

RISE OF COLUMBO

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EPISODE 1: TWO PERSONALITIES MAKES ONE KILL

This working pattern is inspired by and based on the series
"Columbo"- currently intellectual property of NBCUniversal

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& William Link

This script by no means wants to violate any ownership. It's
just a fictive working pattern of a fan.

Dedicated to the great Peter Falk
RIP legend

FADE IN:

EXT. - RUNWAY OF NEW YORK INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

In front of a hangar, a CROWD OF PEOPLE circles the brightly polished Boeing Seven Oh Seven jetliner.

REPORTERS and PHOTOGRAPHERS position in front of a makeshift stage decorated with a banner:

"PAN AMERICAN - The Future is now!
Experience earth's fastest jet airliner
on October 10/26/1958"

RUPERT MCGRAY, 52, an obese man of medium height, holds his hairpiece as he steps on the stage, obviously used to that more windy position up there. He touches it two more times to reassure himself and brightly smiles ahead.

MCGRAY

Welcome friends, investors,
engineers, workers, crew...

He glances toward the proud pilots and their perfect looking stewardesses who just step up the boarding stairs and enter the aircraft, friendly waving goodbye.

MCGRAY

... and of course a friendly hello
to our dear passengers. We hope to
offer you a service which has no
equal. Ladies and Gentlemen, enjoy
our seven oh seven maiden flight
from New York to LAX. Enough of me.
Now let us board this plane.
Hooray!

Amid the applause of the crowd, families and businessmen storm to the boarding stair.

A red Cadillac convertible stops beside the plane. It's driver, RICHARD FINEMAN, 36, thin with a cowboy hat, hops out. He grabs a briefcase from the rear bench, rushes upstairs and into the aircraft.

INT. 707 - DAY

A blond stewardess, SUSIE, welcomes Fineman with a bright smile and a camera in hand.

SUSIE

Mister Fineman, it's a pleasure to have you on board, sir. We're making souvenirs of that historical moment. You want a picture?

FINEMAN

Thanks, sweetheart. Isn't my first maiden flight.

SUSIE

Sure, sir. May I show you your seat? Mister McGray is eagerly awaiting you.

Fineman takes a glance backward, into the plane:

The Passengers are dressed as if there invited to a banquet, finest suits and dresses. The interior looks spectacular as a luxury overnight train. Festive colors, seats that have the size of recliners. The pure "tasteless" chic of 50's.

Thick cigar smoke already fills the air.

Fineman follows Susie beside a curtain who hides the even more spectacular

FIRST CLASS CABIN

Fineman joins a leather bench, a separated lounge that is directed toward several oval windows -- where McGray, leaning back with cigar in mouth, and his secretary PAMELA GREEN, 33, writing in a notebook, await takeoff.

The rest of the first class is deserted.

Fineman pats on McGray's shoulder.

MCGRAY

Richard, son. I thought you wouldn't make it. Thought you'd still party with some of your whores on Broadway.

FINEMAN

You think I'd miss out on all the fun.

He taps the edge of his hat.

FINEMAN

Miss Green.

Pamela nods back.

MCGRAY

Fun, huh? Since when do you care for the company.

FINEMAN

Well, since my father decided to give you the power of the company, over me.

MCGRAY

Boy, you still hold a huge package of Pan Am shares. Aren't you any grateful, son?

In Fineman's pupil's grows an "evil spirit" which the obese McGray doesn't notice while enjoying his cigar and a glass of champagne. Susie does. She just looks a bit intimidated and continues writing.

Fineman smiles, grabs McGray's shoulder, firm.

FINEMAN

Sure, I am. You're the best CEO this company could ever have. I'll take a quick look around before we takeoff, okay?

MCGRAY

Do what you want, son. Just do what you want.

Fineman turns, then stops.

FINEMAN

Before I forget, Rupert. Haven't you said that there's a certain meeting here. An investor? I mean you haven't organized an empty first class for nothing.

MCGRAY

Got a phone call from an AA manager. Interested in twenty aircrafts of our fleet. Could be a multi-billion deal, son.

FINEMAN

Perhaps he's just late. I'll see if I can find him.

Fineman takes off his cowboy hat, tosses it onto the bench beside McGray and leaves through the curtain into the

ECONOMY CLASS

With briefcase in hand, Fineman hastens along the central aisle, passes busy passengers storing their hand baggage.

He enters the

ON-BOARD TOILET

and locks. Fineman looks into the mirror.

He opens the briefcase - inside lie a fake mustache and sideburns, a folded fedora, a blue shirt, sunglasses.

Carefully he sticks the artificial hair to his face. Puts the shirt on...

MOMENTS LATER

Fineman checks his completely new looks. Lastly, he puts a pair of AA (American Airlines) cufflinks to his sleeves, strokes his fedora.

He places the briefcase behind the lavatory and steps back into the

PASSANGER CABIN

Costumed Fineman strolls up to the airplane's main door which is about to get closed.

As he reaches the galley, he turns his head to the side, deliberately avoiding Susie's glance from her jumpseat, and instead faces a brunet stewardess, LINDA.

FINEMAN

Excuse me, Miss. I just forgot to take a photo of me. Would be a great present for my nephew. He wouldn't believe I've been on a Seven Oh Seven. Is it still possible to do me that favor?

LINDA

Of course, sir.

As Linda prepares the camera to take a photo of him, Fineman pulls the fedora's brim down that it almost touches the sunglasses, covering his forehead.

With one hand at his chin, he perfectly positions the AA cufflinks when - click click - the shot is made.

Linda picks pen and paper, a list of names.

LINDA

We'll send you the pictures as soon as possible. What's your name, sir?

FINEMAN

(slow and clear)

It's Andrew Samson. Andrew Samson.

LINDA

Ahh, you're the American Airline's manager who got a meeting with our boss. He closed the whole first class for your exchange.

FINEMAN

It's so exciting to be on that plane, madam. So, exciting.

Fineman takes the camera from Linda's hand.

FINEMAN

Should we also take one of you, hon? You could send it to me as well. Would love to remember that sweet smile of yours.

Fineman takes a picture of her. Linda blushes.

He lays the camera on a case board.

Behind them, another Stewardess closes the main door and the airplane slowly gets into motion.

FINEMAN

Is it possible to go for a quick refreshing?

LINDA

There's certainly a couple of minutes till takeoff. Just be sure to take your seat before takeoff, sir.

FINEMAN

Call me Andrew, sweetheart.

INT. 707 - FIRST CLASS CABIN - DAY

Fineman, unmasked again; no sunglasses, nothing; enters.

McGray and Pamela left the lounge to take their regular seats on the other side. Fineman drops down beside McGray.

FINEMAN

Haven't found any AA manager.

MCGRAY

It seems Mister Samson isn't on board.

He looks around the empty cabin.

MCGRAY

What a waste of money.

They fasten their seat belts.

Fineman looks out the window - the runway whooshes past and the plane lifts off.

An impish grin rises in the corner of his mouth.

INT. 707 - FIRST CLASS CABIN - NIGHT

Pamela and McGray converted their seats into makeshift beds, both asleep.

Fineman gets up, takes his way through the dark cabin.

INT. 707 - ECONOMY CLASS - NIGHT

Costumed Fineman, mustache, sunglasses, fedora... walks through the darkened passenger cabin toward first class.

At the galley, Linda sits on a jumpseat.

Fineman stops. He gives a wink and blows a kiss to her.

She blushes and mouths a bashful, soft

STEWARDESS

Mister Samson.

at Fineman.

He steps into the

FIRST CLASS CABIN

Fineman creeps up to McGray's seat.

Slowly he puts McGray's head into a forearm choke hold.

He tightens the lock, more and more, firmly as a clamp.

McGray wakes a bit. His throat whistles and shrills - but too late, he fails to come back - although his pupils realize he's being choked to death, until they shut forever.

Fineman gnashes his teeth and does not let go till McGray is motionless for several seconds.

He checks McGray's pulse and grins.

P.O.V. PAMELA GREEN: A blurred vision gets clearer. A hand slaps her in the face. It's costumed Fineman. He turns to McGray and chokes his dead body's throat.

BACK TO SCENE

Pamela's eyes tremble. She has a strip of tape stuck over her mouth, cannot scream but see...

P.O.V. PAMELA GREEN: Fineman lets go of the dead McGray. With a syringe in his fingers, he gets closer toward her. She passes out.

BACK TO SCENE

Fineman checks her pulse, bends over her to listen her calm breathing. She's alive-

LATER

Fineman, no costume, in his normal appearance, sits down beside the dead McGray, opposite to the passed out Pamela.

He pulls another syringe from his pocket.

He puts the needle in his upper arm, pushes the plunger.

While he slowly passes out, he takes out a handkerchief, wipes carefully over each side of the syringe and lets it drop to the floor.

He rapidly blinks his eyes. Slower...

FINEMAN
 (screams)
 HEEEELLLLLPPP!

Fineman passes out.

A few seconds elapse till two Stewardesses rush inside.

CUT TO:

INT. 707 - ECONOMY CLASS - NIGHT

Flight manager CARSON DELANY, 43, thin and tall, taps on the shoulder of a MAN on an aisle seat.

DELANY
 Excuse me, sir, I'm flight manager
 Delany. We'd need to talk to the
 gentleman beside you. It's
 absolutely urgent that you follow
 Miss Susie here to another seat.
 Thank you, sir.

MAN
 (yawning)
 Well, fine.

The Man leaves. Delany sits.

Beside him, a man with tousled brown hair has his face buried in a sickness-bag, incessantly puking. Hearing those nasty throw up noises, Delany frowns.

DELANY
 Susie. Give the Sergeant a pill.
 Quick.

Susie rushes off.

DELANY
 Sergeant Columbo?

COLUMBO
 No.

DELANY
 Sergeant Columbo?

COLUMBO
 Yes.

DELANY
 You need to take that pill,
 Sergeant.

COLUMBO

Pill?

DELANY

It's a tablet against your air sickness. Bite on it. That quickens the effect.

While Columbo's face stays in the puke-bag, his hand blindly gropes around for the pill.

Susie carefully puts it into Columbo's palm.

He takes it to the bag that still covers most of his face.

COLUMBO

Oh no! I let it slip. It dropped into the bag...

Delany rolls his eyes and shakes his head.

DELANY

No problem, Detective. We'll get you another one.

ECONOMY CLASS - LATER

Delany rushes along the middle aisle, needs to stop every few steps and wait for DETECTIVE SERGEANT COLUMBO, 28, who still a bit dazed from his sickness staggers behind him.

Columbo is five ft six, has tousled brown hair. He wears white shirt, his slim tie slightly loose.

He carries a coffee and a fat cigar with him.

DELANY

Your first flight, Sergeant?

COLUMBO

My first and last, Mister Delany.

They stop at the galley. Shocked Stewardesses try to continue their task.

COLUMBO

Who's informed.

He turns back toward the weary passengers.

DELANY

Parts of the crew, the pilots of course. They immediately contacted the ground staff to identify a doctor on board and someone who's familiar with this certain field.

COLUMBO

I understand.

DELANY

Otherwise we were able to handle it with highest possible discretion so far. We're three hours from Los Angeles and it would be a dead certain disaster if people will take notice of a murder on board.

COLUMBO

Dead certain, sir.

DELANY

Our stewardesses Linda and Nicole heard the screams of Mister Fineman. The board member of Pan American. His father--

COLUMBO

The Mister Fineman? Pan American Airlines Mister Fineman? Good heavens. What a loss for the company.

DELANY

Actually, it isn't Mister Fineman.

COLUMBO

It isn't Fineman?

Columbo touches his forehead, confused.

DELANY

Well, Yes and No. It isn't Fineman who's... dead. Fineman is alive.

COLUMBO

Fineman is alive?

Delany nods.

DELANY

It's the company's CEO, Rupert McGray who's dead.

Columbo gapes, touches his forehead.

COLUMBO

Thank you, sir. I'll come back to you later.

He steps through the curtain into the

FIRST CLASS CABIN

At the long bench, Pamela Green is wrapped in a thick blanket, sobbing.

On the other side, DOCTOR KHALI AMAD, 30, checks the pulse of the still unconscious Richard Fineman.

Next to him, covered with several blankets, McGray's body.

COLUMBO

Is he going to be fine?

DOCTOR AMAD

He'll be okay. The offender injected them a sedative.

COLUMBO

Them?

DOCTOR AMAD

Both of them?

Columbo gets closer.

COLUMBO

Why didn't he gave her...

He nods toward Pamela.

DOCTOR AMAD

He did. It's McGray who wasn't intoxicated.

COLUMBO

How you know that?

DOCOR AMAD

No prick.

He points toward Fineman's arm. A tiny bloodstain has widened on his sleeve.

COLUMBO

A needle prick?

Doctor Amad nods.

Columbo bends over McGray, uncovers the corpse's upper body.

Heavy strangulation marks at the throat decorate McGray's blue face.

Columbo carefully puts the blanket back.

He examines Fineman's sleeping body.

COLUMBO
What's that, Doctor?

He points at Fineman's temple. There's a white fluid matter.

DOCTOR AMAD
Looks like a glue.

COLUMBO
Could you take a sample of that.

DOCTOR AMAD
For what reasons?

COLUMBO
Who know's, Doctor? Who know's...
It might be something that
shouldn't be there, but is.

Columbo steps through the curtain.

Suddenly Columbo returns, raises his index finger.

COLUMBO
Just one more thing.

He gets close to the Doctor.

COLUMBO
Why is it that Miss Green is
already conscious, and Fineman
isn't?

DOCTOR
To be perfectly honest, sir - that
might be another thing that
shouldn't be but is.

Columbo taps his forehead. He turns and walks off.

INT. 707 - ON-BOARD TOILET - NIGHT

Columbo examines the lavatory. He pushes the flushing.

The vacuum's negative pressure howls till the lavatory's flap closes again.

Columbo strokes his head.

COLUMBO

What might be down there? Yeah,
that's how you did it.

INT. 707 - FIRST CLASS CABIN - NIGHT

Columbo sits next to Pamela.

She's still paralyzed.

He writes in his notepad.

COLUMBO

A man with mustache, thick
sideburns, a fedora, sunglasses?

Pamela nods.

COLUMBO

I'll come back to you. You should
try to get some sleep, Miss.

INT. 707 - GALLEY - NIGHT

Columbo stands beside Linda.

COLUMBO

You mean there was a fourth person
booked for the first class.

LINDA

Yes. Mister Samson from American
Airlines.

Columbo writes.

COLUMBO

Samson. American Airlines.

LINDA

He had those odd long sideburns,
sunglasses.

COLUMBO
Did he wear a fedora.

Linda nods.

COLUMBO
That's him.

LINDA
I know his looks were a little strange. But I somehow found him attractive. We took a photo.

COLUMBO
You took a photo of him?

Columbo touches his forehead.

LINDA
Before takeoff he even took a photo of me. We were flirting a little, you know.

COLUMBO
All right, Linda. That's it for now.

Columbo walks away.

He stops. Turns.

His jaw drops. His eyes widen.

LINDA
He touched the camera? Just before the takeoff?

Linda nods. She grabs for the camera that still sits on the shelf as before.

COLUMBO
(screams)
Don't touch that, Miss!

The whole economy class has heard Columbo. Several poke their heads toward the galley.

COLUMBO
Don't touch the camera!

Flight Manager Delany approaches them.

DELANY
Everything okay, Sergeant Columbo?

COLUMBO

We got his definite fingerprints.
Right upon that camera. Get in
contact with Los Angeles. And get
me a plastic bag.

Columbo takes a deep breath.

He pulls out a fat cigar and lights up.

FADE OUT.