

FADE TO BLACK

"FADE TO BLACK"

1 FADE IN:

TITLE SEQUENCE - EXT. TIFFANY THEATER - NIGHT

The TITLES RAMBLE OVER the building excitement of the CROWD in line with the cultishness of the event, the high of being one up and far out and too much.

2 EXT. TIFFANY THEATER - MARQUEE - NIGHT

FEATURING the "ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW" at the midnight screening, the GEEKS lined up outside enact a ceremony every time the picture plays. They dress in weird costumes and act out the scenario vocally, loudly and graphically. A budding anthropologist could write a book about the tribal rites of punk rock/horror movies and teenage libidos.

CARROT-TOPPED KIDS string out down the line, bopping in their bizarre garb, chattering in a Martian tongue only understood by themselves, the insiders.

In the center of the line, ERIC BINFORD blends in with the crowd, which would make him stand out anyplace else. Slightly built, but with disarming good looks, Binford has the pale skin, nervous demeanor and haggard face of a true film junkie. He lives, eats, breathes and dreams movies.

ERIC'S INNER VOICE

Assholes! Look at 'em. They think they know films? Simple-minded sheep. You want to know about films? Ask me. I can close my eyes and see a whole movie on the back of my lids.

Eric bathes in the sustained madness, above it and beyond it at the same time. Suddenly and abruptly, Eric's bracketed by two of his contemporaries, RICHIE and BART, who revel in giving him a hard time. They shove Eric aside and cut in front of his place in line. They ignore Eric's fuming, silent protests as the CAMERA continues to ROAM OVER the pushing/shoving line.

3 INT. TIFFANY THEATER - NIGHT

The loonies act out the lines of dialog, miming the action on the screen in graphic detail. They wallow in being hip, in the know, and any outsiders, if they dare enter, are treated like lepers.

END TITLE SEQUENCE.

4 EXT. ERIC'S HOUSE (99 RIVER STREET) - MORNING

Binford's house, a rambling wreck, sags back from the pathway in typical Venice style. An outside staircase crawls to the second floor. The balcony droops over the sidewalk, casting mean shadows on the broken cement.

The grey-haired MAILMAN delivers an armful of movie magazines and continues on his rounds.

5 INT. BINFORD HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

AUNT STELLA snoozes in her wheelchair where she's been asleep all night. A dribble of foam trails down her chin, spoiling the elegant effect she's aiming for in a long, flowing gown with roses in her hair. Her damp palm limply grasps a cheerleading baton with which she stridently punctuates her life scriptures. Black roots poke through the blonde dye job on her hair. The breezy pictures of her on the wall in dance costume reminds her of her youth, romance and her early career.

Her black kitty (MIDNIGHT) stretches his spine on the window ledge, flexing his nails...spoiled rotten.

6 INT. BINFORD HOUSE - ERIC'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Eric sprawls sidewise on a straw mat tossed on the floor, half-hidden under the patchwork quilt knitted by his late mother. His eyes are glued to the Sinclair two-inch television set on his pillow, the sound earplug in his ear. The drawn shades partly hide that his room houses a film museum. Posters cover the walls, film books line the shelves, a movie projector and a large television set dominate the room, a Betamax attached. A black plaster replica of the bird from "The Maltese Falcon" further attests to his filmic obsession.

Eric consults the television guide in which he's circled all the movies in red. Having stayed awake all night long, he's consuming the last of "Movies 'Til Dawn". When he removes the earplug from his ear, the stilted dialog from "Earth Versus The Flying Saucers", 1956, squawks audibly, just as his Aunt wheels into the room, hell on wheels:

AUNT STELLA

(superciliously acid)

Well, look here, Mr. Smarts' acting ridiculous as usual. That one-eyed monster's going to wreck your eyes, much less soften your brain. You spend all

(MORE)

AUNT STELLA (Cont'd)
 your time daydreaming and watching
 silly movies. You'll never amount
 to anything that way.

Repeatedly whipped by her tongue each day and night, Eric
 snaps off the TV and crawls out from under the covers, his
 pale body shivering in the muted dark.

Aunt Stella flips up the shades and he's stabbed by a shaft
 of sunlight. He flees from it like Dracula, into the cold
 bathroom.

She turns on the radio to the classical hour on KFAC. She
 waves her baton in time with Wagner's "Das Reingold", a heavy
 piece to wake up to.

7 INT. BATHROOM - MORNING

Eric adopts the punchy face of James Cagney in the bathroom
 mirror, puffing his cheeks like a chipmunk to pronounce a
 death sentence on his nagging Aunt.

ERIC
 (in Cagney's voice;
 into mirror)
 Listen... one more word outta you
 and it's curtains, got me?

Aunt Stella, who watches him from the open doorway, ignores his
 performance and maintains her cutting edge.

AUNT STELLA
 (pointing baton)
 Yes, very funny. When I took you in,
 you were nothing. Zero. Your sweet
 mother, bless her soul, if she had
 lived, I'd still be on the stage. You
 know, I was a grand dancer, the best.

Aunt Stella puffs herself up with regal righteousness.

ERIC
 (wearily)
 Yes, Aunt Stella, I know. You were
 the greatest.
 (under his
 hissing breath)
 What a crock.

AUNT STELLA

If you can get yourself ready, I need some fresh greens from the store. My foot's acting up again and broccoli's the only thing that will cure it.

Eric defiantly extracts a stale Twinkie from under the bath towel and eats it while he shaves his sprouting beard with a Remington electric that PURRS erratically.

AUNT STELLA (Cont'd)

If you insist on eating that junk food, you'll end up in the hospital with the Coca Cola bends, you idiot.

ERIC

(rotely)

Yes, Aunt Stella. You're absolutely right.

The rack under her wheelchair supports a stack of health food fadist magazines, from 'Preventive Medicine' to a book entitled "Carrots Can Make You Well."

AUNT STELLA

(keeping time
to the movie)

You need something like carrot juice in the morning to keep you fit.

Aunt Stella noses about the vast array of electronic and video equipment stacked in the stifling room. She disdainfully pokes a stack of film reels on the table with her chrome baton.

AUNT STELLA (Cont'd)

Every penny you make, you waste on movies... television... and those tapes... You're like a walking, talking robot.

Having finished his toilet, Eric turns to her, his face once more contorted into a reasonable facsimile of James Cagney's who he slightly resembles anyway.

ERIC

(Cagney's voice)

Look Auntie, get off'a my back, will ya?

Aunt Stella shakes her head like there's no hope.

AUNT STELLA

I will when you stop acting like a crazy person.

8 INT. ERIC'S BEDROOM - DAY

She wheels into the living room as he re-enters his domain, now brightly lit. He leans up close to a poster of "White Heat", starring James Cagney, the picture he aped in the bathroom, running his sensitive fingers over it lovingly. Next, Eric opens his wardrobe which displays a vast array of film costumes he's accumulated from auctions, pawn shops and garage sales.

9 As he dresses (not in costume), the CAMERA PANS the STARS, TITLES and STILL PICTURES of the great movies, spelling out the very life force that keeps Eric alive.

Titles such as: GUN CRAZY, THE THING, ATTACK OF THE FIFTY-FOOT WOMAN, ISLAND OF LOST SOULS, DR. CYCLOPS, THE CREATION OF THE HUMANOIDS, BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN, THE GHOUL, METROPOLIS, THEM, THE FLY, WHITE PONGO, ROBOT MONSTER, RETURN OF DR. X, and etcetera, should conjur up an eerie offbeat unsettling feeling, underscored by the tense MUSIC that begins under the scene and will repeat as Eric's theme throughout.

10 EXT. VENICE BEACHFRONT - DAY

As the FREAKS and GOOF-OFFS stretch themselves and awaken for another day of loafing, MARILYN O'CONNOR races down the bike path on roller skates. Her blonde hair whips in the breeze and she good-naturedly waves to those she knows and those she doesn't. Her brain appears to be empty, but looks are deceiving.

Her tights and slick body have a rousing effect on the predatory MALES lining the walkway. She smiles, especially at the WOLF WHISTLES, even from a DIRTY BUM. She's a hot number and she knows it. For the record, even without much makeup, she's a dead ringer for Marilyn Monroe.

11 EXT. WINDWARD AVENUE - DAY

She whips along, passing the newly refurbished boutiques, sandwiched between seedy liquor stores and dusty knickknack shops. She heads for "Hot Wheels", a high fashion roller skate rental and sales outfit.

12 INT. BINFORD HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Eric creates rivers of yellow with his eggs, not eating, avoiding altogether the orange juice, the papaya enzyme and the whole wheat toast.

Across the table, Aunt Stella munches on a raw carrot, her prominent chin protruding. She shoves aside a stack of Betamax movie tapes.

AUNT STELLA

(to Eric)

I wish you'd eat your breakfast
the way you devour those tapes.

Eric grasps the untouched half grapefruit in front of him, hefting it like Sandy Koufax about to wind up.

INTERCUT: flash of James Cagney slamming a half grapefruit into Mae Clark's kisser in "Public Enemy".

ERIC

(Cagney's voice)

Aunt Stella, you're gonna eat those
words.

AUNT STELLA

Don't sneer at me. Grapefruit's a
tonic. Provides Vitamin C without
the acid. Listen to me for a change.

For a brief flicker of a second, it appears Aunt Ella's about to play the Mae Clark part to Eric's Cagney.

Instead, Eric drops the fruit into his plate and kicks away from the dingy table.

AUNT STELLA (Cont'd)

Where are you going? Come back
here, you upstart. You can't go
to work on an empty stomach.

13 EXT./INT. HOT WHEELS SHOP - DAY

Marilyn opens the door with a key and flips the "Closed" sign to "Open". As she pokes behind the counter and closes the cash register, a straight arrow arrives from the bank across the street, moon-faced DAVE POWERS, Joe Schmo from Kokomo.

Marilyn shines on as artistic and organic. Next to her, Dave comes off as double knit, plastic, and artificial.

DAVE

(munching peanuts)

Good morning, beautiful. How about
some coffee and a danish?

Dave's girth proves his interest in food and drink.

MARILYN

Sorry, Dave. I just opened. Maybe later.

The way she says, "later" means "never", but he's undeterred.

DAVE

What are you doing for lunch?

Marilyn applies perfume from her pocket atomizer.

MARILYN

Sorry. I have an important appointment.

He hands her a bag full of change and bills for the register.

DAVE

Thought I'd save you the trouble of coming over to the bank for the money.

MARILYN

You're a sweetheart.

She extracts the loot from the bag and fills the register for the day's business.

DAVE

(pining for her)
How about going to dinner and a movie tonight?

MARILYN

(putting him off gently)
I don't think so, I'm too tired, maybe next week.

DAVE

(nonplussed)
How about Tuesday?

MARILYN

We'll see. I don't know my schedule yet.

Dave buttons his coat and brushes nonexistent lint off his sleeve.

DAVE

(angrily)

What do you want out of life anyway?

MARILYN

(matter-of-factly)

Dave, I'm sick'a this store. I want to get out... to travel and have nice clothes.

DAVE

How do you expect to do that?

Marilyn flicks through a current copy of WET magazine.

MARILYN

By being a model.

DAVE

A model? What a life. You stand around in pink underwear while horny guys with cigars and hot breath paw you all over. Why not marry me instead?

MARILYN

Models make good money. Besides, then nobody can complain about my accent.

DAVE

Well, how come you have such a stiff (thick) British accent if you're not from England?

MARILYN

Because when I grew up in Baltimore, I talked like a truckdriver. I knew if I was going to get ahead, I'd have to do something about my voice.

(disdainfully)

Worked perfectly -- Now I own a skate store.

DAVE

Certainly, you're your own boss, but it's too much strain for a woman.

MARILYN

Look, I wanna be somebody. I wanna walk down the street and have people ask me for my autograph.

DAVE

Oh, Marilyn, come on, you're dreaming.

MARILYN

(riled up)

So what? Dreams make things happen. Why not for me?

DAVE

Have it your way.

The entrance of DOREEN PAPPAS cuts short further conversation. Doreen is older, darker and more street-wise than Marilyn. She treats her blonde counterpart like a younger sister.

DAVE (Cont'd)

Hi, Doreen.

(to Marilyn)

See you later.

Dave makes tracks back to the bank.

DOREEN

(commenting on Dave)

What's with the angry walrus?

Marilyn calms down but her jaw works stiffly from hidden tension.

MARILYN

He's always putting me down for wanting to be independent.

DOREEN

Typical. A fat cat with no sympathy.

MARILYN

It's not that. He means well. He wants to take care of me.

DOREEN

Someday, I'd like to do Dave's astrological reading. I think he was born under the sign of a hamburger.

Unable to remain serious for long, lightening in mood, Marilyn sings a few bars of a familiar song in a familiar voice...to Doreen's delight.

MARILYN
 (kiddingly in
 Marilyn Monroe's
 voice)

'Every baby needs a dad-dad-daddy...
 to keep her worry free...'

14 EXT. BINFORD HOUSE - DAY

Eric exits the house to a chorus of AD-LIB harpings from Aunt Stella. He grabs a new issue of "Bright Lights" and a fresh reprint of "Film Comment" from the mailbox before turning back to his Aunt.

ERIC
 (acting superior)
 Tell me James Cagney's name in
 'White Heat'.

Aunt Stella fumes on the porch in her perpetual sour mood.

AUNT STELLA
 I don't know and I don't give a
 damn.

ERIC
 Cody Jarrett, that's who!
 (Cagney's voice)
 Top a the world, Ma!

Eric seizes his head in the mind-bending, pain-wracked gesture employed by Cagney in 'White Heat'.

AUNT STELLA
 (livid)
 I'm not your mother, it's Aunt
 Stella, you fool!!!

Eric flees down the walk toward the bus stop, wearing a leather jacket and high boots, unusual attire for a sunny day...but it relates to his job.

15 EXT. WILSHIRE BOULEVARD - DAY

Traffic builds up as the workers rush to their nine-to-fives.

16 INT. R.T.D. BUS - DAY

Eric sits in a window seat, alternately reading his film magazines and hungrily devouring all billboards and marquees advertising films.

17 EXT. VENICE APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

A crookedly parked U-Haul truck with Massachusetts plates dwarfs the personal effects piled on the sidewalk.

DOREEN PAPPAS (O.S.)

Your heartline runs parallel to the mind which gives you great powers of intuition and an extremely strong sex drive. You know, we're a lot alike, Moriarty....

Doreen's pulsing VOICE PLAYS OVER DOCTOR MORIARTY, a hip man dressed in accented khaki.

Doreen firmly grasps his wrist and turns over his right hand. She fits in with the scene...an amateur psychic, Venice style.

MORIARTY

Yeah, that's the problem. Otherwise, we'd have gotten together long ago. Because I always liked you, Doreen.

DOREEN PAPPAS

(blushing
uncomfortably)

Well, now that you're moving back into the neighborhood, we can explore old possibilities.

Moriarty hefts one end of a couch.

MORIARTY

Not likely, you've changed too much. Give me a hand.

DOREEN PAPPAS

(lifting her end)

Oh, you're Mr. Consistency, huh? I remember when you'd cross the street if you saw a cop and now you're working for 'em.

MORIARTY

I've always believed in personal growth. That's why I'm a shrink.

DOREEN PAPPAS

(contesting him)

How about me? Otherwise, I'd still be a housewife in Cambridge, married to that dud at M.I.T.

Moriarty's smile reminds one of Tom Hayden, a lot of passion smolders in his psyche.

18 INT. R.T.D. BUS - DAY

To escape the nonsensical chatter of the FAT LADY next to him, Eric trips out.

INTERCUT: SHOT of a crab killing a human being from "Attack Of The Crab Monsters," 1957.

19 INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - STAIRWAY - DAY

Doreen and Moriarty continue their intellectual dalliance, hers more earthy than his, as they trudge up the stairs under a load.

DOREEN PAPPAS

(cooly)

I understand a lot of psychiatrists have sex with their patients.

MORIARTY

And what about psychics?

They laugh in concert, touché.

20 INT. R.T.D. BUS - DAY

Eric buries his face in his movie books, his mind filled with images from his night's viewing.

INTERCUT: A SHOT of the zombies from "Night Of The Living Dead", 1968, crossing an open field, arms outstretched, in pursuit of living prey, a lovely young girl.

21 INT. MORIARTY'S NEW APARTMENT - DAY

Although spare, and in need of a lot of fixing and arranging, the place reflects a basically sunny personality. Moriarty and Doreen spar as they work.

DOREEN

Are you excited about your new job?

MORIARTY

Yeah, my private practice wasn't where it's at.

DOREEN

You're starting to sound like a flower child instead of an ex-radical.

MORIARTY

I haven't changed one bit. I'm planning to turn the police department around, just like in the old days. (on campus).

Doreen stops Moriarty from unpacking a box. She strokes his wrist to read the palm lines, and also to hold his hand more intimately.

DOREEN

You're going to be the authority figure and the criminals are going to hate you as much as we hated the pigs, but I think you can handle that.

(ominously)

It's the ones that live in a dream world, outside of reality... that will be your test.

Doreen's voice weighs heavily with portent.

22 INT. R.T.D. BUS - DAY

At a stop at Wilshire and Bundy, a BADASS, smoking a cigarette, leaps on the bus with a chip on his shoulder. The PASSENGERS instinctively sense trouble and the BUS DRIVER tries to head him off.

BUS DRIVER

(to Badass)

No smoking. Can't you read?

BADASS

(belligerently)

What'd you say? It's good for my health.

Growling all the while, the Badass traverses the aisle, deliberately knocking into EVERYBODY. He seats himself across the aisle from Eric, next to a trim BLONDE wearing shorts. He drops his hammy hand on her knee which she removes like it was radioactive.

BLONDE

(to Badass)

Hands off.

BADASS

(grinning)

Just testing the goods. Don't want a leg too skinny.

He squeezes her knee again. The Blonde exasperately removes his hand again. The other passengers begin to get nervous and either look out the window or at their feet.

The Badass puts his arm around the Blonde and she lets it remain there. She attempts to stand up but he blocks her exit.

Eric imagines rescuing her from her plight.

INTERCUT: SHOT of Hopalong Cassidy wresting the heroine from the slimy arms of the villain and punching him out.

The Badass feels his powers of intimidation growing. He turns to Eric.

BADASS

(to Eric)

What you lookin' at, pipsqueak?

He blows smoke in Eric's face. Eric avoids the challenge by dipping into his film magazines, retreating into fantasy.

23 EXT. R.T.D. BUS - DAY

Eric jumps off the bus as if pursued by devils. He knocks into a tall BLACK DUDE who's about to board.

BLACK DUDE

Hey, man, watch where you're going.

He shoves Eric aside and hops on the bus which whooshes away from the curb.

Eric brushes himself off, feeling light in the back pocket. He dashes madly after the receding bus.

ERIC

(on the run)

HEY! COME BACK HERE! YOU-STOLE MY WALLET!!!

24 INT. R.T.D. BUS - DAY

The Black Dude calmly sifts through Eric's moth-eaten Hopalong Cassidy wallet, disappointed at the small take and chuckling over the photographs of James Cagney and Marilyn Monroe, Eric's two idols.

25 EXT. VENICE POLICE STATION - DAY

In another town, the building might house a dairy or a kite factory. Looking more like a Lionel toy than the real McCoy, the pasty stucco building bears no distinguishing marks, basking in the benign California sunlight.

Doctor Moriarty's ten-speed bike stands chained to the flagpole on the front lawn, his name stencilled to the downtube on the frame.

26 INT. VENICE POLICE STATION - CAPTAIN'S OFFICE - DAY

CAPTAIN GALLAGHER came up through the ranks...the hard way. His brush cut and brusque manner resembles that of a Legionnaire, French or American.

Moriarty sits uncomfortably in the hot seat across the walnut desk littered with unfiled reports.

CAPTAIN GALLAGHER

(bitterly, handing
over paper)

Here's a list of the juvenile
offenders you're going to see first.
They should be locked up but the
judge is handing 'em over to you
instead.

MORIARTY

Does that mean you don't like my
rehab program, Captain?

CAPTAIN GALLAGHER

(challengingly)

I'm required to give you space and
you got six months to make this
thing work. How do you plan on
doing that?

MORIARTY

By gaining their trust.

Gallagher leans across the desk confidentially.

CAPTAIN GALLAGHER

Yeah, a candyass like you might
get these birds to talk. We could
use that information to nail 'em.

MORIARTY

No dice, Gallagher. My material's
strictly confidential.

CAPTAIN GALLAGHER

For an Irishman, you got a thick
head, Moriarty.

Gallagher buzzes the intercom on his desk twice without speaking
into it.

CAPTAIN GALLAGHER (Cont'd)

We're a little short on space.

An attractive brunette policewoman, ANNE ARCHAMBAUD, thrusts
her body into the room. The baggy uniform can't hide her
wholesome sensuality.

CAPTAIN GALLAGHER

(nodding yo-yo like)

Anne. This is Doctor Moriarty.
Show him his office, will you?

As Moriarty stands, Anne shakes his hand warmly.

ANNE
(to Moriarty)
Oh, yes. I've heard about you.

Gallagher frowns at their chuminess.

CAPTAIN GALLAGHER
(to Moriarty)
Hey, Irish. We're outta parking spaces.

MORIARTY
(philosophically)
That's O.K. I ride a bike, Captain.

Gallagher gives him the patented "he's loco" look and springs back in his chair.

CAPTAIN GALLAGHER
(to himself)
Jesus, a conservation kook on top of it.

27 INT. POLICE STATION - HALLWAY - DAY

Anne steers Moriarty through the new wing into the old, obviously Siberia dead ahead.

MORIARTY
Are you another cop that doesn't believe in rehabilitation?

ANNE
Why? Do all cops look the same to you?

MORIARTY
(sizing her up)
No. There's definitely a difference between you and Gallagher.

ANNE
(flattered)
Oh really, what's that?

MORIARTY
He has holes in his gumshoes.

ANNE
 (stopping at door)
 Here we are.

28 INT. MORIARTY'S OFFICE - DAY

Given the back half of a jail cell parcelled off by a crude masonite wall, Moriarty sags pessimistically. The lone light bulb conjurs up visions of beaten confessions, ugly stoolies, the cries of a thousand thugs spilling their guts.

ANNE (Cont'd)
 (trying to be
 cheerful; bored)
 Well, here's your new home. Not
 exactly a place to counsel
 Boston housewives.

MORIARTY
 How'd you know about that?

ANNE
 I know everything about you, Mr.
 Moriarty. It's all in your file.

Moriarty circles the dismal room, trying to remain bouyantly optimistic in this hostile camp.

MORIARTY
 Anything incriminating?

ANNE
 No. The F.B.I. finally closed
 their political file on you.
 But your personal life made for
 fascinating reading.

Anne stops at the door before leaving.

ANNE (Cont'd)
 (suggestively)
 And now here you are in the flesh.

Moriarty nods silently as she slams the door behind her, leaving him with his list and high hopes.

29 EXT. CONTINENTAL FILM SERVICES - DAY

Eric enters the red brick building through the shipping department where a truck loads up with steel film cans and one sheets.

Everybody hits him with AD-LIB verbal abuse.

30 INT. CONTINENTAL FILM SERVICES - HALLWAY - DAY

Eric skulks down the hall, past the vast array of current film one sheets, a CACOPHONY of one-minute spot advertisements for new productions filling the air. The AD-LIB razzing continues.

31 INT. ERIC'S CUBICLE - DAY

He enters a small anteroom carved out of a larger one by a makeshift partition. A crude sign hanging on the wall reads "Binford's Studio." His favorite posters and movie stills plaster the walls.

Eric picks up a stack of invoices and heads for the boss' office.

32 INT. MR. BERGER'S OFFICE - DAY

MORTY BERGER lives in a state of constant agitation. Even when asleep, the blood vessels in his neck threaten to erupt. For him, life remains combat, and he doesn't distinguish between friend and foe, they're all the same to him.

Eric stands in the doorway, in awe, in silence, in fear, while Berger ramrods the customer on the other end of the telephone.

MORTY BERGER

(into telephone)

What the hell you talkin' about?
Those ads went out yesterday.

(looking at
Eric)

My boy delivered them at two
o'clock.

Eric shakes his head correctively "no" but that's not the point. Berger lies to everybody with the same deadpan.

MORTY BERGER (Cont'd)

(sweetly into
telephone)

Come on, Sid. Pay the bill and
I'll send ya another batch right
away. Maybe there was a mixup,
you schmuck.

Berger slams the phone on the hook with A-bomb ferocity.

Eric gingerly steps forward with the invoices which Berger snatches from his fist, tossing them on his cluttered desk.

MORTY BERGER

Binford, you're a fuckup. Sid Fine just cancelled our service. You never delivered the one sheets and spots yesterday. Where the hell you at, buddy?

ERIC

You sold him the stuff but it wasn't ready in time, remember? The printer was delayed.

MORTY BERGER

Bullshit.

(changing course)

Why are you late again? I'm cutting your paycheck, if you last out the week. Get this stuff delivered!!!

ERIC

But Mr. Berger. I lost my money... I was gonna ask you for a few bucks for busfare 'til payday.

MORTY BERGER

...Tough shit. Walk. What do you think I had to do when I was a kid in Brooklyn? I never had a nickle to take the subway.

ERIC

(pleading)

But I was robbed. A pickpocket snatched my wallet.

MORTY BERGER

(missing the point)

That's the whole problem with our society. Nobody stands up to the criminals nowadays. It's time the citizens fought back.

ERIC

But I was getting off the bus and...

MORTY BERGER
 (apoplectic)
 ...Forget it!!!

Mr. Berger clutches his side in pain. He quickly downs two pills from a brown bottle.

MORTY BERGER (Cont'd)
 Damn! That's better. The old
 ticker's acting up again... whew...

He shoves a handful of cassettes into Eric's trembling hands.

MORTY BERGER (Cont'd)
 Get these spots over to the Nuart
 right away, then to K.T.L.A.
 They're waiting for 'em. Haul
 ass!!!

Eric deflates in spirit, but his anger against injustice soars.

33 EXT. HOT WHEELS SHOP - DAY

Marilyn scoots out of the shop after hanging an "Out to Lunch" sign in the window.

Across the street, Dave Powers spots her as he leaves the bank and crosses rapidly, holding up an unidentified object.

DAVE
 (out of breath)
 ...Marilyn, wait...

MARILYN
 (looking back)
 Is it a present for me?

DAVE
 (waving a flier)
 We can get two chicken lunches for
 the price of one with this coupon!

MARILYN
 (crestfallen)
 Thanks, Dave, I'm not in the mood
 for chicken.

34 EXT. CONTINENTAL FILM SERVICES - DAY

Eric prepares to leave on the company Vespa to deliver the sixty-second spots to K.T.L.A. Before he mounts up, two co-workers (about his age) run out of the building to the loading dock. RICHIE and BART use Eric when necessary, but they're not his friends. In fact, he has no friends other than his dreams and his movies.

RICHIE
 Hey, Eric. Settle this, will ya?
 What was the fat man's name in the
 'Maltese Falcon'?

ERIC
 (savoring the moment)
 That's easy.

BART
 Okay, okay. What is it?

ERIC
 (teasing)
 What'll you give me?

RICHIE
 (hotly)
 Come on, man, we ain't got all day.

ERIC
 (relenting)
 Casper Gutman.

RICHIE/BART
 (simultaneously)
 Damn it! That's right!

Richie pays Bart five dollars to settle their wager. They're about to walk off without any thanks.

ERIC
 Hey, wait, I got one for you about
 'Casablanca', but it's gonna cost
 you money.

The two weasels look at each other. "Casablanca's" Richie's favorite film.

RICHIE
 What's the bit? I know that film
 backwards and forwards. I seen it
 fifty times.

ERIC
 You gotta answer my question in
 forty-eight hours or you pay me
 twenty bucks.

Richie and Bart figure that between the two of them, they can come up with the answer.

RICHIE

(enticed)

No sweat. What if we get it right?

ERIC

I'll give you fifty bucks.

BART

I think it's a trick.

ERIC

Also, no fair looking at the (film) print or the script.

Richie's pride in his expertise has been stung and his knowledge of trivia about this favorite movie has been challenged.

RICHIE

(strongly)

You know that I know the film better than anybody. You sure it's not a sucker bet?

ERIC

No tricks. The answer's in the film. Put up or shut up.

RICHIE

It's a lot of dough, but it's a deal.

Eric mentally hitches up his pants and sharpens his wits, pausing for effect.

ERIC

What's Rick's full name?

The two hamsters look at each other gleefully.

RICHIE

You mean Rick who owns the Cafe Americain, the Bogart character?

ERIC

Yeah.

It appears to be too easy for words, but when Richie purses his lips to answer...

RICHIE

(slightly deflated)

Lemme think a minute.

Bart looks baffled and slightly scared. Richie should know and so should he but they're both stumped.

ERIC

Take your time.

Eric pulls on his C.F.S. crash helmet and gloves and boots the kickstarter on the Vespa.

Because of the murderous cross-traffic at the street, Eric's forced to stop in the lot and he accidentally overhears snide remarks which burn his ears.

RICHIE (O.S.)

(referring to Eric)

They broke the jello mold after they made him, didn't they?

BART

You said it. What a ding-dong.

ERIC'S INNER VOICE

(fuming)

They'll pay for that.

Eric guns the Vespa into traffic with a vicious squealing of tires, indicating that he's subject to wild and violent swings in mood.

35 EXT. "DER GREASE PIT" - DAY

Everything about this fast food franchise spells ptomaine so, of course, it's packed to the gills with EATERS of all descriptions, hungrily devouring the endless supply of horsemeat hot dogs, rancid fries and gaseous liquids.

At a redwood bench for four, Marilyn and Dave mull over life's challenges while eating their food.

DAVE

Why are you so hung up on Marilyn Monroe?

MARILYN

I identify with her. She grew up in an orphanage, too.

DAVE

This town's full of girls with gardenias in their hair who tried to make it big and when they didn't, ended up being a waitress or dead under the Hollywood sign.

At this point, Eric skids into the parking lot on the Vespa and parks it, stripping off his riding gear. He ambles to the take-out counter to order.

ERIC

(to COUNTERMAN)

Gimme onion rings, two cheese/
avocado potato puffs and three
jalapeno stuffed hot dogs with
onions and relish. No mayo.

COUNTERMAN

The usual? Comin' up.

MARILYN (O.S.)

(in Marilyn
Monroe's timbre)

'I wanna be loved by you...
Just you, nobody but you.
I wanna be loved by you,
by you alone....'

With his back turned, Eric shivers with delight at the SOUND of Marilyn's sylvan voice. He slowly turns, dumbfounded, a stunned witness to her performance. She definitely looks like Marilyn Monroe. Has he found the reincarnation of his favorite movie siren?

INTERCUT: Marilyn Monroe singing the song "I Want To Be Loved By You" from SOME LIKE IT HOT, dressed in her black decollete wonder.

Tap dancing on the driveway blacktop, Marilyn completes the Monroe routine to SCATTERED APPLAUSE from the TRUCK DRIVERS and other FAST FOOD ADDICTS.

Eric's fascination overcomes his shyness. He approaches Marilyn, breathlessly.

ERIC

Could you possibly be Marilyn...
Monroe?

MARILYN

You got the Marilyn half right.

DAVE

(to Eric)

Hey, fella, can't you see she's
putting you on?

ERIC
 (to Marilyn)
 I just wanted to meet you... I'm
 a great admirer of Miss Monroe's.

DAVE
 (tinge of jealousy)
 Here we go again, another Freak
 scene.

Marilyn sprays herself with perfume from her atomizer.

MARILYN
 (chastizing in
 Marilyn Monroe's
 voice)
 Dave, he's kinda cute.
 (to Eric)
 You're just being sweet, aren't
 you?

Encouraged by her compliment, Eric hastily dips into his fund
 of trivia knowledge, the only way he can think of to impress
 her and shut up Dave.

ERIC
 (smiling)
 What movie did Tom Ewell take you
 (Marilyn Monroe) to in 'The Seven
 Year Itch'?

DAVE
 Big deal, who cares?

MARILYN
 (play-acting)
 I forgot... is it famous?

ERIC
 (prompting)
 A horror movie.

DAVE
 (to Marilyn)
 Why encourage him?

Marilyn plays along to bug Dave and string out Eric at the same
 time, a harmless prick tease can't hurt.

MARILYN
 (coily)
 Let me think. Was it 'Frankenstein'?

Nope. ERIC

'The Werewolf'? MARILYN

Now you're just guessing. ERIC

DAVE
(to Eric)
Who the hell cares?

Marilyn intends to be kind but it sounds sour to Eric's sensitive ears.

MARILYN
Leave him alone, Dave. Can't you see he really is a fan?

ERIC
(erupting)
'The Creature From The Black Lagoon'!
That's the answer, you stupid dummies!
'The Creature From The Black Lagoon'!

INTERCUT: Still of the gill-like creature climbing from the lagoon, one that everyone recognizes from the 1954 epic, originally filmed in 3-D.

Dave recoils from Eric's violent behavior while Marilyn takes it in stride.

MARILYN
(impressed)
How did you know that?

ERIC
(calming down)
That's my thing. Want to go see a movie tonight?

Eric surprises himself by blurting out the invitation.

DAVE
She's busy.

To be contrary, to be independent or simply to be ornery, Marilyn accepts.

MARILYN
Why not? Lovely idea.

ERIC

(gussing)

Great! Meet me in front of Ships
at eight o'clock.

Marilyn smiles and nods her head.

ERIC (Cont'd)

I gotta go now. See you later.

Eric pays for his food which he doesn't bother to eat in his excitement. He sprints away on the Vespa.

DAVE

(bitingly)

If you go out with that creep,
that's real desperation.

MARILYN

You'll never understand, Dave,
that's the difference between you
and me. I really love people
and they love me, too.

Poor Dave, square as a domino, musters up an "oh, brother" look.

36

INT. BINFORD HOUSE - BATHROOM - EVENING

Eric primps in the mirror, fashioning his image after a photo of Cary Grant taped to the wall. Of course, there's no resemblance, physically or mentally, but in his fantasy, he's a clone of Cary's. He hums softly while he clips on his patterned tie which clashes with his stupid shirt. When done, he looks like he stepped out of Garbage's Quarters.

The outer space WHIRR of Aunt Stella's electrified wheelchair precedes her as she draws up in back of Eric. Her chiffon gown, a copy of a ballet wrap, reaches to the floor.

AUNT STELLA

(checking him
out)

Why the new look?

(looking around).

You even cleaned up your room.

You sure you feel all right?

Eric adopts the devil-may-care stance of Cary Grant.

ERIC

(Cary Grant's
voice, badly
done)My darling.. I've got a most
important date.

AUNT STELLA

If you're Cary Grant, I'm Greta
Garbo. Are you going to the
movies again, as if I had to ask?

Eric backs out of the bathroom.

37 INT. ERIC'S ROOM - EVENING

Eric chucks Aunt Stella under the chin with style and grace.

ERIC

(Cary Grant's
voice)You're absolutely correct, darling,
absolutely correct.(resuming his
voice)May I trouble you for a small loan
at the usual interest rate?Aunt Stella extracts a crisp ten dollar bill from a leather
change purse stuffed with money.

AUNT STELLA

On one condition, that you come
home early....

She hands him the money (on the run) as he squirms out the door.

AUNT STELLA (Cont'd)

I need a back rub tonight....

39 EXT. VENICE BEACH BOARDWALK - PAVILION - EVENING.

As the light begins to fade toward the end of the day, Marilyn
skates along the walk by herself. She stops to watch TWO TEAMS
OF MEN play a fast game of roller hockey.The CAPTAIN of the BLUE TEAM rams into her in chasing the ball
(puck) and knocks her flat. When his big blue eyes meet her
starry brown ones, zero.

JAKE
(to Marilyn)
Sorry, gorgeous.

He immediately jumps up and re-enters the game. Marilyn expected at least a few violins to play, something romantic to happen, but it didn't.

Scant seconds later, the REFEREE blows a whistle signaling the end of the game.

Jake skates over to Marilyn's side.

JAKE (Cont'd)
(to Marilyn)
Say, did I hurt you?

MARILYN
(acting hurt)
No. I'll be okay with crutches.

Jake eyeballs her snazzy figure and her skates.

JAKE
I see you got some hot wheels there.

MARILYN
I keep my ball bearings greased, that's all.

JAKE
Haven't I seen you at the roller rink?

MARILYN
Possibly. I'm there every Monday when it's a private party.

JAKE
That lets me out.

MARILYN
Why? Everybody goes.

JAKE
Not bartenders like me.

MARILYN
(ingenuous)
Can you mix a good margarita?

(Cont.)

35

MARILYN

In my town in the Australian outback, they had no movie house. The man would come around in a truck once a week and show the film outdoors.

ERIC

Someday, I'd like to own my own theater where I could show anything I wanted anytime I liked.

MARILYN

Where do you live?

ERIC

In Venice. My mother's dead.

MARILYN

I never knew my parents. My dad was a drover. I'm told.

ERIC

That's a sheepherder?

MARILYN

Yes.

ERIC

Thought so. I saw that in "The Sundowners" with Robert Mitchum and Deborah Kerr.

36

EXT. HOT WHEELS SHOP - DAY

36

ERIC parks the bike near the front door. Marilyn hops off and kisses him on the cheek.

MARILYN

Thanks. You're a dear. Will I see you soon?

ERIC

Why not meet me in front of Ships in Westwood at eight o'clock.

MARILYN

What film are we going to see?

ERIC

It's a surprise. Bye.

As he sprints away on the Vespa, ANITA comes over to Marilyn.

JAKE

(innuendo)

That's my specialty. I'll mix you one with Jake's personal touch.

39 EXT. WESTWOOD STREETS - NIGHT

Flashing lights, HONKING HORNS, hundreds of movie hungry TEENAGERS and DRIFTERS, COPS and SHOPPERS clog the narrow streets vying for thrills.

On Friday night, lines extend outside every movie theater, no matter what's showing.

40 EXT. SHIP'S COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

Pacing to and fro, Eric nervously wrings his hands, reads the Hollywood Press inside the paper rack, and alternately gazes at his shoes and skyward as he waits for Marilyn.

ERIC

(consulting his Hopalong Cassidy watch)

Wonder where she is, Hoppy?
It's almost showtime.

He shines his shoes on the back of his pants legs, tell-tale signs of the cheap polish staining them.

41 EXT. AVCO FOUR THEATER - NIGHT

The CROWD surges forward, busting the long snakelike queue. Eric, amidst them, takes a pummeling from the eager movie fans anxious to get at the four different screens/shows inside. He repeatedly consults his Hopalong Cassidy watch. Still no sign of Marilyn.

Then...a miracle...it's her. In his excitement, Eric spins the YOUNG LADY on high heels around by the shoulder. It's somebody else...an embarrassing moment for all.

42 EXT. VENICE BEACHFRONT - NIGHT

Underscored by the SOUND of CRASHING WAVES and ROMANTIC MUSIC, Jake and Marilyn breeze along the boardwalk on skates, drinking margaritas.

JAKE

I had a dream last week about a girl who looked exactly like you.

Marilyn coquettishly cocks her head as she skates backward. Jake, the lure, goes for the bait, salivating.

MARILYN

Was she any good?

Jake shakes his head negatively.

MARILYN (Cont'd)

Maybe I can do better.

Jake catches up to Marilyn and stops her, spinning her around. She ends up with her arms wound tightly around him.

He kisses her and she kisses him back. The earth doesn't move but he seems like a nice guy.

43 EXT. WESTWOOD/PARIS THEATER - NIGHT

The exiting CROWD from the earlier show buffets Eric, a salmon swimming up stream, searching desperately for Marilyn.

44 EXT. MARILYN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Marilyn fishes for her front door keys in the pocket of her satin shorts.

Jake flicks his neck like a serpent stalking his prey.

JAKE

Lucky thing it's my night off.

MARILYN

(stalling)

Oh. I forgot. I'm supposed to meet this guy in Westwood.

JAKE (intimidating her)

Yeah, I was right. I figured you for frigid right off.

To prove her lust quotient is normal, Marilyn jams the key in the door, determined to prove him wrong.

45 EXT. WESTWOOD STREETS - NIGHT

Eric combs every alley and street and pathway and parking lot and grassy lane seeking Marilyn.

At the same time, his addled mind concentrates on the various marques, advertisements and banners for the latest movies. He dawdles at the one-sheets, is blinded by the sparkling come-ons, and to help forget Marilyn, immerses himself in his fantasyland.

MANHATTAN, THE ALIEN, SUPERMAN, DAWN OF THE DEAD, FANTASIA, GET OUT YOUR HANDKERCHIEFS, AUTUMN SONATA, WHO'LL STOP THE RAIN, and similar titles and ads transport him into his private universe.

46 INT. MARILYN'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jake lies back in the bed smoking a cigarette while Marilyn combs her hair at the dresser. Jake sighs with a mixture of boredom and fatigue.

Marilyn rushes back to the bedside.

MARILYN

(insecure)

Didn't you like it?

JAKE
 (macho man)
 Don't worry about it. A
 coupla more times with Jake
 and you'll be okay.

Jake pulls a stunned Marilyn back into bed.

47 EXT. R.T.D. BUSSTOP - NIGHT

Covered by a flimsy canopy in mock Tudor style, Eric sits down on the bench to wait for the bus. At the curb, a hot little NUMBER in a mini skirt hitchhikes, flashing her comely legs at the many passing cars. From her wares and her fleshy display of them, it's obvious to all but naive Eric that she's a teenage hooker. (JILL).

ERICK
 (to Jill)
 Say, when's the next bus?

JILL
 I'm not waiting for no bus. I'm
 workin'.

ERIC
 Working? Where you headed?

By distracting her, Jill misses flagging down a long black Cadillac passing by.

JILL
 (angry)
 Shut up, will you, numbnuts. I'm
 trying to hitch a ride... on my
 back. Get it!?

Slowly, the truth sinks into Eric's addled brain.

ERIC
 (hopefully and
 lonely)
 How about me? I've got ten bucks.

JILL
 (sneering)
 For what? Cat food? Get lost.

The black Cadillac evidently circled the block and stops to pick her up. She squeezes into the back seat and into the company of an unseen PATRON clouded by cigar smoke.

JILL (Cont'd)
 (nastily, to Eric)
 Hope you freeze your balls off...
 if you got any.

Jill adds to Eric's discomfort from being stood up by Marilyn. Rejected and dejected, he begins to walk home, not caring if he ever gets there.

48 EXT. BINFORDS' HOUSE - NIGHT

Except for a flickering light in Eric's room, the house is dark. Outside, a bright spotlight illuminates the exterior staircase.

49 INT. ERIC'S ROOM - NIGHT

The room's dramatically lit, etching Eric's preoccupation with James Cagney and Marilyn Monroe, his two favorites. Sitting stiffly in an ornate theater palace seat purchased at an auction, Eric watches his own 8mm print of "Kiss Of Death", with Richard Widmark. He's transfixed, nay mesmerized by the flickering shadows on the wall. He blots out everything else around him. All distractions melt away as his mind fixates on the fantasy world before him. His face registers the delight, the pain and the sorrow he sees on the screen. His lips move silently, repeating every line of spoken dialog. He knows every frame of the picture by heart (as he knows so many).

From the hall the SOUND of his AUNT'S VOICE HOOTS and SCREECHES like an angry old owl, however elegant.

50 INT. HALL - NIGHT

Aunt Stella leans out of her wheelchair, adding punch to her delivery with body English and her wagging baton.

AUNT STELLA
 Eric. Come out of there. What's
 bothering you? You haven't been out
 of that room in two days.

A muted movie soundtrack greets her bat-like ears through the closed door.

AUNT STELLA (Cont'd)
 (yelling)
 If you don't open up, I'm going to
 use the key!!!

51 INT. ERIC'S ROOM - NIGHT

Lost in the shadow world on the wall, Eric doesn't hear her, or want to. Unconsciously, Eric puts on a grey fedora (gangster style) as he continues to watch the film on the wall. His withdrawal from reality, born of depression, is complete.

52 EXT. HALL - NIGHT

Aunt Stella agitates the key in the lock. Managing to turn it, she barges into the room.

53 INT. ERIC'S ROOM - NIGHT

Eric rocks in his theater seat, totally engulfed in the shadow play on the wall, transported to another dimension.

AUNT STELLA (O.S.)

Eric, you lazy bones...
what's your story??? You can't stay
in here forever. This isn't a
charity ward. You go to work,
you eat or you can find another
place to live.

"Kiss Of Death" burns into Eric's brain. He mouths the words uttered spittingly by Richard Widmark as he smacks Colleen Gray across the kisser.

ERIC

(Widmark's voice)

Shaddupp!!!

Aunt Stella circles the room, the electric motor on her wheelchair sounding exaggeratedly like a diesel truck to Eric's sensitized ears.

AUNT STELLA

(acting like a
storm trooper)

This is it!!! Watching movies
again! Spending all your money
on films! Everything's movies,
movies, movies! I'm sick and
tired of it!!!

Aunt Stella rams her wheelchair into the projector, knocking it to the floor where it continues to run sporadically, upside-down.

In that moment, an inner transformation overcomes Eric. From meek, mild mouse to swaggering punk. Without so much as a word, his Aunt becomes aware of it and backs off, fearing she's pushed him too far.

AUNT STELLA (Cont'd)

(Ad-libs)

Now, Eric, I want you to please stop...
I didn't mean it...please.

Eric wrenches the fedora over one eye and in one swift motion grabs the wheelchair with his possessed hands and shoves it outside on the porch.

54 EXT. PORCH - NIGHT

Aunt Stella attempts to scream but her tongue freezes. The pinspot lighting the way blinds her eyes and serves to heighten the sinister, twisted smile on Eric's face, a mug at once sympathetic and pathological.

Aunt Stella shoves the wheelchair control in reverse and the tires spin helplessly. The bottom of the stairs appear to be four hundred feet down.

Just as she finds her pipes and lets out a bloodcurdling SCREAM, Eric shoves the works down the stairs, Auntie and all.

Banging, bumping and thumping, step by step, Aunt Stella crashes with an untimely neck bending CRUNCH at the bottom.

At the top, strutting like a peacock, Eric breaks into the bone-chilling LAUGH that Richard Widmark immortalized in "Kiss Of Death" (as the hoodlum, Tommy Udo).

INTERCUT: SHOT of Richard Widmark shoving the old lady down the steps, underlining Eric's madness with the inspiration for it.

Eric automatically spouts the credits of the film which he's reproduced in real life, by rote, like an automaton, parodying the horror of his deadly act.

ERIC

(petrified and
mortified)

"Kiss of Death", Richard Widmark,
Victor Mature, Colleen Gray, Karl
Malden and Brian Donleavy. Directed
by Henry Hathaway, 1947.'

At the bottom of the steps, the wheelchair continues to spin as Aunt Stella's cat, Midnight, curiously sniffs her broken body.

55 INT. BINFORD HOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Shaken by his Jekyll and Hyde transformation, Eric mechanically removes the fedora and splashes cold water on his face. He examines his trembling hands and wipes the twisted traces of Widmark's evil smile off his otherwise normally blank face.

Like a soldier after his first kill, he feels like throwing up or better yet, confessing out of creeping guilt. Confused by the emotions roaring in his head, he laughs and weeps simultaneously.

56 INT. ERIC'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Eric re-enters the room and uprights the fallen projector.

Babbling VOICES OF DISCOVERY and COMMOTION can be heard from outside, exclamations that somebody found Aunt Stella.

Maybe she's not dead, after all???

ERIC'S INNER VOICE

(stricken)

Maybe she's not dead. Then she'll tell on me an' I'll be sent to jail???

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

(I) better call the cops.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

Looks like her neck's broken.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Who lives here?

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

I don't know.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

I'll ring the doorbell.

As the DOORBELL downstairs begins to RING pulsatingly, Eric's strained face returns to normal...benign, pasty, satisfied to reveal nothing within or without. A blank, a cipher, a withdrawn face that only reveals itself in spurts like a night blooming poisonous flower.

57 INT. FLYING MARLIN BAR - NIGHT

At the local watering hole, the sayings of President Kennedy exist side by side with redneck preachments on the opposite wall.... "Better Dead Than Red," etc.

The jukebox is turned down to a whisper so CUSTOMERS at the bar can hear the latest news on the tube perched in the corner.

Moriarty nurses his second martini of the early evening, drowning whatever hopes he had for youth rehabilitation in the latest news of rioting in Iran.

Anne (the female cop) now dressed in civvies exudes femininity in a rough and tumble way.

CHICANO TV NEWS ANNOUNCER

And now, turning to local news briefs.

This story is illustrated by still pictures of Aunt Stella and Eric.

CHICANO TV NEWS ANNOUNCER (Cont'd)

Venice residents were startled earlier this evening by a bizarre accidental death when Stella Binford crashed down a stairway in a wheelchair and died. Her nephew was unavailable for comment.

Moriarty huffs in disgust at the cavalier style of the natty CHICANO NEWSCASTER, an eager beaver in a blazer and red tie.

MORIARTY

(to Anne, pointing
at the set)

Those media hacks take death too lightly. One lousy story after another.

ANNE

True but...all you're gonna get on TV is blood and guts.

57A

MORIARTY

That's the trouble. Kids watch something like 12,000 murders a week on TV to the point of being mindless, empty-headed like Gallagher.

Moriarty signals the bartender for a fresh round.

ANNE

Don't let Gallagher get you down, Jerry, just because he doesn't agree with your methods.

MORIARTY

That's easy for you to say. You're a cop. I'm not a cop so I'm not accepted. He won't listen to me.

ANNE

People hate anything that's different. How do you think they like having me, a woman, as head of the decoys? Now they call working undercover the 'snatch squad.'

Moriarty downs his drink and orders another with a flip of his index finger.

MORIARTY

(waxing on)

All you have to do is look at the evidence. It happens every day. Last week a girl in San Diego picked up a gun and shot her neighbors claiming she saw it on a television show.

ANNE

Well, how do you think I (the police) feel about it?

MORIARTY

(waxing indignant)

Or, how about the guy who's legal defense for murder was that he saw the same thing done on television?

ANNE (pekid)

Take it easy, Jerry.

MORIARTY

Yeah, sure, I'm sorry. I'm obsessed by the subject and it freaks me out because we're planting crazed images in kids' heads.

58 INT. ERIC'S ROOM - NIGHT

Reclining dreamily in his theater chair, Eric watches the tail end of the news program that tossed away the story of his Aunt's death.

CHICANO TV NEWS REPORTER

...and so that about wraps it up
for another Friday night until
tomorrow-morning...

Eric impulsively puts on his fedora a la Richard Widmark, but his face remains stonelike, impassive and impossible to read.

59 EXT. WESTWOOD CEMETERY - DAY

Aside from REVEREND SCHICK and SEVERAL BUMS, Eric's the only mourner at his Aunt's funeral.

REVEREND SCHICK

And as we commit her spirit to
the Almighty, let us pray for her
eternal salvation. That her soul
may find peace in Heaven as it
did on Earth. Amen.

Reverend Schick accepts a gratuity from Eric...a ten spot and hands over Aunt Stella's urn with the cremated body.

REVEREND SCHICK

Sorry, Eric. There's no room next
to Miss Monroe's cript, but there's
other nice sites.

ERIC

(disappointed)

That's where I wanted her.

REVEREND SCHICK

We can put her down there next to
Wallace Beery.

ERIC

No, that's no good.

REVEREND SCHICK

Well, take the ashes home. There's
no hurry. You have plenty of time
to decide.

ERIC

Okay.

REVEREND SCHICK

You'll be in church tomorrow for
your Aunt's memorial service?

ERIC

No. I don't believe in God.

Eric doesn't offer any excuse and the Reverend doesn't press
him.

REVEREND SCHICK

I'm a little short on time. I
have to service a wedding.

(clearing
his throat)

If there's anything else I can
do for you, my boy, call on me.

ERIC

Thanks.

The Reverend strolls to his waiting Cadillac, leaving Eric
with the urn and a sardonic smile.

60

INT. VENICE POLICE STATION - MORIARTY'S QUARTERS - DAY

Moriarty has dressed it up to cover the major faults. Posters
of Albert Einstein and Karl Marx hang side by side. A water
cooler gurgles in the corner next to a library of psychology
books and articles on the mass media. Moriarty sits behind
the oak school days desk holding a file labelled "Franco".

Seated across from him in a belligerent mood, FRANCO the local
gang leader, sulks in a cut-off "Pigs Eat It" sweatshirt. He
crosses his blue jeaned legs, jangling the spurs on his engineer
boots. A growth of tattoos, one prominently "Motherfucker",
snakes up his arm to the bicep, intercepting the pack of Luckies
tucked under his sleeve, macho style circa 1950's. He slicks
back his greasy hair with a rat tooth comb, darting his nasty
eyes at Moriarty, eyes that could kill if they followed his
will.

FRANCO

...he slugged me first, man...

MORIARTY

...self-defense is a lame excuse.

FRANCO

Get offa my back, man. I was outnumbered.

Moriarty leans across the desk.

MORIARTY

Ok, Franco. You call the shot. You wanna go back to jail? Maybe the judge made a mistake.

FRANCO

You pigs don't give a damn, do ya?

MORIARTY

Don't run your shit on me. You know I'm not a cop. I spent hard time in Vietnam with guys a lot tougher than you.

Moriarty isn't kidding and Franco backs down by taking another tack.

FRANCO

Man, I saw this bad dude on 'Riot Squad' the other night -- was outta sight.

MORIARTY

Forget that T.V. crap.

FRANCO

O.K. You don't wanna talk about T.V. you wanna buy some weed?

MORIARTY

Look, I'm not your friend, Franco. I don't even like you.

FRANCO

Yeah? So why should I come see you?

MORIARTY

Cause this time you don't have a choice. You gotta pay back your victim. I've arranged a money-making job for you in a hospital emergency ward.

FRANCO

(put out)

You putting me on, man? I can't stand the sight of blood.

MORIARTY

Too bad. This isn't Monopoly, pal. It's go to work or you don't pass go; it's off to jail.

Franco resignedly slumps in his chair. He mistakenly thought he was in for a soft ride.

61 EXT. BINFORD'S HOUSE (99 RIVER STREET) - DAY

The POSTMAN arrives with the Saturday morning delivery. He frowns at the new name on the mailbox, "Harker", instead of "Binford". Before depositing the mail, he climbs the steps and rings the bell.

Eric answers, his thin frame accentuated by a thin shirt with rolled-up sleeves.

POSTMAN

Oh, Eric. You're still here. I thought maybe you'd moved... because of your aunt's... you know.

ERIC

Nope. I decided the name Harker suits me better than Binford, that's all.

He hands Eric the mail and descends the steps to continue his rounds. When Eric closes the door, the Postman turns for another look at the deadly outside stairwell.

POSTMAN

(puzzled)

Strange bird.

62 INT. BINFORD HOUSE - BACK ROOM - DAY

Eric carries the black cat Midnight in his arms. He reaches the back door and dumps him out. The cat cries in protest, apparently not used to being outdoors.

ERIC
You're on your own now, Midnight,
like me.

The cat wails again to no avail. Eric firmly closes the door.

63 INT. HOUSE-- LIVING ROOM - DAY

Eric gathers up his aunt's magazines and books on health and burns them in the fireplace, creating a roaring bonfire.

ERIC
(addressing
the urn)
Here's to your good health,
Aunt Stella.

He tosses in the final one; the tome about carrots.

64 INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Eric opens the fridge and stuffs his mouth with junk food. Velveeta cheese, Pop Tarts, Whistles and Bugles, artificial soda, Whip 'N Chill and so forth. During this food orgy, he reads about his aunt's death in the newspaper and cuts out the article for posterity.

65 INT. HOUSE-- ERIC'S BEDROOM - DAY

Eric tapes the article about his aunt to the wall next to an illustrated news article, ten years old and yellow with age. Hardly a lightweight story about a celebrity, Eric reads the hard news in fine print under the picture of an attractive young woman...his mother.

ERIC'S INNER VOICE
'Mrs. Herbert Binford, was found this
morning run off of Mulholland Highway.
Apparently, she lost control of the
car on the way home from a late party.

Eric turns his back on the article, hyperventilating with suppressed rage and hatred, clenching his teeth and fists.

ERIC (Cont'd)

(hissing sound)

Party, my ass.

He storms about the room in a mood to destroy something, anything, but changes perceptibly when he comes upon his shrine to Marilyn Monroe, consisting of photos, a compact, and a hand-made icon.

Sighing with relief, Eric gently and lovingly removes a life-size advertising cutout of Marilyn from the wall, a cardboard replica of her in tights and net stockings from "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes". At the same time, he trips the record player and mimes to the music as he dances with her.

MARILYN MONROE'S VOICE

(singing)

'I wanna be loved by you,
I wanna be loved by you,
I wanna be loved by you,
just you alone...'

Her sultry voice lulls Eric into a dreamlike state, far removed from reality and the cares of the real world.

ERIC

(to cut-out)

You're mine forever, Marilyn.
We'll always be together.

Whatever budding sexuality Eric feels, he expresses alone to his silent captive, his and his alone to do with what he wants.

66 INT./EXT. "HOT WHEELS" STORE - DAY

Doreen Pappas deals out rentals and hobnobs with the UPTOWNERS who frequent the place on weekends.

Marilyn skates in the door, polishing off a taco.

DOREEN PAPPAS

(to Marilyn)

Hurry up. You said you'd only be gone a minute. I don't know all the prices.

MARILYN

Yeah, sorry, there was a long line of freaked-out New Yorkers at the taco stand acting like they never saw a burrito before.

She attends to various orders for skates, repairs and advice.

DOREEN PAPPAS

(downplaying it)

That special delivery package
came for you before.

MARILYN

Must be important. Wonder
what it is.

Eric appears at the window outside, peering in, unnoticed in the crush of people NATTERING about. He eagerly watches Marilyn with undivided attention, still pining for her.

She extracts a one-sheet advertising poster from the shipping tube of "Let's Make Love" starring Marilyn Monroe. In scrawly, infantile handwriting at the bottom, it says, "You'll Always Be Mine. A secret admirer."

MARILYN

Wow, look at this. Is it from
a wealthy fan?

DOREEN PAPPAS

(snidely)

Yeah, a real big spender. Those
reproductions are selling for two
bucks apiece on the pier.

MARILYN

Worthless, eh?

Marilyn idly tosses the one-sheet aside and returns to work.

Outside, Eric turns purple with embarrassment and imagined rejection. He scoots off hurriedly, hiding his flushed face.

67 EXT. FOX VENICE MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

Under a ring of lights blurred in the fog, a banner runs across the front of the marquee... "Special this Weekend: Fifty-hour Movie Marathon... Films of Murder, Mystery and Mayhem, presented by the Horror, Sci-Fi and Fantasy Film Society."

- As the costumed PATRONS groggily enter and exit the theater to get fresh air, food and respite from the unending flow of images, they pass by the one-sheets posted about the entrance, including PSYCHO... GUN CRAZY... PEEPING TOM... THE MALTESE FALCON... CHINATOWN... BRUTE FORCE... UNDERWORLD... TARGETS... THE UNHOLY THREE... THE BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN... THE CAT PEOPLE, etc....

68 INT. FOX VENICE THEATER - LOBBY - NIGHT

TWO FILM BUFFS among many, one pimply-faced, stand in the lobby, stretching and yawning but intently watching the film "Psycho" through the open door to the theater.

BUFF ONE is dressed like Mr. Spock in early "Star Trek" garb.

As BUFF ONE turns his back, he reveals the face of BUFF TWO, who wears a rubber mask of Dracula which complements his long, black cape and slicked-back hair.

These guys not only go to the movies incessantly, they dress like movie characters when attending, if the occasion permits.

BUFF ONE

I dig your costume.

BUFF TWO

(removing mask)

Thanks. I got it for last year's marathon.

BUFF TWO IS ERIC, looking pale and exactly like Conrad Veidt in "Nosferatu", an early horror flick featuring Dracula.

ERIC

Too many Draculas here tonight -- next year I'm coming as the Wolfman.

BUFF ONE

(nodding wearily)

My eyes are burning. Wanna dexy?

ERIC

(bright-eyed)

Thanks. Gimme two. I'm fading.

He pops the hyper orange hearts into his mouth.

BUFF ONE

Miss any of the flicks?

ERIC

(matter of pride)

Not a one. This is my favorite event of the year. How about you?

BUFF ONE

If I did, I'd feel like I copped out.

ERIC

Last year I was one of only twenty people that made it all the way through without flaking out.

BUFF ONE

We oughta get medals.

It's obviously one up in buffery to see every flick in the marathon.

69 INT. THEATER - NIGHT

Up front in a crowded row three, Eric slumps down, resting his head on the seat back. He eats hungrily from a tub of buttered popcorn. Recharging his batteries, he appears to be fully alive by living his life vicariously on the big silver screen, hour after hour.

He's supercharged with drug and sleep debt energy. From the absence of dialog and the flickering shadows and the apprehensive comments from others, and the SWISHING SOUND on the screen, it's clear that they're watching the shower scene from PSYCHO.

EVERYONE begins to squirm uncomfortably in their seats. The WOMEN in the audience snuggle up closer to their boyfriends, who do likewise.

Eric stops eating, dropping the popcorn container into his lap. The forceful images of the movie possess him.

70 INT. MOVIE SCREEN - PATRONS' POV - NIGHT

From the audience's P.O.V., we see Anthony Perkins peer through the hole in the wall at Janet Leight taking a shower.

The famous scene lasts only a short time, but the SCREECHING SOUND lasts in everyone's auditory memory forever.

When the knife begins to flash and Janet Leight recoils, Eric's reaction hardens into cold calculation. Everyone in the theater goes berserk except Eric who gets cooler and cooler. With each stab, his blood pressure lowers until he's like a snake, languid and fully satisfied...or is he????

71 INT. MARILYN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Half dressed in a long shirt and shorts, Marilyn sips a lemonade to beat the heat.

A nearby SOUND interrupts her. It could be a door SLAM, but then again, maybe not.

MARILYN
That you, Stacey?

72 EXT. MARILYN'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A RUSTLING SOUND and a dark shadow disturbs the high bushes.

73 EXT. MARILYN'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

The screen door flaps and BANGS in the breeze. Marilyn opens the door and peeks outside inquiringly.

MARILYN
(into darkness)
Hello....

A long shadow slants across the lawn in the moonlight, framing two scuffy black shoes. Marilyn closes the door and pulls the shade, nipping her from view. Eric, dressed as Dracula, patiently waits for her to begin her nightly toilette.

74 INT. MARILYN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Marilyn disrobes in the bathroom, spookily similar to the one in PSYCHO. She soaps and showers behind a plastic curtain covered with copulating figures. Lovingly, she caresses her slim body, fully appreciating every dip and curve.

A distant, growling SOUND intrudes. What could it be?

MARILYN
(tentatively)
Who's there?

75 EXT. MARILYN'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Eric placidly stands in the cover of the vegetation, the pale light from the bathroom illuminating his twisted visage, waiting, watching to strike.

76 INT./EXT. MARILYN'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - NIGHT

She relaxes once again, satisfied it's nothing. Although the window is steamed up from the hot water, a small clear circle remains. From outside, Eric peers in the hole, cold and frosty in contrast to the warm steam inside. His reddened eye watches her like a drill press.

Marilyn continues her merry toilet, not knowing enough to fear the worst. She sings a tune familiar to Marilyn Monroe fans.

MARILYN

(Monroe's voice)

'My heart belongs to daddy...'
(and so forth.)

She bends over to soap her long leg and, completing that, dips her hair under the spout. It's time.

From the urgency of the MUSIC, it's time for IT to happen.

INTERCUT: Sequence of shower scene from PSYCHO.

Marilyn has her back turned to the shower curtain when it's suddenly ripped off its rod. She turns in horror...it's Eric standing in front of her, hidden behind his bizarre garb and rubber mask.

She SCREAMS at the top of her lungs and flails out at him.

Eric raises his fist, but it's only to profer a silver pen, which in the foggy light looks like a knife.

ERIC

Can I have your autograph, Miss
Monroe?

Marilyn's SCREAMS and COMMOTION frighten Eric with their intensity. For a second, he's too stunned to move.

Finally, he slowly backs out of the room, then breaks into a run and out the door.

Marilyn, suffering from shock, hardly believes what she's seen. She hurriedly steps into a towel and calls the police without drying herself.

MARILYN

(trembling,
into phone)

I want to report... a burglar...
a killer... a... oh, I don't
know!!!

POLICEMAN'S VOICE

(on phone)

Calm down, lady. What crime did he commit?

MARILYN

An intruder came into my house while I was taking a shower. Please come over.

POLICEMAN'S VOICE

(on phone)

Do you know who it was?

MARILYN

(hysterical)

No, for God's sake, he wore a Dracula costume.

POLICEMAN'S VOICE

(on phone)

Did he hurt you?

MARILYN

(embarrassed)

No, damn it, he asked for my autograph.

POLICEMAN'S VOICE

(on phone, mocking credulity)

Yeah, I see. So you wanna press charges against a vampire.

MARILYN

You're making me sound stupid, officer!!!

She slams down the receiver in frustration, not knowing where to turn next.

77

EXT. SPEEDWAY - NIGHT

To the tune of YOWLING CATS, BLARING RADIOS and the idle drunken CHIT-CHAT of beach people on a Saturday night, Eric scuttles down the dark lane, his cape flowing behind him.

Sweat covers his brow; the narrow escape from Marilyn's apartment assailing his mind. Did she recognize him? Not likely.

ERIC'S INNER VOICE

She's gone too far. If she understood how much I admire her, she'd be my friend. I'll get even!

Crossing the alley's jagged shadows, he appears to be a creature of the night and even hardened looking TYPES give him a wide berth. Eric's pleased with the effect and his growing power.

78 INT. TYPICAL VENICE APARTMENT - NIGHT

Too many plants and too little sunlight creates the sullen look of a genuine Venice pad that's been remodelled for quick bucks.

Dave Powers usually wears a suit and tie at the bank. Playing a hipster on the weekend, he's draped in artistic attire tonight, phoney beads and all.

Jill, the prostitute (who brushed off Eric in Westwood) doesn't have the good sense to jolly Dave along. She's too much of a bitch and doesn't give a hoot about anybody's feelings.

DAVE POWERS

How about giving me a break, Jill?

Dave's plea comes after the fact and that's dumb. She stuffs his fifty into her purse.

JILL

(nastily)

It's not my fault you can't get it up. Better luck next time, Dave.

She turns on her spiked heel and slams the hollow door behind her.

79 EXT. CROSSWALK - NIGHT

At the Rose Avenue intersection, Eric spies Jill (the Prostitute) leaving Dave's apartment. She stops under the street lamp to adjust her hose and apply lipstick in a hand mirror. As she checks her Timex tank watch, Eric silently glides up behind her wearing the Lugosi mask. He startles her out of her skin.

JILL

(spinning around)

Who the hell are you?

ERIC

(in Bela
Lugosi's
voice)

I believe we've met before.

JILL

Bull. What's your act anyway,
not that I care?

ERIC

(soothingly)

Are you engaged, young lady?

Eric enjoys the riveting effect his demeanor has on the poor young skag.

Struck by having to deal with a weirdo in Dracula's garb, fear changes Jill's tune from nasty to placating.

JILL

Yeah, as a matter of fact, I'm
late to another appointment.
Maybe another time.

Eric knows she's stalling and putting him off. The more nasty and nervous she acts, the more sadistic he grows.

She now realizes she's facing a madman and breaks for her Volvo station wagon parked half a block away.

Eric takes off after her, his cape billowing behind him like a black wing of doom.

Jill falls midway to safety in the middle of the street. An oncoming Fiat sports car swerves to avoid her and HONKS the horn loudly and frantically.

Eric rears up in the headlights, blinded, his dark cape covering his head.

80 INT. SPORTS CAR - NIGHT

The DRIVER, a natty business type, dandified, pretified and now petrified, sees what must be a bad wakeful dream...Dracula prowling the streets of Venice.

He cuts the wheel and crashes into a parked car, knocking himself out cold on the steering wheel.

81 EXT. ROSE AVENUE - NIGHT

Jill, having witnessed the immense power of the winged creature, shivers in fright. She rises to her feet and flees for her life.

Eric started out playing his role for effect. Now, he pursues her hotly, getting into it.

82 EXT. VOLVO - NIGHT

She reaches her car door, but she's too nervous to fish out the keys. She fumbles at the lock, panicked.

Eric looms down on her from across the street.

Terrified, she bolts down a dark alley, tripping on a kid's tricycle, sending it CLATTERING along the pavement.

Eric latches onto her from behind. They struggle violently before she manages to wrest herself out of his clutches.

83 EXT. BUNGALOW - NIGHT

Eric lunges for her again unaware of the jagged fence ahead. He shoves her violently and she falls across the fence, impaling her neck on the spikes.

INTERCUT: SHOT of Dracula (Bela Lugosi) slaking his blood thirst at the neck of a female victim.

Eric turns her over, the broken fence stake stuck in her throat, the color fading fast from her flushed face. He leans over, tasting the spurting blood, tentatively at first and then in a frenzy of blood lust.

A porch light flicks on and a MIDDLE-AGED MAN witnesses what looks to him like Dracula leaning over the limp body of a young girl.

MIDDLE-AGED MAN

(appealing to
inside house)

Marge, call the police! There's
been a murder!

Eric reveals his blood smeared masked face. The COUPLE shrieks in horror.

Eric drifts into the shelter and anonymity of the dark shadows in the alley, leaving the witnesses with a spooky after-image they'll talk about for a long time afterward.

84 INT. ERIC'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The record player spins the MUSIC from the SOUNDTRACK album of PSYCHO, one of Bernard Hermann's greatest scores.

It reverberates throughout the house, setting Midnight the cat to YOWLING in response outside.

85 INT. ERIC'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Eric rocks in his theater seat, alone at last with his dreams. He holds a replica of the Maltese Falcon (from the film of the same name), an artifact reproduced by his fanzine club.

He holds the bird at eye level, gazing into its malevolent black eyes. He still wears the Dracula cape and looks pale enough to be a vampire. Although Jill's death was partly accidental, Eric smugly assumes credit for the kill in his mind. He's moved past the point of feeling remorse for causing someone's death. In fast, he basks in it.

He puts down the falcon and affixes the Lugosi mask once again to his face.

He turns on the portable video camera and recreates his Dracula role in front of the lens.

INTERCUT: Eric's performance with Bela Lugosi's.

After a time, Eric begins to CHUCKLE under his hushed breath. The CHUCKLE grows into a CACLE and the CACKLE into the VOLUBLE SCREAMING GUSH uttered by Anthony Perkins in PSYCHO. It's not important that the audience identify the hideous LAUGH exactly. They'll know Eric's seriously bent and that's the point.

86 INT. CONTINENTAL FILM SERVICES - HALL - DAY

Eric scurries down the hall dressed in his work duds, Frisco jeans and leather jacket. He passes the numerous cubbyholes where workers prepare the film world's advertising aids, past the babble of a hundred film clips being checked for sync and clarity, past the ladies folding one sheets for shipment to the theaters, past the labeling and shipping department. He tries to ignore the jibes of his fellow workers by keeping his head down.

Richie and Bart block his path and Eric stops begrud.

BART
Hey, Binford, wait a minute.

ERIC
Why?

Richie and Eric eye each other.

BART
(snatching
up paper)
Look at this.

He hands Eric an article on the front page of the Enquirer about the Dracula-like killing in Venice on the night of the film marathon.

ERIC
So what?

BART
The paper says a hundred Draculas were in the audience that night. What were you wearing?

Richie and Bart crack up, loving every minute of another crummy joke.

ERIC
(pleasant
and warn)
Wanna see?

Eric bares his teeth, fang-like.

RICHIE
(malevolently)
Think you're funny, huh?

They rough him up lightly and let him go.

87 INT. HALL - DAY

Eric mutters to himself as he traverses the building.

ERIC'S INNER VOICE
Those creeps don't know how right they are. I happen to know Dracula very well. And a few other characters to boot.

88 EXT. CONTINENTAL FILM SERVICES - DUSK

At quitting time, the Employees don't hang around very long, but Eric button-holes Richie in the parking lot, standing between his adversary and his ride.

Bart keeps the motor idling, gunning the motor from time to time.

BART
(to Richie,
impatiently)
Come on, man, let's make it.

ERIC
You guys are trying to screw
me out of twenty bucks!

RICHIE
We got 'til tomorrow to come
up with the answer.

BART
(winking)
Yeah... tomorrow.

ERIC
(incensed)
Today, you know it's today!

Richie looks at Bart to mock appeal for corroboration.

RICHIE
We're right.
(to Eric)
You're wrong. Cool it.

Richie shoves Eric aside with a stiff arm.

BART
Besides, anything you know isn't
worth knowing.

Eric fumes inwardly, seeking revenge.

INTERCUT: FLASH CUT of Cowboy barroom brawl, wherein HOPALONG
CASSIDY throws a black suited VILLAIN across the bar, smashing
the twenty-foot mirror to smithereens.

ERIC
(whining)
I need the money.

Richie looks at Eric disdainfully.

RICHIE
Don't bug us about it again or
we'll step on you like a roach.

Richie hops in the car and Bart roars away from the parking lot.

When they're out of earshot, Eric yells after them futilely.

ERIC
One of Hitler's favorite movies was
'Broadway Melody'! Bet you didn't
know that!!!

89 EXT. WILSHIRE BOULEVARD - DUSK

Thumbing by the side of the road, his outstretched arm weary from
holding it up, Eric coughs from the noxious fumes of the rush-hour
returning home traffic.

Miraculously a Porsche 928 slides to a stop and the passenger
side power window quietly rolls down. A suntanned, smooth talker
wearing a white Mexican embroidered shirt, coos from the driver's
seat. (GARY BIALLY)

GARY BIALLY
Hop in, fella.

Eric can't believe his good fortune.

ERIC
Jesus. Thanks

He yanks open the door and jumps in.

90

INT. PORSCHE - DUSK

Bially, behind the wheel, punches the tape deck, dialing up the current hits. In fact, everything about him smells off beat trendy, from his Mickey Mouse watch down to his Cacharel jeans.

GARY BIALLY

Where ya headed?

ERIC

(sheepishly)

Venice. Near the pier.

GARY BIALLY

That's right on my way.

Eric kicks aside a pile of scripts on the floor.

ERIC

(excitedly)

Are all those scripts yours?

Bially holds his profile for a beat before switching on his patented dayglo smile. His furrowed brow is meant to signify intelligence, charm and good guyness, a friend of the poet indeed.

GARY BIALLY

Yeah, I used to be an actor. Now I'm producing.

Gary Bially slips on his Y.S.L. sunglasses to protect his million dollar orbs from the dying sun to the West.

ERIC

(trying to impress)

I work in the film business, too.

GARY BIALLY

(eyebrows rising)

Really?

ERIC

Yeah. I got a great idea for a story. Would you be interested?

Gary Bially spots a mark, eager and innocent.

GARY BIALLY

(coaxingly)

Sure, maybe I can help you.

Eric reads the credits on one of the scripts.

ERIC

Are you Gary Bially?

GARY BIALLY

Yeah.

ERIC

Didn't you do the 'The Big Rip-off'?

GARY BIALLY

(bragging)

Yep, I do four pictures a year.

Eric's beside himself with joy.

ERIC

(spinning his tale)

Right. Well, it's about two convicts who break out of jail and join up with a carnival of crooks.

GARY BIALLY

What's it called?

ERIC

'Alabama and the Forty Thieves'.

GARY BIALLY

(greedy eyed)

Hey, not bad kid.

91 EXT. STREETS - DUSK

As the Porsche knifes through traffic, the noises BLURR out the conversation. In short order, the black beauty parks curbside near 99 River Street, Eric's address.

92 INT. PORSCHE - DUSK

Bially's an expert in the art of the unkept promise.

GARY BIALLY

(to Eric,
exuding charm)

You'll have to come to my next
premiere... call me at the
studio sometime.

ERIC

(ecstatic)

Oh, great, gee thanks.

Eric offers his hand to shake Bially's but he comes up
empty. Eric doesn't get the message and gets out of the
car, deluded.

Bially whisks away, turbocharger grumbling.

93 EXT. ERIC'S HOUSE - DUSK

Eric rips down River Street, his mind soaring with dreams of
grandeur.

Hi's still too excited to realize he's been brushed off by
Bially. He races up the front porch where Aunt Stella's urn graces
her prized plants and herb collection.

ERIC

(to urn of
ashes)

What luck! What a day! Gary
Bially loved my story can you
believe it?

AUNT STELLA'S IMAGINED VOICE

Enough of your nonsense. Where
have you been?

ERIC

(deflated)

It's a long story.

94 INT. PORSCHE - DUSK

Stopped for a red light, Bially speaks into the mobile car phone,
four of his lines lit up.

GARY BIALLY

(into carphone)

Randy, an idea just came to me...
one of the best I ever had...
it's a real blockbuster. And
get this for a title...

(pause)

'Alabama and the Forty Thieves'.

95 EXT. SANTA MONICA PIER/CAT RACK - NIGHT

Overlooking the water, GUYS come here to play games, pick up
the sleazy girls and often end up watching the waves instead.

Surrounded by the bright, blinking lights, Richie and Bart
finish off the last of their ball throwing at the cat rack.

RICHIE

Come on, let's make like wolves.

BART

What are you talking about?

Richie picks up a large stuffed panda he's won.

RICHIE
(indicating
toy)

The broads, man. They'll eat this up. I know a place down the street that's loaded with cooze.

BART
That's what you said about the pier.

RICHIE
The little foxes are in heat tonight, you'll see.
(pointing
skyward)
There's a full moon out.

Richie howls like a wolf on the prowl as they cross the pier planks to the railing overlooking the ocean.

BART
You're suffering from outer space madness.

They're about to make it down the pier when...

ERIC'S VOICE (O.S.)
Make you play... hombres.

The two musketeers turn around slowly to face a figure dressed in a black cowboy outfit and a Hopalong Cassidy mask. They don't guess that it's Eric and, in fact, think it's funny.

RICHIE
That's quite an outfit, partner. You're celebrating Halloween a little early this year, huh?

ERIC
(in a Western
drawl)
Shut up and draw.

Eric whips a Colt single action .45 sidearm out of his holster and slides it down to Richie. He points his other pistol straight at Richie's stomach.

RICHIE

Hey, cut it out. Don't point that thing at me.

ERIC

I said draw.

Eric holsters his gun and steps back five paces.

BART

(hush-hush
to Richie)

Maybe you better humor him.

Richie hands Bart his stuffed toy and picks up the gun on the ground as:

RICHIE

Okay, you wanna play quick draw, I'll go a round with you.

Richie checks the chamber...

RICHIE

(to Bart)

Christ, this thing's loaded with real bullets.

Eric has a coughing fit, a la Doc Holiday. He holds a red bandana to his mouth to suppress his twitching body.

BART

Freaky, now he's Doc Holiday.

RICHIE

(to Bart)

The guy's a goof ball. (Town's full of 'em.) Let's split.

Richie and Bart head down the pier, Richie in the lead. They're not fully convinced it's safe but they're bold enough to dare it.

As they walk down the hurdy-gurdy pier, FOOTSTEPS dog theirs. Every shadow plays on their imagination, spelling imminent danger. The other FUNSEEKERS along the way pay little attention to them, immersed in their own pursuits.

BART

Let's make a break for it.

RICHIE

Not me. I'm cool.

Bart dashes off in a blurr, leaving Richie behind. Mr. Cool lights a cigarette as...

ERIC

Draw, Clanton. You an' your brothers ain't got a chance. Call it.

Richie recognizes the Kirk Douglas infection in Eric's voice.

RICHIE

(turning, gun
in hand)

'Gunfight At The O.K. Corral'?

Richie aims and "CLICKS" off a dud chamber...SURPRIZE! Eric draws and fires five times, each bullet smashing a gaping hole through Richie's unbelieving body.

Bart stops on the pier, riveted to the planks, his frame trembling in disbelief.

Richie staggers ten or so feet before dropping to one knee.

Eric fades behind a ramshackle building that could be out of the Old West, except this joint sells french fries and shrimp cocktails.

Bart rushes to his fallen friend's side.

BART

(trembling)

Stay put Richie. I'll get help.

RICHIE

Who was that masked man?
(cracking delirious smile)

He expires flat on his back, blood oozing out his shirt, staining the planks dark red.

96 EXT. VENICE ALLEYS - NIGHT

Eric humps down the pothold alleys in his cowboy outfit, drawing his gun at imaginary assailants in the shadows. He mostly sticks to the dark, but now and then he's highlighted by an overhead street lamp and the effect is spooky.

Cats and dogs give him a wide berth. An occasional PEDESTRIAN passes in the opposite direction without noticing... after all, this is Venice and freaks walk around day and night in outlandish garb.

97 EXT. ERIC'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A light appears in Eric's upstairs room. Then the SOUNDTRACK RECORDING of the theme from "High Noon" wafts down from his sick lair.

98 INT. ERIC'S ROOM - NIGHT

Still garbed in his cowboy outfit, Eric sits in front of the Betamax submerged in the shoot-out scene from "High Noon". Whatever revolves in his mutant mind, he laps it up, making it more real than real life.

He slouches down in his favorite chair to better soak up the blood and guts in comfort.

Once again, his lips move silently, framing each line of dialogue which he knows by heart. The movie nut has come home again to roost... for how long is anybody's guess.

99 EXT. VENICE POLICE STATION - DAY

Eric and Bart trip down the stairs together, forced into an uneasy alliance, filling the void left by Richie's absence. Bart's shook up and weakened by his friends's Quixotic death.

BART

Why would they suspect me of killing Richie? I was his best friend.

ERIC

Stupid cops treat everybody the same... Like we're all criminals.

BART

What about that psychological test?

ERIC

A bunch of dumb questions. Captain Gallagher's a real flatfoot, too,

BART

They even grilled Mr. Berger. He's been a nervous wreck lately. He's going in for a bypass operation next week. His heart's worse.

ERIC

(very interested)
Really? I didn't think he had one.

BART

(stopping)
Will they find Richie's killer?

ERIC

If you couldn't identify him because of the mask, who can? See ya later.

Eric playfully points his finger at Bart, dropping his knuckle hammer on the imaginary gun.

ERIC (Cont'd)

POW!

Eric hops on the Vespa parked at the curb as Bart ducks into the parking lot.

100 INT. VENICE POLICE STATION - CAPTAIN GALLAGHER'S OFFICE - DAY

Captain Gallagher, feet on the desk, perfects his chair balancing act while fending off a provoked Moriarty, and a neutral, sympathetic Anne.

CAPTAIN GALLAGHER

We closely questioned all the employees...normal police procedure. By whose authority did you give 'em a test on your own?

MORIARTY

I perfected this psychological questionnaire which helps reveal aberrations. I wanted to help you flush out a suspect.

CAPTAIN GALLAGHER

'Flush' is the right word for the way I feel about your actions.

If he was a violent man, Moriarty might kick the Captain's chair out from under him.

Anne dips in to play referee.

ANNE

(to Moriarty)

Here's a list of the workers at C.F.S.... for reference.

MORIARTY

(to Gallagher)

Three of them show signs of imbalance according to my calculations.

Moriarty displays the list with three names underlined... Eric Binford, Maria Valdez, and Herman Bricks.

CAPTAIN GALLAGHER

(scoffing)

Maria Valdez, the broad in the shipping department is the killer? Thanks Sherlock.

MORIARTY

(to Gallagher)

Also, there might be a link between the Dracula murder and this cowboy caper.

CAPTAIN GALLAGHER

One victim was a third rung employee in an advertising house. The other a hooker. Where's the connection?

MORIARTY

The killer obviously acts out his fantasies, and he will kill again unless we stop him!!!

Captain Gallagher rises from the desk with an imaginary harpoon pointed at Moriarty's vitals.

CAPTAIN GALLAGHER

WE??? Since when did you join the police department?

Moriarty drops the test batch of questions on the desk for the Captain's consideration.

MORIARTY
(giving up)
Just trying to help out.

Captain Gallagher disdainfully tosses the tests into the waste basket.

CAPTAIN GALLAGHER
Well, I don't need a bunch of lines and dots to tell me who a killer is. In the meantime nobody's asking for your help, in case you haven't noticed.

The atmosphere isn't about to defrost so Moriarty heads for the door.

MORIARTY
I know the human mind, especially the sick ones. Whoever did it will reveal himself (to me) sooner or later.

CAPTAIN GALLAGHER
Okay, drop me a line when he calls you.

Moriarty slams the door behind him. The Captain waves bye-bye, convinced the Doc's cuckoo.

101 INT. MORIARTY'S OFFICE - DAY

Moriarty opens his desk and arranges two lines of white powder from a folded envelope. He snorts up, one on one, his nostrils twitching with instant, Sherlockian high.

He begins pacing and thinking with renewed energy and chemical clarity.

Preceded by a LOUD KNOCK, Anne bobs her head in the door.

ANNE
How're you feeling, Jerry?

MORIARTY
(stoned)
Like I stepped into outer space without oxygen.

Stepping inside, Anne notices the fresh Coke residue lines on the pocket mirror.

MORIARTY (Cont'd)

(obligingly)

Is this good stuff?

ANNE

The best we ever confiscated.

She peers at him closely.

MORIARTY

You know, Anne Archambaud, I can't stand rusty thinking...

ANNE

...well then, simmer down. Enough hassle for today. Let's go out and get smashed...

They link arms and gird up to do battle with a bottle. Moriarty flicks off the lights as they leave.

101A

The CAMERA FOCUSES CLOSELY ON a news article pinned on the bulletin board... "The Celluloid Murders, The Incredible Link Between Reality and Fiction!"

102

EXT. SIDEWALK CAFE - DAY

Seated at an outside table, Doreen and Marilyn share a cappuccino while they examine a one sheet from "Niagara", a film that reeks of double dealing, treachery and death.

MARILYN

(frantic)

This is the second poster I got. The first one was friendly. Now he's hostile.

Doreen reads aloud the scrawly handwriting at the bottom.

DOREEN

'You were my idol, but you wouldn't listen. Now you must pay.'

MARILYN

Macabre. It gives me the shivers. Who is this maniac? And what does he want from me?

102A

Eric watches them intently from a nearby phone booth, his face twitching.

DOREEN

It's no joke that Marilyn Monroe was choked to death in 'Niagara'. I think we ought to see a good friend of mine.

MARILYN

Who?

DOREEN

Dr. Moriarty. I'll explain later.

103 EXT. MECHANICS BANK - DAY

Eric's company Vespa tipsily tilts at the curb, one tire almost flat.

BANK PRESIDENT (V.O.)

Twenty thousand dollars is a lot of cash. We can't be responsible once you leave here.

Eric zips out the front door, shoving a bulging leather sachel under his shirt for safe keeping.

ERIC'S INNER VOICE

With Aunt Stella's inheritance, I can do anything I want to.

104 EXT. ERIC'S MACABRE ODYSSEY - DAY

Riding the Vespa, Eric buzzes down Wilshire Boulevard toward Hollywood. Inscrutable behind his new dark green riding goggles, he wheels into Hollywood proper at Van Ness Avenue.

105 EXT. MANNS CHINESE THEATRE - DAY

Eric dutifully snaps a photo of the footprints of Marilyn Monroe.

INTERCUT: Famous newsreel shot of Marilyn Monroe and Jane Russell etching their feet and hands in the wet cement when appearing in "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes".

ERIC'S INNER VOICE

Fame may be fleeting but preferable to obscurity.

106 EXT. HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD - DAY

Eric examines the checkerboard of stars' names on the sidewalk, taking pictures of his favorites.

ERIC'S INNER VOICE

(vibrato)

Good old Cagney's side-by-side
with Monroe, the living and the
dead.

107 EXT. 780 GOWER STREET - DAY

Eric's propelled by the dazzling catalog of movie material dancing in his head. And he never stops gathering facts and never tires of combing the same ground for those he already morbidly knows by heart.

Eric peeks through the wire gate separating the sidewalk from the inner sanctum of the movie studio.

ERIC'S INNER VOICE (Cont'd)

Remember back then, Marilyn
(Monroe)? You made "Clash By
Night" here when it was R.K.O.

He scratches his scraggly beard, while taking another photo.

108 INT. HOLLYWOOD WAX MUSEUM - DAY

Strangeness reigns in the environs. The wax effigies make most people queasy, which subconsciously suggests paralysis in the very wax that provides life after death.

In his element, Eric creeps around the figures...locking on the Marilyn Monroe bedroom tableau. One can sense the overdose of drugs in her veins.

ERIC'S INNER VOICE

A legend never dies.

109 EXT. HOLLYWOOD STUDIO CLUB (1215 LODI PLACE/NOW THE YMCA) - DAY

Eric flies by at full speed, snapping a photo in motion.

ERIC'S INNER VOICE (Cont'd)

You lived here in Room #334. So did Gale Storm, Sharon Tate, and Marie Windsor, and many others when it was known as the Hollywood Studio Club.

110 EXT. VINE STREET ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

Eric passes by, clicking off a photo.

ERIC'S INNER VOICE (Cont'd)

You, Marilyn, went to school here in 1936 when you were ten years old.

111 EXT. MODERN GLASS BUILDING (815 EL CENTRO) - DAY

Eric drives by, slowly glancing at the glass and steel monstrosity.

ERIC'S INNER VOICE (Cont'd)

You lived here in an orphanage, but they tore it down and built this birdcage instead.

112 EXT. FREDERICK'S OF HOLLYWOOD - DAY

Deserted on this Sunday afternoon, the Marilyn Monroe look-alike mannequins stare back at Eric with plastic smiles.

ERIC'S INNER VOICE (Cont'd)

Marilyn, I'll buy you a new wardrobe... furs and diamonds.

113 EXT. HOLLYWOOD RANCH MARKET - DAY

Eric parks at the food takeout counter and consumes handfuls of trash food, the greasier the better. The YOUTH who serves the food looks about sixteen.

ERIC

(to Youth)

Ever see Marilyn Monroe come in here?

YOUTH

No, man, she's been dead for years.

Eric tosses his food in a trash can, bordering on a fit. He doesn't want to hear the truth...he's only interested in his fantasy.

ERIC

No, you're wrong. Marilyn's alive as you and me.

114 EXT. HILLSIDE HOUSE (BRENTWOOD) - DAY

Eric doesn't appear in this front view of a ranch-type spread surrounded by trees.

ERIC'S INNER VOICE (Cont'd)
 Supposedly, Marilyn Monroe died here.
 But she's not dead. She's still
 alive. She's not dead... not yet.

The CAMERA PICKS UP Eric as he steps INTO FRAME, stoop-shouldered. After taking a picture of the house, he spins violently on his heel and mounts the Vespa.

115 EXT. CONTINENTAL FILM SERVICES - DUSK

Eric whips into the parking lot to stash the motorscooter.

"Mr. Berger's" Lincoln Continental squats in the space marked likewise.

Before Eric can dismount, a furious Mr. Berger charges out from the bowels of the building, his veins pulsing.

MR. BERGER

(livid)

What the hell got into you!? I
 could have you arrested for stealing
 Company property.

ERIC

(contrite)

I had something to do and I needed
 wheels.

MR. BERGER

Why don't you buy a car with your
 aunt's \$20,000 insurance policy?

ERIC

How do you know about that? That's
 none of your concern.

MR. BERGER

(red-faced)

There's been all kinds of talk
 about you lately, Binford.

ERIC

You mean about my wedding?

MR. BERGER

(making fun)

That's one I haven't heard.

(snide)

Who's the (un)lucky girl anyway?

ERIC

(proudly)

Marilyn Monroe.

MR. BERGER

(sick of it all)

Hand over the keys, Binford!

Eric changes from mild mouse to malevolent cat. He angrily puffs up his chest, twisting Berger's tie like a noose, affecting his Cagney persona.

ERIC

(smiling

malevolently;

Cagney's voice)

Name's Cody, got me?

In his fury, Mr. Berger pounds Eric's chest with his fist, as shock treatment.

MR. BERGER

Snap out of it, punk! Your name's not Cody!

ERIC

(Cagney's voice)

Yes, it is. Cody Jarrett and don't forget it... wise guy.

INTERCUT: short scene from "White Heat" wherein Cagney has his adversary locked in the trunk of a car.

JAMES CAGNEY

You all right in there?

VOICE IN TRUNK

I can't breathe.

JAMES CAGNEY

I'll fix it so you get some air.

Cagney fills the trunk full of bullet holes.

BACK TO SCENE

MR. BERGER

(to Eric)

LET GO OF ME AND GET THE HELL
OUT OF HERE! YOU'RE FIRED!!!

ERIC

(reverting
to self)

I quit! I'll get my posters
and stuff...

Mr. Berger bodily prevents Eric from entering the building.

MR. BERGER

Forget it. Whatever's left is
mine... it'll help pay for your
lazy act.

Eric seethes with anger and frustration.

ERIC

My posters are valuable originals,
you can't keep those.

MR. BERGER

(locking horns)

Says who?

In a fit, Eric defiantly kicks over the Vespa before he leaves
under a forced march and a barrage of AD-LIB insults from the
foaming mouth of his ex-boss.

ERIC'S INNER VOICE

(tight-lipped)

Nobody pushes Bogie around. You'll
be sorry.

MR. BERGER

(mockingly)

Wipe that wise look off your face,
Binford, 'cause I'm slapping a lien
on your property for damages.

To quell another nervous attack, Mr. Berger pops a few pills
from his endless supply.

116 EXT. CONTINENTAL FILM SERVICES - NIGHT

Mr. Berger's lone Lincoln is parked in the lot; everyone else
has long gone home.

A SHADOWY FIGURE crosses the lawn...the outline of a possible
burglar.

117 INT. OFFICE - NIGHT

Huddled under a gooseneck lamp, the penurious Berger conserves electricity and strains his eyes. He reviews an account ledger, totalling debits and credits with an adding machine.

A SQUEAKY NOISE interrupts him.

He ponders briefly, then returns to work.

BANG, a weird noise startles him. He stares into the gnarled face of SAM, the night watchman, who nervously irons out his Wagenhut uniform with veined alcoholic hands.

MR. BERGER

Damn it, Sam, you scared the pants off me. Why are you creeping around in the dark?

SAM

(stuttering)

Mr. Berger, sir, kin I go out for coffee? I'll be back in a jiffy.

MR. BERGER

Okay. Get me some, too. I'll be here all night working on these books that Binford screwed up.

Sam shuffles off and the outer door SLAMS LOUDLY in the distance.

The BLINDS RATTLE. Berger rises to the window, but there's nothing there.

He returns to his desk, stretching his stiff limbs.

Another funny NOISE erupts from down the hall.

MR. BERGER

Sam? Is that you again?

118 INT. HALL - NIGHT

He flicks the lightswitch but the lights don't respond. Only silence and darkness. He gingerly picks his way down the snakey hall to the end. He turns on the light in the shipping department.

Accidentally, he tangles his hair in a spider web.

118A INSERT A MACRO SHOT of a Black Widow running up the web. He smacks it with a broom and turns off the light.

As he swings down the hall, WHISTLING to gain confidence, he runs smack into a gloomy FIGURE blocking his path.

MR. BERGER (Cont'd)

(alarmed)

What the hell???

Straining to see in the dark, a narrow slit of light from his office pinpoints a body wrapped in white linen.

MR. BERGER (Cont'd)

(officially)

Who's there???

Nothing moves or responds. The figure disappears from view.

MR. BERGER (Cont'd)

(palpatating)

My mind's playing tricks.

119 INT. OFFICE - NIGHT

A ragged hand turns off the light in his office.

Mr. Berger returns, mystified by the Stygian blackness. He turns on the light in vain. He fishes in the desk drawer for a bulb and replaces it. Turning on the light, he tilts the gooseneck around the room, highlighting an array of horror film posters on the wall, some old, some new, including "The Mummy", starring Boris Karloff.

Rubbing his eyes wearily, he sits down to work after taking a sip of coffee.

Hunched over the adding machine, it hums and clicks with electronic buzzes as he double checks his totals.

Preoccupied, he doesn't feel the white hand wrapped in white tape touch his shoulder at first, only after a delayed reaction.

He slowly turns his head to confront a massive, stocky figure wrapped in white...THE MUMMY.

Berger jumps up, startled, knocking the lamp to the floor.

MR. BERGER

What kind of devil are you???

He sees the mummy but doesn't believe his eyes. He staggers back, lockjawed with fright.

The mummy advances on unsteady pins, grunting under its breath.

Mr. Berger stutters around the desk...the thing stands between him and the open doorway to freedom.

When the monster slides forward, he breaks for the doorway into the darkened hallway.

120 INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Mr. Berger stumbles and falls to the floor, losing his spectacles. Before he can recover, the monster steps on his glasses, crushing them.

Berger makes unintelligible WHIMPERING SOUNDS in his throat as he drags himself down the hall, half crawling, sniveling, shivering and shaking, his vision a blur.

He rises to his feet and makes a mad dash to the shipping department, seeking the sanctuary of light. It fails to respond when he flips the switch.

From out of the gloom, a light pierces his eyes from a flashlight carried by the creature.

Mr. Berger tries to exit the fire door, which is bolted and locked with a chain. He grabs an axe and swings mightily at the stolid steel door. The axe CLANKS to the floor, helplessly. He bangs it again.

The monster moves toward him with hesitant, but inexorable steps. THUMP, THUMP, THUMP.

Scared out of his wits and trapped in the corner, Mr. Berger throws up his hands to ward off a rain of blows which never fall.

Suddenly, his internalized fright takes its toll...he clutches his weak heart. Grunting, he drops to one knee, then both. He gasps deeply, reaching for a vial of pills in his breast pocket. He spills them onto the floor in his shaky condition. The creature keeps the pills out of Berger's reach with his toe.

MR. BERGER
(gasping for breath)

Help me...

The creature stands over him, coldly, only the vacant eyes showing signs of life. Otherwise, it's fully swaddled in white, ragged linen.

Mr. Berger coughs his last, expiring on the floor, scared to death.

The monster reaches down to feel his nonexistent breath, then slowly and deliberately, the creature unravels the linen from its head.

Eric Binford (Harker) stares at Berger hatefully with beet red pig's eyes.

The SOUND of approaching footsteps gives Eric a start.

SAM'S VOICE (O.S.)

Mr. Berger. Where are you? It's me.

Eric hobbles out the exit door just as Sam enters the room. When he sees the silent lump of his boss's body at his feet, he drops the coffee cups.

SAM (Cont'd)

Oh, my God!

121 EXT. VENICE BOARDWALK - DAY

Moriarty and Anne bike along the path, dodging the JOGGERS and the numerous darting dogs running loose.

MORIARTY

(proudly)

Franco, my model delinquent, happens to be one of the best new orderlies at Marina Hospital.

ANNE

That's great. (Your program's working.)

MORIARTY

What's new?

ANNE

Gallagher assigned me to a bizarre case today. Mr. Berger, the owner of Continental Film Services, died last night.

Moriarty slams on the brakes.

MORIARTY

Berger was murdered?

ANNE

Hard to tell. But remember that kid who was shot on the pier also worked at Continental.

MORIARTY

Any leads?

ANNE

Berger suffered a heart attack. Funny thing, though, he tried to break down a fire door with an axe when the side door was open.

MORIARTY

(agitated)

What's Gallagher say?

ANNE

The official verdict's Death from natural causes, so we have no case. I want to take a look into it anyway.

Moriarty shifts his bike into low gear.

MORIARTY

(incensed)

I told you before, several suspects worked there.

Anne finds his excitement contagious but baffling.

ANNE

Who are you talking about?

MORIARTY

Come on!!! Let's examine the tests I did of the C.F.S. employees.

Before she can protest, he's pedalled down the block and disappearing fast. She hastily follows.

122

INT. POLICE STATION - MORIARTY'S OFFICE - DAY

The news stories of the Dracula, Hopalong Cassidy and Berger deaths cover the bulletin board.

Turning his back to his guests, Moriarty snorts two lines of coke. Then he pins a paper cut-out (body) of Mr. Berger to his genealogical tree of the Celluloid Murders.

MORIARTY

Berger makes three.

At the top is a blank. Moriarty cogitates in the ethereal presence of Doreen, the organic radiance of Marilyn, and the sexy/earthy aura of Anne. He traces his finger up to Richie's outline.

DOREEN

(commenting)

The cowboy murder was the first, you mentioned...

Moriarty quickly reverses his pointer up to the figure of a voluptuous girl.

MORIARTY

...No, first was the prostitute. She didn't know the cowboy victim, far as we know. A Dracula figure killed her.

DOREEN

(to Marilyn)

And that same night a guy dressed like Dracula broke into Marilyn's house.

MARILYN

Yeah. I freaked. He thought I was Marilyn Monroe.

Moriarty pins a yellow cut-out of Marilyn next to the prostitute's red one.

ANNE

Ah-hah. It sounds like the same person. Is that the first time something like that happened?

MARILYN

Well, I remember once before a whimpy guy at a hamburger stand thought I was Marilyn Monroe.

MORIARTY

(peering intently)

Who was he?

MARILYN
He said his name was Eric
something...

MORIARTY
Eric!!! My god!

Moriarty cooks in his intensified brain, running high and fast on drug clarity.

MORIARTY (Cont'd)
Anne, where's that cloth?

Anne forks over a strip of white linen, barely soiled.

ANNE
This was found next to Berger's
body.

Doreen holds the fragment firmly in her palms, head bowed.

DOREEN
(tuning in)
I sense that the person who
wore this caused a violent
death.

Moriarty scarcely hides his glee, like a kid with a secret. He rushes to his desk and drags out three black and white photographs.

With mounting drama and suspense, he holds up the pictures of his suspects from the psychological tests after the first celluloid killing... Maria Valdez, Herman Bricks and Eric Binford.

Marilyn shudders at the picture of a smirking Eric Binford.

MARILYN
THAT'S HIM! YES, THAT'S THE
GUY!

MORIARTY
(the sly fox)
We better move fast.
(calculating)
Anne, you stick close to Marilyn.
I'll inform Gallagher.

With cyclonic force, Moriarty whips out the door with his entourage close behind.

123 INT./EXT. BEVERLY HILLS ELECTRONICS - DAY

Sporting spiffy new clothes, shiney Italian shoes, a trim haircut and mirrored sunglasses, Eric fits in with the sybaretic mainstream on Rodeo Drive. He stops momentarily outside the store window to gaze at an Advent six-foot wide television, which he's obviously intent on buying. To match the advertised price of \$3,295, Eric pulls out a wad of bills that would choke a horse. While counting, he becomes aware of the television interview of RONA BARRETT in the midst of questioning Gary Bially.

123A

RONA BARRETT ON T.V.

...so what's next on your breakneck schedule, Gary?

GARY BIALLY ON T.V.

A great departure for me. A grass roots story called 'Alabama And The Forty Thieves.'

At the mention of his movie idea being produced, Eric swells with pride. Now, he might be famous and he's already rich!

RONA BARRETT ON T.V.

Very interesting. And where do your ideas come from, if you don't mind my asking.

GARY BIALLY ON T.V.

In different ways. This time it simply flashed on me while I was riding home from work.

124 INT. T.V. STUDIO - DAY

Wrapping up the Rona Barrett interview, a PRODUCTION GO-FER hands Gary Bially a red telephone.

GO-FER

Phone for you, Mr. Bially. It sounds urgent.

RONA BARRETT

Go ahead, Gary. I'll see you later at Ma Maison.

Bially paces as he picks up the telephone receiver, greeted by an excited high-pitched VOICE.

125. INT. T.V. STUDIO/EXT. PHONE BOOTH - DAY

INTERCUT: Gary Bially in T.V. studio and Eric in a public phone booth.

125A

ERIC
(into phone)
Mr. Bially. This is Eric Harker...
I told you about my idea for a
movie, remember?

Bially furrows his brow, emulating Warren Beatty, obviously his idol.

GARY BIALLY
(into phone)
You must be mistaken. Who are
you?

Eric fairly trembles in the confines of the noisy phone booth.

ERIC
(into phone)
You know, my story... 'Alabama
And The Forty Thieves.'

GARY BIALLY
(into phone)
...Sorry, pal. We never accept
outside material. Goodbye.

Bially hangs up the receiver over Eric's squeaking protests.

GARY BIALLY (Cont'd)
What a loser.

Bially's knowing smirk shows he knows exactly what he's doing in rip-off city.

126 EXT. PHONE BOOTH - DAY

Eric turns red, white and blue with anger. His chest heaves dryly, his eyes burn, his heart aches, his juices boil homicidal.

ERIC
(to himself)
There's more than one way to
pay him back. As Bogie used to say,
(MORE)

ERIC (Cont'd)

(Bogart's voice)

'It won't be fast and it won't
be pretty.'

Eric suffers a ringing in the ears, filled with the sweet
revenge babble of a million movie soundtracks.

Vaguely Italianate MUSIC underscores his thrust into the
flow of sidewalk traffic.

127 INT. ERIC'S HOUSE - DAY

Swarming with POLICE in and out of uniform, the old house
creaks with investigative activity.

On the lawn, Gallagher grumpily listens to an excited Moriarty.

MORIARTY

He's a sick, dangerous person,
acting out his celluloid
fantasies in real life.

GALLAGHER

Look, Moriarty, I give you
credit for putting us on to
the killer, but can the high
and mighty explanations, huh?

Moriarty knows he'll have to pursue his target on his own,
without police support, but that's okay with him.

An overworked Anne staggers on the scene.

ANNE

Most of the stuff's been moved
out but we found these.

Gallagher casually glances at the Polaroids from Eric's
bizarre Monroe Odyssey before handing them to Moriarty.

GALLAGHER

Here, Sherlock. Amuse yourself.

Gallagher strides away to play strong boss.

ANNE

(to Moriarty)

Why do you think Binford covered
up the real street sign with this
one?

She displays an official street sign in white letters on a blue background reading "99 River Street".

MORIARTY

Must have something to do with his fantasies.

The second unanswered question nagging Moriarty is the name change on the mailbox. He examines it.

MORIARTY (Cont'd)

(to Anne)

Here's one for you. He changed his name to 'Harker'. Why?

Anne shrugs in mystified reply.

128 EXT. "THE FINAL CUT BARBER SHOP" - DAY

A black Porsche 928 with a "Bially" license plate is illegally parked at the curb.

129 INT. BARBER SHOP - DAY

Converted from an old-time neighborhood barber shop, the mellow stereo, numerous flashy plants and snappy fashion magazines marks this as a redo...a new/old place of business.

The THREE BARBERS, tres-gay, recently graduated from a local Beverly Hills neighborhood salon. They thrive on showbiz patter and provide Variety and the Reporter for their slick clientele.

All three chairs are occupied, with others standing by for treatment. The 1st customer is a ROCK STAR in her twenties, the second a LONG-HAIRED OLDER MAN, in the music business with gold that drips from his apendages, and the third is Gary Bially, about to submit to a hot facial towel.

PETER (BIALLY'S BARBER)

(to Bially)

How's business?

GARY BIALLY

Couldn't be better. -I made a deal on 'Alabama' this morning with Warners.

PETER (BIALLY'S BARBER)

Sensational.

(winking)

Is there a part in it for me?

GARY BIALLY

You'll be called in, to read,
Peter. Don't worry.

Peter whisks the Variety from Bially and tip-tilts back the antique barber chair to apply the hot towel. On the wall, the prices for all services are posted as in the olden days, but reflect current inflation, times ten. You pay plenty extra for schmoozing.

130 EXT. STREET - DAY

A rented chauffeur driven 1936 Packard picks its way through the sparse traffic. Although old, the vehicle is perfectly restored and resembles an old-time hit car from the gangster/prohibition days.

131 INT. PACKARD - DAY

Eric sits grimly in the back seat, thrumming a violin case resting on his lap. He tips back his hat, Alan Ladd style. Dressed to kill in a grey pinstriped suit and bold tie, he appears to be a movie composite of James Cagney, Al Capone, and the Godfather.

INTERCUT: FLASH CUT from "The Godfather", mass assassination scene.

132 INT. PACKARD/EXT. BARBER SHOP - DAY

The funereal Packard parks behind Bially's Porsche. A BEAT COP throws his big foot on the running board.

BEAT COP

(head in window)

This is a red zone. Move it.

ERIC

(politely)

He's just dropping me off, Officer.

BEAT COP

Okay, but hurry up.

When the cop moseys away, Eric steps out over the running board. He hefts the violin case in his hand. He dismisses the unseen Driver with a twenty dollar tip.

ERIC

(Cagney's voice)

That's all, driver.

The Packard zooms off in a cloud of sticky valve smoke.

133 INT. BARBER SHOP - DAY

The gentle hum of business stagnates when Eric walks in the front door waving a Thompson Submachine gun fitted with a drum clip. He wears a James Cagney mask.

He levels the chopper at the reclining figure of Bially, face hidden under a hot towel.

ERIC

(Cagney's voice)

Everybody, out!!!

Without hesitation, the barber shop clears out in seconds. When the stampede subsides, Bially rises up from the chair like a ghost, looking down the barrel of the Thompson.

BIALLY

(to Eric)

It's my birthday, but this is too much. Is this a gag or what?

ERIC

(Cagney's voice)

Yeah, it's gonna be a lotta laughs, big man. Try this on for size.

Eric squeezes the trigger, spraying a burst of bullets over Bially's head, who visibly shrinks as he hunches down, covering himself with his arms.

Methodically, Eric swings the gun from right to left, dicing the barber shop into flying fragments.

BIALLY

(pleading)

What do you want from me?

ERIC

(Cagney's voice)

Nuthin' much from you, you dirty
rat. In fact, nuthin' at all!

BIALLY

Who are you?

ERIC

Me? I'm nobody... you're a
somebody... but not for long.

He maniacally enjoys the whimpering protestations of Bially in the chair. He replaces the empty drum clip with a full one and sporadically fires all fifty rounds into Bially's jumping jack body, making it last.

Before Bially hits the floor, there's more lead in him than a bank vault door.

Eric smugly watches a live canary in the birdcage overhead sprout into song in the unnatural silence. He mimes chucking it under the chin.

ERIC

(Cagney's voice;
to bird)

You got nice pipes, pal. Drop
in the club. Maybe I can do
somethin' for ya.

Eric disassembles the smoking gun and socks it into the violin case before strolling outside.

134

EXT. BARBER SHOP - DAY

As Eric steps into the glare of the sunshine, the Beat Cop yells from across the street.

BEAT COP

(referring to
blasted shop
interior)

What's all the ruckus in there?

ERIC

Check it out. They're offering
free haircuts and close shaves
during remodeling.

Eric disappears slowly around a corner like he's on top of the world.

135 INT. MORIARTY'S APARTMENT - DAY

A trail of torn-off clothing on the floor leads to the dishevelled bed. Under the covers, quite nude, Anne snuggles in Moriarty's arms in post coital playfulness.

ANNE

How serious was it between you and Doreen Pappas?

She holds up her glass for him to refill it with champagne.

MORIARTY

I guess I almost married her.

ANNE

Guess? You and marriage don't mix, eh?

She hiccups but downs another glass without spilling it.

MORIARTY

(changing the subject)

Mind if I turn on the news?

ANNE

What for? You yourself said T.V. was a waste of time... full of trashy violence.

Her right hand sneaks under the covers in the direction of his crotch, reaching for payday.

MORIARTY

(squirming)

I want to catch the sports results.

ANNE

(agreeably)

All right, but give me a chance to score later on.

MORIARTY

You drive a hard bargain.

Moriarty switches on the Sony by remote and the news film features the recent Bially murder (aired by the snappy Chicano reporter seen earlier).

135A

CHICANO T.V. NEWS ANNOUNCER

(outside
barber shop)

This afternoon -- high profile producer, Gary Bially, was machine-gunned inside this barber shop by the celluloid killer.

(pointing to
Porsche at curb)

Rumored to have increasing financial problems, the leasing company will pick up his car in the morning. Bially's estranged third wife says he has no liquid assets and has not paid alimony for three years. So much for appearances.

In bed, Anne senses Moriarty's body stiffen at the macabre news on the screen.

MORIARTY

(incensed)

Christ! Not again! Binford's always a step ahead of us.

ANNE

Of course! We never know where to look.

Moriarty leaps out of bed and springs into his clothes.

MORIARTY

Binford's gotta be stopped.

ANNE

Yeah, but how?

Moriarty flashes the deck of Polaroid pictures of Eric's strange Odyssey.

MORIARTY

What's he hung up on more than anything else in the world?

ANNE

Marilyn Monroe.

Moriarty sits on the bed to better con Anne.

MORIARTY

How would you like to play a
decoy in a starring role?

Anne drops the sheet from in front of her firm jutting breasts.

ANNE

As Marilyn Monroe? Gallagher
would never go for it.

MORIARTY

Who said anything about Gallagher?

The two conspirators hurriedly dress to carry out their plan.

136 EXT. SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD - NIGHT

While looking backward repeatedly to keep an eye out for the law, Eric wanders down the ratty part of Santa Monica, perusing the store windows filled with sex aids, old clothing, sick looking plants and healthy pets.

He carries a duffel bag to compliment his combat fatigues festooned with U.S. Ranger hash marks.

137 EXT. LIQUOR STORE - NIGHT

A muscle man GAY GUY slams to a stop in front of the "Hi-Hat Liquor" store without turning off the ignition on his fancy Jeep Renegade, top down. He strides into the store, leaving the gurgling beast of a machine at the curb, pulsing with horsepower. "Register Communists, Not Guns", "White Power", and "Gay Veterans" stickers plaster the bumpers.

INTERCUT: A clip from "Highway Patrol" in which a young HOOD steals a car.

In a burst of inspiration, Eric leaps aboard the Jeep, shoves it in gear and floorboards it. He peels rubber as the Fag runs out of the store with his package, shaking his doubled-up fist.

His lispy voice contrasts with his jeans, plaid shirt and cowboy boots...reverse macho.

GAY GUY

Come back here, you hetero beast!!!

138 EXT. VENICE STREET/INT. CHEVY VAN - NIGHT

Pausing from time to time to keep a multicolored Chevy van in sight behind her, a living/breathing MARILYN MONROE strides the streets of Venice...Anne as a decoy.

In the van, Moriarty tests the two-way communication from his microphone to Anne's carnation microphone pinned to her dress.

MORIARTY

Don't walk too fast. I almost got caught at a light back there.

ANNE

(into her
carnation
microphone)

Don't worry. I want to catch Binford even more than you do.

139 EXT. FRANCO'S GANG - NIGHT

As Anne rounds the corner, she's confronted by Franco and fifteen of his BUDDIES who have completely blocked traffic with their gaudy motorcycles. They're drinking in the street, cursing and generally carrying on.

ANNE

(into her
microphone)

Time out for a little official police business.

MORIARTY

Looks like Franco. Wait until I can park and help you.

Anne launches into action by confronting the gang, while flashing her badge.

ANNE

You've got to move those bikes immediately. I'm an officer of the law.

FRANCO

(hopped up
on reds)

Dressed like that? Who you
kiddin'? Move 'em yourself,
pussy.

A chorus of raspberries SOARS UP from his aroused pals.
Moriarty pulls up and one of the hoods defiantly slams a
chain over the hood of the van.

ANNE

OKAY. You asked for it.
You're all under arrest.

Another hood snaps the radio aerial off of the van,
They forcefully jump Anne and disarm her, taking the
hide-out gun strapped to her thigh.

Moriarty gamely leaps from the van to Anne's aid.

140 EXT. ERIC'S JEEP - NIGHT

Exhilarated by the expectation of danger, Eric recklessly
drives the Jeep down the dark streets of the Sunday sleeping
village.

Now a certified thrill junkie, he's looking for trouble and
finds it fast...by flicking on the C.B. radio.

ANNE'S VOICE ON C.B.

(pleading)

Backup needed Rose and Main.
Motorcycle gang causing 601.

141 EXT. FRANCO'S GANG - NIGHT

Nose-to-nose and toe-to-toe, Moriarty and Franco glare at
each other.

MORIARTY

Knock it off, Franco. You're too
old to be playing games like this.

FRANCO

Cool it, man. It's after hours.
You got no control over me.

Several of the hoods jump Moriarty from the back and he has difficulty shaking them loose. Franco grabs Anne.

ANNE

Get your greasy hands off me.

FRANCO

Who you callin' oily?

Franco slaps her smartly across the mouth.

FRANCO (Cont'd)

Well, whatcha gonna do now,
mama pig?

Franco winds up and flings her sap through the window of nearby "Stern's Delicatessen", setting off the alarm. All of this action takes place in one foreshortened minute.

142 EXT. - ERIC - NIGHT

Meanwhile, Eric observes the scene from a nearby corner while making himself combat ready. He sports the combined military gear of a Green Beret, Paratrooper, Mercenary and all-around heavy.

From his vantage point, he only has eyes for Marilyn. His girl's in trouble.

ERIC

(John Wayne's voice,
into C.B. mike)

Our pigeon's in trouble.
We need some eighty-eights to
soften 'em up. An' don't forget
the air support. My boys are
going in ahead. Wish us luck...
we'll need it.

He hangs up the mic, shifts the Renegade into four wheel drive and guns the motor.

ERIC (Cont'd)

(John Wayne's
voice; to
himself)

Come on, baby. This is your
night to make prayers out of
sinners.

By the time he hits third gear, headed directly for the bike gang, he's topping fifty miles an hour.

143 EXT. FRANCO'S GANG - NIGHT

A suppressed air of impending terror seizes the gang as they catch wind of the Jeep boring down on them. Drunkenly, their ears prick up and their eyes widen.

FRANCO
(trying to focus
on the Jeep)
What's that???

Sweeping into a sliding broadside, Eric takes out a line of motorcycles with one crunching, metal-bending, ear-splitting CRASH. Several hoods act tough and spring back, but most scatter.

Moriarty hits the ditch head down, Vietnam style.

Delayed smoke bombs obscure everybody's vision.

FRANCO (Cont'd)
(rallying his
troops)
Off that motherfucker!!!

Before he can blink an eye, the Jeep zaps Franco, knocking him flat to the pavement.

To one side, Anne shakes loose from two of her captors and watches in amazement as the Jeep cuts doughnuts on the pavement, wildly scattering the hoods.

ANNE
(to Franco)
Give me my gun.

FRANCO
No way. I need it myself.

The Jeep rolls to a stop in a smoke cloud. The gang closes in like an octopus on what they think is easy prey, their weapons drawn.

Eric addresses his IMAGINARY PLATOON, squatting down, drawing chalk lines on the pavement.

ERIC

(John Wayne's voice)

Sanchez, you and Brown take the left flank. Kowalski, you stick with me. Bernstein and Whitehead, cover the rear. All right, men, let's move 'em out!

Eric signals the famous John Wayne 'give 'em hell' overhand wave, chattering AD-LIB remarks to his imaginary men throughout.

From out of the smoke pall, the gang witnesses an apparition... the crazed, avenging commando... Eric with a John Wayne mask on.

The gang pulls out all the stops and charges.

Eric fractures their first wave with a well thrown hand grenade. Then, every gun in his possession barks at the hoods, mowing them down in bunches. He's nutty enough and freaked out enough to be almost invulnerable. No bullet can seem to touch him.

The firefight lasts long enough for the gang to be creamed.

As the roar dies down, Eric strolls up to a fallen Franco who crawfishes sideways along the pavement holding a wounded leg.

FRANCO

(impressed,
looking up)

Who the hell are you, man?

Eric breaks into a grim, stiff smile under the John Wayne mask.

ERIC

(John Wayne's voice)

John Wayne.

(tipping hat
to Anne)

Miz Monroe. We can be getting back to the hospital now.

(looking up)

It's all clear.

Eric imagines Anne to be Marilyn Monroe and himself as John Wayne, playing out a wartime heroic scene from the kaleidoscope of war flicks scrambled in his memory.

ANNE

I'm feeling weary.

ERIC

(John Wayne's voice)

Well, no wonder. A little bit
a rest an' you'll be good as new.
Those Japs won't be back before
morning.

Eric grabs her elbow with a tight grip.

Moriarty decides to intrude with reality.

MORIARTY

Binford, you can't get away with
this. Let her go.

Eric's take signifies Moriarty's crazy, not him.

ERIC (to Anne)

(John Wayne's voice)

Friend a yours?
(indicating
Moriarty)

ANNE

(indecisive)

Yes and no.

(takes off wig)

Look, I'm not Marilyn Monroe.

Eric ignores her and turns to Moriarty.

ERIC

(John Wayne's voice)

Take it easy, son. We're all
gettin' a big edgy with all this
shelling.

MORIARTY

BINFORD... YOU'RE OFF YOUR ROCKER!!!

Eric levels his Thompson at Moriarty's gut.

ERIC

(John Wayne's voice)

I said to back off, sonny boy.

Moriarty's a hairbreath from getting blasted so he cools it.

The approaching SOUNDS of police, ambulance and fire engine
SIRENS distract Eric from whatever vague plan he was hatching.

ERIC

(John Wayne's
voice)

They're back already. I better
get down to the barracks and warn
the men. I'll be seein' ya.

He stylishly tips his helmet, hops into the Jeep and spins out
down an alley at combat speed.

As official POLICE OFFICERS arrive to take charge, Moriarty,
Anne and Franco's gang are found in the same soup, victims of
Eric's madness.

MORIARTY

(to Anne)

Well, that was a bust.

ANNE

Never mind. We'll get 'im.

FRANCO

(jibing)

Say, doc. He one a your patients?

Moriarty feels like kicking Franco's teeth in.

144
EXT. MAIN STREET (VENICE) - "BLOWUP (AS IN ANTONIONI'S) PHOTO
STUDIO" - DUSK

Anne's patrol car brakes in front of the snappy white front
of the photog studio, remodeled out of an old ice house.

Marilyn and Doreen peer at it from the back seat.

ANNE

(to Marilyn)

Why so late?

MARILYN

The photographer wanted to see me
after work so he could spend more
time. He needs a model who skates.
This is a big break for me.

ANNE

I don't like the looks of it. I'm
going along.

Anne, Doreen, and Marilyn hit the pavement.

Marilyn alights last and brushes her hair, shouldering her skates which have been air-brushed yellow with golden angel's wings glued on the sides. She feels like a star already.

They reach the front door and Anne rings the bell. They step inside on the BUZZER.

145 INT. PHOTOGRAPHY STUDIO/RECEPTION ROOM - TWILIGHT

Except for the modern furniture including an Eames chair, the tastefully arranged plants and the soothing MUSIC on KNX-FM, the reception room is empty. A sign on the secretary's desk reads: "Please Be Seated Until Called For".

One or two ornate movie posters dot the walls in expensive frames. The replica of the Maltese Falcon perches on a gold pedestal in the corner. Anne approaches it.

ANNE

(referring
to falcon)

What's this?

From a speaker affixed high in the corner of the room comes an at once metallic and chilling VOICE, laced with waves of unctious...

ERIC'S VOICE ON SPEAKER

"That is the stuff dreams are
made of..."

(Buffs will recognize Bogart's line from "The Maltese Falcon".)

The three women do not recognize Eric's voice and don't feel any menace at this point, but the audience should be freaking out.

ERIC'S VOICE ON SPEAKER

Put on your skates. I'll be
ready in a minute.

ANNE

(referring
to speaker)

Clever gimic.

DOREEN

(to Marilyn)

Be back in a sec.

146 INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Doreen follows the sign to the ladies room and enters. After she disappears inside, a HAND silently turns the key on the outside, locking her in.

147 INT. RECEPTION ROOM - NIGHT

As Marilyn completes lacing up her skates, the voice of doom vibrates again.

ERIC'S VOICE ON SPEAKER

Come right in, Marilyn.

ANNE

I'll wait right here for you.

Another BUZZER activates the door to the inner sanctum and Marilyn skates in. Anne picks up and flips through a photography magazine as the inner door clangs shut.

148 INT. PHOTOGRAPHY STUDIO - NIGHT

Dramatically lit by pools of colored light, the high lofted room could be the interior of a space station...clean, clear, white, sterile. At the far end, Eric sits at a large desk, his face obscured by back lighting.

ERIC

Come over here... and sit down.

Marilyn skates over and obliges, straining unsuccessfully to see Eric's face shadow hidden behind sunglasses, a visored cap, and heavy makeup which makes him look older.

ERIC (Cont'd)

(indicating
'get up')

I'm sensitive to light. Have some coffee.

He pours them both a cup and Marilyn sips hers without thinking.

MARILYN

Thanks for giving me the chance to earn a free composite.

ERIC

No problem. I picked you especially. Shall we go to work?

MARILYN

Great.

Eric activates a bank of light switches behind a curtain to illuminate a dramatic set dominated by an oversized bed, a rickety nightstand and a dressing table. The famous nude calendar shot of Marilyn Monroe graces the wall above a portable phonograph. Eric engages a record of Frank Sinatra singing, "I'll Be Seeing You."

ERIC

I work better to music, especially Sinatra. Warm up a bit. I'll be right back.

149 INT. RECEPTION ROOM - NIGHT

By peeking through a hole in the wall under a movie poster, Eric watches Marilyn examine the (Monroe) set. She caresses the Marilyn Monroe calendar on the wall. She tries out the bed by bouncing on it. She holds up a Monroe type nightgown in front of her to see how it looks and feels.

In that instant, Eric snaps. Once again, he experiences the real Marilyn Monroe.

150 INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Having completed her toilette, Doreen attempts to open the locked door, at first gently, then with increasing urgency.

DOREEN

Anne... Marilyn... the door's stuck.

She twists and turns the handle violently. Then she begins to pound on the door.

DOREEN (Cont'd)

(yelling)

Help! I'm locked in!

151 INT. RECEPTION ROOM - NIGHT

Anne feels antsy without knowing why. She half listens to the Sinatra record over the speaker. She gets up and goes to the door to the studio to listen with a cocked ear. With nothing to explain her nervousness, she returns to her seat.

ANNE

(to herself)

Doreen seems to be taking an awful long time.

152 INT. STUDIO - NIGHT

Marilyn flips through the stack of Sinatra records. Lastly, she examines a small shrine set up in the corner. A small woman's compact adorns a heart-shaped scarlet silk pillow, reflected five times over in a four-sided mirror.

Eric returns with a Polaroid professional model and screws it to a tripod.

MARILYN

(indicating
bedroom)

I love the set. It's so Fifties.

ERIC

It's an exact copy of Marilyn Monroe's bedroom. We're going to recreate her death right here and now.

Marilyn tenses...mortified to find herself face-to-face with the celluloid killer.

MARILYN

(beside herself)

You're Eric Binford...

Eric begins to laugh softly under his breath as he hands her the expensive compact from the set.

ERIC

Here. This belongs to you, Marilyn, put on your red lips and pale powder.

Marilyn senses a chill of dread run up her spine.

MARILYN

(trepidatiously)

You sent me those weird posters, right, Eric?

Eric removes his glasses and hat and steps into the full light.

ERIC

(demented)

What for? After we're married, everything will be yours anyway.

MARILYN

Married?

Marilyn prepares to make a break for it.

ERIC

Certainly. Just like in 'The Prince And The Showgirl' with Laurence Olivier. One of your better roles.

MARILYN

You're not serious.

ERIC

Yes... I'm filthy rich. We'll go away on a glorious honeymoon and be together... always.

MARILYN

What are you saying?

ERIC

(heating up)

Don't think of refusing me.

Marilyn decides to humor him, con him, lie to him, anything to keep him at bay.

MARILYN

No, of course not, I'll go home and pack my bag.

She skates for the door but her legs wobble under her unsteadily.

ERIC

(snarling)

You can't get away. I put something in the coffee to keep you here.

Marilyn desperately scrambles for the door, the wheels on her skates acting as if they're square. She can't hold her head upright without feeling dizzy. Her mouth gulps like a fish out of water.

ERIC

Don't bother to scream. The room's soundproof.

Eric closes in on her with a handful of pills.

ERIC (Cont'd)

(raging inside)

Take these, my darling. They'll make you sleep better... and I'll capture it all on film.

MARILYN

My god, Marilyn Monroe died of barbituates. Is that what you slipped in my drink? Doreen!!! Anne!!!

Marilyn drops to one knee, heaving deeply, trying to dislodge the seconal by coughing violently.

153 EXT. PHOTO STUDIO - NIGHT

Moriarty arrives, guided to the exact spot by Anne's parked patrol car. He enters the building.

154 INT. PHOTO STUDIO - NIGHT

Marilyn's legs crazily split under her, out of control.

Eric patiently follows her about with the handful of pills, determined to recreate the death of Marilyn Monroe.

ERIC'S INNER VOICE

If I can't have you, nobody will.
Marilyn, you must die as you lived...
by night... recklessly.

155 INT. PHOTO STUDIO/RECEPTION ROOM - NIGHT

Anne's much relieved by Moriarty's presence.

MORIARTY

I figure Binford killed his aunt by pushing her down the stairs. That happened in 'Kiss Of Death' with Richard Widmark.

ANNE

That's wild.

MORIARTY

He changed his street address to '99 River Street' which is the title of a Phil Karlson movie starring John Payne. Understand?

ANNE

Yes.

MORIARTY

He also changed his name to 'Marker' like the character in 'Dracula'.

ANNE

So you're afraid of what role he's going to play next.
(pause)

So am I.

MORIARTY

(innocently)

Say. Where's Marilyn?

156 EXT. "BLOW UP" PHOTOGRAPHIC STUDIO - NIGHT

In spite of her barbituate high, Marilyn eludes Eric by crashing out the back door and into the alley, wobbling on her skates.

Eric follows in close pursuit in no particular hurry. In fact, he adopts the superior sympathetic tone of a Joe Di Maggio or an Arthur Miller, two well known Monroe ex-husbands.

ERIC

(proferring pills)

Come back to bed, my darling.
You need your rest.

159 INT. PHOTO STUDIO/RECEPTION ROOM - NIGHT

The sepulchral voice of Frank Sinatra registers on Moriarty's ears.

MORIARTY

(dawning horror)

Marilyn Monroe's favorite singer,
of course! Look down the hallway!

With a drawn gun, Anne disappears down the hall as Moriarty throws a shoulder into the locked bulky door to the main salon.

158 INT. PHOTO STUDIO - NIGHT

The door finally gives way.

MORIARTY (Cont'd)
(shouting)
ERIC BINFORD!!! WHERE ARE YOU???

When the mania on display before him becomes clear, that he's witnessing the loving recreation of a tomb, he cries out:

MORIARTY (Cont'd)
(angrily)
What a mess.

159 EXT. VENICE ALLEY - NIGHT

Marilyn clenches her teeth to lend her strength. She manages to stay barely out of Eric's grasp by superhuman effort, the drug badly affecting her coordination.

ERIC'S INNER VOICE
She'll be mine again forever.
Nobody can take her away from
me this time.

He dogs her fleeting shadows down the narrow pavement, breaking into a loping run to keep her in sight.

From here on, the soundtrack features the Who's "Behind Blue Eyes," a song about a psycho hidden behind a benign facade.

160 INT. PHOTO STUDIO - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Alerted by the furious nonstop POUNDING, Anne busts the lock on the bathroom door and Doreen spills out, petrified.

ANNE
Are you okay?

DOREEN
(in a state
of shock)
Where's Marilyn?

Moriarty dashes up to them, breathlessly.

MORIARTY

They must be nearby. It looks like his scenario was interrupted.

ANNE

(to Stacey)

Can you make it home by yourself?

Stacey nods yes, zombie-like but spunky.

161 EXT. PHOTO STUDIO - NIGHT

Anne, Moriarty and Doreen exit. They send Doreen on her way, jump into the police car and rocket off into the night.

162 EXT. VENICE STREETS AND ALLEYS - NIGHT

Skating erratically and losing ground steadily, Marilyn crashes into garbage cans in her hasty, drugged flight.

Eric hippity-hops in her wake, grinning from ear to ear, sure of his catch sooner or later.

ERIC

Come, come, Marilyn. Take your medicine like a good girl.

163 INT./EXT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT

Driven by futile speculation that they could have prevented Marilyn's predicament, Anne drives the police car hell bent.

MORIARTY

Head for the canals. My guess is they didn't get far. Marilyn's strong and he's weak... I hope..

164 EXT. PONTOON BRIDGE OVER CANAL - NIGHT

Marilyn struggles up the sloping ramp of one of the famous foot-bridges by grasping the ornate railing, hand over hand. Spent, she can go no further and drops in a heap, half-zonked from the creeping effect of the drugs.

Eric triumphantly catches up to lord it over her. He extracts the pills from his vest, ready to force feed her the barbituates. He kneels down to administer the pills, prying open her lax lips. He forces them into her mouth, one by one, making her swallow reflexively by stroking her throat muscles.

165 INT./EXT. POLICE CAR/TEXACO GAS STATION - NIGHT

Anne madly races through the station on their quest, narrowly missing a collision with another car which cuts in front of them.

Anne thrusts her head out the window of the police cruiser.

ANNE
(to startled
MOTORIST)
Hold it right there! You're
under arrest. I'll be back.

166 EXT. PONTOON BRIDGE - NIGHT

Satisfied she's pumped full of poison, Eric allows Marilyn's comatose body to recline on the pavement. Standing up, he smooths his wrinkled shirt with a doctor's authority.

ERIC
Now you'll always be mine, Marilyn,
and nothing and no one can come
between us from now on.

167 INT./EXT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT

Sometimes on two wheels, the police car careens up and down the streets and alleys of Venice at high speed.

ANNE
What makes you think he's over
here?

MORIARTY
Because the landscape looks like
a movie.

The headlights of the police car pick up Eric sauntering off the bridge toward them.

MORIARTY (Cont'd)
(pointing through
windshield)
There's the maniac!

Eric freezes like a hunted rabbit in the glare of the headlights.

Anne brakes the car and unracks the Remington 870 riot pump shotgun before flying out after Moriarty full tilt.

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EXT. PONTOON BRIDGE - NIGHT

Moriarty almost falls on Eric before he backpedals in a delayed reaction.

MORIARTY

(yelling)

Stop right there, Binford!
You've had it!

Eric takes flight the way he came, up toward the inert body of Marilyn. Near the top of the bridge, Moriarty tackles Eric to the ground. They grapple violently, Eric kicking and screaming all the while in his maniacal James Cagney voice.

ERIC

(yelling into
space in
Cagney's voice)

DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME, MA. I'LL
BE ALL RIGHT!

INTERCUT: subliminal flash of James Cagney as Cody Jarrett in "White Heat", wherein he plays a psychopathic killer, a mama's boy who's famous line caps the picture before the giant gas tank he stands atop blows sky high.

JAMES CAGNEY

Lookit me, Ma, I made it! Top a
the world!!!

BACK TO SCENE

Demonically, Eric kicks at Moriarty and draws a Colt .45 automatic.

ERIC

(Cagney's voice)

Top a the world, ma! That's me!

Anne addresses the Remington shotgun at his gut, aiming from her hip.

ANNE

(to Eric)

I've got you covered. Don't move
an inch.

MORIARTY

Drop it, Binford.

ERIC
 (Cagney's voice)
 You dirty rat. Take that!

Eric squeezes the trigger.

The explosion of his hand gun is drowned out by four .12 gauge reports from Anne's Remington.

Eric's scarecrow body flies through the air from the blast, ricocheting over the railing, hitting the water in the canal with a nasty splat.

Anne's face appears next to Moriarty's, looking down at the floating, wasted body.

ANNE
 (philosophically)
 'He was some kind of banana. (pause)
 What does it matter what you
 say about people?'

(Cultists will recognize the last lines from Orson Welles' "Touch Of Evil" as spoken by Marlene Dietrich, only she said 'man' instead of 'banana'.)

Anne and Moriarty address themselves to reviving Marilyn.

MARILYN
 (eyes fluttering)
 What happened?

ANNE
 Binford's dead.

MARILYN
 (drug induced
 hysteria).
 He was going to have me play
 a big part!

Police SIRENS wail nearby, signaling the imminent arrival of the law.

FADE OUT:

169 FADE IN:

EXT. SANTA MONICA PIER - MORNING

As per usual at this hour, Moriarty jaws with Doreen outside her parlor.

Several nasty scratches mar Moriarty's face and his hand shakes slightly.

Doreen for her part, waxes more sympathetic than ever.

DOREEN

Eric killed his own mother?

MORIARTY

(nodding 'yes')

Ten years ago, she died in a car crash. He copied a Joan Crawford movie by rigging the brakes to fail.

INSERT: SHOT OF NEWS STORY FROM ERIC'S ROOM (SEEN EARLIER) featuring his mother's "Accidental Death".

DOREEN

(O.S.)

Any idea why?

MORIARTY (O.S.)

Apparently his father was killed in the war and his mother found a new lover. Eric felt that was unpardonable.

Doreen wags her head in mystic rhythm.

DOREEN

What started him killing again?

MORIARTY

Same imagined rejection probably.

Moriarty huffs in punctuation, tying off the whole episode in his mind. He affixes the ankle clip to keep his pant leg out of the gears before taking off.

MORIARTY (Cont'd)

(I) guess I better get going. It's okay to be unemployed again, but everything takes longer with my sore leg. Eric Binford left his mark on me.

Doreen
in it.

attempts to cheer him up but instead puts her foot

DOREEN

How's Anne?

Moriarty cocks his head, acting at first like he may not have heard her.

MORIARTY

(melancholy)

Hard to say. She asked to be transferred to Long Beach after the liberals got on her case for shooting Binford in what they called a bloody and murderous manner. She also felt I sided with them.

DOREEN

That's a shame.

MORIARTY

(ironically)

Yeah. A real storybook ending.

Moriarty gimpily pedals off as Doreen summarily greets her first customer of the day, a WOMAN dressed in mourning black.

170 EXT. WINDWARD AVENUE/VENICE STREET CORNER - DAY

A STILL PHOTOGRAPHER'S CREW OF FOUR, MAKEUP, LIGHTING, GO-FER, and MR. FASHION himself, attract a small CROWD of gawkers.

Marilyn, dressed in a white linen dress favored by Marilyn Monroe and made up to look exactly like her, shakes off criticism from Jake

MARILYN

(miffed)

What's wrong? They're willing to pay me to look like Marilyn Monroe, why shouldn't I do it?

JAKE

(priestlike)

Because modeling's a sucker's game.

MARILYN

Where I come from, not making any money is.

The photographer, JOEY MADONNA, a slicko, with his diving front silk shirt, gold medallions, tight imported pants and Riviera suntan, directs the action. He has more than a professional interest in Marilyn from the dirty glint in his viewfinder.

JOEY MADONNA

(to Marilyn; coaxingly)

We're ready, love. Wanna take your place?

JAKE
 (to Marilyn)
 Look, let's go to Catalina for
 the weekend and talk about us.

MARILYN
 (Marilyn Monroe's
 voice; pinching
 his cheek)
 Don't be silly, Jake. You're sweet
 but I'm not going to marry anybody right now.

She swaggers to the center of the street a la Monroe with the
 rumble seat derriere syncopating right, left, right, left.

She stops halfway to blow Jake a kiss. He reacts by making a
 face and huffing away, arms chugging.

Joey Madonna fills the vacuum by slipping his greasy arm around
 her nimble waist.

JOEY MADONNA
 Right over the manhole grate, lovey.

He pecks her cheek with a chaste kiss, drooling with anticipation.

JOEY MADONNA (Cont'd)
 Right there, sweetheart.

By using his hairy forearm, he manages to brush her breast ever
 so accidentally-on-purpose.

JOEY MADONNA (Cont'd)
 You know what to do. Relax. My
 girls always go to the top. If
 they follow my orders.

He pats her ass and backs off. The lighting man adjusts the
 reflector to hit her face flatteringly.

Moriarty glides to a stop on his bike, a silent witness to
 this reincarnation scene.

JOEY MADONNA (Cont'd)
 (marshalling his troops)
 Special Effects.

The go-fer, a pimply-faced youth of nineteen, turns on an air
 compressor which shoots a stream of wind up Marilyn's skirt,
 mimicing Marilyn Monroe in the "Seven Year Itch". The
 resemblance is uncanny.

As Joey clicks away, muttering a non-stop stream of petty
 endearments, the SCREEN FILLS WITH FREEZE FRAME stills of
 Marilyn in provocative poses as the END CREDITS ROLL.

FADE TO BLACK

THE END.