

"M R R O S E"

'THE UNLUCKY DIP'
~~'THE PUT POCKETS'~~



by

Michael J Bird

DISTRIBUTION:

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CAST:

Charles Rose
John Halifax
David Unwin
Harry Croaker
Al Starkey
Daily Globe Photographer
City Man
Workman
Woman in fur coat } TV Interviewees
Female Student }
Male Student }
ITN Newsreader
Barbara Scott Russell
Percival Vance

NON SPEAKING

Doorman of Mirador Restaurant
Volunteer Workers for Duo
Leonard Cook
Inspector Matthews
Two Uniformed Policemen

SETS:

Mirador Restaurant, London
Private Bar, Public House
Rose's Flat Living Area and Kitchen
The Hallway of Vincent Pelling's House and Vincent
Pelling's Study
Barbara Scott Russell's Office
The Cellar of Vincent Pelling's House

CORNERS:

Funland Amusement Arcade
Rose's Car (Front Interior)
Front Door Vincent Pelling's House
French Windows of Vincent Pelling's Study. Ext.

FILMING:

Ext. Mirador Restaurant. A street in London.
S Shop Doorway. Day
Ext. Funland Amusement Arcade. Another street in
London. Day
Ext. Montage of shots for car following sequence. Day
Ext. Vincent Pelling's House. Day
Int. Letter Montage Act Two. Day
Ext. A corner of Vincent Pelling's Garden. Day

FADE IN:

INT. A QUIET CORNER OF THE MIRADOR RESTAURANT IN THE WEST END OF LONDON. STUDIO. DAY

CHARLES ROSE AND DAVID UNWIN OF THE DAILY GLOBE HAVE ENJOYED AN EXCELLENT AND EXPENSIVE LUNCH AND ARE IDLING OVER THE LAST OF THEIR COFFEE AND BRANDY.

UNWIN IS A MAN IN HIS MIDDLE THIRTIES, EX PUBLIC SCHOOL AND WITH AFFECTATIONS VERGING ON BEING CAMP. HE IS A GOOD JOURNALIST IN THE MODERN POPULAR PRESS SENSE AND HIS COLUMN 'UNWIN'S UNIVERSE' IS FOLLOWED BY MILLIONS. HE IS AS TRUSTWORTHY AS THE NEXT MAN - PROVIDED THAT THE NEXT MAN IS ALSO A GOSSIP COLUMNIST ON A NATIONAL NEWSPAPER.

UNWIN:

Don't think I haven't enjoyed it Mr Rose but what have I got, precisely nothing.

ROSE:

Did you expect more?

UNWIN:

I hoped. That's what I get paid for.

ROSE:

Handsomely, no doubt.

UNWIN:

It's what the readers of my column expect.

ROSE:

My views on skirt lengths, drugs, sex and the mores of contemporary Britain?

UNWIN:

It sells newspapers.

ROSE:

Correction, it sells the Globe.

UNWIN:

You're a celebrity. ~~An ex Detective Inspector~~ - Britain's top crime buster.....

ROSE:

(WINCING) I am a naturally charitable man Mr Unwin so I'll forgive you for that vulgar cliché.

UNWIN:

(IGNORING THE INTERRUPTION) ... Your memoirs have topped the best seller lists for months; there are rumours about a film and a second volume ...

ROSE:

And all this is good copy for Unwin's Universe?

UNWIN:

8
Frankly, no. That's ~~all~~ common knowledge. My reputation is based on getting the story behind the story. The more intimate angles on the men and women in the public eye.

ROSE:

Seven libel actions in the last four years.

UNWIN:

So you read my column.

ROSE:

I checked! It's an old habit which I find difficult to break.

UNWIN:

What my readers want is an insight into the private life of people in the news. Thank God, the Great Unwashed have an insatiable appetite for titbits from the tables of the famous and, of course, the infamous.

ROSE:

Well you may tell your sensation starved readers that as far as my private life is concerned, it's ... private!

UNWIN:

So I'm back to nothing.

ROSE:

9 ~~It would appear so unless the fact which~~
You will have gathered during lunch that I like fillet of beef 'en Cochonnilles. ^{Is the} kind of trivia you're after?[?]

THERE IS A PAUSE AND THEN UNWIN TRIES A NEW TACK.

UNWIN:

What about your views on capital punishment and penal reform?

ROSE:

8 Ah! Now you have hit on two subjects about which I have deeply considered and definite opinions. But only on commission ~~I'm afraid~~ and for a fee and, forgive me, not I think for the Daily Globe.

UNWIN:

(IN A LAST DESPERATE ATTEMPT) The crime figures for London look like being up again this year. Any comment?

ROSE:

(WITH A SMILE) Certainly and you may quote me; crime is here to stay.

UNWIN GIVES UP

UNWIN:

Will you have another brandy?

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ROSE:

Thank you but much as I'd like to it would trouble my conscience. I don't feel I've earned it.

UNWIN SIGNALS THE WAITER TO BRING THE BILL

UNWIN:

Tell me, Mr Rose. Why did you accept my invitation then? You must have known the kind of line I'd take.

ROSE:

The food here at the Mirador is excellent and having, I must confess, read your column from time to time I was interested to discover what kind of a man you really are.

UNWIN:

To confirm your contempt?

ROSE:

Oh, contempt is too strong a word. I'm content to leave that to you, Mr Unwin. What was it you called your readers just now, the Great Unwashed?

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EXT. THE MIRADOR RESTAURANT. DAY (FILM)

THE PAVEMENT IS BUSY. ROSE AND UNWIN COME OUT OF THE RESTAURANT AND STAND TALKING WHILE THE DOORMAN TRIES TO GET THEM A TAXI.

CUT TO:

EXT. A SHOP DOORWAY JUST UP THE STREET FROM THE MIRADOR. DAY (FILM)

A MAN IS STANDING IN THE DOORWAY OSTENSIBLY EXAMINING THE GOODS ON DISPLAY. HE IS FIFTYISH, SHORT WITH A ROUND, CHEERY FACE. HE IS DRESSED NEATLY WITH A LIGHT RAINCOAT OVER A DARK SUIT. HE WEARS A BOWLER HAT AND CARRIES A ROLLED UMBERELLA AND AN EVENING NEWSPAPER. HE COULD EASILY BE MISTAKEN FOR A MINOR BANK EMPLOYEE OR THE CHIEF CLERK OF SOME LONG ESTABLISHED COMPANY AND THIS IS EXACTLY THE IMPRESSION HE WISHES TO GIVE. THIS IS HARRY CROAKER, PICKPOCKET.

CROAKER SEES ROSE LEAVE THE RESTAURANT WITH HIS COMPANION AND REACTS. CASUALLY HE MAKES HIS WAY TOWARDS HIM TAKING CARE TO REMAIN UNSEEN BY THE EX-DETECTIVE.

CUT TO:

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EXT. THE MIRADOR RESTAURANT. DAY (FILM)

AS IF ABOUT TO CROSS THE ROAD CROAKER COMES UP ALONGSIDE ROSE WHOSE ATTENTION IS ON THE DOORMAN'S EFFORTS TO FLAG DOWN A CAB. KEEPING HIS HEAD AVERTED CROAKER, COVERING THE MOVEMENT WITH THE NEWSPAPER HELD IN HIS LEFT HAND, SLIPS HIS RIGHT HAND EXPERTLY INTO ROSE'S OVERCOAT POCKET.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE MIRADOR RESTAURANT. DAY (FILM)

WE HAVE A CU OF CROAKER'S HAND, FINGERS TIGHTLY TOGETHER IN THE TRADITIONAL PICK-POCKET STYLE, BEING WITHDRAWN FROM ROSE'S OVERCOAT POCKET. IT IS HALFWAY OUT WHEN ROSE'S LEFT HAND SNAPS OVER THE WRIST LIKE A MANACLE.

CUT TO:

EXT. MCU THE MIRADOR RESTAURANT. DAY
(FILM)

ROSE, WHO IS STILL LOOKING AWAY, HAS
CROAKER IN AN UNBREAKABLE GRIP.

ROSE:

To paraphrase William Blake 'A petty
sneaking thief I know. Harry Croaker,
how do you do?'

NOW HE TURNS FOR THE FIRST TIME TO LOOK AT
HIS CAPTIVE.

CUT TO:

THE PRIVATE BAR OF A PUBLIC HOUSE ACROSS
THE ROAD FROM THE ROAD FROM THE MIRADOR.
STUDIO. DAY

CROAKER:

(HIS FACE IN CU) Straight up, Mr Rose,
you're makin' a mistake!

CROAKER'S VOICE BETRAYS HIS BACKGROUND AS
BEING NEARER TO TOOTING BEC THAN ALDGATE
EAST. HE SEEMS TO BE ENJOYING HIMSELF.

WE PULL BACK AND SEE THAT CROAKER IS SEATED
AT TABLE IN AN ALCOVE WITH HIS BACK TO THE
WALL. DAVID UNWIN IS ALSO THERE, SITTING
IN A CHAIR SO PLACED AS TO BLOCK ANY SUDDEN
ATTEMPT ON THE PART OF THE PICKPOCKET TO
MAKE A RUN FOR IT. ROSE HAS JUST REACHED
THE TABLE HAVING BOUGHT SOME DRINKS AT THE
BAR. HE SETS THESE DOWN: WHISKY AND SODA
FOR UNWIN, A BRANDY FOR HIMSELF AND A HALF-
A-PINT OF BITTER FOR CROAKER.

THE LUNCH TIME RUSH IS OVER AND THERE IS
NO ONE ELSE IN THE SMALL BAR.

ROSE:

8
(SEATING HIMSELF AT THE TABLE) No protestations of injured innocence please, Harry. ~~Your hand was still in my pocket. Now, we'll just sit here quietly and enjoy a drink for old time's sake and then find the nearest constable on his beat. Cheers!~~
HE PICKS UP HIS GLASS AND DRINKS. CROAKER SMILES BROADLY AND SAMPLES HIS BEER LIKE A CONNOISSEUR.

UNWIN:

(INDICATING THE PICKPOCKET) A friend of yours?

ROSE:

8
Hardly. Harry Croaker is a professional pickpocket with not nearly enough convictions to justify so long and so skilful a career. (TO CROAKER) You should have followed my example, Harry, and retired. You've become ~~very~~ careless.

CROAKER:

You spotted me?

ROSE:

The instant we left the restaurant.

CROAKER:

(PROUDLY BUT WITH A NOTE OF UNCERTAINTY AS THOUGH SEEKING CONFIRMATION) You never thought it was you I was going to dip though, did you?

ROSE:

(A TRIFLE NETTLED) A thief you may be but I never took you for a fool. And clumsy!

CROAKER:

(HOLDING UP HIS RIGHT HAND) Rheumatism. Every now and then, in the bad weather

CROAKER: (CONTD)

mostly. Not as quick as I used to be. Good enough for the mugs but not for a pro like you, eh, Mr Rose?

ROSE:

(SMUGLY) Whatever possessed you to try it?

FOR A MOMENT, AND IT IS ONLY FOR A MOMENT, CROAKER HESITATES. A MUSCLE IN THE LEFT-HAND CORNER OF HIS MOUTH BEGINS TO TWITCH NERVOUSLY. TO COVER THIS HE PICKS UP HIS GLASS AND GULPS HIS BEER. WHEN HE PUTS THE GLASS DOWN HE IS IN CONTROL AGAIN.

CROAKER:

Saw you there and somefing came over me, y'know? Couldn't resist the temptation.

ROSE:

Temptation can lead us down some strange and twisted paths. On this occasion I fancy it will take you back to Wormwood Scrubs.

(HE DRAINS HIS GLASS) Now, if you've finished your drink, ~~we'll get the rest of this distressing business over with as quickly as possible.~~

ROSE MAKES A MOVE TO GET UP FROM HIS CHAIR. CROAKER'S MOMENT OF TRIUMPH HAS ARRIVED.

CROAKER:

But you haven't checked, Mr Rose, have you?

ROSE:

Checked?

CROAKER:

Your pocket.

ROSE:

My best efforts to save you from embarrassment have gone unappreciated, Croaker. Delicacy, a virtue I possess almost in extremis is wasted on you.

UNWIN:

What's that old proverb? 'Pride goeth before a fall'.

ROSE:

(WITH A CHILL SMILE OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT)

Proverbs, chapter sixteen, verse eighteen 'Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall'. (TO CROAKER)
As it happens I am carrying nothing of value in my overcoat pockets and the one you chose is empty.

CROAKER:

I know it was empty, don't I?

ROSE:

Are you pleading mitigation because you happened to 'dip' the wrong pocket? Oh, come now. I'm ~~quite~~ sure I don't have to remind you that criminal intent is sufficient to secure a conviction.

CROAKER:

(SLOWLY, ALMOST SPELLING OUT THE WORDS)

I said was empty, Mr Rose. You 'aven't checked to see if it's empty now, 'ave you?

ROSE FROWNS. HE DOESN'T UNDERSTAND; HERE IS A NEW AND ENTIRELY UNEXPECTED DEVELOPMENT IN THIS DRAMA OF HIS OWN MAKING AND IN WHICH, UP UNTIL THAT MOMENT, HE HAD SEEN HIMSELF AS AUTHOR, PRODUCER AND CENTRAL CHARACTER.

ROSE STUDIES CROAKER INTENTLY. THE PICKPOCKET FOLDS HIS ARMS ACROSS HIS CHEST AND LEANS BACK IN HIS CHAIR COCKY, CONFIDENT AND SMILING. UNWIN WATCHES THE TWO MEN. FOR HIM THIS TURN OF EVENTS IS PROMISING AND HE SENSES THE POSSIBILITY OF GOOD COPY. SLOWLY ROSE SLIPS HIS HAND INTO THE LEFTHAND POCKET OF HIS OVERCOAT. WHEN HE PULLS IT OUT HE HAS SOMETHING IN HIS FINGERS. HE DROPS HIS FIND ONTO THE TABLE - THREE FIVE POUND NOTES.

UNWIN:

Interesting!

ROSE IS EVEN MORE PUZZLED NOW. HE IS DETERMINED TO DISCOVER JUST WHAT CROAKER IS UP TO BUT HE IS VERY CONSCIOUS OF THE PRESENCE OF UNWIN. THE THOUGHT OF JUST WHAT THE NEWSPAPERMAN MAY MAKE OF ALL THIS FILLS HIM WITH HORROR.

ROSE:

(TO UNWIN) Quite so, I'm sure we're keeping you from all the more interesting things that are happening in the world outside. I wouldn't be in the least offended if you felt that you had to return to Fleet Street.

IT DOESN'T WORK

UNWIN:

(SHAKING HIS HEAD) My dear Mr Rose you must be joking!

HE TAKES OUT A CIGARETTE AND LIGHTS IT. ROSE ACCEPTS DEFEAT WITH A SHRUG AND TURNS HIS ATTENTION TO THE SMIRKING CROAKER. WHEN HE QUESTIONS HIM HE IS NO LONGER CHARLES ROSE THE RICH AND SUCCESSFUL AUTHOR, MAN OF LETTERS, TELEVISION PERSONALITY AND OPENER OF SUPERMARKETS. THIS IS ROSE THE EX-DETECTIVE INSPECTOR IN ACTION. THE URBANITY IS STILL THERE BUT THE VOICE NOW HAS A SCALPEL EDGE TO IT. HIS MIND IS FULLY ALERT AND SEARCHING AND THE EXAMINATION TAKES ON THE FORM OF A BRISK WALK DOWN A PRIMROSE PATH SCATTERED WITH HIDDEN LAND MINES.

ROSE:

(TO CROAKER AND HOLDING UP THE NOTES) Why?

CROAKER:

I told y'why.

ROSE:

You were suddenly overcome by an irresistible urge to slip fifteen pounds into my overcoat pocket? (CROAKER NODS. THE TWITCH IN THE CORNER OF HIS MOUTH IS BACK AGAIN)

CROAKER:

That's it.

ROSE EXAMINES THE NOTES

ROSE:

They're forgeries?

CROAKER:

(GENUINELY INDIGNANT) That they're not.
Those are the real things.

ROSE:

8
~~Such generosity.~~ What made you think that
I needed the money.

CROAKER:

Well I didn't. 'Course I didn't. I know
you're not short but, like I said, when I
saw you I couldn't resist it.

ROSE:

So, on an impulse you made an attempt to
present me with fifteen pounds? An
unsuccessful attempt as it happened.

CROAKER:

(SULKILY) That's it. But you can't do
nothink to me. I haven't done nothink
wrong. There's no law against what I
done. And the feller what I was going
to slip the money to; he won't come out
on the wrong side ...

ROSE:

Am I to understand you were intending to
put the money into someone else's pocket?
(CROAKER NODS) Then you saw me and you
changed your mind?

AGAIN CROAKER NODS. HIS COCKINESS HAS
FAST DISAPPEARED. NOW HE GIVES THE
IMPRESSION OF REGRETTING THE WHOLE INCIDENT
AND OF WISHING HIMSELF SOMEWHERE ELSE - AS
FAR AWAY AS POSSIBLE. HIS NERVOUS TIC IS
WORKING OVERTIME.

ROSE: (CONTD)

Curiouser and curiouser. ~~Now again~~
~~Croaker, why?~~

CROAKER:

I've told you Mr Rose, 'aven't I? (HE SEES
 THAT ROSE STILL DOESN'T BELIEVE HIM)

~~Straight up. It was a bit of a giggle,~~
~~y'know?~~ I remembered the times you pined
 me in the old days and well putting
 money into your pocket I wasn't really
 taking no chances like, so well, I
 thought I'd try it on and see if I could
 dip you and get away with it.

ROSE:

But you didn't, did you?

CROAKER:

No.

ROSE:

And who is the lucky man you were going to
 reward with fifteen pounds?

CROAKER:

8 ~~His name's Tafler.~~ He works in an office
 in the Strand. ^{His name's Tafler} He's in a bit of bother.
 with his rent; y'know, owing. Landlord's
 laying it on a bit heavy.

ROSE:

And you were going to make him an anonymous
 gift? ~~To help him out of his difficulties?~~

CROAKER:

That's right.

ROSE:

How kind and ^how touching. True friendship.

CROAKER:

Oh no, you've got it wrong Mr Rose. This Taflex, he's no friend of mine. I've never even met him.

ROSE MAKES NO ATTEMPT TO HIDE HIS INCREPUDILITY

ROSE:

Really! And how long have you been giving money away?

CROAKER:

(AFTER A MOMENT'S THOUGHT) Well, I suppose I've been doing it now for ^{a couple of} ~~about two~~ months.

FOR A MOMENT ROSE FINDS HIMSELF LOST FOR WORDS. HE RECOVERS QUICKLY BUT NOT BEFORE UNWIN STEPS IN.

UNWIN:

For two months you've been acting as some kind of one man charity?

CROAKER:

~~Oh no~~, it's not just me. Half the dips in London is doing it.

UNWIN:

Thieves putting money into people's pockets!

CROAKER:

Pockets or purses, it's all the same to us.

UNWIN:

Incredible!

ROSE:

Unbelievable. Tell me Croaker what do you and your associates get out of these acts of charity?

CROAKER:

Well the money's not bad and it's regular. And there's no risk of going inside, is there?

ROSE:

That's an open question! Now, this money which you claim you and the other pick-pockets have been giving away so freely, I'm right in assuming am I, that you are not the donors? (CROAKER LOOKS BLANK) To put it another way. It isn't your money?

CROAKER:

(COMPREHENDING) Oh! No, 'course not.

ROSE:

~~Tell me then, who is the munificent benefactor of London's poor and oppressed?~~
Who is behind this somewhat accentric scheme?

CROAKER:

I don't know.

ROSE:

(MENACINGLY) Croaker!

CROAKER:

Straight up, Mr Rose. I don't know.

ROSE:

Well, someone must have recruited you. Someone must provide you with the money and the names and addresses. Who is this twentieth century Fagin in reverse?

CROAKER:

I can't say. (HE SEES THE LOOK ON ROSE'S FACE) I can't, Mr Rose. Really, I can't.

ROSE:

Croaker, while I admit that the legal position of someone caught putting money into someone's pocket is not entirely clear to me at this moment, there is one thing of which I am sure. Quite close by there is

ROSE: (CONTD)

almost certainly ^a ~~a young and zealous~~ member of the uniformed branch of the Metropolitan Police. He would have no difficulty whatever in finding some reason for taking you into custody with, of course, a little prompting from myself. Suspected person: loitering with intent

CROAKER:

All right, all right. I get the message. It's Al Starkey.

ROSE:

The Al Starkey, late of Pentonville and ~~now the sole proprietor of the Funland Amusement Arcade? He holds the purse strings and gives you your instructions?~~ *He holds.*

CROAKER:

Yes. We go there mornings and he gives out the jobs. He's the one who pays our wages too.

ROSE:

UNWIN And how do you identify your ... well, Victims is the wrong word I suppose, under the circumstances.

CROAKER:

Starkey's got photographs. Tells us where to find them and what kind of bother they're in.

ROSE:

It must warm your heart to know you are doing so much good.

CROAKER:

Like I said, the money's regular. God's truth, that's all I know, Mr Rose. Can I go now?

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ROSE:

Yes, Croaker, you may leave us. (THE PICKPOCKET CAN'T GET AWAY FAST ENOUGH, BUT AS HE PASSES ROSE'S CHAIR THE EX-DETECTIVE INSPECTOR CATCHES HIM BY THE SLEEVE) Remember, though, if you are lying I know where to find you.

CROAKER:

(IN PARTING DEFIANCE) I'm not lying.
(HE INDICATES THE MONEY WHICH IS STILL LYING ON THE TABLE) Have the next round on me.

WITH THAT HE LEAVES HURRIEDLY. ROSE PICKS UP THE THREE FIVE POUND NOTES AND SHUFFLES THEM ABSENTLY. UNWIN LOOKS AT HIM MOCKINGLY AND WITH A GLEAM OF TRIUMPH IN HIS EYES.

UNWIN:

Oh no, Mr Rose, please. This round's mine. Let me buy you that second brandy you refused earlier and don't let it trouble your conscience. Believe me, you've certainly earned it ... now.

FADE TO:

INT. ROSE'S FLAT. STUDIO. DAY

IT IS THE FOLLOWING MORNING. WE HAVE AN OPEN COPY OF 'THE DAILY GLOBE' IN CU. THE HEADLINE OF UNWIN'S COLUMN READS 'CHARLES ROSE AND THE PUT POCKETS'. WE PULL BACK AND SEE THAT IT IS JOHN HALIFAX WHO HAS THE NEWSPAPER. ROSE IS FINISHING A LATE BREAKFAST.

HALIFAX:

(READING) Surprise, surprise for that fearless fighter of crime, now best selling Author ex-Detective Inspector Charles Rose. It seems that he's got at least one good friend in London's underworld. Coming out of a well-known West End restaurant yesterday the eagle-eyed Rose caught a pickpocket in the act. The dip was up to his elbow in the overcoat pocket of guess who? None other than Charles Rose! Another triumph for Britain's ex-top crime buster? Hardly. It turned out that the man was only making an old friend a present - three crisp five pound notes! Result one red faced ex-copper and a jubilant and, he assures me, reformed thief sent merrily on his way. (HALIFAX STOPS READING AND LOOKS ACROSS AT ROSE) You and Unwin didn't exactly hit it off together! (ROSE, WHO IS NOW PRETENDING TO READ 'THE TIMES', SAYS NOTHING) (READING ON) The pickpocket claims that he and his fellow dips in London have been busily distributing funds to the needy in this way for month's. Put pockets, eh? Well, they do say that truth is stranger than fiction. I would be interested to

HALIFAX: (CONTD)

hear from any of ~~my~~ readers who have found themselves suddenly and mysteriously richer in the past few weeks. According to their spokesmen, the Put pockets concentrate on the really needy. It's sad to think that Charles Rose may have fallen on hard times! (HALIFAX WAITS FOR A REACTION.

THERE IS NONE) Any comment?

ROSE:

(SETTING DOWN HIS CUP) This coffee is cold.

HALIFAX:

It wasn't when I brought it in half-an-hour ago. Do you believe him?

ROSE:

Unwin? Never!

HALIFAX:

No, Croaker.

ROSE:

His explanation did nothing for my naturally suspicious mind.

HALIFAX:

(STUDYING THE NEWSPAPER AGAIN) Interesting thought, put pockets!

ROSE:

My dear John please don't use the trite catch phrases of that appalling hack.

HALIFAX FOLDS THE NEWSPAPER AND SETS IT DOWN ON THE TABLE.

HALIFAX:

But it is interesting?

ROSE:

Bizarre.

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HALIFAX:

But not necessarily criminal.

ROSE:

All my instincts are towards bizarre
certainly, criminal probably.

HALIFAX:

It troubles you?

ROSE:

It troubles me.

HALIFAX:

That 'damnable curiosity' again?

ROSE:

Precisely. And you?

HALIFAX:

The same, I suppose.

HALIFAX MOVES TO PICK UP THE COFFEE POT
TO REFILL IT BUT ROSE STOPS HIM.

ROSE:

Never mind that now. The mood has passed.

My coat please and the car. We're going

out. (HALIFAX PUTS THE COFFEE POT BACK ON

THE TABLE AND IS ABOUT TO FOLLOW HIS

EMPLOYERS INSTRUCTIONS WHEN AGAIN ROSE

CHECKS HIM) Have you any small change?

PUZZLED, HALIFAX PULLS SOME MONEY OUT OF HIS
POCKET AND EXAMINES IT.

HALIFAX:

Yes, why?

ROSE:

I feel the need for some amusement.

CUT TO:

INT. THE FUNLAND AMUSEMENT ARCADE. STUDIO DAY

THERE ARE THE GENERAL BACKGROUND SOUNDS OF SLOT MACHINES IN FEVERISH ACTION. WE SEE TWO PINBALL TABLES STANDING SIDE BY SIDE. REFLECTED IN THE GLASS OF THE SCORE PANEL OF ONE OF THE TABLES IS AL STARKEY; THICKSET SURLY AND WITH A HEAVY BLACK MOUSTACHE. STARKEY IS AN UNDERWORLD GO-BETWEEN, A FIXER. HE HAS BEEN INSIDE ONCE FOR RECEIVING BUT IS KNOWN BY THE POLICE TO HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN MANY OTHER CRIMES. THEY JUST HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO PROVE IT.

STARKEY IS PLAYING THE TABLE PERHAPS TO IDLE AWAY SOME TIME, PROBABLY TO TEST IT. INTO THE GLASS OF THE SECOND TABLE LOOMS THE REFLECTION OF CHARLES ROSE. HE PUTS IN HIS MONEY AND PLAYS HIS FIRST BALL. HE GETS A GOOD SCORE.

ROSE:

Encouraging! It looks as if it's going to be my lucky day.

CUT TO:

INT. THE FUNLAND AMUSEMENT ARCADE. STUDIO DAY

ROSE AND STARKEY RE NO LONGER SEEN IN REFLECTION BUT STANDING SIDE BY SIDE PLAYING THE TABLES. NEVER ONCE DO THEY LOOK AT ONE ANOTHER.

STARKEY:

What do you want?

ROSE:

(PLAYING ANOTHER BALL) Not a very warm welcome, Starkey.

STARKEY:

I don't like coppers.

ROSE:

Ex-copper.

STARKEY:

Once a copper always a copper.

ROSE:

It would be a good thing for you to bear that in mind when answering my questions.

STARKEY:

I've got nothing to say to you.

ROSE:

Oh, but I think you have.

STARKEY:

What, for instance?

ROSE:

Well, for a start about pickpockets who are now employed in giving money away. Money which they get from you along with their instructions.

STARKEY:

(THUMPING HIS TABLE) I should've known you'd be along when I read the paper this morning.

ROSE:

Well?

STARKEY:

Well, nothing. That's legitimate; all above board. You can't touch me; no one can.

ROSE:

The police are undermanned and overworked so, unfortunately, they are not always able to concentrate as much time and energy as they would like on the minor criminals.

However, in retirement, I have quite a lot of time on my hands. I'd be delighted to spend some of it on you. I am sure that with a little application I could come up with something.

STARKEY:

Don't you threaten me, Rose!

ROSE:

I wouldn't dream of doing such a thing. Now, who's behind all this?

STARKEY:

Look, shove off. I've told you. What I'm doing is legitimate. There's nothing you can do about it. You can't hurt me and if the man I'm working for wants to remain anonymous, that's his privilege.

(HE FAUCES BRIEFLY) I'll tell you one thing though, he's not very pleased with you, attracting this publicity.

ROSE:

I may cry. (HE LINES UP ANOTHER SHOT)
And that's all you have to say?

STARKEY:

That's all. So like I said, shove off.

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ROSE:

(LETTING GO WITH HIS LAST BALL) At least give your principal a message from me. Tell him that Mr Rose is distrubed, And that when I'm disturbed I am liable to make waves.

ROSE'S LAST BALL CLINCHES HIS GAME. THE SCOREBOARD FLASHES WITH LIGHTS AND A BELL RINGS.

STARKEY:

(IN A FLAT AND GRUDGING VOICE) You've won.

ROSE:

(WITH A SELF-SATISFIED SMILE) I invariably do.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE FUNLAND AMUSEMENT ARCADE. DAY
(FILM)

THROUGH THE WINDOW OF THE CAR WE SEE ROSE LEAVE THE ARCADE AND CROSS THE ROAD TOWARD US. HE OPENS THE OFFSIDE FRONT DOOR AND GETS IN BESIDE HALIFAX WHO IS IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT.

CUT TO:

INT. ROSE'S CAR. STUDIO. DAY

ROSE IS SETTling HIMSELF INTO HIS SEAT

HALIFAX:

Did he tell you anything?

ROSE:

No, but then I didn't really expect him to.

HALIFAX:

What now then?

ROSE:

Well, although he wasn't very forthcoming,
I have an idea that friend Starkey will
want to talk to his boss - and soon!

CUT TO:

EXT. THE FUNLAND AMUSEMENT ARCADE. DAY
(FILM)

WE SEE THE ARCADE AGAIN THROUGH THE CAR
WINDOW FROM THE POV OF ROSE AND HALIFAX.
AFTER A WHILE STARKEY COMES OUT. HE LOOKS
AROUND AND THEN, SATISFIED, WALKS TO A
CAR WHICH IS PARKED A LITTLE WAY UP FROM
THE ARCADE AND ON THE SAME SIDE OF THE
ROAD.

ROSE:

(OV) As I thought, there he goes.

STARKEY GETS INTO HIS CAR AND DRIVES OFF

CUT TO:

EXT. A STREET IN LONDON. DAY (FLIM)

ROSE'S CAR PULLS OUT INTO THE TRAFFIC TO
TAIL STARKEY WHO TAKES A TURNING ON TO A
MAIN ROAD.

CUT TO:

INT. ROSE'S CAR. STUDIO. DAY

HALIFAX:

(GLANCING INTO THE REARVIEW MIRROR)

Interesting!

ROSE:

What is&

HALIFAX:

That car behind us. It's been with us all
the way from the flat.

ROSE:

We're being followed?

HALIFAX:

Yes. Shall I lose him?

ROSE:

(APPALLED BY THE THOUGHT) What, all that twisting and turning around corners. Certainly not, we're not Bonnie and Clyde.

CUT TO:

EXT. A BRIEF MONTAGE OF SHOTS OF ROSE'S CAR ON STARKEY'S TAIL. DAY (FILM)

EVENTUALLY STARKEY DRIVES THROUGH THE GATES OF A LARGE HOUSE ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF LONDON. THE HOUSE IS SURROUNDED BY A HIGH WALL AND THERE IS A SHORT CIRCULAR GRAVEL DRIVE FROM THE GATES TO THE HOUSE WHICH STANDS ONLY A LITTLE WAY BACK FROM THE ROAD. THERE ARE THREE BROAD STEPS LEADING UP TO THE IMPRESSIVE FRONT DOOR. ROSE'S CAR FALLS INTO THE KERP. AS IT DOES SO THE CAR HALIFAX SPOTTED FOLLOWING THEM SWEEPS FAST AND STOPS SOME YARDS FURTHER UP AND ON THE SAME SIDE OF THE ROAD.

CUT TO:

INT. ROSE'S CAR. DAY (FILM)

FROM THE POV OF ROSE AND HALIFAX WE SEE, THROUGH THE CAR WINDOW, STARKEY GET OUT OF HIS CAR WHICH IS PARKED IN FRONT OF THE HOUSE. HE GOES UP TO THE FRONT DOOR AND RINGS THE BELL. THE DOOR IS OPENED TO HIM AND HE GOES INSIDE. WE NOW SEE A MAN GET OUT OF THE CAR PARKED FURTHER ALONG FROM ROSE AND HALIFAX. HE IS YOUNG, VERY ORDINARY LOOKING AND HE IS WEARING A RAINCOAT. LEANING AGAINST THE DOOR OF HIS CAR HE MAKES AN EXAGGERATED SHOW OF IGNORING ROSE AND HIS COMPANION.

CUT TO:

INT. ROSE'S CAR. STUDIO. DAY

HALIFAX:

Who is he?

ROSE:

I haven't the vaguest idea. And there's little we can do about him; this isn't even a no parking area. (ROSE'S ATTENTION IS DRAWN TO THE HOUSE) Ah, that was quick! He's leaving already.

CUT TO:

ACT I

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EXT. VINCENT PELLING'S HOUSE. DAY (ILLM)

THE FRONT DOOR HAS OPENED AGAIN AND FROM THE POV OF ROSE AND HALIFAX WE SEE STARKEY STANDING JUST INSIDE THE HALL TALKING TO SOMEONE WHO IS NOT VISIBLE TO US.

CUT TO:

INT. ROSE'S CAR. STUDIO. DAY

ROSE:

(WHO IS WATCHING THE HOUSE INTENTLY) Now I think would be as good a time as any to introduce myself. (HALIFAX MAKES A MOVE TO OPEN HIS DOOR) No. I want you to wait in the car.

ROSE OPENS HIS DOOR AND GETS OUT

CUT TO:

EXT. THE FRONT DOOR OF VINCENT PELLING'S HOUSE. DAY (FILM)

THE DOOR IS STILL OPEN. STARKEY IS ABOUT TO LEAVE. AT THE SOUND OF FOOTSTEPS ON THE GRAVEL HE TURNS AND SEES ROSE AS HE COMES INTO THE PICTURE. STARKEY GLANCES BACK AT HIS HOST AND INDICATES THE INTRUDER WITH A JERK OF HIS HEAD.

A MAN EMERGES FROM THE HALL AND COMES OUT ON TO THE STEPS. THIS IS VINCENT PELLING. HE IS IN HIS MIDDLE SIXTIES AND IMPECCABLY DRESSED IN A TWEED SUIT OF EXCELLENT CUT. HIS FULL HEAD OF GREY HAIR AND HIS NEATLY TRIMMED VANDYKE BEARD AND MOUSTACHE ENHANCE HIS GENERAL AIR OF DISTINCTION.

ROSE:

Ah, Father Christmas I presume! (HE TAKES OUT HIS WALLET AND REMOVES THE THREE FIVE POUND NOTES PRESENTED TO HIM BY CROAKER. HE OFFERS THEM TO PELLING) These I think belong to you.

AT THIS MOMENT THE SCENE IS BRIGHTENED BRIEFLY BUT BRILLIANTLY BY A FLASH OF LIGHT.

VOICE:

(OV AS ROSE TURNS) Thank you. That was just fine.

THE MAN FROM THE THIRD CAR COMES INTO PICTURE. HE IS CARRYING A CAMERA WITH FLASH ATTACHMENT.

PHOTOGRAPHER:

The Globe. I'm from The Daily Globe.

ROSE:

(LOOKING HIM UP AND DOWN AND WITH A WITHERING AND SCATHING EDGE TO HIS VOICE)
But, of course. Where else could you possibly be from?

END OF ACT I

FADE IN

INT VICENT PELLING'S STUDY. STUDIO. DAY

THE STUDIO IS LARGE AND TASTEFULLY FURNISHED, THERE IS A DESK, BARE SAVE FOR A LAMP, AN ANTIQUE INKSTAND AND TWO OR THREE FILES IN AN ORDERED FILE. BOOKS AND PICTURES LINE THE WALLS AND FRENCH WINDOWS LEAD OUT INTO THE GARDEN.

PELLING AND ROSE ARE SEATED OPPOSITE EACH OTHER ON EITHER SIDE OF THE DESK. PELLING IS ANGRY AND NOT CONCEALING THE FACT.

PELLING:

How dare you interfere in my private affairs, Mr Rose. You have bullied and badgered at least two of my employees and now you come snooping around my house without any ...

ROSE:

(INTERRUPTING) I came to return your money.

PELLING:

Being an ex-policeman does not give you any special privileges. ~~You have no right to pry into something which is entirely legal and with which you are involved in no way whatever.~~

ROSE:

Forgive me, Mr ... Mr ...?

PELLING:

Pelling. Vincent Pelling.

ROSE:

I did
Forgive me, Mr Pelling, but ~~from the moment~~
that I ^{calen} caught Harry Croaker with his hand in
my pocket, ~~I became very much involved.~~

PELLING:

(GRUDGINGLY) Yes, I admit that was unfortunate.
Croaker was wrong to do it. However, he is
being disciplined.

ROSE:

Not too harshly I hope!

PELLING:

Just
No, he has ~~merely~~ been suspended from
distribution work for one month and put on
general duties around the house and grounds ~~here~~

ROSE:

8
Mr Pelling, perhaps if you gave me an
explanation of ~~just~~ what is going on.....?

PELLING:

(GETTING UP FROM HIS CHAIR) Can you think
of one good reason why I should?

ROSE:

To satisfy my 'damnable curiosity' perhaps?
To put my mind at rest?

PELLING BEGINS PACING THE ROOM, LOST IN THOUGHT:
FINALLY HE MAKES UP HIS MIND.

PELLING:

No. But to keep you from interfering any
further, yes. (WEARILY HE PASSES A HAND OVER
HIS FOREHEAD) Two years ago I came back to
this country and what did I find in this
Welfare State paradise? I found old people

PELLING: (CONTD)

struggling to keep alive. ~~Old people going hungry for the want of an extra pound and some of them dying from exposure because they couldn't afford a few hundredweight of coal or a shilling or two more for the gas or electric meter.~~ I found decent people being bullied by avaricious landlords. I found people, foolish people perhaps but nonetheless human beings, ensared by insidious advertising ~~and hard selling techniques~~ into hire purchase debts far beyond their means. And that's only a part of the misery I found around me.

ROSE:

Tragic I agree but in almost every case there is some welfare agency, some existing local organisation to whom these people can turn.

PELLING:

True, and some do. But many, many more do not. And do you know why, Mr Rose? Pride! They are too proud to seek charity from either private or state sources. And so they worry, seek comfort in drink or barbiturates, suffer and sometimes they die; often by their own hand. Don't run away with the idea I am a millionaire because I'm not, but I am a wealthy man. So I hit on ^{the} an idea which would

ACT II

- 4 -

PELLING: (CONTD)

ensure that what assistance I could give would go directly and anonymously to those who are most desperately in need of help.

ROSE:

The 'Put Pockets', as The Globe calls them.

PELLING:

Exactly.

THERE IS A KNOCK ON THE DOOR AND BARBARA SCOTT-RUSSELL COMES INTO THE STUDY. SHE IS AROUND TWENTY-FIVE AND STRIKINGLY ATTRACTIVE, EVEN MORE SO WHEN SHE IS NOT WEARING THE RATHER SEVERE EXECUTIVE TYPE SPECTACLES WHICH SHE HAS ON NOW.

BARBARA:

(SEEING ROSE) Oh, I'm sorry Vincent.

I didn't know you had anyone with you.

PELLING:

It's quite all right. Mr Rose, this is Miss Scott-Russell my assistant.

ROSE GETS TO HIS FEET AND HE AND BARBARA SHAKE HANDS.

BARBARA:

Hello.

ROSE:

How do you do?

ACT II

- 5 -

PELLING:

~~What can I do for you, Barbara?~~

BARBARA:

I just wanted to go over the details for this afternoon's press conference but I can come back later.

PELLING:

Fine, in about five or ten minutes?

BARBARA NODS AND WITH A SMILE TO ROSE GOES OUT OF THE ROOM.

ROSE:

A press conference would indicate that your days of anonymity are over, Mr Pelling.

PELLING:

After that piece in the
~~With that piece in the 'Globe' this morning~~
~~what I have been doing is not likely to remain~~
~~a secret, is it? I had no choice so~~

~~The fact has to be faced and I have~~
decided to capitalise on it. I am calling a
press conference to announce that I am setting
up an entirely new charity. As it is based on
the precept of 'Do unto others as you would they
should do unto you', it is to be called simply
DUO.

~~ROSE:~~

~~And do you intend to run it on the same lines,~~
~~using pickpockets to make the donations?~~

ACT II

- 6 -

PELLING:

~~On exactly the same lines and, what's more, I intend to launch a National appeal for funds so that we may spread our work throughout the country. If every man, woman and child in Britain were regularly to contribute a shilling or two; why, we could almost eradicate the word 'want'. Presented with a challenge like that and with an imaginative idea like DUO, I think I know how the public will respond.~~

CUT TO:

INT ROSE'S FLAT. STUDIO NIGHT

HALIFAX IS WATCHING TELEVISION. WE SEE IN CU A MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN ONE OF A NUMBER OF PEOPLE BEING INTERVIEWED IN THE STREET.

WOMAN:

Gawd bless 'im, that's what I say, Gawd bless 'im!

ACT II

- 7 -

CITY MAN:

Well, of course, he's doing a first class job. More power to his elbow. This is helping those who really need help, not just supporting idle layabouts.

ON SCREEN NOW A MIDDLE-AGED WORKMAN. ROSE ENTERS AND JOINS HALIFAX.

WORKMAN:

Ruddy marvellous! I keep lookin' in me pockets; hopin' like!

THE FILM CUTS TO A WOMAN IN A FUR COAT WHO IS CLUTCHING A SMALL DOG.

WOMAN:

I've always imagined that these kind of people were looked after by the authorities. I mean just what else do they do with all that money that they take away in taxes? Still, if it's needed it's simply wonderful what he's doing. We must all do our bit, mustn't we? And I shall certainly send him a cheque.

THIS INTERVIEW CUTS TO TWO STUDENTS, A YOUNG MAN AND A GIRL IN GLASSES.

GIRL:

As far as I'm concerned, this is the most exciting thing to happen since C N D. I'm just itching to help in some way.

ACT II

- 8 -

YOUNG MAN:

I'm quite certain that the young people of Britain are one hundred percent behind Mr Pelling. ~~After all,~~ We're not all obsessed with sex and drugs. Most of us really care about today's social ills. I mean, we want to help and, ~~as I see it,~~ Pelling is showing the way.

THE ITN NEWS CUTS BACK TO THE NEWSREADER

COMMENTATOR:

At his North London home today Mr Pelling was not available for comment but a steady stream of people have been calling to volunteer their help and offer contributions.

THE COMMENTATOR IS CUT SHORT IN MID-SENTENCE AS JOHN HALIFAX SWITCHES OFF THE SET.

HALIFAX:

He certainly seems to have stirred things up a bit.

ROSE:

Doesn't he, though! Now let's go over what, through dint of great application, you have managed to discover about the charitable Mr Pelling.

HALIFAX:

(WEARILY) Again?

four times.

Alain

ACT II

- 9 -

ROSE:

Again.

HALIFAX TAKES A NOTEBOOK OUT OF HIS POCKET
AND READS FROM IT.

HALIFAX:

(READING) Pelling, Vincent George, born 23rd August 1902 in Feltham, Middlesex. Went to South Africa with his parents when he was fourteen. Turned up in Johannesburg in 1926 and tried his hand at a number of jobs. Finally set up as an export/import agent and apparently did very well for himself. No criminal record although there were rumours that at one time he was mixed up with illicit diamond buying but that means nothing because in those days just about everybody in Johannesburg, certainly every businessman, was rumoured to be involved with I D B. No known criminal associates. Sold up his business and returned to this country two years ago to retire. He owns the house he lives in. He is known to the local tradespeople as a discriminating but very good customer who settles his bills on the dot. Well that's it - a model citizen. You checked with the Yard!

ROSE:

Yes. They have nothing on him.

ACT II

- 10 -

HALIFAX:

I suppose you couldn't just accept that he's an eccentric with a genuine desire to help people?

ROSE:

I will accept that there are such people.

HALIFAX:

But not Vincent Pelling?

ROSE:

I have still to be convinced.

HALIFAX:

You think he's taking you in?

ROSE:

Perhaps. But to be taken in implies being on the inside and that's just where I want you, tomorrow morning - at Pelling's house.

(HE PICKS UP THE TELEPHONE AND STARTS TO DIAL

A NUMBER) I think a letter of introduction ~~from Lord Melford~~ should ensure you a niche in the organisation. *Now I wonder who*

CUT TO:

I can persuade

ACT II

- 11 -

INT THE HALLWAY OF VINCENT PELLING'S HOUSE.

STUDIO DAY.

EVERYTHING IS CHAOS. THE HALLWAY IS STACKED WITH MAIL SACKS AND THROGGED BY VOLUNTEER WORKERS FOR DUO. THE DOOR TO PELLING'S STUDY OPENS AND BARBARA SCOTT-RUSSELL COMES OUT INTO THE HALL WITH HALIFAX. WITH GREAT DIFFICULTY THEY PUSH THEIR WAY THROUGH TOWARDS HER OFFICE.

CUT TO:

INT BARBARA SCOTT-RUSSELL'S OFFICE. STUDIO DAY

THE ROOM IS FURNISHED WITH TWO SMALL DESKS AND THREE METAL FILING CABINETS. BARBARA AND HALIFAX ENTER AND HALIFAX CLOSES THE DOOR BEHIND THEM.

HALIFAX:

It's like a rugger scrum out there.

BARBARA:

Yes, it's been like that ever since the news broke. It seems that a lot of people want to help. You were lucky to be taken on, he's turning most of them away.

HALIFAX:

She's best
Good references.

ACT II

- 12 -

BARBARA:

Of course. (BARBARA IS CONSCIOUS OF THE FACT THAT HALIFAX CAN SCARCELY TAKE HIS EYES OFF HER AND THIS DISCOMFORTS HER MORE THAN A LITTLE SO SHE ADOPTS A BRISK AND BUSINESSLIKE AIR) (INDICATING ONE OF THE DESKS) Well that will be your desk, Squadron Leader.

HALIFAX:

John, please.

BARBARA:

Oh, very well ... John.

HALIFAX:

Now what do we do exactly.

BARBARA:

It's my ... it's our job to find the people who are most in need of help. We're the researchers.

HALIFAX:

And how do we do that?

BARBARA:

Oh, trouble isn't hard to find. We study local newspapers and notices of County Court proceedings. But mostly we're out and about, keeping our ears and eyes open in the street, in pubs, supermarkets. It's surprising what you can find in the most unexpected places.

HALIFAX:

(STUDYING HER) I agree!

ACT II

- 13 -

HALIFAX'S TONE AND SMILE ARE NOT LOST ON BARBARA. VALIANTLY SHE PRESSES ON WITH A BRIGHT NOT CRISP AIR.

BARBARA:

(INDICATING THE FILING CABINETS) Here we keep records of all our cases. Those we have been able to help and those on the list for future action. Each case is given ...
(SEEING THAT HALIFAX IS NOT REALLY LISTENING TO HER SHE BREAKS OFF. WITH A DEEP SIGH SHE REMOVES HER SPECTACLES AND PUTS THEM DOWN ON HER DESK. THE EFFECT OF THIS ON HALIFAX IS IMMEDIATE AND VERY NOTICEABLE) All right! Let's get it over with! Ask me!

HALIFAX:

Ask you?

BARBARA:

The question that has been on your mind ever since Vincent Pelling introduced us. It's pretty standard. "What is a girl like you doing in a job like this?"

HALIFAX:

(LAUGHING) O K. What is a girl like you doing in a job like this?

BARBARA:

This is a charity, you obviously expected to meet a middle-aged spinster with a bun

ACT II

- 14 -

BARBARA: (CONTD)

and a kettle permanently on the boil. Well, just for the record, I am a spinster but I prefer coffee to tea and, as you can see, I don't have a bun. I take my vodka with ice and fesh orange juice and I smoke approximately thirty filter tipped cigarettes a day. I also like attractive men. Now I'll kiss you and that temptation will be behind us for a while.

(SHE MOVES ACROSS AND KISSES HALIFAX LIGHTLY ON THE LIPS. NATURALLY HE RESPONDS AND THE KISS BECOMES SOMETHING MORE THAN BARBARA HAD ORIGINALLY INTENDED IT TO BE. WHEN THEY FINALLY BREAK IT IS OBVIOUS THAT SHE ENJOYED IT. SHE LOOKS AT HIM SEARCHINGLY) (A TRIFLE BREATHLESS)

Didn't Vincent say you were invalided out of the Air Force?

HALIFAX:

That's right.

BARBARA:

Well, I've got news for you Squadron Leader.

HALIFAX:

Oh?

BARBARA :

Yes. You are definitely on the mend!

FADE TO:

ACT II

- 15 -

INT THE KITCHEN OF ROSE'S FLAT. STUDIO NIGHT

ROSE, WEARING A STRIPED BUTCHER'S APRON, IS HAVING SOME DIFFICULTY IN BEATING A GLUTINOUS MIXTURE IN A BOWL.

HALIFAX ENTERS

HALIFAX:

What are you doing?

ROSE:

I was hungry; you were late. I thought perhaps an omelette. Something simple.

HALIFAX:

(TAKING THE BOWL AND PEERING INTO IT WITH A LOOK OF DISGUST) It looks like a batter pudding!

ROSE SURRENDERS THE BOWL WITH GREAT RELIEF AND HALIFAX TAKES OVER PREPARING THE MEAL.

ROSE:

Nothing elaborate, John! Perhaps orange vinaigrette to start with, eh? And a green salad with the omelette? You can leave the choice of wine to me.

ACT II

- 16 -

HALIFAX SHOOTS HIM A LOOK AND ROSE GOES INTO THE LIVING AREA TO SELECT THE WINE. THEIR CONVERSATION IS BETWEEN THE TWO ROOMS.

ROSE:

Are you of the opinion that if anything criminal is going on, then this young lady is in no way involved?

HALIFAX:

I'm certain of it.

ROSE:

Miss Scott Russell seems to have made quite an impression on you.

HALIFAX:

Right! And so did Pelling for that matter.

ROSE:

You think he is an honest man motivated by nothing but the welfare of suffering humanity.

HALIFAX:

(PREPARING THE VINAIGRETTE DRESSING)

I'm ninety-nine percent certain.

ROSE:

Well at least that leaves a one percent room for doubt. I trust you got an opportunity to examine some of his records, presuming, of course, that he keeps any records.

HALIFAX:

~~Nothing. Apart from the fact that~~ Over the last three months he has given away close on eight thousand pounds!

ACT II

- 17 -

ROSE:

(COMING BACK INTO THE KITCHEN WITH CHOSEN BOTTLE OF WINE) A not immodest sum.

Did you manage to get into his study?

HALIFAX:

(NOW PEELING TWO ORANGES) Impossible. It was full of visitors all day.

ROSE:

Then I take it you'll have no objection to spending tomorrow with the delightful Miss Scott-Russell.

HALIFAX HAS HIS BACK TURNED, INTENT ON PREPARING THE ORANGES. TAKING A SPOON, ROSE SURREPTIOUSLY SAMPLES THE VINAIGRETTE DRESSING. A LOOK OF SHEER JOY SPREADS OVER HIS FACE.

FADE TO:

INT BARBARA SCOTT-RUSSELL'S OFFICE IN
PELLING'S HOUSE. STUDIO. NIGHT

IT IS NOW EVENING. BOTH BARBARA AND HALIFAX
HAVE DONE A FULL DAY'S WORK. THE OFFICE IS
LITTERED WITH OPEN ENVELOPES BUT THE OUTGOING
MAIL TRAY IS EMPTY SAVE FOR A DOZEN OR SO
LETTERS.

HALIFAX:

(LEANING BACK IN HIS CHAIR AND SCRATCHING)

Well, thank God, that's that.

BARBARA:

(MAKING AN ATTEMPT TO TIDY THE TOP OF HER DESK)

For today!

HALIFAX:

Tomorrow can wait. Right now what I want to do is to go home, have a quick shower, change and then spend a quiet evening in pleasant company.

BARBARA:

(LOOKING AT HER WATCH) We must be the last one's here.

HALIFAX:

Except for Pelling. I heard him go into his study just now.

BARBARA:

Oh yes, Vincent of course. Poor love! He's been working as hard as anyone today and now he's got a meeting of some kind coming up any minute.

HALIFAX MOVES ACROSS TO HER AND PERCHES ON
THE END OF HER DESK.

ACT II

- 19 -

HALIFAX:

How about it?

BARBARA:

How about what?

HALIFAX:

Well, you were the pleasant company I had in mind.

BARBARA:

Sounds good. And what shall we do? The theatre, dinner somewhere extravagant?

HALIFAX:

Not possible I'm afraid. Claustrophobia.

BARBARA:

Claustrophobia?

HALIFAX:

That's what I got invalided out of the Air Force for; a fear of crowded environments.

BARBARA:

(TEASINGLY) Really? So what did you have in mind?

HALIFAX:

How about dinner somewhere away from other people? Like at your flat for instance?

BARBARA:

It's not a very large flat. If you suffer from claustrophobia we may have to leave all the doors open.

HALIFAX:

I don't think that'll be necessary. Well, how about it? You do the cooking. I'll bring the wine, some filter tipped cigarettes and the latest Beatles L P.

BARBARA:

I've already got it.

HALIFAX:

Good! That'll save me having to ring round and borrow a copy.

BARBARA:

(AMUSED) About 8 15?

HALIFAX:

About 8 .15.

BARBARA:

I live in Chelsea.

HALIFAX:

I know. 17a Luard Close. I looked you up in the telephone book. Shall we go?

WE HEAR THE SOUND OF A CAR PULLING UP IN FRONT OF THE HOUSE.

BARBARA:

Oh, that'll be the men Vincent's expecting.

HALIFAX:

(PUTTING HIS JACKET ON) Who are they, do you know?

BARBARA:

(GATHERING HER THINGS TOGETHER) No. Just a couple of businessmen who are interested in DUO I believe.

ACT II

- 21 -

HALIFAX MOVES TO THE DOOR AND OPENS IT A LITTLE EXPECTING BARBARA TO FOLLOW HIM. HE CAN JUST SEE OUT INTO THE HALL. FROM HIS POV WE SEE PELLING'S VISITORS COME INTO VIEW. BOTH ARE MIDDLE-AGED AND FROM THEIR APPEARANCE THEY COULD WELL BE PROSPEROUS BUSINESSMEN.

CUT TO:

HALIFAX'S FACE IN CU

HE REACTS

CUT TO:

THE TWO MEN IN THE HALL SEEN AGAIN FROM HALIFAX'S POV THROUGH THE PARTLY OPENED DOOR. THE PICTURE FREEZES AND WE ZOOM IN ON THE FACE OF ONE OF THE VISITORS AND HOLD IN CU.

A VOICE:

(OV) (HALIFAX IS REMEMBERING AS THOUGH HE WERE BACK ONCE AGAIN AT A POLICE BRIEFING)

"Leonard Arthur Cook alias Frank Webster alias Major Arthur Lawrence alias Sir Frederick Craxton. One conviction for embezzlement, three convictions for fraud. A confidence specialist'.

(NOW WE ZOOM IN ON THE FACE OF THE SECOND VISITOR)

'Percival Ian Vance alias Thomas Franklyn alias Captain Robert Vaughan alias the Reverend Stephen Munro. Known in the underworld as 'Plausible Percy'. Three convictions for fraud. A confidence specialist'.

Halifax reacts

THE PICTURE UNFREEZES AND THE TWO MEN PROCEED DOWN THE HALL TOWARD PELLING'S STUDY WITHOUT SPOTTING HALIFAX. QUIETLY HALIFAX CLOSES THE DOOR.

HALIFAX:

(LOOKING AROUND FOR AN EXCUSE) Oh damn! There are some letters there that missed the collection. You go on; I'll run these round to the Post Office.

BARBARA:

Fine. 8 15 then?

HALIFAX:

To the second.

ACT II

- 23 -

HE OPENS THE DOOR FOR HER AND BARBARA GOES OUT. SHUTTING THE DOOR BEHIND HER, HE WAITS FOR A MOMENT THEN CAREFULLY OPENS IT AGAIN AND LOOKS OUT. SEEING NO ONE HE STEPS INTO THE HALL.

CUT TO:

INT THE HALLWAY OF VINCENT PELLING'S HOUSE
STUDIO NIGHT

CAUTIOUSLY HALIFAX MAKES HIS WAY DOWN THE HALL TO THE CLOSED DOOR OF PELLING'S STUDY. HE LISTENS OUTSIDE IT BUT HE CAN HEAR NOTHING. SO EVENTUALLY HE TURNS AND TIPTOES UP THE HALL TO THE FRONT DOOR AND LETS HIMSELF OUT QUIETLY.

CUT TO:

ACT II

- 24 -

EXT THE FRENCH WINDOWS OF VINCENT PELLING'S
STUDY. STUDIO. NIGHT

THE CURTAINS ARE DRAWN ACROSS THE WINDOWS.
TREADING SOFTLY HALIFAX COMES INTO THE
PICTURE AND ONCE AGAIN LISTENS TO SEE IF
HE CAN HEAR ANYTHING. HE CANNOT. HE FEELS
THE PRESENCE OF SOMEONE BEHIND HIM AND TURNS
TO FIND CROAKER ON THE END OF A LEAD FROM
AN ALSATIAN. IT IS THE DOG WHICH HE SEES
FIRST.

CUT TO:

INT VINCENT PELLING'S STUDY. STUDIO NIGHT

PELLING IS SEATED AT HIS DESK, HIS TWO
VISTORS IN EASY CHAIRS ACROSS THE BOOK
FROM HIM. THERE IS A TAPPING ON THE FRENCH
WINDOWS WHICH PELLING ANSWERS. CROAKER
AND THE ALSATION COME INTO THE ROOM WITH
HALIFAX ONE STEP AHEAD OF THEM.

PELLING:

(ANGRILY) What the devil's going on?

CROAKER:

I found this feller 'anging round outside.
'e was trying to look through the window.

ACT II

- 25 -

PELLING:

Alright Croaker, you can leave this to me.

(CROAKER LEAVES) Now Squadron Leader,

what's the meaning of this?

HALIFAX COMES FURTHER INTO THE ROOM AND
FACES THE VISITORS BOTH OF WHOM ARE
SUDDENLY LOOKING EVEN MORE UNEASY. ONLY
THESE THREE MEN ARE IN THE PICTURE.

HALIFAX:

I don't know what kind of a line these two are giving you or what they've described themselves as but I can tell you that they are both men with criminal records. They are known confidence tricksters.

PELLING:

Hamilton have you gone stark, staring mad?

VANCE:

Hamilton? His name's not Hamilton, it's Halifax. He's an ex-copper who works for Mr Rose!

PELLING:

(QUIETLY) Oh dear! How very unfortunate.

THERE IS A NOTE IN PELLING'S VOICE WHICH
PROMPTS HALIFAX TO TURN AND LOOK AT HIM.
WHEN HE DOES SO HE FINDS THAT THE
PHILANTHROPIST HAS HIM COVERED WITH A
REVOLVER.

END OF ACT TWO

FADE TO:

INT THE HALLWAY OF VINCENT PELLING'S HOUSE.
STUDIO DAY.

THE HALLWAY IS STACKED WITH MAIL SACKS.
VINCENT PELLING IS DIRECTING THE WORK OF
VOLUNTEER HELPERS WHO ARE DISTRIBUTING
THEM TO VARIOUS ROOMS IN THE HOUSE.
BARBARA SCOTT-RUSSELL ARRIVES. SHE IS A
LITTLE FLUSTERED AND NOT IN TOO GOOD A
TEMPER. PELLING LOOKS UP AND SEES HER
WHEN SHE REACHES THE DOOR OF HER OFFICE
AND HE SMILES WARMLY.

PELLING:

Good morning Barbara.

BARBARA:

Hello. Is Squadron Leader Hamilton in
yet, Vincent?

PELLING:

I don't believe he is my dear; I certainly
haven't seen him.

(BARBARA TURNS TO GO INTO HER OFFICE A FROWN

ON HER FACE) I expect he'll be in later.

Did you want him for anything special?

BARBARA:

Only to give him a piece of my mind.

PELLING:

Oh dear! Rather him than me. Is there
anything wrong?

BARBARA:

No, not really. It's just that we had a date last night and he didn't turn up.

PELLING:

(GENTLY) Well I'm sure he must have had a very good reason.

BARBARA:

Whatever the reason he could have 'phoned.

PELLING:

He probably got tied up somewhere.

CUT TO:

INT THE CELLAR OF VINCENT PELLING'S HOUSE.
STUDIO DAY

THE CELLAR IS STACKED WITH LUMBER OF ALL
KINDS. THE DOOR IS SHUT TIGHT AND THERE
IS ONLY A LITTLE LIGHT.
HALIFAX IS LYING, BOUND AND GAGGED, ON A
TRESTLE TABLE AGAINST ONE WALL.
HE STRUGGLES TO GET FREE BUT IT IS NO USE.

EXT PELLING'S HOUSE.

ROSE ARRIVES IN CAR, DRIVING. GETS OUT
AND ENTERS HOUSE

CUT TO:

INT VINCENT PELLING'S STUDY. STUDIO DAY

PELLING IS AT HIS DESK WHEN ROSE ENTERS
UNANNOUNCED. PELLING IS A LITTLE TAKEN
ABACK BUT HE QUICKLY RECOVERS.

PELLING:

Mr Rose! This is unexpected.

ROSE:

An impulse. I really came down here looking
for a friend of mine who, I was under the
impression, was in this area.

PELLING:

Have you found him?

ROSE:

Not yet. But how clever of you, Pelling,
to know that the friend in question is male;
it could so easily have been a lady.

PELLING:

(A TRIFLE CONFUSED) I merely assumed ...

ROSE:

You do me an injustice ~~as a small flame still flickers.~~

THERE IS AN AWKWARD PAUSE WHICH IS FINALLY BROKEN BY PELLING.

PELLING:

(CLEARLY HOPING THAT THE ANSWER WILL BE 'NO')

Won't you have a seat?

ROSE:

Thank you. I do hope that I am forgiven.

PELLING:

Forgiven?

ROSE:

For being instrumental in involving you in all the publicity.

PELLING:

Oh that! Of course. I am afraid I was a trifle sharp with you when you were last here. Please accept my apologies.

ROSE:

(WITH A WAVE OF A HAND) It would be uncivil of me to do otherwise.

PELLING:

It was quite a shock at the time, of course, but now, as things have turned out, nothing but good can come of it.

ROSE:

I'm glad.

ACT III

- 5-

THERE IS ANOTHER UNCOMFORTABLE PAUSE. PELLING GETS UP FROM HIS SEAT. AS FAR AS HE IS CONCERNED THE INTERVIEW IS OVER.

ROSE:

You must let me make a modest contribution before I leave.

PELLING SINKS BACK INTO HIS CHAIR. VERY SLOWLY ROSE TAKES OUT HIS CHEQUE BOOK AND PEN AND WRITES A CHEQUE WHICH HE EVENTUALLY HANDS TO PELLING.

PELLING:

(STUDYING THE CHEQUE) Mr Rose, how very generous! Oh yes, very generous indeed. But now, if you'll excuse me ... there's so much to do ... I'm sure you understand.

PELLING GETS UP AND TAKING ROSE BY THE ARM GUIDES HIM TOWARDS THE DOOR WHICH HE OPENS FOR HIM.

CUT TO:

Receipt

ACT III

- 6 -

INT THE HALLWAY OF VINCENT PELLING'S HOUSE.
STUDIO DAY

A ROSE COMES OUT OF THE STUDY HE COLLIDES
WITH HARRY CROAKER.

CROAKER:

Beg yer pardon. (HE SEES WHO THE VISITOR IS)
Oh, it's you Mr Rose! Sorry!

ROSE:

(GRACIOUSLY) Think nothing of it, Croaker.
But we do seem to be bumping into each other
rather a lot lately, don't we?

PELLING:

~~Of course, you two know each other.~~ Did you
want me, Croaker?

CROAKER:

No, Mr Pelling, just came in for me lunch.

PELLING:

Well be a good fellow and do something for
me. Mr Rose has very kindly made a
contribution to DUO. Take this cheque along
to the office and get him a receipt, will you?

CROAKER TAKES THE CHEQUE AND SCUTTLES AWAY.
MORE SACKS OF MAIL ARE NOW BEING BROUGHT INTO
THE HALL. ROSE REGARDS THE ACTIVITY AROUND
HIM AND QUOTES DIRECTLY TO A MIDDLE AGED
FEMALE VOLUNTEER WORKER WITH HER HAIR PULLED
BACK INTO A BUN.

ROSE:

"How doth the little busy bee improve each
shining hour, and gather honey all the day
from every opening flower".

ACT III

- 7 -

THE VOLUNTEER REACTS WITH A SIMPER

PELLING:

I beg your pardon?

ROSE:

(INDICATING THE VOLUNTEER WORKERS) All your busy bees, gathering in the nectar.

PELLING:

Oh yes, of course.

(CROAKER RETURNS. HE HAS A FOLDED PIECE OF PAPER IN HIS HAND. HE OFFERS IT TO ROSE BUT BEFORE ROSE CAN TAKE IT PELLING TAKE IT OUT OF THE EX-PICKPOCKET'S FINGERS. HE UNFOLDS IT AND EXAMINES IT) (HANDING IT OVER) There you are, Mr Rose, your receipt. As you can see, everything here is done properly and (PAUSE) legally.

ROSE:

Thank you. (HE PUTS THE RECEIPT INTO HIS POCKET) Well, I'll be on my way.

PELLING:

Goodbye Mr Rose. I do hope you find your friend.

ROSE:

So do I.

FADE TO:

ACT III

- 8 -

INT VINCENT PELLING'S STUDY. STUDIO NIGHT

WE HAVE HALIFAX'S FACE IN CU
WE PULL BACK AND SEE THAT HALIFAX IS SITTING
IN A CHAIR IN FRONT OF PELLING'S DESK. ONLY
HIS HANDS ARE TIED NOW.
PELLING IS SITTING BEHIND THE DESK WITH
VANCE AND COOK STANDING ON EITHER SIDE OF
HIM. THE DESK LAMP IS TURNED ON AS ARE THE
OTHER LIGHTS IN THE ROOM. THE CURTAINS OVER
THE FRENCH WINDOWS ARE CLOSED.

HALIFAX:

He'll be back.

PELLING:

No doubt. But by then your presence will
no longer be an embarrassment to us.

HALIFAX:

Holding me somewhere else won't solve
anything. Sooner or later I'll be found
and then everything will come out.

PELLING:

I appreciate that Mr Halifax. And that
leaves me with only one alternative I'm afraid.

HALIFAX:

(INCREDULOUS) You're going to kill me?

PELLING:

(WITH A DEEP AND GENUINE SIGH OF REGRET)

What alternative do I have?

VANCE:

(ALARMED) Hold on a minute. I'm not having anything to do with murder.

PELLING:

(ANGRIILY) Then suggest some other way in which we can stop him from ruining everything for us. Well?

VANCE SHRUGS

HALIFAX:

Killing me won't achieve anything. You'll just have Rose breathing even harder down your necks.

PELLING:

Don't you think I realise that? After you are found Rose will really put the pressure on but as far as I am concerned you are Squadron Leader Hamilton, a man who was recently discharged from the Royal Air Force on medical grounds. There won't be any evidence to tie us in with John Halifax. ~~Oh Rose will be suspicious of course. He'll put the pressure on but, if we keep our heads, he won't be able to prove anything.~~

HALIFAX:

Is your racket really worth risking a life sentence for then?

PELLING:

Mr Halifax I'd risk a lot more than that for a half share of one million pounds, possibly two million!

HALIFAX:

The money subscribed to DUO.

PELLING:

You've seen for yourself how the money's pouring in with every post. We'll distribute some of it, of course, but no-one will ever be able to check on exactly how much has gone out. And then all three of us will quietly disappear; each with a very substantial fortune.

HALIFAX:

So the whole thing was a con game from the very beginning.

PELLING:

From the very beginning. Dreamt up by me in Johannesburg and perfected by my two colleagues and I ~~when we met on the ship coming over from South Africa.~~

HALIFAX:

If it was all your idea what did you need them for?

PELLING:

Backing. ~~I managed to keep the true facts secret at the time I sold up my business in Johannesburg I was up to my eyes in debts. When they were settled there was very little left.~~

HALIFAX:

So they're your backers.

PELLING:

Someone had to put up capital. After all, as part of our front, we have given away eight thousand six hundred and fifty pounds. And then there's this house and my expenses....

HALIFAX:

(SOMEWHAT BEWILDERED) But Harry Croaker dipping Mr Rose, that couldn't have been part of your plan.

ROSE:

Oh, my dear John, you are usually much more perceptive. Of course it was.

PELLING, VANCE AND COOK SPIN ROUND AT THIS INTERRUPTION. ROSE, ACCOMPANIED BY A DETECTIVE AND TWO UNIFORMED CONSTABLES, IS STANDING IN THE OPEN FRENCH WINDOWS. HE IS SMILING AFFABLY.

ROSE:

Forgive us for not knocking but the door was ajar. Someone seems to have left it unlocked. (PANICKING, COOK MAKES A DASH FOR THE DOOR. HE PULLS IT OPEN BUT IS STOPPED BY CROAKER WHO HAS THE ALSATION WITH HIM) Thank you, Croaker.

(PELLING'S RIGHT HAND GOES TO THE DESK DRAWER IN WHICH HE KEEPS HIS REVOLVER) (QUIETLY BUT FIRMLY) No, I wouldn't recommend that,

Mr Pelling. Your house is completely surrounded

ROSE AND THE POLICE CLOSE IN

CUT TO:

INT ROSE'S FLAT. STUDIO NIGHT

ROSE, HALIFAX AND BARBARA SCOTT-RUSSELL ARE SITTING TOGETHER.

ROSE:

Of course all that business with Croaker was part of their plan. They needed a figure in the public eye, someone newsworthy to trigger off their entire operation. And I happened to fit that bill in every particular. They found out I was lunching with Unwin and they sent poor Harry Croaker along to put the fifteen pounds in my pocket, knowing full well that I'd catch him at it. They also knew that I wouldn't be able to resist following it up. You see, to the public, that seemingly unwelcome exposure set Pelling up as a reluctant but genuine philanthropist. Once that was established the success of DUO was assured.

HALIFAX:

Or so they thought.

ROSE:

Ah! Yes. But then they weren't to know about poor Croaker's mouth, were they?

HALIFAX:

~~His what?~~

ROSE:

~~His mouth. It is almost impossible for Harry Croaker to tell an honest lie simply because when he does he develops a very distressing, tie in the left hand corner of his mouth.~~
when he's lying

HALIFAX:

But why didn't you tell me that?

ROSE:

Stii
 I think you're old enough to find out some things for yourself. ~~It's the kind ... It's the kind of peculiarity associated with a criminal that one keeps stored in the back of one's memory.~~ So when he told me the story about having put the money in my pocket on impulse I knew he was lying. From then on ~~to find out why became almost an obsession.~~

BARBARA:

But how did you know that John was being held in the cellar? I was in the house all day and I hadn't an idea.

ROSE:

*Croaker
Why*

We have friend Croaker to thank for that too. My congratulations, John. It was a very clever idea of yours to get him to write that note and slip it into my pocket.

HALIFAX:

He was tickled to death about having finally dipped you without you noticing it.

(A PAINED EXPRESSION COMES OVER ROSE'S FACE WHICH GIVES HIM AWAY) You knew he'd done it?

ROSE:

The moment he collided with me in this hall this morning.

HALIFAX:

Thank Heavens this time you didn't say anything.

ROSE:

There is a limit to the number of times that one is allowed to hurt another's feelings.

HALIFAX:

Even for Mr Rose?

ROSE DOES NOT RISE TO THIS. INSTEAD HE GETS UP AND MAKES FOR THE DOOR WHERE HE TURNS.

ROSE:

I am going out to dinner but I'm sure you will be able to entertain the young lady.

HALIFAX:

You're going to celebrate? We are feeling pleased with ourselves.

ROSE:

And why not? ~~In the words of Edward Westcott, 'Do unto the other feller the way he'd like to do unto you an' do it fust! And that's just what we did, isn't it?~~ By the way, remind me to cancel that cheque in the morning. FADE OUT.