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WITNESS FOR THE PROSECUTION

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and
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WITNESS FOR THE PROSECUTION

1. COURTROOM NO. 1 - THE OLD BAILEY

A murder trial is about to begin. The venerable chamber of British justice is filled. The participants for the Prosecution and Defense are in their places. So is the jury. So are the spectators. Only the Prisoner's Dock and raised seats of the Judge and city dignitaries are still vacant. Three knocks from a wooden mallet are heard. An usher rises and calls out, "SILENCE!" Everyone stands. A door opens and the Judicial procession solemnly enters: the Sheriff, the City Marshal, the Mace-Bearer, the Sword-Bearer, the Lord Mayor, and finally, the Judge. All in full regalia.

The usher beneath the witness box, delivers the opening proclamation:

USHER
SILENCE! BE UPSTANDING IN COURT!
ALL PERSONS WHO HAVE ANYTHING
FURTHER TO DO BEFORE MY LORDS
THE QUEEN'S JUSTICES OF OYER AND
TERMINER AND GENERAL GAOL
DELIVERY FOR THE JURISDICTION OF
THE GENERAL CRIMINAL COURT DRAW
NEAR AND GIVE YOUR ATTENTION.
GOD SAVE THE QUEEN!

The CAMERA has begun to move in slowly on the bench. As the dignitaries take their places we superimpose the CREDIT TITLES. The Sword-Bearer affixes the Sword, point upmost, above the central chair. The Judge bows first to the Jury, then to the Bar, finally to those with him on the Bench. He sits. Everybody follows suit. The trial has begun.

Meanwhile, the CAMERA has moved in on the gleaming sword and holds there until the last of the Credits FADES OUT:

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

2. LONDON SQUARE (DAY)

A bobby, framed very large in the foreground, is directing traffic. Among the moving cars, quite conspicuous, is a vintage high-bodied Rolls Royce.

3. INT. OF ROLLS-ROYCE (DAY)

A vintage chauffeur is driving. In the back seat are SIR WILFRID ROBERTS and his nurse, MISS PLIMSOLL. Sir Wilfrid is sixty, pale, ill-tempered. A lap robe is tucked around his legs. He has been quite ill. That accounts for the uniformed nurse, Miss Plimsoll: she is forty-five, brisk, unbearably chatty.

MISS PLIMSOLL
(looking out the window)

What a beautiful day! I've been hoping that we'd have a bit of sun for our home-coming. I always say it's worth having all the fog just to appreciate the sunshine. Is there too much of a draught? Shall I roll up the window?

SIR WILFRID

Just roll up your mouth. You talk too much. If I'd known how much you talked I would never have come out of my coma.

(pushing down the lap-robe)

This thing weighs a ton.

MISS PLIMSOLL

Now, now -- we've been flat on our back for two months -- we'd better be careful!

She has pulled up the robe and tries to tuck him in again. He slaps her hand.

4. THE GATE OF LINCOLN'S INN (DAY)

The Porter at the gate recognizes the Rolls, salutes Sir Wilfrid and waves the car through.

5. EXT. LINCOLN'S INN (DAY)

The Rolls proceeds through the Square. It is all very sedate: the old buildings wearing ivy and some barristers wearing robes and wigs.

6. INT. ROLLS-ROYCE (DAY)

MISS PLIMSOLL

(peering out)

Lovely! It must be perfectly lovely to live and work in the Inns of Court. How lucky you lawyers are!

(a beat)

I almost married a lawyer once. I was in attendance when he had his appendectomy. We became engaged as soon as he could sit up. But then peritonitis set in. He went like that.

(snaps her fingers)

SIR WILFRID

He certainly was a lucky lawyer!

7. EXT. SIR WILFRID'S BUILDING (DAY)

The Rolls pulls up before a dignified corner building occupied by many barristers. The chauffeur jumps out, opens the door. Miss Plimsoll emerges, holds out a helping hand to Sir Wilfrid.

MISS PLIMSOLL

Teeny-weeny steps, now Sir Wilfrid. We must remember -- we had a teeny-weeny heart attack.

SIR WILFRID

(ignoring her hand)

Shut up!

(to the chauffeur)

Williams, my cane.

Williams hands him an invalid's cane, with-rubber tip. He starts briskly for the stone steps leading to the entrance. In background, Williams is taking luggage from the boot.

8. THE ANTEROOM OF SIR WILFRID'S CHAMBERS (DAY)

A serious room. The decor is old and oaky. So are the three female employees, Miss McHugh, Miss Johnson and Miss O'Brien. Doors lead to Sir Wilfrid's private office and to the offices of his clerk and juniors. A staircase rises to the floor above, where Sir Wilfrid's living quarters are situated.

Miss Johnson has been leaning out the window. She turns back into the room, excited.

MISS JOHNSON

Here he comes!

There is instant activity. Miss O'Brien rings a handbell. CARTER, Sir Wilfrid's elderly clerk, rushes out from his own room. A charwoman comes running down the staircase. Miss McHugh has taken a bouquet of flowers from a file cabinet. They line up in a rehearsed formation, facing the door. Sir Wilfrid enters rapidly, followed by Miss Plimsoll and Williams.

SIR WILFRID

Good afternoon.

He proceeds toward his office, ignoring the reception line-up. In passing he whisks the flowers from Miss McHugh's hand.

SIR WILFRID

Thank you very much. Everybody back to work.

MISS MCHUGH

Sir Wilfrid, please -- if you don't mind -- I would like to read a little poem which we have composed to welcome you --

She has whipped out a long sheet of legal-size paper, typewritten on both sides.

SIR WILFRID

(interrupting)

Very touching, Miss McHugh. You can recite it after office hours, on your own time. Now back to work.

He starts for his room, sees Miss O'Brien sobbing, her cheeks streaked with tears.

SIR WILFRID

What's the matter with you?

8.

MISS O'BRIEN

Nothing ---- I'm just happy that
you're your old self again.

SIR WILFRID

(a sweeping gesture
with his cane)

One more manifestation of such
sentimentality -- whether in
poetry or prose -- and I shall
instantly go back to the hospital.

MISS PLIMSOLL

Not very likely. They won't take
you back.

(to the staff)

He wasn't really discharged, you
know -- he was expelled. For con-
duct unbecoming a cardiac patient.

SIR WILFRID

Put these in water --

(shoving the
flowers at her)

Blabbermouth!

(to his clerk)

Come on in, Carter.

He goes on into his office, followed by Carter.

9.

INT. SIR WILFRID'S PRIVATE OFFICE DAY

A large, somber room of faded elegance. On one wall is
a painting of Sir Wilfrid in wig and gown. Sir Wilfrid
enters, puts a monocle suspended from a black ribbon
in his eye, and looks about. Behind him, Carter closes
the padded door.

SIR WILFRID

Look at this room! It's really
extraordinarily ugly! Very old
and very musty, and I never knew
I could miss anything so much!

(turning to Carter)

Missed you, too, you musty old
buzzard.

CARTER

Thank you, Sir. I'm not a religious
man, Sir Wilfrid, but when they
carted you off in that ambulance, I
went out and lit a candle.

9.

SIR WILFRID

(touched)

Why, thank you, Carter.

CARTER

Actually, sir, I was lighting it for myself. If anything happened to you, what would happen to me -- after thirty-seven years.

SIR WILFRID

(taking the monocle from his eye)

Thirty-seven years? Has it been that long, Carter.

CARTER

Yes, sir. This is 1952 and that was in October, 1915. The Shepherd's Bush murder. The chemist accused of putting cyanide in his uncle's tooth-paste.

SIR WILFRID

My first murder trial. I was more frightened than the defendant. The first time I rose to make an objection, my wig fell off.

(with the monocle again)

Where is it?

CARTER

I've guarded it with my life.

He crosses to a shelf, takes down a battered metal container.

SIR WILFRID

I hope it still fits. Lost thirty pounds in that wretched hospital. Still, I dare say my head isn't any smaller.

Carter has opened the container and Sir Wilfrid lifts out a barrister's wig. Some white pellets fall to the floor.

SIR WILFRID

What's this?

CARTER

We've put it in moth balls.

SIR WILFRID

(sharply)

Moth balls? Am I not to practice again?!

CARTER

Of course, you are. The solicitors have been breaking down our doors. I've lined up some very interesting briefs for you, sir.

WILFRID

(relieved)

That's better.

CARTER

(pointing to three envelopes on the desk)

A divorce case, a tax appeal, and an important marine insurance claim.

SIR WILFRID

(wistfully)

Oh!

CARTER

They're nice, smooth matters -- with excellent fees --

SIR WILFRID

No, Carter!

CARTER

I'm sorry, sir, but you are not to undertake any criminal cases -- not any more. Your doctors.....

SIR WILFRID

Doctors! -- they've deprived me of everything: alcohol, tobacco, female companionship -- if only they would let me function in my work ... on something worthwhile --

CARTER

Sorry, Sir Wilfrid.

SIR WILFRID

(resigned)

You might as well get a bigger box, Carter, more moth balls, and put me away, too.

9. The door has opened. Miss Plimsoll pokes her head in.

MISS PLIMSOLL
Two-thirty, Sir Wilfrid. Time
for our little nap.

SIR WILFRID
Get out!

MISS PLIMSOLL
(unswerving)
Beddy-bye. We'd better go upstairs
now, get undressed and lie down.

SIR WILFRID
We? What a nauseating prospect!

MISS PLIMSOLL
Upstairs, please.

SIR WILFRID
Are you aware, Miss Plimsoll, that
while on my sickbed I seriously
considered strangling you with
one of your own rubber tubes? I
would then have admitted the crime,
retained myself for the defense.

(claps his wig on his
head, assuming the role
of England's foremost
advocate)

My Lord and Members of the Jury!
I hereby enter a plea of justifiable
homicide. For four months this
alleged Angel of Mercy has subjected
me to every conceivable indignity
of the flesh and the spirit. She
has pawed, probed, punctured, pillaged
and plundered my helpless body while
tormenting my mind with a steady drip
of the most revolting baby talk --

Miss Plimsoll gently lifts the wig off his head and
takes him by the arm.

MISS PLIMSOLL
Come along now, like a good boy.

SIR WILFRID
Take your hand off me, Miss Plimsoll,
or I shall strike you with my cane.
(he raises his cane)

9.

MISS PLIMSOLL
Oh, you'd never do that -- you
might break your cigars.

SIR WILFRID
Cigars? --- what cigars?

MISS PLIMSOLL
(evenly)
The ones you're smuggling in your
cane.

She pulls the rubber tip from the cane. Three coronas
fall out of the hollow cane.

SIR WILFRID
(blustering)
You -- you could be jailed for
this -- you had no search warrant
for my cane.

MISS PLIMSOLL
(to Carter)
In the hospital he'd hide cigars and
brandy all over the place. We called
him Wilfred the Fox.
(she picks up the
cigars)
I'm confiscating these.

SIR WILFRID
Can't I have just one? Just a few
puffs, after meals? Please?

MISS PLIMSOLL
(leading him out)
Upstairs!

10. THE ANTEROOM DAY

Miss Plimsoll leads Sir Wilfrid to the staircase,
Carter following.

SIR WILFRID
(muttering to Carter)
... I'll do it! ... some dark night
when her back is turned I'll snatch
her thermometer and plunge it between
her misshapen shoulder blades ... so
help me!

He is about to mount the stairs when Carter stops him.

10.

CARTER

Oh, no, sir, you mustn't walk up.
We've installed something for you
here.

(pulling out the seat
of an inclinor)

It's a lift, sir.

SIR WILFRID

A lift! What nonsense! I'm getting
a bit sick of this plot to make me a
helpless invalid.

MISS PLIMSOLL

I think it's a splendid idea. Let's
try it, shall we?

She is about to plant herself on the seat when Sir
Wilfrid shoulders her aside.

SIR WILFRID

I'll try it. It is my lift, be-
cause it was my heart attack.

He waves her away, then settles himself in the seat.

CARTER

Simply press this button for up,
and this one for down.

SIR WILFRID

(pressing the white
button)

Carter, I warn you, if this contrap-
tion should collapse -- if the
barrister should fall off the
banister --

He is already sailing up, Miss Plimsoll trotting after
him. He arrives at the top of the stairs, beaming.

SIR WILFRID

(shouting down)

This is remarkable, Carter.
Smoothest flight I've had in
years.

MISS PLIMSOLL

(reaching for his
arm)

Upsy-daisy!

SIR WILFRID

Just once more -- to get the feel
of the controls.

10. Before she can stop him, he has pressed the button and sails down again.

From the bottom of the staircase, Carter is watching his master's enjoyment of the new toy. The door behind him opens and two visitors enter the law offices. They are MR. MAYHEW, a man of Sir Wilfrid's age, a respectable London solicitor from his high collar to the tip of his tightly rolled umbrella. The other man is LEONARD VOLE: young, attractive, wearing a sports coat and slacks -- quite out of place in this stronghold of the bowler hat, the brief case and the striped pants.

10A. CLOSER SHOT

Mayhew is about to speak to a typist, then sees Carter. He gestures to Vole to wait. Vole lights a cigarette while Mayhew walks up to Carter.

MAYHEW

Good afternoon, Carter. Would it be possible to see Sir Wilfrid? I'm sorry I didn't ring up for an appointment, but this is urgent.

CARTER

If it's about a brief, Mr. Mayhew, I'm sorry, but we're full up. Sir Wilfrid has all that he can handle.

MAYHEW

I'm sure he'll want this brief -
(nodding toward Vole
and lowering his voice)
-- Serious criminal matter.

The typists look up at Vole, eyeing him curiously. He smiles uncomfortably in return.

CARTER

Absolutely not, Mr. Mayhew.
(behind him, Sir
Wilfrid slides into
SHOT in the inclin-
ator)

Sir Wilfrid is still convalescent. He cannot possibly accept anything of an overstimulating nature.

SIR WILFRID

They've put me on a diet of bland civil suits. Hello, Mayhew.

10A.

MAYHEW

Hello, Wilfrid. This is very distressing news about your health.

SIR WILFRID

Distressing? It's tragic! You'd better get yourself a younger man, with younger arteries.

MAYHEW

If you could give us just a few minutes. My client is right here.
(pointing)
This is Mr. Leonard Vole. He's in rather a ghastly mess, I'm afraid.

SIR WILFRID

How do you do, Mr. Vole.

VOLE

(with an engaging smile)
Well, according to Mr. Mayhew, I'm not doing at all well!

For an instant Wilfrid looks at him with interest.

At the top of the stairs an impatient Miss Plimsoll claps her hands.

MISS PLIMSOLL

(calling down)

Sir Wilfrid! You're dawdling again!

SIR WILFRID

(right back at her)

Shut up!

(to Mayhew)

Sorry, Mayhew. Try me again some day, when you have something not too stimulating -- like a postman bitten by a stray dog.

He has pressed the button and is going up again. Suddenly, as he is looking down at Mayhew, his attention is drawn to something. He puts the monocle in his eye for a better view.

It is two cigars protruding from Mayhew's breast pocket.

MAYHEW

Well, I wish you could help us, Wilfrid, but I quite understand. Take care.

(turns to go)

10A. Sir Wilfrid, rising on the inclinator, presses the stop button abruptly. Then the down button, and the inclinator starts down.

SIR WILFRID
Mayhew! Mayhew!

Mayhew and Vole have turned to go. They turn back. Sir Wilfrid has come down on the inclinator and jumps up from the seat.

SIR WILFRID
Come back here, Mayhew!

CARTER
Sir Wilfrid, please --

SIR WILFRID
Don't worry, Carter, we won't take the brief. But Mr. Mayhew is an old friend and he needs help. Surely, if I can give him a word of advice ---

(he has opened the door to his own office and beckons)
Come in. I'll give you five minutes.

MAYHEW
That's very kind of you, Wilfrid.

He and Vole are about to follow Sir Wilfrid into his office.

SIR WILFRID
(drawing Mayhew into the room)
If you don't mind, Mayhew, just you and I.

Miss Plimsoll, out of breath, runs down the stairs and up to Sir Wilfrid.

MISS PLIMSOLL
Sir Wilfrid -- our nap!

SIR WILFRID
You go ahead -- start it without me.

He follows Mayhew in, closing the door in her face.

MISS PLIMSOLL
This is your fault, Mr. Carter -- you should not have permitted it!

10A.

CARTER

It is not my fault!
 (with a sharp
 look at Vole)

I distinctly told Sir Wilfrid -- no
 criminal cases.

VOLE

If it's anyone's fault, I expect it's
 mine. It seems silly to me, but
 Mr. Mayhew thinks it's very urgent -
 he thinks I may be arrested at any
 minute.

MISS PLIMSOLL

Arrested for what?

VOLE

Well -- for murder.

He smiles engagingly. They stare at him, trying to
 reconcile his most attractive appearance with what he
 has just told them.

11. INT. SIR WILFRID'S OFFICE DAY

Mayhew is seated in one of the visitor's chairs, relating
 the case. Sir Wilfrid is circling him like a bird dog,
 his eyes glued to the cigars in Mayhew's pocket.

MAYHEW

-- it's the case of Mrs. Emily French.
 You have probably seen the reports in
 the Press. She was a middle-aged
 widow, rather well-off, living with a
 housekeeper in Hampstead. Mr. Vole
 had been with her earlier in the even-
 ing. When the housekeeper returned
 from her day off at eleven P.M. she
 found her mistress dead -- struck on
 the back of the head and killed.

SIR WILFRID

I see ...
 (he doesn't; his mind
 is on the cigars)

MAYHEW

Vole seems a harmless chap -- caught
 in a web of circumstantial evidence --
 perhaps if I gave you some more of the
 details, you might suggest the strongest
 line of defense --

11.

SIR WILFRID

I could probably think better
if you gave me one of those
cigars.

MAYHEW

Of course.

(handing him one)

There are naturally no previous
convictions, he is a man of good
character, with an excellent war
record -- you would like him
a lot.

Sir Wilfrid has torn off the band, bitten off the end
of the cigar and is searching frantically on his desk,
and in the drawers for a match.

SIR WILFRID

(muttering)

They've confiscated the matches,
too. (to Mayhew)

A light, please -- give me a
light.

MAYHEW

(fumbling in his
pockets)

As I see it, the defense
may turn on establishing
alibi for the evening of the
murder --

(no matches)

Sorry -- I haven't any matches.

(getting up)

Let me get some.

SIR WILFRID

(holding him back)

Lord, no! You don't know
Miss Plimsoll. This will take
all our cunning.

He pauses to formulate a plan, then palms the cigar and
opens the door.

12. THE ANTEROOM DAY

Sir Wilfrid stands in the doorway with a benign and
innocent expression.

12.

SIR WILFRID
 (beckoning to Vole)
 Young man -- your solicitor and
 I feel that you may be able to
 enlighten me on a rather
 important point --

VOLE
 (crossing to the door)
 Yes, sir. Anything at all.

MISS PLIMSOLL
 (desperate; advancing)
 Really, Sir Wilfrid --

SIR WILFRID
 You're not in bed yet? UPSTAIRS!

He ushers in Vole, then slams the door in her frustrated
 face.

13. INT. SIR WILFRID'S OFFICE DAY

Sir Wilfrid turns instantly on Vole.

SIR WILFRID
 Give me a match.

VOLE
 Sorry -- I never carry them.

SIR WILFRID
 (crushed)
 WHAT?!
 (to Mayhew)
 And you said I'd like him?

VOLE
 I've got a lighter.
 (produces it)

SIR WILFRID
 (snatching the lighter)
 You're right, Mayhew -- I do
 like him.

(gleefully, as he is
 warming the cigar on
 the lighter flame)
 Can you imagine Miss Plimsoll's
 face if she saw me now?

VOLE
 Let's make absolutely sure
 she doesn't.

13. He deliberately lowers the old-fashioned metal cover over the keyhole.

SIR WILFRID

(to Mayhew)

Splendid? All the instincts of a skilled criminal.

VOLE

(modestly)

Thank you, sir.

They grin at each other.

SIR WILFRID

Young man, you may or may not have murdered a middle-aged widow, but you have certainly saved the life of an elderly barrister.

VOLE

I haven't murdered anybody. It's absurd. But Christine -- that's my wife -- she thinks I may be implicated and that I needed a lawyer. So I went to see Mr. Mayhew and now he thinks that he needs a lawyer. So now I have two lawyers. Silly, isn't it?

MAYHEW

Mr. Vole, I am a solicitor. Sir Wilfrid is a barrister. Only a barrister can actually plead a case in court.

Sir Wilfrid is completely absorbed in his cigar, on which an inch of ash has now appeared. He bends back, opening a small drawer in an old file cabinet behind him. He drops the ash there, then closes the drawer.

SIR WILFRID

(to himself, with satisfaction)

She shall not even find the ashes.

(to Vole)

Go on, go on.

13.

VOLE

(easily)

Well, I saw in the papers that poor Mrs. French had been found dead, with her head bashed in -- and then it said in the papers that the police were anxious to interview me since I had visited Mrs. French that evening -- so naturally, I went along to the police station.

SIR WILFRID

(interrupting; sharply)

Did they caution you?

VOLE

I don't quite know. I mean, they asked if I would like to make a statement and they would write it down, and it might be used against me in Court.

(with a shrug)

Would that be cautioning me?

SIR WILFRID

(with a sigh)

Oh, well, it can't be helped now.

VOLE

Anyway, they were very polite and they seemed quite satisfied.

MAYHEW

They seemed satisfied, Mr. Vole.

(to Sir Wilfrid)

He thinks that he made a statement and that's the end of it.

(back to Vole)

Mr. Vole, isn't it obvious to you that you will be regarded as the principal and logical suspect in this case? I have great fear that you will be arrested.

VOLE

I've done nothing. Why should I be arrested? I mean, this is England. You don't get arrested or convicted for something you haven't done?

SIR WILFRID

We try not to make a habit of it.

VOLE

But it does happen, doesn't it? Of course. There was that case of what's-his name -- Adolph Beck, or Becker - he'd been in jail for eight years when they found out it was another chap entirely -- he was innocent all along.

SIR WILFRID

Very unfortunate. But restitution has been made. He received a free pardon, a bounty from the Crown, and was restored to his normal life.

VOLE

(quite agitated)

Yes, that was all right for him. But what if it had been murder? -- what if he had been hanged? -- how would they restore him to his normal life then?

MAYHEW

Really, Mr. Vole, you mustn't take such a morbid point of view.

VOLE

(a little embarrassed)

Sorry. It's just that when you tell me it's all closing in on me -- It's like a nightmare.

MAYHEW

Relax, Mr. Vole. I am putting you in the hands of the finest and most experienced barrister in London --

SIR WILFRID

Now, Mayhew, let's get this straight. I may have done something highly unethical: I've taken your cigar and I'm not taking your case. I can't. I'm forbidden. My doctors would never allow it.

(to Vole)

I'm truly sorry, young man.

(and to Mayhew again)

However, if you would like the case handled by someone in these chambers, I would recommend Mr. Brogan-Moore-- you know Brogan-Moore? --

13.

MAYHEW

Yes, I do.

(to Vole)

A very able man. I second
Sir Wilfrid's recommendation.

VOLE

(with a shrug)

If you say so ...

Sir Wilfrid has risen and crosses to the door. In passing he shoves his cigar in Vole's hand.

SIR WILFRID

Hold this.

He opens the door into the anteroom.

14. THE ANTEROOM (DAY)

As Sir Wilfrid emerges, Miss Plimsoll and Carter immediately converge on him.

SIR WILFRID

I would like to see Mr. Brogan-Moore in my office just as soon as he comes in from Court.

CARTER

Yes, sir.

MISS PLIMSOLL

(on the verge of
breakdown)

Sir Wilfrid, I have never known such insubordination -- no, not even when I was a nurse in the front lines, during the War -

SIR WILFRID

What War was that? -- the Crimean, no doubt.

He slams the door in her face again.

15. INT. SIR WILFRID'S OFFICE (DAY)

He crosses to his desk.

SIR WILFRID

You'll like Brogan-Moore. He's had excellent training -- under me.

15. As he passes Vole, he takes the cigar out of Vole's outstretched hand, seats himself behind the desk and puffs on.

VOLE

(with a little smile)

This morning I had no lawyers at all -- now I suddenly have three lawyers.

(to Mayhew)

Perhaps we ought to explain to Sir Wilfrid that I have very little money --

(to Sir Wilfrid)

I won't be able to pay all the costs and fees.

SIR WILFRID

Don't worry -- we'll get a fourth lawyer to sue you.

VOLE

He won't get much, I'm afraid. I haven't had a job in four months.

SIR WILFRID

What sort of work do you do?

VOLE

Well, my last job was as a mechanic with a motor servicing firm. The foreman kept riding me all the time. I took it as long as I could, then I quit.

SIR WILFRID

And before that?

VOLE

I was working in a department store -- in the toys, demonstrating children's building sets. Of course, that only lasted through the Christmas rush. Before that, I worked in a petrol station, but things got a little awkward, and -- I got fired.

SIR WILFRID

Awkward -- in what way?

15.

VOLE

The boss's daughter. She kept annoying me, until I told her where to get off. So she told her father I was annoying her, and he told me where to get off.

SIR WILFRID

(dropping ashes in the drawer again)

Very annoying.

VOLE

Before that, I had a job testing electric blankets --

(he catches Wilfrid's penetrating glance)

You must be thinking I'm a bit of a drifter, sir. It's true, in a way, but I'm not really like that. Doing my Army service unsettled me a bit. That and being abroad. I was stationed in Germany. It was fine there. That's where I met Christine, my wife. She was an actress, and a good one. She's been a wonderful wife to me, too, but I haven't been much of a provider, I'm afraid -- somehow, I can't seem to settle down properly since I came back to this country. Of course, if I could just put my egg-beater across --

SIR WILFRID

Egg-beater?

VOLE

Yes, sir. I'm sort of an inventor -- nothing big, just little household things. A pocket pencil sharpener, a key-ring flashlight, but my best is really this egg-beater. -- You see, it not only beats the eggs; it also separates the yolk from the white.

SIR WILFRID

Is that really desirable?

VOLE

If you were a housewife, Sir Wilfrid, you'd see it right away. The trouble is I would need some money for manufacturing and promotion -- well, that's really what I was hoping Mrs. French might do for me after I met her.

SIR WILFRID

Oh. Exactly how did you meet this Mrs. French?

VOLE

That was rather funny in itself -- it was the third of September -- I remember distinctly because it is my wife's birthday -- I was window-shopping on Oxford Street, sort of daydreaming about what I would buy for her -- if I had any money --

INSTANT CUT TO:

16. EXT. MILLINERY SHOP OXFORD STREET DAY

Vole strolls by the shop, stops and looks at a display of silly hats in the window. He looks casually into the shop and sees a middle-aged lady, neat and prim -- MRS. EMILY FRENCH. The salesgirl is just putting a small, conservative hat on Mrs. French. She studies herself in the mirror. Suddenly she is aware that Vole is looking at her. She turns toward him. Vole shakes his head in disapproval. She accepts his decision, tries on a second hat, looks again toward Vole for his opinion. All she gets is a "not good, not bad" sort of look. She discards the hat, tries on a third one. This is a wide-brimmed affair, quite wild. She looks expectantly at Vole. He likes this one and nods his approval. She looks again at the mirror, then rushes out of the shop to talk to him.

MRS. FRENCH

You really like this one?

VOLE

Very much.

MRS. FRENCH

You don't think it's too -- too mad?

16.

VOLE

Mad? Not at all! A little daring, perhaps -- I wouldn't recommend it to every woman -- but you -- why shouldn't you attract some attention --?

MRS. FRENCH

You really think so?

VOLE

Absolutely. If I may suggest just one little thing -- let's tilt that brim a bit, to show off your face --

He does so. Mrs. French lets him. There is the sound of a bus.

VOLE

My bus! Good-bye!

He turns and runs for it. Mrs. French looks after him, a little dazed. From OFF-SCENE comes --

VOLE'S VOICE

Now you buy that hat! I insist!

Mrs. French looks after the bus for a few seconds, then walks back into the shop with a tiny smile on her face.

INSTANT CUT TO:

17. INT. SIR WILFRID'S OFFICE DAY

Sir Wilfrid and Mayhew listening to Vole's account.

VOLE

.. actually, it was quite a ridiculous hat. Silly thing with ribbons and flowers.

SIR WILFRID

(flicking ashes into drawer)
I'm constantly surprised that women's hats do not provoke more murders. Go on, please.

VOLE

I was just trying to be nice to her -- make her feel good. I never dreamed that I'd see her again -- or the flower stand.

SIR WILFRID

But you did?

17.

VOLE

Yes. A few weeks later -- again quite accidentally. I was peddling my egg-beaters that afternoon and business was a little slow....

INSTANT CUT TO:

18. INT. MOVIE THEATRE

A western is in progress. Vole is sitting in the last row, his sample-case on a seat beside him. He is tired and is slouched down in the seat, feet extended. A woman, wearing a wide-brimmed hat, comes into the row ahead, taking the seat directly in front of him. His view of the screen is blocked. He sits up and taps her on the shoulder.

VOLE

Would you mind, Madame --

She turns around. It is Mrs. French, and it's that hat again.

VOLE

Oh, hello --

MRS. FRENCH

(recognizing him)

Hello. It's your fault, you know-- you chose it yourself.

She is about to take off the hat, sees the empty seat next to him, then glances at him.

VOLE

Sure --- if you like.

He moves the sample-case. Mrs. French rises and goes to the aisle, moving into the empty seat.

MRS. FRENCH

Thank you. It's a bother taking it off and putting it back on again.

They sit in the dark, watching the movie. There are the sounds of shooting and hoofbeats.

VOLE

The chap on the white horse is called Jesse James. They've lured him into this ambush -- not at all cricket.

18.

MRS. FRENCH

Don't worry -- Mr. James shoots his way out.

VOLE

He does?

MRS. FRENCH

I've seen it before. I go to the movies quite a lot.

VOLE

You do?

MRS. FRENCH

I get so restless at home -- so I go out, but then I find that I've really no place to go -- so I go to the movies -- sometimes I see the same one two or three times.

A pause. She takes some candy from her purse.

MRS. FRENCH

Toffee?

VOLE

Yes, please --
(taking one)
Thank you.

MRS. FRENCH

I've seen Richard the Third five times.

VOLE

You like Shakespeare?

MRS. FRENCH

I like Sir Laurence Olivier.
(a beat)
Pity he's married.

More shooting suddenly and more hoofbeats from the screen.

MRS. FRENCH

You see - there goes Mr. James now!

INSTANT CUT TO:

19. INT. SIR WILFRID'S OFFICE DAY

Sir Wilfrid, Mayhew and Vole - as we left them.

SIR WILFRID

(to Vole)

Of course, at this time you had no idea that Mrs. French was well-off?

VOLE

Absolutely not. We were sitting in the cheap seats. All I knew was that she seemed to be very lonely - had no friends whatsoever.

MAYHEW

She and her husband had lived abroad in British Nigeria -- for many years. He was in the Colonial Service. He died in forty-five - of a heart attack.

SIR WILFRID

(flicking his ashes
in the drawer)

Please, Mayhew --- not while I'm smoking.

(to Vole)

Go on, young man.

VOLE

Well, they finally polished off Jesse James -- and when we left the movie, she invited me to her house for tea..

INSTANT CUT TO:

20. INT. MRS. FRENCH'S KITCHEN DAY

It is the neat, well-equipped kitchen of a small London town house in a good neighborhood.

Vole is demonstrating his egg-beater for Mrs. French. In the background, JANET MACKENZIE, the housekeeper, is preparing tea.

MRS. FRENCH

I think it's the most fascinating thing I've ever seen.

(to the housekeeper)

Janet! Come look at this!

20.

JANET

(sour)

I've seen egg-beaters before, ma'am.

MRS. FRENCH

But this beats so quickly -- and it separates -- I guess it's centrifugal -- or centrifugal -- or what is it?

VOLE

(very matter-of-fact)

Well, actually, it's specific gravity. It whips cream, too.

MRS. FRENCH

(dreamily)

Janet, did you hear that? -- it whips cream, too.

(a grunt from Janet)

We must have one. Is it expensive?

VOLE

Compliments of the inventor, manufacturer and sole distributor.

MRS. FRENCH

Thank you. We'll use it constantly, won't we, Janet?

(another

grunt from Janet)

We'd better get out of here, Mr. Vole. Janet doesn't like visitors in her kitchen.

She takes his arm, leads him out. Janet looks after them, then contemptuously takes the egg-beater out of the bowl and tosses it into the sink.

21. INT. DRAWING ROOM MRS. FRENCH'S HOUSE DAY

Mrs. French leads Vole into the room. He stops to look around. The room is stuffed with mementos of all the years the Frenches spent in Africa: fierce masks, tigerskin rugs, drums, spears and shields.

MRS. FRENCH

A bit chilly here, isn't it? Shall we have a fire?

VOLE

(a little aghast)

It's a -- charming room.

21.

MRS. FRENCH

Hubert and I collected all these things when we lived in Africa. Hubert was my husband.

VOLE

(points to a particularly horrid mask)

There's a lovable chap!

MRS. FRENCH

That's the mask of the witch doctor. He wore it when he pulled our servants' teeth, so Hubert used to call him a witch dentist. Hubert was so witty.

VOLE

Yes, I can see that.

Janet has entered with the tea tray, puts it down.

MRS. FRENCH

Oh, Janet -- let's use our good silver and china.

Janet grimly picks up the tray and is about to take it out again.

VOLE

Oh, no. Don't bother, Mrs. French -- this is perfectly all right.

Janet puts the tray down again, is about to pour the tea.

JANET

(to Vole)

Lemon or milk, please?

VOLE

I don't really care.

MRS. FRENCH

Would you prefer some sherry?

VOLE

Sherry would be fine.

JANET

We have no sherry.

MRS. FRENCH

But we have. There's that bottle-- the one we bought last Christmas.

21. Mrs. French opens an African cabinet and takes from it a bottle and one glass.

JANET

(sarcastically)

If he'd care for an eggnogg- there happens to be a wasted egg in the kitchen - - all ready and separated.

MRS. FRENCH

(pouring the sherry)

Don't mind Janet, Mr. Vole. It's just that she's terribly Scotch.

VOLE

Is she?

(pointing at the masks)

I thought she came with the collection.

MRS. FRENCH

You know --

(takes another glass from the cabinet)

--- maybe I'll have a glass of sherry myself. I feel like Christmas, somehow.

INSTANT CUT TO:

22. INT. SIR WILFRID'S OFFICE DAY

Mayhew, Sir Wilfrid and Vole as we left them.

VOLE

-- after that I used to see her once or twice a week. She kept a bottle of sherry for me and we would talk, or play canasta, or listen to her old phonograph records -- Gilbert and Sullivan mostly.

(a beat)

It's so weird to think of her now -- laying there, in that living room, murdered.

SIR WILFRID

I assure you she has been moved by now. Not to have done so would be unfeeling, unlawful and unsanitary.

He has taken the drawer with the ashes out of the cabinet, opens the window and empties it into the street.

MAYHEW

(to Vole)

Suppose you tell Sir Wilfrid about the evening of the murder.

VOLE

I went around to see her about eight o'clock that evening...She fixed me a sandwich and we talked a bit and listened to The Mikado. I left about nine. I walked home and got there about half-past. I can prove that - I can swear to it -- in or out of court, on the witness stand, anywhere--

Sir Wilfrid has been listening without looking at Vole and polishing his monocle.

SIR WILFRID

(suddenly, cutting Vole off)

How much money did you get from her?

VOLE

From whom?

SIR WILFRID

From Mrs. French!

VOLE

Nothing. Not a quid.

SIR WILFRID

The truth! How much?

VOLE

Why should she give me any money?

SIR WILFRID

Because she was in love with you!

VOLE

That's ridiculous. She liked me. She pampered me, like an aunt -- but that's all. I swear.

SIR WILFRID

Why didn't you tell her you were a married man?

VOLE

I did tell her.

22. CONTINUED:

SIR WILFRID

But you never took your wife along
when you went there-- did you?

VOLE

No, I didn't.

SIR WILFRID

Why not?

VOLE

Well, because --

SIR WILFRID

Because of what?

VOLE

Well, Mrs. French was under the
impression that Christine and I
didn't get along too well --

SIR WILFRID

Is that true?

VOLE

No. We love each other!

SIR WILFRID

Then how did she get that impression?
Did you give it to her?

VOLE

No -- she seemed to want to believe
it that way --

SIR WILFRID

But you never corrected that
impression? Why?

VOLE

I was afraid she'd lose interest
in me.

SIR WILFRID

Because she was rich?

VOLE

Yes, I suppose so --

SIR WILFRID

And you were after her money?

22.

VOLE

Well, yes -- in a way --

By this time Sir Wilfrid has put the monocle in his eye. He moves his head slightly, so that the sunlight from the window hits the monocle and is reflected directly in Vole's eyes. Vole doesn't bat an eyelash as he continues his fervent statement.

VOLE

I was hoping to get a loan for my invention -- a couple of hundred pounds -- an honest business proposition, that's what it would have been -- is that so wicked?

SIR WILFRID

You knew it was the housekeeper's day off?

VOLE

Yes, I did.

SIR WILFRID

So you went there because you knew she would be alone?

VOLE

No. I went there because I thought she'd be lonely.

SIR WILFRID

All right, lonely! You and the rich lonely woman all alone in that lonely house -- with the gramophone blaring The Mikado -- perhaps you turned the volume up to drown out her cries --!

VOLE

No. When I left her, she was alive.

SIR WILFRID

But when the housekeeper came back, she was dead.

VOLE

The house had been ransacked. It said so in the papers. It must have been a burglar.

(very emotional)

I didn't do it. No matter how bad things look, I didn't do it. You must believe me. You do believe me, don't you?

22. Complete silence for five seconds. Then -

SIR WILFRID
(dropping the monocle)
Of course, Mr. Vole. If I didn't believe you, I would not have subjected your eyes or my arteries to that ordeal.

VOLE
(exhausted)
Thank you.

SIR WILFRID
(seating himself)
As for things looking bad -- they don't look bad, Mr. Vole -- they look terrible. Apparently you have no alibi at all!

VOLE
I have. I left Mrs. French at nine o'clock.

SIR WILFRID
How did you go home -- by bus or underground?

VOLE
I walked. It was a fine night.

SIR WILFRID
Did anyone see you?

VOLE
Of course. Christine saw me when I got home. It was exactly ninety-six. I know because I went right to work on a new sort of clock I've been tinkering with. My wife will tell you that.

SIR WILFRID
Your wife loves you, does she not?

VOLE
Very much. And I love her. We are devoted to each other.

SIR WILFRID
You realize, Mr. Vole, that the testimony of a devoted wife does not carry much weight.

22.

VOLE

You mean that people will think that Christine would tell a lie on my account?

SIR WILFRID

It has been known, Mr. Vole. Blood is thicker than evidence.
(there is a knock)

Yes?

MR. BROGAN-MOORE enters. He is in his middle forties, tall, correct in manner and dress. He is carrying a brief case and a folded newspaper.

SIR WILFRID

Ah -- Brogan-Moore! Come in, come in!

BROGAN-MOORE

(crossing briskly to Sir Wilfrid)

So good to have you out of hospital --

SIR WILFRID

I didn't get a full pardon -- I'm out on parole. You know Mr. Mayhew, I believe, and this is his client, Mr. Leonard Vole.

BROGAN-MOORE

How do you do.
(they shake hands)

SIR WILFRID

(cueing him)

The Emily French murder.

BROGAN-MOORE

(with renewed interest)

Oh, how do you do.
(shakes hands again)

SIR WILFRID

(instantly)

Badly, thank you. There's a mass of circumstantial evidence, no alibi whatsoever - it's a hot potato and I'm tossing it right into your lap,

BROGAN-MOORE

Much obliged.

22.

SIR WILFRID

Your line of defense, however, will be lack of motive. You will agree that we can rule out a crime of passion. That leaves us with a murder for profit. Now then -- if Mr. Vole had been sponging on Mrs. French, why kill her and cut off the source of supply? Or -- if he was hoping for a golden egg, why kill the goose before it was laid? No motive. No motive whatsoever!
(a skeptical glance from Brogan-Moore)

You find some flaw in this line of reasoning?

BROGAN-MOORE

No. It's very sound as far as it goes.

SIR WILFRID

Well, it's all yours, Brogan-Moore. You'll find Mr. Vole very responsive and quite candid -- so candid, in fact, that he has already informed me that we will have to sue him for our fees.

BROGAN-MOORE

(with a smile)

We'll simply put a lien on Mr. Vole's eighty thousand pounds.

VOLE

What eighty thousand pounds?

BROGAN-MOORE

The eighty thousand pounds Mrs. French left you.

VOLE

(open-mouthed)

Left me?

BROGAN-MOORE

(handing the newspaper to Sir Wilfrid)

They opened Mrs. French's bank vault today and found her will.
(to Vole)

Congratulations.

VOLE

You're joking!

(rising to look at the
paper over Sir Wilfrid's
shoulder -- elated)Eighty thousand pounds! -- I was
worrying about a couple of hundred
for my silly egg-beater --- and
now -- I must call Christine --

He reaches for the phone. Suddenly he becomes aware of the way Sir Wilfrid, Mayhew and Brogan-Moore are looking at him. There's a second's silence.

VOLE

(quite sober now)

This inheritance -- it doesn't
make things look any better for
me, does it?

SIR WILFRID

No. I wouldn't think so.

VOLE

So now they'll say that I did have
a motive --

SIR WILFRID

(rising and crossing
to the window)They will indeed. Eighty thousand
pounds makes for a very handsome
motive.

VOLE

(to Mayhew)

I thought you were crazy. But I
guess now they will arrest me.

(to Sir Wilfrid)

Won't they?

Sir Wilfrid looks down into street.

23. EXT. SIR WILFRID'S BUILDING DAY FROM WILFRID'S POINT
OF VIEW.

A police car, driven by a bobby, pulls up sharply.
Police driver gets out to open door.

24. INT. SIR WILFRID'S OFFICE DAY

Sir Wilfrid turns back from the window.

24.

SIR WILFRID
It's quite likely.

VOLE
(violently)
I knew nothing about that will! I didn't know Mrs. French had any intention of leaving me her money. And if I didn't know about it, how could it be a motive?

MAYHEW
(sympathetically)
Mr. Brogan-Moore will certainly bring that out in court.

SIR WILFRID
(to Brogan-Moore, as he crosses to the door)
It's our old friend, Inspector Hearne.

BROGAN-MOORE
Chief Inspector, as of last month.

SIR WILFRID
Chief Inspector!
(to Vole)
They must think a lot of you at Scotland Yard -- you're getting the de luxe treatment.

He opens the door to the anteroom, just as Hearne and another detective come in from the outside.

SIR WILFRID
In here, Chief Inspector.

He beckons Hearne and the other detective into his office.

HEARNE
Sorry to disturb you in your chambers, Sir Wilfrid --

SIR WILFRID
(closing the door)
Perfectly all right. I never object to the actions of the police -- except in court once in a great while.

HEARNE
Yes, sir. I still have the scars.

24.

SIR WILFRID

You know Mr. Mayhew, and Mr. Brogan-Moore.

(nods all around)

And this is Dangerous Leonard Vole. You'd better search him -- he may be armed with an egg-beater.

HEARNE

(to Vole, very formal)

Is your name Leonard Vole?

VOLE

(rising)

It is.

HEARNE

I have here a warrant for your arrest on the charge of murdering Emily French on October fourteenth last. I must warn you that anything you say may be taken down and used in evidence.

VOLE

(as carefree as he can manage)

I'm ready. Must I be handcuffed?

HEARNE

That won't be necessary, sir.

VOLE

You see, I've never been arrested before. Not even for walking a dog off the leash, or having a beer after hours.

SIR WILFRID

There is no disgrace in being arrested, Mr. Vole. Kings, Prime Ministers, Archbishops - even barristers -- have stood in the dock.

VOLE

(to Brogan-Moore)

Will you tell my wife that I ---

BROGAN-MOORE)

Yes, I'll tell her.

MAYHEW

I'll go down to the station with you and see that you're properly charged.

24.

VOLE

Thank you, Sir Wilfrid.
 (to Brogan-Moore)
 I'll be hearing from you, won't I?

BROGAN-MOORE

Yes, of course.

SIR WILFRID

(to Hearne)

Will you see to it that Mr. Vole
 is well treated?

(whisks the other cigar
 from Mayhew's pocket)

Here -- have a cigar!

HEARNE

(reaching for it)

That's very kind of you, Sir Wilfrid.

SIR WILFRID

(pulling it back)

I'd better not! It would constitute
 a bribe!

(he puts it carefully
 in his inside
 coat pocket)

HEARNE

(bitingly)

We ought to be going, Mr. Vole.

Vole starts out with the two detectives on either side
 of him, Mayhew following. Vole turns back in the open
 doorway.

VOLE

(a little grin)

One thing I've learned for sure --
 never look in a window where
 there are women's hats!

They exit. The door closes.

SIR WILFRID

Makes a very nice impression,
 doesn't he?

BROGAN-MOORE

Yes, rather. Did you give him
 the monocle test?

SIR WILFRID

Passed with flying colors.

24.

BROGAN-MOORE

I hope he does as well in the Dock.
This is sticky, you know.

SIR WILFRID

Of course it is! The prosecution
will blast him with their heaviest
artillery. All you'll have is one
little popgun - an alibi furnished
by his wife! Isn't that an
intriguing challenge?

BROGAN-MOORE

(drily)

I think I'd like it more if it
was less of a challenge.

Carter enters.

CARTER

Sorry, Sir Wilfrid, but Miss
Plimsoll has issued an ultimatum:
if you're not in bed in one minute,
she will resign.

SIR WILFRID

Splendid! Give her a month's
pay and kick her down the stairs!

CARTER

Sir Wilfrid, either you take
proper care of yourself, or I,
too, shall resign.

SIR WILFRID

This is blackmail!

(the two men look
at each other)

You're quite right, Carter. For
my first day, this has already
been rather hectic. I should
be in bed.

He takes Carter's arm casually for support, and with Brogan-
Moore following, they go into the anteroom.

25. THE ANTEROOM (DAY)

Sir Wilfrid, Carter and Brogan-Moore cross to the staircase.

BROGAN-MOORE

Mayhew should get on to Mrs.
Vole and have her come over.
Will you sit in?

25.

SIR WILFRID

Thank you, no! I'm in no condition to cope with emotional wives drenched in tears.

He sees Miss Plimsoll waiting for him halfway up the staircase, her arms crossed, her eyes blazing.

SIR WILFRID

Ah, Miss Plimsoll! How alluring you look -- waiting like a hangman on the scaffold.

(plumps himself on the inclinator)

Take me! I'm yours!

(to Brogan-Moore)

Handle Mrs. Vole gently, especially when you break the news of the arrest. Bear in mind she's a foreigner, so be prepared for hysterics -- even a fainting spell. Better have smelling salts ready, a box of tissues and a nip of brandy.

CHRISTINE'S VOICE

I do not think that will be necessary.

They look OFF.

In the entrance stands CHRISTINE VOLE.

She is handsome, calm and self-contained. She wears a grey practical suit, a small hat and white gloves. She speaks crisply, and with a slight German accent.

CHRISTINE

I never faint because I am not sure that I will fall gracefully -- and I never use smelling salts because they puff up the eyes.

(she moves closer to Sir Wilfrid)

I am Christine Vole.

SIR WILFRID

(putting monocle in eye)

How do you do. I am Wilfrid Robarts and this is Mr. Brogan-Moore.

(they nod)

My dear Mrs. Vole, I am afraid we have rather bad news for you ---

25.

CHRISTINE
Don't be afraid, Sir Wilfrid. I
am quite disciplined.

SIR WILFRID
There is nothing to be alarmed about
as yet --.

CHRISTINE
Leonard has been arrested and charged
with murder -- is that it?
(Sir Wilfrid nods soberly)
I knew he would be. I told him so.

SIR WILFRID
I'm glad you're showing such
fortitude..

CHRISTINE
Call it what you like.. What is
the next step?

SIR WILFRID
Your husband will have to stand
trial, I'm afraid.
(to Brogan-Moore)
Will you take Mrs. Vole inside
and explain the procedure.
(to Christine)
Mr. Brogan-Moore will lead the
defense.

CHRISTINE
Oh? You will not personally defend
Leonard?

SIR WILFRID
Regrettably, not. My health -- or
rather the lack of it -- forbids me.

CHRISTINE
It is regrettable. Mr. Mayhew
described you as the champion of
the hopeless cause.

She has followed Brogan-Moore to the door of Sir Wilfrid's
office. Stops, and turns back.

CHRISTINE
Is it perhaps that this cause is
too hopeless?

She does not wait for an answer, walks into the office
and Brogan-Moore closes the door.

25. Sir Wilfrid lets the monocle fall, seats himself on the inclinator and presses the button, all the time glaring at the closed door of his office. The inclinator rises, and Miss Plimsoll trots beside it.

MISS PLIMSOLL

I shall have a very serious talk with Dr. Harrison. It was a mistake to let you come back here. I should have taken you directly to a rest home, or to a resort -- some place quiet, far off -- like Bermuda.

SIR WILFRID

(his mind on
Mrs. Vole)

Oh, shut up! You just want to see me in those nasty shorts.

The inclinator comes to a stop at the head of the staircase. Miss Plimsoll helps Sir Wilfrid up from the seat. He stands still, looking down toward his office door.

MISS PLIMSOLL

(plucking at his
sleeve)

Come, now, Sir Wilfrid, you must not think of it. You must get ready for sleep -- think beautiful thoughts.

She leads him into the bedroom.

26. SIR WILFRID'S BEDROOM (DAY)

It is the room above his office, of the same shape and the same octagonal window design. There is a big Victorian bed, a chaise, deep comfortable chairs, and a washstand behind a folding screen. As they enter, Miss Plimsoll takes a pair of pajamas from the bed and hands them to Sir Wilfrid.

MISS PLIMSOLL

Now put those on -- tops and bottoms -- while I make your bed.

He takes the pajamas, goes behind the screen, deep in thought. Miss Plimsoll starts to remove the bedspread and arrange the pillows.

26.

MISS PLIMSOLL

After your rest, we'll have a nice cup of cocoa. Then perhaps we'll go for a little walk in the square.

Behind the screen Sir Wilfrid hasn't made a move to get into the pajamas. His body is here; his mind is in the office below.

MISS PLIMSOLL

(busy with the bed)

I must say, I feel sorry for that nice Mr. Vole -- not just because he was arrested -- but that wife of his -- she must be German -- I suppose that's what happens when we let our boys cross the channel: they go crazy --- Personally, I think the Government should do something about those foreign wives -- like an embargo -- how else can we take care of our own surplus -- don't you agree, Sir Wilfrid?

(the bed is ready)

All right, hop in --

(no answer)

Sir Wilfrid!

Alarmed, she looks behind the screen. The pajamas are there, but no Sir Wilfrid. She runs out.

27. STAIRCASE AND ANTEROOM BELOW (DAY)

Miss Plimsoll runs to the top of the stairs.

MISS PLIMSOLL

Sir Wilfrid!

Too late. She gets a last glimpse of Sir Wilfrid entering his office.

28. INT. SIR WILFRID'S OFFICE (DAY)

Brogan-Moore is interviewing Mrs. Vole. He is seated behind the desk. Mrs. Vole is in a chair near the window. She is very calm and poised. Sir Wilfrid enters quietly, gestures to Brogan-Moore to continue, then moves to a position from which he can observe Mrs. Vole.

28.

CHRISTINE

Yes, of course, I knew that Leonard had been seeing Mrs. French quite frequently. I knew it from the day when he came home with a pair of green socks she had knitted for him.

BROGAN-MOORE

Well, that's quite natural. And I'm sure a jury will find it rather endearing.

CHRISTINE

Oh, Leonard can be very endearing. He hates that particular shade of green, and the socks were two sizes too small, but he wore them just the same -- just to give her pleasure. Leonard has a way with women. I only hope he will have an all-woman jury -- they will carry him from the courtroom in triumph!

BROGAN-MOORE

A simple acquittal will do. Now, Mrs. Vole, you know that Mrs. French left your husband money?

CHRISTINE

Yes. A lot of money.

BROGAN-MOORE

Of course, your husband had no previous knowledge of this bequest?

CHRISTINE

Is that what he told you?

BROGAN-MOORE

Surely, Mrs. Vole, you are not suggesting anything different?

CHRISTINE

Oh, no. I do not suggest anything.

BROGAN-MOORE

Quite obviously, Mrs. French had come to look upon your husband as a son -- or, perhaps, a favorite nephew.

28. CONTINUED:

CHRISTINE

You think Mrs. French looked upon Leonard as a son -- or a nephew?

BROGAN-MOORE

I do. An entirely natural and understandable relationship.

CHRISTINE

What hypocrites you are in this country!

(Brogan-Moore and Sir Wilfrid exchange a look)

I shock you. I am so sorry.

BROGAN-MOORE

Apparently you have a continental way of looking at things, but I assure you it would be most unwise to suggest that Mrs. French had any feelings for your husband other than -- well -- er --

CHRISTINE

Let us say an aunt. By all means.

Suddenly a bright gleam of sunlight hits her eyes and makes her blink.

Sir Wilfrid has quietly placed himself for the monocle test.

SIR WILFRID

Pardon me, Brogan-Moore.

(then to Christine)

Did you say that the socks Mrs. French knitted for your husband were two sizes too small?

CHRISTINE

At least.

SIR WILFRID

Would that not indicate that she thought of him as a small boy, a nephew, for instance?

CHRISTINE

It indicates that she did not know how to knit.

(she blinks, tries to move to avoid the light beam)

28. CONTINUED:

SIR WILFRID
 (focusing the blazing
 monocle relentlessly)
 Mrs. Vole, you realize that your
 husband's entire defense rests on
 his word and yours.

CHRISTINE
 I realize that.

SIR WILFRID
 And that the jury will be quite
 skeptical by the word of a man
 accused of murder when supported
 only by the word of his wife.

CHRISTINE
 I realize that, too.

SIR WILFRID
 Let us then at least make sure
 that the two are not in conflict.

CHRISTINE
 By all means, let us.

She has been moving her head trying to avoid the glare from
 Sir Wilfrid's monocle. Now she casually reaches for the
 cord of the window shade and pulls it down a couple of
 inches -- enough to cut off the sun from Sir Wilfrid's
 monocle.

CHRISTINE
 There! -- isn't that more
 comfortable for you, Sir Wilfrid?

Brogan-Moore smiles slightly. Sir Wilfrid, his face now
 in shadow, presses on grimly.

SIR WILFRID
 On the night of the murder, your
 husband came home before nine-
 thirty. Is that correct?

CHRISTINE
 Yes -- I believe so.

SIR WILFRID
 In fact, he remembers that it
 was precisely nine-twenty-six.

CHRISTINE

Nine twenty-six! What makes him so precise?

SIR WILFRID

The clock -- the new invention he'd been tinkering with.

CHRISTINE

Clock? Oh -- oh, yes, a new kind of cuckoo clock! It's very clever. Leonard is quite an inventor.

BROGAN-MOORE

Then it is true -- he was at home with you at nine twenty-six?

CHRISTINE

Precisely.

BROGAN-MOORE

And he did not go out again?

CHRISTINE

(by rote)

Leonard came home at nine twenty-six and did not go out again. Isn't that what he wants me to say?

BROGAN-MOORE

Isn't it the truth?

CHRISTINE

(after a long pause)

Of course.

(Brogan-Moore and Sir Wilfrid exchange relieved glances)

But when I told it to the police, I do not think they believed me. Maybe I did not say it well. Maybe because of my accent.

SIR WILFRID

My dear Mrs. Vole -- in our Courts we will accept the evidence of witnesses who speak only Bulgarian, and who must have an interpreter; and even deaf-mutes, who cannot speak at all. As long as they tell the truth.

BROGAN-MOORE

You are aware, of course, that when I put you in the witness box you will be sworn, and you will testify under oath?

CHRISTINE

Yes.

(again, by rote)

Leonard came home at precisely nine twenty-six and did not go out again. The truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Is that better?

SIR WILFRID

Mrs. Vole, do you love your husband?

CHRISTINE

Leonard thinks I do.

SIR WILFRID

(angrily)

Well, do you?

CHRISTINE

Am I already under oath?

SIR WILFRID

Mrs. Vole, whatever your gambit may be, do you know that under British law you cannot be called to give testimony damaging to your husband?

CHRISTINE

How very convenient.

SIR WILFRID

We are dealing with a capital crime. The prosecution will try to hang your husband!

CHRISTINE

He is not my husband.

Brogan-Moore and Sir Wilfrid stare at each other, then at her. There is a moment of shocked silence.

CHRISTINE

We went through a form of marriage in Hamburg, but I had a husband living at the time somewhere in East Germany -- in the Russian Zone.

SIR WILFRID

Did you tell Leonard?

CHRISTINE

It would have been stupid to tell him. He would not have married me and I would have been left behind to starve in the rubble.

BROGAN-MOORE

So he married you, and brought you safely to this country. Don't you think you should be very grateful to him?

CHRISTINE

One can get very tired of gratitude.

SIR WILFRID

Your husband loves you very much, does he not?

CHRISTINE

Leonard? He worships the ground I walk on!

SIR WILFRID

And you?

CHRISTINE

You want to know too much!
(she rises and puts
up the window shade)
Auf wiedersehen, gentlemen.

She crosses quickly toward the door.

SIR WILFRID

(acidly)

Thank you for coming in, Mrs. Vole. Your visit has been most reassuring.

CHRISTINE

(in the doorway)

Do not worry, Sir Wilfrid. I shall give him an alibi. I will be very convincing. There will be tears in my eyes when I say -- Leonard came home at nine twenty-six -- precisely. I may even bring the cuckoo - as an additional witness.

SIR WILFRID

You're a very remarkable woman, Mrs. Vole.

28.

CHRISTINE

And you are satisfied, I hope?

She exits.

SIR WILFRID

I'm damned if I'm satisfied.

BROGAN-MOORE

(after a beat)

Care to join me in a whiff of
those smelling salts?(Sir Wilfrid doesn't
answer; walks
to the window)

SIR WILFRID

That woman is up to something, --
but what?

BROGAN-MOORE

The Prosecution will break her
down in no time when I put her
in the witness box.(while Sir Wilfrid is
looking out the window)You know, defending this case is
going to be rather like The
Charge of the Light Brigade,
or one of those Japanese suicide
pilots - quite one-sided, with
the odds all on the other side.
I haven't got much to go on
with, have I? The fact is,
I've got nothing.

Sir Wilfrid turns from the window.

SIR WILFRID

Let me ask you something -- do
you believe Leonard Vole is
innocent?(no answer from
Brogan-Moore)Do you?He has put the monocle in his eye. The beam of light
hits Brogan-Moore squarely in the face.

BROGAN-MOORE

(turning away)

I'm not sure -- I'm sorry,
Wilfrid -- Of course, I'll do
my best --

SIR WILFRID

It's all right, Brogan-Moore --
I'll take it from here.

He whips out the second cigar taken from Mayhew, bits off the tip. Behind him the door has opened and a frenzied Miss Plimsoll enters.

MISS PLIMSOLL

I have called Dr. Harrison and given him a complete report on your shocking behavior. I can no longer ----

SIR WILFRID

Give me a match, Miss Plimsoll.

MISS PLIMSOLL

Sir Wilfrid!

SIR WILFRID

(fortissimo)

Did-you-hear-me? --- A MATCH!

Dazed and scared, she brings out a book of matches, strikes one with a trembling hand and holds it out to him. He lights the cigar, blowing the first puff into her face. There is fearless defiance in his manner.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

29. EXT. LONDON PRISON (DAY)

A grim, high-walled building looming against a leaden sky. Sir Wilfrid's Rolls Royce is driving through the open gates. The gates close behind the car.

DISSOLVE TO:

30. INT. CELL BLOCK (DAY)

A guard is leading Leonard Vole between a row of cells.

31. INT. PRISON INTERVIEW ROOM (DAY)

A small, grey room with a single desk and three chairs. Sir Wilfrid and Mayhew, in their overcoats, are waiting. A civilian photographer is setting up a tripod camera. Vole enters, the guard closing the door and remaining outside.

VOLE

Hello, Mr. Mayhew. Sir Wilfrid --
(shaking hands with him)
Mr. Mayhew told me you were
going to represent me. I'm very
grateful.

SIR WILFRID

I struck a bargain with my doctors--
I'll let them exile me to Bermuda
for six months as soon as we finish
your case.

VOLE

Thank you.

SIR WILFRID

Let us hope that we will both
survive.

Meanwhile Mayhew has opened a small suitcase, brings out
a faded trench coat and a crushed felt hat.

MAYHEW

Get into these, will you? We
need a photograph.

VOLE

(as Mayhew helps him
into the coat)

What for?

MAYHEW

Because these are what you wore
on the night of the murder. We
want to circulate a photograph.
Perhaps someone did see you leaving
Mrs. French on your way home.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Over here, by the window, please.
Hold it.

(a flash)

Now one in profile, please.

(Vole turns,
another flash)

That's it.

31.

MAYHEW

(to Photographer)

I'll pick up the negatives later,
thank you.

During the following, the photographer packs up his
equipment and leaves.

VOLE

Do we really need this? I mean--
my wife knows what time I came
home that night.

SIR WILFRID

A disinterested witness may be
of more value.

VOLE

Oh, yes, of course -- Christine
is an interested witness --
(with great anxiety -
to Mayhew)

I don't understand -- why hasn't
she come to see me -- ? Won't
they let her see me? It's been
a week ---.

SIR WILFRID

Mayhew, give me the reports.

VOLE

Have you talked to Christine --
what's the matter with her?

SIR WILFRID

(distracting him)

I want to read you a portion of
the evidence of Janet MacKenzie,
the housekeeper: 'Mr. Vole helped
Mrs. French with her business
affairs. Particularly her income
tax returns.' --

VOLE

Yes, I did. Some of the forms
are very complicated.

SIR WILFRID

There is also a hint that you
may have helped her draft her
new will --

VOLE

That's not true. If Janet says
that, she's lying. She was always
against me. I don't know why ---

31.

SIR WILFRID

It's quite obvious. You threw an eggbeater into the wheels of her Victorian household.

(consulting the file)

Now, what about this cut on your wrist? You told the police you cut yourself with a knife?

VOLE

That's right.

(showing the scar)

I was cutting bread, and the knife slipped. But that was two days after the murder. Christine was there -- she'll tell them when she gives evidence.

(he sees Mayhew and Sir Wilfrid exchange glances)

Are you keeping something from me? Is she ill? Was she shocked by what happened to me?

SIR WILFRID

All things considered, I think she took it very well. Of course, that may have been only on the surface. Wives are often profoundly disturbed at such a time --

VOLE

It must be hard on her. We've never been separated before. Not since our first meeting.

SIR WILFRID

How did you meet your wife, Mr. Vole?

VOLE

In Germany, in 1945 --

(with a smile)

The very first time I saw her, the ceiling fell right in on me --

SIR WILFRID

(with raised eyebrows)

Oh?...

31.

VOLE

We were stationed outside Hamburg, with an R.A.F. maintenance unit. I installed a shower in the officers' billet, so they gave me a week-end pass

INSTANT CUT TO:

32. EXT. BOMBED-OUT STREET IN HAMBURG (NIGHT)

The street is wet from rain. Flight Sgt. Leonard Vole, in Royal Air Force uniform, a small kit-bag slung over his shoulder, comes down the street. He stops in the cellar doorway of one of the bombed-out buildings. A sign over the door, with a blue lantern attached, reads: DIE BLAUE LATERNE. Next to the door is a provocative poster of an entertainer exhibiting her remarkable gartered legs. Across the poster is printed: CHRISTINE HELM. Music from a small band drifts from the shabby cellar cabaret and Christine is heard singing.

It is one of those fly-by-night cabarets which spring up in the rubble to attract servicemen.

Vole glances at the poster, then goes down the shattered steps leading into the night club.

33. INT. NIGHT CLUB (NIGHT)

Vole enters the dark smoke-filled room and looks around.

It is a small claustrophobic catacomb with odds and ends holding the crumbling walls together. It is packed with British military personnel. The air is hot and thick with pent-up animal expectancy.

On an ersatz stage an emaciated four-piece German band is accompanying Christine. She wears a German sailor's outfit, with pants. She sings AUF DER REEPERBAHN and accompanies herself on a small accordion.

Vole crosses to the bar, where it is already three-deep, buys himself a schnapps and watches Christine.

Christine starts the second chorus. She steps down from the stage. As she plays and sings, she moves alluringly between the densely crowded tables, brushing against the eager, alcoholized customers. A rickety spotlight, operated by one of the waiters, follows her.

There are scattered catcalls and whistles of disappointment over Christine's costume as she is moving among them.

FIRST DRUNKEN SOLDIER

Hey, Fraulein show us some legs!

SECOND SOLDIER

They rob you blind and then throw
you a ruddy sailor!

THIRD SOLDIER

Come on -- let's see 'em!

She moves on, playing and singing, trying to smile them into submission. There is an atmosphere of impending trouble, with men shouting and banging the table with fists and glasses.

AD LIBS

We want legs!
What are you hiding there?
Cut out the camouflage!
Heraus mit der trousers!
Legs! Legs! Legs!

Her voice is drowned out now in the raging of the crowd. She is trying to make the stage, but doesn't quite make it. A thick-necked Sergeant grabs her.

SERGEANT

All right, Fraulein, if you won't,
show 'em --- I will!

He holds her, bends down and rips one trouser-leg open, exposing her leg above the knee, the stocking and the fancy garter. She kicks him. Another soldier grabs her and rips the other trouser-leg. The stampede is on.

The men packed around the bar also surge forward to get in the melee, leaving Vole alone, sipping his schnapps quietly.

Christine is fighting back, kicking at those in reach, hitting at others with her accordion. The musicians, too, are in on the scrimmage, as are the waiters, all trying to protect her. From OFF come sirens, shrill whistles and screeching of brakes.

A dozen British M.P.'s come surging in, past Vole at the bar. They fight their way through to the heart of the roughhouse, start hauling the combatants apart, and break up the fight. Then they start to drag the struggling soldiers out.

34. EXT. NIGHT CLUB (NIGHT)

The M.P.'s haul the soldiers out and load them on two large military trucks parked outside. The First Drunken Soldier is being hustled onto the truck by an M.P. He makes a last stand, grabbing his captor's trouser-leg.

FIRST DRUNKEN SOLDIER

All right --- show me your legs!

The M.P. clunks him on the head with his night stick, then heaves him onto the truck.

As the last of the soldiers is being dragged out of the night club, an M.P. officer plasters an Out of Bounds sign smack over Christine Helm's center section. Catcalls and hoots from the truck: On target, sir! -- Bull's-eye, Lieutenant! -- Kill-joy! -- Hoch der Kaiser!

The Lieutenant gets into the front seat of the lead truck and both drive off, the soldiers hooting and shouting. The street is deserted again.

To the right of the night club is a completely shattered building. All that is standing is a door. The door opens and Leonard Vole comes out blithely, carefully closing the door again. Without any hesitation he goes to the night club. For a second he stops at the poster. The OFF LIMITS sign has come loose at one corner. He presses it down, smoothing it out, then goes down the steps just as the disheveled musicians are coming out with their instruments.

35. INT. NIGHT CLUB (NIGHT)

As Vole reenters, the waiters are trying to clean up the mess of overturned tables, chairs and broken glasses. Through the overturned furniture he sees Christine, her trouser-legs torn, crawling about, looking for something. She glances up at him coldly.

VOLE

I forgot to finish my drink.

He reaches behind a fire extinguisher attached to the wall for his unfinished glass of schnapps, toasts Christine.

VOLE

Gesundheit.

(no response;
he downs his drink)

What are you looking for?

35.

CHRISTINE

My accordion.

VOLE

Let me help you.

He walks toward her. Suddenly there is a discordant sound. Obviously he has stepped on the accordion. He stops short. Christine looks up at him.

VOLE

(sheepishly)

I think I found it.

He looks down, then slowly raises his foot, the accordion responding with a moaning sound. He winces.

CHRISTINE

(wearily)

Step on it again -- it's still breathing.

VOLE

I'm terribly sorry.

CHRISTINE

(taking the accordion)

All right -- get out. We've had trouble enough.

VOLE

Actually, it's your own fault. That costume outside gives the boys ideas -- then your trousers let them down - hard.

CHRISTINE

That costume went in the first raid on Hamburg. Then raid by raid the rest of my dresses. Now you've bombed my trousers.

Vole extends a package of cigarettes and some chewing gum.

VOLE

Cigarette? Gum?

She takes a piece of gum, removes the wrapper and puts the gum in her mouth. Vole, his eyes on her legs, automatically takes out a pocket lighter and snaps it on, holding it out to her.

CHRISTINE

(after a long beat)

You're burning my nose.

35.

Vole looks up, is aware of his mistake, grins and closes the lighter.

VOLE

Say -- how about some coffee?
(tapping his kit-bag)
I've got a tin of coffee.

CHRISTINE

How much?

VOLE

I don't know -- what's the rate of exchange?

CHRISTINE

Depends - whether it's fresh coffee, or powdered coffee.

VOLE

It's instant coffee. Any hot water at your place?

CHRISTINE

Sometimes.

VOLE

Let's take a chance. Where do you live?

CHRISTINE

Nearby. Come.

She leads him a few steps toward the back of the night club, where a tattered curtain is drawn across a niche. She pulls it back. This is where she lives. It must have been the small wine cellar, now transformed into makeshift living quarters. The plaster is broken and peeling on the walls and ceiling; it is sparsely furnished with a precarious table, a cot and a gas plate for cooking. One corner is just about to cave in -- it is supported by a beam propped up by a chair.

CHRISTINE

Sorry -- it's the maid's night off.

She tosses the accordion onto the cot, then lights the gas plate and puts the water on the stove.

VOLE

It's pretty horrible -- in a gemuetlich sort of way.

35.

CHRISTINE

It's fine now. I used to have a roommate. A dancer. She had luck. She married a Canadian. She lives now in Toronto. She has a Ford automobile.

(she looks at the tiny gas flame)

Better make yourself comfortable - the gas is slow these days.

VOLE

I've got a week-end pass.

He puts his kit-bag and his cap on the table, then starts for the chair in the corner.

CHRISTINE

No, not that chair. It holds up that beam, and that holds up half the ceiling. Better sit on the cot.

VOLE

On the cot?

(he seats himself)

It's getting more gemuetlich all the time.

He watches her as she takes a couple of chipped cups from a shelf. He sees a wedding ring on the appropriate finger.

VOLE

Are you married?

CHRISTINE

Why?

(noticing his look)

Oh -- that. No, I'm not married. I just wear it when I'm working. It gives me a little protection -- with all these men.

VOLE

Didn't work too well tonight, did it?

CHRISTINE

Tonight was bad. But it is getting better.

(a beat)

Where is the coffee?

35.

VOLE

Coffee -- Jawohl!
 (he jumps up, takes
 a tin from his kit-bag)
 The finest Brazilian blend -- the
 same kind Field Marshal Montgomery
 drinks.

He has opened the tin. She pours a spoonful of the
 powdered coffee in each of the cups. Standing behind,
 Christine, he puts his arms around her waist. He kisses
 the back of her neck twice - lightly.

VOLE

How's that for a rate of exchange?

CHRISTINE

(stirring the coffee)

Fair.

VOLE

Would you be interested in having
 the whole tin?

CHRISTINE

I would.

He pushes the tin across the table, then turns her toward
 him and kisses her more ardently.

VOLE

Fair?

CHRISTINE

Very fair.

VOLE

How are you fixed for sugar?

CHRISTINE

I could use some.

VOLE

Cream?

CHRISTINE

Sure.

Vole has removed two more tins from his bag, puts these
 next to the coffee, then takes Christine in his arms again.

VOLE

Sugar.

(a kiss)

Cream.

(a bigger kiss)

35.

CHRISTINE

It is a pleasure to do business
with you.

VOLE

I also carry bacon, powdered eggs
and biscuits.

He spills the contents of the kit-bag on the table.

CHRISTINE

I don't know if I can afford it.

VOLE

Don't worry. We'll work out an
installment plan. A small down-
payment will do.

They exchange looks, smiling. From the night club a
gaunt elderly waiter, dressed for the street with hat
and coat, looks in.

WAITER

Gute Nacht, Fraulein Helm.

CHRISTINE

Gute Nacht.

(she sees his hungry look
at the food)

Hier!

(she hands him all the tins)

Nehmen Sie's mit nach Hause --
fuer die Kinder!

WAITER

Danke schoen -- danke vielmals,
Fraulein Helm!

He bows out, overwhelmed by the goodies, kills the light
in the night club. Vole and Christine are alone again.

VOLE

You gave away a fortune. Half pound
of bacon, four dozen powdered eggs,
and all those biscuits!

CHRISTINE

Do not worry. I shall meet every
installment.

VOLE

Forget it. No charge. Compliments
of Flight Sgt. Leonard Vole.

35.

CHRISTINE

No. We are hungry, but we are not beggars.

VOLE

Nonsense. Nobody owes nothing to nobody. Let's start from scratch. Okay?

CHRISTINE

(a warm smile)

Okay.

VOLE

Let's have the coffee.

(moves to the couch)

If someone had told me I was going to wind up with a German sailor --

He bursts into a rowdy rendition of REEPERBAHN, and drops exuberantly on the cot. The cot collapses, sliding forward and dislodging the chair. The beam falls, followed by a good-sized piece of the ceiling. A big cloud of plaster dust envelops the room. Christine, amused, watches Vole who is shielding his face with his arms.

VOLE

I'm terribly sorry. Maybe I can fix it. I'm good at it.

CHRISTINE

Why fix it? It is not raining.

(sitting beside him on the cot)

Are you all right?

VOLE

I think so.

(rubbing his head)

My head hurts.

CHRISTINE

Maybe I can fix it. I'm good at it.

He lies back as she kisses him. The accordion groans, and Christine reaches under him to fish it out. She throws it into a corner of the room.

The accordion lands upright, then collapses slowly with a lovely languorous sound.

INSTANT CUT TO:

36. INT. PRISON INTERVIEW ROOM DAY

Vole, Sir Wilfrid and Mayhew as we left them. The prison guard visible through the glass in the door.

VOLE

(engagingly)

.. well, I had a week-end pass...
a month's pay in my pocket --

SIR WILFRID

And she already had a wedding ring --

VOLE

That's right. We got married, and when I got out of the Service, I brought her to England. It was wonderful -- I rented a little flat on Tottenham Court Road. When Christine saw it for the first time, she was so happy she broke down and cried.

SIR WILFRID

Naturally. She had a solid roof over her head, and a British passport.

VOLE

Oh, no, it wasn't that at all -- it was me. She lost all her family in the war -- I'm all she has.

SIR WILFRID

(politely)

Yes, of course.

VOLE

You don't really know Christine -- the way she feels about me -- but you'll see when she gives her evidence.

SIR WILFRID

Mr. Vole, I must tell you that I am not putting her in the witness box.

VOLE

You're not!? ---- Why not?

SIR WILFRID

Well -- for one thing, she is a foreigner, not too familiar with the subtleties of our language - the Prosecution could easily trip her up --

36.

MAYHEW

I hear it may be Mr. Myers for the Crown. We can't take chances with him.

SIR WILFRID

Quite.

(consulting his watch)

We'd better be going. Miss Plimsoll is waiting in the car - with her pills and a thermos of lukewarm cocoa.

MAYHEW

(opening the door)

Guard!

VOLE

(pleading)

But Christine must give evidence.

SIR WILFRID

(putting on his hat)

I am -- and you must trust me, Mr. Vole. If for no other reason, because I am a mean, ill-tempered old man who hates to lose.

(extending his hand)

Let us wish each other luck.

The guard has entered and takes Vole out into the corridor. Sir Wilfrid and Mayhew follow.

37. INT. PRISON CORRIDOR (DAY)

The Warder is leading Vole up the corridor. He turns back for one last plea.

VOLE

(very emotional)

I can't face this without Christine. I tell you, I'm scared. I need her. Without her, I'm sunk.

Sir Wilfrid and Mayhew continue down the corridor. They react, but they don't look back. After a few more steps:

MAYHEW

Touching, isn't it, the way he counts on his wife.

SIR WILFRID

Yes -- like a drowning man, clutching at a razor blade.

They walk on.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

38. LONDON STREET (DAY)

A newspaper vendor outside a Tube station. A placard beside him reads: VOLE TRIAL STARTS TODAY. The business is brisk.

39. EXT. OLD BAILEY (DAY)

Start on the figure of Justice on top of dome. A workman on a scaffold is scrubbing the sword and the scale.

PAN DOWN the facade of the venerable building.

DISSOLVE TO:

40. INT. COURTROOM NO. 1 OLD BAILEY (DAY)

Continue the pan, then stop to reveal the packed courtroom. Everyone concerned in the trial except Sir Wilfrid is in place: Judge, clerks, officials, jurors, barristers, the defendant and those of the public lucky enough to have gained admittance.

CLERK

(facing the Dock)

Leonard Vole, you are charged
on indictment for that you on
the fourteenth day of September
in the County of London,
murdered Emily Jane French.
How say you, Leonard Vole?
Are you guilty or not guilty?

In the Dock, flanked by two warders, stands Leonard Vole, pale and tense.

VOLE

(after a pause)

Not guilty.

CLERK

(turning to the jurors)

Members of the Jury, the prisoner
stands indicted for that he on the
fourteenth day of September murdered
Emily Jane French. To this indictment
he has pleaded not guilty, and it is
your charge to say, having heard the
evidence, whether he be guilty or not.

(Clerk sits)

40. A warder touches Vole's shoulder and he sits down.

THE JUDGE

Members of the Jury, by the oath you have just taken you have sworn to try this case on the evidence. You must shut out from your minds everything except what will take place in this Court.

(to Myers)

You may proceed for the Prosecution, Mr. Myers.

Myers rises, a keen, dark, relentless figure. He adjusts his wig as he speaks.

MYERS

May it please you, my lord.

(then to the Jurors)

Members of the Jury. I appear in this case with my learned friend Mr. Barton for the Prosecution. My learned friends, Sir Wilfrid Roberts and Mr. Brogan-Moore appear for the Defense.

He gestures to the other end of the Bar, where the Defense Counsel are seated. Brogan-Moore and Mayhew are present but one seat is vacant -- no sign of Sir Wilfrid.

MYERS

I trust we are not to be deprived of the learned and stimulating presence of Sir Wilfrid.

BROGAN-MOORE

(rising)

My lord, may I assure my learned friend of the Prosecution that Sir Wilfrid is in the Old Bailey. He is slightly incapacitated but he will be in his seat presently.

MYERS

My lord, may I express my regret that Sir Wilfrid is even slightly incapacitated --

JUDGE

You may, Mr. Myers, and you may also proceed with the case for the Prosecution. The transcript will be available to Sir Wilfrid should he require it.

MYERS

Thank you, my lord.

(to the jury)

The facts in this case are simple, and to a point, not in dispute. You will hear how the prisoner made the acquaintance of Mrs. Emily French, a woman of fifty-six; how he was treated by her with kindness and even affection. The nature of that affection you will have to decide for yourselves. On the night of October 14th, last, between nine-thirty and ten o'clock, Mrs. French was murdered and medical testimony will be introduced to prove that death was caused by a blow from a blunt and heavy instrument, and it is the case for the Prosecution that the blow was struck by the prisoner, Leonard Vole.

VOLE

(excitedly)

That's not true. I didn't do it.

The Warder rises with him and urges him back into his seat. The commotion subsides.

MYERS

Among the witnesses you will hear police evidence; also, the evidence of Mrs. French's house-keeper, Janet MacKenzie. And from medical and laboratory experts, and the testimony of the murdered woman's solicitor, who drew her final will.

During this, a shot of the Witness' Bench outside, with Inspector Hearne, Janet MacKenzie, two uniformed policemen, the laboratory man, and Mr. Stokes, a neatly dressed, elderly solicitor. Back in the Courtroom -

MYERS

I will now call Chief Inspector Hearne, Criminal Investigation Department, New Scotland Yard.

USHER

(calling)

Chief Inspector Hearne!

40. The Witness Bench outside. In doorway from Court, policeman appears.

POLICEMAN
Chief Inspector Hearne.

Hearne rises and enters courtroom walking to witness box. The Usher hands him the Bible and holds up the oath card.

HEARNE
(by memory)
I swear by Almighty God that the evidence I shall give shall be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

While Hearne is reciting the oath, Vole is sitting forward in the dock, his hands closed tight on the railing, staring anxiously at the vacant seat where Sir Wilfrid should be.

41. INT. ROBIN ROOM OLD BAILEY (DAY)

A small, panelled room with wooden lockers along each wall. Sir Wilfrid is wearing his wig, one arm is bared, and he is reluctantly allowing a physician, DR. HARRISON, to take his blood pressure. Carter is watching and Miss Plimsoll is filling a hypodermic syringe.

SIR WILFRID
This is ridiculous -- just a bit of nervous heartburn -- I always get it the first day of a trial.

DR. HARRISON
(detaching the gauge)
240 above 130 -- you shouldn't be here at all.

SIR WILFRID
(trying to get up)
I should be in the Courtroom -- the trial has begun!

DR. HARRISON
(holding him down -- to Miss Plimsoll)
The syringe, please.

MISS PLIMSOLL
(passing the syringe)
Now, be a good brave boy, Sir Wilfrid.

41.

SIR WILFRID

Miss Plimsoll, it may interest you to know that I am descended from a warrior family which traces its brave past back to Richard the Lion-hearted

(off-scene Dr. Harrison has jabbed him with the needle)

OUCH!

DR. HARRISON

You're to have a calcium injection daily -- a tranquilizing pill every hour --

(handing him a small white box)

- in case of a sudden pain, or shortness of breath, pop one of these nitroglycerine tablets -- from the black box --

(handing him a small black box)

-- under your tongue. And I'll leave you some drops for --

SIR WILFRID

(getting up)

That's enough, Doctor -- the Judge will be asking for a saliva test --

(to Carter)

I'd better take that thermos of cocoa with me.

(to Dr. Harrison)

Helps me wash down the pills.

He quickly gets into his silk robe while Carter produces the thermos bottle from a small attache case.

MISS PLIMSOLL

(to Carter)

Let me see it, please.

(taking the thermos -

to Dr. Harrison)

My learned patient is not above substituting brandy for the cocoa --

(she has removed the cap, sniffs at the contents)

It is cocoa. So sorry.

SIR WILFRID

If you were a woman, Miss Plimsoll, I'd strike you!

He snatches the thermos and hands it to Carter.

41.

SIR WILFRID
 (with the suggestion
 of a wink)
 Take care of this, Carter.

DR. HARRISON
 Now, Sir Wilfrid, in the courtroom,
 you must avoid over-excitement.
 Watch your temper. Keep both your
 voice and your blood pressure down --

During this, Carter has moved to the attache case, turning his back to the others. In the case is another identical thermos bottle. He deftly exchanges the thermos bottles, closes the container.

SIR WILFRID
 (to Dr. Harrison)
 Thank you, Doctor. I shall be
 quite safe, what with the pills --
 and the cocoa.
 (taking the thermos)
 Come on, Carter!

They exit: Sir Wilfrid, Carter and the thermos full of brandy.

42. INT. COURTROOM NO. 1 (DAY)

Myers is standing, examining Inspector Hearne. The packed courtroom is following the testimony closely.

HEARNE
 ... from the body temperature,
 and other factors, we placed the
 time of death at between nine-
 thirty and ten p.m., approximately
 thirty minutes before Janet MacKenzie,
 the housekeeper, returned home and
 called us.

MYERS
 In what position did you find the
 body of Mrs. French?

HEARNE
 She was lying on her face, with
 a severe injury to the back of her
 head.

Vole, in the Dock, is listening gloomily. He looks up and smiles because he sees that Sir Wilfrid and Carter have entered and are proceeding to their seats. Sir Wilfrid is carrying the thermos bottle under his gown. The interrogation proceeds over this.

42.

MYERS

Was that injury the cause of death, Inspector?

HEARNE

Yes, sir. Death was instantaneous, caused by one blow from a heavy and blunt instrument.

Sir Wilfrid, still unnoticed by anyone but Vole, is making his way to the Bar, Carter to the place reserved for him.

MYERS

Were there any other signs of a struggle?

HEARNE

None. Just the one blow.

MYERS

One blow? Would that indicate to you that the murderer had taken Mrs. French by surprise?

Sir Wilfrid is just about to sit down; straightens up sharply.

SIR WILFRID

My lord, I must object --
 (the Judge, Myers, others
 are now aware of him)
 -- my learned friend refers to the assailant as the murderer, but we have not yet determined whether the assailant was a man -- or a woman. It could quite conceivably have been the murderess.

JUDGE

Mr. Myers, it seems that Sir Wilfrid has joined us just in time to catch you on a point of grammar. Please rephrase your question.

Sir Wilfrid, with a little smile at Hearne, sits down.

MYERS

Yes, my lord.

(to Hearne)

Inspector, is it your opinion that the assailant --

(glaring at Sir Wilfrid)

-- whether he, she or it -- took Mrs. French by surprise?

42. Sir Wilfrid is about to put the thermos bottle under the seat, but rises quickly again.

SIR WILFRID

My lord, I am taken by surprise that my learned colleague should attempt to solicit from the witness an opinion, and not a fact.

JUDGE

Quite so. You'll have to do better than that, Mr. Myers.

MYERS

(resigned)

My lord, I withdraw the question entirely.

SIR WILFRID

That's much better.

(he sits and puts the thermos under his seat)

In the crowded gallery, Miss Plimsoll squeezes herself into a vacant seat next to a young blonde woman whose attention is riveted on Vole in the Dock. Miss Plimsoll sets her alarm wristwatch and settles back.

Below the examination has continued.

MYERS

Very well, Inspector, let us proceed with the facts in the case. After establishing the cause and the time of death, what did you then do?

HEARNE

A search was made, photographs were taken, and the premises were fingerprinted.

MYERS

What fingerprints did you discover?

HEARNE

I found the fingerprints of Mrs. French, those of Janet MacKenzie, and some which later proved to be those of Leonard Vole.

MYERS

No others?

42.

HEARNE

No others.

Vole takes his hands from the rail of the Dock and moves uneasily in his seat at this revelation.

MYERS

Now did you say that the room had the appearance that a robbery had been committed?

HEARNE

Yes. Things were strewn about and a window had been broken near the catch. There was glass on the floor and fragments were found outside. The glass outside was not consistent with the window having been forced from the outside.

MYERS

What you are saying is that someone attempted to make it look as though the window had been forced from the outside, isn't that so?

SIR WILFRID

(rising)

My lord, I must object. My learned friend is putting words in the witness' mouth. After all, if he insists on answering his own questions the presence of the witness seems superfluous.

JUDGE

Quite, quite. Don't you think so, Mr. Myers?

MYERS

(sourly)

Yes, my lord.

(to Hearne)

Inspector, did you ascertain whether any of the murdered woman's property was missing?

HEARNE

According to the housekeeper, nothing was missing.

MYERS

In your experience, Inspector, when burglars --

(with a glance at Sir Wilfrid)

-- or burglaresses -- break into a house, do they leave without taking anything?

42.

HEARNE

No, sir.

MYERS

Do you produce a jacket, Inspector?

HEARNE

Yes, sir.

An Usher crosses to the table on which the exhibits are put out -- a jacket, a knife, the will, and assorted other papers. The Usher picks up the jacket and takes it to the Inspector.

MYERS

Is that the jacket?

HEARNE

Yes, sir.

(as the Usher replaces
the jacket)

MYERS

I propose that this be tagged
Exhibit One.

(then to Hearne)

Where did you find this, Inspector?

HEARNE

That is the jacket found in the
prisoner's flat, which I handed
to our lab to test for bloodstains.

MYERS

And did you find bloodstains?

HEARNE

Yes, though an attempt had been
made to wash them out.

Sir Wilfrid, seemingly disinterested in the interrogation,
twirls his monocle around his finger.

MYERS

What tests did the laboratory
make, Inspector?

HEARNE

First, to determine if the stains
were made by human blood; then to
classify it by group or type.

MYERS

And was the blood of a particular
group or type?

42.

HEARNE

Yes, sir. It is Type O.

MYERS

And did you subsequently test the blood of the dead woman?

HEARNE

Yes, sir.

MYERS

And what type was that?

HEARNE

The same --- Type O.

MYERS

Thank you, Inspector.

Vole, in the Dock, hears the excited murmur from the Courtroom. He glances anxiously at the Judge, who is writing a note, then at the Jury whose expressions indicate that the Prosecution has scored. He looks at Brogan-Moore, preparing some papers, and at Sir Wilfrid who is impassively twirling his monocle.

MYERS

No further questions.

He sits down complacently. There is a moment's pause. Sir Wilfrid carefully puts the monocle in his eye, rises.

SIR WILFRID

You say that the only fingerprints you found were those of Mrs. French, Janet MacKenzie and the prisoner, Leonard Vole. In your experience when a burglar breaks in, does he usually leave fingerprints, or does he wear gloves?

HEARNE

He wears gloves.

SIR WILFRID

Invariably?

HEARNE

Almost invariably.

SIR WILFRID

So the absence of fingerprints in a case of robbery would hardly surprise you?

42.

HEARNE

No, sir.

SIR WILFRID

Can't we then surmise that a burglar might have entered what was presumably an empty house, might have suddenly encountered Mrs. French and struck her -- then realizing that she was dead, panicked and fled without taking anything?

HEARNE

Yes, sir -- that is certainly possible.

MYERS

(rising)

I submit, my lord, that it is entirely impossible to guess what went on in the mind of some entirely imaginary burglar -- with or without gloves.

JUDGE

Quite right, Mr. Myers.

(to Wilfrid)

Let us not surmise, Sir Wilfrid, but confine ourselves to facts.

SIR WILFRID

(nods -- then to Hearne)

Inspector, when you questioned the prisoner as to the stains on his jacket, did he not show you a recently healed scar on his wrist and tell you he had cut himself with a kitchen knife while slicing bread?

HEARNE

Yes, sir, that is what he said.

SIR WILFRID

And were you not told the same thing by the prisoner's wife?

HEARNE

Yes, sir, but afterwards --

42.

SIR WILFRID

(sharply)

A simple yes or no, please.
Did the prisoner's wife show
you a knife and tell you that
her husband had cut his wrist
while slicing bread?

HEARNE

Yes, sir.

SIR WILFRID

I will ask you to examine this
knife, Inspector.

Usher crosses to table, picks up knife with tag on it,
and brings it to Hearne.

SIR WILFRID

Just test the edge of the knife
with your finger --

(Hearne does so)

-- carefully!(Hearne pulls his
finger away)

You agree that the point and the
cutting edge are razor-sharp?

HEARNE

Yes, Sir.

(hands knife back to
the Usher)

SIR WILFRID

Now then, if such a knife were to
slip, might it not inflict a cut which
would bleed profusely?

HEARNE

Yes, sir -- it might.

SIR WILFRID

Now, Inspector, you have stated that
the bloodstains on the prisoner's
jacket were analyzed, as was the
blood of Mrs. French, and they were
both found to be of the same group -
Group O?

HEARNE

That is correct.

42.

SIR WILFRID

However, if the prisoner's blood were also of this same group then the stains on his jacket might very well have resulted from the household accident he described to you?

HEARNE

Yes, sir.

SIR WILFRID

Did you analyze the prisoner's blood, Inspector?

HEARNE

No, sir.

SIR WILFRID

I have here a certificate --
 (Brogan-Moore extends it to him)
 -- stating that Leonard Stephen Vole is a blood donor at the North London Hospital and that his blood is --
 (emphatically)
Group - O.

A buzz in the courtroom. Vole, relieved, wipes some perspiration from his upper lip.

SIR WILFRID

Thank you, Inspector.
 (he sits)

MYERS

(trying to recover lost ground)

Inspector, granted that the cut on the wrist was caused by that knife, is there anything to show whether it was an accident or done deliberately, after the murder -- to account for the blood-stains?

SIR WILFRID

(half-rising)

Really, my lord --!

MYERS

I withdraw the question. You may stand down, Inspector.
 (to the Usher)
 Call Janet MacKenzie.

42. CONTINUED:

USHER

Janet MacKenzie!

POLICEMAN

Janet MacKenzie!

Janet enters Courtroom, carrying bag and umbrella, her tight-lipped face cold and expressionless. As she passes the Dock she glares at Vole and continues on to the stand. Usher hands her Bible and holds oath card. Janet starts to recite the oath.

In the Gallery, Miss Plimsoll is watching the proceedings. Her alarm wristwatch goes off suddenly, and she quickly stifles the buzzer. She looks apologetically at the blonde in the next seat, then leans forward, attracting the attention of Carter below.

Carter catches her eye, nods, signals to Mayhew. Mayhew signals to Brogan-Moore who leans close to Sir Wilfrid, whispering something. Sir Wilfrid has been twirling his monocle on its cord. He nods, takes out the white pill box, from which he removes one pill. Brogan-Moore lifts out the thermos bottle, unscrews the cap and fills it, handing it to Sir Wilfrid. Wilfrid looks up at Miss Plimsoll, who nods approvingly as he puts the pill in his mouth. Then he swirls the liquid in the cup, as in a snifter, inhales the aroma and swallows the contents appreciatively.

In the Gallery Miss Plimsoll is setting her alarm watch again and whispers to her blonde neighbor:

MISS PLIMSOLL

I don't think he could get through the trial if he didn't have his medicine every hour.

During all this Janet MacKenzie has been sworn and we have heard the first of the questioning.

MYERS

Your name is Janet MacKenzie?

JANET

Aye, that's my name.

MYERS

Where do you live?

42.

JANET

(turning to the Judge)
 Now that Mrs. French, poor soul,
 is dead, I've moved in with my
 niece, at 19 Glenister Place.

JUDGE

Miss MacKenzie, would you please
 speak into the microphones.

MYERS

You were companion-housekeeper
 to the late Mrs. Emily French?

JANET

I was her housekeeper. I've no
 opinion of companions, poor
 feckless bodies, afraid to do a
 bit of honest domestic work.

MYERS

Quite. What I meant was that
 you were on friendly terms --
 not altogether those of a mistress
 and a servant.

JANET

Ten years I was with her and
 looked after her. She knew me
 and she trusted me, and Mary's
 the time I prevented her doing
 a foolish thing.

MYERS

Please tell us in your own words
 about the events of the evening
 of September 14th.

JANET

It was Friday and my night out.
 I was going round to see my niece
 in Glenister Road, which is about
 five minutes' walk. I left the house
 at half-past seven. I'd promised to
 bring her a dress pattern that she'd
 admired.

(the microphone looming
 before her makes her
 nervous -- to the
 Judge)

Is this thing necessary?

JUDGE

An excellent question. However, it has been installed at considerable expense to the taxpayers so let us take advantage of it. Please continue.

JANET

Well, when I got to my niece's, I found I'd left the pattern behind so after supper I slipped back to get it, as it was no distance. I got back to the house at twenty-five minutes past nine. I let myself in, and went upstairs to my room.

(glances at Vole)

As I passed the sitting-room, I heard the prisoner in there talking to Mrs. French.

VOLE

(jumping up)

No! It wasn't me! It wasn't my voice!

The warders restrain him. He sinks back in his chair.

MYERS

You're sure it was the prisoner's voice you heard?

JANET

Aye, I know his voice well enough -- with him calling so often. Talking and laughing they were, but it was no business of mine, so I went upstairs and fetched my pattern.

MYERS

Let us be very exact about the time. You say that you reentered the house at twenty-five past nine?

JANET

Aye. The pattern was on a shelf in my room, right next to my clock, and I saw the time. Twenty-five past nine.

MYERS

Go on, please.

JANET

I went back to my niece. She was delighted with the pattern --

(she has turned to the Judge who waves her back toward the microphone)

(cont'd)

42.

JANET (cont'd.)

-- simply delighted. I stayed there until twenty to eleven, then came home. I went into the sitting-room to see if the mistress wanted anything, and there she was, dead, with everything tossed hither and thither.

MYERS

Did you really think that a burglary had occurred?

Sir Wilfrid is still doodling with his pills, but at this question he leaps to his feet.

SIR WILFRID

My lord, I must protest.

JUDGE

(sternly)

I will not allow that question to be answered, Mr. Myers.

MYERS

M'lord.

(to Janet)

How much did you know about the prisoner?

JANET

I knew that he needed money.

MYERS

Did you ever hear him ask Mrs. French for money?

JANET

He was too clever for that.

MYERS

Were you aware, Miss MacKenzie, that Leonard Vole was a married man?

JANET

No indeed! Neither was the mistress.

VOLE

Janet!

(he is again restrained)

SIR WILFRID

(rising)

M'lord, I must object. What Mrs. French knew or did not know is pure conjecture on Janet MacKenzie's part.

42.

MYERS

Let me put it this way ...

(Wilfrid sits)

You formed the opinion that Mrs. French thought Leonard Vole a single man? Have you any facts to support that opinion?

JANET

There was the books she ordered, The Life of Baroness Burdett Coutts and one about Disraeli and his wife. Both of them about women who'd married men years younger than themselves. I knew what she was thinking.

JUDGE

I'm afraid we cannot admit that.

JANET

(bristling)

Why?

JUDGE

Members of the Jury, it is possible for a woman to read the Life of Disraeli without contemplating marriage with a man younger than herself.

MYERS

(after laughter has subsided)

Miss MacKenzie, were you aware of what arrangements Mrs. French had made for the disposal of her money?

JANET

Yes, she had her old will revoked and a new one drawn up. I heard her calling her solicitor, Mr. Stokes. He was there, too, the prisoner, I mean.

MYERS

You heard the prisoner and Mrs. French discussing her new will?

JANET

Aye. He was to have all her money, she told him, as she had no near relatives nor anybody who meant to her what he did.

42.

MYERS

And when did this take place?

JANET

On September 8th, one week to the day before she was murdered.

MYERS

Thank you.

(turning slightly
to Sir Wilfrid)

That concludes my examination.

Janet rises, is about to leave the box, but Sir Wilfrid stops her.

SIR WILFRID

(quietly)

Not just yet, Miss MacKenzie.

She gives him an angry look and resumes her place in the box.

SIR WILFRID

(monocle in eye)

Miss MacKenzie, you have given testimony about two wills: in the old will, the will that was revoked, were you not to receive the bulk of Mrs. French's estate?

JANET

Aye. That is so.

SIR WILFRID

Whereas in the new will, except for a bequest to you of a small annuity, the principal beneficiary is the prisoner, Leonard Vole?

JANET

It will be a wicked injustice if he ever touches a penny of that money.

SIR WILFRID

It is entirely understandable that you are antagonistic to the prisoner.

JANET

I'm not antagonistic to him. He's a shiftless scheming rascal - but I'm not antagonistic to him.

SIR WILFRID

I suggest that you have formed this opinion because his friendship with your mistress cost you the bulk of her estate.

JANET

I never liked him.

SIR WILFRID

Your candour is refreshing. Now, on the night of September 14th, you say you heard the prisoner and Mrs. French talking together. What did you hear them say?

JANET

I didn't hear what they actually said.

SIR WILFRID

You mean you only heard the voices -- the murmur of voices?

JANET

They were laughing.

SIR WILFRID

What makes you say the man's voice was Leonard Vole's?

JANET

I know his voice well enough.

SIR WILFRID

The door was closed, was it not?

JANET

Yes.

SIR WILFRID

You were no doubt in a hurry to get the pattern, so you probably walked quickly past the closed door -- yet you are sure that you heard Leonard Vole's voice?

JANET

I was there long enough to hear what I heard.

SIR WILFRID

Come, Miss MacKenzie, I'm sure you don't wish to suggest to the Jury that you were eavesdropping.

JANET

I know it was him in there with her. Who else could it have been?

SIR WILFRID

Exactly! What you mean is you wanted it to be him. That's the way your mind worked. Now, tell me, did Mrs. French sometimes watch television in the evening?

JANET

Aye. She was fond of a talk, or a good play.

SIR WILFRID

Wasn't it possible that on the evening when you returned home and passed the door, that what you really heard was the television and a man and woman's voices, and laughter?

(to the Jury)

There was a play called "Lover's Leap" on the television that night.

JANET

It was not the television.

SIR WILFRID

Oh? Why not?

JANET

Because it was away being repaired that week.

Laughter in the Courtroom, the Jurors joining in. The Judge, with a smile, is making a note.

Mayhew and Brogan-Moore exchange a worried glance. Sir Wilfrid reaches for his "cocoa," unscrews the cup and pours, gulping it like a man who needs the restorative.

In the Gallery, Miss Plimsoll has seen Wilfrid take the "cocoa". She looks at her watch, puzzled.

MISS PLIMSOLL

(to her blonde neighbor)

Odd -- it's not time yet.

Sir Wilfrid, catching her look, quickly takes a pill from the white box and swallows it with an innocent grin.

42. In the Courtroom, the Usher cries "Silence" and as the crowd subsides, Myers rises.

MYERS

(with a look at
Sir Wilfrid)

If my learned friend has no further questions I would like --

SIR WILFRID

(rising ponderously)

I have not quite finished.

(to Janet -- quite loud)

You are registered, are you not, under the National Health Insurance Act?

JANET

That's so. Four-and-six I have to pay out each week. It's a terrible lot of money for a working woman to pay.

SIR WILFRID

I am sure that many agree with you. Now, then, Miss MacKenzie did you recently apply to the National Health Insurance --

(dropping his voice
slightly)

-- for a hearing aid?

JANET

A what?

SIR WILFRID

(still in a lower
tone)

A hearing aid?

JANET

What did you say?

Laughter in the Courtroom. The Usher cries "Silence".

MYERS

(bristling)

My lord, I must protest at the manner in which this question is being put--

42.

SIR WILFRID
 I will repeat the question, my lord--
 (to Janet -- loudly now)
 I asked you, in a normal tone of
 voice, audible to everyone in open
 court -- did you apply to the
 National Health Insurance for a
 hearing aid?

JANET
 (also loud)
 Yes, I did.

SIR WILFRID
 (shouting)
 Did you get it?

JANET
 Not yet.

SIR WILFRID
 However, you state that you
 walked past a door which is four
 inches of solid oak, you heard
 voices, and you are willing to
 swear that you could distinguish
 the voice of --
 (lowering his tone)
 -- the prisoner, Leonard Vole?

JANET
Who?

SIR WILFRID
 No further questions!

He sits down, breathing heavily.

JANET
 (to the Judge)
 Maybe you can help me, Your Lordship --
 six months ago I applied for the
 hearing aid --

JUDGE
 My dear Miss MacKenzie, considering
 the rubbish that is being talked
 nowadays, you are missing very
 little. You may stand down now.

She stands down, amidst some general laughter. Brogan-
 Moore, Mayhew and Carter exchange satisfied looks at
 their leader's triumph. Even Vole shows some relief in
 a faint smile. The usher cries "Silence!"

42.

MYERS

Call Police Constable Jeffries.

This is echoed by Usher and Policeman. Constable Jeffries rises, proceeds to the Box and is sworn.

During this Sir Wilfrid has shaken all the pills out of his white box and starts forming them into a large star.

MOVE IN on the pattern, then ---

DISSOLVE:

THE COURTROOM AGAIN

Myers standing in his usual place.

MYERS

The Prosecution will now call Mr. Henry Stokes.

This is echoed by the Usher and Policeman. Mr. Stokes, Mrs. French's solicitor, is the last one on the Witness Bench. He rises, carrying his briefcase, crosses to the Witness Box and is sworn.

Sir Wilfrid is doodling with the pills. There are only a few pills left, and the pattern -- now a circle -- is very much smaller.

MOVE IN on the pattern, and then --

DISSOLVE:

THE COURTROOM AGAIN

The Judge looks up from notes he is making.

JUDGE

Mr. Myers, does that conclude your case?

MYERS

(on his feet)

No, my lord, I now call the final witness for the Prosecution, Christine Helm!

There is stunned silence for an instant. Then, as the Usher and Policeman repeat the summons - "Christine Helm!" -- an excited murmur springs up.

42. Sir Wilfrid looks up sharply. Mayhew and Brogan-Moore look at each other.

Leonard Vole, in the Dock, turns slowly toward the witness's entrance, a bewildered look in his eyes.

Christine enters the Courtroom. She is poised and inscrutable as she walks deliberately toward the Box.

VOLE

(an incredulous
whisper, as she
passes)

Christine!

She does not look at him, nor does she react to his voice. She takes her place in the Witness Box, takes the Bible from the Usher and reads from the oath card in a clear, dispassionate voice.

CHRISTINE

I swear by Almighty God that the evidence that I shall give shall be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

As she concludes the oath, Sir Wilfrid is already on his feet.

SIR WILFRID

My lord, I have the most serious objection to this witness being summoned by the Prosecution as she is the wife of the prisoner, Leonard Vole --

MYERS

My lord, I call my learned friend's attention to the fact that I summoned not Mrs. Vole, but Mrs. Helm.

(to Christine)

Your name, in fact, is Christine Helm?

CHRISTINE

Yes. Christine Helm.

MYERS

You have been living as the wife of the prisoner, Leonard Vole?

CHRISTINE

Yes.

MYERS

Are you actually his wife?

42.

CHRISTINE

I went through a marriage ceremony
with him in Hamburg. But I already
had a husband -- he is still alive.--

Leonard leaps to his feet.

VOLE

(wildly)

Christine! --- that's not true! ---

He is restrained by the warders.

CHRISTINE

(never looking at him)

-- this being so, my marriage to
Mr. Vole was not --

(looking at Myers
for help)

MYERS

Not valid?

CHRISTINE

Not valid.

SIR WILFRID

My lord, there is proof of a marriage
between the witness and Leonard Vole.
There is no proof whatsoever of an
alleged previous marriage.

MYERS

My lord, the alleged previous marriage
is in fact well-documented.

(with a superior
smile, he takes a
document from an
assistant)

Mrs. Helm, is this a certificate of
marriage between yourself and one -
Otto Ludwig Helm...?

The Usher takes the document from Myers, shows it to
Christine.

MYERS

... the ceremony having taken place
in Breslau on the 18th of April, 1942?

CHRISTINE

Yes. That is the paper of my marriage.

42.

JUDGE

I should like to see that certificate.

(Usher hands it to him;
he looks at it quickly)

I think this witness is qualified to give evidence.

(hands it back to Usher)

The Usher carries the document to Sir Wilfrid. He takes it and without looking at it throws it angrily on the table.

JUDGE

(to Myers)

Having had the benefit of Sir Wilfrid's opinion, you may proceed.

MYERS

Mrs. Helm, are you willing to give evidence against the man you have been calling your husband?

CHRISTINE

I am willing.

MYERS

On the night that Mrs. French was murdered, you stated to the police that Leonard Vole left the house at seven-thirty and returned at twenty-five minutes past nine. Did he, in fact, return at twenty-five past nine?

CHRISTINE

No. He returned at ten minutes past ten.

VOLE

(on his feet)

Christine, what are you saying? That's not true. You know it's not true!

The Court is in an uproar.

JUDGE

(taps for order)

I must have silence! As your counsel will tell you, Vole, you will very shortly have an opportunity of speaking in your own defense!

42.

MYERS

Leonard Vole returned, you say,
at ten minutes past ten. And
what happened next?

CHRISTINE

He was breathing hard, very excited.
He threw off his coat and examined
the sleeves. Then he told me to
wash the cuffs. They had blood
on them.

MYERS

Go on.

CHRISTINE

I said, "Leonard, what have you
done?"

MYERS

What did the prisoner say to
that?

CHRISTINE

(impassively)
He said, "I've killed her!"

In the Dock, Vole leaps to his feet despite the warders
who struggle to restrain him.

VOLE

Christine! Why are you saying
these things?! Why are you lying!?

The Court is again in an uproar, the Usher crying
"Silence!"

In the Gallery, the spectators are whispering excitedly to
each other. Miss Plimsoll and her blonde neighbor are
leaning forward, both very agitated, the blonde clutching
Miss Plimsoll's arm.

BLONDE

What an awful woman!

MISS PLIMSOLL

Oh, she's evil, that one. I've
known it all along.

The Judge is rapping for order. The Courtroom calms down.

JUDGE

If the Defense so desires I
will order a brief recess, so
that the prisoner may gain control
of himself.

42.

SIR WILFRID

(rising)

My lord is most gracious, but pray let the witness continue. We are all of us caught up in the suspense of this horror fiction -- to have to hear it in installments might prove unendurable.

JUDGE

Proceed, Mr. Myers.

MYERS

Mrs. Helm, when the prisoner said, "I have killed her," did you know to whom he referred?

CHRISTINE

Yes. It was the woman he had been going to see so often.

MYERS

Now, then, when questioned by the police, you told them that the prisoner came home at nine-twenty-five?

CHRISTINE

Yes. Because Leonard asked me to say that!

MYERS

But you have changed your story now --- why?

CHRISTINE

I cannot go on lying to save him! I said to the police what he wanted me to say because I am grateful to him. He married me and brought me to this country. What he has asked me to do I have always done because I was grateful.

MYERS

It was not because he was your husband, and you loved him?

CHRISTINE

No. I never loved him.

In the Dock, Vole is leaning on his hands, staring dully straight ahead.

42.

MYERS

(to Christine)

It was gratitude to the prisoner then that prompted you to give him an alibi in your statement to the police?

CHRISTINE

Yes, that is it, exactly.

MYERS

But now you feel that it was wrong to do so?

CHRISTINE

It is murder. That woman -- she was a harmless old fool, and he makes of me an accomplice to the murder. I cannot come into Court and swear that he was with me at the time when it was done. I cannot do it. I cannot do it.

MYERS

Then this is the truth? -- that Leonard Vole returned that night at ten minutes past ten. That he had blood on the sleeves of his coat, and that he said to you, "I have killed her"?

CHRISTINE

That is the truth.

MYERS

That is the truth -- before God?

CHRISTINE

That is the truth.

MYERS

(solemnly, a low voice)

Thank you.

(he sits)

The hushed Courtroom is focussed on Sir Wilfrid. For a long beat he sits still, breathing hard. Vole and Sir Wilfrid's colleagues are anxiously waiting for him to rise for the cross-examination. Finally, with a sweeping gesture of the hand, he brushes away the pills before him, then lifts himself slowly to his feet.

42.

SIR WILFRID

Mrs. Vole -- or Mrs. Helm -- which do you prefer to be called?

CHRISTINE

It does not matter.

SIR WILFRID

Does it not? In this country we are inclined to take a rather more serious view of marriage. However - Frau Helm, it would appear that when you first met the prisoner in Hamburg you lied to him about your marital status?

CHRISTINE

I wanted to get out of Germany, so ---

SIR WILFRID

You lied, did you not? Just "yes" or "no," please!

CHRISTINE

Yes.

SIR WILFRID

Thank you. And subsequently, in arranging the marriage, you lied to the authorities?

CHRISTINE

I did not tell the truth to the authorities.

SIR WILFRID

You lied to them?

CHRISTINE

Yes.

SIR WILFRID

And in the ceremony of marriage itself, when you swore to love and to honor and to cherish your husband, that, too, was a lie?

CHRISTINE

Yes.

SIR WILFRID

And then -- when the police questioned you about this wretched man who believed himself married and loved, you told them --

CHRISTINE

I told them what Leonard wanted
me to say --

SIR WILFRID

You told them that he was at
home with you at twenty-five
minutes past nine -- and now you
say that that was a lie?

CHRISTINE

Yes. A lie.

SIR WILFRID

And when you said that he had
accidentally cut his wrist, again
you lied?

CHRISTINE

Yes.

SIR WILFRID

Now today you have told us a new
story entirely. The question is,
Frau Helm, were you lying then,
are you lying now, or are you not,
in fact, a chronic and habitual
liar?

By now he is short of breath, his hand holding his chest.

In the Gallery, Miss Plimsoll sees his distress. She
leans forward to attract Carter's attention.

MISS PLIMSOLL

(hoarse whisper)

The other pill -- under the
tongue!

(pantomimes it)

Carter rises quickly, takes out the black pill-box and
surreptitiously passes it to Brogan-Moore.

During this --

MYERS

My lord, is my learned colleague
to be allowed to bully and insult
the witness in this fashion?

JUDGE

Mr. Myers, this is a capital charge,
and within the bounds of reason I
would like the Defense to have every
latitude.

42.

SIR WILFRID

(violently, despite
his spasm)

My lord, may I also remind my learned friend that his witness, by her own admission, has already violated so many oaths that I am surprised the Testament did not leap from her hand when she was sworn here today.

(to Christine)

I doubt if anything is to be gained by questioning you any further. That will be all, Frau Helm!

He sits, breathing heavily, his head back, his hand under the robe holding his chest. Brogan-Moore pushes the open black box toward him. Sir Wilfrid takes a pill, slips it under his tongue, leans back again.

MYERS

(rising)

Mrs. Helm, I presume you know the meaning of the English word "perjury."

(glancing at a note)

In German, the word is "Meineid,"

CHRISTINE

Yes - Meineid -- it means to swear falsely under oath.

MYERS

And are you aware, Mrs. Helm, that in this country the penalty for perjury is a heavy term of imprisonment?

CHRISTINE

Yes, I am aware.

MYERS

(solemnly)

Mindful of this, Mrs. Helm, I ask you once more ---- is the evidence you have given the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

CHRISTINE

So help me God.

42.

MYERS

Then that, my lord, is the case
for the Prosecution.

He indicates to Christine to step down, and sits.

The Courtroom is buzzing with excitement. Christine crosses to the Exit, looking straight ahead. In the Dock Vole sits numb, his head bowed. The eyes of the warders follow her, but Vole never raises his head.

In the Gallery, Miss Plimsoll glances at her blonde neighbor and sees her wiping away a tear.

MISS PLIMSOLL

(opening her handbag)

Want a tissue?

BLONDE

(choked up)

Yes, thanks.

(takes it)

It's the first murder trial I've
ever been to. It's terrible.--

Below the Usher cries "Silence" and the Courtroom becomes still.

JUDGE

Sir Wilfrid, are you ready for
the Defense?

SIR WILFRID

(rising with some
difficulty)

My lord, members of the Jury, the Prosecution has very ably presented against the prisoner, Leonard Vole, a case of the most overwhelming circumstantial evidence. Among the witnesses you have heard Chief Inspector Hearne, who has given his testimony in a fair and impartial manner -- as he always does in these cases. He has evolved and put before you a clever theory of how this crime was committed. Whether it is theory or actual fact, however, you will decide for yourselves. Then - you have heard the evidence of Janet MacKenzie, a worthy and devoted housekeeper, who has suffered two most grievous losses. One, the death of her beloved mistress -- and second, in being deprived of an inheritance of 80,000 pounds which she had fully expected to receive. I will not comment further on her evidence,

(cont'd)

SIR WILFRID (CONT'D)

-- but will express only my deepest sympathy for her in both these mishaps.

And finally -- most damaging of all - the Prosecution has produced a surprise witness, one Christine Helm --whom the prisoner married and brought from the rubble of her homeland to the safety of this country, giving her his love and the protection of his name. I objected to her testimony because a wife cannot give evidence harmful to her husband, but it has been proven that her marriage to Leonard Vole was fraudulent and bigamous. Therefore, her evidence must be admitted and you must consider it for what it is worth.

Such is the Prosecution's case. Now it is the turn of the Defense. We could present, on behalf of the prisoner, a variety of witnesses to his character, his war record, the lack of criminal or evil association in his past. However, only one witness can shed new light on this tragic riddle -- the prisoner himself. Members of the Jury, I call Leonard Stephen Vole!

The entire Courtroom is intent on Vole as he raises his head, gets up slowly, leaves the Dock and proceeds to the Witness Box, followed by the Warder, who stops and stands near the Barrister's door.

The Usher hands him the Book and holds up the oath card.

VOLE

I swear by Almighty God that the evidence I shall give will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

Brogan-Moore has placed a long sheet of paper before Sir Wilfrid, who pushes it away.

42.

SIR WILFRID
Your name is Leonard Stephen Vole?

VOLE
It is.

SIR WILFRID
Where do you live?

VOLE
55 Tottenham Court Road.

SIR WILFRID
Leonard Stephen Vole, did you
or did you not, on the night of
September 18th last, murder Emily
Jane French?

VOLE
(firmly)
I did not.

Sir Wilfrid sits, with a gesture to Myers that Vole is all his. Myers is taken by surprise. Brogan-Moore, Mayhew and Carter look at one another, baffled. There is an excited murmur in the Courtroom and the Usher cries "Silence."

JUDGE
Have you, in fact, concluded
your examination of the prisoner,
Sir Wilfrid?

SIR WILFRID
(half rising)
My lord, the prisoner has endured
three days of the most profound
mental agony and shock. The
Defense feels that his faculties
should be spared for the cross-
examination by my learned friend
for the Prosecution. This is
not a plea for any indulgence.
I am confident that no matter how
searching this may be, the
prisoner will withstand it.
(he sits)

MYERS
(wading in on Vole)
Mr. Vole, at the time that you
made the acquaintance of Mrs.
French, were you employed?

VOLE
No, sir.

42.

MYERS

How much money did you have?

VOLE

Only a few pounds.

MYERS

Did she ever give you any money?

VOLE

No, not a penny.

MYERS

Did you expect to receive any?

VOLE

No, sir.

MYERS

Did you know that in her new will, you were the beneficiary to the extent of 80,000 pounds.

VOLE

No.

MYERS

Now, Mr. Vole, when you went to visit Mrs. French for the last time, did you wear a trench coat and a brown hat?

VOLE

Yes, I did.

Myers has produced from a file a small poster, about 7 x 11, featuring a photograph of Vole in trench coat and hat, with an inscription below in small black capitals: Will any person who saw this man on the evening of September 14th last, between 9:00 and 9:30 P.M., kindly communicate with Leslie Mayhew, Solicitor, of 15 Cork Street, London, W.1. Telephone Gerrard 0909.

MYERS

(holding up poster)

Was it this coat and hat?

VOLE

Yes.

42.

MYERS

My lord, the Defense, leaving no stone unturned in its efforts to establish an alibi for the prisoner, circulated this photograph hoping to bring forth a witness who had seen him leaving Mrs. French's house or entering his own at the times he has stated. Apparently, this splendid effort was without results. However, the Defense will be pleased to learn that at the last moment a witness has come forward, and that the prisoner had been seen, wearing this coat and this hat.

(reactions from Vole,
and from Sir Wilfrid
and his associates)

Lamentably, he had not been seen on the night of the murder, but exactly one week before.

(turning sharply
to Vole)

On the afternoon of September 8th, were you or were you not in a travel agency in Regent Street inquiring about prices and schedules of foreign cruises?

VOLE

(instantly)

Supposing I did. That's not a crime, is it?

MYERS

Not at all. Many people go for a cruise -- when they can pay for it. But you couldn't pay for it, could you, Mr. Vole?

VOLE

I was hard up. I told you so.

MYERS

And yet you came into this particular travel agency -- with a blonde -- a honey blonde, I understand --

JUDGE

A honey blonde, Mr. Myers?

42.

MYERS

A term for a lady with hair like
honey, my lord.

JUDGE

Sounds a bit sticky, doesn't it?

Laughter in Court. Not in Sir Wilfrid's camp, however,
where he and his associates are huddled with very worried
faces.

In the Gallery, Miss Plimsoll is looking down at the Bar.
Her blonde neighbor is biting her lip.

MISS PLIMSOLL

(looking at the Judge)

Quite a sense of humor!
Wouldn't strike him so funny
if he were in the Dock.

Below, the Courtroom has settled down again.

MYERS

(not letting Vole
off the hook)

You then admit that you made
inquiries about the most
expensive and luxurious
cruises. How did you expect
to pay for such a thing?

VOLE

I don't know, it was --

MYERS

If you don't know -- perhaps I
can help you. On the morning of
the very same day, according to
Mr. Stokes, you heard Mrs. French
change her will, leaving you the
bulk of her money --

VOLE

I didn't! I knew nothing about
the will!

MYERS

-- and in the afternoon, you
started making plans to dispose
of the money!

VOLE

No! It was nothing of the kind! I was in a pub, and I met this girl -- I don't even know her name -- we had a couple of drinks and then we walked out together -- we passed that display window with fancy posters with blue seas and palm trees -- the Grecian Islands, or some place -- so we went in -- just for the fun of it -- and we asked for some folders. The man gave me sort of a funny look -- because I looked a bit shabby -- and it irritated me so I kept asking for the swankiest tours -- all de luxe and a cabin on the boat deck -- just putting on an act --

MYERS

An act? No, not an act -- you knew that in a week you were going to inherit 80,000 pounds!

VOLE

No, it was nothing like that! It was make-believe and childish-- but it was fun and I enjoyed it. I wasn't thinking of killing anybody, or inheriting any money!

MYERS

It was just remarkable coincidence that Mrs. French should be killed only a week later?

VOLE

I've told you - I didn't kill her!

MYERS

Can you suggest any reason why the witness, Christine Helm, should deliberately give the evidence she has given if it were not true?

VOLE

(starting to break)

No, I don't. I don't know why my wife - I don't even know why I still call her my wife --she must be lying, or out of her mind.

42.

MYERS

She seemed remarkably sane, and self-possessed. But insanity is the only reason you can suggest?

VOLE

I don't understand it!
(tortured)

Oh, God, what's happened - what's changed her?!

MYERS

Very effective, I'm sure. But in this Court, we deal with fact. And the fact is, Mr. Vole, that we have only your word for it, that you left Emily French's house at the time you say you did, and that you arrived home at five and twenty minutes past nine, and that you did not go out again.

VOLE

(wildly)

Someone must have seen me - in the street -

(to Jury)

- or going into the house.

MYERS

One would certainly think so - but the only person who did see you come home that night says it was at ten minutes past ten. And she says that you had blood on your clothes.

VOLE

(throws arm out)

I cut my wrist!

MYERS

You cut your wrist deliberately!

VOLE

No, I didn't! I didn't do anything, but you make it sound as though I did!

(hand to head)

I can hear it myself!

MYERS

You came home at ten past ten!

42.

VOLE

No, I didn't - you've got to believe me!

(to Jury)

You've got to believe me!

MYERS

You killed Emily French!

VOLE

I didn't do it! I didn't kill her! I've never killed anybody. Oh, God! It's a nightmare. It's some ghastly, horrible dream!

He collapses, his head in his hands.

DISSOLVE TO:

43. INT. SIR WILFRID'S CHAMBERS OUTER OFFICE (EVENING)

The lights are on. It is after office hours and the last of the secretaries is putting the cover on her typewriter. Two large steamer trunks are tagged, ready for shipment. An elderly man, neatly dressed, is seated on the visitors' bench, a cardboard box held on his knees. He is Sir Wilfrid's tailor.

After a few seconds Sir Wilfrid enters, followed by Mayhew, Brogan-Moore, Carter and Miss Plimsoll. They are coming back from Court.

SECRETARY

(cheerfully)

Good evening, Sir Wilfrid. How did it go today?

No answer. Sir Wilfrid and the others walk on toward his office in an atmosphere of defeat.

TAILOR

(getting up)

Sir Wilfrid -- I'm from Hawks & Hill -- I've brought your Bermuda shorts -- for a fitting.

SIR WILFRID

My what?

The tailor has taken the lid from the box, holds up a vast pair of black and white plaid shorts.

43.

TAILOR

You'd better slip these on, Sir Wilfrid --
if we're to have them ready by tomorrow.

SIR WILFRID

My dear man, I am in the middle of
a murder trial --

MISS PLIMSOLL

It'll be all over by tomorrow after-
noon. The boat train isn't until
nine-forty.

SIR WILFRID

(to Miss Plimsoll,
pointing at the
shorts)

You work it out --

(starting for his
office)

-- you know my shape -- you've stabbed
it often enough.

MISS PLIMSOLL

Upstairs, Sir Wilfrid! You need a
lukewarm bath --- your calcium in-
jection -- and there is still a lot
of packing to be done...

He pays no attention, goes into his office with Mayhew,
Carter and Brogan Moore, slams the door.

44. INT. SIR WILFRID'S OFFICE (EVENING)

Carter turns on the lights. Sir Wilfrid crosses wearily
to the chair behind his desk.

SIR WILFRID

Ridiculous, having those boat re-
servations -- how do we know? -- the
Jury may be out for days.

BROGAN-MOORE

Not on this case, I'm afraid. This
seems too open-and-shut.

SIR WILFRID

(sits)

I watched them when Frau Helm was on
the stand. They didn't like her.

44.

BROGAN-MOORE

No, they didn't like her -- but they believed her. They liked Leonard Vole, but they didn't believe him.

MAYHEW

And that travel agency business doesn't help, either. Cigar, Wilfrid?

(extends one; Sir Wilfrid waves it away)

BROGAN-MOORE

Wilfrid, do you think she lied?

SIR WILFRID

(viciously)

Don't you?

BROGAN-MOORE

I don't know. I'm not sure.

SIR WILFRID

(steaming)

I am. She lied -- whether she calls it Meineid, or perjury, she lied! The only question in my mind is why? -- what's her game? --- what is she up to?

(bangs his fist on the desk)

Why?

CARTER

Sir Wilfrid -- I hope that in your final speech tomorrow, you won't let yourself become too emotionally involved -- you must think of your physical condition --

BROGAN-MOORE

He's right. I want to see you save yourself. This isn't going to be your last case --

SIR WILFRID

Yes, it is.

(working up to a crescendo again)

But until it is over, I am still a barrister and my client's life is at stake. That's all that matters -- his life. He is entitled to the best that I can do. If I can't stand up to make my final appeal for him, I'll make it sitting down. If I become short of breath, I'll take

(cont'd)

44.

SIR WILFRID (cont'd)
 a pill -- or two pills -- or all
 of them -- and the box as well!

During the above, the phone has been ringing. Carter picks it up.

CARTER
 (into phone)

Yes?

COCKNEY WOMAN'S VOICE
 (from the receiver,
 slightly inebriated)
 Is this Sir Wilfrid Robarts place?

CARTER
 Yes, it is.

COCKNEY WOMAN'S VOICE
 Lemme talk to the old boy.

CARTER
 Who is this speaking, please?

COCKNEY WOMAN'S VOICE
 Never you mind -- lemme talk to
 'im.

CARTER
 I'm afraid that will be impossible --
 what is the nature of your business?

COCKNEY WOMAN'S VOICE
 It's business, all right. I've got
 somethin' to sell 'im, I have.

CARTER
 Really, Madam --

COCKNEY WOMAN'S VOICE
 An' what I've got to sell 'im, believe
 me, 'e'll want to buy! It's got to do
 with that Leonard Vole chap!

CARTER
 Leonard Vole!

Sir Wilfrid, Brogan - Moore and Mayhew look up at this and listen intently.

COCKNEY WOMAN'S VOICE
 It's about that German wife -- I've
 got the goods on 'er! An' it's for
 sale.

44. Sir Wilfrid grabs the phone from Carter.

SIR WILFRID

This is Wilfrid Robarts speaking.
Now what is this all about?

COCKNEY WOMAN'S VOICE

Well, hello, Ducky --

SIR WILFRID

What is this you said about Mrs.
Leonard Vole?

COCKNEY WOMAN'S VOICE

I'm not just sayin' - I've got it
black and white!

SIR WILFRID

You got what?

COCKNEY WOMAN'S VOICE

Listen to this carefully, Ducky --
I'm in the buffet at Euston Station,
at the far end of the bar, an' I'll be
here for just thirty minutes - because
that's when my train leaves -- if you
want the low-down on that German trollop,
you get yourself over here!

SIR WILFRID

What low-down? What do you know
about her?

COCKNEY WOMAN'S VOICE

Uh-uh -- not on the phone -- you
better get on over here -- an' bring
plenty o'money!

SIR WILFRID

Now, just a moment ---

Sound of a phone being hung up rudely. He slams down the
receiver.

SIR WILFRID

Bilge! --

(he starts pacing
furiously, the heads
of the others following
him curiously)

Some drunken crank! --- you get those
in every murder trial -- drunk and
disorderly -- giving me an ultimatum --
Euston Station in thirty minutes --
got the low-down on Mrs. Vole --
Balderdash -- I'm too old and too sick
to go on a wild goose chase --- Bilge and
Balderdash!

44. Suddenly he grabs his hat and his cane.

SIR WILFRID
Come on, Mayhew!

CARTER
Where to, sir?

SIR WILFRID
Euston Station --- where else?!

He puts on his hat and overcoat and leads the way to the outer office, a bewildered Mayhew following him. At the door he takes the cigar from Mayhew's vest pocket.

45. INT. SIR WILFRID'S OUTER CHAMBERS (EVENING)

Sir Wilfrid comes storming out, followed by Mayhew. Carter and Brogan-Moore look after them. The tailor is still seated on the bench. He jumps up, holding up the shorts!

TAILOR
Now?

SIR WILFRID
(going right on)
Shortly!

Just then Miss Plimsoll comes sailing down on the inclinator, holding the hypodermic needle.

MISS PLIMSOLL
Sir Wilfrid! Where are you going? Your bath, your massage, your dinner, your injection -----!

45. She lands. Sir Wilfrid takes the hypodermic from her hand, punctures the end of the cigar, hands it back to her.

SIR WILFRID

Thank you, Miss Plimsoll!

He is lighting the cigar as he and Mayhew exit quickly. Miss Plimsoll looks after him, open-mouthed.

MISS PLIMSOLL

(deeply pained)

What am I to do? -----

BROGAN-MOORE

I'd suggest you sterilize the needle.

DISSOLVE TO:

46. INT. BUFFET IN EUSTON STATION (NIGHT)

The dominant feature of the place is a mirrored bar of dark wood, crowded with travelers and luggage. Tables and chairs fill the rest of the room. Tall windows give a view of the trains, travelers and attendants outside the Buffet. Intermittently there is the rumble of trains in arrival or departure, and jets of steam from the engines.

Sir Wilfrid comes in briskly, followed by Mayhew. He is a bit short of breath, still puffing nervously on his cigar. The two men scan the room for their rendezvous. They move down the bar until they see someone who fits the bill. A middle-aged brunette woman, flamboyantly dressed, with a

46. jigger of whiskey and a beer chaser at her elbow. She is reading an afternoon paper with the headline: VOLE TRIAL IN THIRD DAY. She is overly made up and her hair is marcelled to fall over one side of her face. Her general attitude indicates quite a few whiskeys and beer chasers. She senses their presence when they stop and look up in the bar mirror.

COCKNEY WOMAN

You wouldn't be Sir Wilfrid Robarts, would you?

SIR WILFRID

I would.

COCKNEY WOMAN

(turning slowly)

I didn't recognize you without your wig. Lovely you all look in them wigs.

(turns and sees Mayhew)

Two o'yer -- I'm not talkin' to two o'yer.

SIR WILFRID

This is Mr. Mayhew, Leonard Vole's solicitor.

COCKNEY WOMAN

Well, that's all right then, I guess.

SIR WILFRID

And your name, please?

COCKNEY WOMAN

No need for names. If I did give you a name it mightn't be the right one, might it?

MAYHEW

As you please. Now, what is this information you allegedly have?

COCKNEY

Have a drink, boys.

(to the barman)

Two whiskeys for my gentlemen friends.

SIR WILFRID

You realize, of course, that you are in duty bound to come forward to give any evidence that you might have in your possession?

46.

COCKNEY WOMAN

Oh, come off it! Did you bring any money?

MAYHEW

What is it you have -- madame?

COCKNEY WOMAN

Letters. Letters that German wife of his wrote -- that's what it is.
(she pats her bag)

SIR WILFRID

Letters written by Christine Vole to the prisoner?

COCKNEY WOMAN

To the prisoner? Don't make me laugh! Poor ruddy prisoner, he's been took in by her all right. An' these letters prove it!

MAYHEW

If you will let us see these letters, madame, we shall be able to advise you as to how pertinent they are.

COCKNEY WOMAN

Well, as I say, I don't expect you to buy without seein', but fair's fair. If these letters get the boy off -- well, it's a hundred pounds for me. Right?

She opens her bag and shows a packet of letters. Sir Wilfrid immediately puts his monocle in his eye.

MAYHEW

If these letters contain information useful to the defense --

(takes out his wallet)

-- I am prepared to offer you ten pounds.

COCKNEY WOMAN

What? Ten blurry pounds for letters like these?

(to Sir Wilfrid)

You can take that piece o'glass outa your eye.

(snaps bag shut)

G'night, gents.

46.

SIR WILFRID

If these should help to prove my client's innocence, twenty pounds would, I think not be an unreasonable sum -- for your expenses.

COCKNEY WOMAN

Fifty -- an' it's a bargain. That's if yer satisfied with what's in 'em.

SIR WILFRID

Forty pounds.

He takes Mayhew's wallet, takes out forty pounds and extends them temptingly.

COCKNEY WOMAN

All right, blast yer. 'Ere, take 'em. Quite a packet!

She puts the letters on the bar. They are on square, monogrammed blue paper. Mayhew and Sir Wilfrid each take one and start reading eagerly. The barman arrives with the two whiskeys and Sir Wilfrid and Mayhew exchange glances. Sir Wilfrid indicates a vacant nearby table and Mayhew picks up the balance of the letters and follows him to it.

COCKNEY WOMAN

Beauties, ain't they? I hope they fix 'er good an' proper.

She picks up her whiskey and beer and moves toward them.

SIR WILFRID

(looking up from a letter)

How do we know these are from Mrs. Vole?

COCKNEY WOMAN

Oh, she worte 'em, all right. It's all fair an' square.

MAYHEW

I've had messages from her. It looks like her handwriting.

(continues to read)

Good Lord, look at this!

SIR WILFRID

(scanning the letter)

Incredible!

COCKNEY WOMAN

There's one comin' up that's even better! Now, what about my money?

Sir Wilfrid hands it to her without looking up.

MAYHEW

How did you get hold of these?

COCKNEY WOMAN

(putting money in her bag)
What difference does it make, just so she gets what's coming to 'er!

SIR WILFRID

What have you got against her?

COCKNEY WOMAN

I'll give you somethin' to dream about, mister!

She pushes back the hair which has hidden one side of her face and leans toward him. Her left cheek is slashed and disfigured.

COCKNEY WOMAN

(tauntingly)
Went to kiss me, Ducky?

Sir Wilfrid and Mayhew take a shocked step back. She laughs harshly.

COCKNEY WOMAN

No, I didn't suppose you would.

She lets her hair fall back in place, covering the scarred cheek.

SIR WILFRID

Christine Vole did that to you?

COCKNEY WOMAN

Not 'er. The chap I was goin' with. He was a bit younger than me, but I loved 'im. Then she come along. Started seein' 'im on the sly and then one day he cleared out. I went after 'im and I found 'em together. I told 'im what I thought of 'er and he cut my face up proper.

SIR WILFRID

(moved)
Did you go to the police about it?

46.

COCKNEY WOMAN

Who? Me? Not likely. 'Sides, it wasn't his fault. Not really. It was hers. It was all hers. Gettin' 'im away from me, turnin' 'im against me. But I waited my time to pay 'er back -- an it's come now!

SIR WILFRID

I'm deeply sorry, deeply sorry. Er -- we'll make it another five pounds for the letters.

He takes out a five-pound note which she snatches eagerly.

COCKNEY WOMAN

'Oldin' out on me, were ye! I knew I was being too soft with ye!

MAYHEW

(still reading)
The cold-blooded vindictiveness!
(to Sir Wilfrid)
Read this one!

Sir Wilfrid and Mayhew, standing close together, read the letter.

SIR WILFRID

Unbelievable! We'd better have the full name of the man to whom these were addressed. Miss --

He looks around for the Cockney Woman, who has disappeared.

SIR WILFRID

Where is she?

MAYHEW

Gone, I'd say. She just doesn't want her other cheek slashed. Can't blame her, can you?

There is the rumble of a train leaving the station. Mayhew gathers the letters together. Sir Wilfrid goes to the bar where the two whiskeys are still standing. He downs one, at a gulp.

BARMAN

Chaser, sir?

SIR WILFRID

Good idea.

He downs the second glass.

DISSOLVE TO:

47. INT. COURTROOM (DAY)

Start on Vole as he is being escorted by two Warders up the stairs from the cells below the Old Bailey into the Dock. The CAMERA pans up to reveal the Courtroom. It is the opening of the fourth day of the trial and the crowded courtroom is awaiting the entrance of the Judge. Presently there are the three knocks heralding the Judge's entry:

USHER

Stand up!

All rise. Judge, Clerks, Alderman, etc. enter and move to their places on the Bench.

USHER

All persons who have anything further to do before Milady the Queen's Justices of Oyer and Terminer and general Goal delivery for the jurisdiction of the Central Criminal Court draw near and give your attendance. God save The Queen.

During this, Vole standing in the Dock, sees that Sir Wilfrid's place at the Bar is vacant. He looks around nervously for his counsel. Mayhew, too, is missing.

The Judge bows to the Court and sits, everyone following.

JUDGE

Since the Defense has called but one witness -- the prisoner -- it has the right to be heard last in summation. Therefore, Mr. Myers, if you are ready, let us have the final address for the Prosecution.

Myers rises, adjusts his robe and wig with the air of a man contemplating imminent, certain triumph.

MYERS

My lord --- members of the jury -- I shall be brief in my final speech because I think the Prosecution has proved so obvious a case of murder against the prisoner, Leonard Vole, that a verdict of guilty seems to be the only possible conclusion. I will briefly summarize these facts ---

There is the sound of commotion near the Barristers' Entrance and heads turn. Sir Wilfrid bustles into the Courtroom, still pulling his robe about him and adjusting his wig. Mayhew is close behind.

47. Vole, in the Dock, has been listening bleakly to Myers' opening, but now looks up eagerly as Sir Wilfrid and Mayhew make their way to the Bar.

JUDGE

You'd better begin again, Mr. Myers -- that is, if Sir Wilfrid is at all interested in our proceedings.

SIR WILFRID

(making his way to his seat.)

I am indeed, my lord! The summation for the Crown, however, is premature --- I ask that the case for the defense be reopened and that a witness be recalled!

There is a reaction in the Courtroom. Vole looks at Sir Wilfrid with a new glint of hope. Brogan-Moore is puzzled by this approach.

MYERS

My lord, I must strenuously object to the reopening of a case which the Prosecution regards as closed.

SIR WILFRID

Evidence of the most startling nature has come into my possession only last night ---

MYERS

My lord, the course my learned friend proposes is quite unprecedented.

SIR WILFRID

I have anticipated my friend's objection and I am prepared to meet it with ample precedent. There is, first, the case of The Crown against Stillman -- which was reported at (by rote) page 463 of the 1926 Appeal Cases --- also, the Crown against Porter, August 11, 1930, reported at the Winchester Assizes, at page 231, and before the Divisional Court the following October, reported at page 153 of 1942 Kings Bench Division. Further, the case of the King against Sullivan, in which this issue was raised, and I am sure your lordship will remember since he appeared for the Prosecution.

47.

JUDGE

I did?

(catching himself)

Oh, yes. Before Mr. Justice Swindon.
Now, what is this new evidence, Sir
Wilfrid?

SIR WILFRID

Letters, my lord. Written by Christine
Helm.

There is a sharp reaction from Vole. Sir Wilfrid has
given the letters to an Usher, who takes them to the
Judge. As the Judge inspects the letters --

MYERS

My lord, the Prosecution continues
its objection. If my memory serves
me well, your Lordship's similar
objection -- in the King against
Sullivan -- was sustained.

JUDGE

Your memory for once serves you ill,
Mr. Myers. My objection was over-
ruled by Mr. Justice Swindon -- as
yours is now, by me!

He hands the packet of blue letters to the Usher, who
carries them back to Sir Wilfrid.

SIR WILFRID

(his voice ringing)

Call Christine Helm!

The call is repeated by the Usher and Policeman at the
door. Christine enters, her customary impassive self,
proceeding to the Witness Box. Vole stares at her blankly,
then he tries to catch Sir Wilfrid's eye, as if hoping
for a clue to the proceedings. Sir Wilfrid gives him an
encouraging nod.

SIR WILFRID

(turning to Brogan-Moore)

If you still have any doubts about
Leonard Vole, I wouldn't mind
betting you a very small box of
cigars.

Christine is now in the Witness Box.

47.

SIR WILFRID

(rising)

Mrs. Helm, you appreciate that you
are still under oath?

CHRISTINE

Yes.

SIR WILFRID

Mrs. Helm, do you know a man named
Max?

CHRISTINE

I don't know what you mean.

SIR WILFRID

It's a simple question. Do you or
do you not know a man called Max?

CHRISTINE

Certainly not.

SIR WILFRID

It's a fairly common name. And yet
you mean that you have never known
a man by the name of Max?

CHRISTINE

Oh, in Germany, perhaps -- that was
a long time ago.

SIR WILFRID

I shall not ask you to go back that
far -- just a few weeks --

(he has taken a folded
oblong white letter from
a pocket)

-- to the 20th of September last.

CHRISTINE

What have you got there?

SIR WILFRID

A letter. I suggest that on the 20th
of September you wrote a certain letter --

(brandishing the folded
letter)

CHRISTINE

I don't know what you're talking about.

SIR WILFRID

-- addressed to a man named Max.

47.

CHRISTINE

I did nothing of the sort.

SIR WILFRID

A letter which was but one of a series written to the same man --

CHRISTINE

Lies ---- all lies!

SIR WILFRID

You would seem to have been on -- let us say, on intimate terms with this man.

In the dock, Vole rises, outraged.

VOLE

How dare you say a thing like that --
(resisting the Warder)
It isn't true!

JUDGE

The prisoner, in his own interest, will remain silent!

Mayhew gestures to Vole to sit down, and he does so, urged by the Warders.

SIR WILFRID

I am not concerned with the general trend of this correspondence --
(unfolding the letter)
-- only in one particular letter.
(glancing down, as if reading)

My beloved Max. An extraordinary thing has happened. I believe all our difficulties may be ended...

CHRISTINE

I will not stand here and listen to a pack of lies -- This letter is a forgery -- it isn't even my letter paper --

SIR WILFRID

(innocently)
It isn't?

CHRISTINE

No. I write my letters on small blue paper --- with my initials on it.

47.

SIR WILFRID

Like this?

He holds up the packet of blue letters which has been out of her sight. She stares.

SIR WILFRID

(holding up the white letter)

This happens to be a bill from my tailor - for a pair of extremely becoming Bermuda shorts.

Excited reaction in the Courtroom. In the Gallery, Miss Plimsoll leans toward her blonde neighbor.

MISS PLIMSOLL

(with pride)

Wilfrid the Fox! That's what we call him, and that's what he is!

Below, order is restored.

SIR WILFRID

Now, Mrs. Helm, you have been kind enough to identify your letter paper --- now, if you like, I can have an expert identify your handwriting.

CHRISTINE

Damn you -- damn you!

VOLE

(on his feet again)

Leave her alone!

CHRISTINE

(to Sir Wilfrid)

Damn you!

JUDGE

Mrs. Helm!

CHRISTINE

Let me out of here -- let me go!

She rushes from the Box, but the Usher stops her. The Court is in a turmoil.

JUDGE

Usher, give the witness a chair.

The Usher helps Christine to a stool near the table. She cries, her head buried in her arms.

JUDGE

Sir Wilfrid, will you now read the letter in question so that the Jury can hear it.

SIR WILFRID

(reading)

My beloved Max. An extraordinary thing has happened. All our difficulties may soon be solved. Leonard is suspected of murdering the old lady I told you about. His only hope of an alibi depends on me -- on me alone. Suppose I testified that he was not at home with me at the time of the murder -- that he came home with blood on his sleeves and that he even admitted to me that he had killed her. Strange, isn't it -- he always said he would never let me leave him --- but now, if this succeeds, he will be leaving me -- because they will take him away, forever --- and I shall be free, and yours, my beloved --- I count the hours until we are together --- Christine.

During this, SHOTS of the Jury, of Miss Plimsoll and the blonde neighbor, of Myers, and a bewildered Vole staring at his sobbing wife.

Sir Wilfrid is short of breath when he finishes, and his hand is under his robe to ease the pain in his chest.

JUDGE

Mrs. Helm, will you go back to the witness box?

The Usher helps her to the Box. She is pale, her cheeks streaked with tears.

SIR WILFRID

I now ask you again, Christine Helm, did you write this letter?

VOLE

(wildly)

Christine, tell him you didn't write it! I know you didn't!

SIR WILFRID

(speaking with difficulty)

Please answer my question ---
did you write this letter?

47.

JUDGE

Before answering, Mrs. Helm, I wish to warn you: the law regarding perjury in this country is very severe. If you have already committed perjury in this courtroom, I strongly advise you not to add to your crime. But if this letter has not been written by you, then now is the time to categorically state this fact!

Christine looks from the Judge to Vole -- then to Sir Wilfrid.

CHRISTINE

(quietly)

I wrote the letter.

(a hush in the courtroom)

SIR WILFRID

(holding on)

Then that, my lord, is the case for the Defense.

DISSOLVE TO:

48. INT. ROBBING ROOM OLD BAILEY (DAY)

Sir Wilfrid is lying back in a deep chair, robe open and collar unbuttoned, completely exhausted. His arm is bare and Dr. Harrison, with Miss Plimsoll's assistance, is giving him an injection, to which Sir Wilfrid doesn't react at all. His mind is elsewhere; he seems troubled.

DR. HARRISON

... I keep asking myself, Sir Wilfrid, which is harder -- your head or your arteries?

(no response from the patient)

You'd better stop pressing your luck -- you're overdue now.

(again, no response)

MISS PLIMSOLL

We're all packed, Doctor. The luggage is in the car. I hope the jury won't take all afternoon.

Brogan-Moore enters with a small box of cigars.

BROGAN-MOORE
 (handing Sir Wilfrid
 the cigars)
 I concede! Congratulations!

SIR WILFRID
 Not yet.

BROGAN-MOORE
 Oh, come now, it's all over.
 Wrapped up, neat and tidy.

Sir Wilfrid grunts and rises with some difficulty, adjusting his sleeve and his collar and robe.

BROGAN-MOORE
 What's wrong?

SIR WILFRID
 It's a little too neat, too tidy,
 and altogether too symmetrical.
That's what's wrong with it!

MAYHEW
 (from the open door)
 The jury is just coming back.

BROGAN-MOORE
 (to Sir Wilfrid --
 bewildered)
 You're not worried about the
 verdict, are you?

SIR WILFRID
 It's not their judgment that
 worries me -- it's mine.
 Let's go.

They follow him out.

DISSOLVE TO:

TEN MORE PAGES TO
 COME. SEE OVER.

THE FINAL 10 PAGES OF
THIS SCRIPT WILL NOT
BE ISSUED GENERALLY
BECAUSE OF THE NATURE
OF THE SURPRISE FINISH.

THE ACTION CONTINUES
IN THE COURT-ROOM .
SET WITH THE SAME
CHARACTERS UNTIL THE END.

NO SYNOPSIS OF THIS
STORY WHICH REVEALS
ITS CONCLUSION IS
PERMITTED FOR ANY
PURPOSE WHATSOEVER.

PLEASE ADD THESE PAGES TO YOUR
COPY OF THE SCRIPT OF WITNESS FOR
THE PROSECUTION, DATED JUNE 10, 1957.

NO SYNOPSIS OR PUBLICATION OF THIS
PART OF THE SCRIPT IS PERMISSIBLE.

49. INT. COURTROOM - (DAY)

The Jury is filing back into its seats. There is a hush of expectation.

Leonard Vole, nerves strained to the breaking point, is in the Dock. His eyes anxiously scan the Jurors, as if to try to guess their verdict. Then his gaze wanders toward Sir Wilfrid and Brogan-Moore, just seating themselves. Sir Wilfrid, leaning forward, does not meet his eyes. He looks past the Dock toward --

The glass-panelled door leading into the Courtroom. The Courtroom Officer stands on guard. The door, opening inward, is pushed just slightly open and through the aperture we see Christine tensely awaiting the verdict.

In the Gallery, the spectators are silent, motionless, in taut anticipation of the result. Among them is Miss Plimsoll and beside her, the dark girl.

In the Court, the Clerk rises.

CLERK

The prisoner will stand up.

Vole and the Warders rise.

CLERK

Members of the Jury, are you all agreed upon your verdict?

FOREMAN

(rising)

We are.

CLERK

Do you find the prisoner at the bar, Leonard Stephen Vole, guilty or not guilty?

Vole is trying to stand steady. The palms of his hands are moist and he automatically rubs them against his coat.

FOREMAN

Not guilty, my lord.

Excitement breaks loose. There is a burst of applause and some cheers.

Vole sits down abruptly, exhausted. His eyes close tightly for a moment.

49. In the Gallery, where all the spectators, including Miss Plimsoll, are cheering and applauding, her brunette neighbor is weeping.

Myers turns toward Sir Wilfrid and makes a gallant gesture of salute in defeat. Sir Wilfrid, leaning forward, does not see Myers, but Brogan-Moore nudges him. He turns toward Myers, with a casual gesture of acknowledgment, then turns back toward the glass-panelled door.

In the slightly open doorway, Christine Vole is standing, her face completely immobile. She withdraws her hand and the door slowly closes, blocking her from view.

During this, the Usher is trying to re-establish order.

USHER

Silence! Silence!

The Courtroom calms down.

JUDGE

Leonard Stephen Vole, you have been found not guilty of the murder of Emily Jane French on September 14th. You are hereby discharged and are free to leave the Court.

He rises, the Courtroom rises with him. He bows to the Court and the Court bows back. Then the Judge exits, followed by the Alderman and Judge's Clerk.

There is again an upsurge of excitement. Spectators are trying to reach Vole, but are pushed toward the exits by the police and warders. Vole shakes hands with his warders. The Jury is filing out, as do Myers and his associates. The Gallery, too, is emptying.

USHER

(during this)

All persons who have anything further to do before the Queen's Justices of Oyer and Terminer and general gaol delivery for the jurisdiction of the Central Criminal Court may depart hence and give your attendance here again tomorrow morning at 10:30 o'clock. God Save The Queen.

Vole, jubilant, has come down from the Dock and is shaking hands with Carter, Mayhew, Brogan-Moore, and finally comes to Sir Wilfrid who is silently leaning forward in his chair.

49.

VOLE

Thank you, Sir Wilfrid. Thank you for everything. You were wonderful.

SIR WILFRID

Let's say we were lucky all around.

A Warder carrying a large envelope has come up.

WARDER

I have your belongings -- if you'll be kind enough to come with me, Mr. Vole, and sign the papers, we can release you.

VOLE

Mister Vole! They didn't call me mister when they checked me in.

MAYHEW

I'll go along with you. I've brought your coat and your hat.

VOLE

Let's go quickly, before they change their mind.

They go into the Prisoner's Dock and down the steps leading below. A policeman and usher are gathering up the exhibits.

BROGAN-MOORE

(looking after Vole, smiling)

Chipper, isn't he? An hour ago he had one foot on the gallows and the other on a banana peel.

(to Wilfrid)

You ought to be very proud, Wilfrid.

(Wilfrid's brow is lined with thought)

Are you?

SIR WILFRID

Not yet. We've disposed of the gallows, but there is still that banana peel -- somewhere -- under somebody's foot.

There is the sound of angry commotion outside the Court-room's Main Entrance. The Policeman and Usher, who have been collecting the exhibits, drop their work and go quickly to investigate. Sir Wilfrid, Brogan-Moore and Carter look OFF.

49. Through the glass-panelled door we can see a bit of a riot -- the crowd in an ugly mood, shouting insults and waving fists. The Policeman and Usher try to break it up, and we see that the object of the crowd is Christine.

The Policeman and Usher help her into the Courtroom. She is dishevelled, a little roughed up, her hat in one hand, and she is rubbing her shin.

POLICEMAN

Better wait here until we get rid of that crowd, Madam.

CHRISTINE

Thank you.

Policeman and Usher go out again to break up the disturbance.

Sir Wilfrid, Brogan-Moore and Carter look at her. Then Carter resumes gathering up the defense papers, also bringing up Sir Wilfrid's thermos from under his seat.

CARTER

Ready, sir? Miss Flimsoll will be waiting.

SIR WILFRID

Let me finish the last of the cocoa--
(uncapting the thermos)
While I am still beyond her jurisdiction.

He motions to Carter and to Brogan-Moore to get out. Now he is alone in the Courtroom with Christine.

He sips the brandy, studying her over the rim of the cup. She brushes her suit, straightens her stockings, looks around as if for something she had lost.

CHRISTINE

I never thought you British could get so emotional -- especially in a public place.

SIR WILFRID

I apologize for my compatriots.

CHRISTINE

It's all right. I don't mind being called names or pushed around, or even kicked in the shin -- but now I have a ladder in my last pair of nylons.

SIR WILFRID

In case you're not familiar with our prison regulations -- no silk stockings.

CHRISTINE

Prison? Will I go to prison?

SIR WILFRID

You heard the learned judge. You will quite certainly be charged with perjury, tried for it, and to prison you shall go.

CHRISTINE

Well -- it won't be for life, will it?

SIR WILFRID

If I were retained for the prosecution, it would be.

CHRISTINE

You loath me, don't you? Like the people outside. What a wicked woman I am, and how brilliantly you exposed me, and saved Leonard's life. The great Sir Wilfrid Roberts did it again!

(firmly)

Well, let me tell you something -- you didn't do it alone! You had help!

SIR WILFRID

What are you driving at?

CHRISTINE

I am not driving at anything any more -- Leonard is free, and we did it!

SIR WILFRID

We?

CHRISTINE

That's right. Remember when I came to see you, and you said that no jury would believe an alibi given by a loving wife, no matter how much she swore that her husband was innocent? That gave me the idea. --

49.

SIR WILFRID

What idea?

CHRISTINE

The idea that I should be a witness, not for my husband, but for the prosecution -- that I should swear that Leonard was guilty -- and that you should expose me as a vicious liar -- because only then, would they believe that Leonard was innocent!

He stares at her, fumbling for his monocle. She crosses slowly toward him.

CHRISTINE

So now you know the whole story, Sir Wilfrid.

(lapsing into Cockney)

I'll give you somethin' to dream about, mister.

She leans over, and like the Cockney woman in the Euston Station, pulls the hair from one side of her face:

CHRISTINE

Wanna kiss me, Ducky?

SIR WILFRID

(shocked)

I suspected something -- but not that -- never that!

Christine re-adjusts her hair, speaks gently now to Sir Wilfrid, who is plainly stunned.

CHRISTINE

Thank you for the compliment. It's been a long time since I was an actress, and I never before played such an important role --

SIR WILFRID

And all those blue letters? --

CHRISTINE

It took me hours to write them -- to invent Max -- there never was a Max, there never has been anyone but Leonard -- only Leonard.

49.

SIR WILFRID

(with some difficulty)

My dear -- could you not have trusted me? -- worked with me truthfully and honorably? -- we would have won.

CHRISTINE

I could not run that risk. You see, you thought he was innocent --

SIR WILFRID

And you knew he was innocent. I understand.

CHRISTINE

No, Sir Wilfrid, you do not understand at all --

(after a beat)

I knew he was guilty!

SIR WILFRID

What?

(stunned disbelief)

No! That can't be true. No!

CHRISTINE

(a low, urgent voice)

Listen to me -- once and for all -- Leonard came home a few minutes past ten -- he had blood on the sleeves of his jacket -- he did tell me he had killed the woman. Only I could save him -- he pleaded with me --

SIR WILFRID

And you saved him -- a murderer!

CHRISTINE

Again, you don't understand - I love him.

She looks off. The Camera pans to the Barristers' door, where Vole is standing in his trench coat, hat in hand. He is smiling complacently. He has been standing there for a little while, and has overheard.

49.

VOLE

(to Wilfrid)

I told you she was an actress --
and a good one. --

(moving easily
toward them)

I knew she would do something for
me -- I just didn't know what, or
how. --

CHRISTINE

Leonard...darling!

She starts to embrace him. He doesn't respond to her,
instead looks over her shoulder at Sir Wilfrid.

VOLE

Fooled you completely, didn't she?

SIR WILFRID

It's you, Vole, who really fooled
me --

(violently)

-- after thirty-five years -- to
be so stupid and so blind --

(tears the wig
from his head)

-- Wilfrid the Fox!

VOLE

Easy -- we both got out of it
alive -- let's stay this way --

(seeing Wilfrid
gasping with fury)

--- here, take a pill.

WILFRID

There are still courts in England --
they're not through with you yet.

VOLE

Oh, yes they are -- you've done
too good a job. You got me off,
and I can't be tried again --
that's the law, and you know it.

CHRISTINE

You can't touch him now --
nobody can.

WILFRID

(passionately)

You'll pay for this somehow --
they'll hang you --

49.

VOLE

No, they won't. As for paying for it -- let's double your fee -- there'll be plenty of money when the will goes through -- I'm not cheap -- I want everybody to get something out of it. There's Janet MacKenzie -- let's get her that new hearing aid --

(looking at
Wilfrid's thermos)

And a new one of those for you -- 18 karat gold, if they make one.

(and to Christine)

And when they try you for perjury, there'll be 5,000 pounds to get you off easy.

CHRISTINE

I don't care, Leonard -- just so we'll be together again --- you don't know what I went through standing in the witness box, having to face you in the dock and saying I never loved you --

(she kisses him, but
he does not respond)

Leonard, what is it?

She looks at him anxiously, then tries to kiss him again. He draws away, looking past her. She turns in the same direction. Miss Plimsoll enters with the brunette girl.

MISS PLIMSOLL

Sir Wilfrid -- the luggage is in the car -- we've only 20 minutes to make the boat train --

(then aware of the girl)

Oh -- this is a nice young lady I met in the gallery during the trial --

(she stops astounded
as the girl runs to
Vole)

GIRL

Len! Oh, Len! They've been trying to keep me away from you -- it's had me nearly crazy--

They kiss, and in marked contrast to Christine's embrace, Vole returns it with some enthusiasm.

49.

CHRISTINE

(shocked)

Leonard -- who is this girl?

GIRL

I'm not this girl -- I'm his
girl -- tell her, Len.

Vole doesn't reply, grins uneasily at Christine with a self-conscious shrug. It gradually dawns on Christine.

CHRISTINE

Leonard, is this the girl who was with you in the travel bureau -- the girl you said you hardly knew -- didn't even know her name? --

GIRL

That's right -- that's who I am. And I know all about you. You're not his wife; never have been. You're years older than he is. We've been going together for months and we're going away on one of those cruises -- just like they said in court -- tell her yourself, Len.

CHRISTINE

(calmly, controlled
with difficulty)

Yes, Len, tell me yourself.

VOLE

(very simply)

Sorry, Christine. That's how it is.

CHRISTINE

No!

VOLE

(to the girl)

Come on Diana, let's go.

Miss Plimsoll and Sir Wilfrid are watching the scene. Sir Wilfrid is spinning his monocle on the ribbon, the light flashing from it.

Vole and the girl have taken a few steps and are near the exhibit table when Christine steps forward quickly, holding Vole by the arm.

CHRISTINE

(near hysteria)

Leonard, you can't! -- not after
what I've done. I won't let you --

VOLE

(pushing her away)

You're being silly now. I saved
your life getting you out of
Germany -- you saved mine getting
me out of this mess. So we're
even. It's all over.

CHRISTINE

Don't, Leonard -- don't leave me.

VOLE

Now pull yourself together. They'll
have you up here for perjury -- don't
make it worse or they'll try you as
an accessory, and you know what that
means.

CHRISTINE

(holding on to him)

Let them. Let them try me for
perjury, or an accessory --

(he shakes himself

loose from her. Her

eyes fall on the flickering
light from Wilfrid's monocle,
flashing on the blade of
the knife on the exhibit
table)

-- or better yet, let them try me
for murder!

She grabs the knife, lurches after him, and with one
wild swoop plunges the knife into him. He looks at
her as if almost in surprise, then crumples instantly.
Diana shrieks piercingly.

Christine stands quietly erect, the knife no longer in
her hand. Miss Plimsoll rushes forward, professional
nurse that she is, and kneels beside Vole, her hand on
his wrist.

Sir Wilfrid, still twirling his monocle, turns his eyes
to the main door, thru which come running three court
officers, drawn by the girl's scream. They swoop down
on Christine, surrounding Vole's body.

49. Sir Wilfrid sits quietly, watching. From off we hear an officer crying "Get a doctor!" and the sobbing of Diana. Then Miss Plimsoll comes to Wilfrid. He looks up at her.

MISS PLIMSOLL

She killed him.

SIR WILFRID

(shaking his head)

She executed him.

Sir Wilfrid looks off toward Christine. A policeman is by the body and giving unheard instructions. Two policemen start to lead Christine out. Carter, distraught and puzzled, comes in, makes his way to Sir Wilfrid.

CARTER

(not realizing)

I -- I've sent the luggage on ahead, and I've got a car waiting outside.

Then Carter gasps as he sees. But Wilfrid's eyes are still on the big main doors through which the police are just taking out Christine. She stops in the open doors, looks back at Wilfrid. Miss Plimsoll looks at Wilfrid, then at the doors, then back to him.

SIR WILFRID

(to himself)

... a remarkable woman!

CARTER

You can just barely make the boat train, Sir Wilfrid.

MISS PLIMSOLL

(softly)

Better bring the luggage back, and you can dismiss the car --

(to Sir Wilfrid)

-- we're not going yet, are we?

There is a long exchange of looks between the two, then Miss Plimsoll reaches down for his wig, hands it to him.

SIR WILFRID

(a declaration of love)

Thank you, Miss Plimsoll.

He gets up with some difficulty and straightens up.

SIR WILFRID

(to Carter)

Get Brogan-Moore to my chambers,
and have Mayhew there, too. We
are appearing for the defense in
the trial of Christine Vole.

He moves away from his seat and walks past the Bench to
the barristers' exit, an erect and dignified figure.

Miss Plimsoll looks after him with great pride. She
suddenly sees the thermos bottle.

MISS PLIMSOLL

(calling after him)

Sir Wilfrid! -- you forgot your brandy!

He stops, smiling. She grabs the thermos and takes it
to him quickly. He puts his arm across her shoulder
as they walk out of the courtroom.

THE END