

MURDER MOST FINE

By

Ira Israel

Adapted from the novel
"Hygiène de l'assassin" by Amélie Nothomb

FADE IN:

EXT. LONDON - DAY - ESTABLISHING SHOT

The camera whirls through London past Buckingham Palace, Big Ben, Piccadilly Circus, Covent Gardens, and Hyde Park. We slowly hone in on the window of a commercial office building, the home of Sloan Advertising.

CUT TO:

INT. SLOAN ADVERTISING AGENCY - DAY

RICK SLOAN JR. (40) is sitting behind his desk in this sterile modern office regarding MADELINE's resume. There is advertising for "Smarties" candies all over the office. Behind RICK is a shelf of televisions.

MADELINE (27) is sitting across from him. She's relaxed because she's failed so many interviews that she doesn't even care anymore. She has been unemployed ever since she graduated from college. MADELINE is applying for a typical McJob, an "Administrative Assistant" job, that translates directly into "Indentured Servant".

RICK (smartly)
So what makes you think that you're qualified for the position that you're applying for?

MADELINE
The advertisement said "No experience necessary"...

RICK
Right then, ah... so then you are qualified, I guess...

MADELINE looks at him queerly.

RICK (awkwardly, after thinking of a question to ask)
Ah... so what would you do if you could do anything?

Suddenly MADELINE wakes up.

MADELINE

I want to go to acting school.

RICK finds this terribly amusing.

RICK

Acting school?! What for?

Don't you want to get married, have kids -
that sort of thing?

MADELINE sighs; she's used to this kind of male chauvinist
bullshit.

MADELINE (seriously)

No, I want to act.

RICK (after a moment)

So listen... it's a little late today... can
you start tomorrow morning?

MADELINE thinks for a moment.

MADELINE (not really caring)

... Sure...

RICK stands and MADELINE follows suit.

RICK

Lovely... ah, why don't we go check-out your
new office and I'll explain your
responsibilities...

RICK points to a little cubicle that looks more like a rat cage
than an office. There's a television on the desk and a little
space to write.

MADELINE looks queerly at the cubicle.

They walk into the rat cage and RICK turns the television on.

RICK (proudly)

If you don't know, I'm the Account Executive
for "Smarties" - y'know, those really
disgusting sweet things that kids love.
We've done alot of market research and found
that the biggest group of "Smarties" buyers
are the people who watch "Lifestyles of the
Rich and Eccentric"... so my job is to make
sure that everything goes smoothly on every

show - y'know, the advertisements and
whatnot...

RICK slides a videotape into the player.

RICK AND MADELINE'S POV: A SMARTIES' COMMERCIAL ON THE TELEVISION

MADELINE turns to RICK who is smiling proudly about the fantastic (ridiculous) commercial.

In the commercial there are a bunch of over-zealous people of all ages dancing, singing, and jumping like maniacs around a junkyard.

A VOICE OVER the commercial says, "Smarties... for people who never grow up!"

RICK hums along with the commercial.
MADELINE looks at RICK as if he were retarded.

The Smarties commercial ends and the show "Lifestyles of the Rich and Eccentric" begins.

VOICE (off) (on the television)
Hark Samsom here for "Lifestyles of the Rich
and..."

RICK shuts off the television.

CUT TO:

EXT. TACH RESIDENCE/LONDON - DAY

HARK SAMSOM (35), commentator of "Lifestyles of the Rich and Eccentric" has just flubbed his opening. He's always ranting and raving - except when he's on camera where he's cool and collected - or at least he tries. When he's off camera he has the annoying habit of finishing all of his phrases with the exclamation "I tell you!" or "I'm telling you!".

Today he's standing outside of the gate of PRETEXT TACH'S residence on Northumberland Road. It's an expansive townhouse that's three stories high: the bottom floor has the kitchen and the servants' rooms, the middle floor has TACH'S bedroom, diningroom, and livingroom, and the top floor is the library where GRAVELOCK works and resides. The large outer staircase leads directly to the middle floor. The lower floor leads out

back to a small garden. The entire property is surrounded by a large old fence with a huge iron gate that leads to the front door.

CAMERAMAN
... we're still rolling...

HARK (acting excited for the camera)
... Hark Samsom here in front of the mysterious and ominous residence of Pretext Tach for "Lifestyles of the Rich and Ugggggh..."
(upset)
Bloody freakin' hell!!!

CAMERAMAN
Cut.

The CAMERAMAN shuts off the camera and just waits while HARK launches into his usual monologue.

HARK (overexcited/to his Cameraman)
Bloody-freakin'-hell, I tell you.
I ain't cut out for this, waitin' in front of some wanker's house for his freakin' butler to come out 'n buy some freakin' chicken...

CAMERAMAN
Just settle down... we'll try it again.

The CAMERAMAN readjusts the camera.

HARK
Right, a bit, a bit, I tell you...

HARK settles down and the CAMERAMAN gets ready to shoot again.

CUT TO:

INT. TACH RESIDENCE/GRAVELOCK'S ROOM/LIBRARY/TOP FLOOR - DAY

ERNEST GRAVELOCK (50) has been PRETEXT TACH's faithful secretary and assistant for the last twenty-five years. He's overly refined and cordial but still has a certain edge to him. He always dresses in an exquisite tuxedo as if he were serving the queen.

His room looks more like a library than a bedroom. All of the

walls are filled with shelves of books - thousands of books, beautifully bound. There is a bed in one corner and a desk in the other. On the desk is a television monitor that allows TACH to call GRAVELOCK from a button on his wheelchair and for GRAVELOCK to observe TACH. In fact, the whole house is equipped with monitors so TACH can always call GRAVELOCK and GRAVELOCK can always observe TACH.

GRAVELOCK looks out of the window and sees yet another reporter, HARK, standing in front of the gate. He shakes his head in despair and returns to his desk.

GRAVELOCK picks up his pen and fondles it. He's ruminating about something. Then he puts on his reading glasses, picks up some papers that he has been writing and begins to recite some verses to himself.

CUT TO:

EXT. SLOAN ADVERTISING - DAY

MADELINE exits the Sloan Advertising Building. Her cat, whom she calls by other names (names of male celebrities), is waiting patiently by the door. MADELINE's expression is one of indifference - not what we would expect after so easily procuring a job - but she picks the cat up affectionately.

MADELINE (affectionately to the cat)
Guess what, Mel?
No, not that, I got another type of job...
Yeah, I guess there's some acting involved -
I gotta act like I've had a frontal lobotomy
- kinda like you when you play the cop in Los
Angeles and everything keeps blowing up...

She takes two steps but then stops as there's a...

TREMENDOUS EXPLOSION.

It shakes the ground beneath her feet. The explosion was in the distance, down the road at Paddington Station, where a terrorist bomb has just ripped through the station at rush hour.

MADELINE stops for a second and thinks but then continues walking.

An ambulance drives past her with its sirens blaring.

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. TACH RESIDENCE - DAY

HARK SAMSOM and his CAMERAMAN have also felt the bomb blast in the distance. They look at each other in disbelief.

HARK
Jesus-freakin'-H-Christ! What was that?

An ambulance with its sirens blaring pulls up in front of the house and screeches to a halt.

HARK signals to his CAMERAMAN to start filming the ambulance as they head over towards it.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. GRAVELOCK'S ROOM/LIBRARY - DAY

GRAVELOCK is at his desk concentrating intensely on his writing. He's passionately absorbed by it until the...

DOORBELL RINGS.

GRAVELOCK breaks his concentration and looks into the monitor that's on the corner of his desk. He sees the anxious face of DOCTOR SWANG with HARK SAMSOM right behind him pushing a microphone into DOCTOR SWANG's face.

GRAVELOCK pushes the button to unlock the gate, and heads downstairs to let the DOCTOR and only the DOCTOR in. HARK will be forced to wait on the other side of the gate.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR/MIDDLE FLOOR - DAY

GRAVELOCK escorts DOCTOR SWANG (60) through the long corridor filled with trophies and awards. DOCTOR SWANG is walking rapidly as if he has something extremely important to do.

DOCTOR SWANG is wearing tennis whites and carrying a tennis racket.

As they approach the large double doors at the end of the hall they hear faintly (off) the sounds of a child or children playing but don't pay any attention to it. The doors open automatically as they approach them and there's dead silence.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVINGROOM/MIDDLE FLOOR - DAY

PRETEXT TACH'S livingroom/receiving room looks like something straight out of Versailles - with a few peculiar childish exceptions. There's a large fireplace with a permanently lighted fire on the wall as they enter; on the mantel is the Nobel Prize and a forty year-old picture of TACH receiving it. Oddly, sitting next to the Nobel Prize is a bag of marshmallows.

There's a large toy train set that goes around the room and through the walls on each side to his bedroom and through the corridor that leads downstairs to the basement. The only place that the trains don't go is GRAVELOCK's room upstairs.

The DOCTOR enters and stands in front of a large copy of "The Death of Socrates" by David.

We don't see PRETEXT TACH.

TACH'S POV: DOCTOR SWANG STANDING IN FRONT OF THE LARGE PAINTING

GRAVELOCK stands off by the door.

The DOCTOR is hurried and anxious today, but is still enough of a refined English Gentleman to speak to his patient caringly - even too caringly, as if he were telling a little boy that he was going to miss the baseball championship because of the chicken-pox.

Although the good DOCTOR is distinctly English and proper, he's about as articulate as George Bush and speaks in phrases rather than sentences.

DOCTOR (smiling profusely)
Good seeing you, looking good today, Tach...
(beat)
Wow, trains look great! Must be very happy with them.

There's an awkward silence.

DOCTOR (trying again)
Known each other a long time, have we Tach?
Oh, forget it! Don't wanna know...

The DOCTOR scratches his head.
He unzips his tennis racket case and takes out a small piece of paper: the test results.

DOCTOR
... Anyway, remember when - there were needles, blood - we took all that blood a while back, a long time ago; then sent it to the lab to run those tests - remember that?

More awkward silence.

DOCTOR
Well, the results - got them back and just stopped by to tell you...
(he read the piece of paper)
So... two months at most... sorry, but the results say that you have... ah, two months... to live... at most.

DOCTOR (continued) (animated)
Massive brain hemorrhage - boom! like a big explosion - it's not going to be pretty... but god-willing, it'll be quick...

GRAVELOCK raises his eyebrows curiously.
There's silence as the DOCTOR waits for a response.
After a moment he continues.

DOCTOR
There's only this one little problem - that's why I rushed over here straight-away - with the ambulance and sirens even - woo woo woo!

- to tell you... you know, didn't want to send one of those impersonal letters or messengers - a kid on a bike - or anything like that...

The DOCTOR fiddles with his tennis racket.

DOCTOR

So remember when I - was saying - told you that I was going - about - you know, on vacation to Bermuda... beach, play a little golf - really beautiful girls...

The DOCTOR cuts himself short. He knows TACH well enough that he shouldn't talk about women.

DOCTOR

So then when I get back - nurse is out on sick leave, there's this temporary chickie who can't even - you know - tell the difference between aspirin and morphine (ha ha ha) and - wouldn't y'know it - I get called on jury duty - so I call my brother-in-law's cousin, barrister, and he can't do anything...

EXTREME CLOSE ON TACH'S GROTESQUE AND MONSTROUS FAT FACE

For the first time we've seen TACH, this huge glutton stuffed into a wheelchair, wearing an expensive bathrobe. He's 65 years-old and his skin is a ghastly white, yet he has the hands and face of a child.

He's a genius and a well-mannered aristocrat, but sometimes he looks as if he would be more at home in a freak show. His wheelchair is especially equipped to accommodate some of his idiosyncracies; it has a silver tray attached to the other side to accommodate his habit of drinking large sweet red drinks (Peach Malibus) every morning; and it has a button that enables him to ring GRAVELOCK at will.

NOTE: TACH ADDRESSES EVERY PERSON IN A DIFFERENT AND DISTINCT WAY.

TACH is fed-up with the DOCTOR's rambling; he cuts the DOCTOR off.

TACH (to Gravelock)

Gravelock, what do you think the chances are of Doctor Swang forming one complete sentence today?

GRAVELOCK
I can't very well tell, sir.

The DOCTOR begins to realize that he's wasting both his and TACH's time.

DOCTOR
Right, so I was saying, or trying to say, that - you know those test results?

He holds up the results.

DOCTOR
... Kinda got lost in the shuffle, pile of things, temporary chickie, jury duty...

The DOCTOR just stands there for a minute. TACH takes a handful of "Smarties" off of the train car next to him and shoves them into his mouth.

DOCTOR
And that's why I came here myself - dressed like this, even - I'm sure that now you understand completely:
(beat)
The results are "dated".

TACH thinks for a moment.

TACH
"Dated"...

The DOCTOR fiddles with his racket and slides the results back into the case.

DOCTOR
Yeah, well, "dated" - about six weeks, "dated"...

TACH, GRAVELOCK, and DOCTOR SWANG all do the calculations in their heads: TACH has two weeks to live.

DOCTOR

Sorry... but I've gotta run - they just put new clay down on the outer courts at Wimbledon and I found this great doubles partner, ambulance driver - can you believe it? - not a very good driver though (ha ha ha)...

DOCTOR SWANG stands there awkwardly for a moment.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

GRAVELOCK escorts DOCTOR SWANG out. At the front door the DOCTOR turns to him.

DOCTOR SWANG (cheerfully)
Well, y'know, I don't know if I'll be seeing you again, Gravelock... so lemme just say thanks for all your trouble...

GRAVELOCK
It's been my pleasure...

DOCTOR
Well, y'see, he doesn't have much time left... so let's try to make his last days as pleasant as possible.

GRAVELOCK
I shall do my best, sir.

DOCTOR
Well, that's all, y'know, anyone can ever ask, Gravelock...
Cheers then.

DOCTOR SWANG perfunctorily slaps GRAVELOCK on the back as if they were old college buddies.
They look at each other for a moment and the DOCTOR exits.

GRAVELOCK (awkwardly)
"Cheers".

CUT TO:

EXT. GATE/TACH RESIDENCE - DAY

As the DOCTOR approaches the front gate, HARK SAMSOM points to his CAMERAMAN to start the camera and he commences to assault the DOCTOR.

HARK (excited/into microphone)
...And the moment we've all been waiting for here on "Lifestyles of the Rich and... (cough)," a man leaving Tach's house... sporting a not-very-stylish tennis outfit and carrying a tennis racket. He's heading towards an ambulance and by the looks of it I guess that...
(to Doctor Swang)
Oh Doctor, Oh Doctor! Any word on Mister Tach today?

The DOCTOR just shakes his head and tries to ignore HARK. HARK takes offense and steps in the DOCTOR's path, blocking his way.

HARK (forgetting he's on camera)
The fat bastard's dying - isn't he, I'm telling you?!

DOCTOR
Let me through!

HARK (happy to have news)
The fat bastard's gonna kick the bucket - isn't he, I'm telling you?!

The DOCTOR nudges by HARK and heads for the ambulance.

HARK (into microphone)
And there you have it, folks... the imminent death of Pretext Tach, verified by Tach's own physician, here on "Lifestyles of the Rich and... Ugggggh"...

The DOCTOR gets into the ambulance and the DRIVER immediately turns on the sirens and hits the gas.

HARK (dropping the microphone)
Doctor Wanker!

HARK watches the ambulance drive away.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVINGROOM - DAY

GRAVELOCK returns to the livingroom where he finds TACH playing with his trains, eating "Smarties" and contemplating his own demise while looking at the painting of "The Death of Socrates."

TACH
Gravelock...

GRAVELOCK
Yes, sir?

TACH stops the train in front of him and takes another handful of candies off of one of the cars. He shoves the candies into his mouth.

TACH
What would you do if you knew that you only had two weeks to live?

GRAVELOCK thinks intently for a moment.

GRAVELOCK (with conviction)
Get laid... sir...

TACH
What's that? Nevermind, I don't want to know.
(beat)
I'm going to give the world what it has been waiting for: "Murder Most Fine".

GRAVELOCK
Excuse me, sir?

TACH
From all the journalists who have implored to interview me over the past forty years I want you to choose three.

GRAVELOCK
But there have been over ten thousand demands, sir...

TACH
Lottery, Gravelock.

GRAVELOCK looks at him inquisitively.

TACH

Choose three and then find that chap on the television - the one that's on right before the transmission sponsored by these wonderful "Smarties" - and have him announce it to the world, that Tach is finally going to speak.

He moves the train to bring him more "Smarties".

GRAVELOCK

Yes, sir.

TACH

And you know my standards, Gravelock.

GRAVELOCK (unconvincingly)

Yes, sir...

TACH

NO WOMEN!

GRAVELOCK

Sir?

TACH (adamantly)

No women.

It's been forty years since I've seen one and I don't want to start now.

GRAVELOCK looks at TACH inquisitively, as if he doesn't understand what he means.

GRAVELOCK

Well, I can't very well draw a lottery, sir, if you're going to exclude women.

TACH (slowly and deliberately)

Yes, you can.

GRAVELOCK doesn't really understand but figures that he'll somehow manage.

GRAVELOCK

No women, sir...

TACH

Correct.

GRAVELOCK starts to exit and then turns around.

GRAVELOCK

Ah, sir, I don't quite understand...
Hildagard and Bertha are women...

TACH draws a long face that says, "Really? I would've never guessed!"

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN/BOTTOM FLOOR - DAY

The hulking Bulgarian twins, HILDAGARD and BERTHA, are hard at work preparing TACH's normal lunch of junk food and disgusting shit. They are huge creatures - large and strong enough to move TACH around easily - yet still somewhat attractive.

The toy train that goes throughout the house also makes a stop in the kitchen where BERTHA has to refill the cars with "Smarties".

CUT TO:

INT. MADELINE'S STUDIO APARTMENT - DAY

MADELINE's studio is just one small square room. Books are piled from the floor to the ceiling along the walls; she can't afford bookcases. There's a small bed in one corner, a television on the floor, and a bathtub that is oddly not in the bathroom but is a part of the main room. Also on the floor is a burner with a pot on it. She has one window that looks onto a brick wall. Taped to the wall above her bed are a series of polaroid pictures of her and her cat; even though all of the photos are of the same cat, they all have different names of famous actors and performers written on them.

Even though nobody's home, the television is on. On the news a REPORTER is reporting from Paddington Station where a terrorist bomb has just killed scores of people. He's standing in front of the back of an ambulance where two PARAMEDICS are shoving one of the wounded into the ambulance. It's really gruesome...

REPORTER (emotionally/on the television)
And yet another egregious act of terrorism has stricken our dear city... Paddington Station was quite literally blown to bits this afternoon right at the peak of rush-hour. It's too early to tell just how many people are dead and it will be weeks before all of the mangled body parts will be

identified...
Back to you, Chris.

MADELINE enters her apartment, her arms full with grocery bags. Although she seems to be very natural, confident, and at ease with herself and her life, she's a dainty creature, trapped in her middle-class London existence and not thrilled about it. Her cat is following her.

MADELINE (romantically, to the cat)
Jack, it's your turn to scrub the tub - I don't care if you hurt your back in Aspen - it's got to be done!

The cat walks past the tub and sits down in front of the television.

(Off) We hear the continuing report on terrorism in London.

MADELINE
Yeah, so I'm gonna have to work on my part tonight... I'll be playing a catatonic psychopath who works for a mentally retarded eunuch in an advertising firm - could be interesting, don't ya think?
Yeah, maybe...

MADELINE'S POV: THE TELEVISION

She picks up the remote control and zaps the channels. Finally, just by chance she hits the end of a "Smarties" commercial and stops on it.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVINGROOM - DAY

TACH hits a button and his favorite painting, David's "The Death of Socrates" splits in half to reveal twenty-five televisions (5 x 5).

He turns the televisions on by remote control and sees the end of his favorite commercial, the "Smarties" commercial.

VOICE (off)
"Smarties... for people who never grow up!"

CUT TO:

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - DAY

On a typical talkshow set, the HOST is interviewing Gravelock.

HOST

Now let me see if I have this straight, Mister Gravelock: Pretext Tach has been told that he's going to die and after forty years of silence and hard work on his mysterious hitherto unpublished book "Murder Most Fine", has decided to grant interviews to three people - kinda like a "Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory" type thing - right?

GRAVELOCK

I don't know what you're referring to, but yes Mister Tach has received over ten thousand requests for interviews in the last forty years and he has declined them all. Alas, as he lay dying in his deathbed, he will muster up enough strength to entertain three interrogators. So I mixed up all of the written requests received over the last forty years and have pulled three at random.

The three names are:

(reading happily from a list)

Dirk Van Peebles, Wallace Winsor, and Hollis Newton.

In place of the expected applause there's dead silence and the HOST gives GRAVELOCK a queer look.

HOST

Right, well... (cough) we all know that Dirk Van Peebles passed on while on assignment in Vietnam and...

GRAVELOCK is becoming distressed.

INSERT TACH WATCHING TELEVISION: HE'S ECSTATIC

HOST

... and Hollis Newton - if I'm not mistaken - gave-up journalism after that nasty incident involving that thirteen year-old boy - do you remember that, Mister Gravelock...?

GRAVELOCK
I'm sorry, but I don't...

INSERT MADELINE WATCHING TELEVISION: SHE'S DUMBFOUNDED AND AMAZED

HOST
So you're left with just Wallace Winsor who I believe - and correct me if I'm wrong - is now bureau chief for the London Times, is he not?

GRAVELOCK
I wouldn't know...

HOST
No, you wouldn't, would you? (ha ha ha)
Right, well then, our congratulations go out to Wallace Winsor who will...

GRAVELOCK
Sorry, but I guess I'll have to draw two other names and those fortunate people will be contacted directly...

HOST
Right, then, there you have it...

CUT TO:

INT. LIVINGROOM - DAY

TACH'S POV: GRAVELOCK'S MISTAKE ON TELEVISION

HILDAGARD enters; she's shocked to find GRAVELOCK on the television wall and TACH applauding him. TACH is very happy about what GRAVELOCK said.
It's time for TACH's daily bath, which brings neither HILDAGARD or TACH any pleasure.

HILDAGARD (with authority)
Bath.

Both of them frown.

TACH hits the buttons to shut-off the televisions and close the painting covering them.

CUT TO:

INT. MADELINE'S STUDIO - DUSK

MADELINE is sitting wrought with tension and emotions. She's staring at the television. For some reason, she has been very moved by GRAVELOCK'S announcement.

MADELINE (to the cat)
I think this is what we've been waiting for,
Sting-man!

CUT TO:

INT. CNN PRODUCERS OFFICE - DAY

MEL GOLDSTEIN has the same amazed look on his face as MADELINE as he regards the television. He's the producer of "The Phil Rite Show," which is like "The Larry King Show".

MEL (excited/to himself)
I can't believe it!
(yelling to his secretary)
Cathy?!
Is Phil still in London?

CATHY (off)
I think so, Mel...

MEL
Book me on the next flight!

He glances back to the television.

CUT TO:

EXT. PUB/STREET LONDON - DUSK

PHIL RITE (50) exits a pub. He's wearing an expensive suit, suspenders, and a bow tie. He looks a little like Larry King from CNN. This famous American talkshow host is taking advantage of being unrecognized in London to get completely sauced. He not

a bad drunk, he's just a little giddy and bubbly. He strolls down a crowded street and every time he sees a pretty woman he mumbles to himself, "Honey, what do you do for money?!" He enunciates this phrase as if he stole it from a James Brown song. He finds great humor in this.

PHIL (to himself)
"Honey, what do you do for money?!"

One WOMAN overhears him and looks at him with utter disgust. PHIL doesn't care - he's wrecked.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM - DUSK

HILDAGARD slowly wheels TACH into the large bathroom.

TACH
I do say, Broom Hilda...

HILDAGARD (correcting him)
Hildagard.

She has trouble with English and doesn't understand TACH's affected speech, but knows that he's being condescending.

TACH
I do say, Broom Hildagard, is that a new perfume you're wearing?

HILDAGARD ignores him. She stops the wheelchair next to the extra-large bathtub. Over the bathtub is an extralarge scale, the kind that they use for weighing and moving cow carcasses in the butcher shop.

TACH
Oh, could you do us a favor and leave a little skin on my lower back today; or I'm afraid that my colon might spill out while I'm being embalmed...

HILDAGARD smiles and she grabs TACH tightly around the chest and begins to pick him up in order to drop him into enormous scale and lower him into the bath. On the wall are assorted (cleaning) instruments that look rather medieval. On the ledge of the tub are many ridiculous children's toys.

CUT TO:

EXT. PHONE BOOTH/LONDON - DUSK

HARK SAMSOM is on the phone with his producer.

HARK (into phone/excited)
Yeah, a real wanker, I'm telling you!
Fuck the bleeding terrorists, this is where
the real story is, mate!
This is "Lifestyles of the Rich and
Eccentric"!... not "Lifestyles of the poor
wankers dying to get home from work."

HARK doesn't realize his play on words.

HARK
Nobody cares about the freakin' bomb!
(beat)
I know, I know.
But the fat bastard's gonna die, this is what
we've been waiting for all along.
... An' I got the exclusive!

He sees a taxi stop in front of TACH's place.

HARK
Ah... gotta go, boss...
Right, I'll call in later...

He hangs up and rushes over towards the taxi.

CUT TO:

INT. MADELINE'S STUDIO - DUSK

MADELINE talks to the cat while she reheats some Fish 'n Chips - she doesn't have a microwave or an oven so she's doing the best she can. She's stirring some greasy Fish 'n Chips around a pot on the burner and the pieces are getting all mashed up. By the time she's done it looks more like babyfood than Fish 'n Chips. MADELINE doesn't even seem to notice this or care.

MADELINE (to the cat)
... Ah, Bono, darling, would you stop all
that scribbling and set the table please?
Yes, I know that you have record company
deadlines and that you must save the world
before Jesus Christ returns in the year 2000,

but that shouldn't stop you from doing your share around the flat now, should it?

The cat is busy ripping apart one of MADELINE's books. MADELINE pours the babyfood into a big bowl and sits down on the floor. The cat comes over and helps himself. MADELINE also digs into the same plate.

MADELINE (to the cat)
Now Bono, if I'm going to be so nice and responsible to have a job so that you can sit around all day and write those little tunes of yours, you're going to have to do some of the cleaning up around here... and then when I have enough money to go to acting school, you're going to have to go out and make friends - you're really becoming too dependent on me...

The cat is busy finishing the puréed Fish 'n Chips.

MADELINE
Are you listening to me?

The plate is empty and MADELINE has only had two bites.

MADELINE
God, you are so egocentric!
You can only think about how things effect
you!
Men!

The cat purrs and casually walks away.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM/TACH - DUSK

HILDAGARD is taking pleasure in scrubbing TACH's back with what looks like a gardening tool. Meanwhile TACH is playfully strangling and pretending to drown a rubber ducky. TACH can see HILDAGARD in the mirror.

TACH
A wonderful and poignant set of milkdugs

you're sporting today, brings back memories
of oh-so-long-ago.

HILDAGARD scrubs harder.

CUT TO:

EXT. TACH - DUSK

GRAVELOCK returns home to find HARK standing in front of the gate. HARK rushes up to GRAVELOCK and shoves a microphone in his face.

HARK
He's going to die, the fat bastard's going to die, isn't he, mate?! I knew it!!

GRAVELOCK looks at HARK queerly.

HARK
So what's he got, just tell me that much:
heart attack? gallstones? kidney infection?
liver cancer?
C'mon, mate, just gimme a hint, I tell you!

GRAVELOCK tries to remain cordial but he's losing his patience.

HARK
Alright, mate, let's have it, I tell you!

GRAVELOCK thinks for a moment.

GRAVELOCK (seriously)
You'd like a hint, "Sport"?

HARK
Yeah, justa hint...

GRAVELOCK leans in to whisper the hint in his ear.

GRAVELOCK (loudly)
... PISS OFF!!

HARK (shocked)
What did you say to me, you wanker?!

GRAVELOCK

I told you to piss off, or I'll call the police...

HARK

The limeys ain't gonna do anything to me and you know it, you bloody-freakin'-old-poached-ham!

GRAVELOCK and turns to walk away.

HARK continues to insult him.

HARK

The queen'll suck your dick before I die, I tell you, y'wrinkled-ol'-geezer...!

GRAVELOCK continues walking.

GRAVELOCK (softly, to himself)

I certainly hope so!

GRAVELOCK heads up the stairs.

HARK

Wanker!

GRAVELOCK enters the house.

CUT TO:

INT. 4-STAR HOTEL - DUSK

PHIL RITE enters his lavish hotel and heads for the elevator. He's still making his favorite commentary - "Honey, what do you do for money?" - every time he passes an attractive woman. Finally the elevator arrives and PHIL jumps in alone.

CUT TO:

INT. ELEVATOR - DUSK

PHIL waits for the doors to close. He pushes the button 100 times in order to make the doors close so that he can go upstairs and masturbate in peace. As the doors shut, a really sexy GIRL jumps in.

At first she coyly faces the door. She doesn't press any button for a floor.

PHIL is checking out her ass as if there were no tomorrow. Finally she slowly spins around and gives PHIL a wink. He's flabbergasted. He doesn't know what to do or say. He just stands there with his mouth gaping for a moment. Finally he composes himself enough to say one line as the elevator approaches his floor...

PHIL (trying to imitate James Brown)
... "Honey... what do you do for money?"

The GIRL takes a step towards him so that he can feel her hot breath on his neck as she says...

GIRL (really sexy)
I'll clean your pipes for three hundred quid, Travellers Checks, Visa, and American Express accepted...

PHIL forces his way past her out of the elevator. He's shocked.

PHIL
That's disgusting!!!

The doors shut on the heartbroken hooker as PHIL heads for his room at the end of the hall.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - DUSK

GRAVELOCK is standing before TACH taking his last instructions for the night before TACH goes to sleep like he does every night when it starts to get dark.

The BEDROOM has an old extra-large bed in it, the kind with brass rails all around it. It almost looks more like a humongous crib than an adult's bed.

TACH is wearing a gown that looks more like a tent than a gown and he's wearing a little beanie on his balding head. The toy train also continues through the livingroom and goes right around the head of the bed.

TACH (happily)
I couldn't have done it better myself, old chap. Nothing could've been more appropriate, you picking a dead journalist to

interview me. You told me that you would do your best and you did it. I commend you.

GRAVELOCK is still embarrassed about his faux-pas, but seems to have other things on his mind.

GRAVELOCK
Did you have pleasant bath today, sir?

TACH (sarcastically, taking offense)
Oh, splendid! I'm quite certain that that beast with the wrinkled milkdugs is plotting my assassination as we speak...

GRAVELOCK
Hildagard and Bertha came on the highest recommendations, sir...

TACH
From whom, Joseph Stalin?!

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL SUITE - DUSK

PHIL enters his room, shuts the door, and turns around to find his producer, MEL GOLDSTEIN (40).

PHIL (casually)
Jesus, you'll never guess what just happened to me!

PHIL realizes that MEL should be in New York and not in London.

PHIL (amazed)
What-the-fuck are you doing here?!

MEL
Big assignment, Phil...

PHIL
Vacation, Mel... I'm on vacation.

PHIL plops himself down into a large chair. He has forgotten to take off his coat.

PHIL (imitating an English accent)
"I got *arseholed*, mate... *arseholed*."

MEL
Big assignment, millions of bucks, new
sponsors, the works...

PHIL
Who's gonna buy time to watch a bunch of
paramedics wheel corpses out of Paddington
Station?!

MEL
I didn't take the goddamn Concord here to
cover the terrorists...

PHIL gives MEL a queer look.

MEL
Pretext Tach, he's dying, and we're gonna
have the exclusive, or at least the first
interview in forty years...

PHIL (unenthusiastically)
Great.
Who-the-fuck is he?

MEL
He's only the most important writer of the
century, some kinda genius or something;

MEL (continued)
my assistant has been faxing you bio-stuff
all day - didn't you get it?

They look at the fax machine which has reams of faxes coming out
of it.

PHIL
I've been busy...

MEL
What did y'do - see Cats again, schmuck?

PHIL
Fuck you, I'm on vacation...

MEL
You're on drugs is what you're on, asshole!

MEL takes out an envelope and displays a cool fifty-thousand dollars. PHIL settles down; this must be important.

MEL (with conviction)
Fifty K - and that's just for Tach.
Your end is alot higher and I guarantee you,
it's cake! Birthday cake, just sitting there
waiting to be eaten. You get in there, you
do your stuff, an hour later we got millions
of dollars rolling in.
It's cake, man!

Although still sufficiently inebriated, PHIL is interested.

MEL
The only problem is that they won't let us
bring the whole crew into his house.
(joking)
So it's just gonna be you two - just like the
old days - "mano-o-mano".

PHIL (sarcastically)
Oh yeah, fuckin' great, man!

MEL (ignoring him)
I've got a meeting with a cat named Ernest
Gravelock, his agent or something, in half an
hour. I called this guy from the plane while
he was still at the television studio - can
you believe it? Anyway, I give him the fifty
K and he says that we're in business, that
you can go first!
(proudly)
It's just "business as usual" on "The Phil
Rite Show"!

CUT TO:

EXT. TACH RESIDENCE - DUSK

Many JOURNALISTS are gathering in front of the gate trying to get
any information available.

CUT TO:

INT. MADELINE'S STUDIO - DUSK

MADELINE is sitting on the futon watching the television
documentaries about TACH. Her cat is sitting in front of an open
book - can this cat read?

The phone rings and MADELINE rushes over to it.

MADELINE (overexcited)
Hello, hello?
(huge smile)
Hi daddy!!!
I gotta job today!
Thanks.
(curiously)
Sure I can. What's up?
OK, I'll be there in an hour...

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL SUITE - DUSK

PHIL and MEL are sitting around drinking good roomservice scotch and reading some faxes.

MEL
This is what I get for hiring that egghead from Radcliff...

PHIL is more interested in the booze than the company or the work.

PHIL looks over a fax indifferently.

PHIL (to himself)
Jesus, this guy is some kinda Shakespeare and all I get is a two line synopsis...

He throws the fax down.

MEL (reading the fax)
OK, so it says here that he won the Nobel Prize forty years ago for a book called "Untitled".

PHIL
"Untitled"?

MEL
Yeah, a book called "Untitled"...

PHIL
Well, that doesn't make much sense - does it?

MEL
I dunno... she says that it's also called

"The History of Eternity"...

PHIL

"The History of Eternity"?

MEL

Yeah... five thousand pages... when he was twenty-five years old... talks about the beginning and end of civilization...

PHIL's practically passing out from boredom.

PHIL (mumbling)

... end of civilization...?

MEL

Yeah, maybe we could link this up with the terrorist thing, do a live spot or something...

(thinking to himself)

"end of civilization, anarchy, terrorism, nuclear holocaust" - how does that sound?

PHIL is falling asleep on the couch.

MEL

Hey, wake-up, asshole!

(beat)

(reading)

OK, so since winning the Noble Prize in nineteen-fifty-five the guy's been a total recluse, never stepped foot outta the house and noone has ever gone in...

PHIL is not listening; he's dozing off again.

MEL

And supposedly he has this unpublished book called "Murder Most Fine" it's probably like the sequel to "Untitled" and... nobody knows anything about him or the book - where is it? is it done yet? ... stuff like that...

(beat)

"Murder Most Fine"...

What the hell could that be about?

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - DUSK

TACH is lying in bed playing with little children's toys. He's being a naughty boy - GRAVELOCK already tucked him in.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - DUSK

While BERTHA meticulously cleans dishes, HILDAGARD enters carrying a rug and a flog with which to whip it. BERTHA throws her a little suspicious glance and HILDAGARD continues on her way through the kitchen to the courtyard in the rear of the premises.

CUT TO:

EXT. COURTYARD - DUSK

HILDAGARD non-chalantly drops the rug but not the whip and continues heading for the tool shed that's on the other side of the small but quaint and well-groomed garden.

CUT TO:

INT. SHED - DUSK

HILDAGARD enters the shed and stops dead in her tracks. On the other side of the shed, sitting anxiously on a cot is... GRAVELOCK. GRAVELOCK is holding the phone to his ear. He looks guilty of something and he slowly places the receiver down. The shed is dark and has gardening tools and other implements of destruction hanging on the walls.

GRAVELOCK appears to be really nervous... or anxious. He stands.

HILDAGARD is at least twice as big as GRAVELOCK.

Each of them slowly take a step towards each other then suddenly... burst into each other's arms and kiss passionately!

GRAVELOCK

Hurry... we don't have much time.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. BEDROOM - DUSK

TACH is dead a sleep. He still has his toys around him and a big smile on his face. The toy train is still going through the room

(Off) In the distance, coming from the shed we faintly hear...

WHIPPING NOISES AND GRAVELOCK GRUNTING

FADE TO BLACK (END OF DAY)

EXT. LONDON/TACH RESIDENCE - MORNING - ESTABLISHING SHOT

The camera whirls through London and slowly hones in on the TACH residence.

Outside the gate of the TACH residence this morning there are a few television crews setting up. The other JOURNALISTS are getting ready to interview whoever goes in or out of the house.

Where is HARK..?

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL BAR - MORNING

PHIL RITE is already (or still) in the bar sucking down Bloody Marys and looking over his notes and various faxes.

CUT TO:

INT. MADELINE'S STUDIO - MORNING

MADELINE is feeding her cat and getting ready to go to work. The television is on and on the screen is the news. But something bizarre is going on: as the NEWSCASTER gives the live report from TACH's house, some lunatic is prancing around him with a paperbag over his head; the lunatic is ranting and raving. The NEWSCASTER is terribly disturbed and forced to cut the report short.

MADELINE points to the television.

MADELINE (to the cat)
Hey, Prince, look at that!

CUT TO:

INT. GRAVELOCK'S ROOM - MORNING

GRAVELOCK is giving the morning English lesson to HILDAGARD and BERTHA, who are totally lost.

GRAVELOCK

Yesterday we discussed in great length "The horror, the horror" from Conrad's "Heart of Darkness". Did either of you have any questions?

HILDAGARD and BERTHA just look at each other dumbfounded. They have no idea what's going on.

GRAVELOCK

Good.

Today we're going to discuss the young man carbuncular from Eliot's "The Wasteland" - OK?

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL BAR - MORNING

PHIL is still sucking down the cocktail as MEL storms in. He rushes over to the bar and takes the drink away from PHIL.

MEL

Hey, what-the-fuck do you think you're doing?!

PHIL

What's it look like I'm doing?! I'm studying...

MEL

Here, let's go over this again: here it is, here's the key...

MEL shoves a piece of paper in PHIL's face and puts PHIL's drink back down on the bar.

MEL

You go in there and you find out everything you can about "Murder Most Fine"; if we can tell the world about that book before anyone else then we're golden!

(proudly)

That's the key, Phil...

That's ten million big ones...

PHIL doesn't care; he picks his drink back up and is about to take a sip when MEL grabs it out of his hands spilling some on PHIL's lap.

PHIL
Awh jeez, Mel, look whatcha done!

MEL
We ain't got time for that now, the car's outside.
Let's go!

MEL grabs PHIL off of the barstool and drags him towards the exit.

CUT TO:

INT. TACH'S BEDROOM - MORNING

GRAVELOCK enters and pauses for a moment; he looks suspiciously at TACH. Then he abruptly wakes him by shaking a large cowbell in TACH's face.

GRAVELOCK takes pleasure in waking TACH but changes his face to look serious when TACH wakes.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE/LONDON TIMES - DAY

The bureau chief for the London Times, WALLACE WINSOR, is sitting at his desk reading at TACH's book "Untitled". A RESEARCHER enters his office. The RESEARCHER looks really tired.

RESEARCHER
Well, the whole group has been working all night, sir, and we'll have our full report for you on Pretext Tach ready in about an hour.

WALLACE
Good.

WALLACE shuts the book.

CUT TO:

EXT. TACH'S RESIDENCE - MORNING

The NEWSCASTER and his CAMERAMAN finish the report and attack the lunatic who has the bag over his head. They finally get close enough to pull the bag off...

it's HARK SAMSOM!

PHIL and MEL pull up to the gate in their limousine.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVINGROOM - DAY

GRAVELOCK rolls TACH into the livingroom; TACH is facing "The Death of Socrates" again.

GRAVELOCK heads towards the corridor leading to the front of the house.

CUT TO:

EXT. GATE/TACH RESIDENCE - DAY

GRAVELOCK greets PHIL and MEL at the gate.
(MEL already met GRAVELOCK last night.)

MEL (proudly)
Mister Gravelock, it's a pleasure to finally meet you... this is Phil Rite, from the Phil Rite show, the pride of CNN, and the number one show in America for the last two years...

They shake hands and GRAVELOCK unlocks the gate.
MEL reaches into his pocket and hands a small tape recorder to PHIL.

MEL (to Phil)
Here, take this...
Just get in there and do your stuff!
It's cake, man!

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

GRAVELOCK escorts PHIL down the corridor. As they approach the large double doors at the end of the hall they hear faintly (off) the sounds of a child or children playing. PHIL throws a curious look at GRAVELOCK who just shrugs his shoulders to say, "I dunno..." The doors open automatically as they approach them and there's dead silence.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVINGROOM - DAY

GRAVELOCK shows PHIL into the receiving room and then exits. PHIL regards the Nobel Prize on the mantel and the fire in the fireplace. He slowly heads towards Tach.

PHIL RITE acts with TACH the way that he acts on his show: he's the star and he's doing the guest a big favor by interviewing him or her.

TACH
Are there many dead???

PHIL is still standing, still toasted.

PHIL (taken aback)
'Scuse me?

TACH
Are there many dead?

PHIL
Oh, Paddington Station - right?
I dunno, I haven't been keeping up.

PHIL makes his way over to the couch.

PHIL
May I?

TACH ignores his request to sit down.

TACH
Would you care for a drink?

After a moment PHIL sits down anyway.

PHIL (happily)
Shit yeah!

TACH
A Peach Malibu?

PHIL
Bloody Mary, please...

TACH
Sorry, we're all out - care for a Peach
Malibu?

PHIL
One of those sweet things? It's a little
early - isn't it?

TACH
A Peach Malibu?

PHIL is getting lost as TACH tests out his first victim.

PHIL
Ah, sure, that'd be great, I'll have a
friggin' Peach Malibu. Thanks...

TACH hits a button to call GRAVELOCK who enters.

GRAVELOCK
Yes, sir?

TACH
Mister Rite will have a "friggin'" Peach
Malibu and I'll take a normal one...

PHIL looks at TACH with disapproval. TACH couldn't care less.
TACH shoves a bunch of "Smarties" into his mouth and sends the
train away.

After an awkward moment of silence, PHIL begins.

PHIL
So, in case you don't know, I have this show
in America and we usually ask the guests what
they want to talk about in advance and then I
write down notes on little cards so that I
know what to - you know - say during the
interview... but, now... ah, I don't really
know what you want to talk about... movies or
- oh, you don't do movies, do you? - or maybe

your book was made into a film and you want to talk about that, or usually guests - you know - just got divorced... and want to clear up some of the issues - you know - bad press, stuff like that - d'ya know what I mean?

TACH just stares at this rare creature, a drunk American television star.

PHIL
So, whatcha think?
Oh, wait-a-minute, shit, I almost forgot...

PHIL pulls out the cassette recorder from his pocket; it takes him a minute to figure out how to turn it on, then he places it on a table next to him.

TACH moves the trains around and takes a handful of "Smarties".

GRAVELOCK enters with two large bright red drinks with fruit and umbrellas and bizarre shit coming out of them.

PHIL looks queerly at the concoction then he looks over his cards.

PHIL
OK, there we go... it says here that you haven't given any interviews since you won the Nobel Prize forty years ago, that you're a recluse, that you've never been out of this house, to the best of anyone's knowledge - is it really true?

TACH
Yes...

PHIL is amazed that this guy hasn't left the house in forty years.

PHIL
What d'ya mean? You don't like meeting people, talking?

TACH
I haven't had much to say... and if I had something to say then I would write it down.

TACH takes another mouthful of "Smarties".

PHIL
So you don't like television or movies or radio...

TACH

Oh yes, I like them, I just don't employ them. As a matter of fact, if you had taken the time to read my book - do you even know the title of it, Mister Rite?

PHIL

It's "Untitled" - isn't it?

TACH

Yes, well, if you had taken the time to glance at it...

PHIL

Five thousand pages - isn't it?

TACH

I wouldn't know; I never counted... if you had taken the time to read it you would know that I discussed the fact that reading and writing were becoming obsolete and that one could get through a day in modern life without being able to write one's name with a stick in the ground... case-in-point before me...

PHIL (not understanding Tach)

Yeah, so, you don't like television - is that it?

TACH

I'd much prefer to contemplate one fine painting for forty years than to watch a bunch of dancing bears jumps through hoops to canned applause...

TACH points to the painting of "The Death of Socrates".

PHIL

So you like art - can we safely say that?

TACH

We can say anything safely, Mister Rite, we're in no danger here.

PHIL

So if I'm getting this correctly and putting it all together, it seems like you have some kinda general fear of the world - right?

TACH

No, I don't have a general fear of the world,
that's a very particular fear with me.

PHIL starts to chuckle; he can't believe it.

PHIL

Well, not leaving the house - don't y'think
that's taking things a little too far?

TACH (deathly serious)

Obviously not...

PHIL drinks most of his large red drink and looks over some more
cards.

PHIL

So nobody knows anything about your life,
your childhood, or anything like that... how
do you explain selling so many books when
nobody knows anything about you...

TACH just looks at him queerly.

PHIL

I mean, are you gonna write some kinda
autobiography or something...?

TACH

Mister Rite, very shortly I am going to die.

I have granted your television station
permission to interview me so that I can
forego writing anything else...

PHIL

So what you're trying to say is that you
don't really like writing - is that it?

TACH

No, I'm not trying to say anything. I would
respond to any questions, if it were possible
for you to form sentences in the grammatical
structure of subject-verb-object-
questionmark...

TACH (continued)

However, you show no propensity for this
capability - "if you know what I mean?" "is
that it?" "don't ya think?" "am I getting

this right?"

CUT TO:

EXT. TACH RESIDENCE - DAY

MEL is ecstatic that PHIL is in there doing the interview while all of these JOURNALISTS are waiting around outside.

MEL (into portable phone)
I don't care what they say! I said five-hundred thousand dollars for thirty-seconds of airtime and I mean it.
We got million-dollar minutes going once, twice, sold! to the man in the corner with the large checkbook.
This guy is a Nobel Prize winner and he hasn't given an interview in forty years - can you believe it? It's like fuckin' Christmas - I mean, Hanukkah - all over again...

MEL hangs-up and sighs with happiness.

HARK approaches him.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE/LONDON TIMES - DAY

WALLACE is sitting around a table with a group of RESEARCHERS discussing TACH's contributions to humanity.

RESEARCHER (reading)
OK, just going over the basics again: Pretext Tach, born 1930 or thereabouts, no background data on parents, raised by his aunt and uncle until forty-six when they were killed by a fire in their country home.
Nobody knows anything about what he did during the war.
Went early to Cambridge, highest marks... quit at eighteen when he received the inheritance from his parents and uncle... Immediately bought that flat on Northumberland Road and retired...

WALLACE

Retired? At eighteen?

RESEARCHER

Yes, well, he's a bit eccentric:

Had private tutors for a few years then wrote his *chef d'oeuvre*, "Untitled" for which he won the Nobel Prize at the young age of twenty-five. He's the only person under thirty to ever win it and he's the only author to receive it after publishing one book... but it wasn't just a book: five thousand pages of poetry and prose combining the finest features from all of the world's two hundred and thirty languages... it's a lifework, it would've taken the average person over forty years to write... and Tach had it published the same day as his twenty-fifth birthday...

(beat) (reading)

Thereafter he became a recluse, no interviews, and no contact with the world, no publications, nothing... never married - maybe gay - nobody knows...

CUT BACK TO:

INT. LIVINGROOM - DAY

PHIL finishes his drink and settles in for the rest of the flight.

PHIL

So, what about dying - how do you feel knowing that you're gonna die?

TACH

You don't know that you're going to die?

PHIL thinks for a second.

PHIL

I mean, you're gonna die pretty soon - y'know?

TACH (smartly)

You never know. Maybe you'll die even before me...

PHIL thinks again for a minute, then decides to change the

subject.
He looks at his notes.

PHIL
So you wrote another book called "Murder Most Fine" but it hasn't come out yet - are you gonna reveal more mysteries about the world in it?

TACH
Mister Rite, the best thing that can be said about the world is that it is completely mundane.

PHIL does not understand this response.
Again he looks at his notes and takes another sip of his drink and TACH shoves some more "Smarties" into his mouth.

PHIL
Yeah, so do you have any brothers or sisters?

TACH
I abstain.

PHIL doesn't understand.

PHIL
What d'ya mean? Y'can't "abstain".
Either you have them or you don't...

TACH
I've abstained from having them.

He looks over his notes again.

PHIL
Any heirs?

TACH
That wouldn't be feasible.

PHIL doesn't understand what TACH is saying.

PHIL
I don't get it...?

They look at each other as if they're speaking foreign languages.

TACH
I'm not equipped to leave heirs.

PHIL can't comprehend this...

PHIL
Whatcha mean?

TACH
I mean that my estate will be turned into a museum where students of my work will come to study it.

PHIL (laughing)
Oh yeah, jeez... I thought you were talking about something else!

TACH is starting to get angry at this moron.

PHIL
So... oh yeah, your childhood, nobody knows anything about it...
(with false concern)
...what do you say, do you want to talk about it?

TACH
There's really not much to tell...

CUT TO:

EXT. CHATEAU - DAY - 1930s - CONTINUE VOICE-OVER OF TACH

There's a young COUPLE having tea outside of a chateau in the countryside of England. The MAN has a funny little moustache and the WOMAN is playing coy, fanning herself with a fan.

TACH (off)
My father always wanted to be an artist, he painted a bit and went to university to become a painter. He wasn't very talented but he insisted on living the romantic life of an artist.
He was not of English descent but he was fascinated by all of Europe and really intended to conquer the entire world with his art.
He travelled to England right after

university and that's where he met my mother.
He was quite a charmer, the old boy, and she fell quickly in love with him and his grandiose ideas.

They had no means of contraception and my mother was such a terrible tart that she let him have his way with her.

Soon after, my father returned to his homeland when he begun a magnificent career as a politician. He gave-up art and moved on to bigger and better things.

He formed a group of men and they began to instill their fellow countrymen with ideas of beauty and splendor...

CUT TO:

INT. ARCHIVES/SLOAN ADVERTISING - DAY

MADELINE is going through old European magazines from the 1930s and 1940s.

In the magazines we see many pictures of Adolph Hitler organizing the S.S. troops.

Soon her boss, RICK, enters.

RICK

Oh, there you are, Madeline!

Whatever are you doing? We have so many things to do - I still have to teach you how to file receipts and sharpen pencils...

C'mon now.

MADELINE closes the magazines and follows RICK.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. LIVINGROOM - DAY

PHIL is sitting there in disbelief... but also his eyes are a little droopy.

PHIL (in disbelief)

Are you trying to tell me that you've never

left the house because you're the bastard child of Adolph Hitler?

TACH

I told you earlier, Mister Rite: I'm not trying to tell you anything!

PHIL

Hey, what d'ya take me for - some kinda asshole or something?

TACH

I wasn't aware that I had a choice.

PHIL

What???

TACH

I didn't know that they came in types...

PHIL looks at TACH queerly - it looks almost as if PHIL can no longer stay awake.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE/LONDON TIMES - DAY

WALLACE is still being briefed by the RESEARCHERS.

RESEARCHER 2 (enthusiastically)

What's most interesting about "Untitled" is that it has absolutely "everything" in it! It's as if this guy - at only twenty-five years old - knew everything that happened and that was going to happen to the human race! Every year since he won the prize there's a week when all of the professors from Oxford and Cambridge get together and go on a retreat just to study Tach's book... very mysterious, you'll be sitting there in a large room with hundreds of people reading it and all of a sudden you'll be overcome by grief and break into tears or burst out laughing or look down and notice that you've got a tremendous erection...

There's silence as all of female RESEARCHERS in the room stare at RESEARCHER 2. He's an academic and didn't realize that you shouldn't talk about your johnson in public.

RESEARCHER 2 (embarrassed)
Right, well, I mean that you have all these emotions when you're reading his work and you don't know where they came from...

WALLACE looks a little worried; he can see that interviewing TACH is not going to be easy.

CUT TO:

EXT. TACH RESIDENCE - DAY

HARK is harassing MEL as GRAVELOCK comes out of the house.

HARK
No really, if you have a spot opening-up, because y'know that English accents go over big with your American audiences...

HARK hands him a business card.

HARK
Y'know, I'm telling you, if I had ten pence for every time I sat home and jerked-off because my producer didn't want me to cover a story, I'd be blind...

GRAVELOCK approaches the gate.

MEL (not paying attention to Hark)
Sure... thanks...
(to Gravelock)
Hey, how's it going in there?

GRAVELOCK
Your presence is requested inside, Mister Goldstein.

MEL
Really?
Great!

GRAVELOCK and MEL head towards the house leaving HARK on the other side of the gate.

CUT TO:

INT. SLOAN ADVERTISING - DAY

MADELINE is sharpening pencils and watching a JOURNALIST on the television who's reporting on TACH.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

GRAVELOCK escorts MEL down the corridor filled with trophies and awards. As they approach the large double doors at the end of the hall they hear faintly (off) the sounds of a child or children playing. MEL looks curiously at GRAVELOCK who throws him back a fake look of curiosity. The doors open automatically as they approach them and there's dead silence.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVINGROOM - DAY

MEL walks through the double doors and sees the light of his life sprawled out unconscious on the sofa. PHIL's pants are down around his ankles.

MEL
What-the-fuck?!!

TACH is playing with tape recorder that PHIL had. He keeps playing the line "What do you take me for - some kinda asshole?"

MEL
What-the-fuck is going on here?!

TACH
You've been summoned to remove this vermin from the house that Tach built. He has utterly nothing interesting to say.

MEL (angry)
He doesn't get paid to be interesting, you get paid to be interesting, asshole!

TACH (to Gravelock)
What's this fascination with anuses? Is it an American obsession?
First this alcoholic informs me that there

are various "types" of anuses and now this gentleman calls me one.
Is this a new "trend" or "fad", Gravelock?

GRAVELOCK
I couldn't rightly say, sir.

TACH
No, I don't suppose that you could...
Well, take these photos and put them in storage.

MEL (curiously)
Hey, hey, what photos?!

GRAVELOCK takes some polaroids from TACH and is about to leave when MEL stops him.

MEL
What are they?

TACH (slowly and deliberately)
Well, your boy there insisted that there were several "kinds" or "species" of assholes and I took some photos of *his* so that I could compare them to photos of other assholes at a later date.

MEL (furious)
What?!

TACH (confidently)
Yes, Mister Rite kindly obliged, in fact he showed no signs of disapproval.

GRAVELOCK shows MEL a blow-up of PHIL's asshole. (We don't see the contents of the photo, obviously...)
MEL is disgusted. He starts to drag PHIL towards the door.

MEL
You're sick, you fat-fuck!

TACH
Yes, that's what the doctor tells me.
Oh, you've forgotten your tape recorder...

MEL puts PHIL down on the floor and angerly starts to march back for the tape recorder.
TACH casually flings it into the fire.

MEL is on the verge of exploding, but realizes he can do nothing to this dying man.

MEL
You'll pay for that, you fat-fuck!

TACH (sarcastically)
Do you take credit cards?

He picks PHIL back up and continues to drag him outside.

CUT TO:

EXT. TACH RESIDENCE - DAY

All of the other JOURNALISTS including HARK are waiting anxiously at the gate as the door opens and MEL drags PHIL, who still has his pants down around his ankles, out of the house. MEL approaches the gate dragging PHIL.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN/BASEMENT - DAY

HILDAGARD and BERTHA are preparing a large lunch comprised mostly of children's cereals and junk food neatly arranged on beautiful settings.

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. TACH RESIDENCE - DAY

The DRIVER from the limousine comes to the gate, grabs PHIL and gently installs him into the limo as the other JOURNALISTS assault MEL to ask him what happened inside.

JOURNALIST 1
Jeez, what happened?!

JOURNALIST 2
Oh, my lord!

MEL
I'll tell you what happened!

MEL grabs all of their microphones.

CUT TO:

INT. MADELINE'S CUBICLE/SLOAN ADVERTISING - DAY

MADELINE is sharpening pencils and watching MEL on the television as he grabs the microphones from the JOURNALISTS.

MADELINE'S POV: THE TELEVISION

MEL (angry/on television)
That beached whale *assaulted* Phil Right,
America's number one talk show host for two
years running, that's what happened! A full
investigation will be launched and charges
will be filed against that... fat, ugly,
white...

The transmission is cut short due to MEL's oncoming vulgarities.

MADELINE is really transfixed by this news. She's sitting there with her mouth gaping.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE/LONDON TIMES - DAY

WALLACE is watching MEL on the television. He turns amazed to some of his RESEARCHERS.

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. TACH RESIDENCE - DAY

MEL continues to rant; he hates English people.

MEL (furious)
You fucking English scumbags! With your fat
fucking faces and white skin and polyester
clothing! Your only contribution to Western
civilization since putting "chips" with the
"fish" is "The Benny Hill Show"!!

MEL throws down the microphones and jumps into the limo.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. MADELINE'S CUBICLE/SLOAN ADVERTISING - DAY

MADELINE is still mesmerized by the television.
Her boss, RICK, comes quickly up behind her.

RICK (aggressively)
Yes, Madeline, how's everything? What are we working on now? Because I have another big important project for you: sorting, stapling, and stuffing.
Sorting and stapling these three thousand potential-client solicitations and then stuffing them into envelopes - but don't worry! You won't have to lick all three thousand envelopes by yourself...

MADELINE
Ah... ill, I'm terribly ill... a woman's thing, you wouldn't understand...

MADELINE points to her lower abdomen and feigns shame.
RICK just stands there in disbelief; he needs this job done.

MADELINE
I was just about to tell you, that I'll be leaving now, taking a sick-day, to take care of this "woman's thing", if you don't mind...

RICK
Well, can't it wait...? I mean, it's your first day...

MADELINE
No, sorry, it can't.

MADELINE pretends to keel over with stomach cramps.

MADELINE
Don't worry, I'll be alright, it's just, you know... this "woman's thing".

RICK looks at her as if she were a martian.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVINGROOM - DAY

TACH is confronting and commending GRAVELOCK.

TACH

Oh yes, old boy, twenty milligrams, is that all it takes?

GRAVELOCK

Yes, twenty milligrams of valium and some alcohol and you'll sleep like a baby...

TACH

I've been sleeping like a baby for forty years, now I want to sleep like an adult...

GRAVELOCK

Well, then I'm afraid that I can't help you...

TACH

I see...

GRAVELOCK turns to leave.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN/BASEMENT - DAY

As BERTHA puts the final touches on TACH'S disgusting lunch, her sister HILDAGARD walks through the kitchen carrying another rug.

BERTHA

***** (in Bulgarian)
subtitled: "Again?"

HILDAGARD

***** (in Bulgarian)
subtitled: "Yes, again, I'm afraid."

HILDA exits and heads for the shed to clean her rug...

CUT TO:

INT. SHED - DAY

HILDAGARD enters (without the rug) and finds the shed empty. She looks around curiously.

Suddenly GRAVELOCK enters convulsed in laughter.

HILDAGARD
Vahtz happening?
Vahtz happening?

GRAVELOCK explodes into laughter at her horrendous accent.
He shows her the photos of PHIL RITE's asshole.

GRAVELOCK (while laughing)
Oh dear god! It was too funny, you should've
seen it...

HILDAGARD smiles with bliss at the photos as if they were family
portraits.

CUT TO:

EXT. TACH - DAY

MADELINE arrives across the street; she's carrying her cat and
observing the pack of hungry JOURNALISTS.

CUT TO:

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

TACH gulps down all of the sugary food like a little kid. In all
of the piles of food there is absolutely no nutritional value
whatsoever. It's a wonder that TACH isn't already dead.

CUT TO:

INT. SHED - DAY

HILDA exits and GRAVELOCK smokes a cigarette and thinks. He's
very contemplative, yet relaxed. He appears to be ruminating
about something.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE/LONDON TIMES - DAY

WALLACE WINSOR continues to demand to know everything he can

about TACH and his work.

WALLACE

What about Tach's personal life? Never married... No girlfriends? Hookers? Little boys? Drugs? Drink? What's his poison?

RESEARCHER

Sorry chief, but that's going to be your job... there was that article in the Sun in nineteen seventy-four that said that Tach was really a woman and that he was the Crimson Killer... but it was unfounded and... well, it was in The Sun. Tach never responded to the allegations.

WALLACE

So we don't know anything about him? He doesn't even exist in our computers except for a little blurb that says Nobel Prize and a couple of book reviews in Chinese...

RESEARCHER

Well, when he won the prize he announced - arrogantly, I must say - that he was going to outdo himself, that he was writing a book called "Murder Most Fine" and that it would give the answers to all of the questions raised in "Untitled". Every year since nineteen-fifty-five we've expected him to publish it but it has never appeared... nobody knows anything about it either...

WALLACE

"Murder Most Fine", heh?

RESEARCHER

Yeah...

WALLACE and the RESEARCHER look at each other as if they found the key.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVINGROOM - DAY

TACH is still watching television as HILDAGARD enters to announce

that it's bath time.

HILDAGARD (with authority)
Bath.

She comes around him and wheels him towards the door.

TACH shuts off the televisions and hits the button to close the painting that covers them.

TACH
Why do you spend all your time inside? A woman of your qualities and expressiveness should have no trouble finding a good husband. You should get out a bit, see the world, enter an Olympic Shotgun Competition...

CUT TO:

INT. MADELINE'S STUDIO - DUSK

MADELINE is conducting a fake television talkshow with the cat playing the guest. She's pretending that she's host of a show such as "The Phil Right Show".
The cat is sitting in the chair attentively.

MADELINE (trying to be serious)
So tell us, David, what was Mick's expression when Jerry walked in on you two?

MADELINE looks at the cat.

MADELINE
Uh-huh.
Uh-huh.
And that was really her idea all along - was it?
Uh-huh.
Have you been in many other compromising positions like that one?

Again she looks at the cat who meows.

MADELINE
Really!
I never would've guessed!

CUT TO:

INT. TACH'S BEDROOM - DUSK

HILDAGARD rolls TACH into the bedroom and again with great effort picks up his disgusting body and flings it into the bed.

TACH picks up some of his toys.

HILDAGARD exits.

GRAVELOCK enters and TACH is upset with him.

TACH
Where were you, Gravelock?
That awful beast touched me twice in one day!
Can you imagine?!

GRAVELOCK just stands there. Yes... he *can* imagine.

TACH
If it happens again I'll have to have it put
to sleep.

GRAVELOCK snaps back into reality.

GRAVELOCK
I'm sorry, sir, but I had to run out for a
moment to alleviate a potential problem with
a journalist.

TACH
Well, you must always consult me before you
act, Gravelock.
Remember, there are only two ways of doing
things: *my* way and *the wrong* way!

GRAVELOCK turns to exit.

GRAVELOCK (to himself)
Fortunately, you have exclusive rights on
both!
(beat) (to Tach)

Goodnight, sir...

FADE TO BLACK (END OF DAY)

EXT. LONDON/TACH RESIDENCE - MORNING - ESTABLISHING SHOT

The camera whirls through London and slowly hones in on the TACH residence.

There's a group of JOURNALISTS standing around this morning. HARK SAMSOM is giving the play-by-play into the camera as a cab pulls up to drop off WALLACE WINSOR.

HARK (over-enthusiastic)

... And that's correct: Phil Rite, who's had the number one show in the world for the past two years running was ejected from Pretext Tach's residence here on Northumberland Road.

As you can see on your television monitors it's complete mayhem verging rapidly on pandemonium here on the normally calm cul-de-sac of Northumberland Road! It makes Paddington Station look as boring as the House of Lords...

WALLACE pays the cabbie and heads towards the gate.
HARK spots WALLACE and starts to head over towards him.

CUT TO:

INT. GRAVELOCK'S ROOM/LIBRARY - MORNING

GRAVELOCK is at his desk writing furiously. He's very concentrated in his work and is taking great pleasure in the words, swirling each one around his mouth as if it were a fine wine.

There's a knock at the door.

GRAVELOCK pulls himself away from his work.

GRAVELOCK
Yes, who is it?

The door opens slowly and BERTHA peeks her head in.

BERTHA
I come early.
Sister's english better than me.
You teach me like you teach her.

GRAVELOCK smiles and puts aside his work.

CUT TO:

INT. MADELINE'S STUDIO - MORNING

MADELINE gets up, pets her cat, and calls RICK, her boss.

On the television in the background a REPORTER is giving his report from in front of TACH's house.

MADELINE (into phone)

Yes, Mister Sloan...
OK "Rick", I mean.
Yes, well...
Uh-huh...
Uh-huh...
Yes, well that's why I'm calling, sir, I
can't such seem to kick this "woman's thing"
- if you know what I mean...
A couple days, I guess...
Yes, well I know that other women have
"women's things" and that they don't all
take-off a week every month but...
Right...
Yes, sir...
Right...
(beat)
Well, then...

MADELINE listens patiently for a moment then she explodes.

MADELINE (screaming)
Well then... I QUIT!! You sleazy bastard,
trying to look down my blouse every five
seconds!! I've seen that collection of porno
mags that you take into the bathroom at tea
time... "No, I don't drink tea" you say, but
that's no reason to ditch into the john and
lope-the-mule everyday at four o'clock - is
it!

There's silence for a moment and then MADELINE hangs up and turns
towards her cat for approval.

MADELINE (happily, to the cat)
There you have it, Al. Just like you did in
the film where you snort all that cocaine...
(imitating Al Pacino in "Scarface")
*Fuck Casper Gomez and Fuck the Fucking Diaz
Brothzers!!!*
(returning to her normal voice)
I just loved that - it was so real!

The cat purrs.

CUT TO:

EXT. TACH RESIDENCE - DAY

WALLACE WINSOR approaches the gate and HARK lays into him.

HARK

Right, mate, well who do you think you are just walking right up and ringing the bell like that?

WALLACE ignores him.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

GRAVELOCK escorts WALLACE WINSOR down the hallway filled with trophies and prizes. As they approach the large double doors at the end of the hall they hear faintly (off) the sounds of a child or children playing. They briefly turn to each other to show their curiosity. The doors open automatically as they approach them and there's dead silence.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVINGROOM - DAY

WALLACE enters slowly and carefully; he heads towards TACH. He doesn't even have time to say, "Nice to meet you" before TACH speaks to him.

TACH

Are there many dead???

WALLACE

Pardon me?

TACH

Are there many dead?

WALLACE

Where?

TACH

In the world this morning.

WALLACE

Not any more than usual, I imagine...

TACH

Well don't let it get the better of you.

WALLACE
Pardon me?

TACH
Your imagination. Don't let it get the better of you.

WALLACE
Oh yeah, right then...
(beat)
May I sit down?

TACH
Would you care for a Peach Malibu?

WALLACE
It's a little early - isn't it?

TACH
Gin?

WALLACE (taken aback)
Ah... no... thank you.

TACH
The only reason I see for abstinence is ignorance, Mister Winsor...

WALLACE (a little awkward)
Right... may I take a seat?

TACH hits the button to call GRAVELOCK.

TACH
Where to?

WALLACE
I mean, may I sit down...

GRAVELOCK enters.

TACH
Gravelock, two Peach Malibus, please...

WALLACE
No, none for me thanks, Mister Gravelock...

GRAVELOCK exits.

WALLACE sits down.

TACH
I didn't offer you one.
I always start the day with two.

WALLACE
Oh well, right then...
Shall we begin?

TACH
Not yet, my throat is parched. I must wait
for my Peach Malibus.

WALLACE takes out a pad and pencil and starts to write.

WALLACE (reading aloud)
"Must drink before speaking..."

GRAVELOCK enters and puts the large disgusting red drinks down
next to TACH.

TACH moves the train around and takes a handful of "Smarties".

WALLACE
Right then, one question on everyone's mind
is...

TACH (cutting him off)
How much I weigh?

WALLACE
Well, not really, I was going to ask about
"Murder Most Fine", but I guess we could
start there if you like...

TACH
Well, I wouldn't know... where do you usually
like to start?

WALLACE
Right, I see.
(reading what he writes)
"Word games..."
So, you've been living here a long time?

TACH
I don't recall...

WALLACE (looking at his notes)

Forty-odd years or so - right?

TACH
They weren't that odd...

WALLACE
Right, so what's the average day like in the
life of Pretext Tach...

TACH (like a little boy)
Don't you want to talk about my Nobel Prize
first?

TACH points to the mantelpiece.

WALLACE
Well, I thought that we'd get to that later
but if you want to begin there, that's
fine...

TACH
No, I was just curious...

WALLACE
Pardon me?

TACH
Just curious, I said.
I had thought that you would want to start
there.

WALLACE
Well... sure, why not?

TACH
OK... Ernest Gravelock wakes me around nine-
thirty and prepares me for the long day ahead
of me...

WALLACE is a little confused.

WALLACE
Exactly who is Ernest Gravelock to you?

TACH
You wish to talk about Gravelock?

WALLACE
No, I was just asking who he is...

TACH
I heard the question... and then I asked you,
"Do you want to talk about Gravelock?" and
you said "No".

WALLACE is totally confused; he can't tell if this guy is a
genius or a jerk.
He takes a deep breath and recomposes himself.
TACH moves the trains and takes a handful of "Smarties".
WALLACE watches him carefully.

WALLACE
Right, well, I was hoping to talk about your
work...

TACH
What are you talking about?

WALLACE
Well, is there anything else that you wish to
discuss; do you have any particular agenda
for this interview?

TACH
No.

There's silence for a moment as both men look at each other
queerly.

WALLACE
Right, then, shall we continue?

TACH (with conviction)
By all means...

WALLACE
May I ask if you are on any medication by any
chance?

TACH
You may ask.

WALLACE
Are you on medication by any chance?

TACH
That would be impossible - wouldn't it?

WALLACE

Pardon me?

TACH

You can't take medication "by chance" - it has to be prescribed.

WALLACE

I mean, are you on any medication?

TACH

I wouldn't know; you'll have to ask my physician, Stuart Swang.

WALLACE

You don't know if you're on medication?

TACH

No...

WALLACE (harshly)

No, I was just wondering if there was anything physically preventing you from answering my questions...

TACH

I don't believe so...

WALLACE

Good.

(over enunciating so that Tach understands each carefully chosen word.

I WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS YOUR WORK WITH YOU PERIOD.

TACH

Isn't that why you came here questionmark.

WALLACE

Of course...

TACH

Well then you don't need to announce it - it's as plain as the teeth in your lips...

WALLACE

Mouth.

My teeth are in my mouth.

TACH

I can't see that far... I can only see your lips...

WALLACE

Right, well then you won the Nobel Prize in nineteen fifty-five when you were twenty-five years old... how did you feel about winning the Nobel Prize at such a young age?

TACH (without thinking)

Nice, splendid, happy, wonderful, and content.

WALLACE

Is that all?

TACH

Yes it is. How would you feel?

WALLACE

I don't know... I just have a Pulitzer...

TACH

Aren't you going to write it down?

WALLACE

What?

TACH

"Nice, splendid, happy, wonderful, and content."

WALLACE

Surely, if you like...

TACH

No, not really, I don't like, and please don't call me "Shirley". Are you going to remember it?

WALLACE thinks for a second and writes it down.

WALLACE

Right, so what did you do after winning the Nobel Prize?

TACH

I retired.

WALLACE

Ah, I was informed that you retired when you were eighteen when you received your inheritance and bought this lovely home... not when you were twenty-five.

TACH

I retire every year - what's wrong with that?

WALLACE

When do you find time to work?

TACH

I don't.

WALLACE

I don't get it - you don't find time to work or you don't work?

TACH

Neither, the latter precludes the former - doesn't it?

WALLACE

Uh... I don't know what you mean...

WALLACE is getting frustrated.

WALLACE

Listen, could you just answer the question?

TACH

Which one?

WALLACE

The one about work. I WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS YOUR WORK WITH YOU.

He doesn't dare say PERIOD although it's on his lips.

TACH

I would like nothing more.
Do you have any specific questions or would you just like me to ramble on?

WALLACE is upset. He figures it's better just to let TACH talk.

WALLACE

I would just like you to ramble on.

I'll take notes.

TACH (non-chalantly)

Ernest Gravelock wakes me promptly at nine-thirty every morning and prepares me for my day; this primarily includes shoving me into my wheelchair for I have become too fat to walk.

WALLACE makes a face that says "I never would have guessed!"

TACH (non-chalantly)

There are two creatures who live and work in the basement. I imported them from Bulgaria where they were being repressed. Now they are completely free to feed and bathe me.

They love me dearly and we live together as one large happy family. Sometimes I like to think the unthinkable, that the dear Mister Gravelock takes indulgences from the sisters but then I recall that this is unthinkable and I don't think it.

Gravelock has been faithful to his wife ever since she passed on. It was very difficult for him when she died. And then it became even worse when she passed on. He was in a state of alcoholic melancholy - not uncommon to what happens when you drink too much when your wife passes on - when I rescued him.

Since then he has acted as my faithful if not loyal secretary. Indeed, he is my favorite person other than myself in this house. In fact, also.

Gravelock and I spend many hours "shooting the breeze" telling stories about the "good old days" when "men were men and women were men also".

TACH (continued)

We're not homosexualists, if that's what you're thinking.

In fact, I'm against all types of homosexuality except when it doesn't exist. Then I don't waste my time.

WALLACE

I see that you're interested in language.

TACH

Really? Where?

WALLACE
Where what?

TACH
Where do you see that I'm interested in
language?

WALLACE
Ah... your mouth!

TACH
Oh, your eyes must be much better than mine!

The two men chuckle for a moment.

WALLACE is starting to enjoy the wordgames that TACH is playing.

WALLACE
Would you care to discuss your childhood?

TACH
I don't know. What do you have to say about
it?

WALLACE
Nothing. I didn't live it.

TACH
Then how could we possibly discuss it?

WALLACE
I mean, WOULD YOU PLEASE TELL ME ABOUT YOUR
CHILDHOOD?

TACH
There's really not much to tell...

WALLACE settles in his seat to listen to TACH.

CUT TO:

INT. STAIRWELL/BUILDING - DAY

HARK is going up a few flights of stairs. Behind him his
CAMERAMAN is filming HARK.
At the top of the flight of stairs there's a door that says

"Emergency Exit" that leads to the roof and then there are a few residents' doors.

HARK casually starts to try to break open the Emergency Exit which leads to the roof and is stuck.

Across the hall an OLD LADY sticks her head out of the door to see what all the noise is.

HARK forgets that his CAMERAMAN is filming him.

OLD LADY
What are you doing, sonny?

HARK
Ah... Scotland Yard, ma'am, why don't you just go back on inside now...

OLD LADY
Scotland Yard, breaking open an emergency exit? How come?

HARK
Shhhhhh... keep your voice down, there's a pack of wild thieves on the roof...

OLD LADY (loudly)
Pack of wild thieves on Northumberland Street, my ass, sonny!

HARK is getting really frustrated because he can't get the door open nor can he shut this woman up.

HARK
Right then, y'old geezer!

The CAMERAMAN turns towards the lady.

CAMERAMAN'S POV: HARK SHOVING AND HITTING THE OLD LADY SO THAT SHE GOES BACK INTO HER APARTMENT.

The CAMERAMAN shuts off the camera.

CAMERAMAN
Ah... Hark... Jesus, d'ya think all that was really necessary?!

HARK

C'mon mate, be professional!

HARK heaves his shoulder into the Emergency Exit one last time and breaks it open.

CUT TO:

INT. COFFEESHOP - DAY

MADELINE is quietly drinking a tea in the coffeeshop across the street when GRAVELOCK enters and spots her. He's carrying a large manilla envelope. She waves to him and he approaches her.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVINGROOM - DAY

TACH is about to recount his life story to WALLACE.

TACH

My mother worked in a large office; she's was a secretary not unlike your own...

CUT TO:

EXT. CHATEAU - DAY - 1930s - CONTINUE VOICE-OVER OF TACH

There's a young COUPLE having tea outside of a chateau in the countryside of England.
The MAN is of tremendous stature and the WOMAN is playing coy, fanning herself with a fan.

TACH (off)

One day after many years of constant imploring on her boss's part, she agreed to spend a quiet weekend with him at his family's country home.

At one point late in the weekend the family went out on an excursion to find an establishment where they could purchase cigarettes. It was a family that loved to smoke.

There was a storm that night and it took the family aeons to return.

While they were away, young Winston took it upon himself to tie and bind my dear mother and sodomize her repeatedly... you can well

imagine the damage done to her interior
organs by all of that poking around in
there...
When the Churchills returned home...

CUT TO:

INT. LIVINGROOM - DAY

WALLACE does not look amused. WALLACE interrupts TACH.

WALLACE (cutting him off)
My father happened to serve under Mister
Churchill and we all know very well that...

TACH (cutting him off)
And then they lived happily ever after...

WALLACE looks at TACH disparagingly.

WALLACE
Listen, I really could care less if you don't
want to talk about your life... and I did not
come here to play wordgames or to hear that
you're the bastard child of Winston
Churchill!
So let's get on with it!
(reading what he's writing)
"Doesn't like to talk about his life."

TACH (feigning shame)
Well, you did ask me to ramble...

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

BERTHA and HILDAGARD are once again hard at work preparing junk
food on elegant plates for TACH'S lunch.

GRAVELOCK enters through the back entrance and winks to
HILDAGARD.

BERTHA pretends not to notice him.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. LIVINGROOM - DAY

WALLACE

Right, then, now it's my turn to ask questions: do you have any regrets?

TACH

I've never thought about it.

WALLACE

Well, could you think about it a little now please?

TACH

Yes, I will.

TACH thinks for a moment.

TACH

OK, I'm ready.

WALLACE

Do you have any regrets?

TACH

Yes, I regret not winning another Nobel Prize.

WALLACE

Why is that?

TACH

Because there's nothing on the mantelpiece in my bedroom.

WALLACE

Is that what the Nobel Prize symbolizes to you?

TACH

It doesn't symbolize anything to me - I just think that it looks pleasant above the fire.

WALLACE

Gaining the Nobel Prize at the age of twenty-five did not change your life?

TACH

Of course it did.

(beat)

Before I won it I just had a rugby trophy on the mantlepiece.

WALLACE is perturbed; the interview is not going well.

WALLACE

What do you think your greatest contribution to society has been?

TACH

To stay inside.

WALLACE

Pardon me?

TACH

I said, "To stay inside."

Have you had your hearing checked lately?

WALLACE

My hearing is just fine, I just don't understand how a Nobel Prizewinner could say that his greatest contribution to society has been "to stay inside".

TACH

Well, why didn't you say so?

WALLACE

I just did!

TACH

No. Before, when you said, "Pardon me?" Why didn't you say, "I just don't understand..."

WALLACE (cutting him off)

Listen, this is not going well, I'm afraid...

TACH (cutting him off)

Don't be.

WALLACE

Don't be - what?

TACH

Afraid. No harm will come to you while you're in this the house that Tach built.

WALLACE

No, that's not what I meant. I meant that I have a long list of questions and I don't feel that a single one of them has been answered.

TACH

I find it terribly rude, declining to have a Peach Malibu with me. I can never finish the second one alone.

WALLACE

Pardon me?

TACH

Your hearing-aid broken again?

WALLACE is getting terribly frustrated with this irascible codger.

WALLACE (angrily)

OK, I'll take a goddamn Peach Malibu and I won't be afraid - just answer some of my questions...

TACH hits a button and GRAVELOCK enters.

TACH (to Gravelock)

Mister Winsor would like a "goddamn" Peach Malibu and I'll have a normal one, please...

GRAVELOCK

Yes, sir.

GRAVELOCK exits.

TACH

As you were saying...

WALLACE

I was saying that I had a long list of questions and that I would like you to answer at least a few of them.

TACH

By all means, go right ahead.

WALLACE

Right, then: Do you keep up with current events? I notice that you don't have a

television in here - is there one in your bedroom?

TACH

No, there is no television in the bedroom.

GRAVELOCK enters carrying two large disgusting drinks.

WALLACE

I assume you read the papers - although I don't see any lying around.

TACH (arrogantly)

Allow me to tell you why I have not read a newspaper in the last forty years: because there are many naturally stupid people in the world and many terribly uneducated people in the world and this combination always makes for bad news.

WALLACE

Well, then, how do you know what's going on in the world?

TACH

I guess.

WALLACE

Pardon me?

TACH

Your hearing aid again?

I said, "I guess."

WALLACE

You guess what?

TACH

I guess what happens in the world. Nothing has really changed in the last hundred years or so - has it?

WALLACE (confidently)

I beg to differ with you, sir. The world changes everyday.

TACH

Don't.

TACH moves the trains around again and takes more "Smarties".

WALLACE

Don't what - differ with you?

TACH

No, don't beg - you have nothing to be afraid of, just ask.

WALLACE concentrates on watching his choice of words.

WALLACE

Right... so do you have any idea of the world events that took place this morning?

TACH

Yes, I know exactly what happened this morning: the same thing that happens every morning. Thousands of journalists around the world gave explicit details concerning the wide array of people who died yesterday. Personally I think that we should start the world over; maybe we'll get it right next time.

WALLACE

Do you mean that you're unconcerned by all those innocent people who died in Paddington Station?

TACH

Firstly, I'm not unconcerned.

WALLACE

Thank God!

TACH

I'm indifferent!

WALLACE

Pardon me?!

TACH

You should really have that thing fixed if you can't hear correctly. Would you like the name of a good physician? He practically cured me... Secondly, it's all the more reason for those people to die if they truly were "innocent".

WALLACE tries to remain calm. He's extremely frustrated. He takes a drink of his Peach Malibu. It tastes so disgusting that WALLACE chokes and almost throws up. He takes a minute to recompose himself while his stomach settles. He pushes the drink aside and looks at TACH'S two empty glasses.

WALLACE

Listen... right... so you are indifferent to all of the people who died meaningless deaths at Paddington Station at the hands of terrorists?

TACH

People have been going out of their way to kill each other for thousands of years and there is nothing you can do to stop them. It's a simple question of economics: there are too many people in the world and not enough food, so those people dying in London just mean that some other people someplace else can live.

WALLACE (becoming angry)

Don't you have any compunction or compassion?

TACH

Wherefore?

WALLACE (he can't believe his ears)

You may be the greatest writer of our century, Mister Tach, but your personal views are very extreme and I don't think that many people would agree with your views on this catastrophe...

TACH

That's because people don't think of the big picture... they're only concerned with their little lives...

WALLACE

Meaning?

TACH

For example, Phil Rite, the famous American talkshow host came in here the other day carrying a pocket full of pictures. He didn't want to know anything about me - he

was just possessed like some madman on showing me these photos.

TACH takes out the photos of PHIL RITE's asshole and hands them to WALLACE.

TACH
Look here...

WALLACE
Uggggghhhh...

Livid, WALLACE stares at the photos. He takes another sip of the Peach Malibu and again chokes on it.

TACH
You see, this man had an agenda: he came in here with one and only one intention. He wanted to display himself to me. I obviously wanted no part of this and he was escorted out.

WALLACE is becoming dazed, woozy.

TACH (confidently)
But you, you come in here, first you drink my fine liqueur, make me entertain you with stories, insist on discussing your recurring auditory problems, and now you want to ask me questions.

WALLACE is on the verge of vomiting. Is it just the photos or did GRAVELOCK spike his drink?

TACH
And there are people out there dying by the minute... but me I have at least another week to live so I recommend that you come back then...

TACH pushes a button to call GRAVELOCK.

GRAVELOCK enters carrying a little blue bucket!

TACH (to Gravelock)
Good idea, Gravelock, we don't want him ruining the carpet...

GRAVELOCK physically picks up WALLACE, puts the bucket by his chin, and escorts him out.

TACH (yelling to Gravelock)
Gravelock, don't forget to get the photos
back!

CUT TO:

EXT. ROOFTOP - DAY

HARK arrives on the edge of the roof with his zoom lens but he's too late. He just catches WALLACE leaving the front door... carrying a little blue bucket and then he focuses on the interior.

HARK'S POV: THROUGH BINOCULARS HE CAN SEE TACH ROLLING AROUND THE LIVINGROOM AND HILDA AND BERTHA DOWNSTAIRS

HARK
Jesus-freakin'-H-Christ!
The wanker!

CUT TO:

INT. MADELINE'S STUDIO - DAY

MADELINE is in her bathtub reading aloud a story to her cat. The cat is sitting on the edge of the basin listening attentively. MADELINE is holding a fat unbound manuscript and doing her best not to get it wet. She's giggling as she reads whatever she's reading.

MADELINE (reading aloud, romantically)
"Beautiful the moment, my hands, bleached
flesh, pure, didactic..."

MADELINE can't go on... it's just too much. She flings the manuscript onto the floor and the cat jumps down to take a look at it.

MADELINE (to the cat)
Can you believe that, Kevin?

CUT TO:

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

Once again TACH is wailing through another disgusting lunch.

CUT TO:

INT. SHED - DAY

HILDAGARD shuts the door behind her as she enters the shed to find GRAVELOCK sucking down champagne and caviar. He smiles affectionately at her.

GRAVELOCK (sexy)
You want to learn more English?

HILDAGARD cracks her whips and smiles.

CUT TO:

INT. MADELINE'S STUDIO - DAY

MADELINE is standing in front of the mirror trying on dresses that make her look important. She gives her comments to her cat who is sitting there in front of the manuscript.

MADELINE (to the cat)
What do you think, Robert? Too stuffy - heh?

CUT TO:

EXT. ROOFTOP - DAY

HARK and his CAMERAMAN are checking out the rooftop.

CAMERAMAN
I think this'll be perfect...

HARK
Right.

CAMERAMAN
But we better get here bright 'n early...

HARK
No problem, mate.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVINGROOM - DAY

TACH is smoking and watching television as HILDAGARD slowly opens the door and casually swankers into the room... it must be bath time. But is this the same HILDAGARD or is this a changed woman??? Her cheeks are flushed as if she just had the greatest orgasm of her life.

HILDAGARD (calm, almost sexy)
... bath...

TACH continues smoking. He doesn't even notice her.

CUT TO:

INT. MADELINE'S STUDIO - DAY

MADELINE zaps the television with the remote controls. Finally she stops on "The Phil Right Show".

MADELINE'S POV: THE TELEVISION

The credits roll for "THE PHIL RITE SHOW" - the pride of CNN - but behind PHIL's desk there's nobody. Suddenly MEL walks onto the set and sits down in PHIL's chair.

MEL (on the television)
Hi, I'm Mel Goldstein, producer of your favorite show, The Phil Rite Show...
ah, tonight, we have a situation that we've never before encountered... I know that you've seen advertisements all day for The Phil Rite Show with special guest Pretext Tach, but, ah... well we went to his home where Mister Tach took the liberty of physically assaulting your favorite host, Phil Rite.
Charges were filed yesterday and - even though the old man is going to die anyway - we here at CNN are committed on seeing justice pursued to the very end.
Unfortunately, tonight, Phil Rite is lying in bed unconscious due to the abuse that he suffered at the hands of Mister Tach...
... letters and flowers may be sent to him

care of the station and the doctors think that he'll come out of his coma-like state in a few days...

So anyway, there's no show tonight - and don't worry, all you sponsors out there - you'll get your money back, or at least some of it...

MEL scratches his head and fakes a smile.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVINGROOM - DUSK

TACH shuts off the televisions by remote control and closes the painting over them.

GRAVELOCK enters and goes around TACH to wheel him into the bedroom.

TACH

Do you realize that I can say more in one sentence, Gravelock, than most people can say in a month?

GRAVELOCK just nods at this ridiculous arrogance as they enter the bedroom.

FADE TO BLACK (END OF DAY)

INT. TACH'S BEDROOM - MORNING

TACH is quietly sleeping like a baby.
Suddenly there's a hand gently wiping his brow.
TACH starts to mumble.

TACH (mumbling almost incoherently)
Milkdugs, milkdugs, old man, wrinkled dug...

Abruptly he wakes.

The camera pulls back to reveal MADELINE standing over TACH.
TACH is terribly frightened.
MADELINE is calm and confident. She's acting motherly towards
TACH.

TACH
Who are you?

MADELINE (calmly, with a smile)
The angel of death...

TACH (after a moment)
You're early. How'd you get in?

MADELINE
Pops let me in.

TACH looks towards the door just as GRAVELOCK enters.
GRAVELOCK takes offense at being called "Pops"; he's not that
old.
He appears to be shocked to find MADELINE in TACH's bedroom.

TACH

Gravelock, what is this beast doing in my bedroom?!

GRAVELOCK (softly to Tach)
This is M, sir, the journalist *du jour*...
I'm sorry, sir, but I had no way of knowing that it was a woman, I just pulled her request out of the lottery, like you said... it was just signed "M"...

TACH (to Gravelock)
Out of the question, remove this nightmare from my sight at once!

GRAVELOCK (apologetically)
Yes, sir, I'm sorry. I asked her to wait in the receiving room. I have no idea how she got into your bedroom.

GRAVELOCK takes MADELINE by the arm. She grabs her bag and they leave the room.

CUT TO:

EXT. TACH RESIDENCE - MORNING

As usual all of the JOURNALISTS are setting up their crews in front of TACH's residence.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROOFTOP - MORNING

On the roof across the street, HARK SAMSOM and his CAMERAMAN finish setting up the camera with the special lens so that they can cover the upcoming interview and HARK can give the play-by-play.

HARK (to the Cameraman)
Jeez, I hope this isn't as boring as the other two wankers... who's turn is it today anyway?

CAMERAMAN
I dunno... I mean, nobody knows who's going to interview him today.

HARK looks curiously at TACH's house.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVINGROOM - MORNING

GRAVELOCK rolls TACH into the livingroom.
TACH is astonished to find MADELINE there flipping television channels by remote control.

MADELINE shuts off the television as they enter. She even flicks the right button to close the painting that covers the televisions.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROOFTOP - DAY

HARK looks through binoculars into the TACH residence while the cameraman tries to shoot the scene with a special lens.

HARK

Jesus, we must be late... there's already someone in there... and it's a chippie!

HARK (excited/into microphone)

Hark Samsom here high atop the roof across from Pretext Tach's veritable fortress where we are witnessing a remarkable feat.

As you can hear in the background, thousands of fellow members of the journalistic

profession and ordinary people like yourself are standing around the Tach estate here on

Northumberland Road to pay tribute to the last great writer of our little century as he gives the third and final interview of his life...

Pretext Tach himself is now entering the livingroom - a tremendous room with paintings valued at over twenty-million pounds and, of course, Tach's Nobel Prize sitting proudly on the mantelpiece.

There's a young woman sitting on the couch... she's dressed in what seems to be an ordinary skirt outfit - I can't make-out any brandnames from here - and here comes Tach

being rolled in by his manservant, the affable Sir Ernest Gravelock...

CUT TO:

INT. LIVINGROOM - DAY

GRAVELOCK wheels TACH past the fire and stops the wheelchair. GRAVELOCK slowly exits. TACH is more tense than usual. GRAVELOCK look suspiciously at MADELINE. She shoots a sharp glance back at him.

TACH
Move over there where the light is better;
it's quite difficult to tell just how
grotesque you really are...

Although she appears to be offended by this remark, MADELINE doesn't move.

TACH (slowly, calmly, seriously)
Mister Gravelock has assured me with his life that you will be the most entertaining and engaging beast that I have ever met - this should not be difficult seeing as I have never met any before. But due to my upcoming inevitable demise and the fact that your two male colleagues were such abyssal failures as human beings, I have agreed to grant you ten minutes of the little time I have left.

MADELINE gives a little gracious nod.
TACH moves the trains around and takes a handful of "Smarties".

TACH
He says that you are an expert on me.
(beat)
Tell me why you've come to see me.

MADELINE thinks with her head lowered for a moment.

NOTE: MADELINE practically always responds to TACH in the same tone that he addresses her at that particular moment. Thus, in the beginning it may seem that they are playing roles with each other.

MADELINE (slowly, sadly, seriously)
I've been diagnosed as having what's commonly known as John Lennon Syndrome, or is it John

Hinkley Syndrome? - I don't remember - it's when a fan identifies so strongly with a celebrity that he or she must kill that celebrity.

TACH (sharply)
I'm not amused.

MADELINE (sharply)
You wouldn't be - unless you were suicidal.

TACH
I'm afraid that it's too late to be suicidal.

MADELINE
Don't be.

TACH (quickly)
Don't be what?

MADELINE (smartly)
Afraid...

TACH is shocked that someone plays the same wordgames as him.
TACH looks at his watch.

TACH
You have nine minutes. Now tell me who you are.

MADELINE thinks for a second. She can't control herself any longer. She jumps up with a huge smile, runs over and tries to hug TACH.
TACH fights her off.

MADELINE (joyously)
I'm your long lost daughter!
Hi daddy, I'm home!

TACH (furiously)
Off me now!!!

MADELINE stands up straight and looks at TACH. At first she looks like a sad little girl, then she shrugs her shoulders, walks back to her seat and sits down.

TACH looks at her with disgust.
He hits the button on his wheelchair to call GRAVELOCK.

TACH (into microphone)

Gravelock, I want this beast removed promptly.

TACH waits for GRAVELOCK to come.

INSERT GRAVELOCK WATCHING THEM ON THE MONITOR: HE DOESN'T BUDGE

TACH is just staring at MADELINE. Neither one of them knows what to say. The silence is very awkward. Finally TACH recomposes himself and attacks MADELINE.

TACH
Are there many dead?

MADELINE
Who cares?!

TACH thinks for a second. He changes his mind about throwing her out. He decides to have some fun with her.

TACH
Would you care for a drink? My throat is parched.

MADELINE
Yes, please.

GRAVELOCK finally enters.

GRAVELOCK
Yes, sir?

TACH is about to say something when MADELINE interrupts him.

TACH
Gravelock...

MADELINE
Six Peach Malibus, please...

GRAVELOCK
Yes, ma'am...

GRAVELOCK exits.

TACH (confused)
What's going on here?

MADELINE

I'm going to interview you...

MADELINE makes the sign of the cross in TACH's direction.

MADELINE

... then I'm going to absolve you of all your sins so that you are free to enter heaven. You'd like that - wouldn't you?

TACH

If you're an expert on me than you would know that I don't believe in any godterms.

MADELINE

What *do* you believe in?

TACH

Somewhere inbetween my words and my thoughts lie my beliefs.

(beat) (seriously)

Now who are you?

MADELINE

I'm the Pope's daughter - I started out as a wet-dream and moved quickly up the papal ladder.

TACH is not smiling; he's a little confused, yet he's intrigued by this girl who seems to have the same ironic tone as he does.

MADELINE

The interview, and then I'll tell you who I am.

TACH looks at his watch again.

MADELINE

So you've been working hard on "Murder Most Fine", planning on leaving something for us after your tragic demise... "Some are born posthumously" - aren't they?

TACH nods gently 'yes'.

MADELINE

What do you have to say about "Murder Most Fine"?

TACH

Nothing.

(beat) (he can't resist)

Only that it's the greatest piece of work in the history of the human race and that if humanity was sufficiently intelligent not to murder itself within one-thousand years, it still wouldn't comprehend the profundity of "Murder".

Nobody has even truly "read" "Untitled" yet.

MADELINE

I've read it.

Twice.

TACH's face breaks into a wide grin.

TACH

I don't believe you. Nobody has read it twice - not even me!

MADELINE

We'll start at the beginning: How would a virgin know so much about prepubescent homosapiens? You must live a very active imaginary life...

TACH

It's the only life for me.

Imagination *is* ninety-nine percent of sex: women imagine that they're in love and men imagine that they're with a beautifully pure woman.

TACH looks MADELINE scrupulously up and down.

TACH

I'm sure that your lovers take hallucinogenic drugs before entering your danger zones.

MADELINE keeps her poker face.

TACH

Or - with a face like that - maybe you're one of the few who has been left behind without carnal knowledge...

MADELINE

Like you?

TACH
Are you certain that I'm a virgin?

MADELINE
You were a virgin when you gave the interview
after winning the Nobel Prize.

TACH
A lot can change in forty years...

MADELINE (smiling)
The more things change, the more they stay
the same...

He gives her a little smile to let her know that she's right.
He's still a virgin.

TACH hits a button and speaks into the small microphone on his
wheelchair.

TACH
Gravelock...
Where are the drinks?

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN/BASEMENT - DAY

GRAVELOCK walks past BERTHA and heads out the back door towards
the shed. Today he's in a hurry.

CUT TO:

EXT. TACH RESIDENCE - DAY

All of the JOURNALISTS are anxiously waiting outside the front
gate for the arrival of the third person to interview TACH.
They don't know that MADELINE is already inside.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROOFTOP - DAY

HARK continues to give the play-by-play of this exciting event.

HARK (trying to act excited)
... And there she goes again, trying to stare
her opponent down...

HARK (continued)
... but the mighty Tach sees an opening and
it looks like he's going to make his move...
and, yes, he's opening his mouth, and yes, I
believe he's saying something, but we can't
quite make out what it is...

CUT BACK TO:

INT. LIVINGROOM - DAY

TACH and MADELINE are just sitting there looking intensely at
each other.

TACH
You know so much about me - how is it that
you're not repulsed like the other
journalists?

MADELINE
I told you, I've really read "Untitled" and I
look forward with great anticipation to the
publication of "Murder Most Fine". You're no
monster to me, Pretext Tach; you're just a
little baby.
Nothing that you could say or do would
repulse me.

TACH (very seriously)
Would you care to place a wager on that?

INSERT WALLACE LYING ILL IN HIS HOSPITAL BED

MADELINE (very seriously)
With pleasure...

INSERT PHIL RITE LYING UNCONSCIOUS IN HIS HOSPITAL BED

TACH

I imagine that you'll want to bet our virginity... I imagine that the only thing that's ever been inside of you is some kind of doctor's instrument with little clippers at the end.

MADELINE (confidently)

I told you: you do live a very active imaginary life!

TACH

At least we have that in common - I'm quite sure that you don't spend much time in the company of others looking as gruesome as you do...

MADELINE (sharply)

The only thing that we have in common is that we're unique, Mister Tach...

TACH is shocked by this play on words, but he tries not to show it.

TACH (ignoring her/seriously)

If I repulse you then you have to get down on all fours and lick the dirt out from between my toes - OK?

She winces at the thought.

TACH

I've always fantasized about degrading a pretentious and arrogant uterus, I mean, journalist...

MADELINE

And what if I succeed at repulsing you - what do I win?

TACH

What do you want?

MADELINE

I want to be the first to read "Murder Most Fine".

TACH (adamantly)

Never!

MADELINE can tell that TACH isn't going to budge. She rethinks her position.

MADELINE

OK then, I've always fantasized about deflating and disemboweling five-hundred pounds of raw ectoplasm...
If you lose then you have to get down on your hands and knees and lick the dirt out between *my* toes.

TACH is completely repulsed by the idea but manages to contain himself.

TACH moves the trains around and pops a handful of "Smarties" into his mouth.

TACH

I expected nothing more from someone of your generation and sex.
You have yourself a deal... and let the best man win!
(beat)
You will rue this day!

They smile with conviction at each other.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROOFTOP - DAY

HARK continues with the play-by-play.

HARK (exaggerated)

Wooh! And it's getting pretty steamy in there, folks! From the way it looks from here I wouldn't be surprised if it came to blows in a matter of minutes...
And I can't say for sure, but I would hazard to guess that Little Miss Tuffet - whoever she is - our mystery journalist is going to break into tears any second now... Tach seems to be grueling away at her just like he did to those other fagets - oops, sorry, we'll cut that later - to those other journalists - if you can call them that - Phil Rite from "The Feel Alright Show" and Wallace Winsor the bureau chief for the London Times - that

rag!...

CUT TO:

EXT. COURTYARD - DAY

HILDAGARD exits the house carrying yet another rug and the flog to whip it. As usual she drops the carpet and continues heading towards the shed.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. LIVINGROOM - DAY

MADELINE nods to the painting that covers the television.

MADELINE

You must watch alot of television.

TACH

Only the commercials... and only commercials about food.

INSERT BERTHA WORKING IN KITCHEN ON TACH'S DISGUSTING LUNCH

TACH (sarcastically)

I find them highly erotic, women licking ice cream, housewives slurping jello, young liberal executive secretaries spreading mayonnaise on white bread...

MADELINE (after thinking)

Why is it that you despise women so much?

TACH

How could you possibly trust anything that bleeds for five days every month and doesn't die?

MADELINE (smartly)

So it's a question of trust - isn't it? Maybe you were betrayed at a young age and never recovered from it...

TACH stops to think. MADELINE has hit the bulls-eye.

TACH (angry)
Listen, Miss Freud, if I'm ever in the market
for a quick vivisection I'll be sure to ring
you, but I'm not, so please let me die in
peace.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. SHED - DAY

GRAVELOCK is watching the monitor as HILDAGARD enters with the
whip and a loving smile.
GRAVELOCK becomes even more uneasy than he already is.

GRAVELOCK
Uh... not today, honey... I have a
headache...

HILDAGARD (disappointed)
Vat?!

HILDAGARD turns away and exits.

GRAVELOCK'S POV: TACH AND MADELINE ON THE MONITOR

CUT BACK TO:

INT. LIVINGROOM - DAY

MADELINE
Let's talk about your childhood.

TACH
There's not much to tell...

CUT TO:

EXT. CHATEAU - DAY - 1930s - CONTINUE VOICE-OVER OF TACH

There's a young COUPLE working in the fields outside of a chateau
in the countryside of England.
The MAN is huge and wearing overalls and the WOMAN is shoveling
dirt with her hands.

The WOMAN is nine months pregnant and could give birth any second.

TACH (off)

It wasn't very pretty. My parents had little money and were forced to work as hired-hands on an estate...

MADELINE (off)

What absolute toddle!

CUT BACK TO:

INT. LIVINGROOM - DAY

TACH is livid to be interrupted like that.

MADELINE (sternly)

That's not how it was at all.

TACH

Why don't *you* tell *me* then, since you seem to know so much about me.

TACH is getting angrier and angrier.

MADELINE

"I know not seems", just what I've read in your books...

TACH

"Book", you must mean...

They look at each other inquisitively. MADELINE seems to have made a faux-pas, but maybe it was intentional.

TACH becomes more suspicious of her.

MADELINE

You're right, "book".

But it doesn't take a genius to know that your "book" conceals more than it reveals...

Now what could Pretext Tach be concealing?

MADELINE is walking on thin ice. TACH gives her a deadly look.

TACH

Cut the psycho-babble, Miss Freud!

MADELINE

All of this intellectual terrorism is just a disguise - a mask that a little boy wears to scare something away...

They stop and look at each other intensely.

TACH
What are you getting at?

MADELINE
Your childhood.

INSERT GRAVELOCK WATCHING THE MONITOR; HE'S WORRIED

TACH and MADELINE look at each other indignantly.
TACH sits there stolidly.

MADELINE
If you have nothing to say, then I'll begin.

You're parents died when you were two years old - boating accident, drowned. You were raised by your aunt and uncle who were very wealthy...
Are you becoming repulsed?
Remember our bet!

CUT TO:

EXT. CHATEAU - DAY - 1940s - CONTINUE VOICE-OVER OF MADELINE

Young TACH (12) is playing with his cousin LEONORA (10) in the woods behind the chateau. They are idyllic children, running and skipping through the woods. They are slightly reminiscent of Adam and Eve playing in the garden of Eden. It's summertime and they're only wearing bathing suits. Their bodies are pure white, hairless, agile and graceful. The PARENTS are off in the distance - it's the same COUPLE that we saw in TACH'S flashbacks.

MADELINE (off)
Your only companion was your cousin Leonora who you were very close to. You-two were practically inseparable, you were raised like brother and sister...
Neither one of you liked your aunt and uncle and, in fact, you thought that all adults

were fake, false, phony.
One day you convinced her to make a pact, to
swear that neither one of you would ever
become an adult, like in some kind of warped
fairytale.

The young TACH and LEONORA run happily through the fields.

MADELINE (off)
For some bizarre reason, you thought that
puberty only occurred during sleep, so you
never slept more than two hours a night. You
thought that adults were big and fat, so you
ate just the minimum to survive and maintain
your strength. You thought that water kept
you young, so you spent as much time as
possible in the lake.

The young TACH and LEONORA dive into the lake joyously and
affectionately playing with each other.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. LIVINGROOM DAY

TACH is trying to keep a straight face and show no emotions.
MADELINE is looking sharply at him.

MADELINE
As time went on, both of the children
realized that their eden was slowly becoming
the hell that their parents were condemned to
live - isn't that right, Mister Tach?

TACH doesn't respond; he's in his own hazy world of remembrance.

MADELINE
Should I go on?

No response.
Finally TACH gives a slight nod.

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. CHATEAU - DAY - 1930s - CONTINUE VOICE-OVER OF MADELINE

The young TACH (14) and LEONORA (12) are joyously playing in the lake.

MADELINE (off)
You and Leonora swore never to become adults.
You solemnly vowed that the first one to reach puberty would die at the hands of the other, the remaining child.
(beat)
You were fourteen; it was the day of her twelfth birthday; you were swimming in the lake that day, like everyday...

The young TACH and LEONORA splash each other in the lake.

TACH (off) (softly)
Yes, I remember...

MADELINE (off)
And you saw something in the water next to Leonora - didn't you?

Next to the young LEONORA in the water there's a small spot of blood that rises from between her legs and disperses near the surface of the lake.

TACH (off) (softly)
Yes, I remember...

Young LEONORA tries to hide the blood by dispersing the water around it, but young TACH has already caught a glimpse of it.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. LIVINGROOM - DAY

CLOSE ON TACH'S FAT BOYISH SAD FACE

TACH is full of emotions as he remembers what happens that day. He keeps his composure sufficiently to finish the story.

TACH (emotionally, staring into space)
And then we get out of the water, slowly... both of us knew what was going to happen...

MADELINE
What?

There's silence.

INSERT GRAVELOCK INTENSELY WATCHING TACH AND MADELINE ON THE MONITOR

TACH
She was so beautiful, so precious...

MADELINE
You were sure that she couldn't stay that way, that she didn't want to become a woman...

TACH
She didn't have to say it, it was obvious.

MADELINE
So she never actually told you that she wanted to die, did she?

TACH (slowly and deliberately)
It wasn't necessary; I knew what she wanted.
Nobody knows a person better than their murderer.

MADELINE contains her fury and anger in light of TACH'S confession.

TACH
But you already knew that - didn't you?
That's why you're here...

TACH and MADELINE look at each other fiercely.

TACH
Who are you?

MADELINE thinks again for a moment then seems to go into a sort of trance.

MADELINE (ominously, rising from her seat)
I'm the ghost of Leonora... ha ha ha...

TACH just shakes his head in disbelief.
MADELINE calms down.

TACH

I don't have time for games, I'm a dying man.

MADELINE

You have plenty of time for games. You're a murderer and you've been condemned to death.

TACH

You knew that I was a murderer just from reading "Untitled"?

MADELINE

I wasn't sure... until now.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROOFTOP - DAY

HARK is becoming bored with what's going on.
He can't think of things to say anymore.

HARK (into microphone)

And it looks like they could break into a samba or watuzi any second now...

The CAMERAMAN lets the camera down off his shoulder.
HARK drops the microphone.

HARK (about Tach)

The wanker!

CUT BACK TO:

INT. LIVINGROOM - DAY

MADELINE

It was hard to believe that a Nobel prizewinner was a cold-blooded murderer...

INSERT PHIL RITE STILL LYING UNCONSCIOUS IN HIS HOSPITAL BED

TACH

Do you know any Nobel prizewinners who are not murderers? Kissinger, Gorbachev...

MADELINE

But you won in literature...

TACH
Hemingway, Pirandello, Kawabata...

INSERT WALLACE LYING ILL IN HIS HOSPITAL BED

There's silence as TACH and MADELINE reflect for a moment.
TACH continues speaking calmly and intelligently.

TACH (thinking aloud)
The real problem was killing her parents, my
aunt and uncle...

MADELINE
What?!

TACH
I was sure that they suspected me...
But do you realize how hard it is to set an
old stone chateau on fire? It took aeons of
planning. Have you ever set an old stone
chateau on fire?

MADELINE is appalled but knows that she can't show her repulsion
because she'll lose the bet.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROOFTOP - DAY

HARK decides to descend since nothing exciting is happening in
TACH's house.

HARK
C'mon, let's pack it up, go to the pub, get
some ales...
Freakin' boring, I tell you!
Watching some fat rich bastard talking to
some chippie... that's not my idea of a good
time, I tell you...

They pack up the camera and head back towards the emergency exit.

CUT TO:

EXT. TACH RESIDENCE - DAY

All of the JOURNALISTS are getting anxious and agitated. They decide to ring the bell.

CUT TO:

INT. SHED - DAY

GRAVELOCK hears the JOURNALISTS ringing the bell but decides to do nothing. He's too involved with watching TACH and MADELINE.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. LIVINGROOM - DAY

Suddenly TACH springs to life. He's angry and aggressive.

TACH

So how do you know all these things about me that nobody else knows? Archives from the chateau...? Why do you care so much about my past, anyway?!

Who are you?

MADELINE (diligently)

I'm from the extreme party of Militant Feminists United. I think that you refer to us as "Dykes on Bikes" or "Chicks with Dicks" or something like that...

TACH

You're not a journalist?

MADELINE

No, I'm a feminist.

TACH (surprised)

And you're here to avenge your sisters for my having insulted them?

MADELINE

We're a very close family - do you know what it's like to change a carburetor with another woman? No, I guess you wouldn't.

(beat)

Think about it - who could know so much about you? Why don't you use a little bit of that vast imaginary life of yours. By the way, how are we going to get you out of that wheelchair so that you can lick the dirt from my feet?

TACH is repulsed by this idea. He becomes enraged.

TACH (violently)

You miserable rabid pig! You snuck into my house and went through my things... you terrible infested tart!

MADELINE (firmly/sarcastically)

Try again, genius!

TACH doesn't know what to say.

TACH (upset)

Get out of here! Go tell the world that you met a murderer... by the time they believe you I'll be dead and then everyone will rush to the stores to buy my work! I insist that you leave now!

TACH pushes a button next to him and the double doors open.
MADELINE stands.

TACH (calling out)

Gravelock! Gravelock!

(to himself)

Where are those goddamn Peach Malibus?!

CUT TO:

INT. SHED - DAY

GRAVELOCK sees TACH calling for him on the monitor and stands up.
He starts frantically looking around the shed for something.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. LIVINGROOM - DAY

MADELINE heads for the double doors.
When she gets to them she stops and turns around.

MADELINE
When was the last time that you looked at the
manuscript for "Murder Most Fine"?

TACH looks at his watch.

TACH
Your ten minutes are long over!
Now get out!

MADELINE (smartly)
The unfinished masterpiece that you're going
to leave for posterity... where is it?

MADELINE walks back over towards TACH.
TACH is becoming even more infuriated.

TACH
What's your point - you...

MADELINE (agitated)
Can we stop with the namecalling, please?
It's getting a little tiresome...

She stops right in front of him and begins to scream.

MADELINE (screaming while shaking her finger
in his face)
And I want that dirty little mouth of yours
nice and clean for when you lick my feet...
you fat worthless piece of shit!!!

TACH looks at MADELINE like a little boy looking at his mother
scolding him.

MADELINE calms herself down; she sits back down.

TACH calmly pushes the button again and the double doors close.

CUT TO:

EXT. TACH RESIDENCE - DAY

Some of the JOURNALISTS start to climb the fence. They want to get inside to find out what's going on.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. LIVINGROOM - DAY

MADELINE

"Murder Most Fine", it's an interesting inversion of Shakespeare's "Murder most foul, as in the best it is." Do you take yourself for King Hamlet or King Claudius?

INSERT GRAVELOCK STILL NERVOUSLY WATCHING ON THE MONITOR

TACH (deadly serious)

How do you know so much about "Murder Most Fine"?

MADELINE

Do you think that being strangled is a murder most fine, or most foul?!

TACH reflects for a moment; something is wrong here.

TACH

Strangulation is a cultivated taste!

They look at each other squarely.

INSERT BERTHA PREPARING TACH'S DISGUSTING LUNCH

TACH sighs and decides to be honest with MADELINE.

TACH

It was how she would've wanted it...

MADELINE (indignantly)

How she would have wanted it?!

TACH

Yes, now she will live forever in her pure state, in "Murder Most Fine".

INSERT GRAVELOCK WATCHING THEM ON THE MONITOR: GRAVELOCK HAS

FOUND WHAT HE WAS LOOKING FOR; HE'S SITTING THERE WATCHING THE MONITOR AND HE'S HOLDING AN ENORMOUS ELEPHANT GUN

MADELINE

Really? Well, where is it? Where do you keep your only copy?

TACH reflects for a moment.

TACH (seriously)

Listen, you know that I would never lick the dirt from between your toes, but I will make you a deal. I'll let you read the first sentence of "Murder Most Fine".

MADELINE smiles. She appears to be all too content to read the first sentence of "Murder Most Fine".

TACH

It's right over there under the bureau.

MADELINE gets up and walks over to the bureau. She bends down on her hands and knees and swipes her hand under the bureau.

MADELINE

Nope... try again.

MADELINE stands-up.

TACH

But I put it there myself last week...

MADELINE

So you can get out of that wheelchair - you fat slob!

CUT TO:

EXT. TACH RESIDENCE - DAY

The JOURNALISTS are getting ornery. They're starting to make a ruckus and are trying to jump the fence.

CUT TO:

INT. SHED - DAY

On the monitor GRAVELOCK spots the JOURNALISTS who are trying to jump the fence. He quickly zaps a button next to the monitor and concentrates again on MADELINE and TACH.

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. TACH RESIDENCE - DAY

An electric shock goes through the fence and jolts all of the JOURNALISTS who fall immediately off of the fence.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVINGROOM - DAY

TACH is looking intently at MADELINE.

TACH
Where is it? Where's my manuscript?

MADELINE casually comes back over and sits down in her chair. TACH starts to panic.

MADELINE
I'll tell you where it is... it's safe and sound under the bureau...

TACH
Thank Goodness!

MADELINE (after a pause)
Yes, thank "*goodness*."
(beat)
My bureau!!

TACH grasps for air. He can't believe his ears. He wheels himself quickly over to the bureau and with tremendous effort slithers his fat body out of the wheelchair and onto the floor.

It takes him almost a full minute of struggling and when he's finally on the floor the wheelchair rolls away.

He sweeps his arm under the bureau but doesn't find anything.

TACH is absolutely livid with rage. He looks as if he's going to start screaming at MADELINE. His fat white face is turning quickly red.

MADELINE gets up and moves towards him.
She lowers her hand to take off her shoe.

MADELINE
As long as you're down there...

She moves her bare foot towards his angry face.

TACH
You...

MADELINE
I told you, you fat slob, no namecalling!

INSERT GRAVELOCK LOOKING INTENSELY AT THE MONITOR, STILL HOLDING THE ELEPHANT GUN

TACH
Where's my manuscript?! Where's my goddamn manuscript?!!

MADELINE (calmly)
Don't worry; it's safe and sound...

MADELINE begins to dangle her foot around his lips.
TACH is livid with rage, but has trouble moving because of his enormous size.

TACH (infuriated)
You read it?

MADELINE
Only the juicy parts...
Are you ready to lick the dirt from between my toes... you lost the bet.

TACH is trying in vain to get up.

TACH
You cheated! You already had the manuscript when you made the bet... you knew that that would infuriate me...

MADLINE (sharply)
And you cheated with Leonora, you knew that she would become a woman before you became a man! It's the law of nature.

TACH (sharply)
There are no "laws of nature"; the basis of nature is chaos.

INSERT GRAVELOCK WATCHING THEM ON THE MONITOR: HE'S ABOUT TO EXPLODE; HE STANDS UP AND GETS READY TO RUSH OUT WITH HIS GUN BUT HIS EYES ARE FIXED ON THE SCREEN

MADLINE moves her bare foot towards TACH's mouth. She's practically about to step on his face. She begins to scream at the top of her lungs.

MADLINE (ranting maniacally)
Pay the baker!! Pay the baker!! Pay the baker!! Pay the baker!!

TACH (resisting adamantly)
No! Never!!

MADLINE crams her foot into TACH'S face and begins to smile joyously.

TACH'S head smacks against the floor.

MADLINE realizes that TACH is no longer protesting and she stops to see what happened.

She looks down and...

CLOSE ON MADLINE'S HORROR STRICKEN FACE

CUT TO:

INT. SHED - DAY

GRAVELOCK rushes out with the elephant gun and heads towards the house.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. LIVINGROOM - DAY

MADELINE is standing over TACH's inert body.
She bends down to see if he's still breathing.

Disappointed, she calmly puts on her shoes and regards TACH with disdain.

She does not panic; she remains calm.

Finally - BAM! - she gives him a solid kick in the shoulder.

TACH doesn't budge.

She casually bends over and - SMACK!- slaps TACH's face.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

GRAVELOCK runs through the kitchen carrying the gun. HILDAGARD and BERTHA look at him queerly.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. LIVINGROOM - DAY

Slowly TACH begins to wake up.

TACH
Lift my head... lift my head... I can't
breath... please...

MADELINE grimaces and then decides to obey him.
She bends over and puts a pillow under his head.

As TACH comes back to life he launches into a long romantic speech.

TACH (passionately, romantically)
I saw it... I saw it. Leonora... I saw her
little face... and my little hands... around
her neck.
It was her birthday, the most beautiful day
in the world, a crystal clear sky, the sun

shimmering off the lake... I hope that everyone sees a day so splendid as that one that summer. It was sublime, sacred... there was a soft breeze winding through the trees...

CUT TO:

EXT. CHATEAU - DAY - CONTINUE VOICE-OVER OF TACH

Young TACH and LEONORA are slowly coming ashore. They start to play-fight and the playing turns to wrestling.

TACH (off) (romantically)
We hadn't slept all night; it was daybreak and we had just finished our morning swim... it was her birthday but it didn't mean anything to us because everyday was a birthday for us; we had no conception of days or weeks because we practically never slept, it was just like the summer was one long day... one long summer day of lovemaking...

Young TACH and LEONORA's wrestling grows more and more violent.

Young TACH slowly moves his hands up her shoulders.

TACH (off)
She was the most beautiful creature to ever walk the face of this godforsaken earth! Her lips were blue from the cold water and her skin was icy clean. She looked like an angel.

TACH's hands reach around her pristine neck.

TACH (off)
Then I saw the sun gleaming off of her sensuous neck... and I remembered the blood in the water and it hit me like a wave of thunder hitting the ground...

CUT BACK TO:

INT. LIVINGROOM - DAY

TACH is still on the floor.
MADELINE is watching him intensely.

CLOSE ON TACH'S FACE

TACH (emotionally)
There's nothing in the world like strangling
someone, especially someone you love. First
you feel all of the little bones and
cartilage contracting, then you feel them
slowly cracking...
Then she looked me dead in the eyes and then
all of the muscles in her neck and body went
limp... and it was at that moment that I
experienced the only orgasm of my life.

MADELINE covers her mouth in horror. She's repulsed by the
thought of the little girl dying at the same moment that this
grotesque man had an orgasm.

TACH (emotionally)
I know what you're thinking. You're thinking
that she suffered.
But it's not true.
It was very peaceful.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

The camera follows GRAVELOCK who is rushing to get to the
livingroom door. As he approaches it he slows down.

He leans the elephant gun and other weapons up against the door.
He tiptoes up to the doors and presses his ear up against them.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. LIVINGROOM - DAY

TACH (passionately)
It was only after that that I too became an
adult... and as an adult I began sleeping
alot and eating alot and imagining alot...
and I stopped "living"...

TACH becomes very emotional again.

TACH
And then I lived - *dead* - until now!
Look at my hands: I still have the hands of a
child. In my head it's still summer, but
outside it's winter. Forty years of the
deepest winter, I've lived!

MADELINE thinks for a moment.
Suddenly TACH breaks her concentration.

TACH
Have you ever experienced complete ecstasy,
Miss Whoever-you-are?

MADELINE shrugs her shoulders coldly.

INSERT GRAVELOCK LISTENING AT THE DOOR

TACH (with conviction)
I want you to strangle me...

MADELINE
But you're going to die soon enough...

TACH
No, I don't want to suffer any more.
Just promise me that you'll publish "Murder
Most Fine".
I want the world to know the real story, *my*
story...

MADELINE doesn't know how to respond.

TACH waits for a response from her but doesn't get any.

MADELINE thinks for a moment; she's confused.

TACH
You can even write the ending if you want,
but please, please make sure that it's
published.
I want you to strangle me; it will prove to
you where the power of my words lie.
(beat)
Go ahead... do it.

MADELINE (intensely)
You are deranged, completely mad...

TACH (seriously)
No, I'm perfectly lucid.

TACH looks MADELINE dead in the eyes.

MADELINE doesn't know what to do; she's feeling too many emotions at the same time.

She looks carefully at his corpulent neck and then she regards her hands.

TACH
Please... go ahead... I'm waiting...
please...

She slowly moves towards him. She crawls gently on top of his chest. Her hands move cautiously towards his neck.

TACH smiles at her. He closes his eyes and she begins to strangle him. He tries to remain calm as she grips his neck harder and harder. He begins to choke. His face turns even more deathly white than usual.

MADELINE's face is turning redder and redder with intensity.

TACH stops choking.

CLOSE ON MADELINE'S HATE-FILLED FACE

Suddenly she stops strangling him. We don't know if he dead or alive. Slowly she climbs off of him, composes herself, and walks over to her handbag.

INSERT GRAVELOCK WATCHING ANXIOUSLY AT THE DOOR: HE MOVES HIS HANDS TOWARDS THE DOORHANDLE BUT DOESN'T YET OPEN IT

TACH wakes up.

He's not dead.

TACH
Gravelock...

No response from GRAVELOCK.

From her bag MADELINE takes out TACH's only copy of the manuscript for "Murder Most Fine"...

TACH crawls over sufficiently to push a button to call GRAVELOCK.

TACH
Gravelock...

TACH tries to get up to stop her but he can't move.

GRAVELOCK bursts into the room with the elephant gun.

TACH
Gravelock, she has the only copy of Murder
Most Fine, take it from her!

GRAVELOCK rushes over to MADELINE and rips the manuscript from her hands.

GRAVELOCK stands there indignantly looking at MADELINE.
He holds the manuscript with care, as if it were his own.

TACH calms down.

GRAVELOCK leans the gun against the fireplace.

TACH
Good, old boy, good on you!

MADELINE looks sternly at TACH.

MADELINE
I've had enough... it's been a long day and I
haven't even had anything to eat yet.

There's silence for a moment.

INSERT BERTHA AND HILDA PUTTING THE FINAL TOUCHES ON TACH'S
DISGUSTING LUNCH

TACH, GRAVELOCK, AND MADELINE looks at each other bizarrely, as
if they don't really know who they are or why they are there.

GRAVELOCK (to Madeline)

Are you hungry?

MADELINE
Yeah...

GRAVELOCK (to Madeline)
I know a wonderful sushi place with a
teriyaki lunch special...

TACH is livid.

TACH
What?!?

MADELINE (to Gravelock)
That sounds fine.
C'mon, poppy, let's go...

GRAVELOCK's face breaks into a wide grin as he casually wings the
legacy into the fire.

MADELINE and GRAVELOCK head for the door.

TACH is left lying on the floor gasping for air, watching his
manuscript burn in the fire.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

GRAVELOCK escorts MADELINE down the hallway.

GRAVELOCK
What happened to your job? Don't you have to
get back to work?

MADELINE
Nah... I quit... I want to go to acting
school, daddy... I think I'm ready.

GRAVELOCK
Yeah, I guess so...

GRAVELOCK pulls out the envelope of \$50,000 that MEL had given to
him.

He hands the envelope to MADELINE.

MADELINE
What's this?

GRAVELOCK
It's for acting school.

MADELINE is amazed and excited.

MADELINE
Wow! Thanks!!

They open the front door leading outside and we can see all of the JOURNALISTS waiting on the other side of the gate.

GRAVELOCK
You were pretty damn good in there, honey!
MADELINE
It was just for you, dad...

FADE TO BLACK

EXT. LONDON/BOOKSTORE - DAY - ESTABLISHING SHOT

The camera whirls through London and slowly hones in on the exterior of a bookshop.

WRITTEN ON SCREEN

ONE YEAR LATER

HARK SAMSOM is standing in front of a bookstore that has a full window display and a lifesize poster of... GRAVELOCK.

HARK is dressed differently from when we've seen him last; he looks even cheaper.

In the window of the store are hundreds of copies of his book

entitled...

"A TERRIBLY FINE MURDER"

HARK SAMSOM

Hark Samsom here for "Essential Buys of the Week", the latest show telling you everything you'll need to live through the week... This week the number one product is a new book by Sir Ernest Gravelock. It's called "A Terribly Fine Murder" and I'm sure that you'll perish sometime this week if you don't read this book...

(Off) There's a huge explosion that shakes the ground beneath HARK's feet.

Some of the books in the display window fall.

HARK just shakes his head in disbelief... more terrorism.

An ambulance passes with its sirens blaring as we...

FADE TO BLACK

THE END