

THE GOOD WITNESS

by

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based on the novellas

"The Next Witness" and "Die Like a Dog"

By

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THE GOOD WITNESS

FADE IN:

MONTAGE/CREDITS

1 INT. BROWNSTONE - HALLWAY - DAY (DAY ONE) 1

Archie grabs his trenchcoat from the hallway tree and starts to put it on. He stops. It doesn't feel right. He looks at a button - it's dangling. He checks the pocket flaps - twisted. He's not happy. He thinks. Ah. Grimly, he puts it on, heads for the door. The DOORBELL RINGS.

ARCHIE (V.O.)

I was on my way out to right a wrong, when fate in the form of Inspector Cramer rang the doorbell.

He opens the door and INSPECTOR CRAMER comes in and barrels past him going towards the office.

ARCHIE (CONT'D)

Inspector Cramer. To what do we owe the pleasure?

CRAMER

I gotta present for your boss.

ARCHIE

Is he gonna like it?

CRAMER

He's gonna love it. Got one for you, too. Stick around.

He disappears into the office. Archie trails after.

2 INT. BROWNSTONE - OFFICE - DAY 2

Cramer serves Wolfe, chomps happily on his cigar. Wolfe regards him balefully. Archie waits at the door.

WOLFE

Mr. Cramer. What brings you into my home?

CRAMER

An opportunity that doesn't come often enough:

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED: 2

WOLFE

Pfui.

CRAMER

A situation you can't get out of.

WOLFE

Archie! Escort Mr. Cramer...

Cramer puts the subpoena down on the table.

CRAMER

Your subpoena for the Ashe trial next week. Do you need me to read it out loud?

WOLFE

You came all this way to serve me in person?

CRAMER

I came all this way to serve you in person. I wanna make sure you understand the fine print.

WOLFE

A sad commentary on the pusillanimous nature of your dreams.

CRAMER

If you don't show up, you'll be in contempt of court. A bench warrant will be issued for your arrest and I will send the newest recruit on the force down here to lead you away in cuffs.

Wolfe glowers, throws the subpoena down and picks his book back up. Cramer savors the moment and bows out. As he passes Archie in the door, he hands him his subpoena.

ARCHIE

Allow me.

3 EXT. BROWNSTONE - STOOP (STUDIO) - DAY 3

Cramer comes out and is surprised to find Archie accompanying him. On Cramer's look.

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED: 3

ARCHIE
I have an errand. This morning
a guy name Meegan tried to engage
Mr. Wolfe to find his wife. *

CRAMER
Fat chance of that.

ARCHIE
No chance at all. So he left
in a huff and grabbed my raincoat
instead of his on the way out.
I'm going to right the wrong.

CRAMER
You should try working for a
living.

They part ways.

4 EXT. 29 ARBOR STREET - ANGLE INCLUDING THE STREET - DAY 4

Archie comes down the street. The camera pulls back to see
whole street and what lies ahead - a police scene. A FLASHING
POLICE CRUISER is double parked in front of the entrance to
29 and a crowd. 29 Arbor Street has a stoop with stairs and
a basement apartment.

ARCHIE (V.O.)
But when I got to Meegan's home
at 29 Arbor Street, I didn't
enter it. There was party going
on in front.

ARCHIE maneuvers through a crowd to the front to see a
POLICEMAN trying to shoo away a BLACK LAB (JET)

POLICEMAN
Whose dog is this?

No one in the crowd responds. Their attention is diverted
by PURLEY STEBBINS, who emerges from a squad car and goes
into the house without delay, bristling with authority.

Archie sees Stebbins and turns away so he won't be seen.

ARCHIE (V.O.)
The presence of Purley Stebbins
made it a cinch that there was
a corpse inside.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED: 4

ARCHIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
And my presence at the scene of
a homicide arouses all of
Purley's worst instincts. I
decided to get my raincoat back
some other time.

He stops and looks down. The Black Lab is nuzzling his knee.
The Cop looks at him.

POLICEMAN
Sure that's not your dog?

ARCHIE
Nah. The wife's allergic to
them.

Archie pats the dog, and moves on.

5 EXT. STREET - DAY 5

Archie goes along appreciating the day unaware that the dog
is tailing him. Archie stops, sensing something. He glances
back. Nothing. Only people. He is relieved. Then he feels
something nuzzle his knee. He looks down.

THE BLACK LAB (JET) grins up at him.

ARCHIE
I'm not your pal.
(The Lab begs to differ;
nuzzles him again. Voice-
over)
Apparently I was mistaken. We
were friends for life. I could
have ditched him by taking a
taxi but that would have been
pretty rude. So I took him
home, as any good pal should.

He begins walking, the dog at his side.

6 INT. BROWNSTONE - HALLWAY - DAY 6

Archie comes in with the dog, hangs up his coat. He looks
at Jet and then heads towards the office with him.

ARCHIE (V.O.)
My idea was to call the ASPCA
for help, but there was no sense
in passing up an opportunity to
annoy Wolfe.

7 INT. BROWNSTONE - OFFICE - DAY

7

Wolfe sits at his desk. As Archie comes in, he doesn't look up, he just starts talking.

WOLFE

Where the devil have you been?
We were going to go over orchid
lists...What's that?

ARCHIE

A dog. A hound to be precise.

WOLFE

I'm in no temper for buffoonery.
Get it out of here.

ARCHIE

No, sir. You have your orchids,
Fritz has his turtle and Theodore
has his parakeets up in the
potting room. Why shouldn't I
have a dog? He is registered
as Champion Nero of Bantyscott
so I'll have to change his name.
I don't want us to confuse the
two of you. Ebony, would do,
or Jet, or Inky...

WOLFE

Stop babbling. It's not a hound.
It's a Labrador Retriever.

ARCHIE

I said hound because it would
be natural for a private
detective to have a hound.

WOLFE

Labradors have a wider skull
than any other dog, for brain
room. A dog I had when I was a
boy in Montenegro had a rather
narrow skull, but I did not
regard that as a defect. I do
not recall thinking that dog
had a defect.

(on Archie's look)

When you smuggled that creature
in here did you take into account
The disruption it would cause
in this household?

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED:

7

Archie starts improvising a leash with a piece of cord.

ARCHIE

Don't worry. I'll get rid of him. I do feel the need for a pet, but what the hell, I can try a chameleon.

WOLFE

No.

ARCHIE

No?

WOLFE

I do not wish to interfere with the commitment you have made.

ARCHIE

I haven't made a commitment.

WOLFE

Then where did you get it?

ARCHIE

He followed me home. I'll just call the ASPCA and we can be rid of him.

WOLFE

No.

ARCHIE

No. Why not?

WOLFE

Call someone you know in the Police Department and use the license number to find out the owner's name. Then call him directly.

ARCHIE

If the owner is dead or in jail, you'll take the position that I committed myself by bringing the dog home.

WOLFE

It would be dishonorable to renege.

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED: (2) 7

He and Jet consider each other.

ARCHIE

You'd enjoy having a dog around provided you can blame it on me.

WOLFE

The name you suggested, Jet. That would be acceptable for this dog.

As Archie nods, Fritz comes in.

FRITZ

Dinner is served, sir.

Jet jumps up at this proposal. Fritz sees Jet.

FRITZ (CONT'D)

Is the animal dining with you?

WOLFE

Pfui. His manners appear to be adequate, but let us test them first in the kitchen.

DISSOLVE TO:

8 INT. BROWNSTONE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT 8

Wolfe carries on as Archie eats.

ARCHIE (V.O.)

The squabs were absolutely edible, but other phenomena of that evening were not so pleasing.

WOLFE

...The Basinji is the oldest breed on earth, originating in Central Africa in 5000 BC, there is, of course, no trace of the Afghan hound until 4000 BC...

Fritz enters with the salad.

WOLFE (CONT'D)

Has Jet demonstrated a capacity for restraint vis a vis food?

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED: 8

FRITZ

For a dog, he has remarkable control.

WOLFE

You wouldn't find him an insufferable nuisance as a cohabitant?

FRITZ

No. Of course, they take time. They must be walked and fed. But for such a noble beast we could make the sacrifice.

WOLFE

Well, we must suffer him in any case, for Archie's sake.

FRITZ

Ah.

ARCHIE

Yeah. That's right. For my sake.

(V.O.)

Clearly they were prepared to become charter martyrs of the Canine Canonization League. Next thing you know, we'd have box seats at the Westminster Dog Show.

WIPE TO:

9 INT. BROWNSTONE - OFFICE - NIGHT 9

Archie and Wolfe are going through orchid lists. Archie reads the descriptions and Wolfe considers them. The DOORBELL RINGS. Archie checks his watch.

10 INT. BROWNSTONE - HALLWAY - NIGHT 10

The Doorbell RINGS again. Archie appears - and one look through the one way glass panel reveals INSPECTOR CRAMER.

Archie shows his watch pointedly as he opens the door six inches.

ARCHIE

You never come after dinner.

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED: 10

CRAMER
Cut the crap, Goodwin and tell
me where the dog is.

On Archie's reaction, we WIPE TO:

11 INT. BROWNSTONE - OFFICE - NIGHT 11

Cramer is settled in the red leather chair.

CRAMER
(to Archie)
The owner of the dog was murdered
this afternoon. The officer at
the scene recognized you and
said you enticed the dog to go
off with you.

ARCHIE
I didn't entice.

CRAMER
The dog just followed you.

ARCHIE
Girls follow me; dogs follow
me. Sometimes even your own
dicks follow me. I can't help...

CRAMER
Skip the comedy. The dog
belonged to a murder victim and
you removed it from the scene
of the murder.

WOLFE
I advise you to shift your ground
if you expect us to listen.

CRAMER
(turning to Wolfe)
And to top it off, this morning,
you refuse to do a job for one
of the tenants of 29 Arbor
Street, Richard Meegan. You
know damn well the last thing I
want near a homicide is you or
Goodwin, but you're here and I
want to know how and why and
what and when and who.

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED:

11

WOLFE

(shaking his head, sighing))
You're wasting your time. In
Mr. Meegan's first breath, he
mentioned his wife...

CRAMER

Yeah, I heard.

WOLFE

...My vanity bristles at the
offer of that sort of job...

CRAMER

Yeah, I know, Wolfe. I...

WOLFE

...and I stopped him. My
bluntness enraged him and he
dashed out, taking Mr. Goodwin's
coat.

CRAMER

So that's how you got there;
why'd you'd take the dog?

ARCHIE

I will admit, if pressed, that
I should not have patted him,
but if there's some kind of
dodge about the dog, please
tell me why I phoned the precinct
to get the name of his owner?

CRAMER

I don't know. With you and
Wolfe I never know. Look. I'm
gonna open the bag.

ARCHIE

He's come for free advice.

CRAMER

Shut up. The man who was killed
was named Philip Kampf. He
lived on Perry Street, a few
blocks from Arbor, all alone
with the dog, no family.

12 EXT. 29 ARBOR STREET -- DAY 12

OLSEN, who has come out to sweep the walk, watches KAMPF and Jet go up the stairs of the house.

CRAMER (V.O.)
Olsen, the janitor, sees him arrive with the dog on a leash at five twenty this afternoon.

WIPE TO:

FLASHCUT TO

Jet being shooed down the stoop stairs by VICTOR TALENTO.

CRAMER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Fifteen minutes later the dog comes out with a tenant named Victor Talento. He says he found the dog in the vestibule, thought it was a stray, and chased it out.

Victor goes, Jets stays around.

FLASHCUT:

Olsen finishes his sweeping. Hears yelling. Runs inside.

CRAMER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Then twenty minutes later, somebody starts yelling.

13 INT. 29 ARBOR STREET -- FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY 13

Olsen comes into the hallway outside Apartment 101 and sees ROSS CHAFFEE standing over the body of Kampf.

CRAMER (V.O.)
He finds two men in the foyer, one live, one dead. The live one was Ross Chaffee, an artist from the top floor studio. The dead one was Philip Kampf.

WIPE TO:

14 INT. 29 ARBOR STREET - FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY 14

It's now a police scene. Stebbins pulls a leash from Kampf's pocket.

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED: 14

CRAMER (V.O.)

We got onto the dog because Stebbins found his leash in the pocket of Kampf's raincoat. The lab says it was used to strangle him.

The two other tenants of the house are brought to the bottom of the stairs by a POLICEMAN: RICHARD MEEGAN and skinny JEROME ALAND, sleepy and tying a satiny robe around him.

CRAMER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

All four tenants of the house were home when Kampf arrived: Victor Talento, a lawyer on the ground floor, had left, but the rest of them - Chaffee, Richard Meegan and Jerome Aland, a night club performer, were still there.

15 INT. BROWNSTONE - WOLFE'S OFFICE - NIGHT 15

Cramer is expounding. Wolfe listens with his eyes closed.

CRAMER

Of course, none of them heard or saw a thing. But Kampf went there to see one of those four men and had his dog with him. My theory is that the dog is my witness.

WOLFE

The animal seems quite intelligent but I doubt if it's up to answering questions.

CRAMER

He saw and heard it all. It's possible he was actually present when Kampf was killed. That's why we want to take it there, to see which door it goes to. We're going to do that now. I gotta man out in my car who knows dogs.

Cramer stands up.

WOLFE

Archie.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED:

15

WOLFE (CONT'D)

Go lock yourself in your room with the dog and stay there until I notify you. Even Inspector Cramer will think twice about breaking down a door.

CRAMER

What you talking about?

WOLFE

Go!

Before Cramer can say anything else, Archie skedaddles.

ARCHIE (V.O.)

I went. It was either that or quit my job on the spot and I resign only when we haven't got company. Jet was waiting patiently where I left him.

16 INT. BROWNSTONE - ARCHIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

16

Archie comes in. Jet looks up but does not come to Archie until told to do so. Archie is impressed. The SOUND of RAISED VOICES and then the door slamming.

ARCHIE

All clear?

WOLFE (O.S.)

NO! Wait until I bolt it!
(beat)
All right!

ARCHIE

You stay here.

Jet doesn't want to but he does.

17 INT. BROWNSTONE - OFFICE - NIGHT

17

Archie enters and Wolfe snaps.

WOLFE

A pretty mess. You sneak a dog in here to badger me and now this?

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED:

17

ARCHIE

Forget it. You're the one who
bollixed this up. And all
because you felt sorry for an
orphan.

WOLFE

I had thought that my
disinclination to permit a
policeman to storm in here and
commandeer any person or object
which struck his fancy was shared
by you.

ARCHIE

It is. Within reason.

WOLFE

Don't be ambiguous. Clearly
the simplest way to settle the
matter is to find out who killed
Mr. Kampf.

ARCHIE

Oh. Of course. That follows.
And we have the prime witness
sitting upstairs.

WOLFE

A witness who can't testify.
We must do better than that.
Luckily we have the pretext for
an immediate exploration. You
can go there to get your
raincoat.

ARCHIE

You mean now?

WOLFE

Yes.

ARCHIE

I'll be damned. No client, no
fee, no nothing except a dog
with a wide skull for brain
room. I will be damned.

He leaves.

{A&E - END ACT ONE}

18 EXT. 29 ARBOR STREET - NIGHT 18

Archie approaches. There are no lights on any floor but the ground floor. He goes up the stairs to the list of names and buzzes the name MEEGAN. No click from the door. He tries the door, it won't open. He tries four buzzes. Nada.

Archie comes back to the sidewalk. He finds a perch on a fire hydrant. The LIGHTS in the first floor apartment go out. Archie shifts his position for a better look.

Talento comes down the stoop and glances at Archie as he passes him. Archie considers the situation and then checks out the street. He sees a FIGURE emerge from the shadows across the street and starts strolling down the opposite side of the street after Victor.

ARCHIE (V.O.)
Sloppy. I would have waited
ten more paces before I started.

Archie counts to ten and then starts tailing the tailer.

19 EXT. STREET - FURTHER DOWN - NIGHT 19

TALENTO comes down followed by the FIGURE on the other side of the street. ARCHIE follows behind them, on Talento's side. Talento stops, the Figure stops. But Archie keeps coming. When he gets abreast of the Figure, they exchange a look. Archie tips his hat. He then moves on to catch up with Talento.

Talento stiffens as Archie begins to gain on him. They reach a streetlight.

ARCHIE
Victor Talento?

TALENTO
No comment.

He keeps going. So does Archie.

ARCHIE
I'm not a reporter.

TALENTO
I'm not interested.

ARCHIE
Okay.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED:

19

ARCHIE (CONT'D)

And if you're out for a midnight stroll, forget it, sorry I interrupted. But if you're headed for something you'd like to keep private - you ought to know - you got a homicide dick on your tail.

(Talento stops)

Don't scream or look around or he'll know I'm telling you.

TALENTO

Is this your good deed for the day?

ARCHIE

No. I'm Archie Goodwin and I'm out dowsing for Nero Wolfe.

TALENTO

Who hired Wolfe to investigate?

ARCHIE

I don't know. He says he needs the practice. I'm helping out by looking for a seam.

TALENTO

I can't help you. A woman phoned me and I arranged to meet her, but she has nothing to do with this business and I have no right to expose her to embarrassment. Damn it. I can't be sure of shaking that man off.

ARCHIE

Or me.

TALENTO

You mean you would follow me?

ARCHIE

I need practice, too. Too bad you don't want to reciprocate.

TALENTO

I see you've earned your reputation as scum, Goodwin.

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED: (2)

19

ARCHIE

You're the one who's going to expose your lady friend.

TALENTO

I'm meeting her three blocks from here. You might be willing to go tell her I'm not coming.

ARCHIE

Sure. Where's the appointment?

TALENTO

The woman's name is Jewel Jones, she's extremely pretty and she'll be at the southeast corner of Christopher and Grove at midnight. Tell her I'll get in touch with her tomorrow.

ARCHIE

Right.

Talento holds out his hand, but Archie shakes his head.

ARCHIE (CONT'D)

See - the problem is: How do I know I'm not shaking hands with a murderer?

They walk off in opposite directions.

WIPE TO:

20 EXT. STREET - NIGHT

20

Archie is sitting on a stoop, waiting. He checks his watch. A COUPLE go by. Then a TAXI pulls up and JEWEL JONES gets out and pays the driver. She looks around.

ARCHIE

Miss Jones? Victor.

JEWEL

Who are you?

ARCHIE

Victor sent me with a message. I've ante'd half of your name and half of his. So it's your turn.

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED:

20

JEWEL

But who are you?

ARCHIE

I'll count to ten. One two
three four..

JEWEL

My name is Jewel Jones. His is
Victor Talento.

ARCHIE

That's the girl.

(V.O.)

I gave her the whole crop.

(Archie talks. Jewel

listens growing annoyed.)

And by the time I finished she'd
developed a healthy frown.

JEWEL

Damn it. Come and put me in a
taxi.

ARCHIE

I'll be glad to. We're going
to Nero Wolfe's place.

JEWEL

We? Are you crazy?

ARCHIE

It's either that or I take you
to a Homicide sergeant named
Stebbins and you two can discuss
why you and Victor Talento didn't
want to be seen together.

Jewel suddenly turns it on.

JEWEL

I'll discuss it with you. I
wouldn't mind that. We'll go
somewhere.

She takes Archie's arm with both hands.

JEWEL (CONT'D)

I want to talk to you. I know
you're the kind of man I could
talk to. You'd understand.

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED: (2) 20

They walk towards seventh avenue, arm in arm.

ARCHIE

You know, you could probably
thaw me in four or five hours;
your voice could thaw a
refrigerator, but we just don't
have time.

Archie sees a taxi and flags it. She pouts prettily as she
gets in.

ARCHIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Of course that didn't stop her
from trying.

WIPE TO:

21 EXT. BROWNSTONE - STOOP (STUDIO)- NIGHT 21

Archie and Jewel mount the steps and ring. Fritz undoes the
chain bolt and opens the door.

ARCHIE (V.O.)

And I was feeling quite brotherly
by the time we got to the
brownstone on 34th Street.

Fritz looks wonderingly at the very pretty Miss Jones as
Archie returns the raincoat to its place.

FRITZ

Good evening, Mr. Goodwin.

ARCHIE

Good evening, Mr. Brenner.
Would you conduct Miss Jones
into the front room? She's
come to marry Mr. Wolfe.

22 INT. BROWNSTONE - OFFICE - NIGHT 22

Wolfe is at his desk reading. Archie sees Jet as he enters.
He looks at the prayer rug, looks at Jet.

ARCHIE

I see you've made some advances
with "my" dog.

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED:

22

WOLFE

The creature was alone and
whining in your room. And
hungry.

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED: (2)

22

ARCHIE

I've brought company. Before I introduce Miss Jewel Jones, I should...

*

WOLFE

The tenants of 29 Arbor Street are men.

ARCHIE

I can't deny it.

WOLFE

Yet you produce a female.

ARCHIE

I can chase her out if you want. I could have grilled her myself but it would have been risky.

WOLFE

Confound it.
(he stares at his book,
decides, dog-ears the
book)
Bring her.

Archie exits.

WIPE TO:

Archie opens the door from the front room to usher in Miss Jones. Her preparation for a wistful smile is interrupted as Jet jumps to his feet and makes for her, making sounds of doggy pleasure. He stops in front of her.

WOLFE (CONT'D)

I see. Can you tell us what the dog's name is, Miss Jones?

JEWEL

That's funny. You're asking me what your own dog's name is?

WOLFE

Pfui. Obviously he knows you well, and he belonged to Mr. Kampf. So you knew Mr. Kampf well. What is the dog's name?

JEWEL

Bootsy.

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED: (3)

22

She gives the dog an efficient pat, spots the red leather chair and goes to sit in it. The dog follows her, wagging his tail.

WOLFE

Good heavens. No other name?

JEWEL

Not that I know of.

WOLFE

And your name is Jewel Jones.

JEWEL

Yes, I sing at a night club. But I'm not working now. Believe me, Mr. Wolfe, if I knew anything that could help I'd be perfectly willing to tell you, because I'm sure you're the kind of man that understands.

Archie reacts to her repeating herself.

WOLFE

I try to understand. You knew Mr. Kampf intimately?

JEWEL

Not lately, not for the past two months. But for nearly a year, we were...as you say.

WOLFE

When did you see him last?

JEWEL

Intimately?

WOLFE

At all.

JEWEL

He came to the club last month and spoke to me there.

WOLFE

There was no quarrel.

JEWEL

What was there to quarrel about?

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED: (4)

22

WOLFE

Do you know Mr. Talento intimately?

JEWEL

Well, I used to live there.

WOLFE

With Mr. Talento?

JEWEL

No. I never live with a man. I had the second floor apartment. But about two months ago, I got a little apartment on East Forty ninth Street.

WOLFE

Then you know the others, too - Mr. Meegan, Mr Chaffee and Mr. Aland?

JEWEL

I know Ross and Jerry, but who's Meegan?

WOLFE

A tenant at 29 Arbor Street. Second floor.

JEWEL

Oh, well sure, that's the floor I had. I hope they fixed that damn table for him. I hate furnished apartments, don't you?

WOLFE

In principle, yes. I take it you now have your own furniture? Supplied by Mr. Kampf?

JEWEL

(chuckling)

I see you didn't know Phil Kampf.

WOLFE

Not supplied by him, then?'

JEWEL

A great big no.

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED: (5) 22

WOLFE
By Mr. Chaffee? Mr Aland?

JEWEL
No and No. Look Mr. Wolfe. A friend of mine was mighty nice about that furniture and we'll just leave it at that.

ARCHIE (V.O.)
I could report the rest of it, but it wouldn't get you any further than it did Wolfe. Around 1:30, I took her to Tenth Avenue and put her in a taxi.

WIPE TO:

23 INT. BROWNSTONE - OFFICE - LATER 23

Archie comes in. Fritz is serving Wolfe beer.

ARCHIE
Where's Bootsy?

WOLFE
No.

ARCHIE
Where's Jet?

WOLFE
Down in Fritz's room. You don't like him.

ARCHIE
That's not true, but if it means you can't blame him on me, fine. Cramer's coming with a writ in the morning to take him anyway.

WOLFE
No.

ARCHIE
I offer twenty to one. Before noon.

WOLFE
That was roughly my own estimate of the probability, and it seemed
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED:

23

WOLFE (CONT'D)

an unfair manner to settle the obligation you brought upon us. So I phoned Mr. Cramer and arranged for you to be present throughout the fatuous performance the police have in mind. While there, you may flush someone more contributive to a solution than that volatile demirep.

ARCHIE

I'll have to look that up, but I resent it on principal.

{A&E: END ACT TWO}

24 EXT. 29 ARBOR STREET - DAY

{DAY TWO}

24

Archie and Jet approach the door, Jet stylishly attached to Archie by a cord. Purley Stebbins waits with a roly poly man with rimless glasses, LOFTUS, the dog expert.

LOFTUS

Well, well. Fine animal. What's his name?

ARCHIE

Bootsy.

LOFTUS

No. A hell of a name. Who did that to you boy?

As the dog and dog expert get acquainted, Stebbins gets close to Archie.

STEBBINS

He should have bit you when you kidnapped him.

ARCHIE

You got it twisted. It's women that bite me. I've often wondered what would bite you.

LOFTUS

Where was the body?

STEBBINS

At the bottom of the stairs.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED:

24

STEBBINS (CONT'D)

The tenant socked him in his apartment and used the leash to finish him. It took a lot of nerve to carry the body down the stairs to the lower hall. Of course the dog was already outside on the sidewalk. Talento had chased him out.

LOFTUS

So Talento's clean?

STEBBINS

No. Nobody's clean. If it was Talento, he just put the dog in the vestibule first, brought the body down and then let him out when he left. Anything wrong with that?

LOFTUS

It depends on the dog. There wasn't any blood.

STEBBINS

Then that's how I'm buying it. Come on, we've already prepped the tenants.

WIPE TO:

25 INT. 29 ARBOR STREET - HALLWAY - TALENTO'S DOOR (101)- DAY

25

As he swings it open the door. Loftus stands behind Jet. Talento is dressed to go out.

TALENTO

Hello, Bootsy.

The other men groan as he pats Bootsy. Stebbins comes up.

STEBBINS

Godammit! I told you not to speak!

TALENTO

Oh. So you did. I'm sorry, I forgot. Do you want to try it again?

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED:

25

STEBBINS

No. That's all. Come on.

ARCHIE

You said in your statement you didn't know the dog.

TALENTO

What?

ARCHIE

You thought it was a stray; you chased it out.

TALENTO

I was in a hurry. I am in a hurry now. The District Attorney wants to see me downtown.

He comes out and pulls the door behind him.

WIPE TO:

26 INT. 29 ARBOR STREET - HALLWAY - MEEGAN 'S DOOR (201) - DAY 26

Meegan opens his door (identical to Talento's, but 201), Scowling.

STEBBINS

Take a look at the dog. Pat it.

MEEGAN

Pat it yourself.

STEBBINS

Have you ever seen it before?

MEEGAN

No.

He slams the door. The men look at the dog, who is unaffected.

LOFTUS

You must realize that a Labrador can't be expected to go for a man's throat. They're not that kind of dog.

(CONTINUED)

26 CONTINUED: 26

STEBBINS
Thanks. I'll remember that.

WIPE TO:

26A INT. 29 ARBOR STREET - HALLWAY - ALAND'S DOOR (301) 26A

Stebbins elbows his way past Loftus and pounds on Aland's door (301). (Identical to Talento's and Meegan's)

STEBBINS
Come on, Aland!

ALAND (O.S.)
The dog don't like me.

STEBBINS
The dog's on a leash.

The door opens a crack. Stebbins pushes it open. Jet sees Aland and immediately growls.

ALAND
Once at a party at Phil Kampf's,
I...I didn't mean to hurt it,
but it thought I did.
(Jet growls)
What are you trying to do?
Frame me?

STEBBINS
We're making the rounds, Mr.
Aland. We didn't want to leave
you out.

Aland slams the door. Jet barks indignantly.

WIPE TO:

27 INT. 29 ARBOR STREET - HALLWAY -ROSS CHAFFEE'S DOOR(401)-DAY 27

As he sweeps the door open. He's very handsome and wears an artist's smock covered in paint. Outside his door things are decorated with two of his paintings, extra furniture. He stares at Jet.

STEBBINS
Okay. Pat him then.

He bends to Jet gracefully. He scratches his ears.

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED: 27

CHAFFEE

Hey beautiful. Do you know
your master's gone? Gone for
good?

(he stands)

Anything else? I'm working and
I like the morning light.

STEBBINS

That's all thanks.

CUT TO:

28 EXT. 29 ARBOR STREET - DAY 28

The three men and the dog emerge to the daylight.

STEBBINS

Loftus. Give him the dog.

ARCHIE

I am willing to give you a
detailed analysis of the dog's
conduct. It will take about a
week.

STEBBINS

Go to hell, and take that dumb
dog with you. *

Archie moseys off with Jet. He stops to let Jet sniff around
and checks behind him as he sees the police cruiser pull
out. Then he looks around and sees a cab and hails it.

THE CAB

pulls up to the curb and Archie leans in. He pulls out a
five and hands it to the CABBIE.

CABBIE

Gee, thanks. For what? Down
payment on my cab?

ARCHIE

You'll earn it, brother.

He opens the back door and invites Jet in.

CABBIE

Hey!

(CONTINUED)

28 CONTINUED: 28

ARCHIE

He's a nice dog. Take care of him and when I return, I'll be reasonable.

(to Jet)

I'll be back when you see me coming down the street.

29 EXT. 29 ARBOR STREET - DAY 29

Archie gets next to the list of names and pushes all the buttons and keeps his hand on the doorknob. There is a click and he opens the door.

ARCHIE (V.O.)

Getting information was going to be tricky. My plan was to let the tenants assume - after seeing me with the dog and Purley Stebbins - that I worked with the Homicide division, but that meant I couldn't bring up Jewel Jones because the cops might not have got around to her yet.

30 INT. 29 ARBOR STREET - HALLWAY ALAND'S DOOR - DAY 30

Archie knocks on the door. Aland opens it.

ALAND

Look, I need my sleep. I work nights.

ARCHIE

We just need to recheck some points, Mr. Aland. How long did you say Richard Meegan has occupied the apartment downstairs?

ALAND

Nine days. Nine days. I'll spell it for you. He took it a week ago Tuesday. I've told you a dozen times.

ARCHIE

Who was the previous tenant? Just before him.

ALAND

I've told you: a girl had it.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED: 30

ALAND (CONT'D)

I've told you she's a fine artist
and I've told you she got me my
job at the night club where I
work.

(raking his hair)

Die like a dog. That's what
poor Phil did. He died like a
dog.

ARCHIE

Did she know Philip Kampf?

ALAND

Who? Jewel? I guess so. Sure
she did. Poor Phil died like a
dog. Like a dog, I tell you.

He shuts the door. Archie starts to head upstairs.

WIPE TO:

31 INT. 29 ARBOR STREET - HALLWAY - MEEGAN'S DOOR - DAY 31

Meegan stares suspiciously out a half opened door at Archie.

ARCHIE

We just want to re-check...

MEEGAN

Haven't I seen you before?
Yeah. When I was in Nero Wolfe's
office. Yeah.

ARCHIE

That's right. I'm often there
on business. Now I'm here on
business.

(opens notebook)

How did you come to take this
apartment?

MEEGAN

Oh my god.

ARCHIE

You could have omitted something
important, Mr. Meegan.

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED:

31

MEEGAN

(rattling it off)

I'm a commercial photographer. In Pittsburgh. Two years ago, I married a girl. Margaret Ryan. Seven months later she left me. She left Pittsburgh, too, anyway I couldn't find her and her family didn't hear from her.

ARCHIE

Did you go to the police?

MEEGAN

No. I didn't want to. You want a better reason, but that's mine.

ARCHIE

I'll skip that. Go ahead.

MEEGAN

Three weeks ago I go to a show at the Art Institute. There was an oil, a big one: "Three Mares in a Pasture". It was three women in it, eating apples. One of them was my wife. I knew the minute I saw her.

ARCHIE

What did you do?

MEEGAN

The artist's signature was Ross Chaffee. The catalogue said he lived in New York. And so I came here.

32 INT. 29 ARBOR STREET - HALLWAY - CHAFFEE'S DOOR - DAY
(FLASHBACK)

32

Chaffee greets Meegan. Meegan talks but Chaffee keeps shaking his head. Meegan gets aggressive.

MEEGAN (V.O.)

He fed me this line - he used so many different models for his pictures, that it was impossible to remember which

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

32 CONTINUED:

32

MEEGAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
was which. It was so phony I
got a little tactless with him.

33 INT. 29 ARBOR STREET - HALLWAY - MEEGAN'S DOOR - DAY 33
Archie is taking notes.

MEEGAN
I'm a photographer. I might
forget a model I see for a day,
but this dolly sat for him for
a month at least. So he was a
phony.

34 EXT. 29 ARBOR STREET - DAY (FLASHBACK) 34
Meegan talks with Olsen, holding a "TO LET" sign. Talento
comes out and eyeballs him. Meegan looks truculent. TWO
MODELS accompany MR. BRAUNSTEIN on their way up to Chaffee's.

MEEGAN (V.O.)
Coming in the house, I'd seen
a sign that there was an
apartment to let and so I rented
it. I wanted to be as close as
I could to Chaffee and the people
who came to see him. There
were models, of course, And
Aland and Talento. And a man
who Chaffee said buys his stuff.
His name was Braunstein.

WIPE TO:

35 INT. 29 ARBOR STREET - HALLWAY - MEEGAN'S DOOR - DAY 35

ARCHIE
Uhuh. And what did you learn
from Philip Kampf?

MEEGAN
Nothing. I told you I never
saw him or heard of him. I
told you twice.

ARCHIE
What would you say if I said
you were seen with him.

MEEGAN
I'd say you were a dirty liar!

He slams the door. ON ARCHIE'S REACTION WIPE TO:

36 INT. 29 ARBOR STREET - HALLWAY - CHAFFEE'S DOOR - DAY 36

Chaffee lounges at the door. He holds two fat paint brushes which he idly uses to decorate the door of his apartment as he talks.

CHAFFEE

My dear sir. Do you mean to say you think I'm lying?

ARCHIE

There are those who find it hard to believe, Mr. Chaffee, that you couldn't remember who modeled for such an important painting.

CHAFFEE

To what end? What deep design am I cherishing?

ARCHIE

Look, Mr. Chaffee. I don't expect a man like you to pass out dirt just for the hell of it, but any dirt that's connected with this murder is coming out, and if you are keeping some to yourself you're a bigger fool than you look.

CHAFFEE

Quite a speech.

ARCHIE

Thanks. You make one.

CHAFFEE

You have my opinion of Kampf, whom I knew quite well; he was in some respects admirable but he had his full share of faults.

ARCHIE

I gather, despite his inheritance, he was not free with a buck.

CHAFFEE

Yes, that. And he had a peculiar, a cruel sense of humor.
(MORE)

*

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED:

36

CHAFFEE (CONT'D)

But that's hardly a reason to
be killed...Look, I'm losing
the light.

*
*

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED: (2) 36

Archie gestures: go on.

DISSOLVE TO:

37 INT. BROWNSTONE - OFFICE - DAY 37

Archie is finishing a phone call, Jet at his feet, when Wolfe parades in carrying his morning orchid. Jet immediately gets up and goes to sit at Wolfe's feet, on the prayer rug. Wolfe pats him before he sits. They exchange looks - Wolfe is defensive; Archie smug.

WOLFE

Well? Proceed.

He leans back, closes his eyes. Archie starts to report.

ARCHIE (V.O.)

I reported. When I came to the end, he asked no questions. Instead, he opened his eyes, and started giving orders.

WOLFE

Call the..

ARCHIE

I'm way ahead of you. I called the Art Institute of Pittsburgh. The show seen by Mr. Meegan ended a week yesterday. The picture was lent by a Mr. Herman Braunstein of New York, also seen by Meegan at 29 Arbor Street. It was shipped back to him by express four days ago.

WOLFE

Get him.

ARCHIE

No. I don't think so. He may be a poop. Why don't I go to the residence without phoning? It's probably there, and if I can't get in you can fire me. I'm thinking of resigning anyhow.

Archie gets up and goes out.

(CONTINUED)

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37 CONTINUED: 39

ARCHIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Since it was my idea, he had
his doubts, but he bought it.

38 INT. BRAUNSTEIN APARTMENT - DAY 38

Archie cases the joint which would comfortably house
airplanes. He is wearing two cameras and carries a portable
light. MRS. BRAUNSTEIN, a tall, dignified dame, appears.

ARCHIE (V.O.)
I explained to Mrs. Braunstein
that a client of mine wanted to
photograph "Three Mares in a
Pasture" for his collection.
When I had invented all the
identification she required,
she led me through the arch
into a room not quite as big as
Madison Square Garden.

Mrs. Braunstein leads Archie to the living room and points.
Archie raises his camera and starts photographing the
painting. He focuses on one particular portion of the three
women eating apples and starts taking close-ups.

39 MULTIPLE INSERTS OF THREE MARES IN A PASTURE: 39

And we get closer and closer to Jewel Jones's smiling face.

CUT TO:

{A&E: END ACT THREE}

40 INT. BROWNSTONE - WOLFE'S OFFICE - DAY 40

The phone rings. Wolfe reluctantly puts down his book and
picks up the phone.

WOLFE
Whom do you want?

INTERCUT WITH:

41 INT. BRAUNSTEIN APARTMENT - DAY 41

Archie has borrowed Mrs. B's phone.

ARCHIE
That's a hell of a way to answer
the phone.

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED:

41

WOLFE

Yes or no?

ARCHIE

I've seen the picture, and I wouldn't have thought the stallion had it in him. It glows with color and life and the blood seems to pulsate under the warm skin...

WOLFE

Shut up! Yes or No?

ARCHIE

Yes. You have met Mrs. Meegan. Would you like to meet her again?

WOLFE

I would.

WIPE TO:

42 INT. JONES APARTMENT - HALLWAY - DAY

42

The door opens to reveal Jewel Jones posing in a very nice blue negligee. Archie keeps his distance.

JEWEL

Oh, Archie. I wasn't sure I should see you, but I couldn't resist...

ARCHIE

Cut it, doll. I've just come from Harold Braunstein's apartment where I've seen the most interesting picture.

She's shocked, but she recovers nicely.

JEWEL

What? Come in and tell...

She steps forward and puts a hand on his arm. He removes it.

ARCHIE

Sorry. But I'm afraid of young mares. One kicked me once. So I'll wait here while you change.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED:

42

ARCHIE (CONT'D)

Don't put on anything red. Mr. Wolfe dislikes red. He likes yellow. Go on.

JEWEL

But...

ARCHIE

Go on. Or I'll go get Richard Meegan.

She gasps and does not recover.

WIPE TO:

43 INT. BROWNSTONE - WOLFE'S OFFICE - DAY

43

JEWEL

Don't call me Mrs. Meegan!

WOLFE

I was only stressing the fact that your identity is not a matter for discussion. Legally, you are Mrs. Richard Meegan. Sit down please.

JEWEL

All right!

Jewel flounces to a chair, pull a handkerchief from her purse and dabs at her eye make up.

ARCHIE (V.O.)

Wolfe was in as bad a humor as she was. He had been compelled to tell Fritz to postpone lunch.

WOLFE

You are a competent liar, madam. Your offhand denial of knowing Mr. Meegan last night was better than competent. When did Mr. Chaffee tell you that your husband was in town looking for you?

JEWEL

I didn't say he had.

(CONTINUED)

43 CONTINUED:

43

WOLFE

Don't be preposterous. When the police learn it was you...

JEWEL

They don't have to learn about me, do they?

WOLFE

Pfui.

JEWEL

Wait. Why I didn't think of it before? You're a detective, you help people in trouble and I'm in trouble. I'll pay you to help me.

WOLFE

Not now; not ever, Miss Jones. When did Mr. Chaffee tell you that your husband was here looking for you?

JEWEL

You won't even listen to me.

WOLFE

Talk sense and I will.

JEWEL

My husband was jealous about me before we got married and then after, he got worse. It got bad. Really bad. Finally, it got so bad I left. I came to New York, found a job and made friends. I modeled for Ross and Phil Kampf found me a job singing. I thought I was safe. Then all of a sudden Ross phoned me that my husband was here. I begged him not to tell.

WOLFE

An idiotic strategy.

JEWEL

The only reason he wants to find me is so he can kill me.

(CONTINUED)

43 CONTINUED: (2)

43

WOLFE

Has he ever killed anyone?

JEWEL

I didn't say anyone. I said me. I don't know what it is. Men just go for me.

WOLFE

Did Mr. Aland and Mr. Talento?

JEWEL

They're good friends of mine. They said they wouldn't tell and they didn't.

(opening her purse)

I can pay you forty dollars to start with. To start. I'm not just in trouble, I'm in danger of my life, really I am. You're not listening!

He's not. He's watching his forefinger make little circles on his desk blotter. Jewel and Jet look at him, concerned. Jewel looks at Archie, who closes his eyes and does the same thing. Then, Wolfe speaks to Archie.

WOLFE

Get Mr. Chaffee.

Archie gets Chaffee on the phone.

JEWEL

No! I don't want him to know...

WOLFE

Nonsense. Everyone will have to know everything.

She whimpers and remonstrates.

ARCHIE

(into phone)

Mr. Chaffee? Nero Wolfe wants to speak with you.

WOLFE

Mr. Chaffee. I need to speak with you and the other tenants of 29 Arbor Street. Of course it's important.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

43 CONTINUED: (3)

43

WOLFE (CONT'D)

Well, if you want it to take less time, then you should bring the other tenants with you. Of course, all of you. How should I know how you will do it? I could suggest that if Mr. Meegan is balky, you might as well tell him that his wife is here....

Jewel leaps from her chair across the desk at Wolfe, who backs away. Jet leaps at her as does Archie

JEWEL

No! Don't tell him, Ross!
Don't bring him. Don't...

At this point, Archie grabs her shoulders and yanks her back so that he lands in the red leather chair with her on his lap. She is by no means through, so he wraps his arms around her, pinning her arms to her sides, whereupon she starts kicking his shins. Finally she goes limp. Archie and Wolfe exchange looks.

WOLFE

Truly, an affecting sight.

WIPE TO:

44 INT. BROWNSTONE - HALLWAY - DAY

44

Fritz lets the three men in - Chaffee, Aland and Talento. Then Meegan comes in after. The others look at him like a pariah. Archie comes down the hall.

ARCHIE

Greetings.
(on their reactions)
Before you ask, I will be happy to discuss my split personality as a homicide dick and a private eye with you after you've talked to Mr. Wolfe.

TALENTO

You double crosser! You used me as an opportunity to drag Jewel Jones into...

The others chime in with their complaints.

(CONTINUED)

44 CONTINUED:

44

ARCHIE

Aah, go climb a rope.

Archie pulls out his gun from his shoulder holster. This stops all of them dead.

ARCHIE (CONT'D)

What with Miss Jones's theory that her husband might kill her on sight and the fact that one of you did kill Poor Phil, I have taken a precaution.

He smiles. Shrugs. Puts it back.

ARCHIE (CONT'D)

It's just a precaution. But it's loaded.

He pats them down from shoulders to ankles. Not unkindly. He shows them to the office. As he passes the door of the front room, he notices that it opens a crack.

ARCHIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I kept Miss Jones in the front room until I had them seated in the office.

WIPE TO:

45 INT. BROWNSTONE - OFFICE - DAY

45

Archie finishes seating the men in chairs facing Wolfe. Jet lies on his carpet. Wolfe looks at the door to the front room. Archie goes to the door and opens it to reveal Jewel. Meegan jumps up and starts for them.

MEEGAN

You little whore...

Jewel ducks behind Archie with a shriek. Talento and Aland jump to their feet.

TALENTO

See what you've done, Goodwin!

ALAND

Don't you call her...you don't owe him anything, Jewel. Nothing.

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED:

45

Archie stiff arms Meegan and backs him towards his seat.
Talent and Aland step to either side.

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED: (2)

45

Archie puts Jewel in a chair next to his. Meegan stares straight at her. She can't pull her eyes off the ground.

ARCHIE (V.O.)

She had the damsel in distress
bit down to a science. On the
other hand, I had begun to
believe that she had a reason.

WOLFE

When this hubbub is over, I'll
proceed. I have not been hired
to work on this case;

(The SOUND of the doorbell
and Fritz answering it.)

The only client I have is a
dog...and he came to my office
by inadvertence.

He stops. He looks at Archie.

ARCHIE

I put the chain bolt on.

Fritz appears.

FRITZ

Inspector Cramer, sir.

WOLFE

I suppose it was to be expected.

WIPE TO:

Cramer and Stebbins appear in the office door.

WOLFE (CONT'D)

Luckily, Mr. Cramer, your usual
chair is unoccupied.

(Cramer hovers, undecided
as to whether he should
submit)

You know the gentlemen, of
course, but not the lady. Her
current name is Miss Jewel Jones.
Her legal name is Mrs. Richard
Meegan.

CRAMER

Meegan. Meegan's wife? The
one in the picture? Where did
you get her?

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED: (3)

45

WOLFE

That can wait. No interruptions.
No demands for thirty minutes.

CRAMER

I don't have to...

WOLFE

If you interrupt again, by
heaven, you can take them all
down to your quarters and stew
it out yourself. You know
everything there is to know.

(Cramer sighs. Sits.

Wolfe turns to the three
men.)

But before I come to that, one
point: I offer no comment on
your guile with Mr. Meegan. I
will even concede that there
was a flavor of gallantry in
it, but what you could not know
was that Mr. Meegan had been to
see me that morning.

CHAFFEE

What? Meegan hired you?

TALENTO

I knew something wasn't right.

WOLFE

I refused the job and he stormed
out in a temper, taking Mr.
Goodwin's raincoat instead of
his own.

CRAMER

We know all that. What I wanna
know is...

WOLFE

Hackneyed and dull. Mr. Meegan.
Some two hours ago, I learned
that you maintain that you never
met Phil Kampf. I would like
to hear it straight from you.
Did you ever meet Philip Kampf
alive?

MEEGAN

No.

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED: (4)

45

WOLFE

You don't wish to qualify that?

MEEGAN

No.

WOLFE

Then whose raincoat hangs on the rack in the hallway?

MEEGAN

What are you talking about?

WOLFE

The raincoat you brought into this house is in the hall now. There on the rack.

MEEGAN

I heard of your tricks, Wolfe. You planted something there.

WOLFE

I will now ask the question that no one has had the wit to ask in this whole investigation: Why did the dog follow Mr. Goodwin through the turmoil of the city? Mr. Goodwin is willing to believe, as many men are, that he is irresistible both to dogs and women and doubtless his vanity impeded his intellect or he would have reached the same conclusion that I did. The dog did not follow him; he followed the coat.

CRAMER

That smells. How can you account for Kampf's dog following Meegan's coat?

WOLFE

I couldn't. I can't. However, it was unquestionably Mr. Kampf's dog, therefore it couldn't have been Mr. Meegan's coat. It is better than a conjecture that it was Mr. Kampf's coat.

(CONTINUED)

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44A

45 CONTINUED: (5)

45

MEEGAN
What are you talking about?

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED: (6)

45

WOLFE

Where did you get it, Mr. Meegan?

MEEGAN

This is a dirty frame.

WOLFE

That it is Mr. Kampf's can be readily established by examining it.

MEEGAN

You can't prove that's the coat I left here.

WOLFE

I warn you. You are in deadly peril.

MEEGAN

She fixed you against me!

WOLFE

Have you any explanation of how Mr. Kampf's coat came into your possession?

MEEGAN

No. And I don't need any, you big blob!

WOLFE

Then you are done for, sir. For your own coat must be somewhere and I think I know where: in the police laboratory. If you won't explain how you got Mr. Kampf's coat, then explain how he came to wearing yours.

JEWEL

I knew it. I knew it! He wanted to kill me! So he killed Phil.

Meegan springs up, so does Jet, barking and keeping him in his chair. Stebbins grabs him and sits him back down. On a look from Wolfe, Jet subsides and reseats himself.

WOLFE

How do you know that, madam?

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED: (7)

45

JEWEL

Because Phil told me. He wanted me to come back to him. I wouldn't. So he told Dick he knew the girl who posed for that picture. Then he comes and tells me that if I don't come back and be with him, he'll Dick how to find me. So I promised I would. And he laughed. He said he had to go see Dick again anyway because Dick had gone off with his raincoat. Phil thought it was funny that Dick had his raincoat and he had Dick's wife.

(to Meegan)

And I'll bet that's just what he told you, huh? I bet he told you I was coming back to him and he thought that was a good trade - a raincoat for a wife!

She giggles. But the giggles becomes sobbing very quickly. Archie stands to go help but the three men are already there - Chaffee, Aland and Talento. Her sobs increase. Stebbins starts to cuff Meegan. Wolfe takes it for one second and then skedaddles.

CRAMER

All right. Everybody's going down to the station. Including you, Wolfe. Hey, where are you going?

Wolfe ignores him and goes out, slamming the door behind him.

ARCHIE (V.O.)

If there's one thing on earth Nero Wolfe will not be in the room with, it's a woman in eruption.

Cramer has to help Stebbins get Meegan into handcuffs and it isn't easy. He keeps up a stream of invective directed at Jewel, whose sobs get more lavish as Chaffee folds her into his arms. Cramer and Stebbins try to get everyone to shut up. Suddenly the door flies open again. Nero Wolfe fills the doorway. Everyone pauses, compelled by his presence.

(CONTINUED)

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45 CONTINUED: (8)

45

WOLFE

Jet.

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED: (9)

45

He gestures. Jet taps obediently out the door to him. Wolfe closes the door. Stebbins looks at Cramer. Cramer looks at Stebbins. They both look at Archie, who shrugs. Then the noise ensues again.

{A&E: END HOUR }

46 INT. MANHATTAN COURTROOM - DAY THREE

46

The prosecuting attorney, MANDLEBAUM, struts before the jury making his opening statement in his patented style. The courtroom is packed, the press box is full. The Judge doesn't appear to be paying attention, but he is. He has patented a country style to win the affection of juries.

MANDLEBAUM`

The People will show that Leonard Ashe engaged Marie Willis to spy on his wife from her vantage point as an operator at the Bagby Answers Telephone Messaging service. And we will prove, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that when poor Marie told him that she could not go on and had decided to tell his wife of his espionage, he murdered her in cold blood.

He paces, getting more intense.

MANDLEBAUM` (CONT'D)

We will demonstrate that Leonard Ashe was mad with jealousy of his wife. Obsessed. It would be easy to portray this murder as an act of passion. But he did not kill Marie Willis when she told him, "No." He didn't raise his hand in anger. He waited until she was all alone at her job, her back to him at the switchboard, probably answering a call. He came up behind her. She never knew what was coming, poor kid. And now this rich sophisticated man sits before you, wealthy enough to buy a battery of lawyers, arrogantly confident that you won't convict him because he is

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

46 CONTINUED:

46

MANDLEBAUM` (CONT'D)
a respectable man, married to a
famous woman. Don't let him
get away with it.

WIPE TO:

DONOVAN
Ladies and Gentlemen. The State
has brought you this case out
of sheer laziness. Is it
plausible that my client killed
a woman because she refused to
spy on his wife? No. Is it
plausible that a grown man would
kill to avoid embarrassment?
No. Is it plausible that in a
fit of rage, a respected
theatrical producer killed an
aspiring actress because she
threatened to undermine his
marriage? Possibly. My client's
wife is a beautiful famous woman.
Leonard Ashe would be a fool
not to be madly in love with
her. Even so, it's only a
theory. A possible explanation.
I can come up with a hundred of
them. The fact is that the
state has not one shred of
physical evidence which
indicates that my client ever
touched Marie Willis, much less
grabbed her and choked her to
death. In fact on finding her
body, he called the police. Is
this the behavior of a cold
blooded killer?

Mandlebaum interviews witness, THE CORONER. He shows him a
glossy photo of the body of MARIE WILLIS

MANDLEBAUM
Is this a picture of the
deceased?

CORONER
Yes.

(CONTINUED)

46 CONTINUED: (2) 46

MANDLEBAUM
What was your analysis of the
cause of death.

Mandlebaum shows a BLACK AND WHITE GLOSSY 8 x 10 to the jury.

INSERT: 8X10 GLOSSY - MARIE WILLIS STRANGLER AT HER
SWITCHBOARD STILL SITTING IN HER CHAIR.

47 INT. BAGBY ANSWERS INC - FRONT ROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK) 47

FLASHCUT: MARIE WILLIS reaches to plug in a call, from behind
her, hands rip off her headset, wrap the cord around her
neck twice and pull. Marie's tries to scream and can't.

47A INT. COURTROOM - DAY 47A

47A CONTINUED:

47A

CORONER (V.O.)
Strangulation. The victim's
windpipe was crushed by an
electrical wire which was yanked
back and held taut around her
neck, tight enough to slice
into the flesh of her neck.

MANDELBAUM (V.O.)
How long did the murderer have
to hold it.

CORONER (V.O.)
Three to five minutes.

MEMBERS OF THE JURY look at the picture and then at LEONARD
ASHE. Behind him, ROBINA KEANE puts her hand on his shoulder.

MANDELBAUM
The killer had to hold her,
dying, choking, for that long?

DONOVAN
Your honor...

CORONER
Yes.

MANDELBAUM
Your witness, Mr. Donovan.

JIMMIE DONOVAN stands. He looks at Ashe.

DONOVAN
Were there any fingerprints on
the cord?

CORONER
Of course not.

DONOVAN
Or any bruise patterns, skin
under her fingernails?

CORONER
No.

DONOVAN
Any physical evidence of any
kind to connect my client to
the body of the victim.

(CONTINUED)

47A CONTINUED: (2)

47A

CORONER

Not in my report.

DONOVAN

Thank you. Your honor, we would like to move for dismissal. The State has not met the evidentiary burden of proof in a capital crime.

MANDELBAUM

(jumping up)

We can establish a clear motive, your honor. By his own admission, he was there - This man was insanely jealous of his wife and this girl threatened to...

The doors of the courtroom open and NERO WOLFE strides in. His floppy pirate hat, his coat, his gold-capped cane. ARCHIE GOODWIN is right behind him. The whole courtroom stops and stares at his magnificent figure. WHISPERS can be heard: "Wolfe. It's Nero Wolfe. Nero Wolfe." AN ENTERPRISING PHOTOGRAPHER takes his picture.

Wolfe looks around. There are only two spaces left: on a bench, between two women. One of them is gorgeous and one of them is THE SMELLY WOMAN. Wolfe considers his options - neither one pleases him. He goes to sit next to the Smelly Woman. She looks at him in moist surprise. Archie sits next to the Gorgeous Woman. The JUDGE raps for order.

JUDGE

Mr. Wolfe. I am so happy you could join us today for the trial.

WOLFE

I am here only because I was subpoenaed, sir.

JUDGE

Yes, and I believe the subpoena stated that you should arrive at 8 a.m. You are two hours late, but I suppose we should be grateful for small favors. In this day and age, even the highest court in the land must bow before the idiosyncrasies

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

47A CONTINUED: (3)

47A

JUDGE (CONT'D)
of the famous. And you, of course, are very famous. I trust our accommodations suit you? Are you quite comfortable? Would you care for us to repeat the testimony which has been given?

WOLFE
That is unnecessary, your honor. I am sure we will be able to follow the course of the trial.

JUDGE
Is it all right with you if we go on, Mr. Wolfe.

WOLFE
I assure you, Judge, that I wish these proceedings to be concluded with as much dispatch as justice will allow.

JUDGE
Well, that's reassuring, Mr. Wolfe.
(to Donovan)
I'm denying your motion.
Continue Mr. Mandlebaum.

MANDELBAUM
The State calls Clyde Bagby.

47A CONTINUED: (4)

47A

Archie settles in, as CLYDE BAGBY waddles up to the stand.

WOLFE

Why must I submit to this?

ARCHIE

Because a summons to testify is an occupational hazard if you hope to collect fees from clients.

WOLFE

I had no client.

ARCHIE

Only because you turned Leonard Ashe down when he asked you for help.

WOLFE

Confound it.

ARCHIE (V.O.)

Nero Wolfe had been called to testify as a key witness in the murder trial of a girl he'd never met. Leonard Ashe had come to the office to try to hire him to get Marie Willie to spy on his wife. And Wolfe, who gets hives at the idea of being involved in marital difficulties, refused. So Leonard went and found Marie himself. Two days later, she'd been found dead at her post, and Ashe had been fingered for the job. Wolfe was the only one in the city, besides the victim and of course, me, who could testify to the extent of his jealousy.

MANDLEBAUM

Mr. Bagby, you are the owner of Bagby Answers, Ink.

BAGBY

I am. The Ink stands for incorporated.

(CONTINUED)

47A CONTINUED: (5)

47A

MANDELBAUM

Could you describe it, please.

BAGBY

Well, it's a telephone answering service. When you're a person or a firm and you have a phone, you're not only always there to answer it. So you get a phone answering service. I've got four different exchange districts - Gramercy, Plaza, Trafalgar, and Rhinelander. I specialize in private homes instead of firms. When somebody dials a client's number, his light goes on on the switchboard and a buzz synchronizes with the ringing of the client's phone. How many buzzes the girl counts before she plugs in depends on who the client is. We got some want her to plug in after three buzzes, some want her to wait longer. I got one client, he has the girl count fifteen buzzes. That's the kind of specialized service I give my clients. The big outfits, the ones with tens of thousands of clients, they won't do that.

MANDELBAUM

And the way the office on 69th street is set up is unusual, is it not?

BAGBY

Yes. It's an apartment. See on account of the labor law, you can't have women working in an office building after 2 am. And I have to give all night service. So on 69th Street I've got 4 girls working and living right there in the apartment.

WOLFE

tries to get comfortable on the bench. THE SMELLY WOMAN, wears a wide feathered hat and has a large purse at her side.

(CONTINUED)

47A CONTINUED: (6)

47A

She smiles at him diffidently, but she does not make room for him or seem aware that her feathers are in Wolfe's air space.

(CONTINUED)

47A CONTINUED: (7)

47A

ARCHIE (V.O.)

Wolfe's mood was to be expected. At this hour of the morning, he should have been sniffing his celebrated collection of orchids.

BAGBY

We give specialized services.

MANDLEBAUM

Now, Mr. Bagby, please look at the gentlemen in the dark blue suit sitting next to the officer. Do you know him?

He indicates Leonard Ashe.

BAGBY

Sure, that's Leonard Ashe. He arranged for 24 hour service on his home phone, paid a month in advance.

MANDELBAUM

Then two days later he made contact with Marie Willis and offered her fifteen hundred dollars to do what?

DONOVAN

Your Honor, the Assistant District Attorney is testifying.

JUDGE

So he is. Let your witness do his own testimony, Mr. Mandelbaum.

MANDELBAUM

Of course. We'll go the long way if that's what Mr. Donovan prefers. Was Leonard Ashe's number on Marie Willis's board?

BAGBY

Yes, sir.

MANDELBAUM

Did he contact Miss Willis?

(CONTINUED)

47A CONTINUED: (8)

47A

BAGBY

Yes sir. He asked to meet with her Well, he was a theatrical producer and she wanted to be an actress, so she asked my permission to meet with him. I said, sure. Ashe asked her...

DONOVAN

If your Honor pleases, the witness can't testify as to what Miss Willis and Mr. Ashe said to each other. He was not present.

MANDELBAUM

Of course not. He is reporting what Miss Willis told him had been said.

JUDGE

That should be kept clear. Do you understand that, Mr. Bagby. Only what she told you.

BAGBY

Yes sir. Ashe said...she told me Ashe asked her to listen in on any phone calls to his apartment during the day. And then every night, she was supposed to phone him and report. He gave her five hundred dollars and promised her a thousand more if she went along.

MANDELBAUM

Mr. Bagby, did Marie tell you what kind of information she was supposed to report.

BAGBY

She told me Ashe wanted her to report on any extramarital activity on the part of his wife.

MANDELBAUM

And did she.

(CONTINUED)

47A CONTINUED: (9)

47A

BAGBY

She told him she wanted to sleep on it and came to see me. She said she knew she should have turned him down but she didn't want to make him sore.

MANDELBAUM

Miss Willis initially agreed, then?

BAGBY

Oh yeah. Until she found out his wife was her idol, Robina Keane. Marie studied acting very seriously.

MANDELBAUM

In any case, can you confirm that the night of her death, Miss Willis had an appointment to meet with Mr. Ashe?

BAGBY

I tried to talk her out of it.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

47A CONTINUED: (10)

47A

BAGBY (CONT'D)

I rode with her in the taxi to Ashe's office. I couldn't budge her. She had given her promise to Ashe and wanted to withdraw it. She wanted him to know that she was going to tell his wife.

The very beautiful ROBINA KEANE who sits on the front row exchanges a loving glance with her husband, who looks haggard.

ARCHIE (V.O.)

I had never worshipped Robina Keane as my idol, but I had liked her fine in a couple of shows and she was giving a good performance in her first and only courtroom appearance - either being steadfastly loyal to her husband, or putting on an act, but good in any case. How she and her husband stood with each other was anybody's guess and everybody was guessing. Some said her husband was her whole world and some that she had only quit the stage to have more time for certain promiscuous activities. I wasn't ready to vote.

In the meantime, Wolfe is having his war with the Smelly Lady. Unconscious of his discomfort, she rummages in her purse and comes up with a lace trimmed hanky and damps the perspiration on her face. It's almost too much for Wolfe.

MANDLEBAUM (O.S.)

So you didn't go up to Ashe's office with Miss Willis?

BAGBY (O.S.)

No sir.

MANDLEBAUM (O.S.)

What did you do that evening, after you saw Marie Willis enter that elevator to go up to Ashe's office.

(CONTINUED)

47A CONTINUED: (11)

47A

BAGBY

I had to keep a dinner date with a friend at a restaurant on 52nd Street. Not long after I got home, the police called to say Miss Willis had been found murdered at 69th street.

DISSOLVE TO:

48 INT. BAGBY ANSWERS, INC. - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

48

The office is now a crime scene, as Bagby identifies Marie. Leonard Ashe is there being questioned by PURLEY STEBBINS.

BAGBY (V.O.)

They wanted me to identify the body. Leonard Ashe was already there. He said a man phoned him - a voice he didn't recognize - and said if Ashe would meet him at the office maybe they could

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

	WITNESS	10-22-01	GREEN	48	53
48	CONTINUED:				48
			BAGBY (V.O.) (CONT'D)		
			talk sense into Marie. Ashe		
			said he found the door to the		
			office just standing open.		
49	INT. COURTROOM - DAY				49
			BAGBY		
			When he saw her, he leaned out		
			a window and yelled for the		
			police.		
			Wolfe processes this comment. He turns to Archie.		
			DONAVAN		*
			Your honor, how does the witness		*
			know this?		*
			MANDELBAUM		*
			These facts are established by		*
			the police report. Mr. Bagby		*
			was there when it was taken.		*
			JUDGE		*
			Gentlemen. Come forward.		*
			WOLFE		
			We're leaving.		
			Archie watches as Wolfe sidles past knees and heads for the		
			door. He follows.		
			ARCHIE (V.O.)		
			I assumed some vital need was		
			motivating him such as phoning		
			Fritz to discuss the state of		
			the shad roe we were to have		
			for lunch.		
50	OMITTED				50
51	EXT. COURTHOUSE - ALLEY - DAY				51
			Wolfe opens a side door, checks down the alley. He comes		
			out; Archie follows.		
			WOLFE		
			Which way is Centre Street? We		
			want a taxi and then I want a		
			word with you.		

51 CONTINUED:

51

ARCHIE

No, sir. First a word from me. You were told you would follow Bagby to the stand. If you want a taxi, of course, you're going home and that will put you in contempt of court.

WOLFE

I'm not going home.

(CONTINUED)

51 CONTINUED: (2)

51

ARCHIE

Right. Where are you going?

WOLFE

To six-eighteen 69th Street.
I'll explain it on the way.

ARCHIE

I'm going back to the courtroom.

WOLFE

No. I'll need you.

ARCHIE

Very touching. This had better
be very good.

WOLFE

It's preposterous.

ARCHIE

Yeah, it is. Let's go back
inside.

WOLFE

I mean Mr. Mandelbaum's thesis.
I concede Mr. Ashe might have
murdered that girl. I concede
his state of mind about his
wife approached mania. But his
solution was to hire someone to
spy on his wife. A man reluctant
to undertake such a chore for
himself, would be unlikely to
strangle a woman and then open
a window and yell for the police.

ARCHIE

Maybe Ashe didn't go there to
kill her. But then he got mad.

WOLFE

Pfui. My testimony will support
the thesis Mr. Mandelbaum is
presenting. If Ashe is
convicted, it will be a judicial
transgression, and I will not
be a party to it.

(CONTINUED)

51 CONTINUED: (3)

51

ARCHIE

You doubt Ashe's guilt and you think your testimony will help tag him, so you're scooting.

WOLFE

That's close enough.

ARCHIE

Not for me. And don't try to guff me that your finely honed sense of justice is putting you to work.

WOLFE

I can't go home. If I go home they will come and drag me back to the witness box.

ARCHIE

So why make the sacrifice? For who? For Ashe? Go back inside.

WOLFE

No. It's not what I like, it's what I don't like.

ARCHIE

What?

WOLFE

Being called as a witness is one thing, being used to corroborate a theory I can't support is another, but being forced to sit there on that confounded bench with a smelly woman pressed up against me...

ARCHIE

Oh. So that's how it stands. Well, it's a fine day, the bank account could use a shot in the arm and there's always a chance that Ashe will be grateful.

Wolfe starts up the alley.

ARCHIE (CONT'D)

I admit that woman was smelly.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

51 CONTINUED: (4)

51

ARCHIE (CONT'D)

But I have a good nose and it was Tissot's Passion Flower, which costs eighty bucks an ounce.

WOLFE

It was smelly.

ARCHIE

What are you going to do at 69th Street?

WOLFE

I don't know.

ARCHIE

Good.

{A&E: END ACT ONE}

CUT TO:

52 EXT. BAGBY ANSWERS, INC - DAY

52

Archie pays the cabbie and then opens the door for Wolfe.

ARCHIE (V.O.)

The apartment building that was the home of Bagby Answers, Ink, had last been painted about the time I started working for Nero Wolfe.

Wolfe emerges and arranges himself, recovering from the horror of the cab ride. He looks about magisterially and then faces the steps. Archie looks with him. It's a dump. They look at each other and start in for the door.

ARCHIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Wolfe and I were in a peculiar position. Normally he thinks up a batch of errands for me and sends me out to do them using my intelligence guided by experience, while he sits home in his favorite chair reading whatever book strikes his fancy and drinking beer provided by Fritz.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

52 CONTINUED:

52

ARCHIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

But that arrangement was out because if he went home now, the court would surely come get him. Therefore, we had to do errands together. I decided to tackle the delicate question of who was in charge.

(out loud)

Since this is your first time running the kind of errands you usually send me on, why don't you take the lead? Are we going to be brush peddlers or plumbers?

WOLFE

Don't be ridiculous.

They go inside.

53 INT. BAGBY ANSWERS, INC. - FRONT ROOM - DAY

53

Wolfe enters the living room of the apartment, followed by Archie. He glares at PEARL who works a board and is a receptionist. The other two women, MISS HART and MISS VELARDI work their boards.

WOLFE

I am Mr. Wolfe and this is my assistant, Mr. Goodwin. We've just come from the courthouse where Leonard Ashe is being tried.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

53 CONTINUED:

53

WOLFE (CONT'D)

(on a look from Archie)
We've been sent to check on
subpoenas that have been served
on witnesses. Have you been
served?

PEARL

Umm...I...no.

WOLFE

Where are Miss Hart, Miss Velardi
and Miss Weltz? They were all
present on July 15th.

On hearing her name, ALICE HART takes off her headphone and
comes forward. MISS VELARDI does not turn around but sits
staring at her board.

ARCHIE (V.O.)

It had been weeks since those
names had appeared in the papers,
but Wolfe's skull had a filing
system even better than Saul
Panzer's.

Hart gets into Wolfe's personal space.

ALICE

Aren't you Nero Wolfe, the
detective?

WOLFE

Yes. You are Alice Hart?

ALICE

(stepping closer)
Yes. What do you want?

WOLFE

(stepping back)
I want information.

ALICE

(stepping closer)
We have no information. Who
sent you here?

WOLFE

Autokinesis.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

53 CONTINUED: (2)

53

WOLFE (CONT'D)

There's a cardinal flaw in the assumption that Leonard Ashe killed Marie Willis. It has made me curious and when I'm curious there is only one cure - the whole truth, and I intend to find it.

Alice Hart starts to tell Wolfe off, then changes her mind.

ALICE

Take my board, will you, Pearl? Miss Weltz has the day off, but Miss Velardi and I can see you. We'll go to my room.

WOLFE

One moment, Miss Hart. A point not covered in the newspaper accounts.

(pointing at board)

Marie Willis was found slumped over her switchboard. Presumably she was seated at the switchboard when the murderer arrived. But you live here, you and the others. If the murderer was Mr. Ashe, how did he know she was alone on the premises.

ALICE

I don't know. Perhaps she told him she would be. Is that the flaw?

WOLFE

No. But I would prefer someone with surer knowledge that she was alone. Since she was small and slight, even you are not excluded, or these others. Not that I am now prepared to charge you with murder.

ALICE

I hope not.

She leads them to a door at the end of the room, into a hallway. Wolfe and Archie exchange a look and follow.

(CONTINUED)

53 CONTINUED: (3)

53

Archie glances back at the room. Bella and Pearl are not looking after them but sit hunched over their boards, staring straight ahead.

ARCHIE (V.O.)

As I followed Wolfe, I was thinking that the reaction we were getting was a little exaggerated. It would have been natural under the circumstances for Miss Velardi and the other girl to turn in their seats for a good look at us, but they didn't. They sat rigid, staring at their boards.

54 INT. BAGBY ANSWERS - ALICE'S BEDROOM - DAY

54

The room is a surprise. There's a chair almost big enough for Wolfe. The furniture is comfortable and over the mantle...

ARCHIE

I may not be an art critic, but isn't that a Van Gogh over your fireplace?

ALICE

What's the flaw?

WOLFE

I'm the inquisitor, Miss Hart, not you. Where did you get that piece?

ALICE

That's none of your business.

WOLFE

It certainly isn't. But there will be no limit to my impertinence with you. If you refuse to say where you got it, I'll put a man on it, a competent man and he'll find out.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

54 CONTINUED:

54

WOLFE (CONT'D)

You can't escape being badgered, madam; the question is whether you will suffer it from me, or face a prolonged inquiry among your friends by meddlesome men.

ALICE

What does it matter where I got the picture?

WOLFE

Probably nothing about you matters. But the picture is a treasure and this is an odd address for it. Do you own it?

ALICE

Yes.

WOLFE

What is your salary?

ALICE

(tightly)
Eighty dollars a week.

WOLFE

Not enough for your extravagance. An inheritance? Alimony?

ALICE

I have never married. I had some savings, and I wanted it. I wanted it. If you save for fifteen years, you have a right to something.

WOLFE

You have indeed. Where were you the evening that Miss Willis was killed?

ALICE

Out in Jersey. In a car, with Bella Velardi. To get cooled off - it was a hot night. We got back after midnight.

WOLFE

In your car.

(CONTINUED)

54 CONTINUED: (2)

54

ALICE

No, Helen Weltz let us take hers. She has a Jaguar.

Archie whistles. To Wolfe.

ARCHIE

A Jaguar is quite a pricey machine. Counting taxes and extras, four thousand bucks isn't enough. You couldn't squeeze into one.

WOLFE

Has any client ever asked you listen in on calls to his number.

ALICE

Certainly not.

WOLFE

Did you know of Miss Willis's regard for Robina Keane?

ALICE

We all knew. Marie did imitations of her.

WOLFE

When did she tell you of her decision to tell Robina Keane that her husband meant to spy on her.

ALICE

I didn't say she had.

WOLFE

Did you know the boyfriend?
(on her look)
Marie Willis's boyfriend, Guy Unger?

ALICE

Not very well.

They continue talking. Archie watches.

ARCHIE (V.O.)

Wolfe was playing a game I had often watched him at, tossing
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

54 CONTINUED: (3)

54

ARCHIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
balls at random to see how they
bounced. It's a good way to
find a lead if you haven't got
one, but it may take all day
and he didn't have it. If one
of the females in the front
room took a notion to call the
cops or the DA's office, we
might have visitors any minute.
As for Guy Unger, Miss Hart
gave the opinion that he and
Marie Willis had enjoyed each
other's company but that's all.
She knew nothing of a crisis
that might have made Unger want
to end the friendship with a
plug cord.

Wolfe abruptly rises.

WOLFE
That's all. For now. Send in
Miss Velardi.

(CONTINUED)

54 CONTINUED: (4) 54

ALICE
Her room is next door. This way.

She's out the door eagerly, but she waits for them.

ARCHIE
Obviously she doesn't want to leave us alone with Van Gogh.

WIPE TO:

55 INT. BAGBY ANSWERS - MISS VELARDI'S ROOM - DAY 55

It's a mess. Dainties on the chair backs and an unmade bed. None of the drawers or doors are exactly closed. Alice shows them in and disappears. Wolfe hates the mess and sits himself down in a chair that is too small for him.

ARCHIE (V.O.)
Bella Velardi's closet door and drawers were open to cracks of various widths. One of the reasons I am still shy a wife, is the risk of getting a crack lover.

WOLFE
Look around.

Archie goes to work. He pulls the closet door open. A jungle of duds bulges out. He closes it. He moves on to a stack of paperbacks on a little table. He picks up the one on top:

ARCHIE
The library. One Mistake Too Many featuring a double breasted floozy shrinking from a muscle bound baboon. Ahah.

He picks up The Racing Form and Track Dope.

ARCHIE (CONT'D)
She's philanthropist. She donates dough to the cause of equine genetics.

WOLFE
Meaning.

(CONTINUED)

55 CONTINUED:

55

ARCHIE

She bets on horse races.

WOLFE

Does she lose much?

ARCHIE

She loses. Probably tidy sums since she takes two house journals.

WOLFE

Open drawers. Have one open when she comes in. I want to see how much impudence these creatures will tolerate.

Archie goes to the smaller chest. In the second drawer he opens, he finds photographs, and he flips through them. He shows Wolfe one. Wolfe holds it up.

INSERT: A SNAP SHOT

BELLA and HELEN WELTZ with GUY UNGER in bathing suits on a boat.

WOLFE (CONT'D)

Guy Unger.
(pockets it)
Find more of him.

At the SOUND of Bella approaching, Archie opens another drawer of the small chest and inspects its contents. As Bella enters, he shuts it in no hurry and turns. She sees it, and he lets her see it, but she doesn't react.

She starts tidying up in a half-hearted way.

ARCHIE (V.O.)

I was ready to meet a yelp of indignation, but didn't have to. With her sassy face and sassier eyes, Bella Velardi looked perfectly capable of indignation, but her nerves were too busy with something else. She decided to pretend she hadn't caught me with her drawer open and that was plain screwy. It was a cinch these phone operators had something on their minds.

(CONTINUED)

55 CONTINUED: (2)

55

BELLA

Miss Hart says you want to ask me something.

WOLFE

Yes. If I put three investigators on the job of finding out how much you lost last year betting on horses, how long do you think it would take them?

BELLA

Why, I...I don't know.

(CONTINUED)

55 CONTINUED: (3)

55

WOLFE

With luck, five hours. Without it, five days. It would be simpler for you just to tell me. How much have you lost?

BELLA

How do you know I've lost anything?

WOLFE

Archie. Resume your search. There's fair chance that she keeps a record of gains and losses.

BELLA

Look, Mr. Wolfe. There's no secret about my liking to bet, but the amounts - that's different. I have friends who - well they don't want people to know, so they give me money to bet for them. So it's about a hundred dollars a week, sometimes two hundred. I mean, I only make \$65 dollars a week.

Wolfe doesn't even dignify the lie with a comment.

WOLFE

In summer weather, when one of you is on duty there at night, are the windows open? The shades up?

BELLA

When it's hot, yes.

WOLFE

It was hot July fifteenth. Were the windows up that night?

BELLA

I don't know, I was out in Jersey. In a car with Alice Hart. To get cooled off. We got back after midnight.

ARCHIE

Well, that settles that.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

55 CONTINUED: (4)

55

ARCHIE (CONT'D)

One woman might conceivably lie, but surely not two, especially in the same words.

WOLFE

If the windows were open and the shades up, would anyone in her senses have killed Marie Willis so exposed to view? What do you think?

BELLA

Why, no. That would have been...no, I don't think so.

WOLFE

Then she - or he - must have drawn the shades before proceeding. How could Leonard Ashe have managed that without startling Miss Willis?

BELLA

I don't know. He might have - No. I don't know.

WOLFE

(producing snapshot)

When was this taken?

Bella jumps up, grabs it. Wolfe holds on. Finally she explodes.

BELLA

You took that from my drawer! What else did you take? Get out of here and stay out!

Wolfe returns the snap to his pocket. Rises.

WOLFE

Come, Archie. There seems to be a limit after all.

56 INT. BAGBY ANSWERS, INC. - FRONT ROOM - DAY

56

They go out. Alice Hart is waiting next to Pearl. Bella grabs Wolfe's arm.

(CONTINUED)

56 CONTINUED:

56

BELLA

Wait. I didn't mean to flare up like that.

WOLFE

When was the picture taken.

BELLA

About two weeks ago. Two weeks ago Sunday. The other woman is Helen Weltz and the man is Guy Unger. We were having a day on his boat, that's all. Guy and Helen and Ralph and me. Ralph is my boyfriend. And Guy. Well, since Marie died, he's kinda taken an interest in Marie.

(on a look from Alice)

Look, I told Marie she was asking for trouble going to Mr. Ashe like that. I told her she was asking for it and she might get it. But she was so daddled on Robina Keane. Well, you couldn't talk to her.

WOLFE

Where is Miss Weltz?

ALICE

This is her day off.

WOLFE

I know. Where can I find her?

PEARL

She's probably at the place she rented up in Westchester, near Katonah. Do you want me to phone and find out?

WOLFE

Yes, if you would.

Pearl places the call.

ARCHIE

Are we going to Katonah in a taxi?

(CONTINUED)

56 CONTINUED: (2)

56

WOLFE

No. We are going to Pete's garage for the car.

WIPE TO:

57 EXT. PETE'S GARAGE - DAY

57

Wolfe and Archie stand waiting for PETE to bring the car down. A UNIFORM COP passes them and gives Wolfe the eye. Archie turns away; Wolfe, of course ignores it.

ARCHIE (V.O.)

For more years than I can remember, Inspector Cramer of Homicide has dreamed of locking Nero Wolfe up, at least over night. And now, with Wolfe in flight, his dream was close to coming true. I didn't think he'd be so excited he'd put out an all points bulletin in that regard, but seeing a cop give Wolfe a second glance made me pause. I told myself it was just nerves. Wolfe's size and carriage rated that much notice without any special stimulation.

WOLFE

We could walk home from here in four minutes.

ARCHIE

I was expecting this. Yes, sir. I knew it was coming - it's your genius working. To go to Katonah, we have to drive. To drive we have to get the car. To get the car we have to go to the garage.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

57 CONTINUED:

57

ARCHIE (CONT'D)

And the garage is so close to home that we might as well go and have lunch first. Once in the house, with the door bolted, we could reconsider this insanity of driving to Westchester.

Wolfe goes to a phonebooth.

WOLFE

I should call Fritz.

ARCHIE

Yeah. What's he cooking for lunch, I wonder.

WOLFE

Fritz? If there are any callers, tell them you have not heard from us. Ah. No. Not at all. I don't know about dinner. You cannot expect us until we arrive.

(he hangs up, glaring)

There have been four phone calls. One from an officer of the court, one from the District Attorney's office, and two from Inspector Cramer.

ARCHIE

Ouch. Are you sure you don't want to go home?

WOLFE

Shut up.

ARCHIE

Yes, sir.

PETE drives up in the sedan and rolls up to a stop.

58 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD -- DAY

58

The car bumps towards Helen's country cottage.

ARCHIE (V.O.)

In his own comfortable chair surrounded by his books, Wolfe can usually keep his genius under control, but faced with a perfumed

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

58 CONTINUED:

58

ARCHIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
woman, he ran away and now he
was stuck. He couldn't go back
to court. He couldn't go home.
So he was headed into the wilds
of Westchester County to talk
to a woman who might be as smelly
as the one he had run from.

WOLFE (V.O.)
Archie. Decrease the velocity
of this deathtrap.

ARCHIE (V.O.)
If this deathtrap goes any
slower, we won't get there until
next Tuesday.

They hit a bump.

WOLFE (V.O.)
What was that? Was that the
tire? Has it blown out? Stop
the car immediately.

ARCHIE (V.O.)
No sir. That was called a bump
and it is unavoidable in
Westchester County. As a matter
of fact, we are headed into a
whole nest of them, so hold on.

59 EXT. COUNTRY HOUSE - DAY

59

Archie pulls the car up next to a yellow Jaguar. Two people
appear, drinks in hand, country clothes. Neither HELEN WELTZ
or GUY UNGER are feeling any pain.

ARCHIE (V.O.)
The dash clock said 2:38 when I
turned off a dirt road into a
rutted driveway and stepped on
the brake to avoid hitting into
a bright yellow Jaguar. Two
people immediately appeared.
Helen Weltz looked bright and
friendly and not like a murderer
at all. I wish I could say Guy
Unger did, but he just looked
mean.

(CONTINUED)

59 CONTINUED:

59

HELEN

You're Archie Goodwin? I'm Helen Weltz. Mr. Wolfe? It's really you. Such a pleasure. This is Guy Unger. Come come come this way. We're enjoying the last gasp of autumn color.

She leads them to the OLD TREE in the shade of which a full bar has been set up on a rustic table. Wolfe lowers himself into one of the little wooden slatted chairs which have been painted.

HELEN (CONT'D)

(gaily)

What will you have? We have martinis and martinis and...martinis. Or if you're cold, I can fix you a hot toddy.

(Wolfe gives a stiff silent shake of his head)

Ohhh. You might as well. Otherwise you came all this way for nothing. I don't know anything. I was out on the Sound on a boat with Mr. Unger that day.

She pours herself another highball.

WOLFE

When did Mr. Unger get here?

HELEN

Why, he just...

(CONTINUED)

59 CONTINUED: (2)

59

UNGER

I'm looking on, that's all.
I'm not an impartial observer,
because I'm partial to Miss
Weltz, but...

WOLFE

Let me explain more fully.
When I spoke to Miss Hart and
Miss Velardi I was insufferable,
and they should have flouted
me, but they were afraid to,
and I assume that you know why.
I also assume that, after I
called, you phoned Mr. Unger,
and he was concerned enough to
get here before I arrived.

UNGER

Forget it. Miss Weltz invited
me yesterday to come out this
afternoon.

HELEN

(laughing)

Behave yourself, Guy. You know
what he said when I told him
Nero Wolfe was coming? He says,
"Maybe he's famous for brains,
but I'm going to make him prove
it!", something like that. I
don't pretend to have brains.
I'm just scared.

WOLFE

Scared of what, Miss Weltz?

HELEN

Scared of you! Wouldn't anybody
be scared if they knew you were
coming to pump them?

WOLFE

You have the alternative of
snubbing me, yet you suffer me.
Why?

She pats Wolfe on the shoulder and then on top of the head.

(CONTINUED)

59 CONTINUED: (3)

59

HELEN

I didn't want to miss a chance
to touch the great Nero Wolfe,
that's why!

(CONTINUED)

59 CONTINUED: (4)

59

She downs her bourbon and goes to pour some more.

HELEN (CONT'D)

Brrr.

WOLFE

Now you have touched me, yet you still suffer me. I can't expect to prove Mr. Ashe innocent; the best I can hope for is to establish a reasonable doubt. Can you give it to me?

HELEN

(giggling)

Sorry, but you're funny. The way they kept after us and after us in the District Attorney's office and you come and expect to drag it out of me in twenty minutes.

She drinks again, controls her shudder, and goes back for more, but Unger beats her to the bottle.

UNGER

You've had enough, Helen. Take it easy.

She stares at him, drops her glass into his lap and sits back down.

WOLFE

The most I expect, Miss Weltz, is support for my belief that you people share knowledge of something that you don't want revealed, and you have given me that.

HELEN

I didn't tell you anything.

WOLFE

Nonsense. You are on the edge of hysteria.

HELEN

I am not!

(CONTINUED)

59 CONTINUED: (5)

59

UNGER

Take it easy, Helen. Why do you doubt his guilt, Wolfe.

WOLFE

Divination. Contrariety.

UNGER

So you're shooting at it on spec. Do you regard me as a suspect?

WOLFE

Yes.

UNGER

Look. Me and Marie weren't engaged or anything like that. We had fun. The week before the murder, we went up the Hudson, in my boat. But there was nothing in it.

WOLFE

What do you do, Mr. Unger?

UNGER

Oh for God's sake.

WOLFE

The papers were vague. Broker, I believe. Have you handled any transactions for Bagby Answers, Incorporated?

UNGER

Why do you ask that? Just curious?

WOLFE

Mr. Unger. Since apparently you've heard of me, you may know that I dislike riding in cars. Do you suppose I would have made this excursion to a place called Katonah completely at random?

UNGER

Let's take a little walk. I want to speak with you privately.

(CONTINUED)

59 CONTINUED: (6)

59

WOLFE

I don't like conversing on my feet. Archie?

Archie stands up.

ARCHIE

Let's go rake some leaves, Miss Weltz.

*
*

Helen Weltz looks back and forth between Unger and him. Unger doesn't give her a clue. Archie takes her to the stairs.

When they are gone, Wolfe and Unger contemplate each other.

WOLFE

Well, sir. You wished to speak with me.

UNGER

Yeah. Why'd you ask me if I did work for Bagby.

WOLFE

Idle curiosity.

UNGER

You're lying. Why'd you come here, why'd you go to the office if you haven't concocted some crazy idea about Bagby?

WOLFE

The most I expected out of my journey was support for my belief that you people have common knowledge of something you don't want revealed. And you have given me that. I will now go to work, although I am not too sanguine. It's quite possible that when I've squandered my time and the time of my assistants, I will find that what you people are nervous about has nothing at all to do with the death of Marie Willis. But I can't know that until I know what it is. And I will know, sir.

(CONTINUED)

59 CONTINUED: (7)

59

UNGER

Yeah, yeah. Well, guess what - I was playing dumb before. I do know something about you. You've come all this way in a car, and you hate cars. You're also shooting at this on spec and you never investigate anything for free. So suppose I offered you some cash? What if I offered you five thousand dollars.

WOLFE

I like money and require a lot of it to live as I see fit. And five thousand dollars is a handsome sum. What would you expect in exchange.

UNGER

I have to spell it out for you?

WOLFE

I never undertake a job unless the client can specify an objective.

UNGER

And they said you were smart.

WOLFE

I will repeat to you what I have said to others. I have seen a flaw in the case against Leonard Ashe, and it has made me curious. When I become curious there is only one cure. The truth. If I undertake an investigation on your behalf, I will still look for the truth whether it is to your benefit or not.

UNGER

All I want you to do is to go back to the court and give your testimony. Stop stalling. That crumb deserves to get the chair after what he did to Marie.

(CONTINUED)

59 CONTINUED: (8)

59

WOLFE

Then you had more feelings for her than you earlier referred to?

UNGER

You didn't know her. She...it doesn't matter, she's gone.

WOLFE

I am surprised that no one seems to think your relationship was more than casual.

UNGER

You are stupid someways. You think I'm gonna tell the police that we were in love, that we were making plans? I'd be sitting in that dock. But I want her killer caught.

WOLFE

You want revenge?

UNGER

Yes.

WOLFE

I am luckier man than you then. I only want the truth.

UNGER

What if I raise the price. What about 10,000 dollars.

WOLFE

Pfui.

UNGER

For 10,000 dollars a man should be able to do his duty.

WOLFE

You interest me. What is your concept of duty? What theory of justice could compel me to help convict a man I am convinced is innocent?

(CONTINUED)

59 CONTINUED: (9)

59

UNGER

I don't know anything about theory. I only know I want you to go back to that courtroom. And I'll pay you 10,000 dollar to go.

60 EXT. FIELD - DAY

60

They pick their way across the meadow. Helen is ahead of Archie, rushing.

ARCHIE

You know, this is far enough unless he uses a megaphone.

(no answer)

Me, I've gotta stay in sight. I admit he'd be a maniac to jump Mr. Wolfe, but being involved in a murder makes people do strange things.

HELEN

He's not involved in a murder!

ARCHIE

He will be when Mr. Wolfe gets through with him.

She drops down in the grass, buries her face in her hands and starts to shake. But she doesn't cry, she just shakes. Archie squats and takes a firm grip on her.

ARCHIE (CONT'D)

That's no way to do it. Open a valve and let it out. If Unger thinks it's me and flies to the rescue that will give me an excuse to plug him.

HELEN

That's enough.

Archie loosens his grip; she looks up at him.

(CONTINUED)

60 CONTINUED:

60

HELEN (CONT'D)

My God. It'd be wonderful if you put your arms around me and told me, 'It's all right my darling, I'll take care of everything, leave it to me.

Archie does so.

ARCHIE

It's all right. My darling, I'll take care of you. Leave it to me. Now what?

HELEN

Why didn't I get me a man? I could have had a dozen, but no, I had to do it all by myself. And now here I am, with a Jaguar and no man. How do you set fire to a car?

ARCHIE

Pour gasoline all over it, toss a match and jump back fast. Be careful what you tell the insurance company or you'll end up in the can.

HELEN

Is it a bluff? Is he just trying to scare something out of us?

ARCHIE

No, not just. If he scares something out of you, fine. If not, he'll get it the hard way. But he will get it. You may get hurt.

HELEN

I'm already hurt.

ARCHIE

Hurt worse.

HELEN

I guess I can be.

She picks a flower - Queen Anne's lace - she twirls it.

(CONTINUED)

60 CONTINUED: (2)

60

HELEN (CONT'D)

I used to feel delicate, just like one of these.

(she crushes it)

Where can I see Nero Wolfe around nine o'clock in town?

ARCHIE

Come on and tell him now.

HELEN

I can't. I don't dare.

ARCHIE

On account of Unger.

HELEN

Yes.

ARCHIE

We'll go and come back when he leaves.

HELEN

He's not going to leave; he came to take me back to the city.

ARCHIE

Then tell me. I'm trained to be a tape recorder. Better than one. You can trust my memory, and I guarantee to repeat it to Wolfe word for word.

HELEN

I don't dare. You don't understand. I'm not a hero.

ARCHIE

Are you afraid for your life?

UNGER

Helen! Helen!

She scrambles up and Archie gives her a hand. They go towards Wolfe and Unger.

(CONTINUED)

60 CONTINUED: (3)

60

ARCHIE

(softly)

Call Wolfe's house when you're ready. Past midnight, 3 AM. It doesn't matter.

HELEN

Are you going to tell him?

ARCHIE

A man named Fritz will answer. Tell him you're the Queen of Hearts. He'll know what to do.

HELEN

If you tell him, I'll deny it.

ARCHIE

You got that? The Queen of Hearts?

(she nods)

Now laugh.

She does. So does he. Merrily they approach the others. But Wolfe and Unger are in no laughing mood.

(CONTINUED)

60 CONTINUED: (4)

60

WOLFE
We're through here, Archie.

{A&E: END ACT TWO)

WIPE TO:

61 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

61

The Sedan comes down the road. The car pulls over to the side, under a tree. Archie gets out of the car and leans against the car. Wolfe rolls down the window.

ARCHIE
We got a nibble from Helen Weltz.

WOLFE
You are the connoisseur of comely women. Is she a murderess in a funk, trying to wiggle out?

ARCHIE
She's trying to wriggle all right, but out from what I would need six guesses. Is Unger wriggling too?

WOLFE
Yes. He's offered me money. First five thousand dollars, and then ten.

ARCHIE
I'll be damned. I've often thought that you ought to get out more. What did you tell him?

WOLFE
That I resented and scorned his attempt to suborn me.

ARCHIE
He was in a panic and it'll wear off. Why not string him along?

WOLFE
Not enough time. I intend to appear in court tomorrow morning.

(CONTINUED)

61 CONTINUED:

61

ARCHIE
Tomorrow. With what, for God's
sake?

(CONTINUED)

61 CONTINUED: (2) 61

WOLFE
We can't go home. Mr. Cramer will have a man posted there. Is Saul Panzer's apartment conveniently located?

Archie gets back in.

ARCHIE
Yes, but he's only got one bed. Lily Rowan has plenty of room in her penthouse, and we'd be welcome, especially you.

WOLFE
We'll manage at Saul's. Let's stop at Dixie's on the way into town.

*
*
*

ARCHIE (V.O.)
He gripped the strap. I started the ignition.

62 INT. DIXIE'S JOINT - 170TH STREET - NIGHT 62

Wolfe devours chili on a stool and converses with DIXIE. In the background Archie makes phone calls at the phone at the bar.

ARCHIE (V.O.)
By eight o'clock, Wolfe had put away three orders of chili con carne at a little dump in Harlem where a guy named Dixie knew how to make it. I spent the time phoning Saul and Fritz, and invested an extra dime in Lon Cohen. When he heard my voice he said...

63 INTERCUT WITH LON COHEN AT GAZETTE 63

LON
Are you calling from the slammer?

ARCHIE
No. Has our absence been noticed?

LON
The whole town's in an uproar.
(MORE)

*

(CONTINUED)

63 CONTINUED:

63

LON (CONT'D)
A raging mob has torn the
courthouse down.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

63 CONTINUED: (2)

63

LON (CONT'D)

We're running a fairly good picture of Wolfe, but we need a new one of you. Could you drop in at the studio, say in five minutes?

ARCHIE

Sure, glad to. But I'm calling to settle a bet. Is there a warrant out for us?

LON

You're damn right there is. Judge Corbett signed it, first thing after lunch. Look, Archie, let me send a man...

ARCHIE

Much obliged, but if I told you where I am, you'd be an accomplice and have to take your own picture.

He hangs up and comes back to Wolfe, who is starting on another bowl.

WOLFE

Chili is one of the great peasant foods, one of the few America has contributed to world cuisine. Eaten with cornbread, sweet onion and sour cream, it contains all five of the elements deemed essential by the sages of the Orient: sweet, sour, salty, pungent and bitter. Like the best of French cuisine, it begins with good meat, chopped not ground, but key to Dixie's success are the onions and tomatoes he owes to his grandmother, who grows them on the south side of the vacant lot behind his house in full sun. He begins his batch on Sundays. By Tuesday it is edible. By Thursday, it is unforgettable.

(CONTINUED)

63 CONTINUED: (3)

63

ARCHIE

Well, there is a warrant in case you're interested. And I didn't try to get Jimmy Donovan, Leonard Ashe's attorney.

WOLFE

Why not?

ARCHIE

What could I say? That Nero Wolfe had something urgent for him and leave a telephone number? He's a sworn officer of the court, and he'd have to serve the warrant on you. Not to mention the one on me.

WOLFE

You're enjoying this.

ARCHIE

I am like hell. I'm a fugitive from justice.

WOLFE

Phone Saul. Ask him if he's heard from Miss Weltz. Then call and arrange for us to see Mrs. Leonard Ashe.

ARCHIE

Oh yeah. I get the easy ones. She's probably sitting there right now hoping a couple of strange detectives will drop in. Are we pretending to be from the court again? Shall I say we are Judge Wolfe and Judge Goodwin?

*

WOLFE

No. We are ourselves.

WITNESS 10-16-01 BLUE 63 77A-78

64
AND
65 OMITTED

64
AND
65

66 INT. ASHE APARTMENT - NIGHT

66

Wolfe and Archie wait with a disapproving MAID while Robina makes her entrance.

ARCHIE (V.O.)

I hadn't managed to speak directly to Mrs. Ashe. A female voice told me she was resting and absolutely could not come to the phone. I asked the voice if it had ever heard of Nero Wolfe. It said it had. I told it to tell Mrs. Ashe that if she didn't see Nero Wolfe that she'd never stop regretting it. Not very clever, I admit, but I was pressed for time.

ROBINA

I'm dead tired. I'm empty. Completely empty. Sit, won't you. Your man said on the phone that I would regret it the rest of my life if I didn't see you. Will I?

*

WOLFE

I'll be as brief as I can. I have information that may not exculpate your husband, but it should at least raise a reasonable doubt in the mind of the jury. However, it would take a prolonged investigation to get it in the form of admissible evidence.

ROBINA

I hate to inform you of this but the trial's already started, Mr. Wolfe.

(CONTINUED)

66 CONTINUED:

66

WOLFE

I have in mind a short cut. To take it I must have a talk with your husband.

ROBINA

Ah. And how, pray tell, will to manage to do that?

*
*

WOLFE

You, Madam. You have a wide acquaintance and great personal charm. It would not be too difficult for you to get permission to talk with your husband tomorrow morning; and you can take me with you.

ROBINA

But what do you wish to say? Is it about me?

(CONTINUED)

66 CONTINUED: (2)

66

WOLFE

I can tell you nothing without compromising my plan.

ROBINA

Well, I suppose I have nothing to lose. Nothing more to lose. But if I do this, should I not tell Mr. Donovan?

*
*

WOLFE

You must not. Not only would he forbid it, he would prevent it. This is for you alone.

ROBINA

For me, alone. My God, it would be such a relief to do something.

WOLFE

Of course, I have made the assumption that you don't want your husband convicted of murder.

ROBINA

You didn't have to say that. My husband's not a fool, but he has acted like one. I love him very dearly. Where can I reach you?

ARCHIE (V.O.)

I gave her Saul's number. She went with us to the foyer but she wasn't there. Her mind was so glad to have a job that it had left us entirely.

67 INT. SAUL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

67

ARCHIE (V.O.)

After circling Saul's block three times, we decided that Cramer had not had enough genius to post a man there and went inside.

Saul opens the door cautiously and then greets Wolfe and Archie and brings them into his apartment. It is a good big room, with windows, one wall of books and another one taken up with a grand piano. There are interesting objects and pictures, such as elephant tusks and large chunks of minerals.

(CONTINUED)

67 CONTINUED:

67

The chairs are big enough for Wolfe and he takes one with pleasure.

(CONTINUED)

67 CONTINUED: (2)

67

WOLFE

A good room. Satisfactory. I congratulate you. Has Fritz phoned you with news of that woman?

SAUL

The Queen of Hearts? No, sir. Will you have some beer?

Wolfe's pleasure shows. He needs this.

WOLFE

I will indeed. If you please.

MONTAGE:

Saul serves Wolfe beer and then a bewildering array of liver pate, herring, sturgeon, pickled mushrooms, melon and three different kinds of cheese and seven bottles of imported beer. Wolfe is delighted and Archie's nose is out of joint.

ARCHIE (V.O.)

In the next three hours, Saul served Wolfe seven bottles of beer, sturgeon, pate, pickled mushrooms, Tunisian melon, and three different kinds of cheese.

Wolfe tries the cheese. There's cheddar, gorgonzola and very runny brie-like cheese.

WOLFE

Vermont cheddar, Piedmont gorgonzola and...Columierre?

SAUL

Vacherin Mont D'or.

WOLFE

Impossible. It is made from the milk of cows who have been fed the last cutting of grass before the first snow. It is available for weeks only in September.

SAUL

Summer in the Alps stayed late this year. I have a friend who keeps an eye out for me.

(CONTINUED)

67 CONTINUED: (3)

67

WOLFE

Satisfactory. Next year have him keep an eye for me.

ARCHIE (V.O.)

Naturally, the first time Wolfe ate under his roof, Saul wanted to give him good grub, okay, but the three kinds of cheese was piling it on.

WIPE TO:

The two men play checkers. Archie lounges and advises.

WOLFE

I notice that you have the new translation of Aristotle's Analytics.

SAUL

It's more colloquial. It provides a voice.

He jumps a man of Wolfe's.

WOLFE

What is your estimation of it's value?

SAUL

No one sets out the problem of deducing a conclusion from a set of disparate facts so clearly.

WOLFE

But is it of use? He never condescended to actual practice. King me.

SAUL

Well...he's Aristotle.

WOLFE

Indeed. He defined the terms for all of us.

ARCHIE

Yeah, yeah. That's certainly true.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

67 CONTINUED: (4)

67

ARCHIE (CONT'D)

I will always remember his
fashion advice. Never mix togas
and sandals on a windy day.
It's ruled my life.

Saul and Wolfe react. Saul jumps three of Wolfe's men.
Wolfe jumps two of his. They are each left with two kinged
pieces.

ARCHIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Time didn't drag too heavily,
what with three hot games of
checkers between Wolfe and Saul,
all draws. Just after midnight
Robina Keane phoned and told
Wolfe to meet her at 100 Centre
Street at half past eight. But
no word came from the Queen of
Hearts. At quarter to one,
Wolfe left his chair and
announced.

(CONTINUED)

67 CONTINUED: (5)

67

WOLFE

Her panic wore off. I'm going to bed.

SAUL

I'm afraid I have no pajamas that you could get into, but I do have a robe from the Sudan...

The phone RINGS. Archie grabs it.

ARCHIE

This is Jackson 4-3-1-0-9.

HELEN (V.O.)

I want...This is the Queen of Hearts.

ARCHIE

I recognize the voice. Where are you?

HELEN (V.O.)

In a booth at Grand Central. I couldn't get rid of him.

ARCHIE

I'll meet you at the information booth, upper level, in five minutes. Will you be there?

HELEN (V.O.)

Of course, I will. Hurry.

He hangs up.

ARCHIE

If her panic wore off, it wore on again. Make some coffee, Saul. She'll need either that or bourbon. And maybe she likes cheese.

{A&E: END ACT THREE}

WIPE TO:

It's dark. 3 am. Archie sleeps restlessly on Saul's couch. Saul is arrayed in a chair. Wolfe pads in from the bedroom, draped in a sheet like a Roman emperor. He stands above Archie.

*

(CONTINUED)

67 CONTINUED: (6)

67

WOLFE

Archie.

Archie reacts defensively and then sees who it is.

ARCHIE

Has it been eight hours already?

WOLFE

Are you awake?

ARCHIE

No. You wouldn't be either if you'd had to deliver Helen Weltz to her apartment after you interviewed her.

WOLFE

Have you finished yet?

ARCHIE

No. One more. I need my sleep in order to be alert enough to keep you from harm. When I don't get sleep you don't get your money's worth. Which, of course, is moot because you don't pay me enough. Okay. Now.

He sits up.

WOLFE

I ask you again. Is she a murderess trying to wriggle out?

ARCHIE

And I answer again. No.

WOLFE

Did she understand the implications of what she told us?

ARCHIE

Not completely. In her state, I don't think she was capable of deducing a conclusion from the assembly of facts.

(CONTINUED)

67 CONTINUED: (7)

67

WOLFE

And you have?

ARCHIE

Once you adjust the point of view, there aren't too many other conclusions to reach.

WOLFE

Indeed. What do you suppose Saul has planned for breakfast?

ARCHIE

Ask Aristotle.

CUT TO:

67A EXT. COURTHOUSE - ALLEY - DAY

67A

Archie appears at the end of the alley. He cautiously looks down and then signals Wolfe. Wolfe emerges from the street and they make their way to the door of the courthouse. It's locked. Archie starts to work the lock.

ARCHIE

Tell me again why I am not going with you.

WOLFE

If you are present, the guard will surely alert the authorities. I will manage on my own. Will you make sure that you are ready with an efficacious route to the courtroom?

ARCHIE

I'll look that up later when I have time, but if you mean quick, yes.

WOLFE

Good. Why is it taking so long?

ARCHIE

Picking a lock is one of my skills, but I seldom get to practice it on the doors of our penal institutions. They are better made than most.

(CONTINUED)

67A CONTINUED:

67A

He gets it. He holds the door and they slip inside.

68 INT. COURTHOUSE - VISITING ROOM - DAY

(DAY FOUR)

68

Leonard Ashe waits miserably. A GUARD is near him. The door opens and Robina Keane comes in. They embrace. Robina turns and nods at the door.

(CONTINUED)

68 CONTINUED:

68

ROBINA

I've brought a visitor, darling.

*

ASHE

I don't want to see anyone but you...

Nero Wolfe comes in the door.

ASHE (CONT'D)

Mr. Wolfe!

WOLFE

Mr. Ashe. I need your attention.

ASHE

But isn't this irregular...

WOLFE

Please just pay attention. While listening to the proceedings yesterday, it occurred to me that a telephone answering service provides a singular opportunity for scoundrelism. Like doctors, servants and lawyers, they have access to privileged information.

ASHE

Well, of course. That's exactly why I thought of using them.

WOLFE

It occurred to me further, that the opportunities to practice blackmail on their clients would be limitless.

ROBINA

Blackmail? You mean an actual criminal operation?

*

WOLFE

Yes. And at the risk of incurring the penalty of contempt, I left the courtroom specifically to view the offices at 69th Street and concluded that it would be impossible for one operator to eavesdrop on

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

68 CONTINUED: (2)

68

WOLFE (CONT'D)
her lines without the others
becoming aware of it.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

68 CONTINUED: (3)

68

WOLFE (CONT'D)

Therefore, if Bagby Answers,
Ink were to engage in a
blackmailing operation, it must
be done collusively or not at
all.

ASHE

My Lord, that would explain why
she didn't turn me down outright.
But how does it affect my case?

ROBINA

I still don't understand how
you mean to get it before the
jury.

*

LEONARD

Get it to the jury? Have you
been consulting with Mr. Wolfe?

ROBINA

No. Of course not, darling.
He came to me.

*

LEONARD

When? How long has this been
going on?

ROBINA

Last night. I was alone and he
called, or his man called and
said...

LEONARD

You were alone with...God. You
still don't know how this kills
me! You...

*

WOLFE

Madam! Sir!

ROBINA

He's trying to help, Leonard.

WOLFE

Don't interrupt again. I have
much to say and must say it all
it before court convenes.

WIPE TO:

69 INT. COURTROOM - DAY

69

The courtroom is packed to the rafters. The BAILIFF is calling Wolfe's name to no avail.

BAILIFF

Nero Wolfe. Is Nero Wolfe present?

No answer. The Judge looks to Mr. Mandlebaum who shrugs.

JUDGE

Can you proceed?

Then the doors to the courtroom open and Wolfe makes an entrance, his cane clearing way for him. Archie follows. All eyes go to him as he makes his way to the bench.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

Why, Mr. Wolfe. How kind of you join us. Do you intend to stay this time?

*
*

WOLFE

I will stay until I have completed my testimony.

*
*

JUDGE

You knew you were to testify yesterday. Why did you leave then?

69 CONTINUED:

69

WOLFE

I was impelled by a motive which I thought imperative. I can expound it now if you so order, but I would rather plead on the contempt charges later if the court will permit. I will still be here.

JUDGE

Indeed you will. You're under arrest.

WOLFE

No sir, I am not.

JUDGE

You're not under arrest.

WOLFE

No, sir. I came here voluntarily.

JUDGE

Well, you are now. Officer, this man is under arrest. But I will allow you to answer the contempt charges later. Bailiff?

The Bailiff holds out a Bible as Wolfe is seated. Wolfe raises his right hand.

BAILIFF

Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

WOLFE

I do so affirm.

JUDGE

Proceed, Mr. Mandelbaum.

MANDELBAUM

Well, Mr. Wolfe, now that I've finally got you on the stand, I may have to keep you until tomorrow.

*

WOLFE

You have always been doggedly thorough, Mr. Mandelbaum.

(CONTINUED)

69 CONTINUED: (2)

69

The courtroom titters. Mandlebaum bristles.

MANDELBAUM

And you are very famous, Mr. Wolfe. Perhaps even deservedly so. But we observe formalities in the courtroom in order that the rule of law can be preserved. So, for the record, please state your name, address and occupation.

WOLFE

Gladly. I am Nero Wolfe, a licensed private detective. My office and my home are at the same address: 914 34th Street, Manhattan, New York City, New York State.

MANDELBAUM

Have you ever met the defendant in this case?

WOLFE

Mr. Leonard Ashe? Yes.

MANDELBAUM

Under what circumstances did you meet Mr. Ashe?

WOLFE

He said he wished to hire me to learn the identity of the phone operator who was assigned to his phone and to propose to her that she spy on his wife.

MANDELBAUM

Did he say why he wished to make this arrangement?

WOLFE

No. But I surmised...

DONOVAN

Objection your honor. Conclusion of the witness as to the intention of the defendant.

(CONTINUED)

69 CONTINUED: (3)

69

MANDELBAUM

Just answer the question, Mr. Wolfe. Yes or no. Did Mr. Ashe suggest any inducement to Marie Willis to participate in his scheme?

WOLFE

No, he did not name an actual sum but he indicated...

DONOVAN

Your honor...

MANDELBAUM

Not what he indicated. What he said. Strike all of his answer except the word, "No"; your answer is "No" Mr. Wolfe. Yes or No.

WOLFE

No.

MANDELBAUM

What else did Mr. Ashe say to you?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

69 CONTINUED: (4)

69

MANDELBAUM (CONT'D)
(no answer)
Mr. Wolfe?

WOLFE
I would like to be sure I understand the question. Do you mean what I said that day, or on a later occasion?

MANDELBAUM
That day, of course. What later occasion?

WOLFE
Are you asking me...?

MANDELBAUM
(attacking)
In your deposition, you swore you hadn't seen Leonard Ashe before or after July 13th.

WOLFE
That was true then. We met again.

MANDELBAUM
When?

WOLFE
In this building at half past eight this morning.

*
*

MANDELBAUM
You met and spoke with the defendant in this building at nine o'clock this morning, today?

WOLFE
His wife arranged to see him and she allowed me to accompany her.

MANDELBAUM
And was Mr. Donovan, the defense counsel, present?

WOLFE
No, sir.

(CONTINUED)

69 CONTINUED: (5)

69

Donovan is on his feet speaking. Mandlebaum doesn't hear him.

*

69 CONTINUED: (6)

69

DONOVAN

I would like state for the record, that I knew nothing of this.

MANDELBAUM

Don't you know that it is a misdemeanor for a witness for the State to talk with the defendant charged with a felony?

WOLFE

We didn't discuss my testimony.

MANDELBAUM

What did you discuss?

WOLFE

Matters which I thought would be of interest to him.

MANDELBAUM

What exactly did you say, Wolfe?

Wolfe suddenly looks almost pleased with Mandelbaum, who hesitates, unsure. Wolfe glances at Donovan. Mandelbaum whips around and looks at Donovan, who shakes his head.

ARCHIE (V.O.)

The fat son of a gun had put it over. Having asked him directly, Mandelbaum couldn't possibly keep Wolfe's theories from the jury, unless Jimmy Donovan was a sap.

JUDGE

Do you wish to withdraw the question, Mr. Mandelbaum?

MANDELBAUM

Oh no, no. I'm absolutely fascinated. You didn't discuss your testimony. What did you discuss?

WOLFE

I told him that yesterday, as I sat in this courtroom, I became aware that significant questions concerning the murder were unanswered and that made my

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

69 CONTINUED: (7)

69

WOLFE (CONT'D)
position as a witness for the
prosecution an uncomfortable
one.

MANDELBAUM
On behalf of the State of New
York, I apologize.

WOLFE
I told him further that I left
this courtroom to make the
investigation which the police
should have undertaken had they
not been so enamored of the
idea that Ashe was guilty.

MANDELBAUM
You are not now answering the
question of your contempt
charges. Did you say anything
relevant to this case?

WOLFE
I detailed to him my suspicion
that Bagby Answers had been
used as a blackmailing operation.

MANDELBAUM
Surely, this is just surmise,
Mr. Wolfe.

WOLFE
Not at all. I told Mr. Ashe
that when I left the court and
visited there, the operators at
Bagby Answers tolerated my
rudeness beyond reason; I learned
their personal expenditures far
exceeded their salaries. An
associate of Bagby's offered me
five thousand dollars for
services which he would not
specify. When I declined his
bribe, he offered me ten. And
most significant, I told Mr.
Ashe that last night Helen Weltz
phoned me.

MANDELBAUM
How long were you with Mr. Ashe?

(CONTINUED)

69 CONTINUED: (8)

69

WOLFE

A half an hour.

MANDELBAUM

Half an hour?

WOLFE

I can say a lot in half an hour.

MANDELBAUM

No doubt. But the court's and the jury's time cannot be spent on irrelevancies. Did you make any suggestions to Mr. Ashe regarding his defense?

WOLFE

No.

MANDELBAUM

Then why did you seek the interview, Mr. Wolfe? Were you seeking employment?

DONOVAN

One moment. Your Honor, surely this is cross-examination and I object to it.

JUDGE

The objection is sustained. Mr. Mandelbaum, you know the rules of evidence. Examine him upon the merits.

MANDELBAUM

Your honor, I...
(takes a moment)
...have no more questions.

The Judge looks long and hard at Wolfe.

JUDGE

Mr. Wolfe. Your reputation precedes you to this witness stand. I must say that as a reader of newspapers, it is an entertaining one. However, as jurist, I read of your exploits with an unquiet heart.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

69 CONTINUED: (9)

69

JUDGE (CONT'D)

From the judicial point of view, you have often taken it upon yourself to be the judge of matters best left to officials who are bound by the rules of evidence and who have sworn to uphold the Constitution. You have on occasion acted as judge, jury and executioner. I would not find it at all entertaining if you tried one of your shenanigans in my courtroom in order to cause a mistrial - intending to get your client released.

WOLFE

He is not my client, sir, and I have only one interest - that justice be served.

JUDGE

That is my point. Your idea of justice and that of the law's may be different.

WOLFE

I accept that analysis.

JUDGE

I am so pleased. But I want you to know that if there is a mistrial as a consequence of your shenanigan in the name of justice, both you and your client will see the inside of a jail.

WOLFE

You appear to be an intelligent man. From my reading of the law, I believe that what I am about to say falls within the rules of evidence.

JUDGE

Unfortunately for you, Mr. Mandelbaum, I cannot at this time see any flaw in Mr. Wolfe's reasoning. However, I reserve the right to do so. Your witness, Mr. Donovan.

*
*

(CONTINUED)

69 CONTINUED: (10)

69

Mandelbaum sits and Donovan takes the floor.

DONOVAN

Mr. Wolfe, why did you seek an
interview this morning with Mr.
Ashe?

WOLFE

Because I wanted to tell him
that I had acquired information
which cast a reasonable doubt
on

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

69 CONTINUED: (11)

69

WOLFE (CONT'D)

his guilt and I wanted to get it to the jury without delay. I had concluded...

MANDELBAUM

Objection. Your Honor. Conclusions of the witness are not admissible.

DONOVAN

But he is merely relating what he said to Mr. Ashe as the Assistant District Attorney asked him to.

JUDGE

The objection is overruled, Mr. Mandelbaum. Continue, Mr. Wolfe.

DONOVAN

You were answering the question: why did you seek an interview with Mr. Ashe.

WOLFE

It occurred to me that if I saw Mr. Ashe the fact would probably be disclosed in the course of my examination by Mr. Mandelbaum; and if so, he would almost certainly ask me what had been said. If he did not, then you would, Mr. Donovan, and I would be able to make my case to the jury. Therefore, I sought an interview with Mr. Ashe.

A bubble of sound bursts as the courtroom absorbs this. The judge frowns at Wolfe. The lawyers approach and whisper furiously. One of the jurors makes a noise and the other jurors look at him. Someone titters. Then Judge shrugs - and waves Mr. Donovan on.

DONOVAN

Please tell the jury what you said to him.

WOLFE

I told him that Helen Weltz came to see me last night and confessed

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

69 CONTINUED: (12)

69

WOLFE (CONT'D)

that Bagby Answers, Inc. had been used as a blackmailing operation for years. All of the switchboard operators had been party to it, including Marie Willis. Their dean, Alice Hart, collected the information, she gave it to Bagby and Unger who used the personal secrets she had culled to blackmail...

GUY UNGER, ALICE HART AND BELLA VELARDI

suddenly jump to their feet and start heading for the door. All eyes go to them.

ARCHIE

Guard. That's Alice Hart in front!

Judge Corbett slams down his gavel.

JUDGE

No one is to leave the room! Officer, detain these people as material witnesses.

*
*
*

The GUARD detains Miss Hart, Guy Unger and Miss Velardi and guides them back to their seats.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

Continue, Mr. Wolfe.

WOLFE

Is it necessary for me to go on repeating the phrase, "I said."?

JUDGE

Not if you confine yourself strictly to what you said to Mr. Ashe this morning.

WOLFE

I shall do so. As I was saying. Guy Unger and Clyde Bagby gave the girls cash. In three years, Miss Weltz received over 15,000 dollars.

*

(CONTINUED)

69 CONTINUED: (13)

69

JUDGE

This is fascinating, but earlier you alleged that you could establish a reasonable doubt of Mr. Ashe's guilt.

WOLFE

Yes, your Honor. According to Miss Weltz, Marie Willis had been ordered by both Unger and Bagby to accept Ashe's proposal to spy on his wife and she had refused. She announced that she would quit, and tell Mrs. Ashe everything - making her an intolerable peril to the whole operation. I believe this establishes a clear motive for all of them and provides reasonable doubt of Mr. Ashe's guilt.

JUDGE

Did you go on to speculate as to a probable replacement for Mr. Ashe?

WOLFE

Yes. The conditions of the murder - the closed windows, the position of the victim made it likely that the perpetrator was a co-worker. I considered the most promising candidate to be Mr. Bagby. He has the most to lose. And all the others had established alibis, on boats, in cars. By his own testimony, Mr. Bagby dined not six blocks from the office.

BAGBY

He's lying. I went home!

WOLFE

And from there he called Mr. Ashe and enticed him to the office to find the body. I leave the timetable to the police, they are extremely efficient with timetables.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

69 CONTINUED: (14)

69

WOLFE (CONT'D)

Now I would now like to plead to the charge of contempt, if I may...

*
*

JUDGE

You may not. You know quite well you have made that charge frivolous. It is dismissed.

*

(to Donovan)

Are you through with this witness, Mr. Donovan?

WOLFE

Yes, your Honor. No more questions.

JUDGE

Mr. Mandelbaum?

MANDELBAUM

Your Honor will appreciate it if I confess I find myself in an extraordinary predicament. I feel I am entitled to consider the situation. I would like to retire and consult with my colleagues. Therefore I ask for a recess and would like the material witnesses made available for questioning.

JUDGE

You may step down, Mr. Wolfe. Alice Hart, Bella Velardi, Guy Unger, and Clyde Bagby will come forward. The rest of you will keep your seats and preserve order.

*

The courtroom immediately dissolves into an uproar. Robina Keane springs up from her seat on the front bench and throws her arms around Wolfe's neck as he leaves the witness stand and presses her cheek to his. An army of photographers leap to their feet and start taking pictures.

A NEWSPAPER PHOTO OF WOLFE AND ROBINA

embracing, frozen in time.

(CONTINUED)

69 CONTINUED: (15)

69

ARCHIE (V.O.)
Actresses always act, but I
admit that was probably
unrehearsed. And I thoroughly
approved since it indicated
that the Ashe family would prove
to be properly grateful.

RETURN TO ACTION:

WOLFE DISENTANGLES HIMSELF

and then passes the SMELLY WOMAN on his way out. She is
enraptured with him and grabs his arm. Emboldened, she plants
a kiss on him.

ARCHIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
The thought may have occurred
to you, that's nice, but the
real reason Wolfe walked out
was because he hated to sit
against a perfumed woman on a
wooden bench. You may be right.

THE END