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COLUMBO

QUICKER THAN THE EYE

Participating Writers

Michael Sloan
Peter S. Fischer

COLUMBO
QUICKER THAN THE EYE

CAST

LT. COLUMBO

KORAN
DELLA
DANNY GREEN
JESSE JEROME
DET. SGT. WILSON
HARRY BLANDFORD
GEORGE THOMAS
LASSITER
BARTENDER
THACKERY
ROGERS
WAITER
JEFFERSON

SETS

EXTERIORS:

MAGIC CIRCLE CLUB

INTERIORS:

MAGIC CIRCLE CLUB
MAIN ROOM
WINGS STAGE
BACKSTAGE AREA
BELOW STAGE
KITCHEN
PASSAGEWAY
BACK CORRIDOR
STOREROOM
KORAN'S DRESSING ROOM
STAIRWELL
JEROME'S OFFICE
ANTEROOM
THIRD FLOOR CORRIDOR
LASSITER'S SHOP
S.I.D. LAB
POLICE LIBRARY
CORRIDOR OUTSIDE

COLUMBO

QUICKER THAN THE EYE

FADE IN

1 INT. MAGIC CIRCLE CLUB - LATE AFTERNOON (UNDER TITLES) 1

Close on three-dimensional, framed tarot card photograph of the Magician. Figure in a magician's robe, sign of life, like an endless cord, over his head. Serpent cincture about his waist, wand raised toward heaven in his right hand. Camera pans off the picture to take in a full shot of the Magic Circle Club. It is decorated with similar medieval flair, incantations, spells, mystical charms and signs framed on the walls. The Club is empty. The lights are dim. Hold for a beat.

2 INT. BELOW STAGE - DAY - CLOSE ON KORAN'S HANDS 2

unwrapping a .38 pistol from a black felt cloth. He loads it and affixes a silencer. Camera pulls back to take in Koran. He is a tall, powerfully built man -- 46, but appears younger -- an entertainer of tremendous charm and expertise, a weaver of spells and charisma, an aura of power and mysticism catching the imagination of audiences wherever he performs. His individual technique and illusory skills are legendary. He stares down a moment at the weapon, then reaches in a bag at his side and takes out some miniature radio equipment: (a) a two-way sending and receiving unit; (2) a small receiver fashioned like a hearing aid. He takes them and moves toward the other side of the basement room. Camera moves with him. The basement is cluttered with old scenery, broken furniture, rostrums, tables of props, decorations, papier-mache animals, parts of sets, stacks of flats against one wall. As the camera tracks with Koran we can see a wooden ladder in the center of the room leading up to a trap-door opening out onto the stage. There is another wooden stairway along the far wall which leads into the wings stage left by the prompt corner. The only other exit from below stage is a door leading into a passage to the kitchen. Camera holds as Koran reaches a trick marble statue standing by some stair rostrums.

3 CLOSE SHOT - STATUE - KORAN 3

Koran presses a concealed switch at the back of the statue. A door is released in the base. Koran wraps the gun back in the black felt and places it inside the hollow base, along with the radio equipment. He closes the compartment.

4 MED. SHOT - FLATS - CLOSET 4

Koran moves into shot through the jumble of scenery, picking up the small suitcase from beside the prop table. Also on the table is a tray, a metal covered dish and a napkin.

5 CLOSE SHOT - CLOSET - KORAN 5

He opens the rusting door, takes a waiter's jacket out of the suitcase and hangs it in the closet. We also observe some glasses and a wig in the suitcase. These he puts on the top shelf of the closet. He closes the closet door and moves a couple of six-foot flats against it. Then he turns. There is no expression in his face or eyes. He starts out.

6 INT. BACKSTAGE AT THE MAGIC CLUB - DAY - LATE AFTERNOON 6

Koran appears and heads toward his dressing room, crossing by George Thomas, Stage Manager for the show, who sits in a chair reading the paper. Thomas speaks with a bit of cockney.

THOMAS

Afternoon, sir.

KORAN

Afternoon, George.

THOMAS

Quite a house last night. Good having you back.

KORAN

(hint of irony)

Yes, like being home again.

THOMAS

Mr. Jerome was looking for you a while back, sir.

KORAN

Was he?

THOMAS

Seemed important.

Koran hesitates at his dressing room door, then turns and heads toward the other.

THOMAS

You couldn't make 'im disappear, could you, sir? Don't tell him I said it.

Koran grins back at him and goes off.

7

INT. JESSE JEROME'S OFFICE - DAY - LATE AFTERNOON

7

Jesse's office is moderate-sized with photos, trophies, awards, etc., adorning his walls. A sofa against one wall, a chair. Jesse sits behind a massive oak desk, next to which is a typewriter desk where he does some typing from time to time. He is a big man, perhaps 250 pounds, in his late 40's -- a gross eater, heavy drinker and thoroughly unlikeable. Jesse has a bowl of shelled shrimp in front of him and throughout the scene he keeps eating them with his fingers, dipping them into a bowl of hot sauce. He has a decanter of wine at his side and drinks throughout as well. Standing opposite him is Harry Blandford, Maitre d' of the Magic Circle Kitchen and Jesse's junior partner in the enterprise.

BLANDFORD

Koran's packing 'em in, Jesse --
we're sold out again tonight. I'm
going to need more help.

JESSE

(a wave of
the hand)

The kitchen's your responsibility,
Harry --- do as you wish.

BLANDFORD

It's just so hard to get good people ---

JESSE

Harry, Harry. Don't bother me with
trivialities. I've given you the
responsibility just for this very
reason. Solve the problem and
leave me be.

BLANDFORD

Yes, sir.

He turns and starts out as Koran enters.

BLANDFORD

Ah, Koran. Good to see you back.

KORAN

Good to be back, Harry.

JESSE

Harry, be a good fellow and shut
the door on your way out.

Blandford hesitates, then goes out, shutting the door. Koran turns to Jesse. It's obvious there is no love lost between these two men.

CONTINUED

7 CONTINUED

7

KORAN

George tells me you were looking for me.

JESSE

Have a shrimp. Magnificent. From a special bed off the Yucatan coast. I have them flown in.

KORAN

No, thanks.

JESSE

Pity.

He eats one.

JESSE

Tell me, Koran -- last month -- just before you left for New York -- you didn't by chance break into this office and search through my effects.

KORAN

Of course I didn't.

JESSE

(smiles, disbelieving)

I thought not. It was dreadful of me even to suggest it. And speaking of New York ---

He wipes his lips and hands with a huge napkin, then reaches into the drawer of his desk and takes out a #10 envelope and tosses it on the desk.

JESSE

I take it this is some sort of joke.

KORAN

Five thousand dollars is hardly a joke.

JESSE

Come, come, my dear friend. I've assimilated the rudiments of arithmetic. Your Eastern tour grossed a hundred thousand dollars -- fifty percent of which is ---

KORAN

Five percent of which is \$5,000.

CONTINUED

7 CONTINUED - 2

7

JESSE

Five percent? A change in our agreement, perhaps. Oh, no, dear man.

KORAN

I've had enough, Jesse. No more down the middle. You get five percent the way any business manager would -- and only because I want to give it to you. You're through bleeding me.

JESSE

Am I -- Sergeant?

Koran reacts.

JESSE

You see how that little word can render you helpless? Really, Koran -- or Sergeant Mueller, if you prefer -- you keep forgetting that I know who you are and where you come from.

KORAN

Dammit, I was just a boy -- barely twenty-one years old ---

JESSE

No one in the S.S. was just a boy, Mueller -- no one at that camp was just a boy unless he was being led into an oven ---

Jesse rises, malevolently.

JESSE

Don't misunderstand me, my friend. I will tell them, the newspapers, the Immigration Service -- the Israelis -- particularly the Israelis -- oh, how they'd love to get their hands on you.

KORAN

You wouldn't dare -- I'm too valuable to you.

JESSE

(indicates envelope)

You call this value? I'd do better

7 CONTINUED - 3

7

JESSE (Cont'd)
exposing you while I have the chance
-- before you break in here again
-- trying to find the old man's
letter -- and don't deny it was
you ---

KORAN
You're an animal, Jerome ---

JESSE
(smiles)
I'm a businessman. When that old
man recognized you last year,
didn't I give you the money to
keep him quiet? That was good
business. And when he died, and
I realized that I was the only one
who knew -- well, that's been good
business, too. That's why we're
such a wonderful team, you and I.
You do very well, despite every-
thing -- certainly better than spend-
ing the rest of your life in an
Israeli prison. Do look at it
realistically -- and have the other
forty-five thousand for me before
the performance tonight. I saw
the most divine Renoir yesterday
and I simply must have it.

Koran turns and heads for the door. He turns. A last look
at Jesse, infuriated.

8 ON JESSE

8

smiling. Lifts a glass of wine to his lips, well satisfied.

8-A ON KORAN

8-A

Leaves.

9 INT. DRESSING ROOM - DAY - LATE AFTERNOON

9

Koran's daughter, Della, 26, in a deep, lingering kiss with
Danny Green, 28, a singer at the Club. The door opens.
Koran enters, stopping short. Della and Danny turn toward
him, startled.

DELLA

Dad!

9 CONTINUED

9

KORAN

If you're going to seduce my daughter, young man, have the courtesy to do so in private.

DANNY

Sir, I'm sorry ---

KORAN

(ignoring him)

Della, I'd like to recheck the harness and the locks again.

Della and Danny share a look as Koran goes to the closet, doffs his coat and starts to roll up his sleeves.

DANNY

(to Della)

See you after the show? I thought maybe a late supper at Mama Lucia's.

DELLA

Sure. Pick me up around midnight.

Danny heads to the door, turns to Koran.

DANNY

Good-bye, sir.

KORAN

Good-bye, Mr. Greenberg.

Danny, at the door, shoots him a hard look, then goes, closing the door behind him. Della turns to her father.

DELLA

You never miss an opportunity, do you?

KORAN

Strange, I was about to say the same thing about you and -- your friend.

DELLA

His name is Green, Dad. Danny Green.

KORAN

Ah, yes. Green.

CONTINUED

9 CONTINUED - 2

9

DELLA

I don't understand you -- he could
be black and Puerto Rican and I
don't think you'd care -- but ---

Koran smiles and goes to her.

KORAN

Della, dear sweet child -- the fact
that Mr. Green is Jewish is immaterial.
But don't you see? He's hollow --
a fraud -- an ambitious, pushy hustler
with very little personality and no
talent whatsoever.

DELLA

I'm going to keep seeing him -- when
and where I choose ---

KORAN

Have I suggested otherwise? I'm
giving you a father's opinion, but
you're a grown woman now. Do as you
like, of course. I wish you nothing
but happiness. I only hope he's what
you really want.

Della smiles up at him and holds him close. He returns the
embrace in a fatherly manner but his face is cold.

CUT TO

10 INT. THE MAGIC CLUB - NIGHT

10

shortly before nine o'clock. A full house. Dinner being
served. People laughing and buzzing while onstage we see
and hear Danny Green singing a musical number.

11 ON DANNY

11

singing.

12 ON THE BAR

12

Jesse Jerome at the end of the bar, sipping a cordial.
Watching Danny.

13 INT. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

13

Close on Koran looking through curtains.

14 HIS POINT OF VIEW 14

Jerome, getting up from the bar and going to a stairway, then heading up the stairs.

15 BACK TO SCENE 15

Koran checks his watch.

16 HIS POINT OF VIEW - WATCH 16

reading: 9:01

17 ON STAGE 17

Danny finishes his song and comes off to applause.

18 BACKSTAGE 18

Danny comes off. Koran goes to him, getting close up to him, putting his hands on him in a friendly manner.

KORAN

Danny, about this afternoon. I'm sorry.

DANNY

Forget it, sir.

KORAN

No, my fault. Go on. Take another bow. They love you.

Danny grins and goes back on stage to take another bow. Koran turns and we see he has lifted Danny's handkerchief. He puts it in his pocket. Della moves up beside him.

DELLA

What was that all about?

KORAN

Just an old-fashioned apology, my dear. Feel better now?

Della smiles as Danny comes off, the house lights go down. A curtain comes up and a voice announces:

CONTINUED

18 CONTINUED

18

MICROPHONE VOICE

And now, ladies and gentlemen, once again to thrill and mystify you, the magnificent illusions of the Great Koran!

Koran moves out on stage with a flourish -- Della hanging back -- as the spot hits him.

19 ANOTHER ANGLE

19

Danny moves to the rear door, light topcoat over his arm. The Doorman opens the door for him.

DOORMAN

Leaving early tonight, Mr. Green?

DANNY

(smiles)

Have to change. Heavy date tonight, Marty.

(nods back
toward Della)

DOORMAN

(returns the smile)

Oh, very good, sir.

Danny exits and the Doorman closes the door behind him.

20 ON DELLA

20

Watching, and then turning her attention back to the stage.

DISSOLVE TO

21 INT. MAGIC CIRCLE CLUB - NIGHT - FULL

21

That night. Crowded as usual. Waiters and waitresses moving among the tables. The audience's attention is fixed upon the stage. They break into applause.

22 CLOSER SHOT - STAGE

22

Koran is dressed in black with a red-lined cape. Large rings and jewels sparkle on his fingers as his hands move in deft, fluid passes. He stands before a draped table upon which sits a glowing silver ball. He holds a black velvet cloth in his hands. To one side of him is Della, now assisting him.

CONTINUED

22 CONTINUED

22

To her left, a middle-aged couple from the audience volunteer from a front table -- stand nervously in the spotlight.

KORAN

I wonder if I might make one last demand upon your patience? I must admit to a weakness for flowers. They decorate my dressing room so beautifully.

(as he speaks, Koran is picking a myriad of seemingly fresh flowers from the pockets, lapels and hair of the bewildered man)

Of course, fresh flowers are not always easy to find. Unless you know where to look for them. Thank you, sir.

The audience applauds. The Man is now moving down toward the audience and the Woman is passing Koran.

KORAN

And for you, my dear....

Koran makes a sweep past her with his cloak, producing a bouquet of flowers, already wrapped in cellophane, which he presents to her as she also descends from the stage. Koran's own applause continues until the couple are reseated and the lights dim again around him.

23 FULL SHOT

23

A Voice echoes through the audience over the microphone system.

MICROPHONE VOICE

And now, ladies and gentlemen, the Magic Circle is proud to present the Great Koran's world-famous 'water tank' illusion.

24 INT. WINGS - STAGE LEFT - FULL

24

shooting from the prompt corner. George Thomas, Stage Manager for the show, sits at his desk, a lighting script before him.

CONTINUED

24 CONTINUED

24

A row of buttons with red and green lights and an intercom to his left. Performers milling around in the dimly-lit wings, gaudily-dressed, other magicians with their assistants, a juggling team. Two black-suited stagehands wheel an eight-foot, oblong glass tank onto the stage. Koran can be seen standing down by the footlights, Della a little way back from him. Oblique glimpse of the audience beyond. Voice over the microphone also echoing backstage. The Stage Manager presses a switch. A red light glows beside him. He speaks softly into his own intercom system.

THOMAS

Stand by, spotlights.

25 INT. JEROME'S OFFICE - ANTEROOM

25

Jerome enters, takes the key out of the door and shuts it. He makes sure the lock is tight. Then he turns and goes into his private office where he flips on a light leaving the anteroom dark. Intercutting now with the stage.

26 ON STAGE

26

A spotlight hits Koran, a lesser one touching Della behind him. The tank is placed correctly and the stagehands move to a harness which has come down from the flies.

27 ON JEROME

27

He goes to a wall safe -- opens it -- take out an old yellowed letter, then he crosses to a wine bottle, pours himself some port, then crosses back to his desk, slips a piece of paper into the typewriter, hesitates and then starts to type. The old yellowed letter sits on the desk.

28 ON STAGE

28

MICROPHONE VOICE

Two members of the stage staff stand by with axes at every performance, ready to smash the glass in case the Master is trapped.

Koran is lifted up by the harness.

29 SHOT OF AUDIENCE

29

quiet, attentive, house lights dimmed, watching in fascination.

30 ON JEROME 30
typing intently.

31 CLOSE ON TYPEWRITER 31
Watch the "ball" of the IBM Selectric whipping back and forth.
And we see what is being typed:

"Department of Immigration and Naturalization
Washington, D.C."

32 ON STAGE 32
Koran is lowered down into the tank. Camera pulls back a
little from it to take in the rest of the stage. Light re-
fracted through the glass. The lid is lowered into place and
a curtain comes around the tank.

33 INT. TANK - CLOSE - KORAN 33
Koran removes the harness, which is immediately hoisted out
of shot. He turns to the left-hand wall of the tank. Sound
of the Microphone Voice drifts faintly through to him.

MICROPHONE VOICE

A glass lid is locked into place
above Koran, sealing him inside.

A curtain comes around the tank, blotting out the brilliant
haze of the front of the house. As soon as it has obscured
the Master from view, a panel slides across the left wall of
the tank which Koran faces. Built into it are a pair of me-
chanical hands, beautifully molded, like wax, into the shape
of Koran's hands, including the large identifiable rings he
wears, the wrists held together, the hands almost in an atti-
tude of prayer. Also, his feet, identical shoes, at the
bottom of the panel. They thrust through the special compart-
ments.

34 FULL SHOT - STAGE - AUDIENCE 34
Shooting from beside the tank, Koran's hands and feet in the
f.g., Della enters the shot with the two pairs of handcuffs.

MICROPHONE VOICE

The Master's hands and feet are
bound with the same handcuffs that

CONTINUED

34 CONTINUED

34

MICROPHONE VOICE (Cont'd)
were examined earlier by two impar-
tial members of the audience.

Della snaps them over the mechanical ankles and wrists. Immed-
iately, she moves around toward the front of the tank.

35 INT. TANK - FULL

35

Koran stands at the left-hand wall as if his own hands and
feet were bound, masking the replicas. Water is pouring down
to one side of him from the transparent nozzle, running across
the floor of the tank. Della's hands pull away the curtain at
the front. Sudden bright light reflecting against the glass.

MICROPHONE VOICE
(faintly)
As you can see, the Great Koran is
indeed in the tank, his hands and
feet bound together.

Della lets the curtain drop, blocking out the light. Close
on Koran, pressing a switch at the back of the hands.

36 CLOSE SHOT - HANDS

36

They move together, gently chaffing at the handcuffs.

37 INT. TANK - FULL

37

Koran kneels down, feeling through the inches of water for the
recessed ring of the trapdoor. Koran finds the ring,
pulls up the trapdoor, water pouring down through the opening.

38 INT. THE STAGE

38

Della moves from the tank down right to another table upon
which sits a large hourglass filled with brilliant red sand.
A spotlight touches the hourglass.

MICROPHONE VOICE
It takes exactly nine minutes and
twelve seconds for the tank to be
completely filled.

Della turns the hourglass over.

39 CLOSE SHOT - HOURGLASS 39

The grains of the colored sand slowly spilling from the full compartment into the empty one.

40 INT. BELOW STAGE - NIGHT 40

Close on the ladder, water splashed over it and down onto the basement floor. Koran climbs down the ladder, shutting the trapdoor behind him. Camera moves down with him, holding him close as he kicks off his wet shoes, exchanging them for a dry pair waiting beneath the prop table. Koran checks his watch.

41 MED. SHOT - STAGE - CLUB 41

shooting from the wings. Della begins her act downstage, also spotlit, producing a beautiful white dove from a white silk handkerchief. During the next few minutes, the audience's breathless attention is divided between appreciation of her act and the filling spot-lighted tank upstage in which Koran "fights" to be free.

42 CLOSE SHOT - KORAN - TRAVELING 42

He moves swiftly to the trick statue, presses the switch at the back, releasing the concealed door, takes the pistol from inside along with the radio mike, receiver and two-way transmitter. Quickly, he puts the small mike around his neck, down under his shirt, out of sight. He puts the earplug in his ear and the receiving unit under his armpit so that it merely looks as if he wears a hearing aid. He sets the transmitter on the table near the door. Now he crosses quickly to the closet door and starts to take off his coat.

43 INT. PASSAGE - NIGHT 43

Koran, now dressed and disguised as a waiter, moves down the passage and up a short flight of stairs to the kitchen.

44 INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT 44

crowded and noisy. White-aproned chefs standing over grills cooking steaks and slices of beef, steam rising into the air. More cooks preparing salads on a long wooded sideboard. Waitresses and waiters entering and leaving with orders, trays

CONTINUED

44 CONTINUED

44

piled high with dirty dishes, new orders going off as the chefs complete them, spinning them along a chromium-topped table. Moment to establish the scene before Koran enters it, head down, carrying the tray, making his way swiftly through the kitchen and up a stairway to the second floor.

45 INT. THE STAGE - NIGHT

45

Della completing an illusion to applause. Camera pans to the hourglass. The sand continues to drain.

46 INT. STAIRWAY - NIGHT

46

Koran mounts another set of stairs to the third floor.

47 INT. JEROME'S OFFICE - NIGHT

47

He sips some port and continues his typing.

48 TIGHT ON TYPEWRITER

48

We see the following is being typed:

"Enclosed find a letter which proves that Koran is in reality an ex-Nazi named Heinrich Mueller...."

49 INT. THE KITCHEN - NIGHT

49

The same noise and confusion as before. People in and out. A waiter named Thackery puts a snifter of brandy on a tray and starts toward the corridor leading to the basement.

50 INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT

50

Thackery gets to the door and tries to open it. Locked. Confused, he knocks twice.

51 INT. THIRD FLOOR STAIRWELL - NIGHT

51

Koran hears the knock through his earplug receiving unit.

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51 CONTINUED

51

KORAN

Yes?

52 INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT

52

KORAN'S VOICE

What is it?

THACKERY

Thackery, sir -- with your brandy.

53 ON KORAN

53

KORAN

No, not tonight.

54 INT. BASEMENT - ON TWO-WAY TRANSMITTER

54

KORAN'S VOICE

Take it back.

Camera pans toward the locked door.

55 INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT

55

THACKERY

Sir?

KORAN'S VOICE

(annoyed)

I said, take it back.

THACKERY

Yes, sir.

He shrugs and moves away from the door.

56 INT. STAIRWELL - NIGHT

56

Satisfied, Koran continues up to the third floor corridor and starts down it.

57 INT. THIRD FLOOR CORRIDOR - NIGHT

57

Koran approaching Jerome's door. He hear typing from within. A puzzled look.

58 CLOSE ON DOOR HANDLE 58

He tries the door handle carefully. The door is locked. The sound of typing continues.

59 ON KORAN 59

frowns, then puts down the tray. He reaches in his pocket and takes out a length of thin steel and carefully starts to pick the lock.

60 INT. JEROME'S OFFICE - NIGHT 60

Typing intently in the private office, he hears nothing.

61 INT. THIRD FLOOR CORRIDOR - ON KORAN 61

having difficulty with the lock. He doesn't understand it.

62 INT. THE KITCHEN - NIGHT 62

Thackery returns with the brandy, puts down the tray. Hesitates, then drinks it. Harry Blandford, the Maitre d' now wearing a tux, sees him and crosses to him sharply.

BLANDFORD

What do you think you're up to there, Thackery?

THACKERY

The old man's not drinking tonight. Shame to waste it.

BLANDFORD

(miffed)

Feeding Napoleon brandy to the likes of you is a total waste.

63 INT. THIRD FLOOR CORRIDOR - NIGHT 63

Koran manages to open the lock. The door opens.

64 INT. JEROME'S OFFICE - NIGHT 64

Noting a light change in the anteroom, he looks up.

JEROME

Hello? Who's there?

No response. He gets up.

65 INT. ANTEROOM TO JEROME'S OFFICE - NIGHT 65

Koran takes out Danny's handkerchief, holds the gun handle wrapped in the handkerchief and looks up as Jerome comes into the room.

JEROME

Who's there?

(to Koran)

What are you doing here? Why aren't you -- ?

He gets no more out. The silencer-equipped gun gives a little "ffft." Jerome clutches his abdomen and goes down in a heap. Koran quickly lays the gun and handkerchief on the floor, then turns and goes into the private office.

66 INT. JEROME'S OFFICE - NIGHT 66

Koran enters quickly and crosses to the typewriter. He sees the faded handwritten letter on the desk and picks it up. Then his eyes fall upon a nearly completed letter in the carriage. He rips it out, reads it, his eyes ablaze with fear and hatred. He crumples the letter and puts it in his pocket. Using the napkin, he picks up the phone and dials the kitchen.

67 INT. THE KITCHEN - NIGHT 67

Blandford answers the buzz. The din is loud. He strains to hear.

BLANDFORD

Yes, Jesse?

68 INT. JEROME'S OFFICE - NIGHT 68

KORAN

(imitating Jerome)

Send up some coffee, Harry.

69 INT. THE KITCHEN - NIGHT 69

BLANDFORD

Coffee? Yes, sir.

He hangs up and turns to Thackery.

BLANDFORD

Thackery!

70 INT. THE KITCHEN - NIGHT

70

Koran, reappearing among the confusion and moving unnoticed through the throng, heading toward the corridor leading to the basement. We see Thackery putting coffee on a tray and getting ready to move out.

71 INT. THE STAGE - NIGHT

71

Della bows and moves quickly off stage left.

MICROPHONE VOICE

Della! Ladies and gentlemen -- a nice hand for the daughter of the Master!

72 THE WINGS

72

Della has come off -- now a Second Girl, who is dressed identically and could pass for her in the dim light, moves out on stage.

73 LONG SHOT OF THE STAGE

73

The Second Girl taking a bow. Then the lights dim and a spot comes up on the water tank. A hush falls on the crowd.

MICROPHONE VOICE

Time is running out. It is only a matter of seconds before the tank will be completely filled.

74 INT. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

74

Della moves past the prompt table, looking at George Thomas.

DELLA

Where's Father?

THOMAS

(shrugging)

Not up yet.

A momentary frown, then she grips hold of a metal ring which swings her up and over the water tank, obscured by the curtain. The nozzle has been swung away and the lid removed. Della is lowered down into the tank, now full of water.

75 INT. TANK 75

Della hits the bottom, holding her breath, gripping the sides of the tank to keep her down.

76 MED. SHOT - STAGE - TANK 76

Drum roll reaching its climax. A second curtain is brought around the tank, also around the supposed figure of Della.

77 INT. TANK 77

The panel is slid back and Della thrusts her own hands and feet through the special compartments.

78 ANGLE ON HER HANDS 78

A stagehand snaps two pairs of cuffs on her ankles and wrists.

79 INT. WINGS - STAGE LEFT 79

Koran runs up the stairs and into the wings. Performers milling around. George Thomas standing now at the table.

THOMAS

(to Koran)

I didn't think you were going to make it!

Koran just reaches the stage in time, gasping for breath, replacing Della's substitute as the curtain is thrown off.

80 FULL SHOT - STAGE 80

Koran steps forward, immaculate and smiling, bowing to the tumultuous applause. Curtain is pulled away from the tank to reveal Della, standing with her hands and feet handcuffed, the water level above her head. She is released from the cuffs, rises up, grips hold of the metal ring and is swung over and down to join her father.

81 MED. CLOSE - DELLA - KORAN 81

Koran takes his daughter's hand and they both bow graciously to the enthusiastic reception. Camera tightens onto Koran's face.

82 HIS POINT OF VIEW NEAR THE KITCHEN DOORS 82

Thackery enters excitedly and talks to Blandford near the doorway. Blandford reacts as Thackery points upstairs. The two of them rush out.

83 ON KORAN 83

smiling in satisfaction because this night he has performed his greatest illusion of all.

84 EXT. THE MAGIC CIRCLE CLUB - NIGHT 84

about an hour later. Two squad cars outside the entrance. An ambulance nearby. Onlookers. A cop named Jefferson at the door. Columbo's Peugeot pulls up and parks. Columbo gets out -- and his appearance is noticeably different. His raincoat is a brand new one. He hesitates, shrugs, tugging down one of the sleeves, then reaches back into the car and takes out a small box of Kentucky Fried Chicken which he carries with him toward the door.

85 ON THE DOOR 85

Jefferson, the police officer, blocks his way, a little puzzled.

JEFFERSON

Excuse me, it's Lieutenant -- uh ---
(gropes for
the name)

COLUMBO

Columbo.

JEFFERSON

(grins)
Thought I recognized you, Lieutenant.
You look different somehow.

He steps aside and pushes the door open.

COLUMBO

Had my hair cut.
(starting in)
Who's in charge?

JEFFERSON

Sergeant Wilson.

Columbo nods, starts in, turns back. Apprehensive.

CONTINUED

85 CONTINUED

85

COLUMBO

Wilson? Detective Sergeant John
J. Wilson?

JEFFERSON

That's him.

Columbo hesitates, nods to himself. Then turns and goes
back in, a little less spring to his step.

86 INT. THIRD FLOOR CORRIDOR - NIGHT

86

Several people milling around, including the usual assortment
of lab men, photographers, etc. Det. Sgt. Wilson comes out
of Jerome's office with a uniformed policeman.

WILSON

I want everyone assembled in the
main room within thirty minutes.
When Lieutenant Columbo arrives,
he's going to want to talk to all
of them.

POLICEMAN

Sir, there are two hundred and
twenty customers down there.

WILSON

The Lieutenant's a very thorough
man. We won't leave until he
finds the person who did this.

POLICEMAN

(glumly)
Yes, sir.

He turns and goes. At that moment, Columbo appears at the
top of the main stairway and heads toward the room. Wilson
spots him and greets him effusively.

WILSON

Lieutenant!

They meet in mid-corridor.

WILSON

Good to see you again, sir. Wilson,
John J. Detective Sergeant.

COLUMBO

Hiya, Wilson. How ya been?
(refuses a handshake)
Watch it -- I got grease all over
my fingers.

CONTINUED

COLUMBO (Cont'd)
(Wilson pulls his
hand back)
My dinner. Want a piece?
(Columbo extends
the box toward him)

WILSON
No, no, thanks.
(beat, realizing)
The coat!

COLUMBO
Huh?

WILSON
Your coat. I must say, that's a
fine looking raincoat, sir.

COLUMBO
(unenthused)
Yeah, well, my wife gave it to me
-- for my birthday.

WILSON
It fits beautifully.

COLUMBO
You think so?
(shrugs uncomfortably)
Feels a little stiff.

WILSON
Well, it's new. You'll get used
to it.

They start into the room.

87 INT. THE ANTEROOM OF THE OFFICE - NIGHT

87

Body in position, covered. Lab men working on the premises
in both rooms as Columbo and Wilson enter.

WILSON
Sir, I have to tell you -- what a
great honor it is -- to be working
with you again -- I've gained a lot
of experience since our last case,
you know ---

CONTINUED

87 CONTINUED

87

COLUMBO

Good, good.
(indicates)
That him?

Wilson reaches in his pocket and takes out a little black book, identical to the one that Columbo carries.

WILSON

Jesse T. Jerome. Born August 3,
1923. Height, 5 foot, 8 inches.
Weight 240 pounds ---

COLUMBO

You weigh him?

WILSON

Took it off his driver's license.

Columbo nods, puts down his chicken on the floor, lifts the sheet and examines the body, feeling the corpse's back which he notices is damp.

COLUMBO

What was he doing -- exercising or something?

WILSON

Sir -- ?

COLUMBO

His back -- and the seat of the pants -- they're damp ---

WILSON

(blankly)

Oh.

He starts to jot it down.

88

INT. MAGIC CIRCLE CLUB - NIGHT - BELOW STAGE

88

Close on the flames of a roaring furnace. Camera pulls back to take in Koran, standing at the iron door of the furnace. A last look at the yellowed letter and then the freshly typed letter. Then he tosses them into the consuming pyre. The wavering light of the flames illuminate the Master's face with a strange intensity, seemingly mirrored in his eyes. Roar of the furnace enveloping him in its sound. He also throws in the sandy-colored wig he'd worn, disintegrating with even brighter light among the ashes.

CONTINUED

88 CONTINUED

88

Sound of footsteps faintly approaching the door. Koran turns from the furnace, shutting the iron door. Camera pulls back a little more to hold him full. The footsteps reach the door. Someone tries the door. The door is locked. Blandford's voice comes through.

BLANDFORD'S VOICE

Hello! Anyone in there?

Koran moves quickly to the marble statue and replaces the radio equipment in the hollow base, camera panning him to it.

89 CLOSE SHOT - KORAN - TRAVELING

89

as he moves back toward the locked door.

BLANDFORD'S VOICE

Koran? Are you in there?

Koran reaches the door and opens it, camera holding him and Blandford in the doorway.

BLANDFORD

I'm sorry, sir. The police. They want everyone upstairs.

KORAN

Yes, of course.

He moves out of the room with Blandford, shutting the door behind him.

90 INT. JEROME'S PRIVATE OFFICE - NIGHT

90

In the b.g., the police are still milling about as Wilson continues to fill Columbo in.

WILSON

One shot through the heart. A .38 calibre revolver with a handkerchief wrapped about the handle was found in the doorway. I suspect it's the murder weapon, though I've learned you can never jump to conclusions.

COLUMBO

(thoughtful)
Good thinking, Wilson.

CONTINUED

90 CONTINUED

90

He tosses a chicken bone into the wastebasket and starts to wipe his hands on his raincoat.

WILSON

(aghast)

Lieutenant!!

COLUMBO

(looks up in shock)

What? What is it?

WILSON

Your coat. You were about to get chicken grease all over your new coat.

COLUMBO

Oops, force of habit.

He plucks a Kleenex from a desk top box, wipes his fingers and tosses it away, then takes off the raincoat.

COLUMBO

I better take this off -- just to be safe.

He does so, draping it over his arm.

COLUMBO

And you say he must have died between 9:00 and 10:06?

WILSON

Yes, sir. He left the bar downstairs just as the magician -- Koran -- was starting his act. A waiter named Thackery discovered the body at 10:06.

COLUMBO

That makes sense.

WILSON

The problem, sir -- is that it could have been anybody -- I mean, unless we trace the gun or pick up some fingerprints -- I mean, anybody could have sneaked up the stairs -- knocked on the door and when Jerome opened the door, they shot him and went right back downstairs again.

CONTINUED

90 CONTINUED - 2

90

Columbo nods.

COLUMBO

You see, that's what's been bothering me. Did he open the door?

WILSON

I don't follow you, sir.

Columbo leads him toward the doorway separating the anteroom from the private office. In doing so, he casually tosses his raincoat on Jerome's sofa.

COLUMBO

Look at this. The anteroom is dark, right? Jerome is shot in the heart -- from the front -- but not at the doorway -- no, he drops back here -- a good twelve or fifteen feet from the door.

91 OTHER ANGLES - MOVING BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN PRIVATE OFFICE AND THE ANTEROOM

91

Columbo moves to demonstrate to Wilson.

COLUMBO

For instance -- he goes to the door -- opens it -- surprise -- bang -- he gets shot. I can understand that.

(beat)

Or he opens the door, recognizes the person, turns and runs toward his office and gets shot in the back. I can understand that, too.

(beat, looks down)

But how does this happen -- unless the door is already open? So Jerome is in his office -- hears a noise -- comes to this doorway here -- sees the murderer -- and bang. That I can understand.

Wilson feverishly flips through his pages. The Policeman appears at the door, wearily.

POLICEMAN

Sergeant, some of these people downstairs are getting a little restless. How much longer do we hold 'em?

CONTINUED

WILSON

(to Columbo)

I took the liberty of quarantining the patrons until you had a chance to interrogate them.

COLUMBO

The guests? No, I don't think that's necessary.

(to Policeman)

Officer, you got their names?

POLICEMAN

Yes, sir.

COLUMBO

Let 'em go. If we need 'em, we'll call 'em.

POLICEMAN

Yes, sir.

He moves out. As he does so, Columbo moves to the lock on the door. Wilson follows him.

WILSON

I'm sorry, sir -- I thought it best ---

COLUMBO

(peers at lock)

It's all right, you did just fine.

WILSON

I was about to say, sir -- I doubt if the door was opened. That's a new lock.

COLUMBO

I can see that.

WILSON

Just installed last week. Only one key and it was found on Mr. Jerome's person.

COLUMBO

Is that right?

(indicating)

You see those scratches? I think somebody picked this lock.

CONTINUED

91 CONTINUED - 2

91

WILSON

Really?

COLUMBO

Have the lab guys take a look.

He moves out of the office into the hallway.

COLUMBO

I'm going downstairs and look around.

92 INT. THIRD FLOOR CORRIDOR - NIGHT

92

Columbo starts off, lighting a cigar. Behind him, Wilson appears, carrying the new raincoat.

WILSON

Oh, Lieutenant. Your coat.

Columbo turns, smiles in embarrassment.

COLUMBO

(grins)

How do you like that? Thanks.

He drapes the coat over his arm and continues down the corridor.

93 INT. MAGIC CIRCLE CLUB - FOYER - NIGHT

93

A couple of cops. Some waiters. People in a state of shock. Koran is wearing a cape and top hat and is helping Della on with her cloak as they prepare to go.

DELLA

I ought to call Danny.

KORAN

No, the sooner we get you home, the better. This has been a dreadful night.

Columbo appears, coat hung over his arm. He looks around and then starts to thread his way through the tables toward the stage. Koran notices this and is apprehensive as it appears Columbo is about to hop up on the stage and go backstage.

KORAN

(to Della)

Excuse me for a moment, my dear. Wait for me out front.

He moves off toward Columbo.

94 ANGLE ON FRONT DOOR - DAY

94

Danny Green enters, wearing a dark suit. He looks puzzled.

DANNY

Della?

Della turns toward him and then crosses to him quickly.

DANNY

What's happened? What's going on around here.

95 INT. MAGIC CIRCLE CLUB - NIGHT - ON FRONT OF STAGE

95

Columbo climbs up on stage just as Koran reaches him.

KORAN

One moment, sir -- the rear of the stage is off-limits.

COLUMBO

I was just going to look around ---

KORAN

I'm afraid that's not possible. I don't want my secrets exposed to the world. You understand.

COLUMBO

Oh, you're the magician! -- Koran -- How do you do, sir?

(puts out hand,
but Koran does
not respond)

You look different from your picture out front. Maybe it's the hat.

KORAN

And you are --- ?

COLUMBO

(flashes the tin)

Lt. Columbo. LAPD. Homicide.

KORAN

(quickly)

Oh, Lieutenant, I'm terribly sorry.

(a slight bow)

I am at your service.

CONTINUED

COLUMBO

Quite all right, sir.

KORAN

Not that I can shed any light on Jessie's death -- I was performing my act at the time he was killed --

(lightly)

-- in fact, I daresay it may have happened during the water tank illusion.

COLUMBO

Oh, yes. My wife and I saw that on television -- when you were at Madison Square Garden -- Terrific! I don't know how you do it, sir ---

KORAN

Of course you don't. And that, Lieutenant, is how I manage to keep one step ahead of the wolf.

COLUMBO

Oh, I'm sure you do a little better than that, sir.

KORAN

(smiles)

A little, I suppose.

(beat)

I really ought to be going, but if there's anything I can do -- short of baring the secrets to my illusions -- let me know.

COLUMBO

I'll do that, sir -- and thank you.

Koran walks off with a flourish. Columbo watches him go.

The following day. Tight on a lock being held in the hands of Rogers, one of the forensic specialists for the S.I.D.

ROGERS

Handmade, with two special baffles. I figured as much when I saw the key.

The angle widens to show that Columbo (in his suit, sans his new raincoat) is studying the lock intently.

CONTINUED

ROGERS

That's why I can't figure how it happened.

COLUMBO

How what happened?

ROGERS

This lock was picked.

COLUMBO

You're sure about that?

ROGERS

(taking it)

Take a look.

He pulls off the cover to display the innards.

ROGERS

See those scratches? Somebody picked it open with a piece of thin steel rod. Impossible, but it happened.

Columbo nods, and puts the lock down.

COLUMBO

What else?

Rogers moves to the handkerchief and picks it up.

ROGERS

This is the handkerchief found on the gun handle. The killer used it to keep his prints off the gun -- also to mask any traces of nitrate.

Rogers thrusts it under Columbo's nose. Columbo sniffs. He makes a face.

COLUMBO

Smells like an ammunition dump.

(beat)

Any identifying characteristics?
Laundry mark --- ?

ROGERS

(shakes head)

It's brand new -- probably never washed. Good quality Irish linen, but nothing special.

Moving along, picking up the weapon:

ROGERS

As for the gun, it's a standard Smith and Wesson .38 caliber revolver. We've matched the serial number with a shipment that was stolen from a wholesaler in San Francisco -- so there's no record of ownership, no prints -- no nothing.

(turns to Columbo)

And there you are.

COLUMBO

(nods)

There I am.

Columbo crosses over to the table where the lock sits, looks at it, picks it up, then turns to Rogers.

COLUMBO

Listen, you mind if I borrow this for a while?

ROGERS

As long as you sign for it.

Columbo nods and crosses to Rogers' desk as Rogers starts to fill out a log.

Wilson enters, looks around and crosses quickly to Columbo.

WILSON

You're here, Lieutenant.

COLUMBO

(nodding, agreeing to the obvious)

Right.

WILSON

I think we've got something.

(looks in book)

Time of death can now be definitely established between 9:56 and 10:06

-- a ten minute span.

COLUMBO

Where'd you get that -- the Medical Examiner?

WILSON

Harry Blandford.

(on Columbo's look)

At the Club. He's the Maitre d' and sort of a junior partner. At 9:56, Jerome called from his office to order coffee sent up -- so he had to have been alive. Ergo, Jerome died within a ten-minute span. Now, all we have to do is check alibis for those ten minutes and we'll have our killer.

COLUMBO

(dubious)

We will? Listen, uh -- Wilson -- there's something I want you to track down for me.

(goes to the table and picks up the handkerchief)

You see this? Brand new. See the folds.

WILSON

Yes, sir.

COLUMBO

I want you to find out who makes this handkerchief, who sells it, and who's bought one recently.

Wilson takes the handkerchief and looks at it dubiously.

WILSON

That could take days -- weeks.

COLUMBO

(nods)

I know. But it's gotta be done.

WILSON

I suppose I could request some men ---

COLUMBO

No, I want you to handle this personally. I have great faith in you.

CONTINUED

97 CONTINUED - 2

97

WILSON

(smiles bravely)

Yes, sir. I'll get right on it.

Columbo moves toward the door, turns and points at the log.

COLUMBO

Help him out, will you, Rogers?

Columbo goes.

98 ON ROGERS

98

ROGERS

(starting to note
the log)

Handkerchief, one. Linen.

Wilson looks at the handkerchief in his hand, not pleased with his assignment.

99 EXT. THE MAGIC CIRCLE CLUB - DAY

99

Columbo's car pulls up and parks in front of the club. He gets out and crosses to the main entrance. He is not wearing any raincoat. The same uniformed cop is still on duty.

JEFFERSON

Afternoon, Lieutenant.

COLUMBO

How ya doin', Jefferson?

JEFFERSON

Okay. We got the side door and the rear covered -- and we're searching everybody leavin' like you asked -- but I sure don't know what we're lookin' for.

COLUMBO

That makes us even because neither do I.

JEFFERSON

Gonna be tough tonight -- all the customers comin' and goin' ---

COLUMBO

I'm not worried about the customers -- just the employees -- waiters, musicians -- people who work here ---

CONTINUED

99 CONTINUED

99

JEFFERSON

Okay, Lieutenant -- we'll keep
checkin' 'em out ---

Columbo grins and goes inside.

100 STAIRS - MED. SHOT

100

Columbo comes down the stairs from the street into the Club. He looks past the camera, adjusting his eyes to the gloom. Then he moves forward through the tables, camera moving back before him, then holding as he stops.

101 COLUMBO'S POINT OF VIEW

101

Koran stands on the stage in a single spotlight, doing some deft card tricks, individual cards and whole packs appearing in his hands from nowhere. He drops them into a black top hat sitting on a small table beside him. Koran does not seem aware of what he is doing, as if it is automatic, staring out into the darkness. Stagehands moving some scenery and props behind him.

102 ANGLE ON COLUMBO

102

as he moves out of the gloom, applauding the tricks, genuinely appreciative. He faces the intense figure, strangely alone in the light, watching the bright cards appearing between his fingers in amazement.

COLUMBO

You know something -- that's really
terrific!

KORAN

Thank you.

COLUMBO

I've always wanted to know how those
things are done. You must have
very dexterous hands. Now, my hands...

(looking at them)

They wouldn't conceal anything.
I wouldn't have the patience, you
know?

Koran finishes off his practice, comes down the steps and
looks at Columbo's hands.

CONTINUED

KORAN

Quite right, Lieutenant. For maximum facility, the hands should be large -- facile --

(beat)

How goes the hunt?

COLUMBO

Sir?

KORAN

Jesse's murderer. Have you any clues?

COLUMBO

No, sir, not really. We're kinda stumped.

KORAN

(casually)

I'm curious -- about the police you have stationed at the doors -- what's their function?

COLUMBO

Well, I'm not really sure. It just seems to me that Mr. Jerome was killed for a reason -- so maybe we ought to seal the place off as best we can until we get some kind of a lead.

(beat)

Speaking of that, I thought perhaps you might be able to throw some light on it for me.

KORAN

(laughs)

Hardly, Lieutenant. At the moment Jesse was murdered, I was sealed in that tank...

(indicates)

...struggling to free myself before I drowned.

COLUMBO

Oh, I didn't mean anything firsthand, sir -- just an idea as to who might have had a motive. An enemy. A name he might have mentioned.

KORAN

Sorry.

They are moving toward the bar in the rear of the club area.

103 INT. BAR AREA OF THE CLUB - DAY

103

Koran moves behind the bar and ruing the following, pours himself a glass of straight tonic water. Columbo looks back at the tank, goes to the bar and perches on a stool. He leans over confidentially.

COLUMBO

Now, I don't want you to take this the wrong way -- but that tank out there -- you're not really in there, right?

KORAN

(smiles)

Perhaps so, perhaps not.

COLUMBO

Not that I want you to give away any secrets -- not at all ---

KORAN

I'd confess to murder itself before I'd do that, Lieutenant.

(beat)

It's the matter of the alibi, isn't it?

COLUMBO

Well, uh ---

KORAN

Of course. Of all the people in the Club last night, I have the best alibi of all -- and yet, the worst. Where was I during the time Jesse Jerome was shot to death? There? Or somewhere else? Fascinating.

He drinks some of the tonic.

KORAN

Tonic water?

COLUMBO

Oh, no. Never use it.

KORAN

Lieutenant, let me put your mind at ease. I did not kill Jesse Jerome. If you insist on an alibi, I can produce one. But for the moment, why don't you concentrate your efforts on more productive areas? For example, the singer, Mr. Green.

CONTINUED

103 CONTINUED

103

COLUMBO

Who?

KORAN

Daniel Green -- Dark, brooding fellow -- you must have seen him last night. He and Jesse have been fighting for weeks. Green wants to leave the club -- Jesse's been forcing him to honor his contract. Not very pleasant, any of it.

Columbo nods, writing in his book.

COLUMBO

Green. Yes. I'll have a talk with him. Thank you very much, sir.

He moves off.

104 ON KORAN

104

smiles, then lifts the glass to his lips and drinks.

CUT TO

105 INT. LASSITER'S LOCK SHOP - DAY

105

Full shot. A small shop absolutely jammed with locks of every size and description. Columbo enters, a bell tinkling in the doorway above him. Camera pans him through the shop to the counter at the back.

106 MED. SHOT - COUNTER - COLUMBO

106

Lassiter moves into shot behind the counter. He is a kindly old man who disguises his compassion for a foolish world with seeming detachment and resignation.

COLUMBO

Mr. Lassiter?

LASSITER

Yes?

Columbo shows him his shield.

COLUMBO

Lieutenant Columbo.

CONTINUED

LASSITER

Oh, yes. I was expecting you.
About Mr. Jerome, isn't it?

COLUMBO

I understand you fitted this new
lock on his door about a week ago.
(takes lock out
of pocket)

LASSITER

(examines it)
Yes, this is my work. Mr. Jerome
was concerned about burglary ---

COLUMBO

This is a fascinating lock, I gotta
tell you. The boys down at the lab,
they couldn't believe it had been
picked.

LASSITER

(horrified)
Picked? Impossible.

COLUMBO

See for yourself.

Lassiter takes out a jeweler's loupe and examines the scratch
marks.

LASSITER

(lowering loupe)
Oh, dear. And Mr. Jerome was so
specific -- he wanted a lock that
not even an expert could pick.

COLUMBO

(reacts)
Were those his exact words

LASSITER

Oh, yes.

Columbo leans across the counter urgently.

COLUMBO

If I brought you a pair of handcuffs
-- an ordinary pair of police hand-
cuffs -- could you exchange the lock
in them for a replica of this lock?

CONTINUED

106 CONTINUED - 2

106

COLUMBO (Cont'd)
 (he holds up the
 one Lassiter has
 shown him)
 Only smaller, of course.

LASSITER
 It could be done.

COLUMBO
 Could it be done before 8:00 o'clock
 tonight?

Lassiter smiles at him, his eyes far away.

LASSITER
 You young people. When I was a
 young man, time was precious. You
 savoured it. Today everything must
 be done yesterday.

COLUMBO
 Yes, sir. This is very, very impor-
 tant. Could you do it?

LASSITER
 If the handcuffs are with me in an
 hour, you will have them back by
 8:00 o'clock tonight.

COLUMBO
 (smiles)
 Thank you, sir. That's terrific.

DISSOLVE TO

107 INT. MAGIC CIRCLE CLUB - NIGHT

107

Full shot. That night. Packed, as usual. Koran is standing
 with a group of admirers at a table in the b.g. Ad lib inter-
 mingled conversations around them. Onstage, Danny Green is
 singing.

KORAN
 But, of course, I'm performing
 tonight, dear man. Jesse Jerome
 was a dear friend whom I shall miss
 terribly, but Jesse was a showman
 above all else. His spirit will be
 here tonight -- it must be enter-
 tained like Banquo's ghost at
 Macbeth's dinner table.

107 CONTINUED

107

Columbo enters the Club behind him. Koran, who has half turned toward the bar, spots him and turns back to his friends.

KORAN

Excuse me, would you?

He moves swiftly from them.

108 MED. SHOT - STAIRS - CLUB - COLUMBO

108

Columbo, wearing his ruffled suit, looks out of place among the most expensively dressed clientele. Camera pans with Koran as he moves into shot up to Columbo.

KORAN

Lieutenant! Welcome.

Columbo is impressed with the atmosphere of the Club, full of people, laughter, smoke and expectation.

COLUMBO

Boy, this is terrific! Are you always as crowded as this?

KORAN

But, of course.

(indicates)

You see them -- my public -- waiting on the off-chance that I should come to a watery end in that infernal contraption ---

COLUMBO

Oh, no, sir ---

KORAN

Oh, really, Lieutenant. The high wire walker -- the aerialist -- even those foolhardy souls who used to challenge Niagra Falls in their barrels -- and myself -- How many times can we spit in the devil's face before he stings back with his serpent tongue?

(he reacts to
Danny's singing)

And now it's time I moved backstage.

CONTINUED

108 CONTINUED

108

COLUMBO

Listen -- I'm a little embarrassed about this, but I've got something with me. A little trick to challenge you with. I think you'll get a big kick out of it.

KORAN

It will have to wait, Lieutenant. My cue's coming up.

A Waiter comes by. Koran snaps his fingers at him.

KORAN

See that the Lieutenant has a front seat for the performance.

WAITER

Yes, sir.

Koran moves off. Columbo watches him go.

109 ANOTHER ANGLE

109

on main entrance, as Det. Sgt. Wilson enters, carrying Columbo's new raincoat. He looks around, spots Columbo and crosses to him.

WILSON

Lieutenant?

As Columbo turns toward the approaching Wilson.

COLUMBO

Son-of-a-gun -- where did you find that? I been looking all over for it.

WILSON

Lost and found, sir. You left it in the cafeteria.

COLUMBO

(drapes it over arm)

No kidding. I thought somebody stole it.

WILSON

At Police Headquarters?

CONTINUED

109 CONTINUED

109

COLUMBO

Well, at least now I can go home to my wife without a lot of yak-ata-yak-ata-yakata. You should'a heard her when I came home for supper without it.

(beat, as Wilson produces black book)

What daya got?

WILSON

Handkerchief, one. Irish linen. Brand name: 'Limerick Looms.' Imported by A&S Products, 23417 South Sepulveda Boulevard ---

COLUMBO

Sergeant, how many stores sell this particular brand?

WILSON

(checking)

Uh -- uh -- 57 ---

Columbo is watching the stage thoughtfully.

110 ON STAGE

110

as Danny finishes his song.

111 BACK TO COLUMBO

111

WILSON'S VOICE

Sir, I know you want me to handle this personally, but -- well, fifty-seven stores, sir -- to see if one clerk remembers selling one handkerchief -- and to whom ---

COLUMBO

Check him out.

WILSON

The singer? Mr. -- uh -- Green, Daniel.

CONTINUED

111 CONTINUED

111

COLUMBO

That's the guy.

WILSON

You think it's important?

COLUMBO

It is to somebody.

WILSON

(nods)

Yes, sir.

He goes off. Beckoned by the Waiter, Columbo starts toward the front as the lights dim and we again hear the off-stage Voice:

MICROPHONE VOICE

And now, ladies and gentlemen, the time has come for you to meet -- the Great Koran!

The Waiter holds a chair for Columbo, who has a front row seat, as Koran bounds onto the stage to tumultuous applause. He makes a bird appear from thin air, then pulls a chicken from beneath his cape and finally, collapses his top hat, twirls it around, pops it back into shape, reaches in and plucks out a live goose. Applause and laughter.

112 ON COLUMBO

112

delighted.

113 INT. BACKSTAGE WINGS - NIGHT

113

Della and Danny off in the wings, out of sight of Koran. She's nervously awaiting her cue. He's anxious to talk.

DANNY

Della, it's a great chance -- six weeks in a casino lounge in Vegas. Okay, maybe it's not headline stuff but it's better than being buried here for the rest of my life.

DELLA

But your contract -- ?

DANNY

Harry says it's okay -- it was only Jesse who tried to keep me here.

CONTINUED

113 CONTINUED

113

DELLA

(beat)

And now Jesse's dead.

DANNY

(catches the inference)

Hey, honey, I wnat out, but not that bad.

DELLA

(nods)

I'm sorry. It was a stupid thought. Look, if you want it, Danny, take it -- but I can't just walk out on him ---

Danny pulls her close to him.

DELLA

My cue ---

DANNY

To hell with the cue -- You've got to cut the cord, baby -- that Daddy's Little Girl routine wears a little thin when you hit twenty-five.

114 ANGLE ON WILSON

114

appearing, stops short as he observes the argument.

115 HIS POINT OF VIEW

115

DELLA

Get your hands off me.
(she shrugs him away)

116 CLOSER

116

DELLA

Even if he weren't my father, he'd need to break in a new assistant.

(beat, softer)

Don't try to bend me too far, Danny -- I might break -- the wrong way.

MICROPHONE VOICE

-- and here she is, the Master's lovely and delightful daughter -- Della!

116 CONTINUED

116

Della moves off onto the stage with a flourish.

117 ON DANNY

117

watching her. Thoughtful. Wilson moves up behind him, watching over his shoulder.

WILSON

Lovely girl. Lovely.

Danny turns to him.

DANNY

Yeah.

Danny starts to move by him. As he does, Wilson starts to cough, but feigns suppressing it because of the stage act.

WILSON

Sorry, may I borrow your handkerchief?

Danny hands it to him. Wilson coughs softly into it, feeling the material as he does so and checking the label, trying to be inconspicuous, but of course, being very obvious.

DANNY

(tongue in cheek)

Like the goods?

WILSON

Irish linen. Very nice. I suppose you have a lot of these.

DANNY

Couple of dozen. Keep it.

He turns away. Wilson looks down, impressed by his good luck. He looks up.

WILSON

Thanks.

But Danny has disappeared among the backstage personnel.

CUT TO

118 INT. THE MAIN CLUB - ON COLUMBO

118

continuing to enjoy himself. Now he's enthralled by what's happening on stage.

119 ON KORAN

119

KORAN

An ordinary piece of black velvet.

(he touches the
silver ball on
the table)

A silver ball.

(he turns toward
the couple, his
smile flashing)

I detect a glimmer of skepticism
in your eyes, sir. Do you doubt
that this is a heavy metal sphere?

(the Man smiles
without answer-
ing)

Would you care to catch it?

Without giving him a chance to reply, Koran throws him the ball. The Man catches it, almost dropping it with the unexpected weight. He laughs, this time sheepishly, looking toward the audience.

MAN

It's a silver ball, all right.

He throws it back to Koran, who catches it with one hand as if it was of no weight at all.

120 CLOSE SHOT - KORAN

120

Slowly, Koran sets the ball down onto the table. The deliberation of this action focuses attention back upon the Master. Lights dim behind his words, creating a dramatic effect.

KORAN

I place the silver ball on the
table. I place the velvet cloth
over the ball.

(he does so)

Lights diffused around him now, his voice hushing the audience with its quiet authority.

KORAN

And now -- ladies and gentlemen --
the laws of gravity are defied.

Koran places his hands on either side of the velvet cloth and lifts it up. Camera follows as he raises the cloth, holding it taut, lights blacking out around the Master now, silhouetting his actions. He does not appear to be holding the cloth any longer, merely touching it.

CONTINUED

120 CONTINUED 120

The silver ball, without apparent propulsion, rises from beneath the cloth as if held by it. It moves up onto the top of the cloth, resting there in the center, seemingly at the will of Koran.

121 REVERSE ANGLE - FULL 121

the audience applauding, Columbo joining them.

KORAN

(into the microphone)

Now, ladies and gentlemen, I need another volunteer from the audience. I can't do it all by myself. Give me a helping hand.

122 REVERSE ANGLE 122

shooting just behind Koran. He extends his hand toward Columbo's table at the front.

KORAN

Lieutenant, why don't you join me up here?

123 CLOSE SHOT - COLUMBO 123

startled by the offer. He shakes his head, smiling, embarrassedly, raising a deprecating hand.

124 CLOSE SHOT - KORAN 124

KORAN

Come on, Lieutenant. It's not so frightening as it looks.

125 MED. CLOSE - TABLE - COLUMBO 125

weakening.

COLUMBO

Well....

He rises from the table, giving in. Tumultuous applause around him. Camera pans him up onto the stage.

126 MED. SHOT - STAGE - AUDIENCE

126

Koran in close shot as the reluctant Columbo ascends.

KORAN

(into the microphone)

Ladies and gentlemen, Lt. Columbo
of the Los Angeles Police Depart-
ment!

Columbo joins Koran in the spotlight and they move to the
center of the stage as the applause trails off.

127 MED. CLOSE - STAGE - KORAN, COLUMBO, DELLA

127

KORAN

Now, Lieutenant, I thought we might
have a game of cards. Are you a
poker playing man?

COLUMBO

Yes, sir. When I have the time.

KORAN

Unfortunately, I haven't got a
pack of cards on me. Have you?

COLUMBO

No, sir. I don't.

KORAN

You're sure?

(he produces a play-
ing card from Columbo's
inside pocket)

Well, it's a start.

(another card from
his sleeve)

And another. And three more. Five
in all. And what do we have? Four
aces! Amazing. Amazing but not
good enough.

(points to thin air)

Here's my straight flush.

COLUMBO

Where?

KORAN

Why, right here.

With a flick of his hand, he pulls five cards from nowhere and
displays them. Columbo applauds, along with the rest of the
audience, in genuine appreciation.

128 WIDER ANGLE

128

Koran turns to Columbo.

KORAN

Now, Lieutenant, I believe before the show started you said you had something for me. Let's try it out now. You won't get a better audience!

The audience applauds louder at this. Koran smiles at Columbo, thinking perhaps he has out-maneuvered him. Columbo still appears embarrassed as he pulls the handcuffs out of his pocket.

COLUMBO

Well, sir -- it's these handcuffs. They're a special pair that we have down at the station. For the really dangerous criminals. You can't break them open. They're absolutely foolproof. The boys and I -- down at the station -- we have a wager that -- well, they just don't think that even you could get out of them.

Koran smiles indulgently, taking the handcuffs from Columbo. The loud encouragement of the audience dies down as Della snaps the cuffs onto Koran's wrists. Koran looks at Columbo standing awkwardly on the stage in the spotlight.

KORAN

Now, these are your handcuffs, Lieutenant. I've never seen them before.

COLUMBO

Absolutely, sir. I can vouch for that.

KORAN

And will you check that I have nothing in my hands or my sleeves?

129 CLOSE SHOT - KORAN, COLUMBO

129

Columbo examines the Master's hands and the voluminous sleeves of his coat.

COLUMBO

Nothing. This is terrific.
(he turns to the audience)

CONTINUED

129 CONTINUED 129

Camera turns a little with him to bring them in.

COLUMBO

Nothing at all.

130 MED. SHOT - STAGE 130

shooting from the audience. A hush settles over them.

131 CLOSE SHOT - ORCHESTRA - DRUMMER 131

He picks up the cue and starts a slow roll on the drums.

132 CLOSE SHOT - KORAN 132

He turns slightly away from Columbo, working a tiny twisted piece of wire concealed in his coat into his hand. He slips it into the lock on the handcuffs.

133 CLOSE SHOT - KORAN'S FACE 133

Moment of realization, as the drum roll reaches a climax, that this is the same lock, in miniature, that he had picked to open Jerome's door on the night of the murder. He is confronted with a crisis decision in the full glare of the spotlight with a hushed audience, waiting expectantly. Does he feign defeat, telling Columbo he could not have picked the lock on that door? Or is he true to his professional instincts, with his audience watching, that there is no lock the Master cannot pick? The decision is momentary; he is left with no real choice.

134 CLOSE SHOT - KORAN 134

He breaks open the handcuffs. The cymbals crash.

135 MED. SHOT - STAGE - AUDIENCE 135

The audience bursts into applause, Columbo joining them. Koran hands the split pair of cuffs to him.

136 CLOSE SHOT - COLUMBO 136

COLUMBO

(quietly)

I knew you could do it, sir.

137 CLOSE SHOT - KORAN 137
reaction in Koran's eyes.

138 MED. SHOT - STAGE 138
shooting from the audience. Koran picks up the microphone again, throwing an arm around Columbo's shoulders.

KORAN
(into the microphone)
Ladies and gentlemen, a round of appreciation for Lt. Columbo. A brave attempt to trap the Master!
(to Columbo)
Thank you, Lieutenant.

Columbo returns to his seat to the applause of the audience, acknowledging it diffidently. Lights change on the stage.

MICROPHONE VOICE
And now, ladies and gentlemen, it is now time for the Great Koran's world-famous 'water tank' illusion.

The tank is wheeled on, the harness lowered from the flies.

139 CLOSE SHOT - COLUMBO 139
He glances down at his watch.

140 CLOSE SHOT - WATCH 140
The illuminated hands reading: 9:48 and 27 seconds.

MICROPHONE VOICE
Koran is lowered into the tank. Its glass walls are six inches thick.

141 BACK TO SCENE 141
Columbo looks back up.

142 COLUMBO'S POINT OF VIEW 142
Koran being lowered into the tank, the glass lid lowered into place.

CONTINUED

142 CONTINUED 142

MICROPHONE VOICE

A glass lid is lowered into place
above Koran, sealing him inside.

143 CLOSE SHOT - COLUMBO - TRAVELING 143

moving through the tables.

144 ANGLE ON THE BAR 144

Columbo reaches the bar, camera holding. The Bartender comes
over.

BARTENDER

What'll it be, Lieutenant?

COLUMBO

A question. Does Koran do this
trick at the same time every night?

BARTENDER

Like clockwork.

COLUMBO

And he's in that thing -- what? --
about ten minutes?

BARTENDER

Something like that.

Columbo turns back toward the stage.

145 HIS POINT OF VIEW - THE STAGE 145

Tank dimly lit. Koran apparently "struggling." Downstage,
Della doing her act.

146 BACK TO SCENE 146

Columbo frowns, then he moves hurriedly through the tables
back toward the stage, camera panning with him to a door
at the front.

147 INT. WINGS - STAGE LEFT - FULL SHOT 147

The usual strange mixture of gaudily-dressed performers and
casual stagehands. George Thomas at his desk, prompt side.
Columbo enters through a door near the prompt desk. Thomas
turns to him.

CONTINUED

147 CONTINUED

147

THOMAS

I'm sorry, sir, members of the audience aren't allowed back here.

(recognizing him)

Oh, Lieutenant, I guess it's all right.

Columbo nods and looks toward the tank, where the "struggling" hands are visible. Wilson crosses to him hurriedly.

WILSON

Lieutenant --- ?

COLUMBO

Has Koran come backstage?

WILSON

Of course not, sir.

(indicating)

There he is -- in the tank.

(out with the book)

About the handkerchief, we're in luck on that ---

But Columbo moves past him, retreating from the backstage area, intent on what he's doing.

COLUMBO

Later, Wilson.

Camera keeps with him as he walks right around behind stage, past surprised performers or nonchalant stagehands, finding no sign of Koran. He moves to a door similar to the one stage left leading back out into the auditorium.

148 MED. SHOT - DOOR - PART OF THE STAGE

148

Audience reacting to the act downstage. Columbo reenters the Club and follows a waitress through the swinging door into the kitchen.

149 INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

149

The usual bedlam, waitresses and waiters entering with trays of dirty dishes and exiting with trays of food. Orders being shouted back and forth. Columbo enters into the fray, moving past the salad shelf to where Thackery waits impatiently for an order from the head chef. Columbo is trying to keep his bearings in relation to the stage.

CONTINUED

149 CONTINUED

149

THACKERY

Two steaks, one well, one medium-to-well, easy on the fries. Order of chili, order of beef.

(turns to Blandford)

You notice the guy at table three? I don't think he's ever seen a fork before. If he's not careful he's going to get some of the food into his mouth.

150 MED. CLOSE - BLANDFORD, COLUMBO

150

COLUMBO

Excuse me....

Blandford whirls on him.

BLANDFORD

(relieved)

You the guy the agency sent over?

Without giving Columbo a chance to reply, he takes a white waiter's coat off a rack and hands it to him.

BLANDFORD

Get that coat off, put this on, grab yourself a tray and join World War III.

Columbo flashes his badge.

BLANDFORD

Police?

COLUMBO

What's below the stage?

BLANDFORD

Well, it's kind of a basement -- a storage room.

COLUMBO

How do I get to it?

BLANDFORD

(pointing)

Through that door there. Down the passage.

(beat)

Look, Lieutenant, I'm Harry Blandford -- I was Mr. Jerome's junior partner ---

CONTINUED

150 CONTINUED

150

COLUMBO

(overrides)

Excuse me, sir. Talk to you later.

He moves quickly toward the door.

151 INT. PASSAGEWAY - NIGHT

151

deserted. Columbo comes down the stairs, moves down the passageway to the door at the end. Camera pans him there and holds. He tries the door. It's locked. He knocks loudly. No response. Then the door opens. Koran smiles at him.

KORAN

Come in, Lieutenant. I've been expecting you.

152 INT. BELOW STAGE - FULL

152

Columbo enters the basement room, shaking his head with rueful admiration.

COLUMBO

Terrific. Just terrific.

(he looks up at
the trap door)I don't know how you do it, sir --
but the illusion is fantastic.

Koran smiles again.

KORAN

I suspected you might come looking
for me tonight -- the alibi and all.

COLUMBO

Well, ten minutes is a pretty long
time.

Koran crosses to an upturned stair rostrum getting on it, sitting down, gesturing with one glittering hand around the small, enclosed room.

KORAN

Nine minutes and thirty-three
seconds, to be precise -- but as
you can see, I am like the poor
devil who escaped the pendulum
only to fall into the pit.

CONTINUED

152 CONTINUED

152

KORAN (Cont'd)

(indicates)

If I had come up by the rear stairway, the stage manager would have seen me -- or if I had attempted to slip out that door, I would have had to pass through the kitchen where literally dozens of people would have been aware of my presence.

COLUMBO

Yes, sir.

Columbo perches on the edge of the cluttered prop table.

153 MED. CLOSE - KORAN, COLUMBO

153

COLUMBO

I gotta hand it to you about those handcuffs, sir. You sure got out of them fast.

Koran shrugs expansively.

KORAN

We all have our talents. Mine is illusion. Yours, I suspect, is reality. And a rather grim reality, at that.

COLUMBO

Well, you certainly cleared up one thing. That was supposed to be a pick-proof lock -- you showed it wasn't. At least, not for someone with your ability, sir.

KORAN

Any lock can be picked, Lieutenant -- if you know how.

Koran glances at his watch. Columbo notes it.

COLUMBO

I guess you gotta keep pretty good track of the time. I mean, if you got up to the stage late, the whole trick would be blown.

KORAN

Oh, yes.

CONTINUED

153 CONTINUED

153

KORAN (Cont'd)
(regarding
Columbo frankly)
Any luck tracing the gun?

COLUMBO
No, none, sir. Anybody could have
owned it.

KORAN
And the handkerchief?

COLUMBO
Nothing special. Just a handker-
chief.

Koran pulls a silk handkerchief from mid-air.

KORAN
Nothing like this, then?

Columbo takes it, wide-eyed at the illusion.

COLUMBO
Son-of-a-gun, you did it again.
(feeling material)
What is this -- ? Silk? Rayon?

KORAN
Silk. I leave the cotton and linen
to the boys in the band.

COLUMBO
Or one of the singers?

KORAN
(smiles)
I suppose.

COLUMBO
I only mention it because you made
such a point of Mr. Green's troubles
with Mr. Jerome -- I thought maybe
that was what you meant.

KORAN
I really didn't mean anything
specific, Lieutenant --
(glances at
watch)
And now -- before my daughter misses
my presence ---

CONTINUED

153 CONTINUED - 2

153

He makes his way to the back stairway, then turns.

KORAN

Oh, incidentally, Lieutenant. I neglected to drink my usual brandy this evening. Help yourself, if you like.

(he points to the snifter on the tray)

COLUMBO

Brandy, sir?

KORAN

Oh, didn't I tell you? I always have brandy brought to me at this same time each evening. It calms the nerves.

He gives a little wave and climbs the stairs.

154 ON COLUMBO

154

watches him go. Then he turns and crosses to the glass. He picks it up, sniffs it thoughtfully and puts it down. He looks back at the door leading to the corridor to the kitchen, then to the stairway to the stage. From up above, a musical crescendo and applause as we know the act has been successfully concluded. Columbo hurries out toward the kitchen.

CUT TO

155 INT. THE KITCHEN - NIGHT

155

The same bedlam as before. Columbo enters, looks around and then in a series of moves, trying to catch the attention of various people:

COLUMBO

Excuse me, but who brought that brandy to Koran last night -- ?

(waiter shakes head and goes off)

Sir, I hate to bother you, but --

(another waiter keeps moving)

Uh -- sir --

(no luck.)

Then loudly)

Could I have your attention? This is police business!

CONTINUED

155 CONTINUED

155

The room becomes more subdued as those on hand halt their activities.

COLUMBO

Thank you. I just want to talk to the individual that took Koran his brandy last night.

THACKERY

I did.

COLUMBO

Could I speak to you for a second?

Columbo beckons him over. Everyone else is still silent, watching. Columbo realizes it and waves them back to work. They go about their business.

COLUMBO

It's okay now. Thank you very much.

Columbo and Thackery move to a secluded corner of the kitchen.

THACKERY

You'll have to make it fast, sir. I've got a boiled lobster and a creamed crab ready for table eighteen.

156 ANOTHER ANGLE - SECLUDED CORNER OF THE KITCHEN

156

Hubbub in the b.g.

COLUMBO

This brandy -- what is that? Some kind of a regular thing?

THACKERY

Oh, yes. During every performance -- I think the old boy needs it to calm his nerves.

COLUMBO

And you always take it to him during that ten minutes he's down there?

THACKERY

Someone does.

COLUMBO

And last night?

CONTINUED

156 CONTINUED

156

THACKERY

What about it?

COLUMBO

You took him brandy last night?
And he was there?

THACKERY

Yes, sir.

(impatiently)

My lobster and my crab, sir?

COLUMBO

Right, right.

(as Thackery starts
to move off)

You're positive?

THACKERY

I know his voice, Lieutenant. It
was him.

Columbo comes after him, taking his arm.

COLUMBO

Whatdayamean, voice? You didn't
see him?

THACKERY

No. Last night, for some reason,
he didn't want his brandy.

COLUMBO

Does that happen often?

THACKERY

Never happened before, that I can
remember -- but we talked through
the door and it was him in there,
all right.

Blandford strides in, looks around and crosses to the two of
them.

BLANDFORD

Thackery, you have people out there
waiting -- !

THACKERY

Yes, sir. A crab and a lobster.
I'll hop right to it.

CONTINUED

156 CONTINUED - 2

156

Thackery moves off. Blandford glares at Columbo.

BLANDFORD

Look, Lieutenant, I'd appreciate it if you'd stay out of my kitchen during dinner hours ---

COLUMBO

I'm terribly sorry, sir. I'm being a pest, but I'm very confused.

BLANDFORD

Yes, I can see that.
(snaps fingers
to a waiter)
Simons, a wine list to table 31.
Quickly.

Blandford starts to move off. Columbo goes after him.

157 ANOTHER ANGLE - NEAR GRILL

157

COLUMBO

Excuse me, Mr. Blandford -- one more thing and then I'll let you be.

(as Blandford
turns to him)

You're in and out of this kitchen all evening. Would you know if a new man was on last night? Even briefly?

BLANDFORD

Lieutenant, we're very short staffed. The agency often sends us temporaries. I tell them, as soon as they get here, 'Get a white coat on, grab a tray and get out there. Make the introductions later.'

COLUMBO

So you wouldn't notice a stranger walking through here?

BLANDFORD

(looking around him)

In this? Are you kidding? I wouldn't notice my mother unless she shouted at me. Why?

CONTINUED

157 CONTINUED

157

COLUMBO

(shrugs)

Just trying to come up with an explanation for the unexplainable.

BLANDFORD

(snorts)

Sounds like you've been talking to Koran.

Blandford walks off.

BLANDFORD

Carlos, you're running low on silverware here. Let's get moving!

Columbo stares after him, nodding. Thoughtful.

158 INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS - DAY - CORRIDOR

158

Wilson coming through headquarter, Danny Green slightly ahead of him. Green seems to be accompanying Wilson under duress. Camera pans them down the corridor toward a door marked: POLICE LIBRARY.

159 ANOTHER ANGLE

159

on door as they get there. Wilson opens the door and looks inside.

160 HIS POINT OF VIEW

160

Columbo in an easy chair near a window, shirtsleeved, tie askew, reading a book. Three books on a table next to him. He's perplexed.

161 BACK TO SCENE

161

WILSON

Lieutenant?

Wilson gestures Danny inside the door as they step into the library.

162 INT. THE LIBRARY - DAY

162

A small room, shelves lined with books.

CONTINUED

A couple of tables to work at. A copying machine in the rear. Another policeman in the back of the room typing at a table. Columbo looks up from his book.

WILSON

I've brought Green in for questioning, sir.

COLUMBO

Green?

DANNY

Lieutenant, what's this all about? Your Sergeant here came to my place, practically dragged me out of bed ---

WILSON

I've got it pretty well locked up, sir.

(produces handkerchief)

One handkerchief, given to me by Mr. Green. Identical to the one used by the killer -- and Mr. Green admits he owns dozens of them.

DANNY

So do a lot of other people ---

WILSON

The night Jerome died, Green left the premises shortly after nine o'clock -- to go to his apartment to change clothes. He was not observed by his landlady or any of the neighbors ---

DANNY

What is this?

WILSON

A simple matter to return to the club unobserved and make his way up the stairs to the third floor ---

DANNY

(exasperated)

Lieutenant ---

COLUMBO

Thank you, Sergeant Wilson ---

WILSON

I've got a motive, too, sir. Ask him about his contract.

CONTINUED

162 CONTINUED - 2

162

COLUMBO

Uh -- yes -- about that -- I understand you and Mr. Jerome were having some kind of problem ---

DANNY

Business, Lieutenant. I wanted out -- he wouldn't let me. Not very understanding or generous, but that was Jesse Jerome. A spiteful, vindictive man -- but if you're suggesting I might have killed him ---

COLUMBO

Not suggesting anything, sir. We're just trying to get to the facts. Was he like that with other people -- for example, Koran?

DANNY

(surprised)

Koran? Uh -- well, I don't know -- Jesse Jerome never made a display of his waspishness -- if he'd had some hold over Koran ---

COLUMBO

You don't know of anything specific?

DANNY

No.

WILSON

Lieutenant, it doesn't take two hours and forty-five minutes to change clothes.

(examines book)

Mr. Green left the club at nine and didn't return until quarter to twelve ---

DANNY

To meet Della -- we were going out ---

COLUMBO

Uh -- Sergeant, that will be all. Thank you, Mr. Green, sorry to have troubled you.

DANNY

You mean, that's it?

CONTINUED

162 CONTINUED - 3

162

COLUMBO

Yes, sir. Thank you. You can go.

Danny hesitates, nods, then turns and goes out. Wilson watches, then turns back to Columbo in disbelief.

WILSON

Sir, you've let him escape!

COLUMBO

Sergeant, you're a very enthusiastic fellow, but nobody's escaped -- and the next time you decide to bring somebody in, will you check with me first?

WILSON

With all due respect, sir -- I must point out that Daniel Green is our most viable suspect in terms of means, opportunity and motive.

COLUMBO

(flatly, putting
away books)
The magician did it.

WILSON

(overriding, with-
out hearing)
Of the three, the motive is the most obvious --
(realizing)
-- sir?

COLUMBO

I said, Koran killed Jesse Jerome.

WILSON

But he was in the cellar storeroom.

COLUMBO

(shakes head)
His voice was in the cellar store-
room. You gotta remember, Wilson
-- Koran is a master of illusion.
You believe what he wants you to
believe. That's why I've been
reading these books on radio re-
ceivers and transmitters -- trying
to figure out how he could'a done
it.

CONTINUED

162 CONTINUED - 4

162

They move toward the door.

WILSON

But even if you're right, why?
There has to be a motive.

COLUMBO

(smiles)

Oh, there's a motive, all right.
We just haven't found it.

His eye is caught by something at the other end of the room.

163 COLUMBO'S POINT OF VIEW

163

The detective who has been sitting in the leather chair, typing at his portable, has stopped. He gets up and turns to get his jacket off a nearby wall hook. The back of his shirt is stained with perspiration.

164 BACK TO SCENE

164

COLUMBO

(frowns)

Wait a second.

WILSON

What is it, sir?

COLUMBO

You remember Jerome's body -- how
it was all sweaty on the back -- ?

WILSON

(nods)

Yes.

Columbo starts out the door.

COLUMBO

Let's go, Sergeant.

165 INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

165

as Columbo emerges, followed by Wilson.

WILSON

Where are we going, Lieutenant?

CONTINUED

165 CONTINUED

165

COLUMBO

Jerome's office is still sealed,
isn't it?

WILSON

Yes, sir.

COLUMBO

That's where we're going.

Columbo hesitates in front of a door.

COLUMBO

Wait a second -- gotta get my coat.

Columbo ducks inside as Wilson waits for him. In a moment,
Columbo reappears, putting on his old raincoat.

WILSON

Sir, what happened to your new
coat?

COLUMBO

(as they move
down the hall)

Oh, that. It didn't fit. The
wife's changing it for something
else.

Wilson tags along as they disappear down the hall.

CUT TO

166 INT. JEROME'S OFFICE - DAY

166

Tight on desk drawer -- open -- then shut. Another is
opened. Camera widens angle to reveal Columbo, sitting in
the leather desk chair at Jerome's desk, thoughtful -- trying
to reconstruct what Jerome was doing. Columbo swivels
around and puts his hands on the typewriter keyboard. He
looks up.

COLUMBO

And there was no sign of anything
that had been typed -- a letter --
a memo -- ?

167 ANGLE TO INCLUDE WILSON AT THE FILING CABINETS

167

WILSON

No, sir -- that's confirmed by the
lab photos.

CONTINUED

167 CONTINUED

167

Wilson has one of the file drawers open and is slowly leafing through the material in a folder.

WILSON

Lieutenant, just what is it we're looking for?

COLUMBO

Beats the hell out of me, Wilson -- but Jerome was sitting at this desk doing something right before he was shot.

168 ANGLE ON OPEN DOORWAY TO ANTEROOM

168

Koran appears, hesitates, then comes in. He is angry but controlled.

KORAN

Lieutenant Columbo.

COLUMBO

Oh, good morning, sir. You know Sergeant Wilson.

Wilson smiles and starts to say something but Koran ignores him, crossing to the desk and staring down at Columbo.

KORAN

What is this I hear about Green? You arrested the man and then let him go?

COLUMBO

We didn't arrest him, sir. Sergeant Wilson brought him to Headquarters for questioning ---

KORAN

If you didn't arrest that man, you should have. It's obvious to everyone that he killed Jesse Jerome.

COLUMBO

Not to me, sir.

KORAN

Damn it, Lieutenant -- what more proof do you need? The handkerchief was his -- he's as much as

CONTINUED

KORAN (Cont'd)
admitted that -- he has no alibi --
and he certainly had a motive --
he knew where Jesse would be and
how to get to him ---

COLUMBO
That's not really proof ---

KORAN
(explodes)
Look, somehow -- and God only knows
why -- my daughter's become infatuated
with that man -- shallow, ambitious,
pushy singer with no talent ---

COLUMBO
That hardly makes him a murderer,
sir ---

KORAN
Someone killed Jesse, Lieutenant
-- someone with a strong motive.
Do you have someone else in mind?

COLUMBO
Did you know he was leaving the
club to change his clothes?

KORAN
(taken by surprise)
What?

COLUMBO
I said, the night Mr. Jerome was
killed, did you know Danny Green
was leaving the club -- to go to
his apartment to change?

KORAN
I suppose I did, but what difference
does that make?

COLUMBO
It means you'd know he had no alibi.

KORAN
(beat, laughs)
I see. My hate for Mr. Green is so
intense that I'd accuse him of
murder to get him away from my
daughter. Really, Lieutenant --
that's rather insulting.

COLUMBO

That wasn't exactly what I meant, sir. My point was -- the murderer left a handkerchief designed to incriminate Green -- and since the murder, you've gone out of your way to point a finger at him.

KORAN

So. Now I am under suspicion. Marvelous, Lieutenant. I'm waiting anxiously for you to enlighten me on two insignificant points -- why did I do it and how did I do it?

COLUMBO

I don't know, sir -- but I'm working on it.

KORAN

Oh, it shouldn't be difficult for a clever fellow like you.

(moves to door)

Well, any time you feel like arresting me, I won't be hard to locate. But may I suggest you come armed with something more than theory and supposition?

He smiles and goes. Wilson watches him go and crosses to the desk.

WILSON

Lost a little of his charm, didn't he, Lieutenant?

COLUMBO

(nods)

It's called 'over-reacting.'

He lifts the typewriter and looks under it, under the rubber mat, then stands and peers down into the guts of the typewriter.

WILSON

Looking for anything in particular, sir?

COLUMBO

I don't know -- a sheet of paper -- a key -- there's something around this desk --

(stops, confused)

What is this?

CONTINUED

168 CONTINUED - 3

168

WILSON
(coming close)
What's that, Lieutenant?

COLUMBO
(points)
This. Looks like a golf ball.

WILSON
Oh, that's how it types.
(beat)
The ball types the letters.

Columbo looks at him blankly. Wilson takes a piece of paper.

WILSON
Allow me to demonstrate. I -- uh
-- used one of these at the Academy
Typing School.

COLUMBO
I didn't know they had one.

He has moved out of the chair and Wilson sits, flips on the machine, inserts the paper and starts to type.

COLUMBO
It's not moving. The typewriter --
what do you call it, the 'carriage?'
-- it isn't moving.

WILSON
There is no carriage, sir. The
ball moves from right to left.
See?

Columbo peers in.

169 TIGHT ON SELECTRIC TYPE FRONT UNIT

169

rapidly typing, "Now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of the party."

170 ON COLUMBO

170

COLUMBO
I'll be a son-of-a-gun.

171 TWO SHOT - AS WILSON TYPES

171

WILSON
A very modern machine, Lieutenant.

CONTINUED

171 CONTINUED

171

WILSON (Cont'd)

It uses a disposable plastic carbon ribbon for a crisp image -- top speed of, I'd say, two hundred and twenty words per minute ---

COLUMBO

Wait a second. Let me see that ---

Wilson steps aside as Columbo moves in over the machine and starts to fiddle with something inside. He stops, thoughtful.

WILSON

You find anything special, Lieutenant?

COLUMBO

I'm not sure.

He takes the sample of Wilson's typing from the machine, looks at it, then back into the "guts" of the typewriter. He looks up at Wilson.

COLUMBO

Very good, Wilson. Very good.

WILSON

(puzzled, but pleased)

Why, thank you, sir.

Columbo again turns his attention back to the sheet of paper.

CUT TO

172 EXT. THE MAGIC CIRCLE CLUB - DAY

172

early morning. Koran drives up in a late model sports car and pulls to a stop at the entrance. He gets out of his car and goes to the front door. Columbo's Peugeot is parked out front. He notes it in passing -- annoyed -- then goes to the door and goes inside.

173 INT. FOYER AND BAR AREA OF CLUB - DAY (ROOM DIM)

173

Koran enters, looks around. Harry Blandford crosses to him.

KORAN

Harry, what's going on?

CONTINUED

173 CONTINUED

173

BLANDFORD

Beats me. That Lieutenant's got
Danny Green up in Jesse's office --
something's about to break on
Jesse's murder.

KORAN

(beat, wary)

Oh? Why do you suppose he wants
to see me?

BLANDFORD

He didn't say.

(beat)

Well, back to the kitchen.

Koran nods as Blandford goes off. The place is deserted.
Koran heads for the stairs and starts up.

174 INT. THIRD FLOOR CORRIDOR - DAY

174

Again, no one apparently around. Koran appears at the top of
the stairs, hesitates, then starts toward Jerome's office.

175 ANGLE ON OTHER OFFICE DOOR

175

opens a crack. We see Wilson peering out.

176 ON KORAN

176

coming to the closed door of Jesse Jerome's office. He
reaches for the handle, then stops as he hears voices from
inside.

DANNY'S VOICE

(loud)

I tell you, Lieutenant -- the man's
an escaped war criminal. A Nazi!

COLUMBO'S VOICE

Mr. Green, will you take it easy,
please -- ?

As Koran reacts to what he hears.

DANNY'S VOICE

Isn't it obvious what happened?
Jesse Jerome knew that Koran was
really Heinrich Mueller -- the
former SS guard --

CONTINUED

176 CONTINUED

176

DANNY'S VOICE (Cont'd)

(Koran reacts
very sharply)

-- and when Jerome threatened to
expose him, Mueller killed him.

COLUMBO'S VOICE

How? The man was locked in the
basement when it happened?

DANNY'S VOICE

The 'how' is in the basement, take
my word for it.

COLUMBO'S VOICE

No, we'll wait until Koran gets
here -- I want to hear his story.

Koran turns quickly and dashes down the corridor, quietly and
deftly. He starts down the stairs.

177 INT. MAIN ROOM OF THE CLUB - DAY (BUT DIM)

177

Koran comes down the stairs. Still deserted. The camera pans
him to the stage. He vaults into it, going through the cur-
tain to the backstage area.

178 INT. BACKSTAGE AREA - DAY - (BUT DIM)

178

Koran comes through the curtains. Again, no one about. He
crosses quickly to the rear stairwell that leads to the base-
ment and starts down.

179 INT. THE BASEMENT STOREROOM - DAY

179

The room is dark but light pours into the room as the rear
door opens and Koran comes in quickly. He flips on the single
work light, then crosses quickly to the base of the pedestal
and springs it open, revealing the trick drawer and its con-
tents. He reaches in and takes out the two-way radio equipment,
then looks around frantically for something to put it in.
He picks up a small blanket and starts to wrap the equipment.
He freezes as he hears a voice.

COLUMBO (o.s.)

I knew it was here somewhere, but
I couldn't find it.

Koran whirls.

180 KORAN'S POINT OF VIEW

180

as Columbo and Danny Green step out of the shadows and into the light. Columbo holds a small mike. He has a plug in his ear.

181 ANOTHER ANGLE

181

KORAN

Columbo! Green. But how -- ?

COLUMBO

How did we get down here so fast? Simple, sir. We were never up in that office. We were here the whole time.

(takes plug from his ear)

It's an easy illusion to accomplish. All it takes is a two-way radio transmitter and receiver -- something like the equipment you have there -- the equipment you used the other night to fool the waiter into thinking you were still in this room -- when in reality you were upstairs murdering Jesse Jerome.

Koran stands, shaken.

KORAN

An interesting theory, Lieutenant ---

COLUMBO

More than that, sir. It shows opportunity.

He puts the radio equipment on a table and takes out a folded sheet of paper.

COLUMBO

And this letter shows motive.

KORAN

Letter?

Columbo hands it to him.

COLUMBO

See for yourself, sir. A letter addressed to the Department of Immigration and Naturalization.

CONTINUED

181 CONTINUED

181

COLUMBO (Cont'd)

It identifies you as a Nazi war criminal. Means, Opportunity and Motive. It's enough to convict for first degree murder.

Koran looks at the letter. Astonishment.

182 HIS POINT OF VIEW - THE LETTER

182

It seems identical to the one he burned the night of the murder!

183 BACK TO SCENE

183

KORAN

Impossible. This is a trick.

COLUMBO

A trick, sir? No, there it is -- not a copy -- the original ---

KORAN

I burned this letter!

COLUMBO

(nods)

I thought you had ---

Koran crosses to the furnace, which is going. He opens the door and crumples the letter, then flings it in. He turns, smiling.

KORAN

So much for your letter, Lieutenant.

Columbo just smiles and reaches in his pocket again. He takes out a second letter, identical to the first.

COLUMBO

I hope you were watching closely, sir. This is my best trick. Of course, I don't have your style -- but the results are pretty good ---

He hands it over. Koran looks at it, shaking his head in disbelief.

CONTINUED

183 CONTINUED

183

COLUMBO

You can burn that one, too, if you like, sir, but I've got a few more of these originals.

During the following, the rear door opens and Wilson enters. He is carrying a walkie-talkie. Jefferson is at his side.

COLUMBO

You made one mistake, sir. You didn't take a close enough look at that typewriter. If you had, you would have noticed it had a plastic carbon ribbon -- the kind you don't reuse.

Columbo reaches in his pocket and takes out a length of it. He holds it up to the light.

COLUMBO

When the key strikes the ribbon, it punches out the letter -- clearly visible on the used ribbon.

184 VERY TIGHT SHOT

184

The ribbon, held between Columbo's fingers. We can see a mass of letters in order with a discernible pattern.

185 BACK TO SCENE

185

Columbo hands Koran the ribbon.

COLUMBO

See for yourself.

Koran holds the ribbon up to the light.

COLUMBO

If you read carefully, you'll see that what was typed on this section of ribbon was 'Now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of the party.'

186 ANGLE ON WILSON

186

He nods with satisfaction.

187 BACK TO SCENE

187

COLUMBO

It was a simple matter to unwind the entire used portion of the ribbon and reconstruct what Mr. Jerome had typed -- the night he was killed. He typed that letter you have in your hand.

Koran stares down at the letter, then at the ribbon, then up to Columbo, in disbelief.

COLUMBO

Means. Opportunity. Motive.

Koran sags.

KORAN

I thought it was the perfect murder.

COLUMBO

Perfect murder? Sorry, sir, there's no such thing as a 'perfect' murder. That's just an illusion.

Columbo nods to Jefferson who moves forward and leads Koran away by the arm. Columbo sighs, shakes his head and starts to walk toward the door. He grimaces in pain.

COLUMBO

Ohh!

WILSON

What is it, sir?

COLUMBO

I gotta sit down.

WILSON

Cramps, sir?

COLUMBO

No, my feet.

Columbo sits on a barrel and starts to take off his shoes (which are out of camera range).

COLUMBO

When my wife took back my raincoat, she traded it in for a pair of new shoes....

CONTINUED

187 CONTINUED

187

Camera pans down to a new pair of brown patent leather shoes, one of which Columbo is removing.

COLUMBO
...and they're killing me.

Columbo looks up at Wilson with a pained expression Wilson merely smiles.

FADE OUT

THE END