

Cut # 3

You nearly ditched us then. I should have locked you up.

MAX. What is all this?

HUBBARD. (*Letting off steam.*) They talk about flatfooted policemen! May the saints protect us from the gifted amateur! (*He crosses to the open window and looks out into the garden for several seconds. Quietly.*) You'd better prepare yourself for a surprise, Mr. Halliday. (*Hubbard continues to stare outside and then suddenly backs into the room waving Max away from the window. After several seconds Margot appears from window, followed by Thompson, a police constable in uniform. Margot is dressed in the same clothes as she was wearing at the end of Act Two, and she carries the same handbag. She stops in the window as she sees the two men. Her appearance should indicate that she has been through a great deal during the last two or three months.*)

MARGOT. Hello, Max. (*Max goes to her.*) Where's Tony?

MAX. He—he's gone out.

MARGOT. When will he be back?

HUBBARD. (*His manner is official and brisk.*) We're not sure. All right, Thompson. (*Thompson exits through window, Hubbard turns to Margot.*) Was it you who rang just now?

MARGOT. Yes. (*Surprised.*) Why didn't you let me in?

HUBBARD. You've got a key. Why didn't you use it?

MARGOT. I did. But it didn't fit the lock.

HUBBARD. And you know why—don't you?

MARGOT. No, I don't. (*Pause.*) Has the lock been changed?

HUBBARD. May I have your bag? (*Margot gives him her handbag. Hubbard opens it, undoes the zip purse and takes out the key. He holds it up.*) You knew this wasn't your key, didn't you?

MARGOT. No. (*Hubbard picks up the attaché case from the bed. He shows it to her.*)

HUBBARD. Your husband has explained this, you know. You can tell us all about it now. (*Margot stares at it. Hubbard watches her face.*)

MARGOT. (*Bewildered.*) What is it? Why am I . . . ? I don't understand. (*Hubbard looks at her steadily for a moment.*)

HUBBARD. No. I don't believe you do. (*Kindly.*) Come and sit down, Mrs. Wendice. (*Margot crosses to sofa and sits down. Hubbard puts key and purse back into handbag.*)

MAX. What's going on here? (*Hubbard goes to desk and looks out of window.*)

HUBBARD (*Shouting into garden.*) Thompson!

THOMPSON. (*From garden.*) Sir. (*Thompson enters.*)

HUBBARD. Take this handbag to the police station.

THOMPSON. Yes, sir. (*Thompson slips his arm through the straps of the handbag and exits through French window.*)

HUBBARD. Wait a minute, you clot. You can't go down the street like that. (*Hubbard takes his briefcase from desk and exits into garden.*) Put it in this.

MAX. Margot, what is this? Why are you here?

MARGOT. (*As if in a dream.*) I don't know. (*Slowly.*) About an hour ago the warden came to see me. He just said I was to be taken home. Two detectives drove me here. They parked just around the corner. Then that policeman came up and said I could go. But I couldn't get this door open. When I left the policeman was still outside and he brought me around by the garden. (*Getting up.*) Where's Tony? He was supposed to visit me this morning but they said he couldn't come. Has anything happened to him?

MAX. No—nothing. (*Hubbard enters through French window from garden. He closes the window, locks it and closes shutters. Then he goes to hall and switches on light.*) Inspector, do you think you could tell us what you're up to?

HUBBARD. Mrs. Wendice, what I've got to tell you may come as a shock.

MARGOT. Yes?

HUBBARD. We strongly suspect that your husband had planned to murder you. (*Margot stares at Hubbard for a moment and then turns to Max.*)

MAX. He's right, Margot. He arranged for Swann to come here that night and kill you. (*Margot shows no sign of emotion.*)

MARGOT. How long have you known this?

HUBBARD. (*Surprised.*) Did you suspect it yourself?

MARGOT. (*Working it out in her mind.*) No—never—and yet . . . (*She looks around the room then turns suddenly to Max.*)

What's the matter with me, Max? I don't seem able to feel anything. Shouldn't I break down or something?

MAX. It's delayed action, that's all. In a couple of days you're going to have one hellava breakdown. (*Puts an arm around her. To Hubbard.*) When did you find out?

HUBBARD. The first clue came quite by accident. We discovered that your husband had been spending large numbers of pound notes