

"THE BIG SLEEP"

Screenplay

by

William Faulkner
Leigh Brackett
Jules Furthman

From the novel

by

Raymond Chandler

1944

FADE IN:

1. EXT. STERNWOOD PLACE - ESTABLISHING SCENE

It is a millionaire's house, big, sprawling, California style, with clipped lawns and gardens, on a hill above the now abandoned oil field which was the family's wealth. A small coupe drives up to the door and stops, and Philip Marlowe gets out. We just have time to establish him as he approaches the door -- a husky, self-confident man, well-dressed but not flashy.

2. INSERT: A BRASS DOORPLATE KNOCKER WITH A BELL BENEATH
lettered

STERNWOOD

3. EXT. FRONT DOOR - CLOSE SHOT - MARLOWE

as NORRIS opens the door. Norris is thin, silver-haired with a gentle intelligent face.

NORRIS
(holding the door)
Good morning, sir.

MARLOWE
I'm Philip Marlowe. General
Sternwood sent for me.

NORRIS
(opens door,
steps aside)
Yes, Mr. Marlowe. Will you
come in?

MARLOWE
(entering)
Thanks.

4. INT. FORMAL MALL - SAME OPULENT BIG-SCALE STYLE - MARLOWE

as Norris shuts the door, takes Marlowe's hat.

NORRIS
Will you sit here? I'll tell
the General you have come.

MARLOWE
Okay.

Norris exits. Marlowe looks about, interested and curious, sees something, moves toward it.

5. CLOSE SHOT - MARLOWE

as he stands before a portrait, examining it with curious interest. It is a portrait of General Sternwood, in regimentals, beneath crossed battle-torn cavalry pennons and a sabre. He is still staring at the portrait when at a SOUND OFF, he turns and sees CARMEN STERNWOOD approaching. She is about 20, in slacks, something sullen and hot about her. She stops about 10 feet from him and stares at him, biting the thumb of her left hand.

MARLOWE

Good morning.

CARMEN

(after a moment)

You're not very tall are you?

MARLOWE

I tried to be.

CARMEN

Not bad looking, though -- you probably know it.

MARLOWE

Thanks.

He goes to a chair and sits down. When he looks up, he sees Carmen approaching, still staring at him.

CARMEN

(approaching)

What's your name?

MARLOWE

Reilly -- Doghouse Reilly.

CARMEN

(beside the chair now)

That's a funny name. Are you a prize fighter?

MARLOWE

No. I'm a shamus.

CARMEN

A what?

MARLOWE

A private detective.

CARMEN

You're cute.

As she speaks, she sits suddenly on the arm of his chair. As she does so, Marlowe rises, shifts the chair in doing so, so that to her surprise, Carmen finds herself sitting in the chair itself. She stares up, surprised and then angrily, is about to speak again when they both see Norris. He has just entered noiselessly, stands beside the chair. On Norris' face there is now a curious expression of grief, sadness. Carmen glances up at him, rises quickly as if he had reprimanded her with words, and exits. Marlowe looks after her, thoughtful, a little grim.

NORRIS

The General will see you now.

MARLOWE

(looking after Carmen)
Who was that?

NORRIS

Miss Carmen Sternwood, sir.

MARLOWE

You ought to wean her. She looks old enough.

NORRIS

Yes, sir. This way, if you please.

They exit through French doors.

6. EXT. REAR LAWN - SAME WEALTHY SCALE

Garage at one side, beyond it a tremendous greenhouse. Norris is leading Marlowe along the path toward the green house. A chauffeur is washing a car before the garage. We establish him in passing -- a handsome, boyish-looking man, OWEN TAYLOR.

Marlowe follows Norris on to the greenhouse, looking at the tremendous size of it as Norris opens the door and stands aside for Marlowe to enter.

7. INT. GREENHOUSE CHOKED WITH ORCHID PLANTS

Marlowe, following Norris between the crowding tendrils and branches. The place is oven-hot, damp with sweat, green with gloom. Marlowe is already reacting to it, is already mopping his face with his handkerchief.

MARLOWE
 (mopping neck,
 following Norris)
 Couldn't we have gone around this?

NORRIS
 (over shoulder;
 walking on)
 The General sits in here, sir.

8. MED. CLOSE SHOT - GENERAL STERNWOOD

in a wheelchair in center of the greenhouse, in a cleared space about which the plants crowd and hover. The GENERAL is the man we saw in the portrait, though older, and obviously dying, so that only his fierce eyes seem to have any life. Even in the terrific heat his body is wrapped in a traveling rug and a heavy bathrobe, his gnarled hands lying like dead gnarled twigs on the rug, his fierce eyes following as Norris leads Marlowe in.

NORRIS
 (stopping)
 This is Mr. Marlowe, General.

The General does not speak, only the fierce eyes stare at Marlowe as Norris pushes a wicker chair up behind Marlowe's legs.

STERNWOOD
 Brandy, Norris.
 (to Marlowe)
 How do you like your brandy, sir?

MARLOWE
 (sitting down)
 Just with brandy.

Norris takes Marlowe's hat, exits.

STERNWOOD
 I used to like mine with champagne.
 The champagne cold as Valley Forge
 and about three ponies of brandy
 under it. You may take your coat
 off, sir.

MARLOWE
 Thanks.

He rises, removes his coat, takes out his handkerchief, hangs his coat on chair.

STERNWOOD

(watching him)

It's too hot in here for any man
who still has blood in his veins.

Marlowe sits again, mops his face and neck.

STERNWOOD

(still watching him)

You may smoke too. I can still
enjoy the smell of it, anyway.

MARLOWE

Thanks.

He produces a cigarette, lights it, blows smoke, Sternwood's nostrils moving as he sniffs the smoke. Norris enters, pushing a teawagon bearing decanter, siphon, initialed ice-bucket.

STERNWOOD

That man is already dead who must
indulge his own vices by proxy.

Norris wheels the wagon up, starts to prepare a drink.

STERNWOOD

(watching pettishly)

Come, man. Pour a decent one.

NORRIS

(adding brandy)

Yes, General.

MARLOWE

(watching)

But not too decent, Norris. I don't
want to exchange places with it.

Norris adds soda, hands glass to Marlowe.

MARLOWE

(taking glass)

Thanks.

He sits back. Norris covers the ice-bucket with a napkin, exits. SOUND of DOOR CLOSING as Norris leaves the greenhouse. Marlowe raises the glass, sips. Sternwood watches him, licks his lips with longing pleasure and enjoyment. Marlowe lowers the glass.

STERNWOOD

Tell me about yourself, Mr. Marlowe.
I suppose I have the right to ask.

MARLOWE

There's not much to tell. I'm thirty-eight years old, went to college once. I can still speak English when there's any demand for it in my business. I worked for the District Attorney's office once. It was Bernie Ohls, his chief investigator, who sent me word you wanted to see me. I'm not married.

STERNWOOD

You didn't like working for Mr. Wilde?

MARLOWE

I was fired for insubordination I seem to rate pretty high on that.

STERNWOOD

I always did, myself. Sir --
 (he slides one
 hand under the
 rug on his knees)
 What do you know about my family,
 Mr. Marlowe?

MARLOWE

(mopping)
 You're a widower, a millionaire, two young daughters. One unmarried, the other married once but it didn't didn't take. Both now living with you and both --
 (he breaks off;
 the General's
 fierce eyes
 watch him)

STERNWOOD

Go on.

MARLOWE

Am I to swap you gossip for hospitality?

STERNWOOD

(sternly)
 You are to swap me your confidence for my own.

MARLOWE

(shrugs)

All right. Both pretty, and both pretty -- wild. What did you want to see me about?

STERNWOOD

I'm being blackmailed again.

MARLOWE

(mopping)

Again?

STERNWOOD

(draws his hand out from under the rug, holding a brown envelope)

About a year ago I paid a man named Joe Brody five thousand dollars to let my younger daughter alone.

MARLOWE

Ah.

STERNWOOD

What does that mean?

MARLOWE

It means 'ah.' It never went through the D.A.'s office, or I'd have known it. Who handled that for you?

STERNWOOD

Shawn Regan did.

MARLOWE

(alternating between the drink, the cigarette and the now sodden handkerchief with which he mops his face and neck)

There must be some reason why Regan's not handling this one too. Am I to know it?

STERNWOOD

Shawn has left me.

MARLOWE

I thought I hadn't seen him around lately.

STERNWOOD

Yes, he left about a month ago, without a word. That was what hurt. I had no claim on him, since I was only his employer. But I hoped we were more than that and that he would have said goodbye to me. You knew him too?

MARLOWE

Yes. From the old days, when he was running rum from Mexico and I was on the other side, and now and then we swapped shots between drinks -- or drinks between shots, if you like that better.

STERNWOOD

My respects to you. Few men ever exchange more than one shot with Shawn Regan. He commanded a brigade in the Irish Republican Army, you know.

MARLOWE

(mopping)

No, I didn't. But I knew he was a good man at whatever he did. Nobody was pleased better than me when I heard you had taken him on as your -- whatever he was here.

STERNWOOD

As my friend, my son almost. Many's the hour he would sit here with me, sweating like a pig, drinking the brandy I could no longer drink, telling me stories of the Irish revolution -- But enough of this.

(he holds out
the envelope)

Here. And help yourself to the brandy.

Marlowe takes the envelope, sits again, wipes his hands on his wet handkerchief, removes from the envelope a card and three clips of stiff paper.

9. INSERT: CARD

-- in Marlowe's hand

Mr. Arthur Gwynne Geiger
Rare Books and Deluxe Editions

Marlowe's hand turns the card over. On the back, in hand-printing.

Dear Sir:

In spite of the legal uncollectibility of the enclosed, which frankly are gambling debts, I assume you might wish them honored.

Respectfully,
A.G. Geiger.

DISSOLVE TO:

10. INSERT: THREE PROMISSORY NOTES

Filled out in ink, dated: September 3
September 8
September 11

On demand I promise to pay to Arthur Gwynne Geiger on order the sum of One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00) without interest. Value Received.

Carmen Sternwood

11. STERNWOOD AND MARLOWE - (AS BEFORE)

Sternwood watching from wheelchair as Marlowe mixes himself a drink at the wagon, then turns toward chair.

STERNWOOD
(watching Marlowe)
Well?

MARLOWE
(standing)
Who's Arthur Gwynne Geiger?

STERNWOOD
I haven't the faintest idea.

MARLOWE
Have you asked your daughter?

STERNWOOD

I don't intend to. If I did she would suck her thumb and look coy.

MARLOWE

Yeah. I met her in the hall. She did that at me. Then she tried to sit in my lap.

Sternwood stares at him. After a moment Marlowe raises the glass, drinks, lowers it.

STERNWOOD

(harshly)

Well?

MARLOWE

(stares at him a moment)

Am I being polite, or can I say what I want?

STERNWOOD

Say it.

MARLOWE

Do the two girls run around together?

STERNWOOD

I think not. They are alike only in their one corrupt blood. Vivian is spoiled, exacting, smart, ruthless. Carmen is still the child who likes to pull the wings off flies. I assume they have always had all the usual vices; whatever new ones of their own invention --

(again he makes
the repressed
convulsive
movement, glares
at Marlowe)

Well?

MARLOWE

Pay him.

STERNWOOD

Why?

MARLOWE

It's cheaper. A little money
against a lot of annoyance. The
money you won't miss, and if your
heart hasn't broken long before this
time, whatever's behind these --
 (indicates the notes
 on the chair)
-- can't do it now.

STERNWOOD

Not my heart. No Sternwood ever had
one. But there is my pride, which I
at least, and I believe my older
daughter still, both have.

MARLOWE

Sure. A man named A.G. Geiger's
just betting himself three thousand
bucks on that pride. Who was this
Joe Brody you paid the five thousand
to?

STERNWOOD

I don't recall. Norris would know.
My butler. I think he called himself
a gambler.
 (hopefully)
This may be an authentic gambling
debt, after all.

Marlowe looks at Sternwood for a moment. Then he half
turns, sets the glass on the wagon and takes the napkin
from around the ice bucket and mops himself with it.
Sternwood watches him.

MARLOWE

Do you think it is?

STERNWOOD

 (after a second)
No.

Marlowe mops himself again with the napkin, puts it back on
the wagon, takes up his glass, drinks.

MARLOWE

I guess you want me to take this
Geiger off your back: that right?

STERNWOOD

Yes.

MARLOWE

Do you want to know anything, or do you just want to be rid of him?

STERNWOOD

Didn't you just tell me I no longer have any heart to be broken?

MARLOWE

It may cost you a little -- besides my own twenty-five a day and expenses.

Sternwood says nothing, merely makes a faint, impatient movement of his head or shoulders. Marlowe drains the glass, sets it back on the wagon.

MARLOWE

When do I start?

STERNWOOD

At once. And now if you will excuse me -- But another brandy before you go?

MARLOWE

(takes up papers
from chair, then
his coat)

No thanks.

STERNWOOD

(presses bell plugged
into chair arm)

Then good morning. And good luck.

He lies back in the chair, closes his eyes. Marlowe watches him a moment, then, his coat over his arm and still mopping his neck, he turns and exits.

12. EXT. GREENHOUSE - MARLOWE

emerges, still carrying his coat, dripping wet, mopping with his sodden handkerchief, breathing the cool air, starts away. Before he reaches the house, Norris meets him, pauses two feet away, silver-haired, respectful, grave.

NORRIS

Mrs. Rutledge, the older daughter would like to see you before you leave, sir. And about the money: the General has instructed me to give you a check for whatever you require.

MARLOWE
Instructed you how?

NORRIS
(blinks, stares,
then smiles)
Ah, I see, sir. I forgot you are a
detective. By the way he rang the
bell.

MARLOWE
You write his checks.

NORRIS
I have that privilege.

MARLOWE
(starts on)
That ought to save you from a pauper's
grave. I won't need any money now,
thanks -- How did Mrs. Rutledge know
I was here?

NORRIS
She saw you through the window. I
was obliged to tell her who you were.

MARLOWE
I don't like that.

NORRIS
Are you attempting to tell me my
duties, sir?

MARLOWE
No. Just having fun trying to guess
what they are.

NORRIS
This way, sir.

13. INT. VIVIAN'S SITTING ROOM

The room is large, over-elaborate, feminine. VIVIAN
reclines on a chaise-lounge, showing her legs to good
advantage. She is beautiful, giving an impression of
strong will and strong emotions, the dangerous
unpredictable type.

She sips a drink, insolently at ease, watching Marlowe as he enters. Marlowe is still ruffled and sweating. He adopts her be-damned-to-you attitude, looks her over, and sits down unbidden, wiping his face and neck with his handkerchief.

VIVIAN

So you're a private detective. I didn't know they existed except in books, or else they were little greedy men snooping around hotels. My, you're a mess, aren't you?

MARLOWE

Yeah -- I'm not the orchid-bearing type.

VIVIAN

This business of Dad's -- think you can handle it for him?

MARLOWE

(sardonically)
It doesn't look too tough.

VIVIAN

Really. I would have thought a case like that took a little effort.

MARLOWE

Not too much.

VIVIAN

Well! What will your first step be?

MARLOWE

The usual one.

VIVIAN

I didn't know there was a usual one.

MARLOWE

Oh, yes. It comes complete with diagrams on Page forty-seven of "How to be a Detective in Ten Easy Lessons", correspondence school textbook.

VIVIAN

You must have read another one on how to be a comedian. I'm quite serious, Mr. Marlowe. My father is not well, and I want this case handled with the least possible worry to him.

MARLOWE

That's the way I'm going to handle it.

VIVIAN

I see. No professional secrets.

Marlowe doesn't answer. He's still admiring her legs. Vivian sets her glass down, looking him over coolly, as though he were something in a bottle.

VIVIAN

How do you like Dad?

MARLOWE

I liked him.

VIVIAN

He liked Shawn. I suppose you know who Shawn is?

MARLOWE

Yeah, I know.

VIVIAN

You don't have to play poker with me. Dad wants to find him, doesn't he?

MARLOWE

Do you?

VIVIAN

Of course I do! It wasn't right for him to go off like that. Broke Dad's heart, although he won't say much about it. Or did he?

MARLOWE

He mentioned it.

VIVIAN

I don't see what there is to be cagey about. And I don't like your manners.

MARLOWE

I'm not crazy about yours. I didn't ask to see you. And I don't mind your ritzing me, or drinking your lunch out of a bottle. I don't mind your showing me your legs. They're very swell legs and it's a pleasure to make their acquaintance. I don't mind if you don't like my manners.

(MORE)

MARLOWE (CONT'D)

They're pretty bad. I grieve over them during the long winter evenings. But don't waste your time trying to cross-examine me.

Vivian is really angry now. She swings her legs to the floor, and her anger is something sparkling and terrific.

VIVIAN

People don't talk like that to me.

Marlowe laughs at her softly. His eyes are warm and mocking. Vivian relaxes slowly, looking at him, and something besides fury comes into her own face.

VIVIAN

Do you always think you can handle people like trained seals?

MARLOWE

Just what is it you're afraid of?

They watch each other, and Vivian's face closes against him like a door.

VIVIAN

Dad didn't want to see you about Shawn at all.

MARLOWE

Didn't he?

VIVIAN

Get out.

(as Marlowe rises
and turns from her)

Please... you could find Shawn if Dad wanted you to.

MARLOWE

(still dead pan)
When did he go?

VIVIAN

A month back. He just drove away one afternoon without saying a word. They found his car in some private garage.

MARLOWE

They?

VIVIAN
 (her manner suddenly
 different, as though
 she has won her bout
 with him)
 Dad didn't tell you then.

MARLOWE
 He told me about Regan, yes. That's
 not what he wanted to see me about.
 Is that what you've been trying to
 get me to say?

VIVIAN
 I'm sure I don't care what you say.

MARLOWE
 (giving her a look
 she could chin
 herself on)
 You might change your mind about
 that some day. So long, Mrs.
 Rutledge.

Vivian watches him as he goes out, with smoldering,
 puzzled eyes.

14. INT. MAIN BALL

Marlowe comes down the hall, heading for the door. Norris
 appears with Marlowe's hat and hands it to him.

MARLOWE
 You made a mistake. Mrs. Rutledge
 didn't want to see me.

NORRIS
 I'm sorry, sir. I make many
 mistakes.

He opens the door. Marlowe pauses to look at the view.

15. LONG SHOT - MARLOWE'S ANGLE

Beyond the lawns and hedges of the Sternwood estate the
 ground falls away to barren fields with several old wooden
 derricks, some of them still wearily pumping oil. The
 derricks are at a considerable distance from the house, but
 a man with binoculars could see any activity around them
 clearly enough. The sky is clouded; THUNDER SOUNDS
 distantly.

16. AT THE STERNWOOD DOOR

MARLOWE

How long those wells been pumping?

NORRIS

About thirty years. The General likes to take his field glasses sometimes and sit by the window and watch the walking-beams. They're like life, he says -- an endless seesaw, forever up and down and getting nowhere

MARLOWE

They get oil. Black stuff, with a smell to it... worth dollars.

He goes out, gets into his car and drives away. The SOUND of THUNDER follows him.

DISSOLVE TO:

17. INSERT: A BRONZE PLAQUE

"HOLLYWOOD PUBLIC LIBRARY"

DISSOLVE TO:

18. INT. LIBRARY

The typical reading room, with the usual characters hunched over books at the tables. Marlowe stands by the librarian's desk. A boy comes from the door to the stacks and hands the librarian a book. She looks at it.

LIBRARIAN

Famous First Editions.
 (looking at Marlowe
 -- it is obvious
 that she feels
 he's not the
 type to be
 reading about
 first editions)
 This was the one you wanted?

MARLOWE

(blandly, as he
 takes the book)
 I collect blondes, too -- in bottles.

He walks over to a table and sits down, leaving the woman staring after him.

19. EXT. GEIGER'S STORE - ESTABLISHING SHOT

Sign on window: "RARE EDITIONS" etc.

Marlowe walks up and pauses to assure himself that it's the right place. The store front is narrow. Discreet gold lettering on the plate glass repeats the legend on Geiger's card:

A.G. GEIGER

Rare Books and Deluxe Editions

The windows are blanked off with Chinese screens, fronted by large Oriental urns. Marlowe puts on a pair of horn-rimmed sun glasses, adjusts his hat to a less rakish angle, and enters.

20. INT. GEIGER'S STORE

The room is small, dim, expensively underfurnished with leather chairs, smoking stands, and a small pseudo-Oriental desk. A few sets of tooled leather binds on narrow tables, others in glass cases.

AGNES, a hard-looking, expensive blonde in a tight black dress, rises from behind the desk as Marlowe approaches and moves to greet him. Her manner is professionally distant, her accent betrays her phony veneer.

AGNES

Can I be of any assistance?

MARLOWE

Would you happen to have a Ben Hur 1860?

AGNES

(hanging on hard
to her composure,
seeing that she's
going to have
trouble with Marlowe)

A first edition?

MARLOWE

No. Third -- the one with the erratum on page one-sixteen.

AGNES

I'm afraid not -- at the moment.

MARLOWE

How about a Chevalier Audubon --
the full set of course?

AGNES

(with a frozen smile)
Uh -- not at the moment.

MARLOWE

(politely)
You do sell books?

AGNES

(dropping the act,
pointing to the
display books)
What do those look like --
grapefruit?

MARLOWE

They look like books from here,
anyway. Maybe I'd better talk
to Mr. Geiger.

AGNES

He's not in at the moment.

Marlowe glances up as a man enters the store; a middle-aged, important-looking person who has an incongruously furtive and nervous manner. He looks quickly at Marlowe, then at Agnes, who gives him an almost imperceptible warning nod. Marlowe remains blandly unaware of the byplay, all his attention apparently on the cigarette he's lighting.

The man walks quickly to the rear of the store. Agnes pushes a button on the desk. A door in the back wall opens on a buzzer lock. The man darts through it like a rabbit.

AGNES

(to Marlowe)
I said Mr. Geiger is not in.

MARLOWE

I heard you. I'll wait for him.

AGNES

He won't be back until very late.

At this point the furtive man comes out of the rear part of the store and leaves hurriedly, looking at neither Agnes nor Marlowe. His face is lined and haggard. Marlowe is interested.

MARLOWE

(watching the man out)
He must have got hold of the wrong
title.

(to Agnes)

Well, guess I'd better blow. I'm
already late now for my lecture on
Argentine cera-micks.

(mispronouncing the word)

AGNES

(icily, correcting him)
The word is cerAMics. And they ain't
Argentine: they're Egyptian.

MARLOWE

You did sell a book once, didn't
you? Well, even the Argentine's
a little too far for me today.
Guess I'll just stick to the public
library -- or I might try that
book store across the street.

AGNES

(freezing)

Do so.

Agnes stares viciously at his back until he is out. Then
she goes to the door at the rear, knocks and goes through.

21. MOVING SHOT - MARLOWE

He walks across the boulevard, turns into a small
bookstore, the second-hand variety, cluttered and dingy.
Several nondescript people browse among the tables. At the
rear a small, dark, shrewd-faced woman sits reading at a
desk -- apparently she is the proprietor. Marlowe
approaches her, and she looks up blank-faced from her book.

MARLOWE

Would you do me a very small favor?

PROPRIETRESS

I don't know. What is it?

MARLOWE

You know Geiger's store across the
street?

PROPRIETRESS

I think I may have passed it.

MARLOWE

You know Geiger by sight?

PROPRIETRESS

I should think it would be easy enough to go to his store and ask to see him.

MARLOWE

I don't want to see him that close, just yet.

(as he gets no response)
Know anything about rare books?

PROPRIETRESS

You could try me.

MARLOWE

Would you have a Ben Hur, 1860, Third Edition, with the duplicated line on page one-sixteen?

The woman pulls a fat volume in front of her, starts to open it.

MARLOWE

...or a Chevalier Audubon 1840...?

The woman stops, closes the book.

PROPRIETRESS

Nobody would. There isn't one.

MARLOWE

Right.

(as the woman gives him a puzzled stare)
The girl in Geiger's store didn't know that.

PROPRIETRESS

I see. You begin to interest me -- vaguely.

MARLOWE

I'm a private dick on a case. Perhaps I ask too much.

(leaning forward to hold a match for her cigarette)
It didn't seem much to me somehow.

PROPRIETRESS

(after a pause)

In his early forties, medium height, fattish, soft all over, a Charlie Chan moustache. Well dressed, goes without a hat, affects a knowledge of antiques and hasn't any. Oh yes, his left eye is glass.

MARLOWE

You'd make a good cop.

PROPRIETRESS

(returning to
her reading)

Only if he wore smoked glasses.

MARLOWE

(laughing softly --
pulling a flat
pint from his
hip pocket)

I shouldn't think you'd have to work too hard to start anything smoking.

He shakes the bottle up and down, invitingly. She looks up at him, searchingly, then smiles slowly.

PROPRIETRESS

It's going to rain, soon.

MARLOWE

I'd rather get wet in here.

She pulls open a drawer and stands two small glasses on the desk. Marlowe smiles, and starts pouring. Through the window behind him the front of Geiger's store can be seen.

DISSOLVE TO:

22. INT. BOOKSHOP - NIGHT (RAIN)

It is raining hard outside. The proprietress is a little tight, quite relaxed, and slightly philosophical, leaning against Marlowe, who sits on a stack of Britannicas beside her, watching the window. The proprietress picks up the bottle, which is now empty, shakes it forlornly, and sets it down again.

PROPRIETRESS

A couple of hours, an empty bottle, and so long, pal. That's life.

MARLOWE

But it was a nice two hours.

PROPRIETRESS

(sighing)

Uh-huh.

(looking toward
the window)

There's Geiger's car driving up.

MARLOWE

(over above action)

Who's the other guy?

PROPRIETRESS

Damon -- or Pythias. I don't know.
Geiger's shadow, anyway. Name's
Carol Lundgren.

Marlowe has risen, is now in a hurry to follow Geiger.

MARLOWE

So long, pal.

PROPRIETRESS

If you ever want to buy a book...

MARLOWE

A Ben Bur eighteen-sixty...

PROPRIETRESS

(sighing)

With duplications... So long.

DISSOLVE TO:

23. INSERT: A STREET SIGN ON A LAMP POST

Wet with rain:

LAVERNE TERRACE

DISSOLVE TO:

24. LONG SHOT - NIGHT (RAIN) ESTABLISHING A SECTION OF LAVERNE
TERRACE

A narrow street with a high bank on one side and a scattering of cabinlike houses built down the slope on the other side, so that their roofs are not much above street level. They are masked by hedges and shrubs. Sodden trees line the dark road.

The headlights of a car appear. Geiger's coupe drives up and stops in front of the garage of a small house almost completely hidden by a square box hedge. Geiger gets out, opens an umbrella, and vanishes behind the hedge. Almost immediately Marlowe's car appears, continuing slowly past Geiger's house. It turns, stops under a tree. The lights go out.

DISSOLVE TO:

25. INT. MARLOWE'S CAR - NIGHT (RAIN)

Marlowe yawns, gets a bottle out of the dash compartment, shakes it reflectively.

MARLOWE

Another hour, another bottle --
another dame?

He uncaps the bottle, salutes an unseen person wryly, drinks, then lights a cigarette and settles down to wait.

DISSOLVE TO:

26. EXT. LAVERNE TERRACE - NIGHT (RAIN)

A dark convertible stops in front of Geiger's house. The lights go out. A small slim woman in a vagabond hat and raincoat gets out. She pauses, looking around -- we see her face dimly. It is CARMEN STERNWOOD. She vanishes behind the hedge. The DOORBELL RINGS faintly, the door opens and closes.

27. INT. MARLOWE'S CAR - NIGHT (RAIN)

Marlowe looks offscene after Carmen, with an unpleasant grin.

MARLOWE

Yeah -- another dame.

His expression indicates that things may pick up shortly. He looks at his watch -- the CAMERA MOVES IN to feature the watch -- the hands standing at 6:35.

DISSOLVE TO:

28. INSERT: THE WATCH ON MARLOWE'S WRIST

The hands now indicate: 7:20

29. INT. MARLOWE'S CAR - NIGHT (RAIN)

SHOOTING obliquely across Marlowe's shoulder, showing the street and particularly Geiger's house through the rain-streaked windscreen. Suddenly a hard white flash of light shoots out of Geiger's house like a flash of lightning. Close on its heels comes a woman's thin half-pleasurable scream. Marlowe is out of the car and on his way.

30. EXT. GEIGER'S HOUSE - NIGHT (RAIN)

Marlowe rounds the hedge on the run. There is a wooden footbridge bridging the gap between the bank and the front door. He covers this in two jumps and stops at the front door. The knocker is in the shape of a lion's head, and ring in its mouth. Marlowe puts his hand on it, and as he does, three SHOTS SOUND from inside.

Marlowe freezes. From inside we HEAR a sighing groan and the thud of a falling body, then footsteps going away. Marlowe looks over the railing of the bridge, but there's no way around to the back. He stands still, listening. Light shows from the house, behind draperies. From offscene at some distance, we HEAR someone running down steps.

31. EXT. REAR STEPS - EXTREME CLOSE - NIGHT (RAIN)

On a man's feet, running with hysterical speed down the wet treads. We follow them across muddy ground, apparently a dirt road surface, to a car.

32. LONG SHOT - ALLEY BELOW GEIGER'S HOUSE - NIGHT (RAIN)

As a car starts and roars away with clashing gears. Almost before it is out of sight a second car pulls out from under shrouding trees and follows it.

33. EXT. GEIGER'S HOUSE - AT FRONT DOOR - NIGHT (RAIN)

The SOUND of the two cars is still audible, fading into distance. Marlowe listens to it. When everything is quiet again he tries the front door, finds it locked. French windows flank the door just out of reach beyond the railing of the bridge. Marlowe swings out over the railing, kicks in the right-hand window, and pulls himself over the sill.

34. INT. GEIGER'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

As Marlowe comes in through the window. The room is wide, low-beamed ceiling, brown plaster walls with strips of Chinese embroidery and Oriental prints on them. Low bookshelves, a desk, thick rug floor cushions, low divans -- an exotic messy atmosphere.

On a low dais at one end of the room is a carved teakwood chair, a massive thing in which Carmen Sternwood sits, rigidly erect, in the pose of an Egyptian goddess.

She wears a man's large silk dressing gown -- it doesn't pretend to fit her and gives the impression of having been thrown hurriedly around her by someone other than herself. Carmen's eyes have a queer fixed stare. She pays no attention to Marlowe. She looks as if, in her mind, she is doing something very important and doing it well. She seems pleased about it, her lips curved to a smile. She laughs from time to time -- softly, secretly.

Opposite her, Geiger lies on the floor in front of a thing like a totem pole. The eye of the totem is a camera lens; it focuses on the chair where Carmen sits. A blackened flash bulb is clipped to the totem beside it. Geiger is dressed in semi-oriental fashion. His embroidered coat is soaked with blood. He is obviously dead.

Marlowe takes all this in, sniffs the air. It is heavy with something unpleasant. He crosses to a small lacquer table bearing a flagon of dark liquid and two glasses. Marlowe sniffs the flagon, makes a grimace of disgust. Carmen's clothes are wadded up on the divan. Marlowe picks up her coat and shoes and goes to her.

MARLOWE

Hello. Remember me.

She doesn't seem to see him. The soft, secret laughter is his only answer. He goes closer, and deliberately slaps her face. This gets a reaction -- he slaps her again, without emotion, but hard. Carmen comes to, slightly, giving him a sly, mad smile.

MARLOWE

You're higher than a kite. Come on, let's be nice. Let's get dressed, Carmen.

He puts her shoes on.

CARMEN

(giggling)
You tickle.

MARLOWE

Yeah, you tickle me, too.

Marlowe pulls her to her feet and puts her coat on, trying not to dislodge the dressing gown. She falls against him, very happy about it all, apparently about to pass out. Marlowe is not happy.

MARLOWE

Let's take a walk.

CARMEN

(thickly, half conscious)
You're cute.

MARLOWE

Sure, sure. So's your boyfriend.
Want to look at him?

He walks the staggering girl over to Geiger's body. It is hard work -- and Carmen is not impressed.

CARMEN

(as before)
He's cute.

MARLOWE

Cute. Yeah. Let's walk.

He walks her back and forth across the room a couple of times -- LOW CAMERA FEATURING the dead man as their legs pass in front of him. Then she passes out in his arms, still convinced that everything is cute. He spreads her out on the divan, unconsciously wiping his hands on his coat as though he has touched something dirty.

Then he returns to the totem and Geiger's body. He examines the concealed camera. The plateholder is gone. He rolls Geiger's body over enough to see under it. No plateholder. He frowns thoughtfully at the girl... then goes into the rear of the house.

35. INT. GEIGER'S HOUSE - REAR ROOMS - NIGHT

Marlowe passes quickly through the bath and kitchen, pausing to try the locked kitchen door and to examine a window which had been jimmed open. The scars show plainly on the wood, the rain blowing in unheeded. Marlowe then goes to the bedroom, which is in keeping with the living room. He glances briefly through the closet, with a man's clothes in it, then picks up a keyholder from the dressing table, where it has been placed along with other contents of Geiger's pockets -- money, handkerchief, etc.

36. INT. GEIGER'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Marlowe returns and unlocks the desk. In one drawer he finds a locked steel box, which he opens with Geiger's keys. He takes from it a leather book.

37. INSERT: THE BOOK IN MARLOWE'S HANDS

He leafs through the pages slowly, showing an index and writing in code, in the same slanted printing as on the cards General Sternwood gave him.

38. INT. GEIGER'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Marlowe places the book in his pocket, wipes his fingerprints carefully from the box, replaces it and locks the desk. He pockets the keys, turns off the lamps and the gas logs in the fireplace, makes a wadded bundle of Carmen's clothes, jams her hat on her head and picks her up, holding her clothes awkwardly in one hand. On the way out he pushes down the light switch by the door, and kicks the door shut behind him.

39. EXT. GEIGER'S HOUSE - NIGHT (RAIN)

as Marlowe carries the sleeping girl out to her car.

DISSOLVE TO:

40. EXT. STERNWOOD HOUSE - NIGHT (RAIN)

Marlowe has just rung the doorbell. In the drive behind him stands Carmen's Packard. The door opens.

Norris appears in it, recognizes Marlowe, looks swiftly past him and recognizes the car also. Then he looks at Marlowe again -- the same quiet, grave face with its expression of grief and sadness which the sight of the car brought into it. His voice though is quiet and calm.

NORRIS

Good evening, sir.

MARLOWE

(rapidly)
Mrs. Rutledge in?

NORRIS

No, sir.

MARLOWE

The General?

NORRIS

He's asleep.

MARLOWE

Good. Where's Mrs. Rutledge's maid?

NORRIS
Mathilda? She's here.

MARLOWE
Better get her down here. This
job needs a woman's touch. Take
a look inside the car.

But Norris does not move, only his eyes go again to the waiting car and return, his face still grave, only the grief a little sharper behind it.

NORRIS
(quickly)
She's all right?

MARLOWE
Sure. She's okay. Just get
that maid. Mathilda can do all
right for her.

NORRIS
We all try to do our best for her.
I'll call Mathilda at once.

MARLOWE
(turning)
Then I'll leave it with you.
Goodnight.

NORRIS
May I call you a cab, sir?

MARLOWE
(pauses)
No. In fact, I'm not here. You
haven't even seen me tonight --
see?

NORRIS
Yes, sir.

Marlowe turns on, fast, walking down the drive in the rain.

DISSOLVE TO:

41. INT. GEIGER'S DARK HOUSE - NIGHT (RAIN)

Marlowe, a shadowy figure, enters, closes door behind him, crosses the room to a lamp, turns the switch. Marlowe is quite wet, indicating that he has walked back from Sternwood's.

He stands with his hand still on the light switch, looks about the room, crosses to another tump, puts it on, is about to turn away when he stops dead, reacts as he looks at the totem pole and at the floor beneath it where Geiger's body had lain.

The body is gone. Marlowe crosses the room, wasting no time, determined. He passes through door to bedroom, snaps light on beyond it, after a moment the light beyond the door snaps off and Marlowe re-enters living room. He has not found the body. He stands for a moment, thinking, then he goes and kneels so that he can squint along the surface of the thick rug. He sees in the nap the marks where Geiger's heels were dragged along it, across the room toward the front door. He rises at last, thoughtful, slowly takes out a cigarette and lights it, drops match into ashtray, stops, takes up the dead match and puts it into his pocket.

Then he takes out his handkerchief, goes and wipes off the bedroom doorknob, goes to the first lamp, turns it out and wipes it off, leaving room in darkness and himself a shadow which can be barely seen in the act of wiping off that button. Then he crosses the room.

42. EXT. DOOR TO HOUSE - NIGHT

Marlowe as he closes and locks it, wipes off knob, pockets keys, turns.

43. INT. MARLOWE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Marlowe, sitting at a table, the code book which he found at Geiger's open before him, a highball at his hand as he tries to work out the code. He cannot solve it. His hand reaches for the highball glass.

DISSOLVE TO:

44. INT. MARLOWE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Marlowe, in bed, wakes reluctantly as LOUD KNOCKING on the apartment door penetrates his slumber. He crawls out of bed, obviously the worse for a hangover, pulls on a dressing gown as he staggers sleepily toward the next room.

MARLOWE

(as the KNOCKING continues)
All right, all right. Keep your
pants on...

45. INT. MARLOWE'S LIVING ROOM - AT FRONT DOOR

as Marlowe opens it to admit BERNIE OHLS, a dapper, slightly flashy man, whose clothes are expensive and always a little wrong. His face is dapper and deceiving since it is actually the face of a man who has been in close places in the course of his duty, has killed several lawbreakers, at times when he was outnumbered and they thought he was covered and helpless until too late. He is pleasant and affable to all, respects courage, loves no man.

MARLOWE

Well Bernie. Don't you ever go to bed?

OHLS

(entering -- surveying Marlowe)

Boy, what a beautiful hangover! Tut, tut -- man your age, out on the town all night...

MARLOWE

I got it right here.

OHLS

(sitting)

That's even worse.

MARLOWE

All right -- what is it?

OHLS

Does it have to be something?

MARLOWE

Look, Bernie, when somebody from the Homicide Squad comes over to help...

OHLS

You're working for the Sternwoods, aren't you?

MARLOWE

(warily)

Yeah.

OHLS

Done anything for 'em yet?

MARLOWE

How could I do anything yesterday in all that rain?

OHLS

(laughing)

Okay -- They seem to be a family that things happen to. A big Buick belonging to one of them is washing around in the surf off Lido fish pier. Oh yea, I almost forgot. There's a guy in it.

MARLOWE

(flatly, after a pause)

Regan?

OHLS

Who? Oh, you mean that Irish ex-legger old Sternwood hired to do his drinking for him. What would he be doing down there?

He watches Marlowe's face narrowly -- it tells him nothing.

MARLOWE

What would anybody be doing down there?

OHLS

That's what I'm going to Lido to find out. Want to come?

MARLOWE

Thanks, Bernie. Yeah, be with you in ten minutes.

He starts out, already pulling off his dressing gown. Ohls looks after him, frowning.

DISSOLVE TO:

46. INT. CAR - OHLS AND MARLOWE - MORNING

Ohls is driving. It is an official car, now and then Ohls sounds the siren.

OHLS

It ain't Regan. I checked up. Regan's a big guy, tall as you and a shade heavier. This is a young kid.

(he SOUNDS SIREN

-- the car is going fast)

What made you think it was Regan?

MARLOWE

Who is it? Don't they know yet?

OHLS

Now, now. Behave. What made Regan skip out? Or ain't you interested in that either?

MARLOWE

Why should I be?

OHLS

That wasn't what old Sternwood wanted you for, then?

MARLOWE

Can't a guy quit a job anymore without notifying the District Attorney?

OHLS

When an ex-bootlegger gets himself hired into a job where all he's got to do is sit in a greenhouse and drink a millionaire's brandy, when he throws that job up --

MARLOWE

I'm not looking for Regan.

OHLS

Okay, keep buttoned, kid.

MARLOWE

General Sternwood told you to send me out to see him. But he never told me I was to report --

OHLS

I said, keep it buttoned, didn't I?
(SOUNDS SIREN)
After all, you got to eat too --
even if I don't know why.

MARLOWE

Sometimes I don't know either.

Ohls SOUNDS the SIREN AGAIN. The car speeds on.

47. EXT. ENTRANCE TO LIDO FISH PIER - MORNING

A faded stucco arch, the sea beyond it, the pier stretching away as Ohls' car stops before the entrance and Ohls and Marlowe get out. Beside the arch are parked a police car and several police motorcycles. The long pier, railed with white two-by-fours, runs out over the water. There are several private cars parked along the road, a crowd of people is gathered at the far end of the pier as a motorcycle officer, stationed beneath the arch, is holding back another crowd as Ohls and Marlowe come up. Ohls shows the officer his badge.

OHLS

(to guard)

Medical examiner come yet?

GUARD

(checks pass,
waves them on)

Beat you by 15 minutes. He's examining the guy now probably.

OHLS

(pockets his pass)

Oh, he is, huh? Didn't you guys ever hear of the D.A.'s office?

GUARD

Keep your shirt on. There's a deputy in charge.

Ohls, followed by Marlowe, passes onto the pier.

48. SEAWARD END OF PIER

A shattered gap in the railing at the end of the pier shows where the car crashed through. Another crowd of people held back by other policemen, gather along the broken railing in b.g. Beyond them, moored to the end of the pier, lies a flat barge with wheelhouse and derrick. As Ohls and Marlowe approach, the police herd the crowd back and four men come up from the barge, carrying a sheet-covered stretcher and carry it on across the SHOT -- the crowd gaping after it. As the bearers are about to pass, Ohls stops them.

OHLS

Wait a minute.

The bearers stop. Ohls turns the sheet back, looks at the dead man's face.

OHLS
 (over his shoulder
 to Marlowe)
 Want a look?

Marlowe looks at the face for a moment. Ohls drops the sheet back.

OHLS
 (to bearers)
 All right. Beat it.

The bearers go on. Ohls and Marlowe approach the barge, the crowd gawking about them, after the stretcher, the policemen shoving among them.

A POLICEMAN
 (to crowd)
 That's all now. Go on.

49. DECK OF BARGE MOORED TO THE END OF THE PIER

On it sits the car which has been lifted from the water. It is the same black sedan which Marlowe saw the chauffeur washing yesterday in Sternwood's garage -- bent and stained with water. In front of the car are gathered Ohls, Marlowe, a uniformed deputy, two plainclothesmen and the Medical Examiner who has just finished repacking his small black bag.

OHLS
 (to deputy)
 What's the story?

DEPUTY
 You can see most of it from here. Went through the rail yonder. Must have hit it pretty hard. The rain stopped down here about nine P.M. The broken ends of the rails are dry inside. That would put it about nine-thirty last night.

OHLS
 Drunk, huh?

PLAINCLOTHESMAN
 Then he must have been that guy you hear about that always drives better drunk. He plowed an awful straight furrow down that pier, right to the end of it. Then he hit the railing right square head-on -- hard and clean -- or he wouldn't have gone through it.

OHLS
All right. Suicide then.

DEPUTY
The hand-throttle was set half-way down. Something had hit him a pretty hard lick across the left temple.

OHLS
(to Medical Examiner)
All right, Doc. Let's have it.

MEDICAL EXAMINER
His neck was broken.

OHLS
What made the bruise? Steering-wheel?

MEDICAL EXAMINER
It was made by something covered. The wound had already bled under the skin while he was still alive.

MARLOWE
A blackjack?

They all turn and glance at Marlowe.

OHLS
(after a moment)
I'd forgotten about you. Let's go back to town.

50. EXT. PIER - MARLOWE AND OHLS

They are walking back toward their car. A few people still hang around, staring at the barge.

OHLS
So you recognized him.

MARLOWE
Yeah. Sternwood's chauffeur. I saw him washing that same car yesterday.

OHLS
So that was what old Sternwood wanted with you.

MARLOWE
Look, I don't even know his name --

OHLS

I do. His name's Owen Taylor. About a year or so back he run Sternwood's daughter, the hotcha one, off to Yuma. The older sister run after them and brought the girl back and had Taylor thrown into the icebox. Then the next day she comes down and begs the kid off -- said the kid meant to marry the sister, only the sister can't see it. So they let the kid go, and darned if the Sternwoods don't have him come back to work, same as if nothing had happened.

MARLOWE

And now somebody'll have to go see them about this.

OHLS

Yep. That's me, probably.

MARLOWE

Leave the old man out of it, if you can. He's got enough troubles already besides being sick.

OHLS

Regan, huh?

MARLOWE

I don't know anything about Regan. I told you that.

OHLS

Then what are you doing in this?

MARLOWE

I'm not looking for Regan. I can tell you that much.

OHLS

(dryly)

Yeah. I heard you the first time.

DISSOLVE TO:

51. INT. GEIGER'S STORE

Marlowe enters, wearing the dark glasses as before, and as before, Agnes rises from behind the desk. She is not happy to see Marlowe.

MARLOWE

(cheerily)

Hello -- I'm back again. Mr. Geiger in?

AGNES

I'm afraid not. No.

Marlowe glances around to make sure they're alone, then removes the glasses and moves close to Agnes.

MARLOWE

It was just a stall about those first editions. I got something to sell. Something Geiger's wanted for a long time.

AGNES

Oh -- I see. Well -- you might come back tomorrow. I think...

MARLOWE

Drop the veil, sister. I'm in the business too.

Agnes stares at him, scared stiff, not knowing how to get rid of him.

MARLOWE

(impatiently)

I haven't got forever. Is he sick? I could go up to the house

AGNES

(frantically)

No, that wouldn't do any good -- he's out of town. Couldn't you tomorrow? --

Marlowe glances up sharply as Carol Lundgren, the dark handsome boy in the leather jacket, opens the door in the rear wall. Behind him, through the open door, we see the back room, littered with the papers and boxes of hurried packing, and a gaunt, hard-looking man with a certain animal attractiveness in the midst of it, cramming folios and stacks of large-sized envelopes into the packing boxes. Carol is obviously strained and under tension, looking as though he has not slept.

CAROL

(desperately)

Agnes, you've got to --

He becomes aware of Marlowe, shuts up abruptly, and slams the door. From the partition his voice rises, sharp but unintelligible, answered by a heavier, man's voice -- no words come through, but the implication is clearly that Carol shall shut up and get out. A door slams violently, then there is silence. Marlowe, ignoring this byplay, and the stricken look on Agnes' face, puts on his glasses and touches his hat.

MARLOWE

Tomorrow, then. Early.

AGNES

Yes, early.

Before Marlowe has quite left the shop she darts back through the rear door.

52. EXT. GEIGER'S STORE - MOVING SHOT - MARLOWE

As he walks rapidly along the Boulevard to a taxi standing at the curb. A smart, competent-appearing girl sits reading a pulp magazine behind the wheel.

53. INT. CAB

Marlowe sticks his head in, does a take, and relaxes.

MARLOWE

(disgustedly)

I would have to pick a girl at this point.

CABBY

(giving him a cold stare)

Anything you want, bud, I can give you.

MARLOWE

(grinning)

And with both fists, too, I'll bet. Tail job?

CABBY

Cop?

MARLOWE

Private.

CABBY

(laying aside the magazine)

Hop in.

Marlowe looks down at the magazine.

54. INSERT: THE MAGAZINE ON THE SEAT

It is a copy of TWO-GUN DETECTIVE TALES, with a lurid cover of gunmen and a gory corpse.

55. INT. CAB - THE SHOT AS BEFORE - MARLOWE AND CABBY

MARLOWE
(grinning)
Okay, kid. Take it.

He gets in quickly.

CABBY
(slapping down the flag)
I got it.

56. EXT. HOLLYWOOD STREET - CAB IN F.G.

A light panel pickup job comes out of an alley and turns down the street. The gaunt, hard-looking man is driving. Marlowe leans forward and gives the cabby the high sign. The cab pulls out to follow.

DISSOLVE TO:

57. INSERT: STREET SIGN

RANDALL PLACE

DISSOLVE TO:

58. LONG SHOT - ESTABLISHING

A section of Randall Place, featuring an apartment building with a basement garage. An awning stretches out over the sidewalk -- lettering along the awning's side reads, RANDALL ARMS. The panel truck drives past the entrance and turns into the basement garage. Some distance behind it we see the cab pull into the curb. Marlowe gets out and walks toward the RANDALL ARMS.

59. INT. RANDALL ARMS - THE ENTRY

The door stands open onto a small foyer, without desk or switchboard. A panel of gilt mailboxes is let into one wall of the entrance. Marlowe, after a glance inside, examines the names under the mail drops. One in particular catches his eye.

60. INSERT: THE CARD ON THE MAILBOX:

The name JOE BRODY is typewritten on the card.

61. INT. RANDALL ARMS - THE ENTRY AS BEFORE

Marlowe taps the card, then gives the foyer one more meaning look, turns.

62. EXT. RANDALL PLACE - AT THE CAB

As Marlowe returns to it. He speaks to the girl, who nods and drives away with him.

DISSOLVE TO:

63. EXT. HOLLYWOOD STREET

as the cab pulls into the curb in front of a non-descript office building. Marlowe gets out and leans in to pay the driver.

64. INT. CAB

MARLOWE

(handing her a bill)

Nice going, kid. Buy yourself an orchid.

CABBY

Thanks. You can take my number in case you have any more jobs you want done right.

(indicating the serial number on her driver's cap)

I mean this number.

MARLOWE

What number did you think I thought you meant?

The Cabby flustered clashes the gears savagely, shoots the cab away. Marlowe tips his hat to her and enters the building as she drives away.

65. INT. BUILDING - HALLWAY AT MARLOWE'S OFFICE DOOR

Marlowe opens the door, which has Philip Marlowe in gilt letters on the upper glass.

66. INT. MARLOWE'S OFFICE - THE WAITING ROOM

A small room, cheaply furnished, with a closed door in one wall. Vivian sits waiting for him, beautifully but simply dressed, quite at ease. She seems in a better humor this morning, smiling at the surprised Marlowe.

VIVIAN

Well, you DO exist, after all.
I'd begun to think I dreamed you
out of a bottle of bad gin.
(with underlying
hint of seriousness)
I've been trying to get you on the
phone all morning.

MARLOWE

You can insult me just as well face
to face. I don't bite -- much.

VIVIAN

(apologetically)
I was rather rude.

MARLOWE

(smiling)
An apology from a Sternwood?
(unlocking the
connecting door,
holding it for her)
Come into my boudoir.

67. INT. MARLOWE'S OFFICE

Like the waiting room, it's shabby and not large. The
usual desk, chairs, and filing cabinets.

VIVIAN

(sitting)
You don't put on much of a front.

MARLOWE

You can't make much money at this
trade, if you're honest. If you
have a front, you're making money
or expect to.

VIVIAN

Oh -- are you honest?

MARLOWE

Painfully.

VIVIAN

(taking out a cigarette)
How did you get into this slimy
business, then?

MARLOWE
 (giving her a look
 as he lights it
 for her)

Because people like you pay good
 money to have the slime cleaned up.

She looks away from him, angry but not able to say
 anything. Marlowe sits down behind the desk.

MARLOWE
 What did you want to see me about?
 Taylor?

VIVIAN
 (softly)
 Poor Owen. So you know about that.

MARLOWE
 A D.A.'s man took me down to Lido.
 Turned out he knew more about it
 than I did. He knew Owen Taylor
 wanted to marry your sister -- once.

VIVIAN
 (quietly)
 Perhaps it wouldn't have been a bad
 idea. He was in love with her. We
 don't find much of that in our
 circle...
 (changing her tone)
 But I didn't come to see you about
 Owen. Do you feel yet that you can
 tell me what my father wants you to
 do?

MARLOWE
 Not without his permission.

VIVIAN
 Was it about Carmen?

MARLOWE
 I can't even say that.

Vivian watches him for a moment, then gives in. She takes
 a thick white envelope from her bag and tosses it on the
 desk.

VIVIAN
 You'd better look at this anyway.

Marlowe examines the envelope.

VIVIAN

A messenger brought it this morning.

MARLOWE

Eight-thirty-five it says -- for
you or your father.

He opens the envelope, takes out a medium-sized photograph.
We do not see the subject of the picture, but Marlowe's
reaction is significant. He whistles softly.

MARLOWE

So that's what Carmen looks like!
(to Vivian)
How much do they want for this?

VIVIAN

Five thousand -- for the negative and
the rest of the prints. The deal has
to be closed tonight, or they give
the picture to some scandal sheet.

MARLOWE

The demand came how?

VIVIAN

A woman telephoned me, shortly after
this thing was delivered.

MARLOWE

There's nothing in the scandal sheet
angle. Juries convict on that racket
without leaving the box. What else
is there?

VIVIAN

Does there have to be something else?

Marlowe nods -- his face is uncompromising.

VIVIAN

(giving in again)
The woman said there was a police
jam connected with it, and I'd
better lay it on the line fast or
I'd be talking to my little sister
through a wire screen.

MARLOWE

(deadpan, nodding)
What kind of a jam?

VIVIAN

I don't know.

MARLOWE

Where's Carmen now?

VIVIAN

She's at home -- still in bed, I think. She was sick last night.

MARLOWE

She go out at all?

VIVIAN

The servants say she didn't. I was up at Las Olindas across the State line playing roulette at Eddie Mars' Cypress Club. I lost my shirt.

(taking another
cigarette --
laughing wryly)

MARLOWE

(getting up to
hold the match
for her)

So you like roulette. You would.

VIVIAN

Yes, the Sternwoods all like losing games. The Sternwoods can afford to. The Sternwoods have money.

(bitterly)

All it's bought them is a raincheck.

MARLOWE

What was Owen doing with your car last night?

VIVIAN

Nobody knows. He took it without permission. Do you think...?

MARLOWE

He knew about this photo?

(shrugging)

I don't rule him out... Can you get five thousand in cash right away?

VIVIAN

I can borrow it -- probably from Eddie Mars.

(sardonically)

There's a bond between us, you see. Shawn Regan ran away with Eddie's blonde wife.

MARLOWE
 (turning away --
 leaving a pause)
 You may need the money in a
 hurry.

VIVIAN
 How about telling the police?

MARLOWE
 You know better than that. The
 police might turn up something
 they couldn't sit on -- and then
 where would the Sternwoods be?
 (after a pause)
 How was it left?

VIVIAN
 The woman said she'd call me back
 with instructions at five.

MARLOWE
 Okay -- call me here as soon as
 you've heard from her.

VIVIAN
 Can you do anything?

MARLOWE
 I think so. But I can't tell you
 how -- or why.

VIVIAN
 I like you. You believe in miracles.

MARLOWE
 (laughing)
 I believe in people believing they're
 smarter than they are -- if that's
 a miracle. Have a drink?

He reaches down into the desk drawer.

VIVIAN
 I'll have two drinks.

Marlowe grins at her. He comes up with a bottle and two glasses, fills them, and takes one to her. They salute, start to drink and find that their eyes have met over the glass rims and refuse to come apart. Vivian breaks it, not because she is shy or coy, but because suddenly there is a sadness in her face. Her gaze drops briefly, then returns to Marlowe, clear, steady, and sad.

VIVIAN

You're a lot like Shawn Regan.

Marlowe looks at her, almost with tenderness and understanding.

MARLOWE

You want to tell me now or later?

VIVIAN

What?

MARLOWE

What you're so anxious to find out.

VIVIAN

It couldn't be -- you.

MARLOWE

Let's do one thing at a time.

VIVIAN

(rising)

I think we've done enough for one day...

MARLOWE

(gently)

Want that other drink?

VIVIAN

(going toward door)

No...

Marlowe sets his glass down on the desk and picks up the envelope.

MARLOWE

You forgot this.

She turns by the door as he approaches, holding out her hand for the envelope. Marlowe gives it to her, but doesn't let go of it.

They are not thinking about the envelope. Slowly he bends to her -- she leans back against the wall, her lips parted, her eyes soft, misted with tears. Marlowe's mouth covers hers. Presently they break -- Vivian puts her hand on Marlowe's cheek.

VIVIAN

(softly)

Your face is like Shawn's too --
clean and thin, with hard bones
under it...

She turns, neither slowly nor fast, away from him, opens the door, and goes out.

DISSOLVE TO:

68. EXT. LAVERNE TERRACE - AT MARLOWE'S CAR - DAY

Parked unobtrusively under some trees a reasonable distance from Geiger's house. Marlowe sits patiently, waiting, his hat pushed to the back of his head, his collar loosened, smoking quietly. Presently, in b.g. in front of Geiger's house, Carmen Sternwood appears furtively around the far end of the hedge, and goes quickly in through the gap leading to the front door. Marlowe reacts, then gets out, to follow her.

69. MED. CLOSE SHOT - CARMEN

standing in an attitude of terror, her back pressed against the wall beside the front door to Geiger's house, staring at Marlowe as he enters. She raises one hand and clenches her teeth on her thumb, staring at him. The terror fades a little as she recognizes him. She wears coat, hat, veil, etc.

MARLOWE

Remember me now, don't you? Doghouse
Reilly, the man that didn't grow
very tall. Remember?

CARMEN

(making an effort
to seem natural)
Is this your doghouse?

MARLOWE

Sure. Let's go inside, huh?

CARMEN

(shrinking, cringing)
Inside?

MARLOWE

You wanted to get in, didn't you?

He pushes her away, unlocks the door, pushes it inward.

MARLOWE

In with you.

He shoves Carmen in ahead of him, follows.

70. INT. GEIGER'S LIVING ROOM - CARMEN AND MARLOWE

Carmen standing, looking about the room, as Marlowe shuts the door and stands looking at Carmen. She feels him watching her, smiles at him. He doesn't answer it. The smile fades. Marlowe takes out pack of cigarettes, offers it. She shakes her head dumbly, staring at him. He lights a cigarette.

MARLOWE

How much do you remember about last night?

CARMEN

Remember what? I was sick last night. I was home.

MARLOWE

Sure you were. I mean, before you went home. In that chair yonder -- on that orange shawl while they were taking pictures. Quit stalling.

(staring at him, she starts to put her thumb in her mouth again)

And stop biting your thumb too.

CARMEN

You -- were the one?

MARLOWE

Me. How much do you remember?

CARMEN

Are you the police?

MARLOWE

No. I'm a friend of your father's.

(a moment)

Who killed him?

CARMEN

(faintly)

Who else... knows?

MARLOWE

About Geiger? Not the police, or they'd be camping here.

(a moment)

Maybe Joe Brody.

CARMEN

Joe Brody? Who's he?

MARLOWE

Sure. Not Steve Brody: Joe Brody. Did Joe kill him?

CARMEN

Kill who?

MARLOWE

Look sister. I don't know how much trouble you are accustomed to, but I hope you've had plenty of practice dodging it.

CARMEN

(nods her head)

Yes. Joe did it.

MARLOWE

Why?

(she watches him
out of the corners
of her eyes, biting
her thumb; he draws
on cigarette, expels)

Seen much of him lately?

CARMEN

No! I hate him!

MARLOWE

So you're all ready to tell the cops he did it, huh?

(quickly, as she
stares at him)

That is, if we can just get rid of that photograph Geiger made last night.

CARMEN

Photograph? What photograph?

MARLOWE

(drags at cigarette,
expels smoke)

Just like last night. What a scream
we are. Sternwood and Reilly, two
stooges in search of a comedian.

CARMEN

Your name isn't Reilly. It's Marlowe.
Vivian told me.

MARLOWE

So you are beginning to remember.
And you came back to look for the
photograph, but you couldn't get
into the house.

(she stares at him)

The photo's gone. I looked for it
last night. Brody took it with him.

CARMEN

I've got to go home now.

MARLOWE

Sure. But I wouldn't tell the
police about Brody yet. Don't even
tell a soul you were ever here --
either last night, or today. Not
even Vivian. Leave it to Doghouse
Reilly. Where's your car?

CARMEN

On the back street, where nobody
would see it.

She turns to go out as he turns to follow.

MARLOWE

You're not going to tell anybody
we were here, are you?

CARMEN

(gives him a swooning look)

It depends. I never tell on people
who are nice to me.

She gives him a languishing, swooning, inviting look, so
that her attitude is a caricature of what her more
brilliant and vivid sister's might be. Marlowe grasps her
arm almost savagely, turns her toward the door.

MARLOWE

Come on. Get out of here --

He stops; they both react as FEET SOUND beyond the door, approaching, they pause dead as the BELL RINGS. While they stand staring at each other, Carmen drooling almost with terror, the BELL RINGS AGAIN, ceases, then SOUND of KEY at the lock and a moment later the door opens and EDDIE MARS enters quickly and then stops dead, staring at them. He is a handsome, hard, horsy-looking man in beautiful, restrained, expensive clothes, who stands staring at them with complete composure for a moment. Then he looks at Carmen, shuts the door, takes his hat off.

MARS

Excuse the casual entrance. The bell didn't answer. Is Mr. Geiger around?

MARLOWE

No. We don't know just where he is. We found the door open and stepped in.

MARS

I see. Friends of his?

MARLOWE

Just business. We dropped in for a book.

Mars stares hard at Marlowe, who stares just as hard back.

MARLOWE

But we missed him.
 (takes Carmen's arm,
 pushes her toward
 door to pass Mars)
 So we'll trot along.

As Marlowe is about to shoulder Mars aside to pass, Mars himself steps aside until Carmen has passed him, then he moves in between Marlowe and the door.

MARS

The girl can go. But I'd like to talk to you a little.

Marlowe stares at him, then makes a slight motion toward the gun inside his coat.

MARS

Don't try it. I've got two boys outside in the car.

He turns, opens the door, Carmen scuttles through it. Mars shuts the door behind her, looks about the room.

MARS

(puts hat back on)
 There's something wrong around here.
 I intend to find out what it is. If
 you want to pick lead out of yourself,
 go ahead.

MARLOWE

A tough guy.

Mars makes no answer. He walks on into the room, looking around. Marlowe watches him.

MARLOWE

I suppose it's all right if I
 smoke.

Mars does not answer. He looks about, sees the totem pole, is astonished, approaches it, stops suddenly as he moves the small rug over the bloodstain with his foot, then kneels swiftly out of sight for an instant beyond the desk. When he rises, he is facing Marlowe and his hand is just emerging from inside his coat, holding a Luger pistol.

MARS

Blood. On the floor there, under
 the rug. Quite a lot of blood.

MARLOWE

(in interested tone)
 Is that so?

Mars slides into the chair behind the desk, still watching Marlowe, hooks the telephone toward him with the pistol-barrel, then shifts the pistol to his left hand and puts his right hand on the phone but without raising it.

MARS

I think we'll have some law.

Marlowe approaches while Mars watches him, and looks down at the stain, pretends to have seen it for the first time.

MARLOWE

That's old blood. Dried.

MARS

Just the same, we'll have some law.

MARLOWE

Why not?

MARS

Just who are you anyway?

MARLOWE

Marlowe's the name. I'm a private detective.

MARS

Who's the girl?

MARLOWE

A client. Geiger was trying to throw a loop on her. We came to talk it over. He wasn't here.

MARS

Convenient -- the door being open, when you didn't have a key.

MARLOWE

Wasn't it? By the way, how'd you happen to have one?

MARS

Is that any of your business?

MARLOWE

I could make it my business.

MARS

(smiles tightly)
And I could make your business mine.

MARLOWE

You wouldn't like it. The pay's too small.

MARS

I own this house. Geiger is my tenant. Now what do you think of it?

MARLOWE

You know some nice people.

MARS

I take them as they come.
(he glances down
at the pistol,
shrugs, puts
it back inside
coat)
Got any ideas, detective?

MARLOWE

One or two. Somebody gunned Geiger. Somebody got gunned by Geiger, who ran away. Or Geiger was running a cult and made blood sacrifices in front of that barber pole there. Or he had meat for dinner and does his butchering in the front parlor.

(Mars scowls at him)

All right. I'll give up, then. Call your friends downtown.

MARS

I don't get it. I still don't get your game here.

MARLOWE

Don't you, Mr. Mars?

Mars stares at Marlowe, who meets his stare steadily. Mars' face is now hard.

MARS

You seem to be telling me Geiger was in a racket of some sort. What racket?

MARLOWE

I don't know. I'm not his landlord. And I'll tell you something else you missed. Somebody cleaned out whatever was in that back room in his bookshop today.

Mars stares at Marlowe a long moment. Marlowe takes out a cigarette deliberately, is starting to light it.

MARS

You talk too much.

While Marlowe stands, the cigarette in his mouth, the matchbox resting in his hands, Mars suddenly whips out the pistol again, holds it on Marlowe, and whistles shrilly. SOUND of car door SLAMMING OFF, then RUNNING FEET.

MARS

Open the door.

MARLOWE

Open it yourself. I've already got a client.

Mars rises, still holding the pistol on Marlowe, crosses toward the door as the SOUND OF FEET reaches the door and the knob is rattled from outside. Mars reaches the door, opens it. Two men plunge into the room, already reaching inside their coats. One is a young hoodlum, good-looking, pale-faced boy, the other is older, slim, deadpan.

MARS
 (jerks his head
 at Marlowe)
 Look him over...

The slim man flicks out a short pistol, covers Marlowe. The boy approaches, searches Marlowe, who turns, helping the boy search him with the burlesqued air of a bored beauty modeling a gown in a shop.

BOY
 Okay. No iron.

MARS
 Find who he is.

The boy draws Marlowe's wallet from his breast pocket, flips it open, studies the contents.

BOY
 A shamus.

He strikes. Marlowe, moving faster, catches his wrist, wrenches it suddenly and sharply, so that in the next instant the wallet is in Marlowe's hand. The boy reacts angrily, but Mars stops it.

MARS
 (sharply)
 That'll do. Beat it.

The boy stops sullenly, glaring at Marlowe.

MARS
 (coldly vicious)
 I said, outside.

The two guards withdraw, exit.

MARS
 All right. Talk.

Marlowe deliberately finishes lighting the cigarette, inhales.

MARLOWE

Not to you. I told you I've already got a client.

MARS

Who was it cleaned out the back of Geiger's store?

MARLOWE

Quite a shower yesterday. Did it rain up there at Las Olindas?

MARS

(slaps the pistol
angrily down on
the desk)

I might even make it worth your while to talk to me.

MARLOWE

That's the spirit. Leave the gun out of it. I can always hear money. How much of it are you clinking at me?

MARS

(slams the desk
again with the
flat pistol)

I ask you a question, and you ask me another. My guess is, you need some help yourself. So cough up.

MARLOWE

Not me. It's Geiger's kinfolk that need help -- provided a man like Geiger had anybody who loved him and will care who bumped him off. So I'd better give what I know to the Law. Which puts it in the public domain and don't leave me anything to sell. So I guess I'll drift.

Marlowe makes a move to lift the gun, but does not.

MARLOWE

(easily)

By the way, how's Mrs. Mars these days?

Mars' hand jerks at the gun, almost lifts it, pauses. He glares at Marlowe.

MARS
 (almost whispers:
 raging inside)
 Beat it. Get out of here.

Marlowe moves easily and unhurriedly toward the door.

71. EXT. STREET - BEFORE GEIGER'S HOUSE

as Marlowe gets into his car. A short distance behind it Mars' car is parked, the two guards in it. Marlowe drives away. He expects a shot perhaps. As he drives away he burlesques it: holds his hand out the window as if he were testing the air for rain. He drives on.

DISSOLVE TO:

72. INT. MARLOWE'S OFFICE - EVENING - MARLOWE

sitting at his desk, the phone pulled up in front of him. He smokes nervously -- he seems to have been waiting some time -- and glances at his wristwatch. The PHONE RINGS. He grabs it.

MARLOWE
 Yeah... What's the news?... Nothing
 -- you mean they haven't called you?
 (smiling sardonically)
 Mrs. Rutledge... You are not a very
 good liar. I thought you were going
 to trust me...
 (jerking the phone
 away from his ear
 with exaggerated
 haste)
 Why, Mrs. Rutledge!

The PHONE CLICKS LOUDLY as the other end is slammed down on the hook. Marlowe replaces his instrument slowly. He is not clowning now. He speaks softly to the telephone as though to Vivian herself, half in admiration, half in anger.

MARLOWE
 You crazy darn fool...

He picks up his hat and goes out.

73. EXT. RANDALL PLACE - NIGHT

on Marlowe, parked a few doors from the Randall Arms, obviously waiting for something.

74. EXT. RANDALL PLACE - AT THE RANDALL ARMS - NIGHT
as Vivian drives up, parks, and enters the apartment.

75. EXT. RANDALL PLACE - NIGHT
Marlowe gets out of his car and walks toward the Randall Arms.

76. INT. UPPER RAILWAY - AT STAIRHEAD - NIGHT
as Marlowe climbs the last steps. He walks down the hall to 405 and presses the bell. In one of the other apartments a radio plays softly. Presently the door of 405 opens noiselessly, just wide enough to show the man who stands behind it -- JOE BRODY, whom we have seen before, in the back room of Geiger's store and later driving the panel truck. He looks steadily at Marlowe and does not speak. His right hand holds the door. A cigarette smolders in the corner of his mouth.

MARLOWE

Geiger?

BRODY

(after a pause, deadpan)
You said what?

MARLOWE

Geiger. Arthur Gwynne Geiger. The guy with the blackmail racket.

Brody's right hand drops slowly out of sight -- we get the impression he's reaching for a gun.

BRODY

Don't know anybody by that name.

Marlowe gives him a hard smile. Brody doesn't like the smile.

MARLOWE

You're Joe Brody?

BRODY

So what?

MARLOWE

So you're Joe Brody -- and you don't know anybody named Geiger. That's very funny.

BRODY

Yeah? You got a funny sense of humor, maybe. Take it away and play it somewhere else.

Marlowe leans against the door and gives him a dreamy smile.

MARLOWE

You got Geiger's stuff, Joe. I got his sucker list. We ought to talk things over.

BRODY

(glancing sideways into the room, then back to Marlowe)
There's plenty of time to talk. Make it tomorrow, bud.

He starts to close the door. Marlowe bares his teeth and shoves the door in against Brody, viciously.

MARLOWE

(pleasantly)
We'll make it now.

77. INT. BRODY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A pleasant room, nicely furnished. French windows open onto a balcony; near the windows a closed door, and near the entrance another door with a heavy curtain drawn across it. Marlowe closes the entrance door behind him, not taking his eyes from Brody. Brody stands still, his hand frozen underneath his coat, his eyes wolfish. Presently he breaks, letting his hand drop.

BRODY

(shrugging -- turning away)
Why not, if you think you got something.

Marlowe smiles, glancing at the curtained doorway. A woman's shoes show below the edge.

MARLOWE

You alone, Joe?

BRODY

(meaningfully)
Yeah.

Marlowe lifts the curtain, high enough to show a very spiffy leg -- Vivian's, in fact. He admires it.

MARLOWE

I could be alone with that almost any time.

He drops the curtain again, goes to the davenport, and sits down, tossing his hat beside him. Brody picks up a box of cigars from a nearby table, walks to an easy chair opposite Marlowe, and sits.

BRODY

Well, I'm listening.

He drops his cigarette stub into a tray and puts a cigar between his lips.

BRODY

Cigar?

He tosses one to Marlowe through the air. As Marlowe reaches out to catch it Brody takes a Police Special out of the cigar box and covers Marlowe, who relaxes slowly, like a steel spring.

BRODY

Okay, stand up. Slow.

MARLOWE

(not moving, smiling
sardonically)

My, my -- such a lot of guns around town, and so few brains. You're the second guy I've met today who seems to think a gat in the hand means the world by the tail.

(derisively)

Put it down, Joe.

(as Joe doesn't move,
only looks nastier)

The other guy's name is Eddie Mars. Ever hear of him?

BRODY

No.

MARLOWE

If he ever gets wise to where you were last night in the rain -- you'll hear of him.

BRODY

(deadpan, but
lowering the gun)

What would I be to Eddie Mars?

MARLOWE

Not even a memory.

BRODY

Don't get me wrong. I'm not a tough guy -- just careful.

MARLOWE

You're not careful enough. That play with Geiger's stuff was terrible. I saw it, you know. I don't think Geiger's boy friend liked it.

BRODY

Carol Lundgren? That punk.

MARLOWE

Yeah. Punk burns, sometimes.

(raises his voice
to the curtain door)

You might as well come out, Vivian.
Brody decided not to shoot me just yet.

(as the curtain parts
slightly to show
Vivian, undecided)

Oh, yeah, and bring the blonde with you.

Vivian comes out, followed by Agnes. Vivian looks strained, angry, indomitable. Agnes looks merely vicious.

MARLOWE

(to Agnes)

Hello, sugar.

AGNES

(sourly)

Hello -- trouble!

Agnes flounces down on the arm of an overstuffed chair. Brody watches, his eyes hard and narrow, expressionless. Vivian stands looking down at Marlowe. She is definitely not glad to see him.

MARLOWE

So you don't really believe in miracles -- or me.

VIVIAN

I've learned not to believe in anything. I don't need you, Marlowe. I don't know how you got here, but I don't want you. Will you get out?

MARLOWE

But darling, the man with the gun
won't let me. Look -- he's all
bothered and curious, wondering
about stuff.

BRODY

(menacingly)
Yeah -- you bet I'm wondering.
(looking sharply
from Vivian to
Marlowe, then
to Agnes)
Agnes -- put some more light on so
I can see to shoot if I have to.
(to Vivian, as
Agnes switches
on a floor lamp)
You -- sit down, and keep quiet.

VIVIAN

Joe, I swear I didn't have anything
to do...

MARLOWE

(attempting to draw
her down beside him)
Don't argue with the man. Here...
(taking Vivian's handbag,
hefting it to assure
himself the wad of
bills is still inside,
and grinning with
satisfaction, placing
bag on couch)
Sit on this, baby... Go ahead. You
won't need it.

VIVIAN

Marlowe, you're ruining everything.

MARLOWE

(finally losing
patience, yanking
her down bodily)
Sit down!

Vivian struggles with him angrily. Marlowe puts his arm
around her and smiles mockingly at Brody, who raises his
gun slightly, with unpleasant significance.

BRODY

Okay, fella. Give out.

MARLOWE

(shaking his head)

Uh-uh, Joe -- you're doing the giving.

BRODY

(leaning forward, menacingly)

Listen...

MARLOWE

Sure, sure -- You're the hard boy with the gun. Okay -- go ahead, blow holes in me. That won't take the cops off your neck.

BRODY

What cops?

MARLOWE

The cops that are going to find out where all that lead in Geiger came from.

He rises, pacing with nervous catlike energy as he talks, his sheer ease and conviction holding Brody motionless.

MARLOWE

You shot Geiger, last night in the rain. The trouble is he wasn't alone when you whiffed him. Either you didn't notice that -- and I think you did -- or you got scared and ran. But you had nerve enough to take the plate out of his camera, and you had nerve enough to come back later and hide his corpse, so you could clean out his store before the law knew it had a murder to investigate.

BRODY

(dangerously quiet)

It's kind of lucky for you I didn't kill Geiger.

MARLOWE

You can hold your breath for it, just the same.

BRODY

You think you got me framed.

MARLOWE

Don't go simple on me, Joe. I told you there was a witness.

BRODY

(suddenly seeing the light)
Carmen! That little... She would -- just that!

Vivian reacts to this -- Marlowe puts his hand strongly on her shoulder, holding her quiet!

MARLOWE

(laughing)
I thought you had that picture of her.

For a moment nobody moves. There is a feeling of predatory animals; caged and waiting. Vivian looks slowly up into Marlowe's face. Then Brody puts his gun down on an end table by his chair.

BRODY

Let's all calm down here. Let's all just sit quiet a minute and think.
(to Marlowe)
Who are you? And what do you get out of this?

MARLOWE

I'm just a guy paid to do other people's laundry. And all I get out of it is those pictures of Carmen.

BRODY

What pictures?

MARLOWE

(as to a child)
Oh, Joe!

He sits down beside Vivian again, talks to her as though Brody were not present.

MARLOWE

How do you like that? He drops the whole thing in my lap, and then he says "What pictures?"
(to Agnes)
Poor Aggie. I hate to think of you standing outside the gas chamber watching him while he chokes.

AGNES

(to Brody)

Joe...

BRODY

Shut up.

(to Marlowe)

How did you get to me?

MARLOWE

I never saw so many streets leading to one place in my life. Everywhere I turn I fall over Joe Brody -- and I been doing a lot of turning.

BRODY

So Carmen says I gunned him.

MARLOWE

With the photos in hand, I might be able to convince her she was wrong.

BRODY

(after a pause, scowling)

I'm not saying I have or haven't got the photos. I'm only saying I'm broke. Agnes and I are down to nickels, and we got to move on for a while till this Geiger thing cools off.

MARLOWE

No dough from my client.

BRODY

(to Vivian -- with cold fury)

So you did go to somebody after all.

(rising)

All right! I don't need your five grand. I can take you off my back, Marlowe, and I can get the cops taken off. I got a connection, see? I got a handle on something big enough to turn this town upside down --

MARLOWE

Why haven't you pulled it?

BRODY

I'm going to. And what I get out of it will make your five grand look like a roll of nickels.

AGNES

Joe -- you're not gonna do it. You
can't go up against Eddie Mars,
he'll --

BRODY

(furiously)

Shut up! You have to let that big
mouth run off in front of --

He is interrupted by the sudden RINGING of the DOORBELL. They hold it, all of them apprehensive of who may be on the other side of the door, while the RINGING STOPS and becomes an insistent rapping. Brody jerks open a desk drawer and draws out a bone-handled automatic, which he hands out to Agnes. She takes it, shaking nervously. Brody indicates Marlowe.

BRODY

(to Agnes)

If he gets funny, use your own
judgment -- and the dame, too.

Agnes sits on the arm of the davenport beside Marlowe, the gun out of sight against him. Marlowe, observing her shaking hand, is not happy. Brody puts his own gun in his pocket, leaving his hand on it, and opens the door. Carmen Sternwood pushes him back in the room, using a tiny revolver which she pushes against his hips. Carmen kicks the door shut behind her; Agnes leaps up, standing out of Marlowe's reach, her gun wavering between him and Carmen. She remains oblivious of the other people in the room. Vivian reacts to her entrance, but says nothing. Marlowe sits still, automatically stroking the sleepy cat.

CARMEN

(to Brody, with quiet
viciousness)

I want my pictures, Joe.

Brody is scared, playing it very easy, backing up as she follows him.

BRODY

Take it easy, Carmen.

MARLOWE

(sharply, eyeing Agnes)
Carmen...

AGNES

(to Carmen)
Get away from him, you.

Vivian rises sharply, also getting out of Marlowe's reach; she whips a small automatic out of her coat pocket.

VIVIAN

(to Agnes, trying to
watch her and Brody
at the same time)

Let her alone.

(to Brody, moving
toward him)

Joe, if you dare to hurt her...

MARLOWE

This is cute. Hasn't anybody else
got a gun? -- We can play ring
around the roses.

CARMEN

(ignoring them
all -- to Brody)

You shot Arthur Geiger. I saw you.
I want my pictures.

MARLOWE

For Pete's sake, all of you --
relax!

No one hears him. The three women continue to behave like nervous cats -- the lead may start flying at anybody, any minute. Brody still has his hand in his pocket; he may blast Carmen -- and Marlowe, gunless, sits in the middle of the possible crossfire. Vivian is closer to him than Agnes, having moved beyond the hampering arm of the couch. Marlowe moves abruptly. Grabbing the couch cushion which Vivian has just vacated, he slings it at Agnes, knocking her off balance and down.

Almost as a continuation of the same movement Marlowe makes a dive for Vivian's legs. She falls on top of him, they struggle for the gun, and Vivian bites Marlowe's wrist. He whacks her across the side of the head with his free hand, wrenches the gun free and stands up. Carmen's attention has been distracted slightly by this dust-up, and Brody strikes at her gun hand. The gun goes off, making a small sharp crack, shattering a pane of glass in the French windows, then skitters out of Carmen's hand and across the floor. Agnes lets go a frightened bleat and collects herself, about to fire at Carmen. Marlowe makes a quick rush, kicks the gun out of her hand, and puts his foot on Carmen's gun just as Carmen gets there, her hands and knees, reaching. She puts her hand on Marlowe's foot, and then looks up at him, sidewise, and giggles. He bends over and pats her on the back.

MARLOWE

Get up, angel. You look like a
Pekinese.

She draws back and rises as Marlowe scoops up her gun with his left hand and drops it in his pocket. The gun he has taken from Vivian still dominates the room.

MARLOWE

Everybody -- stand still.

They do, and he walks over and picks up Agnes' gun, sticking that on in his hip pocket. Brody is wiping the nervous sweat off his face -- Agnes and Vivian still crouch half stunned on the floor. Marlowe laughs.

MARLOWE

My, don't we have fun! You can get
up now, kiddies.

(walking over to Brody)

All right, Joe. Give.

Brody goes sullenly to the desk, opens a secret compartment, and pulls out a fat envelope, hands it to Marlowe. Marlowe glances at the contents.

MARLOWE

Sure this is all of it?

BRODY

Yeah. Now will you dust, so I can
air out the room?

Marlowe turns as the Sternwood girls approach him. Carmen gives him a languishing smile and holds out her hand for the envelope.

CARMEN

Can I have them now?

MARLOWE

I'll take care of them for you.

He hands the envelope to Vivian, who thanks him with her eyes.

MARLOWE

(to Carmen and Vivian)

You'd better go on home now.

Carmen continues to look at him, sidelong, biting her thumb.

CARMEN

You'll take care of Carmen, won't you?

MARLOWE

Check.

CARMEN

Could I have my gun back?

MARLOWE

Later.

CARMEN

You're awfully cute.

MARLOWE

Yeah.

(stopping Vivian
as she passes
him, heading
toward the door)

Countess -- you forgot something.

He picks up her bag off the davenport and hands it to her -- the scene's almost a repetition of the one in Marlowe's office, with Marlowe still holding the handbag.

MARLOWE

Did I hurt your head much?

VIVIAN

(softly)

You -- and every other man I
ever met.

She goes out. Carmen follows her, but at the door she turns impulsively, flings her arms around Marlowe's neck and kisses him.

CARMEN

I like you.

She runs off down the hall. Marlowe looks at her, puzzled by her unusual attitude. He closes the door and turns again to Brody and Agnes. Agnes, considerably scratched up, gives him a snakely glare as she pats her wounds with a handkerchief.

BRODY

I got enough of you, chum.

MARLOWE

Yeah, but there's still some
unfinished business. What's this
handle you got on Eddie Mars that's
big enough to turn the town upside
down?

BRODY

Listen -- you got your pictures --
you got nothing more on me. Get
outta here.

MARLOWE

Sure, I can go. You can go, too.
Up to Quentin, to the big chair in
the little room with the window. They
stand outside, Joe, with stopwatches.
They clock you in seconds, but from
where you sit the centuries stink of
cyanide, and they wrap around your
throat, and a lot of people say it's
easier than hanging -- I don't know.

BRODY

What are you trying to do?

MARLOWE

Keep your neck out of a noose -- in
return for some information. Got an
alibi for last night?

BRODY

I was right here with Agnes.

MARLOWE

(picking up his hat)
Okay, Joe. You can only die once,
even for a couple of murders.

Brody stares at him as he turns to leave. Agnes is scared
-- she puts her hand on Brody's shoulder.

BRODY

Wait a minute. What do you mean --
a couple of murders?

MARLOWE

But then, you don't have to worry,
do you? You got a connection.

BRODY

Sit down.

MARLOWE

(laughs, sits down
on table edge)
Where were you about seven-thirty
last night?

BRODY

(sullenly)

Watching Geiger's place, to see if he has any friends too big for me to kick out of the way when I take over his business. It's raining hard, I'm shut up in my car, and I don't see anything except another car parked in the alley below Geiger's. I look at it -- it's a Buick, registered to Mrs. Rutledge. That's all. Nothing happened, and I got tired waiting and went home.

MARLOWE

Know where that Buick is now?

BRODY

How would I?

MARLOWE

In the Sheriff's garage. It was fished out of twelve feet of water off Lido pier this morning. There was a dead man in it, Owen Taylor, the Sternwood's chauffeur -- the guy you got the pictures from. He'd been sapped and the car pointed out the pier and the hand throttle pulled down.

Brody gives Marlowe a stricken look. Agnes tightens her grip on him.

AGNES

Joe, you didn't...

BRODY

Shut up.

(to Marlowe)

You can't hang that one on me.

MARLOWE

I can make a good try -- unless you talk and talk straight.

BRODY

All right, all right! Yeah, I heard the shots. I see this guy come slamming down the back steps with something in his hand.

(MORE)

BRODY (CONT'D)

He shoots off in the Buick, and I follow him, and out of the highway he skids off the road and has to stop, so I stop too, and play cop. His nerve is bad, and I sap him down -- and I figure the film might be worth something, so I take it. That's the last I see of him.

MARLOWE

Uh-huh -- so Taylor gave Geiger the works, and ail for the love of little Carmen. Agh! The sap!... How'd you know it was Geiger he shot?

BRODY

Seemed like a good guess. When I saw what was on the film I was sure, and when Geiger didn't show at the store this morning, Agnes and I figured it was a good time to do ourselves some business.

MARLOWE

Yeah, you figured, all right. You businesssed yourself right into a hot box.

BRODY

Yeah -- yeah, I guess I did.

MARLOWE

I got connections too, you know, with the D.A.'s office. If I know about Eddie Mars I might be able to cool you down some.

AGNES

(as Brody hesitates)

Go on, Joe -- tell him!

BRODY

Okay. It's kind of a funny story. It ain't about Eddie Mars, really -- it's about his wife. I...

The DOORBELL starts to RING. Brody stands up, with Agnes beside him. Marlowe stays put.

BRODY

So she's back again.

MARLOWE

If she is, she doesn't have her gun.
Don't you have any other friends?

BRODY

(crossing to the
table, picking
up the Colt)
Just about one.
(going angrily
to the door)
I got enough of this.

He opens the door about a foot, with his left hand, holding the Colt ready by his thigh. It is impossible to see who stands in the hall. Almost instantly two shots sound, close together. Brody doubles up, falls forward against the door, slamming it shut. Agnes reacts, but does not scream. Marlowe leaps up, hauls Brody away from the door -- Brody is quite dead. Marlowe runs out.

78. INT. HALLWAY - THE RANDALL ARMS - NIGHT

as Marlowe runs toward the stairs. A frightened woman peers out of a doorway, pointing to the stairs. The SOUND of RUNNING FEET comes from the treads below. Marlowe races to the stairway and down.

79. INT. FOYER - THE RANDALL ARMS - NIGHT

The front door is closing itself quietly as Marlowe races down the last flight of steps. He goes through the door, catching it before it closes.

80. EXT. RANDALL PLACE - THE RANDALL ARMS - NIGHT

as Marlowe comes out, pauses to get his bearings.

81. EXT. RANDALL PLACE - NIGHT - LUNDGREN

He runs between two parked cars diagonally across the street, whirls to fire.

82. EXT. RANDALL ARMS - NIGHT - MARLOWE

as two shots sound -- we see the impact of the bullets on the wall beside Marlowe, too close for comfort.

83. EXT. RANDALL PLACE - NIGHT - LONG SHOT - LUNDGREN
(MARLOWE'S ANGLE)

as Lundgren vanishes behind parked cars, in the dense tree shadows, running hard.

84. EXT. RANDALL PLACE - NIGHT

as Marlowe gets in his car and heads down the street, following Lundgren.

DISSOLVE TO:

85. EXT. HOLLYWOOD STREET - NIGHT

a quiet residential street, with trees growing heavy along the parkway. Marlowe's car pulls in to park. Marlowe gets out into the street, crouching low, and pulls Carmen's little gun from his pocket. He walks back the way he has come, crouching for shelter behind the line of parked cars. Aside from him the street is deserted.

86. EXT. HOLLYWOOD STREET - NIGHT - LONG SHOT - MARLOWE'S ANGLE

as Carol Lundgren walks unconcernedly along, approaching Marlowe. He seems to feel that he's in the clear, even whistles softly as he walks.

87. EXT. HOLLYWOOD STREET - MARLOWE - NIGHT

As Lundgren draws abreast of him, Marlowe steps from between the parked cars, holding the gun at his side. An unlighted cigarette droops from his lips.

MARLOWE

Got a match, bud?

Lundgren stands still, taken by surprise, not sure what to do. His hand rises instinctively to his leather jacket, but not inside. A siren wails off, going toward the Randall Arms -- Lundgren turns his head instinctively toward the sound, and Marlowe steps in against him, the little gun jammed into Lundgren's midriff.

MARLOWE

Me, or the cops?

LUNDGREN

Get away from me.

MARLOWE

This is a small gun, kid. I can give it to you through the belly and in three months you'll be well enough to walk the last mile up at Quentin.

Lundgren holds it, glaring at Marlowe, then relaxes.

LUNDGREN
What do you want?

MARLOWE
(turning --
indicating car)
Get into my car, kid.
(as Lundgren obeys
-- slowly)
Under the wheel. You drive.

88. INT. MARLOWE'S CAR - NIGHT

As Lundgren slides under the wheel, from the curb side, and Marlowe gets in beside him, keeping him covered.

MARLOWE
Let's go to Laverne Terrace --
Geiger's house.
(pleasantly -- as
Lundgren starts
the car)
And by the way, Carol -- if you shot
Brody for friendship's sake, you shot
the wrong guy.

Lundgren gives him a hard, nasty look and laughs.

MARLOWE
(softly)
Not all friendship, was it? Yeah,
money talks, all right. It talks,
and it's breath smells of blood...
(laughing to himself)
I told Brody that sometimes punk
burns...

89. EXT. GEIGER'S HOUSE - AT FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Marlowe and Lundgren stand on the footbridge. Marlowe still carries the toy gun. He pulls the keys out of his pocket with his left hand and gives them to Lundgren.

MARLOWE
You open it.

Lundgren starts to take the keys, then slams Marlowe a quick, hard punch on the jaw. Marlowe rocks back, but doesn't fall -- he smiles and throws the gun down at Lundgren's feet.

MARLOWE

Maybe you need this.

Lundgren goes for the gun. As he bends down Marlowe steps in fast, bringing his knee up into Lundgren's face. The force of the blow straightens Lundgren up, and Marlowe uncorks a terrific left. Lundgren falls heavily. Marlowe, unperturbed, unlocks the door, puts the gun back in his pocket, and starts to drag Lundgren inside.

DISSOLVE TO:

90. INT. GEIGER'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MARLOWE AND LUNDGREN

Lundgren is stretched out on the couch, his hands bound behind him, under his back. A single lamp shines down into his face. He has bled somewhat from the nose. Marlowe sits on the couch, twisted sideways, so that Lundgren's head is strained back over his knee. Marlowe helps the straining by having his left hand wound in Lundgren's hair. His manner is gentle, almost friendly.

MARLOWE

(softly)

You're going to cop a plea, brother -- don't ever think you're not. And when you talk, you're going to say just what I want you to say, and nothing else. You hear me, sweetheart?

Lundgren makes no reply, staring stonily into the light.

MARLOWE

(almost caressingly)

It's your face, Carol. You can do what you want with it.

He jerks Lundgren's head back harder and raises his free hand, bringing it down.

DISSOLVE TO:

91. INT. GEIGER'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Marlowe stands at the telephone, speaking into the instrument. His face is beaded with sweat, his collar open. He smokes jerkily -- we get the impression he hasn't enjoyed slapping Lundgren around. In b.g. Lundgren lies on the couch, both hands over his face.

MARLOWE

(into phone)

Hello, Bernie? -- Yeah, Marlowe. How you fixed for red points, Bernie...? Well, come on up to 7244 Laverne Terrace -- I got some cold meat set out... might interest you.

DISSOLVE TO:

92. INT. GEIGER'S BEDROOM - MARLOWE AND OHLS - NIGHT

They stand by the bed, looking down. Geiger is laid out on the bed. Two strips of Chinese embroidery cover the wounds on his breast, in the shape of a cross, his hands folded over them. The only light in the room comes from two black candles burning on either side of the bed.

OHLS

Nice gesture of friendship.
Lundgren?

MARLOWE

Yeah.

Ohls bends over, lifts up the Chinese embroidery, studies Geiger's chest, then straightens up.

OHLS

So that's where the three slugs went out of Owen Taylor's gun. Well, I can understand that.

(making a gesture
of distaste)

Let's get out of here.

93. INT. GEIGER'S SITTING ROOM - CAROL

sprawled sideways on the couch, leaning his head against the wall, showing signs of his recent battle with Marlowe. Marlowe sits in b.g., easily, smoking. Ohls stands over Carol. Ohls is annoyed with Marlowe, shows it in succeeding scenes.

OHLS

(to Carol)

Do you admit shooting Brody?

CAROL

(not moving -- not
opening his eyes)

Take a jump, Jack.

MARLOWE
 (through smoke)
 He doesn't have to admit it. I've
 got the gun.

OHLS
 (he rouses himself)
 I've called Wilde. Come on. We'll
 deliver this punk to him.
 He leans down, grasps Carol's arm.

OHLS
 Get up.
 (Carol flings his
 hand off -- rises
 sullenly -- Ohls
 moves in beside him)
 Come on, Marlowe. The D.A. will
 want to see the man that solves
 single-handed what we make busts on.
 And on the way to him, you and I
 will talk a little too.

Marlowe rises, follows as Ohls takes Carol out, snapping
 off the lights as he passes them and all exit.

94. INSERT DOOR LETTERED:

DISTRICT ATTORNEY

DISSOLVE THRU TO:

95. INT. SUMPTUOUS DISTRICT ATTORNEY OFFICE

indicating a city of some size, wealth, etc. The D.A. sits
 behind his desk. He wears a dinner jacket, has been called
 hastily from a party obviously. At corner of the desk sits
 Captain Cronjager of the city police homicide detail, in
 plain clothes. He is a cold, hatchet-faced man obviously
 displeased with the way things have happened. Ohls enters,
 followed by Marlowe.

OHLS
 (to Wilde)
 Evening, Chief. Evening, Cronjager.
 (he pulls up a
 chair to sit down)
 Meet Sherlock Holmes, gentlemen.
 (to Marlowe)
 Grab yourself a chair -- unless
 you'd rather be on your feet while
 Cronjager gives you a going-over.

WILDE

Sit down, Marlowe. We'll try to handle Captain Cronjager. But I think you'll admit you were going a little fast, won't you?

MARLOWE

Thanks.

He sits down, takes out a cigarette, holds it unlighted in his hand. Ohls and Cronjager stare at him.

OHLS

Fast is right. But just wait and watch him go when his foot finally does slip.

(to Cronjager)

Maybe you'd better tell Sherlock Holmes here what else you got on the Randall Place killing.

CRONJAGER

A blonde. Down on the street, trying to start a car that didn't belong to her. Hers was right next to it, the same model. She acted rattled, so the boys brought her in and she spilled. Claims she didn't see the killer.

OHLS

(still riding Marlowe)

He's in the back office now -- handcuffed. Here's the gun.

He takes Carol's gun from his pocket, drops it on the desk. Cronjager looks at the gun, but without touching it. After a moment Wilde chuckles, enjoying Cronjager's discomfiture and Ohls' annoyance.

OHLS

But that's just one of them.

(he stares at Marlowe while he addresses Cronjager)

You heard about a car being lifted out of the surf at Lido pier this morning with a dead guy in it?

MARLOWE

(mildly)

Do you have to be coy about it?

OHLS

(staring at Marlowe
-- addressing
Cronjager with
malicious sarcasm)

Sure. The guy they found drowned in the car shot another guy last night in your territory; a guy named Geiger who ran a racket in the back room of a bookstore on the boulevard. The punk I got in the back office worked for Geiger.

(to Marlowe)

You're on the air. Let's have it.

MARLOWE

That's all. When I finally located the lad that moved the packing case out of Geiger's back room, Geiger's blonde secretary was with him. It was Brody. While I was trying to persuade Brody to tell what became of the packing case, the doorbell rang again and Brody opened the door and somebody shot him twice. You know the rest of it.

(he lights his cigarette)

OHLS

Except what was in the packing case
-- yes.

MARLOWE

(smoking)

Brody didn't tell me.

OHLS

(staring at Marlowe)

You see, Cronjager? Even as smart as he is, he's got to guess sometimes, too.

MARLOWE

My guess is the same as yours. Black mailing stuff. Geiger's customers must have been wearing a path across that rug, coming in to knock on that locked door and pay their monthly installments.

OHLS

(staring at Marlowe)
That's right, Cronjager. Maybe
Sherlock's even going to show us
his evidence for guessing that.

MARLOWE

Do you folks still guess when you
have evidence?

WILDE

(sharply)
That's enough of this.
(to Marlowe)
So Taylor killed Geiger because he
was in love with the Sternwood girl.
And Brody followed Taylor, sapped
him and took the photograph and
pushed Taylor into the ocean. And
the punk killed Brody because the
punk thought he should have
inherited Geiger's business and
Brody was throwing him out.

MARLOWE

That's how I figure it.

WILDE

(extends his hand)
Let's see your evidence.

OHLS

Give, pal. Hiding murders.
Spending a whole day foxing around
so that this punk of Geiger's can
have plenty of time to commit
another one.

Marlowe takes from his coat and puts on the desk before
Wilde the three notes and Geiger's card to General Stern
wood, and the notebook with its code list of names. Wilde
looks at them, lights a cigar. Ohls and Cronjager rise and
look at the articles over Wilde's shoulders. Marlowe
smokes quietly.

WILDE

(after a time)
These notes. If General Sternwood
paid them, it would be because he
was afraid of something else. Do
you know what he was afraid of?

MARLOWE

No.

Wilde stares at Marlowe.

WILDE
(after a moment)
Have you told your story complete?

MARLOWE
I left out some personal matters.
(they stare at each other)
I intend to keep on leaving them out.

WILDE
Why?

MARLOWE
I've still got a client. You
recommended me to him through Bernie.
My first duty is to him.

Wilde, Ohls and Cronjager all stare at Marlowe. He smokes quietly. Wilde, staring at Marlowe, makes a slight signal with his hand.

OHLS
(to D.A.)
Okay. But you're wasting time.
If you'd let me handle Sherlock...

WILDE
That'll do, Bernie.

OHLS
(to Cronjager)
I want to surrender a prisoner
to you. Come on.
(he goes toward door
-- Cronjager following.
As Ohls opens the door
he pauses and looks
back at Marlowe. To
Marlowe:)
I like you. Better and better.
Some day I'm going to like you so
well I won't be able to bear having
you out of my sight.

He and Cronjager exit, close the door. Wilde puffs his cigar, staring at Marlowe. Marlowe smokes quietly.

WILDE
(after a time)
Do you know why I'm not tearing
your ear off?

MARLOWE

I expected to lose both of them.

WILDE

(smoking -- watching
him steadily --
after a time)

What are you getting for all this?

MARLOWE

Twenty-five a day and expenses.

WILDE

And for that money you're willing to
get yourself in Dutch with the law
enforcement of this county, maybe
lose your license?

MARLOWE

(quietly)

I've still got a client.

WILDE

Is he still just a client?

(Marlowe doesn't
answer -- smoking)

Listen to me, son. My father was a
close friend of old General
Sternwood. I like him as well as
you do. I've done all my office
permits -- maybe a good deal more --
to save him from grief. But in the
long run, nothing can save him
except dying.

MARLOWE

Yeah -- the big sleep. That'll cure
his grief.

WILDE

It cures all the grief... You really
don't know yet what General Sternwood
wants with you?

MARLOWE

Yes. To settle this business with
Geiger.

WILDE

He's afraid that ex-bootlegger,
Regan, that he took up about a year
ago, is mixed up in this somewhere.
What he really wants is for you to
find out that Regan isn't.

MARLOWE

Regan's no blackmailer. I knew him.

Wilde shrugs slightly.

WILDE

Maybe you'd better find him and prove it.

MARLOWE

Maybe I had.

Marlowe rises. He indicates the objects on the desk.

MARLOWE

Can I have these?

Wilde looks again at the objects, then he takes up the notebook containing the code names and addresses, opens the desk drawer, drops the book in and shuts it, pushes the other things across the desk toward Marlowe.

WILDE

Take them.

DISSOLVE TO:

96. EXT. HOBART ARMS APARTMENT - MARLOWE - NIGHT

as he unlocks the entrance, enters.

97. INT. LOBBY - MARLOWE

as he enters, is shutting the door when a man, the only occupant, sitting with a newspaper in a lobby chair, lowers the paper. It is the young hoodlum who was with Mars at Geiger's house this morning. He rises, flicks his cigarette stub into a potted palm and thrusts the tip of his right hand into the V of his coat-opening.

BODYGUARD

(jovially)

Well, well, if it ain't Hawkshaw himself. The boss wants to talk to you.

MARLOWE

What about?

BODYGUARD

What do you care, Hawkshaw? Just keep your nose clean. Let the boss do all the thinking and ask the questions.

MARLOWE
 (drops hand into
 side pocket)
 I'm too tired to talk. Too tired to
 think too. But if you think I'm too
 tired to refuse to take orders from
 Eddie Mars -- try getting your gat
 out before I shoot that good ear off.
 (bodyguard stares
 at him -- undecided)

BODYGUARD
 A comedian, huh?

MARLOWE
 Yeah. I'm going to die laughing in
 just about a minute.

BODYGUARD
 (baffled)
 You ain't got no gun. Have you
 forgot about this morning?

MARLOWE
 That was this morning. I'm not
 always barefooted.

The bodyguard stares at Marlowe a while longer. Then he
 waves his left hand airily.

BODYGUARD
 Okay, hot shot! You win. But don't
 let it go to your head, see?
 (moves toward the door)
 You'll hear from us.

MARLOWE
 Too late will be too soon.

The bodyguard crosses to the street door, exits. Then
 Marlowe follows to the door, sees it is locked, turns, his
 lip twisted in contempt, and crosses toward elevator.

98. INT. MARLOWE'S APARTMENT - MARLOWE

as he enters, snaps on light, tosses his hat onto the bed,
 takes Carmen Sternwood's little pistol from his pocket,
 tosses it onto table beneath the lamp, crosses to bookcase
 on which a bottle of whiskey sits, takes up the bottle and
 goes on to the kitchen, exits. OVER SOUND OF REFRIGERATOR
 DOOR, CLINK OF GLASS, ETC.

LAP DISSOLVE TO:

99. CLOSE SHOT - MARLOWE

at table beneath the lamp, half-emptied highball beside him, as he finishes cleaning Carmen's pistol. He closes the pistol, and holding it in his left hand, he gathers up the remaining tiny shells he had removed from it, examines them, shrugs sardonically, tosses them into desk drawer, closes drawer and is folding a greased rag about the pistol when the telephone rings. He puts the pistol on the desk and turns.

100. CLOSE SHOT - MARLOWE AT TELEPHONE

He holds the receiver lowered somewhat, so that Mars' harsh voice comes clearly from it.

MARS' VOICE

So you're tough tonight.

MARLOWE

Sleepy, too. What can I do for you, Mister Mars?

MARS' VOICE

Cops over there -- you know where. Did you keep me out of it?

MARLOWE

What do you think?

MARS' VOICE

Listen, soldier. I'm nice to be nice to.

MARLOWE

You listen. Maybe you'll hear my teeth chattering.

MARS' VOICE

(laughs shortly)
Did you -- or did you?

MARLOWE

I did. I don't know why, but I did.

MARS' VOICE

Thanks, soldier. Who gunned him?

MARLOWE

Somebody you never heard of. Let it go at that.

MARS' VOICE

If that's on the level, someday I
may be able to do you a favor.

MARLOWE

You can now. Hang up and let me go
to bed.

MARS' VOICE

(laughs again)
You're looking for Shawn Regan,
aren't you?

MARLOWE

Everybody I meet seems to think I am.
But I'm not.

MARS' VOICE

If you were, I could give you an
idea. Drive up to the club and see
me. Any time.

MARLOWE

Thanks.

MARS' VOICE

Be seeing you then.

The other receiver clicks. Marlowe puts his receiver down slowly, sits a moment, thoughtful. He seems to be waiting for something. He takes out a cigarette, has just struck the match when the phone rings. Without moving he blows out the match and wedges the paper stem into the telephone bell, muffling it, so that it now merely buzzes, steadily as whoever it is continues to ring. Then he strikes another match, lights the cigarette, rises and begins to unknot his tie as he walks out of SHOT. The muffled telephone buzzes, the light snaps off, leaving the room in darkness. The muffled phone continues to buzz as whoever it is keeps on ringing.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

101. ESTABLISHING SHOT - DOOR

lettered: Bureau of Missing Persons

DISSOLVE THRU TO:

102. INT. OFFICE DAY - MARLOWE

Marlowe seated, facing across the desk Captain Gregory, a slow, burly man who looks dull and stupid but is not. Gregory in plain clothes looks at Marlowe's credentials, looks up.

GREGORY

Private, eh? What can I do for you?

MARLOWE

I'm working for General Guy Sternwood.
The D.A. knows him.

GREGORY

I know who he is too. Did the D.A.
send you here?

MARLOWE

Isn't your information available
to anybody, unless it's a homicide
matter?

GREGORY

Did the D.A. send you here?

MARLOWE

No.

GREGORY

Did he know you were coming?

MARLOWE

(after a moment --
takes out cigarettes)
Mind if I smoke?

GREGORY

Go ahead.

MARLOWE

(lights up)
Thanks.

GREGORY

What do you want?

MARLOWE

I want to know what became of a man
named Shawn Regan, who used to work
for General Sternwood.

GREGORY

I don't know where he is. He
scrammed -- pulled down the curtain,
and that's that.

MARLOWE

Will you give me what you have got
on him?

Gregory rings a bell on desk-edge. The door opens, a
middle-aged woman secretary enters.

GREGORY

Get me the file on Shawn Regan,
Abba.

The woman exits. Marlowe smokes. Gregory takes up a
charred pipe, digs tobacco dottle deliberately from it, is
about to fill it when the woman enters, lays an official
file on the desk, exits. Gregory puts down the pipe, puts
on glasses, opens the file.

GREGORY

He blew on the sixteenth of September.
No one reported it. We got into it
by finding the car. It was the
chauffeur's day off, so nobody at
Sternwood's saw Regan take his car
out of the garage. We found the car
four days later in a garage belonging
to a ritzy bungalow court on Sunset.
The garage man reported it to the
stolen car detail; said it didn't
belong there. We couldn't find who
it belonged to.

MARLOWE

And of course Eddie Mars' wife
couldn't tell you, because she had
disappeared too.

GREGORY

(stares at Marlowe
a moment)

If you knew so much already, why
did you come to me?

MARLOWE

Sorry. Go ahead.

GREGORY

So you have been talking to some
Sternwood about Regan.

MARLOWE

Why not? You just said nobody has accused anybody of any crime yet.

GREGORY

Yes, Mrs. Mars was gone too, disappeared within two days of the day Regan's car was left in the garage.

MARLOWE

What are the angles?

GREGORY

Mrs. Mars lived in the apartment the garage belonged to. Regan was known to carry a roll, fifteen grand, in his clothes all the time --

MARLOWE

Yes. I had heard that.

GREGORY

It don't seem to have been any secret to anybody that Regan was sweet on Mars' wife.

MARLOWE

So it looks like they went off together.

GREGORY

Regan had fifteen grand in cash with him. Mrs. Mars had some rocks, and a car of her own -- making two cars available. Everything disappeared but one of the cars.

MARLOWE

What did she look like? Have you got a photograph?

GREGORY

No... A blonde. She won't be now though.

MARLOWE

What was she before she married Mars?

GREGORY

A torcher.

MARLOWE

Maybe she isn't anything now. Maybe neither of them are.

GREGORY

You're thinking of Eddie Mars. You're wrong. Mars is a business man, and a good one. Jealousy's a luxury -- murdering for it, at least -- that a man like Eddie Mars knows he can't afford.

MARLOWE

So, as far as you're concerned, Mars is out.

GREGORY

Mars is out. And, until something more turns up, we are too.

MARLOWE

(rising)

And so am I, it looks like. There's no law on my book either against a man with fifteen grand going away with the woman he loves.

(turning)

Thanks.

GREGORY

(closing the file)

Not at all.

(Marlowe moving toward the door)

Give my best to the D.A.

MARLOWE

(half halts -- being slyly kidded)

I will.

He exits.

103. EXT. STREET - MARLOWE

gets into his car, drives away. As he does so, a coupe starts up behind him, following him.

104. INT. MARLOWE'S CAR - MOVING - MARLOWE

is aware that the other car is following him, is sardonic, is careful to let the other car keep in sight of him.

105. INT. MARLOWE'S OFFICE ANTEROOM - MARLOWE
entering, finds Norris waiting for him.

MARLOWE
(closing door)
Good morning, Norris.

NORRIS
(rises)
Good morning, Mr. Marlowe.

MARLOWE
How's the General this morning?

NORRIS
Not so well, sir. I -- ah --

MARLOWE
Yeah? What's on your mind?

NORRIS
(in sort of a rush)
I read the papers to him this
morning. From -- ah -- certain
items we assume that your
investigation is now complete.

MARLOWE
Yes, as regards Geiger. I didn't
shoot him, though.

NORRIS
Quite so, sir.

MARLOWE
I guess you've called for the debris.

NORRIS
The debris, sir?

MARLOWE
(crossing to other door)
This way.

Norris follows him.

106. INT. MARLOWE'S OFFICE - MARLOWE

at desk takes out papers, evens them, puts them into
envelope.

MARLOWE

There you are. Three notes, and the card.

NORRIS

(steadily)
Thank you, sir. Mrs. Rutledge tried several times to telephone you last night --

MARLOWE

I know. I was busy getting tight.

NORRIS

(puts hand inside coat)
Quite so, sir.
(he draws out check, hands it to Marlowe)
The General instructed me to hand you this. Will it be satisfactory?

MARLOWE

(takes check, glances at it, folds it)
Five hundred. Quite.

NORRIS

(curiously insistent)
And we may now consider the entire incident closed?

MARLOWE

(gets the overtone but covers completely, easily)
Sure. Tight as a vault with a busted time lock.

NORRIS

Thank you, sir. We all appreciate it. When the General is feeling better, he will thank you himself.

MARLOWE

Fine. I'll come out and drink some more of your brandy. Maybe with champagne.

NORRIS

(departing)
I'll see that some is properly iced, sir.

He exits, closes the door. Marlowe's air changes now. He opens the check slowly, looks at it, speculatively.

MARLOWE
 (musing: aloud)
 Completely closed... completely closed.

He rouses, puts the check into his wallet, goes to phone, dials, speaks into phone.

MARLOWE
 Hello... Let me speak to Eddie...
 Sure, Eddie... Phil Marlowe.
 (holding phone between
 head and shoulder,
 he takes out cigarette,
 is about to light it,
 speaks into phone,
 still holding cigarette
 and burning match in
 both hands)
 Hello, Eddie. I want to see you.
 I'll drive up tonight... Check.

DISSOLVE TO:

107. ESTABLISHING SHOT - INSERT: SIGNBOARD

STATELINE, NEVADA

DISSOLVE THRU TO:

108. INT. LAS OLINDAS CLUB ENTRANCE - NIGHT - MARLOWE

checking his hat and coat at counter. The slim, pasty-faced bodyguard who had been with Mars and the other guard at Geiger's house enters, approaches.

MARLOWE
 Hello. How's the pistol-packing
 business up here?

BODYGUARD
 (blandly)
 Better. We don't have so many
 amateurs around.

MARLOWE
 Not amateurs -- just suckers, huh?

BODYGUARD
 (turning)
 This way.

Marlowe follows him.

109. INT. MARS' PRIVATE OFFICE - MARS AND MARLOWE

The office is suave, restrained, well-furnished, shows money. A wall safe in one wall, radio, liquor cabinet, comfortable chairs, etc. Mars wears a well-cut, expensive dinner suit. He shakes hands with Marlowe as the bodyguard withdraws, shuts the door.

MARS

(shaking hands)

Took you a long time to get here,
didn't it?

MARLOWE

I wouldn't be here now if you hadn't
hinted you had something for me.

MARS

(turns to liquor cabinet,
opens it, starts to
fix drinks)

What did you change your mind about?
About what you are after, or just
about admitting it?

Marlowe, lighting a cigarette, doesn't answer. Mars prepares the highballs, approaches, hands one to Marlowe.

MARLOWE

(taking drink)

Thanks.

Mars leans against the desk, elegant, holding his drink.

MARS

A friend of yours is outside playing
the wheels. I hear she's doing well.
Mrs. Rutledge --

(Marlowe says nothing,
drinks)

I liked the way you handled that
yesterday. You made me sore at first.
But I see now you knew what you were
doing. You and I ought to get along.

(Marlowe says nothing,
drinks, smokes. Mars
watches him)

But I like to pay my checks as I go
along. How much do I owe you?

MARLOWE

For what?

MARS
Still cagey, huh?

MARLOWE
All right. How much have you got
that I can use?

MARS
(waves hand, easy)
Oh, that. I heard you had all
the information already.

MARLOWE
I don't know. You didn't bump
Regan off, did you?

MARS
No. So you think I did?

MARLOWE
I came up here to ask you.

MARS
(stares at Marlowe)
You're kidding.

MARLOWE
Yes, I'm kidding. I used to know
Regan. You haven't got the men
for that work. And while I think
of it, don't send me any more gun
punks. I might get nervous and
shoot one of them.

Mars stares at Marlowe, lifts glass and drinks, staring at
Marlowe across the glass, lowers the glass.

MARS
You talk a good game, but I still
think we can get along. Are you
looking for Regan, or not?

MARLOWE
Geiger was trying to blackmail
General Sternwood. I finally
figured out that at least half the
General's trouble was being afraid
Regan might be behind it.

MARS
I see. Well, Sternwood can turn
over now and go back to sleep. It
was Geiger's own racket. I like to
(MORE)

MARS (CONT'D)

know who rents anything from me, so I did some inquiring today myself. So if it was just Geiger you were after, whoever gunned him washed you and Sternwood both up.

MARLOWE

(sets glass down, rises)
I guess that's what the General thinks too since he paid me off today.

(Mars takes up Marlowe's empty glass)
No thanks. No more.

MARS

Another won't hurt you.

MARLOWE

No thanks.

MARS

(sets glass down)
I'm sorry about that. I wish Sternwood would hire you on a straight salary to keep these girls of his home at least a few nights a week.

(he drains his glass, sets it down, wipes his mouth)
They're plain trouble. The older one's a pain in the neck around here. If she loses, she plunges, and I end up with a fist full of paper not even worth the ink on it. If she wins, she takes my money home with her.

MARLOWE

Don't you get it back the next night?

MARS

She's spent it by then.

MARLOWE

And is back on the cuff, huh? Mind if I look the joint over?

MARS

Go ahead.
(indicates small door)
That comes out behind the tables.

MARLOWE

Thanks. I'll go in with the other suckers.

MARS

As you please. We're friends, aren't we?

MARLOWE

Sure.

They shake hands.

MARS

Maybe I can do you a real favor some day.

MARLOWE

Maybe! There's just one thing puzzling me, Eddie. You don't seem in much of a rush to find your wife. From what I hear she's not the kind of a wife a guy wants to lose. Could it be you know where she is -- with Regan?

MARS

(deadly quiet)

Look, soldier... What's between me and my wife is between us.

MARLOWE

Okay. Sorry.

(he goes to door, turns)

You don't have anybody watching me, tailing me around in a gray Plymouth coupe, do you?

MARS

(sharply, surprised,
actually innocent
of it)

No. A gray Plymouth? When?

MARLOWE

Then it don't matter. If it's not you, it's just an enemy. I can take care of him.

He exits. Mars stares after him.

110. INT. CASINO - MARLOWE

leans against small, swank bar, looking into the gambling room, which is big, spacious, various small lay-outs along the wall. At the end of the big room are three roulette wheels. The two outside ones are deserted; even the croupiers have been drawn into the crowd which is packed densely about the middle one. In the center of the crowd

VIVIAN'S HEAD can be seen as she plays her winning streak. Marlowe is watching her. On the fringe of the crowd the waiters stand also, watching. All this is a build-up to show a phenomenal run which Vivian is making. The barman leans on the bar behind Marlowe

BARMAN

She's sure picking them tonight.
She comes here a lot, and from the way it's been running for her, she's due to pick them. Put it's been a long time since this place seen anything like that.

Two men emerge from the crowd about the wheel and approach the bar, excitedly. The barman moves to them, waits.

FIRST MAN

(to Barman)
Scotch and soda.
(the barman starts the drinks. The speaker mops his face)
Boy, I never saw such a run. Eight wins and two stand-offs in a row on that red. Betting a grand at a crack too.

BARMAN

(serves the two drinks)
A grand at a crack, huh? I saw an old horse-face in Havana once --

Marlowe moves away as the two men take up their drinks.

111. GROUP AT WHEEL - MARLOWE

as he reaches the crowd. The play has stopped. The croupiers of all three wheels are now facing Vivian across the table. A mass of bills, chips, etc., before Vivian.

CROUPIER

If you will just be patient a moment, Madame. The table cannot cover your bet. Mr. Mars will be here in a moment.

VIVIAN

(looks about, cool, insolent, though her face shows excitement)

What kind of a cheap outfit is this? Get busy and spin the wheel. I want one more play and I'm playing table stakes. You take it away fast enough, I notice. But when it comes to dishing it out, you begin to whine.

CROUPIER

The table cannot cover your bet, Madame.

(indicates her pile)

You have over sixteen thousand dollars there.

VIVIAN

It's your money. Don't you want it back?

A MAN

(beside her, much more excited than she is)

Look, lady --

VIVIAN

(turns on him, vicious, cutting)

Do you want another sixteen thousand of it?

The man falls back, discomfited. A door opens in the wall behind the table. The crowd falls silent, turns, as Mars comes out the door, smiling, indifferent, immaculate, hands in his jacket pockets as he strolls to the table.

MARS

Something the matter, Mrs. Rutledge?

(she is about to speak when he continues, easily, courteous)

(MORE)

MARS (CONT'D)

If you're not playing any more, you must let me send someone home with you.

VIVIAN

One more play, Eddie. All of it on the red. I like red. It's the color of blood.

Mars stares at her a second, smiles faintly, takes from his inner breast pocket a large pinseal wallet with gold corners, very elegant, and tosses it carelessly to the croupier without opening it.

MARS

Cover her bet in even thousands.
(to the gaping crowd)
If no one objects to this turn of the wheel being for the lady alone.

The crowd remains breathless. Vivian leans down and shoves the whole mass of her winnings savagely onto the RED diamond of the layout, stands back. The croupier leans without haste and rapidly and skillfully counts the money, stacks it, places all but a few scattered chips and bills, rakes these into a neat pile and pushes it off the layout with his rake, leaving the bet on the RED.

Then he opens Mars' wallet with the same detached deliberate swiftness, draws out two flat packets of thousand-dollar bills. He breaks the tape around one, counts off six bills, adds them to the unbroken packet, puts the four other bills back into Mars' wallet and lays the wallet aside as carelessly as if it were a packet of paper matches. Mars does not touch the wallet. He stands as before, elegant, detached, courteous. The croupier spins the wheel with one hand, snaps the ball into it with the other, draws back and folds his arms.

112. CLOSE SHOT - VIVIAN'S FACE

as she watches the spinning wheel.

113. CLOSE SHOT - WHEEL

as it spins, slows, stops.

114. GROUP AROUND TABLE

CROUPIER

Red. Odd. Second dozen.

Vivian laughs, triumphant, for the first time her excitement seems to come through as she lets go for the moment. Then she stops, watches the croupier add the bills to her bet, then with the rake shove the whole thing across to her. Mars smiles faintly, expressionless still, takes up the wallet, puts it back into his pocket, goes back to the door and exits.

115. INT. ENTRANCE - LAS OLINDAS CLUB - MARLOWE

at the checkroom, gets his hat and coat, drops a coin into plate, goes toward the door, putting on coat.

116. EXT. ENTRANCE LAS OLINDAS - NIGHT - MARLOWE

buttoning his coat, comes out, walks on.

117. EXT. SHRUBBERY-BORDERED PATH - NIGHT - MARLOWE

as he enters, stops, looks about. His face is intent, watchful. He listens, puts his hand into his pocket, draws out a pipe, looks at it, tosses it slightly, contemptuously, regretful, shrugs, thrusts pipe into his side-pocket, his hand still clutching it, goes on moving quietly and stealthily now, pauses, listens again, is about to go on when SOUND OF A SLIGHT COUGH comes from ahead. Marlowe steps quickly and soundlessly into the shrubbery.

118. CLOSE SHOT - MARLOWE

hidden behind a shrub, peering out. Ten feet away another man crouches behind a shrub beside the path, watching the path. He turns his head; we see that he wears a mask. He watches the path again, reacts as FAINT SOUND OF FEET begins. Vivian enters, walking rapidly along the path, clutching her handbag to her. As she passes the shrub, the man steps quickly out. Vivian stops but makes no sound.

THUG

(quickly; low-tone)

This is a gun, lady. Gentle now.
Just hand me the bag.

For a moment Vivian does not move. Then she draws a deep breath as if to scream, still clutching the handbag.

THUG

Yell, and I'll cut you in half.
(he opens the
bag, thrusts his
hand inside)
It better be here --

MARLOWE

(quietly, from behind him)
Hi, pal.

(the thug stops dead.
After a second his
empty hand starts
to steal upward)

Easy now.

As Marlowe and the thug stare it out tensely, two shadowy figures emerge from the shrubbery. One of them slugs Marlowe from behind. As he falls, the other grabs for Vivian, apparently about to do the same for her. She lets out a wild scream and starts shooting from the pocket. One of the thugs cries out in mingled pain and anger -- in the distance people begin to shout -- the noise has attracted attention.

THUG

You clumsy yap...

SECOND THUG

Let's get outta here.

They run, vanishing into the dark shrubbery. Vivian crouches beside Marlowe, helping as he tries to sit up.

MARLOWE

(in pain, holding
his head)

Agh -- good thing I got a thick
skull --

People from the club, parking attendants, etc., run up. Flashlights play on them.

CROWD

(ad lib)

What's the matter?... What happened?
... The guy's hurt...

MARLOWE

(rising groggily)

It's okay. Just a slight holdup --
the lady flashes too much dough
around.

(to Vivian)

You all right?

VIVIAN

Yes -- are you?

MARLOWE

Let's go. I don't like crowds.

They get away from the curious onlookers, walking down a dark path toward the parking lot.

MARLOWE

You got a car with you?

VIVIAN

I came with a man. He's dead drunk. Forget him. What are you doing here, besides playing bodyguard?

MARLOWE

We both seem to have been doing a bit of that -- Eddie Mars wanted to see me.

VIVIAN

What for?

MARLOWE

He changed his mind. He never did tell me.

VIVIAN

You lie.

MARLOWE

All right. I'm lying.

They walk on.

DISSOLVE TO:

119. EXT. PARKING LOT - MARLOWE AND VIVIAN

enter, cross to Marlowe's coupe.

MARLOWE

(pauses)

What are you trembling for? Don't tell me you're scared, because I won't believe that.

VIVIAN

(draws him on)

I wasn't used to being high-jacked. Give me a little time.

MARLOWE

High-jacked. That's -- all it was?

VIVIAN

What else?

MARLOWE
 (studying the holes
 in her coat)
 You always go heeled?

VIVIAN
 I feel safer, around the heels
 I go with.

MARLOWE
 (laughing)
 You're terrific.

120. CLOSE SHOT - MARLOWE'S COUPE - MARLOWE AND VIVIAN

He helps her in, gets in, shuts door, starts engine.

LAP DISSOLVE TO:

121. INT. MOVING CAR - DESERT - NIGHT - MARLOWE AND VIVIAN

The car is going pretty fast, Marlowe intent on the road.
 Vivian seems nervous, is looking about, smoking.

VIVIAN
 (smoking nervously)
 So Eddie had you come all the way
 up here and then wouldn't tell
 you what he wanted?
 (dryly)
 That's right. I'm still lying.

Suddenly she flings the cigarette out the window.

VIVIAN
 Have you got a drink?

MARLOWE
 Sure.
 (still driving,
 watching the road,
 he leans, takes a
 flask from dashboard
 compartment, hands
 it to her)

VIVIAN
 (takes flask)
 I can't drink like this. Stop the
 car.

Marlowe stops the car.

VIVIAN
 (puts flask unopened
 back into compartment,
 slams it shut)
 I don't want a drink. Let's talk.

MARLOWE
 Do we need to? The General paid
 me off today -- I'm all washed up.

VIVIAN
 Are you?

MARLOWE
 All right. What's Eddie Mars got
 on you?

VIVIAN
 (easily; lifts the
 handbag, slaps it)
 This, for instance. And tonight's
 not the first time.

MARLOWE
 Which would make Eddie Mars sore.
 So we'll pass that and start over.
 What's he got on you?

VIVIAN
 Wittier, please, Marlowe. Wittier.

MARLOWE
 I can't. I'm too old to learn now.

VIVIAN
 But not old enough to outgrow some
 of your other habits.

MARLOWE
 For instance?

VIVIAN
 Killing people.
 (she stares at him,
 secretive, while
 he tries to follow
 her, catch up with
 what's going on)
 So you're a killer.

MARLOWE
 Does that mean Geiger, or Brody --
 or maybe both of them?

VIVIAN

Why not?

(she looks at him.
Suddenly her manner
changes; she speaks
with a quiet and
complete sincerity)

I wish I was sure you had done it.
Then I could thank you -- in my
father's name. He still has pride,
at least.

MARLOWE

And you and your sister haven't.

VIVIAN

(with bitter contempt)
Carmen and me...
(rapidly)

We're his blood. That's where the
hurt is. That Father might die
despising his own blood. It was
always wild, but it wasn't always
rotten.

(she pulls herself
together, takes out
a cigarette, slumps
back in the seat as
Marlowe strikes a
match. But when he
holds the match to
her, he sees her
lying back in the
seat, the cigarette
in her mouth, looking
at him with lazy and
inviting challenge.
When he brings the
match near, without
moving she blows it
out. When she speaks
it is almost a whisper)

Move closer.

Marlowe stares at her. After a moment he flings the dead
match deliberately away, puts his arm around her,
approaches his face to hers. Suddenly Vivian flings the
unlighted cigarette over her shoulder toward the window,
clasps him in her arms.

VIVIAN

Hold me close!

They kiss, a long kiss. Marlowe raises his head at last.

VIVIAN
Where do you live?

MARLOWE
Hobart Arms.

VIVIAN
I've never seen it.

MARLOWE
Would you like to?

VIVIAN
Yes.

MARLOWE
What's Eddie Mars got on you?

She is motionless in his arms for a second. Then she flings him back with one arm, sits violently up.

VIVIAN
So that's the way it is.

MARLOWE
That's the way it is.

VIVIAN
(controls herself;
takes out a wisp
of handkerchief
and scrubs her lips
savagely with it)
Men have been shot for less than
this, Marlowe.

MARLOWE
Men have been shot for less than
nothing. The first time we met I
told you I was a detective. Get
it through your lovely head. I
work at it, lady. I don't play
at it.

VIVIAN
What makes you think Eddie Mars has
anything on me?

MARLOWE

He lets you win a lot of money,
then he has a gunpoke meet you in
the back yard and take it all away
from you. And you're not even
surprised. You don't even thank
me for saving it for you.

VIVIAN

Do I need to tell you what I think
of you, Mister Detective?

MARLOWE

You don't owe me anything. Your
father paid me. I owe you something
for the kiss.

VIVIAN

Let me congratulate you on keeping
your head.

MARLOWE

Maybe I didn't.

VIVIAN

Take me home.

Marlowe starts the oar again, drives on.

DISSOLVE TO:

122. INT. MARLOWE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

As Marlowe enters, closing the door behind him. The only
light in the room filters in from a street lamp outside.
Marlowe flings his hat carelessly toward a chair, evidently
out of long habit, and starts across the room toward the
kitchen, in search of a drink and in too much of a hurry to
bother turning on lights.

123. INT. MARLOWE'S APARTMENT - REVERSE ANGLE FROM KITCHEN -
NIGHT

As Marlowe approaches, his body filling the f.g. As he
reaches the kitchen door a lamp goes on suddenly behind
him. He freezes, his body blocking the view of what is
behind him. Then, as he turns slowly, we see past him --
Carmen Sternwood sits in an armchair, the one, in fact,
into which Marlowe has pitched his hat. Carmen holds it
up, smiling. She wears an evening gown, more or less
covered by a light wrap.

CARMEN

(coyly)

What does the hatcheck girl get for a tip?

MARLOWE

(grimly)

I'm trying to think of something appropriate -- How did you get in here?

CARMEN

Bet you can't guess.

MARLOWE

(bleakly, lighting a cigarette)

Bet I can. You came in through the keyhole, like Peter Pan.

CARMEN

Who's he?

MARLOWE

Guy I used to know around the poolroom.

CARMEN

You're cute.

MARLOWE

And getting cuter every minute. How did you get in?

CARMEN

I showed your manager your card. I stole it from Vivian. I told him you told me to come here and wait for you.

MARLOWE

Fine. Now tell me how you're going to get out.

CARMEN

(slipping off her wrap)

I'm not going.

She looks at him -- a surprisingly honest, steady look. This is a different Carmen -- a puzzled, half-frightened girl who seems to be waking from a dream -- not sure she wants to, but unable to help herself. Marlowe looks back at her, nastily. But he senses a difference, and his voice is surprisingly gentle when he speaks.

MARLOWE

Listen, Carmen. I'm tired. I've had a hard day's work. I like you, I'm your friend, and any other time I'd be tickled to death to see you. But not now. Will you please go home?

CARMEN

(quietly, hungrily)
Are you really my friend, Phil?

MARLOWE

Sure...

CARMEN

I need a friend, Phil... someone to --

She stops, apparently confused, groping for words.

MARLOWE

Someone to what, Carmen?

CARMEN

I don't know.

She looks up at him again, searching his face. As though Marlowe is a magnet, she is drawn to her feet, still looking at him. She comes close, but does not touch him.

CARMEN

(almost to herself)
What is it in you?... I'm afraid of you, and yet... there's something straight and hard... Phil, I wish I'd met you before -- a long time ago...

MARLOWE

(trying to Josh her out of it)
Hey, hey... What's all this?

CARMEN

I don't know.
(angrily)
Why did you have to come? I was all right. I was fine.

MARLOWE

And now?

CARMEN
 (almost weeping)
 I don't know.

MARLOWE
 Look -- you and I want to go on
 being friends -- and you shouldn't
 be here.
 (holding her
 wrap for her)
 Be a good girl.

During this speech, Carmen seems to take the wrap. But the wrap falls on to the floor, revealing the fact that Carmen is holding Marlowe's hand.

CARMEN
 Do you think I can be a good girl?

MARLOWE
 It doesn't matter what I think.

Carmen kisses his hand.

CARMEN
 But don't you want me to try?

MARLOWE
 (trying to free his
 hand now)
 I just want you to get out of here.

CARMEN
 (clinging to his hand)
 You've got funny thumbs. Can I
 bite it?

Before he can answer, she raises his hand, starts to put his thumb into her mouth. With a sharp violent motion he flings her hand away.

MARLOWE
 Stick to your own thumb. Hasn't it
 carried you all right all your life?

CARMEN
 (obediently)
 All right.

She puts her thumb in her mouth, or her hand to her face in such a way as to appear to be sucking her thumb as usual. Marlowe takes up the fallen wrap and approaches with it.

MARLOWE

Okay. Take your thumb now and
get out of here.

CARMEN

(giggling)

It's not my thumb. See?

She removes the object from her mouth and holds it up for him to see. It is the white queen from his set of chessmen. Marlowe stares at her for a moment, then he slaps her terrifically across the face, rocking her back. The chessman falls from her hand and she stares at Marlowe, frightened now, as he walks toward her.

CARMEN

Do that again.

MARLOWE

(seething with
repressed rage;
almost whispering)

Get out.

CARMEN

Maybe if people had done that to me
more often, I would have been good
now.

Marlowe reaches her, grasps her arm, hurries her across to the door, jerks the door open, almost hurls her through it, flings the wrap after her, slams the door, turns the bolt as she rattles the knob, then begins to hammer on the door. He turns and crosses the room rapidly to the bath while she still beats on the door, and washes his hand savagely with soap and water, his face now actually beaded with sweat.

The KNOCKING CONTINUES. He examines his hand, is still not satisfied, jerks open shaving cabinet, looks at the innocuous bottles of mouthwash, etc., when what he needs is carbolic acid, goes to the kitchen while the knocking still continues, jerks savagely from the shelf his last bottle of whiskey.

It is about half full. He jerks the stopper out, flings it away and pours about a dollar's worth of expensive Scotch over his hand, flings the bottle away, returns to the living room, and while the KNOCKING STILL CONTINUES, he kneels at the hearth, lays the delicate chess piece on it and with a heavy fire-dog hammers the chess-piece into dust, still beating even after the piece has vanished, his blows at last drowning out the SOUND of the knocking on the door.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

124. INT. MARLOWE'S BEDROOM - TELEPHONE ON BEDSIDE TABLE

ringing. Marlowe wakes, rises onto elbow and takes the phone. He holds it loosely, so that we can HEAR OHLS' rasping VOICE from the other end.

MARLOWE

Yeah?

OHLS' VOICE

Marlowe? Come down here. I want to see you.

MARLOWE

I'm not up yet. I haven't had breakfast.

OHLS' VOICE

Never mind the breakfast. If you're not in my office in thirty minutes, you'll be eating it on the county.

Ohls' telephone clicks shut. Marlowe puts his down, throws covers back to get up.

LAP DISSOLVE TO:

125. INT. OHLS' OFFICE - OHLS AND MARLOWE

OHLS

Lay off.

MARLOWE

Lay off what?

OHLS

If you don't know what, it ought to be easy not to do it.

They stare at each other. Ohls takes up a box of cigarettes from the desk, offers it.

OHLS

Smoke?

MARLOWE

(not moving)
I haven't had breakfast yet. Who says for me to lay off?

OHLS

The D.A. does.

MARLOWE

And beyond him?

OHLS

So you want to know. Okay it came from your client. That satisfy you?

MARLOWE

I haven't got a client. General Sternwood paid me off yesterday. I'm through.

OHLS

Well, apparently he don't think so. And he's a friend of the D.A. and the D.A. is the chief crime prosecutor of this county, and I'm the D.A.'s head man Friday, and all three of us tell you to lay off.

MARLOWE

Will you tell me one more thing: Why General Sternwood thinks I haven't laid off?

OHLS

No. But I'll tell you what he might be thinking. That you are trying to uncover enough stuff about his family affairs to put the squeeze on him yourself.

MARLOWE

That's a lie. General Sternwood never told the D.A. nor you nor anybody else that. I don't think the message even came from General Sternwood. It was --
 (he stops, but
 Ohls has already
 broken in)

OHLS

Never you mind what you think. You just lay off. You get it?

MARLOWE

(quietly)
 I get it. Or else I lose my license and take my pick and shovel out of the mothballs.

Thoughtful, he reaches out and takes a cigarette from the box.

OHLS
(watching him)
Changed your mind, huh?

MARLOWE
(recovers, sees the
cigarette in his
hand, drops it back
into the box)
No. I haven't changed it.

DISSOLVE TO:

126. INT. MARLOWE'S OFFICE - LATER - MARLOWE

The TELEPHONE IS RINGING. Marlowe takes it up.

MARLOWE
Yes, speaking --

127. INT. STERNWOOD HOME - VIVIAN STERNWOOD AT TELEPHONE

She wears hat and coat as if about to depart.

VIVIAN
(rapidly)
I've found Shawn. I'm leaving at
once to meet him. We'll send you
a picture postal from Mexico
perhaps. So you can call off the
bloodhounds, and many thanks.
(she hangs up)

128. CLOSE SHOT - MARLOWE AT PHONE

as the click of Vivian's phone comes through it.

LAP DISSOLVE TO:

129. EXT. STERNWOOD HOUSE - MARLOWE AT FRONT DOOR (RAIN)

facing Norris, who has answered the bell. Norris stands holding the door half open, as if barring Marlowe from entering.

NORRIS
(courteous, inscrutable)
No, sir. She left no address.
We don't expect to hear until she
and Mr. Regan reach Mexico City
perhaps.

MARLOWE

So she found him.

NORRIS

(inscrutable)

Yes, sir. We are all most happy.

-- Was there anything else?

MARLOWE

The General...

NORRIS

Is resting. I won't disturb him now.

MARLOWE

Thanks.

Norris watches him, still barring him from entering. He turns. Norris closes the door. Marlowe walks on.

DISSOLVE TO:

130. CLOSE SHOT - PLYMOUTH COUPE - PARKED AT CURB - DAY (RAIN)

the same car which was following Marlowe yesterday. Marlowe passing, recognizes it, pauses, thoughtful, walks on.

131. EXT. HOLLYWOOD STREET - MOVING SHOT - MARLOWE

as he passes the mouth of a narrow alley two men step out quickly. One of them saps Marlowe expertly -- they drag him out of sight.

132. EXT. ALLEY - A DEEP DOORWAY (RAIN)

Marlowe is dazed, but not out. He fights, but the two boys give him an expert going-over, very quickly and efficiently. Marlowe goes down onto the wet bricks. One of the men leans over him.

THUG

(gently)

This is just our way of saying

-- lay off. Get it, Marlowe?

Lay off.

He boots Marlowe in the stomach -- the pair of them depart while Marlowe is getting rid of his breakfast. Presently, while Marlowe is trying unsuccessfully to stand up, HARRY JONES comes up to him. Harry is small, hardly five feet, in a cheap snappy 'underworld' suit. Yet in his wizened ugly face there is independence, honesty, reliability, courage. He helps Marlowe to his feet, steadies him, hands him a handkerchief.

MARLOWE
 (still groggy --
 wiping his face)
 You're the guy that's been tailing me.

JONES
 Yeah. The name's Jones. Harry
 Jones. I want to see you.

MARLOWE
 That's swell. Did you want to see
 those two guys jump me?

JONES
 I didn't care one way or the other.

MARLOWE
 You could have yelled for help.

JONES
 A guy's playing a hand, I let him
 play it. I'm no kibitzer.

MARLOWE
 (grinning)
 You got brains. Come on up to
 the office.

DISSOLVE TO:

133. INT. MARLOWE'S OFFICE - MARLOWE AND JONES

Marlowe removes his coat and hat, hangs them up. Jones watches him. Marlowe is reasonably steady now, gradually getting his wind back.

MARLOWE
 Might as well take yours off too.
 We may be here a good while, unless
 I get another case.

He goes to the desk, sits down, lights a cigarette, pours a stiff shot from the office bottle, then starts to riffle through a small stack of mail on his desk. Jones watches him. He opens top letter, reads it.

JONES
 I been around too. Used to run a
 little liquor. Rode the scout car
 with a Tommy gun in my lap. A
 tough racket.

MARLOWE
 (reading, squinting
 through smoke)
 Terrible.

He tosses the letter into wastebasket, takes up the next,
 opens it, sees Jones still standing.

MARLOWE
 Sit down. You make me nervous
 standing there.

Jones sits on edge of a chair; Marlowe opens and rapidly
 reads the next letter, tosses it in wastebasket, opens
 the next one. Jones watches him.

JONES
 Maybe you don't believe me.

MARLOWE
 (throws letter
 into wastebasket)
 What do you want?

JONES
 (approvingly, man
 to man fashion)
 That's better. I got something to
 sell -- cheap, for a couple of C's.

MARLOWE
 (opens next letter)
 Then don't let me stop you.

JONES
 (baffled)
 Don't you even want to know who I am?

MARLOWE
 (rapidly reading letter)
 I already know. You're not a cop.
 You don't belong to Eddie Mars,
 because I asked him.
 (throws last letter
 into wastebasket,
 sits back and
 looks at Jones)
 So Agnes is loose again, huh?

JONES
 (taken aback)
 How'd you know?

MARLOWE

Well -- she's a blonde.

JONES

She's a nice girl. We're talking of getting married.

MARLOWE

She's too big for you. She'll roll on you and smother you.

JONES

(injured)

That's a dirty crack, brother.

MARLOWE

You're right. I've been running around with the wrong people lately. Let's cut out the babble. What do you want?

JONES

You're looking for something. Will you pay for it?

MARLOWE

If it does what?

JONES

Helps you find Regan.

MARLOWE

Is that what you want the two C's for -- for telling me I'm looking for Regan? People have been telling me that for two days now. I don't even give cigars for it anymore.

JONES

(patiently)

Do you want to know what I got, or don't you?

MARLOWE

I don't know. Two C's buys a lot of information in my circle.

JONES

Would you pay two hundred dollars to know where Eddie Mars' wife is? Would you pay two hundred bucks for that, shamus?

MARLOWE
 (leans forward and
 rubs out cigarette)
 I think I would. Where?

JONES
 Agnes found her. She'll tell you --
 when she has the money in her hand.

MARLOWE
 You might tell the coppers for
 nothing.

JONES
 (quietly)
 I ain't so brittle.

MARLOWE
 (speculatively)
 Agnes must have something I didn't
 notice.

JONES
 (quietly, with
 dignity even)
 I ain't tried to pull anything. I
 come here with a straight
 proposition -- take it or leave it;
 one right guy to another. Then you
 start waving cops at me. You ought
 to be ashamed of yourself.

MARLOWE
 (quietly too)
 I am -- Okay. Two hundred it is.
 I'll have to go to the bank.

JONES
 (rises)
 Okay. After dark'll be better,
 anyway. You know Puss Walgreen's
 office -- Fulwider building --
 four-twenty-eight at the back?

MARLOWE
 I can find it.

JONES
 I'll meet you there at seven
 o'clock tonight. You bring the
 money, and I'll take you to Agnes.
 Okay?

MARLOWE

Okay.

JONES

(going out)

So long then.

He exits.

DISSOLVE TO:

134. EXT. FULWIDER BUILDING - ESTABLISHING SHOT - EVENING (RAIN)

Marlowe enters.

135. INT. FULWIDER BUILDING - LOBBY - MARLOWE

It is deserted. Marlowe pauses at elevator, the door is open, a shabby old man is asleep on the stool. Marlowe goes on.

136. CLOSE SHOT - AT FIRE DOOR - MARLOWE

pushes the door open, enters stairs, door closes behind him.

137. INT. CORRIDOR - (DIM) - MARLOWE

standing flattened against the wall beside a door lettered:

L.D. WALGREEN -- INSURANCE

The transom above it is open, light shines through.

JONES' VOICE

(beyond transom)

Canino? Yeah, I've seen you around.

Sure.

CANINO'S VOICE

(purring)

I thought you'd remember.

Marlowe steals quietly back along the wall, reaches another door, pushes it quietly. It is locked. He takes out his wallet, removes his driver's license from its celluloid, takes the envelope and slips back the door-lock, opens the door carefully and quietly, enters, shuts the door.

138. INT. OFFICE - (DIM) - MARLOWE

as he stands beside an inner door which is slightly open, a light burning beyond it. Through the crack in the door Harry Jones can be seen, sitting behind a shabby desk. The other man, CANINO, is not in sight at this angle.

Jones is sweating; he cannot help that. But there is no fear in his voice and he is not trembling either.

CANINO'S VOICE

So you go to see this peeper, this Marlowe. That was your mistake. Eddie don't like it. And what Eddie don't like ain't healthy.

JONES

You know why I went to the peeper. Account of Joe Brody's girl. She's got to blow. That takes dough. She figured the peeper could get it for her.

CANINO'S VOICE

Dough for what?

JONES

You know about the night the kid bumped Brody? Well, the young Sternwood girl was there. She not only dropped in, she took a shot at Brody. Only the peeper didn't tell the cops that. So Agnes figures it's railroad fare for her as soon as she can get hold of the peeper. You get it?

CANINO'S VOICE

Sure thing. Where's this Agnes?

JONES

What do you care? All she wants is to touch the peeper and blow --

His voice stops. He sits back, staring Canino off, shows terror now despite himself, but still no fear.

CANINO'S VOICE

(purring)

That's right. Look at it. You'll tell me, little man. Where's Agnes?

JONES

Listen --

CANINO'S VOICE

You want me to count three or something, like a movie? Where's Agnes?

JONES

(gives in, collapses)
 You win. She's in an apartment at
 28 Court. Apartment 501. I guess
 I'm yellow, all right.

CANINO'S VOICE

You just got good sense. I ain't
 going to hurt her. If everything's
 like you say, I'll tell Eddie it's
 all jakeloo. We'll even dip the
 bill on it.

As Canino's hand comes into sight setting a whiskey
 bottle on the desk, Marlowe steps quickly back.

CANINO'S VOICE

Got a glass?

JONES

(stares at the bottle,
 hopeless now, sweating
 but still bravely)
 There at the cooler.

As Canino enters, Marlowe steps quickly out. Canino
 crosses the open door. We now SEE HIM; a stocky, vicious
 man in brown: a killer.

139. ANOTHER ANGLE - MARLOWE FLATTENED AGAINST THE WALL

beside the door. Jones cannot be seen now, only Canino as
 he takes the glass from water cooler and crosses the door
 again. Now he too is not visible. Marlowe follows him by
 SOUND ALONE as he returns to the table, clicks the bottle
 against the glass as he pours the drink.

CANINO'S VOICE

(purring, falsely hearty)
 There you are. Drink her down. Mud
 in your eye.

Jones' breathing can be heard as he pants. When Canino
 speaks next, his voice is a little sharper.

CANINO'S VOICE

Drink it. What do you think it is
 -- poison? I bet that Agnes of
 yours wouldn't turn it down.

JONES

No.

(SOUND of his movement
as he takes the glass)

Success.

CANINO'S VOICE

Lots of it.

SOUND as Jones drinks, dies, the glass CLINKS as he drops it, his body thuds as he falls forward, gasps, chokes. Marlowe starts forward, catches himself. The other room goes dark. SOUND as Canino leaves it: his feet, the other door opens, closes again.

140. GLASS DOOR - MARLOWE'S ANGLE

The door opens on the corridor. With the light gone, the glass in the door is faintly luminous, lettering in reverse, Canino's shadow across it. SOUND of his feet dies away. Marlowe moves swiftly toward the inner door.

141. INT. OTHER OFFICE - MARLOWE

his hand on the switch as he turns on the light, looks for an instant at Jones sprawled dead across the desk, the whiskey bottle and overturned glass beside him. Marlowe pauses only a second. He looks about, sees what he wants, crosses to telephone, takes it up, dials hurriedly.

MARLOWE

(into phone)

Information, can you give me the
phone number of Apartment 301,
28 Court Street?

(he lowers phone,
waits, raises
phone quickly
again, listens
attentively)

Thanks.

(puts phone down,
takes it up
again, dials)

Is Agnes in?

The VOICE that answers is a MAN'S VOICE, burly and loud, so that it can be heard over the phone.

VOICE

No Agnes here, buddy. What
number you want?

MARLOWE

Wentworth two-five-two-eight.

VOICE

Right number, wrong gal. Ain't it a shame!

MARLOWE

Yeah. Can you put me back on to the switchboard?

VOICE

Here you go.
(phone clicks, whirrs)

MARLOWE

Hello, Manager? This is Wallis, Police Identification Bureau, is there a girl named Agnes Lozelle registered at your place?... Well, have you got a tall blonde with green eyes, either alone, or with a little chap that weighs about a hundred pounds, green hat, gray overcoat... Yeah, must have been the wrong address. Thanks.

He puts the phone down, turns, looks at Jones.

MARLOWE

(musing aloud,
with admiration)

Well, you died like a poisoned rat. But you drank your poison like a man before you split on your girl, didn't you?

He approaches, gingerly and carefully shifts Jones enough to reach inside his coat, is about to search Jones, the telephone rings. Marlowe pauses, thinks, makes decision, takes up phone.

MARLOWE

(into phone)

Yeah?... Hello, Agnes... Marlowe, the guy you want to see. No, he's not here. He's gone, beat it. But I've got the money. Where are you?... I don't know where he went. Do you want the two C's or don't you?... In half an hour. Right.

He puts the phone down, takes out his handkerchief and wipes his fingerprints off of it, crosses to the light switch, wipes it off too, turns it with the handkerchief, goes to the door, through which he came, exits.

142. INT. CORRIDOR - DOOR HE ENTERED BY - MARLOWE

as he wipes off the knob with his handkerchief.

DISSOLVE TO:

143. INT. AGNES' CAR - MARLOWE AND AGNES - NIGHT (RAIN)

as Marlowe gets into the car -- the gray Plymouth. Beyond the rain-streaked windows a Los Angeles street is visible; lighted store windows, etc.

AGNES

I thought you were never coming.
Give me the money.

Marlowe hands her folded bills. She counts them rapidly by the dash light, then puts them in her handbag.

AGNES

This is a getaway stake, copper.
I'm on my way. What happened to
Harry?

MARLOWE

I told you he ran away. Canino got
wise to him somehow. Forget Harry.
I've paid for information and I want
it.

AGNES

You'll get it. Joe and I were out
riding Foothill Boulevard a couple
weeks ago. We passed a brown coupe,
and I saw the girl who was driving.
She was Eddie Mars' wife. There
was a guy with her -- the watchdog,
Canino. They're people you don't
forget, even if you only saw them
once. So we got curious, and Joe
tailed them. About a mile east of
Realito there's a side road, and
nothing around it but brush and
hills. Just off the highway there's
a two-bit garage and paintshop run
by a guy named Art Huck -- hot car
drop, likely -- and a frame house
behind it. That's where Eddie Mars'
wife is holed up.

MARLOWE
 (studying her coldly)
 You're sure of that?

AGNES
 Why should I lie?... Well, goodbye,
 copper -- wish me luck. I got
 a raw deal.

MARLOWE
 Yeah. Your kind always does.

He turns and opens the door to get out.

DISSOLVE TO:

144. INSERT: A HIGHWAY MARKER

Illuminated by the spotlight of a car. Above a black arrow
 the sign says:

REALITO -- 7 MILES

DISSOLVE TO:

145. EXT. HIGHWAY - LONG SHOT - NIGHT (RAIN)

Marlowe's car spinning along at high speed. The highway
 runs between miles of orange groves, with mountains in the
 b.g.

146. RAPID MONTAGE - NIGHT

Orange groves -- a neon sign: WELCOME TO REALITO -- small
 lighted store fronts -- a bar -- a theatre -- then dark,
 barren fields.

DISSOLVE THRU TO:

147. EXT. HIGHWAY - LONG SHOT - NIGHT (RAIN)

Marlowe's car rushing along the wet highway, which now runs
 through barren country close to the foothills. The car
 takes an S curve, skidding dangerously.

148. CLOSER SHOT - ON MARLOWE'S CAR

as it swings into another curve, a sharp one, and
 deliberately skids off the shoulder, jarring finally to a
 stop in the ditch.

149. CLOSE SHOT - MARLOWE

as he climbs out and bends to inspect the tires. It is raining heavily.

150. CLOSE SHOT - MARLOWE - NIGHT (RAIN)

as he lets the air out of the two right-hand tires.

151. CLOSE SHOT - MARLOWE

as he straightens up and looks ahead.

152. EXT. HUCK'S GARAGE - LONG SHOT - MARLOWE'S ANGLE

A SMALL DINGY GARAGE, with a frame house behind it. Lights show dimly through shaded windows.

153. CLOSE SHOT - MARLOWE

as he nods, satisfied, then gets back into the car.

154. INT. MARLOWE'S CAR - NIGHT (RAIN)

Marlowe takes the license holder from the steering post and puts it in his pocket, then leans lower behind the wheel.

155. EXTREME CLOSE - FRONT OF THE CAR SEAT - NIGHT

as Marlowe's hand pushes open a weighted flap, disclosing a secret compartment with two guns in it. He weighs them, selects the heavier of the two, and draws it out. The flap swings shut.

156. EXT. HIGHWAY - AT HUCK'S GARAGE - NIGHT (RAIN)

Marlowe approaches the garage. There is a sign on the blank side wall -- Marlowe holds a flashlight on it, and we SEE the lettering of the sign:

ART HUCK

AUTO REPAIRS -- PAINTING

Marlowe goes round to the front. The big doors are closed, but a streak of light shows through the crack. Marlowe hesitates, then walks past them to glance at the house.

157. EXT. FRAME HOUSE - MARLOWE'S ANGLE - NIGHT (RAIN)

The only signs of life are the light from the shaded windows and Canino's brown coupe parked in front by a row of stunted trees.

158. EXT. HUCK'S GARAGE - NIGHT (RAIN)

At the door, as Marlowe goes up and hammers on it with the butt of his heavy flashlight. There is a moment of silence. Then the inside light goes off. Marlowe centers his flash in a white circle of light on the doors.

HUCK
(speaking through
the door)
Whaddaya want?

MARLOWE
Open up, I got two flats back on
the highway and only one spare.

HUCK
Sorry, mister. We're closed up.
Better try Realito.

Marlowe doesn't appreciate this. He kicks the door, hard, and keeps on kicking it, until a second voice -- Canino's voice -- speaks from close inside. Then he stops to listen.

CANINO'S VOICE
Okay, Art -- open up for the wise
guy.

A BOLT SQUEALS, and half the door opens inward. Marlowe's flash outlines a gaunt hard face, Huck's face. Then Huck swings a gun down across the flash, knocking it out of Marlowe's hand, still burning.

HUCK
Kill that spot, bud.

Marlowe picks up the flash, turning it off. Light goes on inside the garage, revealing HUCK, a tall man in dirty coveralls. He backs away from the door, keeping Marlowe covered.

HUCK
Come inside and shut the door.

159. INT. HUCK'S GARAGE - NIGHT

as Marlowe closes the door behind him. There is the usual paraphernalia of a garage, and two cars. One is being painted, a spray-gun lying on the fender, the other is Carmen Sternwood's Packard convertible. Canino lounges easily in the shadows by the bench. The RAIN BEATS on the tin roof.

MARLOWE

(indicating Huck's gun)
You could scare off a lot of trade
that way.

HUCK

I'm too far out of town to take
chances.
(pointedly)
You can get yourself hurt, kicking
on doors.

CANINO

(softly)
Cut it out, Art. You run a garage,
don't you?

MARLOWE

(not looking at Canino)
Thanks.
(to Huck)
I suppose you can fix flats.

HUCK

(putting the gun
in his pocket)
As good as you can make 'em, bud.
But right now I'm busy.

CANINO

(pleasantly)
Art -- you got time to fix his
tires.

MARLOWE

You can use my spare -- that'll
help some.

HUCK

Listen, I told you I'm busy with
a spray job...

CANINO

It's too damp for a good spray job,
Art. Get moving -- and take two
jacks.

HUCK

Now wait a minute...

Canino looks at Huck with a soft quiet-eyed stare, then
away again, not saying anything. Huck wilts and moves
away, pulling on a raincoat and banging out with a socket
wrench, a hand jack, and wheeling a dolly.

Canino closes the door behind him and returns to the workbench. Marlowe watches silently, lighting a cigarette.

CANINO

Bet you could use a drink. Wet the inside, and even up.

MARLOWE

Thanks.

Canino produces a bottle and two glasses from under the bench, pours two shots, and hands one to Marlowe. They salute -- Canino drinks, and Marlowe, remembering Harry Jones and the cyanide cocktail, hesitates, then drinks also.

CANINO

(casually)
Live around here?

MARLOWE

No. Just got in from Reno and Carson City.

CANINO

The long way round, huh? Business trip?

MARLOWE

Partly. And in a hurry.

CANINO

Too bad -- you may have a long wait.
(reaching for Marlowe's
empty glass)
How about another, to pass the time.

DISSOLVE TO:

160. EXTREME CLOSE - A WHEEL - NIGHT

-- the tire already on a spreader and loose from the rim. A man's hands and feet working at the job viciously. The CAMERA PULLS BACK to show Art Huck as he rips out the tube. Marlowe and Canino stand almost as before, by the workbench.

HUCK

(grumbling over
above action)
I don't have enough to do -- guys have to get flats in the middle of a cloudburst.

CANINO

(laughing)

Don't crab so much. You can use
an extra bath.

(taking a roll of
coins out of his
pocket, tossing
them idly in the
palm of his hand)

Just get busy.

Huck carries the tube to an airhose and starts to fill it.

HUCK

I am busy, brother. Plenty
busy.

He starts to place the tube in the galvanized tub under the hose, then turns swiftly, lifting the tube high, and brings it down over Marlowe's head and shoulders, a perfect ringer. Marlowe, unable to reach the gun in his pocket, bends forward, trying to throw Huck over his back. Canino steps in lightly, like a dancer, his hand closed hard over the roll of coins, and hangs one with delicate precision on Marlowe's jaw.

Marlowe's tough -- he goes on fighting, although he's already out on his feet. Huck pulls his head back by the hair as Canino clips him again with the weighted fist. Marlowe tries, but it's no use. He goes down and stays that way.

161. INT. MARS' HIDEOUT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A small room, in keeping with the exterior -- furnished comfortably but not luxuriously. The only light comes from a floor lamp beside the davenport where Marlowe lies. His hands are cuffed behind him, his feet roped to the leg of the davenport. He is still out, his face considerably the worse for wear. Vivian sits beside him on a straight chair, holding a half empty glass in her hand. She seems to have forgotten about it. She seems to have forgotten everything but Marlowe -- who begins to come out of it. He opens his eyes presently and looks at Vivian -- he doesn't seem surprised. He winces and shuts his eyes again.

MARLOWE

(thickly)

Move the light, honey...

Vivian rises and turns the light away from his face. He looks up at her again.

MARLOWE

(still groggy)
That's better -- where are the
boys -- out digging a grave?

VIVIAN

(desperately)
Phil, why did you have to go on
with this?

MARLOWE

Why did you?

Vivian turns away from him -- she's obviously keyed up,
scared, desperate.

VIVIAN

I've only known one fool as big as
you...

MARLOWE

(after a pause)
You might spare me a little of that
drink you're not using.

Vivian goes to him, sits down, and holds the glass to
Marlowe's lips, then touches his battered face with her
fingertips.

VIVIAN

(shakily)
Your face looks like a collision
met...

MARLOWE

It won't last long, even this good.
(after a pause,
looking up at
Vivian softly)
I'll give it back to you -- I've
only known one fool as big as you.

They hold it, a twisted uncomfortable moment, and then MONA
MARS enters. She is tall, blonde, strikingly beautiful --
a woman who knows her way around, yet having a certain
dignity and fineness.

MARLOWE

You would be Mrs. Eddie Mars... the
blond that Shawn Regan didn't run
away with.

MONA

Why did you have to make trouble?
Eddie wasn't doing you any harm.
I was never in love with Shawn --
we were just good friends. But
you know perfectly well that if
I hadn't hid out here when Shawn
disappeared, the police would have
been certain Eddie killed him.

MARLOWE

(quietly)
But he did kill him.

MONA

(after a pause,
with quiet dignity)
Eddie's not that sort of man.

MARLOWE

You mean Eddie never kills people.

MONA

No.

MARLOWE

You really believe that, don't you?
And in a way, I suppose you're right...

MONA

(sincerely)
I'm married to Eddie Mars. I love
him. I know what's inside of him.

MARLOWE

Well, if Eddie's such a nice guy,
I'd like to talk to him without
Canino around. You know what Canino
will do -- beat my teeth out and then
kick me in the stomach for mumbling.

VIVIAN

You'll get your talk, Phil. Canino's
gone for Eddie.

MARLOWE

Leaving Art Huck within call, I
suppose. Well, I suppose nobody's
luck holds forever.
(to Vivian)
You could really have gone to Mexico,
you know. You'd have liked it better.
Blood doesn't spatter that far.

MONA

Oh, stop talking that way!

Vivian and Marlowe are no longer conscious of her presence, having retired into a private world of their own.

MARLOWE

But then you couldn't go, could you. The border police would have checked you through alone, and too many people might have seen you -- without Shawn Regan. Much safer to come down here with Mona. Much safer -- especially for Eddie Mars.

VIVIAN

I did it as much for you... Why wouldn't you believe me? Why wouldn't you stop?

MARLOWE

Too many people tried to make me. And besides I knew Shawn Regan -- and I know you.

They look at each other -- and Mona Mars takes herself quietly out of the room.

VIVIAN

Why did I have to meet you? Why out of all the men in the city, did my father have to call you in?

MARLOWE

Things happen that way, sometimes... Light me a cigarette...

She takes one from a table, lights it, and bends over to place it between Marlowe's lips. Marlowe's eyes hold her as though his hands were on her shoulders; she sits down.

MARLOWE

(softly)
You know what they're going to do, don't you? You know the only thing they can do.

Vivian's hands grip the shoulders of his coat. She shuts her eyes and drops her head, holding herself rigid.

MARLOWE

(still softly)

It's not pretty, is it -- even from a distance. And when you're right on top of it, it isn't pretty at all.

VIVIAN

(rising abruptly)

Oh, stop it, Phil. Stop it! Nothing's going to happen...

MARLOWE

Mona's in love with Eddie Mars, but you're not. Are you going through with it?

Vivian moves away, as far from him as she can get, and stands with her back to him, rigid, staring at the curtained window as though she could see through it. Marlowe studies her, then laughs, a quiet sardonic chuckle and relaxes, leaning back on the cushion.

MARLOWE

Pride is a great thing, isn't it? And courage -- and honor -- and love. All the things you read about in the copybooks -- only in the copybooks nothing ever gets tangled. The road always lies so straight, and clear, and the signs say to love and honor and be brave... Take this thing out of my mouth, will you, honey? It's burning me.

Vivian comes slowly to him and takes the cigarette stub from his lips. She hesitates, then goes down onto the couch, dropping the cigarette on the floor. Her arms go around Marlowe, her mouth crushed to his. When she breaks for air, putting her cheek against his, she is almost crying. Marlowe is far from unmoved himself, turning his head against hers, hard.

MARLOWE

(after a pause, whispering)

Get a knife, and cut this rope off me...

Vivian rises, runs out of the room. The SOUND of a kitchen drawer being opened comes OVER from o.s., then the RATTLE of CUTLERY. Vivian returns almost at once with a knife and slashes the rope from Marlowe's feet. Dropping the knife, she helps him get up -- he's not too steady on his legs. They cross the room together, Vivian with her arm around Marlowe. The handcuffs glittering on Marlowe's wrists.

From outside comes the SOUND of a car skidding to a stop. Mona Mars appears in the doorway, holding a gun.

MONA

(quietly, without menace)
Eddie is here -- I think you'd
better wait.

162. EXTREME CLOSE - CANINO'S HAND

opening, playing idly with the roll of coins. The CAMERA PULLS BACK -- we are still in the living room. Marlowe is sitting on the couch, Vivian beside him -- his hands are still cuffed behind him, but his feet are free.

Canino leans unobtrusively against the wall -- near Marlowe. Eddie Mars holds center stage, moving like a lion keyed up for the kill. Mona Mars, the gun forgotten in her hand, sits in the b.g., watching. Her face is still, intent.

VIVIAN

(quietly)
Eddie -- this is where I get off.

MARS

You bought a ticket for the whole run, Countess -- destination unknown. Keep your mouth out of this.
(to Marlowe)
You're making it tough for me, soldier.

MARLOWE

Not me, Eddie. Murder. Murder can make things tough for anybody. You keep tripping over it, all the time.

MARS

(contemptuously)
Murder! I haven't killed anybody.

MARLOWE

Not personally, maybe -- but your hand is behind Canino's, aiming the gun -- or pouring the cyanide into Harry Jones' glass.
(as Mars gives him a startled look)
Yeah -- I was there, in the next room. Canino had a gun and I didn't, so all I could do was watch... I kind of liked Harry Jones.

MARS

You kind of like too many people,
soldier.

MONA

Eddie -- what does he mean? What's
happened? Who was Harry Jones?

MARS

He's just talking. Maybe you better
get out, Mona. We may have to push
him around a little before we get
through.

MARLOWE

(to Mona)

Yeah -- push me a little, right
over the edge. Eddie won't spoil
his manicure to do it -- but
Canino won't mind. He's used to
having his hands dirty.

Canino leans over and slaps Marlowe hard across the face.
Vivian springs up, toward Canino -- Eddie Mars grabs her,
looking toward Mona. Mona has never seen that look on
Eddie's face before.

MARS

(quietly)
Get out, Mona.

MONA

Eddie...

MARS

Get out.

Mona studies him -- it seems that she is looking at a
stranger, a stranger who frightens her, someone evil and
beyond the pale. She seems to grow in stature and dignity,
even as her heart realizes how far down the wrong road it
has traveled. She turns, then, slowly, and goes out.
After she has gone, Vivian wrenches free from Mars' grip.
There is something rather wonderful about her now -- a
blazing, catlike courage. She faces Eddie Mars.

VIVIAN

You don't dare go through with this,
Eddie.

MARS

You think I can't get away with it?

VIVIAN

You think I'm going to let you
get away with it?

Mars studies her, then Marlowe -- realizes what the score is, and smiles sardonically.

MARS

You women kill me. You'll spend
years and wreck lives to get
something you want, and then
throw it all away in a minute
because some guy has a new way
of putting his mouth on yours.

(sitting down,
easily, smiling)

All right, Countess. While we're
doing all this thinking... do you
think you're going to have a chance
not to let me get away with it?

Silence as this sinks in. Vivian sits down quietly beside Marlowe, who looks at both her and Mars with a cold, cynical smile.

MARLOWE

(laughing softly)

It's amazing how fast a beautiful
friendship breaks when a dead body
falls on top of it... Which one
of you killed Regan? If he was
shot in the back, I'll bet on you,
Eddie, because that's the only way
you could have got to him. But if
he took it from the front --

(looking at Vivian)

I can see how you both would have
been jealous of Mona.

Vivian stares at him, a hard, shocked look as though Marlowe is something not human. Marlowe gives it back to her -- then almost at once Canino steps forward and places his hand on Marlowe's head, bending it back, his fingers and thumb biting cruelly into Marlowe's temples. Canino smiles, as though he is very fond of Marlowe.

CANINO

(gently amused)

Ever see a dick with such a one-track
mind? He's sitting right on the edge
of a hole in the ground, but he still
cares who killed Regan. Want to tell
him, Eddie? Want to send him to bed
happy?

Mars makes an annoyed gesture and starts to get up, then freezes as Mona speaks from the doorway.

MONA
(very quietly)
Eddie...

Everyone turns to look at her -- there is a quality of fate in her voice. She leans almost negligently against the door jamb, wearing a heavy coat, holding a big felt hat in her hands.

MONA
I've been a good wife to you, Eddie
-- as good a wife as you'd let me
be. I believed in you, and there
wasn't anything I wouldn't have done
for you -- anything but this.

MARS
Don't be a fool, Mona. Can't you
see...

MONA
(slowly)
I can only see one thing. I've been
married to a killer, and I've helped
him kill.

She turns and goes out. Mars rises, looking after her.

MARS
(to Canino)
Hold the fort, Canino. I'll be back.

He goes out after Mona, not even waiting for Canino's nod of assent. Canino goes to a window and peers through the crack of the blind, still keeping Marlowe covered. We HEAR a car start outside and drive off.

CANINO
(sardonically)
He made it. And he can talk about
love.

He turns back into the room. Vivian has risen, she stands by a table lighting a cigarette with a wooden match from a box which she retains in her left hand.

163. INSERT MATCH BOX IN VIVIAN'S HANDS:

An ordinary small box of matches. The cover has been pushed almost shut, leaving the head of one match protruding.

Vivian holds the flaming match with which she has just lighted her cigarette to the uncovered match head, igniting it.

164. INT. MARS HIDEOUT - THE LIVING ROOM

As Vivian blows out the first match and drops it casually into an ash tray, shielding the box in her hand from Canino's view. Canino strolls back, looking Marlowe over with sadistic humor.

CANINO

I don't really mind the boss leaving.
I can have a lot more fun alone.

165. INSERT MATCH BOX IN VIVIAN'S HAND:

The match has burned back, charring the paper cover. Smoke rises from the box.

166. INT. MARS HIDEOUT - THE LIVING ROOM

VIVIAN

Canino --

CANINO

(looking around, grinning)
Save your breath, baby --

The match box bursts into flame. Vivian hurls it into Canino's face, then turns aside, clutching her scorched fingers.

VIVIAN

(over above action)
Phil!

Marlowe throws himself forward into Canino's legs -- they roll, struggling.

167. CLOSE SHOT - MARLOWE AND CANINO

as Canino comes out on top of Marlowe, at an angle, and whips his pistol down at Marlowe's head. Marlowe wrenches aside -- the gun barrel misses by a fraction, smacking hard on the carpet. Marlowe doubles his knees into his chest and lets go with his feet, getting both heels under Canino's jaw. Canino goes backward and down, dropping his gun, but he's not clear out -- the blow was glancing. He grabs Vivian as she tries to get by him, pulling her down. Marlowe manages to get the gun in his shackled hands. Canino pulls another, fires at him, misses, tangled up with Vivian. Marlowe makes it out the door.

168. EXT. MARS HIDEOUT - AT THE FRONT DOOR - NIGHT (RAIN)

As Marlowe comes out and runs down the steps toward Canino's car. Over by the garage Art Huck stands, scared but undecided. Marlowe snaps a shot at him. Huck makes up his mind in a hurry. He vanishes -- a second later we HEAR a car start and race off down the highway, o.s. Marlowe, working fast but awkwardly because of the handcuffs, opens the door of Canino's car, backs in.

169. INT. CANINO'S CAR - NIGHT (RAIN) - MARLOWE

fumbling for the ignition key and starter button, behind him. He starts the motor, then slides out again, quickly, hugging the ground by the rear wheels, offside.

170. EXT. MARS HIDEOUT - MARLOWE'S ANGLE - NIGHT (RAIN)

As a darkened window goes up. THREE SHOTS are fired from it. We HEAR the whine of the bullets, their impact on the coupe. Marlowe cries out as though hit. Then again there is silence, except for the beating rain and the purring motor.

Presently the house door opens -- there is no light behind it. Vivian appears, walking stiffly, and behind her is Canino, shielded from possible fire. They walk slowly toward Marlowe and the car.

CANINO

Can you see anything?

VIVIAN

(tonelessly)

Nothing. The windows are all misted.

They come steadily closer to the dark car. Suddenly Vivian stops, rigid, and lets go a thin, tearing scream.

VIVIAN

Behind the wheel!

(as though pleading
with Marlowe not
to fire)

Phil!

Canino shoves her roughly aside, dropping to one knee, and pours three SHOTS through the car window. His gun is now empty. No shots answer him -- he is satisfied that Marlowe is dead. He rises, moving to open the car door, as Marlowe emerges from behind the car.

MARLOWE

Finished?

Canino whirls around, and Marlowe, the gun pressed awkwardly against his side, puts four bullets in him. He collapses into the mud and stays there.

MARLOWE

(to Vivian)

Get the keys, honey.

Vivian, white-faced and silent, gets the keys from Canino's pocket and unlocks the handcuffs. Marlowe rubs his wrists -- they look at each other, both tired and drained of emotion -- there seems to be nothing to say.

MARLOWE

(quietly)

You played that hand all right,
Countess.

VIVIAN

(dully)

I don't know why I cared.

She turns and walks away from him toward the garage and her car, not looking back. Presently Marlowe goes back into the house.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

171. INT. STERNWOOD HALL - MORNING - NORRIS AND MARLOWE

As Norris stands in the open door, in the act of admitting Marlowe.

MARLOWE

The General sent for me...

NORRIS

Yes, sir. He's waiting, in the
orchid house.

Marlowe enters, walking along the hall toward the rear with Norris. Subtly, Norris has the air of a guard. Marlowe looks tired and somber, the marks of last night's encounter still plain on his face. He has obviously not been home; he wears the same rumpled suit, no tie, and he has not shaved. Vivian comes out of an adjoining room, as though she has been waiting, and stops them.

VIVIAN

I'd like to see you, Mr. Marlowe.

She gives Norris the nod -- he goes away, and Marlowe follows Vivian into the room, closing the door.

172. INT. SMALL SITTING ROOM - MARLOWE AND VIVIAN

Lavishly furnished. Vivian also looks exhausted, stony, but giving an impression of submerged but volcanic emotion. She does not look at Marlowe.

VIVIAN

Well?

MARLOWE

I kept you out of it. I told a straight story, and Canino left his thumbprint on Harry Jones' door to back me up. I don't know whether they believed me, but there's nothing they can do about it. I'm clear -- self defense. And all Eddie Mars has to say is that Canino was roughing me on his own time.

VIVIAN

(looking at him
now, forced to
admire him)

It wasn't as easy as you make it sound.

MARLOWE

(shrugging)

My neck is usually stuck out, one way or another. It's a little tougher than the General's, that's all.

VIVIAN

(after an uncomfortable
pause)

It's too bad Father can't know what you've done for him. I'm afraid he's... angry with you.

MARLOWE

Why not? Everybody else is.

VIVIAN

You -- won't say anything to him?

MARLOWE

Of course not.

VIVIAN

Phil...

MARLOWE

(brutally)

Listen... I'm tired. I killed a man last night. I stink of cops, and I've still got a rotten taste in my mouth. I want a hot bath with strong soap, and I can't have it until I've seen your father. Do you mind if I go now?

VIVIAN

(going close to him)

Phil -- I didn't kill Shawn Regan.

MARLOWE

(cold, deadpan)

Is he dead?

Vivian stares at him, getting a slow, deadly look in her eyes.

VIVIAN

(very calmly)

It's quite possible. He's been gone a long time, and he's not a peaceful man.

(turning away)

I'll send you my personal check in the morning, Mr. Marlowe.

MARLOWE

Your personal check?

VIVIAN

I'm sure my father would wish you to be repaid for your... extra services, last night.

MARLOWE

(quietly, after pause)

I'm sure your father would know better... and I know you do -- What about Eddie Mars?

VIVIAN

What about him?

MARLOWE

You think he's going to forget
all this?

VIVIAN

I'm tired, too. Get out, Marlowe.

Marlowe shrugs, goes toward the door. He speaks over his
shoulder with an air of casual politeness.

MARLOWE

How's Carmen?

Vivian, her back to him, takes the question just a little
too easily.

VIVIAN

She's fine. She went up to
Santa Barbara last night.

MARLOWE

That ought to be nice for her.

VIVIAN

Yes.

There seems to be nothing more to say. Marlowe exits.

DISSOLVE TO:

173. INT. STERNWOOD REAR GARDEN - DAY - MARLOWE AND NORRIS

as they walk down the path toward the orchid house.
Marlowe glances around, apparently looking for something he
doesn't see. Norris opens the door, permitting Marlowe to
pass him into the greenhouse.

174. INT. ORCHID HOUSE - MARLOWE

As he follows the path between the banks of orchids to the
place where General Sternwood sits, as before -- in the
wheelchair, wrapped in robe and blanket -- only his eyes
are alive, proud and piercing.

STERNWOOD

Sit down, Mr. Marlowe.

Marlowe pulls up a chair, already beginning to suffer with
the heat. He starts to remove his coat, then something in
Sternwood's attitude makes him change his mind.

STERNWOOD

I didn't ask you to look for
Shawn Regan.

MARLOWE

You wanted me to, though.

STERNWOOD

You assume a great deal. I usually ask for what I want.

(as Marlowe does
not answer)

The money I paid you is of no consequence. I merely feel that you have, no doubt unintentionally, betrayed a trust.

MARLOWE

Is that all you wanted to see me about?

STERNWOOD

You're angry at that remark.

MARLOWE

You have an advantage over me, General. It's an advantage I wouldn't want to take away from you. You can say anything you like to me, and I wouldn't think of getting angry. I'd like to offer you your money back. It may mean nothing to you. It might mean something to me.

STERNWOOD

What does it mean to you?

MARLOWE

It means I've refused payment for an unsatisfactory job. That's all.

STERNWOOD

(after a pause)

Why did you go to Captain Gregory?

MARLOWE

I suppose I played a hunch. I was convinced you put those Geiger notes up to me chiefly as a test, and that you were a little afraid Regan might somehow be involved in an attempt to blackmail you. Besides, as I said -- I knew Regan. It meant something to me to find out, too.

STERNWOOD

And you allowed Captain Gregory to think I had employed you to find Shawn?

MARLOWE

Yeah, I guess I did -- when I was sure he had the case.

STERNWOOD

And do you consider that ethical?

MARLOWE

Yes, I do.

STERNWOOD

Perhaps I don't understand.

MARLOWE

Maybe you don't. When you hire a boy in my line of work it isn't like hiring a window-washer and showing him eight windows and saying: "Wash those windows and you're through." You don't know what I have to go through or over or under to do your job for you. I do it my way. I do my best to protect you, and I may have to break a few rules, but I break them in your favor -- After all, you didn't tell me NOT to go to Captain Gregory.

STERNWOOD

(with a faint smile)

That would have been rather difficult.

MARLOWE

Well, what have I done wrong? Your man Norris, seemed to think the case was over when Geiger was eliminated. I don't see it that way. I'm not Sherlock Holmes. I don't expect to go over ground the police have covered and pick up a broken penpoint and build a case from it. If you think there's anybody in the detective business making a living doing that sort of thing, you don't know much about cops. If they overlook anything, it's something much looser and vaguer, like a man of Geiger's type sending you his evidence of debt and asking you to pay like a gentleman. That isn't normal. Why did he do that? Because he wanted to find out if there was anything putting pressure

(MORE)

MARLOWE (CONT'D)

on you. If there was, you'd pay him. If not, you'd ignore him and wait. But something was putting pressure on you. Regan. You were afraid he'd stayed around and been nice to you just long enough to find out how to play games with your bank account.

(interrupting Sternwood,
as he starts to speak)

Even at that, it wasn't your money you cared about. It wasn't even your daughters. You've more or less written them off. It's that you're still too proud to be played for a sucker -- and you really liked Shawn Regan.

STERNWOOD

(quietly, after
a pause)

You think entirely too much, Marlowe -- Are you still trying to solve that puzzle?

MARLOWE

No. I've been warned to quit. The boys at the City Hall think I play too rough. That's why I thought I should give you your money back -- because it isn't a completed job by my standards.

STERNWOOD

(smiling)

Quit, nothing. I'll pay you another thousand to find Shawn Regan. He doesn't have to come back. I don't even have to know where he is. A man has a right to live his own life. And he must have had his reasons for running off like that. I only want to know that he's all right. I want to know it from him directly, and if he should happen to need money, I should want him to have that also. Am I clear?

MARLOWE

Yes, General.

Sternwood leans back in the chair, his eyes closed wearily.

STERNWOOD

(trying to smile)

I guess I'm a sentimental old goat,
and no soldier at all. Find him for
me, Marlowe. Just find him.

MARLOWE

(rising)

I'll try. You'd better rest now.
I've talked your arm off.

He starts away. Sternwood's voice stops him.

STERNWOOD

(quietly)

You have a lot that Shawn had.
Strength -- and a steady eye.

Marlowe stands a moment, remembering Vivian's words. Then
he turns quietly and goes away.

175. GREENHOUSE DOOR - MARLOWE

as he emerges, mopping again, finds Norris waiting for him,
already holding Marlowe's hat for him. Marlowe, surprised
at this, is still further surprised when he looks up and
sees his car, which he left in front of the house, now in
the drive not far away and already turned so that it is
headed back toward town.

NORRIS

I took the liberty of turning it
around for you, sir. Since you were
in the greenhouse, I brought it on
around here at the same time.

MARLOWE

(ironically)

So that now I won't lose hardly any
time getting back to work, huh?

NORRIS

(impenetrable)

You will always be welcome here, sir,
if only to receive our gratitude.

MARLOWE

(stuffs handkerchief
into pocket, takes
his hat, turns)

Thanks.

He walks toward the car. But still Norris walks beside him. Marlowe already realizing that he is being practically frog-walked off the place. They reach the car. Norris steps ahead, opens the door, holds it open for Marlowe to get in.

MARLOWE

You don't even need a gun, do you?

NORRIS

I've never had occasion for one, sir.
I don't think I ever will.

MARLOWE

Neither do I.
(nods toward greenhouse)
What do you think of him this morning?

NORRIS

He's stronger than he looks. As
you would see for yourself if
occasion arose -- which, thanks to
you, it will not now.

MARLOWE

Yeah -- what did Regan have that got
to the General so?

NORRIS

Youth, sir. And the soldier's eye.

MARLOWE

Like yours.

NORRIS

Thank you, sir. And yours.

MARLOWE

Thanks.
(he starts to get
into the car, Norris
still holding
the door)
So Miss Carmen went to Santa Barbara.

NORRIS

Yes. This morning.

MARLOWE

(getting into car, stops)
Mrs. Rutledge told me she went last
night.

NORRIS

(smoothly)

It was near midnight, sir. I thought it was later. I was probably wrong.

MARLOWE

I see.

He gets in. Norris shuts the door. Marlowe starts the engine, puts car in gear.

MARLOWE

If the General has any more trouble, you know how to call.

NORRIS

And whom to call. Thank you again.

Marlowe drives on. In the mirror he can see Norris standing in the drive still watching him, guarding the house which Marlowe realizes he is not to enter again.

DISSOLVE TO:

176. INT. MARLOWE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

Marlowe has just entered. He kicks the door shut, crosses the living room, shedding his hat and suit coat on the floor as he passes.

177. INT. MARLOWE APARTMENT - BEDROOM

as Marlowe continues on his way to the bath, still peeling. He vanishes into the bath -- we HEAR the shower turned on. In the bedroom the PHONE RINGS. Marlowe returns, picks up the phone.

MARLOWE

Yeah?

The voice of Eddie Mars comes clearly from the instrument.

MARS' VOICE

Hello, soldier.

MARLOWE

Hello, Eddie. I been waiting to hear from you.

MARS' VOICE

Got a little news for you, soldier.
I'm skipping the manicures, till I
finish up this job.

MARLOWE

Yeah, I kind of thought you would.
I got a T.L. for you, too, Eddie.
Sternwood offered me a thousand
bucks to find Shawn Regan. I took it.

MARS' VOICE

(softly, after a pause)
Maybe I can help you earn that
grand. You remember that stuff that
Joe Brody moved out of Geiger's back
room?

MARLOWE

Yeah.

MARS' VOICE

Well, I tracked it down where Joe
stashed it, and moved it back up to
Geiger's place after the cops got
through. You might take a look at
it.

MARLOWE

Yeah -- I might.

MARS' VOICE

(laughing softly)
After last night I'm beginning to
think you're as tough as you look.
I told you we could do business
together. So long, soldier.

MARLOWE

Be seeing you.

The receiver clicks. Marlowe sets his instrument down
slowly, looks at it a moment, then returns to the shower,
dropping his shirt in the doorway.

DISSOLVE TO:

178. INT. MARLOWE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM

as Marlowe comes out of the bath, buttoning his pajama
coat. He is freshly shaved, his hair still damp and
rumpled from the shower. He pulls down the shades, putting
out the daylight, and collapses into the bed.

Just as he is comfortably settled, already half asleep, the doorbell RINGS. It rings insistently, with a quality of nervous urgency. Marlowe finally gets up to answer it, pulling on a dressing gown.

179. INT. MARLOWE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

as Marlowe admits Vivian. She is obviously in a fine state of nerves. She enters quickly -- he shuts the door.

VIVIAN

Phil...

MARLOWE

All right, now what?

VIVIAN

Eddie Mars just called me. He's out to get you.

MARLOWE

We knew that a long time ago.

VIVIAN

But now you must believe it. You must get out of town -- now.

MARLOWE

You better sit down, baby, and catch your breath.

He sits down on the davenport.

VIVIAN

Phil, how do you feel about me?

MARLOWE

Just like I feel about a stick of dynamite. Smooth on the outside -- but it makes a mess when it goes off.

VIVIAN

I got a different idea last night. Or maybe you're not a man except when two or three people are trying to murder you.

They kiss -- one of those kisses. Vivian frees herself.

VIVIAN

Now go. At once. I'll give you money -- a thousand -- five thousand if you'll get out of town now -- today...

MARLOWE

That would be stage money. I like to earn my money. I can't earn that much at one time, but what I do earn doesn't smell bad to me.

VIVIAN

Would you get out of town if you knew Shawn Regan was dead?

MARLOWE

Is Shawn Regan dead?

VIVIAN

Would you?

MARLOWE

How did he die?

VIVIAN

Kiss me.

MARLOWE

Later -- maybe. How did Shawn die?

VIVIAN

I killed him. By accident. He was teaching me to shoot and the gun went off.

MARLOWE

And that's what Eddie Mars has got on you. And so he sent you here, to buy me off with you.

Vivian stares at him, slaps him viciously across the face. Marlowe takes it.

MARLOWE

Will you have the kiss now, too?

She slaps him again. He takes it.

MARLOWE

You're good, you're very good, but you can't do it, baby. It won't wash.

VIVIAN

You fool, I killed him, I tell you. Just as you're going to be dead if you don't get out of town. Don't you see Eddie Mars can't let you stay alive now?

MARLOWE

Eddie never developed that trouble this morning. Now I'll ask you one. what's your game with me?

VIVIAN

There's no game -- with you.

MARLOWE

You've been playing spin the bottle with me ever since I met you. It's 'please, Phil' one minute, and 'get out, Marlowe' the next. You haven't told me a straight truth since the first day...

VIVIAN

That's a lie. I'm trying to play straight now. You fool, don't you realize you're going to die if you stay here?

MARLOWE

No. All you've told me is that you want me out of town at any price -- and that you still believe I can be bought if you can just find the right currency. Sure I'm a fool. I try to do my job and keep my nose clean. I risk my whole future, the hatred of the cops and Eddie Mars' gang. I dodge bullets and eat saps. But I'm not supposed to feel anything about it either way, because anybody can buy my immortal soul with a few bucks -- or maybe just a kiss. Sure, I'm a fool.

She stares at him, her eyes blazing. Suddenly she raises her hand, but before she can slap him, he speaks and she pauses.

MARLOWE

That's right. Have another. I throw them in free to old clients.

She stops, stares at him, suddenly takes his face between her hands, stares at him.

VIVIAN

You're going to find Shawn Regan?

MARLOWE

Yeah.

VIVIAN

No matter who gets hurt?

MARLOWE

No matter who gets hurt.

VIVIAN

(letting her hands
drop to his shoulders)

All right, Phil. It's funny -- I
think I really like you now, for
the first time.

She turns to the door, her head high, her voice very cool
and steady. Only her eyes, hidden from Marlowe, tell how
she feels.

VIVIAN

Goodbye, Phil.

She goes out.

DISSOLVE TO:

180. EXT. HOBART ARMS - AT FRONT ENTRANCE - NIGHT

as Marlowe comes out, wearing a hat and trench-coat against
the rain which has begun to fall. He gets into his car and
drives off. As he does so, a second car, a dark convertible
seen indistinctly in the shadowy street, swings around the
corner behind him, slows, falters, then picks up speed,
following Marlowe.

181. EXT. LAVERNE TERRACE - NIGHT (RAIN)

as Marlowe drives slowly, cautiously toward Geiger's house.
The street is dark, deserted. Marlowe drives without
lights. He stops in the tree-shadows by the angle of
Geiger's hedge and slides quietly out of the car, keeping
close to the hedge. His gum gleams faintly in his hand.

182. EXT. LAVERNE TERRACE - NIGHT (RAIN)

A section of the road over which Marlowe has just come.
The dark convertible creeps along in the shadows, also
without lights. It is still impossible to see who is
driving.

183. EXT. GEIGER'S PLACE - NIGHT (RAIN)

as Marlowe makes his way like a stalking cat through the
garden, toward the front door. Nothing stirs. There is no
sound but the rain. Marlowe crosses the exposed bridge at
a crouching run.

Nothing happens. He pauses in the shadows by the front door, then tries the knob. Silently the door swings open. He waits, then darts swiftly inside.

184. EXT. LAVERNE TERRACE - NIGHT (RAIN)

The dark convertible, still shrouded in the heavy shadows of the trees, parks quietly behind Marlowe's car across the road.

185. INT. GEIGER'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Marlowe stands beside the door, which he has closed, listening. He is only a shadow among shadows. The house is utterly still. Marlowe, still cautious, crosses into the rear part of the house, then returns.

MARLOWE

(laughing softly)

Okay, Eddie. I get it -- on the way out.

He draws the heavy curtains quickly across the windows, turns on the lights and sheds his hat and coat. The packing box from Geiger's back room stands on the hearth-rug. Marlowe bends over to look inside.

186. INSERT: THE PACKING BOX

filled with manila filing envelopes, ledgers, etc. On the top of the stack is a folder labeled "Sternwood". It has obviously been placed there on purpose.

187. INT. GEIGER'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Marlowe picks up the folder -- a KNOCK SOUNDS on the front door. Marlowe reacts, dropping the folder, and raises his gun. He moves quickly to turn out the lights, then stands beside the door, flat against the wall.

MARLOWE

Yeah?

CARMEN'S VOICE

Phil -- let me in.

MARLOWE

(after a pause,
unlocking the door)

Come in fast and shut the door behind you.

He retains his wary position while Carmen obeys. When he is sure she's alone, he sighs, relocks the door and turns on the lights. His face is beaded with sweat, his hand shaking slightly. Carmen is lightly clad, without hat or coat. Apparently she has left home in a hurry.

CARMEN

Did I scare you?

MARLOWE

(dryly)

No -- I was expecting visitors...
I thought you were in Santa
Barbara.

CARMEN

They had me locked in my room.
They even had my clothes locked
up. But I climbed down the drain
pipe. I had to see you again.

MARLOWE

Why did you come here?

CARMEN

You were just driving away when I
got to your place. I followed.

She is obviously wrought up, in a highly emotional state.

MARLOWE

It must have been important.

CARMEN

It was. Phil, I -- I'm sorry about
the other night.

MARLOWE

Forget it.

CARMEN

I can't. Phil, you... I don't know
quite how to say this... have you
ever seen something, perhaps in a
dream? Something perfect and
beautiful, a long way off, and you
try to reach it but there are too
many things in your way?

MARLOWE

Yeah. I know what you mean.

CARMEN

Maybe if everything had been different -- if I hadn't been born a Sternwood, if my mother had lived -- if I'd known a man like you before... Oh, Phil, is there ever any way back?

MARLOWE

That depends.

CARMEN

(softly, intensely serious)
You could help me find the way.

He looks at her, saying nothing. She comes closer to him, childlike, pleading.

CARMEN

Phil, you've got to help me. I'm getting lost. I don't know where I'm going any more, and I'm scared.

MARLOWE

Why me, Carmen?

CARMEN

Because... Just because you came into the house, and I saw you. Just a little thing like that. Don't you understand, Phil? You've got something I need, some thing I've got to have. Strength, maybe. I don't know. But I've got to have it, or -- I don't know what's going to happen to me.

She puts her hands on his chest, looking up into his face. For once she's completely honest.

MARLOWE

(quietly)
Was that what you wanted from Shawn Regan?

She draws away from him, very slowly, her eyes changing, hardening, becoming wary.

CARMEN

Perhaps... Phil...

MARLOWE

(gently)

I'm sorry, Carmen. That's how it goes. People have to find their own way -- wherever they're going. You can, if you really want to.

He turns away, to let Carmen have that moment to herself.

MARLOWE

(after a pause)

Before you go... I have something that belongs to you.

CARMEN

(dully)

What?

MARLOWE

Your gun. I've been carrying it around, thinking I'd see you.

He hands her the little gun, out of his coat pocket.

MARLOWE

Careful of it, now. It's cleaned and loaded in all five.

CARMEN

(taking the gun)

Thanks.

Marlowe moves past her, as though to open the door.

CARMEN

Turn around.

He does so -- she has the gun leveled, and there's no doubt what she's going to do with it.

MARLOWE

Carmen!

CARMEN

It's Vivian, isn't it?

MARLOWE

That has nothing to do...

CARMEN

It was Vivian with Shawn, too. It's always Vivian.

She fires point blank as Marlowe takes a step toward her, continues to fire, four shots in all. Then she waits until he has almost reached her and thrusts the pistol almost into his face. He catches her wrist just before she fires, pushes her hand aside as the shot goes off. She snatches her hand free, steps back, hurls the pistol at his chest. It falls to the ground. He stoops and picks it up.

MARLOWE

So that's the way it was with Shawn.

CARMEN

(dazedly)

But he died... why didn't you?

MARLOWE

I blanked the shells.

CARMEN

(still stunned, breathless)

You knew I -- You knew --

MARLOWE

I sort of figured it that way. And I'd like it better if Shawn had taken it in the back after all, from Eddie Mars. -- He was teaching you to shoot, wasn't he? That's what he thought he was doing. Only you didn't fire at the target.

CARMEN

(with half-dreamy
vindictiveness)

No -- they put him in the sump -- down where the old wells are.

MARLOWE

Couldn't you have found a cleaner place?

CARMEN

He didn't mind.

MARLOWE

No. I suppose oil and water are the same as wind and air when you're dead... So Vivian paid Eddie Mars, and covered up for you.

CARMEN

Yes. You'd like to do something about it, wouldn't you? But you can't. I'm always safe.

MARLOWE

How do you figure that?

CARMEN

Because Vivian won't let you. And you won't do it, anyhow. You like my father, just as Shawn did. You know what would happen if you took me into court. Pictures, and long columns in the newspapers, and the Sternwood name all over the headlines. You know what that would do to father.

A pause. She is looking at him like a wicked changeling.

CARMEN

And Vivian's in on this, too. Way in. You wouldn't want to see her go to prison.

MARLOWE

No. I wouldn't want that. And the old man. I wouldn't want to kill him -- for you.

His attitude is one of defeat. Carmen is pleased, triumphant. Marlowe turns away dejectedly, picks up his hat and coat.

MARLOWE

(not looking at her)
Better take these, Carmen, it's raining.

CARMEN

Thanks.

She puts them on quickly, then stands looking at Marlowe.

CARMEN

I think I'm glad I didn't kill you. This is going to eat you. You're going to lie awake nights, thinking about it. And every so often you'll see me somewhere, and I'll laugh at you... Goodbye, Phil.

She turns quickly toward door. Marlowe steps quickly to the light switch. As she opens the door and steps through it, he snaps off the light. There is a brief pause -- then gun fire.

188. EXT. GEIGER'S HOUSE - AT FRONT DOOR

as Carmen crumples silently onto the doorstep. There is silence. The door swings open. Presently from the dark shrubbery Eddie Mars comes, walking slowly toward the silent shape. His gun is in his hand. He crosses the footbridge and moves the dead head with his foot.

Marlowe snaps the switch inside the door; light floods suddenly out over Mars. Marlowe stands in the door, facing Mars across Carmen's body as Mars reacts.

MARLOWE

You were a little too quick on the trigger that time, too, Eddie.

His voice seems to break the spell. Mars goes for his gun, starts to raise it, but Marlowe fires first. Mars drops beside Carmen. As Mars falls, the SOUND of a man running away through the garden comes OVER.

Marlowe whirls, snaps a shot toward the running man, takes a few quick steps, but stops as the SOUND of a car starting and roaring frantically away comes OVER. Marlowe turns toward the door.

189. INT. HOUSE - CLOSE SHOT - MARLOWE

as he gathers up the Sternwood folder out of the box of blackmail stuff, puts it in his pocket as he turns.

190. INT. TELEPHONE PAY STATION - CLOSE SHOT - MARLOWE

as he speaks into phone.

MARLOWE

Bernie? It's me, Marlowe. I've got a couple of dead people up here at Geiger's... Yeah... Carmen Sternwood and Eddie Mars... No, I didn't shoot -- but one of them... Yeah, I hear you. And you hear me, too. I'll be at Sternwood's. I can talk just as well there.

He starts to put the phone down. As he does so, Ohls' angry voice comes OVER.

OHLS' VOICE

Marlowe --

Marlowe puts the phone down, turns to leave the booth.

191. INT. STERNWOOD HOUSE - MARLOWE

-- as Norris opens the front door, admits him. Norris stares at Marlowe, divines the truth by intuition.

NORRIS

It -- has happened?

MARLOWE

So you knew, too, did you? But of course you did: she would have needed somebody just to keep the nightmares off. Where is she now -- Mrs. Rutledge --

As he speaks, Vivian enters. She stares at him as Norris had done, divining the truth too.

VIVIAN

Phil --

MARLOWE

It's all right. I was just telling Norris. It's all all right.

(Vivian sways)

Catch her, Norris!

Norris catches Vivian, supports her as Marlowe moves in, puts his arm around Vivian.

MARLOWE

We've got a few minutes until the police get here.

NORRIS

In here, sir.

They half carry Vivian out.

192. INT. ALCOVE - VIVIAN, MARLOWE AND NORRIS IN B.G.

Vivian has recovered control now.

VIVIAN

Poor Carmen. Even after that -- that -- Tell me it was quick.

MARLOWE

It was quick. She didn't even know, probably. Eddie did. He had a good half second to watch his coming.

NORRIS

(to Vivian)

She was in the darkness, and Mr. Marlowe turned the light on for her -- don't you see?

VIVIAN

I know. Would you really have sent her to -- to the --

MARLOWE

(quietly)

Yes. You don't kill people for free, you know.

VIVIAN

Yes, I know.

MARLOWE

So you gave Eddie Mars Shawn's fifteen thousand dollars to put him into the sump.

VIVIAN

Only it was my fifteen thousand. I pawned the jewels mother left me. I still have Shawn's money, hoping to find his relatives -- if he had relatives. Not that it matters. I know what you must think of me.

MARLOWE

Do you? -- There's one thing bothering me. It's not the sump. Shawn wouldn't care about that now. But he was a Catholic --

VIVIAN

I had prayers said for him in the Cathedral. And I brought the Father out here, too. I couldn't lie to him. He stood beside the sump and blessed Shawn. I prayed too -- for me, at least.

Marlowe puts his hand under her chin, tilting her head back.

MARLOWE

You're okay, soldier. A little dumber than I am, but okay.

(straightening up)

I'm going to see your father now.

VIVIAN

(rising)

Yes. We must tell father --

MARLOWE

Not we, unless you mean Norris and me. You wait here. You may have to keep Bernie Ohls from throwing me into his basement dungeon before I open my mouth.

193. INT. CONSERVATORY - STERNWOOD

-- watching as Marlowe and Norris approach him. He, too, seems to read something by instinct.

STERNWOOD

Come, come, what's happened to my daughter now? Didn't you tell me days ago that I no longer have a heart to break?

NORRIS

It's Miss Carmen, sir --

STERNWOOD

Yes? Tell me.

MARLOWE

She's dead, sir.

Sternwood closes his eyes, otherwise he doesn't move. Norris moves quickly and anxiously toward him, but he opens his eyes again, as black and fierce as ever.

STERNWOOD

Well? Am I to know how?

Norris hesitates in dread, but Marlowe speaks smoothly.

MARLOWE

It was a car crash, sir. She was on her way back from Santa Barbara. It was instantaneous. I don't think she suffered at all.

STERNWOOD

And will no more -- since it was a car crash.

MARLOWE

And there's one more thing. I found Shawn Regan. He's all right. Take my word for it.

Again Sternwood's eyes shut, then open fierce and black again.

STERNWOOD
But he will not return.

MARLOWE
No. He sends you his affection and respect, but he won't come back.

STERNWOOD
Norris --

MARLOWE
(interrupts)
We'll forget the pay on this. I didn't do anything. It was dropped in my lap --

They all react as Vivian enters.

VIVIAN
Phil -- they're here.

STERNWOOD
The police?

MARLOWE
What would the police be doing here, sir?

STERNWOOD
Yes. What would the police be doing here. Go to your friends, sir. I am a little tired and will ask to be excused. Goodnight, and thank you for everything.

MARLOWE
Goodnight, sir.

He and Vivian walk away, Norris following.

194. INT. STERNWOOD HALL

as Marlowe, Vivian and Norris come out of the conservatory. Norris draws ahead, then pauses.

NORRIS
(to Marlowe)
May I add my own thanks, sir?

MARLOWE
You're welcome, soldier.

Norris inclines his head, then goes off down the hall. Marlowe and Vivian give each other one of those looks, and Marlowe takes her hand, drawing her close to him. They follow Norris.

195. AT THE FRONT DOOR - GROUP SHOT - OHLS ACCOMPANIED BY POLICE

As Marlowe and Vivian approach.

OHLS

All right, Marlowe. I'm waiting to see how you're going to talk yourself out of this one.

MARLOWE

(laughing)

For once I'm going to tell the truth.

OHLS

It had better be good.

MARLOWE

(turning to Vivian)

It'll be good, Bernie. It'll be very good. Because you won't have to hold me here. I've decided already myself to stay.

FADE OUT.

THE END