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COLUMBO

TWO WOMEN AND A DEAD MAN

(TVM)

Written

by

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#82259

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TWO WOMEN AND A DEAD MAN

FADE IN

Over OPENING CREDITS, we come upon a:

1 EXT. PALATIAL BEL AIR ESTATE 1

There is a party going on. The circular driveway and the street are filled with cars; there is a group of carhops milling around the front door. We see some late arrivals pull up in a car and carhops open the door.

CUT TO

2 INT. LIVING ROOM 2

which is large, luxurious, where the guests in tuxedos and gowns are listening to the private performance of two classical musicians -- one male and one female -- both young. The boy wears his hair pushed back with a rubber band, the girl is also hip. The music is alive and exciting, the audience is attentive. As we PAN around the room, we pick up the hostess, LAUREN BLACK. She is an elegant, striking woman with a strong presence -- beneath her beauty we sense an inner core. We see her whisper instructions to a waiter, adjust a floral arrangement on the buffet table, move around the crowd toward the steps leading up to the foyer.

CUT TO

3 TWO WOMEN 3

watching Lauren.

FIRST WOMAN

She looks glorious tonight -- so glowing.

SECOND WOMAN

She's in love....

CUT TO

4 LAUREN 4

moving toward the foyer. She is stopped by a FEMALE GUEST.

CONTINUED

4 CONTINUED

4

FEMALE GUEST
(whispering under
the b.g. of music)
Is Nick coming?

Lauren raises hand, crosses fingers. Her friend smiles and nods, she understands. Lauren smiles, nods and winks. Love makes everybody happy. As Lauren moves through the room, we're back to the two women:

FIRST WOMAN
I heard he asked her to marry him.

SECOND WOMAN
It's true -- she's sky high.

CUT TO

5 LAUREN

5

moving toward foyer. She is stopped by another guest -- a CLOSE FRIEND.

CLOSE FRIEND
(confidentially)
You look sensational.

LAUREN
You should have seen me getting into this gown -- A team of three plus a crowbar!

They laugh.

CUT TO

6 WIDE SHOT - LAUREN

6

exits living room.

CUT TO

7 INT. CORRIDOR - LEADING TO FOYER

7

Lauren, alone, passes through the foyer to the narrow casement windows. She looks out.

8 EXT. LAUREN'S HOUSE

8

Closeup of Lauren's expectant face through glass.

CUT TO

9 INT. LAUREN'S HOUSE - FOYER

9

Lauren turns from the window, heads back toward the living room. To a maid who is carrying coats and capes:

LAUREN

Mary, do me a favor...Watch for Mr. French's car. As soon as you see it, come and get me.

As Lauren passes the stairs, we hear a WOMAN'S VOICE, "Lauren -- great party!" Lauren looks. There are two women at the top of the stairs. She raises both hands over her head, clenches her fists and shakes them (in an "I did it!" gesture). The women laugh.

CUT TO

10 MAID

10

at a distance, calling to Lauren:

MAID

Mrs. Black -- he's here.

CUT TO

11 LAUREN

11

whirls and quickly moves to the casement windows, looks out, turns and moves purposefully, rapidly to a private office off the foyer, where she sits in a swivel chair behind a desk. Her mood changes -- her attention is totally fixed. Her back toward the door, she dials the phone.

(Note: First telephone conversation between Lauren and unidentified female voice.)

LAUREN

(intent; almost a whisper)

He showed up...His car just pulled into the driveway. Tonight could be the night. Unless he changes his mind and decides to stay with me -- which I doubt.

We hear the female VOICE answer:

VOICE (V.O.)

Are you nervous?

LAUREN

No -- I'm high. And you?...

CONTINUED

11 CONTINUED

11

VOICE (V.O.)

I'm ready.

We hear the front door RING.

LAUREN

(into phone)

He's at the front door now.

Lauren looks up and notices the BUTLER on his way to answer the door.

LAUREN

(to Butler)

John -- don't answer that for a moment, will you?

(into phone)

Ciao --

(hangs up)

The doorbell is RINGING. Lauren says to the Butler in a playful mood:

LAUREN

(continuing)

Ask who it is.

BUTLER

Who is it?

NICK

(outside door)

Mr. French.

Lauren, quietly and playfully to the Butler:

LAUREN

Ask him if he's been invited.

BUTLER

Have you been invited, sir?

NICK

(outside door)

Yes. I have been invited.

LAUREN

(to Butler; same tone)

Tell him his name is not on the list.

BUTLER

Your name does not appear on the invitational list, sir.

CONTINUED

11 CONTINUED (2)

11

NICK
(outside door)
Listen, this would be a lot easier
if you'd open the door.

LAUREN
(opens door)
May I help you, sir?

NICK
(considers this,
looking directly
at her; after a
beat)
If you put your mind to it, you
could.

LAUREN
(to Butler)
Excuse me, John.

She steps outside and...

12 EXT. LAUREN'S HOUSE

12

...closes the door behind her. Nick kisses her softly,
their lips barely touching, the following exchange is made
between kisses.

NICK
I don't understand. Why don't I
get tired of you....

LAUREN
(enjoying it)
I don't know.

NICK
What is it? Your wealth? Your
lips? The way you walk? You know
you're slightly knock-kneed.

LAUREN
It could be my knees.

He kisses her again and whispers in her ear.

NICK
Doesn't make sense...You're an
older woman -- What is it?...

LAUREN
I can't explain it.

And he hugs her, and he's holding her tightly:

CONTINUED

12 CONTINUED

12

NICK

I'm crazy about you. I can't help myself. What am I going to do?...

She, her head resting on his shoulder, her eyes looking into the distance says as camera moves in tight on Lauren's face:

LAUREN

Live with it, I suppose.

DISSOLVE TO

13 INT. LIVING ROOM

13

We hear the piano and violin as the screen comes up on the party in the living room where the guests are attentively listening to the music. PANNING from the musicians around the room, including the guests, finally picking up Lauren and Nick, seated in the back of the room. Over the music we see Nick lean in to whisper in Lauren's ear:

NICK

Why aren't we married?

LAUREN

(to Nick)

Sit up.

Nick sits up.

LAUREN

(continuing;
matter-of-factly)

Don't say that unless you mean it.

Nick leans in to her ear and whispers:

NICK

I mean it.

LAUREN

Sit up.

Nick sits up.

LAUREN

(continuing)

You're talking about marriage...meanwhile, you're running out on my party in ten minutes.

CONTINUED

13 CONTINUED

13

NICK

I'm not running out on you -- I've already run out on a poker game....

LAUREN

(interrupting)

Are you winning or losing?

NICK

I'm losing, Cookie, I'm stuck twelve thousand, otherwise I'd stay. You know I would rather be ---

LAUREN

(interrupts him; puts her finger up to his lips)

Shhh...I know that. I just wanted to hear you say it.

NICK

Are you free tomorrow afternoon?

LAUREN

Yes.

NICK

May I take you for a drive?

LAUREN

That would be lovely.

He leans over and says, confidentially:

NICK

Will it interfere with your listening if I nibble on your ear?

LAUREN

Let me take care of a few things first...Then I'll come back and let you nibble.

Lauren gets up. We PAN with her as....

14 INT. HALLWAY/PRIVATE OFFICE

14

...she leaves the living room, down the hall, past the library, into her private office. She closes the door, dials the telephone.

CONTINUED

14 CONTINUED

14

LAUREN
 (into phone)
 It's me....

SAME UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)
 What's happening?...

LAUREN
 He's leaving now -- he lied --
 said he was going back to his
 poker game...I'm sure he'll call
 you. Get back to me as soon as
 you can.

LISA
 I will.

LAUREN
 Be careful -- He's capable of
 anything.

LISA
 I know.

LAUREN
 Don't forget your gloves.

LISA
 I won't -- Ciao.

Lauren hangs up. We hear APPLAUSE and a sprinkling of
 "Bravos," coming from the living room where we ---

CUT BACK TO

15 INT. LIVING ROOM

15

We see the party guests standing, applauding, musicians
 bowing, servants beginning to serve drinks. Pick up Nick,
 walking through the crowd, saying "hello," but looking for
 Lauren. He spots her at a distance through the crowd of
 people, says rather loudly:

NICK
 (referring to hors
 d'oeuvres that
 he has in his
 hands)
 It's caviar -- I don't want
 caviar...I want your ear.

LAUREN
 (yells)
 Mr. French...try and control
 yourself.

CONTINUED

15 CONTINUED

15

He makes his way through the crowd and gets to Lauren.

LAUREN
(continuing)
You're leaving now?

NICK
No, not immediately.

LAUREN
Nick, you can go if you want to.
I've got all these people to take
care of....

NICK
I don't want to leave you. I want
to be with you some more. I want
to ---

LAUREN
(interrupts him,
again with
feminine finger
to his lips)
Shhh...
(seriously)
Nick...honestly...I understand.
Go back to your game.

NICK
(kisses her)
Tomorrow afternoon...we'll head
North and find an open field.

Nick passes in front of camera, his black suit taking us to
black.

16 INT. BAR - SANTA MONICA

16

We come up, handheld on the dimly lit back of Nick's head,
which is moving to the Country music. We hear him say:

NICK
What about yourself pleases you
the most?..What's your best
feature?...

By the end of this line, we've come around Nick's head,
handheld, very close on a striking young woman, LISA. Her
intense black eyes and full lips belie her subdued, quiet
manner -- still waters run deep -- they are dancing close,
intimate.

CONTINUED

16 CONTINUED

16

LISA
(impassive)
What do you think...?

NICK
Your teeth.

LISA
You think my teeth are my best
feature?

NICK
No...you do.

LISA
Wrong.

NICK
Your legs...You like your legs the
best.

LISA
What part?

NICK
The thighs.

LISA
(slight smile; it's
true)
How do you know?

NICK
When you put cream on...the way
you linger over them...you keep
doing it.

LISA
You never saw me put cream on.

NICK
I can dream, can't I...I'd like
to spend a month -- say May -- and
just rub cream -- not on your
thighs, I'll settle for your
calves.

Lisa doesn't answer. She's inscrutable -- hard to know what she is feeling. They continue dancing, and by now camera has pulled back to reveal that they are in a small bar, with a jukebox, but curiously, they are dancing privately by themselves in a small area that leads to the kitchen and rest rooms. From this angle, as they dance:

CONTINUED

16 CONTINUED (2)

16

NICK
(continuing)
Come here....

Lisa moves into his arms.

NICK
(continuing;
confidentially,
into her ear)
Does it interfere with your
dancing if I nibble on your ear?

Lisa doesn't answer. She just rests her chin on his shoulder, facing in the other direction. Her look, impassive, still waters run deep. Nick puts chin on her shoulder. They are not looking at each other.

NICK
(continuing)
Don't laugh at this -- promise?

LISA
Promise....

NICK
Let's go live on a Kibbutz.

Lisa doesn't answer, just thinks about this. After a beat:

LISA
Nick, someone's coming.

We see a man in the b.g. approach the two dancers on his way to the men's room. They separate to allow him to pass and they both bow their heads to avoid being seen. Nick, with his head down, looking at the floor, continues talking, even as the stranger passes between them.

NICK
Maybe I'm kidding about the
Kibbutz, but I'm not kidding about
going away...being alone.

The man has passed between them, is out of the way, and they return to each other's arms.

CUT TO

17 EXTREME CLOSEUP - NICK'S HEAD

17

NICK
Just the four of us...you, me, and
the two thighs.

CONTINUED

17 CONTINUED

17

We move off Nick's face onto the girl's hair and we ---

CUT TO

18 BACK OF WOMAN'S HEAD

18

and around her hair. Reveal Lauren, as the Country music is replaced by faint sounds of Mozart.

As we move from her hair, around to her profile, the shot widens. By the time we are full face, we're cutting her just below the chest. We see that she is intently looking at something. We continue pulling back as she suddenly stands. For a moment she is covered, and the entire screen is filled with what turns out to be a blanket. As she folds it, her face is revealed. We continue pulling back. By now we are in a full shot, and we see Lauren folding up a blanket with an electric cord. She walks past camera. We follow her and see that she is in ---

19 INT. BEDROOM

19

We see Lauren go to the dresser, remove a gun, move to a chair, to a piece of hand luggage and place the electric blanket and the gun in the luggage. We hear a telephone. She goes to a night table and answers it.

CUT TO

20 CLOSEUP OF YOUNG WOMAN (LISA)

20

We see it's the same woman we left in the bar, who is now in the bar's telephone booth. The Classical music replaced by the b.g. of Country music.

LISA
(into phone;
quietly;
controlling her
emotions)

Everything's fine. We're going to his place. Right now we're in a bar on the Coast Highway. I can't tell you what time we'll get to his apartment. I'll try to be fast. If there is a delay, just wait. Sooner or later, we'll be there.

We hear a V.O. on the other end of the wire saying:

LAUREN'S (V.O.)
Did he threaten you?

CONTINUED

20 CONTINUED

20

LISA
Not tonight -- He wants to get me
in bed.

CUT TO

21 LAUREN

21

LAUREN
Whatever you do -- be careful.

LISA (V.O.)
I will...Don't forget the light
switch -- I won't forget my
gloves.

LAUREN
Are you sure you want to do this?

CUT TO

22 LISA

22

LISA
Are you sure?

LAUREN (V.O.)
Yes....

LISA
So am I....

23 INSIDE PHONE BOOTH - CLOSE ON LISA

23

We see her look up and mouth the words: "Just a second."

CUT TO

24 LISA'S POINT OF VIEW - NICK

24

outside the booth. He is mouthing the words through the
glass, "Your ear..." pointing to his ear. "Want to nibble
on your ear." He gives a charming little smile, and a tiny
kiss gesture.

25 LISA

25

LISA
He's outside the booth now. He
wants to nibble on my ear....

CUT TO

26 EXTREME CLOSEUP - LAUREN

26

Her face a mask of hatred.

LISA (V.O.)
He's holding up a sign... 'I'm
crazy about you -- can't help
myself -- what am I going to
do?' ...How I hate him.

CUT TO

27 INT. GARAGE - VERY WIDE SHOT

27

It is a subterranean garage. Stillness, nothing moving. Just a very wide shot of the garage and some cars. We hold on this, a little bit longer than we would ordinarily. The stillness is broken by the sound of a car door opening. In the distance, we see Nick get out of his car and BANG his door shut. Lisa gets out, puts her finger to her lips, indicating "quiet." He says, "Shhh..." back, and the two of them (they've had a few drinks), tiptoe quietly through the garage.

Nick heads toward the elevator. Lisa beckons, tells him through sign language, "No." They go through a door marked: "STAIRS." Their mood is playful. They are exaggerating and making fun of their secrecy. There might be a giggle.

CUT TO

28 THE STAIRS

28

Nick is on the first landing. She is near the bottom.

NICK
(quietly; in a
stage whisper)
Hurry up....

LISA
I can't -- I've got a cramp.

NICK
(whispers)
You're kidding.

CONTINUED

28 CONTINUED

28

LISA
(half smile)
I'm not.

Nick comes down to help her and she, giggling and holding her leg, tries her best to walk up the stairs.

CUT TO

29 INT. APARTMENT HOUSE - CORRIDOR

29

NICK
What a time to get a cramp.

LISA
They hurt.

NICK
Well, it's over now.

They continue down the corridor. Nick takes out his keys, opens the door, and they enter, Lisa first.

30 INT. APARTMENT

30

Nick removes the keys, closes the door, turns on the light switch. The lights don't go on.

NICK
Damn!

He tries the switch again, and we hear his keys hit the floor.

NICK
(continuing)
Damn it!
(bends to get keys)
Get the lamp next to the couch.

LISA
All right.

NICK
(bending, looking
for keys; still
in darkness)
You got it?

LISA
In a minute....

NICK
I got my keys.

CONTINUED

30 CONTINUED

30

A STRANGE VOICE (Lauren's voice), answers from the darkness.

LAUREN

Good....

NICK

(turns abruptly)

Lisa?...

LAUREN (V.O.)

No...It's the older woman.

There is a MUFFLED POP, followed by a HARD THUD as Nick's body is driven against the door. For a split second, it doesn't move. We hear the SOUNDS of keys hit the wooden floor followed by the collapse of Nick's body. Lauren emerges from the shadow of the bedroom door. She is carrying a gun. The two women move toward each other wordlessly, touch hands. They embrace. It is a quick gesture, a gesture of mutual congratulations, of trust, of affection. Lisa leans against the door, her head back. We hear her BREATHING as she watches Lauren move toward the couch, which is set in front of the glass sliding doors, to a piece of hand luggage. In silhouette, against the light coming through the doors, we see Lauren open up the hand luggage, remove an electric blanket, move back to Lisa who is still leaning against the front door -- her eyes fixed on the body, her hands pulling on a pair of gloves. Lisa takes the blanket, moves to Nick's body, plugs in the cord and wraps the blanket around the dead man. We stay with her as she returns to the couch where Lauren is waiting. The first words spoken by the two women are:

LAUREN

(to Lisa)

Here is the gun.

Lisa takes the gun.

LAUREN

(quietly, without
breaking the
tension)

The tools are in the bag. Don't forget, turn on the master light switch -- take his car out of the garage -- Wait for my call before you return it. Here's the money for the soup cans -- you know what to do. Don't worry about his jewelry from the bedroom -- I've gotten that. Be brave -- Ciao....

CONTINUED

30 CONTINUED (2)

30

Their cheeks touch. Lauren turns and leaves through the sliding glass doors. We stay on Lisa as she picks up the tools, goes outside, closes the sliding door, begins tampering with the lock. We go out on the sound of the FILE CUTTING against the edge of the door. As we cut, the SCRAPING SOUND is replaced by piano music. We hear, "Bye, Bye, Blackbird," the younger entertainers at the piano, SINGING. We pull back. We are in ---

31 INT. LAUREN'S BEL AIR ESTATE - LIVING ROOM

31

A handful of guests are around the piano, the young entertainers are playing, others are sitting and standing in various other parts of the room; all of them are caught up in "Bye, Bye, Blackbird."

PIANIST

(singing)

'-- Pack up all your cares and
woes -- Here we go, singing low
-- '

The rest of the room joins in on "Bye, Bye, Blackbird." The Pianist points to a little old LADY, who takes the second chorus.

LADY

(singing)

'-- Where somebody waits for me
-- Sugar's sweet, so is he -- '

Everybody joins in on "Bye, Bye, Blackbird."

The Second Guest is taking the third chorus, when Lauren walks into the room. We ---

CUT TO

32 LAUREN'S FACE

32

LAUREN

(singing)

'-- No one seems to love or
understand me -- Oh what hard luck
stories they all hand me -- '

33 BACK TO SCENE

33

Everybody SINGS, "So make my bed and light the light -- I'll be home, late tonight -- " as Lauren continues walking through the room.

CONTINUED

33 CONTINUED

33

GUEST
(to Lauren as she
passes)
Feeling better?

LAUREN
Yes...I took an aspirin...a few
minutes rest can do wonders.

GUEST
Wonderful.

She passes through the living room, into the:

34 EXT. SOLARIUM/BACK PATIO

34

Here's the real party -- mariachi music, spirited dancing,
drinking, people having a good time.

LAUREN
(to Waiter)
I'll have a Scotch -- a double.

A GUEST passes her on his way to the bar.

SECOND GUEST
Headache gone?...

LAUREN
(expansively)
All gone....

35 WIDE SHOT - THE PATIO PARTY

35

Music, dancing, lanterns.

36 INT. NICK'S APARTMENT

36

Stillness...coming up on an empty bedroom. Hold for a
moment, and then in the distance, a full figure coming down
the hallway.

We see Lisa. She is wearing gloves. She goes to the master
light switch on the wall and turns it on. We see the red
button light up. She enters the bedroom, sits on the bed,
removes a drawer from the night table, turns it upside down.
Its contents fall to the floor. She places the drawer on
the bed and with her foot, scatters the contents on the
floor. She reaches for the second drawer as we ---

CUT TO

37 EXT. LAUREN'S BEL AIR ESTATE 37

The party is breaking up, groups of guests are waiting in the driveway for their cars. Carhops are pulling cars up, other cars are leaving. We hear the sound of piano and VOICES SINGING. One guest, male, opens the front door and yells in:

MALE GUEST

Grace!..Hurry up! It's cold out here!

Camera moves....

38 INT. FRONT FOYER OF THE HOUSE 38

We see guests on their way out. Lauren moves across the foyer into the living room and announces to the remaining revellers:

LAUREN

You're welcome to the room, the piano, the liquor, but not me. I've had it.

There is an exchange of "good nights," and "thank yous." The piano launches into "For She's A Jolly Good Fellow," and against the b.g. of boisterous SINGING, we go out as Lauren leaves the room.

CUT TO

39 INT. NICK'S APARTMENT 39

We see Lisa in silhouette, motionless, sitting rather stiffly on the couch. The room is very still. The dead man's body is covered by an electric blanket. The stillness is broken by the sound of a BUZZER. Lisa's head moves. Maintaining her self-control, she gets up, walks to the coffee table, picks up the gun, sits on the coffee table, stares at the dead body.

CUT TO

40 INT. MAIN LOBBY/VESTIBULE OUTSIDE NICK'S APARTMENT BUILDING 40

In full figure, we see the back of a woman. Her finger runs down the directory of the names of the occupants. Her finger stops.

41 INSERT - BUZZER 41

APARTMENT 1-B -- MANAGER -- MR. RUDDICK. A finger comes into view and pushes the buzzer. After a beat, the finger pushes again.

42 CLOSEUP - LAUREN

42

tense, waiting. We hear VOICE OVER over intercom:

MR. RUDDICK (V.O.)
(half asleep)
Yes....

LAUREN
Mr. Ruddick -- it's Lauren Black.
I'm sorry to disturb you at this
hour, but I forgot my key again.

MR. RUDDICK (V.O.)
(sleepy voice)
Who do you want?

LAUREN
It's Mrs. Black, Mr. Ruddick. I
want to get into Nick's apartment.
I forgot my key.

MR. RUDDICK (V.O.)
Oh -- Mrs. Black...Oh, all right.

We stay on Lauren for a bit. We hear the BUZZER, she opens
the door, we stay with her as she walks into the lobby, down
the corridor to the manager's apartment. The door is ajar.

LAUREN
(calls)
Mr. Ruddick!

We hear him answer.

MR. RUDDICK (O.S.)
Come in!...I'll be with you in a
moment.

She enters the apartment.

CUT TO

43 INT. NICK'S LIVING ROOM

43

Lisa stands, the gun at her side. She moves toward the
body, still staring at it.

44 BACK TO MR. RUDDICK'S APARTMENT

44

Mr. Ruddick is emerging from his bedroom, adjusting his
bathrobe.

MR. RUDDICK
Turned cold on us, didn't it? Who
would expect it?

CONTINUED

44 CONTINUED

44

LAUREN

I'm really sorry I woke you.

MR. RUDDICK

Listen, by now I'm used to you -- so what is it tonight? He's playing dice -- or gin -- ? What is it?

LAUREN

Poker.

During this exchange, he's gone into the kitchen to get his set of keys.

MR. RUDDICK

I hope he wins at least. That way, you don't mind waiting.

LAUREN

Between you and me...he's worth waiting for.

By now they are walking out of the superintendent's apartment, down the corridor, toward Nick's apartment.

CUT TO

45 INT. NICK'S APARTMENT

45

Lisa kneeling, removes the electric blanket from the body, picks up the gun from the floor, moves backward toward the sliding glass doors and raises the gun.

CUT TO

46 CORRIDOR

46

Lauren and Mr. Ruddick continuing down the corridor.

MR. RUDDICK

When you wait for him, do you at least cook something for him? Gambling is work. When I play bingo, it makes me hungry. Could be the tension.

LAUREN

No, I don't cook for him...but I run his bath...pay his bills...always have wine ready -- and fruit and cheese. That's what he likes. He adores ---

CONTINUED

46 CONTINUED

46

This dialogue is interrupted by the SHARP CRACK of TWO SHOTS. Lauren and Mr. Ruddick react surprised, frightened, uncertain.

MR. RUDDICK

Oh my God....

CUT TO

47 INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - ANGLE OF FRONT DOOR

47

Shooting through open glass-panelled doors, we see the back of Lisa walking rapidly out through the patio with the hand luggage, through the backyard, disappearing through an alley.

CUT TO

48 INT. NICK'S LIVING ROOM - FRONT DOOR

48

as Mr. Ruddick and Lauren burst through the door to Nick's apartment. They switch on the lights. Lauren screams, Ruddick stands fixed -- Lauren runs to the body.

49 NICK'S POINT OF VIEW

49

LAUREN

Oh my sweet Nick ---

As we ---

CUT TO

50 EXT. NICK'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

50

Columbo's car is pulling up and parking in front of the apartment building. Take him out of the car -- he walks up the sidewalk to the front of the building. He's obviously not fully awake. His collar is up, hands thrust in pockets, hair disheveled. There is a uniformed POLICEMAN on guard outside the front door.

POLICEMAN

(rubbing hands; to
Columbo)

Turned cold, didn't it?...

Columbo mumbles agreement as he goes into the building.

51 INT. FIRST FLOOR CORRIDOR OF NICK'S APARTMENT

51

Columbo walking down corridor. Nick's apartment is on the right hand side of the corridor. The door is open and inside there is a BUZZ of normal police activity that takes place in a murder scene: fingerprint experts, photographers, medical examiner, uniformed cops, detectives taking notes, etc. Before going in, Columbo looks to his left at the apartment opposite Nick's which is vacant, and is being used as an interviewing room. The door to this apartment is also open and inside we see Mr. Ruddick, the superintendent, being questioned by a detective. After glancing through the door of the vacant apartment, Columbo enters Nick's living room.

CUT TO

52 COLUMBO'S POINT OF VIEW - WIDE ANGLE

52

We see the entire scene with all the police activity. Medical Examiner kneeling, inspecting the body. The sliding glass doors in the b.g., which lead out to a patio and to a back alley, are slightly open. Columbo stands in the doorway for a moment and watches the activities. He needs a shave.

CUT TO

53 MEDICAL EXAMINER

53

as he finishes his inspection.

MEDICAL EXAMINER
(to Detective next
to him, taking
notes)

What time did they hear the shot?

HEAD DETECTIVE
Call it two o'clock.

MEDICAL EXAMINER
Well, that makes sense. The
body's still warm. No rigor
mortis yet --
(looks at watch)
It's now two-thirty -- shot a
half-hour ago -- yeah, why not --
Time of death...two o'clock.

Columbo arrives.

HEAD DETECTIVE
Lieutenant....

Columbo nods.

CONTINUED

HEAD DETECTIVE

(continuing;
indicating the
body)

Somebody was robbing the place.
He came home -- surprised him --
them -- whatever -- and they shot
him.

COLUMBO

(sleepy)

Right....

HEAD DETECTIVE

This is where he landed...House
and car keys on the floor next to
the body. The lights were off --
He must have been reaching for
them when they shot him.

COLUMBO

Right....

HEAD DETECTIVE

Some jewelry missing...but they
never got his wallet.

COLUMBO

Any coffee around?

HEAD DETECTIVE

Yeah -- we'll get you some.

(moving to another
part of the room)

Let me show you his wallet -- had
sixteen grand in it.

COLUMBO

Could use that coffee now.

HEAD DETECTIVE

(to Eddie)

Eddie! -- The Lieutenant would
like a coffee.

EDDIE (V.O.)

Coffee flying in ---

HEAD DETECTIVE

(to Columbo)

Here's the wallet, and here's the
sixteen thousand dollars. They
took other money -- I'll show you
that evidence, but ---

CONTINUED

53 CONTINUED (2)

53

Columbo has taken a hard-boiled egg from his pocket and is wandering toward an ashtray.

COLUMBO
(picking up
ashtray)

Just getting this for the shells.

HEAD DETECTIVE
-- But they never took the money
from his wallet. They really
panicked when he came in -- Just
shot him and ran.

COLUMBO
Right....

HEAD DETECTIVE
The victim was a gambler -- that's
what he did for a living. He kept
cash in the apartment -- Hid it
in these fake soup cans. C'mon
in the kitchen and I'll show you.

(as he's walking
toward the
kitchen)

He was robbed once before. Could
have been the same thieves --
Dropped money all over the
place...Hundred dollar bills
laying around.

Columbo, with his egg and ashtray, starts to follow the Head Detective, but spots a small refrigerator in the bar area, and heads toward it. A FINGERPRINT MAN is working in that area.

COLUMBO
Who found him?

FINGERPRINT MAN
The apartment manager and Mrs.
Lauren Black. They were coming
down the corridor. The manager
was going to let her in. As they
approached the apartment, they
heard the shots -- opened the door
-- and found him dead on the
floor.

Columbo has opened the refrigerator.

FINGERPRINT MAN
(continuing)
You looking for something,
Lieutenant?

CONTINUED

53 CONTINUED (3)

53

COLUMBO

Orange juice.

FINGERPRINT MAN

Oh -- nothing in there -- Maybe
the kitchen.

COLUMBO

(closes the
refrigerator)This lady -- what was she doing
here?

FINGERPRINT MAN

She was having an affair with the
victim. They were suppose to meet
here at two o'clock. What
happened was, she got here first.
She has a key but she forgot it,
so she went to the apartment
manager and while she was there
getting her key, the deceased came
home -- entered his apartment --
and bang -- that was it.

COLUMBO

(moving away)

Right....

Columbo stops, returns to refrigerator and opens it again. After a beat, we realize he's staring at a drop of water on the bottom shelf. The interior of the refrigerator is spotlessly clean and totally empty except for two bright red, small tomatoes. Columbo pulls out the drip pan, notices it's half full of water. He opens the freezer part. We see that the ice is half melted.

DETECTIVE

(calling from
sliding door)Lieutenant -- this was the door
that was jimmied -- You want to
take a look at these marks?

COLUMBO

(to Detective;
closing
refrigerator)Where's Eddie? -- Have you seen
Eddie?..Where's my coffee?

HEAD DETECTIVE

(yells)

Eddie!

CONTINUED

53 CONTINUED (4)

53

EDDIE (V.O.)

Coming in at a dead run, sir --
Here I come -- Here you are, sir.
Sorry about the delay.

Eddie arrives. He's got coffee, powdered cream and sugar packets. Columbo sets down his egg and ashtray, starts to prepare his coffee.

EDDIE

Manager says he last saw the victim alive when he left his apartment at two o'clock this afternoon. He never came back until two o'clock tonight, when he got shot.

COLUMBO

(who is using his pencil to stir his coffee)

Right....

HEAD DETECTIVE

(loudly; from door of kitchen)

Lieutenant -- I'm waiting in here for you.

COLUMBO

Right --

(to himself)

Coming in at a dead run.

Columbo has his coffee, egg and ashtray.

54 INT. KITCHEN

54

The Head Detective is pointing to six one hundred dollar bills. They look as if they have been dropped. Some on the floor, some on the side of the sink (which is below an opened cabinet). There are three fake soup cans with the tops removed. One is lying on its side. There are fingerprint men and a photographer in the kitchen.

HEAD DETECTIVE

Looks like he kept his cash in these cans. Whoever robbed the place wasn't fooled.

COLUMBO

Right...

(goes to ice box; opens it up)

CONTINUED

54 CONTINUED

54

HEAD DETECTIVE

You can see they left in a hurry.
Dropped these one hundred dollar
bills. That's exactly the way we
found them.

COLUMBO

No juice?

HEAD DETECTIVE

What's ever there, sir...The
victim was wearing a Rolex watch
-- they didn't take it. But,
here's an empty Piaget case -- so
they must have taken that.

(notices something
strange about
Columbo's shirt)

...Are those pajamas?...

COLUMBO

(looks)

My goodness...You're right...
pajamas....

HEAD DETECTIVE

C'mon, I'll show you in the
bedroom...They dumped the contents
of a jewelry box on the bed --
Nothing but cheap stuff.

They head out. The Detective first, Columbo, bringing up
the rear. Columbo sees a pepper shaker, which he picks up
and puts in his pocket.

COLUMBO

(to photographer
who saw him)

-- For the egg....

CUT TO

55 CORRIDOR LEADING TO BEDROOM

55

Head Detective leading the way.

HEAD DETECTIVE

They turned the room upside down.
I assume they took anything of
value.

Columbo stops to look at the thermometer on the wall.

56 CLOSEUP OF THERMOMETER

56

It reads 74 degrees.

57 INT. BEDROOM

57

HEAD DETECTIVE

(to Eddie)

Separate his personal effects into two piles: Bills in one pile... everything else in another.

HEAD DETECTIVE

The box with the jewelry -- where's that? Has it been fingerprinted yet?

EDDIE

I got it. It's been printed and tagged.

From down the hall we hear Columbo's voice:

COLUMBO

Eddie! -- Where's Eddie? -- Eddie!

EDDIE

More coffee, sir, flying in.

COLUMBO

(heading down hallway)

The victim was last seen leaving the apartment at two o'clock this afternoon?

EDDIE

That's what the manager said.

COLUMBO

-- And he didn't get back until two o'clock tonight?

EDDIE

That's what the manager said.

Columbo turns, heads back to the wall thermometer. He looks.

COLUMBO

Where's the manager?

EDDIE

Across the hall....

Columbo whirls and heads toward the living room. He's fully awake -- he's got the scent. The Head Detective shakes his head in exasperation.

58 INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE NICK'S APARTMENT

58

Columbo moving past a uniformed COP on duty outside Nick's front door.

COLUMBO
(to Cop; on the
move)
What time did it turn cold
tonight?

COP
(in the b.g.)
Not sure...Seven -- eight o'clock.

59 INT. VACANT APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

59

Ruddick, in bathrobe, with a detective with notebook.

RUDDICK
This is the second time he's been
robbed.
(continuing; blows
nose)
Well -- that's the end of sleep
for ---

COLUMBO (V.O.)
(interrupts)
What time did Mr. French leave his
apartment today?

RUDDICK
(looks up)
What?...

CUT TO

60 RUDDICK'S POINT OF VIEW - COLUMBO

60

The Lieutenant moving in hard.

COLUMBO
What time did Mr. French leave the
building today?

RUDDICK
Two o'clock. I already ---

COLUMBO
(interrupting)
How do you know?

RUDDICK
I was standing out front.

CONTINUED

COLUMBO
How did you know the time?

RUDDICK
I just finished my lunch.

COLUMBO
Anybody else in the apartment?

RUDDICK
When?

COLUMBO
Any time.

RUDDICK
The maid....

COLUMBO
When did she leave?

RUDDICK
One o'clock.

COLUMBO
How do you know?

RUDDICK
She works in the mornings -- when
else is she going to leave?

COLUMBO
Did he come back for supper?

RUDDICK
No....

COLUMBO
How do you know?

RUDDICK
His car is never there.

COLUMBO
Never comes back for supper?

RUDDICK
(had enough; louder
and more emphatic)
Don't eat at home -- he's a
bachelor -- leaves in the
afternoon -- gambles half the
night -- comes home to sleep.

CONTINUED

60 CONTINUED (2)

60

Columbo abruptly breaks off the questioning. He's lost in thought. The room is suddenly silent. Ruddick and the Detective are looking at Columbo. No one is moving. The quiet is broken by the SLAM of a bathroom cabinet DOOR, followed by the SOUND of RUNNING WATER.

COLUMBO

Who's that?

DETECTIVE

(conspiratorially)

The lady who came to see the deceased. The one that was having the liaison.

(gestures to
Columbo to lean
in)

She's a knockout.

Columbo goes to doorway, looks in. The room is bare. Just a bed with an uncovered mattress and pillow. Lauren emerges from bathroom with a tissue, wiping her face, and goes to the bed and sits. It's a striking picture, this beautiful woman in a smart outfit, sitting on a bare mattress in an unfurnished room, her hands between her thighs, head up, lost in thought.

COLUMBO

(in doorway;
watches her until
she's seated)

Excuse me...I'm Lieutenant
Columbo...Has anyone spoken with
you?

LAUREN

(numb)

There was a detective here. But
he got called away.

COLUMBO

Let's see if I can get you out of
here. What have you told the
other detective?

LAUREN

Just that I made an arrangement
to meet Nick here at two o'clock
and that I forgot my key...Mr.
Ruddick let me in, and we were

(MORE)

CONTINUED

60 CONTINUED (3)

60

LAUREN (Cont'd)

both in the corridor when we heard the shot, and we ran -- and the door -- we opened the door...

(it is not easy for her to go on, but she does)

...And it was Nick, on the floor.

COLUMBO

I see...Would you prefer not to have your name released to the press?

LAUREN

Oh -- uh...hadn't thought of it -- Well, my friends all knew about Nick -- it's not a secret...

(places her hands between thighs to keep them warm)

Nothing to hide -- in fact, I had a party at my house tonight and Nick was there.

COLUMBO

Is that when you made plans to meet at two o'clock.

LAUREN

Yes...he couldn't stay...He had a poker game -- that's the way he made his living. He didn't want to go, but he had to.

(her voice doesn't crack, but she lowers her head)

COLUMBO

(handing Lauren cup of coffee)

Why don't you take some of this -- it will warm you up.

Lauren takes the cup of coffee.

COLUMBO

(continuing)

Regarding the press...why don't I see what I can do. What do you need it for...having your name in the papers.

CONTINUED

60 CONTINUED (4)

60

LAUREN

Well...I would appreciate that if
it could be managed.

(rueful smile)

It'll make it a little easier when
I go shopping.

Lauren holds the coffee mug in both hands, using it to keep
them warm.

COLUMBO

Do you have a telephone number
where we can reach you if it is
necessary?

LAUREN

Area code two-one-three,
five-five-five,
eight-two-two-eight.

COLUMBO

They obviously went through his
jewelry box -- if I showed it to
you, could you tell what's
missing?

LAUREN

I think so...I'm very familiar ---

COLUMBO

(interrupts)

Listen -- Why don't we do that
some other time -- let's get you
outta here...You've been here long
enough.

LAUREN

Thank you, Lieutenant. I
appreciate that.

Columbo reaches down, takes her elbows, and helps her up.

COLUMBO

(reaching for his
cup)

You haven't touched your coffee
-- Do you still want it?

LAUREN

Oh...I didn't realize...No, thank
you.

COLUMBO

(takes cup)

I could have one of the men drive
you home...It's up to you.

CONTINUED

60 CONTINUED (5)

60

LAUREN

Thank you -- I can manage.

Lauren leaves. Columbo watches her a quick beat. He then reaches into his pocket, takes out his egg, ashtray and pepper, and as he sits on the bed, we realize he's lost in thought.

61 EXT. LAUREN'S BEL AIR ESTATE - DAY - ESTABLISHING

61

Caterer's truck. Caterers removing equipment.

62 INT. BEDROOM - LAUREN

62

on phone, standing by her desk, and looking out the window. The morning newspapers are strewn about.

LAUREN

On my end, everything went fine
-- just perfect.

LISA (V.O.)

And the police? -- What about
them?

LAUREN

No problem...just fine --
everything...One detective -- who
was very considerate -- asked for
my telephone number, just in case
--

(at that moment,
she looks up)

-- Wait a minute...Hold on....

Lauren is staring out the window. After a beat, she realizes it's Columbo.

63 EXT. LAUREN'S BEL AIR ESTATE - COLUMBO

63

He's standing at his car, pouring water from a canteen into a doggie bowl.

64 INT. LAUREN'S BEDROOM

64

LAUREN

-- That's him -- it's the
detective -- He's feeding a dog
-- a basset...a very old ---

CONTINUED

64 CONTINUED

64

LISA (V.O.)
(interrupts)
What do you think he wants?

LAUREN
Probably about the missing jewelry
-- I'm sure it's nothing to be
concerned about....

LISA (V.O.)
All the papers said it was a
robbery. Did you see them?

LAUREN
Yes -- I read them first thing
this morning.

LISA (V.O.)
Call me later...I want to know
what he said.

LAUREN
I'll call you at one....

65 INT. FOYER

65

Columbo is waiting. Lauren comes down the stairs. She's
been through a lot, and it shows. But she doesn't wear it
on her sleeve. She carries a cup of coffee.

LAUREN
Good morning, Lieutenant. Forgive
the way I look. I took a
sedative, and I just got up.

COLUMBO
You look just fine to me.

LAUREN
(smiling)
You're an easy audience.

COLUMBO
That's not the way I see it.

LAUREN
You were very kind to me last
night. I appreciate it.

COLUMBO
I understand what you're going
through.

CONTINUED

65 CONTINUED

65

LAUREN

It's been a nightmare. But, the world doesn't get me that easy. I'll make the funeral arrangements -- I'll do that -- But I'm also going to buy a new pair of shoes...and I'm going to have my hair done...and by the end of the day, I'm going to be spectacular.

COLUMBO

Sounds good to me. Can I ask you a few questions?

LAUREN

Do you mind if we go out in the patio?

COLUMBO

No...No, not at all.

CUT TO

66 EXT. PATIO

66

It's sunny. Lauren, in her housecoat, sits in the sunny portion.

COLUMBO

Our procedure -- in manners like this -- is to verify -- do you mind if I sit in the shade?

LAUREN

Not at all.

Columbo moves to get a chair from the far end of the patio. He brings it to a table with an umbrella, which he has to adjust to produce shade.

COLUMBO

(during above business)

You know...some people can take the heat -- not me. I start sweating -- comes right through my shirt -- but mostly in the feet -- maybe that's why I have such soft feet -- perspiration -- softens them up...of course, it's tough on the nose...Now, my wife -- she likes the heat. She's always cold. It takes that woman

(MORE)

CONTINUED

COLUMBO (Cont'd)
forty minutes to get into the pool. I'm exhausted from swimming, and she hasn't gotten her knees wet yet. I guess it's a question of natures -- she has a cold nature, and I have a warm nature....

LAUREN
She has a circulation problem.

COLUMBO
Right -- probably does. Can that be cured?

LAUREN
No, there's not much they can do about it.

COLUMBO
...And I suppose you've tried the best men in the field?

LAUREN
As a matter of fact, I have -- but, how did you know I had this problem?

COLUMBO
I didn't. It's just that last night I noticed you didn't drink the coffee...You just used the cup to keep your hands warm. Reminded me of my wife...Okay -- enough chit-chat -- down to business.

COLUMBO
(referring to
cigar)
Does this bother you?

LAUREN
Not at all. I like it.

COLUMBO
Good -- Okay -- I'll just get this report out.

Columbo digs around, finds his report -- his pencil -- puts cigar down, during:

COLUMBO
This is for the Captain -- This has to be right -- He's one tough guy.

CONTINUED

66 CONTINUED (2)

66

Lauren, who's been studying Columbo while he fiddles, trying to figure him out.

LAUREN

I'm sure he is....

COLUMBO

We found an empty Piaget case.
Did Mr. French own a Piaget watch?

LAUREN

Yes, he did.

COLUMBO

Expensive?

LAUREN

Very.

COLUMBO

Anything else?

LAUREN

I don't know of anything else that
was worth anything.

COLUMBO

Are you sure?

LAUREN

Nothing comes to mind.

COLUMBO

(gathering up his
papers)

Okay -- All right -- I guess that
does it.

LAUREN

Finished?

COLUMBO

That's it -- Uh...Can't think of
anything else.

Columbo and Lauren rise.

COLUMBO

Do you have anything for a
headache?

LAUREN

(taken aback)

I'm sure we do.

CONTINUED

