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C O L U M B O

THE LAUREL AND HARDY W.C. FIELDS CITIZEN KANE MURDER CASE

(Formerly: "Snips and Snails and Murderers' Tails")

Written

by

Tom Lazarus

COLUMBO

THE LAUREL AND HARDY W.C. FIELDS CITIZEN KANE MURDER CASE

(X)

CAST

COLUMBO

DR. ERIC MASON
DR. CHARLES HUNTER
JOANNE NICHOLS
MISS COCHRANE
DR. ERNEST GARRISON
ANIMAL REGULATION OFFICER STEIN
SERGEANT BURKE
TECHNICIAN
SECOND DOG TRAINER

COLUMBOTHE LAUREL AND HARDY W.C. FIELDS CITIZEN KANE MURDER CASE

(X)

SETSINTERIORS:

DR. MASON'S HOME
KITCHEN
STUDY
GUEST HOUSE
ENTRANCE AND CORRIDOR
INSTITUTE FOR LIFE CONTROL
AUDITORIUM
CONTROL BOOTH
CORRIDOR
DR. MASON'S OFFICE
LOBBY
BOARD ROOM
CARDIOGRAM ROOM
DOG SHELTER ISOLATION ROOM
OFFICER STEIN'S OFFICE
DR. HUNTER'S APARTMENT
LIVING ROOM
BEDROOM

EXTERIORS:

DR. MASON'S HOME
WESTERN STREET
GUARDSMAN KENNELS
APARTMENT COMPLEX

COLUMBOTHE LAUREL AND HARDY W.C. FIELDS CITIZEN KANE MURDER CASE

(X)

FADE IN

1 EXT. WROUGHT-IRON GATE - ESTABLISHING SHOT - NIGHT - ESTATE HOME 1

Camera is slowly drifting up the bars of an ornamental, wrought-iron gate to discover a vast home in b.g. A single window is lighted. A phone is ringing.

The gate is oddly placed -- not a gate at all, really, but a collector's item placed on exterior display.

Atop the gate, camera presses in on a decorative design: an enormous "K."

2 EXT. REAR OF ESTATE - SWIMMING POOL AREA - NIGHT - DOBERMANS 2

Here, in the vicinity of a swimming pool, camera finds two dogs, Dobermans both, beautifully and finely made. One wears a red kerchief about its neck, the other a blue one. They trot a few paces and then freeze, responding to the resumption of the ringing phone. Camera presses in on the dogs and through to:

3 INT. CINEMA BUFF'S STUDY - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING SHOT 3

revealing a large and comfortable study bedecked with motion picture memorabilia -- a collector's study, walls lined with one-sheets and still photographs of the cinematic past. Old film gadgets and mechanisms decorate the room. It is here that the phone is ringing.

Ringings intensifies as the camera drifts toward the phone. En route, it finds a framed photograph of two men and a woman in tennis togs, standing by a net, arms flung around each other, smiling happily.

One of the men is Eric Mason whose home this is. The woman is his dead wife. The other man is Eric's friend, Charles Hunter. Charles will also soon be dead.

Camera finds the ringing phone, follows the cord as it droops to the floor and winds to a baseboard. Here a man's hand enters shot and yanks the phone plug. The phone in the study ceases to ring. But the ringing continues elsewhere in the house.

Camera rises now to inspect the postered walls -- and discovers an old sled mounted between one-sheets. We zoom slowly in on some faded lettering and through to:

4 INT. KITCHEN - CLOSE SHOT - NIGHT - CRYSTAL BALL 4

Inside the crystal ball is a farmhouse tableau; it is snowing, shake-a-scene style. Camera pulls back from all this to discover the crystal ball on a kitchen counter and to find the ringing phone on the kitchen wall. A sudden, thumping sound and we see:

5 ANGLE TO KITCHEN DOG-DOOR 5

as one of the Dobermans bursts noisily through the rubber flap of a dog-door. The second Doberman follows.

6 THE DOGS 6

as they respond to the ringing phone, moving to it, making little whining sounds. The ringing stops abruptly. The dogs fret nervously.

Now a man's voice is heard: whispered, intense, colored by projection through a cheap, tinny loudspeaker.

THE VOICE

Rosebud.

The dogs whirl and tense.

7 ANGLE ON A DANGLING FIGURE 7

A figure -- an oddly dangling figure of a man, shadowed by the low-key lighting. It is from the figure that the voice seems to come.

THE VOICE

Rosebud.

8 THE DOGS 8

Their teeth bare -- muzzles contort into snarls -- bodies set to lunge.

THE VOICE

Rosebud.

And the dogs, transformed into furious death machines, attack.

9 DOGS AND DANGLING FIGURE 9

as the dangling figure, apparent to us now as a straw-filled dummy dressed in a man's warm-up suit, is savaged by the slashing jaws of the maddened animals.

10 LOW POSITION SHOT - CRYSTAL BALL

10

Dislodged by the assaulting dogs, the crystal ball falls and shatters on the kitchen floor. Camera presses in on the remnants of illusion. And the ferocious attack-sounds of the dogs as they dismember the dangling man.

11 INT. INSTITUTE FOR LIFE CONTROL - AUDITORIUM STAGE - DAY -
ANGLE ON ERIC MASON

11

A man dominates the stage of an auditorium, vividly projecting his charismatic personality to his audience. There is a lecturer on the stage which he for the most part ignores. There is also a blackboard scrawled with symbolic diagrams. The two Dobermans (as we shall see) contentedly lie or sit on one side of the stage by an empty chair.

The man is Dr. Eric Mason and our setting is the Institute for Life Control. High above the rear of the auditorium, overlooking the stage, is the glass window of some sort of control booth.

Eric is an ascendant personality, dominantly tall. His style is calculatedly bullying, scornful, authoritative. Still, it is all for the good and welfare of his audience. He wears a blue blazer and grey slacks, as do all other officials of the Institute.

As Eric speaks, camera will pull back to reveal his audience. Men and women are balanced. They are arranged so that there is an empty seat to each side and in front and back of each individual. They have been here for many hours, in search of the psychological salvation which the Institute offers. Many have their jackets off. Some rest with their foreheads against the seats in front of them. Each holds a black control dial wired into his seat.

ERIC

You're going to die -- every last one of you. Sorry to give you the bad news, but that's a fact. Death: sooner or later. Show me those dials.

(audience raises
control dials;
suddenly pointing)

The woman sitting next to the man in the brown jacket -- spread out, give yourself some living space.

The woman shifts to a place surrounded by empty seats.

ERIC

If we wanted you next to each other, we'd fill this place and I'd make another hundred thousand. But you wouldn't get the point! The point

CONTINUED

11 CONTINUED

11

ERIC (Cont'd)
is take control!

He strides to the blackboard and stabs a piece of chalk at a diagram of three nested squares.

ERIC
Take control of your own space --
your own lives -- your own
responses!

12 ANOTHER ANGLE - ERIC

12

as he moves to drop into a chair near the dogs. They nudge his hand with their heads, demanding his attention. He strokes them.

ERIC
We don't want you crammed in and
contaminating each other with your
nasty little fears and insecurities.
And if you don't think you're that
kind of girl or that kind of boy ---

13 ANGLE ON AUDIENCE

13

ERIC
(continuing)
-- what are you doing here shovelling
out your hard-earned money to the
good doctor?

Some nervous laughter.

14 BACK TO ERIC

14

He rises and moves to the lectern.

ERIC
Anybody forget to twist his dial?
(no response)
Come on, answer me: 'No, Dr. Mason!'

15 THE AUDIENCE

15

answering in chorus: "No, Dr. Mason!"

16 BACK TO ERIC

16

as he looks up to the control booth window.

17 POINT OF VIEW SHOT TO CONTROL WINDOW - CHARLIE HUNTER 17

A man, blue-blazered, stands looking down from the window.

ERIC'S VOICE

How'd they do on the word 'death,'
Charlie?

Camera zooms in on Dr. Charles Hunter. Charlie is a handsome, agreeable fellow and Eric's primary assistant. He is also the second man in the photograph we saw earlier. He raises his hand and turns back into the booth.

18 INT. CONTROL BOOTH - CHARLIE AND TECHNICIAN 18

A Technician controls a bank of graph readouts. Charlie tears off a sheet, moves back to the window, scans the graph as he picks up a microphone.

CHARLIE

They didn't like death.

19 INT. AUDITORIUM - ERIC 19

CHARLIE'S VOICE

(on speaker)
Negative eight DB on that one.

ERIC

Thank you, Charlie.

(to audience)

You're not sure what death really means but you don't like it. You don't like the word. You're bothered by the word 'mother', you're afraid of the word 'father'. Words!

20 INT. BOOTH - CHARLIE 20

as he watches Eric, moves to scan the various graphs.

ERIC'S VOICE

'Food' -- 'money' -- 'boss' -- 'wife'
-- and 'sex'. Mommy and Daddy started setting you up right in the cradle -- conditioning you. They took control with the control words.

21 BACK TO ERIC 21

He moves back to the blackboard as:

CONTINUED

21 CONTINUED

21

ERIC

Then the words took control. Now
who's got the control? I've got
the control.

He slashes at the blackboard with an eraser, chalks a small
"x," surrounds it with swift, concentric circles as:

ERIC

The words locked you into your
locked-up lives. Now we're going
to teach you how to smash the
lock.

He crosses now to descend into the audience, pauses to call
the dogs.

ERIC

Laurel -- Hardy.

22 ANGLE ON DOGS

22

They rise and move to:

23 ERIC

23

as the dogs join him.

ERIC

(to audience)

They're not very bright, but they
answer to their names.

(dryly)

What name do you answer to?

24 MOVING SHOT - ERIC

24

He starts down the center aisle. We hope the dogs respond to
some of the aisle-side audience and move to them to be petted.

ERIC

All right, I'm going out and eat
lunch. A nice, big lunch. You're
not going to eat until the facili-
tators tell you you can eat. You'll
earn that privilege.

25 WIDER ANGLE

25

ERIC

Burt and Ian and Betty are going to

CONTINUED

25 CONTINUED

25

ERIC (Cont'd)
help you with that.

We are aware of this crisp, youthful, blazered trio moving to the stage.

ERIC
They want to hear you count. Count backwards from a hundred -- count yourselves right back into the cradle. I know you're tired and I know you're confused. I don't care about that. The Institute isn't here to give you love, it's here to give you control. Now count backwards! One hundred! Ninety-nine....

Eric beats out the cadence as the audience counts in reverse and as he exits with the dogs.

26 ANOTHER ANGLE TO INCLUDE FACILITATORS

26

On the stage, the facilitators pump the countdown like cheerleaders.

27 INT. CONTROL BOOTH - CHARLIE AND TECHNICIAN

27

Countdown continues o.s. Charlie is affixing some of the graph readouts to a clipboard. Eric enters with the dogs. They are immediately all over Charlie and the Technician, demanding affection.

ERIC
How we doing?

CHARLIE
(showing the graphs)
Average average. Following the base line all the way. They'll do well.

Eric examines the contents of the clipboard and addresses the Technician.

ERIC
The woman in seat number twenty-six -- she's playing games with her dial. Pull the plug.

TECHNICIAN
Yes, sir.

The dogs nuzzle the Technician as he works a patch board. Eric starts to exit with Charlie.

CONTINUED

27 CONTINUED

27

ERIC

(re dogs)

Come on, you turkeys. Leave the man
alone.

He exits. So does Charlie. And the dogs.

28 INT. INSTITUTE LOBBY - MOVING SHOT - DAY - ERIC AND CHARLIE - 28
THE DOGS

as they move through a lobby full of comings-and goings, the
dogs tagging along.

ERIC

What's on the docket, Charlie?

CHARLIE

You wanted to check the foreign
language tapes.

ERIC

They'll wait.

CHARLIE

And the seminar with the new
facilitator group.

ERIC

God preserve us.

He exits with dogs into an office as:

ERIC

Come on in.

Charlie follows him in.

29 INT. ERIC'S OFFICE - DAY - ERIC AND CHARLIE - THE DOGS 29

The office is expensively Spartan and remorselessly contempor-
ary. Eric sinks wearily into his desk chair, sets down the
clipboard. There is a mass of paperwork waiting his attention.
There is also a framed photograph on the desk: the same lady
whom we saw at the tennis net in the earlier photo.

Eric loosens his tie.

CONTINUED

29 CONTINUED

29

ERIC

Charlie, Charlie, I grow weary.

CHARLIE

Try the Institute for Life Control.

ERIC

Will it save me?

CHARLIE

From what?

ERIC

(shrug)

The Institute for Life Control.

He is looking at the photograph; he picks it up.

30 INSERT - THE FRAMED PHOTOGRAPH

30

A handsome woman indeed.

ERIC'S VOICE

Let's run away and be Indians, Charlie.

31 ERIC AND CHARLIE

31

Charlie eyes him closely -- a friend's concern. The dogs
hang around.

(X)

(X)

CHARLIE

(quietly)

Do you miss her?

ERIC

Jennifer?

(eyes to Charlie)

Jennifer's dead.

CHARLIE

You never talk about it.

ERIC

What do you recommend, my dear Doctor
of Psychology? A morbid fixation?

(eyes back to
photo)

Her car went over the cliff. She
stopped living. I can't do that.
Not even for her.

He replaces the photograph on the desk, looks again at his
friend.

CONTINUED

31

CONTINUED

31

ERIC

It wasn't that good a marriage, if
you want to know.

Charlie does not want to know.

CHARLIE

Eric....

Eric's eyes are fixed on Charlie's.

ERIC

She was seeing somebody else. Some-
body. I don't know who. Her lover.
Do you still want me to talk about
it, Charlie?

CHARLIE

(a beat)

No.

Eric's mood changes. He scribbles his signature on some
letters as:

ERIC

Then let's get out of here and play
tennis.

A tension seems to ease in Charlie also.

CHARLIE

I thought you'd never ask. Your
place?

Eric glances at his watch.

ERIC

I've got an annual checkup with
Ernie Garrison -- take me a couple
of hours. I'll meet you at the
house -- three o'clock.

(X)

(back to papers)

If I'm late, let yourself in --
make yourself at home.

CHARLIE

Yes, sir, boss. Tennis at three
o'clock.

He pantomimes forehand and backhand racket strokes, starts to
exit.

ERIC

Charlie -- do me a favor and take
these clowny dogs home for me.

(X)

32 AT DOOR - CHARLIE 32
CHARLIE
My pleasure.
(clucks at dogs) (X)
Come on, gang. Let's go. (X)

33 ERIC 33
ERIC
Don't let them push you around.
(a beat)
Good-bye, Charlie.

34 CHARLIE 34
CHARLIE
See you at three.
He exits.

35 BACK TO ERIC 35
He looks again at the photograph of his dead wife and draws
his finger along its surface. (X)

36 INT. CARDIOGRAM ROOM CLOSE SHOT - DAY - DIGITAL READOUT 36
We hear the rumble of some kind of mechanical apparatus. A
digital readout gives us a heart rate of one-hundred-and-
ten and climbing. The heartbeat itself is heard thumping
over a speaker.
Camera angle widens to discover Dr. Ernest Garrison, glasses
pushed up on his head as he moves to examine the scribbling
pen of a portable EKG unit.
DR. GARRISON
You're terrific. You ought to do
this for money.
And camera angles to include Eric Mason in mid-course of a
stress electrocardiogram. Stripped to the waist, he strides
rapidly over a swiftly-moving treadmill. Five electrodes
are plastered to his chest and a blood pressure cuff is
fixed to his arm. He gives Garrison a look.
ERIC
This the best you can do?
GARRISON
Let's find out.

CONTINUED

- 36 CONTINUED 36
He turns up a volume control on the speaker next to a cathode-ray display of Eric's heartbeat. The thumping grows louder. Now Garrison adjusts a control on the treadmill.
- 37 LOW ANGLE SHOT - THE TREADMILL 37
The speed increases. Eric's striding legs pick up the pace.
- 38 CLOSE SHOT - ERIC 38
glazed with perspiration. His glance goes to:
- 39 INSERT - WALL CLOCK 39
It is five minutes to three.
- 40 EXT. ERIC'S HOME - ANGLE PAST WROUGHT-IRON GATE - DAY - CHARLIE'S CAR 40
The beating of Eric's heart continues over scene as we shoot past the "K" atop the gate to find Charlie's car approaching the house.
- 41 EXT. HOUSE - ANOTHER ANGLE - DAY - THE CAR, CHARLIE, THE DOGS 41
Charlie parks the car and emerges. He wears warm-up suit. O.s.heartbeat continues as he holds the door open for the dogs. They come tumbling out, jump at him exuberantly.
- CHARLIE
Beat it! Scram!
- The dogs race toward a flight of steps leading to the upper level tennis court. Charlies moves to the trunk of his car.
- 42 EXT. UPPER LEVEL - TENNIS COURT - DAY - THE DOGS - SHOOTING THROUGH THE NET 42
as the dogs come bounding onto the court and scamper for a yellow tennis ball.
- 43 INT. CARDIOGRAM ROOM - CLOSE SHOT - DAY - EKG TRACE 43
The heartbeat sound quickening in pace -- the rumble of the treadmill -- the scribble of cardiogram styluses.

44 CLOSE SHOT - ERIC'S FEET
striding, striding.

44

45 VERY CLOSE SHOT - ERIC

45

perspiring heavily and breathing deeply as he struggles
against the treadmill.

46 CLOSE SHOT - CATHRODE-RAY DISPLAY 46
and the pulsations of his heart.

47 EXT. REAR OF ERIC'S HOME - DAY - JOANNE - SWIMMING POOL - CHARLIE 47

Heartbeat sound is increasing in intensity. A bikini-clad young woman, as lovely as you can imagine, is arranging a mattress by the pool as she looks to see Charlie, carrying a tennis racket, come to the patio entrance to the house. Her name is Joanne Nichols. She waves to him.

48 AT PATIO ENTRANCE - CHARLIE 48
He waves back, tries the patio door. It is open. He goes in. And heartbeat sound ceases abruptly.

49 INT. CARDIOGRAM ROOM - DAY - ANGLE ON ERIC 49
He lies now on an examining table, chest glistening with perspiration, electrodes still attached. His eyes are closed, his breath steadying.

DR. GARRISON'S VOICE
Any pain?

ERIC
Only when I laugh.

Angle widens to include Dr. Garrison as he adjusts the scratching EKG machine which now stands next to the examining table.

DR. GARRISON
We'll do a resting trace for five minutes. I'll be back.

ERIC
Thanks, Ernie.

The physician exits.

50 CLOSE SHOT - ERIC 50
his eyes open. He looks at the EKG machine, then to:

51 THE WALL CLOCK 51
three minutes after three.

- 52 ERIC 52
He reaches to take a wall phone. He begins to dial.
- 53 INT. ERIC'S KITCHEN - DAY - CLOSE SHOT - OPEN REFRIGERATOR 53
A hand takes a bottle of orange juice from the open refrigerator and closes the door. We angle to discover Charlie. The kitchen is the kitchen of the night scene with the dogs. (x)
Charlie moves to find a glass. The wall phone rings. He glances at it, pours the juice. Ringing continues. He reacts to the thump of the dog-door and:
- 54 ANGLE TO DOG-DOOR - THE DOGS 54
as they rush through the rubber flap.
- 55 CHARLIE AND THE DOGS 55
Charlie eyes the dogs curiously as they go to the ringing phone and repeat the whining noises of the first sequence. He sips the orange juice, finally goes to the phone.
- CHARLIE
(to dogs)
Take it easy, it ain't for you.
(to the phone)
Dr. Mason's residence.
- 56 INT. CARDIOGRAM ROOM - ERIC 56
on the examining table, phone in hand.
- ERIC
Charlie, it's Eric. This damn physical's taking longer than I thought.
- 57 ON CHARLIE 57
ERIC'S VOICE
(filtered)
I'll get there when I can.
- CHARLIE
(to phone)
Whenever.

58 ON ERIC

58

ERIC

(to phone)

Oh, Charlie, help me settle an argument with this big-shot doctor. Ernie won't take an expert's word for it, so you tell him. In the movie 'Citizen Kane' -- what was written on Kane's sled? I mean exactly what was written there?

59 INT. KITCHEN - CHARLIE

59

at the wall phone.

CHARLIE

(to phone)

The sled's hanging in your den -- it says 'Rosebud'....

60 THE DOGS

60

The dogs, snuffling around the kitchen, react and turn toward Charlie, tensing, transforming....

61 ERIC

61

He speaks directly into the cradled phone but raises his voice as if to another person in the room.

ERIC

(to phone)

You hear that, Ernie? Here, Charlie, I'm holding up the phone. Tell him nice and loud.

62 CLOSE SHOT - CHARLIE

62

CHARLIE

(loudly -- to phone)

Rosebud!

63 THE DOGS

63

teeth baring, snarling....

64 CHARLIE

64

staring at the dogs in astonishment -- and with a growing sense

CONTINUED

64 CONTINUED 64
of fear.

CHARLIE
(to phone -- softly)
Eric....

65 LOW POSITION SHOT - THE DOGS 65
poised to attack -- perfect and fearsome killing mechanisms.
They spring over camera.

CHARLIE
(a shriek now)
Eric!

66 LOW POSITION SHOT - CHARLIE AND THE DOGS 66
A sense of the dogs' onslaught.

67 ON ERIC 67
as the sounds of the dogs' savagery comes from the phone.
Face impassive, Eric holds for a few beats, hangs up the
phone. He shifts a little on the table -- perfectly relaxed.

68 WIDER ANGLE 68
as Dr. Garrison returns to the room, moves to the EKG trace.

DR. GARRISON
Any pain now?

69 CLOSE SHOT - ERIC 69
ERIC
No. No, I never felt better.

70 CLOSE SHOT - EKG TRACE 70
charting the mysteries of Eric Mason's heart.

71 EXT. ERIC'S HOME - PARKING AREA - DAY - POLICE VEHICLES

71

Drifting camera reveals police cars parked on the grounds, an Animal Regulation truck, a coroner's wagon, Columbo's Peugeot... a sense of uniformed officers coming and going. Sounds of police radios from the black-and-whites.

A sheeted stretcher is being inserted into the open tailgate of the coroner's wagon. The wagon pulls away, camera panning it a bit and then

LAP DISSOLVE TO

72 EXT. SWIMMING POOL - DAY

72

panning the turquoise surface of the pool in the same direction as previous shot. A yellow tennis ball bobs on the water and is snared by the mesh of a pool skimmer extended into scene. We angle up to discover Eric, jacketless, by the side of the pool, drawing the ball toward him.

73 CLOSER SHOT - ERIC

73

His manner is stunned, severely abstracted. The business of retrieving the ball is simply the implied salving of shock by the performance of a familiar and orderly act. Now Eric stares down at the ball: its yellow surface is mottled with pinkish stains.

SGT. BURKE'S VOICE

Dr. Mason....

Eric looks up blankly and angle widens to include Sgt. Burke.

SGT. BURKE

(as if to reassure
him)

The Lieutenant'll be ready for you
in a few minutes.

It is as if Eric had not heard him. He shows Burke the ball.

ERIC

There's blood. The dogs -- must've
been out here after they -- after
Charlie.....

SGT. BURKE

I'd better take that, sir.

He takes the ball, starts away.

CONTINUED

73 CONTINUED

73

ERIC
(still the dazed
quality)
Sergeant -- where are my dogs?

SGT. BURKE
(indicating o.s.)
The animal truck, sir.

74 EXT. PARKING AREA - ANIMAL REGULATION TRUCK

74

Camera displays the side lettering on the truck, then angles to find Eric coming toward us. He hesitates at the rear quarter of the truck before moving into a position where he can see the dogs.

The mesh gate is open: the dogs are not there. For a moment he stares in confusion. Then a sound of barking and he looks up to see:

75 ERIC'S POINT OF VIEW TO UPPER PATIO LEVEL

75

There, on an upper patio near the tennis court, a raincoated figure, back to camera, is besieged by Eric's dogs.

76 UPPER PATIO LEVEL - COLUMBO AND DOGS

76

Here stands Lieutenant Columbo, the subject of leaping affection and unbounded demands upon his attention. One of the dogs has a yellow tennis ball in its mouth; both are urgently demanding that he throw the ball again.

COLUMBO
Okay, no more ball. That's all with
the ball. That's it. When I say
that's it, that's it.
(the dogs are still
all over him)
Okay, one more time and that's it.

He throws the ball down to the parking area. The dogs burst toward:

77 ANGLE ON STEPS - THE DOGS

77

as they dash down the steps toward the parking level. Also on the steps, ascending, is Eric. The dogs tear by him. He watches them go.

78 UPPER PATIO - COLUMBO 78

He starts to light his cigar and looks down to:

79 DOWN ANGLE TO PARKING AREA - ANIMAL REGULATION OFFICER, THE DOGS 79

as the dogs scamper for the bounding ball. We see an Animal Regulation Officer approaching the truck.

80 COLUMBO 80

calling down:

COLUMBO
They're all yours, Officer.

81 DOWN ANGLE 81

as the Officer waves and moves to collar the dogs by their neckerchiefs. Now he is the object of their affection.

82 CLOSE ANGLE - COLUMBO 82

He finishes lighting his cigar and watches curiously.

83 ERIC AND COLUMBO 83

Eric comes onto the upper patio and for a moment eyes Columbo in much the same way that Columbo is watching the dogs. Then:

ERIC
Lieutenant?

Columbo turns, pans his gaze slowly up to the face of this overpoweringly tall fellow.

ERIC
(simply)
They're my dogs.

COLUMBO
Oh. Oh, I'm sorry, sir.

He closes on Eric, his manner carefully considerate.

COLUMBO
You must be Dr. Mason. Here I am, playing away with the dogs as if nothing had happened. I know what a terrible shock this has been,

CONTINUED

83 CONTINUED

83

COLUMBO (Cont'd)
 coming home from the doctor's and all
 and finding -- finding what happened
 to Mr. Hunter. I'm Lieutenant Columbo.
 Homicide? I'm afraid there has to be
 a police report on every death, sir --
 where the victim wasn't under a doctor's
 care. Are you a physician yourself,
 sir?

ERIC
 No. No, my doctorate's in psychology.

Columbo is staring up at him thoughtfully.

COLUMBO
 You're very tall, sir.

ERIC
 (dryly)
 For a psychologist? Or someone whose
 dogs just killed his best friend.

He moves to the edge of the patio, looks down into the parking area.

COLUMBO
 Just a general observation, sir.

84 CLOSER ANGLE - ERIC

84

ERIC
 You're an acute observer, Lieutenant.

He is looking down to:

85 ERIC'S POINT OF VIEW TO PARKING AREA AND ANIMAL REGULATION TRUCK 85

The truck is driving away.

ERIC'S VOICE
 What'll happen to the dogs?

COLUMBO
 For now, sir, they'll be held by the
 Animal Regulation people.

He moves into shot with Eric who turns now to look at him.

ERIC
 And then put away?

CONTINUED

85 CONTINUED

85

COLUMBO

I'm afraid that'll be up to the courts, sir. Under the circumstances....

ERIC

(slicing in)

I'm not arguing the point. Obviously, they have to be destroyed.

He moves away, descending a flight of steps to a lower patio.

86 ON COLUMBO

86

He takes out his notebook, starts to make a note.

COLUMBO

Dr. Mason?

He glances up, snaps his gaze back to the notebook, looks after Eric, and moves in hot pursuit as:

COLUMBO

Dr. Mason, sir?

87 EXT. STAIRWAY TO LOWER PATIO - ERIC AND COLUMBO

87

Eric pausing as Columbo descends to him.

COLUMBO

Excuse me, sir, are you Dr. Eric Mason, the mind control doctor?

ERIC

It's not mind control, it's life control. There's a difference, Lieutenant. I'm not a Svengali.

COLUMBO

I didn't mean to imply, sir. Why, just last night my wife was talking about your Institute. Oh, you're a very famous psychologist. Mrs. Columbo, she's highly enthusiastic about taking one of your forty-eight-hour sessions -- to study control, sir. Like she said, her exact words: to improve the quality of her life.

Eric regards this amiable fellow with an intense desire to be rid of him.

CONTINUED

87 CONTINUED

87

ERIC

Yes, I can understand her enthusiasm.
But it seems I can't even control my
own dogs.

He continues down the steps. So does Columbo.

COLUMBO

Well, that's what's bothering me,
too, sir. They don't seem to need
much controlling. I mean they're
very affectionate animals. I hit
it off with them right away.

ERIC

They 'hit it off' with everybody,
Lieutenant.

COLUMBO

Until today, sir.

ERIC

Yes. Until today.

88 EXT. LOWER PATIO - ERIC

88

He reaches the lower patio as Columbo comes flapping after
him.

COLUMBO

Were they trained, sir? Some kind
of guard-dog training?

ERIC

The only training they've had is
to love people.

COLUMBO

The victim, Mr. Charles Hunter....

ERIC

Dr. Hunter.

COLUMBO

Dr. Hunter. Did the dogs get along
with Dr. Hunter, too?

ERIC

With everyone.

Columbo consults his notebook.

CONTINUED

COLUMBO

Including Miss Joanne Nichols, sir?

ERIC

I don't know how many ways I can say it, Lieutenant....

COLUMBO

Right, sir. According to Sgt. Burke, Miss Nichols called in the report just after three o'clock -- while you were still at the doctor's.

(eyes up to Eric)

I understand she lives with you, sir.

A brittle edge enters Eric's voice.

ERIC

Not with me. On the premises -- the guest house.

Columbo makes a note.

COLUMBO

Right -- on the premises.

(then)

How do you explain it all, sir?

ERIC

I've never believed the myth about Dobermans turning into spontaneous killers. I still can't get it through my head.

(a helpless shrug)

Something happened. Charlie must've done something to provoke an attack.

COLUMBO

Oh, I doubt that, sir. I doubt that very much. I don't see how Dr. Hunter could've done anything like that.

ERIC

(eyeing him)

You seem very positive, Lieutenant.

COLUMBO

Oh, I am, sir. Can we just step into the house?

He indicates the house. Eric looks at the house, at Columbo. They go.

89 INT. ERIC'S STUDY - DAY - TICKET BOOTH

89

Among the collector's items in the study is a full-size art deco ticket booth. Columbo enters behind the wicket, looking out to us and marvelling.

COLUMBO

It's a remarkable room, sir. I've never seen anything like it.

Columbo moves out from the booth and camera angles to reveal a detailed view of the study as he roams the room. Eric watches him.

COLUMBO

All this memorabilia -- all these wonderful things. It's easy to see you're a fanatic film buff, sir.

We now note a set-piece antique pool table in the middle of the room. There are many books, racks of film cans, rafts of gadgets.

ERIC

We all need our dream worlds, Lieutenant -- even psychologists. Are you a collector?

COLUMBO

Oh, no, sir. I wouldn't know where to begin.

He pauses before a one-sheet for a W.C. Fields film.

COLUMBO

W.C. Fields. Now there was a genius, sir.

Amused by Columbo's enthusiasm, Eric picks up a travesty of a curved pool cue and hands it to him.

ERIC

This was his pool cue.

COLUMBO

(admiring it)
Look at that.

ERIC

(indicating the pool table)
And that was his pool table.

Columbo glances at the table, back to Eric.

CONTINUED

89 CONTINUED

89

COLUMBO

Honest, sir?

ERIC

Honest, Lieutenant.

COLUMBO

(holding up the
cue)

Can I?

Eric makes a gracious gesture: help yourself. Columbo moves to the pool table.

90 AT POOL TABLE - COLUMBO AND ERIC

90

Through following, Columbo makes a few futile shots with the curved cue.

COLUMBO

(marvelling)

W.C. Fields.

(then)

What I wanted to ask you, sir,
when you knew you'd be late for
your tennis game, did you happen
to phone Dr. Hunter to tell him
you'd be late?

Eric removes a few balls from the pockets and rolls them onto the table.

ERIC

No. We both knew I might be
held up.

COLUMBO

But not as late as it turned out.

ERIC

Not as late. Do you enjoy games,
Lieutenant?

Columbo sets the cue aside and begins patrolling the room again as:

COLUMBO

Never had the time for them, sir.
But I'm sure you're very good at
games -- having your own tennis
court and all.

91 ANOTHER ANGLE - COLUMBO AND ERIC

91

Columbo has paused by a basket from which he extracts an ancient film light: a baby spot, its frame dented and rusted, lens shattered, spattered with dirt.

COLUMBO

Oh, this looks very old, sir.

ERIC

An old movie light I picked up last week. It's called a baby spot. I'll work on it -- clean it up -- like those.

He indicates a couple of gleaming antique spots. Columbo glances at them, is drawn to the sled mounted on the wall.

COLUMBO

Would you have been expecting a phone...

(breaks off for)

This sled, sir. What would this be for?

ERIC

A prize treasure -- from the movie 'Citizen Kane.'

COLUMBO

'Citizen Kane?' With Orson Welles? That was some terrific movie. Mrs. Columbo said that was a masterpiece.

ERIC

I'll tell Mr. Welles that she approved.

He starts to turn, is nailed again by Columbo as:

COLUMBO

I was going to ask, sir, if you could've been expecting a phone call about three o'clock. I mean, if you'd been home, would you be expecting anybody to call?

ERIC

Nothing specific.

COLUMBO

I'd like you to be sure about that, sir. Lord knows, after what happened here, you'd be entitled to be confused about a thing like a phone call.

CONTINUED

91 CONTINUED

91

ERIC

I appreciate the dispensation, Lieutenant. I'm still capable of recalling whether or not I was expecting a call. I was not expecting a call.

He turns and crosses to a connecting corridor.

COLUMBO

I wouldn't do that, sir!

(Eric freezes)

Not if you're going to the kitchen.

Eric turns, eyes on Columbo.

COLUMBO

To tell you the truth, it's pretty awful in there. I wouldn't go in there till it's cleaned up.

92 ON ERIC

92

He holds for a beat, advances back into the study, to Columbo.

ERIC

Was there some particular point you wanted to make about Charlie -- or the dogs?

COLUMBO

Right, sir, I almost forgot. Is this a real phone?

He moves to an antique phone on the study wall.

ERIC

Of course.

Columbo holds the phone to his ear, appears puzzled, then looks to the baseboard.

COLUMBO

It's unplugged. There by the baseboard, sir.

He moves to insert the phone plug into the baseboard socket as:

COLUMBO

Now what I wanted to show you, the phone in the kitchen, it's a wall telephone -- like this one.

He is back at the phone now, unhooking the handset so that it dangles and sways.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

COLUMBO

The way we found it, it was hanging off the hook, something like this. You see that, sir? The kitchen phone.

ERIC

Yes, you make it very clear, Lieutenant.

COLUMBO

Well, sir, that's why the victim couldn't have provoked the dogs. He must've been standing there talking on the phone when they attacked.

Eric looks at the phone, at Columbo.

ERIC

That seems to be a reasonable assumption.

(illustrating with
phone)

But when the dogs went wild, couldn't the phone have been knocked off the hook?

He drops the handset: hanging and swaying. Columbo takes it, holds it to his ear.

COLUMBO

Not if you listen to the phone, sir.

(he holds it up for
Eric to hear)

Now you're hearing what I heard on the phone hanging in the kitchen.

And what we hear is the sound of a fast-busy signal.

ERIC

And what does that tell you, Lieutenant?

COLUMBO

It's a fast-busy signal. If the kitchen phone was knocked off the hook, we'd be hearing a steady tone. No, sir, the phone rang in your kitchen and your friend answered it. You can count on that, sir.

Eric remains doubtful.

CONTINUED

92 CONTINUED - 2

92

ERIC

Since we seem to be playing a kind of mind game, Lieutenant -- couldn't Charlie have been calling out on this phone?

COLUMBO

Oh, no, sir. You see, in that case we'd have the steady tone. With a fast-busy signal, we know the call came in, sir.

(hangs handset in cradle)

That's a fact. I checked with the telephone district.

(X)

ERIC

Well, you seem to have won the game, Lieutenant. I accept your fact.

They move now toward exit.

93 COLUMBO AND ERIC - MOVING SHOT

93

COLUMBO

Which still leaves the question of why the dogs attacked. You see what I mean, sir?

(pauses, takes out notebook)

It certainly has been a tragic year for you, hasn't it, sir? I mean your wife's death just -- (checks the book) -- six months ago, and now this?

ERIC

We all have to deal with our emotions. My first instinct is to turn to a friend. And the first friend I think of is Charlie.

(he makes a defeated little hand gesture)

And then Laurel and Hardy.

COLUMBO

Laurel and Hardy, sir?

ERIC

My dogs.

COLUMBO

I should've known.

CONTINUED

3 CONTINUED

93

COLUMBO (Cont'd)
 (pocketing notebook)
 Well, I'll leave you to your thoughts,
 sir.

ERIC
 I'll see you out.

He leads the way to exit.

94 EXT. ERIC'S HOME - DAY - ERIC AND COLUMBO

94

Columbo takes it all in.

COLUMBO
 You certainly have a beautiful home,
 sir. It's like something out of a
 movie itself.

ERIC
 It belonged to Theda Bara. You see
 -- when I leave the Institute, I
 even live in a dream world.

COLUMBO
 Oh, there's nothing dreamy about
 you, sir -- not the way those
 thousands of people depend on you
 for peace of mind.
 (a handclasp)
 We'll be seeing more of each other,
 sir -- until the investigation's
 settled.

Eric is a bit startled at the thought of an ongoing analysis of Charlie's death.

ERIC
 It's not that I haven't been impressed
 by your company, Lieutenant -- but
 what is there to investigate?

COLUMBO
 It's that telephone again, sir. You
 see, whoever Dr. Hunter was talking
 to, that person must've heard those
 awful sounds in the kitchen. He
 must've heard the dogs -- and a man
 dying in there -- dying and scream-
 ing. And nobody called the police.
 We never got a report, sir. Not a
 single one. Except from the young
 lady in your guest house. So you

CONTINUED

- 94 CONTINUED 94
COLUMBO (Cont'd)
see, we'd like to find out who made
that phone call. You understand,
sir. Good-bye.
- And he goes.
- 95 ON ERIC 95
looking after Columbo, no longer amused by this amiable puppy
of a man.
- 96 ERIC'S POINT OF VIEW - TO COLUMBO 96
as Columbo, presumably en route to his car, glances toward the
guest house -- or, to be precise, the upper level entrance to
the guest house. He changes course and crosses to the window-
ed door where he peers inside.
- 97 ANGLE ON ERIC 97
watching.
- 98 ANGLE ON COLUMBO 98
as he moves to descend to the swimming pool level.
- 99 EXT. SWIMMING POOL AND GUEST HOUSE - DAY - COLUMBO 99
Columbo looks around, crosses in medium long shot to the lower
level entrance to the two-story guest house. He knocks at the
door and, as if invited to enter, goes in.
Camera maneuvers now for an up angle toward Eric's house -- and
Eric's figure -- watching. Camera zooms. And his face.
Thoughtful indeed.
- 100 INT. GUEST HOUSE - DAY - JOANNE 100
Lighting here is low-key. Joanne sits on a step of the spiral
stairway reaching up to the second level. She wears a floor-
length terry cloth robe. Her arms are wrapped around herself,
warming herself against the chill of Charlie's death.
In one hand she grips a bedraggled and very ancient Teddy bear.
She is doing an excellent job of submerging her hysteria. She
speaks very quietly.

CONTINUED

100 CONTINUED

100

JOANNE

He was on the floor. The dogs were at his throat. I tried -- I couldn't help him.

Camera angles to reveal Columbo, standing by the stairway.

JOANNE

I ran away.

COLUMBO

(gently)

But you called us, miss.

JOANNE

For all the good it did.

(she shivers)

I'm cold. My folks back home -- they were upset when I told them I was living here -- with Dr. Mason. They said I'd get into trouble. I think I'm in trouble.

COLUMBO

Excuse me, miss, but how did you come to live here?

(X)

(X)

JOANNE

It beats a college dormitory.

She rises now, comes down the spiral.

101 ANOTHER ANGLE - COLUMBO AND JOANNE

101

The first floor is mainly a kitchen, a dining table, a small couch and a few chairs.

JOANNE

I met Dr. Mason when I did the Control Course at the Institute. He said he and his wife had the guest house. They liked having psychology students. I could live here if I helped take care of the main house. So I talked it over with Sigmund. And we took it.

COLUMBO

Sigmund, miss?

With a bit of comic rue, she shows him the Teddy bear.

CONTINUED

101 CONTINUED

101

JOANNE

Sigmund. Formerly Teddy. Daddy said he'd always look after me. Daddy didn't know about the dogs.

She drops the Teddy bear on the couch, moves to the kitchen counter.

JOANNE

After Mrs. Mason died, I had the whole place to myself, mostly. Week-ends and all. So it was a good deal. Would you like some hot chocolate?

COLUMBO

I'd like that very much.

JOANNE

So would I.

She goes around the counter. Columbo moves after her.

COLUMBO

There's just a few more questions, Miss.

102 ANGLE BEHIND THE COUNTER - JOANNE AND COLUMBO

102

JOANNE

Earn 'em.

She hands him a saucepan, gets some milk from the refrigerator. He pours the milk, puts the pan on the stove. Joanne gets out a box of chocolate packets, et al, as:

COLUMBO

You knew Dr. Hunter?

JOANNE

Sure. He was around a lot.

COLUMBO

When you say you had the place to yourself, did you take care of the dogs?

JOANNE

Sometimes. They were terrific company. But Saturdays, Sundays -- sometimes both days, Eric took them.

CONTINUED

102 CONTINUED

102

COLUMBO

To the Institute, Miss?

JOANNE

No, he hasn't been working week-ends
since Mrs. Mason died.

With this, she is reaching up for a couple of mugs. Her hands are shaking. The mugs tumble and shatter. She stands clenched, holding herself again, shivering again. Columbo comes to her.

COLUMBO

Maybe we ought to just sit down,
you and me and Sigmund.

JOANNE

(struggling for a
streak of humor)

Now why didn't I think of that?

She lets herself be guided to:

103 ANOTHER ANGLE - COLUMBO AND JOANNE - THE COUCH, ET AL

103

She sits on the couch. Columbo takes a chair. He reaches for the Teddy bear. Unselfconsciously, he holds it in his lap.

COLUMBO

Miss, just before the screams --
before the thing happened in the
kitchen -- you say you were swimming?
(she nods)

Now try to remember -- were you
swimming on top of the water, or
under the water.

She stares at him for a moment, quite befuddled by his question.
Then:

JOANNE

I was diving -- swimming under
water.

COLUMBO

So you wouldn't have heard a phone
ring -- up there in the house.

JOANNE

(headshake)

I didn't hear any phone.

Columbo rises now, stands over her.

CONTINUED

103 CONTINUED

103

COLUMBO

Thank you very much, Miss.
(he places the Teddy
bear in her lap)
You try to get some sleep.

JOANNE

(a wan smile)
I hope not, Lieutenant. I don't
need any dreams.

Columbo goes to:

104 INT. LOWER ENTRANCE DOOR - COLUMBO

104

as he opens the door, revealing Eric just beyond.

COLUMBO

Oh, sorry, sir. Just leaving.
Excuse me.

He exits past Eric.

105 EXT. GUEST HOUSE - POOL AREA - DAY - COLUMBO AND ERIC

105

as Columbo goes, whistling his little tune. Eric watches,
then enters the guest house.

106 INT. LOWER LEVEL GUEST HOUSE - DAY - ERIC

106

Joanne is no longer there. Eric looks up, then mounts the
spiral stairway to:

107 INT. SECOND LEVEL GUEST HOUSE - SLEEPING AREA - DAY - ERIC

107

Again, a low-keyed mood as Eric enters upon the second level
sleeping area. Then, with a rush, Joanne is there, thrusting
herself into his arms, gripping him, pleading:

JOANNE

Eric -- hold me -- please.

His arms remain at his sides.

ERIC

Joanne, listen to me....

JOANNE

It was so awful....

CONTINUED

107 CONTINUED

107

ERIC

I want to comfort you. I want us to comfort each other. But not until you take control. Think of your secret word -- the word nobody knows but you. The word that defeats every other word.

JOANNE

(still clinging)

I've got a new one -- a new secret word.

(she pulls back,
spitting it at
him)

Blood!

She breaks from him now, moving back to sit on the bed, facing him. He regards her coolly.

ERIC

Now who's going to control your life -- you or that word?

She turns and curls on the bed.

JOANNE

Don't worry about it. I'll sleep it off. Lieutenant Columbo's prescription for health and happiness.

Eric comes closer to her. He speaks gently.

ERIC

You've suffered a terrible experience. It's time to go home. Get out of this place, Jo.

JOANNE

I don't want to go.

ERIC

You've wanted to go ever since you've known.

JOANNE

Known what?

08 CLOSE ANGLE - ERIC

108

ERIC

That we're not going to be lovers.

CONTINUED

108 CONTINUED

108

ERIC (Cont'd)
That I control my own space. That
you can't have everything you want,
just because you want it.

109 AT BED - CLOSE ANGLE - JOANNE

109

Her cheek is pressed against the spread. Her eyes glitter
with tears. The Teddy bear is in the shot.

JOANNE
What the hell do you know about
it, Doctor? What do you know
about it?

110 EXT. DOG TRAINING SITE - CLOSE SHOT - DAY - SHEPHERD

110

A German shepherd, restrained by a trainer's hand, fizzes in a
fearsome rage. Then, as we hear the words, "Ruby! Ruby!" the
dog is released and attacks straight for camera.

Camera zooms back and we see the trainer in b.g. and a cyclone
fence in f.g. which the dog hits with the approximate force of
a bulldozer.

Now camera is panning, revealing a sylvan setting of grass,
trees, whitewashed fences, training areas -- some sort of
distant structure if possible -- other trainers and dogs -- a
sign reading "Guardman Kennels" -- and, finally, in long
shot, Lieutenant Columbo leaning against a railing. A woman
trainer, holding another shepherd in check, is crossing toward
him. Perhaps his car is somewhere in b.g.

111 CLOSER ANGLE - COLUMBO AND MISS COCHRANE

111

The trainer, Miss Cochrane, is not a youngster, but she is as
trim and fit as if she were. The shepherd is indeed authorita-
tive and has a few growls for Columbo as she brings the dog
into shot.

Columbo retreats, ever on the alert for canine danger.

COLUMBO
Ma'am....

The trainer cuffs the dog gently and:

COCHRANE
Stop it! Behave! Sit!

The shepherd sits.

CONTINUED

111 CONTINUED

111

COCHRANE

It's all right, Lieutenant. You can pet him.

COLUMBO

(leerily)

Why should I?

COCHRANE

To show him you're friendly.

COLUMBO

Why can't he show me first?

COCHRANE

(nuzzling the dog)

Bruno's a love.

(to Columbo)

Come on, now.

Columbo raises his hand uncertainly.

COLUMBO

I don't know, Miss Cochrane. Who knows what goes on in the head of a dog?

COCHRANE

I do.

Columbo ventures a pat. The shepherd loves it. So, as it turns out, does Columbo.

COLUMBO

Then you tell me, ma'am: those Dobermans -- why would they kill Dr. Hunter?

As she feeds the shepherd a few tidbits from her pouch:

COCHRANE

They've never been trained as attack dogs?

COLUMBO

No, ma'am.

COCHRANE

Then they might kill for the same reasons people do. Why do people kill?

COLUMBO

Oh, you can understand those

CONTINUED

