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# Sunset Boulevard

By Charles Brackett

SEQUENCE "A"

A-1-4 START the picture with the actual street sign:  
SUNSET BOULEVARD, stencilled on a curbstoppe.  
In the gutter lie dead leaves, scraps of paper,  
burnt matches and cigarette butts. It is early  
morning.

Now the CAMERA leaves the sign and MOVES EAST, the  
grey asphalt of the street filling the screen. As  
speed accelerates to around 40 m.p.h., traffic de-  
marcations, white arrows, speed-limit warnings, man-  
hole covers, etc., flash by. SUPERIMPOSED on all  
this are the CREDIT TITLES, in the stencilled style  
of the street sign.

Over the scene we now hear  
sirens. Police squad cars  
hurtle toward the camera,  
turn off the road into a  
driveway with squealing  
brakes. Dismounted motor-  
cycle cops stand directing  
the cars in.

MAN'S VOICE

Yes, this is Sunset  
Boulevard, Los Angeles,  
California. It's about  
five o'clock in the  
morning. That's the  
Homicide Squad, com-  
plete with detectives  
and newspaper men.

A-5 PATIO AND POOL OF  
MANSION

The policemen and news-  
paper reporters and  
photographers have  
jumped out of the cars  
and are running up to  
the pool, in which a  
body is seen floating.  
Photographers' bulbs  
flash in rapid suc-  
cession.

A murder has been re-  
ported from one of those  
great big houses in the  
ten thousand block.  
You'll read all about  
it in the late editions,  
I'm sure. You'll get  
it over your radio,  
and see it on tele-  
vision -- because an  
old-time star is in-  
volved. one of the big-  
gest. But before you  
hear it all distorted  
and blown out of  
proportion, before those  
Hollywood columnists  
get their hands on it,  
maybe you'd like to  
hear the facts, the  
whole truth...

A-6 FLASH OF THE BODY

MAN'S VOICE

Angle up through the water from the bottom of the pool, as the body floats face downward. It is a well-dressed young man.

If so, you've come to the right party... You see, the body of a young man was found floating in the pool of her mansion, with two shots in his back and one in his stomach. Nobody important, really. Just a movie writer with a couple of "B" pictures to his credit. The poor dope. He always wanted a pool Well, in the end he got himself a pool -- only the price turned out to be a little high... Let's go back about six months and find the day when it all started.

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

A-7 HOLLYWOOD, SEEN FROM THE HILLTOP AT IVAR & FRANKLIN STREETS  
It is a crisp sunny day. The voice continues speaking as CAMERA PANS toward the ALTO NIDO APARTMENT HOUSE, an ugly Moorish structure of stucco, about four stories high. CAMERA MOVES TOWARD AN OPEN WINDOW on the third floor, where we look in on JOE GILLIS' APARTMENT. Joe Gillis, barefooted and wearing nothing but an old bathrobe. is sitting on the bed. In front of him. on a straight chair, is a portable typewriter. Beside him, on the bed, is a dirty ashtray and a

I was living in an apartment house above Franklin and Ivar. Things were tough at the moment. I hadn't worked in a studio for a long time. So I there grinding out original stories, two a week. Only I seemed to have lost my touch. Maybe they weren't original enough. Maybe they were too original. All I know is they didn't sell.

scattering of type  
written and pencil-  
marked pages. Gillis  
is typing. with a  
pencil clenched bet-  
ween his teeth.

A-8 JOE GILLIS' APARTMENT

It is a one-room affair with an unmade Murphy bed  
pulled out of the wall at which Gillis sits typing.  
There are a couple of worn-out plush chairs and a  
Spanish-style, wrought-iron standing lamp. Also a  
small desk littered with books and letters, and a  
chest of drawers with a portable phonograph and some  
records on top. On the walls are a couple of repro-  
ductions of characterless paintings, with laundry  
bills and snapshots stuck in the frames. Through an  
archway can be seen a tiny kitchenette, complete with  
unwashed coffee pot and cup, empty tin cans, orange  
peels, etc. The effect is dingy and cheerless --  
just another furnished apartment. The buzzer SOUNDS.

GILLIS

Yeah.

The buzzer SOUNDS again. Gillis gets up and opens  
the door. Two men wearing hats stand outside one of  
them carrying a briefcase.

NO. 1

Joseph C. Gillis?

GILLIS

That's right.

The men ease into the room. No. 1 hands Gillis a  
business card.

NO. 1

We've come for the car.

GILLIS

What car?

NO. 2

(Consulting a paper)

1946 Plymouth convertible. Calif-  
ornia license 97 N 567.

NO. 1

Where are the keys?

GILLIS

Why should I give you the keys?

NO. 1

Because the company's played ball with you long enough. Because you're three payments behind. And because we've got a Court order. Come on -- the keys.

NO. 2

Or do you want us to jack it up and haul it away?

GILLIS

Relax, fans. The car isn't here.

NO. 1

Is that So?

GILLIS

I lent it to a friend of mine. He took it up to Palm Springs.

NO. 1

Had to get away for his health, I suppose.

GILLIS

You don't believe me? Look in the garage.

NO. 1

Sure we believe you, only now we want you to believe us. That car better be back here by noon tomorrow, or there's going to be fireworks.

GILLIS

You say the cutest things.

The men leave. Gillis stands pondering beside the door for a moment. Then he walks to the center of the room and, with his back to the CAMERA, slips into a pair of gray slacks. There is a metallic noise as some loose change and keys drop from the trouser pockets. As Gillis bends over to pick them up, we see that he has dropped the car keys, identifiable be-

GILLIS' VOICE  
Well, I needed about two hundred and ninety dollars and I needed it real quick, or I'd lose my car. It wasn't in Palm Springs and it wasn't in the garage. I was way ahead of the finance company.

cause of a rabbit's  
foot and a miniature  
license plate attached  
to the key-ring. Gillis  
pockets the keys and as  
he starts to put on a  
shirt

DISSOLVE TO:

A-9

EXTERIOR OF RUDY'S  
SHOESHINE PARLOR (DAY)

GILLIS' VOICE

A small shack-like build-  
ing, it stands in the  
corner of a public park-  
ing lot. Rudy, a  
colored boy, is giving  
a customer a shine.

I knew they'd be coming  
around and I wasn't tak-  
ing any chances, so I  
kept it a couple of  
blocks away in a parking  
lot behind Rudy's Shoe-  
shine Parlor. Rudy  
never asked any quest-  
ions. He'd just look at  
your heels and know the  
score.

PAN BEHIND the shack to GILLIS' CAR, a yellow 1946  
Plymouth convertible with the top down. Gillis enters  
the SHOT. He is wearing a tweed sport jacket, a tan  
polo shirt, and mooosins. He steps into the car and  
drives it off. Rudy winks after him.

A-10

THE ALLEY NEXT TO SIDNEY'S  
MEN'S SHOP ON BRONSON AVE.

GILLIS' VOICE

Gillis drives into the  
alley and parks his car  
right behind a delivery  
truck. PAN AND FOLLOW  
HIM as he gets out, walks  
around the corner into  
Bronson and then toward  
the towering main gate of  
Paramount. A few loafers,  
studio cops and extras are  
lounging there.

I had an original story  
kicking around Paranount.  
My agent told me it was  
dead as a doornail. but  
I knew a big shot over  
there who'd always liked  
me, and the time had  
come to take a little  
advantage of it. His  
name was Sheldrake. He  
was a smart producer,  
with a set of ulcers to  
prove it.

DISSOLVE TO:

A-11

SHELDRAKE'S OFFICE

It is in the style of a Paramount executive's office --

mahogany, leather, and a little chintz. On the walls are some large framed photographs of Paramount stars, with dedications to Mr. Shel Drake. Also a couple of framed critics' awards certificates, and an Oscar on a bookshelf. A shooting schedule chart is thumb-tacked into a large bulletin board. There are piles of scripts, a few pipes and, somewhere in the background, some set models.

Start on Shel Drake. He is about 45. Behind his worried face there hides a coated tongue. He is engaged in changing the stained filter cigarette in his Zeus holder.

SHELDRAKE

All right, Gillis. You've got five minutes. What's your story about?

GILLIS

It's about a ball player, a rookie shortstop that's batting 347. The poor kid was once mixed up in a hold-up. But he's trying to go straight -- except there's a bunch of gamblers who won't let him.

SHELDRAKE

So they tell the kid to throw the World Series, or else, huh?

GILLIS

More or less. Only for the end I've got a gimmick that's real good.

A secretary enters, carrying a glass of milk. She opens a drawer and takes out a bottle of pills for Shel Drake.

SHELDRAKE

Got a title?

GILLIS

Bases Loaded. There's a 40-page outline.

SHELDRAKE

(To the secretary)

Get the Readers' Department and see what they have on Bases Loaded.

The secretary exits. Shel Drake takes a pill and washes it down with some milk.

GILLIS

They're pretty hot about it over at Twentieth, but I think Zanuck's all wet. Can you see Ty Power as a

GILLIS (cont'd)

shortstop? You've got the best man for it right here on this lot. Alan Ladd. Good change of pace for Alan Ladd. There's another thing: it's pretty simple to shoot. Lot of outdoor stuff. Bet you could make the whole thing for under a million. And there's a great little part for Bill Demarest. One of the trainers, an oldtime player who got beaned and goes out of his head sometimes.

The door opens and Betty Schaefer enters -- a clean-cut, nice looking girl of 21, with a bright, alert manner. Dressed in tweed skirt, Brooks sweater and pearls, and carrying a folder of papers. She puts them on Sheldrake's desk, not noticing Gillis, who stands near the door.

BETTY

Hello, Mr. Sheldrake. On that Bases Loaded. I covered it with a 2-page synopsis.

(She holds it out)

But I wouldn't bother.

SHELDRAKE

What's wrong with it?

BETTY

It's from hunger.

SHELDRAKE

Nothing for Ladd?

BETTY

Just a rehash of something that wasn't very good to begin with.

SHELDRAKE

I'm sure you'll be glad to meet Mr. Gillis. He wrote it.

Betty turns towards Gillis, embarrassed.

SHELDRAKE

This is Miss Kramer.



BETTY

Schaefer. Betty Schaefer. And right now I wish I could crawl into a hole and pull it in after me.

GILLIS

If I could be of any help...

BETTY

I'm sorry, Mr. Gillis, but I just don't think it's any good. I found it flat and banal.

GILLIS

Exactly what kind of material do you recommend? James Joyce? Dostoosvsky?

SHELDRAKE

Name dropper.

BETTY

I just think pictures should say a little something.

GILLIS

Oh, you're one of the message kids. Just a story won't do. You'd have turned down Gone With the Wind.

SHELDRAKE

No, that was me. I said, Who wants to see a Civil War picture?

BETTY

Perhaps the reason I hated Bases Loaded is that I knew your name. I'd always heard you had some talent.

GILLIS

That was last year. This year I'm trying to earn a living.

BETTY

So you take Plot 27-A, make it glossy, make it slick --

SHELDRAKE

Carefull Those are dirty words! You sound like a bunch of New York critics. Thank you, Miss Schaefer.

BETTY

Goodbye, Mr. Gillis.

GILLIS

Goodbye. Next time I'll write  
The Naked and the Dead.

Betty leaves.

SHELDRAKE

Well, seems like Zanuck's got  
himself a baseball picture.

GILLIS

Mr. Sheldrake, I don't want you  
to think I thought this was going  
to win any Academy Award.

SHELDRAKE

(His mind free-wheeling)

Of course, we're always looking  
for a Betty Hutton. Do you see  
it as a Betty Hutton?

GILLIS

Frankly, no.

SHELDRAKE

(Amusing himself)

Now wait a minute. If we made  
it a girls' softball team, put  
in a few numbers. Might make a  
cute musical: It Happened in  
the Bull Pen -- the story of a  
Woman.

GILLIS

You trying to be funny? -- because  
I'm all out of laughs. I'm over a  
barrel and I need a job.

SHELDRAKE

Sure, Gillis. If something should  
come along -

GILLIS

Along is no good. I need it now.

SHELDRAKE

Haven't got a thing.

GILLIS

Any kind of assignment. Additional  
Dialogue.

SHELDRAKE

There's nothing, Gillis. Not

even if you were a relative.

GILLIS

(Hating it)

Look, Mr. Sheldrake, could you let me have three hundred bucks yourself, as a personal loan?

SHELDRAKE

Could I? Gillis, last year somebody talked me into buying a ranch in the valley. So I borrowed money from the bank so I could pay for the ranch. This year I had to mortgage the ranch so I could keep up my life insurance so I could borrow on the insurance so I could pay my income tax. Now if Dewey had been elected -

GILLIS

Goodbye, Mr. Sheldrake.

DISSOLVE TO:

A-12

EXT. SCHWAB'S DRUG STORE  
(EARLY AFTERNOON ACTIVITY)

MOVE IN toward drug store  
and

DISSOLVE TO:

A-13

INT. SCHWAB'S DRUG STORE

The usual Schwabadero crowd sits at the fountain, gossips at the cigar-stand, loiters by the magazine display.

MOVE IN towards the TWO TELEPHONE BOOTHS. In one of them sits Gillis, a stack of nickels in front of him. He's doing a lot of talking into the telephone, hanging up, dropping

GILLIS' VOICE

After that I drove down to headquarters. That's the way a lot of us think about Schwab's Drug Store. Actors and stock girls and waiters. Kind of a combination office, Kaffee-Klatsch and waiting room. Waiting, waiting for the gravy train.

I got myself ten nickels and started sending out a general S.O.S. Couldn't get hold of my agent, naturally. So then I called a pal of mine, name of Artie Green -- an awful

another nickel, dialing,  
talking again.

nice guy, an assistant  
director. He could let me  
have twenty, but twenty  
wouldn't do.

GILLIS' VOICE (Cont.)

Then I talked to a couple of  
yes men at Twentieth. To me  
they said no. Finally I  
located that agent of mine, the  
big faker. Was he out digging  
up a job for poor Joe Gillis?  
Hmph! He was hard at work in  
Bel Air, making with the golf  
clubs.

Gillis hangs up with a curse, opens the door of the  
booth, emerges, wiping the sweat from his forehead.  
He walks toward the exit. He is stopped by the  
voice of

SKOLSKY

Hello, Gillis.

Gillis looks around. At the fountain sits Skolsky,  
drinking a cup of coffee.

GILLIS

Hello, Mr. Skolsky.

SKOLSKY

Got anything for the column?

GILLIS

Sure. Just sold an original for  
a hundred grand. The Life of the  
Warner Brothers. Starring the Ritz  
Brothers. Playing opposite the  
Andrew Sisters.

SKOLSKY

(With a sour smile)

But don't get me wrong -- I love  
Hollywood.

Gillis walks out.

DISSOLVE TO:

A-14 THE BEL AIR GOLF LINKS

On a sun-dappled green edged with tall sycamores,  
stands Morino, the agent, a caddy and a nondescript  
opponent in the background. Gillis has evidently  
stated his problem already.

MORINO

So you need three hundred dollars?  
Of course, I could give you three  
hundred dollars. Only I'm not  
going to.

GILLIS

No?

MORINO

Gillis, get this through your  
head. I'm not just your agent.  
It's not the ten per cent. I'm  
your friend.

He sinks his putt and walks toward the next tee,  
Gillis following him.

GILLIS

How's that about your being my  
friend?

MORINO

Don't you know the finest things  
in the world have been written on  
an empty stomach? Once a talent  
like yours gets into that Mocambo-  
Romanoff rut, you're through.

GILLIS

Forget Romanoff's. It's the car  
I'm talking about. If I lose my  
car it's like having my legs out off.

MORINO

Greatest thing that could happen  
to you. Now you'll have to sit  
behind that typewriter. Now  
you'll have to write.

GILLIS

What do you think I've been doing?  
I need three hundred dollars.

MORINO

(Icily)

Maybe what you need is another agent.

He bends down to tee up his ball. Gillis turns away.  
DISSOLVE TO:

A-15

GILLIS IN HIS OPEN CAR

GILLIS' VOICE

driving down Sunset As I drove back towards town  
towards Hollywood. He I took inventory of my pros-  
drives slowly. His pects. They now added up to

mind is working.

exactly zero. Apparently I just didn't have what it takes, and the time had come to wrap up the whole Hollywood deal and go home. Maybe if I hocked all my junk there'd be enough for a bus ticket back to Ohio, back to that thirty-five-dollar-a-week job behind the copy desk of the Dayton Evening Post, if it was still open. Back to the smirking delight of the whole office. All

Gillis stops his car at right you wise guys. why don't a red light by the main you go out and take a crack at entrance to Bel Air. Hollywood? Maybe you think Suddenly his eyes fall you could -- Oh-oh!

**on:**

A-16

ANOTHER CAR

It is a dark-green Dodge business coupe, also waiting for the light to change. but headed in the opposite direction. In it are the two finance company men. They spot Gillis in his car and exchange looks. From across the intersection Gillis recognizes them and pulls down the leather sunshade to screen his face. As the light changes. Gillis gives his car the gun and shoots away. The men narrowly avoid hitting another car as they make a U-turn into oncoming traffic and start after him.

A-17

THE CHASE

to

A-21

Very short, very sharp, told in FLASHES. (Use locations on Sunset between Bel Air and Holmby Hills). The men lose Gillis around a bend, catch sight of him and then -- while they are trapped behind a slow-moving truck. he disappears again.

A-22

GILLIS

He is driving as fast as he dares, keeping an eye out for pursuit in his rear-view mirror. Suddenly his right front tire blows out. Gillis clutches desperately at the steering wheel and manages to turn the careening car into

A-23

A DRIVEWAY

It is overgrown with weeds and screened from the street by bushes and trees. Gillis stops his car about thirty feet from the street and looks back.

GILLIS' VOICE

Was I far enough ahead?

A-24 THE OTHER CAR

shoots past the driveway, still looking for Gillis.

A-25 GILLIS

He watches his pursuers shoot past and out of sight. He opens the door and looks down at the flat tire. Then he looks around to see where he is.

GILLIS' VOICE

Yeah...

I had landed myself in the driveway of some big mansion that looked run-down and deserted. At the end of the drive was a lovely sight indeed -- a great big empty garage, just standing there going to waste. If ever there was a place to stash away a limping car with a hot license number...

A-26 DRIVEWAY WITH GARAGE

An enormous, five-car affair. neglected and empty-looking.

A-27 GILLIS

He gets back into his car and carefully pilots the limping vehicle into one of the stalls. In the adjoining one is a large, dust-covered Isotta-Fraschini propped up on blocks. He closes the garage door and walks up the driveway. In idle curiosity he mounts a stone staircase which leads to the garden. CAMERA IN BACK OF HIM. At the top of the steps he sees the somber pile of

There was another occupant in that garage: an enormous foreign-built automobile. It must have burned up ten gallons to a mile. It had a 1932 license. I figured that's when the owners moved out... I also figured I couldn't go back to my apartment now that those bloodhounds were on to me. The idea was to get Artie Green's and stay there till I could make that bus for Ohio. Once back in Dayton I'd drop the credit boys a picturepost-card telling them where to pick up the jallopy.

NORMA DESMOND'S HOUSE

GILLIS' VOICE

It is a grandiose -- Italianate structure, mottled by the years, It was a great big white elephant of a place. The kind crazy movie people built in the

gloomy, forsaken, crazy Twenties. A neglected  
little formal garden house gets an unhappy look.  
completely gone to seed. This one had it in spades. It  
was like that old woman in  
Great Expectations -- that Miss  
From somewhere above Haversham in her rotting wed-  
comes ding dress and her torn veil,  
taking it out on the world be-  
cause she'd been given the go-  
by.

A WOMAN'S VOICE

You there!

Gillls turns and looks.

A-28 UPSTAIRS LOGGIA

Behind a bamboo blind there is a movement of  
a dark figure.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Wlly are you so late? Why have  
you kept me waitlng so long?

A-29 GILLIS

He stands flabbergasted. A new noise attracts his  
attention -- the creak of a heavy metal-and-glass  
door being opened. He turns and sees

A-30 THE ENTRANCE DOOR OF THE HOUSE

Max von Mayerling stands there. He is sixty, and  
all in black, except for immaculate white cotton  
gloves, shirt, high, stiff collar and a white bow  
tie. His coat is shiny black alpaca, his trousers  
ledger-atriped. He is semi-paralyzed. The left  
side of his mouth is pulled down, and he leans on a  
rubber-ferruled stick.

MAX

In here!

Gilllis enters the shot.

GILLIS

I just put my car in the garage.  
I had a blow-out. I thought --

MAX

Go on in.

There is authority in the gesture of his white-  
gloved hand as he motions Gilllis inside.

GILLIS

Look, maybe I'd better take my  
car --



MAX

Wipe your feet!

Automatically, Gillis wipes his feet on an enormous shabby cocoanut mat.

MAX

You are not dressed properly.

GILLIS

Dressed for what?

THE WOMAN'S VOICE

Max! Have him come up, Max!

MAX

(Gesturing)

Up the stairs!

GILLIS

Suppose you listen just for a minute -

MAX

Madame is waiting.

GILLIS

For me? Okay.

Gillis enters.

A-31

INT. NORMA DESMOND'S ENTRANCE HALL

It is grandiose and grim. The whole place is one of those abortions of silent-picture days, with bowling alleys in the cellar and a built-in pipe organ, and beams imported from Italy, with California termites at work on them. Portieres are drawn before all the windows, and only thin slits or sunlight find their way in to fight the few electric bulbs which are always burning.

Gillis starts up the curve of the black marble staircase. It has a wrought-iron rail and a worn velvet rope along the wall.

MAX

(From below)

If you need help with the coffin call me.

The oddity of the situation has caught Gillis' imagination. He climbs the stairs with a kind of morbid fascination. At the top he stops, undecided, then turns to the right and is stopped by

WOMAN'S VOICE

This way!

Gillis swings around.

Norma Desmond stands down the corridor next to a doorway from which emerges a flickering light. She is a little woman. There is a curious style, a great sense of high voltage about her. She is dressed in black house pyjamas and black high-heeled pumps. Around her throat there is a leopard-patterned scarf, and wound around her head a turban of the same material. Her skin is very pale, and she is wearing dark glasses.

NORMA

In here. I put him on my massage table in front of the fire. He always liked fires and poking at them with a stick.

Gillis enters the SHOT and she leads him into

A-32

NORMA DESMOND'S BEDROOM

It is a huge, gloomy room hung in white brocade which has become dirty over the years and even slightly torn in a few places. There's a great, unmade gilded bed in the shape of a swan, from which the gold had begun to peel. There is a disorder of clothes and negligees and faded photographs of old-time stars about.

In an imitation baroque fireplace some logs are burning. On the massage table before it lies a small form shrouded under a Spanish shawl. At each end on a baroque pedestal stands a three-branched candelabrum, the candles lighted.

NORMA

I've made up my mind we'll bury him in the garden. Any city laws against that?

GILLIS

I wouldn't know.

NORMA

I don't care anyway. I want the coffin to be white. And I want it specially lined with satin.

White, or deep pink.

She picks up the shawl to make up her mind about the color. From under the shawl flops down a dead arm. Gillis stares and recoils a little. It is like a child's arm, only black and hairy.

NORMA

Maybe red. bright flaming red.

Gay. Let's make it gay.  
Gillis edges closer and glances down. Under the shawl he sees the sad, bearded face of a dead chimpanzee. Norma drops back the shawl.

NORMA

How much will it be? I warn you - don't give me a fancy price just because I'm rich.

GILLIS

Lady. you've got the wrong man.  
For the first time. Norma really looks at him through her dark glasses.

GILLIS

I had some trouble with my car.  
Flat tire. I pulled into your garage till I could get a spare.  
I thought this was an empty house.

NORMA

It is not. Get out.

GILLIS

I'm sorry, and I'm sorry you lost your friend, and I don't think red is the right color.

NORMA

Get out.

GILLIS

Sure. Wait a minute -- haven't I seen you -- ?

NORMA

Or shall I call my servant?

GILLIS

I know your face. You're Norma Desmond. You used to be in pictures. You used to be big.

NORMA

I am big. It's the pictures that got small.

GILLIS

I knew there was something wrong with them.

NORMA

They're dead. They're finished. There was a time when this business had the eyes of the whole

wide world. But that wasn't good enough. Oh, nol They wanted the ears of the world, too. So they opened their big mouths, and out came talk, talk, talk...

GILLIS

That's where the popcorn business comes in. You buy yourself a bag and plug up your ears.

NORMA

Look at them in the front offices -- the master minds! They took the idols and smashed them. The Fairbankses and the Chaplins and the Gilberts and the Valentinos. And who have they got now? Some nobodies -- a lot of pale little frogs croaking pish-poshl

GILLIS

Don't get sore at me. I'm not an executive. I'm just a writer.

NORMA

You are! Writing words, words! You've made a rope of words and strangled this business! But there is a microphone right there to catch the last gurgles, and Technicolor to photograph the red, swollen tongue!

GILLIS

Ssh! You'll wake up that monkey.

NORMA

Get out!

Gillis starts down the stairs.

GILLIS

Next time I'll bring my autograph album along, or maybe a hunk of cement and ask for your footprints.

He is halfway down the staircase when he is stopped by

NORMA

Just a minute, you!

GILLIS

Yeah?

NORMA

You're a writer, you said.

GILLIS

Why?

Norma starts down the stairs.

NORMA

Are you or aren't you?

GILLIS

I think that's what it says on my driver's license.

NORMA

And you have written pictures, haven't you?

GILLIS

Sure have. The last one I wrote was about cattle rustlers. Before they were through with it, the whole thing played on a torpedo boat.

Norma has reached him at the bottom of the staircase.

NORMA

I want to ask you something.

Come in here.

She leads him into

A-33 THE HUGE LIVING ROOM

It is dark and damp and filled with black oak and red velvet furniture which looks like crappy props from the Mark of Zorro set. Along the main wall, a gigantic fireplace has been freezing for years. On the gold piano is a galaxy of photographs of Norma Desmond in her various roles. On one wall is a painting -- a California Gold Rush scene, Carthay Circle school. (We will learn later that it hides a motion picture screen.)

One corner is filled with a large pipe organ, and as Norma and Gillis enter, there is a grizzly moaning sound. Gillis looks around.

NORMA

The wind gets in that blasted pipe organ. I ought to have it taken out.

GILLIS

Or teach it a better tune.

Norma has led him to the card tables which stand side by side near a window. They are piled high

with papers scrawled in a large, uncertain hand.

NORMA

How long is a movie script these days? I mean, how many pages?

GILLIS

Depends on what it is -- a Donald Duck or Joan or Arc.

NORMA

This is to be a very important picture. I have written it myself. Took me years.

GILLIS

(Looking at the piles  
of script)

Looks like enough for six important pictures.

NORMA

It's the story of Salome. I think I'll have DeMille direct it.

GILLIS

Uh-huh.

NORMA

We've made a lot of pictures together.

GILLIS

And you'll play Salome?

NORMA

Who else ?

GILLIS

Only asking. I didn't know you were planning a comeback.

NORMA

I hate that word. It is a return. A return to the millions of people who have never forgiven me for deserting the screen.

GILLIS

Fair enough.

NORMA

Salome -- what a woman! What a part! The Princess in love with a Holy man. She dances the Dance of the Seven Veils. He rejects her, so she demands his head on a

golden tray, kissing his cold, dead lips.

GILLIS

They'll love it in Pomona.

NORMA

(Taking it straight)

They will love it every place.

(She reaches for a batch of pages from the heap)

Read it. Read the scene just before she has him killed!

GILLIS

Right now? Never let another writer read your stuff. He may steal it.

NORMA

I am not afraid. Read it!

NORMA (Cont'd)

(Calling)

Max! Max!

(To Gillis)

Sit down. Is there enough light?

GILLIS

I've got twenty-twenty vision.

Max has entered.

NORMA

Bring something to drink.

MAX

Yes. Madame.

He leaves. Norma turns to Gillis again.

NORMA

I said sit down.

There is compulsion in her voice.

Gillis looks at her and starts slowly reading.

GILLIS' VOICE

Well. I had no pressing engagement, and she'd mentioned something to drink.. Sometimes it's interesting to see just how bad bad writing can be. This promised to go the limit. I wondered what a handwriting expert would make of that

Max comes in, wheeling a wicker tea wagon on which are two bottles of champagne and two red Venetian glasses, a box of zwieback and

a jar of caviar. Norma sits on her feet. deep in a chair, a gold ring on her forefinger with a clip which holds a cigarette. She gets up and forces on Gillis another batch of script, goes back to her chair.

childish scrawl of hers. Max wheeled in some champagne and some caviar. Later, I found out that Max was the only other person in that grim Sunset castle, and I found out a few other things about him... As for her, she sat coiled up like a watch spring, her cigarette clamped in a curious holder... I could sense her eyes on me from behind those dark glasses, defying me not to like what I read, or maybe begging me in her own proud way to like it. It meant so much to her...

A-34 SHOT OF THE  
CEILING

GILLIS' VOICE

PAN DOWN to the moaning organ. PAN OVER TO THE ENTRANCE DOOR. Max opens it, and a solemn-faced man in undertaker's clothes brings in a small white coffin. (Thru these shots the room has been growing duskier.)

It sure was a cozy set-up. That bundle of raw nerves, and Max, and a dead monkey upstairs and the wind wheezing through that organ once in a while. Later on, just for comedy relief, the real guy arrived with a baby coffin. It was all done with great dignity. He must have been a very important chimp. The great grandson of King Kong, maybe.

DISSOLVE TO:

A-35 GILLIS  
reading. The lamp beside him is now really paying its way in the dark room. A lot of the manuscript pages are piled on the floor around his feet. A half-empty champagne

It got to be eleven. I was feeling a little sick at my stomach, what with that sweet champagne and that tripe I'd been reading -- that silly hodgepodge of melodramatic plots. However, by then I'd started concocting a little plot of my own...



glass stands on the  
arm of his chair.

THE CAMERA SLOWLY DRAWS BACK to include Norma  
Desmond sitting in the dusk, just as she was before.  
Gillis puts down a batch of script. There is a  
little pause.

NORMA

(Impatiently)

Well?

GILLIS

This is fascinating.

NORMA

Of course it is.

GILLIS

Maybe it's a little long and  
maybe there are some repetitions...  
but you're not a professional  
writer.

NORMA

I wrote that with my heart.

GILLIS

Sure you did. That's what makes  
it great. What it needs is a  
little more dialogue.

NORMA

What for? I can say anything I  
want with my eyes.

GILLIS

It certainly could use a pair of  
shears and a blue pencil.

NORMA

I will not have it butchered.

GILLIS

Of course not. But it ought to  
be organized. Just an editing  
job. You can find somebody.

NORMA

Who? I'd have to have somebody  
I can trust. When were you born --  
I mean, what sign of the zodiac?

GILLIS

I don't know.

NORMA

What month?

GILLIS

December twenty-first.

NORMA

Sagittarius. I like Sagittarians.  
You can trust them.

GILLIS

Thank you.

NORMA

I want you to do this work.

GILLIS

Me? I'm busy. Just finished  
one script. I'm due on another  
assignment.

NORMA

I don't care.

GILLIS

You know, I'm pretty expensive.  
I get five hundred a week.

NORMA

I wouldn't worry about money.  
I'll make it worth your while.

GILLIS

Maybe I'd better take the rest  
of the script home and read it -

NORMA

Oh no. I couldn't let it out  
of my house. You'll have to  
finish it here.

GILLIS

It's getting kind of late --

NORMA

Are you married, Mr. -- ?

GILLIS

The name is Gillis. I'm single.

NORMA

Where do you live?

GILLIS

Hollywood. The Alto Nido Apart-  
ments.

NORMA

There's something wrong with  
your car, you said.

GILLIS

There sure is.

NORMA

You can stay here.

GILLIS

I'll come early tomorrow.

Norma takes off her glasses.

NORMA

Nonsense. There's room over the garage. Max will take you there...Max!

THE CAMERA MOVES

GILLIS' VOICE

TOWARD NORMA'S FACE,  
right up to her  
eyes.

She sure could say a lot of things with those pale eyes of hers. They'd been her trade mark. They'd made her the Number One Vamp of another era. I remember a rather florid description in an old fan magazine which said: "Her eyes are like two moonlit waterholes, where strange animals come to drink."

DISSOLVE TO:

A-36

SMALL STAIRCASE, LEAD-

GILLIS' VOICE

ING TO ROOM OVER GARAGE  
Max, an electric light  
bulb in his hand, is  
leading Gillis up.  
Gillis carries a batch  
of the manuscript.

I felt kind of pleased with the way I'd handled the situation. I'd dropped the hook, and she'd snapped at it. Now my car would be safe down below, while I did a patch-up job on the script. And there should be plenty of money in it...

Max pushes open a door at the top of the stairs.

MAX

(Opening the door)

I made your bed this afternoon.

GILLIS

Thanks.

(On second thought)

How did you know I was going to stay, this afternoon?

Max doesn't answer. He walks across to the bed, screws a bulb in the open socket above it. The light goes on, revealing:

A-37

A GABLED BEDROOM

There are dirty windows on two sides, and dingy wall-

paper on the cracked plaster walls. For furniture there is a neatly made bed, a table and a few chairs which might have been discarded from the main house.

MAX

This room has not been used for a long time.

GILLIS

It will never make house Beautiful. I guess it's O.K. for one night.

Max gives him an enigmatic look.

MAX

(Pointing)

There is the bathroom. I put in soap and a toothbrush.

GILLIS

Thanks.

(He starts taking off his coat)

Say, she's quite a character, that Norma Desmond.

MAX

She was the greatest. You wouldn't know. You are too young. In one week she got seventeen thousand fan letters. Men would bribe her manicurist to get clippings from her fingernails. There was a Maharajah who came all the way from Hyderabad to get one of her stockings. Later, he strangled himself with it.

GILLIS

I sure turned into an interesting driveway.

MAX

You did, sir.

GILLIS' VOICE

He goes out. Gillis	I pegged him as slightly
looks after him, hangs	cuckoo, too. A stroke maybe.
his coat over a chair,	Come to think of it, the
walks over to the win-	whole place seemed to have
dow, pulls down the	been stricken with a kind of
rickety Venetian blind.	creeping paralysis, out of
As he does so, he looks	beat with the rest of the
down at:	world, crumbling apart in

slow motion ...

A-38 THE TENNIS COURT OF  
THE DESMOND HOUSE  
(MOONLIGHT)

GILLIS' VOICE

There was a tennis court, or  
rather the ghost of a tennis  
court, with faded markings  
and sagging net ...

The cement surface is  
cracked in many places,  
and weeds are growing  
high.

A-39 GILLIS - IN THE WINDOW

He looks away from the court to:

A-40 THE DESMOND SWIMMING

**POOL:**

GILLIS' VOICE

There is no water in  
it, and hunks of  
mosaic which lines its  
enormous basin are  
broken away.

And of course she had a pool.  
Who didn't then? Mabel Norm-  
and and John Gilbert must  
have swum in it ten thousand  
midnights ago, and Vilma Banky  
and Rod La Roque. It was  
empty now....or was it?

A-41 GILLIS - IN THE WINDOW

He stares down, his stomach slowly turning.

A-42 THE SWIMMING POOL

At the bottom of the basin a great rat is eating a  
decaying orange. From the inlet pipe crawl two  
other rats, who join battle with the first rat over  
the orange.

A-43 GILLIS -IN THE WINDOW

He starts away, but some-  
thing attracts his atten-  
tion. He turns back and  
looks down again.

GILLIS' VOICE

There was something  
else going on below:  
the last rites for  
that hairy old chimp,  
performed with the  
utmost seriousness --  
as if she were laying  
to rest an only child.  
Was her life really  
as empty as that?

A-44 THE LAWN BELOW

Norma Desmond and Max are  
carrying the white coffin  
towards a small grave as  
which has been dug in the  
dead turf. Norma carries  
one of the candelabra, all

of its candles flickering  
in the wind. They reach  
the grave and lower the  
coffin into it. Then,  
Norma lighting his task  
with the candelabrum, Max  
takes a spade from the  
loose earth and starts  
filling in the grave.

A-45 GILLIS - IN THE WINDOW

He watches the scene be-  
low, then turns into the  
room, goes to the door  
to lock it. There is no  
key, and only a hole  
where the lock has been  
gouged out. Gillis moves  
a heavy overstuffed chair  
in front of the door, then  
walks towards the bed,  
throws himself on it,  
picking up some of the  
manuscript pages to read.

DISSOLVE

END OF SEQUENCE "A"  
SEQUENCE "B"

DISSOLVE IN ON:

B-1 LONG SHOT THE DESMOND  
HOUSE - (MORNING)

The day is overcast. The  
house is shrouded in low  
fog.

SOUND: (Distant organ  
music - improvisations  
on an odd, mournful  
theme - not too loud,  
continuing throughout  
the scene.)

B-2 THE TENNIS COURT, blurred  
over with fog.

B-3 THE EMPTY SWIMMING POOL  
Its dark outline even more  
melancholy under the misty  
blanket.

B-4 THE ROOM OVER THE GARAGE

Muted daylight seeps  
through the blinds. Gillis  
lies on the bed, under a

GILLIS' VOICE  
That night I'd had a  
mixed-up dream. In it

shabby quilt. The manuscript is beside him, some of the pages scattered on the floor. He is just opening his eyes. It takes him a moment to adjust himself to the strange surroundings. His eyes, wandering about the room. suddenly stop, startled. He lifts himself on one elbow and stares at -

B-5 THE DOOR

The heavy chair he had set against it the night before has been pushed back. The door is wide ajar.

B-6 GILLIS

He jumps out of bed. He wears, shirt, trousers and socks. Suddenly he realizes that all his possessions have been brought in. In the closet hang his shirts. His books and typewriter are neatly arranged on the table. His phonograph-radio combination is all installed. Gillis looks around startled, then sits down and starts putting on his moccasins hastily.

DISSOLVE TO:

B-7

A PAIR OF HANDS IN WHITE GLOVES, PLAYING THE ORGAN  
PULL BACK: They belong to Max von Mayerling. He is sitting erect, his bull neck taut as a wrestler's as he rights out somber chord after somber chord. He sits in a shaft of gray light coming from an open

was an organ grinder. I couldn't see his face, but the organ was all draped in black, and a chimp was dancing for pennies. When I opened my eyes, the music was still there... Where was I?

Oh yes, in that empty room over her garage. Only it wasn't empty any more. Somebody had brought in all my belongings - my books, my typewriter, my clothes...

GILLIS' VOICE

What was going on?

French window.

Through the far archway, Gillis storms into the big room.

GILLIS

Hey, you -- Max -- whatever -your-name-is -- what are my things doing here?

No answer.

GILLIS

I'm talking to you. My clothes and things are up in the room.

MAX

Naturally. I brought them myself.

GILLIS

(Furiously)

Is that so!

MAX

Why are you so upset? Is there anything missing?

GILLIS

Who said you could? Who asked you to? Norma Desmond's shadow moves into the shaft of light.

NORMA'S VOICE

I did.

Gillis looks around.

On the couch by the fireplace reclines Norma Desmond, dressed in a negligee. She rises.

NORMA

I don't know why you should be so upset. Stop that playing, Max.

(To Gillis again)

It seemed like a good idea -- if we are to work together.

GILLIS

Look, I'm supposed to fix up your script. There's nothing in the deal about my staying here.

NORMA

You'll like it here.

GILLIS

Thanks for the invitation, but



I have my own apartment.

NORMA

You can't work in an apartment  
where you owe three months' rent.

GILLIS

I'll take care of that.

NORMA

It's all taken care of. It's  
all paid for.

GILLIS

I'm used to paying my own bills.

NORMA

You proud boy, why didn't you tell  
me you were having difficulties.

GILLIS

Okay. We'll deduct it from my  
salary.

NORMA

Now, now, don't let's be small  
about such matters. We won't  
keep books.

(To Max)

Go on, unpack Mr. Gillis' things.

GILLIS

Unpack nothing. I didn't say  
I was staying.

NORMA

(Her glasses off again)

Suppose you make up your mind.

Do you want this job or don't you?

DISSOLVE TO:

B-8 BIG ROOM, NORMA DESMOND'S

HOUSE - (DAY)

Gillis sits at an impro-  
vised table, his typewriter  
in front of him, working  
hard at the manuscript.  
Pencils, shears and a  
paste-pot at hand.

Facing him at some dis-  
tance sits Norma, dressed  
in another version of her  
favorite lounging pajamas,

GILLIS' VOICE

So I let him unpack my  
things. I wanted the  
dough, and I wanted to  
get out of there as  
quickly as possible.  
I thought if I really  
got going I could toss  
it off in a couple or  
weeks. But it wasn't  
so simple, getting some  
coherence into that wild,

the cigarette contraption  
on her finger. She is  
autographing large photo-  
graphs of herself and put-  
ting them in envelopes.

scrambled melodrama  
she'd concocted. What  
made it tougher was that  
she was around all the  
time -- hovering over  
me, afraid I'd do injury  
to that precious brain-  
child of hers.

Gillis takes two or three pages from Norma's hand-  
written script, crosses them out and puts them to  
one side.

Norma rises, crosses towards Gillis, looks over his  
shoulder.

NORMA

What's that?

GILLIS

Just a scene I cut out.

NORMA

What scene?

GILLIS

The one where you go to the slave  
market. You can cut right to the  
scene where John the Baptist -

NORMA

Cut away from me?

GILLIS

Honestly, it's a little old hat.  
They don't want that any more.

NORMA

They don't? Then why do they still  
write me fan letters every day.  
Why do they beg me for my photo-  
graphs? Because they want to see  
me, me, me! Norma Desmond.

GILLIS

(Resigned)

Okay.

He pulls the page from his typewriter. As he does  
so he glances over towards Norma.

GILLIS' VOICE

On the table in front  
of her are the photo-  
graphs which she is sign-  
ing. On the long table

I didn't argue with her.  
You don't yell at a  
sleepwalker-- he may fall  
and break his neck. That's

in the living room is a gallery of photographs in various frames -- all Norma Desmond. On the piano more photographs. Above the piano an oil portrait of her. On the highboy beside him still more photographs.

DISSOLVE TO:

B-9 THE BIG ROOM - (NIGHT)

Shooting towards the big Gold Rush painting. Max, white gloves and all, steps into the shot, shoves the painting up towards the ceiling, revealing a motion picture screen. Max exits.

it -- she was still sleepwalking along the giddy heights of a lost career -- plain crazy when it came to that one subject: her celluloid self, the great Norma Desmond. How could She breathe in that house, so crowded with Norma Desmonds? More Norma Desmond and still more Norma Desmond.

GILLIS' VOICE

It wasn't all work - of course. Two or three times a week Max would haul up that enormous oil painting that had been presented to her by some Nevada Chamber of Commerce, and we'd see a movie, right in her living room.

B-10 NORMA AND GILLIS

They sit on a couch, facing the screen. On a table in front of them are champagne, cigarettes and coffee. Above their heads are the typical openings for a projector. The lights go off. From the opening above their heads shoots the wide beam of light.

GILLIS' VOICE

"So much nicer than going out," she'd say. The plain fact was that she was afraid of that world outside. Afraid it would remind her that time had passed.

B-11 MAX, IN THE PROJECTION BOOTH BEHIND THE ROOM

The light of the machine flickering over his face, which is frozen, a somber enigma.

They were silent movies, and Max would run the projection machine, which was just as well -- it kept him from giving us an accompaniment on that wheezing organ.

B-12 NORMA AND GILLIS

watching the screen. Gillis looks down and sees that Norma's hand is clasping his arm tight. He doesn't like it much but he can't do anything about it. However, when she for a second lets go his arm to pick up a glass of champagne, he gently withdraws his arm, leans away from her and crosses his arms to discourage any resumption of her approach. Norma puts the glass down doesn't find his arm, but is not aware of any significance in his maneuver. They both watch the screen.

She'd sit very close to me, and she'd smell of tuberose, which is not my favorite perfume, not by a long shot. Sometimes as we watched, she'd clutch my arm or my hand forgetting she was my employer becoming just a fan, excited about that actress up there on the screen....I guess I don't have to tell you who the star was. They were always her pictures -- that's all she wanted to see.

B-13 THE OTHER END OF THE BIG ROOM. WITH THE SCREEN

On it flickers a famous scene from one of Norma's old silent pictures. It is not to be a funny scene. It is old-fashioned, but shows her incredible beauty and the screen presence which made her the great star of her day.

B-14 NORMA AND GILLIS ON THE COUCH

NORMA

Still wonderful, isn't it? And no dialogue. We didn't need dialogue. We had faces. There just aren't any faces like that any more. Well, maybe one -- Garbo.

In a sudden flareup she jumps to her feet and stands in the flickering beam of light.

NORMA

Those idiot producers! Those imbeciles! Haven't they got any eyes? Have they forgotten what a star looks like? I'll show them. I'll be up there again. So help me!

DISSOLVE TO:

B-15 THE BIG ROOM - (NIGHT)  
It is apparently empty.  
The elaborate lamps  
make pools of light.

THE CAMERA PULLS BACK  
AND PANS to reveal a  
card table around  
which sit Norma and  
three friends - three  
actors of her period.  
They sit erect and play  
with grim seriousness.

Beside Norma sits  
Gillis, kibitzing on a  
game which bores him  
extremely. An ashtray  
on the card table is  
full and Norma holds  
it out for Gillis to  
take away. He crosses  
the room to the fire-  
place. but his eyes  
fall on the entrance  
door and he stops.

B-16 THE ENTRANCE HALL - (FROM GILLIS' POINT OF VIEW)  
Max stands in the open door. Outside are the two  
men who came to the apartment for Gillis' car.

B-17 GILLIS  
He steps back so that he cannot be seen from the  
door. A second later Max appears, looking for him.

MAX

(Quietly)

Some men are here. They asked  
for you.

GILLIS

I'm not here.

MAX

That's what I told them.

GILLIS

Good.

MAX

They found your car in the

GILLIS' VOICE

Sometimes there'd be a  
little bridge game in the  
house, at a twentieth-of-  
a cent a point. I'd get  
half her winnings. Once  
they ran up to seventy  
cents, which was about  
the only cash money I  
ever got. The others  
around the table would  
be actor friends - dim  
figures you may still  
remember from the silent  
days. I used to think of  
them as her Wax Works.

garage. They are going to tow  
it away.

Gillis doesn't know what to do. From offstage

**comes:**

NORMA'S VOICE

The ashtray, Joe dear! Can we  
have the ashtray?

Gillis dumps the cigarette butts into the cold fire-  
place, crosses to the bridge table, puts the  
ashtray down, leans over and speaks into Norma's ear.

GILLIS

I want to talk to you for a  
minute.

NORMA

Not now, my dear. I'm playing  
three no trump.

GILLIS

They've come for my car.

NORMA

Please. Now I've forgotten how  
many spades are out.

GILLIS

I need some money right now.

NORMA

Can't you wait till I'm dummy?

3.22.49

GILLIS

No.

NORMA

(Angry by now)

Please!

Gillis stands frustrated, hideously embarrassed  
by the stares of the waxworks. He turns away  
and hurries to the door.

B-18 ENTRANCE DOOR TO THE HOUSE

It is half open. Gillis comes into the shot  
and, taking cover, looks out.

B-19 COURTYARD (FROM GILLIS' ANGLE)

The men from the finance company are cranking up  
the car. Max stands watching silently. When they  
finish the cranking job, the men climb into the  
front seat of the truck.

B-20 GILLIS - AT THE DOOR

Over the shot the SOUND of the truck being started

and the cars moving away. Gillis moves out into the courtyard and stands staring after the car. From the house comes Norma.

NORMA

Now what is it? Where's the fire?

GILLIS

I've lost my car.

NORMA

Oh...and I thought it was a matter of life and death.

GILLIS

It is to me. That's why I came to this house. That's why I took this job -- ghost writing!

NORMA

Now you're being silly. We don't need two cars. We have a car. And not one of those cheap new things made of chromium and spit. An Isotta-Fraschini. Have you ever heard of Isotta-Fraschinis? All hand-made. Cost me twenty-eight thousand dollars.

THE CAMERA HAS PANNED over to the garage and FOCUSES on the dirty Isotta-Fraschini on its blocks.

DISSOLVE TO:

B-21 NORMA'S ISOTTA-FRASCHINI  
DRIVING IN THE HILLS  
ABOVE SUNSET (DAY)

Max is at the wheel,  
dressed as usual except  
for a chauffeurfs cap.

GILLIS' VOICE

So Max got that old bus  
down off its blocks and  
polished it up. She'd  
take me for rides in the  
hills above Sunset.

B-22 INSIDE THE CAR  
Gillis sits beside Norma,  
who is wearing a smart  
tailleur and her eternal  
sun glasses. Gillis  
wears his sport jacket-  
flannel trousers-moccasin  
combinatIon.

The whole thing was up-  
holstered in leopard  
skin, and had one of  
those car phones, all  
gold-plated.

He sits uncomfortably. Norma is studying him.

NORMA

That's a dreadful shirt you're wearing.

GILLIS

What's wrong with It?

NORMA

Nothing, if you work in a filling station. And I'm getting rather bored with that sport jacket, and those same baggy pants.

(She picks up  
the car phone)

Max, what's a good men's shop in town? The very best... Well, go there !

GILLIS

I don't need any clothes, and I certainly don't want you buying them for --

NORMA

Why begrudge me a little fun? I just want you to look nice, my stray little boy.

By this time Max has made a U-turn.

QUICK DISSOLVE TO:

B-23 INT. MEN'S DEPARTMENT, AN ELEGANT WILSHIRE STORE  
Gillis stands in front of a full-length triple mirror, surrounded by a couple of salesmen and the tailor, who is busily working out alterations. Gillis wears a double-breasted gray flannel coat with chalk stripes. His trousers belong to another suit of glen plaid. Norma is running the show.

NORMA

There's nothing like gray flannel with a chalk stripe.

(she points at  
the trousers)

This one single-breasted, of course.

(to another salesman)

Now we need a topcoat. Let's see what you have in camel's hair.

The salesman leaves.

NORMA



How about some evening clothes?

GILLIS

I don't need a tuxedo.

NORMA

Of course you do. A tuxedo and tails.

GILLIS

Tails. That's ridiculous.

NORMA

You'll need them for parties.  
You'll need them for New Year's Eve.

(to a salesman)

Where are your evening clothes?

SALESMAN

This way, Madame.

He leads her off. The other salesman arrives with a selection of topcoats.

SALESMAN

Here are some camel hairs, but I'd like you just to feel this one. It's Vicuna. Of course, it's a little more expensive.

GILLIS

A camel's hair will do.

SALESMAN

(With an insulting inflection)

As long as the lady is paying for it, why not take the Vicuna?

DISSOLVE:

END OF SEQUENCE "B"

SEQUENCE "C"

DISSOLVE IN:

C-1 LONG SHOT DESMOND HOUSE  
A day in December. Rain.  
QUICK DISSOLVE TO:

C-2 INT. ROOM OVER GARAGE  
Water is drizzling from  
two or three spots in the  
ceiling into pans and  
bowls set to catch it,  
one bowl right on the  
bed. The room is almost

GILLIS' VOICE  
The last week in December  
the rains came -- a great  
big package of rain.  
Over-sized, like every-  
thing else in California.

emptied of Gillis' belongings by now. Max is carrying out a handful of new suits on hangers. He has a dressing gown over his shoulder. Gillis holds a stack of shirts, his typewriter, and some manuscript. He surveys the room for the last time, to see whether he's forgotten anything. He has. He puts down the typewriter and picks up from under the bed a pair of very smart red leather bedroom slippers. He tucks them under his arm, picks up the typewriter and leaves.

QUICK DISSOLVE TO:

C-3

A BEDROOM IN THE MAIN HOUSE

It is obviously a man's room -- heavy Spanish furniture -- one wall nothing but a closet with shelves and drawers for shirts and shoes. Max is hanging up the suits. Gillis throws the shirts on a big chair, tosses the slippers at the foot of the bed, places the typewriter and manuscript on a desk at the window.

GILLIS

Whose room was this?

MAX

It was the room of the husband.  
Or of the husbands, I should say.  
Madame has been married three  
times.

Slightly embarrassed, Gillis picks up his toilet kit with razor, toothbrushes, soap, etc., and starts towards the bathroom, pausing en route at a rain-splattered window.

GILLIS

I guess this is the one you  
can see Catalina from. Only

It came right through the old roof of my room above the garage. She had Max move me to the main house. I didn't much like the idea -- the only time I could have to myself was in that room -- but it was better than sleeping in a rain-coat and galoshes.

this isn't the day.

He proceeds towards the half-opened door leading to the bathroom. Something strikes his attention and he stops. As in the door to the room above the garage, this lock, too, has been gouged out.

GILLIS

Hey, what's this with the door? There isn't any lock.

MAX

There are no locks anywhere in this house.

He points to the entrance door of the room, and to another door.

GILLIS

How come?

MAX

The doctor suggested it.

GILLIS

What doctor?

MAX

Madame's doctor. She has moments of melancholy. There have been some suicide attempts.

GILLIS

Uh-huh?

MAX

We have to be very careful. No sleeping pills, no razor blades. We shut off the gas in her bedroom.

GILLIS

Why? Her career? She got enough out of it. She's not forgotten. She still gets those fan letters.

MAX

I wouldn't look too closely at the postmarks.

GILLIS

You send them. Is that it, Max?

MAX

I'd better press your evening clothes, sir. You have not forgotten Madame's New Year's party.

GILLIS

No, I haven't. I suppose all  
the waxworks are coming?

MAX

I don't know, sir. Madame made  
the arrangements.

Max leaves. Gillis comes out of the bathroom, picks  
up his shirts, goes over to a closet, opens it. As  
he does so one of the doors without a lock swings  
slightly open. Gillis looks through the half-open  
door and sees.

C-4 NORMA DESMOND'S ROOM

It is empty. The rainy  
day does nothing to  
help its gloom.

GILLIS' VOICE

There it was again - that  
room of hers, all satin and  
ruffles, and that bed like  
a gilded rowboat. The per-  
fect setting for a silent  
movie queen. Poor devil,  
still waving proudly to a  
parade which had long since  
passed her by.

He pushes the door shut  
and walks back into the  
room.

DISSOLVE TO:

C-5 STAIRCASE OF DESMOND  
HOUSE (NIGHT)

Gillis is coming down the  
stairs in his tailcoat  
adjusting the handkerchief  
in his pocket. He obviously  
feels a little uneasy in  
this outfit. From below  
comes a tango of the Twen-  
ties. played by a small  
orchestra. Gillis stops  
in the archway leading to  
the big room and looks  
around.

GILLIS' VOICE

It was at her New Year's  
party that I found out  
how she felt about me.  
Maybe I'd been an idiot  
not to have sensed it  
was coming - that sad,  
embarrassing revelation.

C-6 THE BIG ROOM has been deco-  
rated for the occasion with  
laurel garlands. Dozens of  
candles in all the sconces  
and candelabra are ablaze.

Their flickering flames are reflected in the waxed surface of the tile floor. There is a buffet, with buckets of champagne and caviar on ice. In one corner on a little platform banked with palms. a four-piece orchestra is playing.

At the buffet are Max and Norma. She is drinking a glass of champagne. She is wearing a diamante evening dress. very high style. with long black gloves and a headdress of paradise feathers. Her eyes fall on Gillis. She puts down the glass of champagne. picks up a gardenia boutonniere and moves toward him.

NORMA

Joe, you look absolutely divine. Turn around!

GILLIS

(Embarrassed}

Please.

NORMA

Come on!

Gillis makes a slow 360-degree turn.

NORMA

Perfect. Wonderful shoulders. And I love that line.

She indicates the V from his shoulders to his hips.

GILLIS

All padding. Don't let it fool you.

NORMA

Come here!

She puts the gardenia on his lapel.

GILLIS

You know, to me dressing up was always just putting on my dark blue suit.

NORMA

I don't like those studs they've sent. I want you to have pearls. Nice big pearls.

GILLIS

Now, I'm not going to wear ear-  
rings, I can tell you that.

NORMA

Cute. Let's have some drinks.  
She leads him over to the buffet.

GILLIS

Shouldn't we wait for the others?

NORMA

(Pointing at the floor)

Careful, it's slippery. I  
had it waxed.

They reach the buffet. Max is ready with two  
glasses of champagne. Norma hands Gillis a glass.

NORMA

Here's to us.

They drink.

NORMA

You know, this floor used to  
be wood but I had it changed.  
Valentino said there is nothing  
like tiles for a tango.

She opens her arms.

GILLIS

Not on the same floor with  
Valentino!

NORMA

Just follow me.

They start to tango. After a moment --

NORMA

Don't bend back like that.

GILLIS

It's those feathers. They tickle.

Norma pulls the paradise feathers from her hair  
and tosses them away.

C-7 THE ORCHESTRA

As they play the tango, the musicians eye the danc-  
ing couple, take in the situation, exchange glances  
and turn away with professional discretion.

C-8 NORMA AND GILLIS, TANGOING

Gillis glances at his wrist watch.

GILLIS

It's a quarter past ten. What  
time are they supposed to get  
here?

NORMA

Who?

GILLIS

The other guests?

NORMA

There are no other guests. We don't want to share this night with other people. This is for you and me.

GILLIS

I understand some rich guy bought up all the tickets for a performance at the Metropolitan and sat there listening to La Traviata, all by himself. He was afraid of catching cold.

NORMA

Hold me tighter.

GILLIS

Come midnight, how about blind-folding the orchestra and smashing champagne glasses on Max's head?

NORMA

You think this is all very funny.

GILLIS

A little.

NORMA

Is it funny that I'm in love with you?

GILLIS

What's that?

NORMA

I'm in love with you. Don't you know that? I've been in love with you all along.

They dance on. Gillis is acutely embarrassed. THE CAMERA SLOWLY PULLS BACK, PANS past the faces of the musicians, who play on with a rather overemphasized lack of interest. Finally it winds up on Max, behind the buffet. He stands watching Gillis, a faint trace of pity in his eyes.

DISSOLVE TO:

C-9 NORMA'S FINGER, WITH THE

CIGARETTE GADGET, as she  
inserts a cigarette.

GILLIS' VOICE  
I'm sure a lot of you will  
laugh about this. Ridicu-  
lous situation, wasn't it?  
-- a woman almost twice my  
age ... It got to be about  
a quarter of eleven. I  
felt caught, like a cig-  
arette in the prongs of  
that contraption on her  
finger.

PULL BACK TO:

NORMA AND GILLIS sitting on a couch in front of the  
cavernous fireplace. Norma holds out her cigarette  
to Gillis, who lights it.

NORMA.

What a wonderful next year it's  
going to be. What fun we're going  
to have. I'll fill the pool for  
you. Or I'll open my house in  
Malibu, and you can have the whole  
ocean. Or I'll buy you a boat  
and we'll sail to Hawaii.

GILLIS

Stop it. You aren't going to buy  
me anything more.

NORMA

Don't be silly.

(She reaches under a  
pillow of the couch  
and brings out a  
leather box)

Here. I was going to give it to  
you at midnight.

Gillis opens the box. It contains a matched gold  
cigarette case and lighter.

NORMA

Read what's inside.

Gillis snaps open the case. Engraved inside the  
cover is: TO JOE FROM NORMA, and two bars of  
music.

GILLIS

What are the notes?

NORMA



"Mad about the boy."

GILLIS

Norma, I can't take it. You've bought me enough.

NORMA

Shut up. I'm rich. I'm richer than all this new Hollywood trash. I've got a million dollars.

GILLIS

Keep it.

NORMA

I own three blocks downtown. I have oil in Bakersfield -- pumping, pumping, pumping. What's it for but to buy us anything we want.

GILLIS

Cut out that us business.

He rises.

NORMA

What's the matter with you?

GILLIS

What right do you have to take me for granted?

NORMA

What right? Do you want me to tell you?

GILLIS

Has it ever occurred that I may have a life of my own? That there may be some girl I'm crazy about?

NORMA

Who? Some car hop, or a dress extra?

GILLIS

Why not? What I'm trying to say is that I'm all wrong for you. You want a Valentino -- somebody with polo ponies -- a big shot --

NORMA

(Getting up slowly)

What you're trying to say is that you don't want me to love you. Is that it?

Gillis doesn't answer. Norma slaps his face and rushes from the room and upstairs.

Gillis stands paralyzed, the slap burning his cheek.

C-10 THE TOP OF THE STAIRCASE AND CORRIDOR

Norma rushes up the last few steps, down the corridor and into her bedroom, banging the door. MOVE THE CAMERA toward the closed door, centering on the gouged-out lock.

C-11 GILLIS, IN THE BIG ROOM

He still stands motionless. He glances around furtively, to see if his humiliation has been observed.

C-12 THE ORCHESTRA

The musicians are playing away. They have turned their eyes away from Gillis rather too ostentatiously for comfort.

C-13 GILLIS

His eyes move over toward

C-14 MAX

He is subtler than the musicians. He appears very busy at the buffet, putting empty bottles and used glasses on a tray. He walks across the room with them.

C-15 GILLIS

He starts slowly out. As he does so his long gold key chain catches on a carved ornament of the sofa and holds him for a second of additional embarrassment. He yanks it loose and walks with as much nonchalance as he can muster to

C-16 THE HALL

Crossing towards the coat closet, Gillis throws a look upstairs. Then he pulls the Vicuna coat from its hangar and slips into it as he crosses to the entrance door. He opens the door on the darkness of the courtyard.

C-17 EXT. DESMOND HOUSE

(NIGHT - RAIN)

Gillis shuts the door.

GILLIS'VOICE

He takes a few steps forward, then stands for a while breathing deep. The rain is balm to that cheek where the slap still a burns. He walks for-

I didn't know where I was going. I just had to get out of there. I had to be with people my own age. I had to hear somebody laugh again. I thought of Artie Green. There was bound to

ward with a great sense of relief.

be a New Year's shindig going on in his apartment down on Las Palmas -- the hock shop set -- not a job in the room. but lots of

C-18 DRIVEWAY LEADING TO fun on the cuff. Gillis walks to the street, which is dark and empty. He starts down Sunset in an Easterly direction. A car passes. He tries to thumb a ride, without success. However, the second car, a florist's delivery wagon, stops. Gillis jumps in and the car drives off.

DISSOLVE TO:

C-19 ARTIE GREEN'S APARTMENT

It is the most modest one-room affair, jam packed with young people flowing over into the miniature bathroom and the microscopic kitchenette. The only drink being served is punch from a pressed-glass bowl -- but everybody is having a hell of a time. Most of the men are in slacks and sweaters, and only a few of the girls in something that vaguely suggests party dress.

Abe Burroughs sits at a small, guest-festooned piano and sings Tokio Rose. By the door, a group of young men and girls respond to the song by singing Rinso White or Dentyne Chewing Gum or something similar, in the manner of a Bach choral. Artie Green, a dark haired, pleasant-looking guy in his late twenties, is conducting with the ladle from the punch bowl. The door behind some of the singers is pushed open, jostling them out of their places. In comes Gillis, his hair and face wet, the collar of his Vicuna coat turned up. Artie stops conducting, but the commercial goes right on.

ARTIE

Well, what do you know ! Joe Gillis !

GILLIS

Hi, Artie.

ARTIE

Where have you been keeping that gorgeous face of yours?

GILLIS

In a deep freeze.

ARTIE

I almost reported you to the Bureau of Missing Persons.

(To the company)

Fans, you all know Joe Gillis, the well-known screen writer, opium smuggler and Black Dahlia suspect.

Gillis greets some of the kids by name as he and Artie push their way into the room.

ARTIE

Give me your coat.

GILLIS

Let it ride for a while.

ARTIE

You're going to stay, aren't you?

GILLIS

That was the general idea.

ARTIE

Come on.

Artie starts peeling the coat off Gillis. Its texture takes his breath away.

ARTIE

What is this - mink?

He has taken the coat. He looks at Gillis standing there in tails.

ARTIE

Judas E. Priest, who did you borrow that from? Adolphe Menjou?

GILLIS

Close, but no cigar.

Gillis stands embarrassed While Artie rolls up the Vicuna coat and tucks it above the books on a bookshelf.

ARTIE

Say, you're not really smuggling opium these days, are you?

GILLIS

Where's the bar?

The two make their way toward the punch bowl. It's a little like running the gauntlet for Gillis. There are whistles and 'stares of astonishment at his tails. When they reach the punch bowl, Artie picks up a half-filled glass and fills it.

GILLIS

Good party.

ARTIE

The greatest. They call me the Elsa Maxwell of the assistant directors.

(To some guests who are  
dipping their empty cups  
into the punch bowl)

Hey, easy on the punch bowl. Budget only calls for three drinks per extra. Fake the rest.

GILLIS

Listen, Artie, can I stick around here for a while?

ARTIE

Sure, this'll go on all night.

GILLIS

I mean, could you put me up for a couple of weeks?

ARTIE

It just so happens we have a vacancy on the couch.

GILLIS

I'll take it.

ARTIE

I'll have the bell-hop take care of your luggage.

He runs his finger across the décolleté back of a girl standing in a group next them.

ARTIE

Just register here.

The girl turns around. She is Betty Schaefer.

BETTY

Hello, Mr. Gillis.

ARTIE

You know each other?

Gillis looks at her a little puzzled.

BETTY

Let me help you. Betty Schaeter,  
Sheldrake's office.

GILLIS

Sure. Bases Loaded.

ARTIE

Wait a minute. This is the woman  
I love. What's going on? Who  
was loaded?

GILLIS

Don't worry. She's just a fan  
for my literary output.

BETTY

(to Artie)

Hurt feelings department.

GILLIS

About that luggage. Where's  
the phone?

ARTIE

Over by the Rainbow Room.

Gillis squeezes his way through groups of people  
to the telephone, which is next to an open door  
leading to the bathroom. The phone is busy. A  
girl sits listening to it, giggling wildly. Another  
girl beside her is laughing too. They are apparently  
sharing a conversation with some man on the other end  
of the wire. The telephone passes from hand to hand.  
Gillis watches impatiently, then

GILLIS

When you're through with that  
thing, can I have it?

The girl just nods, going on with her chattering.  
Gillis stands waiting, and Betty Schaefer comes up  
with his glass.

BETTY

You forgot this.

GILLIS

Thanks.

BETTY

I've been hoping to run into you.

GILLIS

What for? To recover that knife  
you stuck in my back?

BETTY

I felt a little guilty, so I got out some of your old stories.

GILLIS

Why, you sweet kid.

BETTY

There's one called...Window... something with a window.

GILLIS

Dark Windows. How did you like it?

BETTY

I didn't.

GILLIS

Thank you.

BETTY

Except for about six pages.

You've got a flashback there ...

There is too much racket for her.

BETTY

Is there someplace we can talk?

GILLIS

How about the Rainbow Room?

They squeeze their way towards the bathroom, past Artie.

ARTIE

I said you could have my couch.

I didn't say you could have my girl.

BETTY

This is shop talk.

She and Gillis go through the open door into

C-20

ARTIE'S BATHROOM

It's a little less noisy, although there are some guests there, chatting and having fun. Betty and Gillis sit down on the edge of the tub.

GILLIS

Now if I got you correctly, there was a short stretch of my fiction you found worthy of notice.

BETTY

The flashback in the courtroom, when she tells about being a school teacher.

GILLIS

I had a teacher like that once.

BETTY

Maybe that's why it's good.  
It's true, it's moving. Now  
why don't you use that character...

GILLIS

Who wants true? Who wants moving?

BETTY

Drop that attitude. Here's some-  
thing really worth while.

GILLIS

Want me to start right now?  
Maybe there's some paper around.

BETTY

I'm serious. I've got a few ideas.

GILLIS

I've got some ideas myself. One  
of them being this is New Year's  
Eve. How about living it up a  
little?

BETTY

As for instance?

GILLIS

Well....

BETTY

We could make some paper boats  
and have a regatta. Or should  
we just turn on the shower?

GILLIS

How about capturing the kitchen  
and barricading the door?

BETTY

Are you hungry?

GILLIS

Hungry? After twelve years in  
the Burmese jungle. I am starving,  
Lady Agatha -- starving for a  
white shoulder --

BETTY

Phillip, you're mad!

One of the girls who was on the phone comes to  
the door.

GIRL

You can have the phone now.



GILLIS

(Paying no attention)

Thirsting for the coolness of  
your lips -

BETTY

No, Phillip, no. We must be  
strong. You're still wearing  
the uniform of the Coldstream  
Guards! Furthermore, you can  
have the phone now.

GILLIS

O.K.

(He gets up, starts  
out, turns)

I find I'm terribly afraid of  
losing you.

BETTY

You won't.

(She takes the glass  
out of his hand)

I'll get us a refill of  
this awful stuff.

GILLIS

You'll be waiting for me?

BETTY

With a wildly beating heart.

GILLIS

Life can be beautiful!

He leaves.

C-21 THE MAIN ROOM

Gillis squeezes himself through some guests to  
the phone. He has to stand in a cramped position,  
holding the instrument close to him as he dials  
a number.

GILLIS

Max? This is Mr. Gillis.

I want you to do me a favor.

C-22 NORMA DESMOND HOUSE

Max is at the phone, in the lower hall.

MAX

I am sorry, Mr. Gillis.

I cannot talk now.

C-23 GILLIS ON THE PHONE

GILLIS

Yes you can. I want you to get my old suitcase and I want you to throw in my old clothes -- the ones I came with, and my typewriter. I'll have somebody pick them up.

C-24 MAX AT THE PHONE

MAX

I have no time to talk. The doctor is here.

C-25 GILLIS ON THE PHONE

GILLIS

What doctor? What's going on?

C-26 MAX AT THE PHONE

MAX

She got the razor from your room. She cut her wrists.

Max hangs up, moves toward the staircase.

C-27 GILLIS AT THE PHONE

GILLIS

Max ! Max !

He hangs up the dead receiver, stands numb with shock. Betty elbows her way up to him, carrying the two punch glasses filled again.

BETTY

I just got the recipe: take two packages of cough drops, dissolve in one gallon of lukewarm grape juice --

Gillis looks up at her. Without a word he pushes her aside so that she spills the drink. He makes his way through the guests to the Vicuna coat, pulls it from the shelf, some books tumbling with it, and rushes towards the door and out. Betty stands looking after him, completely bewildered.

DISSOLVE TO:

C-28 EXT. DESMOND HOUSE - (NIGHT, RAIN)

The doctor's car is parked in the driveway. A taxi pulls up. Gillis, in his Vicuna coat now, jumps out, throws a couple of dollars to the driver and runs toward the house.

C-28a DOORWAY, NORMA DESMOND HOUSE>

Max is opening the door to let out the doctor, a professional looking man carrying a black bag.

Gillis runs into the SHOT.

GILLIS

How is she?

MAX

She is upstairs.

Gillis starts to push past Max. Max grabs his arm.

MAX

Be careful. Do not race up the stairs. The musicians must not know what has happened.

Gillis goes into the house.

C-29 ENTRANCE HALL AND STAIRCASE

Gillis crosses the hall and starts up the stairs.

C-30 INT. NORMA DESMOND'S ROOM

Only one alabaster lamp lights the big, cold room. On the bed lies Norma in her evening dress. She is white as a sheet. Her wrists are bandaged. Her eyes are wide open, staring at the ceiling. One of her shoes has half slipped off her foot. The other is on. Gillis opens the door and stands there for a second. Then he slowly moves to the foot of the bed. He takes the shoes from her feet and puts them on the floor.

NORMA

Go away.

GILLIS

What kind of a silly thing was that to do?

NORMA

To fall in love with you -- that was the idiotic thing.

GILLIS

It sure would have made attractive headlines: Great Star Kills Herself for Unknown Writer.

NORMA

Great stars have great pride.

She puts one bandaged forearm over her eyes, sobbing. Gillis walks slowly over to the mantelpiece, stands there for awhile.

NORMA

Go away. Go to that girl of yours.

GILLIS

Look, I was making that up because

I thought the whole thing was a mistake. I didn't want to hurt you. You've been good to me. You're the only person in this stinking town that has been good to me.

NORMA

Why don't you just say thank you and go, go, go --

GILLIS

Not until you promise to act like a sensible human being.

NORMA

I'll do it again, I'll do it again, I'll do it again!

Gillis stands looking at her helplessly.

C-31 LIVING ROOM, THE DESMOND HOUSE

The candles burned down, the orchestra playing to the emptiness. The orchestra leader looks at his watch, rises, silences the orchestra, then starts them in on Auld Lang Syne.

C-32 INT. NORMA'S ROOM

Gillis still stands. Norma lies on the bed, arms over her eyes, sobbing.

GILLIS

Happy New Year.

Norma continues to sob. Gillis goes to the bed, puts his arms on her shoulders and turns her around.

GILLIS

Happy New Year.

Norma looks at him, tears in her eyes. Slowly she enfolds him in her bandaged arms.

NORMA

Happy New Year. darling.

She kisses him.

DISSOLVE

END OF SEQUENCE "C"

SEQUENCE "D"

DISSOLVE IN ON:

D-1 INT. HALLWAY, NORMA

GILLIS' VOICE

DESMOND'S HOUSE (DAY)

Around the middle of May some incidents happened

The telephone is heard ringing. Max comes from

which I think I should tell you about.

living room to the phone,  
picks it up.

MAX

Hello ... Yes?

D-1a BETTY SCHAEFER, AT THE PHONE ON HER DESK IN THE  
READERS' DEPARTMENT

BETTY

Is this Crestview 5-1733? ... I'm  
sorry to bother you again, but I've  
confirmed the number. I must speak  
to Mr. Gillis.

D-1b MAX, AT THE PHONE

MAX

He is not here.

D-1c BETTY ON THE PHONE

BETTY

Where can I reach him? Maybe  
somebody else in the house could  
tell me.

D-1d MAX ON THE PHONE

MAX

Nobody here can give you any  
information. You will please  
not call again.

He hangs up. From off comes:

NORMA'S VOICE

Who was it, Max? What is it?

D-1e PATIO, NORMA'S HOUSE

It is a sunny day. The garden is in somewhat better  
shape. The old house looks less unkept. The pool  
is filled. Norma sits on a wicker chaise longue, her  
face shielded by an enormous straw hat, her eyes by  
dark glasses. Gillis, in bathing trunks, is on a  
rubber mattress in the pool. Max comes to the  
entrance door.

MAX

Nothing, Madame. Somebody Inqu-  
iring about a stray dog. We must  
have a number very similar to the  
pound.

He starts to turn back.

NORMA

Wait a minute. I want you to get  
out the car. You're going to

take the script over to Paramount  
and deliver it to Mr. De Mille in  
person.

MAX

Yes, Madame.

He goes into the house.

GILLIS

(climbing out  
of the water)

You're really going to send it  
to De Mille?

NORMA

This is the right day.

She indicates a typewritten letter she is holding.

NORMA (Cont'd)

The chart from my astrologer.  
She read deMille's horoscope.  
She read mine.

GILLIS

Did she read the script?

NORMA

DeMille is Leo. I'm Scorpio.  
Mars has been transmitting  
Jupiter for weeks. Today is  
the day of greatest conjunction.  
Now turn around. Let me dry  
you.

She puts the towel around his sholders and starts  
drying him.

GILLIS

I hope you realize, Norma,  
that scripts don't sell on  
astrologers' charts.

NORMA

I'm not just selling the script.  
I'm selling me. DeMille always  
said I was his greatest star.

GILLIS

When did he say it, Norma?

NORMA

So he said it quite a few years  
ago. So what? I never looked  
better in my life. Do you know  
why? Because I've never been as

happy in my life.  
She kisses him.

DISSOLVE TO:

D-2 INT. THE ISOTTA, DRIVING  
DOWN SUNSET ABOUT 8:30  
IN THE EVENING

Max is driving. In the tonneau sit Norma, in a chinchilla wrap, and Gillis in his tuxedo. Norma is rummaging through her evening bag. She finds a cigarette case, opens it. It is empty.

GILLIS' VOICE

A few evenings later we were going to the house of one of the waxworks for some bridge. She'd taught me how to play bridge by then, just as she'd taught me some fancy tango steps, and what wine to drink with what fish.

NORMA

That idiot. He forgot to fill my cigarette case.

GILLIS

(Proffering his case)

Have one of mine.

NORMA

They're awful. They make me cough.

GILLIS

(Pushing open the glass partition, to Max)

Pull up at the drugstore, will you, Max.

(To Norma)

I'll get you some.

NORMA

You're a darling.

She takes a dollar bill from her purse and gives it to him.

D-3 EXT. SCHWAB'S DRUGSTORE

The car drives up and Gillis hurries into the store.

D-4 INT. SCHWAB'S DRUGSTORE

Business is still rather lively. There are about a dozen shoppers, and the soda counter is half filled. Gillis enters and steps to the tobacco counter.

GILLIS

(To the salesgirl)

Give me a pack of those Turkish

cigarettes -- Melachrinos.

The girl opens the glass showcase to locate the fancy brand. From OFF comes

ARTIE'S VOICE

Stick 'em up, Gillis, or I'll  
let you have it!

Gillis turns.

D-5

AT THE SODA FOUNTAIN

Artie Green and Betty Schaefer sit having a sandwich and a milk shake. With his forefinger and a sound effect, Artie riddles Gillis' body. Gillis walks INTO THE SHOT.

GILLIS

Hello, Artie. Good evening,  
Miss Schaefer.

BETTY

(Excitedly)

You don't know how glad I am  
to see you!

ARTIE

Walking out on the mob. What's  
the big idea?

GILLIS

I'm sorry about New Year's. Would  
you believe me if I said I had  
to be with a sick friend?

ARTIE

Someone in the formal set, no  
doubt, with a ten-carat kidney  
stone.

BETTY

Stop it, Artie, will you?

(To Gillis)

Where have you been keeping your-  
self? I've got the most wonderful  
news for you.

GILLIS

I haven't been keeping myself at  
all. Not lately.

BETTY

I called your agent. I called the  
Screen Writers Guild. Finally your  
old apartment gave me some Crestview  
number. There was always somebody



with an accent growling at me. You were not there. You were not to be spoken to. They never heard of you.

GILLIS

Is that so? What's the wonderful news?

BETTY

Sheldrake likes that angle about the teacher.

GILLIS

What teacher?

BETTY

Dark Windows. I got him all hopped up about it.

GILLIS

You did?

BETTY

He thinks it could be made into something.

GILLIS

Into what? A lampshade?

BETTY

Into something for Barbara Stanwyck. They have a commitment with Barbara Stanwyck.

ARTIE

Unless you'd rather have Sarah Bernhardt.

BETTY

This is on the level. Sheldrake really went for it.

GILLIS

O.K. Where's the cash?

BETTY

Where's the story? I bluffed it out with a few notions of my own. It's really just a springboard. It needs work.

GILLIS

I was afraid of that.

BETTY

I've got twenty pages of notes. I've got a pretty good character for the man.

ARTIE

Could you write in plenty of background action, so they'll need an extra assistant director?

BETTY

Shut up, Artie.

(To Gillis)

Now if we could sit down for two weeks and get a story.

GILLIS

Sorry, Miss Schaefer, but I've given up writing on spec.

BETTY

I tell you this is half sold.

GILLIS

As a matter of fact. I've given up writing altogether.

Max has appeared in the door.

MAX

Mr. Gillis, if you please.

GILLIS

Right with you.

Max leaves.

ARTIE

The accent! I've got it: this guy is in the pay of a foreign government. Get those studs. Get those cuff-links.

GILLIS

I've got to run along. Thanks anyway for your interest in my career.

BETTY

It's not your career -- it's mine. I kind of hoped to get in on this deal. I don't want to be a reader all my life. I want to write.

GILLIS

Sorry if I crossed you up.

BETTY

You sure have.

GILLIS

So long.

He leaves.

ARTIE

(Patting her hand)

Babe, it's like that producer says:  
In life, you've got to take the  
bitter with the sour.

D-6 THE ISOTTA, PARKED OUTSIDE  
Gillis comes from Schwab's, gets into the car.  
Max takes off.

NORMA

What on earth, darling? It took  
you hours.

GILLIS

I ran into some people I knew.

NORMA

Where are my cigarettes?

GILLIS

Where are your...?

He realizes he's forgotten them, takes the dollar  
and hands it back to her.

GILLIS

Norma, you're smoking too much.

DISSOLVE TO:

D-7 LIVING ROOM, NORMA  
DESMOND'S HOUSE  
(EARLY AFTERNOON)

Start on a tiny  
parasol being  
twirled...Norma  
peeks out from one  
side of the parasol,  
a bandanna tied  
around her head with  
a rabbit's-ear bow.  
She bats her eyes,  
winks roguishly.

GILLIS' VOICE

Whenever she suspected I  
was getting bored, she  
would put on a live show  
for me: the Norma Desmond  
Follies. Her first number  
was always the Mack Sennett  
Bathing Beauty.

THE CAMERA PULLS BACK to reveal that Norma's black  
pyjama trousers are rolled up over her knees and her  
black stockings rolled down below them. The whole  
effect approximates a Mack Sennett bathing costume  
pretty effectively. She points at a leather pour.

NORMA

This is a rock.

She climbs on it, pantomimes timidity, an attempted  
dive, then jumps off.

Gillis lolls on a couch, watching the performance,  
very bored.

NORMA

I can still see myself in the line: Bebe Daniels, Marie Prevost, Mabel Normand ... Mabel was always stepping on my feet ...What's the matter with you, darling? Why are you so glum?

GILLIS

(Lighting a cigarette with a match)

Nothing is the matter. I'm having a great time. Show me some more.

NORMA

(Taking the match)

All right. Give me this. I need it for a moustache. Now close your eyes.

She runs out of the picture. Gillis has closed his eyes. THE CAMERA MOVES to his face.

GILLIS' VOICE

Something was the matter, all right. I was thinking about that girl of Artie's, that Miss Schaefer. She was so like all us writers when we first hit Hollywood -- itching with ambition, panting to get your names up there: Screenplay by. Original Story by. Hmph! Audiences don't know somebody sits down and writes a picture. They think the actors make it up as they go along.

NORMA'S VOICE

Open your eyes.

Gillis opens his eyes.

Norma has equipped herself with a derby hat, a cane, and blacked in a small moustache. She goes into a little Chaplin routine. While she is doing it, the telephone rings. After a moment Max comes to the living room door.

MAX

Madame is wanted on the telephone.

NORMA

You know better than to interrupt me.

MAX

Paramount is calling.

NORMA

Who?

MAX

Paramount studios.

NORMA

(To Gillis)

Now, now do you believe me? I told you deMille would jump at it.

MAX

It is not Mr. deMille in person. It is someone by the name of Gordon Cole. He says it's very important.

NORMA

Certainly it's important. It's important enough for Mr. deMille to call me personally. The idea of having an assistant call me!

MAX

I myself was surprised at Mr. deMille's manners.

NORMA

Say that I'm busy, and hang up.

MAX

Very good, Madam.

He bows and exits.

NORMA

How do you like that? We've made twelve pictures together. His greatest successes.

GILLIS

Maybe deMille is shooting.

NORMA

I know that trick! He wants to belittle me. He's trying to get my price down. I've waited twenty years for this call. Now Mr. deMille can wait till I'm good and ready.

DISSOLVE TO:

D-8 NORMA, IN THE TONNEAU  
OF THE LIMOUSINE,

DRIVING DOWN MELROSE

She is in full makeup,  
with a veil, a daring  
hat, a suit so stunning  
only she would venture  
to wear it. THE CAMERA  
PULLS BACK. Beside her  
sits Gillis in the glen  
plaid suit. Max is  
driving.

GILLIS' VOICE

About three days later she  
was good and ready. In-  
credible as it may seem,  
there had been some more  
of those calls from  
Paramount. So she put on  
about half a pound of  
makeup, fixed it up with  
a veil, and set forth to  
see deMille in person.

Norma is examining her face in the mirror of her  
vanity. Max, while driving, sees her in the rear  
view mirror.

MAX

If you will pardon me, Madame.  
The shadow over the left eye  
is not quite balanced.

NORMA

Thank you, Max.

With a handkerchief, she corrects it.

D-9

MAIN GATE, EXT. PARAMOUNT STUDIO

The car drives down Bronson and stops smack in front  
of the iron gate. A young policeman is talking to  
an extra; an old policeman sits reading a newspaper.  
Max sounds the horn impatiently.

YOUNG POLICEMAN

Hold that noise!

MAX

To see Mr. de Mille. Open the gate.

YOUNG POLICEMAN

Mr. deMille is shooting. You  
got an appointment?

MAX

No appointment is necessary. I  
am bringing Norma Desmond.

YOUNG POLICEMAN

Norma Who?

Norma has rolled down the window on her side. She  
calls to the old policeman.

NORMA

Jonesy! Come here, Jonesy!

OLD POLICEMAN

Yeah?

(He comes forward slowly)

Why, if it isn't Miss Desmond!

How have you been, Miss Desmond?

NORMA

Fine, Jonesy. Now open that gate.

OLD POLICEMAN

Sure, Miss Desmond.

(To the young policeman}

Come on, Mac.

YOUNG POLICEMAN

They can't drive on the lot  
without a pass.

OLD POLICEMAN

Miss Desmond can. Come on.

They fling open the gate.

OLD POLICEMAN

(As the car drives through)

Stage eighteen, Miss Desmond.

NORMA

Thank you, Jonesy. And teach  
your friend some manners. Tell  
him without me he wouldn't have  
any job, because without me there  
wouldn't be any Paramount Studio.

(To Max)

Go on.

They drive through the gates. The old policeman  
goes to wall phone beside the gate, dials a number.

OLD POLICEMAN

(Into phone)

Norma Desmond coming in to  
see Mr. deMille.

D-10 STAGE 18

A scene from SAMPSON AND DELILAH is being rehearsed  
in the background. The usual turbulent activity  
surrounds it: extras. makeup men, grips,  
assistants, etc., etc. In the dim foreground a  
stage hand is answering a stand telephone. He  
puts down the phone and moves (CAMERA WITH HIM)  
to a second assistant.

STAGE HAND

Norma Desmond is coming to see  
Mr. deMille.

The second assistant walks (CAMERA WITH HIM)  
to the first assistant.

2nd ASSISTANT

Norma Desmond coming in to  
see Mr. deMille.

The first assistant (CAMERA WITH HIM) hurries  
to the set. Sitting with his back toward us  
is C.B. himself. He is rehearsing a scene with  
Hedy Lamarr.

1ST ASSISTANT

Norma Desmond is coming in to  
see you, Mr. deMille.

C. B. turns his head.

DEMILLE

Norma Desmond?

1st ASSISTANT

She must be a million years old.

DEMILLE

I hate to think where that puts  
me. I could be her father.

1ST ASSISTANT

I'm terribly sorry, Mr. de Mille.  
By this time de Mille is on his feet.

DEMILLE

It must be about that appalling  
script of hers. What can I say  
to her? What can I say?

1ST ASSISTANT

I can tell her you're all tied  
up in the projection room. I  
can give her the brush ...

DEMILLE

Listen, thirty million fans  
have given her the brush.  
Isn't that enough?

1ST ASSISTANT

I didn't mean to --

DEMILLE

Of course you didn't. You didn't  
know Norma Desmond as a plucky  
little girl of seventeen, with  
more courage and wit and heart  
than ever came together in one  
youngster.



1ST ASSISTANT

I hear she was a terror to  
work with.

DEMILLE

She got to be. A dozen press  
agents working overtime can  
do terrible things to the human  
spirit.

(to the set)

Hold everything.

He leaves, accompanied by his entourage.

D-11 EXT. STAGE 18

Norma's limousine drives up. Max dismounts  
and opens the door.

NORMA

(taking Gillis's hand)

Don't you want to come along,  
darling?

GILLIS

I don't think so. It's your  
script. It's your show.  
Good luck.

NORMA

Thank you, darling.

She presses his hand against her cheek, descends  
from the car and walks toward -

D-12 THE DOOR OF STAGE 18

The first assistant is holding it open. In the door-  
way stands Mr. deMille. Seeing Norma, he stretches  
out his arms.

DE MILLE

Hello, young fellow.

NORMA

Hello, Mr. deMille.

She has reached him. They embrace.

NORMA

Last time I saw you was someplace  
very gay. I remember waving to you.  
I was dancing on a table.

DE MILLE

Lots of people were. Lindbergh had  
just landed in Paris. Come on in.

He leads her into

D-13 STAGE 18

During the ensuing dialogue, Mr. deMille walks Norma towards the set.

DE MILLE

Norma, I want to apologize for not calling you.

NORMA

You'd better. I'm very angry.

DE MILLE

I'm pretty busy, as you can see...

NORMA

That's no excuse. You read the script, didn't you?

DE MILLE

Yes, I did.

NORMA

Then you could have picked up the phone yourself instead of leaving it to one of your assistants.

DE MILLE

What assistant?

NORMA

Don't play innocent. Somebody named Gordon Cole.

DE MILLE

Gordon Cole?

NORMA

And if you hadn't been pretty darned interested in that script, he wouldn't have tried to get me on the phone ten times.

DE MILLE

Gordon Cole... Look, Norma, I'm in the middle of a rehearsal.

(Indicating his own chair)

Make yourself comfortable.

He walks onto the set, accompanied by his assistants.

DE MILLE

(Sotto voce, to his first assistant)

Get me Gordon Cole on the phone.

Meanwhile, Norma starts to sit, sees the name MISS LAMARR on the chair and with a look of distaste changes and sits on the one marked

C.B. DE MILLE. From somewhere comes

A VOICE

Hey, Miss Desmond! Miss Desmond!

She looks around her.

VOICE

Up here!

Norma looks up at the scaffolding.

On the scaffold stands one of the electricians,  
next to his light.

ELECTRICIAN

It's met It's Hog-eyel

Norma waves at him.

NORMA

Hello.

Hog-eye points his light at her.

HOG-EYE

Let's get a look at you.

The beam of the lamp moves toward Norma. It hits  
her. She sits bathed in light. A couple of old  
costume extras recognize her.

EXTRAS

Say, it's Norma! Norma Desmond!

They rush over and start wringing her hand. Into  
the shot comes a middle-aged hairdresser.

HAIRDRESSER

Hello, Miss Desmond. It's Bessie.

Some elderly electricians and stagehands move in.

D-14 ANOTHER PART OF THE STAGE

The first assistant brings the portable phone to  
deMille. DeMille lifts the receiver.

DE MILLE

Hello.

D-15 GORDON COLE'S OFFICE IN THE PROPERTY DEPARTMENT,  
GORDON COLE ON THE PHONE.

COLE

Prop Department. Gordon Cole speaking.

D-16 DE MILLE ON THE PHONE

DE MILLE

Cole, this is C. B. deMille. Have  
you been calling Norma Desmond?...

What's it about?

D-17 GORDON COLE, ON THE PHONE

COLE

It's that car of hers -- an old

Isotta-Fraschini. Her chauffeur drove it on the lot the other day. It looks just right for the Crosby picture. We want to rent it for a couple of weeks.

D-18 DE MILLE ON THE PHONE

DE MILLE

(Troubled)

Oh. Well, thank you.

He hangs up, walks back towards Norma. (CAMERA WITH HIM).

Norma stills sits in the shaft of light, surrounded by about a dozen people who have come up to pay court. DeMille gestures up to Hog-eye and the light shifts away. The people about Norma disperse slowly with various ad-libs.

DE MILLE

Well, Norma ...

(He sits down next to her)

I got hold of Gordon Cole.

Norma hasn't heard a word.

NORMA

Did you see them? Did you see how they came?

DE MILLE

You know, crazy things happen in this business. I hope you haven't lost your sense of humor ...

Suddenly he realizes that she is crying. She takes the handkerchief from his pocket and puts it over her eyes.

DEMILLE

What's the matter, Norma?

NORMA

Nothing. I just didn't realize what it would be like to come back to the old studio. I had no idea how I'd missed it.

DEMILLE

We've missed you too, dear.

NORMA

We'll be working again, won't we, Chief?  
We'll make our greatest picture.

DEMILLE

That's what I want to talk to you about.

NORMA

It's a good script, isn't it?

DEMILLE

It's got a lot of good things. Of course, it would be an expensive picture...

NORMA

I don't care about the money.

I just want to work again. You don't know what it means to know that you want me.

DEMILLE

Nothing would thrill me more -- if it were possible.

NORMA

But remember, darling -- I don't work before ten in the morning, and never after 4:30 in the afternoon.

The first assistant comes up.

1ST ASSISTANT

We're ready with the shot, Mr. deMille.

DEMILLE

You'll pardon me, Norma? Why don't you just sit and watch?

(He steps onto the set)

O.K. Here we go.

1ST ASSISTANT

Roll 'em.

DEMILLE

Action!

The scene starts.

D-19

THE ISOTTA, PARKED OUTSIDE STAGE 18

Max stands talking to Gillis, who is seated in the car.

MAX

(Pointing to the row of offices in the building opposite)

You see those offices there, Mr. Gillis? They used to be her dressing room, The whole row.

GILLIS

That didn't leave much for Wallace Reid.

MAX

He had a great big bungalow on wheels. I had the upstairs. See where it says 'Readers' Department'? I remember my walls were covered with black patent leather...

The words "Readers' Department" have registered on Gillis' mind. He gets out of the car.

GILLIS

I'll be with you in a minute.

He crosses the street towards the green staircase leading to the second floor.

Meanwhile, two prop men walking down the street come into the SHOT.

1ST PROP MAN

Hey, that's the comic car Cole was talking about!

(To Max)

Do you mind if we look inside?

MAX

Go away. Go away.

D-20 CUBICLE IN THE READERS' DEPARTMENT

Behind the desk sits Betty, typing the synopsis of a novel, a half-eaten apple marking her place. The door behind her opens and Gillis enters.

GILLIS

Just so you don't think I'm a complete swine -- if there's anything in Dark Windows you can use, take it. It's all yours.

BETTY

Well, for heaven's sake!

She moves the book and the apple aside and points at the free space on the desk.

BETTY

Have a chair.

Gillis sits on the desk.

GILLIS

I mean it. It's no good to me anyway. Help yourself.

BETTY

Why should you do that?

GILLIS

If you get a hundred thousand for it, you buy me a box of chocolate creams. If you get an Oscar, I get the left foot.

BETTY

You know, I'd take you up on that in a minute. I'm just not good enough to do it all by myself.

GILLIS

What about all those ideas you had?

BETTY

See if they make sense. To begin with, I think you should throw out all that psychological stuff -- exploring a killer's sick mind.

GILLIS

Psychopaths sell like hotcakes.

BETTY

This story is about teachers -- their threadbare lives, their struggles. Here are people doing the most important job in the world, and they have to worry about getting enough money to re-sole their shoes. To me it can be as exciting as any chase, any gunplay.

GILLIS

Check.

BETTY

Now I see her teaching day classes while he teaches night school. The first time they meet ...

From below comes the SOUND of the Isotta's horn.

GILLIS

Look, if you don't mind, I haven't got time to listen to the whole plot ...

BETTY

I'll make it short.

GILLIS

Sorry. It's your baby now.

BETTY

I'm not good enough to write it

alone. We'll have to do it together.

GILLIS

I'm all tied up. I can't.

BETTY

Couldn't we work in the evenings?  
Six o'clock in the morning? This  
next month I'm completely at your  
disposal. Artie is out of town.

GILLIS

What has Artie to do with it.

BETTY

We're engaged.

GILLIS

Good for you. You've got yourself  
the best guy in town.

BETTY

I think so. They're on location  
in Arizona, shooting a Western.  
I'm free every evening, every week-  
end. If you want, we could work at  
your place.

GILLIS

It's just impossible.

BETTY

Nobody can be that busy.

There is another honk: from down below.

GILLIS

Look, Betty, It can't be done.  
It's out.

BETTY

You're tough, all right.

GILLIS

You're on your own. Stop being  
chicken-hearted and write that story.

BETTY

Honest to goodness, I hate you.

GILLIS

(Turning ln the open door)

And don't make it too dreary. How  
about this for a situation: she  
teaches daytimes. He teaches at  
night. Right? They don't even know  
each other, but they share the same  
room. It's cheaper that way. As a



matter of fact, they sleep in the same bed -- in shifts, of course.

BETTY

Are you kidding? Because I think it's good.

GILLIS

So do I.

BETTY

Came on back. Let me show you where it fits in.

She reaches in a drawer for her notes on Dark Windows.

GILLIS

(At the door)

So long.

Betty picks up the apple and is about to throw it after him.

BETTY

Oh, you --

GILLIS

And here's a title: AN APPLE FOR THE TEACHER.

He ducks out quickly, slamming the door behind him. Betty looks after him, then angrily hurls the apple into the wastebasket.

D-21

STAIRCASE OUTSIDE READERS' DEPARTMENT

Max is rushing up the stairs toward the descending Gillis.

GILLIS

What's the matter, Max?

MAX

I just found out why all those telephone calls. It is not Miss Desmond they want. It is the car they want to rent.

GILLIS

What?

Max has seen something off.

MAX

Ssh...

With his head he indicates

D-22

ENTRANCE TO STAGE 18

The first assistant has opened the door. DeMille is showing Norma out.

DE MILLE

Goodbye, young fellow. We'll see what we can do.

NORMA

(embracing him)

I'm not worried. Everything will be fine. The old team together.

Nothing can stop us.

She turns and walks out of the shot. De Mille stands for a second watching her, then turns to his assistant.

DE MILLE

Get Gordon Cole. Tell him to forget about her car. He can find another old car. I'll buy him five old cars, if necessary.

1ST ASSISTANT

Yes, Mr. De Mille.

They turn back into Stage 18.

D-23

THE ISOTTA

Gillis seated in the rear. Max is helping Norma in and putting the robe over her.

GILLIS

(Apprehensively)

How did it go?

NORMA

It couldn't have gone better. It's practically set. Of course, he has to finish this picture first, but mine will be his next.

There is an exchange of looks between Max and Gillis.

GILLIS

He must be quite a guy.

NORMA

He's a shrewd old fox. He can smell box office. Only I'm going to outfox him a little. This isn't going to be C. B. deMille's Salome. It's going to be Norma Desmond's Salome, a Norma Desmond Production, starring Norma Desmond...Home, Max.

MAX

Yes, Miss Desmond.

As he says the words, he and Gillis exchange a glance

in the rear view mirror.

SLOW DISSOLVE:

END OF SEQUENCE "D"

SEQUENCE "E"

DISSOLVE IN ON:

E-1 CLOSEUP OF NORMA'S FACE

Absolutely no makeup. A hand with a strong small flashlight comes into the picture. The beam of the flashlight travels over the face, exploring it mercilessly. While the light is still on it, two pairs of creamed hands come into the shot and start to massage it.

DISSOLVE TO:

E-2 A SHORT MONTAGE of various beauty treatments applied to Norma.

DISSOLVE TO:

E-3 NORMA BEFORE THE MIRROR  
IN HER BEDROOM

It is nine o'clock in the evening. She is in night gown and negligee and has put triangular patches on the saddle of her nose and at the outer corner of each eye. She is rubbing lotion on her hands. She gets up and crosses to the door of Gillis' room and opens it a crack.

NORMA

Joe darling, are you there?

E-4 GILLIS' ROOM

It is dark except for a lamp over the chaise longue. Gillis lies on it, fully clothed, reading a book.

GILLIS

Yes, Norma.

Through the slit in the door there is a suggestion of Norma.

NORMA

Don't turn around. Keep your

eyes on the book.

GILLIS

Yes, Norma.

Norma pushes the door open and comes in.

NORMA

I just came to say good night.

I don't want you to see me --

I'm not very attractive.

GILLIS

Good night.

NORMA

I've lost half a pound since

Tuesday.

GILLIS

Good.

NORMA

I was a little worried about the

line of my throat. This woman

has done wonders with it.

GILLIS

Good.

NORMA

You'd better get to bed yourself.

GILLIS

I think I'll read a little.

NORMA

You went out last night, didn't

you, Joe?

GILLIS

Why do you say that?

NORMA

I just happen to know it. I had

a nightmare and I screamed for

you. You weren't here. Where

were you?

GILLIS

I went for a walk.

NORMA

No you didn't. You took the

car.

GILLIS

All right, I drove to the beach.

Norma, you don't want me to feel

I'm locked up in this house?

NORMA

Of course not, Joe. It's just that I don't want to be left alone. Not now, while I'm under this terrible strain. My nerves are being torn apart. All I ask is for you to be a little patient and a little kind.

GILLIS

I haven't done anything, Norma.

NORMA

Of course you haven't. I wouldn't let you.

She bends and kisses the top of his head.

NORMA

Good night, my darling.

She goes into her room, shutting the door behind her. Gillis puts his book down and looks at her door.

E-5 THE DOOR TO NORMA'S ROOM

The light can be seen through the gouged-out keyhole. It goes out.

DISSOLVE TO:

E-6 UPPER LANDING STAIRWAY  
AND HALL BELOW (NIGHT)

Gillis, with his coat on by now, comes cautiously to the upper railing and looks down into the lighted hall below.

Max is just extinguishing the lights. Max exits in, the direction of the living room.

After a moment Gillis starts silently down the stairs.

E-7 LIVING ROOM

(Lighted only by the last flicker of a fire on the hearth). Max is putting a fire screen in front of the fire. He hears some

GILLIS' VOICE

Yes, I was playing hooky every evening along in there. It made me think I of when I was twelve and used to sneak out on the folks to see a gangster picture. This time it wasn't to see a picture, it was to try and write one. That story of mine Betty Schaerer had dug

steps and the creak or the  
main door being opened.

He looks out and sees

up kept going through

my head like a dozen  
locomotives...

E-7a THE MAIN DOOR

Gillis, in the moonlit porch,  
is closing the main door  
behind him.

E-8 LIVING ROOM

Max looks after Gillis, his  
face enigmatic as ever.

DISSOLVE TO:

E-9 GARAGE AND DRIVEWAY

(MOONLIGHT)

Gillis comes into the shot,  
gets into the Isotta, drives  
it out of the garage and down  
the driveway to Sunset, as  
quietly as possible.

DISSOLVE TO:

E-10 READERS' OFFICE BUILDING

PARAMOUNT (NIGHT)

Start on a LONG SHOT. THE  
BOOM MOVES FORWARD to the only  
two lights. They are the door  
and window of Betty Schaefer's  
cubicle. Betty sits at the  
desk, typing. Gillis, his  
coat off, his shirt-sleeves  
rolled up, is pacing the floor,  
discussing the construction of  
a sentence. The discussion at  
a stalemate, Betty suggests  
some coffee. Gillis agrees.  
From the electric plate on the  
shelf beside her, Betty takes  
a glass coffee machine. Gillis  
seats himself in her chair  
and starts typing.

Betty opens the door and comes out on the balcony to  
fill the coffee machine from the water cooler stand-  
ing beside the door.

BETTY

I got the funniest letter from

GILLIS' VOICE

So we'd started  
working on it, the  
two of us. Nights,  
when the studio was  
deserted, up in her  
little cubby-hole  
of an office.

Artie. It's rained every day since they got to Arizona. They re-wrote the whole picture for rain and shot half of it. Now the sun is out. Nobody knows when they'll get back.

She moves back into the room.

GILLIS

Good.

BETTY

What's good about it? I miss him something fierce.

GILLIS

I mean this is good dialogue along in here. It'll play.

BETTY

It will?

GILLIS

Sure. Especially with lots of music underneath, drowning it out.

BETTY

Don't you sometimes hate yourself?

GILLIS

Constantly. No, in all seriousness, it's really good. It's fun writing again. I'm happy here, honest I am.

He resumes typing. Betty puts the water on. She picks up a pack of cigarettes on the desk, finds it's empty and throws it away, sees Gillis' open gold cigarette case and lighter on the table by the couch. Betty reaches for a cigarette. The inscription engraved inside the case catches her eye. It reads:

MAD ABOUT THE BOY --

Norma

BETTY

Who's Norma?

GILLIS

Who's who?

BETTY

I'm sorry. I don't usually read private cigarette cases.

GILLIS

Oh, that. It's from a friend of mine. A middle-aged lady, very foolish and very generous.

BETTY

I'll say. This is solid gold.

GILLIS

I gave her some advice on an idiotic script.

BETTY

It's that old familiar story, you help a timid little soul across a crowded street. She turns out to be a multimillionaire and leaves you all her money.

GILLIS

That's the trouble with you readers. You know all the plots. Now suppose you proof-read page ten while the water boils.

DISSOLVE TO:

E-11

AN EMPTY STREET AT THE  
PARAMOUNT STUDIO (NIGHT)

GILLIS' VOICE

Sometimes when we got stuck we'd make a

Gillis and Betty are walking litte tour of the down it. From a stage where drowsing lot, not talk- they are erecting a new set ing much, just wandering comes a great shaft of light. down alleys between the They stop at an apple-vending sound stages, or through machine in the foreground, buy the sets they were get- themselves a couple of apples ting ready for the next and walk on.

day's shooting. As a matter of fact, it was on one of those walks when she first told me about her nose ...

DISSOLVE TO:

E-12

PARAMOUNT'S NEW YORK STREET (NIGHT)

Betty and Gillis are walking down it, THE CAMERA AHEAD OF THEM.

BETTY

Look at this street. All cardboard, all hollow, all phoney. All done with mirrors. I like it better than any street in the world. Maybe because I used to



play here when I was a kid.

GILLIS

What were you -- a child actress?

BETTY

I was born just two blocks from this studio. Right on Lemon Grove Avenue. Father was head electrician here till he died. Mother still works in Wardrobe.

GILLIS

Second generation, huh?

BETTY

Third. Grandma did stunt work for Pearl White. I come from a picture family. Naturally they took it for granted I was to become a great star. So I had ten years of dramatic lessons, diction, dancing. Then the studio made a test. Well, they didn't like my nose -- it slanted this way a little. I went to a doctor and had it fixed. They made more tests, and they were crazy about my nose -- only they didn't like my acting.

GILLIS

(Examining her nose  
by the flame of his  
lighter)

Nice job.

BETTY

Should be. It cost three hundred dollars.

GILLIS

Saddest thing I ever heard.

BETTY

Not at all. It taught me a little sense. I got me a job in the mail room, worked up to the Stenographic. Now I'm a reader...

GILLIS

Come clean, Betty. At night you weep for those lost closeups, those gala openings...

BETTY

Not once. What's wrong with being  
on the other side of the cameras?  
It's really more fun.

GILLIS

Three cheers for Betty Schaefer!  
I will now kiss that nose of yours.

BETTY

If you please.

Gillis kisses her nose. As he stands there, his  
face close to hers -

GILLIS

May I say you smell real special.

BETTY

It must be my new shampoo.

GILLIS

That's no shampoo. It's more like  
a pile of freshly laundered hand-  
kerchiefs, like a brand new auto-  
mobile. How old are you anyway?

BETTY

Twenty-two.

GILLIS

That's it -- there's nothing like  
being twenty-two. Now may I suggest  
that if we're ever to finish this  
story you keep at least two feet  
away from me ... Now back to the  
typewriter.

They start walking in the direction of the office.

DISSOLVE TO:

E-13

THE GARAGE

Gillis gets out. From the seat next him he takes a  
batch of script, folds it and puts it in his pocket.  
He suddenly becomes aware that he is watched, turns.  
Max stands in the moonlight, evidently waiting for  
him.

GILLIS

What is it, Max? Want to wash  
the car, or are you doing a little  
spying in your off hours?

MAX

You must be very careful as you  
cross the patio. Madame may be  
watching.

GILLIS

How about my going up the kitchen stairs and undressing in the dark. Will that do it?

MAX

I'm not inquiring where Mr. Gillis goes every night...

GILLIS

Why don't you? I'm writing a script and I'm dying to finish it, no matter what.

MAX

It's just that I'm very worried about Madame.

GILLIS

Sure you are. And we're not helping her any, feeding her lies and more lies. Getting herself ready for a picture ... What happens when she finds out?

MAX

She never will. That is my job. It has been for a long time. You must understand I discovered her when she was eighteen. I made her a star. I cannot let her be destroyed.

GILLIS

You made her a star?

MAX

I directed all her early pictures. There were three young directors who showed promise in those days: D.W. Griffith, C.B. deMille, and Max von Mayerling.

GILLIS

And she's turned you into a servant.

MAX

It was I who asked to come back, humiliating as it may seem. I could have gone on with my career, only I found everything unendurable after she divorced me. You see, I was her first husband.

DISSOLVE TO:

E-14 NORMA DESMOND'S BEDROOM

One lamp lit. Norma, in a white negligee, with the patches on her face, is pacing up and down -- a small, tormented, pitiable woman. Finally she opens the door to:

E-15 GILLIS' ROOM (MOONLIGHT)

Gillis lies in bed asleep, Norma in the doorway.

NORMA

You're here, Joe ... When did you come home? Where were you? Is it a woman? I know it's a woman ... Who is she? Oh Joe, why can't I ask you? I must know, I must!

Her eyes fall on Gillis' coat, which hangs over a chair. In a pocket is part of the script. Norma takes it out, looks at it. She can't see it in the moonlight. She hurries with it into:

E-16 NORMA'S BEDROOM

Carrying the script Norma goes to the lamp and looks at it. On the first page she sees something which confirms all her suspicions so it reads:

UNTITLED LOVE STORY

by

Joseph C. Gilliss

and

Betty Schaefer

DISSOLVE:

E-17 BETTY'S CUBICLE (NIGHT)

Betty is typing. Gillis sits on the couch, proof-reading a scene. Betty stops typing and Gillis becomes aware of her eyes fixed on him.

GILLIS

Hey, what's the matter...

Betty, wake up!

(He whistles and catches her attention)

Why are you staring at me like that?

BETTY

Was I? I'm sorry.

GILLIS

What's wrong with you tonight?

What is it, Betty?

BETTY

Something came up. I don't want to talk about it.

GILLIS

Why not?

BETTY

I just don't.

GILLIS

What is it you've heard. Come on, let's have it.

Betty gets up.

GILLIS

Is it about me?

Betty doesn't answer, walks out on

E-18 THE BALCONY

She leans against a post, crying. Gillis comes out after her.

GILLIS

Betty, there's no use running out on it. Let's face it, whatever it is.

BETTY

It's nothing. I got a telegram from Artie.

GILLIS

From Artie. What's wrong?

BETTY

He wants me to come on to Arizona. He says it only costs two dollars to get married there. It would kind of save us a honeymoon.

GILLIS

Why don't you? We can finish the script by Thursday.

Betty stands crying silently.

GILLIS

Stop crying. You're getting married. That's what you've always wanted.

BETTY

I don't want it now.

GILLIS

Why not? Don't you love Artie?

BETTY

Of course I love him. I always will. I'm just not in love with him any more.

GILLIS

What happened?

BETTY

You did.

There is a moment's pause before he takes her in his arms. THE CAMERA MOVES AWAY.

DISSOLVE TO:

E-19

HALL AND STAIRCASE  
DESMOND HOME- (NIGHT)

Gillis enters, closes the door as quietly as he can, and goes up the stairs.

GILLIS' VOICE

It wasn't until I got back to that peculiar prison of mine that I started facing the facts. There it was -- Betty Schaefer's future right in the palm of my hand. Betty Schaefer engaged to Artie Green, as nice a guy as ever lived. And she was in love with me. Me ! She was a fool not to sense that there was something phony in my set-up. And I was a heel not to have told her. But you just can't say those things to somebody you're crazy about. Maybe I'd never have to. Maybe I could get away with it, get away from Norma. Maybe I could wipe the whole nasty mess right out of my life...

From Norma's room comes the sound of a telephone being dialled. Gillis enters the shot and stands listening.

NORMA'S VOICE

Is this Gladstone 0858?

E-21

NORMA'S BEDROOM  
Norma lies in bed, dialing a number. She has the

beauty patches at the corners of her eyes and over her nose.

NORMA

Can I speak to Miss Betty Schaefer? She must be home by now.

E-22 A BEDROOM IN BETTY'S FLAT

Connie, a girl of Betty's age with whom she shares the flat, is on the phone. Betty, in a dressing-gown, comes from the bathroom, toothbrush in hand.

CONNIE

(Hand over mouthpiece)

Betty, here's that weird-sounding woman again.

BETTY

What is this anyway?

(Taking the phone)

This is Betty Schaefer.

E-23 NORMA AT THE PHONE

NORMA

Miss Schaefer, you must forgive me for calling you so late, but I really feel it's my duty. It's about Mr. Gillis. You do know Mr. Gillis? ...Exactly how much do you know about him? Do you know where he lives? Do you know how he lives? Do you know what he lives on?

E-24 BETTY AT THE PHONE

BETTY

Who are you? What do you want? What business is it of yours anyway?

E-25 NORMA ON THE PHONE

NORMA

Miss Schaefer, I'm trying to do you a favor. I'm trying to spare you a great deal of misery. Of course you may be too young to even suspect there are men of his sort...

NORMA (Cont'd)

I don't know what he's told you, but he does not live with relatives, nor with friends, in the usual sense of

the word. Ask him ... Ask him again.  
During the latter part of her call, the doors from Gillis' room have been pushed open and Gillis has walked towards her. Suddenly Norma senses his presence and turns around. The telephone freezes in her hand. She tries to hang it up. Very calmly Gillis takes the receiver from her hand.

GILLIS

(Into phone)

That's right, Betty, ask me again.

This is Joe.

E-26 BETTY ON THE PHONE

BETTY

Joe, where are you? What's this all about?

E-27 GILLIS ON THE PHONE

Norma beside him.

GILLIS

Or maybe it would be a better idea if you came over and saw it for yourself. The address is 10086

He hangs up. Norma looks up at him as he crosses to the other end of the room and stands staring at her. The silence becomes unbearable.

NORMA

Don't hate me, Joe. I did it because I need you. I need you as I never needed you. Look at me. Look at my hands, look at my face, look under my eyes. How can I go back to work if I'm wasting away under this torment? You don't know what I've been through these last weeks. I got myself a revolver. You don't believe me, but I did, I did! I stood in front of that mirror, only I couldn't make myself. It wouldn't be

NORMA (Cont'd)

fair to all those people who are waiting to see me back on the screen. I can't disappoint them. Only, if I'm to work, I need sleep, I need quiet, I need you! Don't just stand there hating



me! Shout at me, strike me!  
But don't hate me, Joe. Don't  
you hear me, Joe?

GILLIS

Yes, I hear you. And I wish you'd  
keep still so I can hear the doorbell  
when she rings it.

E-28 BETTY AND CONNIE, DRIVING IN A SMALL COUPE DOWN  
(NIGHT)

E-29 INT. COUPE

Connie is looking at the house numbers.

CONNIE

Here's ten thousand seventy-nine,  
Betty. It must be over there.

Betty turns the car into the driveway of Norma's  
place, stops at the entrance steps. Betty gets out.

CONNIE

Betty, let me come along with  
you. Please.

BETTY

No, I'll be all right.

She shuts the door of the car and goes up the steps.

E-30 NORMA'S BEDROOM

Norma lies on the bed. Gillis sits in a far corner  
of the room, motionless.

NORMA

(In a whimpering monotone)

I love you, Joe. I love you, Joe.

I love you, Joe. I love you, Joe.

There is the sound of footsteps below and the ringing  
of a doorbell. Gillis rises.

NORMA

What are you going to do, Joe?

Without a word, he leaves the room. Norma raises  
herself on the bed, reaching for a black negligee  
lying at the foot of it. As she does so, she dis-  
lodges her pillow a little, revealing a revolver  
hidden beneath it.

E-31 DOWNSTAIRS HALL, THE DESMOND HOUSE (DARK)

Max crosses the hall, putting on his alpaca jacket.  
He turns on the lights. Outside stands Betty.  
From the staircase comes -

GILLIS' VOICE

It's all right, Max. I'll take it.

MAX

Yes, sir.

He stands back as Gillis opens the door.

GILLIS

Hello, Betty.

BETTY

(On the threshold)

I don't know why I'm so scared,  
Joe. Is it something awful?

GILLIS

Come on in, Betty,

Betty enters. As he leads her into the living room,  
Gillis puts his arm around her shoulders.

GILLIS

Ever been in one of these old  
Hollywood palazzos? That's from  
when they were making eighteen thou-  
sand a week, and no taxes. Careful  
of these tiles, they're slippery.  
Valentino used to dance here.

BETTY

This is where you live?

GILLIS

You bet.

BETTY

Whose house is it?

They have reached

E-32

THE LIVING ROOM

Gillis leads Betty in.

GILLIS

Hers.

BETTY

Whose?

GILLIS

Just look around. There's a lot  
of her spread about. If you don't  
remember the face, you must have  
heard the name of Norma Desmond.

BETTY

That was Norma Desmond on the phone?

GILLIS

Want something to drink? There's  
always champagne on ice, and plenty  
of caviar.

BETTY

Why did she call me?

GILLIS

Jealous. Ever see so much junk?  
She had the ceiling brought from  
Portugal. Look at this.

He pulls the rope, showing the projection screen  
under the picture.

GILLIS

Her own movie theatre.

BETTY

I didn't come here to see a house.  
What about Norma Desmond?

GILLIS

I'm trying to tell you. This is  
an enormous place. Eight master  
bedrooms. A sunken tub in every  
bathroom. There's a bowling alley  
in the cellar. It's lonely here,  
so she got herself a companion.  
A very simple set-up: An older  
woman who is well-to-do. A younger  
man who is not doing too well ...  
Can you figure it out yourself?

BETTY

No.

GILLIS

All right. I'll give you a few  
more clues.

BETTY

No, no! I haven't heard any of  
this. I never got those telephone  
calls. I've never been in this  
house ... Get your things together.  
Let's get out of here.

GILLIS

All my things? All the eighteen  
suits, all the custom-made shoes and  
the eighteen dozen shirts, and the  
cuff-links and the platinum key-  
chains, and the cigarette cases?

BETTY

Come on, Joe.

GILLIS

Come on where? Back to a one-room  
apartment that I can't pay for?  
Back to a story that may sell and  
very possibly will not?

BETTY

If you love me, Joe.

GILLIS

Look, sweetie -- be practical.  
I've got a good thing here.  
A long-term contract with no options.  
I like it that way. Maybe it's not  
very admirable. Well, you and Artie  
can be admirable.

BETTY

Joe, I can't look at you any more.

GILLIS

Nobody asked you to.

Betty turns from him, to hide the fact that she is  
crying.

GILLIS

All right, baby. This way out.

He leads her in the direction of the door.

E-33 UPPER LANDING, DESMOND HOUSE

Sitting crouched behind the balustrade is Norma,  
peering down into

E-34 THE LOWER HALL

Betty and Gillis have reached the entrance door.  
Gillis opens it.

GILLIS

Good luck to you, Betty. You can  
finish that story on the way to  
Arizona. When you and Artie get  
back, if the two of you ever feel  
like a swim, here's the pool ...

He switches on the light.

E-35 THE PATIO

The lights go on in the pool, which shines brilliant-  
ly in the dark garden.

E-36 BETTY

She doesn't even look. Her eyes filled with tears,  
she runs down the entrance porch toward her car.

E-37 THE ENTRANCE HALL

Gillis looks after her, closes the door. From the  
upper landing comes the sound of soft sobbing. He

looks up.

E-38

NORMA, ON THE UPPER LANDING

Gillis ascends the stairs.

NORMA

Thank you, Joe -- thank you, Joe.

She tries to take his hand to kiss it as he passes. He doesn't stop. Norma catches his coat. Gillis moves right on into his room. Norma lies on the floor looking after him. She crawls toward a console, pulls herself up by it, starts towards Gillis' door, passes a mirror, realizes how she looks, moves back to the mirror and takes the patches off her face and does a hasty job of removing the cream with her handkerchief, readjusts her expression to a poor travesty of a smile and goes to the door of Gillis' room.

NORMA

May I come in? I've stopped crying. I'm all right again. Joe, tell me you're not cross -- tell me everything is just as it was, Joe.

She opens the door.

E-39

GILLIS' ROOM

In the foreground, open on the bed, is a half-packed suitcase, Gillis just putting some of his old shirts in. Norma stands staring, speechless, for a second. Gillis moves out of the shot towards the closets.

NORMA

What are you doing, Joe? What are you doing? You're not leaving me?

GILLIS

Yes, I am, Norma.

NORMA

No, you're not.

(Calling)

Max! Max!

GILLIS

Max is a good idea. He can help with my luggage.

(He gestures in the direction of the closet)

Thanks for letting me wear the

handsome wardrobe. And thanks  
for the use of all the trinkets.  
He takes the cigarette case and throws it on the  
chaise longue. Then he throws the lighter, the  
wrist watch, the platinum key-chain and the tie clip.

GILLIS

(Indicating the bureau)  
The rest of the jewelry is in the  
top drawer.

NORMA

It's yours, Joe. I gave it to  
you.

GILLIS

And I'd take it in a second, Norma --  
only it's a little too dressy for  
sitting behind the copy desk in  
Dayton, Ohio.

NORMA

These are nothing. You can have  
anything you want if you'll only  
stay. What is it you want --  
money?

GILLIS

Norma, you'd be throwing it away.  
I don't qualify for the job, not any  
more.

NORMA

You can't do this! Max! Max!  
... I can't face life without you,  
and I'm not afraid to die, you  
know.

GILLIS

That's between you and yourself,  
Norma.

NORMA

You think I made that up about  
the gun...

She rushes into her room. Gillis closes the suitcase  
calmly, notices that he is still wearing some cuff-  
links Norma gave him, takes them off.  
Norma reappears in the door, carrying the revolver.

NORMA

See, you didn't believe me!..  
Now I suppose you don't think I

have the courage!

GILLIS

Oh. sure -- if it would make a good scene.

NORMA

You don't care. do you? But hundreds of thousands of people will care!

GILLIS

Wake up, Norma. You'd be killing yourself to an empty house. The audience left twenty years ago. Now face it.

During the preceding. Max has entered. He stands listening, paralyzed.

NORMA

That's a lie! They still want me!

GILLIS

No, they don't.

NORMA

What about the studio?

What about De Mille?

GILLIS

He was trying to spare your feelings. The studio wanted to rent your car.

NORMA

Wanted what?

GILLIS

De Mille didn't have the heart to tell you. None of us has had the heart.

NORMA

That's a lie! They want me, they want me! I get letters every day!

GILLIS

You tell her, Max. Come on, do her that favor. Tell her there isn't going to be any picture -- there aren't any fan letters, except the ones you write yourself.

NORMA

That isn't true! Max?

MAX

Madame is the greatest star of

them all... I will take Mr.  
Gillis' bags.

He leaves.

NORMA

You heard him. I'm a star!

GILLIS

Norma, grow up. You're a woman  
of fifty. There's nothing tragic  
about being fifty - not unless  
you try to be twenty-five.

NORMA

I'm the greatest star of them  
all.

GILLIS

Goodbye. Norma.

NORMA

No one leaves a star. That  
makes one a star.

Gillis picks up the typewriter and leaves.

NORMA

You're not leaving me!

E-40

STAIRCASE

Gillis descending with the typewriter.

NORMA'S VOICE

Joe! ...Joe!

There is the SOUND OF A SHOT. The glass of the front  
door is shattered. Gillis at the door opens it and  
walks out, without looking back.

Down the staircase rushes Norma. a disordered wild-  
ness in the way she moves.

NORMA

You're not leaving me!

She hurries after Gillis.

E-41

PATIO (NIGHT)

Dark except for lights from the house and the  
luminousness of the lit pool.

Gillis is crossing the patio towards the garage. He  
is carrying the typewriter. He doesn't accelerate  
his step, although he has heard the shot. Behind  
him Norma comes from the lighted house.

NORMA

You're not leaving me!

She shoots twice in rapid succession. Gillis drops  
the typewriter. The shots have swung him around. He



is now facing Norma. She shoots him. This shot hits him in the belly. He doubles up, instinctively backs away from her, plummets into the lit pool. Up the stone steps from the garage rushes Max. He sees the situation, hurries towards Norma, who stands exultant in the strange light from the pool.

NORMA

Stars are ageless, aren't they?

DISSOLVE TO:

E-42 THE PATIO

Dawn is breaking. At the edge of the pool stand policemen, detectives and police photographers. Motorcycle policemen are holding off the mob which is trying to storm the house.

A lieutenant from the Homicide Bureau leaves the crowd around the pool and goes into

E-43 THE LOWER HALL, DESMOND HOUSE

It is filled with a pandemonium of police officers, newspaper people, etc. who are kept from the upper floor by two policemen at the head of the stairs. The lieutenant from the Homicide Bureau goes through the crowd to the telephone at the foot of the stairs, picks up the phone and dials.

LIEUTENANT

Coroner's office? ... I want to speak to the Coroner ... Who's on this phone?

E-44 THE WHITE TELEPHONE IN NORMA'S BEDROOM

Standing talking into it is Hedda Hopper.

MISS HOPPER

I am! Now get off, this is more important ... Times City Desk? Hedda Hopper speaking. I'm talking from the bedroom of Norma Desmond. Don't bother with a rewrite man, take this direct. Ready? -- As day breaks over the murder house, Norma Desmond, famed star of yesteryear, is in a state of complete mental shock ...

THE CAMERA PANS TO ANOTHER PART OF THE BEDROOM, where Norma sits at a mirror, staring at herself blankly. Firing questions at her are the Captain of the Holmby Hills Division and the L.A. Homicide Squad. Max stands by faithfully.

HOLMBY HILLS CAPTAIN

You do not deny having killed  
this man, Miss Desmond?

HEAD OF HOMICIDE

Did you intend to kill him?  
Just answer me that.

HOLMBY HILLS CAPTAIN

Was it a sudden quarrel? Had there  
been any trouble between you before?

HEAD OF HOMICIDE

If it was a quarrel, how come you  
had the gun right there?

HOLMBY HILLS CAPTAIN

This guy -- where did you meet him  
for the first time? Where did he  
come from? Who is he?

HEAD OF HOMICIDE

Did he have a wife? Did he had a  
girl friend? Did you know them?

HOLMBY HILLS CAPTAIN

Had he been trying to blackmail you?

E-45

PATIO - (DAWN)

GILLIS' VOICE

The body of Gillis being fished from the pool, put on a stretcher, covered with an army blanket. Two men from the Coroner's office carry it towards the Coroner's hearse, CAMERA PANNING with them.

Well, this is where you came. Here's that pool again, the one I always wanted. They must have photographed me a hundred times. Then they got a couple of pruning hooks from the garden and fished me out ever so gently. Funny how gentle people get with you once you're dead. They beached me, like a harpooned baby whale, and started to check the damage, just for the record ... By this time the whole joint was jumping -- cops, reporters, neighbors, passersby -- as much hoopdedoo as we get in Los Angeles when they open a Super Market. Even the newsreel guys came roaring in. Here was an item everybody could have some fun with, the heartless so-and-so's. What would they do to her?

Even if she got away with it in court- crime of passion - temporary insanity - those headlines would kill her: Forgotten Star a Slayer--Aging Actress-- Yesterday's Glamour Queen...

E-46 NORMA'S BEDROOM

The interrogators are still firing questions at Norma who sits lifeless, staring at herself. Max watches.

HEAD OF HOMICIDE

Did the deceased ever threaten you?  
Were you in fear of bodily injury?

HOLMBY HILLS CAPTAIN

Did you hate him? Had you ever thought of doing something like this before?

HEAD OF HOMICIDE

Was theft involved? Did you catch him trying to steal something, or find he had stolen something?

A police lieutenant has entered, goes to the Head of Homicide.

LIEUTENANT

The newsreel guys have arrived with the cameras.

HEAD OF HOMICIDE

Tell them to go fly a kite. This is no time for cameras.

A word has pierced the mists that surround Norma.

NORMA

Cameras? ...What is it, Max?

MAX

The cameras have arrived, Madame.

NORMA

They have? Thank you, Max. Tell Mr. DeMille I will be on the set at once.

Max flashes a look at the Head of Homicide.

HEAD OF HOMICIDE

What is this?

MAX

Please ...

HOLMBY HILLS CAPTAIN

(sotto voce, to Head of Homicide)  
Well, it's one way to get her down stairs.

HEAD OF HOMICIDE

Okay. And let's have the car right outside.

7-1

NORMA

You will pardon me, gentlemen.

I have to get ready for my scene.

She takes a comb and runs it through her hair, then starts applying some wild makeup.

E-47

STAIRCASE AND LOWER HALL

Max makes his way down the stairs through the crowd of newsmen to the newsreel cameras, which are being set up in the hall below.

MAX

Is everything set up, gentlemen?

Are the lights ready?

From the stairway comes a murnur. They look up. Norma has emerged from the bedroom and comes to the head of the stairs. There are golden spangles in her hair and in her hand she carries a golden scarf. The police clear a path for her to descend. Press cameras flash at her every step.

Max stands at the cameras.

MAX

Is everything set up, gentlemen?

CAMERAMAN

Just about.

The portable lights flare up and illuminate the staircase.

MAX

Are the lights ready?

2ND CAMERA MAN

All set.

MAX

Quiet, everybody! Lights!

Are you ready, Norma?

NORMA

(From the top of the stairs)

What is the scene? Where am I?

MAX

This is the staircase of the palace.

NORMA

Oh, yes, yes. They're below, waiting for the Princess ...

I'm ready.

MAX

All right.

(To cameramen)

Camera!

(To Norma)

Action!

Norma arranges the golden scarf about her and proudly starts to descend the staircase. The cameras grind. Everyone watches in awe.

GILLIS' VOICE  
So they were grinding after all, those cameras. Life, which can be strangely merciful, had taken pity on Norma Desmond. The dream she had clung to so desperately had enfolded her...

At the foot of the stairs Norma stops, moved.

NORMA

I can't go on with the scene. I'm too happy. Do you mind, Mr. DeMille, if I say a few words? Thank you. I just want to tell you how happy I am to be back in the studio making a picture again. You don't know how much I've missed all of you. And I promise you I'll never desert you again, because after "Salome" we'll make another picture, and another and another. You see, this is my life. It always will be. There's nothing else - just us and the cameras and those wonderful people out there in the dark... All right, Mr. DeMille, I'm ready for my closeup.

FADE OUT.

THE END