

ALL THAT GLITTERS

by Daryl Henry

FADE IN:

EXT. SPANISH-STYLE VILLA - SANTA BARBARA - NIGHT

Dominating a moonlit cliff a few feet back from the Pacific Ocean on exclusive Padaro Lane, white-walled and red-tiled, 30 shuttered rooms secluded in a forest of eucalyptus.

OPENING CREDITS
BEGIN OVER

AT THE GARDEN WALL

Carrying a small packsack, wearing jeans, a midnight blue turtle-neck sweater and cotton gloves, his gaunt face blackened with shoe polish, ANDREW MACBECK pushes a female Labrador Retriever atop the adobe perimeter wall, drags himself up after her.

MacBeck, with hair the color of brass, eyes as green as weathered copper and a lopsided grin, is a man of sweeping vision but narrow means, lounging insouciantly on the precipice of middle age. He takes the measure of the cactus garden below then jumps down, looks up. The Lab leaps into his arms, bowling them both over backwards. Before MacBeck can extricate himself a ferocious SNARL shatters the silence. He freezes.

VILLA GARDEN

An enormous ALSATIAN leaps at MacBeck, who curls into a ball, protecting his head. His Lab scampers away.

MACBECK
Millicent, come back!

The Lab returns, submissive. Intrigued, the Alsatian stops chewing on MacBeck, sniffs at Millicent instead.

MACBECK (CONT'D)
Good girl.

MacBeck climbs to his feet, limps through the trees to a terrace. On the way he passes a long black Mercedes parked in the shadows.

ON THE TERRACE

MacBeck takes a grappling hook and a nylon rope from his packsack, swings the hook up to the roof where it catches. He tests it, then begins climbing the wall.

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THE WALL

Level with the 2nd floor he begins to swing back and forth, trying to reach a window sill off to one side. Suddenly there is a SCREECH as the grappling hook slips a few inches. MacBeck glances up, wincing. The hook holds. He resumes swinging. Just as he's about to grab the window sill the grappling hook breaks free.

MacBeck sails sideways through the air, pauses briefly at the top of his arc, then crashes to the ground in a heap beneath a:

STAINED GLASS WINDOW

In the process he knocks an ornate flower pot from the sill. The pot shatters. He opens one eye to see:

BROKEN FLOWER POT

Sticking out of the dirt is a door key.

WIDER

MacBeck drags himself to his feet, clambers up to the front porch, tries the key in the:

FRONT DOOR

The key unlocks the door. He turns the wrought iron latch. The door CREAKS open.

INT. VILLA - NIGHT

MacBeck steps inside the entrance hall, looks around. Nobody in sight. Relieved, he moves across an ornate Persian rug toward the:

LIVING ROOM

Where he descends two steps into a high-ceilinged room crammed with antiquities. He hurries through the miniature museum toward the:

LIBRARY

Where he scans the paneled interior with a squeeze-to-operate flashlight, settling on a large sunrise photograph of the west facade of the GREAT PYRAMID of Giza. Discovering an alarm circuit in the rosewood frame, he carefully bridges it with a length of copper wire he takes from his pocket, removes the photograph. Built into the wall behind is a large safe. Listening closely, MacBeck begins to manipulate the dial, unmindful that the thumb of his right glove has a hole in it. After some moments his safe-cracking attempt ends in failure. Then he notices the caption under the photograph. Squinting through a pair of drugstore glasses, he reads:

(CONTINUED)

INSERT: PHOTO CAPTION

"The Great Pyramid of Giza, 40 stories tall, covering eight football fields, six million tons of stone, 45 centuries old."

BACK TO SCENE

MacBeck looks from the inscription to the photograph then back again, frowning. Then, from upstairs, the faint sound of what could be somebody-- or something-- MOANING. He tenses. Silence. Composing himself, MacBeck tries the series of pyramid statistics on the dial... left four times to 40, right three times to 8, etc. The safe opens. He reaches inside, extracts the contents: several \$10,000 bundles of hundred-dollar bills. He dumps them on a lion-footed gold inlaid coffee table behind him. Suddenly, an inhuman SCREAM fills the house. Impelled to investigate, he leaves the money on the table, moves cautiously toward the:

HALLWAY

Where he stops to listen. After a moment an even more soul-piercing SHRIEK cascades down the stairs. Unable to ignore the terrible plaint, he takes the steps two at a time.

MASTER BEDROOM

MacBeck bursts in to discover a writhing WOMAN chained naked to the canopied bed-- chalk-white skin, purple-eyes, raven hair flung across silk pillows. A hulking MAN stands over her, wearing a scarlet cape and a black eye mask, his arms raised as though to strike her.

MacBeck picks up the nearest chair-- a delicate example of Minoan tomb furniture. He is about to smash it over the assailant's back when the woman HOLLERS at him, eyes flashing:

WOMAN

Put that down-- it's 3000 years old!

Amazed at her coherence under the circumstances, MacBeck knocks the attacker flying with an alabaster urn instead. The man goes limp. The woman glares.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Who the hell are you?

MacBeck shrugs, embarrassed.

MACBECK

I'd rather not say.

MacBeck looks from the outraged woman to the inert man on the floor. The man is wearing black tights under his cape. On his chest is a yellow lightning bolt. Before MacBeck can react, the injured giant climbs to his feet, grunting, nostrils flaring. MacBeck backs toward the door, turns, then bounds down the stairs. The man staggers after him.