

The Temporary Insanity

Of

Daniel Sickles

a screenplay by

Norman Mailer

and

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based on the book

"The Congressman Who Got Away With Murder"

by

Nat Brandt

FADE IN:

Sound of cannon, booming. A rousing chorus of "John Brown's Body" begins and a photograph appears of Civil War troops on the march. Within the still photograph, one lone soldier in the background is moving. A photograph of a fallen horse. Within the still, the horse raises and lowers its head. One after the other, more photographs appear--slaves in pens, plantations with black field hands picking cotton, soldiers with their sweethearts, Abraham Lincoln, Jefferson Davis, dead soldiers in the field, their bare feet evidence of shoeless scavengers. In each image, a small movement stirs within the stillness of the picture.

Drawings are interspersed with the photographs--drawings of battlefields, soldiers loading cannon, singing around campfires, black soldiers and white soldiers, Northern and Southern boys lying dead together. Each has its bit of life moving within the still picture. As the credits roll and the images change, the music flows from "John Brown's Body" to other tunes of the period--"Lorena", "The Bonnie Blue Flag", "Just Before the battle, Mother", "The Vacant Chair", "Tenting Tonight", "Somebody's Darling", "Dixie", and others.

A title appears--GETTYSBURG, 1863. Now pictures of the battle parade across the screen.

A drawing of a general on his horse appears. The horse is rearing up, as if frightened. As we focus on the drawing, it begins to move. We see that the general has been hit in the leg with a miniball.

The leg swings by a shred of skin and lands on the ground as the drawing becomes a real, flesh and blood man. The general falls.

CUT TO:

EXT: THE BATTLEFIELD - DAY

The general is lying on the ground.

A couple of soldiers rush over and carry him to the shelter of a low stone wall. He is amazingly calm. The leg has already distanced itself from him.

GEN. SICKLES

Take that saddle strap there,
sergeant, and buckle it above the
wound.

The soldier tightens the strap as an officer rides up and
dismounts.

MAJOR TREMAIN

General! Are you hurt?

GEN. SICKLES

(quietly)

My leg is lying by that rock, Major.
I would estimate that I was hurt.

The general catches his breath.

GEN. SICKLES

(continuing)

Tell General Birney to take command.
Inform the men that I am wounded. .
. but not too severely.

He attempts to reach into his breast pocket, but is too weak.
Two bearers come up with a stretcher and begin to load the
General onto it. He speaks to one of them.

GEN. SICKLES

(continuing)

Look in the right hand breast pocket
of my coat, corporal.

The corporal does so. He pulls out a fine Havana cigar,
looks at it as if he is not sure this is the right object he
was supposed to find. General Sickles nods, starts to put
the cigar into his mouth, but his hand is shaking. The
corporal assists him.

GEN. SICKLES

(continuing)

Light it for me, son.

The corporal complies.

GEN. SICKLES

(continuing)

Cover me with a blanket.

The corporal covers the general's leg. Only one boot sticks
out at the end of the stretcher. The general lifts his head
and looks at his feet.

GEN. SICKLES
(continuing)
Where is my leg?

The corporal points.

CORPORAL
There, sir.

The General pats the side of the stretcher.

GEN. SICKLES
Bring it here. . .the men must not
see me as a cripple. Put it on the
stretcher. It has been a good leg.
I cannot leave it here alone on this
field.

The corporal arranges the leg under the blanket and they pick him up to carry him off. He is growing weaker, but determinedly smokes on the cigar. They hurry through the woods toward the tents of the field hospital and headquarters. Men lie thick on the ground, wounded, sick, disheartened.

As the stretcher bearers pass with General Sickles, the soldiers try to rise at the sight of their fallen leader. A tired and battered soldier leans against a tree, oblivious to the passing of the litter bearers. He picks at a battered banjo, the opening bars of "The Star Spangled Banner". In a mocking tone, he begins to sing,

BATTERED SOLDIER
"Ohhhhhh, say can you see. . .any bed
bugs on me? If you do, pick a few,
and we'll have bed bug stew. . .

The General motions for the stretcher bearers to stop in front of the man.

GEN. SICKLES
Halt. Now.

They comply. The General speaks to the man, who has quietly stopped his singing.

GEN. SICKLES
(continuing)
Soldier. . .come here.

The man slowly gets up and goes to the stretcher.

Gathering what strength he has left, General Sickles raises himself on his elbows. He points to the man with his cigar.

GEN. SICKLES

(continuing)

How dare you mock the words of that fine song? A great American patriot wrote that song.

The General lays back down on the stretcher, his last reserve of energy ebbing. His voice begins to falter. He speaks, more to himself than to the frightened soldier.

GEN. SICKLES

(continuing)

His son was a friend of mine, Barton Key. A special acquaintance, to be certain. . . . Barton Key. . . Barton Key . . .

One of the stretcher bearers motions to continue. Sickles falls back on the stretcher, looking upward. Music starts--a spirited waltz. From his POV we see the trees against the sky spinning as his head bounces on the stretcher.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT: THE INAUGURAL BALL - WILLARD'S HOTEL - NIGHT

The spinning trees become couples spinning on the dance floor.

A title appears--"President Buchanan's Inaugural Ball--1856"

The ballroom of Willard's is the most beautiful room in Washington. Tonight, it is opulent beyond belief, tables are laden with oysters, ice cream, and other delicacies. The white ceiling is studded with gold stars, and the walls are draped with red, white and blue silk. An orchestra plays a spirited waltz.

Dan Sickles, dressed in white tie and tails, waltzes by clasping the waist of an attractive redhead. His wife, Teresa, a young, dark-haired beauty, glides on the arm of an older elegant gentleman. She gives Dan a long level look, but he is oblivious to her.

Dan sweeps the redhead into a graceful turn. Teresa and her elegant partner pass them, apparently unnoticed.

ELEGANT PARTNER

Who is the woman dancing with your husband, Mrs. Sickles?

Teresa looks without interest toward the couple. She shrugs a little shrug.

TERESA SICKLES

Who? Oh. I don't know. Probably one of his old flames.

ELEGANT PARTNER

And you are not jealous?

She does not care for the question.

TERESA SICKLES

I am very much in love with my husband, and he is in love with me.

He smiles at her in a most charming way. Teresa stiffly returns the smile. We see Dan and the redhead swirling by.

The dancers are interrupted by the band striking up "Hail to the Chief". President Buchanan enters with his niece, Harriet Lane, on his arm. The crowd applauds. The President pauses on the steps. The crowd quiets.

PRESIDENT BUCHANAN

On this momentous evening, the beginning of a new administration, the beginning of a new era, we look to a future of hope. The animosity that now stirs between the states of the North and the South--an animosity that has caused much discord--will soon be diminished.

Our great country, these United States, will not only endure, but become one of the great powers of the world--exactly our rightful place in human events, Providence willing.

The audience breaks into applause. President Buchanan and Harriet Lane step into the crowd, shaking hands, accepting congratulations.

They pass by Dan as they greet their supporters. The President pauses, greets Dan warmly. His partner, the redhead, has melted into the crowd, as the dancing resumes.

PRESIDENT BUCHANAN

(continuing)

Sickles, I need to talk to you. Can you come by my office first thing tomorrow morning?

DAN SICKLES

Of course, Jim. Mr. President!

Dan nods. The President turns away with his niece.

Seeing Dan alone, Barton Key walks up to join him. He is in his thirties, and has for good reason been called "The handsomest man in Washington".

BARTON KEY

Could I have a word with you,
Congressman?

Dan looks at him for a moment, as if trying to place him.

BARTON KEY

(continuing)

I'm Barton Key.

DAN SICKLES

Of course, Mr. Key. I used to play
poker with your father, years ago.
How is he?

BARTON KEY

I'm afraid he is dead.

DAN SICKLES

Oh. I'm sorry to hear that. He was
a master poker player. Do you like
the game?

They step over a few feet to the serving table where a black waiter pours them each a glass of wine.

BARTON KEY

Love the game.

DAN SICKLES

Splendid. You must give me a chance
to recoup a little of what I lost to
your father.

BARTON KEY

My pleasure, Congressman.

DAN SICKLES

What can I do for you, Mr. Key?

BARTON KEY

Congressman, I have enjoyed my work
in the previous administration. I
was hoping that. . .

DAN SICKLES
(overtaking him)
I understand, Mr. Key. You think you might be one of the few men in the Pierce administration who deserves to remain in his old job.

BARTON KEY
I do. And it wouldn't hurt if you could find your way to putting in a good word with President Buchanan.

Dan takes out a cigar and lights it.

DAN SICKLES
I might. I will think about it.

Dan uses his cigar.

BARTON KEY
Thank you, sir. We must arrange a poker night soon.

The men smile and shake hands as Teresa is escorted up to them by Henry Wikoff, a notorious Washington social creature.

HENRY WIKOFF
Congressman Sickles! I had to rescue this beautiful wife of yours! She was about to be devoured by every healthy male in the room.

TERESA SICKLES
Mr. Wikoff, I am not a chocolate confection.

DAN SICKLES
(smiling)
Mr. Key, my wife, Teresa. Darling, this is my friend, Philip Barton Key.

TERESA SICKLES
A pleasure, Mr. Key.

He takes her hand and lightly kisses it. There is a beat as their hands touch and their eyes meet.

BARTON KEY
It is my pleasure, Mrs. Sickles.

Barton Key looks at Dan, with courtesy. Then speaks to Teresa.

BARTON KEY
 (continuing)
 With your husband's permission, may
 I have the next dance?

DAN SICKLES
 Of course.

Henry Wikoff turns to watch as they dance gracefully away.

HENRY WIKOFF
 What a stunning woman, Dan. You are
 a lucky man.

DAN SICKLES
 I am, indeed, Mr. Wikoff.

But he is looking at the redhead who walked away from him.
 She is now dancing with someone else.

CUT TO:

INT: THE HALLWAY OF THE SICKLES' HOUSE - NIGHT

Dan and Teresa are returning from the ball, in a light, good
 mood. Bridget, the maid, takes their coats and hats.

TERESA SICKLES
 Did Laura go to sleep early, Bridget?

BRIDGET
 Oh, no, ma'am. She is waiting up for
 you.

DAN SICKLES
 (looking at his
 watch, smiles, says
 with pride)
 That child!

INT: LAURA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dan and Teresa's young daughter, Laura, with her doll tucked
 securely under the covers, is pretending to be asleep.

Dan quietly opens the door and steps inside. Teresa stands
 in the doorway watching them. He moves to Laura's bedside,
 pauses for a moment looking at her.

Laura opens one eye.

LAURA
 Papa?

DAN SICKLES
It's me, darling.

LAURA
Are you the president, now?

DAN SICKLES
No, Laura. Uncle Jim is the President.

LAURA
(yawning)
Oh, that's right.

He leans down and kisses her on the forehead. He has all the tenderness of a busy father who adores his child and so tries to put it all into one small kiss. She turns around drowsily just long enough to hug him fiercely, then goes back to her doll.

DAN SICKLES
Goodnight, Princess.

He extinguishes a low light. Laura is already asleep.

INT: DAN AND TERESA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dan enters as Teresa is undressing for bed. She is sitting at the dressing table in her petticoat and corset, brushing out her long dark hair. He is smiling still, from the moment with his daughter.

TERESA SICKLES
Help me with my laces? Will you please?

Dan approaches and begins to un-do the intricate workings of the corset.

DAN SICKLES
(making a silly poem)
I will help you with your laces, I
will take you many places. . .

Teresa laughs appreciatively.

TERESA SICKLES
Would you take me to the races?

They laugh together. As their mirth fades, Teresa studies him in the mirror.

TERESA SICKLES
Am I still attractive to you?

TERESA SICKLES
(continuing)
Are you coming to bed now?

DAN SICKLES
Not yet, Kitten. Sam Butterworth and I have to get through some papers before I meet with the President in the morning.

TERESA SICKLES
You're going out?

DAN SICKLES
Yes. . .

TERESA SICKLES
Now?

DAN SICKLES
Teresa. . . I must. You be a good girl and go to bed.

The corset, with some difficulty releases its grip. Teresa stands in her silk shift. Dan kisses her on the top of the head, and starts to leave the room.

TERESA SICKLES
Dan. . .
He stops.

DAN SICKLES
What?
There is a long pause.

TERESA SICKLES
(almost whispers)
Nothing.
Dan turns again to leave.

TERESA SICKLES
(continuing)
Dan?
He pauses in the door.

DAN SICKLES
What is it, Teresa?

TERESA SICKLES
Am I still attractive to you?

He smiles, goes back to her, kisses her cheek, pats her.

DAN SICKLES

Of course you are. You're my wife.
I adore you.

A small smile creeps onto Teresa's face. A sad smile. It suggests she is knowing.

TERESA SICKLES

Say hello to Sam.

DAN SICKLES

I will. I will, indeed.

He leaves the room. Teresa stands looking after him, then, like a good girl, gets into bed alone.

CUT TO:

INT: FANNY WHITE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

C.U. of bare male feet. A woman's hand is massaging the feet. We hear small groans of pleasure. After a moment, we hear a voice, which we recognize as belonging to Dan Sickles.

DAN SICKLES (V.O.)

Higher.

The hand moves up the leg. Now it is kneading the calf. Slowly, sensuously.

DAN SICKLES (V.O.)

(continuing)

Higher.

The hand moves up to the thigh. It massages the thigh for a moment, then disappears under the tail of his long, white dress shirt. We pull back to focus on the face of Dan Sickles, a study in carnal pleasure. We see the hand stop.

DAN SICKLES

Don't stop.

The hand starts again.

Groans and grunts are heard as we dolly back and see the source of the pleasure--a hefty buttercup blonde woman of about forty with large pendulous breasts overflowing a lavender corset. Her pouting face is a study in sexy petulance.

FANNY WHITE

I wanted so much to go to the inaugural.

DAN SICKLES

(impatiently)

Don't talk.

FANNY WHITE

How was it?

We cut to Dan's face.

DAN SICKLES

I said: Don't talk!

FANNY WHITE

Will you let me meet the President?

DAN SICKLES

No!

FANNY WHITE

Will you take me to New York with you next week?

DAN SICKLES

(softly)

If you are a good girl.

Fanny smiles. She gets back into position. We see Dan's face as she returns to business.

DISSOLVE TO:

Fanny lying in bed. Dan gets up to dress. The room is a strew of discarded bustiers, high heeled shoes, silks, flowers that have been tossed on the floor, and used plates of food.

Dan finishes dressing, picks up a large bottle of expensive cologne from the dressing table, and liberally splashes himself with it.

FANNY WHITE

That's right. Put on a lot. You don't want your lady to get a whiff of me, congressman.

DAN SICKLES

(with a big grin)

I'll just tell her I fell over a pig in the street.

He lays a few ten dollar bills on the table and walks out. The gentleness with which he sets down the money is the only evidence of his affection for her.

CUT TO:

EXT: WASHINGTON STREET - NIGHT

C.U. of pigs rutting in the mud. We pull back to see Dan stepping around their wallow in an alley just off a busy street. There has been a light rain and the thoroughfare is a muddy quagmire. Horses and carriages muck through, ladies try to lift their skirts free of the glop and there are, indeed, not only pigs wallowing in the alleyways, but goats, dogs and cats. Free blacks mingle in the crowd, staring at the finery. Everywhere buildings are under construction. Dan turns down a quiet street and goes up the steps of a brownstone house.

CUT TO:

INT: JONAH HOOVER'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUING SCENE

A gentlemen's card party is in progress, and we see some of the men we have met at the inauguration--Congressman Haskin, Henry Wikoff, Sam Butterworth and Barton Key. Dan is greeted warmly by his host, Jonah Hoover, and is handed a glass of brandy by a black butler. He joins the group at the card table.

HENRY WIKOFF

You're late, Sickles.

DAN SICKLES

Working, Wikoff. A congressman's work is never done.

SAM BUTTERWORTH

What is her name?

Dan grins.

DAN SICKLES

I forgot to ask.

All the men laugh. Dan removes his coat, and pulls up a chair next to Barton Key. Jonah Hoover deals the next hand. They ante.

DAN SICKLES

(continuing)

I hope your pockets are full, Key. I've got the hand.

He puts in his chips.

BARTON KEY

Danger is my spice.

(he smiles)

Raise you ten, Congressman.

The card hand progresses. Quick shots of cards being dealt, chips going in. Only Dan and Barton are left. Dan puts in more chips.

DAN SICKLES

Ready to raise me again?

BARTON KEY

(considers)

No, I'll just call.

(puts in his chips)

Dan does not show his hand, yet. Instead, he says to Barton.

DAN SICKLES

I'm speaking to the President in the morning.

Barton raises an eyebrow.

BARTON KEY

Convey my good sentiments.

DAN SICKLES

Only if I win.

Barton laughs.

JOHN HASKIN

What are you two talking about?

JONAH HOOVER

Show your hand.

DAN SICKLES

Barton, you may be in my debt.

BARTON KEY

Thank you, Mr. Sickles. I am already in your debt.

DAN SICKLES

More than you think, Mr. Key.

Smiling, Dan lays down a full house.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT: JONAH HOOVER'S LIVING ROOM - DAWN - CONTINUING SCENE

Hoover, Butterworth and Sickles sit around the poker table. The others are gone. It is morning. The ashtrays overflow with cigar-butts and cylinders of cigar ash. The three men are putting away cards and chips.

JONAH HOOVER

Sickles, if you don't mind my saying. . .

DAN SICKLES

Shoot.

JONAH HOOVER

Why are you going to put in a word for Barton Key?

DAN SICKLES

I kind of like him.

SAM BUTTERWORTH

Come on, Dan. He is just the spoiled son of a famous man.

DAN SICKLES

No, he will be my entree to that old guard social crowd. And they do run this town.

Sickles yawns. Takes out his watch.

DAN SICKLES

(continuing)

Let me borrow your razor, Jonah. I've got to see the President in. . .

He looks at the watch.

DAN SICKLES

(continuing)

Damnation!

CUT TO:

INT: PRESIDENT BUCHANAN'S OFFICE - DAY

The President and Dan are having coffee.

PRESIDENT BUCHANAN

Kansas either comes into the Union free, or as a slave state, but either way, Dan, it is going to tear this congress apart.

DAN SICKLES
It's happening already.

PRESIDENT BUCHANAN
Damn right! That's why I am forced
to walk the line between two camps of
idiots. North or South, one side
won't accept the result.

DAN SICKLES
If anyone can find a compromise, it's
you, Jim.

PRESIDENT BUCHANAN
Delay. That's my only instrument.
Delay cools politicians. But I am
going to need help from the floor.
Will you be there for me?

DAN SICKLES
That's one bitch of a job you're
handing me.
(pause)
But I'll be there. These are the days
when you're going to find out more
about your best friends.

PRESIDENT BUCHANAN
(grins appreciatively)
I can see a day when you'll be
sitting in my chair.

DAN SICKLES
You don't have to tickle my toes, Jim.

PRESIDENT BUCHANAN
I'm not the one who is tickling your
toes. Your problem is to stay away
from those who do.

DAN SICKLES
What the hell do you mean by that?

PRESIDENT BUCHANAN
Bridle your appetite for women, Dan.
We can't afford any scandals right
now.

DAN SICKLES
(slightly offended)
No, of course not!

PRESIDENT BUCHANAN

Why not fix your mind on the largest appetite of them all? Believe me, nothing ever gives more satisfaction than getting elected to this office. Despite Kansas. Kansas be damned!

CUT TO:

INT: THE SICKLES' HOUSE - NIGHT

A sparkling party is in progress. In the corner, a small group of musicians are playing. Teresa, dressed in an elegant flower print silk, is moving about, laughing here, tossing a flirty rebuke there. The doorbell rings and the black butler admits Barton Key. Teresa goes to greet him.

TERESA SICKLES

You did come! I'm glad, Mr. Key.

BARTON KEY

I would not miss an evening in this house, Mrs. Sickles. After the kindness your husband showed me.

TERESA SICKLES

You're more than welcome. My hope is that we have enough single ladies tonight.

BARTON KEY

Why do you say that?

TERESA SICKLES

To pay my respects to your reputation.

BARTON KEY

That bad? Is my reputation that bad?

TERESA SICKLES

I don't know if being spoken of as irresistible is so bad.

BARTON KEY

(laughing)

I promise you, there have been one or two ladies who have resisted me, Mrs. Sickles.

TERESA SICKLES

Poor Barton Key.

Laughing, he offers her his arm and they join the party.

CUT TO:

INT: THE SICKLES' DINING ROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUING SCENE

A long table is set with the finest crystal, china, silver and flowers. Dan presides at one end, and Teresa is seated at the other between Barton Key and Senator Sam Houston from Texas. He is wearing a leopard skin vest under his formal suit, and has a red Indian serape draped over his shoulder.

SAM HOUSTON

Dear young lady, I speak seven different Indian languages.

TERESA SICKLES

How fascinating! Were you really raised with Indians, Senator?

SAM HOUSTON

I was. You can bet on that, Mrs. Sickles. And the Indian tongue is beautiful. Always to the point. As the Cherokee would say,

(He speaks in Cherokee)

"Nihi wijodusv higeya jigovi."

A subtitle appears on the screen: "You are the most beautiful woman I have ever seen."

Teresa pauses. Considers.

TERESA SICKLES

Well, Senator Houston, as my forebears would have said,

She speaks in Italian:

TERESA SICKLES

(continuing; in Italian)

Puo essere che sei intelligente, pero come ti vesti e' proprio strano.

A subtitle translates: "You may be intelligent, but you have strange taste in clothes".

Houston smiles awkwardly. He does not understand Italian. Barton Key on the other side of Teresa, watching this game, roars with laughter.

Teresa looks at Key.

TERESA SICKLES
(continuing)
Do you speak Italian, Mr. Key?

BARTON KEY
I do. I do.

He leans out and addresses Sam Houston.

BARTON KEY
(continuing)
Senator, I think that Mrs. Sickles
has gotten the better of you.

SAM HOUSTON
She golly sure did. Mrs. Sickles may
be the most delightful young woman I
have ever met.

Teresa turns to look at Key. Their eyes meet.

BARTON KEY
She golly sure is.

Teresa disengages from Key's gaze and smiles at Houston. She
looks down the table, hoping to catch Dan's eye. We see Dan
Sickles at the other end of the table, oblivious to
everything except the attractive lady on his right.

CUT TO:

INT: DAN AND TERESA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

It is after the dinner. Teresa and Dan are lying in bed,
dressed in long cotton night clothes.

DAN SICKLES
Sam Houston was certainly smitten
with you tonight.

TERESA SICKLES
Was he?

DAN SICKLES
Couldn't take his eyes off you.

TERESA SICKLES
Did you notice?

DAN SICKLES
Most certainly I did. I told him, "I
don't mind your eyes, Sam, but keep
your hands off her, you randy old
goat."

Teresa snuggles closer to Dan. He kisses her gently on the forehead and turns over to sleep. Teresa is restless.

TERESA SICKLES

Dan?

DAN SICKLES

(sleepily)

Yes, my darling.

There is a long pause. It goes on and on--one of those pauses that husbands and wives try not to get caught up in.

TERESA SICKLES

Is it because I am a mother. . . What is it, Dan? . . . Do you want me any more? . . . I just have this odd feeling. . .

Teresa raises on one elbow and looks at Dan.

TERESA SICKLES

(continuing)

Dan? Are you sleeping? . . . I know you are not asleep. . . Talk to me. . .

DAN SICKLES

Not now, sweetheart. I have a hard day tomorrow, in New York. . .

Teresa lays back on her pillow. Silence. A long beat. One tear silently traces its way from her eye to the pillow.

CUT TO:

EXT: BUSY NEW YORK STREET - DAY

We see the multitude of activities that take place on busy New York streets--newsboys hawking their papers, men unloading their horse-drawn carts with produce for the green grocers, people hurrying toward their many and varied destinations. A carriage pulls up in front of a mid-town hotel, and Dan Sickles alights. He helps a lady out, but we don't quite see her face, obscured by a large hat.

CUT TO:

INT: MID-TOWN HOTEL, NEW YORK - DAY

We focus on Adams, a bewhiskered, balding desk clerk. He looks up and beams a welcoming smile.

ADAMS

Welcome to New York, Congressman Sickles. Your usual room is ready, sir.

DAN SICKLES

It's good to be back, Adams.

ADAMS

Would you and Mrs. Sickles sign the register, please?

We see Dan's hand signing the book, then pushing it toward his companion. We see a hand in a lavender glove, a glittering ring on one finger, signing with a flourish, "Mrs. Congressman Daniel E. Sickles".

We pull back and see Dan standing there with Fanny White and a bellboy carrying several pieces of luggage.

She pushes the book back to Adams the clerk with a smug little smile. Dan offers Fanny his arm as they walk toward the stairs.

Adams and the bellboy watch the retreating figures.

CUT TO:

INT: TERESA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Teresa is in the living room on the floor with Laura. They are having a tea party with Laura's dolls.

TERESA SICKLES

Would you like a little more tea, Mrs. Wentworth?

LAURA

Yes, that would be lovely, Mrs. March.

Teresa pours the tea into the doll's cup. Laura pretends to let the doll drink. The door-bell rings. Bridget answers, and Octavia Ridgeley comes into the room. She is dressed for a party.

OCTAVIA RIDGELEY

What a wonderful tea party, Laura. May I join?

LAURA

Of course, Miss Ridgeley.

Octavia kisses Laura, then turns to Teresa.

OCTAVIA RIDGELEY
I came by to see if you would come
with me to the hop at Willard's
tonight, Teresa.

TERESA SICKLES
Oh, I can't. Dan's away.

Teresa picks up a doll Laura has dropped.

OCTAVIA RIDGELEY
Dan is always away. I need you! I
have asked someone to escort me
tonight, but I don't want him to
think I'm trying to be alone with
him. Please?

TERESA SICKLES
Who is it?

OCTAVIA RIDGELEY
He's a new congressman from the
South. Very good looking. Say yes.
It will be amusing.

TERESA SICKLES
I don't know. . .

CUT TO:

INT: WILLARD'S HOTEL - NIGHT

A "hop" is in progress in the ballroom. Teresa enters on the
arm of William Beekman, the young congressman from the South.
Although Octavia Ridgeley holds his other arm, he clearly has
eyes for Teresa, not Octavia.

CUT TO:

William Beekman dancing with Teresa. He is excited to be
this near to her, and is a bit feverish in manner.

WILLIAM BEEKMAN
I believe we should always tell the
truth, Mrs. Sickles. Will you permit
me an observation?

TERESA SICKLES
I suppose I will.

He hesitates, then plunges ahead.

WILLIAM BEEKMAN

I wouldn't go so often to New York.
Not if I were your husband.

TERESA SICKLES

My husband has a wife with very
expensive taste, and his law practice
happens to be in New York.

WILLIAM BEEKMAN

I would never leave your side.

TERESA SICKLES

Mightn't that be boring?

WILLIAM BEEKMAN

Never for me.

She softens, but not for long.

TERESA SICKLES

You are a master of compliments, Mr.
Beekman. And you must save some for
my friend.

(she looks around the
room)

Where is Octavia?

Teresa spots Barton Key. She manages to maneuver William
closer to the edge of the dance floor. Barton comes toward
her.

BARTON KEY

Mr. Beekman? I'm going to steal Mrs.
Sickles for this next dance.

TERESA SICKLES

Steal me. Mr. Beekman was just about
to invite Octavia for this waltz
anyway, weren't you, William?

William manages to nod graciously. Barton sweeps Teresa
away, as William looks after them. We sense his capacity for
anger. He picks a flower from a vase on a table, and without
noticing quite what he is doing, rips the petals as he
watches the dance.

On the floor, Barton and Teresa draw admiring looks from
other dancers.

BARTON KEY

I can't believe I forgot.

TERESA SICKLES

What can't you believe you forgot?

BARTON KEY

How delighted I am every time I see you.

They look into each other's eyes and dance. Octavia, dancing with a stone-faced Beekman passes and signals that they should leave.

CUT TO:

EXT: WILLARD'S HOTEL - NIGHT

A row of carriages with their coachmen lounging about stand waiting for their owners. Men and women in evening attire flow in and out of the ornate front doors. Suddenly, Teresa and Octavia rush out of the hotel, giggling like schoolgirls. They run up to Octavia's carriage, bang on the door and wake the sleeping coachman. They pile into the carriage. Octavia speaks to the coachman.

OCTAVIA RIDGELEY

Quickly! Let's go!

The carriage pulls away and the horse trots down the street as William Beekman rushes out, looking for the ladies. He stands, looking quizzically in either direction. A moment later, Barton Key follows him. The men eye each other.

BARTON KEY

(smiling, with light
irony)

Taking the night air, Mr. Beekman?

WILLIAM BEEKMAN

(seriously)

Yes. Taking a breath of air, Mr. Key.

CUT TO:

INT: CONGRESSIONAL CHAMBER - DAY

The members are assembled. The atmosphere is already explosive. Low growls are heard. The Speaker of the House rises and bangs his gavel for order. He speaks.

SPEAKER

The floor recognizes the gentleman
from New York.

Dan Sickles gets up and makes his way to the dais. A low rumble starts among the men.

CUT TO:

INT: THE HOLE IN THE WALL - DAY

"The Hole in the Wall" is a bar for the legislators. It is situated right next to the House chamber. In the bar, congressmen are drinking and loudly arguing. There are numerous couches on which drunken legislators have passed out.

As the noise from the chamber escalates, several of the congressmen put down their drinks and start out the door and down the hall into the House chamber. We follow them, and enter the chamber to see Dan Sickles on the dais.

The room is in an uproar. Various congressmen call out to Dan.

WILLIAM BEEKMAN
Buchanan is afraid of the
abolitionists! He's a compromiser.
A pusillanimous compromiser!

NORTHERN CONG.#1
You're wrong, Sir! Buchanan is a
damned Southern sympathizer!

SOUTHERN CONG.#1
Southern settlers have the right to
bring their property with them to
Kansas! And slaves are property!

DAN SICKLES
Mr. Speaker, I have the floor!

The speaker gavels his podium but the uproar hardly subsides.

DAN SICKLES
(continuing)
Are you men legislators or louts?

Boos greet this remark, but the floor subsides just sufficiently to let him speak.

DAN SICKLES
(continuing; points
to Beekman)
You sir, have called our President a
pusillanimous compromiser. You have
said he is vacillating, he is weak.
(more)

DAN SICKLES (cont'd)
(points to Northern
congressman)

And you, sir, have even called him treasonous! I name you, Mr. Beekman, and all of you on either side who have joined this vile chorus, as vicious and incontinent of language. Yes, Our leader, James Buchanan, dares to compromise. . .

(boos)

. . .dares to compromise when no single answer can begin to satisfy the fiercely divergent demands of opposing sides. Our great President chooses not be held up as a hero by one camp and excoriated as a villain by the other. That is the easy course.

(boos)

Instead, he attempts to hold this nation together by bravely choosing the most dangerous path--that path between both sides--thereby drawing the fire of all.

The men are silent for a moment. Then Beekman speaks out.

WILLIAM BEEKMAN

Buchanan is riding the fence. Let him commit to the rights of our Southern States!

NORTHERN CONG.#3

No slave holder is going to crack his whip over the heads of this legislature, Beekman! There will be no slaves in Kansas!

Beekman jumps up and charges into the Northerner. They scuffle on the floor. Instantly, friends and foes of both men enter the fray. Pandemonium. Brass cuspidors are heaved, their tobacco juice splashing on faces and jackets.

One Congressman is sent staggering by a blow, and his toupee flies across the room. He scurries to rescue it and jams it on his head backwards in time to have it sent sailing again.

A rotund man is thrown to the floor, and a gun falls out of his coat pocket. Four men pounce on it, but it skitters across the floor. The men, on hands and knees, pursue it until the owner grabs it and puts it back in his pocket.

Dan Sickles, meanwhile, has kept to the podium, coolly watching the melee. He turns, as William Beekman yells at him.

WILLIAM BEEKMAN
Gutless toady!

This arouses Dan's ire. He jumps off the podium, and goes for Beekman, but John Haskin and two other friends take his arms and escort Dan out as Guards come running in to restore order.

CUT TO:

INT: SENATOR CLAY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A string quartet is playing chamber music at a party given by Senator Clement Clay and his wife, Virginia. Barton Key and Dan Sickles are deep in conversation.

BARTON KEY
Good Lord, Sickles. I thought war was going to start in the very halls of congress today!

DAN SICKLES
It wouldn't surprise me. Everybody there is armed to the teeth.

He discreetly opens his coat to show Barton the derringer in his inside coat pocket.

DAN SICKLES
(continuing)
Do you carry a gun?

BARTON KEY
Not unless I am ready to use it.

The waiter brings them a drink on a tray. They clink glasses. Teresa comes up to them, out of breath from dancing.

DAN SICKLES
Darling, are you ready to go home?

TERESA SICKLES
But I haven't danced with you yet!
Can't we stay just a little longer?

She looks so young and charming. He softens.

DAN SICKLES
Teresa, it's late. You know I have to leave early in the morning.

TERESA SICKLES
Just one dance?

DAN SICKLES

No, darling.

TERESA SICKLES

I'll travel with you to New York tomorrow, if you wish! I can pack everything when we get home.

Dan hesitates.

DAN SICKLES

You are obviously enjoying yourself. Stay here. Barton, can I presume on your kindness to take my wife home when she is ready?

BARTON KEY

Of course, Dan. Delighted.

The music starts again. Dan turns to go. Barton and Teresa begin to dance. Her face is a study. She hardly knows if she is happy or distraught. There is a glitter in her eyes. Dan makes his way through the crowd and out.

CUT TO:

INT: BARTON KEY'S CARRIAGE - NIGHT

Barton and Teresa sit side by side inside the carriage. They laugh, as he produces a bottle of champagne. Barton carefully pours two glasses.

TERESA SICKLES

I've had so much already. . .I'm tipsy.

He raises his glass.

BARTON KEY

To the best dancer in Washington-- tipsy or not.

She drinks, takes a deep breath and starts to cry silently.

He is alarmed. He takes her glass, and holds her hand.

She tries to regain her composure.

TERESA SICKLES

Barton? Why does my husband go to whores?

Barton is now thoroughly alarmed. She laughs at the expression on his face, but it is a champagne laugh that is riding just above an emotional storm.

BARTON KEY

Teresa--why do you say that?

TERESA SICKLES

Because I know. Everyone laughs at me.

Barton puts his arm around Teresa's shoulders and draws her near. She weeps openly.

BARTON KEY

No one laughs at you, Teresa. You are much too beautiful for that.

TERESA SICKLES

You don't know! When I was carrying Laura, he took a whore named Fanny White to England with him--and he presented her to the Queen!

BARTON KEY

(looking at her as if
he has not
understood)

He what?

TERESA SICKLES

You don't believe me?

BARTON KEY

I . . .

TERESA SICKLES

My husband does not love me.

Key draws a deep breath.

BARTON KEY

Would you let me?

TERESA SICKLES

Let you what?

BARTON KEY

Love you.

Teresa sits up, shocked, suddenly sobered.

TERESA SICKLES

Mr. Key, forgive me. I said too much.

The carriage stops at her house.

Teresa jumps out and runs to the door.

CUT TO:

INT: DAN AND TERESA'S FRONT HALLWAY - NIGHT

Teresa enters the front door. She puts down her evening bag.

TERESA SICKLES

Dan? Dan? Are you here?

Bridget comes out, helps her with her coat.

BRIDGET

Oh, no, Mrs. Sickles. Mr. Sickles said to tell you he decided to leave already for New York. He's gone.

TERESA SICKLES

Oh.

(She pauses--a pause filled with all the possibilities of Dan's decision)

Thank you, Bridget.

She slowly climbs the stairs.

CUT TO:

INT: MID-TOWN HOTEL IN NEW YORK - DAY

Adams, the clerk smiling behind his desk.

ADAMS

Good morning, Congressman. Welcome to New York.

CUT TO:

A female hand signing "Mrs. Congressman Daniel E. Sickles". The camera pulls back to reveal the beautiful redhead with whom Dan was dancing at the President's inaugural. She smiles at Adams, the bewhiskered desk clerk.

ADAMS

Thank you, "Mrs. Sickles". I hope you and Mr. Sickles enjoy your stay.

DAN SICKLES

Of course we will, Adams.

He shakes Adams' hand, passing a folded bill.

CUT TO:

EXT: THE SICKLES' FRONT DOOR - DAY

Barton Key, dressed in a beautiful riding outfit, gallops up to the door on his gray horse. He dismounts, rings the bell. Bridget answers.

BARTON KEY

Good morning. I was wondering if Mr. Sickles was home?

BRIDGET

Oh, no, sir. He went off to New York on business yesterday.

BARTON KEY

Then perhaps I could have a word with Mrs. Sickles?

BRIDGET

I'm afraid you just missed her. She took Laura in the carriage to visit her mother for a few days.

CUT TO:

EXT: A BUSY ROAD OUTSIDE WASHINGTON - DAY

We see several carriages trotting down the road, going away from Washington, and others coming toward town. We focus on the Sickles' carriage, and Thompson, the driver. Teresa is visible through the window.

CUT TO:

INT: THE CARRIAGE - CONTINUING SCENE

Laura is asleep on the seat beside Teresa. She hears a tapping sound, and looks out of the window to see Barton Key, galloping along side, tapping at the glass. She smiles, and raps for the driver's attention.

CUT TO:

EXT: THE CARRIAGE - CONTINUING SCENE

The carriage stops. As Barton Key dismounts on the far side of the carriage, we see, 300 yards away, a train puffing up the track, coming from the opposite direction.

CUT TO:

INT: THE TRAIN - CONTINUING SCENE

Inside the approaching train is Dan Sickles, his head bent over some papers. He goes past the carriage without looking up.

CUT TO:

EXT: THE DRIVER'S BOX ON TERESA'S CARRIAGE - CONTINUING SCENE

Thompson, the Sickles' driver is letting Laura pretend to drive the horses. She is laughing and having a high old time. We pull back to see Barton's horse tied to the carriage, trotting behind.

CUT TO:

INT: TERESA'S CARRIAGE - CONTINUING SCENE

Barton and Teresa, sitting side by side, are in the middle of an intense exchange.

TERESA SICKLES

No, No, I'm the one at fault. I've been encouraging you. It was wrong. It is absolutely wrong. Dan Sickles is the only man in the world for me.

BARTON KEY

Do you really believe that?

She hesitates a moment too long.

TERESA SICKLES

I do. I have been in love with him since I was two years old.

Barton looks at her with incredulity.

BARTON KEY

How old was he?

TERESA SICKLES

He was a law student. He boarded with my family. I have never loved any man but Dan.

BARTON KEY

You were a child. I wouldn't call it love.

TERESA SICKLES

It certainly was! I married him when
I was fifteen!

BARTON KEY

You may have been too young to know
your heart.

She pauses.

TERESA SICKLES

I didn't think so. . .then.

BARTON KEY

And what do you think now?

Teresa looks out the window, not daring to meet Barton's eyes.

TERESA SICKLES

I have never told a soul. . .

BARTON KEY

(feeling his way)

But you are going to tell me?

The gentleness of his tone convinces her. She makes a
decision.

TERESA SICKLES

Dan seduced me. We married after I
conceived Laura.

At the look on his face, she adds:

TERESA SICKLES

(continuing)

Are you shocked?

BARTON KEY

No. Angels are above the rules.
Teresa, you are my angel.

He leans down to kiss her. She holds him off.

TERESA SICKLES

I meant what I said. I am in love
with Dan.

CUT TO:

EXT: THE CARRIAGE - CONTINUING SCENE

In a wide shot we see that the carriage abruptly stops. Barton gets out, unties his horse and rides toward Washington. Teresa's carriage continues on its journey.

CUT TO:

INT: THE SICKLES' HOUSE - DAY

Dan is entering the front door with his valise. Bridget comes in.

BRIDGET
Welcome home, sir.

DAN SICKLES
Is Mrs. Sickles upstairs, Bridget?

BRIDGET
No, sir. She's gone with Laura to visit her mother. For the weekend.

Dan considers. A light comes into his eye.

DAN SICKLES
In that case, Bridget, why don't you take a little holiday and go to see your sister?

BRIDGET
Oh, thank you sir!

CUT TO:

EXT: THE SICKLES' HOUSE - NIGHT

Fanny White, wearing a shawl over her head, comes up to the door, rings the bell. Dan, smiling, opens the door.

CUT TO:

INT: DAN AND TERESA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUING SCENE

Dan and Fanny are having a fine time of it. It is a romp. He is puffing and growling and panting, she is squealing with pleasure as they careen back and forth across the bed. They are well-matched.

No shortage of carnal gusto.

CUT TO:

INT: THE BATHROOM IN THE SICKLES' HOUSE - CONTINUING SCENE

Dan is stretched out in a steaming tub. Fanny is washing him with a big sponge. He is smoking a cigar. She lovingly soaps his hair, massaging his head.

FANNY WHITE

Am I going to spend the night?

DAN SICKLES

Spend the night? Have you lost your wits? You can't spend the night here!

FANNY WHITE

Why not?

DAN SICKLES

Because I say so.

FANNY WHITE

But it's so late! I'm afraid to go out alone in the street at night.

DAN SICKLES

You can borrow my dog.

FANNY WHITE

You don't have a dog.

DAN SICKLES

In that case, you'll have to walk home alone.

Fanny angrily dumps a bucket of hot water over his head and flounces out of the bathroom.

CUT TO:

INT: DAN AND TERESA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUING SCENE

Fanny is throwing things into her bag with vigor. She puts on her coat, then sees her discarded red silk bloomers lying on the floor. She picks them up. She deliberates.

CUT TO:

INT: THE BATHROOM - CONTINUING SCENE

Dan is contentedly soaking in the tub. We hear a door bang. He smiles and flicks an ash to the floor.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT: DAN AND TERESA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Teresa is un-packing a valise. She is sorting through her drawers, putting her things away.

DAN SICKLES

How could you take Laura away without even telling me? I don't like it, Teresa.

TERESA SICKLES

Laura scarcely knows you are her father.

DAN SICKLES

(patiently, but not
at all patiently)

I wish there were two of me, but there is only one, and from time to time, I have to oversee my law practice.

Teresa has taken out a few silk chemises and opens her underwear drawer to put them away.

In shocked silence she sees the large red silk bloomers tucked into her underwear drawer. She holds them up, like a captured battleflag.

DAN SICKLES

(continuing)

What the Devil is that?

TERESA SICKLES

(voice rising)

Did you bring your whore to our bedroom? Did you? Do I really mean that little?

Teresa rips the bloomers.

DAN SICKLES

I never saw those before in my life!

TERESA SICKLES

You hate me! I think I am going to be sick.

Dan tries to take her into his arms, but she beats on him, trying to scratch his face. He grasps her wrists.

DAN SICKLES

Teresa, I don't hate you. I love you very much. These must belong to Bridget. She doubtless put them in your things by accident.

TERESA SICKLES

Dan, you had a woman in here!

DAN SICKLES

(shouts--a full
husband's shout)

I would never bring another woman into this house! I love you too much to do such a thing!

TERESA SICKLES

(quietly)

You swear?

DAN SICKLES

(calmly. Profoundly)

I vow.

He puts his arms around her. She allows him to do so, but a glimpse of her face reveals that she is not so easily convinced.

CUT TO:

INT: HALLWAY OF DAN AND TERESA'S HOUSE - DAY

Dan, descending the staircase, signals to Bridget to come nearer. He takes out a bill.

DAN SICKLES

Bridget, you left a pair of red bloomers in Teresa's drawer.

BRIDGET

Sir! I would never wear such a thing!

He puts the bill in her hand, and closes her fingers.

DAN SICKLES

Actually, you do wear red bloomers, Bridget.

She takes it. Puts it into her bosom.

BRIDGET

Yes, I guess I forgot.

She giggles.

CUT TO:

EXT: COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

We see a train going in the direction from Washington to New York.

CUT TO:

INT: TRAIN - DAY

Fanny is dressed in a flowing lavender dress. Dan sits next to her.

DAN SICKLES

Why the deuce did you do it, Fanny?
I almost lost my head!

Fanny caterwauls with laughter.

FANNY WHITE

How did you get out of it?

DAN SICKLES

I lied, of course.

FANNY WHITE

Of course.

DAN SICKLES

Why did you leave those red drawers?

FANNY WHITE

Maybe I wanted a little piece of me
to stay overnight in your big old
house.

She laughs again.

DAN SICKLES

Don't ever pull a trick like that
again.

She chooses to change the subject.

FANNY WHITE

Do you ever lie to me?

He looks at her, as if perplexed.

DAN SICKLES
 Certainly not. Why would I need to?

CUT TO:

INT: SENATOR AND MRS. CLAY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Virginia Clay, a middle-aged belle with rather frizzy bangs and protruding eyes, is presiding at a sumptuous dinner table. Teresa is seated between William Beekman and Barton Key. Barton is having his ear bent by a matronly doyen on his other side. Beekman is trying to make polite conversation with Mrs. Clay. They are both bored. Teresa sits quietly eating ice cream.

WILLIAM BEEKMAN
 The property question in Kansas, Mrs. Clay, must be resolved in favor of the South.

CUT TO:

UNDERNEATH THE TABLE

We see that Barton Key's foot is searching for Teresa's, not knowing that her legs are tucked deep under her chair, while William Beekman's legs are positioned slightly in front of Teresa. Barton's foot bumps against William's, and taps it lovingly, believing it to be Teresa's. William, thinking that it is Teresa touching him, quickly turns, encouraged, to Teresa.

WILLIAM BEEKMAN
 Yes?
 (to Mrs. Clay)
 Excuse me.
 (back to Teresa)
 Yes?

TERESA SICKLES
 (confused)
 What?

WILLIAM BEEKMAN
 Oh, I'm sorry. I was just explaining the property question in Kansas to Mrs. Clay.

TERESA SICKLES
 (bored)
 I see.

WILLIAM BEEKMAN
 How do you feel about it, Teresa?

TERESA SICKLES

About what?

WILLIAM BEEKMAN

Kansas? I'm sorry. I didn't mean to bore you with politics.

CUT TO:

UNDERNEATH THE TABLE

Key is caressing Beekman's ankle with his foot. Thus encouraged, Beekman leans in to Teresa, raises an eyebrow.

WILLIAM BEEKMAN

What I really wanted to say is, since you are alone, perhaps you would give me a lift in your carriage on your way home?

William, believing he is reciprocating Teresa's caress, moves his own foot to caress Barton Key's ankle. Key brightens, turns to Teresa, and hears Beekman asking for a lift home. Barton leans tenderly in toward Teresa. She is thoroughly confused. She glances at Barton, then at William.

BARTON KEY

Mrs. Sickles, I don't have my coachman tonight--his wife is ill. Would it be an imposition to ask you to drop me off after dinner?

Barton seductively rubs Beekman's ankle. Beekman, believing it to be a signal from Teresa, resolutely replies:

WILLIAM BEEKMAN

It would. We are planning to stop at Willard's for a nightcap. . .

BARTON KEY

Fine with me. The night is young.

Teresa is not sure what is happening, but is enjoying the attention from Barton, who has moved closer, and is concentrating his considerable heat toward her.

TERESA SICKLES

I said nothing about Willard's, Mr. Beekman! We can go around by the reservoir, and drop you first. It will be no trouble at all for me to take Mr. Key the rest of the way.

Now William Beekman is thoroughly confused.

CUT TO:

EXT: WASHINGTON STREET - NIGHT

The carriage stops in front of William Beekman's house. Thompson opens the carriage door, and Beekman gets out. The carriage moves away, and William stands in the middle of the street looking after it. He watches until the carriage has gone a distance down the street, then starts to jog after it.

CUT TO:

EXT: WASHINGTON STREET - NIGHT

Out of breath, Beekman is watching from the shadows. The carriage stops in front of the house Barton shares with his sister.

CUT TO:

INT: INSIDE THE CARRIAGE - CONTINUING SCENE

Barton starts to get out, then hesitates.

BARTON KEY

You are driving me mad.

Teresa is breathing heavily. Barton leans in. His lips barely brush hers, and she turns away.

TERESA SICKLES

No. Please.

BARTON KEY

Let me kiss you, Teresa.

He takes her hand.

BARTON KEY

(continuing)

Let me kiss you, just one time. And then if you so decide, I will never bother you again.

She gives her consent by saying:

TERESA SICKLES

I'm afraid.

Barton kisses her, gently at first, then passionately.

CUT TO:

EXT: THE DARK STREET - CONTINUING SCENE

William Beekman is crouching behind a bush across the street. As he watches, the carriage turns and continues back the way it came. Barton Key and Teresa still inside. Beekman waits for a moment, then walks after them with a quick gait.

CUT TO:

EXT: FRONT OF THE SICKLES' HOUSE - NIGHT

The carriage stops, Barton and Teresa get out.

TERESA SICKLES

Mr. Key will be stopping at our house
for a nightcap, Thompson.

THOMPSON

Will you be needing me to bring Mr.
Key, home, Madame?

BARTON KEY

No, thank you, Thompson. I prefer to
take the night air.

TERESA SICKLES

Tell Bridget she may retire for the
evening.

Thompson drives toward the carriage house. Teresa and Barton go in.

CUT TO:

EXT: LAFAYETTE PARK - NIGHT -CONTINUING SCENE

Beekman is standing across the park looking in the parlor window of the Sickles' house. He sees Teresa draw the drapes, Key standing behind her.

CUT TO:

INT: DAN AND TERESA'S HALLWAY - NIGHT - CONTINUING SCENE

Bridget comes up to Thompson standing in the hallway outside the closed door.

BRIDGET

(whispering)
Who is it in there?

THOMPSON

(whispering)
A man!

The lock clicks. Bridget and Thompson jump.

CUT TO:

EXT: LAFAYETTE PARK - CONTINUING SCENE

Beekman has moved across the street from the park, and crouches directly under Teresa's window, trying to stay in the shadow of the front stoop. He hears Teresa's moans. The moans grow in volume.

CUT TO:

INT: THE SICKLES' HALLWAY - NIGHT - CONTINUING SCENE

The sounds of Teresa's moans are heard also by Bridget and Thompson. Their ears are close to the door. Their eyes reflect their curiosity at the sound of furniture being bumped around. Thompson looks lasciviously at Bridget and puts his hand on her ample rear end. She slaps his hand away.

BRIDGET

Not yet! I want to hear more!

We hear moans of intriguing intensity from Teresa, then Barton emits an impressive groan of pleasure. Silence.

THOMPSON

I think that will be all.

Thompson leads Bridget to the pantry.

CUT TO:

INT: THE SICKLES' DRAWING ROOM - CONTINUING SCENE

Barton and Teresa lie on the couch. Her face shows a satisfied woman. She is staring at Barton, whose eyes are closed. He opens his eyes. Startled by Teresa's look.

BARTON KEY

What? What did I do?

TERESA SICKLES

I don't know. But I have never had anything like this.

CUT TO:

INT: WILLARD'S HOTEL - NIGHT

William Beekman and Marshall Bacon are standing at the bar. Beekman is distraught. His clothes are disheveled, as if he has been running, perhaps fallen in the mud.

MARSHALL BACON

You can't go around saying such things!

WILLIAM BEEKMAN

They don't know how blatant they are. There is no doubt in my mind.

MARSHALL BACON

You are going to get in over your head.

WILLIAM BEEKMAN

Marshall, I heard them.

CUT TO:

INT: "THE HOLE IN THE WALL" - DAY

Sam Butterworth is talking to George Woolridge, a close friend of Sickles. Woolridge, crippled from an accident, walks on crutches.

SAM BUTTERWORTH

Marshall Bacon told me. William Beekman insists it's true.

GEORGE WOOLRIDGE

(dumfounded)

Barton Key and. . .

He pauses for effect.

SAM BUTTERWORTH

Mrs. Daniel E. Sickles.

George looks at him in disbelief.

GEORGE WOOLRIDGE

No, No, Sam. Don't jest about such matters.

George rubs his chin whiskers.

SAM BUTTERWORTH

It may be just a rumor. I hope it is just a rumor. For Dan's sake you must keep this in the strictest confidence, George.

GEORGE WOOLRIDGE

Of course I will.

CUT TO:

INT: THE HOUSE CHAMBER - DAY

Dan Sickles is half asleep in his chair. We hear the monotonous voice of the speaker.

George Woolridge stows his crutches under the empty seat next to Dan. He slips into the seat, and leans into his ear. Dan draws back.

GEORGE WOOLRIDGE

Dan, I am sure it is vicious gossip,
but I decided it was my duty to let
you judge how to handle the matter.

The rest we can't hear. Woolridge is whispering in too low a voice.

Dan is chewing on an unlit cigar.

CUT TO:

INT: THE HOLE IN THE WALL - CONTINUING SCENE

William Beekman is sitting at a table drinking with two friends. Dan strides up to him, George Woolridge limping behind.

DAN SICKLES

I'd like a word with you, Beekman. In
the back room.

Without waiting for his response, Dan exits toward the back room.

CUT TO:

INT: A PRIVATE ROOM IN THE REAR OF "THE HOLE IN THE WALL" - CONTINUING SCENE

Dan Sickles faces the door as William Beekman nervously enters with George Woolridge.

Dan eyes him. Beekman is beginning to be alarmed.

DAN SICKLES

Have you been spreading slander about
my wife and Barton Key?

WILLIAM BEEKMAN

(he finds his voice)
Mr. Sickles, that is absolutely false!

GEORGE WOOLRIDGE

Marshall Bacon insists you said that
Mr. Key and Mrs. Sickles . . .

WILLIAM BEEKMAN

No, no, no. . .Gentlemen, I can't
believe this! Yes, I did make some
kind of joke to Marshall Bacon about
Barton Key. About Barton Key and
women in general--some trifling joke--
but I would never, no never, on my
word of honor utter a derogatory word
about Mrs. Sickles.

Dan's eyes blaze.

DAN SICKLES

If there is more to it than that, I
will beat you half to death.

Dan picks up a walking stick and strikes it so hard on the
edge of the desk that it breaks.

WILLIAM BEEKMAN

No--I swear it on my dead mother's
honor.

DAN SICKLES

Let's hope she had some.

Beekman takes umbrage. He angrily points his finger at Dan.

WILLIAM BEEKMAN

Sickles. . .

Dan takes a step, holding the broken stick. Beekman backs
toward the door, and makes his exit.

Dan throws the broken cane into the fireplace, and hot embers
fly out of the hearth.

CUT TO:

INT: BARTON KEY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A sound of a doorbell, followed by loud knocking. Barton Key,
putting on his robe, comes down the stairs and opens his door
to Dan Sickles.

BARTON KEY

Dan! What brings you out at this
late hour? Is something the matter?

DAN SICKLES
Yes, something is the matter.

Barton ushers Dan into the house.

CUT TO:

INT: KEY'S STUDY - NIGHT

Barton paces the room, distraught.

BARTON KEY
I have been protective to Mrs. Sickles during your absences. As you know! As you requested! It is ridiculous to suppose that I have anything but honorable intentions. You must believe me, Dan!

DAN SICKLES
There has been one hell of a lot of talk.

BARTON KEY
Whoever is putting together this slander had better be ready to meet me at the point of a pistol. Believe me, sir, he will regret it. I am a good shot. I don't miss.

Pause. Sickles absorbs the implication of the last remark.

DAN SICKLES
Then I expect you will speak to the authors of this vile business. Let's settle this. Once and for all.

BARTON KEY
I'm going to do just that, Dan.

CUT TO:

INT: DAN AND TERESA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Teresa is tucked under the covers. Dan sits beside her and takes her hand.

DAN SICKLES
Come here, kitten.

She moves a little closer to Dan. Hesitantly.

DAN SICKLES
 (continuing)
 I know it is hard on you when I am
 away.

She sits silently. She looks at Dan, but doesn't reply.

DAN SICKLES
 (continuing)
 I know you love parties, as any young
 woman should. But people can be
 wicked. People gossip. Someone has
 even gossiped that your friendship
 with Barton Key amounts to more than
 a friendship.

TERESA SICKLES
 Do you believe that?

DAN SICKLES
 Of course not. I don't doubt your
 virtue. I would never doubt your
 virtue.

Pause.

DAN SICKLES
 (continuing)
 But I think you had better stop
 seeing Barton unless I am there.

TERESA SICKLES
 Yes, Dan.

DAN SICKLES
 In this town, this kind of slander
 can destroy a man's career.

TERESA SICKLES
 Yes, Dan.

He kisses her, pats her on the hand.

DAN SICKLES
 You're a good wife.

CUT TO:

INT: THE BAR AT WILLARD'S - DAY

Barton Key hands two letters to Dan.

BARTON KEY

Letters of apology. From William Beekman and Marshall Bacon. I think this disposes of the matter, Dan.

Dan leafs through the pages, satisfied.

DAN SICKLES

Why did they ever get into such a stupid situation?

BARTON KEY

Fools. I don't think it has anything to do with Teresa. I think it was some kind of political vendetta.

Dan nods and puts the letters back into his breast pocket.

DAN SICKLES

That's bound to be the answer. I'm glad, Key, to have this odious little mess cleared up.

BARTON KEY

I share your sentiments, Dan.

EXT: A SHABBY STREET IN WASHINGTON - DAY

CUT TO:

Barton Key rides up to a house, gets off his horse, and rings the bell. He glances at the house next door and sees a middle-aged woman, Nancy Brown, peeking suspiciously through her curtains.

The door opens, and a black man comes out on the porch.

BARTON KEY

Mr. Gray?

JOHN GRAY

Who wants to know?

BARTON KEY

Mr. Gray, I am Barton Key, and I have been entrusted to rent a house for a colleague. I was told your place, number 383, is for rent.

JOHN GRAY

Five dollars a month. Wood included. Pay in advance.

BARTON KEY
May I take a look?

CUT TO:

EXT: THE WHITE HOUSE LAWN - DAY

There is a garden party at the White House. The Marine Band plays. Dan stands conversing with President Buchanan and a small group of men. Teresa and Octavia Ridgeley are talking with two other women.

Barton Key saunters by. He sees Dan across the way. Then passing the ladies, he tips his hat and takes Teresa's hand with a slight bow.

BARTON KEY
Lovely day.

He smiles and walks away. Teresa glances at her palm. There is a good sized key with a white address tag attached to it.

CUT TO:

EXT: THE HOUSE AT 383 - NIGHT

We see a candle lit behind the louvered slats of the second story window, and Barton Key places a white string over the shutter, clearly visible from the street.

Teresa Sickles, wearing a plaid dress and a black velvet shawl with tassels, walks hesitantly up the street. She stops and looks at the window with the string.

CUT TO:

INT: THE HOUSE AT 383 - NIGHT - CONTINUING SCENE

The door opens from the outside and Teresa enters. The house is sparsely furnished, the floors are bare. Downstairs is an old table and chairs.

TERESA SICKLES
Barton? Where are you? Are you there?

BARTON KEY
Upstairs.

We follow Teresa. She opens the bedroom door. There is a fire in the fireplace. A bottle of champagne is on ice in a bucket. On the bed is Barton Key, naked. Teresa looks at him, and drops her velvet shawl to the floor.

CUT TO:

EXT: STREET IN FRONT OF 383 - NIGHT - CONTINUING SCENE

Nancy Brown has come out onto her front porch, and peers across the street. She listens in disbelief as she hears low animal cries that build to a carnal avalanche. The door of John Gray's house opens and he steps out onto his porch. Windows up and down the street open. Faces, black and white, peer out toward the house as the sounds of lovemaking resonate through the dark Washington night.

CUT TO:

EXT: MID-TOWN HOTEL - NIGHT

It is the same hotel that has been the site of Dan's previous rendezvous.

CUT TO:

INT: MID-TOWN HOTEL, NEW YORK - NIGHT

Dan and Fanny White are eating a meal in the dining room. Fanny looks pleased with herself.

FANNY WHITE

I heard a naughty bit of gossip.

DAN SICKLES

What?

FANNY WHITE

It's juicy. Really naughty.

DAN SICKLES

(showing interest)

Save it for upstairs.

FANNY WHITE

You don't want to hear this upstairs.

DAN SICKLES

Why not?

FANNY WHITE

It's about your child bride.

DAN SICKLES

(laying down his fork)

What filth are you spouting now?

FANNY WHITE

I heard that your wife has convinced Barton Key to give up going to whorehouses. . .

Dan seizes her hand. He speaks through clenched teeth.

DAN SICKLES

If my wife's name, uttered in any form, ever reaches your filthy tongue again, you will have no tongue. I will rip it out by the roots.

As he clenches her hand, Fanny is in real pain, but trying not to make a scene.

FANNY WHITE

Stop it, Dan!

By the light in her eye, we can see how the pain increases.

FANNY WHITE

(continuing)

Quit right now, or I will scream!

He lets go of her hand.

FANNY WHITE

(continuing)

I hope she does have a lover. She deserves one.

Dan slaps her. All eyes in the restaurant are on them now. Fanny White gets up and straightens her hat. She turns and speaks in a loud clear voice.

FANNY WHITE

(continuing)

You are not the only man who butters my bread. And you are certainly not the best.

Majestically she walks out. Dan looks as though he could be close to a stroke. Slowly, he becomes aware of other diners staring at him. He makes a motion as if Fanny is crazy, shrugs, and continues to eat his dinner. What control!

CUT TO:

EXT: LAFAYETTE PARK - DAY

Barton Key is strolling along the street across from the Sickles' house. The carriage is parked in front, and Thompson lounges on the seat. Barton stops for a moment to watch a group of ragged boys playing marbles, then meanders across the park.

Barton Key sits on a park bench, reading a newspaper. A carriage pulls up and stops not far from the bench.

We see William Beekman keeping watch from the shadows of the carriage.

CUT TO:

INT: DAN AND TERESA'S HOUSE - DAY

Dan and Teresa are having breakfast. The mood is strained. Teresa hands Dan the guest list for the party they are having the following week.

TERESA SICKLES

Can the President fit next Thursday
into his schedule?

DAN SICKLES

I spoke to him. He will come.

Dan looks at the party list.

DAN SICKLES

(continuing)

You have Barton Key on the list.

TERESA SICKLES

You said to avoid him only if you
weren't there.

Teresa looks hurt.

TERESA SICKLES

(continuing)

You really do pay attention to the
gossip, don't you? All right, then.
I will disinvite him if you wish.

Dan considers. He looks at Teresa for a long moment.

DAN SICKLES

On balance, I think it's better if he
doesn't come.

CUT TO:

EXT: LAFAYETTE PARK - CONTINUING SCENE

From Barton Key's POV we see the door of the Sickles' house open. Dan puts on his hat, and pecks Teresa on the cheek. He gets into the carriage, and Thompson pulls away. Teresa closes the door. A moment later, we see her in the upstairs window looking across to the park. Barton Key stands up and looks through a gold opera glass at the window. Removing a white handkerchief from his pocket, he waves it at Teresa. She waves back with a small white handkerchief.

Barton quickly starts to walk toward 15th street, not noticing a carriage following him, Beekman inside.

CUT TO:

EXT: THE STREET IN FRONT OF 383 - DAY

Teresa, dressed in a black and white plaid dress and the black velvet cloak, stops and looks up at the bedroom window. On the shutter is the white string. Key is there. She lets herself in.

Across the street, several children are playing in the yard of Nancy Brown. They stop what they are doing and sneak across the street to crouch in the bushes under the window.

A carriage pulls up, and William Beekman looks up at the window.

Soon, we hear the familiar groans coming across the late afternoon air. One of the boys turns, sees Beekman. Beekman makes a shhh! sound, motions for the boy to come to him.

CUT TO:

INT: DAN AND TERESA'S DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The dinner party for President Buchanan is in full swing. The Senator Clays, Henry Wikoff, Octavia Ridgeley, George Woolridge, the President and Harriet Lane, are sitting around the table finishing their dessert.

CUT TO:

EXT: DAN AND TERESA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A scruffy urchin, about ten years old, whom we have seen in Nancy Brown's yard, hesitantly comes to the door and rings the bell. Bridget opens the door. He hands her an envelope, and runs down the steps into the night.

CUT TO:

INT: DAN AND TERESA'S DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Bridget comes in, waits beside Dan's chair for an opening in the conversation, and hands him the envelope.

BRIDGET

(whispering)

This just came. A boy brought it.

Dan looks at it, starts to put it in his pocket, then changes his mind and opens it.

We see on his face the contents of an extremely disturbing letter. At this moment, President Buchanan stands up while Teresa clinks her silver spoon on her glass.

PRESIDENT BUCHANAN
(giving the toast)
Dan, Teresa--In the midst of so much
contentious feeling in these
uncertain times, you have succeeded
once again in giving us all a
splendid evening.

He lifts his glass, drinks a toast to his hosts. As he continues his speech, we see Dan struggle to keep his feelings confined. He lifts his glass, as do the other diners.

PRESIDENT BUCHANAN
(continuing)
You can have no idea, Teresa, how
much I am in your debt. To feel free
of the cares of state for a few hours
may be the finest sense of pleasure
a President can feel.

Dan stares, unseeing, his mind racing.

PRESIDENT BUCHANAN
(continuing)
Alas, the witching hour approaches,
and I must take up the honorable
burden again. You cannot imagine how
much this dinner in the home of my
close friends has meant to me. And
now, I know you will understand and
excuse me.

He leaves the table. Harriet Lane joins him, and the other diners all get up and follow.

The President kisses Teresa on the cheek, and shakes hands with Dan, who is now standing stiffly beside the door.

PRESIDENT BUCHANAN
(continuing)
Dan, stop by my office in the
morning. I need your advice about
Cuba.

TERESA SICKLES
Buy it, sir.

The President laughs, and they walk him to the door. Dan and Teresa turn back to the drawing room, and the other guests.

HENRY WIKOFF

Why don't we all go over to Willard's
for tonight's hop?

OCTAVIA RIDGELEY

That sounds like fun!

MRS. CLAY

I'm up for a hop.

SENATOR CLAY

(taking his wife by
the arm)

No, Henry. We shall see you later.

Mrs. Clay sighs in resignation. The Clays leave.

OCTAVIA RIDGELEY

I'm game. Teresa?

TERESA SICKLES

(looking hopefully at
Dan)

Only if Dan wants to.

Dan has been in a strange state, almost trance-like. He
rouses slightly.

DAN SICKLES

Tell Thompson to take you and then
come back for me. George, you stay.
I need to speak to you about my
meeting with the President.

Teresa, Henry, Octavia and the others leave the room.

Dan goes into the drawing room, pulls out the letter. George
follows.

GEORGE WOOLRIDGE

That Cuba situation is not as simple
as it seems. . .

DAN SICKLES

Listen!

He proceeds to read.

DAN SICKLES

(continuing)

"Dear Sir: There is a fellow, name
of Phillip Barton Key, who rents a
house of a Negro man name of John A.
(more)

DAN SICKLES (cont'd)

Gray situated on 15th street between K and L streets. Mr. Key goes there for no other purpose than to meet with your wife, Mrs. Sickles. And sir I do assure you he has the use of your wife fully as much as you have. Maybe more. Most respectfully, your friend.

Woolridge reacts, not quite as astonished as he might have been.

GEORGE WOOLRIDGE

Is it signed?

DAN SICKLES

No.

GEORGE WOOLRIDGE

Do you believe it?

DAN SICKLES

I don't know. I really don't know.

Dan strides around the room, distraught.

GEORGE WOOLRIDGE

The letter does give an address. It should be easy enough to find out whether or not this is more nonsense.

CUT TO:

EXT: THE HOUSE OF JOHN GRAY - NIGHT

The carriage pulls up to the house. A warm light shines from the window.

DAN SICKLES (V.O.)

Go in, George. I'll wait here.

GEORGE WOOLRIDGE

I understand.

George Woolridge gets out of the carriage with difficulty, and, on his crutches, makes his way to the door. He knocks and John Gray answers.

GEORGE WOOLRIDGE

(continuing)

Mr. Gray?

JOHN GRAY

Yes.

GEORGE WOOLRIDGE

I would like to inquire who has rented your house at 383?

JOHN GRAY

Why do you want to know?

GEORGE WOOLRIDGE

I. . . have an important matter to discuss with a gentleman who is said to inhabit your house.

JOHN GRAY

Well, a fellow named Philip Barton Key said he needed a lodging for a friend of his, but in fact, it is Mr. Key himself who inhabits the house from time to time.

GEORGE WOOLRIDGE

Does anyone visit him?

JOHN GRAY

I can't say. I don't watch the house.

A voice is heard from the house next door:

NANCY BROWN

I do! I do! I know what's going on!

CUT TO:

DAN WATCHING FROM THE CARRIAGE

CUT TO:

EXT: NANCY BROWN'S HOUSE - NIGHT - CONTINUING SCENE

Nancy Brown is leaning out her window. George Woolridge steps off John Gray's porch, and walks over to her window.

NANCY BROWN

There is a young woman that comes over. She's bold as brass. She must think we are blind and deaf! I have to hustle my little ones out of the yard so they don't hear all the awful noises coming from that house. . .

GEORGE WOOLRIDGE

Excuse me, Mrs. Brown, but do you know the name of the woman in question?

NANCY BROWN

I certainly do know her name. I was walking home from my job with my sister-in-law one day . . .

GEORGE WOOLRIDGE

Mrs. Brown, please! Who is the woman?

NANCY BROWN

I'm coming to that. And a nice shiny carriage passes, and I first recognized her cape--a fancy black velvet do with fringes all the way around. . .

GEORGE WOOLRIDGE

For pity's sake, Mrs. Brown!

NANCY BROWN

Then I saw her face. And I said to my sister-in-law, Agnes, I said, "That's her! That's the woman who makes all the awful noise. . .

George is tapping his crutches against the floor of the porch.

GEORGE WOOLRIDGE

Who is it!

NANCY BROWN

That's what I asked Agnes. "Who is that woman? And she says to me, "Why, Nancy, that's Mrs. Dan Sickles, the wife of the congressman who is the best friend of the President of the United States, Mr. Buchanan." And I says to Agnes . . .

George walks back toward the carriage. He overhears Nancy Brown, still talking:

NANCY BROWN

(continuing)

I says, "Will wonders ever cease?"

CUT TO:

INT: WILLARD'S HOTEL BALLROOM - NIGHT

A hop is in full swing. Teresa is dancing with a handsome man, as is Octavia. They pass each other on the dance floor, laughing.

CUT TO:

INT: SICKLES' HOUSE - NIGHT

Dan and George Woolridge open the door.

DAN SICKLES

Bridget!

Bridget appears from the hallway.

DAN SICKLES

(continuing)

Is my wife home?

BRIDGET

Not yet, sir.

DAN SICKLES

Thank you, Bridget.

Bridget goes back.

GEORGE WOOLRIDGE

Do you want me to stay, Dan?

DAN SICKLES

No. Go on home. I'm fine.

GEORGE WOOLRIDGE

You're sure?

DAN SICKLES

I'm sure. Thank you George. . .

George leaves.

CUT TO:

EXT: THE SICKLES' HOUSE - NIGHT

The Sickles' carriage pulls up, and Thompson assists Teresa and Octavia as they get out laughing.

CUT TO:

INT: THE SICKLES' HOUSE - NIGHT

Teresa and Octavia enter the study, still laughing. Dan sits by the fire, holding a glass of whisky in his hand. He does not look up as they enter.

TERESA SICKLES

Why didn't you come to Willard's? We waited more than two hours for you.

Dan keeps staring into the flames.

TERESA SICKLES

(continuing)

Are you all right?

She tentatively touches him on the shoulder. He leaps to his feet, and flings his drink across the room. Octavia screams. Dan grabs Teresa by the arm and pulls her out of the room. Teresa turns to Octavia.

TERESA SICKLES

(continuing)

Don't leave!

CUT TO:

INT: DAN AND TERESA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUING SCENE

Dan hurls Teresa onto the bed.

DAN SICKLES

You are a whore and a liar. I even know what you wore. Everyone on that block knows. They heard the sounds you made from the bedroom of that house! You screamed! The whole street heard you!

Teresa tries to get out the door. Dan blocks her way. He takes hold of her hand.

DAN SICKLES

(continuing)

Did you wear this ring when you were in bed with him? Did you?

Dan wrenches off her wedding ring, throws it against the closed window. The glass cracks, and the ring bounces back onto the floor. Teresa runs to pick it up, Dan beats her to it. She begins to scratch and pummel him with her fists. He grasps her wrists.

TERESA SICKLES

(screams)

You come to my bed stinking of other women, and you have the effrontery to. . .

She manages to pull away from his grasp. Quick as a cat, she scratches his face. Blood begins to seep from the cuts.

DAN SICKLES

What has happened to you? I don't know you anymore!

Teresa stands in front of Dan, forces him to look at her.

TERESA SICKLES

Well, I know you--and your whores. I was introduced once to an idiot in New York. He said, "Mrs. Dan Sickles? I thought you were blonde." He meant that yellow haired whore! You called her your wife! What does she do for you, Dan, that I couldn't have done?

DAN SICKLES

What in God's name did he do that you screamed? You never uttered a sound with me!

TERESA SICKLES

(screaming)

You never made me!

DAN SICKLES

Scream your way to the Devil. You are going to write a confession.

Dan goes to the desk and brings out a pen and paper.

DAN SICKLES

(continuing)

Your confession. Do you hear?

Teresa pulls back. Dan takes her by the arm. She becomes rigid.

DAN SICKLES

(continuing)

I want to know everything you did with that man. Everything. Write!

Teresa disengages her arm from Dan's grasp, and slowly, with dignity, goes to the desk and sits. Her eyes glitter.

TERESA SICKLES

I will put it all down. I want you to know. You will read it. You will read it all.

Her temper reveals new lines of decision on her mouth. What he asks for, he is most certainly going to get.

Dan goes to the door, opens it. Octavia virtually falls into the room. She has been listening with her ear against the door. Dan calls down the stairs.

DAN SICKLES

Bridget! Come in here. I need you to serve as witness.

(to Octavia)
And you as well.

Bridget runs in, and she and Octavia huddle on the sofa as Teresa writes and Dan paces around the room.

The only sound is the scratching of the pen. Then Teresa carefully blots the letter, rises, and hands it to Dan. He holds it out to Octavia, his hand quivering.

DAN SICKLES

(continuing)

Read it.

Octavia looks at the letter.

DAN SICKLES

(continuing)

Aloud.

Octavia turns hesitantly to Teresa. She nods.

OCTAVIA RIDGELEY

(reading)

"I have been in a house on Fifteenth street, with Mr. Key. How many times I don't know. Numberless times. There was a bed in the second story. I did what is usual for a wicked woman to do. . .

Dan bellows in pain. Octavia jumps. Dan reaches for a bottle of scotch whisky and starts slugging it. Each blow he receives from the letter occasions another slug of whisky.

OCTAVIA RIDGELEY

(continuing)

Must I continue?

DAN SICKLES

Go on.

OCTAVIA RIDGELEY

We went in the same bedroom. I undressed myself. Mr. Key undressed also.

Octavia, like the slave Eliza crossing from ice floe to ice floe, continues to read. Gingerly.

OCTAVIA RIDGELEY

(continuing)

Mr. Key has also kissed me a number of times in this house belonging to Mr. Sickles. We have had connection in this house, in the parlor, on the sofa. This is a true statement, written by myself, with my maid Bridget, and friend, Octavia Ridgeley present. Feb. 26, 1859, Teresa Bagioli.

Teresa is sitting at the desk, quietly staring into her lace handkerchief. Dan sits by the fireplace, looking as if someone has died. He can hold it in no longer. One sob comes out of him, and hearing that, Bridget begins to weep. Dan, however, collects himself.

DAN SICKLES

Octavia, sign this. Bridget, you also sign. You are the witnesses.

Bridget and Octavia take the pen in turn, look at him in fear, and sign the document. Teresa looks on, eyes burning.

TERESA SICKLES

Where is your document, Dan? Why don't you write your confession, Dan?

DAN SICKLES

(coldly)

You are my wife. Not my equal.

Teresa runs out of the room. Octavia and Bridget follow.

CUT TO:

INT: HALLWAY - NIGHT

Laura stands, frightened, in front of her door. She clutches her doll.

Teresa sees her, breaks down in tears and runs into the guest bedroom. Octavia follows her. Bridget goes to Laura, picks her up and takes her back into her bedroom. We hear sounds of objects being knocked over in Dan's bedroom. Sounds of glass breaking.

We follow Bridget and Laura into the child's bedroom. Bridget puts Laura back in bed.

LAURA

What is it, Bridget?

BRIDGET

Nothing, my sweet. Papa is practicing a speech for congress. He's going to give them Hell!

LAURA

Why is Mama crying?

BRIDGET

Oh, child, she was moved to tears by the speech.

CUT TO:

INT: OCTAVIA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Teresa cries, cradled in Octavia's arms.

CUT TO:

INT: DAN'S BEDROOM - CONTINUING SCENE

Dan is hammering Teresa's wedding ring with a poker. Broken glass is scattered across the table top, and his fist is bloody, but he ignores it. He is beating the ring into a battered disc, to the rhythm of a heavy drum inside his head.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

We see Dan sitting in the same chair, staring. Behind him, the sun is rising over the Washington skyline.

CUT TO:

INT: A BARBER SHOP IN WASHINGTON - DAY

Barton Key is in the chair, finishing a shave. The barber takes off the cloth.

Barton Key puts on his coat, a beautiful brown velvet coat which he wears with striped pants and matching vest. He removes a pair of gold opera glasses, adjusts his jacket, returns them to the pocket. He pays the barber, puts on his hat, and checks his handkerchief. He runs his fingers over his face.

BARTON KEY

Now that's smooth to the touch.
Ladies do not like to have their
tender skin chafed. I thank you,
Martin.

They laugh.

CUT TO:

INT: THE SICKLES' HALLWAY - DAY

Bridget is letting Butterworth and Woolridge into the house.

BRIDGET

Mr. Sickles is in the drawing room.

CUT TO:

INT: OCTAVIA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Teresa looks to have aged ten years. She sits in a chair, hair uncombed, still dressed in the clothes from the night before. Obviously, she has not been to bed. Breakfast sits on a tray beside her. Octavia has her ear pressed to the door, trying to catch the conversation going on below.

CUT TO:

INT: THE STUDY OF THE SICKLES' HOUSE - DAY

Dan is ragged from lack of sleep. A half empty bottle of whisky sits on the table.

Dan downs the glass. Pours himself another.

GEORGE WOOLRIDGE

You cannot keep going at this level.

SAM BUTTERWORTH

Dan, keep your wits. Don't let
something like this ruin your career.

DAN SICKLES

(despondently)

What is left to ruin? I am a
laughingstock.

GEORGE WOOLRIDGE

Now, Dan. That is not necessarily true. The trick is to make sure this damage goes no further.

DAN SICKLES

How much further can it go? I have to defend my honor. The only way is to invite Key to a duel.

SAM BUTTERWORTH

Well. . . if you believe that, Dan, then you must do it.

There is a pause long enough for Dan to recall how good a shot Barton claims to be.

DAN SICKLES

I wouldn't honor that Judas with a duel.

GEORGE WOOLRIDGE

Then what are you going to do?

DAN SICKLES

That is the question.

CUT TO:

EXT: LAFAYETTE PARK-DAY

Barton strolls down the street until he is across from the Sickles' house. He checks his pocket watch, takes out his opera glass and looks at the upstairs window.

CUT TO:

INT: OCTAVIA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Bridget is tidying up the room. Teresa sits in gloom. Bridget goes to the window and opens the shutters.

BRIDGET

Let me open this window and let in some light and fresh air, Ma'am.
You'll feel a lot better.

CUT TO:

EXT: LAFAYETTE PARK - DAY

From Barton Key's POV, we see the window open, and an indistinct figure framed there for a moment. Barton waves the white handkerchief.

He lifts the opera glass to his eyes, sees it is not Teresa, lowers the handkerchief.

CUT TO:

INT: OCTAVIA'S BEDROOM - DAY - CONTINUING SCENE

As she opens the window, Bridget sees Barton waving his handkerchief. She glances at Teresa. Quickly she walks away from the window and out of the room.

CUT TO:

INT: THE HALLWAY OUTSIDE THE PARLOR - DAY - CONTINUING SCENE

Bridget knocks on the door. She is nervous. From inside the room, Dan asks,

DAN SICKLES (VO)
What is it?

BRIDGET
May I have a word with you, sir?

Dan comes out of the parlor and closes the door behind him.

BRIDGET
(continuing)
He's here. In the park.

Dan takes the stairs two at a time and goes into his bedroom. He looks out the window and sees Key, handkerchief in hand, looking at his window through the opera glasses.

CUT TO:

EXT: LAFAYETTE PARK - DAY - CONTINUING SCENE

From Key's POV, through the opera glasses, we see Dan Sickles appear in the bedroom window. Key puts the opera glasses in his jacket pocket, turns and quickly walks down the street.

CUT TO:

INT: THE SICKLES' PARLOR - DAY

George Woolridge is looking through a stereoscope and Sam Butterworth is pacing the floor. Suddenly he stops by the window.

SAM BUTTERWORTH
There's Dan! Where is he going?

Through the window, we see Dan Sickles, marching across the park. Butterworth spots Key in the distance, runs out of the room.

SAM BUTTERWORTH
(continuing)
Oh, my God!

CUT TO:

EXT: THE CLUB HOUSE - DAY

Barton Key walks along the sidewalk toward the steps leading in to the Club House.

CUT TO:

EXT: FRONT OF SICKLES' HOUSE - DAY

Butterworth runs toward the two men. George Woolridge hobbles after them, as fast as he can on his crutches.

CUT TO:

EXT: THE CLUB HOUSE - DAY

Barton has his foot on the step, about to enter the club. Dan appears a few yards away, and pulls a derringer out of his pocket.

DAN SICKLES
Key, you have dishonored my bed! You
will die!

Gun in hand, Dan takes aim and fires. His shot is off. He nicks Barton's arm.

Barely able to comprehend what is happening, Barton looks at his bleeding arm, then reacts.

BARTON KEY
Dan! Wait!

Dan raises his arm to fire again. Key rushes forward, and strikes Dan's arm, causing the pistol to fall into the street. Key then grabs Dan. Sickles tries to pull away, but Barton holds him from behind with both arms around his waist. His injured arm is too weak, however, and Dan flings him off, reaches into another pocket and pulls out a second gun.

BARTON KEY
(continuing)
Don't kill me!

Facing Sickles, Key retreats backwards toward the clubhouse. In a panic, he pulls out his opera glasses and throws them at Dan. They bounce off Sickles' shoulder. At the same time, Dan, virtually in slow motion, fires his gun.

The bullet enters Key's groin. His pants gush blood. He staggers toward a tree and tries to shield himself, but collapses on the ground.

DAN SICKLES

You have dishonored my bed! You are going to die!

Key slides to the ground, holding his groin.

BARTON KEY

Don't shoot!

Key tries to raise himself up on his elbow. Succeeds in sitting up. Dan comes over, puts the gun against his head and pulls the trigger. The gun jams.

BARTON KEY

(continuing)

Someone help me! Help!

A group has collected. Some ten or twelve people stand looking on in horror, Butterworth and Woolridge among them. No one moves.

Dan recocks his weapon, puts it against Barton's chest, fires. Blows a gaping hole. Barton falls back to the ground. With each breath, blood bubbles forth from the wound. Dan puts the gun to Key's head pulls the trigger, and again the gun misfires. At this point, some of the men spring into action and grab Dan.

One of the men kneeling beside Key looks inquisitively up at Dan, as if to ask "why?"

DAN SICKLES

He violated my bed.

Dan jerks his arms free of restraints and steps back a few paces. Over and over he repeats:

DAN SICKLES

(continuing)

He has defiled my bed. He has dishonored my bed.

The men watch cautiously as Dan puts the gun into his pocket. Butterworth approaches, takes Dan by the arm and leads him away.

Dan, now calm and composed, although a little pale, goes off with Butterworth. Woolridge pushes toward Key. He sees a glint in the grass. He balances on his crutch, and picks up the opera glasses. He puts them in his pocket.

CUT TO:

EXT: LAFAYETTE PARK - DAY

Dan calmly walks in the park across from his house. Butterworth nervously keeps up with him.

SAM BUTTERWORTH

My God, Dan! You should, at least, have challenged him to a duel! Now you have thrown your career away!

DAN SICKLES

It doesn't matter. A cuckold cannot be elected President.

SAM BUTTERWORTH

You have to turn yourself in, Dan.

DAN SICKLES

Why? It was not murder. It was justifiable homicide.

SAM BUTTERWORTH

That is not the way others will see it.

Woolridge hobbles up.

GEORGE WOOLRIDGE

There you are! I've just come from the club. I found this.

Woolridge hands the opera glasses to Dan. Dan eyes him calmly.

DAN SICKLES

Is the scoundrel dead?

Woolridge nods.

DAN SICKLES

(continuing)

Good. One wretch less in the world.

CUT TO:

INT: THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE IN THE WHITE HOUSE - DAY

An aide knocks on the door and enters without waiting for an invitation.

AIDE

Dan Sickles has just killed Barton Key, sir!

The President jumps up.

PRESIDENT BUCHANAN

What?

AIDE

Shot him right in front of the Club House. Key was unarmed.

PRESIDENT BUCHANAN

Unarmed?

AIDE

Yes, sir.

PRESIDENT BUCHANAN

Key's dead?

AIDE

Yes, sir.

The President sits down in shock. He looks at the aide.

PRESIDENT BUCHANAN

This will be a hard one.

EXT: DAN'S HOUSE - DAY

Dan, accompanied by Butterworth, Woolridge, and two police officers wade through a crowd of people gathered in front of Dan's house.

CUT TO:

INT: DAN AND TERESA'S HOUSE - DAY

Bridget and Octavia stand with Laura. Dan walks up to his daughter and kisses her.

DAN SICKLES

My darling, you are a good girl, and you must be a good girl because Papa has to go away for a little while.

The women look wholly miserable. Dan starts up the stairs.

The policeman blocks the way.

POLICEMAN

Where are you going, Congressman?

DAN SICKLES

Do you mind if I pick up a change of clothing?

POLICEMAN

Your wife is up there, sir.

DAN SICKLES

I have no intention of harming my wife.

The policeman hesitates, then steps aside. Dan ascends the stairs.

CUT TO:

INT: OCTAVIA RIDGELEY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Teresa is lying on the floor. She has neither eaten, combed her hair nor slept.

She looks up with haunted eyes as Dan takes out the opera glasses and hands them to her.

TERESA SICKLES

NO! Nooooooooooooo. . .

The word becomes a scream.

DAN SICKLES

(icily)

At last, one hears you scream.

He turns and walks out of the room. Teresa's wails echo behind him.

CUT TO:

INT: THE JAILHOUSE - DAY

The jailhouse is a crumbling old rattrap, a three story brick building overcrowded with runaway slaves, derelicts, criminals, prostitutes. It has no sewage, water, bath, or ventilation. Prisoners are crowded twelve to each small room.

The jailer ushers Dan into a small dark isolated cell. Dan recoils from the reek of former occupants. A rusty bucket used as a latrine sits in the corner. There is a cot with a thin cotton mattress, no sheets, no blankets.

A rat runs from behind the bucket to disappear under the cot.

DAN SICKLES
Your best accommodation?

JACOB KING
(laughs)
This is what you fellows in Congress
budget us.

DAN SICKLES
We'll have to do something about
that, won't we?

CUT TO:

INT: TERESA'S HOUSE - DAY

Teresa's mother, Mrs. Bagioli, an attractive middle-aged woman with a worldly expression sits in the parlor with her daughter. Teresa, still distraught, is crouched on the bed.

MRS. BAGIOLI
If you get a divorce, where is the
man of any substance who will marry
you? You will never meet such a man.
Because no hostess will receive you.
Even if he spends the rest of his
life in jail, you are better off
remaining Mrs. Sickles. You pray that
he takes you back!

TERESA SICKLES
Take me back! After what he has done?

MRS. BAGIOLI
What has he done? He punished a man
who disgraced you!

TERESA SICKLES
Barton loved me, Mummie. Dan doesn't.

MRS. BAGIOLI
He doesn't? I'd say he killed a man
because of you. Threw everything
away for you! Do you believe a man
does that lightly? You have a lot to
learn about love, my child.

Teresa listens. It is quite a new consideration.

CUT TO:

INT: WILLARD'S HOTEL BAR - DAY

The bar is abuzz with talk of the murder. A group of four card-players sit around a table discussing the case.

FIRST MAN

Sickles did exactly what he had to do. I'm surprised he didn't kill the wife, too.

SECOND MAN

He had no right to judge Barton Key. I know of three married women Dan Sickles took to bed, and who knows how many whores?

THIRD MAN

Well, you can't count whores.

PRUSSIAN DIPLOMAT

I fail to comprehend why the congressman didn't deal with it as we do in Prussia--Challenge the malefactor to a duel! Or as is the practice in England--Sue the bastard. Even better, the French way--Laugh at it. Be civilized!

FIRST MAN

No, he did it the good old American Way--Kill the son-of-a-bitch.

CUT TO:

INT: DR. COOLIDGE'S OFFICES - NIGHT

Dr. Coolidge is performing the autopsy on Barton Key. A colleague, Dr. Robert K. Stone, stands by, and an assistant is recording the remarks of Dr. Coolidge.

DR. COOLIDGE

Bullet entered two inches below subject's groin, passed through thigh and exited between buttock and thigh.

DR. STONE

Sickles missed his target.

DR. COOLIDGE

Yes, he sure did. Key, the poor bastard, went out into the great beyond with his troublemaker intact.

CUT TO:

INT: THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE - DAY

President Buchanan is sharing a glass of port with Sam Butterworth.

PRESIDENT BUCHANAN
I don't believe in abandoning
friends. Not when they are down.

SAM BUTTERWORTH
I fully intend to stick by Dan. . .

PRESIDENT BUCHANAN
This was an act of highly unbalanced
passion. Don't you think so, Sam?

SAM BUTTERWORTH
Absolutely. I agree completely.

PRESIDENT BUCHANAN
Good. Now it is up to you and Dan to
choose Lawyers who can understand
such a defense as a course of action.

SAM BUTTERWORTH
Unbalanced passion. Yes, it was.

CUT TO:

INT: THE JAILHOUSE - DAY

Dan is escorted by two guards into the office of Jacob King, the jailer. King waits for Sickles. It is an arched room about twenty feet square and contains a cot, a desk, two bureaus, and chairs and stools. A fire burns in the fireplace. The walls are newly whitewashed. Antique muskets adorn the walls.

JACOB KING
Sickles, you have friends in high
places. My office will be your home
during the trial.

CUT TO:

INT: THE OFFICE OF ROBERT OULD - DAY

Charles Howard, husband of Barton Key's sister, Elizabeth, is in conference with the newly appointed attorney general of Washington D.C., Robert Ould--a plump, bald man with a receding chin and eyeglasses. He has a slight speech impediment.

CHARLES HOWARD

People are beginning to hold Sickles up as a hero. We cannot allow his lawyers to turn this into a circus where Dan Sickles is exonerated because Barton Key is being tried for adultery. Remember, Mr. Ould, you are prosecuting a murderer.

ROBERT OULD

Mr. Howard, not only do I agree, but this murderer, Sickles, is a man of low moral fiber, himself. However, I have neither the resources nor the funds to investigate his affairs.

CHARLES HOWARD

Well, get them.

CUT TO:

INT: THE JAILHOUSE - DAY

Dan sits in conference with his lawyers, Edwin Stanton, James Topham Brady, and John Graham. They are three of the most respected and powerful legal minds of the time. Their dress and carriage suggest as much. Sam Butterworth sits with them, lending moral support.

EDWIN STANTON

Only one way out of this, my friend. We will have to prove insanity.

DAN SICKLES

Stanton, I will not let you get up in front of the whole world and call me crazy! There may be some scraps of possibility left to my position, and an insane man cannot hold office.

JAMES TOPHAM BRADY

Think about it this way: You were so emotionally wrought, that for the moment--just that one exact moment--you were insane. Momentarily insane.

DAN SICKLES

I never heard of such nonsense.

JOHN GRAHAM

Dan, public sentiment is already going your way, but we have to provide a legal reason to get you off.

EDWIN STANTON
Temporary insanity!

CUT TO:

INT: THE OFFICE OF PRESIDENT BUCHANAN - DAY

President Buchanan is behind his desk. Standing in front of him is Robert Ould.

PRESIDENT BUCHANAN
Ould, I don't know that such an expenditure can be justified. The budget is too tight. Besides, you are more than capable of handling this case by yourself.

The President escorts Ould to the door, pats him on the shoulder.

PRESIDENT BUCHANAN
(continuing)
Good fellow!

Ould is trying to get a coherent sentence out as the President gently steers him through the door.

CUT TO:

INT: OULD'S OFFICE - DAY

Charles Howard is again in conference with Ould.

CHARLES HOWARD
If the President is, in effect, supporting Sickles, then the friends of Barton Key will pay for an assistant with our own funds.

CUT TO:

INT: THE JAILHOUSE - DAY

Dan in his room, surrounded by flowers and books. The remnants of an elegant lunch sit on the table.

Jacob King knocks and comes in.

JACOB KING
A visitor, Sickles.

Dan's six year old daughter, Laura, enters. At her hesitation, Dan leaps to his feet.

DAN SICKLES
Laura! Darling baby.

She runs to his outstretched arms. They hug. Once they separate, she looks around the room with curiosity.

LAURA
Is this your new office, Papa?

DAN SICKLES
Yes, darling. This is where I now work.

LAURA
Do you sleep here, too?

DAN SICKLES
On that little bed.

LAURA
No! Come home to Mama and me!

Dan maintains his composure. At some private cost.

DAN SICKLES
Oh, I have so much work to do, Laura.
Papa can't come home.

Sensing something is wrong, Laura begins to cry.

LAURA
Are you going to die, Papa? Mama is crying. Mama cries all the time.

Dan takes her in his arms.

DAN SICKLES
No, darling. Nobody is going to die.
You just be a good girl for Mama. You be as good as you can be.

LAURA
Will you come home when you finish working?

He does not have to answer, because Teresa's mother comes in. She is silent. She is grave. Her dignity commands his attention.

Dan stands up.

DAN SICKLES
I want to thank you for bringing Laura.

Mrs. Bagioli hands over a letter.

MRS. BAGIOLI
Teresa wants you to have this.

He hesitates, then opens it. We hear Teresa's voice.

TERESA SICKLES (V.O.)
My Dear Husband, May I still call
you my husband? I know now how deeply
I hurt you. I would give all if I
could turn back the hands of the
clock. It seems as if it was not us,
but two other people, a hundred years
ago, who faced each other in such
hatred. That was not us. Can we .
.is it possible, Dan, to begin again?
I have truly grown into a more of a
woman since that horrible night.

Mrs. Bagioli watches him like a hawk. Dan walks a step or
two away. The letter seems to tremble in his hands.

TERESA SICKLES (V.O.)
(continuing)
Please write to me. I give you two
kisses. One from Laura and one from
me. Please take them. Teresa.

Dan stares at the letter.

MRS. BAGIOLI
What do you say, Dan?

DAN SICKLES
(he whispers)
God help us all.

CUT TO:

INT: THE COURTROOM - DAY

The courtroom is a big room with tall, arched windows. There
are two barrel stoves at the front of the court room, making
the room exceedingly warm.

The chamber is packed to overflowing only with men. Given
the expected content of the proceedings, no decent woman
would dare to appear. Onlookers outside crowd the windows,
hoping for a glimpse of the famous prisoner, and others
behind them throng the courtyard.

To the right of the judge's bench, is the prisoner's dock, a
chair inside a waist high box of polished slats.

Seen in the courtroom are George Woolridge, Henry Wikoff, Charles Howard, Jonah Hoover, Teresa's father, Mr. Bagioli, and others.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT: COURTROOM - DAY

Robert Ould offers his opening remarks. He leans in earnestly toward the jury.

ROBERT OULD

So, gentlemen of the jury. . .let us not lose sight of who is on trial here--a man of high stature--an elected official--a lawmaker who took the law into his own hands. Today, society is giving to Daniel E. Sickles what he denied his victim--an impartial jury, and an upright judge. Gentlemen of the jury, Daniel E. Sickles offered his victim nothing but death.

He pounds his fist in prosecutorial anger.

ROBERT OULD

(continuing)

The prisoner at the bar came to that carnival of blood as a walking arsenal of weapons. Three guns he had on his person. Against this perambulating battery, what did the deceased possess for his defense? Nothing. No arms at all.

Ould pauses dramatically. Wipes his glasses with a handkerchief, then his face.

ROBERT OULD

(continuing)

Even as the victim's piteous cries rang out, the prisoner at the bar shot him a second time. Then a third. Even as death was overtaking the fast-fading victim, Daniel Sickles stood over him seeking to scatter Barton Key's brains with a fourth shot.

Ould flings his arms outward from his temples, as if his own brains were exploding.

ROBERT OULD

(continuing)

"You dishonored my bed", he said. Even then, he dared to accuse his helpless victim. "You dishonored my bed." Yes, Gentlemen of the jury, this murderer had the audacity to pronounce a moral judgment over a man who was doing no more than what he, Daniel Sickles, has been doing all his adult life to his own neighbors' wives.

Gentlemen, it was Mr. Sickles' own despicable, sexual escapades that drove his wife into the arms of Mr. Key. Dan Sickles is, himself, directly responsible for the adulterous relationship of Mr. Key and Mrs. Sickles.

But this is not a trial for adultery. It is a trial for murder!

Ould pauses for emphasis, and steps closer to the jury, as if they are old friends

ROBERT OULD

(continuing)

I charge you, gentlemen of the jury, to proclaim to the world: no matter how high the position or lofty the pretensions of the offender, justice and punishment can be found in our legal processes to punish a foul and cold blooded murder!

He steps back, his opening remarks concluded.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT: THE COURTROOM - DAY

John Graham, counsel for Dan Sickles has proceeded to address the jury in his opening remarks.

JOHN GRAHAM

Gentlemen of the jury. You have heard the prosecution. They were good. They were eloquent. But they all left out one fact. The body found in the throes of death was the body of a

(more)

JOHN GRAHAM (cont'd)
 (his voice rises)
 confirmed and habitual adulterer. No
 one compelled Phillip Barton Key to
 commit adultery, except Teresa
 Sickles!

He pauses. A dramatic pause.

JOHN GRAHAM
 (continuing)
 And he was not unarmed. He had two
 deadly weapons which brought about
 his own destruction-- With his
 handkerchief, he signaled to another
 man's wife. With his opera glass, he
 watched for her reply--a reply which
 would lead to illicit sexual congress.

Which one of you, gentlemen of the
 jury, could watch such a signal sent
 to your wife and sit silently by?
 Which of your minds would not snap
 under such duress?

If a burglar breaks into your house
 at night to steal your money, it is
 within the law for the homeowner to
 shoot that intruder. But if that same
 villain enters your wife in your own
 bed, and steals your honor, there is
 no redress. No redress under our law!

John Graham is just getting warmed up. He lifts a Bible.

JOHN GRAHAM
 (continuing)
 Are we a Christian nation? Yes,
 gentlemen, we are! We certainly are.

He holds the Bible aloft.

JOHN GRAHAM
 (continuing)
 Are we ready to learn from our Lord's
 earliest teachings? Yes, gentlemen,
 we are!

He opens the Bible and reads:

JOHN GRAHAM

(continuing)

Deuteronomy chapter 22, verse 22--"If a man be found lying with a woman who hath a husband, they shall both of them die." Leviticus 20:10--The man that committeth adultery with another man's wife. . .shall surely be put to death."

This is the Bible, Gentlemen of the jury! It states no less than that it is, in fact, Christian to punish adultery with death. It is the law of God!

DISSOLVE TO:

John Graham, still talking, hours later. He has taken off his jacket, and the arms of his shirt are soaked with sweat. The crowd is fanning itself in the heat.

He points to Dan.

JOHN GRAHAM

To convict Dan Sickles is to tell every man on the street that he is free to treat every house as a brothel. Is not that enough to unhinge the stoutest mind?

In God's name, Gentlemen of the jury, the world looks to you for guidance! Show the God-fearing world that His law will always prevail. That those who follow His teachings will be exonerated and those who commit adultery will not go unpunished!

John Graham sits down to thunderous applause. The judge hammers his gavel trying to restore order. The other defense lawyers pat him on the back, and spectators within speaking distance call out their congratulations.

CUT TO:

INT: TERESA'S HOUSE - DAY

Mr. Bagioli enters the drawing room. He is exhausted. Teresa and her mother hover beside him.

MRS. BAGIOLI

What has happened, Antonio? What do you think?

MR. BAGIOLI

I think if they could, they would put our daughter on trial instead of her husband.

He leaves the room, moving like a very old man.

INT: DAN'S JAIL CELL - NIGHT

Jacob King announces a visitor.

JACOB KING

Someone to see you, Sickles.

Fanny White enters, smiling. Dan's face falls. Jacob King tries to linger.

DAN SICKLES

Thank you, Mr. King. You may leave us alone.

King reluctantly leaves.

DAN SICKLES

(continuing)

What the Hell are you doing here?

FANNY WHITE

I've missed you.

She tries to kiss him. He resists.

DAN SICKLES

Do you have any sense? I am on trial for murdering a man who slept with my wife!

FANNY WHITE

I wouldn't come here to hurt you. I just wanted to see you. . .but if you want me to leave. . .

DAN SICKLES

That would be wise.

Fanny pauses, playing for time.

FANNY WHITE

Let me just ask you one question.

DAN SICKLES

What?

Fanny is silent.

DAN SICKLES
(continuing)
What? What is the question?

FANNY WHITE
Did you ever love me?

DAN SICKLES
I never lied to you about that, Fanny.
He smiles and pats her hand. She starts to cry.

FANNY WHITE
Not even a little?

DAN SICKLES
(sighs)
Fanny, I have nothing to offer anyone
anymore. If you want me to say I
love you a little, I will.

She sobs.

FANNY WHITE
Don't start lying to me now. I know
you too well.

She collects herself and blows her nose. Dan awkwardly pats
her on the shoulder.

Fanny picks up her bag and walks to the door. She turns for
a final word.

FANNY WHITE
(continuing)
I do know you, Dan Sickles. When
this is over, you'll be around again.

CUT TO:

INT: THE COURTROOM - DAY

The door to the jury room opens and the jury files in. People
jump up on chairs and tables. The judge hammers for order.

JUDGE CRAWFORD
Silence in Court! Order!

Erasmus Middleton rises.

ERASMUS J. MIDDLETON
Gentlemen of the jury, have you
agreed upon your verdict?

The foreman of the jury, Reason Arnold, rises.

REASON ARNOLD
We have.

ERASMUS J. MIDDLETON
Stand up, Daniel E. Sickles.

Dan stands.

ERASMUS J. MIDDLETON
(continuing)
How say you, gentlemen of the jury?
do you find the prisoner at the bar
guilty or not guilty?

REASON ARNOLD
Not guilty.

Pandemonium. The judge pounds with his gavel. To no avail. People are surrounding Dan and congratulating him. Some of his lawyers are crying, Edwin Stanton dances a jig. Jacob King, the jailer, is crying and laughing with joy.

Dan slowly makes his way through the crowd. He is strangely subdued.

The crowd raises Dan to their shoulders and carries him outside to the waiting carriage.

CUT TO:

INT: THE SICKLES' HOUSE - DAY

Teresa, wearing her nightshirt, is peeking out of the curtain at the large gathering outside. She sees her father trying to push through the crowd to get to the door. Mrs. Bagioli angrily comes up behind her.

MRS. BAGIOLI
Get away from that window. And don't
talk to any of that rabble out there.
Those vultures of the press want to
tear you apart.

Mr. Bagioli enters the room. Both women turn to him questioningly.

MR. BAGIOLI
He was acquitted.

TERESA SICKLES
Did you see him?

MR. BAGIOLI
Oh, yes.

TERESA SICKLES
Did you talk to him?

MR. BAGIOLI
No.

MRS. BAGIOLI
Where is he?

MR. BAGIOLI
They are all over at Willard's--
celebrating.

TERESA SICKLES
Is he coming home?

MR. BAGIOLI
I . . . don't know.

Teresa goes to her closet and begins to throw a dress and
petticoats on the bed. Her mother looks at her in
bewilderment.

MRS. BAGIOLI
What are you doing?

MR. BAGIOLI
You don't intend to go there!

Teresa looks at them with steely determination.

TERESA SICKLES
I want my husband back.

CUT TO:

INT: WILLARD'S HOTEL RESTAURANT - DAY

A big party is going on. A hundred and fifty or more people
are gathered to celebrate the verdict. Champagne corks are
exploding, glasses are being passed across the heads of the
crowd from hand to hand.

CUT TO:

INT: THE HALLWAY IN FRONT OF THE RESTAURANT - CONTINUING SCENE

Journalists hover, notebooks in hand, hoping to see Dan. Photographers have set up their tripods, waiting for the opportunity to take a picture. Onlookers mill around.

CUT TO:

INT: THE CELEBRATION - CONTINUING SCENE

Dan sits at a table with Butterworth, Woolridge, and his lawyers. People push around them, giving their congratulations. It is noisy in the extreme.

In the midst of the chaos, the men are trying to have a serious conversation.

At that moment, a hand appears with a glass of champagne thrust out towards Dan. The hand belongs to Reason Arnold, the foreman of the jury.

REASON ARNOLD

Mr. Sickles, I am proud to have been chosen to render the verdict we did, and I am sure that our great God Almighty would have arrived at the same.

DAN SICKLES

Mr. Arnold, I hope you are right. I hope He looks kindly on me in the final judgement day.

CUT TO:

EXT: LAFAYETTE PARK - DAY

Teresa is striding through the park, surrounded by a swarm of journalists.

Teresa walks at a fast clip, not looking to the right or to the left. She tries to act as if she is deaf to the clamor around her.

CUT TO:

INT: THE CELEBRATION - DAY

Dan is in a huddle with his lawyers and friends. He turns to Stanton.

DAN SICKLES

What do you mean, I can't go home?
My child is there!

EDWIN STANTON

You must not even talk to your wife!
And you certainly must not be seen
with her! We will arrange visitation
with the child.

Dan is silent. We can't read his face.

EDWIN STANTON

(continuing)

If you are perceived as forgiving
Teresa, that would be worse than
admitting your guilt!

SAM BUTTERWORTH

I can offer you a room in my house.
Or you can stay here in the hotel.

EDWIN STANTON

Butterworth's house is better. Until
the divorce is final, you should not
attract attention

SAM BUTTERWORTH

What I would suggest is to send
someone to your house right now to
pick up your necessary clothes and
documents. Give me a list and I'll
arrange to have them brought to my
house.

During this exchange, Dan and friends become aware of a
mounting silence in which can be heard a few intense hisses.

Dan sees Teresa in the doorway to the room. Some in the
crowd stare in horror. Some ignore her. A few now hiss
stridently. All are aware of her presence. A number of the
women in the room pointedly turn their backs to her, but peek
with curiosity over their shoulders.

Butterworth, Woolridge and Graham realize what is happening.
They slowly sit down, signalling that Teresa should be
ignored. Dan remains standing, his hands casually thrust
into his pockets, his face unreadable.

Teresa takes in the scene. She looks at all her old friends,
now clearly members of a hostile camp.

Stanton comes forward, gently takes Teresa by the arm.

EDWIN STANTON

Mrs. Sickles, it would be best if you would leave.

Teresa gives a quick, sharp look at Dan.

TERESA SICKLES

Dan, do you want me to leave?

Their eyes lock. Dan is silent.

At this moment, the doors burst open, and the Marine Band marches into the celebration, playing a loud, lively song. The crowd parts, and the band stands in formation, ceasing the music as the leader strides over to Dan.

BAND LEADER

Congressman Sickles, the President has sent the Marine Band to perform for you as a token of his congratulations on your victory.

The leader returns to direct the band in a serenade to Dan. In the moment of silence before the band resumes playing, we hear Teresa ask again, in a firm voice:

TERESA SICKLES

Dan, I want you to tell me to leave.

All eyes are on Dan. He stands in silence, as if he is not in control of his own voice. The band crashes into a loud march. Dan, startled, looks toward the band. When he looks back to the spot where Teresa was standing, he sees Teresa's back disappearing into the crowd, going toward the door. Dan turns to Stanton and company.

DAN SICKLES

(with gravity)

I will think about everything you said. Excuse me.

He leaves the room, leaving the men gaping.

CUT TO:

EXT: LAFAYETTE PARK - DAY

We see Teresa on her way back home. She is again the center of a posse of journalists. They shout rude questions at her.

JOURNALIST #1

Why did you go to the celebration?

JOURNALIST #2

What is your opinion of the verdict,
Mrs. Sickles?

JOURNALIST #3

When is your husband filing for
divorce?

JOURNALIST #4

Do you expect to lose custody of your
child?

JOURNALIST #5

Do you plan to leave town after the
divorce?

JOURNALIST #6

Would you call yourself a woman
destroyed by love?

JOURNALIST #7

Why are you chasing after your
husband? Why aren't you in mourning
for Barton Key?

A drunk dressed in a loud checkered suit sees them pass, and
staggers up.

DRUNK

Who's better in bed, Honey? Sickles
or Key?

Fighting panic, Teresa continues on. In the distance, we see
another pack of journalists following. They surround Dan,
who is pursuing Teresa as fast as possible, given the
circumstances. Some of Teresa's journalists leave Teresa, and
run for the fresh attraction of Dan.

CUT TO:

INT: THE SICKLES' HOUSE - DAY

From the upstairs window, Teresa's mother and father watch
their approach to the house.

MRS. BAGIOLI

Antonio!

She runs down the stairs, followed by her husband. We see
Bridget and Laura in the doorway of the kitchen.

MRS. BAGIOLI
 (continuing)
 Take Laura out to play in the garden.
 Now!

Bridget turns and flees, dragging Laura behind her.

As Mrs. Bagioli reaches the foyer, Teresa, looking like a deer who has been harried by hunting dogs, flings the door open from the other side and goes without a word into the drawing room, closing herself in.

MRS. BAGIOLI
 (continuing; at the
 drawing room door)
 Are you all right?

TERESA SICKLES
 (from inside)
 Yes. I'm fine. Just leave me alone.

CUT TO:

EXT: OUTSIDE THE SICKLES' HOUSE - CONTINUING SCENE

At the entrance to his house, Dan turns to the shouting journalists.

DAN SICKLES
 This is private property!

He goes inside, slams the door.

CUT TO:

INT: THE SICKLES' DRAWING ROOM - CONTINUING SCENE

Teresa is sitting in the armchair, like a queen waiting for her slave to bring someone's head on a platter. A beat passes.

The door opens, and Dan enters. He stops at the door. Looks at her.

He goes to the liquor cabinet and pours himself a glass of scotch. Drinks it. Teresa has not taken her eyes off him. She is looking at him with an enigmatic smile.

TERESA SICKLES
 How does it feel to be a hero?

DAN SICKLES
 (quietly)
 You know very well that I am no hero.

TERESA SICKLES

May I join the celebration now?

Dan begins to pour her a glass of scotch.

TERESA SICKLES

(continuing)

Don't we have champagne?

DAN SICKLES

I didn't know you drank champagne.

He goes into the cabinet and comes out with a bottle. He peels off the foil, and starts to remove the cork.

TERESA SICKLES

It's an acquired taste.

A beat passes.

DAN SICKLES

Did you acquire this taste with him?

Teresa pauses and looks coolly at Dan.

TERESA SICKLES

As a matter of fact, yes.

DAN SICKLES

In that house he rented just for you?

Now, there is a long pause. It is as if she is weighing which continuation she will choose. A Mona Lisa smile appears.

TERESA SICKLES

Exactly. He would always bring a bottle of champagne. We would share it before. . .

DAN SICKLES

Before you made love?

TERESA SICKLES

And after.

Dan struggles with the cork. Teresa sits still and follows his movements with her eyes. He turns. His agitation is evident.

DAN SICKLES

Go on.

TERESA SICKLES
Sometimes he would pour champagne on
my . . .

DAN SICKLES
(grinding the word,
teeth compressed)
Breasts?

TERESA SICKLES
Yes. Right on my bare breasts,

Teresa slowly stands up and starts to unbutton her bodice.
Dan is mesmerized.

It will come as no surprise that her breasts are beautiful.
She drops her dress and stands in her bustier and petticoat.

DAN SICKLES
(almost in a whisper)
What would he do after he poured the
champagne?

Teresa removes her petticoat.

TERESA SICKLES
He would stand naked and I would
spill a little champagne down his
stomach. . .

DAN SICKLES
Go on.

TERESA SICKLES
And when it dripped down. . .

DAN SICKLES
You put it. . .

TERESA SICKLES
(smiles)
Yes. I put it in my mouth.

A shudder goes over Dan.

TERESA SICKLES
(continuing)
It gave me an enormous appetite for
more.

He is in pain, but it is a confusion of pain. His honor is
lacerated, but desire has overtaken him. Wholly unholy
desire.

TERESA SICKLES

(continuing)

Am I enough of a whore for you now?
Or must I have a dozen more men
before you want me?

He is having difficulty breathing. A light has come into his eye Teresa has never seen before.

DAN SICKLES

I would kill them all.

At this moment, Dan is startled by the cork popping and champagne exploding over his hands. Warm bubbly sprays over Teresa, washing her half-naked body. She begins to laugh.

CUT TO:

INT: HALLWAY OUTSIDE DAN AND TERESA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Bridget and Thompson stand outside Dan and Teresa's bedroom door. We hear the familiar cries of Teresa, joined by those we have heard Dan make with Fanny White, but ah, what bliss. Finally they are in chorus with each other. They build to a crescendo, then silence.

Thompson puts his hand, once more, on Bridget's rear end.

THOMPSON

I think that will be all.

CUT TO:

EXT: THE RIVER - LATE AFTERNOON

It is a cloudless, pastoral scene. The late afternoon sun reflects off the water of the Potomac river. Dan and Teresa are in a small dory with Laura. Dan is rowing. Teresa scoops her hand in the water, then flicks the drops on Dan. Laura starts to imitate her, throwing handfuls of water on her father.

DAN SICKLES

(laughing)

Stop! It's not fair! I can't defend
myself against two women at once!

Teresa and Laura throw more water. Dan puts down his oars and dips his own hand in the water, splashing it back onto his two laughing girls.

PAN TO:

EXT: THE BANK OF THE RIVER - LATE AFTERNOON

A proper society husband and wife are sitting on a blanket enjoying a picnic lunch. They hear hilarity echo in from the river. It has the golden sound of late summer afternoon.

SOCIETY HUSBAND

Isn't that Dan Sickles and his wife?

The woman peers down the river.

SOCIETY WIFE

Good Heavens! It is!

SOCIETY HUSBAND

Has he taken leave of all common sense?

SOCIETY WIFE

Is there no end to the depravity these Sickles have engendered?

CUT TO:

INT: THE CONGRESSIONAL CHAMBER - DAY

The room is completely full--every congressman is there, including Dan, slumped in his seat, making feverish notes during the following speech:

WILLIAM BEEKMAN

Daniel E. Sickles has taken back as wife a woman whose reprehensible conduct disgraced all of us. If he can forgive her now, why could he have not forgiven her before the killing? That would have saved a life!

A politician cannot obey one code of morality in his private life, and another in his public career.

Therefore, I put before you a motion to issue a congressional reprimand to Daniel E. Sickles for his blatant disregard of our code of behavior and of public morality.

Thunderous response. The chairman bangs the gavel for order.

CHAIRMAN

The floor recognizes the Gentleman from New York. Sir, you have two minutes.

Dan gets up. As he goes to the front, one by one, congressmen rise and leave the room. Those who remain look at Dan Sickles with cynical expressions, or with cold curiosity. Butterworth and Woolridge stare with sorrow at the floor.

Dan takes the the podium, looks at his notes, watches the room as it empties. He is calm.

Dan crumples his notes. Strong emotions pass across his face.

DAN SICKLES

I can see, from the universal howl of denunciation at the mother of my child, that you men who make our laws want a pound of flesh.

But I know of no law, or code of morals which makes it illegal for a man to forgive a woman--or a woman to forgive a man. I will not allow this congress--or public opinion--to dictate to me to whom I may give my love!

If this affection for my family proves fatal to my political and social standing, then so be it! Gentlemen, you have your wish. I resign my office. There will be no third term for Dan Sickles.

He steps from the podium and walks down the aisle between the empty seats.

CUT TO:

INT: DAN AND TERESA'S DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Dan and Teresa dine alone. The long table is only set for two.

TERESA SICKLES

The dog killed a rat today. It was outside the kitchen door and. . .

DAN SICKLES

Teresa, do you have nothing to talk about at dinner but the death of rats?

TERESA SICKLES

I'm sorry.

DAN SICKLES

No, I'm sorry. Do you mean our dog killed a rat?

Teresa pauses.

TERESA SICKLES

Why don't you go to the club for awhile and talk politics?

DAN SICKLES

Yes, they will rush to greet me there.

There is an awkward moment of silence. Then Teresa picks up.

TERESA SICKLES

Dan. . .we can't go on like this.

DAN SICKLES

I know.

TERESA SICKLES

Have you talked to the President?

DAN SICKLES

Not in a while.

TERESA SICKLES

If we give a dinner for the President, will he come?

DAN SICKLES

I can't say. He does owe me a favor or two.

TERESA SICKLES

No one will be able to refuse, if the President accepts.

DAN SICKLES

It's a gamble, isn't it? But Jim does pay his debts.

CUT TO:

INT: THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE - DAY

Buchanan, sitting at his desk looking glumly at the invitation. He sighs, addresses his aide.

PRESIDENT BUCHANAN
Tell him yes.

Hopeful, sprightly music begins for the following montage:

CUT TO:

INT: DINING ROOM - SICKLES' HOUSE - DAY

Bridget and a new serving girl are setting out twenty places. At one end of the table, Thompson, with the aid of a new man servant, installs a large regal chair with a Presidential seal.

CUT TO:

INT: KITCHEN - SICKLES' HOUSE - DAY

Bridget puts a bowl of caviar on ice. Lobsters sit on a block of ice. Pate's, terrines of roast goose line the kitchen table. The serving maid sticks her finger in the caviar, licks it and makes a face.

She pats the caviar smooth again.

CUT TO:

INT: THE SICKLES' DINING ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

All is ready. The linen has the white splendor of a snow field, the silver gleams like icicles, the flowers riot in the center. Twenty places are all laid out.

CUT TO:

EXT: LAFAYETTE PARK - LATE AFTERNOON

An equerry, mounted on horseback, rides up, dismounts, knocks on the Sickles' front door. Behind him, a second horseman carries a large arrangement of flowers.

CUT TO:

EXT: SICKLES' FRONT DOOR - LATE AFTERNOON - CONTINUING
SCENE

The equerry hands Dan an engraved envelope. The second horseman hands him the huge bouquet.

EQUERRY
With the compliments of the
President, sir.

CUT TO:

C.U. OF THE LETTER AS SICKLES OPENS IT

We read: "I am absolutely with you in spirit, but on reflection, have decided that I cannot be present. I must not compromise the Presidency. I am sorry. Jim"

The music slows. Becomes lugubrious.

CUT TO:

INT: SICKLES' DINING ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Thompson and the man servant are removing the President's chair. Bridget and the serving maid take away two settings.

CUT TO:

EXT: SICKLES' HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

A carriage stops outside. The coachman brings a message to Thompson. From Thompson's POV we see him receive an envelope and a large bouquet of pale yellow chrysanthemums.

CUT TO:

INT: SICKLES' DINING ROOM - CONTINUING SCENE

Two more place settings are removed. Two more chairs are gone.

CUT TO:

INT: SICKLES' DRAWING ROOM - CONTINUING SCENE

The chrysanthemums are placed next to the President's flowers.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT: SICKLES' DINING ROOM - CONTINUING SCENE

Four chairs and four settings are being taken away.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT: SICKLES' DRAWING ROOM - CONTINUING SCENE

It has so many bouquets and wreaths, all in pale colors, that the drawing room now looks like the reception room in a funeral hall.

The music dies.

CUT TO:

INT: SICKLES' DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Dan and Teresa eat in silence with Teresa's parents.

Almost inaudibly, we hear "The Star Spangled Banner" start . Then the sound of artillery over the horizon. Low booming sounds. The diners are caught in a freeze frame.

DISSOLVE TO:

A montage of Civil War pictures, Abraham Lincoln being inaugurated, soldiers on the march, and others. "The Star Spangled Banner" softly continues through the following scene.

CUT TO:

INT: THE OFFICES OF EDWIN STANTON - DAY

A plaque on the door reads "Secretary of War"

Dan Sickles is in conference with Edwin Stanton.

DAN SICKLES

Give me a chance, Stanton. I can
raise a brigade of troops in New York.

He looks Stanton in the eye.

DAN SICKLES

(continuing)

I need this. The only way to redeem
my reputation is to fight in this
war. Stanton, I am a better man than
I was on that terrible day. I want
to prove it.

Edwin Stanton nods.

CUT TO:

INT: DAN AND TERESA'S HOUSE - DAY

Dan is at the door, bag packed. He is wearing the uniform of a Union colonel as he says good-bye to Teresa. Dan tries to separate her arms from around his neck.

TERESA SICKLES

Dan, I have a premonition that I will
never see you again. I don't want you
to go. I have this terrible fear
that you will never come back.

She begins to cry.

Teresa continues to hold to him. He extricates himself gently and goes out the door. As the scene continues, "The Star Spangled Banner", sung by a full choir, grows in volume and drowns her cries out.

CHOIR (V.O.)

"Oh, say can you see. . .any bed-bugs on me? If you do, pick a few, and we'll have bed-bug stew.

If you don't see a few, then we can't have no stew. Instead, we must eat. . .the green slime they call meat.

And the boys in the rear, dream of whisky and beer, so they boil their socks, drink the brew and get crocked.

Oh, say does that chicken coop have any hens? Yes, it does! Let's grab 'em, boys! And we'll eat like kings again!"

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT: THE GETTYSBURG WOODS - DAY

The swirling trees come into focus, and we see General Daniel Sickles on the stretcher being carried toward the hospital tent.

The "Star Spangled Banner" ends. We are in a continuation of the first scene in the film.

CUT TO:

INT: THE HOSPITAL TENT - CONTINUING SCENE

The doctor is dressing the ragged remains of Dan's leg. He grits his teeth.

DOCTOR

That's all we can do at this moment, General. I'm sorry.

Dan looks down at the bandaged stump.

DAN SICKLES

Where is my leg?

They look at him incredulously.

DOCTOR

General, you lost your leg.

DAN SICKLES

You didn't throw it out, did you?

DOCTOR

(aghast)

What did you expect us to do with it?

DAN SICKLES

Bring it back! I want my leg!

CUT TO:

INT: TERESA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Teresa is in bed, seriously ill. Even though there is a fire in the fireplace, she is bundled up in blankets, feverish, with chills. Bridget sponges her face with a pan of water. Laura sits beside her mother, a worried look on her face.

Teresa holds in her hand a letter from Dan. As she reads the letter, she motions for Laura to come closer.

TERESA SICKLES

Laura. . .listen to this--this is so funny--Papa is writing this to you--
"Tell Laura that I am kicking the
Rebels so hard that my leg might get
caught in their rear ends, and I'll
have to come home without it!

They laugh.

CUT TO:

EXT: THE TRAIN DEPOT, WASHINGTON - DAY

Wounded men are being unloaded from the train. A small marine band stands by playing a rousing welcome. A large group including Dan's old friends, Butterworth, Woolridge, Henry Wikoff and others stand watching the men being taken from the train. Dan, on crutches, limps off the train smoking a cigar, stump swinging as he walks. A private follows him carrying his valise, plus a strange odd-shaped case.

The crowd cheers his arrival. Various things are being said in the tumult.

VOICE #1

He turned the tide at Gettysburg!

VOICE #2

They say he is going to get the Medal
of Honor!

VOICE #3

Are you going to run for office
again, Dan?

Sickles murmurs a few responses to the crowd. In the midst
of his welcome, he looks around and is uneasy.

DAN SICKLES

Where is Teresa?

Butterworth and Woolridge, standing next to him, hesitate.

SAM BUTTERWORTH

She is ill, Dan. She is very ill.

CUT TO:

EXT: THE SICKLES' HOUSE - DAY

Dan clumsily gets out of his carriage and makes his way to
the front door of his home.

CUT TO:

INT: SICKLES' BEDROOM - CONTINUING SCENE

Dan enters the room. Teresa is lying in bed, wasted from
consumption. She tries to smile.

As he looks at her face, his eyes glisten.

DAN SICKLES

I'm so sorry, Kitten.

TERESA SICKLES

Oh, Dan. We made a mess of things,
didn't we?

DAN SICKLES

(pause)

We paid for the mess.

TERESA SICKLES

Yes, we did. We paid.

The effort to speak exhausts Teresa. She falls back on the
pillow.

TERESA SICKLES

(continuing)

Take care of Laura, darling.

He breaks down.

DAN SICKLES

Shhhh. Don't talk like that. We're not done yet. You will be with me forever.

TERESA SICKLES

I know. I know. More than you know, Dan. For I will haunt you, darling. I will be with you in every bed. . .

He looks as if she is certainly telling the truth.

The music grows into the soft strains of the Star Spangled Banner, and continues as we

DISSOLVE TO:

INT: A GALLERY IN THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION - DAY

Dan is in his nineties, very old, very grand, significantly wicked. He is accompanied by a small group, including a late-middle-aged woman who hovers adoringly near his elbow. She flicks a piece of lint off his coat in a proprietary manner. Dan addresses the group as the music underlies his words:

DAN SICKLES

Loved ones grow on you. Certain loved ones are as fine as old wine, and I revere them. I commemorate them. So, I invite you, friends, to pay respects to the one I will never forget. I visit him every year on the anniversary of our parting.

He pauses. The group looks around expectantly.

DAN SICKLES

(continuing)

He was with me at the beginning--a small, but vital part of my life. First in body, then in spirit.

YOUNG LADY

(whispers to middle aged lady)

What is he talking about? Is he. . . ?
(she taps her head)

MIDDLE-AGED LADY

Shhhhhh!

Dan goes up to one of the cases in the gallery. We see a very small, highly polished coffin.

Under a glass top, we see the bones of a shattered leg, arranged much the same way dinosaur bones are arranged when small parts are missing.

THIS COFFIN CONTAINS THE LEG OF MAJOR-GENERAL DANIEL SICKLES WHO LOST IT IN THE BATTLE OF GETTYSBURG JULY 3, 1863 DURING THE PROLONGED FIGHTING IN DEVIL'S DEN.

We pull back to see all of the gallery. Dan and party stand and admire the leg. Dan steps a few paces back from the others. The middle-aged lady follows, and looks adoringly up at Dan.

MIDDLE-AGED LADY

That's not really your leg, is it, General?

DAN SICKLES

Yes it is, Ma'am.

MIDDLE-AGED LADY

(thoughtfully)

When you die, will they bury your leg with you, or leave it there?

Dan harumphs, then looks at her with a wicked gleam in his eye.

DAN SICKLES

I never thought about that. It's an interesting question. Why don't we talk about it over dinner--

(whispers)

Just you and me.

They walk away together, arm in arm.

We hear Teresa's voice: It is amused.

TERESA SICKLES (V.O.)

Well, here we go again. Enjoy yourself, Dan. While you still can.

She laughs, and the echoes of the laughter fade and blend into "The Star Spangled Banner". The music swells.

CREDITS ROLL.