A BLANK PAGE in an old TYPEWRITER. Then, BAP-BAP-BAP: KEYS SLAM ONTO THE PAGE: the words "FADE IN". And...

...MUSIC BEGINS, dark, smoky, sexy - a TITLE SEQUENCE that takes us back to Hollywood in 1936:

We see a SKETCH of a beautiful GOWN; the sketch becomes SATIN being cut. Then a SASH is applied. Then that gown appears on the frame of a beautiful STARLET, magically lit on a STAGE.

This is MINNA DAVIS. And she is Hollywood. Movies. The dream.

Then, that fast, she's not real anymore. Suddenly, she's an OIL PAINTING hanging on a wall, immortalized forever in that same GOWN. Gorgeous. We PULL BACK - END TITLES - and we are:

1 INT. BRADY-AMERICAN LOT - EXEC. BLDG. - LOBBY - MORNING

MONROE STAHR studies the portrait soberly. He’s 33, handsome, impenetrable, a success. But haunted. Minna represents a huge loss for him – a huge regret too...


JERRY (O.S.)
Just changed her flowers, Mister Stahr.

We’re in the ART DECO LOBBY of BRADY-AMERICAN PICTURES. Chrome and polish. Great light fixtures overhead. Glamour. JERRY is the Guard; he used to be a silent film hero.

STAHR
Thanks, Jerry. Lilies tomorrow, okay?

JERRY
Sure thing, Mister Stahr.

Stahr exits, his face a mask. We CUT TO:

2 INT. STAHR’S OFFICE – BRADY-AMERICAN EXEC. BLDG. – MORNING

CELIA BRADY stands alone in Stahr’s plush, sun-lit office.

She’s 19, but eager to be older already. She’s also in love with Stahr – the Golden Boy of film... But it’s unrequited, and she knows it. So this office is heartache for her.

She eyes the PHOTOS in here – Stahr with Babe Ruth, Chaplin, Fairbanks. The high life. On the desk is a picture of that same beauty, MINNA DAVIS. Celia glares at it jealously.
On easels are PRODUCTION SKETCHES of an IRISH VILLAGE, circa 1910. On Stahr’s credenza is a beautiful VASE. Celia eyes it--

Knowing she shouldn’t, she grabs the VASE -- as if Stahr had just handed it to her. She even breathes out a:

    CELIA
    Monroe. Thank you. It’s lovely...

She clutches the VASE to her chest like an Oscar. Then--

--suddenly, a DOOR BEHIND CELIA opens. Someone entering. She turns, startled. The VASE FALLS -- and shatters into a dozen pieces, which is when we hear, sharply:

    STAHR
    Celia. Christ.

It’s Stahr, backlit like a God. Celia reddens, mortified.

    CELIA
    Monroe! I’m -- I’m so embarrassed.
    Was it from Minna?

    STAHR
    That’s not the point. Mary?

He blows by Celia, who’s so flustered she spits out a lie:

    CELIA
    I came here to talk to you about Spain of all things -- raising money for the Loyalists fighting Franco.

She shakes a TIN COIN-CAN that says “Support a Free Spain!” But Stahr’s focus is the vase. Just then, MARY GREER enters. She’s 30, Stahr’s #1 secretary, great in a crisis, steady.

    STAHR
    We’ll need some glue.

    MARY
    Right away, Mister Stahr.
    (gathering vase pieces)
    There won’t be any rushes from the Mountie picture; they lost the day to snow. And when you’re done with Mister Brady you have two meetings--

    STAHR
    Can it be fixed?

He meant the vase. Mary smiles. She knows him well.
MARY
I think so. Which meeting should I send in?

STAHR
The one with Celia’s fiance –
Mister White.

CELIA
Who, Wylie? He’s not my fiance.

STAHR
I heard he asked you to marry him.
Thank you, Mary.

Pieces gathered now, Mary leaves. Celia lingers.

CELIA
And did you have any reaction to--

STAHR
Yes. I thought you ought to wait
until he’d been sober for two
years. Or at least five minutes.

CELIA
Well that’s disappointing. Everyone
says I bloomed this Summer. I
thought you’d noticed.

STAHR
Let’s get you back to Vassar. You
can bloom some more.

She sags, crushed. He puts a dollar in her coin-can, as:

CELIA
When’re you going to take me
seriously, Monroe? I can help you.
I have ideas, great stories. Got
one about this bandleader who--

STAHR
I’m excited to hear it... after
you’ve graduated.

That hurt. He goes, grabbing THREE LARGE SKETCHES, leaving
Celia behind. We FOLLOW HIM into the windowed sunniness of:

3

INT. EXEC. BLDG. – STAHR’S OUTER OFFICE – CONTINUING

Mary is on the phone. So’s Stahr’s Secretary #2, FELICITY,
while Secretary #3, GRACIE, types a letter.
MARY (INTO PHONE) Is there anyone on the lot that does antique restoration?

FELICITY (INTO PHONE) I’m sorry, we can’t accept unsolicited manuscripts.

...and Stahr has TWO MEETINGS awaiting him. One is with CALDECOTT RIDDLE, producer - short, chubby, psychotic.

RIDDLE
I heard you were unhappy with the rushes, Monroe.

STAHR
Yes. I was.

RIDDLE
Mind if I ask why?

STAHR
Because he shot the whole thing on a 35 when it should’ve been a 50; all the tension was lost. And he cut the gag with the pith helmet. I loved that. And who dressed those natives? They looked like lollipops.

Felicity involuntarily giggles. Riddle reacts viciously:

RIDDLE
You’re fired.

Felicity gasps, thrown. Can he fire me?

STAHR
Easy, Caldy. There’re still a few things your family doesn’t own.

(hands him 10 PAGES)

My suggestions for your re-takes.

RIDDLE
So thorough.

STAHR
I’m not talented enough to be unprepared. Are you?

Riddle shrinks. Stahr heads past WYLIE WHITE (producer) and KAY MALONEY & MARV RIENMUND (writers).

STAHR (CONT’D)
Sorry, Fellas. I have some selling to do, and Pat’s expecting me.
WHITE
Did you get a chance to read the--

STAHR
Yes. It’s much better. I’ll be right back.

That much praise, and White, Reinmund, and Maloney light up. Approbation, from the Prince! Stahr turns to go - but:

CELIA (O.S.)
I only have two weeks, Monroe - then I fly back--

Celia is behind him in his doorway. Stahr smiles thinly. She realizes there’s an AUDIENCE out here. So she retreets, as--

INT. EXEC. BLDG. - BRADY’S OUTER OFFICE - CONTINUING

Stahr, sketches in hand, glides past secretary BIRDY PETERS.

STAHR
‘Morning, Birdy.

BIRDY
‘Morning, Mister Stahr.

Then he enters - the largest, fanciest office in Hollywood:

INT. PAT BRADY’S OFFICE - CONTINUING

VAST. Stahr passes paintings, gold-brocade sofas... to a grand, elevated DESK - where PAT BRADY sits. The Boss, 50. He’s brawny, imposing, charming, handsome, vain. A brawler.

STAHR
Ask someone to travel this far, Pat, you oughtta provide cab fare.

BRADY
I thought you Israelites were used to crossing the desert. (Stahr takes that well) Gary Cooper’s coming in to pitch me a comedy this morning. Interested?

STAHR
Heck of an actor.

BRADY
He’s a prostitute. Everyone who walks into this office is a prostitute; they wouldn’t be here if they didn’t want something. (Stahr sits) I like your new secretary, by the way. Felicity, is it?
STAHR
We have a deal about that, Pat. Anybody but my secretaries.

BRADY
And what if SHE is attracted to ME, hmmm? The human heart is a hard muscle to fathom.

STAHR
Your heart’s not the muscle I’m worried about at the moment.

BRADY
(smiles, “touche”, then:)
I just hate to see a pretty secretary go to waste. What was my daughter doing in your office?

STAHR
A bit of re-decorating.

BRADY
I don’t like her spending too much time in this environment; it’s unhealthy. Did you see this?

He tosses today’s VARIETY at Stahr. The HEADLINE: “LAEMMLE OUT AT UNIVERSAL. STUDIO IN RECEIVERSHIP”. Stahr nods calmly.

STAHR
That’s the thing about Variety. It takes ten minutes to read and two hours to get over. Pat, I--

BRADY
I wanna start doing what MGM is doing. They’re the only shop that’s making any money.


BRADY (CONT’D)
My new discovery. Sally Sweet. She can sing, dance, cries at the drop of a hat. Knock Shirley Temple right on her ass. We build a musical around her, farm-girl with dreams of the big city, that kind of thing. A whole series. (Stahr is a blank)
I know, the creative side’s supposed to be your domain, but--
STAHR
I’m always open to a good idea.

Silence... meaning: “This isn’t one.” Brady bristles.

BRADY
Better show me your sketches before they burn a hole in your lap.

Stahr stands up SKETCH #1, a HUGE STEAMSHIP passing through New York Harbor, 1910. The Statue of Liberty, Manhattan.

Then SKETCH #2, the DECK of that ship – a mass of FUTURE AMERICANS, huddled masses. And:

SKETCH #3, TIGHTER on two of the FACES on board, a YOUNG GIRL and her BROTHER. Hope in their eyes. Immigrant awe.

BRADY (CONT'D)
What’s this?

STAHR
The promise of America in a single shot: big, cinematic. And true. We’d mount the camera on a plane.

BRADY
Sounds expensive.

STAHR
But memorable. And half the country came over on a boat like that.

BRADY
You’re breaking me, ya know.

STAHR
Could be our Oscar, Pat.

BRADY
We don’t need an Oscar.

STAHR
Yes we do. Just think how much it’ll impress Felicity.

Brady grins. He trusts Stahr’s acumen. CUT TO:

EXT. BRADY-AMERICAN LOT - MORNING

SOUND-STAGES, PROP-TRUCKS, EXTRAS. Stahr meanders happily.

The HOLLYWOODLAND SIGN is visible in the nearby hills; it always charges him up. He passes two BLUSHING SECRETARIES.
BLUSHING SEC’Y #1
Good Morning, Mister Stahr.

BLUSHING SEC’Y #2
Good Morning, Mister Stahr.

Stahr smiles a Good Morning, thrilling them. Then he glides around a corner, past the open door of a REHEARSAL STAGE, someone SINGING inside, beautifully. Then he hears:

A JOYOUS SHRIEK from a TEENAGE GIRL bursting out a door:

JOYOUS TEENAGE GIRL
I got it! I got it! They cast me!

She leaps into the arms of her MOTHER, FATHER, and LITTLE BROTHER. Elation. Moments like that still touch Stahr. A lot.

INT. BRADY LOT - STAGE 11 - MOMENTS LATER

A swanky PARK AVE. APARTMENT SET. Upscale, POSH. A STAGEHAND totes a SCRIPT: “AMERICAN DREAM - THE STORY OF MINNA DAVIS.”

STAGEHAND
Rehearsal up!

REVEAL: GENTS in TUXES and LADIES in GOWNS. And a GRAND-DAME pouring CHAMPAGNE into a glass at the top of a PYRAMID of glasses, the bubbly flowing into each of them. Wow...

Stahr breezes to a corner - where a COSTUMER, Gladys, holds a MAID’S UNIFORM up against BESS BURROWS, a beautiful starlet.

STAHR
Hello, Bess! Hello, Gladys!

GLADYS
Good morning. This one?

She lowers the outfit, revealing Bess’ wondrous body: bra and panties. Stahr waits, as if standing in front of a mannequin--

GLADYS (CONT’D)
Or this one.

Gladys holds ANOTHER MAID-UNIFORM up against Bess, awaiting final word. Stahr thinks about it... then:

STAHR
This one. My my. A beautiful actress, on a beautiful set, in my favorite picture. What a morning.
Thanks, Bess.

Bess beams. But then Stahr breezes out... and Bess sags, deflated. Her crush on him obvious. Gladys gets it--
GLADYS
Cheer up, Honey. It isn’t you. He just doesn’t date.

BESS BURROWS
Maybe if I’d been stark naked.

GLADYS
A couple girls have tried it. But ya can’t compete with a ghost.

That registers. We CUT TO:

8 Ext. Brady Lot - Writers’ Bldg. - Establishing - Morning
Two stories, a balcony. We hear Typewriters Clacking.

9 Ext. Writers’ Bldg. - 2nd Floor Balcony - Same
Celia heads for a door - knocking as she enters.

CELIA
Hello?

10 Int. Hackett’s Office - Writers’ Bldg. - Continuing
No one’s here. But Half-Walls separate this office from the offices around it - so on all sides of Celia we hear Typing, talking. She notes the Headlines tacked to a wall in here:

Hitler occupies Rhineland! Civil War in Spain! Mussolini invades Ethiopia! And from Variety: “Brady Lot Expanding - N.Y. Street Planned.” Celia tightens, as--

HACKETT (O.S.)
Did you at least knock first?

Uh-oh. Celia turns. Here’s Aubrey Hackett: 28, writer, intellect, and born protester. This is his office.

HACKETT (CONT’D)
I guess you don’t have to.

CELIA
Sorry. I was--
(thrusts her can forward)
Support the Loyalists in Spain?

HACKETT
Gosh, and I was hoping you’d come here to ask me to the Screenwriters’ Ball - much as I like to watch you shake your can.
She’s at a loss. He stuffs a ONE-DOLLAR PIECE into the can. There’s a FLIER on the desk: “HOLLYWOOD WORKERS’ COALITION – MEETING” – date, time, and address. She eyes it, as:

HACKETT (CONT’D)
Do you believe in them? Unions? For drivers? Grips? Stitchers...

CELIA
Of course. I talk to my father about it all the time.
   (before Hackett says it:)
“So why’s he about to build his Park Avenue set non-union?” Right? I don’t know.
   (Hackett waiting...) Guess I’m kind of a joke to you.

HACKETT
Not as long as his name’s on those gates.

EXT. WRITERS’ BLDG. – OUTDOOR STAIRS – SAME
Stahr pauses outside the building... listening. Something he hears displeases him... so he climbs the steps.

INT. WRITERS’ BLDG. – HACKETT’S OFFICE – RESUMING
STAHR ENTERS. No knock. Celia thrills but stifles it.

STAHR
Didn’t hear your keys clacking, Aubrey. Are you stuck?

HACKETT
I was baby-sitting.

STAHR
I’d rather you went to church:
   (re: a SCRIPT) This draft. Your Minister character is starting to sound like something from The Scarlet Letter.

HACKETT
Yeah? When’s the last time you were in a church?

STAHR
I do my praying at the box office. You know that.

He grins, leans over one of those HALF-WALLS to:
Meet DESMOND DAVIS: 40, thin - and, right now, jumpy, rheumy, racked, but TYPING FURIOUSLY - like a guy on Benzedrine.

STAHRL
And where’re your pages, Des?

DAVIS
I’m still working on your notes from the night before! Don’t you ever sleep?

STAHRL
We’re three days out, Des. And Pat approved the boat. Give me pages.

We spot the TITLE PAGE of the script he’s working on: “AMERICAN DREAM - THE STORY OF MINNA DAVIS.”

Davis keeps typing. Manically, looking like hell. He lets his right hand hold up pages; the left keeps typing.

HACKETT
This is why people need unions.

STAHRL
To church, Aubrey.

Stahr heads out. Davis keeps pounding away. We CUT TO:

INT. BRADY-AMERICAN - EXEC. BUILDING LOBBY - MORNING

Stahr enters just in time to hear:

HAZEL (O.S.)
And this, of course, is Minna Davis.

He stops. A STUDIO-TOUR GROUP stares at Minna’s portrait. Their GUIDE is HAZEL WARD, 27, ingenue-pretty, instantly aware of Stahr’s presence. So she turns it on a bit, as:

HAZEL (CONT’D)
...who was discovered at a drug store notions-counter and went on to become filmdom’s biggest star... until she died tragically in a fire, two years ago. All Hollywood wept. But she’ll be with us forever - and her story starts shooting this week, on Stage 11!

Stahr passes through. But Hazel keeps selling--
HAZEL (CONT'D)
Now let’s go see a Saharan Desert!

15 INT. EXEC. BLDG. - BRADY’S OUTER OFFICE - MINUTES LATER
Stahr breezes past Birdy, who suddenly keeps her head down as
if unwilling to meet his eye. Stahr notes it.

STAHR
Everything okay, Birdy?

No reply. Something’s off. Stahr enters Brady’s office:

16 INT. EXEC. BLDG. - BRADY’S OFFICE - CONTINUING
Stahr takes that long walk again. Brady sits with VANDERBILT
RIDDLE: 65, WASP New York banker, nattily-dressed, a very big
deal on this lot. Pure Patrician arrogance. And...

...DR. GEORG GYSSLING. 60, benign smile. But his briefcase
bears an OFFICIAL NAZI SWASTIKA EMBLEM. Stahr STOPS. Uh-oh.

Now he knows why Birdy couldn’t meet his eye.

STAHR
Pat. Vandy.

BRADY
Monroe, meet the new German Consul
here in L.A. - Dr. Georg Gyssling.

STAHR
Oh yeah? Doctor of what?

BRADY
Dr. Gyssling is going to be
consulting on our production slate.
(Stahr glares, sits)
They have a new law. “Article
Fifteen” you said it was, Doctor?

GYSSLING
(thick German accent)
First, let me say - there is no
bigger film fan than the Fuhrer. He
watches a picture every night
before retiring.

STAHR
Big fan of Shirley Temple, I’m
told.

GYSSLING
Just so. Wonderful child.
BRADY
Doctor Gyssling just wants to make sure we’re not producing anything that would be offensive to the German people.

STAHR
The German people have produced a few things that are offensive to me. Do I get to consult on that?

Brady wishes Stahr would tone it down. Not possible.

GYSSLING
The article is clear: any company distributing a picture containing anti-German content will no longer be granted permits to export films to Germany. That is now Reich-law.

STAHR
When it’s U.S. law, or Hollywood law, let me know. Until then--

VANDERBILT RIDDLE
He’s already been to Paramount, Twentieth, Universal, Warners, and MGM. They’ve all gone along.

STAHR
I’ll bet. Hafta make sure the Führer has something to watch every night, don’t we?

BRADY
It’s still our studio, Monroe. He’s--

STAHR
--Pat, I have pictures to see to.

With that, Stahr heads for the door. Then he STOPS, suddenly: A sharp STABBING PAIN in his chest stops his breath. Bang.

He’s used to it, a shock that will soon subside (he hopes). So he grits his teeth and shakes it off, and goes. Gyssling and Riddle missed it. Brady didn’t. We CUT TO:

EXT. STUDIO PERIMETER/HOOVERVILLE - DUSK

A PERIMETER WALL. On the other side of it, abutting Brady-American, is a very different kind of lot: a HOOVERVILLE, in what used to be a JUNKYARD. Shacks, lean-to’s. PEOPLE.
Brady eyes them from his side of the fence. Beside him is COLM VICKERS, 45, Cockney, Brady’s HEAD OF STUDIO SECURITY. Vickers is fiercely loyal - and a bit scary.

BRADY
I warned the Mayor about this, didn’t I? I told him it was no place for a Hooverville. And look. How’m I suppose to walk Garbo or Carole Lombard past this?

VICKERS
Damn pig sty.

BRADY
So now I’ll be the heartless mogul who drove these poor people away.

VICKERS
Park Avenue’s gotta go somewhere.

Brady looks out on an American disaster, shakes his head. A CLOUD rumbles. We CUT TO:

18
EXT. VINE ST. - NIGHT

RAIN pounds three umbrella-less DOWN-AND-OUTERS as they walk: MAX MINER, 22, Oklahoman, livid at his misfortune; kid brother NATHAN, 8; their sister DARLA (14, just budding).

They pass by a RELIGIOUS NUT in a PYRAMID HAT whose SIGN says “REPENT! The End is Near!” Miner leads Darla and Nathan into:

19
EXT. AN ALLEY OFF OF VINE - CONTINUING

THUNDER RUMBLES. Nowhere to go. Miner spots a metal DOOR. He throws it open and pulls the kids inside, seeking refuge:

20
INT. MOVIE THEATRE - BACK EXIT/WALKWAY - CONTINUING

A THEATRE. Behind HEAVY CURTAINS, the sound of a NEWSREEL. Nathan’s about to peek at it when Darla startles. Here’s why:

In a dark corner, half-hidden, a HOOKER is on her knees fellating a MAN while clutching a $2 BILL. Raw and stark. Darla and Nathan stare. Miner turns them away, when:

USHER (O.S.)
Hey! Get outta here!

It’s an ONCOMING USHER, flashlight in hand. The Hooker and her JOHN turn, then stumble out into the rain, fast. Then the Usher turns... and sees the Miners. He’s in no mood.
USHER (CONT’D)
You too. Out.

MINER
Where, Mister? Tell me where?

Usher sighs. Shit. Eyeing them... an eternity...

USHER
Okay. One night. But you’re gone in the morning - right?

They nod. Usher goes. Miner huddles his siblings. On the other side of that curtain, the MOVIE AUDIENCE laughs.

MOVIE POSTERS line the walls back here. One is “I’m No Saint” starring MINNA DAVIS. Darla stares at it, longingly. We PUSH IN ON MINNA’S IMAGE – then PULL BACK and we are:

INT. STAHR’S PACKARD/EXT. PCH - MOVING - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

That same MINNA DAVIS, gorgeous, wind-blown, beside Stahr as he drives up PCH. 10 p.m., the top down. The year is 1932. Malibu is still rustic, still the untouched Golden West--

MINNA
You’re thinking about something...
I can always tell. A picture?

Minna has a GORGEOUS IRISH BROGUE. And Stahr is mad for her - he pulls her in close. His beautiful, famous wife...

STAHR
It’s not fully formed yet.

MINNA
Tell me anyway...

She nods. Stahr collects himself, PCH whipping past--

STAHR
I want to make a picture about you.

MINNA
You’re joking.

STAHR
No. Your story: a young girl, starving in Ireland. Father dead, mother overwhelmed. She’s got ONE thing that gives her hope - the promise of America as seen through the movies she sneaks into every

(MORE)
STAHR (CONT'D)
week. I know what that feels like - except for the Irish part.

MINNA
(smiles... then:)
You’re awfully sweet - but I don’t think anybody would care about--

STAHR
She and her kid brother make the crossing in steerage. But the “relatives” awaiting them in Hell’s Kitchen put them to work in a sweatshop. It gets so bad she and the brother live in a subway tunnel for two years... but one break, one talent scout who spots her behind a notions counter... and she winds up being YOU. “American Dream - the Story of Minna Davis.” Think how many people it would inspire.

MINNA
You’re serious.

Yep. And she’s deeply touched... and engaged now.

MINNA (CONT'D)
Who’d play you?

STAHR
Story’s over long before I show up. You step off a train, ask someone for directions to Hollywood - we know the rest. (she considers it) Would ya like that, being immortal?

MINNA
I think marrying you did that.

STAHR
(laughs, then:)
Your brother can write it. He’s really gotten quite good.

She smiles. The wind blows her hair. What a star.

STAHR (CONT'D)
I want to tell your story, Minna.

MINNA
Long as it has a happy ending.
How could it not? He grins. She kisses him. We SLAM TO:

INT. STAHR’S HOME - BEDROOM - BEVERLY HILLS (NOW)

Moonlight through sheer curtains. Reflections from a SWIMMING POOL twinkle on the ceiling. Stahr, on satin sheets, eyes a picture of Minna on the dresser. We RETURN TO:

INT. MOVIE THEATRE - BACK EXIT/WALKWAY/AUDITORIUM - RESUMING

Miner sleeps against a wall. But his younger siblings aren’t beside him: Nathan and Darla are peeking out from behind the curtain to steal a glimpse at the MOVIE playing here.

It’s a COMEDY, and they’re laughing, loving it. We stay on their faces as the movie washes over them. Pure joy. Fun. Delight. Then a sudden scare from a shock on the screen--

And for a second, they’re not homeless; they’re just transported. It’s the magic of a movie. We DISSOLVE TO:

INT. STAGE 1 - BRADY-AMERICAN - DAY

A big SET, with a bejeweled HINDU TEMPLE facade and a huge SHIVA HEAD. Captivating. Ancient. Powerful. Like a dream.

But Stahr stares at it, displeased. Very.

Then RED RIDINGWOOD, (director, 60), hurries up--

RIDINGWOOD
I know all about the pith helmet gag, Monroe. It’s going back in! Gable’s already in make-up.

STAHR
You didn’t finish the Shiva Head.

RIDINGWOOD
Hmmm?

STAHR
Look at it. You only finished the front and sides.

RIDINGWOOD
Seemed like a foolish place to spend your money, Monroe, since we’re not shooting that angle.

STAHR
Let me worry about that. Just get it finished, before we shoot.
RIDINGWOOD
But no one’ll ever see it--

STAHR
The ACTORS’l see it. Ya want them
reacting to a God or a phony prop?

RIDINGWOOD
They’re pro’s, Monroe. I--

STAHR
Red.

Ridingwood’s silent. Hackett, a few feet away, can’t resist
drifting closer. He feels a “moment” coming on. Here it is:

STAHR (CONT’D)
My father was a carpenter. One
night I got out of bed, found him
at his workbench, sanding the back
of a drawer, painting it. I said,
“Dad. Why’re you painting the back
of a drawer? No one’ll ever see
it.” He looked at me and said,
“I’ll see it.” Understand?

RIDINGWOOD
Yes. We’ll take care of it.

Stahr nods, walks away. Hackett joins him, grinning--

HACKETT
I thought your father sold shirt-
trims.

STAHR
You writing a biography now?

Hackett loved that. Stahr walks away...

EXT. BRADY LOT - OUTSIDE STAGE 1 - MOMENTS LATER

Stahr exits, still irritated, when--

A SEDAN rumbles past him: swastika on the door, Gyssling
behind the wheel. Their eyes meet. Fuck. We CUT TO:

INT. BRADY-AMERICAN - EXEC. BLDG. - CONF. ROOM - DAY

Gyssling has 12 SCRIPTS before him, pages dog-eared, marked
with RED PEN, SCENES X’d out. BRADY sits beside him, silent.

Stahr sits opposite them. Pensive, braced silence... until--
GYSSLING
My congratulations on “The Bells of Boston.” Should make a fine picture. Triumph of the common man.
(Stahr nods... waiting)
The others are more worrisome. The kindly doctor in that comedy - you’ve named him Goldberg - we’d like that changed. Perhaps Smith.

STAHR
In Borough Park, Brooklyn?

GYSSLING
Do you want the film released in Germany or don’t you?

Stahr looks to Brady, who does NOT intervene. So--

GYSSLING (CONT’D)
And your villain in that thriller is described here as “Nordic”. I’ll want to see pictures before that role is cast.
(Stahr starting to boil)
The Fuhrer has also decreed that foreign companies doing business in Germany must now rid their German branches of any Jewish personnel. Your co-operation is requested.

STAHR
That’s half our Berlin office.

GYSSLING
Yes. Sadly, they’ll have to go.

STAHR
Perhaps we could just change all their names to Smith.

GYSSLING
A snail might take off its shell - but it is still a snail.

STAHR
Are we through here?

GYSSLING
No. This one won’t do at all.

He picks up “The Story of Minna Davis”. STAHR’S EYES GO WIDE.
STAHR
Beg your pardon?

He looks to Brady, incredulous, sinking, as:

GYSSLING
Your heroine is a gentile woman who goes on to marry a Jew. You.

STAHR
The picture’s over long before then! Pat, are you gonna--

GYSSLING
--The world knows what she did. And it offends the racial sensibilities of the German people. You’ll have to kill it. Or change her name.

Stahr looks to Brady again - and again gets nothing back.

STAHR
Listen, Pal - you don’t get to dictate what--

BRADY
Could just change her name, Monroe.

STAHR
You mean Minna? My wife? The one who helped us build this place?

BRADY
Better than not making it all, isn’t it?

STAHR
Wait. Is this HIS decision or YOURS, Pat?

BRADY
Mine.

What? Silence. The air just rushed out of the room.

GYSSLING
I’ll leave you two to discuss it.

He gathers his Nazi-briefcase and goes.

Stahr waits until he’s gone... then:

STAHR
You son of a bitch.
BRADY
I don’t like this any more than you do. But it’s our second biggest foreign market! And we need the money--

STAHR
This is bigger than money!

Just then, Vanderbilt Riddle enters, as if on cue--

VANDERBILT RIDDLE
I’m leaving, Pat. Meeting go all right, Monroe?

STAHR
Only if you like book-burnings.

VANDERBILT RIDDLE
I wouldn’t know about all that. I’m just a banker. Also an adult.

STAHR
Also a venal prick. Now what?

VANDERBILT RIDDLE
Dinner at the California Club tomorrow, Pat? I look forward to the privacy.

With a look at Stahr, he heads out. Tension hanging...

BRADY
See? Everybody answers to someone.

STAHR
So some Kraut says jump and you just do it?

BRADY
In a Depression? Yes. We make a product, Monroe. There has to be someone to buy it.

STAHR
That “someone” is every kid starving in the streets, Pat – trying to survive like Minna and Des had to survive. American Dream, remember? Pictures like this matter when you have nothing else. I know.

BRADY
It’s a war I don’t want, Monroe.
STAHR
A war is where both sides put up a fight! But it’s your lot.

BRADY
Yes. MY lot. MY name on the gates. I’d like to keep them OPEN.

STAHR
Why bother if all we’re gonna make is crap? Nazi-approved crap!
(Brady doesn’t reply)
You owe that kid in the street, Pat. He made you rich.

BRADY
You know I’m grateful to you--

Stahr just stares. It’s loaded - and infuriating.

BRADY (CONT’D)
You wanna help the Huddled Masses so much? Buy your own OWN studio!
But you’re NOT gonna sink mine!

He storms out, slamming the door.

INT. EXEC. BLDG. - STAHR’S OUTER OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Stahr emerges, dazed. Mary is at her desk, gluing that vase together. Gracie and Felicity are at work.

Vickers drifts into the hall, just in time to hear:

STAHR
Mary, please let the Script Department know: on “The Bells of Boston”, Dr. Goldberg’s name is being changed to Smith... And I’ll need to speak to our Berlin office tomorrow, first thing.

MARY
Yes, Mister Stahr.

STAHR
And we’re cancelling production on “American Dream.”

The words barely came out. She nods tightly.

STAHR (CONT'D)
(says it “vahz”)
How’s the vase coming?
MARY
There’s hope, I think.

She smiles encouragingly, without effect. Vickers grins...

INT. “THE FOXHOLE” - DAY

A restaurant/bar across the street from the lot. Writers come here to unwind - and to hide from Stahr. Celia sits at a big table with Hackett, Kay Maloney, LANDON AAMES, GEORGE BOXLEY--

...and Desmond Davis, who looks amped but shaky, like a guy off his meds. Wylie White eyes the bill:

WHITE
Is everyone kicking in, or do we open up Celia’s coin can and let the Spanish Loyalists buy us lunch?

CELIA
You shouldn’t joke, Wylie. It’s terrible what Franco’s doing. Didn’t you read about Badajoz?

WHITE
When someone opens up a movie-house in Badajoz, then I’ll worry about Badajoz. Until then...

CELIA
You really are a fiend.

WHITE
I’m just not nineteen.

KAY MALONEY
She is appealing, Wylie.

WHITE
I know, nearly as appealing as her father’s money, and that’s a lot.

KAY MALONEY
And you wonder why she won’t marry you?

WHITE
I do. We could make such beautiful profits together!

A WAITRESS wipes down a table in the corner, keeping to herself. This is KATHLEEN MOORE, 27, effortlessly pretty.

Landon Aames watches her from across the place, as:
CELIA
Fascism’s going to destroy Europe.

AAMES
I don’t know why. It’s working pretty well in Hollywood.

Everyone laughs. Kathleen allows herself a quiet smile. But:

Stahr walks in. And everyone tightens. He doesn’t belong here. Worse, he looks grim. So there’s SILENCE. Kathleen noticing it too... as Stahr crosses the restaurant.

He reaches the tables of writers, trying to lighten things:

STAHR
You wouldn’t believe how quiet it is outside the Writers’ Building.

HACKETT
We gotta eat, don’t we?

More tense silence. Kathleen a spectator, as:

KAY MALONEY
What’re you wearing to the Screenwriter’s Ball, Monroe?

HACKETT
Yes, Monroe, what does a vehement anti-unionist wear to a union ball?

STAHR
I dunno. Chagrin, I guess.

He just noticed Kathleen - never saw her before. What a face. It gets his attention, but he’s here to do a job:

STAHR (CONT’D)
Ya got a minute, Des?

DAVIS
Me?

Stahr nods, his face tight... And Davis SINKS. We CUT TO:

EXT. WASHINGTON BLVD. - MINUTES LATER

Stahr and Davis sit on a BUS-BENCH outside the restaurant. Next door, STRIKING PIPE-FITTERS picket an EMPTY LOT. Davis has heard the news now, and he is indeed devastated.

DAVIS
I’m going to kill myself.
STAHR
Oh shit, Des. We’ll find something else for you.

DAVIS
Yeah? As good as putting my own life story up on that screen? Me and Minna?

Davis cries, can’t help it. Guy’s a mess.

DAVIS (CONT’D)
Besides, I’m written out; you know that - my own story and still half the dialogue in it was yours.

STAHR
(bald-faced lie)
That’s hardly true.

DAVIS
You said they’d let you change her name. Why can’t we just do that?

A desperate question. Stahr just stares at him...

DAVIS (CONT’D)
“The movie is the baby” – isn’t that what you always say? “We must protect the baby”?

STAHR
But then she wouldn’t be Minna. And you wouldn’t be you.

Davis nods, ashamed. Silence hangs... Then the restaurant door opens behind them--

And Kathleen emerges, carrying a brown paper bag.

KATHLEEN
Des?

They turn. She offers Davis the paper bag:

KATHLEEN (CONT’D)
Your lunch was getting cold.

Hold it. She has THE EXACT SAME IRISH BROGUE that Minna had. It nearly snaps Stahr’s neck, pure deja vu. But there’s more. She’s kind, the way she’s looking at Davis. Pretty too.

DAVIS
I’m not hungry, Kathleen. Thanks.
KATHLEEN
Still. Ya gotta eat.

She offers him the bag. Stahr hands Kathleen a dollar. Davis reluctantly takes the bag, his head spinning.

DAVIS
Monroe, this is Kathleen. Moore.

STAHR
Are you from Belfast, Miss Moore?

KATHLEEN
Carrickfergus. You know Ireland?

STAHR
A little.

KATHLEEN
(nods... then:)
You need anything else, Des?

Davis just smiles thinly, shakes his head. Kathleen drifts inside without so much as a look at Stahr--

...who unconsciously watches her go. The first woman who’s gotten his attention in a very long while. Then he snaps back to the task at hand. No other choice:

STAHR (CONT’D)
Listen, Des, take a couple days off. I have a western you can--

DAVIS
Monroe?

STAHR
Yeah?

DAVIS
I could use a fiver.

That was LOADED. Stahr hands over a $5 bill. We CUT TO:

INT. BRADY LOT - STAGE 8 - “BELLS OF BOSTON” SET - DAY

A SLATE tells us we’re on the set of “The Bells of Boston.”

LIGHTS, CAMERAS, CREW, etc. In the “Living Room”, a fire glows; stockings hang; “snow” falls outside - as Stahr admires a lovely CHRISTMAS TREE. It’s idyllic. American.

...and, now, unsettling. He hears VOICES in the next room - a “family”, the excited laughter of CHILDREN. He FOLLOWS:
INT. "BELLS OF BOSTON" SET - DINING ROOM - CONTINUING

8 ACTORS playing the Bell Family of Boston - white, healthy, and happy, like a Rockwell painting - rehearse a CHRISTMAS DINNER SCENE as CAMERA-ASSISTANTS tape-measure distances.

Stahr finds a spot in back just as a BLACK "MAID", gravy boat in hand, gets her mark. The actors pretend not to notice Stahr, but they do; there’s pain in his face.

The scene calls for them to lower their heads and say grace. Stahr turns to go. And the REHEARSAL STOPS MID-WORD.

...because Stahr is The Man. If he’s unhappy, it’s death. So everyone on the set goes silent - awaiting his reaction. The DIRECTOR, a hack named JOHN BROCA, turns, and:

BROCA
Something wrong, Monroe?

Stahr doesn’t reply, just drifts out. We CUT TO:

INT. BUS - MOVING - NIGHT

Kathleen sits, staring out the window. The BUS STOPS. The LADY NEXT TO HER, who’d been reading a PHOTOPLAY MAGAZINE, gets up... but turns back to offer it to Kathleen:

LADY ON BUS
I’m done with it, if you...

KATHLEEN
Oh, no. No thank you.

Lady smiles, deboards. The bus pulls away - Kathleen staring out the window - as we pass by a MOVIE THEATRE. Then CUT TO:

INT. MOVIE THEATRE - NIGHT

Davis sits in a half-filled theatre, lost. Everyone around him is LAUGHING. So’s his wife, BERNADETTE. Riotous.

But he is bereft, the world on his shoulders.

And the more the audience laughs, the more despair he feels. We PUSH IN on him. He shuts his eyes, squeezes them tight...

BERNADETTE
Des?

Davis opens his eyes. Bernadette whispers.

BERNADETTE (CONT’D)
Would you get me some candy?
Davis smiles; he just decided something - something huge...

DAVIS
You bet.

He rises, about to head up the aisle. Then he turns back -- and grabs her - a BIG KISS - out of nowhere.

DAVIS (CONT’D)
I love you.

She smiles, thrown, completely missing the agony behind that.

Davis heads up the aisle. We CUT TO:

INT. BRADY-AMERICAN LOT - VICKERS’ OFFICE - MIDNIGHT

Vickers looks out his window... and sees something odd:

Desmond Davis, walking across the lot with a BOTTLE in hand.

It’s MIDNIGHT. Vickers decides to investigate.

EXT. STAGE 11 - MOMENTS LATER

The BOTTLE SHATTERS on the pavement in front of the stage.

Davis enters the building.

EXT. STAGE 11 - ROOFTOP - MOMENTS LATER

Davis, drunk, emerges from a STAIRWELL on to the roof. From here, all of L.A. seems to be asleep. And wobbly...

He moves to the edge of the roof, his legs unsteady. Gets there, surveying the whole damn phony world. This empty lot.

Then he unzips his fly, and urinates off the edge.

INTERCUT WITH/EXT. STAGE 11 - SAME

Vickers arrives just in time to see this. And he is IRATE at the sight of DAVIS, groggily swaying so close to the edge. So they’lI holler at each other - from 50 feet apart:

VICKERS
Jaysus! Make this much fuss over a picture, it oughtta be Grand Hotel.

DAVIS
This was BETTER than Grand Hotel!

VICKERS
Swell. Now zip up your fly and clean this mess! Nobody pisses on this lot while I’m around.
DAVIS
They’re just pictures, right?

VICKERS
Get down here, ya boozy mick!

DAVIS
Okay.

And he JUMPS - flying off the edge. Just like that. A long and graceless fall, straight down. And a second later--


He hates that. So he swallows it, zips up Davis's fly, and:

VICKERS
Fuckin’ disgrace you are.

He walks away, leaving the body behind. The lot is still.

INT. CABANA - BATHROOM - UNIDENTIFIED LOCATION - NIGHT

We’re TIGHT on a PRESCRIPTION BOTTLE. (Inderal, for Angina). Stahr swallows one, then exits this bathroom, emerging into:

EXT. BRADY’S MANSION - BACKYARD - CONTINUING

A LAVISH PARTY. Extravagance. Decadence. Live music with PAID DANCERS doing the Big Apple on the DIVING BOARD as GUESTS look on, entertained. Lots of caviar. Lots of booze.

The music is Cole Porter, played on a Grand Piano. The women are bejeweled. We meander past a LONG BUFFET - to find:

Celia, staring forlornly across the lawn at Stahr as he drifts through the well-heeled crowd. From here, Stahr looks as alone as Celia is, even though he is surrounded.

BRADY (V.O.)
The thing about Monroe is, he’s broken in a way.

She turns... to find her father behind her. Brady:

BRADY
He believes in things that don’t even exist anymore. And I want you to forget about him.

CELIA
You don’t really know him, Daddy.
BRADY
Know him? Who d’ya think named him?
He was running a circus when I found him! Milton Sternberg, 19, from the Bronx! I invented him.

CELIA
I think he’s heroic.

BRADY
Jesus! Why’m I paying for Vassar if you’re gonna fall for a guy whose parents came over in steerage? Just find a nice banker or doctor or--

CELIA
--I don’t want a country-club life! I want this.

BRADY
No, please. Anything but this. It would kill me if you wound up--

CELIA
And I want him. I know he’s not perfect; I know he’s broken inside. But I can fix all that.

BRADY
He’s not just broken, Celia. He’s dying.

He expected that to land hard. But she’s blank.

BRADY (CONT’D)
Congenital defect in his aorta.
Inoperable. One day his heart’s just going to explode. And I--

CELIA
I know about that. Everybody does. Why do you think he’s always in such a rush to make that one perfect picture? I think it just makes him MORE heroic.

BRADY
You’re just a KID! What would you--

CELIA
--Louie Mayer thinks so too. He asks Monroe to lunch every month.

Brady reacts, just as Celia intended. A juvenile thrill.
BRADY
...Where’d you hear that?

CELIA
Everyone just knows. Didn’t you?

Out she goes, into the party - drifting purposefully toward Stahr. A defiant look back at her father, then a grin--

...which makes Brady fume. We DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BRADY LOT - STAGE 11 - DAWN

The lot is still. Sun’s barely rising. No movement.

But here’s Stahr. Grief and guilt on his face...

...as Davis's bent body lies on the sidewalk, blood dried from the back of his head, very dead.

20 ONLOOKERS stare at the body in shock. TWO EXTRAS DRESSED AS ANCIENT ROMANS join the ONLOOKERS. A few GRIPS.

Vickers appears at Stahr’s side, shaking his head.

VICKERS
We’ll notify his wife... I suppose she’ll be by later, to collect his things, yeah?

That was loaded, but Stahr doesn’t reply, just glares, his face hardening. We PUSH IN ON HIM - rage - then SMASH TO:

INT. EXEC. BLDG. - BRADY’S OUTER OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Furious, about to erupt - Stahr charges by Birdy’s desk.

There’s a little GIRL waiting out here: SALLY SWEET, 6 (we saw her headshots), in a short blue dress and tap-shoes. Adorable... except she’s picking her nose.

STAHR
You must be Sally.

She nods - without pulling her finger from her nose. Perfect. Stahr barges toward Brady’s door. Birdy’s alarmed--

BIRDY
He doesn’t want to be disturbed!

STAHR
Who does?

With that, he’s through the door, and--
...where Brady is about to mount a beauty, CAROL DePARIS, up against his desk. Her blouse is off. His hand is moving up her skirt. No resistance... until Stahr storms in--

BRADY
Christ! They don’t KNOCK in the Bronx?

Carol straightens herself, embarrassed, covering up fast.

STAHR
Let me guess. Sally Sweet’s mom.

BRADY
Manager. Carol DeParis, Monroe Stahr. Is there something I can--

STAHR
Des Davis is dead. Threw himself off a soundstage last night.

Brady tightens - Stahr looking right through him.

BRADY
What’re you looking at me for? I didn’t push him.

STAHR
Didn’t you?

BRADY
I gave him a job when no one else would touch him - which is more than anybody’s brother-in-law had a right to expect. The hand-holding I leave to you.

STAHR
You’re all heart.

BRADY
Hey, I’m not trying to be a legend, Monroe. I’m just trying to survive.

STAHR
Why? So the world can get its first taste of Sally Sweet?

BRADY
That’s right! For two hours we can make people laugh and sing and (MORE)
BRADY (CONT'D)

forget - and they'll love us for it. THAT'S OUR JOB.

STAHR

This picture mattered to him, Pat. It mattered to me.

BRADY

A little compromise on your part and we'd be shooting it by now.

That stung, because Stahr knows it's true. But he recovers:

STAHR

Make sure you give her a dog.

BRADY

Who?

STAHR

America's Sweetheart. People love a kid who loves her dog.

He heads for the door. We STAY ON BRADY... and DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BRADY LOT - OUTSIDE STAGE 11 - NIGHT

VOTIVE CANDLES and FLOWERS mark the spot where Des Davis died. Celia, Hackett, Kay Maloney - and Stahr - stand here, an informal remembrance, no one saying a word. Then--

Kathleen approaches, nods a hello to them, and adds another bunch of flowers, somberly. Silence, then:

KATHLEEN

I don't understand it. He was so... hopeful.

HACKETT

That's what this place runs on - hope. 'Course, what's hope compared to our second largest foreign market - right, Celia?

STAHR

Leave her alone, Aubrey.

Hackett's silent. Celia's ashamed. More silence hanging...

CELVIA

You don't... know my father.

HACKETT

I know enough.
Brady again stands at the fence separating this lot from the Hooverville. Just ten feet away are Max Miner and his siblings. They've just found refuge here.

Little Nathan fingers the dregs of a discarded soup can.

MINER
Put that down, Nathan. You’ll be up all night sick.

Nathan drops the can. Brady doesn’t react. We return to:

Celia thinks about it - just has to reply:

CELIA
Daddy was a trolley operator when he was 14. All the operators stole back then; the companies expected 15 percent of their fares to disappear. Daddy took 85 percent. One day two Supervisors, both grown men, cornered him, demanding a cut. He broke their jaws with a lead pipe. See, money meant survival to him then... It still does.

Brady hasn’t moved, watching these down-and-outers. Vickers appears beside him, taking in the sorry scene with a sigh.

VICKERS
Ya don’t wanna be late for your dinner, Mister Brady.

BRADY
Y’ever had to live on the streets, Colm?

VICKERS
All the time as a kid.

BRADY
Me too.

His face tells us, “It stunk,” a bitter memory - but:
BRADY (CONT’D)
Builds character. And I’m sick of this place being half the size of MGM.

He walks away. Vickers grins. We CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE STAGE 11 - LATER NIGHT

47

Stahr is still here. Alone. He sighs, then:

INT. WRITERS’ BLDG. - DAVIS’S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

48

Stillness. Stahr moves to Davis’s desk, opens the bottom drawer. It has a FALSE BOTTOM. He slides it back, revealing:

DRUG-WORKS: syringes, hypodermics, vials. He grabs them.

INT. THE CALIFORNIA CLUB - NIGHT

49


VANDERBILT RIDDEL
God, what a prima donna. I don’t know how you stand him. Whining about art, riling the Germans just because he dislikes their politics. He doesn’t understand business!

BRADY
MGM might disagree, Vandy. Louie Mayer asks him to lunch every Goddamn month.

VANDERBILT RIDDEL
Well, birds of a feather. Where’s my Goddamn Scotch?

Brady smiles thinly. We CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE THE WRITERS’ BLDG. - MOMENTS LATER

50

Stahr dumps the drug works in a TRASH BIN and walks away...

INT. ST. MARK’S CHURCH - PRIVATE QUARTERS - NIGHT

51

FATHER MATTHEW GREEN oils the wheels of a MODEL TRAIN. He has several of them on a table in his room, which is small and spare. He wipes the oil off his hands with a cloth.

INT. ST. MARK’S CHURCH - CHAPEL/CONFESSIONAL - NIGHT

52

Green crosses a large CHAPEL, to the CONFESSIONAL BOX.
He sits, slides the screen open... and hears:

UNSEEN PARISHIONER (O.S.)
Forgive me, Father. I have sinned.

FATHER GREEN
How long has it been since your last confession?

UNSEEN PARISHIONER (O.S.)
This is my first, I’m sorry. I’m not of your faith.

Huh? We REVEAL the “Parishioner”: Stahr - Jewish but HERE.

STAHR ("UNSEEN PARISHIONER")
This place mattered to someone who mattered to me. I just... have nowhere else to go.

FATHER GREEN
I see...

Silence hovers, Stahr struggling. Pain and grief...

STAHR
Do you like to go to the pictures, Father?

FATHER GREEN
I suppose.

STAHR
Do you think they matter?

FATHER GREEN
Not especially, no.

STAHR
That’s just it - they’re the only thing that matters to me now. I can’t feel anything else. And someone just died, trying to make one for me.

FATHER GREEN
Died?

STAHR

FATHER GREEN
How?
STAHR
By being me.
(Green is silent)
All day long I convince people that I know better than they do what’s best for them. I guess it’s your job too. Maybe a hundred times a day, I take someone to the edge of a roof and I say, “Don’t worry. You can jump; there’s water down there. Trust me.” Not “I think this’ll work.” I have to be certain, or it all falls apart. I have to KNOW.

The words come harder now...

STAHR (CONT’D)
But I don’t always know. And there isn’t always water down there. Sometimes there’s just pavement. Which means I’ve lied to them. I lie a lot, Father.

FATHER GREEN
Can you stop? Can you find another way?

STAHR
No. I don’t have time. Ya see, I’m--
(he stops short...)
Do you have a prayer that can fix all that?

Father Green doesn’t know what to say. Stahr shuts his eyes.

EXT. LAUREL CANYON BUNGALOW - ESTABLISHING - NIGHT
A small, modest bungalow, carved into the canyon. Moonlit.

INT. KATHLEEN’S BUNGALOW - LIVING ROOM - SAME
Kathleen sits on a couch, reading a book of POETRY BY YEATS. But it’s too LOUD in here to concentrate, because:

Through a door we see and hear her ROOMMATE, an aspiring actress named PHOEBE GREER, in nothing but a girdle, standing on her tip-toes, breathing deeply through a DICTION EXERCISE:

PHOEBE
Red-leather, yellow-leather, red-leather, yellow-leather.

Kathleen eyes her, “Really?” Phoebe shrugs without apology. Kathleen shuts the door. Peace at last.
INT. STAHR’S HOME - BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT
Stahr turns on the light, can’t sleep. Staring. Hurting...

Fuck it. On the nightstand is a stack of scripts, and a stack of books. He sighs... until one of them catches his eye:


Stahr sighs. Grabs it. Opens it. We DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BRADY LOT - STAHR’S PACKARD - MOVING - MORNING
Stahr drives around a corner -- passing a bunch of “FRENCH NOBLEMEN,” practicing SWORDFIGHTING. He parks in his space.

...narrowly missing Celia, who’s been waiting here.

STAHR
Jesus, Celia.

CELIA
If you don’t like bandleader stories I have one about a--

STAHR
Please, no pitches. Not from you.

Somehow, his energy has returned. He looks determined. He gets out, taking that COPY OF GATSBY. She follows him--

CELIA
Then take me to the Screenwriters’ Ball tonight?

STAHR
Celia, why waste yourself on me? Pictures are my girl. It’d be like marrying a doctor.

CELIA
I love my doctor. He’s sexy.

STAHR
--Y’ever read Dante, Celia?

CELIA
In high school, a hundred years ago.

STAHR
Then you should know - there’s a special ring of hell reserved for (MORE)
drunkards, bad comics, and anyone
dumb enough to date his boss’s
daughter.

He heads off, charged, ready for battle - but:

CELIA
Monroe? If I weren’t my father’s
daughter would you go with me?

That touched him. He turns, drifts toward her. She waits...
Then a sweet, fatherly KISS on her forehead. And a whisper:

STAHRR
I’d be the luckiest man there.

She just melted. Stahr charges into the building...

INT. EXEC. BLDG. - LOBBY - CONTINUING
Stahr enters. Vickers is here, beneath Minna’s portrait.

VICKERS
Touching.

STAHRR
You’re everywhere, Colm.

VICKERS
If only you knew...
(Stahr brushes past)
By the way: “Vahz” is a bit much
for the son of two rag-pickers,
hmm? Wouldn’t want anyone thinking
we’d gotten pretentious.

Stahr doesn’t fire back. Vickers had a feeling he wouldn’t.

INT. EXEC. BLDG. - BRADY’S OUTER OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER
Birdy dabs a coffee-stain from Brady’s BRIGHT GREEN TIE - as
Stahr blows by, Gatsby in hand.

STAHRR
Careful, Pat. You could blind
somebody with that thing.

BRADY
Oh. What shade is it?

STAHRR
Green. Bright.

Looks like gray to Brady. Turns out, he’s COLOR-BLIND.
She has a flair for the dramatic. *(re: Gatsby book)*
What’s that?

Your penance. No calls, Mary.

With that, Stahr is behind a closed door. Brady bristles.

INT. STAHR’S OFFICE – MOMENTS LATER

Stahr at his desk, reading *Gatsby*. Brady enters, no knock.

I have a lot of work to do, Pat.

Ignoring that, Brady walks over and puts down a BLANK CHECK.

What’s this?

A blank check. Next picture you can make whatever you want, with no interference from me - or anyone else.

A peace offering. Brady even signs it. Stahr just stares...

--provided it isn’t about my wife or the Reichstag fire.

Ya want it or don’t you?

Is this your conscience, Pat? Or my lunches with Mayer?

Brady tightens, turns to go, leaving the CHECK behind... Then he STOPs. Turns. Just remembered this is HIS lot:

Gun to your head - and it’ll never leave this room - you know Sally Sweet’ll make us money. Don’t you.

*(Stahr is silent)*

Just like you know that no studio is rich enough to cut off a revenue stream the size of Germany.

*(again, no reply)*

So maybe we should stop the pouting *(MORE)*
and get back to work, hmmm? For the 
sake of the thousands of employees 
that are depending on our sound 
governance?

STAHR
I always said you were the smartest 
guy on the lot, Pat.

BRADY
Fat bit of good it does me.

He turns... and goes. We DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BALLROOM - ROOSEVELT HOTEL - NIGHT

The SCREENWRITERS’ BALL. Formal, elegant. Champagne flowing. 
Flowers. There’s a large framed PHOTO of Desmond Davis on an 
easel. And FRED ASTAIRE himself waltzing on the dance floor.

At a TABLE: Hackett, Kay Maloney, Marv Rienmund, Wylie White, 
George Boxley, John Broca, Ridingwood, Celia...

And Stahr – who is getting worked over by this group:

KAY MALONEY
Then there was the Army picture. 
You put him through ten drafts and 
still didn’t make it.

STAHR
I’d thought something was there. It 
wasn’t. My mistake.

HACKETT
And the Broadway picture – you had 
half of us writing behind him and 
didn’t shoot that one either.

STAHR
Just because you make a script 
better doesn’t mean you’ve made it 
good. Des knew that.

BOXLEY
Des just heard NO too many times. 
Christ, we all have. It’s a wonder 
he was alone up there.

STAHR
“No” is supposed to make you work 
harder, George. You writers get 
mixed up because you think all this 
is personal – hating people and

(MORE)
worshipping them, sometimes in the same breath, and expecting them to worship YOU; you just ASK to be kicked around.

RIDINGWOOD
Hear, hear.

The writers throw a look at Ridingwood: “Shut up.”

STAHR
I like people and I like them to like me. But I keep my heart where God put it - on the inside.

KAY MALONEY
Still, he was a happy guy when he got here. The business changed him.

STAHR
Show Business doesn’t change who you are, Kay. It just reveals who you are.

No one fires back. Broca fills the silence:

BROCA
Didn’t you like your dinner?

Broca gestures to Stahr’s plate. Not a bite has been eaten.

KAY MALONEY
Monroe doesn’t eat during the week.
(Broca’s a blank)
He likes the feeling he gets from being hungry, thinks it gives him an edge. Doesn’t smoke either. Or dance. Do you, Golden Boy?

STAHR
That’s a lovely dress, Celia.

CELIA
You should see what it looks like in a ball on the floor.

That came out of nowhere, drawing shocked laughs from everyone, except Stahr. He just stares.

CELIA (CONT’D)
Why so shocked, Monroe? Vassar’s not a convent!

More laughs. Celia’s certain that will work.
But Stahr missed the line entirely. Here’s why:

*Kathleen just entered the ballroom*, with a VERY DRUNK Landon Aames. She looks impossibly good. Red dress, hair tumbling.

That fast, Stahr is STARING, big-time. His eyes wide.

And everyone, (notably Celia), sees it.

...as Aames wobbily leads Kathleen to the table.

WHITE
Landon, you sly dog.

AAMES
*(truly hammered)*
Don’t be too impressed; she only said yes because it was a memorial for Des.

Stahr STANDS, the only male at the table to do so.

STAHRLiss Moore.

KATHLEEN
Mister Stahr.

The chemistry between them is palpable. Everyone feels it.

AAMES
Good Christ.

He sinks drunkenly into a seat. Defeated, that fast.

KATHLEEN
Maybe some coffee--

STAHRLWould you care to dance first?

Wait a minute. Stahr, who doesn’t pursue ANYONE... just asked her to dance. Everyone watching.

KAY MALONEY
Well I’ll be damned.

KATHLEEN
That would be nice.

He offers his hand. The whole table staring. Kathleen takes it, and Stahr leads her away. Behind them, Celia pouts, the men stare jealously, Kay Maloney amused.

ANGLE - THE DANCE FLOOR - The song is “The Way You Look Tonight.” And Stahr and Kathleen are King and Queen of the prom, instantly. Floating across the floor. Magic...
STAHR (CONT’D)
I’m sorry about Landon. I imagine he was just a bit overwhelmed.

KATHLEEN
By day he seemed so tame.

They move well together - and that accent of hers...

STAHR
Tell me, how is it that you see all these writers and producers every day and no one’s ever asked you to come read for something? A face like yours. Makes me think I should fire the whole bunch.

KATHLEEN
Oh. No. They’ve asked. A few times. I just don’t have any interest.

STAHR
In acting?

KATHLEEN
In any of it. Sort of an unsavory business if you’ll forgive my saying.

STAHR
Do they know you feel that way?

KATHLEEN
No point in insulting them. I like having a job.

STAHR
Like I said, a natural actress.

KATHLEEN
Hardly matters now. I’m leaving next week.

What? Stahr’s hoping he heard that wrong.

STAHR
To go where?

KATHLEEN
Home. Back to Ireland.

STAHR
But... Why?
KATHLEEN
Homesick, I guess. I came here to find the world I always saw in all your movies. But this isn’t the movies at all, is it? It’s just where they’re made.

He’s surprised by how much her news is rocking him.

KATHLEEN (CONT’D)
Anyway, tonight seemed like a good chance to say goodbye to everyone.

STAHR
Is this because of Des?

KATHLEEN
No. I knew it soon as I got here.
(a beat)
I would like to know why he did it, though. Poor guy.

STAHR
I dunno. I think he just stopped believing in his next draft.

KATHLEEN
People don’t jump off a roof just ‘cause they can’t get a script right.

STAHR
I wasn’t talking about writing.

KATHLEEN
Then it’s the town, isn’t it?

What the hell can he say? They just keep floating to that beautiful song...

KATHLEEN (CONT’D)
I don’t think I ever fit in here. Maybe I never really tried. A whole year and I never even found a church to go to.

STAHR
Funny, I happen to know one.

The whole table is watching them. Kathleen notices:

KATHLEEN
They talk about you, ya know - all of them, all the time.
STAHR
What do they say?

KATHLEEN
That nothing’s ever good enough for you. You’re never happy with anything.

STAHR
That’s true. Well, it was.

KATHLEEN
‘Til when?

STAHR
‘Bout five minutes ago.

That registers. And Stahr STOPS.

He’s got something to say and he wants it to land. Kathleen waiting. The moment frozen. He looks into her eyes. But then:

Suddenly, Bernadette – Davis's WIDOW – enters, wearing BLACK.

BERNADETTE
Monroe?

STAHR
Bernadette, I--

WHACK. She slaps him right across the face. Instant SILENCE.

An out-of-nowhere SHOCK, bringing the ball to a halt. The BAND stops playing – everybody watching, even Astaire:

BERNADETTE
That’s for my husband. For Des. You knew he was putting that garbage into his veins. Didn’t you.

She’s shaking. Kathleen stunned. Stahr too. He doesn’t reply.

BERNADETTE (CONT’D)
...but you needed your script. (Stahr is silent...)
And now he’s dead, just like Minna. Everyone who comes close to you pays for it. Don’t they.

She goes. Stunned silence. The BAND remains silent.

KATHLEEN
Miss Davis?
Kathleen goes after Bernadette. All eyes on Stahr, shaken as hell. What will he do now? Then, another sudden stabbing PAIN IN HIS CHEST. His breath catches sharply. He grimaces--

But he shakes it off - pure pride - heads out to:

THE LOBBY - CONTINUING - But there’s NO TRACE OF KATHLEEN out here. Or Bernadette. Both just GONE... It registers on his face - doesn’t seem to surprise him at all. He turns toward:

THE WRITERS’ TABLE - RESUMING - Stahr makes the long walk back, alone, chagrined. The whole town watching...

So he just goes back to work, his voice low and calm--

STAH R
Kay, in your script, Ted should go to confession to unburden himself of all the envy he’s feeling.

The writers trade looks as if they’d heard wrong. That’s his response to being slapped? Script notes?!

KAY MALONEY
But... he’s not Catholic.

STAH R
That’s why he can tell the truth in there.

Kay realizes: she likes the idea a lot. But Stahr’s not done:

STAH R (CONT’D)
And John I want you to reshoot your Christmas scene.

BROCA
Oh? Why?

STAH R
There aren’t enough people in it. (Broca doesn’t get it)
The paperboy should be there, the shoe-shiner, the orphans from the local Y. It should feel like the whole COUNTRY is there, especially the ones who aren’t on their feet yet. Add a day to the schedule; I don’t care what it costs. (Broca’s still a blank) It’s Christmas, John. Everyone should have a seat at the table.

Broca gets it. Stahr turns to Ridingwood now--
Oh, and Red... I’m taking you off “Mandalay Nights.”

Ridingwood pales. Just got leveled, no warning, in public.

But... I don’t... Why, Monroe? The picture’s good.

Exactly.

Silence. Stahr collects his thoughts, a bit rocked--

We’re all here to make something - Des was too. It can be art, or it can just be another product. Me, I’m voting for art. I’m voting for perfection, now more than ever. I’m rough on all of you. Sorry. A bruised ego can heal in an hour. A bad movie will haunt you forever. And I’ve been haunted enough.

And Stahr walks away. Everyone watches him go. The BAND resumes playing. Celia catches him, takes his hand--

Monroe, I know what story I need to tell you. It just came to me.

Celia, please. Not now. I’m--

--I want to do a movie about the Nazis, right now, before they--


Let me finish. Gosh sakes, Monroe.

That had some backbone to it. He’s taken aback. So:

There’s a spy ring, foreign agents, loyal to the Fatherland, operating (MORE)
CELIA (CONT’D)
out of a Manhattan apartment.
Espionage, that sort of thing.

Stahr can’t BELIEVE how tone-deaf this is, but she goes on:

CELIA (CONT’D)
A woman begins to suspect that it’s all being run from the apartment next to hers: an old man she always hated because he’s mean to her cats when they get in to the hall. She goes to the FBI, tells them her suspicions. They laugh her out of the office. So she sets up a listening device, in the walls, snooping on him. Turns out, she was RIGHT. They ARE foreign spies – and what’s more they’re planning to assassinate the President! She goes back to the FBI. This time, one agent decides she ISN’T crazy. And they start to work together. They even fall in love, a blue-collar 9-to-5 type and this wealthy woman from the Upper East Side. They--

STAHR
Celia. Stop.

It takes her a second for her mouth to stop moving.

STAHR (CONT’D)
I can’t make that movie. I can’t even say Nazi in a movie anymore.

CELIA
But don’t you see? You wouldn’t be saying it at all! That’s the point! These spies are from a fictional country. It’s totalitarian and brutal. Elections there are rigged; dissenters are jailed and murdered. But WE DON’T CALL IT GERMANY! So the only way Gyssling could complain that it’s about the Nazis would be to admit that they behave in the same way. He can’t.

There it was, a great idea. And Stahr is engaged.

CELIA (CONT’D)
Monroe?
STAHR
An anti-Nazi picture that never says the word Nazi.

CELIA
Yes!

More thinking, his gears turning, Celia hanging...

STAHR
We call it Brinel.
(Celia’s a blank)
The country. Brinel. It’s Berlin, with the--

CELIA
--letters mixed up. That’s wonderful. So you like it?

STAHR
You want a story credit?

CELIA
I want to produce it.

STAHR
One thing at a time, Darling. You have a few things to learn yet.
(his wheels turning...)
Aubrey should write this. Type up some pages for him to look at; we’ll start there, all right?

Celia can barely speak: acceptance, from the Golden Boy! She mumbles an “mmm-hmmm”... as:

STAHR (CONT’D)
But no more talk about your dress wadded up in a ball on the floor, hmmm? This is business.

He goes. She’s too dazed to move. Her dreams, her heart, her ambition - answered in a single moment. Rapture. We CUT TO:

61 EXT. HOOVERVILLE/BRADY LOT PERIMETER - LATE NIGHT

BARREL-FIRES, DISPLACED PEOPLE huddled under trees. We find Nathan and Darla Miner beside one.

MINER (O.S.)
Hey.

They turn. Miner has just arrived. He hands them a PEACH. Darla grabs it, takes a bite - rapture. Hands it to Nathan.
DARLA
What about you, Max?

MINER
I had three or four on the way.

They doubt that. He sits, just as--

A CHAUFFEURED TOWNCAR pulls up. And out steps Brady.

Everyone notices. Miner too. Brady walks past the Miners, his pace brisk. No eye-contact. He reaches the MIDDLE of the Hooverville, where he STOPS. And sighs. What’s he doing here?

Down-And-Outers all around – everyone watching him, as:

Brady takes off his Fedora and lays it on the ground. Huh???
Then he pulls a WAD OF CASH from his overcoat... and puts the CASH inside the Fedora. Maybe $1,000 - just like that.

Then he turns and heads toward the Towncar.

BACK TO MINER – What’d I just see?

All over this park, OTHER DOWN-AND-OUTERS get to their feet as if looking at a mirage - can’t quite trust it.

A few take halting steps toward it - the Horn of Plenty - yet they WILL NOT run or stampede, determined to keep their dignity. So it’s an orderly stream, growing... But:

Miner doesn’t move. And he stops his siblings from moving.

Brady nears his towncar, again crossing right by Miner, who is stationary, just staring through Brady. Why isn’t this guy running for the money? Brady reaches the car, then TURNS:

BRADY
Don’t you want any of the--

MINER
I need a job, Mister. You got one of those in that hat of yours?

Brady wasn’t expecting that. Neither were Nathan and Darla.

BRADY
Do you know who I am?

MINER
Yeah. Ya know who I am?

Pure desperation, masked by bravado. Brady weighs it all...
BRADY
You got a driver’s license?

MINER
An Oklahoma one, yeah.

BRADY
An Okie. Christ.
(sighs... then)
Come to the lot, first of the month. Ask for a man named Vickers. You are?

MINER
Max Miner.

BRADY
Miner. Any of these people ask, I told you to screw off. Understand?

For show, he spits in Miner’s direction and turns away, as:

MINER
Yes Sir...

62 EXT./INT. KATHLEEN’S BUNGALOW – FRONT DOOR – NIGHT
A hand knocks on the door. It opens.
...and Kathleen finds Stahr at her doorstep.

KATHLEEN
Mister Stahr? How did you--

STAHR
Your boss is a friend. That is, he’d like to be.
(she nods)
I’m sorry about that scene at the ball. Did it drive you away?

KATHLEEN
No. Just reminded me why I’m leaving.

Okay. This might take some pitching. Stahr digs in...

STAHR
Miss Moore, I don’t know you very well. And I have no right to ask this... but it’d mean a lot to me if you’d just... hold off for a moment, before you leave.
KATHLEEN

Why?

STAHR
Well for one thing, the rest of the waitresses in that restaurant are terrible.

(she laughs...)
One dinner. Then if you still wanna go, I’ll buy you the ticket myself.

That connection again. Chemistry. But she has to ask—

KATHLEEN
It’s not just that I remind you of someone else...

STAHR
Well, yes. But also that you’d call me on it.

(she LOVED that...)  
Please. I hate sad endings...

She’s leaning; we can feel it. Then, suddenly, she isn’t:

KATHLEEN
You picture-people, you tell these beautiful stories. But they’re not all beautiful. Are they.

STAHR
No. It’s why we do rewrites.

It’s left there, hanging. We CUT TO:

INT. BRADY MANSION - GRAND STAIRCASE - LATE NIGHT

Celia floats up the stairs, past the ART on the walls. Down a hallway. The smile just won’t leave her face...

INT. BRADY MANSION - MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUING

She enters, no knock. Brady’s in bed with a newspaper. The sheets are satin, the pillows plush, his pajamas silk.

BRADY
Going to bed, Honey?

CELIA
Daddy, I’ve decided something. I’m not going back to Vassar.

BRADY
Oh?
CELIA
You were right. Why pay all that money when everything I want is here?

Just then, CELIA’S MOTHER emerges from the MASTER CLOSET in a flowing nightgown. She is ROSE, a dewy beauty of 40.

ROSE
And what’s that?

CELIA
Monroe. He just hired me.


BRADY
What are you talking about?

CELIA
I pitched him a story; he wants me to produce it! That’s a better education than school, isn’t it?

BRADY
That son-of-a-bitch.

CELIA
I’m going to marry him, Daddy – and help him make that one perfect picture before he--

She can’t finish the sentence. Brady is silent, until:

BRADY
Rose?

ROSE
I think it’s vulgar.

CELIA
It’s an ugly world. But we’re going to shine a light on it, Monroe and I. While he still can. G’night.

Resolved, she drifts out. We CUT TO:

EXT. ALLEY OFF OF VINE - NIGHT

Darla and Nathan lead Miner down that SAME ALLEY where rain once poured down on them. But now they look happy, giddy.

MINER
This is really sneaky.
DARLA
Hush up, Max. We’ll pay ‘em back with your first wages!

She quietly opens that METAL DOOR. Music pours out from the MOVIE THEATRE. In they go. Even Miner smiles. DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BRADY LOT - EXEC. BLDG. - CORRIDOR - MORNING

Stahr glides down the hall - passing Hackett, who grins:

HACKETT
Brinel, huh?

STAHR
It was Celia’s idea.

Hackett smiles. Stahr just passing him, when--

STAHR (CONT’D)
And Aubrey? Make them monsters.

Hackett nods, happy to do so. Stahr continues along, to:

INT. STAHR’S OUTER OFFICE - CONTINUING

Gyssling sits out here, awaiting a meeting with Stahr, who doesn’t even acknowledge the guy. Then:

INT. STAHR’S OFFICE - CONTINUING

Stahr enters. Mary’s here, hiding something behind her back--

STAHR
Mary?

MARY
I have something for you.

She smiles, and reveals what she’s been hiding... It’s that VASE. Fully restored. Pristine, a stunning reconstruction. Stahr approaches, takes the vase, studying it - beyond moved.

STAHR
It’s... I don’t know what to say, Mary. Thank you.

Stahr spots a SHELF, puts the vase on a small pedestal... and stands back, admiring it, including Mary in the moment:

STAHR (CONT’D)
Some things exist just to be beautiful. They don’t have to make any more sense than that.
MARY
(beaming)
Should I send Doctor Gyssling in?

STAHN
Let him wait.

Mary grins, goes. Stahr stares at that vase, pleased, until:

BRADY (O.S.)
Hey. Sternberg.

Here’s Brady, in the doorway – furious, imperious:

BRADY (CONT’D)
You resent me, that’s fine. But why
drag my FAMILY into it?

His tie is BRIGHT RED today. It seems to distract Stahr, as:

BRADY (CONT’D)
Making my daughter a PRODUCER? Why
not just shove a hot poker up my
ass? Now she’ll never straighten
out.

STAHN
She’s talented, Pat. Must be in her
genes.

BRADY
You stay OUT of her genes, ya hear
me? I am the king here! I don’t
want something to live, it dies.

STAHN
Maybe. But I’m making her movie.

BRADY
Yeah? With whose money?

STAHN
Yours - courtesy of that blank
check. I’m cashing it, Pat.

Brady, furious, eyes him coldly.

BRADY
What happened to dying on the cross
to get Minna’s story made?

STAHN
Minna wasn’t the issue. Greatness
was. And this can be great.

(MORE)
The movie is the baby, remember?

Brady just saw Stahr’s core. So did we.

BRADY
Fuck the baby.

With that, he goes, SLAMMING the door behind him, too hard--

Stahr wheels around. The vase begins to fall. And as we HEAR IT SHATTER, we... CUT TO:

INT. ST. MARK’S CHURCH - CHAPEL/CONFESSIONAL - DAY

Father Green once again slides open the screen in his confessional box--

Kathleen waits on the other side. Chagrined. Humble.

KATHLEEN
Forgive me, Father...

She lowers her head a bit, as we CUT TO:

INT. STAHR’S HOME - SCREENING ROOM - LATE NIGHT

Stahr sits alone in his screening room, watching a movie. It’s an OLD SILENT FILM OF MINNA’s, flickering on the screen. Minna in a broad comedy. Funny as hell.

Stahr breathes out the kind of laugh that comes when you watch your child do something adorable: there’s love behind it, an affectionate kind of awe. And gratitude.

Minna’s antics continue, Stahr chuckling now, loud, unwatched - just a fan appreciating an artist. He laughs again.

Then, to his shock, he begins to cry. Out of nowhere.

Maybe it’s just a release; maybe he’s been carrying around too much for too long. But it’s powerful, a wave - painful, raw... and honest. He can’t stop it. Head in hands, sobbing.

It doesn’t let up until, jarring him, the sound of his FRONT DOOR OPENING. Someone just came in. Moment broken. He sags. But he doesn’t get up... just sags back, wiped.

INT. STAHR’S HOME - FOYER - MOMENTS LATER

Stahr emerges from the screening room, STOPS in his tracks--

There’s a single RED ROSE on the bottom step of the stairs.
We don’t know what it means, but **Stahr** does. And it’s bad.

He **CLIMBS THE STAIRS**, which are dotted now with a **VOLUNTEER NURSE’S UNIFORM**. Hat, white shoes, white stockings, the dress itself. Whoever just entered is no longer wearing much.

But Stahr doesn’t look excited. In fact he looks stricken.

INT. STAHR’S HOME - BEDROOM - CONTINUING

He enters, **dread** on his face. Halts in the doorway. Because--

**Rose Brady** lies in his bed - which means:

Monroe Stahr is fucking Pat Brady’s wife, Celia’s mother.

**ROSE**

He doesn’t care much about beauty, does he. I’m sorry, Monroe.

Stahr’s silent. Rose grins knowingly, removes her bra. **Beauty**, that fast. Stahr crosses anxiously to the drapes.

**STAHR**

Rose, I told you. This **has** to stop.

**ROSE**

It **can’t**. I hate everything else. Does that make you angry?

**STAHR**

Yes.

**ROSE**

Good.

He **shuts the drapes**, DARKNESS smothering her face. We...

--FADE OUT.

-EN...