

Adrien Brody Diane Lane

Ben Affleck

LAVA FILMS, LLC

TRUTH, JUSTICE, AND THE AMERICAN WAY

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January 20, 2005

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FADE IN ON THE BOTTOM OF A LADDER

dragging along the dirt, passing OUT OF FRAME.

EXT. HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

A thump on the side of the garage, and now the top rungs of the ladder appear over the roof. Somebody climbing up, all the way to the top. Little hands into view, and then the rest of a FRESH-FACED FIVE-YEAR OLD BOY. Short, 50's-style haircut. Plaid bathrobe, because it's chilly out here.

He looks down on the neighborhood, surging with power and freedom. And then off comes the robe. He sweeps it behind his back, tying the long sleeves around his neck. Gets his footing, but that's the last thing he's worried about.

See, this kid wants to fly. Expects to fly.

Arms outstretched, plaid cape waving, he lifts one foot into the air.

FLOATING PAST HIM

gently off the roof, lifting into the sky, then dropping down, earthward, with a sudden terrifying acceleration--

CUT TO BLACK

JUNE 16, 1959 2:15 A.M.

EXT. 1579 BENEDICT CANYON DRIVE - NIGHT

CAMERA DROPPING, as if one continuous shot, out of the darkness to settle on this cozy two-bedroom with a pair of windows peeking over the garage. Tonight, it's a --

Crime scene. LAPD cruisers. A hearse from the mortuary of Gates, Kingsley, and Gates.

In the driveway, OFFICER DANIEL KORBY takes the statement of LEONORE LEMMON, a hot broad whom trouble always seems to follow. Light rain falling as headlights sweep INTO FRAME.

DETECTIVE DON JOHNSON climbs out of the unmarked car, lighting a Chesterfield. Early 40's, no body fat, less patience. Heads straight to the house, overhearing the blonde--

LEONORE

How the hell should I know?

KORBY

You said he was distraught.

LEONORE

I didn't say I knew why. I mean you don't look too happy either.

INT. 1579 BENEDICT CANYON DRIVE - NIGHT

Sgt. VICTOR PATERSON meets Johnson at the door, leads him inside. Paterson's late-20's, a solid cop. He points to the THREE PEOPLE on the couch.

PATERSON

The one on the end is a houseguest,
Robert Condon. The other two are
friends, Carol Van Ronkel and Bill
Bliss. Bliss found the body.

Johnson looks around. At the liquor bottles on the coffee table, most empty or near. The cigarettes piled high, the ice still melting in tall glasses.

DET. JOHNSON

When the party start?

PATERSON

Little after midnight.

Then up the stairs to the bedroom.

PATERSON (CONT'D)

Coroner's ruling it "Indicated
Suicide."

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT - A MAN'S BODY

Naked on the bed, belly-side up, his head a bloody mess.

Tape on the floor marks where the gun was found. Tape on the ceiling marks a bullet hole. Otherwise, except for the body and the bloody sheets, the room looks perfectly normal.

Paterson nods out the window that overlooks the backyard. There's Leonore, sitting on a wrought iron bench.

PATERSON

Leonore Lemmon, the fiancée, she
says he was depressed. Also predicted
he would do it.

(off Johnson's look)

What she said. He went upstairs,
she told her pals he was gonna shoot
himself.

DET. JOHNSON

(dryly)

So why didn't she stop him?

PATERSON

Maybe she believed what she saw on
TV.

DET. JOHNSON
(not following)
On TV.

PATERSON picks up a black and white publicity card from a stack on the dresser and shows it to JOHNSON.

THE CARD

a MAN IN A SUPERMAN COSTUME. Posing dramatically, jaw set, hands on hips, a starkly lit gray wall behind him. Below the photo, a stamped signature, "Best Wishes, Superman."

DET. JOHNSON (CONT'D)
(of the body on the bed)
Him?

PATERSON
"Faster than a speeding bullet."

DET. JOHNSON
Not this time.

PATERSON looks up at the bullet hole in the ceiling. Something about it bugging him.

EXT. SIDEWALK-- DAY

CHESTER SINCLAIR

squints into the sun. He's in his late 40's, thin, neat, sweating slightly in suit about eight years out of date.

HIS POV-- IN FRONT OF HIM

a 1950's white-box apartment court on a nowhere block south of Wilshire.

SINCLAIR crosses to the entryway.

EXT. APARTMENT COURT-- DAY

WITH SINCLAIR

as he climbs the outside staircase to the upper walkway of the motel-style complex.

MOVING ALONG THE WALKWAY

as SINCLAIR passes by apartment doorways, looking for a number.

He stops outside 215. From inside-- or is the next apartment over?-- the SOUND of a WOMAN heading toward climax.

SINCLAIR pauses. His eyes flit around uncomfortably.

HIS POV-- OVER THE RAILING OF THE WALKWAY

a small swimming pool in the courtyard below. A man in his late 50's stands on the deck in a Speedo, curling a barbell and smoking a cigarette.

Inside 215, the WOMAN gives a final moan, rising and falling away.

SINCLAIR dabs his forehead with a handkerchief and knocks.

Silence. Somewhere in the complex, Paul Anka sings "Lonely Boy" on a radio.

After a few moments, a young woman opens the door. She is KIT HOLLIDAY, maybe 22, with a gamine look, acts more wise-up than she really is. Her face is flushed.

SINCLAIR

I have new information.

A MAN steps into view in the room behind KIT. He's LOUIS MOGLIO, mid-30's, dark good looks that don't get him as far as he thinks.

He's tucking his shirt into his pants, trying to be casual about it.

He sees SINCLAIR, slaps a smile on his face, and gestures for him to come inside.

INT. APARTMENT-- MOMENTS LATER-- DAY

Sparsely furnished. The stuff looks rented. One corner's been set up as an office. KIT busies herself with some papers at a polite distance.

SINCLAIR

I went to the building on Rossmore.
The office is occupied by an
orthodontist. You can imagine my
consternation.

MOGLIO

We're setting up in a better location.
Right off Wilshire. Adding an
operative. But. Delays. The phone
lines. So, time being...

He gestures vaguely at the apartment. Pause.

SINCLAIR

(lowering his voice)
I have reason to believe my wife
continues to engage in illicit carnal
relations.

MOGLIO exchanges a tiny glance with KIT.

KIT
I'm going to take care of those mailings.

MOGLIO
Yeah, good.

KIT exits. Pause.

MOGLIO (CONT'D)
Mr. Sinclair, we did check into that for you, there was nothing we could come up with.

SINCLAIR
In that regard I blame myself.

MOGLIO
How's that.

SINCLAIR
Despite my efforts, my wife became aware of a change in my demeanor and curtailed her activities accordingly.

MOGLIO
(feeding him)
But now she...

SINCLAIR
Is emboldened once again.

Pause. MOGLIO suppresses a slight sour taste.

MOGLIO
She still at Western Costume?

SINCLAIR
I drop her off there every morning. What transpires after that...

He lets it hang in the air.

MOGLIO
(wanting to get this over with)
Okay. The fee is--

SINCLAIR
Fifty dollars a day. A three day minimum. In advance.

And he's got the money in hand, ready to pass it over.

MOGLIO
(his best bedside manner)
We'll do everything we can.

EXT. WALKWAY-- MOMENTS LATER-- DAY

SINCLAIR heads toward the stairs. His step seems lighter,
like a burden's been lifted. MOGLIO watches him go.

KIT (O.S.)
"Marshall Dillon, can't you tell
when a woman's waiting to be kissed?"

MOGLIO turns to see KIT crouched in the service alcove,
smoking a cigarette, holding script sides.

MOGLIO
And do you kiss him?

KIT
James Arness? He won't be at the
audition.
(Pause. Of Sinclair)
It's not right, you know.

MOGLIO
Sinclair? His money.

KIT
He's nuts.

Pause. MOGLIO shrugs.

MOGLIO
Look. I'm gonna show my face. Drum
up some real business. You can take
off. Study your lines.

KIT
I already did. They're not hard.
(Pause.)
I could write up a contract for him.

MOGLIO
You're gonna nail this Gunsmoke gig.
I got a feeling.

KIT
Tell me I'm going to be a star.

MOGLIO
You kidding? You're not gonna return
my calls.

KIT
(trying it on)
Louis Moglio? Never heard of him.

She's joking, of course. But right then MOGLIO feels it's probably going to be true.

INT. COFFEE SHOP-- DAY

MOGLIO enters, in sport jacket, gabardines, and open-neck shirt. Not a man with a desk job. At far end of a row of booths he sees THREE CLEAN-CUT MEN eating lunch.

He moves along the counter, face carefully composed, taking a seat a few feet away from the MEN. They pay him no attention.

OLDER MAN

It's two o'clock in the morning, I'm thinking I'm not the best P.I. in California, but if I can't spot a one-eyed Negro Jew sneaking into a house in Beverly Hills, it's time to pack it in. And Del comes around--

BLOND MAN

Wrong address.

OLDER MAN

He's banging her like clockwork three doors down and we have nothing.

DEL

Mr. Davis is a very talented performer.

OLDER MAN

Sammy Davis is very talented. Kim Novak is very white. And Harry Cohn was very very angry.

YOUNG MAN

What'd Nick do?

OLDER MAN

He, questioned our professionalism.

YOUNG MAN laughs, a little too hard. OLDER MAN abruptly addresses MOGLIO-- he's been aware of him all the time.

OLDER MAN (CONT'D)

You know what that's like, right?

MOGLIO swivels around on the seat.

OLDER MAN (CONT'D)

What's the matter, Ace, Alpha Beta's not hiring parking lot guards?

MOGLIO

Not with you moonlighting, Chuck.

CHUCK
(to YOUNG MAN)
Study this gentleman. Observe him
closely. The get-up. The haircut.
Nobody told him the world don't need
two Ralph Meekers.

MOGLIO
Listen to him, kid. And don't take
up smoking either. It's a filthy
habit.

CHUCK
(looking MOGLIO in the eye)
This isn't show business, pal. It's
just a job. You punch in every day.
(To DEL)
Let's go.

DEL
I'm still eating, Chuck.

CHUCK eyes him distrustfully. Then HE gestures to the YOUNG
MAN. The two of them head for the door.

MOGLIO watches them go. He turns to see DEL watching him.
Pause.

MOGLIO
Nick keeping you busy?

DEL
Payroll scam at Warner's.

MOGLIO
Real detective work.

DEL
(not unfriendly)
I'm a real detective.

Pause. MOGLIO slides in the booth opposite DEL.

MOGLIO
Anything you guys throwing away?

DEL
Jesus, lou.

MOGLIO
Look, I'm asking. What's wrong with
that? There's shit you won't touch.

DEL
But you will.

MOGLIO

If it puts me in a Fleetwood bigger
than Nick Harris's.

DEL

He drives a Lincoln.

MOGLIO

Come on, Del. Feed me something.

DEL

Why should I?

MOGLIO

Cause you owe me, partner.

Pause. DEL flips open folded newspaper by his side. The
headline is about REEVES' death.

MOGLIO (CONT'D)

What?

DEL flicks the headline with his finger.

MOGLIO (CONT'D)

What? The guy who used to play
Superman? He shot himself. What?

DEL

Someone thinks he didn't.

MOGLIO

Yeah? Who?

DEL

(a slight hesitation)
His mother.

MOGLIO

(a sideways smile)
Ah come on.

DEL

You asked me.

MOGLIO

How do you know what she thinks?

DEL

Cause she tried to hire us this
morning.

MOGLIO

What does she have the cops don't?

DEL
 She's just his mother.
 (Picking up on MOGLIO's
 disappointment)
 You like headlines. There's a
 headline.

MOGLIO
 (thinking it through)
 What did Nick say?

DEL
 Maybe you forgot. We get paid to
 keep things out of the newspapers.
 (Pause.)
 Helen Bessolo. She's in from
 Illinois. She's at the Beverly
 Wilshire. Right? And you don't
 work for Nick Harris.

MOGLIO
 Huh?

DEL
 When you pitch her. You're not an
 associate. You're not a stringer.

MOGLIO
 Who said I'm pitching her?

DEL
 (Pushing his plate away)
 I'm done eating.

He slides out of the booth and starts away, stops himself.

DEL (CONT'D)
 Hey, I forgot. Have one.

He holds out a cigar with a Montana Dulce band on it. MOGLIO
 eyes it quizzically.

DEL (CONT'D)
 Guess who's a daddy.

EXT. WESTERN COSTUME COMPANY-- MELROSE AVE.-- DAY

MOGLIO's '51 Bel Air parked across from the six-story
 building.

INT. MOGLIO'S BEL AIR-- DAY

MOGLIO slouches behind the wheel with a copy of the Herald-
 Examiner, skimming the sports pages.

After a few moments, he puts the paper aside and looks out
 at the entrance to the building.

Someone comes, someone goes-- nothing of any interest.

MOGLIO lifts up a cheap Argus rangefinder and snaps a few pictures. He rewinds the roll of film, removes it, writes "SINCLAIR" on it with a marking pen.

He stretches, rolls his neck. Something catches his eye.

HIS POV-- A SMALL BOY

standing on the curb diagonally opposite. He's dressed in a rumpled Superman playsuit. Head bowed, eyes focused on nothing. Barely holding onto the Mirror-News, the big headline reading:

TV'S SUPERMAN, OUT OF WORK, KILLS SELF

A strange apparition in the bleaching California sun.

MOGLIO stares at him.

Traffic coming down Melrose blocks the BOY from view.

EXT. HOUSE-- DAY

MOGLIO stands on the landing. A newish neighborhood of ranch houses in the street behind him.

LAURIE CLARK opens the front door. The former Mrs. Moglio. Barely thirties, pretty in Capri pants, but tired around the eyes. She gives MOGLIO a hard look.

MOGLIO

Don't give me grief, okay? Nobody said you had to stay in Van Nuys.

LAURIE

You were the one who wanted a backyard.

She turns and goes back into the house. MOGLIO follows.

INT. HOUSE-- CONTINUOUS-- DAY

Neat and proper. It looks like LAURIE makes a effort to keep it that way.

MOGLIO takes in the living room. A stuffed Goofy toy sits on the couch.

LAURIE

Disneyland.

MOGLIO

He like it?

LAURIE
Russ took him on a canoe. A Daniel
Boone ride. Seemed to go alright.

MOGLIO
Russ. Russell. Rusty.

LAURIE
Am I supposed to ask your permission?

MOGLIO
Just want to make sure his intentions
are honorable.

A sliver of a smile at that from LAURIE. Pause.

LAURIE
Keeping busy?

MOGLIO
Yeah. Maybe something big.
(off LAURIE's look)
You don't believe me?

LAURIE
(more knowing than cruel)
I always believed you. Every time.

An awkward silence.

MOGLIO
Where's Evan?

EXT. BACKYARD-- MOMENTS LATER-- DAY

Well-mown grass. Wooden fence. A new swing set. Off in a
corner, a YOUNG BOY, about eight, stands by himself, neatly
dressed, staring at nothing-- MOGLIO and LAURIE's son, EVAN.

INT. HOUSE-- CONTINUOUS-- DAY

MOGLIO and LAURIE stand by the sliding glass door to the
backyard.

MOGLIO
(looking at EVAN)
What's going on?

LAURIE
The actor who shot himself. Who
played Superman.

Pause. MOGLIO uneasy hearing this, not exactly sure why.

MOGLIO
What about him?

LAURIE
(OF EVAN)
He's upset.

MOGLIO
He told you that?

LAURIE shakes her head. Pause. MOGLIO slides back the door and steps out.

MOGLIO (CONT'D)
(calling to EVAN)
Hey scout. Your old pop's taking
you to school.

INT. CAR-- DAY

Still at the curb. MOGLIO and EVAN sit in silence. Finally:

MOGLIO
What's on your mind, scout?

EVAN
Nothing.
(Pause.)

MOGLIO
Things you see on TV. Someone's a
cowboy or... or a spaceman. It's
just pretend, right? Just acting.
Remember we talked about that?

EVAN
I remember.

MOGLIO
(happy to it end there)
Good.

Pause. HE reaches down and pulls a package out from under the seat.

MOGLIO (CONT'D)
Hey, what's this?

EVAN
I don't know.

MOGLIO
Well find out.

HE hands it to EVAN. EVAN opens it. It's an Etch-a-Sketch.

MOGLIO (CONT'D)
You like that?

EVAN

Yeah.

(Pause.)

Thank you.

MOGLIO

Turn the knobs.

But EVAN doesn't play with it. HE stares out the window.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - MORNING

LITTLE KIDS getting off the bus, PARENTS dropping them off. And these kids, they're like zombies. Red-eyed, many still weeping. TEACHERS are outside in force to console them, guiding them with gentle hands toward the classrooms. EVAN is among them.

THE BEL AIR

at the curb. MOGLIO watches EVAN join the other KIDS.

MOGLIO waves to him, a little gesture. But EVAN misses it as he disappears into the crowd of KIDS.

INT. CORRIDOR-- BEVERLY-WILSHIRE HOTEL-- DAY

MOGLIO standing outside room 1228. He glances up and down the empty corridor, shifts a little, and puts on a sober, sensitive face.

He knocks. Beat. HELEN BESSOLO, REEVES' mother, opens the door. 65, looks older, frail.

MOGLIO

Mrs. Bessolo? Louis Moglio. I called?

HELEN eyes him warily. Pause.

HELEN

(remembering)

From Mr. Harris.

MOGLIO

Well, he, referred you to me.

(Pause.)

I'm here to help.

INT. ROOM 1228-- MOMENTS LATER-- DAY

ON THE DRESSER

a makeshift shrine to REEVES-- framed photos, headshots, production stills from the 40's, REEVES handsome and young in all of them, that square jaw, thick head of hair. But no Superman shots-- none at all.

MOGLIO

looking carefully at the shrines, with sympathy and concern.

MOGLIO

Our children. Yes?

He turns to HELEN, in chair by the window. She says nothing.

MOGLIO (CONT'D)

They'll always be our babies. And something happens, without our knowledge, our understanding, we're left with... Confusion. Doubts. Loss. We feel loss. How should we act? Is it wrong to question? What we're told? For myself, honestly? I think it's wrong not to.
(Pause.)

HELEN

You work for Mr. Harris?

MOGLIO

I was an operative at the agency. Branched out on my own. Certain situations the agency is uh, not prepared to handle, they come to me.

No sense from HELEN whether or not she's buying this.

HELEN

A house full of strangers.

MOGLIO

How's that.

HELEN

The ones there. That night. Van Ronkel. Bliss. And that woman.

MOGLIO

This is Leonore? The fiancée?

HELEN

How could you trust anything they say?

MOGLIO

Did he give any indication to you?

HELEN

About what?

MOGLIO

Being, you know, despondent?

HELEN
Why would he be?

MOGLIO
When was, if I may, the last time
you spoke with your son?

HELEN looks out the window. Pause.

HELEN
Do you know a Herbert Korzcek?

MOGLIO
Ah, no.

HELEN
He's also an investigator here. He
called today. Very professional.
He says I have a case.

MOGLIO
Uh. Well. I'm sure he's a highly...
(Pause.)
Okay. Mrs. Bessolo? I'm gonna level
with you. LAPD, they don't like to
be shown up. They already shut the
door on... on your son. Suicide.
End of story. You want that door
opened again-- make the cops and DA
pay attention-- you need a headline
this big...

And he flashes a copy of the News-Mirror: "TV'S SUPERMAN..."

MOGLIO (CONT'D)
...only with the truth. So that
everybody knows. You gotta shove it
their faces.

MOGLIO watches HELEN. SHE looks at the headline in the paper.

HELEN
I'll be paying by check.

INT. AUTOPSY ROOM-- COUNTY MORGUE-- DAY

APPROACHING AN AUTOPSY TABLE

drawing up on the body of GEORGE REEVES. Naked on the table,
big rough stitches holding his head together.

MOGLIO looks at it, suppressing sadness and disgust.

ORDERLY
Five minutes. I didn't let you in.

MOGLIO eyes play over the body.

MOGLIO
(not listening)
Right...

ORDERLY
Hey.

MOGLIO glances at him.

ORDERLY (CONT'D)
The twenty.

MOGLIO fishes out a bill and hands it off to him. Then back to REEVES.

ORDERLY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
You know who people wanted to see?
Lana Turner's guy. Stompanato.

MOGLIO
No kidding...

ORDERLY
I tell you, that kid of hers, the
knife was practically sticking out
his ass. You think about how hard--

MOGLIO sees three livid bruises on REEVES' torso.

MOGLIO
What are these?

ORDERLY
Huh?

MOGLIO
These marks. What he do, beat himself
up before he shot himself?

ORDERLY
I don't know.

MOGLIO looks at REEVES' wrist. A lighter band against a
fading tan.

He glances around. A cardboard box nearby, marked REEVES.
He goes for it.

ORDERLY (CONT'D)
Don't do that.

MOGLIO looks inside. REEVES' robe, stiff with blood. A
ring. A watch.

MOGLIO plucks the watch out. Expensive. Van Cleef & Arpels
on the face.

ORDERLY (CONT'D)
I didn't say you could touch
anything...

MOGLIO turns the watch over. An inscription on the back:

Mad About the Boy

TM

ORDERLY (CONT'D)
Put it down. The M.E.'s coming back.

MOGLIO's not paying attention.

ORDERLY (CONT'D)
You hear? That's it. You gotta go.

MOGLIO leans forward toward REEVES.

MOGLIO
(quietly, to REEVES)
So pal. Who's TM?
(Pause.)
Come on, what do you say. You help
me, I'll help you.

ON REEVES' FACE

Giving up nothing.

A MAN'S VOICE
George.

INT. CIRO'S - NIGHT (1951)

NATIVIDAD VACIO, a struggling actor in his mid 30's, sits at a not-central table in the hopping Hollywood night spot. He looks vaguely uncomfortable.

VACIO
(more insistently now)
George.

REEVES

Sitting opposite him, a handsome, square-jawed man of 37, giving off an easy charm and a sense of not taking himself that seriously.

He's scanning the room, ready to make eye contact.

VACIO (CONT'D)
Don't order any more drinks. I can't
afford it.

REEVES

We couldn't afford the cover, Nati.
It's all gravy after that. There's
Billy Wilder, hello hire me please.

VACIO

Look, we're two steps from the men's
room. Anyone sees us, they'll think
we're queer.

REEVES

Well, you do look fetching tonight.

VACIO

Okay. I'm leaving.

REEVES

No you're not. You're going to
practice the fine art-- casting guy
from Fox-- of getting noticed without
looking like you're trying, Fred
Zinnemann.

ZINNEMANN at a table, thin face, big, high forehead, listening
to his companion with air of detachment.

VACIO

Who?

REEVES

A director, Nati. Of movies? Try
reading the trades.

VACIO

No one's gonna hire me any--

A sudden roar and electric whine. VACIO turns.

In the center of the room, a WORKMAN neatly slices off a
section of a table in a booth for a pretty, very PREGNANT
WOMAN waiting nearby, next to another WOMAN, who's enjoying
the spectacle hugely.

The OWNER of CIRO's helps the PREGNANT WOMAN slide into booth
as the CROWD applauds.

VACIO (CONT'D)

That's Rita Hayworth.

The HOUSE PHOTOGRAPHERS, always on the lookout for action,
converge on the scene.

VACIO (CONT'D)

(turning to REEVES)

You see that? It's Rita--

But REEVES is gone.

WITH REEVES

Heading for the center of attention, moving into camera range just before the flashbulbs pop, right next to

THE WOMAN

in mid-laugh, looking at him over her shoulder.

She is TONI MANNIX, a former showgirl with killer looks and a wild streak. Though a good ten years older than the other starlets in the room, she more than holds her own. Smoking a Lucky, head a little light from her fourth or fifth bourbon.

TONI

Just made it.

REEVES

Pardon?

TONI

Into the picture.

REEVES

(innocently)

Was somebody taking a picture?

Caught, no question, but charming. Toni pulls out a silver cigarette case and Reeves is right there with a light.

TONI

We're awfully well-trained, Mr....

REEVES

George Reeves.

Smiling at Toni, magnetically handsome. A current between them. TONI bursts out in a raucous laugh.

REEVES (CONT'D)

(thinks she's mocking him)

Was it my line reading?

TONI

I laugh when I'm happy.

REEVES

Who am I making so happy?

TONI

I'm Toni.

REEVES

Just a poor girl with no last name?

TONI laughs again.

REEVES (CONT'D)
 (enjoying it now)
 I never knew I could spread so much
 joy.

TONI
 Who knows what you might be spreading?
 And now REEVES laughs, sparked by TONI's brazenness.

TONI (CONT'D)
 Your turn, George.

FROM THE BACK OF THE ROOM

REEVES chatting TONI up, TONI loving it...

VACIO

sitting by himself, watching, with nothing but the tab.

EXT. SANTA MONICA BEACH - NIGHT (1951)

The surf rolls in. The pier is lit up in the distance.

EXT. SANTA MONICA BEACH-- NIGHT (1951)

TONI AND REEVES

walking along the shoreline, shoes in hand. In the
 background, DANCERS mill around an outdoor pavilion near the
 coast road. Music drifts across the beach.

TONI
 Your very first acting role.

REEVES
 My very first paid acting role.

TONI
 Your very first paid acting role was
 in "Gone With The Wind," the biggest
 picture ever made.
 (he nods, it's true)
 And yet I don't remember you.

Reeves goes right into character -- a Southern gentleman.

REEVES
 "And we want all your waltzes. First
 Brent, then me, then Brent, then me,
 and so on."

And Toni's eyes go wide and she cackles out loud --

TONI

You were a Tarleton! Your hair was orange!

REEVES

It was not orange.
(beat)

It was tangerine.

TONI

Alright, so that was your first film, what was your last?

REEVES

That one you didn't see.

TONI

Try me.

REEVES

"The Adventures of Sir Galahad,
Boldest Knight of the Round Table."

(off Toni's blank look)

Saturday-morning serial, very cheap.
We all rode the same horse.

TONI

(smiles warmly)

And yet I know you did a wonderful,
professional job and I'm sure the
children loved it.

REEVES

I was doing alright until the war,
but when I got out...

(shrugs)

I don't know, I just couldn't make
things...

(Pause.)

Talking about myself.

TONI

(tweaking him)

You're an actor.

REEVES

What about you?

TONI

Oh yes. What about me?

REEVES

Actress? No.

TONI

Carry on, inspector.

REEVES
In the business?

TONI
Who isn't?

REEVES
(pressing it)
Were those your pals? At Ciro's?

TONI
I know some of them.

REEVES
Good people to know.

TONI
Not if you know them.

REEVES
That... sounded sad.

TONI
I was aiming for mysterious. But
you saw right through me.

Her eyes sparkle mischievously. REEVES moves in close. HE
kisses her.

But after a moment SHE pulls back, looking serious.

TONI (CONT'D)
I'm much too old for you, you know.

And suddenly REEVES is looking serious too, wondering what
just went wrong.

TONI bursts out into her laugh and plants her lips on his,
pulling him down, hand unzipping his fly.

TONI (CONT'D)
Hmm. Did they dye this tangerine
too?

REEVES glances around nervously. The DANCERS aren't that
far away.

REEVES
Uh...

TONI
I want to feel alive, George. What
else matters?

SHE lowers herself toward his crotch, and REEVES doesn't
have an answer.

INT. VAN CREEF AND ARPELS-- DAY (1959)

An elegantly dressed SALESWOMAN stands behind the counter of exclusive Beverly Hills jeweler.

SALESWOMAN

We don't give out that information.

MOGLIO stands opposite her on the other side of the counter.

MOGLIO

I understand. Only here's the thing.

Hoping for a spark of interest from the SALESWOMAN. He goes on anyway.

MOGLIO (CONT'D)

Mr. La-- person I work for, he... I come back empty-handed, it's my job.

Still nothing from the SALESWOMAN.

MOGLIO (CONT'D)

Get me that watch George had, he told me. The one he loved so much. Something to remember him by.
(Pause.)

SALESWOMAN

George?

MOGLIO

George Reeves.

SALESWOMAN

(genuinely sad)
Oh, Mr. Reeves.

MOGLIO

They were very close. Like brothers. Spoke every week. Until...
(Pause.)

SALESWOMAN

Who do you work for?

MOGLIO

I can't. You know? I just do what I'm told. I mean, people like us...
(including the SALESWOMAN)
We gotta take a lot, huh? Not expect too much back. Not even a thank you. Rest of the world found out what these stars are really like... well, we got some stories, right?
(Pause.)

SALESWOMAN

Hold on.

SHE turns, goes through a nearby card file, pulls out a card.

SALESWOMAN (CONT'D)

A Line & Diamond Classique.
Unfortunately no longer made.

MOGLIO

Uh-oh.

SALESWOMAN

I'm afraid so.

MOGLIO steals a glance at the card. A long list of entries.

MOGLIO

He was a good customer.

SALESWOMAN

No. These are all Mrs. Mannix's
account. She... she bought him a
lot of things. You know.
(Pause.)

MOGLIO

Right. Of course. Say no more.
(Pause.)

I better break the bad news.

SALESWOMAN

Maybe if I showed you something else?

MOGLIO

(the worried underling)
I don't think that's gonna help.

A shift in the SALESWOMAN. She wants to dish.

SALESWOMAN

Burt Lancaster?

MOGLIO

(playing along)
Now the how the heck did you--

SALESWOMAN

I heard he can be difficult.

MOGLIO

(in strictest confidence)
Between you and me? Complete prick.

INT. REEVES' APARTMENT - NIGHT (1951)

MOVING THROUGH THE DARKENED APARTMENT

A single man's place, neater than most, but with the air of the temporary becoming permanent.

INTO THE BEDROOM

Reeves and Toni, fucking themselves senseless. As Reeves reaches his orgasm, the bedpost slams against the wall, once, twice, three times...

INT. REEVES' BEDROOM-- MORNING (1951)

REEVES splayed out on his stomach the sheets. He cracks open an eye.

HIS POV-- TONI

Her back to him, naked, going off tiptoe to the bathroom.

REEVES flips over on his back and looks up at the ceiling. HE smiles to himself.

INT. REEVES' APARTMENT - MORNING (1951)

Reeves drops the Herald on the table, pours himself coffee. He flips through to the Sports section, sees the headline: "DIMAGGIO SIGNS FOR \$100G", then skips to the Society page. Almost immediately he finds what he's looking for.

THE "OUT ON THE TOWN" COLUMN

The goings on in Tinseltown, including a photo of Rita Hayworth's table being sawed off at Ciro's. And there's Reeves, looking dashing, next to Toni. Reeves is pleased, seeing his name in the caption. About to tear it out, when he stops, a second photo catching his eye.

CLOSE ON THE PHOTO

It's of Toni -- with another man. Older, squat, dark beady eyes, also snapped at Ciro's last night. The caption reads:

MGM VEEP EDDIE MANNIX AND WIFE TONI

BACK ON REEVES

Looking at the photo. Not sure at all how to play it.

INT. REEVES' BATHROOM - MORNING (1951)

IN THE SHOWER

TONI pulls back the curtain and steps out in the morning sunlight coming through the window. REEVES is standing right there, the paper by his side.

Her first impulse is to cover herself. SHE stops and displays herself to REEVES.

TONI
Am I alright in daylight?

REEVES
(neutrally)
You're fine in daylight.

TONI
You can look closer.

REEVES steps forward-- whatever else HE's thinking, HE's powerfully attracted to her. HE puts his arms around her, draws her close.

REEVES
(whispering in her ear)
Mrs. Eddie Mannix.

TONI pulls back, looks at him. HE holds out the newspaper photo. TONI eyes it.

TONI
(a hurt child)
Oh.

INT. KITCHEN-- REEVES APARTMENT-- MOMENTS LATER-- DAY (1951)

REEVES pours himself a bourbon. TONI, wearing a robe watches him carefully.

TONI
I don't have a problem with a man drinking in the morning. But it's impolite not to offer me any...

REEVES eyes her, pours her a glass.

REEVES
(staying cool)
One word from your husband I'm stuck doing serials forever. If I'm lucky.

TONI
Meaning what?

REEVES
Things you hear.

TONI
"Eddie's a mobster?" Is that it?

REEVES
Well... is he?

TONI
He's the general manager of MGM.

REEVES
That doesn't answer the question.

TONI
He'd never touch you.

REEVES
Why not?

TONI
Because it would hurt me.

REEVES
I don't get it.

TONI
You'd have know Eddie. Maybe you will.

REEVES
(a hint of sarcasm)
We'll all dine at Ciro's, shall we?

TONI
We could. He wouldn't mind.
(Pause.)
Eddie's got a mistress. A sweet girl. An apartment in Brentwood. Cabin up in Big Bear. It might make him happy. I couldn't say.

REEVES
What do you have?

TONI
I have... another seven good years.
Then my ass drops like a duffel bag.

REEVES
It seems alright now.

TONI
Thank you for noticing.

REEVES
I noticed last night.

TONI
Did you think I could help you?

REEVES
I thought you were most beautiful woman in the room. And yes, I did.

TONI
Do you know who you looked like?

REEVES
Who?

TONI
Sir Galahad.

SHE means it as a compliment, but it pricks at REEVES. HE tries to cover, but TONI sees the reaction.

TONI (CONT'D)
It's all easier than you think,
George.

REEVES
What is?

TONI
Getting what you want. If you know
what you want.
(Pause.)
Should I leave?

REEVES
You should stay.

HE draws her body against his and kisses her hungrily.

EXT. MOGLIO'S APT-- DAY (1959)

MOGLIO outside the door, about to put the key in. KIT opens the door from the inside.

MOGLIO
I got a fiancée. I got a mistress,
former mistress, not sure on that
yet, I got bruises on the body--
(off KIT's look)
What?

She flicks her head back. MOGLIO sees SINCLAIR waiting within.

INT. MOGLIO'S APT.-- MOMENTS LATER-- DAY

SINCLAIR looks through the surveillance photos. MOGLIO watches him carefully.

MOGLIO
She never left the building, Mr.
Sinclair. I can't swear nothing
went on in there, but she never left
the building.

SINCLAIR sorts through the photos methodically.=

SINCLAIR
There's a side entrance.

MOGLIO
(not liking this)
Okay.

SINCLAIR
(still looking at the photos)
And a loading dock. Neither would
be visible from your vantage point.
(Pause.)

MOGLIO
Mr. Sinclair, I'm not sure how much
more I can do for you. Maybe... you
and your wife, you sit down, have a
conversation, see if--

SINCLAIR
This man. Here.

He holds up a photo. A blurred figure of someone leaving
the building..

MOGLIO
He, works there.

SINCLAIR
No. I've seen him somewhere else.

The phone rings. KIT answers in b.g.

SINCLAIR (CONT'D)
Mr. Moglio. I have utter faith in
your abilities. But you might wish
to entertain the notion that there
is more going on here than you
realize.

INT. CIRO'S-- NIGHT (1951)

A corner booth, private. REEVES, TONI, a young, pretty,
very quiet JAPANESE WOMAN, and the man in the newspaper photo,
TONI's husband, "The Bulldog," EDDIE MANNIX, radiating power
and a sense of barely suppressed violence. Drinks in front
of them.

Silence.

TONI
(to MANNIX)
Did you go to the doctor?

MANNIX
I went.

TONI
What did he say?

MANNIX
(barely a shrug)
Those guys, they're all frauds.

TONI
Not a very helpful attitude.

No response from MANNIX.

TONI (CONT'D)
(with genuine concern)
Eddie.

MANNIX
Something has to kill you. Don't
it?

But MANNIX is looking at REEVES.

MANNIX (CONT'D)
You under contract?

REEVES
I was. At Warner's.

MANNIX
But now you're not.

REEVES
No.

MANNIX
Tough game.

REEVES
(upbeat)
Always ready to play.
(Pause.)

TONI
George was in Gone With the Wind,
Eddie.

MANNIX
Oh yeah?

REEVES
(going for flippant charm)
I was Butterfly McQueen's stunt
double.

MANNIX
(not responding at all)
That picture made money.

Silence again. REEVES turns to the JAPANESE WOMAN.

REEVES
What brought you to Los Angeles,
Miss Yoshida?

MANNIX
There's no point talking to her.

REEVES
I'm sorry?

MANNIX
She doesn't speak English.

The WOMAN smiles.

TONI
Eddie. There's a darling little
house on Benedict?

MANNIX
Uh-huh.

TONI
It's 12,000. I'd like to buy it.

MANNIX
What for?

TONI
Just to get away. You know.

MANNIX eyes TONI and REEVES.

MANNIX
Well. It's a good investment.
(to REEVES)
Right?

REEVES doesn't know what else to do but nod.

MANNIX calls a WAITER over.

MANNIX (CONT'D)
What's not on the menu?

WAITER
We have some very nice Blue Points
set aside, Mr. Mannix.

ON REEVES

trying hard to look comfortable.

MANNIX (O.S.)
Bring us those. Cobb salads.

UNDER THE TABLE

TONI's hand playing over REEVES' crotch.

MANNIX (O.S.) (CONT'D)
How's the flank steak?

REEVES reacts to TONI's provocation.

WAITER (O.S.)
The flank steak is very good.

MANNIX (O.S.)
What kind of fish?

WAITER (O.S.)
We have a salmon, we have fresh--

REEVES grabs TONI's hand. TONI laughs. MANNIX looks at her. HE address the WAITER, but focuses on TONI.

MANNIX
My wife will take another Gibson.

EXT. PATIO-- REEVES' HOME-- BENEDICT CANYON DRIVE-- DAY
(1951)

REEVES AND NATI VACIO

looking over the patio, drinks in hand.

REEVES
What do you think?

VACIO
The most I ever got from a girlfriend
was a tie.

REEVES
It's just how Toni does things.

VACIO looks at REEVES, sensing a slight embarrassment.

VACIO
(genuinely)
You should be happy, George.

REEVES
(smiling)
Wouldn't mind a job.

VACIO
(looking off, his voice dropping
a little)
Well. She could put a word in.
With her... you know.

REEVES responds by finishing off his bourbon. Then HE sticks his hand in his pocket and pulls out some bills.

REEVES

He

VACIO

What's this?

REEVES

I don't know. Couple of hundred.

VACIO

Why are you giving it me?

REEVES

Because you need it.

(Pause.)

Oh come on Nati.

Pause. VACIO takes the money. TONI enters from the living room. Other GUESTS at this housewarming party visible within.

TONI

(to REEVES)

Your talent is required.

INT. LIVING ROOM-- REEVES' HOME-- MINUTES LATER (1951)

Reeves playing "Cielito Lindo" on the guitar and singing, VACIO harmonizing while the other GUESTS listen and drink.

Reeves finishes with a flourish, and Toni leads the applause. She gives him a passionate kiss and then straddles him like a rodeo rider. REEVES does nothing to stop her, everybody laughing as --

TONI

(softly)

Could life be any more grand?

INT. CASTING LOBBY - DAY (1951)

TWENTY GUYS sit in couches, on the floor, or just mill around. They all look the same, between 25-35, solid builds, full heads of hair, Caucasian. And now we see --

REEVES

waiting among them. HE tries to focus on the script sides in his hands.

HIS POV-- THE SIDES

The character name of SUPERMAN circled in pencil.

From inside the casting room, the sound of another, actor
LESTER KOENIG, bad enough not to know how bad he is.

KOENIG (O.S., through door)
Lois and Jimmy! What have you done
with them?

Casting Director HAROLD CHILES reads off his sides.

CHILES (O.S., through door)
They're safe for now, Superman. Just
don't get any big ideas about stopping
the robbery.

REEVES

Finding it hard to concentrate, because he can't believe
this is where his career has taken him.

KOENIG (O.S., through door)
Alright, you win this time. But if
something happens to them, I promise
you -- you'll wish this day never
arrived.

REEVES' POV

two other ACTORS stealing a glance at him, one whispering to
the other.

A paranoid moment for REEVES-- do these guys recognize him?

The door to the casting office opens.

All eyes turn to KOENIG exiting, full of confidence, CHILES
calling the next name on the list.

CHILES
George Reeves?

INT. CASTING OFFICE - DAY (1951)

The table now buried under dozens of headshots, producer ECB
MAXWELL, early 30's, and associate producer BARNEY SARECKY,
mid-50's, no closer to finding their man than when they
started. Flipping through pictures, drinking cold coffee
when Chiles walks in with Reeves.

CHILES
Bob Maxwell, Barney Sarecky, George
Reeves.

REEVES
Hello gentlemen.

Chiles nods to Reeves, and the audition begins.

But REEVES just stands there.

CHILES

Whenever you're ready, George.

REEVES looks at the script. That circled "SUPERMAN." HE makes a decision.

REEVES

They're safe for now, Superman. Just don't get any big ideas about stopping the robbery.

A solid read, but everyone looks confused.

CHILES

Actually, George, you're reading for the other role?

A almost-sly smile from REEVES-- he knows he's been caught.

REEVES

Superman.

SARECKY

He's the hero.

REEVES

I suppose I've always felt more the criminal type.

MAXWELL

(Sensing REEVES' embarrassment)
We're looking for a new take on the character, George. Someone kids'll be enthralled by, sure, but adults can enjoy watching as well. It needs a real actor.

SARECKY

What's the worst that can happen, we offer you the part.

Everybody smiling, and Reeves reluctantly shrugs his acceptance. Turns back the pages on his sides, and then --

REEVES

All right, Mr. Prince, I got your message. Now what is it you want?

CHILES

It's not what I want, Superman. It's what you want.

REEVES

I'm not in the mood for games.

Maxwell and Sarecky edge up in their seats, finally hearing the performance they've been waiting for. Strong. Real. Chiles sneaks a peek at Maxwell, and --

SMASH INT. ART WEISSMAN'S OFFICE - DAY (1951)

Reeves' face buried in his hands. Weissman is Reeves' agent and friend. In fact, Reeves is Weissman's only client-- more a sign of Reeves' loyalty than Weissman's standing in the industry.

WEISSMAN

An actor can't always act, sometimes he has to work.

REEVES

Don't tell me about "work," I played Sir Galahad with a cardboard sword.

WEISSMAN

(ever the cheerleader)
I enjoyed you in that.

REEVES

You were the oldest boy in the theater, Art.

WEISSMAN

It's a dirt-cheap kiddie show. It doesn't even have a sponsor. Odds are no one's ever gonna see it.

REEVES

Just sounding better and better.

WEISSMAN

And you need the money.

REEVES

There's money.

WEISSMAN

I mean money of your own.

A sensitive area there. Tense beat between these longtime friends, then --

REEVES

How could I come so close... and wind up in tights?

WEISSMAN

Take the job, cash the checks, and we'll forget it ever happened. Hell, we'll deny it ever happened.

REEVES weighs the situation.

REEVES
 (singing, suddenly deciding to
 be merry)
 Hi diddley bum, the actor's life is
 fun.

WEISSMAN
 There you go. What's so bad?

REEVES
 Oh, dance with me, you wild, balding
 agent you.

HE grabs WEISSMAN, and, against the other man's will, twirls
 him around the room.

REEVES (CONT'D)
 Can't you see I love you madly, Arthur
 P. Weissman?

A GREY WOOLEN JERSEY

moving slowly and with great difficulty over Reeves' head.
 Already we can see the annoyance in his eyes, just the act
 of getting this thing on a huge pain in the ass.

INT. WESTERN COSTUME - CONTINUOUS-- MORNING (1951)

Toni watching as IZZY BURNS, the costumer, helps get the
 jersey all the way down, pulling and smoothing the shirt,
 the felt shield with the famous "S" in chocolate brown.

TONI
 Why is it so drab? Superman wears
 blue and red.

IZZY
 Not on TV, not enough contrast. But
 maybe if the show flies they might
 film in color. For when the color
 sets come out.

REEVES
 (mock enthusiasm)
 Oh good, then I'll get to wear the
 blue and red.

Izzy positions the shirt some more. Scowls. Starts rummaging
 through boxes as Reeves runs his hand tentatively over the
 "S," almost afraid to touch it.

IZZY
 Try these.

Hands Reeves a rubber contraption that looks like shoulder-
 pads extending down to the elbow.

AN EMPTY THREE-WAY MIRROR

And then Reeves steps into the reflection, in finished costume, decked out just like a superhero should be. Rippling muscles, long cape, kingly boots.

REEVES staring at himself as Toni comes up behind.

REEVES
(softly)
I look like a goddamn fool.

INT. MOGLIO'S CAR-- MOVING-- DUSK

THROUGH WINDSHIELD

as the car approaches LAURIE's house.

RUSSELL CLARK

LAURIE's new boyfriend, standing on the lawn. A big decent lug of a guy. He sees MOGLIO pulling up.

EXT. HOUSE-- VAN NUYS-- MOMENTS LATER-- DUSK

MOGLIO gets out of the car. RUSSELL comes up to him.

RUSSELL
Lou? I'm Russ Clark. Laurie and I--

MOGLIO
Goofy.

RUSSELL
Sorry?

MOGLIO
You went to Disneyland.

RUSSELL
(affably)
Yes, that's right. Last week.
(Pause.)
She's a little upset, I happened to be in the neighborhood--

MOGLIO
(Heading toward the front door)
That's convenient, Russ.

RUSSELL
(following him)
He's a good kid. I saw that right away.

MOGLIO
In the canoe?

RUSSELL
What?

MOGLIO
He was a good kid in the canoe?

RUSSELL
I mean good in general.

MOGLIO
Well you'd know, Russ, huh?

HE step through the front door.

MOGLIO'S POV-- INTO THE LIVING ROOM

approaching the couch, one cushion of which is a charred, smoking mess, recently extinguished. LAURIE, in pink kitchen gloves, is trying to clean up.

RUSSELL
The policy will cover it, that's not a problem. But... we're concerned.

LAURIE turns to MOGLIO.

LAURIE
(flatly)
He took the charcoal fluid. He poured it all over and put it on the couch.

MOGLIO
Put what on the couch?

LAURIE hands him a charred scrap of fabric. MOGLIO takes it, looks at it. It's burned and discolored. But it's clearly part of the "S" from a child's Superman costume.

INT. EVAN'S ROOM-- DUSK

EVAN is hunched on the bed, staring down at the Etch-a-Sketch MOGLIO gave him, turning the dials.

MOGLIO sits in a kid's chair beside him. LAURIE leans against the door in b.g.

MOGLIO
What's the deal, scout?

EVAN focuses on the Etch-a-Sketch.

MOGLIO (CONT'D)
Your mom's pretty upset. What if the house burned down? You'd wouldn't have a place to live. People get killed in fires. Use your noggin.
(Pause.)

EVAN
It was just to get rid of it.
(Pause.)

MOGLIO
The, costume? You wanted that, scout.
Remember? You begged for it.

EVAN
Not anymore.

MOGLIO
Why?

EVAN
He shot himself in the head. He
shot himself with a Luger. That's a
Nazi pistol.

MOGLIO looks at the Etch-a-Sketch. A dense, patternless
scribble.

MOGLIO
So... so you know that man, he was
an actor. And if he did shoot...
whatever he did, you can still watch
him on TV. Can't you.

EVAN goes on twisting the knobs. Pause.

MOGLIO (CONT'D)
Scout. I asked a question.

EVAN keeps at the Etch-a-Sketch.

MOGLIO (CONT'D)
Evan. Put that down. Answer me.
You hear what I'm saying?

LAURIE
(catching the edge in his voice)
Alright.

MOGLIO
You listen when I talk.

LAURIE
(stepping forward)
Let's leave it--

MOGLIO
Put it down.
(grabbing the Etch-a-Sketch)
Put it down.

LAURIE
(sharply)
Louis.

MOGLIO
Gimme that goddamned--

The Etch-a-Sketch goes flying. It hits the wall and breaks, sending the graphite powder inside flying.

INT. KITCHEN-- VAN NUYS-- MOMENTS LATER-- NIGHT

LAURIE sits at table, smoking a cigarette, RUSSELL beside her. MOGLIO stands in the doorway.

MOGLIO
Then what the hell did you call me for?

LAURIE
I don't know. Possibly you might care that your son is, is having--

RUSSELL
(to LAURIE)
Maybe you should take a breath--

MOGLIO
I do care--

LAURIE snorts derisively.

MOGLIO (CONT'D)
I do, he is my son, Laurie, and just cause I can't spend every--

LAURIE
--"you have so much going on--"

MOGLIO
Is that what you called me for? To tell me that? Cause I heard it already. A thousand fucking times from you.

RUSSELL
Lou, that kind of language--

MOGLIO
(To LAURIE)
Is this his business?

RUSSELL
I'm just trying to keep things--

LAURIE
Russ.

RUSSELL
What?

LAURIE
This is between Louis and me.

Pause. RUSSELL looks down at the tabletop.

LAURIE (CONT'D)
(To MOGLIO)
There's something you're not understanding here. Evan asked for you. I wasn't going to call. He asked.

MOGLIO's momentarily speechless.

A small noise from RUSSELL.

LAURIE turns to see EVAN standing in the kitchen doorway. Silence.

RUSSELL
Let's, uh...
(Pause.)
Let's all have ourselves some ice cream.

INT. MOGLIO'S CAR-- OUTSIDE THE HOUSE-- NIGHT

MOGLIO sits behind the wheel of the parked car, staring straight ahead.

He suddenly jabs the car into gear and stamps on the gas. Squeal of rubber.

REEVES (V.O.)
Sorry I couldn't help you two but,
after all, I'm not Superman.

INT. SOUNDSTAGE - DAILY PLANET OFFICE - DAY (1951)

REEVES, as Superman's alter-ego Clark Kent, in a wide-lapelled double-breasted blue suit and black glasses. He sits on the edge of the desk, a light moment, filming the end of an episode with PHYLLIS COATES as Lois Lane, and 18-year old JACK LARSON, playing cub reporter Jimmy Olsen.

LARSON
Jeepers, no, Mr. Kent.

PHYLLIS
I suppose that would be too much to ask.

REEVES
I suppose it would, Lois. I suppose
it would.

A dead moment then-- SOMBONE's gone up on a line.

LARSON
(realizing)
Sorry, that's me, uh...

DIRECTOR
Keep rolling.

REEVES
(seizing the opportunity)
Lois, would you like to meet the
real Man of Steel?

PHYLLIS
(running with it)
Well... sure I would.

REEVES stands and drops his trousers.

REEVES
Let's get to it.

With comic exaggeration HE pounces on PHYLLIS and pretends
to hump her. The CREW starts laughing. TONI stands among
them.

PHYLLIS
Oh... Clark!

REEVES
(To LARSON)
You're next, Jimmy! Leave the bowtie
on!

JOHN HAMILTON, the actor playing editor Perry White, enters
like a character in a farce.

HAMILTON
Great Scott!

REEVES
(shagging away)
No one is safe!

EVERYONE is cracking up, REEVES loving being the clown.

INT. REEVES' DRESSING ROOM-- DAY (1951)

REEVES sits at the make-up table in his padded Superman
underwear. TONI in a chair opposite. THEY're both drinking
bourbon.

REEVES
What do you think?

TONI
The scripts are awful. Everything
looks cheap. You're charming.

REEVES
Say that last part again.

TONI smiles. Pause.

TONI
She's a lesbian.

REEVES
Who?

TONI
The one playing Lois.

REEVES looks at her, nonplussed.

A knock on the door.

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT (O.S., through door)
Mr. Reeves?

REEVES
Yello.

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT (O.S., through door)
Whenever you're ready.

REEVES
(back to TONI)
Is she really?

TONI
As far as you're concerned.

REEVES realizes SHE's telling him to keep away from PHYLLIS.

REEVES
Well. You know what I say?

TONI
What.

REEVES
(cheerfully)
Here's to the bottom of the barrel.

HE picks up his glass and knocks it back.

INT. SOUNDSTAGE - DAY - REEVES (1951)

An alleyway has been constructed between two "brick" walls. Scattered newspapers lie on the ground. Huge, sweltering klieg lights are placed so that only the foreground of the alley is lit, the rest disappearing into darkness.

DIRECTOR

Cue fan...

A STAGEHAND turns on a large oscillating fan, blowing the newspapers and other debris into the air, in front of camera.

DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

Cue George.

Here comes REEVES.

Dead serious, running out of the alley. And then he jumps -- and takes off! Wires attached to a harness under his uniform lifting him off the floor.

TONI watches from the wings with BOB MAXWELL, smiling wide, hand covering her mouth as REEVES flies over camera, and --

The wires snap. And REEVES plunges to the concrete floor.

Nobody does anything for moment. Then the CREW rushes over.

They help him to his feet, but HE shakes them off. HE steadies himself against a flat, his back to the concerned ONLOOKERS.

TONI steps forward.

TONI

George?

REEVES

(after a moment)

I'd like to thank the members of the Academy, and all the folks back in Galesburg, Illinois...

Relief spreads through the room.

DIRECTOR

(tentatively)

Okay. Can we get set up again?

REEVES

Not with the wires.

DIRECTOR

You won't use the wires?

REEVES

No I won't.

DIRECTOR

(not get his head around this)
How are you supposed fly?

REEVES

That's a good question.
(Pause.)

DIRECTOR

(folding)
We're gonna work out something else.

REEVES stifles a flash of pain. HE sees TONI watching him.

HE tosses her a jaunty wink.

JUDGE BRAND (V.O.)

I, George Reeves, being of sound and
disposing mind and memory, do declare
this my last will and testament...

INT. JUDGE BRAND'S CHAMBERS - DAY (1959)

Moglio watches LEONORE LEMMON, waiting patiently for her
payoff. Her friend CAROL VAN RONKEL, younger, attractive,
with shoulder-length, wavy hair, sits beside her.

JUDGE BRAND

I hereby give, devise and bequeath
all monies and personal property
owned by me at the time of my death
to Toni Mannix.

Eyebrows raise. Heads turn, all eyes on LEONORE, squirming
in her seat, biting her lower lip, almost to bleeding. CAROL
whispers something to her.

MOGLIO watches LEONORE closely. He smiles to himself.

INT. CORRIDOR-- COURTHOUSE-- MOMENTS LATER-- DAY

MOGLIO pacing LEONORE and CAROL as THEY walk briskly toward
the exit.

CAROL

Maybe there's another will.

LEONORE

There goddamn better be.

MOGLIO

Miss Lemmon. Can we talk for a
minute? I'm Louis Moglio, I'm a
private investigator--

She and CAROL pick up their pace. MOGLIO scurries after.

MOGLIO (CONT'D)
I've been retained by Helen, the
bereaved mother...

LEONORE
(to CAROL)
Hitch.

MOGLIO
... of your late fiancé, I just want
to ask you a couple of questions
regarding--

LEONORE
You're not a investigator.

MOGLIO
Yes I am ma'am, licensed by the state
of California--

LEONORE
(to CAROL)
You know what he is? A catfish.

MOGLIO
(confused by that)
I'm a catfish?

LEONORE
So go clean the mud out of your
whiskers.

The two women continue on out the doors. MOGLIO stands there,
nonplussed.

HE notices a small knot of COURT REPORTERS, hanging around
and killing time. HE makes a beeline for them.

MOGLIO
(sizing one of the REPORTERS up)
What are you, the Times?

REPORTER 2
I'm the Times.

MOGLIO
Well what do you think about Superman
offing himself, cutting his beloved
fiancée out of the picture? And
leaving the green to someone's else
wife? Hell hath no fury, huh? I
mean people get killed for less.
(Pause.)

REPORTER 2
You saying he was murdered?

MOGLIO
That's a helluva question.

REPORTER 1
What's your name?

MOGLIO
Louis Moglio. M-O-G-L-I-O.

The REPORTERS write it down.

EXT. HOUSE-- OFF LAUREL CANYON-- NIGHT

MOGLIO knocks on the door of an upper apartment at the top of the backstairs.

NATALIE, KIT's housemate, answers.

NATALIE
Yes?

MOGLIO looks past her, into the apartment.

HIS POV

a group of PEOPLE, young actor-types, sitting around the little room, drinking wine and smoking. THEY all look nervously at the intruder. KIT sits on the sofa, a YOUNG MAN close beside her.

INT. KIT'S BEDROOM-- NIGHT

MOGLIO and KIT in bed after sex.

MOGLIO
What happened with James Arness?

KIT
He can go fuck himself.

MOGLIO
Whoa. Whoa. Don't talk like that.

KIT
Why not? You do.

MOGLIO
Well don't be like me. I mean I'm not someone to...
(Pause.)
Watch your language is all.

KIT

I have a father, you know. He sells
tires in Colorado Springs.

MOGLIO doesn't want to touch that. HE stares at the ceiling.

MOGLIO

Who was that next to you. When I
came in.

KIT

Chad? He's in my acting class.

MOGLIO

He any good?

KIT

He's okay I guess.
(Pause.)

MOGLIO

You shouldn't hang around people
less talented than you.

KIT

You've never seen me act.

MOGLIO

So?

KIT

So you don't know if I'm talented.
I just answer your phone. You don't
know what I could do.

MOGLIO

What is it you wanna do?

KIT

Help you solve a case.

MOGLIO

We're in the movies, huh.

KIT

I'd be Lauren Bacall and you, who
was that old guy?

MOGLIO

Ouch.

KIT

I'm kidding, Humphrey Bogart.

MOGLIO

I'm like Bogart?

KIT
Maybe Yves Montand.

MOGLIO
Who the hell is he?

KIT
An actor. He's French.

MOGLIO
Good-looking guy?

KIT
So-so.

Pause. SHE smiles. MOGLIO does too. He lights a cigarette.

KIT (CONT'D)
What's that?

SHE points to a white scar under his armpit.

MOGLIO
Something stupid.

KIT
A fight?
(Pause.)

MOGLIO
My pop, he was on the gate at Metro.

KIT
A guard?

MOGLIO
Went off to work every day in this uniform. Crease on the pants like a razor. I thought he was Chief of Goddamn Police. What he was? A doorman. Fake cop in make-believe land. Clark Gable said good morning once. That was a big deal.

KIT
(not following)
And... he did that?

MOGLIO
I was a month out of the Army. 1946. No job. Pop got me set up. Strike at MGM. Keep the union guys off the lot. Platoon around the gate, me and forty other saps. You know? Bats and billy clubs.
(MORE)

MOGLIO (CONT'D)

Got outta hand, little teamster shit came at me with a razor. Cut an artery. Two years in North Africa, all I got was crabs. Six days in Culver City, bam. And my pop apologized.

KIT

To you?

MOGLIO

To the studio. For his son screwing up. Like the guinea chickenshit peasant he was.

KIT

Maybe he expected more of you.

MOGLIO

Maybe.

He gets out of bed and goes to the window. He looks down onto someone's living room window. The TV's on in there, tuned to "The Loretta Young Show."

MOGLIO (CONT'D)

I'm gonna go make a great big asshole outta myself tomorrow.

KIT

Oh really?

MOGLIO

And I need you to go rent me a wheelchair.

HE EXT. REEVES' HOME - NEXT MORNING

MOGLIO helps HELEN out of his car and into the rented wheelchair. The COURT REPORTERS are on hand, as well as a PHOTOGRAPHER.

So are the cops-- DETECTIVE JOHNSON and SGT. PATERSON, looking on mistrustingly.

HELEN

(as MOGLIO lowers her into chair)
I don't need this.

MOGLIO

(a whisper)
I do.

A middle aged MAN approaches.

MAN

Mrs. Bessolo? I'm James Engelmann
from RKO-Pathe Studios.

HELEN

The what?

ENGELMANN

"Superman" was filmed on our lot,
and I am here to express how saddened
we all are over your son's loss.

HELEN

My son wasn't lost, Mr. Engelmann.
He was taken.

INT. REEVES' HOME - DAY

MOGLIO helps HELEN inside, the wheelchair left at the
entrance. SHE shrinks back into him, overwhelmed by being
in the house where her only son died such a violent death.
ENGELMANN hovering nearby.

DET. JOHNSON

I don't recommend going up there,
ma'am.

MOGLIO

She didn't come all the way from
Illinois to take advice from you.
(to HELEN)
You're gonna be strong, right? For
George.

Helen nods to Moglio. He leads her to the stairs. The
REPORTERS, PHOTOGRAPHER, and ENGELMANN follow.

INT. REEVES' BEDROOM - DAY

As we saw it earlier, except with no dead Reeves, and with
one other addition -- prayer cards. Jesus, walking into the
clouds. One on the bed, one taped to the ceiling. Paterson
and Johnson clearly surprised to see them.

Moglio picks the one off the bed.

MOGLIO

Were these in the report?

PATERSON

They weren't here then.

DET. JOHNSON

This area gets a lot of religious
groups. Healers. They're pains in
the ass, but they mean well.

(MORE)

DET. JOHNSON (CONT'D)
(to Paterson)
Make sure the doors are locked before
we go.

Helen leaning on Moglio now, her face drained of color.
Staring at the bloody mattress as --

MOGLIO
Whoops, hang on there, Mrs. Bessolo...

Moglio first nods to the Photographer, who snaps a shot of
Helen fainting, then ushers her --

INTO THE HALLWAY

To a chair, Paterson hurrying to the bathroom for water.

HELEN
Just... let me sit a moment...

Paterson returns with a cup, and Helen drinks.

BACK IN THE BEDROOM

Det. Johnson pulls the second prayer card off the ceiling, a
bullet hole underneath, as Moglio and Paterson return alone.

ENGELMANN
Is she alright?

MOGLIO
(re: the mattress)
That's her son's blood, you tell me.

DET. JOHNSON
(For the REPORTERS)
No sign of forced entry or physical
struggle. The Luger found there on
the floor, heavily oiled, no prints.
He kept it in the night stand.

Motioning to the night stand, the top drawer pulled out just
enough for Moglio to see a container of pills inside.

DET. JOHNSON (CONT'D)
The slug, there, in the ceiling. The
casing we found on the bed, under
the body.

MOGLIO
You want to fill me in how a man can
shoot himself and wind up on top of
the casing?

ENGLEMAN

Is this your strategy, Mr. Moglio?
To impugn the laws of physics?

MOGLIO

(barreling on)
No prints on the gun -- maybe he
wiped it clean after putting that
hole in his head.

DET. JOHNSON

Prints aren't automatic, certain
conditions have to be present. A
conductive surface, moisture on the
finger tips...

ENGELMANN

Wouldn't a detective of your caliber
already know that?

MOGLIO

(ignoring him)
You question the people in the house?

DET. JOHNSON

They all gave sworn statements.

MOGLIO

Oh, they swore. The fiancée's
friends, not his. 45 minutes to
call the cops, plenty of time to get
some bogus story straight, but you
got sworn statements.

DET. JOHNSON

You accusing me of something?

Moglio sees Helen back in the doorway, and turns up the heat.

MOGLIO

Was Reeves checked for powder burns?
Suicide shot, right in the temple,
where's the powder burn?

DET. JOHNSON

I'm not the coroner.

MOGLIO

He never checked. Didn't notice the
bruises on his body either. Bruises,
by the way, aren't automatic. Certain
conditions have to be present, like
a fight with the guy who's trying to --
(remembers Helen)
-- cause your expiration.

Helen looks suitably impressed, and then walks past the bed and into the small walk-in closet.

MOGLIO

moving in front of the night stand, watching Helen with everybody else. Making good and sure nobody sees him pocket that container of pills from the top drawer.

A beat later she returns with a double-breasted blue suit.

HELEN

He won't be buried in that cape.

She exits, the others following, when Sgt. Paterson stops. Staring at the rug, how it's bunched up under the legs of the bed. He gets on his knees, starts rolling it up.

And it doesn't take long to find TWO MORE PRAYER CARDS.

And under the cards, two more bullet holes in the floor.

MOGLIO

Since when do suicides miss twice,
lay down a rug, and start over?

(mock innocence)

Is that normal? I'm just asking.

A nod to the Photographer, Moglio getting in the picture, and as camera bulbs start flashing--

INT. AN OFFICE-- MGM-- DAY

CLOSE ON A YOUNG HUNK

in the Tab Hunter mold, blond, bland good looks. He looks pleadingly SOMEBODY off-camera, his throat dry with tension. Another MAN stands close behind him, only partly visible.

A chair creaks.

MANNIX

Older now, in visible decline, with an unhealthy pallor and the wheeze of an emphysemic. But still HE's a dark and forceful presence.

HE eyes the HUNK silently, picks up a photo from a stack on his desk, holding it by the corner, like a stranger's handkerchief.

MANNIX

That cost this studio fifteen grand.

HE flings it at the HUNK. It hits him and lands on the floor.

THE PHOTO

black and white, hard flash. The HUNK in an act of sexual congress with another MAN.

Back in the office, the HUNK averts his eyes.

MANNIX (CONT'D)

You think you're worth that?

HUNK

We... were just--

MANNIX

This hillbilly picture, what is it?

HOWARD STRICKLING

the other MAN in the room. The long-time head of MGM publicity, a dapper gentleman worlds away from MANNIX.

STRICKLING

Lil' Abner.

MANNIX

Two million dollar investment. You think I'll let you fuck with that? You think you're gonna be a star?

STRICKLING

Our concern here--

MANNIX

Get this straight. I'm not one of the Polish kikes making the Andy Hardy pictures. I'm the mick from Jersey they hired to run the sausage factory. You know what that makes you?

HUNK

I...

MANNIX

A face. Faces can change.

STRICKLING

What Mr. Mannix means--

MANNIX

He knows what I mean.
(to the HUNK)
Out of my sight.

HUNK exits quickly. MANNIX stares out the window.

MANNIX (CONT'D)

Set up something. Him on the beach with some starlet. A picnic. Soda pop.

STRICKLING

Already arranged.

MANNIX

I don't need to tell you your job.

STRICKLING

No, you don't.

MANNIX

They treat the contract like shit now, Howard. Whatever the fuck they want.

STRICKLING

The business is changing.

MANNIX

Fags and television. And what are we. Last of the Mohicans.

STRICKLING

That was a UA picture, Eddie.

MANNIX looks at him. Not a smile, but an acknowledgement of a long association.

MANNIX

This wop prick detective.

STRICKLING

I sent Jim Engelmann over to the house. He used work for us. I'm sure you don't want MGM coming into it.

MANNIX

And?

STRICKLING

Louis Moglio. Two years with Nick Harris. Shot his mouth off about Susan Humphries to Confidential for five thousand dollars. Harris fired him.

MANNIX

Susan Humphries.

STRICKLING

A Jennifer Jones type. Under contract at Fox. Heroin addict.

MANNIX
Drove off Topanga doing 90.

STRICKLING
You have a good memory, Eddie.

MANNIX
What's the prick want?

STRICKLING
Money. Press. Whatever he can grab.

MANNIX
What's he got.

STRICKLING
Some questions.
(Pause.)

MANNIX
My wife won't get out of bed. Three days, she won't get out.

STRICKLING
I'll stop by and see her.

MANNIX
Do that. Cheer her up. She always liked you.
(Pause.)

STRICKLING
Eddie. Is there anything you need to tell me?

MANNIX
About what?

STRICKLING
Anything... I need to have a story ready for.

MANNIX looks at him deadpan. He pushes the HUNK's photos on the desk away.

MANNIX
Get rid of these fucking things.

EXT. VAN RONKEL HOUSE-- DAY

CAROL VAN RONKEL opens the door on MOGLIO. Her eyes narrow in recognition.

CAROL
She's not here.

MOGLIO
Miss Lemmon? That's interesting.

CAROL
What is?

MOGLIO
That you thought I came to talk to her. Since this is your house.

CAROL says nothing. Behind her, an older MAN, late 50's, saturnine, makes eye contact with MOGLIO and disappears inside.

MOGLIO (CONT'D)
Your father?

CAROL
My husband. He's a screenwriter.

MOGLIO
That must be fun.

CAROL
What does that mean?

MOGLIO
No one could blame you for wanting to be around people your own age. What was his name? Bill Bliss? I'm sure you're just friends.

Pause. CAROL gestures with her chin.

CAROL
Out back.

EXT. BACKYARD-- VAN RONKEL HOUSE-- DAY

MOGLIO and CAROL stand by an unhealthy-looking orange tree.

MOGLIO
You should water this.

CAROL
My husband does the garden. It takes his mind off his writing.

MOGLIO
What do you do, Mrs. Van Ronkel?

CAROL
I don't go around trying to get my picture in the paper.

MOGLIO
(pleased)
You saw that, huh?

CAROL
What are you going to do when it
blows up in your face?

MOGLIO
(countering)
There are two bullet holes in the
bedroom floor. What do you know
about that?

CAROL
Leonore made them. Months ago.

MOGLIO
(almost enjoying this)
Why?

CAROL
I asked her to.

MOGLIO
You asked her to shoot a gun into
the floor?

CAROL
When you're plastered everything's
funny.

MOGLIO
He shoots himself and you all wait
45 minutes to call the police. That's
unusual.

CAROL
Have you ever been at a party where
a man goes upstairs and blows his
head off?

MOGLIO
No.

CAROL
Then how do you know what's unusual?
(Pause.)

MOGLIO
Where can I find Miss Lemmon?

CAROL
She's not the way you think she is.

MOGLIO
What way is she?

CAROL
She's only looking for love.

MOGLIO makes an entry in his notebook.

MOGLIO
(deadpan)
I want to remember that.

EXT. VAN RONKEL HOUSE-- DAY

MOGLIO heads for his car. He sees VAN RONKEL standing by the hedge, smoking a pipe.

VAN RONKEL
You're a detective.

MOGLIO
Yes sir.

VAN RONKEL
Men hire you to find out what their wives are up to. That sort of thing.

MOGLIO
Yeah. They do that.

VAN RONKEL
Does the truth make them happier?

MOGLIO
Hardly ever.

Pause. VAN RONKEL's got more to say.

VAN RONKEL
He wasn't going to marry her.

MOGLIO
Reeves? How do you know?

VAN RONKEL
She ran over here when he told her. I heard every word.

MOGLIO
How did Miss Lemmon react?

VAN RONKEL
Like a longshoreman on a bender.

EXT. REEVES' HOME - NIGHT - JUNE 16, 1959

Leonore and Carol join Bill Bliss and Robert Condon in the window, watching Reeves play.

Reeves finishes up, done for the night when an argument breaks out between he and Leonore. Lots of muffled shouting, and then Reeves heads up the steps, leaving Leonore downstairs, furious.

CAMERA RISES to the upstairs bedroom, Reeves entering disgusted and drunk. He disrobes, sits down on the end of the bed, when Leonore comes charging in. The argument picks up again, growing more heated, when Leonore opens the night stand drawer and pulls out the Luger.

Reeves tries to calm her, but she responds by angrily firing twice into the bare floor. Screaming at Reeves, who's struggling to take the gun away, both of them drunk, but Leonore not too drunk to squeeze the Luger's trigger one final time.

Reeves falls back on the discharged casing, Leonore staring at the blood gushing out of her fiancé's head. She sees the window shade open and shuts it quick, INTO CAMERA.

INT. MOGLIO'S BEL AIR - NIGHT (1959)

Parked. MOGLIO dozing up front. Waking with a start.

HIS POV-- OUTSIDE

Benedict Canyon Drive. The street is deserted. REEVES' house across the way, silent and dark.

MOGLIO gazes out. HE sees a car parked in a little ways down the street. The driver door is slightly ajar and the dome light is on inside.

MOGLIO glances at the house. After a moment he gets out of his car.

EXT. PATIO-- REEVES HOUSE-- MOMENTS LATER-- NIGHT

MOGLIO tries the patio door leading into the living room. It's unlocked.

INT. LIVING ROOM-- REEVES HOUSE-- NIGHT

MOGLIO stands in the empty, dark room. A creak from upstairs. HE heads for the staircase.

INT. UPSTAIRS-- REEVES HOUSE-- MOMENTS LATER-- NIGHT

MOGLIO'S POV-- MOVING

as HE steps onto the upstairs landing. REEVES' bedroom straight ahead, the door ajar.

MOGLIO steps up to it, pushes it open. From inside, a toilet flushes. The bathroom door opens. The light inside catches MOGLIO full on.

WOMAN'S VOICE

I had to take a leak. What's your excuse?

MOGLIO snaps the bedroom light on. LEONORE stands there.

MOGLIO

This is a sealed crime scene.

LEONORE

(absolutely unfazed)

Then I guess we both deserve to get our bottoms spanked.

SHE moves to the nightstand by the blood-stained mattress, opens the drawer. Reaches inside and takes out an envelope.

MOGLIO

What's that.

LEONORE

Last time I looked it was five thousand in traveler's checks. Georgie put it aside for our honeymoon. That's off the plate now, isn't it.

MOGLIO

That why you killed him?

LEONORE

You think he was rich? That Superman gig paid shit.

MOGLIO

Maybe you found that out too late.

LEONORE

He was fun. He could knock back the booze like nobody's business. Pretty good in the sack. Yeah.

SHE glances at bed. Maybe a moment of sadness-- it's hard to tell. Then SHE puts the traveler's checks in her purse and steps forward.

LEONORE (CONT'D)

You're in my way.

MOGLIO

Lady, I could nail you with this.

LEONORE

D'artagnan, you couldn't nail me with roses and a trip to Vegas. And you're not a cop.

(MORE)

LEONORE (CONT'D)
So what hell are you doing sneaking
around, following me into my dead
fiancé's bedroom? That's a little
creepy.

SHE walks past him and out of the room.

MOGLIO
I'm gonna be on you, Miss Lemmon.

LEONORE
(exiting)
Not unless you dope me first.

EXT. KIT'S APARTMENT-- NIGHT

NATALIE, KIT's roommate, opens the door.

MOGLIO
Kit in?

NATALIE calls inside to her BOYFRIEND.

NATALIE
You know where Kit is?

BOYFRIEND
Class or something?

MOGLIO
She studies a lot.

NATALIE
(back to MOGLIO)
You want to leave a message?
(Pause.)

MOGLIO
Yeah. I got a meeting in morning.
She can come in late.

INT. NATE & AL'S - DAY

Breakfast with Helen, Moglio on his best behavior. Three
newspapers are on the table, all turned to stories on Reeves.

MOGLIO
You see how I got us in the papers?
That's like gold. Guaranteed LAPD
reads this. Guaranteed they don't
like it. More heat they feel, more
pressure they're under to reopen the
case.

HELEN
The police reopened the case?

MOGLIO
They're going to. If I keep it up.
Which requires a financial commitment
from you. So I can go on hammering.

HELEN doesn't bite. MOGLIO tries to up the ante.

MOGLIO (CONT'D)
I did get a copy of the police report.
Lotsa holes. And not just the ones
in the floor. Plus something else.
Your son called the wedding off.
That's a new motive for Miss Lemmon.
And what I want to do--

HELEN
(definitively)
She was never going to be his wife.

MOGLIO
You knew he wasn't--

HELEN
(agitated)
Do you think my own son would get
married without telling me? To a
greedy whore like that?

MOGLIO's startled. Did she just say what he heard?

MOGLIO
So... you weren't on the best terms
with his fiancée?

HELEN
Anyone one could see what she was.

MOGLIO
And when you spoke to George, he--

HELEN
(scanning the room)
All these people.

MOGLIO
What about them?

HELEN
Sitting around like they're so
important. I don't know who they
are.

(Pause.)
George starred with Sinatra. With
Gable. He was an important film
actor. How could they forget?

Moglio staring at Helen now, starting to wonder about her.

CASTING DIRECTOR (V.O.)
George Reeves?

INT. CASTING LOBBY - DAY (1953)

A DOZEN ACTORS sit on the couch, mill around the room, waiting to be called. Reeves is by himself at the window, looking down on Hollywood Boulevard when Casting Director FAY SCHWARTZ sticks his head out the door.

OUTSIDE THE CASTING ROOM

Fay enters, but Reeves stops outside. A sign on the door:

FROM HERE TO ETERNITY-- ALL ACTORS SIGN IN FIRST

REEVES takes one last moment for himself.

Because there is nothing he wants more than this part.

FAY (O.S.)
George Reeves will be reading for
the role of Maylon Stark...

REEVES walks in, exuding talent and confidence.

REEVES
Good morning one and all.

The door shuts behind him.

EXT. DRIVEWAY-- REEVES HOUSE-- DAY

TONI, standing in the doorway of the house, watches a T-shirted REEVES, washing the sporty little Alvis SHE bought him. HE goes at it with single-minded concentration.

TONI
(calling out)
Someone else can do that, you know.

REEVES
It's a beautiful car. Just want to
keep it clean.
(of his appearance)
This bother you?

TONI
(Stepping toward him)
Lord no. It's inspiring all sorts
of impure thoughts.

REEVES smiles halfheartedly and goes back to the car.

TONI (CONT'D)
How was the audition?

REEVES
(noncommittally)
Good. Felt good.

TONI
(dryly)
Don't get too excited.

REEVES
(focusing on the car)
Art had news. They're picking up
"Superman."

TONI
They're what?

REEVES
Kellogg's. They bought it.

TONI
After two years?

REEVES
It starts next month. I will be on
TV next month. In brown and gray
underwear.

TONI
Well...
(pause)
Hooray.

REEVES
Oh Christ.

TONI
(sariously)
George. Maybe it wasn't your proudest
moment--

REEVES
You know, I'm almost sure it wasn't.

TONI
--but you did create a very likeable,
attractive, very... heroic character.

REEVES
I did?

TONI
(sidling up against him)
I'd fuck you in a second.

And it looks like SHE just might.

REEVES

I hope to God nobody watches.

And we FADE UP "Superman's" exciting theme music, and --

ANNOUNCER'S VOICE

Kellogg's, the greatest name in
cereal, presents --

SMASH-- A TELEVISION SCREEN - MONTAGE BEGINS (1953)

The opening to the Superman show, in crisp black & white.
CAMERA PUSHING IN past a star-filled universe, a comet
suddenly exploding into the legend:

ANNOUNCER'S VOICE

The Adventures of Superman!

The ANNOUNCER intones over images of a gun firing, a train
screaming through frame:

ANNOUNCER'S VOICE (CONT'D)

Faster than a speeding bullet...
more powerful than a locomotive...
able to leap tall buildings at a
single bound...

The lighting severe, the music invigorating. It may be a
kid's show, but it's no joke.

EXT. WOOLWORTH'S - NIGHT (1953)

THREE KIDS at the storefront window, where the newest line
of 9-inch TVs are showcased. Watching wide-eyed a shot of
Superman, actually flying, high over Metropolis. People
shouting in the crowd below --

MAN

Look! Up in the sky!

MAN #2

It's a bird!

WOMAN

It's a plane!

MAN #3

It's Superman!

Two of the kids are dragged off by THEIR PARENTS, leaving
one who moment by moment becomes completely mesmerized.

WIFE TO:

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - NIGHT (1953)

A row of cookie cutter homes, everybody's TV in the same room, glowing through the windows. KIDS outside playing tag, running around, tossing a baseball.

And as we PAN THE HOUSES, we see FAMILIES gathered in front of their sets, and we hear which show they're watching: "I Love Lucy"... "Dragnet"... "The Jack Benny Show"... "I Love Lucy"... "I Love Lucy"... "I Love Lucy"... "Superman"...

INT. REEVES' HOME - NIGHT (1953)

Toni watches from the edge of the couch, a grin on her face. Reeves watches from the steps, a drink in his hand. He can only stand it for a beat before walking away.

WIPE TO:

INT. HELEN'S HOME - GALESBURG, ILLINOIS - NIGHT (1953)

Helen sitting in her chair, alone, watching her son on television. Pictures of REEVES, the ones we saw in her hotel room atop the set.

CN THE TV

REEVES in costume, against a flapping American flag and a starry sky.

HELEN turns off the set. Black screen, white dot, nothing.

INT. MUSSO & FRANK'S - MORNING (1953)

REEVES and TONI eat their flannel cakes with WEISSMAN, who reads excited from Variety.

WEISSMAN

Okay. Here. Here. "Homes with children, 'Adventures of Superman,' 91 share."

REEVES

That means no adults watching, right?

Weissman gives Toni a look -- doesn't Reeves get how successful he is?

WEISSMAN

They're watching with their kids, George. Families. Kellogg's ordered twenty-six more, they want to film in color.

REEVES
 (to Toni, with mock enthusiasm)
 Oh good -- I'll get to wear the blue
 and red.

ANGLE - AT THE FRONT WINDOW

Maybe SEVERN KIDS pressed against the glass, big smiles,
 getting bigger now that Reeves is looking their way.

He smiles at the kids, waves, and they go berserk. You can
 hear them screaming outside the restaurant. Toni and Art
 grinning as Reeves takes a drag on his cigarette.

WEISSMAN
 Maybe you should put that out.

REEVES
 What for?

TONI
 Superman doesn't smoke.

Reeves about to ask what that has to do with him...

And then it sinks in. He gets up from the table, staring at
 the kids all waving, jumping up and down.

INT. MUSSO & FRANK'S - MENS ROOM - DAY - REEVES (1953)

REEVES, cigarette in his mouth, finishes up at the urinal.
 Steps over to sink. Stares at himself in the mirror.

The MEN'S ROOM ATTENDANT discreetly places a clean ashtray
 on the counter in front of him.

Hold a beat, and go --

INT. MUSSO & FRANK'S - DAY - REEVES (1953)

exits the Mens Room, the cigarette history. Walking back to
 his table -- when he stops.

Staring out the front window, because now there are --DOZENS
 AND DOZENS AND DOZENS OF KIDS outside, screaming and waving.

PANNING-- ANOTHER WINDOW

more KIDS crowding against the glass.

REEVES

as it hits him-- he's as big a star as it gets.

To boys twelve and under.

INT. MOGLIO'S APT.-- DAY

MOGLIO'S POV-- A PUBLICITY SHOT OF REEVES

adjusting his glasses as mild-mannered Clark Kent.

KIT (O.S.)

There should be a show with a female detective.

MOGLIO glances up to see her coming in.

KIT (CONT'D)

Someone sort of young, short black hair, she knows jujitsu, and--
(Off MOGLIO's dark look)
What?

MOGLIO

How was class?

KIT

Huh?

MOGLIO

Your acting class. How was it?

KIT

It was fine.

MOGLIO

Pretty long.

KIT

Sometimes they are.

(Pause.)

You want to find out or not?

MOGLIO

Find out what.

KIT

That prescription you stole. I called the doctor. Superman was on pain pills. You know why?

MOGLIO

I think you do.

KIT

He crashed his car a couple of months back. Almost got killed.

MOGLIO

Was he drunk?

KIT

There wasn't any brake fluid.

MOGLIO

How do you know that?

KIT

Because I took a guess. I went to the Esso station at bottom of Benedict. I said I was from the insurance company. I spoke to a Mr. Phelps. He was very friendly.

(Pause.)

MOGLIO

Leak in the lining.

KIT

Mr. Phelps couldn't find one.

(Pause.)

Not bad, huh?

MOGLIO

They were still getting married. At least then. Far as she knew.

KIT

Wouldn't that be why?

MOGLIO

Why Leonore drains his brake fluid?

KIT

Why Mrs. Mannix does.

(Pause.)

He leaves her, right. For this younger woman. She can't bear it--

MOGLIO

And Toni wants him dead.

KIT

That happens, doesn't it?

MOGLIO

I don't know, Kit. You tell me.

A look-- maybe hurt, maybe guilt-- runs across KIT's face. She tries to hide it.

A knock on the front window. MOGLIO turns.

SINCLAIR stands on the other side on the glass, waiting to be attended to.

EXT. DRIVE-IN MOVIE THEATER-- DAY (1953)

THE CONCESSION STAND

the CASHIER, in white apron and little paper hat, rushes out of the the cinderblock hut.

CASHIER

(lamely)

Help. Help. They've robbed the concession stand.

HE points helpfully at two CROOKS running out with sacks full of stolen money. One carries a gun, the other a rifle.

PULL BACK - WIDE ON SCENE

A LARGE CROWD OF KIDS and THEIR PARENTS, with more sitting inside their parked cars, watching the bad guys make their getaway. POLICE are on hand to keep the crowd under control, and an ambulance is ready to roll in case they don't.

And then, we hear a familiar sound. The "whooshing" sound of Superman flying overhead, playing tinnily through dozens of parking space speakers.

The KIDS look up, squealing with excitement, as --

THE PLAY AREA

behind a low chain-link fence, temporarily masked off by a tarp.

REEVES sits on a see-saw, having a drink. He's in his costume, a new color one, vibrant blue, yellow and red.

HE takes his time finishing the drink, rises from the see-saw, walks ten paces from a spring-board. Waiting for his own voice to come over the loudspeakers --

REEVES' VOICE

Stop right there!

Reeves turns to a couple of STAGEHANDS.

REEVES

Gotta fly. Couple sonsabitches to catch.

They crack up as REEVES runs toward the spring-board, getting a good jump...

ON REEVES

launching over the fence and making a perfect landing, as the Superman music plays and the crowd goes absolutely crazy.

ANGLE-- ON ONE KID

Standing with his MOTHER, eyes wide, mouth hanging open. And something else. The front of his trousers slowly darkening. The KID is so excited, he's peeing in his pants.

BACK ON REEVES

He runs toward the CROOKS, who start shooting. Sound of gunshots over the loudspeakers, Reeves standing in his hands-on-hips pose, until the CROOKS run out of bullets.

Reeves walks over, knocks the FIRST CROOK out with one punch. Takes his gun and squeezes it like clay. Then he grabs the rifle and bends the barrel around the OTHER CROOK, before the "police" arrive to take them away.

The crowd gives REEVES a huge ovation, the kids clapping and screaming for their favorite hero, as REEVES waves back.

ANGLE - ANOTHER KID

maybe ten years old, moves through the crowd, decked out in a cowboy outfit, coming up behind REEVES...

And pulling a six-shooter. A real one, with real bullets in the chamber.

KID

Hey Superman!

REEVES turns to the kid -- and knows immediately he's in trouble. The kid has the gun aimed right at his chest, his little finger curled around the trigger.

REEVES smiles gently, not wanting to spook the kid.

REEVES

Well, hello. What's your name?

KENNETH

Kenneth Tyler. Can I shoot you?

It's weird. KENNETH is this cute little kid, obviously excited to be talking to his hero, no clue that the bullet he shoots might actually kill him.

REEVES' heart is pounding as he slowly, slowly, kneels on one knee, to get eye-to-eye with the KID.

REEVES

Why would you want to do that, Kenneth?

KENNETH

So the bullet bounces off, so can I?

KENNETH bringing his other hand around the gun as --

REEVES

You know what the problem is, Kenneth?
After your bullet bounces off me, it
might accidentally hit someone else.
You wouldn't want that to happen.

KENNETH

Gosh no...

REEVES

Of course not. So tell you what...

REEVES puts his hand out, for the gun.

REEVES (CONT'D)

How about you and I, just the two
Of us--

And a SHOT EXPLODES FROM THE GUN, KENNETH not even meaning
to fire, the bullet tearing past REEVES, ricocheting off the
pavement, and then-- a MOTHER'S SCRRAM.

REEVES turns to see --

LITTLE GIRL ON THE GROUND

Nine years old, bleeding, her MOTHER dropping to her knees,
people running over to see, the Mother shouting --

MOTHER

Somebody help! Help my baby!

PUSHING IN ON REEVES

Watching the scene unfold. And then he finds himself running
over, just starts running, people automatically parting,
like he can actually do something. Reaching the GIRL, and--

SHE looks up at him... and smiles. SHE's just been shot,
and SHE's smiling at REEVES.

REEVES forces himself to smile back. Then HE picks her up,
the child's blood dripping over his brand new color costume,
smearing the world famous "S."

ON REEVES

Running with the Girl in his arms, cutting through the crowd,
toward the ambulance, everybody getting out of his way, THE
KIDS thinking it's part of the act, shouting --

VARIOUS KIDS

Fly, Superman! Fly!

He reaches the ambulance, helps get the Little Girl inside. Watches the DOCTOR clean the wound, and then, thankfully --

DOCTOR

It's a graze.

Relief on REEVES' face as he turns away, the GIRL'S MOTHER rushing past him to the ambulance.

CLOSE ON REEVES

standing there, paralyzed by the delayed shock, trying to hide his clenched, shaking hands from the eyes of the watching, expectant CROWD, feeling horribly, humiliatingly exposed in his tights and cape.

HE sees

KENNETH THE COWBOY

Crying in his MOTHER'S arms, knowing what he's responsible for. He lifts his head to find Superman looking at him.

ON REEVES

Staring back at the frightened, shamed kid.

THE CROWD

all eyes on REEVES.

Somehow HE pulls himself together, pushing his arms tight against his sides so no one can see them trembling. Kneels down to KENNETH, who can't meet his eyes, hanging on to his mother's dress.

REEVES

(gently)

She's alright, Kenneth. Kenneth?
Look at me.

Kenneth forces himself to look up.

REEVES (CONT'D)

I know you didn't mean to hurt anyone.
But guns should only be handled by
grown-ups, do you understand that?

Kenneth nods, and then rushes into Reeves' arms. Reeves comforts him, but his own unease is there on his face.

INT. MOGLIO'S BEL-AIR-- DAY

MOGLIO behind the wheel of the parked car, camera in hand.

HIS POV-- OUT THE WINDOW

the Western Costume building.

MOGLIO puts the camera on the dashboard, leans back, shuts his eyes.

A sharp rap on the windshield.

MOGLIO's eyes snap open.

HIS POV-- A WOMAN

standing right outside. Middle-aged, drawn face, someone you wouldn't look at twice.

MOGLIO rolls down the window.

WOMAN

You think I don't see what you're doing?

MOGLIO

Sorry?

WOMAN

Day after day, taking pictures?

MOGLIO

I'm just waiting for the traffic to lift--

WOMAN tosses one of MOGLIO's earlier surveillance photos on his lap.

WOMAN

He leaves those where I can see them. Then he pretends he doesn't know what I'm talking about.

MOGLIO

Look, uh... Mrs. Sinclair?

MRS. SINCLAIR

What is he paying you?

MOGLIO

That's a confidential--

MRS. SINCLAIR

Whose money do you think it is?

MOGLIO

Huh?

MRS. SINCLAIR
He's been out of work for seven months. I don't know what he does all day. He won't tell me. Why don't you investigate that?

MOGLIO
Ma'am, I'm just trying to turn a buck here. If there's problem between you two, maybe you should talk to a priest whatever. Hash it out.

MRS. SINCLAIR
Just because you're paid doesn't make it right. You tell him I haven't done anything.

SHE turns and heads back to the building.

MOGLIO
(calling after)
I can't fix your marriage, ma'am...

But she doesn't hear him.

INT. BEDROOM-- REEVES'S HOUSE-- (1953)

REEVES lying on the bed, drink in hand, his eyes tracking
SOMEONE ELSE in the room.

REEVES
(innocently)
Just thought you could put a word in.

TONI

smoking a cigarette, pacing back and forth.

TONI
What do you suggest I say?

REEVES
He... drops a hint to Zinnemann.
That's all.
(pause)
It was a very solid audition.

TONI
It's Harry Cohn's picture. Eddie's at MGM.

REEVES
Well. What ever happened to honor among thieves?

TONI
 (bristling at the implication
 about MANNIX)
George...

SHE stops herself and turns to the dresser. Pause. SHE reaches inside for something.

TONI (CONT'D)
 (turning back to REEVES)
 Here.

SHE's holding a gift box, Van Cleef & Arpels. SHE hands it to him.

TONI (CONT'D)
 Because you've had a rough week.

REEVES takes the box and opens it. Inside, an oiled, blue-black Luger.

REEVES
 Van Cleef sells these?

TONI
 I don't want some drunk deciding to finish what that horrid child started.

REEVES
 I don't think a gun's--

TONI
 I'm just more comfortable knowing--

REEVES
 What would make me safe is not prancing around in a cape in front--

TONI
 You'd be gone, George. Alright?
 And then what happens to me?

Something SHE immediately wishes SHE hadn't said. SHE looks away. An uncomfortable silence.

Then REEVES twirls the pistol in his hand, gunslinger-style.

REEVES
 (singing-- from High Noon)
 "Do not forsake me oh my darling..."

TONI still doesn't look at him.

REEVES (CONT'D)
 "On this our wedding day..."

TONI
(easing a little)
That was at Paramount.

REEVES
"Fred...derick Zinnemann please come
save me..."

TONI
Oh, stop.

REEVES
"Before my liver rots away..."

EXT. A MANSION-- BEVERLY HILLS-- DAY

MOGLIO stands before the baronial door of the home of EDDIE
and TONI MANNIX.

A MAID opens the door.

MOGLIO
Mrs. Mannix please.

MAID
Who shall I say?

MOGLIO
Jasper. Hornsby. About redoing
the, uh, sun room.
(Pause.)

MAID
Just a moment.

SHE shuts the door. MOGLIO cools his heels. He looks around
the grounds.

THE GARDENER

cutting back the hedges along the driveway.

MAN'S VOICE
Mr. Moglio.

MOGLIO turns. HOWARD STRICKLING stands in the doorway.

MOGLIO
Do I know you?

STRICKLING
No. But I'm familiar with you.

MOGLIO
Everybody reads the Times, huh.

STRICKLING

I'm Howard Strickling. I handle publicity at MGM. And I'm wondering why you would be trying to approach Mrs. Mannix under false pretenses.

MOGLIO

Are you speaking professionally?

STRICKLING

I'm speaking as a friend. Of the Mannixes.

MOGLIO

Can I see Mrs. Mannix?

STRICKLING

She isn't well. And frankly neither she nor her husband appreciate being dragged into this business.

MOGLIO

What business is that?

STRICKLING

Your business, Mr. Moglio.

MOGLIO's about to respond when he hears a car approaching. He turns to see a BEVERLY HILLS POLICE CRUISER pulling up.

MOGLIO

(to STRICKLING)

You didn't have to go and do that.

STRICKLING

You seem have an inflated sense of your importance. They're on routine patrol.

MOGLIO sizes up the situation.

MOGLIO

Could you pass on a message to Mrs. Mannix?

STRICKLING

What would that be.

MOGLIO

I hope to see her at the funeral.

HE turns and heads toward his car, passing the cruiser.

STRICKLING

(calling out)

I remember your father, you know.

MOGLIO stops, turns back to STRICKLING.

MOGLIO
What about him?

STRICKLING
He was a very loyal employee.
(Pause.)

MOGLIO
Yeah. He was good at that.

INT. CIRO'S - NIGHT (1953)

SOMEONE'S POV-- MOVING THROUGH THE ROOM

Lots of BEAUTIFUL YOUNG WOMEN, there to be seen, and whoever the SOMEONE is eyes them very closely as we go past. It's

TONI

drink in hand, keenly aware of the competition, spooked that SHE's beginning to lose the battle.

SHE spies WEISSMAN at a table. Above him, a banner reading CONGRATS ON ETERNITY! Hangs over the area reserved for Reeves' party.

TONI
Where's The Boy, I've been hunting
all over.

WEISSMAN nods to the bar, where--

REEVES

chats up a pretty young CAMERA GIRL while HE waits on a drink. As happy as we've ever seen him. Handsome and healthy, a man with a future.

BACK ON TONI AND WEISSMAN

Weissman thrilled for his friend.

WEISSMAN
They sure kept us hanging long enough.
I knew it would pan out.

TONI
Really? How did you know that?

WEISSMAN
(laughing)
Jesus, what choice did I have?
(toward REEVES)
Take a good look, nothing's gonna be
the same for him again.

TONI

(archly)
Is he headed straight for the top,
Art? Maybe they'll put his name in
lights.

WEISSMAN

"Here to Eternity." Sinatra.
Lancaster. Clift.

TONI

Which is the one who sings?

Staring again at

REEVES

signing for his drink, still talking with the Camera Girl,
when he looks over at TONI. Raises a glass to his partner,
because the two of them are in this together. Then HE turns
to SOMEONE ELSE clamoring for his attention.

ON TONI

holding there for a beat, feeling rebuffed. SHE rises and
lights on JACK LARSON, standing beside his good-looking DATE.

TONI (CONT'D)

(marching up to him)
Hello you brazen youth.

LARSON

Hi, Toni. Great news for George,
huh?

TONI

Absolutely startling.

LARSON

(of his DATE)
I want you to meet--

TONI

Jack. Are you staring at my tits?

LARSON

(totally thrown)
Huh?

TONI

Don't be embarrassed. They've been
up against Oscar winners.
(to the DATE)
I do mean that literally.

LARSON

I wasn't staring, Toni...

TONI
 (whispering in his ear)
 I still don't need a bra.

SHE takes his hand and slips inside her dress. LARSON'S speechless.

REEVES

surrounded by ADMIRERS, catching the sight of LARSON'S hand on TONI'S breast.

TONI meets his eye, smiles and raises her glass back to him.

INT. WAYSIDE CHAPEL OF THE GATES - DAY (1959)

REEVES' BODY

lying peacefully in the open casket, in the blue suit picked out by his mother. He's been cleaned up, his face reconstructed, but he looks bizarrely unreal.

THE CHAPEL

ART WEISSMAN makes his way through the eulogy.

WEISSMAN
 (After a silence)
 It's a funny business. The one we're in. A lot of people, they act like friends. Until they're done with you. Until they don't need you anymore.

MOGLIO sits a couple of rows back. He surveys the small crowd-- PHYLLIS COATES, REEVES' friend NATIVIDAD VACIO, some members of the "Superman" crew, a few others. HELEN is up front, frail but stoic.

Conspicuous by their absence: Lenore Lemmon. Toni Mannix.

WEISSMAN (CONT'D)
 George wasn't like that. He was... a friend. A client, but also a friend. I wanted good things to happen for him. I think they did happen. The show... the kids who looked up to him...

The rear door of the chapel opens. MOGLIO turns to see PATERSON enter, positioning himself discreetly by the wall. Brief eye contact between them.

WEISSMAN (CONT'D)
 He was good company. He never complained.
 (MORE)

WEISSMAN (CONT'D)

(a small smile)

Well, maybe just a little. He was loyal to me. When he didn't have to be. When he could have moved on. He...

And that's as far as he can go without breaking down. The hall drop-dead quiet.

MOGLIO listening too, caught despite himself. Feeling something, not liking feeling it.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE CHAPEL-- DAY

The MOURNERS filter out, heading for their cars. The "Superman" cast offer condolences to HELEN. A small knot of REPORTERS and PHOTOGRAPHERS circle in.

MOGLIO watches them, the mood from inside still on him, something he can't shake.

And there's PATERSON, staring at him with a challenging intensity.

MOGLIO spots WEISSMAN and heads toward him.

MOGLIO

(coming up to him)

Mr. Weissman? I, ah... My name is Louis Moglio, I'm, ah...

HE pauses, suddenly not finding the words. WEISSMAN looks at him expectantly.

WEISSMAN

You knew George?

MOGLIO

No. But I wanted to ask you if... if you thought...

WEISSMAN waits, not knowing what this stranger wants, not wanting to be unkind.

STRICKLING appears in the middle distance behind WEISSMAN. MOGLIO sees him.

WEISSMAN

I'm no speechmaker. Saying what you really feel, it's hard.

(A pat on MOGLIO's arm)

Thank you for coming.

HE walks toward his car. MOGLIO starts after him.

MOGLIO
(calling after)
Mr. Weissman, I just...

STRICKLING steps in front of MOGLIO. WEISSMAN continues on.

MOGLIO (CONT'D)
(to STRICKLING)
Seeing me off the grounds again?

STRICKLING
Mrs. Mannix was unable to attend.
For reasons I'm sure you can
understand. But did she wish to be
represented.

MOGLIO
You do a lot for your friends.

STRICKLING
And you're just doing your job. I
respect that. But I am concerned.

MOGLIO
About what?

STRICKLING
Your history. People are rarely
afforded a chance to make the same
mistake twice.

MOGLIO
You threatening me?

STRICKLING
I'm offering you an opportunity.
There's a place for you at Metro if
you'd like it.

MOGLIO
In a booth at the gate?

STRICKLING
The studio has other needs. The
pay can be generous.

MOGLIO
I'd rather talk to Mrs. Mannix.

STRICKLING
There's nothing there for you.

MOGLIO
Then why are you pitching me?

STRICKLING

When it comes to publicity, it doesn't matter what's true or false. If it's bad for the studio, if it stops one person from buying a ticket, I have to fix it. That's my job.

(Pause.)

The offer is sincere. Don't let your pride stand in the way.

MOGLIO looks at him, then to the hovering REPORTERS. HE suddenly charges up to them.

MOGLIO

Bad day, boys. I'll tell you what's sadder. Injustice. Incompetence. Calling it suicide when it's really murder.

REPORTER 1

Sing us a new song, Moglio.

MOGLIO

What, you don't love me anymore?
How about this. Two months ago
someone drained all the fluid outta
George Reeves' brake line. Almost
died right then. Coincidence, right?
Cause the cops don't make mistakes.

HE sees PATERSON again, still watching him. MOGLIO doesn't like it at all. HE wheels angrily on the PHOTOGRAPHER.

MOGLIO (CONT'D)

Hey, Capa, you work for a living?
Lift the fucking camera.

EXT. A MOVIE THEATER IN GLENDALE - NIGHT (1953)

ADJUST TO the marquee, reading SNEAK PREVIEW TONIGHT, a LARGE CROWD filing in. Sinatra's name up there. Burt Lancaster. Montgomery Clift. Deborah Kerr. Not Reeves.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT (1953)

It seems like everyone Reeves ever knew is part of the PACKED HOUSE-- PHYLLIS, WEISSMAN, JACK LARSON, BOB MAXWELL, NACIO-- Reeves sits with Toni, pumping hands, a proud smile, rising for hugs.

The theater darkens. The curtains part, wartime music begins, and when the title FROM HERE TO ETERNITY appears, the crowd breaks into spontaneous and thunderous applause.

BUDDY ADLER AND FRED ZINNEMANN

ZINNEMANN, the movie's director. He and producer ADLER watching from behind the back row of seats.

ZINNEMANN

(Dryly)

Well Buddy, they love it so far.

ANGLE - ON REEVES

His heart pounding in anticipation. It's that moment when you know your whole life is about to change.

WIDE ON THE THEATER - ON SCREEN

A scene playing out between MONTGOMERY CLIFT and FRANK SINATRA. Coming to the end, when--

IN THE AUDIENCE-- REEVES

squeezes Toni's hand.

This is it.

Toni nods, excited.

BACK ON THE SCREEN

Reeves makes his first appearance, in uniform, but this time it's Army. His hair is in a brush cut, and he looks good. Different. Best of all, he's not wearing a cape.

WIDE ON THE THEATER

it takes a beat, but suddenly a buzz runs through the audience. People turn to each other, point to the screen, and then, from all corners, the murmurs of -- "Superman."

More people realize who they're watching, even as the scene continues to play, their gleeful shouts of "Superman!... Great Scott!.. Jeepers, Mr. Kent," beginning to drown out the dialogue.

ADLER AND ZINNEMANN

are confused, they don't get it.

But one thing is clear-- they don't like it.

It's killing their movie.

ON REEVES

shrinking into his seat.

TONI
 (to REEVES, sotto voce)
 People can see you.

REEVES tries to control himself, just crumbling inside.

BACK ON ADLER AND ZINNEMANN

Listening to the Superman comments continue.

And then ADLER turns to ZINNEMANN.

Makes a "scissors" gesture -- cut him out.

EXT. PATIO REEVES' HOUSE - DAY (1953)

REEVES

sitting alone on the swinging bench, a drink in his hand,
 staring at nothing.

TONI steps forward onto the patio. Silence.

REEVES
 (almost a croak)
 Eddie could do something.

TONI
 What do you think he could do?

REEVES has no idea. TONI puts her arms around him, nuzzling
 him from behind. Softly reassuring him --

TONI (CONT'D)
 You know I'll always take care of my
 Boy.

REEVES just swallows his bourbon.

EXT. PARKING AREA-- APARTMENT COURT-- NIGHT

MOGLIO gets out of his car. A moment of weariness.

HIS POV-- A WINDOW

looking over the parking area. The BARBELL GUY stands there,
 naked, flexing his muscles, staring out at nothing.

MOGLIO heads for the stairwell.

INT. MOGLIO'S APT.-- NIGHT

MOGLIO comes in from the walkway. The place is dark. HE
 reaches for the light switch. Nothing happens.

A soft shuffling noise.

MOGLIO

Kit?

Silence. Off in the corner, a small red glow, floating in midair. SOMEONE drawing on a cigar.

MOGLIO (CONT'D)

Who's gonna yell "surprise?"

Behind him, SOMEONE ELSE slams the door shut. MOGLIO turns. He's abruptly grabbed and thrown onto the floor.

MOGLIO struggles to his feet. A kick in the gut and he's on his knees gasping.

A flashing beam hits him in the face.

CIGAR MAN

You listening?

MOGLIO

Get that fucking thing--

Another kick. A sharp bark from MOGLIO as HE goes down.

CIGAR MAN

Are you listening. Nod your head.

MOGLIO manages a nod. The CIGAR MAN strikes a match to relight his stogie. A glimpse of his face-- big, square, cold eyes, the veiny nose of a hard-core alcoholic. And back into darkness.

CIGAR MAN (CONT'D)

Be smart. Let it go.

MOGLIO

Your wife's snatch? She won't let me.

CIGAR MAN

Here's what I mean.

The SOMEONE ELSE shifts position. A clenched fist, a chain wrapped around it, comes straight at MOGLIO.

MOGLIO's head snaps back sharply.

BLACK SCREEN

FADE IN-- KIT

looking down.

KIT

Are you alright?

MOGLIO

coming to. It's morning. The left side of his face is a puffed-up wreck, the eye swollen shut.

He tries to get up, doesn't make it.

KIT (CONT'D)

I'm calling a doctor.

MOGLIO gestures "no." He makes a big effort and manages to sit up.

KIT (CONT'D)

At least some ice.

She heads for the kitchen. MOGLIO mutters something.

KIT (CONT'D)

(frazzled, rooting in fridge)
Stop being stubborn, you were
unconscious for, there's no ice,
what did you say?

MOGLIO

(sharply)
There's no ice.
(Pause.)

KIT

What's it about.

MOGLIO

That murder bullshit I been slinging.
I think it might be true.

KIT

Reeves?

MOGLIO nods.

KIT (CONT'D)

I can help.

(Off his look)
You know I can.

MOGLIO

Yeah. Me and Nancy Drew.

KIT

I'm not going to let you keep telling
me what I'm able to--

MOGLIO

Kit. Let's call it a day. Alright?

KIT

What?

MOGLIO

You shouldn't be around me. It's not some movie you want be in. It's just a fucked-up little business where you find out how shitty people are so you can make the rent.

KIT

You don't really believe that.

MOGLIO

You know what I care about? You're balling that Chad kid and you don't have the guts to tell me. Do you.
(Pause.)

KIT

I--

MOGLIO

-- was going to, sure. So now you don't have to.

(Pause.)

Look, it's fine. You made the smart move. He's your age. He probably loves you. I understand.

KIT is stung by his words. A beat.

KIT

You want me here today?

MOGLIO

No. I don't think I do.

And that's it. KIT stands there, not sure what to do with herself. Then she exits.

MOGLIO leans on the desk, his face throbbing, his mind racing. He looks down, notices something on the floor just sticking out from under the desk.

He pokes it out with his foot. It's the butt of a cigar, with a Montana Dulce hand around it.

INT. COFFEE SHOP-- DAY

MOVING IN-- ON DEL

MOGLIO's ex-partner, sitting in the booth, eating lunch.

HE looks up to see

MOGLIO

looming over him, an apparition with a blown-up face.

MOGLIO tosses the cigar butt onto the table.

MOGLIO

Let's go outside.

DEL

Sure, Lou.

HE slides out of the booth and starts toward the front.

MOGLIO

(stopping him)
The other way.

Pause. DEL shrugs and head toward the back. MOGLIO follows.

EXT. ALLEY-- BEHIND COFFEE SHOP-- DAY

MOGLIO and DEL come out the back door. MOGLIO closes it behind him.

MOGLIO

You packing?

DEL

Not when I cross the street for lunch.

MOGLIO suddenly pushes DEL against the wall and shoves his hand inside DEL's jacket. He fishes out a service revolver.

MOGLIO

What's the next lie? They just wanted to talk to me?

DEL

I do what I'm told, Lou.

MOGLIO wraps his hand around DEL's throat.

MOGLIO

Listen you prick. You took the cash from that rag same as me. Twenty five hundred for ratting on some hophead actress and I never said a word. It was my ass out the door. Cause I was loyal.
(squeezing hard)
To my fucking partner.

DEL's face turns red, his eyes bulging.

DEL

Nick.

MOGLIO

Why.

DEL

Wouldn't say. Just take care of it.

MOGLIO

Who were the sonsabitches.

DEL

I never got names.

(Pause.)

Look. When I helped you out. I should have kept my mouth shut. I had to make good. You'd do it too, don't bullshit me. That's how the mortgage gets paid.

MOGLIO looks at him. A sudden eruption of rage. He drives his fist hard into DEL's stomach.

INT. MOGLIO'S APT.-- DAY

THE KITCHEN SINK

a bag of ice is dumped into it.

MOGLIO whacks it with a hammer. HE picks up a chunk and holds it against his face.

A loud knocking on the door. HE takes DEL's gun off the kitchen counter and shoves it in the back of his waistband.

He goes to the door and looks into the peephole.

THROUGH THE PEEPHOLE

Two uniformed LAPD OFFICERS standing outside.

OFFICER 1

(shouting through the door)

Louis Moglio?

INT. POLICE CAR-- MOVING-- DAY

MOGLIO in the back seat.

HIS POV-- OUT THE WINDOW

pulling up in front of the Western Costume building. PATERSON is there, talking to some other COPS. A slight shift of his head as he sees the car approaching.

INT. WESTERN COSTUME-- DAY

PATERSON, walking fast, leads MOGLIO down a corridor. DET. JOHNSON trailing behind.

PATERSON
He gave us your name. Said you'd explain.

MOGLIO
Who did?

PATERSON
The perpetrator.

HE pushes open a door and steps into the storeroom.

Long racks of clothes-- cowboy costumes, togas, ball gowns.

MOGLIO, trying to keep pace with PATERSON, notices dark smears of blood on the floor.

PATERSON (CONT'D)
She ran in here, he kept following.

A tilted-over rack, clothes in disorder all around. A group of COPS standing in a loose circle.

PATERSON (CONT'D)
Shot her again in the throat. And one more through the heart.

COMING UP TO THE PILE OF CLOTHES

a COP steps out of the way. MOGLIO gets a clear view of

MRS. SINCLAIR

lying atop the clothes, a big red wet spot in her chest, eyes open and dull, looking like a thrown-away doll.

MOGLIO looks at her, not wanting to believe what he's seeing.

PATERSON (CONT'D)
Harriet Sinclair. Worked in accounts.

MOGLIO
She...
(Pause.)
The perpetrator what?

DET. JOHNSON
Sat down and waited for us.

PATERSON
(to another COP)
Danny.

The COP brings SINCLAIR forward, his hands cuffed.

SINCLAIR
Mr. Moglio.

MOGLIO stares at him.

MOGLIO
Oh Jesus Christ.

SINCLAIR
I suppose the fault is mine. For
failing to see that you and your
whore were not aiding me, but guarding
the rampant fornications of my wife.
(Pause.)
I hope you've learned the meaning of
justice.

EXT. WESTERN COSTUME-- DAY

MOGLIO watches the stretcher with MRS. SINCLAIR's covered
body slide into the ambulance.

PATERSON's beside him.

PATERSON
This one's easier.

MOGLIO
Than what.

PATERSON
Your other murder.

MOGLIO
What's that mean?

PATERSON walks away. The ambulance drives off. MOGLIO
watches it go.

INT. MOGLIO'S APT-- NIGHT

MOGLIO, sitting in the middle of the floor, drunk off his
ass.

The phone's ringing away. HE finally grabs for it. LEONORE's
on the other end. SHE starts in right away.

LEONORE
That bitch who hired you. You think
she loved Georgie?

MOGLIO
Who is this?

LEONORE
He grew up without a father. And
when he's old enough she finally
tells him what happened.

MOGLIO

Miss Lemmon?

LEONORE

Suicide. Pistol, in the mouth. Georgie never stopped thinking about it. You hearing this? Fifteen years later he gets a visitor. His father. Alive. He'd dumped the bitch for another woman. Left Georgie too. No one does that to her, right? She tells her son his father killed himself. Her own son. They never talked again.

MOGLIO

That lets you off the hook?

LEONORE

I didn't screw Georgie's head on backwards. She did.

MOGLIO

Why you telling me now?

LEONORE

I'm a just little blotto, sugar. I'm kind of horny. And I'm pretty goddamned all alone.

MOGLIO

So?

LEONORE

I don't know. I thought maybe we had something in common.

SHE waits for a response, her breath loud on the line. MOGLIO doesn't say anything. SHE hangs up.

MOGLIO thinks about the news.

INT. ROOSEVELT HOTEL - CORRIDOR - DAY

Moglio rapping on the door.

MOGLIO

Mrs. Bessolo.

(no answer)

Mrs. Bessolo, it's Detective Moglio.

Raps again, hard enough to push open the unlocked door.

INT. HELEN'S HOTEL SUITE - DAY-- CONTINUOUS

A MAID is stripping the bed in the vacated room. She looks quizzically at MOGLIO.

EXT. STREET-- OUTSIDE THE ROOSEVELT-- DAY

MOGLIO runs out of the hotel and sees HELEN getting into a cab.

HE rushes over, just catching the door as the HOTEL DOORMAN slams it shut.

MOGLIO

Mrs. Bessolo.

She looks up at MOGLIO.

HELEN

I won't be needing your services any longer, Mr. Moglio.

MOGLIO

When were you gonna tell me?

HELEN

I intend to mail you a check.

MOGLIO

That's it?

HELEN

I don't owe you anything else.

MOGLIO

How about an explanation? How about telling me your son wouldn't even give you the time of day?

HELEN

Don't you use that tone with me. Mr. Strickling gave me his word--

MOGLIO

Strickling?

HELEN

-- that a statue would be erected in my son's honor...

MOGLIO

A what?

HELEN

Outside the Chinese Theater.

Moglio realizing --

MOGLIO

You never gave a shit, did you?

HELEN
You'll be paid.

MOGLIO
Keep the goddamned check.

HE slams the door shut. HELEN rolls down the window.

HELEN
My son was a great star. He deserves
a statue!

The cab pulls away.

EXT. SCHOOLYARD-- DAY

EVAN playing with other KIDS on the monkey bars. HE drops
down and sees

MOGLIO

standing a few yards away, an outsized figure among the
schoolchildren. HE's disheveled, unsteady on a bellyful of
booze. Wrinkled sport shirt, no jacket.

HE makes a gesture, halfway to a wave. EVAN returns it
uncertainly.

MOGLIO comes closer.

EVAN
Mom's picking me up.

MOGLIO
I know that scout. I just wanted
to... I got you something.
(HE feels around in his pockets)
I left it in the car, I'll give it
to you when we drive back.

EVAN
But Mom's picking me up.
(Pause.)

MOGLIO
Right, it's okay. I'll take you.

EVAN
How come you're not at work?

MOGLIO
Cause I don't sit in an office, scout.
That's for suckers. Your pop's an
investigator. He investigates.

EVAN
You never wear a suit.

MOGLIO

I don't have to. Cause I'm not a sucker. Let me take you home.

EVAN

I'm supposed to wait for mom.

MOGLIO

Don't worry about mom. She knows your pop loves you. Evan. Okay.

EVAN

You don't live with us.

MOGLIO

Your mom and me, we don't have the same... Evan, the world, it won't give you anything. And nobody has magic powers. So you gotta be tough. You gotta show them who you are. My father never taught me that. He--
(He finds the car keys)
Okay. Here we go.

HE drops the keys. EVAN watches him with growing unease.

MOGLIO (CONT'D)

(Reaching down)

I'm fine, I'm fine, we're driving now...

HE loses his balance, landing on his ass. The other KIDS watch silently. A couple of TEACHERS and a hefty MAINTENANCE MAN start approaching.

MOGLIO (CONT'D)

(calling out to them)

I'm his son. My son. He is.

(to EVAN)

Tell 'em scout.

EVAN stands there.

MOGLIO (CONT'D)

Just tell em.

EVAN starts backing away.

MOGLIO (CONT'D)

I'm not gonna hurt you, I would never do that...

EVAN bolts across the schoolyard. MOGLIO struggles to his feet, starts after him. The MAINTENANCE MAN blocks his way.

MOGLIO wavers unsteadily. HE raises his hands, palms out-- no fight in him.

INT. BATHROOM-- MOGLIO'S APT.-- DAY

MOGLIO lies naked in the dry tub, staring up at the ceiling, his swollen face against the cool porcelain.

A knock on the front door. Whoever it is just keeps hammering.

EXT. FRONT DOOR-- MOGLIO'S APT.-- DAY

MOGLIO opens the door. Wrinkled pants, no shirt.

PATERSON

standing on the walkway. HE looks MOGLIO over in silence.

EXT. POOL-- APARTMENT COMPLEX-- DAY

MOGLIO and PATERSON sit in folding chairs by the small pool.

PATERSON

I didn't like it from the start.
They rushed it. And closed the case.

MOGLIO

Why.

PATERSON

LAPD. Never look back. And then
there was pressure.

MOGLIO

From who.

PATERSON

(His voice dropping)
I can't do what you're doing.
Understand? I got a wife, kids, car
payments. I'm in for twenty years
and a pension.

MOGLIO

But I got nothing to lose, huh.

PATERSON

Think it through. MGM buys off the
mother--

MOGLIO

I'm not getting paid.

PATERSON

That's all it's about for you.

MOGLIO

I got that woman killed, okay?
(MORE)

MOGLIO (CONT'D)

For nothing. For fifty bucks a day.
Stringing her husband along. Like I
was running him. Cause I couldn't
see straight in front of me. I'm
done screwing up.

PATERSON

You think so?

MOGLIO

What's that mean?

PATERSON

Why don't you get on the right side
of something for once?

MOGLIO

Where do you get off telling me what
I should do?

PATERSON

I'm not the one with the guilty
conscience. Am I.

HE rises abruptly and starts out. MOGLIO watches him go.

HE glances at PATERSON's empty chair. A file folder on the
seat. MOGLIO can just make out the name on the tab: MANNIX.

HE looks away.

HIS POV-- THE BARBELL MAN

standing stock still, looking old and weary, weights dangling
from his arms. After a moment, HE takes a breath and starts
another set of curls.

MOGLIO looks back at the folder.

HE picks up the folder, opens it. A wad of newspaper
clippings and old police reports. An article from the Los
Angeles Examiner, Nov. 20, 1937.

MOGLIO reads the headline:

STUDIO EXEC'S MISSING WIFE FOUND DEAD

Underneath, a picture of a pretty woman, BERNICE MANNIX, and
a picture of her husband, EDDIE MANNIX.

MOGLIO turns to the next page. A police report from the
late 40's. A dancer, RIVA WATSON, found dead in a motel
room on Beverly Boulevard. MANNIX's name in a deposition by
the desk clerk, circled in red by PATERSON.

Another page, from a 1930's "Photoplay" magazine. Paul Bern, Jean Harlow's husband, commits suicide. Eddie Mannix, MGM's general manager, says all the Metro family is saddened by the blow to one of the studio's most beloved stars.

Another article, from the early 50's. A would-be actress claims she was raped at an MGM studio party. MANNIX is named in the suit. Someone's blacked out the actress' name. Her picture's there, though-- an appealing ingenue.

And a final clipping. That Ciro's photo from the 1951 "On the Town" column. Handsome GEORGE. Happy TONI. At the table behind them, MANNIX eyes them coldly.

THE COURTYARD

MOGLIO sitting in his chair, caught in a square of late afternoon sunlight, reading through the pages.

EXT. PATIO-- REEVES HOUSE - DAY (1957)

WEISSMAN steps out to see REEVES, in just bathrobe and undershorts, standing over the smoking barbecue pit, cigarette in his mouth, bourbon in his hand. There's no missing the belly that's grown on him.

WEISSMAN

So. What's the emergency?

REEVES looks at him balefully.

REEVES

Have a drink, Art.

WEISSMAN

It's 10:30 in the morning. What.

REEVES

It's, uh, pretty bad.

WEISSMAN

What is.

REEVES

It's very bad.

WEISSMAN

Oh Jesus, George, enough, let's deal with it.

REEVES

(slyly)

We're canceled.

HE burst into a grin and squirts lighter fluid on the coals. Flames leap up.

HE drops a full Superman costume onto the grill.

INT. BEDROOM-- REEVES HOUSE-- DAY (1958)

TONI

her eyes moving back and forth, tracking

REEVES

packing suitcase, shirt unbuttoned, moving from dresser to closet to bed. HE takes out a suit.

TONI

Will that still fit?

REEVES

I dreamed I want to New York City in my Maidenform girdle.

And HE's got one, too-- it goes into the suitcase.

TONI

I just don't see the point.

REEVES

It's my production company. If I don't sell it, who will?

TONI

The business is here, George.

REEVES

The money's in New York. And I can make the papers there.

TONI

It's a lot of bother.

REEVES

I want to do this. I'm looking forward to it. I'd like to be... in charge of my own life.

TONI

(taking that as a slap)
I see.

REEVES

No, you don't. You think I should just sit here doing, I don't know what, while the both of us...
(pause)

TONI

Yes?

(MORE)

TONI (CONT'D)

(pause)
The both of us what.
(pause)

REEVES

Look. Toni. This makes sense to me. I set up my own projects. I direct. I produce. I hire some other dope to jump around in colored underwear. It's worth a shot.

Pause. TONI offers up a half hearted nod.

REEVES (CONT'D)

(carefully neutral)
Maybe I'll work at MGM, right?

No response from TONI. REEVES finishes packing and works the suitcase closed.

REEVES (CONT'D)

I'll call you from--

TONI

Kiss me.

REEVES

Just let me get--

TONI

No. You have to.

Pause. REEVES catches her strained tone. HE steps forward, kisses her on the lips, meaning for it to be taken as tender.

But TONI needs something more, keeping her mouth on his, hands fumbling around his belt and zipper, pulling his pants down, reaching around his cock, REEVES going along with it, nothing more, and that night on the beach in Santa Monica seems like a very long time ago.

EXT. TOOTS SHORS - NEW YORK CITY - NIGHT (1958)

The famous watering hole on 52nd Street, a home away from home to celebrities and sports figures.

INT. TOOTS SHORS - NIGHT - ON LEONORE LENNON (1958)

The party girl whom trouble always seems to follow. She smokes cigars, she drinks, and she has no time for losers.

Posing with gal pal JACKIE STANDER as a flashbulb pops, a feathery CAMERA GIRL snapping their picture.

LEONORE

Wait, wait, I blinked, do it again.

CAMERA GIRL
Sorry, no retakes.

LEONORE
My goddamn eyes were closed.

The Camera Girl turns to the next table, her feathery ass two feet from Leonore's face.

CAMERA GIRL
Good evening, may I take your picture?

They're willing, and as they smile for the camera, Leonore lights Camera Girl's ass on fire with her cigar. Jackie doesn't even notice, all excited about who she's just spotted.

JACKIE
You know who that is over there?
That's Superman.

THEIR POV - ON REEVES

at a table with New York Post writer EARL WILSON. Reeves is drinking bourbon, Wilson's taking notes.

BACK ON LEONORE AND JACKIE

Jackie with a school-girl smile as --

LEONORE
Oh, right...

Then suddenly a commotion, Camera Girl shrieking, flames rising from her ass. Leonore and Jackie just staring at Reeves as --

JACKIE
He's gotta be loaded, all my little cousins are glued that show.

LEONORE
Yeah? We should get them an autograph.

And before Jackie can stop her, Leonore's walking over.

ANGLE - ON REEVES AND EARL WILSON

Wilson looking at one of Reeves' new business cards.

REEVES
The Superman show was fine for what it was, but producing and directing are my goals now. I'm very excited about--

LEONORE
(arriving, interrupting)
Earl Wilson, look at you all dressed
up! I haven't seen you since...

WILSON
They threw you out of Sarli's for
throwing coffee at your waiter.

LEONORE
(in her defense)
I had ordered tea.

Leonore turns to Reeves, who's already grinning.

LEONORE (CONT'D)
Find something funny, junior?

REEVES
I know when I'm out of my league.

LEONORE
Don't sell yourself short, I got a
big heart.
(then, slyly)
I'll bet you have a big one too.

Earl Wilson looks embarrassed, but Reeves grins even wider,
because this girl's a firecracker.

REEVES
That's sweet of you to say, Miss...

LEONORE
Leonore Lemmon.

REEVES
My name's George. If you're not
busy later, maybe I could buy you a
drink.

LEONORE
George, I'm always busy later.

And off Reeves, clearly smitten, go --

BACK ON JACKIE STANDER

all excited as Leonore comes back, one big smirk.

JACKIE
Did he sign?

Leonore shows Jackie a napkin.

JACKIE (CONT'D)
George Reeves... Gotham Hotel, Room
1443.

(eyes widen)
Superman wants to get laid!

INT. REEVES' HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT (1958)

Reeves and Leonore, fucking from one end of the bed to the other. Leonore finally falls over, exhausted.

LEONORE
Oh God... Jesus goddamn Christ...
(catches her breath, then)
You know what, stallion?

REEVES
Tell me.

LEONORE
I think you might be starting to get
the hang of this.
(wickedly)
Let's do it again.

REEVES is in heaven.

INT. LIVING ROOM-- REEVES HOUSE - DAY (1958)

REEVES

sitting on the sofa, not in heaven at all.

TONI stands over him, her body rigid.

TONI
You're saying this why.

REEVES
To, be honest.

TONI
(with ice-cold sarcasm)
My. That's noble. What is that,
from some script you auditioned for?
In the 1940's?

REEVES
It's just me. Talking to you.

TONI
I'm so grateful. Straight Arrow
George. You go to New York, you fuck
some whore, you run back to tell me--

REEVES
She's not a whore.

TONI

She's an "actress"? A "singer"?
Does she blow smoke rings with her
cunt?

SHE stops herself. Quickly regroups.

TONI (CONT'D)

Is it a fling you want?

REEVES

Not a fling.

TONI

You're in love. Two weeks in a hotel
room.

(pause)

Well? You're being honest.

REEVES

She makes me feel young.

TONI

Have you seen yourself, George?

REEVES

Please, Toni.

TONI

Your face is going.

(pointing)

Here. And here. Your eyes. Hair.
Your stomach. You think no one
notices?

REEVES

We don't have to do this. I'm asking
you to let me--

TONI

But you've got your "projects," don't
you. You're going to be a director.
You'll sit in your little chair
polishing your balls, thank god I'm
rid of that old hag I had to screw,
what was her name? The one who bought
me a fucking house.

REEVES

For God's sake--

TONI

You want publicity? I'll say you're
a Red. A faggot. A lush, nobody's
going to call that a lie--

REEVES
(sharply)
You never helped me.

TONI
What?

REEVES
You never lifted a finger. I asked you. You could've told Eddie. You could've made him. You could've gotten me something. You wanted me stuck in that clown suit, didn't you. Your Boy. Jesus Christ.

And then TONI knows SHE can destroy him.

TONI
But George. That's all you were good for. Don't you know that yet? Ten-year-olds and shut-ins. Your audience. That's the best you were ever going to be.
(pause)
What else were you expecting?

It sticks into REEVES like a hatchet.

INT. REC ROOM-- PATERSON HOME-- DAY

MOGLIO sits with PATERSON before a reel-to-reel recorder.

Through the patio doors behind them, PATERSON's kids can be seen in the backyard, running back and forth.

PATERSON presses the PLAY LEVER, and we're in the middle of a phone conversation, Leonore's voice shouting --

LEONORE'S VOICE
(on tape)
-- you think we don't know who this is? You dried-up old bitch? Tell her Georgie. Tell her how it is.

A fumbling sound on the tape as the phone is passed.

REEVES' VOICE
(on tape)
Hello?
(no response)
Toni, this won't help. You have to stop. It's not good. For you. I'm laying the phone down, stay on as long as you like.

We hear a small thump, the phone setting down, but the caller doesn't hang up.

PATERSON

You don't think that proves Toni was over the edge?

MOGLIO

Nothing says it's her.

PATERSON

Mannix had the juice to get him iced.

MOGLIO

Nobody said he had problems with Toni and Reeves.

PATERSON

Maybe his problem was Toni without Reeves.

MOGLIO

He killed him for sending his wife back to him?

PATERSON

Maybe it's love.

MOGLIO

What kind of love is that?

PATERSON

Their kind.

Pause. MOGLIO looks absently around the room. Family photos on the wall. One catches his eye. It's of the INGENUE who claimed to have been raped at an MGM party in '51.

PATERSON follows his gaze. Pause.

PATERSON (CONT'D)

My sister.

MOGLIO

Actress?

PATERSON

Gave it a shot.

MOGLIO

(Carefully)

Didn't work out, huh.

PATERSON looks away. HE rewinds the tape.

REEVES' VOICE

(on tape)

Toni, this won't help. You have to stop. It's not good. For you.

PATERSON
They could do something with this.

MOGLIO
Who.

PATERSON
Your reporter pals.
(pause)

MOGLIO
You got enough here. She's sitting
on something. Bring her in.

PATERSON
That's not what we talked about.

MOGLIO
What did we talk about? I nail
Mannix? And no heat on you? It
won't work that way. I can't get
past the door. You got the badge.
(Pause.)
If she didn't do it he did. Either
way she's gotta know.

PATERSON
I need him pulling the trigger.

MOGLIO
In the room with Reeves? I don't
see it.

PATERSON
Whoever he hired. It's just as good.

MOGLIO
Make a call.

PATERSON looks out the window at his kids. Pause. He reaches
for the phone, dials.

PATERSON
(into phone)
It's Paterson. Looking for a warrant.
(Pause.)
Mrs. Edward Mannix.

EXT. REEVES' HOME - BACKYARD - DAY (1958)

Leonore lies on a chaise lounge, in a bathing suit, holding
a reflector to her face in the only patch of sunlight in the
yard. Elvis singing "Hard Headed Woman" on the transistor
radio when Reeves comes out, full of energy and excitement.

REEVES

Leonore! Art just called, Universal's
financing my movie!

She screams and jumps into his arms. Kissing and hugging
and then --

LEONORE

We need to have a real blow out.

REEVES

This time I want my friends there
too. Jack and Art --

LEONORE

Junior, leave the party plans to me.

He starts to argue, but she kisses him, long and hard.

LEONORE (CONT'D)

I've never screwed a film director
before... hope it gets me a part.

INT. REEVES' HOME (1959)

Music blares and the house is PACKED WITH PEOPLE, Reeves
with a phone to one ear and a finger in the other as --

REEVES

(into phone)

Who wants me to wrestle?

INTERCUT - INT. WEISSMAN'S OFFICE (1959)

Weissman eating a pastrami sandwich at his desk as --

WEISSMAN

(into phone)

The professional circuit, and they're
serious. You might get a kick out
of it.

(then)

What do you got, a party going on?

And Reeves, he feels like shit telling Weissman --

REEVES

(into phone)

Just a few friends of Leonore's.

ANGLE - LEONORE

showing Carol and Bill Bliss the latest in technology -- a
bulky reel-to-reel tape recorder with thick wires plugging
into a specially-modified phone jack. The reels turning as--

LEONORE

(explaining)

So when the old bitch calls, this
contraption records it automatically.
Now at least the cops believe us.

(then, calls)

Hey! This way!

To a DELIVERY GUY carrying a case of liquor. Leonore waves
him over, and we follow her into --

THE KITCHEN

The Delivery Guy behind her, setting the case on the table.
Leonore in her purse for a tip when Reeves comes in. Takes
a look at the bill, and --

REEVES

Lem, you've gotta slow down, the
liquor tab is killing me.

LEONORE

(kisses him)

You're directing your own movie next
month, Georgie, live a little. Or
take another headache pill. Just
don't ruin the party, okay?

She takes his hand, pulls him back into the living room,
squeezing his ass on the way.

EXT. REEVES' HOME - NIGHT (1958)

The party going strong when a car approaches, a Jaguar.
Slowing at Reeves and Leonore dancing in the front window.

Toni, at the wheel, watches until she can't stand it anymore,
and drives off.

EXT. MANNIX ESTATE-- NIGHT (1958)

Toni's Jaguar tears up the drive. The brakes screech, jerking
the car sideways, jamming it to a stop against the hedges.

INT. JAGUAR-- NIGHT

TONI stares out at nothing, her face a frozen mask.

Suddenly she shatters. Deep, terrifying howls from down in
her gut-- fury, pain, inconsolable loss, arms flailing out,
nails raking into the leather of the seats.

EXT. MANNIX ESTATE-- NIGHT-- CONTINUOUS

The front door opens. MANNIX stands there, looking out.

HIS POV-- THE JAGUAR

the windows fogging up, TONI inside, a caged animal, her cries muted through the glass.

MANNIX watches her, his jaw muscles tight.

INT. STRICKLING'S BEDROOM-- NIGHT (1959)

STRICKLING, in bed, fumbles for the phone.

MANNIX (V.O., phone)
Howard.

STRICKLING
(into phone)
Eddie. It's...

HE looks at the clock on the nightstand. 3:42.

STRICKLING (CONT'D)
It's very late, Eddie.
(Pause.)
You there?

MANNIX
That actor.

STRICKLING
Reeves?

MANNIX
What he's going to do with the rest
of his life?

STRICKLING
He has some spaceman script set up
at Universal. To direct.
(Pause.)
If you offered Wasserman--

MANNIX
I know how to handle it.

HE hangs up.

A STORYBOARD (1955)

Detailed pencil sketches of aliens and flying saucers, and

ADJUST TO

Reeves angrily kicking it across the floor of the Benedict Canyon house. Weissman is here, the bad news messenger, as --

LEONORE
Universal's only one studio, get the
money someplace else.

WEISSMAN
I've already tried.

LEONORE
Try harder, he's your only client.
What kind of bullshit agent are you?

REEVES
Leonore, enough.

Leonore returns to the couch, pissed off, grabs a magazine.

REEVES (CONT'D)
Art... this movie. I was counting
on it. I need it. There has to be
something I...

WEISSMAN
(a beat, then)
The wrestling offer.

It can't get any more humiliating.

REEVES
It pays?

WEISSMAN
It pays. Their only concern, are
you up to it. Physically.

A beat, Reeves considering the offer. This degrading,
embarrassing offer.

REEVES
You film me. So they can see.

Leonore can't sit still any longer, back in Reeves' face.

LEONORE
Why don't you just join the goddamn
circus?

ON REEVES
no choices now.

EXT. REEVES' HOME - NIGHT - JUNE 16, 1959

A DARK FIGURE

Standing on REEVES' lawn in the dark.

HIS POV-- LOOKING INTO THE LIVING ROOM

Through the front window. LEONORE, CAROL, CONDON and BLISS, drinking, watching REEVES strum a Spanish song on his guitar.

EXT. REEVES' HOME - BACKYARD - NIGHT - JUNE 16, 1959

The FIGURE comes around the back, the party continuing inside, everybody too drunk to notice. A trellis bolted to the wall.

The FIGURE starts climbing up it.

EXT. REEVES' HOME - NIGHT - JUNE 16, 1959

REEVES finishes singing, tired and done for the night. Says his goodnights and heads upstairs. CAMERA RISING with him, up to the second floor bedroom window.

REEVES enters. He disrobes, sits down on the end of the bed. And then, from behind, the FIGURE ENTERS FRAME. A struggle, but REEVES is far too drunk to put up a fight. The FIGURE pounds REEVES' body, where the three bruises eventually surface, then fires the Luger into Reeves' head.

And as REEVES falls backward on the bed--

INT. MOGLIO'S CAR-- DAY

MOGLIO napping behind the wheel of the parked car. Wakes with a start.

HIS POV-- OUT WINDSHIELD

the gate to the Mannix estate.

MOGLIO checks his watch.

HE gets out of the car.

EXT. RETIRO WAY-- CONTINUOUS-- DAY

MOGLIO leans against the car and lights a cigarette. HE watches the gate.

A police cruiser approaches. It pulls up alongside him. The COP inside rolls the window down and stares at him.

MOGLIO
Where's Paterson?

COP
Who?

MOGLIO
Sergeant Paterson.

COP
No parking on this street.

MOGLIO
I'm waiting for somebody.

COP
Wait somewhere else.

EXT. PARKING LOT-- POLICE PRECINCT-- DAY

PATERSON standing around shooting the breeze with a GROUP OF DETECTIVES by an unmarked police car. HE looks up to see MOGLIO approaching.

PATERSON steps away from the group, moving forward to cut MOGLIO off.

MOGLIO
What happened?

PATERSON
With what.

MOGLIO
Toni Mannix.

PATERSON
I don't know what you're talking about.

MOGLIO
What kind of bullshit is that?

PATERSON
You got some business here?

MOGLIO
I think I do.

PATERSON
I think you're wrong.

A moment between them. Then a VOICE calls from off.

VOICE
Paterson.

MOGLIO sees DET. JOHNSON approaching. Beside is an older man, big, square face, cold eyes, that alky nose. Smoking a cigar. The man who kicked the shit out of MOGLIO.

CIGAR MAN
(calling again)
Paterson.

PATERSON
Yeah, Captain.

CIGAR MAN
We're eating.

MOGLIO looks at PATERSON. Pause.

MOGLIO
Explain to it your sister.

PATERSON averts his eyes.

PATERSON
(to CIGAR MAN)
I'm coming.

HE turns away from MOGLIO and joins the other DETECTIVES.

CIGAR MAN
(to PATERSON)
Hey.

A worried look shoots across PATERSON's face.

CIGAR MAN (CONT'D)
You drive.

HE tosses PATERSON the keys. The DETECTIVES pile into the car.

CIGAR MAN is the last to get in. HE stares deadpan into on MOGLIO's eyes and disappears inside the car.

EXT. THE MANNIX ESTATE - LATE AFTERNOON

Set up for an outdoor party.

DOZENS OF PEOPLE, a FULL ORCHESTRA, big banner that reads:

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY EDDIE & TONI!!!

MOGLIO

making his way across the lawn, past the GUESTS, heading for the open front door. HE slips inside.

INT. FOYER-- MANNIX HOUSE-- DAY

It's empty. MOGLIO sees a MAID just disappearing upstairs, carrying a dress in a dry-cleaning wrapper.

HE follows after.

INT. HALLWAY-- MANNIX HOUSE-- DAY

The MAID knocks on a door. It opens and SHE steps inside, shutting it behind her.

MOGLIO

hanging back in the alcove, watching. The hallway is silent. HE glances out the alcove window.

HIS POV- OUT THE WINDOW

looking out onto the lawn. Among the GUESTS, HE spots DEL and CHUCK, the Harris detectives, scanning the crowd and conferring. THEY start toward the house.

IN THE HALLWAY

the MAID exits the room. The door shuts again. SHE goes past the unseen MOGLIO.

MOGLIO heads for the door, leans up close against.

MOGLIO
(a near whisper)
Mrs. Mannix?

Nothing.

MOGLIO (CONT'D)
Mrs. Mannix. Can I talk to you.

Silence again. Then the squeak of floorboard inside.

MOGLIO (CONT'D)
It's about George.
(pause)

TONI (O.S., through door)
George... shot himself.

MOGLIO
How do you know that, Mrs. Mannix.

TONI (O.S., through door)
He was shot.

MOGLIO
Someone shot him? Is that what you mean? Who did that?

From below, the voices of DEL and CHUCK quizzing the MAID.

MOGLIO (CONT'D)
Mrs. Mannix. Can you... can you help me understand.
(MORE)

MOGLIO (CONT'D)

(pause)

Would you please help me.

Pause. The door opens a crack. MOGLIO sees a slice of the darkened room, but not TONI.

SOUND of DEL and CHUCK coming up the stairs.

TONI (O.S., through door)

Did you know him?

MOGLIO

No.

TONI (O.S., through door)

He really was the most beautiful boy.

MOGLIO sees DEL and CHUCK heading toward him.

MOGLIO

Mrs. Mannix--

DEL walks up to him. The door shuts.

DEL

You're not invited, Lou.

MOGLIO

Were you?

CHUCK

We're working. Come on.

INT. POOL HOUSE-- MANNIX ESTATE-- DAY

The detectives escort MOGLIO inside. Billiard table in the middle of the room. MANNIX is there. Beside him A MAN, early 60's, well dressed, trim-- NICK HARRIS.

MOGLIO

Mr. Harris.

HARRIS

Hello Louis.

MOGLIO

You come up from Palos Verdes just to see me?

HARRIS

I came to celebrate my friends' anniversary. You know Mr. Mannix?

MOGLIO
No. But we have a lot of people in
common. Don't we, Eddie?

MANNIX
I got nothing in common with you.

MOGLIO
Bernice. Riva Watson.

MANNIX
Nick--

MOGLIO
George Reeves.

HARRIS
That's enough, Louis.

MOGLIO
Oh? Am I offending? Being
indiscreet? Bad character. Bad for
business, huh? I guess I don't fit.

HARRIS
Louis, your problems are your own.
And whatever you're pursuing here--

MOGLIO
(of MANNIX)
You cover up for this prick--

HARRIS
Whatever fantasy you've constructed--

MOGLIO
Had a bullet put in Reeves' head--

HARRIS
-- will not alter your past or redeem
your failures for a single--

MOGLIO charges at HARRIS. CHUCK steps in and drops him with
a gnt punch.

MOGLIO staggers, but rage keeps him going. CHUCK throws him
onto the billiard table and presses a cue stick against his
throat.

MOGLIO
(spitting it at MANNIX)
You're going to jail, you son of a
bitch.

CHUCK
Shut it.

MOGLIO
You're gonna answer. For everything.
You're a Catholic? Every sin. You'll
burn in hell.

MANNIX gets up, walks over to MOGLIO.

MOGLIO (CONT'D)
You don't like that, huh? Jesus
won't piss on you? You superstitious
asshole. You fucking gangster.

MANNIX gestures CHUCK away. With surprising delicacy he
lifts the stick off MOGLIO's throat. HE stares MOGLIO
straight in the eye.

MANNIX
(quietly)
You're the one?

MOGLIO
Huh?

MANNIX
No one else ever tried. No one ever
knocked on my door.
(pause)
You don't know me. You don't know
my business. I don't let you.

MOGLIO
You're an old man, Eddie. Who's
gonna wipe the blood off your hands?

MANNIX
My hands? I work in pictures.

MOGLIO
You're a murderer.

MANNIX gazes at him levelly. HE leans in close.

MANNIX
Prove it.
(Pause.)
You hear me? Go on. I'm ready.
Prove one... fucking... thing.

SOMEONE else enters the room. MOGLIO's eyes shift. It's
CIGAR MAN, the LAPD lieutenant. HE positions himself behind
MANNIX.

MANNIX leans back. Silence. He steps away, turns, walks
out of the pool house.

MOGLIO lies on the table, panting.

HARRIS

Louis. You've had your minute. The world moves on.

CIGAR MAN pounces on MOGLIO, lifting him off the table by the lapels.

EXT. RETIRO WAY-- DAY

The gates of the Mannix estate shut behind MOGLIO. He stands in the middle of the street, his chest still heaving.

HE looks around. No one to attack. No one to pay attention. No place to go next.

INT. MANNIX HOUSE-- DAY

MANNIX knocks on TONI's door.

TONI (O.S.)

Come in.

MANNIX opens the door.

INT. TONI'S BEDROOM-- DAY

An artificial twilight. The heavy drapes are drawn. MANNIX can barely make out TONI sitting by the make-up table.

MANNIX

People are waiting. You coming down?

TONI

Help with my dress.

MANNIX goes over to her. On the table, propped up against the mirror, a prayer card.

TONI stands, back to him. He zips up her dress.

MANNIX

Okay?

TONI nods.

MANNIX (CONT'D)

I'm gonna let some light in.

HE throws back the drapes. Sunlight floods in. TONI turns her head away.

MANNIX looks out the window. The GUESTS milling around outside.

MANNIX (CONT'D)

I want to tell you something.

TONI
Yes?

MANNIX
I love you. No matter what. And
you know I'll take care of you.
Forever.

TONI nods.

MANNIX (CONT'D)
You're safe with me. With your
husband.
(Pause.)
Let me see what you look like.

Pause. TONI steps forward, into the sunlight. An old woman,
older than her age, lined face, tired, red eyes, lank gray
hair.

SHE looks at him uncertainly, squinting in the light. HE
touches her cheek gently.

MANNIX (CONT'D)
You're beautiful. You always will
be.

SHE buries her face in his hand.

INT. AN OFFICE-- DAY

MOGLIO

sitting in a chair, talking to someone unseen.

MOGLIO
I see the pieces. How they should
fit...
(Pause.)
How I want them to fit. But I
can't... I can't make them...
(Pause.)
I looked in his face. He could do
it. I know he could do it. He
wouldn't think about twice.

ART WEISSMAN

sitting opposite MOGLIO, behind his desk. A small office in
an old building. Not much to show for the years as an agent.

WEISSMAN
Eddie Mannix.

MOGLIO
Yeah.

WEISSMAN

He came out here, when? 1925? Those men, they're like princes. Kings. Kings do what they want. Or someone does it for them. No. I would never say it wasn't possible.

(Pause.)

MOGLIO

What about Mrs. Mannix?

WEISSMAN

You couldn't not like her. Such brightness. Sexy, heck yes. And she loved George. Really loved him. And, you know what happened. Could she have done, what you're saying? I don't want to think that.

MOGLIO

Leonore?

WEISSMAN

We never got along. Leave it there.

MOGLIO

And Mr. Reeves?

WEISSMAN

George?

MOGLIO

George.

WEISSMAN

A charming man. Funny. Handsome. Not like the ones today. The squinting and the mumbling. A movie star face. Why wasn't he one? I don't know. What he wound up with... it should have been enough. For someone. But George...

(Pause.)

MOGLIO

What?

WEISSMAN

He kept it hidden. All the booze. But it was there. He needed the world to notice him. And in the end... the world doesn't care. Not for long.

(Pause.)

Does that solve anything for you, Mr. Moglio?

(Pause.)

MOGLIO

What do you think happened?

Pause. WEISSMAN reaches into his desk and pulls out a canister of 8mm film. HE slides it across to MOGLIO.

WEISSMAN

I never showed this. I knew it wouldn't help. You watch it. Tell me what you see.

HOME MOVIE FOOTAGE - REEVES GRINNING

in flickering black & white. Dressed in a karate robe, he claps his hands and starts rolling around the grass, doing somersaults, one after the other, showing off his agility. A 45-year-old man, heavier than he should be, the years of booze showing, but still trying, hoping to land the gig.

ADJUST TO - INT. MOGLIO'S APT. - DAY

A projector rolling the film against the wall, Moglio watching with morbid curiosity.

THE MOVIE

REEVES' head bowed-- he's just hurt himself on a tumble.

HE looks up, tamping down the ache, into camera, smiling.

INT. MOGLIO'S BEL AIR - DRIVING - DAY

Who knows how long Moglio's been driving. His eyes are glazed. Like he has to keep moving, but has nowhere to go.

EXT. REEVES' HOME - NIGHT

Moglio drives up in the Bel Air and stops across the street. Stares out the window at Reeves' house.

HE gets out of the car and heads for the house.

EXT. PATIO-- REEVES'S HOME-- NIGHT

MOGLIO stands outside the living room window, looking in the dark, empty room.

The strumming of a guitar, and go --

INT. REEVES' HOME - NIGHT - JUNE 16, 1959

On the last night of Reeves' life. Right now, though, at this moment, Reeves seems a contented man, singing a sweet Spanish ballad, his fingers moving easily over the strings. PAN THE FACES of Leonore, Carol, Bill Bligg and Bob Condor, all with smiles, watching him, enjoying him.

ANGLE - REEVES

Eyes closed, lost in the moment. No thoughts of Superman, unfulfilled careers, or phone calls in the night.

ON CAROL

something outside catches her eye. She looks out the window to the patio.

Nothing there. The wind in the trees.

ON MOGLIO

inside the living room now.

HIS POV

He's alone in the empty, dark room.

MOGLIO turns.

REEVES

back in the party. HE finishes his song to the applause of his audience. He flashes that Hollywood handsome smile, one last time, then bows and says his goodnights.

Starts up the steps.

MOGLIO

in the empty room. Looking at the vacant staircase. HE turns back.

LEONORE

back in the party, face flushed with booze. Watching REEVES head up the stairs. SHE leans into CAROL, deadpan, whispers something in her ear-- above the room noise we just make out "going to kill himself."

CAROL looks at her, baffled. Then SHE laughs-- LEONORE must have been joking.

INT. BEDROOM-- REEVE'S HOME-- NIGHT

REEVES enters. HE stands there calmly.

MOGLIO

alone in the empty room, his mind's eye working.

REEVES

taking a step forward. He starts to undress, without haste, face composed.

ANGLE - REEVES

Eyes closed, lost in the moment. No thoughts of Superman, unfulfilled careers, or phone calls in the night.

ON CAROL

something outside catches her eye. She looks out the window to the patio.

Nothing there. The wind in the trees.

ON MOGLIO

inside the living room now.

HIS POV

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INT. BEDROOM-- REEVE'S HOME-- NIGHT

REEVES enters. HE stands there calmly.

MOGLIO

alone in the empty room, his mind's eye working.

REEVES

taking a step forward. He starts to undress, without haste, face composed.

Taking care with his clothes, folding them neatly. Shoes at the foot of the bed.

He stands there, naked. Staring off.

MOGLIO

in the empty room, looking where REEVES must have stood.

MOGLIO watches the imagined scene.

REEVES sits carefully on the foot of the bed. Sound of music and voices from the party below. HE listens. HE nods, as if someone had just said something to him.

EXT. REEVES' HOME-- NIGHT

The bedroom window. Then a gunshot. Flash of powder lights up the shade from inside for an instant. Then darkness.

MOGLIO

Standing in front of the house now, looking up at the window. The street is utterly silent.

HE looks down. A tattered prayer card at his feet.

HE picks it up. Goes to the front door. Slides it under the handle of the knocker.

He heads back to his car.

INT. MOGLIO'S APT.-- DAY

The projector running, MOGLIO watching.

HIS POV-- THE WALL

Not REEVES doing his karate moves now, but bright color footage. LAURIE, younger here, jeans and head kerchief, in a backyard with five-year old EVAN, very pleased to be in his new Superman suit, running around, jumping.

In the darkened apartment, MOGLIO watches.

THE MOVIE

a flash of white, a new scene. Same backyard, only it's MOGLIO now, with LAURIE filming. MOGLIO, in shirtsleeves, cigarette in his mouth, standing awkwardly with EVAN, still in his costume.

HE picks EVAN up, just for something to do in front of the camera, tosses him up a little into the air, catches him. Says something to him.

EVAN stretches his arms out, like Superman. MOGLIO tosses him up again, higher this time. EVAN laughs. Another toss. EVAN's loving it. And higher again. MOGLIO smiles-- the kid's joy is infectious.

And higher still. EVAN's arms outstretched. LAURIE pans up to follow him. Right then, for an instant, he's flying.

The film runs out.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HOUSE-- VAN NUYS- DUSK

A car pulls up in f.g., only the fender visible. The engine cuts off.

PAN UP

MOGLIO sitting behind the wheel. Freshly shaved and combed. A clean dark gray suit. A sober tie. Anybody's working dad. He gazes out.

THE HOUSE

After a moment the front door opens.

MOGLIO throws a quick glance at himself in the rear-view mirror. HE adjusts his tie, even though it's fine.

HE gets out of the car, stands beside it.

LAURIE stands in the open doorway. A look between them.

Then SHE goes back inside, closing the screen door behind her. Silence.

After a few moments a small figure appears behind the screen nearly in silhouette. It has to be EVAN.

MOGLIO gestures to the suit he wears, a small ironic smile on his lips-- he knows he's not fooling anyone, but he's giving it a try.

EVAN look at him seriously. He steps out, sits on the landing. Still appraising MOGLIO. Then the same half smile from him.

MOGLIO nods, takes a breath. He starts toward the house.

FADE TO BLACK

THE END

