

Night And The City

(20th Century Fox, 1992)



Screenplay by Richard Price
Directed by Irvin Winkler
Characters: PHIL (Cliff Gorman)
HARRY (Robert DeNiro)

NOTES: HARRY FABIAN is a fast-talking New York lawyer—an ambulance chaser, a loser. He has concocted a scheme to become a boxing promoter, kicking it off with a big local “fight night” event. He’s convinced it will be a hit, but he’s digging a hole for himself borrowing the money for it, and making enemies. PHIL, HARRY’s sometime friend, a local restaurant owner, has promised to lend HARRY half of the money, saying he’ll give it to HARRY the night of the fight. But it’s a false promise; PHIL knows that HARRY has been having an affair with his wife, Helen. PHIL also knows that Helen plans to leave him and open her own restaurant with a phony liquor license that HARRY procured for her. He sets HARRY up for a fall.

76. INTERIOR. WOLFE TONE—DAY

PHIL at the bar. Only a few customers. Dead hour. HARRY comes down the stairs. PHIL pours him a drink.

HARRY: It’s not good, Phil.

PHIL: What...

HARRY: (cagey) It’s off... I appreciate the loan but ah... save your coin there, Pops.

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PHIL: What...

HARRY: I need twelve grand if I need a dime... the disco I was gonna use? They wanna hold me up for nine now... it’s over... I tried to raise a few more dollars... it’s very tight out there... cheers.

PHIL: (with uncharacteristic mildness) OK... so we’ll make it twelve.

HARRY: (stunned) You’re shittin’ me.

PHIL: Not at all... I want fourteen five back.

HARRY: (light-voiced in disbelief) Phil... you’re OK, you know that?

PHIL: You still gotta wait until the day before or so... it’s a lot of money.

HARRY: Phil... they broke the mold with you.

PHIL: You hear the news?

HARRY: What...

PHIL: (studying him) Helen walked out on me.

HARRY: Aw Jesus! What a cunt!

PHIL: You know what else? She’s opening the Blue Dolphin... that place on Hudson Street?

HARRY: Fuck her! It’s better, you know? It’s better that... if she’s that kind of person to begin with, you know? Aw Christ, man I am really sorry... sorry for her more because hey... a person like that you can always leave them but they, they have to live with themselves all their lives... you know what I mean? You have to live with yourself.

PHIL: (studying him) You make your own bed, right, Harry?

HARRY: (animated) Exactly... now lie in it.

PHIL: (casual, dry) Hey Harry... how did Helen get a liquor license?

HARRY: (shrugging) They’re so fucked up down there—God knows. She lucked out I guess, you know? When you’re hot you’re hot, when you’re not, you can’t give it away.

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PHIL stares at HARRY for a beat. He smiles; a rictus of a grin.

PHIL: Harry... I'm gonna throw you a good luck party... how many kids are fighting. Ten?

HARRY: Twelve.

PHIL: OK... twelve... I'm gonna blow you to a dinner party here the night before... you know, prefight night... it'll be nice publicity... you, Al, the kids.

HARRY: Yeah?

PHIL: Why not... protect my investment... get some publicity maybe... good for the place, too... no booze 'cause of the kids... so... well... look, come in with them Monday night early... they got the weigh-in Tuesday, right? Say six... I'll throw dinner for them, and I'll have the dough for you.

HARRY is buzzy with joy, snapping and clapping.

HARRY: Mister Phil!

PHIL: *De nada.*

HARRY makes for the door and splits. PHIL is alone smoking a cigarette. He picks up the phone.

PHIL: Yeah... State Liquor Authority, please.

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