

THE DEATH ARTIST (1995)

(REMAKE OF CORMAN'S CLASSIC "BUCKET OF BLOOD")

INT JABBERJAW - NIGHT

The cavernous CLUB is packed with a cross section of ARTISTS, POETS, ACTORS, MODELS, ROCKERS, GRUNGERS, PUNKS, ADDICTS, and other assorted characters, standing at the bar and seated at tables - bizarre PAINTINGS and SCULPTURES adorn the walls -

CLOSE on a BOOM BOX on a stage - the tape rolls, and soon strange industrial music begins to blare from the box -

MAXWELL, an eccentric - looking man with a goatee and various PIERCINGS on his face, stands on the stage in front of a microphone - an abstract PORTRAIT hangs on the wall behind him -

MAXWELL

I will talk to you of art, for  
there is nothing else to talk  
about, for there is nothing  
else...life is nothing but  
homeless traveler on the RTD  
of art...

We pull back to see PATRONS sitting at tables amid various sculptures, paintings, and displays of questionable artistic promise -

MAXWELL

Burn gas on the freeways, and whip your  
sour cream of circumstance...flip at  
your channels and plod at your monitors...

Soon we see WALTER PAISLEY, a meek, unassuming bus boy, work his way around the tables, taking empty drinks, emptying ashtrays, all the time listening to the performer on stage -

MAXWELL

Creation is, all else is not...  
what is not creation is meatless  
sausage, and rice cake, let it  
all crumble to feed the artist -

Walter passes a table where an upscale ART DEALER with a ponytail interrupts his prospective client to answer his cellular phone -

MAXWELL

The artist is, all others are not, a  
canvas is a canvas or a painting, a  
rock is a rock or a statue, a sound  
is a sound or it is music, a preacher  
is a preacher or an artist -

Walter passes ART, seated with two attractive women - he rolls himself a cigarette, nodding in approval to Maxwell -

MAXWELL

Where are John Joe Jake Jim Jerk,  
dead dead dead, they were not born  
before they were born, they were not  
born, where are Leonardo, Mozart,  
Shakespeare, alive alive alive, they  
were born -

Walter continues to bus the room - he pauses to stop and listen to Maxwell - he then looks over a MAN'S shoulder - he is sketching - Walter observes the SKETCH -

POV It is a fairly good sketch of the room -

LEONARD, the artsy manager of the club, notices Walter pausing to listen -

MAXWELL

Bring on the multitudes and the  
multitude of fishes - feed them  
that you will be satisfied,  
nourish the artist, stretch their  
skin upon an easel, crush their  
bones into a paste, so that he may  
mold them, let them die, and by  
their miserable death become the  
clay in his hands, that he might  
form an ashtray or an ark - that he  
might take you in his magic hands  
and wring from your marrow wonder -  
all that is comes through the eye  
of the artist -

Walter moves on - sees an attractive woman, CARLA, who opens a MANILA ENVELOPE and removes some HEAD SHOTS of herself -

MAXWELL

The rest are blind fish, swimming  
in the cave of aloneness- swim on you  
mortal and muddling maddened souls -  
and dream, of one bright and sunny  
island - some artist will bait a hook,  
and let you bite upon it, bite hard, and  
die -

Walter looks at Carla's picture -

MAXWELL

In his stomach, you will feed  
creation!

Maxwell turns off the tape, and the audience applauds -

Carla then looks up to see Walter looking at her picture - he awkwardly smiles at her and she smiles back -

Leonard then approaches Walter -

LEONARD  
Walter, what are you doing?

WALTER  
I was just looking at Carla's picture.

LEONARD  
Well that's not what I pay you for, now is it?

WALTER  
Well I was uh, just looking...

LEONARD  
Well do some looking around the room. I see cups, ashtrays - let's go...

Walter slinks away - Leonard gets close to Carla, very close, all the time admiring her head shot -

LEONARD  
Ah, your new head shot...  
(Beat)  
I like it, very much...

CARLA  
Do you have to be so cold to him?

Leonard smiles, and strokes Carla's hair -

Walter watches this, then turns and walks away -

At the entrance of the club stands LOU, a man in a designer suit, no tie - he scans the room as Walter passes him -

LOU  
How ya doin'?

WALTER  
Uh, hi.

Walter slinks away, and Lou looks around some more -

Art sees Lou -

Lou subtly gestures to Art and heads into the club -

Art gets up, addressing the two girls -

ART  
I'm out of here.

Art and Lou head toward the MEN'S ROOM -

INT MEN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Art and Lou check the stalls to see the room is empty -

ART  
Alright we're clear.

LOU  
Anything new?

ART  
Not really. One girl who fit the  
descrip came in, kinda skinny, brunette,  
didn't see much changing hands.

LOU  
Is the manager cooperating?

ART  
Yeah, he's keeping an eye out, said  
he'd call us if he sees anything.  
That's about it for tonight.

LOU  
Alright I got you, man. It's my  
turn for freak patrol.

ART  
You know it.  
(Beat)  
I'm out of here.

Art heads out, and Lou checks himself in the mirror -

INT JABBERJAW - NIGHT

Maxwell sits at a table with Carla, MAYOLIA, a skinny yet buxom  
woman, and CHARLIE, a long-haired hanger-on - Maxwell is looking at  
Carla's head shot -

CARLA  
So, do you like it?

MAXWELL  
(bored)  
It's perfectly adequate, as far  
as those type of things go...

Walter approaches, with a tray of glasses in his hand -

MAXWELL  
(changing subject)

I don't think anyone gets what  
I said, their blank faces staring,  
mute, unfeeling -

WALTER

I liked it very much Mr. Brock.  
I liked it very much.

MAXWELL

(condescending)  
Well I'm overjoyed.

WALTER

"Let them die, and by their miserable  
death become the clay in his hands,  
that he might form an ashtray or an  
ark -"

Carla looks at Walter -

CARLA

That's word for word.

MAXWELL

Is it? I've forgotten.

MAYOLIA

You mean you don't remember your  
own poem?

MAXWELL

I refuse to say anything twice -  
repetition is death!

CHARLIE

What do you mean?

MAXWELL

When you repeat something, you  
are reliving a moment, wasting  
it, looking at a shed skin - I  
only want new impression, new  
sensations -

WALTER

I thought you believed that life  
is a homeless traveler riding on  
the RTD of -

MAXWELL

(interrupting)  
I know that - I know that! I also  
believe in burning the creative  
candle, you understand, down to  
the end - to be uncreative you  
might as well be dead...a walking

machine, toiling in a factory!

WALTER

I worked in one of them. Back in  
Alaska.

(smiles meekly)

The people at the table look at Walter, then laugh  
cynically -

In the background, Leonard glares at Walter -

CARLA

Walter, Leonard's looking at you  
again.

Walter grabs up a cup and saucer off the table, almost spilling the  
contents before heading off -

CHARLIE

That guy's a class-A cracker.

MAXWELL

Walter's got a clear mind. Probably  
something will enter it, feel lonely,  
and leave again...

Everyone at the table laughs weakly -

At another table two eccentrically dressed ARTISTS, CUFF and LINK,  
talk to an upscale older couple - Cuff has a series of MATTED  
PHOTOGRAPHS in his hand -

OLDER MAN

I've heard you can find some  
cutting edge pieces here if you  
keep an eye out -

OLDER WOMAN

I'd like to find something for  
our den, something unusual -

CUFF

Well maybe these works might  
interest you -

Cuff shows the woman the photographs - she reacts to them with  
disdain -

POV they are pictures of various ROAD KILLS - squirrels, skunks,  
possums -

CUFF

It's our road kill series. I take  
the pictures.

LINK

(proudly)  
I do the research.

The woman hands back the photographs -

OLDER WOMAN  
Not quite what I was looking for.

OLDER MAN  
Yes, we're interested in something  
with some investment potential -

CUFF  
Hey, this is no supermarket,  
there are no aisles, it's all  
in the attitude -

Walter approaches -

LINK  
Yeah that's a dead soul way to  
look at it -

OLDER WOMAN  
Nonsense. We have developed many  
a rapport with struggling artists -  
we're very supportive -

WALTER  
"All that is comes through the eye  
of the artist - the rest are blind  
fish, swimming in the cave of  
aloneness."

The four people stare at Walter -

OLDER WOMAN  
That's very deep, and coming from a  
bus boy too -

WALTER  
"Feed them that you will be satisfied -  
the artist is, all others are not -"

OLDER MAN  
Where have I heard that before?

OLDER WOMAN  
Are you a poet also?

WALTER  
Uh...no. No I'm not.

OLDER MAN  
What do you do?

WALTER  
Well, uh, I'm...working, I've

been working on something, it's not ready yet.

CUFF

What is it, a crying clown?

WALTER

Huh?!

LINK

Walter must have bought himself some crayons.

Leonard approaches, looking exasperated -

CUFF

Get out of here, man. We're negotiating a deal.

WALTER

I am working on something! I'm going to show you soon!

LEONARD

Walter!

Leonard gets close to him -

LEONARD

(under his breath)

You're starting to try my patience!

Walter sheepishly heads off - the two artists laugh -

The older woman looks at Leonard -

OLDER WOMAN

Is he, uh?...

LEONARD

About to be out of a job.

Walter returns to Maxwell's table, where Carla, Mayolia, and Charlie are still sitting - he gestures to some empty glasses -

WALTER

Are you done with these?

MAXWELL

Yes, get rid of them...

In the split second when no one is looking, Walter snatches up one of Carla's head shots, keeping it under his tray, as he cleans up the empty glasses -

DISSOLVE

TO



EXT JABBERJAW - NIGHT

Walter passes an alley where a group of THUGS hastily strips down a car parked on the street -

EXT STREET - NIGHT

Walter walks the streets alone - soon he stops and looks ahead -

There is a PARKED CAR with the windows open - A COUPLE is making out in the front seat -

Walter smiles meekly -

Soon the man in the car, a mean-looking character spots Walter - the two stop making out and the man stares at Walter -

MAN

What are you looking at? You want to get shot?

Walter's smile fades, and he stuffs his hands in his pockets, and heads down the street, alone, inadvertently bumping into some GARBAGE CANS -

EXT COURTYARD APARTMENTS - NIGHT

Walter unlocks a creaky iron gate covered with dead ivy -

EXT COURTYARD - NIGHT

As Walter heads in, he runs into MRS. SWICKER, the landlady -

WALTER

Oh, hello Mrs. Swicker.

MRS. SWICKER

Hello Walter. I want to tell you the super fixed the leaky pipes and sealed up that hole in your wall.

WALTER

Oh, OK.

MRS. SWICKER

Walter you look awful pale! What did you have to eat today?

WALTER

I had a salami sandwich, Mrs. Swicker.

MRS. SWICKER

If you were my son...why don't you

let me fix you a nice hot bowl of  
soup, it won't take but a minute.

WALTER

Oh no, that's OK, I can fix myself  
something. Besides, I got something  
important to do...

Walter goes to unlock his door -

MRS. SWICKER

Oh by the way did you happen to  
see Frankie out here, by any  
chance?

Walter thinks for a second -

WALTER

Uh, no, I didn't see him at all.

MRS. SWICKER

What's got into that cat? Well if  
you do see him, tell him I've got  
a nice fat piece of ocean-fresh  
halibut for him -

WALTER

T-tell him that?

MRS. SWICKER

If you see him.

WALTER

OK Mrs. Swicker.

Mrs. Swicker heads off -

MRS. SWICKER

Good night Walter...

WALTER

Good night, Mrs. Swicker -

Walter opens his door and heads in -

INT WALTER'S ROOM - NIGHT

Walter closes the door and turns on a LIGHT hanging over a kitchen  
TABLE - a CLOTH covers an object roughly the size of a bowling ball  
on the table -

He removes Carla's head shot, tucked inside his shirt, and places it  
on the table after looking at it for a beat -

Walter heads over to the STOVE, stopping to notice a freshly  
plastered area on the wall, a bag of PLASTER still on the ground -

Walter opens himself up a can of BEANS - he looks around and finds an old, dented metal POT, pouring the beans into the pot -

He throws the empty can in the direction of an overflowing GARBAGE CAN, lights the stove and puts the pot on the burner -

Walter then takes a seat at the table - he lifts the cloth, revealing a mound of CLAY -

A cat meows in the distance as Walter looks at Carla's picture, appreciating her beauty -

WALTER

Now I have my muse...

Walter then turns and begins to mold the clay -

DISSOLVE

TO

INT WALTER'S ROOM

A half-hour later. Walter has attempted to sculpt a bust - he looks at Carla's picture, then back at his sculpture -

Walter's POV it is a badly sculpted HEAD, that not only looks nothing like Carla but has a hard time passing for anything human -

Walter looks at it, knowing that much work is needed on his creation -

He grabs a blob of fresh clay from an adjacent pile and begins to form a nose - the cat meows again - Walter looks around -

WALTER

Frankie?

Walter continues enthusiastically sculpting the blob of clay -

WALTER

A canvas is a canvas or a painting.  
A rock is a rock or a statue...a  
sound is a sound or is music...

Walter looks at the sculpture -

Walter then attaches the nose - smoothing it on -

It looks RIDICULOUS, something out of grammar school art class - he's having difficulty forming anything that resembles a nose -

WALTER

Come on...you're supposed to be  
a nose...

The malformed face stares dumbly back at him as he fights to shape

the nose -

The cat meows again - Walter is getting increasingly frustrated - he backs up to look at the head -

PAN the photograph of Carla, over to the sculpture - one of the ears falls off -

Walter squints at the head, failing to convince himself it's looking better - frustrated, Walter yanks the nose off and grabs a little more clay -

WALTER

Why can't I make a nose!

On the stove, the beans begin to boil -

Walter shapes the clay and sticks the nose back on, his tongue sticking out of his mouth as he fumbles with it -

The nose has changed shape and juts perpendicularly off the head, resembling Pinocchio -

Walter begins to sculpt with increasing fury -

He grabs up more clay, starts mashing the face -

Soon the object begins to lose resemblance to anything close to a human head, or anything for that matter -

Walter stands up and backs up, looking at the sculpture - getting angry he begins to mush the sculpture -

WALTER

No no no no -

The cat meows again, louder - Walter looks around, irritated - he begins to SQUASH the sculpture -

Finally losing his patience Walter kicks back the chair, grabs the clay head and HURLS it across the room -

The clay hits the wall with a dull THUD, stays there for a beat, then falls to the ground -

Walter pushes back his hair with his hand - the cat meows -

The beans begin to OVERFLOW on the stove -

Walter runs toward the stove, smacking his head on the overhead light -

The light swings back and forth as Walter rushes over to the pot, grabbing it hastily off the stove before SHRIEKING in pain and dropping the pot into the sink, splattering beans in all directions -

Walter clutches his hand in pain as the light swings, the cat meowing louder -

Walter begins to look around furiously -

WALTER  
Frankie shut up!

Walter then focuses his frustrated mind toward the direction of the patched up wall -

Walter gets closer -

He hears the meowing coming from inside the wall -

WALTER  
Frankie?

Walter puts his ear to the wall - he hears SCRATCHING noises -

Walter turns away from the wall -

WALTER  
I don't believe this!  
(yelling at the wall)  
How did you get stuck in the wall!

The meowing persists -

WALTER  
Alright alright - calm down,  
I'll get you out -

Walter looks around, goes toward a drawer by the sink, and produces a long, narrow CARVING KNIFE - he heads back to the wall -

WALTER  
Hang tight Frankie, ol' Walter's  
gonna get you out...

Walter then feels the wall as if he does this type of thing professionally - when he determines the proper area of entry he carefully aims the knife and - WHAM! -

SCREECH! Frankie makes a comical screech of pain which ends abruptly -

Walter FREEZES - his eyes wide open with panic - he stands back -

The wall is silent -

WALTER  
Frankie?

There is no response -

WALTER  
Frankie how're ya doin' in there?

There is no response -

Walter begins to BEAT the wall, until the thin material begins to give way -

He RIPS a big chunk of the wall off, confirming the worst -

The knife IMPALED Frankie into a wooden stud in the wall - the cat is no more -

Walter pulls and tugs at the knife until it is freed from the wall - he gingerly cradles Frankie, still impaled by the knife -

WALTER  
What have I done?

Walter walks over to the kitchen table -

WALTER  
Oh Frankie I'm so sorry...

He lowers the cat down -

WALTER  
Poor Mrs. Swicker...  
(Beat)  
She had a nice fat piece of  
ocean-fresh halibut for you...

Walter walks backward toward the kitchen, looking forlornly at the cat -

He reaches for another can of beans, but his eyes focus on the clay head on the floor -

Walter picks up what used to be a head and sits back down at the kitchen table -

He looks at Carla looking back at him from the picture - he then stares blankly ahead -

WALTER  
Repetition is death, Frankie...

DISSOLVE

TO

EXT LOS ANGELES - DAWN

Silhouetted buildings in the early light -

INT WALTER'S ROOM - DAWN

Still dressed, Walter tosses and turns on his bed -

MAXWELL (V.O.)

Nourish the artist, stretch their  
skin upon an easel, crush their  
bones into a paste, so that he may  
mold them, let them die, and by  
their miserable death become the  
clay in his hands, that he might

MAXWELL (cont.)

form an ashtray or an ark - that he  
might take you in his magic hands  
and wring from your marrow wonder -  
all that is comes through the eye  
of the artist -

Walter bolts upright, waking from his dream -

WALTER

(beat, then almost  
imperceptibly)

Where are the John Joe Jake Jim...  
Jerk...

Walter gets up out of bed - he heads toward the kitchen table -

He looks at a now stiff Frankie -

MAXWELL (V.O.)

Dead...dead...dead...

Walter stares at Frankie for a beat and turns off the overhead lamp  
- he then looks up, as if getting an idea -

He looks over at the floor -

Sees the BAG OF PLASTER -

EXT STREET - DAY

Walter's feet are visible as he walks down the street - as we pan  
up, we see Walter cradling a PACKAGE wrapped in brown paper and  
string -

EXT JABBERJAW - DAY

Leonard stands very close to Carla, who is wearing tight, red velvet  
bell-bottoms - she flips through several canvases of SCRIBBLE  
PAINTINGS she has brought over -

CARLA

I'm trying to find a style of  
my own. Do you really like them?

LEONARD

Oh yes...very nice...very, very  
nice...

Walter then approaches with his package -

Carla sees him - so does Leonard -

CARLA

Hi Walter...

LEONARD

What are you doing here so early?

WALTER

Well I brought something, I wanted to show you.

LEONARD

What is it, your laundry?

WALTER

Huh?

CARLA

Don't worry about him...what have you got?

WALTER

(enthusiastically)

A thing I made.

Walter lowers it to the ground and undoes the string - he then opens the paper and reveals what he brought -

It is FRANKIE, encased in plaster along with the knife -

Walter grins like a simpleton at his creation, but Carla is impressed -

CARLA

Wow...

(Beat)

Wow...

Carla picks up the statue -

CARLA

Leonard...look at this...

Leonard puffs on his cigarette -

LEONARD

Where'd ya buy that?

WALTER

I didn't buy it I made it.

Leonard takes another puff -



LEONARD  
(incredulous)  
You...made that?

WALTER  
I said I did, didn't I!

CARLA  
I've never seen anything like this,  
maybe Segal, but nothing with such...  
dichotomy...  
(Beat)  
It's very good, Walter -

WALTER  
Honest?

LEONARD  
Well, what's it called?

Walter looks up at Leonard -

WALTER  
Dead Cat!

LEONARD  
(Beat)  
Dead Cat?

WALTER  
Yeah.

LEONARD  
Well it sure looks dead enough.

Walter stands up -

WALTER  
You want to buy it, put it in the  
club?

LEONARD  
You want me to buy Dead Cat?  
(laughs)  
It'll scare people away.

CARLA  
Don't you feel it?

Leonard and Walter look at Carla -

LEONARD AND WALTER  
(simultaneously)  
Feel what?

CARLA  
Don't you feel what it's giving

off? It's...presence...  
come take a closer look...

Leonard gets closer -

CARLA  
Look at the detail, it's so alive,  
and yet...so dead...

Carla turns the statue's face toward Leonard -

CARLA  
Look at the expression on its face...

Walter puffs his cigarette and stares at Walter -

LEONARD  
Well...why did you put a knife in  
it?

WALTER  
I didn't mean to.

LEONARD  
Got carried away, huh?

Leonard inspects the statue -

LEONARD  
Alright, I'll tell you what. I'll  
put it in the corner of the alcove.  
If it sells, we'll split it fifty-  
fifty. How's that?

WALTER  
Sure!  
(Beat, then to Carla)  
So I guess that means I'm an  
artist after all.

CARLA  
(smiles politely)  
Maybe so...

LEONARD  
I wouldn't give up your day job.

WALTER  
All that is comes through the  
eye of the artist...

LEONARD  
Alright get a grip on yourself  
Now since you're here why don't  
you start early, the kitchen  
needs cleaning.

WALTER

Sure!

Walter heads off then turns and faces Leonard and Carla -

WALTER

You really like it?

CARLA

Of course...it's wonderful.

LEONARD

I can barely contain myself.  
Now chop chop!

Walter heads into the back -

INT JABBERJAW - NIGHT

The scene is happening, strange music plays in the background -

Art walks into the club - Walter passes him -

WALTER

Did you see my cat?

ART

Why, is he lost?

WALTER

No, I uh...

Walter walks away -

In the alcove sits Dead Cat - a young man wearing a beret and leather jacket inspects the work - he seems zonked out on some chemical - Walter approaches him -

WALTER

You like my cat?

YOUNG MAN

Yeah...it's like out there,  
you understand what I'm saying?

WALTER

Sure. You want to buy it?

YOUNG MAN

No man, I don't have the funds  
to be buying various pieces of  
artwork, you understand what I'm  
saying?

Leonard approaches -

WALTER

Sure.

The young man heads off - Walter faces Leonard -

WALTER

People seem to like my cat.

LEONARD

Enough already about it - get to work!

Walter heads off - Leonard lights a cigarette and looks at the sculpture -

Walter busses a table -

CHARLIE (O.S.)

Hey Walter, come here!

Walter heads over to a table - seated are Maxwell, Carla, Charlie, and another attractive blonde woman - Maxwell appears clearly intoxicated -

CHARLIE

Congrats, Walter.

CARLA

Walter everyone's talking about it.

Maxwell turns and focuses on Walter -

MAXWELL

I saw your...cat.

WALTER

Did you like it Mister Brock?

MAXWELL

Call me...Maxwell.

CHARLIE

How'd ya do it Walter?

WALTER

Oh, I just got some plaster, and fixed it up.

CHARLIE

Papier mache?

WALTER

Uh, no. Plaster.

Charlie laughs - Maxwell stares at Walter, then staggers to his feet  
- looks at the room -

MAXWELL

Attention everyone! Everybody!

Some people pay attention -

MAXWELL

(drunkenly)

As you pass through these yellow portals I am sure you noticed on your right a small plaster figure, and assumed this transfixed effigy to be the work of a master sculptor. Indeed, so it is. And that bright, new creator is in our midst. He's none other than Walter Paisley, our very own bus boy, whose undiscovered hands of genius have been carrying away your empty cups of frustration!

People look at Walter, who sheepishly accepts the praise -

MAXWELL

Remember him. His is the silent voice of creation. Within the dark rich soil of humility, he blossoms as the hope of our nearly sterile times.

Charlie and Carla clap -

MAXWELL

(to Walter)

Bring me a gimlet.

Maxwell sits back down -

Walter passes a table where Cuff, Link and Mayolia are sitting -

Cuff stops him -

CUFF

Hey congrats on the cat Walter. I wonder where you got the idea of dead animals.

WALTER

Huh ?

LINK

Yeah, can you say plagiarism?

CUFF

Not only that, he copied us!

MAYOLIA

Oh nonsense! Your works hit the viewer over the head. They're so...obvious.

Mayolia then looks up at Walter -

MAYOLIA

I get it Walter. I get it.

WALTER

What do you get?

MAYOLIA

Your work, the layers of irony.

Just then several people approach Walter and begin asking him questions -

Art watches the commotion -

Leonard also watches the commotion with a completely dumbfounded expression on his face -

Art dealers talk to Walter, as well as artists -

Just then Lou walks in, stands next to Art -

LOU

What the hell's going on?

ART

Everyone wants to meet the bus boy.

LOU

What did he do?

ART

He made a cat.

Lou looks at Art, who returns the stare -

ART

Outta plaster.

Lou walks in -

LOU

See you later -

ART

Righto.

Art leaves - Leonard looks at Walter -

Walter uncomfortably enjoys the attention -

Just then the old couple chimes in - the older man looks around -

OLDER MAN

Where's my mocha latte double  
grande!

Leonard drops his cigarette and crushes it with his foot -  
He heads over to Walter and escorts him away from the  
people - Walter accepts someone's BUSINESS CARD -

Leonard takes him aside -

WALTER

Did you hear that Mr. De Santis?  
Everyone's really crazy about  
Dead Cat.

LEONARD

Yes they are, aren't they? Look,  
why don't you take the rest of the  
night off, you look tired.

WALTER

Well I don't know -

LEONARD

No, it's Ok...you came in early.  
(Beat)  
Besides, you're creating an incident.  
When people are applauding they don't  
order anything.

WALTER

Well...

LEONARD

Look, go home and...work on something.  
Make another cat.

WALTER

I don't have another cat!

LEONARD

Well make a dog, make a parakeet!  
I'm sure you'll think of something.

WALTER

A parakeet?

Leonard begins to lose his patience - he yanks the tray out of Walter's hand -

LEONARD

Go home.

WALTER

OK...good night Mr. De Santis!

LEONARD

Good night Walter.

MAYOLIA (O.S.)

Wait - Walter!

Walter begins to head out the door but is stopped by Mayolia - Walter turns around and faces her - she gets close -

WALTER

Hello Mayolia.

MAYOLIA

Walter, you did something to me with your work tonight.

WALTER

With Dead Cat?

MAYOLIA

With Dead Cat. Like a breath of fresh air. I could just - babble on about it for hours.

WALTER

Really?

Mayolia gives him "that" look -

MAYOLIA

Yeah. I really could. I'm not just saying that.

Mayolia gets closer making her heaving cleavage more accessible to Walter's eyes -

MAYOLIA

It's like...you've turned on.

WALTER

T-turned on?

MAYOLIA

A hot light bulb is burning inside of you.

(Beat)



I want to be warmed by it.

WALTER

That's really nice of you  
Mayolia.

MAYOLIA

Let me into your world Walter...  
let me into that white hot  
inspired world.

WALTER

I can't. I gotta go home.

Mayolia presses herself against Walter, who awkwardly  
reacts -

MAYOLIA

Well, I'll go home with you.

WALTER

Oh no, I couldn't do that. Mrs.  
Swicker would start asking questions.  
She's my landlady.

Art sits at a table, watching the encounter -

MAYOLIA (O.S.)

Isn't there anything I can do  
for you?

Mayolia reaches out and touches Walter -

WALTER

I don't think so Mayolia.

MAYOLIA

I want to be part of it, I want  
to inspire you, I want to do -  
something!

WALTER

You don't have to do anything!

MAYOLIA

(Beat)

Then let me give you something  
then...

Walter watches, perplexed, as Mayolia reaches into her cleavage -

Lou watches the transaction carefully -

Mayolia takes out a CAMEO NECKLACE, takes it off her neck -

MAYOLIA

Maybe this will give you some

inspiration, change your  
perception of reality...

Mayolia looks around, and hands the necklace to Walter -

MAYOLIA

I want you to have it. There's  
a little something for you in  
here...

WALTER

Gee. Thanks.

MAYOLIA

Let it inspire you. Maybe it  
will let you think of me.

She wraps Walter's hand around the necklace -

MAYOLIA

If you have to go, go.

Walter backs out -

MAYOLIA

Go and don't look back.

Walter leaves -

Lou waits for a beat, then gets up -

EXT JABBERJAW - NIGHT

Walter leaves the club, passing some incoming people -

When he leaves, Lou exits the club -

He heads over to the payphone and picks up the receiver, about to  
make a call -

Suddenly, he changes his mind - he hangs the receiver up, and  
decides instead to follow Walter -

INT WALTER'S ROOM - NIGHT

Walter closes the door and turns on the overhead lamp -  
He looks at the medallion Mayolia gave him and places it on the  
table - he then picks it up again, inspects it -

He notices the medallion has a clasp -

EXT WALTER'S WINDOW - NIGHT

Lou is outside, watching Walter -

He then checks his .45 HANDGUN and stuff it back in his shoulder  
holster under his jacket -

INT WALTER'S ROOM - NIGHT

Walter notices the medallion has a clasp - he pops it open and notices a twisted-off corner of a PLASTIC BAG containing a white powder inside - he opens the bag and smells the powder, no knowing what it is - he dabs his finger in it and puts it on his tongue, GRIMACING at the taste of the substance - he puts the open medallion down on the kitchen table -

EXT WALTER'S WINDOW - NIGHT

Lou heads off -

INT WALTER'S ROOM - NIGHT

Walter heads over to the dresser, looks at himself in the mirror-

WALTER

Why yes, that is one of my pieces...  
it's one, in a series...

Walter then picks up the picture of Carla, looks at it for a beat -

WALTER

And I love you too Carla...

Walter sighs, then heads over to his cabinets, opens them up -

A box of PANCAKE MIX is the only item -

Walter takes out the box and grabs a round, sharp-edged GRIDDLE out of the lower cabinets -

Soon the door knocks - Walter walks over to the door carrying the griddle -

He opens the door - Lou is standing there -

LOU

Hello, Walter.

WALTER

Hi. I know you! I've seen you  
down at the Jabberjaw plenty.

LOU

Yes, you have.  
(Beat)  
Can I come in?

WALTER

Uh, sure.

Walter closes the door behind him -

WALTER

I was going to make some pancakes,  
you can have some if you like.

LOU

Hm.

WALTER

Did you see my cat?

LOU

Yeah I did.

Lou heads over to the table, sees the medallion -

LOU

I also saw the girl give you this.

WALTER

Oh yeah that was Mayolia, she's  
a nice girl.

(Beat)

She's kind of strange, though.

Walter watches Lou take a dab of the white powdery contents and put  
it on his tongue -

LOU

You like chasing the dragon, Walter?

WALTER

Chasing the dragon? Whaddya mean?

(Beat)

You sure you don't want a pancake?

LOU

You can cut the crap.

Lou WHIPS out his BADGE -

Walter looks at the badge, then at Lou -

LOU

Police officer.

WALTER

You're like an undercover guy!

LOU

You're in some deep shit pal, whether  
you know it or not.

WALTER

Huh?!!!

LOU

Possession of narcotics isn't something

we take lightly, you understand?

Lou takes a few steps closer and Walter takes a few steps back -

LOU

But I got a feeling you're gonna cooperate with me. Yessir, I think you and me are gonna be real good friends.

(Beat)

Why don't you tell me about your connection.

WALTER

C-connection?

LOU

I'm not looking to pinch you! I don't care about you, or the girl.

(Beat)

But you want to save your ass, you better start telling me what I want to hear. Now!

WALTER

Telling you what?

LOU

Who's the head honcho! Who's providing the smack connection!

WALTER

Smack?

LOU

(rolls his eyes)

Goddammit, where are you from, Mars?

WALTER

Alaska! What the heck's wrong with it!

LOU

Haven't you ever heard of smack! Horse! Junk! Heroin!

WALTER

(enthusiastically)

Is that what that is? I never seen any before. I always thought

that stuff was expensive!

LOU

Oh, yeah. It can get real expensive.

WALTER

Wasn't that nice of Mayolia to  
give me some expensive smack.

Walter heads over to the stove - Lou stops him, turns him around -

LOU

(angry)

Who do think you're dealing with,  
huh? I'm willing to cut you a  
break, chief!

WALTER

(totally confused)

You are?

LOU

Good ol' mild mannered Walter!  
Give it up. It doesn't fly with  
me.

Lou steps up to Walter who cringes behind his griddle -

WALTER

I- don't know what you're talking  
about!

LOU

You're coming downtown with me,  
Walter. You're gonna come clean  
with me, you're gonna name names  
or I swear to God I'll see to it  
personally you rot in a cell upstate!  
Are we understanding each other?

WALTER

(panicked)

Wait a minute! What'd I do?

LOU

I got you cold, pal. Make  
it easy for yourself, use your  
head.

WALTER

I didn't do nothing wrong! That  
was Mayolia's! I didn't ask her  
for it. I don't know about any -

LOU

Yeah yeah yeah - look! I've

heard this song and dance before,  
save your breath, you're coming with  
me!

Lou goes to turn Walter against the wall but Walter springs back -

WALTER

Wait a minute - I told you I didn't  
do nothing wrong!

LOU

Don't give me a hard time Walter! You  
don't want to get me mad! You're  
coming with me!

WALTER

I ain't going no place with you!

Lou then grabs his .45 from behind him and aims it at  
Walter -

LOU

Turn around!

Walter panics and begins to FREAK OUT-

WALTER

You're gonna shoot me!

LOU

Turn around!

Lou lunges for Walter's arm to turn him around but he staggers back  
-

LOU

What are ya, deaf? Turn around!

WALTER

NO! NO DON'T SHOOT ME I DON'T  
WANT TO GET SHOT!

LOU

Relax!

WALTER

YOU'RE GONNA SHOOT ME!

LOU

Walter shut up and relax!

WALTER

NO YOU'RE GONNA SHOOT ME DON'T  
SHOOT -

Lou SPRINGS for Walter -

WHAMMM! Walter SINKS the griddle into Lou's skull - Lou grunts and crashes to the floor -

Walter cringes back in terror - as he steps back we see the BLOODY EDGE of the griddle -

Walter staggers back, witnessing what he has done -

Soon there is a KNOCKING on his door -

MRS. SWICKER (O.S.)

Walter!

At first Walter is too shocked to hear the knocking, but soon he does, and a horrible realization forms in his mind -

EXT COURTYARD - NIGHT

Mrs. Swicker knocks on the door, listening intently -

MRS. SWICKER

Walter!

She knocks again -

MRS. SWICKER

Walter are you alright? I thought  
I heard some shouting a minute ago!

Mrs. Swicker waits for a beat - soon she hears BANGING and CLANGING through the door -

MRS. SWICKER

Walter!

The banging and clanging continues -

Mrs. Swicker knocks again - the banging reaches comical proportions -

MRS. SWICKER

Walter open this door -

The clanging continues - Mrs. Swicker jiggles the door handle - the door opens -

INT WALTER'S ROOM - NIGHT

Mrs. Swicker walks in and Walter hides the bloody griddle in the nick of time, staggering back -

MRS. SWICKER

What's all the noise in here!

WALTER

Noise Mrs. Swicker? What noise?

Mrs. Swicker closes the door behind her -



MRS. SWICKER

Don't tell me I didn't hear a racket! I'm an older woman and I don't need to be upset and disturbed in this manner!

WALTER

I was just straightening up the place.

MRS. SWICKER

Straightening up indeed! Are you sure you're not alone?

WALTER

I'm always alone, Mrs. Swicker, you know that.

Mrs. Swicker begins to snoop around the place -

MRS. SWICKER

Walter have you been talking to yourself again?

WALTER

(wringing his hands)

Well yes I guess I have been Mrs. Swicker. Somebody's got to.

Mrs. swicker continues to snoop around - she then turns and looks at Walter -

MRS. SWICKER

(exasperated)

Walter, you know what you need is a girl!

Mrs. Swicker continues to inspect the place, with Walter following close behind her -

MRS. SWICKER

She doesn't have to be pretty... just as long as she takes good care of you...

WALTER

Uh, I can take real good care of myself, Mrs. Swicker!

Mrs. Swicker continues to look around the cluttered room -

MRS. SWICKER

Yeah I can see that! Look at this place!

At that moment Lou's BLOODY ARM drops into view in the background,

having been stuffed in a crawl space above the sink -

MRS. SWICKER

It's terrible! Why don't you  
ever clean it up!

Walter notices the arm as Mrs. Swicker directs her attention in the  
opposite direction, grabbing a sheet -

MRS. SWICKER

And when did you change these sheets  
last! It looks like they're alive!

Walter panics, and gently leads Mrs. Swicker to the door -

WALTER

Uh, Mrs. Swicker I got to meet some  
friends later, and I have to take  
a shower!

MRS. SWICKER

Well why don't you clean up this  
dump!

Mrs. Swicker resists as Walter opens the door and pushes her out -

WALTER

I will - good night Mrs. Swicker!

MRS. SWICKER

What's the matter with you!

Walter shoves her out the door and closes it behind him -

Pressing his back against the door he looks ahead -

Blood begins to trickle down Lou's arm -

Walter approaches the bloody arm, caught in a total panic -

Blood begins to drop on the floor -

Walter looks around frantically, and finds a big metal POT -

He places it under the dripping blood, lowering it to the ground -

He then steps back, listening to the rhythmic trickle of blood  
hitting the pot -

Walter staggers back, grabbing a sponge -

He heads over to a PUDDLE of smeared blood on the floor -

He gets on his knees and begins to wipe up the blood -

WALTER

(crying)

I didn't mean to hurt you, sir...  
if you had shot me, you'd be  
mopping up my blood now...

Walter continues to mop up the stain -

WALTER  
I couldn't help it if I got scared.  
I didn't mean it!

Walter stops to listen to the trickling blood - something dawns on him -

WALTER  
It's crazy...it's crazy...  
(Beat)  
I didn't think I had it in me...  
How'd ya do it, Walter...

Walter gets up, faces Lou's off camera corpse and addresses it -

WALTER  
He said go home and make something  
Walter! Make another cat...

Walter looks down at the pot filling with blood -

WALTER  
But I told him I didn't have  
another cat...

Walter then gets an idea, and looks up toward Lou's body -

Walter's expression changes, from one of panic to one of new inspiration -

EXT PAYPHONE - DAY

Art is on the phone -

ART  
No, nobody seems to know where  
he went...  
(Beat)  
why don't you put an A.P.B. out  
and I'll check on it from here...  
(Beat)  
Right...Ok, bye.

Art hangs up the phone -

DISSOLVE

TO  
INT JABBERJAW - DAY

Leonard enters and closes the door - he begins lifting shades and getting the place ready to open -

He heads over to the alcove, something catches his eye -

It is the Dead Cat sculpture -

Leonard stops to look at it, laughing faintly to himself - he then picks it up and inspects it, shaking his head -

He puts it back, positioning it just so - as he turns his back the cat leans forward and crashes to the ground -

Leonard turns around and sees what happened - he picks it up and examines it -

There is a FRACTURE in the plaster - Leonard runs his finger over it -

CLOSE on Leonard's face he notices something -

As Leonard traces his finger over the fracture, he discovers some CAT HAIRS protruding from the sculpture -

Taken aback by the discovery, Leonard puts the sculpture down -

He then pokes it, almost as if he expects a response - Leonard slowly breaks into a knowing smile -

DISSOLVE

TO

EXT STREETS - NIGHT

A MONTAGE of police PATROL CARS driving down various streets -

RADIO OPERATOR(V.O.)

...officer Louis LaRue...age 29,  
five foot eleven, Caucasian, black  
hair, last seen wearing jeans and  
a dark jacket...

DISSOLVE

TO

INT JABBERJAW - NIGHT

The joint is jumping as the audience listens to a MUSICIAN playing assorted GARBAGE from the scrap yard -

Several PATRONS examine the Dead Cat sculpture -

Cuff and Link sit at a table noticing the commotion with contempt -

CUFF

Look at that, man. Big deal.

LINK

I know.

CUFF

I mean it's like, you know, I do  
my art because that's what I am,

you know? I'm an artist. I'm not like a banker, you know. Like I create.

LINK

I know, man.

CUFF

But it bugs me when someone rips off our ideas, our concepts, and people freak out about it, you know, and tell us ours stinks!

LINK

I know, man.

CUFF

I mean, screw them, you know? I'm just gonna go right on creating 'cause it comes from here -  
(pounds chest)  
you know?

LINK

I know, man.

Just then Art enters the club -

Cuff and Link see him come in - Walter busses an adjacent table -

CUFF

And, man who is this dude? He's like always casing the joint.

A shady - looking couple behind Cuff and Link notice Art also, and decide to hastily leave -

LINK

I wonder what his deal is.

CUFF

I think he's looking for you, man... it's all finally catching up with you!

Link sees Walter -

LINK

No I think they're looking for Walter, 'cause he's wanted for stealing -

Walter leaves with the tray pretending not to have heard the comment - he nevertheless CRASHES into a Leonard, spilling the contents of the tray -

CUFF

Jeez, take it easy Walter!

Walter crouches and picks up the items -

Leonard looks down at him with disdain - Walter then stands up -

WALTER

Sorry about that Mr. De Santis!

Leonard says nothing for a beat -

LEONARD

That's alright Walter...

Leonard then gestures to a table -

LEONARD

Put the tray down...have a seat.

The comment takes Walter by surprise -

WALTER

H-have a seat?

LEONARD

Have a seat -

Cuff and Link watch as Walter sits down -

WALTER

I thought I'm not supposed to sit with the customers...

LEONARD

Now why shouldn't you, Walter? Things are different now...

WALTER

They are?

Leonard sits down, facing him - he lights a cigarette -

LEONARD

Of course they are, Walter.

Carla then makes her way toward their table -

LEONARD

You've arrived. You've been recognized. You're a talent, a creative force to be reckoned with.

CARLA

Leonard, what are you doing?

Leonard and Walter notice Carla -

WALTER

Hiya Carla.

LEONARD

What am I doing? I'm just telling  
Walter the truth.

Carla sits down and listens -

LEONARD

A man came in here and wanted to  
pay me fifty dollars for the cat.  
In fact, he took it home to show  
to his wife, in case you're wondering  
where it was.

Carla looks at Walter -

LEONARD

You know what that proves?

WALTER

What, Mr. De Santis?

LEONARD

It proves I've underestimated  
Walter's ability. His work has  
hit a nerve in the collective  
zeitgeist of the art community.  
It has enormous realism - you can  
hardly tell it from the real  
thing!

LINK

Sounds like he's busting your  
chops, Walter.

CARLA

Are you trying to be funny?

LEONARD

I'm totally serious!

Leonard gets close to Walter - puts his hand on his  
shoulder -

LEONARD

The question is what are you going  
to make next, Walter? Did you  
make that dog yet, or that parakeet?

(beat)

How about making something out of  
the cockroaches in your room?

WALTER

I-I already got a new one!

CARLA

Great! What is it?

WALTER

It's a...full length life-size figure!

CARLA

What's it called?

WALTER

(Beat)

Murdered man.

Leonard takes his hand off Walter's shoulder -

LEONARD

Murdered...man?...

CARLA

When do we get to see it?

WALTER

Well...any time, I guess.

LINK

(sarcastically)

Man that's a trippy name, kinda like the Warhol mayhem series...

CUFF

I saw a statue once called The Third Time Phyllis Saw Me She Exploded.

LINK

Now what kind of statue was that?

CUFF

I don't know it was made out of driftwood and dipped in sulfuric acid. It was out there...

LEONARD

Well...why murdered man?

WALTER

I don't know, it just happened, I guess.

(Beat)

I didn't mean to.

LEONARD

You didn't mean to what?



WALTER

Well, I mean it could have been something else, but it just worked out that way.

CARLA

It's called spontaneity, Leonard. Get with the program.

WALTER

Yeah it was all just an accident.

Leonard has suddenly become pale - he gets up -

CARLA

Are you alright?

LEONARD

Yes...I'm uh...I'm fine.

LINK

You don't look so hot...

CUFF

You must have had some of the food -

Cuff drops a chunk of whole wheat bread onto his plate -

Leonard composes himself -

LEONARD

Excuse me...

Leonard heads off -

CARLA

I think he really is sick...

LINK

So who isn't around here?

Leonard heads over to the other end of the club -

A PLUMP MAN enters the club, looking around -

He spots Leonard, and makes his way toward him -

Leonard takes a deep breath - the plump man approaches -

PLUMP MAN

I tried to contact you by phone but I couldn't...

LEONARD

Excuse me I have to make a call...

Leonard picks up the phone and dials a number -

PLUMP MAN

I want that cat. I'll pay you one thousand dollars - cash.

LEONARD

(on the phone)

I'm trying to reach Lieutenant Beldere...

PLUMP MAN

What offers have you got for it? I won't be out-bidder. I'm a wealthy man and I don't mind paying for something I want.

LEONARD

I can't talk right now.

PLUMP MAN

What do you want for it? Two thousand? Three thousand?

LEONARD

No...look I'm busy...

PLUMP MAN

Listen to me...I don't want to lose this piece -

LEONARD

(on the phone)

I'm holding for Lieutenant Beldere!

PLUMP MAN

Listen to me, listen to me...I've been collecting art pieces all over the world for years and let me tell you something. This newcomer Walter Paisley has it, whatever it is, the X factor, that indefinable quality that separates the greats from the hacks, and I want that cat in my hands. Are you listening to me?

LEONARD

Can't you see I'm busy here?

The plump man reaches inside his jacket -

PLUMP MAN

Alright you want to play hard... to insure I get that cat I'll give you five thousand dollars - cash, right here, right now...

The plump man pulls an envelope out of his jacket - this gets

Leonard's attention -

PLUMP

Two thousand for the cat, and  
a first look at the kid's next  
stuff.

Leonard looks at the plump man -

VOICE ON PHONE (V.O.)

Lieutenant Beldere.

Leonard hangs up and faces the plump man -

LEONARD

Someone has the cat just now but  
I'll have him back in a few days.

(Beat)

And you can have it for five thousand  
dollars.

The plump man breaks into a smile, pats Leonard on the arm and  
shakes his hand -

PLUMP MAN

Alright...thank you sir, I  
consider it a bargain.

The plump man gives Leonard his card, and heads out -

PLUMP MAN

Call me when you're ready...  
good night.

Leonard watches him leave - Leonard takes a deep breath as carla  
approaches him -

CARLA

Are you feeling better Leonard?

Leonard looks at her -

LEONARD

Yeah, I'm feeling a lot better.

CARLA

Listen, I'm going over to Walter's  
after the place closes. I want to  
get a look at Murdered Man. Do you  
want to come along?

Leonard looks at her for a beat, then nods -

Onstage, the industrial musician finishes up his song, and the crowd  
applauds -

DISSOLVE

TO  
INT WALTER'S ROOM - NIGHT

The door opens and Walter walks in, followed by Carla and Leonard -

Walter turns on the overhead lamp - In the center of the room is a  
TALL OBJECT covered by a sheet -  
Leonard closes the door behind him -

Carla looks at the object -

CARLA  
Look at the size of it!

WALTER  
It's not really that big I got  
it on kind of a stand...

CARLA  
Let's see it.

WALTER  
Uh, well, I'm a little nervous,  
I never did a person before.

CARLA  
You can do anything you want if  
you set your mind to it.

Leonard leans back against the door and swallows -

LEONARD  
It's hot in here...

WALTER  
You want me to open a window or  
something?

CARLA  
Come on Walter, take off the  
sheet.

Walter obliges, pulling down the sheet to reveal his creation -

It is LOU, standing upright and looking down at the three spectators  
- his skull is CLEAVED right down the middle from the top of his  
head to the bridge of his nose -

Leonard and Carla stare in dumbstruck silence -

Walter looks at their expressions, clutching the sheet -

WALTER  
Don't you like it?

Carla continues to stare for a beat -

CARLA

Like it?

(Beat)

It's a masterpiece. I've never  
seen anything like it before...  
and I hope I never see anything  
like it again.

Walter smiles and looks at his creation -

WALTER

Me too.

LEONARD

I have to sit down.

Carla walks around the statue -

CARLA

Take it in...in it's eloquence...  
modern man in all his...self  
pity...

Leonard drops down onto a hardwood chair -

CARLA

How did you ever find it all  
in yourself, Walter?

WALTER

It wasn't easy.

Carla looks back at Leonard, who has an ashen look on his  
face -

CARLA

What's the matter with you?

LEONARD

Nothing...nothing at all.

CARLA

I've never seen anyone so...  
squeamish.

(Beat)

Well, what's your opinion,  
Leonard?

LEONARD

Don't ask.

CARLA

Oh come on! Even you can see  
its value.

The head stares back at the two -

CARLA

Do you think you or I could have  
conceived of such a thing, much  
less have executed it?

Leonard says nothing -

CARLA

Well then admit it, it's a work  
of genius.

LEONARD

I admit it.

Walter heads over to Leonard -

WALTER

We can bring it down to the  
Jabberjaw.

Leonard gets up -

LEONARD

No. Why don't you cover it up  
Walter...

CARLA

Why not?

LEONARD

Why don't you cover it up, Walter!

Walter throws the sheet back over the sculpture -

CARLA

What's wrong with you, why do  
you want to hide it?

LEONARD

Well, I've been thinking...

(Beat)

I didn't realize how much...talent  
Walter actually had. It would be  
wrong for us to show them one at  
a time.

(Beat)

Dead wrong.

CARLA

You're right. We should build a  
collection first.

Leonard backs up, looking at the two of them -

LEONARD

That's it...that's the idea!  
Maybe when it's big enough we

can have a show!

Walter rushes over to Leonard -

WALTER

A show?! Like this Sunday?

LEONARD

N-no! Not exactly, I mean you  
take years and years...

Leonard looks at the sculpture, composing himself -

LEONARD

It will take years to make that  
many statues.

(Beat)

But your work would be featured.

CARLA

That's the idea, Walter. It's the  
only way to gain recognition. All  
the big art critics and art dealers  
would be there, it would be an  
event.

LEONARD

Yeah then you could unload - sell  
this stuff for a lot more.

WALTER

A show..how soon can we go?

LEONARD

These things take time Walter...  
but for now you've got to break  
out of this one...avenue you're  
on...

Leonard heads over to Carla -

LEONARD

Carla and I will guide you, help  
develop and evolve your work...maybe  
lead you toward something more abstract...

CARLA

Abstract? With his talent for realism?

LEONARD

You see the direction his realism  
takes! It's unhealthy!

WALTER

Look you said I was a genius! If  
I'm a genius I don't want to be a  
bus boy anymore!

LEONARD

Well maybe you have a point there,  
you shouldn't keep working at the  
Jabberjaw. Look...

Leonard digs into his pocket and peels off TWO HUNDRED  
FIFTY DOLLARS -

LEONARD

Now look - Dead Cat's money in  
the bank, I'm sure that man's going  
to buy it, so here's your half  
in advance - twenty five dollars.

Leonard hands the money to an ecstatic Walter -

LEONARD

And if you need more, I've got it,  
don't worry.

(Beat)

I have faith in you Walter.

Walter heads over to Carla holding up the money and smiling like a  
simpleton -

WALTER

Gee..twenty five dollars for  
something I made!

CARLA

Now you're a professional!

Leonard heads over to the door and opens it -

LEONARD

Let's go!

Carla gives a look of attraction to Walter and heads toward the door  
-

CARLA

Good night, Walter. And keep  
up the good work.

Walter smiles at her as Leonard gently takes her arm -

LEONARD

But don't burn yourself out, Walter.  
You've got all the time in the  
world.

(Beat)

Let's go!

Leonard pulls Carla into the courtyard -

Walter heads over to the door -



WALTER

Good night.

Walter closes the door and gazes at the money again - he is truly thrilled, and begins to JUMP around the room, HOOTING and HOLLERING -

EXT COURTYARD - NIGHT

Mrs. Swicker walks by Walter's door, overhearing him carrying on -

INT WALTER'S ROOM - NIGHT

Mrs. Swicker opens the door watching Walter jumping around -

MRS. SWICKER

What's going on!

Walter SPINS around and stops jumping - he runs over to Mrs. Swicker holding the money -

WALTER

I'm an artist Mrs. Swicker! A professional artist!

Walter YANKS the sheet off the statue -

Mrs. Swicker stares at the apparition, looking as if she's about to lose her lunch -

She gently back up into the hall -

MRS. SWICKER

Good night...

Mrs. Swicker closes the door abruptly -

Walter turns around, and gleefully continues to stare at the money -

DISSOLVE

TO

INT JABBERJAW - NIGHT

Another busy night at the club - a DJ spins a hybrid assortment of records resulting in a most irritating sound -

Leonard sits close to Carla, smoking, as she nurses a glass of wine -

Art arrives again, looking around the room -

He passes Maxwell, who sits at a table with Mayolia, Charlie, and an attractive blond girl - once again, Maxwell is somewhat intoxicated -

MAXWELL

One of the greatest advantages

to modern poetry is the overload  
of sensations from which to draw,  
everywhere in our minute lives,  
our TV's and our information  
traffic jam! The goal is to  
filter those sensations to  
articulate our awareness! And  
I'm proud to say my poetry is  
understood only by that small  
minority which is...aware!

ATTRACTIVE GIRL

Aware of what?

MAYOLIA

Not of anything stupid! Just  
aware!

Art passes Cuff and Link, sitting at a table smoking cigarettes -

CUFF

There's that weird dude again.

LINK

Man if this place doesn't cool  
out I'm gonna hang out somewhere  
else...

The singer continues to sing his song - Link then sees something -

LINK

Get a load of this -

Then Walter walks through the front door - his look has changed  
considerably - he's dressed like an eccentric artist, wearing  
unusual clothes, and looking somewhat ridiculous - he strides into  
the club -

People notice him and greet him as he nods to various  
people -

A couple points, and talks about him -

He passes Leonard and Carla - Leonard does a double-take -

CARLA

Hi Walter.

WALTER

Carla...

Walter sits down at a table next to Leonard and Carla - a waiter  
approaches -

WALTER

I'll have a Taft's-Sorrel mineral  
water, a piece of papaya cheese

cake, and, and a grande cappuccino.

Walter lights up a small CIGAR, looking at Carla confidently - a piece of TOBACCO gets stuck on his lip, which he has to spit off -

Maxwell approaches Walter's table and extends his hand -

MAXWELL

Walter.

Walter shakes his hand -

WALTER

Maxwell.

MAXWELL

I see the rewards of achievement  
have come your way.

Maxwell sits down -

WALTER

Well I am starting to have some  
success now, with my pieces...

Cuff and Link witness the encounter -

CUFF

Man look at that get up !

LINK

Looks like that cat paid  
off in spades.

CUFF

Let's check out the scene.

Cuff gets up -

LINK

I'm with you.

Leonard stands and addresses Maxwell and Walter -

LEONARD

I was just suggesting to Walter  
that he experiment with more  
abstract themes.

Maxwell looks at Leonard with contempt -

MAXWELL

Why do you suggest anything to  
Walter? Are you the spokesman  
for society coming to poke  
your stifling finger in his

eye!

Cuff and Link show up -

CUFF

And a hearty good evening to ya!

Cuff and link sit down, flanking Maxwell, who shifts and looks at the two of them - Leonard sits back down with Carla -

MAXWELL

Oh now who invited these two, down from the clouds?

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Maxwell!

Maxwell turns -

We see the shrill voice belongs to ALICE, a well-developed blonde in a tight sweater, who makes her way toward the table -

MAXWELL

Clear the table and bring me a bowl, I may be sick!

Alice approaches the table -

CUFF

It's Alice Ziobro, here to spread a little cheer -

Alice looks at Maxwell -

ALICE

Do you like my haircut?

MAXWELL

It's enchanting.

Alice takes a seat near Cuff and Link -

CARLA

Where have you been, Alice?

ALICE

(smugly)

I was up in Seattle working on a video.

LINK

Oh yeah? For who?

ALICE

Petroleum Function.

LINK

No way!

ALICE

Yeah it's for their new CD.

Alice then turns her attention to Walter -

ALICE

(disdainfully)

Don't you work here?

WALTER

Not anymore!

MAXWELL

That's right, Walter has sold  
his first sculpture.

Alice is unimpressed by the news -

ALICE

Oh. Really.

Cuff gets close to Alice -

CUFF

This guy's a clown and he ripped  
off our concepts.

ALICE

Oh yeah?

CUFF

Now he's trying to act cool about  
it.

(Beat)

Someone needs to pop his bubble.

ALICE

What are you thinking?

Cuff whispers to Alice, and the two of them start laughing -

MAXWELL

And what project looms on the  
horizon, Walter?

WALTER

Uh, I don't know.

Alice faces Walter -

ALICE

I do life modeling, you know.

Walter looks at Alice -

ALICE  
Would you like to do me?

WALTER  
I just might.

ALICE  
I'd be glad to help.  
(Beat)  
For \$50 an hour.

Cuff and Link crack up -

LEONARD  
Never mind that. Walter's going  
to try something abstract.

MAXWELL  
There you go again! I may take my  
business to the Snake Pit!

CARLA  
As a matter of fact I was going to  
suggest to Walter that he try a  
female figure. It would be a  
departure from the mayhem/death  
theme. You really should, Walter.

Carla looks at him -

CARLA  
If you like, I'll be your model,  
for free.

Walter looks at her -

WALTER  
I couldn't. Not you.

Leonard gets closer to Carla -

LEONARD  
(suggestively)  
Would you pose for me for free?

CARLA  
Well, it all depends, Leonard...

Walter sees this and is FLUSHED WITH JEALOUSY -

CUFF  
Man if you want to be a legit  
artist you have to do nudes,  
nudes, nudes...

LINK

Right. Ain't no body of  
work complete without some...  
nudes -

This is about all Maxwell can take - Cuff cackles like a buffoon -

MAXWELL

Get these Philistines out of here!

ALICE

Oh let's change the subject I'm  
sick of hearing about sculpture!  
No one knows how to do that anymore,  
especially the bus boy from the  
Jabberjaw...

WALTER

Who do you think you're talking  
about!!

Alice laughs condescendingly -

ALICE

Look at you! Who do think you  
are. You're just a poser trying,  
and failing, to fit into the scene!

MAXWELL

Strong words...  
(under his breath)  
...for such a simple mind.

ALICE

I think this bit about him being  
this discovered sculptor is a  
bunch of baloney and a cry for  
help.

WALTER

That's not true I am a sculptor!

ALICE

Oh yeah?

Alice picks up a piece of CAKE -

ALICE

Prove it! Make something out  
of this!

Walter SMUSHES the cake onto Alice's palm -

WALTER

There! Flat Cake!

Maxwell BELLOWS with laughter - Alice wipes off her hand -

ALICE  
If you were an artist you could  
have created something!

WALTER  
I'm going home!

Walter gets up and leaves -

Carla turns and raises her glass to Alice, smiling -

CARLA  
Alice?  
(smile fades)  
You're a bitch.

Dejected, Walter makes his way out of the club, storming past  
Mayolia -

Mayolia watches Walter leave -

DISSOLVE

TO

EXT JABBERJAW - NIGHT

Alice makes her way out the door - heads down the steps and walks  
off -

Then out of the shadows we see Walter, who has been waiting for her  
to leave -

When the coast is clear, he begins to follow her...

EXT BUNGALOW - NIGHT

Alice enters the courtyard - she walks over to the front door of her  
bungalow, enters, and closes the door behind  
her -

Just then Walter stealthily enters the courtyard -

He approaches Alice's door, waits a beat, then gently  
knocks -

Alice opens the door and looks at Walter -

ALICE  
What are you doing here?

WALTER  
I wanted to apologize for  
being nasty to you this evening.

Alice is unimpressed -



ALICE

So you apologized! Good night!

Alice SLAMS the door right in Walter's face -

Walter takes a few steps back - he clenches his jaw then BANGS on the door -

Alice RIPS the door open -

ALICE

Listen schmuck, why don't you get out of here and let me go to bed!

WALTER

I didn't finish talking to you!

ALICE

Well I'm done talking to you, what do I have to do, draw you a diagram!

WALTER

I decided to make a female figure after all!

(Beat)

I want you to pose for it.

Alice looks him up and down for a beat, changing her tone -

ALICE

(sarcastic)

Well I'm touched.

(beat)

You're serious, aren't you?

WALTER

Yes. Fifty dollars an hour, right?

ALICE

Yeah.

Alice laughs, and stares at Walter for a beat -

ALICE

Well, if you've got the money, I don't mind posing.

(Beat)

When do you want to start work?

Walter looks up at her sheepishly -

WALTER

Tonight.

ALICE

What, right now?

WALTER

Uh-huh.

Alice looks him up and down again -

ALICE

Hold on...I'll get my coat.

DISSOLVE

TO

EXT COURTYARD - NIGHT

Walter and Alice head over to his front door -

ALICE

It's kind of dark -

WALTER

Shh!

Alice shuts up and the two of them quietly head into his room,  
closing the door -

Just then Mrs. Swicker opens her door down the hall, poking her head  
out -

INT WALTER'S ROOM - NIGHT

Alice begins to undress -

ALICE

You could use a little more  
heat in this place -

Walter drags a big bag of PLASTER out of a closet - he drags it to a  
new addition in the room, a large TROUGH -

WALTER

It's bad for the clay. You'll  
get used to it...

Walter then props up a chair -

ALICE

I'm almost ready -

WALTER

Sit in this chair, and I'll pose  
you.

Walter heads over to the lump of clay on the table -

Alice sits down, back to camera, totally nude -

ALICE

Do you like what you see?

Walter does a double take, and swallows hard at the voluptuous figure before him -

WALTER

Yes.

(Beat)

Just stay like that.

Walter nervously kneads the clay -

ALICE

That doesn't look like very much clay.

WALTER

Oh it's enough...

ALICE

Are you nervous, Walter?

WALTER

N-no...

Alice sexily shifts in her seat -

ALICE

Not even a little bit?

WALTER

I already told you I'm not.

ALICE

When's the last time you had a totally nude girl in your room...

WALTER

(swallows)

Um...

ALICE

Without a stitch of clothing on, sitting and facing you...

Walter fumbles with the clay -

ALICE

A girl with a body like mine?

WALTER

You're breaking my concentration!

Alice laughs -

ALICE

Walter can I ask you something?

WALTER

What!

ALICE

Are you a virgin?

Walter stands up -

WALTER

For cryin' out loud what does  
that have to do with anything!

ALICE

It's just an innocent question.

(Beat)

Besides I just wanted to clarify  
your intentions.

WALTER

Whaddya mean?

ALICE

Well I just wanted to make sure  
you know, fully and completely,  
that you're never gonna get any  
from me, at least in this lifetime.

This comment stings Walter - he clenches his jaw, and gets up -

WALTER

Look -

(Beat)

This pose is all wrong!

ALICE

I'll pose any way you want.

Walter then grabs up a SCARF, and approaches Alice -

Walter then hands the scarf to Alice -

WALTER

I want you to put this around  
your neck...

Alice takes the scarf and places it around her neck -

WALTER

Just like that...that's right.

Walter then steps behind Alice, grabbing the ends of the scarf  
gently -

Then suddenly Walter PULLS the ends hard, choking Alice -

Alice clutches the scarf and struggles, panicking and gasping for air -

Walter tugs at the scarf with all his might -

Alice kicks and tries to free herself, to no avail -

Walter continues to strangle her, clenching his jaws -

INT CARLA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Carla, Maxwell, Cuff, Link, and another girl sit around the living room - Carla hands Maxwell a plate -

Maxwell inspects the plate -

CARLA

Here you go, enjoy.

MAXWELL

I hope this was made with egg whites!

CARLA

It was.

MAXWELL

What's this sauce! I'm lactose intolerant.

CARLA

Don't worry it's a non-dairy sauce made from soy milk.

MAXWELL

Hm.

Maxwell takes a bite - someone knocks at the door and Cuff goes to answer it -

Cuff answers the door -

CUFF

Hey it's mister perjury!

In walks Walter, who notices everyone there -

WALTER

Hi.

MAXWELL

Good morning Walter!

Walter approaches Carla, a little dejected he wasn't

invited -

WALTER

Hi Carla.

(Beat)

What's going on?

CARLA

These guys came by to help me try out some of my new organic recipes.

WALTER

Oh...

MAXWELL

Wheat germ omelette, guava nectar and garbanzo sprinkled with smoked yeast. Join us?

WALTER

No thanks. Sounds good though.

MAXWELL

Suit yourself.

CARLA

What's up, Walter?

WALTER

I came over to see you.

(Beat)

I brought something...I wanted to show you.

CARLA

Oh yeah?

WALTER

Yeah. Can some of you guys help me?

Maxwell puts down his plate -

CARLA

Is it murdered man?

WALTER

Better!

Carla gets up -

CARLA

Come on!

Maxwell claps his hands twice, not getting up -

MAXWELL

All hands!

Cuff and Link follow Carla -

DISSOLVE

TO

INT CARLA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Walter, Cuff, and Link carry an OBJECT covered by a sheet - Maxwell watches -

LINK

Man this is heavy!

CUFF

Yeah what's this, Murdered Elephant?

MAXWELL

Put it in the middle of the room!

CARLA

When did you make this, Walter?

WALTER

Uh, last night. It doesn't take me very long.

The men put the object down, out of breath -

CUFF

Well let's see it, man!

Walter undoes a string and lifts off the sheet to reveal -

ALICE, naked and seated in a chair, clutching at a scarf around her throat -

Everyone stares at it in awe -

CARLA

Walter...I can't believe it.

MAXWELL

I'm honored to know this man.

WALTER

So you think it's nice?

LINK

Man, she's beautiful.

WALTER

(to Carla)

You think she's better than Murdered Man?

CARLA

Well I can't say that Walter! She's  
incomparable. They're both great.

MAXWELL

I'm...moved. I'm moved to write  
about this!

(Beat)

Tonight, at the Jabberjaw, I will  
recite a new poem, and we'll  
celebrate in your honor!

Maxwell puts his hand on Walter's shoulder -

Carla then kisses Walter, a peck on the lips - Walter is  
flabbergasted -

INT JABBERJAW - NIGHT

A LOUD BAND wraps up a song, and the singer CRASHES into the drum  
set - people applaud -

Walter sits in a big wooden chair with a paper CROWN on his head and  
a paper STAR on his lapel, looking a little tipsy - in one hand is a  
GOBLET, in the other a PLUNGER -

Art and a new UNDERCOVER COP stand at the entrance of the club -

ART

Alright, let's split up and keep  
a low profile. You hear anything,  
you let me know.

The undercover cop nods, and heads off -

ART

I'm going to get to the bottom  
of this...

Carla approaches Walter with a bottle of CHAMPAGNE -

CARLA

More champagne, your majesty?

WALTER

Here here...

Carla pours some into the goblet -

CARLA

Where where...

WALTER

There there...

The goblet overflows -



WALTER

That's good...

Carla sits down next to Walter on the edge of the stage - Walter leans over to her with a drunken smile on his face -

WALTER

May I please have another little  
kiss?

CARLA

Walter! Jeez!

WALTER

(smile fades)

Sorry...

Carla laughs - Walter smiles again and Carla puts her head against his arm -

Leonard surveys the crowd from another part of the room -

Maxwell then heads to the stage where Walter is sitting and raises his hands -

Scattered applause erupts -

MAXWELL

Order! Order!

The crowd quiets down as Maxwell puts his hand on Walter's shoulder -

MAXWELL

Walter...

(booming voice)

The bird that flies now pays  
later through the nose of  
ambidextrous apathy -

Walter strains to understand -

MAXWELL

Necrophiles may dance upon the  
placemats in an orgy of  
togetherness -

Walter looks around the room as Maxwell gathers steam -

MAXWELL

The highway of life cuts sharply  
through the shady ghettos and the  
ivy-covered tombs, and laughter

rains from every capsule in the  
star-spangled firmament -

Cuff, Link, and Mayolia listen from an adjacent table -

MAXWELL (O.S.)

And in the deep freeze it is the  
children's hour -

Maxwell punches holes in the air with his finger -

MAXWELL

And no one knows that Duncan is  
murdered and no one knows that  
Walter Paisley is born -

Maxwell slaps his hand on Walter's shoulder, spilling some of  
Walter's champagne - Walter smiles and looks at Maxwell through his  
drunken haze -

MAXWELL

(getting louder)

Duncan knows...Tuesday sunrise  
knows...alley cats and garbage cans  
and satellite dishes, and you and I,  
and the nude descending the staircase,  
and all such things with souls, we  
shall hear that Walter Paisley is born!

Walter looks at Maxwell with a half-smile, completely lost -

MAXWELL

(loud)

Ring rubber bells! Beat cotton  
gongs! Strike silken cymbals! Play  
leather flutes -

Leonard listens with a blank expression on his face -

Art slouches at a table and looks at Maxwell like he's a jerk - he  
shifts, unable to take much more of this -

MAXWELL (O.S.)

The cats and cans and you and I  
and all such things with souls,  
we shall hear that Walter Paisley  
is born!

Maxwell raises his clenched fists -

MAXWELL

And the soul become flesh - Walter  
Paisley is born!

Maxwell stands back - people applaud, and Maxwell bows his head and  
leaves the stage -

Cuff claps enthusiastically - Link slouches behind him, half-clapping - Mayolia seems too moved to clap -

CUFF

That was cool, man, that was cool.

MAYOLIA

That was the greatest rap I ever heard!

CUFF

It sent me.

Cuff then turns to Link -

CUFF

What did he say?

LINK

Didn't you hear him?

CUFF

No man I'm on my own plane.

Walter sits onstage by himself, still holding his plunger -

Maxwell sits down at a table with Charlie and two attractive girls -

CHARLIE

Maxwell that was magnificent.

Maxwell slugs back the rest of his champagne -

1ST PRETTY GIRL

You're really...eloquent.

Maxwell clunks the glass on the table -

MAXWELL

Walter deserves every word of it!

1ST PRETTY GIRL

Makes me so glad I'm aware.

Maxwell puts his hand over the girl's hand -

Carla approaches Walter, who reels a bit in the chair - he has a sad look on his face -

WALTER

Did you hear what he said?

CARLA

Yes Walter.

WALTER

All about me...

Carla nods and smiles -

WALTER  
It's true, isn't it?

CARLA  
Every word...

Walter slowly smiles -

DISSOLVE

TO  
INT JABBERJAW - NIGHT

The crowd has thinned out, people are leaving -

Walter polishes off the dregs of a bottle of champagne as Leonard watches him -

LEONARD  
You better hold off on the  
bubbly.

WALTER  
Yeah, why?

LEONARD  
You might talk too much.

WALTER  
Yeah and what would I say?

MAXWELL (O.S.)  
Are you two grinders ignoring us?

Walter staggers over toward Maxwell, who is sitting with Carla, Charlie, and the two attractive girls -

WALTER  
Oh not me Maxwell, I wouldn't  
ignore you.

He puts his hand on Maxwell's shoulder -

WALTER  
I know what it is to be ignored.

CARLA  
Tell us what you're going to  
make next, Walter.

WALTER  
(reeling)  
I'm gonna make the most wildest  
wittiest things you ever seen...  
gonna make big statues and li'l

statues, tall statues n' short  
statues...

Walter takes his crown off -

WALTER

I'm gonna make statues of nobodies  
and statues of famous people, statues  
of actors -

(looking at Maxwell)

and poets...and people who sell things  
on television...and a statue of the  
mayor, and some rock singers and  
their instrument friends...

The group listens to Walter -

WALTER

An' everyone will say Walter let  
me shake your hand...it's a real  
pleasure to have known you...

MAXWELL

(applauding)

Here here!

The group claps -

Leonard watches in the background as Walter polishes off his glass -

DISSOLVE

TO

EXT STREET - NIGHT

Walter staggers down the street -

WALTER

Alley cats and garbage cans...they  
know that Walter Paisley is born...

Walter removes the star from his lapel and continues to stagger down  
the street -

WALTER

Ring rubber bells, beat cotton  
gongs, strike silken cymbals...

Walter turns the corner -

WALTER

Tell us what you're gonna do  
next Walter...

Walter bounces against a wall -

WALTER

(loud)

I'm gonna make big statues and  
little statues, movie stars and  
poets, and people who sell things  
on television, and the mayor, and  
some rock singers...

Walter stops walking and leans his hand against the wall -

WALTER

(Beat)

What are you gonna do next, Walter?

Walter all of a sudden gets a sad look on his face -

WALTER

What am I gonna do next...  
what am I gonna do next...

Walter looks like he's about to cry -

WALTER

I gotta do something before they  
forget me...I know what it's like  
to be ignored...

Walter thinks, then heads off, down the alley -

EXT LUMBER YARD - NIGHT

CLOSE on a table saw - a CARPENTER pulls the saw over a piece of  
wood, then turns it off -

He picks up the wood and inspects the cut - he then turns around,  
only to be startled by Walter -

CARPENTER

Who are you? Whaddya want?

WALTER

(slurred)

Life is nothing but a homeless  
guy on th' bus of art...

CARPENTER

Huh?

Walter gets RIGHT in the carpenter's face -

WALTER

(slurred)

What is not creation is rice  
cakes...let them all crumble  
to feed the creator...

The carpenter stares at him for a beat, trying to avoid Walter's  
boozy breath -

CARPENTER

Beat it, ya drunk, or I'll call  
the cops!

The carpenter turns the saw back on -

Walter SPINS the man around by his shoulder -

WALTER  
(loud, slurred)  
All else is rice cakes!

The carpenter SHOVES Walter hard - he lands on his ass -

CARPENTER  
Get out of here, you god - damn  
freak or I'll split your head  
with a two-by-four!

Walter staggers to his feet and takes a few steps back - the  
carpenter gives him a wary look for a beat and then continues sawing  
-

Walter then POUNCES on the man, choking him -

The carpenter tries to fight back but Walter is possessed with a  
psychotic strength -

Walter begins to gain the upper hand forcing the man's neck closer  
and closer to the sawblade -

The carpenter sees the blade, and struggles with all his might to  
get free -

CARPENTER  
No...no!

Walter forces the man's face down on the metal -

CARPENTER  
Stop...no...NOOOOOO!

The saw makes a CUTTING noise -

CARPENTER  
Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!

FADE OUT  
FADE IN

EXT JABBERJAW - DAY

Leonard gets a PAPER out of a VENDING MACHINE -

He reads the headline - "HEADLESS MAN FOUND IN LUMBERYARD"

Leonard reads it for a beat -

Walter then approaches, carrying a box -

WALTER  
Hello Leonard! Beautiful morning,  
isn't it?

LEONARD  
It was.

Leonard lowers the paper - his face drops -

LEONARD  
What do you have in the box?

WALTER  
Just wait till you see this!

Walter opens the box and removes the contents -

It is the HEAD of the carpenter - Walter shoves the sculpture in  
Leonard's face -

Leonard drops the paper and staggers back -

WALTER  
Whatsamatter Leonard?

LEONARD  
(Beat)  
You made...a bust...  
WALTER  
(gleefully)  
Yeah isn't it wonderful?

Leonard takes a few steps back -

WALTER  
Whatsamatter Leonard?

LEONARD  
Put it down, Walter.

Walter's smile fades, and he puts the head down - Leonard addresses  
him -

LEONARD  
Walter...Walter listen carefully.  
(Beat)  
I don't want you to make any  
more statues. Do you understand?  
No more statues.

WALTER  
(hurt)  
Well Why not? I gotta make statues  
Leonard. You heard Maxwell, they



want me to make them.

(Beat)

I can't go back to being a busboy!

LEONARD

Maxwell! He's behind all this with all his stupid blowhard poetry!

(Beat)

Listen, you've got to stop right away! I'm beginning to feel responsible!

WALTER

Well, w-what did you do?

LEONARD

Never mind...

Leonard puts his arm around Walter -

LEONARD

Walter...I decided to have that show for you, right away.

Walter walks with Leonard -

LEONARD

When Carla comes by I'll talk to her. She'll make up some nice invitations. We'll have them printed up.

WALTER

Yeah?

LEONARD

Well invite the critics, and the art collectors...we'll tell them...

DISSOLVE

TO

INT CARLA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

INSERT INVITATION - a fancy invitation to the Jabberjaw to showcase the work of Walter Paisley -

Mayolia fixes up the back of Carla's dress - Cuff and Link slouch in chairs, and Maxwell fumbles with his tie, dressed formally -

MAYOLIA

Well I don't see why we can't go!

MAXWELL

Mister Leonard De Santis is afraid  
to have you come. You who buy  
his coffee, his potables, his food.  
You are the heart and soul and meat  
of the Jabberjaw.

(Beat)

And he slighted you!

CUFF

Did you get an invitation?

MAXWELL

I did not! But I'm going anyway.  
Not to drink his champagne but  
to see Walter's triumph.

Just then Walter walks through the front door, dressed to the nines

-

MAXWELL

After that we go no more!

WALTER

Hiya Maxwell.

Maxwell pats Walter's arm -

MAXWELL

I won't say good luck, Walter.

WALTER

Why not?

MAXWELL

It would imply you could not  
succeed on your ability alone!

Maxwell dramatically exits -

Walter watches him, then heads over to Carla, and smiles -

CARLA

You look so handsome.

Walter looks down at his outfit -

WALTER

I do?

Walter then looks at Carla -

WALTER

So do you.

Cuff and Link crack up at his comment -

WALTER

I mean, you look so pretty.

CARLA

Thank you.

WALTER

Are you ready?

CARLA

Ready? We've got plenty of time.

WALTER

I know. But I wanted to talk to you.

Carla looks at Walter for a beat -

CARLA

Ok...

Carla grabs her coat and bag -

CARLA

We can go now if you like.

Walter and carla head out -

CARLA

(to the others)

Goodbye.

WALTER

Bye!

LINK

(dryly)

Break a leg.

Walter and Carla head out, closing the door behind them -

CUFF

Man, why do you suppose Walter wants to get her alone?

(Beat)

You suppose he could be physically attracted to her?

LINK

No man, he ain't the type. He don't get enough vitamin E.

CUFF

Maxwell gave him a bottle of wheat germ oil. Maybe he started taking it.

EXT STREET - NIGHT

Walter and Carla walk down the street - Walter says nothing -

CARLA  
Nice night out...

WALTER  
Hm...

The two say nothing for a beat -

CARLA  
Well...what did you want to talk to me about?

WALTER  
Well...w-what kind of people do you like, Carla?

CARLA  
Oh, I don't know. Smart people. Creative people I guess.

WALTER  
You think I'm creative?

CARLA  
Of course I do!

WALTER  
That means you like me!

Carla looks at Walter -

CARLA  
I like you very much, Walter.

WALTER  
I thought you did on account of you kissed me the other night!

Carla sees where this is going and doesn't like it - the two stop walking -

CARLA  
Well that was for your sculpture of the girl. Your nude in the chair.

WALTER  
Carla -

Walter tries to arrange his thoughts -

WALTER  
I, uh, I've been alone for a

long time, and I know you've  
been alone because you never  
seem to go out with anybody -

Walter looks nervously at his hands -

WALTER  
- even though Leonard's always  
asking you to go out with him and  
I - just -

CARLA  
What are you trying to say?

Walter gestures for Carla to sit down at a nearby bench -they sit  
down -

Walter swallows appearing very nervous -

WALTER  
Carla...  
(Beat)  
I don't want to make statues  
anymore!

CARLA  
You don't?

WALTER  
No.  
(Beat)  
I want to get married.  
(Beat)  
To you.

Carla senses trouble -

CARLA  
Uh...  
(Beat)  
...how long have you been thinking  
about this, Walter?

WALTER  
Oh...f-for a long time. Ever  
since you first came to the club.

Carla looks down at the ground -

WALTER  
You were the only one who was  
ever nice to me!  
(Beat)  
I didn't know you loved me  
until you kissed me.

Carla suddenly feels very awkward - she takes a deep breath and  
prepares for the rejection -

CARLA

Walter, I really do like you.  
And I did kiss you. But...  
that was because of your work.

Walter listens intently to every word -

CARLA

There's more to being in love  
than just that.

Carla gives a sympathetic look to Walter - Walter doesn't react for  
a beat, as if putting two and two together -

WALTER

You mean...you don't love me?

Carla looks down at the ground -

CARLA

I'm afraid that's what I mean.

Walter begins to get very upset -

WALTER

But you gotta love me!  
(Beat)  
Why do you think I made that  
statue of Alice?!

CARLA

Walter, I'm sorry...

WALTER

You just can't be sorry! I wanna -  
I wanna marry you!

Carla looks around -

CARLA

Now calm down Walter!  
(Beat)  
Now, let's go in there, and  
when the show's over, maybe we  
can talk about it.

WALTER

No! I want to talk about it now!

CARLA

Walter...  
(Beat)  
I don't want to hurt your feelings  
but there is no way we're ever going  
to get...together. You know what I  
mean?

WALTER

Why not?!

CARLA

Because...

(Beat)

We're just friends. That's all.  
Just friends.

WALTER

I get it. I see the whole thing  
now. No one knows if Walter Paisley  
is born!

CARLA

Jeez, what is your problem all of a  
sudden?

WALTER

Oh sure, let's string along poor  
Walter, see how far it will take us!

Carla gets up -

CARLA

You're starting to freak me out,  
Walter. I'll see you there.

Carla heads off - Walter watches her leave -

WALTER

You have to love me, Carla...

DISSOLVE

TO

INT JABBERJAW - NIGHT

The hoi polloi of the art community mingle at the private party -

On display are Walter's creations - Dead Cat, Murdered Man,  
Strangled Girl and his bust of the carpenter's head -

People talk about the works in muted voices, as if they are  
serious works of art -

Art, the undercover cop, is also there, eyeing the room -

Maxwell takes an hors d'oeuvre off a passing tray, and nods to  
someone offscreen -

Walter sits alone, dejected - a waitress presents him with a tray of  
champagne glasses -

Walter looks up at the tray -

WALTER

No thanks.

The waitress walks away -

The plump man talks to an ART CRITIC -

CRITIC

We have many artists about but  
no craftsmen.

The critic gestures to the voluptuous figure of Strangled Girl -

CRITIC

This man knows his anatomy.

PLUMP MAN

I'd give five thousand for  
this.

CRITIC

After you've read my review it will  
probably cost you ten thousand.

The critic and the plump man laugh -

Maxwell swaggers over to Walter, putting his empty glass of  
champagne on a passing tray and grabbing up another -

He puts his hand on Walter's shoulder -

MAXWELL

So what's the problem?

Leonard watches them from across the room -

MAXWELL

Why on Earth should you be so  
depressed? Have you heard some  
of the things they've been saying?  
You can make fifty thousand  
on these pieces alone!

WALTER

I thought you didn't respect money!

MAXWELL

I don't! But fifty thou? That's  
not money, that's manna!

Walter gets up -

WALTER

Leave me alone.

Walter sees Carla -

He gets up and heads over to her -



Carla glares back at him - Walter looks at her with a strange gaze in his eyes -

WALTER

I'm sorry about what I said before.

CARLA

(softening)

Forget it.

WALTER

I've been thinking...

(Beat)

Carla, would you do one favor for me?

CARLA

Just about anything, Walter.

WALTER

Would you let me make...a statue of you?

Carla smiles -

CARLA

Would you really like to? That would make me very happy.

WALTER

Ok...tonight. I'll make a statue of you tonight, OK?

Carla smiles and nods - then her smile fades -

Leonard takes a sip of champagne and notices something across the room -

Cuff and Link have crashed the party - they head over and take a look at Murdered Man -

Leonard puts his glass down and heads over to them -

Cuff takes his cigarette and jams it in the mouth of Murdered Man - Leonard approaches -

LINK

Man, we've come to make the scene.

LEONARD

You weren't invited. Now get out of here.

CUFF

I guess we're not good enough to get a private show.

LEONARD

That's right! And we're not open for  
business! This is an art exhibit! No  
bums!

Leonard pushes them out the door as Cuff grabs his cigarette back -

LINK

Man, you're the worst.

LEONARD

Yeah right right - goodbye!

CUFF

That's alright, we got a pressing  
engagement!

LINK

Yeah, right outside the door!

Leonard closes the door behind them -

Carla is looking at the collection - she inspects Dead Cat, the  
carpenter's head -

She then approaches Strangled Girl - She smiles, drinking in the  
sculpture -

Then she sees something that troubles her -

CARLA

Uh - oh.

She looks closely at one of the hands - a FRACTURE has formed on one  
of her fingers -

Carla gently goes to touch it when the piece CRACKS OFF -

Carla picks up the piece and goes to put it back -

She sees a HUMAN FINGER protruding from the sculpture -

Carla stands back, in shock -

She looks around the room - soon shock turns to horror -

She makes a bee-line for the front door but is stopped by Walter -

WALTER

Where are you going Carla?  
Whatsamatter?

Carla is mute with terror for a beat, but manages to get out the  
words -

CARLA

Walter...there's...

WALTER

What?

CARLA

There's...a body inside that statue!

Walter smiles innocently -

WALTER

Well, that's Alice.

Carla is speechless -

WALTER

It's alright, Carla.

(Beat)

Maxwell said it's alright.

Walter takes a few steps closer -

WALTER

Let them become clay in his hands  
so that he might mold them.

Carla is clearly frightened -

CARLA

Walter...stay away from me!

WALTER

Don't you see Carla? I made them  
immortal.

Walter takes a few steps closer -

WALTER

Don't you see? I can do the  
same for you!

Carla waits for a second, then SHOVES Walter out of the way, fleeing  
out the door -

Walter looks around to see if anyone is looking -

Nobody is -

He takes this opportunity to BOLT out the door in pursuit of Carla -  
EXT STREET - NIGHT

Carla runs down the street as fast as she can -

Walter follows, in hot pursuit -

INT JABBERJAW - NIGHT

The critic stands in front of Strangled Girl - Art approaches from  
behind -

The critic has noticed the EXPOSED finger -

CRITIC

Well I'll be. Look at this!

A WOMAN approaches -

CRITIC

There's another work...inside this work.

WOMAN

My Heavens! It looks...like a real finger.

CRITIC

It's unparalleled...reality cased in layers...concealed in a shield of whiteness, blankness...

Art scrutinizes the finger - several other people begin to approach, admiring the discovery -

ART

Yeah...that's reality alright -

Art does not like what he sees -

Art heads over to murdered man -

He inspects the hand - sees a RING shape on one of the fingers -

A horrible realization forms in Art's mind - he grabs a BUTTER KNIFE off a table and begins to chip away at the hand -

Maxwell sees this, begins to stumble over to it -

MAXWELL

Precisely what are you doing!

Art breaks the plaster off the fingers - he inspects the ring on Lou's finger -

ART

Lou...Lou!

(Beat)

Get back!

Everyone spins around as Art grabs a chair - SWINGS IT at Murdered Man -

There is a loud CRASH as Leonard watches Art hit the sculpture - the whole crowd then SCREAMS - the jig is up -

EXT STREET - NIGHT

Carla continues to flee from Walter -

Walter appears to be gaining some ground -

Carla turns a corner -

CARLA

Help!

Walter then follows her around the corner -

INT JABBERJAW - NIGHT

Art, Maxwell, and the critic run over to an ashen-faced Leonard -

ART

Call 911 get a patrol car down  
here - I'm going to get Paisley!

MAXWELL

I'm going with you!

EXT JABBERJAW - NIGHT

Art, Maxwell and the critic burst out the front door - Cuff and Link see them -

CUFF

Hey what's the deal!

MAXWELL

Walter Paisley is a murderer!

CUFF

Man he just chased Carla down the  
street -

Art, Maxwell and the critic head off - Cuff and Link follow them, running -

INT JABBERJAW - NIGHT

Leonard is on the phone, biting his nail -

EXT ALLEY - NIGHT

Carla ducks down an alley and crouches behind a dumpster surrounded by some garbage cans -

Walter turns into the alley, and looks around -

Carla freezes -

Walter then SPOTS HER -

He lunges after her, but Carla throws some garbage cans in front of him and runs away -

Walter throws the cans aside and continues to chase her -

EXT LUMBER YARD - NIGHT

Carla runs into the yard and hides behind a large stack of wood -

Walter then approaches, looks around, then suddenly -

Walter looks around -

Carla hides, but inadvertently KNOCKS OVER a piece of wood -

Walter hears it rattle across the ground - he runs toward the noise

-

Carla grabs a bookshelf-sized PLANK as Walter approaches -

Walter freezes for a beat, a manic expression on his face -

CARLA

Get back Walter...

Walter starts to approach -

CARLA

Get back Walter!

Walter lunges and WHAM! Carla slams the plank over Walter's head -  
he hits the ground -

Carla runs off in the direction she came from -

Walter staggers to his feet, clutching his head - he looks around,  
not knowing which direction Carla went - he runs in the opposite  
direction -

EXT STREET - NIGHT

Walter runs down the street, stopping to catch his breath - he then  
continues to run down the street -

EXT STREET - NIGHT

Carla runs into Art as he pursues Walter -

ART

Are you alright?

CARLA

Yeah - he's flipped out!

ART

Where is he?

Carla gestures with her head and Art takes off -

EXT STREET - NIGHT

Art runs down the street, pulling out his REVOLVER -

EXT ALLEY - NIGHT

Walter runs down the alley -

EXT STREET - NIGHT

Cuff and Link runs down the street, followed by Maxwell and Carla -

Maxwell stops to catch his breath - Carla pushes him forward - the critic follows -

EXT COURTYARD APARTMENTS - NIGHT

Walter looks around the street, desperate -

He then looks toward his house, and runs to the gate -

EXT COURTYARD - NIGHT

Walter flies through the gate -

Mrs. Swicker approaches - Walter nearly CHECKS her into the wall -

MRS. SWICKER

What in the name of -

Walter opens his door and slams it behind him -

INT WALTER'S ROOM - NIGHT

Walter locks the door -

Walter looks around the room, panicking - he accidentally knocks Carla's picture to the ground -

WALTER

What are you gonna do now Walter?

Walter looks in his closet -

Walter then looks up, as if getting an idea -

He begins to frantically barricade his door -

DISSOLVE

TO

EXT COURTYARD - NIGHT

Mrs. Swicker points at Walter's door as Art, Maxwell, Cuff, Link, Carla, and the critic run toward it -

MRS. SWICKER

He's in there - he's gone crazy!

Art tries the door -

ART

Paisley! Open the door!

INT WALTER'S ROOM - NIGHT

Walter frantically mixes the plaster in the trough -

He looks back at the relentless banging at his door, and mixes the plaster with increased fury -

EXT COURTYARD - NIGHT

By this time a whole crowd of people have assembled at Walter's door - Art, Maxwell, and Leonard alternately kick and bash the door - the door begins to give -

ART

Harder!

They continue to bash the door until finally -

INT WALTER'S ROOM - NIGHT

CRASSHHHH!!! The door bursts open and Art, Maxwell, Leonard Carla, Cuff, Link and the critic all stumble in, pushing aside any obstacles -

Everyone begins to pour in but as they look ahead, there is a collective gasp -

They are looking at Walter, HANGING from a NOOSE, and covered in dripping plaster -

The crowd gathers around Walter in stunned silence -

Carla looks remorsefully at Walter -

CARLA

Oh no...Walter...

CRITIC

Unbelievable...this will command a small fortune.

MAXWELL

I suppose he would have called it Hanging Man...

(Beat)

...his greatest work.

PULL BACK to reveal the room of spectators, looking at Walter's final creation -



THE END