

The Coverups

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. ELEGANT SUBURBAN HOME - EARLY MORNING (FALL 1995)

INT. KITCHEN

A uniformed SERVANT places a loaded, delectable breakfast plate before preoccupied ERIC BLOOM. A balding, chunky, jowly man in his mid-50s, Eric's scowl is on the verge of cracking his lower jaw.

He pushes the plate away, adjusts his ill-fitting toupee.

ERIC BLOOM

I'm not a man of the arts,
Camille. I've got no business
being the director of an art
museum.

CAMILLE BLOOM, trim and buxom, ten years his junior, sits across from her husband, china coffee cup in hand. The same servant places a small plate bearing a solitary piece of dry toast before her, then retreats.

Morning light streams into the breakfast nook, illuminates Camille's orangey red, teased-out hair.

CAMILLE BLOOM

Eric, you had no business managing
a chain of fifty grocery stores
for twenty-five years, either, but
you did it.

Eric reaches, plucks a strip of bacon from his plate, takes a bite, grimaces, tosses the remainder back.

ERIC BLOOM

That was different, Camille. It
was my family's business. When my
brother died, I had a duty to fill
in for him. In time, I grew into
it, and by the last year I nearly
enjoyed it.

He nervously fusses with the toupee again, scratches scalp beneath it.

Camille dismissively waves her bejeweled, manicured hand, as she sips coffee. She puts the cup down with recognizable force.

CAMILLE BLOOM

This situation is not very different. Andrew Carr dies in a freak water-skiing accident and the Cleveland Museum of Fine Arts board votes you in as the interim director. What is so horrible?

ERIC BLOOM

I feel like a fish out of water. I only consented to be on the board at all, due to your pushing -- oh, excuse me, 'suggestion.' Personally, I can't tell a Picasso from a pistachio and I'm fine with that.

Camille stands, hands the plate with the uneaten toast back to the servant.

CAMILLE BLOOM

Well, you should not be. Art enriches our lives; it provides social status; it says something about--

ERIC BLOOM

Spare me the Art Appreciation 101 lecture, Camille.

Eric pulls off the toupee, deposits it atop his breakfast.

CAMILLE BLOOM

Look, it's your first day, Eric. Try to be open-minded. You'll see, you'll come to delight in it.

CUT TO:

EXT. MUSEUM - EARLY MORNING

SIGN: CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, MONA LISA'S GRAND WORLD TOUR, FINAL WEEK

PARKING LOT

Eric drives his Jaguar into the parking spot designated for the director. The car pulls too far forward, badly scraping the lower portion of the fender on the high, concrete curb. Eric, furious, pounds the steering wheel, inflates airbag.

MUSEUM HALLWAY

Briefcase in hand, Eric hurriedly walks through corridors paved with freshly polished stone. His footsteps echo throughout empty hallways, in the hours before the museum's scheduled opening.

He stops, asks directions from an aged SECURITY GUARD, MOS, who points the way. Scowl intact, Eric proceeds.

OFFICE

Seated at an enormous, hand-carved desk, Eric opens and closes drawers, briefly inspects contents. A middle-aged secretary, MISS BASHFORTH, enters and approaches.

MISS BASHFORTH

Is there anything I can assist you with, Mr. Bloom?

Her thin, red lips form a weak smile. Eric pauses his rummaging, looks up.

ERIC BLOOM

In my haste, I seem to have neglected to bring a pen. Do you have one I could borrow, Miss...

MISS BASHFORTH

Bashforth, June Bashforth.

She gently slides a penholder full of pens from the desktop's corner to its center. Bloom nods, shows his appreciation and embarrassment.

INT. MUSEUM - MINUTES LATER

MAIN ENTRANCE

A SECOND SECURITY GUARD, ancient, stands by the still-locked door. Outside, a distinguished, fortyish MAN of medium build and height approaches, makes eye contact, impatiently twirls one end of his thick, black mustache. He wears a tailored suit consistent with his haughty, patrician demeanor. At the guard's prompt, he produces an I.D. and his annoyance.

The guard lets him in, politely pinches the brim of his cap.

SECURITY GUARD #2

Mornin', Mr. Whetsok.

ALBERT WHETSOK strides past the guard without further acknowledgement.

SECURITY GUARD #2 (CONT'D)
 Looking forward to things
 returning to normal, once the Old
 Girl heads back to France, Mr.
 Whetsok?

Whetsok stops in his tracks, shudders, steps back to the guard.

ALBERT WHETSOK
 The 'Old Girl?' I assume you are
 referring to the Mona Lisa,
 whatever your name is.

The guard's jaw drops. He rolls his eyes, realizes he has opened the proverbial can of worms.

SECURITY GUARD #2
 Meant no offense, Mr. Whetsok, and
 m'name is Oscar.

ALBERT WHETSOK
 I could not care less what your
 name is. What is of importance is
 that for a two-month period, the
 cultural backwater that is
 Cleveland, has been blessed by the
 presence of the most important
 artistic icon on Earth's surface.
 And that only happened due to the
 heroic efforts of Andrew Carr,
 who, sadly, is not alive today to
 celebrate the successful
 conclusion to the exhibit.

The security guard clears his throat, looks down. As Whetsok struts away, his left foot slips on the polished floor, momentarily dropping him to one knee. The guard notices, barely remains stone-faced. Whetsok continues on his way, without looking back.

CUT TO:

INT. MUSEUM SECURITY ROOM - MINUTES LATER

A modest-sized room with a formidable door contains what is colloquially named 'The Envelope.' It is a steel, rectangular container mounted on wheels. Its front bears a motorized door that, when lowered, will reveal the Mona Lisa, securely displayed within.

Whetsok, along with two aged SECURITY GUARDS (#3, #4), prepare to wheel The Envelope to its display gallery, prior to the museum's opening.

SECURITY GUARD #3
Care to wheel The Envelope out on your own, for the final day of the exhibition, Mr. Whetsok? The honor is all yours, if you care to, sir.

Whetsok perfunctorily dusts off a suit lapel with the back of his hand.

ALBERT WHETSOK
I do not consider breaking a sweat in this suit a notable honor.

SECURITY GUARD #4
Ain't you the least bit sentimental about the 'Old Girl's' final showing before heading back to the Looover?

Whetsok strikes the palm of his hand to his forehead, then lowers it quickly. He shakes his head in disbelief, stares at the guards with total contempt.

ALBERT WHETSOK
Are you all clones, by any chance?

SECURITY GUARD #4
I've had many a job in my life, sir, but never one with the circus. Shall we proceed?

CUT TO:

INT. MAIN GALLERY - MINUTES LATER

With Whetsok supervising, the two guards align The Envelope evenly behind two brass posts connected by a thick, red velvet rope. When they step away, Whetsok makes a microscopic change in the metal box's position, then steps beside it.

SECURITY GUARD #3
Y'know the security code, sir?

ALBERT WHETSOK
How could I not? It hasn't changed in two months -- everyone but the janitor knows it.

KEYPAD

Whetsok's fingers punch in a numeric code on the keypad mounted on the side of The Envelope, activating and lowering the protective steel plate.

BACK TO SCENE

A whirring sound is heard, as the front plate slowly descends.

At the point where Mona Lisa's forehead is visible, the two security guards depart.

Arms folded, Whetsok, having gone through this procedure numerous times, yawns, turns his gaze to a Renaissance era landscape on display to the left of The Envelope. He takes an additional critic's step towards it, adjusts the slightly cockeyed frame.

MONA LISA

The fully lowered front plate reveals the Mona Lisa giving the finger to whomever views it.

BACK TO SCENE

Whetsok concludes observing the adjacent painting, walks right past the the bogus Mona Lisa, without giving it a glance. Three feet beyond The Envelope, he stops, freezes in his tracks.

INT. MUSEUM MAIN ENTRANCE

Security Guard #2 undoes the door locks to allow anxiously awaiting VISITORS to enter. As the door opens, Security Guard #1 barrels into Guard #2, forces the door shut, re-locks it. Thunderstruck, he can only shake his head. An angry VISITOR pounds the door. Guard #2 turns to Guard #1.

SECURITY GUARD #2
What is it, Fred? The men's
restroom flood again?

BACK TO SCENE

Whetsok, flanked by Guards #3 and #4, who hold him upright, stands, aghast, before the iconic painting. His legs are rubber.

SECURITY GUARD #3
I'm pretty sure that wasn't there
yesterday.

Whetsok hyperventilates, catches his breath, stands firmly,
shakes off the guards. He takes a wobbly step towards the
work.

WHETSOK

Eyes bulging, mouth agape, his expression is one of horror
combined with sorrow. A tear rolls down his cheek.

BACK TO SCENE

Whetsok comes within a foot of the Mona Lisa, scrutinizes.

SECURITY GUARD #4
Mr. Whetsok, sir, we must alert
the director.

SECURITY GUARD #3
That's right! We gotta contact
Mr. Carr.

ALBERT WHETSOK
You'd need a seance for that --
Carr is dead, remember?

Security Guard #3 slaps his thigh in disgust.

SECURITY GUARD #4
Yeah! The new guy started today.
Bloom... or something.

SECURITY GUARD #3
What are we gonna tell him?

ALBERT WHETSOK
Welcome to the art world.

CUT TO:

INT. ERIC BLOOM'S OFFICE - SECONDS LATER

Alone in his second-story office, Eric stands by the
window, stares at the Cleveland skyline.

ERIC BLOOM
Maybe Claire was right. This
might not be such a bad job after
all.

He forces a half smile, blissfully looks around the beautifully decorated office, takes a deep, confident breath, exhales, pats his stomach.

ERIC BLOOM (CONT'D)
I think I'll have Chinese for lunch.

The door to Bloom's office bursts open. Whetsok, accompanied by guards #3 and #4, explodes into the room. Ms. Bashforth, alarmed, follows, holds an immense bouquet of just-delivered red roses.

Bloom seeks safety, bolts behind his high-backed desk chair.

ERIC BLOOM (CONT'D)
Who the hell are you? What is the meaning of this intrusion?

Whetsok, breathing heavily, swallows hard, composes himself.

ALBERT WHETSOK
I am Albert Whetsok, a staff researcher and prominent donator to this museum, and--

SECURITY GUARD #3
It's the Mona Lisa, sir!

Whetsok knocks Guard #3's hat off.

ALBERT WHETSOK
Shut up, you dolt! Not another word! This situation demands more than your monosyllabic babbling!

Bloom comes out from behind the chair.

SECURITY GUARD #4
She's, she's givin' everyone the finger!

ERIC BLOOM
What? Who's giving the finger?

Miss Bashforth squirms through, barely able to hold onto the immense bouquet. Its satin sash, twisted, bears a message that cannot be read.

MISS BASHFORTH
These just arrived, Mr. Bloom.
May I set them down here, please?
It's quite heavy.

She sneezes violently.

MISS BASHFORTH (CONT'D)
I'd leave them in my office,
temporarily, but I am terribly
allergic, as you see.

She sneezes twice more.

ERIC BLOOM
Who is giving whom the finger?
This sounds like a problem for
human resources to handle.

The bouquet tips over. Bashforth struggles to right it.
Whetsok stamps his foot, knocks a framed photo off the
desk.

ALBERT WHETSOK
Everyone shut the hell up! The
Mona Lisa is gone, replaced by a
mockery!

Silence reigns. Eric's desk phone rings. Stunned, he
picks up the receiver, holds it a foot from his ear.

INT. BLOOM MANSION

A tiny, white, yapping dog in her lap, Camille comfortably
sits in her luxuriously appointed, cavernous living room,
speaks into an antique French phone held by a servant.

CAMILLE BLOOM
I hope I am not disturbing you on
your first day, Eric, but I did so
want to wish you all good things.
Tell me, dear, are you having fun?

BACK TO SCENE

Pale Eric blinks at a furious pace, the rest of his face is
paralyzed.

ERIC BLOOM
Most definitely, Camille, fun is
the perfect word.

Miss Bashforth unravels the twisted satin sash on the
bouquet. It reads: Best of Luck! Love, Camille.

ERIC BLOOM (CONT'D)
 Yes, the flowers just arrived...
 they're... they're lovely... I
 have to go now, Camille... and
 continue... having funeral... uh,
 fun... Goodbye.

Eric, wide-eyed, drops the receiver. Miss Bashforth hangs up the phone.

ERIC BLOOM (CONT'D)
 Miss Bashforth, please leave us
 and hold my calls, if you would be
 so kind.

Miss Bashforth humbly backs out of the office, closes the door, sneezes.

ERIC BLOOM (CONT'D)
 Please continue, Mr. Whetsok and
 tell me this is all a practical
 joke, some sort of sick initiation
 ritual, never to be repeated or
 spoken of again.

Whetsok approaches Bloom, ominously shakes his head.

SECURITY GUARD #3
 To me, it just looks like some
 jokester painted on a hand, giving
 the finger.

The guard repeatedly mimics giving the finger. Bloom collapses into his seat, lightly bangs his forehead on the desktop.

ALBERT WHETSOK
 Excuse me! I did not realize we
 had the honor of having the ghost
 of Sir Kenneth Clark working here
 in Cleveland as a security guard!

Security Guard #3 wilts.

ALBERT WHETSOK (CONT'D)
 I gave it a sound look. It is
 very close to the original,
 skillful -- but fake! And,
 Director Bloom, you have to do
 something about it -- now!

Bloom's eye is drawn to the massive bouquet. He bolts to his feet, strides to it, kicks it over, turns to Whetsok.

ALBERT WHETSOK (CONT'D)
Besides that!

ERIC BLOOM
What else should I do?

CUT TO:

EXT. LOUVRE, PARIS, FRANCE - AFTERNOON

INT. LOUVRE, OFFICE DOOR

Lettering (in French) indicates this is the office of the director of the Louvre, RENE CLEMENT.

OFFICE

The director, standing in the middle of his exquisite, Baroque office, beams over a small, framed print presented by a bearded, distinguished-looking GENTLEMAN.

RENE CLEMENT
(in French)
Splendid! A very worthy addition to the museum's collection of Durer woodcuts. We have been seeking this particular one for over fifteen years.

The director's desk phone rings. He raises one finger, indicating he must pause to answer it, which he does, placing the print under one arm. The gentleman looks on.

The director listens; his expression sours, eyes widen. After a few seconds he takes the receiver away from his ear, lowers it, mistakenly sticks it in his jacket pocket. Oblivious, he steps to the gentleman, calmly hands back the framed print, takes one more look at it, then walks to the far side of the office, twenty feet from its windows and their panoramic view of Paris.

Instantly, he runs full speed, sprints past his guest, smashes through the plate, along with the trailing phone, and plummets to his death. The stunned gentleman, silent, peers out and down from the broken window, makes the sign of the cross.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF CLEVELAND - NIGHT (ONE DAY LATER)

ABANDONED WAREHOUSE

INT. A LARGE DIRTY TENT

The tent, capable of accommodating several hundred attendees, stands inside the gutted warehouse. Off-key music from a small, brass band is audible, o.s. A crudely-made sign outside its entrance reads: Rich E. Faith, Church of Enduring Prosperity, LLC.

INT. TENT

Strings of 40-watt light bulbs poorly illuminate the space. Thirty impoverished-looking PEOPLE, including some families, are spread out among the two hundred rickety folding chairs. Some in attendance doze, while others read newspapers, eat, or smoke. Unruly children play tag.

STAGE

A wooden stage in front of the seats is flanked by two nondescript men, one short, one tall, wearing cheap suits.

DONATION BUCKET

A large, clear plastic bucket crudely marked 'God won't forget' sits on the stage, within reach of the first row. It is empty.

BACK TO SCENE

A spotlight hits center stage, the tinny music stops.

RICH E. FAITH, an energetic young man, in his late twenties, leaps into the center of the spotlight. Wearing a lime green suit, microphone in hand, he peruses this evening's audience.

CROWD

Hardly anyone is paying attention.

BACK TO SCENE

Rich fights back anxiety, disappointment, broadly smiles, flashes perfect white teeth. His straight, jet black hair arches high off his forehead, streams back over his jacket

collar. He piously looks heavenward, places the mic to his lips, sneaks a quick glance at the donation bucket.

BUCKET

The bucket is still empty.

BACK TO SCENE

Faith swallows, sweats, looks to the short, suited man to his left.

SUITED MAN

The suited man looks back at Faith, shrugs.

BACK TO SCENE

AUDIENCE MEMBER #1 (O.S.)
You take a vow of silence, Faith?

Laughter, tittering are heard o.s.

AUDIENCE MEMBER #2 (O.S.)
Rich, maybe you're the one in need
of a miracle!

Rich lowers the mic, wets his parched lips. An empty soda cup hits him in the shoulder.

AUDIENCE

Audience members throw assorted garbage, KIDS jeer, tip over empty seats. A light bulb pops, goes out, smolders.

BACK TO SCENE

Rich steps out of the spotlight; it goes out.

Jeering, boos intensify o.s.

FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER

The tent, now devoid of an audience, is a garbage-strewn mess.

BACKSTAGE

STAFF amble about. Dejected, Rich sits in a folding chair, head down, arms folded. BRUCE, the tall, suited man, stops next to Rich, donation bucket in hand. It makes a hollow sound when he drops it at Rich's feet. Rich looks up.

BRUCE

There were actually four pennies
in it, Rich.

RICH E. FAITH

Twice last night's haul, Bruce.
Things are looking up.

BRUCE

Split them among the boys, or open
a Swiss bank account?

Rich smirks.

LARRY, the short, suited man, approaches.

LARRY

Rich, you got a visitor, says
she's an artist.

Rich stands, perks up.

RICH E. FAITH

Finally, some good news. Keep your
fingers crossed, Larry.

AUDIENCE SEATING AREA

RICH'S POV

Standing in the aisle separating the two demolished halves of the auditorium, artist MARIGOLD WEST casually rests one delicate arm on top of a large, rectangular painting covered with burlap. The fresh paint stains on her jeans and t-shirt suggest she has come directly upon completion of the commissioned piece. Her sweet smile is in anticipation of seeing a paycheck. She looks side-to-side, takes in the aftermath of the event.

BACK TO SCENE

Rich walks within a foot of Marigold, eyes the covered canvas.

RICH E. FAITH
Your ad in the Penny-saver said
you work fast -- you weren't
kidding.

Marigold points to herself.

MARIGOLD WEST
It's what keeps the customers
coming back to Marigold West.
Looks like all hell broke loose
here. You an evangelist, or a
fight promoter?

Rich chuckles.

RICH E. FAITH
Evangelist, at least for a few
more weeks. Hopefully, the
painting you did will turn things
around. Let's take it backstage
and have a look.

BACKSTAGE

Rich and Marigold rest the four-foot-by-six-foot covered
painting on two chairs. Rich takes a step back.

MARIGOLD'S POV

She looks Rich over from head to toe, focuses on his smile.
His roving eyes and expression indicate he finds her
attractive.

BACK TO SCENE

About to reveal the image, she pauses, plays with a corner
of the burlap.

MARIGOLD WEST
Excited?

Rich smiles, bites his lower lip.

RICH E. FAITH
Like a kid on Christmas Eve.

MARIGOLD WEST
Y'know, before closing a deal, I
like to find out a little bit more
about who my customers are.

(MORE)

MARIGOLD WEST (CONT'D)
 What's your story? You always
 been in the religion racket?

Rich, caught off guard, looks away momentarily, straightens his suit. Composed, he paces as he replies.

RICH E. FAITH
 No, not always. Actually, I was
 a magician before I found
 religion.

MARIGOLD WEST
 Not unrelated fields -- were you
 any good?

He pauses, laughs, continues pacing.

RICH E. FAITH
 Oh, yeah, real good. I remember
 one critic who said I couldn't
 make vanishing cream disappear.

She laughs, continues toying with the burlap.

RICH E. FAITH (CONT'D)
 And before that I was a
 jack-of-all-trades in a small,
 regional circus.

MARIGOLD WEST
 Meaning exactly what?

RICH E. FAITH
 The behind-the-scenes jobs that
 payin' customers don't care about,
 but that are essential for the
 circus' success.

Marigold rolls her eyes.

MARIGOLD WEST
 God, this is like pulling teeth.
 Such as?

RICH E. FAITH
 Polishing clown shoes, spreading
 hay for the elephants, chimp
 grooming-

MARIGOLD WEST
 Chimp grooming?

She laughs again, slaps the top edge of the painting.

RICH E. FAITH

As they say, a well-groomed chimp
is a happy chimp. Somebody had to
do it.

MARIGOLD WEST

Your parents must be so proud!

Rich stops pacing, turns serious, reflective, approaches
the painting.

RICH E. FAITH

I wouldn't know; I left home at
the age of sixteen.

Marigold's smile evaporates.

RICH E. FAITH (CONT'D)

So, let's see what you've come up
with.

MARIGOLD WEST

Now, I had to do it on board,
instead of canvas, on account of
those special cuts you wanted in
the back. What exactly are they
for?

RICH E. FAITH

A little surprise I have in mind
for the faithful.

MARIGOLD WEST

Intriguing... Ta-da!

Marigold throws back the burlap, steps away.

PAINTING

The highly realistic painting shows details of a famous
European altar piece from the 15th century: Adoration of
the Mystic Lamb. The dominant element is the lamb, which
stands outdoors upon an altar. Next to the lamb is a gold
chalice. The altar is surrounded by kneeling angels.
Clerics, in robes, solemnly stand to the left and right,
beyond them.

Speechless, Rich takes two steps back, then two more. Lost
in thought, he nervously scratches the back of his neck.

MARIGOLD WEST

Well?

He walks up to the work, squats, puts his face within an inch of thing, springs to his feet.

RICH E. FAITH
Whoa! It's, uh... certainly realistic.

Marigold folds her arms.

MARIGOLD WEST
It's what you asked for.

Rich moves behind the painting, inspects.

BACK OF PAINTING

Channels are cut into the wood, near the center. Rich's fingers run along them.

BACK TO SCENE

Rich looks in Marigold's direction, raises his eyebrows.

RICH E. FAITH
I don't know, Marigold.

Annoyed, Marigold places clenched fists on her hips, stands defiantly.

MARIGOLD WEST
What don't you know?

RICH E. FAITH
It's okay-y, I suppose.

He ponders, rubs his chin. Marigold kicks over a nearby folding chair. Rich defensively jumps back.

MARIGOLD WEST
Listen up, circus boy! I wasn't born yesterday! You're setting the stage for knocking down the price we agreed to -- and I won't have it!

She charges him, sticks her upright palm in front of his face.

MARIGOLD WEST (CONT'D)
Pay me!

OUTSIDE THE WAREHOUSE - MINUTES LATER

Rich stands by the door to Marigold's beat-up truck. She folds a check, sticks it in her shirt pocket, opens the door.

RICH E. FAITH

Thanks again for the quick service. It was a genuine pleasure meeting you, Marigold. You're very talented... and perceptive. If the painting has the response I think it will, I'll need a second.

In a strictly business-like manner, Marigold nods, shakes hands, get in her truck.

MARIGOLD WEST

I appreciate the business, Mr. Faith.

Marigold drives off into the dark.

CUT TO:

INT. MARIGOLD'S APARTMENT - ONE HOUR LATER

The tiny fourth-floor apartment is overloaded with paintings at various stages of completion. A variety of subjects and styles are evident: landscapes, portraits, still-lives, some abstract, some realistic. Blank canvases and wood panels of assorted sizes are vertically stacked. An encrusted easel, piles of rags and boxes of used art supplies complete the clutter.

A tall, thin, scruffy man, in his thirties, CRAIG RANSID, sits cross-legged on the stained, chewed-up couch. Preoccupied with dark thoughts, he nervously taps one foot, while biting dirty fingernails.

Craig pauses, takes off his filthy sneaker and sock from his crossed leg, brings his soiled foot to his mouth, bites a toenail.

The door flies open. Marigold enters, weighed down with bursting grocery bags. Ransid drops his foot, offers no assistance.

MARIGOLD WEST

Thank God the door lock's still busted.

CRAIG RANSID

Damn it, Marigold! Can't you even knock?

Marigold unloads the bags on the already overcrowded coffee table.

MARIGOLD WEST

Craig Ransid! It's my apartment, remember?!

Craig puts his sock and sneaker back on, rummages through a grocery bag. He finds an apple, takes a bite, jams it back into the bag.

CRAIG RANSID

You were gone an awfully long time. Where'd you go? Who'd you see?

Marigold begins putting the groceries away, pauses, playfully puts her index finger to her chin, flutters her eyelids. She assumes the voice of a rich, spoiled snob.

MARIGOLD WEST

Oh, let us see... I went for a manicure, then I pranced over to Tiffany's, to see if my new tiara is ready -- which it was not, tragically. Then I popped over to Buckingham Palace for a spot of tea with the queen -- you schmuck!

Ransid races to her, grabs her wrist, twists it.

CRAIG RANSID

I said, where ya been?!

MARIGOLD WEST

Let me go, Ransid; I'm sick of your suspicions!

He releases, she picks up a can of corn, throws it. He bats it away. Marigold brushes back her short, blonde hair.

MARIGOLD WEST (CONT'D)

I dropped off the painting, got paid and went shopping. One of us has to put food on the table!

Ransid points at her, menacingly.

CRAIG RANSID
 If you're seein' someone else,
 Marigold, so help me, you're gonna
 regret we ever met!

She chuckles.

MARIGOLD WEST
 Wow! Do you really want to feed
 me that straight line?

CRAIG RANSID
 I'm going back to my place!

MARIGOLD WEST
 Your 'place'? You mean your shack
 at the junkyard!

Ransid mumbles, stops, storms out. He slams the door,
 which swings back open.

CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT, ALBERT WHETSOK'S HOME - THE SAME NIGHT

Sitting across the table from Whetsok is his long-time
 friend, RALPH CARLING, a large, heavy-set man, of similar
 age, with a prominent brow and wispy, red hair.

An open bottle of wine and two partially filled glasses sit
 on the table between them. The basement, spacious and
 spartan, is poorly lit. Whetsok repeatedly twirls the end
 of his mustache.

ALBERT WHETSOK
 Yes, Ralph, my dear friend, I
 thoroughly concur -- quite the
 inauspicious beginning to director
 Bloom's art management career. I
 harbor serious doubts that he will
 stick with it.

Whetsok takes a sip of wine, Ralph refrains.

ALBERT WHETSOK (CONT'D)
 You've hardly touched your claret
 -- that vintage not to your
 liking? If not, this basement of
 mine has more to choose from than
 most Michelin-rated restaurants.

RALPH CARLING

You know me, Al, a simple beer man at heart, with the emphasis on simple. Wine is for strictly educated types, like yourself.

ALBERT WHETSOK

You're not so simple, Ralph. We each have our respective areas of expertise, that's all. I know a thing or two about art and business, while you are skilled in a half dozen trades, something I know nothing about.

Ralph smiles, nods in agreement. He forces a sip of wine, grimaces, coughs, sets the glass down.

RALPH CARLING

Getting back to Bloom, what did you suggest he do, after contacting the head of that French museum, the one whose name I can never pronounce right?

Whetsok barely stifles a condescending grin, runs his index finger around the rim of his glass, raises an eyebrow.

ALBERT WHETSOK

The Louvre. I told that pitiful, ex-grocery manager to do everything in his power to keep news of the theft from leaking out.

Whetsok and Ralph stand, begin walking. On the walls of the basement are hung paintings by contemporary masters: Pollock, de Kooning, Rothko. More, covered by sheets, lean against the cement walls.

RALPH CARLING

Sound advice. Best to keep to keep it under wraps; silence will probably be recommended by the authorities, too.

They stop at a small table. On it sits a bucket with a wooden stirrer in it. Ralph stirs, raises the stirrer to check the consistency of the viscous, white liquid within. Whetsok carefully observes.

ALBERT WHETSOK

I most definitely agree that will be their suggestion...

(MORE)

ALBERT WHETSOK (CONT'D)
 looks a bit runny. Did you mix
 according to my precise
 specifications?

Ralph looks up.

RALPH CARLING
 Exactly.

Ralph, holding the bucket, and Alfred, continue walking,
 come to a stop.

WHETSOK'S POV

The Mona Lisa, spotlit, rests on a sturdy, wooden easel. A
 few feet behind and to the side, The Envelope, its face
 plate lowered, is visible.

BACK TO SCENE

The two men stand before the masterpiece. Whetsok is in
 awe, Carling is impatient.

ALBERT WHETSOK
 Rather clever of us, I think, to
 pilfer the painting and its
 holder.

RALPH CARLING
 And nice of the Cleveland museum
 to cut its security budget year
 after year. The alarm wires to
 the freight entrance were corroded
 clear through -- should have been
 replaced years ago.

ALBERT WHETSOK
 Certainly, and I can't help but
 feel that the decrepit guards
 deserve recognition, too, for
 being such sound sleepers.

Whetsok pats Ralph on the back.

ALBERT WHETSOK (CONT'D)
 Let's not short-change ourselves,
 though, my friend. We deserve
 some credit, as well. Well, we
 really should get started.

RALPH CARLING
 Who should go first?

ALBERT WHETSOK
Oh, I suppose I should.

Whetsok reaches into his jacket pocket, pulls out and adorns protective eyewear. He then reaches down, o.s., and picks up a circular saw. Ralph steps away. Whetsok turns on the power tool, steps forward and, without hesitation, cuts the Mona Lisa in half, from top to bottom.

He calmly steps aside, prompts Ralph with a nod and a smile.

ALBERT WHETSOK (CONT'D)
All done. Proceed to gesso both halves, if you would be so kind.

Ralph, brush in hand, stirs the contents of the bucket, then slops and spreads a generous portion on the right half. He pauses, turns to attentive Whetsok.

RALPH CARLING
You sure this can be restored?

ALBERT WHETSOK
Yes, pretty sure. The gesso, if you prepared it properly, can be removed by a competent restorer, or so I've been told.

Ralph pauses slopping.

RALPH CARLING
And what about the...

Ralph alludes to the saw cut by vertically raising and lowering a finger in the air.

ALBERT WHETSOK
That? That will be more challenging, but it's what the acquirer wants, and I can't argue with the logic.

RALPH CARLING
Logic?

Ralph displays confusion.

ALBERT WHETSOK
Every law enforcement agent in the world will be looking for a single panel measuring thirty-by-twenty-four, not two measuring half as wide.

CUT TO:

EXT. CLEVELAND POLICE DEPT. HEADQUARTERS - DAY

PEOPLE, uniformed and not, exit and enter the brownstone building.

INT. HALLWAY

Offices stretch as far as the eye can see.

END OF HALLWAY

Doorway near vending machines bears the writing: Art & Collectibles Unit. Detective DEREK STUMP's name is written on a piece of paper duct-taped to the glass.

INT. STUMP'S OFFICE

Stocky, baby-faced Detective Derek Stump sits, crumpled, behind a desk that is far too large for this puny office. Upon it lie numerous packages of baseball cards, of which a few are open, their contents neatly arranged for easy viewing.

With elbows on the desk, and his high-cheekboned fleshy face in the palms of his hands, Stump closely studies the cards, fights drowsiness.

A portable radio atop a huge file cabinet softly plays the broadcast of a Cleveland Indians game.

Stump pauses, sips coffee from an Indians mug, resumes his previous position, idly whistles.

Two hard raps on the door disrupt Stump's reverie. Before he can respond, the door flies open, bangs a desk corner.

File folder in hand, tall, balding, JACK FELDMAN, Head of Detectives, squeezes in, displays urgency on top of his usual petulance.

JACK FELDMAN
Stump?! Since when are you in
charge of the Art Unit?

DEREK STUMP
Since a week ago, sir.

As he struggles to maneuver in the cramped space, Feldman, perturbed, motions for Stump to remain seated. He slaps the file folder onto the desk.

JACK FELDMAN

I thought they were shutting this unit down.

DEREK STUMP

They were, but Chief Daniels assigned me, as punishment, after I blew the cover of one of our guys, who was in the middle of a drug sting.

JACK FELDMAN

I know, I heard all about it. Just wanted to see if you had the balls to tell the truth. Way to screw up, Stump.

Stump looks away.

JACK FELDMAN (CONT'D)

That your radio?

DEREK STUMP

Oh, sorry sir, I'll-

JACK FELDMAN

Turn it up.

Puzzled, Stump reaches over, complies.

DEREK STUMP

Didn't know you were an Indians' fan, sir.

Feldman fumes.

JACK FELDMAN

I'm not, shut up and listen.

FELDMAN'S POV

Feldman, distracted, looks around the room. Two framed posters, one with cracked glass, display famous works of art: Da Vinci's Last Supper and Michelangelo's Statue of David. Between them is a signed, framed photo of Cleveland Hall-of-Fame member, Bob Feller.

BACK TO SCENE

JACK FELDMAN

What I have to say to you is to be held in the strictest confidence. Strictest. Do you understand?

DEREK STUMP

Yes, sir, completely.

Feldman steps closer. He lowers his voice, makes it barely audible above the sound of the radio.

JACK FELDMAN

Were you aware that the Mona Lisa was in its final week at the museum of fine arts?

DEREK STUMP

The what?

Feldman blanches, his jaw drops open.

JACK FELDMAN

C'mon, you must know -- the friggin' Mona Lisa. The painting!

Stump comes to.

DEREK STUMP

Yeah, yeah, sure! Sorry, it's a little hard to hear with the radio going. Alomar got a double; he's been on a real tear for the last week.

Feldman folds his arms, glares.

DEREK STUMP (CONT'D)

I didn't see the exhibit, but my mom did. She liked it... a lot. It's by that guy from Europe-

Feldman raises one hand, cuts him off.

JACK FELDMAN

It's the most famous goddamn painting on the planet, Stump, and it's been stolen.

Stump, stunned, covers his mouth.

JACK FELDMAN (CONT'D)

And there are no good leads, as of this moment. The museum has been shut down.

(MORE)

JACK FELDMAN (CONT'D)
 The cover story is that a staff member has been diagnosed with Legionnaires' disease.

Stump nods.

DEREK STUMP
 That should buy us quite a bit of time, if it holds.

JACK FELDMAN
 That was actually a semi-intelligent remark, Stump. I'm feeling less inclined to kill myself.

Derek beams.

DEREK STUMP
 Thank you.

JACK FELDMAN
 The Louvre has been contacted.

Stump leans forward, turns serious.

DEREK STUMP
 Is that the gang that stole it?

Feldman kicks the desk.

JACK FELDMAN
 Stump, I take back everything good I just said about you, and anything I might be nuts enough to say in the future. The painting belongs to the Louvre. It's a museum -- in Paris, which is in France, a country on planet Earth!

O.s. cheering is heard on the radio. Drawn to it, Stump every so slightly starts to turn his head in its direction.

JACK FELDMAN (CONT'D)
 So help me, Stump, if you turn your head one degree more in the radio's direction, a surgeon at the Cleveland Clinic is going to win the Nobel Prize for Medicine, for figuring out how to remove it from your ass!

Stump focuses on Feldman.

JACK FELDMAN (CONT'D)

The Louvre is on board with our museum's cover story, which is good. Now we just have to find the damn thing.

DEREK STUMP

And... that's what you want... me to do, with no art background and a budget that barely covers the gas I use?

Feldman laughs, quickly catches himself for being too loud. Composed, he opens the file folder, jabs its contents with his finger.

OPEN FILE FOLDER

An eight-by-ten photo of an aristocratic, older gentleman, perhaps seventy, is opposite a one-page biography.

BACK TO SCENE

JACK FELDMAN

Don't be delusional, Stump. This man is the head of Louvre security. He's everything you're not -- an art expert and an experienced law enforcement officer with a long, exemplary career. Be careful, you might actually learn something from this guy.

DEREK STUMP

Yes, Lieutenant Feldman, I'll do my best.

JACK FELDMAN

Please don't. Just meet him at the airport, take him around, do what he asks and don't get him killed.

DEREK STUMP

What's his name?

JACK FELDMAN

Henri Bougereau, and don't screw it up. I don't want a second international incident on my hands.

Stump silently attempts to pronounce the name, is frustrated.

DEREK STUMP
Why can't anyone from there just
be named Bill Smith?

CUT TO:

EXT. CLEVELAND AIRPORT - DAY

TERMINAL

Sign next to terminal reads: Cleveland Airport,
International Arrivals.

INT. GATE AREA

A display board shows times of arriving flights. Stump,
photo in hand, stands before it, spies the arrival from
France.

GATES 20-25

Along with many OTHERS, Stump waits for arriving
passengers. He keeps checking the photo. Many PASSENGERS
have come through -- still no Bougereau. Stump checks his
watch.

DISPLAY BOARD

Stump double-checks the flight arrival data.

BACK TO SCENE

Stump, now alone, concerned, eyes the barren passenger
exit.

DEREK STUMP
What the hell? How could I...

An airline EMPLOYEE walks to the exit's security door,
raises the kickstand, nearly closes it. As it is about to
shut, a bony hand emerges, prevents closure. Surprised, the
employee opens the door, apologizes MOS.

Henri Bougereau graciously nods, smiles accepts the
apology. He is over six feet tall, reed thin, with a long,
lined face. His ample gray hair is combed straight back.

Bougereau, carrying a designer briefcase, is attired in a tailored, black suit. His crisp, white shirt is offset by a royal blue ascot. A silk, paisley scarf completes the outfit.

As the employee departs, Stump rushes to Bougereau's side, grabs his arm.

DEREK STUMP (CONT'D)
Mr. B! Mr. B! I'm your contact!

Bougereau sneers, brushes away the hand.

HENRI BOUGEREAU
A sleepless flight, an inedible
meal and now a boisterous greeting
from a heavy-handed junior
detective -- such is my welcome to
America! Phht!

Bougereau waves his hand in disgust. Stump backs away.

HENRI BOUGEREAU (CONT'D)
And who in God's name is Mr. B?!

Stump nervously straightens his tie and suit jacket.

DEREK STUMP
Just a friendly, more casual way
of addressing you, sir.

Henri, dismissive, puffs.

HENRI BOUGEREAU
It is obviously because you cannot
pronounce my name, Mis-tare
Stoomp!

DEREK STUMP
Oh, I-

Henri stomps his foot.

HENRI BOUGEREAU
Pronounce it!

Defeated, Derek shakes his head. Henri raises an index finger.

HENRI BOUGEREAU (CONT'D)
On-ree Boo-ger-oo. Remember that!

Stump takes a deep breath, thinks about repeating the name, extends his hand, instead, smiles.

DEREK STUMP
Welcome to Cleveland.

CUT TO:

INT. UNMARKED POLICE CAR - MINUTES LATER

Stump drives, Henri sits next to him, his expression deadpan.

DEREK STUMP
We should probably stop at the museum first, uh, unless, of course, you'd like to meet Lieutenant Feldman for a briefing. Then again, if you'd like to-

HENRI BOUGEREAU
I am famished.

DEREK STUMP
Oh, sure thing. Can't solve an international art crime with a growling stomach, can we? I'm the exact same way.

HENRI BOUGEREAU
Perish the thought.

DEREK STUMP
In the mood for pizza?

Henri winces.

HENRI BOUGEREAU
Never.

Stump snaps his fingers.

DEREK STUMP
I got it! As long as you're in Cleveland, you gotta try a Polish Boy!

Affronted, Henri turns to Stump.

HENRI BOUGEREAU
I beg your pardon!

DEREK STUMP
A Polish Boy, it's a Cleveland specialty.

(MORE)

DEREK STUMP (CONT'D)
 Everyone knows what a Polish Boy
 is: Polish sausage, slaw,
 barbecue sauce... You'll love it!

HENRI BOUGEREAU
 I have heartburn just from
 listening.

DEREK STUMP
 All right, what do you want?

Henri rubs the corners of his mouth with his thumb and
 index finger.

HENRI BOUGEREAU
 Mmm... Perhaps escargot to start,
 with a split of good French
 Champagne. I would follow that
 with steamed mussels, crusty
 French bread, assorted cheeses,
 Sauterne, then coffee... and a
 pear tart topped with freshly
 whipped cream.

CAR

Stump swerves the car over to the curb, brakes.

BACK TO SCENE

DEREK STUMP
 We're not doin' an episode of Iron
 Chef here, pal. We got a case to
 solve.

Henri, unruffled, adjusts his ascot.

HENRI BOUGEREAU
 Rush, rush, rush -- that's all you
 Americans know.

DEREK STUMP
 My lieutenant was ready to skin me
 alive before I picked you up. If
 he finds out we stopped for a \$200
 lunch, with wine, he'll shit down
 my throat!

Henri, placid, inspects his nails, stares out the window.
 Stump senses defeat.

DEREK STUMP (CONT'D)
Okay, okay. There's this little
French place my girlfriend's been
begging me to take her to for
three years.

Henri smiles.

HENRI BOUGEREAU
Sounds acceptable, barely.

CUT TO:

INT. MARIGOLD'S APARTMENT - THE NEXT DAY

Marigold, at her easel, works on a partially completed
still life.

O.s., a knock on the door.

MARIGOLD WEST
It's not locked, come on in.

Albert Whetsok enters, carries the two gessoed halves of
the Mona Lisa. He wears glasses with a heavy, black frame
and thick lenses. He also wears a brimmed hat. Most
conspicuously, his mustache is gone.

Marigold only knows him, in his current guise, as GORDON
KEATING. Whetsok will now be referred to as
WHETSOK/KEATING.

WHETSOK/KEATING
Marigold, nice to see you again.
What are you working on?

He sets the panels down, steps to her easel. Marigold
pauses, sets down her palette and brush.

MARIGOLD WEST
Nice to see you again, too, Mr.
Keating. This? Just a still life
I'm working on in between
commissioned pieces. I come from
a family of workaholics.

Keating takes a closer look. Judging, he rocks his head
from side to side.

WHETSOK/KEATING
Rather has the look of 16th
century Netherlandish works.
Impressive.

MARIGOLD WEST

Exactly. I'm a big admirer of
their realism and use of light.

Marigold steps to the sink, fills a glass of water, sips.

MARIGOLD WEST (CONT'D)

I see you've brought two panels,
all ready to go. Have some more
work for me?

Whetsok/Keating picks up one of the panels, joins Marigold
at the sink.

WHETSOK/KEATING

Indeed, I do.

MARIGOLD WEST

I take it then, that the other
piece I did was well received?

Whetsok/Keating strokes his chin, half smiles.

WHETSOK/KEATING

It most definitely made an
impression.

She offers a glass of water. He silently declines;
Marigold sets hers down.

MARIGOLD WEST

I imagine whoever you gave it to
got quite a laugh out of it. It's
not too often you see Mona Lisa
giving someone the finger.

WHETSOK/KEATING

I should say not.

She reaches for the panel, which he hands over with slight
hesitation.

MARIGOLD WEST

So, what do you have in mind for
this one?

She inspects and rotates it from the horizontal, to the
vertical.

WHETSOK/KEATING

I am interested in having an
Oriental seascape, in the style of
Hokusai. Is that something you
are comfortable executing?

MARIGOLD WEST

Absolutely. I have several books of Japanese prints somewhere in this mess. They'll be helpful... once I find them.

WHETSOK/KEATING

Oh, excellent. Tell me, are you in the midst of other commissioned work?

MARIGOLD WEST

Need it right away, huh?

WHETSOK/KEATING

If convenient, I don't mean to chafe.

Marigold laughs.

MARIGOLD WEST

Seein' as you're a repeat customer, I can put you at the head of the line, Mr. Keating, but I'll need... mmm... \$1,200 for this one.

Whetsok/Keating takes a deep breath, exhales, thinks.

WHETSOK/KEATING

How about \$2,000, total, for the two -- that is, \$1,000 for each piece.

She walks to the second panel, picks it up.

MARIGOLD WEST

All right, that's fair. You want the same style for this one? It'll make a nice diptych.

WHETSOK/KEATING

No, no. I'll want something different for that one. Not sure yet. I'll get back to you, once I decide.

MARIGOLD WEST

All right, but I'll need a deposit, right now.

WHETSOK/KEATING

You're all business, Miss West.

Keating produces his wallet, extracts bills.

WHETSOK/KEATING (CONT'D)
I can give you \$300.

She takes the money.

MARIGOLD WEST
I'll get right on it.

Whetsok/Keating politely bows, exits.

CUT TO:

EXT. RICH E. FAITH'S TENT - THAT EVENING

SIGN BY ENTRANCE: BEHOLD THE MIRACLE PAINTING!

O.s., sounds of a large, excited, engaged crowd.

INT. TENT

A packed house, every seat taken, while THRONGS stand off to the sides. Sweat-soaked ATTENDEES cheer and shout at what they witness onstage, o.s. Many wave bibles, stand on seats, crane necks for a better view. Uniformed VENDORS busily sell iced drinks.

VENDOR

A YOUNG MAN carries a nearly empty tray of iced drinks bearing a prominent \$10 sign. Two parched ATTENDEES wave money, gladly exchange it for the beverages, then accidentally spill them in their haste.

BACK TO SCENE

STAGE

Long lines of eager PEOPLE snake from onstage, down stairs and into the aisles. Numerous USHERS struggle to maintain order.

Rich, microphone in hand, in his trademark green suit, feeds off the electricity in the air, relishes the success he has sought for so long. Grinning, he pumps a fist in the air, moves to center stage.

CENTER STAGE

Flanked by Bruce and Larry, his suited assistants, Marigold's spotlit painting rests on an ornate gilt easel.

Blood drips from the painting, forms puddles on the floor. An ATTENDEE with crutches is brought within the allowable distance to the artwork.

As a robed CHORUS passionately sings o.s., a spray of blood emanates from the depicted lamb, soaks the crutch carrier. He throws them down at once, dances a jig, back-flips off the stage.

RICH E. FAITH

Behold! The miracle painting!
The miracle painting heals another
afflicted soul! Prosperity is
sure to follow, my friends!

RICH'S POV

The crowd goes wild.

BACK TO SCENE

RICH E. FAITH

Thank you! Thanks to all of you
for attending! Tell your friends
to join us for even greater
miracles this weekend!

BACK OF PAINTING

Thin, leaky tubes carrying blood wind down the back of the painting, disappear beneath and behind the curtain in back of it.

BACKSTAGE - ONE HOUR AFTER THE SHOW

Rich, exhausted, disheveled, sits in a makeshift dressing room. He wipes sweat away with a towel, discards it. Piles of cash sit on the table next to him. Bruce approaches, dumps a cardboard box of still more cash on the existing mound.

BRUCE

We keep going at this pace, Rich,
we really will need to open a
Swiss bank account.

Rich smiles, gently glides his hand over the bundled bills.

RICH E. FAITH
Now this is what I call a miracle.

Bruce laughs, turns away, quickly comes back, snaps his fingers.

BRUCE
Forgot to mention, we're down to two gallons of blood. That's not going to get us through the weekend.

Rich peels off a few bills from a bundle, hands them to Bruce.

RICH E. FAITH
Have Larry run down to the slaughterhouse and pick up whatever you think we'll need.

Bruce pockets the bills, departs.

Rich picks up the receiver of his desk phone, enters a number.

RICH AND MARIGOLD

The following scene intercuts between Rich, back stage, and Marigold in her apartment.

Marigold, painting the seascape on the half-panel obtained from Whetsok/Keating, picks up on the sixth ring.

MARIGOLD WEST
Marigold speaking.

RICH E. FAITH
Hi, Marigold, this is Rich.

MARIGOLD WEST
Yeah.

RICH E. FAITH
Rich, you remember, the world's worst magician and former chimp groomer?

Rich laughs, alone.

MARIGOLD WEST
I remember.

RICH E. FAITH
You don't sound too happy to hear
from me.

MARIGOLD WEST
We concluded our transaction.
What's on your mind?

Rich looks at, toys with, the mountain of money.

RICH E. FAITH
Well, I wanted to tell you how
fantastically the painting you did
for me has gone over.

Marigold smiles, rolls her eyes, catches herself warming
up, returns to being aloof.

MARIGOLD WEST
I'm very happy for you. Now, is
there something else? I'm in the
middle of a rush order.

RICH E. FAITH
I have a second painting I'd like
you to do for me -- much smaller
than the first; something I can
easily carry around. I need it
right away.

Marigold looks around the room, spies the second, blank
gessoed panel from Whetsok/Keating. She picks it up.

MARIGOLD WEST
How's thirty inches tall, by
twelve inches wide?

RICH E. FAITH
Yeah, that would work.

MARIGOLD WEST
What's the subject?

Rich hesitates, thinks.

RICH E. FAITH
St. Sebastian. You know, the
saint who-

MARIGOLD WEST
Got shot full of arrows.

Rich jumps to his feet.

RICH E. FAITH
Exactly! That's the one! I'll
need notches in the back on this
one, too. Right where the arrows
strike.

MARIGOLD WEST
Okay, but like I said, you're not
the first customer in line.

RICH E. FAITH
Will \$3,000 move me up?

Marigold's eyes light up.

MARIGOLD WEST
Consider yourself in first place,
Rich.

Gratified, he nods, smiles.

Marigold takes down the partially done oriental seascape,
replaces it with the other blank panel from
Whetsok/Keating.

MARIGOLD WEST (CONT'D)
I'll let you know when it's ready.

CUT TO:

INT. DIRECTOR BLOOM'S OFFICE - DAY

Eric Bloom, head in hands, sits slumped forward at his
desk. He lowers his head into the crook of his arm, falls
asleep, snores.

ERIC'S DREAM

Anxious, alone, Eric wanders the dimly lit galleries of a
major museum. He pays no attention to the art; his goal is
to find the exit, from what has become a maze. His quick
breaths form plumes of steam in the cold air. His hands
struggle to maintain their grip on a car battery.

He turns a corner, finds himself in an especially deep,
narrow gallery displaying one floodlit painting: the Mona
Lisa. As he steps closer, the painting recedes at an equal
pace. When he advances more quickly, the painting recedes
at a greater rate.

The battery becomes more of an encumbrance, but he fights
to hold on, presses forward.

Eric, suddenly alarmed, stops, looks over his shoulder.

ERIC'S POV

Blackness, no way out.

BACK TO SCENE

Ahead, the Mona Lisa has progressed to the point where it is barely visible. Eric moans, stops. From the blackness behind him a female hand emerges, taps him on the shoulder. Eric gasps, turns.

ERIC'S POV

MONA LISA, alive, full height, stands before him, holds a carved wooden picture frame.

BACK TO SCENE

She places it around his neck. He hands her the car battery, she smiles in her curious, engaging manner. The smile, transient, becomes a frown. Her eyes well-up, tears stream.

MONA LISA
This won't do me any good.

ERIC BLOOM
Why not?

MONA LISA
The alternator's shot.

Eric withers.

MONA LISA (CONT'D)
How will I ever get home?

All goes black.

BACK TO SCENE

Miss Bashforth enters Eric's office, sneezes, begins stuffing wilted roses into a trash bag, sneezes again. Eric awakens, is flustered, acts as if he was awake the entire time, nervously clears his throat.

ERIC BLOOM
 Let me know as soon as they get
 here, Miss Bashforth.

She breaks from her task.

MISS BASHFORTH
 I will; they're due here shortly.

She shoves more roses into the bag, pauses.

MISS BASHFORTH (CONT'D)
 Will they let us leave, Mr. Bloom?
 You know, say we were found to be
 free of Legionnaires'. I'm afraid
 we may be quarantined here for
 months!

Eric rocks his head, sits back, ponders. His red eyes are underscored with dark rings. At a loss for an answer, he resumes his prior, sullen position.

O.s., a firm knock on the office door. Miss Bashforth sneezes, opens the door, allowing Detective Stump and Henri Bougereau to enter. They strut to Eric's desk.

Bloom remains seated, wearily looks up at his guests, gestures for them to sit in the chairs in front of the desk. They remain standing, silent.

ERIC BLOOM
 I take it you are Detective Stump
 and Henri Bougereau of the Louvre.
 Which one's which?

Bougereau, enraged, darts around the side of the desk, grabs Bloom by the collar, hoists him out of his chair. Stump, stunned, observes.

HENRI BOUGEREAU
 Ignoramus! You bulbous, bloated
 bale of offal! How could you let
 this happen?! Are you deaf, dumb,
 blind and stupid?!

ERIC BLOOM
 You must be Bougereau.

Bougereau gives him a hard shake, shoves him back in his seat, which spins, resulting in the seat's back facing forward.

Bougereau turns to Miss Bashforth, growls.

HENRI BOUGEREAU

You! Out!

She sneezes, grabs the bag of dead roses, hesitates.

ERIC BLOOM

You should go, Miss Bashforth.

She exits.

Stump rounds the desk, rotates the chair to the forward position. Bloom cowers.

DEREK STUMP

This isn't a good start, Henri.

Bloom composes himself, as does Henri, who is winded.

OUTSIDE THE OFFICE

Miss Bashforth listens by the door, turns her head towards her desk.

MISS BASHFORTH'S POV

The phone on the desk.

BACK TO SCENE

HENRI BOUGEREAU

It's the least he deserves, him
and the other so-called
administrators of this sardine can
that dares to call itself an art
museum!

Bloom attempts to speak but is immediately cut off by Bougereau.

HENRI BOUGEREAU (CONT'D)

Silence! I demand to have access
to, and see, all security data,
including video, personnel files,
scheduling, maintenance records
and deliveries for the past twelve
months!

ERIC BLOOM

Listen, I'm new here. I don't
even know where the damn gift shop
is.

(MORE)

ERIC BLOOM (CONT'D)
 I want to help you; I intend to
 help you, but it was my first day,
 you understand and-

Bougereau yanks Bloom out of his seat again. Stump
 intervenes, places himself between the two men.

DEREK STUMP
 Roughing him up won't get us
 anywhere, Henri.

HENRI BOUGEREAU
 To you, perhaps. I am half
 convinced Monsieur Bloom was in on
 it.

Eric pounds his fist on the desktop.

ERIC BLOOM
 That's absurd! Ridiculous! I
 have an alibi that can be
 confirmed by half a dozen people.

HENRI BOUGEREAU
 "Alibi." The quicker a suspect
 spits out that word, the more
 suspicious I become.

DEREK STUMP
 Look, now that we're all well
 acquainted, I think the next order
 of business is to speak with the
 three men who made the discovery.

Bougereau displays annoyance at Stump's suggestion and
 assertiveness.

HENRI BOUGEREAU
 I will consider your proposal,
 "Assistant" Detective Stump. But
 first, we should break for lunch.

Disgusted, Stump slaps his sides.

DEREK STUMP
 Lunch?! We just had a
 seven-course breakfast two hours
 ago! I ate more lobster than I've
 eaten in my entire life!

Henri, indifferent to the protest, shrugs.

HENRI BOUGEREAU

My stomach doesn't know what time it is; it just knows it needs filling. Any worthy dining establishments left in the great, culinary city of Cleveland, Ohio? One that does not serve Polish Boys?

Bloom clears his throat.

ERIC BLOOM

Gentlemen, if I may... The Terrace Cafe, at the top of the Pomeroy Building, serves an excellent luncheon. I am sure you won't be disappointed with the cuisine, or the view. Mention my name for a good table, and try the duck.

DEREK STUMP

I don't believe this, I simply don't believe this.

HENRI BOUGEREAU

It sounds adequate. Thank you for the suggestion, Monsieur Bloom. I sincerely hope you are better at dining recommendations than museum administration.

Bloom straightens his jacket and tie.

ERIC BLOOM

May I join you?

HENRI BOUGEREAU

When a croissant wins the Tour de France.

ERIC BLOOM

I see. Well, is the staff at least free to leave the premises?

HENRI BOUGEREAU

Not until I say so.

Henri exits, Stump shakes his head in disbelief, mumbles, follows. Miss Bashforth tentatively re-enters the office, looks to Eric for a statement.

MISS BASHFORTH

Can we leave?

ERIC BLOOM

I'm afraid we're not going
anywhere for a while, Miss
Bashforth. Please alert the staff
and prepare a list of restaurants
with take-out.

CUT TO:

EXT. LONDON, UK - DAY

(THE NEXT DAY)

A torrential downpour soaks the city.

BUILDING

An imposing, black, modern commercial building bears the
sign: The Tucker Art Gallery.

The massive bronze door's gold lettering: By Appointment
Only.

INT. TUCKER GALLERY - WAITING AREA

Whetsok/Keating, fidgety, impatient, flips through an art
magazine, tosses it aside, garners the attention of a busy
SECRETARY.

SECRETARY

It shouldn't be much longer, Mr.
Whetsok. Mr. Tucker's had a very
hectic morning.

As Whetsok/Keating, vexed, grabs another magazine, the
secretary's intercom buzzes.

HAROLD TUCKER (V.O.)

Send him in.

INT. HAROLD TUCKER'S OFFICE

The mahogany paneled room is quite dark, save for the
brilliant illumination cast by an antique desk lamp, and
its reflection off the polished, bald head of seated Harold
Tucker.

Tucker, an obese man, in his sixties, is hunched over an
open, ancient book. O.s., the sound of sheets of rain
pelting windows, rumbling thunder.

Whetsok/Keating slowly enters, gazes at the variety of
shadowed masterpieces, from many cultures, adorning the

walls. He quietly, gently sits in the lone chair in front of Tucker's desk. Tucker's head remains lowered.

HAROLD TUCKER

Did I say you could sit?

Whetsok/Keating immediately rises. Tucker looks up, his tiny, blue beady eyes peer out from under a lardy brow.

HAROLD TUCKER (CONT'D)

Sit.

Whetsok/Keating obeys. Tucker slams the book shut, forces an ugly grin.

HAROLD TUCKER (CONT'D)

I wish my dog was as obedient.
Whetsok, I bet if I said roll
over, next, you'd do that, too.

WHETSOK/KEATING

I haven't been paid yet, so I
might.

HAROLD TUCKER

You'll get paid, when I have both
halves of the 'Hot Chick.'

Whetsok/Keating, displeased, shakes his head.

WHETSOK/KEATING

Excuse me, Mr. Tucker, but that
was not our agreement. I made the
trip here, at considerable risk,
to collect the down payment.

HAROLD TUCKER

Well, consider the agreement
unilaterally modified, by me,
right now.

Tucker aggressively jams his index into the desk's ink blotter.

HAROLD TUCKER (CONT'D)

And, as for the risk, your trip
here to pick up the Turner sketch
was arranged for and documented
months ago.

Whetsok/Keating folds his arms, bites his lower lip.

WHETSOK/KEATING

I need part of the money, today.
Something. Twenty-five percent.

Tucker scoffs, stands, displays his massive girth, strokes suspenders, scowls.

HAROLD TUCKER

Five percent. I'll see that your account here is credited by tomorrow.

Whetsok/Keating bolts to his feet, raps the desktop.

WHETSOK/KEATING

House credit?! I'm going to be paid, in art, by the world's biggest dealer in forgeries?

Tucker lowers his head, grips the ends of his desk.

HAROLD TUCKER

Mr. Wassong, if you please.

From out of a dark office corner steps LEROY WASSONG. He is a muscular, red-haired, oriental gentleman wearing a dark blue suit. He steps into the light, squints. Poker-faced, he pulls back his jacket, reveals a holstered pistol.

HAROLD TUCKER (CONT'D)

Mr. Wassong, kindly show Mr. Whetsok the door -- face first, if you find it necessary.

CUT TO:

INT. BACK STAGE, RICH E. FAITH'S TENT - DAY (ONE DAY LATER)

Marigold, guided by Larry, enters, carries the covered, small format painting commissioned by Rich.

Rich reads *The Wall Street Journal*, immediately sets it down, upon seeing her. He flashes a smile. Larry steps away.

RICH E. FAITH

Marigold! Wonderful to see you again. Is that the St. Sebastian?

Marigold smirks.

MARIGOLD WEST

It's not the Mona Lisa. Got it done at 3 a.m. Thought I'd bring it right over.

As Rich takes the painting, Marigold notices the improved surroundings.

MARIGOLD WEST (CONT'D)
 Something different about the place. Noticed it out front, too. That impending sense of failure is missing. Things really picking up?

Rich produces and hand Marigold a wad of cash.

RICH E. FAITH
 Godsend greenbacks! We've hit the jackpot, Marigold.

Shocked, she eagerly counts the bills.

RICH E. FAITH (CONT'D)
 I added an extra \$500. Your painting turned the tide... with the help of a the little alteration I made.

Marigold smiles, reflects, stashes the money in her jeans, turns serious.

MARIGOLD WEST
 What alteration?

RICH E. FAITH
 Gonna do it with this one, too. Let me show you.

He unwraps the new painting, approves.

PAINTING

Depiction of St. Sebastian tied to a post, struck with a multitude of of arrows.

BACK TO SCENE

Rich looks at the back of the piece.

RICH E. FAITH
 Good, I see the holes align perfectly with the arrow wounds... Jeez, this wood looks really old.

MARIGOLD WEST
No extra charge, Rich. Like
before, I did everything you asked
for.

Rich uncovers a device on his desk. It has the same
dimensions as the painting.

DEVICE

Meant to fit on the back of the painting, the device
contains a series of tubes and vials filled with red
liquid. Electric components are also present.

BACK TO SCENE

Rich attaches the device to the painting's back, looks
around for Larry.

RICH E. FAITH
Hey, Larry, come over here. It's
time for a practice miracle.

Larry lightheartedly approaches. Marigold eagerly looks
on.

LARRY
Somethin' new, Rich?

Rich holds up the painting for Larry's evaluation.

LARRY (CONT'D)
Looks great.

RICH'S PANTS POCKET

Rich's hand produces a small remote control, presses its
single button.

BACK TO SCENE

Streams of red liquid squirt from the picture's wound
sites, dousing Larry. He raises his hands too late; he's
soaked, his suit ruined. Larry takes it well, laughs.

Marigold, shocked, steps back. Rich, thrilled over the
device's success, jumps, hoots, hollers.

RICH E. FAITH

No more just waiting on stage for
the faithful! With this, I can
bring the miraculous to the
masses! We're going to be on
local cable tonight! I got ten
volunteers who'll be takin' calls!
What d'ya think, Marigold?

She seeks the right words.

MARIGOLD WEST

There's no business like show
business.

CUT TO:

INT. MARIGOLD'S APARTMENT - EVENING

At her easel, Marigold feverishly works on the Japanese
seascape commissioned by Whetsok/Keating. It's nearly
complete.

The phone rings; she picks up on the eighth one.

MARIGOLD'S APARTMENT/WHETSOK'S HOME - INTERCUTTING

Whetsok/Keating removes an ice bag from one side of his
face, reveals a bruise.

WHETSOK/KEATING

Greetings, Marigold, it's Mr.
Keating.

Marigold sets down her brush.

MARIGOLD WEST

Hello, Mr. Keating. You'll be
pleased to know I've nearly
completed the Hokusai-style
seascape.

Whetsok/Keating twirls the end of his phony mustache; it
comes off.

WHETSOK/KEATING

Oh, excellent news. I dare say
you could have painted the ceiling
of the Sistine Chapel over Labor
Day weekend.

She laughs.

MARIGOLD WEST

That's very kind of you. Have you decided what subject you want for the second painting?

He tries to put the mustache back on, fails, sticks it in his shirt pocket.

WHETSOK/KEATING

Yes, that's why I called. I would like an Impressionistic landscape for the second. Something with a pond, lily pads and such.

MARIGOLD WEST

That should not present a problem.

She picks out one of her boards from assorted-sized panels leaning against the couch.

MARIGOLD WEST (CONT'D)

No problem at all -- just need a few days.

WHETSOK/KEATING

Well, the sooner the better. I'll be in touch.

MARIGOLD WEST

Thank you, Mr. Keating.

Marigold hangs up, picks up a hand saw, places a pencil in her mouth, looks for and finds a yardstick.

Marigold, alarmed, is drawn to the creaky sound, o.s., of her apartment door opening.

MARIGOLD'S POV

A very short, emaciated old woman, MRS. TAYLOR, enters, carrying an exceptionally well-fed cat. Bespectacled Mrs. Taylor's gray hair is pulled straight back, ends in a small bun. Her ragged bathrobe is encrusted with cat hair and feathers.

BACK TO SCENE

MRS. TAYLOR

Hope I didn't frighten you,
Marigold dear.

She struggles to hold onto the cat. Marigold breathes a sigh of relief, puts her hand to her chest.

MARIGOLD WEST
 No, not at all, Mrs. Taylor,
 please come in. Who's this big
 fellow?

Marigold approaches her slight neighbor, scratches the cat
 behind its ear.

MRS. TAYLOR
 Oh, these are the latest additions
 to my ever-growing family.

MARIGOLD WEST
 These?

MRS. TAYLOR
 (to the cat)
 Now there, Mr. Benny, be a good
 boy and let Mr. Burns out for some
 air.

CAT

The cat opens its mouth, allows the exit of a yellow
 parakeet from its full cheeks.

BACK TO SCENE

The parakeet takes to the air, circles Mrs. Taylor's head
 twice, lands atop it.

Marigold is delighted with the antics.

MARIGOLD WEST
 Now I see what you meant. How
 many does this make, Mrs. Taylor?

Mrs. Taylor ponders, shrugs.

MRS. TAYLOR
 Oh, honestly, I can't say anymore;
 I've lost track. All I know is,
 it's more than our miserable
 landlord allows, by far. Thank
 goodness he's never around.

MARIGOLD WEST
 I guess so, though I wouldn't mind
 him coming around to fix my door
 lock.

Mrs. Taylor wends her way to the easel, espies the
 Hokusai-style seascape, admires it. Marigold joins her.

MRS. TAYLOR
 Oh, this is simply lovely,
 Marigold, simply lovely.

MARIGOLD WEST
 Why, thank you.

MRS. TAYLOR
 What the hell is it?

Marigold is momentarily taken aback, then points to the various details of the work, as she describes it.

MARIGOLD WEST
 It's a seascape, done in an
 oriental style... 19th century.
 There'e the seaside village...
 Those are waves. It's not quite
 done.

Mrs. Taylor adjusts her glasses.

MRS. TAYLOR
 Well, honestly, I don't see any of
 that -- but I want it, for my
 cats. They'll be fascinated by
 it. Name your price, dearie.

MARIGOLD WEST
 Oh, I'm afraid I couldn't sell it
 to you, Mrs. Taylor. It's a
 commissioned piece.

Mrs. Taylor dismissively waves one wrinkled hand, makes a sour facial expression.

MRS. TAYLOR
 Oh, piffle! Nonsense, dearie! I
 won't have the word 'no' from you.
 I've got money I haven't folded
 yet! Now, how much?

Marigold is ambivalent. Mrs. Taylor takes a closer look. The bird hops from the top of her head, onto the painting's upper edge.

MARIGOLD WEST
 I do have more wood... I suppose
 I could make another one for you.

MRS. TAYLOR
 No, no! I want this one! This
 exact one! It's perfect!

MARIGOLD WEST
It's not finished.

Mrs. Taylor turns to Marigold. The parakeet hops back atop her head, tweets.

MRS. TAYLOR
I said it's perfect, child. It doesn't need another stroke. You hear Mr. Burns chirpin' away? He agrees!

Marigold acquiesces, rolls her eyes.

MARIGOLD WEST
Okay, I'll make a new one for my client. How's... one hundred dollars?

Mrs. Taylor smiles, reveals horrible teeth, hugs the cat.

MRS. TAYLOR
You'll take one-fifty -- and like it! Not another word!

MARIGOLD WEST
You win, Mrs. Taylor.

MRS. TAYLOR
I'll come back with the money in a jiffy. Let me drop off Mr. Benny and Mr. Burns.

She steps towards the door, halts, turns back to Marigold.

MRS. TAYLOR (CONT'D)
I nearly forgot! My whole reason for coming over here was to ask if you heard the shocking news. Seein' you're an artist and all, I figured you'd be interested.

MARIGOLD WEST
What news is that, Mrs. Taylor?

Marigold, only mildly interested, fusses with her wood panels, looks for one suitable for a replacement for Whetsok/Keating.

MRS. TAYLOR
It's about the art museum downtown. I suppose you heard -- it was shut down due to Legionnaires' disease.

MARIGOLD WEST

I heard a little something. I
don't really pay much attention to
the news. Is that it?

Mrs. Taylor methodically strokes the cat; the bird hops
onto its tail.

MRS. TAYLOR

No. There's rumors about the Mona
Lisa. It's different, somehow
different, they say... and not in
a good way, either.

Marigold freezes.

MRS. TAYLOR (CONT'D)

I'll be right back with the money,
Marigold.

Mrs. Taylor exits.

CUT TO:

EXT. JUNKYARD ENTRANCE - THE NEXT MORNING

Sign at entrance reads: Scafuri's Plumbing Junk

Beyond the chain link fence is an endless vista of assorted
plumbing discards: pipe, sinks, toilets, water heaters and
more.

EXT. SHACK

A dilapidated shack is surrounded by an ocean of junked
toilets, divided by a narrow, dirt path. Alone, Craig
Ransid walks, stops, looks over his shoulder. Satisfied no
one else is present, he farts, enters the structure.

INT. SHACK

The interior is a pigsty, worthy of its location in a
junkyard. Fast-food wrappers, cans, bottles, newspapers
and other assorted trash abound. Craig kicks garbage out
of his way, reaches the unmade bed, flops onto it. He
picks up a newspaper, stares at the front page.

FRONT PAGE

Headline reads: Is There Something Wrong with the Mona
Lisa?

BACK TO SCENE

Ransid discards the paper, rolls in the direction of bedside metal shelving covered with a tarpaulin. He reaches under a nearby, filthy pillow, pulls out a half-eaten candy bar covered with lint and hair. He briefly inspects it, picks off a hair, pops the candy into his mouth, chews.

Still chewing, he pulls off the dusty tarp, reveals a PC, monitor, printer and recording equipment. Suddenly disgusted by the candy, he spits it onto the floor. Ransid returns his attention to the electronics, turns them on, makes adjustments.

CRAIG RANSID

Let's see what cheatin' Marigold's
been up to recently.

The monitor comes to life, the recording equipment whirs, then stops. He bangs the side of it with his fist, it comes back to life.

MONITOR

The interior of Marigold's apartment appears. Moving about, she stops at the sound of a knock. Whetsok/Keating enters, dressed as Keating.

CRAIG RANSID (O.S.)

Goddamn it! Who's that bum?

WHETSOK/KEATING

Marigold, a pleasure to finally
meet you. The tiny photograph in
your classified ad does not do you
justice.

He shakes her hand, eagerly steps towards the easel, which bears a covered work. Marigold follows, grips the cover's corner.

MARIGOLD WEST

Likewise, nice to meet you, Mr.
Keating. This was a rather
unusual request.

WHETSOK/KEATING

Indeed. I have a friend who
enjoys art with a humorous twist,
shall we say. May I see it now?

MARIGOLD WEST

Certainly.

She pulls the cover away, reveals the version of the Mona Lisa giving the finger. Whetsok/Keating laughs heartily, puts his hands to his cheeks.

WHETSOK/KEATING
Marigold, this is grand!

BACK TO SCENE

Ransid pauses the video, rolls off the bed, finds the discarded newspaper, takes a second look. He carefully folds it, places it on the bed, thinks.

CRAIG RANSID
That interesting. Let's see some more.

Craig returns to the recorder, fast-forwards until he sees Whetsok/Keating return with the two gessoed panels. Fast-forwarding again shows Marigold working on them. Another burst forward reveals Mrs. Taylor's purchase. Craig stops the video, turns the machine off, picks up and scans the newspaper one more time, then gently sets it down.

CRAIG RANSID (CONT'D)
The museum is sticking to its bullshit story about Legionnaires' disease -- the cops, too. It's a crock. The painting must have been swiped... and Marigold was in on it, which means she's got money. A lot of money.

Ransid turns the recorder back on, returns to the frame showing the phony Mona Lisa, prints off a copy and inspects it, while picking his nose.

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - THAT AFTERNOON

At a table suitable for six guests, in a busy, expensive restaurant, Henri and Derek sit across from one another. The table is littered with the remains of a sumptuous, multi-course meal, most of which is deposited in proximity to Henri.

Lost in thought, he carefully picks his teeth with a gold toothpick. Derek, impatient, drums his fingers on the silk tablecloth. A WAITER brings the check on a tray covered by a silver dome, sets it in front of Derek.

WAITER

I hope you enjoyed your meal, gentlemen. It was our pleasure to serve you both and we look forward to your prompt return.

Henri exhibits skepticism. The waiter uncovers the tray, which holds the check and a single red rose, then departs. Derek slowly pushes the tray until it is front of Henri.

DEREK STUMP

You gonna eat the rose, too?

Henri smells the rose, returns it to the tray, picks up the check, indifferently tosses it back down, along with a credit card retrieved from his breast pocket.

HENRI BOUGEREAU

The artichoke and salmon mousse struck me as a bit... sodden with creme fraiche. That is not how it is prepared in France.

Derek picks up his fork, bangs its handle on the table, momentarily silencing the room. Red-faced, he leans forward, speaks softly, intensely.

DEREK STUMP

What the hell is the matter with you?! Since you arrived, all you've done is stuff your face and then complain about the food quality not being up to French standards! You're here to solve one of the worst cultural crimes in history and, instead, you act like some snotty restaurant critic!

Henri solemnly folds his hands on the table.

HENRI BOUGEREAU

An accurate observation, Monsieur Stump, but completely superficial.

Derek leans back, opens his shirt collar.

HENRI BOUGEREAU (CONT'D)

You mistakenly assume that I am not devoting serious thought to the case, while simultaneously attempting to enjoy the local, substandard fare, but that, in fact, is all I have been doing.

The waiter returns, takes away the bill and card.

HENRI BOUGEREAU (CONT'D)
 And it is all I have ever done, in
 the entirety of my career -- with
 most successful results, I might
 add.

A BUSBOY arrives, attempts to remove a plate of assorted
 cheese remnants. Henri slaps his hand, signals for him to
 depart, which he does.

HENRI BOUGEREAU (CONT'D)
 The service, if you can call it
 that, is deplorable, worthy of a
 Turkish prison.

DEREK STUMP
 Jesus Christ.

Henri, perturbed, leans forward.

HENRI BOUGEREAU
 All you have is your anger and
 impatience, Detective Stump,
 whereas I have my refined
 suspicions and suspects. I am
 ready to proceed.

The waiter returns with the card and receipt. Henri signs.
 They rise. Derek, contrite, grabs a cheese remnant, pops
 it in his mouth, chews.

DEREK STUMP
 Okay, you're the boss. Where to?

HENRI BOUGEREAU
 I'd like to find a pastry shop.

DEREK STUMP
 Oh, my god.

CUT TO:

INT. MARIGOLD'S APARTMENT - LATER

At her easel, Marigold works on the replacement Hokusai for
 Whetsok/Keating.

Craig enters, without knocking, slams the door shut.
 Marigold briefly looks in his direction, keeps working.

CRAIG RANSID
 Happy to see me?

MARIGOLD WEST

I can barely contain myself.

He approaches, puts his arm around her, tries to kiss her, but she evades him, makes a sickened face.

MARIGOLD WEST (CONT'D)

God, you stink. Listen, Craig, I'm up against a tough deadline. I've got two paintings to complete and I need to get paid; it's nearly the landlord's birthday.

Craig scratches his head, exhibits confusion. She paints.

MARIGOLD WEST (CONT'D)

That means the rent is due. Plus, I don't want you around when you smell like a chicken coop during a July heat wave. You must have come from your place.

Craig picks up, inspects, the gessoed panel bearing the sketch for the Impressionistic landscape. Marigold takes it from him, sets it on the easel, next to the seascape, resumes working.

CRAIG RANSID

Hurry, hurry, hurry. Marigold West is always in a hurry, when I'm around. Seems like you're tryin' to get rid of me. Somebody else gonna come callin'? Somebody wearin' a hat and glasses?

Marigold puts down her brush and palette.

MARIGOLD WEST

Spell it out. What's on your mind?

Ransid reaches into his leather jacket, pulls out the folded printout, unfolds it, holds it by two fingers in front of Marigold's face. Tauntingly, he gently rocks it back and forth.

PRINTOUT

The printout shows Marigold and Whetsok/Keating standing before the substitute Mona Lisa.

BACK TO SCENE

Marigold gulps, blushes, sweats, looks away. Ransid smirks.

MARIGOLD WEST

So... Wait! That picture! You're spying on me, you bastard!

She takes a swing at Craig, misses. He tightly grabs her arm, laughs.

CRAIG RANSID

Your expression, it was priceless!
Yeah, I spy on you!

He brushes back a lock of her hair on her forehead, runs the back of his hand along her blushing cheek. Marigold pushes him away.

CRAIG RANSID (CONT'D)

You must have heard the rumors, too. The cops' big, fat lie and what the real problem with the Mona Lisa is.

Marigold turns away, fusses with art supplies. Frustrated, she knocks them to the floor.

CRAIG RANSID (CONT'D)

That guy, the one who commissioned the piece -- he recruited you. You're in on it with him. He must have paid you plenty, Marigold. You're holdin' out on me.

She picks up and throws a tube of paint, misses Craig.

MARIGOLD WEST

I'm no accomplice! I never met him before and only charged him my going rate, you peeping parasite!

Ransid waves the printout a second time, folds and stashes it in his pocket.

CRAIG RANSID

Fifty grand will keep my mouth shut. You've got seventy-two hours, not a minute more, and that's only because I love you so much.

She spits. Craig strides to her fridge, opens the door, pockets assorted food items, then walks to the door, looks back at Marigold.

CRAIG RANSID (CONT'D)
I've been so busy, I didn't have
time to go food shopping.

He exits; Marigold cries, goes back to work.

CUT TO:

INT. MARIGOLD'S APARTMENT - THE NEXT DAY

Weary Marigold sits on an arm of the sofa, sips coffee. The two, completed paintings for Whetsok/Keating rest on the easel. She wipes her brow with her forearm, sighs, longingly looks at the couch.

MARIGOLD WEST
I don't think I can make it to the
bed, but, then again, the couch
smells from Craig.

Marigold stands, moans.

O.s., a knock on the door

WHETSOK/KEATING (O.S.)
Marigold? May I come in?

Marigold becomes animated, stands, straightens her hair, looks the apartment over, then looks in the direction she suspects Craig's camera must be. Her eyes widen.

MARIGOLD'S POV

Molding along the ceiling: the black dot of an electric eye.

BACK TO SCENE

WHETSOK/KEATING (O.S.)
Marigold? Are you there?

O.s., Whetsok/Keating knocks harder.

MARIGOLD WEST
Mr. Keating? Don't come in! I
just, uh, got out of the shower!
I need a minute; I wasn't
expecting you.

She looks about, finds a large tube of white paint, grabs a step-stool.

MARIGOLD'S POV

Her grip tighten on the tube, pushes out a blob of opaque, white paint onto the lens.

BACK TO SCENE

WHETSOK/KEATING (O.S.)
I tried calling several times last night, but you didn't pick up.

Marigold puts away the step-stool and paint.

MARIGOLD WEST
No time to talk, I was focused on getting the work done.

WHETSOK/KEATING (O.S.)
That's my diligent girl. May I enter?

MARIGOLD WEST
Yes, I'm decent now. Please come in.

Whetsok/Keating enters, looks at Marigold, is perplexed.

WHETSOK/KEATING
Good to see you... I hope you don't mind my asking, but your hair isn't wet, and for someone who just got out of the shower, you still have quite a bit of paint on your hands.

Marigold reflexively touches her hair, looks at her hands, wipes them on her jeans.

MARIGOLD WEST
Yes, well, about that... Truthfully, it was a tough night. My lousy boyfriend, work stress... I wasn't really in the mood to see anyone today.

Embarrassed, Whetsok/Keating takes a step back, gazes downward.

WHETSOK/KEATING

Pardon my suspicion, it was wrong
of me to question you.

MARIGOLD WEST

No offense taken, Mr. Keating.
Come, have a look at the
paintings. They're done.

They both step to the easel. Whetsok/Keating smiles,
approvingly nods.

WHETSOK/KEATING

Excellent, both fully meet my
expectations. Uh...

He steps closer to the two works, angles his head, looks
closely at the seascape's edge, runs one finger along it.
Whetsok/Keating nervously coughs, makes an odd humming
sound.

MARIGOLD WEST

Something wrong? Did I miss a
spot?

Whetsok/Keating grabs the oriental seascape, brings it
within an inch of his nose, flips it, stares at its back.
He throws it down, grabs the Impressionistic landscape,
similarly inspects it, throws it down. Furious, he turns
to Marigold.

WHETSOK/KEATING

Where are the panels I gave you?!
Where are they?!

Dumbfounded, Marigold falls back onto the couch.

WHETSOK/KEATING (CONT'D)

God damn it! Marigold! For the
last time -- what happened to
them?!

He leaps at Marigold, pins her to the couch with his
forearm.

MARIGOLD WEST

What are you doing?! I painted on
them and sold them! I cut new
ones for you, same dimensions,
from panels I had in stock. What
difference does it make? They
were old anyway. These will last
longer.

Whetsok/Keating rolls off her, stands, crazily simpers.

WHETSOK/KEATING
 She thinks she did me a favor!
 "They'll last longer," she says!

His mood darkens.

WHETSOK/KEATING (CONT'D)
 I have to have them back -- today!
 At once! Now!

Marigold stumbles to her feet, hyperventilates.
 Whetsok/Keating kicks over the easel, stomps the paintings
 on the floor.

MARIGOLD WEST
 Stop! Let me think! Um, across
 the hall -- Mrs. Taylor! She
 bought the oriental seascape.

Whetsok/Keating, sweat-soaked, exhausted, catches his
 breath, thinks.

WHETSOK/KEATING
 And the other?! Who?! Who bought
 it?!

Marigold tugs at her hair with both hands.

MARIGOLD WEST
 A faith healer, televangelist!
 His tent is on the edge of town.
 I did a religious painting for him
 -- some saint... Saint Sebastian!

WHETSOK/KEATING
 The first one, Mrs. Taylor -- you
 said she lives across the hall?

Marigold nods. Whetsok/Keating grabs her by her shirt
 front, rushes for the door.

MARIGOLD WEST
 What's so damned important about
 the panels?

They exit.

HALLWAY, OUTSIDE MRS. TAYLOR'S APARTMENT

WHETSOK/KEATING
 I think you know quite well.

CUT TO:

INT. MRS. TAYLOR'S APARTMENT

A multitude of cats and small, colorful birds oddly live in harmony. The small apartment is overcrowded with large pieces of dated furniture. Shelves and tables bear displays of cat-and-bird-themed knickknacks and figurines. Classical music softly plays on an old turntable.

Seated on the couch, Mrs. Taylor, cats in lap and adorned with birds, joyfully daydreams. Next to her rests the oriental seascape. It is the subject of attention of a group of cats, all vigorously scratching at it.

O.s., pounding on the door startles her.

MARIGOLD WEST (O.S.)

Mrs. Taylor! Mrs. Taylor! Open up! It's me, Marigold! It's urgent -- please open up!

Dozens of birds flutter and flap around the room. A chorus of meowing cats mill about. The ones scratching the painting persist.

Before Mrs. Taylor can reach the door, it's kicked open by Whetsok/Keating. Animal mayhem ensues, when he and Marigold enter.

MRS. TAYLOR

Marigold? Marigold! Who is this maniac? What is this about?

Marigold tries to defuse the situation. Whetsok/Keating is shocked at the apartment's contents, maniacally scans the room for the painting.

MARIGOLD WEST

Mrs. Taylor, this is Mr. Keating, an... an acquaintance. He's an art fancier.

MRS. TAYLOR

Quite a wound-up one, I'd say. I picture art fanciers as a bit more placid.

WHETSOK/KEATING

Where's the painting you bought from Marigold?

He stumbles about; Marigold runs to Mrs. Taylor's side.

MARIGOLD WEST

Mrs. Taylor, he originally commissioned the painting. Remember me telling you? Well, he wants it back -- pretty badly, as you can see.

Mrs. Taylor defiantly folds her arms.

MRS. TAYLOR

No! I paid for it! It's mine!

Mrs. Taylor and Whetsok/Keating espy the painting on the couch simultaneously.

MRS. TAYLOR'S AND WHETSOK/KEATING'S POV

The painting, still being scratched, reveals a bit of the Mona Lisa.

BACK TO SCENE

Whetsok/Keating bellows, lunges for it, but Mrs. Taylor, too quick, nabs it first. Whetsok/Keating falls to his knees, implores.

WHETSOK/KEATING

I'll pay you five times what you paid for it!

She hugs it tightly, stomps.

MRS. TAYLOR

I wouldn't take twenty times. My cats instantly took to it, especially Mr. Cambridge. You cannot have it back. Now, out -- the two of you! Scoot!

MARIGOLD WEST

Mrs. Taylor, please. I have an exact duplicate I'll give you for free -- and I'll return your money.

Whetsok/Keating rises, reddens, swats birds. Mrs. Taylor steps towards the wall separating her apartment from her neighbor's. Cats defensively align in front of her.

MRS. TAYLOR

Two bangs on this wall and Mr. Peterson will be in here -- armed!

(MORE)

MRS. TAYLOR (CONT'D)
 He's an ex-city-cop with a short
 temper.

She bangs once. Whetsok/Keating and Marigold make eye
 contact.

WHETSOK/KEATING
 (to Marigold)
 We can always come back here.
 Take me to your preacher friend.

Disgusted, Marigold huffs, heads for the door, exits.
 Whetsok/Keating follows. Mrs. Taylor returns the painting
 to the couch, where the cats resume clawing it. She picks
 up one other, holds it to her ear.

MRS. TAYLOR
 (to the cat)
 Oh, my, you are right, Mrs.
 Diller, I completely forgot. Mr.
 Peterson moved out six months ago.

CUT TO:

EXT. RICH E. FAITH'S TENT - LATER

Whetsok/Keating and Marigold struggle to enter, work their
 way against the tide of exiting ATTENDEES, many of whom are
 blood soaked. The crowd is elated, energized.

An ATTENDEE (#1) wipes blood from his face with a
 handkerchief.

ATTENDEE #1
 My wallet's empty, but it was
 worth every penny -- and then
 some. Rich E. Faith changed my
 life!

ATTENDEE #2
 Yeah, too bad there was no ATM. I
 can't complain, though. The
 painting of St. Sebastian sprayed
 me -- twice! It's a sign I tell
 'ya! I'm buyin' me a speedboat
and a new truck, cause I'll be
 rich by next June!

ATTENDEE #1
 Amen, brother! Glad I signed up
 for his credit card.

Whetsok/Keating, shocked, turns to Marigold.

WHETSOK/KEATING
 You did say your client is an
 evangelist, right?

Marigold, wide-eyed, nods.

WHETSOK/KEATING (CONT'D)
 But these people, pardon the
 expression, look as though they
 should be on their way to a
 surgeon.

MARIGOLD WEST
 No need to, they've already been
 worked on by a smooth operator.

BACK STAGE

Rich wipes down the blood-drenched St. Sebastian painting,
 pats staff members on the shoulder, offers words of praise.
 When finally alone, Marigold and Whetsok/Keating approach.

RICH E. FAITH
 Hey there, Marigold! What a nice
 surprise. What brings you here?

Whetsok/Keating extends his hand to Rich, who does not
 reciprocate.

WHETSOK/KEATING
 It was I. My name is Gordon
 Keating. Marigold told me all
 about your ministry and your
 miraculous paintings. I had to
 see them first hand. Marigold was
 kind enough to drive.

Rich, uncomfortable with the explanation, holds the
 painting firmly with both hands.

MARIGOLD WEST
 That's right, Rich. Mr. Keating
 here deals in art and wanted to
 see the St. Sebastian, in
 person...just like he said.

RICH E. FAITH
 Well, Mr. Keating, you want to see
 it, see it in action. I suggest
 you come back tomorrow night.
 There's a gatherin' of the
 faithful at eight. Look forward
 to seein' you -- you too,
 Marigold.

Rich signals for Larry and Bruce, who immediately come to Rich's side. He hands them the St. Sebastian.

RICH E. FAITH (CONT'D)
Lock it up extra tight, boys.

They take it, depart.

RICH E. FAITH (CONT'D)
Be seein' you, Marigold.

Rich turns, walks away.

CUT TO:

INT. COCKTAIL LOUNGE - ONE HOUR LATER

Whetsok/Keating and Marigold sit over half-finished cocktails in a secluded section of a quiet bar. Whetsok takes a sip from his martini, extricates and chews an olive, snaps the toothpick in half.

WHETSOK/KEATING
I have to say I'm having a difficult time keeping my inner frustration from boiling over, Marigold.

MARIGOLD WEST
I can fully appreciate that, Mr. Keating.

WHETSOK/KEATING
No, you cannot. I must, I repeat, I must have both panels back: Mrs. Taylor's and Mr. Faith's, within two days at most. Like it or not, Ms. West, we need to be on the same team for awhile. I assume you know what lies beneath the two gessoed panels, and that you understand that, at this very moment, you are considered to be an accomplice.

She sighs, reluctantly speaks.

MARIGOLD WEST
Well... now that we're in this together, there is something else, quite important, that I need to make you aware of.

WHETSOK/KEATING

Oh?

MARIGOLD WEST

Yes, an additional problem.

Whetsok/Keating kicks the bar. Marigold looks around.

MARIGOLD'S POV

The only other patron is a muscular oriental man sitting at a table ten feet away.

BACK TO SCENE

Marigold is satisfied she can speak freely.

TABLE

LeRoy Wassong, wearing a baseball cap and a heavy jacket, sips his beer, watches TV, but listens attentively to Marigold and Whetsok/Keating via an earpiece.

BACK TO SCENE

MARIGOLD WEST

I've got this creep of a boyfriend, Craig Ransid. He lives in a shack at Scafuri's Junkyard. He... um... you're not going to like this.

WHETSOK/KEATING

I'm braced for the worst, continue.

Marigold downs the rest of her drink, clears her throat.

MARIGOLD WEST

He's been secretly recording everything that goes on in my apartment, for months.

Whetsok/Keating polishes off his drink. Wassong stands, departs.

WHETSOK/KEATING

Everything?

MARIGOLD WEST

Uh-huh. You picking up the mock
Mona; you dropping off the panels,
and everything in between, and
after. Everything.

Elbows on the bar, Whetsok/Keating puts his hand to his
head, rumples his hair, mumbles, pauses.

WHETSOK/KEATING

Our first order of business then
is to pay your boyfriend a visit,
isn't it?

CUT TO:

INT. BLOOM'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Weary Bloom, disheveled, bearded, clears away pizza boxes,
other food packaging from his desktop, with a sweep of his
arm, invites Henri and Derek to sit.

From the desk's center drawer, he pulls out a folder,
slides it to Henri.

HENRI BOUGEREAU

I presume this is Albert Whetsok's
file?

ERIC BLOOM

Why, yes, how did you know?

Henri's expression turns quizzical.

HENRI BOUGEREAU

I asked you for it, when we spoke
on the phone.

Bloom, eyes bulging, pinches his lower lip, babbles
incoherently.

ERIC BLOOM

You did? Oh, oh, yes, that's
right, you did. Please excuse me,
I haven't slept much since the
quarantine went into effect. By
the way, how many of the staff
have contracted Legionnaires'
disease, at this point?

DEREK STUMP

None. It's a cover story,
remember?

Bloom sweats, fusses with his soiled shirt collar.

ERIC BLOOM

Of course. Yes-yes, I knew that.

HENRI BOUGEREAU

Whetsok's was the only personnel file missing, when I asked you for all of them. Why?

ERIC BLOOM

Only the late Andrew Carr could answer that. I found this file quite by accident, while rummaging through drawers. I've had a lot of time on my hands, as you well know.

Henri puts on gold-rimmed reading glasses, opens the file.

ERIC BLOOM (CONT'D)

I went through it, very carefully, before you arrived. It's got some serious inconsistencies.

Bloom picks up a pizza box from the floor, extricates a stale slice, takes a massive bite, mindlessly chews.

HENRI BOUGEREAU

How so?

ERIC BLOOM

For one, the mining consulting firm he claims to head is non-existent. And my wife, Camille, knows the dean of the university Whetsok says he did graduate work at. She asked, at my request, if he attended. He did, for two weeks.

Henri slowly closes the file, removes his glasses, looks in Stump's direction.

DEREK STUMP

You're not going to tell me you're hungry, are you?

HENRI BOUGEREAU

Perhaps we'll eat after we visit the Whetsok residence. Let's be on our way.

ERIC BLOOM

You know, I used to be indifferent
about art -- now I hate it, after
what it's put me through.

Henri walks over to Bloom, pats him on the shoulder,
condescends.

HENRI BOUGEREAU

You'll come to appreciate it
someday, Monsieur Bloom. You just
need to learn to scratch below the
surface a bit.

CUT TO:

INT. MRS. TAYLOR'S APARTMENT - SAME TIME

Cats scratch at the oriental landscape; more join in.

PAINTING

More of the Mona Lisa, damaged, is revealed.

CUT TO:

EXT. BROWNSTONE RESIDENCE - THIRTY MINUTES LATER

Detective Stump's car pulls up in front of the building;
the two men get out.

FRONT DOOR

Stump rings the doorbell, pauses, rings again, harder.

A female caretaker, CHERYL, opens the door.

CHERYL

May I help you, gentlemen?

Stump flashes his badge.

DEREK STUMP

I'm Detective Stump, with the
Cleveland Police. Is Mr. Whetsok
home?

Cheryl, taken aback, puts her hand to her chest.

CHERYL

N-no. I have not seen him in some time. I am Cheryl, the caretaker. I do not live here. My job is to maintain the residence -- that is all. Is something the matter, officers?

DEREK STUMP

Do you know his whereabouts?

CHERYL

I am very sorry, I do not. He comes and goes, travels quite a bit, but never tells me where, or for how long.

HENRI BOUGEREAU

May we come in?

She turns pensive. Derek smiles.

DEREK STUMP

Just for a quick look, five or ten minutes. You can show us around.

CHERYL

Oh, I... I don't know.

Stump takes out a notepad and pen from his jacket, turns serious.

DEREK STUMP

Cheryl, what's your last name?

HENRI BOUGEREAU

If I may... I detect a Portuguese accent, northern Portuguese. I doubt her real name is Cheryl.

DEREK STUMP

Oh. Do you have a visa, 'Cheryl?'

Cheryl looks up and down the street.

CHERYL

Come in, gentlemen.

INT. WHETSOK RESIDENCE

The immaculate, colonial-style interior is appointed with numerous paintings. Henri pays close attention to each one, as the threesome proceed down a long corridor.

DEREK STUMP
Mr. Whetsok has quite an
impressive art collection. Is he
in the business?

Cheryl stops.

CHERYL
I do not know, I do not ask. All
I do is dust them, regularly,
thoroughly.

SERIES OF SHOTS

Cheryl shows both men the remaining living areas: kitchen,
bedrooms, living and dining rooms.

DINING ROOM

Derek looks the room over, while Henri inspects an antique
landscape painting.

CHERYL
Well, that is it, gentlemen. That
is the house. The front door is
to your left.

Henri turns his attention to Cheryl.

HENRI BOUGEREAU
Is there a basement?

Cheryl reluctantly nods.

BASEMENT

The Envelope is nowhere to be seen. The walls are barren.
Sheets cover large canvases leaning against them. Henri
peaks at several.

WORK TABLE

Henri and Derek stop at a wooden work table, upon which
rests a circular saw. Henri picks it up, finds and
inspects sawdust on the blade.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - MINUTES LATER

Derek drives, Henri, solemn, shakes his head, produces a handkerchief, rubs his eyes.

DEREK STUMP
Something wrong?

HENRI BOUGEREAU
Not something, everything. None
of those paintings were signed.
And that sawdust...

DEREK STUMP
What of it?

Henri, disgusted, contracts his lips, wipes his eyes again.

CUT TO:

EXT. SCAFURI'S JUNKYARD - AFTERNOON

Marigold's truck pulls up to the open entrance of Scafuri's junkyard. A compact car across the road is the only other vehicle. No one else is present. She and Whetsok/Keating get out, start walking to Craig's shack.

MARIGOLD WEST
Just what do you expect to
accomplish here?

WHETSOK/KEATING
Buy off, Mr. Ransid, naturally,
and convince him to destroy
whatever evidence he has.

Marigold chuckles.

MARIGOLD WEST
That laughable; you don't know
Craig.

A gunshot rings out, o.s., followed by two more in quick succession.

WHETSOK/KEATING
Sounds as though I may never have
the opportunity

MARIGOLD WEST
C'mon, there's a shortcut.

Marigold goes off-path, leads the way. Whetsok/Keating follows. The shortcut wends through land filled with

damaged, grime-encrusted toilet tanks and bowls. Marigold quickly, deftly, maneuvers through the debris, while Whetsok/Keating struggles to keep up.

WHETSOK/KEATING

My god, Marigold! I'd have sooner traipsed through quicksand! Was this necessary?

MARIGOLD WEST

Sorry it couldn't be a tulip garden -- keep up!

CRAIG'S SHACK

The door is open when Marigold and Whetsok/Keating arrive. They pause to catch their breath, suspiciously look about.

LEROY WASSONG (O.S.)

Come in, you two, you're just in time.

INT. CRAIG'S SHACK

Wassong, smiling, gun in hand, sits on the edge of the bed. Craig's body is partially draped over the mattress. The electronic equipment is smashed.

LEROY WASSONG

Nice to see you again, Whetsok. You looked better with your phony mustache.

Marigold looks at Keating/Whetsok.

MARIGOLD WEST

Whetsok?

Whetsok/Keating (from now on, Whetsok) rolls his eyes.

LEROY WASSONG

(to Marigold)

Who do you know him as?

MARIGOLD WEST

I only know him as Keating. How do you two know each other?

ALBERT WHETSOK

We have a common employer-

LEROY WASSONG

Who is very unhappy! Sorry about your boyfriend, lady -- what a jerk. You could definitely do better.

CRAIG'S BODY

Breathless, his eyes are fixed and dilated, limbs contorted.

BACK TO SCENE

MARIGOLD WEST

No argument there. You know, this is the longest I've seen Craig without his finger in his nose.

ALBERT WHETSOK

You've done us a favor, Wassong, destroying all the evidence.

Wassong reaches into his pocket, produces a disc.

LEROY WASSONG

Not all of it. Mr. Tucker is way past being impatient. He wants both halves of the 'Old Girl' delivered, by you, as promised. If you disappoint him, the disc goes to the police. I've seen the highlights; it's thoroughly incriminating.

MARIGOLD WEST

How did you know where to find Craig?

LEROY WASSONG

I was at the bar, when you two stopped for cocktail hour. Surprised you didn't recognize me, Whetsok, especially after we got acquainted in London.

ALBERT WHETSOK

I know so many red-headed, muscular, oriental men -- it's hard to keep track.

Wassong waves the pistol, as he speaks.

LEROY WASSONG

And you didn't see me at Rich E.
Faith's tent, either. I must
admit, I am somewhat insulted.

An OLD MAN, shotgun in hand, barges into the shack.

OLD MAN

What the hell is this all about?

Wassong instantly springs from the bed's edge, knocks away
the gun barrel with his forearm, slugs the old man on the
side of the head with his pistol, knocking him out.

Wassong flees. Marigold and Whetsok tend to the old man.

MARIGOLD WEST

It's Mr. Scafuri, Craig's boss.
Help me get him on the bed.

They raise the limp codger, get him onto the mattress.

ALBERT WHETSOK

He's breathing, he'll be all
right. Let's get going. I want
to get that disc from Wassong.
Barring that, I need to get the
two halves of the painting, to
save my skin.

MARIGOLD WEST

Well, mine's on the line, too!

Whetsok grumbles. They exit the shack, run.

ENTRANCE TO JUNKYARD

The sedan is gone. A beat-up truck, with the junkyard's
name on it, is present, inside the entrance. Whetsok and
Marigold reach the entrance, head for her truck, stop.
Marigold points to the tires.

MARIGOLD WEST

Shit! Your coworker slashed my
tires, that asshole!

ALBERT WHETSOK

That doesn't make sense! Why
would he-

MARIGOLD WEST

Don't you see? He saw the video.
He knows who has the two halves!

(MORE)

MARIGOLD WEST (CONT'D)
 He's going to get them himself,
 cutting you out of the deal.

Whetsok shudders.

ALBERT WHETSOK
 And then give the police the disc-

MARIGOLD WEST
 Frying both our asses!

ALBERT WHETSOK
 See if the keys are in Scafuri's
 truck!

Marigold runs to the driver's side, looks in.

WHETSOK

Whetsok reveals, checks and re-conceals a small pistol,
 holstered to his ankle.

BACK TO SCENE

MARIGOLD WEST
 They're here! Hop in and let's
 go!

They enter the vehicle.

VEHICLE INTERIOR

Marigold starts the engine, gives it gas. Black smoke
 billows, temporarily clouds the front windshield. They
 cough, gag.

ALBERT WHETSOK
 Where to first?

MARIGOLD WEST
 He probably went to Mrs. Taylor's,
 it's the closest. I hope this
 piece of crap gets us there.

BACK TO SCENE

The vehicle sputters, takes off, jerks to a stop, expels a
 dark cloud of fumes, takes off again.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - ONE HOUR LATER

In the hallway, Wassong stealthily approaches the door to Mrs. Taylor's apartment, its lock broken by Whetsok's previous, forced entry. He cautiously opens it a few inches, looks inside.

WASSONG'S POV

Mrs. Taylor, back on the couch, pleasantly snoozes while birds flutter about and some cats lounge. Many continue pawing and clawing the panel, which now reveals a great deal of a quite-damaged half of the Mona Lisa. Chirps and meows fill the air.

BACK TO SCENE

Wassong enters, stops. The animals cease the noise-making, turn their attention to the intruder.

WASSONG'S POV

All the animals focus on him, then suddenly pounce and dive-bomb from all angles.

BACK TO SCENE

Covered with pecking birds and clawing, biting cats, Wassong stumbles about the apartment, shrieks. Mrs. Taylor continues snoozing, sniffs. Stumbling through cat litter boxes, Wassong loses his balance, falls head first.

CAST IRON RADIATOR

Wassong's head strikes the radiator, makes a sickening crunch. Motionless, his eyes remain open. The animals relent.

BACK TO SCENE

Mrs. Taylor awakens, her attention immediately drawn to the fallen, lifeless body.

MRS. TAYLOR

Ooh, I do hope he wasn't here to
fix the door lock.

She reaches for the phone on the table next to the couch, picks up the receiver, presses zero.

MRS. TAYLOR (CONT'D)
May I have the police, please?

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - THIRTY MINUTES LATER

Outside the apartment building, the junkyard truck approaches, but does not stop, as there are a number of police vehicles present, lights flashing.

TRUCK INTERIOR

ALBERT WHETSOK
Bloody hell! What's this all about? We don't dare stop.

MARIGOLD WEST
No, we can't. I just hope Mrs. Taylor is all right.

Whetsok slaps the dashboard.

ALBERT WHETSOK
If Wassong got what he wanted, he's off to your friend Faith, for the other half. You better step on it!

She guns the engine.

MARIGOLD WEST
Half way there!

CUT TO:

INT. FAITH'S TENT - THIRTY MINUTES LATER

Back stage, alone, seated, Rich carefully wipes blood from the St. Sebastian painting, pauses, wrings out the cloth.

Marigold bursts in, startles Rich. Whetsok is several feet behind.

MARIGOLD WEST
Thank goodness you're safe!

Rich springs to his feet. He's pleased at the sight of Marigold, but not Whetsok.

RICH E. FAITH
Marigold, I wasn't sure I'd see
you again, or your friend. You
say I'm safe; are you sure?

Marigold is perplexed.

MARIGOLD WEST
Y-yes, why wouldn't I be sure?

Rich motions for Marigold to look behind herself.

MARIGOLD'S POV

Whetsok holds his pistol.

BACK TO SCENE

ALBERT WHETSOK
Give me the painting -- right now.

Rich, confused, looks at it, then Marigold.

RICH E. FAITH
What is so important about it?

MARIGOLD WEST
It's half of the Mona Lisa.

Rich laughs heartily.

RICH E. FAITH
Sure, sure it is. Well then, I'm
not giving it up.

Whetsok fires a single shot, hits rich in the torso. Rich
clutches his chest, twists and falls face first to the
ground. Marigold runs to his aid. Whetsok grabs the
painting, exits. Rich's employees gather round.

MARIGOLDS' POV

She, with the help of Larry, rolls Rich onto his back.
There's a hole in the jacket and burn marks, but no blood.
Rich's eyes flutter, open.

RICH E. FAITH
That hurt, even with the Kevlar
vest.

BACK TO SCENE

MARIGOLD WEST
How did you know to where a
bulletproof vest?

LARRY
He's got a show tonight; he always
wears his vest in front of a
crowd.

RICH E. FAITH
Remember what happened that night
in Atlanta, Larry.

LARRY
Oh, yeah. I didn't think you were
gonna make it.

Marigold stands.

MARIGOLD WEST
I have to go. I have to check on
my neighbor, she... Shit! I've
got no truck!

RICH E. FAITH
I'll take you.

CUT TO:

INT. MRS. TAYLOR'S APARTMENT - LATE AFTERNOON

Among the animals, POLICE and forensics PERSONNEL mill
about, try to do their job, much to Mrs. Taylor's dismay.

MRS. TAYLOR
Mind the cats, you! You nearly
stepped on Mr. Fields. And stop
swatting the birds! Oh, if my
late husband was alive, this
commotion would have killed him
all over again.

She bends, picks up two cats. Birds alight on her
shoulders. Henri and Stump enter, show astonishment.
Stump approaches a uniformed OFFICER.

DEREK STUMP
I'm Detective Stump. I got a call
from Lieutenant Feldman -- said
you notified him of something Art
& Collectibles might be interested
in?

The officer scratches the back of his neck.

OFFICER
Yeah, could be. Let me show 'ya.

O.s., Henri moans.

HENRI BOUGEREAU (O.S.)
No, no, oh... no.

The officer and Stump join Henri near the couch, where he holds the painting to his chest. Nearby cats claw the air.

OFFICER
(to Stump)
Your partner's quite the art lover. I take it the painting's of interest?

DEREK STUMP
Y-yeah, we'll be taking it with us. Tell me, who was the victim here?

Stump and the officer step to the corpse.

OFFICER
No I.D. on the body; he busted his head on the radiator. All we found was a disc. If it's relevant to your case-

DEREK STUMP
It is. I'd like it.

The officer produces the disc. Stump takes it, steps over to Henri.

DEREK STUMP (CONT'D)
You gonna be okay?

Henri wearily nods, shows stump the mutilated work.

DEREK STUMP (CONT'D)
Look on the bright side -- the crime's half solved.

He shows Henri the disc.

DEREK STUMP (CONT'D)
This was found on the John Doe. We should take a look at it, as soon as possible.

Mrs. Taylor approaches Stump.

MRS. TAYLOR

It's such a shame. She's such a good artist. I will have to reprimand my kitties, at some point.

DEREK STUMP

You know the artist? The one who painted whatever... this was, over... what was beneath?

Mrs. Taylor points.

MRS. TAYLOR

Marigold, she lives right across the hall.

Stump, Henri and the officer exit.

HALLWAY

Stump notices that the door to the apartment across the hall is ajar. He steps to it, peers in.

STUMP'S POV

Marigold's easel and art supplies are evident, plus an old TV attached to a disc player.

BACK TO SCENE

Stump, Henri and the officer enter.

INT. MARIGOLD'S APARTMENT

DEREK STUMP

(to the officer)

Listen, we're going to spend some time here, review the video, wait for the tenant. She's not going to come up if she sees your people around, so I need you to clear out, right away.

OFFICER

Yes, sir. I'll move 'em out.

The officer exits. Henri, sullen, places the half-Mona Lisa on the easel, picks up and examines two of Marigold's paintings.

HENRI BOUGEREAU
Whoever she is, she's very
talented.

DEREK STUMP
If you say so. Henri, you haven't
eaten in nearly three hours; you
must be starved. Why don't you
see if there's some bouillabaisse
in the fridge?

Henri, dismissive, waves him off. Stump turns on the TV
and the disc player, inserts the disc.

DEREK STUMP (CONT'D)
Let's see if this sheds some
light.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - FORTY MINUTES LATER

Whetsok drives up to the apartment building.

INT. JUNKYARD TRUCK

ALBERT WHETSOK
They're gone -- finally, they're
gone. Time to pay the old cat
lady another visit.

He looks down.

WHETSOK'S POV - PAINTING

The blood-stained St. Sebastian lies on the front seat.
Whetsok tenderly pats its surface.

BACK TO SCENE

ALBERT WHETSOK
Can't leave you here, Old Girl-

Whetsok strikes his forehead.

ALBERT WHETSOK (CONT'D)
I can't believe I just said that.

He removes his jacket, covers the painting, exits the
vehicle with it.

Whetsok enters the building. Rich's car arrives, parks near the truck.

INT. CAR

MARIGOLD WEST
There's the junkyard truck. He must be headed back to Mrs. Taylor's for the other half.

RICH E. FAITH
Half of what?

Marigold gestures, gets out of the truck, as does Rich.

MARIGOLD WEST
The Mona Lisa! What d'ya think?!

RICH E. FAITH
You're serious?

She runs across the street, to the apartment building. Rich follows.

MARIGOLD WEST
Yes!

INT. MRS. TAYLOR'S APARTMENT - MINUTES LATER

Wassong's body gone, Mrs. Taylor attempts to restore order. She happily hums, puts things in their proper place. She pauses, puffs, turns towards the entrance.

MRS. TAYLOR'S POV

Inside the apartment, angry Whetsok silently closes the door behind him.

BACK TO SCENE

MRS. TAYLOR
Another gentleman caller? I wasn't this popular in my twenties. The neighbors are going to think I'm a floozy -- some sort of nympho!

ALBERT WHETSOK

If you care about your precious animals' lives, you'll hand over the painting. I am not leaving without it.

Mrs. Taylor cackles.

MRS. TAYLOR

Actually, you are -- it's back over in Marigold's place.

She points in the direction of Marigold's apartment. Whetsok, stunned, looks about, does not see the painting. He turns, dashes out.

INT. MARIGOLD'S APARTMENT

Stump removes the disc from the player, turns to Henri, who finishes off a Twinkie. Stump is surprised at Henri's consumption of junk food. Henri chews, shrugs.

HENRI BOUGEREAU

It's not bad, but the French would make it better.

Derek holds up the disc.

DEREK STUMP

This answers everything.

HENRI BOUGEREAU

Indeed, it does, but finding this Mr. Keating may prove difficult.

Whetsok bursts in, the jacket-covered painting under his arm.

ALBERT WHETSOK

Marigold!

DEREK STUMP

Keating!

Stump and Henri instantly recognize Keating. Henri lunges for the door, slams it shut, blocks Whetsok's escape, smiles. Derek takes away the painting, unwraps it.

DEREK STUMP (CONT'D)

You were saying, Henri?

HENRI BOUGEREAU
 It's as I told you, previously,
 Derek. I have my methods and they
 work.

Henri cuffs Whetsok, sets him down on the couch. Ashamed,
 exhausted, Whetsok lowers his head.

Marigold charges in, with Rich in tow.

MARIGOLD WEST
 Who are you people? Whetsok?!

DEREK STUMP
 We're the police.

HENRI BOUGEREAU
 Ah, Mr. Whetsok of the elusive
 file, is also Mr. Keating. How
 gloriously convenient.

Overcome, Whetsok looks up, yells.

ALBERT WHETSOK
 Marigold! You ruined everything!
 Couldn't you just do what I
 asked?! It was so damn simple!

DEREK STUMP
 Who's your friend, Marigold?

RICH E. FAITH
 I'm Rich E. Faith, the evangelist.
 Listen, I had absolutely nothing
 to do with any of this.

Marigold places her hand on Rich's shoulder.

MARIGOLD WEST
 Unlike during his show, he's
 telling the truth. I did some
 paintings for him. He uses them
 in the performance. Take a look
 at the St. Sebastian, remove the
 backing. It's rigged to squirt
 blood. He didn't know the Mona
 Lisa was under the gesso -- hell,
 neither did I.

Henri cringes, removes the backing, groans.

DEREK STUMP
 We watched the disc. It's clear
 you were duped by Whetsok.

HENRI BOUGEREAU

First cut in half, then mutilated
into a huckster's prop... What
will the director of the Louvre
say? How can I even begin to tell
him?

Stump yanks Whetsok off the couch, hustles him towards the
door, opens it.

DEREK STUMP

Henri, you did your job. They're
gonna pin a medal on you the size
of a dinner plate and hang your
picture up in the Louvre's
cafeteria, so don't lose any sleep
over it.

Henri is inconsolable.

DEREK STUMP (CONT'D)

I'm takin' this slob downtown for
booking. Nice workin' with you,
Henri. Come back to Cleveland
sometime.

HENRI BOUGEREAU

Of course, Derek, we'll go out for
Polish Boys.

Stump and Whetsok exit. Rich ruminates, rubs his jaw.

RICH E. FAITH

Mr. Henri? Part of what I do is
help people when they're feelin'
low. May I offer a few words?

Glum Henri returns the St. Sebastian to the easel.

HENRI BOUGEREAU

If you wish.

Rich steps to the easel, gently moves the two battered
halves together.

RICH E. FAITH

As Marigold can tell you, I used
to be a magician before I became
an evangelist. In both those
professions, I've seen how
people's perceptions shape what
they believe to be reality.

(MORE)

RICH E. FAITH (CONT'D)

If you see me pull a rabbit out of a hat that was pancake-flat a second ago, and don't have a logical explanation for how that happened, then maybe, just maybe, I really do have an extraordinary ability. And if a painting somehow sprays blood and you can't explain how it happened -- but you feel better -- then maybe it does have special powers.

HENRI BOUGEREAU

So.

Marigold grabs a rag off the couch, steps to the easel, holds the rag in front of the two halves, then snaps it away.

MARIGOLD WEST

Then perhaps a convincing enough replacement will persuade people that the original never suffered a scratch.

Henri perks up, wets his lips, takes a deep breath.

HENRI BOUGEREAU

You do have considerable talent, Ms. Marigold.

Marigold beams.

MARIGOLD WEST

And I work fast.

Rich picks up the phone, hands it to Henri.

RICH E. FAITH

Why don't you call up your boss and tell him Miss Mona never looked better?

Henri hesitates, smiles, takes the phone.

CUT TO:

INT. ERIC BLOOM'S CAR - THE NEXT MORNING

Bearded, weary Eric drives home. Dark circles underlie his red, unblinking eyes.

DRIVEWAY

Bloom's Jaguar enters the driveway with speed, crushes shrubs, comes to a cockeyed, abrupt halt.

INT. BLOOM MANSION - ONE HOUR LATER

Bloom, appearing as he did on the drive home, sits at the kitchen table, eats ravenously. SERVANTS set down additional platters of food. Calm Camille sits next to him, sips coffee, gently sets down her cup.

CAMILLE BLOOM

My poor, poor Eric, such an ordeal. Of all times for an outbreak of Legionnaires' disease. Thank goodness you maintained your health.

Eric pauses, grunts, resumes shoveling in the banquet-for-one.

CAMILLE BLOOM (CONT'D)

You'll be happy to know it is business as usual around here.

Eric nods, chews.

Camille, puzzled, knots her brow, raises an index finger.

CAMILLE BLOOM (CONT'D)

Except for one strange thing, last night. Very strange... When I got home from bridge, there were two, rectangular packages leaning against the garage door. Two, the same size.

Eric half-listening, picks up two pieces of bacon, compares their sizes, jams them into his mouth.

CAMILLE BLOOM (CONT'D)

Well, I had Marie bring them in and I unwrapped them.

Eric stops munching.

CAMILLE BLOOM (CONT'D)

What do you think they were?

Eric shrugs, resumes chewing.

CAMILLE BLOOM (CONT'D)
Paintings, two paintings. One was
a Japanese seascape, the other a
painting of St. Sebastian. I have
no idea who sent them, or why.

Camille takes a quick sip of coffee.

CAMILLE BLOOM (CONT'D)
They're lovely. I took the
liberty of hanging them up in your
study. I hope you don't mind.

Eric stops chewing, smirks.

ERIC BLOOM
Fine. You know me, Camille; I
couldn't care less about art.

FADE OUT:

THE END

(CONT'D)

(CONT'D)

