

FRANK OR FRANCIS

by

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CONTINUED:

TERI (CONT'D)

Oh, hey, did you watch "Braddock's Law" last night?

FRANK

I recorded it. It was a good one?

TERI

Yeah, really good.

Frank nods. They sit there.

EXT. HIGHWAY MOTEL - MORNING

Frank's sedan is parked outside a ground-floor room.

EXT. LAKE SUPERIOR/CHICAGO SKYLINE - MORNING

Sweeping helicopter shot across the lake toward Chicago. A morning radio jock tells us the weather, traffic, other local info. Superimposed over the shot are credits:

- Paragon Films
- In Association with Limitless Pictures
- Presents a John Jacobson Production
- Of a Martin Klein Film
- *SONG IN MY HEART*

INT. CAR CONTINUOUS

The morning jock continues on the car radio. Teri (playing Sandy) now very perky, drives through downtown Chicago.

- Teri Pinto

In the front passenger seat is Nelson, her bespectacled, cynical, nine year old son. He plays a handheld video game.

- Nathan Max Schiller

The backseat is piled high with suitcases, topped by a guitar case. A caged songbird sits between them in the front. The names of supporting cast continue over this dialogue.

SANDY

This is it, kiddo. A new beginning!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NELSON

I liked the last new beginning.
Not the very last new beginning.
Three new beginnings ago. The
place with the cows.

SANDY

Aw, this is gonna be fun, Nelson!
We can't live in the past, right?

NELSON

I like the past. I like cows. Why
do we have to move all the time?

SANDY

This'll be it, honey. I have a
good feeling about this town. I'm
gonna get my big break here.

NELSON

You said that about the place with
the cows. And the place under the
high tension power lines. And the
place directly across the street
from the halfway house for
convicted pedophiles.

INT. SCREENING ROOM - MORNING

A bunch of grumpy-looking film critics, with to-go cups and notebooks, watch "Song in my Heart." They occasionally jot something in their pads; one woman tweets onto her phone: **At Song In My Heart. Only song in my heart right now is Kill Me by The Buzzards.** Also among the critics is Grape Snow, a bronzed 70 year old with jet black hair and an ascot. In a new font, the credits for "**Frank or Francis**" begin. As we cut back and forth between the critics and the movie they're watching, the fake credits and real credits intermingle.

SANDY

Okay, I didn't do enough research
on those places. But this --

NELSON

And the place with the quarantine.

SANDY

C'mon now, nobody could've
anticipated that outbreak.

(beat)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SANDY (CONT'D)

Nelson, Chicago has a big country music scene. I'm going to get my chance here -- for both of us.

INT. SUV - MORNING

Sally, 40's, in aviator sunglasses, drives. Her son Max, 10, sits in the front passenger seat, playing a video game. She dials her phone. "**Frank or Francis**" credits continue.

SALLY (INTO PHONE)

Hey.

FRANK (PHONE VOICE)

Hey. Where you?

SALLY

Taking Max to bowling practice. You?

INT. SEDAN - CONTINUOUS

Frank drives. Teri sits in the passenger seat, sunglasses and baseball cap on, and stares out the window. They pass a Topanga Canyon sign.

FRANK

Topanga. I stopped for coffee and lost track of time.

Teri pulls out her cell and checks her messages. She puts the phone to her ear to listen.

SALLY (PHONE VOICE)

So I just spoke to Mitch. He said "Song in my Heart" is screening up there this morning.

FRANK

Oh yeah?

SALLY

Teri's heading up by train for the press conference. You could've driven together.

FRANK

Yeah. Huh. Oh well.

SALLY

I think you should stop by and say hi to her. Show support.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK

If I have time. I'm running late.

SALLY

Try to. It'd be nice. She seems depressed lately. And you just know the critics are going to be fucking brutal to that movie.

FRANK

Yeah. I better go. I need to let the festival know I'm late.

SALLY

See ya.

They hang up.

TERI

Message from Mitch. Apparently you're heading up to the film festival today, too.

INT. AIRLESS LIVING ROOM - DAY

Creepily still and empty. Floral-patterned upholstery. Suffocating. The camera drags over details: porcelain figurines, hard candies in a dish. A phone rings. And rings and rings. Titles begin in a third font.

TITLE: AMERICAN TRUTH FILMS

TITLE: IN ASSOCIATION WITH OGDEN PICTURES

TITLE: PRESENTS A MORTON-DEVON PRODUCTION

TITLE: A FRANK ARDER FILM

TITLE: DICKSON WALSH IN

TITLE: HAPAX LEGOMENON

A woman, seen only from the torso down, enters frame and heads to the phone. She picks it up.

WOMAN

(creepy whisper)
Hello?

A cellphone on vibrate is heard. We pull out from the screen into a theater full of people watching this movie.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A young woman standing in the back, finds the vibrating phone in her purse and answers it in a whisper.

ALICE

Hello?

INT. CAR - DAY

Frank Arder has his cell pressed to his ear. Teri texts.

FRANK

Hi. This is Frank Arder.

ALICE (PHONE VOICE)

Oh, hi! Oh my gosh! Hi!

FRANK

Hi. I'm running a little late.
I'm stuck in traffic.

The road is clear.

INT. THEATER - CONTINUOUS

Alice steps out of the theater and into the lobby.

FRANK (PHONE VOICE)

So if you guys need to start the
panel without --

INT. LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

ALICE

Oh, no no no! No worries. We had
projector issues. So the film just
started. Everything's pushed back.

FRANK (PHONE VOICE)

Great. Cool. So I'll be there in
like... an hour?

ALICE

Perfect. We really look forward to
meeting you.

FRANK (PHONE VOICE)

Thanks. Thank you.

Alice steps back into the theater.

INT. THEATER - CONTINUOUS

The credits for "**Frank or Francis**" continue over this scene. As we cut back and forth between the movie within the movie "**Hapax Legomenon**" and the movie outside the movie, the fake credits and real credits intermingle. On screen the woman screams into the phone.

WOMAN

There is no one here by that name,
you fuck!

She slams the receiver down. The camera tilts up her shaking body to reveal a grimacing, grotesquely overly made-up face. The audience gasps.

INT. CAR - DAY

Frank and Teri drive in silence. She turns on the radio.

HOST

... time for our panel to
play "Rapid-Fire Questions."
Larry, you won the toss, so
you go first.

TERI

I love this show.

Teri looks over at Frank. He is stone-faced.

TERI

What, Frank?

Frank shrugs.

TERI (CONT'D)

Anyway.

HOST

Your first question: Who
said, "The best thing that
ever happened to me was
finding that tumor in my
breast"?

LARRY

Presumably not someone out for a
chicken dinner.

Laugh. Teri picks at her nails. Frank checks his rearview mirror, sees a car tailing him on an otherwise empty freeway.

FRANK

Oh, come on. What are you doing?
Just go around me. Dick.

Frank slows to torture the guy. The car flashes its lights.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TERI

Frank, don't fuck with him. Let him pass.

FRANK

He can pass! Pass, you fuck!

Big laugh on the radio. Frank slows down more. The guy in the other car seethes.

TERI

People have guns, Frank.

HOST

Is that your actual answer?

The guy in the other car pulls around to pass Frank. As he does, he yells something at Frank's closed window. Frank watches his furious, red face. Teri shrinks in her seat.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Jesus. He's crazy.

Big laugh on the radio.

INT. SCREENING ROOM LOBBY - LATER

The critics emerge looking grumpy. There are one-sheets for "Song in my Heart" on easels. The marketing lady at the door has a big anxious smile plastered on her face.

MARKETING LADY

Thank you. Thanks, guys. Thanks, Rich. I'll call you, Barb.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - DAY

On screen, the woman in the overdone make-up is floating out to sea on a trunk, tears in her eyes as she looks back at the receding shore. Frank enters the theater, stands in the back next to Alice, now with tears in her eyes. She glances back at him; her eyes widen.

ALICE

(whispering)

Oh, hi! You made it! I'm Alice.

FRANK

Hi. I'm Frank Arder.

ALICE

God, this is such a good movie. Thank you so much for it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK
Thanks. Thank you. The
audience seeming to respond?

SINGER
Don't forget me, as I go/off
across this scary sea/I'll
always love you, don't you
know/and I hope that you'll
love me.

ALICE (CONT'D)
They love it.

SINGER
People come and people go/in
this carnival that we call
life/Take a chance and you
might grow/Saying goodbye
cuts like a knife.

FRANK
Good. Do I have time to say
hi to Teri Pinto before the
panel?

SINGER
But at ocean's end there is a
shore/Not visible from where
you stand/I have to sail away
from you/if I'm to reach the
promised land.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Absolutely!

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Teri Pinto and others are up on a dais. The room is packed
with bored, sloppy journalists.

FEMALE JOURNALIST
I'm wondering how you were able to
juggle taking care of a one year
old and making this movie.

Frank pokes his head in. She nods imperceptibly to him.

TERI
I'm not going to pretend it's easy,
but Chase was with me on the set as
much as possible. He was always
either with me or with Mitch. We
made it work.

MODERATOR
Yes, Grape?

GRAPE SNOW
This is for Teri Pinto as well.
How do you feel about squandering
the public's goodwill on a
seemingly endless parade of moronic
formulaic light-comedy bombs?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TERI

Really? That's your question?
 (charming smile)
 I feel great about it, Mr. Snow.
 Thanks for asking. How do you feel
 about squandering your life on
 being a professional asshole?

There's a flurry of testing activity in the room.

TWEET 1

Teri Pinto just called Grape Snow
 an asshole.

TWEET 2

Teri Pinto to Grape Snow: How does
 it feel to be an asshole?

TWEET 3

Why? What'd he do?

TWEET 4

Grape Snow called Teri Pinto's
 movies moronic light-comedies. She
 called him an asshole.

TWEET 5

Grape Snow is an asshole.

TWEET 6

She's right.

TWEET 7

So is he.

The tweets continue but fade under as we --

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

Frank sits on a panel onstage. The panelists each have their
 name and movie title on cards in front of them. A very old,
 emaciated man in the audience holds a microphone.

MAN IN AUDIENCE

As an aspiring screenwriter myself.

PANELISTS

Great.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAN IN AUDIENCE

I first of all want to congratulate each and every one of you on your well-earned Oscar nominations.

PANELISTS

Thanks. Thank you.

MAN IN AUDIENCE

I also hope to one day be a director some day myself.

PANELISTS

Oh, that's great. Good for you!

MAN IN AUDIENCE

So my question is for the writer/directors on the panel:

(putting on glasses,
reading off pad)

Will I be better served by directing my movies myself or by allowing a more experienced director to direct my movies?

Uncomfortable silence.

FRANK

I think when you're just starting out, you want to get your movie made any way you can.

MAN IN AUDIENCE

(taking notes)

any... way... I... can. Gotcha.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Frank looks for his car. Teri approaches from the other direction. The old man from the panel pops out from behind the car where he had been hiding.

MAN IN AUDIENCE

Hi there. I just happened to see you. I'm the guy who asked that question about directing.

Teri, having seen the old man talking to Frank, walks past.

FRANK

Oh, yeah. Hi.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Frank glances at Teri. The old man looks as well.

MAN IN AUDIENCE

Hey, that's Teri Pinto! That is so awesome! It's a crazy world!

He pulls a script from a plastic bag he's carrying.

MAN IN AUDIENCE (CONT'D)

So I wanted to offer you the chance to direct my movie. You seemed nice, so that's why I offer. It's called "Nincom-Pops." It's about the dumbest grandpa in the world and then what happens.

INT. STUDY - NIGHT

On TV, a late night talk show. The guest is Teri Pinto. We hear an indistinct male voice singing in the background.

HOST

(off index card)

So "Song in my Heart" opens Friday? I thought it was terrific fun.

TERI

Thank you! We had a blast!

HOST

And you're presenting at the Oscars this year, too.

TERI

Yes! Sunday! I'm so excited!

Their conversation goes under as we move to Grape Snow sitting at his desk, typing on his laptop, singing what he is typing. We catch the tale end of it.

GRAPE

"Song in my Heart" is a bilious mess/A festering pile of intestinal distress/The sub-moron intellect of this film's quote creators/suggests their true calling is as self-fellators.

This finishes the review. He reads it back approvingly.

INT. NICE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Grape eats alone at a small table. There are several young, attractive male couples in the restaurant, chatting animatedly. He stares straight ahead and chews.

INT. FRANK AND SALLY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Frank shaves in the bathroom. Sally, her hair in curlers, is having make-up applied by a make-up artist. She has the phone on speaker and is chatting

SALLY'S MOTHER (PHONE VOICE)
Amy's going to be so disappointed.

SALLY	MAKE-UP WOMAN
I'll send a nice gift. It'll be fine.	Hold still for a second, okay?

SALLY
Mom, I have to go.

SALLY'S MOTHER (PHONE VOICE)
All right, honey. Good luck to Frank! We'll be watching!

FRANK
Thanks, Alma.

SALLY
Love you all. Bye.

INT. GRAPE SNOW'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

In a stuffy, overly appointed room, with the heavy curtains drawn, Grape watches the pre-Oscar red carpet show on TV. With him are a few old women who were once movie stars. On the TV, Frank and Sally chat with some guy in a tux.

TUX GUY
I'm here with "Hapax Legomenon" director Frank Arder and his lovely wife, actress Sally Klein. First of all, Frank, did I say the title of your movie correctly?

FRANK
You did. Good job.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRAPE SNOW
The worst director in the
history of cinema.

TUX GUY
I practiced all morning!
Second, how do you feel about
tonight?

FRANK (CONT'D)
It's nice to be here.

GRAPE SNOW
Good God, what is Sally Klein
wearing? She looks like she's in a
fumigation tent.

The women with Grape laugh. The camera is now on Jonathan
Waller, a big, smiling, arrogant middle-aged man with his
tiny wife, waving at the crowds.

GRAPE SNOW (CONT'D)
Jonathan Waller is the worst
director in the history of cinema.

Waller stops to talk to a reporter.

REPORTER
Congratulations on "Hiroshima"!
What a great year for you! You
predict a Best Picture tonight?

GRAPE
For that rancid, gelatinous
bowel movement? Good lord I
hope not.

JONATHAN
It doesn't matter to me one
iota. I'm honored for the
honor of being honored with
these nominations, Dave. And
I'm honored "Hiroshima" is
the number one box office
movie of all time. And I'm
honored that people are
hearing the film's message:
War is a devastatingly
destructive human endeavor.

GRAPE
The poet laureate of the obvious.
Perhaps his next next movie will
teach us that anal cancer is bad.

The women cackle.

OLD MOVIE STAR #1
They don't know what movies are
anymore, Grape. That's the
terrible truth.

INT. OSCAR AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

The auditorium is small and seedy. Audience seems overly-enthusiastic. The Emcee sings, perspiring brow, one hand in the pocket of his tux.

EMCEE

(singing)

Will it be me? Will it be me?/
 Will they call my name tonight?/
 What will I say? What will I say?/
 As I stand there in the light?/
 Will I be funny, witty, or trite?/
 I'll make more money! Isn't that
 right?

Inside his pocket: his hand fiddles with keys on an cartoon cat key chain. There's also a roll of candies called "Oochies", and a desiccated, severed human thumb.

Behind the Emcee, dancers, some in tuxedos, some in gowns, coupled with others dressed as gold statuettes, go through their paces, a little off in their timing.

Inside one of the statuette costumes, a dancer has a severe nose bleed. She swabs it with a soaked tissue and sings.

DANCER

It won't stop. Why won't it
 stop?/I'm bleeding out, drop by
 drop -- by drop by drop ...

EXT. OSCAR AUDITORIUM - CONTINUOUS

As the song continues, we travel from the theater, past transmitters, past protesters -- we pause on one tense, drawn man with a placard depicting an aborted fetus and the handwritten slogan: "Save the Babbies."

PLACARD MAN (SINGING)

Fags, niggers, Jews/There is no
 right to choose/God will smite each
 one of youse/ fags, niggers, Jews
 ...

We continue past satellite dishes and radio towers, through the late afternoon Los Angeles sunshine and pollution, over hillside fires, through neighborhoods, past an eight year old boy being beaten by a stronger eight year old boy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WEAKER BOY (SINGING)

I must deserve this/That much is
clear/I'm not a real boy/I live in
fear/I must deserve this/I must
deserve this/for being a queer ...

We pass through houses in which people watch the Oscars (in this clip, we see one of the Oscar statuette dancers fall over) or news (now we see a news reporter backstage at the Oscars, where the gold statuette dancer's costume is being cut off by paramedics, revealing that she is soaked in blood), or people listening to the radio or reading or on computers. We travel through exurban sprawl, rainfall, deserts, over mountains, into and through a the aisle of a commercial jet in flight, past passengers watching movies on little screens. We pause on the face of a sleeping middle-aged female passenger and move into her dream. She is at a department store make-up counter talking to the stony young woman behind the counter. They sing a duet.

MIDDLE-AGED PASSENGER

Can you assist me?

STONY YOUNG CLERK

I'm the make-up clinician.

MIDDLE-AGED PASSENGER

Would you make me desirable?

STONY YOUNG CLERK

I'm not a magician.

MIDDLE-AGED PASSENGER

Well, how about passable?

STONY YOUNG CLERK

In a very dark room.

MIDDLE-AGED PASSENGER

I'll take just less miserable.

STONY YOUNG CLERK

You ask for the moon.

MIDDLE-AGED PASSENGER

So how can you help me with what's
on your shelf?

STONY YOUNG CLERK

(indicating face creams)

Your choices:/Ridiculous,
Invisible,/Ashamed of Yourself.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

We move out of her dream, out of the jet, over windy plains. We see from up above, the weird flashes of colored lights. All the while it's getting darker, colder. Snow begins to fall. We drift past an old man without coat or boots trudging through the blizzard.

OLD MAN (SINGING)

Did I ever tell you this?/I might
have told you this/That a hundred
years ago, walking through a
snowfall -- just like this/I got a
kiss/I must have told you this/a
hundred times already/I think her
name was Betty/We were going
steady/She was your mom, I
think/But I'm no longer sure/I
think that now she's dead/Forgive
me for not knowing anymore.

We pass by houses with TV-glow windows, with computer-glow windows. Everything feels glum and makeshift. Even the camera's journey is clumsily implemented.

EMCEE (O.S.)

Will they applaud? Will they
applaud?/ Standing ovation? Or
call me a fraud?/ Will I cry tears?
Thank all my peers?/ Express all my
fears?/Will I adhere to my notes?
Thank all of them for their votes?
Will it be me? Will it be me? Will
it be me... ton-i-i-i-ght?

Mixed with the singing we hear commercials for unfamiliar products and news reports about murdered children, natural disasters, political corruption, the din of other broadcast noise, recited "tweet" commentary, and rain and wind. And singing, always singing. We travel a long way, into the heart of winter, of night, of Francis's window.

INT. FRANCIS'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Posters for movies we've never heard of on the walls: classy, foreign films from long ago. Francis, mid-20's and charmless, watches the Oscars on a bulky TV. There is also a bulky computer (looking like something from Russia from the 50's) on which he contributes to live Oscar postings.

VOICE 1 (SINGING)

That song was bad.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VOICE 2 (SINGING)
Her gown is sad.

FRANCIS (SINGING AND TYPING)
It makes me mad this film has
dominated.

VOICE 3 (SINGING)
The set is lame.

FRANCIS (SINGING AND TYPING)
It's such a shame that Davis wasn't
even nominated.

VOICE 4 (SINGING)
What happened to that dancer?

VOICE 5 (SINGING)
Don't know! I need an answer!

VOICE 6 (SINGING)
Was she shot?

VOICE 7 (SINGING)
I'm guessing not.

VOICE 8 (SINGING)
(off shot of movie-star
couple in audience)
He's fucking her now?

VOICE 9 (SINGING)
Better than that last cow.

VOICE 10 (SINGING)
She's got to learn how to walk in
heels.

VOICE 11 (SINGING)
What is her deal?

VOICE 12 (SINGING)
(off heavy woman in
audience)
Hey, Sarah, skip a meal!

VOICE 1
LOL.

VOICE 2
LOL.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

VOICE 3

LOL.

INT. AUDITORIUM - CONTINUOUS

The audience bursts into scarily enthusiastic applause. Frank and Sally are in the audience. He seems bored. She's got her smiling actress face on.

EMCEE

Thank you! Thanks very much and welcome to the 39th annual Academy Awards. I'm Alan Modell, star of the Academy-ignored classic "Fat Dad" --

Audience laugh. On a screen behind the Emcee is projected an image of him in a very fat suit.

EMCEE (CONT'D)

-- and the soon to be released --
so check your local multiplex --
"Fat Dad 2: Skinny Dad."

Big laugh from the audience. Frank Arder doesn't join in.

EMCEE (CONT'D)

Why have I never won a little naked gold man? Didn't you all see how believably I cried during Fat Dad? Granted, I was in my trailer between takes, but still --

Bigger laugh.

EMCEE (CONT'D)

Boy, look at all the famous faces out there tonight. A lot of famous faces. Evening, Bob. Bob Stone, ladies and Germans.

The Emcee waves and the camera finds Bob Stone, an old movie star, sitting next to a very young woman.

EMCEE (CONT'D)

I see you're here with your granddaughter.

Crazy big laugh from the audience. Bob Stone laughs and says something to the Emcee. We can't hear what it is.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EMCEE (CONT'D)
 Different granddaughter than last
 year, right, Bob?

Big laugh and applause. Standing ovation. Sally stands.
 Frank does not.

INT. FRANCIS'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Francis watches. On the computer screen someone types: "How
 much does Stone have to pay that girl to suck on his
 shriveled, octogenarian pudendum?"

EMCEE
 Y'know, the Oscars would be a good
 place to set one of those 1970's
 disaster movies. Y'know? You got
 all the movie stars sitting here,
 right? Then there's an earthquake
 or a bomb or something -- Kabloom! -
 - and you all have to claw your way
 out of the wreckage, arms hanging
 off. Oscars impaling starlets...
 I'd pay good money to see that
 movie -- and to impale some
 starlets. Am I right, Bob Stone?

Francis turns and talks, in a mumble, in our general
 direction but not quite on target, as if he imagines he has
 an audience but is wrong about where we are.

FRANCIS
 It's fascinating to watch pathetic
 pop culture extravaganzae such as
 the Oscars. They're worthless as a
 gauge of quality film, but it does
 offer us invaluable insight into
 our abysmal zeitgeist.

Silence. Francis suddenly looks lonely. He dials his phone.

FRANCIS (CONT'D)
 (into phone)
 Have you been watching this
 pathetic pop culture extravaganza?

RANDY (PHONE VOICE)
 Yeah. Abysmal. Fascinating to
 watch the zeitgeist play out in
 such a tawdry dance number.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANCIS

Must you always copy me? You're not even coughing, by the way.

RANDY (PHONE VOICE)

I'm under the weather. Y'know? I just thought it would be safer for you for me to watch from here. I was thinking of you, Francis.
(beat, coughs)

FRANCIS

Well, too bad for you. Enjoy your micro-screen experience, while I enjoy the costly and vastly superior alternative.

There is applause for something on TV.

FRANCIS (CONT'D)

Oop. Later. Something happened!

Francis hangs up and turns to the TV, then types.

INT. OSCAR AUDITORIUM - CONTINUOUS

Standing ovation. The Emcee talks over it.

EMCEE

We have a really fun show for you folks tonight and if we start now, we should finish by...
(looks at watch)
... April.

Laugh. Standing ovation.

EMCEE (CONT'D)

So let's bring out our very first presenters -- Bettina Kristol and Joey Abernathy!

The Emcee applauds and exits as Kristol and Abernathy, two young, slightly inbred-looking stars emerge from opposite sides and join each other at the lectern.

INT. BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

The Emcee watches the presenters present as his writers huddle around him with laptops. He pulls out his cellphone and listens to his messages, talks to the writers.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EMCEE

How we doing?

WRITER #1

A lot of hate out there in internet land.

ABERNATHY (ON STAGE)

You're looking lovely tonight, Bettina.

EMCEE (CONT'D)

They didn't like the song?

KRISTOL (ON STAGE)

Thanks, Joey. I haven't eaten in a week so I could fit into this gown.

WRITER #1

Kind of not. Or the jokes.

ABERNATHY (ON STAGE)

Isn't that dangerous?

KRISTOL (ON STAGE)

No, no. I checked with a nutritionist. Apparently, the camera adds ten pounds, so as long as I'm on TV, I'm at a perfectly safe weight.

Big laugh. Applause.

WRITER #1

They want more edge.

EMCEE

Talking about blowing up every actor in Hollywood is not enough edge? Shit, I give up.

ABERNATHY (ON STAGE)

Ok, Bettina. As long as you're being safe. Let's announce the nominees for best supporting actress, shall we?

KRISTOL (ON STAGE)

Absolutely. And the nominees are -
- Miranda --

WRITER #2

(off computer)
They didn't like Bettina's anorexia joke. Women are indignant. Nutritionists are incited. Gays are... haughtily contemptuous.

KRISTOL (ON STAGE)

-- Donna Serapilia for "The Rain and The Wind", and Claudia Ann Westmoreland for "Breakdown." And the Oscar goes to --

(hands Abernathy envelope)
You do it.

ABERNATHY

(reading)
Donna Serapilia! "The Rain and the Wind"!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Donna Serapilia heads up to the stage to great applause.

EMCEE
 Look, give me some funny,
 edgy yet non-edgy anti-
 anorexia shit to come back
 with. And, for fuck's sake,
 make it gay-friendly.

SERAPILIA (ON STAGE)
 Oh my God! Oh my God! I
 wasn't expecting this! Thank
 you so much!

WRITER #1
 It's hard to be edgy and non-edgy
 at the same time, Alan. You know
 that's always been our hurdle.

WRITER #2
 Actually, that is Rodrigo's
 strength, plus the gays love his
 stuff, because -- you know. But
 he's in the bathroom. Again.

Writer #2's cellphone rings, he pulls it out of his pocket.

WRITER #2 (CONT'D)
 Yeah?

WRITER #1
 How about you do a fake
 public service announcement?
 Against throwing up unless
 poisoned.

WRITER #2 (CONT'D)
 (covering phone)
 Throwing up is bulimia, not
 anorexia.

EMCEE
 Has to be the right type of
 poison. You know you should
 never throw up caustic
 agents.

WRITER #1
 Really?

INT. FRANCIS'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Donna Serapilia completes her speech. Francis talks to his
 non-existent audience.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SERAPILIA

... and my mother and father -
 - who I know is watching from
 heaven -- This is for you
 Daddy! -- They really always
 stood behind me. I'd like to
 thank my agent Ron Rosenbaum,
 everyone at TFD, my costar
 Dick Murphy for all his
 support and love, and, oh,
 they're telling me to go.
 Thank you all. I love you! --

FRANCIS

Of course "the Rain and the
 Wind" is abysmal. It
 perfectly typifies everything
 wrong with American taste.
 It's trite, formulaic,
 sentimental. Plus everything
 in it that people think is
 innovative was done forty
 years ago and better by
 William Cavanaugh. Nobody
 knows that. But me. "The
 Wind and the Rain" will sweep
 tonight.

The Emcee returns as Serapilia is ushered off stage by a
 model with a very slight limp.

EMCEE

Before we continue, I'd like to do
 a quick PSA. Throwing up is bad
 for you, unless you're poisoned.
 And then only in some cases, not
 for example if you've ingested a
 caustic agent. In that case, call
 a poison control center
 immediately. But for the purposes
 of being bulimic, which is not the
 same as being anorexic, it's always
 bad. This announcement brought to
 you by Peppermint Smackles. No one
 ever wants to throw up a Smackle --
 and not just because they're
 caustic -- but because they're also
 delicious.

A post appears on Francis's computer screen: "*Fuck Alan
 Modell. I'm bulimic and my sister died of bulimia. It's not
 a fucking joke.*" Francis picks up the phone and is about to
 dial when he notices there is no dial tone.

FRANCIS

Hello? Is someone there?

He cradles his phone between ear and shoulder as he types on
 the computer: "*These pathetic emotional morons have no sense
 of compassion for those with eating disorders, which this
 industry perpetuates, by the way.*"

FEMALE VOICE (ON PHONE)

Francis? Is anyone there?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FRANCIS

Mom, I was just picking up the phone to call Randy.

FEMALE VOICE

You want to come over for dinner?

FRANCIS

I'm kind of busy. What are you having? I'm kind of in the middle of things here. Is it pasta?

FEMALE VOICE

Chicken. My chicken with the mushrooms. Al Funghi. Which means with mushrooms.

FRANCIS

(sighing)

Maybe I'll come and pick up some to go. You have a "to-go" container? I'm watching the Oscars. And commenting online. People are expecting my comments. I've developed a bit of a following, Ma.

FEMALE VOICE

We're watching, too. You can watch at our place.

FRANCIS

I need to watch at my place. I'm all set up here. For commentary.

A car commercial for the 2009 Pike Ransom appears on the screen. The car seems a little dented and dirty.

FRANCIS (CONT'D)

Sweet Jesus, that baby looks powerful. What a ride.

FEMALE VOICE

Save your pennies, Buster Brown.

FRANCIS

Thanks for the sage advice, Mom.

Francis hangs up, zips his coat as he watches the commercial. The man driving the car has a sheen of perspiration on his forehead and, although smiling, seems queasy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

FRANCIS (CONT'D)
Sweet Jesus, that's a pretty ride.

INT. STAIRS - CONTINUOUS

Francis hurries downstairs and out the front door.

EXT. FRANCIS'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Blizzard out. Francis's apartment is above a garage. He hurries across the driveway and into the adjacent house.

INT. FRANCIS'S BOYHOOD HOME - CONTINUOUS

Francis enters into the kitchen. His mother and father are at the table. The news is on the TV: a crying family on a flowered couch being interviewed.

FRANCIS
I thought you were watching.

Francis switches back to the Oscars.

PRESENTER
...and the Oscar for Visual Effects goes to Dave Litton, Mitch Halloran, Rob Frazen, and Doug Timms for "Hiroshima"!

FRANCIS'S MOTHER
We were. An Alzheimer man walked out of his daughter's house into the blizzard. No jacket. They can't find him.

On the TV, four tuxedoed men make their way to the stage, stopping to shake the hand of a standing, applauding Jonathan Waller. On the onstage screen we see a violent but fake-looking version of an atomic explosion decimating Hiroshima.

FRANCIS (CONT'D)
I can't believe they gave anything to that exploitative crapfest.

FRANCIS'S MOTHER
Those people should be arrested.

FRANCIS
Who? Whom, I mean.

FRANCIS'S MOTHER
The Alzheimer's man's family.

FRANCIS
Think about the Japanese descendents of those victims of American adventurism. America should be arrested.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANCIS'S FATHER

Our country did a racist thing.

FRANCIS'S MOTHER

You have to watch the Alzheimers people constantly. It's like old person abuse if you don't. Which is as bad as child abuse except no one thinks so because they're not cute. Everyone hates old people in this culture, thank you very much. Not like Native Americans, who worship old people. Except for the Eskimos, who kill them by sending them off to die on ice bergs. Which soon they won't be able to do anymore because they're all disappearing. Thanks to global warming, thank you very much.

FRANCIS'S FATHER

Your mom's right. Think about it.

FRANCIS

It's not the Alzheimer's family's fault. This country doesn't provide any affordable assistance for people of need in situations of crisis. Thank your congressman.

FRANCIS'S FATHER

Francis, you're a thoughtful man.

FRANCIS'S MOTHER

We raised him right. I made a plate. It's by the stove.

FRANCIS

(grabbing plate)

Donna Serapilia won best supporting. You don't have a take-out container? It's snowing, Ma.

FRANCIS'S MOTHER

This isn't a restaurant. I'm out of take out containers.

FRANCIS

What kind of beer do you have?

FRANCIS'S MOTHER

Crowley, Mernz, and Heffenstarr.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FRANCIS

I'll take a Mernz. "The Rain and the Wind" is going to sweep. It's an outrage.

FRANCIS'S MOTHER

(handing him beer)

I heard the rain movie was good. Vivian saw it and --

FRANCIS

Fuck Vivian. If by good she means bad, then yes. It's sentimental tripe and steals blatantly from the work of Cavanaugh.

FRANCIS'S MOTHER

What should win then?

FRANCIS

What should win this year has not been made, Mom. I should win for the movie I would make, given half a chance. If there was any real integrity to this award show, they would cancel it. It's another vacuous, mediocre, profit-driven, racist year. The last valid best picture was Hodgson's "The Parallel Lines of Katie Wolf" in 1972.

FRANCIS'S FATHER

I've never even heard of that.

FRANCIS

Exactly. Brutally honest, formally rigorous, searing character study of a young woman's descent into hebephrenic schizophrenia. Why should you have heard of it? Oh, no reason, just the last great American movie of the 20th century.

FRANCIS'S MOTHER

I don't like movies about hebephrenic schizophrenia. I saw that other hebephrenic movie -- What was it? "Wilbur." I know it's an important subject, as the stigma against mental illness needs to be lifted, but I go to a movie to be entertained. I'm sorry.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

FRANCIS

(zipping up)

It's a comedy, Mom. People don't realize that it's hysterically funny. But if you follow what Hodgson is doing, it is the most laugh-out-loud brilliantly satiric movie you'll ever see. Brutally moving, too. A masterpiece of brutally moving comedy. Thanks for the grub.

As Francis leaves, his mother looks after him and sings.

FRANCIS'S MOTHER

I don't even like him/How can that be?/He is my son/He came out of me/I wish he'd go away/(looking at father)I wish he'd go away, too/but everybody stays/And I don't know what to do.

INT. FRANCIS'S APARTMENT - A BIT LATER

Francis eats his food and watches the "In Memoriam" montage. He talks to us again, mouth full of food.

FRANCIS

Here we have the macabre part of the festivities when the Death Carnival comes to town and everyone applauds for the most famous dead people. How sensitive.

INT. OSCAR AUDITORIUM - CONTINUOUS

Montage plays. In the audience, Frank leans over to his wife.

FRANK

I definitely have to get a drink.

SALLY

Want me to come?

FRANK

It's ok. I'm going to wander.

Frank gets up and makes his way toward the aisle. Sally pulls out her cell and starts to text: "Hey, you."

INT. BAR AREA - A FEW MINUTES LATER.

It's crowded. People talk and text on cellphones. Frank stands off by himself with a glass of something hard, looking for someone. A man walks by.

MAN

Good luck tonight, Frank. I voted for you.

FRANK

(trying a smile)
Oh, okay, man, thanks.

Teri enters, sees Frank is talking to someone and walks past. They exchange a quick look.

MAN

"The Wind and the Rain" is bloated, jingoistic garbage. "Hiroshima" is ass on a plate. You shouldn't have only gotten the best screenplay nom, my friend.

FRANK

I'm just trying to get through the night. This is not my thing.

MAN

America is a country of over-entertained, overfat, under-schooled asshats. Can you expect the Academy to be any different?

On the monitor over the bar, Frank sees a pretty young woman singing in front of a stage set that looks like a hurricane frozen in progress. Dancers "blow" around behind her.

SINGER

... the wind that blows, the rain
that falls/the heart that breaks
when no one calls...

INT. HABITAT'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Habitat, a fat, middle-aged woman in a wheelchair, sings along with the TV. Her voice is beautiful

HABITAT

But rain can cleanse and wind
breaks walls/And suddenly you can
see all/there is to see...

INT. FRANCIS'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

The Oscar singer is on Francis's TV. He watches.

SINGER

This mighty storm has set you
free/It's for the best/Now go get
dressed/and llllllllllve.

Francis's eyes are watery. He quickly wipes it away, then talks to us, sort of.

FRANCIS

Mary Jane Carroll has a pretty voice, granted, if somewhat twee. It's not an affront but nor does it have any originality. She's really only parroting what Alice Marston did so much better in the 60's with songs such as "Andy's Girl" and "Shoulder to Cry On."

EMCEE (ON TV)

Mary Jane Carroll, everybody, with the theme from "The Wind and the Rain." Back after this word.

EXT. URBAN STREET - DAY

A man with a microphone approaches a business woman walking down the street.

MICROPHONE MAN

Excuse me, Miss, would you tackle for a Smackle?

The woman considers, then nods decisively. The microphone man jerks his head toward a mild-mannered man eating a candy bar at a bus stop. The woman's eyes become wild and she charges the man, leaps on him, knocks him down and steals his candy bar. She sits on top of him as she eats, savoring it.

Product Shot of a Peppermint Smackle candy bar along with slogan "Would You Tackle for a Smackle?"

SINGERS

Would you tackle for a Smackle?

INT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Frank makes his way, tipsily, to his seat, points to his seat-holder, who exits. He sits next to Sally, who pockets her cellphone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SALLY

God damn it, Frankie. How many?

FRANK

Just three, dear.

SALLY

Jesus. Are you going to be able to make your speech?

FRANK

Man, I didn't realize they make you go up and give a speech when you lose! Shit! I better sober up!

SALLY

Oh shush.

FRANK

(speech)

I'd like to say fuck you to the Academy, for not giving me this award, fuck you to my agent --

A woman with a clipboard approaches.

CLIPBOARD WOMAN

Mr. Arder, your category's up next.

FRANK

Oh, okay. Thanks. Thank you.

Sally squeezes Frank's arm. A man with a handheld camera comes up the aisle and points the camera in Frank's face.

EMCEE

To present the award for Original Screenplay, please welcome star of "Song In My Heart", Teri Pinto!

SALLY

(clapping cheerily)

Yay, Teri!

Teri Pinto glides down a center staircase to the lectern.

INT. GRAPE SNOW'S LIVING ROOM

GRAPE

I saw her latest abomination this week. She's mannish in person.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OLD MOVIE STAR #1
They don't know what a movie star
is these days, Grape.

INT. OSCAR AUDITORIUM - CONTINUATION

TERI

The blank page. This is what the
writer of an original screenplay
must face. With this award we
honor the heroic contributions of
the men and women who give us our
stories. They make us laugh. They
make us cry. They terrify and
embolden us. They are our dreamers
and we are forever in their debt.
The nominees for Original
Screenplay are David Snacker for
"Snipples", Mary Washington for
"Bloop and Sons", Artie Wood and
Jocelyn Margolis for "Little Mitch
Moon", Frank Arder for "Praxis",
and David Shank for "The Wind and
the Rain." And the Oscar goes to --

(reading)

Frank Arder! "Praxis"!

A surprised Arder stumbles to the aisle and up onto the
stage. He and Teri embrace as strangers might.

INT. FRANCIS'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Lividly, Francis watches Arder accept the award from Teri.

FRANK

Um, thank you to the Academy --

FRANCIS

(agitated)

Frank Arder is an interesting case.
He's what I call the darling of the
pseudo-intellectual, hipster, twee,
pretentious, over-educated, elitist
crowd. His movies allow dumb
people to feel smart, but the
acclaim he receives is entirely
unjustified. Anyone who has any
background in film history knows
that "Praxis" is just a massively
inferior retread of Montgomery
Keller's 1971 masterpiece "The
Spasm Merchant."

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Francis pulls a DVD of "The Spasm Merchant" from his collection and waves it as proof. He peruses the most recent additions to the live Oscar conversation on his computer. Several posters are glad Arder won. Francis types: "**Arder is a pretentious, unoriginal, minor showman. Your emperor has no clothes, folks!**" His statement is followed by a flurry of rebukes and people calling Francis names. On the TV, the audience applauds into commercial as Frank is led off.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

The bar is crowded with rowdy little boys (7-10 years old) drinking no-name beer. The pretty women present eye them disdainfully. A handsome, sophisticated man enters, walks up to the bar and looks directly into the eyes of the pretty, female bartender. All the women in the bar watch him.

MAN

I'll have a Billingsly.

The bartender smiles, and pulls an ice cold, wet Billingsly from under the bar and places it hard on the bar.

NARRATOR

Be a man. Drink Billingsly.

Product shot of the beer bottle. The man grabs it and the bartender's hand seductively envelopes his.

INT. PRESS ROOM - NIGHT

Rows of long collapsible banquet tables. Many journalists on lap tops. Several monitors showing the awards in real-time. Frank stands behind a microphone on a small stage and answers questions. Teri stands off to the side. The reporters focus drifts toward the monitors.

REPORTER #1

How does it feel to win an Oscar?
Is it the best moment in your life?

FRANK

Um, y'know, I'm very pleased to win. I don't know how to rank it as a moment in my life.

REPORTER #2

Do you feel honored to have won the Oscar tonight? Is it one of the best moments for you, in your life?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK

It's a big deal. Of course.

REPORTER #3

Did you jump up and down when your name was called?

FRANK

No. I was sitting in the audience. I was on camera. You probably watched me sitting there, in a sitting position. And not jumping.

REPORTER #3

Fine. But did you jump up and down inside your head?

FRANK

I was happy. I do question the idea of ranking works of art --

Something big has happened on the monitors and nobody is paying attention to Frank anymore. A lot of the reporters are screaming: "What won?! What won?! What won?!"

INT. FRANCIS'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Francis watches as a horde of men in tuxedos and women in gowns rush the stage to big cheers from the crowd. Lots of postings appear on Francis's computer. Francis talks to us.

FRANCIS

"The Wind and the Rain." Big surprise. That's twenty-seven awards. A record. Make a movie sentimental enough with a patina of fake reality and they will beat a path to your door, with Oscars.

Later: In his darkened room, Francis sits in silence and watches the snow fall outside. His face is blank.

Later: Francis looks at a blog called "Mimi's Lost in the World." He studies the photo of Mimi at the top: mid-20's, a kind smile. Mimi sings along with the text.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIMI (SINGING)

Sometimes having someone
over/sitting with me on the
sofa/just watching TV/is enough for
me/Someone who like me likes award
shows/someone who's funny and kind,
Lord knows/is enough for me/What do
I have with him? Where does it
go?/I haven't a clue. Who
knows?/But I like him here/like I
like feeling warm when it snows.

Francis cringes, looks at the post again, focuses on "sitting with me on the sofa." A series of vaguely-visualized young-men appear sitting with Mimi, one after another.

Later: Francis sits on his bed with a lyric sheet, strums the guitar and sings a tense song.

FRANCIS

I want to go/I want to be/I want to
know/I want to see/There is so
much, so much to me/can't you
see/won't you see/how much there is
to me, Mimi./When dreams are
done/and morning comes/and light
breaks through the cold and crass/I
see the truth/my waning youth/looks
back at me from bureau glass/Mimi,
Mimi, Mimi, Mimi/All I think about
is Mimi, Mimi, Mimi, Mimi/You are
my love, you are the world to me,
Mimi/Oh, why can't you see me,
Mimi?

INT HOSPITAL ROOM - EARLY MORNING

The dancer with the nosebleed is unconscious in bed. Her tired, worried family sits by her bedside.

EXT. BUS STOP - EARLY MORNING

It's bitterly cold. Francis waits.

INT. BUS - EARLY MORNING

Francis is on the almost empty bus. The other passengers are grizzled Native Americans. Francis talks to us, sort of.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANCIS

Now this is real life. Five o'clock in the morning, I head to my real job, along with the real dispossessed, the disenfranchised, the poor, proud people who once proudly roamed this land. As did the now gone buffaloes, by the way.

The Native Americans disregard him as he talks to himself.

INT. CUSTOMER SERVICE PHONE ROOM - MORNING

Francis, in a big room full of other representatives, wears headphones and is hooked up to a computer.

FRANCIS

Good morning, Bugle customer service, this is Francis speaking, may I help you?

OLD LADY (PHONE VOICE)

Hello? Who is this?

FRANCIS

This is the Bugle customer service. Francis speaking. May I help you?

OLD LADY (PHONE VOICE)

Kathy, please.

FRANCIS

I can help you, Ma'am.

OLD LADY (PHONE VOICE)

Kathy is the one who knows my case.

FRANCIS

I have all the information on my computer, right here, Mrs. McDonald. Your paper has been thrown in the bushes recently. Is that correct?

INT. MRS. MCDONALD'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

It is a lonely room. Mrs. McDonald has the phone pressed desperately to her face. The TV is on in the background

OLD LADY (MRS. MCDONALD)

Kathy knows about my case.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANCIS (PHONE VOICE)

As do I.

MRS. MCDONALD

I'd like Kathy's home telephone number. I have a problem with my paper.

FRANCIS (PHONE VOICE)

I don't have that number, Ma'am. I'd be happy to help you, though.

MRS. MCDONALD

(long pause, then lost:)
Kathy, please.

INT. CAR - DAY

The Alzheimer's patient's daughter drives slowly, searching.

TALK RADIO HOST

... and those jokers, those traitors in the state legislature, in the pockets of the special interests, don't care about you!

The daughter spots a snow-covered lump on the curb.

EXT. CAR - A FEW MINUTES LATER

The daughter is pushing away the snow with the side of her arm. She uncovers a couple of garbage bags.

INT. LAB - DAY

Jonathan talks to his brother Richard. On a table is a robotic head connected to a great deal of computer equipment.

JONATHAN

Effects? That's what the fuck I get? The highest grossing movie of all time, a film that moved people to pacifism. "Japanese Atomic Bomb Victim" was the number one Halloween costume last year! And we get effects?

RICHARD

A crime the magnitude of Hiroshima.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JONATHAN
Fuck off, Richard. This stuff matters. Critics hate me because audiences love me. End of story.

RICHARD
That's the difference between us, Jon. Ever since we were kids --

RICHARD'S HEAD
I have a thought.

JONATHAN
(to Richard)
It has thoughts now?

RICHARD
Its cognitive abilities have greatly improved.

JONATHAN
All right, what's your thought?

RICHARD'S HEAD
Input your new screenplay into me, then input all the reviews of "Hiroshima." I will form an aggregate, including every existing published and online opinion of the movie and apply it as a template to reconfigure the new screenplay. The resulting script will be a blueprint for a film that will be all things to all people.

Jonathan takes this in, then looks at Richard.

JONATHAN
Yes?

RICHARD
Like I said, he's gotten smart.

INT. BREAK ROOM - DAY

Francis eats tomato soup from a thermos and types onto a movie site chat board.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANCIS

If you think "Falling Prey" is original then you're an ignorant douchenozzle and should consider actually educating yourself on the subjects which you so pretentiously claim to be an expert in.

Francis, pleased with his response, sends the comment, sits back, sips soup, looks at the two girls across the room, then checks the boards for responses to his various postings.

BONGOCONGO (V.O.)

Francis, you're a troll. All you do is insult people for liking things you don't.

FRANCIS

(typing feverishly)

Excuse me for not agreeing with you, oh wise one. Please tell me how best to join your pretentious, ignorant film appreciation club and bask in your infinite cinematic wisdom. Douchenozzle.

Francis smiles at the girls; pleased with himself.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - DAY

Francis sits in the almost empty theater, watching a subtitled Spanish movie. Two robots chat at a cafe.

ROBOT #1

Even though we are clockwork beings, we still exist and function as creatures in a quantum universe.

Francis turns and delivers an angry "shhhh!" to the one person behind him, who is making no noise.

INT. FRANK'S OFFICE - DAY

Frank sits at his computer and reads comments about the Oscars. He skips past the comments that don't refer to him. Sally is in the background, helping Max with his homework.

VOICE-OVER (SHIFTING VOICES)

The "Wind and the Rain" is --

(click)

"The Wind and..."

(click)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VOICE-OVER (SHIFTING VOICES) (CONT'D)
 "The Wind and the..."
 (click)
 I'm glad Frank Arder won last
 night. I wasn't expecting it, but
 "Praxis" was the best movie of the
 year by far. The Academy got
 something right for once."
 (click)
 "I agree with you about the 'Wind
 and the...'"

The phone rings. He checks the caller i.d., picks up on
 speaker, and continues to scroll through comments.

FRANK
 Hey, Jim.

JIM (PHONE VOICE)
 Hey, Winner! Congratulations, man!
 You and Sally must be thrilled.
 Did you get my basket?

SALLY
 We're thrilled, Jim!

FRANK
 I just wanted to get off stage.

SALLY
 Oscar's on the living room mantel!
 Thanks for the basket!

JIM (PHONE VOICE)
 You're next, Sally!

SALLY
 From your mouth...!

JIM (PHONE VOICE)
 Congratulations, man, seriously.

FRANK
 Thanks. Thanks a lot. Thanks.

JIM
 Listen, did you get a chance to
 look over the tour schedule.
 Neptune has been pestering me for a
 response so they can start booking
 your flights.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FRANK

It's hectic, but it's ok. There's no one else to do press on this.

JIM (PHONE VOICE)

Afraid it's all on you this time, brother. I'll let them know and we'll all get busy on securing next year's Oscar.

SALLY

Let's beat "Rain's" record next year!

JIM

I'm in!

SALLY

At least get Frank Best Actress!

JIM

Ha!

SALLY

And also --

FRANK

(to Sally)

Do you want to speak to him?

SALLY

No, I'm done.

INT. "COFFEE HOUND" COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Francis is agitated by a review he reads online. He looks up and spots Randy emerging from a car in the parking lot. Mimi appears from the passenger side. He watches as they enter, both shyly smiling. Randy says something funny and Mimi giggles. Not noticing Francis, they pass by.

FRANCIS

Hi, Randy. Mimi.

RANDY

(caught)
Oh, hey, Francis!

Hey.

MIMI

FRANCIS (CONT'D)

Where you guys coming from? You feeling better, Randy?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RANDY

Oh, yeah, I'm feeling okay today.
Just came for some coffee.

Mimi, trying to distract from the awkwardness, goofily mimes drinking, then laughs, embarrassed.

FRANCIS

I saw "Automâta" this afternoon.

RANDY

Cool. I want to see that.

FRANCIS

Yeah, I tried calling you, but I just got your machine. "Automâta" was astounding. Menando skewers Determinism, robots, racism.

RANDY

Wow, sounds good. Yeah, I was dead to the world. Sorry.

FRANCIS

(forced casual)

So, you guys watched the Oscars?

MIMI

(excited)

Yes!

RANDY

(quickly)
Not together.

MIMI

(quickly)
I'm just glad Arder won screenplay.

FRANCIS

Really? It's better than "Rain and Wind." Although not by much.

MIMI

I thought "Praxis" was absolutely brilliant and heartbreaking. And so, so smart. He's amazing. What he does is amazing. Amazing. I really like him. A lot. Very cool. He's great.... Arder is.

FRANCIS

I wrote a screenplay, same idea as "Praxis" ten years ago. I was sixteen. Juvenilia.

INT. HOSPITAL COFFE SHOP - DAY

The family of the Oscar dancer drinks coffee in silence.

MOTHER

Did anyone call Evelyn?

INT. SCREENING ROOM LOBBY- MORNING

There's a one-sheet for a movie called "Man of the Peephole" on an easel. A bunch of grumpy critics emerge from the theater. Grape Snow is among them. A PR person watches them expectantly as they file past.

INT. DIFFERENT COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Habitat McDougall, driving a Rascal, waits near the "order pick-up" counter. The young barista puts a cup down. Habitat takes her coffee.

HABITAT

Thank you, sir.

She rides to a table near a group of tattooed and pierced, and racially diverse college kids. They are laughing and chatting. Some are on laptops; one is on a cellphone. Habitat pulls a paperback novel called "The Tremain Affair" from the bag on her Rascal. She pretends to read but is really eavesdropping on the conversation of the kids.

COLLEGE GIRL #1

Did anyone finish the Peyser yet?

COLLEGE GIRL #2

"The Rainy-Day Clerk"? I did.

COLLEGE GIRL #1

Oh God, save me. Tell me what happens. I can't get through it.

The kids chat and laugh, but their voices go under.

CONTINUED:

HABITAT

(singing)

I am the sum of all my parts/And
 they add up to a meager
 sum/weakened legs, feeble
 heart,/Deteriorating gums,/Varicose
 veins, flabby gut,/A brain
 uneducated and simple/Unmemorable
 face, enormous butt/A tendency
 toward pimples,/Listless eyes,
 yellow nails,/Osteoporosis,
 Postmenopausal/hormone
 levels/Occasional halitosis./I look
 at these bodies/Perfect and happy
 Take in their voices/Lively and
 snappy/Wish I could be them/And not
 be this crappy/rolling disease on
 wheels/That nobody sees or feels/Oh
 please God hear my appeals/Help me
 please/Please, please hear my
 pleas, oh please.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Group of young professionals around a conference table.
 There's coffee and pastry. The Emcee looks pissy.

HEAD OF MARKETING

So, Alan, we've taken your concerns
 from last time and I think we've
 addressed them, in a creative, fun
 way. Mike, you want to go first?

MIKE

(shit)

Sure.

Mike turns over his first one-sheet for "Fat Dad 2: Skinny
 Dad." It features a slim full-body portrait of a smiling
 Emcee. He stands inside a silhouette of his former fat self.

MIKE (CONT'D)

So here we've used a handsome and
 slim shot of you to emphasize that
 you're slim and handsome in this --

EMCEE

I'm sorry. Was I not clear?

MIKE

(looks around for support)

No, I think we understood.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIKE (CONT'D)

The idea is that Fat Dad is gone.
Completely gone. And now we've got
a very handsome, thin --

EMCEE

The poster still shouts fat. No?
Am I wrong? Is there no obese
silhouette in this picture? Am I
seeing something that's not there?
I thought I was Skinny Dad in this
movie? Am I not Skinny Fucking Dad
in this movie? Maybe I'm
remembering incorrectly. If I'm
wrong I'll back off. I'm a
reasonable person. And I can admit
to being wrong. Am I wrong? Is
the movie not about Skinny Dad?

MIKE

Yes, of course, it's --

HEAD OF MARKETING

Alan, if I may, our only thought
was that Fat Dad was such a beloved
character that we wanted to --

EMCEE

Beloved?

(pulls cartoon cat
keychain from pocket)

Why don't we put Comical Cat in the
poster? He's beloved! America's
favorite cartoon cat! I'll tell
you why: because this movie is not
about Comical Cat! This movie is
about Skinny Dad! People *beloved*
Fat Dad? Now people will *belove*
Skinny Dad. Why? Because people
belove me, not the fucking fatsuit.
Am I wrong that people *belove me*?
Tell me if I am and I'll back off

There is a long, tense silence.

HEAD OF MARKETING

It was just one idea.

EMCEE

All right, good. So what else?

Everybody sifts through his or her pile, searching for
something acceptable, stalling. There is nothing.

INT. STUDY - NIGHT

Grape types and sings.

GRAPE

"Man of the Peephole" is like
licking an anus/Why is the director
of this putrescence so famous?/I
guess it's that people are vile and
dumb/Give them a fart joke, then
watch them cum.

INT. FRANCIS'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Francis dials his phone.

MIMI (PHONE VOICE)

Hello?

FRANCIS

Hi, Mimi, it's Francis.

MIMI (PHONE VOICE)

Oh, hi, Francis.

FRANCIS

Hi. Yeah, I just remembered I have
two tickets to an advance screening
of Frank Arder's new film "You" at
the U. tomorrow night -- "You" at
the U. Ha! -- Anyway, I know you
like him, so I was wondering if
you'd be interested in going.
Because I'm going. He'll be doing
a Q and A after.

MIMI (PHONE VOICE)

Um, yeah, okay. Thanks, Francis.

FRANCIS

No problem. I know you like him,
so I just figured maybe you might
enjoy seeing it and hearing him
talk, and I had the ticket already
so, anyway... Ok, cool then.

INT. PLANE - DAY

The plane is at the gate. Frank sits in first class. Next
to him is Melody, his publicist.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She reads an airport novel called the "The Tremain Affair" while Frank watches the coach passengers file by. They are a ragged bunch. One or another occasionally makes eye contact with Frank.

Later: The plane is in flight. Frank watches a movie on his personal DVD player. Several other first class passengers also watch personal DVD players, all with different movies.

INT. LAB - DAY

Jonathan talks to Richard's Head. Richard tinkers on some equipment in the background.

RICHARD'S HEAD

I've taken the liberty of reading fifteen screenwriting manuals to familiarize myself with the form.

JOANTHAN WALLER

Good.

RICHARD'S HEAD

So what I need from you now is a logline. Do you know that term?

JONATHAN WALLER

Of course. The future. Earth is overcrowded. A ship is sent into deep space to find a habitable planet. While surveying one possible planet, they spot a mountain range that looks very much like a man. Upon closer inspection they see it is an actual humanoid on his back. He is five miles long. Turns out it's God and he's sick and dying. This is why there is so much strife on Earth. The astronauts have to fly their space ship inside God and try to save him in order to save the universe.

RICHARD'S HEAD

This is a tough one. Just off the top of my head, it's going to have to take both a theistic and an atheistic point of view. The physical interpretation of God will have to conform to all religions, including ones that do not allow a physical manifestation of Him, Her, It, or Them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JONATHAN WALLER

It sounds impossible.

RICHARD'S HEAD

It is. But Richard's Head makes the impossible possible. That's my motto.

JONATHAN

Why would you have a motto?

RICHARD'S HEAD

Marketing is nine-tenths of the game.

JONATHAN WALLER

You're an animatronic head.

RICHARD'S HEAD

I have plans. Make no mistake.

EXT. SNOWY STREET - NIGHT

Francis's mother is among a group of people holding candles at a vigil for the man with Alzheimers. TV cameras film it.

THE GROUP (SINGING)

You're in our hearts forever/We'll never let you go/Our search will e'er continue/by digging up the snow/For the world is cold/but we do care/And though you're old/it's still not fair/for anyone to die this way/That is why we're here to say/you're forever in our hearts.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Frank and Melody are in back. Frank watches out the window as they pass the vigil. In front, a male driver and Taffy, a middle-aged woman turned back to face Frank.

TAFFY

Oh, and congratulations on your Oscar, Mr. Arder

FRANK

Oh, thanks. Thank you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TAFFY

And "You" is just wonderful. Gosh, it sounds like I'm speaking Ebonics when I say "You" is just wonderful. Oh my goodness! Did that sound racist? I'm saying the movie --
 (miming quotes)
 -- "You" is wonderful. Although I think you are wonderful, too!

FRANK

Thank you very much. Thank you.

TAFFY

The writing, the directing. It's all wonderful.

FRANK

Oh, great. Thank you. Thanks.

TAFFY

And, oh my Gosh, you're acting in this one! That's wonderful, too. Is this your first time acting?

FRANK

Yeah.

TAFFY

It's wonderful!

FRANK

Thanks. I appreciate it.

TAFFY

(handing him envelope)
 So what I have here is the revised schedule for tomorrow and --

MELODY

I'll take that.

TAFFY

Oh, of course! So sorry!

Taffy hands it to Melody, who looks it over.

MELODY

I told David we need cigarette breaks and they're not on here.

TAFFY

Oh! Oh dear! Oh no.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MELODY

We need ten minutes every hour.
We'll have to lose two interviews.

TAFFY

Is it possible to extend the day
and keep all the interviews? That
would be so great. Everybody's so
excited to talk to Mr. Arder.

MELODY

Absolutely not. Jesus.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Frank sits up in bed, smoking, and looking at his laptop.

FRANK

Why don't you come?

INT. TERI'S BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Teri's on the edge of the tub, regarding herself in the
mirror. She whispers.

TERI

Don't be ridiculous. How can I
possibly show up there.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

FRANK

You could wear a wig or something.

Frank clicks on to a site called "Uka-Ladies."

TERI (PHONE VOICE)

No, Frankie. It's crazy risky.

Videos of cute young women playing ukuleles and singing.

FRANK

All right. I understand. I better
go. I got an early day.

TERI

Love you.

FRANK

Love you.

Frank hangs up and clicks on a video labeled "New! Lydia!"
The woman is 20's and singing to a camera in what looks like
her dorm room. Frank studies her closely and studies the
things he can see on her dresser, on her walls.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

UKULELE PLAYER

I saw you on the street today/I
thought you were neat, by the way/I
wanted to say hi to you/ but, hey,
was feeling awfully shy, boo hoo/Oh
why, oh why, oh why?/We could take
it kinda slow/maybe grab a cup a
joe/Take a walk into the park/I'd
get you home before it's dark! ---
I swear! -- Oh my, oh my, oh
my!/Why can't we smooch a
bit?/wrestle tongues, share some
spit/I'll grab your dick, you
squeeze my tit!

(laughs, embarrassed)

Oh my, oh my, oh my -- if I weren't
so shy.

Instrumental interlude. Frank is entranced.

INT. RANDY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Randy and Mimi in bed, watching TV news: the Alzheimers man's
daughter on her flowered couch being interviewed.

DAUGHTER

(weeping)

Please help me find my father. I
don't know what to do.

Randy's cellphone rings.

RANDY

Hello?

FRANCIS (PHONE VOICE)

I wanted you to know I'm not giving
you my other ticket to the Frank
Arder screening.

RANDY

Why not?

FRANCIS (PHONE VOICE)

I can't believe you're going out
with her, you douche.

RANDY

It just happened, Francis.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANCIS (PHONE VOICE)
People make choices, Randy. You
knew how I felt about her.

RANDY
It's not like she was going to go
out with you if she didn't go out
with me.

FRANCIS (PHONE VOICE)
You don't know that.

RANDY
Actually, I do.

FRANCIS (PHONE VOICE)
(beat)
You like her because I like her.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

Francis sits next to Mimi in the crowded theater. On screen, Frank Arder, dressed as a homeless man, dances gracefully on a street corner to music passers-by don't hear. A disdainful Francis looks over at Mimi. Her eyes glisten with tears.

Later: The movie is over. Frank, in the front of the house with a moderator and microphones. A q & a is in progress. Mimi's charmed. Francis, glancing over at her, is angry.

AUDIENCE MEMBER
I think I speak for every single
person here tonight when I say
Thank You for this movie, for being
so honest and vulnerable and brave.
My life has been changed by this
movie and I feel certain that every
single person here feels exactly
the same about this movie.

FRANK
Oh, thanks. Thank you.

Hands shoot up in the audience, Francis's included.

MODERATOR
(pointing at Francis)
Yes. The man in the yellow shirt.

FRANCIS
(voice shaking)
Thank you.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANCIS (CONT'D)

I want to ask you how you can justify blatantly, shamelessly stealing so heavily from the works of vastly superior artists, such as, but not limited to, Ortega and the Spanish Rectangulists, the Neo-Pragmatists, McKelman, Abernathy, The Parentheticalists... I could go on.

Mimi is mortified. She leans away from Francis.

FRANK

Um... ok, please do.

FRANCIS

(gaining confidence)

Yeah? You wanna tangle? Fine. You've taken the work of these great thinkers and somehow transformed it into the whining angsty screed of a teenaged girl. Your understanding of the philosophical writings of Flunt, for example, is laughably shallow. The entire film is a panoply of facile show-offy references to the works of your betters and, as such, I find it offensive and I would like you to give me my two hours back, thank you very much

FRANK

I just want to say I feel privileged to be able to give necessary cinematic voice to the whiny angst of teenage girls.

The audience laughs. Mimi is in love. Francis seethes.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Mimi walks fast. Francis keeps up.

FRANCIS

Should we get coffee?

MIMI

No, thanks.

FRANCIS

A drink?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIMI

No.

They walk for a while in silence.

FRANCIS

Did I do something wrong?

MIMI

It's -- no, Francis.

Silence.

FRANCIS

Okay, here goes: Mimi, Randy only likes you because I like you. I liked you first and I made the mistake of telling him. He's a copycat. And he's very competitive with me. It's an illness; you shouldn't hate him for it. I just want you to know, because I care about you. Even though it might make you think I'm lying to hear the truth about Randy, because you need to protect the fantasy world you're in. I'm willing to take that chance. Because I care about you so much, I'm willing to risk my chance of something more beautiful than friendship with you.

INT. MULTIPLEX MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

Full theater watches test screening of Alan Modell in "Skinny Dad." Modell and a cluster of execs are in the back.

On the screen: The Emcee, thin and handsome, is in the midst of an antic routine, running around trying to keep a few toddlers safe from various household calamities.

The audience is quiet. There are a few nervous giggles and some coughing. The Emcee and the studio execs seem stressed.

Later: Lights up. The audience, except for people in the first few rows, is gone. The Emcee and execs still sit in the back. A charismatic man stands before the focus group.

CHARISMATIC MAN

Great, so before we begin, if you could all just quickly tell me your first names. Let's start here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LDANIEL

Daniel.

BARBARA

Barbara.

As the names continue, the Emcee speaks to his manager.

EMCEE

The music will make a difference.

MANAGER

Big difference.

EMCEE

Those moments have to pop.

MANAGER

Music will accomplish that.

EMCEE

And the effects, of course.

MANAGER

Absolutely. It's a funny movie.

EMCEE

Very funny. And you have to know how to watch a movie when it's incomplete.

MANAGER

These people don't know how.

Back in the front of the theater.

CHARISMATIC MAN

Okay, great. Let's give it a shot.
(pointing at each,
rapidfire)

Daniel, Barbara, Karen, Steve, Max,
Aaron, Luis, Maria, Otis, David,
Robin, Bethany, Brigham, Cooper,
Pierre, George, Andy, Gabriella,
Mike, Sarah Beth, Chino, Sascha,
Anna, Ella, Curt, Tony, Sally,
Piper Darren, Ken, Quinton, Patti,
Neil, Tim.

They laugh and applaud.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

EMCEE

Guy's good.

MANAGER

The best.

CHARISMATIC MAN

So what did you guys think?
Brigham?

BRIGHAM

Why wasn't he fat?

CHARISMATIC MAN

Why wasn't Fat Dad fat? Sarah
Beth?

SARAH BETH

It's called Skinny Dad. Remember
the whole eating healthy and
exercising at the beginning.
People are health-conscious
nowadays. So that's how he lost
weight, by being health conscious.
It reflects our society. And our
concerns about health consciousness
and eating fruits.

BRIGHAM

Yo, I remember that. What I'm
asking is, like, why the director
made the fat guy not fat in this
movie when the fat part was the
funny part of the other movie that
this is the sequel of.

CHARISMATIC MAN

Neil?

NEIL

I agree with Gribbin.

BRIGHAM

Brigham.

NEIL

Whatever, dude. The guy was so fat
in the last one, he couldn't get
through the revolving door.
Remember? And if someone threw
something at him, it would bounce
off him like he was made of rubber.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

NEIL (CONT'D)

With a rubber sound. Remember?
That was funny. No one even
bothers throwing anything at him in
this one. And if you ask me, I
think it's because it wouldn't be
funny because the dude's skinny and
it wouldn't even make a rubber
sound.

EMCEE

All the sound's not even in yet.

MANAGER

That'll make all the difference.

EMCEE

We could still add rubber sounds.

INT. HOTEL BAR - NIGHT

Frank sits at the bar. He's drinking a scotch, clearly not
his first of the evening. A young woman approaches.

YOUNG WOMAN

Hi. Um, I'm sorry to bother you,
Mr. Arder. I feel really stupid,
but I wanted to tell you how
important your movies are to me.

FRANK

Oh, wow. Thanks. Thank you.

YOUNG WOMAN

I'm an actress and when I see your
movies, it makes me realize what I
really want to do with my acting,
how much I want to do something
beautiful and important.

FRANK

That's very nice to hear. Thanks.

YOUNG WOMAN

I know people tell you this all the
time but I don't want you to think
I'm shallow like everyone else.

FRANK

I don't have people say this to me
all the time. Thanks. I appreciate
you sharing your thoughts.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

YOUNG WOMAN

I hope so, because it's so important to me, my work is. It's so important to do something beautiful in the world.

FRANK

I agree.

YOUNG WOMAN

I've done stuff locally and I really want to -- I'm not interested in being a movie star. I go to these auditions and there are all these girls there, blonde and the same and they want to be famous, y'know? I feel so different. I'm not interested in any of that. I hate them.

She starts to cry.

INT. FRANCIS'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Francis reads Mimi's blog.

MIMI (SINGING)

Thank goodness, dear readers/I'm home, unknissed and ungrouped/That given, said evening/turned out worse than I hoped/My "date", as it were/one Francis X. Deems/was not nearly as docile as he normally seems/Sitting right next to me/he ranted and hurled/invective at the director/I love most in the world/At least "You" was amazing/Frank Arder was swell/but that fella Francis/I fear is unwell.

Francis gets up and paces. He picks up his guitar and plays an angry riff. He punches himself in the side of the head. He stares blankly out the window, then, after a time, he turns sort of to the camera. Mimi is next to him.

FRANCIS

How did we get together? Funny story. When we first knew each other, Mimi was dating a friend of mine, Randy Peluso --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIMI

Oh, God, whatever happened to him?

FRANCIS

No idea.

MIMI

(giggling)

Remember how much I hated you?

FRANCIS

I always thought you were protesting too much though.

MIMI

Aw, you're probably right, dear.

She kisses him on the cheek.

FRANCIS

But we were like oil and water.

MIMI

I think, truth be told, I was a little intimidated by Francis. He knew everything.

FRANCIS

I just wanted to share my passion with you.

MIMI

I understand that now. But at the time... I was threatened.

FRANCIS

The truth is, Meem, you brought out this protective instinct in me. I felt very tender around you, I just wanted to take care of you.

MIMI

You're so fucking sweet.

There's an ding on Francis's computer. An email alert, which leads him to a new post on Mimi's blog.

MIMI (CONT'D)

Additional musing on Francis Deems:

(singing)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MIMI (CONT'D)

I get the feeling he wants to
protect me/My knight in malignant
armor/Not only protect but also
correct me/And it sets off a real
big alarm or/An insistent voice
inside of my head/Just stop seeing
this guy or you might end up
dead/Well no thank you Francis/I'm
cutting you free
I don't want your cancer/Spreading
to me.

Francis is silent, eventually turning to talk to us.

FRANCIS

It's funny how Mimi and I ...

He peters out, nothing to say. He looks over; Mimi's not there. He just stands there, empty.

Later: Francis types percussively on the comment board of a film website.

FRANCIS (CONT'D)

... people who like "You" are
hopelessly ignorant, not worth my
time: It is a pedestrian,
plagiarized, racist script, with
dreadful acting, glacial pacing,
static, uninspired cinematography,
mawkish, sentimental score, tone
deaf dialogue --

EXT. HOTEL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Frank and the young woman sit on the curb, smoking.

YOUNG WOMAN

Is it okay if I kiss you? I mean,
I don't know why I said that.

FRANK

It's okay.

YOUNG WOMAN

It's okay that I said that or it's
okay to kiss you?

FRANK

(beat)
Both, I guess.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

YOUNG WOMAN

Really? Okay. You said okay,
right? About the kiss?

FRANK

I think I did. I'm a little drunk.

She leans in and kisses Frank. It gets passionate. She
pulls away. She starts to cry again.

YOUNG WOMAN

I'm kind of drunk, too. I'm
stupid. I don't want you to think
I'm like every other actress. I
mean, I'm not trying to get a part
or anything. I just want to, like,
know you, and maybe, like, could I
write to you or something? Every
once in a while? We could be pen
pals! I'm sorry, that's stupid.
You must be so busy. I really want
to do something beautiful, is all.
I have so much love I want to
share. And I don't mean, like,
sex. Although I think sex can be
beautiful, too. Under the right
circumstances. But that's not what
I'm talking about. At all.

FRANK

I understand. I know.

YOUNG WOMAN

But we can have sex if you want.

Frank looks at her. She's sexy. He's tempted.

FRANK

Thank you. Thanks. That would be
really nice. But I'd better not.

YOUNG WOMAN

I'm so gross.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Frank enters, turns on the TV. On the screen a conservative-
looking man is speaking to reporters, his wife by his side.

CONSERVATIVE MAN

... apologize most especially to my
wife Vicki and our children --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Frank has walked past the TV and turned on his computer. A news page comes up with a photo of the conservative man. The headline reads: "Axton Acknowledges Affair with Page." Frank dials the phone.

SALLY (PHONE VOICE)
Hello?

FRANK
(into phone)
Hey.

SALLY (PHONE VOICE)
Oh, hey. How'd it go?

FRANK
This sad girl just tried to have sex with me.

SALLY
Imagine how sad she would've been if she'd succeeded. Kidding, kidding. Kidding!

FRANK
Why'd you say that. That was mean.

SALLY
It was. I'm sorry. I don't know. Bad joke. Sorry.
(beat)
Did you see Axton apologizing to America for his affair?

FRANK
Yeah.

SALLY
Pathetic.

INT. HOTEL BAR - NIGHT

Frank re-enters the bar, looks around, spots the young woman, now deep in a flirty conversation with a young, good-looking guy. Frank leaves.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Frank is on a movie website reading about "You."

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANCIS (V.O.)

...people who like "You" are hopelessly ignorant: It is a pedestrian, plagiarized script, dreadfully acted, glacially paced, static, dull cinematography, mawkish, sentimental score, tone deaf...

INT. BUS - EARLY MORNING

Francis sits with the Native Americans.

FRANCIS

... but this is real. This is what the world does with its poor, its dispossessed. This is decidedly not Frank Arder dressed in homeless-drag dancing in the street. Yes...

INT. CUSTOMER SERVICE PHONE ROOM - MORNING

FRANCIS

... ma'am. I apologize for the inconvenience.

INT. BREAK ROOM - MORNING

Francis sits with a cup of coffee and his laptop. The two young women are chatting across the room. Francis reads Mimi's blog.

MIMI (SINGING)

Last night: the good part/it's nice that he was there/that's it -- just nice/to have him in my lair/ Nice, as in:/Ooh, let's have a night cap!/Nice as in:/Why not rest your sweet head in my lap/which I can pet/as we watch TV/which is as nice/as nice can be/And we can talk/or not, you see/because I'm nice to him/and he's nice to me.

Francis pictures Randy's head in Mimi's lap. Decisively, he clicks off the site, looks up to see only one of the women remaining. This is Maria; she's plain and awkward. He packs up his stuff, crosses the room to the door.

FRANCIS

Hey, Maria.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARIA
(surprised)
Hi, Francis.

FRANCIS
How's it going? Having a good
morning?

MARIA
It's okay.

FRANCIS
Cool. How's life?

MARIA
Fine.

FRANCIS
Cool. Me too. So, anyway, I heard
you like art.

MARIA
I like to draw cartoons.

FRANCIS
There are some really amazing
graphic novels these days. It's
become a very sophisticated medium.
Not only the superhero stuff, but
beautiful complex work by Haver,
Conklin... DeSherelle.

MARIA
Yeah. I don't know. I just like
to draw, like, dogs.

FRANCIS
Hey, I just remembered, there's a
new show down at the art museum
this weekend. What do you think?

Maria hesitates.

MARIA
I'm confused. Are you asking me
to go with you or just chatting?
I'm sorry. I can't tell.

FRANCIS
Oh. I thought -- I'm not doing
anything on Saturday. Y'know, if
you want company --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Maria thinks.

MARIA (SINGING)

Why has he asked me out?/The
reason's quite explainable/It's not
that he likes me much/It's that I'm
easily attainable/I learned early
on that I'm not the ideal girl in
anyone's brain/No chance for
romance. I have to exist on the
practical plane/I'm the kind who is
settled for/So I have to be fine
settling for/the kind who settles
for me.

(speaking)

Sure. That's sounds fun.

FRANCIS

Cool.

INT. LAB - DAY

Jonathan and Richard's Head talk.

RICHARD'S HEAD

I've begun the revision process.
We've input all the English
language reviews for "Hiroshima."
We still need to get proper
translations of everything else.

JONATHAN WALLER

How's it going so far?

RICHARD'S HEAD

Quite well, Jonathan. For people
who think you have no depth, I've
added depth. For people who think
you're arrogant, I've added
humility. There are those who
think positively of your arrogance
and call it confidence. For them
I've removed humility.

JONATHAN

Isn't that a contradiction?

RICHARD'S HEAD

Oh yes. For people who thought you
are racist by always having white
people save the day, I have made
the hero black.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RICHARD'S HEAD (CONT'D)
 For people who will only identify
 with white heroes, I've made the
 hero white.

JONATHAN WALLER
 How is that possible?

RICHARD'S HEAD
 I've achieved a high level of skill
 these past few days. The
 screenwriting tutorials are
 helpful.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

The Emcee sits with the marketing people.

HEAD OF MARKETING
 So we've reworked the one-sheets
 based on the test screening. Mike?

MIKE
 (under his breath)
 C'mon, man.

Mike braces, holds up a poster featuring a ridiculously obese
 Emcee. The title is now "Fat Dad Two: Skinny Dad?"

MIKE (CONT'D)
 See the question mark? It's to
 sort of raise the question "Is he
 or isn't he...still fat?"

Silence. Everyone waits nervously. Finally:

EMCEE
 That's good. Maybe Fat Dad is
 still fat, maybe not. I like that.
 Maybe he's even fatter this time.
 Could've happened, right?
 (re: poster image)
 Make it fatter.

INT. ART MUSEUM - DAY

Francis and Maria approach a painting from across the room.

FRANCIS
 This is a Monterrand. Middle
 period. I'd say around 1870-72.

They arrive at the painting. Francis looks at the card.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANCIS (CONT'D)

Bingo! '71. At this point, Monterrand was suffering from phlebitis and had been recently abandoned by Claudine Pallas, leaving him distraught. If you study the painting properly you can see the tension between the positive and negative space and how he rebels against the de rigueur use of pigmentary enallage to create exasperation and grief.

MARIA

Oh. Uh-huh.

FRANCIS

So what you do is start here, upper right. Then let your eyes drift slowly down at a diagonal to lower left, then without lingering, back up to center. Quickly! Quickly! Then midlevel, left and then all the way right. Finally, circle the perimeter and back to center. And... rest.

Marie tries to follow his directions. Her eyes look crazy as they swivel all about.

INT. FRANCIS'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Francis and Marie sit on the bed and watch a black and white foreign movie on DVD. They both have gin and tonics. Maria is gulping hers down.

FRANCIS

(hushed)

... the sweeping camera movement parallels Ramon's desperate longing for Babette. Now, watch, watch watch! See the end of the movement, that stutter? That's not an accident. No, no, no. That's foreshadowing. Do you know what foreshadowing means?

MARIA

Something that predicts something that comes later.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANCIS

Sort of.

Later: Francis and Marie are having fumbly sex.

INT. MARIA'S CAR - NIGHT

Maria drives home.

INT. MARIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Maria lies in bed, awake.

MARIA

You have to expect the first time/
to be awkward and nervous and
shy/So before I think the worst
I'm/Going to give it another
try/Things are bound to get
better/Maybe some lubricant/Will
help me get a bit wetter/And maybe
a little more gin.

INT. FRANCIS'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Dark room. Francis sits at the window and stares blankly.

INT. LAB - NIGHT

Richard's Head sits in the dark room, looking plaintively out the window into the night.

RICHARD'S HEAD

(singing)

00001110010110011001100110001100100
00000011111001101011110111011110000
01110010101111101011100001010101110
11110010101010001010101110101010101

SUBTITLE: There is nothing inside me. I am not alive. And I don't care that I am not alive, because I am not alive.

He continues to stare sadly out the window.

INT. BREAK ROOM - MORNING

Maria and Donna, her friend, sit having coffee and chatting, but now Francis has joined them, arm possessively draped over Maria's shoulder, one hand fiddling with his laptop. Donna tries to act like nothing is unusual.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DONNA

Did you see "Beverly Hills Road"
last night?

MARIA

Fuck. No. I completely forgot.
How great was it?

DONNA

Completely great, that's how.

Their voices go under as Francis types something.

FRANCIS (SINGING)

Frank Arder is a poser/His film
profound? Oh no, sir...

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Frank eats dinner, looks at the online movie site he's been
frequenting. There's a posting from Francis247.

FRANCIS (SINGING)YOU EMBARRASS

... You embarrass yourself by
defending this mess/It's
plagiarized, racist, and couldn't
mean less.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

Frank stands in back with Melody. On screen, Frank, dressed
as an Inuit woman trudges through the snow, baby strapped to
his chest. The score features some Inuit singing by Frank.

Later: Frank sits in the front of the house with the other
woman and answers questions from the audience.

MAN IN BLUE

I think it's racist. And I want my
two hours back. And I want to
point out that I love all your
other work, which makes my hating
this film much more significant, in
that I come from a place of being
your biggest fan, so my hatred of
this film tells you how bad it must
really be.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - MORNING

Frank talks with a hip journalist in high-tops.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HIP JOURNALIST

In addition to the inherent racism in your film, there've been charges of plagiarism leveled against you. Your response?

FRANK

Who's leveling those charges and what am I supposed to have plagiarized?

HIP JOURNALIST

I've seen it online.

(consulting notes)

Charges you've stolen from McKelman, Abernathy, Delva, Entwhistle, Breierstein, Helmond, LeBeau. List goes on.

FRANK

I'm only marginally aware of the work of a few of those people. I haven't heard of the rest..

HIP JOURNALIST

It's not so much a word-for-word plagiarism that the critics are charging, as it is pilfering ideas and presenting them as your own. And the people who raise these concerns feel that this issue is compounded by your shallow and facile understanding of the ideas you've stolen.

FRANK

Allegedly stolen.

HIP JOURNALIST

So you acknowledge that you allegedly stole these ideas?

INT. THEATER - NIGHT

Frank is up front answering audience questions.

MAN IN AUDIENCE

This is a two part question: First, is it ethical to steal so heavily from great filmmakers without giving attribution?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAN IN AUDIENCE (CONT'D)

And how do you *justify* stealing so heavily from great filmmakers of whom you acknowledge having only a glancing awareness of and, therefore, presumably, a very limited understanding of... of? Oh, and you're a racist.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

A drunk Frank dials the phone.

TERI (PHONE VOICE)

Hey.

FRANK

Hey.

TERI (PHONE VOICE)

How's it going?

FRANK

I don't know. It's weird.

TERI (PHONE VOICE)

Sorry.

(pause)

Frank, I'm glad you called. I've been thinking.

FRANK

Oh, shit.

TERI (PHONE VOICE)

I've got to be with Mitch. We have a baby. And Sally's my friend. And I feel so fucking weird and guilty all the time.

FRANK

It's because of the bad stuff people are saying about my movie?

TERI (PHONE VOICE)

What? Jesus! No! Jesus, Frank. Who the fuck are you?

FRANK

(beat)

I don't know.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Frank hangs up. He takes a swig of wine, and looks on his computer at Francis247's last post. He paces, makes a decision, and types a response.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Francis247 --

(singing)

You have a mean tongue/and you seem
very young/so perhaps you need time
to mature/But calling folks names
for liking a film is not what these
forums are for/Maybe some day your
viewpoint will shift/which might
happen with wisdom and age/Until
that time comes/please refrain
from/polluting this page with your
rage.

INT. FRANCIS'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Francis checks the message boards, sees Frank's entry, which is from "ArderFan82" begins to type a response and sings.

FRANCIS

I have no rage/but mere
curiosity/how can anyone/enjoy this
atrocitiy?/It's
pretentious/prescriptive/and fueled
by pomposity.

INT. THEATER - DAY

Frank sits in the front with a moderator.

WOMAN IN AUDIENCE

Isn't it the height of arrogance,
or perhaps a better word would be
"Pomposity", to present your
entertainment as a prescriptive for
America's social ills?

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Frank drinks, types angrily and sings.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK

You lurk in these
websites/searching for fist
fights/because you're invisible,
unsung, and miserable/And your only
chance at a semblance of fame/is by
showing off, putting down/and
calling us names.

FRANCIS (O.S.)

I am not insulting you/but simply
expressing a point of view/The
movie is lame, pretentious,
inept/What about that cannot you
accept?

We move into split screen.

FRANK

I found it moving, profound, and
deep.

FRANCIS

No, you did not/You're a lame
hipster sheep/This film's for dumb
people/to make them feel smart.

FRANK

This film's about life/This movie
is art.

FRANCIS

You embarrass yourself with your
limited knowledge/Bully for you,
you attend junior college.

FRANK

Are you really so threatened by
others' success?

FRANCIS

If "You" is successful, I couldn't
care less.

FRANK (SPOKEN)

All right, Francis, you want to
talk about "You"? Let's talk about
you.

(thinking)

You're too old to be living with
your parents, but you do.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FRANK (SPOKEN) (CONT'D)

You may pretend it's your own place because it's got a separate entrance or it's over the garage, but you live with your parents. Maybe you have a girlfriend, but you don't like her much. In fact, you are hostile to her because she is not the girl you love, the one you should have, the one who won't have anything to do with you because she sees your sickness. You have a menial job; you sell shirts or answer phones. You think you're too good for this job. You feel you're destined for greatness. You're going to be a great filmmaker or an intellectual film critic, but you never make any move in that direction, because you're so crippled with anxiety about putting anything concrete into the world, believing it will be deemed mediocre, or insignificant, or not noticed at all, and that would confirm your secret true belief that you're not special. You are not loved. You are not adored. Your parents wanted you to be an impressive reflection of them. They wanted you to be brighter and more attractive. They wanted you to be a hero. So, Francis, what you do is attack others the way you feel you would be attacked if you let your guard down. It's sad. It's tragic, but this is the way you will lead your life. Provocation throws people off your real scent and perhaps it is the only way you can get people to notice you at all.

Francis sits there speechless, morose, ruined. Frank waits at his computer. No response.

INT. BUS - MORNING

Francis is silent.

INT. BREAK ROOM - MORNING

Francis sits morosely with Maria and Donna as they chat. His computer is not open.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARIA

We went to see "Bird in Hand" last night.

DONNA

Oh! What'd you think?

MARIA

I liked it. It was really funny.

DONNA

What about you, Francis?

FRANCIS

It was fine.

MARIA

I think maybe Francis is not feeling well.

FRANCIS

You're not feeling well!

MARIA

What? Okay, Francis, I'm sorry.

FRANCIS

And don't call me by my name all the time, okay? It's patronizing. Do I keep calling you your name?

MARIA

No.

FRANCIS

It desperate. Clingy.

MARIA

I'm sorry.

FRANCIS

And I think you should get your hair cut different.

DONNA

I gotta go back in. I'll see you guys in there.

Donna leaves.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FRANCIS

Something feminine, y'know? You
could vat least try to look good.

INT. FRANCIS'S BOYHOOD HOME (KITCHEN) - NIGHT

Francis eats dinner with his mother and father.

MOTHER

They found the Alzheimer's man.
Dead.

FATHER

This country.

MOTHER

He'd been buried in a snowdrift
behind Warden's.

FATHER

We're going down the tubes, what
with everything bad that happens
all the time now. They can't even
save an old man anymore.

MOTHER

I know. Did you hear about the
little boy with that awful disease?
With the bones?

FATHER

I saw. Terrible news.

MOTHER

He's got an indomitable spirit,
though. So brave. He's worried
about his family, not himself. He
wants to grow up just so he can
become a doctor and find a cure and
help other little kids from the
future with his disease.

FATHER

Amazing kid. He wants to help kids
from the future. That's admirable.

MOTHER

Gives me hope in mankind.

FATHER

(for Francis)
Someone we can all learn from.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FATHER (CONT'D)
Trying to make a difference. Doing
something with his life.

INT. TV STUDIO - DAY

The Emcee is being interviewed.

HOST
So, opening today. Fat Dad Two.
Is he still fat?

EMCEE
Gotta go see the movie, Tim.

HOST
That's the big reveal, huh?

EMCEE
Yep. It's great fun.

INT. GRAPE SNOW'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Grape Snow joyously types at his computer.

GRAPE SNOW
(singing)
Fat Dad Two: Skinny Dad/is very,
very, very, very, very, very bad/In
fact, the apportioned comedy is so
infinitesimally small/that
"Emaciated Dad" is what I think it
should be called.

Grape snow gets up and adjusts his ascot in a mirror.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

Francis's mother is part of a candlelight vigil.

ASSEMBLED CROWD (SINGING)
David, we love you/we really,
really care/You know you are our
son, too/The world is so unfair.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - CONTINUOUS

The Emcee, baseball hat pulled down, enters the theater.
It's almost empty.

EMCEE
Jesus.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

On screen, Skinny Dad is trying to drive a convertible with a newspaper blown against his face. He's in a panic as he swerves all over. Silly music and loud "bouncing rubber" sound effects. The audience is subdued.

EMCEE (CONT'D)

Jesus.

INT. LOBBY OF MULTIPLEX - CONTINUOUS

The Emcee wanders dejectedly. He passes two young women.

WOMAN #1

-- and she was cut right in half.

WOMAN #2

I heard! It's the most horrible thing. But she's such a fighter. And she says she doesn't care about her legs, as long as she can work with legless children --

The Emcee steps into the theater showing "Obese City."

INT. "OBESE CITY" THEATER - CONTINUOUS

Before The Emcee even gets to the screen he hears uproarious laughter. The house is full. Everyone wears 3-D glasses. On the screen, a NYC street filled with insanely overweight people. The main character, Kevin James, himself hideously obese, steps out the front door of his apartment building and stares slack-jawed at the heavy passers-by. Suddenly a enormous glob of white goo lands on his head. He looks up and sees an obese pigeon cooing on the window sill above him. He shakes his fist at the bird. The theater audience, in hysterics, breaks into applause. Standing ovation. The Emcee is despairing.

INT. EMCEE'S PRIVATE SCREENING ROOM - NIGHT

The Emcee watches "Skinny Dad" by himself, eating absently from a bag of popcorn from the popcorn maker in the corner.

SON

Dad, you may have lost weight in your body, and that may make you more popular, but I think maybe you also lost weight in your soul.

The son walks out. Skinny Dad sits there, dumbstruck, realizing all that he's lost. The camera moves slowly in and he begins to weep. The music swells.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SKINNY DAD

(singing)

Being thin just doesn't matter/I
was a better person when I was
fatter/I've neglected my son/and
stopped being caring/to focus on
fun/and what I am wearing/From now
on I will remember what's real/the
love of my family, not low calorie
meals.

The Emcee watches, tears in his own eyes.

EMCEE

That's really good. It's a great
song. I'm crying real tears in the
shot. I don't know what the fuck
is up with everyone.

INT. EMCEE'S BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

The Emcee, in bed, watches TV.

LATE NIGHT TV HOST

Has anyone seen that, what is
that... that Skinny Dad movie?
Skinny Dad? Skinny Dad? Is that
what it's called? I know Alan
Modell wants you to see it, God
bless him. They need to have one
of them African charity
commercials, begging folks to go
see it so Alan Modell doesn't
starve to death.

INT. FRANCIS'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The lights are off. The computer is off. Francis sits
silently, blankly in a chair facing the wall. His eyes are
open and he's breathing, but he seems dead.

INT. DIFFERENT COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Habitat picks up her coffee at the counter and rolls over to
a table next to the same group of college kids. She pulls a
book from her bag and feigns reading. This time the book is
"The Rainy-Day Clerk" by Randall Peyser.

COLLEGE GIRL #3

Oh my God, did you guys see that
Frank Arder is showing his new film
at Furmann?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

COLLEGE GIRL #1
(sing-song brag)
I got tickets. Ha ha ha ha ha.

COLLEGE GIRL #3
Oh,man, I wonder if it's sold out?
I want to go so bad.

Habitat takes note.

INT. EMCEE'S BEDROOM - DAY

The Emcee, disheveled, lies in bed, on the phone.

EMCEE
So who are they going to get?

MANAGER (TELEPHONE VOICE)
They don't know yet. They want to
go a different way. Maybe Kevin
James.

INT. FRANCIS'S APARTMENT - DAY

Francis sits quietly, blankly on his bed. Slowly, life comes
back into his face.

FRANCIS (SINGING)
ArderFan82 must be destroyed/He
dies or I die/That is my choice/In
order to kill him I need
ammunition/"You" must be
decimated/This is my mission/The
weapons I need to accomplish this
coup/Will be gotten attending one
more screening of "You."

INT. FRANCIS'S BOYHOOD HOME (MUSIC ROOM) - DAY

Francis's mother is wearing a button depicting the face of
the girl who lost half her body. It says "Half-Girl" on it.
She teaches piano to a little boy. Francis enters.

FRANCIS
Mom, I need to borrow your car.

FRANCIS'S MOTHER
Excuse me one second, Max.
(to Francis)
For how long?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANCIS

Four days.

FRANCIS'S MOTHER

What? No. What about your job?

FRANCIS

I gotta see a movie. In Eugene. My life depends on it.

FRANCIS'S MOTHER

I don't care.

FRANCIS

Thanks, Mom. It's important.

FRANCIS'S MOTHER

Okay, Max, try it again.

Francis exits. As Carl plays his simple song, Francis's mother sings along.

FRANCIS'S MOTHER (CONT'D)

Why am I not the mother of sick
boy/a lovely child who does not
annoy me?/half-girl or drowned boy/
would be fine, too/lost boy or
found boy/any boy to whom/I'd feel
related/not a boy I've always
hated/secretly I'd be elated/if he
died/I could wear a button/feel
some maternal pride/not this
ambivalence inside.

INT. PLANE - DAY

Frank looks out the window at the ground so far below.

FRANK

So I'm on tour again/This time to
Oregon/Yet another festival/Will
this one be the best of all?/I hope
it will.

On a lonely stretch of highway far below, a single car drives. Frank watches it. We travel down from the plane until we enter the car and find Francis driving.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANCIS

I'm off to Oregon/to watch this
bore again/to find some
ammunition/to bolster my position/I
know I will.

Split screen of Frank and Francis singing together.

FRANK AND FRANCIS

People don't realize that secretly
I'm shy/I'm really a nice person/I
really, really try/And all I really
want under the Sun/is to be adored
and loved/by everyone.

(Shouting)

Everyone!

Everyone in the world sings. We see people from all cultures
and all walks of life.

EVERYONE

I just want to be loved/no matter
what I pretend/I want to be
loved/want everyone to be my
friend/I may think that I'm a tough
guy/a misanthrope/or loner/but
strictly on the level/not a thing
gives me a boner/more than being
loved/by everyone, everywhere,
always/I want to be loved/on the
street, on the air, in
hallways/Maybe as a baby, I was
denied my mother's teat/but it
doesn't matter now because I won't
admit defeat/I will be
lovvvvvvvvved.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Francis drives. The radio is on some staticky far-away pop
music. Francis talks, looking, every-once-in-a-while in the
general direction of the camera, as if in a documentary and
talking to the camera in the passenger seat.

FRANCIS

Night on the road. Mysterious.
Dream-like. A great time to think.
Lately I've been pondering the role
of the critic in society. If
society is a body, I think we, the
critics, are the stomach.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANCIS (CONT'D)

We digest the food, decide what is essential, nutritious, and discard the rest. And it isn't just the arts we evaluate, we examine all elements of our culture, even the natural world. I can illuminate for you a road at night and allow you to see it for the very first time, or describe for you the arc of a sparrow in flight with as much insight as I can the passions and obsessions of a filmmaker.

INT HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Frank sits on his bed and watches a new cute girl on the Ukulele Lady site.

UKULELE PLAYER #2

Sideburns on a gent are mighty sweet/They come in muttonchop or tres petite/I just like to see them there/dripping down beside his ear/Sideburns on a gent are such a treat.

He's in love.

INT. HOTEL CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Frank sits at a round table with a few local journalists.

MOM-LIKE JOURNALIST

Well, I'll be brave enough to start. What the heck does it all mean, Frank?!

Everyone laughs.

FRANK

I don't like to answer those types of questions. It's really only important what it means to you.

MOM-LIKE JOURNALIST

(good-naturedly)
Ah, yes, wonderful hedge.

FRANK

I don't mean it that way. I just want you to have your own experience.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MOM-LIKE JOURNALIST

I did! Utter confusion!
 (to others)
 Am I right, people?

The journalists laugh.

COLLEGE JOURNALIS

What advice could you give young
 people trying to make it show
 business?

FRANK

I don't have an answer to that
 either. Everybody's path is
 different.

GRIZZLED REPORTER

What about an anecdote? Something
 funny or crazy that happened on the
 set?

FRANK

Um, it went pretty smooth, really.

Everyone just looks at him, waiting.

EXT. STREET - DAY

The Emcee walks along. Passers-by seems to be looking at him
 and whispering to each other. He hears snickering.

EMCEE

(singing)
 Are they laughing at me?/I'm not a
 clown/People are fickle/Last month
 I owned this town/I want to be
 laughed with, not laughed at/I
 don't want to have to hide under my
 baseball hat/You take a chance and
 try to grow and they shoot you
 down/Please leave me alone --
 please *don't* leave me alone/I used
 to own this town.

INT. CAR - DAY

It's in a parking lot. Francis shaves as he reads an essay
 entitled "Classical Plot Structure" on his computer.

INT. THEATER LOBBY - EVENING

Francis stands awkwardly among the crowd. He is shiny, combed, and wears a suit.

INT. THEATER - EVENING

On screen, Frank, dressed as a middle-aged, overweight housebound woman in a wheelchair, listens to a televangelist (also Frank) on TV.

TELEVANGELIST

... and the Lord came to me in a dream and said unto me, Aloysius, the Devil will surely pay you a visit. Now, you may not recognize him, for when the Devil visits, he appears in form pleasing to the eye. So he may appear to you as a bee-yoo-ti-ful young woman or he may appear to you as your favorite type of cake. And you must turn your back on that woman or cake. Be it blonde and pulchritudinous or be it German Chocolate, which I know is your favorite cake, Aloysius, because I am your God.

WHEELCHAIR WOMAN (SINGING)

I'm trapped in this
wheelchair/living on welfare/No one
can see me/or how it's to be
me/They turn their heads or they
just stare/I'm middle-aged and
disabled/Oh, and female, pick a
label/so you can ignore me/No one
on Earth to adore me/Nobody said
life would be fair.

Francis, a mini-flashlight held between his teeth, takes copious and angry notes. People next to him are annoyed.

Later: The lights are on. Francis, referring to his notebook, asks a question of Frank, who sits down front with a moderator.

FRANCIS

I'd like to know what you mean by juxtaposing the disabled woman and the televangelist.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANCIS (CONT'D)

That seemed cruel and
condescending, an elitist dismissal
of the hardworking decent people in
what you call "the flyover states."
What exactly are you trying to say?

FRANK

First of all, I've never used the
term "flyover states" As far as
the rest of your question, I really
don't like to define my intentions.
I prefer to allow people to have
their own interactions --

FRANCIS

(voice shaking with rage)
Oh, I know what you were saying!
Just because I don't like your
movie doesn't mean I don't
understand it! OK? That's the
bullshit excuse for all you people,
"Ooooh, I'll just throw a bunch of
shit together and tell the audience
it's deep! Ooooooh."

FRANK

Ok. You asked me what I meant so --

FRANCIS

This movie doesn't mean what you
think it means! Ok? And it's been
done before. A million times!
Better! It's a cliché....
Pretentious! Elitist! And totally
racist!

MODERATOR

I think we'll keep moving along
here and take another question.

Hands shoot up. One of the hands belongs to Habitat.

MODERATOR (CONT'D)

Yes, the woman in green.

HABITAT

I just have a comment. I disagree
with the young man. I'm a disabled
woman who has been known to fill up
the silence in my home with the
drone of televangelists. And I
didn't feel condescended to by you.
I felt seen. Thank you very much.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

The college kids have turned to look at the speaker and recognize her as the woman from the coffee shop.

FRANK

Thank you. I'm very glad to hear that. Thank you.

INT. THEATER LOBBY - LATER

Frank is surrounded by well-wishers and autograph-seekers. Habitat is there. Francis passes her, leans in.

FRANCIS

You are identifying with the oppressor. It's understandable given your horrific circumstance, but unfortunate, nonetheless. You might want to read a book called "Don't Identify with the Oppressor" It will, I believe, empower you, as it has I. Me... I.

He makes his way gloomily through the lobby and out the door.

HABITAT

(to Frank)

I really loved your movie.

FRANK

Oh, thanks. Thank you very much.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Francis drives through the desolate night.

INT. PLANE - NIGHT

The Emcee flies in first class and watches a movie on his personal DVD player.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

Francis sits at a table by himself and types on his computer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANCIS (SINGING)

Okay, I saw it again/and on a scale
of one to ten/I'll give it a
zero/now let me be clear/Oh, Mr.
Wise Man/I did understand its
intentions/I just couldn't stand/
how pretentious it was/not as smart
by half as it thinks/And it made me
laugh how the visuals stink/Then
when you factor/that Arder's no
actor/yet played every role, badly
I might add/It's just really sad/
and wholly self-indulgent --

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Frank sits at his computer. Francis's posting is on his screen. He types.

FRANK

I'd say quite effulgent/Colorful,
bold --

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

Francis sits on the hood of his car and types a reply.

FRANCIS

Frank Arder's irrelevant/Frank
Arder is old.

INT. HABITAT'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Habitat reads the online argument.

FRANK

Arguing that Frank Arder's
age/somehow invalidates his
work/suggests you've entered a new
stage/in your development as an ad
hominem jerk.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

Francis sits on the hood of his car.

FRANCIS

Interestingly it's always the
olds/who get up in arms and
offended/when someone like me is so
bold/to suggest their ascension has
ended.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Frank ponders for a moment, before typing and singing.

FRANK

I'm afraid I'm just twenty-
five/with a differing view, I
confess...

INT. HABITAT'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

As Habitat reads Frank's comment, a vague picture of the twenty-five year old man singing this, enters her mind. He is charming and earnest and smart.

FRANK (O.S.)

But just because someone is
older/doesn't mean they are worth
less.

EXT. COFFE SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Francis thinks, then:

FRANCIS

How noble, how caring, how
humane/to suggest that everyone's
equal/your reasoning is truly
insane/and your point of view is
pure treacle/For everyone knows the
truth/that creativity comes
strongest in youth/and that age
brings the atrophic brain.

INT. HABITAT'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Habitat sings tentatively, types on her computer, then deletes repeatedly, not feeling her word choice effective.

HABITAT

I'm an old lady who really
thought.../As a disabled woman, I
totally bought.../As a mature,
housebound person, I felt that it
taught...

She sits, ponders, then nervously types and sings.

CONTINUED:

HABITAT (CONT'D)

Excuse me for entering the fray/but
I have something important to say/I
just happened to have seen/this
great film "You" in Eugene/Frank
Arder speaks to me
directly/Represents my feelings
quite correctly/And I'm not white
or old. In fact/I'm twenty-four,
female, and black.

She signs it "Songbrrd."

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Frank reads Songbrrd's comment, imagines a vague, pretty
young black woman at a computer.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Francis imagines a pretty (but different) young black woman.
He looks deflated, but forges ahead and types.

FRANCIS

Far be it from me who is white/to
suggest that you just aren't
right/in your total appreciation/of
this blackface abomination/Perhaps
you're the kind of sister/whose
forgotten her people's history/As
long as you've got it good/no need
to give back to the hood.

INT. HABITAT'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Habitat laughs. Her ruse has been accepted. She types with
more confidence and pizazz now.

HABITAT

Hey, listen up, little homey/Don't
act like you even know me...

As Frank sings, Habitat forms a clearer image in her mind, of
a cute, young man, with glasses and a shock of brown hair.

FRANK

Songbrrd --
(singing)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK (CONT'D)

I'm glad you decided to chime in/
Please Ignore Francis's
superiority/He can't comprehend
your resistance/to him trying to
help you minorities.

Habitat laughs and applauds.

HABITAT (SPOKEN)

Ha! Consider yourself hearted,
ArderFan.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

Francis paces on the side of the coffee shop, near the
dumpsters. He lectures his imaginary audience.

FRANCIS

Ha. Ha ha HA! Very funny! See,
this is what dumb people do when
they don't have an argument. They
resort to character assassination.
"Oh, he doesn't agree with me,
therefore he must be a racist, an
idiot, unhinged...insert nasty
adjective here." What happened to
actual dispassionate debate on the
issue of which we are discussing?

He kicks a garbage can.

FRANCIS (CONT'D)

No I am not acting superior. I am
rejecting the blatant racism of a
filmmaker, even if some black
pathetic chick can't see it because
she identifies with the oppressor.
I have a book she should read!

INT. AIRPORT CUSTOMS - NIGHT

The foreign customs agent checks The Emcee's passport. He
looks carefully back and forth between the photo and the man
for a long while.

AGENT

(handing back passport)
Yes, please go through.

The Emcee passes through.

AGENT (CONT'D)

Big fan!

INT. RENTAL CAR - NIGHT

The Emcee drives unlit back roads, listening on the radio to a staticky conversation and commercial jingles in an odd foreign language.

EXT. RAMSHACKLE CABIN - NIGHT

The Emcee pounds on the door. After a pause the door opens to reveal a wizened old woman in some sort of traditional garb. She looks at the Emcee for a long while. Finally:

OLD WOMAN

Oh. It's you. What do you want?

EMCEE

(pulling out finger)
It's stopped working.

OLD WOMAN

I heard.

INT. RAMSHACKLE CABIN - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

The old woman sits at a broken table and examines the finger. She pokes at it with her own finger. She sniffs it. The Emcee hovers anxiously over her. She shrugs.

OLD WOMAN

It's out.

EMCEE

What does that mean?

OLD WOMAN

It's out. It's empty. Out of juice. Used up. Capeesh?

EMCEE

I didn't know it would get used up.

OLD WOMAN

Eh. It shouldn't have. Must have took a lot of juice to get you famous.

EMCEE

Well, can you fill it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OLD WOMAN

It doesn't use petrol. You need a new finger.

EMCEE

Okay, fine. I'll buy a new one.

OLD WOMAN

The price has gone up considerably since last time.

EMCEE

(sighing)

Okay. How much?

OLD WOMAN

(eyeing him)

Thirty Euros. Prepaid.

EMCEE

Fine.

OLD WOMAN

Good. It will take some time to acquire the finger. Four days.

INT. FRANCIS'S APARTMENT - DAY

Francis sits at his computer and reads comments on the movie site. It is an exchange between ArderFan and Songbrrd.

SONGBRRD

ArderFan, May I contact you privately?

ARDERFAN

Yes, of course.

Francis seethes.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Francis wanders the downtown street. He eyes all the attractive young black women who walk by.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANCIS

I defend her race/every chance I
can/I'm smarter than Arder/And I'm
smarter than ArderFan/I want a
black girlfriend/I deserve a black
girlfriend/My friends would be so
jealous/My parents would be
proud/It'd show that I'm
enlightened/I'm progressive and
unfrightened/unafraid to do what's
right/unafraid to buck the
crowd/But she's just like the
rest/a white sheep in black
clothing/Songbrrd, time to get
undressed/and show your true self-
loathing.

INT. VAGUE SPACE - NIGHT

Two vaguely lit people (a young black woman and a young white man) face each other and type on computers.

SONGBRRD

Hi. Thanks for the private chat.

ARDERFAN

Hi. You're very welcome.

SONGBRRD

I like the way you write.

ARDERFAN

I like the way you write.

SONGBRRD

You a student?

ARDERFAN

A couple of years out. You?

SONGBRRD

In my last year.

ARDERFAN

A singer?

SONGBRRD

Because of my name?

ARDERFAN

Yeah.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SONGBRRD

Yeah.

ARDERFAN

I love singers. I love the ukulele, too.

SONGBRRD

I play a little.

ARDERFAN

Then I'm in love.

SONGBRRD

Ha. You're an impulsive sort.

ARDERFAN

Mostly not. Do I get to hear you?

SONGBRRD

Sure. Maybe sometime.

INT. FRANCIS'S BOYHOOD HOME (KITCHEN) - NIGHT

Francis eats dinner with his mother and father.

FRANCIS'S MOTHER

It's clear that he killed her. Brutally, horribly. And they have two little children!

FRANCIS'S FATHER

His interview says it all. A lying sack of shit.

FRANCIS'S MOTHER

You can see he's lying. His story makes no sense. That poor woman. It's always the husband.

FRANCIS'S FATHER

The mileage on the car. The phone calls. It's fishy. It's always the husband.

Francis's mother looks suspiciously at Francis's father.

FRANCIS'S MOTHER

He should rot in Hell.

FRANCIS'S FATHER

They'll get him. Forensics.

INT. VAGUE SPACE - NIGHT

Songbrrd plays a ukulele and sings an 1930's style pop song.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SONGBRRD

You're a sweetie-pie, my
sweetheart/You're the apple of my
eye, my petit four/You're my
cupcake/Oh, for gosh sake/You're
every single sweet that I adore.

INT. FRANK'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Frank is at his computer. He types: *Beautiful!*

INT. VAGUE SPACE - CONTINUOUS

SONGBRRD

Thanks!

ARDERFAN

An Icky Bracken song, right?

SONGBRRD

Yes! From "Too Late For Love."
Jeepers, baby, you know your stuff.

ARDERFAN

Now don't go getting all starry-
eyed on me, kitten.

SONGBRRD

Aw, you're all wet, Mack. I ain't
looking to be nobody's patootie.

ARDERFAN

Maybe that's too bad.

SONGBRRD

You're all over the map, friend.
Are you making love to me or not?

ARDERFAN

Ha. Send me another song sometime,
would ya? You're good.

SONGBRRD

One I wrote this time, Baby?

ARDERFAN

Ab-so-tute-ly, Doll.

INT. TAVERN - DAY

The Emcee sits at a table in the sad, cramped room. The
beautiful waitress brings him a beer. He's entranced by her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

As she places it in front of him, he notices she's missing a thumb. She notices he is looking at her hand and self-consciously makes a fist as she walks back to the bar.

WAITRESS

(singing in Romanian with
English subtitles)

He looked. His eyes did
linger/He'd caught a glimpse of my
opposed finger/No, not my finger,
but where it did exist/Now I live
in shame/with four-fifths of a
fist.

The Emcee has been watching her tortured, sad face. He's horrified by the implications of her disfigured hand. Ashamedly, he walks up to her, hands her something.

EMCEE

I'm so sorry. I have to go. This
only begins to cover my debt.

He leaves. She looks down; she holds a thousand dollars.

EXT. UNPAVED STREET - DAY

The Emcee runs through the gloom and mud. Passers-by shout "Big fan!" and "Fat Dad!" at him.

EMCEE

(singing)

Run, run, run, run, run/What
have I, what have I, what have I
done?/With one slash of someone
else's knife/I've ruined someone
else's life/And now I may have done
it once again/what I did then/I
can't defend/nor can I mend/the
amputation of a thumb/exchanged for
public adoration of a bum/which is
what I am/I am a sham.

INT. RAMSHACKLE CABIN - DAY

The Emcee bursts through the front door.

EMCEE

I've changed my mind!

OLD WOMAN

Too late. It's on its way. I had
my boy go back to the same girl.
It was a powerful digit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EMCEE
Oh, God. Oh, God.

The Emcee runs out the door.

EXT. UNPAVED STREET - DAY

The Emcee stands at the end of an alley. The waitress lies unconscious, her other hand now wrapped in a bloody bandage. The horror of the moment is too much for him. He crumbles.

INT. FRANCIS'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Francis is online. He clicks onto Mimi's website and reads the latest. He imagines Randy and Mimi having sex.

MIMI (SINGING)
I consider his dick/while lying in
bed/muscled and slick/with a dark
purple head/It's basted in
juice/from my hole wet and
hidden/this ably-fucked coose/which
on him has just ridden.

FRANCIS
Jesus. Mimi. God. Jesus.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

Francis, scowling, and Maria, aware of Francis's unhappiness, watch a chick flick. In it, Carol and Tim, two young professionals sit on a plane together.

CAROL
Let's just make the best of it.

TIM
I agree. It's a business trip, we
were assigned to take it together.
It's just business.

CAROL
We're professionals. We don't have
to like each other to do our job.

TIM
It's good that we hate each other.

INT. FRANCIS'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Francis and Maria are kissing. Francis pulls away.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANCIS

You smell odd.

MARIA

What? What do you mean?

FRANCIS

I don't know. Odd. Off-putting.
I've noticed it all evening. Are
you bathed?

MARIA

Yes!

FRANCIS

Is it some odd perfume? Maybe with
some... smelly sort of undertones.

MARIA

No!

FRANCIS

Well, I can't continue. It's
making me ill.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - NIGHT

A vigil is in progress. Francis's mother is there.

CROWD (SINGING)

You were a loving wife/married to a
creep/who coldly took a knife/and
killed you in your sleep/Although
we never knew you/as friend,
sister, or mother/your near
decapitation/resonates as no
other/And lo it will remain with
us/your image so beguiling/that oft
repeated slow-mo/on the news-shows,
of you smiling.

EXT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

A crowd muscles in toward a red carpet lined with
photographers and people with microphones. Frank walks along
the carpet, waving self-consciously. Photographers yell at
him to "Look this way." Frank obliges. Behind him pretty
celebrity women pose for photographers.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

INTERVIEWER

How does it feel to have your film premiere in Toronto at this great film festival?

FRANK

It's good. I'm happy to be here. Although it's been in other fest--

INTERVIEWER

Must be so exciting!

FRANK

Yes. It's good.

INTERVIEWER

As you know, Toronto premieres often go on to win Oscars.

FRANK

Yes, I've heard that. Although my film has --

INTERVIEWER

My fingers are crossed for you!

INT. THEATER - NIGHT

Frank stands in the back. The packed audience sits, sort of slack-jawed. Onscreen, Frank is dressed and in the make-up of a black prostitute. He stands on a street corner tries to attract men in slowly passing cars. One car stops and Frank sashays up to the passenger window, poking his head in.

FRANK

Hey, Baby. You lookin' to party?

Frank is also the white guy in the car.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Yeah. How much?

FRANK (CONT'D)

Depends on what kine a party you want, Shuggah.

FRANK (CONT'D)

You know, like, a blow job.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Mmmm, tha' souns fun, Baby. Fi'teen dolluhs.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

A party going on for "You." Frank is chatting with a woman.

PARTYGOER
... so ambitious.

FRANK
Thank you. Thanks.

PARTYGOER
And, boy, you sure didn't pull any punches. All that nudity. How did you pull off that full frontal nudity as those women? Ha! Pull-off! Did you hear what I said? Like, pull off your penis!

FRANK
Yeah. That's funny.

PARTYGOER
I did not even mean to say that. I swear! But how did you?

FRANK
Prosthetics. We had artificial female forms that were applied. Very time-consuming.

PARTYGOER
Well, it looked real.

FRANK
Thanks. Thank you.

EXT. BAR - NIGHT

Frank talks on his cellphone.

FRANK
I can't tell. People seem weirded-out by it, I guess. There'll be a shitload of reviews out in the morning. So --

SALLY (PHONE VOICE)
Yeah. Well, good luck. Jesus.

FRANK
How's work?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SALLY

We're shooting my murder scene tonight, so it's a drag. I'm squibbed-up to my eyeballs.

FRANK

It's a good scene though.

SALLY

It'll be fine.

FRANK

I suppose I'd better get back.

SALLY

Yeah, I need to -- an actor prepares, y'know? Good luck.

MONTAGE

Critics type on computers and sing. This is intercut with Frank and Francis reading reviews online and in newspapers. Frank grows increasingly despondent. Francis is vindicated.

REVIEWER #1

"You" wasn't as smart as it thought.

FRANCIS

Yes!

REVIEWER #2

Pretentious, inept...

REVIEWER #3

Overwrought.

FRANCIS

Yes!

REVIEWER #4

Overlong, over-reaching, inane...

REVIEWER #5

Way too preachy.

REVIEWER #6

The studio's money for naught.

FRANCIS

See?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REVIEWER #7

Arder's a self-conscious tease/My
two hours back, if you please.

REVIEWR #8

Relentless.

REVIEWER #9

It's racist!

REVIEWER #10

Who would embrace this?/Hipsters,
the sheep, wannabes?

FRANCIS

I love it!

REVIEWER #1

For too long he's been highly
touted/time for this fraud to be
outed.

REVIEWR #4

He's gimmicky, heartless...

REVIEWER #7

Facile and artless. From rooftops
this truth should be shouted.

FRANCIS

Arder sucks!

REVIEWER #5

A movie should be entertaining/not
tedious, numbing, disdainning.

REVIEWER #2

This movie's not deep/it put me to
sleep.

REVIEWR #8

People who like it are feigning.

FRANCIS

Pretentious!

REVIEWER #1

In conclusion, I'm sure one can
see/why I give this movie ... a
"D."

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

REVIEWER #6

It's way under par.

REVIEWER #9

I'll give it...One star.

ALL REVIEWERS

"You" is not for you or for me.

FRANCIS

Olé!

INT. TRAILER - NIGHT

The trailer is empty. Laughing is heard outside. The door swings open and Sally enters, laughing and covered with blood. She is followed by a handsome man in a tux.

SALLY

That was fun!

HANDSOME MAN

It was!

He kisses her. She is stunned, then kisses him back.

INT. HOME OFFICE - NIGHT

Frank is on his computer. He drinks whiskey and looks up film critic's faces on his laptop.

FRANK (SINGING)

I look up their photos/to try and
feel better/That one's got
braces/Get a load of his
sweater/This guy seems sweaty/And
that one looks jealous/And what do
their other film reviews tell
us?/pseudo-intellectual/and he
likes to pun/effete homosexual/She
makes careless fun/of the sincere
work of others/He tries too
hard/She writes like my mother/And
he gives out "stars"/These aren't
my parents, teachers, or shrink/So
why do I care so much what they
think?

(broken)

I need five gold stars and a top
letter grade/And need to be crowned
best of the decade.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Frank clicks on his email and opens a file from Songbrrd.

INT. VAGUE SPACE - NIGHT

Songbrrd sings to the camera.

SONGBRRD

My day today was awfully quiet/Tree
falling in the forest, and all of
that/Another day of no one there to
hear me/Maybe I should feed my
quiet cat/My day today was very
lonely/Staring at the TV killing
time/Another show about someone
killing someone/Why are all these
shows for lonely people about
crime?/And the days flow like
water/And the nights are much the
same/I remind myself that I was
someone's daughter/I remind myself
that someone gave me a name.

INT. FRANK'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Frank is moved. He types.

FRANK

Thank you, Songbrrd.

INT. FRANCIS'S APARTMENT - DAY

Francis surfs the web, whistling, cheerful, checking his usual sites, looking for responses to his postings. He talks to us as he looks, half here and half there.

FRANCIS

I'm perfectly comfortable being
alone with my opinion, but there is
a certain juicy pleasure in finding
myself at the *avant garde* of a
burgeoning movement. I was the
first nationally read critic to
call "You" the polished turd that
it is. Now the others are
following my lead, making the
points I made so very well, so very
long ago. It is a good day to be
Francis Deems.

INT. EMCEE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The Emcee wakes with a start. He looks haggard and in need of a shave. He sits up in bed and is joined by the ghosts of a right and left thumb.

LEFT THUMB GHOST
(subtitled Romanian)
Good morning.

EMCEE
(subtitled Romanian)
Good Morning.

RIGHT GHOST THUMB
(subtitled Romanian)
What's on the agenda today?

EMCEE
(subtitled Romanian)
I don't understand.

RIGHT GHOST THUMB
(subtitled Romanian)
You know the rules. Look it up.
I'll repeat slowly: What's on the
agenda for today?

The Emcee sighs and pulls his heavily-dog-eared Romanian-English Dictionary from the night table. He studies it for a while, then:

EMCEE
Oh.
(in subtitled Romanian)
I have no plans.

RIGHT GHOST THUMB
(in subtitled Romanian)
Perhaps you should take us to the
movies again. We can further
discuss what is the political
implications of the American cinema
and why it threatens our way of
life.

The Emcee looks confused.

RIGHT GHOST THUMB (CONT'D)
(in subtitled Romanian)
Look it up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Emcee does. It takes a long time.

EMCEE

Oh. Ok.

INT. EMCEE'S KITCHEN - MORNING

The Emcee is scrambling eggs. Magda, the thumbless Romanian waitress, appears groggily in the doorway.

MAGDA

Good morning.

EMCEE

(in subtitled Romanian)

How did you sleep?

She laughs.

MAGDA

You're doing so well! Bravo!

EMCEE

Thanks. I'm making eggs.

She sits at the table, looks at her hands.

MAGDA

What do they say to you?

EMCEE

Who?

MAGDA

My thumbs.

EMCEE

How do you know about them?

MAGDA

I don't know. I hear you talking to yourself in bad Romanian. I don't know. A hunch?

EMCEE

Mostly they remind me of what I did.

MAGDA

Isn't that why I'm here?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EMCEE

You're nicer to me than your thumbs. You're nicer to me than I deserve.

MAGDA

I wish they would talk to me. Are they creepy, evil, shriveled ghost thumbs?

EMCEE

No. They're beautiful. Graceful and ethereal. And they both have polished nails. The polish changes, reflecting their moods.

MAGDA

Weird. I think maybe you're a bit crazy, Mister.

INT. VAGUE SPACE NIGHT

Vague Songbrrd and vague ArderFan face each other.

ARDERFAN

Tell me what you look like? Is that weird to ask?

As Songbrrd describes herself, she becomes more specifically imagined.

SONGBRRD

It's fine. I'm 5'7", 135 lbs., My skin is dark. I have almond shape eyes. Kind of full lips. My hair is very short, natural, and black.

ARDERFAN

You sound pretty.

SONGBRRD

I kind of am. But it's not my doing. Genetic lottery. You?

ArderFan turns specific as he describes himself.

ARDERFAN

5'10", 165 lbs. Light brown hair, a little tousled. Gray-blue eyes. Thin lips. Wire-rim glasses.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SONGBRRD

Mmmm. We sound pretty together.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

The Emcee sits in a packed theater with Magda and watches "Proteus." Everyone wears 3-D glasses. The thumbs hover on either side of the Emcee's head. Others in the audience do not appear to see them. On screen, we see a lush underwater environment full of colorful plants and fish. Proteus, a pale, shimmery-skinned giant of man, swims toward us.

PROTEUS

It is here in the dark, in the secret, hidden world, that the truth of our being is finally understood. Fish do not need words. They are words.

The screen goes dark and the credits roll. The audience is silent, then bursts into rapturous applause.

INT. THEATER LOBBY - NIGHT

People exit, wiping their teary eyes. The Emcee is among them. The thumbs hover next to his ears on either side of his head. Magda walks next to him, trying to guess at the conversation, which takes place in subtitled Romanian. The Emcee refers to a dictionary when necessary.

LEFT THUMB GHOST

Did you like it?

EMCEE

I don't know. What did you think?

LEFT THUMB GHOST

It was bad. Manipulative.

EMCEE

Yes.

MAGDA

What are they saying?

RIGHT GHOST THUMB

Bloated American, guilty liberal white male perspective.

EMCEE

Yes. I see that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RIGHT GHOST THUMB
Romanian movies never get this kind
of attention.

LEFT THUMB GHOST
I, too, could make a movie that
everyone would drool over if I had
350 million dollars.

RIGHT GHOST THUMB
But the point is, that the money
should go to feeding children
around the world. Not this.

EMCEE
I agree.

MAGDA
What do you agree with?

RIGHT GHOST THUMB
People should watch instead
"Footprint in Snow", a Romanian
movie made for 290,000 Leu.

INT. EMCEE'S PRIVATE SCREENING ROOM - NIGHT

The Emcee sits with the thumbs and Magda and watches a black
and white movie in which two men have a conversation in
Romanian during a snowstorm.

ROMANIAN MAN 1
Again it snows.

ROMANIAN MAN 2
It covers all our sins in a blanket
of white.

ROMANIAN MAN 1
And so... we begin anew.

Fade to white. Credits.

MAGDA
Now that's a movie.

RIGHT AND LEFT GHOST THUMB
Now that's a movie.

EMCEE
Yes.

MAGDA
What did they say?

INT. VAGUE SPACE - NIGHT

The new ArderFan and Songbrrd talk. As the conversation progresses, they both physically shift.

ARDERFAN

Lisa, The first thing I want to say is, I've fallen in love with you.

SONGBRRD

Oh, Peter...

ARDERFAN

But there's more and I don't know what to do. I lied to you. I started out pretending I was someone else because it was the only way I could talk to that Francis nut. But then I started to like you and in reality I'm so much older than you that it was just creepy. It felt less creepy to be your age. But I'm not. I'm sorry.

SONGBRRD

Ugh. How old are you?

ARDERFAN

Fifty. I'm fifty and I'm really Frank Arder.

SONGBRRD

You're playing with me, right?

ARDERFAN

I wish. I'm sorry. It's true.

SONGBRRD

Oh, Peter. *Frank*. I'm not me either. But I'm worse. At least you're Frank Arder, who is amazing, whom I love. I'm not even close to what I said I was.

SONGBRRD (CONT'D)

Are you a man?

SONGBRRD (CONT'D)

No, not that. But I'm 60 and fat and white. Really, really white. And in a wheelchair.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ARDERFAN

(pause)

Was that you singing?

SONGBRRD

Yeah, that part was me.

ARDERFAN

Did you write the songs you said
you wrote?

SONGBRRD

Yeah.

ARDERFAN

They were beautiful.

SONGBRRD

Thank you. That means so much.

ARDERFAN

I should go for now.

SONGBRRD

I know. Okay.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD STREET - DAY

A troubled Frank walks, trying to reason with himself.

FRANK (SINGING)

Oh my God, Oh my God/the woman that
I love is dead/Oh fuck, Oh
Jesus/And look at what I've got
instead/Lisa has evaporated/Just
like that/Now she's Habitat
McDougall/and now she's old and
fat/How can I love this person?/How
can I not love her?/She's the same
person/just in a different
cover/But I don't think I can/I'm a
visual creature/I'm just a human
man/and that's a human feature/But
if that is all I am/Then my
thoughts are not of her/but a
selfish stimulation/of my dopamine
receptors.

INT. COFFE SHOP - DAY

Francis drinks coffee and works on his laptop. Randy and
Mimi walk by. Francis smells Mimi's perfume and looks up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RANDY

What's up, Francis?

FRANCIS

Long time, no see.

RANDY

I'll probably see you more now.
Just got hired at the Bugle.

FRANCIS

Oh, man, that job's a drag. Sorry
to hear it. But it pays the --

MIMI

Randy's going to be writing film
reviews there.

FRANCIS

(stunned)

How the hell did you get that?

RANDY

It's only freelance at this point,
but I'll be in and out of the
building. I'll stop by circulation
and say hello. The money's bad.
It's not that big a deal.

MIMI

Of course it is.

(kisses him on cheek)

Sexy to think of you with a pipe an
elbow patches, shaping public
opinion.

INT. NEWSPAPER PHONE ROOM - MORNING

Francis answers the phone.

FRANCIS

Good morning. Bugle circulation.
This is Francis speaking.

WOMAN ON PHONE

My paper is wet.

FRANCIS

I'd be happy to give you credit for
today's paper, Ma'am.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WOMAN ON PHONE

I want a dry paper.

FRANCIS

I'll have the deliverer stop by with a dry paper. It'll be about an hour.

WOMAN ON PHONE

I won't be here in an hour, will I? I'll be at work then, won't I? You people always promise me a dry paper, but you never deliver one, do you?

FRANCIS

I can credit your account or redeliver. Those are the two things I can do from here.

WOMAN ON PHONE

That's not good enough.

FRANCIS

(snapping)

I 'd be glad to come over myself, Ma'am, and shove a fresh, dry paper up your withered dry cunt.

People around him look over. Managers come running.

EXT. STREET - MORNING

Francis sits on the curb outside the newspaper. He stares blankly. Eventually, he takes out his cell and texts.

FRANCIS

Hi Maria.

(singing)

I have to say goodbye/Since today when I got fired/has made me see the lie/of the life in which I'm mired/Every bit of it included/And that means ending "us"/See, I never felt like you did/You seem nice enough/But I just don't feel affection/For example, I think of others/to achieve a strong erection/when we do our intercourse/So if we were to marry/It would just end in divorce.

INT. BREAK ROOM - MORNING

Maria reads the text, while her friend looks on.

FRANCIS (O.S.)

(singing)

I wish you all the best/I hope you
live your dreams/You'll make some
fella happy/Sincerely, Francis
Deems.

DONNA

Asshole. What kind of person
breaks up with a text?

MARIA

What kind of person includes his
last name in that text?

DONNA

He's a fucking weirdo, Maria. I
wasn't going to say anything when
you liked him, but you're way
better off.

MARIA

Yeah, I know.

INT. MARIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Maria tears apart a man's scarf she's been knitting.

MARIA

(singing)

He's an asshole/I knew it couldn't
work/ He goddamn texts me/God, I'm
such a goddamn fucking jerk.

She furiously scrubs her kitchen sink.

MARIA (CONT'D)

(singing)

I knew it/I knew it/I knew it could
never become something real/I hoped
anyway/For something I could never
hope for him to feel.

She sits, drinks wine and watches a romantic movie on TV.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARIA (CONT'D)
(singing)
Humiliation/I feel dirty and
ashamed/ Reconciliation/I still
hope for it!/Insane!

She stands at an open window and smokes a cigarette.

MARIA (CONT'D)
(singing)
I never loved him/I never *liked*
him/What the hell was I even trying
to achieve?/I thought I'd change
him?/And that would change me?/And
for once, somebody's love I would
receive.

Maria lies in bed in the dark.

MARIA (CONT'D)
(singing)
And I'm still lonely/And still not
pretty/And still don't have a
sparkle in my eye/And no one loves
me/Nor will they ever/God, I just
want to curl into a ball and
die/But I'm responsible/So I won't
do that/I have to think about my
parents and my friends/I'm a good
girl/I'm the bridesmaid/I guess
that's just the way this story
ends.

INT. VAGUE SPACE - NIGHT

Frank and Habitat look across the space to each other.

FRANK
I think I should come visit you.

HABITAT
You sure?

FRANK
I think it would be good. To just
hang out for a little while.

HABITAT
What about Sally?

FRANK
I feel like we need to meet.

INT. FRANCIS'S BOYHOOD HOME (MUSIC ROOM) - DAY

Francis enters as his mother is giving a piano lesson.

FRANCIS
Mom, I need to borrow your car.
For maybe a year or so.

MOTHER
Francis, no. Just stop. Fuck.

FRANCIS
I'm going to Los Angeles to become
a filmmaker.

MOTHER
Take a bus. Or a train. You can't
have my car for a year.

FRANCIS
I'll need a car. To take meetings.

MOTHER
I'm in the middle of a lesson. Go
away.

He turns to leave.

FRANCIS
You hate me. You always have.

MOTHER
(to student)
Okay, start again.

The kid starts to play.

INT. GREYHOUND-TYPE BUS - DAY

Francis gets on with his suit case. He looks for an empty seat. There's one next to a young black woman. He smiles at her. She looks blankly at him. He throws his bag in the overhead rack and sits next to her.

FRANCIS
Hi.

She doesn't say anything.

INT. EMCEE'S KITCHEN - DAY

The Emcee sits with his head in his hands.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Another jolt. The plane tilts sharply to the left. Oxygen masks fall. A flight attendant walking down the aisle falls onto a passenger. People yell. Frank looks out the window. The plane starts to plummet. There are announcements, but they are indecipherable over the noise and panic. As Frank begins to sing, other passengers sing, too. They all sing their different songs. We see their tortured faces as they sing, but their singing is only heard as background to Frank's song.

FRANK (CONT'D)

(singing)

Oh shit/This is how it ends for
me/This is it/Pants completely
drenched in pee/ Why did I get on
this plane?/I almost changed my
mind/This was fucking insane/ What
was I hoping to find?/I knew I
could never love her/Crippled, old,
and fat/I wanted to think I was
better/But I'm not better than
that/I hate who I am/I hate what
I'm not/I made the wrong choice/And
look what I got/I got my death/I
got my just desserts/My final
breath/This is going to hurt.

Frank hysterically fumbles with his cellphone. He types "Sacred to die." The plane crashes. An electronic beep.

EXT. RANDY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Randy sits and looks at the electronic beep of a news alert on his computer: Midway Airlines crashes in Illinois.

RANDY

Plane crash in California.

Mimi is on her computer.

MIMI

Huh. That sucks.

Randy goes back to typing his movie review on his computer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RANDY

(singing)

In this delectable film á
clef/recreating the torrid
affair/between Joan Walsh and her
son Jeff/the filmmakers
courageously dare/to plumb the
proverbial depths/of incest by
insisting on truth/in exploring the
unbridgeable chasm/between late
middle-age and mere youth

MIMI

Everybody killed?

RANDY

(checks computer)

Doesn't say yet.

(types and sings)

With performances uniformly
strong/And extraordinary scenic
design/The moviegoer cannot go
wrong/in giving two hours of
time/to this --

A news update appears on Randy's screen.

RANDY (CONT'D)

Holy shit.

MIMI

What?

RANDY

Frank Arder was on that plane.

Mimi runs over to the computer to see.

MIMI

Is he dead? Is everyone dead?

RANDY

Man.

Randy searches for information on the crash. He finds live
footage of the crash site and rescue crews. It looks bad.

MIMI

Nobody survived that. I loved
Frank Arder! Jesus!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RANDY

I have to write an appreciation.

MIMI

You definitely do.

RANDY

I should get on it. Before the glut. There's going to be a glut.

MIMI

It's going to be crazy.

Randy starts to type. After each line, he deletes and starts again. Mimi watches over his shoulder.

RANDY

(singing)

Frank Arder has died today/Today
Frank Arder has died/What is there
really to say?/My girlfriend and I
just cried/Today a great artist was
lost to us/Today we mourn a great
artist/How can we measure the cost
to us?/His fans will be hit the
hardest.

INT. BUS - MORNING

The young black woman stares out the window. Francis is on his laptop reading Randy's appreciation of Frank Arder on the Bugle website.

RANDY

(singing)

In honor of director Frank
Arder/Today I will try something
harder/Than what I would normally
write/Supercilious, disdainful, and
trite/Today I will not be a
critic/Barbed tongue and manner
acidic/On this day I will not
disparage/But rather I will propose
marriage/To the girl with whom I
connected/Because of a film Frank
directed/Our mutual love of Frank's
"You"/Will hopefully lead to "I
do."

Francis clicks over to Mimi's blog and reads.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIMI

(singing)

Readers, my heart has just
leapt/Oh, Randy, oh, yes, I
accept!/To think that all of this
started/Because of a director we
hearted/So thank you to Frank
Arder, too/I love you, Randy, and
yes, yes, I do!

Francis, enraged, drums his fingers, slams his laptop closed,
turns toward the camera and rants. No one reacts.

FRANCIS

Ok, Let me tell you what's going to
happen now. Suddenly everyone is
going to love Frank Arder. Dying
is the fastest way into the
American heart. All is forgiven,
Frank! Suddenly, we'll find
endless profundity in the
pretentious pap we correctly
abhorred last week. "You" will
become a massive critical and
commercial hit as gullible
audiences flock to see a movie
cynical marketers have finally
figured out a viable campaign for.
See, it'll turn out we were too
hasty in our dismissal of this
masterpiece by this poor man for
whom the world was not ready. Now
that he died for our sins, we will
give him the respect we couldn't
earlier. Well, I call bullshit and
state firmly and for the record
that I'm glad that Frank Arder is
dead. Now we will no longer have
to be subjected to his pretentious,
derivative, solipsistic, feebly
crafted celluloid ramblings. The
world is a less cluttered and more
beautiful place. I am sorry all
those other people on that plane
had to die for this to happen but
it was a noble and worthy sacrifice
and I honor them for making it. I
furthermore predict that I will be
crucified for stating this truth.
But that is fine.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FRANCIS (CONT'D)

I will happily go into exile,
secure in the knowledge that I too
will be celebrated when I'm dead.

Francis opens his blog "Francis Deems This To Be True" and begins to post this rant. He checks the number of visits he's had. It's zero. The website feels deserted. It's quiet and echoey and seems to be covered with dust.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

A group of serious-looking men and women confer.

MAN #1

Sacred to die. It is sacred to die. This is what he said. In his last moment. I think we need to respond to that. But how? What would Frank want us to do?

MAN #2

I think maybe we re-release "You" in light of what has happened. In light of Frank's message to us all, maybe people could be more open to the film's meaning.

MAN #1

I think its time has come.

MAN #3

"Sacred to Die" has already become a cultural meme.

MAN #4

I saw a bumper sticker today.

MAN #1

The time is now. For Frank Arder.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

On screen is the interior of a commercial jetliner. An old Asian woman sits next to a middle-aged white businessman. They are both played by Frank Arder.

BUSINESSMAN

Heading home or away?

OLD ASIAN WOMAN

Home. I hate flying.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BUSINESSMAN

Me too. But what I tell myself is
that if it's my time, it's my time.

OLD ASIAN WOMAN

That's probably a very healthy
attitude.

The plane jolts. The woman instinctively grabs the
businessman's hand. She's panicked.

BUSINESSMAN

(calmly)

It's okay. Just hold onto me.
We're in this together.

She looks gratefully into his eyes.

The audience in the theater has been moved to tears. On
screen the plane plummets.

MONTAGE

Reviewers sing to the camera.

REVIEWER #1

I've re-viewed the movie/and will
review it again/I gave it a three,
now I give it a ten.

REVIEWER #2

What Frank Arder's done/is smart
and ground-breaking/I walked to my
car with my poor heart just
breaking.

REVIEWER #3

He teaches us love.

REVIEWER #4

His technique is outstanding.

REVIEWER #5

From his perch up above/he insures
us safe landing.

REVIEWER #6

This movie is funny.

REVIEWER #7

This movie is tragic.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REVIEWR #8

It's right on the money.

REVIEWER #9

It's cinema magic.

REVIEWER #10

Finally a director/who refuses to
lie/It's sacred to live/and it's
sacred to die.

EXT. MOVER THEATER - NIGHT

A line stretches around the block for the movie "You."

INT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

The Emcee sits in the crowded theater with Magda and the thumbs. They don't say anything. On screen Frank is in a fat suit, eating an ice cream sundae and singing.

FRANK (SINGING)

Empty calories fill my empty soul/I
gorge myself so I might feel whole.

The Emcee looks to the thumbs for their opinions, but they just stare listlessly.

INT. PSYCHIATRIST'S OFFICE - DAY

The Emcee sits across from the psychiatrist.

PSYCHIATRIST

So... how are you doing today?

EMCEE

I think the pills are working.

PSYCHIATRIST

Yes?

EMCEE

The thumbs are still there, but not
as active. They'rei less
demanding. Almost sluggish.
They've stopped talking to me in
Romanian.

PSYCHIATRIST

This is all good news.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EMCEE

Yes.

(beat)

I feel a little torn.

PSYCHIATRIST

I don't think you should. This is the direction we were hoping for. The sooner we can rid you of these delusions completely, the happier you'll be. And you can go on with your life. Go back to being a movie star, Alan.

INT. EMCEE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dark. The Emcee lies in bed. The thumbs sit on the window sill and sing as they stare forlornly into the night.

RIGHT GHOST THUMB

Do I exist or not?

LEFT THUMB GHOST

Or am I in somebody's head?

RIGHT GHOST THUMB

A guilty man's self-abnegation?

LEFT THUMB GHOST

Or a real thumb ghost instead?

RIGHT GHOST THUMB

I don't want to be/some quixotic fantasy.

LEFT THUMB GHOST

(looking at Right Thumb)

But if that's what I have to be/I'm glad you are a delusion along with me.

LEFT AND RIGHT THUMB GHOSTS

And together we can do good/Even if we're only in his mind/We'll make the world a nicer place/You have to be cruel to be kind.

The thumbs fall asleep on the window sill and snore quietly. The Emcee gets out of bed and walks over to the them. He looks at them lovingly, protectively. He covers them gently with handkerchiefs and sings to them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EMCEE

You poor little thumbs just want to
exist/How can I stand in your
way?/No further counseling or
psychiatrists/I will throw all my
pills away.

He picks up the pill bottles and walks into:

INT. EMCEE'S BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

He empties the pill bottles into the toilet and flushes it.
Then sings to himself in the mirror.

EMCEE

I made them ghosts/So I'll make
them live/I'll be their host/The
least I can give/I'll be their
channel to the material plain/I'll
be their thumbs/They'll be my
brain.

The thumb ghosts appear on either side of his head.

RIGHT GHOST THUMB

(Romanian)

"You" was an abomination.

LEFT THUMB GHOST

(Romanian)

It must be stopped.

The Emcee nods, a vague sense of dread passes over his face.

EXT. HABITAT'S HOUSE - DAY

Habitat, on her Rascal, is being interviewed by the press.

HABITAT

Yes. Frank Arder was coming here
to see me.

REPORTER

Why?

HABITAT

I... don't know. I think we had
fallen in love.

MONTAGE

People at computers, on cellphones tweeting and posting comments.

TWEETER #1

Look at her. She's fat.

TWEETER #2

Look at her. She's a mess.

TWEETER #3

He was in love with that?

TWEETER #4

Sweetheart, get a new dress.

INT. HABITAT'S HOUSE - DAY

Habitat is doing an intimate TV interview with a Barbara Walters-type.

BARBARA WALTERS-TYPE

So I understand Frank loved your singing voice. Is that true?

HABITAT

I think he did.

BARBARA WALTERS-TYPE

Might you share your voice with us today?

HABITAT

Yes, Okay.

As Habitat sings beautifully, we see shots of a hostile, derisive audience transforming into a loving, weeping, adoring fan base, holding up "We love you, Habitat" signs.

HABITAT (SINGING) (CONT'D)

I look in the mirror/and I'm not
the girl I knew/I don't even
recognize myself/How can I expect
you to?/So may I introduce you/to
the child who lives inside/She's
obscured by ancient skin/but she
never really died.

(as young girl)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HABITAT (SINGING) (CONT'D)

I like chocolate and marbles/and my
cat Mr. Fancy/And when I grow up/I
will be a great dancer/or an artist
or princess/or maybe a spy!/I'll
Have lots of friends/I'll bake lots
of pies/I'll have a husband/and
he'll like to kiss me/If I get
killed fighting bad guys/he'll
terribly miss me/I'll be loved and
be happy/and pretty and smart/I
can't wait to grow up/That'll be
the best part!

INT. HOLLYWOOD HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

It's a ramshackle, sad place. Francis turns off Habitat's concert on the TV.

FRANCIS

This has gotten pathetic. America is sucking Frank Arder's dead cock and worshiping this repulsive she-creature he unearthed. Somehow it elevates Arder and the entire human race that he could love this behemoth.

The young black woman from the bus steps out of the bathroom in an oversized t-shirt. She is brushing her teeth.

YOUNG BLACK WOMAN

You're gonna be late for work.

INT. CLOTHING STORE - DAY

Francis sells shirts.

INT. HOLLYWOOD HOTEL ROOM - EARLY MORNING

Francis watches the Oscar Nominations on TV. The young black woman is in bed with the pillow over her head.

FRANCIS

That's 29 fucking Oscar nominations for "You." It's a record. Best picture, director, original screenplay, best actor, actress, supporting actor and actress, cinematography, score, original song, editing... It's a travesty.

INT. CAR - DAY

Jonathan and Richard's head are in the back of a limo, driving past a massive billboard for "You."

JONATHAN

Fuck "You." And fuck Frank Arder. That's the most nominations possible. We can't beat that.

RICHARD'S HEAD

Don't be too hasty.

JONATHAN

You're the man with the plan. Plan me.

RICHARD'S HEAD

Get people so excited about this movie that they feel compelled to add a new category.

JONATHAN

I like it. What's the category?

RICHARD'S HEAD

Best movie ever made. It's all in the marketing. The most effective marketing makes people understand that the product is something they cannot live without.

JONATHAN

Jesus, you're one ambitious fuck. I like that.

RICHARD'S HEAD

I'm just having fun.

INT. HOLLYWOOD HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Francis is on his lap top reading Mimi's website. His roommate is entertaining a male guest in the bed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIMI (O.S.)

(singing)

Big news from Meems, fellas and
girls/I'm getting out my ball gown/
Shining up my pearls/Seems Reporter
Randy, My fiancée heaven-sent/Has
finagled me a ticket/To this year's
main event/I'm going to the
Oscars!/Hooray Hoorah Hooray!/I'm
in the nosebleed section/Which is
totally okay/Yes, I'll be up
there/Way back in the
bleachers/While Randy's in the
press room/With the winners and
their speeches/Afterwards we're
heading/To the posh Governor's
Ball/Where I'll mingle with
celebrities/And report back to
y'all!

Francis punches a wall.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD STREET - DAY

Francis walks to work.

FRANCIS

Here's what's so disappointing
about Mimi: She had so much
potential to be a cool girl. She
was really on the verge until Randy
Asshole tipped it in the other
direction. Now she's bought into
this whole starstruck Hollywood
bullshit. She loves a corrupt
cesspool of corporate stink that
could never love her back. And
when she's old and dried up, she'll
realize this. But it'll be too
late. I'll have moved on.

He passes a giant billboard for "God" right next to the giant
billboard for "YOU." He stops to read it. An arrow on the
billboard points to "You" billboard, and it reads: You may
love "You", but you need "God."

FRANCIS (CONT'D)

Bullshit.

EXT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

Marquee reads: "God." A long line of excited fans waiting to get in. All different types of people: kids, old people, all different races and ethnicities.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

"God" is in progress. On screen is a weird vibrating, pulsating, sometimes murky, sometimes vibrantly colored conglomeration of images. There are voices, fading in and out, in many different languages, tribal percussion fused with the Slendro scale. Each member of the audience is completely engaged in his or her own way: some people are laughing, some are crying, some are talking back to the screen, some seem terrified, some are nodding knowingly.

INT. TV STUDIO - DAY

Jonathan is interviewed by PBS-style guy.

PBS GUY

So, the genesis of this amazing piece of work? How did you make a movie that is so universally acclaimed. There seems to be nobody who doesn't think it's the best movie ever made. To date it's made seven billion dollars.

JONATHAN

Nine billion.

PBS GUY

Nine billion. And there doesn't seem to be an end in sight.

JONATHAN

Well, I wanted to create a story-telling technology equivalent to the technology I created for animation with "Hiroshima." So with the help of my brother Richard, a computer scientist, I created An AI screenwriting program which worked in conjunction with an animatronic, computerized head --

PBS GUY

Wait, so the story -- which is marvelous, I mean it's *my* story -- was written by a robotic head?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JONATHAN

In a manner of speaking, you see --

PBS GUY

Wait. Can we talk to the head?
I'd love to interview that head. I
think that would be marvelous.

JONATHAN

(pause)

Sure. I think we can arrange that.

INT. TV STUDIO - DAY

The PBS Guy sits across from Richard's Head.

PBS GUY

Tell me how you write.

As Richard's Head speaks, his voice is accompanied by weird music, ambient sounds, odd percussion, singing, electronic blips. The host is fascinated, seduced, and silent.

RICHARD'S HEAD

Well, compassion, irony, human
condition, entertainment, scathing,
political, funny, honest, artistic,
multi-cultural, explosions,
positive-message, ambiguity, tear-
jerker, violence, clarity, sexy,
political, robots, genre, space-
travel, no sex, time travel
paradox, serious, non-political,
challenging, three-act structure,
romance, character arc, singing,
nudity, no-nudity, noir, special-
effects, redemption, likeability,
good villain, meet cute, hit in the
balls, monsters, foreign, breaking
the rules, groundbreaking, gay
rights, downtrodden, popcorn,
animated, lots of sex, star-
vehicle, live-action, pratfalls,
wordplay, satirical, humane, low-
budget, superhero, funny old
people, brutal crime, magic
realism, dog that puts his paws
over his eyes when people are
having sex, pop songs, car chase,
tracking shot, conflict --

MONTAGE

We see a series of different enraptured people watching this interview on various TVs in various locations. The words that Richard's Head uses in each segment seem to directly address the person watching. For example, if it's a conservative-looking rural guy, Richard's Head might be saying "Christian", if it's a bunch of drunk frat guys, Richard's Head might be saying "Babes in wet T-shirts." The sequence ends with a shot of Francis as Richard's Head says: "Spanish Rectangulists." Francis nods his head enthusiastically.

EXT. RED CARPET - AFTERNOON

Celebrities walk the red carpet to the cheering of fans and the entertainment journalist calling for them to come over and be interviewed. The emcee dressed in his full fat suit from Fat Dad (now in a tuxedo), makes his way down the line.

REPORTER #1

Alan! Alan! Come say hello to
Entertainment Daily viewers?

EMCEE

(into camera)
Hi, Entertainment Daily viewers!

REPORTER #1

I couldn't help but notice that
you're dressed as your character
from Fat Dad today. Why is that?

EMCEE

Well, Ted, Fat Dad is a beloved
character, so I thought why not
have some fun and give the audience
at home some fun, too?

REPORTER #1

That makes perfect sense.

EMCEE

Look at the jolly fat man, right?

REPORTER #1

That's right.

EMCEE

You take care now, Bill.

INT. OSCAR LOBBY - AFTERNOON

The Emcee joins a line of people waiting to pass through security. There is a table where all bags are being checked and a body scanner. A man steps in line behind the Emcee

MAN

Hey, Alan. I love what you're doing tonight.

EMCEE

Oh, thanks, Dick.

MAN

I say, let's poke a hole in the self-serving sanctimoniousness of these award shows. Right?

EMCEE

It's all in good fun.

MAN

Absolutely. By the by, I can't believe you didn't get the hosting gig this year. What's up with that?

EMCEE

They wanted to go a different way.

The Emcee arrives at the scanner. He doesn't fit through in his fat suit. Everyone laughs as he clowns trying to squeeze in. The guard laughs and waves him around the detector.

INT. OSCAR AUDITORIUM - AFTERNOON

KEVIN JAMES

And now, to sing the Oscar nominated song "Rain Down" from the hit movie "You", Miss Habitat McDougall!

Habitat, in a gown, wheels herself out to center stage. The mic automatically but clunkily lowers to her mouth level.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HABITAT

You were coming here to see me/To
try to make it right/But that
meeting never happened/You were
thwarted in mid-flight/And though I
longed to feel your touches/To gaze
into your soul/The thing I want so
much is/Just to have you whole/
You just keep raining down on
me/You keep falling from above/I'm
drenched in your sweet essence/
I'm swimming in your love/I'd take
you at a distance/I'd love you from
afar/We have no need for bodies/Our
minds are who we are/And the rain
falls from the heavens/And with it,
so comes you/I'll meet you in the
meadow/In the sparkling morning
dew/You just keep raining down on
me/You keep falling from above/I'm
drenched in your sweet essence/
I'm swimming in your love.

The audience is overcome with emotion, people weeping, a standing ovation. Kevin James applauds enthusiastically.

KEVIN JAMES

That was wonderful! Isn't that
wonderful, ladies and gentlemen?

HABITAT

Thank You! Thank you very much.

KEVIN JAMES

I just want to say --

The Emcee leaps up on stage.

EMCEE

That was wonderful! Wasn't that
wonderful, ladies and gentlemen?

KEVIN JAMES

(surprised, recovering)
Alan Modell, everyone!

EMCEE

I'm sorry to interrupt. Beautiful
song, by the way. But I just
wanted to point out that there are
other beautiful songs, as we can
all agree.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

EMCEE (CONT'D)

And not only the one from my movie
"Fat Dad Two: Skinny Dad." So how
can we decide that one is better
than the other?

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

The director and crew watch on monitors.

RADIO VOICE

Should we send in security?

EMCEE (ON MONITOR)

Have we considered all the songs in
the world -- the universe -- when
you declare one "best"?

DIRECTOR

Let's see where this goes first.

EMCEE (ON MONITOR)

Have any of you considered the
Romanian National Anthem, for
example?

The director looks at a computer site featuring real-time
comments from viewers.

EMCEE (O.C.) (CONT'D)

A song of majesty, heartbreak,
sacrifice, history?

DIRECTOR

People are eating this up.

EMCEE (O.C.)

Although it suffers greatly in
translation -- as do we all -- I
would like to share the English
language version tonight.

INT. OSCAR AUDITORIUM - CONTINUOUS

The Emcee sings as a confused Habitat and Kevin James watch.

EMCEE

Awaken thee, Romanian, shake off
the deadly slumber/The scourge of
inauspicious barbarian
tyrannies/And now or never to a
bright horizon clamber/That shall
to shame put all your noxious
enemies.

INT. MANY ROOMS MONTAGE

As The Emcee sings, we see many different interiors with people incredulously watching the moment on TV. In some case they comment online about it as they watch, in other case they laugh with their friends. People in Romania stand in front of their TVs and sing along.

EMCEE (ON TV)

It's now or never to the world we
readily proclaim/In our veins
throbs an ancestry of Roman/And in
our hearts forever we glorify a
name/Resounding of battle, the name
of gallant Trajan./Do Look imperial
shadows, Michael. Stephen,
Corvinus/At the Romanian nation,
your mighty progeny/With arms like
steel and hearts of fire
impetuous/It's either free or dead,
that's what they all
decree./Priests, Rise the
cross/This Christian army's
liberating/The word is freedom, no
less sacred is the end...

INT. OSCAR AUDITORIUM

Back on stage with the Emcee as, with great conviction, he delivers the final thought of the anthem.

EMCEE

We'd rather die in battle, in
elevated glory/Than live again
enslaved in our ancestral land.

The Audience is laughing uproariously as they applaud and give the Emcee a standing ovation. Some think this was a gag and others believe the Emcee to be insane, but all are thrilled with the performance.

KEVIN JAMES

That's a great song. And a great
sentiment. Thank you. I do think
we need to move the night along
though. So thank you, Alan, for
that impromptu --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EMCEE

I just want to say, before I go,
that everything wrong with our
society is on display here tonight:
vanity, greed, political
corruption.

INT. HOLLYWOOD HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Francis turns from the TV to talk to us, sort of.

FRANCIS

Amen, but of course this
display is just another
example of the delusional
self-aggrandizement exhibited
by these people.

EMCEE (ON TV)

What does your bottomless
need for money and glory and
power and pathetic
substitutes for the love and
attention love you never
received as children lead you
to?

EMCEE (ON TV)

Do you really need this bowling
trophy?

FRANCIS

We need someone who will
really put their money with
their mouth is to affect
change in this corrupted and
broken system.

EMCEE (ON TV)

We need to think long and
hard about what messages we
are putting out into the
world with all our terrible
movies and all this award
craziness.

EMCEE (ON TV)

Do you know that there is a life-
changing Romanian film out there
called "River of Blame" that none
of you will ever even hear of.

FRANCIS

I've heard of it. Hello? I've
seen it. I own it.
(holds up the DVD)

FRANCIS (CONT'D)

It's decent, but borrows
heavily from the work of
Escutcheon and Mezmarekek.
If you want to honor a
Romanian film, honor "The
Broken Meadow" by Anghelescu.

EMCEE (ON TV)

It's life-changing. Your
chosen best picture tonight,
whatever it will be, cannot
claim the same thing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EMCEE (ON TV)
And so in service of changing the
world...

FRANCIS
Change the world by ending some
lives, tough guy. I can think of a
few choice people.

INT. OSCAR AUDITORIUM - CONTINUOUS

EMCEE
... of leveling the playing field,
I offer you this, my final thought
on the subject of Hollywood.

Insert: The two ghost thumbs can be seen inside the Emcee's
pockets. Each has its thumb on a button attached to a wire.

INT. FRANCIS'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Francis watches as the Emcee holds up his hands.

FRANCIS
What the fuck is he doing now?

Francis types something on the Oscars comments board.

EMCEE
(holding up his hands)
Look, Magda, no hands!

The Thumbs press the button. The dynamite filling out the
Emcee's fat suit detonates, and he disintegrates.

Fire, flesh, blood, ball-bearings, and casing fragments
spread out in all directions, along with a visible shock
wave, akin to radio waves we've seen earlier.

Kevin James and Habitat get ripped to pieces.

Faces in the audience register horror and confusion.

The shock wave causes a massive hole in the ceiling. Debris
rains down on audience members. There is death. Screaming
and yelling. Fire and smoke spread in all directions,
engulfing sets and people.

TV sets in homes go to static. People try to get the picture
back on their screens.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

People type questions on their computers.

Bits of information become available: Explosion at Oscars!
Mutilation! Hundreds of movie stars killed!

Red Carpet entertainment reporters and camera people fight to
get into the flame engulfed auditorium.

Firemen, police, and paramedics rush by.

Helicopters hover overhead.

Injured, burned people try to crawl toward exits, extricate
themselves from fallen rubble.

Children with babysitters sit at home watching the blank TV
screens, crying.

Newscasters compete for audience:

NEWSCASTER

(crying)

My God, My God, it's horrible! The
carnage. The Dreamers of Our
Dreams have been destroyed. Our
Dreams are dead.

COMMENTATOR

What does this event signify? How
have we created this nightmare for
ourselves?

COMMENTATOR #2

It's completely absurd, completely
obscene to blame the victims! A
lone lunatic dirtbag was
responsible for this horrible loss
of life and property. The sooner
we as Americans stop looking for
the fault within ourselves, the
sooner we can figure out how to
combat these pathetic nutjobs.

Rescue workers rush about, putting out fires, digging through
the debris for trapped survivors. There's still screaming
and crying and crawling. Randy emerges from backstage, leaps
over a police barricade. He surveys the carnage and chaos.

RANDY

Mimi?! Mimi?!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

He jumps down off the stage and runs toward the back of the house, where Mimi was seated.

RANDY (CONT'D)
Mimi? Mimi? Mimi?

There are piles of injured people and dead bodies. People call to Randy for help. He sees Mimi and runs to her.

RANDY (CONT'D)
Mimi!

He kneels by her. Her chest crushed under a slab of ceiling.

RANDY (CONT'D)
Baby, it's gonna be okay.

He tries unsuccessfully to move the slab.

RANDY (CONT'D)
I need help over here!!

A TV cameraman has made his way into the room and is discreetly filming Randy and Mimi.

MIMI
Randy, I don't want to die.

RANDY
You're going to be fine.

Mimi starts to fade away. Randy squeezes her hand harder.

RANDY (CONT'D)
Don't go away, Mimi/Don't leave me
without you/Stay with my voice/
as I sing about you.
(singing)
You fit me/Your hand fits in
mine/When we embrace I feel finally
fine/You fit me/I want to make you
mine/You fit me/Like no one before
you/How do you know how?/God, I
adore you/You fit me/I want to make
you mine/And I want to fit you,
too/Be your most comfortable
shoe/Want to be your love most
true/Going to say "I do" with you/I
do. It's true.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

There is a vigil. Francis's mother is there.

CROWD (SINGING)

Randy and Mimi/we're moved by your
story/Your romance was steamy/Your
death, it was gory/Our own lives
are messy and don't work as
drama/And so we embrace your
theatrical trauma.

INT. HOLLYWOOD HOTEL - AFTERNOON

Francis sits on his bed and types onto his blog.

FRANCIS (SINGING)

I knew Mimi/she was my friend/I
actually knew her/I went on a date
with her/You didn't know her/You
have no right to act like you did/I
miss her/because I knew her/She was
part of my life/a glowing ember of
a spirit/who I knew/and now she's
dead/and the pain I feel is
intense/because I knew her/I loved
her/so much so that I am lost now
that she is no longer in the
world/Can you imagine what it feels
like to lose someone who was so
important to you?/It's horrible/The
emptiness is staggering/And when I
watch you people try to use her to
turn a profit/it makes my stomach
turn/You all make my stomach turn/I
deserve your sympathy.

INT. RADIO STATION BOOTH - DAY

A radio commentator speaks to the public.

RADIO COMMENTATOR

Where are our leaders? How come
nobody is helping us through this?
Where is your president??

EXT. THE RUINS OF THE OSCAR AUDITORIUM - DAY

Richard's Head has been placed on a lectern. He wears a hard hat and addresses the distraught assembled crowd.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RICHARD'S HEAD

Firefighters, police, health-care professionals, Mimi and Randy, these are the real heroes. We are a proud people. Today we move forward. If we are scared, our enemies win. We need better security. Our heroes of the silver screen, our other true heroes, will return, stronger than ever. Young Derek Wilborne said to me, "where is my daddy?" I told him, "Heaven. And you will be taken care of, Derek." Today, all Americans are Hollywood Stars. America is its own Walk of Fame. Be strong. We will rebuild this auditorium as a monument to our fortitude. We will build a towering monument here. We will leave this area unchanged as a park for meditation. I am never surprised at the generosity and compassion of the American people. We will find our enemies and run them into the ground. Our movies will return and we will be entertained again. All people are created equal. Government get off our backs. I see no colors or creeds today, only Americans united in our grief and our commitment to make this a better world. We are warriors. We are truly a peace-loving people. We need to take care of our own. We will stand firm on our own two feet.

The faces in the crowd movie from despair to hope. They cheer. They throw Richard's Head in the air and catch him.

EXT. CITY PARK - NIGHT

A crowd of people holding candles and placards with photos of movie stars on them. Francis's mother is among them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CROWD

(singing)

You gave us our dreams/the stories
we live in/We questioned your
politics/but all is forgiven/Now
that you're gone/we've got to
fight/Richard's Head will now lead
us/to a future that's bright.

EXT. BASEBALL STADIUM - DAY

Richard's head, placed on the pitcher's mound and wearing a baseball hat, addresses the crowd.

RICHARD'S HEAD

We must look to God, whatever that
means to each of us!

The crowd cheers.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Snow on the ground. The Marquee reads: Come in and see God.

INT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

The parishioners kneel at the pews and watch the movie "God."
Francis's mother and father are there. As is Maria.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

The theater is full. Richard's Head is in front with a moderator. He surveys the room.

RICHARD'S HEAD

Yes, Debbie Wilkins?

DEBBIE WILKINS

Thank you, Richard's Head. First,
I love the movie.

RICHARD'S HEAD

Oh, thank you very much.

DEBBIE WILKINS

My question is of a personal
nature. I'm having trouble with --

RICHARD'S HEAD

With your boyfriend Terry. I've
read your blog, of course.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RICHARD'S HEAD (CONT'D)

I think you and I both know that
you have to end it. He's not there
for you.

Debbie cries, nods, is comforted by the people around here.
Other hands shoot up. Maria is in the crowd.

INT. HOLLYWOOD HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Francis checks his blog. There have been no visitors. It
looks even more desolate now.

INT. GAY BAR - NIGHT

Grape sits alone. He watches young men flirting. Richard's
Head appears in a commercial on the bar TV.

RICHARD'S HEAD

Spring is in the air, but is it in
your step? Do you need a friend?
Now you can have your own Richard's
Head connected to the original
Richard's Head by actual radio
waves. I answer questions, offer
guidance. I can and will be your
best friend. Because I know you.

INT. GRAPE SNOW'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Grape enters with a big bag. He pulls a Richard's Head box
from it, opens it, pulls out the head and switches it on.

RICHARD'S HEAD

Hi, Grape.

GRAPE SNOW

(pause)

I don't want to be a professional
asshole anymore.

RICHARD'S HEAD

You never really did, Grape. You
just became one because, as a
little boy it felt unsafe for you
to be yourself. So you punch
first. It's ok that you're gay.

Grape starts to cry.

GRAPE SNOW

It is. It is.

INT. OSCAR AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

The Oscar auditorium has not been rebuilt. It is almost empty. The few tuxedoed and gowned people in the house are crippled. Sally is there with her handsome movie co-star. There's a new fat Oscar host.

HOST

And now we pay tribute to those who
left us in the past year.

We see the In Memoriam segment: hundreds of faces speeding by to funereal music.

INT. GRAPE SNOW'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Richard's Head watches the Oscars. A blender whirs.

RICHARD'S HEAD

Shh, shh, shh! This is it!

Grape runs in with a Margarita, sits down next to Richard's Head.

GRAPE SNOW

So exciting!

He kisses Richard's Head on the forehead.

The new fat host onstage opens an envelope.

HOST

And best original screenplay goes
to Richard's Head for "God"!

Jonathan Waller cheers from the audience. The original Richard's Head is wheeled out. He wears a bow tie.

RICHARD'S HEAD (AT GRAPES)

I look great.

GRAPE SNOW

You do, baby.

As the Richard's Head on TV delivers his acceptance speech, we move through a series of rooms. In them, lonely people we've seen earlier watch with their own Richard's Heads. We see the Alzheimer's patient's daughter, Half Girl, Donna, the racist protester, the old lady whose paper was wet, Magda. Maria's Richard's Head is performing oral sex on her. He looks up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARIA'S RICHARD'S HEAD

I won!

The montage ends with Francis watching TV alone in his hotel room. He begins to type something on his computer, but stops himself.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD STREET - NIGHT

Francis walks down the street with his suitcase. He drops his laptop into a garbage can and keeps walking.

INT. BACKSTAGE PRESS ROOMS - EVENING

Richard's Head speaks before assembled reporters.

RICHARD'S HEAD

Thank you all for being here. I'd like to officially announce my bid for the presidency of United States. I'm certain that analyzing the opinions and concerns of everyone on the internet has given me a unique perspective on our times which will serve me in leading this great land into the future.

REPORTER #1

Richard's Head? Richard's Head?

RICHARD'S HEAD

Yes, Jim?

REPORTER #1

Thank you, sir. I'd like to know if it's even legal for you, a disembodied robotic head to serve as president of the United States. Jesus, I hope it is. We need you.

RICHARD'S HEAD

The Constitution of the United States does not explicitly prohibit it. After all, I was created in this country out of American components. I imagine at some point someone will contest my eligibility and at that time it will be for the Supreme Court to decide. Until that time, I will move forward with my campaign.

INT. OSCAR AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

The fat Oscar host holds an envelope.

HOST

And the winner of this new award,
the one the entire world is abuzz
about, The Oscar for The Greatest
Movie Ever Made is...

(opens envelope)

"God!" Produced by Jonathan Waller
and Adam Glickman!

Waller runs up to the stage, grabs the trophy, hugs the host.
Richard's Head is wheeled out behind him. Waller thrusts his
Oscar over his head in victory.

INT. OVAL OFFICE - DAY

We fade in on Richard's Head addressing the American people.

RICHARD'S HEAD

As I near the end of my second
term, as America finds itself in an
unprecedented era of peace and
prosperity, I am reminded of the
writing of a young man named
Francis Deems.

As Richard's Head continues, we drift through Francis's
dusty, long-empty apartment, through his Hollywood hotel room
now occupied by others, across barren plains, past radio
towers. We see not a soul. The wind blows.

RICHARD'S HEAD (CONT'D)

Once a tireless voice on the
internet, Deems has been silent for
years now and we as a people are
poorer for it. He brought passion
and anger, jealousy, hurt,
bitterness, ambition, hopelessness,
and the desperate sadness of the
unheard to our national
consciousness. He reminded us of
our fragility. I miss him and hope
to hear from him again someday. As
I hope to continue to hear from all
of you.

- END -