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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.

Ringling 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 posterred 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. Somebody. 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

111 CONTINUED - 2

111

COLUMBO (Cont'd)
reasons, ma'am. People murder out
of fear -- or jealousy -- greed --
sex, all those things.

COCHRANE
So do dogs, Lieutenant. And some-
times, like us, they just plain go
crazy.

(calling off)

Henry!

(then)
Come on, Bruno.

She starts back to the training area. Columbo ducks under the
rail and goes with her.

112 MOVING SHOT - COLUMBO AND MISS COCHRANE

112

COCHRANE
When dogs go killer-wild we call it
reverting. Reversion back to the
wolf. We don't talk about it a
whole lot. But it happens.

COLUMBO
Well, that would explain it, ma'am.

The trainer pauses.

COCHRANE
Except you said you played with the
dogs -- after they went savage.
I've never heard of a reverting dog
that didn't stay that way.

Columbo stares at her for a beat.

COLUMBO
Well, thank you, ma'am. We didn't
clear up much, but it sort of high-
lights the problem.

COCHRANE
Glad to help, Lieutenant.

Columbo starts toward his car as:

COCHRANE
(calling off)
Henry, we'll run a couple.

113 FULL SHOT - SECOND TRAINER 113
to include another trainer waving and moving into position.
He wears a padded suit and tips a hood over his face.

114 SHEPHERD AND MISS COCHRANE 114
as she prepares to release the dog.

COCHRANE
All right, Bruno. Ready...
(then)
Kiss!

The dog is instantly a bark, snarling creature of mayhem.
She releases it toward the other trainer.

115 ON COLUMBO 115
as he turns to see:

116 COLUMBO'S POINT OF VIEW - SHEPHERD AND SECOND TRAINER 116
The trainer receiving the attack.

117 ON COLUMBO 117
moving back to the woman as:

COLUMBO
Ma'am? Miss Cochrane? Ma'am,
what did you just do?

COCHRANE
(calling)
Bruno! Come! Bruno!

She turns to Columbo. Through following, the shepherd will
rejoin her.

COCHRANE
Just an attack command.

COLUMBO
But you said -- (X)
(glances at Bruno)
-- you said K-I-S-S, ma'am. (X)

COCHRANE
That's Bruno's attack word. A dog
can respond to any command, as
long as he's trained to understand
it. Look, I'll show you.

117 CONTINUED

117

She turns the shepherd directly toward Columbo and:

COCHRANE

Bruno -- kill!

118 FLASH CUT - COLUMBO

118

and his horror reflex.

119 THE SHEPHERD, ET AL

119

as the dog leaps for Columbo -- leaps up and licks his face.

COLUMBO

Okay -- okay, that's enough.

(as Cochrane reclaims
the dog)

You mean a trainer can control
a dog with any word? Any word
at all?

COCHRANE

A sign, a sound, a word. Any
word in any language.

Columbo strokes his cheek thoughtfully as:

COLUMBO

Right -- right. Millions of words.

(then)

And you can train any dog to do
that?

COCHRANE

If he's smart enough.

COLUMBO

Even a dog like mine? Back there
in the car? Just a regular dog?

120 EXT. COLUMBO AND COCHRANE - DAY - COLUMBO'S PEUGOT

120

They approach Columbo's car as:

COLUMBO

Mrs. Columbo, she's alone a lot,
me working nights and all. We've
been thinking about training him
up for a guard dog. I'd feel a
lot better knowing she was pro-
tected.

CONTINUED

120 CONTINUED

120

He opens the car door, reaches in and lifts out about sixty pounds of limp bassett hound.

COLUMBO

Come on, dog, here's the teacher.
Come on.

He sets the dog down. It stands there. It hasn't moved in years.

COLUMBO

(masterfully)

Stay! Don't go running around --
just stay!

The dog sure as hell stays. Columbo looks at Cochrane.

COLUMBO

You see? He could be a lethal
weapon. He's already part
trained. What do you think, ma'am?

Cochrane looks at the dog, at Columbo.

COCHRANE

If you want to protect your wife,
why don't you just teach her
karate? 'Bye, Lieutenant.

She crosses off. Columbo looks at the dog.

121 COLUMBO AND THE DOG

121

He commands it:

COLUMBO

Kill!

(then)

Kiss!

(then)

Back in the car. Get back in the
car.

Well, it's only a dog. It ain't a college professor.

122 INT. AT COUNTER - CLOSE SHOT - NIGHT - DOG FOOD AND OPENER

122

A man's hands open a can of dog food. Angle widens to give us Animal Regulation Officer Stein, a formidably constructed young man with an anxious-to-please manner.

CONTINUED

122 CONTINUED

122

He is working at a counter within a room that contains a block of dog cages. Off to one side is his cubbyhole of an office. A door leads to a corridor.

On the counter are two dog bowls, coffee implements, a raised shelf from which he takes a box of Ritz-like crackers. He spreads one of these with a little dog food, nibbles it, finds it acceptable. He is about to shovel food into the bowls as Dr. Eric Mason enters from the corridor, admitting a little storm of o.s. dog-yapping.

OFFICER STEIN

Sorry, sir. This is a closed area.

ERIC

(showing him a slip)

My name's Mason. The officer at the desk said I could see my dogs.

Stein takes the slip, examines it uncertainly.

OFFICER STEIN

Well, I don't know, Dr. Mason.

He looks at Eric, crosses into his office to check the slip against a couple of documents on his desk.

123 ON ERIC

123

He looks at the cages. Most of them are empty. Finally he comes to a large double cage -- and the Dobermans.

ERIC

(softly)

Laurel -- Hardy.

The dogs come to the front of the cage. Eric looks up as Officer Stein comes from his office, still holding the slip.

OFFICER STEIN

I'd better check with Lieutenant Columbo. He's around here somewhere.

ERIC

Officer -- when will they be put away?

OFFICER STEIN

Nothing definite. You'll be glad to know, sir, the Lieutenant's doing everything he can to keep them alive.

CONTINUED

123 CONTINUED 123

ERIC

(a beat)

Yes. Thank you.

The Officer exits.

124 ANGLE ON ERIC - THE DOBERMANS 124

as Eric turns to fondle the dogs through the bars of the cage.

ERIC

Well, now, my darlings. Who's kept
your neckerchiefs so nice and clean?
Was that the young officer?

(then)

I wish you both a long and happy
life. But that wouldn't be so
comfortable for me, would it? So
you're going to have to do me one
last service.

(some whining sounds
from the dogs)

Smell the candy? Want some candy?

He takes something wrapped in tissue from his pocket, unfolds
it to reveal a couple of large chocolates.

ERIC

Guess what I've got for you. Your
favorite chocolates. See? Ready
for a treat?

125 ANGLE TO ENTRANCE DOOR 125

The door opens and we see Columbo looking toward:

126 COLUMBO'S POINT OF VIEW - ERIC 126

about to extend the chocolates to the dogs.

127 ON COLUMBO 127

COLUMBO

Just hold it, sir!

He starts forward.

128 ON ERIC 128

turning to Columbo, still holding the chocolates. Columbo

CONTINUED

128 CONTINUED

128

comes into shot. Their eyes are riveted on each other.

COLUMBO

Sorry, sir. They're only supposed to be fed by the officer.

ERIC

Not even chocolates, Lieutenant?

COLUMBO

Not even chocolates, Doctor.

ERIC

In that case, would you care for one?

He holds out one of the chocolates -- and eats the other.

ERIC

Delicious.

COLUMBO

Thanks all the same, sir.

ERIC

I'll say good night, then.

He starts past Columbo.

COLUMBO

Oh, I'm glad we ran into each other, sir. I wanted to ask you about this.

From his raincoat pocket Columbo removes a plastic evidence bag.

COLUMBO

The technicians found this on your kitchen floor. They asked me to account for it, sir. Do you know what it might be?

Eric takes the bag, holds it to the light.

129 INSERT

129

The evidence bag. It holds a few wisps of straw.

0 BACK TO SCENE

130

ERIC

It looks like straw, Lieutenant.

CONTINUED

0

CONTINUED

130

COLUMBO

The technicians were confused about that, sir. They couldn't figure out where the straw came from.

ERIC

I'm sure it's from a case of wine I ordered last week.

He returns the bag. Columbo pockets it as:

COLUMBO

Right, sir. That would explain it! Straw from a case of wine. I told them it was something like that.

ERIC

Will there be anything else, Lieutenant?

Again their glances are locked, both playing out some kind of "head game," as Eric called it.

COLUMBO

Well, as long as you're asking, sir -- just to fill out my report -- when you used to take the dogs away on week-ends, what is it you did with the dogs?

ERIC

We walked on the beach. They played -- I thought. Thinking's an old-fashioned habit, but one well worth cultivating.

COLUMBO

I'll have to try it sometime, sir. And the dogs were always with you?

ERIC

Always.

COLUMBO

On the beach?

ERIC

On different beaches.

COLUMBO

Good night, sir.

CONTINUED

130 CONTINUED - 2 130

ERIC

Good night, Lieutenant.

He exits.

131 ON COLUMBO 131

as he turns to the caged dogs, eyes them for a few beats,
thrusts out a commanding finger.

COLUMBO

Kill!

(then)

Kiss!

(then)

Ruby!

(then)

Diamond!

(then)

Emerald!

The dogs ignore him.

COLUMBO

Terrific.

The phone rings in Officer Stein's office. The dogs rear up
against the bars and commence the "telephone" whining sounds
with which we are already familiar.

Watching them, Columbo finally makes the connection between
their reactions and the ringing phone. He looks to:

132 COLUMBO'S POINT OF VIEW - OFFICE AND PHONE 132

through the open door to the tiny office -- and the ringing
phone on the desk.

133 BACK TO COLUMBO AND DOGS 133

His glance swings back to the agitated dogs. The phone stops
ringing. They lapse into disinterest.

COLUMBO

(echoing his last
speech)

Terrific.

He moves quickly to:

- 134 THE TINY OFFICE - COLUMBO 134
as he dials the phone, replaces the handset. It rings immediately.
He moves back to watch.
- 135 THE DOGS 135
repeating their telephone act.
- 136 ON COLUMBO 136
He props his left elbow on his right hand. And smokes. And
thinks.
- 137 INT. INSTITUTE FOR LIFE CONTROL - DAY - CONTROL BOOTH - ERIC 137
Eric stands in the empty control booth near the graph mechanisms
and the switch panel. The styluses are silent. He is copying
some figures from a computer readout.

Suddenly a stylus begins to scratch out a fluctuating line.
Eric looks in astonishment: the stylus has no right to be
moving. He crosses to the auditorium window and looks down to
see:
- 138 DOWN ANGLE - ERIC'S POINT OF VIEW - COLUMBO 138
A raincoated figure sits alone in the empty auditorium, working
the dial wired to his seat. Camera zooms closer.
- 139 INT. BOOTH - ON ERIC 139
He reaches to snap a couple of switches and picks up a microphone.
- 140 ON COLUMBO 140

ERIC'S VOICE
(PA effect)
Good morning, Lieutenant.

Columbo whirls, looks, finally finds:
- 141 UP ANGLE SHOT - TO BOOTH AND ERIC 141
Eric looking down to us, microphone in hand, saluting Columbo.
- 142 ON COLUMBO 142

COLUMBO
Oh, it's you, sir. They told me

142 CONTINUED 142
COLUMBO (Cont'd)
you were busy. I was just playing
with this.
He holds up the dial.

143 INT. BOOTH - ERIC 143
COLUMBO'S VOICE
(PA effect)
Is that all right, sir?
ERIC
We use it to monitor reactions to
certain words. Words control our
lives, Lieutenant -- if we let
them.

144 INT. AUDITORIUM - ON COLUMBO 144
ERIC'S VOICE
(PA effect)
That's why we encourage our
people to learn a secret word --
to fight off all the other words.

145 INT. BOOTH - ERIC 145
ERIC
Do you have a secret word?

146 DOWN ANGLE TO COLUMBO 146
COLUMBO
(PA effect)
No, sir, I don't think so.

147 INT. AUDITORIUM - VERY CLOSE SHOT - COLUMBO 147
COLUMBO
Do you have one, sir?

148 INT. BOOTH - ERIC 148
ERIC
Of course, Lieutenant. My very
own.

CONTINUED

148 CONTINUED

148

ERIC (Cont'd)

(then)

I'll be right down.

Click: he switches off.

149 INT. INSTITUTE LOBBY - CLOSE ANGLE - COLUMBO

149

He is seen in a glare of light, cigar in mouth, as:

COLUMBO

Conditioned response --

(he lights the cigar)

-- I don't think I know what 'conditioned response' means.

Camera angles to include Eric. They stand in the Institute's fishbowl lobby.

ERIC

It's our habit reaction to certain signals. Words are signals. For instance, you just lit your cigar. Because you're troubled by this new idea. That's your conditioned response to my signal.

Columbo looks at his cigar.

COLUMBO

I certainly must be an open book to a man like you, sir.

Eric allows himself a smile.

ERIC

Partly open.

COLUMBO

The way you just smiled, Dr. Mason -- would that be your conditioned response to a flattering remark?

Eric is no longer smiling.

150 INT. INSTITUTE - BOARD ROOM - DAY - COLUMBO AND ERIC

150

Both are seated at the T-shaped board room table. Eric's blazer is draped over his chair. There is an open legal tablet in front of him. He toys with a pencil.

CONTINUED

150 CONTINUED

COLUMBO

It's about your late wife, sir.

ERIC

(surprise)

Jennifer?

COLUMBO

I guess it's mostly about the dogs. And that phone call just before Dr. Hunter died. I can't get it out of my head that somebody wanted the dogs to kill.

ERIC

Lieutenant, I can't....

Columbo's outthrust hand cuts him off.

COLUMBO

Maybe you were the target, sir. An enemy -- somebody who wanted to get rid of you and then it all went wrong. And Dr. Hunter got killed instead.

ERIC

That's incredible nonsense....

COLUMBO

Not when you consider your wife, sir. The automobile accident -- her car going over that cliff. The investigating officers, they never could figure out why.

(hunching forward)

Is there anyone who hated you and Mrs. Mason enough to see you both dead?

Eric searches his face, then:

ERIC

Do you really believe that?

Columbo lays his cigar in an ashtray, scratches ruefully at the back of his head.

COLUMBO

Well, sir, I can't say that I do. It's just that we have to consider every side of it.

Eric closes the legal tablet, lays down the pencil.

CONTINUED

150 CONTINUED - 2

150

ERIC

You do that very well. You're a fascinating man, Lieutenant.

COLUMBO

To a psychologist, sir?

ERIC

You pass yourself off as a puppy in a raincoat -- happily running around the yard, digging holes all over the place. Only they aren't really holes, Lieutenant. You're laying a mine field. And wagging your tail.

COLUMBO

It's just the job, sir. It makes us look like that.

He rises.

ERIC

We'll discuss it sometime. Your whole personality. I'd enjoy that.

COLUMBO

Well, we all like to learn about ourselves.

(crossing to exit)

I'll be running along now.

(at the door)

It's certainly been an education, sir.

And he is gone.

151 ON ERIC

151

Columbo's cigar lies smoking in the ashtray. Eric angrily stubs it out. He reaches for a phone, dials three times, then:

ERIC

(to phone)

Get me Judge Jacob Metzler. We have the number.

52 EXT. ERIC'S GUEST HOUSE - UPPER LEVEL - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING

152

A stiff wind is blowing, harrying plants and trees. Camera

CONTINUED

- 152 CONTINUED 152
slowly zooms in on an unlit window of the guest house. Finally we make out Joanne Nichols in the window, staring toward:
- 153 JOANNE'S POINT OF VIEW - THE MAIN HOUSE 153
A single, lower-story light is on (presumably in the study).
- 154 UPPER LEVEL ENTRANCE - THE DOOR 154
as the door is flung open and Joanne emerges, caught up in a gust of wind. A coat is flung over her shoulders. She goes to:
- 155 REVERSE ANGLE - JOANNE AND MAIN HOUSE 155
as she hurries to the main house.
- 156 INT. MAIN HOUSE - NIGHT - AT ENTRANCE 156
The door opens and Joanne enters the darkened house. She moves slowly through the foyer, pauses at the base of a stairway for:
JOANNE
(calling)
Eric?
She moves down a corridor and into another room.
- 157 INT. AT ENTRANCE TO STUDY - JOANNE 157
moving into shot, flinging the door open.
JOANNE
Eric?
- 158 INT. STUDY - NIGHT - COLUMBO AND JOANNE 158
She stands staring at Columbo. He holds the battered old spotlight and is scrubbing at the rust with a small pocketknife.
COLUMBO
Dr. Mason's lecturing tonight, miss.
He sets the lamp down, closes and pockets the knife.
JOANNE
I'm sorry.

CONTINUED

160 CONTINUED

160

The kitchen is spotless. Perfectly ordered. They move deeper into the room.

COLUMBO

See? Just a kitchen, miss.

Columbo moves to take the handset from the wall phone. He lets it dangle.

Through following, he looks around and finds a high stool with folding steps. He carries it to a specific point and unfolds the steps as:

COLUMBO

What I wanted to ask you -- you heard Dr. Hunter screaming. Now, where was he when you saw him?

Carefully holding herself intact, she points toward a point on the floor not far from the phone.

COLUMBO

Right there. And the dogs?

She points to the same place.

JOANNE

There.

Now Columbo is climbing the steps onto the stool, examining the ceiling. This as:

COLUMBO

What you heard, was it just a scream -- or was Dr. Hunter trying to say something?

161 CLOSE SHOT - COLUMBO

161

as he fingers a black hook driven into the ceiling.

COLUMBO

Can you hear me up here, miss?

162 ON JOANNE

162

JOANNE

He was calling -- for Eric.

163 BACK TO COLUMBO

163

He cranes to examine the bearing surface of the hook: the black paint has been worn down to shiny metal.

COLUMBO

He was calling for his friend.

(then)

This hook, miss -- do you know what it might be for?

164 JOANNE AND COLUMBO

164

as Columbo descends from the stool.

JOANNE

No. I never noticed.

He points to that place on the floor.

COLUMBO

And right after seeing that, miss -- that's when you called the police?

She stares at him for a beat, turns and exits. Columbo goes after her.

165 INT. STUDY - NIGHT - COLUMBO AND JOANNE

165

Joanne moves to the phone in the study.

JOANNE

I tried this phone. It was dead.
I called from the guest house.

Columbo touches her shoulder.

COLUMBO

Thank you, miss. You did very well.

She manages a wan smile, starts to go as Columbo moves to pick up the old baby spot.

COLUMBO

Miss Nichols -- this spotlight --
Dr. Mason called it a 'baby spot'...
(he carries it to
her)

He said he picked it up a week ago.
But he couldn't have bought it in
one of those cinema buff stores.

CONTINUED

165 CONTINUED

165

COLUMBO (Cont'd)

There's a lot of dirt on it -- you see that?

(he shows her)

And his secretary, she said he was working every day that week and most of the nights.

JOANNE

It was a week-end, Lieutenant. He brought home lots of junk when he took the dogs -- like that old hitching post.

She indicates a section of hitching post set up by the fireplace.

COLUMBO

Well, that makes sense, miss.

He holds the lamp up to the light.

COLUMBO

There's a lot of rust, but it says here --

(he struggles to read)

-- 'Property of Callaghan Film Ranch -- Peach Tree, California.'

JOANNE

There. You might try starting your own collection.

COLUMBO

I might do that, miss.

JOANNE

Goodnight.

COLUMBO

Goodnight, miss.

She exits. Columbo moves to set down the lamp and finds himself looking into the W.C. Fields one-sheet. He salutes it.

COLUMBO

Goodnight, sir.

He turns out of shot.

166 EXT. WESTERN STREET - LOW POSITION SHOT - DAY - CALLAGHAN'S SALOON

166

Part of a Western Street motion picture location, long

- 166 CONTINUED 166
abandoned to total disuse. The ghost replica of a ghost town.
Last night's wind continues to blow.

A sign, hanging aslant and swaying in the wind, identifies
"Callaghan's Saloon." A broken swinging door bangs with each
gust. From o.s. we hear a small, metallic creaking sound
which continues through:
- 167 ANOTHER ANGLE - THE STREET 167
empty and isolated. A great ball of tumbleweed blows through.
Now we hear the rumble of an automobile and:
- 168 COLUMBO'S CAR 168
drives to the mouth of the street.
- 169 CLOSER SHOT - COLUMBO 169
He stops the car and gets out. His eyes take it all in.
- 170 MID-STREET - LOW POSITION SHOT - COLUMBO 170
His silhouetted figure walks toward us with a measured pace:
shootout at the Callaghan Ranch.
- 171 EXT. BOARDWALK - COLUMBO 171
A rusty chain, once part of some kind of lifting apparatus,
hangs from a second-story and creaks in the wind. Columbo,
glancing back over his shoulder, is startled as he walks into
the chain. He steadies it. It is very rusty. He is about
to move on as his attention is taken by a rusting ring at the
end of the chain. He looks at it closely.
- 172 VERY CLOSE SHOT - COLUMBO AND RING 172
The bearing surface of the ring has been scraped to bright,
shiny metal. Columbo runs his finger along the shiny part.
- 173 THE SALOON - COLUMBO 173
as he comes from the saloon into the street. He looks down,
kneels into:

174 LOW POSITION SHOT - COLUMBO

174

as he picks up a small, cheap audio speaker. A couple of wires dangle from it. The frame is battered. The cone has been ripped. Dirty straw is strewn around.

Columbo examines the speaker, puts a cigar in his mouth, sets the speaker aside and picks up a harness yoke about the width of a large coathanger. The wood is like driftwood. A rusty hook is fastened to its balancing point. Columbo examines the hook. The bearing surface is worn to bright, shiny metal.

175 ANGLE ON HANGING CHAIN

175

It continues to creak in the wind. Columbo comes into shot with the yoke. He looks, then hangs the hook on the ring at the end of the chain. The two shiny surfaces are mated.

He looks up, takes out a match to light his cigar, looks down, bends to the broken boards of the walk. There is a good deal of straw around. He brushes it aside and reaches between two boards to remove a weathered, yellow tennis ball punctured with toothmarks.

He rises with it, back into shot with chain and yoke. He lights his cigar, looks at the ball, at the yoke dangling at the end of the chain. He gives it a little push. It sways in the wind and creaks. Somewhere, way off in the distance, some dogs are barking. Or perhaps it is our imagination. Columbo flips the tennis ball and watches the swinging chain.

176 EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - DAY - CLOSE ON POTTED PLANT

176

A man's hands lift a potted succulent and remove a key from its pottery tray.

Angle widens to reveal an apartment complex, an apartment entrance -- and Eric. A glance around. He unlocks the door and enters.

177 INT. CHARLIE HUNTER'S APARTMENT - DAY - LIVING ROOM AND ENTRANCE - ERIC

177

as Eric comes in. He locks the door behind him. The atmosphere is as dead as Charlie. Comfortable bachelor digs. A set-piece of the room is a large desk aflow with work in progress, i.e., stacks of files, a calculator, scribbled legal pads, etc. The pronounced ticking of a clock.

Eric looks around. All familiar. It pleases him that the room is familiar. It pleases him that Charlie is dead.

He crosses to the desk.

178 AT DESK - CLOSE SHOT - FRAMED PHOTOGRAPH 178

It is a smaller replica of the photograph we saw in Eric's study: Charlie, Eric, Eric's dead wife, Jennifer, all embracing at the tennis net. Eric's hand picks it up. We angle to include him looking at the photograph. The faintest of smiles touches his lip. He places the photograph face down and opens a bottom desk drawer.

179 INSERT - THE DRAWER 179

Eric's hand pushes through a clutter of objects and uncovers a stack of standard-enlargement snapshots clamped with a rubber band. The top photo is a snap of Charlie and Jennifer. Both wear bathing suits, faces close, nuzzling each other.

180 ERIC 180

He withdraws the packet of snaps, removes the rubber band, swiftly runs the photos through his hands.

181 INSERT - THE SNAPSHOTS 181

all of Charlie and Jennifer. We have only a glimpse of them: kissing, clowning, embracing.

182 BACK TO ERIC 182
(X)

He pockets the snaps, closes the desk drawer, starts to turn, turns back to replace the framed tennis photo in its proper position.

COLUMBO'S VOICE

Mr. Mason, sir?

Eric whirls to see:

183 COLUMBO 183

He stands in the arched doorway to the bedroom area. He holds a clotheshanger on which we see a man's suit trousers and vest. He comes into shot with Eric as:

COLUMBO

I've been looking forward to having that psychological discussion -- about my personality, sir. But I guess this isn't the time or place.

CONTINUED

183 CONTINUED

183

ERIC

I was looking for some reports
Charlie was working on. What
brings you here, Lieutenant?

Eric begins sifting through the several file folders on the
desk.

COLUMBO

Just looking around. Look and
think. Think and look. That's
the game, sir.

ERIC

(still searching)
In my work, we call that *gestalting*.

COLUMBO

Gestalting?

ERIC

Trying to pull the particular out of
the totality. Looking for the one
reality that explains the whole.

Columbo holds up the hangered trousers and vest.

COLUMBO

I guess that's what I've been doing
with this suit. Dr. Hunter had a lot
of suits, but this is the only one
without a jacket. Did he wear this
one much, sir?

ERIC

I wouldn't know. We wear blazers at
the Institute.

(he has found the
reports)

These are what I need.

He puts the file folders under his arm, nods to Columbo.

ERIC

Good luck, Lieutenant -- with what-
ever you're looking for.

COLUMBO

Right, sir. I'll just stay on here
and *gestalt* for awhile.

Eric starts for exit. Columbo starts to the bedroom, turns
back for:

CONTINUED

183 CONTINUED - 2

183

COLUMBO

Oh, Dr. Mason, could you tell me about how Dr. Hunter was with women?

ERIC

He was divorced a few years ago....

COLUMBO

I mean before he was killed, sir. Any special women in his life?

ERIC

Different women. Nobody special.

COLUMBO

I gather from your staff that Dr. Hunter was quite a ladies' man.

ERIC

(a beat)

That was the game Charlie was good at.

COLUMBO

Well, don't let me keep you, sir.

ERIC

We'll still have that personal talk sometime, Lieutenant.

He exits. Columbo goes to:

184 CHARLIE'S BEDROOM - FEATURING CHARLIE'S BED

184

The bed is covered with hangered suits -- a dozen of them, all complete with jackets. Columbo enters shot, lays the jacketless hanger on the bed, steps back and surveys the effect. And the cigar.

185 OMITTED

185 (X)

186 INT. GUEST HOUSE - UPPER LEVEL SLEEPING QUARTERS - RAIN-SPATTERED WINDOWS - NIGHT - JOANNE

186 (X)
(X)

Wind-driven rain flails against the windows. Camera pans to Joanne. Some pillows are piled against the head of the bed. She sits-lies there, lighting a cigarette. She wears whatever she would wear for travelling. She dangles the Teddy bear by one ear.

(X)

(X)

CONTINUED

186 CONTINUED

JOANNE

When at first you don't succeed,
run away, Sigmund -- run away.

She tosses the Teddy bear aside and camera follows as it lands in an open, packed suitcase on the bed. Other suitcases on the floor. Now we hear sound of door closing below.

187 ON JOANNE

187

tightening. Sound of footsteps ascending the spiral stairs. She stubs out the cigarette.

188 AT STAIRWAY - ERIC

188

as he comes to the top of the stairs. He is wet with rain. He pauses, looking to:

189 JOANNE

189

meeting his gaze.

190 ON ERIC

190

He crosses to her. He sits on the edge of the bed, looks at the suitcases.

ERIC

Tonight?

JOANNE

(that rueful streak
of humor)

Good-bye to all this.

ERIC

Everything that's ever lived has
to die, Joanne.

JOANNE

Not like Charlie died.

ERIC

Poor Charlie.

She looks into his eyes.

JOANNE

I could've made you happy.

CONTINUED

ERIC
(headshake)
Not after Jennifer.

JOANNE
Jennifer and Charlie. All your
grief for them and nothing for
me.
(then)
No more grieving, Eric.

She leans back, not without some small sense of triumph as:

JOANNE
Your wife and friend. They were
lovers. You never knew that.

Eric stiffens.

ERIC
What?

JOANNE
I saw them -- when you were working
at the Institute. When Charlie
came here. When he took her -- to
the places they went. They were
lovers, Eric.

Eric stares at this young woman who has suddenly transformed
herself into a very potent danger.

ERIC
You knew that -- all the time --
and said nothing?

JOANNE
You loved her so.

His hand is extending, touching her cheek. And his other
hand.

ERIC
You mustn't talk about this, Jo.

and Eric's hands -- so gentle -- descending to her throat as:

ERIC'S VOICE
Never. Nobody can know. Nobody
can ever know. Only us....

191 CONTINUED 191

His hands are stronger now. A glimmering of fear starts in her eyes. There is a sudden, sharp rapping sound at the downstairs glass door. She looks.

192 ERIC 192

as he looks to:

193 HIGH ANGLE ON RAIN-SPATTERED WINDOW - COLUMBO 193

peering in the window.

194 JOANNE AND ERIC 194

Joanne moves from the bed to the upper-level balcony. Columbo, rain-wetted, enters.

COLUMBO
(looking up)
Excuse me, Miss Nichols, but I thought I might find Dr. Mason here.
(Eric moves to the balcony)
I hoped you might have a little time, sir.

ERIC
Time for what, Lieutenant?

COLUMBO
(ascending the stairs)
I was just on my way home and I thought, a night like this, you might be right here at home yourself. And we could have our psychological talk, sir.

ERIC
(a beat -- then)
It's the perfect night for it.

Columbo has spotted Joanne's suitcases. He goes to:

195 TWO SHOT - COLUMBO AND JOANNE 195

COLUMBO
Going somewhere, miss?

JOANNE
Home, Lieutenant. It's the perfect night for that, too.

CONTINUED

195 CONTINUED

195

COLUMBO

Well, you be happy, miss. You
and Sigmund.

She stares at him for a beat, then suddenly kisses his cheek.
Columbo is pleased.

COLUMBO

Thank you, miss.

196 INT. ERIC'S STUDY - NIGHT - FIREPLACE

196

A fire burns in the fireplace. Camera is slowly pulling back
and widening angle as:

ERIC'S VOICE

Do you think we could find one
single word that dominates your
life, Lieutenant?

We find Eric and Columbo, coats off, seated in easy chairs,
facing each other before the fire. Each holds a glass of red
wine. Good conversation on a bad night.

COLUMBO

Now that you put it that way,
sir, I suppose there is one.

ERIC

Then say the word.

COLUMBO

Murder.

ERIC

(amused)

Well, that's simple enough. Your
work dominates everything.

COLUMBO

Doesn't everyone's, sir?

ERIC

Only a fortunate few.

(hunches forward)

Now I'm going to say a word. You
tell me the first word that comes
into your mind and I'll say another
word. And so on.

(then)

Murder.

COLUMBO

Dogs.

CONTINUED

| | |
|----------|---------|
| Justice. | ERIC |
| Work. | COLUMBO |
| Mother. | ERIC |
| Father. | COLUMBO |
| Father. | ERIC |
| Win. | COLUMBO |
| Pain. | ERIC |
| Fail. | COLUMBO |
| Murder. | ERIC |
| Word. | COLUMBO |

Eric leans back.

ERIC
 I'd say you had a wholesome enough childhood. And you're something of an over-achiever. But how did we get from 'murder' to 'word?'

COLUMBO
 Well, it's the dogs, sir. I keep coming back to how maybe there's some signal -- some special attack word that sets them off.

ERIC
 But then the dogs would have to be trained....

COLUMBO
 The worst of it is, sir, if somebody did train the dogs, he could dangle the word right in front of me and I wouldn't recognize it.

197 CONTINUED - 2

197

ERIC

But the dogs would -- according to your theory.

COLUMBO

Oh, yes, sir -- the dogs'd certainly react to the word -- like a conditioned response.

ERIC

But isn't there an order for the dogs to be put away?

COLUMBO

Yes, sir, in forty-eight hours. This is terrific wine, sir. Judge Jacob Metzler handed down the order yesterday. I understand he's a friend of yours. Can we try the game again, Dr. Mason?

MASON

The game?

Columbo sets down his wine glass, hunches forward the same way Eric did.

COLUMBO

The word game, sir. Only this time I'll start it.

(extends his finger at Eric)

Money.

Eric regards him for a beat -- decides to go with it.

Work.

ERIC

(X)

(X)

198

198 TEMPOED INTER-CUTS - ERIC AND COLUMBO

COLUMBO

Work.

ERIC

Teach.

COLUMBO

Elephant.

ERIC

Tusk.

COLUMBO

Wolf.

CONTINUED

198

CONTINUED

198

| | | |
|------------|---------|-----|
| | ERIC | |
| Dog. | | |
| | COLUMBO | |
| Dog. | | |
| | ERIC | |
| Kill. | | |
| | COLUMBO | |
| Kill. | | |
| | ERIC | |
| Charlie. | | |
| | COLUMBO | |
| Wife. | | |
| | ERIC | |
| Love. | | |
| | COLUMBO | |
| Animal. | | (X) |
| | ERIC | |
| Hunt. | | (X) |
| | COLUMBO | |
| Trap. | | (X) |
| | ERIC | |
| Word game. | | |

He grins.

199

COLUMBO

199

Columbo grins also.

200

EXT. ERIC'S HOME - AT WROUGHT-IRON GATE - CRANE SHOT - NIGHT -200
ERIC AND COLUMBO

shooting past the decorative "K" as they approach. It has stopped raining. Eric is seeing Columbo out. Camera arms down through:

COLUMBO

Well, thank you very much, sir.
And I'll explain to Mrs. Columbo
how my condition is work-dominated.

ERIC

I think she might have guessed.

CONTINUED

000 CONTINUED

200

About to leave, Columbo is drawn back to the gate.

COLUMBO

This gate, sir -- the big letter 'K' -- I can't get it out of my mind that I've seen this gate somewhere before.

ERIC

Your wife's favorite movie, Lieutenant -- 'Citizen Kane.' It's the gate from 'Citizen Kane.'

Columbo snaps fingers in recognition.

COLUMBO

That's it, sir. The opening shot of the movie....

ERIC

Through the gate to the big house....

COLUMBO

And just a single light on....

ERIC

The crystal ball....

COLUMBO

Snowing in the crystal ball....

ERIC

And Charles Foster Kane dies.

COLUMBO

That's where it all begins, sir... (X)

ERIC

With his last word -- Rosebud. (X)

COLUMBO

The sled -- the one on your study wall, sir. We'll be playing the word-game again if we go on like this. Goodnight, sir. That's some terrific gate. (X)

And he goes.

201 ANGLE ON ERIC

201

seen through the bars of the gate: a clear winner in the game of words.

202 INT. DOG SHELTER - ISOLATION ROOM - CLOSE SHOT - NIGHT -
MINI-TAPE RECORDER

202

From the mini-tape recorder come the words of the word game between Columbo and Eric: the latter phase, i.e., the part triggered by Columbo. Camera angles back to reveal the recorder in Columbo's hand, the caged Dobermans, Animal Regulation Officer Stein. Columbo is watching the dogs. Officer Stein is watching Columbo.

The dogs pay no attention whatsoever. The tape runs out. Columbo stops the machine.

COLUMBO

Nothing.

OFFICER STEIN

What'd you expect, Lieutenant?

Columbo flicks him a glance, puts the machine on rewind and:

COLUMBO

We'll run it again -- in the cage.

He opens the cage, sets the recorder between the dogs, starts it playing before the top of the word game, closes the cage. Still no reaction. Now the telephone rings. Stein goes to answer it. And the dogs begin their familiar telephone response: jumping up on the bars and whining.

203 ANOTHER ANGLE - OFFICER STEIN

203

coming to the door of his office.

OFFICER STEIN

For you, Lieutenant. Judge Metzler.

Columbo reacts, goes to the office. Officer Stein goes to the dogs.

204 INT. OFFICER STEIN'S OFFICE

204

Columbo closes the door and picks up the phone.

COLUMBO

(to phone)

Lieutenant Columbo, Judge. Thanks for returning. It's about the two Dobermans, sir, and the death order ...I understand they killed a man, sir, but I'm not sure it was really the dogs that killed him...I can't prove anything, sir, not without those dogs!

CONTINUED

204 CONTINUED

204

A sudden and fearsome sound of savagery explodes outside the office. Columbo reacts. The door is flung open by a shaken Officer Stein.

OFFICER STEIN
Lieutenant, you better get out
here!

Columbo drops the phone and runs out.

205 ANGLE ON DOGS

205

They have gone berserk. For an instant their snarling jaws are at the tape recorder. Then they are flinging themselves against the bars of their cage. We have the sensation that if the cage fails to hold, neither of the men will survive.

206 ON COLUMBO

206

He has the same sensation.

207 EXT. GUARDSMAN KENNELS TRAINING SITE - EARLY MORNING - COLUMBO (MOS)

207

This and succeeding shots of sequence are photographed for a soft, pastoral effect.

Columbo is seen in a long angle, leaving his car and crossing to join the trainer, Miss Cochrane. They walk and talk. Somewhere o.s., a couple of dogs are barking.

208 EXT. SUNSET SHOT - DAY (STOCK)

208

a crimson sunset. Barking effects continue.

209 INT. COLUMBO'S CAR - NIGHT - COLUMBO AND MISS COCHRANE (MOS)

209

Columbo slumps behind the wheel, sleeping. Miss Cochrane comes to the open window and wakes him. It is a hard awakening. They speak. The dogs are still barking.

210 EXT. CYCLONE FENCE - DAY - COLUMBO (MOS)

210

shooting through the cyclone fence as Columbo comes toward us and gazes beyond camera. He looks very tired and is badly in need of a shave. He yawns. And lights a cigar. The dogs continue to bark.

- 211 EXT. ERIC'S HOME - FRONT PARKING AREA - NIGHT - ERIC'S CAR 211
Eric's car drives up and parks. He emerges, crosses past the Kane gate towards the house. A phone starts ringing inside.
- 212 OMITTED 212
- 213 INT. ERIC'S KITCHEN - NIGHT - ERIC 213
as he lets himself in, switches on the lights -- and is frozen by the sight of:
- 214 REVERSE ANGLE - DANGLING DUMMY 214
A straw-filled dummy hangs from the ceiling hook on a slender chain. It is dressed in the trousers and vest displayed earlier by Columbo. The kitchen phone is ringing. The dummy twists and sways.
- 215 ON ERIC 215
as he reacts now to a thumping sound and:
- 216 ANGLE ON DOG-DOOR 216
The two Dobermans rush through the rubber flap of the dog-door.
- 217 ANOTHER ANGLE - THE DOGS 217
responding to the phone as before. It stops ringing after a few seconds.
- 218 ANGLE ON ERIC 218
He takes a step backwards in a flight reflex, is turning to the door as Columbo enters from the study corridor.

COLUMBO

Quite a stunt, isn't it, sir? I mean the way the dogs go to the phone like that.

ERIC

(tightly)

What the hell are you playing at?

219 THREE SHOT - ERIC, COLUMBO, THE DUMMY

219

as Columbo comes into shot.

COLUMBO

Just my game, sir. You're good at tennis and word games. Dr. Hunter was a winner with women. This is my game.

(he touches the dummy)

He's my partner, sir. I call him 'Charlie.'

ERIC

You have a morbid streak, Lieutenant. I should've detected that.

Columbo ignores this, sets the dummy to swaying and:

COLUMBO

It's as if the dogs were trained to be right here by the phone -- when Dr. Hunter got that call, sir -- just before he was murdered. And the murderer had to be certain this was the only phone that would ring. Can I show you, sir? In the study?

Columbo goes toward the study. Eric looks balefully after him and follows. The dogs trot along.

220 INT. STUDY - NIGHT - COLUMBO, ERIC AND THE DOGS

220

They enter. Columbo goes to the phone as the dogs go o.s. This as:

COLUMBO

You know that Judge Metzler countermanded his order about Laurel and Hardy. That was very good luck for us, sir.

(picking up the study phone)

You remember this phone was disconnected, sir? That was so Dr. Hunter would answer in the kitchen. Where the dogs came in.

(replacing phone)

Don't feel you have to comment, sir. It's just a theory.

He hangs up the phone, picks up a pool cue -- a legitimate one

CONTINUED

220 CONTINUED

220

this time.

COLUMBO

Do you mind, sir? I really enjoy the game and I don't get much chance. Would you join me?

Eric looks at Columbo as if he would like to impale him on the cue. But he takes a cue of his own and they go to:

221 THE POOL TABLE

221

The balls are racked for a break but no cue ball is on the table. Columbo removes it from a pocket -- and then, from the same pocket, takes a yellow tennis ball which he rolls to Eric.

COLUMBO

Oh, I found this tennis ball, sir. It's like the kind you use, and with dog toothmarks on it.

(he breaks the rack
and:)

I found it out at the old Callaghan movie ranch -- where you got this baby spot, sir.

He turns and holds up the battered spotlight.

ERIC

Yes -- I've visited Callaghan's.

He makes a shot: he does not do very well.

222 ON COLUMBO

222

He speaks -- prepares to shoot -- speaks -- prepares again -- shoots and speaks.

COLUMBO

That's where the murderer trained his dogs -- on the old Western Street -- with a hanging dummy, sir. Made out of straw.

(indicates kitchen)

Like the one out there. The same kind of straw the police technicians found in your kitchen that day. And the murderer, he used a loudspeaker in the dummy to repeat the kill commands.

CONTINUED

222 CONTINUED

222

COLUMBO (Cont'd)

So the dogs would tear anyone apart
if they heard that attack word...

(after his shot)

'Conditioned response' is what you
called it.

Columbo has pocketed a ball. He indicates the pocket.

COLUMBO

Oh, in that same pocket, sir. If
you'll just take a look.

223 ANGLE ON ERIC

223

His gaze goes from Columbo to the pocket. He reaches under the
ball and takes out a torn swatch of dirty suiting fabric --
the same material as the vest and trousers. As he stares at
it, Columbo comes around and takes it from his hands.

COLUMBO

You see this, sir? It's what the
murderer dressed the dummy with --
out there on the Western Street.
I found it when I went back for a
second look. That's a torn piece
of Dr. Hunter's missing jacket --
so the dogs would take the scent,
sir. To reenforce the kill command.
Does that make sense to you, sir?

Eric looks at Columbo and then beyond him to:

224 REVERSE ANGLE - THE DOGS

224

Sitting. Waiting.

225 ERIC AND COLUMBO

225

ERIC

What does all this have to do
with me?

COLUMBO

Charlie died in your house. The
dogs are your dogs.

After a long stare, Eric makes his shot: and sinks a ball.

226 COLUMBO

226

COLUMBO

Very nice shot, sir.

(lining up)

And then there's your wife.

He shoots.

227 ANGLE ON THE TABLE

227

as a ball goes in. Camera angles to include Eric.

COLUMBO

If you'll look in the pocket, sir.

After another look at Columbo, Eric reaches into the pocket and takes out a photograph. As he looks at it:

228 INSERT - THE SNAPSHOT

228

Jennifer and Charlie -- the swim suit series -- kissing.

COLUMBO'S VOICE

Dr. Hunter and your wife, sir.

229 ON ERIC

229

He looks up and Columbo comes into shot, takes the photo, shows Eric:

COLUMBO

It must be one of those time-delay snapshots. There were a bunch of photos just like this in Dr. Hunter's desk. Maybe that's how you found out about their affair, sir. And you picked up those pictures that day I was in Dr. Hunter's apartment. Only I took this one first, sir. Before you got there.

ERIC

(indicating the pool table)

You play a first-rate game, Lieutenant.

COLUMBO

Well, my father taught me. So that was the motive, sir. Their affair. That's why you killed your wife, Dr. Mason. I can't prove that. I can certainly prove you killed Dr. Hunter.

CONTINUED

229 CONTINUED

229

He turns again to the pool table, lining up a shot as:

ERIC

But now without the kill command,
Lieutenant.

COLUMBO

Oh, that won't be necessary, sir.

He makes his shot, sinks his ball.

COLUMBO

It was really a very simple case --
starting with the kitchen phone, sir.
(he starts around
to the pocket)

Because you were the one who phoned
Doctor Hunter.

(he draws the pool
ball and a roll of
paper from the table
pocket)

That's why he was yelling for you,
just before he died. Like you were
right there in the kitchen with him.

With a flourish, he lets the roll of paper unwind and trail
down to the floor. It is an electrocardiogram. He takes it
to Eric.

COLUMBO

Your electrocardiogram, sir. It
was three o'clock when your physician
left you alone for a resting trace.
He went to talk to a three o'clock
patient, sir. And then your heart,
it began going like a hammer.

(X)

He shows the section of trace to Eric.

COLUMBO

You see this part -- right here?

230 INSERT

230

The cardiogram trace and Columbo's fingers.

COLUMBO'S VOICE

A lot of sudden stress -- lots of
excitement. Right there at three
o'clock. Just before the dogs
attacked.

231 BACK TO SCENE

231

COLUMBO

Oh, you killed him with a phone call, sir. I'll bet my life on it.

He turns back to the table. Eric lets the cardiogram slip to the floor.

COLUMBO

(pool table biz)

A very simple case. And not because I'm particularly bright, sir. I must say you've been a disappointment. I mean your incompetence. You left enough clues to sink a ship. Motive, opportunity -- and for a man of your intelligence, you got caught in a lot of stupid lies, sir. A lot of them.

He makes his shot.

232 ON ERIC

232

Cold, murderous rage lies open in his face. He looks to:

233 ANGLE ON THE DOGS

233

Sitting. Waiting.

234 BACK TO ERIC

234

ERIC

Laurel. Hardy.

235 THE DOGS

235

They rise and go to:

236 ERIC AND COLUMBO

236

A sense of the dogs' presence. Columbo, his back to Eric, prepares to shoot again.

CONTINUED

236 CONTINUED

236

ERIC

(evenly)

I think you deserve the whole package, Lieutenant. The total picture. Everything to make your case complete.

COLUMBO

Oh, I think I've made my case, sir.

ERIC

(sharply)

Watch the dogs!

His hand comes up, pointing at Columbo as latter turns from the table.

ERIC

Rosebud!

237 THE DOGS

237

muzzles skinning back in a growl.

238 COLUMBO

238

eyes flicking from Eric to the dogs.

239 ERIC

239

ERIC

(again)

Rosebud!

240 THE DOGS

240

They lunge, leaping for:

241 COLUMBO AND THE DOGS

241

as they spring to Columbo, two engines of affection, leaping up to lick his face. He rears back as:

COLUMBO

Take it easy. Okay, that's it.
When I say that's it, that's it.

242 TWO SHOT - ERIC, COLUMBO, THE DOGS

242

Eric frozen in astonishment as the dogs retreat.

COLUMBO

Is that what they call a 'conditioned response,' sir? The way you turned the dogs on me?

ERIC

You knew the command.

COLUMBO

The point is, sir, you knew the command. How I knew it, it was this tape machine.

From his pocket Columbo draws the mini-tape recorder we saw earlier.

COLUMBO

It's got what they call a 'voice-operated control.' You see that, sir? When somebody talks, it switches on automatically. I had it in my pocket, that night a few weeks ago when we played the word game.

He turns on the tape machine, sets it down on the pool table. It plays the word game and some of the subsequent material as:

COLUMBO

I played it for the dogs. And just by accident they heard the part where we stood out by the gate and talked about 'Citizen Kane' -- and rosebud, sir. Laurel and Hardy, they went crazy.

He retrieves the machine, turns it off, pockets it.

COLUMBO

So then this lady dog trainer, she knew how to de-program the dogs. Now, instead of killing when they hear the word, they kiss. Like trading one conditioned response for another. You understand, sir.

He moves to pick up W.C. Fields' wildly-bent cue.

COLUMBO

May I try this again, sir?

CONTINUED

242 CONTINUED

242

Eric's eyes track him back to the pool table, where Columbo tries to figure out how to use the curved cue.

ERIC

Very good, Lieutenant. Remarkable, really. You take control very well. All the way. I'd swear you'd taken my course.

243 ON COLUMBO

243

still trying to get the hang of the bent cue.

COLUMBO

No -- no, sir. Never. It's just that I enjoy the pleasure of the game.

(he stares at the cue)

I wonder how W.C. Fields did it.

He bends to make his shot. Ridiculous. And freeze.

FADE OUT

THE END