

RELIC

screenplay
by
John Raffo

~~based~~ on the novel
by
Douglas Preston and Lincoln Child
and

a screenplay by
Amy Holden Jones

July 21, 1995

MISSING PAGE 58

EXT. SOUTH AMERICAN MOUNTAINS -- NIGHT

Pounding DRUMS vibrate around a large tent-like hut made of animal skin. Smoke and firelight everywhere.

INSIDE THE TENT

A dirt floor surrounded by a ring of stones. An OLD WOMAN sits near a hot fire, MUMBLING intently.

Next to her is a tall sunburnt man. He wears a blue slouch hat with a worn leather band. He is JOHN WHITNEY.

Across the ring is a stone altar surrounded by torches.

CLOSE

On the altar is a black figurine, very old, primitive: A man, down on all fours with strange clawed hands. His face is covered in a horrific mask, along his back a scaly spine.

The drums increase. The woman CHANTS. The fire BURSTS in a spray of sparks and smoke.

The woman bends over and produces a small wooden cup with an ornate handle. She dips the cup in a pot of bubbling dark liquid as the sound of the DRUMS builds.

She hands the cup to Whitney.

Whitney hesitates, drinks it all down. Eyes shut, he gasps and looks up. Around the edges of the smoky room are a dozen DARK-SKINNED MEN dressed in tribal fare, painted faces, shields, weapons.

WHITNEY

The Zenzera....

The woman CHANTS in rhythmic foreign tongue... The tribal men close the circle and CHANT alonge....

John Whitney trembles, sweat beading on his brow as the DRUMS continue, louder and louder....

IN THE SWIRLING SMOKE

There is a slinking movement of blackness... we begin to see the outline of a NAKED MAN down on all fours....

His skin has been painted deep, shiny black. He wears a horrific mask and strange thick clawed gloves over his

hands. He has a long ridged spine-like thing strapped to his back which extends into a snaky tail.

He moves close to Whitney and rises up on his knees, extending his clawed hands in the air....

And suddenly John Whitney SCREAMS....

EXT. BELEM, BRAZIL / DOCKYARD-- NIGHT

A tiny port city under a huge black cloud of impending tropical storm.

A small freighter, the "SANTA MARIA" is at the dock, in the final frantic stages of loading.

THE DECK OF THE SANTA MARIA - SAME

A freight boom swings and lowers the last of Whitney's cases into an already crowded hold.

CAPTAIN BORNE and a CUSTOMS OFFICER sign the last of a sheaf of papers. The Captain waves at the BOOM OPERATOR, SHOUTS at the DECKHANDS and looks worriedly at the sky.

A steam WHISTLE BLOWS....

Suddenly a man runs hard down the pier. It's a wild-eyed, bedraggled, blue-hatted John Whitney.

WHITNEY (breathlessly)
Captain... Captain Borne?! My
name is Whitney... I shipped
some material I believe is on
your ship. I must get it
back... the cases... I need
them back....

BORNE
Sorry friend, nothing comes off
the boat once Customs clears
our manifest.

WHITNEY
You don't understand, it's
dangerous. I have to get them
back. Please listen to me--

BORNE

--Look I told you, once customs
clears our cargo... nothing
comes off the boat.

WHITNEY
Please listen to me--!

--He grabs the Captain by the shoulder.

Borne shoves Whitney, KNOCKING him off his feet. The
captain YELLS to the mates as he jumps over the gunwhale
onto the ship's deck.

The MATES cast off their lines. Diesels GRIND and the
freighter begins to move out of port.

Whitney staggers to his feet and looks around desperately.
He hesitates a moment, then throws himself over the edge of
the pier onto the back of the freighter.

INT. THE HOLD OF THE SANTA MARIA

The cargo rocks gently in the GROAN of the diesel. John
Whitney staggers through the darkness, and finds the
labeled cases.

He uses a long screwdriver to SNAP the bands off one of the
crates and pries open the lid.

CLOSE: INSIDE THE CASE

Nestled in leafy packing material, wrapped in plastic, is
the black figurine of the Kothoga. It stares through milky
polyethylene with a frightening, evil gaze.

WHITNEY

trembles, GASPS, reaching inside the crate....

CUT TO:

EXT. LAKE MICHIGAN SHORE / SOUTH CHICAGO -- DAY

A windy, blue sky day... A coast guard helicopter THUNDERS
through the sky along the worn urbanized shore of Lake
Michigan.

BELOW - CALUMET HARBOR -- DAY

The "Santa Maria" has come aground near an old earthen landing. The boat is cold, lifeless, seemingly abandoned. But the landing is crowded with police cars, ambulances, flashing cherry tops. COPS and EMS WORKERS mill about.

A state COP, harried and sweating, moves through the crowd towards the landing helicopter, one hand clamping his hat to his head.

The chopper door opens, and a tall, striking man in black suit climb out. This is SPENCER.

STATE COP
(shouting against the racket)
Agent Spencer?

EXT. THE LANDING -- DAY

Spencer and the cop move through the crowd of workers along the landing.

STATE COP
Coast Guard found it early this morning. Don't really know how long it's been here. Not much goes on down this part of the lake anymore.

Spencer looks around at the old pier. There are tunnels, channels cut into the walls of the old landing.

COP
There was a time when thirty coal barges a day would float through this slip. A thousand men worked the breakwater. Thing's are different now.

EXT. DECK OF THE SANTA MARIA -- DAY

The cop leads Spencer up onto the tilted deck.

COP
Ship's registered out of Brazil, came down through the seaway. Paperwork all looks legit, but we figured you guys would want to know. I mean how many freighters from South

America do you see?

The cop leads Spencer to a door, pushes it open. Spencer leans inside....

INT. WHEELHOUSE

Empty, but floor and walls are covered in brown goop.

COP
It's blood alright. Lab's
checking for type....

INT. THE HOLD

Cop and Spencer move down the row of cases and containers.

COP
Still checking the manifest...
but the cargo looks like it's
pretty much undisturbed.

SPENCER
Did you bring in dogs?

COP
Drug unit went over the whole
thing. I told 'em it was a
waste of time. Whatever drugs
were on this boat are long
gone. We figure they boarded
at night, killed everyone,
threw the bodies overboard, and
took the drugs. Anyway, the
ship's clean.

Spencer looks carefully around the hold. He pulls a penlight out of his pocket. He drops to one knee and studies a mark on the wooden floor.

COP
You know salvage unit can't
move the boat 'til we get her
unloaded, so the sooner you
sign off, sooner customs can
check the cargo... say what is
that... you find something?

Spencer is examining a faint depression in the floor.

SPENCER

Give me a hand here would you?

Spencer stands and pockets his flashlight.

COP

Martinez, Durango get down here!

INT. HOLD - A MOMENT LATER

Cops slide a heavy crate across the floor. In the floor is a recessed hatch.

Spencer leans over and pulls the hatch. Everyone reels.

COPS

-Jeeez the smell!

-What the hell?

Someone gags. Most of the cops cover their mouths. Spencer shines his light down....

INT. SHIP BILGE/SERVICE AREA

A narrow corridor of curving walls and rusting pipe. Two feet of scummy, briny water.

Spencer climbs down into the dark interior, wades through the muck. Shining his light. He stops.

Stacked on floor half covered in water are the rotting BODIES of a half a dozen men.

Floating in the water at their feet is a blue hat with a leather band.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHICAGO LAKEFRONT - DAY

A bright windy morning. Clouds float over the lake as whitecaps peak nervously before the towering Chicago skyline.

MARGO GREEN strides along a concrete walkway, rollerblades HISSING as she glides through the narrow park that runs along the lakefront. She is thirty-ish, trim, wears

tights, a sweater, carries a heavy knapsack.

EXT. FIELD MUSEUM -- DAY

We SWEEP down over the roof of this massive construct, exposing a thick nest of intersecting roof lines and an enormous neo-classic facade.

Margo shoots out the pedestrian underpass that crosses Lakeshore Drive to a 700 foot stepped plaza, the north and main entrance to the colossal museum. The entire structure is constructed of spectacular white marble, with four twenty-foot thick, eighty-foot high columns holding up an enormous Grecian pediment.

Margo skates through a large group of CHATTERING SCHOOL-CHILDREN, spins to a stop, and sits at the base of stairs.

Behind her, an enormous black banner floats on the facade of the museum, bearing jagged bone-lettering over a jack o'lantern mask: "SUPERSTITION: EXHIBIT OPENS OCTOBER 29".

TEACHER

Walk! Walk!!

A pair of eight-year-old boys, JOSH and EUGENE (buzz cuts, pants three sizes too large) stop and watch Margo slide a dark skirt up over her legs, rolling the tights underneath. She grins at the boys as she squirms into a white blouse.

MARGO

Didn't your parents tell you
not to stare?

JOSH

Didn't yours tell you not to
get dressed in the street?

Margo SMILES as she tucks in her shirt.

MARGO

You guys going inside?

EUGENE

We're gonna see the dinosaurs.

MARGO

Excellent dinosaurs. The best.

A MUSEUM WORKER passes.

MUSEUM WORKER
Morning Doctor Green.

MARGO
Morning Sal.

JOSH
You're a Doctor?

EUGENE
You don't look like a doctor.

MARGO
I'm an Evolutionary Biologist.

EUGENE AND JOSH
Oh.

TEACHER (os)
--Josh!! Eugene!! Back with
the group. Walk! Walk!!

INT. MUSEUM ATRIUM -- DAY

A guard pulls a velvet rope allowing the excited schoolkids into the enormous skylit space dominated by a huge DINO-SAUR, a fountain, and a pair of spectacular BULL ELEPHANTS.

The kids scatter and swarm along this singular skylit gallery, which is 300-feet long and 75 high.

TEACHER
Walk walk!!

EDGAR RIDGEWAY, a nattily dressed man in his fifties, emerges from a side gallery and strides purposefully across the marble floor. He leads an associate curator named MORTIMER, and a museum guard named BASKIN.

EXT. WEST END MUSEUM EMPLOYEES ENTRY - DAY

An elderly GUARD sits in a booth around another corner of the museum, nodding hello as MUSEUM EMPLOYEES pass.

Margo rolls past, pushing off, cutting right, then left....

GUARD
Hey!! Hey! Doctor Green, I
told you--!

INT. HALLWAY/MUSEUM RESEARCH AREA -- DAY

--Margo scoots down an enormously long hall lined with old displays, fossil bones, artifacts, filing cabinets.

Margo spins around a corner, into, incredibly, another equally lengthy hall, and almost knocks over the still purposefully striding Edgar Ridgeway et al.

RIDGEWAY

Margo....

MARGO

Edgar... morning sir.

RIDGEWAY

I'm not sure those are appropriate attire for our Curatorial staff.

MARGO

Well, you know, Edgar, I think it depends how you look at it. Now viewed purely as transportation, they're really quite functional. Especially in a space as large and sprawling as this mus--

RIDGEWAY

--I believe we have a departmental meeting this afternoon.

MARGO

Three o'clock.

RIDGEWAY

And I'll see you there without your vehicular... appurtenance.

Ridgeway moves on. Margo frowns, scowls at Ridgeway's back, and turns to find a GAGGLE of her fellow museum WORKERS hanging out a pair of lab doorways. A couple of them burst into mock APPLAUSE.

SOMEONE

Bust-ed.

Margo moves through them, gently hip-checking GREG

KAWAKITA, who wears a brand new off-the-rack three piece suit.

INT. BIOLOGICAL SCIENCE LAB -- DAY

A big communal lab crowded with apparatus: Computer terminals, stereo zoom and dissection microscopes, freezers, centrifuges, autoclaves, electrophoresis devices, glowing monitors, blown-glass distillation columns etc.

Mixed in with all the high tech machinery are bits of tagged bone, skulls, fossils. Off the room are scattered a dozen cubby-hole offices. Some have doors.

Margo rolls down past a long table with TWO GRAD STUDENTS wearing rubber gloves and working with tiny DNA tubes suspended in liquid nitrogen. A THIRD pulls a heavy alcohol specimen bottle filled with lizards off a large dumbwaiter.

MARGO

Morning team. Donna, did you get those skink samples loaded?

DONNA

It's through the replicator, we got a big sample.

MARGO

Ex-cellent. Charlie, did we get the database back on line...?

CHARLIE

It's alive, but I don't know for how long.

MARGO

I'll take what I can get for now... Am I hot?

CHARLIE

Hit F2.

Margo slips into a chair in front of an enormous monitor. This smaller area is Margo's "lab". She hits her keyboard and the monitor flashes up a long string of data....

Margo scans it as she unbuckles her wheels.

A heavy-set woman named ALICE appears near Margo's desk

with a large blue box crammed with files. On it's side, hand lettering, upside down says, "BLOOD DRIVE"--

--Margo looks up in horror--

MARGO

--No! Get away from me...!

ALICE (cheerfully)

It's that time again Margo!

MARGO

No Alice. No. I do enough begging around here without chairing the blood drive.

ALICE

You know Margo, this year the blood bank's at an all time low.

MARGO

That's what you said last year.

ALICE (still smiling)

And last year your department donated over 50 gallons. Don't you want try and break your own record?

Margo stares witheringly at Alice. Alice smiles sweetly.

MARGO (resignedly)

Put it in my office--

Alice departs and Margo goes back to unbuckling her wheels. Greg Kawakita reappears, drops a thick sheaf of printouts on Margo's desk.

MARGO

(eyeing Kawakita's clothes)
So... You going to a party or sumthin'?

KAWAKITA

Just trying it out is all.

MARGO

Don't give me that shit Greg. I've worked my ass off for a tenured curatorship. And I'm

two years senior to you.

KAWAKITA

And you've been passed over before.

MARGO

Thanks for reminding me.

KAWAKITA

All I'm saying is tenure isn't always about being the best scientist.

MARGO

It's not about ass-kissing either.

Margo suddenly leans in to Kawakita.

MARGO

Say you know you've got something on your...

(gesturing)

...right... there....

Kawakita rubs his cheek and mouth....

MARGO

Still there. Your... lip....

He rubs again.

MARGO

No... there... no....

Kawakita rubs again, then finally catches on.

MARGO

Oh. I guess it's just your face....

Kawakita scowls and turns.

INT. MUSEUM BASEMENT HALLWAY -- DAY

Mortimer, referring to a numbered printout, leads Ridgeway and Baskin down the wide, musty corridor of one of the museum's storage sections. They follow a labyrinthine route through a dim passageway lined with overhead pipes.

There are arrows pointing to ORNITHOLOGY, FISH, MARSUPIALS, HERPETOLOGY, PALEONTOLOGY, ANTHROPOLOGY etc.

Throughout these storage areas are what seem like a million drawers in stacked metal cases, and another million jars with specimens suspended in alcohol solution.

Finally they come to a large wood-screened door, with a crudely padlocked gate. A thumb-tacked file card says only: "Recent Arrivals".

MORTIMER

Here we are, Professor.

RIDGEWAY

Now if we can only find our way out again.

Mortimer pulls a key, but to his surprise the door swings open freely.

MORTIMER

That's a surprise. I mean I'm sure I locked this d--

--Suddenly there's a SQUEAL and something dark and nasty bursts out. The three men jump....

RIDGEWAY

Good god... I thought we'd herded all the cats out of here.

MORTIMER

We tried sir, but... you know... without them, the... uh... the rodent colony experienced a sort of population explosion.

RIDGEWAY

The rodent colony....

BASKIN

Rats sir.

MORTIMER

The kind we have, *Rattus Muridae* also known as the Brown or Norway rat, probably originated in Eastern Asia.

They often associate in packs of sixty or more and often become predatory. Interestingly enough--

RIDGEWAY

--Alright alright... let's just get through this before we become part of the food chain.

MORTIMER

(referring to his notes)
Lot number four... crate two... wait... hey....

ANGLE ON A SHIPPING CASE

One of the same cases we last saw on board the freighter. It has been crudely pried open.

MORTIMER

Oh no... here... help me.

Baskin helps Ridgeway lift the lid from the case. Inside are several items wrapped in plastic, carefully labeled, nestled in packing material of leaves and twigs.

One smaller item is near the top of the crate.

MORTIMER

Thank god... I know the exhibition is essentially complete sir, but I think you'll agree this is something special.

Mortimer carefully unwraps the plastic.

MORTIMER

It's a relic collected some time last year in South American by John Whitney.

RIDGEWAY

Good grief... the Whitney Expedition. I didn't know anything made it back at all.

MORTIMER

There isn't much. These effects arrived about a month ago, the only surviving

trace... it hasn't been logged
in the computer much less
curated. I stumbled on it
quite by accident.

RIDGEWAY

Did you know John Whitney,
Doctor Mortimer?

MORTIMER

Only by reputation sir. I know
he was considered an eccentric.

RIDGEWAY

He died trying to prove his
evolutionary theories.

Mortimer carefully unfolds cotton wrapping, uncovering
Whitney's black figurine.

MORTIMER

In his rather sketchy notes,
Whitney claimed this relic
represents the warrior demon
known as "Kothoga" or "Son of
Satan". Possibly fifteenth
century, from the "Zenzera", a
tribe believed entirely
extinct.

RIDGEWAY

Magnificent.

MORTIMER

Oh... I suppose there is one
other thing you should know
sir.

RIDGEWAY

What's that?

MORTIMER

Well in Whitney's notes... he
claimed the statue carried a
curse.

RIDGEWAY (smiling)

That is precisely why I want it
in the new exhibit. Good work-
Oww!!

Ridgeway looks down as blood leaks out his finger and drips on the floor.

RIDGEWAY

Damn. I've cut myself on the thing.

He hands the statue to Mortimer, fishes a handkerchief out of his pocket, and wraps it around his digit.

BASKIN

Looks like maybe that curse is still at work.

RIDGEWAY

Doctor Mortimer, please prepare the relic immediately for exhibition... And guard, please have the rest of these crates moved into the secure storage area.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FIELD MUSEUM -- DAY

The sun is low, barely breaking through dark clouds.

INT. MUSEUM / MINERALS AND GEMS EXHIBIT -- DAY

Cases and cases of jewels and minerals. Schoolkids sweep through the aisles, Eugene and Josh, a part of the mob.

EUGENE

Rocks. A bunch of rocks!

The P.A. HUMS on, a HISSY tape loop:

P.A.

Attention please, the museum will close in fifteen minutes. Please proceed immediately to the nearest exit.

JOSH

Mrs. Magraminian, it's almost time to go and we still haven't seen the dinosaurs!

TEACHER
Walk, walk, this way
children....

Josh looks at Eugene, motions him with a jerk of his head. The two boys slip away from the larger group past a barricade, dart down a side corridor and up a wide stair.

INT. EMPLOYEE MEN'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Baskin steps inside the all-tile room. He finds a light switch. The fluorescents HUM and glow, flickering on.

Baskin moves across the room, stopping suddenly when he catches sight of his own reflection in a mirror.

He laughs at himself, moves into....

ONE OF THE STALLS

Baskin sighs, reaches up and pulls down on a small reinforced pebble-glassed window mounted on the wall, opening onto a the bottom of a shaftway.

He sits on the toilet seat cover and fishes out a pack of cigarettes and a lighter from his shirt pocket.

He lights the cigarette and takes a deep drag. He sighs, leans back on the plumbing, enjoying his smoke.

There's a tiny NOISE from somewhere outside the stall. He cocks his head, releases the air in his lungs. Waits. Nothing.

He takes another drag, and there it goes again... a WHEEZING from somewhere nearby.

BASKIN
Hello. Johnson? Davis, that
you?

Nothing. Then another WHEEZING. Closer.

Baskin flicks the butt out the window. He reaches forward for the on the stall door--

--suddenly WHAMMM!! A pair of huge claws slip under the stall door, grab Baskin's legs and rip them out from under him, pulling him clear off the toilet and violently dragging him out under the door.

There's a DULL thud, then a horrible wet SMASHING sound.

INT. REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS ROOM -- DAY

Eugene and Josh emerge and walk wide-eyed among the cases of lizards, chameleons, tortoises. The boys have the hall to themselves.

Josh suddenly points....

JOSH

Look!

Eugene looks to the far end of the hall where temporary barricades have been put up to prevent access to the next room. A scaffold begs to be climbed.

Josh runs over and starts up. Eugene hesitates.

EUGENE

We're not supposed to go back there.

JOSH

Whattya think they're gonna put us in museum jail...? Chickenshit.

Eugene hesitates, then follows Eugene up the scaffold.

INT. MUSEUM HALL OF BIRDS -- DAY

Windowless and dark. Thousands of little stuffed birds line the walls from floor to ceiling. Josh and Eugene enter and slow down.

EUGENE

I don't want to go this way.

JOSH

Don't be a wuss Eu-gene.

The boys continue on more slowly, their footfalls echoing in the silence.

INT. MUSEUM/RESEARCH AREA - EVENING

Margo works at her computer in one of a row of carrel-like

cubicles near her lab. Each of the bays is separated by a large plate glass window.

Someone BANGS on one of the windows several cubicles away.

Margo looks up through the glass. A few of the GRAD STUDENTS are leaning on the window, feigning imprisonment, pleading for release.

STUDENTS

-Freedom! Freedom!

-Please! Master!

Margo smiles and looks at her watch. Waves away the students.

MARGO

Home! Go home! Egress
yourselves, lovable peons.

Margo begins gathering her printouts.

INT. STORAGE HALLWAY -- DAY

Margo swings her rollerblades over her shoulder and moves down the empty hall. She hears something and stops. She turns... waits.

Behind her the hall disappears into darkness. At the end of the hall, something moves.

MARGO

Hello? Someone there?

Nothing. Nothing moves.

Margo sighs, shakes her head and moves on.

INT. ANOTHER HALLWAY -- DAY

The two boys have left the exhibition space far behind. They are lost somewhere in the endless collection space.

JOSH

There's gotta be a way out of
here.

EUGENE

We've been walking around for

hours. Now we're gonna miss the bus. We're gonna miss the bus!

JOSH

Shuttup Doofus. We missed the bus an hour ago.

The hall takes a sharp dog-leg, ending in a darkened cul-de-sac filled with hideous carved masks. Against the side of the chamber is another barricade. Josh looks behind.

JOSH

Hey, there's a really cool staircase back here.

EUGENE

No. No more staircases.

Josh disappears behind the barricade leaving Eugene completely alone in the dark room with the Shaman masks.

The masks stare at Eugene. He rocks on his feet, then moves behind the barricade to find a circular stair leading down into total darkness.

INT. SPIRAL STAIRCASE -- CONTINUING

Eugene clutches the banister, whispers....

EUGENE

Josh?! Where are you? Josh?!

Eugene steps down into the darkness.

EUGENE

Hey! This isn't funny man!

He steps down to the bottom of the stairs--

--Suddenly someone grabs him around the shoulders. He YELPS! Josh appears from behind him, LAUGHING....

JOSH

Ha ha ha! You goofball!! You almost wet your pants.

EUGENE

Quiet! You hear that?

The boys fall silent. There's a noise. A LOW WHEEZING SOUND. They turn. They're another long hallway. A shadow moves down at the far end.

EUGENE

What is it?

JOSH

I don't know... you smell something....

EUGENE

You farted didn't you...?

JOSH

No... not lately anyway....

There's another low, WHEEZING SOUND.

EUGENE

Let's go back upstairs....

They turn back up the spiral stairs, but there's a FOOTFALL above them. Something moves at the top of the stairs.

Their faces fill with fear. Their lips tremble. Josh GASPS.

EXT. MUSEUM -- NIGHT

A police SIREN WAILS.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE MUSEUM/WEST ENTRANCE -- DAY

A dark sedan pulls up in front of crime scene tape at the base of the museum steps. A rear door swings open and Spencer climbs out, still in his signature black suit.

A cop sternly approaches him, but Spencer pulls a leather wallet with a shield inside.

SPENCER

Officer in charge.

COP

This way sir.

NT. MUSEUM OFFICE

Furniture has been pushed up against the walls. COPS, CRIME SCENE WORKERS in a temporary command post set up.

A round, balding man, LIEUTENANT VINCE D'AGOSTA is addressing a group of COPS.

D'AGOSTA

There's an incredible amount of blood evidence in there so don't touch anything til the S.O.C. has finished up. I want a perimeter established and I don't want anybody getting through okay? Go go.

A COP

Security wants to know if they can open the doors on time.

D'AGOSTA (sighs)

Tell 'em no.

(to someone else)

Is the Coroner's investigator finished? Well find out. Go.

The cop goes through a door to a hallway. As the door swings open we see....

A BENCH ACROSS THE HALL

On the bench are Josh and Eugene, safe and whole, seated on a row of chairs.

D'AGOSTA

glances at the boys, talks softly to ANOTHER COP.

D'AGOSTA

Take the boys down to the Fifteenth. I want detailed statements with a psychologist present, full evaluation. Go.

(to someone else)

We want to interview every employee, hours they were here yesterday, where they were, what they saw, get a list from personnel and get started....

He turns, sees Spencer, standing, somewhat bemusedly out of harm's way.

D'AGOSTA

And you are?

SPENCER

Special Agent Spencer, F.B.I.

Spencer offers his I.D., which D'Agosta takes and carefully examines.

D'AGOSTA

Where are your little friends
Spencer? I thought you guys
travelled in packs.

SPENCER

I think I might have some
interest in your case
Lieutenant. Perhaps we can be
of service to one another.

D'AGOSTA

So am I out?

SPENCER

Not at all Lieutenant, you seem
to be doing rather well. I'm
here to observe, help if I can.
Will that be alright?

Spencer offers his hand. D'Agosta shakes suspiciously.

D'AGOSTA

I suppose you'd like to see the
body.

SPENCER

That sounds like a good place
to start.

D'Agosta gestures to the head of the stairs.

D'AGOSTA

You might wanna hold onto your
fuckin' hat, brother.

INT. THE MEN'S ROOM - DAY

D'Agosta and Spencer enter the tiled room. It is brightly lit with big portable quartz lamps. The floor is a sticky mess of half-dried blood.

A PHOTOGRAPHER bends over the body, flash POPPING, and SQUEALING intermittently.

A CORONER'S ASSISTANT works the scene, MUTTERING into a tape recorder.

D'AGOSTA

He's a museum guard named Frances Baskin whose shift ended at seven last night. Been dead about twelve hours.

SPENCER

Who found it?

D'AGOSTA

Night watchman. Been puking his guts out all morning. Ambulance workers finally put him on an I.V. You can see him in the hospital later if you like.

SPENCER

I trust he's not a suspect.

D'AGOSTA

Not unless blowin' lunch is illegal.

SPENCER

Did you find the head?

D'AGOSTA

In the corner under the sink there.

Spencer bends down to study a bloody lump under the porcelain sink, stands and paces carefully around the room.

D'AGOSTA (to photog)

You get a full series... the doors, everything?

The photographer nods, boredly.

SPENCER

Lieutenant, this blood on the wall seems interesting. Yes?

D'AGOSTA (to photog)
Did you get that? Do a series on the blood on the wall. I want ballistic analysis, pinpoint source, speed, force, get it?

SPENCER
(to the photographer)
If you'd be so kind, we'd like angles from each corner of the room. Take your time, bracket your exposures, we want to see every detail. Will ~~that~~ be alright?

The photographer stares at Spencer a moment, nods.

Spencer continues to analyze the room. He opens a stall door, looks inside.

A Scene Of Crime worker appears, pulls his surgical mask from his face.

SOC WORKER
All done Lieutenant.

D'AGOSTA
You got a complete grid? Signs of ingress and egress, a full Trace Chem right?

SPENCER
Lieutenant... over here please.

IN THE STALL

D'Agosta and the SOC worker join Spencer.

SPENCER
If you'd be so kind.

Spencer points to the window. The SOC worker leans over and pulls the window down....

OUTSIDE

are dozens of cigarette butts.

D'AGOSTA
Jeezus... I thought you said
you got everything? Find out
if there all the same brand,
find out if our man was a
smoker... Jeezus! Does he have
cigarettes on him? Where the
fuck are his cigarettes--?

--A cop, (BAILEY) approaches.

BAILEY
--Lieutenant, the Museum
Director would like a word....

EXT. MUSEUM EMPLOYEES ENTRY -- DAY

As Margo approaches she sees the parked Black-and-Whites,
COPS, CRIME SCENE WORKERS.

She bumps into Kawakita.

MARGO
Greg! What's going on?

KAWAKITA
You tell me. Rumor says
there's been a murder. A
couple of kids or something.
They're not letting us in our
labs.

(grinningly)
Nice suit.

MARGO
You started it.

INT. CENTRAL ATRIUM -- DAY

Spencer and D'Agosta enter the central gallery of the
museum and approach a group of suited men. Among them are
IAN CUTHBERT, and Edgar Ridgeway.

D'AGOSTA
Doctor Cuthbert? Vincent
D'Agosta, Chicago Homicide and
this is--

--As D'Agosta gestures, he realizes Spencer has left his

side. D'Agosta turns and spots Spencer a few yards away studying the stuffed BULL ELEPHANTS.

D'AGOSTA

--Special Agent Spencer. I trust you gentlemen have been informed of the identity of the victim.

CUTHBERT

Yes Lieutenant, a terrible terrible thing--

--A black-haired man in a brown suit, TOM PARKINSON, shifts impatiently.

PARKINSON

--I don't understand what the FBI has to do with this....

CUTHBERT

--This is Thomas Parkinson, our Director of Security.

Spencer does not turn from the elephants.

SPENCER

My agency has nothing formally to do with this investigation. Lieutenant D'Agosta and I are merely sharing information. Isn't that right Lieut-- You know I had no idea these were original Akeleys....

The entire group hesitates.

D'AGOSTA

What the fuck is an Akeley?

Cuthbert studies Spencer, impressed.

CUTHBERT

Doctor Akeley brought the Bull elephants back from Africa in 1905. They're one of our prize possessions--

--Edgar Ridgeway sighs impatiently.

RIDGEWAY

--Gentlemen, we're all very busy... if... look... I don't mean to downplay the importance of your investigation... but I'm afraid your limiting access to our work areas this morning puts my staff and I at great disadvantage--

D'AGOSTA

--You'll be allowed in your offices as soon as we've had a chance to sweep the building.

RIDGEWAY

And the exhibition space, when will that open?

D'AGOSTA

Again, as soon as we've had a chance to make sure it's safe for the public.

RIDGEWAY

I wonder if you understand exactly what you're dealing with Sergeant--

D'AGOSTA

--Lieutenant.

RIDGEWAY

It's just that we have a major exhibition about to open--

CUTHBERT

--Doctor Ridgeway chairs our Department of Anthropology... and he is the curator of our newest exhibit.

Spencer turns from the elephants and joins the group.

SPENCER

That would be the "Superstition" exhibit wouldn't it?

CUTHBERT

Exactly. We're very excited about it. It doesn't officially begin until next week but

the board is hosting a preview tomorrow night. A benefit... for the Historical Society.

RIDGEWAY

All of our publicity is tied to it. The press will be there. It would be a disaster if we had to postpone.

SPENCER

I think that in this situation, Doctor, the only event that might qualify as a disaster would be another unnecessary death. Don't you agree?

D'AGOSTA

Look. I won't make any promises, but we'll try and be out of your hair by the end of the day.

RIDGEWAY

Ian, I really must get down to my lab--

CUTHBERT

--Edgar, I have no intention of putting our employees or our patrons in any kind of danger. Lieutenant D'Agosta, we leave our well being in your hands.

INT. CORONER'S OFFICE -- DAY

Spencer and D'Agosta swing through a doorway and move quickly down a hall.

D'AGOSTA

...you know the last thing I need is for those pricks to "leave it in my hands". Next I suppose I'll get a call from the fucking Mayor....

Spencer smiles.

SPENCER

Lieutenant, the two boys...

you've interviewed them?

D'AGOSTA

Claimed they saw something.
Big. One thought he had a
beard. Both agreed he smelled
bad. They got away and hid in
a service closet til we found
them this morning. I don't
know how much it means, kids
that age, we'll see what the
shrink says.

SPENCER

Has there been any sign of a
murder weapon?

SPENCER

Its a big fucking place
Spencer. You have any ideas?

SPENCER (smiling)

Not yet Lieutenant. But I'm
working on it.

Spencer and D'Agosta come to a pair of double doors.

D'AGOSTA

You ready for this?

SPENCER

As ready as one can be.

INT. AUTOPSY ROOM -- DAY

Spencer and D'Agosta pull surgical masks over their faces
and join two frocked and masked people at an autopsy table.

A forensic pathologist, DR. MATILDA ZWIEZIC, is writing
quickly on a clipboard in front of a pair of plastic
covered lumps. An assistant is nearby, DOCTOR FRED GROSS.

ZWIEZIC

Lieutenant D'Agosta, lovely to
see you this morning. I heard
this one was yours.

D'AGOSTA

I save all the good ones for
you Matilda.

ZWIEZIC

And you've brought a friend.
Enchanting.

(speaking into a microphone)
We are joined this morning by
Lieutenant Vincent D'Agosta,
Chicago Homicide, and....

D'AGOSTA

Special Agent Spencer. F.B.I.

Zwiezic casts a wary eye at Spencer.

ZWIEZIC

Spencer. Those schoolkid
murders down in Indianapolis.
You were in on that.

SPENCER

You have a good memory, Doctor.

ZWIEZIC

A thing like that is hard to
forget.

SPENCER

But fortunately Doctor, you do
forget, until something stands
to remind you.

D'Agosta stares at Spencer, shakes his head....

D'AGOSTA

Can we get this over with
please?

ZWIEZIC (back to work)

If you have any comments,
please speak clearly toward the
microphone. Let's go Fred.

Gross pulls back the plastic, uncovering the recently
washed, less recently headless body of Fred Baskin.

ZWIEZIC

--Well. We have here a
Caucasian male, probably aged
25 to 30 years. Height, well,
let's skip that. Weight, maybe
160. There are undetermined
number of large lacerations

proceeding from the left anterior pectoral region at a 190 degree angle downward through the costals, sternum, and terminating at the right anterior abdominal region. This is a massive wound, perhaps two feet long. It appears that the pectoralis minor and pectoralis major are separated, and the body is eviscerated to a great degree. The sternal process has been split and the rib cage exposed. Now for the head. Fred?

Fred uncovers the head.

ZWIEZIC

The head is decapitated between the axial process and the atlas. The entire occipital portion of the calvarium and half the parietal process have been crushed, or rather seemingly punched through and removed, leaving a hole perhaps five inches in diameter. The skull is empty. The entire brain appears to have fallen out or been extracted through this hole... Do we have it?

Fred produces a bloody pan. Zwiezic dives in.

ZWIEZIC

The brain is severely traumatized and appears to have been severed at the medulla oblongata. The pons Varolii is intact, but separate. The cerebrum has been completely severed from the mesencephalon- Wait a second... do we have everything? Something's missing. Lieutenant where's the rest of it?

D'AGOSTA

You've got everything we found.

Spencer clears his throat.

SPENCER

I believe the thalamoid organs
are missing.

Everyone stares at Spencer. Finally Zwiezic returns to the
brain.

ZWIEZIC

There is no thalamoid region,
or pituitary gland.

D'AGOSTA

What are you talking about?

SPENCER

The thalamus and the
hypothalamus regulate body
temperature, blood pressure,
heartbeat, the metabolism of
fats and carbohydrates, the
sleep-wake cycle. It also
appears to have something to do
with the centers of pleasure
and pain. Wouldn't you agree
Doctor?

ZWIEZIC

In a nutshell.

D'AGOSTA

How's it do all that?

ZWIEZIC

Hormones. It secretes hundreds
of regulatory hormones into the
bloodstream. Fred look at
this.

Fred peers down into the brain.

FRED

Somekind of serrated
incision....

He shrugs. Zwiezic replaces the brain in the dish.

ZWIEZIC

Let's go back to the body. I
am opening and probing the

first laceration at the point
of entry. Clamp here Fred.

D'Agosta sighs, holds his breath in repulsion as Zwiezic
rudely shoves her hand into the dead man's chest.

ZWIEZIC

Hold it. There is... a piece
of foreign material deep in the
muscle, about four centimeters
below the right nipple and
lodged on a rib. Forceps Fred.

She pushes the forceps into the chest, twists them and
pulls. When she holds them up to the light, they are
gripping a bloody lump.

ZWIEZIC

Sterile water Fred.

Fred fetches. Zwiezic swirls the forceps in the water and
holds them back up again, revealing a curved, organic
thing, two inches long, jaggedly broken at one end, deadly
sharp at the other.

D'AGOSTA

What the hell is that?

FRED

Maybe a knife... a bone knife?

ZWIEZIC

Might be bone... certainly
looks organic... but I don't
think its a knife....

SPENCER

Lieutenant, I'd like to bring
that over to the bureau, run it
through the lab.

D'AGOSTA

We can do that downtown.

SPENCER

Can you have the results in the
morning?

INT. POLICE CRUISER -- DAY

Spencer and D'Agosta ride in the back of a cruiser.

D'AGOSTA

Spencer we're supposed to be sharing information. I don't think I'm getting my cut.

Spencer smiles at D'Agosta.

SPENCER

What I know is this: Five months ago, in May of this year, a small freighter carrying cargo from South America was found beached on an unused landing in South Chicago, not ten miles from here. On boarding the distressed vessel, I discovered the bodies of twelve men. They were badly deteriorated it was impossible for the Coroner to entirely establish identity. But one thing was sure, that each man had been violently decapitated and the thalamoid region of the brain removed.

D'Agosta stares.

SPENCER

Three weeks earlier, when the boat passed through St. Ignace Michigan, the Captain reported nothing amiss. But somewhere in that 500 mile voyage down Lake Michigan, something went very very wrong.

D'Agosta shakes his head.

D'AGOSTA

South America. Wholesale killing on open water. I can solve your case with one word Spencer... drugs. What else could it be?

SPENCER

That is what I'm here to find out.

D'AGOSTA

You pick up a blurb about a murder in a museum and you make a connection? Who are you Batman?

SPENCER

Lieutenant. The cargo on that boat contained, among other things, three crates to be delivered to the Field Museum of Natural History.

INT. MUSEUM BASEMENT -- EVENING

A pair of cops, BAILEY and MCNALLY move through a basement service area. An enormous VENTILATOR UNIT issues a THROBBING ROAR.

Bailey uses a flashlight to probe dark corners. McNally refers to an elaborate floorplan.

Bailey shakes his head as he approaches a concrete block wall.

BAILEY

I thought you said there was a door down here.

MCNALLY

That's what the map says....

BAILEY

Hey....

Bailey squats and points the flashlight down at the floor.

CLOSE

A dark brown print.

MCNALLY

What is it?

BAILEY

A footprint... I don't know.

BAILEY

analyzes it a moment, then shines the light around. He

spots a massive AC receptacle mounted at the bottom of a length of conduit on the wall.

Incongruously, there's a tiny white plug stuck in the box and a length of dirty white zip cord running along the floor.

Bailey grabs the wire, pulling on it lightly. He follows it until it disappears behind the ROARING manifold of the the ventilator.

Bailey flattens against the wall and peers down behind the sheetmetal.

He pulls his gun and slips out of his utility belt, handing it to McNally, then flattens himself against the wall and begins squeezing behind the manifold.

BAILEY

comes to a small wiring bay. He shines his light to reveal dusty old conduit, long abandoned telephone wires, a battered wooden door.

He bends and finds the lamp wire disappearing under the edge of the door. He pushes the door open.

INT. OLD SERVICE CLOSET

Bailey and his flashlight beam move into a tiny, dirty room. There's a small reading lamp on the floor near a pallet made of blankets and towels. There's a tiny old battered TV.

Then there's a NOISE.

Bailey shines his light into the face of a dirty, hairy MAN, who is charging, SWINGING forward with a hunk of pipe. The man is dressed in rags, MUMBLING incoherently, shuddering wildly.

The pipe CRACKS into Bailey's shoulder. Bailey sags down against the wall....

The man leans in on Bailey, face fierce and boiling... he opens his mouth exposing, horrible rotting teeth, HISSING, GROWLING like an animal....!

Bailey staggers back and SHOTS... BAM! BAM!!!

EXT. MUSEUM -- DAY

The sky is dark. The lake is glimmering malevolently.

CUT TO:

INT. MARGO'S LAB -- DAY

There are perhaps fifteen PEOPLE working on various projects at the room-length tables.

Margo works diligently at a computer screen covered with what looks like a series of bead-like strings. She scribbles on a legal pad. She is completely absorbed.

Spencer appears.

SPENCER

Doctor Green.

MARGO (absently)

Yes.

SPENCER

Special Agent Spencer. F.B.I.

MARGO

What can I do for you, Spesh--

--She looks up at Spencer's striking presence and for a moment is stunned.

MARGO

Excuse me but... I guess I've never met a special agent before.

SPENCER

We're on even terms, Doctor.
I've never met an Evolutionary Biologist.

MARGO

Uh... you wanna sit... or....

Spencer pulls up a chair.

SPENCER

(referring to the acetates)
Unless I miss my guess, those

are DNA schedules. We use DNA fingerprinting in our police work. They've become quite well known of late.

MARGO

Right. Actually, what I'm working on is a little different.

SPENCER

How is that?

MARGO

Well... You really want to know?

SPENCER (smiling)

Can it hurt to learn?

Margo shrugs and turns her monitor towards Spencer.

MARGO

Depends who's teaching.

(hitting keys)

Okay... well... you might know that every plant or animal has a characteristic assortment of chromosomes....

A picture of a cell appears on the screen. Inside the circle are some little lines (chromosomes).

MARGO

A chromosome is divided into units called genes, and each gene is responsible for a certain trait, skin tone, eye color etcetera.

The video shifts, showing more detailed chromosomes.

MARGO

Now these genes are composed of DNA which is composed of two polymeric ladder-like chains twisted around one another into a regular double helix.

The video shifts to a file picture of a double helix.

MARGO

The rungs of this ladder are formed by hydrogen base pairs. There are four kinds... Adenine, Guanine, Thymine, and Cytosine. You with me?

SPENCER

A,G,C,T.

Margo nods and hits a couple of more keys. On the monitor appears a field of what look like strung beads.

MARGO

Okay. These are the base gene sequences broken down into fields. Now... you police guys get a blood sample and look for repeating sequences of three. These sequences are known as codons. It's their consistent repetition that are unique to each individual and give you guys your fingerprint. But... you guys can only match known specimens. See... you bring me a specimen and ask me if its the same as another specimen I look at the sequences and say yes or no. Now what I'm trying to do with my Interpolator software is figure out the identity of an unknown species. Like this....

She picks up a small rodent skull from her desk.

MARGO

Say you go out and find a little skull like this one... What is it? I don't know. You don't know. Okay. I take a sample, in this case a scraping, I push it through the replicator and establish a DNA sequence. I run the sequence through the interpolator software and....

She hits a couple of keys. The screen changes and a picture of a large rodent appears on the screen.

MARGO

Ondatra zibethicus... muskrat.
I can also generate a statistical profile of the specimen's morphological features and I can identify its genus, in this case, *cricetidae* and how it got here in an evolutionary sense....

SPENCER

So, you use your interpolator to establish the phylogeny of specimen....

MARGO (impressed)

Exactly... we establish an evolutionary tree and put the specimen on the proper branch.

She hits another few buttons. A picture of a rodent evolutionary tree appears labeled CRICETIDAE.

SPENCER

Fantastic.

MARGO

Well yeah... when it works it's fantastic, but first I have to get the program past beta testing, and pack enough information into its database. It's slow going.

SPENCER

I imagine the museum is excited about your work.

MARGO

Molecular biology is a brand new field and very competitive. But it's expensive, and it's not exactly making the public flock to the museum.

Spencer smiles.

SPENCER

Not like, for instance, an exhibit on Superstition.

Margo eyes Spencer suspiciously, smiles ruefully, then punches out her terminal and clicks off her monitor.

MARGO

Agent Spencer, I don't think you came here to talk about sequence interpolation. And I told the police I didn't know that guard who was killed.

SPENCER

Doctor Green, I wonder if you could identify something for me.

Spencer reaches into his pocket and produces a small ziplock bag.

Margo takes the bag. Holds it up. The curved thing they found in the autopsy.

MARGO

A claw. Or a piece of one. Right?

SPENCER

You tell me.

She examines it carefully and shakes her head.

MARGO

I tell you what... let's try this the easy way.

INT. MUSEUM BACK HALLWAY -- DAY

Margo leads Spencer quickly down a long unmarked corridor. The walls are thick with old displays, wooden cases full of artifacts. Margo cuts hard through an unmarked door.

INT. EXHIBIT SERVICE HALL

Margo leads Spencer through a one-way gate, an "Iron Maiden", a tall, fingered steel revolving door that passes through another fingered gate like an egg slicer.

INT. MUSEUM / DIORAMA HALL - CONTINUING

A long gallery, three stories high, dark and dramatic. Dioramas two floors high, full of lions, hippos, wart hogs etc. In the middle is a large jungle island with a GORILLA beating its chest. Margo and Spencer's shoes CLICK down a grand marble stair, double around the bottom and back through another door.

INT. DINOSAUR HALL -- DAY

Margo moves up and across a ramp, running along one side of the room. This is the museum's main dinosaur hall. There are several large, spectacular dinosaur skeletons on display. Margo leads Spencer out another unmarked door.

INT. STAIRWELL - DAY

Margo drops down three flights.

INT. OSTEO PREPARATION AREA -- DAY

Margo and Spencer move quickly through an enormous room filled with a huge variety of containers, drains, tanks etc. SOMEONE cleans out a bin with a BLAST of STEAM.

A TEAM OF SCIENTISTS performs an autopsy on a small WHALE.

Another, DOCTOR BROWN stands on a platform and skims fat off the surface of a huge stainless steel tank with a long net.

The smell is enough for Margo to reach for a handkerchief and clamp it over her mouth.

MARGO
(through the handkerchief)
What's the soup today, Brownie?

BROWN
Rhinocerotidae Sondaicus.

MARGO
Cool.

SPENCER
He's cooking a Rhinocerus?

MARGO (muffled)
It's a maceration tank. Skin

'em, toss 'em in the warm water, eventually the meat and flesh falls off. Then we give it to the beetles to finish it off.

SPENCER

Beetles?

Margo makes a short detour and motions Spencer into a stainless steel vault.

INT. DERMESTID BEETLE UNIT

Big glass and screen cages full of bones and animal carcasses. Crawling all over these things are great colonies of tiny worm-like beetles.

MARGO (still muffled)

Weird, but standard museum technology over the whole world. Dermestid beetles, a fairly common insect that'll eat the flesh off almost anything. And we get what we want... clean skeletons.

INT. ALCOHOLIC STORAGE ROOM - DAY

Margo emerges into a tall double tiered room. A grated floor holds racks and racks of specimens in alcohol storage. Reptiles, fish, snakes etc preserved in large jars. Margo removes the hanky, takes a clear breath.

MARGO

This is one of six main storage areas for the collection. No one's got a real count on it, but the museum has something like three million specimens. Mammals, insects, reptiles, minerals, anthropological artifacts. The exhibition areas actually contain about two percent of the collection. Down here's where the real stuff happens... this is where the scientists live.

They past through a wire gate and up a short stair. Mor
alcohol storage.

SPENCER

So... you use all these
specimens in your research.

MARGO

I might. See it works like a
library. If I want to do
research on an animal... say
Lagidium Viscacia a South
American rodent... I can come
down here and find samples...
skin, skull, skeleton, dried
and preserved, maybe a dozen
specimens preserved whole in
alcohol. I mean, you have to
understand... for a scientist,
this place is heaven.

Margo heaves open another heavy door.

INT. FROCK'S LABORATORY -- DAY

A basement room, lit by small high windows. Everywhere are
tables covered with specimens of frightening variety....

MARGO (calling)

It's Margo!

Margo and Spencer wander into a huge basement lab, taking a
circuitous route through storage racks until they spot a
brightly lighted lab table.

At the table, his back to us, is a tiny man in a
wheelchair. He is silhouetted in the twin lights of a
dissecting microscope, scribbling diligently in a notebook.

MARGO

Doctor Frock, it's Margo!

Frock holds up a hand, scribbles a few more notes, and
turns.

MARGO

Special Agent Spencer, this is
Professor Al--

SPENCER

--Professor Albert Frock. I'm honored to meet the museum's foremost evolutionaist.

FROCK

Evolutionary statistics, Mister Spencer. Anyway, I'm afraid these young molecular scientists like Doctor Green here are giving me a run for my money.

MARGO

Doctor Frock laid the foundation for most of the work now being done.

FROCK

I'm afraid my theories are not quite the thrill Doctor Green thinks they are, Mr. Spencer. Certainly not to your average museum administrator anyway.

MARGO (with a sneer)

All the current management wants is dinosaurs, cannibals, and shamans.

SPENCER

You're talking about Doctor Cuthbert.

MARGO

Ian Cuthbert is Paleontologist turned bean counter.

FROCK

No Margo. Ian's methods might be something less than scientific, but his heart's in the right place. I'm afraid this museum cannot continue to operate in the red.

MARGO

But superstition, of all things! Science is supposed to destroy myth, not extending it. Next we'll be studying alien abductions and Elvis sightings.

Frock smiles gently at Margo.

FROCK

Margo, did I ever tell you about my experience with the Ki tribe of Bechuanaland? Charriere studied them in 1869 and made note of the fact that the Ki used the bark of a certain bush as a headache remedy. But when I showed up three quarters of a century later, they had stopped using the remedy. They believed instead that headaches were caused by sorcery. The kinfolk of the victim would identify the sorcerer and go off and murder him. Of course, the relatives of the dead sorcerer were then required to avenge this death, so they often went right back and killed the person with the headache. I'm sure you can imagine what eventually happened.

MARGO and SPENCER

What?

FROCK

It was a medical miracle. People stopped getting headaches.

Frock laughs heartily. Spencer smiles.

FROCK

You see Margo, myth and science are often two different ways of looking at the same thing. Now Mister Spencer, what would an agent of the government want with a fossil like me?

Spencer reaches into his jacket again, and removes the plastic envelope, hands it to Frock. Frock pushes back his glasses and holds it up to the light.

FROCK

Well... yes... very

interesting...

MARGO

Some sort of claw, right?
Feline?

FROCK

A claw...yes... but not
mammalian, no... at least among
extant species....

MARGO

Avian? Reptilian maybe?

FROCK

No. Saurian I believe. Yes.
Definitely saurian.

SPENCER

A dinosaur?

Frock grins at Spencer approvingly....

FROCK

See the claw has a conical
shape, a deep, fully enclosed
root. It tapers to an almost
perfect tripyrarnidal cross
section near the top. This
appears in only two classes of
animal: dinosaur and bird. I
would say it was from a bird,
except that even though you
only have a partial sample,
it's too big. So... dino-
saurian. Where'd you get it?
It's a lovely fake.

He offers it back to Spencer.

SPENCER

We found it in the body of the
guard who was killed last
night. And I don't think it's
a fake. The bureau lab thinks
it's keratin-based, but
couldn't identify it any
further.

MARGO

Someone could have carved it

out of a horn or a hoof.

FROCK

You think perhaps one of our dinosaurs has come back to life and is taking vengeance for evolutionary bad luck?

Spencer smiles.

SPENCER

Doctor Frock, what was John Whitney looking for in Central America?

FROCK

What on earth does John Whitney have to do with this?

SPENCER

Maybe nothing. I'm not sure.

FROCK

John was trying to find a cult-tribe known as the "Zenzero". They were shadow people... conjurers. A nasty sort. Reportedly cannibalistic, very territorial. Their myth concerns a deal they made with the devil in return for the use of the his son... a ferocious beast. The Zenzero used the beast to conquer neighboring tribes. But when their enemies were all dead, it turned on them, and destroyed the Zenzero themselves.

SPENCER

Did Doctor Whitney's beast have a name?

FROCK

John referred to it as the "Kothoga"... or "Son of Satan". Please understand, Mister Spencer, John wasn't hunting snipe. He was trying to gather evidence as proof of a theory. He was trying to illuminate a

phenomenon we called the "Calisto" effect... John thought the story of the Kothoga was the mythification of a principle supposing that evolution wasn't always gradual or driven by natural selection. John believed that sudden fluctuation in evolutionary pattern might be caused by sudden or grotesque changes in environment... Now that might sound crazy, but remember what I told you about the relationship between science and myth. And there were a lot of people who believed John might be right. Including many in this museum.

SPENCER

And were you one of them Professor Frock?

FROCK

Yes. Yes. I still am.

SPENCER

And you Doctor Green?

MARGO

No. Maybe. I'm not sure.

SPENCER

Tell me if you can, Professor... is there anyone in this museum who might be holding a grudge, perhaps someone desperate enough to create his own "Kothoga"?

FROCK

I don't understand.

SPENCER

I think perhaps this claw was part of something used as a murder weapon... to make it look like the victim was killed by an animal. Did the Kothoga have claws?

FROCK

I can't answer that... but... there's supposed to be a representation of the beast in the material John sent back from the expedition.

SPENCER (considering)

I'm familiar with that shipment. Do you know where that material is stored?

MARGO

I don't think most of it's been curated yet. But I'm sure we could find it.

Margo stands and smiles.

SPENCER

Oh, one other thing, Doctor Green. ~~This~~ claw... could you run it ~~through~~ your new software... your Interpolator? How would that be? Would that be alright?

MARGO

It's a fake. If it were real it would be a twenty thousand years old. Maybe more.

SPENCER

Perhaps you'd give it try... just in case.

MARGO

In case of what?

SPENCER (smiling)

In case we're both wrong.

CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT HALLWAY \ STORAGE ROOM -- DAY

Margo checks a printout and finds the door we saw earlier. She fumbles with a huge ring of keys.

SPENCER

I don't think that's necessary
Doctor Green.

Spencer pushes on the door.

SPENCER
The lock has been forced.

Inside. Margo feels for a light switch, throws it on.

MARGO
Doesn't matter.

INSIDE STORAGE ROOM

The room is entirely empty. Margo finds a clipboard hung on the wall. She sighs.

MARGO
Whitney Expedition... it came
in six weeks ago... but the
material's been moved to the
secure storage area. Dated
just yesterday.

SPENCER
Secure storage... what's that?

MARGO
That's where the museum keeps
the valuable material that
isn't on display. Mostly
minerals, things that have
somekind of a street value.

Spencer is preoccupied, examining the floor.

MARGO
This signature....

She hands Spencer the clipboard.

MARGO
Baskin-- that's the guard who
was killed isn't it...?

Spencer looks at Margo briefly, then looks around once more, steps backwards out into....

THE HALL

Spencer takes off, striding, counting his steps.

MARGO

Mister Spencer, wait...!

Spencer pushes open a door, stops and looks:

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE MEN'S ROOM

Yellow police tape guards a door where Baskin's body was found. Margo catches up.

MARGO

We have to go up to Security to have them open the other storage area. They're the other way.

SPENCER

But the most direct route to the secure area is this way, isn't it?

Margo stares at the police tape, the SOC marks on the floor.

MARGO

Yeah. This hallway leads directly there.

SPENCER

Yes.

(distantly)

Yes. I'm sure it does.

CUT TO:

INT. OUTSIDE SECURE STORAGE AREA -- DAY

A SECURITY GUARD leads Spencer and Margo through the gloom with a flashlight.

GUARD

Must be a light down here somewhere.

MARGO

Here's the door....

The guard disappears a moment, finds a light switch, flicks it on. Fluorescents HUM....

MARGO

Oh....

At the base of the door and around the lock, the paint has been scraped away as though by vicious claws.

They exchange a look and back away as the guard moves to open the lock.

INSIDE SECURE AREA

Margo switches on a light and moves inside. An arched vault. Shelves full of stuff.

Whitney's crates sit on the floor in the middle of the room. Margo bends over a case, lifts the lid.

MARGO

This case looks as though it was broken into.

SPENCER

I imagine that's why it was moved here.

Spencer examines the crate carefully. Margo finds a shipping list, hands it to Spencer, then returns to the case. She examines the items wrapped in bubble pack and suspended in leafy packing material.

MARGO

That's funny... you know we try to keep potential pest-carrying substance to a minimum... the specimens in here are wrapped in plastic, but this other material... I don't know... some kind of leaf. John was careful about things like that.

While Spencer examines the shipping voucher Margo finds a unused plastic bag, and drops a few of the leaves inside.

SPENCER

Doctor Green, I think perhaps something's been removed from this shipment.

Margo looks at the voucher and refers to a clipboard hanging on the wall.

MARGO

Edgar Ridgeway signed out a specimen yesterday. Ridgeway's an anthropology curator. The superstition exhibit is his baby.

Suddenly there's a noise from behind them.

D'AGOSTA

Spencer. They told me I'd find you down here somewhere.

At the door are is Lieutenant D'Agosta and a group of UNIFORMED COPS.

D'AGOSTA

Seems while you had your back turned, the Chicago Police Department solved this case.

INT. TEMPORARY COMMAND POST -- EVENING

COPS mill about, disassembling the temporary HQ. Spencer studies a file jacket.

D'AGOSTA

That's funny Spencer. I thought this would make you happy.

SPENCER

A vagrant Lieutenant D'Agosta. Malnourished. Deranged. Probably schizophrenic.

D'AGOSTA

A convicted rapist, a suspect in a pair of murders. Three arrests for armed robbery, three for assault. Two terms in Leavenworth, four in East Bay. And the two kids ID'ed him seperately.

SPENCER

They saw him Lieutenant, but

they didn't see him commit murder.

D'AGOSTA

He was covered in the dead guard's blood, he was also carrying his wallet.

SPENCER

And what about a weapon?

D'AGOSTA

--Come on Spencer! This place is loaded with potential weapons... it was something he found... maybe somekind of ancient artifact, that's your theory isn't it? He used it to kill the guard and then he dumped it. Shit we found three knives in that closet he was living in. What more do you fucking need?

Spencer shuts the jacket.

SPENCER

What about twelve men dead on a boat in Lake Michigan? A homeless ex-convict with three dollars in his pocket, sailed two hundred miles, killed twelve men by cutting off their heads, took nothing, sailed back here, grabbed a cab to the museum and hid in a nearly inaccessible closet in the subbasement. Help me out Lieutenant, I'm having a little trouble here--

D'AGOSTA

--There were a thousand other pieces of cargo on that boat. You could build a case for any one of them.

SPENCER

There's nothing in this man's jacket that indicates a precedent for behavior like

this.

JACOBSEN, one of D'Agosta's team arrives with a zip-lock bag. He puts it down in front of the exasperated D'Agosta.

D'AGOSTA

What's this?

JACOBSEN

We found it in the service closet. There's an inscription on the back.

D'Agosta opens the baggie and pulls out a heavy silver medallion.

D'AGOSTA

Saint Christopher medal.

JACOBSEN

James J. Martinez--

--Spencer blinks with a start

JACOBSEN

We think maybe we got an I.D.--

SPENCER

--He's a Panamanian Merchant Seaman. Or was. Out of Sault Ste. Marie.

D'Agosta stares at Spencer.

D'AGOSTA

I guess that puts my man on your boat.

SPENCER (a little stunned)

Yes I suppose it does.

D'AGOSTA

Look Spencer, you know there's been a lot of pressure on me to get out of here. Now if it makes you feel better, we'll keep the museum shut down over the weekend, but I'm going to let them open for their preview tomorrow night. I, frankly, have no right to keep them

scored above 4%. But I ran homo sapiens as a control and it scored a 33.

MARGO
33 percent match with mammalian DNA.

KAWAKITA
That's what your software says.

MARGO (scanning the printout)
What else... Hemidactylus turcicus. What the hell is that?

KAWAKITA
I didn't know either. Looked it up in the B.N. Database.

MARGO
And....

KAWAKITA
Turkish Gecko.

MARGO
Gecko.

KAWAKITA
A lizard.

MARGO
I know what it is. But lizard DNA and mammalian DNA on the same strand?

KAWAKITA (shrugging)
Your source is contaminated.

MARGO
I took a scraping from deep in the sample, and the forensicist who did the autopsy is considered the foremost expert witness on DNA pathology in the midwest. No, no my friend. I think this sample's clean.

KAWAKITA
Then your software screwed the

pooch.

MARGO

Greg, your lack of affection
for my software is more than
well documented.

KAWAKITA

Hell Margo, if these results
are anywhere near accurate,
I'll personally recommend you
for an associateship.

MARGO

I'll call Porky Pig, maybe I
can get his vote too--

FROCK

--There is another possibility.

Both Kawakita and Margo turn to the little wheel-ed man...

FROCK

A lot of repeated base pairs
could suggest a high level of
genetic damage. When DNA is
defective it often uncontrol-
lably replicates long repeating
sequences of the same base
pair. Radiation can damage
DNA. So can certain chemicals.
Even viruses can create these
abnormalities.

MARGO

Viruses?

INT. COMMAND CENTER -- EVENING

Margo enters, sees a cop at a desk.

MARGO

I'm looking for Agent Spencer.

COP

Yeah. He's with the
Lieutenant, putting out the
detail. They're in the
Superstition exhibit. Go
through there and up the st--

MARGO

--I know the way thanks.

EXT. DIORAMA HALL -- EVENING

Margo moves through the big room to the entrance to the Superstition exhibit on the far wall. The doors are in an overhanging jack-o-lantern mouth, teeth broken and agape.

A cop, MARTINI is near the entrance.

MARTINI

Sorry ma'am museum's closed.

MARGO

Uh, no actually....

She remembers her i.d. hanging on a chain on her chest, displays it. The cop is suspicious, but nods.

MARGO

Did Agent Spencer go through here?

MARTINI

Who?

MARGO

Nevermind.

Margo heads through the gaping mouth-door.

INT. SUPERSTITION EXHIBIT -- EVENING

Margo steps into a cool, dark, eerily lit, narrow space. There is a soft, eerily WHISTLING wind.

MARGO

Hello... anyone here?

Margo makes her way unsteadily through the dark. The hall twists and turns, maze-like, blind alley over blind alley until Margo finds herself in a dark and dank stone tomb.

Several mummies lay in sarcophagi. A soft CHANTING slithers through the air. This is unlike anything we've seen in the museum. Weird in a manipulative and carnivalesque way.

Margo step down a dark stone tunnel. Along the walls are tattooed heads, shriveled lips drawn back from rotting teeth.

She enters ANOTHER ROOM: A Mayan tomb. A skeleton in the center wears a headdress and tribal robes. Gold rings encircle fleshless fingers. We hear JUNGLE DRUMS.

Margo moves on... there are Shaman dancers, covered in grasses and shells, many armed Tibetan god-figures with spectacularly angry masks.

Finally the walls open up into a larger gallery featuring images of the DEVIL from cultures around the globe.

Margo finds herself dwarfed by abhorrent statues of SATAN, TORNARSUK, INCUBI, all hideous, all malevolent.

Suddenly from behind Margo, there's a long and soft WHEEZE. Margo turns and sees a SHADOW, black on black, gliding stealthily towards her, moving through the hideous artifacts.

Slowly, Margo backs up, slipping quickly through the exhibit. The shadow chases in a swift, slinking motion, a muscular, sinuous run... not human at all.

Margo turns and runs down another winding corridor. Overhanging trees covered in Spanish Moss WHISPER. A wolf HOWLS. Bats SQUEAK and flutter.

She turns as she bumps into a glass case... and finds the relic, the "Kothoga": black, spiny back, clawed hands.

Another soft WHEEZING....

Margo backs away... and stumbles out into ANOTHER HALL...

Finally turning, seeing a "WOMANS" sign, she throws herself through a door....

INT. WOMAN'S ROOM -- DAY

Bright fluorescent light. Margo moves to a sink. Tries to relax. She turns on the faucet.

The water HISSES into the porcelain bowl. She cups her hands, shuts her eyes, bends her neck and splashes it up over her face.

She stares into the mirror and sighs.

Suddenly she hears something... a THUMP near the door.

She turns, and quickly moves to one of the stalls.

INSIDE STALL

Margo throws the lockset, turns, folds down the seatcover, crouches on the seat so her feet don't show, and listens intently.

We hear the CREAK of a door.

Margo looks up above her. A reinforced window is just above her head, closed tight.

At the base of the stall, a SHADOW moves across the tile. There's a soft WHEEZING sound.

WATER runs.

Margo is holding her breath. She puts her head down, wraps a trembling hand tightly around her knees.

OUTSIDE THE STALL

An OLD CLEANING WOMAN is standing at the sink. She shuts off the water. Turns back to the door.

She WHEEZES, pulls out a breathalyzer, takes a hit. She HUMMS as she walks back out the door.

For a moment, nothing moves. Then slowly, the stall door swings open and Margo sticks her head out.

CUT TO:

INT. SUPERSTITION EXHIBIT -- NIGHT

Margo is sitting on a chair, in the now brightly lit Superstition area. The mood is no more frightening than a mother's kitchen at high noon.

Seated near her are Doctors Cuthbert and Ridgeway, OTHERS.

MARGO

No. That's not what I saw...
it's alright, forget it. This
is silly....

Spencer, D'Agosta, Parkinson and several guards come back in the room. Cuthbert turns to them.

PARKINSON

Nothing.

CUTHBERT

Are you sure you're alright
Doctor Green?

MARGO

I'm fine. It was nothing. I
got spooked.

RIDGEWAY

Mister Parkinson, let's seal
the exhibit until tomorrow
night. And this time, make
sure it stays sealed.

D'AGOSTA

I'll leave a watch at the entry
and egress of the exhibition
for the next twenty-four hours
if you like Doctor Cuthbert.

RIDGEWAY (sharply)

That might at least keep
curious staff away.

Margo shoots Ridgeway a withering look. Cuthbert smiles
and looks at the others.

CUTHBERT

Well I guess if our exhibit can
scare a scientist as rugged as
our Doctor Green, then we've
gone a good way toward
accomplishing our goal.

The group fractures and breaks. Parkinson points to the
ceiling and the doors and talks to D'Agosta.

Margo approaches Spencer, steers him away from the others.

SPENCER

I understand you were looking
for me Doctor Green.

MARGO

Yeah... the results from the

claw are done... I'm afraid
they're inconclusive. They--

--She sees something....

MARGO

--There it is....

They are only a few feet from the black figurine.

CLOSE ON THE RELIC

Even uglier, blacker, in the fluorescent light.

SPENCER

John Whitney's relic.

MARGO

The Kothoga.

CUT TO:

EXT. MUSEUM -- NIGHT

Cloudy. All is quiet.

INT. DIORAMA ROOM / SUPERSTITION EXHIBIT -- NIGHT

The doors inside the grinning mouth are closed. A police-
man, DOYLE is seated at a table set up near the entry. He
looks at his watch impatiently and pulls out his radio.

DOYLE

Bailey? Doyle. I'm still
waiting for McNally.

BAILEY (os)

He should be there any minute,
he had to do a walk by, check
in with Museum personnel.

DOYLE

I'm starting my third shift,
man. This is getting old.

BAILEY (os)

Hang on, if I can't raise him,
I'll come in and relieve you
myself.

The radio HISSES, fades, an LED blinks red. Doyle pulls the battery and drops it in a charger near the desk.

There's a sound, a low WHEEZING from behind the Superstition doors.

DOYLE
McNally? Hello?

No answer. Doyle pauses. He moves to the exhibit door. He listens. Another WHEEZE....

He cautiously opens the door, looks into the darkness.

INSIDE SUPERSTITION EXHIBIT

The masks and shadows stare in silence as Doyle steps inside. There is a low sound of damp, clotted, BREATHING.

DOYLE
McNally, cut the crap.

The door swings slowly shut behind him.

A dark form slithers through the gloom, accelerating noiselessly, suddenly rushing Doyle, who raises his hands to defend himself, mouth opening to scream and WWHHHAAMMMM!!

He is hit with a force so severe and complete, that he hasn't time to make a sound.

BACK TO SUPERSTITION ENTRANCE

Officer McNally appears. He sighs, looks around. No one.

McNALLY
Doyle? Hey!

He finds Doyle's walkie on the table, then pulls his own off his belt.

McNALLY
Bailey, McNally. What happened to Doyle?

BAILEY (os)
He's not there?

McNALLY
No one's here. He left his

radio.

BAILEY (os)
He starts his forty-eight to-
night. I think he jumped the
gun.

McNALLY (considering)
Can't say I blame him.

BAILEY (os)
Any sign of a monster?

McNALLY (smiling)
Nothing yet.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MUSEUM -- DAY

A flat and cloudy day. Wind whips at the huge banner as workers install velvet ropes and a red carpet on the museum stairs.

INT. MARGO'S LAB -- DAY

Margo is at her workstation, sifting through acetate after acetate, an impossible mess....

She sighs and moves some of the stuff away, uncovering the plastic bag with the leaf samples.

She considers the bag a moment, zips it open and removes some of the leaves, examining them carefully, turning one of the leaves over, studying the underside.

CLOSE

Tiny balls, like seeds, line the bottom of the leaf.

MARGO

slides down the table and lifts the dust cover off a dissecting microscope, puts the leaf underneath, adjusts the lights and peers in.

MARGO
Hey Greg... take a look at
this.

Greg Kawakita sticks his head out his office. He is dressed in a tuxedo, frustratedly trying to get the studs in his shirt.

KAWAKITA

You know they're closing down the wing at six and the Director wants us downstairs before the patrons arrive--

MARGO

--Look at this would you...?!

Kawakita steps over to Margo's lab and peers into the microscope.

MARGO

Along the back here....

KAWAKITA (shrugging)

Seed pods or... I don't know... eggs?

Margo stares at Kawakita.

MARGO

Jesus, maybe something did crawl out of that case. Greg... Can you do a chem analysis right away?

KAWAKITA

Now?

INT. THE MUSEUM BASEMENT

Spencer gestures at a blueprint unrolled on a table.

JONATHON BRADLEY is holding the leashes on a pair of large loose-fleshed hounds. Around them are a building engineer named EVANS, and a shotgun-wielding cop named HARVEY.

SPENCER

We'll head down the basement facility through the storage level here and work our way east to west....

BRADLEY

You have something?

Spencer produces a plastic bag with a swatch of red-soaked cloth inside.

Bradley opens the bag, squats down to the dogs and lets them gently sniff.

BRADLEY

Castor, Pollux... Find!!
Find!!

INT. MARGO'S LAB -- DAY

Grad Students and Kawakita are all working nervously around their tables dressed in tuxes and dresses. Only Margo remains in her work clothes.

Albert Frock rolls into the room. He is dressed in his tuxedo, untied tie in hand.

FROCK

I was hoping perhaps someone could help me with this damned tie-- Margo, you're not even dressed!

Margo's scanning a stream of printouts at her table.

MARGO

Professor Frock, wait 'til you see what we found.

FROCK

I don't care what you've found, it's important for you to get downstairs and put on a good sh--

--Margo grabs Frock's chair and pushes him over to her lab.

MARGO

--Look... here's a list of all the material in the Whitney shipment: a pipe, some writing instruments, the figurine of the beast, which is now in the superstition exhibit, a grass fetish, and some spear points--

FROCK

--As expected... nothing extraordinary. Certainly nothing that would prove the existence of the Zenzera, or their myth.

MARGO

But look at this... these leaves were used as packing material surrounding the specimens.

She shows Frock a variety of stems and leaves. Frock shrugs.

FROCK

John was in the field and he didn't have any inorganic material. It's not unusual--

MARGO

But look at these leaves. Underneath... the fleshy part....

Frock examines the bottom of the leaf.

MARGO

I think they're eggs.

Margo pushes Frock over to the microscope. Frock stares down in it.

FROCK

Not eggs... no... look at the way their attached to the leaf structure... some sort of a parasitical fungus I believe.

MARGO

Fungus...

There's a BEEPING sound. Kawakita TEARS a printout off a computer, drags it over to Margo's lab.

KAWAKITA

Here we go.

He and Margo scan them quickly.

MARGO

Glycotetraline collagenoid.

KAWAKITA

Weinstein's thyrotropic hormone, 2, 6, adenosine.

MARGO

1,2,3 Oxytocin 4-monoxytocin supressin...

KAWAKITA

Gammaglobulin A, x-y, left positive. Hypothalamic cortico-tropic hormone, left negative--

MARGO

--Hormones. This Fungus is loaded with hormones.

FROCK

Look here... reverse transcriptase, an enzyme almost always found in association with viruses.

MARGO

Viruses again.

FROCK

What we have is a plant heavily infected with a virus. It's taken over some of the plant's cells, then inserted its own genetic material into the plant's genes.

KAWAKITA

I don't get it.

FROCK

Virus in plants is not uncommon. Burls on maples and pine trees are caused by viruses.

MARGO

But why would a virus code for animal proteins? What good are animal hormones in a plant?

Frock's face fills with concern.

FROCK

Margo, perhaps you should send
the others down to the preview.

Margo catches Frock signal and turns to the others.

MARGO

Oh...
(to the room)
Sorry everyone, workday's over,
we'll see you downstairs.
Enjoy yourselves.

The grad students smile and scuttle for the door, happy for
their release. Only Kawakita is left.

MARGO

Go on Greg, we'll meet you down
there.

KAWAKITA

You're sure?

FROCK

Go on ahead Doctor Kawakita.
I'll save a dance for you.

Kawakita looks at Frock and Margo suspiciously, turns and
leaves.

EXT. MUSEUM -- EVENING

Spotlights blast the front of the museum. A well-heeled
crowd is working its way up the broad marble steps.

INT. ATRIUM

The room is lit with spotlights from the third floor
balcony. Two great chandeliers glow high above the great
room. The CROWD is further gathering, moving towards the
entrance to the DIORAMA HALL, which is still roped off.

INT. DIORAMA HALL -- NIGHT

An ORCHESTRA near the stairs at the southern end of the
great hall is warming up.

A pair of bars has been set up on either side of the room.

A dance floor is down in front of the orchestra. A long banquet table laden with heaping platters of food runs along the opposite wall. White-jacketed WAITERS and CATERERS scurry in last minute preparation.

Edgar Ridgeway is scanning the room, pointing, WHISPERING to his staff. Ian Cuthbert and Tom Parkinson join him.

RIDGEWAY

I think we're about ready for our guests sir.

CUTHBERT

Very well... Mister Parkinson?

Parkinson pulls a walkie-talkie out of his cummerbund, whispers into it with great import.

INT. MARGO'S LAB

Margo stares at Frock.

MARGO

What was that all about?

FROCK

Margo, please hurry and get dressed.

MARGO

Professor Frock... why does a plant virus program for animal protein?

FROCK

I didn't want to frighten the others, but unless I'm mistaken, all of the hormones listed in that analysis are produced by the human hypothalamus gland.

MARGO

The hypothalamus?! That's the area that was missing from the brain of the guard....

FROCK

Which is why we have to go down to the preview and find Agent

Spencer.

MARGO

I don't need to get dressed to find Spencer. I'm dressed just fine.

FROCK

Margo, I'm not about to let that weasel Kawakita steal that associateship out from under you. You are going to make an appearance at that party like it or not.

INT. SECURE STORAGE AREA -- DAY

Bradley, Spencer, Harvey, and Evans are moving through the storerooms following the tracking dogs.

SPENCER

Anything?

BRADLEY

Not yet sir. There's a lot of foreign smells down here which might knock out their olfactories, we'll have to take it slow.

Suddenly one of the dogs stops and raises his head, sniffing the air.

The other dog similarly cocks his head. The dogs quicken their pace and begin moving through the stores.

INT. MUSEUM HALLWAY -- NIGHT

The dogs track through the area by the spiral stairs, the men follow, jogging to keep up.

INT. MUSEUM BASEMENT/SERVICE AREA -- NIGHT

The four men enter a large plant service area. The noise from a pair of AIR CONDITIONING UNITS is deafening.

BRADLEY

Find! Find!

INT. SUBBASEMENT - DAY

Flashlight cut through the darkness of this large, damp, and ancient room. Along one side are a pair of enormous rusting boilers.

SPENCER

We've gone off the map. Mister Evans?

EVANS

The coal plant. At one time there were twenty men down here keeping these old boilers stoked.

The dogs are pulling Bradley home.

BRADLEY

Mister Spencer... the scent seems to be getting stronger.

INT. A SHAFTWAY

A long low shaft with a brick-arched ceiling, runs off under the earth into inky blackness.

EVANS

The old Chicago coal line. Ran from the piers down south all the way to the north end. Electric trams hauled coal right into the basement from the ore barges. It's how Chicago stayed warm.

SPENCER

How far does it go?

EVANS

Some of 'em have been filled in, but this one comes out in the planetarium across the drive. At least that's what they say. I gotta tell you I don't come down here much... jus' start thinking about all that dirt over my head.

The dogs are BAYING, pulling Bradley down the shaftway.

Spencer nods at Bradley. Bradley nervously moves down the deepening shaft.

FURTHER INSIDE THE SHAFT

The men hesitate as the tunnel narrows.

HARVEY

God what on earth is that
smell?

The dogs continue to BAY, tugging on their leashes.

BRADLEY

I don't like this.

Spencer pulls out a pistol and unlocks the safety.

SPENCER

Mister Bradley, you and the
dogs first. I'll be next.
Mister Evans, behind me.
Officer Harvey, please watch
our backs. If I call for you,
move up with your weapon
immediately.

The dogs pull hard on their leashes, WHINING and BARKING.

The group begins to move into the darkness. Spencer and Bradley shine their powerful lights down the concrete artery. The pipe is only a few feet wide. The men have to stoop to clear their heads.

Ahead we can hear strange clotted WHEEZING.

The dogs BARK, pulling violently on their leashes.

BRADLEY

There's something moving, right
in front of us. Castor!
Pollux! Heel!

The dogs drag Bradley forward, paying no attention. The hair on their backs is rising in an angry ridge.

BRADLEY

Castor!!

Bradley's flashlight beam dances along the floor and ceiling of the cave. One of the dogs twists violently, baring it's teeth and crossing it's lead with the other.

Bradley stamps down on the lead, trying to clear it. But the other dog pulls and the leather slips behind Bradley's ankle.

Bradley trips and falls, and the first dog jumps away, racing down the tunnel.

Bradley lunges for the second dog's lead, but he gets away too, desperately chasing the first.

BRADLEY

Castor!! Pollux!! No!!

SPENCER

Officer Harvey!!

The cop swings up from behind, shotgun already up in the crux of his elbow.

The dog's BARKING echoes through the tunnel....

Spencer holds the beam of his flashlight steady as he grabs onto Bradley, keeping him from chasing his dogs.

BRADLEY

No!! NO! CASTOR! POLLUX!

Suddenly there is much barking and BAYING from the darkness in front of them. Then horrible SOUNDS, a deep and terrifying ROAR, not at all the sound of dogs. Then more... TRICKLING liquid... a pathetic WHINE.

Suddenly a massive dark shape of blood and fur hurtles through Spencer's light. Spencer ducks as the thing flies back past him.

Harvey FIRES and pumps the shotgun desperately BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!! The muzzle flares light up the tunnel and ECHOES painfully in our ears.

Spencer swings his flashlight down at the thing that flew by him as the ECHOES FALL into silence.

ON THE GROUND

is Castor, his head almost entirely ripped from his torso.

EVANS

Jeezus Christ, Jeezus Christ!
What the hell did that?

There is a moment of silence, than a terrible SOB from somewhere in the darkness.

BRADLEY

Pollux. Pollux!

Bradley turns and stumbles down the pipe before Spencer can turn and grab him.

SPENCER

Bradley! NO! NO!!

But Bradley disappears, footsteps ECHOING and FADING.
Spencer turns quickly.

SPENCER

Officer Harvey, take Mister
Evans and go back and find
Lieutenant D'Agosta. Tell him
where we are and what you've
seen. Hurry please!

EXT. THE MUSEUM

Cabs and limousines tangle outside the museum entrance. A huge rotating spotlight cuts through a building RAIN. Valets with umbrellas swing open car doors.

A tall, grey-haired man (THE MAYOR) in an elegant tux climbs out of a limo and helps his WIFE over the door sill. FLASHBULBS burst, reporter's yell.

REPORTERS

Mister Mayor! Mister Mayor?
Your honor! Are you looking
forward to the Superstition
exhibit?

The Mayor waves at the reporters through the rain as PUBLIC RELATIONS FLAKS tug him away.

MAYOR

Nothing like a good scare. And
this museum is a great place
for it!

REPORTERS
Your honor... your honor!?

INT. SUB-BASEMENT TUNNEL - NIGHT

Jonathon Bradley, alone, moves deeper into the tunnel.

BRADLEY
Pollux! Pollux! Come!

There is only the sound of running, TRICKLING WATER.

Bradley moves forward into a deeper, wider section. There are several shallow niches in the pipe off to the side. There's a noise in one of them. Bradley moves for it.

BRADLEY
Pollux! Pollux!! Here boy!

REVERSE ANGLE

From the niche. Bradley peers in, crouching, his flashlight flaring in our eyes.

Something moves slowly behind Bradley.

IN BRADLEY'S FLASHLIGHT BEAM

Pollux is cowering, watching Bradley, WHIMPERING, backing up.

BRADLEY
There you are boy... its
okay... Pollux?!

ON BRADLEY

as he turns... a look of horrible dread fills his face....

SOMETHING

moves at Bradley with impossible speed. We get a glimpse of cat-like eyes, enormous mandibled jaws as they swing open....

BRADLEY'S NECK

SNAPS Back. Blood SPATTERS.

THE SHADOW

looms over the dog. The dog cowers, backing away, trembling.

But the shadow suddenly retreats.

INT. DIORAMA HALL -- NIGHT

Ian Cuthbert moves through the BUZZING CROWD, shaking hands, moving towards a dais set up near the ribboned, grinning Superstition entrance.

Edgar Ridgeway is nearby, chatting amiably with Tom Parkinson and Greg Kawakita.

RIDGEWAY

I think we're ready to begin.
Alright Tom?

Parkinson pulls out his walkie.

PARKINSON

Base, have we shut down the
outer cells?

WALKIE

Still checking the basement lab
area sir.

PARKINSON

Basement? I thought we told
them to be out by six?

RIDGEWAY

That's where your lab is isn't
it Greg?

KAWAKITA

Yeah, we all came up a while
ago....

(he hesitates)

It was clear.

PARKINSON

You're sure? It'll be a long
night for anyone who gets
locked in there.

KAWAKITA

Yes...

(smiling)

It was clear.

AT THE DAIS

Edgar Ridgeway moves up to a microphone on the platform.

RIDGEWAY

Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you
for coming tonight....

AT THE BACK OF THE HALL

D'Agosta surreptitiously slides around the edges of the party, trying hard to look comfortable in his tuxedo.

He nods at Officer MARTINI.

MARTINI

Nice outfit Lieutenant. They
didn't have one with ruffles?

D'AGOSTA

Everything alright Martini?

MARTINI

Quiet as a museum.

There's APPLAUSE. D'Agosta turns to look at the dais where Ridgeway has given way to the Mayor.

MAYOR

...As we ride with great
fragility into the sunset glow
of these, the last few days of
the twentieth century, I'm
reminded of man's great
achievements....

D'AGOSTA

Thar she blows.

MARTINI

Is he speaking English?

Suddenly, a breathless, sweating, Officer Harvey appears, still carrying the shotgun....

D'AGOSTA

Jesus Harvey, put that thing
away!

HARVEY

Lieutenant.... down in the
basement... we saw something!

D'AGOSTA

You saw what? Where's Spencer?

BACK BY THE SUPERSTITION ENTRANCE

The Mayor and Cuthbert are holding a giant pair of scissors. They grin for FLASHING cameras as the scissors clumsily snap at a crepe ribbon. When the ribbon fails to separate, Edgar Ridgeway impatiently steps forward and tears it in half.

The Mayor laughs, grins, grabs Cuthbert's hand and shoves it in the air like they just won Wimbledon doubles. More STROBES flash.

The crowd APPLAUDS and swells towards the Superstition entrance.

BACK TO D'AGOSTA

He stares at Harvey a long moment.

D'AGOSTA

Alright... I'm going into the
exhibition with the first wave.

(to Harvey)

You call for backup and sit
tight okay?

Harvey nods. D'Agosta motions to Martini to join him, and moves for the front of the hall.

NEAR THE SUPERSTITION ENTRANCE

D'Agosta and Martini slips into the group immediately behind the mayor, which includes a scowling Parkinson.

PARKINSON

I thought we agreed to keep the
uniforms on the sidelines.

D'AGOSTA

Just one. The crowd sees a
blue, they feel protected.

PARKINSON

We don't want them to feel protected Lieutenant, we want them scared. And you and I had an agreement.

D'AGOSTA (with a sigh)

You got a radio?

PARKINSON

Yes of course.

D'AGOSTA

Okay.

(to the uniform)

Martini get lost.

(to Parkinson)

You stay on the other side of the Mayor and you watch me. If anything goes wrong, I'm gonna take out my gun and I'm gonna shoot you, then I'm gonna shoot the mayor. So nothing better go wrong.

INT. SUB-BASEMENT TUNNEL -- NIGHT

Spencer is alone in the tunnel, gun drawn, moving carefully through the darkness. His senses are keen, FOOTSTEPS ECHOING lightly through the narrow space.

Water drips everywhere, the space is deep and dark and nasty.

Spencer hesitates. He shines his light carefully around. He bends, touches the ground, rubs his fingers together.

IN THE FLASHLIGHT BEAM

Spencer's fingers are covered in blood.

ON SPENCER

As he stands up he bumps his head, and something moves... there's a piece of dirty plywood leaning against the side of the tunnel, covering a low opening in the brickery. He pushes the plywood away.

INSIDE THE OPENING

A crude old service room of somekind.

Spencer ducks inside and shines his light... illuminating a grisly horror show. The room is filled with bones and carcasses of every kind. There are scraps of leather, a shiny bits of metal, torn plastics, detritus of every kind.

On the floor is what appears to be a crude nesting place made of newspaper, sticks. It is frighteningly huge.

Spencer shines his light around. suddenly revealing the decapitated body of Jonathon Hamm.

Suddenly there's a NOISE at the door of the room.

Spencer jerks hard, moving his light and gun in one piece.

IN THE FLASHLIGHT BEAM

Trembling, Pollux steps out of an arched niche.

SPENCER

relaxes.

SPENCER

Here boy... its okay... here
boy....

The dog comes to Spencer, who pets him gently, stands and begins back the way he came.

INT. SUPERSTITION EXHIBITION - NIGHT

D'Agosta works his way through gap-toothed entry and ducks around a display into the first room of the exhibition where Ridgeway and Cuthbert are giving the Mayor a private tour.

RIDGEWAY

This is a very rare sacrificial gurney from Mesoamerica. The priests would sacrifice the victim, cut out the beating heart, and eat it.

MAYOR

Say, I think I could use one of these down in City Hall.

Ridgeway, Parkinson, and Kawakita GUFFAW sycophantically.

INT. MUSEUM HALLWAY

Margo pushes Frock's wheelchair down a long hall. She is dressed in a black mini-suit and heels, looking somewhat awkward, but quite fetching.

MARGO

Stupid Fucking Shoes. I swear
I couldn't be more
uncomfortable.

FROCK

The board will promote you just
so they have someone besides
Edgar Ridgeway to look at.

MARGO

That's exactly what I'm trying
to avoid.

They've reached a door, Margo reaches over Frock and turns the handle, but it won't open.

MARGO

Locked.

FROCK

It seems Mister Parkinson made
good on his promise.

MARGO

Then all the doors along this
wing are locked.

Margo spins Frock in his wheelchair.

MARGO

Come on Professor....

FROCK

Where?

FROCK

Down the firestairs and across
the sub-basement. We still
have time.

BACK INTO THE SUPERSTITION EXHIBIT -- DAY

D'Agosta's following the Mayor's group, entering the room with the sarcophagi....

But as the room narrows, D'Agosta loses sight of the Mayor, so he slips behind one of the displays and squeezes out the other side. He is now at the leading edge of the crowd, next to a vertical case with a mummy inside.

SOMEONE

-What is that?

-That blood looks so real.

D'Agosta turns and glances at the display. This mummy is covered in fresh-looking blood. D'Agosta's face fills with concern.

He looks up... sees that the false ceiling is red... soggy... sagging....

A DROP OF BLOOD

drips from the ceiling, SPLATTERING on a the white dress of a WOMAN next to D'Agosta. She jerks in repulsion.

The crowd around her pulls back and WHISPERS... Someone in the crowd shoves D'Agosta.

D'AGOSTA

Don't worry about a thing
folks, all part of the show--

THE CROWD

-That's blood! -

-No that's real!

The group surges, knocking into the sarcophagus, which pushes into the curtain which pulls on the ceiling...

The ceiling sags and something plunges down through the soggy red mess... a headless TORSO drops through the tiles.

It is dressed in a blue police uniform, swinging eerily by its knees....

D'Agosta struggles towards the Mayor as the crowd surges back the way they came....

D'AGOSTA

Easy folks easy! All part of

the show! All part of the
show!

But MEN and WOMEN turn and try and run, which is impossible
for the crush of the crowd.

Another sarcophagus topples. A glass case of delicate
fetishes is pushed aside, then CRASHES to the ground.

Suddenly, over in a corner of the room, something huge,
enormous, BURSTS through the ceiling, reaches down and
grabs a screaming, KICKING bald guy straight up off the
floor and disappears into the ceiling.

D'Agosta stares in shock as the CROWD SCREAMS and jams for
the exit.

INSIDE SECURITY COMPUTER CONTROL

BEEPING ALARMS wake up the dull museum guards in the
control room. They are DAVIS and JOHNSON.

JOHNSON

What's going on?

DAVIS

We got robbery alert in the new
exhibition space....

JOHNSON

How could that be? The
freakin' Mayor's down there.

DAVIS

Five, six, seven. Shit the
whole board's goin' off.

Another BUZZER begins beeping. Johnson moves to another
monitor.

JOHNSON

Code twenty-seven... what the
hell is that?

He scans a chart on a wall.

JOHNSON

Earthquake. Shit, the computer
thinks there's been a fucking
earthquake, the fire codes are

going in.

DAVIS

This is Chicago. We don't have earthquakes in Chicago.

JOHNSON

The computer doesn't know where the fuck it is....

INT. GEM ROOM -- DAY

ALARMS are ringing loudly. A steel cage is dropping down over the gems exhibit. PEOPLE are scrambling for the exit.

BACK IN SECURITY CONTROL ROOM

Johnson is typing as fast as he can. Lights and alarms are going off all over the room.

DAVIS

Computer's forcing down the last cell doors.

JOHNSON

Jesus, that's the Diorama Hall, Can't you override manually?

DAVIS

Not in code status I can't. We'll have to reset the whole system.

Suddenly another alarm rings....

JOHNSON

Jeezus, the sprinklers have been triggered.

DAVIS

Shit! Shut it down! Shut everything down!

INT. THE DIORAMA ROOM -- NIGHT

The band is still playing as ALARM HORNS RING and a flood of PEOPLE squeeze out the Superstition doors and charge across the dance floor.

Suddenly the overhead sprinklers CUT LOOSE, and begin to SPRAY ragged, irregular droplets.

The well-heeled and the mighty stare skyward, trying to make sense out of the bizarre... it's raining indoors!

People pour out of the exhibit, running through splashing water for the exit. Those who weren't running before, begin to run now.

SCREAMS. A table is over-turned. A banquet SMASHES to the floor.

D'AGOSTA AND PARKINSON

stagger out of the exhibit, horrified at the sight of PEOPLE jammed at the lone exit back into the atrium. Above their heads, a huge corrugated security door is grinding relentlessly down.

PARKINSON

The cell door. D'Agosta!

D'AGOSTA

What's happening?

PARKINSON (into walkie)

Control, Parkinson, what's going on down there?

INT. SECURITY CONTROL

JOHNSON (into walkie)

The computer's turned on all systems sir, we can't reverse it!

PARKINSON (VO)

Shut down the computer now!
Shut it down now!!

INT. POWER ROOM - BASEMENT

ROARING ventilators. Sprinkler heads are showering a wire room full of ductwork and big electrical conduit. Suddenly there are SPARKS. A huge electric WHHHAAPPP!!

BACK TO DIORAMA HALL

D'Agosta and a PATROLMAN claw their way through the panicky crowd trying to clear people away from the descending door.

D'Agosta finds a heavy chair and jams it under the steel gate, trying to slow its progress. But the heavy door simply crushes the chair, SNAPPING it apart.

D'Agosta turns to a pair of approaching COPS.

D'AGOSTA

Get people away from that door.
Call downtown and tell them we
need ambulances, EMS personnel.
Pull everyone you can find off
watch and get them inside that
front hall. I want as big a
presence as we can muster as
soon as we can get it.
Martini, get inside that
exhibition and find out how
many are hurt and get them out
here, then get them first aid.

Suddenly the lights begin to FLICKER... the room is plunged into DARKNESS!

INT. SECURITY CONTROL ROOM -- NIGHT

Lights out. Davis stands and unbolts the door out to the basement level. He sticks his head out a moment.

DAVIS

Shit... Lights are out all
along this level.

JOHNSON

What about emergency generator?

DAVIS

What about it? It's in the
sub-basement, east wing. About
a mile from here.

JOHNSON

Well what about the backup
batteries? At least we can
reboot the system, get it back
on line.

DAVIS

They're out in the wire room
somewhere.

Johnson stares at Davis.

JOHNSON
Oh hell I'll go....

Johnson takes his flashlight and a gun from the drawer and goes out the door.

JOHNSON
And don't lock me out!

INT. SECURITY WIRE ROOM

A maze of smoking wires and circuit panels that have been totally trashed. Cables have been ripped out of battery boxes, a row of electronic equipment has been turned over. Johnson moves inside, shines his flashlight....

JOHNSON
What the hell happened in here?

There's a NOISE behind him. Johnson hesitates, looks over his shoulder, sees nothing.

He shakes his head and tries to right one of the computer boxes.

There's another noise behind him, a WHEEZING sound.

JOHNSON (over his shoulder)
Davis, don't be fuckin' with
me. I don't need this shit.

INT. SECURITY ROOM

Davis turns his head. He's heard something.

DAVIS
Hey... hello? Jimmy?

There's a heavy WHEEZING. Damp, deep.

Davis squints in the darkness. Suddenly there's a BLAST of STATIC from the radio.

PARKINSON (vo)

Control, Parkinson. We've got
real trouble up here, shut down
your system! Shut it down!

DAVIS (to himself)
It is down. What's he talking
about?

Davis reaches for the walkie, but he is distracted by the
door slowly opening behind him.

DAVIS
Jimmy?

BACK OUTSIDE THE WIRE ROOM

Johnson emerges from the wire room and locks the door. He
steps down the basement hall and back to the Security Room.

INSIDE SECURITY AREA

Johnson steps inside. Davis is seated, back to us.

JOHNSON
Hell, I don't know what the
fuck got in there, but
someone's fuckin' trashed the
back up system.

PARKINSON (radio)
Repeat, Control, Parkinson,
Control come in....

JOHNSON
Jesus Davis, answer the man.

But Davis isn't moving.

JOHNSON
Hey Davis....

Johnson reaches forward and turns Davis' chair from the
console. The chair swings freely as...

DAVIS' HEAD

says goodbye to his neck. It topples, rolling 360 degrees
so it comes to rest in Davis' own lap, a quizzical
expression on his face.

JOHNSON

is dumbstruck. He takes one step back before something steps out of the shadows and SNAPS hard, grabbing Johnson by the back of the neck with its jaw.

It thrashes, swinging Johnson like a rag doll. Johnson SCREAMS and fights back for only a moment.

INT. BASEMENT STORAGE LEVEL

Spencer emerges from the sub-basement and back into the storage area, leading Pollux. He has his gun out and is carefully moving along.

Suddenly Pollux stops, raises his muzzle in the air and begins sniffing.

He pulls on his leash and bends his nose to the ground.

INT. ANOTHER PART OF THE BASEMENT STORAGE LEVEL

Margo and Frock burst through a gated door and move through the bottom of one of the bi-level storage areas.

INT. ANOTHER PART OF THE BASEMENT/NEAR SECURITY ROOM

Pollux tracks hard down the concrete hall, Spencer has to jog to keep up. The dog turns, suddenly stops. Spencer looks around.

In front of him, is the open door to the Security Control Room.

INT. SECURITY CONTROL ROOM

Spencer steps inside. Faces the two headless bodies.

Spencer carefully moves across the room. He picks up a walkie-talkie, slips a battery off the charger and inserts it in the case. He spots a ring of keys on the console, and picks them up.

Pollux WHINES from outside the door.

Spencer turns and steps back outside.

BACK IN BASEMENT

Pollux is staring down the hall. The fur on his back rises.

SPENCER

Easy boy....

Spencer switches off his flashlight and takes the dog's lead. The dog GROWLS... and singles out a door on the left side of the hall.

Spencer stops at the door. He holds his pistol up, flicking down the safety, and checking the top of the magazine.

He steadies himself, and stares at the door. Incredibly...

THE DOORKNOB

begins to turn. The door CRACKS open, begins to swing in, away from Spencer.

SPENCER

bursts forward, snapping out his leg and KICKING hard across his body, forcing the door back and wide....

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR

Margo and Frock jump back.

MARGO

Agent Spencer!

Spencer lowers his gun and breathes a sigh of relief. He steps through the door and let's the dog in front of him.

MARGO

Hey boy!!

--Suddenly there is a deafening ROAR!! The monster leaps into the doorframe behind Spencer!

This is the first time we've seen the beast clearly: It's big, five feet high when down on all fours, with an elongated head with lidless eyes. Its skin is a strange amalgam of fur and scales. It's back is ridged, with a spiny hump running down the middle, and a long sinuous tail. It has a bony, and articulated mandible surrounding its jaw.

Spencer instinctively shoves hard at the door, JAMMING it toward the doorframe. The monster SCREAMS a horrible, unearthly ROAR... one claw jammed inside the doorbuck.

Spencer is leaning with all his might, but the beast continues to RAM at the heavy door!!

SPENCER

Help me!

Margo kicks off her pumps and runs hard at the door, hitting it like a small, well dressed linebacker.

The door SLAMS shut. Spencer is able to shoot the bolt and the door holds fast.

The monster SCREAMS again from the other side.

Margo and Frock are too shocked to move. They jump in fright as the beast RAMS hard....

The door shakes mightily in it's frame. The shock sends Spencer sprawling.

The beast HITS it again, and the heavy metal door bends inward. The beast STRIKES again and again. Then suddenly stops.

Spencer, Margo, and Frock stare at one another.

FROCK

Incredible!

MARGO

Wait!

Margo looks around, finds a pair of hemostats on a lab table. She grabs them and moves to the door.

She sticks the grippers inside the space between jamb and door and pulls out a long stringy web of green skin.

MARGO

Looks like Mister Ugly left something behind.

CUT TO:

INT. ANOTHER STORAGE AREA - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

Spencer, Margo, and Frock run hard into a caged storage area. Spencer slams home the steel gate.

He sags against it and catches his breath.

FROCK

I've never seen anything like it. Margo, you know what this means?

MARGO

Right now I'd say it means we're in a lot of trouble.

Margo clears a table and lays out the sample.

MARGO

Spencer, your light, hurry please.

Spencer hands Margo his flashlight. She props it on the edge of the table and begins to examine the bit of skin.

FROCK

But don't you see! It's the Kothoga! The Calisto effect! John Whitney found the Zenzeran beast and somehow managed to send it back to the museum! This totally exonerates Whitney and his theories. Incredible!

EXT. MUSEUM - NIGHT

A bedlam scene. Rain. Cops, EMS workers, people in formal dress stumbling down the stairs. Limos, Cherry tops, ambulances HISSING and SQUAWKING.

A TRAFFIC COP in a yellow slicker blows a WHISTLE, tries desperately to move the snarled traffic.

CAPTAIN MARTIN, swarthy, in a baggy suit, BARKS through a walkie. A pair of helicopters THUNDERS over the museum.

A DETAIL of cops in RIOT GEAR up the wide steps....

A HELICOPTER THUNDERS overhead.

INT. MUSEUM - ATRIUM

A team of EMS works drag acetylene tanks to the cell door, hook on cable and hoses, fire up the nozzle with POPPING HISS....

INT. DIORAMA ROOM -- NIGHT

Lights out. Weak illumination only from the windows high above. The room is a shambles, food and tables everywhere. Parkinson shakes his head at D'Agosta.

PARKINSON

I can't raise the control room.
I don't know what's gone wrong.

D'AGOSTA

Alright. Help me get a count on people left in here and the exhibit hall. Let's get them together and figure a way out of here.

PARKINSON

We can't lift this door until we get the computer restarted. And the fire stairs only lead to the basement or the roof--

--Suddenly Martini appears....

MARTINI

--Lieutenant, I got a call from that FBI guy, says he's in the building somewhere.

D'Agosta motions for the walkie.

D'AGOSTA

Spencer, D'Agosta. Where are you?

SPENCER

West wing, basement level, in one of the labs. The power's out. What's going on up there?

D'AGOSTA

We've had a full power failure and we've got fifteen people trapped in the Diorama Hall with the security doors down.

We've got EMS outside but they think it will take at least two hours to cut through the sheetmetal.

BACK TO SPENCER (INTERCUTTING)

SPENCER

Listen to me carefully Lieutenant. I know this is hard to believe but there is some kind of animal loose in this building.

D'Agosta moves away from the others, whispering so they can't hear.

D'AGOSTA

I've seen it Spencer... or part of it anyway. It attacked someone in the exhibit.

SPENCER

You've got to get out of there, Lieutenant....

D'AGOSTA

You're not listening Spencer. There's no way out.

SPENCER

The fire stairs Lieutenant, behind the bandstand. Take the fire stairs down four levels to the sub-basement and head west into the service area. You'll find a passageway to the old coal line. You should come up in one of the building's nearby. Understand?

BACK TO D'AGOSTA

He is standing in the middle of the Diorama room, by Bailey and Martini.

SPENCER

Lieutenant, do you understand?

D'AGOSTA

I understand Spencer.

INT. ICHTHYOLOGY LAB - CONTINUING

Spencer shuts down the walkie.

MARGO

--Doctor Frock, look at this
would you?

Frock and Spencer move over to Margo's table.

MARGO

Mister Spencer hold the light
for me please?

Margo has a sample of the beasts' skin pinned under the
microscope.

MARGO

Now this is weird. Look, a
keratinized surface broken into
plates in the subderma... no
sweat glands anywhere....

WHAT THEY SEE

is a blow up of a shingled, waxy surface, overlapping
concentric curves.

SPENCER

What are you talking about?

FROCK

It has scales. Like an
amphibian or reptile.

MARGO

But that's not all... here on
the same sample...

She moves the bottom stage and Frock looks again.

There are big wavy lines, tiny translucent blood vessels
beneath the surface.

FROCK

Hair follicles. Capillaries.
They might be vestigial... I
can't tell....

FROCK AND MARGO

look at one another. Margo swallows.

SPENCER

I'm afraid--

MARGO

That doesn't happen! Hair, sweat glands, and a capillary system are distinctly warmblooded, and this type of long hair is generally mammalian, often primate. Scales are exclusive to fish or reptiles. This thing is both... or neither.

Frock wheels away from the table, head down. Margo picks up on it, turns to him....

MARGO

The hormones.

SPENCER

What hormones?

MARGO

Spencer, in the crates Doctor Whitney sent back, the artifacts were packed in a leaf specimen that carried a parasitic fungus. That fungus was loaded with hormones... animal hormones produced in the thalamic region of the human brain.

SPENCER

You know that it's been a pattern in the killings. The thalamus, hypothalamus, and pituitary have been removed.

MARGO

These proteins are responsible for growth, bone structure, exoskeletal physiology, skin maintenance... I know this is crazy but maybe this animal started out as something else... a chameleon or a lizard or even a dog. It ate these leaves and it changed into what

it is now, into what we saw a few minutes ago. And it needs these hormones to stay alive.

FROCK

There are instances of drastic physiological change in nature: The tadpole metamorphoses from fish to amphibian when its brain produces a huge dose of hormones and literally shocks the body into transmission.

SPENCER

So... when this thing was denied access to those shipping cases, it was forced to find another source of those proteins....

MARGO

That's why we got the confused results from the interpolator. That's why it typed for an unknown species. My program wasn't wrong... this thing is an amalgam of species. And judging by its recent actions, we can assume it's continuing to grow, and change.

She looks at Frock who is deeply absorbed in thought.

MARGO

Spencer, I've got to get to my lab. Can we do that?

INT. DIORAMA HALL - NIGHT

D'Agosta stands with two cops and fifteen stranded patrons.

PARKINSON

This is absurd Lieutenant. Listen to yourself. Do you suppose an animal entered the code that turned on the sprinklers, or dropped that firedoor?

D'AGOSTA

I don't know Mister Parkinson,
but you saw what happened in
there didn't you.

PARKINSON

I don't know what I saw in
there.

RIDGEWAY

--Lieutenant, forgive me, but
I've seen a great many things
that defy rational explanation.
But I am sure the thing that
killed those men is the same
animal you and I face in the
mirror every morning. Nothing
more and nothing less.

D'AGOSTA

Doctor, you might be right.
But I was wrong to let this
preview open up today. And now
it's up to me to get everyone
out of here as quickly as I
can.

Ridgeway stares at D'Agosta.

RIDGEWAY

Through the basement? Through
some antique crawlspace no
one's travelled in thirty
years. I believe I'll take my
chances and wait for your
compatriots to cut through that
door.

D'Agosta looks at Bailey.

D'AGOSTA

Johnny take off your gun and
give it to Doctor Ridgeway.

(to Martini)

Teddy, give him your radio and
your flashlight.

THE MAYOR

Lieutenant DeGusto.

D'AGOSTA

Dee A-go-sta, sir. Vincent.

Badge number 14173.

MAYOR

Lieutenant, I want you to consider very carefully your actions here tonight.

D'AGOSTA

--I have sir. But we don't have any more time. Now when we get outta here you can fire my ass, but right now, you're coming with me.

D'Agosta heads over towards the bandstand. Martini and Bailey follow immediately.

Ten other PEOPLE follow somewhat less surely, leaving Ridgeway, Parkinson, the Mayor, the Mayor's wife, Ian Cuthbert, and Greg Kawakita.

Cuthbert, seated all this while, stands and looks at Ridgeway.

CUTHBERT

Good luck Edgar.

Cuthbert limps away. The Mayor's wife moves to help him.

MAYOR'S WIFE

Joseph. Please.

The Mayor grudgingly follows his wife, helping Cuthbert.

Ridgeway, Parkinson, and Kawakita are left alone. Ridgeway smiles bemusedly.

D'AGOSTA

is at the closed metal fire door.

D'AGOSTA

Teddy what do we have?

MARTINI

One service revolver, an extra loader, two flashlights, one radio and a shotgun with eight rounds.

D'AGOSTA

I'll lead with the shotgun,
John you stay in the middle,
Teddy you take the pistol and
stay at the back. I need two
volunteers to help Doctor
Cuthbert.

MAYOR
I can handle that.

ANOTHER MAN
I'll help.

D'AGOSTA
Okay. You stay directly behind
me. The rest are single file
and holding hands okay? Now
it's gonna be dark. We go
slow, we go quiet, and we stick
together. Okay John, open the
door.

INT. ICHTHYOLOGY LAB -- NIGHT

Margo pulls the metal gate shut. Doctor Frock is on the
other side. He locks the gate behind her.

FROCK
Don't worry about me Margo.
There's no way you can drag me
up and down those fire stairs.

MARGO
We'll be back.

FROCK
Be careful.

Spencer has his gun out as Margo, barefoot, turns and
hurries down the aisle of the storage room.

INT. DIORAMA ROOM

D'Agosta hurries the patrons into a dark stairwell. He is
the last inside. He looks once more back across the hall.
Ridgeway smiles at him, waving the gun.

RIDGEWAY
We'll see you outside in a few

hours.

D'AGOSTA
I hope so Doctor Ridgeway.

D'Agosta exits.

RIDGEWAY
The lemmings march. Well
Gentlemen, I think the bar is
open.

Ridgeway heads over to the bar. He doesn't see a dark shape slither through the back of the room near the shattered Superstition entrance.

INT. STORAGE AREA

Margo and Spencer run down another basement hall and up a short metal stair. Margo finds a short, low door....

MARGO
Here...

INT. DARK STAIRWELL

Seventeen people form a long human chain and work their way down the steep, wide stairwell.

Vincent D'Agosta's eyes strain to see.

INT. ICHTHYOLOGY LAB

Albert Frock stares through the gate into the darkness.

INT: SUPERSTITION EXHIBIT: CLOSE

Many of the displays are in disarray. One of those still standing is the black figurine, the relic... the Kothoga. Ever angry. Ever evil.

SOMEWHERE IN THE DIORAMA ROOM

The real Kothoga waits, BREATH WHEEZING. It turns its head, reptilian tongue kissing the air.

Suddenly it moves with stunning acceleration. Quick as a lizard. Stealthy as a cat.

CUT TO:

INT. MARGO'S LAB - NIGHT

Margo climbs out from behind a file cabinet and moves quickly through the dark room. She desperately searches through piles of material....

INT. DIORAMA ROOM

Ridgeway's made himself a stiff scotch at the bar. Parkinson is drinking vodka. Kawakita has something with a cherry in it.

PARKINSON

Edgar, I suppose we have to deal with the reality of this situation. I'm afraid the exhibit's a disaster. And I suppose I'll lose my job.

RIDGEWAY

Ah, Thomas, I think you'll find that prospects for the Superstition exhibit will only be enhanced by this publicity. No, I don't think we could have planned it any better.

PARKINSON

And... my position?

RIDGEWAY

Well, I suppose someone will have to take the fall. A quiet resignation might be the easiest way.

Parkinson stares at Ridgeway.

PARKINSON

You son of a bitch.

Suddenly there is a noise behind Parkinson.

KAWAKITA

What was that?

Parkinson picks up the flashlight and plays the beam around the enormous room... nothing.

RIDGEWAY

Don't let your imagination get away from you Mister Kawakita.

Parkinson moves away from the bar area and out onto the dance floor, playing the light into the diorama displays.

Kawakita stares desperately into the dark.

KAWAKITA

There's something in here with us.

Ridgeway smiles and shakes his head. Suddenly something moves across the floor toward him so quickly that it barely registers in our vision....

Edgar Ridgeway takes a HAMMERING blow in the side. His drink flies from his hand as he falls.

The monster, the "Kothoga" is on top of him, TEARING at his neck. Ridgeway flails desperately but the monster simply rips him apart.

Kawakita staggers away from the bar, too terrified to scream, turning and running wildly across the room....

PARKINSON

shines the light over by the bar. But everyone is gone.

PARKINSON

Edgar? Greg?

Something moves quickly past Parkinson. Parkinson wheels to the right. He can hear the WHEEZING horribly close to him. He moves his light with a trembling hand.

IN THE FLASHLIGHT BEAM

The light illuminates a distorted view of a enormous animal face... but it's only the angry, static ape in the island diorama.

BACK TO PARKINSON

He relaxes for a moment, when suddenly from his left, the Kothoga strikes, RIPPING Parkinson out of frame. We catch a brief glimpse of hideous eyes and face, slathering, blood-gorged jaw.

Offscreen, we hear Parkinson's gun BURST and an awful SCREAM.

INT. SUB-BASEMENT LEVEL

The chain of people are passing D'Agosta one by one at the bottom fire door.

D'Agosta turns at the sound of GUNFIRE from up the stairs.

D'AGOSTA (a whisper)
Keep moving!!

He motions the group to pass him at the door. As Martini goes by, D'Agosta whispers....

D'AGOSTA
Martini. Keep heading west.
If you're not sure of the
direction, ask Cuthbert. I'll
catch up in a minute.

MARTINI
What are you going to do
Lieutenant?

D'AGOSTA
Just go! Keep moving! Hurry!

INT. DIORAMA ROOM -- NIGHT

Greg Kawakita stumbles through the rubble and up the stairs, through a side door and into....

INT. EXHIBIT ACCESS HALL -- NIGHT

Kawakita runs down the length. Finds an alcove, dives in.

Breathing hard, he turns and peeks behind him... something slithers through the darkness.

Kawakita turns and scrambles desperately down the hall, finally spotting the exit... the many fingered one-way

gate... the "Iron Maiden"....

He charges into it. It spins halfway around and stops dead. Kawakita is trapped.

He trembles as he turns his head and sees the Kothoga behind him, like a cat outside a birdcage.

Kawakita trembles, tears pouring out of his eyes, BLUBBERING incomprehensibly as the beast moves near.

The Kothoga's forked tongue slides out of it's mouth and kisses air....

Kawakita WEEPS uncontrollably. The Kothoga's mandibles swing open and snatch forward.

Blood SPLATTERS through the gates....

INT. MARGO'S CUBBYHOLE OFFICE

She digs through the mess... finally finds the blue "Blood Drive" file box....

She pulls out a handful of files.

SPENCER

Doctor Green, we have to go--

MARGO

--"W"... Waters... White...
yes! Whitney!!

She runs back into the other room. She finds the thick Interpolator printout. She flips and scans, suddenly stops.

MARGO

Spencer! Last year, I ran the Blood Donor program for my section. A complete pain in the ass, but one of the donors was John Whitney, just before he left on his expedition. Whitney's blood type was AB positive. Very Rare. Like one in six thousand. Well yesterday, my interpolator software typed the owner of that claw as having human

blood. I thought it was contamination, but it wasn't. The interpolator was right!

SPENCER
Congratulations Doctor Green,
I'm sure the Nobel committee
will--

MARGO
--The blood type was AB
positive!

Spencer stares at Margo.

MARGO
Don't you see?! We were both
wrong! John Whitney did come
back to this museum! Only he
isn't John Whitney anymore. He
ate or drank or smoked those
leaves, a huge dose. Enough to
change him into something none
of us could possibly recognize.
And when his source dried up he
found those hormones in
someplace else.

Spencer stares at Margo.

SPENCER
So Whitney was on that
freighter. Human perhaps at
the beginning, but by the time
they reached Lake Michigan,
something entirely different.

EXT. MUSEUM ROOF - NIGHT

A helicopter THUNDERS across the enormous roof of the museum. Half a dozen SWAT TEAM MEMBERS dangle off the aircraft runners and drop to the roof. They carry weapons, ropes, harness, rappelling gear.

INT. ICHTHYOLOGY LAB / BASEMENT HALL -- NIGHT

Albert Frock has moved his wheelchair to the lab gate and is undoing the bolts holding it fast. He pushes it open and rolls out into the basement alley....

He stares left and right. He moves slowly down the hall.

INT. STAIRWELL -- NIGHT

Vincent D'Agosta moves up the dark fire stairs. He can see little, accompanied only by sound of his own footsteps.

His senses are keen as he pushes open the door into the Diorama Hall. He turns on his flashlight....

D'AGOSTA
Doctor Ridgeway? Parkinson?

INT. DIORAMA HALL -- NIGHT

D'Agosta begins across the floor. Stops suddenly when he sees Parkinson's shattered body, the pool of blood.

We hear a WHEEZING BREATH. There's a dark shape, across the room, moving in snaky rhythm.

Suddenly there's a CRASHING. Shards of glass rain down to the floor.

D'Agosta looks up to see climbing ropes drop smoothly from the corners of the skylight. THREE SWAT guys begin to rappel, sliding elegantly down....

D'Agosta stares at them....

D'AGOSTA
No! Wait! NO!!

As the FIRST SWAT cop nears the floor... the Kothoga STREAKS across the tile, leaping five feet into the air, and intersecting, HITTING the cop hard, KNOCKING him free of the rope and sprawling to the floor.

The Kothoga covers him, tearing into his upper body, grinding his head and neck apart with his teeth.

The SECOND SWAT team member is almost to the bottom. He pulls his machine gun. B-B-B-B-B-BAM BAM BAM!!!

But the Kothoga charges hard, curls its tail and SNAPS, BASHING into the guard, knocking him off his feet. It leaps on him, TEARING off an arm and digging down into his neck with his fangs.

The THIRD SWAT team member has taken notice and begins to SHOUT to the roof.

THIRD SWAT

Up... pull me up!! Take me up!!

The Kothoga runs to a wall, and grips a cornice with it's claws... and begins to climb.

It swings up over the balcony and swings out onto the ceiling. Claws flat and grippy like a lizard, it crawls straight out, fully upside down.

THE THIRD SWAT COP

desperately struggles up the rope. He reaches the edge of the skylight as HUMAN arms grab for his shoulders, trying to pull him through.

ON THE ROOF

The REST of the SWAT TEAM pulls the BABBLING, terrified, third cop up through the glass by the arms...

THIRD SWAT

HURRY! HELP ME! It's after me! Agghhh!!

Suddenly something unseen TUGS hard at the SWAT guy and he begins to convulse and THRASH desperately. Then his face goes calm. White.

With a desperate, final lunge, the others pull him clear of the skylight frame....

As they fall backwards they realize the third guy's bottom half is all vicious, thrashing Kothoga. The monster has swallowed the third guy up to the waist and is GOBBLING, working its way up to the head....

They SCREAM and drop the whole mess back through the glass.

INT. DIORAMA ROOM - CONTINUED

The Kothoga free-falls through the air and HITS down onto the floor. It effortlessly rights itself and spits out the remains of the SWAT cop. It turns its head and stops dead still, listening....

INT. STAIRWELL -- CONTINUED

D'Agosta throws himself down the stairs, one hand on the rail, spinning around landings, running as hard as he can.

INT. THE SUB-BASEMENT

D'Agosta pours through the door... turns and JAMS the shotgun into the firedoor latch and runs down the hall.

We hear D'Agosta's FOOTSTEPS recede. For a moment there is nothing... Finally....

THE DOOR

begins to RATTLE... suddenly the steel gun barrel bends with a GROAN. The door JERKS open and the Kothoga slides into the basement hall.

Suddenly there's a noise... a SQUEAK....

The monster stops, turns.

ALBERT FROCK

rolls out of the darkness. Stops and stares at the monster. On his face is an expression of sheer wonder.

The Kothoga stares lidlessly at Frock. It's tongue darts from its mouth... as though for a moment, it actually understands, remembers.

Then suddenly it charges forward, tail lashing, RAMMING into Frock's wheelchair.

Frock spins out of control. The beast ROARS and RAMS at him again.

The little gray man is tossed violently from his wheelchair and the beast is SCREAMING, jaws agape, ripping down....

INT. A STAIRWELL -- DAY

Spencer and Margo lean on a crowbar and twist open a door near the lab area.

D'AGOSTA (radio)
Spencer, D'Agosta. Do you
read?

Spencer pulls the walkie from his pocket.

SPENCER
Lieutenant, where are you?

INT. SUB-BASEMENT -- DAY (INTERCUTTING)

D'Agosta and his group are gathered near the old furnaces at the head of the coal line.

D'AGOSTA
We've reached the old boilers.
We're about to go down in the
coal line. Spencer! I think
it's following us. I think it
knows where we are.

BACK TO SPENCER AND MARGO

SPENCER
Hurry Lieutenant. Get out as
quickly as you can. We'll
follow you and try and decoy it
away. But there is no time to
spare.

He punches out the walkie.

SPENCER
Doctor Green, the leaves in
those crates... maybe we can
use them to... trap it somehow.

MARGO
We'll need the keys to the
storage area.

Spencer reaches into his pocket and produces the key ring
he found in security control.

SPENCER
Perhaps it's one of these.

INT. BASEMENT HALL

Spencer and Margo move surreptitiously down the maze-like
hall.

MARGO

Left here... then a right I
think. There.

They turn down a long aisle near the base of the fire stairs.

Spencer uses his flashlight to search the floor. Margo moves cautiously behind him.

They pass into the area we last saw Frock. Spencer stops.

IN THE FLASHLIGHT BEAM

Half hidden by the end of a storage aisle is the overturned wheelchair.

SPENCER

moves toward the chair, shines his light past the end of the aisle and blocks Margo's progress with his hand. She pushes past him. Then stops dead.

WHAT MARGO SEES

is the torn and tattered body of Albert Frock, a huge bite taken out of the back of his neck, his body in an enormous pool of crimson blood.

MARGO

stares at the body of her friend. Her face fills with succeeding waves of revulsion, bitterness, sorrow... and finally anger....

She looks up at Spencer. Spencer stares back at her, grim faced, resolute.

INT. SUB-BASEMENT COAL LINE -- NIGHT

Eighteen people form a human chain and work their way slowly through two feet of water into the darkness.

Vincent D'Agosta is the last man in. He looks behind him, trying to penetrate the darkness with his eyes.

INT. SECURE STORAGE AREA -- NIGHT

Margo and Spencer swing open the secure area door.

Spencer's light finds the unmolested Whitney crates.

Spencer looks around.

SPENCER

We need some sort of container
that will let the scent pass
into the air.

Margo thinks a moment... suddenly kicks off her shoes,
pulls up her dress and tears off her pantyhose....

MARGO

I guess these things are good
for something.

She tears them in half and hands one of the stockings to
Spencer.

INT. ALCOHOL STORAGE -- NIGHT

Margo runs up the stair to this gated, grid-floored space.
Spencer follows with a handtruck.

Along one wall there are racks of 55 gallon drums. Labels
on each read: Gasoline, Sodium Hypochlorite, Formalin,
Methyl Alcohol, Nitric Acid etc.

SPENCER

What's all the chemistry for?

MARGO

Bone and skin preservation uses
a lot of potent chemicals. And
don't forget half the
collection is preserved in al-
cohol. We have a very special
relationship with the Fire
Marshal. Here....

Margo indicates a chest high thermos of liquid nitrogen.

MARGO

We know this thing is at least
part reptilian. Probably
ectothermic... so it can't
handle extremes of hot and
cold. If we can change the
temperature of that thing by
thirty or forty degrees... it

won't last long.

SPENCER

We use the leaves as a lure.

MARGO

Then freeze the ugly bastard.

INT. COAL TUNNEL -- NIGHT

Lieutenant D'Agosta grimly follows the group, moving steadily, slowly through waist-high water.

Bailey appears, having worked his way back down the line.

BAILEY

Martini says it's getting deeper Lieutenant.

D'AGOSTA

Anything on the radio?

BAILEY

I think we're down too far for transmission, lotta rock and metal down here.

D'AGOSTA

Keep moving.

Bailey turns and heads back towards the front of the line.

D'Agosta looks back through the darkness behind him. We can see the fear in his face.

INT. THE BOILER ROOM NIGHT

Margo and Spencer have arrived at the head of the coal tunnel. Margo swings the stocking above her head, following Spencer into the narrow tunnel.

INT. DEEP INSIDE THE TUNNEL

The water is up around D'Agosta's chest now. Suddenly behind him there's a NOISE, a RIPPLE of water.

D'Agosta stops and turns. Bailey appears behind him.

D'AGOSTA
You hear something Bailey?

Bailey listens, shakes his head.

D'AGOSTA
I need your gun.

Bailey hands over his gun.

D'Agosta turns back down the tunnel and shines his light down the distance.

Behind him the group has stopped, they are crowded behind Bailey, watching D'Agosta.

Suddenly Officer Bailey twitches... and is violently jerked below the surface. A WOMAN behind him SCREAMS!

The water boils as Bailey struggles desperately beneath the surface. Suddenly everything is quiet, the water glassy.

Eerily, Bailey's body surfaces, shoulder and back first.

D'Agosta struggle to get near it, GRABS it, rights it, realizes it doesn't have a head on it.

People GASP in revulsion....

D'AGOSTA (to the others)
Run!! Now!! GO!!

The group struggles back, desperately trying to run in chest-deep water--

--Suddenly a WOMAN is pulled under the surface SCREAMING. The others back away in a panicked FRENZY....

And suddenly the Kothoga surfaces, rising above the water like a nightmare, water sheeting down off its scales, the woman's head locked in its horrible jaws.

D'Agosta desperately fires his gun... BAM! BAM! BAM! BAM!

The beast recoils, then hesitates, stops and stares at D'Agosta.

His nostrils FLAIR, rippling horribly in his evil face. He turns and dives. His long tail arches in serpentine lashes and disappears back the way he came.

SOMEONE

-He's gone....

The Mayor has separated himself from the others. He is behind D'Agosta.

MAYOR

Something drew him away. He's after something else.

D'AGOSTA

Keep moving. Hurry!! It can't be much farther!

INT. ANOTHER PART OF THE TUNNEL

Spencer and Margo work their way through two feet of water, swinging their nets above their heads.

Spencer holds up his hand. They stop.

They can hear TALKING, SCREAMS distantly down the pipe. Then nothing.

Spencer shines his light down the pipe, strains to see, listening with everything he's got.

MARGO

Come on, they're--

SPENCER

No... they stopped. It must have turned back this way.

MARGO

I don't hear anything.

SPENCER

Up on the platform there... the tank....

Spencer hangs the stocking and leaves on the protruding rivet in a rusting steel overhead beam.

Margo rolls the handtruck off to one side, in a niche formed by the support structure. She readies the hose and ducks back in the cove.

Spencer moves forward, water rising steadily, up past his crotch, around his waist. He has his gun drawn and reaches

a wider spot in the cave, which the water has turned into a sort of open grotto.

CLOSE ON MARGO

She watches Spencer move forward, steadily. Suddenly....

MARGO
Spencer... Spencer! BEHIND
YOU!!

ON SPENCER

Behind him, between he and Margo, the Kothoga rises to the surface.

Spencer spins, FIRES his gun, BAM BAM BAM!!

The beast dives as the sounds ECHO in the tiny space....

Margo pulls the hose off the tank. Waves ripple wildly around her as the beast surfaces again.

She stares at the beast, trembling, clamping down hard on the hose valve....

There's a SQUEAL as the frozen liquid shoots out and spatters against the beast's skin. It SCREAMS and thrashes wildly, as the liquid SCALDS him.

The tunnel fills with steamy haze as Margo continues to shove the valve ahead, as the beast ROARS, thrashes, and HISSES wildly.

As the tank empties Margo rocks backwards, finally throwing the tank into the monster's path, turning and running... desperately trying to get away.

INT. PIPE ENTRYWAY -- DAY

Margo charges out the end of the tunnel and runs hard for the stairs.

With a ear shattering SQUEEEAL, the monster appears. He is badly burned, eyes milky and singed. His green skin is gone black. But his mouth is still huge, blood red and vicious... and he appears totally capable of one more meal.

INT. SUB-BASEMENT - NIGHT

Margo charges desperately across the service area... pulling down shovels, brooms, anything she can put into the path of the beast.

INT. STORAGE AREA -- NIGHT

Margo hurries through the narrow storage alleys, through case after case of file drawers.

She pulls a rack of pelts down behind her, running as hard and fast as she can.

She ducks into one of the glassed in cubicles, leans inside, exhausted, completely out of breath....

Suddenly there is a FLICKER of light, a HUM. She looks up....

The fluorescents above her are coming to life... the power is back on!

Margo slides carefully to edge of the glass... she peeks... and there... eight cubicles away the monster appears, turns, sees Margo...

It ROARS hideously, and runs at the glass... BURSTING through the entire length of cubicles, striding through like a bull, SHATTERING eight panes of glass in a continuous burst....

Margo stumbles into the hallway, finds a door, plunges inside....

INT. DERMESTID BEETLE ROOM

Margo turns to see a body on the floor covered in the enormous colony of insects.

GREG KAWAKITA

is slowly being devoured by the beetles. His body is torn and smashed, bugs crawling from his mouth and eyes.

MARGO

is horrified, staggers back out another door... runs up the bilevel stairs to the....

ALCOHOL STORAGE AREA

Margo scans the dozens and dozens of floor-to-ceiling library racks filled with thousands of reptiles, fish, snakes, turtles in large alcohol-filled jars.

Margo runs to the prep area. She finds a large oscillating fan standing under the sink. She grabs it, pays out the cord and sets it under the racks of fifty-five gallon drums. She turns it on and it begins to spin, HUMMING brightly.

Above it, she turns the valve on a tank of gasoline and lets the liquid flow down onto the spinning blades. The gasoline SPATTERS, atomizing into a fine mist, filling the air with a lethal fog.

She GAGS, choking on the fumes. She finds a rag on a table, and covers her mouth and nose.

She finds a glass jar and fills it from a tank labeled "methyl alcohol". When the jar's full, she shuts it off, then thinks better of it and lets it continue to pour out on the floor.

She grabs a large test tube off the lab table and fills it with yellow sodium hypochlorite (bleach). She moves back to the lab, corks the test tube and drops it carefully into the jar of alcohol. She clamps down the lid and turns back to the row of drums.

She stops, seeing something. A black shadow is moving under the grid below her feet. She hesitates, stares a moment at the rack of chemistry. She runs down the row of tanks and opens all the spigots, letting a nasty mixture puddle out onto the floor.

She grabs her jar, turns and runs down the aisle, ducking down one of the library rows.

HER POV

The gated door is only a few yards away.

MARGO

COUGHS again, covers her mouth with the rag, watches.

THE BEAST

slinks slowly up the stairs and through the gate, slides down the aisle.

MARGO

waits... waits... waits... then charges forward, slams shut the gate, bolting it home. She turns and runs down the aisle, twisting around the corner, finally stopping, turning, looking back--

--Suddenly a huge claw smashes through the shelf next to Margo, BURSTING through a large jar full of snakes. Margo reels backwards, covered in alcohol, shaking off the snakes, narrowly avoiding the claws grasp.

She dives, slipping down the aisle, as the Kothoga ROARS after her....

Margo rams hard against the shelving, knocking into free jars which SMASH against the floor.

She staggers through the storage area, pushing hard on one of the shelving units. A whole row SMASHES against one another, dominoing across half the room, creating a virtual waterfall of alcohol and oozy, animal carcasses.

THE KOTHOGA

struggles mightily out of the mess, bashes through the shelving with swipes of his muscular, scaly arms.

He rises and stares... Margo is nowhere to be seen.

The beast slides slowly down the dim room, rounds a corner.

MARGO

is standing down a long aisle. She stares. Trembling, waiting.

THE KOTHOGA

lowers its head and slinks forward.

MARGO

licks her lips, tries desperately to control her breathing... the air is filled with the steady HUM of the fan. The room is filling with gaseous cloud.

THE BEAST

continues forward, WHEEZING moistly, horribly...

MARGO

trembles, stares, as it nears....

THE BEAST

moves ever closer, breath RIPPLING softly. It's black forked tongue slides out its horrible mouth and snakes down her cheek, along her jawline down onto her neck.

MARGO

is repulsed. She squeezes back, swallowing, looking hard in its eyes. Her voice is choked, raspy, barely a whisper....

MARGO

I know it's you, John....

THE BEAST

hesitates... as though it understands....

MARGO

trembles desperately....

HER HANDS

grip tightly on the sweating jar.

MARGO

...I'm sorry....

THE BEAST

rears, SNAAAAPPING opens its jaws, teeth and lips slathered in bloody, awful reptilian ooze.

MARGO

swings her arm behind her and up, throwing the jar with all her strength.

It SMASHES against the floor just behind the beast and EXPLODES in a burst of WHITE HOT FIRE!!

There's a FLASH behind the monster, a building ROAR....

Margo pulls on the dumbwaiter rope, and squeezes backwards into the car, pulling shut the door as the room begins to

BLOOM in fire....

THE MONSTER

turns as is engulfed in a white-hot explosion....

INT. STORAGE HALLWAY

Margo squeezes out the dumbwaiter car as the STOREROOM explodes over her head and begins to IGNITE the entire storage area....

As Margo runs down the hall... a huge FIREBALL BLOOMS behind her....

OSTEO PREP AREA....

Margo dives for the big maceration tank, hurling herself over the edge and PLUNGING desperately under the putrid, reeking surface.

The EXPLOSION ROARS through the room and the heavy chained lid slams down on the tank with a BOOM!!

And the world is a hell of flame and fire.

THROUGH THE GATES OF THE ALCOHOL STORAGE ROOM

The beast is a melting, burning carcass, ROARING, staggering pathetically through this cage of death, finally falling, a disintegrating lump of liquid coal.

EXT. THE MUSEUM -- NIGHT

FIREMEN aim a hose down over the roof of the monumental structure and down into the west wing.

CAPTAIN MARTIN BARKS orders near the stone steps.

An out of breath COP IN BLUE runs through the rain.

COP

Captain, we finally got through that door. Found two more bodies inside the main room.

MARTIN

God, not the Mayor.

COP

Can't tell sir, they're pretty badly messed up.

MARTIN

What about the others?

COP

We've got the power up, trying to get into the other levels... but its a big place.

MARTIN

Wait'll I get my hands on that D'Agosta... he'll be back in a fuckin' squad car--

A VOICE

--I don't think so Captain.

The Mayor steps out of the darkness behind the Captain. He is wet, dirty. He has his arm around his wife. Cops and firemen throw rain gear around them and the other fifteen people working their way across the plaza.

MARTIN

Mister Mayor... How did you get out--

MAYOR

--It's a long story Captain. These people are all wet and tired. I'd like to see they get under a roof as soon as possible.

MARTIN

Yes sir.

MAYOR

And you leave D'Agosta alone or I'll give him your job. We owe the man our lives.

Martin waves cops into action. When he turns back up the stairs, he sees...

D'AGOSTA AND SPENCER...

burned and battered... moving weakly down the stairs.

MARTIN

Vince! I was just--

D'AGOSTA

Never mind the bullshit Fred.
I need a detail. Full riot
armor, automatic weapons.
We're going go back in....

INT. ALCOHOL STORAGE -- NIGHT

Spencer and D'Agosta, a SWAT TEAM, FIREMEN, disperse
through the cinder-filled, smoky, watery structure.

The firemen move quickly through the rubble, CALLING
INSTRUCTIONS, blasting bits of fire with chemical fog.

SWAT TEAM GUY

Jeezus! Over here sir!

D'Agosta and Spencer follow the cop through the rubble.

ON THE GRID

is the black and shattered hulk of the Kothoga. In death
it is ugly but threatening no more.

SPENCER (to the cop)

Anything else?

COP

Nothing sir.

D'Agosta nods and gestures with his head.

D'AGOSTA

I'm sorry Spencer.

But Spencer suddenly turns.

SPENCER

Did you hear something?

We hear a muffled SHOUTING.

INT. OSTEO PREP

Cops GRUNT as they hoist the heavy lid off the maceration
tank.

COPS

--What the hell?!

--Jeezus what--

--Margo stands, sputtering, rising out of the reeking, stinking mess.

MARGO

You took long enough!

Spencer and D'Agosta stare at her.

MARGO

Well, give me a hand would you?!

Spencer looks at Margo and smiles, reaching out, taking her by the hand.

CUT TO:

EXT. MUSEUM -- DAY

A bright spring day. Cloudless blue sky. Gorgeous Lake Michigan.

INT. MUSEUM OFFICE -- DAY

A middle-aged woman, KATHERINE is at a desk, on the phone.

KATHERINE

Doctor Green's office. No I'm sorry, she's in a meeting... the American Museum in New York? The Director? Of course I'll let her know... Doctor Green's office. Harvard? The new software will be shipping in a month. Interpolator Two, that's right. Well I'm sorry you'll have to wait in line like everyone else. Doctor Green's office. Who sir? Spencer? FBI? No, I'm sorry sir--

MARGO (vo)

--I'll take that!!

INT. MARGO'S OFFICE

Just beyond. Total disarray. But large, with a window. Beyond her through a door we can see a busy lab.

MARGO (into phone)
Spencer!! How's Washington?
You mean Captain D'Agosta don't
you...? You read it huh?
Yeah, Smithsonian, big deal
very big deal. Already
negotiating for the follow
up....

Margo stands and moves around the side of the desk. We can see she wears rollerblades.

MARGO
...Well I'll send it to you of
course....

She rolls over to the printer, checks a figure.

MARGO
...Great... call me when you
get in. We'll have dinner.
How would that be? Would that
be alright?

She hangs up the phone. She bends to pick something off the floor. A shadow falls over her.

Margo looks up. Fright fills her face.

A large, dark shape looms in the doorway.

MARGO
No! No! No way!

ON THE DOORWAY

It is Alice with the blue "Blood Donor" box.

ALICE (cheerily)
It's that time again....

FADE TO BLACK.