

THE LAST TYCOON

(from the novel by F. Scott Fitzgerald)

Pilot Episode

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Amazon Studios
Sony Television
City Entertainment
Home Run Productions
Mad Ben Productions
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PRE-PRODUCTION DRAFT
October 28, 2015

A-1 A BLANK PAGE in an old TYPEWRITER. Then, BAP-BAP-BAP: A-1
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 1

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...

A small PLAQUE reads: "MINNA 1902-1934." White flowers sit in an URN beneath it. Stahr sighs, his Fedora in hand.

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 2

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

3

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 retreats, as--

4 INT. EXEC. BLDG. - BRADY'S OUTER OFFICE - CONTINUING 4

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:

5 INT. PAT BRADY'S OFFICE - CONTINUING 5

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.

He slides a HEADSHOT over. Meet SALLY SWEET, 6. Dimples, tap-
shoes, curls. Americana. Wholesome and vile. Stahr hates her.

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:

6

EXT. BRADY-AMERICAN LOT - MORNING

6

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.

7 INT. BRADY LOT - STAGE 11 - MOMENTS LATER 7

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.

STAHNR
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:

STAHNR
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 8

Two stories, a balcony. We hear TYPEWRITERS CLACKING.

9 EXT. WRITERS' BLDG. - 2ND FLOOR BALCONY - SAME 9

Celia heads for a door - knocking as she enters.

CELIA

Hello?

10 INT. HACKETT'S OFFICE - WRITERS' BLDG. - CONTINUING 10

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.

11 EXT. WRITERS' BLDG. - OUTDOOR STAIRS - SAME 11

Stahr pauses outside the building... listening. Something he hears displeases him... so he climbs the steps.

12 INT. WRITERS' BLDG. - HACKETT'S OFFICE - RESUMING 12

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:

13 INTERCUT WITH/INT. DESMOND DAVIS'S OFFICE - CONTINUING 13

Meet DESMOND DAVIS: 40, thin - and, right now, jumpy, rheumy, racked, but TYPING FURIOUSLY - like a guy on Benzedrine.

STAHR

And where're your pages, Des?

DAVIS

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

STAHR

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.

STAHR

To church, Aubrey.

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

14 INT. BRADY-AMERICAN - EXEC. BUILDING LOBBY - MORNING 14

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 15

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 16

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 Fuhrer 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:

17

EXT. STUDIO PERIMETER/HOOVERVILLE - DUSK

17

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 18

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 19

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 20

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:

21 INT. STAHR'S PACKARD/EXT. PCH - MOVING - NIGHT (FLASHBACK) 21

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:

22 INT. STAHR'S HOME - BEDROOM - BEVERLY HILLS (NOW) 22

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:

23 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:

24 INT. STAGE 1 - BRADY-AMERICAN - DAY 24

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'll 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...

25 EXT. BRADY LOT - OUTSIDE STAGE 1 - MOMENTS LATER 25

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:

26 INT. BRADY-AMERICAN - EXEC. BLDG. - CONF. ROOM - DAY 26

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.

27 INT. EXEC. BLDG. - STAHR'S OUTER OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER 27

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...

28

INT. "THE FOXHOLE" - DAY

28

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:

29

EXT. WASHINGTON BLVD. - MINUTES LATER

29

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:

30 INT. BRADY LOT - STAGE 8 - "BELLS OF BOSTON" SET - DAY 30

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:

31 INT. "BELLS OF BOSTON" SET - DINING ROOM - CONTINUING 31

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:

32 INT. BUS - MOVING - NIGHT 32

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:

33 INT. MOVIE THEATRE - NIGHT 33

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:

34 INT. BRADY-AMERICAN LOT - VICKERS' OFFICE - MIDNIGHT 34

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.

35 EXT. STAGE 11 - MOMENTS LATER 35

The BOTTLE SHATTERS on the pavement in front of the stage. Davis enters the building.

36 EXT. STAGE 11 - ROOFTOP - MOMENTS LATER 36

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.

37 INTERCUT WITH/EXT. STAGE 11 - SAME 37

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'll 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--

--a BLUR plummets by Vickers. THUMP. Blood spraying up onto Vickers' suit and face. *DEATH, that fast*. Terrifying. And Vickers is truly rattled. Frozen.

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.

38 INT. CABANA - BATHROOM - UNIDENTIFIED LOCATION - NIGHT 38

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

39 EXT. BRADY'S MANSION - BACKYARD - CONTINUING 39

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:

40

EXT. BRADY LOT - STAGE 11 - DAWN

40

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:

41

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

41

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--

42

INT. BRADY'S OFFICE - CONTINUING

42

...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:

43

EXT. BRADY LOT - OUTSIDE STAGE 11 - NIGHT

43

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...

CELIA
 You don't... know my father.

HACKETT
 I know enough.

44 EXT. STUDIO PERIMETER/HOOVERVILLE - SAME (NIGHT) 44

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:

45 EXT. OUTSIDE STAGE 11 - RESUMING 45

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.

46 EXT. STUDIO PERIMETER/HOOVERVILLE - RESUMING 46

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:

47 EXT. OUTSIDE STAGE 11 - LATER NIGHT 47

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

48 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.

49 INT. THE CALIFORNIA CLUB - NIGHT 49

Posh. Restricted. Well-dressed WASPS among beautiful furnishings. Vanderbilt Riddle and Brady at a table.

VANDERBILT RIDDLE

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 RIDDLE

Well, birds of a feather. Where's my Goddamn Scotch?

Brady smiles thinly. We CUT TO:

50 EXT. OUTSIDE THE WRITERS' BLDG. - MOMENTS LATER 50

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

51 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.

52 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
Because I failed him. Completely. I
failed my wife too.

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.

53 EXT. LAUREL CANYON BUNGALOW - ESTABLISHING - NIGHT 53

A small, modest bungalow, carved into the canyon. Moonlit.

54 INT. KATHLEEN'S BUNGALOW - LIVING ROOM - SAME 54

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.

55 INT. STAHR'S HOME - BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT 55

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:

"*The Great Gatsby*" by Fitzgerald. A well-worn copy. Inscribed "Monroe - May all your lights be green ones - Your Minna."

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

56 EXT. BRADY LOT - STAHR'S PACKARD - MOVING - MORNING 56

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)

STAHR (CONT'D)
 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:

STAHR
 I'd be the luckiest man there.

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

57 INT. EXEC. BLDG. - LOBBY - CONTINUING 57

Stahr enters. Vickers is here, beneath Minna's portrait.

VICKERS
 Touching.

STAHR
 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.

58 INT. EXEC. BLDG. - BRADY'S OUTER OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER 58

Birdy dabs a coffee-stain from Brady's BRIGHT GREEN TIE - as
 Stahr blows by, *Gatsby* in hand.

STAHR
 Careful, Pat. You could *blind*
 somebody with that thing.

BRADY
 Oh. What shade is it?

STAHR
 Green. Bright.

Looks like gray to Brady. Turns out, he's COLOR-BLIND.

BRADY
 She has a flair for the dramatic.
 (re: Gatsby book)
 What's that?

STAHR
 Your penance. No calls, Mary.

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

59

INT. STAHR'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

59

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

STAHR
 I have a lot of work to do, Pat.

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

STAHR (CONT'D)
 What's this?

BRADY
 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...

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

BRADY
 Ya want it or don't you?

STAHR
 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:

BRADY
 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)

BRADY (CONT'D)

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:

60

INT. BALLROOM - ROOSEVELT HOTEL - NIGHT

60

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)

STAHR (CONT'D)
 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.

STAHR

Miss 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--

STAHR

Would 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--

STAHR

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.

STAHR

That's why he can tell the truth in there.

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

STAHR (CONT'D)

And John I want you to reshoot your Christmas scene.

BROCA

Oh? Why?

STAHR

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--

STAHR (CONT'D)
 Oh, and Red... I'm taking you off
 "Mandalay Nights."

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

RIDINGWOOD
 But...I don't... Why, Monroe? The
 picture's *good*.

STAHR
 Exactly.

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

STAHR (CONT'D)
 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--

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

STAHR
 Celia, please. Not now. I'm--

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

STAHR
 --Don't you read Variety? The
Fuhrer runs Hollywood now. Just ask
 Des Davis.

CELIA
Let me finish. Gosh sakes, Monroe.

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

CELIA (CONT'D)
 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

61

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

62

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:

63 INT. BRADY MANSION - GRAND STAIRCASE - LATE NIGHT 63

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

64 INT. BRADY MANSION - MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUING 64

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.

Wait. What? Now Brady looks horrified. Rose too.

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:

65

EXT. ALLEY OFF OF VINE - NIGHT

65

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:

66 INT. BRADY LOT - EXEC. BLDG. - CORRIDOR - MORNING 66

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:

67 INT. STAHR'S OUTER OFFICE - CONTINUING 67

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

68 INT. STAHR'S OFFICE - CONTINUING 68

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?

STAHR
Let him wait.

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

BRADY (O.S.)
Hey. Sternberg.

Here's *Brady*, in the doorway - furiously, 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.

STAHR
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*.

STAHR
Maybe. But I'm making her movie.

BRADY
Yeah? With whose money?

STAHR
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?

STAHR
Minna wasn't the issue. *Greatness*
was. And this can be great.

(MORE)

STAHR (CONT'D)
 (no reply)
 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:

69 INT. ST. MARK'S CHURCH - CHAPEL/CONFESSIONAL - DAY 69

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:

70 INT. STAHR'S HOME - SCREENING ROOM - LATE NIGHT 70

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.

71 INT. STAHR'S HOME - FOYER - MOMENTS LATER 71

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.

72

INT. STAHR'S HOME - BEDROOM - CONTINUING

72

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.

-END PILOT.