Fade in:

Stock footage of the city's soaring architecture. Tall spires and crowded avenues. People hurrying and scurrying about like industrious, single-minded ants.

NARRATOR:

(v/o)

Life and dreams are leaves of the same book, the book we read through and the one whose leaves we turn idly to read a page here and there.

Dreams bring to light material which could not originate either from the dreamer's adult life or from his forgotten childhood. We are obliged to regard them as part of an archaic heritage, a source of prehistory which is not to be despised. Memory is far more comprehensive in dreams than in waking life. Dreams bring up recollections which the dreamer has forgotten or repressed, which are inaccessible to him when he is awake.

May not our whole life be a dream?

Long shot of people, many of them elderly or crippled, making their way slowly, painfully up the steps of a church or cathedral, under the forbidding gaze of the priest/monsignor.

There are many who think that the affairs of this world are governed either by Divine Providence or Fortune in such a manner that human wisdom has no share in them, hence we should let everything take its natural course. It is said that Fortune is partial to young men because they are frank and forward, and seem to think they have a right to her embrace.

Thunder drums, lightning flashes; closeup of priest's severe, terrifying countenance.
Camera tilts upward, into the skies of the city, helicopter shots of the skyscrapers and monuments surrounding the business and banking district. The sun is going down, the towers bathed in golden light.

The city which comes at last in the winter of a civilization means intellect and money, or mind and money for their own sake. The body of a civilized people dissolves into a formless mass, devoid of culture and wanting in soul-life. As soon as the multitude is united in one body, it is impossible to offend against one of its members without attacking the whole body, or to attack the whole body without offending against the members who comprise it.

Shot of throngs of people clogging the streets. Rush hour mania. Literally a sea of faceless faces.

The general will is indestructible; it is always constant, unalterable and pure. Time flows on forever and makes of any culture a mere incident in the endless geological and stellar histories of the world.

Cut to gilded opera house, standing room only for the enormous woman in brass breastplate, belting out an aria that shatters glass at two hundred paces and gives most people in the audience nose bleeds.

From a cliff on the Rhine three maidens rise to the surface of the stream and renew their plaintive song over the loss of the Rhine gold.

Not yet do I comprehend; for now, after riddles, I am bewildered by dark oracles.

Daylight still held the bastions against the night. In the deep canyons of the city, though, the dark was stealing in...

Panning downward, into a certain neighborhood, dusk falling rapidly. A woman moving through the streets, most people coming home from work or preparing for an evening out. The woman walks with forlorn purpose, her face an impassive mask. She glances neither left nor right, engaging in an on-going, disjointed dialogue with herself.

SHE:

Every day some misfortune befalls me. I don't complain, I'm used to it, and I wear a smiling face.

She crosses a small paved patio with a drinking fountain and marker in the center, and palm and avocado trees to one side. By the time she reaches the sidewalk, everyone had vanished.

A torturing thought takes over: he might not meet her.

So what? If he wants to play it that way, I'll play it that way. He can't break me.
Finds the bench, takes a seat, though she is conspicuous in this neighborhood. An outsider in dress and comportment. But no one bothers her, even as the minutes stretch on, well past the appointed hour.

Finally she stands, uncertain and ill at ease. The street lights have come on; they're far apart and dissipate the night only a short radius. Somewhere a television blares, a baby cries, a man's voice is raised in anger, a dog barks fitfully.

A car approaches, and she waits, but it passes without slowing, and then another, and still another. The first sharp thrust of panic strikes her. She has to walk, to do something. If she stands here alone with her imagination, she will be lost.

_A voice emerging from the darkness, a man-sized figure materializing soon afterward._

**HE:**

She turned to the right, and that was when he came up behind her, so swiftly that she scarcely heard his footsteps before he spoke.

_*Looking for someone?*_

_Are you?_ But her voice wasn't playful. It sounded strained, unnatural.

Yeah...come on, I've got a car across the street.

**SHE:**

She doesn't move. Couldn't we talk here?

_Here?_ On the sidewalk? His thin, tight lips relax into the faintest smile. Nothing doing. Come on.

Taking a firm grip on her arm and steering her across the street toward a white Chevrolet, and helping her in, releasing her arm only as he closes the door and pushes the red button locking it. He hurries around to the driver's seat.

Please, she says, let's talk here.
HE:

But he wasn't listening. He put the car in gear and nosed out into the meager traffic, giving no indication of their destination. He sensed her growing unease and reveled in it. The tension built until she could bear it no longer--

*Cut to: the two of them in his car, a terrible rear projection giving the impression of movement.*

SHE:

While he drives she tries to explain what happened. She tells him the truth: that she had been unfaithful to him with Robert. She speaks about the emptiness in her life, the uncertainty of their relationship. She admits her mistake and begs his forgiveness. She is in a better, happier place, more settled. Content to go on as before. But she can see from his face that she has made a tactical error. His expression is murderous, she actually thinks about jumping out of the car--

HE:

He remained inflexible. Nothing could make him happy again. He did not believe her. Accused her of dishonesty, false modesty. Called her names, filthy names. She asked if he would believe her if she killed herself. He replied that he would not.

*Ext. The car parked in a secluded lookout spot. The twinkling lights of the city visible through the windshield.*

Even if what she said were true, the thought that she'd been with someone else...it was unbearable. And the fact that it was Robert, that was merely the icing on the cake. She asked him what he was thinking--

SHE:

I no longer see you alone, he says. The other is always with you.

In response, she flings herself across the seat toward him--

*Flash forward: cops and men from the coroner's department overflowing a small apartment. Inexpensively furnished but with definite feminine touches. Some of them are ashen, appalled by what they discovered in the bedroom. Even jaded old hands seem affected. Bradley stands in the midst of it all, notebook out. The rest of the room freezes into a tableau as he summarizes his report for the benefit of F.B.I. agent, "Rip" Martin:*
BRADLEY:

The facts that transpired in connection with this extraordinary case were sufficiently mysterious to puzzle everybody.

Four of the above named witnesses, being recalled, deposed that the door to the apartment was locked until the resident manager was prevailed upon to open it. The time elapsing between the screams and their entrance to these chambers was anywhere was five to ten minutes.

Inside everything was perfectly silent--no groans or noises of any kind. They called out but no one answered. The door leading to her room was closed but not locked.

*Special Agent "Rip" Martin, pacing back and forth in the foreground, continues the reconstruction:*

"RIP" MARTIN:

There was no sound. The bedroom door was closed; insects moved in the sun. The world went on as before.

A small room at the back of the building. Her last, desperate cries echoing through the building.

The wild disorder of the room. Where it finally ended. A heavy club or any large and obtuse weapon would have produced such results, if wielded by a powerful man.

BRADLEY:

Defensive injuries. Both arms more or less shattered. Whole body bruised and discolored.

"Rip" Martin is clearly annoyed at being upstaged. Bradley keeps his eyes on his notepad, studiously avoiding his livid stare. Even the still figures around them pick up on the awkward atmosphere.

The frightful mutilation of the body is significant, of course. Especially considering the limited amount of time he had before the neighbors came to check out the screams.

The head of the deceased was, uh, entirely separated from the body and was also greatly shattered, virtually unrecognizable. The throat had been cut with a very sharp--
Flash to the horror in the bedroom, a snapshot of the gory scene that barely registers before we cut back to "Rip" Martin and Bradley in the living room. The living statues are starting to show the strain. Some of them are trembling, others have noticeably shifted to a more comfortable posture.

There were several deep scratches just below the chin, together with a series of livid spots which were evidently the impression of fingers. The face was distorted and fearfully wounded. The eyeballs protruded and the tongue had been--

"Rip" Martin gags and moves out of frame. Bradley smirks and concludes his business. Still reading from his notes:

Nothing further of importance has been uncovered thus far although several persons of interest have been detained pending further examination. This is a strange and peculiar affair all around. That is all.

"RIP" MARTIN:
(Off screen)

Thank you, Bradley. Excellent report. Very...detailed.

Sound of retching.

BRADLEY:

Yes, sir. Thank you, sir. Sorry about the eyeball part. Got carried away.

The death chamber, a few minutes later. Bradley is dubious.

BRADLEY:

Are you sure you want to do this, sir?

"Rip" Martin stands at the head of the bed and turns back the sheets. The eyes, unseeing, stare past him. The imprint of a fear already nonexistent, still disfigures the face.

And then Special Agent "Rip" Martin goes "Erup!" and unceremoniously contaminates the crime scene with Martino's lunch special, a very under-rated veal scallopini. Bradley rolls his eyes heavenward and "Rip" Martin straightens, not even having the decency to look embarrassed...

Cut to: Fifteen minutes later they are in their squad car, heading back to headquarters. The mood is tense, neither of them willing to speak about what has just transpired. Bradley sits behind the driver's wheel, his grip easy but alert. Beside him, "Rip" Martin speaks quickly into a mike:
"RIP" MARTIN:

No signs of forced entry. Killer accompanied victim back to the apartment, possibly accosting her in the street or had somehow gained entry and was waiting in a corridor or stairwell. Assailant was well-prepared, using various weapons to incapacitate and, ah, commit indecencies on the body. Is there an M.O. at work here? Other attacks we can connect this too? My sense is this guy has done this before.

_He can feel Bradley's scrutiny. That was bad form, upchucking his lunch like that. Never happened before. He'd lost face. It was important to win back their trust, starting with Bradley. "Rip" shifts his holster a little forward under his coat, which he leaves unbuttoned. He clenches and unclenches his hands to loosen the arm muscles. No matter how many times he visits a crime scene, he never gets over what people are capable of doing to each other in the name of love, hate or indifference. Mankind, he had decided a long time ago, is a bad animal._

_He tends to talk rapidly. A habit he'd acquired in childhood. He has a kind of photographic memory that can absorb an enormous amount of detail at a glance. The agent transmits to the dispatcher:_

> We need everything you can get. Don't worry about jurisdiction. I have a hunch this could be a lot bigger than we thought.

_DISPATCHER:_

_Are you sure you've got authority to do that, hon? Couldn't you just be flying off the handle? The Boss doesn't much go for cowboy agents--_

_Bradley sniggers but "Rip" Martin has had enough._

"RIP" MARTIN:

In investigations such as we are now pursuing, it should not be so much asked "what has occurred" as "what has occurred that has never occurred before". The things that are of interest are states of conflict and rebellion, in which the id has the prospect of forcing its way into the ego and into consciousness.

_DISPATCHER:_

_Welll...maybe. But it could well be that you're fixed on one or two points with absolute clarity but in so doing, necessarily, have lost sight of the matter as a whole. There is, in my experience--not to pull rank on you, hon--there is such a thing as being too profound. Like my old daddy used to say: "you won't find truth in a well"._
"RIP" MARTIN:

You believe I have fallen into the gross but common error of confounding the unusual with the abstruse. It's because you are unfamiliar with the unique workings of my mind, the processes that enable me to solve every manner or puzzle or riddle put before me. In my case it is by these deviations from the plane of the ordinary that reason feels its way, if at all, in its search for the true. In fact, it is by this faculty that I will arrive at the solution of this mystery, no matter how insoluble it may appear at the moment.

And now there must be an end to equivocation. I must have the truth: will you contact your watch commander and tell him that I want all available resources placed at my disposal? This guy likes what he does and he's done it before. I'm staking my reputation on it...

Flashback: the car, perched at the top of a hill. She clings to him but something's wrong.

SHE:

Something is wrong. There is a momentary surge of peace, just being close to him. His familiar smell, the animal magnetism he radiates. But then she realizes how stiff he is, unresponsive to her proximity. Everything crumbles before her eyes. Civilization, the world, all the great buildings and temples. There's nothing left. A shattered, lifeless world. And she is alone there. He is leaving her. Abandoning her.

Let him talk. Let him discourse. It will ease his conscience.

HE:

She moved into the light. Her small nose and the areas over her cheekbones were still patched with red, but otherwise her face was a dreadful color. She came close to me and--it's horrible--I could see a nerve jumping under her cheek. She kept repeating that she needed me, that I was the only good thing in her life. She blamed me for going behind my back with Robert.

And then it all came out. Everything. It happened because of our anger. We were both wild with fury. She told me that she enjoyed herself with Robert, that he was a "real" man, whatever that means. We were deliberately trying to hurt each other at that point. I admit it, I probably said far worse things than she did. I have a rotten temper. And she could bring out the demon in me--she always knew where to get me...

Bursting out:
All right! All right! I'll tell you. I suppose I've got to, haven't I? She accused me of being unable to perform, of being physically incapable of giving carnal pleasure.

I was appalled and started the car. Drive to the nearest bus stop, gave her some money and left her there. Couldn't stand being around her another second longer.

This whole episode has left me feeling like I have been ill-used by fortune. Sarcastically and pitilessly handled by a wanton universe that gave not a single errant thought to my existence. You ever get that feeling?

Cut to squad car, "Rip" Martin and Bradley. Bradley in the process of taking a tight corner. Both of them mime leaning into it. They are slightly out of synch with the rear projection. Straighten before the turn is completed.

BRADLEY:

I still like the boyfriend for it. She practically called him a eunuch.

"RIP" MARTIN:

I think it more probable that he was innocent. I hope, for both our sakes, that I am right in that supposition.

BRADLEY:

You still say this is some kinda kook--

"RIP" MARTIN:

Not a kook. Someone who carefully formulates a plan, chooses a victim and carries out their terrible crime with such facility they are able to repeat it over and over again with multiple victims.

BRADLEY:

Like...Jack the Ripper?

"RIP" MARTIN:

Or worse...

Cut to: Car idling beside a bus stop.
SHE:

Silent, indignant, despairing. She looks over at him but he will not relent. She reaches for the door, experiencing a wave of shame that is new to her. Then, realizing the end has come, she looks around her in astonishment, with eyes that see nothing. At last, she has no choice but to leave. She makes herself climb out of the car, arranging her dress before stepping away from the vehicle, moving as though partially paralyzed, her muscles weak and unsteady. Barely notices the Chevrolet accelerating away.

The next bus arrives fairly quickly and she pays the fare with some of the money he gave her. Practically flung at her.

She presses her purse into her lap. The bus is half full and will only take her as far as downtown. After that, she'll have to flag down a cab. Or walk.

She settles herself back, feeling almost as if she is unravelling. She is limp and sweaty. Practically dissolving into the seat. A graying woman and her son of about eighteen sit across from her. Two teenaged girls sit up front and flirt with the young driver. She looks behind her and meets the unsettling, direct gaze of a man with a long, pale face and high, receding hairline. She turns around and directs her attention out the window.

She gets off near the library, passes a coffee and snack shop, a man handing out religious tracts and a strolling policeman. No one appears to notice her. She checks her reflection in a storefront, makes sure she is still visible to the naked eye.

She's lucky enough to snag a cab but has a bad moment when she can't remember her address. "Don't you know where you live, Miss?" She laughs and touches eyes with the smiling driver via the rearview mirror. Turns out he's a nice guy and the ride home is pleasant. She gives him a decent tip and raises her hand to him as he pulls away...

Cut to the F.B.I. field office, where "Rip" Martin is working late, receiving reports and following up new leads. His desk is cluttered and he looks wore out--but then his line buzzes:

SWITCHBOARD OPERATOR:

(v/o)

I've a man on the line. Says he has info on the girl who got killed. Wants to talk to the agent in charge.

"RIP" MARTIN:

Put him through.
Picks up the telephone.

Hello? Special Agent Martin here. How can I help you?

The caller's voice is low, indistinct.

INFORMANT:

Don't bother trying to trace this call, there won't be time.

"RIP" MARTIN:

I give you my word--

INFORMANT:

Save it. I got information to give you and then I'm hanging up. You interested?

"RIP" MARTIN:

May I have your name, please?

INFORMANT:

This doesn't concern me. It's about another guy.

"RIP" MARTIN:

Go on.

INFORMANT:

I met him through a friend. My pal told me this guy got sent up for stalking and attacking women. He said this guy told him there's no thrill in this world like getting a woman and stripping her, and then afterward feeling her soft throat in his hands as he squeezed the breath out of her. My buddy said it gave him chills, listening to him. How much pleasure the idea of killing gave this creep. I know for sure he did time for killing a gal in Oklahoma. He bragged about how soft Quentin is compared to some of the Okie joints he'd been in.

"RIP" MARTIN:

Can you give us names? Your friend or--
INFORMANT:

I've given you all I'm gonna. And that was for free. You want someone for the killing of that gal the other day, this is your man. Now go out and earn your pay, G-Man. Find this guy and put him away forever.

A click and then the line goes dead.

Ext. Across the street from her apartment building. She walks at a good clip, already searching through her purse for the front door key.

SHE:

She doesn't see him until the last possible moment. And then he is beside her, formed from the darkness but as solid as skin and sinew. His first words are unexpected and intriguing. He says: Much madness is divinest sense/To the discerning eye.

The man is swaying, ever so slightly. He is dressed in a long coat, which hangs strangely about him. When he brushes against her, objects secreted in various pockets shift and grate together. They are nearly at her building. She is almost home. But now he is speaking again. One day, he says, one day at the seashore--

NARRATOR:

One day at the seashore I was carried off by an eagle, for which I am eternally grateful. For he granted me a perspective of the world that was truly...Olympian.

His face joyful as he remembers.

It was a day in early summer and the sun lay hot.

SHE:

This is my building.

NARRATOR:

It is the inventor of the steam engine and not the stoker who is most important. Don't you think?

SHE:

Just idle chatter, something to fill up the gap in the silence but there's an undercurrent of danger or menace. Nothing she can put her finger on.
She's nodding, trying to appear friendly and accommodating and, meanwhile, her fingers have closed over her keys and she's angling toward the entranceway. His small eyes have an odd, glazed cast and are fixed intently on her. His left hand is in his coat pocket and she knows without the slightest doubt that he is armed and very, very dangerous. He presses close to her, speaking softly--

NARRATOR:

We'll pretend I'm your fella. Go inside, no fuss. Conduct our business and go our separate ways.

SHE:

She sags at the sinister meaning of his words and sees confirmation in the inhuman stillness of his face. Every hint of emotion erased. Horrifying. And then she feels the gun pushed into her side where his hand holds it in his pocket.

I apprehended he would kill me in an instant, like a hateful little animal or pest. I wanted to live for another minute, ten minutes. Hoping and praying the whole time that somehow everything would turn out right in the end.

_Cut to: F.B.I. field office. "Rip" Martin and Bradley going through files, working the telephones, drinking cold coffee and eating bad take-out food._

_It's grueling and monotonous work. They're looking for a needle in a haystack. "Rip" tells the story about the instructor at the Academy who always said "But if a man tears a haystack down straw by straw he eventually finds the needle". No one responds; they've heard the story at least five times before._

_But eventually they work their way down to a single needle. "Rip" looks up the I.O., the identification order sent out by Washington to the FBI's fifty-three field divisions on each wanted subject. The I.O. shows a rather handsome man, though without distinguishing features. Just another face in the crowd._

Rape and murder.

"Rip" Martin sinks back in his chair, his thoughts dark with foreboding.

Once identification is made, the agents move swiftly. Their renewed sense of urgency soon produces the particulars on their suspect, including his current address.

_The SAC to the radio man: Notify all units..._

_Cut to: Interior of her apartment. A small, poorly lit space. She backs away from her strange companion, trying to put as much distance between them as she can. He removes his long coat, lays it across a chair. Reaches into its pockets and begins to withdraw things: a wooden club, a scalpel, a hunting knife..._
NARRATOR:

A glittering hero by day but night becomes a season of horror.

Seizing her arm and yanking her to him. Embracing her wildly and then pulling back.

But you have become far too involved for me to use any sort of evasion.

His voice guttural, low.

Are you not afraid of the night and the mountains and the long road?

And she answers:

SHE:

--she answers by quoting from her mother's favorite Psalm:

If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou are there.

A strong, gloved hand slips around her neck. Fingers dig deep into her throat, preventing any outcry. His face is close to hers and he is avidly watching her suffer.

NARRATOR:

From childhood's hour I have not been
As others were--I have not seen as others saw...

SHE:

She can hear nothing but her own struggles for breath, the brush and rustle of their clothing as they struggle. Thoughts tumbled about in revolt and complete confusion. She somehow breaks away, careers about the room, colliding with lamps, overturning the coffee table. Turning away from him and fleeing toward the bedroom, her bruised throat emitting a series of shrieks and squeaks.

Her assailant follows, gripping some of the grim tools of his trade.

NARRATOR:

But there's no lock on the bedroom door. And the fire escape is right outside the window...
Cut to: The squad car, en route to the killer's last known address, a motel out in the boonies. Bradley is driving, as usual, and "Rip" Martin is beside him, fretting, double-checking to make sure all units are properly synchronized.

BRADLEY:
You think he knows we’re on his trail?

"RIP" MARTIN:
Not necessarily. He might be over confident. If it wasn't for a lucky tip, we'd still be spinning our wheels. Pulling in every known pervert on the books and getting nowhere.

BRADLEY:
And you say he's done this kind of thing before?

"RIP" MARTIN:
Undoubtedly.

BRADLEY:
Seems a shame to have to take him alive, don't it?

"RIP" MARTIN:
Bradley...

BRADLEY:
You saw what he did to that girl, Agent Martin. Don't tell me that didn't get to you.

"RIP" MARTIN:
I told you already, it was a hot day and I shouldn't have had such a heavy lunch--

BRADLEY:
The girl was butchered. And it would have been worse if the neighbors hadn't busted in.
"RIP" MARTIN:

We'll do it my way. This man is desperate. We can't risk civilian casualties or a hostage situation.

Bradley mutters something under his breath.

Did you say something, Bradley?

BRADLEY:

Just a prayer, sir.

"RIP" MARTIN:

For what?

BRADLEY:

That I get to him before you do.

The unmarked pool car speeds along through the descending night.

Cut to: her apartment. A shriek is abruptly cut off, the resulting silence definitive and unnerving. A long shot from down the corridor, the activity in the bedroom hidden from sight.

SHE:

The noise was so high in the air that at first I thought it was thunder.

I climbed into a painless brilliance, ascending step by step, with no sense of exertion. Instead, a growing feeling of exhilaration. There was a young boy beside me, guiding me along. He seemed to know the way. We walked for a long time and finally I grew too tired to go on. In a little patch of shepherd's thyme, I lay down. The boy, uneasily as though he should not leave me, eventually drifted away. I decided to wait for him or for someone else who served the same role. Having faith that I wouldn't be forgotten, confident that sooner or later someone would come and lead me the rest of the way home.

Cut to: the parking lot outside a shabby motel. Seedy managers and seedier clientele. Some rooms rented by the month. A cleaning staff that look like end of the line hookers.

Bureau cars and clean, well-groomed agents would be conspicuous. "Rip" Martin has solved the problem by spotting the cars in distant locales, some several streets away. Once the place is completely covered, "Rip" Martin drives up, gets out near the office and asks to see the manager. Tenants are peering out
through their windows. He should have dressed more casually. His attire screams "heat". Some are sure to mistake this as a bust. It won’t take long for word to spread.

Cupping his hands as though to light a cigarette, "Rip" whispers into his concealed mike:

"RIP" MARTIN:

We're blown, everyone move in, repeat, everyone move in...

He doesn't wait for confirmation, sprinting back toward the office. He sees Bradley standing outside the entrance...and then someone runs between them. Making for a green Ford, only the man drops his keys, flustered, the resemblance to the mug shot unmistakable.

NARRATOR:

I watch him approach, his gun held at his side. Some occupants are trying to get to their room and he just elbows them out of the way. Never taking his eyes off me. I drop the keys and back toward the street. That's when he barks:

"RIP" MARTIN:

F.B.I. You're under arrest. Get your hand out of your pocket.

NARRATOR:

Raising my eyes toward the sun, using my free hand to blunt the ferocity of its blinding rays. The white light leaking through my fingers. Casting burning shadows on my eyes. It is time.

He jerks a pistol from his pocket.

BRADLEY:

He's got a gun, Rip!

In the dead silence that follows the warning, training and instinct vie for supremacy. While it's unclear which wins out in the end, the result is an instantaneous answer of muscles to an order from the brain. "Rip" Martin's gun leaps up and he drills two holes in the middle of the killer's chest. The wounded man folds to the pavement, jackknifes in pain and appears to expire.

"RIP" MARTIN:

(to Bradley)

Well, it's over.

He relaxes his textbook shooting stance. His manner now formal, almost frigid. His enunciation perfect.
BRADLEY:

Nice shooting. You okay?

"RIP" MARTIN:

I feel like...I just put down a mad dog.

Cars come screeching up, backup units rushing to the scene, everyone looking for their share of credit.

BRADLEY:

I sure ain't gonna lose any sleep over it.

"Rip" Martin stows his trusty sidearm. His fellow law enforcement officers look on admiringly as he moves off. Agent Ripley J. Martin is "Special" once again.

Pulling back until the scene is viewed from treetop level and then the camera moves higher, the boroughs of the city filling the frame. A nightscape of tall, illuminated buildings and beads of moving light.

"RIP" MARTIN:

We found notebooks filled with writing. All sorts of speculations about theology and philosophy. It amounted to a small stack of exercise books crammed with his most private ideas and thoughts...and they told us absolutely nothing. His very last entry is both typical and troubling. You could tell he sensed something was wrong. We were closing in on him and it was only a matter of time. His final words now seem like a kind of perverse benediction...or an expression of supreme irony. I guess we'll never know.

NARRATOR:

(v/o)

During the barbaric stages of man's development and, indeed, up to the present high level of mechanization, the success of an individual depended upon power, force, cunning, trickery; in short, upon a predatory temperament.

Human beings, in their generous endeavor to comprehend an endlessly complex universe, have always hesitated to conceive a God who is indifferent or hostile or nonexistent; and, even while they sit down and weep by the waters of Babylon, invent excuses for the oppression which prompts their tears.
As individuals, as citizens, we yearn to be free, escape the implacable bonds of Fortune and secure our personal and moral independence. To be authors of our own destinies, write our own fates, even if it is in the blood of others.

All things of creation we behold, and find them very good, for through Thy spirit we behold them. For out of nothing have all things been created, both that which we behold and that with which we do behold.

Vaya con dios. Go with God.

End

This "cut up" is dedicated to the late great Bill Lee

The author acknowledges using excerpts from the following texts (among others) in the creation of this narrative: Operation Terror by Mildred and Gordon Gordon (© Copyright, 1961; Doubleday & Co.); "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" by Edgar Allan Poe; "The Doomdorf Mystery" by Melville Davisson Post; False Scent by Ngaio Marsh (© Copyright, 1960; The Crime Club); 101 of the World's Greatest Books edited by Spencer Armstrong (Copyright, 1937; Doubleday, Doran & Co. Inc.)

© Copyright, 2010 Cliff Burns (All Rights Reserved)