

SUNSET BOULEVARD

Charles Brackett
Billy Wilder
D.M. Marshman, Jr.

March 21, 1949

SEQUENCE "A"

A-1-4 START the picture with the actual street sign:
SUNSET BOULEVARD, stencilled on a curbstone.
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

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

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

MAN'S VOICE

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.

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.

him, on the bed, is a dirty ashtray and a scattering of type written and pencil-marked pages. Gillis is typing. with a pencil clenched between 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 reproductions 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,

GILLIS' VOICE

Well, I needed about two hundred and ninety dollars and I needed it real quick, or I'd lose my car.

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 because 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

It wasn't in Palm Springs and it wasn't in the garage. I was way ahead of the finance company.

DISSOLVE TO:

A-9

EXTERIOR OF RUDY'S
SHOESHINE PARLOR (DAY)

GILLIS' VOICE

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

I knew they'd be coming around and I wasn't taking 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 questions. 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

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

the towering main gate of Paramount. A few loafers, studio cops and extras are lounging there.

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. Sheldrake. 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 Sheldrake. He is about 45. Behind his worried face there hides a coated tongue. He is engaged in changing the stained rilter 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 Sheldrake.

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. Sheldrake 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 beamed 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. Shel Drake, 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. Shel Drake.

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 fount-
ain, 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
another nickel, dialing,
talking again.

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
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

driving down Sunset towards Hollywood. He drives slowly. His mind is working.

GILLIS' VOICE

As I drove back towards town I took inventory of my prospects. They now added up to 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 a red light by the main right you wise guys. why don't 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 GILLIS' VOICE
shoot past and out of Yeah...
sight. He opens the

door and looks down at the flat tire. Then he looks around to see where he is.

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

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...

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 jalopy.

NORMA DESMOND'S HOUSE

It is a grandiose -- Italianate structure, mottled by the years, gloomy, forsaken, little formal garden completely gone to seed.

From somewhere above comes

GILLIS' VOICE

It was a great big white elephant of a place. The kind crazy movie people built in the crazy Twenties. A neglected house gets an unhappy look. This one had it in spades. It was like that old woman in Great Expectations -- that Miss Haversham in her rotting wedding dress and her torn veil, taking it out on the world because 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

Why are you so late? Why have you kept me waiting 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!

Gillis 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 Gillis 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 or 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 did'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.

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.

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 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

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.)

GILLIS' VOICE

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 glass stands on the arm of his chair.

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...

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 Apartments.

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

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

GILLIS' VOICE

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, LEADING TO ROOM OVER GARAGE

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

GILLIS' VOICE

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 wallpaper 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.

He goes out. Gillis looks after him, hangs his coat over a chair, walks over to the window, pulls down the rickety Venetian blind. As he does so, he looks down at:

GILLIS' VOICE

I pegged him as slightly cuckoo, too. A stroke maybe. Come to think of it, the whole place seemed to have been stricken with a kind of creeping paralysis, out of beat with the rest of the world, crumbling apart in slow motion ...

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

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

GILLIS' VOICE

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

A-39 GILLIS - IN THE WINDOW

He looks away from the court to:

A-40 THE DESMOND SWIMMING
POOL

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

GILLIS' VOICE

And of course she had a pool. Who didn't then? Mabel Normand 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 something attracts his attention. He turns back and looks down again.

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 below, 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

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?

GILLIS' VOICE
It was all very queer, but queerer things were yet to come.

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 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 -

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

B-5 THE DOOR

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

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...

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

GILLIS' VOICE
What was going on?

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 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' VOICE

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

Facing him at some distance sits Norma, dressed in another version of her favorite lounging pajamas, the cigarette contraption on her finger. She is autographing large photographs of herself and putting them in envelopes.

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, 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 handwritten 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 photographs? 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.

On the table in front of her are the photographs which she is signing. On the long table 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:

GILLIS' VOICE

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

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 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 signifi-

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.

cance in his maneuver. They
both watch the screen.

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

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

game which bores him them as her Wax Works.
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
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 emptied of Gillis' belongings by now. Max is carrying out a handfull 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

GILLIS' VOICE

The last week in December the rains came -- a great big package of rain. Over-sized, like everything else in California.

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 raincoat and galoshes.

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
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 perfect 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 sur=
face 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 diamonte
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 dancing 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. Ridiculous situation, wasn't it? -- a woman almost twice my age ... It got to be about a quarter of eleven. I felt caught, like a cigarette 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 fur-
tively, 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 ostentatious-
ly 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. 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 forward with a great sense of relief.

GILLIS'VOICE

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 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

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 something 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 look-
ing 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 rdriver 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 ENRANCE 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 DESMOND'S HOUSE (DAY) The telephone is heard ringing. Max comes from living room to the phone, picks it up.	GILLIS' VOICE Around the middle of May some incidents happened which I think I should tell you about.
-----	--	---

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 Inquiring 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. de Mille'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. Incredible 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 doorway 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.

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 wprry 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 in 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 tele-
phone 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' VOICE

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

Yes, I was playing hooky every evening along in

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 steps and the creak or the main door being opened. He looks out and sees

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)

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 up kept going through my head like a dozen locomotives...

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, j.s 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.

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.

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

BETTY

I got the funniest letter from 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 GILLIS' VOICE
PARAMOUNT STUDIO (NIGHT) 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
DISSOLVE TO: on one of those walks
when she first told me
about her nose ...

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 card-
board, 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 elec-
trician 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 handkerchiefs, like a brand new automobile. 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. Grirrith, 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. 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, what-
ever 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 oosts 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.

E-20 GILLIS' ROOM

He enters and turns on the light. He sinks down on the chaise longue, thinking. His eyes wander to the door of Norma's room. Through the gouged-out key-hole he sees the light.

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 pre-
sence 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 brilliantly 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.

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 wildness 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

hoopeddoo 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