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COLUMBO

NO TIME TO DIE

(TVM)

Written by

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Based on a novel by Ed McBain

COLUMBO

NO TIME TO DIE

FADE IN

1 INT. BALLROOM - NIGHT

1

MELISSA HAYS and ANDY PARMA are dancing in close embrace to the sound of romantic music:

Melissa looks dazzling in her wedding gown, properly so, since her face and form are familiar to millions as a famous model. Andy, the groom, in tuxedo, is a handsome partner.

ALEX VARICK, a professional photographer, circles them, snapping pictures. Two other cameras dangle from around his neck.

MELISSA

(affectionate
chiding)

Alex, darling, Andy and I are not the only people here. This is our moment.

ALEX

You bet. It's a once-in-a-lifetime moment, and these moments will sell like hot cakes. Good for you, my dear Melissa, and -- very good for me.

ANDY

Yeah, Alex, why don't you spread yourself around. I want some shots of my buddies for the scrapbook.

ALEX

For the police archives? Okay, Andy. I'll leave you in peace for a minute. Where's your best man?

ANDY

Dennis? Probably with the second most beautiful girl in the place.

Alex wanders off. Camera cranes up from Melissa and Andy as they dance away, revealing more of the ballroom.

CONTINUED

1 CONTINUED

1

A festive wedding reception. The band plays good music. Some people dance. Others are seated at tables in convivial conversation. The lavish buffet is well attended. Another table holds a multi-tiered wedding cake.

Over this, in the style of the police bulletin on a computer screen, the legend appears:

SUNDAY, 9:35 P.M.

2 ANGLE

2

DETECTIVE DENNIS MULROONEY, with the svelte model, CINDY, in tow, eases away from the people around the buffet. They both carry plates of food -- hers, a few delicate pieces of salad -- his, heaped with more substantial fare.

MULROONEY

Pity we couldn't have made this a double wedding. 'Best Man marries another beauty!'

CINDY

I've known you for only ten minutes.

MULROONEY

That's plenty. I've got that feeling. You got that feeling?

CINDY

What feeling?

MULROONEY

Give me another ten minutes. Come on, I'll introduce you to someone who'll vouch for my character.

3 ANGLE

3

COLUMBO sits at a table with the bride's mother, LOUISE HAYS, a frail lady.

COLUMBO

You know, Mrs. Hays, watching Andy and your daughter dancing gets me thinking about my own wedding reception. It was in an Italian restaurant and we waltzed to the music of Vinnie Scavelli and his Paisanos. When I held Mrs. Columbo in my arms she was light as a moonbeam.

CONTINUED

3 CONTINUED

3

LOUISE

How nice. Did I meet her?

COLUMBO

No ma'am. She's not here. She had to go to Chicago to look after her mother. She fell and broke her hip.

LOUISE

Your wife?

COLUMBO

No, her mother.

LOUISE

Poor thing.

COLUMBO

She was having fun at the time, ma'am. Learning to use a skateboard.

LOUISE

How nice.

Mulrooney and Cindy arrive. Columbo rises.

MULROONEY

Excuse me, Lieutenant, Mrs. Hays. Cindy, I'd like you to meet Lieutenant Columbo, the groom's uncle. I was telling Cindy that I'd make a great husband, and you'd vouch for me.

COLUMBO

Well, Cindy, he's a pretty good cop. I can tell you that. But I never, ever, give advice on marriage.

MULROONEY

Thanks a bundle, Lieutenant.

ALEX (V.O.)

Look this way!

They all turn toward the voice, revealing Alex as he flashes a shot, and then joins the group.

ALEX

Hi, Cindy. How are you feeling, Mrs. Hays?

CONTINUED

3 CONTINUED (2)

3

LOUISE

Not too bad, thank you. Do everybody sit down.

The others settle around the table, Columbo again next to Louise. Alex continues snapping pictures of them as they talk.

LOUISE

Alex, this is Lieutenant Columbo, Andy's uncle. You know, Alex was the one who discovered Melissa. He made her famous.

ALEX

I had that pleasure.

LOUISE

Tell them.

ALEX

Last summer. I was shooting a fashion layout in Malibu. Melissa had just come down from Seattle and was on the beach with friends. I thought she was stunning, and wound up taking more shots of her than the professional models. When I showed the stuff to the head of the agency, that was it. She took off like a rocket. Never saw it happen so quickly, nor to a nicer young woman.

SGT. ELLIOTT GOODMAN and MARTIN HAYS, the bride's father, join them.

GOODMAN

Mrs. Hays, I was telling your husband what a great reception this is.

LOUISE

Most of the planning was Melissa's doing. And, of course, Martin paid the bills.

HAYS

(with a smile)

Sure did. A few more bucks and I could have built another shopping mall in Seattle.

Alex turns to Cindy.

CONTINUED

3 CONTINUED (3)

3

ALEX

Come on, Cindy. Let's snap a few.
Who knows? You might be my next
great discovery.

She leaves with him, saying a "See you later" to Mulrooney.
Hays moves over to Louise solicitously.

HAYS

It's way past your bedtime,
Louise. Remember what the doctor
said.

LOUISE

(rising)

That medication is a nuisance.

HAYS

Yes, dear.

4 ANGLE

4

Melissa and Andy do a final twirl on the dance floor, and
then she takes his hand and leads him over to join the
group at the table.

HAYS

(to Melissa)

We're going upstairs.

MELISSA

Are you all right, Mother?

LOUISE

Fine, darling. Just a little
tired. We'll talk in the morning,
won't we?

MELISSA

I'll pop in to see you before we
leave.

She gives Louise a kiss. As does Andy.

ANDY

Rest well, Louise.

LOUISE

It's all been so lovely. I'm very
proud of you both.

All round good nights, etc., and Mr. and Mrs. Hays leave.
Melissa turns to Columbo.

CONTINUED

4 CONTINUED

4

MELISSA

You haven't danced all evening.

COLUMBO

It's been more fun watching you.

MELISSA

You're not going to get away with it. Let's go.

She grabs him by the hand and drags him, protesting good-naturedly, onto the floor.

Andy, Mulrooney and Goodman watch them.

MULROONEY

Andy, you're a lucky sonofagun!

ANDY

I know it.

GOODMAN

- Quite a gal.

MULROONEY

I just had a thought. Where I come from it's customary for the groom's buddies to kidnap the bride on her wedding night. What do you think, Sergeant?

GOODMAN

New to me.

MULROONEY

But fun. Better keep an eye on her, Andy.

ANDY

Don't try anything unless you want a broken neck.

MULROONEY

Oh yeah? I'm going to talk to a few of the other guys. Plus, keeping them away from my girl.

And he's gone, chuckling.

ANDY

You don't think that joker would get up to anything?

CONTINUED

4 CONTINUED (2)

4

GOODMAN

He's just kidding. But I'll keep
an eye on him.

(looks to the
dance floor))

Get a load of Fred Astaire!

5 DANCE FLOOR

5

where Melissa and Columbo, surrounded by admiring guests,
are cutting up a rug. Columbo is into some pretty fancy
footwork. Alex recording it for posterity.

MELISSA

Hey, where did you learn this
stuff?

COLUMBO

Mrs. Columbo showed me. She likes
to go dancing. About the only
exercise I ever get. She wears
me out.

MELISSA

Go, baby, go!

And they do. Finishing to a round of applause.

DISSOLVE TO

6 ANDY

6

with his hand on the knife ready to cut the wedding cake.
Melissa, traditionally, with her hand on his. On screen:

SUNDAY, 10:40 P.M.

They are surrounded by the guests. Columbo, Hays, Goodman,
Mulrooney, and Cindy are f.g. Alex, poised with his camera
at the ready ---

ALEX

Ready, set cut!

And they do. They feed each other pieces of the cake. To
cheers and applause. Alex snaps away. The band plays.
Other cuts are distributed all round. We move in to the
stylized figurines of bride and groom atop the cake.

DISSOLVE TO

7 ANOTHER ANGLE

7

Waiters with trays distributing glasses of champagne. Alex is up on a table where he has a good view of the whole assembly. Hays, with glass in hand, steps onto the bandstand and signals for silence.

HAYS

I faithfully promised our newlyweds that I would get them out of here by eleven. They're leaving early in the morning for a place where even the tabloids won't find them for a couple of weeks. Melissa, my dear, your mother, who is resting happily in bed, and I, are full of joy and pride for our beautiful daughter, and that fine young man, Andy, who we welcome into the family. Continuing happiness to you both. May you prosper and multiply. That last was a commercial for a grandchild. Real soon!

Laughter. He drinks, as do the others.

HAYS

I think the uncle of the groom should say a word. Ladies and gentlemen, Lieutenant Columbo.

Columbo steps up.

COLUMBO

I know Andy's parents would have been as delighted by Melissa as I am. She's a wonderful girl, and not a bad dancer.

Laughter.

COLUMBO

Mr. Hays, you and Mrs. Hays aren't losing a daughter, you're gaining a police force. Melissa, Andy, health and happiness to you always.

They all drink to that. Melissa blows kisses, Andy waves.

MELISSA

Thank you. Thank you. We love you all.

CONTINUED

7 CONTINUED

7

Andy shakes hands and embraces Hays. The same with Columbo. Melissa hugs them both. Then, the radiant young couple move out to the lobby, surrounded by the festive throng. Someone starts -- "For They Are Jolly Good Fellows..." The band picks it up. Everyone joins in.

8 INT. HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

8

Melissa and Andy emerging from the ballroom followed by the singing guests. Alex is ahead of them, clicking away.

The newlyweds are en route to the elevator when Alex goes up to Andy.

ALEX

Andy, do me a favor. One picture I don't have. For old times' sake. Of me and Melissa.

ANDY

Be a pleasure.

He takes the camera. Alex positions himself with an arm around Melissa. Andy aims. Click. (NOTE: This still will show a blond young man, clearly seen in the b.g., crossing the lobby). Melissa gives Alex a kiss.

MELISSA

Thank you, Alex, for everything.

Andy hands back the camera and the couple move to the elevator. "For They Are Jolly Good Fellows..." continues from the group. Alex takes a few more shots. (NOTE: In one of these the blond young man is seen pressing the elevator call button as Andy and Melissa stand waiting by the closed doors).

9 ANGLE - ALEX

9

clicking away.

10 ANGLE - INSIDE THE ELEVATOR

10

from behind Andy and Melissa, waving to the singing crowd, as the elevator doors shut.

11 INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

11

The Bridal Suite door closing. It bears the DO NOT DISTURB sign. On screen:

SUNDAY 11:10 P.M.

12 INT. BRIDAL SUITE - NIGHT

12

Silence. Andy and Melissa stand at some slight distance from each other, suddenly almost shy.

ANDY
You're beautiful.

MELISSA
Why does it feel strange?

ANDY
Yeah. It does, doesn't it?
Living together a year, and it's
like I have to start getting to
know you all over again, Mrs.
Parma.

He moves to her and gives her a gentle kiss. She breaks it with a laugh, and a shove away.

MELISSA
We're like a couple of moonstruck
kids. Go take your shower! I'll
get out of this.

She starts unbuttoning the wedding gown.

ANDY
Yes, please. Right away, ma'am.

And he heads for the bathroom, taking off his jacket and tie, throwing them on the bed. Humming to himself. The bathroom door closes. She hears him burst into song -- "For I'm A Jolly Good Fellow..." She smiles. Hears the shower start to flow. Twirls happily. Removes her earrings, bracelet, and necklace. Places them on a bedside table. Starts to get out of her wedding gown.

13 INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

13

Still singing, Andy, finished with the shower, turns it off. Towels. Wraps a spare dry towel around his waist. Now humming to himself, he does his teeth, combs his hair, flexes muscles in the mirror. Not bad. Suddenly notices a fancy bottle of men's cologne with a tab around the neck. He reads the inscription: BE MY GUEST, LOVE, M.

He smiles, opens the bottle, smells it, pours a little, and applies it.

14 INT. BRIDAL SUITE - NIGHT 14

The bathroom door opens and Andy emerges with a flourish.

ANDY

I'm all yours, Mrs. Parma!

No Melissa in the bedroom. Calling her name, he moves into the sitting area. Not there either. Closet doors are open and he sees her wedding gown on a hanger. He goes to the main door.

15 INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT 15

Andy peering out. Sees a middle-aged respectable couple entering a room halfway down. They're gone. The corridor is now deserted.

16 INT. BRIDAL SUITE - NIGHT 16

Andy closing the door, perplexed. He walks back into the middle of the room and suddenly stops. Says to himself, "Mulrooney! That joker! I'll kill him!" Fast to the phone. Punches in two digits.

ANDY

Front desk? This is Andy Parma.
In the Bridal Suite. Yeah,
thanks, great reception! I've
mislaidd my wife. No. No,
kidding. It ain't funny. Can you
track down my best man, Mr. Dennis
Mulrooney? He's staying the night
here. If he's not in his room,
try the bar. He likes bars. No.
No big deal. Just some dumb
horsing around. Thanks.

17 INT. HOTEL BAR - NIGHT 17

The phone rings. BARTENDER picks it up.

BARTENDER

Bar here....

(listens, calls
out)

Anyone by the name of Dennis
Mulrooney?

Down a ways among the other drinkers, Mulrooney is deep in the seduction of Cindy, now draped on his shoulder. He looks up.

CONTINUED

17 CONTINUED

17

MULROONEY

That's me.

The Bartender hands him the phone.

MULROONEY

Yeah. Hi, Andy.

(listens)

Take it easy, buddy. Not guilty. Just joshing about the kidnapping. Got more important business on my mind. Maybe she forgot something. Came down to pick it up and got into some conversation. There's still a good crowd back in there. Nice party. Want me to look around? You're coming down? Okay?

18 INT. BRIDAL SUITE - NIGHT

18

Andy hangs up. Irritated, but still not too worried, he heads for the bathroom to get his clothes, crossing behind the sofa. He stops, bends, picks up one of Melissa's shoes. Looks around for the other. What the hell. Sees something else under a side table. Looks like a wad of cotton wool. He picks that up. Feels it. Smells it. Quickly turns from it. He's not irritated any longer. He's afraid.

19 INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

19

Columbo, in his raincoat, coming from the elevator to where Andy, now dressed, tensely waits outside the open door of the Bridal Suite.

Columbo talking down the length of the corridor as he approaches. On screen:

MONDAY, 12:05 A.M.

COLUMBO

Nearly escaped, but Melissa's dad, Mr. Hays, nailed me for some advice on where to open one of his malls down here. What do I know? He was asking for some good low crime areas. That's a tough one to answer. Quite a guy. Great talker. I couldn't get away. He

(MORE)

CONTINUED

19 CONTINUED

19

COLUMBO (Cont'd)
was moving in on Sergeant Goodman
as I was leaving. Glad you had
me paged. I was kinda surprised
you'd want to see me tonight.

He's beside Andy now. Takes a close look at him.

COLUMBO
What's the matter?

Andy turns into the suite. Columbo follows.

20 INT. BRIDAL SUITE - NIGHT

20

Andy closes the door. He holds out a hand revealing the
wad of cotton wool. He's very quiet. Barely contained.

ANDY
Smell it.

Columbo takes it and sniffs.

COLUMBO
Chloroform.

ANDY
Melissa's gone. Somebody took
her.

COLUMBO
Somebody what?

ANDY
Kidnapped her.

Pause.

COLUMBO
What are you saying, Andy?

ANDY
It happened while I was in the
shower. When I came out she was
gone.

Pause.

COLUMBO
(still has the
wad)
And this was here?

CONTINUED

20 CONTINUED

20

ANDY

Yes.

Columbo looks about in wonderment. He sees the wedding gown hanging in the closet.

COLUMBO

What was she wearing?

ANDY

Everything's here. She must have been in her underwear.

Now Columbo starts to prowl the room, the tempo gradually increasing as he picks up the scent.

COLUMBO

When did it happen?

ANDY

I told you. I was in the shower.

COLUMBO

How long?

ANDY

Not long.

Columbo lifts up the jewelry from the bedside table.

COLUMBO

No valuables taken?

ANDY

(bitterly)

Only the most valuable thing in the world.

Columbo peers at the lonely shoe on a table.

COLUMBO

What's this doing here?

ANDY

Found it on the floor. The other's missing.

COLUMBO

Where was it?

ANDY

(pointing behind the sofa)

Right there.

CONTINUED

20 CONTINUED (2)

20

Columbo meticulously examines the area as they continue:

COLUMBO

Where was the wad with the chloroform?

ANDY

Under that side table.

Columbo veers over to the side of the sofa, looking for anything near the table that might be a clue.

COLUMBO

What time did you go into the bathroom?

ANDY

We must have got up here about 11:15. We talked a bit. Not much. Then Melissa told me to go take a shower.

COLUMBO

Told you?

ANDY

We were joking. I guess we both felt a bit foolish for some reason.

COLUMBO

Someone listening outside the door might have heard her say that.

ANDY

Say what?

COLUMBO

'Take a shower.' If he heard it, he'd know you were in there.

He is now at the window. Opens the drapes. The window is closed. He tries it. Locked. Then he crosses to the main door. Opens it. Inspects that lock.

COLUMBO

Not forced. Prints from the handles won't be much use. You've used them a couple of times since it happened.

CONTINUED

20 CONTINUED (3)

20

ANDY
(nervous
sarcasm)
Gee, I'm real sorry about that,
Officer!

COLUMBO
(understanding)
Okay, Andy. Okay.

He goes into the corridor. Andy follows.

21 INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT

21

Columbo looks down the length of it.

COLUMBO
He wouldn't carry an unconscious
woman out this way through the
hotel. He might have sneaked her
into a room nearby. Or...
(turns in the
other direction
where there is
a fire exit
some twenty
feet away)
He'd be more likely to carry an
unconscious woman down the fire
stairs.

He goes to the exit door, opens it.

COLUMBO
Hold this. We don't want it
self-locking on us.

Andy does as he's told, but he lets out some suppressed
rage mingled with his fear.

ANDY
An 'unconscious woman!' That's
Melissa you're talking about. My
wife. You're my uncle, for Pete's
sake. She's related.

22 INT. FIRE STAIRS - NIGHT

22

Columbo starting to descend. He turns with a sympathetic
look.

CONTINUED

22 CONTINUED

22

COLUMBO

He could have taken 'Melissa' out this way. That's what I'm checking. How long were you in the shower?

ANDY

Ten minutes or so.

COLUMBO

Did you hear anything?

Columbo is by now out of sight around the corner on a lower landing. Their voices echo in the stairwell.

ANDY

I was in the shower. Singing. Enjoying myself.

COLUMBO

Okay, Andy. So you got out at about 11:30, 11:35?

ANDY

I guess.

23 INT. FIRE STAIRS - LOWER SECTION - NIGHT

23

Out of sight of Andy, Columbo comes upon Melissa's matching shoe on the stairs. He deliberates a second. Then puts it in his raincoat pocket. He starts back up.

COLUMBO

Yeah. Chances are he came this way. Let's get back to the room.

24 INT. BRIDAL SUITE - NIGHT

24

They enter and Columbo closes the door. The empty place bothers Andy. He goes to the window.

Columbo paces a little. Thinking.

COLUMBO

It seems like Melissa's dad has plenty of money. Whoever did it could have done it for ransom. On the other hand it might be revenge.

ANDY

Revenge?

CONTINUED

COLUMBO

You've put a few guys behind bars.
You've used your gun on a couple
of them. Someone might want to
get even.

Andy at the window, sightlessly looking out.

ANDY

Got a cigarette?

COLUMBO

I thought you'd quit.

ANDY

I did. Got one?

COLUMBO

(taking out a
couple of his
cigars)

I got these.

Andy turns. Looks at the cigars. Smiles in a strange sort
of way, and takes them.

ANDY

Thanks. Helluva wedding.

He bites into one of the cigars. Columbo, very aware of
Andy's condition, lights it for him with a match.

COLUMBO

Get on the phone. Tell Sergeant
Goodman I'd like him in on this.
And Mulrooney. Goodman's big on
kidnapping. Have him get someone
from the lab over here to dust for
prints. Ask him to lay on a phone
tap. I'll clear it with the
hotel. You fellas go over
everything you know. I'm going
to take a look outside that fire
escape.

He heads for the door. Turns when he gets there. Sees
Andy at the window, disconsolately staring out. Columbo
calls across ---

COLUMBO

Hey, Andy!

CONTINUED

24 CONTINUED (2)

24

ANDY
(turning)
Yeah?

COLUMBO
Hang in there. We'll find her.

And he's gone. Andy takes a drag on the cigar. Looks at the smoke rising from it, then goes to the phone and presses a couple of digits. He waits for a moment.

ANDY
(on phone)
Please put me through to Mr.
Dennis Mulrooney in the bar.

25 INT. FIRE STAIRS - NIGHT

25

Columbo descending to the ground floor level. He pushes open the fire escape door, steps outside, and lets it close behind him.

26 EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

26

He inspects the door -- flush to the wall. No keyhole. No means of entry from that direction. He looks around. Sees he's in an alley courtyard -- the sort of place used for loading and unloading. A couple of trash dumpsters along one wall.

Across the alley, there's some illumination from a shaded light above a red metal door. Alongside it, more light from within glows through a dirty window.

Columbo goes to the dumpsters, takes a look inside. He crosses the yard past the opening leading to the street, glances out. A motorcycle roars by. Followed shortly by another.

He then turns his attention to the window, tries to see through. It's almost opaque with dirt. Goes to the door. Knocks. No reply. Knocks again. Louder. Nothing. Then he bangs on the door with his fist.

VOICE WITHIN
Who the devil is it?

COLUMBO
Lieutenant Columbo. Los Angeles
Police Department.

27 INT. RESTAURANT KITCHEN - NIGHT

27

BILL BAILEY, a scarecrow of a man in his seventies, wearing thick glasses, black pants, a sweat shirt, an old apron, and dirty sneakers, unlocks a dead bolt, picks up a steel skillet as a weapon, opens the door a crack and peers out at Columbo.

BAILEY

If you're a cop, where's your uniform?

COLUMBO

I'm a plainclothes detective.

BAILEY

Got any ID?

Columbo shows it.

COLUMBO

I'd sure like to talk to you for a couple of minutes.

Bailey opens the door wide.

BAILEY

I'm Bill Bailey. Come on in.

Columbo steps inside. Bailey shuts the door. Columbo takes in the huge cookstove, butcher-block work table, sink piled with pots and pans, stainless steel refrigerators, and hanging utensils.

COLUMBO

This the kitchen of a restaurant?

BAILEY

They like to call it that.

Columbo looks up at the window above the work table.

BAILEY

That's smoke grease on the window. Disgraceful, ain't it? Some of it'll never come off, but it'll be a darn sight cleaner when I'm through with it.

COLUMBO

So you're the cleaning man. What time did you start work tonight, Mr. Bailey?

CONTINUED

BAILEY

Call me Bill, like in that song. Folks are always asking me. 'Why don't you go home, Bill Bailey?' And they all say it like nobody ever thought of it before. What time, you said? Ten o'clock. Came on at ten, like always. They close at nine and are outa here by nine-thirty. They're supposed to use that half-hour to wash the dishes and pots and pans. Most of the time they just leave 'em soak in the sink and I finish 'em up. They never say a word to me. Maybe they think brownies creep in here at night to scour this grease pit into shape.

COLUMBO

Where do you live, Bill?

BAILEY

West L.A. Off Pico. 134 Neptune Street.

Columbo scribbles a note of it on a scrap of paper.

COLUMBO

Did you happen to see anybody outside in the yard sometime after eleven?

BAILEY

If you mean people, I never seen any.

COLUMBO

But you did see something?

BAILEY

A van. A white van. The driver had backed it all the way into the alley. That's what made me notice it. Most delivery men pull in head first, then back out when they're through unloadin'.

COLUMBO

What kind of deliveries are made after eleven o'clock Sunday night?

CONTINUED

27 CONTINUED (2)

27

BAILEY

None I know of. You got some interest in that van? Was it stolen?

COLUMBO

Just a routine investigation, Bill. Did you see the driver?

BAILEY

Told you. Didn't see nobody. Heard the van backin' in. By the time I climbed up on the table and looked out the window, the driver had gotten out and walked away.

COLUMBO

You looked out that window?

BAILEY

Think I'm blind as a bat, don't you? The eyes ain't first-rate, but these glasses are prescription, and they let me see real good.

COLUMBO

I wasn't questioning your eyesight, Bill. It's all that grease on the window.

BAILEY

I'm used to lookin' through it when I hear somethin' interestin' outside...

(cackles)

Sometimes them hotel bellhops sneak chambermaids out in back where they think nobody can see 'em.

Columbo climbs up on the table. Peers out.

COLUMBO

I can barely see the hotel. But you say the van was white.

BAILEY

Yep. What part of it I could see.

COLUMBO

Which part was that?

CONTINUED

27 CONTINUED (3)

27

BAILEY

The rear end. Where the doors are.

COLUMBO

Was there anything written on it?

BAILEY

Nothing as I could see. It was white. I just got on with my work.

As Columbo clambers down:

BAILEY

But I can tell you what time it left. Exactly eleven thirty.

COLUMBO

How do you know, exactly?

BAILEY

I was takin' off my watch to scour the pots and pans, when I heard the van doors open and shut, like somethin' was bein' loaded in the back.

COLUMBO

Did you look out the window again?

BAILEY

No, sir, I didn't. If I'd known you'd be around askin' questions I'da climbed back up to get a peek at the driver.

(shrewdly)

You ain't much of a poker player, are you?

COLUMBO

Not the best.

BAILEY

I seen the look on your face when I told you 'bout the driver loadin' somethin' in the back. It ain't the van that's got you bothered -- it's what the fella put in it. I'll bet it was somethin' he stole outa that hotel -- somethin' real valuable. Am I right, Lieutenant?

CONTINUED

27 CONTINUED (4)

27

COLUMBO

Bill, you should've been a
detective.

28 INT. KIDNAP ROOM - NIGHT

28

A sliver of light under a door. Pan slowly from it across a bare wooden floor to reveal a woman's stockinged feet, bound at the ankles with cord. Move gently along the body, see she's wearing a slip, on her side, arms behind her, arrive at the head, the beautiful mouth taped with a gash of white adhesive tape.

Melissa is lying on a foam mattress set on the floor of what appears in the faint light to be an otherwise empty small room. Her eyes are closed. We hear as in a dream Andy's voice singing faintly -- "For he's a jolly good fellow, etc."

Camera moves in close to her eyes. Almost as if sensing its presence, they open, slowly at first, then suddenly wide, in terror.

SHOCK CUT TO

29 A SINGLE IRIS AND DILATED PUPIL

29

The song increases in volume combined now with the sound of a shower, exaggerated.

OIL DISSOLVE TO

30 INT. BRIDAL SUITE

30

Melissa has just stepped out of her dress, takes it over to the closet, removes a hanger, inserts it in the dress, places it on the rod, turns and freezes.

31 SERIES OF ABRUPT CUTS

31

- a) The full figure of a man coming at her fast from the closed door.
- b) CLOSE on Melissa.
- c) CLOSE on the man. He's wearing a surgical mask.
- d) CLOSER on her. Backing off. Looking down.

CONTINUED

31 CONTINUED

31

- e) CLOSE on the man's right hand. It holds a lethal surgical scalpel.
- f) CLOSER STILL on her. Turning toward the bathroom. Opening her mouth to scream.
- g) CLOSE on the man's open left hand. Whipping forward.
- h) CLOSE on her mouth and neck. The left hand clamps the mouth. The scalpel is at her throat. On a finger of the scalpel hand, we see a distinctive ring.
- j) TWO HUGE HEADS. Together. Hers wrenched back against his. The surgical mask at her ear. A terrible hoarse whisper comes from it -- "QUIET!"

SLOW MOTION: Follow his left hand as it descends to his coat pocket, removes a wad of cotton wool, returns with it as he places it over her mouth and nose. There's no struggle. Just her eyes of terror losing focus and closing.

Throughout all this, Andy sings happily in the shower.

32 INT. KIDNAP ROOM - NIGHT

32

Sudden dead silence. Melissa's eyes, now filled with tears, her body shaking with silent sobs.

Camera moves slowly away, leaving her in the distance, in the shadows.

33 INT. BRIDAL SUITE - NIGHT

33

Goodman and Mulrooney seated at a table. Scratch paper and pencils. Cups of coffee. On a trolley nearby, two Thermos jugs, milk, sugar, a plate of sandwiches, another of sweet cakes.

TWO POLICE TECHNICIANS are working a tap on the phone. Setting up a tape deck, installing an extra extension.

Andy paces, puffing nervously on one of Columbo's cigars.

Through the archway to the bedroom, Melissa's bags can be seen lying empty on the floor, her things spread out on the bed, empty purse beside them, its contents in a neat pile.

The scene plays with a terse, quiet urgency, with the sense that time is of the essence.

Columbo is over with the technicians ---

CONTINUED

33 CONTINUED

33

COLUMBO

How long will it take to lay on that phone tap, fellas?

TECHNICIAN

Fifteen, twenty minutes.

COLUMBO

Can somebody call in while you're working on it?

TECHNICIAN

You bet. Any call comes through, we'll hear it.

COLUMBO

If it does, let Detective Parma take it.

TECHNICIAN

You got it, Lieutenant.

Columbo moves to join the two at the table.

COLUMBO

(to Goodman)

It's usually soon, you say, Elliott?

GOODMAN

That's the pattern. Ransomers like to gloat a while. Not too long. Adrenaline's pumpin', and they want that money fast. They like to get to you while you're still in shock, before you've had time to do too much about it, before the cops get organized. But you'd be surprised how many kidnappings for ransom we don't even hear about. People pay up, and if the kidnapped party is safely returned, that's the end of it.

ANDY

You put it so well, Sergeant.

MULROONEY

He's only trying to help.

ANDY

Heck, I know that. It just hurts to hear it.

CONTINUED

COLUMBO
Personal question, Andy.

ANDY
Shoot.

COLUMBO
Do you and Melissa have much money between you?

ANDY
I'm rolling in it, as you know, on the huge cop's salary they pay me. Melissa makes plenty. But she's only been in the business eighteen months, and most of what we'd saved has gone into that house we bought. We have a few thousand left over for furnishing the place and that's it.

MULROONEY
Her dad's got plenty, right?

GOODMAN
Told me he owns eight shopping malls.

ANDY
Yeah, and about half the other real estate in Seattle.

COLUMBO
They wrote an article on him in the L.A. Times.

ANDY
When are we going to tell him what happened?

COLUMBO
No point in opening that can of beans just yet. And his wife's none too well. Leave them in peace until there's no choice. If it's ransom we'll hear soon enough. If it's something else, let's work on it. Jealousy. Anyone got it in for Melissa?

ANDY
You all know her. Sure she's tops in the business, but nobody bears a grudge.

CONTINUED

33 CONTINUED (3)

33

MULROONEY

Yeah, even Cindy said that. Said there's no bull with her.

(wryly)

Cindy! See what I gave up for you, Andy.

ANDY

(dry)

Thanks, pal!

GOODMAN

Melissa's just natural. Can't imagine anyone wanting to do her harm.

COLUMBO

Any notes, threatening letters?

ANDY

Nothing here.

(gestures at the bed)

We thought of that and went through all her stuff while you were out. Anyway, she'd have told me.

There's a knock on the door. Everybody freezes. Another knock, followed by ---

VOICE OUTSIDE

Fingerprints!

Columbo goes to the door. Lets in a middle-aged TECHNICIAN with his kid. Columbo recognizes him.

COLUMBO

Glad it's you, Joe. We're kinda in a real hurry. All I need is the door. Forget the handles. They've been used plenty by all of us. Hit the door surface and the door frame. Someone carried somebody else out this way and might have put out a hand for support. When you're through here, do the same thing with the fire escape to the left down the corridor. Door, walls, the works. Okay?

CONTINUED

33 CONTINUED (4)

33

JOE
You got it, Lieutenant. How's
Mrs. Columbo?

COLUMBO
Just fine, thanks. And Joe, ask
the guys at the lab to put a rush
on it for me, will you?

JOE
No problem.

He goes to work. Columbo moves to the table and gets his
coffee cup, goes with it to the trolley for a refill from
one of the flasks.

COLUMBO
No point in letting this go to
waste.
(holds up the
flask)
Anyone?

Goodman and Mulrooney rise.

MULROONEY
We'll get it.

GOODMAN
Andy, want some?

Andy still pacing.

ANDY
Thanks.

The scene proceeds no less quietly urgent with Columbo,
Goodman and Mulrooney clustered around the trolley,
freshening their cups, helping themselves to a sandwich or
a cake if they feel like it. Goodman fills a cup for Andy
and takes it to him. Columbo chooses an iced doughnut.

COLUMBO
Revenge. You guys come up with
anything on that while I was gone?

GOODMAN
Something that might figure.

MULROONEY
Andy blew away a guy a few years
ago. His brother swore to get
even.

CONTINUED

33 CONTINUED (5)

33

GOODMAN

Name of Albert Wagner. Tell the
Lieutenant, Andy.

In their own time, the guys drift back to the table or
wherever. Columbo munches on his iced doughnut.

ANDY

About three years ago, long before
I met Melissa, I was dating this
waitress, Sharee was her name.
One night we were in a club in
North Hollywood, and some drunk
came busting up to our table, and
asked Sharee how it felt to be
dating a cop when her husband was
serving time.

Columbo has icing over his fingers from the doughnut.
Looks around for a napkin. They're all taken. Licks his
fingers. They're still sticky. He goes into the bathroom
leaving the door open.

34 INT. BATHROOM

34

Columbo turning on a faucet to wash his hands.

COLUMBO

(calling out)

Who was the guy. The drunk?

35 INT. SUITE

35

MULROONEY

(calling back)

Albert Wagner.

ANDY

I found that out later. Right
then, I let the club bouncer take
care of him.

Andy moves over near the bathroom door.

ANDY

Driving home, Sharee told me that
it was her ex-husband, Billy, the
drunk's brother, who was serving
the last couple of weeks of his
sentence. He sure got out on
time.

(MORE)

CONTINUED

35 CONTINUED

35

ANDY (Cont'd)

One late night the two of them jumped me outside my apartment. Cracked a rib, busted my head before I could get my gun out. Billy tried to take it away from me and I had to shoot him. He died right there in his brother's arms.

36 INT. BATHROOM

36

Columbo, listening to Andy, takes a towel to dry his hands, notices the bottle of cologne, reads the inscription, and some thought strikes him.

COLUMBO

What happened to him? Albert.

37 INT. SUITE

37

ANDY

I booked him. He swore he'd get back at me if it was the last thing he ever did. The Judge gave him three years for Assault Two, class 'D' felony.

Columbo emerges from the bathroom carrying the cologne.

COLUMBO

You say this was three years ago.

ANDY

About.

Joe is finished with the door.

JOE

All through here, Lieutenant. I'll go hit the fire escape.

And he leaves, as Columbo calls out "Thanks, Joe."

COLUMBO

Sergeant. Will you check if Wagner is out yet?

GOODMAN

Can do, soon as these guys clear the outline.

(MORE)

CONTINUED

37 CONTINUED

37

GOODMAN (Cont'd)
(calls over to
them)
-- How's it coming?

TECHNICIAN
Four, five minutes.

Columbo places the cologne on the table.

COLUMBO
Shows how dumb I am.
(points to the
tab on the
bottle)
You know what's on here, don't
you, Andy?

ANDY
Yeah. By heart. 'Be my Guest.
Love, M.' M for Melissa. She
left that for me as a surprise.
What about it?

COLUMBO
'Guest' is what it's about.
Suppose it was one of the guests
who did this? Somebody at the
wedding?

ANDY
They were all family and friends.

COLUMBO
All of them? How many did you
know?

ANDY
Most of them were Melissa's. A
whole lot from the magazine
business. Editors. Models.

COLUMBO
But how many did you know?

ANDY
Me? About twenty percent.

COLUMBO
See what I mean? We're gonna have
to check them all. Where's the
guest list?

CONTINUED

37 CONTINUED (2)

37

ANDY

I don't have it.

COLUMBO

You don't have it?

ANDY

We made it out and gave it to the Hays.

COLUMBO

Parents of the bride. Dumb again. Yeah, the parents of the bride are the ones who send out invitations to a wedding.

(beat)

You know what that means, don't you?

38 INT. HAYS' SUITE - NIGHT

38

Central sitting room. Bedrooms off either side. Hays, in a robe, is fixing himself a nightcap from a drinks tray on the sideboard in the sitting room. He hears a gentle tap on the door, looks at the watch, frowns, glances toward one of the bedroom doors which is closed, goes to the main door and opens it to reveal an apologetic Columbo.

COLUMBO

(whispering)

Sorry to disturb you, Mr. Hays.

HAYS

(whispering)

What the heck, Lieutenant? It's almost one thirty.

COLUMBO

I wouldn't bother you in normal circumstances, but this is sort of important.

HAYS

It better be. My wife overdid it tonight, and is extremely unwell. I gave her some medication and don't want her disturbed. Won't it keep?

COLUMBO

I'm afraid not, sir.

CONTINUED

38 CONTINUED

38

HAYS

All right, come in. Don't talk until we're in my bedroom and we get the door closed.

He lets Columbo in, shuts the door, and they quietly move across the sitting room and into the second bedroom.

39 INT. HAYS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

39

Hays closes the door. Even in here they converse almost in a whisper. Hays turns to Columbo.

HAYS

What's on your mind at this time of the night?

COLUMBO

I have a lot of respect for you, Mr. Hays, and I'm not going to beat the bush. Your daughter has been kidnapped.

Hays doesn't move a muscle for a moment. He just looks at Columbo. We begin to see how he might indeed own half the real estate in Seattle.

Never taking his eyes from Columbo, he raises the glass, takes a drink, and sits on the bed.

HAYS

I rely heavily on my eyes and ears, and I know you're not joking. Please repeat what you said.

COLUMBO

Melissa was abducted from the Bridal Suite. Shortly after they went upstairs tonight. While Andy was in the shower. We know she was chloroformed. For now, we don't know who did it, but we're working on it.

HAYS

(dry)

That's good to hear. Why wasn't I informed earlier?

CONTINUED

COLUMBO

One reason was out of consideration for your wife, and the other was that I felt it would serve no useful purpose until we had more information.

HAYS

I'm a big boy. I could have taken it.

COLUMBO

Yes, sir.

HAYS

No matter.

(gets up, starts
to pace)

The first thing that comes to mind is ransom, she being the daughter of a rich man. No doubt, if you're working on it, as you say, that has been taken into consideration. Let me make it crystal clear, that if there's a ransom demand, whatever amount, I'll pay it instantly, no questions asked. And I emphasize, no police histrionics. I'll pay, and when my daughter is returned, then and only then can you go in with guns blazing. Is that understood?

COLUMBO

Clearly, sir.

HAYS

What is being done?

COLUMBO

Everything possible. One way you can help, Mr. Hays. We need the guest list to check out everyone who was at the wedding.

HAYS

You suspect it might have been someone who was in the hotel tonight?

CONTINUED

39 CONTINUED (2)

39

COLUMBO

We don't know anything for sure.
But that's one area we have to
follow up.

HAYS

Then let's not waste any more
time. Time I imagine, is of the
essence in these matters.

Hays moves to his briefcase, open on the dresser. Sifts through some papers. Columbo notices a framed photo of Melissa with her father and mother. It's on the bedside table. He takes a step forward staring at it. A thought strikes him.

COLUMBO

Yes, sir. Time is everything.

Hays comes over with four sheets of paper, paper-clipped together. He hands them to Columbo.

HAYS

Here are the names, addresses and
telephone numbers of everyone to
whom invitations were sent out.
Complete as far as I know.

COLUMBO

Thank you.

Hays picks up the photo. Looks at it. And for the first time displays some emotion.

HAYS

Good hunting, Lieutenant.

COLUMBO

We'll keep you informed.

HAYS

I'd appreciate that. But no word
to Mrs. Hays. Nothing in the
papers. On TV. None of that.
It would kill her if she heard of
it in her present condition.

COLUMBO

I promise you it will be kept
quiet.

HAYS

How's Andy?

CONTINUED

39 CONTINUED (3)

39

COLUMBO

You'd be proud of him. Working at it as hard as the rest of us.

HAYS

I'm pleased to hear that.

40 INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

40

Columbo, with the guest list, briskly heading from the elevator to the Bridal Suite. He passes four young late partygoers, slightly and quietly inebriated, giggling among themselves, and shushing each other as he goes by.

Halfway to the suite, he sees Goodman coming out. Goodman closes the door and moves with purpose down the corridor. Columbo turns and walks part of the way back to the elevator with him.

COLUMBO

Anyone call?

GOODMAN

Nothing yet. But I checked on Wagner. He's been out for a couple of weeks. I'm on my way to a snitch I know. You ever meet him? Calls himself Comfort?

COLUMBO

No. I heard of him. Tubby, isn't it? Tubby Comfort. A coupla the fellas use him a lot.

GOODMAN

Yeah. He knows the dirt on every crook in town. Makes a nice few bucks on the side spilling the beans on them. Spends half his nights in some hole of a steam bath. I'm gonna see if he has anything on Wagner. You get the list?

COLUMBO

Yeah.

GOODMAN

How was Hays?

COLUMBO

Tough. He's somethin' else.

CONTINUED

40 CONTINUED

40

GOODMAN
See you.

COLUMBO
Yeah.

And they split. Goodman for the elevator. Columbo back in the direction of the suite.

41 INT. SUITE - NIGHT

41

The phone tap technicians are gone. Andy's at the table listing the people he knew at the reception. Mulrooney pouring coffee. Columbo enters, all business.

COLUMBO
That photographer was called Alex, looked like he never stopped taking pictures. What's his second name?

ANDY
Varick. Alex Varick. Why?

Columbo looks up the name on the list, scribbles the address on a piece of hotel scratch paper.

COLUMBO
We're going to need photos of everyone to match faces with names until they're all accounted for. While I'm away, you fellas go through that list. Check all the people you know. Anyone else you can follow up on, use the spare phone. And if either of you has a tame snitch, call and see if there's news on Wagner.

And he's gone.

42 INT. KIDNAP ROOM

42

In the sliver of light from under the door, Melissa lies asleep, her position more or less the same as before.

Suddenly, there is the sound of a high-pitched whistle, of the sort made by steam from a kettle. Her eyes open, momentarily confused, then, as she remembers, they fill with alarm, and look to the door. The sound is out there somewhere. The whistling stops.

CONTINUED

42 CONTINUED

42

Then she hears water pouring; the rattle of a kettle being placed on a stove top; the clink of crockery; a cabinet door shutting.

She struggles into a sitting position on the foam mattress and wrestles with the cord that binds her hands. Then she hears footsteps approaching the door. Sees the soles of shoes through the slat at the bottom. A key turns in the lock. The light outside is switched off. Darkness. The door opens. In the faint spill of another light down the hall, a shadowy figure enters and closes the door.

Suddenly a flashlight beam hits her eyes, the shock of it forcing her to squeeze them shut. Then his voice ---

ABDUCTOR

Melissa, my love, when I remove the tape, do not scream. It would be useless to scream. This place is not near to anyone who would hear you. Only me.

Her eyes gradually open. All she can see of him is a faint outline. He directs the flashlight onto a wall where there is a window frame. The area within the frame is painted black over what appear to be bricks.

ABDUCTOR

Behind the black paint, are hollow glass building blocks, like this.

He shines the flashlight onto one such glass cube in his right hand. The beam reflects eerily through it. He puts the cube on the floor.

ABDUCTOR

These are excellent insulation against sound. Screaming would only strain your vocal cords, and irritate me. Please my love, don't do it. If I become irritated, I might be tempted to use the blade on you, and I don't want to do that. Not yet.

His right hand comes back into the beam of light. "The blade" is the scalpel.

ABDUCTOR

So sorry I had to tie you up. It was necessary at the time.

CONTINUED

42 CONTINUED (2)

42

He places the flashlight on the floor so that it shows only her upper body. We see his hand and lower arm as he reaches for the tape over her mouth. She moves her head away.

ABDUCTOR
Be still. The least hurtful way
to do this is with one quick pull.

He takes the edge of the tape, and removes it sharply. She winces.

ABDUCTOR
That wasn't too bad, was it?

She stares fearfully in the beam.

ABDUCTOR
Speak to me, my love. I adore
hearing that lovely voice in those
commercials of yours.

With the scalpel, he cuts the cord binding her ankles and wrists. She massages them.

ABDUCTOR
I've just made some tea for us.
Would you like some? Darjeeling.
It's very nice.

MELISSA
Where's Andy?

ABDUCTOR
Andy?

MELISSA
Where's my husband?

ABDUCTOR
You have no husband. The marriage
has not been consummated. With
regard to the man I saw go through
that bogus wedding in the church
-- we left him in the shower.
(chuckles
pleasantly)
He should be dry by now.

MELISSA
Do you know he's a policeman?

CONTINUED

42 CONTINUED (3)

42

ABDUCTOR

Oh yes. Yes indeed. I read all the marriage announcements. Detective Andrew Parma.

MELISSA

Do you know what happens if a policeman or his family are harmed or threatened?

ABDUCTOR

The cops get excited. Not to worry. It will be finished long before they can do a thing about it.

MELISSA

What will be finished?

ABDUCTOR

You'll see. It will be wonderful.

MELISSA

Who are you? What do you want with me?

ABDUCTOR

I'm devoted to you. I desire your love. And you shall give it to me. Now, the tea will be getting cold. Don't tell me you're not thirsty. How about a cup?

MELISSA

Water. I'll have some water.

ABDUCTOR

Silly, silly! But whatever your heart desires, my love.

He picks up the flashlight, the glass cube, goes to the door, opens it, switches off the flashlight. She sees his faint silhouette from the light down the hall.

MELISSA

Light. Can I have real light in here? I don't like the dark. Please.

ABDUCTOR

Perhaps. Yes, perhaps you'd be nicer to me then. We'll think about it.

The door closes. Beneath it, she sees the bright light outside switched on. The lock clicks shut.

43 EXT. GRUBBY STREET - NIGHT

43

A small neon sign bears the legend "ARABIAN SAUNA, STEAM AND MASSAGE". Beneath it -- a heavy studded door, adorned with brightly colored stars and crescents.

Goodman, leaving his unmarked car, crosses the sidewalk, pushes through the stars and crescents as a well-dressed customer is departing, collar up, head down. Goodman finds himself in a lobby.

44 INT. LOBBY - NIGHT

44

Seductively lit. Draped in the style of a sultan's tent. Piped, soft, reedy music of the East is meant to complete the illusion.

Behind a desk -- a gentleman dressed in red velvet trousers, and a black vest with gold piping. On his head, a felt FEZ with dangling tassel.

Behind him, on the wall, a couple of large frames containing a selection of photographs of "beautiful" girls in harem outfits. Between the large frames, a smaller one containing in fancy print: PROFESSIONALLY SCHOOLED EGYPTIAN MASSEUSES. Two of these ladies pass, giggling, from the lobby through an arch hung with a beaded curtain. The beads rattle behind them. The fezzed one smiles the smile of a poor man's Akim Tamiroff.

He's delighted to see a new face, opens a register with a flourish, and holds forth a quill pen.

FEZ

Welcome, sir. Please sign in.
You'll leave here a new man.
Refreshed. Your cares perspired
away, your aching muscles eased
by gentle hands.

Goodman shows his ID. The smile of the fezzed one tightens a little.

GOODMAN

Cut the crap. If it weren't for
the fact this dump keeps a bunch
of weirdos off the streets, we'd
close it down in five minutes.
Tubby Comfort here tonight?

FEZ

Mr. Comfort is indeed enjoying his
usual steam bath.

CONTINUED

44 CONTINUED

44

GOODMAN
Where's he at?

The Fez indicates the beaded arch.

FEZ
Pass through the Oasis Lounge to
the locker room. Sauna and
massage rooms through the door on
your left. Steam to the right.

GOODMAN
I'm obliged.

He pushes through the curtain. The beads rattle behind
him.

45 INT. PEUGEOT - NIGHT

45

Travelling. Columbo at the wheel.

SUPERIMPOSE:

MONDAY, 2:09 A.M.

46 EXT. STREET - NIGHT

46

Traffic is sparse, the Peugeot drives by at a fast lick.

47 INT. KIDNAP ROOM

47

There is now a standing lamp, plugged into a wall outlet.
A stylish floral bathrobe on a hanger is suspended from the
shade support. On the floor, a tray. On the tray, a pot
of tea, cup and saucer, milk, sugar, a small plate of
cookies. A kitchen chair nearby.

Melissa is over by a wall, in her slip, hands around her
bare shoulders. The Abductor is pouring water from a large
plastic bottle into a small mug, also plastic.

ABDUCTOR
You were absolutely right. The
lamp does make it nicer. Much
more cosy.

He crosses to her with the mug. Proffers it. She takes
it and gulps the water down.

CONTINUED

47 CONTINUED

47

ABDUCTOR

I knew you'd be thirsty, my love. After the tape on your mouth. And no doubt a little nervous at the unaccustomed surroundings. Have some more.

She holds out the mug. He fills it. Again she drinks. She stares at the scalpel held in his right hand with the bottle. He walks over and places the bottle on the floor beside the mattress. Then he sits on the chair and pours a cup of tea.

ABDUCTOR

I think I'm being very considerate. Why don't you wear the robe? It's very nice. Your size. You modeled one just like it once. I bought it for you when I was preparing for this. Be comfortable. Have a cookie.

He leans back in the chair, crosses his legs, sips the tea, very much at ease, but he looks odd raising the cup with the scalpel still in his hand.

MELISSA

How long are you going to keep me here?

ABDUCTOR

That's better. Let's converse. Be civilized. How long? In this room? Until about three o'clock in the afternoon. Then we prepare. Three forty-five was when my mother told me she was married. That's precisely the time we'll do it.

MELISSA

Do what?

ABDUCTOR

You'll see. It will be glorious, my love. A pity my mother can't be with us to see it.

Melissa decides to humor this lunatic, to play for time, but she yawns in spite of herself, feeling desperately tired.

MELISSA

Where is your mother?

CONTINUED

47 CONTINUED (2)

47

ABDUCTOR

She had her throat cut. She's in heaven, my love. Waiting for us.

MELISSA

Did -- someone -- murder her?

ABDUCTOR

Oh yes. My father. He was a doctor. A surgeon. Very famous. I was nearly a surgeon myself. But, my love, some things are not meant to be.

Melissa yawns again. Her eyes droop. She's finding it hard to keep awake. She moves over to the mattress.

MELISSA

Tell me about it.

ABDUCTOR

He was a beast. Always bullying my mother. Making her cry. I heard them fighting one day in the bedroom. That was the worst time. I was eight years old. Listening outside the door. I heard her screaming. Then it stopped. And I ran into the room. And she was on the bed. All blood up here.

(places a hand
at this throat)

He'd cut -- this -- wide open.
With one of these.

He holds up the scalpel, looking at it in fascination. Melissa lies down on the mattress, utterly exhausted, yawning, her eyes barely open.

MELISSA

Did he? Did he really?

ABDUCTOR

Then he saw me and did the same thing to himself.

He has recounted all of this in the most reasonable manner, as though he were giving a weather report. Placing the cup and saucer on the tray, he goes across and stands looking down at Melissa, who stares up at him in a haze.

CONTINUED

47 CONTINUED (3)

47

MELISSA

(her speech
slurred)

What did you say?

ABDUCTOR

That's it, my love. Rest. I dissolved a sleeping pill in the mug before I brought it in. Very quick. Very strong. I'm going to take a half of one myself. Make me sleep awhile. Then I must go to my work. We'll be refreshed. We must be refreshed for the ceremony. Mustn't we?

Melissa takes in part of this, tries to raise herself, but slumps back onto the mattress, no longer resisting as her eyes finally close.

48 INT. STEAM ROOM

48

Billowing almost impenetrable steam. Goodman appears out of the clouds, squinting his eyes, trying to see through them. He wears a towel. Carries his wallet and ID case in one hand. A holstered .38 Detective's Special in the other. Goodman is not enjoying the heat.

He hears some kind of music ahead of him, and the sound of hands slapping on flesh. He calls out in that direction.

GOODMAN

Tubby, where the heck are you?

TUBBY'S VOICE

Never forget a face. Never forget a voice. Do I have the pleasure of welcoming Sergeant Goodman? Bear to the right a few degrees, and you will discover the fount of all knowledge.

Goodman moves as directed, and the form of TUBBY COMFORT is revealed through the mist. Seated like a great, white, blubbery Buddha, slapping his belly in tempo to the music. He's perched on the upper tier of three-stepped wooden benches. Goodman climbs up and sits beside him, close to the ceiling where it's hottest.

GOODMAN

Jeez. It must be over two hundred degrees in this place.

CONTINUED

48 CONTINUED

48

TUBBY

Heat's good for you. Melts the fat.

GOODMAN

Yeah. You lost so much I hardly knew you.

The wheezing rumble that comes out of Tubby is laughter. Beside him on the bench, is the source of the music -- a portable radio. Tubby turns down the volume a little. Next to it, a portable phone. Also, a plastic bag of candy, from which he nibbles. His lower extremities are wrapped in a bath sheet. Sweat oozes from every pore.

TUBBY

How did you ever find me?

GOODMAN

I knew no human being in his right mind would ever come in a dump like this. And here you are.

This levity is almost too much for Tubby. He shakes like a jelly at the wit of it. When he can talk ---

TUBBY

Here in the flesh, so to speak. What do you want, Sergeant -- a copy of my secret diet?

GOODMAN

Cut the fat jokes, Tub. I got a rushed job for you. Wagner. Albert. He had a brother called Billy....

TUBBY

...until Billy tried to take a cop's gun away from him. Delightful family. I hear his sweetheart of a brother got out early for good behavior.

(wheeze)

Do You want Albert's address so you can add it to your Christmas card list?

GOODMAN

How'd you guess?

Tubby picks up the portable phone. Plays with it fondly.

CONTINUED

48 CONTINUED (2)

48

TUBBY

One hundred of the taxpayers'
money on account to cover the
phone bills for my secret numbers.
Two hundred more when I make your
dream come true.

Goodman opens his wallet. Tubby wheezes.

49 EXT. STREET - NIGHT

49

In the hills. Distant city lights. The Peugeot comes into view.

50 INT. PEUGEOT

50

Columbo, right hand on the wheel, holding the scrap of paper on which he scribbled Varick's address. Left hand with a flashlight out the window as he searches for the house in the unlit street. Suddenly he brakes. He sees

51 A LETTER BOX

51

Almost hidden in the bushes. There's a number on the post. More distinctively, a metal miniature camera and tripod soldered to the top of the box. Driveway to the side of it. Beyond, a two-storied modernistic house. A porch light. No other illumination.

52 INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

52

Varick asleep. There's the strident sound of a bell. He turns irritably. Almost immediately another peal of the bell. Wearing pyjamas, Varick throws back the bedclothes violently, switches on a light, peers at a bedside clock. It reads 2:38. The bell again. Muttering to himself, Varick goes to a window, pulls the drapes, opens the window, looks down, calls out ---

VARICK

Do you think I'm deaf!?

53 EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT - HIGH ANGLE

53

Seeing Columbo step back from the door onto the pathway, looking up.

CONTINUED

53 CONTINUED

53

COLUMBO

Mr. Varick?

VARICK

Who's that?

COLUMBO

Mr. Varick, please excuse the time of night. Perhaps you remember me from the wedding reception -- Lieutenant Columbo. I wouldn't do this to you, sir, if it wasn't urgent police business.

54 ANGLE

54

Low. Showing Varick above at the window.

VARICK

What does police business have to do with me?

COLUMBO

Not you directly Mr. Varick. But we had a little trouble after you left, and I think you can help us clear it up.

VARICK

What kind of trouble?

COLUMBO

If you can spare a minute, sir, I'll tell you about it.

VARICK

Middle of the night!

He slams shut the window.

55 INT. SITTING ROOM - NIGHT

55

Varick, now robed, in none-too-sweet a mood, coming through the door. He switches on a light as Columbo follows him in.

COLUMBO

I really appreciate this, Mr. Varick, And I'm sorry about waking....

CONTINUED

55 CONTINUED

55

VARICK

What's the problem, Lieutenant?

COLUMBO

I'm afraid I can't go into details. I can say it involves one of the Hays.

VARICK

Mrs. Hays? She looked pretty sickly to me.

COLUMBO

No, to the best of my knowledge Mrs. Hays is all right for the time being.

VARICK

Mr. Hays?

COLUMBO

He's in some trouble. And it might get worse.

VARICK

He's loaded, I know that. What do you mean 'it might get worse?' Blackmail? Is that it?

COLUMBO

Something like that.

Varick loses some of his edge.

VARICK

I like the guy. Dotes on Melissa. Wanted her to be a doctor before the fame happened. He never even squawked. Gave her all kinds of support.

COLUMBO

Yes. He's very fond of her.

VARICK

Does Melissa know about this?

COLUMBO

It would be best to keep it from her.

VARICK

What can I do?

CONTINUED

55 CONTINUED (2)

55

COLUMBO

I'd like copies of all the photos you took at the wedding. Church. Reception. Group shots in particular.

VARICK

(with an ironic laugh)

Know how many rolls I shot?

COLUMBO

No idea, Mr. Varick.

VARICK

Fourteen. That's over five hundred photos. What would you do with them if you had them?

COLUMBO

Eliminate everyone who can be recognized. You'll help there, I hope. Anyone not known will be considered suspect.

Varick heads out toward the hallway.

VARICK

My studio and lab are at the rear of the house.

56 INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

56

Varick shows the way down the hall.

VARICK

I have a session with Caroline Hacker at eight this morning. Maybe you met her at the reception. Toughest editor in the business. She's doing a six-page spread on the wedding and has a deadline. You're in luck. My assistant is processing the stuff right now.

They turn a corner.

57 INT. PHOTO LAB

57

Highly sophisticated. The latest equipment. Piles of photos. Hanging numbered negatives. SANDY, Varick's

CONTINUED

57 CONTINUED

57

assistant, takes two 11x14 prints off the dryer, moves to the door, opens it, and goes through into the adjoining studio.

58 INT. PHOTO STUDIO - NIGHT

58

Again sophisticated. Flash screens. A variety of cameras on tripods. Photographic backgrounds. Negative viewing screens.

A long counter illuminated by strip lighting. This is covered with an array of the wedding photos. Columbo and Varick are each bent over group shots, viewing them through magnifiers, marking the photos with white marker pencils.

Sandy approaches with the two prints. Hands them to Columbo.

SANDY

Lieutenant. These are the last two blown-up group shots you asked for.

COLUMBO

Mr. Varick, would you say everyone who was at the church and reception is covered by the photos you're giving me?

Varick looks over his shoulder at the two prints that have just arrived.

VARICK

With these and the bunch over yonder they're covered plenty.

SANDY

Alex, if you want to have everything ready for your meeting I'd better get back to work. Got some catching up to do.

COLUMBO

(to Sandy)

I surely appreciate your spending all this extra time.

SANDY

Don't mention it. Nice wedding.

And he returns to the lab, closing the door.

CONTINUED

58 CONTINUED

58

COLUMBO

Mr. Varick. When Mr. Hays hears about this he's going to be in your debt as much as I am.

VARICK

I hope it works out for you both.

COLUMBO

Yes, sir. Just one more thing.

VARICK

What's that?

COLUMBO

If you wouldn't mind marking everyone you recognize on these two new pictures?

VARICK

Then I can snooze for an hour?

COLUMBO

I hope so, sir.

Columbo holds up one of the pencils.

COLUMBO

These are very good for marking photos. Is it all right if I borrow this to take with me?

VARICK

You know what, Lieutenant?

COLUMBO

What?

On the counter top there's a jar stuffed with white marker pencils. Varick takes a bunch and hands them to Columbo.

VARICK

(with a smile)

Be my guest!

On Columbo's look ---

CUT TO

59 EXT. STREET - DAWN

59

The Peugeot drives by against the glow of a breaking day.

- 60 INT. PEUGEOT - DAWN 60
Columbo at the wheel, stifling a yawn. On the passenger seat, two bulging envelopes. In large, stylish print, the top one reads -- ALEX VARICK, PHOTOGRAPHER.
- 61 INT. KIDNAP ROOM 61
The lamp is off. Light from under the door shows Melissa asleep on the mattress, the bathrobe spread across her body. On the floor beside her, a tray containing the bottle of water, mug, two bowls, two smaller bottles, a fork. On top of one of the bowls, a sheet of white paper. Near the tray, a portable tape player. A door is heard closing. Footsteps down the hall. Then another door, opening, closing.
- 62 INT. ABDUCTOR'S OUTER HALLWAY - DAY 62
The Abductor locks a door. Tests that it's secure. He carries a short white coat. He bends, picks up a suitcase, crosses a hallway to another door, dilapidated, hanging askew, partially open, early morning light seen through the gap. A glimpse of overgrown shrubbery. The hallway is in a state of neglect, peeling paper on the walls, curling paint. He pushes the door open and goes out, returning it to where it was.
- 63 EXT. ALLEY - DAY 63
Early morning. Bailey, carrying a brown paper bag, leaves the kitchen, locks the door, and exits toward the street. Tilt up from him to the facade of the hotel. Zoom in to a window. Closed curtains.
- 64 INT. BRIDAL SUITE - DAY 64
Inside, the lamps are still on. Curtains closed, daylight around the edges.
Goodman, on the couch, is sifting through photos spread out beside him. Making a pile of those fully marked up. Retaining a few.
Andy's at the desk. More photos. He's marking a group shot. Looks at his watch.
Mulrooney lays a bunch of photos on the trolley, pours the dregs from one of the flasks into a cup, sniffs it, and loads it with sugar.

CONTINUED

64 CONTINUED

64

Columbo and Hays seated at the table. Scattered 8x10's. Hays is in his robe. Columbo has a magnifying glass and the marker pencil. The guest list is in evidence, Columbo's own stub of a regular pencil on top of it. Together they are studying a group shot.

Everyone is in need of sleep and a shave, but the sense of urgency remains in the air.

Hays points at three spots on the group shot.

HAYS

My sister, Martha Finch, and her son and daughter, Mike and Veronica.

65 INSERT - THE GROUP SHOT

65

An 11x14 enlargement. (NOTE: This still was taken by Varick up on a table at the reception. A high angle revealing most of the guests listening to Hays proposing the toast.)

Columbo's hand comes into shot with the white marker and circles the heads of the three people indicated by Hays. Then he runs a cross through the circles.

We see that the majority of heads are so marked -- with circles and crosses. A few are circled, but not crossed.

Columbo's hand pulls the four pages of the guest list into frame, turns to the second page, and with a regular pencil checks the three names Hays just gave him. We see that the majority of names are already checked. The guest list is taken out of frame, again revealing the group shot beneath.

Hays' finger indicates a couple standing together.

HAYS (V.O.)

Nathan Smyth, my accountant, and his wife, Rebecca. Melissa's godparents.

Columbo's marker pencil circles them. Crosses the circles. The guest list is brought in again. Columbo's hands turn to the last page, checks Mr. and Mrs. Smythe with the other pencil. The majority of names on this page also already checked.

66 INT. BRIDAL SUITE - DAY

66

Hays stands up. Columbo rises with him.

CONTINUED

66 CONTINUED

66

HAYS

That's the last of everyone my wife and I knew. I'd better get back. She may be awake. I left a note saying I'd gone to the exercise room. Another, shall we say, white lie, will be needed. She will be expecting Andy and Melissa to stop by before they were supposed to go to the airport. What time is it?

ANDY

Six-forty.

HAYS

(to Columbo)

Doesn't look too promising for a ransom call, does it?

COLUMBO

You never know, sir.

HAYS

(with a look at
Andy)

Indeed.

He picks up a bath towel from the back of his chair, goes to Andy, shakes him by the hand, and gives him an affectionate comforting squeeze around the shoulders.

HAYS

Andy, my boy. What can I say? My thoughts are with you. I'll be doing a little praying.

ANDY

Thank you, Martin.

Hays moves to the door, Columbo ahead of him, opening it. Hays shakes Columbo's hand.

HAYS

Good luck, Lieutenant. Call as soon as you have anything positive. Remember what I said earlier about Mrs. Hays.

COLUMBO

I will. I surely appreciate your help, Mr. Hays. And I hope your wife is feeling better.

CONTINUED

HAYS

Thank you.
(then to Goodman
and Mulrooney))
Good-bye, gentlemen.

With a murmured "Good-bye, sir" from each of them, Hays leaves. Columbo closes the door and goes to the table. He begins sorting the photos that are eliminated to one side.

MULROONEY

There might be a coupla cups of cold coffee left. Any customers?

GOODMAN

I'm saving myself for a lox and cream cheese, tomato and onion. I can almost taste it.

Columbo is all business. He looks to the window with daylight spilling along the curtains' edges.

COLUMBO

Let's have some daylight in here.

Mulrooney draws the curtains. Morning light streams in. Mulrooney turns off the lamps.

MULROONEY

(dry)
Good morning all.

COLUMBO

Andy, what have you got?

Andy brings across one group shot, and two other stills.

ANDY

Three faces unaccounted for.

Columbo takes the stills and examines them.

COLUMBO

One man. Two women. And you circled the singles like I said.

ANDY

Yep.

COLUMBO

Sergeant?

CONTINUED

66 CONTINUED (3)

66

Goodman now to the table. One still in his hand, which he gives to Columbo.

GOODMAN

Two unidentified. Men. Singles all circled.

COLUMBO

That's three men, two women.

Mulrooney comes across with a couple of stills.

MULROONEY

One man, one woman.

Columbo sifts through his own pile.

COLUMBO

That's four men, three women. Unidentified. I don't have any of those. I have five singles.

They watch as he gathers together the pertinent stills and paces about in deep thought, examining one after the other and summarizing the situation.

COLUMBO

Between us, and with the help of Mr. Hays and Varick, we've accounted for husbands and wives, other couples, singles, cops, other friends of Andy, Melissa's friends, magazine people, editors, designers, models, makeup and hair people. We're left with seven unidentified faces -- four men, three women. Who are they? That's why I wanted us to circle all the singles. Look at this ---

He's picked up the guest list from the table.

COLUMBO

Here -- Norman Aylesbury. It says beside the name -- single. Bring partner.

He turns another page.

COLUMBO

Here again.

67 INSERT - SECOND PAGE

67

All but five of the names are checked. Columbo runs his finger down the list. Stops at a name.

COLUMBO

See this, Brenda Mosley. Single.
Brings partner. There's one
single here we don't count --
that's Cindy.

68 INT. BRIDAL SUITE - DAY

68

MULROONEY

Yeah. The one that got away.

COLUMBO

That leaves five singles on this
page. All with the same remark.
Bring partner.

Columbo quickly examines the other two pages.

COLUMBO

Three on that. Six on this.
That's how many altogether?

MULROONEY

Sixteen.

ANDY

No. Fifteen. One plus five, plus
three, plus six. That's fifteen.

GOODMAN

Yeah. Fifteen.

MULROONEY

Right. Fifteen.

COLUMBO

We've got fifteen identified
singles who were invited to bring
partners. Some did. Some didn't.
There are seven unidentified
faces. Four men. Three women.
We don't know which singles
brought which partners. We'll
have to check them out. All
fifteen. Personally. Call 'em.
Go see 'em. Show 'em the photos
Have them identify the
unidentified. And we're going to
need more guys to do the footwork.

(MORE)

CONTINUED

68 CONTINUED

68

COLUMBO (Cont'd)

And we're going to need more copies of the group shots. Our photo lab can do that fast. It's time to get to the Squad Room. A little early for the Captain but I'm gonna call him. See if he can spare some fellas.

He goes over to the newly installed outline, starts to dial, gets to the fourth digit when the other regular phone rings. They all freeze in place. Stare at each other. Is this the call?

COLUMBO

Andy, it's you who has to take it.

Andy moves in, reaching for the phone.

COLUMBO

Hold it! Elliott, the tape!

Goodman is already there. Presses a button. The spools turn. The phone continues to shrill.

COLUMBO

Now.

Andy picks it up. The others wait tensely.

ANDY

This is Andy Parma.

(pause)

Hold on, please.

(hands phone to
Goodman)

It's for you.

Goodman takes it.

GOODMAN

Goodman here.

69 INT. MESSAGE ROOM - DAY

69

Although it's day, it's always night where Tubby Comfort is.

A sultry, low, pink light shines on him. He's lying face down on a massage table, the portable phone to his ear. Behind him, a harem girl is applying oil and working her wiles on the fold of his neck and shoulder.

70 INTERCUT

70

TUBBY

Sergeant dear, where's that two hundred? Brother Wagner is at the Haven Hotel. Room 317.

71 INT. BRIDAL SUITE - DAY

71

Goodman covers the mouthpiece.

GOODMAN

(to Columbo)
Tubby. He's traced Wagner.
(into the phone)
Are you sure it's him?

72 INT. MESSAGE ROOM - DAY

72

TUBBY

Jack, the night clerk, knows him. And let's not have any trouble for Jack. Like he doesn't want Albert to hear who fingered him. Jack's a nice clean boy. All he does is help me out now and again.
(wheezes)
I'm sure your discretion is as good as mine.

73 INT. BRIDAL SUITE - DAY

73

To one side, Columbo punching in numbers on the outline. Andy has an open suitcase nearby, pulling out his .38. Checking it. Then donning his jacket.

Mulrooney, getting into his.

GOODMAN

When did Wagner check in?

TUBBY

About midnight.

GOODMAN

Alone?

TUBBY

With a chickie.

74 ANGLE

74

Columbo on the outline.

COLUMBO

Sorry to bother you so early
Captain. We need some help, kinda
urgent.

75 INT. CAPTAIN'S BATHROOM - DAY

75

The Captain, in a T-shirt, at a mirror. Shaving with an
electric razor. Cordless phone to his ear.

CAPTAIN

Okay, Columbo. What's the
problem?

76 INT. BRIDAL SUITE - DAY

76

GOODMAN

Was the girl ambulatory?

77 INT. MASSAGE ROOM - DAY

77

TUBBY

(taking time for
a wheeze of
laughter)

So sorry, Sergeant. I don't have
my dictionary handy.

GOODMAN

Dammit. Did she walk in or did
he carry her?

TUBBY

Why would he carry her? On the
other hand, it might have been a
good idea. Jack says she was
spaced out. Like on something.

GOODMAN

Anything else I should know?

78 INT. BRIDAL SUITE - DAY

78

COLUMBO

Three guys could do it. I'd sure
appreciate it if you feel you
could spare them.

79 INT. CAPTAIN'S BATHROOM - DAY

79

The Captain. Not pleased.

CAPTAIN

I should have been told about this earlier.

COLUMBO

Believe me. There was no time, Captain. We've never stopped since it happened. I didn't want to bother you until we had something positive.

80 INT. MESSAGE ROOM - DAY

80

The harem lady has moved further down toward Tubby's waist. He likes it. Squirms in ecstasy.

TUBBY

Sweetheart. That's a nice delicate spot. More, sweetheart, more.

GOODMAN

What's that you said, sweetheart?

TUBBY

Not you, darling. My little angel is tending to my needs.

81 INT. BRIDAL SUITE - DAY

81

GOODMAN

I'll bet. I said, is there anything else I should know?

TUBBY

Yes, darling. Jack said he saw a nasty weapon in Albert's belt as he helped the chickie up the stairs. Don't forget my wages.

82 ANGLE

82

Columbo signals Mulrooney to him.

COLUMBO

Right, Captain. I'll send Mulrooney over with the photos. He'll have them copied. And he'll tell the guys what's needed. I sure appreciate this.

83 INT. CAPTAIN'S BATHROOM - DAY

83

CAPTAIN

How long?

COLUMBO

He'll be at the Squad Room in
twenty, twenty-five minutes.

CAPTAIN

So will I. Tell him I'll expect
a full report.

84 INT. BRIDAL SUITE - DAY

84

COLUMBO

You'll have it, Captain. Thanks
a million.

He hangs up. Goes to the table. Collects the pertinent
photos together.

GOODMAN

(on phone)

Stop griping, Tubby. You know I
always deliver. No expense
spared. Bye-bye, sweetheart.

He hangs up.

COLUMBO

(to Goodman)

Where's Wagner?

GOODMAN

Haven Hotel. Room 317.

Columbo hands the photos, the guest list, and a couple of
marker pencils to Mulrooney. Andy is already at the door,
raring to go.

COLUMBO

(to Mulrooney)

You heard what I said to the
Captain?

MULROONEY

Sure did, Lieutenant. I'm on my
way.

COLUMBO

Let's go.

And he turns to the door.

85 INT. KIDNAP ROOM - DAY

85

Melissa waking. Realizing where she is, she listens. Silence. She feels the bathrobe covering her, throws it aside, gets up, and switches on the lamp. Sees the tray. Picks up the sheet of paper and reads what's on it.

86 INSERT - THE PAPER

86

The message is written in bold print: She speaks it as she reads:

GOOD MORNING MY LOVE.
I LEFT SOME DIET (HA! HA!) FOOD FOR MY
LOVELY MODEL.
OIL AND VINEGAR TO TASTE.
THE TAPE IS ONE OF MY FAVORITES!
SEE YOU AFTER WORK. SOON, LOVE, SOON.

87 INT. KIDNAP ROOM - DAY

87

MELISSA
(talking to
herself)

So you've gone to work, have you?
Good boy.

She goes to the door. Tries it. It doesn't budge. She inspects the lock. Sees it's a key-operated deadbolt. Can't be opened from either side without a key. She gives the door a thump with her clenched fist. Yells ---

MELISSA
Andy, where are you? Where are
all those cops I married into?

She collects herself.

MELISSA
Don't be silly, Melissa. Think.

She looks around. Inspects the tray -- a bowl of fruit salad. A bowl of chopped tomatoes, parsley, red cabbage. A bottle of oil. A bottle of vinegar. Fork. Napkin. Mug. The bottle of water. She takes a drink from it. Looks at the tape player. Switches it on. A brass band plays lively marching music. Many tubas.

MELISSA
So that's your favorite music, is
it?

She looks across at the black window, picks up the fork and heads for it.

CONTINUED

87 CONTINUED

87

MELISSA

Let's see if you were telling the truth about the window.

She starts scratching away at the black paint. The music plays.

88 EXT. STREET - DAY

88

Goodman's car pulling into the curb. Andy is first out, coming from the far side almost on the run, intercepted by Columbo exiting the near side, placing a restraining hand on Andy's arm. Goodman out from the driver's door. They proceed purposefully across the sidewalk and enter The Haven Hotel.

Camera tilts up past the fading sign to the third floor level. In its heyday, the place had some character, but now a neglected relic, haven to cockroaches and bed bugs.

89 INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR - DAY

89

Showing the length of it. Columbo, followed by Andy and Goodman appear from the head of a stairway and proceed quietly past doors, Columbo looking for the room. He arrives at 317. The sound of music within.

90 INT. BEDROOM - DAY

90

The door is kicked violently open by Andy and Goodman who burst into the room, guns at the ready, yelling ---

ANDY AND GOODMAN

Freeze! Police!

Whip pan to the bed, where Albert Wagner lies in his shorts, covers thrown back, a gun in his hand. It's a revolver, the cylinder open, a box of shells on the bed beside him. He was in the act of loading one of them. On the bedside table, a cheap portable radio plays bad music. Beside it, a couple of beer cans. His clothes are thrown haphazard on a chair.

Wagner in shock. Andy is upon him in a flash, his gun an inch from Wagner's eyes.

ANDY

Don't move, you scum!

CONTINUED

90 CONTINUED

90

Goodman's not far behind. He takes the revolver out of Wagner's hands. Andy's long frustration has reached dangerous proportions.

ANDY
Where's my wife?

WAGNER
I'm gonna get you, you sonvabitch!

ANDY
Talk, or you're dead meat. Where is she?

We saw nothing of Columbo in the suddenness of the bust, the action being concentrated on the bed area. As Andy's gun hand quivers and Wagner looks in danger of having his brains blown out, we hear a yell from Columbo.

COLUMBO (V.O.)
Hold it Andy!
(then quieter)
This way, miss.

Andy looks across to the half-open bathroom door. Columbo comes out with a pathetic GIRL of about twenty-five. She's wearing an oversized cheap floral shirt, unbuttoned, clutched with one hand around her nakedness, dazed eyes in another world, sniffing, dabbing at her nose with tissue paper. Columbo carries a soap dish containing white powder, half a straw, and a small plastic bag with more of the white powder.

COLUMBO
We're the police, miss. What's your name?

THE GIRL
Sam.

COLUMBO
Sam?

SAM
Samantha.

COLUMBO
How long have you know this man, Samantha?

SAM
Last night. Just last night.

CONTINUED

COLUMBO
Where did you meet him?

SAM
Bar. In a bar.

COLUMBO
What time, miss?

SAM
Dunno.

COLUMBO
Nine, ten, eleven?

SAM
The ball game was on TV. I like watching Darryl Strawberry. Do you like him?

COLUMBO
Yes, I do. Were you with this man all evening?

SAM
He wanted -- you know -- he had some of the stuff. I needed a fix real bad.

WAGNER
(yelling)
Shut your trap!

ANDY
Shut yours!

WAGNER
Bitch!

Goodman switches off the radio.

COLUMBO
He was with you all the time?

SAM
Yes.

COLUMBO
What were you doing before you came here?

SAM
Drinking beer.

CONTINUED

90 CONTINUED (3)

90

COLUMBO
(holding up the
plastic bag)
Did he give you this?

SAM
Yes. Can I have it?

Columbo turns to Andy and Goodman.

COLUMBO
Book him.

91 INT. KIDNAP ROOM - DAY

91

Melissa has scraped most of the black paint from one of the glass blocks. Also some from the one adjacent to it. Greenish daylight shines through. She works with the fork on the plaster between them. Only a little of it has come away. It's a hopeless task, and she knows it. She steps back and wipes her brow. The brass band tape marches on. Another number -- trumpet and kettle drum. She listens to it a moment.

MELISSA
I'm beginning to like that stuff.
You're cracking, Melissa!

She inspects the door again. This time the hinges. The door opens into the room. Two hinges held in place by the usual pins. Both hinges are partially rusted. She tries to move the bottom pin with a flange of the fork. It won't budge. She looks around. Sees the hanger that held the bathrobe suspended from the shade support on the lamp. The hanger is wooden with a metal screw-in hook.

She unscrews the hook, and crouches on her knees. With the point of the hook she attempts to push up the bottom of the lower hinge pin, while at the same time prying with the fork at the lip of it. It won't budge. She sits back, staring at it.

MELISSA
Help me, God. Why didn't he oil
it? Why did he let it rust?

She gets up, takes a drink of water. As she replaces the bottle, she suddenly looks at the tray. Almost reverently she picks up the vinegar.

CONTINUED

91 CONTINUED

91

MELISSA

Rust. Vinegar kills rust.
Vinegar does this. Vinegar does
that. Thank you Mother dear for
the lecture! Thank you, God!

Now excited, she pours some of the vinegar onto both
hinges, chattering to herself:

MELISSA

First the vinegar. Let it soak,
Melissa! Don't rush, give it
time. Then the oil. Don't say
I have to thank you too, lover
boy, for leaving them here!

The trumpet and kettle drum have a hearty tempo on the
tape.

92 INT. SQUAD ROOM - DAY

92

The usual activity. Phones ring. Calls are dealt with.
Some cops work at desks. Others drift in and out going
about their business. A couple of typewriters click away.
Two witness statements being taken. Computers at work.
A proportion of the cops in uniform.

Columbo at a desk, sifting through group shots. He has a
magnifying glass and the marker pencil. Mulrooney stands
behind him, mug of coffee in his hand. There's a jug of
it on the desk. Other mugs. A plate of Danish. Another
of sandwiches. Andy pours himself a coffee and goes round
to join Mulrooney.

Goodman opposite Columbo, wolfing his lox and cream cheese.
Three young uniformed cops, nearby, snacking, drinking
coffee. Call 'em TOM, DICK and HARRY. The Captain is
seated slightly apart, his feet up on a chair, smoking
cigar, watching.

Columbo, Andy, Goodman and Mulrooney haven't slept or
shaved, and it shows.

MULROONEY

Yeah. With the help of these
three guys.

(indicating Tom,
Dick and Harry)

Some of the singles weren't too
happy. Sleeping off the party.

CONTINUED

92 CONTINUED

92

CAPTAIN

This isn't a holiday camp. How about you three get back to your desks.

Tom, Dick and Harry move with alacrity.

COLUMBO

(calling after them)

Thanks, fellas.

(then to

Mulrooney)

What's the breakdown?

MULROONEY

I've marked them on the guest list.

Columbo flips through it.

MULROONEY

Nine went without a partner. Six took partners with them.

COLUMBO

(referring to the guest list)

Everyone's accounted for on here.

(turning his attention to the photos again)

All the singles circled and crossed. The six identified partners circled and crossed. That accounts for six of the seven unknowns. And here's the one that's left.

93 INSERT - AN 11 X 14

93

covered with crossed circles. One face unmarked.

CHURCH STILL #1 -- Hays with Melissa on his arm coming down the aisle on their way to the altar. The unmarked face is in the rear pew. Alone. His left hand up, partially covering his face. NOT the ring hand.)

Columbo's marker pencil comes in and circles the head. Another photo is placed on top of the first. 11x14.

CONTINUED

93 CONTINUED

93

CHURCH STILL #2 -- A high shot taken from what would be the altar steps showing Andy placing the ring on Melissa's finger -- only one unmarked face -- the guy in the rear pew, clearly seen. Columbo circles. Another photo brought into frame. 11x14.

CHURCH STILL #3 -- Shot from the rear of the church as the bride and groom walk toward the exit, smiling faces turned looking after them. Again, only one unmarked -- the guy in the rear pew, not smiling, large foreground, three quarter view. He appears to be putting on sunglasses. Columbo circles.

Columbo speaks over this as he proceeds through the photos, marking.

COLUMBO (V.O.)
Thirty to thirty-five. Blond.
Good looking. Tall about 180
pounds.

94 INT. SQUAD ROOM - DAY

94

Goodman, Andy and Mulrooney are now all clustered behind Columbo, peering over his shoulder, fascinated by the quarry. Columbo picks up the magnifying glass.

COLUMBO
Let's take a closer look.

He peers through the glass.

95 INSERT THROUGH THE MAGNIFIER

95

STILL #2. The guy's head enlarged.

COLUMBO (V.O.)
Yeah. He's good looking all
right.

96 INSERT - STILL #3

96

is brought in under the magnifier -- three quarter backview.

COLUMBO (V.O.)
Seems like he's putting on the
sunglasses ready to sneak outa
there.

97 INT. SQUAD ROOM - DAY

97

The Captain gets up and moves over.

CAPTAIN

Gimme.

Columbo hands him the three stills and the glass. The Captain examines them.

CAPTAIN

No joy on the fingerprints?

GOODMAN

Half a dozen different sets on the door. All kinds on the fire exit area. Nothing in criminal records, Captain.

CAPTAIN

I don't know what you're waiting for, Columbo. We got one clear shot here. Blow it up. Copy it. Rush it to every TV station in town. Every newspaper. If you want to find the guy, that's the way to get moving on it.

Columbo thoughtfully rises to pour himself a coffee. Takes a Danish.

ANDY

I got some interest in this. Let me look at this guy close.

The Captain hands over the #2 still and the glass, Andy peers through it.

ANDY

Don't look good-looking to me!

He returns the two items.

CAPTAIN

(some sympathy
showing)

Me neither.

ANDY

We got no ransom call. Nothing came through here on the hookup with the hotel phone. Forget ransom. I know what you guys have been thinking. From the start. But you wouldn't say it to me.

(MORE)

CONTINUED

ANDY (Cont'd)

Let's not kid ourselves any longer. Weirdo! Right? Suppose this guy's a freak and sees himself on TV. What might that make him do, Captain?

CAPTAIN

I don't like saying this to you, Andy. But what's he gonna do that he wouldn't do anyway?

COLUMBO

It might make him do it quicker. There's another thing, Captain. Mrs. Hays, Melissa's mother, is a sick woman. She knows nothing about it yet. I promised Mr. Hays not to do it this way.

CAPTAIN

What else is there?

COLUMBO

What time is it?

ANDY

Six minutes past nine.

COLUMBO

We couldn't do it before, but we can do it now. They'll be open now.

CAPTAIN

What the heck are you talking about? Who'll be open?

COLUMBO

Car dealers. There's one witness you don't know about, Captain.

CAPTAIN

All you ever tell me is stuff I don't know about.

COLUMBO

Sorry, Captain. We were following up other things. I'd put it at the back of my mind until we could do something about it. This guy, Bailey. Saw a white van at the

(MORE)

CONTINUED

COLUMBO (Cont'd)
rear of the hotel by the fire exit about the time it happened. All he says he saw is a white van but people sometimes see more than they think they saw. You know that better than anyone, Captain.

CAPTAIN
Compliments kill me, Columbo.

COLUMBO
Maybe if we jog his memory he'd come up with something more specific. Let me have these three extra guys and we'll hit every dealer in town. Get brochures of every type of van. Show them to Bailey. We might get lucky.

CAPTAIN
You want these three guys again?

COLUMBO
That is, if you can spare them.

CAPTAIN
(with a look to Andy)
Have 'em as long as you need 'em.

COLUMBO
What's that, Captain?

CAPTAIN
You got 'em.
(calls over)
You three. You're with Lieutenant Columbo.
(holds up one photo)
I'll get a blowup of this joker anyway, spread copies to all our guys.

A bit self-conscious at letting his heart show for a moment, he throws the other two photos on the desk.

CAPTAIN
Whole damn police force is nearly at a standstill!

He heads for his office.

CONTINUED

97 CONTINUED (3)

97

COLUMBO
(calling after
him)

Thanks a million, Captain! Let's
go fellas.

Leading the way, he crosses to the door -- Andy, Goodman, Mulrooney and the three guys in a pack behind him. They go out, door closing behind them. Then it reopens, and Columbo comes back in.

He crosses to the desk, sifts through the photos as though he's lost something. It seems he can't find what he's looking for, and moves toward the door again.

Halfway there, he has a thought, turns back once more, goes to the desk, picks up the guest list, stuffs it in a pocket, and finally exits.

98 EXT. POLICE BUILDING - DAY

98

A sign reads POLICE PARKING ONLY. - A variety of vehicles at rest. Two black and whites pulling in. One leaving. Two uniformed cops with a handcuffed arrest on their way to book him. A few other cops moving to and from the building.

Columbo comes jogging out the front door, raincoat flapping, to where Goodman's unmarked car with Andy and Mulrooney in the backseat is pulling up in expectation of his arrival. Behind it, also on the move, a black and white with Tom, Dick and Harry aboard. Goodman's car barely stops as Columbo scrambles into the front seat calling out ---

COLUMBO
Sorry, fellas.

Both cars pull out fast.

99 EXT. STREET - DAY

99

The cars threading through traffic.

100 INT. GOODMAN'S CAR - DAY

100

Columbo f.g. in the front seat, Andy and Mulrooney seen behind. Andy's talking. It's a nervous kind of talk as he tries to keep himself in focus.

CONTINUED

100 CONTINUED

100

ANDY

Santa Monica Boulevard, Sarge.
There's a stack of manufacturers.
Nothing else for blocks.

MULROONEY

Better than Washington Boulevard?

ANDY

Yeah. They're all closer
together.

MULROONEY

How about Ventura?

ANDY

Santa Monica's better. I live
around there. Bought my Mustang
from one of the used car dealers
on that street. They're all
there. Chrysler, Chevrolet,
Dodge, Ford, Nissan, Toyota. You
name it.

Columbo appears lost in thought. Not paying attention.

101 EXT. STREET - DAY

101

The cars stop at a red light. The front passenger door of
Goodman's car opens and Columbo gets out.

GOODMAN

What's up, Lieutenant?

COLUMBO

I just remembered something. You
fellas carry on. I know where to
find you.

Before they have a chance to say anything else, he closes
the door and nips across the street, reaching the sidewalk
as the lights change. He turns and waves as the cars
continue on their way. Then he searches his pockets, takes
out the crumpled guest list, goes through a couple of
pages, muttering to himself, and finds what he wants.
Next, he pulls out his badge, and waves it aloft as he
steps into the street.

COLUMBO

Taxi!

102 INT. KIDNAP ROOM - DAY

102

Melissa, her hair disheveled, on her knees. The oil and vinegar, the napkin, the water, on the floor beside her.

She works intensely on the lower hinge with fork and hook. It appears to move slightly. Another try. It comes up. A fraction. She applies more oil, wipes her hands on the napkin, and goes at it again.

MELISSA

Come on, baby. Come on!

103 INT. OFFICE COMPLEX - DAY

103

A stylish outer office with doors leading off it. Framed fashion sketches and magazine covers on the walls. Behind a SECRETARY at a desk -- the logo of FEMININE FLAIR. The Secretary, herself, is dressed and made up with considerable flair. Plus, she's adamant.

SECRETARY

Absolutely not, sir. Miss Hacker and Mr. Varick are in conclave.

Revealing Columbo.

COLUMBO

Conclave, ma'am?

SECRETARY

Miss Hacker has a deadline to meet and has left strict instructions not to be disturbed under any circumstances.

COLUMBO

Mr. Varick knows me. Just tell him I'm here.

SECRETARY

She said NOT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES!

Columbo fishes out his ID. Shows it.

COLUMBO

This is an urgent circumstance.

SECRETARY

(sarcastic)

You're not going to arrest either of them, are you?

CONTINUED

103 CONTINUED

103

COLUMBO

You must be joking, ma'am.

SECRETARY

Of course. Come back this afternoon.

Columbo moves over to the doors.

COLUMBO

Which door is it, ma'am? You don't want me to try them all, do you?

Then he sees one with a discreet nameplate -- CAROLINE HACKER. Before she can do a thing, he's knocked and gone through.

104 INT. HACKER'S OFFICE - DAY

104

Ultra stylish. A large desk. Display tables. On one wall, a huge layout board. Photos of the wedding tacked to the board. Photos are on the desk. On the tables. On the floor. Varick is on his knees, sorting a pile. It looks as though he brought the entire five hundred shots with him. As the door opens, Caroline turns from examining the layout board. She's a handsome lady in her forties, a powerhouse of an editor.

Columbo entering, stepping carefully between the strewn photos, dripping charm. He heads straight for Caroline and takes her hand in both of his. Even she is nonplussed.

COLUMBO

Miss Caroline Hacker!

(makes it sound
like royalty)

Do forgive me for coming unannounced. Alex told me all about you. Said you're the best. Boy, look at this layout. I'm the groom's uncle, and I can tell you that Melissa will be over the moon when she sees what you're doing for her. Good morning, Alex, how are you after our night together?

CAROLINE

(smiling in
spite of
herself)

Alex, you know this bundle of fun?

CONTINUED

Alex's mouth is slightly agape at the suddenness of it all. Then he chuckles.

VARICK

Alex is just fine, Lieutenant. Caroline, you want someone to break into Fort Knox, Lieutenant Columbo's your man. You wouldn't guess it, but he's a police detective. Melissa's very fond of him.

CAROLINE

Fascinating.

(suddenly
businesslike)

I'm surprised you got past my secretary. She's very good. What can I do for you? Uncle or not, please make it quick.

COLUMBO

Yes, ma'am. We wouldn't want to worry Melissa on her honeymoon, would we?

CAROLINE

I should certainly hope not. She's a delightful girl. The most cooperative I've ever worked with.

COLUMBO

She is lovely ma'am. And to avoid worrying her, there's something I need from Mist-er-Alex. Real quick. A little matter concerning her father. He'll tell you about it later when you've met your deadline.

CAROLINE

I'm consumed by curiosity. Especially about the night you spent together!

VARICK

(to Columbo)

Did we miss something?

COLUMBO

I suddenly remembered I saw none of the photos you took in the lobby. Maybe I missed something.

CONTINUED

104 CONTINUED (2)

104

Alex gets up, goes to the desk.

VARICK

Oh yes. The one of me and
Melissa. And a few others. I
didn't remember myself. Not 'til
I couldn't find me anywhere. Then
I realized it was on part of a
roll still in the camera. Here
they are. I can't imagine what
use they'd be to you.

Alex hands Columbo half-a-dozen photos. Columbo quickly
scans them. Retains two. Hands back the others. Alex and
Caroline look over his shoulder. Intrigued.

CAROLINE

I LOVE that one of Melissa and
Alex. Simply divine. Definitely
going in. The Discovery and the
Discoverer.

COLUMBO

Do either of you know this man?

He points.

105 INSERT - THE STILL

105

Andy took of Alex and Melissa. Behind them the Abductor
can clearly be seen crossing the lobby.

VARICK (V.O.)

Never seen him before.

CAROLINE (V.O.)

Quite photogenic. But I've no
idea who he is.

106 INT. HACKER'S OFFICE - DAY

106

Columbo returns that photo to Varick. He now retains one
only.

COLUMBO

May I borrow a magnifying glass?

Varick takes one from the desk. Hands it over. Columbo
peers through it intently at the picture.

CONTINUED

COLUMBO

(still peering)

Let me ask you. Do you think I could borrow this picture for a couple of hours?

The two others glance over his shoulder again.

VARICK

Not one of my best. Andy looks good, but you can barely see anything of Melissa's face. You can keep it. Don't you agree, Caroline?

CAROLINE

That's a discard if ever I saw one.

Columbo hands back the magnifier, shakes Caroline by the hand.

COLUMBO

Miss Hacker. It's been a pleasure. I really appreciate you giving me the time. I'll sure buy this issue the minute it hits the stands. Two copies. One for me. One for my wife. She's gonna love it.

He shakes Varick's hand.

COLUMBO

Thanks.

(with a wink)

Alex, I owe you another.

He's on his way to the door.

VARICK

Good luck.

CAROLINE

Come back when I'm not so pressed. We'll talk about Fort Knox.

COLUMBO

Together we'll crack it, ma'am.

With a smile and a wave, he's gone.

- 107 EXT. SANTA MONICA BLVD. - DAY - MONTAGE 107
- a) TOM, one of the uniformed cops, with brochures, comes out of a FORD showroom. He turns right up the street in the direction of a CHEVROLET sign.
- b) Goodman, also with brochures, enters a DODGE showroom.
- c) Andy, in a showroom, being handed a selection of brochures by a Sales Manager.
- 108 INT. KIDNAP ROOM - DAY 108
- Melissa, struggling with the lower hinge pin. It comes out. With building excitement, she stretches her muscles and goes to work on the other one.
- 109 EXT. SANTA MONICA BLVD. - DAY 109
- Harry, with brochures, crossing the street from KRAMER MOTORS to the parked black and white f.g. He gets in the driver's door as Tom and Dick hurry along the near side of the street with their brochures and pile in. The black and white takes off.
- 110 INT. GOODMAN'S CAR - DAY - TRAVELING 110
- Shooting past Goodman and Andy in the front seat, seeing Mulrooney running on the sidewalk toward them with a bunch of brochures.
- 111 EXT. SANTA MONICA BLVD. - DAY 111
- Goodman's car stops. Mulrooney gets in. It takes off.
- 112 INT. POLICE PHOTO LAB DARKROOM 112
- Columbo and a TECHNICIAN are seen in the glow of a red light as they stand over a wash tray. The Technician juggles a 10x8 print.
- 113 INSERT - THE WASH TRAY 113
- as the image emerges of a blowup of part of a hand, featuring a ring on the third finger.
- TECHNICIAN (V.O.)
That's as good as we're going to get.

114 INT. POLICE PHOTO LAB - DARKROOM 114

COLUMBO
Can we see it under the magnifier?

TECHNICIAN
Moving right along, Lieutenant.
Moving right along.

He switches on the regular light. While he extracts the dripping print, blots it, and puts it under a magnifier, Columbo looks at the photo he got from Varick.

115 INSERT - THE STILL 115

We see a mid-shot of Andy and Melissa moving toward the closed elevator doors, Andy looking back over his shoulder, laughing. Melissa, also laughing, but we see little of her face. Beyond them, to one side of the doors, the Abductor, mostly turned away, but his hand clearly seen pressing the elevator call button. On the hand, the ring area as in the blowup, circled in marker pencil.

COLUMBO (V.O.)
How does it look?

116 INT. POLICE PHOTO LAB - DARKROOM 116

The Technician peering through the magnifier.

TECHNICIAN
Take a peek.

He moves over, and Columbo gets his eye to the piece.

117 INSERT - UNDER THE MAGNIFIER 117

A college ring, huge. The lettering on it is hazy, but readable.

COLUMBO (V.O.)
R.A.M.S.E.Y. The guy went to
Ramsey College.

118 INT. POLICE PHOTO LAB - DARKROOM 118

COLUMBO
(looking around)
Where's the phone?

119 INT. GOODMAN'S CAR - DAY - TRAVELING 119

Goodman driving. Andy beside him. Mulrooney in back looking at brochures. The phone rings. Goodman picks up.

GOODMAN

Goodman.

(beat)

Yeah, Lieutenant. We got 'em.

All kinds. On our way back.

(beat)

Ramsey College? Sure I know it.

Out near Pomona.

120 INT. KIDNAP ROOM - DAY 120

Melissa working furiously on the second hinge. The pin moves up a little.

121 EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS - DAY 121

An area near the front entrance. Andy and Goodman move quickly through some strolling students. Andy carries a large buff envelope. Pan with them as they enter the doors under a sign reading -- RAMSEY.

122 EXT. STREET - DAY 122

The Peugeot driving by.

123 INT. PEUGEOT - DAY 123

Columbo at the wheel. Eating a sandwich. On the seat beside him, a huge pile of brochures. Wedged between them and the back of the seat, a Styrofoam cup with a lid on it. Columbo places the remainder of his sandwich on top of the brochures and takes the cup.

124 INT. GROUND FLOOR COLLEGE OFFICE - DAY 124

The college PRESIDENT stands behind a desk. Behind the desk, a window. Through the window can be seen normal campus activity. Andy and Goodman stand on the other side of the desk. The DEAN is studying a photo of the Abductor.

PRESIDENT

If he was here, it was certainly before my time, Sergeant. But then, my tenure didn't commence until a couple of years ago.

(MORE)

CONTINUED

PRESIDENT (Cont'd)

There was a sort of clean sweep about then. Many of the faculty are new. By the look of him, it must have been a while ago.

GOODMAN

If he was at this college, there has to be a record of him somewhere.

PRESIDENT

Quite. But the evidence of a college ring is not much to go on. There are thousands of them in existence. Without a name, I don't see how I can help.

ANDY

Yearbooks. If he was here, there might be a photo in a yearbook.

PRESIDENT

Possibly.

(looking closely
at them)

I get the feeling this is an urgent matter.

GOODMAN

We have reason to believe he abducted this officer's wife.

Beat. The President looks at Andy.

PRESIDENT

The College Library. That's where you'll find the yearbooks.

A surprisingly well-kept bungalow. Nice display of flowers in the front yard. Columbo out of the Peugeot, a pile of brochures under one arm. On the car roof, another pile. He closes the door, hefts the second pile and heads up the pathway, surprised at the appearance of the place. He takes a step back and looks again at the number on the letter box.

126 EXT. BAILEY'S FRONT DOOR

126

A bench beside it. Columbo coming up to the door. There's no bell. Just knocker. He can't reach it with the hindrance of the brochures. He places the right hand bundle on the bench. Then knocks. No reply. Knocks louder. Nothing. Columbo steps back, looks around, and canters to the side of the house, arriving at a window with closed curtains. Knocks on that.

127 INT. BAILEY'S BEDROOM - DAY

127

Bailey already half out of bed, cursing to himself. Daylight spills from behind the curtains. He's wearing a nice, long clean nightshirt. The bedroom's clean and tidy too. More knocking. Bailey gets his glasses from a bedside table, puts them on.

BAILEY

Who the blazes is it? Man can't get no damn rest!

He crosses to the window, and pulls the curtains, revealing Columbo. Columbo signals for him to open the window. Bailey yanks up the bottom half.

BAILEY

What in heck are you doin' here?

COLUMBO

Nice house, Bill.

BAILEY

Don't give me none of that bull. It's my sister's place. Good thing she ain't here. She'da chewed your nuts for tryin' to get at me. I'm workin' tonight.

COLUMBO

Bill, you know I said you could have been a detective? Now's your chance. How would you like to save a life?

Bailey peers owlshly at him through his thick glasses.

128 INT. KIDNAP ROOM - DAY

128

The top hinge pin comes away in Melissa's hand. The activity has kept her mind occupied. Now she's very nervous.

CONTINUED

128 CONTINUED

128

She turns off the tape. Dead silence. She places the pin aside. Tries pulling on the door knob. Of course, the door doesn't budge. Says "stupid" to herself. She steps back. Sees the gap at the bottom. Gets on her knees. The gap is big enough to take her fingers. She puts them through under the hinge side, and starts to tug. The door moves slightly. She tugs harder.

129 INSERT - THE UPPER HINGE

129

moving slightly. Moving more. Suddenly the door comes away a few inches from the frame.

130 INT. KIDNAP ROOM - DAY

130

She rises. The door is loose on the hinge side. She grabs it and tugs it away from the lock. She staggers back as it comes free. Light spills on her from the hall. She lays the door to one side of the frame and steps out.

131 INT. HALLWAY - DAY

131

Utterly bare white walls. A strong overhead light. Another, dimmer, ceiling light over the front door. No furniture. The floor -- bare boards. Melissa goes quickly to the front door, yanks on the handle. No hope. It's a cheap door, but with expensive locks. One of them a similar deadbolt to the one in "her room." It's not the time to work on more hinges. She moves to another door halfway down the hall, cautiously opens it and peers into the darkness. Feels for a light switch. Turns it on. Revealing ---

132 INT. KITCHEN - DAY

132

Clinically neat and tidy. On the far wall, a window frame. She goes to that. No hope. It's had the same treatment as the one in the Kidnap Room. Painted black over what looks like glass blocks.

133 INT. HALLWAY - DAY

133

Melissa emerges from the kitchen. Goes to the far end of the hall. To another door. Puts her ear to it. Carefully opens it onto more darkness. Again, feels for a switch. Finds it, and clicks it on. Instantly there's the sound of the wedding march. She gasps, and stares in frightened wonder ---

134 INT. SHRINE ROOM - DAY

134

On one wall, dead white, she sees huge projected images of herself, one clicking in after another. Modeling dresses, underwear, bikinis. Commercial stills of her pitching cosmetics, hair treatments. Huge glamorous heads. Shots of magazine covers. There's a proponderance of the scantily clad. Opposite the wall, a king-sized bed, carefully made. Beside the bed, on a tailor's dummy, a beautiful white wedding dress. On the faceless dummy's head, a tiara. The wedding march plays on.

On a bedside table, a dim shaded lamp. On the other bedside table, a revolving circular automatic slide projector, clicking in one slide after another. Beside it, a tape machine with a built-in speaker, the tape turning.

Melissa looks desperately at the rest of the room. She can hardly believe it -- in the far wall, a window, painted black, but over what appears to be regular glass. She rushes to it, yanks at the catch. It opens. She starts to pull up the lower half. It gives two inches. But no more. She puts all her strength into it. No further movement. Suddenly the wedding march stops, and she hears ---

ABDUCTOR (V.O.)

Silly girl! You've spoilt everything!

She swings around. The Abductor stands with his finger on the tape machine button. He holds out his right hand. The scalpel gleams. He walks toward her. She backs into a corner.

ABDUCTOR

That window is wedged so that it opens only a few inches. We have to have some ventilation in this place, don't we, my love?

He is beside her, scalpel held near her face.

ABDUCTOR

You seem surprised to see me. I had a slight problem at my work, and they let me go early. Some people don't appreciate me as they should. But you do, don't you? Your makeup's a mess. Look at your hands. Filthy. What a shame. Yes, you've spoilt everything. We'll have to bring the ceremony forward. And we'll have to freshen you up.

(MORE)

CONTINUED

134 CONTINUED

134

ABDUCTOR (Cont'd)

You must look your best. As a special treat you'll have the pleasure of watching me change my clothes. We must both look our very best for the wedding.

MELISSA

(she can hardly speak)

What wedding?

ABDUCTOR

Ours.

MELISSA

I'm already married.

ABDUCTOR

Not really. You'll only be truly married when you're married to me, my love.

135 INT. COLLEGE LIBRARY - DAY

135

Looking as it should. A few students making use of the place. Andy and Goodman side by side at a table. Piles of yearbooks stacked to one side. One book in front of each. The photo between them. They turn the pages quickly. Urgently. Goodman tries to stifle a yawn. Andy snaps his book shut, puts it on the discard pile. Opens another.

136 INT. BAILEY KITCHEN - DAY

136

Bailey seated at the kitchen table, yawning. He's going to yawn more. A mug of coffee in his hand. He's not finding it easy to stay awake. Columbo has to give him a little nudge. Two piles of brochures, one on his left, the other on his right. Columbo, standing behind him, taking single brochures from one pile, letting Bailey have a look. After rejection, transferring it to the other pile.

COLUMBO

Anything like this?

BAILEY

Naw. It weren't that. That's a pickup with a little camper on it. Like my sister's boy has. Know it anywhere.

CONTINUED

136 CONTINUED

136

COLUMBO
(another
brochure)
How about this minibus?

BAILEY
It wasn't any kind o' bus at all.
It didn't have all them winders.

COLUMBO
Did it have any windows?

BAILEY
Must have. How could the driver
see out without 'em? When are you
gonna tell me about this murder?

COLUMBO
I hope it's not that, Bill.
You're helping me to stop it.

BAILEY
You sure you're gonna tell me?

COLUMBO
Soon as I know all about it, I
give you my word I'll come over
here and tell you the works.
Okay?

(another
brochure)
How about this?

137 INT. COLLEGE LIBRARY - DAY

137

Andy discards a book.

ANDY
1980 was not a good year. '81
speak to me!

He picks up another book, starts on it.

GOODMAN
Suppose the guy was never here at
all? Suppose he stole the ring?

Goodman closes his book, picks up another.

ANDY
Don't think those thoughts.

CONTINUED

137 CONTINUED

137

GOODMAN

This is '82. Unless the guy was the biggest dummy of all time, he couldn't have been here after that.

Goodman flipping pages. Andy turns back on a page he's just flipped. Grabs the photo.

ANDY

Look at this. Without the long hair.

138 INSERT - A PAGE OF THE YEARBOOK

138

The photo beside a smaller photo in the book. It's the Abductor. Younger. Shoulder-length hair. Smiling. Some joker has sketched a hospital gown onto him, drawn a stethoscope around his neck. A dripping scalpel in his hand. There's a caption underneath.

GOODMAN (V.O.)

That's him. What's it say?

Andy speaks it as they read:

RUDY "DOC" STRAUSS IS HEADED FOR PRE-MED.
VOTED MOST LIKELY TO DISSECT A FRIEND.

139 INT. COLLEGE LIBRARY - DAY

139

Goodman looking at Andy, who remains frozen, staring at the long-haired photo.

GOODMAN

A doctor. The sonvabitch could be a doctor.

Andy violently snaps shut the book.

140 INT. BAILEY KITCHEN - DAY

140

Bailey yawning. Columbo pressing him. The left pile is very small now.

COLUMBO

So it might have had a window.
You said you never saw the front.

CONTINUED

140 CONTINUED

140

BAILEY

Told you a hundred times. I seen
the back.

COLUMBO

Did it have a window in the back?

(shows him a
photo of a van
with a wide
rear window)

...like this?

BAILEY

All I could see was one little
window.

COLUMBO

But there might have been two.

(shows him photo
of rear of a
red van with
two doors each
with window)

...like this?

BAILEY

Wasn't red. It was white!

COLUMBO

Forget the color for a minute.
Was this the style of it?

BAILEY

Maybe. Sorta.

Columbo rips a narrow strip of white paper from the back
of one of the brochures. Holds it over a section of a
photo in another brochure, and lets Bailey look.

COLUMBO

Is this sorta what you saw?

141 INSERT - PHOTO OF A WHITE VAN

141

The masking strip of paper hides part of it. It's a
slightly three quarter rearview. A window in the rear door
can be seen. There are lights in the upper corner.

142 INT. BAILEY KITCHEN - DAY

142

Bailey, now all attention. Astonished.

CONTINUED

142 CONTINUED

142

BAILEY
That's it! That's what I seen!

COLUMBO
Are you sure about that, Bill?

BAILEY
I'd swear on a stack of Bibles.

COLUMBO
Look at this, Bill.

143 INSET - PHOTO OF VAN

143

Columbo pulls away the masking paper and reveals a red band running around the body of the van and across the rear doors, where it is lettered -- AMBULANCE.

BAILEY (V.O.)
I'll be doggone! It's an ambulance!

144 INT. THE STRAUSS BATHROOM - DAY

144

Strauss is in white tie and tails. His hair neatly combed. He looks rather dashing. Melissa in front of the mirror, finishing coming her hair. Her hands clean. Her face washed.

STRAUSS
Let me look.

He stands beside her and peers into the mirror at their double reflection.

STRAUSS
(gesturing at
her hair with
the scalpel)
Loosen up the right side a little.
It looks too severe. I adore you
with that slightly disheveled
look.

She doesn't move. He touches her neck with the scalpel. Flinching, she runs the comb through the right side of her hair. Tosses her head, and the hair falls loosely.

STRAUSS
Much better. Now the lipstick.

CONTINUED

144 CONTINUED

144

Still holding the scalpel, he opens a vanity case, takes out a lipstick, removes the top, and twists it ready for application.

STRAUSS

One of my favorite shades on you.
Let me try it.

Again their double image in the mirror. He lipsticks his own lips. Smiles at her in the mirror. She watches, almost hypnotized.

STRAUSS

See how good it looks with white.
We'll be a perfect match. Now
it's your turn.

And he proffers the lipstick.

STRAUSS

After the lipstick, the mascara,
the eyebrows. A touch of bloom
on the cheek. Then into the
wedding dress and on with the
nuptials.

He hums the Wedding March, happily. With shaking hand she takes the lipstick.

145 INT. SQUAD ROOM - DAY

145

There's a cop at every desk. Every cop, including Columbo, is working a phone. Behind the glass window of his office, the Captain paces, puffing on a cigar.

Andy has finished a call. Puts down the receiver, refers to a computer screen in front of him. Under the clear heading -- HOSPITALS, it has the addresses and telephone numbers of every hospital in the Los Angeles and adjacent areas. Andy picks up the phone and punches in another number.

Mulrooney in front of another computer screen divided into two sections with clear headings. CLINICS. NURSING HOMES. He's on a call:

MULROONEY

You've never heard of anyone
called Rudy or Rudolf Strauss.
Are you sure? No, he's not a
red-nosed reindeer.

He hangs up in disgust. Looks for another number.

CONTINUED

145 CONTINUED

145

Goodman at a desk. On the phone. A reference book in front of him. He's getting impatient.

GOODMAN

All I'm asking is did he graduate from your Medical School. I know you don't know yet, lady. I just want to ask it one more time. You've been checking records for ten minutes. It's an easy name. Under S. for Strauss. Like the waltz.

A Yellow Pages telephone directory. Columbo's finger on the AMBULANCE SERVICES section. He's on the phone.

COLUMBO

Thank you sir. I surely appreciate that. Perhaps you can ask around your people. If you have any news, please give us a call. Much obliged.

He hangs up.

146 INT. SHRINE ROOM - DAY

146

Silence. The projector switched off. The tape also. Melissa, fastening the last buttons on the wedding dress. She looks quite beautiful. Her hands quiver a little. Strauss looking on, tiara in one hand, scalpel in the other.

STRAUSS

A slight nervousness enhances your beauty, my love. The dress is a perfect fit. See, I knew all your measurements. Except for shoes. We'll have to do without those. That's the least important item. Now for the tiara. It was my dear mother's.

He moves to her. She flinches back a pace.

STRAUSS

Just like a thoroughbred. So skittish. Be still. The sooner it's all over, the sooner you'll be at peace.

He carefully places the tiara on her. Humming the Wedding March:

CONTINUED

146 CONTINUED

146

STRAUSS

Ta, dum, dee, dee, dum. Ta, dum,
dee, dee, dum.

147 INT. SQUAD ROOM - DAY

147

As before. Panning around the room, seeing all the activity. The Captain now paces between the desks. Hubbub of overlapping voices as they question on phones. Hanging up. Checking new numbers. Punching them in. Columbo rises with his phone, holds up a hand for silence. Everybody stops what they're doing.

COLUMBO

Yes, sir. Strauss. That's right, Rudy. One of your ambulance drivers is he, sir? You fired him this morning. I see. So he went off with one of your ambulances last night, did he? Would that be about 10:30? I see.

(picks up a
pencil)

Perhaps you have an address where we could reach him, sir?

148 INT. SHRINE ROOM - DAY

148

Strauss at the head of the bed. Stroking the sheets.

STRAUSS

These are the best silk. Pure white. It will soon be so lovely for us in here when we consummate our marriage. So close together, my love. So very close. Then afterwards. In the relaxed moments afterwards, I'll have to do what was done to my dear mother.

(looks
affectionately
at the scalpel)

You'll hardly feel it. I'm very precise.

He moves to her at the foot of the bed, where she stands like a frozen vision in white. He takes a gold wedding band from his vest pocket. Holds it up.

CONTINUED

148 CONTINUED

148

STRAUSS

This is the real one. You will
remove that bogus thing from your
finger.

MELISSA

(clutching it
to her)

No!

A flash of violence, and he's suddenly beside her,
wrenching her left hand to him. The scalpel at her throat.
His face inches from her.

STRAUSS

Off with it, my love!

149 EXT. STREET INTERSECTION - DAY

149

A black and white, screeching around a corner, lights
flashing.

150 EXT. STREET - DAY

150

Two more, in convoy, lights flashing, sirens blaring,
weaving through traffic.

151 INT. SHRINE ROOM - DAY

151

Strauss at the bedside table. He switches on the
projector. The images jump onto the wall. Then the tape
machine. "The Wedding March". It's too loud for him. He
turns down the volume a piece. Always with scalpel in
hand, he adjusts his swallowtail coat, vest, and tie. Then
he walks through the projector beam to where Melissa stands
at the foot of the bed. She's now in a state of numb,
almost resigned fatigue. He takes her arm, turns her, and
they both face the "screen," their silhouettes in the midst
of the images. Reflections flit across their faces.

STRAUSS

Dearly beloved. We are gathered
together....

152 EXT. STREET - DAY

152

An ambulance roars by, lights flashing, siren blaring.

153 EXT. STREET - DAY

153

A black and white, similarly activated.

154 INT. BLACK AND WHITE - DAY - TRAVELING 154

Tom, Dick, and Harry, plus another cop. One of them has a rifle. Another, a tear gas gun.

155 INT. SHRINE ROOM - DAY 155

Strauss and Melissa as before.

STRAUSS

I, Rudolf Arnold Strauss, take you, Melissa Elizabeth Hays to be my lawfully wedded wife, to have and to hold....

156 EXT. STREET - DAY 156

Goodman's unmarked car, flashing gumball on roof, streaks by.

157 INT. GOODMAN'S CAR - DAY - TRAVELING 157

Goodman driving. The Captain in the front seat beside him. Andy and Mulrooney in the back. Columbo to the right of them behind the Captain. The sound of blaring sirens. Columbo looks out the rear window. He sees ---

158 EXT. STREET - DAY 158

Directly behind Goodman's car, two black and whites in convoy, lights flashing, sirens blaring. Beyond, another black and white, weaving through traffic to get in line.

159 INT. GOODMAN'S CAR - DAY 159

Columbo turns and leans forward close to the Captain's ear. He speaks as quietly and confidentially as he can with the racket going on.

COLUMBO

We've sure got some heavy artillery in the way of support, Captain.

CAPTAIN

You bet.

COLUMBO

Too bad if the guy heard us coming.

CONTINUED

159 CONTINUED

159

CAPTAIN

We want to get there fast, don't we?

COLUMBO

No doubt about that, Captain.

CAPTAIN

I'll cut the sirens when we're closer.

COLUMBO

That'll be fairly soon, won't it?

160 INT. SHRINE ROOM - DAY

160

As before.

STRAUSS

(tense)

Say it!

MELISSA

Never.

STRAUSS

Say -- I, Melissa Elizabeth Hays, take you, Rudolf....

MELISSA

Never. You can kill me, you creep. But I'll never say that.

Strauss fights for control, takes her by the neck with his left hand, raises the scalpel, nips her below the ear, draws a drop of blood, touches it with a finger of his right hand, shows her the blood.

STRAUSS

Not yet, my love. I mustn't complete it now. Not yet. There's more to do. I'll cut by degrees if necessary until the end.

He removes his left hand from her neck, reaches out.

STRAUSS

Give me your left hand.

The sight of blood has unnerved her. She puts out the hand. He places the wedding band on her finger.

CONTINUED

160 CONTINUED

160

STRAUSS

There, my love. Whether you say
it or not, you're mine.

Again the left hand to her throat. He kisses her, gently,
on the lips.

STRAUSS

And now to bed.

161 INT. GOODMAN'S CAR - DAY

161

Columbo still close to the Captain. Sirens blaring.

CAPTAIN

Yeah. Get there outta sight.
Surround the place. Cover doors.
Windows, roof, stairwells. Every
damn thing. Then wham! Bust in.
All at once. Freezes the
sonsabitches in their tracks.
Every time.

COLUMBO

That's a good way to do it,
Captain. I've seen it work. And
I've seen people hurt. This might
be a bit different. With it being
Melissa. A cop's wife. Andy's
wife.

CAPTAIN

You telling me my job, Columbo?

COLUMBO

No way, Captain. No, sir. But
with so many guys in uniform, and
three of them young cops who
haven't been on the force six
months, one of them might, you
know, sort of accidentally, give
it away.

CAPTAIN

Get to it.

COLUMBO

How about an extra five, ten
minutes? Before you bring in the
main force. Hold them back in
reserve. We've been on this so

(MORE)

CONTINUED

161 CONTINUED

161

COLUMBO (Cont'd)
long, an extra few minutes doesn't
cost much. It might save a life.
How about it Captain? As a favor
to Andy?

CAPTAIN
You're breaking my heart!

But he picks up the intercom.

162 INT. SHRINE ROOM - DAY

162

The wedding dress is now back on the tailor's dummy.
Strauss carefully tops it with the tiara. Melissa stands
in her slip. She dabs at the speck of blood on her neck.
Strauss goes to her, takes a handkerchief from his top
pocket, and hands it to her.

STRAUSS
Keep that clean. I don't want to
see too much blood just yet. My
mother wouldn't like it.

He moves to the bed and pulls back the upper sheet on the
far side (the side opposite to the projector).

163 EXT. STRAUSS HOUSE - DAY

163

Columbo crouches into position behind a hedge. He peers
through a gap, and sees ---

A large, unkempt lot. A quiet street beyond. In the
center of the lot, an isolated two-story house. Utterly
neglected. Surrounded by overgrown shrubs and bushes. The
upper story with broken window panes. The windows below,
mostly black.

164 CLOSER - COLUMBO

164

He looks to his right and sees:

165 ANDY

165

Further down the hedge, snapping the cylinder shut on his
gun.

166 COLUMBO

166

looks at the house again.

- 167 CLOSER - THE HOUSE 167
The front door hangs loose on its hinges, slightly ajar.
One window nearby is block glass.
- 168 COLUMBO 168
He moves forward.
- 169 MULROONEY 169
Gun out, pushing through a broken fence.
- 170 ANDY 170
Gun at the ready, moving quickly from behind a bush.
- 171 GOODMAN AND CAPTAIN 171
Guns out, the Captain with a walkie-talkie, both appearing,
low, around a corner of the house. They hear the faint
sound of the music from within.
- 172 INT. OUTER HALLWAY - STRAUSS HOUSE - DAY 172
Looking out toward the sagging front door. Columbo in
silhouette, easing through. The music again. A little
louder.
- 173 INT. SHRINE ROOM - DAY - CLOSE ON MELISSA 173
in bed, the covers clutched up to her chin, fearfully
staring up beyond the scalpel stroking her cheek. Above
the scalpel, Strauss's bare ar,. We hear a whispered
"Beautiful, beautiful" from Strauss. The scalpel and arm
move away, leaving Melissa's eyes following the unseen
Strauss as he passes below the bed.
The music is now a German lullaby. The projector turns.
- 174 ANGLE 174
Strauss's naked silhouette seen projected over the other
images on the "screen" as he moves below the bed across to
the near side, the silhouette getting larger as he closes
on the lens, his side of the bed.

175 ANGLE - MEDIUM CLOSE ON MELISSA 175

staring across to where he is, unseen. She edges away as the covers are pulled back. There's a sense of his getting into bed. The covers are pulled up.

176 ANGLE 176

Seeing Strauss and Melissa in bed. He's smiling, slowly edging his naked torso toward her.

STRAUSS

Soon, my love. Soon.

He transfers the scalpel from his right hand to the left, and slowly runs his right hand under the sheets to Melissa's body.

177 INT. STRAUSS HALLWAY - DAY 177

The door shatters open as Andy hurtles through, gun at the ready, yelling, yelling primeval yells as we whip with him smashing through into the Shrine Room.

178 INT. SHRINE ROOM - DAY 178

Simultaneously with Andy's arrival, Mulrooney erupts through the black window, glass flying, spinning onto his feet, gun ready, yelling.

The sound of more glass shattering elsewhere in the house.

In the split second all this has happened, Strauss stares wild-eyed one way, then the other, screams, transfers the scalpel from his left hand to the right.

Melissa, in her slip, frantically pulling back the sheets, trying to scramble from the bed, Strauss, screaming, grabbing for her, the scalpel arm swinging.

Andy pumps four bullets into him.

Strauss taking them, bleeding, wrenching into death.

Andy moving forward.

Melissa running to him. Into his arms.

Columbo to one side of the door, watching.

Goodman and the Captain enter from the hall. The Captain is peaking quietly into his walkie-talkie.

CONTINUED

178 CONTINUED

178

Apart from that, all is quiet enough, but for the murmurings of Melissa and Andy, the purr of the projector as it throws its images, and the continuing lilt of the lullaby.

Columbo looks down at the gun in his hand. It's a sort of quizzical look. Then he says, to no one in particular:

COLUMBO
What time is it?

FREEZE FRAME

In a moment his question is answered on screen, as it clicks in:

MONDAY. 12:37 P.M.

FADE OUT

THE END