

PRODUCER: Stanley Kallis
DIRECTOR: James Frawley

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COLUMBO

MURDER, SMOKE AND SHADOWS

Written

by

Richard Alan Simmons

(TVM)

PLEASE NOTE:

Pertaining to the present name Herb Fisher:
All references to Herb will be Len; all
references to Herbie will be Lenny; all
references to Herbert will be Leonard.

ALSO PLEASE NOTE:

All references to Jeanie Fisher will be Jenny
Fisher.

COLUMBO

MURDER, SMOKE AND SHADOWS

FADE IN

1 EXT. STUDIO LOT - TOUR TRAM - DAY 1

The wonders of movie-making are unfolding for the delight of visiting tourists (two tram loads in a single train) as their tour leader, a blazered young lady stationed by the driver, good-naturedly spiels their way through the studio lot.

So it goes, cut by cut, hither and yon, and what takes our eye is not so much the grand sights of the studio as the man seated at the very end of the last tram. A tourist indeed, his clothes too thick for this splendid, sun-blessed California day; his name is HERB FISHER, a bit round-shouldered, a bit work-worn for all his thirty young years. Curiously, he seems to be oblivious to the tour guide's happy pitch, his tensioned eyes following a will of their own as they search nervously from side to side.

2 EXT. SPECIAL EFFECTS BUILDING - TOUR TRAM, GUIDE, HERB 2

Here the Tour Guide points out a plain and massive building as:

TOUR GUIDE

And to the right, folks, the magic kingdom where our directors truly make the impossible become true: the special effects building. We just might drop in there later and continue this tour all the way to Mars.

Some appreciative light laughter from the folks. As for Herb, his eyes are riveted on that building now. It is as if he were holding his breath and that breath becomes a wincing gasp as a young man exits springily from the special effects building. He is a pleasant young man, as nice a young man as you could ever wish to see. His name is ALEX BRADY -- about Herb's age but still touched with vibrant youthfulness. Worn blue jeans and a blue workshirt and a can of film under his arm.

CONTINUED

2 CONTINUED

2

TOUR GUIDE

And coming out over there, right on cue for us, ladies and gentlemen, that fellow there is the famous master of special effects, Alex Brady. That's the young man who's made more superhits than any film-maker in Hollywood history.

(X)

(calling out to him)

Hi, Alex.

Alex tosses the film can into an electric cart and waves to the folks, some of whom wave back as the tram goes on its way. But not with Herb. Herb has split from the tram, over the back end just as Alex gets into the cart and swings it in an arc to drive off in the opposite direction.

3 ANGLE ON HERB

3

his face impassive now, shading his eyes, watching Alex and the cart.

4 HERB'S POINT OF VIEW - THE CART

4

swings into a turn and disappears around a corner.

5 EXT. BOYS CLUB - DAY - ALEX AND THE CART

5

What we call the Boys Club is a neat bungalow -- a boys club for one boy. The boy is Alex who parks the cart and enters with the film.

6 INT. BOYS CLUB - DAY - ALEX

6

as he enters his personal playland, part film-sorcerer's lab, part fraternity house.

For example: an editor's Kem on one table, an elaborate and immaculately antique electric train on another; large blow-ups of Wyeth illustrations of boy's classics on the

CONTINUED

6 CONTINUED

6

walls along with overpowering photos of athletic heroes; a round water bed and bean-bag chairs; books and books in a vast built-in case and, over there, equally voluminous collections of records, audio tapes, video tapes; to play the audio tapes and records, the grooviest stereo rig you can imagine with speakers like locomotives; to play the video stuff, a television setup ripped from the innards of NASA; history-of-cinema treasures such as an ancient crank camera, megaphone, projector; a soft drink machine, a bright red refrigerator and a replica of a drugstore soda fountain. Above all, awards -- statuettes and honors and plaques and, in a pinnacle position, an Academy Oscar decked in a doll-like toga and derby hat.

Alex drops the film can by the Kem, moves to kick the drink machine. A can of soda drops into his hand. He pops the top, crosses to turn on the stereo, returns to the Kem, drinks, removes a smallish reel of film from its container, threads it up. Classical music breaks like thundering surf from the speakers. Alex starts the Kem, drops onto a stool and drinks again.

7 KEM - SPECIAL EFFECTS FOOTAGE

7

What we have here is fairly technical stuff: various phases of building an elaborate special effect. Still, it seems to march along smartly, if abstractly, with the music from the stereo.

8 ALEX AND HERB

8

Oh, yes -- Herb indeed as he comes to the partially open door and gravely studies Alex who in turn watches the film. It is a few seconds before he says:

HERB

Alex?

Alex's head snaps up. He stares blankly for a moment, then breaks into an ecstatic grin of recognition.

ALEX

Herbie.

He rises, snaps off the drive motor on the Kem, crosses exuberantly to embrace his old friend as Herb comes deeper into the room. As for Herb, he returns the embrace half-heartedly as if embarrassed by Alex's affection.

CONTINUED

ALEX

Herbie, Herbie, you come to L.A.,
you don't call? You don't let me
know?

(breaking from
the embrace)

You did call -- two days ago. My
secretary said you were on the
phone. I picked it up, you weren't
there. You playing tricks?

HERB

I wanted to see if you'd be here.
I guess I was nervous.

ALEX

What're you nervous about?

(moves to turn
off stereo)

Let me look at you. What're you
doing here? You still living in
Albany? (X)

HERB

(diffidently)

Yeah, still Albany. Still working
in the men's store.

(eyes trace the
room)

You know, I figured you'd have an
office like this.

ALEX

(a hint of
amusement)

It's not my office, Herb. Just
a goof-off place.

Herb moves to check out the awards.

HERB

Talented Alex. Smart, smart Alex.
And still just one of the fellas.
The three of us goofing around old
L.A.

(turns to dart
a rueful grin
at Alex)

You and me and Buddy Coates.

ALEX

What're you in town for? How
long?

CONTINUED

8 CONTINUED (2)

8

HERB

(taking a good
look around)

Me? Just the day. I ducked my
job for the day. In this morning,
out tonight. I took the studio
tour. Jumped ship when I saw you.

(eyes find the
Oscar statuette)

Look at that. You won the Award.
I was so proud of you that night.
Me and Buddy.

(X)

(eyes on Alex
again)

The three of us -- kids banging
around this town -- we knew you
were the special one, Alex --
helping you make your little
movies. We still didn't dream how
successful you were going to be.
How rich and famous.

He has drifted to the electric train. There he switches
the transformer, and the tooting train takes half a turn
around the track. He switches it off.

HERB

Our Alex.

Hands in his pockets, Alex lounges into one of the bean bag
chairs.

ALEX

Knock it off, Herb. I was lucky.
I work hard but luck is luck.
Even those days we were going to
school here....

HERB

Sure, college boys.
(that pensive
grin again)

We didn't stay there very long,
did we? Too many important things
to do.

ALEX

What I was really doing, was
jumping the studio fence --
passing myself off as a mail boy
-- flogging my one-reelers like
popcorn. Until the cops caught
me.

(MORE)

CONTINUED

8 CONTINUED (3)

8

ALEX (Cont'd)

They were throwing me out when Mr. Marosco came driving by. Want to talk about luck? He even wanted to see my films.

HERB

(the memory still
amazes him)

How old were we then?

ALEX

Twenty. Ten years ago. Mr. Marosco gave me his word -- before I was twenty-one, I'd direct a film for his studio. In the luck department, I was the grand champion.

(X)

Herb is looking at the static image on the Kem.

HERB

Can I see?

Alex rises and turns on the drive.

ALEX

Just some effects we're building.

Herb watches for a few seconds. Then, looking directly at Alex:

HERB

Poor Buddy's dead.

ALEX

(profound shock)
Buddy Coates? How? When?

HERB

Last week. Hepatitis. I'd see him once in a while. I bought insurance from him. At the end I came down to New York.

ALEX

(still the shock)
He married?

HERB

No. Me neither.

ALEX

Me neither.

CONTINUED

HERB

We were a hard-luck bunch. First my sister Jeanie, then Buddy.

Alex really doesn't want to talk about Jeanie.

ALEX

Jeanie was a long time ago.

HERB

Not so long. A year behind us in school. Just after you had your good luck with Mr. Marosco.

Okay, enough. Alex breaks off and crosses to the soda fountain.

ALEX

Come on, we'll drink a soda to Buddy -- what was his favorite?

HERB

Chocolate.

ALEX

Chocolate. I got chocolate.

He starts to build a couple of ice-cream sodas.

HERB

Can we drink to Jeanie, too?

Alex flicks a glance at him.

ALEX

Sure. Ice-cream sodas all around.

Herb stands there watching him.

HERB

Remember how we were helping you finish up that amateur film of yours? I had to work at the market that Sunday -- keep up the payments on my motorcycle. You wanted Jeanie to ride it in the picture -- some kind of stunt you wanted. She was scared of it and I said no way, so we dropped the whole thing.

He crosses now to sit at the soda fountain.

9 AT FOUNTAIN - ALEX AND HERB

9

Alex still building the sodas. Herb's eyes are fixed on him as:

HERB

You and Buddy -- your second cameraman -- remember how you got him hooked on film there for a while?

ALEX

Buddy should've stayed with it.

(X)

HERB

And there's you and Buddy waiting for her to show up at your location. But she never got there. That accident she had with the cycle. Bleeding to death till somebody found her. Too late for the paramedics. She died in their ambulance.

Spoons and straws in the sodas; one for Herb, one for Alex.

ALEX

(quietly)

Come on, Herb. Don't lacerate yourself.

HERB

Lacerate. You always knew just the right word.

ALEX

To Buddy.

HERE

To Jeanie.

They drink through the straws -- Alex more than Herb. Herb puts his soda down, takes a package from his jacket pocket.

(X)

HERB

The last day with Buddy. He gave me a package. He made me promise not to look at it till he wasn't with us anymore.

Alex looks at the package -- at Herb's solid gaze.

CONTINUED

9 CONTINUED

9

HERB

It was a little reel of sixteen-millimeter film, like you used to use.

(opens the package)

I had it made up bigger -- in thirty-five millimeter -- like you use now.

(reveals the mini-reel)

Can we play it on that thing?

He indicates the Kem. Alex takes caution from Herb's grave eyes. Without a word he takes the film and comes from behind the fountain to cross O.S. to the Kem. Herb watches him. I can tell you as a fact that his look is murderous.

10 AT THE KEM

10

Alex is threading up the film. Herb comes into SHOT. Alex looks at him again, starts the drive.

11 AT THE KEM

11

The film is grainy black-and-white. We see JEANIE -- about nineteen, pretty and long-haired. She is riding the motorcycle -- vivacious and laughing, an instant of pure joy, TV-commercial style -- as she pulls a grandstanding wheelie on what seems to be a tree-lined secondary road. Suddenly, as her rear wheel slams into a pot hole, her little stunt goes out of control.

The motorcycle skids and reels and Jeanie is thrown O.S. The CAMERA, hand-held, clings for a second to the flopped motorcycle, then SWERVES erratically to FIND Jeanie's inert body flung by the side of the road. There is already a wet shine of black-and-white blood.

Now young Alex runs into the scene. He holds a sixteen-millimeter camera, reacts in panic at what he sees, turns and gestures wildly at the CAMERA. Our gyrating IMAGE sweeps up into the air. And the film runs out.

12 AT THE KEM - ALEX AND HERB

12

Alex continues to stare for a moment at the blank screen, then looks at Herb. What he sees is a paroxysm of hatred.

CONTINUED

12 CONTINUED

12

HERB

She got there all right, Alex. My sister got to you and Buddy and your movie. No accident along the way. Your stunt went out of control. Jeanie was bleeding to death and you didn't even try to save her. You just ran away and left her to die. Because of Mr. Marosco? Because you were afraid your wonderful new good luck was going to run out if he ever knew what you did to her?

Alex's mind is racing. He turns back to the Kem, reruns the film.

13 THE KEM AND ALEX'S HANDS

13

as he freezes the film on a selected frame: young Alex standing over Jeanie's body, gesturing to the unseen camera. Alex again looks at Herb and reads the full heat of his rage.

HERB

I choked on it. I couldn't tell anyone -- not until I could face you.

ALEX

Herbie....

HERB

(riding over him)

I'm glad you're such a terrific success. I'm glad you got everything you have. Because, you bastard, Alex, I'm going to turn it all into garbage. I'll ram that picture --

(the Kem image)

-- into every scandal sheet and then every newspaper; I'll see that film on every TV news show until you choke on it, too ---

ALEX

It isn't true, Herbie!

CONTINUED

HERB

-- and the cops and the prosecutors until you climb into your grave, Alex, like it's your new sports car! That's what I came here....

ALEX

(over him)

It isn't real!

Herb breaks off, stares at him.

ALEX

What was Buddy playing at? When'd he start doing tricks with film?

HERB

(stunned)

What?

ALEX

(jams his finger
at the Kem
image)

It's a fake -- phoney! All tricked out! What was he -- jealous? Crazy because I made a life and he didn't? Look at it, Herbie! It's not even one piece of film. Any technician could read it. You can see the mat line, clear as crystal!

(there is no mat
line nor:)

Look at the generational grain.

HERB

(uncertain for
an instant)

I don't see anything....

ALEX

(angrily)

I'll prove it to you -- black and white! Buddy did something evil here. If he wanted to accuse me, why didn't he accuse me?

(reaches for the
film)

Give me the film, I'll show you....

(X)

CONTINUED

13 CONTINUED (2)

13

HERB

No!

His own hand descends over the reel. Alex steps back.

14 UP ANGLE - ALEX

14

From this perspective, it is he, not Herb, who is an image of evil. Biblically diabolical.

ALEX

(voice softened
persuasively)

Herbie, for God's sake. We were friends. We were all friends. What's Buddy doing to us?

(X)

15 ALEX AND HERB

15

Our Alex, again -- the nicest of young men.

ALEX

You really think I could've done this to Jeanie?

(again the
flounder of
uncertainty in
Herb's gaze)

Give me a few hours. Wait here for me. I have to get some equipment together -- other experts -- I'll show you its fakery. Then you'll understand, too. Whatever there is to understand -- about poor Buddy. We've been pals since we were twelve. Am I going to stand here and lie to you? Another few hours too much, Herbie?

HERB

(bleakly)

I'll keep the film. My plane's at eleven. I have to be in the store tomorrow.

CONTINUED

15 CONTINUED

15

ALEX

I'll put you on the plane myself.
And you'll give me a hug good-bye.
For now, try to be comfortable.

(hand sweeps
around)

Everything's here.

(hand reaches out
to touch his
friend)

Try a little trust.

Alex turns and exits. Herb watches him go. He stands awkwardly and finally looks toward:

16 OSCAR STATUETTE

16

The fun-loving Oscar statuette. Toga, bowler hat and all.

17 EXT. STUDIO STREET - LATE AFTERNOON - ALEX AND CART

17

as Alex, driving the electric cart, turns it through the vast open doors of a sound stage.

(X)

18 INT. SOUND STAGE - ALEX AND CART

18

as Alex drives in and the doors trundle shut behind him.

(X)

House lights illuminate the relatively bare sound stage. Substantially, what we have is:

Over there -- something that looks like a high, black-painted picket fence; every other picket is missing. Length about twenty feet.

In the back -- a vast projection screen approaching the dimensions of a cyclorama. Facing it at a distance -- a hulking projector.

(X)

Over on the side, against the stage wall -- a clump of 10K's, baby's and coiled electrical cables.

Over here -- a large holographic photography table with its array of laser, mirrors, lenses, shutters, etc. The laser is live and gives us a pretty effect.

Next to the holographic table -- another table, a light one on wheels, holding a few framed holographic images, correctly lighted and ready to be viewed. Fiddling with their adjustment is Alex's boyish special effects maven, STAN GILLIS.

CONTINUED

18 CONTINUED

18

Alex dismounts (that same springy, go-to-hell gait we saw earlier) and comes over to him.

19 ALEX AND STAN

19

Alex crossing in.

STAN

You okay, Alex?

ALEX

I was any better I'd be unbearable. What've we got?

STAN

Three-dimensional magic.

ALEX

Show me.

As Alex moves to check the holographs, CAMERA ANGLES TO SHOOT FROM BEHIND HIM so that we see what he sees: the vaguely three-dimensional quality of a holographic image of a shapely young woman. Later we will meet her as Ruth Jernigan. Alex reacts with some measure of surprise, looks at Stan.

(X)

ALEX

Ruthie?

(X)

STAN

She volunteered.

(X)

ALEX

Well, she's a volunteering kind of a girl.

(X)

(hunching forward
to look)

Swing the table.

Stan slowly and smoothly swings the table from side to side on its wheels. We get about a twenty-degree angle before the image degrades and vanishes.

ALEX

About twenty degrees off axis and there she goes. I don't think we're ready to thrill the audience with Ruth Jernigan in glorious holographic three dimensions.

(X)

CONTINUED

19 CONTINUED

19

He is already crossing to the projector, switches it on. If it is necessary to dim the house lights for the following effect, he can use a rheostat dangling from a cable near the projector.

(X)

20 WIDE ANGLE

20

There, on the vast screen, is (for instance) the Roman coliseum.

ALEX

Stan, get in there and look nice for me.

Stan goes to the screen. For all the world, he looks to be standing in the middle of the coliseum as:

STAN

I got the laser table ready. We can stay late, work up some of our own holograms.

ALEX

Can't do it tonight.

He breaks toward the stack of electrical equipment against the wall.

ALEX

Got to fiddle with the script.
(re the projected
image)
We ever get that system to work,
who needs locations?

He looks back to the electrical gear.

STAN

I've got some new plates.

ALEX

Break 'em out.

Stan moves to peruse a rack of film cans.

(X)

21 ALEX AT ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT

21

He looks down at a specific length of coiled cable, fingers it for length and heft. Tucked away over there is a pair of electrician's gloves. Alex sees them -- reaches for them.

CONTINUED

21 CONTINUED

21

STAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Want to see these plates now?

(X)

ALEX

Can't, Stanley. Maybe tomorrow.

Thoughtfully he slips the gloves into the coils of the cable he has just selected.

22 EXT. STUDIO STREET - LATE AFTERNOON - ALEX AND THE CART

22

driving up to his office bungalow. This one has a different ambiance than the Boys Club; its louvered windows directly face the studio street. Also parked there is Alex's Corniche Rolls Royce, its convertible top in place.

Out of the cart and into the bungalow goes Alex.

23 INT. BUNGALOW - RECEPTION - LATE AFTERNOON - ALEX AND ROSE WALKER

23

Alex's secretary is an old-timer at the studio, maybe twice his age. And that's how good a secretary she is. Her name is ROSE WALKER.

The reception office is as lavish as you please and a bit formal in contrast to the Boys Club. To one side, three high, wing-backed chairs surround a round table. Rose is typing dictation into a computer via a headset attached to a tape machine.

Alex approaches and takes a clipboard telephone list from her desk as:

ALEX

Hello. You're fired.

ROSE

(removing
headset)

Excuse me, Alex?

ALEX

I said go home, Rosie. It's time.
Thanks for the day.

ROSE

Say it again.

ALEX

Why?

CONTINUED

ROSE

Because I like to hear it.

She goes to get her topcoat. Alex moves to his office door. Now we see that a man reading a newspaper in one of the high-backed chairs is glancing back at Alex from behind a wing.

ROSE

Mr. Marosco called twice. He's anxious to talk with you.

ALEX

Tell him tomorrow. I haven't got time now.

(the phone list)

What's this call?

(X)

Coat over her arm, she comes back past Alex and takes the phone list.

ROSE

That nice production manager you used to work with -- the one you called the professor. I said you'd call him back.

(X)

ALEX

(a wince of
frustration)

Aw, Rosie, couldn't you have said something else?

ROSE

(right in his
eye)

Should I have told him he's too old, Alex?

ALEX

(twist of
resentment)

Give me a break.

He turns to his office door.

ROSE

(quietly)

Alex -- Ruth Jernigan's waiting for you.

CONTINUED

23 CONTINUED (2)

23

ALEX
(stares for a
beat)
How long?

ROSE
Not long -- ten minutes. And Phil
Crossette is here.

As she goes to secure her computer and Alex again turns to his office, the guy from the winged chair moves in on him, folding his newspaper.

24 ALEX AND PHIL

24

PHIL CROSSETTE is a merry-eyed fellow with a fighter's build and face. He speaks in an intimately lowered voice.

PHIL
Won't keep you a minute, Mr.
Brady. That little job I did for
you the other day --
(flicker of a
wink)
-- everything work out all right?

ALEX
Yeah, Phil, fine -- fine.

PHIL
Performance okay?

ALEX
Yeah, your work was very good.
We get the next picture going,
I'll show my appreciation.

PHIL
No part too small. Any time I can
help you out, maestro.

He exits to the street with a good night to Rose. Alex grins a private grin and goes into his office.

25 INT. PRIVATE OFFICE - LATE - ALEX AND RUTH JERNIGAN

25

as Alex enters. More opulence. In the softly low-keyed lighting -- just a desk lamp -- we see RUTH JERNIGAN in a chair half-facing the disaster-strewn desk. This young

CONTINUED

25 CONTINUED

25

woman is prettier than you can possibly imagine and even nicer than that. Her wide skirt is arranged just so around her in the chair; her hands are folded demurely in her lap. She looks like a picture.

She and Alex regard each other until:

RUTH

I've been posing here for you.

Alex comes to lean over her, hands braced on the arms of her chair.

26 CLOSER ANGLE - ALEX AND RUTH

26

ALEX

You want to try for laughs, try a little kick with your upstage foot.

Her hands reach out to cup his face. Gently and lengthily, she kisses him.

RUTH

How's that for laughs?

ALEX

Ruthie, I could use a lot of that.

RUTH

You used to use a lot of that.

(a beat)

Before I went to work as your leading lady.

Alex moves to drop into the chair behind his desk, one foot raised to the chair top. He gazes at her.

ALEX

I seem to have heard something how you went and got yourself a new boy friend. Just a couple of playful actors. Right on my very own picture.

RUTH

Maybe the movie was our trouble, Herr Doktor Direcktor. I seemed to have slipped your mind -- just your actress while you made your very own picture.

They continue to look at each other.

CONTINUED

26 CONTINUED

26

RUTH
Can I confess, Alex? Even
murderers are allowed to confess.

A KNOCK at the door.

ALEX
(voice up)
Yeah.

Rose enters, coat on and ready to leave.

ROSE
Excuse me.

She crosses to lay a sheet of paper on Alex's desk as:

ROSE
Weather report. Good night,
Alex. (X)

ALEX
Good night, Rose.

A good night to Ruth (first name) and Rose exits. Alex
looks at Ruth.

ALEX
And good night to you, Fraulein
Doktor Actress.
(a beat)
I've got to do something about you
and me, babe.

RUTH
Now?

ALEX
(helpless shrug)
Now I've got other things to think
about.

She mimics his helpless shrug -- and rises.

RUTH
Try to slip me in.

She gives him a little Oliver Hardy wave of her fingertips
up by her cheek. Then she exits as:

RUTH
Exit pursued by a bear.
(winks at him)
Shakespeare wrote that.

And out the door.

27 ON ALEX

27

We hear the outer door open and close. Alex rises, goes to the window, watches her leave. Then he turns down the louvres of the blinds, fully blanking the window. He moves to stand over the desk lamp, picks up the phone.

28 UP ANGLE - ALEX

28

The devil again. He dials, then:

ALEX

(to phone)

Davey, Alex Brady. I need water on Brownstone...

(looks at his watch)

About half an hour -- I'm not running a debate, Davey. Just find your man and do it!

He hangs up.

29 EXT. BOYS CLUB - NIGHT - ALEX IN CORNICHE

29

as Alex's Corniche pulls up in front of the Boys Club.

30 INT. CORNICHE - NIGHT - ALEX

30

Alex looks at the bungalow -- at the pair of electrician's gloves laying on the seat beside him. He stuffs them in his back pocket as he exits the car and crosses to:

(X)

31 INT. BOYS CLUB - NIGHT - HERB

31

He is replacing a book in the bookcase -- not precisely but laying on its side over the tops of other books. It is entirely possible that we will be seeing this volume again before this tale is told.

Herb turns to face Alex as he enters. They face each other across a distance, both subdued.

ALEX

Thanks for waiting.

HERB

What was I going to do -- go dancing?

Alex sees the 35mm reel laying on the Kem table.

CONTINUED

31 CONTINUED

31

ALEX

Take the film. They're waiting
for us. And we've got a stop to
make.

HERB

(pocketing the
reel)

I don't believe this, Alex.

ALEX

I know.

(a beat)

You will.

32
thru 37
OMITTED

32
thru
37

38 EXT. BROWNSTONE STREET - NIGHT - THE CORNICHE

38

as the car turns onto the street, travels its length and
parks just around a corner.

39 CLOSER SHOT - ALEX AND HERB

39

as Alex gets out of the car.

ALEX

Come on.

Herb gets out also, follows Alex around the corner to:

39A EXT. BROWNSTONE STREET - ALEX AND HERB

39A

The deserted brownstone set, all false front and shadow,
is at once homely and malefic, banal and ominous. Confused
by this setting, Herb looks around. Light from somewhere
tails their figures with long shadows.

ALEX

Brownstone Street.

HERB

(doesn't like
this)

What for? Why'd you bring me
here?

CONTINUED

39A CONTINUED

39A

ALEX

To see the street.

He does a restless little whirling dance, an extravagant touch of Astaire, as:

ALEX

This is where we make movies.
Shadows on the handy-dandy screen.
This is where we kid you with
illusion. This is where we blow
your reality, Herbie.

(ends up facing
his friend, one
hand outflung
for a finish)

This is where I kill you, Herbie.
That's why I brought you here.

Herb stares, shrinks back a step.

ALEX

(a sudden grin)

Come on -- we could never hurt
each other, you and me.

HERB

(dry-throated)

The film -- it's the truth, isn't
it?

Alex advances on him, heavy with menace now, as:

ALEX

What the hell do you know about
truth? What's shadow, what's
substance, Herbie? They teach you
about that in the men's store?

Fully frightened now, Herb stumbles back from Alex's
threat, stumbles down a short flight of brownstone
stairs....

40 EXT. BELOW STREET LEVEL - HERB AND ALEX

40

as Herb catches his balance, looks up to Alex as Alex
descends toward him.

HERB

You're crazy....

CONTINUED

40 CONTINUED

40

ALEX

Better run, Herbie. Escape,
escape....

Herb turns and tears at the door at the base of the stairs. It swings open to reveal no exit -- a solid brick wall. He whirls to reface Alex as we hear the rumble of an approaching water truck. Now Alex is suddenly the pathetic victim of unearned treachery.

ALEX

That film -- you want to hurt me,
old friend. You want to hurt an
old friend. And that hurts me
right here.

Looming over Herb, he indicates his own heart. The sound of the truck is closer now.

41 EXT. STREET LEVEL - BROWNSTONE STREET - THE WATER TRUCK

41

A night beast comes to spray its sluice of water onto the deserted street. Alex and Herb, below street level, cannot be seen.

The truck moves on, leaving only the hard sheen of wet street and pavement, and its vanishing sound.

42 EXT. BELOW STREET LEVEL - HERB AND ALEX

42

ALEX

(reassuringly
now)

Hey, it's all an act. Don't you
know an act? I'm acting for you.

Herb darts past him, flees up the steps. Alex comes after him.

43 HERB

43

Again, in his haste, he stumbles and recovers; but now Alex is on him again from an unexpected direction, thrusting into shot.

(X)

ALEX

Here we go, Herbie.

44 UP ANGLE - ALEX

44

The devil again.

(X)

ALEX

Watch your feet. Wet is dangerous. Don't fall now, kid.

Alex is advancing on us as CAMERA pulls back from him.

ALEX

Here we go, illusion all the way -- into the maelstrom. Into the valley of death rode the six hundred. All fakery, Herb. No valley, no gallant six hundred. Death is the only part that's real....

(X)

45 ALEX AND HERB

45

Alex advancing on the retreating Herb -- shepherding him toward a high, wrought-iron gate behind him.

ALEX

Who's the real illusion, you or me, Herb? Which one of us is going to die?

And Herb turns from him, turns into the wrought-iron gate, seizes it as if it were his only escape from Alex's presence.

And in this instant, the gate becomes a lightning bolt, high voltage cracking Herb's life in writhing, burning spasm. Not even his scream goes untouched by terminal shock.

46 LOW POSITION SHOT - HERB'S FEET

46

Herb's twisting feet planted in the truck's wet legacy.

47 ALEX AND HERB

47

Alex watches until Herb is clearly dead, then moves to the side and bends to throw a massive switch embedded in a snaking length of electrical cable. Silence now as Herb's body drops from the gate.

Alex puts on the electrician's gloves from his back pocket, moves to disconnect the cable from a high-voltage junction box, then the other end -- which terminates in a giant clip -- from the gate.

48 ANGLE ON TRUNK OF ALEX'S CAR 48

as Alex unlocks the trunk, throws in coiled cable and gloves. They land next to a sledge hammer. He returns to Herb's body, hefts it in his arms, crosses back to dump it in the trunk. Thwunk! The trunk lid closes into CAMERA.

49 EXT. STUDIO MAIN GATE - NIGHT - CORNICHE, ALEX, GATE GUARD 49

Here is Alex's car pausing at the main gate on its way out of the studio. A uniformed GATE GUARD comes from the gate house to wish him good night.

GATE GUARD
Everything okay, Alex?

ALEX
Everything's peachy keen. Good night, Scotty.

GATE GUARD
Good night, sir.

The car drives off. A gust of wind ruffles the guard's uniform. He puts out his hand and looks up. It is beginning to rain. He reaches into the gate house and takes out a slicker jacket.

50 DRIVING SHOT - ANGLE THROUGH WINDSHIELD - RAIN - NIGHT 50

Wipers flag down the rain as Alex's car drives a secondary road close by a beach.

51 EXT. BEACH - NIGHT - RAIN 51

We are aware of a strip of beach and the surf beyond. Wind and rain. Now, with a thud, Herb's body drops before us onto the sand. CAMERA ANGLES TO REVEAL Alex, hair lankly plastered across his forehead, seemingly oblivious to the rain as he stares down at the mortal remains of Herb Fisher, late of Albany.

52 POINT OF VIEW SHOT - HERB 52

to show us the head flopped to one side, cheek in sand, a hand outflung and -- Oh, yes -- all his pockets turned inside out and empty.

53 UP ANGLE - ALEX 53

from below his waist. Still looking down in this most sinister of angles, he slightly raises and spreads his hands, thumbs and forefingers at right angles as if -- can it be? -- as if framing a shot.

54 LOW POSITION SHOT - HERB'S BODY 54

as Alex's foot kicks out, nudging the face from cheek-down to straight up, kicks again to flop the outflung arm closer to the body.

55 ALEX 55

head slightly cocked, evaluating this new aesthetic. He nods, satisfied: definitely a better shot. He turns o.s.

56 EXT. CAR TRUNK 56

as Alex takes the sledgehammer and goes O.S. CAMERA HOLDS and soon we hear the sound of the hammer's single blow. Now Alex returns to SHOT, puts the sledgehammer back in the trunk and slams it shut. CAMERA CONTINUES TO HOLD as he crosses to driver's door. We hear the door open and close. The engine starts and the car pulls away.

Now CAMERA adjusts, ever so slowly, to show us the rain (lighter now) falling on a well-thumbed paperback book laying on the road. As we DESCEND on it, we read the title: "THE FILMS OF ALEX BRADY."

And with this:

FADE OUT

FADE IN

57 EXT. BOYS CLUB - DAY - ALEX, CART 57

and here's Alex driving up to park his cart. A curious glance at that strange car parked there, a battered, convertible Peugeot of mature vintage. Ah, well. Out of the cart and carrying one of the framed holographic films, Alex enters the partially open door of the Boys Club.

58 INT. BOYS CLUB - DAY - ALEX 58

as Alex enters to the sound of the electric train and:

59 ANGLE TRACKING THE TRAIN

59

Here it comes, indeed a child's dream of glory. And as it curves into a turn, we discover LT. COLUMBO, face at track level and cigar-stub clamped, bathed in delight as he touches a button to produce a locomotive WHISTLE.

60 ALEX AND COLUMBO

60

Alex watches him for a beat or two, then, a bit cool at this turf invasion:

ALEX

Excuse me. I think one of us might be in the wrong place.

Caught red-handed, Columbo hastens to turn off the train and throw up his hands in surrender.

COLUMBO

Oh, that'd be me, Mr. Brady. I certainly know who you are. I'm sorry, but in this whole studio

--
(an expansive gesture)

-- this whole wonderful place, this is the treasure --

(the electric train)

-- that took my eye. This is certainly some beauty. I'm with the police, sir.

(showing Alex his badge)

Lieutenant Columbo? Homicide?

Now, as the man in the wrinkled rain coat identifies himself, Alex stands with his back to him, placing the hologram in some temporary position, so that we are shooting through the back of the film as we see his reaction: Jesus!

COLUMBO

Miss Walker, your secretary, sir, she asked me to wait here while she tried to find you.

61 ANOTHER ANGLE - COLUMBO AND ALEX

61

When Alex turns to reface Columbo, he is once again the most winsome of young men.

CONTINUED

61 CONTINUED

61

ALEX

Lieutenant, I don't know what brought you here, but you're the answer to a film-maker's prayer. How did you know?

COLUMBO

Know what, sir?

ALEX

In my business, we work with the people we work with and we never -- hardly ever -- break out of that self-centered little circle.

(X)

With this, hands in his pockets and ever so relaxed, Alex drops into his bean bag chair, merry eyes dancing all over Columbo.

ALEX

To meet somebody wonderfully new, an authentic plumber or chemist or -- praise God -- a homicide lieutenant -- from time to time I've thought about making a detective movie.

(X)

(reaches for a straw in an empty soft-drink can)

Now I want to stick this straw in your ear and extract everything you've ever thought or felt or seen or even dreamed about your profession: and I bless whatever it is that brings you to me. Please sit down, Lieutenant. Don't hesitate to tell me the story of your life.

Columbo hears all this with beaming bemusement: Alex's greeting has wrapped him a warm embrace.

(X)

COLUMBO

Well, Mr. Brady, that's as fine a greeting as I've ever received.

(X)

And, indeed, Columbo accepts Alex's invitation to sit in a facing bean bag chair. It sinks precipitously to a level lower than Alex's and seems, in Columbo's case, to be precisely designed for maximum discomfort. It's a struggle.

(X)

CONTINUED

61 CONTINUED (2)

61

COLUMBO

(X)

Mostly, when a policeman shows up, people -- right away they get all guarded and queasy. But you, sir, you make me feel very warm and welcome. What I've come to see you about, that's about an unidentified body on the beach -- what we call a John Doe. Do you mind if I stand, sir?

Giving up on the Procrustean chair, he rises. So does Alex.

ALEX

Why don't we try it over here, Lieutenant. A John Doe on the beach?

(X)

He leads Columbo toward the water bed.

COLUMBO

Identity unknown, sir. An unidentified body. Found on the beach. Early this morning.

62 AT WATER BED

62

Alex's hands urge Columbo to sit on the bed.

ALEX

Here -- try this for comfort. Try stretching out. It's a water bed.

Well, Columbo gives it a try.

COLUMBO

You know, I've never tried one of these. My wife -- that's Mrs. Columbo -- she's been trying to get me interested.

ALEX

How do you like it?

Columbo tries shifting his weight on this fluid machine.

COLUMBO

Well, to tell you the truth, it feels all swimmy. Makes me wonder
(MORE)

CONTINUED

COLUMBO (Cont'd)
what Mrs. Columbo has in mind.
I know it seems very strange, sir,
my coming to you with this John
Doe, but if you'll just bear with
me.

He sits up, shifting awkwardly from here to there on the bed. Alex perches on a nearby high director's chair and listens with riveted attentiveness. An antique motion picture camera stands on a tripod just beyond his shoulder as if ready to follow his command for action.

COLUMBO
You see, the victim's face, Mr. Brady -- I hate to say it right out like this but there wasn't any face. Like he'd been struck with something heavy, like a big hammer. And his death by electrocution. I'd say about your age, sir. Electrocuted by a very high voltage. Burned up his whole nervous system.

ALEX
(an outstretched
finger)
It rained last night. Lightning.

COLUMBO
I'm afraid not, sir. The weather people say rain but no lightning.

ALEX
High tension lines on the beach?

COLUMBO
That would certainly help explain it, Mr. Brady. But no electricity where we found the body. No electricity at all. This is really a very interesting bed, sir.

He stands, gratefully. So does Alex. From his raincoat pocket Columbo takes a package -- an object wrapped in a small, wrinkled, brown paper bag.

CONTINUED

COLUMBO

And we can't even get fingerprints. His hands all burned. Like he was grabbing onto something when it happened. And his pockets empty, sir. All turned out and empty. So you see we really have a very puzzling problem here -- how to identify him -- give him a name and a life and then maybe we can deal with how he died. Which brings me to you, sir. And this.

And out of the paper bag comes a well-thumbed paperback book.

COLUMBO

The Films of Alex Brady.

He holds up the book to Alex who regards it, and then Columbo, quizzically.

COLUMBO

We found it near the body -- up on the road. Like maybe somebody dropped it, or it fell from the victim's pocket if somebody was carrying the body -- like from a car. Or maybe it's got nothing whatsoever to do with the murder.

ALEX

That's the first time you've used the word 'murder,' Lieutenant.

COLUMBO

(cocking his head
to look at the
book)

Well, I expect it was something like murder. It would have been a very strange electrocution where the victim got up and turned out all his pockets and then took himself to the beach where he hit himself in the face. You see what I mean, sir?

(X)

Now Alex (followed by Columbo) is crossing toward his bookshelves as:

CONTINUED

62 CONTINUED (3)

62

ALEX

What I don't see, Lieutenant, is how I can help you. I expect there's several thousand copies of that book around the world.

63 AT BOOK SHELVES

63

ALEX

I've even got one of them myself.

He holds up a duplicate book which he takes from the shelf. Not far away is the book that we last saw in Herb's hands, laying across the tops of other volumes. Through the following speech, he picks this book up and returns it to its proper place on the shelf.

COLUMBO

Well, it's not just the book, Mr. Brady. It's what's written here inside this book -- inside the cover. Over by the light, please?

And off they go to the soft light glowing from a curving section of glass-brick wall.

64 ANOTHER ANGLE BY GLASS-BRICK DECOR

64

Here Columbo gives Alex the book, stands by his shoulder, opens the front cover and points out:

COLUMBO

It's damp from the rain last night, but you can still read it. Written in pencil. It's the telephone number of the studio -- with the area code? You see that, sir?

ALEX

Yes, I see that.

65 INSERT - THE BOOK - INSIDE THE COVER PAGE

65

Written in pencil: "818 - 555 - 7000". And written immediately under it: "818 - 555 - 6971". Columbo's HAND, cigar and all, points out:

CONTINUED

65 CONTINUED

65

COLUMBO'S VOICE

And under the studio phone number, the phone number of your own office, Mr. Brady. Your direct dial number, if someone wanted to reach you without going through the switchboard.

66 BACK TO SCENE

66

COLUMBO

You see that? Like somebody had found out your number and then written it here so they could call you.

ALEX

Well, that's clear enough.

He hands the book back to Columbo.

COLUMBO

Did someone call you, sir?

ALEX

You mean someone without a face -- electrocuted -- whose name we don't know?

Columbo is trying to get the book back into the paper bag as:

COLUMBO

Now that you put it that way, it's not much of a question, is it, sir? But we wouldn't be doing our job if we didn't follow up on every little detail. Any kind of strange call at all? Maybe somebody you didn't even know?

ALEX

Oh, yes.

Columbo looks up from his successfully bagged book.

COLUMBO

Yes?

ALEX

Yes. Lots of calls from the unknown.

(X)

CONTINUED

66 CONTINUED

66

As Alex speaks, he crosses back to the hologram, moves to throw a switch that appropriately lights it high from behind, then comes to view it and make appropriate adjustments, swaying from side to side to test the alignment. And there is Columbo behind him, following Alex's swaying, getting a sense of what is going on. The hologram is the same presentation of Ruth Jernigan that we saw earlier. All this as:

(X)

ALEX

Books like that, they're mostly published for amateurs, Lieutenant. Film buffs, dreamers, people living their lives through some film-maker they think they understand, or who'd understand them. Some of them have a goofy idea for a movie, some have even scratched down a script, most of them are just enthusiastically fantasizing. And they call. Where did I begin? How did I get started? How can they get started? Tell me the secret, show me the way. They're sweet or desperate or sad and they do call me and everyone else who does our kind of work.

(turns from the
hologram to
Columbo)

I'm sorry, Lieutenant. No help.
No help at all.

COLUMBO

Well, I can't say I'm surprised, sir. And I'll be running along now.

(a hand toward
the hologram)

You can almost reach out and touch her.

ALEX

Would you like to? That's a holographic film. Guaranteed three-dimensional.

(X)

COLUMBO

But she's just a piece of film, sir.

He is drifting toward the exit. Alex goes with him as:

CONTINUED

66 CONTINUED (2)

ALEX

We could say that about everything we do around here: just a piece of film. But is the film real, Lieutenant?

COLUMBO

Well, the film, that's reality. But the pictures on the film....

ALEX

The images. Are they any less real?

COLUMBO

(stopping)

No, oh, no, Mr. Brady. I can see you're going to run rings around me if we go on like this. I'm afraid I've taken up enough of your time, so I'll just say thank you very much, and I won't be troubling you again, sir.

He offers his hand. Alex takes it as:

ALEX

No trouble at all, Lieutenant.

COLUMBO

Good-bye, sir.

And out he goes. Alex looks after him with amusement. That is most definitely that. But as Alex starts to turn, the door opens and there he is again.

COLUMBO

(diffidently)

Were you really serious about making a detective movie, sir? A film about somebody like me?

ALEX

(a gnaw of
impatience)

Are you going to help me, Lieutenant?

Columbo, the uninvited, is deeper into the room now, having a fresh look at everything.

CONTINUED

66 CONTINUED (3)

66

COLUMBO

(X)

Well, that's the problem. I've got to be honest with you, sir. The kind of work I do, I think it's not as interesting as you think it is. It's just not all that exciting, Mr. Brady -- not like in the movies. The things I work with, I'm afraid they wouldn't be very interesting to an audience. If I'm wrong, sir, I'm sure you'll correct me.

67
thru
69
OMITTED67
thru
69

70 AT SODA FOUNTAIN - COLUMBO

70

COLUMBO

Like these ice-cream soda glasses here. If I was on a homicide case -- you'll forgive me, sir -- and these soda glasses were all I have to work with, well, I'd have to find that interesting. But you, sir....

(X)

Now Alex comes into SHOT, sits on one of the fountain stools and drinks in every word. Columbo is looking at the remains of the sodas which Alex and Herb had shared.

(X)

ALEX

I'm already interested, Lieutenant.

(X)

COLUMBO

(X)

Then I'd have to say you used all this fairly recently -- this wonderful, old-fashioned soda fountain. Two ice-cream sodas, straws and a spoon and an ice-cream soda glass --

(dips a finger
in a glass to
taste it)

I'd say chocolate, sir.
(crouches to peer
at the glasses)

Chocolate syrup with vanilla ice cream. What we used to call a black and white, sir.

(MORE)

CONTINUED

COLUMBO (Cont'd)

And the way the cream has dried hard along the rim, I'd say sometime maybe yesterday. So -- if I was trying to make it more interesting for you, sir -- I'd have to say two of you were enjoying two black-and-white sodas together yesterday. But not really enjoying them because one of them is hardly touched and the other isn't really finished. So you might have been very busy together, or something was upsetting both of you and you just left them there.

Taking a handkerchief from his pocket, he uses it to carefully hold up one of the glasses as if this were indeed serious business.

COLUMBO

As to who that other person might have been, sir, I'd say it was probably a man -- no lipstick marks. And for the rest of it, Mr. Brady, well, we'd have to go to fingerprints.

Glass back on fountain bar, handkerchief back in pocket and a self-effacing grin for Alex.

COLUMBO

But I don't think we have to go that far, sir. I told you you'd be disappointed.

ALEX

(claps his hands)
Bravo, Lieutenant. Not just interesting. Fascinating.

COLUMBO

Well, I think maybe you're just being kind, Mr. Brady. And I'll really have to be going now, sir.

ALEX

I'll try not to keep you.

Columbo starts for the exit, turns to exhibit a hand upraised in salute. And he is finally gone.

- 71 ON ALEX 71
His smile fades. He takes the soda glasses and carries them to the fountain sink. There he smashes them against the steel basin. His glance snaps up at the sound of the door reopening.
- 72 AT DOOR - COLUMBO 72
his head thrust in.
- COLUMBO
Was I right, sir -- about the
soda glasses? (X)
- ALEX (X)
Close enough, Lieutenant.
- An ultimate wave from Columbo. And this time he really does go. (X)
- 73 ON ALEX 73
I suspect he has had quite enough of Lieutenant Columbo. (X)
- 74 EXT. STUDIO STREET - DAY - COLUMBO, COLUMBO'S CAR, WATER TRUCK 74
Columbo driving. And here comes that water truck -- so mercilessly close that Columbo, whose driving leaves much to be desired, has to swerve to avoid it.
- 75 OMITTED 75
- 76 COLUMBO IN CAR 76
as he looks back at this monstrous invader, looks forward again and reacts with horror as he slams on the brakes for a circus stop.
- 77 EXTERIOR - COLUMBO, THE CAR AND A TANK 77
A tank? Yes, a military tank, parked a hair's breadth in front of his car. A couple of mean-eyed veterans are perched by the turret which revolves to point directly at Columbo with a bleakness to rival their own glares. Columbo reverses gingerly, swings around the tank and:

78 EXT. ALEX'S OFFICE - DAY - COLUMBO AND CAR 78

He pulls into a parking spot, gets out and goes into the office.

79 INT. RECEPTION OFFICE - DAY - COLUMBO 79

as he enters. Empty. He calls out:

COLUMBO

Ma'am?

The door to Alex's private office is partially open. He goes to it.

80 INT. ALEX'S OFFICE - DAY - ROSE WALKER, COLUMBO 80

Columbo's face peering through the door, Rose seated behind Alex's shambled desk, phone to her ear as she searches through the mess.

COLUMBO

Ma'am?

She holds up a silencing finger, then waves him into the room as:

ROSE

(to phone,
frustratedly)

No chance, Cecil! He wouldn't order it without telling me. He should've told me before he ordered it but he would've told me after -- I said if he didn't tell me before -- Well, if you have to put something in your computer, I can't think of a better place to insert it!

(bang goes the
phone; to
Columbo)

Are you an inspector?

She continues rifling through the stuff on Alex's desk as:

COLUMBO

No, ma'am, just a Lieutenant. We don't have inspectors anymore. I just wanted to thank you. Mr. Brady and I, we found each other in his secret hangout.

CONTINUED

80 CONTINUED

80

ROSE
(still pawing
around)

You mean the Boys Club. The Boys Club for one boy. If you were an inspector, you could help me inspect his desk. I'm looking for a ten-ton water truck.

COLUMBO
On his desk, ma'am?

ROSE
A note or something. They claim he ordered a water truck to wet down the brownstone street last night and now their whacko computer wants to charge our whacko computer and that's some whacko system. Why would he order a water truck? We won't even shoot for six months.

COLUMBO
I'm sure I wouldn't know, ma'am. He's very young, Mr. Brady, isn't he?

Rose leads the way to the outer office as:

ROSE
The whole damn business is very young, Inspector.

81 INT. RECEPTION OFFICE - DAY - COLUMBO AND ROSE

81

as they enter.

COLUMBO
Lieutenant, ma'am.

(X)

Rose goes to her desk and starts paging through her number-strewn computer screen as Columbo glances at her desktop.

(X)

COLUMBO
When I was a young policeman, the inspectors, they -- is this the weather report?

(X)

CONTINUED

81 CONTINUED

81

ROSE

(continuing work)

Help yourself. Picture-makers
live and die by the weather.

(X)

COLUMBO

I always like to check and see if
I'm really going to need my
raincoat.

(X)

Rose gives him a look. He moves to stand over her
shoulder and watch her computer as:

(X)

COLUMBO

Like I was saying, ma'am, when I
was young on the force, the
inspectors, they all seemed very
old.

(X)

ROSE

When I was a young secretary, all
the great directors and producers
seemed very old. Now that I'm an
old secretary, they got very
young. Film children. They know
every foot of film ever shot but
they think the only important date
in the history of the world is
their own birthday.

(turning to him)

Is there anything more I can do
for you?

COLUMBO

Well, I was wondering, ma'am. All
those fans of Mr. Brady -- those
people who read books about his
films and all -- when they call
for him here, do you keep lists
of those phone calls?

ROSE

If we did, I'd need an extra
computer instead of a clipboard.

(shoves the
clipboard phone
list across the
desk)

No, we don't bother anymore.

CONTINUED

81 CONTINUED (2)

81

COLUMBO

Right. Well, it would've been some job going through those names.

(heel of his palm
against his
forehead)

What am I talking about? I wouldn't even know what name I'd be looking for. Well, good-bye, Miss Walker.

ROSE

(back to work)

Good-bye, Inspector.

And Columbo exits.

82 INT. AT DOOR

82

as it opens again: Columbo and cigar.

COLUMBO

Lieutenant, ma'am?

A genial nod. Gone.

83 EXT. STUDIO ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING - DAY - UP ANGLE - STOCK

83

MR. MAROSCO'S VOICE

This picture of yours, Alex. I know how you love to prepare -- think it out -- experiment.

84 INT. MR. MAROSCO'S OFFICE - DAY - ANGLE ON MR. MAROSCO

84

The office mirrors MR. MAROSCO'S status -- the boss: the right age; tough in shirt-sleeves; not a great deal of education but plenty of wisdom. His feelings for Alex are deep, warm and open. Seated on a couch in front of a coffee table piled with scripts, he leans slightly forward, as if anxious to make himself understood.

(X)

MR. MAROSCO

You want it to be perfect and you plan for a summer release.

85 ANGLE TO INCLUDE ALEX

85

His back to Mr. Marosco, Alex stands on the visitor side of the desk, looking at whatever is there. We might notice framed photos of wife, children and grandchildren. (X)

ALEX

Anything wrong with that, Mr. Marosco?

MR. MAROSCO

You're like an agent, Alex. You read upside down. What do you find on my desk?

ALEX

The secrets you keep from me.

From a container, Alex scoops up a handful of paper clips and turns to face Mr. Marosco, leaning against the edge of the desk. Through the following, he is linking the paper clips into a necklace.

MR. MAROSCO

I keep no secrets. Not from you.

(a slight edge)

Thank you for finding time for me. (X)

(then)

I have a problem, Alex. The board -- they're all over me about a hit for Easter. Your next picture. It's what they want. Easter -- not summer.

His eyes scan Alex's face for a reaction. Alex is making a necklace. Finally:

ALEX

Tell them I can't do it that fast. Say I won't do it.

MR. MAROSCO

It's not the board that's asking you. It's me. It's business -- a new stock issue. Half the board's crazy. They think this is like the oil business, real estate. We're not exactly strangers, Alex. I hope we respect each other. Maybe more than respect. Can we -- can I -- have it by Easter? (X)

Alex moves to sink into a chair facing Mr. Marosco. Still linking the necklace. His face has gone sour.

CONTINUED

ALEX

When do they have to know?

MR. MAROSCO

I have to know today. A board meeting.

ALEX

I've got a lot on my mind these days. Everybody's coming at me. Why do I have to change my plans for them?

(X)

MR. MAROSCO

For me, Alex.

ALEX

Tell them I'm obstinate -- whacko, like old Rosie says.

(rises)

Say there's nothing you can do with me. That way we're both covered. Blame it on me. What are they going to do to you? They can't lay a glove on you.

(loops the necklace over Mr. Marosco's head)

That's for you.

Mr. Marosco looks up at him.

MR. MAROSCO

You're a generous young man, Alex.

He rises. Alex looks at his watch.

ALEX

I've got to get back.

(a warm, farewell hug)

You know how to handle them, boss. You always did.

He exits.

He stands for a beat, then goes to his desk chair. Carefully he lifts the necklace over his head. He throws it in his trash basket.

87 CLOSE ANGLE - TRASH BASKET 87

as the necklace hits the bottom of the basket.

88 EXT. BEACH - DAY - SHOOTING TOWARD ROAD - COLUMBO, ET AL 88

Here we see the staked-out and taped outline of Herb's body -- a few uniformed and civvied police officers collecting their gear, dumping litter from a nearby trash can into a plastic bag, etc. -- some official vehicles and Columbo's car on the road.

Columbo, without his raincoat, stands by the road looking down at the body site. In his hand is THE FILMS OF ALEX BRADY book.

89 CLOSER - COLUMBO 89

Thoughtful, thoughtful.

He turns now to move to the rear of a black-and-white with a uniformed officer in the driver's seat. The trunk is open. A few inches behind the bumper is a taped "X" on the road where we first saw the book at the end of the first act. Inside the car's trunk, in addition to official stuff, is Columbo's raincoat.

Now we see Columbo put the book in the raincoat pocket, then arrange and lift the coat as if it were a body. As he bears this mock-heavy burden out of the trunk, the book slips from the pocket and:

90 THE TAPED "X" - BOOK 90

as the book falls over the tape mark.

91 COLUMBO AND POLICE CAR 91

COLUMBO

Thank you officer -- just drive away now.

The police car pulls forward out of shot. Cigar in mouth, Columbo continues to look down at the book as he shrugs into his raincoat, bends to pick it up as DETECTIVE (X) SERGEANT BURKE comes into shot. Burke is a vaguely worried sergeant, gun-shy of the Lieutenant's unexpected moods and questions.

SGT. BURKE

Excuse me, lieutenant. Can you look at these?

CONTINUED

91 CONTINUED

91

COLUMBO
(as they start
away)

Right away, sergeant. You examine everything?

SGT. BURKE

I certainly did, Lieutenant.

92 EVIDENCE WAGON - COLUMBO AND SERGEANT BURKE

92

They come to the open tailgate of a parked evidence wagon. Various articles of the victim's clothing are arrayed here in clear plastic bags.

SGT. BURKE

Just the regular manufacturer's labels, Lieutenant Columbo. Nothing here to help us.

(X)

COLUMBO

Let me see those shoes.

Sgt. Burke takes a pair of shoes from the plastic bag, lays one down, passes the other to Columbo who acutely inspects his prize. Well-worn loafers.

COLUMBO

You see that shoe, Sergeant Burke? That shoe mean anything special to you?

SGT. BURKE

I can't say it does, sir.

COLUMBO

Well, that's a very comfortable, well-made shoe. For a loafer I mean. Portuguese, I think.

(searches for an
interior label)

There -- made in Portugal. You see that?

SGT. BURKE

(Jesus!)

Yes, Lieutenant.

COLUMBO

Inexpensive. Well-worn. The man got his money's worth with this shoe. Inner sole.

(MORE)

CONTINUED

COLUMBO (Cont'd)
(inspects under
the inner sole)
Nothing under it. You ever walk
a beat, Sergeant?

Columbo inspects under the inner sole of the other shoe as:

SGT. BURKE
No, sir. I never did.

Now Columbo turns the second shoe over. The heel is
missing, its base ragged and charred.

COLUMBO
Oh. Heel's gone. Sticky.
Probably the electricity, where
it came out. You never know what
electricity'll do when it comes
out. One of my nephews, he was
fixing a television set when
lightning hit the antenna. Went
right off his screwdriver and
burned a hole in the tile floor.
Never even hurt him. Except he
never fixed another television
set.

(shoes back in
plastic bag)
Did I ask you if you ever walked
a beat, Sergeant?

SGT. BURKE
I said I never did, Lieutenant.

COLUMBO
Well, that's why you don't have
my interest in shoes. I walked
plenty of beats, Sergeant.

(raises a foot
to the tailgate,
displaying his
own shoe)
You see this shoe? Sort of a
boot. That's the best shoe. I
don't mean the best shoe money can
buy. I mean a comfortable shoe
for a working man. Up high.
Grabs the ankle.

(foot down)
This is a very interesting
subject, Sergeant. If you ever
walked a beat, I mean. What's
this?

92 CONTINUED (2)

92

Columbo lifts up another plastic bag.

SGT. BURKE
That's his belt, lieutenant.

COLUMBO
Oh. His belt.

Columbo takes the belt out of the bag, dangles it by the buckle.

COLUMBO
Just an ordinary belt?

SGT. BURKE
Yes, sir. Ordinary.

COLUMBO
(speculatively)
An ordinary belt....

He eyes the dangling belt. What could come from an ordinary belt?

93 OMITTED

93

94 INT. BOYS CLUB - NIGHT - RUTH JERNIGAN

94

She stands with her eyes scrupulously closed, facing the CAMERA beyond which is the soda fountain. We hear the clinks of something going on there.

RUTH
When do I get to open my eyes?

ALEX'S VOICE
When I say so.

RUTH
Who was that man waiting in your office last night?

ALEX'S VOICE
The man -- Oh, Phil Crossette.

RUTH
Who is he?

ALEX'S VOICE
Just a guy who comes around.

CONTINUED

94 CONTINUED

94

RUTH
I've seen him before.

ALEX'S VOICE
Could be. He's an actor -- bit
player.

RUTH
I don't mean like that. I mean
somewhere real.

ALEX'S VOICE
What comes after Saturday?

RUTH
Sunday.

ALEX'S VOICE
Now you can open your eyes.

She does. Wide, reactive eyes.

RUTH
Oh, Alex.

95 REVERSE ANGLE - ALEX

95

In either hand he holds two obscenely vast and variegated
ice-cream sundaes.

ALEX
Oh, Ruthie.

96 ANOTHER ANGLE - ALEX AND RUTH

96

seated on side-by-side stools at the soda fountain,
rapturously enjoying the sundaes.

RUTH
Love finds Andy Hardy. I feel
like a nineteen-thirties movie.

ALEX
That sweet and innocent?

She darts a glance at him, lets it pass.

RUTH
You ever going to find true love,
Andy Hardy?

CONTINUED

ALEX
I thought I did.

RUTH
(winces)
Ouch. No fair.

Alex gives her a level look.

ALEX
Tell me about your actor.

RUTH
(a faint shrug)
Your actor. Your picture. And
I was drowning -- scared to death
of working for you. I was
wig-wagging all over the place.
(does a kind of
manic mock
semaphore)
Help me, hold me, kiss me, save
me. But you were too busy counting
sprocket holes. Picture hadn't
even started yet when I met Brian
-- met him by accident. My leading-
man-to-be. And then. We had a punishing
love affair.

ALEX
Who got punished?

RUTH
Supposed to be you. Worked out
it was me. Brian and I -- we were
acting all the way.

By this time they are facing each other, eyes on each other, sundaes abandoned.

ALEX
You did it very well.

RUTH
The acting or the affair?

ALEX
Come on, Ruthie. I got
over-immersed. What's the penalty
for that?

CONTINUED

96 CONTINUED (2)

96

RUTH

Today I'd say about forty lashes.
Then, what I had in mind was a
death sentence.

(then)

Did you miss me?

Alex makes a mock evaluation.

RUTH

I mean on balance.

ALEX

Yes.

RUTH

How much?

ALEX

How much did you want? Just bat
your eyelashes.

(X)

Her eyelashes bat and tremble. Her eyes glisten. Alex
leans over and kisses her -- long and tenderly. And a door
chime rings.

(X)

ALEX

Perfect.

He crosses irritably to open the entrance door.

97 INT. AT ENTRANCE - NIGHT - ALEX AND COLUMBO

97

as Columbo is revealed, thrumming with enthusiasm.

(X)

COLUMBO

It's been a splendid day, sir.
It's been a terrific day. Very
good news. I thought you might
be interested in sharing that with
me.

(X)

ALEX

Come in, Lieutenant.

(X)

And Columbo comes in.

98 ANGLE TO INCLUDE COLUMBO, ALEX, RUTH

98

ALEX
(introducing)
Lieutenant Columbo, my friend Ruth
Jernigan.

RUTH
I've been hearing about you,
Lieutenant.

She goes to get her jacket as:

COLUMBO
I'm sure everybody's heard about
you, Miss Jernigan. I mean your
movies. And that holographic
film there. It's a great
pleasure, ma'am. I hope I'm not
intruding....

RUTH
Not at all. I'm sure you and
Alex have important business.

COLUMBO
Well, it is important, ma'am.

She goes to Alex, kisses him lightly and:

RUTH
Remember me, kiddo.
(then)
Good night, Lieutenant.

COLUMBO
Good night, ma'am.

She exits.

99 ANOTHER ANGLE - COLUMBO AND ALEX

99

Alex starts back to the soda fountain and Columbo diverts
to the electric train as:

ALEX
Is our business important,
Lieutenant? Or is it the electric
train?

Columbo switches on the train, watches it for a few beats
before:

CONTINUED

99 CONTINUED

99

COLUMBO

Well, I'm going to let you be the judge, Mr. Brady. I've got some very important news, sir.

ALEX

About our John Doe?

COLUMBO

Well, he's not a John Doe anymore. We know exactly who he is.

Alex, who ideally has his back momentarily toward Columbo, snap-turns to face him.

ALEX

In one day, Lieutenant?

99A COLUMBO

99A

And out of Columbo's raincoat pocket comes another one of those damned paper bags. He briefly stops the train, lays the bagged object across a car, restarts the train.

COLUMBO

I told you it's been a terrific day, sir. He was wearing this.

99B THE TRAIN

99B

as it bears its cargo around the track to Alex's position. Here the train stops. Alex picks up the paper bag, looks to Columbo and back to the bag again as he moves to the rear of the soda fountain, thereby placing it as a barrier between himself and this invading policeman.

100 AT SODA FOUNTAIN

100

Here Alex removes from the bag a tightly coiled belt. He dangles it.

ALEX

His belt?

Columbo comes into SHOT to sit at the fountain.

COLUMBO

His belt, Mr. Brady. What do you think of that belt?

Alex, still dangling the belt, looks mutely at Columbo.

CONTINUED

COLUMBO

You're thinking that's not a very interesting item there to put in a movie.

(takes the belt)

But what if I show you this, sir -- this flap here on the inside of the belt. Does that help give me your attention, Mr. Brady?

ALEX

(a bit bleakly)

You have my attention, Lieutenant.

COLUMBO

(showing him)

And this zipper, sir -- under the flap. You see the zipper here? That tells us this is what they call a money belt. People take trips, sometimes they hide money in a belt like this in a secret pocket. Are you interested yet, Mr. Brady? I mean for something you might use in a movie?

ALEX

We are not making a movie, Lieutenant. Why don't we just stick to our John Doe and his remarkable belt.

Columbo hands the belt back to him with:

COLUMBO

If you'll just open the zipper, sir.

Alex unzips the zipper, looks at Columbo.

COLUMBO

You see how there's a secret pocket in the belt, Mr. Brady? Why don't we find out what's in the pocket? That is if you're still interested, sir.

Alex, as it turns out, is sufficiently interested to probe into the pocket and to draw out a longitudinally folded traveler's check which is revealed as:

100A INSERT - THE TRAVELER'S CHECK 100A

as Alex unfolds it.

100B BACK TO SCENE 100B

ALEX

It seems to be a traveler's check.

Columbo takes belt and traveler's check from his hands, sets the belt aside as:

COLUMBO

That's exactly what it is. The victim was a very careful man, sir. He was hiding a traveler's check in his money belt. A hundred-dollar traveler's check. You see that, sir? And the numbers printed here? Do you think your audience would find these numbers exciting, Mr. Brady? Because to a detective, these numbers they're -- well, they're thrilling, sir. What these numbers tell us, the victim might as well have signed his name and address right here. Because these special numbers -- what they do is connect this particular check with the buyer's name and his address. That's an absolute fact, sir. And that's how we know the identity of the John Doe.

He rises, proceeds to put belt and traveler's check into different pockets of his suit and raincoat as:

COLUMBO

I expect that soon we'll be learning a lot more than that, sir. I hope you don't find all this too boring, Mr. Brady. I find it very interesting.

ALEX

And who was he, Lieutenant?

COLUMBO

Who was...oh, you mean the John Doe.

CONTINUED

100B CONTINUED

100B

He takes out his notebook and hunts for the right page.
Alex must carefully control a temperament now on the edge
of distraction. (X)

COLUMBO

His name was Fisher, sir. Herbert
Fisher. And he lives in Albany.
At least he used to live in Albany
before he got electrocuted.

Alex's eyes become very thoughtful indeed. (X)

ALEX

Herb Fisher? Are you sure?

COLUMBO

Very sure, sir. The Albany police
people, those boys have been very
cooperative. They even faxed us
his driver's license photo.

(from his breast
pocket)

Right here, sir.

He hands Alex a faxed photo of: (X)

101 INSERT - FAXED PHOTO OF HERB 101

The pose a little wooden but unmistakably Herb.

102 BACK TO SCENE 102

Still staring at the photo, Alex comes around the bar to
face Columbo directly. And now Alex -- poor Alex -- must
say:

ALEX

I know this man, Lieutenant.

COLUMBO

You do, sir?

It is for all the world as if Alex were dissolving in
shock. (X)

ALEX

I don't understand. Herbie -- we
grew up together -- loved each
other. I can't -- Herbie's the
body on the beach? (X)

CONTINUED

COLUMBO

It's such a remarkable coincidence, sir -- that you actually knew each other.

Alex has moved to sit on the water bed, palms at his eyes, fingertips digging into his forehead, trying to absorb the assault. Columbo is the soul of compassion.

ALEX

Coincidence is what makes a story, Lieutenant. Without coincidence, life runs evenly -- like a train on a track. Coincidence is a train wreck. Violence and suffering. And guilt.

His hands fall from his face. We see there are tears there.

COLUMBO

Guilt, sir?

ALEX

Herb's sister, Jeanie -- she died ten years ago. A crazy accident. On her way to meet me. Me. No me, no accident. No dead Jeanie. And now Herb, too? Who'd want to kill Herbie? What was he doing in Los Angeles? Why didn't he call me?

COLUMBO

(a quiet empathy)

When did you see him last, sir?

ALEX

I don't know. Three years ago. With another friend. Buddy. Jeanie's dead and Buddy's dead. And Herbie murdered. That leaves me.

Alex rises frailly, moves in the direction of the door, turns for:

ALEX

I'm going to take myself out of here, Lieutenant. If you don't mind. I'm afraid I'm not fit company.

CONTINUED

102 CONTINUED (2)

102

COLUMBO

I understand, sir. It must be a terrible shock.

ALEX

Is there anything else I can do?

COLUMBO

Well, there is something sir.

ALEX

Tell me.

COLUMBO

Maybe not, sir. Under the circumstance....

ALEX

They're my circumstances. Not yours. Go ahead and ask, Lieutenant.

COLUMBO

Is it all right if I make myself an ice-cream soda?

Alex stares at him for a long beat, then:

ALEX

Of course. Good night, Lieutenant.

COLUMBO

Good night, Mr. Brady.

Alex crosses to exit.

103 OMITTED

103

104 COLUMBO

104

alone. He goes to the soda fountain.

105 EXT. BOYS CLUB - NIGHT - ALEX, CORNICHE

105

SHOOTING from inside the car as Alex comes to enter it. He sits for a few beats, thinking desperately hard. Then he furiously bangs his hand down on the wheel.

- 106 INT. BOYS CLUB - NIGHT - COLUMBO 106
- Columbo is behind the soda fountain bar. Ice-cream soda glass in hand. Scoops of ice cream in the glass. Now he adds flavoring. He adds every kind of flavor there is, squirting them from all the bar spigots. Now an elegant spritz of soda water, a straw and a spoon. (X)
- ? (X)
- 107 OMITTED 107
- 108 ANGLE ON COLUMBO 108
- He sets his soda glass on the fountain bar -- moves to the bookshelves.
- Here he takes Alex's copy of the film book from the shelf, compares it with his own copy from his raincoat pocket. Nothing to be learned. He replaces Alex's book and pockets his own.
- Now he reaches for another book, this one large and blocky -- the same book that Herb Fisher had earlier laid on the tops of other books on the shelf -- the book that Alex had returned to its proper place. Columbo looks at the title.
- 109 INSERT - THE BOOK 109
- A Cal State Northridge year book for 1979.
- 110 BACK TO COLUMBO 110
- He lays the book where it had been when Alex picked it up. He duplicates Alex's exact actions, putting it back where it belongs. Then he does it again. But this time he takes the book with him as he moves to turn off a light switch.
- Now all lights are off except the one directly over the fountain. CAMERA HOLDS ITS POSITION as we watch Columbo go to the fountain stool. In this single pool of light, he begins to read. Then he takes a pull on his soda straw. We hear a slurp like a suction pump.
- 111 EXT. BROWNSTONE STREET - DAY - CLOSE SHOT - ELECTRICIAN'S HANDS 111
- as GLOVED ELECTRICIAN'S HANDS insert a cable terminal into a high-voltage junction box. ANGLE WIDENS to REVEAL the electrician. He waves O.S.

112 RITTER AND OPERATOR 112

The operator, waiting for the electrician's high sign, turns on a wind machine.

113 FOG OPERATOR 113

as he opens the jets on a fog machine.

114 THE WHOLE KIT AND KABOODLE 114

All of the foregoing we see on the fog-swirled brownstone street, and all of this, too:

A Titan crane moving into position. High up on the operator's seat is Alex.

Alex's Corniche, driven by a studio driver, sort of mills around. The convertible top is down and Stan Gillis, Alex's Lieutenant, sits on the back of the rear seat.

A camera car (driver and two in crew) also whirls around the crane.

In addition there are more ritters, special effects people, et al.

Now Alex calls down to Stan from the crane head.

ALEX

Stanley.

STAN

Ho.

ALEX

Where's the water truck?

STAN

Coming at a dead run, Alex.

(X)

115 ANGLE ON WATER TRUCK 115

coming indeed. Spraying all the way. And behind it we discover Columbo's car with Columbo behind the wheel.

The truck sluices between the other vehicles and goes on its way; Columbo stops his car.

(X)

115A AT COLUMBO'S CAR - COLUMBO AND BASSET HOUND

115A

As Columbo starts to leave the car, the BASSET HOUND beside him seems to have the same idea: about a hundred-weight of Jell-O trying to ooze out of the driver's door. Columbo interposes between dog and freedom.

COLUMBO

All right, Dog -- you stay here.
Sit. Sit. Stay. Stay in the
car. Don't stay in the car.
(it doesn't stay
in car)

How come you know that command?
(the dog in his
arms now)

Okay -- in the car.

A swift shove and an adroit slam of the door and the dog-in-the-car trick is done.

116 ALEX ON CRANE

116

Again he calls down to Stan.

ALEX

Stan -- less wind, more fog.

117 IN THE HURLY-BURLY

117

Stan vaults off the Corniche and moves to the fog machines.

118 ON COLOMBO

118

shading his eyes, looking up to Alex.

COLUMBO

(calling)

Mr. Brady -- Mr. Brady, sir.

119 ALEX ON CRANE

119

COLUMBO'S VOICE

(calling up)

Excuse me, Mr. Brady....

That voice. Alex looks to the side and down, and sees:

119A ALEX'S POINT OF VIEW - DOWN ANGLE SHOT TO COLUMBO

119A

COLUMBO
(calling up)
It's me, sir. Lieutenant Columbo.

119B ALEX ON CRANE

119B

His eyes close for an instant, then:

ALEX
(calling down)
I'm afraid I'm busy up here,
Lieutenant.

120 COLUMBO

120

COLUMBO
(calling up)
I got the clippings, sir.

120A ALEX ON CRANE

120A

ALEX
(calling down)
You have the what?

120B COLUMBO

120B

COLUMBO
(calling up)
Clippings -- newspaper clippings.
You just take your time, sir.
I'll just wait here. I know
you're busy. I don't want to
interfere.

Even so, the crane head, with Alex, arms down into shot.

ALEX
What clippings, Lieutenant?

COLUMBO
At the office, sir -- just part
of my investigation. All the
newspaper clippings from that
motorcycle accident with Mr.
Fisher's sister. You and your
friend, Buddy, you had nothing to
feel guilty about. I just wanted
to say that.

(MORE)

CONTINUED

COLUMBO (Cont'd)

It even makes me feel better, Mr. Brady. That accident, it was just the motorcycle. It had nothing to do with you, sir. It would have been different if she was working on your film, but she wasn't. So there's no reason for guilt, Mr. Brady. There's nothing you could have done about it.

(without missing
a beat)

Could I sit there with you, sir? I mean when you go back up? Your work looks very interesting.

Alex, who has listened calmly to all of this, has no desire to hear any more of it.

ALEX

As you said about your work, Lieutenant -- I don't think mine's as interesting as you think it is.

COLUMBO

Just a few minutes, sir? Sort of like turnabout -- your work for my work? I'd be very quiet, Mr. Brady.

ALEX

(glances at
watch; indicates
seat beside him)

Come on. Let's go.

COLUMBO

I really appreciate this, sir.

Enthusiastically he climbs onto the seat next to Alex. And with a lurch, up goes the crane -- as fast as we can get it to go.

121 DOWN ANGLE SHOT FROM CRANE HEAD

121

to get that whooshy elevator effect. Everyone down there is looking up.

122 UP THERE ON THE CRANE

122

Alex is busy with his finder. Columbo is busy hanging on.

CONTINUED

ALEX

This is called a Titan crane
Lieutenant. The height bother
you?

COLUMBO

No. No, hardly at all.
(looking down)
I don't hardly mind it.

(X)

ALEX

We're just having a look at all
this for about twenty seconds in
a dream sequence. Wind whipping
the fog around. Slick wet
streets.

(calling down)

Down ten.

The crane head drops about ten feet. So does Columbo's
level of spiritual attainment.

ALEX

(continuing)

It'll be very real in its own way.
Film makes its own reality.
That's a film-making fundamental.
I'm not sure whether we'll shoot
this day or night.

COLUMBO

(a gingerly look
down)

Is that why you ordered the water
truck the other night, sir -- to
wet down the street?

Alex looks at him sharply.

COLUMBO

Your secretary was very upset
about that when you forgot to tell
her.

ALEX

These days Rosie gets upset about
card tricks. And we don't make
allowances for age.

(calls down)

Down and right!

Columbo holds on.

(X)

123 CRANE BALLET SEQUENCE

123

The general idea here is to manipulate the crane up, down and sideways in such a manner as to produce a delicately green-hued Columbo. The basic elements are:

Angles on crane and crane head as it arms every which way.

Angles on Columbo.

Angles on Alex peering calmly through his finder.

Down angle elevator shots, moving up and down.

124 EXT. BROWNSTONE STREET - DAY

124

The party is over and all vehicles and crew are departing which leaves Columbo watching them on the brownstone street.

Alex is driving his Corniche. Stan, again perched on the back of the rear seat, streams out a kite as the Rolls Royce pulls away and Alex calls back:

ALEX

Got to get back to my stage.
Glad you enjoyed it, Lieutenant.

(X)

125 COLUMBO

125

watching them go.

COLUMBO

(calling after
him)

Oh, I think I did, sir.

(X)

They are gone. In his sudden isolation, Columbo looks around. One functioning wind machine has been left behind. He moves to look at it. The wind ruffles his hair and raincoat. Now he hears and responds to the rhythmic sound of a door swinging and banging.

(X)

126 BROWNSTONE STREET - DESCENDING STEPS - COLUMBO

126

SHOOTING UP from base of stairway as Columbo appears at the top, looks down toward us.

- 127 REVERSE ANGLE - COLUMBO 127
 and the door at the base of the stairs swinging shut. He descends, opens the door. Just a solid brick wall beyond it. He closes the door, goes back up the steps.
- 128 THE RITTER - COLUMBO 128
 as he comes into SHOT, looks at the machine, looks down to its electrical cable, follows its snaking length to the point where it connects into a high voltage junction box.
 Now Columbo looks up to see something o.s. He moves toward it and CAMERA brings us to the iron gate once grasped by Herb Fisher.
 He touches the gate -- even practices grasping it. Then, once more, he looks around -- moves a few feet -- bends to pick something up and inspect it closely.
- 129 INSERT - BURNED HEEL REMNANT 129
 A small, charred object, much like the heel of a man's shoe.
- 130 BACK TO COLUMBO 130
 Well, it's something to think about. He pockets the object, heads back toward:
- 130A COLUMBO'S CAR - COLUMBO AND BASSET HOUND 130A
 The car is where Columbo parked it earlier. The dog is in the car. Columbo approaches, opens the door and gets in. The dog is all over him. He ruffs it affectionately.
 COLUMBO
 Next time you go on the Titan crane.
 Columbo is about to start the car when he reacts to a familiar sound.
- 131 thru 136 OMITTED 131 thru 136
- 136A APPROACHING WATER TRUCK 136A
 Here it comes again, returning. No spraying action this time. (X)

CONTINUED

136A CONTINUED

136A

Camera brings the truck into shot which includes Columbo getting out of his car and flagging down the driver with:

COLUMBO

(calling)

Excuse me, sir? Excuse me? Can you tell me where I can find Mr. Alex Brady's personal stage?

He goes over to talk with the driver. We leave them in what appears to be a very animated conversation.

136B INT. ALEX'S STAGE

136B

But we seem to be in Egypt. This is what we see: framed by a large Moorish window opening, the pyramids of Egypt rise from the desert and a camel caravan winds its ancient way. All of which does not at all account for:

ALEX'S VOICE

Awful dead in there, Stan.

STAN'S VOICE

Let me try something.

Suddenly the gauzy curtains which border the window opening begin to flutter in the desert breeze.

STAN'S VOICE

That any better, Alex?

ALEX'S VOICE

Not bad. Got any sand?

STAN'S VOICE

Sand, I need a bigger wind machine.

ALEX'S VOICE

Okay, we're done with the window.

Whereupon window, curtains and all go sliding off somewhere, leaving us with an expanded desert and the entrapped figure of Lt. Columbo peering at us out of the wasteland with hand-shaded eyes.

COLUMBO

(calling out)

Sir -- Mr. Brady?

136C REVERSE ANGLE - THE SOUND STAGE - PROJECTOR, ALEX, ET AL 136C

We see the beam of the projector in our houselights-off setting and -- standing on a shallow rise -- Alex lowering a director's finder.

ALEX

What are you doing in my desert,
Lieutenant?

He descends from the riser to the projector.

137
thru
143

OMITTED

137
thru
143

144 PROJECTED PLATE, COLUMBO

144

COLUMBO

I was looking for you. sir. I
think I came in the wrong way.

We hear a sudden whir of the projector and Columbo looks around skittishly as his ambiance becomes (for instance) the Taj Mahal.

COLUMBO

This is very strange, sir.

Another whir and there is Columbo trapped (for instance) on the heaving deck of an ocean liner.

COLUMBO

I think you'd better get me out
of here.

145 ALEX AT PROJECTOR

145

as he turns off the projector.

146 ANGLE TOWARD SCREEN

146

The screen is blank now. In our almost-dark ambiance, Stan helps Columbo down from a ramp or whatever it is that he is standing on. And as Columbo starts toward Alex:

STAN

You be okay for a while, Alex?

ALEX

Sure, go ahead.

Stan goes off somewhere.

146A ALEX

146A

He looks up toward a high catwalk.

ALEX
(calling up)
Hey, Wagner -- you still with me?

146B ALEX'S POV - UP ANGLE

146B

A spotlight comes on and nods up and down.

146C ALEX

146C

ALEX
(calling up)
Let's help Lieutenant Columbo.
He seems to be lost.

147 ALEX AND COLUMBO

147

The spot brings Columbo into SHOT. The spot goes out; houselights come up.

COLUMBO
That was a very eerie feeling,
sir. For a minute there I didn't
know where I was anymore.

ALEX
And where were you when you knew
where you were, Lieutenant?

COLUMBO
Oh, I was in the middle of my
work, sir -- thinking about your
friend Herbert Fisher. His being
here in Los Angeles and all -- can
you think of any reason he
wouldn't get in touch with you?

ALEX
I cannot. I've been troubled by
that, too.

COLUMBO
Could he have been angry with you
about something?

ALEX
How could I possibly know,
Lieutenant?

CONTINUED

147 CONTINUED

147

COLUMBO

(X)

(thoughtfully)

Right. How could you know a thing like that if you hadn't seen him or talked to him.

(then)

You'll pardon all these questions, sir. Ask and listen, listen and ask. That's all we have to work with. It's really not a very interesting line of work -- not nearly as fascinating as yours, Mr. Brady.

Alex eyes him a little impishly now, calculating a way to shift their relationship back onto his own turf. (X)

ALEX

(X)

A minute ago, you were lost in the shadows, Lieutenant. Shadows on a screen. Light and shadow, shadow and light -- that's all we have to work with, For instance, what's that over there?

He points toward:

148 ANGLE ON PICKET FENCE

148

The same, high, black-painted picket fence we saw earlier.

COLUMBO'S VOICE

It looks like a big, black picket fence, sir.

149 BACK TO SCENE

149

ALEX

And up there?
(points up toward
the catwalk;
calls)
Wagner!

150 ANGLE TOWARD THE UNSEEN ELECTRICIAN

150

House lights go down. The spot light comes on, swings and:

151 COLUMBO AND ALEX

151

The light finds them.

COLUMBO

A spotlight, Mr. Brady?

ALEX

Let's see what happens when we mix
the fence with the light.

A gesture to the unseen electrician. The light moves off.

152 ANGLE ON PICKET FENCE

152

Now we see light (this time it is not as simple as the spot) illuminating the picket fence. Long, bar-like shadows are cast across the studio floor.

Alex brings Columbo into the SHOT -- moves to the other side of the picket fence. Columbo remains on this side.

153 CLOSER ANGLE - COLUMBO AND AND ALEX

153

on either side of the fence -- each partially lighted, partially shadowed; and each with perfect black backgrounds.

ALEX

Light and shadow, Lieutenant. Am
I trapped behind the fence or are
you? Or are we trapping each
other?

(X)

Now Alex begins to stride along the fence; Columbo moves with him.

154 PICKET FENCE SEQUENCE - ALEX AND COLUMBO

154

Their transverse motion, their movement along the picket fence, constitutes the action of the sequence. As they move, directions change periodically and occasionally the stage line is jumped. Sometimes their movements are harmonious, sometimes counter to each other. And sometimes Alex and Columbo seem to mysteriously switch places and, in a twinkling, jump back again to their original positions.

Their shadowed faces are seen in the interstitial spaces of the picket fence, the two men displayed in a variety of angles; we even see cuts of their legs as they move.

CONTINUED

154 CONTINUED

154

ALEX

(X)

Why don't we try to escape from all this, Lieutenant?

COLUMBO

Well, it should be easy to find a way out.

155 REVERSED MOTION

155

Suddenly they are moving in the opposite direction along an endless fence.

ALEX

Not if we reverse the action. See? We're still locked with each other. Now our film's making its own reality. And there's no end to the fence.

So it seems. The fact is that we have substituted a much longer length of picket fence.

COLUMBO

(X)

We could always just back away from each other, sir.

ALEX

Back away and you lose your light. Without light, you die -- your picture dies. And you've lost your murder case.

(X)

156 MOVING UP - ANGLE ON ALEX

156

That diabolical Alex again.

ALEX

(X)

You've left the world of your own reality, Lieutenant. Now you're in my world. Now you're living in my reality. And you've lost your substance. You're a shadow on my screen.

157 BACK TO SEQUENCE

157

COLUMBO

(X)

An illusion without reality, sir? But I think I'm very real.

CONTINUED

157 CONTINUED

157

ALEX

What's real and what isn't? We do our tricks with smoke and mirrors. But the mirrors are real. So is the smoke. Is the fence real, Lieutenant?

He taps it as he goes.

COLUMBO

Oh, I'm pretty sure about that, sir.

ALEX

Clouds of atomic particles fly through empty space, pretending to be a fence. You call that reality?

COLUMBO

As real as you are, Mr. Brady.

158 ANOTHER MOVING UP ANGLE ON ALEX

158

The white light is slowly turning crimson now.

ALEX

Right! Now you understand. I'm the substance and you're the shadow. I've created you and I can destroy you. I can vanish you with a word.

(X)

COLUMBO'S VOICE

What word is that, sir?

Alex extends a pointing finger.

ALEX

Kill!

And suddenly all light is gone.

159 ANGLE ON SHADOWED FENCE

159

The house lights come up to reveal the original short length of picket fence and Alex where he doesn't belong: on Columbo's side of the pickets.

Now we hear the sound of hands clapping.

- 160 COLUMBO BY PROJECTOR 160
Columbo is over there by the projection machine,
applauding.
COLUMBO
Remarkable, sir.
- 161 ALEX 161
He grins boyishly.
ALEX
Just an exercise.
- 162 INT. ALEX'S PRIVATE OFFICE - COLUMBO AND ALEX - LATE 162
AFTERNOON
Columbo is seated on a couch, Alex in a facing chair. (X)
Both are relishing huge candy bars.
COLUMBO
Exercise or not, sir. That
certainly was a treat. All that
with just one light and a little
bit of fence.
ALEX (X)
Theatrical tricks. Not in the
same league with pursuing a murder
case.
COLUMBO (X)
Well, we're back to that same
problem, Mr. Brady. You want to
make a picture about a detective.
And in this particular murder
case, the victim's belt and the
traveler's check -- you might say
that was interesting and even
theatrical.
Now, from the bag, he takes out a familiar pair of shoes. (X)
COLUMBO (X)
But now I'm dealing in shoes --
evidence -- came off the victim's
feet.
(hands shoe to
Alex)
See anything interesting?

CONTINUED

Alex puts the candy bar aside, takes the shoe. Just a shoe. But the belt was just a belt. What's coming at him next?

ALEX

Do I see anything nteresting?
No....

COLUMBO

Just a shoe.

ALEX

Just a shoe.

COLUMBO

(pointing in area
of interior
label)

Just looking at that shoe, I could tell it was a cheap shoe and I guessed made in Portugal. But so what.

ALEX

(checking the
label)

Portugal. Right.

Columbo hands him the other shoe and takes back the first one.

COLUMBO

Here's another shoe.

ALEX

(examines it)

No. heel.

COLUMBO

No heel. Not much, but better than nothing.

ALEX

(what else can
he say?)

A missing Portuguese heel. It's not uninteresting, Lieutenant.

COLUMBO

Now the question -- what happened to the missing heel -- now that question, that --

CONTINUED

ALEX
(overlapping)
Yes -- yes, I see....

COLUMBO
-- that question might get the
attention of an audience. You
agree?

ALEX
Definitely The audience'd be
right with us.

COLUMBO
What made the heel come off?
Could you discover that just be
using your eyes? What do you
think?

ALEX
I don't know.

COLUMBO
Well, you can't. But you can
discover it just by using your
finger.

(takes Alex's
finger, places
it on spot where
heel used to be)
Sticky?

ALEX
Yes. Yes, it is. It is sticky.
Yes.

COLUMBO
Probably the electricity where it
came out -- electricity blew the
heel off.

ALEX
But you already knew the victim
was electrocuted. So this
deduction of yours -- it doesn't
really represent any -- uh -- real
progress.

COLUMBO
Oh, no -- no -- no.

ALEX
It's not like it's helping you
solve the case.

162 CONTINUED (3)

162

COLUMBO

No. No. That'd really be exciting -- for both of us. Have you on the edge of your seat.

(shoes back in bag and getting up)

No, what you see is what you get. Okay, sir. Thank you for your time. I know you're busy. And don't give up on this case, Mr. Brady. Who knows what tomorrow will bring? Let's hope we'll find some real progress.

ALEX

I'll keep my fingers crossed.

COLUMBO

Good day, sir.

He exits.

162A ALEX

162A

Troubled Alex. But there's worse. He hears the door reopen.

162B AT THE DOOR - COLUMBO

162B

He re-enters and into SHOT with Alex as:

COLUMBO

Just take a second, sir. You'll get a kick out of this. I'm walking around on the brownstone street and naturally I have heels on my mind -- a shoe without a heel -- how the heel came off -- heel this, heel that. And I stepped on something.

(slaps his pockets)

Where did I put it? You won't believe this -- I picked it up -- (taking it out)

-- and it's a heel -- that's one I tell the wife -- go back to work -- see you soon.

And Columbo's out the door again.

162C ALEX 162C
His face now is absolutely bitter. (X)

163 OMITTED 163

164 EXT. ALEX'S HOME - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING - STOCK 164
Something appropriately hypermodern would be nice.

165 INT. ALEX'S HOME - FIREPLACE - NIGHT - ALEX AND RUTH 165
A fire in the fireplace. Ruth is stretched out there, a brandy glass held against her body. Alex sits near her on the floor, his back resting against something. He holds a glass also. The scene looks like one of those fancy cognac ads.

His hand reaches out to fondle her hair.

ALEX

From my bed -- on a clear dawn --
you can see Catalina.

RUTH

I know.

ALEX

Can I show you?

RUTH

It's not dawn yet.

ALEX

It will be.

RUTH

Your friend, Phil Crossette -- the
man in your office the other
night. I remember where I saw him
before.

ALEX

Is it that important?

RUTH

I think so. But first I want to
tell you about how I met Brian.
I want you to know. Our
accidental meeting.

His hand falls away from her hair.

CONTINUED

ALEX

Brian.

RUTH

I was flying home from New York. Landed in the rain -- around midnight. And no cabs. My lucky night -- a taxi just showed up out of nowhere.

A shadow passes over Alex's face.

RUTH

The driver was taking me home. Encino. Not my lucky night. The cab broke down -- in the rain. Something in the engine. I got soaked holding a flashlight for him. Then his radio wasn't working either. He went to a house and rang the bell to make a phone call. It turned out to be Brian's house. Brian came back with him and invited me in -- just to get dry. Two fellow actors. Found out we were going to work in the same picture. Your picture. We talked for hours.

(a beat)

In the morning he drove me home. And that's how we met. How's that for coincidence?

She puts the brandy aside, sits up and looks directly at Alex.

RUTH

Know who the cab driver was, Alex?

(no answer)

Your bit-player friend. Phil Crossette. Pretty good actor. Did his part well. You use another actor to make sure Brian would be at home that night?

(X)

ALEX

What's that supposed to mean?

RUTH

(straight and level)

It means you're lousy, Alex. You're the lousiest there is.

CONTINUED

165 CONTINUED (2)

165

Ruth rises quickly, moves to snap up her coat hanging over a chair arm. Alex also rises.

ALEX

Ruthie, whatever happened that night -- whatever you think happened -- we want each other now....

Ablaze now, Ruth whirls on him.

RUTH

You set us up! Director Alex -- Alex the master manipulator, making his little puppets dance the dance of love. Freeze me out and then juggle me a new lover. God comes to Hollywood!

Alex's eyes have gone bleak now. His voice, too.

ALEX

Everybody got what he wanted. Brian wanted you. You wanted to punish me. And your love scenes with Brian were excellent. That's what I wanted. That's all I wanted. So who suffered, Ruthie? What got lost?

Their eyes hold for an instant until:

RUTH

(then)

Go to hell, Alex.

And she leaves him.

166 INT. ALEX'S HOME - - NIGHT - RUTH - EN ROUTE TO FRONT DOOR 166

as she crosses to:

167 INT. AT FRONT DOOR - RUTH AND COLUMBO 167

She opens the door and almost runs into Columbo who stands there with his hand raised, about to knock. She holds for a couple of beats, then lunges past him into the night. He looks after her. (X)

Columbo ventures into the house, closing the door behind him and calling out:

CONTINUED

COLUMBO

Mr. Brady? Mr. Brady, sir....

Alex appears. The presence of Columbo does not add to his state of well being.

COLUMBO

Excuse me, Mr. Brady -- my stopping at your home like this; but I've got some more news and Miss Jernigan was just leaving...

(glances back
toward the door)

She seemed to be upset, sir.

ALEX

She's upset, I'm upset. Do we have to do this now, Lieutenant?

COLUMBO

Ordinarily, I wouldn't even trouble you, Mr. Brady. But there's very encouraging news.

ALEX

All right. Tell me your news.

He leads the way to:

COLUMBO

The Albany police, they traced Herb Fisher's place of employment -- to a men's wear store. Seems he told them he needed a day off for some dental work -- that was the day he died here in L.A.

(apologetically)

Uh, sir ... I'm expecting two acquaintances -- they're coming in a second car -- let me make sure they get the right house.

Columbo starts for the front door, returns to drop a candy bar on a table.

COLUMBO

Oh. Brought you a candy bar. Know you have a sweet tooth.

Back he goes -- O.S. to the front door. Which leaves Alex to ponder the implications of this camel in his tent.

CONTINUED

168 CONTINUED

168

ALEX
(up; to O.S.
Columbo)
How did he get here?

168A AT FRONT DOOR - COLUMBO

168A

calling back to O.S. Alex.

COLUMBO
You mean, Mr. Fisher? By plane.
He arrived that morning. We
traced his return ticket....

168B INT. LIVING ROOM - ALEX

168B

COLUMBO'S VOICE
His return was supposed to be....

This is a nightmare. Alex closes his eyes. But now there
is only silence from O.S. front door. Alex opens his eyes,
waiting. But this is what he hears:

COLUMBO'S VOICE
(calling out)
Come on in, fellas -- close the
door behind you -- we'll be in the
living room.

From Alex, a gesture of desperation from which he cleverly
recovers as Columbo returns to the living room.

COLUMBO
Where was I?

ALEX
Herb arrived that morning and he
had a return ticket....

COLUMBO
Right. A return ticket for eleven
o'clock that same night.

ALEX
(shakes his head
in confusion)
You mean he only planned to be
here for one day?

COLUMBO
Just a day, sir.

CONTINUED

168B CONTINUED

168B

Columbo's two acquaintances enter the living room. SEWELL is stocky and pugnacious; KARDARSIAN is lean and hungry.

COLUMBO

Mr. Sewell, Mr Kardarsian -- Mr. Brady.

SEWELL

How do you do?

KARDARSIAN

How do you do?

ALEX

Good evening....

These formalities out of the way, and in a most unnerving manner, Columbo completely ignores the presence of the Messrs. Sewell and Kardarsian (who hover wolfishly) while he pursues his initial conversation with Alex.

COLUMBO

(to Alex)

Strange, isn't it?

Alex's eyes leave the two strangers.

COLUMBO

His coming here for just one day.

ALEX

(again eyeing the strangers)

Yes -- strange he didn't call me.

COLUMBO

You never heard from him at all?

ALEX

I told you -- not for three years.

COLUMBO

Right. You told me.

Suddenly he again becomes aware of his acquaintances, pulls them into confrontation with Alex.

COLUMBO

(to Mr. Sewall)

George...

(MORE)

CONTINUED

168B CONTINUED (2)

168B

COLUMBO (Cont'd)
(to Alex)
Mr. Sewall is a new detective,
working his way up. George, tell
Mr. Brady where you first
encountered Mr. Kardarsian.

SEWELL
That was on Century Boulevard.

168C ALEX

168C

trying to follow this.

COLUMBO'S VOICE
Oh. Not at the airport.

SEWELL'S VOICE
No....

COLUMBO'S VOICE
I thought it was the airport.

SEWALL'S VOICE
Century Boulevard.

168D BACK TO SCENE

168D

Mr. Karadasian follows as attentively as Alex.

COLUMBO
(to Sewell)
And that's where you showed him
Mr. Fisher's picture?

SEWALL
Yes, sir -- and he recognized it.

COLUMBO
(to Alex)
Mr. Kardarsian is a cab driver.
(to Kardarsian)
From Iran?

KARDARSIAN
Yes, sir....

COLUMBO
Hope things are going well for you
here.

CONTINUED

KARDARSIAN

Thank you.

COLUMBO

(showing him
Herb's picture)Now you recognize this man and
remember picking him up at the
airport?

(to Alex)

And Mr Brady, you're going to find
this hard to believe: do you know
where Mr. Kardarsian took Mr.
Fisher?

ALEX

Lieutenant, I couldn't possibly
know. I think you'd better come
out and say what you want to say.

COLUMBO

He took him to the studio -- to
your very own studio, sir.

ALEX

The studio?

KARDARSIAN

(interrupting)

I didn't leave him off at the
studio. I took him to the Tour
Center.

COLUMBO

The Tour Center -- right -- you
did mention that. My mistake.

(to Alex)

The Tour Center where the visitors
come to take the tours.

ALEX

Yes, I know the Tour Center. What
was Herb doing at the Tour Center?

COLUMBO

It is strange. Hard to believe
a man would fly all the way from
Albany just to see the studio.
And then plan to fly right back
home again. Can you think of any
reason to do that?

ALEX

No. No, it's -- baffling.

CONTINUED

168D CONTINUED (2)

168D

COLUMBO

(X)

It is, sir. It's all very puzzling. Well, Mr. Sewall, Mr. Kardarsian, we've kept Mr. Brady long enough.

(shepherding them toward the door; calling back to Alex)

Don't bother seeing us off, sir. I know it looks like the trail runs out at the tour center. But we've come a long way, Mr. Brady. Don't give up on me, yet. Good night, sir.

And there comes a shower of good nights and thank you's from the visitors. And of course they must be returned by Alex. This nerve-shredding storm of cheeriness continues as Columbo takes his acquaintances O.S. to the front door which presently opens and slams. Alex stands transfixed.

(X)

168E ALEX

168E

CAMERA is SLOWLY MOVING IN FOR A VERY CLOSE SHOT. He is reaching the outer limits of endurance. Still the torture continues as we hear his guests' fading footsteps on the walk and Columbo's fading voice.

(X)

COLUMBO

(X)

Did I tell you Mr. Brady is a movie director? He's a great movie director. That's how come he got a house like that.

CAMERA IN CLOSE, there is a shine of perspiration on Alex's face. His mouth is very bitter.

(X)

169 OMITTED

169

170 INT. PHIL CROSSETTE'S BEDROOM - CLOSE ANGLE - TELEPHONE -- NIGHT

170

The telephone is ringing a harsh and nasty ring. A HAND reaches for it and CAMERA ANGLES TO REVEAL Phil Crossette awakened from his sleep and reaching for a lamp switch.

PHIL

(to phone)

Hello. Phil Crossette.

171 OMITTED

171

172 INT. ALEX'S FIREPLACE ROOM - MATCHING ANGLE - ALEX WITH
PHONE - NIGHT

172

ALEX

(to phone)

This is Alex. I've got another
private job for you.

173 PHIL

173

PHIL

Sure, Alex. All work guaranteed.

(reaches for pad
and pencil)

What kind of part you got in mind,
maestro?

174 EXT. STUDIO COMMISSARY - COLUMBO - DAY

174

Strolling, he sees the studio commissary -- looks at his
watch -- looks at the commissary again -- crosses to enter,
discarding his cigar butt in a trash can.

175 INT. STUDIO COMMISSARY - COUNTER - COLUMBO - DAY

175

Columbo, sitting at the counter, is flanked by a couple of
lady extras. The one costumed as a caped English nurse is
FRAN; the other, a bridesmaid, is LISA. They speak over
him as his order of hamburger and fries arrives. The
ladies are having salads.

FRAN

How's your salad?

LISA

Good. Lots of veggies.

COLUMBO

(to Fran)

Excuse me, ma'am. The hot sauce?

She hands him the hot sauce.

LISA

How's yours?

COLUMBO

(to Lisa)

And the mustard, ma'am?

CONTINUED

175 CONTINUED

175

She passes him the mustard. Through the following, he applies heavy hot sauce to his hamburger, lots of mustard on his fries.

FRAN

There's supposed to be shrimp.

LISA

They're little shrimpy shrimp.
They hide them in the dressing.

FRAN

I still don't see any.

Columbo slyly inspects her salad for shrimp as:

COLUMBO

The ketchup, ma'am?

She passes him the ketchup. He likes lots of ketchup.

FRAN

You see the paper this morning?

Columbo looks to either side, then says:

COLUMBO

Excuse me -- would you ladies like
to sit together?

They would and they thank him. Columbo and Fran change positions. Columbo starts to eat as:

LISA

What about the paper?

FRAN

The story about that dead man they
found on the beach? Herb Fisher?

LISA

Is that his name?

FRAN

He used to live in L.A. I used
to go with him.

Well now. Columbo reacts. He shifts a bit and his eavesdropping head inclines toward the women. Sometimes, as they speak directly to each other and their voices drop, he has to lean even farther.

LISA

You must feel awful.

CONTINUED

175 CONTINUED (2)

175

FRAN

Worse. Out of nowhere I got a phone call from him the other day. I don't even know how he got my number.

LISA

You're kidding.

FRAN

Wait'll you hear this. He said he was up at the Tour Center -- supposed to meet someone there who never showed up. He sounded all panicky. Wait'll you hear.

(drops her voice)

He said he had to score a load of coke to take back to Albany.

They are looking at their watches now -- leaving money on the counter -- preparing to leave.

LISA

He said that? Coke?

FRAN

Out of nowhere. He asked me if I knew anybody for coke. I hung up on him.

They are standing now and moving O.S. as:

LISA

We're late again. The assistants'll have a fit.

Columbo grabs a napkin, wipes his mouth and moves after them.

176 COLUMBO, FRAN, LISA, STUDIO COP IN B.G.

176

Columbo is hauling out his badge as he comes after the departing extras. In b.g., a uniformed studio cop watches curiously.

COLUMBO

Excuse me, ladies -- excuse me?

They turn and look at him as he displays his badge.

CONTINUED

176 CONTINUED

176

COLUMBO
Lieutenant Columbo? With the
police? I couldn't help hearing
about the phone call....

FRAN
(slicing in
dubiously)
Are you an actor?

COLUMBO
Oh, no. No, ma'am. Homicide.

FRAN
(disgust)
That's all I need -- another
pickup by an out-of-work actor.

She turns with Lisa and they are out the door. Columbo
starts to follow.

COLUMBO
Please, ma'am, it's not a
pickup....

But now that studio cop has moved to block him. What have
we here? The studio cop is none other than Phil Crossette,
Alex's utility bit-player.

177 COLUMBO AND PHIL

177

PHIL
You bothering the artistes,
gorgeous?

COLUMBO
No, sir. Police officer --
(the badge)
-- Lieutenant Columbo?

Phil takes the badge and inspects it. Columbo tries to
move around him. It is like trying to dodge around a
brewery truck.

PHIL
We got a whole prop department
full of these.
(hands it back)
I don't think the artistes want
to be bothered. Next time try
calling yourself a casting
director. You're a casting
director, they'll talk to you all
day.

- 178 EXT. STUDIO COMMISSARY - COLUMBO - DAY 178
Columbo bursts out of the commissary. No sign of Fran the nurse. No sign of Lisa the bridesmaid.
- 179 INT. BOYS CLUB - THE ELECTRIC TRAIN - NIGHT 179
The train is running its repetitive course, the locomotive headlight lighting its way through the darkness. CAMERA slowly TRUCKS TO DISCOVER the glow of Columbo's cigar and Columbo seated in a director's chair, his face the embodiment of thought.

There is an open book in his lap. As he looks down and closes it, we recognize the University Year Book we saw earlier. Now he rises. From his raincoat pocket he takes a squeezed-up paper bag -- shakes it out -- inserts the book.

He moves to the running train. His hand reaches for the transformer.
- 180 ANGLE ON THE TRAIN 180
The locomotive light goes out and the train stops. OUR ANGLE HOLDS: little gleams of reflected source highlighting the train's stillness as we hear the sound of Columbo's footsteps and of the Boys Club door opening and closing.
- 180A EXT. EUROPEAN STREET - DAY - ALEX, ET AL 180A
Alex's picture-planning lash-up has assembled on the European street. Instead of a crane we have a high riser -- as high as we can get. Alex is up there. The street has been wetted. Fog from fog machines. (X)
- 180B ON RISER - ALEX 180B
The captain on his bridge. He has a hand-held camera to his eye. (X)

ALEX (X)
(calling down)
Just the fog this time -- no wind,
just fog.

His concentration is broken by: (X)

COLUMBO'S VOICE (X)
(calling up)
Mr. Brady -- Mr. Brady, sir?

CONTINUED

180B CONTINUED

180B

Exasperated, Alex looks down to:

180C ALEX'S POINT OF VIEW - COLUMBO IN CAR

180C

Down there -- way down there -- is Columbo, thrusting head and shoulders out of his car.

COLUMBO

It's Lieutenant Columbo.

180D INTERCUTS - COLUMBO AND ALEX

180D

as they call up and down to each other.

ALEX

Yes, Lieutenant. What is it?

COLUMBO

Just wanted to say good-bye for now, sir.

ALEX

Are you leaving us?

COLUMBO

It's the case, Mr. Brady. It's taken a whole new turn. Have to spend some time with the narcotics boys. So we won't be seeing each other for a while.

ALEX

Well, you convinced me, Lieutenant. There's such a thing as too much reality.

COLUMBO

Excuse me, sir?

ALEX

You've convinced me that a real detective doesn't belong in a movie.

COLUMBO

(a bit
crestfallen)

Oh. Well, maybe we can talk about that again. Good-bye, Mr. Brady.

180E ON ALEX

180E

ALEX
(meaning "I
thought you'd
never go")
Good-bye, Lieutenant.

(X)

180F COLUMBO AND CAR

180F

He's off in a cloud of fog.

(X)

181 OMITTED

181

181A INT. RESTAURANT - DAY - ESTABLISHING

181A

CAMERA FOLLOWS the cocktail waitress with the long, pretty hair and the nice legs as she carries her tray to deposit aperitifs at a table occupied by Rose Walker and Alex.

Alex sips his drink, looks at Rose and says:

ALEX
Well, Rosie, where do we begin?

ROSE
I didn't know we were beginning anything --
(picks up her
drink)
-- except these.

ALEX
Maybe it's an ending then. For you and me. Time to think about a new job, Rose.

ROSE
Oh.
(knows exactly
what he means)
You mean a new secretary?

ALEX
Whatever.

A bus boy deposits bread and butter on their table.

ROSE
Old Rose. Young Alex. Rose too old for Alex. Alex too young for Rose.

CONTINUED

181A CONTINUED

181A

Now their TABLE WAITRESS brings their luncheon order -- cold poached salmon.

TABLE WAITRESS

Here we are...

As the waitress leaves them, Rose picks up a fork, looks back to Alex.

ROSE

I think there's something about me you ought to know, Alex.

(he eyes her
quizzically)

I'm still going to enjoy my lunch.

She tries her salmon. It is excellent.

ROSE

(just making
conversation)

Alex, did you remember to tell that nice Lieutenant Columbo about your phone call from Herb Fisher?

Alex's attitude changes. He takes a good, solid look at her as the bus boy leans in to top off his water glass and then moves off.

ALEX

What difference does that make?

The table waitress returns to set some dill sauce on their table. Rose takes some. Through the following, the bus boy comes back to top off Rose's water.

ROSE

I thought I heard you tell him you hadn't heard anything from your friend Herb Fisher -- not for three years. But Mr. Fisher called you the other day. And you picked up the call and no one was there. Remember, Alex?

ALEX

(carefully)

That's not a very interesting subject, Rose. Why bring it up?

CONTINUED

181A CONTINUED (2)

181A

ROSE

I remembered his name. Herb Fisher. My mother's maiden name was Fisher. Try your salmon, Alex. It's very good.

Alex just looks at her. The cocktail waitress cruises by to check their table.

ROSE

I was checking the old phone sheets yesterday. The page was missing -- for the day Mr. Fisher called. Did you know it was missing, Alex?

ALEX

(a beat)

No.

(then)

If it was missing, you probably threw it away by mistake.

(finishes his drink)

You were talking about leaving me -- finding another job. I don't want you to do that, Rosie.

ROSE

Oh, I'd never leave you, Alex. I was just thinking about a long, paid vacation. Maybe a cruise. Maybe around the world. I always dreamed of something like that. But then I'd come back to you. What do you think?

Again the cocktail waitress checks their table, leans over to collect their empty drinks. Alex's eyes are riveted on Rose. The Table Waitress comes by and notes his untouched salmon.

TABLE WAITRESS

Is something wrong with your salmon, sir?

ALEX

(snapping)

No. You can take it.

She does.

CONTINUED

181A CONTINUED (3)

181A

ALEX

(to Rose)

I think you deserve a rest, Rose.
My treat. For a loyal secretary.
I'll have my travel agent get in
touch with you.

182 OMITTED

182

183 ON ROSE

183

ROSE

You really should have tried the
salmon, Alex.

It's really very good.

184 EXT. ALEX'S STAGE - ALEX IN CORNICHE - DAY

184

Alex drives up to park by the stage, gets out and is about
to walk around the front of his car when he sees and
reacts to:

(X)

184A ALEX'S POINT OF VIEW - COLUMBO'S CAR

184A

There it is, parked on the other side of the street from
the stage and down there a bit. CAMERA ZOOMS IN with
Alex's gaze.

184B ALEX

184B

Distress. He thought he had rid himself of Columbo's
presence.

184C ALEX'S POINT OF VIEW - COLUMBO'S CAR - LIMOUSINE

184C

A chauffeured limousine rounds a corner to pass Columbo's
car and drive toward us.

184D ALEX

184D

He turns toward his stage and is about to enter as the
limousine pulls into SHOT. Mr. Marosco is in the passenger
seat.

The passenger window lowers and:

MR. MAROSCO

Alex.

CONTINUED

184D CONTINUED

184D

Alex turns, hesitates, crosses to the limo.

MR. MAROSCO

Maybe you have a minute to join me, Alex.

ALEX

Sure, Mr. Marosco.

185 INT. LIMOUSINE - DAY - ALEX AND MR. MAROSCO

185

as Alex enters the rear seat. Mr. Marosco wears a polo shirt and golf slacks.

MR. MAROSCO

See? I'm playing hooky. Rita and I are spending the afternoon with our grandchildren.

ALEX

You deserve it, Mr. Marosco.

MR. MAROSCO

Do I? And did I deserve the answer I got when I asked you for a favor -- my problem with the board?

Alex suspects that he might have made a serious mistake there.

ALEX

I know -- I was pretty uptight that day....

(X)

Still distracted by the presence of Columbo's car, he ventures a glance out the limousine window.

(X)

185A SHOOTING THROUGH LIMOUSINE WINDOW - COLUMBO'S CAR

185A

Yes, indeed.

(X)

ALEX'S VOICE

There's a policeman hanging around the lot.

(X)

185B BACK TO SCENE

185B

ALEX

Wants me to make a picture about him. I thought I was rid of him.

(X)

CONTINUED

185B CONTINUED

185B

MR. MAROSCO
Lieutenant Columbo?

(X)

Alex looks at him. Sweet God Almighty. What's been going on here? (X)

MR. MAROSCO
A curious man. I enjoyed him.
(then)

(X)

I must tell you, Alex: I was very hurt by your attitude. Your friendship -- suddenly even that was like an Alex Brady illusion.

ALEX
I can make it up to you, Mr. Marosco. I can try to manage a schedule for Easter....

MR. MAROSCO
(an avuncular pat)
It won't be necessary. I've made other arrangements. And for you, too, Alex. I want to discuss this picture you've offered us.

Alex stiffens.

ALEX
What do you mean 'offered us'? We have an agreement....

MR. MAROSCO
(slicing in)
No. What we have is an understanding. My understanding is that you'll prepare the picture. Take six months for that -- take two years or a lifetime. It's all the same. Only day-to-day expenses will be authorized. So play your ungrateful games, Alex. Perfect your illusions. But I give you my word: in the end your picture will be the greatest illusion of all. I'll see to it that it's never made. Never. Never.

(X)

ALEX
(a panic begins)
Mr. Marosco, you can't just....

CONTINUED

185B CONTINUED (2)

185B

MR. MAROSCO
(cutting him off)
Please, Alex. I'm already late
for the grandchildren.

186 THE LIMOUSINE - ALEX AND MR. MAROSCO

186

The door opens. Alex gets out. The limo drives off. Alex stands there for a moment, then crosses to wrench open the door to his stage.

187 INT. ALEX'S STAGE - LIMBO - ALEX

187

as he enters and crosses toward the projector where we SEE Stan Gillis loading a reel in the light of a lamp on an adjacent table.

STAN
Hi, Alex. ot a new effect here
-- haven't even seen it myself.

ALEX
(tightly)
We're through with effects. Lock
up the stage.

He turns back to the exit. Stan flips the projector on as he looks after him.

STAN
I thought we were going to....

ALEX
(whirling on him)
I said lock it up!

But now the projector is projecting and Alex's eyes go to the vast screen.

188 THE SCREEN - PROJECTED IMAGE

188

Projected there, like a recurring nightmare, is a loop of part of the film that Herb showed to Alex, repeating over and over Alex's action of approaching the prostrate Jeanie (X) and waving wildly at the camera. Finally the picture freezes on the same frame which we saw frozen on the Kem.

189 ON ALEX

189

Shock. When he speaks his voice is hoarse and almost a whisper.

ALEX

Where did this come from?

190 ALEX'S STAGE - AT HOLOGRAPHIC EQUIPMENT - COLUMBO

190

curiously inspecting the holographic stuff. He looks toward Alex.

COLUMBO

(projecting)

From the boys in Albany, sir. Your assistant was kind enough to put it up for me.

191 ALEX AND STAN

191

Alex looks at Stan.

ALEX

Get out.

Stan looks from Alex to Columbo's position and back to Alex. He leaves.

192 MOVING SHOT - COLUMBO

192

Columbo is crossing the stage toward Alex. He carries a double-handled market shopping bag -- the light plastic kind.

COLUMBO

I hope you don't mind -- just a few more questions, sir. The Albany police, they've been some terrific help. They even sent me an inventory of everything in Mr. Fisher's apartment. And when I saw there was a roll of sixteen millimeter film hidden in with some groceries, well -- because of my new interest in film -- I sent for it, Mr. Brady.

(X)

193 ALEX AND COLUMBO

193

as Columbo comes into SCENE with Alex. He places the plastic bag on the table by the projector, fishes out a small reel of sixteen millimeter film to show him.

COLUMBO

Just this little reel, sir. But I had it made up like this --
(points to screen)
-- for your screen. You see the screen?

194 THE SCREEN

194

and the frozen frame.

195 COLUMBO AND ALEX

195

Alex's gaze -- iced now -- turns on Columbo.

ALEX

And what do you make of my screen, Lieutenant?

COLUMBO

Well, when I put it together with the newspaper clippings, I see Mr. Fisher's sister after that motorcycle accident. And I see you there, too, sir.

(X)

Alex moves to turn off the projector.

ALEX

Do you mind, Lieutenant?

COLUMBO

Not at all, sir.

(X)

ALEX

You seem to have taken over my stage. Invite me to the first day of shooting.

(X)

He turns and crosses furiously toward the exit. But now, at Columbo's next words, he freezes and then turns to him.

(X)

COLUMBO

The girl's accident, sir -- it couldn't have been the way you told it at the time. Remember you said Mr. Fisher's sister had the accident before she reached your location?

(X)

#64112

103
(X)

196
thru
198

OMITTED

196
thru
198

199

ALEX

199

His position now is behind the picket fence.

COLUMBO'S VOICE

But the accident had to have happened while you were filming her motorcycle stunt, Mr. Brady.

Columbo comes into SHOT, still carrying the shopping bag. As he faces Alex, they are separated by the fence.

COLUMBO

And you ran away and left her to die. At least that's what the film says. Did Mr. Fisher ever show you the film, sir?

ALEX

No, Lieutenant. I don't even know where he got the film.

Once again, Columbo begins to walk along the length of the fence, touching each picket as if counting them. Alex goes with him.

NOTE: Again we have switched the fences.

COLUMBO

Maybe he got it from your other friend -- the one who passed away last week. Mr. Fisher must've been very upset about that film -- showing how his sister really died and all. Could he have been hostile or threatening to you, Mr. Brady?

Columbo pauses. So does Alex.

COLUMBO

Something like that -- self-protection -- that would certainly be a very good motive for murder.

ALEX

Remember I haven't seen or talked to him for three years? Are you suggesting I killed Herb, Lieutenant?

CONTINUED

COLUMBO

Oh, no, sir. All I'm considering is a motive. You know, I still can't figure out how you did our scene here with just this little length of fence.

He starts back along the fence; Alex goes with him.

ALEX

It was easier than trying to make a murder case out of a motive.

They walk and pause through:

COLUMBO

Well, there's this to be considered, too, sir. I was looking over your secretary's phone sheets -- that first day we met, Mr. Brady -- just looking for some film buff who might have called you. I really didn't know what I was looking for. Then the next day -- when I had Mr. Fisher's name -- one of the phone list pages was missing. I could tell that by the dates, sir.

ALEX

Shabby work, Lieutenant. Uninteresting -- trying to make a case out of something that wasn't there.

COLUMBO

But I did have Mr. Fisher's phone records checked for that day. And he did call the studio switchboard. And then he called your office, sir. Do you think he was planning to visit you?

ALEX

I wouldn't know, Lieutenant. He did not visit me. And I never got the call.

CONTINUED

COLUMBO

(pause)

Oh, I believe that, Mr. Brady.
But you knew he called. And you
told me you hadn't heard from him.
I can't believe the fence is this
long.

ALEX

If that's all, Lieutenant, I
happen to have a few problems of
my own....

He starts to turn. But Columbo is reaching into his sack
again, drawing out a piece of folded paper, thrusting it
between the pickets as:

COLUMBO

Oh, there's more, sir. For
instance -- there's this.

Alex turns back -- eyes that piece of paper -- moves to
take it, unfold it, look at it.

COLUMBO

Your weather report, Mr. Brady --
the one your secretary always
brings you?

Columbo grasps the fence, shoves it laterally. To our
astonishment, the thing is on wheels. Now nothing stands
between him and Alex.

COLUMBO

That's for the night Mr. Fisher
was electrocuted. You see the
prediction for rain, sir?

ALEX

Yes, I see the prediction for
rain.

COLUMBO

But that was the night you ordered
the brownstone street washed down
-- so you could look at it wet.
And I had to ask myself why would
you do that -- and get charged for
it and all -- when you knew it was
going to rain. Could you help me
with that, Mr. Brady?

CONTINUED

199 CONTINUED (3)

199

ALEX

(X)

Because I'm an impatient man,
Lieutenant. A rain prediction
doesn't guarantee a wet street.
A water truck does.

Columbo is rummaging through his shopping bag and
extracting a shoe as:

(X)

COLUMBO

(X)

Well, that would certainly explain
the truck, Mr. Brady. But then
there's Mr. Fisher's shoes. Over
by the light, sir?

He leads the way toward:

(X)

200 AT LAMP-LIT TABLE BY PROJECTOR

200

as Columbo and Alex come to the table and Columbo displays
the shoe in the lamp light. His hand points out:

COLUMBO

(X)

You remember his shoe, sir? The
one with the missing heel?
(the bag again;
out comes the
heel)

It's the heel I found on your
brownstone street -- the street
you made sure was nice and wet?
That would be a very dangerous
place to stand, sir -- I mean if
somebody was gripping on to
something that was high voltage.
You see the burned heel, sir?
(fits it against
the shoe)

The lab boys say it's a perfect
fit.

ALEX

Do you believe that's where Herb
was murdered? On the brownstone
street?

COLUMBO

(evidence back
in the bag)

Well, it's a possibility, sir.
And there's the book.

(MORE)

CONTINUED

200 CONTINUED

200

COLUMBO (Cont'd)
 (and out comes
 that university
 year book)
 Your university year book -- from
 the books in your Boys Club? I
 took the liberty, sir.

A couple of torn paper strips stick out of the top of the
 book. Columbo opens the book at the second strip.

COLUMBO
 I put these book marks here, Mr.
 Brady.

(points to a
 picture)
 That'd be your college
 picture....

(X)

201 INSERT -- THE PICTURE, COLUMBO'S HAND

201

We see a photograph of three grinning youths: Alex holding
 a camera; Herb Fisher on one side, holding a mike boom;
 another young man, presumably Buddy Coates, on the other
 side of Alex, also with a camera. Columbo's HAND points.

COLUMBO'S VOICE
 With Herb Fisher -- and I'd guess
 that's Buddy Coates.

Columbo's hand flips the pages to the first marker.

COLUMBO'S VOICE
 And here -- the class before
 yours, sir -- here's Mr. Fisher's
 sister, Jeanie ---

(X)

There she is -- a single, smiling portrait.

202 BACK TO SCENE

202

COLUMBO
 -- the one who died in the
 accident.

(X)

Alex looks from the book to Columbo.

ALEX
 Is there a point to this,
 Lieutenant?

CONTINUED

COLUMBO

(closing the
book)

Well, sir, it has to do with how people treat a book. Some people turn down the corners of a page and some people use book marks. My own mother, she'd chop my hand off if she ever saw me turn down the corners of a book. So I use a book mark -- like these, sir.

He removes the paper slips.

COLUMBO

Which do you do, Mr. Brady?

ALEX

I confess I'm a corner-turner, Lieutenant. Is there a penalty? (X)

COLUMBO

Well, whichever way, it gets to be a habit, sir. And whoever looked at this book last -- maybe just to look from picture to picture and reminisce about happier times -- I think he used a book mark. (X)

Now Columbo takes out his notebook, leafs through its pages, extracts what looks like some sort of admission ticket and hands it to Alex as:

COLUMBO

I found this in your college year book, sir. On the same page as the photo of Mr. Fisher's sister.

Alex takes the ticket, examines it with a long look, lifts his eyes back to Columbo who retrieves the ticket and turns to the projector.

COLUMBO

Maybe you can see it better this way. I think the crime lab boys put it on this same piece of film.

He starts the projector.

203 THE SCREEN - PROJECTED IMAGE 203

A bit more of Alex's frozen frame as he stands over Jeanie's body. Then a new image: a giant reproduction of a studio tour ticket, displaying printed date and time. (X)

COLUMBO'S VOICE

You see the date and time printed there, sir? The date Mr. Fisher died. And the time twelve minutes after three o'clock.

204 ON ALEX 204

COLUMBO'S VOICE

Just two minutes after Mr. Kardarian's cab delivered Mr. Fisher to the Tour Center. (X)

205 COLUMBO AND ALEX 205

Columbo looks at Alex who still stares at the screen.

COLUMBO

So we can say that's Mr. Fisher's ticket, sir. To the studio tour.

(replaces the book in his bag)

And the ticket was in your year book, sir. A book mark. So Herb Fisher -- he had to have been in your Boys Club. On the day he died. The day -- the night -- you murdered him, Mr. Brady. By electrocution. On the brownstone street. (X)

Now, slowly, Alex's malevolent gaze turns from the screen to Columbo.

COLUMBO

I'd say by that iron gate, sir. Near where I found the heel.

ALEX

(contemptuously)

Do you really think some underpaid policeman is going to arrest me with all this circumstantial claptrap? (X)

He moves to snap off the projector. Columbo relights his cigar and waves out the match.

CONTINUED

COLUMBO

I almost forgot, sir. Your secretary, Miss Walker, she's been very helpful. She helped us with that little scene at the restaurant this afternoon. Where you tried to bribe her with that trip around the world. I'd say that was an admission of guilt, Mr. Brady. Her testimony'll be very damaging.

ALEX

I wouldn't count on it, Lieutenant. Whatever Rosie told you, in the end it'll be her word against mine.

COLUMBO

Well, not exactly, sir. We do have witnesses.

Now, as Columbo continues, he rolls the wheeled lamp table away, crosses to move a chair and another chair as if he were clearing the area for a performance that is about to begin.

COLUMBO

You see, that scene in the restaurant, that was what you might call staged, sir. Like your own little manipulations. Like the taxi driver who drove Miss Jernigan that night? Or the two lady extras in the studio commissary yesterday when I was having lunch. They were very convincing, sir. Only, one of them was a nurse, and there weren't any hospital scenes shooting in the studio. And the other was a bridesmaid, and there weren't any wedding scenes either. So I'd say they were your actors, Mr. Brady. Trying to fool me. Maybe you'd like to meet some of our own actors -- our witnesses at the restaurant, sir.

Alex watches as Columbo, satisfied with his cleared area, purposefully strides out of it and points his finger up to the catwalk. Through the following, his manner is for all the world like a ringmaster's.

CONTINUED

- 205 CONTINUED (2) 205
- COLUMBO
Mr, Wagner, sir!
- The house lights dim.
- 206 UP ANGLE TO CATWALK 206
- A spotlight comes on.
- 207 THE DARKENED STAGE 207
- The spotlight beam hunts until, over there, it picks up (costumed as before) the Bus Boy we saw at the restaurant. Now he has an actor's curtain-call strut as he crosses, held by the spot, to the area cleared by Columbo. Out of the shadows we hear:
- COLUMBO'S VOICE
(ringingly)
You remember the bus boy, sir.
The part of the bus boy was played
by Detective Sergeant Chavez!
- Detective Sergeant Chavez makes a virtuoso bow to Alex. As he does so, ever so faintly, we begin to hear the sound of mass applause. Chavez takes himself off into the darkness and the spot swings for the next curtain call.
- 208 ALEX'S REACTION 208
- All the arrogant sizzle is beginning to leak out of him.
- 209 IN THE SPOTLIGHT 209
- Striding into the spotlight is the Table Waitress (costumed as before) from the restaurant. The spot follows her to the cleared area as:
- COLUMBO'S VOICE
And another witness, sir -- your
luncheon waitress, a role very
well performed by Detective
Bennett!
- Detective Bennett makes her bow to Alex and takes herself off as the spot swings again. Applause a bit louder now. (X)

210 ALEX'S REACTION

210

His face glistens with perspiration.

COLUMBO'S VOICE

Next witness, Mr. Brady -- your
very own cocktail waitress!

211 IN THE SPOT

211

The long-haired Cocktail Waitress (costumed as before)
comes, with the spot, to take her bow to Alex.

COLUMBO'S VOICE

A little hand for your favorite
actress -- the popular Ruth
Jernigan!

The Cocktail Waitress removes her wig to take her virtuoso
bow. She is patently recognizable now as Ruth, and she
looks up to Alex with an expression that orders him to
auto-sexual excesses.

212 ALEX'S REACTION

212

Full beads of perspiration are running down his face now.
And the applause thickens.

213 BACK TO THE SHOW

213

As Ruth disappears into the shadows, the spot swings to
illuminate Columbo.

214 COLUMBO

214

He delivers this straight to CAMERA.

COLUMBO

And then there's myself, sir --
playing my own part. The only
thing I've enjoyed about this
case, Mr. Brady, is charging you
with murder.

(arms are
extended to
either side)

And I must say, that's been a very
great pleasure, sir,

And now Columbo takes his own bow to tumultuous applause
-- and goes off.

215 ANGLE ON ALEX

215

as the spot swings to pin him in a ghastly brightness. He stands limply before us, head down, as defeated as we would ever wish to see him.

216 ANGLE ON RITTER

216

Suddenly the wind machine turns on and pivots toward CAMERA.

(X)

217 BACK TO ANGLE - ALEX

217

Winds ruffle his hair and clothing; fog drifts into the scene. Now, as Alex's head rises and he turns from side to side, looking helplessly into the darkness, searching for the help that will never come, the long shadows of the picket fence fall across him and the stage floor -- bars to enclose him forever.

(X)

CAMERA begins to CRANE UP, still holding him, in a crescendo of applause, until we hear a single, awesome, shatteringly discordant cymbal clash. And there, as we FREEZE him:

(X)

FADE OUT

THE END