

PROD. #01971

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**THE GHOST AND
MR. CHICKEN**

aka

RUNNING SCARED

Final Screenplay

by

JIM FRITZELL and EVERETT GREENBAUM

RUNNING SCAREDCAST

LUTHER HEGGS DON KNOTTS

ALMA PARKER

GEORGE BECKET

POLICE CHIEF ART FULLER

OLLIE WEAVER

MR. KELSEY

CALVER WEEMS

EDNA JUNE WEEMS

BILLY RAY FOX

J. T. BARRINGER

SUSANNA BLUSH

HERKIE

MRS. NATALIE MILLER

MR. DELIGONDO

MRS. HUTCHINSON

MRS. COBB

MR. MILO MAXWELL

EILEEN

MRS. MILO MAXWELL

NICHOLAS SIMMONS

HAROLD WHITLOW

MAN IN RESTAURANT

WAITRESS

CASHIER

KID (small boy)

BUM (at picnic)

BAND LEADER

MAYOR CARLISLE PRESTON

CHARLEY

ELEVATOR MAN

SPECTATOR

SPRINGER

BAILIFF

JUDGE

MISS TREMAINE

GAYLOPD PATIE

WOMAN JUROR AND MAN JUROR

(X)

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RUNNING SCARED

SETS

INTERIORS:

EDSEL SEDAN - PROCESS
POLICE STATION
BOARDING HOUSE UPSTAIRS HALL
LUTHER'S ROOM
BOARDING HOUSE DINING ROOM
NEWSPAPER COMPOSING ROOM
NEWSPAPER OFFICE
LUNCHROOM
BOARDING HOUSE LIVING ROOM
CELLAR IN SIMMONS HOUSE
ENTRY HALL IN SIMMONS HOUSE
STUDY IN SIMMONS HOUSE
ORGAN ROOM IN SIMMONS HOUSE
PIPE ROOM IN SIMMONS HOUSE
BANK
HOTEL ROOM
HOTEL ELEVATOR
HOTEL HALL
COURTROOM

EXTERIORS:

STREET IN FRONT OF SIMMONS HOUSE
POLICE STATION
STREET IN FRONT OF BOARDING HOUSE
MAIN STREET
SIMMONS HOUSE YARD
COURIER-EXPRESS OFFICE
TOWN BANK
TOWN PARK
ALMA'S FRONT PORCH
COURTHOUSE

RUNNING SCARED

FADE IN

1 EXT. TOWN STREET - NIGHT

A set of car headlights lights up a brace of road signs at the entrance to a town. The signs are: RACHEL, KANSAS ROTARY... MONDAY 2 P.M., RACHEL, KANSAS LIONS, FRIDAY 1 P.M., RACHEL KANSAS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, THURSDAY, 1 P.M. The car headlights pick out more signs from the drivers POINT OF VIEW reading: RACHEL, KANSAS...POPULATION 11,002...ELEVATION, 410.

2 EXT. TOWN STREET - NIGHT

Suddenly a flash of lightning illuminates the Simmons Mansion. It is huge, Gothic, replete with towers and cupolas. It sits in the center of a half acre of ground surrounded by a wrought iron speared fence. The town streets are wet.

3 ANOTHER ANGLE - LONG SHOT

A set of car headlights APPEAR in the distance. As they near, we:

4 INT. CAR - NIGHT

LUTHER HEGGS is behind the wheel of an Edsel Sedan. He is a fragile looking man in his early thirties. He's a rather tense figure as he hunches over the wheel. To keep up his courage he is HUMMING a tone deaf rendition of "SLEEPY LAGOON."

5 ANOTHER ANGLE - LUTHER'S POINT OF VIEW

Another flash of lightning illuminates the Simmons Mansion.

6 EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Luther's car pulls to the left side of the street as he passes the mansion. As the car passes OUT of frame, we PICK UP CALVER WEEMS, the town lush, weaving drunkenly as he makes his way along the fence bordering the Simmons place. He's wearing a broad, black and white checkered lumber jacket. Just as Luther's car passes, a two by four flashes from behind a bush. With an ENGLISH COMEDY SOUND EFFECT, it crashes down on Calver's head and he drops to the ground like a sack of wet sand. O.s. we HEAR a woman SCREAM.

7 EXT. SUSANNA BLUSH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

It's located directly across the street from the Simmons Mansion. Susanna, an old biddy, sitting by the second-story window, sees Calver drop. She leans out the open window.

CONTINUED

7 CONTINUED

SUSANNA

Murder! Murder! Help! Murder!

8 EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Luther's brakes lock, the car spins to a stop. When it stops it is still going in the same direction.

9 INT. CAR - NIGHT

Luther looks around nervously. He rolls the window down about two inches and listens.

SUSANNA (o.s.)

Murder! Help! A man's been murdered!

Luther quickly rolls the window back up again. Sitting there for a moment, one can SEE he can't decide whether or not to get involved. He rolls the window down just a crack this time.

SUSANNA (o.s.)

Help! Help!

He decides to go back.

10 EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Luther makes a wild U-turn, backing into a tree, hitting a fence, knocking over trash cans on the sidewalk. Back on the street he zig zags back to the scene of the so-called crime.

11 ANOTHER ANGLE

Susanna is running from her house to the victim as Luther arrives. She is a ridiculous figure in her nightgown, umbrella and goulashes. Luther nearly hits her as she runs across the street. He slams on the brakes and spins again. Luther springs from his car, flipping a press card out of his breast pocket so it hangs on the outside of his jacket. He starts toward Susanna, then remembers something, hurries back to his car, gets a Speed Graphic camera. He again starts for Susanna and the fallen body, only to remember something else. He runs back to his car, taking out a leather pack of camera accessories. He crosses once again to Susanna and the body, but is reluctant to get too close to the body.

CONTINUED

11 CONTINUED

SUSANNA

It's Calver Weems! He's dead! He's
been murdered!

Luther starts nervously getting his camera ready for a shot.
He pulls out the camera nervously....

LUTHER

(excitedly...shaking)
Don't panic! Don't panic!

Luther fishes a flashbulb from his bag and starts to insert
it in the camera.

SUSANNA

Oh, Luther! Luther, it was terrible!
He was walking along, when bang!
Right on the head, with THAT!

She points to a two by four on the ground. Luther jumps when
she emphasizes "with that," dropping the flashbulb on the
sidewalk. The "POP" makes both of them jump.

LUTHER

Did you see who did it?

SUSANNA

No! It was just bang! Right on
the head, with that!

Luther is digging out another flashbulb now. He starts to
focus.

LUTHER

F-four...no...no...F-two...wait a
minute, wait a minute...

(looks up at the sky)
Let's see...dark...raining....

He sets the lense and starts to line up the shot. Susanna is
standing between him and the body.

LUTHER

Susanna, please! Now step back...
and don't touch anything...it's
all evidence.

SUSANNA

He was walking along when bang!...
right on the head!

CONTINUED

11 CONTINUED - 2

Luther shoots a picture. He reaches around to remove the spent bulb burning his hand. The bulb drops to the sidewalk with a POP! Susanna and Luther both jump.

LUTHER

The murder weapon.

He inserts another bulb.

Luther leans down and takes a closeup of the two by four. Susanna leans down beside him at his level.

SUSANNA

(yelling in his ear)

Bang! Right on the head! I was going to brush my teeth and watch Lawrence Welk, when I looked out the window and BANG!

Luther jumps with that last bang! He is on the verge of hysteria, himself.

LUTHER

For heaven's sake, Susanna, pull yourself together! Now look, I'm going down to the police station.

He starts for his car, Susanna at his side.

LUTHER

You get on the phone and call my editor.

SUSANNA

Who?

LUTHER

George Becket! Tell him to get down to the police station as soon as possible. And whatever you do, Susanna, keep your head.

Luther turns quickly and runs right into his car with a loud, metallic THOMP. Luther recoils from the bump, opens the car door to get in.

SUSANNA

I don't want to stay here alone.

CONTINUED

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11 CONTINUED - 3

Luther gets in the car. The door is still open.

LUTHER

I told you to get in the house and
call Mr. Becket. Now go!

Susanna excitedly SLAMS the door on Luther's hand. She runs
across to her house as Luther sits there suffering. He spins
his wheels making a wild U-turn and heads down the street.

DISSOLVE TO

12 EXT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Luther pulls up in his Edsel. He skids a bit on the wet
pavement. He jumps out of his car. In running for the
station entrance he slips on some wet leaves almost going down.
OLLIE WEAVER, the reporter on the newspaper, a man in his
early thirties, comes running up the street as Luther's about
to enter the police station.

OLLIE

Hey, Heggs! Wait a minute!

LUTHER

What are you doing here, Ollie?

Luther stops...Ollie comes up to him. He sees the PRESS tag.
He puts it back in Luther's pocket.

OLLIE

The price tag on your suit's hanging
out.

Luther determinedly pulls the PRESS tag back out.

LUTHER

That's my press card and you know it.

OLLIE

Becket called. What's up?

LUTHER

I've got a story...that's what's up.

Ollie sticks the press tag back in Luther's pocket.

OLLIE

If there's a story I'll handle it.

Luther turns and walks quickly into the station.

13 INT. STATION - NIGHT

It's a typical police station, sparse institutional type furniture. Police Chief ART FULLER, a middle-aged, heavy set man, is seated at his desk, reading. Two LOAFERS, BILLY RAY FOX and J. T. BARRINGER are seated at a small table quietly playing checkers. They're men in their early forties. Luther ENTERS excitedly, Ollie at his heels.

OLLIE

You set type, little man, I'll
do the writing.

They APPROACH the Chief. Luther takes out another PRESS card SLAMMING it down on the desk. The Chief jumps ---

CHIEF FULLER

(impatient)

Aw, Luther.

LUTHER

(up...excitedly)

Chief, you better get somebody out
to the Simmons place! I got the
pictures and everything! I was
coming down the street...I was coming
down the street.

FULLER

(softly)

Now, wait a minute, Luther. Just
calm down. Now give it to me from
the beginning. Nice and slow.

The loafers forget their game to listen.

LUTHER

(up...excited...fast)

I was comin' down the street....

FULLER

(calmly)

Too fast.

OLLIE

Yeah, cool it, sport.

He takes a big shaky breath, trying to calm himself.

FULLER

What happened, Luther?

CONTINUED

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7

13

CONTINUED

LUTHER

Well, I was comin' down the
street ---

GEORGE BECKET, the newspaper's editor and owner ENTERS. He's
a young attractive man in his early thirties.

BECKET

What's up? I got this call from
Susanna Blush...two-by-fours...
Calver Weems...Lawrence Welk....

LUTHER

I got a real scoop, Mr Becket.
Pictures and everything.

OLLIE

(to Becket)

I've been trying to get the story
from Walter Cronkite here, but he
won't give.

BECKET

(to Fuller)

What's this all about?

FULLER

(shrugs...

sighs)

I don't know. He's so keyed up.

BECKET

(turning to

Luther)

All right now, calm down.

LUTHER

(angrily)

Calm? Calm? Do murder and calm
go together? Calm and murder?
Murder?

BECKET

Murder?

LUTHER

Murder!

CONTINUED

13 CONTINUED - 2

The two loafers intrigued get up from their game, joining the group. Everybody's very interested now.

BECKET

All right, let's have it, Luther.

Having gotten their attention, Luther calms down.

LUTHER

Well, I was out on Warren Harding Road. I had just passed the old Simmons Mansion when I heard this scream..."Help! Help! Murder!"

J. T. BARRINGER

Murder?

LUTHER

Murder! Quick as a flash I whipped the Edsel around and sped back. I jumped out of my car and there it was. Do I have to tell you how I felt when I saw it?

OLLIE

(angrily)

Saw what?

LUTHER

The dead body of Calver Weems! He'd been bludgeoned to death by a board!

FULLER

I better get a man out there right away.

Fuller turns to the wall behind him.

FULLER

(yells)

Herkie!

HERKIE'S VOICE ANSWERS indistinguishable from o.s.

FULLER

Get out here! On the double!

CONTINUED

13 CONTINUED - 3

Again Herkie answers from many rooms away, indistinguishable.

OLLIE
(making notes)
Did you actually see it happen?

LUTHER
No. Susanna Blush saw it. Eye
witness.

FULLER
Susanna Blush.

LUTHER
She lives right across the street. Eye
witness.

BECKET
Was she out on the street?

LUTHER
Saw it from her upstairs window.
Eye witness.

OLLIE
You said that, Sonny.

FULLER
You actually saw the murder weapon,
Luther?

LUTHER
Yeah, a two by four. Got a picture
of it.

FULLER
(up)
Herkie!

O.s. WE HEAR a muffled reply from Herkie. Now Calver Weems,
weaving drunkenly and holding a handkerchief to his bruised
head, ENTERS with his wife, EDNA JUNE WEEMS, a tight-faced
embittered woman. There are blood stains on his checkered
lumber jacket.

BECKET
Did you get pictures of the body,
Luther?

LUTHER
Left, right profile...head on.

BECKET
Fine.

CONTINUED

13 CONTINUED - 4

Now Calver and his wife come up behind Luther.

CALVER

What's up?

Irritated, Luther turns.

LUTHER

Look, don't bother us now, Calver.
We've got a murder on our hands.

(takes)

Calver!!! What are you doing
here? You're dead!

OLLIE

I knew it! I knew it!

BECKET

(to Fuller)

Sorry, chief.

LUTHER

I saw you layin' there!

EDNA JUNE

I want this drunken bum thrown
in the tank.

CALVER

Throw me in the tank? She's the
one who hit me! With a board
that thick!

Luther sticks his face close to Calver's.

LUTHER

Are you trying to make a fool out
of me?

OLLIE

You don't need much help, scoop.

FULLER

(handing Edna
the keys)

Put him in number three, Edna
June.

LUTHER

(to Calver)

You're dead!

CONTINUED

13 CONTINUED - 5

CALVER

I am not.

LUTHER

I saw you!

CALVER

You did not!

LUTHER

I did, too!

CALVER

You did not!

LUTHER

(up...angrily)

Did!

CALVER

(up...angrily)

Didn't!

LUTHER

Did!

CALVER

Didn't!

LUTHER

Did!

CALVER

Didn't!

FULLER

Awright! Awright, you two, that's enough.

Edna June takes Calver by the arm to lead him away.

EDNA JUNE

Come on, loved one.

Edna June leads Calver away. Luther is flushed with anger.

LUTHER

(pleading...to others)

I've got the pictures, and everything.

Edna June opens the back door and she and Calver EXIT.

CONTINUED

13 CONTINUED - 6

Becket is shaking his head slowly, looking at Luther. The two loafers start giggling a little. One with a kind of a wheezy laugh. Becket puts his hand on Luther's arm. Ollie shakes head in disgust.

BECKET

(kindly...but
had it)

Luther, from now on let Ollie and me run the paper and write the stories. You just set the type. All right?

LUTHER

But I was sure ---

BECKET

Good night, Luther.

OLLIE

Nice work, scoops.

The two loafers really cackle at Ollie's line. Becket and Ollie EXIT. Luther throws an angry look at the loafers. Lots of heavy sighs from Fuller as he puts away the form and puts his desk in order. Luther starts out. The loafers, giggling, follow Luther. The three of them EXIT. Now Herkie, a rather beefy deputy, ENTERS from the back.

HERKIE

I'm ready, chief.

Fuller spins in his swivel chair and looks up at Herkie.

FULLER

Herkie, you've got to be the slowest man alive.

14 POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Luther is crossing the sidewalk to his car. Billy Ray and J. T. right behind him laughing.

J.T.

Scoop.

BILLY RAY

Haw.

CONTINUED

14 CONTINUED

J. T.
Calver looked so natural.

Luther burns.

BILLY RAY
I better get me a new suit for the
funeral.

They stifle giggles. Luther seethes.

J. T.
Wonder who done him in.

BILLY RAY
I don't know. Can't wait to read
the morning paper and find out.

They both break up. Luther's had it. He turns around,
taking a karate stance.

LUTHER
You two just watch it! These hands
are as hard as steel!

J. T.
Hey, look at him, Billy Ray. He's
a karate champeen. We better watch
ourselves.

They laugh again, taunting Luther. Luther's breath is coming
short as he controls his temper. Luther takes a couple of
karate slashes at the air. Billy Ray and J. T. step closer
to him.

BILLY RAY
Go ahead, Luther.

J. T.
Yeah, go ahead. Start something.

Luther tightens up...a bit frightened now.

LUTHER
(pauses, then)
Why don't you run up an alley and
holler fish!

With that Luther quickly gets in his car, rolls up the window
and locks the doors. Billy Ray and J. T. turn and head down
the street.

J. T.
(as they fade)
Extra! Extra! Calver Weems murdered!

They both giggle as we....

DISSOLVE TO

15 EXT. TOWN STREET - DAY

WE PAN a milk truck up the street making door to door deliveries. It stops at an old two-story, wood frame house, in front of which is a sign reading: NATALIE MILLER...ROOM AND BOARD.

DISSOLVE TO

16
and
17 OMITTED

18 INT. BOARDING HOUSE DINING ROOM - DAY

Around a food-laden, huge dining table sit the tenants. MR. DELIGONDO, a man about sixty-five...Ollie, and two elderly ladies, MRS. HUTCHINSON and MRS. COBB. Mrs. Miller is at coffee urn on a separate table, filling coffee cups. Ollie is relating last night's incident.

OLLIE

Then, all of a sudden, in walks Calver Weems. And Luther says to him. "What are you doing here...? You're dead."

The ladies laugh lightly.

MRS. COBB

We shouldn't laugh.

They laugh again a little.

MRS. HUTCHINSON

We really shouldn't.

More snickering.

19 INT. HALL STAIRS - DAY

Luther coming down. He stops when he HEARS the laughter.

OLLIE (o.s.).

He took a closeup of the two-by-four. Can you imagine that?? What an idiot!

Luther takes a big breath, braces himself and continues on down and ENTERS the dining room.

20 INT. DINING ROOM

Luther ENTERS. The ladies and Mr. Deligondo busy themselves with their food.

LUTHER

Good morning, everybody.

The ladies smile and nod. Deligondo keeps eating.

OLLIE

Morning, scoop.

Luther takes a seat. Mrs. Miller is sitting now. Luther helps himself to some food. There is an embarrassed silence for a moment.

MRS. HUTCHINSON

(pause; then)

A person is never dead 'til his pulse is stopped, Luther.

Luther sighs...nods...he'd rather not hear about it anymore. He sits down between Mrs. Cobb and Mrs. Hutchinson.

MRS. COBB

Do you know how to take a pulse, Luther? You place your forefinger and your middle finger on the palm side of the dead person's wrist.

LUTHER

I know, Mrs. Cobb.

MRS. COBB

(goes right on)

Don't use your thumb or you'll be taking your own pulse.

OLLIE

Oh, uh...Mr. Ace Reporter, pass the marmalade, please.

LUTHER

(under)

Lay off, will ya, Ollie.

Luther passes the marmalade.

MRS. MILLER

Enough is enough, Oliver. I don't blame Luther one iota. If I saw someone laying in front of that spooky old Simmons place I'd think he was dead, too.

CONTINUED

20 CONTINUED

MRS. HUTCHINSON
It's a murder house. I wouldn't
go near there for a hundred dollars.

MRS. COBB
I wouldn't go near there for two
hundred.

MRS. HUTCHINSON
Three hundred!

MRS. COBB
(angrily)
Four!

MRS. HUTCHINSON
(angrily)
Five!

Mrs. Hutchinson's back is to Mr. Deligondo. He seizes the
opportunity to snatch her hard-boiled egg.

MRS. COBB
Six!

MRS. MILLER
Ladies, ladies, please!

MRS. HUTCHINSON
Anyway, it's a murder house.

MRS. COBB
(knowingly)
Murder and suicide, murder and
suicide.

MRS. HUTCHINSON
Seven!

MRS. MILLER
Thank the good Lord, they're finally
tearing that place down.

MRS. HUTCHINSON
Tearing it down?

OLLIE
Uh huh. Ephraim Simmons' nephew
came to town two days ago.

MRS. COBB
Nicholas.

CONTINUED

20 CONTINUED - 2

MRS. HUTCHINSON

Nick.

MRS. COBB

Eight!

OLLIE

Anyway, he's finally getting the will probated. I hear he's going to bulldoze it to the ground.

MRS. MILLER

Didn't they question him about the murder at the time?

OLLIE

He was cleared.

MRS. HUTCHINSON

I never liked his eyes. So dark.

MRS. COBB

(knowingly)

He had blue eyes.

MRS. HUTCHINSON

Dark eyes.

MRS. COBB

Blue.

MRS. HUTCHINSON

Dark.

MRS. COBB

Blue!

MRS. HUTCHINSON

(pause...burns)

Nine!

MRS. MILLER

Really!

MRS. COBB

All the Simmonses had the Simmons eyes.

O.s. WE HEAR a car horn. Mrs. Miller gets up and crosses to a window on the street side. She pulls back the curtain.

MRS. MILLER

It's Alma, Ollie.

CONTINUED

20 CONTINUED - 3

OLLIE

Tell her I'll be right out.

Luther comes alert at the mention of Alma's name. Mrs. Miller opens the window.

MRS. MILLER

Morning, Alma.

ALMA (o.s.)

Morning, Mrs. Miller.

MRS. MILLER

(up...out the
window)

He's still eating, Alma! Come on
in for some coffee!

21 EXT. HOUSE - DAY

ALMA PARKER, an attractive young lady of twenty-six is sitting in a used convertible. The engine is running.

ALMA

(up...to house)

No thanks, Mrs. Miller. I'll wait
out here and get some sun.

22 INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

Mrs. Miller at the window.

MRS. MILLER

As you wish, dear. Love your print!

ALMA (o.s.)

Thank you. Got it at Belson's.

Mrs. Miller comes away from the window.

MRS. HUTCHINSON

Three ninety-five.

MRS. COBB

She's an awful sweet girl.

OLLIE

Yeah, she's a good kid.

Luther gets up to go to the percolator for more coffee. He works his way by the window and steals a glance at Alma. Then he turns and looks enviously at Ollie. Stealing another look at Alma, Luther puts down his cup and while the others continued talking, he makes his way surreptitiously to the front door. As Luther GOES....

22 CONTINUED

(This is cover dialogue for the above).

MRS. COBB

My niece, Malva, bought one of Belson's prints. It's red with yellow flowers across the ---

(lowers her voice
for Mrs. Hutchinson)

Bosoms.

When she did this she again turned her back on Mr. Deligondo, who quickly snitches a piece of her toast. By now Luther is gone. They eat for a beat in silence.

MRS. MILLER

To this day, I'll never understand why old Mr. Simmons murdered his wife.

MRS. HUTCHINSON

Everybody knows Ephraim was crazy.

MRS. COBB

They all had cold eyes with thin lids.

23 EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Luther walks out of the house casually, toward Alma's car. Alma is sitting with her head on the back of the seat, face to the sun. Her eyes are closed. Luther, toe in the dirt, all the way up the walk, makes his way to her car. He stands there staring at this lovely girl for almost a minute. He thinks she's just great. She stirs and her eyes open halfway, then realizing he's there, opens them fully and turns.

ALMA

Oh! Good morning. Luther.

LUTHER

(clears throat...
nervously)

Alma.

ALMA

I didn't hear you come up.

LUTHER

(clears throat...)

Oh...I uh....

(kicks the sidewalk)

I was just a....

(clears throat)

How're you doing?

CONTINUED

23 CONTINUED

ALMA

Fine, thank you. I just love
the sun, don't you?

LUTHER

Oh, yeah...I ---
(looks into sun...
blinks his eyes)

She catches him looking at her.

LUTHER

I've always liked the sun.

Alma is slightly amused at Luther.

ALMA

How's everything down at the paper?

LUTHER

Oh, okay, I guess. But I suppose
Ollie keeps you pretty well filled
in on what goes on.

ALMA

Ollie doesn't tell me much about his
work. Tells me a lot about himself,
though.

Luther tries to laugh...kind of snorts softly. There's a
moment of awkwardness now...Luther not knowing what to say.

LUTHER

(pause)
Love your print.

ALMA

Thank you, Luther.

LUTHER

Mrs. Cobb's niece, Malva, bought
one of Belson's prints. It's red
with yellow flowers across ---
(trails off
embarrassed)

There's another awkward pause...Luther, not knowing what to do
with his hands, leans on the car. He recoils as the sun heated
metal burns his fingers.

LUTHER

Boy, that sun really beats ---

Alma, seeing Ollie come out of the house past Luther's shoulder,
doesn't hear Luther.

CONTINUED

23 CONTINUED - 2

ALMA

Hi, Ollie.

LUTHER

(trailing off...
turning)

...down on a metal car and ---

Luther just drops it as Ollie comes up to the car.

OLLIE

Morning, Sugar. You look like a
million bucks.

Luther's lip curls a shade as Ollie gets in the car. Alma
starts the motor.

OLLIE

Hey, Luther, Calver Weems said not
to tell anybody he's dead until he
says so.

Ollie laughs. Alma looks confused. They drive AWAY.

24 EXT. BOARDING HOUSE - DAY

Luther is still standing there watching them drive down the
street. He walks to his own car, now. On it someone has
printed PRESS in the dust. Luther burns in silence. He
starts to wipe it off. He burns a bit then gets in his car,
angrily slamming the door. He starts it up and drives down
the street in a hurry, as we....

DISSOLVE TO

24-A EXT. NEWSPAPER OFFICE - DAY

Sign reads: "RACHEL-COURIER-EXPRESS"

DISSOLVE TO

25 INT. NEWSPAPER COMPOSING ROOM - DAY

It's a dark room in the basement of the paper. One sidewalk
level window gives it a thin stream of sunlight. Luther is
at the composing table filling type boxes, setting up a page.
MR. KELSEY, a weird-looking old man is busily sweeping the
room. On occasion he looks over at Luther sympathetically.
Whenever Mr. Kelsey makes a move he sweeps his way to wher-
ever he's going. One gets the feeling he sweeps his way
through life.

CONTINUED

25

CONTINUED

LUTHER

(as he works)

I don't know. You try, you try
and you try and what do you get?
Heartaches!

KELSEY

Now wait a minute, Luther. You
didn't do so bad. Your pictures
turned out nice, you had a good
murder going there. Only trouble
with it was nobody got killed.

LUTHER

Mr. Boob.

(spells)

B-double O-B...boob!

KELSEY

You know why you thought you saw
a murder out there, Luther? 'Cause
that's a murder nouse!

LUTHER

Well, they can't tear it down too
soon for me.

KELSEY

Tearing it down? Who's tearing
it down?

LUTHER

Nick Simmons.

KELSEY

But he can't do that without the
bank okaying it. He don't have
clear title to that property.
The bank's got a lien on it.

LUTHER

Guess he's gettin' that all cleared
up.

KELSEY

He's here in town, huh?

LUTHER

Yeah.

Kelsey sweeps his way a few feet from Luther preoccupied with
the news that the Simmons house is being torn down. Kelsey
shakes his head, then sweeps even further away from Luther.
He's in deep thought. Luther works busily. Suddenly a door
opens from above, showing a shaft of light. Ollie comes
down about four or five steps.

25 CONTINUED

OLLIE

Oh, Mr. News! We need an item for
a three-inch filler.

Ollie goes back UP, closing the door. Luther burns.

LUTHER

(under)

Mr. News. I'll fill him some day.

Luther takes a karate stance and does a couple of chops.
Then he steps to a small file cabinet and starts thumbing
through some cards.

LUTHER

Filler...filler...three inches.

Kelsey has swept his way closer to Luther now. He's still
on the Simmons place..

KELSEY

So little Nick is finally getting
his way, eh?

Luther has found a filler and is setting it up to copy.

LUTHER

(turning)

What'd you say, Mr. Kelsey?

Luther starts to set some type.

KELSEY

You know, I was working there at
the time of the murder.

LUTHER

Yeah?

KELSEY

I was the gardener.

LUTHER

Oh?

KELSEY

(mysterioso)

Young Mrs. Simmons was a beautiful,
beautiful woman. Sparkling black
eyes and alabaster skin.

Luther is hooked.

CONTINUED

25 CONTINUED - 3

KELSEY

The old man was crazy jealous.
You know, Luther, it was just twenty
years ago this week, they were both
found dead.

LUTHER

This week?

Luther pulls back, bumping his hanging light with his head.
It continues to swing, casting eerie shadows as Kelsey talks.

KELSEY

(nods)

They say what happened was this.
The two of them was in the master
bedroom arguing. He was in a
jealous rage. Suddenly, he became
violent...stabbed her right in the
throat. They never did find out
what with. Then he went completely
loco. He ran up into the tower,
blood drippin' from his hands, and
played that pipe organ of his.

Luther shudders.

KELSEY

It was midnight, Luther, and he sat
there playing and laughing and
screaming to beat the band. When
the music reached its peak, he
suddenly jumped up screaming and
threw hisself out the window...
splat!

Luther jumps slightly.

KELSEY

(lowers his voice...
closer to Luther)

They say the ghost of old man
Simmons still climbs the tower and
plays the organ at midnight.

Luther just sits there in silence. Suddenly the upstairs
door opens. Ollie APPEARS.

OLLIE

(UP)

Luther!!

Luther jumps ten feet.

LUTHER

Aaaaaaaah!!!

CONTINUED

25 CONTINUED - 4

OLLIE

Let's have that filler!!

The door closes.

LUTHER

(still shaky trying to
pull himself together)
I don't uh...believe in ghosts...
particularly.

Luther prepares to go to work. Kelsey is in deep thought.

KELSEY

Got an idea how you can write a
story for the paper.

LUTHER

How?

KELSEY

That filler. I think folks'd be
interested in reading about the
Simmons case again -- it bein' the
20th Anniversary and all.

LUTHER

You mean write my own story instead
of usin' a standard filler?

KELSEY

Sure.

LUTHER

You think I dare do that?

KELSEY

(close to Luther)
'Course you do. Know why?

Luther shakes his head tensely.

KELSEY

You've got spunk.

Luther thinks for a moment...straightens up....

LUTHER

I get that from my mother. She
had plenty of spunk.

Luther prepares to set type. Kelsey looks over his shoulder,
talking in Luther's ear.

CONTINUED

25 CONTINUED - 5

KELSEY

(softly)

It was twenty years ago come this Tuesday, when -- the bodies of Mr. and Mrs. Simmons were found ---

DISSOLVE TO

26 EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Becket is walking down the street, his newspaper under his arm. He's in front of the newspaper office when he runs into MRS. MAXWELL, an older club woman type.

MRS. MAXWELL

(excitedly)

Oh, Mr. Becket, Mr. Becket! It's wonderful! The whole town's talking about it.

BECKET

Oh, hello, Mrs. Maxwell.

MRS. MAXWELL

Oh, that article on the old Simmons mansion...just delicious.

BECKET

Well, thank you. I've had a lot of nice comment on it.

MRS. MAXWELL

You know, my group and I have always felt that there's a very active spirit life in that old house.

BECKET

Spooks?

MRS. MAXWELL

We prefer manifestations. Must run...keep up the good work.

Mrs. Maxwell LEAVES. Becket turns and ENTERS newspaper office.

26-A INT. NEWSPAPER OFFICE - DAY

Ollie is sitting at a typewriter batting out copy as Becket ENTERS.

BECKET

Say, Ollie, good reaction to the story on the Simmons place. Do more on it.

OLLIE

Do more? I haven't done anything on it yet. Nick Simmons won't even see me.

26 CONTINUED

BECKET

(pointing out the
article)

You mean you didn't write this?

Ollie quickly reads the article. He shakes his head.

OLLIE

This isn't mine. My idea was the
passing of a landmark.

BECKET

Well, if you didn't write it and I
didn't write it, who did?

Kelsey has eased over, still sweeping. He coughs consciously
a couple of times. Ollie and Becket turn to him.

BECKET

Do you know something about this,
Mr. Kelsey?

KELSEY

About what, Mr. Becket? I wasn't
following the conversation.

Ollie and Becket exchange glances. Becket taps the paper.

BECKET

This.

Kelsey takes a look at the paper.

KELSEY

Ohhh, you mean the Luther Heggs
story.

OLLIE

(snapping his fingers,
points to Becket)

Luther!

Becket and Kelsey give Ollie a look.

OLLIE

I should've known this was Luther's
work.

(looks at paper)

Get this..."The horribleness and
awfulness of it will never be
actually forgotten." Ugh!

CONTINUED

BECKET

Look, tomorrow night is the twentieth anniversary of the murder-suicide. We oughta capitalize on it. You know, with a fresh approach.

KELSEY (under)

I think somebody ought to spend the anniversary night in the house.

OLLIE

(snapping fingers)

I got an idea. Let somebody spend the anniversary night in the house.

BECKET

Great, great.

OLLIE

Leave it to me. I'll get in there just before midnight....

BECKET

No, no...not you, Ollie. What we need is somebody with a wild imagination...someone who's a bit of a coward...a little superstitious.

Kelsey crosses to the cellar door and opens it.

KELSEY

(calling...up)

LUTHER, YOU ALL RIGHT??

LUTHER (o.s.)

I'm fine.

Ollie and Becket look at one another.

BECKET

Of course...Luther.

OLLIE

But he can't write.

BECKET

You'll help him.

Becket and Ollie cross to the cellar door. Behind them marches Kelsey, happily using his broom as a band leader's baton. He twirls it if possible. Becket opens the door.

27 INT. CELLAR PRESSROOM - DAY

Ollie, Becket and Kelsey ENTER and start down the stairs.
Luther is at work at the typesetting bench.

BECKET

Luther?

LUTHER

(timorously)

Yes, sir???

BECKET

Congratulations on that filler.
Great story.

They come up alongside Luther.

LUTHER

Well, thank you, Mr. Becket. I
was hoping you wouldn't mind.

BECKET

We're going to do a follow-up.
Front page lead. And you're going
to write it.

LUTHER

A by-line? For me? Golly, I, I ---

BECKET

Do you believe in ghosts?

LUTHER

(chuckles confidently)

You ought to know better than to
ask that, Chief.

BECKET

Do haunted houses scare you?

LUTHER

They're mortar, stone and wood.

Becket and Ollie exchange glances.

BECKET

Good, because you're going to
spend the murder night in the
Simmons house...alone..

LUTHER

Uh...well, now...just a second...
I uh...welll ---

CONTINUED

27 CONTINUED

OLLIE

What's the matter, Ace? Scared?

LUTHER

No, no...it's just I uh...I mean that I've gotta check my bowling schedule and everything.

BECKET

Well, you think it over. Let us know tomorrow.

Becket and Ollie head UPSTAIRS. Luther shakily watches them go and then turns to Kelsey with a sickly smile.

KELSEY

This is a great chance for you, Luther.

LUTHER

(weakly)

Yeah.

Kelsey sees Luther's worried.

KELSEY

Why don't you go out there tonight and just look it over?

LUTHER

Yeah, maybe I will. After all, it's only mortar.

KELSEY

Stone....

LUTHER

Stone. And uh ---

KELSEY

And wood.

LUTHER

And wood.

Luther tenses up as we:

DISSOLVE TO

28 EXT. SIMMONS HOUSE - NIGHT

It's a windy night and the trees around the old place are creaking as the wind bends the branches. The wind blows a crumpled newspaper from the gate of the house down on the sidewalk. PAN with the paper 'til it crosses the street and blows against a pair of shoes around the corner of a building. The FEET kick the paper free. OPEN THE SHOT to reveal Luther peering around a building at the Simmons' house. He stares at the house as if weighing an adversary. He decides to venture OUT.

28-A ANOTHER ANGLE - LONG SHOT

From the other side WE SEE Luther, a lonely figure, venturing to the curb preparatory to crossing.

28-B ANOTHER ANGLE - MED. SHOT

Luther starts WHISTLING to keep up his courage. He starts to step off the curb to cross, then changes his mind. He makes a few false starts. Now he takes a big breath and decides to cross. Just then a CAT runs behind him and, MEOWING loudly. Luther panics, runs across the street backing into a tree directly in front of the Simmons' house. He gets tangled in a branch. Thinking he's been grabbed, he turns and starts swinging karate chops wildly. Realizing he's hitting a tree branch he momentarily calms down. Suddenly HE HEARS FOOTSTEPS APPROACHING. He ducks behind the tree and waits. The FOOTSTEPS STOP. There is a beat...then slowly Luther peeks out from behind the tree again. He's quite tense. Again WE HEAR THE FOOTSTEPS. Luther ducks back. As he moves, he PDPS A TWIG. WE HEAR THE FOOTSTEPS quickly approach the tree. They STOP. We want to give the impression with SOUND there is someone on the opposite side of the tree from Luther. Luther stands there tensely for a moment. His hands come up karate style. He is frozen in terror. Now he decides to check the other side of the tree. He moves around slowly. No one's there. Then he moves on around the tree some more. Still no one. He decides it must have been his imagination and relaxes. He heaves a big sigh, then turns back to his original spot. Suddenly he is confronted with the looming figure and swarthy face of NICHOLAS SIMMONS.

LUTHER

Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah!!

CONTINUED

28-B CONTINUED

Simmons is just staring at him. Luther stands there shaking in silence. Finally he has enough courage to speak. Luther extends his hand.

LUTHER
(extending his hand)
Luther Heggs.

SIMMONS
Nicholas Simmons. What are you
doing in front of my house?

LUTHER
Oh...well...I uh....
(swallows hard)
What are you asking for it?

SIMMONS
It's not for sale. I'm tearing it
down.

LUTHER
Oh...well...uh...guess I'll just
have to build.

With that Luther turns on his heel and runs down the street
as we....

FADE OUT

FADE IN

29 EXT. COURIER - DAY - EXPRESS OFFICE

Luther comes OUT the door onto the street. He's carrying a large envelope. Becket APPEARS in the door behind Luther.

BECKET

Make sure you catch the twelve o'clock pickup with that.

LUTHER

Right, chief.

Luther starts on down the street. He sees Alma head toward the lunchroom. They almost collide, from the opposite direction.

LUTHER

Oh, I'm sorry!

ALMA

Hello, Luther.

LUTHER

Going to lunch?

ALMA

Yes, I'm on my way to lunch.

LUTHER

Oh, going to have lunch eh?

ALMA

(smiles)

Yes.

LUTHER

What time is it?

ALMA

(looking at
her watch)

Twelve o'clock.

LUTHER

Oh, that's lunch time all right.

There is an awkward pause. (Alma is amused.)

ALMA

Why don't we have lunch together?

CONTINUED

29 CONTINUED

LUTHER

Oh, yes! I have to mail this right away for Mr. Becket.

ALMA

I'll go in and get us a booth. I'll order for you. What would you like?

LUTHER

Chicken noodle soup.

ALMA

I'll see you in a minute.

Alma ENTERS the restaurant as Luther runs down the street to the mailbox, almost knocking down anyone in his path. He drops the envelope in the mailbox. A man is standing there. Luther turns to him, excited.

LUTHER

I'm having chicken noodle soup!!

Luther runs back to the restaurant. Man does a take.

30 INT. LUNCHROOM - DAY

It is very crowded. He spots Alma in a two-person booth she is sharing with another man. Luther makes his way to her. He looks a bit confused seeing this man. The man is a burly truck-driver type.

ALMA

This was the only booth, Luther. This gentleman is just about finished.

MAN

I'm almost up to my jello.

Luther gives the man an embarrassed nod and smile. The man just looks. (LUTHER, UNABLE TO SIT, PLAYS THIS ENTIRE SCENE STANDING AWKWARDLY AT THE TABLE.) He stands there awkwardly for a moment.

LUTHER

(shyly)

Uh...did you happen to read yesterday's paper?

CONTINUED

30

CONTINUED

ALMA

Uh huh.

LUTHER

(smiles a bit,
then)

What'd you think of it?

ALMA

What do you mean?

LUTHER

The story on the Simmons place.

ALMA

Oh, yes, I did see that.

LUTHER

That was my story.

ALMA

Really? I didn't know you were a
reporter. I thought you were...uh
...a...uh...typesetter.

LUTHER

I am now. Just background. I'm
working my way up.

ALMA

I see.

LUTHER

Oh...yeah...I uh...I've got a
certificate from the Kansas City
Correspondence College of Journalism.
Rafe Henderson came out of there you
know.

ALMA

Oh? Who's Rafe Henderson?

LUTHER

He covered that famous dead whale
story where that whale washed up on
the beach at San Francisco?

(distastefully)

Laid there for three weeks.

CONTINUED

The man at the booth has hesitated with a bite of food half way up to his mouth. He is staring at Luther. Luther turns to him.

LUTHER

I'm sorry.

The waitress ENTERS with a coke, a tuna sandwich and a bowl of soup. She places the coke and sandwich in front of Alma then looks around. She then takes man's plate, sets jello before him.

WAITRESS

Who gets the soup?

LUTHER

Yours truly.

She makes some room on the already crowded table and sets the soup in front of Luther. Alma notices his plight.

ALMA

Can you manage?

LUTHER

Oh, sure.

Alma starts to eat. Luther tries to eat the chicken soup with noodles throughout the scene. He has great difficulty getting it up to his mouth.

ALMA

I didn't know you wanted to be a full-time reporter.

LUTHER

Yeah. I guess I've just got printers ink in my veins.

ALMA

Like Ollie.

Luther burns a little.

LUTHER

I suppose so.

CONTINUED

30 CONTINUED - 3

ALMA

Have any more assignments?

LUTHER

As a matter of fact...

(Luther looks at the
man...who has stopped
eating to listen)

It's very possible something big's
about to break.

Luther turns away from the guy a little and lowers his voice
confidentially to Alma.

LUTHER

Don't uh...mention this to anybody.

Alma shakes her head. The man leans a little closer.

LUTHER

But, I may do a follow-up on the
Simmons story. They want me to
spend tonight in the Simmons house.
It's the twentieth anniversary of
the murder, you know.

ALMA

I know. It's an exciting idea. Even
though people say they don't believe
in ghosts, it takes a lot of nerve
to spend the night in that spooky
old place.

LUTHER

Spunk.

ALMA

Are you going to do it?

LUTHER

Well, I ---

He sees man lean in to hear answer.

LUTHER

(to man)

Aren't you through with your
Jello?

CONTINUED

30

CONTINUED - 4

The man LEAVES. As Luther watches the man go, he starts to sit down. Ollie ENTERS FRAME and quickly slips into the vacant seat behind Luther.

OLLIE

Hi, baby. Sorry I couldn't have lunch with you.

ALMA

Ollie, that's Luther's seat.

Alma smiles uncomfortably.

OLLIE

Well, what's the word, Heggs? Are you going to spend the night in the house or aren't you?

LUTHER

Well, I've ---

OLLIE

I'm giving two to one all over town that you won't do it. Not getting too many takers neither.

Ollie gives Alma that "know it all" smile. Luther burns a little. He looks at Alma. Alma smiles at him encouragingly. Luther pulls himself up straight.

LUTHER

I'm afraid you're going to lose a lot of money, Ollie. Because at eleven-thirty tonight I'll be there! Good-bye, Alma.

Luther turns and angrily starts out of the place. As he passes the cashier he waves to her.

LUTHER,

Put that on my tab!

As Luther reaches the door:

CASHIER

You haven't got a tab.

CONTINUED

30

CONTINUED - 5

Nervously, Luther turns, fumbling for money and a bit embarrassed, he goes back to the cashier and pays. As the cashier makes change, the clock on the wall behind her strikes one bong for twelve-thirty. Luther looks at the clock on the wall worriedly as we:

DISSOLVE TO

31

INT. BOARDING HOUSE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - CLOSEUP OF A GRANDFATHER CLOCK

against the wall. It is twenty minutes after eleven.

32

ANOTHER ANGLE - CLOSEUP

of Luther's tense face. OPEN THE SHOT to REVEAL Luther sitting in a straight-back chair. He has a sleeping bag on the floor beside him. Across from Luther sits Mrs. Cobb and Mrs. Hutchinson. Mrs. Hutchinson is crocheting, Mrs. Cobb is just sitting and rocking staring at Luther. Mrs. Hutchinson drops a crochet needle on a rug making an ever so slight NOISE. Luther jumps, startled. She picks it up. Luther tries to compose himself but he's very tense. Mrs. Miller ENTERS from the kitchen.

MRS. MILLER

Mr. Deligondo is getting you his flashlight, Luther. He'll be here in a minute.

Luther smiles his thanks rather tightly. Mrs. Miller sits down across from Luther...the three ladies seated in a row now.

MRS. HUTCHINSON

I was only two blocks away that night. At my sister Clara's. We were sort of listening to the organ, you know... the midnight bells were ringing. I turned to Clara and I said, "Clara, the organ music sounds strange tonight."

Mrs. Hutchinson settles back and rocks in silence...just the SQUEAK of the chair. Mrs. Cobb and Mrs. Miller look at Mrs. Hutchinson for a finish.

MRS. MILLER

(pause)

Well...what did Clara say?

CONTINUED

32 CONTINUED

MRS. HUTCHINSON

She said, "Yes it does"...you know Clara.

Mrs. Cobb and Mrs. Miller settle back nodding.

MRS. MILLER

They say the bloodstains are still on the organ keys.

Luther reacts.

MRS. HUTCHINSON

That's right. They've never been able to get them off.

MRS. COBB

(up)

And they used Bon-Ami.

Luther has gotten more and more wide-eyed through this entire conversation.

MRS. MILLER

Everybody says he still comes back and plays at midnight.

MRS. COBB

He doesn't play as well as he used to.

Mrs. Hutchinson and Mrs. Miller turn to Mrs. Cobb.

MRS. HUTCHINSON

You mean you've heard him play?

Mrs. Cobb puts her nose in the air and doesn't answer...turns away slightly. Mr. Deligondo ENTERS with the flashlight lit. He sets it down next to Luther, shakes Luther's hand and EXITS to go upstairs.

MRS. MILLER

Time to go, Luther.

LUTHER

(coding out of it)

Huh?... Oh yeah.

He turns and looks at the clock. Now he gathers up his gear and slowly starts toward the front door. The three ladies rise and go along behind him. He opens the door, then turns to face them for his final farewell.

CONTINUED

32 CONTINUED - 2

LUTHER

Well, this is it.

Mrs. Hutchinson leans over and kisses Luther on the cheek.

MRS. HUTCHINSON

Good-bye, dear.

She holds a mashed-up hanky to her mouth stifling a tear. Mrs. Miller comes forward, hugs and kisses Luther. Now it's Mrs. Cobb's turn -- she steps up, kisses and hugs Luther, then steps back.

LUTHER

(swallowing hard)

See you in the morning.

MRS. COBB

(up)

God willing.

Luther does a take then EXITS into the darkness of the night as we:

DISSOLVE TO

33 EXT. SIMMONS HOUSE - NIGHT

In the black distance we SEE the beam of a flashlight coming up the sidewalk approaching the Simmons main gate. Luther comes INTO VIEW and stops at the gate. Luther looks around for a few seconds. He draws himself up and decides to go through with it. Suddenly Ollie APPEARS from behind a tree.

OLLIE

(beastlike snarl)

Graaaaaah!

Luther practically jumps out of his skin. He doesn't dare turn around. Ollie crosses to him and puts his hand on Luther's shoulder. Luther tenses even more.

OLLIE

Just putting your adrenalin in shape, kid.

LUTHER

My adrenalin is fine.

CONTINUED

33

CONTINUED

OLLIE

You're really going in there, eh?

LUTHER

What do you think I came out here for? 'Course I'm going in there! You think I came out here not to go in there??

OLLIE

Don't get so excited, fella.

LUTHER

You know why I'm excited? Because of you! That's why I'm excited.

OLLIE

Oh come on, Luther, you're scared and you know it. You want me to go in with you?

LUTHER

No, I don't want you to go in with me. You'd love that wouldn't you? ...sharin' the glory. Well, for your information, fella...I work single-O. Just me, myself and I.

OLLIE

Okay, Ace...she's all yours. See you around.

Ollie turns DISAPPEARING into the darkness. Luther watches him go, then...

LUTHER

(pause)

Ollie???

Only silence. Now Luther turns and looks at the looming shadow of the house. To give himself courage, he flips out his PRESS CARD. He leans down and pushes the flashlight through the gate placing it so it will illuminate the gate and path. Now he tosses his sleeping bag over and it lands right on the flashlight putting him in darkness. He climbs the wrought iron gate with some struggle, dropping to the other side. As he hits the ground we HEAR a THUNDER CLAP and a flash of lightning illuminates the scene. Luther jumps. Recovering he gathers his flashlight and bag and starts up the long driveway with much trepidation. He reaches the front porch, stops and looks the house over.

CONTINUED

33 CONTINUED - 2

Again drawing himself up he walks onto the porch and tries the front door. It is locked. He turns his back on it to figure another way to get in...the door slowly creaks open. Luther turns frightened. He reaches for the partially opened door... a slight gust of wind closes it gently. He tries it again... shaking it...it is locked tight. Again he turns his back on the door...again it CREAKS open slowly. Luther is terrified. He reaches for the door again...this time a bigger gust of wind SLAMS it shut. Luther gets off the porch in a hurry. He makes his way along the side of the house...Suddenly he drops out of sight. His SCREAM FADES as he DISAPPEARS into the ground.

34 INT. CELLAR - NIGHT

Luther comes tumbling down a coal chute INTO the cellar. His lantern goes one way, his sleeping bag and his lighted flashlight still another. Luther sits on a pile of coal trying to catch his breath. A flashlight is sweeping up and down. It intercepts his face in the middle of each movement. Thinking that somebody is inspecting him with the light, he holds up his hands.

LUTHER

(shakily; indicates
his press card)

Rachel -- Courier Express.

The light movement narrows and stops on his feet. He decides to climb down and inspect it. Crossing the cellar, he finds his flashlight and sleeping bag have landed on a rocking chair. He touches the rocking chair once or twice for confirmation... then chuckles to himself. He picks up his light and flashes it around the cellar. It's loaded with old furniture, coal, a few empty wine bottles and tons of cobwebs.

He finally spots a stairway leading upstairs. It is covered with cobwebs. But he can make out a second story door. He crosses to the base of the stairs and in so doing bumps into an old phonograph. Thinking nothing of it, he continues. Just as he reaches the base of the stairs, he hears:

VOICE

(slow and deep)

Do...do...do...what...you've...done...
done...done....

Luther, frightened, runs right through the cobwebs to the top of the stairs.

35 INT. LONG HALLWAY - NIGHT

Luther reaches the top. As he does, the voice changes and becomes a woman's VOICE, SINGING.

VOICE

Beefore...babbyyy! Do, do, do what
I do, do, do adorre...baaby.

Luther flashes his light back down the cellar stairs, finding the old phonograph. He sighs relieved. The phonograph SLOWS DOWN, the VOICE becomes LOWER and STOPS in a matter of seconds. Luther is not aware that his head is covered with cobwebs. He turns from the cellar door and starts slowly down the long hallway. Suddenly he stops...his face tightening into a mask of fear.

36 ANOTHER ANGLE - LUTHER'S POINT OF VIEW

A ghost-like face all in white, is shining a flashlight at Luther. It is the reflection of his own face in the long mirror at the end of the hall. Uttering small cries in the bottom of his throat, he starts to back away from the mirror slowly. Suddenly there's a CLAP OF THUNDER, a bolt of lightning and a sudden gust of wind. The wind blows a door open and sweeps down the hall, bowling the cobwebs off Luther in one fell swoop! He realizes the apparition was himself.

37 INT. ENTRY HALL - NIGHT

It is a massive, high-ceilinged area, with a portrait of the young Mrs. Simmons on a wall at one end and a wide stairway leading to the second story at the other end. Luther presents a lonely dwarfed figure in this room as he stands in the center looking around. He focuses on the portrait and walks closer. He stares up at the beautiful Mrs. Simmons. For a moment he is entranced with her ethereal beauty. Deciding to bed down now, he crosses the huge entry hall and ENTERS another room. (ADD: Business with dressing dummy in house.)

38 INT. STUDY - NIGHT

This room is a panelled room with numerous bookcases. It is completely furnished. Most of the furniture is covered with sheets giving it an eerie look. There is a huge fireplace over which hangs a hunting trophy of the late Mr. Simmons. It is the head of a hyena. The furniture itself is massive and roccoco, reminiscent in flavor, perhaps, of Falcon's Lair. Luther tosses aside a sheet, bares a leather sofa.

CONTINUED

38

CONTINUED

He flattens out his sleeping bag on it. He opens the bag's zipper and the SOUND is THUNDEROUS. A bit frightened, he starts opening it a click at a time. Then with a burst of bravado, zips it all the way open quickly. He looks around cockily...he'll show this house a thing or two. His flashlight has been set on a table. Luther now prepares for bed. He removes his coat, shoes, and necktie...He looks at the light for a moment, then decides it's best to leave it on. He climbs into his sleeping bag. It's an arctic type bag, with a zipper up the middle. He zips it all the way to his chin, revealing his face only.

Suddenly there is a POUNDING on the wall. THREE METHODICAL POUNDS. Luther quickly zips the bag up his head DISAPPEARING completely like a turtle. The whole bag begins to shake. Now he zips it open a little revealing his face. It is frozen in terror. Again, THREE METHODICAL POUNDS ON THE WALL. Luther looks toward the wall.

LUTHER

Who...who...who's there?? That you
Ollie?...you tryin' to scare me?

He gets out of the bag now, still shaking. As he reaches for his flashlight, a dark figure darts quickly behind him. He picks up the flashlight and pivots quickly just missing the sight of the figure. He turns again shining his light against the wall whence the SOUND came.

LUTHER

Billy Ray??...J.T.? You in the other
room? You trying to scare me??? I'll
show you! Darn you guys!!!

In frustration he takes a book from the shelf and throws it against the wall.

39

ANOTHER ANGLE

Luther facing the wall. A panel opens. Luther recoils.

LUTHER

(half under)
Holy toledo!

He shines his flashlight into the opening in the wall. The beam reveals a narrow stairway going up into the walls of the house. He cautiously puts one foot and starts to examine the staircase. As he steps in to aim the flashlight even further up the stairs, ZIP, the panel slides shut behind him. Luther panics...he races up the stairs...his footsteps echoing through the interior of this long stairway. Reaching an opening at the top he races into the organ loft.

40 INT. ORGAN ROOM - NIGHT

It is in a cupola...windows all around...the huge console type organ in the center of the room. Luther ENTERS. Confronted with the huge organ he gasps. It has many tiers of keys covered with cobwebs. Behind Luther the panel closes. Luther doesn't notice. He begins making his way toward the organ, shining the flashlight on the keys. The beam picks up the brownish stains.

LUTHER
(under...gasping)

Blood.

Luther stands there hypnotized. The flashlight starts to shake in his hands. The Church Bells o.s. start. BONG, BONG, BONG. His trembling builds...suddenly the organ begins to PLAY loudly. No one is at the keys! Luther stares at it with a horror stricken face. He turns, thinking his mode of entrance is still open. He hits a solid wall. The organ continues to PLAY wildly. In a panic Luther rushes around the room looking for a way out. He finds a door, opens it and LEAVES.

41 INT. PIPE ROOM - NIGHT

Luther ENTERS. He's on a spiral staircase. This pipe room is where the organ pipes are located. The walls are filled. The SOUND of the organ is deafening as Luther passes through. He finds a door in the piperroom and EXITS.

42 INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Luther ENTERS. This hallway runs across the house. He races down the hallway...the organ MUSIC has been supplemented with maniacal laughter now. Luther finds himself at the head of the stairway in the main entry hall. He races down the stairs to the main entry hall.

43 INT. ENTRY HALL - NIGHT

As the MUSIC crests, Luther looks up and sees that a pair of gardeners' pruning shears has been stuck in the throat of the portrait of Mrs. Simmons. A dark red fluid flows from the wound. Luther trembles uncontrollably. His eyes go back in his head and he faints in a heap on the floor. CAMERA PULLS BACK to reveal this lonely crumbled figure in the huge empty expensive entry hall as we

DISSOLVE TO

44 OMITTED
thru
46

47 EXT. TOWN BANK - DAY

It is the RACHEL MUTUAL SAVINGS AND LOAN. MR. MAXWELL, Bank President, comes down the street toward the bank. He is a round, gray haired man in his middle fifties. His most prominent feature is a weak face. He ENTERS the bank.

48 INT. BANK - DAY

It's a standard small town bank. The executive desks, one on each side of the door, are at the front windows. The windows are quite large. Maxwell ENTERS. He AD LIBS "good mornings" to a couple of tellers, then APPROACHES a secretary's desk. This is EILEEN, young, attractive girl, great figure, etc.

MAXWELL

(softly)

Good morning, Eileen.

(sniffs)

Oh, my oh my what a lovely sweater.
Of all your sweaters, I love this
one the most.

EILEEN

(under...a bit
embarrassed)

Mr. Simmons is waiting, Mr. Maxwell.

She nods in the direction of Maxwell's desk. Maxwell turns.
He crosses to Simmons.

MAXWELL

Sorry I'm late, Nicholas. We had
a seance at the house last night
that ran 'til all hours. It was
a surprise seance for Mrs. Maxwell.
Her birthday, you know.

SIMMONS

Don't tell me you believe in that
sort of thing, Milo.

MAXWELL

It means the world and all to Mrs.
Maxwell.

(lowers his voice)

When the lights are out I usually
sneak a few nips.

CONTINUED

48 CONTINUED

SIMMONS

Did you sign the papers? Is the title cleared?

MAXWELL

The title? The papers? Oh...oh... yes, the house, the house.

(looks through papers on desk...then remembers)

No...as a matter of fact, no.

Eileen crosses to one of the tellers from her desk. Maxwell has to check her just once on the sly. Back to Simmons.

MAXWELL

Pretty soon, though, Nicholas. DelRoy Fleming is supposed to sign the quit claim today.

SIMMONS

That'll be it then?

MAXWELL

Well, I have to sign after and that should finalize it.

SIMMONS

I can get my bulldozers in on Monday, then.

MAXWELL

I don't understand that, Nicholas. Why bulldoze it down? If you took it down piece by piece you could sell some of that beautiful old woodwork. Your Uncle imported all of that hand carved work. It must be worth a ---

SIMMONS

I haven't the time. I want to get back to Chicago.

Simmons gets up now.

SIMMONS

Are you sure I can start Monday?

MAXWELL

I forsee no problems, Nicholas.

48-A EXT. BANK - DAY

Just then a tense, frightened Luther comes walking by the huge bank window heading for the newspaper office. He is carrying his sleeping bag and flashlight.

49
and
50

OMITTED

51 INT. NEWSPAPER - DAY

CLOSEUP of a tense, frightened Luther. Open the SHOT to reveal Luther at a typewriter with Ollie behind and Becket directly in front of him.

LUTHER
(mumbling)
It was terrible...terrible.

BECKET
Yeah...yeah. Well, tell us what happened.

LUTHER
(mumbling)
It was terrible, terrible.

Luther starts to cry.

OLLIE
Oh, no. He's gonna cry.

BECKET
Steady now, Luther. Tell us about it.

LUTHER
It was terrible, it was terrible.
I'll never get over it as long as I live.

Becket looks past Luther to Ollie.

BECKET
Great opening line.
(rote)
I'll never get over it as long as I live.

Ollie puts his arms around Luther and types the line on the typewriter.

BECKET
Okay, Luther, go ahead.

LUTHER
(up...excitedly)
Got to house...smash, lightning...
thunder...it was awful...swoosh...
zoom, down the coal chute!!

CONTINUED

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50

51 CONTINUED

BECKET
(dictating to
Ollie...calmly)
I arrived at the house. Giving
careful consideration to the most
advantageous means of entry. I
selected the coal chute.

Ollie types as we....

DISSOLVE TO

52 OMITTED

52-A INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Fuller is reading Luther's article, aloud. Billy Ray
and J. T. are listening intently.

FULLER
(reading)
Once inside I had a look around,
then made myself comfortable for
the night. Suddenly, there was
a strange knocking on the wall.
I remained cool.

BILLY RAY
Haw!

FULLER
I ambled over to investigate this
phenomenon. Much to my surprise
the wall opened up.

53 INT. MRS. MILLER'S DINING ROOM - DAY - CLOSEUP
of Mrs. Miller reading the newspaper article.

MRS. MILLER
(reading)
Moving swiftly, I found myself
in the organ loft. There it was,
the massive organ, shrouded in
cobwebs, its once beautiful
ivory keys still covered with
the stains of young Mrs. Simmons'
blood.

Open the SHOT to REVEAL Mrs. Cobb, Mrs. Hutchinson and
Mr. Deligondo.

CONTINUED

53 CONTINUED

MRS. COBB
And they used Bon Ami.

MRS. MILLER
(reading)
Suddenly the midnight bells rang
and the organ began to play. But
there was no one at the keys.

Mrs. Cobb and Mrs. Hutchinson gasp.

MRS. MILLER
Was it the ghost of Mr. Simmons?
I asked myself this as the music
filled the mansion turning my
blood to ice.

MRS. HUTCHINSON
Poor Luther.

MRS. COBB
He's certainly got his mother's
spunk.

54 INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY - CLOSEUP
of Mr. Simmons. He's reading the paper.

SIMMONS -
(reading)
Later I descended to the first
floor.

Open the SHOT to reveal Simmons reading ALOUD.

SIMMONS
There I was to see the most horrify-
ing display of all in this bloody
parade of terror. The portrait
of young Mrs. Simmons had been
stabbed in the neck with an instrument
which appeared to be a pair of
gardener's pruning shears.

Angrily, Simmons crumples the paper, throwing it to the ground.

55 EXT. TOWN STREET - DAY
Miles Becket is hurrying up the street to the newspaper office.
He ARRIVES and ENTERS.

56 INT. NEWSPAPER OFFICE - DAY
Becket ENTERS in a hurry. Ollie is at his desk typing. He
looks up at Becket.

CONTINUED

56 CONTINUED

BECKET

You never saw anything like it!

Becket crosses to the door landing to the cellar pressroom. Kelsey is sweeping near the door. Becket opens the door and YELLS to the pressman. THE SOUND OF ROLLING PRESSES is HEARD o.s.

BECKET

(up)

All! Run off another five hundred!
They're selling like hotcakes.

He crosses to Ollie in a hurry.

BECKET

We've made some kind of a hero out
of Luther. And that Simmons place
is the talk of the town.

In b.g. Kelsey jumps in the air, clicking his heels together.

DISSOLVE TO

57 EXT. SIMMONS MANSION - DAY

Police Chief Fuller and his Deputy Herkie are standing guard at the main gate. Mrs. MILO MAXWELL, an older clubwoman type is leading her PSYCHIC OCCULT SOCIETY of Rachel in an assault on the mansion. They are all women in their middle fifties or older. Two women carry a banner with the Society's name on it. Across the street, a few men are taking pictures of the mansion. A few kids are running around.

FULLER

I'm sorry, Mrs. Maxwell. Nicholas
Simmons gave me strict orders. No
one's allowed on this property.

MRS. MAXWELL

Mr. Fuller, you don't seem to under-
stand. We are followers. We are on
the path of the occult.

FULLER

I'm afraid you won't find any of
that around here.

MRS. MAXWELL

It's obvious you don't understand.
Our society is dedicated to contacting
the other world.

CONTINUED

57 CONTINUED

FULLER

The Communists?

MRS. MAXWELL

The spiritual world! There are more on the other side than there are here. Don't you realize that? There are cosmic forces all around us.

FULLER

Aww...you mean what Luther said he saw in there? Aww, come on.

MRS. MAXWELL

We believe what he saw more than we believe you standing there.

FULLER

I'm still not letting you in.

LORETTA PINE

Mrs. Maxwell! Mrs. Maxwell! The cosmic vibrations.

(X)

MRS. MAXWELL

Coming!

She leaves Fuller and crosses a few steps to her friend. Mrs. Maxwell stands next to her friend for a moment. She closes her eyes.

MRS. MAXWELL

Ohh! The divine emanations from it!

Other members gather around them. They hold hands as Mrs. Maxwell touches the fence. They feel the so-called vibrations from the house.

MRS. MAXWELL

(up)

Hail, cosmic self! Taro caro...
Salamond!

GROUP

...salamond!

Fuller, disturbed, takes out his whistle and blows it.

FULLER

Awright, ladies, break it up. That's it for today. No demonstrating without a permit!

CONTINUED

57 CONTINUED - 2

MRS. MAXWELL

You have no right to bar us from this house.

FULLER

I've got my orders.

MRS. MAXWELL

I'll see that those orders are changed.

FULLER

You better do it soon...it'll be torn down Monday.

MRS. MAXWELL

(shocked)

Torn down?? By whose orders?

FULLER

Nicholas Simmons...the owner.

MRS. MAXWELL

What? Are you sure?

FULLER

Positive.

MRS. MAXWELL

(looking at the house tragically)

This citadel of the divine destroyed? Never!

OCCULT SOCIETY

(all at once)

Never, never! How dare he! Etc.

FULLER

(controlling his impatience)

Please, girls...please...it's all right to say it...just don't demonstrate. Please, girls.

MRS. MAXWELL

(gesturing for order)

All right, girls, quiet.

There is silence.

MRS. MAXWELL

(as if in prayer)

This house shall not be destroyed.
Taro caro.

CONTINUED

57 CONTINUED - 3

GROUP

Salamond.

The women march OFF and Fuller is left alone. There's a pause as he makes sure they're gone. Then he crosses to the fence and touches, withdrawing his hand quickly. He touches it again as we...

DISSOLVE TO

58 INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

Mr. and Mrs. Maxwell are seated across from one another having lunch. Mrs. Maxwell is busily eating some pudding.

MRS. MAXWELL

(angrily)

Milo! Look at me when I talk to you!

MR. MAXWELL

Halcyon, I promised Nicholas Simmons I'd clear the title by the first of the week.

MRS. MAXWELL

Then you haven't signed the final papers yet.

MR. MAXWELL

Well, no, I haven't.

MRS. MAXWELL

Milo, do you realize how long it's been since we've had a local manifestation? We've always had to go out of town. As far away as Wooster, Ohio.

MR. MAXWELL

Aw, Halcyon.

MRS. MAXWELL

Don't "aw, Halcyon" me, Milo. You don't seem to realize the cosmic importance of this. This is bigger than the whispering steeple in Kansas City, it's bigger than the headless ballet dancer in Dublin, Ireland...why it's even bigger than the day our own dear Theresa received the personal message from Rudolph Valentino in Toledo. Milo, you will not sign those papers.

CONTINUED

58 CONTINUED

But, dear --- MR. MAXWELL

You won't! MRS. MAXWELL

But, dear --- MR. MAXWELL

You won't! MRS. MAXWELL

But --- MR. MAXWELL

I own fifty-one per cent of the
bank's stock! MRS. MAXWELL

(weakly) MR. MAXWELL
I won't.

There's a pause. Mrs. Maxwell looks at his pudding.

MRS. MAXWELL
Milo, you didn't eat your tapioca.
No wonder you have a nervous stomach.

He sneaks a hateful look at her as we...

DISSOLVE TO

59 INT. BANK - DAY - CLOSEUP OF SIMMONS

SIMMONS
(angry)
What kind of a man runs his bank
on the whims of his wife???

OPEN THE SHOT to REVEAL Simmons and Maxwell at Maxwell's
desk. Simmons is standing.

MAXWELL
You don't know Mrs. Maxwell.

SIMMONS
In the name of heaven, man! I've
waited twenty years for this!

MAXWELL
She owns fifty-one per cent of the
bank's stock, for Pete's sake!

CONTINUED

59 CONTINUED

SIMMONS

You don't mean to tell me your wife believes all that Luther Heggs' hogwash!

MAXWELL

With all her heart. She came home last night and vibrated for an hour!

SIMMONS

Let me get this straight. You mean you're not going to sign?

MAXWELL

I just can't, Nick.

SIMMONS

(tight-lipped;
contained anger)

Okay.

Simmons turns and walks toward the door. Maxwell is worried.

MAXWELL

What are you going to do?

SIMMONS

(stops, turns)

When I get through with Luther Heggs nobody will believe him when he says good morning.

Simmons EXITS as we...

DISSOLVE TO

60 EXT. TOWN PARK - DAY - CLOSEUP OF A SMALL SIGN

reading: Rachel Chamber of Commerce Picnic Lunch...Guest Speaker...Luther Heggs. In b.g. we HEAR a MARCH being played by an undermanned, slightly off-key band.

DISSOLVE TO

61 ANOTHER ANGLE - CLOSEUP OF THE BELL

of a sousaphone "Oompaing." OPEN THE SHOT to REVEAL the eight piece band on the park bandstand. Behind the band there is a huge colorful banner on which is printed: RACHEL, KANSAS...HOME PLATE FOR WHEAT AND DEMOCRACY. OPEN THE SHOT FURTHER to REVEAL the full park picnic set-up.

CONTINUED

61 CONTINUED

Rows of picnic tables, picnic type food, chickens, hams, etc. Perhaps a couple of spits over which beef is being roasted. People are milling around...some talking, others listening to the band, etc. Perhaps a small boy tries to steal something from a table and is chased off. Only a select thirty or forty people are at the tables. But a fringe crowd of practically the whole town has turned out to hear Luther speak.

62 ANOTHER ANGLE

Mrs. Cobb, Mrs. Hutchinson and Mrs. Miller in the fringe crowd. Mrs. Miller is looking toward the park parking lot anxiously.

MRS. MILLER

Where on earth is Luther? He'll be late for his own speech.

MRS. COBB

Celebrities are never on time.

MRS. HUTCHINSON

There's Alma!

(up)

Hello, Alma!

Mrs. Cobb and Mrs. Miller wave.

63 ANOTHER ANGLE

Alma standing by a picnic table.

ALMA

(waving; up)

Hi, ladies! Have you seen Ollie?

63-A ANOTHER ANGLE

Mrs. Hutchinson

MRS. HUTCHINSON

I think I heard him say he wasn't coming.

MRS. COBB

I think his nose is out of joint 'count of Luther.

64 ANOTHER ANGLE

Mrs. Miller.

CONTINUED

64 CONTINUED

MRS. MILLER

(up)

Here he comes!!

Everyone looks toward the parking lot.

65 ANOTHER ANGLE

Luther emerging from the trees bordering the parking lot. A CHEER rings out from the crowd. The BAND STRIKES UP "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow." We see a new Luther. He's wearing a cocked pork pie hat, new tweeds and a trench coat is slung carelessly over one shoulder. In the distance he's the image of Frank Sinatra. As Luther starts toward the picnic area he is joined by a few kids, darting around him. Dogs join in the fun as Luther approaches with his strange entourage. Luther is eating up the adulation as he makes his way to the picnic tables. As he comes through the crowd he spots Mrs. Cobb, Mrs. Miller and Mrs. Hutchinson. He throws them a kiss. The three ladies wave their handkerchiefs delighted to be recognized. Many people extend their hands and Luther shakes them.

(X)

ALMA

(up)

Over here, Luther!

Luther makes his way over to where Alma is standing. (During the next few speeches Luther is waving to people. They are waving to him.)

LUTHER

Hi, Alma...You alone?

ALMA

Uh huh. Why don't you sit here?

LUTHER

Swell.

65 CONTINUED - 2

LUTHER

(to Alma)

Nice turnout.

ALMA

Lot of extra people here today,
Luther. Just for you. Are you
nervous?

LUTHER

(looks like he's about
to say..."Noop"...
then relaxes)

Not really.

A KID COMES UP.

KID

Can I have your autograph, Mr.
Heggs? It's not for me, it's
for my father.

Luther gives him the autograph.

CONTINUED

65 CONTINUED

Other people start crowd around Luther. Herkie intervenes.

HERKIE

(up)

All right...all you people who
aren't Chamber of Commerce clear
the table area! Come on, only
C of C people here....

Herkie moves a few people back clearing Luther and Alma.

HERKIE

Not you, Mr. Heggs, you stay right
where you are. You too, Miss.

(aside to people
he's moving back)
That's Alma Parker.

ALMA

(laughs at Herkie's
line)

I guess being with you makes me
somewhat of a celebrity.

LUTHER

Well.

Luther hangs his head, smiles embarrassed.

Luther awkwardly pulls out the bench for Alma to sit down.
She sits...Luther takes a seat next to her. The TOWN BAND
starts up a soft waltz in b.g. A LADY comes by and sets
two plates of food in front of them.

LORETTA PINE

I get to feed the speaker.

(X)

Luther sort of chuckles. The woman leaves.

LUTHER

(under to Alma)

Loretta Pine.

ALMA

I know.

They both look at their dishes.

CONTINUED

65 CONTINUED - 4

LUTHER
I just love good food.

ALMA
So do I.

LUTHER
Do you really?

ALMA
Uh huh.

LUTHER
So do I. You know, you and I are
a lot alike.

Alma gives him a sweet smile.

LUTHER
(pause)
My mother liked good food.

ALMA
Oh?

LUTHER
She always said "I'd rather eat
good food than bad food any old
day of the week."

They take a few bites of food. There's a moment of silence.
Luther sneaks a few looks at her.

LUTHER
We're having lunch together again.

ALMA
Yes, we are.

Luther sneaks a few more looks as Alma eats...he's building
his nerve.

LUTHER
Would you...uh...would you like
to have lunch some evening? I
mean...uh dinner?

ALMA
Well, I ---

CONTINUED

65 CONTINUED - 5

LUTHER
(quickly; self-
defeated)
Well, yeah...I understand...you
and Ollie and all.

ALMA
Not necessarily.

LUTHER
Oh, you mean, you and Ollie, aren't
uh ---

ALMA
Not as much as people think.

LUTHER
Ohh.

Luther looks at her not knowing what to say for a moment.

ALMA
Would you like to come to dinner
Sunday night.

LUTHER
(blurts)
Yeah!

ALMA
Fine.

Luther obviously pleased, eats in silence. Now Herkie
comes down the now filled picnic table checking the diners.
He leans over to look at each one. They're all busily eating.

HERKIE
C of C...C of C...C of C.
He gets to Luther and Alma.

HERKIE
You're not C of C but you're
okay....

He continues on around the table.

HERKIE
C of C...C of C...C of C....

Now he grabs a dirty, old drunken BUM with five days growth
of beard and lifts him off the table bench.

CONTINUED

65 CONTINUED - 6

HERKIE
You're not C of C!

BUM
I'm Rotary!

HERKIE
Get out of here!

We PAN with Herkie and the bum as they pass the bandstand.
STAY with the band as it continues to play the waltz.

DISSOLVE TO

66 EXT. BANDSTAND - DAY

A young BOY playing the last eight bars of a fast accordion solo. His sister is twirling a baton at his side. They finish. As the crowd APPLAUDS we OPEN THE SHOT to REVEAL the crowd...scattered throughout the dining area, the waitresses are removing empty plates, etc. The BAND LEADER steps to the mike.

BAND LEADER
Thank you, Billy and Norma Jean Wexler. That concludes the musical portion. Now, ladies and gentlemen, it is with great honor and privilege that I present the head of our Chamber of Commerce and the Mayor of our town, Carlyle Preston!

67 ANOTHER ANGLE - PICNIC TABLE

The MAYOR stands to applause and takes a bow. Then he makes his way to the bandstand. The crowd APPLAUDS him all the way up. A few people BOO him.

68 ANGLE - BANDSTAND

The Mayor raises his hands for silence. The audience quiets down.

VOICE
Atta boy, Carl!

The Mayor throws a vote-getting wave in the direction of the voice.

CONTINUED

68 CONTINUED

MAYOR

My fellow citizens of Rachel.

The microphone begins a slight feed-back HOWL. The Mayor slaps the mike once and it stops.

MAYOR

The electrician must be a Democrat.

The AUDIENCE LAUGHS.

VOICE

Atta boy, Carl!

The Mayor nods tolerantly to the voice, a touch of impatience in his expression.

MAYOR

Rachel has been humming the last few days. And I don't have to tell you why. There's been an old house in this town for years, that if the truth be known, folks have been afraid to go near. I know I have.

VOICE

Atta boy, Carl!

MAYOR

But one of our own had the pluck to go in. And that name has been on every tongue. And the name of that person who's been on every tongue is none other than, and I really don't have to say it... Luther Heggs.

Luther makes his way to the bandstand amid tumultuous APPLAUSE. As he makes his way through the tables people are giving him a standing ovation. They reach out to shake his hand. He smiles and nods. Mrs. Maxwell and four other ladies form a chain and Mrs. Maxwell touches Luther...they all quiver at the same time, ostensibly from the vibration. Luther doesn't know what to make of it. He jumps. He continues on up to the bandstand and mounts. He crosses to the microphone, notes in hand. He shakily holds his notes in front of the mike...the paper NOISE is ear-shattering.

LUTHER

Thank you, Mayor and fellow Rachelanians. I stand here ---

CONTINUED

68 CONTINUED - 2

The mike starts an ear-shattering FEED-BACK HOWL. Luther hits the mike the way he saw the Mayor do it. The HOWL gets LOUDER. Luther is starting to get more unnerved. The Mayor steps up and with one authoritative slap hits the mike and the FEED-BACK STOPS.

LUTHER

(clears his throat;
smiles weakly)

That electrician must be a Democrat.

He gets no laughs...nothing. He giggles nervously. He tries to pull himself together. He places his notes on the speaker's rostrum, consults them briefly and clears his throat to start his speech. Just as he opens his mouth a gust of wind comes up, blowing the notes all over. He watches them go, mouth open. Recovering he realizes he has to go on. He addresses the crowd.

LUTHER

(nervously)

Mr. Mayor and fellow Rachelanians.
I'm proud to be here today.

VOICE

Atta boy, Luther!

Luther waves to the voice.

LUTHER

When I was told I was to be guest speaker at this luncheon, I asked myself this. "Who are you, Luther Heggs, to be guest speaker at this luncheon?" I thought about my answer about being a guest speaker for a long time. What is a guest speaker? Let me clarify this.

(clears throat)

I have been called brave. What is brave? Let me clarify this. Of course we know it is short for brave-ery. That goes without being said. But also it is the symbol of another thing. It is the symbol of doing one's duty no matter what is scaring him personally.

VOICE

Atta boy, Luther!

CONTINUED

68 CONTINUED - 3

Luther looks at the voice disturbed.

LUTHER

Take your World War Two. There were many heroes in World War Two. Who were your heroes?...What were your heroes?...They were guys...fellows, who, when thrust into a situation, forged ahead...barring none. Let me clarify that.

A beat here...he's run out of gas.

LUTHER

Thank you for having me.

The audience APPLAUDS wildly. The band leader gives the downbeat and the band strikes up a Sousa March. Luther makes his way off the stand. The crowd moves toward him as he reaches the bottom of the steps, crowding around AD LIBBING "Congratulations, etc." He ad libs "Thank yous." A few people thrust pencils and paper in front of him and he signs autographs. Mrs. Milo Maxwell comes up to him and waves her hand in front of his face.

MRS. MAXWELL

Taro caro salamond.

LUTHER

Thank you.

A man approaches him with a paper in his hand.

CHARLEY

Are you Luther Heggs of 1347
Lucerne Road?

LUTHER

Well, you know me, Charley.

CHARLEY

Here..

Luther takes the paper.

CHARLEY

I loved your speech, Luther.

LUTHER

Thanks. What do you want me to write on this?

CONTINUED

68 CONTINUED - 4

CHARLEY
Nothing. You're not supposed to
write on a subpoena.

LUTHER
A subpoena?

MAYOR
A subpoena?
(to someone at
his side)
He got a subpoena.

A few people in the crowd pass it on down. "He got a
subpoena...Luther got a subpoena." Luther just stands
there stunned as we...

DISSOLVE TO

69 EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Luther and Becket are walking down the street.

LUTHER
(concerned)
Exactly what is libel, Mr. Becket?

BECKET
It's when you print an untruth
about somebody that damages them,
Luther.

LUTHER
Who did I damage?

BECKET
Whom.

LUTHER
Whom.

BECKET
The Simmons family name.

They ENTER the Rachel Hotel.

DISSOLVE TO

70 INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

A tall man with a much too small uniform is operating the elevator.

BECKET

Mr. Simmons.

ELEVATOR MAN

Five oh four.

The elevator starts up.

LUTHER

But everything I told you is the truth.

BECKET

I believe you, Luther. As implausible as it all sounds I trust you. You brought me the story in good faith, we printed it in good faith and we'll fight this suit in good faith. The freedom of the press is at stake here.

Luther brightens as a result of Becket's attitude.

LUTHER

(cockily)

I have to laugh. People should know by now they can't kick the fourth estate around.

The elevator stops at the fifth floor. He juggles unsuccessfully to get the elevator even with the floor. He keeps missing... goes a foot above the floor, then a foot below. Then he gets up to within six inches of the floor and attempting to level off, goes six inches past the fifth floor. Luther and Becket are getting a little seasick. Finally the operator gives up and opens the door with the elevator about eight inches higher than the hall floor.

OPERATOR

Step down.

Luther and Becket start to step up gingerly.

OPERATOR

Mr. Heggs?

Luther almost falls, trying to stop in mid-flight. He turns.

LUTHER

Yes?

The operator extends Luther a pencil and paper.

CONTINUED

70 CONTINUED

OPERATOR

Can I have your autograph?

Luther takes the paper and pencil and gives the man his autograph.

OPERATOR

(looking over Luther's
shoulder)

Just draw a little ghost under it
there.

LUTHER

Okay.

Luther contorts his face simulating a ghost as he does the tiny drawing. He hands it back to the operator and joins Becket in the hall.

71 INT. HALL - DAY

Luther and Becket head down the hall. They reach the door numbered "five oh four." Becket knocks. Simmons opens the door.

SIMMONS

Gentlemen.

Luther and Becket ENTER.

72 INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Whitlow is seated in a chair having a drink.

SIMMONS

My attorney, Mr. Whitlow.

Luther and Becket AD LIB greetings.

SIMMONS

Well, let's get right down to business. Heggs, as you know I'm suing you, personally and Becket I'm suing the Rachel-Courier Express, of which you are editor and owner. If I win this case and I will, I'll take your paper.

(to Luther)

And if I take Becket's paper, where are you going to work, Mr. Heggs?

CONTINUED

72 CONTINUED

Luther shrugs cockily.

LUTHER

Oh... the Chicago Trib... the
Pittsburgh Press maybe... the New
York Times... might run up to San
Francisco and take a crack at the ---

SIMMONS

Now I'd rather not sue... waste all
that time in court.

LUTHER

(trailing off)
... The San Francisco Chronicle or ...
(practically whispering when
he realizes no one is listening
to him)
... the Farmer's Digest in Wichita.

SIMMONS

(going on)
So I have an alternative to offer.
Just publish the fact that this
story was a figment of Hegg's
imagination and I'll call off the
suit. What do you say?

BECKET

In other words, you want a retraction.
Is that it?

SIMMONS

Exactly.

Becket pauses and thinks for a moment, then turns to Luther.

BECKET

Tell me once more that what you said
happened really happened.

LUTHER

It happened.

BECKET

The wall did open.

LUTHER

Whoosh! Right open.

CONTINUED

BECKET

And the organ?

LUTHER

Played and played and played.

BECKET

Nobody at it.

LUTHER

Just cobwebs.

BECKET

And the shears in the throat.

LUTHER

(swallows hard.. holds
his throat.. barely audible)
Shears in the throat.

He coughs a little as he remembers. Becket turns to Simmons.

BECKET

(firmly)
No retraction.

SIMMONS

All right. We'll see you in court.

Becket turns to go. He opens the door stepping OUT into the hall. Luther has a moment alone with Whitlow and Simmons.

WHITLOW

(sneering)
Heggs, when I get you on that stand,
I'm going to rip you to shreds.

SIMMONS

Who do you think you are? A little
pipsqueak like you fighting us in
court. Just who do you think you are?

LUTHER

(childlike defiance)
Drop dead... that's who! Right,
Mr. Becket?

CONTINUED

72 CONTINUED - 3

Luther turns and for the first time realizes Becket has left.

LUTHER

Mr. Becket??

Luther runs toward the door.

LUTHER

Mr. Becket???

73 INT. HALL - DAY

Becket is at the elevator. Luther arrives a bit out of breath.

LUTHER

Boy, you should've heard me telling
'em off back there.

BECKET

You better save your breath for the
courtroom. You're going to need it.

Now the elevator arrives. The doors open but the operator
has missed the floor by two feet. He starts juggling during
the below, trying to get the elevator even with the floor.
Luther and Becket keep making false starts into the elevator.
The operator finally stops about a foot above the floor.

OPERATOR

Step up, please.

Becket steps up into the elevator. As Luther starts to step
up, the operator drops the elevator to about four feet below
the floor and Luther drops in with a thud, disappearing.

OPERATOR

(looking down)

Sorry, Mr. Heggs.

DISSOLVE TO

74 EXT. ALMA'S FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

It's a warm quiet night...crickets, etc...Alma's house is an
older small town wooden frame type...porch with railing.
There is an older type glider on the porch. Alma and Luther
COME OUT of the house.

LUTHER

Well, that was just about the best
pounded steak I've ever eaten.

CONTINUED

74 CONTINUED

ALMA

I'm glad you enjoyed it. My mother
is really a wonderful cook.

LUTHER

She sure is.

(pats his stomach)

Boy!

(giggles)

Now Luther crosses to the railing and takes a couple of deep
breaths of the warm night air. He stretches and flexes a
bit, punctuating the moves with a subtle karate chop.

ALMA

What was that you just did?

LUTHER

Karate.

ALMA

Oh, do you know karate?

LUTHER

Oh, yeah, I've been studying it by
mail for years.

(chest out a bit)

This whole body's a weapon.

ALMA

Sounds worthwhile. Would you like
to sit down?

LUTHER

Sure.

He swaggers to the glider and sits down. They sit swinging
back and forth for a moment.

LUTHER

Guess you think I'm worried about
this trial business tomorrow, don't
you?

ALMA

Well, I ---

LUTHER

(cocky)

It's all part of the game. A news-
paperman has to do whatever comes
along.

(switch to concerned

...softly)

I hope I say the right things.

CONTINUED

74 CONTINUED - 2

Alma gives him a sympathetic look,

ALMA
(pats his hand)
Everything'll work out all right,
you'll see.

LUTHER
I've never been on one of those
stands before.

ALMA
You'll do fine.

Luther stares ahead some more...Alma looks out toward the
front yard, too. There's a pause, then, Luther turns to Alma.

LUTHER
Do you think I'm crazy?

ALMA
Oh, Luther. What a silly question.

LUTHER
Some people think so.

ALMA
Most of the people in town are
behind you.

LUTHER
Well...Billy Ray Fox and guys
like that ain't.

ALMA
His opinion isn't worth a hill of
beans.

LUTHER
(laughs a little)
...hill of beans.

Now Alma puts her head back on the back of the glider,
looking up at the sky. The moonlight shines on her face.
She is a lovely picture. They sit for a moment in silence,
then Luther casts a glance in her direction. She doesn't
see him. He hesitates, clears his throat...

LUTHER
You know something, Alma.

He starts to put his arm up behind her. She turns and looks
right at him. He pulls his arm down self-consciously.

CONTINUED

ALMA

HMMMM?

Luther is taken aback by her beauty, swallows hard.

LUTHER

Oh, nothing.

Luther looks straight ahead now. Alma looks over at him. She smiles. Luther's brow is furrowed as he obviously tries to think of something to say. He tries putting the arm up again.

LUTHER

Alma.

She turns. He pulls it down.

ALMA

Yes, Luther?

LUTHER

(getting up, he starts to pace excitedly, blurts)
The thing is this, you're a...well...
you're a darn attractive girl.

ALMA

Thank you.

LUTHER

And I'm a guy...well, what I mean to say is...well, you take your average guy and your above average girl...well, the point is this... some people are...well, average is darn lucky to be on a porch with above average. What I mean is ---

ALMA

Luther, are you trying to say that you like me.

LUTHER

(relieved)

Yeah.

Alma looks at him for a moment, then kisses him lightly on the mouth. They separate and look at each other warmly.

CONTINUED

74 CONTINUED - 4

ALMA

(softly)

I like you, too, Luther.

They look at each other warmly as Luther reaches over and takes her hand in his.

75 EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY - CLOSEUP

of a steam whistle on a peanut wagon. The SHRILL SOUND piercing the air. OPEN the SHOT to reveal the courthouse steps. They are jammed with people unable to get inside the courtroom. Herkie is guarding the main door.

HERKIE

I'm sorry, folks. The courtroom's all filled. Back off now...keep this door clear.

Four kids run in one door of the courthouse...in a matter of seconds they come out another door and head down the steps, Chief Fuller in pursuit.

WE PAN Fuller chasing the kids and pick up Luther and Becket pulling to a stop in front of the courthouse. They're in Luther's Edsel.

SPECTATOR

Here comes Luther!

Immediately the crowd closes in around Luther's car. He and Becket can barely get out. Once out of the car they start making their way up the courthouse steps. Spectators AD LIB as they go through..."Go get 'em, Luther!" "We're behind you, buddy." "Good luck, Luther!" A kid shoves an autograph book in Luther's face. He smiles and writes in it.

LUTHER

(as he writes)

Journalistically yours...Luther
Heggs.

He hands the boy his book back. Ollie and Alma make their way over to Luther and Becket. Alma takes Luther's arm and kisses him lightly on the cheek.

ALMA

Good luck, dear.

Ollie is surprised. Luther gives her a warm look. He appreciates her comforting remark.

CONTINUED

75 CONTINUED

LUTHER

Thank you.

Luther and Becket ENTER. WE STAY with Alma and Ollie.

OLLIE

What was that all about?

ALMA

What?

OLLIE

The cute little nip on the cheek.
What's going on?

ALMA

Ollie, you don't own me...and you
never did.

Ollie backs off looking at her.

OLLIE

Oh.

Ollie turns his back on her and walks AWAY.

76 INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Luther and Becket ENTER. As they walk down the aisle to the defense's table...people AD LIB "good luck" etc. Some touch his sleeve. Near the front Mrs. Maxwell and about eight of her occult group are seated. As Luther passes they stand and turn to him.

GROUP

Taro caro salamond.

LUTHER

(smiles)

Thank you.

Luther and Becket continue to the defense table. There is much crowd noise. Luther is drinking in this adulation. Just as he gets to the table, a VOICE rings out. The same voice from the picnic.

MAN

Atta boy, Luther!

CONTINUED

77

ANOTHER ANGLE

Simmons and Whitlow ENTER. Mrs. Maxwell and her group rise and lead the courtroom spectators in HISSING. As Simmons and Whitlow head down the aisle, Kelsey's and Simmons' eyes meet and there is obvious animosity.

78

ANOTHER ANGLE

Luther, Becket and SPRINGER at the defense table. SPRINGER is Becket's attorney. A man in his middle thirties.

BECKET

Norman.

LUTHER

Mr. Springer.

SPRINGER

How're you feelin', Luther?

LUTHER

Three oh.

SPRINGER

Boy, this place is really buzzing.

Luther and Becket take their seats. Mrs. Cobb taps Luther on the back. She and Mrs. Hutchinson and Mrs. Miller are seated behind them. Luther turns. They all wave their fingers together.

LUTHER

Hi, Ladies.

MRS. MILLER

(whispers)

Have you got a clean hankie?

Luther taps his back pocket and nods. Springer starts taking a lot of papers from his briefcase. Luther is sitting there tapping verously. Ollie ENTERS through the railing gate and comes up behind Luther. He leans down and whispers.

OLLIE

This may cost me my job, but I hope they fry you.

Ollie turns and LEAVES. Luther watches him go.

CONTINUED

78 CONTINUED

BECKET

What'd he say?

LUTHER

Hm?...Oh, nothing.

79 ANOTHER ANGLE

The bailiff rises.

BAILIFF

Oh yea, oh yea, oh yea.

The judge ENTERS behind the bailiff. The judge is an old man with white hair. A shabby black suit and shoe-string tie.

BAILIFF

The district court of Hummler county is now in session, Judge Harley Nast pre---

The judge is at his seat.

JUDGE

It's all right, Charley, I'm here.

The courtroom is still BUZZING with talk. The judge BANGS his gavel.

JUDGE

(UP)

All right, let's have quiet in here.

The crowd quiets down.

MAN (o.s.)

(UP)

Atta boy, Judge!

JUDGE

Now this is a case of libel. Nicholas Simmons versus Luther Heggs, Miles Becket and the Rachel Courier-Express. Where's my water, Charley?

Charley reaches down behind his desk.

JUDGE

All right, Mr. Whitlow...start it up.

Whitlow stands to begin his opening statement.

CONTINUED

WHITLOW

Thank you, your honor.

Whitlow crosses to the jury.

WHITLOW

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury,
it is my intent ---

Charley brings a glass of water to the judge.

CHARLEY

Here's your water, Judge.

Whitlow just stands and burns.

JUDGE

Thanks, Charley...where's the bible?

CHARLEY

I haven't got it. Haven't you got
it?

JUDGE

No. Hold it up, Mr. Whitlow.

Charley crosses to the door to the judge's chamber. He opens
it.

CHARLEY

(UP...into chambers)

You got the bible, Arnold?

A hand sticks out the door with the bible. Charley takes it
closing the door.

CHARLEY

Got it, Judge. Arnold had it.

MAN (o.s.)

Atta boy, Arnold!

The judge tries to locate the voice briefly, then addresses
Whitlow.

JUDGE

All right, Whitlow.

WHITLOW

Thank you, your honor.

CONTINUED

79 CONTINUED - 2

Whitlow turns to address the jury again.

WHITLOW

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury,
it is my intent to prove that
Luther Heggs did willfully and
with full intent, concoct and
publish a fabrication injurious
to the family name of my client,
Nicholas Simmons. I will prove
in fact that this fabrication is
the product of an imagination of
a man whose dreams and ramblings
are a danger to the community.

80 ANOTHER ANGLE - FULL SHOT

The audience buzzes with excitement.

81 ANOTHER ANGLE - MED. SHOT

Luther turns to Springer.. He is frightened.

LUTHER

(indignant)
He's trying to say I'm crazy.

82 ANOTHER ANGLE - WHITLOW

He turns to the bench.

WHITLOW

With the court's permission I would
like to call as our first witness,
Miss Neva Tremaine.

Charley stands.

CHARLEY

(UP)
Miss Neva Tremaine!

Judge holds one ear.

JUDGE

(UNDER to Charley)
Easy, easy, Charley.

CONTINUED

82 CONTINUED

A little old lady, MISS TREMAINE, rises from the audience and makes her way to the witness stand. The audience BUZZES a bit.

83 ANOTHER ANGLE - MED. SHOT

Luther, Becket, and Springer. Becket turns to Luther.

BECKET

(UNDER)

Who's that?

LUTHER

My old grade school teacher.

84 ANOTHER ANGLE

Charley holds out the bible and Miss Tremaine puts her left hand on it, raising her right hand.

CHARLEY

Do you solemnly swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

MISS TREMAINE

I do.

(UNDER to Bailiff)

Charley, your fingernails.

CHARLEY

(whispers)

I had a flat on the way to work.

Charley steps away and Miss Tremaine takes her seat on the witness stand. Whitlow approaches her.

WHITLOW

Would you state your name and address for us, please?

MISS TREMAINE

Neva Tremaine, three twelve "E" Street, Rachel, Kansas.

WHITLOW

And your occupation, please.

MISS TREMAINE

Schoolteacher, Willow Road Elementary School, third grade, retired.

CONTINUED

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84

84

CONTINUED

WHITLOW

Were you active there between nineteen thirty and nineteen thirty-eight?

MISS TREMAINE

I was in my prime.

WHITLOW

Was one Luther Heggs a student of yours during that period?

MISS TREMAINE

He was..

Miss Tremaine leans over and looks past Whitlow to Luther. She waves her hankie.

MISS TREMAINE

Hi, Luther.

85

ANOTHER ANGLE

Luther shyly returns the wave.

86

WHITLOW AND MISS TREMAINE

WHITLOW

How would you describe Mr. Heggs as a boy?

MISS TREMAINE

Oh, Luther was a very nice boy. He got three blue stars in deportment and three gold stars in penmanship.

WHITLOW

How else would you describe him?

MISS TREMAINE

He was painfully thin and very keyed up.

WHITLOW

Can you elaborate on the phrase "keyed up?"

MISS TREMAINE

Well, let's see...For one, he never ate the crusts on his sandwiches at lunch.

CONTINUED

SPRINGER

I object! I move that statement be stricken from the record. A lot of people trim the crusts on their bread!

MISS TREMAINE

(to Springer)

He didn't trim them, young man! He ate the inside out and left the crust.

JUDGE

(sighs)

Overruled.

WHITLOW

More specifically, Miss Tremaine -- how else did he behave? You know, being keyed up?

MISS TREMAINE

His shoes fell off a lot. But I suppose that could be because he was so thin and ran so much.

WHITLOW

Was he a talkative boy?

MISS TREMAINE

When he had a good story to tell. And he made up some beauties.

WHITLOW

What kind of stories, Miss Tremaine?

MISS TREMAINE

Ohhh, wild things.

WHITLOW

Can you recall any specifically?

MISS TREMAINE.

Well, I remember he once told all the boys he found a real skeleton in MacQueen's barn.

The audience stirs again. Some of the women GASP. Luther jumps to his feet.

LUTHER

Of a squirrel, a squirrel! I never said it was a person skeleton!

CONTINUED

86 CONTINUED - 2

JUDGE

(BANGING gavel)

Quiet down, Luther, or I'm going
to have to cite you for contempt!

LUTHER

And they were my brother's shoes!
That's why they fell off!

MAN (o.s.)

Atta boy, Luther!

The judge BANGS his gavel angrily. Luther sits down sheepishly.

WHITLOW

Can you recall any more of Mr.
Heggs' imaginative ramblings, Miss
Tremaine?

MISS TREMAINE

Oh, lots of things. He told Mary
Jane Panucci that the filling in
his eye tooth was a short wave radio
and he used to get messages from
Admiral Byrd.

87 ANOTHER ANGLE - MED. SHOT

Luther, Becket and Springer.

LUTHER

(UNDER)

I only wanted her to like me.

88 ANOTHER ANGLE

Miss Tremaine and Whitlow.

WHITLOW

Go on, Miss Tremaine.

MISS TREMAINE

Well, I remember once I asked my
students to write a theme called
"My Father." Luther wrote that
his father was really the Prince
of Wales but there was a mix-up at
the hospital.

CONTINUED

88 CONTINUED

The audience starts laughing. Whitlow turns to Springer.

WHITLOW

Your witness.

89 ANOTHER ANGLE - MED. SHOT

Springer, Luther and Becket.

SPRINGER

No questions.

Luther looks at him surprised. Miss Tremaine walks INTO FRAME on her way to her seat.

MISS TREMAINE

I hope I helped you, Luther.

LUTHER

(dejectedly)

Thank you.

Springer sees how down Luther is.

SPRINGER

Don't worry about a thing, Luther.
I've got a surprise witness coming up.

Luther just sighs heavily.

DISSOLVE TO

90 INT. COURTROOM - DAY

GAYLORD PATIE, a middle-aged, clerical looking man is on the stand. He is being interrogated by Luther's attorney, Mr. Springer.

SPRINGER

Your full name, sir?

PATIE

Gaylord Patie.

SPRINGER

And what is your occupation?

CONTINUED

90 CONTINUED

PATIE

I'm a certified public accountant
for the state.

SPRINGER

Now then.

(turns to the jury
confidently)

I understand that you, Mr. Patie
have heard the organ playing in
the Simmon's mansion. Am I correct,
sir?

PATIE

You are. I have heard organ music
coming from the tower of the Simmon's
mansion on three separate occasions.
That's why I came to you, Mr. Springer.

SPRINGER

And at what time did you hear this
music?

PATIE

At the stroke of midnight.

O.s. we HEAR a GASP from the audience.

SPRINGER

And what else have you heard coming
from the Simmon's mansion, Mr. Patie?

PATIE

On the first occasion a woman
screamed. On the second and third
occasions a man screamed.

SPRINGER

And what kind of screams were they,
Mr. Patie?

PATIE

Wild, maniacal screams.

CONTINUED

90 CONTINUED - 2

SPRINGER

(briskly)

Thank you.

(turns)

Your witness.

Whitlow is on his feet quickly APPROACHING Mr. Patie.

WHITLOW

Mr. Patie, I understand you are
President of the International
Conclave for Unidentified Flying
Objects.

PATIE

That is correct, sir.

WHITLOW

And where was your last meeting
held?

PATIE

(pointing up)

On Mars.

WHITLOW

(briskly)

Thank you.

91 ANOTHER ANGLE

Luther sinking down in his chair.

92 ANOTHER ANGLE

Whitlow joining Simmons at their table.

SIMMONS

Good work.

WHITLOW

Wait'll I get Heggs up there.

93 ANOTHER ANGLE

CLOSEUP of the bailiff.

CONTINUED

93 CONTINUED

BAILIFF

Luther Heggs to the stand, please.
Luther Heggs.

94 ANOTHER ANGLE - FULL SHOT

There is a buzzing in the courtroom. Spectators turning to one another whispering etc. Luther nervously gets up out of his chair. He starts making his way toward the stand. To get there he has to walk along the audience barrier. As he nears the aisle Mrs. Maxwell and her GROUP form a chain holding hands, Mrs. Maxwell at the head. She reaches over the barrier and touches Luther's arm. The group quivers in ecstasy.

MRS. MAXWELL

Taro caro.

GROUP

Salamond.

Luther jumps like he's been goosed. As Luther approaches the bench the Judge turns to him.

JUDGE

What was that all about?

LUTHER

(embarrassed...under)

Uh...taro caro salamond.

JUDGE

Oh.

(up...to Mrs. Maxwell's
group)

You lodge women...keep your seats.

(to the bailiff)

Alright Charley.

Charley extends the bible to Luther who puts his left hand on it, raising his right.

CHARLEY

Do you solemnly swear...
(mumbles the rest)

LUTHER

I do.

CHARLEY

Be seated.

Luther sits down. Now Whitlow approaches him.

CONTINUED

94 CONTINUED

WHITLOW

(kindly)

Your full name is Luther Heggs.
Is that right?

LUTHER

(nervously)

Yes, sir.

Luther's right leg is jiggling up and down.

WHITLOW

Do you mind if I call you Luther?

LUTHER

(quickly)

Fine!

WHITLOW

(notices Luther's
leg)

Relax, son.

LUTHER

I am.

Luther places his hand on the vibrating leg to stop it from
jiggling. His other leg starts jiggling.

WHITLOW

I'll try not to keep you on the
stand too long, Luther.

LUTHER

(nervously)

Oh, I don't mind. It's all part
of the game.

WHITLOW

What game is that?

LUTHER

The newspaper game.

WHITLOW

You love the newspaper game, don't
you, Luther?

LUTHER

Sure do. I believe if you cut
me I'd bleed ink.

Luther laughs a nervous, wheezing laugh.

CONTINUED

94 CONTINUED - 2

WHITLOW

That's very funny.

LUTHER

Thank you.

WHITLOW

You seem to have a knack for turning a colorful phrase.

LUTHER

Well...

(false humility)

when you work with words, words are your work.

WHITLOW

Bravo. Yes, I guess you would learn a lot about words down there in the typesetting room.

LUTHER

(clears throat)

Well, I uh...I'm just filling in time down there in the typesetting room.

WHITLOW

Oh, I see. You'd do anything to become a full time reporter. Isn't that true?

LUTHER

Well...who wouldn't? After all a chance comes along and ---

WHITLOW

Including exaggerating and fabricating.

LUTHER

-- and a fellow'd be a fool to pass it up and...what???

WHITLOW

I'm asking you a question, Mr. Heggs. Why don't you curb your daydreams for one minute?

LUTHER

(angrily)

Why don't you curb your tongue!

CONTINUED

94 CONTINUED - 3

MAN (O.S.)

Atta boy, Luther!

The audience LAUGHS. The judge pounds for order. Luther's back is up. Whitlow turns his back on Luther for a moment until the court noise dies down. Suddenly he turns, confronting Luther. Luther recoils.

WHITLOW

(UP)

Isn't it true you were promised a position as a full time reporter if you brought back a sensational story from that house? A story, which in truth, came out of your own head?

LUTHER

(up on his feet)

No! That's not true! I saw those things!

MRS. MAXWELL

Yes! Yes!

LUTHER

I heard those things!

MRS. MAXWELL

He heard those things!

LUTHER

Those church bells rang!

Women in the audience AD LIB..."Yeah! Yeah!"

MRS. MAXWELL

They rang, and rang!

LUTHER

And the organ played?

MRS. MAXWELL

Oh yes...it played!

Audience AD LIBS..."Yes! Yes!" Judge pounds for silence.

LUTHER

And I saw the blood stains on the keys! They're still there!

CONTINUED

95 ANOTHER ANGLE - CLOSE SHOT - MRS. COBB

MRS. COBB
And they used Bon Ami!

96 ANOTHER ANGLE - MRS. MAXWELL

MRS. MAXWELL
Tell it, Luther! Tell it!

97 ANOTHER ANGLE - LUTHER AND WHITLOW

LUTHER
(UP)
And when I ran downstairs I came
face to face with the painting of
Mrs. Simmons.

MRS. MAXWELL'S VOICE
That dear, dead girl.

LUTHER
There was a pair of gardener shears
stuck in her throat...blood
gushing from the wound!

A woman SCREAMS from the audience. The spectators are buzzing excitedly.

98 ANOTHER ANGLE - THE AUDIENCE

Mrs. Maxwell has fainted. The man next to her stands up.

BAILIFF
Mrs. Maxwell's fainted, Judge!!

(X)

99 ANOTHER ANGLE

The bench. The Judge is on his feet, banging for order.

JUDGE
Some of you huskies over there!
Pick her up and get her out
under a tree or something.

100 ANOTHER ANGLE

A group of men are struggling with Mrs. Maxwell trying to move her down the aisle. She's an awkward load, causing great difficulties.

MRS. MILLER
Keep her head up!

MRS. HUTCHINSON
Keep her feet up!

MRS. COBB
Keep her head higher than her feet!

101 ANOTHER ANGLE - SIMMONS.

He is looking across the courtroom focusing on Mr. Kelsey. There is hate in his eyes.

102 ANOTHER ANGLE

Kelsey deep in the audience. He is conscious of Simmons gaze and glares back at him.

103 ANOTHER ANGLE

The Judge. He's banging his gavel angrily. The courtroom quiets down slightly.

JUDGE
Quiet down! Now I'm going to tell you something right now! I don't know if I believe in ghosts or not. Me and my missus has talked about that many a night. There's only one way to find out if there's anything going on in that Simmons place. This court hereby orders the jury and interested parties will meet here in front of the courthouse at eleven thirty tonight and we'll go down to the Simmons house and see for ourselves! Court's adjourned!

There is a burst of applause. The audience is on its feet.

104 ANOTHER ANGLE

Simmons and Whitlow at their table.

SIMMONS

(under...angrily)
I don't want people going through
that house. Object or something.

WHITLOW

I can't. The court has ordered it.

105 ANOTHER ANGLE

Luther looking somewhat victorious. As a buzzing excited
audience makes its way out as we....

DISSOLVE TO

106 EXT. TOWN STREET - NIGHT

Luther is leading a group including the Judge, Jury, Whitlow, Simmons, Becket, Springer, Ollie. They are marching down the street toward the Simmons place. They march in silence. Some of the jurors carry Coleman lanterns -- Luther is swaggering with importance and determination. A few dogs join them, barking excitedly, delighted with the action. As they approach the Simmons house the crowd gathered at the gate starts murmuring "here they come." "Now we'll see for sure" etc. Herkie and Fuller clear a path to the main gate. The crowd parts to let the interested parties through. The women jurors look around, frightened, they huddle together.

JUDGE

(to Fuller)

Okay, Chief, we're ready. We're
going in.

FULLER

Right, Judge.

Fuller opens the gate. The jurors start through the gate. Herkie is checking them.

HERKIE

You're okay...you're okay.

Alma comes up to Luther.

ALMA

Good luck, Luther.

CONTINUED

106 CONTINUED

LUTHER

(cockily)

We've got it made.

Mrs. Maxwell comes up to Luther.

MRS. MAXWELL

I believe in you, Luther. I
believe in what you stand for.

My group is sharing this with you
and that's akin to love.

Mrs. Maxwell steps back, looking at him.

LUTHER

(shyly)

Taro...uh...caro....

MRS. MAXWELL'S GROUP

Salamond!

Luther's embarrassed. He turns to Alma.

LUTHER

You're coming in with me aren't
you, Alma?

ALMA

I don't know if they'll let me.

LUTHER

Come on. You're with me.

Luther takes her arm, leads her to the gate.

LUTHER

(to Herkie)

She's with me.

Herkie gives him the okay sign, and they go through the gate.
The jurors, judge, and the others have already gone through.
Now Mr. Kelsey, last in line, tries to go through the gate.

HERKIE

Where're you going, Kelsey?

KELSEY

Press.

HERKIE

Who're you kiddin'? Out!

Kelsey looks completely frustrated. He disappears into the crowd.

107 ANOTHER ANGLE

The group is heading up the drive to the house. The lady jurors hang back a bit.

LUTHER

(up)

Close ranks, people.

WOMAN JUROR

(to another)

I always knew I'd hate jury duty.

They reach the front door. Fuller produces a key, opens the door and the group ENTERS.

107-A INT. SIMMONS ENTRY HALL - NIGHT

The group ENTERS, Luther taking charge immediately. He steps away from the group.

LUTHER

(up)

All right now, let me have your attention for a minute. I'm going to take you on a tour duplicating my movements of that night. Now you're apt to see some pretty frightening things, but don't panic. You're in no real personal danger. Ladies of the jury, stay close together...hold hands if you wish. First I'm going to take you into the den, then up to the organ loft and ---

Whitlow has turned and is looking at the portrait of Mrs. Simmons on the wall....

WHITLOW

Say, Heggs, isn't that the portrait of Mrs. Simmons you were talking about?

LUTHER

Well, first I'd rather show them the ---

WHITLOW

That's it, isn't it?

CONTINUED

107-A CONTINUED

The group moves over to the portrait, some of them holding up their lanterns. The painting is unmarred, and slightly different in color and composition.

SIMMONS

Where's the garden shears?

OLLIE

Where's the blood?

WHITLOW

Seems to me there should be some kind of hole in there.

LUTHER

(crossing to examine the painting)

I'm sure there is. Wait a minute, I'll show you.

Luther examines the painting. He turns, rather shakily.

LUTHER

That's funny. Wait a minute... maybe this isn't the same picture.

108 ANOTHER ANGLE

The group. They are exchanging disbelieving looks. Some of the jurors exchange whispered comments.

109 ANOTHER ANGLE

Luther...a bit desperate.

LUTHER

I don't think that's the same picture.

OLLIE

That's okay, Luther, if you've seen one picture of a woman with shears stuck in her throat you've seen 'em all!

BECKET

(in fast)

Luther, let's start the tour with the wall that opens.

CONTINUED

109 CONTINUED

LUTHER

All right, all right. Follow me,
everybody! We're going to see the
wall that opens! The opening wall!

Luther turns for one more confused look at the painting.
Then walks through the group and heads for the study. The
group, still exchanging whispered comments, follows him.
The Judge is alongside Luther.

LUTHER

Oh, I know what our trouble is
back there.

(indicates painting)

That didn't happen 'til after the
midnight bells.

Luther ENTERS the den.

JUDGE

My mind's wide open, Luther.

He tosses Luther a side glance of doubt. the group ENTERS
the study.

110 INT. STUDY - NIGHT

They all ENTER, Luther in the lead. He crosses to the
secret wall.

LUTHER

Over here, everybody. This is
your wall that opens up...right
over here.

The group crosses to him.

111 ANOTHER ANGLE

Simmons has moved over and is blocking the andirons. Alma
notices his move and looks at him curiously.

112 ANOTHER ANGLE

Luther at the wall. He backs away about ten feet. The group
splits to let him back up.

CONTINUED

112 CONTINUED

LUTHER

Now I was standing about here. I
picked up a book....

He picks up a book.

LUTHER

And I threw it against the wall....

He throws the book against the wall.

LUTHER

And whoosh! She opened!

Luther and the others stand there expectantly. Nothing
happens. He picks up another book. Rears back to throw it.

LUTHER

Picked up a book, threw it against
the wall and...

(throws book)

Whoosh?

The group stare at him now. Quickly Luther throws two more
books at the wall...hard. Nothing happens. There is
murmuring among the jurors now. Luther crosses to the
wall...he's desperate. He starts pounding on the wall.

LUTHER

Now wait a minute...this should
open right up...whoosh! There's
something wrong here! There's
stairs in there!

OLLIE

(to Alma..under)

A real loser.

The Judge APPROACHES him kindly.

JUDGE'

Luther, it's uh...almost midnight.
We better be getting along to the
organ part of it.

LUTHER

I can't understand it. It
opened right up.

CONTINUED

112 CONTINUED - 2

JUDGE

Whoosh.

LUTHER

That's right.

They all start their EXIT toward the main entry hall.

113 INT. ENTRY HALL - NIGHT

The Jury, Judge and group are heading up the stairs to the second floor of the house.

OLLIE

(under to Becket)

I've seen spookier things at Mrs. Miller's house.

BECKET

Ollie, if this little experiment falls flat, you're in as much trouble as me and Luther.

The group reaches the top of the stairs. Luther holds up his hands for them to stop.

LUTHER

Well, folks, it's almost midnight. The ghost of Mr. Simmons will be up in the organ loft in a matter of minutes.

Luther stops as one of the lady jurors whispers something in the Judge's ear. The Judge turns to the other ladies.

JUDGE

Do all of you ladies feel the same way?

They nod timorously.

JUDGE

Very well. You're excused from going to the organ loft. Wait for us here in the entry hall.

Eagerly and relieved the eight women jurors run down the main stairs to the entry hall huddling in a group. Luther leads the rest of the party down the hall to a door. He opens and leads the way IN.

114 INT. SPIRAL STAIRWAY ROOM - NIGHT

The group, Luther in the lead, enters and starts up the stairs.

115 INT. ORGAN LOFT - NIGHT

The group enters, gathering around the organ. Some of the men look around frightened.

MAN JUROR

Look, the bloodstains.

LUTHER

That's right...there they are.
What time have you got, Judge?

JUDGE

(checking his
watch)

About twenty seconds to midnight.

LUTHER

Good.

ALMA

Oooh.

LUTHER

Steady does it.

They all stand in silence now staring at the organ. Everybody's a bit tense. Suddenly, WE HEAR the first CHURCH BELLS o.s. Everyone leans in a bit closer to watch the organ keys.

LUTHER

Okay...all right now...here we go.

No sound from the organ.

SIMMONS

This is ridiculous.

LUTHER

(pause as he waits
expectantly...the
bells are still
ringing)

Okay....

(to the organ)

Come on...let's go...come on...
come on...

CONTINUED

115 CONTINUED

LUTHER

(snaps his fingers
in tempo)

Go baby. One...two...three ---

Now he tries to hum the tune the organ played...nothing happens. Luther coaxes the organ in every conceivable way to no avail. He tries to simulate organ sounds. He stops, looks up, they're all staring at him.

JUDGE

(heaves a big sigh)

Luther, I think that's about it.

LUTHER

But it played! It played, I tell you! You can see the blood on the keys.

They all give Luther looks of disdain. He slumps defeated. They all walk out. Luther stands there alone.

116 INT. MAIN ENTRY HALL - NIGHT

The group comes down the main stairs, heading for the front door. There are AD LIBS.... "I knew he was crazy from the word, go." "Hoax, nothing but a hoax." They all EXIT. Luther APPEARS, barely visible in the darkness, at the head of the stairs.

117 EXT. SIMMONS HOUSE - NIGHT

The jury etc. come out of the house and walk toward the street. As they near the gate the spectators close in anxious for news.

118 INT. DEN - NIGHT

Alma has lagged behind and is investigating the andirons. The room is quite dark. She tugs and pushes the sphere on the top of the andiron. One of the spheres turns in her hand. There is a CLICK: a HUMMING NOISE as the wall to her right opens. She is momentarily startled. Slowly she crosses to the open wall. Then suddenly, a black gloved hand covers her mouth. A bulky shadow of a man pushes her into the opening. The wall SLAMS shut.

119 EXT. SIMMONS HOUSE - NIGHT

Luther coming out the front door. He slowly makes his way to the crowd out front. He hears the Judge saying.

JUDGE

(to Fuller)

You might as well tell these folks to go home, Chief. There's nothing in there.

WOMAN JUROR

Just an old empty house.

WHITLOW

All imagination, I'm afraid.

FULLER

(up...to the crowd)

All right, folks. Break it up. It's all over. The Judge says there's nothing in there. Let's move along now.

The crowd murmurs disappointedly. WE HEAR ALIBIS..."just a fake," "a hoax." The crowd starts to move away. TIGHTEN ON Becket and Luther still standing there.

BECKET

(sighs)

We're finished, Luther. You better find another job.

LUTHER

I'm sorry, Mr. Becket...couldn't we ----

BECKET

Please. Just leave me alone. Luther. Just leave me alone.

Becket walks away. The crowd has moved half a block down the street by now...everyone except Mrs. Maxwell. She just stands there looking at him. Luther stands there sheepishly, shrugs philosophically, smiles. There's a pause...then WHAM! She hits him in the face with her purse, turns angrily and heads on down the street. Luther is left alone in front of the Simmons...he stands there for a moment looking quite forlorn.

CONTINUED

119 CONTINUED

He starts out the gate and turns to go down the street toward the center of town. The crowd has completely DISAPPEARED. He's a forlorn-looking figure as he makes his way along the fence surrounding the Simmons' house. A chill wind comes up and Luther raises his coat collar. Suddenly he stops...he thinks he hears something o.s. FAINTLY WE HEAR the organ start to play. Luther tenses...he's momentarily undecided whether or not to go back in. He turns to call to the crowd, but the street is empty. He decides to go back in. He walks up the sidewalk to the gate and enters. The ORGAN is LOUDER now. Luther makes his way to the front door and ENTERS.

120 INT. MAIN ENTRY HALL - NIGHT

The ORGAN is playing wildly and loud as Luther ENTERS. O.s. the WIND BLOWS a few SHUTTERS against the walls of the house. Luther hurries up the main stairway to the second floor and heads down the hall.

121 INT. ROOM AT BASE OF SPIRAL STAIRWAY - NIGHT

Luther ENTERS. The ORGAN is almost deafening this close. Luther straightens his back and slowly starts up the spiral staircase. He stops as he hears a maniacal LAUGH from the loft. He decides to continue on up.

122 INT. ORGAN LOFT - NIGHT

A candelabra burns dimly. Luther APPEARS in the doorway. He stiffens, recoiling in shock. The ORGAN music is ear splitting.

123 ANOTHER ANGLE

A black-cloaked figure is hunched over the organ playing. The player is fanatically engrossed in his music.

124 ANOTHER ANGLE - LUTHER

He swallows hard, and decides to see who it is.

125 ANOTHER ANGLE - MED. SHOT - LUTHER AND FIGURE AT THE ORGAN

Luther is about three feet behind the man. Luther slowly moves around to one side to get a look at the man's face. The man turns, back to the CAMERA.

CONTINUED

126 ANOTHER ANGLE - CLOSEUP - LUTHER

Luther GASPS.

127 ANOTHER ANGLE - CLOSEUP - MR. KELSEY

128 ANOTHER ANGLE - MED. SHOT - LUTHER AND KELSEY

LUTHER

Mr. Kelsey! You???

KELSEY

I thought this would get you back
in here, Luther. Where are the
others?

LUTHER

They all left. You mean you ---
(indicates the
organ)

KELSEY

Yup...Played the night you were
here...stabbed the painting...
everything.

LUTHER

But when the organ was playing
there was nobody at it.

KELSEY

There's a tuning keyboard under the
pipes.

LUTHER

But where were you tonight?

KELSEY

That dumb Herkie wouldn't let me
in.

LUTHER

But why? What's this all ---

O.s. we hear a woman SCREAM. Luther and Kelsey jump. Another
SCREAM.

CONTINUED

128 CONTINUED

LUTHER
That sounds like Alma.

O.s. another SCREAM. They both look toward the wall.

KELSEY
Come on!

Kelsey presses the deepest base NOTE on the organ and the wall opens up, revealing the secret stairway. Another SCREAM. This one loud and clear. Kelsey grabs the candelabra, leading Luther to the open panel. They look in.

129 INT. SECRET STAIRWAY - NIGHT

Luther and Kelsey's POINT OF VIEW. Simmons has Alma in a viselike grip.

SIMMONS
Take another step closer and I'll kill her.

Kelsey reaches inside his coat and pulls out a pair of gardener's shears. He points them toward Simmons menacingly. Luther is starting to tremble.

KELSEY
Know what these are, Mr. Simmons?

Simmons looks.

KELSEY
That's right. They're my shears. The ones you used to kill your aunt. And you left 'em there to pin it on me.

Simmons, Alma in his arms, is retreating slowly down the narrow stairs.

SIMMONS
I'll kill her, Kelsey. Now let me out of here.

Kelsey starts moving down the stairs toward Simmons. Luther is behind him.

CONTINUED

129 CONTINUED

KELSEY

It won't do you a bit of good,
Nickie. Now everybody's going to
know about this staircase...your
big alibi, Nickie. It won't help
to bulldoze the house down now.

Kelsey moves a step closer to Simmons.

SIMMONS

That's far enough!

Kelsey turns to Luther.

KELSEY

(whispers)

Go downstairs and come up behind
him.

LUTHER

How?

KELSEY

Turn the andiron. It opens the
panel in the study.

LUTHER

(mumbling)

Andiron....

Luther backs up the steps EXITING.

130 INT. ORGAN LOFT - NIGHT

Luther ENTERS, EXITS the doorway to the spiral staircase.

131 INT. SPIRAL STAIRCASE ROOM - NIGHT

Luther racing down the hall to the main stairway leading down
into the entry hall, slipping and falling along the way.

132 INT. HALL - NIGHT

Luther racing down the hall to the main stairway leading down
into the entry hall.

133 INT. ENTRY HALL - NIGHT

Luther comes flying down the wide stairway. He ENTERS THE STUDY.

134 INT. STUDY - NIGHT

Luther runs to the fireplace and frantically starts turning the andirons. Nothing happens. He is turning the wrong one. Finally he gets the right one and the panel opens. Luther crosses to the opening stealthily. He is behind Simmons and Alma. Kelsey is visible about a third of the way down the stairs. Kelsey reacts when he sees Luther.

KELSEY

(to Simmons)

You killed them both, didn't you?
Killed 'em both for the money and
tried to pin it on me.

Luther takes his Karate stance. He practices a couple of Karate chops.

SIMMONS

(to Kelsey)

I'll kill her, Kelsey!

Holding his hands Karate fashion, Luther starts to stalk Simmons. He suddenly hurls himself towards Simmons, giving him a crashing Karate blow across the back of the neck. There is a LOUD THUD. Luther recoils in pain.

SIMMONS

(showing no visible
effects from the
blow and without
turning....)

Stay out of this, Heggs.

Luther backs off holding his hand, moaning around the study.

135 INT. STAIRWAY - NIGHT

Kelsey.

KELSEY

Don't give up now, Luther! Get
'im!

SIMMONS

Stay back, Heggs! Stay back!

136 INT. STUDY - NIGHT

Luther is panicky...he doesn't know what to do...he charges in different directions. Then backs away from the stairway opening and takes a sprinter's starting position. He runs at Simmons' back, hurling his body through the air in a flying block position. He hits Simmons square across the back and drops to the ground limply. Simmons goes down across the prone Luther. Kelsey comes down the stairs and holds the shears at Simmons' throat.

KELSEY

Alma, call the police.

DISSOLVE TO

137 INT. ENTRY HALL - NIGHT

CLOSEUP of Simmons all trussed up with a sash cord. OPEN THE SHOT to reveal Luther, Becket, Kelsey, Alma, Herkie and eight or ten spectators who have wandered in as a result of the police car arriving among them. Luther is pacing back and forth feeling his oats. He throws a couple of Karate chops, etc.

LUTHER

The bigger they are, the harder they fall.

Fuller ENTERS from the den.

FULLER

He's right, I turned the andiron and the wall opened up.

LUTHER

You better learn to take the word of the press, Chief.

Luther flicks his press tag at Fuller.

FULLER

All right now, let me get this whole thing straight.

KELSEY

You see, the secret staircase was Simmons' big alibi. He ---

LUTHER

That's right. The big alibi-rooney.

CONTINUED

137 CONTINUED

KELSEY

You see, that night the old man was up in the organ loft playing the organ.

Luther imitates the organ briefly as he struts around.

KELSEY

I heard a scuffle coming from the madam's bedroom, I saw Nick Simmons run out of the room and head for the organ loft.

LUTHER

(points up)
Topside.

KELSEY

He didn't see me.

LUTHER

He didn't see him.

KELSEY

I went into the bedroom and there lay Mrs. Simmons with my garden shears stuck in her throat.

Luther reaches in Kelsey's pocket and takes out the shears.

LUTHER

Here they are...here's your murder weapon. I submit these as Exhibit "A."

Fuller takes them.

LUTHER

Watch the prints.

KELSEY

I grabbed those and put them under my coat. When the servants came up the stairs we heard a scream from the organ loft and the thud of a body falling into the bushes. We rushed to the window and there on the ground below lay the body of old man Simmons.

CONTINUED

137 CONTINUED - 2

HERKIE

Oh, my! How horrifying.

LUTHER

Dead as a doornail.

KELSEY

We turned and started down the stairs, met Nick Simmons comin' up like he'd just come home. You see, he had slipped downstairs by way of the secret staircase.

The crowd reacts, mumbling surprise to one another.

LUTHER

That's it, that sews it up.

KELSEY

Ever since then, folks just figured the old man, having one of his crazy spells, killed his wife, went up stairs, played the organ and then jumped out the window.

FULLER

How come you waited so long to bring this out in the open, Mr. Kelsey?

KELSEY

I was scared. But this was my last chance.

LUTHER

I think that about wraps it up, Chief. Take him away.

Luther starts walking OUT, Alma on his arm.

HERKIE

You knock Simmons out, Luther?

LUTHER

Oh, yeah. Karate...made my body a weapon.

He Karate chops his hand, hurting it. People pat Luther on the back as he continues OUT.

DISSOLVE TO

138 OMITTED

138-A INT. MRS. MILLER'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

An arbor has been made -- room is decorated gaily. Luther, Alma and JUDGE HARLEY NAST. They're in formal wedding garb. The room is jammed with their friends. In the corner is a harmonium.

JUDGE

Do you, Alma, take this man to be your lawful wedded husband?

ALMA

I do.

139 ANOTHER ANGLE

Herkie and Fuller

JUDGE (o.s.)

Do you, Luther, take this woman to be your lawful wedded wife?

140 ANOTHER ANGLE

Ollie and Becket.

JUDGE (o.s.)

By virtue of the authority vested in me....

141 ANOTHER ANGLE

Mrs. Miller, Mrs. Cobb, Mrs. Hutchinson and Mr. Deligondo still wearing his hat.

JUDGE (o.s.)

I now pronounce you man and wife.

142 ANOTHER ANGLE

Luther, Alma and the Judge

JUDGE

You can kiss her now, Luther.

CONTINUED

142 CONTINUED

Luther lifts Alma's veil and kisses her.

MAN'S VOICE

Atta boy, Luther!

Luther and Alma turn and start down the aisle to the strains of the Wedding March. People fall in behind them and start out. Nearing the door the ORGAN MUSIC switches to the weird music heard in the haunted house. Everybody turns and looks in the direction of the harmonium. As one, they freeze in disbelief. We PAN SLOWLY ACROSS the room to the harmonium. It's playing, the keys and foot pedals are moving, but no one is seated there. SEGUE INTO THEME as we....GO TO CREDITS. UNDER CREDITS Luther leads the way across the room and starts to look over the harmonium. He's joined by the others, as we:

FADE OUT

THE END