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Handwritten initials and scribbles, including a large '11' and a signature.

Handwritten mark resembling a stylized 'N' or '2'.

NIGHT GALLERY

"THE RING WITH THE RED VELVET ROPES"

Teleplay by  
Robert Malcolm Young

From the story by  
Edward D. Hoch

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#35201

NIGHT GALLERY

"THE RING WITH THE RED VELVET ROPES"

CAST

JIM FIGG  
SANDRA BLANCO  
RODERICK BLANCO  
MAX  
BIG DAN ANGER  
HAYES  
CHEF  
MAID  
REFEREE

S.B.:

REPORTERS  
CHAUFFEUR  
HANDLER  
TIMEKEEPER  
BLANCO'S HANDLER

SETS

INTERIOR:

SPORTS ARENA DRESSING ROOM  
BLANCO BEDROOM/BATH  
BLANCO GAME ROOM  
LIMBO ROOM - THE RING  
DRESSING ROOM

NIGHT GALLERY

"THE RING WITH THE RED VELVET ROPES"

FADE IN:

1 INT. SPORTS ARENA DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT 1

Angled on Max, a fight trainer/manager, as he good-naturedly eases the last of a group of reporters and well-wishers into the corridor. The excited group leaves reluctantly, some with glasses aloft, and all with a last-minute thought: "You really showed 'em, Jim-Baby!"... "We knew Big Dan was a bum, Jim"... "Don't let him forget about the party, Max"...etc. Max finally gets the door shut, unleashing some welcome quiet. He turns to the o.s. hero, spreads his putty face into a broad, satisfied grin. Widen angle as he speaks to reveal Jim Figg, 27, the new heavyweight champion, super-confident, uncomplicated, unscathed by the bout. Still in his robe, he stands probing his face in a mirror.

MAX

Champion.

JIM

Say it again.

MAX

(bear-hugging him)

Champion.

JIM

(laughs)

That bum didn't even scratch me.

Jim starts disrobing. Max assists him.

MAX

Big Dan Anger was never no bum, Jim.

The phone rings.

2 ANOTHER ANGLE 2

to include a phone and the shower stall. Max crosses to phone. Jim balls up his robe, towels, and tosses them into a laundry bin under:

JIM

If that's Nina, tell her to go straight to the party.

MAX

(into phone)

Hello...

CONTINUED

2 CONTINUED

2

We frame close on Jim. He works out a kink in his shoulder, turns, starts toward shower stall -

MAX'S VOICE

...Yes, I'll take it...No, he can't talk now...

- camera moving with him. Max's voice fades, thinning and vanishing too quickly for the steps Jim takes. Jim freezes suddenly. Angle widens to include the door to the dressing room. Big Dan Anger, battered, bleeding and bent, looms like a leonine loser, his massive body filling the doorway.

JIM

Big Dan. What're -- ?

BIG DAN

(sardonic)

Champion!

(a snide laugh)

You just think you're champion.

JIM

Okay...okay. But we can talk re-match tomorrow. Go get yourself patched up.

BIG DAN

You're no more champ than I was...

3 ANGLE ON MAX

3

still on phone:

MAX

...okay, I'll tell him.

Max hangs up. We pan him to Jim who is still standing by the door - closed now and with no sign of Big Dan.

MAX

That was Curly. He had to take Big Dan to the hospital. Something about bone splinters...

JIM

(emerging from a trance)

Big Dan?

MAX

Yeah, they got him on the table now.

CONTINUED

3 CONTINUED 3

JIM

I was just talking to him.  
(as concern pops  
into Max's eyes)  
Don't look at me like that, Max.  
I tell you Big Dan was just here!

4 WIDER ANGLE 4

Max crosses to the shower stall, his hand reaching in and adjusting the flow and temperature.

MAX

The fight was rough. After you shower, we're checking with Doc Hoffman.

JIM

(crossing to Max)  
I saw him. You hear? I saw him!

MAX

Okay...gimme your trunks and get in there now...

We move in closer. Jim snaps off his trunks and enters the steam-misted stall. Max moves out of frame.

JIM

Curley must've been putting you on, Max.

As we frame closer on Jim, the steam fogs out the structure of the stall, leaving only Jim, dimly perceived.

JIM

Big Dan was standing right in the doorway there.  
(beat)  
You hear me?

The steam swirls and the density erases Jim as we -

DISSOLVE TO:

5 INT. BLANCO BEDROOM/BATH - JIM - DAY 5

The mist opens a bit and we see Jim again. He's been transported here and is not yet aware of it. Nor are we.

JIM

Max...you out there?

CONTINUED

5

CONTINUED

5

Jim turns off the faucets. The steam thins quickly and we should be "suspicious" of the stall for it is a different, infinitely more elegant one. Jim grows increasingly angry.

JIM

Max! Why the hell don't you answer?

The water's off. We pull back quickly as Jim throws open the glass shower door and is confronted by a personal valet who stands there with a thirsty terrycloth robe ready to be slipped into. Hayes is a supremely tranquil man and that disturbs Jim (and us) because no one in his right mind can be so truly at peace with this world. Perhaps some other? His knowing eyes smile, and that makes us wonder what he knows that we don't.

HAYES

The name is Hayes, Mr. Figg.

JIM

How'd you get in here?

(pushes him aside)

Max? Where the hell are you?

And Jim's move, toward camera, has brought him in view of the bedroom complex beyond the bath area. He stands in a waist shot, dripping wet, only his eyes moving and exploring the impossible. Hayes moves in behind him and helps him into the robe. Jim is too stunned to resist. Hayes even ties the sash cord.

HAYES

There now, Mr. Figg, isn't that better?

6

FULL SHOT

6

Jim is thoroughly confused. Simple, logical thoughts are buzzing around in his head. Okay, fighters take some bad punches and see some funny things; but this - this bedroom, this virile and ostentatiously luxurious bedroom is real! He moves about, touching a few things to confirm.

HAYES

I trust the accommodations are to your liking, Mr. Figg?

Jim turns to him, confusion briefly controlling his anger.

JIM

Okay, now let it go. Let me hear it just like it is, buddy.

CONTINUED

HAYES

Things are as they seem, sir.

Jim rushes to him, grabs him by the collar in a hold that would choke an ordinary man. Hayes' expression doesn't change.

JIM

Don't you double-talk me, runt!  
I'm the heavyweight champion of the  
world. Now, where is this place?  
How'd I get here?

HAYES

I'm sure your hosts will be glad to  
answer your questions, Mr. Figg.

JIM

Who? What hosts?

HAYES

Why, Mr. and Mrs. Roderick Blanco,  
sir.

(then, disengaging)

Now then, Mr. Figg, I think you'll  
find everything you need, sir.  
There's a casual and dress wardrobe  
in that closet, everything to your  
size...

Jim reels to the closet, camera moving with him. He hurls  
the sliding door open, revealing a total wardrobe. He reels  
about, dazed, disbelieving.

HAYES

...personal toiletries in the bath --

JIM

(roars)

What happened to my clothes?!

And under his roar we begin to hear the rat-tat-tat of a punch-  
ing bag. (NOTE: this will continue as cued throughout much  
of the show. The sound will always be the same perspective,  
near, yet just out of reach. The rhythm of the bag will  
never vary.) Jim advances threateningly on Hayes.

JIM

Where's Max??

HAYES

Lunch will be served on the --

CONTINUED

7 CONTINUED

7

JIM

Do your number on your own time!  
Who's this Blanco?

HAYES

Missus Blanco hopes you'll join her  
in the game room...

Jim turns, begins to look for something, camera going with  
him, camera losing Hayes.

JIM

A phone. There's gotta be a phone  
in this --

He turns to where Hayes should be, reacts sharply.

8 WIDER ANGLE - TO INCL. THE DOOR

8

No sign of Hayes. Jim lunges to the door, attacking the over-  
sized doorknob. The door doesn't budge. Jim bellows:

JIM

Hayes...HAYES! You open this...

Jim is working the door, considering breaking it down when he  
becomes aware of the punching bag. He steps back into the  
room, antennae out, ears tuning in to the sound. Another  
sound mingles: surf. Knocking over some slight bit of decor  
in his path, he crosses directly to the window and looks out.

9 WHAT HE SEES (STOCK)

9

The ocean far below, surf boiling its liquid lace around vast  
boulders that rest at the foot of the sheer cliffs on top of  
which the house must perch.

10 BACK TO SCENE

10

Jim turns back into the room, consternation having landed the  
knockout blow to his wrath. We move in tighter as he tries  
to reconcile reality as he's always known it with the tangible  
signs that it exists on more than one level. The rat-tat-tat  
persists.

11 INT. BLANCO GAME ROOM - HAYES - DAY

11

Close on Hayes and pulling back fast to reveal Jim seething  
alongside him in the doorway. Jim looks like he's just been  
done by Sy Devore. The rat-tat-tat continues.

CONTINUED



11 CONTINUED

11

HAYES

Mr. James Figg, madame.

Jim barges ahead, his pointing and admonishing finger preceding him by an arm's length. Camera circles to lose Hayes and take in the room and introduce us to Sandra Blanco's back, curved provocatively as she pours from sterling into fine china on a massive cocktail table.

JIM

Okay, lady, you got some high-powered explaining to do --

He suspends as any man would, in response to the ineffable and sensual beauty of his hostess. She extends her hand, turning Jim's pointing finger into a hand that will shake hers.

SANDRA

I'm Sandra Blanco, Mr. Figg. Roderick's wife. I've so wanted to meet you.

JIM

Look...Mrs. Blanco, I...

SANDRA

Sandra.

JIM

Sandra, I figure I've been drugged and kidnapped. I mean, in my place you'd be a little sore, too, right? Maybe you people ought to think this thing out a little more. Kidnapping's a serious charge.

SANDRA

I'm sure it must be. Coffee?

Though he doesn't answer, she pours some black anyway.

JIM

Lady...Sandra, maybe I'm not getting through to you? I just happen to be, as of last night, the heavy-weight champion of the world. I got a hundred friends must be looking for me already...not to mention TV, wire services, the FBI --

She hands him the coffee, her eyes sipping him and enjoying the taste.

CONTINUED

11 CONTINUED - 2

11

SANDRA

Drink.

Jim would go on but finds himself powerless to ignore her bidding. He takes the coffee and sips it.

SANDRA

Better?

(steps closer)

I saw the fight. You have a magnificently developed body.

JIM

Yeah. Well...Ringside? I mean you had good seats?

SANDRA

Very. We watched it here.

JIM

Here? But -- the fight wasn't televised...not on the home screen...

Sandra shrugs, as if it's of no consequence, moves away.

12 ANOTHER ANGLE - TO INCL. TELEPHONE

12

of the push-button variety. Jim takes note of it out of the corner of his eye.

SANDRA

Do you like the ocean, Jim?

JIM

I like it okay -- when I know which ocean it is.

SANDRA

How delightful. A sense of humor. Oh, Jim, I am liking you. Do you feel me liking you?

JIM

That him on the punching bag? Your husband?

SANDRA

All your senses...so alert, so aware.  
(looks him up and down,  
smiles approval)

I think I like you because you're different from the others.

CONTINUED

JIM

Others?

SANDRA

Other champions. There's an honesty about you. You're that way in the ring, too.

(approaching him)

Roderick thinks you're the best man we've had here in the last ten years.

(her hand at his hair)

I think -- longer.

JIM

Ten years?! You don't look like you could've been married that long.

SANDRA

See how nice you are.

Jim takes a swallow of his coffee, moves to set cup down.

Jim's cross has taken him directly in front of the push-button phone. He's considering it.

JIM

Am I supposed to know this husband of yours...what's-his-name, Blanco?

SANDRA

Roderick? I don't see why.

JIM

So, what'm I doing here? What's he want from me?

SANDRA

Roderick will explain.

JIM

Why can't you explain? And don't tell me you don't know.

(as she is silent)

Lady, I --

SANDRA

Sandra.

13 CONTINUED

13

JIM

(exploding)

Lady!!(counts off on his  
fingers)

I don't know where I am. I don't know how I got here. I never saw this place in my life. I don't know who you are and I sure as hell don't know who Roderick Blanco is -- but let me tell you, I am ready for him. Good and ready!

And with that, he snatches up the phone and pushes a button on it. He freezes quite suddenly, his finger lingering on the button, his anger vaguely echoing, the telephone receiver cringing in his white-knuckled grip. He cocks his head, listening. Only the ocean at low tide whispers softly. The rat-tat-tat has stopped! In its way, it has been the only familiar element in this bizarre setting. Its absence releases a new and indefinable fear in Jim.

SANDRA

Something wrong, Jim?

Idly, he returns the phone to its cradle.

JIM

It stopped. The punching bag.  
Stopped.

SANDRA

Yes.

(beat)

Roderick is coming.

We frame for Jim who doesn't understand why he's beginning to sweat. The sound of o.s. footsteps fades in from a long way off, gradually approaching.

14 SANDRA

14

studies Jim's concentration on the closed double doors that lead into the game room. She moves off, draping herself on the bar, whatever, watching, waiting, enjoying this.

15 JIM

15

Staring fixedly toward the doors, angle tightening on him. O.s. footsteps peak and stop. We are in extreme closeup.

16 ANGLE ON DOUBLE DOORS - JIM'S POINT OF VIEW

16

We hold a good beat. Roderick Blanco opens the doors in a surprisingly perfunctory manner, makes his entrance, and stands there while the doors close themselves slowly and neatly. Blanco is a dark, powerfully-built man (about Jim's size) no more than 30 in appearance. Arrogance to dwarf an Alp; egoism adorning every move and gesture. George Sanders sans accent and avec physique. Von Stroheim with lifts. Contempt and madness dueling in his eyes. His clothes are dramatic and tight-fitting. Hanging around his neck, as always, is a blood-red towel.

17 JIM

17

duly impressed, yet almost relieved to see it has two eyes, two legs, etc.

BLANCO'S VOICE

Jim Figg. Bare knuckle heavyweight champion of England.

18 FULL SHOT

18

as, having made his announcement, Blanco saunters into the room, blatantly appraising Jim.

JIM

You got the wrong Figg.

BLANCO

Let's hope so. The pugilist I mentioned died in 1734.

(then)

He was beaten only once.

Blanco has been encircling Jim, studying him like a piece of merchandise. Musingly, he murmurs:

BLANCO

Leave us, Sandra.

She exits. Having finished the scrutiny, Blanco moves to the cocktail table and pours himself a cup of coffee.

BLANCO

I don't suppose you know what all the experts are saying about you this morning, do you, Figg?

JIM

That I'm missing? Kidnapped, maybe?

CONTINUED

18 CONTINUED

18

BLANCO

They say that your...dispatching of Big Dan Anger suggests you're likely to hold the crown for years. They're right, you know.

Jim, sensing he's in some kind of danger, seeing the madness in Blanco's eyes, begins to feel his way. Blanco's enormous self-confidence has nibbled at Jim's confidence.

JIM

...Are they?

BLANCO

The crown. But not the championship.  
(to Jim's bewildered reaction)

You'll do what Big Dan did. He pretended to be the champion for four years and nobody questioned him, now did they?

JIM

And...and who was the real champion all that time?

BLANCO

I knocked out Big Dan in the first minute of the second round.

JIM

You boxed Big Dan?

BLANCO

As I will you.

JIM

You and me? A match?

BLANCO

You want to be the real champion, don't you?

JIM

I guess I thought I was. I mean, what was that little brouhaha Big Dan Anger and me had last night...?

BLANCO

A preliminary. I'm talking about a private match. Nothing different from all the others I've fought.

CONTINUED

18 CONTINUED - 2

18

JIM

Before Big Dan, you mean?

BLANCO

And before and before and before.  
Bruises, breaks, blisters and blood.  
Basics. Let's deal with those.  
The prosaic approach.

(snaps towel at an  
unseen fly)

You'll not leave here, Figg, until  
you've met me in the ring. Recon-  
cile your mind to that.

JIM

(beat)

Speak to my manager.

BLANCO

(reels, exploding)

Don't you understand anything, Figg?!  
No managers. No crowds. No public  
displays. A private match. In my  
ring!

19 INT. LIMBO ROOM - THE RING - DAY

19

The ring, regulation in all respects, save for its red velvet ropes, gleams in the center of a dim, blood-red limbo area. Ringside, on all four sides, are some theatre seats nearly camouflaged by their matching color. The light that illuminates the ring is contained and visible, like rays of sunlight slashing through a grove of trees. Camera pulls back until an astounded Jim and Blanco are revealed.

JIM

And what's the purse?

BLANCO

Purse?

JIM

I won a million dollars last night.

BLANCO

But you didn't win the championship.  
You defeated a man I defeated...  
Can you settle for that, Figg?

20 CLOSEUP - BLANCO 20

BLANCO

You'll fight me because you want to  
be the real champion -- not just  
allow the world to think you are.

21 CLOSEUP - JIM 21

his reaction.

22 FLASH CUT - REPRISE SC. 2 22

as Big Dan Anger tells Jim:

BIG DAN

You just think you're champion...

23 BACK TO SCENE - JIM AND BLANCO 23

Jim looks at Blanco, then the ring, the whole preposterous  
thing beginning to take on new plausibility.

24 CLOSE ON FLAMING TORCH 24

in blackness. We pull back and in the dim flickering of the  
torch we see that Blanco is holding it and leading Jim. They  
come to a stop. Blanco arcs the torch to the ground where it  
ignites a ring of fire that races to meet itself until it  
encircles a monolithic podium on top of which is an oversized,  
gold-leaved volume bound in antiquity. The flaming circle re-  
mains the only source of illumination, and its quivering light  
brightens nothing but Jim, Blanco and the volume. Blanco  
strides through the narrow band of fire with total indifference  
(and immunity), as though the routine is a familiar one - which  
it is. Jim holds back, properly intimidated by the ferocious  
fingers of fire that leap impetuously beyond their own  
geometry. Blanco turns, annoyed.

BLANCO

You can hardly see from there.

Having been challenged, Jim emulates Blanco's stride through  
the flame and stands alongside him.

25 ANGLED BY THE VOLUME 25

as Blanco opens it and, without reverence, turns past a few  
initial pages and suspends, bringing the torch closer so Jim  
can see. Jim looks.

CONTINUED



25 CONTINUED

25

BLANCO

It clearly states that the under-  
signed did engage in a bout with  
yours truly on such-and-such a date  
and was defeated by a knockout.  
It's signed Big Dan Anger.

Jim nods. He starts to turn the page. Blanco reaches in,  
firmly closes the volume.

JIM

What else you got in there?

BLANCO

Ah. I've tweaked your imagination,  
Figg. A rare accomplishment, I  
expect.

JIM

Anybody around here ever answer a  
question.

BLANCO

Yes. See -- that was an answer.  
But to the earlier one, suffice to  
say that when you sign the document  
stipulating the outcome of our  
encounter, it shall rest here...  
(indicates volume)  
...between the flyleaf and Big Dan's  
affidavit.

JIM

But Big Dan wasn't your first fight.

BLANCO

(ponderous)  
Not -- quite.  
(then)  
We'll fight Monday. Whatever you  
need to prepare will be provided.  
Winner take all.

Blanco turns and starts out. Jim calls after him as we move  
in fast to frame Jim:

JIM

Blanco. What's "all"?

No answer. The ring of fire goes out.

BLACKNESS

(ACT BREAK)

FADE IN:

26 INT. BLANCO'S GAME ROOM - NIGHT 26

Angled, with the push-button phone in f.g. Jim enters surreptitiously, moves to the phone. He picks up the receiver, pushes a button. The button lights up.

27 LIMBO SHOT - CHEF 27

Wearing his tell-tale chef's bonnet, the moustached Chef picks up the phone.

CHEF  
Chef Alexandre here.

28 CLOSE - PUSH-BUTTON PHONE 28

as Jim's index finger angrily pushes a second button - the first light blinking out in favor of the second.

29 LIMBO SHOT - MAID 29

pert and in uniform. The Maid answers the phone.

MAID  
Upstairs.

30 CLOSE - JIM 30

angrily pushing another button.

31 LIMBO SHOT - CHAUFFEUR 31

on phone. (NOTE: each succeeding shot briefer than previous.)

32 TIGHT - PUSH-BUTTON PHONE 32

Flash cut of Jim pushing another button.

33 LIMBO SHOT - HAYES 33

on phone, as imperturbably unruffled as ever.

HAYES  
Was there something you wished, sir?

34 JIM

34

JIM

Yes! How do I get an outside line?

35 HAYES

35

HAYES

I'd assumed you understood, sir --  
there is no outside line.

(then)

Good night, Mr. Figg.

36 THE PUSH-BUTTON PHONE

36

as Jim angrily slams the receiver down. Zoom back, holding Jim as he stands there, angry, frustrated, and not a little worried. Crossing to the window, he stares out.

37 WHAT HE SEES - REPRISE SC. 9 (STOCK)

37

The ocean far below, the rocks, the boiling surf - this time printed for a night effect.

38 JIM

38

whose face mirrors his feeling of helplessness. His head swivels, his gaze traveling about the room. He spies something o.s. Camera pulls back, goes with him as he strides to another window situated in the wall on the opposite side of the room. He peers out. His jaw sags in incredulous dismay.

39 WHAT HE SEES - REPRISE SC. 9 (STOCK)

39

Printed for night, the exact same shot!

40 INT. BLANCO (JIM'S) BEDROOM - JIM - NIGHT

40

Jim in bed; a fitful sleep. Camera moves in closer, almost subjectively. Then a delicate hand reaches in and sensually traces the outlines of Jim's lips. His breathing alters. His eyes open slowly. Then, in a startlingly rapid and fierce motion, he seizes the hand and sits upright, camera retreating fast to frame a two-shot with Sandra. Jim sees who it is and releases her. Then, softly, an announcement:

SANDRA

I think you can beat him.

(then)

He thinks so, too. I can't remember when he was so...apprehensive.

CONTINUED

40 CONTINUED

40

SANDRA (cont'd)

(then)

He's never been beaten before.

JIM

He hasn't, huh?

SANDRA

Let him win.

JIM

I never threw a match in my life.

SANDRA

It's different this time. The stakes are different.

JIM

(measures her)

You're afraid I'll hurt him?

SANDRA

No. That's not what I'm afraid of.

The whole experience has been bizarre enough to convince Jim that her warning is valid. A chill runs down his spine.

JIM

What about the others?

SANDRA

They lost and left. They never told anyone what happened here. How could they -- how could you? -- without admitting defeat? Lose, Jim. Lose.

JIM

Or...what?

Sandra starts to reply, freezes, reacting to the sudden o.s. rat-tat-tat of the punching bag echoing from somewhere in the house. Leaning over, she kisses Jim lightly but with cosmic passion - then, wheeling, she quickly exits. Slowly we frame for Jim. The rat-tat-tat continues.

41 SHADOW SHOT - BLANCO - IN LIMBO

41

his shadow at the punching bag, the rat-tat-tat matched to action for the first time.

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

42 INT. BLANCO GAME ROOM - SANDRA AND JIM - NIGHT

42

They're both seated at the bar. O.s. sound of rat-tat-tat continues. Sandra is nursing a drink. There's a fire in the fireplace. Jim pops a few peanuts.

SANDRA

I watched you working out today.

Jim chews slowly, thoughtfully. The tension crackles in competition with the smouldering logs. Finally:

SANDRA

You going to lose?

Jim stares at her, keeps chewing. He doesn't know what he's going to do. Rat-tat-tat continues. Hold a few beats.

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

43 SHADOW SHOT - BLANCO IN LIMBO

43

his shadow at the punching bag (same as #41). The shadow changes from black to blood red, our theme color. Now, for the first time, the steady rhythm of the rat-tat-tat suddenly alters. The shadow (Blanco, of course) poises for one final slam. The bag's frenzied shadow responds. Blanco's shadow makes a deliberate exit. Only the blood-red shadow of the bag coming to rest remains. Camera moves into the red until it fills the screen.

44 INT. "DRESSING ROOM" - JIM AND HANDLER - NIGHT

44

Jim in elegant boxing robe. The Handler assigned to him is taping his hands in silence; he knows his job well. The usual pre-fight tension is assaulting Jim, but this time, it's intermingling with an eerie excitation that transcends anything he's ever felt before.

45 INT. LIMBO ROOM - THE RING - NIGHT

45

Sandra and ten or twelve others file into the room in silence. Their interest is detached, somehow; it's as though they're watching a rerun of an event and already know the outcome. One Man moves to a bell, ringside. The others seat themselves without hesitation. We see the Chef, Chauffeur, Maid, Hayes, etc. A few beats after they are all perfectly still, Jim and his Handler appear from behind camera. Jim stops a beat and takes in the "crowd."

46 THE CROWD - JIM'S POINT OF VIEW - PANNING SHOT

46

Eyes turn with only vague curiosity. Hayes offers a thin smile. Sandra nods subtly.

- 47 ANGLE ON JIM 47
- moving with him into the ring. There is the usual stool. He sits on it. He sniffs. The silence and the stares get to him. He rises, stretches on the ropes. He suspends this when he sees:
- 48 BLANCO - JIM'S POINT OF VIEW 48
- as he moves toward the ring. His robe and trunks are in the theme red. He is solemn and confident - or appears to be.
- 49 FULL SHOT - THE RING 49
- as Blanco and his Handler enter. Blanco lightly moves to his corner, stretches lavishly. The Referee, old agile and knowing, must've entered the ring during our pan of the crowd for he's already ring center, waiting solemnly. All is still and both fighters settled in their corners. Rather ceremoniously, the Referee extends a beckoning arm to each opponent. Blanco rises first and crosses to Referee. Jim takes that as his cue. The Referee extends the flat of his hands to the top of each fighter's head. He rests them there and closes his eyes prayerfully.
- 50 INTERCUT - JIM AND BLANCO 50  
thru  
53
- Blanco, for the first time, eyes his opponent with respect, even awe. It's a slip of the eyes and when Jim picks up on it, Blanco switches instantly back to supreme confidence. 53
- 54 CLOSE ON SANDRA 54
- She reacts to this exchange and seems to understand its significance. Tentative anxiety.
- 55 BACK TO THE RING 55
- The Referee finishes and without a word, stands off. Blanco and Jim go to their corners. The silence. The goddamn eerie silence. That's what gets to Jim.
- 56 THE TIMEKEEPER 56
- He stares into space. It's hard to tell what will make him strike the bell that commences the match.

- 57 JIM 57  
A twitch near his mouth he never had before.
- 58 BLANCO 58  
staring at Jim.
- 59 FULL SHOT - THE RING 59  
The audience is silhouetted now; only the ring and the glowing red walls are illuminated. GONG!
- 60 FAST ZOOM SHOT 60  
on the bell just as the hammer retreats.
- 61 FLASH CUT - BLANCO 61  
springing from his corner.
- 62 FLASH CUT - JIM 62  
lurching out equally fast.
- 63 THE RING 63  
Blanco's professionalism and physique instantly suggest he's a good match. He comes out low, looking for an opening. Jim dances back, trying to figure his opponent's style. A clench. Referee breaks them.
- 64 ASSORTED CUTAWAYS 64  
thru 68  
68 Individual shots of the audience, the Referee, Sandra, the Timekeeper, Jim's Handler. thru 68
- 69 JIM AND BLANCO 69  
Each man throws a few. Nothing. Jim throws a good one that Blanco catches with his shoulder.
- 70 THE TIMEKEEPER 70  
He strikes the bell.

71 FULL SHOT

71

The two men retreat to their corners. All the ritual attendance to a professional bout is carried out - in utter silence, however. Neither man is hurt nor tired.

72 UP-ANGLE ON JIM - MONTAGE SEQUENCE

thru  
8572  
thru  
85

Slowly move in closer. As we do, we superimpose a montage of the next few rounds. Each cut of the superimposure is printed with increasing resolution. Each cut also diminishes the resolution on Jim. That is to say, the montage fades in as Jim fades out. We hear the Timekeeper's bell several times throughout this, usually at a cut in the bout, suggesting a passage of time. By the end of the above (which takes twenty seconds) we should be in the fifth or sixth round. Both men have been on the offensive and considerable damage has been inflicted.

86 ANGLE ON THE FIGHT

86

The blows are coming too fast to count. It's as though each of them has decided this would be the last round. Blanco lands a major blow and Jim staggers, falls to his knees. The Referee moves in while Blanco walks/stumbles to a neutral corner.

REFEREE  
(does the mandatory  
eight-count)

87 INTERCUT - JIM AND BLANCO

thru  
8987  
thru  
89

Each man knows that the next exchange will be the final one. Jim is up at the eight count and moves in on Blanco with an attack that tells us why he's expected to be one of the all-time great champions. Blanco is down.

90 CLOSE ON BLANCO

90

on his knees. The eight count heard o.s. He's dazed and crazed. His eyes burn through the blood that trickles from his head. Foolishly, because he's half out of it, he's up on the five count.

91 THE RING

91

as Blanco, his balance off, his vision blurred, barrels toward Jim. Jim lands one - two - three haymakers. Blanco goes against his red velvet ropes and becomes entangled in them briefly. Camera moves in tight on Blanco, his blood vanishing in the matching red velvet. He falls out of frame.



92 BLANCO DOWN 92

miraculously still conscious. He eyes Jim with mad resolution. He doesn't hear the count. He manages to get to his knees. Finally he gets up.

93 WIDER ANGLE 93

Jim is in fast with blows that -

94 EXTREME CLOSEUP - BLANCO 94

- land so fast they simply blur and splatter red until -

95 THE RING 95

- Blanco collapses in a heap. Jim, gulping air, staggers to a neutral corner as the Referee begins the count:

REFEREE  
(the ten count)

96 JIM 96

as he turns to the audience.

97 THE AUDIENCE - JIM'S POINT OF VIEW 97

Phlegmatic. Silent. Move in to Sandra. Her eyes shift from Blanco to Jim. They're impossible to read.

98 BACK TO JIM 98

who looks about - a brand new rage coming over him. His emotions explode as, camera following him, he shouts:

JIM  
What's the matter with you...?  
(grabs Referee)  
Why didn't you stop it?  
(rushes to Blanco's  
Handler)  
You saw what was happening. Why  
didn't you throw in the towel?!

99 ON SANDRA 99

as Jim, vaulting from the ring, comes rushing up to her.

CONTINUED

99 CONTINUED

99

JIM

Don't you care? You're his wife!  
Nobody should take that kind of  
beating! Nobody!!

Sandra listens impassively and then looks off. Jim turns, staring in the direction of her gaze. Camera shifts, angling past him to the ring where the Referee kneels examining Blanco's inanimate body. He rises now, at a deliberate, solemn pace. There is a feeling of coronation in the air.

REFEREE

The champion is dead. Long live  
the champion.

100 FULL SHOT

100

The entire audience rises, approaching Jim obsequiously. Hayes holds out Blanco's robe. Jim, still of this earth, rejects the robe and climbs back into the ring, rushing to Blanco's body.

101 THE RING - REVERSE ANGLE

101

Blanco's back is in f.g. Jim hurtles toward it, falls to his knees, and rolls Blanco over to bring his face into full shot. We are looking at the bewiskered face of a white-haired, ancient man who is deteriorating before our eyes even in this brief glimpse.

102 UPSHOT - JIM - FROM CORPSE'S POINT OF VIEW

102

his horrified reaction. To no one in particular he says:

JIM

Good Lord Almighty...who was he?

103 ANGLE ON THE RING

103

Hayes is in the ring now, approaching Jim with the robe ready to be slipped into.

HAYES

He was the Real World Champion,  
having first taken the title from  
Jem Mace in 1861, and having  
successfully defended it ever  
since...until tonight.

Stunned, Jim allows Hayes to slip the robe on him. Without resistance or vocal protest, his benumbed mind reeling, he permits Hayes to assist him from the ring.

104 ON SANDRA

104

who stands waiting for Jim. The others have already departed. Jim comes up to Sandra. Hayes discreetly withdraws.

SANDRA

Winner take all, Jim.

And that line says everything. Sandra strokes Jim's biceps through the robe, staring intently up into his face.

JIM

For how long?

SANDRA

As long as you win.

She links her arm with his and together they move out. Camera pulls slowly up and back to reveal the entire ring. The specks of blood are gone. Blanco's remains are gone. The ring is empty. Ready for the next bout. And now, once again, we hear the rat-tat-tat of the punching bag.

FADE OUT

THE END