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Scene Analysis #1
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In this magnificent scene from 1944's *Double Indemnity*, the editing process is so discreet and so subtle that one would not even think to stop and take a look if one weren't told to. The techniques used in this scene alone will go on to be a trademark of film noir as well as the classical Hollywood editing system.

Throughout the entirety of the scene, there seems to be roughly two, maybe three setups. The first is the exterior moment when Walter pulls up to the front of the house and walks to the front door. The second setup is where Walter walks into the house and is greeted by the nanny as well as the stunning Phyllis Dietrichson, wife of the man he's originally come to talk to. The third setup takes place in the living room where Walter is joined by Phyllis to talk about her husband's insurance policies. With these three setups scattered around one single location, the editor has much to work with and does a fine job of intercutting all three locations accordingly.

For the duration of the scene, I counted up to 23 complete cuts and transitions. Many are match cuts but there are a few different ones thrown in for good measure. The very first cut we see in the scene is a dissolve from Walter walking on the pathway to Walter being greeted at the door by the nanny. This style of editing would be highly unconventional in a modern film today but it was a hallmark of the classical Hollywood editing style. Even at the end of the scene, you can see that the scene is about to dissolve from Walter saying goodbye to Phyllis to Walter brooding his thoughts openly while driving his car. Other editing techniques are used to create dialogue; when Phyllis is talking down from the top of the stairs to Walter, one can clearly see that two reels of

film were shot, one on Walter and one on Phyllis. The editor then intercut the two going back and forth, making for a nifty little sequence.

As far as soundtracks go, there seems to be one predominately running throughout the interior sequences. As for the exterior beginning of the scene, there are most likely two, maybe even three soundtracks running simultaneously (Walter's narration, kids playing in the street, the hustle and bustle of Hollywood in the valley below, etc.)

The pacing of the five-minute scene is exemplary in that it touches almost all speed ranges. In the beginning, the editing moves right along as Walter saunters up to the front door. Once he becomes engaged in conversation with Phyllis, the editing quickens up quite a bit, with each line of dialogue cueing a cut from one character to the other. The most interesting pacing technique is used when Phyllis comes downstairs after changing her dress and sits in the living room long with Walter to talk about her husband. While Walter is explaining some things, Phyllis gets up to pace back and forth. The camera stays on her while we hear what Walter's saying, this is important because we're seeing Phyllis' reaction to what Walter says. There's a slight moment to "breathe" when Walter says he's been in the insurance business for eleven years; the edit quickly cuts to him uttering the phrase then immediately cuts back to Phyllis' pacing. A genius procedure in editorial pacing.