

IT'S A MAD, MAD, MAD, MAD WORLD

Second Draft Screenplay

by

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Title and Credits Sequence

Let's get down to earth. We're way out there, way, way out, and the whole world spins. Start down. Then the Main Title, with asteroids or meteorites possibly knocking a few holes in it (so they'll know right away how imaginative we are), and the Credits are given where due. They continue, and we move in, ever more quickly, determined to find out just what it is that really makes the thing go 'round. Then pretty soon we break through some atmosphere effects or something; and then, moving right in there, we pick up and hold on an enormous, miles-high view of a vast expanse of southeastern California.

Some rough, semi-mountainous country, a stretch or two of desert, the place looking all right in the early-morning sunshine. Closer. Far below, a tiny black dot on a twisted white ribbon. Closer still. A big black sedan, travelling fast.

Stay with it. Because of the range we can't see who's inside it. But we begin to hear it, to hear its roaring motor and its screaming tires on these incessant curves. It takes them far too fast.

Subjectively then, from the black sedan's point of view, the sounds of motor and tires and rushing wind coming up louder all the time as suddenly, startlingly, a big furniture van looms large and directly ahead. A long, loud blast on the horn and we swing out beside it and pass it, the noises it makes rising to join those which already blend or contend with the Music.

But then there are three more cars ahead, going at thirty-five, some fifty yards apart, along this difficult stretch of road. Horn blaring almost constantly now, we swing out to the left and go rushing past them one after the other. First a curious-looking, thirty-year-old vintage touring car of some European manufacture. Then a '57 Chevrolet wagon, whose driver adds his own horn to the general racket in angry protest. And then, finally a Cadillac convertible.....

But this last one is difficult. It takes a curving shoulder of the mountain in the middle of the road as we try to pass. (We have had all the credits but the last one.)

And now, as the sounds come up to a really frightening pitch and volume, we swing out again, dangerously, closer and closer to the edge of this road with its suggestion of nothing below; we gun the engine, almost make it, brake screamingly as the angle of the curve intensifies, swerve, skid, lose all control, crash with a tearing, splintering

impact through the low wooden railing that borders the curve, go off, (rear wheels suddenly shrieking worse than ever as they come free of the road on a slightly rising gradient), and we lift up, five feet, ten, fifteen, suddenly losing almost all momentum; and then, for a terrible, interminable two or three seconds, we remain poised, sickeningly, in space.

Then from below, far down below on the rocky, boulder-strewn hillside. Way, way up there, the big black sedan seems for an instant to be suspended. But it's not. Very slowly it noses over and starts coming down.

When its trajectory is defined and we know that our position is precisely in its path, the final credit is superimposed. Behind it, coming faster and faster, the black sedan grows larger and larger in the frame.

Finally, of course, it more than fills it. We cannot even begin to describe the actual impact. And we must make it clear that we think it will be the monstrously inexorable quality of the horrendous, downplunging juggernaut that will have the audience cringing under their seats before the picture even begins -- and not the intimation that this is a Stanley Kramer comedy.

Well, so much for that. The next four hours are as follows:

1 EXT. THE ROAD

1

A big, wide-angled view. The first two vehicles, the Cadillac convertible and the Chevrolet wagon, have already stopped. The curious-looking European car is pulling up in line behind them; and the big furniture van is braking to a halt behind it. At once all the men in all four of the vehicles dismount and come running forward to a point in f.g. at which they can look off and down at the wreck below.

J. RUSSELL FINCH gets out of the Cadillac, runs forward, stares down, gasps with horror. He is a big, nervous, highly excitable, worried-looking, well-dressed man in his forties. There are two women in the b.g. in the Cadillac. MELVILLE CRUMP, a well-set-up, neatly groomed, respectably intelligent-looking fellow in his late thirties, has come forward from the Chevrolet, leaving a woman in his car who is not clearly seen at this range. Almost all the lines in this scene are overlapped, jumbled, not always intelligible.

J. RUSSELL FINCH

Did you see it? The way he just went sailing out there? The

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

J. RUSSELL FINCH (CONT'D)
terrible way he just went sailing
out? He went -- he just went
sailing right out there --

MELVILLE CRUMP
(shaken, staring off
and down)
Terrible! He must've been doing
eighty when he -- I tell you, it
was terrible!

DING BELL and BENJY BENJAMIN are running up to join the first
two. They are both rather unprepossessing-looking, sloppily-
casually-dressed men in their thirties who look like not
awfully successful professional gag-writers, which is what
they are. And behind them, LENNIE PIKE, a big, strong,
oafish-looking fellow in coveralls who might be forty, comes
running from the furniture van.

J. RUSSELL FINCH
An ambulance -- we'd better --
somebody ought to -- shouldn't
we get an amb --

BENJY BENJAMIN
(looking down,
reacting)
Holy -- jumping --

DING BELL
Zowie! Look at that car!

MELVILLE CRUMP
We -- we'd better -- we'll have
to see if -- should we --

LENNIE PIKE
(coming up, reacting)
Let's get down there!

Without pause Lennie Pike goes off the road and scrambles
down the hillside, going o.s. Ding Bell and Benjy Benjamin,
muttering and murmuring unintelligibly, follow him at once.
Melville Crump, following after them, speaks to nobody in
particular.

MELVILLE CRUMP
Anybody got a first-aid kit?
Why don't people carry the
things?

J. Russell Finch has turned and calls above the preceding
line to the women in the Cadillac.

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED: (2)

1

J. RUSSELL FINCH
We're going to -- you just stay
in the car -- we're going to
see --

EMMELINE FINCH
(calling back, very
nervously)
Russell, be careful! Remember
your condition! It might
explode!

J. RUSSELL FINCH
You stay in the car, all right?
(to himself, as
he goes)
The way he just sailed out
there....

Carefully J. Russell Finch starts scrambling down the hillside after the other four. As he goes o.s. one of the two women in the Cadillac stands up in the back, and a third woman steps out of the Chevrolet wagon.

2 EXT. THE THREE WOMEN

2

MONICA CRUMP, an incredibly gorgeous, preposterously feminine, spectacularly hypermammiferous, beautifully blonded, superbly well-preserved creature of twenty-five or thereabouts, moves forward rather nervously to speak to the two women in the Cadillac. EMMELINE FINCH, a pretty but rather worried-looking woman in her thirties, is sitting in the front of it with her hand over her eyes, breathing with surprising audibility. MRS. MARCUS, her mother, is standing up in the back of it. Mrs. Marcus has been talking loudly and continuously in the b.g. ever since the beginning of the previous scene (Background Script Note 1). Now she continues without pause. She is a determined-looking woman of fifty-five or thereabouts, over-groomed, and her taste in personal adornment runs to excessive quantities of necklaces, bracelets and assorted baubles. She is given to gesticulation at all times, so that, despite the harshly grating quality of her voice, she tinkles and jingles most pleasantly now and throughout the day.

MRS. MARCUS
....and that's why you have
accidents, because nobody cares.
You think anybody cares? Ha!
I'd just like to be in charge

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MRS. MARCUS (CONT'D)
of accident prevention for about
ten seconds, that's all, and
then --

(seeing Monica
Crump)
Good morning.

MONICA CRUMP
Wasn't it awful? Just awful?

EMMELINE FINCH
Oh, I'm going to be sick!

MRS. MARCUS
You're not going to be sick!
(to Monica Crump)
Can you see what's happening
down there?

EMMELINE FINCH
Oh! Don't even look! I don't
even want to know!

MONICA CRUMP
Do you think -- do you suppose
the man was killed?

MRS. MARCUS
He was trying hard enough. Go
over and look, will you?

EMMELINE FINCH
Don't look!

MONICA CRUMP
Well, I don't really want to....

EMMELINE FINCH
I just know I'm going to be
sick....

MRS. MARCUS
(bellowing
explosively)
Emmeline!

The five men come scrambling down the rocky, scrub-covered hill, Lennie Pike first, then Ding Bell and Benjy Benjamin, then Melville Crump and J. Russell Finch with greater care

(CONTINUED)

behind. As the camera pans them down the last ten yards the black sedan is brought into shot. It stands terribly smashed on its nose, jammed into some huge boulders. The camera follows the first of the five down past the wreck to a little heap of rubbish dumped here many years before. Amidst the rubbish, flat on his back, wide awake and with a wholly unexpected expression of complete exasperation, lies SMILER GROGAN. A rather elderly criminal type, he lies surrounded by tin cans, a couple of broken crates, bottles, faded newspapers, an old battered misshapen bucket. He looks up, curiously but without much interest, as the five men reach and gather around him in a nervous, solicitous, hard-breathing little group.

LENNIE PIKE

Hey, he's alive! He's alive!

BENJY BENJAMIN

Is he hurt bad?

DING BELL

We got to get an ambulance.

J. RUSSELL FINCH

You mean to tell me he survived that....

(looking down at
Smiler Grogan
incredulously)

The way you just went -- sailing
out there --

MELVILLE CRUMP

Look, I'm not a doctor but I've
had medical training -- I'm a
dentist: are you -- do you
think you're badly hurt?

Smiler Grogan, who has appeared to be completely preoccupied with his own thoughts up to this point, now looks up at Melville Crump for a long speculative moment, and then glances at the others. Weakly:

SMILER GROGAN

Is he -- kidding?

J. RUSSELL FINCH

We've got to do something.
What're we going to do? Can
we carry him up the hill?

(CONTINUED)

SMILER GROGAN

I'm not going up the hill. I'm
going --

(breaking off,
overcome by
coughing)

-- over the hill....

LENNIE PIKE

Now, wait a minute, Mac, if we
can get an ambulance --

SMILER GROGAN

Forget it. But thanks for --
(coughing)

-- thanks for stopping.

LENNIE PIKE

Listen, mister, we'll get you
to a hospital --

SMILER GROGAN

(actually smiling
slightly)

You move me, I'll break up in
little pieces.

(reflectively,
more to himself
than to them)

But what a deal -- what a --

(more coughing)

-- stupid lousy deal....

DING BELL

Look, pal, if you'll just tell
us --

SMILER GROGAN

(ignoring him)

And nobody knows about the
dough. Nobody even knows --
about the dough --

LENNIE PIKE

Take it easy, mister --

SMILER GROGAN

They don't know it's there -- I
never told anybody -- so there
ain't a single soul who even --

(coughing, evincing
sudden alarm)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SMILER GROGAN (CONT'D)

-- who even knows -- so nobody'll
find it -- three-hundred and
fifty Gs and it's just going --
just going to rot. It'll just
lay there and rot....

Bewildered by the dying man's statements, startled by the increasing violence of his agitation, the five men exchange multilateral glances, shaking their heads and making sympathetic, unintelligible, unscriptable little sounds. Then, suddenly appearing quite desperate:

SMILER GROGAN

Listen! I'll tell you something --
and I ain't got long -- so listen.
You would've helped me if you
could. There's this dough, see,
there's all this -- dough --
three-hundred and fifty Gs --
you hear what I'm saying? Three-
hundred and fifty --

He coughs, suddenly stiffens, gasps, grunts, and reveals his fear that the sands will run out for him before he's finished speaking. Staring down at him, helplessly, the five strangers appear more horrified by his condition than interested in what he is saying. His emotional desperation has engaged all their sympathy; but the practical nature of his statements has not yet engaged all their attention.

SMILER GROGAN

Listen, you're a good bunch of
boys. You can have it. In the
park, in Rosita --

(coughing)

-- Rosita Beach State Park --
just south of Dago near Santa
Rosita. It's in this box and
it's buried under this --

(coughing)

-- you'll see it -- under this
big -- this big W.....you can't
miss it -- a big W.....and it's
been there 15 years.....

Again the five listening men exchange bewildered glances. Now they are beginning to take a certain interest in what Smiler Grogan says, but at the same time they are still more concerned to do whatever they can for him. After a little pause they all suddenly stir and start speaking at once.

(CONTINUED)

THE FIVE OF THEM

This is no good. - We've got to
get some help. - Somebody go
telephone. - Isn't there anything
we can do? - Somebody, etc., etc. --

SMILER GROGAN

(calling out,
desperately)

No, listen, I tell you! I'm
giving it to you -- all of it --
and don't let them kid you, don't
let them give you the business,
see, because it was mine -- and
I paid for it, paid for every
lousy buck of it, you hear? But
watch out! Watch out for the
bulls! Lousy stinking bulls are
everywhere!

J. RUSSELL FINCH

(nervously)

Bulls?

SMILER GROGAN

(hysterically now)

Everywhere! Bulls all over the
place! You can't get away from
them long enough to -- listen,
you've got to promise me you
won't just leave it there -- to
rot.....

(coughing)

You just drive down there, and
you dig it up, dig it all up....

(beginning to get
through to them)

....and then you -- get yourselves
all fixed up, walk down the street,
like a king, back to the old
neighborhood....see all the
fellows....the dames, and all with
the big hello --

(coughing)

-- a big hello for old Smiler....
good old Smiler, everybody's
friend....

His voice trails away, he sinks back slowly, his eyes close.
The five exchange grim glances and shake their heads. For a
second or two it seems that Smiler Grogan has breathed his

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED: (5)

3

last. Then all five jump, startled, as the poor wretch opens his eyes and screams wildly.

SMILER GROGAN

Aunt Belle! I didn't mean to
do it!

LENNIE PIKE

Holy -- take it easy, mister!

But, quite out of his mind now, Smiler Grogan has seized Melville Crump's elbow in both hands and appears to be trying to claw his way up the dentist's arm. Melville Crump is not really at ease during this business.

SMILER GROGAN

Please! Say it don't make any difference, Aunt Belle! Please say -- Aunt Belle, please, you got to say -- you got to tell me it don't make any difference!

DING BELL

Well, tell him, for heaven's sake!

MELVILLE CRUMP

(swallowing hard)

It -- uh -- it don't make any difference....

Then, in his very last moment in this world, seizing upon the horrified dentist and gazing up into his eyes, Smiler Grogan, infinitely relieved, smiles. One nightmare instant while he appears to want to embrace Melville Crump, and then, with one tremendous great shuddering convulsion, he falls back dead. As he does one of his legs suddenly shoots out and gives a hefty boot to the battered bucket which, dislodged from the heap, begins clattering farther down the hillside.

4 EXT. THE BUCKET

4

It goes, rolling and falling, farther and farther down the mountain, the tinny clatter it sets up echoing around the hillside for a surprisingly long time.

5 EXT. THE FIVE MEN

5

J. Russell Finch, Melville Crump, Ding Bell, Benjy Benjamin and Lennie Pike have all turned and are staring, fascinated

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED:

5

down at the clattering bucket. Suddenly, with a shuddering gasp, Melville Crump frees himself from the clutches of the thing that was Smiler Grogan. They all look down at it, shaken and even stunned by this experience -- and yet, with some part of their minds, already and obviously beginning to mull things over.

LENNIE PIKE

I guess he's dead.

BENJY BENJAMIN

(with feeling)

Well, if he jumps up like that again I'm leaving.

DING BELL

What a routine!

J. RUSSELL FINCH

We ought to cover him up.

All five look at each other. Ding Bell resents J. Russell Finch's look.

DING BELL

Well, don't look at me: this is the only coat I've got with me.

LENNIE PIKE

I've got a blanket up in the truck. You think there coulda been anything in all that -- what he was telling us?

DING BELL

What? Aw, he was raving, man. He'd flipped.

Suddenly, from high on the road above them, there comes the SOUND of a wailing siren on a fast-approaching police car. Then a squeal of brakes and the siren whines to an abrupt silence. All five have turned a little nervously to stare up at the road as the FIRST PLAINCLOTHESMAN suddenly appears, takes a quick look, and at once starts scrambling down towards them in a very big hurry. As all five watch his descent:

MELVILLE CRUMP

I think -- this must be the police. Should we say anything about the....

(CONTINUED)

J. RUSSELL FINCH

You mean, about what he was saying?
They'll start asking questions:
we'll be here all day --

DING BELL

Well, listen, we can't afford to
get stuck here, we got an important
date with a guy in Vegas this
afternoon --

LENNIE PIKE

Yeah, and I got this load of
furniture and stuff to get to
Yuma --

MELVILLE CRUMP

My wife and I were -- it's only
the second day of our vacation,
and we wanted to get to --

J. RUSSELL FINCH

Well, I've got my wife and her
mother with me, and we're going
all the way to Lake Mead --

BENJY BENJAMIN

So what's all the argument? So
we make like clams, so we don't
get involved in a lot of questions,
so we'll all be on our way, right?

MELVILLE CRUMP

(as the First
Plainclothesman
approaches)

Are you a police officer?

The First Plainclothesman scrambles down the last twenty
yards. He glances at the wreck, goes quickly to the corpse,
bends over it for a moment, straightens up, cups his mouth
in his hands and shouts: "Yes!" (We might see, far in the
b.g. above, his partner turn away at once.) The First Plain-
clothesman looks down at the corpse again, shakes his head
disgustedly, and then turns to the five men.

FIRST PLAINCLOTHESMAN

How long ago'd this happen?

DING BELL

A few minutes -- five minutes?
Just a few minutes ago.

(CONTINUED)

FIRST PLAINCLOTHESMAN

Any of you see it? Actually see it happen?

MELVILLE CRUMP

No, he was around the curve -- he passed all of us, you see --

FIRST PLAINCLOTHESMAN

Did anybody actually see it?

J. RUSSELL FINCH

Well, he was just passing us when he -- he just went sailing right out there -- up there --

FIRST PLAINCLOTHESMAN

Who was first down to him?

THE FIVE OF THEM

Well, we all came down. - We all were. - We came down together.

FIRST PLAINCLOTHESMAN

Was he dead? Was he already dead?

Pause. No-one's quick to speak. Ding Bell scratches his neck.

FIRST PLAINCLOTHESMAN

I said, was he already dead when you got down here?

BENJY BENJAMIN

Practically.

FIRST PLAINCLOTHESMAN

(very interested)

Still alive? He say anything?

DING BELL

Eh?

FIRST PLAINCLOTHESMAN

Did he say anything, before he died?

LENNIE PIKE

What about?

FIRST PLAINCLOTHESMAN

Whaddya mean, what about? Did he say anything or didn't he say anything?

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED: (4)

5

DING BELL

Well, he was kinda raving, you know?

FIRST PLAINCLOTHESMAN

Raving? What about, raving?

MELVILLE CRUMP

It was -- it was sort of --

J. RUSSELL FINCH

Embarrassing.

FIRST PLAINCLOTHESMAN

What was? Come on, come on!

BENJY BENJAMIN

He thought this fellow was his aunt --

FIRST PLAINCLOTHESMAN

His aunt?

DING BELL

Yeah. His Aunt Belle.

LENNIE PIKE

That's right. He musta had an aunt named Aunt Belle.

FIRST PLAINCLOTHESMAN

Listen, did he make any kind of statement? Did he leave any last messages, anything like that?

The five men now look at each other with thoughtful, worried, rather bewildered expressions, doing their best to remember. They all make some faces and the First Plainclothesman stirs impatiently. Then:

LENNIE PIKE

(indicating Smiler,
then Melville Crump)

Well, he wanted -- he wanted this fellow to tell him it didn't make any difference.

FIRST PLAINCLOTHESMAN

(to Melville Crump)

What? Why you?

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED: (5)

5

DING BELL

Because he thought he was his
aunt.

BENJY BENJAMIN

His Aunt Belle.

FIRST PLAINCLOTHESMAN

But what was it he wanted you to
say didn't make any difference?

J. RUSSELL FINCH

He didn't make that clear, officer.

DING BELL

Aw, he didn't make anything clear.
Listen officer, can we get going --

FIRST PLAINCLOTHESMAN

Wait a minute. I'll have to take
your names and where you can be
reached, just in case --

MELVILLE CRUMP

But my wife and I are on a vacation,
officer, and we haven't planned --
we don't know where we'll be --

DING BELL

And we don't know where we'll
be staying in Vegas, or how
long --

LENNIE PIKE

And I got this furniture for
Yuma before I go back to Modesto --

BENJY BENJAMIN

Look, officer, be reasonable.
We stopped to see if we could
do anything and we were too late.
So how about let's break this up
now and clear out of here, okay?

DING BELL

(indicating Smiler
Grogan)

Yeah, we'll hold a service for
him some other time, but we still
got our own lives to live, you
know what I mean? Like we ain't
even had breakfast yet.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED: (6)

5

FIRST PLAINCLOTHESMAN

All right, take it easy.
(to J. Russell Finch)
We'd better have your name,
anyway, in case later on the
coroner or somebody wants a
statement.

J. RUSSELL FINCH

J. Russell Finch. 2790 Penrose
Boulevard, Fresno. But we won't
be at home for the next two weeks --
they'd have to contact me through
my office --

FIRST PLAINCLOTHESMAN

Yeah, where's that?

J. RUSSELL FINCH

The Pacific Edible Seaweed
Company, in Fresno. I'll be
calling them every day and my
secretary'll know where we....

But while J. Russell Finch is speaking the Second Plain-
clothesman, having scrambled down, approaches the group, and
his line overrides the preceding one.

SECOND PLAINCLOTHESMAN

Ambulance is on its way. He
dead?

(as the other
policeman nods)

Listen, we'd better shift those
cars up there, they're on that
curve --

FIRST PLAINCLOTHESMAN

Yeah. Well, I guess that's all
we can -- all right, gentlemen,
thanks very much.

The five men turn to go, and then all five turn around again
for a curious last look at Smiler Grogan. A pause. Then
they go on, moving o.s. as the two officers turn and stand
looking down at the corpse. They both seem distracted and
a little dispirited as they light up cigarettes.

SECOND PLAINCLOTHESMAN

Well....there's an unexpected
twist for you.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED: (7)

5

FIRST PLAINCLOTHESMAN

They're not going to like it in
Santa Rosita. Culpeper'll scream.

SECOND PLAINCLOTHESMAN

We'd better get our story straight
if we don't want Culpeper to --

FIRST PLAINCLOTHESMAN

What story?

(indicating the
dead man)

He gets up as usual, he starts
driving, he goes in a place for
breakfast, he goes to the Gents,
and he climbs out a back window.
So what? Not even Culpeper's
gonna say we shoulda been in
there with him.

SECOND PLAINCLOTHESMAN

Anyway, we were only two or three
minutes behind him.

FIRST PLAINCLOTHESMAN

Listen, you'd better get back up
to the car, case there are any
calls. I'll stay here and see
the coyotes don't drag him away....

The Second Plainclothesman turns and starts the climb up to
the road. A hundred and fifty yards beyond and above him in
the b.g., the five men can be seen near the top. Now as the
CAMERA PANS we see the roof of the wrecked car for the first
time. There is a gaping aperture in it that is a reasonable
facsimile of Smiler Grogan in silhouette.

6 EXT. THE FIVE MEN BESIDE THE ROAD

6

Lennie Pike, Ding Bell, Benjy Benjamin, Melville Crump and
J. Russell Finch, in that order, approach the top. They are
all out of breath and J. Russell Finch, obviously in bad
shape, is holding his side. Now they all pause and stand
breathing hard and get into a fast-moving little game of up-
from-under glances -- glances that are quick, speculating,
calculating, nervously furtive. Each looks at all the others,
trying to size them up, clearly wondering if the others are
taking this affair as seriously as he is -- but then at once
assumes a blandly casual expression whenever his glance is
met by another. A corny quintet, and obviously five hope-
lessly bad poker-players.

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED:

6

BENJY BENJAMIN

Man, oh man: my back!

DING BELL

Let's face it, we're just not
ready for Everest.

MELVILLE CRUMP

It's a shame -- there wasn't
anything we could do....

LENNIE PIKE

Yeah, you can't help feeling
sorry for the poor guy....

J. RUSSELL FINCH

The thing that got me was the way
he just went sailing out there....

Pause. They all look back down the hill. Then they all
stir, and shrug, and shake their heads, and speak at the
same time.

THE FIVE OF THEM

Well....

Throughout this little scene Mrs. Marcus' bitter voice may
have been heard from the b.g. (Background Script Note 3.)
Now all five men turn away and move back towards their four
vehicles. None of them hurries.

7 EXT. THE FIVE MEN AND THE THREE WOMEN

7

Mrs. Marcus is still standing up in the Cadillac as the five
men approach, and Monica Crump steps forward to meet her hus-
band. Ding Bell and Benjy Benjamin go on together to their
car, and Lennie Pike goes on back to his van during the fol-
lowing.

MRS. MARCUS

Well?

J. RUSSELL FINCH

It was a terrible thing.

EMMELINE FINCH

Oh, Russell, I feel sick.

J. RUSSELL FINCH

Now, take it easy, honey. These
things happen, you know....

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED:

7

MELVILLE CRUMP

(to his wife, in
the b.g.)

There was^d nothing we could do
for him. Nothing at all.

MRS. MARCUS

(to her son-in-law
in f.g.)

What kind of attitude is that --
these things happen? They only
happen because the whole country's
full of people who when these
things happen just say, well,
these things happen -- that's
why they happen.

J. RUSSELL FINCH

Let's try not to get all upset....

Melville Crump has opened the door for his wife in the b.g.
Now all five men, throwing a few last surreptitious glances
at each other, get into their vehicles. Starters whirr,
motors sound. Then J. Russell Finch glances back at Melville
Crump in the car behind, smiles slightly, and lifts a hand
in a casual gesture of farewell to which the other man re-
sponds. (Mrs. Marcus will surely still be speaking: Back-
ground Script Note 4.) One after the other, still in the
same order (the Cadillac, the Chevrolet, the European car
and the van), the four vehicles get under way.

8 INT. CADILLAC - MOVING

8

Now as he gathers speed J. Russell Finch's expression reveals
all the excitement he has been hiding. His glance shifts
ceaselessly from the road ahead to his rear-view mirror, in
which he is watching (and we may catch a glimpse of) the
three vehicles behind him.

MRS. MARCUS

....and what do all those
half-witted morons up in
Sacramento do about it? They
sit there with their big feet
up on their big desks and milk
fifteen million people of as
much graft --

J. RUSSELL FINCH

Listen.... I want to tell you
something.... I don't want to

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

8

J. RUSSELL FINCH (CONT'D)
interrupt, but I want to tell you
something....

9 INT. THE CHEVROLET - MOVING

9

Melville Crump, who is watching both the Cadillac ahead of him and the two vehicles in his rear-view mirror, is so obviously excited that his wife looks at him curiously.

MONICA CRUMP
What is it, Melville? Why are
you looking so --

MELVILLE CRUMP
Wait a minute. I'm watching
something. Wait a minute!

10 INT. THE TOURING CAR - MOVING

10

Both men are very excited. Benjy Benjamin turns in his seat and looks back at the big van fifty yards behind them.

D
DING BELL
Don't look back, you nitwit,
just sit still! Play it
straight!

BENJY BENJAMIN
Listen, they're not kidding me,
they all went for it --

11 INT. THE FURNITURE VAN - MOVING

11

Lennie Pike is hunched tensely over the wheel, staring at the three vehicles in front of him with unwavering suspicion.

LENNIE PIKE
Yeah.... yeah, that's right, so
what you gonna do now, eh?

12 INT. THE CADILLAC - MOVING

12

J. Russell Finch hasn't yet managed to stop the flow.

MRS. MARCUS
.... and what's the Governor
do about it? Nothing! and --

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED:

12

J. RUSSELL FINCH
Listen! I've got to tell you
something. Listen, that fellow
back there, just before he died,
he was -- he was saying something...

13 INT. THE CHEVROLET - MOVING

13

Monica Crump looks at her husband curiously.

MONICA CRUMP

What about?

MELVILLE CRUMP

Now, there's probably nothing
in it, because he was -- sort
of out of his mind, you know
what I mean?

14 INT. THE TOURING CAR - MOVING

14

Benjy Benjamin is leaning forward tensely, staring ahead.

BENJY BENJAMIN

Look at that broad in the Chevy!
Look at the way she's reacting!

DING BELL

Yeah, but they may not all have
believed him -- why should they?
The old guy may have been goofy.
Get the map outta that pocket!

15 INT. THE CHEVROLET - MOVING

15

Melville Crump speaks quietly, conspiratorily, as though
afraid he might be overheard.

MELVILLE CRUMP

....and according to him it's
supposed to be buried in this
park, Rosita Beach State Park.

MONICA CRUMP

Three hundred and fifty
thousand dollars?

16 INT. THE CADILLAC - MOVING

16

J. Russell Finch watches his rear-view mirror. Emmeline has stopped looking sick and now looks merely apprehensive. Mrs. Marcus looks thoughtful.

J. RUSSELL FINCH

Aw, there may be nothing to it at all. On the other hand --

MRS. MARCUS

There may be three-hundred-and-fifty thousand dollars in it!

J. RUSSELL FINCH

Those two weird-looking characters in that crazy car, they believed him -- I'm positive they did.

EMMELINE FINCH

But Russell, why didn't you tell the policemen? You know you --

MRS. MARCUS

Wait a minute. If the other four of them didn't believe him, why didn't they tell the police? Tell me exactly what the man told you, word for word. Don't leave anything out.

17 INT. THE CHEVROLET - MOVING

17

Monica Crump is becoming quite excited now.

MONICA CRUMP

But do you think he really meant it?

MELVILLE CRUMP

I don't know. Some of the others believed him, I know that. Those two right behind us -- don't turn around! -- they believed him. They're looking at a map, right now....

MONICA CRUMP

But maybe the man was just playing some kind of trick on everybody, have you thought about that? Maybe he was a practical joker.

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED:

17

MELVILLE CRUMP

Monica, what kind of man would think of playing a joke on complete strangers when he'd just broken every bone in his body?

18 INT. THE TOURING CAR - MOVING

18

Benjy Benjamin studies the map.

BENJY BENJAMIN

There's one about twelve miles ahead, four miles down this road going south -- but we're not going to find a charter outfit operating out here --

DING BELL

We don't need a charter outfit, we just need an airplane!

BENJY BENJAMIN

But we promised Jerry we'd be in Vegas before six o'clock. Jerry's gonna be unhappy, Ding, you know that?

DING BELL

Yeah? And who's gonna be happy if one of these others goes down to Santa Rosita and finds three-hundred and fifty thousand dollars? You?

BENJY BENJAMIN

How they're going to find it? Even if it's there nobody knows where it is.

DING BELL

I know where it is -- it's under a big W, buried under a big W: a waterfall, an old windmill, something that starts with a big W, that's where it is!

19 INT. THE FURNITURE VAN - MOVING

19

Lennie Pike hunches over the wheel, his face a mask of derision.

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED:

19

LENNIE PIKE

That's right, figure it out,
everybody figure it out, yeah....

20 INT.. THE CADILLAC - MOVING

20

Repeatedly trying to get a word in anywhere, J. Russell Finch is caught in a little flurry of mother-and-daughter crossfire.

EMMELINE FINCH

....and the one thing Dr. Carroll said, he said that Russell must have no undue excitement of any kind for at least two weeks because of his condition. And that's why we came on this little vacation, so Russell could just relax. You should have told the police.

MRS. MARCUS

You keep saying that! What's it got to do with the police?

EMMELINE FINCH

But mother, I think the police were chasing the man, they drove up so --

MRS. MARCUS

Well, why shouldn't they have been chasing him? He was speeding!

EMMELINE FINCH

I'm only thinking of Russell's condition --

MRS. MARCUS

You mean his financial condition? Because that's his only condition. Emmeline, will you just ask yourself why your husband had a nervous breakdown? Because he's sunk almost forty-thousand dollars including fifteen-thousand of mine in a company for making seaweed for people to eat -- and not only does nobody even like it but it costs over four dollars a can --

(CONTINUED)

J. RUSSELL FINCH
But some people like it. I like
it. And we're working on getting
the cost down --

MRS. MARCUS
You were working on getting the
cost down when you went out into
the street and stood there
screaming --

EMMELINE FINCH
Mother!

MRS. MARCUS
Oh, Emmeline, shut up!

21 INT. THE CHEVROLET - MOVING

21

There are beads of sweat on Melville Crump's forehead as he
mutters, more or less intelligibly, half to himself.

MELVILLE CRUMP
We'd have to get over to 66,
then down 95.... But it must be
a couple of hundred miles by
road -- if we could just find a
plane that we could charter....
The big W.... The big W....

22 INT. THE TOURING CAR - MOVING

22

Ding Bell stares at his rear-view mirror, his expression
just a bit savage now.

DING BELL
Big stupid proletarian moron -
look at him back there, staying
right with us --
(speaking to his
rear-view mirror)
Nobody's leaving you behind,
eh, sport? And that edible-
seaweed character in the Caddy,
did you hear that? Edible
seaweed! Who's he kidding?
Just watch them, that's all --

BENJY BENJAMIN
Watch! Watch-tower! No. A
wall? Under some kind of wall?
Walnut tree!

23 INT. THE FURNITURE VAN - MOVING

23

Lennie Pike is holding a map up beside the steering wheel and snatching quick glances at it while maintaining his position. He can talk to himself if he thinks of a line.

24 INT. THE CADILLAC - MOVING

24

J. Russell Finch is protesting to his wife.

J. RUSSELL FINCH

But, honey, I wasn't the only one there, there were four other men there too! It was just as much up to them to say something as it was up to me, wasn't it?

MRS. MARCUS

So listen to him. For once in his life he's making sense.

25 INT. THE CHEVROLET - MOVING

25

Melville Crump labors, gives birth to an idea.

MELVILLE CRUMP

A weeping willow! No.... Some kind of sign, maybe, with a big W, starting with a big W....

MONICA CRUMP

Like in Welcome.

MELVILLE CRUMP

There could be something to it. He might have been a miser, an eccentric-type miser. After all, there're an awful lot of eccentric people in California, including eccentric-type misers -- in fact, if you stop and think about it, practically all misers you ever hear about are eccentric types, always burying their money somewhere -- and always where you'd never expect to find it -- and it's practically always a whole lot more than anybody would ever expect them to have, too....

26 THE TOURING CAR - MOVING

26

Ding Bell is sweating a little, too. Benjy Benjamin is less excited and seems uneasy.

BENJY BENJAMIN

Look, we don't know what we're getting into. If the money is there, how do we know it's not hot?

DING BELL

What're you worrying about? The old guy said it'd been there fifteen years! Even if it was hot, the statute of limitations or something musta cooled it off by now.

27 INT. THE FURNITURE VAN - MOVING

27

Lennie Pike steers with one hand, holds the map with the other. Muttering:

LENNIE PIKE

Aw, wait a minute, lemme just see -- aw, wait a minute....

28 INT. THE CADILLAC - MOVING

28

Mrs. Marcus, very much keyed up now, is leaning over the back of the seat, her aggressive countenance obtruding between those of the two in front.

MRS. MARCUS

Listen, why're we going 35? Step on it a little and see what happens.

EMMELINE FINCH

No!

J. RUSSELL FINCH

They'll all see what I'm doing.

MRS. MARCUS

Well, try it. So what have you got to lose?

EMMELINE FINCH

I'd just like to hear what Dr. Carroll would have to say if he -- now, Russell, be careful! Russell!

(CONTINUED)

28 CONTINUED:

28

J. Russell Finch, glancing repeatedly into his mirror, begins speeding up -- to 45, to 50, to 55

29/31 INTS. THE THREE BEHIND - MOVING

29/31

Fast and immediate reactions in the Chevrolet, the touring car and the furniture van.

32 EXT. A GENERAL (helicopter?) VIEW -- ALL FOUR VEHICLES 32

All four of them step it up to 60 or more, which is dangerously fast on these curves. But none falls behind. Even the big furniture van manages to stay with it.

33 INT. THE CADILLAC - MOVING

33

Mrs. Marcus looks back over her shoulder.

MRS. MARCUS
Faster! Go on, step on it!

34 INT. THE CHEVROLET - MOVING

34

Monica Crump excitedly seizes her husband's arm, which doesn't help.

MONICA CRUMP
Oh, Melville! This is getting --
it's so exciting!

35 INT. THE TOURING CAR - MOVING

35

Ding Bell guns the old car for all she's worth.

DING BELL
Yaaahh! So now who's kidding
who?

36 INT. THE FURNITURE VAN - MOVING

36

Lennie Pike shifts, double-declutching bears down, wrestles the big van around a curve, gives it the gun and laughs out loud.

LENNIE PIKE
Yeah, that's right, leave the
big guy behind, sure, that's
right, just try it, that's all....

37 INT. THE CADILLAC - MOVING

37

Mrs. Marcus tinkles violently in her frustration.

MRS. MARCUS

Can't you do any better than
that? What are you waiting for?

EMMELINE FINCH

Oh, Russell, be careful! Oh,
I'm going to be sick!

38 INT. THE TOURING CAR - MOVING

38

Benjy Benjamin is actually frightened.

BENJY BENJAMIN

Ding, take it easy -- watch it!
-- you gotta watch these curves --

DING BELL

We can't hold on to that Caddy, or
that Chev! We just got to get to
some airfield!

39 INT. THE CADILLAC - MOVING

39

J. Russell Finch shakes his head, lifts his foot, and starts
settling back in his seat a little.

MRS. MARCUS

Well, what are you doing?

J. RUSSELL FINCH

That's no good, no good at all --

EMMELINE FINCH

Oh, the inside of my stomach --

40 INT. THE CHEVROLET - MOVING

40

Melville Crump watches the Cadillac, glances at his mirror.

MONICA CRUMP

He's slowed down again. Can't
you pass him?

MELVILLE CRUMP

No, not here -- he'd just
speed up again.

41 INT. THE TOURING CAR - MOVING

41

Benjy Benjamin is studying the map again.

BENJY BENJAMIN

Listen, there's one way we could
play this: we could drop out.
There's another road --

DING BELL

I tell you we can't get anywhere
in this old bucket, we've got to
get ourselves an airplane!

BENJY BENJAMIN

But that costs dough, and we
haven't got enough --

DING BELL

Benjy, will you stop worrying?

42 INT. THE FURNITURE VAN - MOVING

42

Now Lennie Pike, studying his map, spots the same road.

LENNIE PIKE

Hey! Wait a minute! Hey, yeah,
yeah....

He throws the map into the seat beside him, stares ahead
with a shrewdly calculating expression, grins to himself,
puts his foot on the brake and very gradually begins slowing
down -- to 35, 30, 25.....

43/45 INTS. THE THREE AHEAD - MOVING

43/45

A fast little series of chain-reactions, as, one by one,
Ding Bell, Melville Crump and J. Russell Finch, watching
their rear-view mirrors, all begin slowing down.

46 EXT. GENERAL SHOT -- ALL FOUR VEHICLES

46

Still precisely forty yards apart, the four now proceed at
a steady seven miles per hour.

47 INT. THE FURNITURE VAN - MOVING

47

Angling past Lennie Pike as the three vehicles ahead of him
round a sharp curve on a shoulder of the mountain and are
lost to sight. He jams on the brakes, stops, and listens
keenly for a moment as the SOUND of the three motors
abruptly fades away.

48 EXT. ROAD - LENNIE PIKE

48

He gets down quietly, softly closes the door, and creeps fifteen yards along to a point at which, peering carefully around a jutting corner of the steep-falling hillside, he will be able to make sure that the other three have gone on. He is grinning with hope and excited anticipation until, as the angle of the shot widens, he finds himself face to face with Ding Bell, Benjy Benjamin, Melville Crump and J. Russell Finch.

49 EXT. ROAD - THE FIVE MEN

49

Lennie Pike jumps. The other four, without exception obviously contemptuous of his gambit, all assume transparently false expressions of solicitude; and again they all start speaking together.

THE OTHER FOUR

Having trouble? - Something wrong? - What's the matter, had a breakdown? - Anything we can do?

LENNIE PIKE

(trying to bluff)

Oh, no, it was just one of my tires. I thought --

(throwing in his hand)

Aw, so what? Okay, so I was trying to -- aw, nuts....

The other four are clearly embarrassed by Lennie Pike's embarrassment, and Melville Crump suddenly makes some gesture of impatience.

MELVILLE CRUMP

Oh, listen -- this thing -- you know what? We're making a mistake --

J. RUSSELL FINCH

I absolutely agree.

BENJY BENJAMIN

So?

MELVILLE CRUMP

It's silly. If we all go on like this --

J. RUSSELL FINCH

We'll never get anywhere.

(CONTINUED)

LENNIE PIKE

Hey, that's right, you know that?

MELVILLE CRUMP

So why don't we do something sensible -- why don't we just stop and discuss this whole matter calmly and reasonably --

J. RUSSELL FINCH

I'm with you.

MELVILLE CRUMP

-- and arrive at some sensible -- conclusions about things?

LENNIE PIKE

Hey, yeah, why don't we do that, what he said?

DING BELL

Nothing to lose. If we're all here nobody gets an advantage --

BENJY BENJAMIN

So let's talk.

Fifty yards away in the b.g. the other three vehicles can be seen parked in line astern just off the road on a short flat stretch of ground. (The three women may be seen, looking back at this parley, but they are too far away for us to hear Mrs. Marcus.) Momentarily embarrassed again, Lennie Pike turns back to his van.

LENNIE PIKE

I better bring her round off this curve.....

The other four men start back towards their cars as, in the b.g., Mrs. Marcus is seen getting out. As they go:

MELVILLE CRUMP

Talk it over, it's the only thing to do, like intelligent people.

In f.g. Lennie Pike, still looking embarrassed and disgruntled, gets back into the furniture van. He is muttering to himself.

LENNIE PIKE

Oh, stupid. I coulda got away with it if I -- oh, stupid.....

Mrs. Marcus studies all four men suspiciously as they approach. Monica Crump is getting out of the Chevrolet. Emmeline Finch looks very worried. In the b.g. the furniture van comes around the curve.

MRS. MARCUS

So? So what happens now?

J. RUSSELL FINCH

We're going to talk things over.

MELVILLE CRUMP

(to his wife)

Yes, I made the suggestion that we try to behave a little more intelligently and all the others agreed with me.

DING BELL

Hey, watch him!

Lennie Pike, instead of pulling into line behind the three vehicles, drives past them, causing the others for one second to think that he may be making a run for it; but then he swings off the road and parks, first in line, just in front of the Cadillac. The other four men glower, clearly attaching significance to this unfair advantage. Lennie Pike cuts his engine, gets out, and walks over to the group. There is a level clearing twenty or thirty yards from the cars. Indicating it:

MELVILLE CRUMP

We can talk over there -- otherwise we'll have to stand in the road.

They all move over to the clearing, where a few trees may afford their conference a degree of privacy. At this point there is a general atmosphere of embarrassment in the scene, and almost everyone is watching almost everyone else with a certain wariness, some suspicion, and, in the case of Mrs. Marcus, plain resentment.

MRS. MARCUS

Well? Who's doing the talking?

MELVILLE CRUMP

It was my suggestion, madam, that it would --

MRS. MARCUS

So it was your suggestion. So what?

(CONTINUED)

MELVILLE CRUMP

Well, now, it seems to me that if there really was anything in that - uh -- information -- and of course that's not possible for anybody to say -- and there's no way anybody can be sure -- I mean, for all we know he might have been some kind of screwball or something -- but, for the time being that's just speculation --

DING BELL

Hey, I thought you said you were a dentist? You sound more like a Congressman.

BENJY BENJAMIN

Yeah, so skip the filibuster, buster. We're wasting time.

MELVILLE CRUMP

All right, let's just examine the facts. This man said there was this money buried somewhere down in that park --

LENNIE PIKE

Under a big W. Hey, what's a big W?

DING BELL

We find out we'll shoot you a wire, okay?

MELVILLE CRUMP

Now, it's only a possibility that what the man told us was true. But if it is true, then it's a fact that it's almost two-hundred miles to that park. Why don't we just get back in the cars, quietly, and just drive all the way down there at a nice safe sensible speed, and everybody keep everybody else in sight, and then we can all look for the money, and then if it is there, and we find it, well, then we could share it. Share it all out on a simple basis, among everybody.

(CONTINUED)

J. RUSSELL FINCH

You've got a point. I think
he's got something there.

EMMELINE FINCH

And I think we should go
straight to the police.

DING BELL

Police? Why the police?

MRS. MARCUS

That's all right, she's with us.

BENJY BENJAMIN

Listen, if we go start a
conversation with the police
the first thing they'll say is
how come we didn't broach the
subject in the first place?

DING BELL

Yeah, what's all this talk about
the police? Here's this guy,
he's had this accident, he's
like on his death-bed --

BENJY BENJAMIN

And it's obvious he's forgotten
all about making a will --

LENNIE PIKE

Hey, you know what? I haven't
made any will either.

DING BELL

-- and so he says to us, here's
an inheritance for you, he says,
I want to leave you everything
I've managed to put by -- that's
what he said, isn't it? He even
made us promise not to say
anything about it, to anybody,
isn't that right?

(staring incredulously
at Emmeline Finch)

You want we should ignore a
solemn promise to a dying old
man on his death-bed?

MRS. MARCUS

Never mind! She's with us. What's
with this fair shares for everybody?

(CONTINUED)

Pause. This question engages everybody's attention at once. The atmosphere is suddenly thick with suspicion. A preposterous pattern of multilateral antagonisms now builds up very rapidly indeed.

MELVILLE CRUMP

We're here in four vehicles --:
why don't we just say one-quart --

DING BELL

A quarter? What're you talking
about? That means you three all
get a quarter and Benjy and I've
got to split a quarter --

BENJY BENJAMIN

Yeah, what're you trying to do?

J. RUSSELL FINCH

It seems fair enough to me --

DING BELL

It's perfectly fair to you --

BENJY BENJAMIN

It just cheats us, that's all --

DING BELL

Figure it out: three-hundred and
fifty thousand, divided by four,
that's eighty-seven thousand, five
hundred bucks! So you three get
eighty-seven thousand, five
hundred bucks and we're supposed
to --

BENJY BENJAMIN

Yeah, look: There were five of
us there, how about saying it's
a five-way split?

MELVILLE CRUMP

Well, there's no reason why we
shouldn't discuss it. That would
mean five shares of seventy-
thousand --

LENNIE PIKE

Seventy thousand bucks! Holy
mackerel! Hey, you realize
how many loads I'd have to haul
from Modesto to Yuma to --

(CONTINUED)

MRS. MARCUS

You're overlooking one little thing.....

LENNIE PIKE

What little thing?

MRS. MARCUS

We can all count, can't we?
There were eight of us there.

BENJY BENJAMIN

Wait a minute: what's that mean?
Eight into three-hundred and fifty, -- what're you giving us?
Ding and I -- we still --

DING BELL

Still only get one-quarter, when
there were five of us there!

(to Mrs. Marcus)

And what's with you, lady? You
weren't there -- you just happen
to be riding with him --

MRS. MARCUS

Then just ignore me, little man.
Just try it.

At the moment they are all still talking one at a time, but all their lips keep moving as they all get involved in some fast little flurries of mental arithmetic. (Lennie Pike is the only one who uses his fingers.)

LENNIE PIKE

Yeah, listen, that means -- with eight shares that means everybody else splits up half of my share --

MELVILLE CRUMP

Well, speaking for my wife and myself we'd be just as happy --

DING BELL

As happy with two-eighths as with one-quarter? Listen, you're being too big about this!

J. RUSSELL FINCH

There's nothing to be gained by losing our temper --

(CONTINUED)

DING BELL

Nothing for you to gain? Just
three-eighths of three-hundred
and --

LENNIE PIKE

Hey, let's just put it back the
way we had it before, either one-
quarter for each car including
the van or one-fifth for each
guy. Just because this old bag
sticks her big --

MRS. MARCUS

What! How dare you -- how dare
you speak to me --

DING BELL

Yeah, flattery won't get you
anywhere --

MRS. MARCUS

Are you going to stand there --
Russell! -- are you just going
to stand there and let that big
stupid-looking goon --

BENJY BENJAMIN

Aw, look, lady, he called you an
old bag so he's sorry he called
you an old bag, so --

LENNIE PIKE

I don't know I'm so sorry.

EMMELINE FINCH

Oh, this is unseemly, it really
is. It's unseemly.

MONICA CRUMP

I've got an idea, if anybody's
interested.... Why not start
all over and discuss it again,
only this time everybody be
calm and sensible the way
Melville said?

This contribution, the first that Monica Crump has made,
throws everybody off-stride for a moment. Then, suddenly
and almost explosively, everybody starts talking at once.
To dissect the babel:

(CONTINUED)

MELVILLE CRUMP

There's no reason why we shouldn't work this thing out. Surely we can conduct ourselves with a little more -- Please! A little more dignity!

DING BELL

There were five of us there and there ought to be five equal shares! Just because this old udder says she's gotta get a share -- hey, listen! Listen!

MRS. MARCUS

Either we've had the emancipation of women in this country or we -- listen, will you all shut up? I said, shut up!

MONICA CRUMP

If you'd all just listen to Melville.... Melville, tell them...

J. RUSSELL FINCH

As far as I'm concerned -- excuse me, I just want to make this point -- I just want -- excuse me. Excuse me....

BENJY BENJAMIN

Listen, we'll take one fifth for each man -- that's two fifths for us -- but not one quarter or two eighths because that's exactly the same as one quarter --

LENNIE PIKE

Hey, look, just lemme say one thing.... Look, I got just as much right to speak as anybody else -- aw, shut up, will you! You all gone nuts or something?

EMMELINE FINCH

Russell, surely you aren't going to.... Oh, mother, how can you let yourself be involved in a thing like this? Oh, I'm going to be sick! Sick!

So there they stand, eight ill-assorted people all yelling at once in a cacophonous ensemble on a scrub-covered hillside in the southeastern part of California at about half-

(CONTINUED)

50 CONTINUED: (7)

50

past nine on what would have been such a lovely morning if only they'd never met. And because it is no longer possible to understand what any of the eight is saying it seems an opportune moment for the camera to back away and leave them, which it does.

51 INT. SANTA ROSITA POLICE STATION - SWITCHBOARD OPERATOR

51

Very pretty girl, one of two, answers, connects the call.

SWITCHBOARD OPERATOR

You're through to Homicide --
Santa Rosita Central Police
Station -- Detectives Division?
-- connecting you now....

52 INT. DETECTIVES DIVISION - MAIN OFFICE

52

The phone rings in the big, orderly, well-equipped main office. Huge maps of the state on the walls -- (one of them slightly redrawn to suit our purpose -- two or three smaller rooms opening off: Culpeper's private office, an interrogation room, records. A pretty, competent-looking policewoman SECRETARY is sharpening pencils. A young (thirty-five), good-looking, plainclothes LIEUTENANT, crossing room with some papers, absently lifts receiver of phone on desk. Beyond him, the room's only other occupant, a pleasant-looking middle-aged SERGEANT, is at another desk writing a report.

LIEUTENANT (telephone)

Detectives Division, Mathews....

SHERIFF'S VOICE (over the line)

Sheriff Mason, Crockett County.
Just had a report on Smiler Grogan.
Captain Culpeper there?

LIEUTENANT (telephone)

No, the Chief's not in yet,
Sheriff, he's a little late
this morning --

CULPEPER comes into the office as the Lieutenant speaks. CAPTAIN C. G. CULPEPER, Chief of Santa Rosita Detectives Division, is a rugged, very capable and competent-looking career-cop who is pushing sixty hard. He has a face like a bunch of rocks.

(CONTINUED)

CULPEPER

So: I'll stay late after school.
Who is it?

LIEUTENANT

Sheriff, Crockett County --

CULPEPER

(with quick interest,
taking receiver)

Smiler's up there -- anything
happened?

(telephone)

Sheriff? Culpeper. Has he
made a break? What's happened?

SHERIFF'S VOICE (over the line)

No, 'fraid I got some bad news
for you: Grogan's cashed in his
chips.

CULPEPER (telephone)

What!

SHERIFF'S VOICE (over the line)

Crashed his car out on County
thirty-nine, twenty minutes ago.

Culpeper is dismayed. Carrying the receiver, he turns to a huge map of Southern California on the wall. (The map is covered with perspex and a long twisting, zigzagging trail, running from Los Angeles over to the southeastern part of the state, has been drawn on it in wax pencil.) Culpeper takes up a wax pencil as he stands before it. Behind him his two subordinates and the Secretary take an increasing interest in the scene. During all this:

CULPEPER (telephone)

Well, how did it happen? Are
Kluzetsky and Zacharias there
with you?

SHERIFF'S VOICE (over the line)

No, they're still out there. He
was making his break, all right.
Doing eighty, with your men right
behind him.

CULPEPER (telephone)

Where did it happen?

(CONTINUED)

SHERIFF'S VOICE (over the line)
On thirty-nine. About eighteen
miles east of Danby Junction and
nine miles west of Valley Center.

Culpeper reaches up and extends the line marking Smiler
Grogan's route by four or five inches to the east.

CULPEPER (telephone)
Sheriff, was he killed outright?

SHERIFF'S VOICE (over the line)
Yep, he was dead by the time
they got down to him.

CULPEPER (telephone)
What surprises me is that he was
running east. Did Kluzetsky and
Zacharias actually see the accident?

SHERIFF'S VOICE (over the line)
No, the way I understand it he'd
got a little lead on them --

CULPEPER (telephone)
Well, were there any witnesses?

SHERIFF'S VOICE (over the line)
Yep, there were a few people,
went down to see if they could --

CULPEPER (telephone)
Was Smiler already dead?

SHERIFF'S VOICE (over the line)
I don't know, but I can find out --

CULPEPER (telephone)
Do that, will you, Sheriff?
See what they say.

A not so big, rather roughly furnished, outlying-district-
type county sheriff's office. A big, jovial, county
sheriff-type COUNTY SHERIFF on the phone, a not very bright-
looking DEPUTY at another desk with a radio mike.

COUNTY SHERIFF (telephone)
Hold the line a minute.
(turning to the
Deputy)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

53 CONTINUED:

53

COUNTY SHERIFF (CONT'D)

Ask those two Santa Rosita men
if any of those people got to
Grogan while he was still alive.

DEPUTY (microphone)

Crockett to F three.

54 EXT. THE ROAD - PATROL-CAR

54

The second Plainclothesman, lounging half in, half out of
the F-car, flicks away his cigarette, grabs the mike.

SECOND PLAINCLOTHESMAN (microphone)

F three.....

VOICE (through speaker)

Got a request from Santa Rosita
for extra information. Did anybody
reach Grogan while he was still
alive? Over.

SECOND PLAINCLOTHESMAN (microphone)

Five men who went down to him.
They said he only lived a minute
or two, and he was right out of
his mind.

55 INT. THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE

55

The Deputy turns and glances at the Sheriff, who nods,

SHERIFF (telephone)

They say he was still breathing
but just about his last, and that
he didn't say nothing sensible.

56 INT. CULPEPER'S OFFICE

56

Culpeper stares at the map, on which he has marked an X
where the accident occurred, and considers this information.
His subordinates have moved up behind him.

CULPEPER (telephone)

All right, Sheriff, I'd like
the names and addresses of
those witnesses, just in case.
If Kluzetsky and Zacharias have
got them, we'd like descriptions

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CULPEPER (CONT'D)
of their cars. We'll just make
sure that everybody who even got
near Smiler went on wherever he
was going. It's ten to one they
did, but if they did --
(flinging away the
pencil)
-- this case is closed.

SHERIFF'S VOICE (over the line)
See what we can do, and call you
back.

Culpeper hands the receiver to the Lieutenant, he to the
Sergeant, and he to the Secretary, who hangs up. Culpeper
has already turned away and moved disconsolately into his
own office, the Lieutenant and the Sergeant following.

CULPEPER
Well, there's a fine start to
the day. You wait --

57 INT. CULPEPER'S PRIVATE OFFICE

57

A smaller room, well-furnished, orderly, with two other
doors leading to a private bathroom and to the corridor.
Culpeper comes in, no break in his line, and as he enters
indulges a career-long habit of sailing his hat at a hook
on a hatstand across the office.

CULPEPER
-- for fifteen years to solve a
really important case and then
the whole case just --

He breaks off, astounded, as his hat, half-way through its
flight, banks sharply, sails past his desk, and flies through
the narrow gap at the bottom of a partly raised window. The
Lieutenant looks at the Sergeant, and the Sergeant turns and
runs out.

SERGEANT
It's all right Chief, I'll get
it for you!
(passing Secretary)
He's done it again....

Still very annoyed, Culpeper goes over to the window,
raises it, and looks out.

58 EXT. THE STREET FROM CULPEPER'S VIEWPOINT

58

Two stories below, the hat is lying, crown up, out in the middle of the street. A succession of fast-moving cars goes by. Each of them swerves sharply, crossing a lane-line, to avoid hitting the hat. Another car comes up quickly and, deliberately swerving well out of the lane it was in, manages to flatten the hat with two wheels.

59 INT. THE MEAN MAN'S CAR - MOVING

59

The man who ran over the hat is straining forward, giggling excitedly, looking back in his rear-view mirror.

60 EXT./INT. CULPEPER AT WINDOW

60

Culpeper, infuriated, is bellowing down at the Sergeant, who has run out of the front door of the station.

CULPEPER

Get his number! Get that
fellow's number!

61 INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE

61

The Sheriff is standing behind his Deputy, looking over his shoulder. The Deputy is scribbling down the information coming over the radio.

SECOND PLAINCLOTHESMAN'S

VOICE (through speaker)

-- and the fourth one was a big furniture van with just one driver, travelling from Modesto to Yuma. That's all we can tell you. Over.

DEPUTY (microphone)

Okay, F three, that's good enough. Out.

SHERIFF

All units to report right away if they see any of that bunch -- wherever they see 'em. Put it on.

DEPUTY (microphone)

Crockett to all units. Information is requested on the whereabouts of four vehicles known to have

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

61 CONTINUED:

61

DEPUTY (CONT'D)
 been travelling on county thirty
 nine half an hour ago. All four
 believed heading east. Numbers
 unknown but general description
 follows. Item: one Cadillac --

62 INT/EXT. CROCKETT COUNTY PATROL-CAR - MOVING

62

Out in the semi-mountainous country where the colloquy is taking place TWO PATROL-CAR OFFICERS in a Crockett County police car are following an ambulance to the scene of the accident. The Deputy's description is coming over, and even as the Second Patrolman notes them on his pad the ambulance and the car pass the four parked vehicles. (The eight people may be seen momentarily in the b.g. through some foliage beside the road.) The Second Patrolman, surprised to find any vehicles stopped here, reacts quickly as he recognizes them. During all this:

DEPUTY'S VOICE (through speaker)
 -- convertible. Item: one
 Chevrolet station-wagon. Item:
 one large furniture van. Item:
 one Foreign-type touring car.
 All four may have crossed state
 line to Arizona. Do not
 interrogate, but all units
 report any observation.

SECOND PATROLMAN
 (above the voice)
 What are those four -- say!
 That's them!

FIRST PATROLMAN
 Call it in.

SECOND PATROLMAN (microphone)
 County seventeen to Headquarters....

DEPUTY'S VOICE (through speaker)
 County seventeen.

SECOND PATROLMAN (microphone)
 Say, we just made all four of
 them, they're all parked out
 here on the side of the road,
 about four miles from Valley
 Center. Listen, we've already
 passed them, they're standing
 there talking.

(CONTINUED)

DEPUTY'S VOICE (through speaker)

Stand by.

(pause)

All right, seventeen, this is important. Ambulance is to proceed to the accident, but --

SHERIFF'S VOICE (through speaker)

Lemme have it. Sammy? That you, Sammy? Now, listen, I want you to get under cover. Put the car out of sight and get where you can see what's happening there. Wait a minute.

(In b.g.: Get me Santa Rosita again, hurry up.)

All right, Sammy, now you get where you can watch them and one of you stay by the radio so we can hear what's going on.

63 INT. CULPEPER'S OFFICE

63

The Secretary is on the phone again.

SECRETARY (telephone)

Detectives Division. Oh, just a minute, Sheriff....

(calling to Lieutenant)

The Sheriff again, for Captain Culpeper....

Culpeper, still looking extremely angry, comes out of his private office to take the receiver from her, coming past the Lieutenant in the doorway. Before Culpeper reaches phone the Sergeant comes in with the ruined hat.

SERGEANT

I took it down to the cleaners, Chief, but they say it's ruined.

CULPEPER

I'd like to get my hands on --

(telephone)

Hello, Sheriff. Culpeper....

SHERIFF'S VOICE (over the line)

Got some news for you, Captain. All the people in them four

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SHERIFF'S VOICE (CONT'D)
vehicles are stopped beside the
road about five miles from where
the accident happened, all talking --

Culpeper reacts really sharply, swinging about at once, going
back to the map during the following.

CULPEPER (telephone)
What! You sure? Where? Can you
give me the exact position?

SHERIFF'S VOICE (over the line)
Four miles west of Valley Center,
from the crossroads there.

Culpeper draws a short line, again to the right, east from
the X at the accident to the position of the colloquy --
and makes a considerable X there.

CULPEPER (telephone)
Good! Now, listen. I don't want
those people -- in no circumstances
must those people find out they're
under surveillance, right?

SHERIFF'S VOICE (over the line)
Already took care of that,
Captain. Got two of my best men
under cover there.

CULPEPER (telephone)
As soon as your men can get them
I want the numbers of those four
vehicles --

(to Lieutenant)
Call Sacramento Vehicle, tell
them we're going to want a
fast kickback on four ownerships --

(to Secretary, as
another phone rings)
Stop all incoming calls till we
get this under control.

(to Sheriff again)
Now, look, if you'll just relay
all reports as you get them --
and have somebody open a second
line to us, will you? I want
the fullest descriptions of
everybody there --

(to Secretary)
Tell the switchboard to let the

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CULPEPER (CONT'D)

other call from Crockett through --
(to the Sergeant)
-- and you take that one --
(to Sheriff again)
Now, Sheriff, here's what I --

SHERIFF'S VOICE (over the line)

Wait a minute, report coming in now. Yep, they got somewhere where they can see 'em all right, says they all seem to be having a big argument. Woman there hit one of the men in the face with her handbag. Wait a minute, got the numbers coming in now. All four got California plates.

CULPEPER

(to the Lieutenant)

Take those down.

Now, this scene is increasingly busy. The Lieutenant has already placed a call to Vehicle Registration on another phone, the Secretary has spoken on yet another to the switchboard, and that phone has subsequently rung, opening the second line. As the scene continues the minor conversations will be subordinate to the voices of Culpeper and the Sheriff over the line -- (but they will be detailed in the Background Script Note 5). The Sergeant is noting and repeating them to Sacramento. Culpeper, staring at the big X on the map, can scarcely control his excitement. He turns about suddenly with some gesture of elation, then notices someone o.s. as he speaks.

CULPEPER

What do you know about that!
This case isn't closed, it's wide open -- Chief! Chief, come in here a minute, will you?

The Santa Rosita CHIEF OF POLICE, who was passing the open door in the corridor, steps just inside the room. Impressively uniformed, he is a heavily built, kindly-looking veteran with a dignified degree of grizzle.

CHIEF OF POLICE

Morning. What is it?

CULPEPER

We've got a situation here that's just about incredible. Look.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CULPEPER (CONT'D)

(indicating on map)

Smiler Grogan spent last night there, finally made his break this morning, got to here, and crashed and killed himself. But before he died some people stopped to help him, and now they're stopped here, talking, apparently arguing about something -- and a Crockett County unit's got them under observation --

CHIEF OF POLICE

You think he told them something?

CULPEPER

I don't think they stopped to play Shinny.

(telephone)

All right, Sheriff, we're getting a kickback on those license numbers. Now just make certain that none of your men tip this, will you? Not a single one of those people must suspect that anybody's interested in them.

During this, in b.g., the Lieutenant has audibly been noting and repeating the stuff coming through from Sacramento on another line.

LIEUTENANT (telephone)

....the Cadillac, yes? J. Russell Finch, 2970 Penrose Boulevard, Fresno. The Chev? Doctor Melville Crump, 42610 Gloria, Bakersfield. The what? Isotta-Francini? Is that a car? Martin J. Bell, Sky-High Apartments, 4420 Sunset Boulevard, Beverly Hills. And the truck, yes? Leonard Pike, 217 Washington Street, Modesto. Right, wait a minute....

(turning to Culpeper)

Got all four of them, Sir.

CULPEPER

(nodding, talking,
glancing at list)

Good.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CULPEPER (CONT'D)
(turning to Sergeant,
handing list)

All right, start calling the nearest stations on all four, ask for confidential kickbacks, as complete as they can -- who they are, where they live, what they do for a living, everything they can give us. Hurry it up.

The Sergeant starts this process in b.g. on another phone. (The stuff to be detailed in Background Script Note 6.) Still holding the receiver, standing before the map, Culpeper turns back to the Chief of Police.

CULPEPER
Shall I tell you what will happen? Look. Smiler robbed the Tuna Factory here....

He indicates a place on the coast quite close to the Mexican border. Then, indicating Pasadena as he goes on:

CULPEPER
.... got nabbed that same night in Pasadena. Convicted, did fifteen years. Then two weeks ago he comes out, borrows the car in L.A., knows we're watching him, goes for this crazy-comedy tour, makes his break, this happens, and now these people, having left the scene, all stop to talk it over. Which means they know. Now, where've I always said Smiler stashed that dough?

He draws a neat little circle which encloses the mark for the Tuna Factory and the entire community of Santa Rosita -- between San Diego and the border.

CULPEPER
Right here. Which means that if these merrymakers --
(indicating the X
for the Colloquy)
-- decide to go for it they'll go on to Valley Center, turn south --

(CONTINUED)

CHIEF OF POLICE

But why did Smiler head east when he made his break? If the money's down here somewhere --

CULPEPER

He was just being clever. Five bucks says that if this bunch go on they turn right at that cross-roads.

CHIEF OF POLICE

It's a bet.

CULPEPER

If they do move, we'll want to set up a general hotshot over the whole southern part of the state -- and we'll need aerial co-operation.

(turning to Lieutenant)

Get on to Captain Hardesty, ask him how many helicopters he could give us....

(telephone)

Yes, Sheriff?

SHERIFF'S VOICE (over the line)

They're still talking.

64 EXT. THE ROAD - THE COLLOQUY

64

The five men and three women are still standing in a group. Tempers are high, nerves frayed, and several seem near the point of emotional exhaustion. For the first few moments as we rejoin them several are speaking at once again, to the following effect:

LENNIE PIKE: Hey, how come no matter how you figure it out I always get less than anybody else gets?

DING BELL: Look, so far as we're concerned, we're agreeable --

BENJY BENJAMIN: (The loudest of them) Let him explain it, will you? (to Melville Crump) Listen, explain it again, like you said.

MELVILLE CRUMP

It's perfectly simple. We give shares to everybody for everything,

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MELVILLE CRUMP (CONT'D)

you see what I mean? There were eight of us there, so there are shares for that. There were four cars that stopped, so we give four shares for that. That makes twelve. Then there were five of us who went down to try to help and that's five more shares and that makes seventeen, correct? And then we add the same number of shares as there were people in each vehicle --

(indicating each in turn)

-- three for your group, two for you two, two for us, and one for you. And that makes twenty-five shares in all. So, twenty-five into three-hundred and fifty thousand, that makes fourteen thousand dollars a share. And that means that you, for example --

(turning to J.

Russell Finch)

-- would get three shares for being three people, one share because you went down the hill, one share for one car and three more shares for being three people in the car, right? And that would be eight shares or one-hundred and twelve thousand dollars --

DING BELL

And that takes care of everything, including the emancipation of women and everything else --

LENNIE PIKE

Yeah, but look a minute. I only get one share for being one person, one share for going down the hill, one share for the truck, and one share for being only one person in the truck, and --, no matter how you figure it out I never get as much as everybody else gets. I don't know.

(CONTINUED)

MELVILLE CRUMP

(consulting notes, to
J. Russell Finch)

One Hundred and twelve thousand
for you --

(to Ding Bell and
Benjy Benjamin)

-- ninety-eight thousand to you,
eighty-four thousand for ourselves --

(and to Lennie Pike)

-- and fifty-six thousand for
you. Three-hundred and fifty
thousand, and if there's a way
of working it out that's any
fairer than that, well, I wish
somebody would kindly tell me --

MRS. MARCUS

I'll tell you. There were eight
of us there and that simply means
eight shares, three for us, two
for you two --

Ding Bell throws up his hands, turns to Benjy Benjamin,
and speaks loudly enough to override her line.

DING BELL

Aw, this is hopeless! If we go
on listening to that old bag --

BENJY BENJAMIN

Yeah, look, lady, what you wanna
do? You wanna make this whole
thing every man for himself?

DING BELL

And every woman for himself.
Don't forget the emancipation
of women --

MRS. MARCUS

(menacingly to Ding
Bell)

One more funny remark from you --

BENJY BENJAMIN

(to Ding Bell)

Oh, let's get out of here --

J. RUSSELL FINCH

Now, just a minute, there's no
reason to -- now, look here --

(CONTINUED)

64 CONTINUED: (3)

64

Benjy Benjamin and Ding Bell have started to turn away, even moved a tentative pace or two in the direction of the cars. All the others are watching them intently.

BENJY BENJAMIN

Look, we figured it seventeen different ways and none of them's any good because somebody's against it no matter how we figure it. Well, there's only one way to figure it and it's the only way that's going to be any good and that's every man including the old bag for himself.

DING BELL

Yeah. So good luck, like may the best man win.

BENJY BENJAMIN

(to Mrs. Marcus)

Except for you, madam. In your case may you just drop dead.

LENNIE PIKE

Hey, look, we all agree about that, so why can't we agree about -- why don't we....try to....

But Lennie Pike's voice fades away and is followed by a long few seconds of tense and absolute silence. Everyone looks at everyone else, a little incredulously, as if they all find it difficult to believe that this is happening to them. Very slowly, Ding Bell and Benjy Benjamin begin edging away towards their car. For two more seconds some of the others appear to be on the point of speaking. Then, all at the same instant and all in one headlong hurly-burly bunch, they break and run for the four vehicles. The scene is one of confused rush. J. Russell Finch and Mrs. Marcus, seizing upon Emmeline Finch, virtually drag her after them. Monica Crump, running beside her husband, breaks and loses one heel of her high-heeled shoes, and is pulled away by Melville Crump when she tries to stop and find it. The confused and unintelligible yells will be detailed in the Background Script Note 7.

65 EXT. ROAD -- ALL FOUR VEHICLES

65

It's rather like a Le Mans start. They all reach their vehicles at about the same time. Lennie Pike in the big van gets away first. Behind him, letting in the clutch too quickly, J. Russell Finch stalls the Cadillac. Behind him,

(CONTINUED)

65 CONTINUED:

65

Melville Crump guns the Chevrolet wagon, swings out quickly, and passes both the stalled Cadillac and the furniture van before it really gets going. And, finally, Ding Bell gets by the Cadillac and into third place as J. Russell Finch, now last, gets under way. So, as they roar away, the order at the start is the Crumps, Lennie Pike, Ding Bell and Benjy Benjamin, and the Finch contingent.

66/70 EXTS. THE VARIOUS VEHICLES - MOVING

66/70

A short fast succession of shots as the Crumps start pulling away; as Lennie Pike does his best to hog the middle of the road; as Ding Bell with a surprising burst of acceleration overtakes the van and gets into second place; as J. Russell Finch, coming up very fast now, is checked by the big van on a sharp curve; and as all four, not very far apart, build up to 45 or 50.

71 EXT. ROAD, COVERED POSITION - THE FOUR VEHICLES,
PATROL-CAR OFFICERS

71

Panning, the camera holds all four (the Chev, the Isotta-Francini, the van and the Cad) as they go roaring loudly around the curve and pass the point from which the Two Patrolmen have been observing them. The Patrol-car is parked behind some trees beside the road. The First Patrolman pans with his field-glasses as the parade tears by. The Second Patrolman, standing beside the car, gives a running radio commentary -- but the four vehicles make too much noise for us to hear him. They roar on, still gathering speed.

72 INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE

72

The Sheriff listens excitedly as the voice comes over.

SECOND PATROLMAN'S

VOICE (through speaker)

-- doing about fifty, the Chevrolet
still leading. There they go. Over.

SHERIFF (telephone)

Yep, they're on their way.

73 INT. CULPEPER'S OFFICE

73

Culpeper and the Chief still stand staring at the big wall map. Behind them the Lieutenant, the Sergeant and the Secretary are watching closely. Tension now.

(CONTINUED)

73 CONTINUED:

73

CULPEPER (telephone)
All in the same direction?

SHERIFF'S VOICE (over the line)
That's right, and according to my
boys they're all on dangerous
driving charges already.

Reaching up with his pencil, Culpeper begins extending the dotted line in an easterly direction from the point of the colloquy.

74 EXT. ROAD -- THE FOUR VEHICLES - MOVING

74

Still in the same order, all keeping up, all quite closely bunched.

75 INT. THE CHEVROLET - MOVING

75

Melville Crump, extremely excited, is straining over the wheel, taking the curves as fast as he can. He glances at his rear-view mirror repeatedly. Beside him Monica Crump, fumbling in her excitement, is trying to straighten out a large road-map that has been folded the wrong way.

MELVILLE CRUMP
Have you got it?

MONICA CRUMP
No, it's all backwards. Mount
Shasta National Forest: are we
anywhere near --?

MELVILLE CRUMP
No, that's up at the top, look
at the bottom....

MONICA CRUMP
Are we near Oregon?

MELVILLE CRUMP
That's seven-hundred miles from
here!

76 INT. THE TOURING CAR - MOVING

76

Benjy Benjamin reacts with extreme anxiety as Ding Bell takes a curve too fast.

(CONTINUED)

76 CONTINUED:

76

BENJY BENJAMIN

Hey, take it easy, will you --
watch it! Hey, are you trying
to pass him? We can't pass that --
Ding, take it easy!

77 INT. THE FURNITURE VAN - MOVING

77

In the big van Lennie Pike watches his rear-view mirror, sees the Cadillac behind him swing out in an effort to pass, and swerves out into the middle of the road. The Cadillac, baulked, drops back a little. Lennie Pike snarls with satisfaction.

78 INT. THE CADILLAC - MOVING

78

J. Russell Finch looks furious. Emmeline Finch looks incredulous. Mrs. Marcus, in the back seat, looks as if she will explode.

MRS. MARCUS

We're the ones with the Cadillac
and we're running last?

J. RUSSELL FINCH

I can't pass him on these curves --

MRS. MARCUS

Go on! Go ahead! There, look at
that space! Well, what're you
waiting for, an engraved invitation?

79 EXT. ALL FOUR VEHICLES - MOVING

79

They come around a curve and into a short straight stretch. The Isotta-Francini, threatening to pass the Chevrolet, swings out beside it. Fifty yards behind it the Cadillac moves all the way over to the left. They hold these positions, the leaders slowing down so that they are all closely bunched again, as the road curves around a hillside to the right.

80 INT. AN ONCOMING VEHICLE - MOVING

80

Coming at a reasonable speed in the opposite direction is an old pre-war, broken-down Pontiac sedan. It is driven by a middle-aged COLORED MAN whose middle-aged WIFE sits beside him. The whole car is packed with suitcases and there are

(CONTINUED)

80 CONTINUED:

80

more cases and trunks on a luggage-rack on the roof. We see them for one second, during which the man reacts with sudden incredulous terror and the woman tries to scream.

81 EXT. THE FOUR VEHICLES - MOVING

81

From the Pontiac driver's point of view. The curving road ahead is completely covered by the fifty-mile-an-hour phalanx of onrushing vehicles.

82 BACK TO SHOT

82

Without any possible alternative and without an instant's hesitation the Pontiac driver wrenches the wheel and drives straight off the road.

83 EXT. THE PONTIAC AND THE FOUR VEHICLES - MOVING

83

At twenty-five or thirty miles an hour the Pontiac starts an incredible run down the 45-degree gradient of the hillside. Above and beyond it in the b.g. the other four vehicles roar away and o.s. The camera holds on the Pontiac for quite a time from some way down the mountain as, rapidly shaking itself to pieces, shedding trunks, cases and boxes, its tires exploding, it comes hurtling and bounding down. Somehow the driver manages to keep it on all four wheels, and ultimately to stop it just within earshot. There is a pause. The Colored Man simply sits there, and then turns and looks back up at the road incredulously. Finally:

MAN

I said it before and I'll say it again. I never wanted to move to California!

84/87 EXT. THE FOUR VEHICLES - MOVING

84/87

Three or four fast-moving shots as the race continues. In one of them J. Russell Finch can be seen finally passing Lennie Pike, the Cadillac narrowly skirting disaster in the process. (Mrs. Marcus' voice may be heard above all the racket, shouting encouragement to her son-in-law, as the Cadillac goes by.) The order now: Melville and Monica Crump, Ding Bell and Benjy Benjamin, J. Russell Finch and his womenfolk, a frustrated Lennie Pike.

90 INT. THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE

90

The Sheriff, who is excited, has risen, the phone in his hand, and moved over beside the radio speaker. Holding the receiver near the speaker:

SHERIFF (Telephone)
Can you hear it? They're going
through now....

SERGEANT'S VOICE (through speaker)
-- and the European car with the
two men is turning right, right
behind the Chev --

91 INT. CULPEPER'S OFFICE

91

Culpeper is holding the receiver so that he and the Chief can both hear what is coming over the line, and all three of his subordinates have now crowded up quite close behind them and are listening too. (As well as the Sergeant's Voice we should hear the sounds of roaring motors, clashing gears and screaming tires as the cars and the big van turn.)

SERGEANT'S VOICE (through speaker)
(and over the line)
-- and the Cadillac's just coming
up, he's turning, and the truck's
right behind -- hey, that's too
fast -- no, it's all right, he
made it, -- and they've all turned
right, all four are now moving
south on C-18. Looks like they're
making for Highway 66.....

In the course of this Culpeper has grinned, the Chief has winced, taken out his wallet, extracted a bill. Now, lowering the receiver as he takes it (so that the Sergeant's Voice diminishes in volume) and pointing to the map:

CULPEPER
Thanks. Here, look. Airfield.
Just four or five miles south.
Another five bucks --

CHIEF OF POLICE
No, I've got to admit it's
enjoyable but the entertainment's
too expensive. I'll be in my
office.

92 EXT. ROAD - ALL FOUR VEHICLES

92

On a better road now, a well-surfaced second-class blacktop that runs down out of the hills and across a relatively

(CONTINUED)

88 INT. CULPEPER'S OFFICE

88

Culpeper, still listening to the Sheriff, extends the dotted line a little more on the map. (And we see that the line is only half an inch -- or two miles -- from the crossroads at Valley Center.)

SHERIFF'S VOICE (over the line)

Well, here's a little item for you. They forced a fellow off the road, wrecked his car, shook up his wife, a serious accident -- and not a single one of 'em bothered to stop. Well, we got three cars waitin' for 'em at Valley Center, so I reckon they're covered no matter which way they go.

CULPEPER (telephone)

Well, I reckon we got a notion --
(breaking off, covering
mouthpiece, grimacing,
turning to Chief)
I'm beginning to talk like him....
(then, to Sheriff
again)

We've got an idea, Sheriff,
they're all going to turn right...

In the b.g. during this the Sergeant on another line has applied to the Bakersfield police for any information about a Dr. Melville Crump (Background Script Note 8).

89 EXT. VALLEY CENTER CROSSROADS

89

Valley Center is a very small commercial hamlet consisting of a gas station, general, drug and liquor stores, six or eight buildings. At three different places in f.g. three Crockett County patrol-cars are waiting behind buildings or other cover. There are a couple of Deputies in or about each of the cars, and one of them, a Sergeant, can be seen but not heard calling in on the radio. Beyond them, stretching away for a quarter of a mile into the b.g., is the road they are all watching. Suddenly one of the officers stiffens and points. Far down the road a vehicle appears, coming very fast. Then another, a third, and then the big furniture van. Now the Sergeant is reporting steadily (Background Script Note 9), but his voice is gradually drowned out as, coming up very fast indeed, the Chevrolet brakes very hard and, tires screaming, skids around the corner and roars off to the south. The other three vehicles are very close behind. The Sergeant is seen shouting into his radio mike.

92 CONTINUED:

92

flat patch of desert, the race continues. The Chevrolet wagon leads by a couple of hundred yards and is increasing the lead. Behind it the touring car is edged well over the center line and baulking the hard-pressing Cadillac. The big van is another couple of hundred yards farther behind and beginning under this pressure to pour out a good deal of black smoke. There is virtually no other traffic.

93 INT. THE CHEVROLET - MOVING

93

Monica Crump is still trying to figure out just where they are on the map. Impatiently, after a glance ahead and into his rear-view mirror, Melville Crump reaches over and takes it.

MELVILLE CRUMP

Monica, can't you even find where we -- here, let me see it. Here, you hold the wheel, and let me --

She moves over and takes the steering-wheel in both hands, staring ahead excitedly. Melville glances at the map and then quickly unfolds and arranges it.

MELVILLE CRUMP

Valley Center, that's right, that's the place we just went through -- an airfield! There's an airfield marked right here -- let me see --

The thing is that Monica Crump, who would like to be as helpful as possible, has begun studying the map too.

94 EXT. THE CHEVROLET - MOVING

94

At 80 or 85 miles an hour the Chevrolet wagon has eased over to the wrong side of the road, where its left front wheel is now about two inches from the soft shoulder of sand.

95 BACK TO SHOT

95

MELVILLE CRUMP

It can't be more than a mile ahead on the right. Just watch out for a --

(looking up, screaming,
grabbing wheel)

WATCH OUT!

(CONTINUED)

95 CONTINUED:

95

Instinctively over-compensating, he wrenches the wheel violently and the map blows up over his face. Monica Crump starts to yell.

96 EXT. THE CHEVROLET - MOVING

96

It swerves violently back and forth across the road three or four times, just missing both shoulders, before it comes under control.

97 INT. THE TOURING CAR - MOVING

97

Ding Bell and Benjy Benjamin are watching it incredulously.

BENJY BENJAMIN

Hey, what's he trying to do?

98 EXT. ALL FOUR VEHICLES, PATROL-CAR

98

The four race on, over a little rise in the ground and farther into the flat stretch of desert. The Chevrolet, having slowed down to avoid an accident, is only just in front of the Isotta-Francini. The Cadillac and the furniture van have moved up, and now all four vehicles are fairly closely bunched again. They roar on away. Then, moving along about a quarter of a mile behind them, a Crockett County patrol-car appears, slowing down and then stopping on the rise in ground. We can recognize the Sergeant who reported from Valley Center. Now he watches the four vehicles in the distance through his field-glasses for a moment, then takes up the mike and calls in again.

99 EXT. ROAD NEAR AIRFIELD - ALL FOUR VEHICLES

99

From a fixed position ahead of the racers and beside the road we can see both the slight curve in the road itself two-hundred yards away and, on the left of the picture, a dusty little dirt road running a quarter of a mile away to some shacks in the distance. A crude home-made sign by the turning says, Airport. We hear the approaching vehicles before we see them. Then the Chevrolet wagon comes roaring around the curve at 75, brakes sharply as Melville Crump sees the sign and the turning, skids, slows still more, and turns off onto the road to the airport. At once the Chevrolet, accelerating rapidly, starts throwing up an almost incredible amount of desert dust, which leaves a billowing cloud behind it. Only three or four seconds behind the Chevrolet comes the Isotta-Francini. Brakes screaming and gears clashing,

(CONTINUED)

99 CONTINUED:

99

it slows down just enough to make the turn, and is all but lost to sight as Ding Bell drives into the swirling yellow-white cloud of alkaline-dust. Coming closely behind the touring-car, the Cadillac slows down quickly and then stops, fairly close in f.g., so that its three occupants are well within earshot. J. Russell Finch, clearly alarmed, turns in his seat and points to the dust cloud. Both left wheels of the Cadillac are a foot or two over the center line. During the following Mrs. Marcus stands up in the back to look off at the cloud; and we should hear the rapid approach of the furniture van just around the curve.

J. RUSSELL FINCH

They're gonna hire airplanes!

MRS. MARCUS

Never mind them! Let's go!

J. RUSSELL FINCH

But if they get planes they'll
be there hours before we --

The big van comes around the curve, doing about 60, and then its brakes start screaming. As Lennie Pike tries to stop he rocks and swerves across the road, seems for a moment to be about to pass the Cadillac, loses control of his terribly heavy load, brakes some more, and skids towards the crash. Meanwhile:

MRS. MARCUS

I said, never mind! Nobody's
going to get me --

J. RUSSELL FINCH

Look out! Watch that --

MRS. MARCUS

-- up in the air --

Precisely at that moment the big van, which has slowed to not more than 20, belts into the back of the Cadillac.

100 EXT. CLOSE ON MRS. MARCUS

100

At the height of her trajectory, upside down, she seems for a moment to pause. Then, tinkling and jangling above the sound of the crash itself, she drops into the floor of the car on her head.

101/104 QUICK FLASHES

101/104

Of the point of impact, with the truck's radiator and the Cadillac's rear end both badly damaged; of Lennie Pike, Stunned, holding his forehead; of J. Russell Finch, clutching his solar plexus as Emmeline Finch gives a whimper beside him; and of Mrs. Marcus still upside down in the back and bellowing unintelligibly.

105 INT. THE FURNITURE VAN

105

Close on Lennie Pike as he reacts with prolonged and horrified incredulity to the preposterously sustained succession of crashes that occur, and go on occurring in the back of the van. He winces and flinches repeatedly.

106 INT. THE CHEVROLET - MOVING

106

Melville Crump looks eagerly ahead, grins savagely in his excitement. Behind them there is nothing to be seen but the great yellow-white cloud.

MELVILLE CRUMP

Are they following us?

MONICA CRUMP

I can't see anything.

MELVILLE CRUMP

I'll show them!

107 EXT. DUST CLOUD, TOURING CAR

107

The yellow-white cloud, swirling and billowing, fills the entire picture. Then, ghost-like, the radiator of the Isotta-Francini gradually emerges, and Ding Bell and Benjy Benjamin can be heard coughing, groaning, half-strangling, like the victims of a tear-gas attack. Barely intelligibly:

DING BELL

I can't see! I can't see where
I'm going! Get out and walk ahead!
Tell me where the road is!

108 EXT. ROAD NEAR AIRFIELD

108

Lennie Pike and J. Russell Finch and his two women have all got out and are already involved in dispute. J. Russell Finch holds his chest, Mrs. Marcus massages the back of her neck, and Lennie Pike rubs his forehead. Emmeline Finch stands looking like someone who has abandoned all hope.

(CONTINUED)

MRS. MARCUS

-- where you were going, you
stupid --

LENNIE PIKE

You were blocking the whole road!

J. RUSSELL FINCH

This is terrible! Your bumper's
wedged right inside the -- we're
locked together!

LENNIE PIKE

Look, you get in and put your
brakes on hard and I'll back the
truck up and pull 'em apart.

109 EXT. AIRFIELD

109

With the great dust-cloud in the b.g. Melville Crump brakes
sharply beside the little cluster of dilapidated adobe
buildings and tin-roofed sheds. The place is incredibly
run-down, and there are a lot of undernourished chickens
wandering around. Melville Crump looks apprehensive. His
wife gets out behind him. Faintly, far in the b.g., we may
hear the cries of Ding Bell and Benjy Benjamin.

MONICA CRUMP

I don't see any planes. I don't
see anything.

MELVILLE CRUMP

There's got to be a plane!

As he speaks, a slovenly, slatternly woman, the PILOT'S WIFE,
comes around one of the huts with a bucket full of washing
in one hand and a disgruntled baby in the other. Eagerly,
running up to her:

MELVILLE CRUMP

Excuse me -- good morning. Are
there any airplanes here? Is
there a pilot?

PILOT'S WIFE

There's just my husband. You
mean my husband?

MELVILLE CRUMP

Well, is your husband a pilot?

PILOT'S WIFE

Yes. But he's not up yet.

(CONTINUED)

109 CONTINUED:

109

MELVILLE CRUMP

Well can you wake him up? It's
important, really important!

110 EXT. ROAD NEAR AIRFIELD

110

Emmeline Finch and Mrs. Marcus are standing beside the road, watching almost with horror as Lennie Pike, obviously for the fifth or sixth time, savagely races the big truck's engine, lets out the clutch, and shoots backwards eight or ten yards, dragging the Cadillac with him. There is an ugly sound of tearing metal and all four of the Cadillac's locked wheels scream on the road, but it doesn't come loose. Furiously Lennie Pike accelerates for ten yards and stomps on the truck's brakes. More noise, but still the two vehicles are locked together, and what the furniture van is doing to the back of the Cadillac shouldn't happen to a Volkswagen.

MRS. MARCUS

(shouting above the
the din)

A Cadillac, and you just sit there
and let him -- keep it up! Three
more times, we'll have a compact
car!

111 EXT. DUST-CLOUD - TOURING CAR

111

Coughing and gasping, Benjy Benjamin appears in the cloud, walking, then the car appears ghost-like behind him. Its engine is missing badly and backfires two or three times.

DING BELL

Benjy? Where are you?

BENJY BENJAMIN

Here! Come on! You're all
right!

Suddenly, backfiring again, the engine dies. During the following exchanges the starter grinds repeatedly as the engine catches but immediately dies again.

DING BELL

It's stalled! We've got dust in
the carburetor or something! Come
on, baby, you can't stall on us!
Come on!

(CONTINUED)

111 CONTINUED:

111

BENJY BENJAMIN

Well, get it going, will you!
Come on Ding, hurry up! Get it
going!

112 EXT. ROAD NEAR AIRFIELD

112

Still locked together, the big van and the Cadillac are now off the road and standing on the shoulder. The two men and two women are standing in a group again. Mrs. Marcus is angrier than ever.

MRS. MARCUS

-- and you'll see who the jury believes, because it's our word --

J. RUSSELL FINCH

Listen, while we stand here arguing those other four are hiring planes --

LENNIE PIKE

Yeah, but what can we do -- we need a breakdown crew --

J. RUSSELL FINCH

If we could get someplace, we could rent a car --

LENNIE PIKE

Yeah, but there's no traffic, we might have to wait here for -- wait a minute! There's a bicycle in the van!

He turns and runs around to the back of the van.

J. RUSSELL FINCH

Well, listen. Would you be willing to ride somewhere and hire a car and then come back and pick us up?

MRS. MARCUS

What, we're going to trust him?

LENNIE PIKE

Aw, listen, lady, I'd have to come back. I ain't got enough dough with me to rent a car --

(CONTINUED)

112 CONTINUED:

112

J. RUSSELL FINCH
I'll pay for the car. And then
the four of us split whatever we
get four ways. Is it a deal?

LENNIE PIKE
Why sure, that's the best offer
I had yet. It's a deal.

They shake hands. As Lennie Pike starts to open the van
doors J. Russell Finch quickly looks at his map.

J. RUSSELL FINCH
There's a place called Homer's
Well about five miles ahead. You
can either try for there or go
back to that place --

LENNIE PIKE
It'd be better to go on ahead,
then if you get a lift with
anybody you could pick me up.

113 EXT. ROAD - PATROL-CAR

113

A few hundred yards away, just around the curve on the rise
in the ground, the patrol-car is stopped. The Sergeant is
standing beside it, watching both scenes (at the accident
and at the airfield) through field-glasses. A Deputy in the
car sits holding the mike.

SERGEANT
They just made a deal or something.
Better report in that the two men
just shook hands.

114 EXT. ROAD NEAR AIRFIELD

114

As Lennie Pike opens the big doors there is an astonishing
cascade of bent and broken household furniture and equip-
ment. Lennie Pike is visibly shaken by the extent of the
damage.

LENNIE PIKE
Boy, when the people who own this
stuff see this I hate to think --

A bicycle, one of the last things loaded, is discernible in
the mess. J. Russell Finch eagerly reaches up, grabs it by
the front wheel, and pulls it out, dislodging and breaking
a little more crockery in the process.

(CONTINUED)

114 CONTINUED:

114

J. RUSSELL FINCH
Never mind. Just get to a phone
and hire the best car you can find --

LENNIE PIKE
Hey, this is a girl's bike --
it's for a little girl. And
listen, I'd better put that stuff
back so I can lock up the van --

J. RUSSELL FINCH
We'll put everything back -- just
get going and hurry up.

LENNIE PIKE
(mounting the
bicycle)
I gotta admit I feel kinda silly,
you know what I mean?

He rides off, maintaining his bulky balance with difficulty
at first, then gathering speed. The three stand looking
after him. Then:

EMMELINE FINCH
It's all so undignified.

115 EXT. AIRFIELD

115

Melville and Monica Crump, the Pilot's Wife and the PILOT
are in a group just outside one of the adobe huts. The
Pilot is an extremely dopey-looking character who has pulled
some trousers on over the long woolen underwear which he
wears despite the heat. His back bothers him, so that he
rubs it a lot, he needs a shave badly, and he has a discon-
certing twitch. We hear the SOUND of the other car approach-
ing after a moment.

MELVILLE CRUMP
So will you take us? Yes or no?

PILOT
For two-hundred-and-fifty
dollars? Guess I will.

MELVILLE CRUMP
Good. We'll leave the car here
and come back for it -- maybe
tomorrow. Now, come on, let's
get going, hunh? You get plane
ready I'll make out the checks --

. (CONTINUED)

PILOT

Checks?

MELVILLE CRUMP

Travellers' checks, Bank of
America --

He turns at the sound of rapidly approaching footsteps. Then Ding Bell and Benjy Benjamin come running around the corner of the hut. They are so thickly coated with dust that both make a zombie-like impression, so that the Pilot's Wife stifles a half-scream which causes the baby to start crying in an unpleasant way. Ding Bell and Benjy Benjamin scarcely glance at the dentist and his wife, address the Pilot at once.

DING BELL

You a Pilot? Have you got an
airplane?

PILOT

That's right, both times.

DING BELL

Well, listen, how many planes
are there here? Is there another --

MELVILLE CRUMP

Just the one, and we've just
chartered it. So you and your
friend will have to --

BENJY BENJAMIN

(to the Pilot)

Is that true? Have you made a
deal with him?

PILOT

That's right.

The Pilot starts into one of the huts. Melville Crump, swelling with triumph, stands watching Ding Bell and Benjy Benjamin with a superior sort of sneer, and seems amused by them. Benjy Benjamin makes an angry gesture, filling the air with dust. His partner a little hysterically calls after the Pilot.

DING BELL

Well, listen, where's the nearest
place around here we'd be likely
to find another plane?

PILOT

Well....nearest you might be
sure would be up at North Valley --

(CONTINUED)

115 CONTINUED: (2)

115

DING BELL

Where's that?

PILOT

Other side of Valley Center,
twelve, fifteen miles.

The Pilot, pulling up his suspenders, goes into the hut. Ding Bell turns and looks at Melville Crump for a long moment with silent, bitter hatred. Benjy Benjamin joins him in the look. Melville Crump watches them. Monica Crump watches him. The Pilot's Wife watches them all. The baby yells.

MELVILLE CRUMP

Filibuster, eh? Stick around,
you can watch us take off.

DING BELL

Listen, dentist, you know what,
I hate all dentists, but you:
what I'd like to do to you I
couldn't even tell you in the
presence of your wife.

BENJY BENJAMIN

Yeah, and vice versa!

DING BELL

Come on!

Ding Bell and Benjy Benjamin start running back to their car.

116 EXT. ROAD - PATROL-CAR

116

The Sergeant is still watching through field-glasses.

SERGEANT

The two guys in the funny car
are leaving again. If there's
a plane there the fellow with
the blonde must have made a
deal.

117 INT. THE TOURING CAR - MOVING

117

Ding Bell, clashing his gears, accelerates furiously, pulling away from the little field, and blowing up his own cloud behind. Benjy Benjamin writhes with frustration.

(CONTINUED)

117 CONTINUED:

117

BENJY BENJAMIN

But it's twenty miles in the
wrong direction!

DING BELL

So what? We can't race against
a Cadillac! And even if we could,
this dopey dentist is going to be
there in an hour! We don't just
need a plane, we need a jet!

118 EXT. ROAD - LENNIE PIKE

118

Lennie Pike, having gone half a mile, pedals laboriously up
a hill, breathing audibly.

119 EXT. ROAD NEAR AIRFIELD

119

Having stuffed the shambles back into the van, J. Russell
Finch fixes the padlock. Emmeline Finch has her shoulder
to one of the big doors. In the b.g. the Isotta-Francini
approaches rapidly, raising another cloud. Mrs. Marcus
notices it.

MRS. MARCUS

Look! They're coming back! No
plane! I'll bet they couldn't
get a plane!

J. Russell Finch turns and watches the car with interest.
Even Emmeline Finch, despite her better instincts, is
curious.

J. RUSSELL FINCH

Just the one car: the other two
must have --

MRS. MARCUS

(aggressively)

Let's stop them! Think of some
way we can stop them! Make them
give us a lift!

But even as she speaks the Isotta-Francini, reaching the
road thirty yards from where they're standing, turns away
to the left. Ding Bell and Benjy Benjamin, clearly aston-
ished and delighted by the sight of the accident, both shout
derisively, "Yaaaaaahhh!" As they roar away to the north:

MRS. MARCUS

The stupid idiots, they're not
even going the right way!

(CONTINUED)

119 CONTINUED:

119

EMMELINE FINCH

They've given up. They're going
to the police. They've just
remembered that there's such a
thing as human dignity, that's all.

120 EXT. ROAD - PATROL-CAR

120

The Sergeant, having seen the touring car approaching, has
already lifted the hood, scattered some tools on the ground,
and now appears to be tinkering with the motor. At this
point, travelling south at a steady forty, a battered old
station wagon with one man in it goes by. As Ding Bell and
Benjy Benjamin approach:

SERGEANT

Don't look in their direction.

(then, when they
have passed)

Gimme the mike....

(microphone)

County four. Listen, Sheriff,
the two guys in the European car
have headed north. Do we tail
them? Over.

SHERIFF'S VOICE (through speaker)

No, Pete and Sam can pick them
up at Valley Center....

SERGEANT (microphone)

Okay. Wait a minute. The other
three are just stopping a car....

121 EXT. ROAD NEAR AIRFIELD

121

J. Russell Finch and Mrs. Marcus, out in the middle of the
road, have waved the old Station Wagon to a stop. As it
comes to a halt we see the single occupant, ALGERNON HAW-
THORNE, an affable-looking Englishman of 35 or 40. He is
attired in casually sportive dress.

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

Oh, I say! Accident? Anyone
hurt?

J. RUSSELL FINCH

No, but we've got to get to a
phone. Can you give us a lift --

(CONTINUED)

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

Oh, but I'd be delighted.
(to Mrs. Marcus)
Good morning madam --

Mrs. Marcus has already opened a rear door and is getting in.
Speaking simultaneously:

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

Take care, madam, those cacti
specimens --

MRS. MARCUS

We'd be much obliged if
YeeeeoooOOW!

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

Terribly sorry, madam, I tried
to warn you, I've been collecting
samples of desert flora and I --
perhaps if we put them behind
the seat there, don't you think --
I'm terribly sorry -- are you
quite all right?

(and seeing
Emmeline Finch)

Oh, good morning, good morning....

During all this J. Russell Finch has opened the front door
for his wife, said, "Come on, honey," and Emmeline Finch,
murmuring "Good morning," has climbed into the front seat.
At the same time Mrs. Marcus, having shoved a cardboard box
of small disinterred cacti samples on one side, extracts a
troublesome needle from her posterior, staring silently at
the Englishman the while.

J. RUSSELL FINCH

If you could just get us to a
phone --

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

Of course, of course. All aboard?
(glancing at the
two vehicles)

Looks quite nasty, that, you're
jolly lucky no one was injured.
(to J. Russell
Finch)

I take it you were in the
Pantehnicon?

J. RUSSELL FINCH

Eh? I was driving the Cadillac.

(CONTINUED)

121 CONTINUED: (2)

121

MRS. MARCUS

Where'd you get that funny accent?
You from Harvard or somewhere?

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

Harvard? Oh: no, madam, I'm --
uh -- I'm English, don't you know.

MRS. MARCUS

I knew it was funny. Maybe we
can get going, all right?

122 INT. STATION WAGON - MOVING

122

Algernon Hawthorne lets in the clutch, drives off.

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

Certainly. Oh, we haven't
introduced ourselves. My name's
Hawthorne, Algernon Hawthorne....
Major Hawthorne, as a matter of
fact.

J. RUSSELL FINCH

Finch. This is my wife -- and my
mother-in-law, Mrs. Marcus.

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

How do you do.

(over his shoulder)

Just shove those things quite
out of your way -- that's right.
I'm afraid I wasn't expecting
passengers, you know, else I
shouldn't have left them on the
seat. It's rather my hobby,
cactus -- I've just had ten days
gathering a few Genora to fill
out my collection -- nothing
really spectacular, Cereus
Echinocactus, Opuntia -- that sort
of thing. Spot of leave, you
understand -- from Vandenburg.

MRS. MARCUS

From what?

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

Oh, the missile place, don't you
know? I've been attached there
for the past year -- sort of

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

122 CONTINUED:

122

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE (CONT'D)
liaison work. All very hush-hush
and whoosh-whoosh, what? Ah, ha,
ha, ha, ha ha!

123 EXT. AIRFIELD - CLOSEUP MELVILLE CRUMP

123

Absolutely horrified.

MELVILLE CRUMP
THAT? Is that the -- you mean
~~that~~ that's the -- THAT?

124 EXT/INT. THE BIPLANE IN THE SHED

124

Perhaps the oldest biplane still flying in the U.S., it has a huge radial engine, two open cockpits, a mass of heavily rusted struts and wires, an astonishing number of varicolored patches in its fabric. The Pilot, who now wears an old-fashioned flying jacket, helmet and goggles, turns and throws back the tarpaulin which hangs down over the front of the shed -- and the tarpaulin, old and rotted, tears and falls to the ground. The Pilot kicks it aside.

PILOT

Yep.

MELVILLE CRUMP
But, will it -- listen, are you
sure that -- I mean, will it fly?

PILOT

Not sayin' she'd win no beauty
contest, but she flies.

MONICA CRUMP
Melville, I don't want -- I
don't think we ought to --

MELVILLE CRUMP

But, what are all those --
those metal things under the --

PILOT

Dustin'. Was doin' a little
dustin' a year or two back --

MELVILLE CRUMP

But you mean to say you're
licensed to carry passen --

(CONTINUED)

124 CONTINUED:

124

PILOT

Nobody said nothing about a license. I was just trying to do you a favor -- kind of informal.

MONICA CRUMP

Melville, I just don't think --

She breaks off, jumping back and crying out as a big black hen which has been nesting in the forward cockpit suddenly jumps up and then flaps down to the ground and exits. At the same time, surprised and delighted:

PILOT

So that's where she was! Been lookin' everywhere for two days!
(peering into the cockpit)

Should be some eggs in here, she's gone broody!

125 EXT. ROAD - LENNIE PIKE, STATION WAGON

125

Streaming with sweat now, Lennie Pike hears the approaching car. He gets off at once, turns as the station wagon approaches and lifts an eagerly hopeful hand.

126 INT. STATION WAGON - MOVING

126

Algernon Hawthorne, having seen him, has started to brake, but Mrs. Marcus leans forward with a wild expression and clutches his shoulder in a grip which actually hurts him.

MRS. MARCUS

Don't stop! Keep going!

EMMELINE FINCH

Mother!

J. RUSSELL FINCH

But don't you think we ought to --

MRS. MARCUS

The big stupid lout, he's the one that ran into us! Keep going!

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

Well, I dare say you know -- I mean to say, just as you like, what?

127 EXT. ROAD

127

Lennie Pike just stands there looking after them. (This moment of betrayal is such as to require musical emphasis if it's to be really heartrending.) He stands there, and for a long few seconds he just can't believe it. He may act a little, even act up. Then, talking to himself in a kind of whimper, he gets back onto the little girl's bicycle and goes pedalling on.

128 INT. CULPEPER'S OFFICE

128

Still before the map, the phone held to one ear, Culpeper is drawing a line an inch or two north from Valley Center (representing Ding Bell and Benjy Benjamin). We should also see that he has marked the scene of the accident between the van and the Cadillac, has a line for Lennie Pike on the bicycle, and another for the station wagon (which, on the map, hasn't yet reached the bicycle). In the b.g. the Lieutenant is on the phone to the State Police, and the Sergeant applies for a run-down on Algernon Hawthorne's station wagon (Background Script Note 10).

CULPEPER (telephone)

Yes, they're making for that other field up at North Valley.

SHERIFF'S VOICE (over the line)

Had a report about the other two.
They got an old biplane out of the hangar and are trying to start her up.

CULPEPER (telephone)

Good. Hold it a minute, Sheriff....

He turns as the Lieutenant finishes the b.g. call and steps up.

LIEUTENANT

State say they've got two helicopters practically there now --

CULPEPER

(nodding, then telephone)

Fine. As soon as they've taken off, Sheriff, I'd like your men to get in there fast and find out exactly where they went, right?

129 INT. THE TOURING CAR - MOVING

129

Ding Bell drives furiously. Benjy Benjamin looks unhappy.

BENJY BENJAMIN

Suppose when we get there there's
no plane? Anyway, the dentist is
bound to get there first!

DING BELL

How can you be sure? How do you
know we won't get a break? How
do you know they won't crash or
something?

130 INT. FILLING STATION

130

In the office of a small, completely isolated filling station J. Russell Finch is finishing a frustrating conversation on the telephone. Mrs. Marcus stands impatiently in the doorway. Two mechanics, RAY and IRWIN, can be seen through the doorway outside, one filling the station wagon's tank, the other wiping the windshield. Algernon Hawthorne has got out of the station wagon and is standing around. Emmeline Finch is sitting with an embarrassed, wounded expression on a chair beside the telephone.

J. RUSSELL FINCH (telephone)

....But haven't you got another
car that we -- what? All right,
thanks.

He hangs up as Irwin comes into the office to get some
change for the Englishman.

J. RUSSELL FINCH

Look, are you sure you can't rent
us that truck out there? I'll
pay --

IRWIN

I told you, mister, we can't.
This is our first week open.
How could we do without our
truck?

Irwin goes back outside, where Ray can be seen checking the
station wagon's oil. J. Russell Finch looks at his wife and
then at his mother-in-law.

J. RUSSELL FINCH

We'll have to talk to the
Englishman -- if we tell him
what happened --

(CONTINUED)

EMMELINE FINCH

You wouldn't! Russell, how could you even admit that we're involved in anything so --

MRS. MARCUS

He'll say he's entitled to a share.

J. RUSSELL FINCH

Well, he would be entitled to a share, if he drove us all the way down there -- and if we don't tell him all about it he won't.

MRS. MARCUS

We'll have to.

(as J. Russell
Finch starts out)

But, listen, ten per cent:
there's no reason at all for
him to expect more --

J. Russell Finch comes outside as Irwin counts out Algernon Hawthorne's change. This filling station provides an important setting in the story, and should be described. It is brand new, spic and span, gleaming with fresh paint. The whole place is decorated with little flags and streamers on wires, and there are several self-consciously unctuous signs: "The Most Important People In The World - Are Customers"; "Our Pride Is To Serve You"; "Your Satisfaction Is Our Satisfaction", etc. The building is set back from the road fifteen or twenty yards, and there are no other buildings in sight. The building itself is only one story high, flimsily constructed, largely prefabricated. As well as the two or three pumps, it has a small garage attached which is fully equipped for ordinary running repairs. Ray and Irwin, who have their living quarters behind the office, have obviously taken great interest in the place, for the front is landscaped and prettily planted, and there are trellises here and there and flowers hanging in little pots, and so on. The establishment as a whole should not be noticeably fragile, it should simply be so nicely done up that we will realize later how much Ray and Irwin care about it.

IRWIN

....Three-twenty-five, fifty,
four, five dollars. Thanks,
and come in again.

(CONTINUED)

131 CONTINUED:

131

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

Thank you. I say: no luck in
obtaining a motor?

J. RUSSELL FINCH

That's what I want to talk to
you about. Mr. Hawthorne, how
would you....

Mrs. Marcus has approached the two of them and is watching
the Englishman closely. Emmeline Finch has come out of the
office in the b.g. and remains standing there, her gaze
averted with embarrassment. J. Russell Finch, conscious of
Irwin's and Ray's presence, turns and walks a few paces
away from them with the Englishman and his mother-in-law.
Confidentially, in a very low voice and after clearing his
throat portentously:

J. RUSSELL FINCH

What would you say if I told you
that we know of a very simple way
for you to earn thirty-five
thousand dollars?

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

Thirty-five thousand -- what?

132 EXT. ROAD - LENNIE PIKE

132

Lennie Pike is wobbling with exhaustion. Then a car, a
beaten-up old '37 Buick convertible comes up behind him.
Lennie Pike jumps off the bike again, stands in the middle
of the road, and waves the car to a stop. The driver, a
sour-looking, middle-aged neurotic named OTTO MEYER, looks
at him and at the little girl's bicycle curiously.

LENNIE PIKE

Thanks for stopping. Listen,
can you gimme a lift?

OTTO MEYER

What's with the little kiddie's
bicycle? You some sort of nut?

LENNIE PIKE

No. I had an accident. Anyway,
I got to get to Santa Rosita --
and fast --

OTTO MEYER

Then I can't help you. I'm
turning off down at --

(CONTINUED)

LENNIE PIKE

Well, wait a minute, lemme think a minute. How'm I gonna -- yeah. Hey, listen, I wanna tell you something. You got a few hours you could spare?

OTTO MEYER

A few hours? Look, buddy, you've been out in the sun too long. You want to be careful --

LENNIE PIKE

No, listen, wait a minute, I've just got to have some help so I'll tell you something. Now, you aren't gonna believe what I'm gonna tell you, because a thing happened -- a little while ago, about twenty miles back, a thing happened that you just wouldn't believe it could happen.

OTTO MEYER

Well, I'm pretty gullible. Try me.

The ancient little biplane's wheels have old-fashioned chocks set against them, and its motor, missing and back-firing badly, is ticking over. Melville and Monica Crump are standing beside it, and the Pilot's wife, having put the baby away, is watching nearby. The Pilot gets down out of the rear cockpit and speaks to Melville Crump above the clatter of the motor.

PILOT

Whenever you're ready.

Monica Crump, clearly reluctant, allows her husband to lead her over to the machine, which is shuddering violently from stem to stern. He gives her a hand as she starts to step up, placing one foot on a small metal rung on the trailing edge of the lower wing by the fuselage. It breaks, coming loose on one side. Seeing this, the Pilot lifts one finger, then turns, runs over to the hangar-shed, picks up an empty crate, brings it back, and smilingly places it so that Monica Crump can step up onto the wing. With some assistance, looking pale, Monica Crump does. But as she lowers herself into the big forward cockpit she tears her skirt badly on a loose screw somewhere in the machine. She reacts with some dismay.

(CONTINUED)

133 CONTINUED:

133

Helped in turn by the Pilot, Melville Crump climbs up, then lowers himself carefully into the seat beside her. As he climbs back into the aft cockpit, and speaking above the sound of the motor:

PILOT

Fasten the seat-belt across you there. We'll taxi down to the end to get the wind. She likes a good long run for taking off.

134 INT. BIPLANE

134

Close on the Crumps as Melville fumbles with and fastens the belt across their laps. Monica Crump looks very frightened.

MELVILLE CRUMP

Now, don't be nervous, darling --

He breaks off, reacting with alarm as, behind them, the Pilot races the motor, drowning his words, and then leans out and signals to the front.

135 EXT. PILOT'S WIFE

135

Out in front of the aircraft she pulls the chocks away from the wheels, steps back out of the way, and makes the Sign of the Cross.

136 INT. BIPLANE - MOVING

136

Melville and Monica Crump, having noticed her, react. Melville Crump swallows heavily. Monica Crump holds his arm with both hands. The little plane, its motor very loud now, shudders a couple of times and then slowly begins rolling along. Now a little closer on both of them as Melville Crump, chiefly to cover his own mounting apprehension, begins talking very rapidly and loudly to his wife.

MELVILLE CRUMP

We'll get there first. And if we get there first we'll find the money. And if we find it we'll have it all. So don't be nervous. There's nothing to be nervous about!

137 EXT. ROAD - LENNIE PIKE, OTTO MEYER

137

Otto Meyer stares up at Lennie Pike, giving him complete attention.

LENNIE PIKE

... And the way I see it is, it would be a fifty-fifty split just between you and me -- I mean, if we get there first.

OTTO MEYER

The thing that bothers me is this big W. You sure you told me everything you know? You sure you don't know what the guy meant by a big W?

LENNIE PIKE

No, but none of them know. It's just who gets there and finds it first. Okay? We got a deal?

OTTO MEYER

Well, I guess so.....

Delighted, Lennie Pike exuberantly picks up the little bicycle, flings it across the road, runs around the front of the car, opens the door and starts to climb in.

OTTO MEYER

You'd better move that bike off the road. Somebody might trip over it in the dark.

LENNIE PIKE

Oh -- yeah.....

He gets out, runs across the road, picks up the bike, lifts for a hefty heave, hears the Buick roar away as Otto Meyer lets in the clutch, and, even as he looks over his shoulder in horrified dismay, throws the little bicycle off the road and down into a gulley.

138 INT. OTTO'S BUICK - MOVING

138

Grinning slightly, Otto Meyer adjusts his rear-view mirror so that he can see the diminishing figure in the road behind.

139 EXT. ROAD - LENNIE PIKE

139

He stands there for a second. Then he runs, bellowing like a mad bull, for ten or fifteen yards after the car. Then he realizes that he can't catch it, so he stops. He keeps saying things, but they are unintelligible, or the music is so loud that we can't hear them. Then he goes back, scrambles down into the gully, grabs the bike, charges back up to the road, jumps on it again in a terrible fury, pedals three yards, discovers that he's bent the front wheel, gets off, stamps it back into shape, gets on, keeps going. This man is now a potential murderer.

140 EXT. BIPLANE

140

Warmed up but still missing occasionally, the little biplane is now way down at one end of the field. Leaning forward and shouting, with a smile:

PILOT

Okay, here we go!

He opens the throttle, the motor backfires a couple of times, and the old biplane starts to roll.

141 EXT. BIPLANE - MOVING SHOT HOLDING ON THE PLANE

141

It's very slow getting along. After two-hundred yards, and after a couple of tries, the tail comes up. Another couple of hundred and the plane gets four or five feet off the ground. But the moment its nose lifts it loses speed and the wheels come down again. It repeats this up-and-down process three or four times, giving an impression of stupendous effort.

142 INT. BIPLANE - MOVING

142

Monica Crump, eyes closed, clutches her husband who, eyes wide open, is rigid with terror as he stares ahead.

143 EXT. MELVILLE CRUMP'S VIEWPOINT - MOVING

143

Fifty or sixty yards ahead, the cluster of buildings. We should catch a glimpse of the Pilot's Wife, kneeling somewhere there with her head bowed and her hands folded in prayer.

144 BACK TO SHOT

144

Melville Crump sees her. He makes a sound in his throat.

145 EXT. BIPLANE

145

At the last moment it takes the air and clatters up fifty feet, clearing the buildings. It should be possible, high above the barking splutter of the motor, to hear Monica Crump's short high-pitched scream. The camera, panning, picks up the Pilot's Wife in f.g. as she makes the Sign of the Cross again, gets up, dusts her knees, and walks away.

146 EXT. ROAD, AIRFIELD AND SKY

146

In a huge, wide-angled shot from a position beyond the road, we see the abandoned Cadillac and furniture van in f.g. The Biplane, gaining a little altitude, comes towards us, then veers off towards one side of the frame and splutters o.s. The shot holds. Far over on the other side of the frame there stands one single isolated large tree. Suddenly a helicopter which has been hovering out of sight behind it lifts twenty feet and comes into view. It goes twirling away across the frame after Melville and Monica Crump, and passes o.s. The shot holds. In f.g. one of the Crockett County patrol-cars roars onto the frame, turns down the road to the buildings, and raises another great cloud of dust.

147 EXT. ROAD - LENNIE PIKE

147

Pedalling. A little pathos here.

148 EXT. ROAD - OTTO'S BUICK

148

Otto Meyer's old convertible, going fast, when one of its front tires suddenly blows. The Buick swerves sharply as Otto Meyer brakes, but he keeps it on the road. Slowly, he starts to stop, then sees a sign beside the road: GAS-OIL, 500 YARDS. Changing his mind, he shifts up again and keeps going, running on the flat and flapping tire.

149 EXT. FILLING STATION

149

Algernon Hawthorne stands besieged by Mrs. Marcus and J. Russell Finch, who are looking a little desperate. Emmeline Finch still remains a little apart, not joining in this business; and Ray and Irwin, increasingly intrigued, are watching all four of the travellers curiously.

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

But this is positively extraordinary!

MRS. MARCUS

So it's extraordinary! Yes or no?

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

Well, but, I mean to say, certainly.

J. RUSSELL FINCH

Well, that's fine. Come on, honey, Mr. Hawthorne's going to take us, let's get in the car....

Mrs. Marcus, looking very grim, is already climbing in. Emmeline Finch comes forward reluctantly, glancing at the Englishman briefly, clearly too embarrassed for words. As Algernon Hawthorne is getting into the driver's seat J. Russell Finch, taking out his wallet, turns to Ray and Irwin.

J. RUSSELL FINCH

I gave you the keys. Here's -- twenty dollars. Just tow it in here and keep it locked up.

IRWIN

You want us to tow in the truck?

MRS. MARCUS

No, that's got nothing to do with us! Hurry up! Let's get started!

Algernon Hawthorne has started the car. Now he nods to Ray and Irwin, lets in the clutch, and the old station wagon rolls away. Ray and Irwin stand looking after it, then look at each other.

RAY

You get the impression there was something funny going on there?

Irwin starts to reply, then breaks off and turns as Otto Meyer's old Buick convertible comes whipping into the station from the other direction. He has driven fast enough on the rim to cut the punctured tire to ribbons, and it makes a loud slapping noise until he stops. Jumping out:

(CONTINUED)

OTTO MEYER

Quick, I need some help! I had this blow-out! There's a spare in the back but I think that's flat, too. Have a look, will you? Listen, is there an airport around here? Never mind! Just see if the spare's all right, and if it is get it on there as quick as you can, will you? If the spare's flat too I don't want you to fix it, I just want to get a new one on fast -- but if you haven't got a new one then you'll have to fix the spare, so hurry, will you, I'm in a real big hurry, and the other can be gassing her up, so come on, will you, let's hurry it up, okay? Let's go!

150 INT. CULPEPER'S OFFICE

150

Culpeper is by the map, standing half crouched in an attitude of extreme tension as he listens on the phone. As he speaks and then cries out the Chief of Police, with his hat on and obviously dropping in before leaving, comes into the office behind him. Culpeper's three subordinates are also waiting tensely.

CULPEPER (telephone)

Yes? Where? Yes? That's it!

(turning to the
Sergeant)

Run and tell the Chief --

(then, as he sees him)

-- Chief! Just got the word:
the people who hired the plane
are heading for Santa Rosita!

CHIEF OF POLICE

All you have to do is sit down
and put your feet up and let
them close the case for you.

CULPEPER

I've never seen anything like this....

(telephone)

Excuse me a minute, Sheriff....

(handing receiver
to Lieutenant)

Here, look, I've got the whole
situation in detail --

(CONTINUED)

CHIEF OF POLICE

No, I've got to go, I've got an appointment with the Mayor.

CULPEPER

Well, before you go, spare me a minute, something I wanted to say. Here, come in my office....

He has taken the Chief's arm and indicated the door beside them. Glancing at his watch, the Chief nods. They go into Culpeper's private office.

151 INT. CULPEPER'S PRIVATE OFFICE

151

As they come in:

CHIEF OF POLICE

What is it? You know what His Honor's like, I don't want to keep him waiting --

CULPEPER

I'll make it fast -- it's partly about him I wanted to speak to you --

CHIEF OF POLICE

The Mayor?

CULPEPER

Well, and the Council. Now, listen, Tom, next week the Council are going to talk about pensions again -- no, wait a minute, I know you know what I want to say, but you don't know all of it. In four months I'll be finished. Now, the pension for my grade hasn't been upped by a red cent since nineteen-thirty-four. And if the Mayor would get behind a motion --

CHIEF OF POLICE

But what can I do? I can't put any pressure on the --

CULPEPER

But you can! That's the whole point! Now, look: before the day's over I'll have closed that case, one of the biggest cases we've ever had on our books, and

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CULPEPER (CONT'D)

I want you to talk to the Mayor about it. Tell him. Tell him that the money is where I always said it was, right here in this neighborhood, and tell him -- make him see how much credit is going to be reflected on the Department. Now, come on, Tom, get in there and pitch a little.

CHIEF OF POLICE

Well -- I can try --

CULPEPER

Tom, if he gets behind that motion it'll carry unanimously! Don't you see, I want to use this situation -- and why not? Why shouldn't I use it? You know I've got it coming to me!

CHIEF OF POLICE

Well, I'll do everything I can. You know that, don't you?

CULPEPER

And he'll listen to you, because he has to. Look, before you go, one more thing. About a vacation. Once I've wrapped up this Smiler Grogan case my desk is clear. I want to grab three weeks and take Ginger for a really good holiday. Is it all right with you?

CHIEF OF POLICE

Why, of course it's all right.

CULPEPER

Wonderful. I can hardly wait to tell her. And you'll work on the Mayor for me?

CHIEF OF POLICE

I'll do my best, I promise you that.

Culpeper flings an arm around the Chief's shoulders, making the old affection between them plain, as they start out.

CULPEPER

I won't forget you for this. Tom, you know what? I've got a feeling this morning: all kinds of things are beginning to break my way.....

152 INT. STATION WAGON - MOVING

152

Algernon Hawthorne has the old station wagon barrelling along a straight level stretch at about 60. J. Russell Finch stares ahead with a strained expression. Emmeline Finch sits between them with the resigned expression of someone being taken for another kind of ride. Behind them, Mrs. Marcus is sitting leaning forward, her features a grim mask of concentrated fury. Then suddenly, startlingly, her expression changes. She stiffens, her mouth falls open, she seems to be undergoing some dreadful kind of seizure. Suddenly grabbing Algernon Hawthorne's shoulder, she at the same time emits a terrifying explosive bellow:

MRS. MARCUS

SYLVESTER!

All three in the front almost jump out of the seat, Emmeline Finch gives a cry, and the station wagon swerves violently.

153 EXT. STATION WAGON - MOVING SHOT

153

At 55 or 60 the right front wheel, swerving a few feet out onto the level shoulder, hits a sizeable chunk of rock with an audible thump. But then, under control, it skids back onto the road.

154 BACK TO SHOT

154

For a few seconds they are all talking at once.

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

What? I say! What did you --

EMMELINE FINCH

Mother, do you have to -- do you have to frighten everybody out of --

J. RUSSELL FINCH

For heaven's sake, you shouldn't suddenly shout like that --

MRS. MARCUS

Why didn't I think? Here we've been running around like a pack of lunatics and all the time -- why didn't we think of Sylvester? He's sitting right there! He lives at Silver Strand Beach!

J. RUSSELL FINCH

It's true! I never even thought --

(CONTINUED)

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

But -- who is -- uh -- Sylvester?

MRS. MARCUS

He's my son! Emmeline's brother!
He's a lifeguard down there!

Disconcerted enough already, Algernon Hawthorne is now even more disconcerted by a heavy wobble that has set up in the front wheels.

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

Do you know, I'm not by any means certain that we haven't damaged this machine --

MRS. MARCUS

All we have to do, we telephone Sylvester, he jumps in his car, drives straight over there -- he lives on the very next beach, practically --

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

I'm right in assuming, I hope, that that approach to the problem wouldn't affect our -- uh -- little arrangement?

J. RUSSELL FINCH

Of course not. We said ten per cent and we meant ten per cent --

MRS. MARCUS

So come on, let's go, just get us to where we can phone!

155 INT. BIPLANE - IN THE AIR

155

Both Melville and Monica Crump are looking much better now, but Melville Crump seems worried as he glances at the ground a few thousand feet below. Suddenly he turns, cups his hands, and shouts back at the Pilot.

MELVILLE CRUMP

Won't it go any faster?

PILOT

Wide open she burns up the gas!

MELVILLE CRUMP

Well, open her wide open! I'll pay for the gas!

(CONTINUED)

PILOT

Cost you about another fifty!

Melville Crump nods. The Pilot lifting a hand, scrawls a signature with an invisible pen. Nodding, Melville Crump takes out his folder of travellers' checks, uncaps his pen, and opens the little plastic folder. In sheer terror Monica Crump gives a terrifying scream. Before her husband can speak, pointing wildly:

MONIC CRUMP

Do something! Melville do
something! It's a spider!

Melville Crump begins slapping at the thing with the little plastic folder.

156 EXT. FILLING STATION

156

Otto Meyer, standing beside the old convertible, is accepting his change from Irwin. Ray, on his knees, is slapping the hub-cap back on the wheel, which has a nice new tire. A second or so after the scene begins we can see Lennie Pike appear a hundred yards up the road in the b.g., coming fast on the little bicycle. At first none of those in f.g. notices him.

OTTO MEYER

Thanks. Here, buy yourselves a drink, okay?

Having spotted him, Lennie Pike now gives a great bull-like bellow. Fifty yards away, he comes on fast. Otto Meyer whirls, sees him, instinctively steps back with alarm. Ray and Irwin react curiously. Thinking very quickly:

OTTO MEYER

My God! It's that lunatic! The
one that got out of the asylum
last night! Watch him! Be careful!
Look out! Grab him, will you?
Watch it -- he's a homicidal MANIAC!

The action is fast. Lennie Pike, having ridden into the drive, bellows again, leaps off the bike, stumbles, falls, and runs forward, not frothing but obviously intending mayhem. Otto Meyer dodges nimbly around the car, trying to keep it between them. Screaming a little hysterically now:

OTTO MEYER

Stop him! Grab him! Listen, I'm
a psychiatrist and I tell you he's
crazy!

(CONTINUED)

RAY

(to Lennie Pike)

Hey, wait a minute, mister --

Momentarily checked by the car between them, Lennie Pike speaks with obvious anticipatory relish to Otto Meyer.

LENNIE PIKE

So somebody'll stumble over
the little bicycle in the dark,
hunh? When I get finished with
you, they're gonna be stumbling
over you in the dark -- GEYAAAGGH!

In his wrath, moving around the car and finding the open door in his way, he tears it off its hinges and tosses it aside. With a broad smile he charges through the car, leaps from the front seat, comes hurtling down on Otto Meyer, grabs him in both hands by the elbows, lifts him slowly above his head, and slams him against the front of the building. Otto Meyer gives another strangled scream. Then, as the big man prepares to slam him against the building a second time, Ray, who has picked up a quart bottle of oil from a rack beside the pumps, slams Lennie Pike very hard indeed on the back of his head. Lennie Pike lets go of Otto Meyer and crashes to the ground. Without pause Otto Meyer steps over his unconscious bulk, gets quickly into his car, jumps out again, picks up the twisted door on the ground, throws it in the back or rumble seat, jumps in and starts the engine. During this frantic business:

OTTO MEYER

Good! You just got him in time!
Now listen, you keep him here and
I'll send some strong lads with a
strait-jacket! You'll get a reward
for this!

IRWIN

Man, I never saw anything -- hey,
how many people has he killed?

OTTO MEYER

Now, don't be morbid. Just tie
him up somewhere and wait for the
men in the white coats, right? But
I want you to know I'm proud of you.

Otto Meyer drives away and o.s. Ray and Irwin look at Lennie Pike.

RAY

Holy mackerel, the way he started
to -- we'd better get him tied up.
if he starts to come to, hit him
again.

157 EXT. NORTH VALLEY AIRPORT AND FLYING CLUB

157

It is a small but rather prosperous-looking place, typical expensive club-flying field. Two or three hangers, four or five light planes standing about, several more in hangars with Mechanics and Fitters working on them. A big club room, restaurant and bar, a small office building. Ding Bell and Benjy Benjamin, looking quite desperate now, are standing just outside the open door of the office, which adjoins the club room, pleading with the AIRPORT MANAGER (or CLUB SECRETARY). A hundred yards away in b.g. an extremely handsome, fast-looking, twin-engined plane is parked.

DING BELL

But listen, we've just got to get to Santa Rosit!

AIRPORT MANAGER

I tell you, this is a club: we don't do charter work, and there's nobody around who could take you --

BENJY BENJAMIN

Hey, whose plane is that over there?

AIRPORT MANAGER

That belongs to Mr. Tyler Fitzgerald, but I don't think he'll be going anywhere today --

DING BELL

Well, where is he? Is he here? Can we talk to him?

AIRPORT MANAGER

Mr. Fitzgerald is -- uh -- asleep, and I don't think --

He has glanced at the club rooms as he speaks. Ding Bell and Benjy Benjamin, catching the look, at once turn towards the entrance to it.

BENJY BENJAMIN

We can ask him, can't we? Just ask him?

157A INT. CLUB ROOM

157A

A big, very dark room, all the blinds still down. There is a bar, a kitchen and other rooms off, easy chairs, a couple of billiard tables, flying pictures and trophies on the walls. A shaft of brilliant sunlight slashes into the room as Ding Bell and Benjy Benjamin, closely followed by the protesting Airport Manager, come in. The shaft of light

(CONTINUED)

157A CONTINUED:

157A

momentarily reveals a big, handsome man in his forties (TYLER FITZGERALD), asleep on his back on a billiard table. He has a cushion under his head and is partly covered by a blanket but he is fully dressed in evening clothes. He is snoring stertously. There is evidence of a hard-drinking party the night before still to be cleared up. As they enter:

AIRPORT MANAGER

Wait a minute! You can't disturb Mr. Fitzgerald --

DING BELL

We're not going to disturb him, we just want to speak to him.
Oh -- Mr. Fitzgerald? Excuse me -- Mr. Fitzgerald?

The Airport Manager has closed the door plunging the room into darkness again. Ding Bell has touched the sleeping man's shoulder, now shakes it. Tyler Fitzgerald suddenly snorts, splutters, cries out, chokes, and comes half awake.

TYLER FITZGERALD

Wha -- ugh -- eaggghwth -- vasschhwissh -- eh? -- Whahhatt? Whazzahh -- What? What? What?

DING BELL

Excuse me, sir, I'm sorry to disturb you, but it's an emergency --

AIRPORT MANAGER

You had no right to come crashing in here --

TYLER FITZGERALD

Eagghhh! Oooohh! Who -- what's that? OOooohh.....

DING BELL

We've got to get down to Santa Rosita, Mr. Fitzgerald, and there's nobody who can take us except you --

BENJY BENJAMIN

And it's a matter of life and death.

DING BELL

That's right! Life and death!

Tyler Fitzgerald, his eyes still closed, lifts himself painfully onto one elbow, gives a terrible groan and

(CONTINUED)

157A CONTINUED: (2)

157A

crashes onto his back again.

BENJY BENJAMIN

It's our grandmother! She's on her deathbed, you see, and she's asked for us --

DING BELL

That's right! Our grandmother's dying, Mr. Fitzgerald, and she's asked for us to be there when she goes -- but she's down in Santa Rosita and we can't get there unless we --

Tyler Fitzgerald has moaned and groaned throughout. Now, unable to take in what is being said, his eyes clenched shut with pain and effort, he gets onto one elbow, carefully lifts his legs over the side of the table, and starts slowly lowering himself to the floor. As his foot reaches and gently touches the floor he gasps and clasps the top of his head in an agonized reaction. Then he stands leaning against the table with his hands covering his face, shuddering, swaying, and uttering a few more moans.

AIRPORT MANAGER

They forced their way in here, Mr. Fitzgerald. I told them --

DING BELL

Please, Mr. Fitzgerald, we wouldn't bother you if it wasn't a matter of life and death. Oh: my name's Bell, Ding Bell, and this is Benjy Benjamin, and you're our only hope, Mr. Fitzgerald --

BENJY BENJAMIN

Yeah, if you don't help us we may as well give up --

TYLER FITZGERALD

Wait a minute. Just -- just -- wait a minute.

(opening his eyes)

I -- I can't -- I can't see! Something's happened -- to my eyes! I can't see, I tell you, I can't see!

Even as he speaks he rushes over to the window, grabs hysterically at the bottom of the blinds, and accidentally releases one. It flashes up, and the brilliantly glaring sunlight crashes into his eyes. Tyler Fitzgerald, screaming

(CONTINUED)

157A CONTINUED: (3)

157A

with pain, reels backwards across the room, crashes over a card table, and falls very heavily, head hitting a stool or the foot-rail at the bottom of the bar. All three of the others are rushing to his side; but we know from the sound his head has made that Tyler Fitzgerald is out cold.

158 OUT

158

159 INT. FILLING STATION

159

Inside the filling station, in the back of the workshop section, Ray and Irwin are binding the still-unconscious Lennie Pike to a chair, using yards of black mechanics' tape. Lennie Pike is slumped, head lolling, on the chair which has been set against one of the metal poles that supports the roof. His wrists are taped together behind the chair and around the metal pole, and Ray and Irwin are winding the powerful tape around him dozens of times.

RAY

Hurry up! We've got to make
sure he --

LENNIE PIKE

(suddenly furiously
awake)

I'll kill that dirty little --
(fully awake, seeing
them)

Hey, what's the matter?
(finding himself
tied down)

Hey, what're you doing? I'm
tied up!

IRWIN

Now, listen, you just sit right
there, and everything'll be all
right.

RAY

They're getting some friends of
yours to come and take care of
you --

LENNIE PIKE

What friends?

(struggling)

Listen, what's the big idea? Get
me loose from here, will you?

(CONTINUED)

IRWIN

Now, take it easy, pal, because
you've been sick --

LENNIE PIKE

Who says I've been sick? And
where's the guy who --

RAY

Now, take it easy! The doctor's
gone back to get --

LENNIE

What doctor? I don't know any
doctor! You guys crazy or
something?

(struggling violently)

Get this stuff off me! I'm
warning you!

RAY

Now, just sit still, you don't
want to get excited --

IRWIN

Watch him! Ray, watch him!

LENNIE PIKE

Turn me loose! I'll kill that
guy -- get this stuff -- just
let me -- I get my hands on that
-- get it off, turn me loose....

RAY

Now, listen, we're warning you --

IRWIN

Do something! Hit him or something!

Lennie Pike, writing and thrashing about like a maddened
beast, succeeds in pushing himself upright, pulling the
chair to which he is bound up with him. With some unintel-
ligible cries Irwin has turned, picked up a heavy length of
chain, and tries to fasten it around Lennie Pike's body.
At the same time Ray picks up a heavy monkey-wrench and
prepares to strike Lennie Pike another blow on the head.
But as the big man writhes and struggles the chair smashes
to kindling, he gains a few inches of leeway in his bindings,
and some of the dozens of strands of tape are broken.
Shouting unintelligibly about having warned him, Ray aims
a hard blow, Lennie Pike kicks out at him and dodges, and,
missing Lennie Pike's head by inches, the monkey-wrench

(CONTINUED)

catches Irwin on the knuckles. Irwin really screams. Ray shouts, apologizing, and Irwin continues to yell in something like agony, but Lennie Pike is making more noise than both of them. Now, much nearer being free, he lunges with all his weight against his bonds, and the metal roof support to which he's taped breaks. A corner of the roof sags slightly, and Lennie Pike, plunging headlong across the workshop, crashes straight through a flimsy partition and into the office, there falling to the floor and hurting his head again. Horrified, terrified, Ray advances upon him with the monkey-wrench, and Irwin follows more diffidently with a crank-handle. Rising, Lennie Pike turns, lifts both hands placatingly, and, bending low so that he can address them directly through the hole he's made in the wall, delivers a stern but perfectly reasonable warning:

LENNIE PIKE

Now, listen fellows, that's
enough! You go on like that
I'm going to get sore.....

Ray continues to advance warily. Exasperated, Lennie Pike picks up the office chair, starts to throw it through the hole in the partition, and inadvertently knocks the cash register to the floor, where it breaks and spills. Ray, having shouted something to Irwin (all the action in this sequence is too fast and furious for most of the lines to be detailed), charges in, swings the wrench at Lennie Pike, misses, drops the wrench, and takes a tremendous swing at Lennie Pike which sends him back through the partition, considerably enlarging the gap in it. But at the same time, Irwin, having come round, rushes in the front door behind Lennie, swings the crank down with both hands, and smashes the light fixture above Lennie Pike's head.

LENNIE PIKE

(during this action)

Now, no fooling, that's enough.....

Without a pause he grabs Irwin by the arm and flings him against the shelves which line the back wall of the office. Most of the shelves come down, as do all the various kinds of bottles, cans, spark-plugs, small accessories and other impedimenta on them. Outraged now, without a second's let-up, Ray renews the assault, jumping on the big man's back and throwing him momentarily off balance, so that in falling he smashes the desk to pulp and with one foot unintentionally kicks through the big front window.

(CONTINUED)

159 CONTINUED: (3)

159

LENNIE PIKE

Look, will you cut it out?
Listen, what's the matter with
you guys? Come on now, be
reasonable.....

Irwin, getting out from under the fallen shelves,
charges upon him again, but with a powerful heave
Lennie Pike sends him crashing against the door-frame,
which breaks, thereby damaging another of the roof-
supports. Then, pulling Ray into position for a
straight punch:

LENNIE PIKE

Listen, we ain't got nothing to
fight about --

D
Lennie Pike hits him a really solid blow which sends
Ray flying backwards through the door. Stumbling over
the rising Irwin, he crashes backwards through one of
the 2-x-2 pillars that support the porch room (loosening
the sign which is fixed above it and dislodging one of
the hanging potted plants), and falls back upon a large
tubular rack full of a hundred or so bottles of engine-
oil, knocking it over and breaking quite a few of them.
Then, as Lennie Pike starts to come out, Irwin, clutching
the other 2-x-2 pillar for support as he struggles to his
feet, breaks it: the little porch-roof comes down,
striking Lennie Pike a severe blow on the forehead.
Momentarily stunned, he staggers back into the office
and at once, their determination and fury renewed,
Ray and Irwin charge in after him.

160 EXT. ROAD - PATROL-CAR

160

Perhaps a couple of hundred yards away, with the little
garage plainly visible in the b.g., Two Officers are
standing beside their car observing this affair. At
this distance the outraged bellows and screams of pain
are perfectly audible, and even as the Two Officers watch,
either Ray or Irwin can be seen flying headlong through
a window, only to rise at once, grab some blunt instrument,
and run back in again.

FIRST OFFICER

Man, listen to that -- look!
Did you see that -- holy --
jumping -- listen to them!

161 INT/EXT. FILLING STATION

161

Well, the action continues. The description thus far being pitifully inadequate, it seems pointless to do any more than sum it all up. The whole fight should take at the most three minutes in time. All three participants remain articulate, but their statements and cries in the course of the affray will naturally be so disjointed that some suggestion for them may reasonably be left to the Background Script Note 11. The important thing is simply that when the fight has lasted two of its three minutes Lennie Pike's temper is finally aroused. Berserk then, he begins laying about him on all sides, picking up and swinging anything (including Ray and Irwin) heavy enough to accomplish the complete destruction of this place in which the Fates have conspired to try to contain him. Ray and Irwin, fighting with passionate conviction for this pretty little place on which they have labored for so long and with such care, are surprisingly enough never quite killed, never quite knocked out. But at the end of the three minutes the building itself (which will have been designed for the achievement of this outcome) will be more than half wrecked. Then, with Ray and Irwin momentarily stunned (or perhaps pinned down somewhere under some of the debris), Lennie Pike comes staggering out of the shambles and stands breathing hard and massaging his many sore places. Then, as the Two Officers look on from behind cover, he runs over to the small breakdown-truck, starts to get in, hesitates, passing a curious few seconds. As the Two Officers watch he paces up and down two or three times, gesticulating furiously, talking to himself, plainly wrestling with his conscience. Then, moving quickly, he jumps into the truck and starts it up. But because of the position in which it is parked he has to reverse ten yards before he can drive out onto the road. Backing up furiously, he inadvertently strikes one of the few roof supports that has remained so far undamaged. There is an audible crack and the roof sags. Somewhere within, one of the two proprietors can be heard screaming. Gunning the breakdown-truck for all it's worth, Lennie Pike roars off down the road and o.s. Some three seconds pass. Then, with a sudden quick succession of the most frightful sounds, the ruined building collapses completely. If its destruction is accomplished as presently envisaged, no part of the monstrous pile of rubbish will now rise more than three feet from the ground.

162 EXT. FILLING STATION

162

The Patrol-car now rolls to a stop before the shambles. As it comes up the Second Officer can be heard reporting in.

(CONTINUED)

162 CONTINUED:

162

SECOND OFFICER (microphone)

..... and we're just going to
check if either one of them was
killed. Standby.

The Two Officers, not hurrying, get out and begin moving about the fantastic pile, peering into it here and there. An audible groan, then something in it stirs, raising a good deal of dust. Very slowly, first Ray then Irwin get to their feet in the middle of the rubbish, where they stand for a moment, swaying and reeling, looking about. Then they see the Two Officers. Ray, having noted that the breakdown-truck is gone, points wordlessly into the distance. But the effort costs him too much, and he falls back down into the rubble and out of sight.

163 INT. THE BIPLANE - MOVING IN THE AIR

163

Melville and Monica Crump are clearly much restored in spirit. (Such country as we can see below has changed in character: they have covered some distance.)

MELVILLE CRUMP

It could be anything. Like, if there was an old wreck, you know, on the beach. Or an old wagon. Or some kind of wheel. Or a wharf.....

MONICA CRUMP

Melville, you know what I'd really like to do, if we got the money? I'd like to go all the way back to Jefferson City, Missouri. With a great big Rolls-Royce, a big white one, and you know what I'd like, I'd like to stay right in the Missouri Hotel where I sold cigarettes, but with my own personal maid and the whole top floor just to ourselves. I'd just like to show all of them what I really used to think of them, all those stupid snobs out on East Circle Drive, with their sleazy boats down at that sleazy Bagnell Dam.....

(CONTINUED)

163 CONTINUED:

163

MELVILLE CRUMP

If that's what you want to do,
that's exactly what we'll do.
Not only that, a Rolls-Royce is
a sound investment.....

164 EXT. GENERAL STORE

164

J. Russell Finch and Algernon Hawthorne are standing just outside the open door of a big modern drugstore in another little country hamlet. Beyond them, in a glass-walled telephone booth inside the store, Mrs. Marcus, having placed a call, makes impatient gestures as she waits for a reply. The Englishman's car is parked in front of the store and Emmeline Finch is waiting stoically within it. J. Russell Finch is nervously restive. Algernon Hawthorne seems lost in thought. Suddenly Mrs. Marcus opens the door of the booth, leans out, and calls angrily through the doorway to her son-in-law.

MRS. MARCUS

He must be home, he never gets
up this early. Why doesn't he
answer?

She closes herself in the booth again. In f.g. the Englishman turns to J. Russell Finch.

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

I say, I hope you don't mind
my asking, but what sort of chap
is your brother-in-law?

J. RUSSELL FINCH

He's a nut. Why?

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

Well, I do hope he's nothing
like my own brother-in-law.
Curious chap. Secretary of a
golf club out near Pangbourne.

J. RUSSELL FINCH

So what about him?

(CONTINUED)

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

It's just that I was thinking, if Reggie were to get hold of some information like this information, I think that as likely as not that's the last anyone would ever see or hear of dear old Reggie, what? I mean to say, I doubt very much if old Reggie would be waiting for us in Santa Rosita.....

The features of J. Russell Finch reveal in rapid succession curiosity, suspicion, alarm, sudden determination. Even before the Englishman has finished he turns, steps through the doorway, opens the booth, and as he speaks takes the receiver from his mother-in-law.

J. RUSSELL FINCH

We're wasting too much time.

MRS. MARCUS

But, Russell, he's bound to be there --

J. RUSSELL FINCH

(hanging up the receiver)

No, come on, let's just keep going.

Looking disgruntled, Mrs. Marcus comes out of the booth and through the doorway. Looking somewhat relieved, Algernon Hawthorne joins them and they all go over to the car. Just before they get in, and giving her son-in-law a sudden hard and suspicious look:

MRS. MARCUS

Wait a minute. Are you against calling Sylvester?

J. RUSSELL FINCH

He's not there! We're wasting time. Come on, let's go.

The Englishman has already started up the old wagon.

164A INT. LOCKER-ROOM

164A

A typical country-club locker-room, deserted. Lockers, benches, showers, massage-tables. (Glazed windows -- or, if we can see outside, a large pool, also deserted). Tyler Fitzgerald, half-bent over and still holding the back of his head, comes in from the club-room or a passage leading to it. Ding Bell, Benjy Benjamin and the Airport Manager are right behind him. During the following Tyler Fitzgerald goes to a large locker, opens it, then sits down on a bench, still holding his head. As they enter:

TYLER FITZGERALD

(over his shoulder)

- - just some coffee....

BENJY BENJAMIN

You don't know what it means to
us --

TYLER FITZGERALD

Okay, okay, okay. I told you:
I'll take you. I was going to
Los Angeles, but if it means that
much to you --

DING BELL

You just don't know how much --

TYLER FITZGERALD

Okay, okay, okay. But you'll
have to give me a chance to pull
myself together -- maybe a shower
and a cup of coffee -- I just
never had one like this before --

BENJY BENJAMIN

(rushing over to
showers)

You want a shower? I'll turn
it on for you. You want a hot
shower or a cold shower? I'll
turn it on --

DING BELL

(at the same time)

Lemme help you get your clothes
off --

He starts pulling at Tyler Fitzgerald's jacket, jarring
him slightly. Tyler Fitzgerald pulls away and lifts his
hands in protest.

(CONTINUED)

164A CONTINUED:

164A

TYLER FITZGERALD

Okay, okay! Don't do that! Now, listen, fellows, I told you that I'm sympathetic and I'll take you, but just relax a little, will you? I'm sick. Now, just do me one favor. Go outside -- go out and sit by the pool and have a drink or something -- and I'll be with you. Just give us a chance.

(holding his head
again)

Where's that coffee?

AIRPORT MANAGER

George is just getting it.

BENJY BENJAMIN

We're not trying to rush you, Mr. Fitzgerald. It's just that it's like we said --

DING BELL & BENJY BENJAMIN

(together)

-- a matter of life and death --

TYLER FITZGERALD

Okay, okay -- you two just --
okay.....

BENJY BENJAMIN

We'll wait outside.....

Tyler Fitzgerald, rising and reeling, starts taking off his clothes. Ding Bell and Benjy Benjamin go out through another door. It closes, not very loudly; but Tyler Fitzgerald gasps and shudders in reacting to the small sound, and holds his head again.

164B EXT. POOL

164B

Ding Bell and Benjy Benjamin come out to the pool. There is not a soul in sight except one GIRL, but she is very much in sight. A six-foot show-girl type, the girl, stacked (it's the only word) to a spectacular degree, clad in the most ludicrous bikini, is stretched on her back on an inflated rubber mattress at the edge of the pool. Half-asleep, she stirs and looks up as the two men appear. Then she reaches for a bottle of sun-tan lotion. So pre-occupied are Ding Bell and Benjy Benjamin that they give her scarcely a glance.

(CONTINUED)

164B CONTINUED:

164B

GIRL

Oh -- hi. Good morning.

BENJY BENJAMIN

Yeah.

GIRL

(lifting sun-tan lotion)

Would one of you do me a favor?

Just my back and the back of my
legs?

Ding Bell and Benjy Benjamin come over and squat or kneel down beside her. They are all but completely unaware of her. Benjy Benjamin absently takes the lotion, she rolls onto her stomach, and he begins smearing grease on her back.

BENJY BENJAMIN

If only the guy will hurry.

DING BELL

(also applying lotion)

But his plane looks fast. It's got two motors. And he'll take us right there, the whole way.

BENJY BENJAMIN

If only we can get there before that dimwitted dentist.

Ding Bell nods. Absently, almost unconsciously, they both go on spreading the magnificent creature with sun-tan lotion.

165 OUT
166 OUT
167 OUT

165
166
167

168 INT. BREAKDOWN-TRUCK - MOVING

168

Barrelling along at sixty, Lennie Pike keeps glancing nervously at his rear-view mirror, obviously expecting pursuit. Some of the strips of tape have stuck to his clothes, and he keeps ripping them off and throwing them out of the window.

169 INT. STATION WAGON - MOVING

169

The station wagon is moving at speed, but there is so much vibration in the steering now that Algernon Hawthorne is quivering constantly throughout his person. Behind the

(CONTINUED)

169 CONTINUED:

169

three in the front Mrs. Marcus is leaning forward with a fiercely eager expression.

MRS. MARCUS

Stop at the first place you come to. He could have been in the shower --

J. RUSSELL FINCH

No, let's forget about Sylvester. Every minute we waste telephoning --

MRS. MARCUS

Are you saying you don't want to call Sylvester? You mean you don't trust Sylvester, is that it? You don't trust your own brother-in-law?

J. RUSSELL FINCH

Look, I only said --

MRS. MARCUS

Well, if that doesn't --
Emmeline! Did you hear that?
Your husband has just informed us that in his opinion your brother is some kind of crook!

J. RUSSELL FINCH

I didn't say he was a crook --

EMMELINE FINCH

Oh, please, let's not quarrel --

MRS. MARCUS

Why should anybody quarrel? Your husband has just insinuated that he's married into a den of thieves --

J. RUSSELL FINCH

I didn't say den of thiev --

MRS. MARCUS

Stop the car!

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

I beg your pardon?

EMMELINE FINCH

Mother, please --

MRS. MARCUS

Will you stop the car! Stop!

(CONTINUED)

169 CONTINUED: (2)

169

Algernon Hawthorne, startled, brakes sharply.

J. RUSSELL FINCH

Now, be reasonable. All I said --

MRS. MARCUS

Reasonable! Turn off the engine!
Now, we'll make up our minds right
here.

J. RUSSELL FINCH

Look, this doesn't make sense --
(indicating the
Englishman)

We talked it over back there,
and Mr. Hawthorne and I would
prefer --

MRS. MARCUS

What! You mean that you two --
(bellowing at the
Englishman)

You mean it was you that
suggested that my son --

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

Madam, I hasten to assure you --

MRS. MARCUS

Well, if you think that I'm about
to sit still while some unAmerican
foreigner makes slanderous
accusations against my own flesh
and blood -- We'll see about that!

Thrusting violently forward, she grabs the ring of keys
hanging from the ignition, sits back and folds her arms.
During this:

EMMELINE FINCH

Oh, mother, this is awful --

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

I beg your pardon, madam, but --

MRS. MARCUS

So we'll see! So you don't think
your brother-in-law can be trusted!
Well, if my boy is out then every-
body is out! So we'll see!

J. RUSSELL FINCH

It isn't even our car, you don't
have any right --

(CONTINUED)

169 CONTINUED: (3)

169

MRS. MARCUS

You address me on the subject of
having rights?

170 EXT. STATION WAGON

170

Mrs. Marcus opens the door so violently that a hinge cracks, and gets out. The station wagon is standing just off the road in a fairly desolate stretch of country. As she dismounts, a car, travelling in the opposite direction, slows down and stops, and a FUNNY-LOOKING MAN in it calls out across the road:

FUNNY-LOOKING MAN

Trouble? Having some trouble?

MRS. MARCUS

Yes! And we don't need any help
from you!

The Funny-Looking Man, startled, drives away. J. Russell Finch and Algernon Hawthorne have both got out of the station wagon. Emmeline Finch stays in the front seat and puts her face in her hands again. Mrs. Marcus, moving with dignity, begins walking away from the road. Her son-in-law and the Englishman start moving after her.

J. RUSSELL FINCH

Now, with all due respect, this
is too much! Give Mr. Hawthorne
his keys or we'll never get there!

MRS. MARCUS

Ha! Too bad!

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

Madam, I'm bound to confess I find
your attitude somewhat less than
helpful --

MRS. MARCUS

And what's it got to do with you,
if you wouldn't mind telling me?

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

Well, it does occur to me that if
you've quite made up your mind to
withdraw from the affair then you
might reasonably be expected to
hand over my keys so that I at any
rate can -- uh -- press on with it.

(CONTINUED)

MRS. MARCUS

You keep out of this!

(to her son-in-law)

Now, for the very last time, are
we going to call up Syl --

Suddenly the fifteen-year-old dam of J. Russell Finch's bitter resentment, outraged frustration, and pent-up anger bursts, releasing the following:

J. RUSSELL FINCH

No, we are not.

(as she stares at him)

We are not, and I'll tell you why
we are not. Because your son
Sylvester is an irresponsible,
unreliable, big, loud-mouthed,
lazy, good-for-nothing bum who,
if he isn't a downright crook,
it's only because he hasn't got
enough brains or enough ambition
even to be a crook!

He breaks off, momentarily disconcerted, as Emmeline Finch, still sitting in the station wagon, wails. Mrs. Marcus has staggered back a step or two and put a hand to her head, as though she were capable of fainting. The Englishman is watching J. Russell Finch with a new and profound admiration.

J. RUSSELL FINCH

Now, if you don't want to come
with us you don't have to come
with us, but you've got to give
us those keys or else you'll force
us to take them away from you!

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

Hear, hear!

MRS. MARCUS

You wouldn't dare.....

Furiously, incredulously, almost challengingly, Mrs. Marcus backs up another step or two and plunges the ring of keys deep into the copious recesses of her bosom. In the b.g. Emmeline Finch, who keeps groaning and saying "No" throughout this ugly business, climbs out of the station wagon, staggering slightly with the violence of her own emotions. His features a mask of idiot determination, J. Russell Finch moves forward. Algernon Hawthorne is behind him, his manner curiously combining both diffidence and determination.

(CONTINUED)

170 CONTINUED: (2)

170

J. RUSSELL FINCH

For the last time....and I'm
asking in a nice way.....

MRS. MARCUS

You..... wouldn't....dare! Stop!
Take one more step and --

(as he does)

What do you think you're -- if
you lay a hand -- stop! Emmeline,
look at them! Stop! Emmeline!
Help! HELP!

Completely unnerved, Mrs. Marcus has turned around and actually run a few steps farther into the country. But as her son-in-law and the Englishman grab her the camera whips quickly to her daughter, holding closely upon her as, stifling a scream, she falls back weakly against the side of the station wagon and stuffs her wrist into her mouth.

EMMELINE FINCH

Russell! No, don't -- no, you
couldn't -- no, Russell! Oh, please,
you mustn't -- you wouldn't -- oh,
no! Mr. Hawthorne, how could you --
Oh, nooooo.....

171 EXT. THE ASSAULT ITSELF

171

The image is painful to describe. J. Russell Finch and Algernon Hawthorne have seized Mrs. Marcus by the ankles. Holding her upside down, they shake her violently and repeatedly in an effort to dislodge the keys. Thrashing about head downwards, she has raised a good deal of dust. Tinkling and jingling loudly, she adds her own shouts and bellows to the cries of her daughter in the b.g. Above all the din:

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

I assure you, madam, absolutely
no offense intended --

J. RUSSELL FINCH

(grabbing the keys
as they fall)

It's all right! I've got them!

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

Ah! Well done! Oops! Gently!

(CONTINUED)

171 CONTINUED:

171

But as they try to lower her billowing, bellowing bulk to the ground Mrs. Marcus kicks and thrashes violently out of their grasp. As J. Russell Finch at once tries to help her to her feet she hits him a violent blow, low, with her handbag, and at the same time kicks the Englishman savagely on the ankle, making him cry out. J. Russell Finch steps back out of range as she swings at him again.

J. RUSSELL FINCH

You forced us! Now, I'm willing to say I'm sorry, but you -- now, come on, let's get back in the --

MRS. MARCUS

Get away from me! Don't touch me!

172 EXT. STATION WAGON

172

Emmeline Finch starts to run to her mother, but J. Russell Finch, coming back towards the wagon, grabs and holds his wife. They are all talking or shouting at once.

J. RUSSELL FINCH

We had to do it! She made us --

EMMELINE FINCH

Mother! Russell, let me go!

MRS. MARCUS

Just wait! You think you can manhandle a decent woman and just -- you're going to jail! You're going to be arrested for assault! I'm going to sue you for everything you've -- take your hands off my daughter!

Algernon Hawthorne, limping badly, has gone around the wagon, got in and started up.

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

I say, if we're going we'd better be on our way, old chap.....

EMMELINE FINCH

(over and over again)

Oh, mother! Russell, how could you?

J. RUSSELL FINCH

You know I had to do it!
(shouting to the
Englishman)

No, wait just a minute, I'm coming!

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

J. RUSSELL FINCH (CONT'D)

(to his wife again)

You saw what she did! She made us!

(to his mother-in-law)

Be reasonable! He's going!

Get back in the car!

MRS. MARCUS

Take your hands off my daughter!

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

We are wasting so much time,
old man --

J. RUSSELL FINCH

No, wait! Now please, honey,
if she won't come you still have
to come -- I can't leave you here.
Honey, you've got to make a
choice, don't you understand!
And your place is with --
No, wait --

But Emmeline Finch breaks away from him with another cry
and runs to her mother, who puts an unnecessarily protective
arm around her and goes on shouting:

MRS. MARCUS

That's right, go on! Go ahead
you big stupid hooligan! And
just wait and see what happens!

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

Look, old boy, I'm going to say
ta-ta for now --

J. Russell Finch, having called to his wife once again,
turns and starts to get into the station wagon. When he's
only half inside it Algernon Hawthorne lets in the clutch
and the wagon roars away. J. Russell Finch closes the
door and calls back once more in a desperate wail:

J. RUSSELL FINCH

EMMELINE..... Emm.....

EMMELINE FINCH

Oh, mother, how could this happen?
How could it happen?

MRS. MARCUS

I'll show him! Just wait 'til
I -- oh, that big, stupid,
ignorant, phony good-for-nothing
-- I'll show him!

173 INT. STATION WAGON - MOVING

173

J. Russell Finch's anxiety is such that he can't sit still. He writhes, looks back desperately, puts his head in his hands, and thrashes about in his seat. The Englishman is excited and delighted to be back in the race.

J. RUSSELL FINCH

-- and if you'd waited a minute, instead of -- we can't just leave them there, she'll call the police, she'll have us arrested -- we'd better go back. Maybe if we both apologized --

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

Quite useless: you'll never persuade the old harridan to come along now. Far better to press on, what? We've lost a disgusting amount of time as it is.

J. RUSSELL FINCH

She took your keys, she didn't have any right to take your -- she forced us to do what we did --

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

I absolutely agree, and I thought you handled the situation beautifully, my dear fellow. I say, our nearside suspension is positively wonky.

J. RUSSELL FINCH

Listen! Now we've just got to get there, we've got to get at least a share of that money! You don't understand, she's got this mortgage, don't you see, she put this money into my company and I owe her fifteen thousand dollars and she'll kill me! You heard her threaten to sue -- well, she will! She'll knock me right out of business, she'll make Emmeline divorce me -- you don't know what she's like, I tell you! If you knew her the way I know her! Her own husband! If you'd seen the way she -- she just marched him into his grave, like she had a gun at his head! I mean it, she'll kill me!

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

Steady. Now, steady on, old chap.

174 INT. BREAKDOWN-TRUCK - MOVING

174

Reacting to something ahead, Lennie Pike brakes sharply.

175 EXT. ROAD

175

Mrs. Marcus, standing imperiously well out in the road, waves the truck to a halt. Emmeline Finch is sitting disconsolately on a boulder beside the road. As the truck stops Lennie Pike sticks his head out of the window.

LENNIE PIKE AND MRS. MARCUS
(together)

You!

He shifts into bottom gear, ready to go. Very quickly, stepping in front of the truck:

MRS. MARCUS

Wait a minute! We're in trouble!

LENNIE PIKE

Everybody's in trouble! Go on --
get out of the way!

MRS. MARCUS

Look, you don't think that we
were the ones who wanted to leave
you back there? It was my son-
in-law, and that Englishman --

LENNIE PIKE

What Englishman? Come on, get
out of the way!

MRS. MARCUS

The one that picked us up! They
wanted to cheat you out of your
share! Why do you think we
wouldn't go on with them? Now,
all we want is a lift to the
nearest town --

Emmeline Finch, who has risen but not come forward, is staring at her mother as though she'd never really seen her before. Lennie Pike looks at Emmeline Finch shrewdly.

LENNIE PIKE

Is that true, what she's saying?

MRS. MARCUS

What kind of a woman do you think
would lie about a thing like that
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MRS. MARCUS (CONT'D)
in front of her own daughter?
Now, you leave us here, and you
know what you're going to get out
of all this? Nothing! My daughter
and I are going to get it all!

LENNIE PIKE
Yeah? And how you going to do
that?

MRS. MARCUS
I'm going to call up my son, who
is ten miles from Rosita Beach,
and he's going to drive over
there and get the money and
we're going to have it all, that's
how. I was going to offer you a
share just for taking us to a
phone, but as you're not interested,
we'll wait for another car.

She steps out of the way so that Lennie Pike can proceed.
Worried, he glances across at Emmeline Finch.

LENNIE PIKE
Is that true? You really got
a brother already down there?

EMMELINE FINCH
Yes, it's true -- that's true.

LENNIE PIKE
All right, but just remember you
said I get a share --

MRS. MARCUS
Come on, Emmeline, get in.

EMMELINE FINCH
(getting in beside
Lennie Pike)
Mother, for the last time, why
don't we go to the nearest
police --

MRS. MARCUS
(getting in after her)
I'm glad it's the last time.
(to Lennie Pike)
Turn around. If you go back
about four miles --

(CONTINUED)

175 CONTINUED: (2)

175

LENNIE PIKE

No, I'd rather go ahead. We'll
find someplace.

176 INT. BREAKDOWN-TRUCK - MOVING

176

He gets the truck rolling. Suddenly, suspiciously:

MRS. MARCUS

Where'd you get this truck?

LENNIE PIKE

(glancing nervously
behind)

I sort of borrowed it....

176A EXT. POOL

176A

Essentially the same shot. The Girl appears to have gone to sleep, but Ding Bell and Benjy Benjamin are both still applying sun-tan lotion with the same absent air of intense pre-occupation. Then, suddenly:

BENJY BENJAMIN

Hey, he must be ready by now.

DING BELL

Let's go see.

(to sleeping girl)

You're pretty well covered....

They put down the lotion and go back into the locker-room.

176B INT. SHOWER IN (OR OFF) LOCKER-ROOM

176B

Tyler Fitzgerald is standing upright, his legs spread and braced to hold him in that position, asleep. The shower sprays soothingly onto his hairy chest. We hear the entry of the other two. Then:

BENJY BENJAMIN

He's still in the shower! Hey,
Mr. Fitzgerald! You still in
the shower?

Tyler Fitzgerald jerks and wakens with a snoring start. He has been holding a cake of soap in his hand but drops it now.

BENJY BENJAMIN

Hey, you must be really clean
by now, eh?

(CONTINUED)

176B CONTINUED:

176B

TYLER FITZGERALD

Okay, okay, I'm just -- I dropped
the soap --

He bends over to retrieve it and hits his head, pretty hard, against the aluminum side of the shower, which makes quite a loud noise. Exclaiming, he straightens, holds his head with one hand, turns half around to turn off the water, clearly slips on the cake of soap, and falls abruptly out of the picture. This time the side of the shower makes a really big noise, like the start of a J. Arthur Rank picture. Ding Bell and Benjy Benjamin, alarmed, try to open the closed door of the shower, but the unconscious bulk of Tyler Fitzgerald is clearly holding it shut. During this nonsense:

DING BELL & BENJY BENJAMIN

(together)

Hey! Did he fall? Hey, Mr.
Fitzgerald! Open the door! It's
stuck! Hey, did he -- Mr.
Fitzgerald! You all right? Mr.
Fitzgerald!

177 INT. CULPEPER'S OFFICE

177

As busy as ever. Culpeper, sitting on the edge of a desk before the big wall-map, is still on the phone. In the b.g. the Secretary on another line is booking two seats on a Pan-Am flight to Hawaii (Background Script Note 11). On another line the Lieutenant is taking a report from the Aerial Division at State Police H.Q. (Background Script Note 12). And the Sergeant is talking on a fourth line to the Sheriff of McCoy County (Background Script Note 13). As Culpeper in f.g. is speaking his Secretary finishes her conversation and approaches him.

CULPEPER (telephone)

Well, here's the situation,
Sheriff. The dentist and his
wife are way out ahead, and
they ought to be here in about
thirty minutes. The two
Hollywood gag-writers, Bell
and Benjamin, are still at
North Valley airport,
obviously trying to get
another plane. This fellow
Meyer -- Otto Meyer, the one
the truck-driver brought into
the deal -- he's well out in
front among all those on the
ground. We've just had a

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

177 CONTINUED:

177

CULPEPER (CONT'D)
 rundown on him from Boulder City:
 he's a piano player, got fired
 from some joint out there
 yesterday for being too drunk to
 work. Hold on a second....
 (as his Secretary
 approaches)
 Got the seats?

SECRETARY
 Flight seven on Sunday morning.

CULPEPER
 Wonderful. Get my home for me.
 (telephone)
 The thing that's hard to understand
 is that apart from ordinary
 misdemeanors none of these ten
 people have got any records at
 all. And yet we're ready to
 book them for conspiracy, for
 withholding information, for
 causing accidents, failing to
 report accidents, for reckless
 driving, theft, at least three
 cases of assault and battery --
 (as his Secretary
 nods in b.g.)
 Got my home? Excuse me, Sheriff,
 another call....

He hands the receiver to the Lieutenant, who has finished
 his own call and moved up beside him.

CULPEPER
 (indicating his
 private office)
 I'll take it in here....

178 INT. CULPEPER'S PRIVATE OFFICE

178

Culpeper enters, closing the door on the constant murmur
 of voices in the other room, goes over to his desk and takes
 up one of the two phones on it. As he sits down and puts
 his feet on the desk his whole manner suggests that this is
 a great moment in a great day for Culpeper.

CULPEPER
 Ginger?

BILLIE SUE'S VOICE (over the line)
 Daddy, it's Billie Sue --

(CONTINUED)

CULPEPER (telephone)

Oh: let me speak to your mother,
will you, sweetheart?

During the few seconds that he waits, in very close on his reflective, contemplative expression. The question that obviously exercises him: how could any police officer attain such heights of professional brilliance? Then he reacts with pleasure at the sound of the next voice, even though it has a high-pitched, grating, nasal quality.

GINGER'S VOICE (over the line)

Well?

CULPEPER (telephone)

Tell me something. How does it
feel being married to the most
brilliant personality in the law
enforcement industry?

GINGER'S VOICE (over the line)

Are you referring to yourself?

CULPEPER (telephone)

Ginger, I want you to prepare
yourself for a little shock. When
I tell you what's happened here --

GINGER'S VOICE (over the line)

Well, tell me -- I've got this
biscuit-dough --

CULPEPER (telephone)

The Smiler Grogan case is solved.

GINGER'S VOICE (over the line)

The what? So what the hell is
the Smiler Grogan case?

CULPEPER (telephone)

The Tuna factory robbery, the
case I've been talking about
for the last fifteen years. Don't
you remember, the theory I had
that nobody else would agree
with? That Smiler buried the
haul right here in this
neighborhood? Well --

GINGER'S VOICE (over the line)

Look, is this more important than
biscuits? So what do you want me
to do, design a medal or something?

(CONTINUED)

CULPEPER (telephone)
That won't be necessary, that'll
be taken care of by the Department
and the City Council. No, all I
want you to do is three things:
wipe the flour off your hands, go
downtown and buy yourself five-
hundred dollars' worth of the
prettiest clothes you can find,
and make all the preparations
necessary for a little flight to
Hawaii Sunday morning....
(after a little pause)
Ginger?

GINGER'S VOICE (over the line)
No, I'm here. So what's the gag?

CULPEPER (telephone)
It's no gag. As a matter of fact
this is the best break I've had
in thirty years, and you and I are
celebrating. To give you some
idea, the Chief's over at the
Mayor's office right now, discussing
the little matter of my pension --

GINGER'S VOICE (over the line)
You don't mean they're going to
do something --?

CULPEPER (telephone)
Yes, ma'am. And you know what
it'll mean? At least another four,
five-thousand a year, to bring it
into line with the other grades.
At least that. Now listen, I've
changed my mind about the five-
hundred. Make it seven-fifty --
you'll probably need some
accessories. All right?

GINGER'S VOICE (over the line)
I can't believe it. Are you
serious about flying to Hawaii?

CULPEPER (telephone)
Flight seven, Sunday morning.

GINGER'S VOICE (over the line)
Are we taking Billie Sue?

(CONTINUED)

178 CONTINUED: (3)

178

CULPEPER (telephone)

Nope, it's just the two of us,
for about three weeks. We're
going to celebrate, Ginger, and
my feeling is, after twenty-seven
years we've earned it.

179 EXT. CROSSROADS SETTLEMENT

179

Another little commercial hamlet: a filling station, a
chili-hamburger joint, two or three stores, half a dozen
other buildings clustered at a crossroads. In f.g., a
Crockett County Patrolman (whom we haven't seen before) is
standing beside his car, which is parked under cover of a
building. Eighty yards away the Englishman's station wagon
is stopped at the filling station. A Second Patrolman comes
running back to the car, keeping under cover.

SECOND PATROLMAN

They got some trouble with a
wheel -- trying to rent a car.

180 EXT. FILLING STATION

180

A dopey-looking ATTENDANT stands talking to J. Russell Finch
and Algernon Hawthorne, who have dismounted and are looking
at the damaged wheel. As he speaks a phone rings inside.

ATTENDANT

No, I'm sorry. The nearest place
you could be sure of getting one
would be at Canyon Springs --
about forty-five miles. Excuse me.

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

(as Attendant goes)

Forty-five miles? The bloody
machine'll never do it.

J. RUSSELL FINCH

Look, I've been thinking: we're
making a mistake, a terrible mistake.
We've got to go back for them --

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

Back? Oh, now, really, you're not
serious?

J. RUSSELL FINCH

No, listen, don't you see, all she
has to do is get to a telephone

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

180 CONTINUED:

180

J. RUSSELL FINCH (CONT'D)
and my brother-in-law will get
there first and they'll have it
all. The rest of us'll never see
a dime! Come on, let's go!

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE
(as they get in)
But, look here, even if she gets
all the money, I fail to see that
that affects our arrangement. I
mean to say, I'll still be entitled
to the ten per cent we agreed,
surely?

He has already started up. Now as he gets under way
J. Russell Finch merely throws him a look compounded of
pity and disgust.

181 EXT. STATION WAGON AND BREAKDOWN-TRUCK

181

A wide-angled view down the road they've come with the
filling station on the left and the chili-hamburger joint
on the right. As the Englishman swings the station wagon
past the pumps and into a big U-turn, Lennie Pike comes up
fast, brakes, and swings the breakdown-truck off the road
and into a parking space beside the chili-hamburger joint.
The five occupants of the two vehicles fail to notice each
other. Mrs. Marcus has already dismounted and run inside.
The station wagon, shimmying steadily, goes back down the
road and disappears.

182 EXT. CHILI-HAMBURGER JOINT

182

Lennie Pike gets out of the truck, moves up and down, then
pauses and stands restively beside it. Beyond him, through
an open door or window, Mrs. Marcus can be seen putting
coins into a telephone box. Emmeline Finch, slumped in the
truck, suddenly shakes her head.

EMMELINE FINCH
It's like a nightmare, like
something in some awful nightmare.
I have to keep telling myself that
it's all really happening. If you
could have seen what Russell and
that Englishman did to mother --

LENNIE PIKE
Oh, look, people lose their tempers,
that's all. How come you stayed
with her instead of sticking with
your husband?

(CONTINUED)

EMMELINE FINCH

Because I wouldn't have believed that Russell could do a thing like that. Let alone an Englishman. It just proves that good manners don't mean anything, not even English good manners. He kept encouraging Russell. He kept saying hear, hear, and things like that.

LENNIE PIKE

(lost in bitter
reflection)

Listen, you think everybody's behaving like a bunch of nut-heads, you want to know something? Back there when this whole thing started, all I was trying to do, I was going to string along with everybody else just to get a fair share, just my share, you know what I mean? And you know what I wanted the money for? I wanted to be in a position to do something for Miss Jenkins, this little old lady where I live at her boarding house. That's all I wanted, just to do something for Miss Jenkins, like maybe get her a wheel-chair with a motor on it and like take her some flowers every day, in exchange for looking after me and everything since I was fifteen years old, you know? That was all I wanted! So what happens next? So everybody says I'm supposed to have a smaller share than anybody else because they think I'm sort of specially stupid or something, like they don't even care it's a democracy, and in a democracy the one thing that don't matter is how stupid you are, you got an equal --

EMMELINE FINCH

But you know that's not the right attitude --

LENNIE PIKE

And then that dirty, rotten, slimy bum that double-crossed me! When

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

182 CONTINUED: (2)

182

LENNIE PIKE (CONT'D)

I get a hold of that smart aleck
what I'm going to do to him, well,
if you're there and you see it you
just look away, that's all --

But he breaks off as Mrs. Marcus comes out, breathing hard.

LENNIE PIKE

You get him?

MRS. MARCUS

Maybe he went out for something,
for the paper or something. We
can keep on trying --

LENNIE PIKE

(getting into truck)

But what if you never do get him?
Listen, we could be the last ones
there!

The breakdown-truck roars out onto the road and away. A
moment later the Two Patrolmen appear from behind their
cover and stand looking after it.

183 EXT. OTTO'S BUICK

183

Otto Meyer has been making good time in the old Buick
convertible. He is still well out in the wilds in rough,
semi-desert country (but the topographical character should
be different somehow). The Buick comes down a steep hill
at about sixty, then brakes hard to take a sharp curve at
the bottom.

184 INT. OTTO'S BUICK - MOVING

184

Otto Meyer is tense with excitement. Suddenly he reacts
curiously to something ahead and puts on the brakes again.

185 EXT. ROAD

185

A huge, powerfully built, roughly dressed, anxious-looking
man who looks like Mike Mazurki (THE MINER) is out in the
middle of the road. An old battered jeep is parked on the
shoulder. The Miner, who is waving the car to a halt in
the middle of the road is carrying a small black medical
bag. As Otto Meyer stops he rushes up to the car, reacting
briefly to the fact that the right-side door is in the back
seat.

(CONTINUED)

OTTO MEYER

What's the matter?

THE MINER

I need help! Can you give me a lift? It's my wife, she's sick, see, and the doc sent me after some medicine and I just ran out of gas.

OTTO MEYER

Sure I'll give you a lift, jump in, jump in.

186 INT. OTTO'S BUICK - MOVING

186

Relieved, the Miner does. Otto Meyer lets in the clutch and they roll away. The Miner, who is distraught and sweating with anxiety, wipes the sweat from his strained features.

THE MINER

You might know, first time I've run out of gas in ten years, just when I -- man, I've never been so scared in my life.

OTTO MEYER

What's the matter with your wife?

THE MINER

That's the trouble, the doc's not sure. He says whatever it is she's too sick even to be moved. He needed this special stuff and we haven't got a phone so I went to get it and then ran out of -- slow down a little, the turning's just up here on the right --

OTTO MEYER

Turning? You mean your place is off the road?

THE MINER

Only a mile. Just here....

OTTO MEYER

Now, wait a minute, friend, I've got problems myself, and I can't afford to take the time --

(CONTINUED)

186 CONTINUED:

186

THE MINER

Hold it! Stop the car.

(Otto Meyer does)

Now listen, buddy, I'm sorry about your problems but the doc said to hurry -- and this is my wife. Now, come on.....

187 EXT. ROAD - WAGON-TRACK

187

Horrified, Otto Meyer looks at the rocky wagon-track that appears to lead off into some very rough country. Not wanting any part of this:

OTTO MEYER

But there's not even a road --
and I told you I'm in a --

THE MINER

Come on, we're wasting time!
Listen, don't force me --

The Miner has turned and leaned over towards Otto Meyer, and is holding the steering-wheel in one powerful hand. So intense are his feelings that, simply by squeezing it, he unintentionally breaks a section of the rim right out of it.

THE MINER

-- don't force me to get rough.
Oh -- sorry, I didn't mean to --

OTTO MEYER

(looking at the
damage)

No, no, of course not. You say it's only a mile? Well, certainly, certainly. I don't think that's too much to ask --

But the old Buick takes him out of earshot as, at about fifteen miles an hour, it goes bouncing down the rough and rutted track and out of sight. As it disappears a patrol-car comes into the shot, slows down and stops. One of the Two (new) Patrolmen excited, studying his map, is already reporting in.

PATROLMAN (microphone)

....given the guy a lift.
According to the map there's an old mine about a mile away and this track's the only way to it.
Do we go in or just wait here?
Over.....

188 INT. CULPEPER'S OFFICE

188

Culpeper is on the phone before the map. His three subordinates are as busy as ever, and while Culpeper is speaking another phone rings and the Secretary answers it in b.g. A new character is on the scene: A POLICE REPORTER, a cynical-looking fellow who, very hopped-up, is talking excitedly (Background Script Note 14) to the Lieutenant across the room while waiting for Culpeper to finish.

CULPEPER (telephone)

No, if they follow him in they may run smack into him. Tell your men just to sit still and pick him up again when he gets back to the road, right? Excuse me a minute, Sheriff....

SECRETARY

Mrs. Culpeper's on the line. I've switched it in there....

Nodding, Culpeper starts into his private office; but the Police Reporter, breaking off his conversation with the Lieutenant, crosses quickly to him.

THE REPORTER

A story as big as this, there must be some way you can let me --

CULPEPER

One word: you let one word out on this before we wrap it up and I'm warning you, Smitty, I'll lower a boom on you. Look, suppose the radio people got this thing: and break out with it now: all those people turn around and go home, you've got no story, and I've got no case. Wait a minute.....

189 INT. CULPEPER'S PRIVATE OFFICE

189

Culpeper has moved into his private office as he speaks. He shuts the door on the Police Reporter, goes to his desk, and picks up the receiver. He is smiling.

CULPEPER

Ginger?

(CONTINUED)

GINGER'S VOICE (over the line)

Listen, I've been thinking. It's the weekend after next that Billie Sue's invited her new boy friend down from Pomona. And not only that, we forgot about Momma: she's supposed to be coming to stay for two weeks from next Wednesday.....

CULPEPER (telephone)

Oh well now, wait a minute, Ginger, we can't let a couple of little things like that --

GINGER'S VOICE (over the line)

Little things? You know what Momma's going to say: that we just don't want her. And Billie Sue says that the boy at Pomona went to a lot of trouble to arrange for that weekend --

CULPEPER (telephone)

No, come on, now, Ginger, this is silly. Tell Billie Sue to call -- what's his name? Oscar? -- tell her to call Oscar and say how much you and I are looking forward to meeting him, but have her explain that this is our first chance for a vacation in years and ask Oscar to come for the first weekend after we get back -- and the same with your mother. Tell her we'd love to have her the day after we get back from Hawaii. She'll understand. Now, do that, Ginger. Do it right away.

Still bouncing and lurching violently, the old convertible comes around the shoulder of the hill at ten miles an hour. A hundred yards farther, at the end of the wagon-track, there is a dilapidated shack. A car (the doctor's) stands at the front door, and the entrance to a mine-shaft can be seen beyond in the b.g. In the last hundred yards the rough track dips very sharply down a one-in-four incline. Otto Meyer brakes sharply at the top.

(CONTINUED)

190 CONTINUED:

190

OTTO MEYER

Look, that's too steep! You can make it the last hundred yards, can't you?

THE MINER

Sure -- but you'll have to drive her down there to turn round. I sure appreciate this, mister!

Clutching the black medical bag carefully, The Miner jumps out of the convertible and runs down ahead towards the shack. A grubby-looking LITTLE BOY comes out of the shack, sees The Miner approaching, and calls something to someone inside. Hesitantly, not liking the steepness of the incline, Otto Meyer, braking steadily, lets the old Buick start down the gradient. When he has gone ten yards the wheels on one side get caught in a deep rut. The Buick lurches very violently.

191 EXT. THE ENGINE-SUMP

191

Close on the bottom of the engine-sump as it smacks really hard against the side of a rock buried in the surface of the road. A rivet goes, or the steel plate of the sump actually cracks: in any case, a steady stream of engine-oil begins running out of the sump and pouring across and down the track.

192 EXT. WAGON-TRACK

192

Cursing indistinctly, unaware of the damage, Otto Meyer keeps going. The oil streaming out of his sump now begins running blackly across the whole width of the track in front of his tires. The car skids and slithers slightly as it reaches the bottom of the incline. Beyond in the b.g. The Miner has run into the shack. Now, as Otto Meyer furiously reverses the Buick and prepares to drive back out again, the Little Boy comes out of the shack and stands watching him. Otto Meyer flings him one glance of loathing, slams the Buick into bottom gear, and starts coming back up the incline. (It might be possible for him to drive right up into a big close shot before) he discovers, halfway up the gradient, that his wheels are spinning in the big patch of oil, to which his still-leaking sump is steadily adding. Cursing and growling some more, Otto Meyer stops trying to accelerate, puts on the brake, lets the Buick bounce and slither back down to the bottom of the hill, backs up another fifty yards past the shack, slams hard into bottom gear again, races the engine, lets in the clutch, and comes tearing forward, hitting the bottom of the hill at at least thirty mile

(CONTINUED)

192 CONTINUED:

192

an hour. In the b.g. in front of the shack the Little Boy watches quietly. But all that happens to Otto Meyer is that he drives back up into very close shot again and then stops there, straining with frustrated effort, as his spinning rear wheels, losing all traction, burn shrieking rubber so loudly that Otto Meyer's curses are intelligible only to lip-readers. Then he throttles back, puts on the brakes again, and just sits there for a long moment, thinking.

193 INT. BIPLANE - MOVING IN THE AIR

193

Melville and Monica Crump are sitting silently lost in thought. Melville Crump's eyes are glazed with excitement. Pleased, the Pilot leans forward and shouts, pointing ahead.

THE PILOT

There she is!

194 EXT. AERIAL SHOT - SANTA ROSITA AND SEA

194

From their viewpoint, a vast and quite heavily populated area, with the Pacific in the distance.

195 BACK TO SHOT

195

Cupping his mouth with his hand:

THE PILOT

'Bout fifteen miles! I know a place where we can land her without bothering anybody! Won't be long now!

MELVILLE CRUMP

(to his wife)

We're first! We're bound to be the first! We'll have a whole hour before any of the others -- picks and shovels! We'll get a taxi, stop and buy some picks and shovels --

MONICA CRUMP

Oh, Melville, it's wonderful!

MELVILLE CRUMP

(a savage cackle
of laughter)

When I think of the rest of them --
when I think what they're going to

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

195 CONTINUED:

195

MELVILLE CRUMP (CONT'D)
 say when they all finally get there
and find out we've already gone....!

196 EXT. AT THE MINE

196

The Little Boy lounges against the side of the shack, munching an apple thoughtfully as he watches Otto Meyer. With the old convertible turned around, Otto Meyer glances at the boy, races the engine, lets in the clutch, and starts backing up the incline in a determined burst of acceleration. For a long moment, as the Buick gets within twenty yards of the top, the boy hesitates, his mouth agape, between bites. Then the wheels start spinning, the tires scream, and the engine roars. Inscrutably the Little Boy takes his bite, and Otto Meyer comes skidding down the hill again.

197 EXT. STATION WAGON

197

J. Russell Finch is looking about wildly on both sides of the road as Algernon Hawthorne pulls the shimmying station wagon to a halt at the deserted spot where the women were abandoned. As they come up into earshot:

J. RUSSELL FINCH
not here! They're gone!

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE
 Well, surely they got a lift --

J. RUSSELL FINCH
 But we only passed six or seven cars and they weren't in any of them. They must've been picked up by somebody going that way. Look, let's go back to that place where we phoned before --

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE
 But that's miles in the wrong direction -- and we're not certain of finding them there!

J. RUSSELL FINCH
 (now near despair)
 Oh, I don't know. I've got to find my wife. Oh, I don't know what to do!

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE
 But, whatever has happened to them, surely it makes more sense for the
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE (CONT'D)
 two of us just to press on? For
 all we know your brother-in-law
 may be out, away somewhere. And
 even if he were to be the first,
 he has still to find the money,
 hasn't he? No, really, I do most
 earnestly recommend that we simply
 forget about your good ladies and
 press on with all possible dispatch --

J. RUSSELL FINCH
 Oh, all right, all right, turn
 around! Press on with all
 possible dispatch!

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE
 (starting to turn)
 And I don't really feel that
 personal rancour will help the
 situation -- if I may say so....

197A INT. STATION WAGON - MOVING

197A

As they get rolling again J. Russell Finch turns and sits
 staring at the Englishman with an expression of anger and
 contempt. Algernon Hawthorne glances at him and grimaces in
 an ugly way. Still J. Russell Finch stares at him, his
 features so distorted by a raging despair as to suggest a
 disordered mind. The Englishman glances at him again,
 frowning uneasily and may perhaps loosen his collar with a
 finger. Still J. Russell Finch stares at him, looking him
 up and down, examining his bone structure, his hair, his
 moustache, his clothes and his complexion. Then, finally
 (when the silent little scene has been played for all the
 relief we can get from the incessant chatter), and just be-
 fore the Englishman is moved to speak:

J. RUSSELL FINCH
 Well, it may surprise to you know
 that I don't really feel that what
 you don't really feel matters a
hoot! Not that much!

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE
 Well, really, if you're going to
 descend to that level of --

J. RUSSELL FINCH
 Oh, shut up! Don't the British
 ever stop talking? You're only

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

197A CONTINUED:

197A

J. RUSSELL FINCH (CONT'D)
in on this deal because we brought
you in! So just shut up and drive --
and keep on the right side of the
road! You're in the United States
of America now, not that fogbound
little swamp you call your country --

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE
Now, see here, I have no wish to
quarrel with you, Finch, but
speaking as a representative of
Her Majesty's Armed Forces I take
the most particular exception to
any remarks that --

J. RUSSELL FINCH
Oh, phooey! If you're so proud of
the place why don't you go back
there? What're you doing over
here? You want me to tell you
something? As far as I'm concerned
the whole British race is
practically finished! If it
hadn't been for Lend-Lease -- if
we hadn't kept the whole place
afloat by giving them billions
that they never even said thank
you for, the whole phoney outfit
would've sunk right under the
Atlantic years ago --

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE
If I had the greivous misfortune
to be a citizen of this benighted
country I should be most hesitant
in offering any criticism whatever
of any other --

J. RUSSELL FINCH
(outraged)
Are you knocking this country?
Are you saying something against
America?

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE
Against it? I should be positively
astounded to hear of anything that
could be said for it! Why, the
whole bloody place is the most
unspeakable matriarchy in the whole
history of civilisation! Look at
yourself, and the way your wife and

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

197A CONTINUED: (2)

197A

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE (CONT'D)

her strumpet of a mother put you through hoops! So far as I can see American men have been totally emasculated. They're like slaves. They die like flies from coronary thrombosis while their women sit under hair-dryers eating chocolates and arranging for every second Tuesday to be some bloody sort of Mothers' Day! And this positively infantile preoccupation with bosoms! In all my time in this wretched, Godforsaken country the one thing that has most appalled me is the American people's preposterous pre-occupation with bosoms! Don't you realize, the secondary female sexual characteristic has become the dominant theme in American culture -- in literature, in advertising, in all fields of entertainment, in everything! I'll wager anything you like, if American women stopped wearing brassieres, your whole national economy would bloody well collapse overnight!

198 EXT. AT THE MINE

198

Otto Meyer has disappeared and the Buick is out of sight. The Little Boy, starting a second apple, has moved out forty or fifty yards from the shack and climbed up onto a big rock, where he sits, his knees drawn up and his arms resting across them, ready for a grandstand view. We hear the battered old Buick for several seconds before we see it. Then, coming at an almost incredible fifty miles an hour, it appears on the rough boulder-strewn ground behind the shack, bounces with a roar onto the wagon-track, and goes bounding, in a preposterous series of leaps and lurches, in another desperate try at the little hill. But again the traction goes, the wheels spin, the Buick slithers and slides back down when it is only ten feet from the top -- and the Little Boy permits himself the slightest suggestion of a smile. Otto Meyer almost screams at the Little Boy as the car reaches the bottom again.

OTTO MEYER

Listen! I've got to get out of here! Go in and ask your dad to come out for a minute and tell me some way I can get out of here! Hurry up!

(CONTINUED)

LITTLE BOY

I can show you a way out. There's another way around to the --

OTTO MEYER

To the road? Back to the road?
Well, come on! Why didn't you say
so? Listen, you show me the way,
I'll give you a dollar!

LITTLE BOY

Um. Three dollars.

OTTO MEYER

All right, three dollars, but
come on, I'm in a hurry! Come
on, jump in the car! Which way?

LITTLE BOY

Around that way. What happened
to your door?

OTTO MEYER

Never mind that. You just tell
me the way. You're a good little
boy!

The battered old Buick, leaving a tiny black trail of oil,
moves off away from the shack and the wagon-track, doing
about fifteen on the rough, uneven ground.

199 INT. CULPEPER'S PRIVATE OFFICE

199

Moving quickly, his manner a little distracted now, Culpeper
comes into his private office and grabs the receiver.
Frowning:

CULPEPER (telephone)

Ginger? What's the matter now?

GINGER'S VOICE (over the line)

Well, now we have got a problem.
It's Billie Sue. She's locked
herself in her room and she's
simply hysterical, she's crying
so loud the neighbors are going --

CULPEPER (telephone)

What! But what's the matter?

(CONTINUED)

GINGER'S VOICE (over the line)

Well, she did just what you suggested, she called up Oscar at Pomona and they had some kind of argument about how he'd already arranged everything -- and he said Billie Sue wasn't taking their engagement seriously -- and then they started simply screaming at each other and anyway now the whole engagement's off and I don't know. Listen, can you hear her in her room? The neighbors are going to think somebody's getting murdered --

CULPEPER (telephone)

But Ginger, that's ridiculous! Look, if this boy Oscar is as childish as that then she's better off without him! Now, go tell her --

GINGER'S VOICE (over the line)

You tell her! Listen, you can't just treat this whole engagement like it was nothing! Where else is Billie Sue going to find a boy her age who's seven feet tall? You keep forgetting if a girl is six feet five inches tall she's bound to have special problems --

CULPEPER (telephone)

But be reasonable! I know she has special problems, but with all the basketball teams there are in California she's bound to meet -- sooner or later she's bound to meet some fellow who's not only seven feet tall but who's also serious-minded and --

As he is speaking the Lieutenant appears in the half-open doorway. Annoyed, Culpeper shakes his head and waves him away.

CULPEPER (telephone)

Now look, Ginger, I have to hang up now because I'm very busy. Tell Billie Sue that we'll take her to Hawaii with us, and then call up your mother and get that

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

199 CONTINUED: (2)

199

CULPEPER (CONT'D)

out of the way. Look, just
explain to them that we're
celebrating, will you?

GINGER'S VOICE (over the line)

Well, all right, but I'm beginning
to think maybe this idea of
celebrating anything is a punk
idea....

CULPEPER (telephone)

I'll call you later. Now, bye-bye.

He hangs up, grunting with exasperation, and goes quickly
back into the other room.

200 INT. MAIN OFFICE

200

As Culpeper comes in the Lieutenant turns to him with some
notes in his hand.

LIEUTENANT

Aerial Division say that Doctor
and Mrs. Crump are headed for the
field out at Blue Lake. They say
they're only five minutes away.

Culpeper moves up to another big large-scale wall map of
Santa Rosita and its surrounding area.

CULPEPER

All right. Tell all units --
(to his secretary)

Tell communications I want a mike
and speaker rigged up here right
away so that we've got the control,
right?

(to Lieutenant)

Tell all units that Doctor and
Mrs. Crump are almost certain to
take a taxi. I want them under
observation by at least three
units at all times. We'll use a
checkerboard set-up with wide open
channels, right? What's the
latest on the others?

LIEUTENANT

(consulting notes)

Well, those two gag-writers are
still at North Valley field -

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

200 CONTINUED:

200

LIEUTENANT (CONT'D)

nobody's taken off yet. There's a 'copter report that the man Otto Meyer is for some reason trying to get back to the main road by going around another way --

CULPEPER

He may have realized he was being watched. Never mind. It's Doctor and Mrs. Crump that we're chiefly concerned with now --

Two Technicians come into the office with a radio set, microphone and speaker.

CULPEPER

Good. Set it up here, will you?

201 EXT. BLUE LAKE AIRFIELD

201

A shabby little field on the outskirts of Santa Rosita, it is mainly used for club-flying, freight and short-charter work. There is an old wooden control tower at one end of the ramshackle administration buildings, a few hangars, some light aircraft standing about, a few mechanics and fitters working in a desultory way. A taxi is parked outside the Airport Cafe, its driver asleep behind the wheel. In the f.g. an F-Car (unmarked) is drawn up beside the buildings and Two Santa Rosita Plainclothes Detectives are standing by it, one watching through field-glasses, the other holding the radio mike. The one with the glasses points at a distant speck in the sky. The Second Plainclothesman nods.

SECOND PLAINCLOTHESMAN (microphone)

F sixteen to Central. They're coming in, all right. Landing in three, four minutes. Over.

CULPEPER (through speaker)

Right. Now, on your toes, fellows.

In f.g. one of the two Plainclothesmen turns and looks across the field. In at least two other positions in the b.g. plain cars with two plainclothes officers waiting in or by each are visible.

201A INT. CLUB ROOM

201A

Attired now in extremely smart but casually sporty clothes, Tyler Fitzgerald comes in from the locker-room, followed by

(CONTINUED)

201A CONTINUED:

201A

Ding Bell and Benjy Benjamin. All the blinds in the big room are up now and GEORGE, a funny-looking club steward, is bustling about behind the bar. (There is no-one else in the place, but there is an atmosphere of opening for the day's business). With one hand pressed against his temple, moving with extreme care, Tyler Fitzgerald goes over to the bar-counter and settles himself gently on a stool. Ding Bell and Benjy Benjamin sit down restively on either side of him. But as they enter:

TYLER FITZGERALD

-- okay, okay, okay --

BENJY BENJAMIN

-- and we're really obliged to you, Mr. Fitzgerald, you've got no idea, I mean it's a real obligation --

GEORGE

(calling into kitchen)

Let's have Mr. Fitzgerald's breakfast....

DING BELL

It's just that we're scared that we'll be too late, you know what I mean? Like if she has some last words for us or anything --

TYLER FITZGERALD

Okay! Listen, there's somebody with her, isn't there? The poor old lady's not lying all alone somewhere, is she?

BENJY BENJAMIN

But I feel she needs us, I can't help feeling we're letting her down --

TYLER FITZGERALD

Well, really, fellows, I'll get you there, but just let me get something inside me. Maybe if I eat something....

But his voice trails away as George, having picked up the plate at the kitchen-hatch, now places some ham and eggs on the counter before him. In an open booth near the bar a telephone has started ringing. George moves to answer it and Tyler Fitzgerald gives the eggs a long, thoughtful look before gently pushing the plate away.

(CONTINUED)

201A CONTINUED: (2)

201A

GEORGE (telephone)
 North Valley Flying Club. Who?
 Oh -- just a minute and I'll see....
 (turning to the bar)
 It's for you, Mr. Fitzgerald: a
 lady.

Tyler Fitzgerald sits frowning for a moment, as though trying to remember. Then suddenly his features fall into an expression of abject terror. He swallows hard and holds his head again.

TYLER FITZGERALD
 Oh. Oh, boy. Boy oh boy oh boy,
 am I in trouble: oh boy. Oh....
 (moving towards
 telephone)
 No, listen, tell her that you don't
 -- no, wait a minute: man oh man,
 am I in the -- no, I'd better -- I'd
 better speak to her -- yeah, I guess
 I'd better. Boy....
 (then, on telephone)
 Sweetie? Good morning.... Now, I
 know what you're going to say, but
 I can explain.... I was on my way
 to the party -- if you'll just let
 me explain....

Still sitting at the bar Ding Bell and Benjy Benjamin now enter upon a prolonged series of reactions to everything that Tyler Fitzgerald says. The series ranges from a simple slow-burn to a fairly complex conflagration.

TYLER FITZGERALD (telephone)
 But I can explain that, Gloria....
 but you've got to give me a chance
 to explain.... well, of course I
 feel badly about it -- I feel
awful -- but if you'll just allow
 me to explain.... I can explain
 that.... I can explain the whole
 thing.... But why won't you let me
 explain? Don't you want me to
 explain?..... But I've told you;
 I know how it looks but I can explain
 exactly what happened....

Then covering the mouthpiece with his hand, leaning out of the booth:

TYLER FITZGERALD
 George, give me -- give me a small
 glass of beer or something, will
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

201A CONTINUED: (3)

201A

TYLER FITZGERALD (CONT'D)

you? No, wait: make it a bourbon
old-fashioned. I need something
to....

(then, on telephone)

I know. I know. I know, I know,
I know. But -- all right, now
wait a minute, Gloria, I just
want to ask you one thing, just
one thing, all right? Well, are
you going to give me a chance to
explain?

202 OUT

202

203 OUT

203

204 EXT. BLUE LAKE AIRFIELD

204

The biplane, down, has stopped, its engine still ticking
over, fifty yards from the nearest police car, near the
main buildings. Melville Crump has jumped down and is
helping his wife to dismount. As she drops to the ground
she catches and tears her skirt again, exclaiming, and then
examining the tear. At the same time Melville Crump is
speaking up above the sound of the engine to the Pilot.

MELVILLE CRUMP

.... And you can keep an eye on
the Chev for a day or two till I
can get back for it, all right?

PILOT

Reckon. Only just don't mention
I flew you to anybody, 'cause
she's not exactly licensed for
charter, know what I mean? Just
trying to do a favor.

MELVILLE CRUMP

Many thanks!

205 EXT. SANTA ROSITA POLICE-CAR

205

Two Officers watch casually as, in b.g., Melville and Monica
Crump move quickly, half running, between two buildings and
out to a point at which Melville Crump sees the taxi.

206 EXT. TAXI

206

Reaching it, Melville Crump shakes the sleeping Driver, who sits up, yawning. In b.g. one of the Officers strolls casually towards them, wanting to get within earshot.

MELVILLE CRUMP

Take us out to -- no, wait a minute: we want to go out to the beach, but stop at a hardware store, any hardware store, all right? And we're in a hurry!

He has already opened the door for his wife. Now as the taxi starts up he gets in. It rolls away. At various places in b.g. we see at least two or three cars (all with two men in them) casually move out to follow. And the Officer who has heard Melville Crump's instructions has run back to his car and grabbed the microphone and started talking.

207 INT. CULPEPER'S OFFICE

207

Culpeper, his three subordinates and the Reporter are grouped intently by the radio speaker, which is set up in front of the big map of Santa Rosita.

OFFICER'S VOICE (through speaker)

.... A hardware store, then out to the beach, but no address mentioned. Over.

CULPEPER

The beach? Where at the beach?

LIEUTENANT

Could be a bungalow somewhere --

CULPEPER

(impatiently)

Ah -- never mind, in ten minutes we'll have the whole answer....

208 - OUT
209 - OUT
210 - OUT
211 - OUT
212 - OUT
213 - OUT
214 - OUT
215 - OUT

208
209
210
211
212
213
214
215

216 INT. OTTO'S BUICK - MOVING

216

With the Little Boy beside him, Otto Meyer is proceeding at about twenty miles an hour across a rough but level stretch of ground in desolate country. Having cheered up some:

OTTO MEYER

This is better than the track.
How much farther to the road?

LITTLE BOY

Well, it's quite a ways yet.

(Camera might lift to reveal, high in the sky above them, a helicopter stooging about.)

217 EXT. STREET

217

In some busy street in a Santa Rosita shopping district the taxi stops outside Dinckler's Hardware Store. Forty yards beyond it in the b.g. one of the police-cars pulls in at the corner, its occupants watching the taxi. Melville and Monica Crump get out. Turning to the driver:

MELVILLE CRUMP

We'll just be a minute....

In the b.g. one of the Officers gets out and strolls casually towards the taxi. As Melville and Monica Crump start to enter the store a Salesman comes quickly out.

SALESMAN

No, we're closed. It's twelve --

MELVILLE CRUMP

(impatiently,
annoyed)

Aw, don't be silly, I just want
to buy some --

SALESMAN

(nodding inside)

Mr. Dinckler's still there --
you can ask him.

The Salesman goes off down the street. Melville and Monica Crump enter the store.

218 INT. HARDWARE STORE

218

It is a big store, fifty yards long, two stories high, with staircases leading to floors above and below, and not a soul in sight. Moving quickly, looking for picks and shovels, Melville Crump comes half the length of the store, then sees a sign TOOLS, GARDEN IMPLEMENTS, above the open door from which stairs lead down to the basement.

MELVILLE CRUMP

Ah, down stairs. Come on.

Followed by his wife he goes quickly through the doorway, down a flight of wooden stairs, out of sight. As the Crumps disappear a door opens at the back of the store. MR. DINCKLER, a funny-looking middle-aged man, appears. He dries his hands on a roller-towel on the door, comes forward through the store, pauses to kick off the stop at the bottom of the door through which Melville and Monica have descended. The heavy door swings shut, a stout Yale lock clicking into place. Then, quickly, Mr. Dinckler flicks off a half-dozen light switches beside the door.

219 INT. BASEMENT

219

Melville Crump, having selected a shovel, is just picking up a pick when the lights go out.

MELVILLE CRUMP

Hey -- hey! -- hey!

MONICA CRUMP

(in total darkness)

Melville! The lights have gone out.

220 EXT. STREET

220

The Officer, leaning down casually by the window of the taxi (and having shown his badge) nods as the Taxi-driver speaks.

TAXI-DRIVER

They haven't told me yet. He just said out to the beach --

But during this, to the Officer's surprise, Mr. Dinckler comes out of the store, closes the main door, locks it and walks quickly away down the street. After a second's hesitation the Officer trots after him, catching up with him when Mr. Dinckler has almost reached the police-car.

OFFICER

Mr. Dinckler? What about those people? You locked them in the store --

(CONTINUED)

220 CONTINUED:

220

MR. DINCKLER

But I didn't see any -- I'll go
back and let them out --

OFFICER

No, wait. Better wait a minute.

MR. DINCKLER

You the police? What's up?

The Officer turns quickly, runs over to the police-car.

221 INT. BASEMENT

221

Melville Crump, only very dimly discernible, is up at the
top of the stairs, pounding on the door with his clenched
fist. Shouting at the top of his voice:

MELVILLE CRUMP

Hey! Hey, somebody! Hey, we're
shut in here! Hey, open the door!

In the darkness somewhere below him Monica Crump is uttering
a few distressed little moans. Giving up pounding:

MELVILLE CRUMP

This is -- this is absolutely --
well this is the stupidest -- here,
have you got your lighter? Strike
a light -- here, give it to me,
we've got to get some light --

He has turned, stumbled, and now crashes headlong down the
stairs, yelling. Monica Crump screams very loudly.

222 INT. CULPEPER'S OFFICE

222

Culpeper and the others are listening to the radio.

OFFICER'S VOICE (through speaker)

.... should we have Mr. Dinckler
let them out, or what? F seven,
over.

CULPEPER

How could they get themselves
locked in a basement? We'd better
let them out....

He starts to give the order when his Sergeant intervenes.

(CONTINUED)

222 CONTINUED:

222

SERGEANT

Aw -- that ain't fair.

CULPEPER

What? What do you mean?

SERGEANT

Well, they got themselves in there,
they ought to get themselves out.
If you help them it's not fair to
the others.

CULPEPER

But the moment anybody gets where
they're going we're picking them
up. What difference does it make
who gets there first?

SERGEANT

It's a race, ain't it? What you
want to help this dentist for?
Me, I been pullin' all the time
for the guy with the furniture van,
Pike. The rules oughta be the same
for everybody, or it's just not fair.

Culpeper considers this, chuckles at the absurdity. Then:

CULPEPER (microphone)

Central to F seven. No, we'll
leave them there and see what
happens. Cover all the exits but
render no assistance. Over.

223 INT. BASEMENT

223

Melville Crump has found and lighted several candles.
Carrying one, he is moving about somewhere down at one end
of the big basement room. Monica Crump, looking very
distressed, stands holding two lighted candles at the
bottom of the staircase, watching him. In some exasperation:

MELVILLE CRUMP

There must be some other way --
hey, wait: sledge-hammers -- I'll
knock that door down!

Picking up a sixteen-pound sledge-hammer, he comes back to
the staircase and hands his candle to his wife.

MELVILLE CRUMP

Here, hold this, so I can see.

(CONTINUED)

223 CONTINUED:

223

MONICA CRUMP

You think you can do it?

MELVILLE CRUMP

Of course I can do it.

He goes up to the landing at the top of the staircase, spits in his hand, rubs his hands together, swells his chest, takes up the sledge-hammer and swings a mighty blow at the door. The sixteen-pound head of the hammer, not yet permanently wedged to the shaft, flies through the air and knocks a huge pyramid display of Kerosene lanterns crashing to the floor. Monica Crump screams again and drops all the candles. As he gropes back down the stairs in the darkness:

MELVILLE CRUMP

Monica -- now listen, we've got
to get a grip on ourselves.....

223A EXT. STATION WAGON

223A

The right front wheel of the Englishman's station wagon is very loose now, so that the wagon occasionally touches the shoulder or shimmies a few feet over the center line. It is only moving at thirty-five or forty.

223B INT. STATION WAGON - MOVING

223B

Algernon Hawthorne and J. Russell Finch are still quarreling furiously. Both seem near the point of intellectual and emotional exhaustion.

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

.....And only last week, walking past some school, I heard this enormous group of idiot children singing this inconceivably stupid song, some drivel about my country 'tis of thee sweet liberty or some such rubbish -- and what do you think they were using for the tune? God Save The Queen! Our national anthem! In all my life I've never encountered such a monstrous piece of bloody cheek!

J. RUSSELL FINCH

Listen, let me tell you something! Do you know what you can do with your national anthem -- and with your Savile Row suits and your Rolls-Royce automobiles and your

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

J. RUSSELL FINCH (CONT'D)

rolled umbrellas and your stinking
fish and chips and your phoney
British accent? You can take
the whole bunch and -- what are
you doing?

Positively outraged, Algernon Hawthorne has braked hard
to a very sudden halt, flinging J. Russell Finch forward
in his seat. Turning upon the American with a really
terrifying expression:

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

Now you go too far.

J. RUSSELL FINCH

So why stop? Listen, you're
just being ridiculous!

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

I assure you I have no intention
of tolerating any such remarks
as you've been making --

J. RUSSELL FINCH

Oh, look, this is childish!
What are we arguing about? I
don't know where my wife and
her mother are -- we're way
behind all the others -- we're
not getting anywhere -- and
we waste time arguing! Maybe
if we just shut up and try to
get another car and get there
as fast as possible -- you never
know, we might not be too late.
So you shut up about this country
and I'll shut up about your country
and let's both just shut up!

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

Very well. That is certainly
the most intelligent thing you've
said today.

He gets the old wagon into gear and rolling again. Both
frowning, both men subside for a long moment. Then,
unable to contain himself any longer:

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

But there was just one other
small point I had to make --

224 INT. CULPEPER'S OFFICE

224

Both the Lieutenant and the Secretary hang up on calls and turn to Culpeper.

LIEUTENANT

Aerial report that the man Otto Meyer is now three miles from the road and getting nowhere. They say he has a child in the car with him.

SECRETARY

They've traced that number that Mrs. Marcus keeps calling. It's a bungalow at Silver Strand Beach, and it's listed under the name of Sylvester Marcus --

CULPEPER

Her son, maybe? Yes, that's it, she thought she could get him in first --

(to Lieutenant)

Have the nearest cruiser check that bungalow, and tell him to keep it covered until this whole thing's wrapped up. And tell Communications to tap that line: I want a report immediately if anybody answers that phone, right?

OFFICER'S VOICE (through speaker)

F seven to Central. There's a lot of pounding inside now. We think he's trying to beat his way out. Over.

CULPEPER

Sounds as if they're stuck, all right.

225 INT. BASEMENT

225

The door sounds very solid indeed as Melville Crump slams it. After a final despairing blow, streaming with sweat, he puts down the sledge-hammer, leaning it against the door. Sliding, it falls over, then crashes down on some shelves, smashing a good deal of stuff and causing Monica Crump to exclaim. He goes down the staircase.

MONICA CRUMP

Can't you do it, Melville?

(CONTINUED)

225 CONTINUED:

225

MELVILLE CRUMP

Don't you think if I could do it I would do it? No! Now, we've got to think, we've got to use our heads! There must be a way to get out of here! Wait a minute!

Moving about feverishly, he has noticed an enormous display of tools, among which some electric saws are prominently featured.

MELVILLE CRUMP

Saws! That's it! We can saw through the door! We need a brace and bit to drill a hole through it, and a plug for one of these saws, and then we'll saw our way out of here! Look for a brace and bit, a big one!

MONICA CRUMP

A brace and a what?

226 INT. CULPEPER'S PRIVATE OFFICE

226

With the door to the main office closed, Culpeper is seated at his desk, already on the phone. His domestic situation is clearly distracting him more and more.

CULPEPER (telephone)

But what did your mother say?

GINGER'S VOICE (over the line)

Oh, you know: if we didn't really want her why did we invite her in the first place -- all that.....

CULPEPER (telephone)

Well, what about Billie Sue? Did you --

GINGER'S VOICE (over the line)

She says couldn't we invite Oscar to come with us --

CULPEPER (telephone)

To Hawaii? Ginger, listen, I told you, we're supposed to be celeb -- look, if we took both of them, don't you know what it would mean?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CULPEPER (CONT'D)

All that business about special beds, everywhere we go people staring at us all the time! Now, listen, tell Billie Sue that she's coming but that we can not take Oscar!

GINGER'S VOICE (over the line)

All right, but there's something else. Mike just called me, he wanted us to come out to Manzanita for the weekend, so I told him about going to Hawaii. He says if we can afford to fly to Hawaii how come you can't afford to co-sign his note, so that he can go into partnership in that motel business?

CULPEPER (telephone)

Now, Ginger, listen! Just because he's your brother, that doesn't give Mike any right to take that line with us --

GINGER'S VOICE (over the line)

That's what I tried to tell him --

CULPEPER (telephone)

Maybe I will be able to co-sign the loan for him, I just don't know yet. It depends on how far the Council's willing to go on the pension --

GINGER'S VOICE (over the line)

You mean I can tell Mike that --

CULPEPER (telephone)

Well, provided you make it clear that I can't say yet exactly how much I'll be able to do. Now, I simply have to hang up. Tell Billie Sue what I said, stop worrying about your mother, and stop worrying about your brother. Just stop worrying. Now, bye-bye.

It is little more than a shack in a shabby beach neighborhood. A shiny new Pontiac convertible is parked in the driveway beside it. A Prowl-Car Cop comes running back

(CONTINUED)

227 CONTINUED:

227

from the Pontiac to the Prowl-Car in f.g., nods to his Partner, and reaches inside the car for the microphone.

PROWL-CAR COP (microphone)

Car nine to Central. The guy's home, all right, but he's got company. Car outside belongs to a Mrs. Calvin Halliburton, 5388 Vista Drive, Escondido. And they're not answering the phone, because we heard it ringing. Over.

228 EXT. OTTO'S BUICK

228

It has now reached some very rough country. Following the Little Boy's direction, Otto Meyer drives at three miles an hour along a rugged stretch which curves around the lower slopes of a rocky, scrub-covered hill. He looks really concerned. Reaching a point at which he is fearful of falling into a twenty-foot ravine, he suddenly stops.

OTTO MEYER

Look, are you sure this is the way?

LITTLE BOY

Sure I'm sure. Just keep going.

OTTO MEYER

Well, you get out in front and watch I don't go over the edge there! Go on, tell me if I get too close to the edge!

The Little Boy gets out, runs twenty-feet in front of the car. At the same time Otto Meyer squints up at the sun.

OTTO MEYER

Hey, wait a minute: the road was to the west and we're going east. Why are we going east? Why east?

LITTLE BOY

It's the only way back. Come on, you're all right, come on.....

Furiously Otto Meyer lets in the clutch. At two or three miles per hour the battered old Buick, pitching and rolling, crawls forward over the rocky ground.

229 INT. HARDWARE STORE

229

Very close on the door as the tip of a bit chews its way through the wood. (There is plenty of light on this upstairs side of the door: we should notice that the wooden door is heavily reinforced around the edges with thin metal strips. Nothing unusual about it, except that it's a very heavy door). As the bit, an inch in diameter, drills through the wood, the whole bit suddenly slams through under Melville Crump's pressure.

230 INT. BASEMENT

230

Melville Crump gives a painful yell as the bit crashes through the door and he bangs his elbow. Monica Crump, who is standing beside him with two candles, makes a sympathetic sound. He pulls the brace and bit out of the one-inch hole, bends down, peers through it, and shouts.

MELVILLE CRUMP

Hey! Hey!

Then he puts his eye to it for a moment. Then, turning, he goes quickly down stairs and grabs a long thin metal electric saw, the flex of which he has plugged into a socket at the bottom of the staircase. As he comes quickly back up the staircase, his expression grimly determined:

MELVILLE CRUMP

Now, watch this. I'll cut the whole lock right out of the door. We'll be out of here before you --

But he breaks off, exasperated, as he discovers that the length of cord on the electric-saw is six inches too short: the saw won't reach the hole he's drilled in the door. After two seconds:

MONICA CRUMP

Melville, it won't reach the door.

MELVILLE CRUMP

Thank you. Thank you, Monica. If you hadn't told me --

MONICA CRUMP

Well, all I meant is that the cord --

(CONTINUED)

230 CONTINUED:

230

MELVILLE CRUMP

I know what I can do. I can
take the cord off another one
and splice the two lengths
together.

He starts down the staircase, stumbles, catches at the
banister. Exasperated:

MELVILLE CRUMP

Will you just hold the candles
so I can see what I'm doing?
Will you just hold the candles?
Please?

231 EXT. THE BREAKDOWN-TRUCK - GAS STATION, SMALL TOWN 231

A long shot. The breakdown-truck pulls into a gas station
on the outskirts of a small town. Mrs. Marcus goes quickly
inside, may be seen through a window making another call.
Lennie Pike gets out of the truck, speaks to an Attendant,
the Attendant starts putting gas in the tank. Emmeline
Finch stays in the truck. Lennie Pike looks about nervously.
Unseen by him, a furtive police-car pulls up and sits waiting
two-hundred yards away in the b.g.

231A INT. TYLER FITZGERALD'S PLANE - MOVING IN THE AIR 231A

As the plane climbs sharply away from the field, Tyler
Fitzgerald retracts the wheels, checks various instru-
ments, and settles back in his seat. Ding Bell and
Benjy Benjamin are sitting just behind him. The plane
is the very latest thing, luxuriously and specially
fitted out to suit the tastes of an extremely well-heeled
playboy. The cabin is roomy and comfortable with plenty
of headroom. There are seats for about five, a built-in
bunk, a lavatory, a beautifully-equipped bar, racks and
cupboards full of guns, deep-sea fishing-tackle, golf
clubs, racquets, etc. Ding Bell and Benjy Benjamin both
look nervous. Tyler Fitzgerald, in unspeakable hungover
agony, looks terrible.

231B INT. POLICE HELICOPTER - MOVING IN THE AIR 231B

Two Aerial Division cops in it are watching Tyler
Fitzgerald's plane and one of them is calling in.

(CONTINUED)

231B CONTINUED:

231B

AERIAL COP (mike)
license number (?), flying
 south-southwest, estimated speed
 a hundred-seventy-five. We'll
 never be able to stay with them.
 Why not have other units pick
 him up when he gets farther south?
 Over.

231C BACK TO SHOT

231C

Not liking the glare, Tyler Fitzgerald puts on some dark
 glasses. Leaning forward:

BENJY BENJAMIN
 Gee, she's really fast, hunh?

TYLER FITZGERALD
 Yeah. You'll be there in no time.
 You know what I need? I need a
 drink. There's some ice and
 stuff in the bar back there:
 what about making us some Old-
 Fashioneds?

DING BELL
 But do you think you ought to
 drink - I mean, while we're flying?

TYLER FITZGERALD
 Oh, come on, come on, come on.
 Stop kidding and make us some drinks,
 will you? Come on.

Reluctantly Ding Bell gets out of his seat, moves back to
 the bar, lifts a flap, discovers a sink and a refrigerator
 and, above it, built-in cupboards full of bottles and
 plastic tumblers in wooden racks. Looking a little worried
 he begins making the drinks.

232 OUT
 233 OUT

232
 233

234 EXT. SYLVESTER'S BUNGALOW

234

The two Prowl-Car Cops are up quite close to it, behind the
 garage of the place next door, listening to the sound of
 the telephone within. It rings two or three times, then
 stops. The Officers exchange glances and grins.

238 INT. CULPEPER'S PRIVATE OFFICE

238

Culpeper, standing, is on the phone. Almost flabbergasted:

CULPEPER (telephone)
Your mother's had what?

GINGER'S VOICE (over the line)
Oh -- one of her attacks, those attacks she gets. The woman who lives upstairs there just phoned and said the doctor's on his way. I keep telling myself that it can't be serious --

CULPEPER (telephone)
Serious? Now, listen, Ginger, you know the thing's not serious, you know your mother's putting it on. Ginger, if it's happened a hundred-and-fifty times before -- including right in the middle of our wedding -- how can it possibly be serious? Look, did you tell Billie Sue --

GINGER'S VOICE (over the line)
I tried to. She says she's leaving.

CULPEPER (telephone)
Leaving what? Leaving home? Let me talk to her. Get her to the phone.

GINGER'S VOICE (over the line)
I'll try. Just a minute.....

Very close on Culpeper as the unintelligible voices of his wife and daughter, raised in hysterical argument, come indistinctly over the line. As he stands there, holding the receiver before him and staring at it as if it were a live and evil instrument, there is a tap at the door and the Lieutenant sticks his head in.

LIEUTENANT
Chief, there's a 'copter report --

CULPEPER
Oh, all right, I'm coming! Just -- just wait a minute, can't you?
(telephone again)
What? She what?

GINGER'S VOICE (over the line)
She won't come to the phone.

239 EXT. STREET OUTSIDE HARDWARE STORE

239

By the wall of the building an Officer is listening again to the faint sound of heavy pounding.

235 EXT. BREAKDOWN-TRUCK - GAS STATION, SMALL TOWN

235

The same long shot. Mrs. Marcus, obviously furious, hangs up and comes out of the gas station. Lennie Pike has already started the truck. She gets in and it rolls away. In the b.g. the police-car moves patiently out to follow.

236 INT. HARDWARE STORE

236

Again on the other side of the door as with a sharp angry high-pitched whine the long narrow blade of the electric-saw starts slashing its way through the heavy door. It cuts very quickly through the one-inch hole over towards the door frame, making Melville Crump's intention of cutting the whole lock away perfectly clear. But when the blade reaches the metal strip which binds the edges of the door there is a terrible metallic ripping sound and the fine teeth of the saw begin tearing and twisting themselves into a distorted and useless mess.

237 INT. BASEMENT

237

Exasperated, Melville Crump switches the motor off, forces the blade back along the path it has cut, and yanks the ruined saw out of the one-inch hole. During this:

MELVILLE CRUMP

It's hit something! There's some metal or something in the way!
(examining the blade)

Look at it! Absolutely ruined, and they've got the nerve to ask eighteen-ninety-five for a piece of junk like that!

MONICA CRUMP

But Melville, if you can't saw a way out then how are we going to get out?

Instead of replying, he flings the useless saw away, takes one of the candles from her, goes down the staircase and moves off past some display counters into the farthest recesses of the darkness. There, moving too quickly, he blows the candle out. His voice pathetic in the darkness:

MELVILLE CRUMP

Oh, for the love of -- bring me a light, will you? I want to --

An incredible crash as he stumbles and pitches headlong into some display and brings down some loose-standing shelves full of buckets. His wife screams again.

MONICA CRUMP

Melville, what are you doing?

There is much more light now. There are dozens of candles lighted and stuck up all over the place, and Monica Crump, using one, is lighting still more. Melville Crump, who has found another door at one end of the basement, is swinging wildly at it with another sledge-hammer. Nearly exhausted, he breaks off momentarily and looks at his wife.

MELVILLE CRUMP

It must lead somewhere. It's not an outside door or we'd hear some noises, but it may be a room with a window in it.....

Picking up the heavy sledge, he swings another couple of blows, and the last one knocks the door off its hinges. Exclaiming hopefully, Melville Crump peers into the dark little room, turns and takes a candle, pushes the door out of the doorway, and steps in. His wife comes up beside him. It is just a little room, ten feet square, in which explosives, ammunition and fireworks are stored. No window.

MELVILLE CRUMP

It's just another store-room.
Wait a minute: dynamite! We could blow our way out of here --

MONICA CRUMP

(reacting with alarm)

Oh, no! You can't! Melville --
do you know anything about dynamite,
or things like that? I can't stand
explos --

MELVILLE CRUMP

There's nothing to it. I've watched people blowing up tree stumps and -- no, wait: that's the burglar-alarm. That's what we can do! We can set off the burglar-alarm, somebody'll come running in to see what -- and we'll be out! Now don't be frightened if a bell goes real loud. Don't be frightened.....

Holding a candle in one hand he reaches up to a black box on the wall and pushes and then pulls a couple of levers sticking out of the side of it. Nothing happens. Then he opens the front of the box, revealing a lot of electrical apparatus.

MELVILLE CRUMP

Just stand back a little.....

(CONTINUED)

Taking aim, he swings a tremendous blow which knocks the whole apparatus off the wall. It crashes to the floor but no bell sounds. Suddenly, bellowing almost hysterically:

MELVILLE CRUMP

Have you ever seen anything like it? That's the burglar alarm!
The stupidest burglar in the world could walk right in here and help himself to everything in the place and we can't even get out!

He begins hitting the big black box around the floor with the sledge-hammer, striking at it savagely, knocking it to pieces. Then he rains a furious succession of blows at the thick black cables which lead to it. Then, in a sudden frenzy he picks up a length of the cable and begins slamming the shattered end of it against the wall. Then, as he picks up another length in the other hand and stands looking at the two frayed ends:

MONICA CRUMP

But I was just thinking. Even if you did get the bell going and somebody came, what about the damage? Won't they make you pay for the damage?

MELVILLE CRUMP

(outraged by the suggestion)

Damage! Make us pay for the damage?
We're the ones that they shut in here --

Instantly all is violent action. Inadvertently he touches the two heavily-charged ends of the cable. Tremendous sparks fly, and continue to fly: he gasps, then yells, and yells again. She screams. Vibrating like jelly, trying and failing to let go of the fused cables, he advances hysterically upon his wife, yelling at the top of his voice.

MELVILLE CRUMP

Grab it! I can't let go! Monica, grab one of them!

But Monica Crump, fearful of electrocution, retreats before him, herself screaming. For a wild instant, his expression a frantic mixture of fear for himself and rage with her, he tries to make her take one. Then, in sudden terrible desperation, as the only way of freeing himself from the hissing, spitting, writhing cables, he charges backwards a few paces in one tremendous lunge. The cables are torn out

(CONTINUED)

240 CONTINUED: (2)

240

of his grasp by the force of his retreat, the connection is broken, and the hissing and spitting stop abruptly. But his backward plunge takes him up against some shelves which, extending into the room, are heavily laden with hundreds of tins of paint. The shelves crash over, knocking down others which in turn strike others. As masses of stuff crash to the floor the din is extraordinary. It is almost impossible to hear Monica Crump screaming.

241 EXT. OTTO'S BUICK

241

A preposterous shot. Swerving and lurching drunkenly, the battered old Buick is crawling painfully up an incline of fifty degrees. Otto Meyer is clearly hysterical now. The Little Boy is fifty feet ahead of the car, motioning him on and up. The gradient is so steep that the Buick actually slips back a few feet. Then it clears a slight rise. Immediately, aghast, Otto Meyer pulls on the hand-brake, gets up in the seat, and points ahead at some still higher, still rougher country half a mile ahead.

OTTO MEYER

That? You mean we're supposed to
drive over -- what's the matter
with you? You're crazy! I'll
never get over that --

But he breaks off as one of his tires (they are being cut up very badly on this ground) now blows with a bang. As it does the old Buick's brakes give slightly and it starts slipping back down the hill. Whimpering audibly, Otto Meyer quickly, desperately slams her back into gear.

242 INT. CULPEPER'S PRIVATE OFFICE

242

Distraught now, Culpeper comes in, slams the door, grabs the phone.

CULPEPER

Well? Did you stop her?

GINGER'S VOICE (over the line)

Before I could run after her the
doctor called up --

CULPEPER (telephone)

Well, what does he say?

GINGER'S VOICE (over the line)

He says it's not serious, but he
wanted to talk to you, so I gave
him your number --

(CONTINUED)

242 CONTINUED:

242

A soft knock, and the Secretary sticks her head in. Softly:

SECRETARY

Long-distance for you, a Doctor
Chadwick -- he's on the other line.

CULPEPER (telephone, nodding)

He's on the other line now. I'll
call you back.

GINGER'S VOICE (over the line)

Listen, Mike called back, too. I
told him just what you said. What
do I do about Billie Sue? She's
down at the bus-stop --

CULPEPER (telephone)

Well, run down there! Tell her to
call me! What am I supposed to do,
Ginger, have her arrested? I'll
call you back.....

(lifting other phone)

Doctor Chadwick? Captain Culpeper.
How is she? Is there anything
seriously wrong?

DOCTOR'S VOICE (over the line)

Organically speaking, no. The old
woman's as sound as a bell, But
there is a problem, Captain. It's
difficult to talk about on the
telephone, but the fact is your
wife's mother appears to have
feelings of antagonism towards you
personally that are so strong that --
well, in my opinion it amounts to
a serious mental imbalance.

CULPEPER (telephone)

You mean she's crazy? But she's
always been like that. She hasn't
changed a bit in twenty-eight years!

DOCTOR'S VOICE (over the line)

Yes. Well, if you like, I can call
in a psychiatrist, because she
definitely needs treatment. It
might take six months, or even a
year, and it's not inexpensive.
But it might be worth it to you
to have her straightened out. Your
wife has my number, in case you --

(CONTINUED)

242 CONTINUED: (2)

242

CULPEPER (telephone)

Yes, well, I'll have to think about this, Doctor, but -- thanks for -- all you've done. Thanks very much -- for everything.....

243 EXT. BREAKDOWN-TRUCK - DRUG-STORE

243

In the forecourt of a big drug-store on the outskirts of some good-sized town Lennie Pike stands writhing with impatience beside the truck. Emmeline Finch, looking completely exhausted, slumps in the front seat. Beyond them in the b.g., Mrs. Marcus can be seen telephoning.

LENNIE PIKE

Aw, listen, this is no good! We must've spent a whole hour calling a number and no answer. Can't you make her see --

EMMELINE FINCH

I'm sorry. It's no good talking to me. I can't make anybody see anything about anything.

244 EXT. SYLVESTER'S BUNGALOW

244

The Prowl-Car Cops, lurking quite close, hear the phone ring once or twice. Then, indistinctly from within, a woman answering, saying: "Hello". The Two Cops stiffen, try to get closer.

245 INT. DRUG-STORE - TELEPHONE BOOTH

245

Mrs. Marcus reacts, electrified. Harshly, quickly:

MRS. MARCUS

Who's that? Who's that?

246 INT. SYLVESTER'S BUNGALOW

246

Cleaned up, and with everything in order it would look terrible. As it is it's all but indescribable. Darkened, all the blinds down, overturned furniture, dead flowers, empty beer cans on the floor, paper coming off the walls, dirty laundry, a great pile of last week's potato-salad, pickles that have turned white. A great flabby hulk of a man (SYLVESTER MARCUS) lies on a bed, snoring stentoriously. An exhausted-looking but by no means unattractive lady in

(CONTINUED)

246 CONTINUED:

246

her thirties (MRS. CALVIN HALLIBURTON) is somewhere across the room, weakly holding the receiver. She is wearing a bathing or sun-suit.

MRS. CALVIN HALLIBURTON

What? Well, who do you want?

247 INT. DRUG-STORE - TELEPHONE BOOTH

247

Beyond Mrs. Marcus, in the b.g., Lennie Pike reacts sharply as Mrs. Marcus signals to him. Turning quickly, he opens the door of the truck for Emmeline Finch. Interested despite herself Emmeline Finch climbs down, and a moment later she and Lennie Pike come inside and crowd close upon the booth. (NOTE: Both ends of the conversation, in the drug-store and in the bungalow, to be cross-cut repeatedly now).

MRS. MARCUS (telephone)

I want my son! Who is that? I want to speak to Sylvester Marcus!

MRS. CALVIN HALLIBURTON (telephone)

Oh. Well, you'll have to wait a minute. I'll see if I can....

(calling across room)

Hey, wake up! There's a woman says she's your mother on the phone --

SYLVESTER MARCUS

(waking sluggishly)

What? What? My mother? What, on the telephone? Mom? Oh....

He gets up, staggering. He is wearing bathing trunks. He pulls an Hawaiian shirt on as he crosses the room.

MRS. MARCUS

There's somebody there, and they're getting him. Now we'll see!

SYLVESTER MARCUS

Hello?

MRS. MARCUS (telephone)

Sylvester! Sylvester?

SYLVESTER MARCUS (telephone)

That you, Mom?

MRS. MARCUS (telephone)

Of course it's me! I've been trying to get you all morning!

(CONTINUED)

SYLVESTER MARCUS (telephone)

Ah, well I was asleep, you see,
and I don't guess I -- hey, Mom,
wait just a minute, will you?

(calling across room)

Hey, get me a beer or something,
will you? Man, I feel like
somebody ran over me with a --

(then, telephone)

So what's with you, Mom? How's
every little thing in Fresno, okay?

MRS. MARCUS (telephone)

Sylvester, will you listen?
Something's happened!

SYLVESTER MARCUS (telephone)

It has? Well, what's that, Mom?
Hey, you all right? Sis all right?

MRS. MARCUS (telephone)

Sylvester, don't talk, just listen.
There was an accident this morning,
a man got killed --

SYLVESTER MARCUS (telephone)

Who? Who got killed? Mom? What's
the matter?

MRS. MARCUS (telephone)

Listen! Pay attention! We heard
about something! About some money!
Sylvester, we know where there's a
fortune!

(closing booth door,
cupping mouthpiece)

Sylvester, can you hear me? There's
a whole fortune, in cash, and you
can get it before anybody gets it,
but you've got to hurry, do you hear?

SYLVESTER MARCUS (telephone)

Hey, Mom! What's the matter? What
is this? Mom, are you all right?

MRS. MARCUS (telephone)

Of course I'm all right! Sylvester --

SYLVESTER MARCUS (telephone)

Well, where are you? I mean,
where're you speaking from, Mom?

(CONTINUED)

MRS. MARCUS (telephone)
That doesn't matter -- we're in
Plaster City, but that doesn't
matter. Now, listen --

SYLVESTER MARCUS (telephone)
But I thought you were going on
vacation. Are Russell and Emmeline
with you?

MRS. MARCUS (telephone)
Sylvester, forget about Russell!
Will you just shut up and let me --

SYLVESTER MARCUS (telephone)
But what's going on? Mom, where's
Russell?

MRS. MARCUS (telephone)
Don't even mention Russell! When
I tell you what Russell did --

LENNIE PIKE
Just tell him about the dough.

MRS. MARCUS
You keep out of this, will you?

SYLVESTER MARCUS (telephone)
But what did Russell do, Mom?
(calling across
the room)
Something's happened to my Mom!
I think she's flipped her --
(telephone)
What did he do?

MRS. MARCUS (telephone)
He assaulted me, if you want to
know! He grabbed me, right beside
the road, he and this Englishman I
don't even know --

SYLVESTER MARCUS (telephone)
(really frightened)
Mom! Who's with you? Who are you
with now? And where are you?

MRS. MARCUS (telephone)
I'm with this truck-driver in
Peterson's Drug Store in a place
called Plaster City and will you
shut up a minute so that I can tell
you what --

(CONTINUED)

247 CONTINUED: (3)

247

SYLVESTER MARCUS
 (calling across the room)
 She's flipped! She's gone off her
 rocker or something!
 (then, telephone)
 Now, listen! Mom! Listen, you
 stay right there! I'm coming!
 I'm coming right now!

MRS. MARCUS (telephone)
Will you shut up and listen!

SYLVESTER MARCUS (telephone)
 Mom, it's going to be all right!
 Now, stay right there and don't
 worry! Just take it easy! I'm
 coming right now and everything'll
 be all right!

248 INT. DRUG-STORE

248

Mrs. Marcus, in a frenzy of exasperation now, has come out of the booth and turned to the Cashier to get some more change. Several shoppers and the people sitting at the fountain watch the three of them curiously.

MRS. MARCUS
 Give me some change! Hurry up!
 (to her daughter)
 He wouldn't even let me speak, the
 big idiot! How could he be so
stupid?

249 EXT. SYLVESTER'S BUNGALOW

249

The two Prowl-Car Cops move quickly and furtively away from the bungalow as Sylvester Marcus, having put on some shoes, comes running out of the bungalow towards the Pontiac. The Cops dodge under cover in b.g., as Sylvester Marcus jumps into the car and Mrs. Calvin Halliburton appears in the doorway. Both Sylvester Marcus and Mrs. Calvin Halliburton are quite hysterical

MRS. CALVIN HALLIBURTON
 No! You can't take my car! My
 husband -- what do you think my
husband is going to say? Stop!

SYLVESTER MARCUS
 I've got to! It's my mother!
 Either she's gone crazy or she's
 been raped or something! Maybe both!

(CONTINUED)

249 CONTINUED:

249

She is still screaming "No!" as Sylvester Marcus backs the Pontiac convertible out of the drive, kicks it into low gear, and roars rapidly away. Inside the bungalow the phone is ringing again. With a wail Mrs. Calvin Halliburton goes back inside to answer it. Further down the street, the Prowl-Car appears and moves off after the Pontiac.

250 INT. SYLVESTER'S BUNGALOW

250

(The hysterical Mrs. Calvin Halliburton to be cross-cut again with the outraged Mrs. Marcus in the drug-store).

MRS. CALVIN HALLIBURTON (telephone)

Yes? Hello!

MRS. MARCUS (telephone)

Will you tell Sylvester --

MRS. CALVIN HALLIBURTON (telephone)

Sylvester's gone! He took my car!
Oh, what am I going to do? He's
taken my car! He just grabbed my
keys and.....

251 INT. DRUG-STORE - TELEPHONE BOOTH

251

Very slowly, with a stunned expression, Mrs. Marcus hangs up the phone. Lennie Pike is standing beside the booth, staring at her. Emmeline Finch is just behind him, watching both him and her mother. After a pause:

LENNIE PIKE

Well?

MRS. MARCUS

So he's coming here. But I'm not
to worry about anything because
everything's going to be all right.

(to her daughter,
suddenly exploding)

Exactly like your father! Big,
stupid, muscle-headed moron -- I
tell you he's exactly like your
father!

EMMELINE FINCH

(wailing pathetically)

Oh, Mother, how can you say a thing
like that about your own --

(CONTINUED)

251 CONTINUED:

251

MRS. MARCUS
(furiously, to
Lennie Pike)

Well, what are you just standing
there for? What are we waiting
for? Let's get out of here!

252 EXT. STATION WAGON - MOVING

252

It is rolling along at not more than thirty-five in deserted country. The rightfront wheel has an all but incredible amount of wobble in it now, and as they waffle through an S-curve the Englishman obviously has enormous difficulty even in staying on the road.

253 INT. STATION WAGON - MOVING

253

Both J. Russell Finch and Algernon Hawthorne are looking extremely unhappy. There is so much free play and vibration in the steering that the Englishman, shaking steadily in his seat, has to wrestle the wheel incessantly just to keep going. Beside him J. Russell Finch writhes and jerks nervously, repeatedly, in his seat.

J. RUSSELL FINCH
Easy! Watch that -- you're over
the line, you're too far -- watch
that curve -- careful!

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE
(explosively)
All right! It really isn't
necessary for you to -- I'm doing
my best, surely you can see that?
This running commentary is driving
me positively bonkers!

J. RUSSELL FINCH
It was just that you were a little
bit over the -- WATCH IT!

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE
Will you -- now, I assure you I
have no wish to be offensive, but
if you don't pipe down I'm going
to -- now, look here. It's less
than twenty miles to Canyon City
and the chap at the petrol station
said we'd be able to hire another --

(CONTINUED)

J. RUSSELL FINCH

I know. It's just that I'm a little nervous. I haven't been in very good shape lately, you know? That dentist, the one I told you rented the plane, he's bound to be there by now. Either that or I'll bet anything that my mother-in-law --

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

I say, do let's drop the subject of your blasted mother-in-law, shall we? I would be grateful --

J. RUSSELL FINCH

But if she gets her hands on that three-hundred-and-fifty thousand dollars that's the finish, that's all, and the rest of us may as well --
CAREFUL! WATCH IT!

254 INT. BASEMENT

254

The scene is now a very colorful one. A great many of the cans of paint that Melville Crump knocked down evidently crashed open and spilled their contents, for a very large area of the floor now resembles nothing so much as an immense Jackson Pollock. It is really very pretty in the candlelight. But at the start the scene is a sad one. Melville Crump is sitting slumped on the bottom step of the staircase, defeated and forlorn. Monica Crump is leaning with her elbows on a counter and her head in her hands.

MONICA CRUMP

You'll have to think of some story, something to tell them. When they see all the damage you've done --

She breaks off, horrified, as Melville Crump, making a terrible noise in his throat, leaps frenziedly to his feet, grabs a discarded sledge-hammer, and begins smashing a big display of picnic equipment.

MONICA CRUMP

Melville! Melville, stop! STOP!

He flings the heavy hammer away from him with all his exhausted might. As it knocks something else crashing and clattering to the varicolored floor he whirls upon his wife. Beside himself, raging, quite hysterically:

(CONTINUED)

MELVILLE CRUMP

First! I was first! I was ahead
of all of them! I got the plane!
I had the whole thing, right in
the palm of my hand! All I wanted
was just a pick and shovel! And
then -- hey.....hey....

MONICA CRUMP

(as he stands staring
wildly)

What's the matter, Melville? What
are you staring at?

MELVILLE CRUMP

(pointing at them)

Blow-torches! I can burn a way
out! Hey! I can burn that whole
lock right out of the door!

He has run over to the blow-torches, grabbed one, and
started studying some instructions on it.

MONICA CRUMP

Do you think it'll work?

MELVILLE CRUMP

It's simple! All you do is --
listen! We're not beaten yet!

255 INT. TYLER FITZGERALD'S PLANE - MOVING IN THE AIR

255

Tyler Fitzgerald drains the last of his Old-Fashioned and
hands the glass to Ding Bell.

TYLER FITZGERALD

Don't make them so sweet this time.

DING BELL

You sure you want another one?
We've already had two. Let's
wait till we --

TYLER FITZGERALD

Oh, come on, what're you talking
about? Look, I'll make them this time.

(to Benjy Benjamin,
just behind him)

Here: you take the controls.....

BENJY BENJAMIN

Me? But I can't -- you mean me?

(CONTINUED)

Tyler Fitzgerald has risen and stands holding the stick with one hand so that Benjy Benjamin can take it. Benjy Benjamin doesn't move.

TYLER FITZGERALD

Sure. There's nothing to it.
Move into the seat.

DING BELL

Hey, Benjy doesn't know anything
about -- Benjy can't fly this --

TYLER FITZGERALD

Oh, nonsense, anybody can fly.
Here, come on, I'll show you.

Very nervously, Benjy Benjamin squeezes past Tyler Fitzgerald and sits in the pilot's seat. Shaking his head:

BENJY BENJAMIN

Hey, look, I don't know anything
about --

TYLER FITZGERALD

Believe me, will you? Here. Hold
that. Now stick your feet on the
rudder -- that's right. So who
says you can't fly an airplane?
Now, I'll show you how to make an
Old-Fashioned the old-fashioned way.

BENJY BENJAMIN

But, what if something happens?

TYLER FITZGERALD

If what happens?

Ding Bell, looking very apprehensive, has come forward and moved into the seat right behind the pilot's seat, where he sits looking nervously over his partner's shoulder. Tyler Fitzgerald stands watching Benjy Benjamin for a moment, grinning, then moves back to the bar.

DING BELL

Now, don't worry, Benjy, just hold
her steady, you're all right --

TYLER FITZGERALD

All right? He's great. He's a
natural-born flier, that's all.

Tyler Fitzgerald slices a lemon in half, starts to pour whiskey into a plastic pitcher, discovers the bottle's nearly spent. Opening a cupboard above the bar, he takes another full quart out of a rack in the cupboard. As he

(CONTINUED)

does, the plane banks slightly to the right. Thrown slightly off balance, he turns and calls forward:

TYLER FITZGERALD

Little left aileron, eh? Here.....

He sets the bottle on a cupboard shelf, turns and steps forward to lean over Benjy Benjamin's shoulder. Behind him, as the plane banks to the left, the half-lemon rolls off the bar to the floor.

TYLER FITZGERALD

No, that's too much, just ease her back. That's right. You're great, boy, you're just great.

He slaps the extremely nervous Benjy Benjamin on the shoulder, turns back to the bar, slips on the lemon and falls very hard. The metal arm of a chair (or the edge of the bar or something) catches him quite resoundingly just at the base of the skull. Unheard and unnoticed by the two up front, he rolls onto his face, out cold. And then, as if that weren't enough, the plane banks slightly to the left and the quart of bourbon comes down and gives him a confirmatory blow on some other part of the skull. Up front, Ding Bell is close beside his partner and supporting his hand on the stick. Such view as we have of the horizon is see-sawing quite a bit now. During the following Ding Bell is too concerned about Benjy Benjamin's efforts at the controls to turn around, and speaks repeatedly to Tyler Fitzgerald over his shoulder.

DING BELL

No, ease her back: didn't you hear what he said?

(then, over his shoulder)

Look, don't you think you'd better -- listen, you'd better come back and -- watch it, Benjy! Straighten her up!

(again over his shoulder)

Hey, all kidding aside, this is beginning to make me ---

In his anxiety he has half-risen and turned in his seat. Now he sees the unconscious Tyler Fitzgerald on the floor and his voice rises, breaking hysterically:

DING BELL

-- NERVOUS!

(screaming at his partner)

Benjy! Something's happened!

(CONTINUED)

BENJY BENJAMIN

What's happened? What's the matter?

DING BELL

(running back,
terrified)

Hey! Hey, what are you --

(reaching Tyler
Fitzgerald)

Is this a gag? Hey, listen --

BENJY BENJAMIN

(from up ahead,
screaming)

Well, what is it?

DING BELL

(shaking Tyler
Fitzgerald)

Hey, wake up! Come on!

(then, screaming)

He's out! He fell down or something!

Benjy, he's out cold! He's unconscious!

BENJY BENJAMIN

(turning, screaming)

Listen, this is no time for a gag --

Ding, for God's sake -- oops!

We feel the movement as the horizon tilts and the plane rolls slightly. Benjy Benjamin wrestles with the stick, squawking in his terror, and Ding Bell pitches across the unconscious man and hits his own head on the fridge -- but only hard enough to hurt.

DING BELL

What -- no! Benjy, no! For God's
sake, keep her steady!

(rushing forward)

Benjy, what're you doing? Straighten
her up! No! Not like that! Watch it!

BENJY BENJAMIN

I'm trying to straighten her -- do
something! Try to revive him!

Quick, throw some water on him --

Ding, do something! Hurry!

Ding Bell has turned and raced back to the bar. Grabbing the pitcher and propping himself against the bar, he turns a tap and fills the pitcher with water. Up forward his partner turns around in his seat briefly to look at him, steadily making little whimpering noises. Tyler Fitzgerald has rolled on to his face again. Bending above him, Ding Bell turns him over with one hand, holding the pitcher in the other. The plane noses down sharply, Ding Bell plunges

(CONTINUED)

255 CONTINUED: (4)

255

forward six or eight feet, crashes against the back of the pilot's seat, and pours the pitcher of water onto his partner.

BENJY BENJAMIN

No! Not on me! On him!

DING BELL

(wildly, terrified,
grabbing stick)

You're diving! Pull it back --
Benjy, pull it back! Not like that!
Ease it back -- do what he said!

BENJY BENJAMIN

I don't remember what he said!

256 EXT. POLICE HELICOPTER - AERIAL SHOT

256

In b. g. Tyler Fitzgerald's plane is nosing up and down erratically. Close in f. g. the Aerial Patrolman in the shadowing helicopter watches, points, says something to his companion, shakes his head, starts to report.

257 BACK TO SHOT

257

Ding Bell still crowds Benjy Benjamin, helping him hold the stick. The horizon comes approximately level.

DING BELL

Yeah, yeah, that's it, now steady,
just keep her steady, that's it --

BENJY BENJAMIN

I am! So do something! Get back
there and wake him up!

DING BELL

It's no good, I tell you! He's out!
And we've gotta get help --

BENJY BENJAMIN

Help! Who's going to help us?
How are we going to get any --

DING BELL

The radio! We'll try the radio!
Hold her steady! We'll try to
contact somebody, maybe a doctor,
and they'll tell us what to do --

(CONTINUED)

257 CONTINUED:

257

BENJY BENJAMIN

Then try it! But hurry up!

Ding Bell has started examining the radio, picking up a microphone, fiddling with switches.

DING BELL

Now wait a minute! Let me try to figure out how -- does that switch it on? You think it's on? Why don't they put the instructions on it? Now wait a minute --

(calling into the microphone loudly)

Hello! Is anybody -- can anybody hear us? Hello, anybody who can hear us! Somebody on the ground! Hello anybody on the ground! Somebody say hello down there!

BENJY BENJAMIN

Mayday! That's what you say you're supposed to call, Mayday!

DING BELL

(loudly, microphone)

That's right! Mayday! Mayday! Anybody! Come in, anybody! Please! Mayday, Mayday, Mayday! Listen, I don't think I got it switched on....

258 EXT. OTTO MEYER'S BUICK

258

Another preposterous shot. The old Buick is inching down the side of a hill that would faze an Italian cavalry horse. The Little Boy is twenty feet below, motioning him on. Suddenly Otto Meyer jams on the brakes and points ahead in horror.

OTTO MEYER

Look! Hey, look! Look at THAT!

259 ANOTHER ANGLE

259

A few hundred yards ahead of them, circling the bottom of the boulder-strewn hillside, there is a fast-running little stream. Only twenty yards wide, it looks deep.

OTTO MEYER

Do we have to cross that? Do we?

LITTLE BOY

It's okay. I know where there's a ford. It's easy, really easy --

(CONTINUED)

259 CONTINUED:

259

OTTO MEYER

Now, listen, little boy, if you brought me all this way just to -- oh, go ahead! Don't just stand there looking stupid! Go on! Hurry up! Let's get it over with!

260 INT. BREAKDOWN-TRUCK - MOVING

260

And moving fast. But Lennie Pike and Mrs. Marcus appear to be involved in a really furious argument. Emmeline Finch sits between them, shaking her head hopelessly.

LENNIE PIKE

All you had to do was just tell him what the situation was!

MRS. MARCUS

Never mind! Why don't you just shut up and drive?

LENNIE PIKE

The whole bunch will be there by now!

MRS. MARCUS

Well, who's fault is it? Let me tell you something -- everything that's happened to my daughter and me today only happened for one reason, because you were too stupid to look where you were going and wrecked our car in the first place!

Lennie Pike jams on the brakes so hard that Emmeline Finch cries out and her mother, jingling melodiously, is thrown forward and hits her head on the windshield.

261 EXT. BREAKDOWN-TRUCK - STEEP HILL

261

Near the top of a steep hill the breakdown-truck skids off the road and stops violently on the shoulder. It is close enough for us to hear the following exchanges:

LENNIE PIKE

All right! I had enough! You can get out of the truck, or I'm going to throw you out!

EMMELINE FINCH

Oh, please, please, please, please --

(CONTINUED)

261 CONTINUED:

261

MRS. MARCUS

You're not going to do anything!
Drive on! Big, stupid idiot --

Lennie Pike pulls on the hand-brake, gets out of the truck,
turns to Emmeline Finch, and points angrily at Mrs. Marcus.

LENNIE PIKE

I'll bet anything it was her idea
to go right by me when I was back
there on the bicycle! Wasn't it?
Ah. Well, just like your husband,
you know what I mean, I had all I
can take.

(turning to Mrs. Marcus)

Now, come on, get out of there.

MRS. MARCUS

(as her daughter
gets out)

I'm not getting out! I'm not
moving! I've got just as much
right as you've got to be in this
truck because you stole it -- and
that's the first thing I'm going
to tell the police if you don't
get back into this truck and take
us to Rosita Beach State Park!

262 EXT. ROAD - PATROL CAR

262

Half a mile behind them a patrol-car has stopped beside the
road. Standing beside it a Patrolman is watching the scene
at the top of the long hill through his glasses.

263 INT. TRUCK - MOVING

263

As the DRIVER, a big burly professional, reacts with alarm
And wrenches his steering-wheel.

264 EXT. TRUCK AND STATION WAGON

264

As they almost collide head-on. The Englishman's station
wagon is at least six feet over the center line, and the
right front wheel appears to be held on by a single nut now.

265 INT. STATION WAGON - MOVING

265

Both J. Russell Finch and Algernon Hawthorne are very angry
now.

(CONTINUED)

J. RUSSELL FINCH

If that truck hadn't pulled over --
listen, I can't take this!

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

Now, see here! If you don't try
to control yourself, I warn you
I'm going to put you down, right here --

J. RUSSELL FINCH

What, you mean, and go on by yourself?

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

I have a perfect right in all the --

J. RUSSELL FINCH

Well, if that doesn't take the
cake! You only got in on this in
the first place because I brought
you in! So you're going to leave
me behind! Well, that's something,
that is! I guess that's the English
idea of fair play, eh? That's
what the British call it, isn't
it? Fair play?

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

I am beginning to find you personally
offensive! Will you kindly --

J. RUSSELL FINCH

Listen, you're not the first
Englishman I ever met, not by any
means! Five years ago I was in on
a project, a good project, where we
were dealing with the so-called U.S.
representatives of a British company
in Sluff, just outside London --

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

Sluff? Can you possibly mean, Slough?

J. RUSSELL FINCH

I don't care what they call it,
what I'm getting at is that every
single one of those Englishmen was
the biggest crook I ever met! By
the time they got through with us
they'd taken us for every cent we --

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

Well, if you're as asinine in your
conduct of business affairs as you've
been in this affair --

(CONTINUED)

265 CONTINUED: (2)

265

J. RUSSELL FINCH
That's right! That's just the --
watch it! You're over the line
again! That's just exactly the
attitude that lost you your whole
lousy, stinking British Empire,
that's all that is -- watch it!

266 EXT. STATION WAGON - TUNNEL

266

Wobbling very badly, the station wagon enters a little tunnel on the curving shoulder of the mountainside.

267 EXT. WHEEL, STATION WAGON

267

Two seconds later, closely followed by the station wagon, the right front wheel rolls into view and down the road a few yards ahead of the car. (The road, on a downgrade here, curves fairly sharply to the right, so that for a few seconds centrifugal force keeps the wagon going on its three remaining wheels).

268 INT. STATION WAGON - MOVING

268

Shooting past J. Russell Finch and Algernon Hawthorne, we see the wheel begin to roll away from them as the Englishman brakes. Along the right-hand side of the road some kind of repair work (pipe-laying or whatever) has been prepared, and a couple of dozen oil-drums stand spaced ten yards apart to protect whatever it is. As we cut into the station wagon neither man is at first aware of the emergency.

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE
-- bound to say that for any
American to offer criticism of any
other -- I say! Isn't that -- what
on earth -- I say!

J. RUSSELL FINCH
(at the same time)
Hey, what's that -- look! -- hey,
be careful! Watch it!

269 EXT. STATION WAGON

269

It brakes very sharply, the wheel-less hub comes down, digs into the ground, and at perhaps thirty miles an hour the station wagon ground-loops with a shriek of its three tires and, still on the road, goes on down the hill at thirty miles an hour, backwards.

270 EXT. STATION WAGON - ANOTHER ANGLE

270

The station wagon begins bowling over the oil-drums, hitting them all. One after the other, they go crashing and clattering down the little embankment.

271 INT. STATION WAGON - MOVING BACKWARDS

271

Both J. Russell Finch and Algernon Hawthorne utter little moans of anxiety, and both cover their heads.

272 EXT. STATION WAGON

272

Clipping the last of the oil-drums, it now swerves off the road and bounces backwards down the embankment and into some boulders which bring it to a sudden noisy halt in a cloud of dust.

273 EXT. STATION WAGON - BELOW EMBANKMENT

273

They get out of car, J. Russell Finch holding his elbow and Algernon Hawthorne the back of his neck. Both move up to look at the wheel-less rim, then, being only a couple of yards apart, exchange a long look of all but maniacal mutual loathing. Both appear too furiously exasperated to speak. A definite pause. Then the Englishman turns, still holding his neck, and looks up the embankment towards the road. (Perhaps a car is heard going by above them, establishing that they cannot be seen from the road in their present position). Then, suddenly, completely without warning, J. Russell Finch leaps forward and swings (by his standards) a tremendous roundhouse right at Algernon Hawthorne, catching him on the side of the head and knocking the astounded Englishman off balance. Stumbling backwards a pace or two, the Englishman falls into a sitting position, from which he sits staring up at the edible-seaweed manufacturer incredulously for a long moment. Then, as J. Russell Finch adopts a ludicrously unprofessional fighter's stance, the Englishman leaps to his feet, runs forward with a bellow, and swings a tremendous blow, missing widely. Before he can recover J. Russell Finch throws a fast succession of eight or nine punches, none of which lands. Then with a snarl the Englishman kicks J. Russell Finch viciously on the knee. J. Russell Finch cries out, clutches his knee, and dances on one foot as the Englishman fails to hit him five more times. They are both now gasping for breath. Suddenly, ducking another ineffectual blow, J. Russell Finch throws up one arm, inadvertently striking the Englishman on the nose with the back of his hand. Staggering back, startled, the Englishman holds his nose carefully with both hands, discovers a drop of blood, retreats in mounting terror, loses his

(CONTINUED)

273 CONTINUED:

273

nerve completely, and suddenly turns and runs. Enraged, J. Russell Finch chases him ten yards, at which point the Englishman slips and falls to the ground. Rising quickly, he throws up his hands to protect himself, accidentally sticking his finger in J. Russell Finch's eye, and it is J. Russell Finch's turn to retreat in obvious alarm. Much inspired by this turn of events the Englishman now advances threateningly upon the American, uttering a few well-modulated growls. Horrified, the edible-seaweed manufacturer turns and runs.

274 INT. THE BASEMENT

274

Kneeling on the landing, partially obscured by the smoke from the sizzling paint and wood, Melville Crump, grinning like a demon, is burning a deep path around the lock fitting in the door. Behind him, near the top of the staircase, his wife stands watching hopefully. The smoke stings his eyes and makes him cough. After a moment, in some eagerness and excitement, he holds the blow-torch aside and gives the lock fitting a heavy thump with the heel of his hand.

MELVILLE CRUMP

It's burnt practically all the way through! I'll knock the whole thing out with the hammer....

He turns and goes quickly down the stairs, carrying the blow-torch and fiddling with the valve-screw in an effort to turn it off. Then, finding that it's stuck or defective, he stands it carefully on a counter at the bottom of the staircase, turning it so that the white-hot flame touches nothing. Then he goes over, quickly picks up a sledge-hammer, comes back to the bottom of the staircase, and, as he starts up, inadvertently knocks the blow-torch with the shaft of the sledge-hammer. The blow-torch is not knocked over. It is merely spun around so that, as Melville Crump runs quickly up the stairs, the white-hot flame now hissingly applies itself to the railing or bannister at the bottom of the staircase. Reaching the top, and waving away the smoke:

MELVILLE CRUMP

Stand back. Give me room to swing....

Monica Crump does. Taking good aim, Melville Crump swings a heavy blow at the lock-fitting area around which he has burnt a half-inch trench. Then he swings another. The door still sounds pretty solid. Monica Crump watches him. Both are quite unaware that the blow-torch is rapidly beginning to set the bottom of the staircase on fire.

275 EXT. OTTO'S BUICK - AT THE STREAM

275

Otto Meyer has stopped the battered old Buick at the very edge of the stream. It is only twenty-five yards across, but it runs fast enough to obscure its own depth and to make a constant roar. Obviously very distraught, Otto Meyer has got out of the car and is arguing with the Little Boy. The Buick's motor, quite drained of oil now, is clearly very hot, because the radiator is putting out clouds of steam. His voice rising shrilly:

OTTO MEYER

But there must be some other place! You're crazy, I tell you!

LITTLE BOY

This is the best place there is!

OTTO MEYER

But it's too deep! I'll never make it across that --

LITTLE BOY

It's not deep, mister. Look, I'll show you....

He pulls off his shoes, turns, and, watching his footing carefully, walks straight across the creek. At no point is the depth any higher than his knees. Otto Meyer stands watching him furiously. On the other side the Little Boy turns and calls back:

LITTLE BOY

You see? It's easy!

Otto Meyer stands undecided for a moment. Then he looks at his watch, makes a furious gesture, and gets quickly into the car. Across the stream the boy makes come-on gestures, smiling and nodding. Otto Meyer gets the Buick into gear and drives forward a few feet until the front wheels reach the water. Then, jamming on the brake and pulling on the hand-brake, he jumps angrily out of the Buick, flails his arms, and screams at the Little Boy.

OTTO MEYER

It's too deep! You filthy little brat, I tell you it's too deep!

276 INT. TYLER FITZGERALD'S PLANE - MOVING IN THE AIR

276

Ding Bell is crouched beside Benjy Benjamin, holding one of the ear-phones to his ear and turning the two or three knobs on the radio-set this way and that. Suddenly he jumps.

(CONTINUED)

DING BELL

I've got something! Wait a minute --
I've lost it -- no, wait --

RADIO ANNOUNCER'S VOICE

(through ear-phones)

.... and, friends, in all the
hustle and bustle of our modern
lives we can none of us be sure
when we are going to have a serious
accident because accidents do
happen. If you're not adequately
covered, if your loved ones are not
fully protected --

DING BELL

(above this)

No! It's just an ordinary radio .
program! How do you get the --
what's the right wave-length?

BENJY BENJAMIN

Well, how do I know what's the --
Ding, do something! Hurry!

DING BELL

Well, don't you think I'm trying?
Hold her steady, for -- will you
hold her steady?

The horizon tilts slightly in b.g. His strained, distorted features streaming and gleaming with sweat, Benjy Benjamin holds the stick in both hands. Behind them, rolling to one side as the plane banks pretty steeply, Tyler Fitzgerald's head strikes the stout metal leg of one of the seats, making an audible BOIN--N--N--G!

277 INT. CULPEPER'S PRIVATE OFFICE

277

Culpeper is seated at his desk, holding the receiver with one hand and his head with the other, and his features reveal such horror that the shot is actually startling.

CULPEPER (telephone)

Mike -- Mike, listen -- now,
Mike, please -- wait a minute,
Mike --

MIKE'S VOICE (over the line)

No, but I mean it, buddy-boy, I'm
just never going to forget you for

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MIKE'S VOICE (CONT'D)

(over the line)

what you did for me when the
chips were down and I really
needed a pal, because that's just
what you are, pal, a real chips-
down pal --

CULPEPER (telephone)

Mike, will you wait a minute? Now,
I don't know what Ginger told you --

MIKE'S VOICE (over the line)

What? Why, just what you said --
that on account of all of a sudden
everything is gravy with you you're
in the glorious position of being
able to co-sign that little note --
and that you have signified your
willingness to do same --

CULPEPER (telephone)

Mike.... Mike, now wait a minute....

MIKE'S VOICE (over the line)

I tell you, buddy-boy, I mean
things are really jumping. As soon
as Ginger told me what you'd said
I made a deal to sell the restaurant --
and for twenty-two thousand! So,
with that twenty-two plus what the
bank'll put up with you co-signing
my loan, we got it made, but made!
And listen, just because a lot of
people have said this motel scheme
is crazy you may think it's a risky
proposition, what with all the
malaria and all that they got down
there. But once we get those swamps
pumped out it's just going to be
apple pie from here to Sunday!

CULPEPER (telephone)

No! No, now, Mike, you've got to
listen to me! Now, look, this
thing has gotten completely out of
hand. Mike, all I wanted -- two
hours ago, all I wanted was to
celebrate, to take Ginger on a
little vacation and -- listen, Mike!
Everything's gone to pieces! Billie
Sue's engagement is broken and she's

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CULPEPER (CONT'D)

(telephone)

run away from home, Ginger is terribly upset, your mother has had one of her attacks, and now you tell me we've gone into the motel business in some malarial region --

But during this the Secretary has tapped and entered, looking seriously alarmed. Culpeper throws her a wild-eyed glance.

SECRETARY

Your daughter, sir, on the other line -- and I think there's something wrong....

CULPEPER (telephone)

Mike! I've got to hang up now!

(hanging up; grabbing
other phone)

Hello! Billie Sue? Billie Sue, where are you?

BILLIE SUE'S VOICE (over the line)

I'm at the bus station, I only called because Mummy said --

CULPEPER (telephone)

Now, Billie Sue, sweetie, what are you doing in the bus station?

BILLIE SUE'S VOICE (over the line)

I'm waiting for the bus.

CULPEPER (telephone)

Now, sweetie, will you -- will you just listen to me for a minute, because -- now, look, I don't know what happened, I mean, I know what happened, but I don't know why it happened, and whatever happened, I can promise you -- are you listening, sweetie? -- I promise you that everything will be all right because I'm going to see that everything is all right! So now, if you will just turn in your ticket and get in a taxi and go home, I give you my word that within twenty-four hours I'll have

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CULPEPER (CONT'D)

(telephone)

everything all cleared up, and
I'll go up to Pomona and speak
to Horace myself and see that
Horace --

BILLIE SUE'S VOICE (over the line)

(wailing wildly
between her sobs)

His name's not Horace! It's
Oscar! You don't even care
what his name --

CULPEPER (telephone)

Now, sweetie, I'm sorry, of course
it's Oscar, I just get a little
confused --

BILLIE SUE'S VOICE (over the line)

Horace was over three years ago --

CULPEPER (telephone)

Sweetie, I know that, of course he
was, and all I meant was -- no,
look: now, really: I want you to
do this one little thing for me.
I want you to -- Billie Sue, now
try to understand. When this
thing started -- now, honestly, I
don't know what happened, but all
I wanted to do was to celebrate --
no, well, never mind that, because
what I want you to do is just turn
in your ticket and then get in a
cab and go home right away and
just wait until I can get there.
Will you do that for me, sweetie?
Because, if you'll just do that
one little thing for me -- sweetie,
wait just a minute, don't hang up,
just wait one minute....

The Secretary (who went back out before) has now come in
again.

SECRETARY

Your wife. She's on the other --

CULPEPER (telephone)

Hello, sweetie? Now, listen,
before you hang up just wait a
minute, because I've got your
mother on the other line. Now,
everything's going to be all right.
Just wait one minute....

(CONTINUED)

277 CONTINUED: (4)

277

The Secretary has gone out, closing the door quietly. Culpeper places the first receiver, from which we can hear the continuous sobbing of his daughter, on the desk; then, rubbing his forehead with the back of his wrist, he lifts the other one.

CULPEPER (telephone)

Ginger? Now listen, Ginger, I've got Billie Sue on the other line -- holding on on the other line. She's at the bus station and she's very unhappy, but it's all right because I've promised her that I personally am going to see that everything gets straightened out, and that I will see Horace -- I mean, I will see Oscar, and that everything will be just great, and I want you -- Ginger, are you listening? If I put the two receivers together, I think that Billie Sue may be able to hear your voice on the other line --

(grabbing the other receiver)

Billie Sue, just wait one second -- (then back to the other)

-- I want you to tell her, to give her the assurance that I mean what I say when I say that everything is going to be all right. Now, will you do that? Will you just -- now, just one minute, let me --

(holding both receivers together)

Ginger? Can you hear Billie Sue? She's crying. She's in the bus station and she's crying, but she's waiting for you to tell her -- Billie Sue, are you listening? Are you listening to your mother? Now, listen to your mother, sweetie, because --

The Lieutenant enters, quickly, not knocking.

LIEUTENANT

I'm sorry, the Chief wants to see you --

As Culpeper looks up, startled, momentarily thrown off what little balance he has, the Chief of Police comes in. His features are a savage compound of bitterness, anger and despair. Staring up at him, Culpeper still sits holding

(CONTINUED)

the two telephone receivers side by side on his blotting-pad. Throughout this scene the voices of both Ginger and Billie Sue can be heard rising and falling ceaselessly, but all their ensuing dialogue is subordinate to the other stuff and may be left to the Background Script Note 16. Culpeper stares up at his visitor.

CULPEPER

What -- uh -- what's the --

CHIEF OF POLICE

(having slammed door)

You wouldn't believe it! You
couldn't believe it!

CULPEPER

But -- but, what -- what?

CHIEF OF POLICE

I tell you, I've never been so disgusted in my life! It's no. The answer's no! He won't back any increase in pensions, he won't even talk about it! And there won't be any increase in pensions, and do you know why? Because they've got a solid majority of both Republicans and Democrats who've agreed that if anything is said about pensions they'll actually reduce your pension! Why? Because they know that you personally were more responsible than anybody else for shutting down the houses! And could I do anything? Would he listen to me? Ha! All right, so you're an honest cop and you've spent a lifetime being an honest cop and you've got that and that's all you've got! It's no good saying I'm sorry -- I'm too angry and too sick at my stomach to be sorry!

He stomps out. The shrill, jumbled voices of his womenfolk suddenly rising from the two receivers on his desk before him, Culpeper simply sits there.

The First Act Finale

And at that point we go into the somewhat phrenetic finale of this long first act. Culpeper sits there, as if pole-axed, listening to the hysterical and wholly unintelligible voices of his wife and daughter, and suddenly, surprisingly, the area of the frame is reduced to a much smaller rectangle, firmly outlined in some strong contrasting color, and precisely centered within the larger rectangle of completely blank screen. Culpeper sits there.

Then, suddenly, startingly, shockingly, the whole of the screen around the central rectangle is split into six more heavily outlined segments. All at once. Not just the images of all the scenes but the sounds from them as well. Instantly, in so much less time than it takes to describe, the thing assumes the proportions of a seven-ring circus.

Culpeper, in the center, sits there.

Above him, in the left, appear Melville and Monica Crump.

Above him, in the right, appear Ding Bell and Benjy Benjamin.

Below him, on the left, appear J. Russell Finch and Algernon Hawthorne.

Below him, on the right, appear Lennie Pike, Emmeline Finch and Mrs. Marcus.

To one side, on the extreme left, appears Sylvester Marcus.

To the other, on the extreme right, Otto Meyer.

Treating this pay-off to the first act as a special problem within the overall problem, it will go something like this.

CULPEPER. For the first minute or so Culpeper just sits there. He can hear the voices of Ginger and Billie Sue, but he really isn't listening.

MELVILLE AND MONICA CRUMP. In the basement of Dinckler's Hardware Store, poor Melville Crump swings another blow with the sledge-hammer at the lock, but it is still intact. He is so exhausted now that the sledge-hammer falls out of his grasp. Turning to retrieve it, he sees for the first time that the bottom of the wooden staircase is actually on fire. Horrified, he calls the fact to his wife's attention, runs down the stairs, jumps over the flames, whips off his coat, and, while yelling to Monica Crump to run down and leap over the blaze, fans the flames with it. Not sure precisely how terrified she is, Monica Crump emits a few screams on a purely tentative note. But Melville Crump, nothing if not a quick thinker, reacts very sharply as his eye alights upon a sizeable selection of fire-extinguishers. Shouting reassurances, he seizes upon the largest and most

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expensive-looking, makes a frantically clumsy effort to get it into operation, fails, pauses momentarily to read the instructions on the side of it, and at the same time begins shouting hysterically that there is no need to get excited...

DING BELL AND BENJY BENJAMIN. In the plane all is pretty much as before, except that both men are now sweating so heavily that their shirts are discolored. Benjy Benjamin is whimpering as he sits holding the stick. At first his whimpering is unintelligible, but then we should realize that Benjy Benjamin is praying. Still desperately trying to make contact on the radio, Ding Bell chances to pick up a cemetery advertisement, something about how reassuring they will find it if they have made adequate provision for their final resting-place. Then, not quite fainting, Ding Bell slumps heavily against his partner, groaning and clutching at his arm. Benjy Benjamin yells and the horizon begins to jump up and down again. They are both emitting noises indicative of acute alarm as they struggle to get the plane back into level flight. And, on the floor behind them, the unconscious man's head hits the chair-leg again with another gong-like note.....

OTTO MEYER AND THE LITTLE BOY. Puffing a great deal of steam now, the battered old Buick has gone almost halfway across the fast-running stream. On the other side in b.g. the Little Boy is shouting repeated encouragement to Otto Meyer. But -- as Otto Meyer feared -- the water is just a little bit deeper than the little boy thought. It is partly because of that, and partly because the bottom of the stream is so muddy and slick, that the Buick's rear wheels begin spinning very wildly as Otto Meyer gives her the gas. In the very last stages of emotional exhaustion, Otto Meyer screams wildly at the Little Boy that he isn't going to be able to do it. And at that point the Little Boy, suddenly losing confidence, admits for the first time that he doesn't think he will, either.....

LENNIE PIKE, MRS. MARCUS AND EMMELINE FINCH. Emmeline Finch stands weeping audibly beside the breakdown truck. Lennie Pike seems absolutely desperate. Lying across the seat with her arms entwined through the spokes of the steering-wheel, Mrs. Marcus as might be expected is offering the most spirited resistance. Bellowing at her, Lennie Pike gives a mighty tug at her leg. Emmeline Finch gives a little scream as, Mrs. Marcus' shoe coming off in Lennie Pike's hands, he topples backwards and crashes heavily into the ditch. Roaring with determination, he scrambles up again and makes another try for the lady's thrashing ankles. But she, fighting very grimly for all her screaming, and thrashing about very heavily, quite accidentally kicks off the hand-brake -- and Emmeline Finch screams again as, very, very quickly, the breakdown truck starts rolling backwards down the hill. The

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CONTINUED: (2)

message not yet having reached his brain, Lennie Pike refuses, for the first twenty yards, to relinquish Mrs. Marcus' knee. But then, as the truck gathers speed, he has to, and goes plunging again into the ditch. In absolute horror Emmeline Finch falls screaming to her knees. In some confusion Mrs. Marcus thrashes about somewhere down below the steering-column in an effort to get into the seat. And in some exasperation Lennie Pike climbs out of the ditch again and, quickly out-distanced, starts running like a mad thing down the long hill after the breakdown truck.....

J. RUSSELL FINCH AND ALGERNON HAWTHORNE. Almost incredibly, the fight has continued. As we pick them up now, Algernon Hawthorne is clearly on top, at least psychologically speaking, for he is advancing and J. Russell Finch is retreating, using the car as a barricade and dodging around it repeatedly. Watching each other steadily and trying to read what is left of each other's minds, they are, as they dodge and rush this way and that, like very large children playing tag. Then J. Russell Finch stumbles and the Englishman rushes quickly upon him, hitting at him violently, missing, and falling off-balance. J. Russell Finch at once leaps forward and smacks the Englishman on the back of the neck in a well-intentioned but ineffectual rabbit-punch. At once the Englishman runs, possibly shouting, "Foul!" J. Russell Finch chases him five yards and then, utterly exhausted, stops, picks up a large stone, and hurls it at his opponent with all his might. The stone misses the Englishman but breaks one of the windows of his station wagon. At once, enraged again, Algernon Hawthorne turns and rushes back, bellowing, at J. Russell Finch. He, losing his nerve, resumes his darting and dodging retreat around the badly battered wagon, and the game of tag goes on.

SYLVESTER MARCUS. There's not much to this segment but what there is is very moving. Hitting way up there around a hundred in Mrs. Calvin Halliburton's Pontiac, Sylvester Marcus is driving brilliantly when one considers that he's in tears. Every so often, whenever it is his turn for a contribution, Sylvester Marcus gives a terrible sob and shouts: "It's all right, Momma! Momma, I'm coming! Sylvester's coming!"

CULPEPER. After a while, clearly nearly at his wits' end, Culpeper leans over the desk and listens to the two voices of his womenfolk. Then for one moment he lifts the receivers to his ears, one to each. But then he puts them on the desk again, being careful to turn them so that the mouthpieces are opposite the earphones. Then he leans back in his chair and just goes on sitting there....

MELVILLE AND MONICA CRUMP. Melville Crump by this stage has figured out how to work the fire-extinguisher and, while he hasn't yet done much about the flames, he has managed to get

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CONTINUED: (3)

a surprising amount of extinguisher fluid on Monica Crump. But, what with one thing and another, along about here we should be able to see that there is no real danger of their burning up. Melville Crump may actually have two or three different extinguishers going by now and they are knee-deep in a mass of fluid, but only because there is no time for him to read the instructions about turning off the ones he's turned on. So there's no more yelling and screaming in this segment, just a good deal of moaning and groaning.....

DING BELL AND BENJY BENJAMIN. "Please! Somebody say hello." Ding Bell is shouting, when Benjy Benjamin suddenly screams: "It's the sea! The ocean! Right there! Ding, we're going to crash in the ocean!" And then the horizon starts its dance again, and the two desperate, despairing men go on screaming at each other to take it easy, to do something, to think of something, to use their heads.....

OTTO MEYER AND THE LITTLE BOY. When from the far bank the Little Boy sees what is happening he clearly decides that there is no point in hanging about waiting for his three dollars, and he turns and runs away. Because in the foreground the battered old Buick, having lost its footing completely out in the middle of the stream, is slowly being washed downstream. And as it goes, moving very slowly in the fast-running water, the stream gets deeper and deeper. Otto Meyer, displaying an almost incredible degree of philosophical resignation, remains quietly seated behind the wheel. Still the car moves, sinking lower and lower. As the water rises in the front seat and laps against his ribs Otto Meyer gives one tiny little gasp, because the water is obviously very cold; but that's all. Indeed, even at the very end, when nothing remains above the surface but Otto Meyer's head, the top three inches of the windshield, and the top of the door that Lennie Pike tore off in the gas-station, he maintains a curiously calm and contemplative attitude. Somewhere below there is a thud as the old Buick comes up against some rocks on the bottom. Otto Meyer just sits there. There seems no doubt that he should be wearing a hat.....

LENNIE PIKE, MRS. MARCUS AND EMMELINE FINCH. Emmeline Finch is still on her knees, hands clasped as though in prayer, but she is not praying, she is screaming. Lennie Pike, running like mad halfway down the hill, trips and falls headlong, not actually breaking anything. And in the hurtling breakdown truck, still thrashing about on the floor and unable to regain the seat, Mrs. Marcus screams imperiously for help. We should catch a glimpse of the reactions of relief in Lennie Pike and Emmeline Finch as the breakdown truck, running off the road near the bottom of the hill, chances to hit a stretch of rough but fairly level ground. It goes swaying and bounding along backwards for several hundred yards, only gradually losing speed, but it never actually turns over.....

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CONTINUED: (4)

J. RUSSELL FINCH AND ALGERNON HAWTHORNE. They stand now face-to-face, hands up in the most aggressive posture, staggering and stumbling about in exhausted circles, both groaning audibly for air. For quite a long time both are unable to offer a single blow. Then, finally, they swing at the same instant, hit each other's fists a real wallop, and at once, crying out painfully together, turn and rush away from each other to nurse their genuinely injured hands.

CULPEPER. He sits there. There is a tap. Someone comes in. He looks up. It is the Sergeant. The Sergeant seems very concerned. He stands looking down at his Chief. Finally he speaks.

SERGEANT

Whatsa matter, Chief? Sumpin wrong?

Culpeper looks up at him for a long moment, not quite seeing him. Then he seems to see him. Then suddenly he chuckles, his voice sounding strange. He chuckles again. Then he goes on chuckling.....

CURTAIN

BETWEEN THE ACTS

The curtains being closed, the sound-track continues. Three-quarters musical, it will be interrupted every so often by a succession of short staccato surveillance-reports, these to be identified as coming from all the police cars and aircraft involved in the story. For the sake of clarity we will hear only those reports coming into Culpeper's office, not the responses.

The reports will keep the audience fully informed as to the movements of all the principals. They will have a variety of volumes, pitches and timbres, coming as they will over a variety of radio and telephone systems. There may be as many as two dozen of them and they will all be specifically detailed in an appendix to the script. But, tentatively:

First, the officers at the hardware store should report that the Crumps appear to have started a fire in the basement; then that they seem to have put it out; then more pounding; and then that it is quiet in the basement but that they can hear some moving about....

Second, the aerial police shadowing Ding and Benjy should report again that the behavior of the pilot is inexplicable, that the plane is wallowing about all over the sky; then we should suddenly catch a few snatches of Ding Bell's voice as he yells hysterically for somebody to come in; and later we might overhear something of the efforts of the control-tower

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CONTINUED:

at Santa Rosita Airport to make radio contact with the plane; that should be heard to be difficult because Ding Bell does not operate the radio intelligently; and this later development would not occur until near the end of the interval.....

Third, we should hear from the officers who are watching Lennie Pike and the two women that, following her dangerous run down the hill, Mrs. Marcus has climbed out of the truck and tried to hit the man Pike as he approached; then later we should learn that, following this altercation, the man Pike apparently has agreed to take Mrs. Marcus and Mrs. Finch on with him in the stolen truck; and later that they are now back on the road and moving west on Highway 80.....

Fourth, those cops following J. Russell Finch and Algernon Hawthorne should report that these two have stopped fighting and have accepted a lift in a vegetable-truck, abandoning the station-wagon; then ten minutes later that they have arrived in Canyon City and are both trying to rent automobiles from a local Avis office; and a few minutes later that they are going on together in one car. Just before the end of the interval it should be made clear that they are proceeding west on Highway 80; that Lennie Pike and the two women in the stolen truck are only about 15 miles ahead of Finch and Hawthorne in the rented car; and that Finch and Hawthorne -- without knowing it, of course -- are steadily gaining on Pike's truck as the two vehicles race in through the Cleveland National Forest area.....

Fifth, the car following Sylvester Marcus should report that he is moving east on Highway 94 and driving very dangerously. Subsequently, from a combination of reports, it should become clear that first Lennie Pike and the two women and then -- ten minutes later -- J. Russell Finch and Algernon Hawthorne have turned off Highway 80 and onto Highway 94; and thus it should be clear at the end of the interval that the truck and the Ford are proceeding west, a few miles apart, on the same highway, and that Sylvester Marcus in the Pontiac is headed east, towards them, only eighteen or twenty miles away. (This all makes slightly more sense than it seems to make, and there may be some idiots in the theater who are still trying to follow the story).....

Sixth, the helicopter cops should report that the man Otto Meyer, his car having drowned, has managed to get ashore and is making his way on foot back towards the Highway.....

278 NOTE: SCENES 278 TO 293 INCLUSIVE: OUT.
THRU
293

THE SECOND ACTSLOW FADE IN:

294 INT. BASEMENT

Almost imperceptibly, we fade in on nothing. The screen is so dark that we should not realize for the first few moments that we are back in the basement with Melville and Monica Crump. Then, very gradually, in a bottom corner of the frame a tiny hissing spitting crackling little flame appears and begins burning its twisting way across the screen. Unintelligible at first, the fiery little light illuminates its own path: we see that it is a long length of burning fuse hissing its way along the basement floor.

295 INT. BASEMENT -- BEHIND A COUNTER

Close on Melville and Monica Crump. They are lying side by side on the floor behind a large and heavy counter at the farthest end of the store. There are enough candles about for us to see that both are tense as they wait for the explosion. Monica Crump, her face half-buried in her arms, seems genuinely terrified. Melville Crump, himself transparently nervous, has one arm protectively around her shoulders. The steady hissing of the fuse, far at the other end of the basement, is clearly audible throughout. Suddenly, unable silently to bear the strain, Monica Crump gives a long low shuddering whimpering moan.

MELVILLE CRUMP

Now, stop it, Monica. It's only one little stick of dynamite and it's seventy feet away, way over there in the other room -- and this is a solid oak counter. How could it possibly hurt us from way over there --

296 INT. BASEMENT -- THE FUSE

Hissing across the floor, the burning fuse has reached a point only a few yards from the door of the little room. Now, lighting its own way, it illuminates a very large cardboard crate which Melville Crump has moved out of the little room before setting his explosive charge. A big label on the crate becomes legible: FIREWORKS -- HIGHLY INFLAMMABLE -- HANDLE WITH CARE.

MONICA CRUMP (over)

I don't know, but please, Melville, go and stop it! Run out and stamp on it or something! You know how I hate explosions --

(CONTINUED)

296 CONTINUED:

MELVILLE CRUMP (over)

I tell you, it's perfectly all right!
 I'm just going to blow one little hole
 in the wall! And then we'll be out of
 here!

These lines will be inaudible but it doesn't matter. The burning fuse has ignited the bottom of the big cardboard crate of fireworks. Now as the fuse burns on towards the door of the little room it encounters a pool of extinguisher fluid, hisses, splutters, and goes out. But there is still some light on the scene -- a dull red light -- as the bottom of the big cardboard crate begins to smoulder and to glow.

297 INT. BACK TO SHOT

Monica Crump, the palms of her hands pressed tightly to her ears, now emits a sustained and really heart-rending wail. But Melville Crump, still lying protectively beside her behind the counter, raises his head and listens intently with a disconcerted expression. Above the noise she is making:

MELVILLE CRUMP

Something's happened to the fuse --
 no, wait, listen a minute! The fuse
 has gone out! I can't hear it!

MONICA CRUMP

(clutching at him)

Keep down! Melville, don't get up!

MELVILLE CRUMP

But I just want to see what --the
fire-extinguisher stuff! That's
 what's happened! The fire-extinguisher
 stuff's got on the fuse!

MONICA CRUMP

(grabbing at him)

No! Melville, no! You'll be killed!
 Melville, you'll be blown to bits --

MELVILLE CRUMP

Oh, Monica, for heavens sake! Now,
stop it! I'm just going to see what's
 happened.

(rising)

Why do you always imagine I don't
 know what I'm doing? Don't you think
 I have any sense at all? Why can't
 you have a little confidence in me?

He has stepped around the end of the counter and moved cautiously forward. At precisely that instant all hell

(CONTINUED)

297 CONTINUED:

breaks loose. It starts, shockingly enough, with a single terrifying explosion in the big crate which blasts dozens of smaller cartons, most of which are also already ignited, all over the basement. Monica Crump's scream, very possibly the loudest so far in the picture, can only barely be heard against the rapidly mounting crescendo of explosions. Melville Crump, hysterical himself when he is narrowly missed by five rockets and seven roman-candles in quick succession, throws himself to the floor, subsequently scampers on hands and knees through a fantastic fusillade of fiery flashing pyrotechnics, regains the shelter of the counter, and bravely attempts to protect his steadily screaming spouse. Against all the noise, against her screaming, he appears to be explaining that the fuse must have ignited the fireworks that he moved out of the little room -- but it should not be possible to hear or to understand him. Now without pause all the smaller cartons begin erupting into terrible life on all sides, sending hundreds of rockets, roman-candles, explosive flying-saucers and whatnot shooting, whizzing spitting, flashing, screaming and exploding in all directions in this relatively confined and darkened interior. Because of all the varicolored paint and random masses of fire-extinguisher fluid in the room the scene should have been striking enough even before the pyrotechnics. Now it must be all but incredible.

298 EXT. OUTSIDE THE HARDWARE STORE

Standing beside the police-car outside the store the unhappy Mr. Dinckler and a couple of officers listen to the preposterous racket inside the building.

MR. DINCKLER

No! Oh, no! Listen, you boys got to do something! That's a nine-thousand dollar shipment of fireworks I had there --

AN OFFICER

They must be trying to attract attention...

299 INT. BASEMENT

Close on Melville and Monica Crump as his desperation and her hysteria and the uproar itself all reach their various heights. At this stage whole bunches of firecrackers, as though propelled by some diabolical intelligence that has marked the hapless dentist for doom, begin flying over the counter and landing on top of or just beside Melville Crump and his wife. He, recalling many a scene from the old epics of trench-warfare in the First World War, desperately scrambles to pick them up and throw them, still exploding, back again.

300 EXT. TYLER FITZGERALD'S PLANE -- AERIAL SHOT

Close on it momentarily (close enough, why not, for us to see Ding Bell's and Benjy Benjamin's horrified countenances through the cabin windows) and then an air-pocket or something tosses the plane pretty violently and it suddenly lurches half a mile away from us. But they have at least kept it in the air: six-thousand feet or so below, a curve of coastline and a lot of Pacific Ocean.

301 EXT/INT. POLICE HELICOPTER -- AERIAL SHOT

Close enough on the open door of the helicopter to hear one of the Aerial Cops shouting into his microphone.

AERIAL COP (microphone)

... Practically out of control --
we've never seen anything like it --

302 INT. TYLER FITZGERALD'S PLANE -- MOVING IN THE AIR

In the fifteen or twenty minutes since we last saw them Ding Bell and Benjy Benjamin haven't had much fun, either. Both have lost several pounds and are drenched with sweat. Benjy Benjamin, bug-eyed with terror, seems frozen to the stick. On his knees beside his partner, Ding Bell is screaming into the microphone in a voice so hoarse that it is scarcely intelligible. The horizon waffles up and down as the plane hits a few little pockets.

DING BELL (microphone)

Help! Somebody, help! It's no good!
This isn't getting us anywhere! I
can't just go on yelling at somebody
when there's nobody there --

BENJY BENJAMIN

(matching hysterias)

What makes you think I can go on?
I can't go on, either! Here --
you take it -- you fly it --

Benjy Benjamin has suddenly let go of the stick and started to rise to move out of the pilot's seat. In complete panic, Ding Bell has dropped the microphone, grabbed the stick with one hand, and forced his partner back into the seat with the other. At the same time, screaming:

DING BELL

Watch it! What're you doing?
Don't let go of that -- hold the
stick! Benjy, have you lost your
mind? Now, hang on to that stick --

(CONTINUED)

302 CONTINUED:

BENJY BENJAMIN

(suddenly sobbing)

I just can't do it any more ...

DING BELL

Now, listen -- hey, you're crying.

(as Benjy cries

more loudly)

Now, come on, Benjy, you've got to hold onto the airplane while I try to get somebody on the radio, and how're you going to -- what can you do if you're crying?

(sobbing himself)

Aw, now, Benjy -- now, look: you're beginning to -- aw, now you've got me doing it, Benjy, you're making me cry, just because you're crying -- now, listen, there's nothing to --

(sob)

-- Aw, Benjy, please --

(sob)

-- You've got to stop it -- now, will you stop crying, Benjy? Aw

(sob)

come on

(sob)

now,

(sob)

Benjy

(sob)

please

(sob)

try

(sob)

to

(sob)

.....

Still kneeling beside his partner, Ding Bell is attempting to wipe away Benjy Benjamin's tears, but he is so blinded by his own that he only succeeds in poking Benjy Benjamin repeatedly in the eye. They are both wailing so loudly that their voices afford a brief respite from the monotonous sound of the engines. The horizon dances.

303 INT. BASEMENT -- BEHIND THE COUNTER

In the basement of Dinckler's Hardware Store the worst is over. There are eight or ten last little explosions, not very significant, and then, except for the hissing of some slow-burning flares in various parts of the basement, there is comparative silence. It is the silence of the battlefield after a real humdinger of a battle, and in the silence Monica

(CONTINUED)

303 CONTINUED:

Crump, still lying behind the counter, weeps bitter tears of despair. Nervously, badly shaken by all that has happened, Melville Crump slowly gets up and stands looking across the shambles of a basement. The lurid colored lights from the slow-burning flares give Melville Crump (and indeed the whole scene) a weird, unearthly, almost infernal appearance. Reassuringly, against the sound of his wife's sobbing:

MELVILLE CRUMP

It's all right, darling, it's all over. It was just that I accidentally laid the fuse too close to that crate and -- it's all right. There's plenty of fuse, I can lay another --

MONICA CRUMP

(getting up)

No! I won't let you! You'll kill us! And I won't -- I won't let myself be killed in the basement of some hardware store!

MELVILLE CRUMP

Oh, now, come on --

MONICA CRUMP

No! If you hadn't been so stupid, if you hadn't gotten us trapped in here in the first place --

MELVILLE CRUMP

I! If I hadn't --

MONICA CRUMP

Well, who did? Did I? You did! Every single thing that's happened was your fault! First you say we have to have an airplane and so you give away three-hundred dollars for one trip in an airplane that that stupid man couldn't get three-hundred dollars for it if he sold it -- an airplane with chickens in it -- and then when we do get here first, instead of just going straight there and finding the money you say I have to have a pick and shovel first, but you can't even buy a pick and shovel without getting us trapped in this horrible basement --

MELVILLE CRUMP

(with dignity)

All right. You don't have to go on. I'm finished.

(CONTINUED)

303 CONTINUED: (2)

MONICA CRUMP

Oh, shut up, you were all finished before you even started, so shut up! The trouble with you is you've always got some stupid reason why you can't do anything right -- like because you're a dentist who can't stand seeing anybody in pain you can only make six-thousand dollars a year. But you want to get married to me so you say you earn forty-thousand dollars a year --

MELVILLE CRUMP

I didn't say I earned forty-thousand dollars a year. I never said I earned forty-thousand dollars a year. What I said was, I said, "A good dentist can earn forty-thousand --"

MONICA CRUMP

What difference does it make what you said? It's what you led me to believe. And then after we were married and I said "Why can't we have a Mercedes instead of the Chevrolet" -- then you tell me we only have six-thousand dollars a year because you just can't stand seeing somebody else in any kind of pain -- that's what you said! Any self-respecting dentist wouldn't care if everybody else was in agony if that was the only way he could give his wife the kind of life he'd led her to expect --

MELVILLE CRUMP

(with great dignity now)

Very well, then. You don't need to say any more. It's easy to see -- I'll never be able to please you....

304 INT. SANTA ROSITA AIRPORT CONTROL-TOWER

Just an ordinary tower at a fairly busy medium-sized branch-line airport -- (Santa Rosita has a population of 90,000). The tower is a glass-walled room on top of one of the taller buildings. There are three people in it: the Tower Comptroller, an Assistant and a Radio Operator. They are all excited and there is tension in the room. The Tower Comptroller is by the window searching the sky with binoculars, the Assistant is on a phone, and the Radio Operator is fiddling with his set in some anxiety. In these first few seconds everything happens at once.

(CONTINUED)

304 CONTINUED:

ASSISTANT (telephone)
 ... We don't know who it is but they're
 in trouble because we keep getting snatches
 -- wait a minute! Here they are again!

DING BELL'S VOICE (through speaker)
 (hysterically overriding
 previous line)
 --od's sake, please, come in!
 Somebody! Anybody! Come in!

TOWER COMPTROLLER
 (turning, shouting)
 That's it! Get them!

RADIO OPERATOR (microphone)
 This is Santa Rosita Tower!
 (to the other two)
 He's on send, he keeps holding his
 switch -- wait a minute!
 (microphone)
 Hello, that airplane! This is
 Santa Rosita Control Tower! Calling --

305 INT. TYLER FITZGERALD'S PLANE -- MOVING IN THE AIR

Both Benjy Benjamin and Ding Bell, who is slumped beside his
 partner's seat, are listening incredulously to the Voice
 coming through the speaker.

RADIO OPERATOR'S VOICE (speaker)
 -- That unidentified plane! Can
 you hear me? Come in that plane!
 Over!

As he grabs the microphone again, hysterically relieved:

DING BELL (microphone)
 They've heard us! Benjy,
 somebody's heard us! Hello!
 Hello, down there! Can you hear
 us? Listen, come in, say some more!
Say some more, will you? Listen,
 we're in trouble up here, we're in
 a terrible jam!
 (then, hysterically
 to Benjy Benjamin)
 I've lost them! They're not
saying anything!

He shakes the hand-microphone, accidentally letting go of the
 switch again. Immediately:

(CONTINUED)

305 CONTINUED:

RADIO OPERATOR'S VOICE (speaker)

-- a minute, you're not using that set the right way. You press your switch down to transmit and when it's level you're on receive -- can you understand me? This is Santa Rosita Tower. Where are you and who are you? Over.

DING BELL (microphone)

Yow, I got it, I got it now! Okay, well, listen, we're in this plane, this fellow's plane, and he's unconscious -- can you hear me? Are you listening? -- he's unconscious in the back because this whole carton of bourbon fell on his head, so for God's sake what do we do? They're not saying anything, we lost them again --

BENJY BENJAMIN

Let go of the switch! The switch, you idiot!

RADIO OPERATOR'S VOICE (speaker)

(as Ding Bell
switches to receive)

-- can give us your position. Who's flying the plane? Over.

DING BELL (microphone)

Whaddya mean, who's flying the plane? Nobody's flying the plane, we're just sitting here -- and we don't know what our position is, the thing on the dashboard says sixty-five-hundred feet and we can see the coastline and the ocean and that's all we know so can somebody do something? Listen, we can't get down! We're stuck up here in this thing and what's-his-name's back there out cold -- listen, whaddya gonna do?

BENJY BENJAMIN

(screaming at him)

Why are you talking? Let the other guy say something, will you?

RADIO OPERATOR'S VOICE (speaker)

-- can try to fix your position and also tell us what kind of plane it is. What kind of plane? Over.

(CONTINUED)

305 CONTINUED: (2)

DING BELL (microphone)
 Hello, this is us! We don't know
 what kind of plane, it's got two
 engines and this built-in bar and
 there's a little John in the back!
 So do something!

BENJY BENJAMIN
 You gotta say over! What's the matter
 with you?

DING BELL (microphone)
 Yeah, over....

306 INT/EXT. SANTA ROSITA CONTROL-TOWER

Out on the balcony with his binoculars the Tower Comptroller suddenly points, whirls, runs in, shouting.

TOWER COMPTROLLER
Yes! There they are! Southeast at
 about six thousand! Let me....

(then, leaning
 down to microphone)
 Santa Rosita Tower. Listen, we've
 spotted you, we can see you! Now,
 you've got to hold that course! Can
 you hold that plane on course long
 enough for us to get something
 organized? Santa Rosita, over....

DING BELL'S VOICE (through speaker)
 No, listen, I keep telling you, we
 can't do anything, you gotta get
somebody else to do something!
 What're you going to do?

BENJY BENJAMIN'S VOICE (speaker)
Will you let go of the of the switch?

DING BELL'S VOICE (thru speaker)
 Sorry! Over!

In the b.g. during this the Assistant, who is on the phone, has reacted to being answered after a delay. Then, simultaneously with but subordinated to the f.g. stuff:

ASSISTANT (telephone)
 Sir, Tower here, emergency. We've
 got radio contact with an unidentified
 plane, they report the pilot's unconscious
 -- some accident while in flight --

The Tower Comptroller during this has turned to his
 Assistant:

(CONTINUED)

306 CONTINUED:

TOWER COMPTROLLER

Tell him it's full emergency and that
we're going to try to bring them down
-- tell him!

The Assistant relays this message (Background Script Note 17) as the Tower Comptroller runs quickly back out to the balcony and raises his binoculars again. After a couple of seconds he reacts with excitement, runs back in.

TOWER COMPTROLLER

(overriding others)

I've got it, it's a Cessna Executive
two-twenty. There's one here, I saw
it this morning: who's got a two-
twenty Cessna?

ASSISTANT (telephone)

One second, sir --

(turning to

Tower Comptroller)

-- Chief says okay, go ahead.

TOWER COMPTROLLER

All right. Divert everything coming
in to Dago, and warn everybody.

Ambulance, fire-rescue, the works.

Come on, come on, let's get going!

(suddenly remembering,
snapping fingers)

It's that Colonel -- Colonel Wilberforce!

He's got the identical ship! He was

over at Maintenance! If he's still

there, get him over here -- and hurry!

(leaning down to
microphone)

Santa Rosita Tower. Now listen, don't
talk, just listen! We're getting this
under control, so take it easy. We've
got you in sight, we know what kind of
plane you're in, we're getting somebody
over here who knows your instrument
layout and we're making all the necessary
preparations to talk you down, right?
Santa Rosita, over...

DING BELL'S VOICE (thru speaker)

Up here to Santa Rosita Tower. Listen,

we can't land this thing! Can't youunderstand? We're in real trouble!Over!

Somewhere outside the tower an emergency bell begins its
clangorous toll. All along the tarmac people come out of buildings
and hangars to see what it's all about. In f.g., looking pretty
grim:

(CONTINUED)

306 CONTINUED: (2)

TOWER COMPTROLLER (microphone)
Now, listen to me, you'll be perfectly
all right as long as you follow
instructions. One thing: it's important
that the man at the controls is the
man on the radio, otherwise -- let
me speak to the man at the controls,
right? Over....

307 INT. TYLER FITZGERALD'S PLANE -- MOVING IN THE AIR

Ding Bell nervously fiddles with the earphones, dropping, but
not breaking them, and tries to put them on Benjy Benjamin's
head. Benjy Benjamin resists, moves the stick, and the
horizon jiggles up and down. During this:

DING BELL
He says they gotta be able to talk
to you -- he says you should --

BENJY BENJAMIN
Whaddya talking about? I can't do
everything! I'm supposed to fly the
airplane and operate the radio and
-- so what're you doing, are you the
air hostess or something?

308 INT. CULPEPER'S OFFICE

Culpeper is not present. The door to his private office is
closed. The Lieutenant is on the phone and the Sergeant, the
Secretary and the Police Reporter are all waiting for him to
finish speaking.

LIEUTENANT (telephone)
Talk them down? Why, they'll kill
themselves. All right, we've got the
airport covered whatever happens.
(hanging up)
Look, the Chief'll have to -- he's
got to take charge of this situation
or -- what's the matter with him,
anyway?

The others all look at the door of Culpeper's private office.
They are uncertain and uneasy.

SERGEANT
He's just sittin' in there....

SECRETARY
He said he didn't want to be disturbed
any more. Disturbed!

(CONTINUED)

308 CONTINUED:

SERGEANT

He just keeps looking at the wall ...

The Lieutenant, not liking this situation, turns nervously back to the big state map on the wall, the other three turning after him. Beyond them all, in the b.g., the door opens quietly and Culpeper appears.

LIEUTENANT

Well, we'll have to disturb him if any of these --

(then, hearing
Culpeper's entry,
turning)

Ah! Situation's under control,
Chief....

CULPEPER

Hmm?

SERGEANT

You okay, Chief?

CULPEPER

Hmm? Why, yes, why? How're things going?

LIEUTENANT

Well, something's got to happen before long....

309 EXT. STREET OUTSIDE HARDWARE STORE

Two Officers are bending down with their ears pressed to the wall of the hardware store. Ten yards from their position a small group of fascinated Cantonese are huddled in the open doorway of the Chinese Laundry next door to Dinckler's Hardware Store, watching the policemen.

LIEUTENANT'S VOICE (over)

... The two in the basement first of all started a fire and then set off a lot of fireworks, but they still haven't gotten out....

310 EXT. TYLER FITZGERALD'S PLANE -- AERIAL SHOT

Through the cabin windows, Benjy Benjamin with the earphones on, listening, nodding; Ding Bell kneeling beside him, stroking his shoulder encouragingly.

(CONTINUED)

310 CONTINUED:

LIEUTENANT'S VOICE (over)

... The two characters in the plane had some accident which knocked the pilot unconscious and now the Tower out at the airport is going to try to talk them down. And as for the others...

311 EXT. OTTO MEYER AFOOT

Staggering over the top of a hill, soaking wet, he stumbles and falls, skinning his ankle. But then he sees the road, only half a mile in the distance. He gets up and goes on.

LIEUTENANT'S VOICE (over)

Aerial report that the man Otto Meyer -- he lost his car, you see, trying to cross some river -- he's on foot and walking back to the road....

312 EXT. BREAKDOWN-TRUCK

It goes tearing past.

LIEUTENANT'S VOICE (over)

...The fellow Pike --

SERGEANT'S VOICE (over)

He's the one I say'll get there first --

LIEUTENANT'S VOICE (over)

-- anyway, he's about here, coming in on 94 with Mrs. Marcus and her daughter Mrs. Finch.

313 EXT. RED FORD CONVERTIBLE

It goes tearing by.

LIEUTENANT'S VOICE (over)

...Mister Finch and Algernon What's-his-name, the Limey, are only four or five miles behind them in this Avis Ford they rented in Canyon City.....

314 EXT. SYLVESTER MARCUS' PONTIAC

Going very fast, the opposite way on the screen.

(CONTINUED)

314 CONTINUED:

LIEUTENANT'S VOICE (over)

...And this Sylvester Marcus, the one the old lady called, he's about here, going in the other direction. They all ought to be meeting up in five or ten minutes....

315 INT. CULPEPER'S OFFICE

Culpeper, strangely withdrawn, stands looking thoughtfully at the map as the Lieutenant finishes his resume. The other four are all watching him curiously. He is perfectly at ease, calm, smiling slightly. He looks at the map. The camera moves in close upon him, very close. He is lost in thought. We see the map. He isn't looking at Highway 94. He is looking at Mexico. He is looking at Ensenada. A phone has rung in the b.g., and the Secretary has answered it, and the Lieutenant, standing right beside Culpeper, is saying something to him, speaking very earnestly (Background Script Note 18) -- but we can't hear the other voices because Culpeper isn't hearing them. All we can hear, very faintly at first and then coming up quite powerfully, provocatively, are the strangely exotic rhythms of some wonderfully sensual Mexican music. Very close on Culpeper now. Above the music we hear the voices of women, soft, soothing, suggestive. His eyelids drooping, Culpeper smiles. Then he blinks. Immediately, abruptly, the aural vision fades -- and the Lieutenant can be heard again.

LIEUTENANT

-- covered at all points. If you think --

CULPEPER

Well, I think it's all -- all right. You know what? I believe I'd like a butterscotch sundae --

SERGEANT

I'll get you one, Chief, I'll run down to the drug --

CULPEPER

No, I'll go. I don't like them out of cartons, and I need a little air.
(indicating
map)

Nothing's going to happen for the next five minutes, anyway.

SECRETARY

(indicating phone)

Mrs. Culpeper would like to --

(CONTINUED)

315 CONTINUED:

CULPEPER

No. No calls. No more calls...

He goes out, smiling, even beaming upon them all, closing the door quietly behind him. All four stand staring at the door. The Sergeant is the most concerned of the four.

POLICE REPORTER

What's with him?

LIEUTENANT

Something's wrong...

SERGEANT

Aw, why's somethin' gotta be wrong?
He feels like a butterscotch sundae,
so okay, he has a butterscotch sundae...

316 INT. TYLER FITZGERALD'S PLANE -- MOVING IN THE AIR

Close on Ding Bell and Benjy Benjamin, both listening entranced to the energetic, high-pitched voice from the ground. (Benjy Benjamin has earphones on. Either Ding Bell has too or the voice also sounds through a small speaker beside the pilot's seat. Or Benjy Benjamin has the only earphones and Ding Bell can only hear by maintaining a cheek-to-cheek relationship with his partner -- in which case the aural business is stylised as with telephones, so that we hear what they hear).

COLONEL WILBERFORCE (thru earphones)

Men, this Colonel Wilberforce speaking.
These gentlemen here have asked me to --
uh -- take charge of this situation and
so I immediately said that I -- uh -- that
I would be glad to -- uh -- take charge
of it. Now, before I say anything else,
men, what I want to say before I say
anything else is that there is no need
for alarm -- positively no need for any
alarm, because I've spent a lifetime in
command and I'm a lot more used to dealing
with emergencies than most people are
used to -- uh -- dealing with emergencies,
so now let's not let ourselves give way
to panic, right? Now, just tell me if
you're receiving me loud and clear.
Over.

Taking one hand from the stick, Benjy Benjamin, reaches for the microphone switch. The horizon rises and falls. Quickly:

DING BELL

I'll work the switch.

(CONTINUED)

316 CONTINUED:

BENJY BENJAMIN (microphone)
 Yes, sir, very loud and very clear --
 but what do we do? Over!

317 INT. SANTA ROSITA AIRPORT CONTROL-TOWER

Leaning above the microphone and peering through the window at the distant speck in the sky (the plane is in a different quarter now) is Colonel Wilberforce. After a short pause to enable the audience to get out of the aisles and back into their seats:

COLONEL WILBERFORCE (microphone)
 Steady, men! Well now, I'm told that neither of you've had any flying experience and before I say anything else I want to congratulate you on having done so well -- uh -- so far. Now, first of all, men, I'll explain just what we intend to do. You can't land the airplane until you've made your approach, and you can't make your approach until you've made a long slow turn around down to the south. Now, we want to be quite clear about a few things before you start the long slow turn. Now, the stick which you're holding there -- at least, I assume -- men! Are you holding that stick? Is somebody holding that stick? OVER!

BENJY BENJAMIN (through speaker)
 Yes sir, I'm holding it! We're both holding it!

Colonel Wilberforce places a hand over his heart for a moment, glances at the others, swallows, shakes his head, smiles slightly. All three of the others are watching him steadily and with increasing dismay, the glances they exchange revealing their growing fear that Colonel Wilberforce is not exactly the right man for the job.

COLONEL WILBERFORCE (microphone)
 Good. For just one second there, I was afraid -- well, never mind that. Now, I'm going to explain the controls. It's most important that you have a clear understanding of the controls, men, because otherwise I simply shudder to think what's likely to.... Now, after I've explained the control-system, once you
 (more)

(CONTINUED)

317 CONTINUED:

COLONEL WILBERFORCE (mike; Cont'd)
 have a clear understanding of the
 controls, then we'll tackle the problem
 of reducing the speed of the airplane,
 but without reducing it so much that
 the machine stalls in the air. When
 I say "stall": stalling simply
 means --

Behind Colonel Wilberforce during this the Tower Comptroller
 shudders and covers his eyes with his hand. His Assistant
 turns and leans weakly against the wall and shakes his head.

318 INT. TYLER FITZGERALD'S PLANE -- MOVING IN THE AIR

Ding Bell and Benjy Benjamin are listening all right, but
 whereas before they made contact with anyone they were merely
 in terror, now they are beginning to appreciate how bad the
 situation really is.

COLONEL WILBERFORCE'S VOICE (speaker)
 -- that the loss of your forward
 speed is such that the -- what? What's
 that? Just a minute, men, just hold
 on for one minute while --
 (addressing someone
 in the tower)
 What's that you're saying?

BENJY BENJAMIN
 (in despair)
He's not -- Ding, he's not going to
 be able to do anything for us --

DING BELL
 No, listen to him! You gotta have
confidence in him! Benjy, he's a
Colonel! Listen to him!

COLONEL WILBERFORCE'S VOICE (speaker)
 (defensively, in
 the tower)
 But, I've got to explain the
controls, haven't I? Now, you'd
 better let me handle this
 situation in my own way -- and
 stop interrupting -- otherwise
 those poor devils up there simply
 haven't got a chance -- not a
chance! All right, now, men, let's
 keep our heads....

319 INT. DRUGSTORE -- TELEPHONE-BOOTH

Culpeper wears a little smile as he dials a number. Shut into a glass-sided sound-proofed telephone-booth in the drugstore, he has a large butterscotch sundae on the coin-box by his elbow. When he has finished dialing we hear the number ringing, and during this pause he takes a few bites of sundae with appreciation. Very close on Culpeper, we should sense, behind his calm exterior, a terrible tension. He stiffens suddenly, then relaxes with great relief as he gets a reply.

JIMMY'S VOICE (over the line)

Hello, yeah?

CULPEPER (telephone)

Jimmy? I was afraid you might not be home. You alone there?

JIMMY'S VOICE (over the line)

Sure I'm alone. Who's talking?

CULPEPER (telephone)

An old friend of yours, Jimmy --

JIMMY'S VOICE (over the line)

Hey, is this who I think it is? Is that Captain Cul --

CULPEPER (telephone)

That's right, Jimmy. Now, listen to me --

JIMMY'S VOICE (over the line)

Well, what's up? I ain't done anything. What you calling me for?

CULPEPER (telephone)

I was wondering how Betty is these days.

320 INT/EXT. JIMMY'S SHACK AND BOAT-DOCK

Jimmy, a small, dour, nervous, funny-looking little crook, is standing, receiver in hand, in the living-room of his dilapidated water-side house. He looks through the window or open doorway at the very powerful, fast-looking thirty-five-foot cabin cruiser tied up just outside at the dock. Her name can be seen clearly.

JIMMY (telephone)

She's fine, why?

CULPEPER'S VOICE (over the line)

I was thinking about a little trip...

(CONTINUED)

320 CONTINUED:

JIMMY (telephone)

You? You mean with me?

CULPEPER'S VOICE (over the line)

That's it. I want to -- get away for a while. But I don't want any fuss, I thought we might slip away quietly, a little cruise down to the south, you know?

JIMMY (telephone)

I don't get it. Listen, you mean round-trip? Or just one-way?

CULPEPER'S VOICE (over the line)

One-way, Jimmy.....

JIMMY (telephone)

Hunh? You? YOU?

321 BACK TO SHOT

Culpeper smiles slightly, thoughtfully spoons up some whipped cream and a nut. (He has left the cherry on an island of ice-cream in a sea of butterscotch).

CULPEPER (telephone)

You know how it is, Jimmy: a sudden impulse

JIMMY'S VOICE (over the line)

Listen, if you're throwing me a curve --

CULPEPER (telephone)

No, no, I wouldn't do that. Now suppose I came out to your place in half an hour, Jimmy, in thirty or forty minutes: could we go right away?

JIMMY'S VOICE (over the line)

Sure. But listen, is there something in it for me?

CULPEPER (telephone)

Oh, yes, there's something for everybody. There's one detail: you'll have to lose a car for me, later. But the really important thing is that both you and Betty be ready to go the minute I get there, right?

JIMMY'S VOICE (over the line)

Sure. We're ready right now.

(CONTINUED)

321 CONTINUED:

CULPEPER (telephone)
 All right. I won't be long, Jimmy.
 Thanks a lot.

He hangs up, finishes the sundae, and smacks his lips with noisy satisfaction.

322 EXT. ROAD

Somewhere out on Highway 94, only about twenty-five miles from the goal, the breakdown-truck comes around a downhill curve at about eighty. Camera holds on it, panning it away into the distance; then holds unreasonably on the empty barren rocky hillside above the road. After a moment the desperately forlorn and depressingly bedraggled figure of Otto Meyer appears. Staggering and stumbling, he clambers down to the roadside and begins trying frantically to thumb a lift. Three cars in rapid succession whip past, their occupants ignoring him. Otto Meyer makes one or two gestures and calls something after them, but we are not close enough to catch these comments.

323 EXT. THE ROAD -- OTTO MEYER AND THE VERY NERVOUS MAN

Then, to Otto Meyer's immense relief, a '57 Dodge convertible slows down and stops. Its single occupant is a middle-aged VERY NERVOUS MAN who looks at Otto Meyer curiously as he runs up beside the car.

VERY NERVOUS MAN
 You want a lift?

OTTO MEYER
 Thank you -- just in to Santa Rosita
 -- I have to get there as quickly as possible --

VERY NERVOUS MAN
 Well, I can take you most of the way,
 I'm going to San Diego.

324 EXT. POLICE HELICOPTER -- AERIAL SHOT

A couple of thousand feet above, the helicopter hovers. One of the policemen, watching the scene through binoculars, reaches for the mike and starts reporting in.

325 INT/EXT. THE DODGE -- MOVING

The Very Nervous Man is clearly not a very fast driver: several cars overtake and pass them. Otto Meyer stirs

(CONTINUED)

325 CONTINUED:

restively, glances at his watch, reacts with disgust when he sees that it has stopped. The Very Nervous Man glances at him again curiously.

VERY NERVOUS MAN

Nice afternoon.

OTTO MEYER

What? Oh -- yes. Yes.

VERY NERVOUS MAN

It's none of my business, but I can't help noticing your clothes are all wet. You been in some water or something?

OTTO MEYER

Yes. Look, I haven't the time to explain but I'm involved in a kind of emergency. Would you mind driving a little faster?

VERY NERVOUS MAN

Why, no. I'll step it up to 40. I don't usually drive that fast since my operation.

Otto Meyer stirs restively again. Suddenly the red Ford convertible with Algernon Hawthorne and J. Russell Finch in it comes up very fast from the b.g. and passes them at twice their speed. Never having seen the two characters in it, Otto Meyer hardly glances at it.

326 INT. THE BASEMENT

Melville and Monica Crump are sitting silently in a slough of despond. Melville Crump seems to be thinking, but his wife seems not to be thinking. After a moment she takes a compact out of her handbag, opens it, sees her reflection, wails once, then weeps silently. Melville Crump gets up, moves about restively, shakes his head reflectively, and appears so deep in thought that she becomes intrigued.

MONICA CRUMP

What's the matter? Why are you shaking your head like that?

MELVILLE CRUMP

Oh, I was just thinking that after all this it's funny how it doesn't really matter. I mean, how it doesn't matter to me. I'm not even disappointed -- for myself. I'm just disappointed for you, that's all. Of course you realize that this means the end of Jefferson City, Missouri.....

(CONTINUED)

326 CONTINUED:

Monica Crump stares at her husband, who has assumed an attitude of patient, indifferent resignation. Then, after a few seconds, when his words have fanned up the flickering embers of her greed:

MONICA CRUMP

Well....could it really be a little explosion? You promise me?

327 EXT/INT. SANTA ROSITA AIRPORT CONTROL TOWER

A fast-moving, tense, anxious, complex little scene. The Control-Tower is a busy place now, and quite a few people have crowded into the control-room itself or moved up onto the exterior staircases and balconies in order to hear what goes on. At the top, in f.g., the Tower Comptroller, out on the top balcony, watches steadily through binoculars. We can see beyond him into the control-room, where Colonel Wilberforce, peering through the open window, is still by the mike. The Assistant (and two or three other Airport personnel) are also watching the place through binoculars.

TOWER COMPTROLLER

(over his shoulder)

Yes, that's all right...

COLONEL WILBERFORCE (microphone)

That's all right, men, you're doing fine...

TOWER COMPTROLLER

No, that's too much -- too steep --
get that wing up!

COLONEL WILBERFORCE (microphone)

That's too much, men! You're banking too steeply! Move the stick an inch to the left! An inch to the left, men!

TOWER COMPTROLLER

That's better!

COLONEL WILBERFORCE (microphone)

Good! That's much better! Now hold her just like that, you're making a first-class slow turn there, men, really first-class.

While the voice of the Tower Comptroller and Colonel Wilberforce carry on like this (Background Script Note 19) cut or crane down to a lower balcony where a Plainclothes Detective is speaking to an Airport Official. (The audience to deduce their identities.) Beyond and below them in front of the tower quite a big crowd has collected, and out on the

(CONTINUED)

327 CONTINUED:

edge of the tarmac an ambulance and some fire-wagons can be seen waiting.

PLAINSCLOTHES DETECTIVE

...And without knowing it both Benjamin and Bell have been under surveillance all day in connection with another matter.

AIRPORT OFFICIAL

But what are we supposed to do?

PLAINCLOTHES DETECTIVE

Nothing, absolutely nothing. Headquarters' instructions are that no matter what happens they mustn't be held up or delayed in any way. I mean, if they do manage to get down...

COLONEL WILBERFORCE (microphone)

(over, his voice
ringing down from
above)

That's fine, men! You're doing well!
I'm proud of you, men, proud of you!

328 INT. THE DODGE -- MOVING

Out on Highway 94 Otto Meyer shifts impatiently in his seat as the Dodge rolls sedately into the outskirts of some little town like Potero. Looking about in some desperation at faster-moving cars, he happens to notice the helicopter a thousand feet above and a little behind them. Suddenly, with a violent start and an exclamation of dismay, he crouches down in the seat and clutches the Very Nervous Man's knee.

OTTO MEYER

Look out!

VERY NERVOUS MAN

What? What's the -- what's the --

OTTO MEYER

They've spotted us!

VERY NERVOUS MAN

What? Who have? What are you --

OTTO MEYER

No, don't slow down! Keep going!

VERY NERVOUS MAN

But what do you -- what is this?

(CONTINUED)

328 CONTINUED:

OTTO MEYER

(looking up)

That helicopter! They've seen us!

VERY NERVOUS MAN

What? What helicopter?

(glancing over his
shoulder quickly)But that's a police helicopter --

OTTO MEYER

That's right! That's what it looks
like! They use them all the time!

VERY NERVOUS MAN

Who use them all the time?

OTTO MEYER

Well, who do you think? Now, listen,
I didn't want to tell you this but
I'll have to. They've gotten me
hemmed in --

VERY NERVOUS MAN

Who have? What are you --

OTTO MEYER

No, don't talk, listen! They've
got me in a corner, so I'll have
to break the rule. The rule says
we must never reveal our identity
but this is a desperate situation!

VERY NERVOUS MAN

What is? What are you --

OTTO MEYER

Listen, I don't know how much time
there is, so if you've got any feeling
for your country at all then pay
attention! You've just got to get
to a phone!

VERY NERVOUS MAN

I've got to? But what for?

OTTO MEYER

You've got to make -- listen, this
is a matter of life and death --
you've got to call Intelligence,
the Central Intelligence Agency in
Washington --

VERY NERVOUS MAN

But what on earth --

(CONTINUED)

328 CONTINUED: (2)

OTTO MEYER

Tell them you're calling for M-twenty-seven. Tell them M-twenty-seven's been spotted and they've already made three attempts on his life today! Tell them they got me down to an old silver mine and tried to drown me! Wait a minute, you can stop just up there, you can phone from that drugstore!

VERY NERVOUS MAN

But look, I don't think I --

OTTO MEYER

Don't worry, none of them know you, you won't be in any danger! Just get to that phone, tell the operator emergency priority and ask for the CIA! Now, quick! Stop! Jump out!

(cowering down in
the seat, peering
up at the helicopter)

You'll be all right, they've never even seen you! Hurry! I'll get the car under cover and come back -- if they don't get me! For God's sake, man, get off the street before they spot you! Run for it! Get out of sight!

329 EXT. OUTSIDE DRUGSTORE IN LITTLE TOWN

The Very Nervous Man, who has tried to interrupt these exhortations several times, now flings another panic-stricken glance at the helicopter and runs into the drugstore. Through the plate-glass window we can see him as he runs up to the two telephone-booths, both of which are occupied, inside. At about that point Otto Meyer shifts over in the seat, and, permitting himself a small smile, drives away and o.s. Inside the drugstore the Very Nervous Man makes an effort to get the people who are talking on the two phones to let him interrupt. They refuse. He appears to be shouting at them. Then, as he attempts to take the receiver out of the hand of a Large Irrate Lady in one of the booths she offers some stout resistance. The business builds up until there is a considerable commotion. The shot might hold until the Very Nervous Man, who is now obviously hysterical, has been placed under physical restraint.

330 INT. THE BREAKDOWN-TRUCK -- MOVING

On Highway 94, going fast, Lennie Pike shifts down and prepares to stop as three-hundred yards ahead the traffic-lights at a

(CONTINUED)

330 CONTINUED:

big intersection turn red. He looks worried and preoccupied and is ignoring the argument between Mrs. Marcus and her daughter.

EMMELINE FINCH

...But I still say, when we get to Santa Rosita we ought to go straight to the police --

MRS. MARCUS

But we don't know what's happened yet! First we go out to that Park, and if the rest of them have already been there and gone then we go straight to the police and tell them everything we know, because for all we know there may be a reward and SYLVESTER!

The truck has stopped at the lights, which are just changing to green. The old lady has screamed the name so loudly that her daughter cries out in reaction.

331 EXT. INTERSECTION -- THE PONTIAC

Across the intersection, from their viewpoint. Sylvester Marcus gives the Pontiac the gun and roars away in the opposite direction. (He hasn't heard his mother's scream nor glanced at the breakdown-truck).

332 INT. THE BREAKDOWN-TRUCK -- MOVING

Looking pretty confused, Lennie Pike has driven across the intersection. Mrs. Marcus is throwing herself about in the seat, still screaming.

MRS. MARCUS

Stop him! It's Sylvester! Turn around! Stop him, do you hear!

LENNIE PIKE

But he's going the wrong way! Whaddya want to stop him for?

MRS. MARCUS

It's my son!

(hitting at
Lennie Pike)

Do as you're told, you stupid idiot!
Turn around!

With a disgusted expression Lennie Pike does a U-turn, at the same time turning to look after the Pontiac.

333 EXT. ROAD -- THE PONTIAC

From their viewpoint. The Pontiac is already hundreds of yards away and gathering speed. As he makes the turn:

LENNIE PIKE

But listen, we can't catch that
Pontiac! Hey, watch it: cops!

On the other side of the intersection the patrol-car which has been trailing the breakdown-truck and is now faced with it going in the opposite direction turns smartly off down the side road, the two Patrolmen in it not looking at the breakdown-truck.

334 INT. THE PONTIAC -- MOVING

Sylvester Marcus is driving with furious concentration. His eyes are still red from weeping. Far down the road behind him in the b.g., the breakdown-truck can just be seen, falling still farther behind.

335 INT. THE BREAKDOWN-TRUCK -- MOVING

Mrs. Marcus, leaning forward, bounces in her seat.

MRS. MARCUS

Come on, faster! Catch him! You've
got to stop him!

LENNIE PIKE

We can't catch him, I tell you!

336 EXT. INTERSECTION -- TWO PATROL-CARS

Both the patrol-cars -- that following Sylvester Marcus and that following the breakdown-truck -- now come slowly around a corner of the intersection, obviously allowing the two vehicles to gain some distance before falling in behind again. One of the Patrolmen is reporting in as the car rounds the corner. His voice carrying momentarily:

PATROLMAN (microphone)

... Have turned around and are heading
back east after the Pontiac....

337 INT. BREAKDOWN-TRUCK -- MOVING

Lennie Pike hits the steering-wheel a hard blow in protest.

LENNIE PIKE

This is stupid! Listen, you call
me a stupid idiot? Well, you're
a stupid idiot!

(CONTINUED)

337 CONTINUED:

MRS. MARCUS

But he'll go all the way to Plaster
City --

LENNIE PIKE

So what? So we go all the way to
Plaster City too?

(putting on
the brakes)

I don't know about you -- I'm turning
around -- you want catch him, get out
and run!

Having slowed down, he swings into another U-turn.

338 INT. PATROL-CAR -- MOVING

Half a mile away, in the first of the two Patrol-cars, a
Patrolman is leaning forward peering through binoculars.

PATROLMAN

Watch it: the truck's turning around
again. I've never seen anything like
this bunch...

He reaches for his microphone again.

339 INT. THE PONTIAC -- MOVING

Over Sylvester Marcus' shoulder as, passing through some little
built-up area, he has to slow down as a huge grocer's van
backing up to a supermarket partially blocks the road. He
starts to swing out around it but a red Ford convertible,
coming fast, takes priority, forcing Sylvester Marcus to brake
to a sudden halt. Over his shoulder or from his viewpoint we
see J. Russell Finch in the car with Algernon Hawthorne. As
the red Ford whips past, absolutely astounded:

SYLVESTER MARCUS

Russell? Hey! Hey, Russell!

A second's hesitation, then Sylvester Marcus swings into a fast
U-turn.

340 INT. RED FORD CONVERTIBLE -- MOVING

J. Russell Finch has obviously not seen his brother-in-law nor
even noticed the Pontiac. The Englishman, driving with an
angry concentration, pushes the Ford up to seventy-five again.
J. Russell Finch stirs restively in his seat, looking extremely
unhappy. Neither man shows the slightest sign of any damage
from their epic struggle.

(CONTINUED)

340 CONTINUED:

J. RUSSELL FINCH

The whole issue was probably decided an hour ago. If she got Sylvester on the phone he's bound to have gotten the money. He's probably already spent it.

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

Well, who's fault is it? If you hadn't wasted so much time in that infantile display of physical aggressiveness --

J. RUSSELL FINCH

Look, the only reason we're together now was that they only had one car ready. Let's stop arguing and just get there -- even if we are last.

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

I should like to say that, whatever the outcome of the day, I shall not forget that you struck me when I wasn't even looking.....

In the b.g. the Pontiac is closing the gap slowly, and is now only three or four-hundred yards behind.

341 EXT. THE WHOLE BUNCH -- MOVING (Helicopter?) SHOT

In f.g. the breakdown-truck is only doing about sixty on this level ground. At eighty the red Ford Convertible swings out and passes it. Two-hundred and fifty yards behind in b.g., Mrs. Calvin Halliburton's Pontiac gains on both of them.

342 INT. THE BREAKDOWN-TRUCK -- MOVING

Side-angled across the three in the breakdown-truck. Mrs. Marcus and Lennie Pike are still quarreling and it is Emmeline Finch who first notices the occupants of the red Ford as it overtakes and passes them.

MRS. MARCUS

If you'd been quicker turning around we could have caught him.

LENNIE PIKE

Now listen, I'm telling you, you better shut up or I'm --

EMMELINE FINCH

(as the red Ford goes by)

Russell! There! It's Russell and Mr. Hawthorne!

(CONTINUED)

342 CONTINUED:

MRS. MARCUS

Stop them! Catch them!

LENNIE PIKE

Listen, you start that again --

MRS. MARCUS

Faster! Step on it! Blow the horn,
you big --

LENNIE PIKE

What makes you think they'll stop?
And what do you want with them
anyway? Hey, I wonder what took
them so long?

Mrs. Marcus has leaned over and tooted the horn, but it has made only an insignificant little sound. The red convertible has already left them some two-hundred yards behind and all three are staring at it as Sylvester Marcus, moving even faster, passes them in the Pontiac.

MRS. MARCUS

Well, keep up with them! You're falling
behind! You've got to keep up with
them, you hear?

EMMELINE FINCH

(screaming as she
notices Pontiac)Sylvester! Mother! Sylvester!

MRS. MARCUS

Stop him! Don't let him --

LENNIE PIKE

Stop screaming at me!

He sounds the horn again four or five times, but Sylvester Marcus (who has not even glanced at the truck) pulls rapidly ahead in the Pontiac.

343 EXT. THE WHOLE BUNCH -- MOVING SHOT

In f. g., the red Ford convertible, hitting eighty-five. A hundred and fifty yards behind it, the Pontiac, hitting ninety-five. Falling well behind in b.g., the breakdown-truck. This shot might hold for eight or ten seconds while the gap between the two cars in f.g. diminishes and the truck drops farther and farther behind.

344 INT. THE RED FORD CONVERTIBLE -- MOVING

As J. Russell Finch speaks there is a long blast on the horn from the Pontiac a hundred yards behind them.

J. RUSSELL FINCH

I'd rather see anybody get it --
if we can't have it then I'd rather
see anybody get it than my brother-
in-law get it --

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

(glancing in
mirror)

I say, why's that chap sounding his
hooter?

The Pontiac is only fifty yards behind the Ford. Turning around to look at it:

J. RUSSELL FINCH

Probably some road-hog who thinks he
owns the -- what! Well, I'll --

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

What is it? What's --

J. RUSSELL FINCH

It's my brother-in-law! How in the
world -- be careful! You'd better
slow down!

345 EXT. ROAD -- BOTH CARS -- MOVING SHOT

The Pontiac has pulled abreast the Ford. Now, side by side and three or four feet apart, the two vehicles take a long curve at seventy miles an hour.

346 INT. RED FORD CONVERTIBLE -- MOVING SHOT

Shooting past J. Russell Finch and Algernon Hawthorne in f.g. as beyond them Sylvester Marcus, shouting, lifts a hand and indicates the side of the road.

SYLVESTER MARCUS

Stop! Pull over there! Stop!

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

What is the silly ass playing at?

J. RUSSELL FINCH

He wants us to stop --

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

But, look here, that's a complete waste
of time --

(CONTINUED)

346 CONTINUED:

SYLVESTER MARCUS
I'm warning you, Russell! Stop!

J. RUSSELL FINCH
Be careful -- watch him! There's
no telling what he'll -- look out!

347 INT. THE PONTIAC -- MOVING

With a savage snarl Sylvester Marcus eases the Pontiac gradually to the right, pushing up closer and closer against the red Ford until only inches separate the two fast-moving vehicles and J. Russell Finch, shouting repeated warnings to the Englishman, cringes back against the Englishman's shoulder. Shouting very loudly:

SYLVESTER MARCUS
I'm telling you, Russell, you'd better
stop right now or -- all right, I'll
show you -- get over -- get over and
stop, or I'll --

348 EXT. BOTH CARS -- MOVING SHOT

Close on both vehicles as, with a sickening screech of metal, the Pontiac rubs side-swipingly against the Ford. Swerving sharply, the Ford veers a few inches to the right, veers back, and there is another, louder clash between the two cars. Both rapidly lose speed, slowing to fifty, to forty-five, to forty. Then, having got the Pontiac three or four feet in front of the Ford, Sylvester Marcus suddenly wrenches the wheel hard over: the Ford's front bumper on the left hits hard into the right front wheel of the Pontiac with a lot of noise, and more or less locked together the two cars skid off the road and onto the grass-surfaced shoulder. They have almost come to a halt when they knock over three or four small trees and plunge into some thick roadside shrubbery.

349 INT. PATROL-CAR -- SIDE ROAD

In a side-road nearby one of the Patrol-cars involved in this business pulls up under cover of some trees and stops in time for us to catch a part of the officer's report. As his companion gets out and runs to a point from which he can observe the scene of the accident:

OFFICER (microphone)
...And he ran right into them, he ran
them right off the road! We can't
tell from here whether anybody's hurt --

350 EXT. THE SCENE OF THE ACCIDENT

Both Sylvester Marcus and Algernon Hawthorne have got out of their cars and J. Russell Finch is standing up in the seat of the red Ford Convertible. Algernon Hawthorne is very badly shaken. Sylvester Marcus' whole manner is full of terrible menace.

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE
(near hysteria, to
J. Russell Finch)

Do something! The fellow's obviously
beside himself!

J. RUSSELL FINCH
Now, listen, Sylvester --

SYLVESTER MARCUS
What did you do to my mother!

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE
He's positively starkers!

J. RUSSELL FINCH
We didn't do anything to your mother!
If you'll just give me a chance to
explain --

But Sylvester Marcus advances on J. Russell Finch, who climbs down out of the Ford and begins retreating around it, trying to keep both the vehicles between himself and his brother-in-law. The Englishman, trying to keep away from both of them, stumbles and falls momentarily out of sight in some bushes.

SYLVESTER MARCUS
She told me, she called up and said
that you -- listen, what she told me,
it was so horrible I thought she'd gone
nuts or something -- but it was true --

J. RUSSELL FINCH
(really frightened
now, backing away)
It wasn't true! I don't know what
she told you, but whatever it was
it wasn't true --

A number of cars have gone past on the road, but none has stopped. Suddenly, as Algernon Hawthorne gets to his feet again and J. Russell Finch continues to retreat, Sylvester Marcus leaps at the Englishman, catches him by the front of his clothes, and slams him up against the side of one of the cars. In a challenging roar:

SYLVESTER MARCUS
Are you English? Just tell me are
you English!

(CONTINUED)

350 CONTINUED:

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

Well, yes, as a matter of fact, but
my dear fellow, I assure you --

With an animal-like roar Sylvester Marcus hurls Algernon Hawthorne to one side, where the Englishman with a strangled scream disappears again into the shrubbery. Beyond this shambles the breakdown-truck can be seen pulling to a stop fifty feet away in the b.g., but Sylvester Marcus, intent on mayhem, doesn't notice it. Again advancing on his brother-in-law:

SYLVESTER MARCUS

She said there was an Englishman! She
said you and some Englishman -- why
I'll kill you, you dirty, rotten --

But the three in the b.g. have jumped out of the truck. Lennie Pike stays beside it. The two women come running forward. Calling out as she comes:

EMMELINE FINCH

Russell! Sylvester! Russell!

J. RUSSELL FINCH

Emmeline!

SYLVESTER MARCUS

Sis? Momma?

MRS. MARCUS

(without preamble,
berating her son)

Why couldn't you listen? Why
couldn't you just shut up and listen
to what I was telling you?

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

(climbing out of
the bushes again)

Take care! That chap's run absolutely
amuck!

SYLVESTER MARCUS

But how come -- listen, I thought
-- Momma, you said -- when you
phoned me you said -- how come
you told me -- what'd you want to
say a thing like that for? What
is this? Listen, what goes on?
Will somebody tell me --

(CONTINUED)

350 CONTINUED: (2)

MRS. MARCUS
(overriding and
ignoring his lines)

Oh, shut up, will you! You should've
had enough sense to listen --

J. RUSSELL FINCH
(to his wife, in
entreaty)

Sweetie, I couldn't help what happened,
you know that, honeybunch --

EMMELINE FINCH
But you shouldn't have -- you know
you shouldn't have done what you --

SYLVESTER MARCUS
What? What'd he do? Just tell me
what he did, I'll tear his ugly
head off!

J. RUSSELL FINCH
(beginning to
retreat again)
Stop it, will you? This isn't getting
us -- this won't get us anywhere!

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE
Hear, hear!

Fifty feet away in the b.g. Lennie Pike has stood watching
all this from beside the truck. Quite a few cars are going
by, most of them so quickly that their occupants don't notice
this business beside the road. The two or three which have
slowed down and started to stop Lennie Pike has waved on.
Now, impatient of this nonsensical delay, he calls from the
b.g.

LINNIE PIKE
Listen, I'm not going to -- I'll
see you around.....

MRS. MARCUS
(shouting at him)
You stay right where you are! You
admitted you stole that truck! We
can have you picked up in two minutes!

Lennie Pike scratches his head thoughtfully, stays where he
is.

SYLVESTER MARCUS
Listen, will somebody just tell me
something? Will somebody give out
with just one little word of
explanation?

(CONTINUED)

350 CONTINUED: (3)

MRS. MARCUS

I told you once, there was this accident this morning --

SYLVESTER MARCUS

You mean you were -- you mean it's true, about a lot of dough buried in --

J. RUSSELL FINCH

It was true: you think the others won't have gotten there by now? Look, the longer we stand here arguing --

SYLVESTER MARCUS

Well, let's get going. Maybe the others -- hey, what others? Who're the others?

MRS. MARCUS

Never mind, we'll explain all that on the way!

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

(having inspected
the Ford)

I say, we seem to have burst a tire. I don't think --

SYLVESTER MARCUS

(getting into
the Pontiac)

Wait a minute. I'll back this thing out...

He presses the starter. It grinds for a while but the motor won't catch. In the b.g., watching them, Lennie Pike suddenly reaches a thoughtful decision. Calling over:

LINNIE PIKE

Hey, you know what? I just thought: you get me picked up I can get you picked up, right? So I'll see you around!

He starts to get back into the truck but Sylvester Marcus gives up with the starter and quickly jumps out of the Pontiac. Running up to the truck, followed by the others:

SYLVESTER MARCUS

Hold it, buster! It looks like we're all going in the truck. Listen, you know this neighborhood?

LINNIE PIKE

No.

(CONTINUED)

350 CONTINUED: (4)

SYLVESTER MARCUS

Well, I do, so I'll drive..

(turning to his
mother)

Listen, make up your mind --

(indicating Finch
and Hawthorne)

-- You wanna take them with us or not?

MRS. MARCUS

We'll have to take them, otherwise
they'll call the --

SYLVESTER MARCUS

(to Finch and
Hawthorne)

So get in the back --

(then to Lennie Pike)

-- You too. My mother and sister'll
ride in front.

351 EXT. PATROL CAR -- SIDE-ROAD

A patrolman watching the scene through binoculars several
hundred yards away turns and calls back to his companion at
the car.

PATROLMAN

They're all going on in the truck,
all six of them!

352 EXT/INT. SANTA ROSITA AIRPORT CONTROL-TOWER

As before. The Tower Comptroller, having shifted his position,
stares through his binoculars at another quarter of the sky
now.

TOWER COMPTROLLER

Another couple of minutes, then you'll
have them in position!

COLONEL WILBERFORCE (microphone)

Just another couple of minutes, men,
we'll have you in position....

353 INT. TYLER FITZGERALD'S PLANE -- MOVING IN THE AIR

Kneeling beside his partner's seat and steadily patting the
top of his head, Ding Bell, a trifle unnecessarily, repeats
this information.

(CONTINUED)

353 CONTINUED:

DING BELL

Just another couple of minutes, Benjy,
they'll have us in position.

354 INT. CULPEPER'S OFFICE

Culpeper, back in the office and very much back in control again, is standing before the big wall-map. His three subordinates and the Police Reporter watch him intently. After a few moments of deep, heavy-lidded concentration, Culpeper speaks. Indicating the various points on the map:

CULPEPER

Right, now pay attention. They're going to try to talk that plane down in the next few minutes here. The truck with the main bunch is just out here, and the man Otto Meyer is only a mile behind them, here. The dentist and his wife are here. So, whatever happens, somebody's getting pretty warm. Now, here's the plan. We know they're making for somewhere on the shore, so I'll be moving out --

(indicating the
Sergeant)

--and you can come with me, in a plain car, into a position about here.

(indicating the
Lieutenant)

Now, you'll be in central control of the whole situation and in constant contact with me, right? The moment anybody gets close enough to the finish to tip us where it is, I'll issue the pull-away order. I don't want any mistakes. When I order the pull-away the whole area is to be cleared -- and kept clear -- of all units, city, county, state and aerial. You can relay the order through the whole net: they're to abandon surveillance and clear right out of it, right?

SERGEANT

I'll go get a car ready, Chief.

CULPEPER

I'll be right out. Remember: not a single one of these people must suspect that they've ever even been under observation. Now, not one of them knows me or has ever even seen me, so

(more)

(CONTINUED)

354 CONTINUED:

CULPEPER (Cont'd)
 I'm going to move in alone. When
 I move in I'll give you the word,
 and once you've passed it on I don't
 want another policeman anywhere within
 miles of me, right?

LIEUTENANT
 Right.

CULPEPER
 (enjoying this
 particular line)
 I won't like it at all if I see
 another policeman.....

355 INT. BASEMENT

Melville Crump is stringing another long length of fuse all the way across the room and making sure by running it over counters and shelves that it will not encounter any fluid this time. Pathetically dishevelled, holding some candles nearby so that he can see, his wife has another idea.

MONICA CRUMP
 Melville, will you do just one thing
 for me? Before you use the dynamite,
 try hitting the door once more.

MELVILLE CRUMP
 But I've practically broken my back
 on that -- oh, all right. Where's
 the sledge-hammer?

He finds one on the floor, moves to the bottom of the staircase, pauses. Indicating the bottom of it:

MELVILLE CRUMP
 That staircase isn't even safe. The
 fire burnt away the whole side of the --

MONICA CRUMP
 You can do it, Melville! Please!

MELVILLE CRUMP
 Well -- hold the candles, so I can
 see what I'm doing.
 (mounting staircase)
 This thing feels like it's ready to
 fall down anyway. All right. Here
 goes.....

Lifting the heavy hammer, he takes aim and then swings the hammer back very powerfully. He never strikes the door. The

(CONTINUED)

355 CONTINUED:

staircase structure is in fact so shaky that the pull of his backswing suddenly tears the whole staircase and landing right away from the wall. Astonishingly, with Melville Crump bellowing on top of it, the whole edifice flies twenty-five feet across the basement, where in a great cloud of dust the dentist disappears headlong in a mass of broken and splintered debris. Monica Crump screams. For a long moment there is no movement under the wreckage.

MONICA CRUMP

Melville! Melville, where are you?

Then some timbers are heaved aside. Very slowly, covered with paint, dust, extinguisher-fluid and bruise-marks, Melville Crump staggers up to his feet and stands there reeling. Very gently:

MELVILLE CRUMP

Now, listen, Monica. Let's forget about the door....

356 EXT. THE BREAKDOWN-TRUCK AND THE DODGE -- MOVING

In f. g., J. Russell Finch, Algernon Hawthorne and Lennie Pike are sitting uncomfortably in the wooden bed of the breakdown-truck. Somewhere out on Highway 94, only ten or twelve miles from Santa Rosita now and in fairly heavy traffic, the truck brakes sharply at a main intersection, then starts gathering speed again as the lights turn green. During this, and during the first couple of lines, we can see Otto Meyer in the Dodge convertible coming up very fast and swinging out to pass the truck. All three of the men in f.g. seem worried and anxious as well as uncomfortable. The Englishman looks preoccupied; but J. Russell Finch is just explaining something to Lennie Pike.

J. RUSSELL FINCH

...And I give you my word, I wanted to stop for you -- my wife wanted to stop --

(indicating Algernon Hawthorne)

-- he wanted to. But tell him -- tell him how my mother-in-law made us drive right by him --

LENNIE PIKE

Listen, anything about your mother-in-law you don't have to explain, you know what I mean? Like if it would make a good plot for a really crummy horror movie, then I believe it --

(CONTINUED)

356 CONTINUED:

But even as he is speaking Otto Meyer blows the Dodge's horn twenty yards behind: Lennie Pike notices him, stares open-mouth for one incredulous second, and leaps to his feet. With a violently menacing gesture, and screaming stentoriously as the Dodge roars by:

LENNIE PIKE

I'll kill you! You wait! I'll get
you! I'll catch you and I'll kill
you, you dirty -- I'M GONNA KILL YOU!

His gestures are so violent in fact that he all but falls out of the truck. It is Algernon Hawthorne who saves him, by clutching at his clothes. Then, as Lennie Pike stares after the fast-departing Dodge and utters one or two low growls, the Englishman, most disconcerted by this unexpected business, stares curiously, uncomprehendingly at the big truck-driver. After swallowing once:

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

Someone -- someone you know?

357 EXT. POLICE STATION PARKING-LOT

Culpeper comes out of a side door of the police station and strolls over to the waiting F-(plain, radio-equipped) car, beside which the Sergeant stands waiting. Culpeper carries a mounted map of the Santa Rosita area which he hands to the Sergeant. As he approaches:

CULPEPER

I'll drive. All set?

SERGEANT

All set, Chief.

358 INT. CULPEPER'S CAR

Culpeper gets in, starts the engine as the Sergeant gets in beside him, and then reaches for the mike.

CULPEPER (microphone)

Culpeper. All set?

LIEUTENANT'S VOICE (thru speaker)

Yes sir, all set. Airport just reported they're starting the landing-approach now.

CULPEPER (microphone)

Right.

He hangs the mike on its hook, then simply sits there for several seconds, looking about reflectively -- at the

(CONTINUED)

358 CONTINUED:

headquarters building, at his long career, at all the past.

SERGEANT

What's the matter, Chief? Forgotten something?

CULPEPER

No. No, I don't think I've forgotten anything...

359 EXT. POLICE STATION PARKING-LOT

Not hurrying, looking purposeful only because we know, Culpeper's purpose, the F-car moves out of the parking-lot, turns into the street, slips into a stream of traffic, and is lost to sight.

NOTE. At this point we reach a passage the treatment of which requires an explanation. From a cutting standpoint it must develop very rapidly into one of the fastest-moving sections of the story. There are so many cuts in the course of the passage, and some of them are so brief, that it simply cannot be described with even a third of the speed at which it's supposed to play. But, complex though the structure is all the scenes within it take place in or outside the airplane, in our outside the control-tower, and in our outside the basement of the hardware store; so it will help us a little if we abandon temporarily the somewhat elaborate setup of scene-headings. This whole passage must be packed into five minutes.

360 An exterior moving aerial shot of the plane, establishing several things: that its wheels are down now; that it has lost a great deal of altitude in making the long approach and is only a few hundred feet up; that its speed has been noticeably reduced; and that, gently buffeted by air-currents, the machine itself conveys a curious impression of acute nervous anxiety.

361 Close on Ding and Benjy, approaching the maximum pitch of their anxiety. Benjy as if frozen to the stick, bug-eyed in his terror, awash with sweat and moaning steadily. Ding kneeling beside him, one hand on Benjy's hands on the stick, the other comfortingly patting Benjy's cheek. Aural confusion as the Colonel's increasingly anxious voice pitches higher and higher over the radio; as, above it, Ding chants incessant reassurance; as, above both, Benjy moans still more loudly. COLONEL WILBERFORCE'S VOICE: "...Yes, you're doing very well, men, everybody here in the tower, we're all agreed about that, that you're doing very well indeed, your air-speed is just right now and your angle of descent -- that's a good angle of descent there, men, and you're headed straight towards the main run-way, just three miles -- a little less than three miles

(CONTINUED)

361 CONTINUED:

now, everything is just fine, not a thing to worry about, nothing to it at all, men -- and now remember, once all three of your wheels are on the ground you can gradually apply your brakes -- oh, about your brakes, men: your brake is that little lever on the -- uh -- on your -- uh -- wait a minute, which -- uh -- just a minute, men, wait just one minute...." DING BELL (hysterically, during and above all this): "You can do it, Benjy, you're all right, no fooling, you're going great, Benjy, and it's only a little farther, you see? -- just a little bit farther now, Benjy, and everything'll be all right, so now just keep her steady and everything -- no fooling, Benjy, it's great, it's just great, the way you're going and -- Benjy, look, I'm not even nervous, you know what I mean, I mean, there's nothing to it, you're going so great -- I mean, you won't believe me, Benjy, but I'm actually enjoying it now, you're doing so great -- oh, dear God up in heaven have mercy on us..." And BENJY BENJAMIN, at the same time: "Now I lay me down to -- what am I saying?"

362 In the tower, appalling those who are watching him, Colonel Wilberforce nervously, distractedly, sits down quickly in a chair, adopts an imaginary flying position, tentatively goes through the motions of putting on the brakes, pulls them on first with his right hand, then his left, then his right -- then scratches his head with his right -- then grabs the microphone again. COLONEL WILBERFORCE (microphone): "On second thought, men, there's no need to use your brakes, the run-way's long enough that once you've throttled back you'll roll to a stop quite naturally, so forget about the brakes, the brakes don't matter." Almost beside himself in his excitement now, the Colonel, holding the microphone on its long length of heavily-insulated flex, moves over to the door which stands open to the balcony. Far beyond him, the speck in the sky grows larger. Exhibiting a fine old military flair for melodramatics, COLONEL WILBERFORCE (microphone): "All right, men, the chips are down now, so let's keep calm, because this is it..."

363 In the basement, everything prepared for the blast-out, Melville Crump stands holding a candle in one hand the end of the fuse in the other. But his wife has had second thoughts which have frightened her again and she is refusing to get down behind the counter. MELVILLE: "Now, come on, Monica, you've already agreed, so get behind the counter --" MONICA: "Think of something else -- Melville, I've changed my mind -- if you'd just try to think of something else, anything but dynamite --" MELVILLE: "Oh now, come on, come on, will you?"

364 Outside the hardware store the distraught Mr. Dinckler, who is actually in tears now, is pleading desperately with one of the plainclothes officers. MR. DINCKLER: "I tell you it's only so quiet because they're planning something else --

(CONTINUED)

364 CONTINUED:

and listen, you boys got to stop them!"

365 Ding and Benjy. A short but increasingly terrifying scene now, interlarded with viewpoint-shots of the field and the runway which they are approaching at a hundred-and-ten miles an hour. Ceaselessly, most disconcertingly, the COLONEL'S VOICE: "...And yes, that's good, that's very good indeed, fellows, just keep perfectly calm and steady now, because you've only got a little more than a mile to go so hang on, just one minute more, men, and it'll be all over -- I mean, it'll all be over -- I mean courage, men, because we're all with you down here -- every second of the way, men, we're all pulling for you just as hard as we can so now let's just hold onto our nerves, men, and not get excited or do anything foolish but just keep calm, that's all we've got to do, keep calm, CALM, MEN!" But, understandably enough, all this is just too much for Benjy Benjamin, and now, suddenly converting a long-drawn-out moan into more of a yell, he closes his eyes tightly, apparently preferring not to see what's going to happen. Really yelling now, partially drowning out the Colonel's voice, Ding Bell puts both hands on Benjy Benjamin's face, desperately pulling and holding his partner's eyelids open with the tips of his fingers. DING BELL: "Benjy, what're you doing? Benjy, open your eyes! Benjy, in the name of -- please, Benjy, you've got to open your -- Benjy, how can you see where we're going if you've got your -- Benjy, open them! Look! Keep looking! Benjy, you're closing them again! BENJY!" And during this, seeing (as we do) the ground approaching very fast two-hundred feet below, and being freed of his partner's support with the stick, Benjy Benjamin shrinks back in his seat with a terrible wail, pulling the stick back with him.

366 An exterior shot of the plane. With only a mile to go it suddenly begins to climb.

367 Melville Crump applies the candleflame to the end of the fuse, which catches and hisses away. At once dropping down beside his wife behind the counter, MELVILLE: "Now, don't worry, just keep calm!"

368 Ding and Benjy. In terror, Ding Bell leans forward and pushes at the stick, which his partner still holds. They wrestle with it, both yelling unintelligibly. The COLONEL'S VOICE: "No! No, no, no, not like that, what are you doing? Men, what are you doing? Good heavens, look at them! Men! Have you lost your minds?" Screaming, Ding Bell manages to push the stick forward again -- a little too far.

- 369 An exterior shot of the plane as it noses down sharply from three-hundred feet to twenty-five feet, zooms to three-hundred, drops to fifteen, reaches two-hundred and fifty again, and starts to repeat this undulating manoeuvre.
- 370 Out on the balcony at the top of the control-tower, still clutching the microphone which he has brought out with him, screaming almost hysterically now -- COLONEL WILBERFORCE: "No, no, no no! Too high! Too low! Bring it up! Bring it down! Men, what are you-- no no, no no! Too high! Too low!
- 371 The fuse burns its way across the basement. Above its hissing, the sound of Monica's little moans.
- 372 Ding and Benjy, wrestling now, fighting over the stick, Benjy half out of the seat, Ding half into it, the horizon see-sawing very violently. BENJY BENJAMIN, having found his voice again, screaming: "We'll never make it! We can't land it! We've got to climb up as high as we can -- let go, let go! -- climb up and try to -- get off! -- try to think of something else!" During this, in all the thrashing about, Benjy Benjamin inadvertently kicks the rudder quite sharply with his foot.
- 373 The plane. Only fifty feet above the ground, still headed in the general direction of the run-way and losing speed rapidly now, the plane begins yawing violently from side to side, its tail swinging around in both directions so that repeatedly it is in the position of approaching the run-way sideways on.
- 374 Out on the balcony, screaming, gesturing violently as if he could will the plane down, COLONEL WILBERFORCE: "No! Left rudder! Steady! No, right rudder! Hold it! No, left! That's it! No, right! Right, RIGHT!"
- 375 The fuse, with only fifteen feet to go, now burns its way into the little room where the dynamite is.
- 376 In the plane, Ding Bell, upside down so that his head is on the floor between his partner's feet, is still wrestling with him for possession of the stick. Both men are saying something (as is the Colonel) but it's all quite unintelligible.
- 377 Some ambulance men, waiting. Beyond them, firemen, men in asbestos suits.
- 378 The plane. Only eight or ten feet above the ground, still swinging preposterously from side to side.

- 379 The fuse, burning the last few feet up the brick wall towards the charge.
- 380 Ding and Benjy, screaming, wrestling, thrashing about.
- 381 The plane's wheels, incredibly only three feet above the ground as the machine still waffles about.
- 382 Up on the control-tower balcony as the Colonel, fearing they are too far to the left on the run-way, makes violent sweeping gestures with his arm as he screams into the mike: "Right! To the right! Farther over to the -- get it over! Over!" With that last word, and gesturing too violently, the Colonel falls over the balcony-railing and plunges out of sight.
- 383 The plane. Its wheels touch down perfectly.
- 384 Colonel Wilberforce in mid-air. Tangled up in and hanging onto the long length of microphone flex, Colonel Wilberforce bellows in terror -- and thirty-five feet below him the crowd around the base of the tower makes a big wide empty place very quickly indeed.
- 385 In the control-room above three-quarters of the preposterously intricate innards of the radio installation are yanked right out of the enormous set by the Colonel's weight on the flex, and a twisted jumbled mass of valves, coils, wires and tubes crashes to the floor, flashes across it, and gets jammed up in the foot of the doorway --
- 386 -- And at once, having dropped eight feet in his first plunge, the Colonel now falls another twelve, at the same time screaming: "Help! Get me down! Somebody get me down!"
- 387 Then the dynamite explodes.
- 388 In the plane, absolutely astounded, having got to his knees again and helping his partner (who is sprawled across the pilot's seat) to hold the stick, DING BELL yells: "Hey! We made it! Benjy, we're down!" And, incredulously, BENJY BENJAMIN: "We 're still alive?"
- 389 The plane rolls down the run-way, rapidly losing speed.

- 390 At the tower, the Tower Comptroller, having run down one flight, is reaching out from the first-story balcony in a desperate effort to grab the still-dangling, still-screaming Colonel Wilberforce --
- 391 -- When, in the doorway of the control-room above, the jammed-up guts of the big radio set suddenly disintegrate --
- 392 -- And instantly, with one last yell, Colonel Wilberforce plunges out of the picture. The Tower Comptroller looks down for an instant, winces, and then looks away.
- 393 The plane, halfway along the run-way, has slowed right down to 40 miles per hour.
- 394 In the basement, Melville Crump, having crossed the big room, approaches, and enters the little store-room to see what effect the explosion has had. The room is so dull of smoke and dust that he can't see. Coughing, he starts waving the smoke and dust away.
- 395 In the plane, still rolling along the run-way, suddenly fired by a new thought, DING BELL: "Wait a minute! We don't want to go over there! They'll want to ask questions, they'll hold us up for hours -- look! Keep it going! Turn it towards that road over there -- maybe we can get out of here before they -- that's it, turn over there!"
- 396 In the control-room the Radio Operator, stunned, stands looking at the fantastic shambles the Colonel has made of his radio installation. Incredulously, RADIO OPERATOR: "But that set cost thrity-five-thousand dollars!"
- 397 On the balcony of the tower, having called down, the Tower Comptroller receives the reply from A VOICE: "Yes, sir, he's all right, but he broke both his legs." Distraught, the Tower Comptroller turns and looks out across the field at the plane, which, revved up again, has now turned off the run-way and is headed towards the opposite end of the field. TOWER COMPTROLLER: "What are they doing? What is this?"
- 398 In the basement, having discovered that he has blown a hole the size of a window through the brick wall, Melville Crump sticks his head through the hole and into a large and dimly-lit boiler-room. MELVILLE CRUMP: "It worked! It's another building! Hurry up, climb through, I'll get the pick and shovel!" Nervously, dislodging some loose bricks, Monica Crump climbs through the hole. As she does the lights come on, the door opens at the top of a flight of stairs, three

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398 CONTINUED:

very nervous-looking middle-aged Chinese gentlemen appear, come halfway down the steps, and stand staring at her, obviously flabbergasted by the explosion and by her appearance. She stares at them. Before she can scream, carrying his pick and shovel, Melville climbs through the hole behind her, sees the three men, takes Monica's arm, and quickly leads the way up the steps. Smiling most reassuringly to the three Chinese, MELVILLE CRUMP: "It's all right, don't be alarmed! Everything's all right! It's just that we got trapped downstairs in the store next door and--we were in a big hurry, you know what I mean? --but it's all their fault, their fault entirely, so any damage we've done, next door, they'll take care of it, you know?" During this they reach the top of the stairs, the three Chinese shrinking back. As Melville and Monica come up into the receiving-room of the Chinese Laundry, ONE OF THE CHINESE: "Don't try to stop them. They are maniacs." (This is said in Cantonese, but we may need that extra laugh in Chinatown). Still smiling and nodding at everyone (there are a dozen more Cantonese washing or ironing), MELVILLE CRUMP: "You'll have to excuse us, we're in a hurry, you see, but if you just see the people who own the hardware store they'll be very happy to -- thanks very much, thank you." Then, at the door, after peering nervously up and down the street: "Come on, let's go. Hurry up!"

- 399 Fifty yards away, unseen by the Crumps, the plainclothes officers and Mr. Dinckler watch them emerge from the Chinese Laundry and hurry away around the corner. One of the officers reaches into the car for a mike.
- 400 The plane. It has taxied clear across the field towards a high wire fence by a busy main road. Still moving at thirty miles per hour, it is only fifty yards from the fence.
- 401 DING BELL: "Okay, get ready to put on the brakes, we'll get over that fence and make a run for it -- where're the brakes? Hey -- hey, watch it!" They find the brakes but they don't get them on in time. Both are flung forward violently as the plane hits the fence.
- 402 --And on the floor behind them Tyler Fitzgerald's head hits the leg of the metal seat with another boin-n-n-n-g!
- 403 The plane, exterior. The nose of the plane, including the door, is sticking out over the top of the fence which it (apparently) has smashed. Then in closer on them as Ding opens the door, jumps down to the road, calls: "Hurry up!" BENJY BENJAMIN (suffering a terrible delayed reaction): "I can't. I can't move. I can't even stand up." DING BELL: "What're you talking about? Benjy, we're there!"

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403 CONTINUED:

All we do, we find a cab -- hey, there is one! Taxi! Hey, taxi!" In the door of the plane, looking back at their passenger, BENJY BENJAMIN: "But what about him?" DING BELL: "The amulance is right there -- come on, let's get out of here!"

404 EXT. STREET BY AIRFIELD -- FIRST CABBIE

Twenty yards from the plane the FIRST CABBIE has not only stopped but gotten out of his taxi to stare in astonishment at the whole scene. The First Cabbie, who will play a big part in the remainder of the story, is a funny-looking colored man. Ding Bell comes rushing over to him. Behind him, looking very shaky, Benjy Benjamin clambers down out of the plane.

DING BELL

Listen, you know where Rosita Beach State Park is?

FIRST CABBIE

Sure. Say, what happened?

DING BELL

Never mind -- nothing! Come on, we're in a hurry, let's go! Hurry up, Benjy, get in, get in!

405 EXT. STREET NEAR HARDWARE STORE -- SECOND CABBIE

Somewhere on the other side of town a SECOND CABBIE is staring incredulously at Melville and Monica Crump, who, having wasted half a minute searching, have just run up to his parked taxi. The Second Cabbie is also an important character and is also a funny-looking man.

MELVILLE CRUMP

--To Rosita Beach, to the State Park at Rosita Beach --

SECOND CABBIE

(staring at Monica Crump)

But what happened to you? You two in some kind of initiation or something?

MELVILLE CRUMP

Never mind! We're in a hurry!

406 INT. DINCKLER'S HARDWARE STORE

Having come in on the main floor, accompanied by a couple of cops, Mr. Dinckler approaches and opens the door to the basement. Then, standing there in the doorway, he flicks on all the light-switches beside the door. The scene below is suddenly brilliantly lit. Mr. Dinckler looks at it. We see it. Then Mr. Dinckler looks at it again. We see it again. Then Mr. Dinckler gasps and claws at his collar and falls out of the picture and into a dead faint. Quickly, bending over the prostrate man:

ONE OF THE COPS

Call for an ambulance.

407 INT. THE CRUMPS' CAB -- MOVING

Straining forward in his excitement, speaking quietly so that the Second Cabbie won't hear:

MELVILLE CRUMP

We may not be too late, even now.
Something might have happened to the
others....

MONICA CRUMP

I just thought of something: you
didn't leave any money for the pick
and shovel....

MELVILLE CRUMP

What? Oh... Even if they've got there
-- whoever's got there -- they may not
have found it yet. We may still have
a chance!

408 EXT. CULPEPER'S CAR

Still three-quarters of a mile inland and up on high ground which affords a view, Culpeper's car comes up slowly and stops at the side of the road. About half a mile beyond and below it the broad sweep of Highway 101 can be seen; beyond it, a narrow road leading directly away to Rosita Beach State Park; and the Park itself, heavily wooded and fringed with palms, a half-mile-wide triangle of ground pointing into the blue Pacific.

409 INT. CULPEPER'S CAR

Culpeper sits very quietly, grinning. (Basically speaking, Culpeper goes on grinning from here on in, but only because it amuses him to see how extraordinarily well his plan works.) Beside him the Sergeant, who looks excited, makes chinagraph notations on the map which he holds on his knees as the radio report comes over.

(CONTINUED)

LIEUTENANT'S VOICE (over speaker)

...say Benjamin and Bell have stopped at a gardeners' supply place on Ocean Boulevard and are buying picks and shovels. Yes, now they're getting back in the cab. Hold it, chief, there's a report on the Crumps. Their cab has turned onto one-oh-one, moving south -- they're moving towards your present position. Wait a minute. The other taxi's also turning onto -- they're on one-oh-one and are moving north. They're both moving in towards your position, chief.

CULPEPER (microphone)

All right, hold it a second.

He leans over and looks down at the map, on which the Sergeant has made wax-pencil indications of the positions of everybody. The Crumps and Benjamin and Bell are less than a mile apart on the main coast highway and moving towards each other. Otto Meyer's Dodge is indicated only three or four miles away, and the truck with the six people in it is indicated as being not very far behind the Dodge. The converging paths of the two taxis, however, leave only a single possible inference for Culpeper: they are making for the road leading from 101 down into Rosita Beach State Park. (During this brief pause we may hear two or three fast reports on the progress of the others: Background Script Note 20). Pressing the mike-switch again:

CULPEPER (microphone)

Right, understood. Stand by.

410 EXT. CULPEPER'S CAR

Leaving his motor idling, Culpeper thoughtfully steps out of the car and then stands lounging against it with his chin resting on his folded arms on the roof. He is still grinning thoughtfully as he stares down at the half-mile section of Highway 101 that stretches across below him. The camera moves so that we can watch with him. Then, at almost precisely the same instant, the two Yellow Cabs appear, traveling fast, coming in from both sides of the screen. A couple of hundred yards behind both the cabs a couple of innocuous-looking F-cars keep pace. Still watching them with his little smile, not actually bending down, Culpeper reaches a hand inside the vehicle: the Sergeant puts the microphone into it. Casually, with no hint of excitement:

CULPEPER (microphone)

Culpeper. Yes, we make them both from our position, we're sitting right on top of them. All right, tell all units to stand by for a pull-away order . . .

(CONTINUED)

Far below, the fast-converging Yellow Cabs both brake sharply and at the same time turn off down the road which leads into the Park.

411 INT. THE CRUMPS' CAB -- MOVING

As he recognizes the occupants of the other cab:

MELVILLE CRUMP

Look! It's those two idiots!

412 INT. DING BELL'S AND BENJY BENJAMIN'S CAB -- MOVING

And as they see the others:

DING BELL

Hey, it's the dentist!

413 EXT. CULPEPER'S CAR

Grinning but not quite licking his lips:

CULPEPER (microphone)

Right, this is Culpeper. Call off all
units now.

414 INT. DING BELL'S AND BENJY BENJAMIN'S CAB -- MOVING

Both are sitting forward nervously, straining with impatience. The Crumps' cab is twenty or thirty yards ahead of them.

DING BELL

Pass that cab if you can!

FIRST CABBIE

I can't on these curves. Say, what's
the big rush, anyway?

DING BELL

Whaddya mean, rush?

BENJY BENJAMIN

We just want to get there in a hurry --

FIRST CABBIE

Well, you're there.

He starts braking to a stop.

415 EXT. THE CRUMPS' CAB -- PARKING LOT

The Crumps are already getting out of their cab, which has stopped in a big parking area just outside the entrance to

(CONTINUED)

the Park. Melville Crump, paying off the Second Cabbie, glances nervously at Ding Bell and Benjy Benjamin as they jump out of their cab twenty yards away.

MELVILLE CRUMP

Here, there's five bucks, keep the change and many thanks.

SECOND CABBIE

Thanks, but don't you want me to wait?

MELVILLE CRUMP

Uh -- no. No, thanks a lot.

SECOND CABBIE

Well, tell me something: what's with the pick and shovel?

MONICA CRUMP

Sand-castles. We like making sand-castles.

MELVILLE CRUMP

Yeah -- but real big ones, and then we wait for the tide to come in, you know? Thanks.

(to his wife)

Come on, if we don't hurry the tide'll -- come on!

416 EXT. GATES OF THE PARK

Pulling his preposterous-looking wife after him by the wrist, Melville Crump comes running through the big rustic gate of Rosita Beach State Park. Just beyond them in the b.g. Benjy Benjamin can be seen paying off the First Cabbie as Ding Bell, carrying their pick and shovel, comes running after the Crumps. As he approaches:

MELVILLE CRUMP

The question is, did anybody get here ahead of us?

MONICA CRUMP

There aren't any cars out there --

DING BELL

Hey, wait a minute!

MELVILLE CRUMP

They might have come in a cab, like us -- or they could have been here and gone already.

He pauses and they turn as Ding Bell trots up to them. Benjy Benjamin starts running towards them from the b.g.

(CONTINUED)

DING BELL

Listen, you know what? We ought to talk this over.

MELVILLE CRUMP

I've got nothing to say to you.

DING BELL

You think anybody's been here?

MELVILLE CRUMP

How would I know? Come on, Monica --

DING BELL

Wait a minute! You mean you really think we might be the first? Well, then, look, why don't the four of us make a deal? I mean, you don't know where to look and we don't know where to look and maybe if we're all partners we can find it before all the others -- hey, I don't get it: what do you think happened to the others?

BENJY BENJAMIN

Say, listen, how come you're only getting here now when you had the plane?

(then, looking
at Monica Crump)

Holy suffering -- what happened to you?

417 EXT. OUTSIDE THE GATE

The two Cabbies, who obviously know each other slightly, are in a little conspiratorial huddle somewhere by the cabs.

SECOND CABBIE

I don't know, but there's something up, and that's for sure. You see the dame -- the way somebody messed up that dame? I thought maybe with the pick and shovel and all he was bringing her out here to bury her.

FIRST CABBIE

Naw, they're digging something up, not planting anything -- I mean -- you know what I mean. I'll tell you something. This bunch really piques my curiosity.

SECOND CABBIE

Whaddya say we move the cabs up the road and sneak back for a look? I'd really like to know.

The other four conspirators are still standing in a group in the path leading on into the park. Melville Crump looks wary.

MONICA CRUMP

You mean if either of us find it we have to give you half and if either of you find it you have --

DING BELL

Sure. So what about it?

MELVILLE CRUMP

All right, I agree. Now, assuming until we find out differently that we're the first ones here, the only important question is what did he mean by the big W? He said -- isn't that what he said? -- He said "you'll see it, buried under this big 'W'."

BENJY BENJAMIN

Yeah, you got any ideas?

MELVILLE CRUMP

No.

DING BELL

Well, come on, so let's look.

419 EXT. CULPEPER'S CAR

Coming down the hill of a street leading into the main highway, Culpeper's car meets the two F-cars coming up as they pull away from the area. The Sergeant leans out and waves the other two cars to a stop, and Culpeper brakes to a stop beside them.

420 INT. CULPEPER'S CAR

Turning to the Sergeant:

CULPEPER

All right, you shove on back to headquarters and wait'll you hear from me.

SERGEANT

Lemme come with you, chief --

CULPEPER

No, I'd like to, but it might snarl things up.

(punching the
Sergeant's shoulder)

Thanks for everything...

(CONTINUED)

SERGEANT

Well, good luck, chief.

Nodding, smiling, Culpeper lifts a hand in farewell, then watches thoughtfully as the Sergeant joins the two plain-clothes officers in one of the cars and both cars move off together up the hill and out of sight. As he watches them disappear, Culpeper's attention is caught by the exciting rhythms of some Mexican music coming from a radio in a house nearby. He listens to the music for a few seconds, smiles again, and reaches for the mike.

CULPEPER (microphone)

Culpeper. All right, I'm going in. Now, remember, there's no telling how long this business may take and I want to bring in every single person involved. So for the last time: any badge that I find anywhere near this area will be in my desk drawer this evening.

421 EXT. PARK

Melville and Monica Crump, searching. They come down through some trees together, looking about ceaselessly, up, down, here, there and everywhere. A hundred yards beyond them some light breakers plunge pleasantly on the narrow strip of beach which girds the park. On a rocky little ridge just this side of the beach, between the Crumps and the blue sea beyond, there is a group of giant palms. The camera pans with Melville and Monica Crump as they come along in f.g. Then Ding Bell and Benjy Benjamin, having made a wide half-circle through the park in the opposite direction, come into the shot and meet the other two. All four are looking anxious.

MELVILLE CRUMP

No windmill -- no walnut trees -- no waterfall -- no weeping willow..... you seen anything?

DING BELL

Nothing. Not a thing.

Now the camera holds on the four people in f.g., the shot composed so that their four figures obscure the group of giant palms fifty yards beyond them.

BENJY BENJAMIN

There's got to be something!

MONICA CRUMP

Are you sure he didn't say something else, something that you've forgotten?

(CONTINUED)

MELVILLE CRUMP

The big W: he said it was buried
under the big W and that we'd see it:
that's all he said.

DING BELL

It's got to be here!

MELVILLE CRUMP

You two go the way we came and we'll
go the way you came -- maybe we missed
something.

The four move off, looking up, down, all around, everywhere
but at the group of giant palms before which they have stood
in f.g. and played the little scene. Camera holds on the
shot after they've left it, so that we see for the first time
that there are only two giant palms in the group; that the
two giant palms stand only ten feet apart on the rocky little
ridge down by the beach; that typically enough they are both
split at their bases and have grown in two enormous Vs; and
that the two enormous Vs, standing side by side, make one
enormous W. (Two or three bars of heavenly choir is our
suggestion, just to make sure the audience sees the big W).

422 INT. CULPEPER'S CAR -- MOVING

Not hurrying, he is driving down the little T-road towards
the park. Then he reacts, startled by a loud blast on the
Dodge's horn, and glances out curiously at Otto Meyer as,
going very fast indeed, the Dodge passes Culpeper's car.

423 EXT. THE PARK

Down near the beach somewhere the Two Cabbies come creeping
out from behind some shrubbery to play a little scene in front
of the giant palms. Speaking softly, looking off after their
four ex-passengers:

FIRST CABBIE

They're looking for something buried
under something called a big W. That's
what the goofy guy said.

SECOND CABBIE

But what?

424 EXT. PARKING LOT

Culpeper drives past the two Yellow Cabs which are parked
beside the road fifty yards from the gate, then stops in the
parking-area, cuts the engine, and gets out of his car. He
glances at the Dodge nearby. It sits enveloped in the cloud
of dust it has raised by stopping so quickly, and Otto Meyer

(CONTINUED)

has already disappeared. Whistling the little Mexican tune, Culpeper turns and strolls through the gate and into the park. Pausing by a little drinking-fountain, he glances about casually and then bends over to have a drink.

425 EXT. THE PARK

All four scrambling and stumbling over some rough ground somewhere, Melville and Monica Crump encounter Ding Bell and Benjy Benjamin again. They are all beginning to sweat from their exertions.

DING BELL

Anything?

MELVILLE CRUMP

Nothing.

There is a stirring in some bushes twenty yards away; all four turn and look at them. Then Otto Meyer, carrying a shovel, appears, pushing through the bushes, sees the four of them, stops short, stands looking at them (and at their tools) for a long moment expressionlessly, then turns and disappears back into the bushes.

DING BELL

Who's he?

MELVILLE CRUMP

I don't know -- don't you know?

BENJY BENJAMIN

But he's got a shovel!

MONICA CRUMP

Couldn't it be, maybe he's just a prospector or something?

DING BELL

Look, we're wasting time.

BENJY BENJAMIN

Let's all look harder. Everybody search really hard.

Looking harder, they all move off and out of shot again. Pause. Having witnessed the whole encounter between these four and Otto Meyer, the Two Cabbies now come out of some other bushes nearby and stand staring after them again.

FIRST CABBIE

Five of them: what do you make of
five of them?

(CONTINUED)

SECOND CABBIE

I think there's been some mass escape
from somewhere, from some laughing
academy, you know?

426 EXT. PARK

Culpeper is strolling down the path. Suddenly Ding Bell and Benjy Benjamin come through some trees, meet him face to face, stop, and glance at him curiously. Then they come on towards us as Culpeper, apparently ignoring them, strolls on down the path. As they come forward, speaking softly:

BENJY BENJAMIN

Who's he?

DING BELL

How do I know? It's a public park,
isn't it? Keep looking!

427 EXT. PARK

Over somewhere about a hundred yards from the big W, Monica Crump, out of breath now, calls after her husband, who is lunging about aimlessly a little way away from her.

MONICA CRUMP

Melville! I know! I just remembered --
when we were kids -- if you lost anything
what you always did was just close your
eyes real tight and turn around three
times and then just walk straight forward
and open your eyes and there it is --
it always was --

MELVILLE CRUMP

Oh, come on, Monica, just keep looking,
and stop that silly --

MONICA CRUMP

Well, just let me try it.
(doing it)

I close my eyes -- I turn around
once -- and I turn around twice --
I turn around three times --

428 EXT. THE TWO CABBIES

Close on them as, flabbergasted, they watch Monica Crump from behind some bushes ten yards away.

429 BACK TO SHOT

Monica Crump sways dizzily.

(CONTINUED)

MONICA CRUMP

And then I just walk straight --

With one hand held over her eyes and the other pointing straight before her directly at the big W, Monica Crump staggers three or four paces forward and, despite her husband's warning shout, plunges headlong into a gully.

430 BACK TO SHOT

The Two Cabbies exchange very thoughtful glances.

431 BACK TO SHOT

As he helps his wife to her feet again:

MELVILLE CRUMP

Monica, we haven't got time to play games.

MONICA CRUMP

But it always worked when we were kids --

432 EXT. PARK

Culpeper, standing within earshot behind some trees nearby, has listened to this curiously. Beyond him in the b.g., Melville Crump moves off to search some other area, his wife stumbling after him. Watching them but keeping under cover, Culpeper strolls casually after them. When Culpeper has moved some distance away, the Two Cabbies, who have been hidden in some bushes just behind Culpeper, stick up their heads and look after him. Very softly:

FIRST CABBIE

Who's he?

SECOND CABBIE

Don't know. I've seen him somewhere.

433 EXT. PARK

Close on Culpeper. As he strolls over a little rise in ground from which we can see the big W two-hundred yards away in the b.g., Culpeper is watching Ding Bell and Benjy Benjamin, who are wandering around forty yards away and looking in the wrong direction. Their voices carrying:

BENJY BENJAMIN

It's just not here!

(CONTINUED)

DING BELL

It is here! It's buried here, under
a big W. Just find anything that starts
with a W.....

The two move on and Culpeper stands looking after them, for the first time understanding that none of these people appears to know precisely where Smiler Grogan's loot actually lies. From another direction, outside the park, a car can be heard braking sharply to a stop. Culpeper turns and walks away in the direction of the gate.

434 EXT. PARKING-LOT

The break-down truck has arrived. Lennie Pike, Algernon Hawthorne and J. Russell Finch have jumped out of the back and Sylvester Marcus and his mother have climbed of the front, but Emmeline Finch remains seated in the truck. This group also appears to have exercised some foresight, for it, too, is equipped with two picks and two shovels. Getting down, Lennie Pike throws a savage glance at the Dodge convertible. Then, with a snarl:

LENNIE PIKE

Just lemme get my hands....

SYLVESTER MARCUS

Somebody must've come out here in
those cabs.

J. RUSSELL FINCH

That means -- that would mean --

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

Quite. They're still here.

MRS. MARCUS

They'd better be.

(turning to her)

Come on, Emmeline!

(when she doesn't)

You're not just going to sit there?

EMMELINE FINCH

Yes I am.

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

But, Mrs. Finch, surely you must at
all events be curious?

EMMELINE FINCH

No, I'm not even curious, Mr. Hawthorne.
I'm just disgusted.

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

Oh, I say, that's rather a pity. Well,
if you'll excuse me now, Mrs. Finch...

(CONTINUED)

A little uncomfortably he turns away after the others. Beyond in the b.g. Mrs. Marcus, J. Russell Finch, Sylvester Marcus and Lennie Pike can be seen going through the gate, Mrs. Marcus in the lead.

435 EXT. PARK

Somewhere down by the big W, Ding Bell and Benjy Benjamin scramble exhaustedly through a little gully and up to some bushes. There they encounter Melville and Monica Crump who, from behind the bushes, are peering out at someone else. Signaling for silence, the dentist stops the two gag-writers, and then all four stand peering intently around the bushes at something o.s. The camera pans to reveal, forty yards away, Otto Meyer, also under cover.

436 EXT. OTTO MEYER

Unaware that he is being observed, Otto Meyer peers out from behind a tree, at something else o.s. The camera pans again to reveal Culpeper, thirty yards away, with his head sticking up like a periscope through a sea of shrubbery.

437 EXT. CULPEPER

Unaware that he is being observed by Otto Meyer, Culpeper is peering out at Mrs. Marcus, J. Russell Finch, Sylvester Marcus, Lennie Pike and Algernon Hawthorne as they all come down the path.

438 EXT. PARK

All five -- Mrs. Marcus, J. Russell Finch, Sylvester Marcus, Algernon Hawthorne and Lennie Pike -- are looking about.

MRS. MARCUS

They're here somewhere. It means they haven't found it.

SYLVESTER MARCUS

You're sure that's all the guy said: buried under a big W?

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

Well, actually, it was only afterwards, don't you know, that I joined the party --

LENNIE PIKE

That's what he said -- a big W.

Mrs. Marcus, J. Russell Finch, Algernon Hawthorne, Sylvester Marcus and Lennie Pike move a little warily on down the path and out of shot. As soon as they have passed, Culpeper steps out of the shrubbery and stands for a moment looking after

(CONTINUED)

them. Then he moves off down the path after them. When Culpeper has moved out of shot Otto Meyer moves in, crawling through some bushes on his hands and knees and then, under cover of some trees, watching Culpeper for a moment before creeping off after him. As Otto Meyer goes out of shot Melville and Monica Crump, closely followed by Ding Bell and Benjy Benjamin, appear, stand huddled in a little group of four, and look after Otto Meyer. Then when they have all moved silently and cautiously down the path and out of shot the Two Cabbies stealthily appear, look after the others, and after a moment join the preposterous parade.

439 EXT. CULPEPER AND OTTO MEYER

Culpeper, having taken cover behind some bushes, is standing bent over, peering out at somebody o.s. Then, looking furtively back over his own shoulder, Otto Meyer comes creeping around the bushes without looking where he's going and actually bumps up against Culpeper. Both men turn and straighten up, facing each other with curious expressions. For a long moment, as their glances lock, each waits for the other to speak, but neither does. Then, still looking back at each other with the same expressions, Culpeper and Otto Meyer move quietly away in different directions, out of each other's sight and out of ours.

440 EXT. SEVERAL PEOPLE

Close on Sylvester Marcus as, hearing some rustling in a nearby thicket, he pulls Mrs. Marcus down beside him behind some bushes. These two peer out from f.g. as, forty yards away, Ding Bell and Benjy Benjamin suddenly appear and run, doubled over, across an open space to another covered position from which they can get a better view of someone else we can't see. Whispering:

SYLVESTER MARCUS

Who're they? From this morning?

She nods. Sylvester Marcus watches thoughtfully, frowning, as Ding Bell and Benjy Benjamin go out of sight. Then his attention is caught and held by Culpeper, who now appears and stealthily follows Ding Bell and Benjy Benjamin.

SYLVESTER MARCUS

Who's he?

Mrs. Marcus shrugs and shakes her head, then stares as, Culpeper having disappeared, Otto Meyer appears, now following Culpeper. Again Sylvester Marcus whispers:

SYLVESTER MARCUS

Who's he?

Mrs. Marcus shakes her head again. In a querulous whisper:
(CONTINUED)

SYLVESTER MARCUS

Momma, how many people are mixed up
in this thing? Sssh....

The Two Cabbies now trot across after Otto Meyer. As they
go out of sight:

SYLVESTER MARCUS

Who're they? Cabbies? This thing's
like a convention.....

441 EXT. J. RUSSELL FINCH AND ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

Close on the two of them. Peeking out from behind cover they
see Otto Meyer twenty yards away in the b.g.

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

Who's he?

J. Russell Finch shakes his head.

442 EXT. DING BELL AND BENJY BENJAMIN

Peering out from somewhere else at Sylvester Marcus in b.g.:

BENJY BENJAMIN

Who's he?

443 EXT. MELVILLE AND MONICA CRUMP

Peering out furtively from somewhere they both see Algernon
Hawthorne peering out furtively from somewhere else.

MELVILLE CRUMP

Who's he?

444 EXT. PARKING-LOT

Emmeline Finch sees something off, licks her lips, climbs out
of the truck, and walks through the gate and over to the
little fountain beside the path.

445 EXT. PARK

Close on Culpeper, who has changed his position. Looking off
at someone o.s., he hears the tiny splash of water at the
drinking-fountain and, turning, sees Emmeline Finch thirty
yards away in the b.g., bending down and drinking.

446 EXT. FOUNTAIN

Close on Emmeline Finch as, refreshed, she straightens up,
takes out a handkerchief, dips it in the water, and starts
(CONTINUED)

to bathe her forehead. She appears, as she glances vacantly down through the park, to be staring at nothing. Then suddenly her eyes widen and all her features fall apart.

447 EXT. EMMELINE FINCH'S VIEWPOINT

Two-hundred-and-fifty yards away, perfectly framed by a fortuitously aligned succession of three or four gaps in the trees and bushes, the big W sways slightly, dreamily, in the gentle Pacific breeze.

448 BACK TO SHOT

Emmeline Finch utters a gasping little cry, falls back a pace, and puts her wrist in her mouth, as is her wont.

449 EXT. CULPEPER AND EMMELINE FINCH

Immediately curious, Culpeper now turns and walks towards her. Emmeline Finch, still staring as though transfixed, at first doesn't see or hear him.

CULPEPER

Is anything wrong, ma'am? I didn't mean to startle you. Are you all right?

EMMELINE FINCH

Who are you? Are you -- are you with the others?

CULPEPER

Which others?

EMMELINE FINCH

The ones who are looking?

CULPEPER

I am, in a way. Aren't you?

EMMELINE FINCH

No! I didn't want anything to do with it, right from the start. And do you know what? I know where it is! I'm the only one who knows where it is -- and I wasn't even looking!

CULPEPER

You know where it is?

EMMELINE FINCH

But I'm not sure what I should do. I don't know what to do!

Two-hundred yards away, the scene beginning on a fairly extensive patch of greenery. Beyond it, forty yards away across some open ground, the big W. At first, although there are some muffled stirrings and whisperings in the bushes, no one is to be seen. Then suddenly, utterly exasperated, Mrs. Marcus leaps to her feet, her head and shoulders appearing above the foliage. Imperiously:

MRS. MARCUS

All right, now that's enough! You're all being ridiculous!

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

(standing up)

I quite agree, Mrs. Marcus.

MRS. MARCUS

Come on! We all know we're all here and nobody is fooling --

DING BELL

(suddenly standing)

Okay, so we all know, so what?

SYLVESTER MARCUS

(leaping to his feet)

So watch your tone when you're speaking to my mother, buddy!

J. RUSSELL FINCH

(rising)

Well, we're not going to get anywhere if we go on like this!

Melville and Monica Crump, Benjy Benjamin and Lennie Pike have also risen at various places within the frame. All nine of them, standing in a group which is not more than fifteen yards across, look about at each other in exasperated embarrassment.

LENNIE PIKE

Hey, listen, I'll tell you something, we're not the only ones who are here. I saw at least four or five other guys --

SYLVESTER MARCUS

Yeah, there are two cabbies hanging around, we saw them --

DING BELL

Aw, they came with us and with the dentist. We couldn't get rid of them!

LENNIE PIKE

Hey, did anybody see anything of a big, ugly baldheaded guy with a sneery expression on his face -- real ugly?

Very close on him as, hiding under some bushes fifteen yards away, he reacts with some indignation to this description. As he goes on listening carefully:

MRS. MARCUS (over)

Look, why are we wasting time? We all know we're all here and we all know that even if somebody finds the money nobody's going to get away without everybody getting a share. So why don't we do something sensible and get this thing organized?

SYLVESTER MARCUS (over)

Did you all hear what Momma said?

452 EXT. CULPEPER AND EMMELINE FINCH

Up at the drinking-fountain, still standing with Culpeper, Emmeline Finch is staring wildly off across the park. Suddenly, all in an instant, she undergoes the most astonishing transformation. Now as she whirls upon the startled Culpeper she is no longer in any way pathetic; she is a woman of fire, a woman ablaze with passionate conviction and determination.

EMMELINE FINCH

All right then, listen -- and I'll tell you what I'll do! I don't even know you, I don't know how you got mixed up in this thing -- but if you'll help me then I'll help you -- all right? If the others don't find it we can hide somewhere -- you and I, we can hide -- and just wait till they've all given up and gone away -- and then, if you'll help me, you can have half and I'll take half! Is that all right? Is that fair? And then, if I have half the money I can go away -- I'll be able to get away somewhere -- somewhere so far they'll never even be able to find me, my mother or Russell or Sylvester or anybody --

453 EXT. PARK

Back to a group shot of the nine people, the shot featuring Lennie Pike. As, beyond him in the b.g., Melville Crump speaks Lennie Pike's attention is caught and held by a small stirring in the bushes nearby. Suddenly suspicious, Lennie Pike turns and creeps quietly around the bushes in the direction of the stirring.

MELVILLE CRUMP

--But now that everybody's here there's only one possible solution and that is
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MELVILLE CRUMP (CONT'D)

that every single person gets one
share, one even equal share --

Suddenly, emitting a stentorian bellow, Lennie Pike plunges forward into the bushes -- and on the instant Otto Meyer leaps to his feet with a startled yell, flings away his pick, and runs like a rabbit. Lennie Pike, having tripped and fallen, gets to his feet and, still bellowing, bounds away in pursuit. Multilateral exclamations from the others, surprised and exasperated by this irrelevant business. Desperately, Otto Meyer runs straight for the big W with Lennie Pike only three or four yards behind him.

454 EXT. THE BIG W

Seen from the water's edge, the big W stands beautifully framed, filling the whole screen. Otto Meyer comes running under it, through it, and on into f.g. As he comes running through it:

LENNIE PIKE

I'll kill you, you dirty -- Hunh?
Hey!

Astounded, he has skidded to a halt five or ten yards this side of the trees, turned around, looked up at the trees, and pointed. Tracing the giant letter with one hand as though he were writing on an invisible blackboard:

LENNIE PIKE

Hey, look! Look, that's it!

455 EXT. THE GROUP

Fairly close on the eight people in the bushes as they suddenly see it. Now as they all stand gaping with astonishment the Two Cabbies slowly rise, appearing in this group for the first time, and stand gaping with the others.

FIRST CABBIE

Hey, he's found it!

And so intent are all the others as they begin moving slowly towards the big W that they scarcely glance at the Two Cabbies. Excited exclamations, cries of "Hey!" and "Look!" and "That's it!" from all sides.

456 EXT. CULPEPER AND EMMELINE FINCH

Culpeper, his attention caught by the softly carrying sounds of excited voices across the park, has turned slightly away and stands listening. Emmeline Finch looks suddenly apprehensive. Turning back to her:

(CONTINUED)

CULPEPER

Too late -- it sounds as if they've found it. I'm sorry, Mrs. Finch.

EMMELINE FINCH

Well -- it doesn't matter. It was a nice dream -- while it lasted.....

457 EXT. THE BIG W.

Tremendously elated. Lennie Pike stands directly under the trees. The whole group on the inland side has rushed up to join him and there are jumbled exclamations:

VARIOUS PEOPLE

Right in front of us all the time! --
Hey, he wasn't kidding! -- It was true,
he was telling the truth! -- How could
we have missed it? -- etc., etc.

In the general excitement Otto Meyer also joins the group, coming up from the other side of the trees and actually clapping Lennie Pike on the shoulder as his voice sounds above the jumble of other voices:

OTTO MEYER

Well done! Congratulations!
(speaking to all
the others)

Listen, what do you say the big fellow here gets an extra share from the rest of us for being the one who found it? I say he ought to have an extra share!

The others are all too excited to give any attention to Otto Meyer, but Lennie Pike, confused and thrown off-balance by the suggestion, turns and glances at Otto Meyer with a look compounded of gratitude and appreciation as well as bitter detestation -- sort of a method look.

458 EXT. THE BIG W -- ANOTHER ANGLE

Now all twelve people -- Mrs. Marcus, Ding Bell, J. Russell Finch, Melville Crump, Benjy Benjamin, Sylvester Marcus, Otto Meyer, Lennie Pike, Monica Crump, Algernon Hawthorne and the Two Cabbies -- are in a group under the big W. Suddenly they all fall silent. Then, staring at the ground beneath them, conscious that they may actually be standing on pay-dirt, they all step back a pace or two, forming a little circle under the big W, and stare at the ground with wide-eyed reverence. After a moment:

LENNIE PIKE

Well....

(CONTINUED)

J. RUSSELL FINCH

Wait a minute. What if somebody comes along? What'll we tell them?

MONICA CRUMP

I know: why don't we just say we're all members of an anthropological expedition and --

DING BELL

You mean, archaeological?

MONICA CRUMP

Or, that, too.

SYLVESTER MARCUS

Or, we don't tell them anything. We just tell them, buzz off or we'll beat their brains out.

LENNIE PIKE

Yeah, that's good. Listen, some of you move back a little.

The others do. Then Sylvester Marcus, Ding Bell, Melville Crump and Lennie Pike, being the four who carry picks, step forward, face each other from all four points of the compass, glance about to make sure they have room to swing, nod to each other, and start swinging. The other eight all stand staring, fascinated, as the four picks begin tearing up the sandy soil.

459 EXT. THE BIG W

Now possibly a fast-moving series of closeup portrait studies inter-cut with rapid-progress shots of the ever-deepening hole: Mrs. Marcus; Algernon Hawthorne; Benjy Benjamin; the First Cabbie; Otto Meyer; J. Russell Finch; the Second Cabbie; and Monica Crump: all staring curiously vacantly as if all caught and held in a mass-hypnotic trance.

460 EXT. THE BIG W -- ANOTHER ANGLE

Then when the hole is two feet deep Otto Meyer, who has been licking his lips, steps forward with his shovel, wanting eagerly to help. Finding him a little in the way of his swing, Sylvester Marcus silently pushes Otto Meyer well back out of his way with a gentle sweep of one arm. The digging continues. Beyond the four excavators and the little circle of eight spectators, Culpeper and Emmeline Finch can be seen approaching thirty yards away. They are not hurrying. Even at this distance we can discern Emmeline Finch's disappointment; still, she seems curious, anyway; and Culpeper is obviously very interested indeed. The digging continues.

(CONTINUED)

Then, as Culpeper and Emmeline Finch come forward and move into a couple of gaps in the circle and stand there looking at the hole, all the twelve others are so fascinated by the digging that they scarcely notice them. J. Russell Finch turns and gives his wife a brief and vacant look, but his tension is so great, his preoccupation so complete, that it is quite as if he'd never met her. The digging continues. Now, perhaps conscious of the fact that when the chips were down she was as capable of avarice as all the others there, Emmeline Finch watches with a thoughtfully subdued expression as the four picks tear ever more deeply into the earth. The digging continues. After a moment, becoming vaguely conscious of the new arrival at his side, Benjy Benjamin glances briefly, casually at Culpeper; watches the hole again; and then, in a slow and somewhat distracted double-take, looks again at Culpeper as if to say, who's he? Then Culpeper, becoming conscious of the other man's look, turns and bestows a thoughtful, reassuring little smile upon Benjy Benjamin. After a moment Benjy Benjamin returns the smile; and then both men go on watching the digging. The hole is now so deep that Lennie Pike and Sylvester Marcus have got to their knees in order to swing their picks down into it; and Ding Bell and Melville Crump, breathing hard and audibly from their exertions, have stepped aside a little to give them room. Now, silently lifting a hand to stop Lennie Pike, Sylvester Marcus drops down into the hole, flexes his shoulders, and starts swinging the pick again.

461 EXT. VARIOUS PEOPLE

Again, possibly, a short fast series of closeup reactions: Emmeline Finch; Ding Bell; Monica Crump; Otto Meyer; and Culpeper, still smiling the little smile of a cat about to eat thirteen canaries.

462 EXT. THE GROUP

Then, after three or four powerful swings, Sylvester Marcus' pick strikes something which gives off a tinny, metallic sound. For one instant he stays bent over, motionless, as though he'd slipped a disc; and there are twelve or thirteen audible gasps and catchings of breath. Then, grabbing a shovel, Lennie Pike drops down beside Sylvester Marcus, uses the shovel powerfully, throws it aside, squats down in the hole, sweeps away some loose earth, and suddenly pauses. All twelve of the others press forward to look down.

463 EXT. THE GROUP -- ANOTHER ANGLE

Possibly a vertical shot from directly above as the other twelve heads push into the frame for a look. In the dark bottom of the hole the top and one side of a light metal case lie exposed to greedy view. One instant while Lennie Pike and Sylvester Marcus exchange wild looks, then, tearing and sweeping away great handfuls of earth, they clear the top
(CONTINUED)

463 CONTINUED:

of the case completely. It is old and worn thin and the edges are corroded. Another instant, another look, and then together Lennie Pike and Sylvester Marcus begin tugging at the case to lift it clear. There is a small ripping sound as a number of tiny metal rivets give way along one edge.

SYLVESTER MARCUS

Easy -- you'll tear it apart.

Lennie Pike shifts his grip. Both men get both their hands under it. Both tug and lift. The case is finally disinterred.

464 EXT. THE GROUP.

A few of the group on one side move back slightly as the two men in the hole swing the case out beside it. It is about the size of a large suitcase and bound about by a heavy leather strap. The leather has rotted so much that the strap comes apart in their hands. One little pause more. Then, their faces streaming with sweat, Lennie Pike and Sylvester Marcus together lift off the lid. Now all fourteen stare at the neatly folded, tightly packed bundle of oilcloth. Some blink a few times, several swallow hard. Algernon Hawthorne clears his throat. Not hurrying, perhaps afraid to hurry, Lennie Pike and Sylvester Marcus begin laying back the covering folds of oilcloth. Two or three seconds and then the prize lies fully revealed. Unbound, as if gathered in a random harvest, but neatly stacked in dozens of bundles, in many tens of thousands of bills of various wholly satisfactory denominations, the sum of three-hundred-and-fifty-thousand dollars is breathtakingly revealed. (We just heard the heavenly choir again, too). It is quite a long moment before anyone speaks. Then:

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

I say, do you think perhaps we should find a bit of cover?

DING BELL

Aw, there's nobody around.

J. RUSSELL FINCH

We'll have to count it out --

MRS. MARCUS

Well, what are we waiting for?

BENJY BENJAMIN

And listen, everybody wins something, so no arguments, okay? Just equal shares for everybody.

(CONTINUED)

464 CONTINUED:

OTTO MEYER

That's right -- that's the only way
-- and with fifteen of us here --

(counting, pointing
at everyone in turn,
and starting with
himself)

-- One, two, three, four, five, six,
seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven,
twelve, thirteen, fourteen --

(and then, having been
around the group,
counting himself in
again)

-- fifteen: if we just count out
fifteen equal HEY!

He addresses the others from a height of seven feet, for Sylvester Marcus and Lennie Pike, standing on either side of him, have both grabbed him by the arms, each with one hand and lifted him bodily off the ground between them.

LENNIE PIKE

Why, you dirty, double-crossing --

SYLVESTER MARCUS

You think you can pull a thing --

Still holding Otto Meyer suspended in mid-air Lennie Pike and Sylvester Marcus swing roundhouse blows with their free hands. Both connect. Otto Meyer, knocked out of their joint grasp, flies several feet through the air, performs a spectacular backward somersault, and disappears down in the hole. Emmeline Finch gasps, but the others all murmur with approval. Before Otto Meyer has time to do more than moan, and bending down above him menacingly:

SYLVESTER MARCUS

You didn't cheat anybody but yourself --
because you're out!

LENNIE PIKE

Yeah, and just one little peep out
of you, that's all, and we'll fill
up that hole on top of you!

MRS. MARCUS

So that makes thirteen shares. Start
counting!

MONICA CRUMP

But thirteen is unlucky.

CULPEPER

It certainly is.

(CONTINUED)

464 CONTINUED: (2)

Culpeper seems to be on the point of letting all the others in on his little secret; but Otto Meyer has scrambled to his feet in the hole and now momentarily distracts everybody.

OTTO MEYER

Listen! Listen, you're not going to cut me out, you hear? Not after what I've been through --

He dodges and yells as Mrs. Marcus swings savagely at his head with her handbag.

OTTO MEYER

I'm warning you! Either I get my share just like everybody else -- or I'm going straight to the police!

MELVILLE CRUMP

(startled)

The police?

ALGERNON HAWTHORNE

But, I say, why should you think --

OTTO MEYER

(pointing at the money)

It came from somewhere, didn't it? Where do you think --

LENNIE PIKE

Listen, we know where it came from -- the poor old guy that had the accident this morning -- and you weren't even there, so shut up!

Now, still smiling slightly but beginning to be a little impatient, Culpeper glances at his wristwatch. Again he starts to speak and again Otto Meyer, jumping up and down in a frenzy in the hole, forestalls him.

OTTO MEYER

I tell you, I'm going straight to the police!

This talk of the police seems to be making everybody increasingly nervous -- except Culpeper. All the others are staring thoughtfully, distractedly, at Otto Meyer. In the sudden silence:

CULPEPER

What makes you think the police will be interested, Mr. Meyer?

(CONTINUED)

464 CONTINUED: (3)

OTTO MEYER

Because it's obvious that money --
(breaking off,
startled)

-- Hey, how do you know my name?

LENNIE PIKE

(to Culpeper, surprised)

You know the little jerk?

CULPEPER

I've never actually met him, Mr. Pike.
But I've come to feel that I know him.

LENNIE PIKE

How come you know my name? I never
you any place --

DING BELL

(aggressively to
Culpeper)

Who are you, anyway?

(to some of the
others)

Didn't he come with you? We though
he was with you --

MELVILLE CRUMP

But we thought that he --

(staring at Culpeper)

Who did you come with, then? Who
are you?

CULPEPER

I'm Captain Culpeper, Detective's Division,
Santa Rosita Police Department.

Perhaps the longest pause in the picture while they all just stand there and look at him. Then they look at each other for a while. Then they look at Culpeper some more. Only Otto Meyer moves. Having climbed out of the hole, he starts to run away. At the same time, in one big preposterously childish wailing chorus:

ALL THE OTHERS

Oooohh, NO!

CULPEPER

Don't make the mistake of causing
us any more trouble, Mr. Meyer. The
situation's bad enough as it is.

(CONTINUED)

464 CONTINUED: (4)

OTTO MEYER

(stopped in his tracks)

What do you mean? What situation?
Look, are you trying to imply that
any of these people here have done
something wrong?

CULPEPER

(gently, almost
compassionately)

Well, Mr. Meyer, when I left my office
the situation was still confused, but
if I remember rightly there were
thirteen charges of conspiring to
defraud, thirteen charges of withholding
information, five charges of assault
and battery, two -- both relating to
you, Mr. Meyer -- of false
impersonation, three of wilful
destruction of property, nine of causing
accidents, I forget how many of failing
to report or leaving the scene of
accidents -- and an estimated six-
hundred-and-fifty state, county and
local charges of speeding, ignoring
signs and signals, school zones, and
dangerous driving.

(a lip-smacking
little pause)

I think it may take the D.A.'s office
a few days to draw up a complete list,
but that won't matter because he'll
need that time to decide whether you're
all to be charged as accessories after
the fact.

DING BELL

(after a horrified
pause)

After what fact? You mean -- this
money was -- stolen or something?

Culpeper nods, once, watching Ding Bell.

MELVILLE CRUMP

But that wasn't our impression, officer.
It was my distinct impression that the
man who had the accident had just --
well, hidden it here.

CULPEPER

I wouldn't bother worrying about that,
Doctor Crump. I think if I were you
right now I'd be worrying about that
hardware store.

(CONTINUED)

464 CONTINUED: (5)

FIRST CABBIE
(of Second Cabbie and
himself)

But listen, us two: all we did was
pick up those four --

CULPEPER

I know -- and apart from the fact
that you both blackmailed your way
into an open-and-shut conspiracy case
and withheld information from the police,
I don't think the D. A. will be much
interested in you. You two: pick up
the case, will you? We have to go now.

MRS. MARCUS
(surely winning
our hearts)

But what about us -- I mean, the ones
who were just passengers?

Cupeper gives her a long and thoughtful look, but the old
battleaxe, commanding our admiration, hardly fliches. Then,
nodding to the Two Cabbies, who have stooped to pick up the
case:

CUPEPER

Shall we go?

465 INT. CHIEF OF POLICE'S OFFICE.

Close on the Chief of Police. Alone in his office, sitting
hunched forward at his desk, he softly and repeatedly pounds
his clenched fists together as, staring at one of his
telephones with bitterly angry determination, he waits
impatiently for it to ring. When it does, he picks it up and
grunts. A woman's voice says something unintelligible.
Overriding her very roughly:

CHIEF OF POLICE (telephone)
I know how busy his Honour is. I'm busy
too. Now get up and go into his office
and tell him I said to pick up that
telephone!

A pause. The Chief of Police studies his clenched fist while
he waits, as if examining a weapon with which he intended to
destroy something. When the Mayor answers his voice is
indistinct. Overriding him, too:

(CONTINUED)

465 CONTINUED:

CHIEF OF POLICE (telephone)
 I know you're busy. I'm busy, too.
 I've been sitting here in my office
 for the past hour, and I've been busy
 thinking. What about? Culpeper: that's
 what about. Now, stop talking and just
 listen. Captain Culpeper is the best
 single policeman in the history of this
 department. He has the best record in
 the force. He's the only completely
 honest man I ever met. So, as a
 reward for a lifetime's service, he
 gets pushed around now by you and a
 crummy crowd of crooked councilmen.
 I'm coming to the point. The point
 is that I happen to have enough
 stuff in my private files -- stuff
 relating to civic building, road
 contracts, the harbour and cannery
 projects, -- enough to put you, the
 D.A., myself, and a two-thirds
 majority of the council behind bars
 for the next twenty years -- and I
 give you my word that that's where
 everybody's going unless certain
 things start happening now. I want
 the pension for Culpeper's grade to
 be trebled -- not doubled, trebled.
 I want Culpeper to retire with honor.
 I want it on paper and over your
 signature that that's exactly what
 is going to happen and I want that
 paper in my hands in fifteen minutes --
 or I'll have all the reporters in
 town in here in twenty. You know the
 word for this, your Honor. It's called
 blackmail.....

Pause. The Mayor's voice, indistinctly but on a high and
 fearful note, on the line. Then, in a hard way, the Chief
 of Police slowly begins to smile.

CHIEF OF POLICE (telephone)
 Well, that's fine, I knew you'd see it
 like that. Sure, it's just that Captain
 Culpeper -- well, you know, he ought to
 get what's coming to him.....

466 EXT. OUTSIDE THE PARK

Close on the case of money, holding on it for a few moments
 as it is carried the last few yards to Culpeper's car --
 then quickly to Culpeper's contented countenance as he
 watches the Two Cabbies place the case in the front seat.

(CONTINUED)

466 CONTINUED:

The whole disconsolate group now stands there, still stunned, waiting for Culpeper's orders. Suddenly, desperately:

DING BELL

Couldn't you give us a break?

BENJY BENJAMIN

We've had a pretty hard day already, officer. Like I haven't even had any breakfast yet.

Culpeper looks at them. All stare, with varying degrees of hopelessness, at Culpeper.

MONICA CRUMP

We know we don't deserve any kindness, Captain, but if you could help us, maybe we'd all be inspired to try and live better lives or something....

CULPEPER

(amused)

Well....there is one thing: it might help.....

(as they listen eagerly)

If, instead of being brought in by me, you went and turned yourselves in: juries are always favourably impressed by that.

MELVILLE CRUMP

You mean you'd let us?

MRS. MARCUS

Well, what are we waiting for? Let's go turn ourselves in!

OTTO MEYER

Why should you care anything about whether we get a break or not?

CULPEPER

Because no matter what you've all done today -- you're not really criminals, Mr. Meyer. Anybody can be tempted, you know -- if the price and the circumstances are just right. Now, we're not going into Santa Rosita because the D.A. wants to keep the press out of this until he's finished his preliminary examination. We're going over to Palm City. If you
(more)

(CONTINUED)

466 CONTINUED: (2)

CULPEPER (Cont'd)
like you can all get into those two
cabs and go down to the central
station there and just walk in --
and that way you'll be able to testify
to voluntary surrender.

J. RUSSELL FINCH
Then let's do that.

DING BELL
We can't all get in two cabs. Can't
we take --

CULPEPER
No, you'd better leave the stolen
vehicles to be picked up later.
(to the Two Cabbies)
Drive carefully. They may be the
last passengers you two ever carry.

The thirteen others remain there a moment more, as if trying to think of something further to say. Then, still standing by his car, Culpeper watches as all thirteen turn and move off towards the two cabs fifty yards up the road. From this position we can see some little discussion about the seating arrangements as they reach and start climbing into the two cabs. It develops into a little b.g. scene: when six of the unhappy group have climbed into each cab Lennie Pike goes back and forth between them a couple of times in an effort to find room; getting in the end into the first in line. But while this is going on, Culpeper in f.g. gets into his car, glances at the case on the seat beside him, reaches for and then sits holding his microphone. Beyond him the two cabs get started and pull away back up the T-road.

CULPEPER (microphone)
D-Div. Culpeper.

LIEUTENANT'S VOICE (through speaker)
Yes, sir?

CULPEPER (microphone)
Everything's under control but this
may take a little while longer --
because there was one joker in the
deck that nobody knew about. Right?

LIEUTENANT'S VOICE (through speaker)
Yes, sir. Understood, Chief.

CULPEPER (microphone)
Just sit tight and don't make a move
of any kind until you hear from me.

(CONTINUED)

466 CONTINUED: (3)

He flicks the switch, looks at the mike in his hand, and hangs it carefully back on its hook. Then, not hurrying at all, he presses the starter, gets the F-car into gear, lets out the clutch, and rolls sedately away up the T-road after the others.

467 INT. FIRST CAB -- MOVING.

J. Russell Finch and Emmeline Finch are in the front seat beside the First Cabbie and Mrs. Marcus, Sylvester Marcus, Algernon Hawthorne and Lennie Pike are all jammed together in the back. Lennie Pike is not actually seated but merely crouched over in the little space in front of the other three. Losing his balance as the cab takes a slight curve in the T-road, he steps on Mrs. Marcus's foot during the following.

MRS. MARCUS

So we're all supposed to be grateful, I suppose. That's all I needed, a condescending cop!

(mimicking Culpeper)

"No matter what you've all done today you're not really criminals"! Of all the snooty, patronising -- you're standing on my foot!

SYLVESTER MARCUS

You're standing on momma's foot!

468 INT. SECOND CAB -- MOVING.

Melville and Monica Crump are in front with the Second Cabbie and Ding Bell, Benjy Benjamin and Otto Meyer are slumped despondently in the back. These six are not unhappier than the seven in the other cab but it's a tie.

MELVILLE CRUMP

If only everybody had just listened to me this morning.....

SECOND CABBIE

Why? What'd you say this morning?

MELVILLE CRUMP

Well, what I said was, I said we ought to have twenty-five equal shares, eight for the eight people who were there --

THE THREE BEHIND (all together)

Oh, shut up!

(CONTINUED)

468 CONTINUED: .

MONICA CRUMP

Melville, I know there's a law against breaking into any place, but are you sure there's a law against trying to break out of a --

OTTO MEYER

Is she kidding? Listen, there are laws -- there's some kind of law against everything, and according to Captain Do-it-Yourself back there we've broken them all. Why should he care about giving us a break?

DING BELL

Yeah, I was wondering that: what's with him, anyway?

Otto Meyer, Ding Bell and Benjy Benjamin turn and look back down the T-road. Three-hundred yards behind Culpeper's car can be seen, not hurrying, following the two cabs.

BENJY BENJAMIN

There's something sorta funny. How can he be so sure that we're going to do --

SECOND CABBIE

(nervously,
apprehensively)

Listen, Mac, we better do exactly what he told us. Aw, how could I get myself mixed up in a stupid deal like this?

Disgustedly he brakes and shifts down as, coming to the top of the T-road, they reach the main coast highway.

469 EXT. T-ROAD JUNCTION, SIGN.

The first cab, containing the Finch-Marcus-Hawthorne-Pike contingent, has already stopped at the intersection. Now as the second cab closes up and stops behind it we have time to read a big sign-post which makes sense of our somewhat fictionalized geography. The sign shows, to the right:

Santa Rosita	3
Chula Vista	4
Palm City	6
MEXICO	9

And, to the left:

San Diego	11
LOS ANGELES	131

(CONTINUED)

469 CONTINUED:

The south-bound traffic is not very heavy. After a few seconds, during which time Culpeper's car does not catch up with them, both cabs turn out of the T-road and south, right, towards Palm City.

470 INT. CULPEPER'S CAR

Close on Culpeper. He has stopped, two-hundred yards back down the T-road. He sits here, his motor idling softly, waiting; glances at his watch; looks at the case beside him; hears, perhaps, a bar or two of the Latin-American music; and smiles, certainly, his little smile.

471 INT. THE SECOND CAB -- MOVING

In the back of it, Otto Meyer, Ding Bell and Benjy Benjamin are all looking back with intense curiosity now. The main road has curved slightly but they can still see the entrance to the T-road three-hundred yards behind them. Suddenly:

OTTO MEYER

Wait a minute! Hold it a minute!

SECOND CABBIE

No, we'd better not fool around --

DING BELL

Do what he says! Stop!
(as the Second Cabbie
brakes)

Why isn't he staying with us?

472 INT. FIRST CAB -- MOVING

Still crouched over, noticing that the cab behind them has stopped:

LENNIE PIKE

Hey, the others are stopping.

MRS. MARCUS

What? What for? Will you get off
my foot!

473 INT. THE SECOND CAB

Now all six in it are looking back at the T-road turning in the distance. They are nervous, confused, uncertain.

(CONTINUED)

473 CONTINUED:

OTTO MEYER

What's he doing? First he gives us what he calls a break and then he doesn't even bother to watch us. And where are the cops, the other cops?

DING BELL

That's right: If they've been following all of us all day that park should've looked like the policemen's ball.

474 INT. THE FIRST CAB

It has stopped. The seven within it are all looking back curiously in the same sort of confusion.

J. RUSSELL FINCH

Maybe he's had a flat -- or his car broke down --

MRS. MARCUS

Back up! Back up to the others!

475 INT. THE SECOND CAB

Suddenly, all but electrified by a new thought:

OTTO MEYER

Hey, how do we know he is a cop? He didn't even show us a badge!

SECOND CABBIE

Sure he's a cop, I've seen him around town, I just didn't rememeber before --

DING BELL

Yeah, okay, but what's he doing?

476 EXT. MAIN ROAD -- BOTH CABS, THE GROUP

The first cab having backed up a hundred yards to join the other on the side of the road, Sylvester Marcus, Lennie Pike, Algernon Hawthorne and J. Russell Finch now get out of it and move quickly back to join Otto Meyer, Ding Bell, Benjy Benjamin and Melville Crump as they get out, too.

SYLVESTER MARCUS

Hey, what's the matter? What are you --

(CONTINUED)

476 CONTINUED:

OTTO MEYER
(pointing back
towards the T-road)

What's he doing?

MELVILLE CRUMP
I thought surely he'd follow us --

DING BELL
So: what's he doing?

LENNIE PIKE
You'd think he'd be worried we'd all
make a big run for it --

BENJY BENJAMIN
Well, what's he doing?

477 INT. CULPEPER'S CAR -- MOVING.

Now he drives up to the end of the T-road, slows down, stops, and looks off to his right. Past him or an eyeline-shot to establish that because of the curve in the main road he cannot see the two cabs and all the men standing beside them three-hundred yards away. Then closer on Culpeper for his reaction to the apparent fact that the coast is clear. Then still closer on his face, as, tensely, eyes narrowed, he sits staring at something directly in his path. And then closer and closer still until finally, his eye filling the whole of the frame, we see reflected in the pupil of his eye a word that looks like POTS. Instantly the whole frame flips over, reverses, so that we see what Culpeper sees, the flat unequivocal warning injunction: S T O P.

478 EXT. THE MAIN ROAD -- THE WHOLE GROUP

All of them, absolutely astounded, as, the main road being momentarily clear of traffic by the junction, Culpeper's car suddenly streaks out of the T-road, accelerates rapidly with a squeal of tires, and tears off and away to the north.

THE CLIMAX

479 Culpeper, driving, going fast but not too fast, eyes flicking at his rear-view mirror, his little smile making it plain that he thinks he's getting away with it.

480 Back to the Group by the Two Cabs, all shouting in a sudden hysterical burst of unintelligibility, jumping up and down, running a few steps to the north, running back, getting into the cabs, getting out again, screaming, stepping on each other's feet, trying to make themselves heard. Most

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piercingly above the general din, the shrill shriek of MRS. MARCUS: "I tell you, he's running for it! Let's go after him! You stupid idiots, can't you see he's grabbed it himself? Hurry up, we've got to catch him! Hurry up!" During these exhortations she flings some of the group aside and plunges back into the first cab. Still yelling (who can dialogue a scene for thirteen hysterical people? See Background Script Note 21), still milling and shoving about, the other twelve begin getting back into the cabs.

481 Culpeper, going well, grinning.

482 In the first cab, which is making a U-turn, getting under way, being followed by the second. Again so much hysteria, so many people talking at once, that above the hubbub (Background Script Note 22) only a few lines are wholly intelligible. FIRST CABBIE: "Listen, I don't care, if we don't do just exactly what he said --" LENNIE PIKE (overriding him): "Hey, wait, if the policeman's running away why don't we all run away?" MRS. MARCUS (overriding him): "Faster! Hurry! Let's get going! You stupid idiots, we've got to get that money now so we can say we caught that crooked cop and they won't even be able to charge us with GET OFF MY FOOT!"

483 In the second cab, yelling louder than the others (Background Script Note 23) are yelling, OTTO MEYER: "Don't you understand, it explains everything! No other cops around, not a cop in sight -- he planned it! We were the only ones who knew where it was and he just hung around waiting to take it away from us!" DING BELL: "Yeah, that's right, you're right, it's gotta be that -- and listen, if we get that dough and we're the ones to turn it in, we'll be in the clear --"

484 Tension is pitched so high now that in the first cab Sylvester Marcus seems to be replying to Ding Bell, who is fifty yards behind in the second cab. SYLVESTER MARCUS: "So let's just get the dough and we can worry about turning it in later." FIRST CABBIE: "Look! He's slowing down! He's seen us!" J. RUSSELL FINCH: "No, he's turning off, to the left!"

485 From their viewpoint as, a third of a mile ahead, Culpeper's car is seen making a fast turn to the left, to the west, down another little T-road which leads to an isolated ram-shackle little sort of Cannery Row community by the sea.

486 Culpeper, gunning the F-car down the long narrow road, glancing at the mirror, seeing (as the others are still some distance from the turn) his trail quite clear behind.

- 487 In the first cab, straining forward eagerly, kicking savagely at Lennie Pike when once again he accidentally steps on her foot, MRS. MARCUS: "Watch him! Oh, if there's one kind of crook that just makes me sick at my stomach I tell you it's a crooked cop! Faster!"
- 488 Taking the turn fast, only ten yards apart now, both cabs tear down the narrow side road. The heads of various people are poked out of the windows as they peer ahead. Four-hundred yards away down at the end of the road the F-car can be seen for an instant before it turns off and disappears.
- 489 In the first cab, in which Mrs. Marcus, Lennie Pike, Sylvester Marcus and Algeron Hawthorne are all yelling for the First Cabbie to hurry, close on EMMELINE FINCH: "-- to be sick, I'm going to be sick -- "
- 490 In the second cab, almost hypnotising the others by the sheer power of his logic, OTTO MEYER: "--We grab him, we get the dough, and we give him a choice: equal shares with everybody or else we turn him in!"
- 491 Outside Jimmy's shack, down at the end of the lane, Culpeper, still grinning, is just easing the F-car into position before driving it into the garage at the back of Jimmy's house. Also grinning, Jimmy stands at the garage doors, motioning to Culpeper to let the car come forward. Beyond, ready to cast off without an instant's delay, the fast cruiser waits, throbbing with impatient promise, at Jimmy's boat-dock.
- 492 Very close on Culpeper. He has just started to nose the F-car into the garage --
- 493 When, only twenty yards away, the first cab roars into terrifying view, brakes with tires shrieking, skids to a very sudden halt, and is rammed, at about twenty-five miles an hour, by the second cab, the Second Cabbie having neither the brakes nor the reflexes of the First Cabbie. Thirteen concerted roars from the occupants of the two cabs as they see Culpeper --
- 494 --And Culpeper, after swallowing once with enormous difficulty, throws one glance at the startled, fearful Jimmy, says: "Uh -- sorry: sudden change of plans", whips the F-car into reverse, backs up fast in the yard, whips it into low, turns very sharply, and guns the F-car with a great rolling swerve back onto the road and away again -- narrowly missing several of those characters who have dismounted from the two cabs and started to rush forward, and almost but not quite running over Mrs. Marcus's foot.

- 495 The Group. Beside themselves with the heat of the chase now, they begin fighting and clawing their ways back into the two cabs, with many a cry of "Get him! Hurry! Quick! After him! Stop him! He's getting away! Turn around! Hurry up or we'll lose him! Come on! Hurry!" Jimmy the Crook, all dressed up and with nowhere to go, stands staring at them, forlorn and a bit disconcerted, to say the least. Beyond all, having already put a desperate two-hundred yards between himself and the others, Culpeper roars back towards the main road. Now, very quickly, both cabs get under way -- but the road is narrow and they use Jimmy's yard in order to turn around. In this process and in their feverish eagerness to give further pursuit, the Two Cabbies, as the one noses into the space and the other backs into it, contrive -- to their mutual and increasing wrath -- to have yet another collision. Jimmy has time for one question: "Listen, will somebody -- would anybody mind just telling me what goes on?" But he never gets an answer: as quickly as that, they've all gone.
- 496 As from the first cab, which is filled with cries of "There he is! Watch him! Don't lose him! Don't let him get away!" -- and far up at the main road the F-car can be seen skidding to a halt.
- 497 Very close on Culpeper, unsmiling, a few beads of perspiration on his fevered, increasingly furrowed forehead. A glance at his rear-view mirror: the two cabs, far behind but coming up fast. A look to the left, to the right, then across the road --
- 498 -- At the sign, which says, among other things: MEXICO 13 --
- 499 --And then one second for his snap decision. Seizing upon a gap in the main-road stream of traffic, he gives her the gun--
- 500 -- And the F-car, heeling over with a squeal of tires, roars off and away back to the right, south --
- 501 -- Even as the two cabs, coming very fast now, reach the top of the T-road, slow down, start to intrude themselves into a little stream of vehicles, can't, and are momentarily held in check -- as three, four, five-hundred yards away in b.g. the F-car gathers speed.
- 502 Close on Culpeper as, hitting 50, 60, 70, he swings out over the center-line and begins passing everything going south. Long, loud, protesting blasts of horns by other drivers. One terribly anxious glance flung over his shoulder.

- 503 In the first cab, also gathering speed five-hundred yards behind the F-car, the FIRST CABBIE: "He's going for the border! Listen, if we just stopped and phoned the police station --" MRS. MARCUS: "Don't be silly! We've got to get that money! Catch him!"
- 504 And in the second cab, not far behind the first, Ding Bell and Otto Meyer are both leaning forward and repeatedly hitting the Second Cabbie on the back in their desire to encourage him. DING BELL: "Come on, Mac, step it up, let's get this thing going!" SECOND CABBIE: "Listen, take it easy, you're hurting my shoulder -- "
- 505 The F-car's rear-view mirror as Culpeper swings out to pass some more vehicles: far behind but gaining a little, the two cabs can be seen swinging out too --
- 506 -- And Culpeper is very worried indeed --
- 507 -- As, four-hundred yards apart and easily distinguished from the rest of the traffic because they are moving now at twice its speed, the F-car and the two cabs race on to the south....
- 508 Then back to Culpeper's office, where the Lieutenant, the Sergeant, the Secretary and the Police Reporter are waiting tensely by the silent radio-speaker. They stir, rise respectfully as the door opens and the Chief of Police, smiling, relaxed and amiable, comes in. CHIEF OF POLICE: "No, don't move. How's everything going?" LIEUTENANT: "Captain Culpeper's last report was that everything's under control, sir. He said it might take longer than he thought --" VOICE THROUGH SPEAKER: "Car 14 to D-Div Control". LIEUTENANT: "Come in, fourteen. What is it?" VOICE THROUGH SPEAKER: "Well, listen, we think something's going on. We're out on one-oh-one by Cortez checking a mad-dog report--" LIEUTENANT (overriding him): "Orders were maintain silence, fourteen, Captain Culpeper wants this channel clear --" VOICE THROUGH SPEAKER: "Well, we know, but we just saw Captain Culpeper, he just went by here doing 90 miles an hour". Reactions of astonished bewilderment. At the same time the Chief of Police's Secretary knocks at the half-open door, murmurs apology, and ushers in a nervous, funny-looking man, the MAYOR, who takes a sealed envelope from his pocket. CHIEF'S SECRETARY: "The Mayor to see you, sir --" THE MAYOR (to the Chief): "I thought I'd better come over myself --" The Chief of Police, preoccupied and distracted, lifts a hand, stopping this, as, his alarm rapidly increasing, he watches the Lieutenant. LIEUTENANT (microphone): "Uh -- don't understand that, fourteen. You're sure it was Captain Culpeper? Look, was he chasing anybody? Could he have been

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508 CONTINUED:

chasing somebody?" VOICE THROUGH SPEAKER: "Well, no, that's what struck us so funny, there were about fifteen people in two cabs right behind him and the way it looked to us they were chasing him!" Now a long few seconds while the Chief of Police, the Lieutenant, the Sergeant, the Secretary and the Police Reporter -- all of them stunned -- try to absorb the shock of this. CHIEF OF POLICE: "Call him. Try to contact him". LIEUTENANT (microphone): "Calling Captain Culpeper. This is D-Div Central. Urgent. Come in, Captain Culpeper..." Another silence then, in which they all stare at the silent speaker, waiting. One of the phones rings, THE SECRETARY answers: "Yes? Oh -- well, just a moment, please. (To the others) It's Mrs. Culpeper..." Still they watch the unforthcoming speaker. Frightened, quietly, desperate now, the CHIEF OF POLICE: "Try again."

- 509 Very close on Culpeper, going faster than ever, but not getting anywhere: behind him, only two-hundred yards behind, gaining, the two cabs. Then the LIEUTENANT'S VOICE: "This is D-Div Central urgently calling Captain Culpeper. Come in, Captain Culpeper". Culpeper swallows, his glance flicking ceaselessly, frantically now from the rear-view mirror to the road ahead. Somehow as he suddenly stiffens into an attitude of even greater tension, he conveys that he is about to try something.
- 510 A general shot of all three, the F-car and the two cabs, still whipping past everything else going south.
- 511 Then, braking very sharply and swerving desperately across the northbound traffic, the F-car wholly unexpectedly turns off the main road and into a boulevard that leads into the city --
- 512 -- As, right behind it, but going too fast to make the turn, the first cab is forced by its own momentum to go on by the turning. But the second cab, having a little more time, does make it, and continues the chase --
- 513 -- While the first cab, taking the next side street that offers, comes roaring up to the boulevard to rejoin the company --
- 514 -- And, watching his mirror, Culpeper sees that he hasn't shaken them off --
- 515 -- So runs a red light at forty-five --
- 516 -- But so does the first cab --

- 517 -- And the second cab --
- 518 -- And a town cop on his beat runs into the street, astounded, shouting after them, grabbing for his whistle --
- 519 -- As, his features revealing his hysteria now, Culpeper wrenches the wheel hard over, and the LIEUTENANT'S VOICE is heard, pleading now: "Please come in! Come in, Captain Cul --" --
- 520 -- And the F-car takes a fast sharp turn into a side street on two wheels, careens two-hundred yards --
- 521 -- Takes another, in the opposite direction, like a fox trying desperately to outwit a pack of hounds --
- 522 -- Roars into a long narrow alley, gains speed rapidly, with both cabs momentarily left behind --
- 523 -- And then brakes shriekingly to a full stop as --
- 524 -- Culpeper, horrified beyond description, sees --
- 525 -- The big van blocking his exit from the alley --
- 526 -- And, turning with a wild expression, sees --
- 527 -- The second cab, now nearest, come turning in three-hundred yards behind him --
- 528 -- Flings open the door, grabs the heavy case (forty or fifty pounds), gets it under one arm and, supporting it with the other, runs as fast as he can along some walk or passage leading away from this back-alley; while any people about (and this is a crowded district near the center of the city) turn and stare after him curiously; and while we, holding a position beside the abandoned F-car, see the first cab to approach and stop again rammed hard by the other when it brakes too sharply; and while, above the unintelligible cries of the thirteen pursuers, the sad and desperate voice of the CHIEF OF POLICE is heard in f.g. as, a hundred yards away now and running for all he's worth, Culpeper dodges out of sight: "Captain Culpeper -- calling Captain Culpeper -- Culp, this is Aloysius speaking. Listen to me, Culp. Everything's been fixed. There's been some negotiation and everything's all right, you can take my word for it. Now, stop this nonsense

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and answer me. Culp, this is Aloysius..." (And, above and behind and beyond this last unhappy appeal, the cries -- "There he is! He ran down there! Stop him! Don't let him get away!" -- of all the others as they tear off in pursuit)....

529 The group in Culpeper's office at headquarters. Motionless. The Chief of Police stands staring at the incredulous Lieutenant. The Chief's holding the envelope which the Mayor has given him. The Police Reporter stands staring at the Chief. The Secretary, aghast, stands holding the phone with the call from Mrs. Culpeper. The Sergeant, slumped heavily in a chair, stares stupidly at nothing, his vision clouded by a single tear. The MAYOR, understanding that something's up but not understanding what, breaks the silence: "I'm afraid I still don't understand. What does all that mean?" For a long moment, ignoring the Mayor, the Chief of Police, glancing at all the others, doesn't speak. Then, having to dredge deep for the energy the orders require, and not quite looking at the Lieutenant, the CHIEF OF POLICE: "Well - that's it. All units. Arrest Captain Culpeper. Tell them". For a few seconds the Lieutenant doesn't move. The Mayor stares. The Chief of Police becomes conscious of the sealed envelope in his hand, looks at it, finds the strength to tear it in half, and in a casually weary way hands the pieces back to the Mayor. GINGER'S VOICE suddenly sounds in the silence: "Hello! Oh, what are they doing? Hello!", and the SECRETARY, nervous, distracted, says to the Chief of Police: "Mrs. Culpeper -- will you -- can you speak to her?" A moment of hesitation during which the Chief's expression hardens. The Lieutenant sits down before the microphone and in b.g. (Background Script Note 24) orders all units to arrest Captain C. G. Culpeper, etc. and in f.g. the CHIEF OF POLICE lifts the receiver to his ear and says: "Yes?" GINGER'S VOICE: "Who's that? I'm trying to reach Captain Culpeper! I insist on speaking to my husband!" CHIEF OF POLICE: "This is Aloysius, Ginger. We want to speak to him too, and when we've caught him we'll have him get in touch with you..."

530 Somewhere, in some back street or some alley near the center of this busy town, obviously having run a long way because they are all staggeringly out of breath and sweating heavily now, the ten exhausted, exasperated men -- Sylvester Marcus, J. Russell Finch, Algernon Hawthorne, Lennie Pike, Otto Meyer, the First Cabbie, Ding Bell, Melville Crump, Benjy Benjamin and the Second Cabbie -- now are to be seen, milling about, running this way and that, searching in increasing hopelessness here, there, everywhere, gasping for air, groaning, shaking their heads, -- and making plain that they have lost their quarry. But then they all look at each other, and suddenly, their bitter frustration firing them with renewed determination, they grab a second wind and stagger

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on, half-running, away in one direction and out of sight. Only then does Culpeper, himself nearly exhausted, appear: having been hidden all the time somewhere in the middle of the picture (where? in the trunk of a parked car? in the back of a delivery-van? in a street-cleaner's cart? somewhere), he appears, watches the others disappear, and moves off quickly, beginning to run, in the opposite direction; and has gone no more than five paces when --

- 531 -- Mrs. Marcus, coming around a corner into this area at a gasping tinkling run, actually collides head-on with Culpeper, gives bellowing sort of scream, makes a grab for the case, misses, and then, as the desperate detective dashes off wildly in another direction, screams: "Here! He's here! Back here!" --
- 532 -- To the ten men, who, a hundred yards or so away, turn back at once to give chase --
- 533 -- While Culpeper, staggering and stumbling with the heavy case, runs and runs --
- 534 -- And Mrs. Marcus, losing a shoe in flight, screams and bellows and tinkles --
- 535 -- And Sylvester Marcus, Otto Meyer, Ding Bell, the First Cabbie, Melville Crump, Lennie Pike, the Second Cabbie, Benjy Benjamin, Algernon Hawthorne and J. Russell Finch (despite his condition) come running in one long sustained stampeding rush --
- 536 -- And Culpeper, seizing hysterically upon some desperately inadequate cover, tries pathetically to hide from the pursuing mob --
- 537 -- Is startled and indescribably relieved when, the fever of the chase having carried away their reason, all ten men go pounding senselessly right by his position, missing him by inches, and on and out of sight again --
- 538 -- So that once again, as he jumps up and, flinging a desperate glance over his shoulder at the ten as he dashes back, he is something more than disconcerted --
- 539 --To crash head-on again into the nightmarishly ubiquitous, jingling jangling bulk of Ruby Marcus --

- 540 -- And the others, hearing her stentorian cries, come running back again --
- 541 -- And Culpeper runs in another direction, eluding them again for no more than three seconds --
- 542 -- During which he discovers that he has run into a dead-end passage, is trapped, and, hugging the case protectively to his bosom, staggers back against the back-alley door of some big building, feels it swing open behind him, and stumbles into --
- 543 -- An empty passage, dimly lit, full of dirt and rubble, with some stairs at the end of it leading to another door; towards which, shutting the outside door, he now runs --
- 544 -- While all the others come running past Mrs. Marcus (Lennie Pike inadvertently stomping on her foot as he passes) and dash into the dead-end passage --
- 545 -- And Culpeper, inside, having charged through the door at the top of the stairs, finds himself in the hall of an enormous empty building, so stripped of everything -- of all partitions, fixtures, fittings -- that there is literally nothing left anywhere for him to hide behind, and with no avenue of escape except a shaky wooden staircase that leads on up into the ruined and gutted structure; hears, at this moment, the hoarse cries of his pursuers below; and charges, hugging the case, on up the stairs --
- 546 -- As Sylvester Marcus, Otto Meyer, Ding Bell, Lennie Pike and all the others rush into the hall, dash this way and that, finding only emptiness, turn to the staircase, and, at a signal from Otto Meyer, fall instantly completely silent, listening at the foot of the staircase --
- 547 -- And Culpeper, two flights up (and with nothing on this floor either except another great expanse of empty space), also freezes on the stairs, holding his breath, listening for their footsteps below --
- 548 -- And they all wait, straining, motionless, listening with all their ears, ten lunatics in tableau --

- 549 -- Until Culpeper, incapable of enduring this strain, creeps up three or four steps, encounters a loose one which screams in protest, and --
- 550 -- The ten, breaking the tableau in a great concerted rush, go bellowing up the stairs --
- 551 -- As he runs, whimpering now, higher --
- 552 -- And they run, faster, coming up after him --
- 553 -- And he manages another floor --
- 554 -- But they get closer --
- 555 -- So that, staggering, his breath coming in great gasping groans, Culpeper give up, and is actually turning about to surrender --
- 556 -- When Sylvester Marcus, missing a step, falls, brings down Otto Meyer, Ding Bell and Lennie Pike, thereby impeding the ascent of all the others for three or four seconds --
- 557 -- During which, scraping the bottom of the barrel of his courage, Culpeper propels himself onwards and upwards once again --
- 558 -- While the ten, having disentangled themselves, come on --
- 559 -- And Culpeper, reaching the topmost floor, running a few last desperate yards, rounds some corner of the stairwell structure, sees the sign Fire Escape above a half-open door, runs, stumbling, pushes through it --
- 560 -- And finds himself out on the topmost landing of the iron fire-escape-ladder, a hundred and twenty-five feet above the big central plaza in the heart of Santa Rosita; one desperate glance behind as the others are heard reaching the top inside: then, the iron ladder ringing under his feet and creaking under his weight, Culpeper

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descends the first few steps as --

561 -- Far below, in a lot beside the building, a minor Union Official is heatedly addressing a big group of workmen who have obviously been called to an emergency meeting to consider strike action. Somewhere near a big sign which declares that a fine new office block will be erected on this site by Sternad Enterprises Incorporated, the Official is saying: "Sternad promised me that we could work out something acceptable to everybody -- " when he sees the tiny figures on the ladder high above, shouts a sudden startled warning --

562 -- As Lennie Pike, Benjy Benjamin, Sylvester Marcus, Otto Meyer and then all the others begin appearing on the ladder's top landing --

563 -- AND Culpeper, reaching and rounding the first landing below, stumbles and drops the case in his exhaustion, turns frenziedly to retrieve it --

564 -- While, below, the horrified workmen begin shouting: "Hey! Get off that ladder! That ladder's not safe! Get off!" --

565 -- Even as the first three or four to reach Culpeper pounce upon the case, struggling for possession of it and ripping one seam of the case apart, and all the others reach the same little landing of the ladder --

566 -- Which, under the concentrated weight of the eleven men, now begins to shake, to creak, to scream as only tired metal can, and to tear away, rivet by rusted rivet, from the corroded support-brackets on the side of the ancient dilapidated ruined shell of a building --

567 -- And all eleven men, after freezing for one terrible instant in attitudes and expressions of pure and sudden animal terror, now utter a startled rising shuddering whimpering moaning groan-shout-scream and grab in hideous panic at each other and at the ladder itself as the whole landing tears away from the wall, sags, swings out and away from the wall, breaks and falls --

- 568 -- A few feet, at which, in a little more than a second, a thing happens which requires a good deal of explanation. The part of the ladder which has actually broken away -- comprising one landing and a flight of six or seven steps leading up from it -- has all eleven men congregated upon it. Now as it plunges down with the eleven screaming men some part or parts of it -- the jagged, broken staircase or the twisted support-brackets or something -- strikes and becomes enmeshed with the steps or railings of the landing just below. And the weight of their concentrated mass is enough to pull an enormous section of the fire-escape-ladder right away from the side of the building, so that the section to which they cling swings, with a scream of metal that all but drowns their screams, some twenty feet away from the wall and out over the street, where, in a terrifyingly precarious position, unable to move, unable even to try to get back, likely and almost certain to fall at any instant, they hang, in one great shuddering screaming mass, a little more than a hundred feet above the ground --
- 569 -- And in the streets of the plaza below, reactions and cries of alarm from a few, then some dozens, then some hundreds of citizens as they see the terrifying predicament of the eleven men above --
- 570 -- And, perhaps shooting vertically downwards past the eleven, who remain, clinging desperately, as if paralysed but still screaming, we see the area of the street just below them clear very rapidly indeed as screaming, shouting, pointing pedestrians scamper well out of the way --
- 571 -- And the workmen, racing for the building, with shouts of: "Call the Fire Department! Get some ropes or something! Get a ladder: A ladder!" -- and more people, attracted by all the hubbub, come running out of stores and offices, all around the plaza, while others appear at the windows of the adjacent hotel and the big department store on the other side --
- 572 -- and Mrs. Marcus, also attracted by the shouts and screams comes around a corner and into the plaza, looks up, screams, and then shouts above the surrounding din: "Get off that -- are you all out of your minds? What do you think you're doing?"

573 Now as closely as possible on the cluster of eleven men for a detailed examination of their actual physical predicament. This is more easily illustrated than described, but in a tentative analysis we arrive at this. The Anchor-men, so to speak, are J. Russell Finch, Melville Crump, the First Cabbie, Lennie Pike and Benjy Benjamin. These five actually have a good firm grip on the ladder (although one or two may be upside down), but would be quite incapable of making any move (even if they dared try) because of the combined weight of the other six, all of whom, having missed in their grabs for the ladder, have succeeded in latching onto either one or more of the anchor-men or onto somebody else latched onto them. Thus, Sylvester Marcus, Ding Bell and the Second Cabbie are clinging desperately to various parts of J. Russell Finch, Lennie Pike and the First Cabbie, while both Algernon Hawthorne and Otto Meyer have got a fairly firm grip on them, and Culpeper has a perilous hold on various parts of both Benjy Benjamin and Melville Crump. But Culpeper has a special problem in that he is still encumbered with the case, which, with a really tremendous effort, he has held pinned against his side with one elbow. Now, as this little scene begins, the terrible concerted scream of the eleven is gradually reducing and breaking down into a sustained series of low and very pitiable animal moans. At this point (he is beginning to tire), the case very gradually begins slipping out from under Culpeper's elbow. His position in relation to the others is such that he is lying at an angle of forty-five degrees. To his bitter dismay the case starts slipping, inch by inch, down his thigh and over his knee -- where, we should feel, it must surely fall. But then, with a supreme effort, Culpeper contrives to bring up his leg, catching and holding the heavy case with his foot, and wedging it firmly against the upthrust rump of Otto Meyer, who is clinging firmly with both hands to the trousers (which have gradually come undone) of Algernon Hawthorne. But now as Culpeper strains mightily to keep the case there a terrible thing happens: one whole side of the damaged case falls open, an edge of oilcloth lifts and flaps back and a considerable number of bills flutter out of that corner of the case and begin blowing about in the little breeze --

574 -- and all eleven men, completely motionless and suddenly completely silent, watch as some several hundred dollars in small bills begins to blow away --

575 -- And below, on the ground, the voices of the ever-growing crowd, which up to now have combined in a shrieking roar of alarm, now sound a new note, a startled, excited note of opportunity, as the stuff comes swirling down like manna --

576 -- And now, while Otto Meyer, horrified, stares back over his shoulder, some several thousand dollars, begins, bill by fluttering bill, to go --

- 577 -- And Culpeper simply hangs there watching it.
- 578 -- And then another twenty, thirty, forty-thousand dollars suddenly whipping clear and swirling all about them in a ceaselessly shifting little gray-green cloud, as a tremendously excited roar comes up from the many hundreds below --
- 579 -- And Culpeper watches --
- 580 -- While on the ground one of the workmen, about to run into the building with a great coil of rope, now throws the rope aside and joins the increasingly happy multitude of people who, in a rapidly-mounting frenzy of madcap determination, dash and mill and surge and run and jump about grabbing at the money --
- 581 -- And poor Mrs. Marcus, slamming her handbag at some jubilant citizen with a fistful of money just as he leaps gaily for some more, screams: "Stop that! That's got nothing to do with you! Now, hand it over!" --
- 582 -- And Culpeper watches --
- 583 -- And now all of a sudden, with a fluttering whoosh, the case toppling off the desperately upflung posterior of Otto Meyer, the whole lot goes --
- 584 -- And three-hundred-and-fifty thousand dollars blows up a sudden storm, swirls and billows up, darkening the afternoon sky above the plaza, into one great frightening ominous cloud --
- 585 -- At the very heart of which, Culpeper watches --
- 586 -- And policemen, whistles shrieking all but soundlessly against the monstrously grandisonant screaming bellowing roar that fills the heart of the city now, rush about ineffectually trying to get control of the crowd --
- 587 -- And suddenly one of the few steel rivets by which the whole fire-escape-ladder is still pinned to the wall gives way, the structure shudders and drops six inches --

- 588 -- The eleven men give vent to sounds ranging from whimpers through yells to screams --
- 589 -- And, in the middle of the gray-green cloud, as the Englishman's trousers suddenly come down, Otto Meyer plunges another five feet, where he hangs thoughtfully suspended from one empty leg of Algernon Hawthorne's pants, which he grasps in one hand, and from Culpeper's left ankle, which he grasps, equally firmly, with the other --
- 590 -- While, in the plaza-gardens across the street, under the poplar trees, Monica Crump, who is screaming hysterically as she is buffeted this way and that by the antics of the maddened multitude, is now thrown up against Emmeline Finch, who is screaming hysterically as she is buffeted this way and that by the antics, etc, etc --
- 591 -- And on the far side of the plaza the enormous fire-engine inches its way forward through the great hysterical mob --
- 592 -- And we see that the Chief of Police, the Lieutenant and the Sergeant are among the uniformed men who are trying desperately to get the great ladder-truck through the square --
- 593 -- As another steel rivet tears out of the wall --
- 594 -- And the whole structure drops another six inches --
- 595 -- And the eleven give voice to yet another full-bodied scream --
- 596 -- And, looking down, we can see, a hundred feet below, the milling crowd push and scamper back, leaving a cleared circle twenty feet in diameter directly beneath the screaming men above --
- 597 -- And then the panic-stricken attention of Melville Crump Benjy Benjamin -- and indeed of all the others -- is caught and held by the fact --
- 598 -- That the big fire-engine has almost reached the street below them --
- 599 -- As policemen and firemen force a path for it through the tumultuous throng --

- 600 -- And down by the fire-engine, in the midst of the melee, we hear the frantic exchange: "The net? Can we use the net?" "Too high! The ladder, hurry! Get the ladder up!" --
- 601 -- And high above, the eleven desperate men look down, seeing but not really believing in this chance of salvation--
- 602 -- While beside the fire-engine Mrs. Marcus swings her handbag violently at firemen, screaming: "Hurry! My boy's up there!"
- 603 -- And now, as J. Russell Finch, Melville Crump, the First Cabbie, Lennie Pike, Benjy Benjamin, Sylvester Marcus, Ding Bell, the Second Cabbie, Algernon Hawthorne, Otto Meyer and Culpeper watch, the great rescue-ladder on the big red fire-engine slowly but steadily begins lifting, unfolding in sections like a jackknife, stretching, reaching up, coming closer, straightening, locking into a long perpendicular plane that, stretching up close beside them, merely serves to emphasise how terribly far they are from the ground. Then, far below, a tiny figure in a black uniform and a big black helmet starts climbing up the ladder. Silent now, not even whimpering, the eleven watch. Up and up, growing ever larger, the dark and helmeted figure comes. The eleven stare at him. He gets closer. They see that it is the Chief of the Santa Rosita Fire Department. He comes on, the big ladder beginning to sway gently under his weight as he nears the top. The eleven stare. The Fire Chief is a funny-looking man who inspires no confidence whatever in the hearts of the eleven men or the audience, either. Reaching the very top of the ladder, and being then no more than three feet away from Culpeper and Otto Meyer, the Fire Chief addresses them: "All right now, let's be careful, only one man at a time on the ladder --" It is not so much the fact that the crowd below is making it impossible for them to hear the Fire Chief, it is rather more the fact that at that very instant --
- 604 -- Another rivet tears loose from the wall --
- 605 -- And the fire-escape sags another six inches --
- 606 -- That causes Otto Meyer, Culpeper and Algernon Hawthorne to turn and make a sudden instinctive grab for the topmost rung. Having seized upon it, and being still entangled with the other eight on the fire-escape, those three are unable or unwilling to let go of it despite the fact that the Fire Chief begins screaming hysterically for them to do so. Then, as Benjy Benjamin and the Second Cabbie and then two or three more of the entangled mass begin effecting the switch from the fire-escape to the increasingly confused mass atop the rescue-ladder, the Fire Chief, still screaming in protest, rapidly descends back down the ladder and out of shot --

- 607 -- As, suddenly, all screaming and yelling unintelligibly, all the rest of the eleven make a quick decision, let go of the fire-escape for good and grab hold of the ladder or of somebody else who has managed to grab hold of it --
- 608 -- At which point (and it should be terrifying when seen from below) the hundred-foot ladder, flexing gently through a great arc under a weight for which it was never designed, swings thirty or forty feet away from the building, out over the poplar trees across the street, and back again --
- 609 -- While the eleven men scream --
- 610 -- And the Fire Chief screams --
- 611 -- And Monica Crump screams --
- 612 -- And Emmeline Finch screams --
- 613 -- And all the people scream --
- 614 -- And Mrs. Marcus bellows --
- 615 -- Sways back again, and back, and back again, with all the eleven -- Culpeper, Otto Meyer, Melville Crump, the First Cabbie, Sylvester Marcus, Ding Bell, Benjy Benjamin, Lennie Pike, the Second Cabbie, Algernon Hawthorne, and J. Russell Finch -- hanging on somehow, a hundred feet up, at the very top of it --
- 616 -- Until, stressed beyond endurance, the metal at the very base of the ladder suddenly cracks: and firemen leap out of the way as the base of the ladder breaks away from the fire-truck fitting and crashes to the grounds --
- 617 -- So that for one terrible instant all eleven men are clinging to the top of a hundred foot ladder that remains perpendicular despite the fact that it is completely unsupported at its base --
- 618 -- Until Mrs. Marcus, screaming, "My boy! My boy!" rushes up to it, grabs a couple of rungs, and tries desperately singlehandedly, to keep it standing upright --
- 619 -- The Fire Chief and one or two others rushing up to help her --
- 620 -- The eleven men screaming and screaming --

- 621 -- As the ladder sways --
- 622 OUT.
623 OUT.
- 624 -- And then, whipping up quite a bit of wind noise, topples, falls with the eleven screaming men across the street and bounces down upon the top of one of the poplar trees that border the gardens in the plaza --
- 625 -- Bounces up again, flinging off some bodies, which, as the ladder bounces and the process is repeated a couple of times, are identified as --
- 626 -- Ding Bell and Melville Crump, who, after flying some forty or fifty feet through the air, crash really resoundingly against the side of the adjacent building, whereupon they fall no more than ten feet to a broad concrete cornice just beneath them;
- 627 Otto Meyer and Benjy Benjamin, both of whom come down somewhere in a part of the Plaza that is reserved as a children's playground, Benjy Benjamin being entangled in some swings and Otto Meyer plunging down a slide head-first into a box of sand;
- 628 J. Russell Finch, who having described a somewhat more spectacular trajectory, lands spreadeagled on a beautifully-laid table on a fourth-story balcony of the nearby hotel;
- 629 Lennie Pike and the First Cabbie, who comes plunging down through the branches of the tree atop which the ladder has fallen, with the branches repeatedly and partially breaking their fall as the tree is laid virtually bare;
- 630 Sylvester Marcus, who, having been thrown off at the ladder's second bounce, flies like a human cannonball straight through a sixth floor window of the hotel, crashes to the floor, skids across the bedroom, and drives head first through the bathroom wall --
- 631 Algernon Hawthorne and the Second Cabbie, who, being luckier than some but still not very lucky, chance to fall into the water at the base of the plaza fountains; and
- 632 Culpeper, who, having bounced off last of all, flies backwards, somersaulting several times, through a great arc, only to have

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632 CONTINUED:

his fall fortuitously checked by a flag-pole, which, projecting at an angle from the side of an adjacent building, catches and holds him suspended by the back of his coat. Close on him for one terrible instant; on the crowd below from his horrified eye-line; on him again, as, the material in his coat falling apart as he slips backwards down the pole, he --

632A -- plunges some sixty feet toward the ground --

632B -- lands on a great awning above an entrance below --

632C -- is pitched out across the sidewalk, somersaulting once more --

632D -- and dives headlong into a big metal container. His impact makes a terrible noise. And even as poor Culpeper, except for his feet and ankles, disappears from view the camera is frantically zooming in on the single, simple inscription on the side of the container. It says..... RUBBISH.

633 INT. SANTA ROSITA HOSPITAL. ORTHOPEDIC WARD - DAY

In the dead silence which follows all the tumult and the shouting, the scene begins with a bewildering shot composed of the most elaborate assortment of pulleys, weights and wires; wires which lead down to a suspended leg; a leg which leads to the rest of Benjy Benjamin. Looking unbelievably forlorn, he is so heavily bandaged and encased in so many chunks of plaster that he is scarcely recognisable. After a moment he glances to one side: we see that Sylvester Marcus is if anything in worse condition; he glances idly at someone else nearby: and then, one after another or two or three at a time, we see J. Russell Finch, Ding Bell, Lennie Pike, the First Cabbie, Otto Meyer, Melville Crump, the Second Cabbie and Algernon Hawthorne; all so badly battered and broken, so preposterously suspended by the most incredible array of multiple-traction equipment that it should rend our hearts; and they, when we have had time to react to them all, and to the fact that they have at least survived, we see

633A CULPEPER

However horrifying the total effect of the other ten, Culpeper predicament must somehow succeed in topping it. It is all but unbelievable. Supported in a semi-supine position, he has at least three limbs heavily encased in plaster and various other parts bound up in an astonishing variety of bandage. As the dead silence in the ward continues, Culpeper, absolutely

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633A CONTINUED:

motionless, his features expressing nothing but a kind of pole-axed incredulity, stares vacantly at nothing. Then, in a bed to one side of Culpeper's and nearer the door, there is some small movement. Culpeper's attention is caught by it. He watches as, using his one usable arm, Lennie Pike takes up a banana from a small bowl of fruit on his bedside tray, succeeds in half peeling it, and begins eating the banana slowly with no very thoughtful expression. Then, losing interest in this incident, Culpeper goes back again to staring at nothing. Still the silence stretches (some birdsong or far-off traffic noises merely serving to emphasize it). Then, slowly, significantly, portentously, the camera moves in very very close on Culpeper's features; and at this point, after another few seconds' pause, the faintest suggestion of a smile appears somewhere behind Culpeper's eyes. Just as slowly, it seems to grow. And then, suddenly, almost startlingly in the silence of this ward, Culpeper suddenly chuckles.

Instantly the other ten heads turn as all the others give him their startled attention. Culpeper, continuing to smile, seems oblivious of them all. After a moment:

OTTO MEYER

So what's so funny?

Gradually focussing upon them, Culpeper glances thoughtfully about. All ten of the other seem intent upon his reply. Finally:

CULPEPER

I was just remembering -- when all the reports on you ten were coming in -- I kept saying to myself, they must be idiots. Idiots. And here I am.....

BENJY BENJAMIN

So what's that make you? Another idiot?

CULPEPER

No. You ten are the ones who are idiots. I'm just a crook.....

He smiles, perhaps chuckles, again. The others stare at him thoughtfully. Lennie Pike finishes his banana and tosses the peel at his tray -- but it misses and falls to the floor a few feet from the ward entrance.

LENNIE PIKE

It'll take a lot more than that to get a laugh out of me....

The camera has followed and held upon the banana peel.

633B Instantly, at the other end of a long corridor leading to the ward, a door slams open and Mrs. Marcus appears. Drums. As she comes striding down the corridor we have time to see that she is high up in what even for her is a towering rage. A couple of paces behind her, straggling pathetically and both looking tearful, come Emmeline Finch and Monica Crump. And behind them, Two Police Matrons, escorting them all. From Mrs. Marcus's manner alone we can deduce that this is not the first time the women have been given permission to visit the ward. As she approaches the door Mrs. Marcus steps out even faster, her stride accelerated by her wrath.

633C In the Ward, Culpeper and the other ten look up with varying degrees of dismay as they hear her heavy tread. She enters under full steam. Before she is even through the doorway the magnificent woman, her jaw jutting out and her clenched fist raised before her, has begun her tirade:

MRS. MARCUS

Now, see here --

It is the fall to end all pratfalls, reaching an altitude perhaps, of five-and-a-half or six feet. The whole ward shakes when she hits. Instantly there is one great, incredulous, concerted cackle of laughter. All but crucified in his traction, Culpeper laughs until the tears are streaming from his eyes. Above their heads the fantastically complex jumble of weights and balances and wires jingles and jangles and begins dancing crazily about. The laughter grows, rising louder and louder, more and more hysterically, until it is mad, mad, mad, mad laughter.....

FINAL CURTAIN