REAL COUNTERFEIT WITCHES
Of The Twenty-First Century

BY

ANONYMOUS

BASED ON

BLESSED PHOEBE HARRIS & HER EXECUTION DAY

June 21, 1786

*

Name: S.S. ROGUES
FADE IN:

SUPER: 2011, ANTELOPE VALLEY, CALIFORNIA

EXT. JOHN’S BACKYARD GARDEN – DAY

Footfalls on the sunny path into the ARBOR where the sun only bleeds through momentarily, then subdued, hidden.

The shaded passage feels moist to the eye, canopied by fervent vines. They cling so tight to the braided wooden structure. Every wavy tendril THROBS with life.

The footfalls stop. A rich silence. SQUAK! A raven sounds, flutters above, a ruffled rest, atop the canopy.

SERIES OF SHOTS

--The raven holds a silver coin, drops it through a gap
--Inside the arbor, it falls slowly, spinning
--Lands as a King George III Threepence

LOU-LOU (V.O.)
(British accent)
Stop following me into the future.
Don’t cling like your ruddy vines.

John’s hand picks the coin to pocket. A MELODY leads to:

SUPER: 1786, LONDON

EXT. LONDON, NO. 17 – DRURY LANE – NIGHT

Rain hails against the black building, its wet shell dressed in satiny blue streaks of light.

A man presses a struggling female into the shelter of No. 17’s doorstep. The grip of hand. Shifting shadows.

BREATHING. A couple of drunk PROSTITUTES step past, laughing. They peek at the couple they recognize.

PROSTITUTE

Off go the prostitutes. Chat melts into the distance. Faint light reveals the couple’s faces.

JOHN MAYLORD, a rich lord of lust, steals in for a kiss.
Red haired LOU-LOU SHELOTTI: her pale skin seems to weaken the night, her green eyes flash. She turns away. Water pools on the ground. Water pools in John’s eyes.

He sees Lou-Lou’s face changing: Lou-Lou the skimpy brunette, the yellow haired bird, the stone face love torn wench-- all Lou-Lous with a smear of white and black hair that’s course and tangled like the vines.

LOU-LOU
Sky farmer. Counterfeit.

FLASHCUT:

INT. HIDDEN COINING ROOM, LONDON, FLASHBACK - NIGHT

John proudly reveals a machine, an oversized meat grinder, diamonds on the front. He places iron beads into a crucible at the top, then cranks a shaft.

LOU-LOU (V.O.)
Drawing the king’s picture!

The beads begin to glow a hot red. He presses down the lid which he then locks in place, presses a lever. He waits. Pulls another lever. A CLINK. A compartment at the bottom of the machine opens with a jangle. A pick up.

JOHN
A throopnee.

FLASHCUT:

DRURY LANE

Lou-Lou throws a whack of coins onto the street.

JOHN
Dinging away our bread?!

FLASHCUT:

COINING ROOM

He hands the coin to her. She looks closely at it. KING GEORGE and DEI GRATIA

JOHN
You can do others, too. Sixpence, shillings...
LOU-LOU
Me? Wherya ramp this rattletrap?

Lou-Lou studies the machine. Note the inscription on front: A-PELLA MANIFESTO I. Letters blur.

DISSOLVE TO:

THE ARBOR

John feels the vines, places his head lovingly near them.

LOU-LOU (V.O.)
You and your magic arbors, your obsession with vines.

JOHN (V.O.)
Vines are like a strong will. They don’t care which way they travel, they push and they grow.

A gentle rain falls atop the green canopy.

DREAM FLASH - COINING ROOM - NIGHT

Lou-Lou presses counterfeit coin when THREE MEN break through the door, hauling her to judgement.

DRURY LANE

BLACK. RAIN. LAUGHTER... MORE PROSTITUTES...

Lou-Lou’s eyes fierce, afraid.

LOU-LOU
No more coin! No more us!

Her voice turns croupy, scraping the air with ill health.

LOU-LOU
I dreamt they came for me...

The rain stops. BLACKNESS. Lou-Lou enters the blackness alone, a cone of light upon her, she trembles. The SUCK of one last good breath.

A cord around her neck, tightened. She’s raised from the ground to hang-- slowly. Choking.
LOU-LOU of 2011 startles awake from her afternoon snooze. We only see her from the back. The room is delightfully messy though pained by the strum of a banjo-playing blues singer, seeking repose in song. She turns over:

This Lou is raven like, her coal eyes obviously upset. Curious white/black strip of hair, again. She sweeps it out of her face, coughs, rubs her neck.

LOU-LOU

Aragetta?!

An antelope slips off in the distance...

LOU-LOU (O.S.)
It’s on my flesh! Can you get me my pills!

...then nothing but barren dry landscape. Waves of heat.

John’s hand places a trinket box on the counter where an Ivy awaits transplant near a pot of dirt.

On the wall, a print of Lou-Lou 1786, the painted lady counterfeiter, pale as on that rainy night, not a tinge of fear. Lou the peaceful, pre the press of phoney coins.

John’s shadow moves over the print. He brushes his hand over the masterpiece glass.

John removes a tiny wax marble from the trinket box, places it in a bottle. Caps and shakes it. He delights in the sound of the rattle. It POPS like corn. He removes the cap and pours the resulting beads into a bowl. CLINK-CLINK. Then into the microwave:

Moments later the old MELODY blooms in the microwave.

John opens the door. There, a miniature 1786 Lou-Lou Doll. Close on the machine’s front shows silver letters. Not a microwave, but an APPLE MANIFESTO XLR-8.

Heat waves break the otherwise monotonous terrain.
An ugly electric sound plays on the aimless horizon until Lou-Lou’s old shack enters frame. The ugly sound marries the MELODY from John’s Apple Manifesto-- it targets:

EXT./INT. LOU-LOU’S SHACK - DAY

The shoddy place looks like a bad garage sale. On the porch, tin cans hang from the roof. Wind brings their clangs in rhythm with the MELODY that overtakes the banjo until it stops entirely.

    LOU-LOU
    Aragetta, turn down that music at once!

Rampage. Loud scuffs from fluffy-slippered angry feet. Face of fire, she throws the door. Music blares.

INT. ARAGETTA’S ROOM - DAY

Neat little space decidedly female. An open laptop sits cold in the corner, apparently off.

    LOU-LOU
    You know that music reminds me--

Lou-Lou opens her eyes. The music is silenced.

    LOU-LOU
    Aragetta?

No Aragetta. Lou-Lou looks down. A NOTE she reads aloud.

    LOU-LOU
    Went to Antelope Hill to scone poor Benny Malone. We can use the cash. Hope sleep was good. Your very best friend, Aragetta.

The stunned Lou-Lou looks around the empty room.

INT. JOHN’S KITCHEN - DAY

John lifts the Lou-Lou Doll, places her in his pocket.

    JOHN
    Here now Lou-Lou.
INT. LOU-LOU’S SHACK – DAY

Lou-Lou appears like a bird, perched on an unseen branch. She turns slowly around, listening for a predator.

LOU-LOU
Aragetta, are you playing tricks?

EXT./INT. CALIFORNIA DESERT, MOTEL ROOM – DAY

Aragetta as a good prostitute. Poor Benny Malone with the wilted look of a man whose wife crafts doilies, but won’t

BENNY
Go down for me Aragetta.

ARAGETTA
But Aragetta wants to play.

She reaches inside her satin bag.

INT. ARAGETTA’S ROOM – DAY

Lou-Lou snaps her eyes, heady sensory uptake slowed.

LOU-LOU
What am I saying-- of course she’s turning tricks. What else?

Lou-Lou turns in circles, analyzing the room.

LOU-LOU
But I’m sure I heard John’s music.

She laughs, shrugging it off.

LOU-LOU
There’s no way he could find me. I cast a perfect stealth. Unless...

Lou-Lou exits, frantic--

INT. LOU-LOU’S KITCHEN – DAY

--to her own APPLE MANIFESTO, a pretty pink thing. She punches some numbers on the front. It jingles a tune that whirls out a FALLING DEAD SOUND before flashing:

EXPIRY DATE COMPLETED – SEPTEMBER 2010
LOU-LOU
What?! No stealth?!

INT. JOHN’S KITCHEN – DAY

John drops a sugar cube delightfully into a delicate china tea cup, his careful hand stirs it with the smallest of spoons. Done, he plays with the spoon, springing it happily up and down with measured grace...

He alternates his thoughts from the Arbor to his tea:

ARBOR

John speaks to a twisted vine, handling it like a woman.

JOHN
I need a new angle. Not coins.

KITCHEN

He peruses an old book on his E-Reader. Pictures of regal LOVELY LADIES, gowned, and holding parasols. He hums that melody while playing with a cord. He twines it ‘round his precious Ivy-- on to its miniature trellis.

INT. ARAGETTA’S ROOM – DAY

Lou-Lou pulls at her neck as if something is there. She sinks to a strange reverie, falls to the floor, apparently asleep. The computer flashes an advertising:

WANTED: REAL WITCHES OF THE 21st CENTURY

Lou-Lou awakes. Sees the flashing ad. She gets up and clicks it. An artificial black suited AD MAN spouts to the camera, surrounded by purple mauve bottles and jars of LOVELY LADY BEAUTY PRODUCTS.

AD MAN
Our company seeks energetic real witches to launch our Lovely Lady Beauty Products...

The look of “wha” on Lou-Lou’s face.

LOU-LOU
Madness! As if a real witch is going to reveal herself.

Lou-Lou prances around the room.
LOU-LOU
Here I am everyone! Come and take me away to the staay-a-ke!
What a bunch of rubbish!

But the Ad Man isn’t finished: Handsome, less artificial.

AD MAN
Are you the sexy witchy babe we’re looking for?

Lou-Lou strokes her hair.

AD MAN
Want to make a difference?

LOU-LOU
Well, I have been cooped up here a lot lately. (irked) Maybe Aragetta’s been stealing business. I never did trust a best friend.

AD MAN
Be all the witch you can be.

LOU-LOU
He’s right!

EXT./INT. OFFICE, LOVELY LADY BEAUTY PRODUCTS – DAY

Glamorous Hollywood office, walls a soft lavender. Lou-Lou follows the leader. The leader is the odd looking receptionist, WANDA WUFFUL, 20s. Very unattractive.

WANDA
My name’s Wanda Wufful by the way.

She shows off her name tag. Lou-Lou does a smile-nod.

WANDA
I think you will make a wonderful Lovely Lady. Just like me!

Lou-Lou’s grin says “ugly?” Wanda Wufful spots a brown package the size of a shoe box on a nearby shelf.

WANDA
Nobody opens the mail anymore?

She grabs the package and exits.
Glass shelves glimmer with Lovely Lady Products. Lou-Lou drinks it in until she catches sight of herself in the mirror: Her black/white stripe. She searches fast: A Lovely Lady BOX HAT and veil she grabs and snugs it on.

-- John enters from the back Wee-Wee room, pulling up his zipper. He wears SHADES and BEARD.

JOHN
It sure feels good to wag the dog.

LOU-LOU
I think maybe I have the wrong office. I’m looking for the person in charge of hiring.

JOHN
I’m the InterviewER if you’re the InterviewEE.

He cricks his head in scrutiny.

JOHN
Hold on one moment. A call.

He whips out (thank god) his phone. Lou-Lou tinkers a bit, then proceeds to the adjoining display office. John watches cagily from the side, eyeing her up and down.

He calls up Lou-Lou pictures, sliding his finger over the screen. Various Lou-Lous glide past until: Lou-Lou 1786. Red hair, pale skin, clear green eyes.

DISPLAY OFFICE

Lou-Lou peruses the goodies on the shelves. She inspects the lipsticks, spritzes perfume, sniffs the air in audible chuffs and liberally applies lotions.

John toddles quietly in to see Lou-Lou’s back turned away from him, still inspecting the products.

As Lou-Lou is about to pull down a bottle of Lovely Lady Shampoo, she stops. She’s that bird again, perched and listening. She shivers with a chilled spine, then turns:

LOU-LOU
You were watching me.

JOHN
You are who I think you are?

LOU-LOU
Who do you think I am?
JOHN
Well who do you think I am?

Her gaze zeroes: coin on table. Too clear. Wanda enters.

LOU-LOU
It’s very hazy, but I remember
Aragetta brought you ‘round our place one night. Sconed much?

Lou-Lou watches as he covers his ringless finger.

JOHN
Please don’t tell my wife. Yes, that was me. With Ara...betta.

LOU-LOU
That’s a clanker. You never even met her.

WANDA
Sorry to disturb--

JOHN
It is you.

LOU-LOU
What are you fobbing off now?

JOHN
This job is only open to a Real Witch of the Twenty-First Century.

LOU-LOU
How dare you!

Lou-Lou shoves past, sits in his chair, assumes control.

WANDA
(holding a puny rattletrap)
I hitched the new APPLE MANIFESTO XM-1000. I pushed a bad button?

Lights flicker out. The MELODY transmorgifies...

EXT. CORK AND THISTLE PUB - DRURY LANE, LONDON - NIGHT

John, Lou-Lou, Aragetta, Benny, Wanda-- in rogue attire. John pulls coins from his pocket, a gesture of goodwill on his open palm. Look: a pub. They enter on good times.

FADE OUT: