



Scripts.com

# The Birds

By Ed McBain

**FADE IN:**

FULL SHOT - GRANT STREET - SAN FRANCISCO - DAY

It is mid-afternoon, and there is a tempo and pace to the people walking, the doorman HOOTING for taxicabs, the policemen directing traffic.

PAN SHOT - PEDESTRIANS

waiting at street corner for light to change.

CLOSE SHOT - MAN

at the end of line of pedestrians. He is looking up at the sky.

TWO SHOT - MAN AND WOMAN NEXT TO HIM

as she follows his gaze upward.

LONG SHOT - THE SKY

with hundreds of gulls in it, wheeling.

MED. SHOT - THE STREET CORNER

as the light changes and people begin to cross. In the crowd walking the other way, a man turns to look up at the wheeling gulls in the sky overhead. The CAMERA LOCATES:

MED. SHOT - MELANIE DANIELS

in the crowd of pedestrians, approaching Davidson's Pet Shop. She is a young woman in her mid-twenties, sleekly groomed, exquisitely dressed, though hatless. She walks with the quick sureness of the city dweller, a purposefulness in her stride, a mischievous grin on her face. She continues toward the front door of a pet shop and enters.

INT. BIRD SHOP - MED. SHOT

Melanie opens the door and comes through, still looking back toward the street and skywards. The proprietor, a MRS. MacGRUDER, comes toward her.

**MELANIE:**

Hello, Mrs. MacGruder, have you ever seen so many gulls?

MRS. MACGRUDER

Hello, Miss Daniels.

**MELANIE:**

What do you suppose it is?

MED. SHOT

Mrs. MacGruder takes a look out at the sky. A puppy is BARKING, o.s.

MRS. MACGRUDER

(shaking her head)

There must be a storm at sea. That can drive them inland, you know.

They are climbing the short flight of steps into the bird department now. The BARKING of the dog SEGUES into the clamor of innumerable birds, TWEETING, TWITTERING, CAWING as Melanie and Mrs. MacGruder go to the counter at the far end. There is a circular cage in the center of the room, and the walls are lined with wire-mesh cages and smaller wooden cages so that the effect is one of being surrounded by birds, contained birds to be sure. The birds are quite beautiful, mostly exotic birds, small splashes of color behind the wire-mesh cages, larger bursts of brilliant hue on the parrots and parakeets in the bigger cages. As they walk:

MRS. MACGRUDER

I was hoping you'd be a little late, Miss Daniels.

(apologetically)

You see, he hasn't arrived yet.

**MELANIE:**

You said three o'clock.

MRS. MACGRUDER

I know. Oh, I know.

(she is more distressed now)

I've been calling all morning. Oh, you have no idea. Miss Daniels, they're so difficult to get, really they are. We get them from India, you know, when they're just little chicks, and then we have to...

**MELANIE:**

Well, this one won't be a chick, will he?

MRS. MACGRUDER

Certainly not. Oh, no. Certainly not. This will be a full grown myna bird. Full grown.

**MELANIE:**

And he'll talk?

MRS. MACGRUDER

Well, yes, he'll talk. Well, no, no.

You'll have to teach him to talk.

**MELANIE:**

Yes.

MRS. MACGRUDER

Yes.

(pause)

Oh my, I suppose I should call them again. They said three o'clock.

(pause)

Maybe it's the traffic. I'll call.

Would you mind waiting?

**MELANIE:**

(judiciously)

I think maybe you'd better deliver him. Let me give you my address.

(she begins taking  
off her gloves)

MRS. MACGRUDER

(producing pencil and  
pad)

Oh. Oh, well, all right.

As Melanie starts writing:

MRS. MACGRUDER

I'm sure they're on the way, though.

Could I just call?

**MELANIE:**

(with a resigned sigh)

Well, all right, but...

She scurries out behind the counter and out of sight. Melanie finishes writing her address and stands impatiently by the counter. She taps her teeth with the pencil.

MRS. MACGRUDER (O.S.)

Hello, this is Betty MacGruder at Davidson's.

(pause; accusingly)

It's past three, you know.

(pause)

Well, how long do you think...? All right, would you check it please?

Yes, I'll wait.

Melanie sighs. Leaving her gloves and purse on the counter,

she begins wandering around the shop, still tapping her lips with the pencil. There is no menace in the birds surrounding her. They are active and beautiful as they dart behind the bars and mesh of their cages. Off screen, the puppy begins BARKING again as the front door opens. Melanie looks up.

MED. SHOT - MITCH BRENNER

as he closes the entrance door behind him and starts up the steps to the bird department. He is a handsome man, about twenty-nine or thirty, well-dressed, and carrying a felt hat.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

seeing him, and then turning away to bend before the cage of strawberry finches. She pokes the pencil through the mesh. The birds are startled into scarlet flight.

TWO SHOT - MELANIE AND MITCH

as they pass each other in the aisle. He gives a polite little nod, and she gives a polite little smile. But as he passes her, and unknown to her, he turns for a second look -- and then vanishes behind the circular cage as he turns the corner.

MED. SHOT - MELANIE

looking at her watch as she wanders around the other side of the cage and then comes face to face with Mitch again.

**MITCH:**

I wonder if you could help me.

**MELANIE:**

What?

**MITCH:**

(deliberately, and with a touch of hauteur)

I said I wonder if you could help me.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

a trifle annoyed by his manner at first. She is about to inform him, if you please, that she is not a shopgirl. But then something rebellious flashes in her eyes and an idea comes to her.

**MELANIE:**

(solicitously)

Yes, what was it you were looking

for, sir?

TWO SHOT - MELANIE AND MITCH

**MITCH:**

(deadpan)

Lovebirds.

**MELANIE:**

Lovebirds, sir?

**MITCH:**

Yes. I understand there are different varieties, is that true?

**MELANIE:**

Well... yes, sir, there are.

**MITCH:**

These are for my sister... her birthday you see. As she'll be eleven and... well, frankly, I wouldn't want a pair of birds that were too demonstrative.

**MELANIE:**

I understand completely, sir.

**MITCH:**

As the same time, I wouldn't want birds that were aloof, either.

**MELANIE:**

(leading him around shop)

No, of course not.

**MITCH:**

Do you have a pair that are just friendly?

**MELANIE:**

I think so, sir.

(she looks around)

Now then, let me see.

**MITCH:**

(at the finches)

Aren't these lovebirds?

**MELANIE:**

No, sir, those are... redbirds.

**MITCH:**

The sign says strawberry finches.

**MELANIE:**

(airily)

Yes, we call them that too.

(she moves away)

Ahhh, here we are, Lovebirds...

(and stops before a  
cage of canaries)

**MITCH:**

Those are canaries, Miss.

(pause)

Doesn't this make you feel awful?

**MELANIE:**

(baffled)

Doesn't what make me...?

**MITCH:**

All these innocent little creatures  
caged up like this?

**MELANIE:**

Well, we can't just let them fly  
around the shop, you know.

**MITCH:**

I suppose not. Is there an  
ornithological reason for keeping  
them in separate cages?

**MELANIE:**

Oh, certainly. It's to protect the  
species.

**MITCH:**

I imagine that's very important.  
Especially during the moulting season.

**MELANIE:**

Yes, that's a particularly dangerous  
time.

**MITCH:**

Are they moulting now?

**MELANIE:**

Some of them are.

**MITCH:**

How can you tell?

**MELANIE:**

Well... they get a sort of hangdog  
expression.

CLOSE SHOT - A CAGED BIRD - MITCH'S P.O.V.

The bird is wearing a distinctly hangdog expression.

**MITCH:**

Yes, I see.

(pause)

About those lovebirds, Miss...

**MELANIE:**

Are you sure you wouldn't like to  
see a canary instead? We have some  
very nice canaries this week.

**MITCH:**

All right.

(he smiles)

She smiles back.

**MITCH:**

(he waits)

All right, may I see one, please?

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

as she realizes she is expected to take one of the canaries



out of the cage. She smiles feebly, glances toward the counter where she expects Mrs. MacGruder to reappear momentarily, and then takes a deep breath. She opens the door to the canary cage, and cautiously puts her hand into it.

**MELANIE:**

(feebly)

Here, birdie. Here, birdie, birdie.

One of the canaries suddenly flutters out of the cage and into the room. Melanie leaps back, startled.

**MELANIE:**

Oh! Ohhhhh!

FULL SHOT - THE BIRD DEPARTMENT

as the canary flies frantically about the room, Melanie and Mitch in pursuit. Mrs. MacGruder appears at the counter, finally confronted with the chaos she's been expecting all day.

MRS. MACGRUDER

What is it? Oh! Oh my, one of the birds is loose!

She joins in the chase around the room. The bird flutters up to the ceiling, and then lands on the counter and watches them suspiciously.

**MITCH:**

Shhh! Shhhh!

He tiptoes up to the bird, hat in hand. Quickly, he covers the bird with his hat, then reaches under to grab it.

CLOSE SHOT - MITCH

the canary in his hand.

**MELANIE:**

There we are!

MRS. MACGRUDER

Oh, good! Oh, wonderful.

FULL SHOT - THE BIRD DEPARTMENT

as Mitch carries the canary back to the cage. He opens the door.

**MITCH:**

(putting the canary  
in)

Back into your gilded cage, Melanie

Daniels.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

startled.

**MELANIE:**

What did you say?

TWO SHOT - MELANIE AND MITCH

**MITCH:**

(savoring this)

I was merely drawing a parallel,  
Miss Daniels.

**MELANIE:**

But how... how do you know my name?

**MITCH:**

(secretly)

A little birdie told me.

(he smiles politely)

Good day, Miss Daniels.

(he bows to Mrs.

MacGruder)

Madam.

(he starts out)

**MELANIE:**

Hey, wait a minute!

She goes after him. Mitch turns, stops, smiles, enjoying her  
bafflement immensely. Melanie studies him. Then:

**MELANIE:**

I don't know you.

**MITCH:**

Ahhh, but I know you.

**MELANIE:**

How?

**MITCH:**

We met in court.

**MELANIE:**

We never met in court or anyplace else.

**MITCH:**

That's true. I'll rephrase it. I saw you in court.

**MELANIE:**

When?

**MITCH:**

Do you remember one of your practical jokes that resulted in the smashing of a plate glass window?

**MELANIE:**

I didn't break that window!

**MITCH:**

No, but your little prank did. The judge should have put you behind bars!

**MELANIE:**

What are you? A policeman?

**MITCH:**

I simply believe in the law, Miss Daniels, and I'm not too keen on practical jokers.

**MELANIE:**

What do you call your lovebird story if not a practical...

**MITCH:**

Ahhh, but I really do want those birds.

**MELANIE:**

You knew I didn't work here. You deliberately...

**MITCH:**

Right. I recognized you when I came in. I thought you might like to know what it felt like to be on the other end of a gag. What do you think of that, Miss Daniels?

**MELANIE:**

I think you're a louse.

**MITCH:**

I am.

(he tips his hat)

Good day.

(to Mrs. MacGruder)

Madam.

(and he goes down the steps)

**MELANIE:**

And I'm glad you didn't get your lovebirds!

**MITCH:**

(breezily, as he goes out)

I'll find something else.

(he gives a slight bow)

See you in court some day.

The door closes. The puppy begins BARKING.

**MELANIE:**

(angrily)

That... that... who was that?

MRS. MACGRUDER

I have no idea.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

seething as she stares after him. Suddenly, she gets an idea.

MED. SHOT - MELANIE

going down the steps and to the front door of the shop. She looks through the glass.

LONG SHOT - MITCH - MELANIE'S P.O.V.

getting into his car at the curb.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

looking after the car at the curb.

CLOSE SHOT - THE LICENSE PLATE CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

seeing the plate, giving a brief, determined, angry nod. She begins to repeat the numbers to herself as she turns.

FULL SHOT - MELANIE

as she comes up the steps again and walks toward the counter.

MED. SHOT - MELANIE - MRS. MACGRUDER'S P.O.V.

as she comes up to the counter.

**MELANIE:**

Have you got a pencil?

MRS. MACGRUDER

What? Oh, yes, certainly.

As Melanie begins writing:

MRS. MACGRUDER

They said the myna bird would be here later this afternoon. If you'd care to come back...

**MELANIE:**

No, you'd better send him. May I use your phone?

MRS. MACGRUDER

(bewildered by everything)

Yes, certainly.

(she puts phone on counter)

**MELANIE:**

(as she dials)

Do you have any lovebirds?

MRS. MACGRUDER

No, not in the shop. But I can order them for you.

**MELANIE:**

How soon?

MRS. MACGRUDER

Well... well, how soon would you want them?

**MELANIE:**

Immediately.

(into phone)

Is this the Daily News? Melanie Daniels. Would you get me the city desk, please?

MRS. MACGRUDER

I might be able to have them by tomorrow morning. Would that be all right?

**MELANIE:**

(with an edged anger)

That would be just fine.

(into phone)

Hello, Charlie, this is Melanie. I want you to do a favor for me.

(pause)

No, this is a small one.

(pause)

Pressure you? Why, Charlie darling, would I try to pressure you? Will you call the Department of Motor Vehicles for me and find out who owns this license plate? DKQ dash one seven six.

(pause)

Yes, a California plate.

(pause)

No, I'll stop up there in a little while. Is daddy in his office?

(pause)

Oh. No, no, I don't want to break in on a meeting. Just tell him I'll see him later. Thank you, Charlie.

(she hangs up)

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE ICY DETERMINATION ON HER FACE.

**MELANIE:**

Now. What time tomorrow morning?

**FADE IN:**

FULL SHOT - MELANIE'S SPORTS CAR

pulling up in front of Mitch's building, the top down. She glances up at the address, gets out of the car, comes around to the other side, and opens the door.

CLOSE SHOT - THE LOVEBIRDS

in a cage as Melanie reaches for them.

MED. SHOT - MELANIE

turning from the car and going into the building. She pauses in the lobby, studies the names alongside the bell buttons.

CLOSE SHOT - HER GLOVED HAND

running down the list of names slowly. It stops.

INSERT - THE CARD

her finger beside it.

BRENNER, M. 3B

CLOSE SHOT - HER GLOVED HAND the forefinger extended as she runs it down over every bell button in one column, and then does the same for the next column.

MED. SHOT - MELANIE

as she turns from the bells to the inner door of the lobby, grabbing the knob. A BUZZ SOUNDS. She opens the door.

REVERSE SHOT - MELANIE

coming through the door and into the lobby. She walks swiftly toward the elevator where a well-dressed man is standing, waiting. Behind her, the inner door is BUZZING wildly with answering BUZZES. Melanie and the man stand waiting for the elevator, silently. Behind her, the BUZZING STOPS. The elevator doors open. The man smiles pleasantly and allows her to enter first. She does so with a small nod. The elevator doors close.

TWO SHOT - MELANIE AND THE MAN - IN THE ELEVATOR

The birds are CHIRPING wildly in their cage. The man and Melanie stand silently side by side. The man's eyes wander down to the bird-cage. Melanie's eyes move toward him. Self-consciously, she stands with the cage of CHATTERING birds. The man is dead-panned, unsmiling. The elevator stops. The doors begin to open.

FULL SHOT - MELANIE

stepping out of the elevator as the doors open. The man is right behind her. She begins looking for apartment 3B. The man is walking down the corridor beside her. She stops in front of the apartment, hesitates, hoping the man will turn the corner in the corridor. Instead, he stops at the apartment just opposite. He begins fumbling in his pocket for his key. He looks at Melanie.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

smiling at him feebly.

FULL SHOT - THE CORRIDOR

The man spread change and an assortment of junk on the palm

of his hand as he searches for his key. Impatiently, Melanie watches him. Making a decision, she puts the birdcage down before the door to apartment 3B, and then opens her purse.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE'S GLOVED HAND

reaching into the purse for a white envelope.

INSERT - THE FACE OF THE ENVELOPE

written there in Melanie's handwriting: MR. MITCHELL BRENNER.

MED. SHOT - MELANIE

as she props the envelope against the cage, and then hurriedly goes down the hallway, intent on retreat.

MAN'S VOICE

Miss...? She stops, distressed.

FULL SHOT - THE CORRIDOR

the man at the one end, key in his hand; Melanie at the other end, near the elevator.

**MAN:**

Is that for Mitch Brenner?

**MELANIE:**

(curtly)

Yes.

**MAN:**

He's not home.

**MELANIE:**

That's all right.

She presses button for the elevator.

**MAN:**

He won't be back until Monday. I mean, if those birds are for him....

**MELANIE:**

Monday?

**MAN:**

Yes. I don't think you should leave them in the hall, do you?

**MELANIE:**

(trapped)

Well, I...



The elevator doors open.

**MELANIE:**

Well, where did he go?

**MAN:**

Bodega Bay. He goes up there every weekend.

**MELANIE:**

Bodega Bay? Where's that?

**MAN:**

Up on the coast. About sixty miles north of here.

**MELANIE:**

Sixty...

(her face falls)

Oh.

**MAN:**

About an hour and a half on the freeway. Or two if you take the coast highway.

**MELANIE:**

Oh.

**MAN:**

I'd hold the birds for him, but I'm going away myself. Someone's got to feed them, I suppose.

**MELANIE:**

(in utter despair now)

Yes. Yes, someone's got to feed them.

**MAN:**

(apologetically)

I'm awfully sorry.

He puts the key into his lock, opens the door, and goes inside. The door closes. Melanie is alone in the hallway.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

exasperated. She looks at the open elevator. She turns to look at the birds.

LONG SHOT - THE LOVEBIRDS

in their cage outside the apartment door, CHATTERING.

MED. SHOT - MELANIE

surrendering with a gesture of resignation. She walks down the hall, picks up envelope and puts it in her purse, picks up the bird cage, carries it back to the elevator. The birds are COOING and CHIRPING madly.

**MELANIE:**

Oh, shut up!

And she steps into the elevator.

**DISSOLVE:**

FULL SHOT - MELANIE'S OPEN CAR - (MATTE)

on the coast highway. It is a spectacularly beautiful day, with a cloudless blue sky. The montage of SHOTS that follow should alternate between the winding, twisting road and the ocean below, and CLOSEUPS of Melanie driving with the caged birds on the seat beside her. The last shot should be a FULL SHOT of the car rounding a particularly sharp curve.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

She turns wheel forcefully.

CLOSE SHOT - THE LOVEBIRDS

in the cage as the car rounds the bend. They lean to one side as the car turns, come up straight again as the car rounds the curve.

FULL SHOT - (MATTE)

Car approaching Bodega Bay seen high up.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

at the wheel, she glances out toward the bay.

FULL SHOT - A CLUSTER OF BUILDINGS AT WATERFRONT

ahead, through the windshield as the car approaches.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

behind the wheel, leaning forward slightly for a look at the town.

LONG SHOT - DOCKS ON LEFT

through the windshield as Melanie slows her speed.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

behind wheel.

LONG SHOT - STORES

on right of the road as Melanie enters the town. SLOW PAN matching car's cruise past BAKERY, SHOE REPAIR, CLEANERS,

RADIO AND TELEVISION.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

behind wheel.

LONG SHOT - THE TIDES

past the gas station and beyond to the parking area and the docks, continuing Melanie's slow observation of the place.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE - (PROCESS)

studying the town. The car turns into road by gas station.

FULL SHOT - THE TOWN

through the windshield. The car turns right. There is life in the town now, fishermen crossing the road, women with their hair in curlers, old ladies carrying shopping bags.

This is Saturday morning, and the town -- such as it is -- is alive with its inhabitants. We see them from Melanie's

P.O.V. AS SHE SCANS THE PLACE FOR ITS POST OFFICE. (THIS TO BE TAKEN ON BACK LOT.)

FULL SHOT - THE CAR

pulling in, in front of the post office. Melanie opens the door and steps out. She is smartly dressed in a traveling suit and sweater. She looks up at the sign, and then walks quickly toward the front door.

MED. SHOT - MELANIE

enters post office.

CLOSE SHOT - POSTAL CLERK

behind cage as Melanie approaches it. He is busy filling out a form of some kind, affixing stamps to it, etc. He does not look up as she approaches.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

through the bars of the cage.

**MELANIE:**

Good morning.

CLOSE SHOT - POSTAL CLERK

**CLERK:**

(without looking up)

Morning.

TWO SHOT - MELANIE AND THE CLERK

**MELANIE:**

I wonder if you could help me.

**CLERK:**

Try my best.

**MELANIE:**

I'm looking for a man named Mitchell  
Brenner.

**CLERK:**

Yep.  
He is still busy with his form, still does not look up.

**MELANIE:**

Do you know him?

**CLERK:**

Yep.

**MELANIE:**

Where does he live?

**CLERK:**

Right here. Bodega Bay.

**MELANIE:**

Yes, but where?

**CLERK:**

Right across the bay there.

**MELANIE:**

Where?

It seems as if the Clerk will not answer her. Suddenly, he  
leaves the window.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

through the bars, exasperated.

REVERSE SHOT - FULL - MELANIE

as she tries to peek through the bars to see where he's  
vanished. A door to the left of the window opens, and the  
Clerk steps out. He walks a little distance as Melanie watches  
him, then stops, turns and looks at her surprised, as if  
he'd expected her to be right behind him. He stands stock  
still, looking at her, saying nothing. She understands then  
that he wants her to follow him, and she catches up, neither  
speaking. They go to the front door. He opens it, looks at  
her, then looks out across the town and the bay. He extends  
his arm and points.

**CLERK:**

See where I'm pointing?

**MELANIE:**

Yes?

FULL SHOT - THE BAY - THEIR P.O.V. - (MATTE)

CLERK (O.S.)

See them two big trees across there?

MELANIE (O.S.)

Yes?

CLERK (O.S.)

And the white house?

MELANIE (O.S.)

That's where the Brenners live.

TWO SHOT - MELANIE AND THE CLERK

**MELANIE:**

The Brenners? Mr. and Mrs. Brenner?

**CLERK:**

Nope, just Lydia and the two kids.

**MELANIE:**

The two kids?

**CLERK:**

Yep. Mitch and the little girl.

**MELANIE:**

I see. How do I get down there?

**CLERK:**

Follow the road straight through town 'til it curves off on the left. That'll take you right around the bay to their front door.

**MELANIE:**

The front door.

(pause)

Isn't there a back road I can take?

**CLERK:**

Nope. That's the road. Straight through town, stay on your left, right around the bay to the front door.

**MELANIE:**

You see, I wanted to surprise them.

**CLERK:**

Mmmm.

**MELANIE:**

I didn't want to come right down the road, where they could see me.

**CLERK:**

Mmmm.

**MELANIE:**

It's a surprise, you see.

**CLERK:**

Mmmmmmm.

(long pause)

'Course, you could get yourself a boat, cut right across the bay with it. The Brenners got a little dock there you could tie up at. If that's what you wanted to do.

**MELANIE:**

Where would I get a boat?

**CLERK:**

Down at the dock by the Tides Restaurant. Ever handled an outboard boat?

**MELANIE:**

(looking at him)

Of course.

**CLERK:**

(looks back at her)

D'you want me to order one for you?

**MELANIE:**

(surprised)

Thank you.

**CLERK:**

What name?

**MELANIE:**

Daniels.

**CLERK:**

Okay.

He nods briefly and goes inside. Melanie looks across the bay.

FULL SHOT - THE BAY - MELANIE'S P.O.V. - (MATTE)

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

smiling. She gets a new idea. She reaches into her purse for the envelope. She looks at the envelope, then tears it up and stuffs the torn envelope into her handbag. She turns back toward the post office.

INT. THE POST OFFICE - FULL SHOT

as Melanie approaches the Clerk's window. He is still busy, still does not look up.

**MELANIE:**

I wonder if you could tell me...

**CLERK:**

Yep?

**MELANIE:**

The little girl's name.

**CLERK:**

The little Brenner girl?

**MELANIE:**

Yes.

**CLERK:**

Alice, I think.

(he turns, shouts to

someone in rear)  
Harry, what's the little Brenner  
girl's name?  
HARRY'S VOICE  
(shouting)  
What?

**CLERK:**  
(shouting)  
The little Brenner girl.  
HARRY'S VOICE  
(shouting)  
Lois!

**CLERK:**  
(shouting)  
It's Alice, ain't it?  
HARRY'S VOICE  
(shouting)  
No, it's Lois!

**CLERK:**  
(to Melanie)  
It's Alice.

**MELANIE:**  
Are you sure?

**CLERK:**  
Well, I ain't positive, if that's  
what you mean.

**MELANIE:**  
I need her exact name, you see.

**CLERK:**  
That case, I tell you what you do.  
You go straight through town 'til  
you see a little hotel on your left  
there. Not the motel, that's the  
other end of town. This is the hotel.  
Now you take a right turn there, you  
got that?



**MELANIE:**

Yes?

**CLERK:**

Near the top of the hill, you'll see the school and right behind it, the church. You head for the school.

Now just past the school, you'll see a little house with a red mail box.

That's where Annie Hayworth lives, she's the school teacher. You ask her about the little Brenner girl.

**MELANIE:**

Thank you.

**CLERK:**

Yep.

(pause)

Could save yourself a lot of trouble.

Her name's Alice for sure.

**MELANIE:**

Can I have the boat in about twenty minutes?

The Clerk nods.

**MELANIE:**

How much for the phone calls?

**CLERK:**

(brushing this aside)

It's nothing.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

grinning, as she makes for the door and EXITS.

EXT. GENERAL STORE - MED. SHOT - MELANIE

getting into the car and slamming the door.

**DISSOLVE:**

LONG SHOT (MATTE) - MELANIE'S CAR turning in school road.

FULL SHOT - MELANIE'S CAR

passing the school and pulling up outside the teacher's house.

CLOSE SHOT - THE RED MAIL BOX

with the name "Hayworth" on it. PULL BACK to reveal:

FULL SHOT - MELANIE

passing the mail box and going up the walk to the front door. The house is a two-story frame with steps leading to the front door. There are white curtains in every window of the house, and a sign in the window to the left of the doorway advises, ROOM TO LET. Melanie rings the doorbell.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

waiting. She RINGS the bell again:

ANNIE'S VOICE

(shouting)

Yes? Who is it?

**MELANIE:**

Me!

ANNIE'S VOICE

Who's me?

FULL SHOT - MELANIE

walking along the porch of the house. The walk in front of the house is lined with beautifully planted and cared-for flowers. ANNIE HAYWORTH comes round from the back of the house as Melanie reaches the corner. She is a woman of thirty-two, tall, big-boned, with a strong beautiful face. Her hair is disarrayed at the moment, and she is dressed for the garden, wearing slacks and a loose-fitting sweater, and earth-stained gloves. But there is something about her, a feeling of expansive comfort, rather than sloppiness.

**MELANIE:**

Miss Hayworth?

**ANNIE:**

Yes?

**MELANIE:**

I'm Melanie Daniels. I'm sorry to bother you, but...

CLOSE SHOT - ANNIE

She is puzzled by Melanie who, exquisitely dressed and groomed, seems singularly out of place in Bodega Bay. She studies her openly.

**ANNIE:**

Yes?

TWO SHOT - MELANIE AND ANNIE

**MELANIE:**

The man at the post office sent me.  
He said you'd know the name of the  
little Brenner girl.

**ANNIE:**

Cathy?

**MELANIE:**

The one who lives in the white house  
across the bay?

**ANNIE:**

That's the one. Cathy Brenner.

**MELANIE:**

(smiling)

They seemed sure it was either Alice  
or Lois.

**ANNIE:**

Which is why the mail in this town  
never gets delivered to the right  
place.

(She takes out package  
of cigarettes, offers  
one to Melanie)

Did you want to see Cathy about  
something?

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

taking cigarette, hesitating.

**MELANIE:**

Well... not exactly.

CLOSE SHOT - ANNIE

studying her, thinking she understands.

**ANNIE:**

Are you a friend of Mitch's?

**MELANIE:**

No, not really.

TWO SHOT - MELANIE AND ANNIE

There is an awkwardness here. Annie wants to know more. She puffs on the cigarette, smiles, tries a friendly approach.

**ANNIE:**

I've been wanting a cigarette for the past twenty minutes, but I couldn't convince myself to stop. This 'tilling of the soil' can get a little compulsive, you know.

**MELANIE:**

It's a lovely garden.

**ANNIE:**

Thank you. It gives me something to do with my spare time.

(pause)

There's a lot of spare time in Bodega Bay.

(another pause)

Did you plan on staying long?

**MELANIE:**

No. Just a few hours.

**ANNIE:**

You're leaving after you see Cathy?

**MELANIE:**

Well... something like that.

(pause)

I'm sorry. I don't mean to sound so mysterious.

**ANNIE:**

Actually, it's none of my business.

There is a pause. Melanie, by her silence, affirms that it is none of Annie's business.

**ANNIE:**

(putting out cigarette)

I'd better get on my way. Thank you very much.

**ANNIE:**

Not at all.

They begin walking toward the car.

**ANNIE:**

(still curious)

Did you drive up from San Francisco?

**MELANIE:**

Yes.

**ANNIE:**

It's a nice drive.

(pause)

Is that where you met Mitch?

**MELANIE:**

(hesitating, then)

Yes.

**ANNIE:**

I guess that's where everyone meets  
him.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

as she gets in behind the wheel. Annie's remark is not lost  
on her, and a quick look of sudden understanding crosses her  
face.

**MELANIE:**

Now you sound a bit mysterious, Miss  
Hayworth.

TWO SHOT - MELANIE AND ANNIE

as Annie leans over the seat.

**ANNIE:**

Do I?

(she shakes her head,  
smiles wistfully)

No, I'm an open book, I'm afraid.

(pause)

Or maybe a closed one.

(she smiles again,  
sees the lovebirds)

Pretty. What are they?

**MELANIE:**

Lovebirds.

Taking this as a further indication of Melanie's relationship

**with Mitch:**

**ANNIE:**

Mmm.

(pause)

Well, good luck, Miss Daniels.

**MELANIE:**

Thank you.

She nods pleasantly, starts the car, pulls away.

CLOSE SHOT - ANNIE

watching the car, a look of sad resignation on her face.

**DISSOLVE:**

MED. SHOT - MELANIE

coming out of Brinkmeyer's General Store, carrying a small paper bag, walking toward her car out front. The CAMERA FOLLOWS her as she gets in. She opens her purse and reaches in for the paper bag.

CLOSE SHOT - HER HANDS

She pulls out a birthday card from the paper bag.

MED. SHOT - MELANIE

reaching into her purse again for a fountain pen. She unscrews the cap, braces the card on her closed purse.

INSERT - THE CARD

Happy Birthday, the usual rhyming sentiments. The pen writes:  
To Cathy

**DISSOLVE:**

FULL SHOT - MELANIE'S CAR

crossing the highway down into the parking area behind the Tides, close to the docks.

**HIGH SHOT:**

She gets out of the car and walks onto one of the docks, the bird cage in her hand. Melanie approaches a waiting fisherman. She asks for her boat. The fisherman nods. He leads her to the dock and the waiting boat. She gets into the outboard motorboat, the fisherman helping her. He hands down the

lovebirds in their cage.

FULL SHOT - THE BOAT

pulling away from the dock, heading across the bay.

VERY LONG SHOT (MATTE) - THE BOAT

and the wide expanse of the bay, as it heads on a direct course for the house on the other side.

VERY LONG SHOT (MATTE)

Another spectacular SHOT of the small boat.

FULL SHOT - THE BOAT

coming head-on toward CAMERA, Melanie at the tiller. She cuts the motor. The motor drifts to a stop. The bay is silent except for the cry of the gulls.

LONG SHOT - THE BRENNER HOUSE - MELANIE'S P.O.V.

There is not a sign of activity as the boat drifts just a little closer. As Melanie watches, the front door opens and a woman comes out, walks to a red pickup truck, starts the engine. A little girl comes out of the house, goes to the truck, gets in. The woman shouts something to a man -- Mitch Brenner, probably, though it is difficult to tell from this distance -- and he comes over to the truck.

The truck grinds into gear, goes around the turnabout, and heads down the road away from the farm, a huge cloud of dust behind it. The farm is still again. Mitch stands looking after the truck for a moment, and then begins walking up toward the barn in the distance.

**CLOSE SHOT:**

watching, biting her lip.

LONG SHOT - THE BRENNER HOUSE

Mitch reaching the barn and entering. Silence.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

watching, waiting.

LONG SHOT - THE BRENNER HOUSE

Not a sign of life.

MED. SHOT - MELANIE

picking up paddle from deck, beginning to paddle in toward dock.

FULL SHOT - THE BOAT

edging in toward the dock. Closer, closer, Melanie puts down the paddle. The boat drifts in.

MED. SHOT - MELANIE

leaping ashore, tying up the boat, reaching down for the cage. She climbs onto the dock and approaches the CAMERA until she is in WAIST SHOT. The CAMERA STARTS to RECEDE in

front of her as she walks forward.

THE CAMERA MOVING TOWARD THE HOUSE AND BARN

The barn door closed, still no sign of Mitch.

WAIST SHOT - MELANIE

Coming off the dock and onto the lawn, the CAMERA still RETREATING in front of her. She makes her way carefully across the lawn, glancing toward the barn, carrying the bird cage.

FULL SHOT - CAMERA GETTING NEAR THE HOUSE AND BARN

WAIST SHOT - MELANIE

crossing the lawn, the CAMERA RETREATING in front of her.

FULL SHOT - CLOSER - CAMERA APPROACHING THE HOUSE AND BARN

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE - WALKING

CAMERA RETREATING in front of her: Excitement and anticipation on her face. She wets her lips. The CAMERA PANS WITH her as she goes to front door and lets herself in.

FULL SHOT - INT. THE BRENNER HOUSE ENTRY

as the door opens. Melanie ENTERS quickly, and closes the door behind her. She glances around for a moment, getting her bearings. The house is silent.

MED. SHOT - MELANIE

entering the dining room. Hastily, she puts the cage on the dinning room table, props the card up against it, then glances through the lace curtains on the dinning room window.

FULL SHOT - THE BARN - CLOSER - THROUGH THE CURTAINS

as before.

EXT. BRENNER HOUSE - WAIST SHOT - MELANIE - MOVING P.O.V.

as the front door opens and Melanie EMERGES. CAMERA PANS AND FOLLOWS her back down front walk. Melanie glances over her shoulder toward the barn.

EXT. BARN - MOVING P.O.V.

Mitch has not emerged.

MOVING P.O.V. - MELANIE

CAMERA CONTINUES MOVING on Melanie's back toward the end of the dock. Melanie again glances over her shoulder toward the barn.

MOVING P.O.V.

further along the dock toward the barn. Still no Mitch.

**BACK TO MELANIE:**

CAMERA CONTINUES on her back for a short distance and STOPS as Melanie continues to the end of the dock and climbs into the boat.

MOVING P.O.V. - MELANIE

CAMERA CONTINUES on her back for a short distance and STOPS



as Melanie continues to the end of the dock and climbs into the boat.

MOVING P.O.V. - MELANIE

CAMERA FOLLOWS Melanie as she paddles away from the dock.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE (PROCESS)

as she looks toward the house and barn. She starts to duck down.

EXT. BARN - MELANIE'S P.O.V.

as Mitch EMERGES from the barn and goes toward the house. He goes INSIDE.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE (PROCESS)

peering over the stern of the boat.

EXT. HOUSE - MELANIE'S P.O.V.

Mitch dashes OUT of the front door and looks around.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

as she watches Mitch.

MELANIE'S P.O.V.

as Mitch runs back INTO the house.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE (PROCESS)

peering over stern of the boat.

MITCH - MELANIE'S P.O.V.

as he EMERGES from the front door and raises binoculars.

EXTREME CLOSE SHOT - MITCH

as he looks towards Melanie's boat through the binoculars.

The Bay is reflected in the glass.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE (THROUGH BINOCULARS)

She is pulling at the cord which starts the motor. She sits down and grabs the tiller. She looks back over her shoulder, as the boat moves away.

CLOSE SHOT - MITCH

He is smiling with amused recognition; he lowers the binoculars and dashes OUT OF FRAME.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE (PROCESS)

The CAMERA IS MOVING WITH her as she looks toward Mitch.

LONG SHOT - THE BRENNER HOUSE

Mitch is running for his car. The car door SLAMS. The ENGINE STARTS. The car practically leaps out of the driveway.

CLOSE SIDE-ON SHOT - MELANIE

as she watches the car race along the shore.

LONG SHOT - CAR - MELANIE'S P.O.V.

Mitch's car racing along the shore.

CLOSE SHOT - THREE QUARTER BACK LEFT - MELANIE (PROCESS)

She looks off RIGHT toward car.

CAR - MELANIE'S P.O.V.

Mitch's car racing along the shore road, turns inland at Keesport.

CLOSE SHOT - STRAIGHT BACK - MELANIE (PROCESS)

Melanie looks CAMERA RIGHT, her eyes slowly turn CAMERA LEFT.

CAR - MELANIE'S MOVING P.O.V.

Mitch's car races past wrecked ferry boat.

CLOSE SHOT - STRAIGHT BACK - MELANIE (PROCESS)

Her head continues to turn CAMERA LEFT. She looks off and

**sees:**

LONG SHOT - THE DOCK - MELANIE'S MOVING P.O.V.

moves forward slower. Mitch drives onto dock, gets out of the car and stands waiting.

CLOSE SHOT - STRAIGHT BACK - MELANIE (PROCESS)

partially posing for Mitch, her hair blowing in the wind, her head tilted back, a smile on her face.

FULL SHOT - GULL

swooping down from UPPER LEFTHAND CORNER OF FRAME TO LOWER RIGHT. CLOSE SHOT - STRAIGHT BACK - MELANIE (PROCESS)

as gull strikes the back of her head. She recoils and looks up with shock and pain.

GULL - MELANIE'S P.O.V.

The gull soars away from LOWER RIGHTHAND corner of frame to UPPER LEFT.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

reacting to the sudden attack and looking after receding gull. Blood is starting down her temple from her hair.

MED. SHOT - MITCH

as the boat comes closer. The boat drifts in toward a second boat tied up at the dock. Mitch crosses the docked boat, leaps into Melanie's boat.

MED. SHOT - MITCH AND MELANIE

in the boat.

**MITCH:**

That was the damndest thing I ever saw.

**MELANIE:**

What made it...

**MITCH:**

It deliberately came down at you -- you're bleeding...

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

a thin line of blood trickling from the cut on top of her head, down onto her forehead and cheek. She seems dazed. She shakes her head in answer to him, then touches the top of her head, looks at her bloody fingers, and then nods weakly.

CLOSE SHOT - MITCH

concerned.

**MITCH:**

Come on, let's take care of that.

FULL SHOT - THE DOCK

as they climb onto it. A fisherman standing by looks at Melanie curiously.

**FISHERMAN:**

What happened, Mitch?

**MITCH:**

(over his shoulder)

A gull hit her.

**FISHERMAN:**

A what?

The CAMERA FOLLOWS them as they walk across the parking area behind the Tides, and to the closest office. Mitch tries the door knob. The door is locked.

INSERT - SIGN ON DOOR OUT TO LUNCH TWO SHOT - MELANIE AND

**MITCH:**

as he tries door of next office. It, too, is locked.

**MITCH:**

Come on, we'd better go up to the restaurant.

They walk quickly up the slope to the Tides, establishing gas station across the road, the collection of stores opposite, the cars pulling in and out. Mitch opens the door for her, and they ENTER.

INT. THE TIDES - FULL SHOT

This is a small neighborhood restaurant, with the feeling of a local hangout. There are fishermen lounging at the bar, and a teenage boy playing one of the pinball machines. Two ladies in housedresses, with their hair in curlers, are

sitting at one of the booths, having coffee. The rear wall of the restaurant is almost all window, looking out over the bay and the parking area below. A television set over the bar is going. The shots and horsehoof beats of an old Western movie should be HEARD muted throughout following. DEKE CARTER, who owns the restaurant with his wife, alternates his attention between serving his customers and watching the Western. He looks up immediately when Mitch and Melanie ENTER. MED. SHOT - THE BAR  
Mitch and Melanie coming over to it.

**MITCH:**

Deke, have you got a first aid kit back there?

**DEKE:**

(instantly alarmed)  
What happened?

**MITCH:**

Young woman cut herself.

**DEKE:**

Shall I call the doctor?

**MITCH:**

(accepting the first aid kit)  
I don't think it's that serious.  
You want to sit up here?  
Melanie climbs onto the stool.

**DEKE:**

You cut yourself outside, Miss?

**MITCH:**

Stop worrying, Deke. She was in a boat.  
He is rummaging around in the kit.

**DEKE:**

I had a man trip and fall in the parking lot once, sued me before I could bat an eyelash.

**MITCH:**

I don't think Miss Daniels is going to sue anybody.

**DEKE:**

(doubtfully)

Well, you're the lawyer.

(goes to other end of bar)

TWO SHOT - MELANIE AND MITCH

as he unscrews cap from bottle of peroxide.

**MELANIE:**

What's that?

**MITCH:**

Just some peroxide. I want to clean out the cut.

He pours peroxide onto a gauze pad and begins swabbing the cut. They are silent for several seconds. Then:

**MELANIE:**

So you're a lawyer.

**MITCH:**

That's right. What are you doing in Bodega Bay?

**MELANIE:**

Do you practice here?

**MITCH:**

No, San Francisco. What are you...?

**MELANIE:**

What kind of law?

**MITCH:**

Criminal.

**MELANIE:**

Is that why you'd like to see everyone behind bars?

**MITCH:**

Not everyone, Miss Daniels.

**MELANIE:**

Only violators and practical jokers.

**MELANIE:**

That's right.

As he swabs cut.

**MELANIE:**

Ouch!

**MITCH:**

I'm sorry.

(pause)

What are you doing up here?

**MELANIE:**

Didn't you see the lovebirds?

**MITCH:**

You came all the way up here to bring  
me those birds?

**MELANIE:**

To bring your sister those birds.

You said it was her birthday.

Besides, I was coming up anyway.

**MITCH:**

What for?

**MELANIE:**

To see a friend of mine.

(she winces)

Will you please be careful?

**MITCH:**

I'm sorry.

(pause)

Who's your friend?

**MELANIE:**

Why...

(pause, stymied)

**MITCH:**

Yes?

**MELANIE:**

(blurting the only  
name she knows)

Annie. Annie Hayworth.

**MITCH:**

Well, well, small world. Annie  
Hayworth.

**MELANIE:**

(realizing this was a  
mistake)

Yes.

**MITCH:**

How do you know Annie?

**MELANIE:**

(the lie getting deeper)

We... we went to school together.  
College.

**MITCH:**

Did you! Imagine that! How long will  
you be staying?

**MELANIE:**

Just a few... just a day or two...  
the weekend.

**MITCH:**

I think we'll have to shave the hair.  
Deke, have you got a razor?

**MELANIE:**

(pulling away)

Oh, no you don't!

**MITCH:**

It's still bleeding a little. Here,  
let me put this on.

He takes up a tiny Band-Aid and, tearing the gauze off, says:

**MITCH:**

Bend your head down. This little  
Band-Aid won't show.

He presses the tiny Band-Aid over the cut. Melanie takes a  
mirror from her handbag and, bending her head down, looks at  
it. She covers her hair over it as Mitch says:

**MITCH:**

So you came up to see Annie, huh?

**MELANIE:**

Yes.

**MITCH:**

I don't believe you.

(grins)

I think you came up to see me.

**MELANIE:**

Why would I want to see you, of all  
people?

**MITCH:**

(shrugging)

I don't know. But it seems to me you  
must have gone to a lot of trouble  
to find out who I was, and where I  
lived and...

**MELANIE:**

It was no trouble at all. I simply  
called my father's paper. Besides, I  
was coming up here anyway, I already  
told you...

**MITCH:**

(grinning)

You like me, huh?



**MELANIE:**

I loathe you. You have no manners.  
And you're arrogant and conceited  
and... I wrote you a letter about  
it, in fact, but I tore it up.

**MITCH:**

What did it say?

**MELANIE:**

None of your business.

(pause)

Am I still bleeding?

She lowers her head.

**MITCH:**

Can't see a thing.

**MELANIE:**

I can't say I like your seagulls  
much, either. I come all the way up  
here to...

**MITCH:**

But you were coming up anyway,  
remember?

**MELANIE:**

I was! And all I get for my pains is  
a... a... a hole in the head!

**MITCH:**

(grinning)

Right next to the one you already  
had.

**MELANIE:**

(angrily)

Look, Mr. Brenner...

LYDIA (O.S.)

Mitch?

They turn toward the door.

MED. SHOT - LYDIA BRENNER

closing the door behind her, coming toward the bar. She is a woman in her late forties, attractive, wearing shirt, blouse, cardigan sweater, low heels. There is nothing agrarian-looking about her. She speaks with the quick tempo of the city dweller, and there is lively inquiry in her eyes.

**LYDIA:**

(puzzled)

I thought I saw your car. What are you doing in town?

**MITCH:**

(rising to greet her)

I had to acknowledge a delivery.

(grins)

Mother, I'd like you to meet...

**LYDIA:**

A what?

**MITCH:**

(continuing)

Melanie Daniels. Melanie, my mother.

CLOSE SHOT - LYDIA

Her eyebrows raising ever so slightly, not in displeasure, but simply in enormous curiosity as she acknowledge the introduction.

**LYDIA:**

How do you do, Miss Daniels?

(to Mitch)

Acknowledge a what?

**BACK TO SCENE:**

**MITCH:**

A delivery, Mother. Miss Daniels brought some birds from San Francisco.

Lydia thinks she understands. This is one of Mitch's San Francisco chippies.

**LYDIA:**

Oh. I see.

**MITCH:**

For Cathy. For her birthday. By the way, where is she?

**LYDIA:**

Across at Brinkmeyer's.

**MITCH:**

Miss Daniels is staying for the weekend. In fact, I've already invited her to dinner tonight.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

turning to him in surprise, beginning to shake her head.

CLOSE SHOT - MITCH

**MITCH:**

After all, you did go to the trouble of bringing up those birds.

MELANIE (O.S.)

I'm sorry. I couldn't possibly...

**BACK TO SCENE:**

**LYDIA:**

You did say birds?

**MITCH:**

Yes, lovebirds. We couldn't let you...

**LYDIA:**

(understanding completely now)  
Lovebirds, I see.

**MITCH:**

...get away without thanking you in some small way. After all, you haven't even met Cathy and you are staying for the weekend...

**MELANIE:**

Yes, but...

**MITCH:**

You are, aren't you?

**MELANIE:**

Certainly, but...

**MITCH:**

Then it's settled. What time is dinner, Mother?

**LYDIA:**

Seven o'clock, same as usual.

**MITCH:**

I'll pick you up, Miss Daniels. Where are you staying?

**MELANIE:**

With... with Annie, of course.

**MITCH:**

Of course, how stupid of me. A quarter to seven, will that be all right?

**MELANIE:**

Annie... Annie may have made other plans. I'll have to see. Besides, I can find my own way.

**MITCH:**

You're sure now? You won't hire a boat or anything?

**MELANIE:**

I'm sure.

**MITCH:**

Seven o'clock then.

**MELANIE:**

Maybe.

CLOSE SHOT - MITCH  
grinning.

**MITCH:**

We'll be waiting. How's your head now?

MED. SHOT - THE GROUP

Lydia looks at Mitch inquiringly.

**MELANIE:**

(with an overwarm smile)

It's nothing, Mrs. Brenner. A gull hit me, that's all.

Lydia stares at her doubtfully.

**DISSOLVE:**

EXT. ANNIE HAYWORTH'S HOUSE - FULL SHOT

Melanie is standing on the front steps, a paper bag in her hands. She rings the doorbell. The ROOM TO LET sign is still in the window. The door suddenly opens.

**ANNIE:**

(surprised)

Oh, hi!

(pause)

Did you find her all right?

TWO SHOT - MELANIE AND ANNIE

**MELANIE:**

Yes, I did.

There is a long awkward pause. Annie smiles expectantly at Melanie. Melanie seems hesitant.

**MELANIE:**

I was wondering...

**ANNIE:**

Yes?

**MELANIE:**

That sign.

(pause)

Do you think I could have the room for a single night?

**ANNIE:**

Well, I'd really hope to rent it

for...

**MELANIE:**

I would appreciate it. I've tried everywhere in town, and they're all full.

**ANNIE:**

(after a pause)

Sure. You can have it.

(smiles)

Where's your bag? In the car?

Melanie holds up the paper bag. Annie looks at it and then smiles.

**ANNIE:**

It's utilitarian, I'll say that for it.

**MELANIE:**

(smiling)

I just picked up some things for the night at the general store. You see, I hadn't planned on spending much time here.

**ANNIE:**

Yes, I know. Did something unexpected crop up?

There is a moment where both women look at each other...

When Melanie answers, it is abrupt and a trifle cold -- she is again telling Annie to mind her own business.

**MELANIE:**

Yes.

(pause)

May I use your phone? I'd like to call home.

There is another moment where Annie appraises Melanie's attitude, and then accepts it. She suddenly smiles warmly.

**ANNIE:**

Why don't you come in then? I was just about to mix a martini.

She is about to lead Melanie into the house when they both hear a SOUND overhead. They turn to look skyward.

LONG SHOT - A FLOCK OF LARGE BIRDS

flying in beautiful precise formation against the sky.

TWO SHOT - ANNIE AND MELANIE

**ANNIE:**

(shaking her head)

Don't they ever stop migrating?

But Melanie is watching the sky and the birds with a curiously serious expression.

**DISSOLVE:**

LONG SHOT - THE APPROACH ROAD to the Brenner house. Melanie's car is driving along the shore. Behind her, the sky is stained with sunset. There are gulls on the bay, cawing into the silence.

FULL SHOT - THE CAR

as it pulls into the Brenner yard.

MED. SHOT - MELANIE

reaching up for the rear view mirror, tilting it to examine her lipstick, touching the edge of her mouth with one hand. She gets out of the car, CAMERA FOLLOWING her to the house. She climbs the porch steps, KNOCKS on the door. There is no answer. Puzzled, she begins walking back into the yard. In the distance, she sees Mitch, Lydia and Cathy coming from behind the chicken sheds. She raises her arm in greeting.

**MELANIE:**

(calling)

Hi!

FULL SHOT - MITCH, CATHY, LYDIA

in the distance. Mitch and Cathy raise their arms.

**CATHY:**

(excitedly)

Hi!

(she breaks into a trot toward Melanie)

CLOSE SHOT - CATHY as she approaches. She is an eleven-year-old child, clear-eyed, bright, uninhibited, wearing a shirt and blouse, her hair cropped close to her head. She hesitates for just a moment.

**CATHY:**

Miss Daniels?

**MELANIE:**

Yes?

And Cathy flings herself into Melanie's arms, almost knocking her off her feet, hugging her fiercely.

**CATHY:**

They're beautiful! They're just what I wanted! Is there a man and a woman? I can't tell which is which.

**MELANIE:**

Well, I suppose...

FULL SHOT - ALL OF THEM

**MITCH:**

(coming up)

Hi. Annie had no plans, huh? I'm glad you came. Are you hungry?

**MELANIE:**

Famished.

**MITCH:**

Dinner's just about ready.

(explaining)

We were out back looking at the chickens. Something seems to be wrong with them.

**LYDIA:**

(going toward house)

There's nothing wrong with those chickens, Mitch. I'm going to call Fred Brinkmeyer right now.

**MITCH:**

(as they follow into house)

I don't know what good that'll do.

(aside to Melanie)

Chickens won't eat.



FULL SHOT - THE BRENNER HOUSE

as they ENTER, CAMERA FOLLOWING them throughout into dining room where Lydia dials phone, talking to Mitch all along.

**LYDIA:**

He sold the feed to me, didn't he?

**MITCH:**

Caviat emptor, Mother. Let the buyer beware.

**LYDIA:**

Whose side are you on?

**MITCH:**

I'm simply quoting the law.

**LYDIA:**

Never mind the law. Cathy, you can start serving the soup.

She has finished dialing now, is waiting while the phone RINGS.

**LYDIA:**

This won't take a minute, Miss Dan...

(into phone)

Hello, Fred? This is Lydia Brenner.

I didn't interrupt your dinner, did I?

(pause)

Fred, that feed you sold me is no good.

(pause)

The chicken feed. The three bags I brought.

CLOSE SHOT - LYDIA

holding the telephone.

**LYDIA:**

Well, it's just no good. The chickens won't eat it.

(pause)

They're always hungry, Fred. I opened one of the sacks when I got home,

and I poured it out for them, and they wouldn't touch it. Now you know chickens as well as I do, and when they won't eat, there's just something wrong with what they're being fed, that's all.

(pause)

No, they're not fussy chickens.

(pause)

Who? What's he got to do with it?

(pause)

Fred, I don't care how much feed you sold him. My chickens...

(pause)

He did? Dan Fawcett?

(pause)

This afternoon?

(pause)

Well, that only proves what I'm saying. The feed you sold us is...

(pause)

Oh. Oh, I see. Uh-huh. Uh-huh. Uh-huh. Maybe I ought to go over to see him. You don't think there's something going around, do you?

(pause)

No, never.

(pause)

No, Fred, they don't seem sick at all. They just won't eat.

(pause)

Mmmm. Mmmmm. Well, I'll try to get over to Dan's farm. Maybe he'll... mmmmm... mmmmm... all right, Fred, thanks.

(she hangs up, puzzled)

FULL SHOT - THE DINING ROOM

as Lydia comes to the table. Mitch and Melanie are sitting opposite each other in the center chairs. Cathy is serving the last bowl of soup.

**LYDIA:**

(as she sits)

He got a call from Dan Fawcett a

little while ago. His chickens won't eat, either.

**CATHY:**

It's what you said, Mom. Mr. Brinkmeyer's feed is no good.

**LYDIA:**

(slowly)

No, Cathy. He sold Mr. Fawcett a different brand.

(extremely worried)

You don't think they're getting sick, do you, Mitch?

CLOSE SHOT - LYDIA

her eyes troubled as she picks up her napkin.

**DISSOLVE:**

FULL SHOT - THE LIVING ROOM

The meal is over. The lovebirds in their hanging cage have been covered for the night. In the b.g. Mitch and Lydia are carrying the stacked dishes to the kitchen. In the f.g. Cathy and Melanie are by a small upright piano. Melanie is playing a Debussy Arabesque: She picks up a cigarette from the ashtray now and again to take a puff.

**CATHY:**

I still don't understand how you knew I wanted lovebirds.

**MELANIE:**

Your brother told me.

**LYDIA:**

(as she goes into kitchen)

Then you knew Mitch in San Francisco, is that right?

**MELANIE:**

No, not exactly.

**CATHY:**

Mitch knows lots of people in San

Francisco. Of course, they're mostly hoods.

**LYDIA:**

(from the kitchen)

Cathy!

**CATHY:**

Well, Mom, he's the first to admit it.

(to Melanie)

He spends half his day in the detention cells at the Hall of Justice.

**LYDIA:**

(coming from kitchen)

In a democracy, Cathy, everyone is entitled to a fair trial. Your brother's practice...

**CATHY:**

Mom, please, I know all the democracy jazz. They're still hoods.

(to Melanie)

He's got a client now who shot his wife in the head six times. Six times, can you imagine it?

(she starts for living room)

I mean, even twice would be overdoing it, don't you think?

**MELANIE:**

(to Mitch as he carries load of dishes out)

Why did he shoot her?

**MITCH:**

He was watching a ball game on television.

**MELANIE:**

What?

**MITCH:**

His wife changed the channel.

He GOES INTO kitchen.

TWO SHOT - MELANIE AND CATHY

Melanie interrupts her playing to take another puff at her cigarette.

**CATHY:**

Is smoking fun?

**MELANIE:**

Oh, I suppose so.

**CATHY:**

Could I have a puff?

**MELANIE:**

I don't think your mother would like that.

CATHY (O.S.)

Just a little one.

TWO SHOT - MELANIE AND CATHY

They both glance conspiratorially toward the kitchen.

Quickly, Melanie extends the cigarette. Quickly, Cathy takes a small puff.

**CATHY:**

(delighted)

Why, it's just like air, isn't it?

(determined)

When I grow up, I'm gonna smoke like a chimney! I'll be eleven tomorrow, you know.

**MELANIE:**

I know.

**CATHY:**

Are you coming to my party?

**MELANIE:**

I don't think so.

(seeing the child's

face)

I have to get back to San Francisco.

**CATHY:**

Don't you like us?

**MELANIE:**

(touching her hair)

Darling, of course I do!

**CATHY:**

Don't you like Bodega Bay?

**MELANIE:**

I don't know yet.

**CATHY:**

Mitch likes it very much. He comes up every weekend, you know, even though he has his own apartment in the city. He says San Francisco is just an ant hill at the foot of a bridge.

**MELANIE:**

(smiling)

I guess it does get a little hectic at times.

**CATHY:**

If you do decide to come, don't say I told you about it. It's supposed to be a surprise party.

Melanie laughs.

**CATHY:**

You see, they've got this whole complicated thing figured out where I'm going over to Michele's for the afternoon, and Michele's mother is going to say she has a headache and would I mind very much if she took me home. Then, when we get back here, all of the kids'll jump out!

(pause)

Won't you come? Won't you please  
come?

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

shaking her head, glancing toward the kitchen.

**MELANIE:**

I don't think so, Cathy.

INT. KITCHEN - TWO SHOT - LYDIA AND MITCH

Mitch is helping her as she loads the dishwasher.

**LYDIA:**

She's a charming girl, isn't she,  
Mitch?

**MITCH:**

Yes, very.

**LYDIA:**

And certainly pretty.

**MITCH:**

Yes.

**LYDIA:**

How long have you known her?

**MITCH:**

I told you. We met yesterday.

**LYDIA:**

In a bird shop.

**MITCH:**

Yes.

**LYDIA:**

She was selling birds.

**MITCH:**

No. I only led her into believing I  
believed she was... Mother, it's  
really very complicated.

**LYDIA:**

But she did buy the lovebirds and then brought them all the way...

**MITCH:**

Mother, where did you go to law school?

**LYDIA:**

(laughing)

Forgive me. I suppose I'm just naturally curious about a girl like that.

(pause)

She's very rich, isn't she?

**MITCH:**

I suppose so. Her father owns a big newspaper in San Francisco.

**LYDIA:**

You'd think he could manage to keep her name out of print. She's always mentioned in the columns, Mitch.

**MITCH:**

I know, Mother.

**LYDIA:**

She is the one who jumped into that fountain in Rome last summer, isn't she?

**MITCH:**

Yes, Mother.

**LYDIA:**

Perhaps I'm old-fashioned.

(pause)

I know it was supposed to be very warm there, Mitch, but... well... actually... well, the newspaper said she was naked.



**MITCH:**

I know, Mother.

**LYDIA:**

It's none of my business, of course,  
but when you bring a girl like that  
to...

**MITCH:**

Mother?

**LYDIA:**

(looking up)  
Yes?

**MITCH:**

I think I can handle Melanie Daniels  
by myself.

**LYDIA:**

Well...  
(she sighs)  
So long as you know what you want,  
Mitch.

**MITCH:**

I know exactly what I want, Mother.

**DISSOLVE:**

FULL SHOT - THE BRENNER LAWN - EXTERIOR - NIGHT  
as Mitch and Melanie cross it to her car. A wind is blowing  
off the water, and high fast clouds are scudding across the  
face of the moon.

**MITCH:**

You'll be able to find your way back,  
won't you?

**MELANIE:**

Oh, yes.

**MELANIE:**

Will I be seeing you again?

**MELANIE:**

San Francisco's a long way from here.

**MITCH:**

I'm in San Francisco five days a week. With a lot of time on my hands. I'd like to see you.

(he grins)

Maybe we could go swimming or something. Mother tells me you like to swim.

**MELANIE:**

How does Mother know what I like to do?

**MITCH:**

I guess she and I read the same gossip columns.

**MELANIE:**

Oh. That. Rome.

**MITCH:**

Mmmm. I like to swim. We might get along very...

**MELANIE:**

In case you're interested, I was pushed into that fountain.

**MELANIE:**

Without any clothes on?

**MELANIE:**

With all my clothes on! The newspaper that ran the story happens to be a rival of my father's paper. Anything they said...

**MITCH:**

You were just a poor, innocent victim of circumstance, huh?

**MELANIE:**

I'm neither poor nor innocent, but  
the truth of that particular...

**MITCH:**

The truth is you were running around  
with a pretty wild crowd...

**MELANIE:**

Yes, but...

**MITCH:**

...who didn't much care for propriety  
or convention or...

**MELANIE:**

Yes.

**MITCH:**

...the opinions of others, and you  
went right along with them, isn't  
that the truth?

**MELANIE:**

Yes, that's the truth. But I was  
pushed into that fountain, and that's  
the truth, too.

**MITCH:**

Sure. Do you really know Annie  
Hayworth?

**MELANIE:**

No.

(pause)

At least, I didn't until I came up  
here.

**MITCH:**

So you didn't go to school together.

**MELANIE:**

No.

**MITCH:**

And you didn't come up here to see her.

**MELANIE:**

No.

**MITCH:**

You were lying.

**MELANIE:**

Yes, I was lying.

**MITCH:**

Did you really write a letter to me?  
Or was that a lie, too?

**MELANIE:**

I wrote the letter.

**MITCH:**

What did it say?

**MELANIE:**

It said, "Dear Mr. Brenner, I think you need those lovebirds, after all. They may help your personality." That's what it said.

**MITCH:**

But you tore it up.

**MELANIE:**

Yes.

**MITCH:**

Why?

**MELANIE:**

Because it seemed stupid and foolish.

**MITCH:**

Like jumping into a fountain in Rome!

**MELANIE:**

I told you what happened in Rome!

**MITCH:**

Do you expect me to believe...?

**MELANIE:**

I don't give a damn what you believe!  
Angrily she gets into the car, is about to slam the door  
when Mitch catches it in his hands.

**MITCH:**

I'd still like to see you.

**MELANIE:**

Why?

**MITCH:**

I think it could be fun.  
CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE  
pulling the door shut.

**MELANIE:**

That might have been good enough in  
Rome last summer. But it's not good  
enough now.  
CLOSE SHOT - MITCH

**MITCH:**

It is for me.  
CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

**MELANIE:**

But not for me.  
CLOSE SHOT - MITCH

**MITCH:**

What do you want ?  
CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

**MELANIE:**

(angrily sarcastic)  
I thought you knew! I want to go  
through life laughing and beautiful

and jumping into fountains naked!

Good night!

MED. SHOT - THE CAR

as it pulls away. Mitch yanks his hands back from the door.

CLOSE SHOT - MITCH

as he watches the car leave.

LONG SHOT - THE ROAD

The car turns the bend and disappears. Empty road. Only the long line of telephone poles and wires and... something strange on the wires.

CLOSE SHOT MITCH

His attention caught by the poles and wires.

CLOSE SHOT - THE WIRES

Hundreds of birds sitting on them.

MED. SHOT - MITCH

standing and watching. A wind blows off the water. He shivers suddenly, turns up his collar, and heads for the house.

**DISSOLVE:**

INT. ANNIE HAYWORTH'S LIVING ROOM - MED. SHOT - ANNIE

**HAYWORTH:**

In an easy chair, reading. She is wearing a robe and smoking, absorbed in her book. She turns when she hears the front DOOR OPENING.

**ANNIE:**

Miss Daniels? Is that you?

MELANIE (O.S.)

Yes.

Annie rises to greet her. As Melanie ENTERS THE SHOT:

**ANNIE:**

Hi.

(seeing her face)

Is something wrong? Is that cut beginning to bother you?

**MELANIE:**

(touching her head)

No, it's not the cut that's bothering me.

**ANNIE:**

(concerned)

Would you like some brandy?

**MELANIE:**

If you have some, I'd...

**ANNIE:**

I'll get it, sit down, Miss Daniels.

Do you want a sweater or something?

A quilt?

As Annie gets the brandy:

**MELANIE:**

No, thank you.

(pause)

Won't you call me Melanie?

**ANNIE:**

All right.

(she smiles)

MED. SHOT - MELANIE sitting, tucking her legs up under her.

She is disturbed by her conversation with Mitch and, in fact, by the way this entire trip has worked out. Annie brings her the glass of brandy, and she takes it gratefully.

**MELANIE:**

Thank you.

**ANNIE:**

(sitting opposite her)

It gets a little chilly here at night sometimes. Especially if you're over near the bay.

Melanie nods and sips at the brandy. There is a long pause.

**ANNIE:**

Well, how'd your evening go?

Melanie shrugs.

**ANNIE:**

Did you meet Lydia?

Melanie nods.

**ANNIE:**

Or would you rather I changed the subject?

**MELANIE:**

(with a tired smile)

I think so.

**ANNIE:**

(nodding)

How do you like our little hamlet?

**MELANIE:**

I despise it.

**ANNIE:**

(laughing)

Well, I don't suppose it offers much to the casual visitor. Unless you're thrilled by a collection of shacks on a hillside. It takes a while to get used to.

**MELANIE:**

Where are you from originally, Annie?

**ANNIE:**

San Francisco.

**MELANIE:**

How'd you happen to come here?

**ANNIE:**

Oh, someone invited me up for the weekend a long time ago.

There is an awkward pause. Annie shrugs.

**ANNIE:**

Look, I see no reason for being coy about this. It was Mitch Brenner.

Melanie nods.

**ANNIE:**

I guess you knew that, anyway.



**MELANIE:**

I suspected as much.

**ANNIE:**

You needn't worry. It's over and done with. A long time ago.

**MELANIE:**

Annie -- there's nothing between Mitch and me.

**ANNIE:**

Isn't there?  
(she shrugs)  
Maybe there isn't. Maybe there's never anything between Mitch and any girl.

**MELANIE:**

What do you mean?

**ANNIE:**

I think I'll have some of that, too.  
(she pours brandy,  
drinks, sighs)  
I was seeing quite a lot of him in San Francisco, you know.  
(she smiles weakly)  
And then, one weekend, he asked me up to meet Lydia.

**MELANIE:**

When was this?

**ANNIE:**

Four years ago. Of course, that was shortly after his father died. Things may be different now.

**MELANIE:**

Different?

**ANNIE:**

With Lydia.

(pause)

Did she seem a trifle distant?

**MELANIE:**

(smiling)

A trifle.

**ANNIE:**

Then maybe it isn't different at all. You know, her attitude nearly drove me crazy. I simply couldn't understand it.

**ANNIE:**

When I got back to San Francisco I spent days trying to figure out just what I'd done to displease her.

**MELANIE:**

And what had you done?

**ANNIE:**

Nothing! I simply existed. So what was the answer? A jealous woman, right? A clinging possessive mother. (she shakes her head)

Wrong. With all due respect to Oedipus, I don't think that was the case at all.

**MELANIE:**

Then what was it?

**ANNIE:**

Lydia liked me, you see. That was the strange part of it. In fact, now that I'm no longer a threat, we're very good friends.

**MELANIE:**

Then why did she object to you?

**ANNIE:**

Because she was afraid.

**MELANIE:**

Afraid you'd take Mitch?

**ANNIE:**

Afraid I'd give Mitch.

**MELANIE:**

I don't understand.

**ANNIE:**

Afraid of any woman who'd give Mitch  
the only thing Lydia can give him --  
love.

**MELANIE:**

Annie, that adds up to a jealous,  
possessive woman.

**ANNIE:**

No, I don't think so. She's not afraid  
of losing her son, you see. She's  
only afraid of being abandoned.

**MELANIE:**

Someone ought to tell her she'd be  
gaining a daughter.

**ANNIE:**

She already has a daughter.

**MELANIE:**

What about Mitch? Didn't he have  
anything to say about this?

**ANNIE:**

(apologetically)

I can understand his position. He  
went through a lot with Lydia after  
his father died. He didn't want to  
risk going through it all over again.

**MELANIE:**

I see.

**ANNIE:**

So it ended. Not immediately, of course. I went back to San Francisco, and I still saw Mitch every now and then... but we both knew it was finished.

**MELANIE:**

Then what are you doing here in Bodega Bay?

**ANNIE:**

You get straight to the point, don't you?

**MELANIE:**

I'm sorry. Forgive me.

**ANNIE:**

No, that's all right, I don't mind. I came up here for two reasons. To begin with, I was bored with my job in San Francisco. I was teaching at a private school there... well, you know, you probably went to one yourself.

**MELANIE:**

I did.

**ANNIE:**

Then you know. Little girls in brown beanies. Deadly. Here I have a life. I'll go into that classroom on Monday morning, and I'll look out at twenty-five upturned little faces, and each of them will be saying, 'Yes, please give me what you have.'

(pause)

And I'll give them what I have. I haven't got very much, but I'll give them every ounce of it. To me, that's very important. It makes me want to

stay alive for a long long time.

(she sighs)

That's the first reason.

**MELANIE:**

And the second?

**ANNIE:**

(simply)

I wanted to be near Mitch.

(pause)

It was over, and I knew it, but I wanted to be near him, anyway.

(she smiles)

You see, I still like him a hell of a lot. That's rare, I think. I don't want to lose his friendship... ever.

There is a moment of silence. Into the silence, the TELEPHONE shrills. Annie hesitates a moment, and then goes to answer it.

CLOSE SHOT - ANNIE

at the phone.

**ANNIE:**

Hello? Oh, hello. No, no, I wasn't asleep. What is it?

(pause)

Yes, just a little while ago. Sure, hold on.

(she turns to Melanie)

It's Mitch. For you.

TWO SHOT - MELANIE AND ANNIE

as they stare at each other across the room, Melanie hesitating.

**ANNIE:**

He's waiting.

Melanie rises and goes to the phone. The CAMERA FOLLOWS Annie to the wing chair in the foreground and stays on her throughout following, recording her reactions as Melanie talks to Mitch in the background.

Annie is not devastated by this call, and yet there is a wistfulness to her expression as she realizes she may finally and irrevocably be losing Mitch to another girl.

**MELANIE:**

(at phone; coolly)

Hello? Yes, this is Melanie. Fine, thank you. No, no trouble at all. I simply followed the road. It's a very bright night.

(pause)

What? Oh. Well, there's no need to apologize. I can understand...

(pause; she listens)

Well...

(she listens again)

That's very kind of you. No, I'm not angry.

(she listens)

I couldn't. I'm afraid I have to get back to San Francisco.

(pause)

No, I wouldn't want to disappoint Cathy, but...

(pause)

I see.

(she is warming)

I see. Well, if you really...

(pause)

All right. Yes, I'll be there.

(pause)

Good night, Mitch.

She hangs up and looks at Annie in embarrassment.

**MELANIE:**

He wants me to go to Cathy's party tomorrow afternoon.

(pause)

I said I would.

**ANNIE:**

I'll be going, too, to help out. It should be fun, Melanie.

**MELANIE:**

It seems so pointless.

(she sighs)

I think I'll go to sleep. This has  
been a busy day.

(picking up her paper  
bag)

My luggage.

She smiles, takes out a flowered muumuu, holds it up to Annie.

**ANNIE:**

Pretty. Did you get that at  
Brinkmeyer's?

Melanie nods and drapes the muumuu over her arm. She is silent  
for a moment, pensive. Then:

**MELANIE:**

Do you think I should go?

**ANNIE:**

That's up to you.

**MELANIE:**

It's really up to Lydia, isn't it?

**ANNIE:**

Never mind Lydia. Do you want to go?

**MELANIE:**

(firmly)  
Yes.

**ANNIE:**

Then go.

The room is silent. Melanie nods, slowly, and then smiles.

**MELANIE:**

Thank you, Annie.

Suddenly, into the silence, comes a THUMP at the door,  
startling them both.

**ANNIE:**

(rising)

Who can that be at this hour?

(she walks to door)

Who is it?

(no answer)

Is someone there?

Melanie goes to stand beside Annie. Puzzled, Annie unlocks the door, and then opens it. She looks out into the night. There is nothing but the SOUND of the wind.

**ANNIE:**

(to the emptiness  
outside)

Is anyone there?

**MELANIE:**

(pointing to the ground)

Look.

CLOSE SHOT - A DEAD SEAGULL

CLOSE SHOT - ANNIE

**ANNIE:**

(sympathetically)

Ohhh. Oh, the poor thing. He probably  
lost his way in the dark.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

who stares at the dead bird as Annie stoops to pick it up.  
And then, slowly:

**MELANIE:**

But... it isn't dark, Annie. There's  
a full moon.

TWO SHOT - MELANIE AND ANNIE

as Annie, stooping, looks up at her. On their puzzlement and

**consternation:**

**FADE OUT:**

**FADE IN:**

HIGH SHOT - THE BRENNER HOUSE The place is decorated with balloons strung from the house to various points on the lawn. The children, in party clothes, with their parents, are clustered around a long folding table upon which are sandwiches, ice cream and soft drinks. The parents are either helping the children to more or telling them they are having too much. There is a general SOUND of kid's CHATTER and LAUGHTER. Coming up the sloping path, away from the party, are Melanie and Mitch. The CAMERA PANS them UP the slope and



away from the party in background. As they turn the hairpin bend of the slope, and come up toward the CAMERA, we see the entrance of the harbor and the Pacific in the background. The CAMERA PANS them as they come near to us and, once more, the party is in the background. Mitch and Melanie pass the CAMERA out to the left.

CLOSER SHOT - THE TOP OF THE DUNES

Melanie and Mitch come INTO the picture from the right and stand against the sky. Mitch takes a martini shaker from one of his pockets, and two glasses from the other. He hands one of the glasses to Melanie, and then pours.

**MELANIE:**

I really shouldn't have any more.  
I'm a little tipsy already.

**MITCH:**

I'm trying to get you to stay for dinner. We're going to have a lot of roast left over.

**MELANIE:**

I couldn't possibly. I have to get back.

**MITCH:**

(with a shrug)  
Cheers.

**MELANIE:**

Cheers.  
They drink.

**MELANIE:**

What's in this? Nitro-glycerin?

**MITCH:**

Why do you have to rush off? What's so important in San Francisco?

**MELANIE:**

Well... I have to get to work tomorrow morning, for one thing.

**MITCH:**

(surprised)

You have a job?

**MELANIE:**

(sipping at the martini)

I have several jobs.

**MITCH:**

What do you do?

**MELANIE:**

I do different things on different days.

**MITCH:**

Like what?

**MELANIE:**

(hesitating)

On Mondays and Wednesdays, I work for the Travelers' Aid. At the airport.

**MITCH:**

Helping travelers.

**MELANIE:**

Yes.

She hesitates for a moment, thinking. She has never really considered before what she does with her time, and now that she is accounting for it, it sounds a little meaningless and unimportant.

**MELANIE:**

And on Tuesdays, I take a course in General Semantics at Berkeley. That's not a job, of course. I just take it because...

**MITCH:**

What about Thursdays and Fridays?

**MELANIE:**

On Thursdays I have my meeting and lunch.

(pause)

I'm chairman of a group that's sending a little Korean boy through school.

We plan how to raise funds and...

things like that.

(she shrugs)

**MITCH:**

And Fridays? What do you do then?

**MELANIE:**

Nothing.

(she smiles)

I go to bird shops on Fridays.

**MITCH:**

I'm glad you do.

**MELANIE:**

Do you know what I was doing in that shop?

**MITCH:**

What?

**MELANIE:**

I have an aunt, you see. Aunt Tessa. She's seventy years old, and veddy prim and strait-laced.

(she does an imitation)

She's coming back from Europe at the end of the month, and I'm going to give her a myna bird that'll talk to her.

**MITCH:**

What'll it say?

**MELANIE:**

(facetiously)

You'll think me very bold, sir.

**MITCH:**

No, tell me.

She leans over and whispers in his ear. They both burst out LAUGHTER. But then suddenly, a very serious look comes into Melanie's face.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

serious, introspective.

**MELANIE:**

That's silly, isn't it? Teaching a bird to shock my aunt. That's just silly and childish.

(slight pause)

Maybe I ought to go join the other children.

FULL SHOT - MELANIE AND MITCH

as she moves abruptly away from him, and starts toward where the children have begun playing Blind Man's Bluff. Mitch stares after her for a moment, moved by this sudden glimpse of character, and then follows her down the dune. The children are all in a circle. Annie is busy changing the blindfold from Michele to Cathy.

CAMERA PANS - MELANIE AND MITCH

The CAMERA is now on the lawn POINTING UP toward dunes. We see Mitch and Melanie descending. They are coming down by way of a short cut and are not on the zig-zag path. As they reach the lawn they move along the side of it at the foot of the dunes. They are absorbed in each other. The CAMERA PANS OFF them and BRING INTO the picture Annie, surrounded by the children. She is in the act of changing the blindfold from Michele to Cathy. She hands Michele her glasses back. During this, and while she is putting the blindfold round the eyes of Cathy, she is looking to her right and obviously is watching Mitch and Melanie.

MITCH AND MELANIE - ANNIE'S P.O.V.

MED. SHOT - ANNIE

CAMERA MOVES A LITTLE to her left (CAMERA RIGHT). At this moment, in the background, Lydia is emerging with the birthday cake. The candles on it are unlit. Lydia immediately also catches sight of Mitch and Melanie and she slows up somewhat as she walks to the long table, her eyes still on the couple. During this we see Annie in the foreground sending Cathy off.

**ANNIE:**

All right then, here we go.

(she spins her)

Once!

(she spins her again)

Twice!

(she spins her again)

Three! Go get 'em, Cathy!

She says all this while still looking toward the couple. She turns her head away from the couple with a new expression on her face. She twists completely around to look at Lydia as though she were wondering if Lydia sees what she sees.

Suddenly we HEAR a little boy's voice crying:

LITTLE BOY (O.S.)

Look! Look!

Annie swings round and the CAMERA RUSHES INTO her face as she looks up.

LONG SHOT - ANNIE'S P.O.V.

A gull is swooping down.

CLOSE SHOT - CATHY

as she changes her tactics, stops dead, and then cautiously reaches out in front of her at the air. The gull suddenly swoops at her, hitting her shoulder. She whirls.

**CATHY:**

No touching allowed!

She almost falls.

FULL SHOT - THE GULL

seen from Cathy's position. He flies off, cycles and then returns.

CLOSE SHOT - ANNIE

reacting to gull. She turns her head back to Cathy.

TWO SHOT - MELANIE AND MITCH

reacting to the gull hitting Cathy. They start towards Cathy.

MED. SHOT - ANNIE

with Cathy and the children around. The CAMERA PANS DOWN as she ducks with two gulls swooping by.

CLOSE SHOT - LYDIA

hurriedly putting the cake onto the table. She rushes round to the front of it.

FULL SHOT - ANNIE - LYDIA'S P.O.V.

Annie rising from the ground. Cathy and the other children are running in the background.

CLOSE SHOT - LYDIA

reacting to two more gulls diving.  
FULL SHOT - TWO GULLS - LYDIA'S P.O.V.  
diving toward the children.  
CLOSE SHOT - LYDIA  
She starts to run out CAMERA RIGHT.  
MED. SHOT - LYDIA REACHES CATHY  
She pushes her to the ground as a gull attacks.  
TWO SHOT - TWO MOTHERS  
as a gull swoops between them.  
FULL SHOT - MITCH  
coming out of the house with a broom.

**TWO GULLS:**

swooping down at the children's heads.  
MED. SHOT - MITCH  
swinging at gull and missing.  
LONG SHOT - LITTLE BOY  
running toward bank. Gull swooping after him.  
CLOSE SHOT - LITTLE BOY  
falling forward against the bank as the gull smashes into  
him.  
FULL SHOT - MELANIE AND MITCH  
running to the injured boy, who is lying against the bank.  
THREE SHOT - MELANIE, MITCH AND LITTLE BOY  
They look up.  
LONG SHOT - THE GULLS  
against the sky, flying away in formation.  
CLOSE SHOT - MITCH  
about to swing with the broom again, but the birds are no  
longer there. A puzzled look crosses his face. He turns to  
Melanie.

**MITCH:**

Are you all right?  
TWO SHOT - MELANIE AND MITCH

**MELANIE:**

Yes.

**ANNIE:**

(coming over)  
That's the darnest thing thing I've  
ever seen in my life.  
TWO SHOT - LYDIA AND MITCH

**LYDIA:**

Are they gone?

**MITCH:**

They're gone, Mother.

FULL SHOT - THE LAWN

as the children begin drifting back toward the table and the cake. There is the curious feeling of lightning having struck very close by without having injured anyone. All that adrenaline has boiled up, and now it has no place to go.

**LYDIA:**

Well... well, is everyone all right?

**MITCH:**

(with a small boy)

I think he got a little scratch,  
Mother.

GIRL #3

Did you see them? They were hawks!

GIRL #4

They were bigger than hawks!

**ANNIE:**

Children, they were only seagulls.

And then the meaning of what she has just said strikes her,  
and she remembers the bird hitting her door the night before.

TWO SHOT - ANNIE AND MELANIE

as Annie turns to look at her and they exchange a silent  
meaningful glance.

**BACK TO SCENE:**

**CATHY:**

They must have been after the food,  
Mother.

They all turn toward the table.

CLOSE SHOT - THE TABLE AND THE REST OF THE FOOD ON THE TABLE,

UNDISTURBED CLOSE SHOT - MITCH

eyes narrowed.

**MITCH:**

They didn't touch anything.

**BACK TO SCENE:**

**ANNIE:**

(trying to restore  
order)

Well, they're gone now, so... so  
let's...

(pause)

Who was 'it?' You were 'it,' weren't  
you, Cathy?

GIRL #2

Can I be 'it,' Miss Hayworth?

TWO SHOT - MELANIE AND MITCH

as Annie and the children begin the game behind them.

**MITCH:**

You look a little shaken.

**MELANIE:**

I... I am.

(pause)

Mitch, is... Mitch, this isn't usual,  
is it? The gull yesterday when I was  
in the boat, and the one last night  
at Annie's, and now...

**MITCH:**

Last night? What do you mean?

**MELANIE:**

A gull smashed into Annie's front  
door.

(pause)

Mitch... what's happening?

**MITCH:**

(concerned)

I don't know, Melanie.

(pause)

Look, do you have to go back to  
Annie's?

**MELANIE:**



No, I have my things in the car.

**MITCH:**

(gently)

Then stay and have something to eat before you start back. I'd feel a lot better.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

She nods, and then looks up at the sky. Suddenly she shudders.

**DISSOLVE:**

CLOSE SHOT - MITCH'S HANDS - DINING ROOM INT. IN BACKGROUND

He is slicing the leftover roast beef.

MED. SHOT - MITCH

putting the meat onto plate, turning over his shoulder to call into living room. The lovebirds in their cage are making a terrible racket.

**MITCH:**

Do you want some mustard with this?

MELANIE (O.S.)

No, thank you.

**CATHY:**

(coming from kitchen)

Why didn't Annie stay for dinner?

**MITCH:**

She said something about having to get home to take a call from her mother back East.

**CATHY:**

Oh. Where d'you want the coffee?

**MITCH:**

Take it into the living room, would you, hon?

**CATHY:**

(seeing the birds)

What's the matter with them?

Lydia turns from a side table, where she is cutting some French bread.

**LYDIA:**

What's the matter with all the birds?  
She covers the cage. Under the cover, the birds are still  
tweeting madly. Lydia stares at the covered cage for a moment,  
and then sighs heavily.

**LYDIA:**

Hurry up with the rest, Mitch. I'm  
sure Miss Daniels wants to get on  
her way.  
As she moves into the living room.

**CATHY:**

I think you ought to stay the night,  
Melanie.  
INT. LIVING ROOM - CLOSE SHOT - LYDIA  
a sharp look at her daughter.  
MED. SHOT - CATHY  
pouring coffee into the cups set on coffee table.

**CATHY:**

We've got an extra room upstairs and  
everything.

**MITCH:**

(coming in with two  
plates)  
That road can be a bad one at night,  
Melanie.  
(he picks up coffee  
cup, hands it to  
Melanie)  
They are now all eating with plates on their knees - buffet  
style.

**MELANIE:**

If I go across to Santa Rosa I'll  
come onto the freeway much earlier.

**LYDIA:**

(picking up a cup)  
Yeah, and the freeway's well-lighted,  
isn't it, Mitch?

**MITCH:**

Yeah, but she'll be hitting all that traffic going back to San Francisco.

**CATHY:**

Did you put the cover on that cage, Mom?

**LYDIA:**

Yes, I did.

**CATHY:**

Just listen to them!

**MITCH:**

(to Melanie)  
Some cream?

**MELANIE:**

I'll get it.

She reaches over for the cream pitcher. Her eye is caught by something in the fireplace.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

looking curiously.

CLOSE SHOT - THE FIREPLACE

a single swift is sitting on the hearth.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

turning to Mitch.

**MELANIE:**

Mitch...

CLOSE SHOT - THE FIREPLACE

as dozens of swifts begin pouring from the opening.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

frightened now.

**MELANIE:**

(shouting it)

Mitch!

CLOSE SHOT - THE FIREPLACE

hundreds of birds pouring into the room.

FULL SHOT - LYDIA

shrieking in terror, dropping her coffee cup.

FULL SHOT - THE ROOM

full of birds, swooping, diving. Mitch runs to the door, throws it open.

**MITCH:**

(to the others)

Get outside! Run!

(he turns toward Lydia)

CLOSE SHOT - LYDIA in terror, surrounded by birds.

MITCH (O.S.)

Mother!

MED. SHOT - MITCH

wrenching the cloth from the coffee table, cups, coffee pot, sugar bowl, creamer falling to the floor as he swings the cloth at the birds.

CLOSE SHOT - CATHY

covering her face.

MED. SHOT - MELANIE

reaching for small fireplace broom.

CLOSE SHOT - LYDIA

shrieking as the birds dive at her face.

CLOSE SHOT - MITCH

realizing it's impossible to run. They must stay and fight.

**MITCH:**

(shouting)

Cathy, get some matches!

MED. SHOT - CATHY

running for the kitchen. Birds swooping after her.

MED. SHOT - MELANIE

swinging the fireplace broom.

MED. SHOT - MITCH

rushing to the fireplace. He is almost knocked over by birds coming out of the opening. He stuffs paper under the logs already in place there.

CLOSE SHOT - LYDIA

She lets out a horrified scream. There are birds fluttering in her hair, caught there.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

swinging the broom, covered with birds.

MED. SHOT - A PICTURE ON THE WALL

(an enlargement of a photograph of Cathy, smiling.) As a bird flutters against it.

MED. SHOT - CATHY

running into the room, covering her face with bent arm,  
rushing to Mitch with the box of matches.

MED. SHOT - MITCH

taking the matches. He lights one. A bird hits his arm. He  
drops the match. He lights another one.

CLOSE SHOT - THE MATCH

falling onto the paper in the fireplace. It flickers for a  
moment, then catches. Birds are still pouring out, past the  
paper beginning to catch.

CLOSE SHOT - ANOTHER WINDOW PANE

as a bird crashes through it.

MED. SHOT - MITCH

rushing to Lydia, swinging the cloth at her head. She is  
hysterics now, BABBLING. The SHRIEK of the birds is a wild  
cacophony.

CLOSE SHOT - THE FIRE

blazing.

MED. SHOT - A BIRD

swooping out of the fireplace, its wings aflame.

FULL SHOT - THE ROOM

less birds in the air now, the single flaming bird flying  
toward the drapes.

MED. SHOT - THE DRAPES

as the flaming bird lands on them.

CLOSE SHOT - THE DRAPES

catching fire.

MED. SHOT - MELANIE

swinging the broom wildly.

**MELANIE:**

Mitch! The curtains!

CLOSE SHOT - MITCH

turning, seeing, his eyes opening wide.

MED. SHOT - MITCH

ripping at the flaming curtain. He throws it to the floor,  
begins stamping on it.

CLOSE SHOT - CATHY

**CATHY:**

It's working! The fire's working!

CLOSE SHOT - THE FIREPLACE

only the blazing fire. No more birds entering.

MED. SHOT - THE WINDOWS

birds bursting through the panes, leaving.

MED. SHOT - MELANIE

as she beats away another bird.

CLOSE SHOT - ONE OF THE BROKEN WINDOWS

the birds leaving en masse now.

FULL SHOT - THE ROOM

A shambles. Windows broken, furniture knocked over, pictures askew, the floor covered with birds and broken glass. In a corner of the room, Lydia crouches with her hands covering her face, sobbing. The burnt curtain is still smoldering. Mitch is covered with soot. Melanie puts down the broom wearily. The attack is over.

**DISSOLVE:**

INT. BRENNER LIVING ROOM - CLOSE SHOT - A HAND reaching down to pick up a dead bird.

MED. SHOT - AL MALONE, THE DEPUTY

a plain man with a limited intelligence, used to giving out speeding tickets or warning drunks. He holds the bird on the palm of his hand, looks at it steadily, nodding all the while.

**MALONE:**

That's a chimney swift, all right.

CLOSE SHOT - MITCH

**MITCH:**

We know what it is, Al.

FULL SHOT - THE ROOM

Lydia is huddled in one of the easy chairs, still in shock.

**MALONE:**

Well, these birds live in chimneys, you know.

**MITCH:**

Not by the thousands.

**MALONE:**

No, I gotta admit this is peculiar.

(pause)

Did you have a light burning or something.

**MITCH:**

Yes, but the curtains were drawn.

**MALONE:**

'Cause sometimes birds are attracted  
by light, you know.

(pause)

Sure is a peculiar thing.

**MITCH:**

What are we going to do about it,  
Al?

**MALONE:**

I don't think I get you, Mitch. Do  
about what?

**MITCH:**

Well...

(he feels a little  
foolish)

Well... these birds attacked us.

CLOSE SHOT - MALONE

slight disbelief on his face.

**MALONE:**

What's more likely, they got in the  
room and was just panicked, that's  
all.

CLOSE SHOT - MITCH

**MITCH:**

(still a little  
hesitant)

All right, I'll grant you a bird'll  
panic in an enclosed room. But, they  
didn't just get in. They came in!

Right down that chimney.

TWO SHOT - MITCH AND MALONE

**MALONE:**

(trying to make sense  
of this)

My wife found a bird in the back  
seat of her car once.

**MALONE:**

(shrugs)

Didn't know how he got in there.  
Had a broken leg, turned out. Just  
fluttering all around there.  
(he shrugs again)

**MITCH:**

These birds were...

**MALONE:**

What I'm trying to say, Mitch, is  
these things happen sometimes, you  
know? Ain't much we can do about it.  
(he shrugs)

**LYDIA:**

Tell him about the party.

**MITCH:**

That's right. We had a party here  
this afternoon for Cathy. Her  
birthday.

**MALONE:**

Oh, yeah, yeah.  
(he grins)  
How old is she now?

**MITCH:**

Eleven. In the middle of the party,  
some gulls came down at the children.  
And Miss Daniels was attacked by a  
gull just yesterday after...  
CLOSE SHOT - MALONE  
considering this.

**MALONE:**

Yeah.  
(thinking)  
Were the kids bothering them or  
something? 'Cause sometimes they'll  
do that, you know. If you make any  
kind of disturbance near them, they'll



just come after you. I seen that  
plenty of times myself.

TWO SHOT - MALONE AND LYDIA

**LYDIA:**

The children were playing a game,  
Al. Those gulls attacked without...

**MALONE:**

Now, Lydia, 'attack' is a pretty  
strong word, don't you think? I mean,  
birds just don't go around attacking  
people without no reason, you know  
what I mean? The kids just probably  
scared them, that's all.

**LYDIA:**

These birds attacked!

**MALONE:**

(nodding)

Well, what would you like me to do,  
Lydia? Put out a pick up and hold on  
any suspicious birds in the area?

(he smiles)

Now, that'd be pretty silly, wouldn't  
it?

CLOSE SHOT - MITCH

**MITCH:**

Does this room look silly?

TWO SHOT - MITCH AND MALONE

**MALONE:**

No, you got quite a mess here, I'll  
admit that.

(pause)

Maybe you oughta put some screening  
on top of your chimney

(pause)

Seems a little pointless, though.

Freak accident like this wouldn't  
happen again in a million years.

(pause)

You want some help cleaning up?

CLOSE SHOT - MITCH

exasperated.

**MITCH:**

I can handle it myself.

CLOSE SHOT - LYDIA

giving a small moan.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

**MELANIE:**

I'll take Cathy up to bed.

CLOSE SHOT - MITCH

**MITCH:**

Are you staying?

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

**MELANIE:**

I think I should, don't you?

CLOSE SHOT - LYDIA

observing, making no comment.

MED. SHOT - MELANIE

putting her arm around Cathy's shoulders.

**MELANIE:**

I'll get my things from the car. Do

you want to walk with me, Cathy?

TWO SHOT - MITCH AND MALONE

as Cathy and Melanie go out.

**MALONE:**

Well, if there's anything else I can  
do, Mitch...

**MITCH:**

Thanks, Al. We'll be all right.

**MALONE:**

Goodnight, Lydia.

No answer.

**MALONE:**

Sure is peculiar, I got to say that

for it.

He exits.

FULL SHOT - THE ROOM

It is silent. Mitch looks across at Lydia who sits as still as a stone in her chair. The door closes gently on a note of utter helplessness.

**FADE OUT:**

**FADE IN:**

INT. BEDROOM IN BRENNER HOUSE - MED. SHOT - MELANIE

Melanie has just gotten out of bed. She is wearing the rather unsophisticated nightdress she brought at the store. Her hair is loose. She wears no makeup. She is bent over a lavatory which has been installed in the bedroom. She is busily brushing her teeth. Her head half turns as she HEARS VOICES.

LYDIA'S VOICE

Mitch! Mitch! Mitch, I'm going to drop Cathy off now.

MITCH'S VOICE

Okay.

LYDIA'S VOICE

I'll probably drive over to the Fawcett farm. Do you need anything in town?

MITCH'S VOICE

No.

Melanie finished brushing her teeth. She goes to the window and looks out. Outside, we HEAR the SOUND of the pickup truck starting.

FULL SHOT - THE YARD BELOW - MELANIE'S P.O.V.

as Cathy, carrying her schoolbooks, runs to the pickup truck and climbs in. The truck moves out of the yard and down the road. It turns the bend, and moves out of sight.

MED. SHOT - MELANIE

turning from the window. She goes to the bedroom door, CAMERA FOLLOWING. She opens the door.

**MELANIE:**

Mitch?

There is no answer.

**MELANIE:**

Mitch?

FULL SHOT - MELANIE

coming down the steps from the attic room. The house is empty. The CAMERA FOLLOWS her into the dining room, where she stops at the cage of lovebirds, bends down to them with a smile on her face.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE AND THE BIRDS

She smiles and pokes her finger into the cage. The birds TWEET at her.

**MELANIE:**

(imitating them)

Chee-chee-chee-chee-chee.

FULL SHOT - MELANIE

leaving the cage. She walks to the sideboard upon which is an electric coffee percolator which is plugged into the wall. She feels it with her hand. It is hot. She pours a cup, then peers out of the side window.

LONG SHOT - MELANIE'S P.O.V.

Mitch on the shore, working with a rake in his hands. A thin column of smoke is climbing the sky.

MED. SHOT - MELANIE

carrying the cup of coffee. She sets it down for a moment to put on her fur coat, which is hanging on the hall stand. She picks up the cup again, walks to the front door and EXITS.

FULL SHOT - MELANIE

coming out of the house and into the garden, carrying the cup of coffee. It is a beautiful day. She sips at her coffee and then breathes deeply of the air.

CLOSE SHOT - HER FACE

fresh, rested. There is a contentment in her which we have not seen before. She looks off toward the shore.

LONG SHOT - MITCH

on the shore, working with the rake. The thin column of smoke is climbing the sky.

MED. SHOT - MELANIE

She turns her attention away from Mitch, and walks to the end of the garden toward the shore. A wind is blowing off the water, moving white puffs of cloud swiftly across the sky, whipping the full short shirt of muumuu about her legs as she walks. She stands there silhouetted against the sky for a moment.

**SLOW PAN:**

as Melanie scans the horizon. There isn't a bird anywhere in sight. The day is still and clear, but somehow ominous in its silence. Her gaze comes to rest on Mitch and the thin column of smoke again. In the distance, Mitch sees her and raises his arm in greeting. She waves back at him. He puts the rake down and begins walking toward the house.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

There is anticipation on her face now. She watches Mitch coming toward her, her eyes glowing.

FULL SHOT - MITCH

closer to the house now.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

waiting, anticipating.

MED. SHOT - MITCH

He stops, looks at her, and then turns toward the house.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

as first surprised, and then puzzled. The back screen DOOR CLATTERS shut off screen. A small hurt look crosses her face.

FULL SHOT - MELANIE

as she turns away from the house and begins walking in the garden, sipping idly at her coffee. A screen DOOR CLATTERS again. She turns.

Mitch is coming out of the house, from the front door, wearing a different shirt, buttoning it as he walks to her.

TWO SHOT - MELANIE AND MITCH

**MITCH:**

I wanted to change my shirt.  
Melanie is uncomprehending.

**MITCH:**

It smelled of the fire.

**MELANIE:**

(nodding)  
It's hard to believe anything at all happened yesterday, isn't it? It's so beautiful and still now.  
(pause; then sagely)  
I think I've got it all figured out, by the way.

**MITCH:**

Really? Tell me about it.

**MELANIE:**

(secretively)  
It's an uprising.

**MITCH:**

Of birds?

**MELANIE:**

Certainly, of birds.  
Mitch grins.

**MELANIE:**

It all started several months ago with a peasant sparrow up in the hills, a malcontent. He went around telling all the other sparrows that human beings weren't fit to rule this planet, preaching wherever anyone would listen...

**MITCH:**

Growing a beard...

**MELANIE:**

(delighted)  
Yes, of course, he had to have a beard! 'Birds of the world, unite!' he kept saying, over and over...

**MITCH:**

So they united.

**MELANIE:**

Not at first. Oh yes, a few sparrows out for kicks...

**MITCH:**

Well, they'll go along with anything.

**MELANIE:**

Sure. But eventually, even the more serious-minded birds began to listen.

"Why should humans rule?" they asked themselves.

**MITCH:**

Hear!

**MELANIE:**

Why should we submit ourselves to their domination?

**MITCH:**

Hear, hear!

**MELANIE:**

And all the while, that sparrow was getting in his little messages. Birds of the world, unite!

**MITCH:**

Take wing!

**MELANIE:**

You have nothing to lose but your feathers.

They both burst out laughing, then fall into silence, then laugh again and finally are silent. The garden is deathly still.

**MITCH:**

(attempting to be serious)

What it was, probably...

**MELANIE:**

Mmm?

**MITCH:**

They're probably hungry, that's all. This was a bad summer. They eat berries and... and nuts, you know, and the hills are all burned out, so they're probably searching for food wherever they can get it.

**MELANIE:**

With my little sparrow leading team.  
She laughs, and Mitch joins her, but it is hollow this time.  
Like children who have told themselves a too realistic horror  
story, they are becoming a little frightened.

**MITCH:**

It's so damn quiet out there.

**MELANIE:**

It was like that yesterday.

**MITCH:**

What do you mean?

**MELANIE:**

After the gulls attacked.

**MITCH:**

I hadn't thought of that.

(pause)

And then the swifts came.

**MELANIE:**

It makes you feel as if they're...  
they're waiting or... resting...  
or....

**MITCH:**

(trying to make it  
light again)

No, they're having a meeting, Melanie.

Your sparrow is standing on a soap  
box and...

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

her face dead serious.

CLOSE SHOT - MITCH

**MITCH:**

...waving his little wings...

His voice trails. His face becomes serious, too. Again, the  
garden is silent.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

her face set and grim, her eyes serious, her words coming



slowly and with the chill of horror on them.

**MELANIE:**

They were angry, Mitch. They came out of the chimney in fury.

(pause)

I had the feeling they wanted each and every one of us dead.

TWO SHOT - MELANIE AND MITCH

He takes her in his arms suddenly, to comfort her. She goes to him longingly.

**MITCH:**

Melanie, Melanie...

**MELANIE:**

I'm frightened, Mitch.

**MITCH:**

No, no...

**MELANIE:**

I'm frightened and confused and I...

I think I want to go back to San Francisco where there are buildings and... and concrete and...

**MITCH:**

Melanie...

**MELANIE:**

...everything I know.

She looks up at him suddenly.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

**MELANIE:**

Oh damn it, why did you have to walk into that shop?

They kiss suddenly and fiercely. On their kiss,

**DISSOLVE:**

EXT. FAWCETT FARM - FULL SHOT - THE RED PICKUP TRUCK

Lydia at the wheel, pulling into the Fawcett farm, the name of the farm clearly visible on a painted arch over the gate.

Lydia gets out of the truck and walks to the front door. She knocks. There is no answer.

MED. SHOT - LYDIA

**LYDIA:**

Dan?

She comes down off the steps, the CAMERA FOLLOWING, back a little away from the house.

**LYDIA:**

Dan?

There is no answer. She shades her eyes and looks out over the fields.

LONG SHOT - FARMHAND ON TRACTOR

FULL SHOT - THE BARNYARD

as Lydia crosses to a fence and cups her hands to her mouth.

**LYDIA:**

(shouting)

Hi, there!

LONG SHOT - THE FARMHAND

He stops the tractor, turns toward Lydia, shading his eyes.

CLOSE SHOT - LYDIA

**LYDIA:**

(shouting)

Is Mr. Fawcett home?

LONG SHOT - THE FARMHAND

**FARMHAND:**

(shouting back)

I think so, ma'm. His missus is in Santa Cruz, but he ought to be here.

CLOSE SHOT - LYDIA

**LYDIA:**

Have you seen him this morning?

LONG SHOT - THE FARMHAND FARMHAND

No, ma'm. I reckon he's in there, though.

MED. SHOT - LYDIA

**LYDIA:**

(shouting it)

Thank you!

FULL SHOT - LYDIA

as she crosses the barnyard again. There are several chickens scurrying about. She walks closer to them, sees an open bag of feed lying against the fence.

CLOSE SHOT - LYDIA

getting an idea.

MED. SHOT - LYDIA

reaching into the bag of feed. She scatters some on the ground.

**LYDIA:**

Here, chick, chick, chick, chick.

Here, chick, chick, chick, chick.

CLOSE SHOT - A CHICKEN

He struts up to the scattered grain.

CLOSE SHOT - LYDIA

watching him.

CLOSE SHOT - THE CHICKEN

He seems to be examining the feed. Then he turns away from it and struts off.

CLOSE SHOT - LYDIA

a small knowledgeable nod of her head. The chicken's reaction strengthens her determination to talk to Fawcett. She turns.

FULL SHOT - LYDIA

approaching the front door again. She knocks. No answer.

**LYDIA:**

Dan?

She backs away from the house again. The barnyard is silent.

In the distance, we can HEAR the SOUND of the tractor.

**LYDIA:**

Dan? Are you home?

No answer.

CLOSE SHOT - LYDIA

a little annoyed. She glances at the ground floor window closest to the door.

CLOSE SHOT - THE WINDOW

A small pane of glass is broken.

CLOSE SHOT - LYDIA

puzzled.

FULL SHOT - LYDIA

going to the front door, trying the knob.

MED. SHOT - LYDIA

The door opening ahead of her as she pokes her head into the house.

**LYDIA:**

Dan?

The house is still and silent.

INT. THE ENTRY HALL - FULL SHOT

as Lydia comes in. We can see the living room off to the right, but it looks normal and untouched. Lydia turns to her left and looks down a long corridor.

FULL SHOT - THE CORRIDOR - LYDIA'S P.O.V.

a door at the end of it is partially ajar, spilling artificial light into the corridor.

**LYDIA:**

Dan?

No answer.

CLOSE SHOT - LYDIA

a little troubled. She seems deciding whether or not she should leave. A determined look comes over her face.

FULL SHOT - THE CORRIDOR - LYDIA'S P.O.V.

as she walks down it slowly toward the open door at the opposite end. Outside the door, she pauses.

**LYDIA:**

Dan? Are you in there?

No answer. Lydia puts out her hand, slowly begins showing the door open.

CLOSE SHOT - LYDIA

coming into the room. Her eyes begin to take in the room.

SLOW PAN OF THE ROOM - LYDIA'S P.O.V.

starting to the right of the doorway as she enters and continuing a little below eye level, the CAMERA PICKS OUT: A standing floor lamp, the shade dangling, but the light still burning; a picture hanging askew on the wall, its glass shattered; the window to the left of the picture, every pane of glass shattered; a dresser with two stuffed birds on its top; both birds have been badly damaged, the stuffing ripped out of them, the head of one hanging at a crooked near decapitated angle; the window to the left of the dresser, all the panes shattered. The level of the CAMERA DESCENDS, and begins a SLOW PAN of the floor. It PICKS OUT broken glass, continues its PAN to SHOW scattered feathers, continues its PAN to SHOW a broom, feathers caught in the straw, a single

bedroom slipper, continues to SHOW a pair of legs in pajamas, one foot bare, the other slippered, and then immediately

**CUTS TO:**

CLOSE SHOT - DAN FAWCETT

His face. Covered with blood, the eyes missing from their empty staring sockets. Immediately

**CUT TO:**

CLOSE SHOT - LYDIA

a terrified scream erupting from her mouth.

FULL SHOT - LYDIA

turning and running for the door. The CAMERA FOLLOWS her in an unbroken headlong flight, the scream continuing as if she is incapable of stopping it, as she stumbles, runs, trips her way down the corridor and bursts out of the house, still screaming, into the pickup truck. The engine starts, she backs the truck out at breakneck speed and hits the highway, CAMERA FOLLOWING. CLOSE SHOT - LYDIA

at the wheel, her face stamped with terror, her eyes wide.

FULL SHOT - THE TRUCK

at breakneck speed, negotiating the severe curves on the highway. It almost hits a small car coming from the opposite direction, swerves, screeches around the curve.

CLOSE SHOT - LYDIA

behind the wheel, unmindful of anything but flight.

FULL SHOT - THE ROAD - LYDIA'S POV

through the windshield, blurring past. She turns the bend leading to the house. For an instant, through the windshield, there is a quick glimpse of Melanie and Mitch in embrace in the garden. Then the tires shriek, and the truck turns and barrels into the front yard.

FULL SHOT - MITCH

alarmed as he runs out of the garden and toward the truck just as it jerks to a stop.

MED. SHOT - MITCH

through the truck as he pulls open the door opposite Lydia.

**MITCH:**

(alarmed)

What is it?

CLOSE SHOT - MITCH

as he sees his mother.

CLOSE SHOT - LYDIA

slumped on the wheel of the car, her head on her arms, sobbing. On her sobs...

**DISSOLVE:**

INT. BRENNER KITCHEN - MED. SHOT - MELANIE

at the kitchen stove, taking a kettle of tea from the burner. She pours it into a cup, puts the cup on a tray already set with sugar and creamer. She looks up as Mitch comes into the kitchen.

TWO SHOT - MELANIE AND MITCH

**MITCH:**

That was Al on the phone. He wants me to meet him out at the Fawcett place. Says some detectives from Santa Rosa'll be there in a little while.

(pause)

Will you be all right here?

**MELANIE:**

Yes. I was just taking her in some tea.

He goes to her, puts his arms around her from behind, kisses her hair. But she turns in his arms suddenly and clings to him fiercely, and then buries her head in his shoulder.

**MELANIE:**

Be careful. Please.

She walks him to the door. At the door, they kiss -- a long, full kiss.

FULL SHOT -- THE KITCHEN

as Mitch goes out. Melanie looks after him for a moment, and then picks up the tray. Outside, we HEAR the SOUND of his car starting. The CAMERA FOLLOWS Melanie out of the kitchen, through the dining room, and to one of the bedroom doors on the other side of the house. Gently, she KNOCKS.

LYDIA (O.S.)

Mitch?

FULL SHOT - THE BEDROOM

This is Lydia's room, and cluttered with the mementos of a life no longer valid. There are photographs of her dead husband, souvenirs of trips taken together, bric-a-brac of Mitch's childhood. Under it all, there is a distinct

femininity. She sits up in bed as Melanie enters, bearing the tray.

**MELANIE:**

No, it's me, Mrs. Brenner. I thought you might like some tea.

TWO SHOT - LYDIA AND MELANIE

**LYDIA:**

Oh, thank you.

There is a long silence as Melanie puts the tray on the bed, arranges the pillows behind Lydia.

**LYDIA:**

Where's Mitch?

**MELANIE:**

Al Malone wanted him out at the Fawcett farm.

**LYDIA:**

Why? Didn't Al believe my story?

**MELANIE:**

He was calling from the farm, Mrs. Brenner.

**LYDIA:**

Then he saw.

**MELANIE:**

He must have. He sent for the Santa Rosa police.

**LYDIA:**

What good will they do?

She sips at the tea. There is a long awkward pause. Melanie walks to the window and looks out over the bay.

**LYDIA:**

Do you think Cathy's all right?

**MELANIE:**

What?

**LYDIA:**

Cathy. At the school.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

at the window, her face turned away from Lydia. Her expression clearly shows that she doesn't know whether Cathy is all right. But when she turns to Lydia, there is a comforting smile on her face, and her voice is soothing.

**MELANIE:**

Yes, I'm sure she's fine.

TWO SHOT - MELANIE AND LYDIA

**LYDIA:**

Do I sound foolish to you?

**MELANIE:**

No.

**LYDIA:**

I keep seeing Dan Fawcett's face.

(she shudders)

They have such big windows at the school.

(pause)

All the windows were broken. In Dan's bedroom. All the windows.

**MELANIE:**

Try not to think of that, Mrs. Brenner.

**LYDIA:**

I wish I were a stronger person.

There is a long awkward silence. She sips at her tea reflectively.

**LYDIA:**

I lost my husband four years ago, you know.

(pause)

It's odd how you depend on someone for strength, and then suddenly all the strength is gone, and you're



alone.

(pause)

I'd love to relax some time. I'd love to be able to sleep.

(pause; the worried look again)

Do you think Cathy's all right?

**MELANIE:**

Annie's there. She'll be all right.

**LYDIA:**

I'm not this way, you know. Not usually. I don't fuss and fret over my children.

(pause)

When Frank died...

(pause)

You see, he knew the children, he really knew them. He had the knack of being able to enter into their world, of becoming a part of them. That's a rare talent.

**MELANIE:**

Yes.

**LYDIA:**

I wish I could be that way.

There is another silence. A curious thing is happening in this room. Lydia, for perhaps the first time since her husband's death, is discussing it with another person. Curiously, the person is Melanie.

**LYDIA:**

(honestly and simply)

I miss him.

(pause)

You know, sometimes I wake up in the morning, and I think 'I have to make Frank's breakfast,' and I... I get up and there's a... a very good reason for getting out of bed until... until, of course, I remember.

(pause)

I miss talking to him.

(pause)

Cathy's a child, you know, and  
Mitch...

(she shrugs a little  
sadly)

...Mitch has his own life.

(pause)

I'm glad he stayed here today. I  
feel safer with him here.

(she sighs deeply)

**MELANIE:**

Would you like to rest now, Mrs.  
Brenner.

**LYDIA:**

No. No... don't go yet.

(pause)

I feel as if I... I don't understand  
you. And I want so much to understand.

**MELANIE:**

Why, Mrs. Brenner?

**LYDIA:**

Because my son is...

(pause)

My son seems to be fond of you.

(pause)

And I...

(pause)

I'm not quite sure how I feel about  
it. I really don't know if I... like  
you or not.

**MELANIE:**

Is that so important, Mrs. Brenner?  
You liking me?

**LYDIA:**

Yes, I think so. My son is important  
to me. I want to like any girl he

chooses.

**MELANIE:**

And if you don't?

**LYDIA:**

(with a faint smile)

Then I don't suppose it'll matter  
much to anyone but me.

**MELANIE:**

I think it might also matter to Mitch.

**LYDIA:**

(shaking her head)

Mitch has always done exactly what  
he wanted to do.

(pause)

I'm not complaining. That's the mark  
of a man. But...

(pause)

You see, I... I wouldn't want to  
be... be left alone. I don't think I  
could bear being left alone. I...  
forgive me. This business with the  
birds has me upset. I... I don't  
know what I'd do if Mitch weren't  
here.

**MELANIE:**

(going to the bed;

adjusting the pillow)

Why don't you try to sleep now, Mrs.  
Brenner.

**LYDIA:**

(sighing)

I wish I were stronger.

(she pauses and looks  
toward the window.)

Do you think she's all right? Do you  
think she's safe at the school?

**MELANIE:**

Would you like me to go for her?

**LYDIA:**

I couldn't ask you to.

**MELANIE:**

I don't mind, really.

**LYDIA:**

Would you? I'd feel so much better.

**MELANIE:**

I'll just clear up here, and then  
dress.

She picks up the tray and starts for the door.

**LYDIA:**

Melanie?

At the door, Melanie turns.

CLOSE SHOT - LYDIA

her face soft.

**LYDIA:**

(gently)

Thank you for the tea.

**DISSOLVE:**

EXT. BODEGA BAY - DAY - LONG SHOT

Melanie's car turns and goes up School Road.

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY - MED. SHOT

Closer shot of the car coming to a stop outside school.

Inside the school, we HEAR the children SINGING.

CHILDREN (O.S.)

I married my wife in the month of

June. Ristle-tee, rostle-tee, mo, mo

mo!

MED. SHOT - MELANIE

smiling as she gets out of the car and heads for the school.

CHILDREN (O.S.)

I carried her off in a silver spoon.

Ristle-tee, rostle-tee, hey bombosity,

knickety-knackety, retro-retroquo-

quality, willoby-wallaby, quo-mo,

mo, mo! Uality, willoby-wallaby,

quo-mo, mo, mo!

The CAMERA FOLLOWS Melanie into the school and down the corridor. The children's VOICES are LOUDER now.

CHILDREN (O.S.)

She combed her hair but once a year.

Ristle-tee, rostle-tee, Mo, mo, mo!

With every rake, she shed a tear.

Ristle-tee, rostle-tee, hey bombosity,

knickety-knackety, retro-quo-quality,

willoby-wallaby, Mo, mo, mo!

Melanie is at the door to Annie's room now. She opens the door and looks in.

FULL SHOT - ANNIE - MELANIE'S P.O.V.

leading the children in song. She catches sight of Melanie at the door. Melanie wiggles her fingers. Annie points to her wristwatch indicating that she'll be finished in a few minutes and motions for her to wait in the play-yard outside. Melanie turns and starts down the corridor again.

EXT. SCHOOL - MED. PANNING SHOT

Melanie emerges and strolls up street toward Annie's house. Inside the children are still singing.

CHILDREN (O.S.)

She swept the floor but once a year.

Ristle-tee, rostle-tee, mo, mo, mo!

She swore her broom was much too

dear. Ristle-tee, rostle-tee, hey

bombosity, knickety-knackety, retro-

quo-quality, willoby-wallaby, mo,

mo, mo!

**CLOSE SHOT:**

Melanie turns back and seats herself on seat in front of play yard.

CHILDREN (O.S.)

She churned the butter in Dad's old

boot. Ristle-tee, rostle-tee, mo,

mo, mo! And for a dasher she used

her foot. Ristle-tee, rostle-tee,

hey bombosity, knickety-knackety,

retro-quo-quality, willoby-wallaby,

mo, mo, mo!

CLOSE UP - MELANIE

A side profile of Melanie as she sits. Size of shot has seat on bottom of screen. We are shooting three-quarter toward

the school.

CHILDREN (O.S.)

The butter came out a grizzle-y-ygrey. Ristle-tee, rostle-tee, grey. Mo, mo, mo! The cheese took legs and ran away! Ristle-tee, rostle-tee, hey bombosity, knickety-knackety, retro-quo-quality, willoby-wallaby, mo, mo, mo!

MED. SHOT - PLAY YARD

Three-quarter angle on play yard behind Melanie. A CROW alights on the Jungle Jim.

CHILDREN (O.S.)

I brought my wife a horse one day. Ristle-tee, rostle-tee, mo, mo, mo! She let the critter get away. Ristle-tee, rostle-tee, hey bombosity, knickety-knackety, retro-quo-quality, willoby-wallaby, mo, mo, mo!

CLOSER SHOT - MELANIE

a nearer cut of Melanie same angle as previous. Waist shot.

MED. SHOT - PLAY YARD

again four more crows arrive.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

Nearer shot of Melanie smoking. Same angle. Just above waist - bust shot.

MED. SHOT - PLAY YARD

Again five more crows arrive.

CLOSE UP - MELANIE

head and shoulders of Melanie as she sits smoking. There is no sound except for the faint voices of the children singing inside the schoolhouse. Melanie is puffing away at her cigarette and occasionally glances in the direction of the school. We hold on this shot of Melanie for a very long time so that we are able to express her ignorance of what is going on behind her with the crows. After a wait of about what seems to be a half a minute or more, Melanie's attention is drawn to something above her.

MED. SHOT - SKY

A crow is coming down.

CLOSE UP - MELANIE

as her eyes follow the flight of the crow.

MED. SHOT - SKY

Crow moving down and LEFT to RIGHT, the sky and Annie's roof

in the background.

CLOSE UP - MELANIE

Her head has twisted around to follow the flight of the crow.  
She is almost looking into the play yard.

MED. SHOT - PLAY YARD

A crow slowly descends to the play yard and as the CAMERA  
FOLLOWS it down, we see for the first time that the number  
of crows has increased to an alarming number - almost 200 or  
even perhaps 250. This last crow settles down with the others.  
CHILDREN (O.S.)

(throughout preceding)

I asked my wife to wash the floor.

Ristle-tee, rostle-tee, mo, mo, mo!

She gave me my hat and showed me the  
door! Ristle-tee, rostle-tee, hey  
bombosity, knickety-knackety,

Retro-quo-quality,

(the song slows -- it  
is near the end)

Willoby-wallaby, mmmmmmmmo, mmmmmmmoo,  
Mo!

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE The CAMERA WHIPS UP as she leaps to her  
feet in alarm. Her body has turned, but we are now facing  
the opposite side of the school yard.

CLOSER SHOT - PLAY YARD

The play yard is full of crows.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

Big head of horrified Melanie.

MED. SHOT - PLAY YARD

A closer view of the menacing birds.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

Big profile of Melanie. She turns with back to CAMERA and  
goes toward school looking at crows as she goes away. The  
CAMERA FOLLOWS her for a few paces and then STOPS so that  
her image becomes smaller as she goes up steps into

EXT. PLAY YARD - DOLLY SHOT

A side view of the crows as seen by Melanie.

FULL SHOT - THE INTERIOR CORRIDOR

Melanie in headlong flight toward Annie's room.

ANNIE (O.S.)

All right, children. Now please put  
your books in your desks, and bring  
the songsheets to the front of the  
room. No one's going out to play

until I have all the songsheets.

FULL SHOT - THE ROOM

Annie is lining the children up near the door leading to the play yard.

**ANNIE:**

We're not going outside until we quiet down. Ralph? Did you hear me? The children mutter for a moment, and then are still.

**ANNIE:**

All right now. She begins opening the play yard door. Suddenly, the door from the corridor bursts open, and Melanie rushes wildly INTO the room. She goes directly to Annie, shoves her out of the way, and SLAMS shut the play yard door.  
CLOSE SHOT - ANNIE

**ANNIE:**

wh...?  
TWO SHOT - ANNIE AND MELANIE  
against a background of children's VOICES, as they react to this new excitement.

**MELANIE:**

Outside.  
LONG SHOT - THE CROWS - THROUGH THE WINDOWS TWO SHOT - ANNIE

**AND MELANIE:**

**MELANIE:**

We've got to get the children out of here. These big windows... there's no way to board them up. Annie gives a quick nod, understanding immediately.  
FULL SHOT - THE ROOM  
Through the windows, we can see the waiting crows. One moves restlessly into flight, then settles on the equipment again.

**ANNIE:**

Quiet down, children! Quiet down! The children modulate into silence.

**ANNIE:**



Miss Daniels wants to see how we  
conduct ourselves during a fire drill.  
I'd like you to...

**CHILDREN:**

(grumbling in Unison)  
A fire drill? This is our play period,  
Miss Hayworth! Gee whiz! Etc.

**ANNIE:**

I'd like you to show her how quiet  
and obedient you can be.  
The children again fall silent.

**ANNIE:**

We're going to go out of the school  
now. Those of you who live nearby  
can go directly home. I want the  
rest of you to go down the hill, all  
the way to the hotel. Do you  
understand?

**CHILDREN:**

All the way down the hill? Gee, Miss  
Hayworth, we never... Home? Why do  
we...?

**ANNIE:**

(shushing them)  
I want you to go as quietly as you  
can, not a sound, until I tell you  
to run. And then I want you to run  
as fast as you can. Does everyone  
understand?

(pause - silence)

All right. John, would you lead the  
class, please?

The children walk two-by-two to the corridor door. John opens  
it, and they begin filing out. Melanie turns to look at the  
play yard.

CLOSE SHOT - A SINGLE CROW

fluttering at the window, almost in exploration. He hangs  
there for a moment, then wings back to the playground  
equipment.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

**MELANIE:**

(whispering)

Hurry!

EXT. PLAY YARD - FULL SHOT (6)

straight on of all the crows.

NEARER SHOT - PLAY YARD (8)

but a different angle.

CLOSER SHOT - PLAY YARD (10)

but a different angle from the others

CLOSE SHOT - (12)

A low angle of five or six crows filling the screen.

EXT. PLAY YARD

The screen is filled with crows. About fifty or more. All of a sudden we HEAR the distant PATTERNING of children's feet as they start running. Immediately the crows rise and the CAMERA PANS UP with them into the sky.

EXT. SCHOOL ROAD - LONG SHOT - (PLATE) (15)

The FULL SHOT showing the children running toward the CAMERA - Annie herding them at the rear. The crows - about two hundred - rising over the schoolhouse roof and descending toward and reaching the running children. Shot as a moving background with six or seven children in front on a treadmill with the mechanical birds coming into top of screen as though continuing on from the plate. The birds swing around and among the foreground children.

EXT. SCHOOL ROAD (4) (S)

A side view of running children with Melanie in front urging them forward. Birds fly between them, two or three others wheel around, one live one sweeps by in foreground.

EXT. SCHOOL ROAD (3) (P)

Three or four children running. Birds overhead - one or two children spread out as others come in from sides and take their places. Birds swerve in and out.

EXT. SCHOOL ROAD (2) (S)

Profile of running child. Bird catches up and bites.

EXT. SCHOOL ROAD (3) (S)

A nearer side on view without Melanie. Birds wheeling in and out - others overhead.

EXT. SCHOOL ROAD (1) (P)

Bird on top of girl's head (showing feet and wings).

EXT. SCHOOL ROAD (2) (S)

A three-quarter back of two children running - lots of birds

overhead and others wheeling. Screen almost full of birds.

EXT. SCHOOL ROAD (1) (P)

One-half child's face - a bird's head and beak on left, dashing round to the child.

EXT. SCHOOL ROAD - CLOSE UP (L)

of feet running.

EXT. SCHOOL ROAD - HIGH MOVING SHOT (6) (L)

showing the crows among the running children.

EXT. SCHOOL ROAD (1) (P)

Big head of girl - bird lands on her right shoulder - wing over her face.

EXT. SCHOOL ROAD (1) (P)

One SCREAMING child as bird swoops from top left down to lower right.

EXT. SCHOOL ROAD (2) (S)

Head and shoulders of boy who ducks behind pole -- bird goes by as another attacks him from right-hand side.

EXT. SCHOOL ROAD (1) (FP)

Back view of boy's head running. He looks back.

EXT. SCHOOL ROAD (½) (P)

Big head of bird coming at CAMERA.

EXT. SCHOOL ROAD (1) (FP)

Back view of little girl running. She looks over her shoulder.

EXT. SCHOOL ROAD (½) (P)

Big head of bird coming into CAMERA.

EXT. SCHOOL ROAD (3) (L)

Straight back CLOSE SHOT of Annie dragging slow children. No birds in back, but several wheeling around them.

EXT. SCHOOL ROAD - HIGH MOVING SHOT (6) (L)

showing the crows chasing the children down the street - with the Bay in the distance.

EXT. SCHOOL ROAD (3) (S)

A bird dives to head of Michele and she falls OUT of picture.

EXT. SCHOOL ROAD - CLOSE UP (1) (L)

of Michele as she hits ground.

EXT. SCHOOL ROAD - CLOSE UP (½) (L)

Her glasses smash.

EXT. SCHOOL ROAD (2) (S)

Flash Cathy - she sees and runs back. Birds swirling around.

EXT. SCHOOL ROAD (1) (S)

Six birds descend on fallen Michele - legs running by.

EXT. SCHOOL ROAD (3) (S)

Cathy RUSHES IN. She disperses birds and bends to pick up Michele.

EXT. SCHOOL ROAD (2) (S)

Melanie stops, looks back and sees Cathy and Michele, heads of other children rushing by in foreground. Birds swirling. Melanie dashes out left.

EXT. SCHOOL ROAD (3) (S)

Melanie reaches Cathy and Michele -- Michele is now on her feet. Birds swirling -- Melanie looks about -- sees.

EXT. SCHOOL ROAD (2) (L)

Station wagon across the street. Birds swirling about and children running by.

EXT. SCHOOL ROAD (5) (L)

Melanie drags Cathy and Michele to the station wagon. We see the Bay in the distance and children running on the bottom of the street.

INT. STATION WAGON - CLOSE SHOT (8) (S)

Shooting inside the wagon across the front seat. The three scramble in, Cathy first, then Michele and Melanie last -- the door SLAMS on crows swooping around. Cathy and Michele are SCREAMING with fright.

INT. STATION WAGON - P.O.V. (3) (FP)

Through the windshield we see crows attacking. Bay and running children in distance.

INT. STATION WAGON (3) (P)

The faces of the three - Birds are fluttering on the rear window.

INT. STATION WAGON - MELANIE (3) (P)

wheel in foreground. She starts to slam hand on horn ring.

INT. STATION WAGON (2) (S)

Crows attacking side window.

INT. STATION WAGON (2) (S)

Hand on horn ring.

INT. STATION WAGON (2) (P)

Cathy and Michele's faces huddled together.

INT. STATION WAGON (2) (P)

Melanie's big head - she looks down.

INT. STATION WAGON - CLOSE UP (1) (P)

Knob of wiper -- her hand comes in and pulls it out.

INT. STATION WAGON (3) (FP)

Wipers starting. Crows retreat.

INT. STATION WAGON (2) (P)

The three faces staring out.

INT. STATION WAGON - P.O.V. (3) (P)

through windshield. The crows are starting to go away.

INT. STATION WAGON (2) (P)

Melanie looks out and sees:

EXT. SCHOOL ROAD - P.O.V. (6) (FP)

through windshield. Annie running back with stick. She beats the last of the crows away.

INT. STATION WAGON (6) (S)

Melanie flops in exhaustion over the wheel as Annie comes round to the side window and starts to open the door.

**DISSOLVE:**

INT. THE TIDES - FULL SHOT

It is lunchtime and there is a busy bustle to the place as DEKE CARTER officiates behind the bar and HELEN CARTER, his wife, rushes back and forth between diners at the tables. A DRUNK sits at the bar, old, grizzled, the weary wisdom of booze in him. In one of the booths sits SEBASTIAN SHOLES in his shirt sleeves, eating a hurried lunch quickly and efficiently. A WOMAN and TWO CHILDREN are seated at another table, about to order. A party of noisy SALESMAN is laughing and clowning around throughout following at a table in the rear. The phone from behind the bar has been placed on the counter, and Melanie is speaking into it while Deke listens. Over her head, the television set is blasting with its perennial Western, the gun shots punctuating her conversation.

**MELANIE:**

Daddy, there were hundreds of them.

No, I'm not hysterical, I'm trying to tell you this as calmly as I know how. All right, Daddy. Yes Daddy.

(she takes a deep breath)

Just now. Not... fifteen minutes ago.

The door to the Tides opens and MRS. BUNDY, sixtyish, wearing walking shoes and a tweed suit, a very masculine-looking woman with short clipped white hair, comes in, passes through foreground, goes to bar, her attention slowly caught by what Melanie is saying.

**MELANIE:**

At the school. No, I don't. Just a minute.

(to Deke)

What's the name of the school?

**DEKE:**

Just the Bodega Bay School.

(to Mrs. Bundy)

Help you, Mrs. Bundy?

MRS. BUNDY

I need some change, Mr. Carter.

As Deke opens cash register...

**MELANIE:**

The Bodega Bay School.

(to Deke)

Could you turn that down, please?

Deke gives Mrs. Bundy her change, turns off television.

**MELANIE:**

I don't know how many children.

Thirty or forty. Yes.

Mrs. Bundy goes to cigarette machine, pauses to listen to Melanie.

**MELANIE:**

No, the birds didn't attack until the children were outside the school.

Crows, I think. I don't know, Daddy.

Is there a difference between crows and blackbirds?

MRS. BUNDY

(turning from machine)

There is very definitely a difference, Miss.

**MELANIE:**

They're different, Daddy.

(to Mrs. Bundy)

Thank you.

(into phone)

I think these were crows. Yes, hundreds of them. Yes, they attacked the children, attacked them.

(exasperated)

Daddy, a little girl was sent to the hospital in Santa Rosa. Well, all right, but you act as if I'm... all

right, all right.

(pause)

No, I can't come home now. I just can't, Daddy. How is it there? I mean... are there birds? In the sky? But no trouble. Well, I hope...

(pause)

I don't know when. I simply can't leave now. Tell Mother not to worry. All right, Daddy, good-bye. She hangs up. Mrs. Bundy is at her elbow.

MRS. BUNDY

They're both perching birds, of course, but of quite different species. The crow is brachyrhynchos. The blackbird is cyanocephalus.

**MELANIE:**

Thank you.

(to Deke)

Do you know Dan Fawcett's number?

**DEKE:**

In the book right here, Miss. As Melanie looks it up...

**DEKE:**

(to Mrs. Bundy)

I don't see what difference it makes, Mrs. Bundy, crows or blackbirds. If they attacked the school, that's pretty serious.

MRS. BUNDY

(with a superior smile)

I hardly think either species would have the intelligence to launch a massed attack. Their brain pans aren't large enough for such...

**MELANIE:**

(dialing)

I just came from the school, madam. I don't know about their brain pans but...

MRS. BUNDY

Birds are not aggressive creatures,  
Miss. They bring beauty to the world.  
It is mankind, rather, who...

**HELEN:**

(going to door leading  
to kitchen)

Three Southern fried chicken, Sam.  
Baked potato on all of them.  
LAUGHTER from salesman at table.

**MELANIE:**

(into phone)  
Hello, may I speak to Mitch Brenner,  
please?

(pause)  
Yes, I'll wait.

MRS. BUNDY  
(continuing to Deke)  
...insist on making it difficult for  
life to survive on this planet. If  
it weren't for birds...

**DEKE:**

Mrs. Bundy, you don't seem to  
understand. This young lady says  
there was an attack on the school.

MRS. BUNDY  
Impossible.

**MELANIE:**

(in background)  
Mitch? I'm glad I caught you.  
Something terrible has happened.  
Her background conversation continues through following:

**DRUNK:**

(suddenly)  
It's the end of the world!

**HELEN:**

What's this about the school?



**DEKE:**

Bunch of crows attacked the school,  
Helen.

**DRUNK:**

It's the end of the world.

(suddenly quoting)

"Thus saith the Lord God to the  
mountains, and to the hills, to the  
rivers and to the valleys; Behold,  
I, even I, will bring a sword upon  
you, and I will destroy your high  
places.

**HELEN:**

The Lord's not destroying anything,  
Jason.

**DRUNK:**

"In all your dwelling places, the  
cities shall be laid waste, and the  
high places shall be laid waste!"

(he nods)

Ezekiel, Chapter six.

**HELEN:**

(quoting)

"Woe unto them that rise up early in  
the morning that they may follow  
strong drink."

**DRUNK:**

(nodding)

Isaiah, Chapter 5. It's the end of  
the world.

**MELANIE:**

Yes, all right, I'll wait for you.

Good-by.

(she hangs up)

MRS. BUNDY

(laughing)

I hardly think a few birds are going  
to bring about the end of the world.

**MELANIE:**

(turning to her)

These weren't a few birds.

CLOSE SHOT - THE WOMAN AND THE CHILDREN

waiting for their lunch, listening to the conversation;  
becoming very nervous.

**BACK TO SCENE:**

**DEKE:**

I didn't even know there were many  
crows in Bodega Bay this time of  
year.

MRS. BUNDY

The crow is a permanent resident  
throughout its range. In fact, during  
our Christmas Count, we recorded...

CLOSE SHOT - SHOLES

eating.

**SHOLES:**

(suddenly, from his  
table)

How many gulls did you count, Mrs.  
Bundy?

**BACK TO SCENE:**

MRS. BUNDY

Which gulls, Mr. Sholes? There are  
several varieties.

**SHOLES:**

The ones that've been raising the  
devil with my fishing boats.

MRS. BUNDY

Probably herring gulls. They arrive  
in November, you know, and don't  
migrate North again until March or...

**MELANIE:**

(leaping upon this)

Have you had trouble with gulls?

**SHOLES:**

One of my boats did last week.

**DEKE:**

(making a connection)

This young lady got hit by a gull  
only Saturday.

SAM'S VOICE

(from kitchen)

Pick up the chicken.

**HELEN:**

Now it's gulls. A minute ago, it was  
crows.

(she picks up tray,  
shrugs, goes to table)

Deke, I'm still waiting for those  
Bloody Marys!

**DEKE:**

Coming right up!

CLOSE SHOT - WOMAN

as Helen brings food. She is beginning to get really  
frightened.

**WOMAN:**

Could you ask them to lower their  
voices, please? They're frightening  
the children.

**LITTLE GIRL:**

Timmy has a canary.

**HELEN:**

That's nice. Are you Timmy?

**LITTLE BOY:**

My cousin is Timmy.

**BACK TO SCENE:**

SAM'S VOICE

(leaving table, coming  
to bar)

A whole flock of gulls nearby capsized

one of my boats. Practically tore  
of the skipper's arm.

**HELEN:**

(coming back)

You're scaring the kids. Keep it  
low.

**DEKE:**

You're scaring me, too. Are you trying  
to say all these...

(he shakes his head)

That sounds impossible, Sebastian.

**SHOLES:**

I'm only telling you what happened  
to my boat.

MRS. BUNDY

The gulls were after your fish, Mr.  
Sholes. Really, let's be logical  
about this.

**MELANIE:**

What were the crows after at the  
school?

MRS. BUNDY

What do you think they were after,  
Miss...?

**MELANIE:**

Daniels. I think they were after the  
children.

MRS. BUNDY

For what purpose?

**MELANIE:**

To...

(she hesitates)

To kill them.

There is a long silence.

MRS. BUNDY

Why?

Another silence.

**MELANIE:**

I don't know why.

MRS. BUNDY

I thought not. Birds have been on this planet since archaeopteryx, Miss Daniels; a hundred and twenty million years ago!

A TRAVELING SALESMAN ENTERS, goes to bar, listens.

MRS. BUNDY

Doesn't it seem odd that they'd wait all that time to start a... a war against humanity?

**MELANIE:**

No one called it a war!

**SALESMAN:**

Scotch, light on the water.

MRS. BUNDY

You and Mr. Sholes seem to be implying as much.

**HELEN:**

Are you finished here, Sebastian?

**SHOLES:**

Let me have some apple pie, Helen.

(to Mrs. Bundy)

Who said anything about war? All I said was that some gulls...

**HELEN:**

(yelling to kitchen)

One apple pie! You want more coffee?

**SHOLES:**

No. ...came down on one of my boats. They could have been after the fish, just as you said.

**SALESMAN:**

Your captain should have shot at them.

**SHOLES:**

What?

**SALESMAN:**

Gulls are scavengers, anyway. Most birds are. If you ask me, we should wipe them all out. World would be better off without them.

MRS. BUNDY

(outraged)

Birds?

**SALESMAN:**

Yeah, birds. All they do is make a mess of everything. Who needs them?

MRS. BUNDY

We need them.

**SALESMAN:**

Not if they're starting a war.

MRS. BUNDY

They are incapable of organized warfare!

**MELANIE:**

Have you ever seen a jay protecting a nest?

MRS. BUNDY

I have seen jays doing everything it is conceivable for jays to do.

Ornithology happens to be my avocation, Miss Daniels. You're talking about preservation of the species, a hen protecting her young. There's a vast difference between...

**MELANIE:**

Maybe they're all protecting the species. Maybe they're tired of being shot at and roasted in ovens and...

MRS. BUNDY

Are you discussing gamebirds now?

All birds are not gamebirds, you know.

**MELANIE:**

I don't know anything about birds except that they're attacking this town.

**SALESMAN:**

Then fight back. Get yourselves guns and wipe them off the face of the earth.

MRS. BUNDY

That would hardly be possible.

**DEKE:**

Why not, Mrs. Bundy?

MRS. BUNDY

Because there are 8,650 species of birds in the world today, Mr. Carter. It's estimated that five billion, seven hundred and fifty million birds live in the United States alone. The five continents of the world...

**SALESMAN:**

(muttering)

Kill them all. Get rid of them. Messy animals.

MRS. BUNDY

...probably contain more than a hundred billion birds!

**DRUNK:**

It's the end of the world!

**DEKE:**

Well, we seem to have more than our share of them right now, Mrs. Bundy. Maybe this young lady's right. Maybe they've all gone crazy.

**HELEN:**

Here's your pie, Sebastian. You want it at the table?

**SHOLES:**

No. Here's fine.  
(he begins eating)

**HELEN:**

Where are the Bloody Marys, Deke?

**DEKE:**

Coming.

**HELEN:**

(angrily)  
Are we running a business here -- or  
a bird sanctuary?

**SHOLES:**

(beginning to change  
his mind)  
Actually, those gulls must have been  
after the fish.  
MRS. BUNDY  
Of course.

**SHOLES:**

Makes a lot more sense than... well,  
an attack.  
MRS. BUNDY  
Of course it does. If we believe  
that birds are attacking, why... why  
next we'll believe that grasshoppers  
and cockroaches are capable of...

**DRUNK:**

Cockroaches! Urghh!  
CLOSE SHOT - WOMAN  
getting more and more anxious.

**WOMAN:**

Hurry, children. Finish your lunch.

**BOY:**

Are the birds gonna eat us, Mommy?

**SHOLES:**



Maybe we're all getting a little carried away by this. Admittedly, a few birds acted strangely. That's no reason to believe...

**MELANIE:**

This isn't a few birds! I keep telling you that! These are gulls and swifts and crows and...

MRS. BUNDY

And what? Vultures? Hawks? Eagles?

**MELANIE:**

Maybe! Is it impossible?

MRS. BUNDY

Yes. I have never known birds of different species to flock together.

The very concept is unimaginable.

(laughing)

Why if that happened, we wouldn't have a chance. How could we possible hope to fight them?

**SHOLES:**

We couldn't. You're right, Mrs. Bundy.

**WOMAN:**

(calling from table)

Excuse me, may I have a check, please?

**HELEN:**

(concerned)

Is everything all right, ma'am?

**WOMAN:**

Yes, I... I'm anxious to get on the road.

**SAM:**

(coming from kitchen)

What's the matter? Something wrong out here?

**DEKE:**

Nothing's wrong.

**SAM:**

All this shouting.

MRS. BUNDY

We're fighting a war, Sam.

**SAM:**

A war? Against who? Did the  
Russians...?

**SHOLES:**

Against birds.

**WOMAN:**

(suddenly)

I'm glad you all think this is so  
amusing. You've frightened my children  
half out of their wits.

**BOY:**

I'm not scared, Mommy.

**WOMAN:**

Keep quiet. If that young lady saw  
an attack on the school, why won't  
you believe her?

**SAM:**

What attack? Who attacked the school?

**WOMAN:**

Birds did. Crows! And you're all  
sitting around here debating! What  
do you want them to do next? Crash  
through that window?

**LITTLE GIRL:**

(frightened by her  
mother)  
Mommy!

**WOMAN:**

Quiet! Why don't you all get home?  
Lock your doors and windows!  
(her hysteria rising)  
Put on your coats, children!  
(to Deke)  
What's the fastest road to San  
Francisco?

**DEKE:**

The freeway, ma'am.

**WOMAN:**

Where do I get it?

**SALESMAN:**

I'm going out that way, lady. You  
can follow me.

**WOMAN:**

Then let's go. Now!

**SALESMAN:**

I haven't finished my drink.

**WOMAN:**

(on edge of panic,  
shouting at her  
children)  
Put on your coats! Do you want to  
get trapped here?

**BOY:**

I can't find my scarf.

**WOMAN:**

Look in your sleeve!  
The door opens. Mitch and Al Malone come in.

**MITCH:**

Melanie?  
At the far table, the salesman begin singing, rowdily.

**MITCH:**

(going to her)

I got here as fast as I could.  
Where's Cathy?

**MELANIE:**

At Annie's house. She's all right.

**SAM:**

Al, why aren't you over there where  
the attack was?

**MALONE:**

Because I just got back from Dan  
Fawcett's place, that's why.

**MITCH:**

He was killed last night. By birds.

**MALONE:**

Now hold it, Mitch. You don't know  
that for a fact.

MRS. BUNDY

What are the facts, Mr. Malone?

**MALONE:**

Santa Rosa police think it was a  
felony murder. They think a burglar  
broke in and killed him.

**WOMAN:**

Were the Santa Rosa police at your  
school today?

(impatiently, to  
salesman)

Are you coming?

**SALESMAN:**

Take it easy, lady.

(through window)

There isn't a bird anywhere in sight.

**DRUNK:**

(quoting)

"Look at the birds of the air: they  
do not sow or reap, yet your heavenly

father feeds them."

**WOMAN:**

I'll never feed another bird as long as I live!

**SALESMAN:**

Something like this happened in Santa Cruz last year. The town was covered with seagulls.

**WOMAN:**

Can't you please finish your drink?

MRS. BUNDY

That's right, sir, I recall it. A large flock of seagulls got lost in a fog and headed in for the town, where all the lights were.

**SALESMAN:**

They made some mess, too, smashing into houses and everything.

(shaking his head)

They always make a mess. We're better off without them.

MRS. BUNDY

The point is that no one seemed to get upset about it. They were gone the next morning, just as if nothing at all had happened. Poor things.

**WOMAN:**

I'm leaving! Are you coming?

**SALESMAN:**

All right, all right!

(he downs his drink)

Hope you figure this out, folks.

**DRUNK:**

It's the end of the world.

The Tides is silent for a moment.

**SHOLES:**

Well, I'd better get back to the cannery. What do I owe you, Deke?

**DEKE:**

Let's see. Scallops and coffee...

**MITCH:**

Hold it just a minute, Sebastian.  
Sholes turns to him.

CLOSE SHOT - MITCH

his face very serious.

**MITCH:**

Sebastian, I'm not an alarmist.

**SHOLES:**

No one ever said you were, Mitch.

**MITCH:**

(flatly)

I think we're in trouble. I don't know how or why this started, but I know it's here and I know we'd be crazy to ignore it.

MRS. BUNDY

(sarcastically)

Ignore what? The bird war?

**MITCH:**

(exploding)

Yes, the bird war, the bird attack, the bird plague, you can call it what you want to, they're out there massing someplace and they'll be back, you can count on that!

MRS. BUNDY

Ridiculous!

**MITCH:**

Mrs. Bundy, why don't you go home and polish your binoculars?

**SAM:**

Go on, Mitch.

**MITCH:**

If we don't do something now, if we don't get Bodega Bay on the move...

**SHOLES:**

Look, Mitch, even if this is true, even if all the birds...

**MITCH:**

Do you believe it's true, Sebastian?

**SHOLES:**

(after a long pause)

No. I don't, Mitch. Because I can't see any reason for it.

**MITCH:**

It's happening. Isn't that a good enough reason?

**SHOLES:**

(thoughtfully)

I like Bodega Bay as well as any man. If I thought...  
(he shakes his head)

**MITCH:**

Then help me, Sebastian. You're an important man in this town. If you'll help, the rest will.

**SHOLES:**

Help how? What do you want to do?

**MITCH:**

I'm not sure, but...

**SHOLES:**

If you don't even know what you want to do...

**MELANIE:**

Listen to him, please.

**SAM:**

(taking position beside  
Melanie)

You listen to him, Sebastian!

**MITCH:**

I only know we've got to drive them  
away from town -- before they drive  
us away.

**SHOLES:**

How?

**MITCH:**

Mrs. Bundy, you said something about  
Santa Cruz. About seagulls getting  
lost in the fog, and heading in for  
the lights.

**DEKE:**

We don't have any fog this time of  
year, Mitch.

**MITCH:**

We'll make our own fog.

**SHOLES:**

How do you plan to do that?

**MITCH:**

With smoke.

**MALONE:**

There's an ordinance against burning  
anything in this town, unless it's...

**MITCH:**

We'll use smoke pots. Like the Army  
uses.

**DEKE:**

What good'll that do? Smoke's as bad  
as birds.



MRS. BUNDY

Birds are not bad!

**SHOLES:**

How can we go on living here if we blanket the town with smoke?

**MITCH:**

Can we go on living here otherwise?

Pause. They are silent.

**SAM:**

(slowly)

It's worth a try, Sebastian.

There is more silence as they all consider. And then suddenly:

**MELANIE:**

Look!

They turn toward the window.

TIDES CAR PARK - FULL SHOT

Viewed from the side window inside the Tides we see three or four gulls diving down toward the highway over the roof of the Tides Office. Two more swoop into the foreground of the window and out to the left.

**DEKE:**

(alarmed)

Gulls!

**MITCH:**

They're back!

**SHOLES:**

They're only the usual... What are you...

TIDES TOWN - LONG SHOT

The first gull reaches the gas station but misses the attendant who is in the act of filling the car. The owner is seen disappearing into the men's room.

INT. TIDES

A quick flash of the group of faces at the window of the Tides Restaurant.

TIDES TOWN - MED. SHOT

A nearer view of the gas station. A second gull hits the man

on the back -- he falls -- hits his head on the pump and then collapses over the gasoline hose pipe, pulling it out and causing it to spill. The third and fourth gulls sweep by. The gas begins to flow away.

MED. SHOT - MELANIE AND MITCH

inside the Tides. Mitch dashes toward the door -- Melanie after him. Through the glass windows into the street we see people dashing off to the right, in the direction of the gas station. At the door, Mitch turns.

**MITCH:**

(to Melanie)

Stay back in here.

Deke Carter comes running from behind the bar to join Mitch. They both EXIT. Melanie dashes back to her original place at the window. The CAMERA RETREATING with her, we come to the window and over Melanie's shoulder we see the men arrive to rescue the attacked gas station attendant.

Three or four gulls are still attacking and they flutter away as the men appear to beat them off. Suddenly Melanie in the foreground turns in full profile to her right and looks down.

TIDES CAR PARK - MED. SHOT

on the sloping pavement before her a stream of gasoline is flowing to the right into the car park.

CLOSE SHOT - GASOLINE

flowing down to the car park.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

through the window. She suddenly looks toward the gas station.

MED. SHOT - THE CAMERA PANS

along the flowing gas back to the station.

CLOSEUP - MELANIE

She turns back to the car park.

FROM MELANIE'S VIEWPOINT

We see the flow of gasoline trickling toward the car parked below her. At this particular moment, a car has pulled up, has come to a stop and a man emerges. He is in the act of lighting his dead cigar, but his attention is drawn to the happenings around the gas station. With this half-drawn attention, he strikes the match and holds it to the cigar.

CLOSEUP - MELANIE

She quickly slides the window open and yells down to the man.

FROM MELANIE'S VIEWPOINT

The man looks about him, holding the match I his fingers. As he catches sight of Melanie, the match burns his finger and he drops it.

CLOSEUP - MELANIE

Her horror-stricken face.

FULL SHOT - THE PARKING AREA

Three fast explosions in a row as the man's car, Mitch's car, and the one next to it go up in flames.

CLOSE SHOT - THE HORRIFIED FACE OF MELANIE

**TURNING TO SEE:**

FULL SHOT - THE GAS STATION

The line of flame running swiftly from the burning cars, following the gasoline on the ground, directly to the pump, which blows up as the men are jumping away with the injured attendant.

EXT. TIDES TOWN AND CAR PARK - MATTE SHOT

A very high shot shows the beginning of the people of the town rushing around the car park and the streets across the highway, endeavoring to put out the two fires. We see automobiles coming to a stop on Highway One, and the oil smoke beginning to rise from the burning gas station and the parked cars. Some men have managed to start a fire hose and have trained it on the burning cars. Suddenly but slowly the foreground in the sky just below the CAMERA begins to fill with wheeling gulls. The whole picture below becomes obliterated by the foreground birds who now begin to swoop down on the town.

EXT. TIDES TOWN

A raking shot outside the Tides Restaurant showing the phone booth and motel off in the background. People are rushing out from the restaurant and look up in the sky. Gulls begin to descend into the scene, driving the people back into the restaurant. Melanie is seen in the distance calling for Mitch:

**MELANIE:**

Mitch...! Mitch!

We see her look up to the sky.

LONG SHOT - THE SKY

The sky is full of seagulls.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

Looking about her frantically. She turns her face up again to see the descending gulls. She is driven to take refuge in the phone booth.

CLOSEUP - INSIDE THE PHONE BOOTH - MELANIE

slams the door shut. Gulls are now beating at the glass all around her.

EXT. TIDES TOWN

From Melanie's viewpoint inside the booth we see the people who have been rushing to put out the fire now faced with clouds of birds coming on them.

CLOSEUP - MELANIE

looking out in terrified alarm but still searching with her eyes for Mitch.

MED. SHOT - PEOPLE RUSHING FROM THE TIDES

CLOSEUP - MELANIE

in the phone booth. She turns and looks swiftly in the direction of the car park.

EXT. TIDES CAR PARK

Some men have secured a hose and are obviously getting water from the bay. They are turning the stream onto the burning cars. At this time, the birds are filling the area around them. They suddenly turn the hose up into the birds.

CLOSEUP - MELANIE

Her eyes turn up quickly.

LONG SHOT - FROM HER VIEWPOINT

We see the stream of water swing to and from among the birds. Melanie turns back from this at the sound of a roaring car.

EXT. TIDES TOWN - FROM HER VIEWPOINT

We see a car zig zag down from the town in a drunken manner coming toward her in the phone booth. We can see birds flying in and out of the windows of the car. We can see the arm and hand of the driver trying to beat them away. In the background of this scene we see the fire truck arrive.

CLOSEUP - THE HORRIFIED FACE OF MELANIE

as the car comes toward her in the booth.

EXT. TIDES TOWN

At the last minute, the car swerves away from the booth.

**CLOSER SHOT:**

A side view of the car after practically scraping the side of the booth. We see that it's full of birds attacking the driver. As it goes by, it near tilts over to inadvertently give us a view of its interior.

FLASH CLOSEUP - MELANIE

watching the car.

EXT. TIDES CAR PARK

The car goes on and smashes into the other burning cars. It

explodes.

CLOSEUP - MELANIE

Suddenly she hears the firing of a gun. She turns.

TIDES TOWN - LONG SHOT

She sees a man with a gun shooting up at birds but to no avail. One or two descend upon him. He throws the gun down and rushes back into the Tides Office. Melanie, with a slight

**turn, now sees:**

**THE TIDES TOWN:**

The fire volunteers with birds descending around them drop their hose.

**CLOSER SHOT:**

shows the hose snaking wildly and jumping. At one moment the water turns and comes in a powerful stream hitting the windows of the phone booth.

CLOSEUP - MELANIE

recoils from this water attack. Through the streaming window she sees the fire volunteers rushing away for cover. To the left we see a horse with its head covered with gulls; its palomino-colored body covered with crows. It is bucking and leaping and kicking its van to pieces.

At this moment the scene is obliterated by the appearance of a man groping his way closely past the phone booth windows.

His face is poring with blood: his head and shoulders are covered with attacking birds. He disappears from sight.

Melanie, now almost in a faint, opens her eyes to see Tides Town. Through the booth window she sees Mitch and Deke Carter, the owner of the Tides, coming down toward the CAMERA and waving the birds away from them with flailing arms.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

opens the booth doors and starts out with a cry of recognition, but she has barely stepped out when more gulls crash around the booth causing her to go back.

CLOSEUP - MELANIE IN PROFILE

looking out again toward Mitch.

EXT. TIDES TOWN

Through window she sees Deke Carter run off in one direction while Mitch suddenly sees a child at the window of the burning building adjacent to the flaming and smoking gas station.

Mitch dashes across and goes up the short staircase into the smoking building.

CLOSEUP - MELANIE

looking across in horror.

LONG SHOT - THE BURNING BUILDING

For a moment there is no sign of anyone about, then suddenly Mitch appears with the small child at the window. He calls down. One man dashes from the direction of the Tides Office, another from the Tides Restaurant. They both wait below the window as Mitch drops the child.

FLASH - MELANIE

watching this breathlessly.

**CLOSER SHOT:**

The moment the child has dropped, Mitch suddenly looks up. He slams the window as two or three birds crash into the windows. They disappear into the building.

CLOSEUP - MELANIE

holding her breath.

LONG SHOT - THE BURNING BUILDING

No sign of Mitch.

CLOSEUP - MELANIE

getting more desperate.

CLOSEUP - BUILDING

No sign of Mitch. Suddenly a chair flies through the window and Mitch climbs OUT and drops to the ground.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

opening the door of the booth, yells out to him.

LONG SHOT - MITCH

sees her and starts running toward the booth.

HIGH SHOT - MITCH

beating his way through the birds. He reaches the booth.

**LOW SHOT:**

close to the Tides Restaurant entrance. We see Mitch drag Melanie from the phone booth and run with her toward the CAMERA through the birds into the restaurant.

INT. THE TIDES

There must be at least twenty people all looking toward the windows. It is as though they are hiding from a storm. The CAMERA is high enough to see Melanie and Mitch COME IN, very hurriedly close the door. We see the gulls wheeling outside. There is a kind of stunned silence among the people. We can hear the sound of the screaming gulls outside. Suddenly a woman's voice SCREAMS out:

**WOMAN:**

Why are they doing it?! Why are they doing it...?!

Some of the heads of the group turn.

**CLOSE SHOT:**

It is the woman who had the two children screaming at Mrs. Bundy who is seated in a booth table staring numb and helpless. Mrs. Bundy turns and looks at her and mutters some words.

MRS. BUNDY

([Mrs. Bundy offers a weak explanation of why the birds could have gone berserk like this. This information should be obtained from Dr. Stager.])

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE AND MITCH

looking across at this slight scene. They turn back and over their shoulders the gulls seem to be in much less quantity.

**MITCH:**

(looking up)

I think they're going.

Melanie follows his look. At this moment there is a loud CRASH OF GLASS. They turn their heads suddenly.

MED. SHOT - FROM MITCH'S AND MELANIE'S VIEWPOINT

And past the heads of the other people who have also turned, we see one of the back windows of the Tides Restaurant has gone and gulls are coming in. Two or three of the men who are on the edge of the crowd turn and go back toward the window, beating them out. They succeed in doing this.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE AND MITCH

They turn from the gulls in the restaurant to look to the street.

**MITCH:**

I think it's safe to get out now.

**MELANIE:**

Don't let's take any chances.

**MITCH:**

We've got to get Cathy.

They open the door and make their way out into the street, running and looking about them desperately.

EXT. BODIGA STREET

There are one or two gulls flying around. Others are perched on roofs as we see Mitch and Melanie dashing along the sidewalk.

EXT. BODIGA STREET

There are still one or two gulls or crows in evidence as they move along past the last street and come into the more countrified part of the town.

LONG SHOT - THE SCHOOL YARD

We see them turn and dash up the road toward the school which we see in the distance. There are some birds perched on the school roof.

SIDE-ON DOLLY SHOT - MELANIE AND MITCH

going up the school road. He stops for a moment and looks up, Melanie following his look.

SKY SHOT - FULL

of wheeling gulls.

SIDE-ON CLOSE SHOT - THE TWO

They move on and go past Melanie's waiting car outside the school. Suddenly Melanie brings him to a halt.

LONG SHOT - ANNIE'S HOUSE - FROM THEIR VIEWPOINT

There are a few blackbirds on it.

MELANIE'S VOICE

Look... the crows again.

CLOSE SHOT - THE TWO

Mitch starts off. Melanie restrains him.

**MELANIE:**

Careful, Mitch. The crows may be back in the play yard.

CLOSE SHOT - THE TWO

They advance cautiously. When they are level with the play yard, we see what they see.

MED. SHOT

THE CAMERA DOLLIES along the play yard. It is again full of crows.

**CLOSE SHOT:**

They walk stealthily past.



**CLOSE SHOT:**

CAMERA PANNING ALONG the waiting crows.

**CLOSE SHOT:**

Shooting over the shoulders of Melanie and Mitch, they approach Annie's house. Melanie glances apprehensively over her shoulder toward the crows.

EXT. ANNIE'S HOUSE

Melanie and Mitch arrive. They come to a sudden stop.

LONG SHOT - ANNIE'S HOUSE

A woman is crumpled lifelessly on the front steps before the door.

MED. SHOT - MITCH

He reaches the body. He rolls it over.

QUICK CLOSE SHOT - ANNIE

dead.

QUICK CLOSE SHOT - MITCH

The shock registering on his face.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

realizing that Annie is dead, and wondering for a moment what Mitch's reaction will be.

MED. SHOT - MITCH - MELANIE'S P.O.V.

He kneels silently by the body. Gently, he touches Annie's face, and then gently and illogically takes off his jacket and covers her, as if he is tucking a blanket around her to keep her warm. He turns away then.

MED. SHOT - THE WINDOW

with its ROOM TO LET sign. Cathy is standing near the sign, with her eyes peering at something outside.

CLOSE SHOT - MITCH

turning to follow Cathy's gaze.

CLOSE SHOT - MIXED BIRDS

Malevolent, sitting on the fence, the killers.

FULL SHOT - THE ROAD

As in fury, Mitch picks up stones and begins hurling them at the birds. Melanie dashes forward.

**MELANIE:**

(as the birds flutter  
into the air)

Mitch! Don't!

She runs to him, grabs his arm, struggles with him as he maniacally continues hurling stones at the birds, who are now hovering flight.

**MELANIE:**

Please! Get Cathy! Let's get out of here!

Her words reach him. Breathing heavily, he goes INTO the house and COMES OUT carrying Cathy, who is dazed and in a state of shock. The CAMERA PANS him over to Melanie who holds Cathy to her.

CLOSER THREE SHOT

as Melanie looks anxiously toward the house.

**MELANIE:**

Mitch, you can't leave her out there.

He GOES OUT OF PICTURE. Melanie watches him. Over her shoulder is the white face of Cathy. We HEAR a DRAGGING SOUND and then a door is CLOSED.

MED. SHOT - MELANIE'S P.O.V.

We see Mitch EMERGING from the house. The body is no longer in the pathway. He comes toward the CAMERA.

MED. SHOT

He joins Melanie and Cathy. The CAMERA MOVES AHEAD of the three of them as they silently make their way past the crows once more, Melanie holding Cathy close to her. They look out cautiously to the right.

MED. SHOT

CAMERA DOLLYING PAST the crows again.

BACK TO THE DOLLY SHOT OF THE THREE

They move forward stealthily, CAMERA AHEAD of them.

MED. SHOT

Another DOLLY SHOT past the crows.

CLOSE SHOT - THE THREE

The CAMERA is now behind them. They move away from us and go toward the waiting car.

MED. SHOT

They arrive at the car.

**MELANIE:**

You drive, Mitch.

She goes round the far side and gets into the car. Mitch slips in behind the driver's seat. The car turns into the CAMERA and goes down the school road.

FULL SHOT - THE CAR - INTERIOR

Mitch, Cathy and Melanie facing the CAMERA, tensely. Melanie looks over her shoulder.

**MELANIE:**

(holding her breath)

I don't think they're coming.

Cathy does not turn: she is staring ahead of her, her eyes wide, her lip trembling. They drive in silence, and then suddenly, Cathy begins speaking, almost as if to herself, as the CAMERA COMES IN TIGHT on her face in shock.

**CATHY:**

On our way back from taking Michele home... we... we heard the explosion and went outside to... see what...

what it was.

(pause)

All at once the... the birds were everywhere. All at once. She... she pushed me inside and... they covered her.

(pause)

Annie.

(pause)

She pushed me inside.

TWO SHOT - CATHY AND MELANIE

as she takes the child in her arms to comfort her.

**DISSOLVE:**

CLOSE SHOT - A LONE GULL flying low over the water, the CAMERA TRACKING it. The bay is silent. The gull spreads its wings to brake, and then sits on the water. The CAMERA continues low over the water, going through thousands of gulls sitting there patiently, as if it is threading itself through a crowd, not a sound, over the gulls, and then lifting to show the Brenner house in the distance.

FULL SHOT - THE BRENNER HOUSE

Behind the panes of glass, we can see the boards Mitch nailed across the windows. He is on the roof now, testing the two attic dormer windows. He turns to look out over the bay.

LONG SHOT - THE BAY

covered with sitting gulls. In the distance, the town is still smoldering. But the sky is clear of birds.

MED. SHOT - MITCH

picking up his hammer, sliding over the shingles to where the ladder leans against the side of the house.

FULL SHOT - THE HOUSE

as Mitch comes down the ladder and Melanie turns the corner, carrying a load of driftwood and old lumber.

TWO SHOT - MELANIE AND MITCH

as she drops the wood outside the door and he joins her. She is looking out over the bay when he comes to her. This is not the Melanie we saw at the beginning of the picture. Her hair is disarrayed, and her face and clothing are streaked with soot. But beyond a surface physical appearance, there is a weary wisdom in her eyes, and a strength to her as she stands looking toward the distant smoldering town.

**MELANIE:**

The town looks clear.

**MITCH:**

The bay doesn't.

**MELANIE:**

How long have they been gathering there?

**MITCH:**

The past fifteen minutes.

(pause)

It seems to be a pattern, doesn't it? They strike and disappear, and then they start massing again.

Melanie nods. They are both silent, watching the bay.

**MELANIE:**

I keep thinking of Annie.

(she squeezes her eyes shut)

**MITCH:**

(after a long pause)

It... it doesn't look very different, does it? A little smoke over the town, but otherwise...

**MELANIE:**

(looking)

Even the birds sitting out there.

It does look very much the same,  
Mitch. This could be last week.

**MITCH:**

It may not be last week again for a  
long long time.  
They are both silent.

**MELANIE:**

Look. They're still coming.  
Mitch nods. Silence.

**MITCH:**

Do you want to try your father again?  
(Melanie shakes her  
head. Puzzled, Mitch  
looks at her)

**MELANIE:**

I tried a little while ago. The  
phone's dead.

**MITCH:**

Have we still got power?

**MELANIE:**

Yes.  
(leaning against him)  
I'm tired, Mitch. I'm so very very  
tired.  
LYDIA (O.S.)  
Mitch! I'm getting something on the  
radio!

INT. THE LIVING ROOM - FULL SHOT

Lydia is hovering near the radio. Cathy is sitting on a  
footstool. The windows are boarded, and the lights in the  
room are on. A tremendous amount of static is coming from  
the radio as Mitch and Melanie join them

**LYDIA:**

I can't get any of the local stations.  
I think this is San Francisco.

**ANNOUNCER:**

...would include formulation of a central financing committee to handle credit and to allocate responsibility for the various facets of the project. A vote on the motion is expected early tomorrow morning.  
TWO SHOT - MELANIE AND MITCH listening.

**ANNOUNCER:**

Continuing with the local news, police are still investigating the series of valuable jade burglaries in the Chinatown area. The round-up of known criminals has not as yet produced a suspect, but Commissioner Nelson said today he was certain the burglaries were quote linked and the work of the team of professionals unquote.

(pause)

In Bodega Bay early this morning, a large flock of crows attacked a group of children who were leaving the school during a fire drill. One little girl was seriously injured and taken to the hospital in Santa Rosa, but the majority of children reached safety in the town.

(pause)

On the national scene today, the opening of the new session of Congress was marked by a State of the Union address that...

**MITCH:**

Is that all?

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

...drew a standing ovation for the President. The Chief Executive, in discussing our relation to Europe and the rest of the world community

**said:**

foreign policy lead as I have said  
to a single goal --

**MITCH:**

(sighing)

We're going to need more wood for  
the fire. We can't let it go out.

**ANNOUNCER:**

(continuing as drone  
in background)

The goal of a peaceful world of free  
and independent states. This is our  
guide for the present and our vision  
for the future -- a free community  
of nations, independent but  
interdependent, uniting north and  
south, east and west, in one great  
family of man, outgrowing and  
transcending the hates and fears  
that rend our age. We will not reach  
that goal today or tomorrow. We may  
not reach it in our lifetime. But  
the quest is the great adventure of  
our century. We sometimes chafe at  
the burdens of our obligations, the  
complexity of our decisions, the  
agony of our choices, but there is  
no comfort or security for us in  
evasion, no solution in abdication,  
no relief in irresponsibility.

(pause)

In assuming the tasks of the  
Presidency, I said that few  
generations, in all history, had  
been granted the role of being the  
great defender of freedom in its  
hour of maximum danger. This is our  
good fortune, and I welcome it now  
as I did when I first took office.

(pause)

For it is the fate of this generation --  
Of you in the Congress and of me as  
President -- to live with a struggle

we did not start, in a world we did - not make. But the pressures of life are not always distributed by choice. And while no nation has ever faced such a challenge, no nation has ever been ready to seize the burden and the glory of...

**LYDIA:**

(pause)

Did you you get the windows in the attic, Mitch?

**MITCH:**

I got them all, Mother.

**LYDIA:**

When do you think they'll come?

**MITCH:**

I don't know.

**LYDIA:**

If there are... larger birds, Mitch... they'll get into the house.

**MITCH:**

That's a chance we have to take.

**LYDIA:**

Maybe we ought to leave.

**MITCH:**

Not now. Not while they're massing out there.

**LYDIA:**

When?

**MITCH:**

I don't know when. We'll see what...

**LYDIA:**

Where will we go?



**MITCH:**

I don't know yet. I think we'll be safe here.

(Pause)

Let's bring that wood in.

**LYDIA:**

What happens when we run out of wood?

Music begins to play. The music is sweet, with violins and long piano arpeggios, almost too much to bear against the tension being played in front of it.

**MITCH:**

I don't know. We'll break up the furni...

**LYDIA:**

(shouting)

You don't know, you don't know!  
When will you know? When we're all dead? Like Annie?

**CATHY:**

(shrieking it, her face white)  
Mother!

**LYDIA:**

(at Mitch)  
If your father were here...

**MITCH:**

(sharply)  
Mother! I'm trying my best!  
(shaking his head)  
I'm... trying... my...

**LYDIA:**

(trembling, nodding)  
I'm sorry, Mitch.  
CLOSE SHOT - MITCH  
the strain showing on his face. He nods briefly.

**MITCH:**

Let's get the wood. Why don't you make us all some coffee, Mother?

FULL SHOT - HOUSE

as Melanie and Mitch come out and head for the pile of wood. There is a NOISE in the sky. Startled, glancing upward, they begin to run back toward the house and then stop and slowly scan the sky.

FULL SHOT - ENORMOUS FLOCK OF BIRDS

flying in tight formation.

TWO SHOT - MELANIE AND MITCH

**MELANIE:**

Where are they heading?

**MITCH:**

Inland.

**MELANIE:**

Santa Rosa?

**MITCH:**

Maybe.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

watching the birds. A look of utter sadness crosses her face. It is clear that she is thinking the birds will reach Santa Rosa, and eventually San Francisco as well.

MITCH (O.S.)

(gently)

Come on. Let's get this wood in.

Melanie nods. But the look of sadness stays on her face, and her eyes remain on the sky.

**DISSOLVE:**

FULL SHOT - THE LIVING ROOM

Lydia is pouring coffee into cups. In the dining room, we can HEAR the CHATTER of the lovebirds. As Lydia pours the sound distracts her. Cathy is sorting candles at the couch. There is evidence of preparation everywhere: flashlights, kerosene lamps, a butane burner. Mitch is at the fireplace putting more wood on the fire. Melanie comes into the room and dumps another load.

**MELANIE:**

That's the last of it.

**LYDIA:**

Did you close the door?

**MELANIE:**

And locked it.

**CATHY:**

Mitch, can I bring the lovebirds in here?

**LYDIA:**

(snapping it)

No!

**CATHY:**

Mom, they're in a cage!

**LYDIA:**

They're birds!

CLOSE SHOT - MITCH

studying his mother, realizing how close she is to breaking.

**MITCH:**

(softly)

Let them stay in the other room.

CLOSE SHOT - LYDIA

her hand trembling as she pours the coffee.

FULL SHOT - THE ROOM

as they all sit and accept their coffee. The room is silent except for the CRACKLE of the fire. Mitch rises to put more wood on the fire. In the dining room, the lovebirds still are CHATTERING wildly. Their chirping is the only sound in the house.

**CATHY:**

Mitch? Why are they doing this? The birds.

**MITCH:**

(putting wood on fire)

I don't know, honey.

**CATHY:**

Why are they trying to kill people?

**MITCH:**

I wish I could say. But if I could answer that, I could also tell you why people are trying to kill people.

The room is silent again except for the TWEETING of the lovebirds offscreen. And then, suddenly, the lovebirds fall silent.

CLOSE SHOT - CATHY

turning to look toward the other room, her face going white, her eyes widening.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

waiting.

CLOSE SHOT - LYDIA

waiting.

CLOSE SHOT - MITCH

waiting.

FULL SHOT - THE ROOM

dead silent now. Each of them is sitting on the edges of their chairs, waiting. There is the SUDDEN SOUND of splintering glass.

**LYDIA:**

Mitch...

**MITCH:**

Shhh. Shhh.

Silence. Into the silence, another pane of glass, SHATTERING, the THUD of a bird against the boards. Silence. More panes of glass SHATTERING. The SOUND of birds striking the boards and the outside of the house begins building, almost like muffled drumbeats. THUD, THUD, with an irregularity of rhythm. Interspersed, like the counterpoint in an alien orchestration, is the FLUTTER of wings. And then, like another section entering, we begin to hear the SCRATCHING and CLAWING at the roof.

CLOSE SHOT - LYDIA

looking up toward the roof, the SOUND getting louder. She squeezes her eyes shut.

TWO SHOT - CATHY AND MELANIE

as the child cuddles up into her arms. Over the other sounds, there comes a NEW SOUND, the unmistakable rat-tat-tat-tattat

of a woodpecker. It stops. It begins again. Rat-tat-tat tattat-tat. Tat-

**CATHY:**

(in terror)

I'm... I'm sick, Melanie. I want.. I want to throw...

Her face pale, she rises suddenly and starts for the bathroom.

**MELANIE:**

I'll go with you.

They leave the room. Mitch and Lydia sit in silence. We HEAR Cathy retching offscreen, almost drowned out by the shuffling of wings and the rasping of claws, the incessant thudding of birds striking the house.

FULL SHOT - THE ROOM

Mitch rises and puts more wood on the fire. The SOUND of the birds is still everywhere around the house. He looks at his watch. He rises, walks into the kitchen to check the back door. It seems all right. The CAMERA FOLLOWS him into the dining room. He stops at the cage with the lovebirds.

CLOSE SHOT - THE LOVEBIRDS

watching him. Is there menace or innocence in their eyes? He cannot tell.

CLOSE SHOT - MITCH

looking at the lovebirds in puzzlement. There is suddenly a NEW SOUND offscreen, the splintering of wood, the tearing sound of bigger beaks. Alarmed, he turns.

MED. SHOT - MITCH

coming into the entry hall.

CLOSE SHOT - THE FRONT DOOR

The wood is beginning to splinter as the bigger birds outside assail the door.

FULL SHOT - MITCH

turning quickly, the CAMERA FOLLOWING him into the dining room. He pulls the cloth off the table, begins moving it toward the door. In the entry, he lifts the table on end and piles it against the door. He goes into the kitchen again, CAMERA FOLLOWING. He upends the enamel-topped table, drags it to the back door. He is piling chairs against the table when Melanie COMES IN. She looks at what he is doing with alarm. Mitch looks in the direction of where his mother is and then back to Melanie, with an expression almost of desperation. Both turn back to the barricaded door. The

CLAWING and the PECKING fills the void. The noise is a din now, insidious and increasingly more frightening.

**MELANIE:**

When will they stop?

**MITCH:**

I thought they'd have stopped by now.

**MELANIE:**

What time is it?

**MITCH:**

Almost two a.m.

**MELANIE:**

You must be exhausted.

**MITCH:**

How about you?

She shakes her head. They both move into the dining room, the CAMERA FOLLOWING THEM. The lovebirds are sitting in their cage, close together, silent. Mitch picks up a chair, ready to carry it to the front door. He hesitates, puts down the chair, goes to the cage.

CLOSE SHOT - MITCH

looking at the birds, wondering.

CLOSE SHOT - THE BIRDS

looking back at him. Again, it is impossible to read their expressions. Malice or benevolence?

MED. SHOT - MITCH

He raises his hand, brings it toward the bars of the cage.

CLOSE SHOT - THE BIRDS

watching, unmoving.

CLOSE SHOT - MITCH'S FINGER

as he thrusts it through the bars. The birds sit unmoving.

One of them tweets.

TWO SHOT - MELANIE AND MITCH

**MITCH:**

I wonder if Cathy fed them.

He turns away from her, goes to the cupboard, opens the door, takes out a small box of bird feed.

CLOSE SHOT - THE CAGE

as his hand approaches the door. The birds are watching him. His hand hesitates. Then his thumb and forefinger lift the small catch on the cage door. His fingers open the door. Cautiously, in TIGHT CLOSEUP, his hand goes into the cage. The birds sit and watch. One of them tweets. He removes the small feeding tray, puts the bird seed into it, replaces it in the cage. The birds hesitate another moment. Then, tweeting, they begin to eat.

FULL SHOT - THE DINING ROOM

as Mitch closes the door to the cage. Melanie is slumped against the wall. He goes to her and takes her in his arms. Wearily, she raises her head. The SOUND of the shuffling, pecking, clawing birds is everywhere around them.

**MITCH:**

(holding her)

You should have left when you wanted to.

She shakes her head.

**MITCH:**

You'd have been safe in San Francisco.

**MELANIE:**

I don't want to be safe. I want to be with you.

There is something pathetically comic about her voice, like a small child's, confused but defiant. Holding her close, Mitch laughs, and she laughs with him. Exhausted, they stand in each other's arms, laughing in that weary, silly, dead of night sort of way. And suddenly... The lights go out.

**MITCH:**

(in the darkness)

The power.

**MELANIE:**

Mitch...

**MITCH:**

Wait here. Don't move.

The screen is totally black for perhaps five seconds. In the blackness, we HEAR the birds clawing and ripping, and the

SOUND is enormously MAGNIFIED. A flashlight suddenly goes on.

TWO SHOT - MELANIE AND MITCH

as he comes to her with the flash. We see them only dimly as he directs the beam upwards.

**MITCH:**

We'd better light some of those lamps.

**MELANIE:**

No... wait.

(pause)

Hold me.

In the near darkness, we see them embrace and kiss. It is almost black in the room except for the strange effect of the flashlight as he holds it behind her.

**MITCH:**

I think they're easing off.

**DISSOLVE:**

FULL SHOT - THE LIVING ROOM

A kerosene lamp is burning. Melanie is awake, watching the fire. Lydia has fallen into a semi-recumbent position asleep on the couch. Cathy is curled up in one of the easy chairs. Mitch is asleep by the fire. The fire is burning brightly and steadily. The house is almost still. There is no longer the sound of the clawing and pecking, but there is another

**SOUND now:**

steady dribbling, difficult to place.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

listening to the curious sound, trying to fathom its meaning.

**MELANIE:**

(whispering)

Mitch?

MED. SHOT - MELANIE

as she turns toward him.

**MELANIE:**

(still whispering)

Mitch?

CLOSE SHOT - MITCH



asleep.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

seeing this, making her decision. The SOUND is still coming from somewhere in the house. She decides to let Mitch sleep, picks up a very long flashlight.

FULL SHOT - MELANIE

as she goes through the house, checking. She stops in the entry hall, plays the flashlight over the furniture piled against the door. Everything seems all right. She goes into the kitchen, again, checks the door, and then plays the beam on the boarded windows. Satisfied, she goes down the corridor outside the bedroom. She opens the first bedroom door, enters, goes to the windows, plays the beam on them. Everything's all right. She comes into the corridor again, opens the second bedroom door, again checks windows, and leaves.

FULL SHOT - MELANIE

climbing the steps to the attic. She stops outside the first door upstairs, opens it, goes into the room, plays the light on the windows. Nothing. She comes out into the corridor, goes to the second bedroom, opens the door, enters, walks to the windows. They are boarded securely. She is starting back toward the door when she stops.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

looking.

CLOSE SHOT - THE FLOOR

a pile of chipped and broken plaster.

MED. SHOT - MELANIE

turning the flashlight up toward the ceiling.

CLOSE SHOT - THE CEILING

A huge hole in it, showing moonlit sky outside.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

turning her eyes from the ceiling, determination on her face, and suddenly, her eyes open wide.

CLOSE SHOT - AN OWL

sitting in the darkness, staring at her.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

reacting.

QUICK MED. SHOT - THE OWL

wings spread in the beam of light.

FULL SHOT - MELANIE

backing to the door. The owl hits her, sends her staggering back, causing the door to slam shut. She looks up at the

FULL SHOT - THE CEILING

a swarm of mixed birds coming through the hole and down toward

her.

MED. SHOT - MELANIE

in the room swinging the lighted flashlight as the birds attack her.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

in the room, as the owl hits her full in the face.

MED. SHOT - MELANIE

swinging the flashlight as the birds attack her.

MITCH (O.S.)

Melanie!

FULL SHOT - MELANIE AND THE BIRDS

grotesque and silent as she struggles with them. The room is a crossing cacophony of mixed light beams and fluttering wings.

MITCH (O.S.)

Melanie, open the door!

He hurls himself against it. Inside the room, where Melanie struggles, we HEAR his hammering on it. Melanie is overwhelmed by the birds.

She falls to the floor, the flashlight beside her. In the spreading rays of the light, we see the frantic fluttering of wings as the birds cover her. There is a stronger assault on the door by Mitch outside.

LYDIA (O.S.)

(screaming)

Mitch, get her out of there!

MED. SHOT - THE ROOM

Melanie, collapsed at the base of the door, is no longer in view. Neither are the birds, whose fluttering shadows we see on the door as Mitch again hits it from outside.

MITCH (O.S.)

Melanie!

The door begins to open.

FULL SHOT - MITCH

as the door bursts inward and he stumbles into the room. He begins swinging at the birds immediately, reaching down for Melanie, fighting off the attack at the same time. He begins dragging her out of the room. Her clothes have almost been shredded from her body, and her face is torn and bleeding. We catch only quick glimpses of her near-nudity, as Mitch pulls her into the corridor and then, holding the door shut behind him with one hand, delivers swinging furious blows at the few birds that have escaped into the corridor.

**MITCH:**

Mother, get a rope!

**LYDIA:**

Oh, my God, look at her!

**MITCH:**

(shouting)

Get a rope!

She rushes off. He struggles grotesquely with the birds. There is a wild fury in him, and a methodical dedication. He will not allow them to defeat him. A large bird strikes his hand, knocking the club from it.

MED. SHOT - MITCH

as the bird strikes at his face. He reaches out with his hands, grasping the bird, letting go of the door knob.

Another bird flutters into the corridor.

CLOSE SHOT - MITCH

in anger and desperation as he throttles the bird with his hands. He reaches behind him to grab the doorknob again, and is immediately attacked by the other bird.

**MITCH:**

(yelling)

Mother! Hurry!

TWO SHOT - LYDIA AND MITCH

as she runs up the steps and into the corridor, carrying a heavy piece of rope. Mitch grabs the bird and hurls it angrily to the floor. Lydia is staring down at Melanie in terror and compassion. He takes the rope from her, loops it over the doorknob, pulls it taut across the hallway, and ties it to the bannister, sealing the door. He turns immediately to Melanie, picks her up and carries her to the steps, Lydia following. As they go downstairs:

**MITCH:**

Cathy! Get a blanket and some bandages!

**CATHY:**

(at the foot of the stairs, on the verge of tears)

Is she all right?

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

cradled against Mitch's shoulder, her face bleeding profusely.

**MELANIE:**

I'm... I'm....

FULL SHOT - MITCH

as he carries her into the living room, but her down on the couch.

**MITCH:**

Just lie there and keep still.

Cathy rushes to them with a roll of bandages and a blanket.

By the light of the lantern, Mitch drapes the blanket over Melanie and then begins unrolling the bandage. But his hands are trembling, and he drops it.

**LYDIA:**

Let me do that, Mitch.

She picks up the bandage.

**MITCH:**

I can handle it.

**LYDIA:**

I know you can.

(her eyes meet his)

But I'd like to.

He nods. Silently, she begins working on Melanie.

**MELANIE:**

(weakly)

Please don't mess me up with bandages,

Mrs. Brenner.

**LYDIA:**

Shhhh. Shhhh.

**MELANIE:**

Please.

But she begins cleaning the wounds, taping bandages over the cuts. The house is still. She works silently and quickly.

**LYDIA:**

(as she works)

I'm not very good at this, Mitch.

**MITCH:**

You're doing fine.

**LYDIA:**

(Apologizing)

I mean. I want to...

Pause.

**CATHY:**

Listen!

CLOSE SHOT - LYDIA

raising her eyes. The room is silent. There is nothing to hear.

**LYDIA:**

They're gone. God have mercy, they're gone.

FULL SHOT - MITCH

as he goes to the front door, and cautiously moves away the table and chair. He opens the door a crack.

FULL SHOT - THE YARD

through the crack. Daylight is almost here. There are no birds visible.

FULL SHOT - THE DOOR

from outside as Mitch opens it wider. The door is scarred and splintered. As he opens the door, one or two dead birds spill into the room. He steps out into the yard. Lydia is directly behind him.

FULL SHOT - THE HOUSE

a shambles, all the windows broken.

TWO SHOT - LYDIA AND MITCH

**MITCH:**

They're gone. The same pattern.

**LYDIA:**

But they'll be back.

**MITCH:**

We won't be here.

**LYDIA:**

Where can we go, Mitch? There's no place to go.

**MITCH:**

I want to try for San Francisco. There are buildings there. Steel and concrete!

**LYDIA:**

(shaking her head)  
We'd never make it. They're probably all over the road.

**MITCH:**

We have to try it.  
(a long silence)  
We can't stay here.  
(silence)  
Melanie needs help.  
(silence)  
Mother, the house won't take another attack.

**LYDIA:**

If...  
(pause)  
If... when we get to San Francisco...  
(pause)  
If they're already there?

**MITCH:**

They won't be.

**LYDIA:**

If they are?

**MITCH:**

We'll worry about that when we get there.

**LYDIA:**

I'm frightened, terribly frightened. I... I don't know what's out there, Mitch.

**MITCH:**

What do we have to know, Mother?  
We're all together, we all love each  
other, we all need each other. What  
else is there? Mother, I want us to  
stay alive!

**LYDIA:**

(nodding; then after  
a pause)  
I started to say... inside...

**MITCH:**

You don't have to.  
He holds out his hand to her.

**MITCH:**

I think we'd better get started.

**DISSOLVE:**

FULL SHOT - THE BRENNER YARD

It is covered with the eerie half-light that comes just before dawn, a light that persists throughout all of the following until the penultimate shot in the picture. The silence is deafening. There is not a bird in sight. The door to Melanie's convertible are open as she and Mitch come out of the house together and he helps her to the car. He puts her in the back seat, tucks the blanket around her. In the background is the pickup truck, too small to hold all of them. Lydia comes to the door and quickly crosses the yard, not looking down at the dead birds. Cathy appears in the doorway to the house.

CLOSE SHOT - CATHY

She is carrying the cage of lovebirds. She hesitates just outside the doorway. She looks at Mitch.

CLOSE SHOT - MITCH

looking back at her.

FULL SHOT - CATHY, MITCH, AND LYDIA

Across the expanse of the desolated yard.

**CATHY:**

May I take them, Mitch?

He does not answer. She continues looking at him.

**CATHY:**

They haven't harmed anyone.

**LYDIA:**

Take them.

**MITCH:**

(with a slow nod)

We'll put them in the trunk, Cathy.

He takes the birds from her and goes to the back of the car. The CAMERA STAYS on Cathy who gets into the car on the front seat. Mitch comes around the other side of the car, stops, and looks toward the trees.

MED. SHOT - THE TREES

covered with waiting birds.

MED. SHOT - MITCH

getting into car.

**MITCH:**

Be careful with that door.

Cathy closes the door gently, and almost soundlessly. Mitch does the same with his door.

**MELANIE:**

(weakly)

Mitch, if they hear the car starting... if they see movement...

**MITCH:**

We'll take it slow until we get to the main road.

(pause)

Are you ready?

CLOSE SHOT - MITCH'S HAND

turning the key. The motor springs to life.

FULL SHOT - INT. THE CAR

anticipation on all the faces.

**MITCH:**

All right.

(he takes a deep breath)

Here we go.

FULL SHOT - THE CAR



from the outside, as it creeps out of the yard. The bay is still, the road is still, the car makes barely a sound as it passes the gate and starts down the road.

MED. SHOT - THE ROAD AHEAD - THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD

as they begin driving slowly. The wires are down. A small fire is burning in the brush, where the wires made contact. The car continues to move. It turns the first bend in the road.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE - LOOKING THROUGH THE WINDOW

She gasps quickly.

MED. SHOT - A GROUP OF HERONS - AT WATER'S EDGE

standing, waiting silently.

FULL SHOT - THE CAR - INTERIOR

as the tension begins to starts.

**MITCH:**

Shhh. Shhhh.

MED. SHOT - THE ROAD AHEAD - THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD

as they approach the derelict barge. It is covered with waiting seagulls.

CLOSE SHOT - LYDIA

seeing them. Her lip begins to tremble.

CLOSE SHOT - MITCH

turning toward the side of the road ahead.

FULL SHOT - AN OVERTURNED SCHOOL BUS - MITCH'S P.O.V.

covered with waiting birds.

**CATHY:**

(whispering)

Mitch, let's turn back.

**MITCH:**

Shhh. Shhhhh.

MED. SHOT - A ROADSIDE HOUSE

as the car passes. A barricade has been set up on the front porch, and a man is leaning over it, dead, a shotgun in his hands. The porch is covered with waiting birds. At the boarded window, we see a woman and child peering from a gap.

CLOSE SHOT - CATHY

reacting.

FULL SHOT - THE CAR - BIRD'S P.O.V.

as it threads its way slowly and cautiously along the winding road to town. The birds are sitting on some of the still-standing wires, watching, waiting.

FULL SHOT - THE TOWN APPROACH - THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD as the car turns a bend in the road. There are thousands of birds ahead, on every gutted and smoldering rooftop, on every pole, on every fence.

**LYDIA:**

Mitch!

MED. SHOT - MITCH

as he stops the car and looks ahead.

FULL SHOT - THE CAR

in the middle of the road, stopped. Ahead are the birds.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

frightened, try not to reveal her fear.

**MELANIE:**

Can we turn back?

CLOSE SHOT - MITCH

**MITCH:**

I... I don't think so. If we get through town, I think we'll be all right.

FULL SHOT - INT. THE CAR

There is a long silence. It is Melanie who has the strongest reason for fearing the birds. It is Melanie, her fear growing, who makes the decision.

**MELANIE:**

Then go ahead, Mitch.

FULL SHOT - EXT. THE CAR

as it begins moving forward again at an excruciatingly slow rate of speed, into the town and the waiting birds.

CLOSE SHOT - LYDIA

as she turns to look out the window on her side.

CLOSE SHOT - A LINE OF BIRDS

as the car moves past them slowly.

CLOSE SHOT - LYDIA

closing her eyes.

FULL SHOT - BRINKMEYER'S GENERAL STORE

through the windshield. The roof and sills are covered with birds. The window is smashed in, canned goods are strewn all over the sidewalk, bolts of cloth run in a riot from the open door and across the road, dead people are lying in the gutter. But in the hotel, we see some faces behind broken

windows.

TWO SHOT - CATHY, MITCH

The tension on their faces,

MED. SHOT - THE STORES OPPOSITE THE TIDES

as the car approaches them. The windows are all broken, and merchandise is lying on the sidewalk. Birds are everywhere, waiting.

CLOSE SHOT - A DEAD MAN

lying on the sidewalk, clutching a television set in his arms.

CLOSE SHOT - MITCH

strained, looking at the road ahead.

LONG SHOT - THE ROAD AHEAD

a clear sky, a bird-free stretch,

CLOSE SHOT - MITCH

**MITCH:**

(almost as a prayer)

Here we go.

(he rams down on the accelerator)

FULL SHOT - THE CAR - EXTERIOR

as Mitch rams the accelerator to the floor and it zooms ahead in a burst of speed.

FULL SHOT - THOUSANDS OF BIRDS

taking wing.

MED. SHOT - MORE BIRDS

taking wing.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

screaming.

**MELANIE:**

Mitch!

CLOSE SHOT - MITCH

wrenching at the wheel as the car turns a bend.

FULL SHOT - THE ROAD AHEAD

through the windshield, as a flock of birds take wing immediately ahead.

CLOSE SHOT - THE WINDSHIELD

from the inside, as birds flutter against it.

CLOSE SHOT - THE ROOF OF THE CAR

from the inside, as a beak slashes it, letting in a thin line of light.

CLOSE SHOT - MITCH

wrenching at the wheel again, another bend.

HELICOPTER SHOT - THE CAR

navigating the sharp bends in the road as birds streak at it in straight lines.

TWO SHOT - LYDIA AND MELANIE

in the back seat as several slashes appear in the roof over their heads, letting in more light.

CLOSE SHOT - THE ROOF

More slashes, more light in scattered beams.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

her fear growing as the scattered light beams bring back the memory of the attic room and her flashlight battle with the owl.

CLOSE SHOT - THE ROOF

more slashes, building, the beak thrusts combining with the incoming beams of light in a weirdly horrifying way.

CLOSE SHOT - LYDIA

**LYDIA:**

(almost a prayer)

Dear God... dear God... please,  
please, what have we done? Please.

(and then in anger at  
the roof and the  
birds)

Can't they leave us alone?

(shrieking it)

LEAVE US ALONE!

MED. SHOT - THE CAR INTERIOR all the passengers, as the roof suddenly rips back.

FULL SHOT - BIRDS

from inside the car, hovering over it the moment the roof tears back.

CLOSE SHOT - MELANIE

This is too much for her. She screams at sight of the birds, and then turns her face into Lydia's shoulder.

TWO SHOT - LYDIA AND MELANIE

as Lydia recognizes Melanie's need. She puts her arm around Melanie's shoulder and gently, soothingly, holds her close.

FULL SHOT - THE CAR

racing along as the birds hover over it.

CLOSE SHOT - MITCH

his face screwed in anguish, tears rolling down his cheeks as he grips the wheel and hits the gas pedal.

FULL SHOT - THE OPEN CAR

streaming canvas ribbons behind it. It turns another bend in the road.

FULL SHOT - THE ROAD AHEAD - (THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD)

It is arrow-straight, no curves.

FULL SHOT - THE CAR

in a burst of speed as it hits the straightaway. It begins to outdistance the birds. The gap widens. A flock of birds attacks it from the side of the road, but it speeds into them and through them. The gap grows wider and wider. They are well ahead of the birds now.

CLOSE SHOT - LYDIA

**LYDIA:**

We're losing them.

CLOSE SHOT - MITCH

only a nod, his face streaming tears.

LONG SHOT - THE CAR (BIRDS' P.O.V.)

as they fall way behind now, the car moving swiftly into the distance.

TWO SHOT - LYDIA AND MELANIE

on the back seat. Melanie begins sobbing in a sudden release of tension. Lydia, in compassion, and tenderly, cradles Melanie's head on her shoulder. Melanie, her eyes glistening, looks ahead through the windshield.

FULL SHOT - THE CAR INTERIOR

all their faces visible.

**CATHY:**

Mitch? Do... do you think they'll be all right? In the trunk? Can they breath?

**MITCH:**

(with the faintest smile)

I think they'll be all right, honey.

There is hope on their faces as the car streaks into the wind. Not a wild exuberance, but a relaxation of tension. They stare ahead through the windshield, and then they squint their eyes against the sudden sunrise ahead, and Mitch reaches up to turn down the sun visor.

**MITCH:**

It looks... it looks clear up ahead.

FULL SHOT - THE CAR

moving AWAY FROM THE CAMERA FAST into magnificent sunrise over the crest of the hills. Further and further into the distance it goes.

**FADE OUT:**

**THE END:**