

“THE HANGING STRANGER”
A radio play
Based on the short story by Phillip K. Dick
Written by Jake Lewis

CHARACTERS (in order of vocal appearance):

Loyce

Radio Announcer

Don

Jack

Jenkins

Margaret

Cop 1

Cop 2

Bus Driver

Man

Attendant

Commissioner

Janet

Tommy

Jim

Guard

Mason

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Scene 1

*SFX of LOYCE digging, grunting.*

LOYCE (narrating): The day I saw the hanging stranger had started like any other. Janet had gone downtown to shop and the kids were in school, and then Gods-knows-where. I, meanwhile, had been down in the basement all day, digging out our foundation to repair it. I had lost track of

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time in the work, finding pleasure in the aches and coat of dirt that covered my body.

*SFX of alarm going off.*

LOYCE: Five o'clock. Quittin' time. Well, for *this* job, anyway.

*SFX as he drops the shovel, walks across his yard, up his porch stairs, and into his house.*

LOYCE (narrating): It wasn't bad quality for a 40 year old man replacing the foundation all by himself. With the money I was saving, I could buy that new vase for Janet, who still wasn't home. But I couldn't wait for her. I had just enough time to wash up and get to the store, give the kid a dinner break. Maybe make a sale or two myself. Ha! You need customers for that.

*SFX of water running, washing his hands, patting his neck with a rag, etc.*

*SFX of LOYCE leaving the house, getting in his car, and starting it.*

RADIO ANNOUNCER: --and it's a cool 75 degrees this Halloween night in downtown Pikeville, where the kids are going store-to-store trick or treating. And now, to get you in the holiday spirit, here's a creepy classic.

*SFX of some Halloween song.*

LOYCE (narrating): Of course. There were parking spaces left in front of the store because the whole town was down here trick or treating. How did I forget? Don Ferguson must be going crazy. I'd have to park on the other side of the green and walk over.

*SFX of his car turning, driving.*

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LOYCE (narrating): That was when I saw it.

*SFX of the car suddenly braking.*

LOYCE: What the hell is that hanging from the telephone pole?

*SFX of a car braking suddenly and honking behind him.*

LOYCE: Yeah, yeah.

*SFX of him driving then parking. He gets out of the car, and is heard walking briefly.*

LOYCE (narrating): Maybe it's just a Halloween decoration, I thought. The most realistic one I'd ever seen, though.

*SFX of him running across the grass of the common.*

LOYCE: Don! Don! Get out here!

*SFX of the bell over the door of the shop jingling.*

DON: Ed? What's the matter? I can't just leave a customer standing there--

LOYCE: Do y'see it?

DON: See what, boss?

LOYCE: That! It looks like....no, it *is* a person! Hanging from the pole there!

*SFX of DON lighting a cigarette.*

LOYCE: What the hell is wrong with everybody, just walking past it?

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DON: Take it easy, old man. There must be a good reason, or it wouldn't be there.

LOYCE: A reason! What kind of a reason?

DON: Like the time the Traffic Safety Council put that wrecked Buick there. Some sort of civic thing. How would I know?

*SFX of feet approaching.*

JACK: What's up, boys?

DON: Hey, Jack. How's shoe business?

JACK: You know what they say...

DON & JACK: There's no business like shoe business!

LOYCE: *(totally unaware of their joke)* There's a body hanging from the telephone pole.

JACK: Oh yeah. So there is. Huh!

LOYCE: I'm going to call the cops.

JACK: They must know about it, or otherwise it wouldn't be there.

DON: I got to get back in. Business before pleasure.

*SFX of bell over door.*

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LOYCE: *(beginning to get hysterical)* You see it? You see it hanging there?  
A man's body! A dead man!

JACK: Sure, Ed. I saw it this afternoon when I went out for coffee.

LOYCE: You mean it's been there all afternoon?

JACK: Sure. What's the matter? Have to run. See you later, Ed.

*SFX: Footsteps as JACK moves away.*

*SFX: Crowd sounds, some people briefly commenting on body, but none in a worried or scared way.*

LOYCE: I'm going nuts.

*SFX of LOYCE walking back across the common, horns honking at him as he steps into traffic. He is running again. There is a sound of a collision with another body.*

JENKINS: Watch out, pal! *(realizing)* Oh, hey Ed. Ain't that something?

LOYCE: So you see it too? The man up there.

JENKINS: Sure, how can you miss it? I think that's sort of the point, no?

LOYCE: But...who is he? Why? What does it mean?

JENKINS: Beats me. No one local. They really did a number on him, didn't they?

LOYCE (narrating): The man had been middle-aged. His clothing was ripped and torn, a gray suit, splashed and caked with dried mud. A

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stranger. I had never seen him before. His face was partly turned, away, and in the evening wind he spun a little, turning gently, silently. His skin was gouged and cut. Red gashes, deep scratches of congealed blood. A pair of steel-rimmed glasses hung from one ear, dangling foolishly. His eyes bulged. His mouth was open, tongue thick and ugly blue.

JENKINS: You look like you might faint, Ed. Here, take a seat on this bench where you can get your wits together.

LOYCE: *My wits? More like everyone else's! Just walking by like it's nothing!*

MARGARET: Something wrong?

JENKINS: Ed's not feeling well.

LOYCE: How can you stand here? Don't you see it? For God's sake—

MARGARET: *(nervously)* What's he talking about?

LOYCE: The body! The body hanging there!

CROWD: *(ad-lib)*: Is he sick? It's Ed Loyce. You okay, Ed?

LOYCE: *(screaming)* The body! Let me go! The police! Get the police!

CROWD *(ad-lib)* Ed— Better get a doctor! He must be sick. Or drunk.

LOYCE: Get away from me!

*SFX of LOYCE running, pulling open the door to his store.*

LOYCE: Don! Do something! Don't stand there! Do something! Something's wrong! Something's happened! Things are going on!

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*SFX music crescendo.*

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Scene 2

SFX of a police siren.

COP 1: Name?

LOYCE: Edward C. Loyce. Officer, listen to me. Back there—

COP 1: Address?

LOYCE: 1368 Hurst Road.

COP 1: That here in Pikeville?

LOYCE: That's right. Listen to me. Back there. In the square. Hanging from the telephone pole--

COP 2: Where were you today?

LOYCE: Where?

COP 2: You weren't in your shop, were you?

LOYCE: No. No, I was home. Down in the basement.

COP 1: In the *basement*?

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LOYCE: Digging. A new foundation. Getting out the dirt to pour a cement frame. Why? What has that to do with—

COP 2: Was anybody else down there with you?

LOYCE: No. My wife was downtown. My kids were at school. You mean because I was down there I missed—the explanation? I didn't get in on it? Like everybody else?

COP 1: That's right. You missed the explanation.

LOYCE: Then it's official? The body—it's *supposed* to be hanging there?

COP 2: It's supposed to be hanging there. For everybody to see.

LOYCE: (*with a grin in his voice*) Good Lord. I guess I sort of went off the deep end. I thought maybe something had happened. You know, something like the Ku Klux Klan. Some kind of violence. Communists or Fascists taking over. I'm glad to know it's on the level.

COP 1: It's on the level.

LOYCE: I feel better. I was pretty excited there, for a minute. I guess I got all stirred up. Now that I understand, there's no need to take me in, is there?

There is no response from the cops, just the sound of the siren and outdoor noises.

LOYCE: I should be back at my store. Don hasn't had dinner, and what with the trick or treating... I'm all right, now. No more trouble. Is there any need of—

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COP 2: This won't take long. A short process. Only a few minutes.

LOYCE: I hope it's short.

SFX of the car slowing and braking for a stoplight.

COP 1: Never make this light. It's like it has something against me.

LOYCE: Funny, getting excited like that and—

SFX of LOYCE throwing the door open and making a run for it. Cars' brakes squeal, horns honk, people shout at him as he tries to disappear into the crowd.

LOYCE (narrating): I ran through the crowd that had suddenly converged to swallow me, and burst through a hardware store. I couldn't stop. I barreled down the narrow aisles, past the alarmed clerks, and into the storage room at the back.

SFX of him running through the store and out the back door.

LOYCE (narrating): Now the aches I felt, which had been an odd sort of pleasure earlier in the day, were wracking my body. I had to stop. In the alley behind the store, I paused to catch my breath.

SFX of LOYCE panting heavily.

LOYCE (narrating): I think I had gotten away. No one had followed me out here. Who were those guys? Definitely not cops. You can't own a small business in this town for 25 years and not know everyone on the police force. And how come no one else seemed to care what was going on?

SFX of a police siren winding down and stopping.

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LOYCE (narrating): In the panic of my flight from...whoever those cops had been and the ensuing crowd, I had not realized where I had ended up. The Hall of Justice! I had run right to them! had to keep moving. It wasn't safe here.

SFX as he slowly creeps away. As he does so, a humming noise begins to get louder.

LOYCE: Dear God. What in the world is that noise?!?

SFX of him creeping closer, the sound getting louder.

LOYCE (narrating): Above the City Hall was a patch of darkness, a cone of gloom denser than the surrounding night. A prism of black that spread out and was lost into the sky. I struggled frantically to close my ears, my mind, to shut out the sound.

SFX: The sound gets louder yet, pulsating.

LOYCE (narrating): The splotch of darkness, hanging over the City Hall. Darkness so thick it seemed almost solid. In the vortex something moved. Flickering shapes. Things, descending from the sky, pausing momentarily above the City Hall, fluttering over it in a dense swarm and then dropping silently onto the roof. Shapes. Fluttering shapes from the sky. From the crack of darkness that hung above..

SFX of flickering, dropping, noises.

LOYCE: It's them!

SFX of music crescendo.

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### Scene 3

LOYCE (narrating): I don't know how long I stood there and watched, crouched behind a sagging fence in a pool of scummy water. They were landing. Coming down in groups, landing on the roof of the City Hall and disappearing inside. They had wings. Like giant insects of some kind. They flew and fluttered and came to rest—and then crawled crab-fashion, sideways, across the roof and into the building.

*SFX of the above description.*

LOYCE (narrating): I was sickened. And fascinated. Cold night wind blew around me and I shuddered. I was tired, dazed with shock. On the front steps of the City Hall were men, standing here and there. Groups of men coming out of the building and halting for a moment before going on. Were there more of them?

*SFX of men talking in hushed voices.*

LOYCE (narrating): It didn't seem possible. What I saw descending from the black chasm weren't men. They were alien—from some other world, some other dimension. Sliding through this slit, this break in the shell of the universe. Entering through this gap, winged insects from another realm of being.

*SFX of feet moving to cars.*

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LOYCE (narrating): A few of those...things...moved toward a waiting car. I couldn't watch anymore, shutting my eyes in horror. My senses reeled as I felt my legs start to give way beneath me. I hung on tight to the sagging fence.

*SFX of cars driving off.*

LOYCE (narrating): Pseudo-men. Imitation men. Insects with the ability to disguise themselves as men. Like other insects familiar to Earth. Protective coloration. Mimicry.

*SFX of a winged creature flying about.*

LOYCE (narrating): I pulled myself away and got slowly to my feet. It was night. The alley was totally dark. But maybe they could see in the dark. Maybe darkness made no difference to them.

*SFX of LOYCE quietly leaving the alley.*

LOYCE (narrating): I moved out onto the street. Men and women flowed past, but not so many, now. At the bus-stops stood waiting groups. A huge bus lumbered along the street, its lights flashing in the evening gloom.

*SFX of bus approaching and braking.*

LOYCE (narrating): I quickly moved forward, pushing my way among those waiting, for fear of being caught.

*SFX of people being pushed out of the way and LOYCE moving down the bus aisle.*

LOYCE (narrating): I took a seat in the rear, by the door. A moment later the bus moved into life and rumbled down the street.

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*SFX of the bus accelerating. A Halloween song comes on over the PA.*

LOYCE (narrating): I studied the people around me. Dulled, tired faces. People going home from work. Quite ordinary faces. None of them paid any attention to me. All sat quietly, sunk down in their seats, jiggling with the motion of the bus. The man sitting next to me unfolded a newspaper. He began to read the sports section, his lips moving. An ordinary man. Blue suit. Tie. A businessman, or a salesman. On his way home to his wife and family.

*SFX of newspaper pages turning.*

LOYCE (narrating): Across the aisle, a young woman, perhaps twenty. Dark eyes and hair, a package on her lap. Nylons and heels. Red coat and white angora sweater. Gazing absently ahead of her, humming quietly.

*SFX of her humming.*

LOYCE (narrating): A high school boy in jeans and black jacket. A great triple-chinned woman with an immense shopping bag loaded with packages and parcels. Her thick face dim with weariness. Ordinary people. The kind that rode the bus every evening. Going home to their families. To dinner. Going home—with their minds dead. Controlled, filmed over with the mask of an alien being that had appeared and taken possession of them, their town, their lives. But not mine. I had happened to be deep in the cellar instead of in the store. Somehow, I had been overlooked. They had missed me. Their control wasn't perfect, foolproof. Maybe there were others. I felt a sense of hope flicker in me.. They weren't omnipotent. They had made a mistake, not got control of me. Their net, their field of control,

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had passed over me. I had emerged from my cellar as I had gone down. Apparently their power-zone was limited.

*SFX of bus moving.*

LOYCE (narrating): A few seats down the aisle a man was watching me. A slender man, with dark hair and a small mustache. Well-dressed, brown suit and shiny shoes. A book between his small hands. He was watching me, studying me intently. Was he one of them? Or—another they had missed? He was shrewd. A man too shrewd for them—or one of the things itself, an alien insect from beyond.

*SFX of the bus stopping.*

LOYCE (narrating): The bus halted. An elderly man got on slowly and dropped his token into the box. He moved down the aisle and took a seat opposite Loyce.

*SFX of the main paying and shuffling down the aisle.*

LOYCE (narrating): The elderly man caught the sharp-eyed man's gaze. For a split second something passed between them. A look rich with meaning.

*SFX of the bus moving.*

LOYCE (narrating): I knew at the moment, more than anything in my life, I had to get off this bus. So I ran to the door, stepped down into the well, and yanked the emergency door release. The rubber door swung open.

BUS DRIVER: Hey! What the hell—

*SFX of the bus braking suddenly.*

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LOYCE (narrating): I squirmed through. The bus was slowing down. There were houses on all sides. A residential district, lawns and tall apartment buildings. Behind me, the bright-eyed man had leaped up. The elderly man was also on his feet. They were coming after me

*SFX of the men calling and coming after him.*

LOYCE (narrating): I leaped and hit the pavement with terrific force, rolling against the curb. Pain lapped over me. Pain and a vast tide of blackness. Desperately, I tried to fight it off as I struggled to my knees and then slid down again. The bus had stopped. People were getting off.

*SFX of crowd noises and LOYCE breathing in a panic.*

LOYCE (narrating): I groped around. My fingers closed over something. A rock, lying in the gutter. Somehow, from adrenaline or fear, I crawled to my feet, grunting with pain. A shape loomed before me. A man, the bright-eyed man with the book.

MAN: You there. Relax.

LOYCE (narrating) Before I knew it, I kicked at him.

*SFX of the MAN gasping and falling. Then the noise of LOYCE bringing the rock down on him. The MAN screamed and tried to roll away.*

MAN: Stop! For God's sake listen—

*SFX of the rock being brought down again, followed by a hideous crunching sound. The MAN's voice is cut off and dissolves in a bubbling wail.*

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LOYCE: You all! Don't touch me! Leave me alone! Or suffer the same fate!

*SFX of Loyce scrambling up and back.*

LOYCE (narrating): I ran down the sidewalk, up a driveway. None of them followed me. They had stopped and were bending over the inert body of the man with the book, the bright-eyed man who had come after me. Had he made a mistake?

CROWD (*ad-libbed*): He killed him! He's dead! Catch him!

LOYCE (narrating): it was too late to worry about that. I had to get out—away from them. Out of Pikeville, beyond the crack of darkness, the rent between their world and mine. I had to find Janet and the kids before it was too late.

*Music reaches crescendo.*

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Scene 4

SFX of door being flung open.

JANET: Ed! What is it? What--

LOYCE: Pull down the shades. Quick.

JANET: But--

LOYCE: Do as I say. Who else is here besides you?

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JANET: Nobody. Just the twins. They're upstairs in their room. What's happened? You look so strange. Why are you home?

SFX of door being locked and LOYCE tramping through the house.

SFX of a knife being pulled from a butcher block.

LOYCE: Sharp. Plenty sharp.

SFX of him walking to another room.

LOYCE: Listen to me. I don't have much time. They know I escaped and they'll be looking for me.

JANET: Escaped? Who?

LOYCE: The town has been taken over. They're in control. I've got it pretty well figured out. They started at the top, at the City Hall and police department. What they did with the real humans they—

JANET: What are you talking about?

LOYCE: We've been invaded. From some other universe, some other dimension. They're insects. Mimicry. And more. Power to control minds. Your mind.

JANET: My mind?

LOYCE: Their entrance is here, in Pikeville. They've taken over all of you. The whole town—except me. We're up against an incredibly powerful enemy, but they have their limitations. That's our hope. They're limited! They can make mistakes!

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JANET: I don't understand, Ed. You must be insane.

LOYCE: Insane? No. Just lucky. If I hadn't been down in the basement I'd be like all the rest of you.

JANET: Ed--

LOYCE: But I can't stand here talking. Get your coat.

JANET: My coat?

LOYCE: We're getting out of here. Out of Pikeville. We've got to get help. Fight this thing. They can be beaten. They're not infallible. It's going to be close—but we may make it if we hurry. Come on!

JANET: Ed! You're hurting me!

LOYCE: Get your coat and call the twins. We're all leaving. Don't stop to pack. There's no time for that."

JANET: Where are we going?

SFX of drawer being pulled open and contents spilling. Then, the noise of a map being unfolded.

LOYCE: They'll have the highway covered, of course. But there's a back road. To Oak Grove. I got onto it once. It's practically abandoned. Maybe they'll forget about it.

JANET: The old Ranch Road? Good Lord—it's completely closed. Nobody's supposed to drive over it.

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LOYCE: I know. That's our best chance. Now call down the twins and let's get going. Your car is full of gas, isn't it?

JANET: "The Chevy? I had it filled up yesterday afternoon. Ed, I--"

LOYCE: Call the twins!

SFX of door unlocking.

LOYCE (narrating): I peered out. Nothing stirred. No sign of life. All right so far.

JANET: *(voice wavering)* Come on downstairs. We're—going out for awhile.

TOMMY: Now?

LOYCE: *(barking)* Hurry up. Get down here, both of you.

TOMMY: I was doing my homework. We're starting fractions. Miss Parker says if we don't get this done—

LOYCE: You can forget about fractions. Where's Jim?

TOMMY: He's coming.

JIM: *(calling)* What's up, Dad?

LOYCE: We're going for a ride.

JIM: *(calling)* A ride? Where?

LOYCE: Janet, we'll leave the lights on. And the TV set. Go turn it on. So they'll think we're still—"

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SFX of a buzzing noise.

LOYCE (narrating): I dropped to my knees, the butcher knife out. I suddenly became sick to my stomach as I saw it coming down the stairs, wings a blur of motion as it aimed itself. It still bore a vague resemblance to Jimmy. It was small, a baby one. A brief glimpse—the thing hurtling at me, cold, multi-lensed inhuman eyes. Wings, body still clothed in yellow T-shirt and jeans, the mimic outline still stamped on it. A strange half-turn of its body as it reached me. What was it doing?

SFX of a sting.

LOYCE (narrating): A stinger. I stabbed wildly at it. It retreated, buzzing frantically. I rolled and crawled toward the door. Tommy and Janet stood still as statues, faces blank. Watching without expression. I stabbed again. This time the knife connected.

SFX of a screech. Then the noise of it hitting and wall and falling.

LOYCE (narrating): Something lapped through my mind. A wall of force, energy, an alien mind probing into me. I was suddenly paralyzed. The mind entered my own, touched against me briefly, shockingly. An utterly alien presence, settling over me. And then it flickered out as the thing collapsed in a broken heap on the rug.

Noises stop.

LOYCE (narrating): It was dead. I turned it over with his foot. It was an insect, a fly of some kind. Yellow T-shirt, jeans. My son...Jimmy.... I closed

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my mind tight. It was too late to think about that. I scooped up my knife and headed toward the door.

SFX of door opening.

LOYCE (narrating): I looked back at my wife and son. Janet and Tommy stood stone-still, neither of them moving.

SFX of door slamming and LOYCE racing down the porch steps.

LOYCE (narrating): The car was out. I'd never get through. They'd be waiting for him. It was ten miles on foot. Ten long miles over rough ground, gulleys and open fields and hills of uncut forest. I'd have to go alone.

Music reaches a crescendo.

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## Scene 5

\_\_\_\_\_ *SFX of a rooster crowing.*

LOYCE (narrating): The early morning sunlight was blinding. I had traveled all night, and finally halted, gasping for breath. Sweat ran down in my eyes. My clothing was torn, shredded by the brush and thorns through which I had crawled. Ten miles—on my hands and knees. Crawling, creeping through the night. My shoes were mud-caked. I was scratched and limping, utterly exhausted. But ahead of me lay Oak Grove.

*SFX of him taking a deep breath.*

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LOYCE (narrating): Twice I stumbled and fell, picking myself up and trudging on. My ears rang. Everything receded and wavered. But I was there. I had got out, away from Pikeville.

*SFX of him walking, stumbling.*

LOYCE (narrating): A farmer in a field gaped at me. From a house a young woman watched in wonder. I reached the road and turned onto it. Ahead of me was a gasoline station and a drive-in. A couple of trucks, some chickens pecking in the dirt, a dog tied with a string.

*SFX of dog barking, chickens pecking.*

LOYCE: Thank God. I didn't think I was going to make it. They followed me most of the way. I could hear them buzzing. Buzzing and flitting around behind me.

ATTENDANT: What happened? You in a wreck? A hold-up?

LOYCE: They have the whole town. The City Hall and the police station. They hung a man from the lamppost. That was the first thing I saw. They've got all the roads blocked. I saw them hovering over the cars coming in. About four this morning I got beyond them. I knew it right away. I could feel them leave. And then the sun came up.

ATTENDANT: (*nervously*) You're out of your head. I better get a doctor.

LOYCE: Get me into Oak Grove. We've got to get started—cleaning them out. Got to get started right away.

*Music crescendos.*

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Scene 6

LOYCE: And then the Attendant called you, and that brings me here.

SFX of a tape recorder being stopped.

COMMISSIONER: Cigarette? Looks like you need one.

LOYCE: You don't believe me.

COMMISSIONER: Suit yourself.

SFX of cigarette being lit, inhaled, exhaled.

COMMISSIONER: I believe you," he said abruptly.

LOYCE: Thank God.

COMMISSIONER: So you got away. You were down in your cellar instead of at work. A freak chance. One in a million.

SFX of LOYCE drinking coffee.

LOYCE: I have a theory. Thanks for this, by the way.

COMMISSIONER: What is it?

LOYCE: About them. Who they are. They take over one area at a time. Starting at the top—the highest level of authority. Working down from there in a widening circle. When they're firmly in control they go on to the next town. They spread, slowly, very gradually. I think it's been going on for a long time.

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COMMISSIONER: A long time?

LOYCE: Thousands of years. I don't think it's new.

COMMISSIONER: Why do you say that?

LOYCE: When I was a kid.... A picture they showed us in Bible League. A religious picture—an old print. The enemy gods, defeated by Jehovah. Moloch, Beelzebub, Moab, Baalin, Ashtaroth—

COMMISSIONER: So?

LOYCE: They were all represented by figures. Beelzebub was represented as—a giant fly.

COMMISSIONER: (*grunting*) An old struggle.

LOYCE: They've been defeated. The Bible is an account of their defeats. They make gains—but finally they're defeated.

COMMISSIONER: Why defeated?

LOYCE: They can't get everyone. They didn't get me. And they never got the Hebrews. The Hebrews carried the message to the whole world. The realization of the danger. The two men on the bus. I think they understood. Had escaped, like I did.

Silence.

LOYCE: I killed one of them. I made a mistake. I was afraid to take a chance.

THE HANGING STRANGER (a radio play)

Based on the short story by Phillip K. Dick

Adapted by Jake Lewis

COMMISSIONER: Yes, they undoubtedly had escaped, as you did. Freak accidents. But the rest of the town was firmly in control.

LOYCE: Yes.

COMMISSIONER: Well, Mr. Loyce. You seem to have figured everything out.

LOYCE: Not everything. The hanging man. The dead man hanging from the telephone pole. I don't understand that. Why? Why did they deliberately hang him there?

COMMISSIONER: That would seem simple. *(Beat.)* Bait.

LOYCE: Bait? What do you mean?

COMMISSIONER: To draw you out. Make you declare yourself. So they'd know who was under control—and who had escaped.

LOYCE: *(horried)* Then they expected failures! They anticipated— They were ready with a trap.

COMMISSIONER: And you showed yourself. You reacted. You made yourself known.

SFX of door opening.

COMMISSIONER: Come along, Loyce. There's a lot to do. We must get moving. There's no time to waste.

SFX of chair scraping back.

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LOYCE: (*mumbling*) And the man. Who was the man? I never saw him before. He wasn't a local man. He was a stranger. All muddy and dirty, his face cut, slashed—

COMMISSIONER: (*softly*) Maybe you'll understand that, too. Come along with me, Mr. Loyce. Right this way.

Music crescendos.

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### Scene 7

\_\_\_\_\_ *SFX of a bank vault closing, a person walking up a flight of steps.*

GUARD: There y'are, Mr. Mason! Was wondering if you was ever gonna' come up out of the vault today.

MASON: It takes a lot longer to plan out a bank vault than you'd think, Clarence. But glad to be done for the day.

*SFX of door opening, and MASON walking to his car. He halts his steps.*

MASON: What the hell is that? Clarence!

GUARD: Sir, everything ok?

MASON: There. In front of the police station. There's some...bundle hanging there.

GUARD: Why don't you just get home to your wife and kids, eh? I'm sure there's a nice hot dinner waiting for you on the table.

THE HANGING STRANGER (a radio play)  
Based on the short story by Phillip K. Dick  
Adapted by Jake Lewis

MASON: But there's a man. On that pole.

GUARD: Fascinating, isn't it?

MASON: Yet...no one seems to care.

GUARD:Go home now. You hear?

*SFX of GUARD whistling as he walks away.*

MASON: Yes. Yes, I think I will....

*He unlocks his car and drives off, as music crescendos.*

THE END