

DAVE. What's your point?

COLUMBO. Point? I wasn't making any point.

DAVE. (*Slightly nettled.*) It sounded as if you were, and a rather foolish one. You just heard the man admit he had an argument with his wife. He probably still had a chip on his shoulder this morning.

COLUMBO. I was only—

DAVE. (*Interrupting.*) Lieutenant, I told you Doctor Flemming is a friend of mine, a very close friend. I hope he won't be annoyed by tactless remarks, especially at a time like this.

COLUMBO. I'm sorry, Mr. Gordon. I guess I shouldn't have mentioned it.

(*The TELEPHONE rings. They look at it and FLEMING comes slowly from the bedroom. He is apprehensive. DAVE picks it up.*)

DAVE. Hello? No, he's indisposed. You can give me the message. (*Listens, then hangs up and looks somberly at FLEMING.*) Claire passed away a few minutes ago. . . . She was conscious at the end. (*FLEMING stares at him.*) If it's any consolation, Roy, the last thing she called out was your name.

(*FLEMING sinks into a chair, feigning grief. But for a beat there is the flicker of relief on his face.*)

THE LIGHTS GO OUT

END OF SCENE 1