

Suspense

The House in Cypress Canyon

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CAST: (5-10 men, 1 woman)

MAN IN BLACK

KEN NILES-

SAM-

JERRY/AGENT-

JIM/ (ROBERT TAYLOR) -

ELLEN/ (CATHY LEWIS)-

1st OFFICER

2nd OFFICER

Dr. WESTLEAF

RADIO DISPATCH

MAN IN CROWD

2nd MAN

SFX:

Door

Thunder

CAR humming

Car braking and turning around.

Key jiggling door lock

Door unlocks

Door creak open

Footsteps

Animal Howling

Water faucet running

Medicine cabinet open & close

Brushing teeth

Shoes dropping to floor

Light turn off

Car squealing around corner

Car door open & close

Radio turn on & static

Police siren

KEN NILES: And now, Roma Wines, R-O-M-A,
Roma Wines presents...

(MUSIC: "Suspense" tone)

MAN IN BLACK: Suspense!

(MUSIC: bells)

KEN NILES: Tonight Roma Wines bring you Robert Taylor in The House in
Cypress Canyon, a Suspense play produced, edited, and
directed for Roma Wines by William Spier.

(MUSIC: Climaxes)

KEN NILES: Suspense! Radio's Outstanding Theater of Thrills is presented
for your enjoyment by Roma Wines. That's R-O-M-A, Roma
Wines, those better-tasting California wines enjoyed by more
Americans than any other wine. Yes, right now, a glassful
would be very pleasant as Roma Wines bring you Robert
Taylor in a remarkable tale of...

(MUSIC: "Suspense" tone)

MAN IN BLACK: Suspense!

(MUSIC FADES INTO...)

(SOUND: Thunder ROARS.)

(SOUND: A door OPENS.)

SAM: Merry Christmas, Jerry!

(SOUND: DOOR CLOSES.)

SAM: How's the real estate business?

JERRY (laughs): Kind of early with your greetin', aren't ya, Sam?

SAM: Well, I gotta get 'em in sometime. I may not see ya again until next Christmas.

JERRY: This real estate racket gets any crazier, I'll be dead by next Christmas.

SAM LAUGHS.

JERRY: I'm glad you could get up here, though, Sam.

SAM: What's on your mind, Jerry?

JERRY: Aw, you-- You'll probably shoot me when you hear it, Sam, because I'm probably nuts. But... but doggone it, you're a detective and you're my pal and... I just had to tell somebody.

SAM: Well, you sound like it's serious.

JERRY: That's just it. I-I don't know what it is, Sam, but... Now, listen, you--you know we're agents for a group of houses up in Cypress Canyon?

SAM: Mm hmm.

JERRY: Those places that were started before the war, never got finished?

SAM: Oh, yeah...

JERRY: All they got in were the foundations,...

SAM: (OVELAPPING) Mm-hm.

- JERRY:** (CONTINUING) --just concrete and a couple of beams. Well, they've been finished now. In fact, I'm puttin' up the For Rent on the last of 'em today.
- SAM:** Well, what do you want? Police protection from the mob?
- JERRY:** Listen, Sam. This house that I'm talkin' about, it's got a number now, uh, 2256. But before, when the men went back to work on it, about three months ago, well, they just started when the foreman on the job brought me a shoe box that he'd found up on a beam. And this box had a -- a what do you call it? -- a... a manuscript in it. A story, kind of. All written out.
- SAM:** Yeah.
- JERRY:** Well, he gave me the thing. I read it. I didn't think much about it. I put it in my desk but-- The other day as I happened to drive by there, I saw the number on the house and what the house looked like, I thought of this manuscript. It... Well, I don't like it, that's all. There's something funny about it.
- SAM:** Well, what's funny about it?
- JERRY:** Well... Mind you, this thing was found in an unfinished house in Cypress Canyon, house was only just started building--
- SAM:** All right.
- JERRY:** Well... Listen, Sam, I wanna read it to ya, if you've got the time. Then you'll see what I mean.
- SAM:** All right, shoot.
- JERRY:** Well, here's how it begins... Uh... (reads) To Whom It May Concern: My reasons for setting down on paper what follows here will be abundantly clear...
- (MUSICAL:** bridge as Jerry's voice CROSSFADES to Jim's.
- JIM (narrates):** ... will be abundantly clear to anyone in to whose possession it may fall. First, let me say that I'm a very ordinary person. My name is James A. Woods. I'm thirty-five years old. By profession, a chemical engineer. My wife, Ellen, was a schoolteacher when I met and married her in Indiana seven years ago. There's nothing in the past life of either one of us to

suggest remotely any cause or reason for the dreadful thing that has invaded our lives. Our married life has been in no way different from that of millions of other average, reasonably happy, and congenial families. Three months ago, I was ordered by my firm to take charge of a rather minor project in Los Angeles, Hollywood to be exact. The order was a sudden one. There'd been no time to secure accommodations and, conditions being what they are, the inevitable result was that, until day before yesterday, we'd been living in the cramped quarters of one of those characteristic California motels. Needless to say, most of our spare time had been devoted to a search for something more permanent and comfortable but the fruits of these efforts had been financially, and in every other way, a geometrical progression of discouragement. Until last Saturday afternoon. Only four days before Christmas. We were driving into town, on our way to a movie, when Ellen saw it.

(SOUND: A car engine HUMS.)

ELLEN: Jim, look!

JIM: What?

ELLEN: That sign. In front of that real estate office.

JIM: Oh, yeah, yeah.

ELLEN: Don't you see what it says? For rent, furnished, two-bedroom house, close in, immediate occupancy.

JIM: Yeah, uh huh.

ELLEN: Aren't you gonna stop?

JIM: Oh, Ellen, you know what a sign like that'd mean right out in plain sight in front of a real estate office.

ELLEN: Oh, yeah, but, Jim--

JIM: Either they want six hundred dollars a month--

ELLEN: We'll never know until we ask.

JIM: And if it's any good at all, there're probably fifty people fighting for it right back there now.

ELLEN: Well, honey, there's no harm in trying, now is there?

JIM: You really wanna go back?

ELLEN: Aw, it's probably foolish, but what can we lose?

JIM: Well, Okay.

(SOUND: Jim BRAKES and TURNS the car around.)

ELLEN: Oh, darling, come on, cheer up. How do you know? Maybe our luck's changed. Maybe Fate's gonna give us a nice new house for a Christmas present.

(MUSIC: __bridge.)

(SOUND: __A KNOCK on a door.)

AGENT: Come in.

(SOUND: __The door OPENS and CLOSES.)

JIM: Oh, uh, we're sorry to bother you but we just happened to see that "For Rent" sign outside and, uh--

AGENT: Oh, yeah. I hung it outside just this minute.

(MUSIC: Eerie background)

ELLEN: Is... Is the house available?

AGENT: Why, sure, sure it is.

JIM: Uh, let me introduce myself. My name is James A. Woods. And this is my wife Ellen.

AGENT: How do you do?

(SOUND: __An extremely loud CLAP of thunder.)

AGENT: Wow. Looks like it's fixin' to rain.

JIM: Yes. So it does, doesn't it?

(MUSIC: __bridge.)

JIM (narrates): Well, it was one of those things. The real estate agent had just been authorized to rent the place by mail that morning and he'd hardly had time to look at it himself and put up his sign when we drove up. It was... just an ordinary little California house about halfway up Cypress Canyon. Number Twenty-Two, Fifty-Six. Just an ordinary, undistinguished little house. The agent didn't know much about it. Construction on it had been stopped by the war and it had just been completed and furnished lately. Been vacant while somebody's estate was being settled and now, it was owned by a bank in Sacramento.

(SOUND: Footsteps approaching)

JIM: (CONTINUING) Of course, we didn't care about that...

AGENT: Got this key in the mail along with the authorization to rent. Only one there is. Of course, you can have duplicates made.

(SOUND: Key JIGGLES in the lock.)

AGENT: Seems to stick a little.

(SOUND: The door UNLOCKS.)

AGENT: Oh, well, there it is.

(SOUND: The hinges of the door CREAK noisily as it opens.)

ELLEN: Doesn't sound as though that door had ever been opened.

AGENT: Well, a little oil on the hinges'll fix that all right.

ELLEN: Oh, sure.

(SOUND: All three WALK around the house on wooden floor.)

AGENT: Well. Now, here's your living room. Furniture's a little dusty, of course. You gotta expect that. It's good furniture though, you see? Benson Brothers.

ELLEN: Yes. Uh huh.

AGENT: Now, over here's a little den. Paneled, you see? Radio, fireplace. Really a very attractive little room. Particularly for a man.

JIM: Uh huh. Yup.

AGENT: Now, the--the bedroom's off the living room here. Everything's all on one floor, ya understand?

ELLEN: Uh huh.

(SOUND: Bedroom door OPENS.)

AGENT: It's, uh, quite nice, I think.

ELLEN: Yes. Uh huh.

AGENT: You can see you get the morning sun here. There's a view of the canyon through these front windows. (FADES OUT) You got cross-ventilation...

JIM (narrates): That's about all there was to it. Wasn't the best place in the world. It was small and badly built but -- what would you have done? We took it, with as little inspection as that. It was the Saturday before Christmas. And the very same evening, we were struggling up the steps from the road with suitcases and boxes and armloads of clothes and all the endless bric-a-brac that people collect and never know they have until they move. Ellen began unpacking and I began moving things around and taking the worst of the pictures off the wall. Doing all the little things that everybody does when they move into a new place and try to give it something of their own personality.

(SOUND: Footsteps, door open, and Moving boxes)

ELLEN: (FADE IN) Don't be such a sourpuss. You know, it's a roof over our heads for Christmas. That's more than we ever thought we'd get, isn't it? Now. What in the world are we gonna do with those two pictures?

(SOUND: Ellen walks around looking over the place.)

JIM (bored stiff): Well, why don't we just leave 'em where they are?

ELLEN: Jim, we can't! They're too awful.

JIM: Uh, all right. Put 'em in the closet, then.

ELLEN: I can't. Both the closets are jammed full.

JIM: No, I mean the other one in the little alcove off the den. Least, there's a door there. I suppose it's a closet, I don't know.

(SOUND: Ellen walks over to the closet)

ELLEN (laughs): (VOICE IS OFF MIC) If that isn't a commentary on the housing problem, huh? A woman moving into a house without even knowing where all the closets are. Take the pictures down, will ya, honey? Bring 'em in here.

JIM: Okay, okay.

ELLEN: Guess you'll have to help me with this door. I can't get it open.

(SOUND: Jim walks over.)

JIM: Let me see it.

(SOUND: The doorknob RATTLES.)

JIM: Well, of course you can't, silly, it's locked. Where're those keys we found in the desk?

(SOUND: Ellen walks over to the keys.)

ELLEN: Here they are.

(SOUND: Jim fumbles through several keys. Door rattles slightly.)

JIM: Nope... not this one. Sure this one won't work. (INSERTS another key) Nope. Feels like an awful solid door for a closet.

ELLEN: Hmm... that's one solid door in the house.

JIM: (TRIES ONE LAST KEY) Nope, this one won't do it either. Well, we'll just have to get a locksmith up here on Monday. I'll put the pictures behind the desk, okay?

(SOUND: Ellen moving things around.)

ELLEN: Yeah, yeah, all right. Jim, if you could just help me move this armchair, huh?

JIM: Oh, Ellen, will you let it go until tomorrow? You know what time it is?

ELLEN: Aw, but, honey, I'd like to get the place looking just a little bit--

JIM: Yeah, but it's almost midnight. In fact, it--it's exactly--

THE WEIRD CRY OF WHAT SOUNDS LIKE AN ANIMAL, SOME DISTANCE AWAY.

ELLEN: What was that?

JIM (chuckles): Tomcat, I guess. Out in the brush somewhere.

ELLEN: Sounded near. (laughs nervously) Hope that doesn't go on all night.

JIM: Oh, there isn't much we can do about it. Come on, Ellen, I'm dead tired.

ELLEN: All right, Jim.

(SOUND: _ Jim and Ellen WALK off. Jim RUNS water in the bathroom.)

JIM: Where'd you put the toothpaste, honey?

ELLEN: It's right in the medicine cabinet.

(SOUND: _ Jim OPENS the medicine cabinet.)

JIM: Oh, yeah.

(SOUND: _ Jim SHUTS the medicine cabinet.)

ELLEN: Jim, we ought to get some firewood tomorrow. You know, a fire in that living room would make all the difference in the world.

JIM: (BRUSHING HIS TEETH) We can't. It's Sunday.

ELLEN: Well, Monday, then. Jim, I think red curtains are what we need, don't you?

JIM: (STILL BRUSHING) Mm hmm. Mm.

ELLEN: You know, just at least for the living room. Anyway, the ones in there now have just got to come down.

JIM: Yeah, I suppose they do.

ELLEN: What do you think of red?

JIM: Well, I guess it's all--

ANOTHER WEIRD CRY, LOUDER, NEARER. LESS ANIMAL, MORE HUMAN SOMEHOW.

ELLEN (uneasily): Jim.

JIM: That's some tomcat.

ELLEN: Jim, it... sounded... in the house.

JIM: Aw, now, how could it be in the house, Ellen? We've been over every inch of the house.

ELLEN: Except... that closet.

JIM: Now, how could a cat or anything else be in a closet that's been locked up for over a year?

ELLEN: I don't know.

JIM: Yeah. Probably under the house. A wildcat or mountain lion or something. I hear they have 'em in California.

ELLEN: Jim, I don't like it.

JIM: Well, neither do I like it but there's nothin' we can do about it tonight.

ELLEN: Oh, maybe we ought to call somebody, the police or some neighbor.

JIM: Aw, don't be silly, Ellen. You act like a kid. Come on, let's go to bed, huh?

ELLEN: Oh, all right. I suppose it is silly.

(SOUND: Ellen DROPS her shoes to the floor.)

ELLEN: Tell me, did you lock the door?

JIM (yawns): Yeah, yeah, yeah. Can I turn out the lights now?

ELLEN: Yeah. All right.

(SOUND: Jim SNAPS off the lights.)

JIM: Good night, Ellen. Sleep tight.

ELLEN: Good night, Jim.

(MUSIC)

JIM (narrates): I don't know what time it was. Perhaps an hour. Perhaps only a half hour later. My mind was in that hazy borderland between sleep and a dream that's still part of consciousness.

A LENGTHY, HORRIFIC EAR-SPLITTING CRY, ALL TOO HUMAN.

JIM (narrates): Then I was awake.

THE CRY BECOMES A WAIL AND FADES AWAY.

JIM: Ellen. Are you all right?

ELLEN: Yes.

JIM: Did you have a nightmare or something?

ELLEN: No. I heard it too.

JIM: Well, that didn't sound like any cat.

ELLEN: Put on the light.

JIM: Yeah.

(SOUND: Jim SNAPS on the light.)

ELLEN: It... it seemed to be... out there, Jim... i--in the house somewhere.

JIM: I'm going to look into this.

(SOUND: Footsteps)

ELLEN: Jim, you be careful.

JIM: Come on.

(SOUND: The bedroom door OPENS.)

JIM: Where-where's my shotgun?

ELLEN: In the den, I think.

(SOUND: Jim WALKS briskly to the den.)

ELLEN: Jim!

JIM: What?

ELLEN: (ALMOST SPEECHLES) There's... there's something... wet...

(SOUND: Jim WALKS to Ellen.)

JIM: What? Wet?

ELLEN: ... running from under the closet door... sticky...

JIM: Ellen, don't. Don't touch it.

ELLEN: I had to. Jim, it's... It's blood.

(MUSIC: bridge.)

KEN NILES: For Suspense, Roma Wines are bringing you Robert Taylor in "The House in Cypress Canyon." Roma Wines presentation tonight in Radio's Outstanding Theater of Thrills, Suspense. (a little more cheerfully) Between the acts of Suspense, this is Ken Niles for Roma Wines. These days before Christmas are busy ones indeed. Yet smart hostesses everywhere find time for shopping and distinguished home entertaining later. The secret? Magnificent Grand Estate Wines. Presented by Roma, America's greatest vintner, Grand Estate Wines add distinction to your hospitality on a moment's notice. Make your holiday welcome, effortless and in perfect taste. The brilliant clarity, full fragrance, and mellow taste of Grand Estate Wines please discriminating people everywhere. For Grand Estate Wines, limited bottlings by Roma, are born of choicest grapes, then patiently guided to superb taste richness by Roma vintner skill, necessary time, and America's finest wine-making resources. Delight your guests with Grand Estate California Wines. For entertaining, medium sherry, ruby port, or golden muscatel. For

dining, burgundy or sauterne. So insist on Grand Estate Wines and enjoy the crowning achievement of vintner skill.

(**MUSIC:** “Suspense bells”)

KEN NILES: And now, Roma Wines bring back to our Hollywood soundstage Robert Taylor as James A. Woods, with Cathy Lewis as his wife, Ellen, in “The House in Cypress Canyon,” a tale well-calculated to keep you in...

(**MUSIC:** sting.)

MAN IN BLACK: Suspense!

(**MUSIC:** bridge.)

JIM (narrates): It can not be too difficult to understand from the foregoing why I have taken the pains to set down in writing the events related here. To find in one's newly rented house a closet which cannot be opened is, in itself, certainly no great cause for alarm. But to be awakened in the stillness of the night by unearthly cries within that house—to find oozing from under that closet door something that is unquestionably blood... that's another matter. Perhaps others might have been braver than we. Suffice it only to say that we got out of the house in something very close to a panic -- and only returned when we had the moral support of two stalwart Los Angeles policemen.

(**SOUND:** Footsteps. Looking about)

1st OFFICER: You, uh, just moved in here, you say?

JIM: That's right, Officer. You can-you can see we're still unpacking.

1st OFFICER: And the place has been empty right along before that?

JIM: Yeah, I-I don't know much about that part of it. You could check all that with the real estate agent, though.

2nd OFFICER: Well... (clears his throat) where is this closet?

ELLEN: Oh, it-it's right in here, Officer.

(**SOUND:** Everyone WALKS to the closet.)

ELLEN: And-and the blood... the blood is--

1st OFFICER: Where? Where's the blood?

ELLEN: Jim?

JIM: Officer, I-I swear to you, there was blood on the floor less than an hour ago. I-I saw it.

1st OFFICER: (SKEPTICAL) Uh huh.

JIM: It was running out from under that door. We heard that noise and we got up and then we saw it. Th-the door was locked.

1st OFFICER: Locked, huh?

(SOUND: The officer STEPS over to the door -- and easily OPENS it.)

ELLEN: Oh, no, I--

1st OFFICER: Well, it seems to be all right now.

2nd OFFICER: Hey, uh... you folks aren't trying to be funny, are ya?

ELLEN: I... isn't there anything in it?

1st OFFICER: (INSIDE THE CLOSET) No, ma'am. There is not.

JIM: Look, Officer, we're reputable people. You can call my firm. They'll tell you all about me.

(SOUND: The officer BANGS on the closet walls.)

1st OFFICER: There's nothing wrong with this closet. Walls are solid. No trap doors.

JIM: If you think I'm lying, you--

1st OFFICER: I didn't say that, Mister. (WALKS out of the closet) Oh, you probably did hear some sort of noise and you got a little panicky--

ELLEN: What about the blood? It-it got on my hands.

2nd OFFICER: It isn't there now, is it?

ELLEN: (WITH A TONE OF DREAD) Yes.

2nd OFFICER: Where?

ELLEN: I... I feel it.

1st OFFICER: (CHUCKLES) Now, you folks just take it easy. You're liable to hear all kinds of noises up in these canyons at night. You're, uh, from the east, you say?

JIM: Uh, yeah. I-I-I'm sorry, Officer.

1st OFFICER: Aw, that's all right. That's all right. If you have any real trouble, call on us anytime.

(SOUND: THE OFFICERS WALK TO THE FRONT DOOR.)

JIM: All right.

2nd OFFICER: Well, good night.

JIM: Good night.

1st OFFICER: Good night.

(SOUND: The officers OPEN the front door which CREAKS noisily, as before.)

2nd OFFICER: Hey! Ha, ha, ha! You ought to have this door fixed. (TEASING) That's enough to scare ya!

JIM: Yeah, we're, uh, we're going to have it fixed.

(MUSICAL: bridge.)

JIM: (NARRATES) We didn't say much about it after that. There wasn't much that could be said. The next day, I went down to a lot and bought a little Christmas tree and some trimmings and we tried to pretend we were cheerful but there was an uneasiness between us that had never been there before. Ellen seemed tired and listless. Several times during the day I noticed her washing her hands with a... with a brush. Scrubbing the one that had touched the blood. That night, we each took a sleeping pill and went to bed.

(MUSICAL: bridge. Continues ominously under dialogue)

JIM: It was sometime after midnight when I was suddenly wide awake, staring into the darkness. In some way, I-I knew at once and instinctively what had awakened me. Ellen was not in her bed, nor in the room. The nameless thing I had feared gripped at my heart until I could scarcely breathe.

(SOUND: The bedroom door OPENS.)

JIM: I opened the bedroom door and started through the house, putting on every light that I could find. There was not much to search but I searched thoroughly, the... the living room, the kitchen, bathroom, den, even the garage. And all the time, the dread of looking where I knew at last I must look. For I think I knew from the very first time where I'd find her.

A PAUSE.

JIM: It must have been a full minute that I stood before that closet door. Then...

(MUSIC: sting)

(SOUND: The closet door OPENS.)

JIM: I opened it. She stood there, rigid. Her arms at her sides. Her fingers, extended like claws. Her hair was over her face. Her eyes stared out of it. Her lips were drawn back in a grin like an animal at bay. For a moment, I was frozen with the horror of it. I stretched out my hand.

ELLEN GRUNTS.

JIM: Very deliberately, she turned her head and sunk her teeth, until they met, into the flesh of my forearm.

(MUSIC: Sting)

JIM: I'd raised my hand to strike at her but... already she'd relaxed her hold and gone utterly limp.

ELLEN CRIES QUIETLY.

JIM: She would've fallen unless I'd caught her. I carried her into the bedroom and laid her on the bed. Strangely, at that moment, my only thought was how I might revive her. Until I saw that it

was... it was not a faint but a sleep that she'd fallen into. A sleep as deep and heavy as though she'd been drugged.

(SOUND: Jim quietly SHUTS the bedroom door behind him.)

JIM (narrates): And so I left her. But for me, that night... there was no sleep.

(MUSIC: builds into a bridge.)

(SOUND: Ellen OPENS the bedroom door and WALKS out.)

ELLEN: (FROM THE OTHER ROOM) Jim?

JIM: Yes, Ellen?

(SOUND: Footsteps of Ellen approaching.)

ELLEN: (YAWNING) What are you doing up so early?

JIM: Oh, I-I got a little restless, went out to make some coffee.

ELLEN: Oh. (MORE YAWNING) I had the most wonderful sleep. (SIGHS) And I feel so rested.

JIM: Do you?

ELLEN: Mm hmm. (suddenly concerned) Jim!

JIM: What?

ELLEN: What's the matter with your arm?

JIM: Oh, I... I just hurt it.

ELLEN: Well, honey, it-it's terribly swollen. Let-let me see it.

JIM: No, i-it's all right, Ellen.

ELLEN: Well, it isn't all right. You've got to see Doctor Westleaf right away.

JIM: Sure, I-I will.

ELLEN: No, now you promise me, Jim, that you'll go the first thing this morning. How'd it happen?

JIM: Oh, I, uh... Th-th-there was a dog.

ELLEN: Dog?

JIM: Yeah. I-I heard him trying to chew through the screen door. I went out to chase him away and he... bit me.

ELLEN: Well... You mean, with all that racket and I didn't even wake up?

(MUSIC: begins)

JIM: No, Ellen. You-you didn't even wake up.

(MUSIC: Continues to bridge scenes.)

JIM: (NARRATING) It was clear to me that Ellen knew nothing of what had transpired the night before. I went to my office that morning and made a pretense of going over routine business, if only to restore my mind to some semblance of calm by the sight and sound of common, familiar things. The pain in my arm had become a persistent, dull throbbing. I made a late appointment with Dr. Westleaf. He treated my arm with something of an arched eyebrow and he said:

WESTLEAF: Well, I've never seen anything quite like it before. That is, such a rapid onset of infection.

(MUSIC: __bridge.)

JIM: It was dark when I left his office. I hadn't realized it was so late.

(SOUND: __Jim's car ROARS homeward.)

JIM: Driving home, my car seemed... seemed sluggish until I saw the needle on the dashboard...

(SOUND: __Tires SQUEAL as he hits each curve in the road.)

JIM: ... and realized that I was pushing it to the utmost of its speed. I was racing home to prevent... prevent something, before it was too late. Before the darkness conspired against me. For somehow I already knew with certainty that it was the darkness and the night that I had to fear. The curves of the canyon seemed endless. Then the cold fear reached up inside me. My house, too, was dark.

(MUSIC: continues under dialogue)

(SOUND: Jim STOPS the car, CLIMBS out, and WALKS up the front steps.)

JIM: I went slowly up the stone steps from the road, looking, praying, for some sign of light or life. There was none.

(SOUND: The front door CREAKS open noisily.)

JIM: The house was empty.

(SOUND: Jim SHUTS the door behind him.)

JIM: Ellen was gone.

(SOUND: Jim WALKS through the house.)

JIM: I-I looked with the same self-torturing thoroughness -- and in that closet first of all.

(SOUND: The closet door OPENS.)

JIM: Knowing as I did, that it was hopeless. And so, alone in that empty house, I waited—powerless and helpless, now. Deadened in thought and will, empty as the house itself, save only for the overwhelming sense of a terrible foreboding. Sometime in the early hours of the morning...

(SOUND: Jim SNAPS on the radio.)

JIM: ... I snapped on the radio. Short wave. Why? Surely, a minor question now. I only know that I did.

(SOUND: Radio STATIC.)

JIM: And then I heard it.

RADIO DISPATCHER: Car fifty-eight. Car Five-Eight. Go to Laurel Canyon. The 4000 block. A report that a man has been injured or attacked. Condition thought to be critical. Ambulance will follow. That is all.

(SOUND: The STATIC fades. A police siren WAILS.)

JIM (narrates): I was there almost before the police, edging my way through the little crowd, staring down at the man lying there in his white uniform under the streetlight.

MAN IN CROWD: Yeah, the milkman, poor guy.

2nd MAN: I heard him scream but when I got here, he was just like this. There was nothing I could...

2nd OFFICER: All right. Stand back. Stand back. Please, please stand back.

1st OFFICER: Well, you again.

JIM: I...I heard it on the radio. I-I live just down the road.

1st OFFICER: Yeah, yeah, I remember.

JIM: Wh-what happened?

1st OFFICER: Well, take a look. Maybe you can tell us.

JIM: (NARRATING) He was dead. And he was lying on his back. And his throat had been torn out as though by the fangs of some wild animal.

MUSIC: bridge.)

JIM: (NARRATING) It is now Christmas Eve. Or rather Christmas morning, for it's a little after midnight. I've been waiting here, here in the stillness of this empty house for nearly twenty-four hours. Waiting for the end. Already once tonight, I've heard that dreadful wailing cry somewhere in the hills. I've nailed up the closet door but that I... I know was childish. Useless. My arm is horribly swollen and turning black but... that's nothing. It's another end that I foresee, as surely as other men foresee the rising of the sun.

THE WEIRD UNEARTHLY CRY, SOME DISTANCE AWAY.

JIM: I hear the cry again. It's nearer now... I shall leave these notes in a sealed envelope and put it in a shoe box in the hope that someone will give credence to these dark and terrible events -- if, indeed, such nameless horrors can ever yield to mortal understanding.

THE WEIRD UNEARTHLY CRY, CLOSER NOW.

JIM: As for myself, I feel no longer any fear or even sorrow. Only a desire that the end and the thing I must do may come soon. And it will be soon. I know.

(SOUND: The front door OPENS and CREAKS noisily open.)

JIM: Yes, for there is someone at the door.

THE WEIRD UNEARTHLY CRY -- LOUD AND LONG AND INSIDE THE HOUSE IN CYPRESS CANYON.

(MUSICAL: bridge.)

(SOUND: Low, ROLLING thunder.)

JERRY: (READING) "...someone at the door." (stops reading) Huh. What do you make of it, Sam?

SAM: Quite a yarn. Well, what of it?

JERRY: That's what I thought. Now, listen, that's not quite of all of it.

SAM: Oh?

JERRY: Clipped to it's a newspaper clipping. Listen. (reads) "Hollywood, December the 26th. Police reported what was apparently a case of murder and suicide in Cypress Canyon sometime in the early hours of the morning. The victims were James A. Woods, a chemical engineer, and his wife, Ellen. Preliminary investigation indicates that Mrs. Woods was killed by the blast of a shotgun in the hands of her husband who then turned the weapon upon himself. That she fought desperately for her life, however, was evident by the disorder of the room and the severe lacerations inflicted upon her husband about the neck and arms. This is the second tragedy to be reported in Cypress Canyon within twenty-four hours, the other being the unexplained death of Frank Polanski, a milkman."

SAM: Well, no such murders, or whatever they were, ever occurred, if that's what's worrying you. The clipping, well... you can have those things printed up, you know.

JERRY: Oh, no, it's not that, Sam. That story was found in an unfinished house in Cypress Canyon. No number, no nothing. Just a framework.

SAM: Uh huh.

JERRY: Now that house is finished. When I drove by it today-- But that's what stopped me, Sam. Because it all fits! -- now that it's finished. It is the house in the story, the same construction, the same vines and creepers on the lawn, even the same number.

SAM: So what? A guy who knows roughly what this house is gonna be like writes a yarn and loses it or something.

JERRY: Did he know the place was gonna be listed for rental today, the Saturday before Christmas?

Sam: (AMUSED) Jerry. Coincidence. Two bits you find the guy next door is a ghost story writer or something and he's been wondering for a year what happened to that thing he wrote.

JERRY: Okay. Okay. Coincidence. (LAUGHS, self-consciously)

(SOUND: _He WALKS with Sam to the door.)

JERRY: I-I'm sorry I bothered you, Sam.

SAM: Don't be silly. I liked it. It's a good yarn. Uh, that the "For Rent" sign you were talkin' about?

JERRY: Oh, yeah, yeah. I'm gonna put it up outside now.

(SOUND: _Jerry OPENS the real estate office door and Sam WALKS out.)

SAM: Uh huh. Well, so long, Jerry, and Merry Christmas again.

JERRY: Yeah, well, thanks, Sam. (laughs at himself) I guess I was kind of silly, all right.

SAM: Listen, when a guy named, er, whatever-it-is, Woods, with a wife named Ellen, comes in to rent that place from you, then you can start worrying.

JERRY: (chuckles) Yeah. Well, so long, Sam.

SAM: So long, Jerry.

(SOUND: Jerry SHUTS the real estate office door.

(SOUND: After long pause, there is a KNOCK on the real estate office door.)

JERRY: Come in.

(SOUND: The door OPENS and CLOSES.)

(SOUND: Footsteps entering.)

JIM: Oh, we're sorry to bother you but we just happened to see that "For Rent" sign outside.

JERRY: Yeah. I hung it out just this minute.

(MUSIC: eerie underplaying the dialogue.)

ELLEN: Is... Is the house available?

JERRY: Why, sure, sure it is.

JIM: Let me introduce myself. My name is James A. Woods. And this is my wife Ellen.

(SOUND: An extremely loud CLAP of thunder.)

JERRY: How do? Wow. Looks like it's fixin' to r--

JIM: Yes, it does, doesn't it?

(SOUND: A low ROLL of thunder over an ominous

(MUSICAL: _____ bridge.)

KEN NILES: Suspense! Presented by Roma Wines, R-O-M-A, Roma Wines, selected for your pleasure from the world's greatest reserves of fine wines. Tonight's show marks the third birthday of Suspense on the air and this is Ken Niles, asking our star of the evening, Robert Taylor, to help us celebrate.

ROBERT TAYLOR: Why didn't you tell me before, Ken? If I'd've only known, I'd've baked a cake.

KEN NILES: Well, Bob, all Suspense parties are surprise parties. As an old hand on Suspense, uh, you know that in our plays the tables are usually turned on the star, so tonight, although it's our birthday, we're going to give you a present. Here it is. A gift basket of Grand Estate California Wines from Roma, America's greatest vintner, to our distinguished anniversary guest, Robert Taylor.

ROBERT TAYLOR: Thanks, Ken. You turn a nice table.

KEN NILES: And you can set a nice table with Grand Estate burgundy in your basket, Bob. For Grand Estate burgundy means rare dining pleasure. Add memorable distinction to holiday dinners. Even everyday meals are outstanding in taste when Grand Estate burgundy is served. Yes, all Grand Estate wines, presented by Roma, are limited bottlings of outstanding taste excellence.

ROBERT TAYLOR: That I know about Grand Estate wines, Ken.

KEN NILES: But did you know that for Grand Estate wines, Roma selects only the choicest grapes? Then the ancient skill of Roma master vintners, necessary time, and America's finest wine-making resources, guide the [que vay?] of this great treasure to rich taste luxury. That's why discriminating wine users everywhere look to Grand Estate wines as the crowning achievement of vintner skill.

ROBERT TAYLOR: Reason enough. And now, Ken, who's all set to star on Suspense next Thursday?

KEN NILES: It's that very wonderful actress and wonderful girl, Miss Susan Peters. Susan will appear as a young lady in strained circumstances who finds herself mistaken for a very rich young lady and who is forced into continuing the deception with murder as a result.

ROBERT TAYLOR: Well, I'll certainly make it a point to listen and, uh, before I go, I'd like to thank this really great company of actors who've played with me tonight and particularly Cathy Lewis who played Ellen.

CATHY LEWIS: Thank you, Bob.

KEN NILES: Tonight's original Suspense play was written by Robert L. Richards. Next Thursday, Same time, you will hear Miss Susan

Peters as star of... Suspense! Produced by William Spier for the Roma Wine Company of Fresno, California. This is CBS, the Columbia Broadcasting System.

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