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COLUMBO

COLUMBO GOES TO COLLEGE

Screenplay by
Jeffrey Bloom

Story by
Jeffrey Bloom

and
Frederick King Keller

COLUMBOCOLUMBO GOES TO COLLEGECASTCOLUMBO

COOPER REDMAN
JUSTIN ROWE
COOPER'S DAD
PROFESSOR D.E. RUSK
JOE DOYLE
JOHN DOYLE
GRETCHEN CLARK
MEDICAL EXAMINER
CRIME LAB MAN
JOHN
OFFICER
MALLOY
JANITOR
COP
DETECTIVE
MAITRE D'
NORM
VALET
CHIEF WHALEN

TOBY
SARA
OLLIE SACHS
TODD
BARTENDER
TOBY
CARY
NEWSWOMAN
CHARLES
NORM
MRS. RAYNES
COACH GARY CLARK
JUSTIN'S MOTHER
JUSTIN'S FATHER
(JORDAN ROWE)
DEAN HOWARD GILLESPIE
NEWS ANCHOR
PRODUCER
CREWMAN
LATIN MAID
REPORTER
2ND REPORTER
3RD REPORTER
GIRL
STUDENT
PROFESSOR
2ND PROFESSOR

COLUMBO

COLUMBO GOES TO COLLEGE

SETS

INTERIORS:

FRATERNITY HOUSE
LIVING ROOM
STAIRS
2ND FLOOR HALL
FRATERNITY ROOM
SCHOOL BUILDING
LECTURE HALL
PROFESSOR'S OFFICE
HALLWAY
LOBBY
GARAGE STAIRS
GARAGE
ANOTHER SCHOOL BUILDING
HALLWAY
DEAN'S OFFICE SUITE
DEAN'S OFFICE
LOUNGE
MALIBU BEACH HOME
HARDWARE STORE
JOE DOYLE'S HOUSE
VARIOUS RESTAURANTS
CAFE BARRADO
RESTAURANT
GRETA'S HOUSE
JUSTIN'S HOUSE
PARENTS' MASTER SUITE
JUSTIN'S BEDROOM
FATHER'S STUDY
FRANK'S HOUSE
TELEVISION STATION
SMALL STUDIO
BILLY'S (BAR)

EXTERIORS:

UNIVERSITY CAMPUS
FRATERNITY HOUSE
FRATERNITY ROW
COOPER'S FAMILY HOME
STREET AT GARAGE
GARAGE RAMP
MOTEL AND LOUNGE
PARKING LOT
VARIOUS RESTAURANTS
GRETA'S HOUSE
RAYNES' HOUSE
BACKYARD
JUSTIN'S FAMILY HOME
NEIGHBORHOOD
SHABBY HOUSE
BILLY'S (BAR)

COLUMBO

COLUMBO GOES TO COLLEGE

FADE IN

1 EXT. UNIVERSITY CAMPUS - DAY - MAIN TITLE SEQUENCE - CHOPPER 1

Cruising the campus as he heads toward Fraternity Row is COOPER REDMAN: Gatsby, only greater. Privileged, blessed, he's a twenty-one-year-old senior who's tall, blonde and handsome, smart, rich and charismatic.

His car/truck is an outstanding, totally tricked-out vintage 4WD GMC Jimmy that sits up pretty as a picture on oversized tires, the wheelwells flaked with genuine Malibu beach sand. That's where Cooper was born and raised, in the Colony, where Mom and Dad still live.

We watch girls smile and wave, boys call out to him as he drives past. On this campus of 20,000 students Cooper cuts an heroic figure. To know him is a must; to be his friend is extraordinary.

2 EXT. FRATERNITY HOUSE - DAY 2

Credits continue as Cooper finds a place to park the Jimmy. This is a rich boys' frat house, bigger and fancier than the others. Even the cars around it are the best on campus: Miatas and BMW convertibles and Jeeps.

Cooper hops out of the Jimmy, grabs his tennis bag, heads off toward the house. He's got a mini-remote attached to his key chain, a gizmo about the size of a cigarette lighter. He presses one of its two flat switches and there's a distinctive sound as the Jimmy's door locks slam home.

3 INT. FRATERNITY HOUSE - DAY 3

Credits continue as Cooper walks through the house and eventually heads upstairs. We have more opportunity to see evidence of wealth and privilege. Rooms are large, furnishings are plush. And even lounging around killing time, these are the best-dressed fraternity boys we've ever seen. Casual elegance, GQ style.

We also see continuing evidence of Cooper's popularity in the way he's greeted by his fraternity brothers. Surely he's the best-liked guy in the house.

CONTINUED

3 CONTINUED

3

TOBY
Cooper, my hero! Phillips in
straight sets?

COOPER
With the sun in my eyes and a ding
in my racket.

TOBY
(big high five)
My man!

4 ON THE STAIRS

4

NORM
The Mighty Coop. Major party coming
up. Black tie and shorts.

COOPER
Hey, give a guy time to wax his legs.

Credits end.

5 INT. 2ND FLOOR HALL - DAY

5

A tiny horn honk gets Cooper's attention as he begins down the hall. He stops, looks down. There on the floor is a wonderful toy, one of the latest additions to the Sharper Image catalogue. For a mere \$300, it's a 1:10 scale 4WD truck, complete with five-inch studed tires, dual differentials, dechromed twin stacks and roll bar, mag wheels. The thing is painted in black and white zebra stripes and can cruise at 18 mph while being remotely controlled from 150 feet away.

In the bed of the truck is a custom addition: a small video camera. It's about the size of two cigarette packs and has been propped up so that the lens is pointing up toward Cooper's face. Stuck to the back of the cab is a yellow Post-It note with a simple message: GOT IT!!

(X)

The truck honks again, then begins down the hall. Cooper follows. The truck will eventually lead him to his room, but along the way Cooper will be passed by several more of his Fraternity Brothers and by their offhand responses to the sight we'll know that they've seen this trick before. Greetings can be improvised.

The truck stops at a closed door, waits patiently. Cooper moves in behind it, opens the door. The truck rolls in. Cooper looks.

6 INT. FRATERNITY ROOM - DAY

6

It's the room shared by Cooper and his best friend since they were kids, JUSTIN ROWE. Justin's sitting on his bed, playing with the remote control unit for the toy truck while watching the television. On the TV screen we can see another view of the room; the view that's being transmitted by the little camera in the truck bed: an extreme low angle (black and white) of Cooper as he stares across the room toward Justin.

Justin doesn't have Cooper's immediately obvious good looks, but in his way he's just as handsome, maybe even more compelling. He's smaller, dark and wiry, with riveting blue eyes and drop-dead smile, which he now shows.

Cooper's question is gnawing at his guts.

COOPER

Did you get it?

A taunting pause, and then Justin holds up some sheets of paper; holding his hand -- not accidentally -- over the title on the cover sheet. But now he slowly removes it, like a stripper with her fan. He'd been obscuring one word: FINAL.

Seeing it, Cooper kicks the door shut behind him, crosses the room in a few big steps, grabs the papers to see if they're the real thing, then takes Justin's hand in a mighty, titan-like clasp. He's grinning from ear to ear.

COOPER

Where would I be without you.

It's earnest. He means it.

JUSTIN

Are you kidding? You'd have to study.

A beat. A wink, perhaps a half-smile, then Cooper moves with the unexpected swiftness of a judo champ, turning the handshake into a fierce hold, spinning Justin around, pinning him, hurting him. (X)

JUSTIN

(laughing through his pain)

All right, okay, I give, I take it back!

After which Cooper releases him, bops him on the head with the test papers, and then they're both laughing like the twenty-one-year-old kids they still are.

CUT TO

7 EXT. COOPER'S FAMILY HOME - DAY 7

It's a big, gorgeous house on the beach in Malibu. Cooper, with his gleaming blond hair and year-round surfer tan, fits right in. Barefoot, dressed in shorts, singing along with some rock and roll, he's waxing a surfboard, the waves crashing in the b.g. He looks up when the radio is switched off. His DAD is there and he doesn't look happy.

COOPER
(innocence and
concern)
Something wrong, Dad?

DAD
Trish Mears' father called me. He's
threatening to sue.

Cooper's shaken by the news and immediately goes on the defensive, hoping to sound reasonable, mature, level-headed, and legal-minded.

COOPER
Dad...getting the abortion was
Trish's idea, not mine.

DAD
While you were doing what, Cooper?
Encouraging her to have your baby?

COOPER
We could've worked it out, Dad.
Other people have. We wouldn't have
been the first.

DAD
(erupts)
The first?! This is the third girl
in the past eighteen months! For
God's sake, Cooper, you're almost
twenty-one years old! When do you
start showing some responsibility!?
How long am I supposed to keep
bailing you out?!

COOPER
Dad...please...it takes two to....

DAD
(cuts him off)
Get it together, Cooper. Hear me?
I'm giving you fair warning. One
more mess...one more screw up...and
you're on your own. Do you
understand me, Coop?

(MORE)

CONTINUED

7 CONTINUED

7

DAD (Cont'd)
I'm not threatening you this
time...I'm just telling you. One
more and you're out.

A very tense, unhappy beat, and then the father turns and
walks away. Cooper just stands there. He got the message.

CUT TO

8 INT. LECTURE HALL - NIGHT

8

It's a big room, mostly empty. There's less than a dozen
students in PROFESSOR RUSK'S Criminology class, most of
them, like Justin and Cooper, pre-law.

We see by the wall clock that it's ten to nine, and
students are standing, gathering their papers and books
preparing to leave. Cooper looks like he's still worrying
about his talk with his father.

Professor Rusk, around forty, is an intense, good-looking
man; not particularly professorial in either his manner or
dress. Something's bothering him tonight, and as he gets
ready to dismiss the class he appears distracted.

PROFESSOR
That's it for tonight.

Grunts and groans from many of the students. Then, from
one of the young women:

SARA
Who's it going to be this semester,
Professor Rusk?

Rusk finds a scrap of paper with a name on it.

PROFESSOR
Homicide detective. Uh...Lieutenant
Columbo.

OLLIE SACHS, who most everyone just calls Sachs, is
excited. He's a rumpled, pale, mildly eccentric young
fellow.

(X)

SACHS
Oh, that sounds terrific. An actual
Homicide detective.

Several of the students are already filing out.

CONTINUED

8 CONTINUED

8

SARA
(walking out)
'Night, Sachs.

TODD
'Night, Sachs.

They're all leaving now, including Justin and Cooper.
Cooper pats Sachs on the shoulder as they pass, a fond, big
brotherly sort of pat.

COOPER
See you next week, Ollie.

PROFESSOR
Justin? Cooper? I'd like to see you
both in my office.

In was unexpected. They turn to him, watch him head for
the door, posture rigid, stride tense. It doesn't bode
well.

9 INT. PROFESSOR'S OFFICE - NIGHT

9

Small, cramped, cluttered. The Professor's there, tossing
papers, pill bottles into his briefcase. He responds to (X)
the knock on his door.

PROFESSOR
Come in.

Justin and Cooper step in.

PROFESSOR
Close the door.

They do, and then wait. The Professor is boiling with
rage, determined not to explode, but he's right on the very
edge. He's not just angry, but painfully disappointed and
hurt.

PROFESSOR
You blew it, boys.

JUSTIN
Excuse me.

PROFESSOR
Don't toy with me, Justin! Not you,
of all people.
(beat; then)
I know about the test, that you took
the test -- stole the test....

CONTINUED

9 CONTINUED

9

COOPER

What?

The Professor whirls to face Cooper, points a finger right in his face.

PROFESSOR

Not a word! Hear me? Not one more word!

His hands are trembling.

(X)

PROFESSOR

The two of you are an absolute disgrace. All the privilege...all the potential...all the smarts...and what do you do with it? You waste it, squander it, drag it under your feet. You don't deserve what you have, guys; you probably never did. And you don't have any respect for anyone.

A pause while he makes a visible effort to control his raging temper but isn't very successful. Then:

PROFESSOR

I don't trust myself to make a proper decision right now as to what action I'm going to take. But I'll tell you this much: when I'm ready to make that decision it'll either be to flunk the two of you...or to go to the dean and ask him to throw you out of this university.

Brief, stunning silence.

10 INT. SCHOOL BUILDING - HALLWAY - NIGHT

10

The Professor's leaving his office and Justin and Cooper are right behind him. Maybe there's some room for compromise.

Up ahead is a door leading to a stairway to the faculty parking garage, one floor down. A few yards beyond that is a security desk complete with a uniformed campus cop, JOE DOYLE, in his forties, and a number of small, black and white monitors which display images from closed-circuit security cameras located in the garage and near a couple of different entrances to the building.

CONTINUED

10 CONTINUED

10

Also on the desk is Joe Doyle's personal television set, a little one with a four-inch screen and an ear plug. Joe's a serious sports fan and at this time of year the basketball play-offs are in full bloom. Half-sitting on the edge of Joe's desk, watching the little TV over Joe's shoulder, is another man, JOHN, Joe's brother.

John's in civilian clothes of the plain-wrap variety and he's munching Cheetos from a large cellophane bag. He and Joe bear a physical resemblance to one another, but John looks harder, tougher, and a lot more used.

So involved in the basketball play-off, they barely notice the Professor, Justin and Cooper as they walk toward them down the otherwise empty hallway. Justin notices them, however.

COOPER

Professor Rusk...maybe we should go for a beer, talk things over.

(X)

PROFESSOR

Save it.

Behind his back, Justin and Cooper exchange a look: this isn't good.

11 INT. GARAGE STAIRS - NIGHT

11

They follow the Professor down the echoing stairway to the subterranean garage.

JUSTIN

It was really just kind of a crazy prank, Professor. Sort of a dumb, last-minute idea.

PROFESSOR

We're not in church, Justin. And I don't take confession anyway.

12 INT. SCHOOL BUILDING LOBBY - NIGHT

12

We can see the three of them on one of the monitor's on Joe Doyle's desk as they head across the garage. Joe and John, engrossed in the game, still haven't even bothered to look. Cooper's saying something else to the Professor but the security cameras don't transmit sound; and anyway, this time the Professor isn't even bothering to respond.

13 INT. GARAGE - NIGHT

13

It's large enough to hold maybe sixty cars in four rows but there are only a few here at this late hour and the place echoes. There's one ramp for entrance and exit. We see the John. The Professor's car has a custom license plate reading: CRIME 1, or maybe CRMNOLG. He's heading toward it, fishing keys from his pocket, clearly not wanting to deal with Justin and Cooper anymore tonight. He opens the door, slides in.

COOPER

Professor? Can't we talk about it?

Rusk slams the door, starts his car, jams it into reverse and Justin and Cooper have to dodge out of his way. Cooper shouts out in protest. The Professor heads toward the ramp. Cooper's hot.

COOPER

Who the hell does this jerk think he is?!

He heads toward the Jimmy. Justin follows, not certain what's up, but intrigued by Cooper's energy. Cooper hits the remote and the door locks shoot up with a jolt, echoing loudly in the garage. They climb in and Cooper gets the Jimmy started and heading out even before Justin has his door shut.

There's a pair of gate arms -- one coming, one going. The arms will lift if you've got a car key; if not, you've got to buzz the guard on duty upstairs, which Cooper now does, impatiently. There are speakers built into the gate arm post, and one of the closed-circuit cameras mounted on a wall near them can see vehicles entering and leaving, as well as a portion of the garage itself.

COOPER

Come on, Joe, wake up!

He hits the buzzer button again.

14 INTERCUT BETWEEN THEM AND JOE

14

We see the John on one of the monitors on Joe's desk. Responding to the sound of the buzzer, Joe pulls out his earplug, switches on a mike. John idly glances at the monitor.

JOE

Hey, boys, how're you doin'?

CONTINUED

14 CONTINUED

14

COOPER

Kind of in a hurry tonight, Joe. Hot dates. Could you raise the gate?

JOE

Sure. But where the hell are my Laker tickets? I thought we had a deal.

COOPER

Next week. Word of honor, man. Sorry as hell.

JOE

Yeah, but you promised....

(X)

JUSTIN

Trust us, Joe.

(X)

Joe hits a button and the gate arm rises.

(X)

(X)

Cooper floors the pedal and the Jimmy roars up the ramp.

15 EXT. STREET - NIGHT

15

They come up to street level, pull up short. Above the garage entrance behind them we can see a sign indicating that this is Faculty Parking Only. The Professor's car is just disappearing around a corner. Cooper takes off after it, snapping them back in their seats.

16 INT. JIMMY (MOVING) - NIGHT

16

Justin's fastening his seat belt. Cooper looks like he's got murder on his mind.

JUSTIN

(semi-serious)

You planning to run him off the road?

COOPER

We're the ones getting killed, Justin. Between him and my old man I'm smelling dead meat, right in this truck.

(beat; then)

Where the hell's he going, anyway? He lives the other way, doesn't he?

Justin considers the question. Then, mischievously:

CONTINUED

16 CONTINUED

16

JUSTIN

You don't suppose he's meeting....

(X)

Cooper glances over at him, then back to the road.

COOPER

I thought they broke that up a few months ago.

JUSTIN

Did they? It's Thursday night, Coop. Team's away...Coach Clark is with the team...

A thoughtful beat. Then:

COOPER

Let's go see.

JUSTIN

(nods; then)

Let's.

CUT TO

17 EXT. MOTEL AND LOUNGE - NIGHT

17

It's off the road, tucked under some trees, somewhere in the valley. The sparsity of cars parked in front suggests it's just right for a rendezvous. The Jimmy pulls into the lot. Cooper cuts the lights and parks. Thirty yards away they can see the Professor's car with its custom plate, and beside it a cute little Mercedes convertible in mint condition, a lady's car. Professor Rusk, having just arrived, is walking into the place. He hasn't a clue that he's been followed.

18 INT. JIMMY (PARKED) - NIGHT

18

Cooper's skeptically eyeing the dingy place.

COOPER

It can't just be that he's hungry.

Justin seems to be trying to place the Mercedes.

JUSTIN

Isn't that hers?

COOPER

Let's take a look.

19 EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

19

They exit the Jimmy and head across the lot toward the restaurant.

20 INT. LOUNGE - NIGHT

20

They step in. It's not any brighter inside, and the cigarette smoke is dense enough to bounce a ball off. There's music from a jukebox, some colored lights, and people sitting in the bar area. Among them are Professor Rusk and GRETCHEN CLARK, a strikingly attractive woman in her early thirties. They're huddled in a booth.

Justin and Cooper hang back in the shadows. They watch Rusk broom the waitress -- evidently he's not here to drink -- then begin an intense dialogue with Gretchen, who clearly doesn't want to hear what he's got to say. Rusk is doing almost all the talking.

JUSTIN
(hushed)
Recognize her?

COOPER
Oh yeah.

They can't really hear much over the music, but the pantomime is obvious enough. Something Rusk said has brought Gretchen to tears. The Professor tries to console her, but can't. She stands. He moves after her, brings her back. Everyone in the place has become their audience, including the BARTENDER.

The Professor continues to be gentle with her, caressing her, drying her tears, kissing her softly. Suddenly she pushes him away, pummels his chest with her fists. He grabs her wrists. She wrenches free, looks at him, then runs out.

20A EXT. LOUNGE

20A

She rushes past Justin and Cooper in the smokey shadows, watching.

JUSTIN
If looks could kill.

CUT TO

21 EXT. CAMPUS - DAWN

21

First light and barely anything moving yet.

22 EXT. FRATERNITY HOUSE - DAWN 22

The Jimmy's parked in front.

23 INT. FRATERNITY ROOM - DAWN 23

They're both in their beds but neither is asleep. The beds form an "L" with a lamp table at the junction. After a moment of silence, their voices quiet:

COOPER
Justin?

JUSTIN
Yeah.

COOPER
What d'you think he's going to do?

JUSTIN
About us, or Coach Clark's wife?

COOPER
Come on....

JUSTIN
I'm not sure, Coop. I think he's unpredictable right now. I think things are going on in his life that most people aren't aware of.

COOPER
But we are?

JUSTIN
I am.

COOPER
Like what?

JUSTIN
Things I've heard. Things I've overheard.

COOPER
Overheard from who?

JUSTIN
Everybody who's anybody. I bugged my father's office.

COOPER
You serious?

CONTINUED

23 CONTINUED-

23

JUSTIN

(nods)

I planted an IPP-405 transmitter in his phone. About the size of a nickel. Picks up everything. Five hundred bucks, but 'hours of fun.'

(X)

COOPER

I can believe it. So what'd you learn about Professor Rusk?

(X)

JUSTIN

That he's got enemies. Real ones, Coop. Not just you and me. There are people who wouldn't cry at an early funeral.

COOPER

(intrigued)

What're you talking about?

JUSTIN

I'm talking about his new book. Where he names names. Where he gets into people's faces. Big people. Dangerous people. The man is all across the board, Coop. He's an equal opportunity annihilator: defense contractors, savings and loan executives, senators, congressmen....

COOPER

And you figure some of these people could be out to get him?

JUSTIN

There've been threats on his life. Death threats. They've been reported to my father. These people are playing for real.

(X)

COOPER

And the coach's wife looked like she wanted to kill him.

(X)

JUSTIN

That's my point. This clown is the perfect victim.

(X)

A thoughtful silence. Then, more serious than he's ever been in his life.

CONTINUED

23 CONTINUED (2)

23

COOPER

If Rusk talks to the Dean, Justin,
it's all over for me.

JUSTIN

I'm aware, Coop. Do you think I've
got anything less to lose? Do you
think for a minute if I'm turned down
by Harvard Law my father won't skin
me himself? At the rate we're going,
our futures could last about one more
week.

A grim silence. Then:

COOPER

We really don't have a lot of options
here, do we.

JUSTIN

I don't think we've got any at all,
Coop. It's either him...or it's us.

A solemn silence and then Cooper reaches a hand out and
then Justin does the same and they shake like Musketeers.

COOPER

Us.

JUSTIN

Us.

CUT TO

24 INT. MALIBU BEACH HOME - DUSK

24

The first scene in a brief montage. The sequence should be
visually compelling, stylized. There's a current of
tension, underscored by music, because the boys are
preparing for a murder.

But they do it with such ease, such grace, that the
statement seems to be: the very rich are much different
than you and me: they even murder with panache.

Dad and MOM are barbecuing on the deck, entertaining a few
friends in grand style. Wine glasses are clinking and the
sky is ablaze at sunset. Inside, alone, Cooper's quietly
searching for something, and now finds it in a drawer, in
its own small leather case, something that's about the size
of his palm.

He quickly opens the case, checks the contents. Whatever
it is he's pleased to have found it, and now quickly
pockets it before heading back outside to join the others.

25 INT. SCHOOL BUILDING - LOBBY - NIGHT

25

The buzzer on Joe Doyle's desk gets his attention. He looks away from his basketball game and toward the monitor displaying the view of the faculty garage entrance/exit. He can see the GMC with Cooper behind the wheel, grinning broadly. Coop extends his hand out the window and toward the camera, displaying a pair of Laker tickets.

Excited, Joe hits the button to raise the gate arm, grabs his ring of building keys, heads down the hall to the stairway door, disappears behind it.

No sooner than he's gone, Justin enters the lobby from the main door, crosses to the desk, opens a drawer. Inside, along with Joe's junk food stash and a copy of a gun magazine, is another key ring, Joe's personal keys: house and car. Justin grabs them, quickly walks out.

26 INT. HARDWARE STORE - NIGHT

26

Justin watches as a Clerk makes a copy of the house key.

27 INT. JOE AND JOHN DOYLE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

27

The door opens with the duplicate key and Justin and Cooper come in, close it. They don't turn on any lights. There's enough illumination from the street to see that it's a shabby, utilitarian, impersonal sort of place, reasonably tidy but nothing to write home about, or even to share.

They each switch on small flashlights and begin to search the place, careful not to disturb anything. We can see now that both are wearing thin rubber gloves.

A flashlight beam picks up a photograph.

(X)

27A INSERT - PHOTO

27A

Joe and Frank Doyle hoisting beers.

(X)

(X)

27B BACK TO SCENE

27B

They continue their search. It doesn't take long. Cooper finds the gun wrapped in a chamois on a shelf in a closet. He unwraps it and both shine their lights onto it. It's a Colt semi-automatic handgun: Officers Model MKIV Series 80. A .45 with a fairly stubby, 3 1/2 inch barrel.

(X)

He ejects the clip; it's empty. He shoves it back in.

CONTINUED

Columbo Goes to College (1990) Pages 17 & 18 missing from script

Missing pages:

A page or part of a page of the only available US copy is missing here. This situation is not unusual; many of the scripts held in the libraries or files of major studios and production companies have missing material, a fact that clearly illustrates the expendability of the screenplay once the true text, the film itself, has been made.

35 INT. PROFESSOR'S OFFICE - DAY

35

He's working at his desk. He's in his shirt-sleeves, his jacket hanging on a coat rack by the door. He responds to the knock.

PROFESSOR

Come in.

The door opens and Justin steps in. Rusk isn't happy to see him.

PROFESSOR

(curt)
What is it, Justin?

Justin closes the door behind him. He seems uncharacteristically humbled, chagrined.

JUSTIN

I spoke to my father, Professor Rusk.
I told him what happened, what...we
did.

The Professor wasn't expecting this. He puts his pen down, gives Justin more of his attention.

PROFESSOR

I'm listening.

JUSTIN

He was...not happy. He said a lot
of things; we both did. There were
certain...threats. Certain promises.
(beat; then)
He'd like to speak to you.

PROFESSOR

Have him call.

JUSTIN

No, I mean in person. Tonight.

PROFESSOR

Tonight?

JUSTIN

He's leaving for Washington in a few
hours, but he'll be at Cafe Barrado
at eight, having dinner alone. It's
just across campus. He'd like you
to join him.

CONTINUED

35 CONTINUED

35

PROFESSOR

I've got a guest tonight, you know that. I can't walk out in the middle of class.

JUSTIN

You can be back before class is over.

A silence. The Professor seems to be weighing his options. Justin helps him.

JUSTIN

I hope you don't think my father's trying to throw his weight around, Professor Rusk. But in consideration for all his contributions to the University, he's hoping you'll agree to meet him even if it's only for ten minutes.

(X)

The situation sounds compromising as hell, even when it's put as gracefully as Justin just did. Rusk glances at his clock: it's almost 7 PM. He stands up.

PROFESSOR

I'll think about it, Justin.

JUSTIN

Thank you, sir. That's all I can ask.

He turns, reaches for the door, pauses. He looks back.

JUSTIN

Professor Rusk....

PROFESSOR

(slipping into his jacket)

Yes?

JUSTIN

(a beat; then)

I'm sorry.

Justin walks out and down the hall. Rusk watches him.

CUT TO

36 INT. LECTURE HALL - NIGHT (LATER)

36

Columbo is at the front of the hall, looking a little uncomfortable and out of place in front of the dozen students. Justin and Cooper are in their regular places, in an aisle to themselves with an empty seat between them. We recognize other faces, including Ollie Sachs, Sara, Todd.

Professor Rusk is sitting in an aisle seat near the back of the hall. We can see that he's very troubled by Justin's request -- or Justin's father's request -- and is having a hard time coming to a decision as to how he should respond. Ethics vs. Reality. He glances at the wall clock. It's 7:25.

Justin steals a glance back toward the Professor, and then Cooper does the same. The looks are discreet, unnoticed by the others, but we can sense their restlessness.

During all of this:

COLUMBO

...And that was really very lucky.
I actually didn't have that much to
do with solving that particular case.

SACHS

Well, that's what's bothering me,
Lieutenant: your modesty.

COLUMBO

You're Mr...?

SACHS

Sachs.

COLUMBO

Mr. Sachs.

SARA

We just call him Sachs...
Lieutenant.

A few of the students chuckle. Columbo grins.

COLUMBO

Okay...Sachs. You think I'm being
too modest. But the truth is, every
detective has his share of luck.
Which is not to say that we don't
sometimes make that
luck...manufacture that luck....

SARA

Manufacture?

CONTINUED

36 CONTINUED

36

COLUMBO

Lemme put it this way: It's not unheard of for a detective to make up a little story now and then if that'll help him get at the truth. If it works, then you might say that luck had a hand in it, right? But even if it doesn't, you want to know a secret? The most successful detectives are still almost always going to be the luckiest.

TODD

And that's you?

A beat. Columbo grins humbly.

COLUMBO

Well...I've still got my job.

The students laugh. Justin forces a smile. The Professor is still in the room.

DISSOLVE TO

37 EXT. BUILDING - NIGHT (LATER) - ESTABLISHING

37

A music cue begins and regular sound fades.

38 INT. LECTURE HALL - NIGHT

38

The wall clock tells us it's 8:10. The Professor is still in his seat at the rear of the class, still looking very uncertain. The strain on Justin and Cooper is beginning to show.

Columbo, on the other hand, seems to have gotten over his initial stage fright and appears to be enjoying himself and the students.

There's an animated discussion going on between Columbo and the kids, but we can't hear the dialogue.

Professor Rusk suddenly stands, walks out. Justin and Cooper react: it's at once profound relief, and a rush of adrenaline.

39 INT. BUILDING - HALLWAY - NIGHT

39

Through Professor Rusk's partially open door we can see him talking to someone on the phone as he puts papers and pill bottles in his briefcase. He then puts the cap on a pill bottle and puts the bottle in his briefcase. He finishes the call, grabs his keys, leaves his briefcase open on the desk, and walks out. (X)

Ahead, Joe Doyle is at his desk, once again caught up in a basketball play-off game on television, plugged into his earphone. He doesn't hear or notice the Professor as he leaves his office and disappears behind the door to the garage stairs.

(OPTION: While Professor Rusk is on the phone we see him take a bottle of pills from his briefcase, remove one pill and drop it into his coat pocket. The rest of the scene continues as above.)

40 INT. LECTURE HALL - NIGHT

40

Cooper casually reaches down and removes something from his book bag. We catch a glimpse of it and recognize the palm-sized item in the leather case.

41 INT. FACULTY GARAGE - NIGHT

41

Rusk heads toward his car across the dim, almost empty garage.

42 INT. LOBBY - NIGHT

42

Rusk's image is seen on the monitors on Joe's desk as he passes out of one camera's range only to be picked up by the next. Joe isn't watching.

43 INT. LECTURE HALL - NIGHT

43

The students are laughing with Columbo over something that was said, their young, carefree faces in contrast to the tension we can see in Justin and Cooper. We don't hear the laughter, only the music building in intensity.

44 INT. LOBBY - NIGHT

44

In the monitor, Rusk is walking past the Jimmy, removing his keys from his pocket.

45 INT. LECTURE HALL - NIGHT 45

Somehow, Justin and Cooper know how close they are. We can feel it along with them. Justin quietly removes the Jimmy's keys from his pocket. We recognize the mini-remote dangling from the chain.

46 INT. LOBBY - NIGHT 46

We see Rusk on the monitor as he nears his car.

47 INT. GARAGE - NIGHT 47

The music stops. The sound of the Professor's final half dozen footsteps bounces off the bare concrete walls. The garage seems unusually silent. Rusk approaches his car on the driver's side, inserts the door key into the lock. Even that seems oddly loud.

48 INT. LECTURE HALL - CLOSE - JUSTIN AND COOPER 48

The time is now and they know it.

49 INT. GARAGE - NIGHT 49

In the moment of dead silence the gun shot sounds ferocious. It echoes through the garage, brutally. Blood splatters on the side view mirror. Professor Rusk drops like a stone.

50 INT. LECTURE HALL - NIGHT 50

With sound back to normal we can hear the continuing laughter of the students, and even some applause. Somehow, Justin and Cooper know that the deed is done. Justin opens his hand, rests it on his leg. Cooper reaches over, taps it. A low-five between the best of friends.

DISSOLVE TO

51 INT. LECTURE HALL - NIGHT (LATER) 51

It's 8:50 and the class has ended. Students are on their feet, including Justin and Cooper, and a number of them have gathered around Columbo; they're not anxious to see him go. We hear some dialogue like: "Great class, Lieutenant...see you next Thursday...night, Lieutenant..." And then:

CONTINUED

51 CONTINUED

51

JUSTIN

Can you join us for a beer,
Lieutenant? Bunch of us go out after
class every Thursday, try to gross
each other out with murder stories
we've read.

COLUMBO

Well, that's very nice of you to
offer, but I don't think....

COOPER

Come on, Lieutenant, we'll have some
fun.

A beat. Columbo's considering it.

52 INT. STAIRWAY TO GARAGE - NIGHT

52

Columbo, Justin and Cooper, Ollie Sachs, Sara, Todd and a
couple of other students walking down the concrete stairs.
Columbo confides in Sara:

COLUMBO

I feel kind of bad I didn't have a
chance to say good-bye to Professor
Rusk.

SARA

(helpfully)
You'll see him next week.

SACHS

Was the Devlin case the only time you
were involved with the FBI,
Lieutenant?

53 INT. GARAGE - NIGHT

53

We see the door open and Columbo and the group of students
begin across the echoing garage. Columbo's answering
Sachs' question but the words are lost under the sounds of
footsteps. Justin and Cooper exchange a glance, their eyes
appearing to twinkle, like mischievous kids, even in the
dim light. And then Sara screams.

54 NEW ANGLE - SCENE

54

Columbo and the others see the body lying in blood
alongside the Professor's car, the keys still dangling in
the door lock.

CONTINUED

54 CONTINUED

54

The other students react with shock and horror -- including, it would seem, Justin and Cooper. Sara, her back turned to the scene, is crying, and Todd is trying to comfort her.

Columbo gestures for all of them to stay where they are as he advances, alone, to the body. He kneels beside it, checks for a pulse.

SACHS

Is he dead, Lieutenant?

COLUMBO

I'm afraid so, Sachs.

More reactions from the students. Columbo looks around, taking in the entire scene, seeing nothing out of the ordinary.

JUSTIN

Do you want me to go for help,
Lieutenant? Call 911?

Columbo stands. A beat, then:

COLUMBO

Yeah. Tell them there's a homicide
detective already at the scene...and
that it appears to have been a
murder.

(X)

Justin nods his grave understanding, glances at Cooper, immediately heads for the Jimmy. Hearing the pronouncement of murder, Sara gasps, sobs. Columbo goes to her, puts his arms around her to comfort.

(X)

COLUMBO

Easy, easy. Everything's gonna be
okay.

(X)

Justin's in the Jimmy and now starts it up, immediately heads toward the ramp. The other students are beginning to respond to Columbo's post-trauma therapy; seem to slowly be coming out of their shock.

SARA

(pulling herself
together)

I'll be okay. Thanks, Lieutenant.

(X)

COLUMBO

You sure?

(X)

CONTINUED

54 CONTINUED (2)

Sara nods, manages a smile.

Columbo sees Justin stop at the gate arm, hit the buzzer button.

$$\begin{pmatrix} X \\ X \\ X \end{pmatrix}$$

55 INT. LOBBY - NIGHT

Joe hears the buzzer, glances impatiently at the monitor, recognizes the Jimmy, hits a button to raise the gate arm, then immediately returns his attention to the ball game on television.

56 INT. GARAGE - NIGHT

The arm rises and Justin speeds up the ramp.

57 EXT. STREET AND SCHOOL BUILDING - NIGHT

Justin roars out onto the street, speeds down the block and around the corner, comes to a screeching stop in front of the building's main entrance, leaps out.

58 INT. BUILDING LOBBY - NIGHT

Joe's still as we last saw him, engrossed in his televised game, deaf to the world. Justin races in, shouts to him:

JUSTIN

Joe! Joe!

Joe hears him, turns, pulls the earphone from his ear. He's both startled and confused.

JOE

What's the matter? What's wrong?

JUSTIN

(breathless)

There's been a murder!

JOE

(on his feet)

What?!

JUSTIN

Downstairs, in the garage. Professor
Rusk!

JOE

What?! Rusk is dead?!

CONTINUED

58 CONTINUED

58

He spins around, looks at the monitors. He can see the quiet commotion in the garage: the students conducting their evidence search; Columbo rising into view on the far side (driver's side) of Rusk's car.

JUSTIN

I've gotta call 911!

Joe's already running toward the stairway door.

JOE

Yeah! Okay! I better get down there!

He pulls open the door.

JUSTIN

Wait a second! Shouldn't we save the tape? Maybe there's something on it!

JOE

Jeez, you're right. Do it! Save 'em!

He disappears down the stairs. Justin, suddenly calm, sits down at the desk. He stares at the monitor screens, then at one in particular, where Columbo stands beside the Professor's car. Justin reaches out to some keys, strikes several of them in some pattern. The monitor screen showing Columbo suddenly goes dark, but the others continue displaying their images as before.

A beat, and then Justin picks up the phone, dials 911.

CUT TO

59 EXT. BUILDING/GARAGE RAMP - NIGHT (LATER)

59

Police cars and other official vehicles surround the entrance to the faculty garage. Media vans are here as well, along with news crews recording the scene and interviewing whoever will speak to them. The violent murder of a university professor is a big story. A crowd of students has gathered and we can sense their nervousness and excitement. Among them we see Justin and Cooper, Sachs, Sara, Todd, and the other two who were with Columbo when they found the body.

60 INT. GARAGE - NIGHT

60

A quiet but active scene. There's a dozen or more people in here, searching for evidence -- forensic and otherwise; photographing the crime scene from every angle; dusting for prints; the usual.

Columbo's with the M.E.

COLUMBO

What've we got?

M.E.

Single gunshot wound to the head;
probably a large caliber bullet.

He produces a plastic evidence sheath and Columbo peruses it.

COLUMBO

What am I looking at?

M.E.

A couple of pieces of the slug that
killed him.

COLUMBO

Oh, yeah? It broke apart?

M.E.

I'm guessing it was supposed to;
looks like a hollow point. So the
bullet would do the greatest damage.

COLUMBO

I wonder where he was going.

(X)

M.E.

Who?

(X)

COLUMBO

The Professor. He left in the middle
of the class.

(X)

M.E.

Beats me.

(X)

Columbo stares more closely at the few small pieces of
lead in the plastic envelope but then sees one of the LAB
MEN walking past. Columbo goes after him.

(X)

COLUMBO

Excuse me, can I ask you a question?

CRIME LAB MAN

Sure, Lieutenant.

CONTINUED

60 CONTINUED

60

COLUMBO

These cameras down here -- I think there's three of them in this garage, and they all look alike to me -- are they the kind of cameras that 'record,' like on video tape; or d'you think they just 'show' what they're seeing, like on a TV screen in some other room somewhere?

The Crime Lab Man looks at one of the cameras a little more closely.

CRIME LAB MAN

It's hard to tell, Lieutenant. Might be either kind. But you can probably find out by talking to the campus police.

COLUMBO

Yeah, that's what I'll have to do. Thanks.

The Lab Man walks off. Columbo approaches the corpse. JOHN is there, kneeling beside the body. Columbo kneels down beside him, mumbles a hello. (X)

JOHN

Lieutenant....

Columbo peruses the items that John's already removed from the Professor's pockets, most of which are bagged. One is a wallet containing cash and credit cards. Columbo considers this.

JOHN

Pretty safe to rule out robbery as a motive, huh, Lieutenant?

COLUMBO

Hmmm? Oh. Yeah. Looks that way. I wonder where he was going.... (X)

But now his attention is turned to something else, a large pill.

COLUMBO

You found this...?

JOHN

In his pocket, yeah. Just like that, by itself.

Columbo sniffs the pill, is puzzled by it.

CONTINUED

60 CONTINUED (2)

60

OFFICER'S VOICE

Lieutenant? Want to take a look up
here?

Columbo looks toward the OFFICER who's at the base of the
ramp. He points up toward the street.

OFFICER

Up on the street, sir.

61 EXT. BUILDING/GARAGE RAMP - NIGHT

61

Columbo follows the Officer up the ramp and out onto the
street. The crowd is still there, held back by police
tape. About thirty feet from the ramp is a small chalk
circle on the street. The Officer and Columbo stop beside
it, look down. Both of them kneel. We see, now, that the
chalk mark is encircling a brass cartridge.

COLUMBO

.45?

OFFICER

Yes, sir.

Columbo nods, inspects the cartridge without touching it.
He pats his pockets, looking for something. Then:

COLUMBO

Would you happen to have a pencil?

OFFICER

(hands it to him)

Pen all right?

COLUMBO

Oh, that's fine, yeah, thank you.

The Officer watches as Columbo inserts the tip of the pen
into the empty shell, lifts it up, turns it toward the
light as he carefully examines it.

OFFICER

If you're thinking what I'm thinking,
Lieutenant -- that this shell belongs
to the slug that killed the guy in
the garage -- what's it doing up here
on the street?

A beat, and then Columbo hands the pen and shell to the
Officer, stands up.

CONTINUED

61 CONTINUED

61

COLUMBO

That's an excellent question. A
really excellent question.

And then, seeing Justin and Cooper and the others, he waves to them -- reassuringly. Thinking of something he wants to ask them, he moves closer to where they're standing behind the police lines.

COLUMBO

Did Professor Rusk usually leave the
building right after class?

SARA

We'd almost always walk out together.

COLUMBO

Any ideas where he might've been
going tonight?

Head shakes all around.

JUSTIN

Sorry Lieutenant.

Another detective in the crowd, MALLOY, calls out as he approaches:

MALLOY

Need you inside, Lieutenant.

Columbo waves his acknowledgement, begins to walk away. Cooper calls out:

COOPER

If you get a chance, Lieutenant,
we'll be over at Tex's.

Columbo nods, waves.

CUT TO

62 INT. LOBBY - NIGHT

62

Columbo, Malloy, Joe Doyle, and a couple of other detectives, including John, are walking down the empty corridor. A UNIFORMED COP stands outside Rusk's office, the door partially open behind him. As they pass the office Columbo suddenly stops -- and then, so do the others. Columbo has seen Professor Rusk's briefcase where he left it, on top of his desk, and it has intrigued him.

CONTINUED

62 CONTINUED

62

COLUMBO

Is this...?

He glances around, looks behind the door, sees Professor Rusk's name. Then, to the others:

COLUMBO

Why don't you fellas get that other thing set up and I'll meet you down there in a few minutes. I just want to take a quick look in here.

MALLOY

Sure.

They continue down the hall, but Columbo suddenly calls out to them:

COLUMBO

I saw a janitor around here before. Would you see if he's still in the building?

JOHN

I'll see if I can find him, Lieutenant.

Columbo waves his thanks, nods to the Uniformed Cop at the door, steps into the office.

63 INT. PROFESSOR'S OFFICE - NIGHT

63

Columbo glances around the office, getting the feel of it, then approaches the desk. He sees the Professor's initials in gold near the latch on the briefcase. The Cop has also stepped into the office and is watching him.

Now, from the hall, the sound of approaching footsteps. Both men turn toward the door as John reappears, this time with the JANITOR.

JOHN

This is Mr. Morris, Lieutenant. He looks after this building.

COLUMBO

Oh, how do you do. Did you know Professor Rusk, sir?

JANITOR

Enough to say hello and good-bye.

CONTINUED

63 CONTINUED

63

COLUMBO

I see. Were you aware of his comings and goings?

JANITOR

I wouldn't always know when he came in, but I'd usually know when he'd leave, because that'd be before ten, when Joe locks up the building.

Columbo looks at the briefcase on the desk.

COLUMBO

Would he usually take his briefcase with him, sir?

JANITOR

I never knew him to leave it behind, if that's what you mean.

Columbo nods, opens the briefcase, looks inside. Along with various papers there are several bottles of pills. He briefly examines them, then selects one in particular. He opens it, pours a pill into his palm. It looks the same as the one he found in Rusk's pocket. He reads the label:

COLUMBO

(Generic drug name) Take before meals.

JANITOR

For high cholesterol.

Columbo turns to him.

JANITOR

My wife takes the same kind.

Columbo looks back at the pill.

COLUMBO

Cholesterol, huh? Terrible thing. Takes all the fun out of eating.

JANITOR

Pretty much.

Columbo turns to John.

COLUMBO

Have you got the pill you found in the Professor's pocket?

CONTINUED

63 CONTINUED: (2)

63

JOHN

Yeah.

He reaches into his pockets, withdraws several plastic evidence bags, finds the one containing the pill, glances at it, hands it to Columbo. Columbo makes the comparison. It's clearly a pill from the same bottle.

COLUMBO

Well, what d'you say about that? One mystery solved already. The man was going to eat! And he was expecting to be back here, to pick up his briefcase, before ten.

JOHN

Sounds reasonable to me.

COLUMBO

(to Cop)

Can you do me a favor?

COP

Sure, Lieutenant.

COLUMBO

Grab a Yellow Pages and make up a short list of restaurants in the neighborhood. No fast food places. Just the kind of restaurants a man would go to who was conscious of his health.

COP

Take me about ten minutes.

COLUMBO

Thanks very much.

64 INT. CLASSROOM - NIGHT

64

Columbo's just walking in. Malloy's there, along with John, another detective or two, and Joe Doyle -- who's holding a cassette -- all of them standing around a television set. Columbo hands the evidence bag back to John.

COLUMBO

Thanks. Sorry to keep everybody waiting. Is that the tape from the security camera, sir?

CONTINUED

64 CONTINUED

64

JOE
This is it, yeah.

He hands it to Columbo.

COLUMBO
How much does a tape like this hold?

JOE
Right around an hour.

COLUMBO
And then what? Do you put in a new one?

JOE
No, the tape records for an hour, and then, unless you stop it, it automatically records over itself. That way one tape lasts for months.

COLUMBO
Uh-huh.

Columbo hands the tape to Malloy who loads it, grabs the remote control, hits a button.

MALLOY
Here we go, Lieutenant.

An image has appeared on the screen, the angle seen by the camera near the base of the ramp. It shows that portion of the garage from the gate arms to the edge of the first of the two aisles, and includes the Professor's car and a couple of others, but not the Peugeot, which was parked out of range, or the Jimmy -- which was evidently parked just beyond the periphery of this camera's angle.

At the bottom of the frame we see a printout of the date and time. The time changes every second.

COLUMBO
Eight-oh-one.

JOE
That's the Professor's car, right there. This one here belongs to Professor Miller; this one's Professor Giraldi's....

COLUMBO
If this garage is for faculty parking only, why was a student parked down there, in a truck?

CONTINUED

64 CONTINUED (2)

64

JOE

Cooper -- he's the blond one -- his old man has season tickets to the Laker home games. It was kind of a trade-off.

COLUMBO

I see.

MALLOY

Want me to high-speed through it, Lieutenant? See what we find?

COLUMBO

Yeah, why don't you do that.

Malloy hits the fast-advance on the remote. The image on the screen jerks a little, but otherwise doesn't change. No one enters or leaves the garage. The time code at the bottom of the frame speeds through the minutes and seconds.

As the timer approaches 8:15.46, the Professor's shadow appears in the angle seen by this camera.

COLUMBO

Hold it.

Malloy clicks the remote to normal speed and all of them inch closer to the screen. It becomes totally silent in the classroom. All of them know that they're probably about to see a man being murdered. The anticipation isn't easy, even for hardened homicide detectives.

We see, from this angle, an exact replay of the murder. The timer at the bottom of the frame prints out a permanent record of the final fifteen seconds of Professor Rusk's life. He's only a small figure in the distance, and the lighting is dim, but what happens is still all too clear.

The tape doesn't record sound so the shot isn't heard. They can see the instant that the slug strikes the victim, and they can see Rusk drop to the concrete floor on the far side of his car where he's no longer in view.

Malloy freezes the tape frame. The time is 8:16.01. All of them stare at the screen and for a moment no one speaks. Joe Doyle is more obviously shaken than the others.

JOE

I should've seen it. I should've been watching.

CONTINUED

64 CONTINUED (3)

64

COLUMBO

(sympathetic)

I don't think it could've possibly
changed what happened, sir.

(beat; then)

Play it through to the end, Malloy,
will you?

MALLOY

Yeah.

He clicks the remote to high-speed forward again. No one speaks as the tape rushes through toward the end. Nothing new appears on the screen. No one enters; no one leaves. It's empty as a crypt.

At 8:52.21, however, there's some new action on the screen Malloy returns to normal speed. It's Columbo and the group of students crossing the garage and discovering the body. We watch the scene again, from a new angle, and without sound this time. We see Justin run toward the second aisle, momentarily disappear from view, then reappear seconds later in the Jimmy, and drive out.

COLUMBO

(thinking out loud)

No one came in to the garage before
the Professor...and no one left after
he was shot. That's a mystery,
John.

(X)

JOHN

That is a mystery.

(X)

The faces on the men in this classroom are as somber as the images on the tape. Columbo turns away from the screen; he was there, he already saw this part.

He sees the Cop in the doorway. The Cop holds up a piece of paper. The restaurant list.

CUT TO

65 INT./EXT. VARIOUS RESTAURANTS - NIGHT

65

A brief MONTAGE as Columbo walks into or out of a few nice restaurants; speaks to various Maitre d's, asks his questions and gets negative responses.

66 INT. CAFE BARRADO - NIGHT

66

Columbo's hit pay dirt. A handsome Latin MAITRE D', complete with a ponytail, a suit from Bijan, and a delightful accent, is looking through some slips of paper at the reservation desk. It's late and the last few beautifully dressed patrons are leaving. Columbo looks unusually shabby in comparison. The Maitre d' finds what he's been searching for.

MAITRE D'

Here it is. Yes, yes...the call came in at 8:10 from a Professor Rusk. His instructions were to notify Mr. Rowe that he was on his way but was running a few minutes late.

COLUMBO

May I see that, please?

MAITRE D'

Of course.

He hands the slip of paper to Columbo, discreetly excuses himself, quickly moves to bid an effusive good-bye (improvised) to two of his patrons, kissing the woman. He returns to Columbo.

COLUMBO

Did you know Professor Rusk, sir?

MAITRE D'

I'm afraid not. A name...a voice over the telephone...that was all.

COLUMBO

When Mr. Rowe came in, did you give him this message?

MAITRE D'

There was no Mr. Rowe, Lieutenant.

With a flourish he turns the reservation book so that Columbo can see for himself.

MAITRE D'

You see? No Mr. Rowe at all.

A beat, and then he's off to bid an even grander good-night to another couple. Columbo stares at the note and the two names: Professor Rusk...Mr. Rowe.

CUT TO

67 INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

67

It's a college hangout, crowded at all hours, even the wee ones. Columbo walks in. He's old enough to be everyone's father. Cooper sees him first, sort of half-stands in their booth, waves, calls out:

COOPER

Over here, Lieutenant!

Columbo sees them, makes his way over. The students are very pleased to see him. Five of them are there: Justin, Cooper, Sachs, Sara and Todd. They slide over, make room. There's food and drinks all over the table. Apparently not even murder can entirely kill a college kid's appetite.

JUSTIN

Glad you could make it, Lieutenant.
We haven't stopped talking about the case since we left.

COLUMBO

Well, that's good, that's probably the best thing you could be doing right now.

(to Sara)

How're you feeling? A little better?

SARA

A little. Thanks.

SACHS

How'd you make out, Lieutenant?

A pause. They all wait. Columbo shakes his head, profoundly confused.

COLUMBO

I'll tell you something: this is turning out to be a real mystery.

JUSTIN

How so, Lieutenant?

COLUMBO

I saw a videotape that was recorded by one of the security cameras in the garage.

TODD

Really? You mean...it shows the killing?

COLUMBO

Yes.

CONTINUED

67 CONTINUED

67

The students react. Sara shakes off a chill.

COOPER

And the murderer?

COLUMBO

That's where the mystery comes in. We have a video tape recording of a murder...but it's like it was done by the invisible man. No one else is seen going in to the garage...no one else is seen going out.

JUSTIN

Sounds like Agatha Christie. How could it've been done, Lieutenant?

COLUMBO

Well, we're just beginning the investigation, of course, and there's a lot of questions that need to be answered. But believe me, that tape's going to reveal a tremendous amount of information. It's a very important piece of evidence. For example, we know the exact time of death....

JUSTIN

Which was?

Columbo digs a slip of paper from his pocket, finds the answer written on it somewhere.

COLUMBO

Sixteen minutes after eight.

SARA

We were in class, just a couple of hundred feet away....

SACHS

What else, Lieutenant? The path the bullet took?

COLUMBO

Yes, we'll be able to determine that very soon...and we'll know approximately where the killer was standing...his height....

COOPER

His height? Fantastic.

CONTINUED

67 CONTINUED- (2)

67

COLUMBO

We also know that robbery wasn't the motive because the killer never approached the body.

TODD

Never?

COLUMBO

The tape continued to record until a few minutes after we found the body and Justin left to call 911.

SACHS

And during all that time no one left the garage?

COLUMBO

Not by the ramp, no one we could see.

JUSTIN

Could you see the door to the lobby stairs, over by Joe Doyle, the guard?

COLUMBO

No, that we couldn't. And that's something we're going to have to consider, you're right.

SARA

(sadly)

Has someone talked to Professor Rusk's wife?

COLUMBO

One of our men did that, yes. I'll probably be seeing her first thing tomorrow. That's always one of the hardest parts.

(beat; then trying
to brighten things)

What kind of a man was Professor Rusk? Did you like him? Was he a good teacher?

JUSTIN

He was an exceptional teacher, Lieutenant.

COOPER

(nods solemnly)

It's true. One of the best.

CONTINUED

67 CONTINUED. (3)

67

SARA

Yes.

JUSTIN

Full of enthusiasm and energy.
Always surprising us with something
unexpected. Challenging us. He was
smart, he was ethical, he was
tough....

COOPER

He was real. Most of all, that's
what he was: real.

JUSTIN

And...

(bobs his head, grins
mischievously)
...he was absolutely crazy about
women.

SARA

(sharp)
That's not fair, Justin.

TODD

Probably not, but it's true.

SACHS

Even so, it's pretty poor form to
trash the reputation of the newly
dead.

For a beat, no one speaks. Columbo looks from one to the
other. Then:

JUSTIN

He played around, Lieutenant. At
least that's what some people said.

COOPER

(angry)
Come on, Justin, drop it. The body
isn't even cold yet!

JUSTIN

Any campus this size is going to be
a rumor mill, Lieutenant. Choosing
which ones to believe and which ones
to ignore is going to be one of your
biggest problems.

COLUMBO

Yes, I'm beginning to see that.

CONTINUED

67 CONTINUED (4)

67

TODD

Well, you've come to the right source, Lieutenant. Mr. Rowe here always seems to hear more rumors than anyone else.

Columbo's antennae are vibrating. He looks up.

COLUMBO

Mr...?

TODD

(indicates)

Rowe. Justin Rowe. Gossip's his middle name.

Columbo turns to Justin. Justin grins.

CUT TO

68
thru
70

OMITTED

68
thru
70

70A EXT. CAMPUS - DAY

70A

Police B&W's and TV remote vans and trucks spread out across the campus.

CUT TO

70B EXT. CAMPUS QUAD - DAY

70B

Solemn students in groups of three and four are discussing Rusk's murder.

Uniformed police officers move among them, ask questions. TV crews are interviewing other students.

CUT TO

70C EXT. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

70C

Reporters are circled around DEAN GILLESPIE on the steps.

DEAN

The faculty, staff, students, and I mourn the loss of Professor Rusk and offer our condolences to Mrs. Rusk.

CONTINUED

70C CONTINUED

70C

REPORTER

Do you have any idea who might have
had a reason to kill him, Dean
Gillespie?

DEAN

(slight pause)

No.

2ND REPORTER

Do you know if he had any enemies?

DEAN

(too quickly)

No. Thank you, that's all I have to
say at this time.

He turns, starts to enter the administration building.

3RD REPORTER

Do you have any comments on the
rumors about....

The Dean scowls, hurries into the administration building.

DEAN

(ignoring the
question; to an
aide)

Rumors. Scandal. That's all we
need.

CUT TO

70D EXT. GRASS - SARA AND STUDENTS

70D

having lunch under a tree.

GIRL

(to Sara)

You were there? You saw him? What
was it like?

SARA

It was horrible. Blood everywhere.
Not like the movies. It was real.

She shudders.

SARA

I don't want to talk about it
anymore. Okay?

CUT TO

70E EXT. GARAGE RAMP

70E

A TV reporter is holding a microphone in front of a STUDENT.

STUDENT

I saw him yesterday morning. He was running. So full of life. And now this....

CUT TO

70F EXT. FACULTY CLUB

70F

Three or four professors are walking under a row of trees.

PROFESSOR

(lighting his pipe)

At least he lived a full life.

2ND PROFESSOR

(knowing smile)

So they say. So they say....

3RD PROFESSOR

But what a terrible way to die.

CUT TO

71 EXT. FRATERNITY ROW - DAY

71

Columbo drives down the street of fraternity houses, eventually passing Justin and Cooper's. He glances up at the beautiful house.

72 INT. FRATERNITY HOUSE - DAY

72

Justin and Cooper have become, overnight, even bigger celebrities. Right now they're walking through the house, heading toward the front door, surrounded by a small horde of fraternity brothers who cling to every word and enjoy every moment.

COOPER

The cop's a total crack-up. Stands about yea high, wears a suit I think Toby donated to a homeless shelter last year....

TOBY

Is it tan?

CONTINUED

72 CONTINUED

72

CARY
(coming from another
room)
Hold it! Flash bulletin!

He rushes to a TV set and switches it on, flips to a certain channel.

JUSTIN
What's up?

CARY
Watch. Just watch.

The screen brightens to reveal a NEWSWOMAN standing in front of one of the college buildings, a crowd of students surrounding her.

NEWSWOMAN
...The investigation into last night's campus murder has taken an unexpected new turn. According to sources at the university, Professor D.E. Rusk, the victim in the brutal slaying, may have been involved in an extramarital affair at the time of his death....

The Newswoman continues, but we can barely hear her over the reactions from the kids in the room. On the screen, a photograph of Professor Rusk.

CHARLES
Atta boy, Rusk!

CARY
Who d'you think it was?

NORM
That he was playing around with? Are you serious? Coach Clark's wife, who else?

CARY
I heard she and Professor Roberts used to have a thing.

JUSTIN
Ancient history, lad.
(the final word)
It was Rusk and Gretchen Clark.

All of them turn their attention back to the Newswoman on TV.

CONTINUED

72 CONTINUED (2)

72

NEWSWOMAN

A spokesman for the police department refused to comment. Funeral services for the slain professor have not been announced as of this time.

Justin and Cooper exchange a look: Could things get any better than this?

TOBY

This is getting heavy, boys.

CHARLES

Hey...it's not General Hospital.

CUT TO

73 EXT. GRETCHEN'S HOUSE - DAY

73

Gretchen's Mercedes is parked in the driveway. Columbo's Peugeot is there, along with several cop cars parked on the street, TV vans, and uniformed officers holding back the eager media people who are determined to grab a piece of this sensational, burgeoning scandal, even if it's only a shot of the house.

74 INT. GRETCHEN'S HOUSE - DAY

74

Columbo's with her. Gretchen's understandably upset by the commotion. Columbo indicates the excitement outside.

COLUMBO

I'm sorry about all that, ma'am.

GRETCHEN

What did you want to ask me, Lieutenant?

COLUMBO

There's talk, ma'am, that Professor Rusk was having an affair. These things are very delicate, of course, and I don't want to offend you, but....

GRETCHEN

I'm a married woman, Lieutenant. My husband is the coach of the basketball team.

COLUMBO

Yes, ma'am, I'm aware of that.

CONTINUED

74 CONTINUED.

74

GRETCHEN

Professor Rusk was a married man.

COLUMBO

Yes, ma'am.

GRETCHEN

Then why do you think I would tell you that I was having an affair, even if it were true?

COLUMBO

Because if it was true, ma'am, it might help us find a murderer.

GRETCHEN

Who would be...who, Lieutenant? Me? My husband? Professor Rusk's wife?

No response from Columbo. She's no dummy, this beautiful young woman.

GRETCHEN

Do you have any other questions, Lieutenant?

COLUMBO

Just one, ma'am. Would you mind telling me where you were last night, say between seven and nine?

GRETCHEN

I was at home.

COLUMBO

And your husband, ma'am? Was he at home too?

GRETCHEN

My husband was with the team in Washington. In Seattle. I'm sure you knew that already, Lieutenant.

(beat; then)

Is there anything else?

COLUMBO

No, ma'am. Not at this time.

He hesitates, then begins toward the door, reaches for the knob.

GRETCHEN

Lieutenant.

CONTINUED

74 CONTINUED (2)

74

He stops, looks back.

COLUMBO

Yes, ma'am?

GRETCHEN

Whatever D.E. Rusk and I had together...it ended several months ago. My husband is aware of that. I never saw Professor Rusk again.

A beat. Columbo nods.

COLUMBO

Thank you, ma'am.

She walks out of the room, dignity intact. He watches her, admiring her in some way.

75 EXT. GRETCHEN'S HOUSE - DAY

75

Even though it's only been a few minutes, the crowd has already grown. Columbo heads for his car. He looks up at the sound of a horn and sees Justin and Cooper in the Jimmy, just arriving. They park, hop out, approach him.

Cooper uses the remote to lock the doors.

COLUMBO

Hey, how're you feeling today?
Manage to get any sleep?

JUSTIN

Couple of hours.

COLUMBO

Yeah, I know what you mean.

JUSTIN

(nods toward house)

Pretty tawdry stuff, huh, Lieutenant?
The Professor and the coach's wife?

COLUMBO

Well, actually, it turns out that that's been over for some time....

COOPER

(to Justin)

See? Didn't I tell you?

Justin ignores him.

CONTINUED

75 CONTINUED

75

JUSTIN

I don't know if it matters to you,
Lieutenant, but the campus 'hot line'
knows where they used to meet.

COLUMBO

(fascinated)

Is that so?

Cooper looks extremely uncomfortable, as if in his perfect world he doesn't want to have to deal with nasty rumors and sexual innuendo. It's a terrific act.

COOPER

The Lieutenant just said it was old news, Justin. Why're you still looking for dirt?

JUSTIN

(to Columbo)

Place out in the Valley, we're told.
Don't know the name or the address
but I've got some directions and if
you want to follow us I think we can
get you there.

Brief pause. Then, from Cooper, who seems very unhappy with this line of investigation:

COOPER

This is lousy, Justin. This stinks.

JUSTIN

(to Columbo)

I keep trying to tell him that life's
not a peppermint candy. I don't seem
to be getting through.

CUT TO

76 EXT. MOTEL AND LOUNGE - DAY

76

We see the Peugeot and the Jimmy in the lot.

77 INT. LOUNGE - DAY

77

The joint isn't a lot brighter even in daylight, and it's still fogged with cigarette smoke. The three of them are entering the bar. There's only a handful of patrons, drinking quietly. We recognize the Bartender from the previous scene. Cooper takes in the dingy atmosphere.

CONTINUED

77 CONTINUED

77

COOPER

Swell place.

BARTENDER

What can I get you, gentlemen?

Columbo produces his I.D.

COLUMBO

Lieutenant Columbo. Homicide.

BARTENDER

Can't say I haven't been expecting you.

COLUMBO

Why is that, sir?

BARTENDER

Guess you want to talk about the dead professor, right?

COLUMBO

That's very interesting, sir. How did you know that?

BARTENDER

Because I saw his picture all over the news last night. The guy and his girlfriend came in here just about every week for a year.

COLUMBO

He came in with the same woman, sir?

BARTENDER

Blonde, right? In her thirties? Real good looking?

Columbo and the boys exchange a look: isn't this an interesting turn of events.

COLUMBO

But they haven't been in here recently...not in the last few months, isn't that right, sir?

BARTENDER

They were in here last week.

Cooper seems terribly disappointed.

COOPER

What?

CONTINUED

77 CONTINUED (2)

77

COLUMBO

Last week, sir?

BARTENDER

Sat right over there. Had a big blowout.

COLUMBO

You mean they had a fight?

BARTENDER

Lady was hotter than a pistol over something. The guy tried to calm her down but couldn't. She split.

COLUMBO

She left? Alone?

BARTENDER

Far as I could tell. The Professor stayed for another hour, crying in his beer.

(beat; then)

So, what d'you figure: she plugged him?

No one answers him.

78 EXT. MOTEL AND LOUNGE - DAY

78

Columbo steps outside with Justin and Cooper, the three of them lost in their own thoughts. Then:

JUSTIN

So...what do you figure, Lieutenant?
Do you think she did plug him?

COOPER

Come on, Justin, give us a break!

JUSTIN

Can I ask you a serious question, Lieutenant? Does Gretchen Clark have an alibi for Thursday night?

Cooper looks dangerously close to punching his friend. Columbo seems hurt by the realization that Gretchen lied to him.

COLUMBO

She was at home.

CONTINUED

78 CONTINUED

78

JUSTIN

Alone, right? Because her husband was with the team in Seattle.

COOPER

(a stern
pronouncement)

Get off it, Justin! Gretchen Clark did not murder Professor Rusk.

JUSTIN

Maybe not, Coop. But there's one thing we do know, and that is that she's been lying to the Lieutenant, hasn't she. She's been playing him for a fool. And I think we'd all like to know why.

A pause. Then, still appearing distracted:

COLUMBO

I think I better go and have a talk with the Professor's wife.

JUSTIN

(nods)

Yeah, that would probably be useful.

COLUMBO

Thanks for all your help...both of you. I'm going to go back inside and make a couple of phone calls.

JUSTIN

Will you stay in touch, Lieutenant? Keep us up to date?

COLUMBO

Oh, sure. We're in this thing together.

He waves, walks back into the lounge. Justin and Cooper head off toward the Jimmy. Soon as they turn their backs their expressions change dramatically. Suddenly, like kids with the giggles in church, they're trying desperately to keep from bursting into laughter.

79 INT. LOUNGE - DAY

79

Columbo stands beside the pay phone, waiting for his call to go through. Through a window he can watch Justin and Cooper approaching the Jimmy in the parking lot. With their backs turned he can't see their laughter.

CONTINUED

79 CONTINUED

79

But in his expression we can sense his awareness.

COLUMBO

(on phone)

Yes, I'm waiting for Detective Malloy. I'll hold on, yeah. Thank you. Malloy? Columbo. You've got the inventory of Professor Rusk's office? The list, yeah. You got it in front of you? Okay, good. Confirm this for me, will you? There weren't any airline tickets in his briefcase, right? You're sure? Okay, that's fine. No, that's all I needed to check. Thanks very much.

He replaces the receiver, lingers there a moment, fine-tuning his plan. Through the window he can watch the Jimmy drive out of the lot.

CUT TO

80 EXT. RUSK'S HOUSE - DAY

80

The Peugeot is parked in front of the pretty house.

81 EXT. RUSK'S BACKYARD - DAY

81

MRS. RUSK is an attractive woman in her early forties. Right now she's potting plants on a work table in the backyard. Busy work to help her with her grief. Columbo's with her.

COLUMBO

I know this is a very painful time for you, ma'am, but I need to ask you a few questions.

MRS. RUSK

About Gretchen Clark, Lieutenant?

Columbo's surprised by this, and by her frankness.

COLUMBO

Yes, ma'am.

MRS. RUSK

She and my husband had an affair that lasted almost an entire year. It wasn't D.E.'s first. I found out
(MORE)

CONTINUED

81 CONTINUED

81

MRS. RUSK (Cont'd)
about this one three months ago and I told him I would leave him if he didn't end it. So he did, or at least that's what he told me and that's what I believed...or wanted to believe.

COLUMBO
But he didn't end it?

MRS. RUSK
She wouldn't let him.

COLUMBO
When did you find out, ma'am?

MRS. RUSK
Ten days ago...when D.E. told me.

COLUMBO
He told you he was still seeing her?

MRS. RUSK
No, Lieutenant. He told me that he'd seen her for the last time, and that it was over for good.

COLUMBO
I see. Did you believe him?

MRS. RUSK
How could I? I wanted to hear it from Mrs. Clark, and I wanted to be able to see her eyes when she told me. So I went to meet her...for the first time. We talked...and after a while we cried...
(beat)
It was over.

COLUMBO
When was that, ma'am...that you visited Gretchen Clark?

MRS. RUSK
That was Thursday night, Lieutenant. The night my husband was killed.

Columbo takes a moment to let that sink in. Then:

COLUMBO
You and Mrs. Clark were together at the time of the murder?

CONTINUED

81 CONTINUED. (2)

81

MRS. RUSK

That's correct, Lieutenant. In her home. If Gretchen Clark was on your list of suspects...or if I was, for that matter...I'm afraid you're going to have to look elsewhere. We seem to cancel each other out.

Another pause. Columbo's got a lot to think about. Then, onto another tack:

COLUMBO

We found a plane ticket to Phoenix in your husband's briefcase, ma'am. He was scheduled to travel over the weekend. Did you know about that trip?

MRS. RUSK

He never mentioned it, Lieutenant.

COLUMBO

All right. Thank you, ma'am. Thank you very much.

He starts across the lawn.

MRS. RUSK

Please find D.E.'s killer, Lieutenant.

COLUMBO

I intend to do that, ma'am.

He walks out.

CUT TO

82 INT. GRETCHEN'S HOUSE - DAY

82

She's just admitted him. The crowd outside has grown again. The strain is showing on her face.

COLUMBO

I'm sorry to bother you again so soon, ma'am, but I have to ask you a few more questions.

He turns, hearing footsteps. COACH GARY CLARK appears from the hallway. He's a big man in his late thirties, a former basketball player, and he doesn't look happy.

CONTINUED

82 CONTINUED

82

COLUMBO

Hello, sir.

GRETCHEN

This is my husband, Gary Clark. This is Lieutenant Columbo with the police.

Clark doesn't offer to shake hands.

COLUMBO

How do you do, sir. As I was saying to your wife, I'm terribly sorry to have to take up your time like this, but....

CLARK

Ask your question, Lieutenant, and then leave us alone, please.

COLUMBO

Yes, sir, I'll try to be quick. I know this is very difficult for both of you.

(to Gretchen)

I believe you told me that you hadn't seen Professor Rusk in several months, ma'am. Am I remembering that correctly?

GRETCHEN

That's right.

COLUMBO

I see. Well, is it possible that you might have forgotten a meeting you had with him...just about a week ago?

CLARK

(more at Gretchen than Columbo)

A week ago?

COLUMBO

Ma'am?

She hesitates, fearful of admitting the truth in front of her husband; afraid of lying to the police.

COLUMBO

We have a witness who can place you with Professor Rusk at a restaurant last Thursday night, ma'am.

CONTINUED

82 CONTINUED (2)

82

CLARK

What?!

GRETCHEN

Professor Rusk asked me to meet him there. I did. But I only stayed a few minutes and then I came back home. Alone.

A beat. Columbo nods.

COLUMBO

Thank you, ma'am. That's the same thing the witness told us: that you left, by yourself, after a few minutes.

Gretchen seems relieved, as does her husband. Still, she's anxious for Columbo to leave.

GRETCHEN

Is that all, Lieutenant?

COLUMBO

Yes, ma'am.

She crosses toward him, heading for the door. He follows. She opens the door for him, steps outside.

82A EXT. GRETCHEN'S HOUSE - DAY

82A

Columbo walks out, glances back toward the husband.

COLUMBO

'Bye, sir.

Clark turns, disappears down the hall.

COLUMBO

Good-bye, ma'am.

GRETCHEN

Good-bye, Lieutenant.

He starts away and Gretchen begins to close the door. But now Columbo stops, turns back.

COLUMBO

There's just one other thing, ma'am. We came across a plane ticket to Phoenix in Professor Rusk's briefcase.

(MORE)

CONTINUED

82A

CONTINUED

82A

COLUMBO (Cont'd)

He was scheduled to fly there this weekend. Do you have any knowledge of that, or any idea of who he may have been planning to see?

GRETCHEN

I'm afraid not.

A beat. Columbo nods.

COLUMBO

Thank you, ma'am.

She watches him walk away.

CUT TO

83

EXT. FRATERNITY HOUSE - DAY

83

It is late afternoon. There's a party just getting started. Out front, lots of activity as the best and the brightest (and the best-looking and the richest) begin arriving in their fancy cars and fancy clothes. The men are all wearing formal tuxedos -- with just one difference: instead of pants, they're wearing shorts. The young ladies are all California-girl beautiful.

(X)

From inside the house we can hear rock and roll. We see Justin and Cooper greeting some new arrivals at the door, and now they suddenly notice Columbo, parked across the street in the Peugeot. He smiles and waves, then calls out:

COLUMBO

I just wanted you to know that that individual we were discussing earlier is clean as a whistle.

Justin and Cooper exchange a look; intrigued. They cross toward him.

JUSTIN

(as they approach)

Are we talking about a certain party who was seen at a certain bar with the victim?

COLUMBO

That's the one. Has an iron-clad alibi.

CONTINUED

83 CONTINUED

83

COOPER
(to Justin; with
satisfaction)
See? Didn't I tell you?

COLUMBO
Turns out that on the night of the
murder, Gretchen Clark and the
Professor's wife were together.

JUSTIN
Together? That's pretty amazing.

COLUMBO
Well, this is turning out to be a
very perplexing investigation.

JUSTIN
I'll say.

COLUMBO
That's some outfit.

COOPER
This? Didn't they used to have
black-tie-and-shorts parties in your
day, Lieutenant?

COLUMBO
If they did, nobody ever invited me.

JUSTIN
We better get back inside. But
thanks a lot for stopping by to fill
us in, Lieutenant.

COLUMBO
Any time, fellas. Have fun.

COOPER
(waves)
Thanks. See you later.

They both head back toward the house. Columbo watches
them. More and more chic guests are arriving. Cooper
kisses several girls.

83A INT. FRATERNITY HOUSE - DAY

83A
(X)

Justin and Cooper thread their way through the crowd. The
music is blaring.

CONTINUED

83A CONTINUED

83A

It takes them a while before they notice that Columbo has come in after them and is trying to get to them, or at least to get their attention, which he finally does.

They come together at some point and Columbo asks them something but it's not possible to hear him over the music and the crowd noise. Justin gestures and Columbo follows them to a part of the room where it's further away from the music and consequently a bit quieter.

COLUMBO

Nice party.

JUSTIN

Yes.

COLUMBO

I forgot to ask you something; maybe you can help me with this: We found an airline ticket in the Professor's briefcase. A round trip ticket to Phoenix. He was due to travel over this past weekend. Did he happen to make any mention of that trip in class? Or do you have any idea why he might've been going?

Justin and Cooper exchange a look.

JUSTIN

Well, let me think. Phoenix?

COLUMBO

Yeah. In on Friday night, back on Sunday.

A CUTE GIRL tries to steal Cooper away but he begs off. She pouts, winks, blows a kiss, disappears into the crowd.

JUSTIN

(vamping gracefully)

Well, I couldn't say this for sure, Lieutenant, but there's an outside chance it could've been to meet a man by the name of Smith?

(X)

COLUMBO

Smith?

(X)

JUSTIN

Yeah. Tom Smith, or John Smith ..something like that. Remember, Coop?

(X)

CONTINUED

83A CONTINUED (2)

83A

COOPER

Vaguely, yeah. A fed, right?

JUSTIN

Right. Remember he told us about the guy? Might've been FBI... maybe an investigator in the Attorney General's office....

COOPER

He'd never tell us the whole story.

JUSTIN

No. But what he did tell us, Lieutenant was, that over the years he'd been feeding this guy Malloy all kinds of inside stuff he'd picked up while researching his books....

COOPER

(suddenly
remembering)

Wait a minute. Now I'm thinking he may have said something about going out of town over the weekend.

COLUMBO

Really?

COOPER

I can't remember exactly, and I don't know if he mentioned Phoenix, but....

JUSTIN

(a frightening
thought)

What if he was going to meet Malloy? And what if he had some new information to give him?

COOPER

And what if somebody knew about it and wanted to shut him up.

(tense beat; then)

This is pretty scary stuff.

COLUMBO

Well, it can be a pretty scary world, sometimes.

Justin and Cooper nod. It's profound philosophy.

(X)

CONTINUED

83A CONTINUED (3)

83A

COLUMBO

Well, I better get going. I'll try
and check that out. Tom Smith or
John Smith, right?

(X)

JUSTIN

Right.

(beat; then)

I've got a thought, Lieutenant.

COLUMBO

Okay.

JUSTIN

(after a beat)

Maybe you should have a little talk
with my father.

COLUMBO

Your father?

JUSTIN

My father's a criminal attorney,
Lieutenant. But he's also legal
counsel to the university.

COOPER

Which means he hears more rumors than
Justin does.

JUSTIN

I can't promise that it'll lead
anywhere, but it could be worth your
time. What d'you think? Should I
try and set it up?

COLUMBO

Oh, absolutely. And the sooner the
better.

JUSTIN

How about tonight...if I can.

COLUMBO

Tonight? Tonight would be terrific.
But I don't want you to have to leave
your party....

JUSTIN

Murder cases tend to get real cold
real real fast, Lieutenant.
Professor Rusk taught us that.

CONTINUED

83A CONTINUED (4)

83A

COLUMBO
(nods; impressed)
Professor Rusk was right.

Justin pats him on the shoulder.

JUSTIN
Lemme see what I can do.

He walks off through the crowd: a man on a mission.
Columbo watches him, then glances at Cooper.

COLUMBO
Sometimes I wonder where I'd be
without you fellas....

CUT TO

84 INT. JUSTIN'S PARENTS' MASTER SUITE - NIGHT

84

It's an enormous suite, plush as a palace and just as formal. MOTHER'S in the final stages of dressing for a formal affair. Justin is with her in the suite, helping her into a showy, diamond necklace.

MOTHER
Well, if this detective is even
remotely as inept as you've painted
him, dear, he's obviously going to
need all the help he can get.

JUSTIN
We're doing all we can, Mother,
believe me. But the way things are
going, it's probably going to turn
out to be closer to a class project
than a homicide investigation.

MOTHER
What a sad, terrible thought. Poor
Professor Rusk. First he's murdered;
then they assign this rumped little
dumbbell to track down his killer.
Dear me. Poor Mrs. Rusk.

JUSTIN
Will you talk to Dad?

MOTHER
Of course I will. I'll talk to him
right now.

Justin pecks a kiss on Mother's neck.

CONTINUED

84 CONTINUED

84

JUSTIN
Thanks, Mom. You look gorgeous.

CUT TO

85 INT. JUSTIN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

85

Justin gave up a lot when he left here to move to the Frat House, ritzy or not. His old bedroom is big as a garage, decked out with state-of-the-art stereo equipment, beautifully framed contemporary art, whatever he wanted.

JUSTIN
(on phone; hushed,
but animated)
Yes. Tonight. He'll be here in
about an hour.

86 INTERCUT PHONE CALL WITH COOPER, IN FRAT HOUSE - NIGHT

86

Cooper's on one of the phones in a room downstairs. In the b.g., the party is continuing noisily.

COOPER
(on phone; similar
enthusiasm)
I'm coming over. I'm leaving right
now. I've gotta be there for this.
This is too much.

JUSTIN
(coolly)
What it is, Coop, is perfect.

COOPER
I still can't stop laughing over that
'Phoenix' routine. Was that luck
or what?

(X)

JUSTIN
When somebody hands you the baton,
Coop, you run like hell.
(beat; then)
It was pure inspiration.

CUT TO

87 EXT. JUSTIN'S FAMILY HOME - NIGHT

87

The estate is formidable at night. Columbo putters up the drive in the Peugeot.

CONTINUED

87 CONTINUED

87

There's a party in progress here, too. We can hear a discreet band, and the parking areas are filled with glitzy cars. A parking attendant will take the Peugeot from Columbo, but he doesn't look pleased by the prospect.

CUT TO

88 INT. FATHER'S STUDY - NIGHT

88

It's almost caricaturishly manly, a genuine gentleman's room, complete with dark oak paneling, a few well-chosen certificates, rifle case, bar, stone fireplace, leather furniture, antique rosewood desk. Everything but a bearskin rug.

Justin's FATHER (JORDAN ROWE), in is tuxedo, is briskly entering with Columbo, looking by contrast shabbier than usual. Behind them, the sounds of the party and just a brief glimpse of some of the beautifully dressed guests. Columbo's impressed. (X)

The Father is an imposing man. He is extremely capable, wildly successful -- He can be polished or direct. He has a natural superiority -- He doesn't waste time -- has a high standard of competence which he demands of everybody. He is impatient with mediocrity, and anxious to get back to his guests. In this scene, his annoyance with what he considers to be as lazy mind increases until he decides to cut to the bottom line and be direct. (X)

FATHER

I heard you wanted to talk to me
about Professor Rusk.

COLUMBO

Well, actually your son suggested it.

FATHER

But specifically, you want to know
more about the Professor's books?

COLUMBO

I think that's what your son had in
mind.

FATHER

(a touch annoyed)
You're not sure?

COLUMBO

About what your son had in mind,
sir?..No, I'm not.

CONTINUED

88 CONTINUED

88

FATHER
(takes a breath,
trying to conceal
his annoyance)
Have you read his books?

COLUMBO
No, sir.

FATHER
But you're familiar with the subject
matter....

COLUMBO
Ah, no sir. I didn't know he wrote
books.

FATHER
Are you telling me you're actually
investigating the murder of Professor
Rusk, and that you're unaware that
he has written highly explosive
exposes of crime figures in the
United States?

COLUMBO
Let me tell you what happened. I was
on my way to lunch....the Captain
stopped me. Would I be interested
in talking to some students? I said
sure. He told me to call Professor
Rusk. That was the first time I ever
heard of the man.

FATHER
(this detective is
just dumb)
I see...But that was before he was
murdered.

COLUMBO
Yes, sir.

FATHER
But after he was murdered, and you
were trying to find out who did it.
Did you have any curiosity about the
man's life?

COLUMBO
Oh, you mean like going and reading
his books?

CONTINUED

88 CONTINUED (2)

88

FATHER

I mean like finding out that there are people out there who wanted to see him dead.

COLUMBO

Well, it came out that he was having an affair -- with a married woman -- the Coach's wife. Apparently, a very emotional situation -- I don't ---

FATHER

(interrupting)

And that's how you've been spending your time?...

COLUMBO

Yes, sir...And talking to the kids.

FATHER

(repeats)

-- And talking to the kids.

The Father puts his head in his hands, takes a deep breath, trying to be patient as possible with this total incompetent who is obviously still unaware of the real motive in this killing.

FATHER

(rising)

All right, Lieutenant, I've tried to be as patient as possible. But it's obvious that you don't know which end is up. That's not an insult -- that's a fact. I can't do your homework for you, but I can tell you where to begin.

FATHER

(picks up a book from his desk)

This is Rusk's first book on organized crime in New Orleans. Read it.

(picks up galley)

This is a galley of his second book. Deals with white-collar crime in Southern California. He ties in the mob to the laundering of drug money and he names names. Read it. Here's the bottom line. Dangerous people have made actual threats on his life.

(MORE)

CONTINUED

88 CONTINUED (3)

88

FATHER (Cont'd)

Other criminal attorneys, speaking for their clients, have urged me to warn the Professor that unless he backed off -- unless he deleted the names -- he was in terrible danger. So what you have to do, Lieutenant, is stop worrying about whose wife is screwing who and get to the heart of the matter. This man was shot because he had a big mouth.

COLUMBO

I certainly appreciate you telling me this. Makes my life a lot easier -- Now I'm pointed in the right direction.

CUT TO

89 INT. JUSTIN'S BEDROOM

89

Justin and Cooper listening on their portable FM radio. Cooper is lying on the floor drinking a Coke. Justin is sitting on the bed. Cooper reaches up and lowers the volume.

(X)

COOPER

I can't believe how perfect this is.

JUSTIN

Let me ask you a question.

COOPER

Yeah.

JUSTIN

Do you think Columbo's parents were related?

COOPER

(chuckles)

I doubt it.

Cooper turns the volume back up, and we hear Columbo's voice saying to the Father:

COLUMBO (V.O.)

I found out one thing for sure tonight. I know where your son gets his brains.

CONTINUED

89 CONTINUED

89

Justin doubles over with laughter. Cooper, lying on the floor, kicks his feet in the air (like he's riding a bicycle).

COOPER

This is better than sex.

CUT TO

90 OMITTED

90

90A FATHER'S OFFICE - DOWNSTAIRS

90A

FATHER

My son has the best mind of anyone I've ever met.

(pause)

But he couldn't get into Harvard Law School without my help. With his ability, they should send a limousine for him. But I had to push buttons. Something's wrong. His mind is somewhere else. I wish I knew where. But he's gonna end up the best damned criminal attorney in the nation, or I'll break every bone in his body.

COLUMBO

He can go far. All the way. There's no doubt about it.

FATHER

He'd better.

CUT TO

90B JUSTIN'S BEDROOM - UPSTAIRS

90B

Cooper turns the volume down.

COOPER

Your father's pretty wacky.

JUSTIN

(laying on the bed
looking at the
ceiling)

He's a sick man. I hate him.
(pauses as:)

CONTINUED

90B CONTINUED

90B

COOPER
(ear near the
radio)
Get this.
(returns the
volume up)

We hear his father's voice.

FATHER (V.O.)
His friend, Cooper, there's another
kid with brains -- but he thinks he's
gonna be a tennis pro -- the kid's
a B-player, but in his mind he's John
MacEnroe, what does that say for his
judgment. I'll tell you what he's
good for -- he can get young girls
pregnant.

Cooper flaps his four fingers against his thumb like a
mouth moving, but there's hatred in his face.

91 EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

91

The door opens and Columbo steps out, Father behind him.
Again we get a brief glimpse of the party, and hear the
sound of it. A valet unhappily goes to fetch the Peugeot.

FATHER
Let's try and get the job done
expediently, Lieutenant, shall we?
Professor Rusk was an arrogant
son-of-a-pup, but he didn't deserve
this. Nor can this university
survive all this nasty prodding by
the media.

He sees the valet start up the Peugeot. It's almost
unbelievable that such a car should be parked in his
driveway.

COLUMBO
Just one more thing, sir.

FATHER
Yes?

COLUMBO
It's about Thursday night. Did you
happen to have dinner at a restaurant
near the campus by the name of Cafe
Barrado?

CONTINUED

91 CONTINUED

91

FATHER

In fact I had dinner at a restaurant named Fredo's, Lieutenant. In San Francisco. With the District Attorney. And the Lieutenant Governor.

The Peugeot arrives. Columbo extends a hand and Father shakes it.

COLUMBO

Thank you very much, sir; not only for all your help but for your sound advice. Good night, sir.

FATHER

Good night, Lieutenant.

VALET

Your car, sir.

COLUMBO

How'd you know it was mine?

VALET

Just a lucky guess.

The Father stands there watching Columbo get into the broken-down car and putter away. Camera tilts up to a second floor window. We see Justin and Cooper silhouetted there, watching Columbo drive away.

CUT TO

92 INT. FACULTY GARAGE - NIGHT

92

No cars at all in the garage tonight. Nothing or no one except Columbo. He stares at the chalked outline where Rusk's body was discovered, then looks around the dim emptiness. He walks away from the outline, footsteps echoing. He walks straight back, maybe twenty paces, then stops, turns around. He raises his arm and points a finger as if it were a gun.

The lobby stairs door opens and Joe Doyle steps into the garage. Columbo turns to him, turns his invisible gun into a wave.

COLUMBO

Hello, sir.

JOE

Lieutenant?

CONTINUED

92 CONTINUED

92

COLUMBO

It's only me. I should've let you know I was coming down here. I apologize.

JOE

I saw somebody poking around down here on the monitors, didn't know who it was. Anything I can help you with?

COLUMBO

Well, sir, I'm just trying to work a few things out. That video tape has been a tremendous help.

A beat. Columbo looks around, checking his position again. Then:

COLUMBO

This is just about as close as the killer could've been, sir, because if he'd been any closer we would've seen him on the tape we have -- which was taken from that camera right over there, correct?

JOE

Uh-huh.

COLUMBO

But if this is where he was standing, wouldn't he have been seen by that camera?

He points over his shoulder to another wall-mounted camera. Joe looks, nods.

JOE

That's right, Lieutenant. He would have.

COLUMBO

And you might've seen him, too....

JOE

If I'd been watching the monitors instead of the basketball game. Yeah. And I feel guilty as hell about it, Lieutenant, believe me. Like you said: maybe I couldn't have kept the Professor alive. But at least I might've been able to identify the killer.

CONTINUED

92 CONTINUED (2)

92

COLUMBO

Well, that's what's really bothering me, sir. Why -- when you thought to save the tape from that camera -- you didn't think to save the tape from this one, too. Because if you had, we'd probably be able to make that identification.

Dead silence. Joe looks from one camera to the other, then back to Columbo. And then he remembers.

JOE

I didn't save it at all, Lieutenant.

COLUMBO

Sir?

JOE

I was so shook up when Justin came running in shouting about the Professor being murdered, all I could think of was getting down here. It was Justin who remembered about the tape.

COLUMBO

Justin?

JOE

Yeah. The truth is, if it hadn't been for him, we wouldn't even have the one tape we do.

COLUMBO

Justin turned off the machine to save the tape?

JOE

(nods)

And damn lucky he thought of it, right?

Columbo nods. Yes, very lucky.

CUT TO

93 INT. ANOTHER SCHOOL BUILDING HALLWAY - DAY

93

Columbo's walking down the hall, looking at a slip of paper in his hand, checking door numbers until he finds the one he wants. He walks in.

94 INT. DEAN'S OFFICE SUITE - DAY

94

An Elderly Secretary in the outer office is about to give Columbo some instructions but never gets the chance. The door to the Dean's office is open and Columbo is spotted by Justin's Father, waved in.

FATHER

(impatient)

Come in, Lieutenant, come in.

95 INT. DEAN'S OFFICE - DAY

95

Columbo's surprised to see him.

COLUMBO

Mr. Rowe...?

He walks in. The DEAN stands up from behind his desk, walks to meet Columbo, extends his hand.

DEAN

I'm Dean Gillespie, Lieutenant.

COLUMBO

How do you do, sir. It's a real pleasure to meet you.

JUSTIN'S VOICE

Hello, Lieutenant.

Columbo turns, even more surprised to see Justin in the office.

COLUMBO

Hey, Justin, this is a real surprise. I didn't even know your father was going to be here.

DEAN

Let me explain. Lieutenant. The reason I called Chief Whalen and requested this meeting with you is because Mr. Rowe -- and Justin as well -- has some extremely pertinent new information which we think will impact heavily on your investigation into the murder of Professor Rusk.

COLUMBO

Is that so? Well, I'll be very anxious to hear that, sure.

CONTINUED

95 CONTINUED

95

DEAN

You understand, of course, that the sooner we can rap this up and get back to the business of running a university, the happier we'll all be.

COLUMBO

Oh, I understand that completely, yes, sir.

DEAN

(indicates Father)
Quinton?

Justin's Father assumes command; it's something he does quite naturally. He's fast, slick, focused. And today he seems absolutely determined to make mincemeat out of Columbo. He begins circling him as if Columbo were in the witness box and the Father is his cross-examiner.

FATHER

Thank you, Howard. Lieutenant, you and I are both in the same line of work: the pursuit of justice. You're a cop; I'm a lawyer. You catch 'em; I try 'em. Correct?

COLUMBO

That's correct, sir.

FATHER

And because of that we both know how critically important it is to follow a trail while the scent still lingers in the air.

COLUMBO

Yes, sir.

FATHER

Then tell me, Lieutenant, please: why are you ignoring what is certainly the most obvious trail in this entire investigation.

COLUMBO

Sir?

FATHER

Joe Doyle, Lieutenant, the campus policeman who was on duty last Thursday night.

CONTINUED

95 CONTINUED (2)

95

COLUMBO

Uh-huh....

FATHER

He has a brother, Lieutenant. A John Doyle. Are you at all aware of this individual?

COLUMBO

John Doyle? No, sir, I can't say that....

FATHER

Justin? Please?

JUSTIN

John's an ex-con, Lieutenant. He's been out for about a year and he's having a pretty tough time getting onto his feet. Joe's hit us up a few times, me and Coop and some of the others, asking us if we could help John get a job....

FATHER

Evidently this campus guard thinks that all students at this university are from wealthy families owning numerous businesses and employing thousands of people with nothing more important to do than social work for parolees....

JUSTIN

Anyway, from what Joe's told us, Lieutenant, his brother used to hang out with some pretty heavy hitters; you know, syndicate guys. So that started us thinking....

FATHER

Along lines that should be very obvious, Lieutenant. Where was John Doyle on the night? Was he in the area? Was he out of town? Does he have an alibi? Or was he in fact the trigger man? We asked ourselves: How could the killer have walked up those stairs from the garage and through a door that's located not more than ten feet from Joe Doyle's desk without being seen? Unless, of course, Mr.

(MORE)

CONTINUED

95 CONTINUED (3)

95

FATHER (Cont'd)

Doyle had been conveniently looking the other way...because, in fact, he's an accessory to murder and the murderer is his own brother?!

For a moment no one speaks. Then:

DEAN

Chief Whalen had a copy of John Doyle's record messengered here this morning, Lieutenant.

He takes it off the desk, hands it to Columbo.

DEAN

You'll find his current address in there as well, I believe.

Columbo hefts the thick file, nods. He's impressed.

COLUMBO

Well, this is a terrific lead; very good. I'm going to sit down and read this file right away, and I'm going to try to make contact with this John Doyle no later than this evening.

DEAN

Excellent.

The Father crosses to where he left his attache case, picks it up, signifying the end of the meeting. But he's still skeptical as hell.

FATHER

Keep us informed, won't you, Lieutenant?

COLUMBO

Oh, you can count on it, sir. Every step of the way.

The Father shakes hands with the Dean, pantomimes that they'll talk later (about this incompetent), privately, on the phone.

FATHER

Coming, Justin?

He walks out without waiting. Justin steps forward, extends his hand to Columbo, who shakes it.

CONTINUED

95 CONTINUED (4)

95

JUSTIN
Thanks, Lieutenant.
(indicates file)
And watch yourself with that guy.
Please.

COLUMBO
Oh yeah, you bet I will, he sounds
like a very dangerous man.

Justin leaves. Columbo thinks of something, begins after him, then remembers the Dean. He turns back.

COLUMBO
Very nice to meet you, sir.

DEAN
Good luck, Lieutenant.

COLUMBO
Thank you, sir, I think I'm going to
need it.

CUT TO

96 EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

96

Columbo parks the Peugeot and gets out, looks around. For once the car doesn't look out of place, this neighborhood isn't exactly a jungle, but it's about half a light-year from Beverly Hills. He checks the address of a fairly shabby house, right out of the Thirties. Then he looks up. There, on a deck built over the garage, is John Doyle, sitting in the twilight on a bridge chair in his T-shirt, smoking, sipping Scotch from a bottle, lazily watching the end of the day. He notices Columbo, who now calls up to him.

COLUMBO
Afternoon, sir. Are you John Doyle?

No response. Columbo shows his ID.

COLUMBO
Lieutenant Columbo. Homicide.

No answer.

(X)
(X)

COLUMBO
I'd like to come up and talk to you,
sir. Would that be all right?

CONTINUED

96 CONTINUED

96

JOHN

Okay.

CUT TO

(X)

97 INT. JOHN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

97

We should be able to immediately identify it as the house from which Justin and Cooper stole the .45.

John's returning to the shabby living room from the kitchen, carrying the fresh bottle and two glasses. The television is on but the sound is off. It's tuned to a news program. We catch occasional glimpses of the news anchor in between stock shots of building fires, traffic accidents, the usual.

Columbo's lighting a cigar. John sits down, slides a glass in front of Columbo.

COLUMBO

None for me, sir. Thanks anyway.
This is your hour.

JOHN

Suit yourself. This about that Professor?

COLUMBO

Professor Rusk, yes, sir.

JOHN

Yeah, shook old Joe up pretty bad.
Got home about three in the morning,
wouldn't stop talking about it,
couldn't sleep, wouldn't have a
drink...He's been dry five years.
More power to him, I guess.

He pours himself a shot. He lights a cigarette.

(X)

JOHN

What's the scoop, Cap? Somebody
pointin' at me? Round up all the
usual suspects?

COLUMBO

It'd make it easy, sir, if you could
just tell me where you were last
Thursday night.

JOHN

Easy for who? I was here.

CONTINUED

97 CONTINUED

97

COLUMBO
Alone?

JOHN
(holds up the glass)
Unless you consider this a friend.

(X)

(X)

He tosses down the drink, refills the glass.

JOHN
Would I have a reason to want to kill
this professor?

COLUMBO
I don't know, sir. Would you?

JOHN
Heard he had a girl friend. And a
wife.

COLUMBO
They didn't do it.

JOHN
I'll take your word for it. Who does
that leave?

COLUMBO
Some people think it was a hit.

John looks at him. He doesn't laugh but his eyes are
twinkling.

JOHN
A hit?

COLUMBO
Professor Rusk wrote books about
touchy subjects. Maybe somebody was
mad at him.

JOHN
And got me to take him out.

COLUMBO
And your brother to make it possible
by looking the other way.

A beat. John mulls it over, nods his head: it's not
completely unreasonable. He sips the Scotch, puts it down.

JOHN
So when do you make the arrest?

CONTINUED

97 CONTINUED (2)

97

COLUMBO

Do you own a gun, sir?

JOHN

(mildly disappointed)

I was just beginning to like you, officer. Let's don't play each other for shmooes, okay? You're a cop; you read my file; you know what I did, when I did it, how much time I served, where I served it. I'm a three-time loser, my friend: I can't join the Marines; I can't vote; and I can't own a gun.

COLUMBO

Joe owns one. Carries it when he works. A .38 revolver. Do you know if he happens to own a .45 automatic, sir?

JOHN

Is that what they used?

COLUMBO

That's right.

JOHN

One shot in the head, huh? From about sixty feet away Joe told me.
(impressed)
Some shot.

He drinks to it, his hands still trembling a little. Then:

JOHN

Boys I knew...from that distance they would've used about six sticks of dynamite.

(beat; then)

You got anything else you want to ask me, Lieutenant? I was kind of looking forward to making some popcorn and watching the wrestling on TV.

But suddenly Columbo's attention is elsewhere. A photo of Professor Rusk has appeared on television, along with a banner: CAMPUS MURDER! The NEWS ANCHOR appears suddenly energized. Columbo reaches for the remote.

COLUMBO

Would you mind, sir, if....

CONTINUED

97 CONTINUED (3)

97

He finds the volume on the remote, turns it up. They both watch.

NEWS ANCHOR

...exclusive new information on the death of Professor D.E. Rusk. This station has been able to obtain a videotape of what appears to be the actual murder. We're going to show this footage, but we're strongly advising that it may be upsetting, and parents of younger children may not want them to watch. Once again: the footage you're about to see -- exclusively on this station -- appears to be a videotape of the murder of Professor D.E. Rusk, which occurred last Thursday night in the faculty parking garage on the university campus.

98 SCENE ON TELEVISION

98

The faculty garage, but this time seen from a completely different angle. This is not -- repeat not -- the video recorded by the security camera. This video was shot from a position approximately where the Jimmy was parked.

For a few seconds, nothing moves. We see the Professor enter the shot, walk toward his car. As before, there's no sound. He removes his keys from his pocket, approaches the driver's side of his car. He puts the key into the lock. Then, without warning, he suddenly falls in a heap to the concrete floor.

99 ANGLE - COLUMBO

99

He stares at the television, truly baffled by what he's just seen.

CUT TO

100 INT. FRATERNITY ROOM - NIGHT

100

Justin and Cooper are staring at their television. The News Anchor is back, blabbing on about the sensational footage they just screened, but Justin's got the remote in his hand and he's already muted the sound. The silence in the room is intense. Finally, they look at one another, see their own chalky faces reflected in each others' eyes.

CONTINUED

100 CONTINUED

100

And for the first time we see a tremor in Justin's ice-cold nerve.

JUSTIN

How the hell did they get that?

Cooper can't answer; doesn't have an answer. He just shakes his head. Justin erupts.

JUSTIN

(vicious)

How the hell did they get that!

But still, from Cooper, only confused and frightened silence.

CUT TO

101 OMITTED

101

101A EXT. TV STATION KRVA - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING

(X)

101A

101B INT. TV STATION

(X)

101B

(X)

Columbo's walking through, asking directions, being pointed in various directions. He's fascinated by the hustle and bustle, the array of equipment, the sets on wheels, the oversized photos on the walls, etc. But he also appears anxious; in a hurry.

102 INT. SMALL STUDIO - NIGHT

102

It's the studio from which they broadcast the news program we saw earlier; we can recognize the set, and so can Columbo as he walks in. There's nothing going on just now, only a few crew people doing whatever they do, and a PRODUCER looking over some pages of text. He notices Columbo, ignores him, then looks again.

PRODUCER

(skeptical)

Lieutenant Columbo?

Columbo nods, heads toward him.

COLUMBO

Yes, sir. You must be....

PRODUCER

Phil Diefendorfer. Nice to meet you.

CONTINUED

102 CONTINUED

102

COLUMBO

Yes sir, and you too, sir. Thanks for agreeing to see me right away. Sometimes we have to move very quickly; I'm sure you're aware of that, sir.

PRODUCER

Sure.

COLUMBO

This videotape of Professor Rusk's murder...that's a very unusual thing. If I understand this correctly, sir, a man by the name of Muldoon brought it to you?

PRODUCER

Right. And the station bought it for twenty-five hundred dollars.

COLUMBO

Just like that, sir? A man walks in with a videotape of what appears to be the murder of a local university professor, he shows it to you, and you buy it for 2500 dollars?

PRODUCER

Well, it wasn't quite that fast, actually. We wanted to know where it came from, of course.

COLUMBO

Of course.

PRODUCER

So we asked him.

COLUMBO

Uh-huh.

PRODUCER

With two of the station's attorneys in the room. Who agreed with us that we should deliver a copy of the tape to the police department immediately. Which we did.

COLUMBO

Yes, I'm aware of that. But where did Mr. Muldoon say he got the tape?

CONTINUED

102 CONTINUED (2)

102

PRODUCER

Last Thursday night he recorded a movie off of some obscure channel -- he has a dish antenna in his yard; picks up close to a hundred channels....

COLUMBO

Is that so.

PRODUCER

Yes. Anyway, today, when he decided to watch the movie, right in the middle of it he saw the shooting in the garage.

COLUMBO

That's where you lose me, sir.

PRODUCER

It's really not all that complicated, Lieutenant. Whoever killed Professor Rusk televised it.

COLUMBO

Excuse me? They what?

PRODUCER

(trying to be very clear)

Someone had to have been televising the murder, Lieutenant. Broadcasting it. Sending a signal from a camera to a receiver. All television signals travel through the air. This particular signal, just by chance, was picked up by Mr. Muldoon's dish antenna while he was recording the movie. So it ended up on his cassette.

COLUMBO

Someone was televising the murder of Professor Rusk?

PRODUCER

No question about it.

COLUMBO

Like with a television camera...like one of those?

He points to the big video cameras mounted on dollies around the stage.

CONTINUED

102 CONTINUED (3)

102

PRODUCER

Possibly. But more likely they would've used something a little more discreet.

COLUMBO

Discreet?

PRODUCER

Smaller.

COLUMBO

Smaller. You mean like those ones we see the guys carrying on the news...?

He pantomimes carrying a Betacam -- awkwardly -- on his shoulder.

COLUMBO

And in the other hand he's got a gun...?

He adds the gun to his pantomime. The whole concept looks pretty ridiculous.

COLUMBO

So he's looking through the camera with one eye, and sighting the gun with the other...?

It's getting more and more preposterous.

PRODUCER

I haven't a clue as to how it was done, Lieutenant, or why it was done, or whether it was one person or an entire crew, or where they were broadcasting to. All I can tell you is one thing for sure: somebody did shoot it...the gun and the moment.

Brief pause.

103 INT. TELEVISION STATION - NIGHT

103

Columbo's finding his way out, deep in thought. But now he suddenly stops. He's staring at one of the giant color photographs on the corridor wall. It's a very dramatic, wide angle shot from behind the helmeted head of an Indy race car driver. We see a part of the car's cockpit, the instruments, several cars in front of him, one alongside him, the track, the stands, etc.

CONTINUED

103 CONTINUED

103

Columbo stares at this photograph, working something out in his head. A CREWMAN walks past, wheeling a camera on a dolly.

COLUMBO

Excuse me, can I ask you a question?

CREWMAN

Shoot.

COLUMBO

The camera that took that picture...was that a television camera?

CREWMAN

You bet. They probably had fifty of them at Indy this year.

COLUMBO

Where? I never see them. Where are they?

The Crewman gestures with his thumb and forefinger, indicating something just a few inches long.

CREWMAN

'Bout so big.

COLUMBO

(amazed)

No. A television camera? That small? Is that a fact?

CREWMAN

Hey, that's nothing. They got cameras in hospitals nowadays that're so small they can stick 'em right up your....

Columbo pales, throws his hands up.

COLUMBO

Thank you very much, sir.

A beat. Then, steadier:

COLUMBO

Thank you very much.

He turns and walks out.

CUT TO

104 INT. FRATERNITY HOUSE - DAY

104

Columbo's walking through the house and then upstairs to the second floor rooms. Cary's showing him the way. Other kids are passing to and fro, checking the rumpled detective out.

COLUMBO

(impressed)

This is some beautiful place; I had no idea.

CARY

Yeah, well, we're kind of the top-of-the-line fraternity; sort of state-of-the-art, you know?

COLUMBO

Sure, I can see that, yes. Back in the days I went to school ...gee, I don't know if there was anything quite like this.

CARY

Where'd you go to college, Lieutenant?

COLUMBO

Oh, I never actually attended college. But I used to go to some parties there every once in a while, you know.

CARY

Sure. There's Justin and Cooper's room, Lieutenant: end of the Hall.

COLUMBO

Thank you very much.

Cary walks off. Columbo approaches the door, knocks.

JUSTIN'S VOICE

It's open, Lieutenant!

105 INT. JUSTIN AND COOPER'S ROOM - DAY

105

Columbo opens the door, smiles in at the two boys. Clearly, they were expecting him. He steps in.

CONTINUED

105 CONTINUED

105

COLUMBO

Hiya, fellas. Listen, I gave your number to one of the detectives; I'm waiting for some information; I told him if it came in before ten-thirty he could try me here. Was that all right?

COOPER

No problem.

COLUMBO

Good. Thanks.

JUSTIN

How'd it go with Joe's brother, Lieutenant? Were you able to see him last night?

COLUMBO

Oh yeah, I saw him all right. And I'd like you to thank your father for me, Justin; and the Dean. That was a very solid lead. I know it came from you fellas in the first place...credit where credit's due, of course....

JUSTIN

What'd he say, Lieutenant? Could he prove where he was last Thursday night?

COLUMBO

Oh yeah, no problem there. He was out drinking...place called Billy's, nearly the beach. It's his favorite hangout. Only thing is, on this particular night, his only witness happens to be his bottle.

COOPER

So he doesn't really have an alibi.

COLUMBO

Not unless Scotch can talk.

JUSTIN

Did you bring him in?

CONTINUED

105 CONTINUED (2)

105

COLUMBO

Well, I don't feel quite ready for that yet. Still got a couple of loose ends. You know.

(suddenly)

Say, did you fellas happen to see that video tape on the news last night?

JUSTIN

Everybody saw it; the whole house was talking about it. Somebody must've bootlegged a copy from the security camera tape, right?

COLUMBO

Oh no, it wasn't that, no.

COOPER

It wasn't?

COLUMBO

No. That's what I wanted to tell you. That's the thing that's bothering me. That tape we've had for almost an entire week. No. This tape -- the one last night -- this was taken from a whole different angle; a whole different part of the garage...where they don't even have a security camera. Don't ask me how, but....

The telephone rings.

COOPER

Probably your call.

(on phone)

Hello. Yeah, he's here, hold on.

He hands the receiver to Columbo.

COLUMBO

Thanks very much

(on phone)

Malloy? Yeah. Yeah? You did? Oh, that's terrific. Yeah, just a second....

He fumbles in his pocket for his note pad, finds it, then searches for a pencil and comes up empty. Justin hands him one. Columbo nods his thanks. Justin and Cooper watch and listen anxiously.

CONTINUED

105 CONTINUED (3)

105

COLUMBO
(on phone; writing
down the info)
Okay, shoot. '76 Ford two-door,
light blue, yeah. 2, A, B, M, 5, 4,
3. Got it. Yeah, good, right.
Thanks, Malloy.

He hands the receiver back to Cooper, looks at the
information he wrote down, stands.

COLUMBO
(absently)
Car he bought when he got paroled
last time.

JUSTIN
Joe's brother?

COLUMBO
Yeah. Be nice to find it, know what
I mean?

COOPER
Sure. Is that one of those loose
ends, Lieutenant?

Columbo grins, nods, like: You kids could make some real
fine detectives one day. He waves, goes to the door.

COLUMBO
I gotta run. Think about that second
tape, will ya, fellas. Maybe you can
help me out on that. That's very
very puzzling.

JUSTIN
Sure.

COLUMBO
Thanks. And don't forget about
thanking your father for me, okay?

JUSTIN
I won't.

COLUMBO
See you later.
(then, remembering;
brightly)
See you in class...Thursday night.

CONTINUED

105 CONTINUED (4)

105

Columbo walks out. The expressions on Justin and Cooper's faces fade like sunsets.

CUT TO

106 INT. JUSTIN'S FAMILY HOME DINING ROOM - NIGHT

106

It's a big, formal room. The family's at the dinner table, just the three of them, looking dwarfed. Several maids and butlers stand discreetly in the b.g. Father's keenly upset.

FATHER

I don't understand what this detective is doing. I truly don't. Why didn't he make an arrest? Why didn't he at least bring the suspect in for questioning? Why didn't he conduct a search!?

MOTHER

Why was he ever permitted to take this case?

FATHER

Every day that passes without something substantial to report to the media forces the attention to the entire community onto this university. We're in the headlines every morning! The damage this is going to do to next year's alumni fund-raising campaign is absolutely incalculable!

MOTHER

(to Justin)

Is there anything more that you and your friends can be doing to help, dear?

In the b.g., a telephone begins to ring.

JUSTIN

We're trying, mother. Coop and some of the guys are out tonight, looking for this creep's car. Maybe....

A LATIN MAID walks in with a telephone, approaches Justin.

MAID

It's for you, Mr. Justin. He said it was very important.

CONTINUED

106 CONTINUED

106

Justin takes the phone, looking very hopeful now.

JUSTIN

Coop?

107 EXT. BILLY'S - NIGHT

107

It's a dive with a parking lot and some cheezy neon advertising beer, cocktails, and pool. It looks pretty quiet tonight. In a phone booth in front of the place we can see Cooper, and we can also see the object of his attention: a light blue Ford Coupe, make-model-license number the same as the one Columbo's looking for.

COOPER

(on phone)

I'm at Billy's. And we just hit the jackpot.

108 INT. JUSTIN'S DINING ROOM - NIGHT

108

Justin can't entirely conceal his thrill. He looks at his Mother and Father.

JUSTIN

Coop's found the guy's car.

A beat, and then Father suddenly rises from his chair.

FATHER

Get me the police!

CUT TO

109 OMITTED

109

109A EXT. STREET - NIGHT

109A

SCREECHING SIRENS. A pair of black and whites whip by, gumballs blazing. The black and whites cut into a parking lot.

109B EXT. BILLY'S BAR - PARKING LOT - WIDE

109B

Headlights and spotlights from two other black and whites are trained on an ND car as the cops shine their flashlights into the car.

109C ANGLING PAST LICENSE PLATE 109C

As two cops check the car doors, find them locked.

109D ANOTHER ANGLE 109D

The cops from the first pair of black and whites pull up to the entrance of Billy's Bar. Hands on gun, they push past Cooper and four or five other rubbernecks, and hurry into the bar.

109E INT. CAR - ANGLING PAST DOOR LOCK 109E

as one of the cops inserts a paper-thin steel jimmy into the window mechanism, and pop the door lock.

109F WIDE ANGLE 109F

Malloy pulls up in an unmarked car, stops. Columbo's right behind him in the Peugeot. As they get out of their cars, a DETECTIVE, badge stuck in breast pocket, comes out of the rear entrance.

DETECTIVE

Malloy. Your suspect's not in there.
My men are checking the neighborhood.

MALLOY

Good.

109G ANOTHER ANGLE 109G

As Columbo falls in beside Malloy, he sees a cop block Justin and his father from crossing the police line at the entrance to the parking lot.

109H ANGLING CAR - LOW 109H

Columbo and Malloy watch as the cops complete their search of the front of the car, move into the back, remove the seat.

109I GUNNING THROUGH BACK OF CAR 109I

Columbo and Malloy watch as one of the cops strains to reach down into the frame beneath where the backseat was.

CONTINUED

109I CONTINUED

109I

COP

I think I got it. Gimme a ballpoint.

His partner passes him a ballpoint pen. The cop sticks it down into the frame and probes around.

109J JUSTIN, FATHER

109J

watching from behind the police line. Justin sees something O.S., nudges his father, who follows his look ---

109K ANGLING STREET

109K

A very unhappy John Doyle, his hands cuffed behind his back is being walked into the parking lot by three cops.

109L ANGLING COLUMBO, MALLOY

109L

also watching.

109M ANOTHER ANGLE

109M

The cop rises up out of the backseat with a Colt .45 on the pen, holds it up triumphantly in front of Columbo and Malloy.

MALLOY

(yells to the cops
with Doyle)

Okay, take 'im downtown. Hold 'im
for questioning.

The cops walk Doyle to a black and white. Ever helpful, Cooper steps forward, opens the back door.

COLUMBO

(to the cop with the
.45)

Get that to ballistics, right away.

Columbo catches Justin's father's eye, points to the gun

COLUMBO

(shouts to Justin's
father)

We found the gun. We're taking it
down to ballistics.

CONTINUED

109M CONTINUED (2) 109M

Justin's father gives Columbo an imperial nod, turns and walks away. Justin makes a circle of his thumb and forefinger, makes an okay sign.

109N FAVORING COLUMBO 109N

returning the okay sign.

109O JUSTIN 109O

cupping his hands around his lips ---

JUSTIN
(shouting past
Columbo)
Coop. Coop. Good work, Coop.

109P COLUMBO 109P

turning to see Cooper closing the door of the police car behind Doyle and the cop. Cooper gives Justin a thumbs up sign, as we:

CUT TO

110 EXT. CAMPUS - DAY 110

The Jimmy cruises merrily along, heading toward the Stanford Whitcomb Building, Justin and Cooper looking relaxed and confident. They turn down the ramp.

111 EXT. RAMP - DAY 111

They stop at the gate arm, glance toward the camera on the wall.

COOPER
It's just us, Joe.

A beat, and then the arm rises.

JUSTIN
(sympathetic)
Cops let you see your brother yet?

JOE'S VOICE
(over speaker)
Not yet. Maybe tomorrow.

CONTINUED

111 CONTINUED

111

COOPER

Hang in there, man.

JOE'S VOICE

Yeah. Thanks, guys.

They drive through, into the garage.

112 INT. FACULTY GARAGE - NIGHT

112

The Jimmy drives in. Justin and Cooper are surprised to see Columbo in the garage, along with the two other men in overalls. Seeing them, Columbo grins happily, waves, calls out to them:

COLUMBO

Hiya, fellas. Do me a favor, will you? Will you park in exactly the same spot you did last Thursday night? Do you remember that? I think it was this one right over here.

He's precisely right, and the boys do as directed. They climb out, lock the doors, walk toward Columbo.

JUSTIN

What's going on, Lieutenant?

COLUMBO

(enthusiastic)

Oh, we're going to have a terrific class tonight, just terrific, very exciting. What we're going to do is recreate the murder of Professor Rusk -- sort of like a class project; maybe even in place of a final exam.

(indicates the two men in overalls)

These two fellas here, they're also with the department, but on the technical side. They're going to help me set some things up.

Justin and Cooper turn toward the other men just as they begin to remove the canvas tarp that had been covering one of the cars in the garage, revealing it to be Professor Rusk's car, with the personal license plate: CRMNOLG.

Columbo looks very pleased. Justin and Cooper try to look the same.

CUT TO

113 INT. LECTURE HALL - NIGHT

113

The class is assembling, Columbo's there.

COLUMBO

Could I ask all of you to take the
very same seats you had last week.
Thank you very much.

We see the regulars, including Sara and Todd, but not Ollie
Sachs.

TODD

Is it true you're planning to
recreate the murder tonight,
Lieutenant?

COLUMBO

Well, in a manner of speaking. This
isn't really a who done it, but more
of a how he done it.

Laughter from the students. Then:

TODD

There's talk that you arrested a
suspect. Is that a fact?

(X)

COLUMBO

Well, we brought a man in for
questioning, yes.

TODD

(whispers)
Anybody know who?

(X)

JUSTIN

(whispers back)
Heard it was Joe Doyle's brother.

COLUMBO

(over the above)
Does anyone happen to remember
something we were discussing last
Thursday night, which was the role
that Lady Luck plays in a homicide
investigation? Well, she showed up
again this time, just a couple of
days ago, when that video tape
appeared on the news. Let me tell
you: for me, that fifteen-second
video turned this entire case upside
down.

CONTINUED

113

CONTINUED

113

SARA

Was it the tape that lead you to the killer, Lieutenant?

COLUMBO

Oh, absolutely. Once I saw that, and once I began to understand how it was possible, the whole thing began to fall into place.

TODD

How'd the tape fit in, Lieutenant?

COLUMBO

Well, that's what I'm going to demonstrate right now.

He walks over to a large screen television set and switches it on. Everyone stares at the screen and then reacts as the picture comes on and they recognize the faculty garage and Professor Rusk's car.

COLUMBO

What we're looking at right now is a live picture from a camera in the garage downstairs.

TODD

Like from a closed-circuit camera, right? Like the security cameras.

(X)

COLUMBO

No. As a matter of fact what we're seeing here is the same thing as a television broadcast.

SARA

You have a television camera downstairs, Lieutenant?

COLUMBO

That's correct, yes. And this is just what things looked like last week when Professor Rusk left this hall and walked to his car at 8:16.

He walks to a table upon which he's set up some sort of display covered with a cloth which he now removes. More reactions from the students as they see a Colt .45 automatic braced in such a way that it's standing upright, in profile: the barrel pointing away from the students, toward a side wall.

Cooper shifts a little uncomfortably in his chair.

CONTINUED

113 CONTINUED (2)

113

Bent around the trigger of the gun is a thin metal rod which at its other end is attached to a small, molded plastic item, about the size of a pack of cigarettes.

Two small colored wires extend from this device and connect to a black metal box about the size of a deck of cards. And that, in turn, is wired to a twelve-volt battery.

The students are intrigued.

COLUMBO

Now I know this probably looks very high-tech, but believe me, everything you're looking at here is put together from ordinary, inexpensive items that some of you probably even own and aren't even aware of.

He picks up a handy-talky from the table, speaks into it.

COLUMBO

(into handy-talky)
Sachs? Can you read me?

There's some static noise from the handy-talky, and then Ollie Sachs suddenly appears on television, stepping into view alongside Rusk's car. Sachs holds a handy-talky. He waves to the camera.

(X)

COLUMBO

(into handy-talky)
Are you all set down there, Sachs?

SACHS

(futzled; over radio)
All set, Lieutenant.

COLUMBO

Will you show the class what's in your other hand, please?

On TV, Sachs raises his hand, shows that he's holding a small remote device. Justin and Cooper stare at it.

114 INT. LECTURE HALL - NIGHT - FLASHBACK (SLOW MOTION)

114

We're seeing the earlier scene in the hall, moments before Rusk was murdered, but now the scene is replayed in slow motion. As before, we see Justin remove the car keys from his pocket.

115 INSERT - REMOTE 115

The very small device dangles from the chain.

116 RETURN TO SCENE (NORMAL SPEED) 116

COLUMBO
(to the class)
Pay attention to the gun, please.
(into radio)
All right, Sachs; whenever you're ready.

On the screen, Sachs hits a button on the remote. In the lecture hall, the thin metal rod pulls back and the trigger squeezes. The gun fires a blank load, and the students, not expecting it, react noisily. All except Justin and Cooper, that is.

Columbo looks toward them and grins, pleased by his demonstration, apparently looking for approval. Justin returns a tight smile, nods his blessing.

CUT TO

117 INT. GARAGE - NIGHT 117

We can hear the class coming down the stairs, and then the door opens and, with Columbo in the lead, all of them begin to file out into the garage and walk cross the echoing space toward Ollie Sachs and the Professor's car.

The students are excited, animated, all of them seem to be talking at once, but the echo makes their voices unintelligible.

As they come closer there's yet another surprise, at least for Justin and Cooper. The two men who were previously seen in overalls have changed clothes and are now dressed in standard-issue detective suits, complete with gold badges hanging from their pockets. (X)

Columbo approaches the detectives and one of them hands him something. It's a small object in a leather case.

118 INT. LECTURE HALL - NIGHT - FLASHBACK (SLOW MOTION) 118

The earlier scene, again in slow motion.

- 119 INSERT LEATHER CASE 119
- We see Cooper remove the palm-sized object in the leather case from his book bag.
- 120 RETURN TO SCENE (NORMAL SPEED) 120
- The students gather around Columbo as he takes a miniature television set from a matching leather case. It's a beautiful little thing, with a two-inch screen; the whole thing no bigger than the palm of his hand. There is a white dot on the front of the screen. (X)
- 121 INT. LECTURE HALL - NIGHT - FLASHBACK 121
- The earlier scene. Cooper keeps the miniature TV out of sight, on his lap, and now switches it on. It's in a position where both he and Justin can see it. There is a white dot on the front of the screen, too. (X)
- 122 RETURN TO SCENE (NORMAL SPEED) 122
- The two-inch screen of the TV in Columbo's hand brightens and the students find themselves looking at the exact same scene as they saw on the large screen television upstairs.
- COLUMBO
This is what the killer saw...a
picture just like this...right before
he pulled the trigger.
- The students stare at the tiny image, fascinated.
- 123 FLASHBACK 123
- The identical image on the screen in Cooper's hand in the lecture hall.
- We can see now that two very thin strips of colored tape have been applied to the face of the miniature screen, forming a cross hairs pattern.
- 124 RETURN TO SCENE 124
- Something's missing in this equation, and it now begins to occur to the students:

CONTINUED

124 CONTINUED

124

TODD

Where's the camera, Lieutenant? You said there was a television camera down here.

And now the whole class catches on and begins looking around the garage -- with the exception of Ollie Sachs, and maybe Justin and Cooper -- looking for the camera that's transmitting the image to the television set in Columbo's hand.

But Columbo suddenly changes the subject. He looks at Justin and Cooper.

COLUMBO

Do you fellas usually lock your car when you park down here?

COOPER

Lock the car?

(X)

COLUMBO

Yeah.

(X)

COOPER

Are you kidding? In this day and age, Lieutenant? Sure we do.

COLUMBO

Well, that's what's bothering me.

JUSTIN

What's that, Lieutenant?

As Columbo talks, he busies himself by walking around to the far side of the Professor's car, where he begins to remove something that's apparently beside it.

COLUMBO

Last Thursday night, when you drove out of here to call 911, I can't remember you unlocking the doors. It makes that sound, right? Doesn't it? You use that little gizmo you've got on the key chain and it opens the locks by remote control and it makes a loud noise.

No response from Justin or Cooper. But now Columbo suddenly reveals what he's been doing beside the car. He lifts up a full-sized, eerily life-like dummy, dressed in clothes that resemble those that Professor Rusk wore last week. The kids react. It's chilling.

CONTINUED

124 CONTINUED (2)

124

Columbo carefully places the dummy in just the right position alongside the driver's door, then moves the dummy's hand -- which is holding keys -- until it's next to the lock.

COLUMBO

Do you think you could just do that for us now, Justin? Just click the locks? So I could try and remember if I heard that sound. It'll work from this far away, won't it?

JUSTIN

Sure.

They're all looking at Justin and Cooper now, all of them, including the other two detectives -- although not necessarily with suspicion; just interest. Justin removes the keys and the remote from his pocket. He looks at Columbo and then at the Professor's car and the dummy beside it on the driver's side. He looks at the Jimmy, parked about sixty feet away. And he knows it's not by accident that Columbo's made sure no one is standing between the Jimmy and the Professor's car. He looks back at Columbo, patiently waiting.

125 INT. GARAGE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK (SLOW MOTION)

125

From the earlier scene. The Professor approaches his car.

126 RETURN TO SCENE (NORMAL SPEED)

126

Justin moves his thumb onto the remote button.

127 INT. LECTURE HALL - NIGHT - FLASHBACK (SLOW MOTION)

127

Justin and Cooper stare down at the tiny TV screen.

128 INSERT - MINI TV SCREEN

128

The Professor begins to place his key in the door lock.

129 RETURN TO SCENE IN GARAGE (NORMAL SPEED)

129

Columbo stares at Justin.

130 INT. LECTURE HALL - NIGHT - FLASHBACK (SLOW MOTION) 130
Justin and Cooper stare down at the mini-TV.

131 INSERT - MINI-TV AND JUSTIN'S FINGER ON REMOTE 131
We watch as the Professor's head moves directly under the (X)
white dot. Justin presses the remote button.

132 RETURN TO SCENE (NORMAL SPEED) 132
A gun fires! In the garage, the sound is painfully loud.
A bullet slams into the dummy's skull, cracking it. The
reactions from the students are volatile.

But certain expressions remain fixed: Columbo, Justin,
Cooper, and the two detectives. After a beat:

TODD
Where'd that shot come from? (X)

Columbo begins walking toward the Jimmy. (X)

For a moment, just some confusion, and then one after
another the students follow him, realizing that the show
isn't over yet.

When Columbo reaches the Jimmy he raises the hood. He
waits for the others to gather around, to look where he's
looking. And now at last we see it: a .45 automatic and a
miniature television camera (the one we saw in the opening
scene in the back of the toy truck) braced side by side
between the radiator and the grill, very securely clamped
into position so that both the lens of the camera and the
barrel of the gun have clear access to whatever's beyond
the slatted grill.

COLUMBO
(to the students)
This little thing right here? This
is a genuine TV camera, just like the
kind they use at Indianapolis where
they have them stuck all over those
cars. And this little gizmo here,
like the one I had upstairs, which
pulled the trigger, is an automatic
car door locking device. That's all
it is. Pushes the locks up; pulls
them back down. And this...
(MORE)

CONTINUED

132

CONTINUED

132

COLUMBO (Cont'd)
(steps back, gestures
to include the whole
vehicle)

This is the very very clever way the
whole package came in to the garage
last Thursday night...and went out.

A beat. Then, reaching into the engine compartment and
finding the ejected cartridge that landed on the base of
the radiator:

COLUMBO
And finally this. Just like the
cartridge last week, this one
would've fallen through the bottom
eventually. And you see? It even
has these funny little scratch marks
on the side -- same as the one we
found on the street -- from banging
around against all this metal under
here when it was first ejected from
the gun.

The students are enormously impressed, but Justin seems
almost breathlessly shocked.

JUSTIN
I can't believe this, Lieutenant.
Are you telling us that John Doyle
set this whole thing up right under
our noses? In our truck?

COLUMBO
Oh no, no, not John Doyle. No, I
don't really think this sort of thing
is John Doyle's style, do you,
Justin? Coop?

COOPER
But didn't you arrest him for
Professor Rusk's murder?

COLUMBO
John? Arrested? Oh, sure, we took
him down to the station to ask him
a couple of questions, and we kept
him there while we were waiting for
the ballistics report on the gun we
found in the car....

He suddenly turns to one of the other detectives:

CONTINUED

132 CONTINUED (2)

132

COLUMBO

Do we have a copy of that report down here yet?

DETECTIVE

I'll check, Lieutenant.

He raises his handy-talky, mutters something into it. Columbo turns back to Justin and Cooper.

COLUMBO

But arrest him? No, we had no cause to do that.

And now, before anyone can respond to this news, there's the sound of a car. They look toward the ramp. Coming into view, the old Ford coupe, John Doyle's car, pattering down into the garage and toward Columbo and the students.

Justin and Cooper are totally baffled. Malloy cuts the engine, climbs from the car, hands Columbo a document.

MALLOY

Ballistics report, Lieutenant. The gun we found in the car checks out. It was the murder weapon, all right.

Columbo nods, turns to face Justin and Cooper.

JUSTIN

But then that's it, right? What more do you need? You've got the murder weapon, and you found it in John Doyle's car!

COLUMBO

Well, you're half right, Justin. We did find the murder weapon. But the truth is...it's not Mr. Doyle's car.

Dumb silence. Columbo steps over to the car, reaches in, flips down the driver's visor. Justin and Cooper look. There's a photograph clipped to the visor -- of Columbo's dog and a young girl.

COLUMBO

It's my wife's.

(points)

Our dog...Dog. Our niece, Janet. She's fourteen.

Grim silence. The two detectives are approaching Justin and Cooper from behind. The students are slowly beginning to make sense of it.

CONTINUED

132 CONTINUED- (3)

132

COLUMBO
(to Justin and
Cooper)

The description of the car and the
license number and the name of the
bar...? Nobody had any of that
information except the two of
you...after I gave it to you. Nobody
but you could've planted the gun.

The detectives have reached Justin and Cooper and now cuff
them, without resistance. The students are having a
difficult time accepting it as real.

Justin nods. Maybe he knew it all along. It doesn't
appear as if the boys are going to say anything else. The
detectives begin to lead them away.

COLUMBO
Justin...? Cooper...?

They stop, look back.

COLUMBO
Why'd you do it?

For a beat, just the silence. Then:

COOPER
You'd never understand, Lieutenant.

JUSTIN
Oh, I don't know.

COOPER
No? Then try it. Tell him.

JUSTIN
(after a beat)
It was self-defense, Lieutenant. It
was survival of the fittest. It's
how we were raised. It's what we've
been taught.
(another beat; then)
We never really had a choice.

A final look between them and then Justin and Cooper turn
and walk away. Columbo watches them go.

FADE OUT

THE END