Maniac (1934)

Meirschultz laboratory--
cabinet in background. Oper-
at ing table in semi-foreground.
Table containing apparatus--
some strange-looking paraphana-
lia which might remind one of
vivisectionist--overhead light
on table--rest of room dim and
eerie-looking. Two practical
hypodermics.

Dr. Meirschultz is working on
table, testing hypodermics with
back to audience (side view) and
doing business with instruments.

He holds hypo to light and ad-
dresses his assistant.

MEIRSCHULTZ
Tonight, my dear Maxwell, I
am ready to try my experi-
ment on a human.

Maxwell is a bit alarmed.

MAXWELL
Yes?

MEIRSCHULTZ
At the morgue, there is a
[lethal] gas suicide--an ideal
specimen.

Maxwell is surprised; runs
hand thru his hair.

MAXWELL
Have you made arrangements?

We see Meirschultz' face for the
first time--rather typical, half-
mad scientist--mussed gray
hair--very penetrating eyes--
beard.

Shows his eyes as
he says "prying
eyes."

MEIRSCHULTZ
(very sharp) No! You know I
do not work under prying
Very contemptuous.  

You will find a way for me to work without detection. It is your chance to show your gratitude for my generosity and protection.

Maxwell is excited at the queer look in Meirschultz' eye.

MAXWELL
I will never forget what you have done for me and will do anything to help you—but the morgue—dead people—suppose we should be caught?

MEIRSCHULTZ
How many times have you told me of your impersonations—that you never had a chance.

4 Meirschultz drums on table.  
Craftily.

Maybe your art will serve you after all. You have seen the coroner. Why not impersonate him?—That's it!

Seeing Maxwell succumbing.

Impersonate him. The time has come when you can repay me for what I have done.

5 Max is agitated and seems afraid of the doctor.

MAXWELL
It's horrible, I tell you! Working on the dead; trying to bring back life.

Max is excited.

MAXWELL
It's not natural—you with your weird ideas! Haven't I stayed here and nursed dying dogs—and—

Notices Satan.

—even that miserable cat. And for what—for a measly roof and food. Because you took me in when I was down and out!

6 CUT to Satan, gazing at him.
The doctor glares at Maxwell, who seems to cringe under the spell of the doctor's eyes.

MEIRSCHULTZ
Once a ham, always a ham. You, an actor! And don't forget, my dear Maxwell, the police will be glad to find you.

Max is very contrite—smiles wanly. Clears his throat.

MEIRSCHULTZ
Of course not. In time you may be a great man.

FADE OUT

FADE IN the morgue—very dark. Several sheeted tables with supposed corpses underneath sheets.

One, in foreground, is that of a frail, beautiful girl. Meirschultz has a case and Max is looking down in guise of coroner—very dignified—looks entirely different than earlier scene. Has extreme atmosphere of confidence about him.

CUT to cat pouncing on rat and eating it.

TWO SHOT—Meirschultz hands his case to Maxwell—whispers

MAXWELL
Hm—I did not mean I wouldn't—

MEIRSCHULTZ
This is the one—here.

MAXWELL
File No. 26941—Maria Altura—24—suicide—carbon monoxide gas—not claimed.

He shudders involuntarily as he watches—looks about him.

Meirschultz opens case—takes out hypos—looks at them—gets air bubble out—gives one
from each into neck of girl.

He then starts a series of manipulations—massages abdomen in region of heart—raises arms—works arms.

Maxwell watches, then notices that girl is rather good-looking—starts working with arms.

Meirschultz puts stethoscope to heart—works more rapidly. He is very tense—and excited. Use every effort to build up tenseness.

Finally, a faint sigh from the girl—then

CU of slight drool from the mouth. This is all to let the audience know she is faintly alive.

Max is astounded at the signs of life. He seems pretty awestruck. He then looks at the girl. This look decides him to brazen it out.

Meirschultz continues.

Unlock the side door. Then get the cart—but watch [out] for the guard. Get him out of the way and we'll take her out.

TWO EMBALMERS are working on a body and notice Meirschultz and Maxwell working on Maria.

1ST EMBALMER
By gosh, them stiffs are gettin' heavier and more of 'em every day. They even got the coroner working overtime.

2ND EMBALMER
Yeah, between the gangsters and the autos, we won't need another war to carry off the
1ST EMBALMER
You didn't even mention the suicides. Did you notice the beaut that came in today?

2ND EMBALMER
Did I?

1ST EMBALMER
That's the one that's got the coroner doing nightwork.

2ND EMBALMER
What--special autopsy?

1ST EMBALMER
[Guess so.] Must be. I wonder who that old Santa Claus is?

Meirschultz laboratory.
Max and Meirschultz come thru door of room off lab where they have left Maria. Meirschultz looks thoughtful but agitated.

Maxwell, thoughtful, seems a bit awestruck.

Meirschultz is excited by Maxwell's speech.

MEIRSCHULTZ
With twenty-four hours complete rest, she will recover.

MAXWELL
Think of it--life back in a body that sought oblivion. It's uncanny--the possibilities terrify me.

MEIRSCHULTZ
Not a word of this out. This is only a step. Cases like this have an element of doubt. I want a victim with a shattered heart. Yes, a heart--that can be replaced by this beating thing I have forced life back into. Now for my supreme accomplishment. Maxwell you will get me such a victim.

CUT TO CU heart beating in bottle.

TWO SHOT

MAXWELL
Meirschultz grows more excited.

Not from the morgue. They'll get suspicious.

MEIRSCHULTZ
I don't care where you get it! From the morgue, the street--the undertaker! But get one! (whispers) The end will justify the means.

Maxwell at door. He is alarmed at the doctor's eyes and excitement and decides to be on his way.

CU Max at door.
Thinks out loud.

MAXWELL
The undertaker around the corner. That gangster shot today. Just the thing.


A basement window--
Maxwell opens it and climbs in very stealthily.

Interior basement mortuary. Complete darkness, except beam from small window shining on hazy outline of table with stiff on it.

CU Max tiptoeing to table, his figure rather crouched and looking very fearful.

CU Maxwell's head--glances around as if he fears a presence.

CUT to cat fight outside--one cat runs and other follows.

They jump thru basement window.

They scoot across floor under Maxwell's legs--frightening him so he knocks over body with frightful clatter and he
dashes out of the basement.

Street from mortuary to Meirschultz--Maxwell is running as if pursued.

Meirschultz' lab--Maxwell enters excitedly. His expression is one of fear and terror.

Impatiently.

Very breathless and excited.

MEIRSCHULTZ
Where is it?

MAXWELL
(gasps) I--couldn't get--it--

CU face of Meirschultz--he is very angry and glares at Maxwell contemptuously.

MEIRSCHULTZ
Coward--

Then Meirschultz cools off and paces up and down with Maxwell watching as if not knowing what might happen.

Suddenly, Meirschultz stops in front of Maxwell.

You fool! You have failed me in the greatest moment of my life!

Then Meirschultz goes on walking. Maxwell still watches, fascinated (build up).

MEIRSCHULTZ
I have it! You have seen my powers. You have worked with me! You have faith in me!

CU Meirschultz' hands taking gun from drawer as we hear his voice.

TWO SHOT--Meirschultz hands gun to Maxwell.

Meirschultz is exultant.

Take this--take your life. I will give it back to you. You know I can!

Gleam appears in his eye--CU.

My beating heart shall live in your body--think of it--

Live!
Maxwell thinks the doctor is mad--takes gun automatically.

Turns around and looks at it, then whisks around facing the doctor, gun pointed.

CU hand--fingers pulling trigger.

(max shots)

TWO SHOT--Meirschultz falls to floor. Maxwell drops gun, goes over to doctor, looks him over, realizes the doctor is dead.

CU Maxwell--whispers on knees, beside body.

Maxwell

Murder! Ugh.

Slowly the realization dawns on him; his remorse is turned to fear and terror.

Murderer--and of my bene-factor--horrible--how could I?

Questioning.

[What will I do? I must bring him back. But can I?] You should live--you have so much to give the world. But has he? Why should the unconscious peace of the dead be disturbed?

Decisive.

Isn't the spark that moves the maggot the self-same spark that moves the man? Preserving that spark in the individual is not important. What we do with the spark while we have it is important.

Conclusive.

[In Meirschultz, the spark is gone. In Maxwell, it lives. Still, Meirschultz was great. Maxwell was nobody. Meirschultz could bring life back. Why couldn't I?]

Buckley saw that body--if he tells the police--no they wouldn't believe him. Well,] they might--they would
search this place--they--mustn't--find him dead. I must bring him back. I'll find that formula and use the beating heart.

Maxwell goes thru letters and papers before making dash for liberty. Among them, he finds:

INSERT:

"By the use of XDSQ formula in injection into spine, violent superadrenal criminals can be made completely docile ..."

Maxwell. Maxwell.

The formula for restoring life must be here. [Nothing to bring him back. But--this may come in handy.]

I'd better hide him."

Doorbell rings and Maxwell decides to answer it to avert suspicion. He shoves the body into Maria's room.

The above formula paper drops on floor.

Doctor's waiting room. Maxwell opens door. A woman is standing there rather excited.

MRS. BUCKLEY
Dr. Meirschultz, please.

MAXWELL
He isn't here.

She thinks the doctor is just busy working and will see her if it is important enough.

MRS. BUCKLEY
That's terrible. It's so very urgent. Will you tell him that Mr. Buckley is having positively alarming hallucinations. Why, he thinks he's the orang-
utang murderer in Poe's "Murders of the Rue Morgue." Tell the doctor I must have some definite help.

I'll go get him and bring him back.

She rushes off.

MAXWELL
No--No--don't do that--

Mrs. Buckley is out of sight.

Maxwell turns--goes back to lab, thinking, locking door before going back.

MAXWELL
Meirschultz would be missed.

Maxwell never would.

Maxwell glances around and sees makeup case.

CUT TO CU makeup case.

CUT TO Maxwell with case and then

CUT TO fades of his changes into Meirschultz. Beard, heavy eyebrows, graying hair, etc.

When completed, he takes one long look in mirror and swells with pride.

MAXWELL
Not only do I look like Meirschultz--I AM Meirschultz. I will be a great man.

CUT TO CU dead Meirschultz, eyes staring. Maxwell's hands enter scene and pull down the lids.

FADE OUT

INSERT: Door--"MISSING PERSONS DETAIL Captain H.W. Jones"
CUT TO Jones' office.

He is sitting at desk, talking on phone. Two officers lolling about.

(Phone rings)

JONES (on phone)
Yes, speaking.

(to officer)
Take this down.

INTERIOR--JONES' OFFICE.

Coroner, Jones and 1st embalmer--Mike.

Jones is puzzled.

Also puzzled.

Mike quickly tries to justify himself.

MIKE
Sure and I would have swore it was the coroner himself--

JONES
There must have been a strong resemblance--?

MIKE
The dead image! And talked like him too.

JONES
Oh, then you were speaking with the coroner--?

Quickly explanatory--

MIKE
No--He was a-talkin' to an old fella looked like Santa Claus--like I said to Jake--
suddenly--

Half to himself--

Jones thinks of Meirschultz but does not commit himself.

Anyway, he had a beard. And busy hair 'n 'n eyes kinda wild.

It musta been two other fellas.

JONES
Could you identify the man if you saw him again?

MIKE
I wouldn't swear to anything now--since I was so sure it was the coroner.

Jones has been thinking and turns to the coroner.

JONES
Mike's description sounds like your friend Meirschultz. Have you seen the doctor lately?

Belittles this suspicion as of no consequence.

CORONER
Whuh, Dr. Meirschultz is a great research scientist. Why, he has formulated some amazing methods for preserving gland extracts in their most potent state. He's no body snatcher.

JONES
Well, doctors and scientists often have something queer in their minds. Anyway, I'll look into it.

Jones rises.

CORONER
Go easy, Jones. I wouldn't like to offend the doctor--

Ushering them out.
JONES
Don't worry. I won't embarrass you.

Jones walks back to his desk a bit puzzled. Picks up letter--

Picks up inter-office phone and presses buzzer.

JONES
Collins, see if you have anything on Don Maxwell, last heard from in this city. Impersonations in vaudeville.

Officer nods assent.

(into phone)
Body of Maria Altura, suicide was stolen from the morgue. Thief impersonated the coroner. Party with him looked like Dr. Meirschultz. Yes, I'll look into it before anything is done formally.

Hangs up receiver.

(to officer)
Boy, that's a hot one--and a new one--it used to be getting rid of the body, but now they're stealing them.

59  CUT TO LAB--Maxwell.

Doorbell rings again. Max peeks to see who it is before opening. He turns the lights low.

60  CUT TO Ext. Doctor's house--Mrs. Buckley ringing bell. Mr. Buckley is with her. Maxwell opens door.

61  CUT TO interior office--same door--over Maxwell's shoulder.

MRS. BUCKLEY
Here he is, doctor.

Max takes it.
He invites them in.
MAXWELL
Come in--(to Buckley) You are looking well, Mr. Buckley. What seems to be troubling you?

BUCKLEY
Nothing is troubling me. I seem to be troubling everyone else.

Maxwell tries to be affable.

MAXWELL
I wouldn't feel that way. Let's talk it over.

Turns to Mrs. Buckley.

(to Mrs. Buckley)
How often does he have these spells?

MRS. BUCKLEY
They are becoming more frequent. The last ones have been less than a week apart.

MAXWELL
That is bad--let me see. Did we X-ray his head for pituitary pressure?

MRS. BUCKLEY
Oh yes. Don't you remember? You suggested operating after you completed your new experiment. But, really, doctor, I am afraid to wait much longer.

Maxwell is worried about this situation, not wanting to take responsibility.

MAXWELL
Well, you know, we hate to operate on these cases. It's so delicate an operation and I have been awfully busy.

(to Buckley)
You are willing, of course, to sign the necessary papers that you undergo this operation at
Buckley is angry.

MRS. BUCKLEY
Of course, James wants to be cured.

BUCKLEY
Who said I did? Always scheming to try to get me to sign papers. You're trying to get rid of me—that's what—

MAXWELL
Now, never mind, Mr. Buckley. Nothing will be done that you are not entirely in accord with.

MRS. BUCKLEY
He always seems to feel someone is trying to take advantage of him.

To Buckley he gives a look of appeal as he says

MAXWELL
I'll give him a shot to relieve the nerve tension. It may help him. We'll try that first.

Maxwell is anxious to get rid of them.

Meirschultz' lab. Maxwell puts water into hypo. Glances in direction of door with body.

CU DOOR

Max lays hypo down on table.

MAXWELL (to himself)
Water—that'll do him no harm and I'll be rid of them.

CU table, showing hypo laying next to the one used on Maria. Buckley's hypo rolls off on floor. Maxwell's fingers take other hypo.

Maxwell with hypo.

MAXWELL (calls)
Come in here, please.
Max bares Buckley's arm and gives him a shot.

MAXWELL
There now, you'll feel better--

BUCKLEY
Ugh.

Mrs. Buckley tries to soothe Buckley.

MRS. BUCKLEY
Don't excite yourself, James. Be calm.

Instead of growing quieter, Buckley becomes enraged.

BUCKLEY
Slipping. Creeping. It's terrible. I can't stand it--

Slowly he assumes the attitude of ape man.

MRS. BUCKLEY
Doctor, he seems worse instead of better. What was in that hypo?

Buckley starts to rave, and during this speech becomes ape man.

BUCKLEY
Pouring into my blood--darts of fire stabbing my brain--agonizing--I can't stand this--torment--torture--I can't stand it--I won't stand it.

He runs amuck and begins fight with Mrs. Buckley and Maxwell.

CUT TO Maria comes thru door, stepping over Meirschultz' feet visible thru open door, leaves door open and wanders into laboratory in a daze.

Buckley knocks Max over by
table and Maxwell sees hypo on floor.

75 CU Max sees hypo.

MAXWELL
What was in that hypo?

76 Buckley throws Mrs. Buckley across room by open door where body is. He spies Maria, grabs her and leaves the room.

77 Mrs. Buckley bending over Meirschultz body. She looks up, horrified.

MRS. BUCKLEY
What's this? He's dead! [Call the police!] Doctor, what have you done? This looks like murder.

78 Max is agitated. He feels he will be undone completely.

MAXWELL
No, no--not murder--my assistant--he shot himself.

MRS. BUCKLEY
Shot himself? When? Why I just saw him an hour ago. Why didn't you call the police?

Maxwell thinks fast and talks jerkily.

MAXWELL
No, not the police. I wanted to bring him back to life. I wanted to experiment on him. In fact, I must. I can restore him.

79 Mrs. Buckley looks accusingly, then picks up paper Max had dropped.

MRS. BUCKLEY
You murdered your assistant, just to experiment on him.

80 Reads paper.
Dr. Meirschultz, I've often heard of your uncanny experiments, but this tops them all. But, I think we speak the same language---am I right?

MAXWELL
Well, I don't know just what you mean---the same language.

MRS. BUCKLEY
We have a common interest. When you bring your assistant back to life, his mind will do as you direct. You can do that to Buckley too---

To herself says:

And he will do as I direct.

81 She picks up telephone.

MAXWELL
What are you going to do?

MRS. BUCKLEY
I'm going to call the police.

MAXWELL
No, you can't do that---they'll get suspicious---

MRS. BUCKLEY
Hm--with Buckley loose, they'll get suspicious if we don't call them.

82 Mrs. Buckley telephones.

MRS. BUCKLEY
Police Department? This is Dr. Meirschultz' office. An epileptic patient just escaped while here for treatment.

Maxwell listens to her explanation with wonder.

He imagines himself a monkey. He may frighten people ... Please notify me immediately ... oh, no, he isn't dangerous.

83 Hangs up phone.

MAXWELL
Why did you tell them that? You know he is dangerous!

MRS. BUCKLEY
The police will notify you as soon as they capture him...
Now, it's up to you to get him away from the police without arousing suspicion.

Maxwell becomes alarmed.
They are closing in on him.
The police are involved.

Mrs. Buckley leaves, saying

MRS. BUCKLEY
As soon as they call, let me know.

After she is gone, Maxwell inspects the body--looks at heart.

CU heart in bottle.

MAXWELL
Buckley saw that body. The police--if they come--I must bring him back. I must find that formula.

Goes to papers and digs out notations at last on restoring life. He reads intently.

INSERT: formula

OUTER OFFICE--waiting room.
Goof at door to see doctor.
Sound of bell.

GOOF
Howdy do, Doctor. A couple of my cats got away--did ya see 'em?

MAXWELL
Why, of course not. What would I want with your cats.

GOOF
I knew ya didn't want 'em. Still, I thought ya mighta used 'em for some experiments.

MAXWELL
Me-cats-never-oh-ah--

Unconsciously he looks question--Then
recovering

That is, I think too much of Satan to use cats for experiments.

GOOF
That's what I thought. No harm meant, doctor--

Goof leaves.

89
CUT TO Satan sneaking along and dragging out heart and starting to eat it.

89a
Maxwell returns and discovers Satan devouring the heart.

MAXWELL
What am I going to do. The police will be here any minute. I must dispose of the body. I'll hide it--I'll burn it--no, can't do that--ah, the basement.

BASEMENT. Maxwell is looking for a spot to hide the body.

CU niche in brick wall.

He tears a few bricks out.

Turns to go back upstairs and sees Satan watching him--the gleam appears in Satan's eyes.

MAXWELL
Satan--the gleam--you vicious wretch! Stand between me and salvation, will you--

Maxwell lunges at cat, thinking the cat has Meirschultz' eyes and gouges one eye out.

(yowls of cat)

CU eye in his hand.

MAXWELL
Why, it's not unlike an oyster--or a grape--(smiles--laughs)

Perplexed.

But the gleam is gone.
Satan jumps thru window.

LABORATORY--Maxwell drags body out.

BASEMENT--Maxwell dragging body and putting it behind partially torn down wall.

Building under construction. Max is stealing cement.

BASEMENT--Wall nearly complete. He runs out of cement on his trowel and crosses room.

CUT TO limb of trees rubbing against roof.

Satan jumps in with Meir-schultz body.

Maxwell returns and closes wall.

FADE OUT

Jones' office. Jones at desk. Buckley is brought in by an officer.

OFFICER
Picked him up stealing food. Seems to be a little off. Hated to lock him up till you had a look at him.

Buckley acts very sullen thru all this scene.

JONES (to Buckley)
What's the matter? Are you ill?

BUCKLEY
No-

JONES
Who are you? What is your name?

BUCKLEY
I don't know, [I tell you].

Phone rings.

Jones picks up phone.
Show various facial expressions during this conversation to put this over.

JONES
Yes ... hmm ... You say she hasn't been dead an hour? Send up the officer that brought her in.

Hangs up phone.

102b

JONES
What made you steal? Are you hungry?

BUCKLEY
No--I don't want to give any money. Everybody wants money--I'm not going to give any money.

JONES
Who wants your money--maybe I can help you.

BUCKLEY
Maybe you want my money, too.

Very friendly.

JONES
No, I don't want money. I only want to find out who you are and where you live. My business is finding people. Not taking their money.

BUCKLEY
You--a friend to me?

JONES
Why, yes, to you, Mr.--Mr. --what?

BUCKLEY
I don't know--I can't tell--

Jones indicates pencil and paper on desk.

JONES
Try him writing. Amnesia victims will often write what they can't say.
OFFICER
Mr. Jones, I have news about that corpse.

JONES (to officer)
Just a moment--

Buckley responds to Jones' very human treatment.

BUCKLEY
[Oh--all right.] (Mumbles--)

JONES
Write "boy," "school," "house," "home," "father," "his name," "born," "my name is--"

Buckley writes all these words but when it comes to his name he writes "James--Chicago," then stops short.

Officer enters room.

BUCKLEY
No, no! I won't sign any papers. You can't make me--

JONES
Hm--pressure--

To Buckley.

That's all right. We'll talk later.

To officer.

Let him rest.

To 2nd officer.

So, you found the body stolen from the morgue?

2ND OFFICER
Imagine--she was alive. What a horror. Could have been buried alive. She must have run away from the
JONES
Never mind your theories. Was she ever conscious?

2ND OFFICER
Just before she died she came to--

JONES
Did she talk?

2ND OFFICER
Said "doctor"--[something]

JONES
[Was it] "Meirschultz"?

[2ND OFFICER
How did you know?]

Buckley jumps at the name. Seems to be going into another spell. He looks terrible.

Buckley starts turning to ape man.

JONES
Tell me, just what you know of Dr. Meirschultz.

BUCKLEY
Papers--they all want me to sign papers.

JONES
Dr. Meirschultz, too?

Buckley is very excited and starts to have spell.

BUCKLEY
Yes--I can't stand it--everybody wants papers--oh, oh (starts to growl)

JONES
Take him to the psychopathic hospital.
Officers take Buckley out, leaving Jones alone.

JONES (to himself)
It looks as though I'd better look in at Dr. Meirschultz.

EXTERIOR neighborhood of lab.
Collins walks down street and encounters woman sweeping off front steps. Collins stops.

COLLINS
Do you know a Dr. Meirschultz and his assistant, Don Maxwell?

Woman stops sweeping and leans on broom.

WOMAN
Sure—they're sorta queer, I'd say. They's lots of queer goings on up there. They even brought a dog back to life once.

COLLINS
That sounds to me very remarkable.

WOMAN
It may be, but to my notion, those that monkeys with what they got no business to get queer sooner or later.

COLLINS
Maybe you're right.

WOMAN
I know I am. Why, I even heard a shot up there last night.

COLLINS
Why didn't you notify the police?

WOMAN
That's their business—not mine.

Starts to sweep vigorously.

EXTERIOR.
Jones leaves and goes to
cat farm. Goof has bunch of cats around and nods to Jones.

JONES
I understand from your neighbors that all [them] cats are making noise at night. Dr. Meirschultz has put in a complaint.

GOOF
He's been stealing my cats to experiment on [them]. I know cause I've been [watching] spying on him.

JONES
[Lot of] How many cats you have--what's the matter--rats?

GOOF
Yeah--thousands, and right in my back yard.

Jones takes this.

JONES
Thousands?

GOOF
Sure, got thousand cats, too. Look at 'em--

Points to cages of cats.

Jones points to Dr.'s house.

JONES
What's the idea [of wanting so many] do you sell them [to the doctor]?

GOOF
Oh, no. It's my own idea. I'm in the business. In the fur business.

JONES
Oh, I see. Cats' fur.

GOOF
That's it. You get it quick.

JONES
But where do the rats come in?
You're not as quick as I thought. I figgered out that rats breed faster than cats--cat skins make good fur--
The cats eat rats. Rats eat raw meat. That is, they eat the carcasses of the cats. So--the cats eat the rats--the rats eat the cats. And I get the skins--simple ain't it?

Jones is astonished at the Goof's simple logic.
(mouths this)

(aloud)

Cats eat rats--(nods)
But, rats eating cats--that's news.

[But, tell me, doesn't the doctor object to all this?]

Oh, him. He has a cat of his own. But his assistant--he's the cat-hatenest man I ever saw. Goofy, if ya ast me.]

By the way--did you hear a shot last night?

Maybe. I don't know.

Scratches his head.

Jones walks away, shaking his head.

If I want any information I'd better go to the doctor himself.]

I'm detective Jones. Just dropped in to tell you a bit of news.

You found Buckley?
as he tells the following.

JONES
Not exactly. He has been seen, though. And not far from here. There is also a report that he has been seen carrying a woman. That's fantastic, though, as no one has reported a woman missing.

115 Maxwell swallows.

MAXWELL
That is a mystery.

116 TWO SHOT--observing.

JONES
By the way, where is your assistant?

MAXWELL
Oh, Maxwell? He's left.

117 CUT TO INTERIOR--hotel bedroom.
Four show girls; Alice Maxwell; Marvel, acrobat; Maizie, in bath; Jo;--business with vibrator.

MARVEL
Hey, Maizie, we know you're hard boiled. You don't have to stay in the water thirty minutes to prove it.

MAIZIE
Aw--let me alone. I may not be decent, but I'm sure gonna be clean.

Alice in vibrator.

ALICE
Say, if anyone is entitled to first place in that bathroom, it should be me. Didn't I sign the register and welcome you as secret guests? Why, if it wasn't for nervy little Alice--

118 Maizie comes in with towel and grabs kimono.

you'd all be sinking your weary bones into the soft
Maizie takes glass tomato juice from Jo and picks up newspaper.

JO
Press--that reminds me. I have pressing business.

MAIZIE
Here's one for the book. A sandwich man pounding pavements. Walks into a wallet with forty-two grand in it.

JO
I'd like to find that man--

MARVEL
Maybe we could sandwich him in--huh?

MAIZIE
Can you imagine--the damned fool turned it in.

MARVEL
His head must have been a jelly bean--instead of the way they thought it was.

ALICE
Well, it sure was soft, all right. But would it be soft to land on to forty-two grand.

MAIZIE
Yeah--but listen. After he turned it in, people made such a fuss over him that he went "nutty." Thought he was the Almighty in person.

MARVEL
So, that's what being honest gets ya. A nice soft padded
cell in the bughouse.

ALICE
La Cucuracha—la cockroach...

MARVEL
[Pushin' all jokes aside.] It is pretty tough. Imagine the poor guy. I'll bet nobody noticed him all his life. And then—say, wasn't there some guy in history that spent his life looking for an honest man?

JO
Sure—but in his day, men were men. Today, they're too scared to be anything but honest.

ALICE
But a brave man can sure get away with plenty.

MAIZIE
Say, you musta been readin' the papers. Or maybe you been drinking "crazy water" and your head's Wrigley. Be yourself, Alice, playing the heavy heavy don't suit you.

ALICE
It's getting me down—always broke—never a break.

JO
Why don't you ditch that ham and pick yourself a rich husband?

ALICE
Rich husband—I've heard they do come that way—but not often.

MARVEL
Often enough—but not our way.
Jo smiles, but Maizie is intent on an item in Variety. Her eyes widen.

She waves the paper and shouts.

MAIZIE
Alice! Listen to this--Don Maxwell, personality impersonator, gets lucky break.

JO
Why, that's your husband, ain't it?

ALICE
Pipe down--let her read it, will you?

MAIZIE
"By queer quirk of fate, actor falls heir to Australian estate. This paper is trying to find him. He used to be around in vaudeville days, but we have not heard much of him lately. Well, more power to you, Don. We thought some day you'd impersonate the right guy."

MARVEL
The lucky ham--from now on he'll have the company of a good egg.

JO
Will wonders ever cease? Our little Alice in Wonderland--

ALICE
I'm in wonderland, all right--wondering if that ham's around. Say--I wonder if he's still with that goofy professor.

(knock on door)
MAIZIE
Scram for cover--who is it?

MAN'S VOICE
It's me--

Maizie opens the door.

MAIZIE
Aw, nothing but old music in the ear. The chorus girl's bunion producer.

Young man enters.

MARVEL
Well, what's news from the front?

YOUNG MAN
Front, my eye--it's the firing line. Show's closed.

MAIZIE
In the woids of Walter Winchell--"There are three kinds of actors--those on the screen, those on the radio and those on their ears"--well back to the fan dance for Maizie.

JO
Well, it may be the bread line for us--but Alice don't have to worry. She's struck it rich--But I'm nothin but a nothin.

To Alice.

YOUNG MAN
About time--after all that digging.

ALICE
You bet, and I'm off to a fly-ing star. (Mae West gag)
Now you can all come up and see me some time--

JO
Say, when do I take these bath salts--before or after my bath?

CU JO with bathsals.

JONES' OFFICE--Jones
questions Mrs. Buckley. Very easy manner.

Much the dutiful wife--put on for Jones.

Slow questioning.

A little exasperated at Jones' slowness. Very sweet.

Very explanatory--her sweetest manner.

Fully for their effect.

She is scared stiff. Wants to shield Meirschultz but wants to save herself from any complicity.
MRS. BUCKLEY
Why--er--what do you mean by that--why, Dr. Meirschultz--

Takes it when she says "Dr. Meirschultz." He watches carefully as he says the following

JONES
No, not Meirschultz. Your husband had a dying woman in his arms when found.

MRS. BUCKLEY
Oh, surely, the doctor can explain that. My husband is innocent. You ask the doctor.

JONES
Tell me exactly what happened when your husband left Dr. Meirschultz.

She tells this fable carefully careless.

MRS. BUCKLEY
He didn't want to sign the necessary papers to enter a hospital proper. The first thing I knew he had the most terrible spell he has ever had. And before the doctor could help him--there was so much confusion I fainted. When I came to he was gone.

Very careful questioning.

JONES
Then he did not take the young lady with him?

Trying to save Buckley to get him out.

MRS. BUCKLEY
He may have. I think I did see her then. You had better ask the doctor. He can tell you exactly what she died of--you'll find she wasn't murdered--

Ushers Mrs. Buckley out.

JONES
I'm sure we can straighten
this out. You have been very helpful. Thank you.

MAXWELL
I didn't have anything to do with it. They could not understand why he had not been confined long ago. You knew he was dangerous. So did they.

MRS. BUCKLEY
You can't double-cross me like that. You were to help me. You were to operate on him. You were going to put him under my power.

MAXWELL
Not so fast, Mrs. Buckley. That was your idea!

MRS. BUCKLEY
Say, what's made you so cocky?

MAXWELL
Ushers her to door.

Ushers her to door.

EXTERIOR Meirschultz.
Alice comes up walk--looks Mrs. Buckley over and swings up to door. Jones is still concealed.

MAXWELL
Did you wish to see someone?

ALICE
I understand my husband is--your assistant. May I see him please?

Stalling.

MAXWELL
Ah--he isn't here now.

Very dismayed.

Very dismayed.

ALICE
You mean he doesn't work for you?

MAXWELL
No, not exactly. Why the great anxiety? It must be
something important.

ALICE
It is—you know what a struggle he's had.

MAXWELL
Indeed, he has often told me.

131

Enlarging to make the doctor feel her importance. Her eyes grow large and Max looks intently at her.

ALICE
He's inherited a fortune.

MAXWELL
You say a fortune. He never spoke to me of any rich relatives.

ALICE
He hardly knew of them himself. I believe it was his uncle in Australia.

MAXWELL
I am certainly glad to hear it. I know he'll be pleased.

ALICE
Don't tell him. I want to be the first to bring him the news.

MAXWELL
That's only natural. Maxwell will be here around eight tonight.

ALICE
Okay—I'll be here at eight.

She goes out door.

132

Jones wanders casually in to office. Max starts—nervous.

JONES
How do you do.

MAXWELL
Well, news of Buckley?

JONES
Yeah, he was picked up—
also the body from the morgue. Say, what did you have to do with stealing that body?

MAXWELL
Why, Buckley stole that body. That's what alarmed Mrs. Buckley so. I have been trying to get her to put Buckley in an institution but she wants to keep him.

JONES
So—that's it. Buckley took the body.

Maxwell beams, thinking he is safe with that story.

MAXWELL
Yes indeed. He has been a difficult case. Now that you have him in custody—you have him haven't you?

JONES
Oh, yes, he's in good hands now.

MAXWELL
Fine. Mrs. Buckley will be all right when she gets used to the idea.

JONES
Do you have many patients, doctor?

MAXWELL
Oh no. Mostly research in endocrinology.

JONES
Mind if I look around? Seems to me you have carried on some interesting experiments.

MAXWELL
Sure, I'll take you thru.

Sure of himself but taking no chances.

133 OMIT

134 They walk thru.
Advance to basement steps--door.

JONES
What's down there?

MAXWELL
Oh, just the basement. Some day I intend to build an experimental laboratory down there. It will save me from intrusion.

JONES
I'd like to have a look.

They go down--look around but Jones sees nothing.

JONES
Where did you say your assistant went?

Max is nervous. Does not know what to answer.

MAXWELL
He? Oh, he's away for a while. He'll be back, though.

OFFICE.

JONES
Thanks. I'll be seeing you.

To himself.

[MAXWELL
Not if I can help it.]

Max is alone.

MAXWELL
The gleam--it was in Meir-schultz' eyes when he wanted to murder me. It was in Mrs. Buckley's eyes when she wanted to murder her husband. Alice had that gleam in her eye when she wanted to find me. She'd murder me. That's what she wants to do. I must get rid of her --but how--Mrs. Buckley--she will help. She must help--

He picks up phone.

Mrs. Buckley, we are being investigated. The police are suspicious of you ... you
Meirschultz lab.
Mrs. Buckley has arrived.
She is very excited.

Maxwell watches her eyes while she talks.

Maxwell fixes hypo, filling it from formula. Looks at formula, then at bottles.

... I think I have a way out. Come over right away.

MRS. BUCKLEY
We must get him out or we are lost.

MAXWELL
You are right. But before I can get him back here, you will have to help me.

MRS. BUCKLEY
How? What can I do?

MAXWELL
[Something very important. I have been threatened;] Mrs. Maxwell, my assistant's wife, is crazy. She thinks I murdered her husband. [She wants to murder me.] I want you to help me quiet her--give her a shot from this hypo. [Keep it hid till we get her] down in the basement--there is a secret vault [there]. We will put her there till we get your husband--[then turn her over to the authorities. Then we will both be free.]

MRS. BUCKLEY
It sounds all right, except for the fact that she's crazy. It seems to me she has the right idea--(laughs).

MAXWELL
Oh, so you feel that way too (he laughs).

Motions to other room.

Stay in there--I'll call you when needed.

Mrs. Buckley goes in to other room.
Alice enters. Maxwell comes in and greets her. Motions to chair.
He lets down on his voice.

MAXWELL
[Hello Alice.] I'm glad to see you.

ALICE
Gosh, you had me fooled.

MAXWELL
Sh--sh--I want to have a few words with you quietly.

ALICE
So--friendly or otherwise--?

MAXWELL
[Perfectly friendly, my dear.] At last, I have really a secure living for us. We can travel or anything we choose.

ALICE
Then you knew of the inheritance?

MAXWELL
Sure--I have one little job to accomplish, then we can leave together. No doubt you are surprised at this disguise.

ALICE
No, I wouldn't be surprised at anything from you.

Winningly.

MAXWELL
Now, honey--you are here in time to help me and you can--

ALICE
I knew there was a catch in this some place--but spill it.

Quiet and dramatic.

MAXWELL
In the other room, I have a crazy woman that I have been treating.
ALICE
Ha ha, you have been treating.

MAXWELL
Quiet, will you? This is serious. Our lives are in danger.

ALICE
What do you mean "our"?

He demands her attention.

MAXWELL
That's what I said. Now, listen to me. I want you to help me take this woman down stairs. I will give her a shot. You can take care of her till I get help.

ALICE
How about me getting the help. She's quiet now, isn't she?

145 He is fixing a shot for Alice to give to Mrs. Buckley.

MAXWELL
Yes, but she will break out any minute. She is not afraid of a woman. Just push this into her arm. But keep it hid, and all will be well.

146 Goes over to door and calls

All right, Mrs. Buckley. We will go down stairs. I have a special treatment room there.

147 Maxwell stands back. Ushers both women out in front of him. He starts them down stairs.

He backs out and shuts them in the basement where the sealed up body of Meirschultz is.

(Door closes)

MAXWELL
(laughs maniacally)

Stands with back to door—hands outstretched in back.
Basement--both women are scared stiff.

Both eye each other fearfully. Both think the other insane.

Both conceal hypos. They watch for a chance.

Finally, tough Mrs. Buckley makes lunge at Alice with hypo.

Alice screams.  

(scream)

Mrs. Buckley takes it as sign of insanity and ...

Puts hand over Alice's mouth.

Alice tries to free herself. The fight is on.

Meirschultz' office. Jones comes in with officer.

MAXWELL  
You here again?

JONES  
Yes. Mr. Buckley thinks you treated him a little rough. He's in the hospital. How about it?

MAXWELL  
Oh, nothing. He is crazy, that's all. I had a little trouble with him.  

(muffled screams of woman)

JONES  
What's that?

MAXWELL  
(laughs) Oh, nothing. A couple of my patients having a little argument.

(more screams)

Officer grabs Maxwell.

JONES
Take me down there.

MAXWELL
It won't do any good. They are a pair of would-be murderers fighting it out.

JONES
Man, you're crazy. What kind of a place is this?

MAXWELL
Oh, I'm crazy, am I? Let me tell you something. Those women have--the gleam--

JONES
Come on, we're wasting time.

158 Jones drags Maxwell down stairs as the screams subside and all is quiet for a moment. The officer accompanies them.

159 The officer separates the women and holds them.

160 CUT to wall concealing cat and Meirschultz. (sound of cat meowing.)

161 CUT to Jones looking at wall.

JONES
Say, what's behind that wall?

162 CUT to Maxwell.

MAXWELL
Take that cat away. That's Satan--the murderous Satan. The wretch that ate Meirschultz' heart. He still has the gleam--even in that loathsome one eye. It watches me--that gleam--

163 All look at Maxwell, horrified.

164 CUT to Jones.

JONES
Quiet, doctor. What do you mean by the "gleam"?

165 MAXWELL
The gleam--it haunts me.
Meirschultz had it. He knew too much. He brought life back to the dead. He had to die. Satan had it. Mrs. Buckley has it. She wanted to kill her husband.

He points to Alice.

Thrashes arms wildly.

Alice wanted to kill me.

They all know too much--want to know too much.

ALICE
Listen to that! I wanted to kill him, did I? Well, I should have done it--the lousy ham.

(both women yell)

(cat meouws again)

During this time, Jones has been edging nearer the wall --motions to the officer to handcuff Maxwell.

Jones then tears down wall and out jumps Satan and the doctor's body is revealed (or rolls out on the floor).

MRS. BUCKLEY
It's the doctor! (turns to Maxwell) Then, who is this?

JONES
Mrs. Maxwell, isn't this your husband?

ALICE
I'm sorry to say--it is-- (or "Yeah--what's left of him")

CUT to Maxwell raving and gibbering. Officer helps Jones.

JONES
Come on, Maxwell--

CU Maxwell with faces and gleams darting thru his head,
especially Meirschultz' face.

MAXWELL
The gleam--the gleam--they drove me to it! I tell you, they drove me to it! I didn't want to use my art for murder or crime.

They drove me--with hunger, with misery and humiliation. I only wanted to amuse--to entertain--but here I am--spent my life perfecting an art that no one wanted--no one appreciated --I was good--I was able--anyway, I showed them--Dr. Meirschultz, a real impersonation (laughs maniacally). Meirschultz--my supreme impersonation.

FINIS