

man #1 (Boddy)

28 Jonathan Lynn with Hunter Foster, Eric Price, and Sandy Rustin

Start

BODDY. *(From the floor:)* Unless . . .

ALL. Unless, what?

(BODDY stands up and dusts himself off. He holds his briefcase.)

BODDY. You agree to double down.

MUSTARD. Double what?

BODDY. You each pay me twice what you've been paying, and I'll tell the police it was a phony call and send them on their way. You refuse . . . and I put this briefcase—containing all the evidence needed to expose your wrongdoings—in the hands of the police and the press. I believe some of you would face a lifetime of jail, and others, a lifetime of shame.

(A moment of silence as they all soak it in. Then they all move to attack BODDY.)

ALL. "That's why you've brought us all here?!" "You bastard!" "Get that briefcase!" *(Etc.)*

BODDY. Unless . . .

ALL. Unless what?!

BODDY. Well, there is something else you could do for me. One little favor that would change the game. Something I just can't bear to do myself.

ALL. What?!

BODDY. *(To GUESTS:)* Have a seat, please.

[MUSIC CUE #21]

(The GUESTS walk to the couch. The men all sit as the women, with arms raised, glare at them with venom in their eyes. After a beat, the men realize their mistake and move to stand behind the couch. The women sit.)

WADSWORTH. What's this about, sir?

BODDY. *(Ignoring WADSWORTH:)* In this bag there are six gifts I've brought you from Washington. Things I thought you might find useful this evening.

(BODDY opens the duffle bag. He hands out six gift-wrapped parcels, one to each guest.)

BODDY. Open them.

SCARLET. Why not? I enjoy getting presents from strange men.

[MUSIC CUE #22]

(pbbod)

11/11

AWP

(She carefully removes the ribbon, the wrapping paper and comes to a cardboard box. Slowly, she lifts the lid. Puzzled, she lifts out a heavy brass Candlestick. She looks at BODDY.)

SCARLET. A Candlestick? What's this for?

(One by one, each of the GUESTS open their presents, holding them up in the air.)

(A musical sting supersedes each reveal of a weapon.)

MUSTARD. A Wrench . . .

GREEN. A Lead Pipe . . .

PEACOCK. A Dagger

PLUM. A Revolver . . .

WHITE. Ahhhhhh! It's a snake! It's a snake!!!

(She peers back into her box.)

Nope. It's a Rope.

BODDY. In your hands you each have a lethal weapon. You all showed up here tonight because you believed the evidence against you was so terrible that you would do almost anything to keep it a secret. I'm putting that theory to the test. Mr. Wadsworth here is the only other person who knows your secrets; and it's costing me—and you—dearly to keep him quiet. You see, I wouldn't have to double your payments if I didn't have to pay Mr. Wadsworth for his silence.

ALL. Mr. Wadsworth?!

WADSWORTH. That's a lie!

BODDY. He may look suave and charming . . .

WADSWORTH. Thank you . . .

BODDY. But really he's conniving and manipulative.

WADSWORTH. False!

BODDY. Why do you think he's called the police?

PLUM. *(To WADSWORTH:)* You called the police?

WADSWORTH. Only because HE instructed me to do so!

BODDY. Did I? Or did Mr. Wadsworth call the police here himself, so that he can carry out his greedy threat: Pay him more—or he reveals us—and all our questionably legal behavior—to the police.

WADSWORTH. I would never!

BODDY. Ladies and gentlemen . . .

[MUSIC CUE #23]

BODDY. . . . If you can manage to *somehow* get rid of Mr. Wadsworth, I'll have no need to increase your blackmail or expose you to the police. As a matter of truth, if you can help me *eliminate* Wadsworth, who not only knows all of your secrets, but also mine . . . perhaps I can find it in my heart to *eliminate* your blackmail altogether and be done with this terrible business once and for all.

WADSWORTH. You would never!

PLUM. Why us, Boddy?! Why don't you do your dirty work yourself?

BODDY. Why should I, when the six of you are so uniquely motivated?

WADSWORTH. After all I've done for you?! This is how you repay me?!

(To GUESTS:)

Don't listen to him! He's a liar!

(Music becomes more dramatic.)

I'm one of you! He's been blackmailing me along with the rest of you.

SCARLET. Oh yeah? What'd you do?

WADSWORTH. That's neither here nor there! The point is—I'm not a butler! I'm an indentured servant!

BODDY. Don't make a scene, Wadsworth. It's over.

(To GUESTS:)

The police are on their way, ladies and gentlemen. Now's your chance. Kill Wadsworth and end your blackmail . . . FOREVER!

(He switches off the lights. Blackness. Thuds. Gasps. Screams. A gunshot. Scuffles. Groans. The lights are switched back on.)

[MUSIC CUE #24]

(BODDY lies on the floor. Prone. Face down. Everyone else remains as they were.)

WHITE. It's Mr. Boddy!

WADSWORTH. (Enormously relieved:!) Oh thank God.

SCARLET. Is he breathing?!

PLUM. Stand back!

Stop