

THE X-FILES

"Untitled"

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Green Rev. - October 22, 1999

CAST LIST

Agent Fox Mulder
Agent Dana Scully

Young Boss
The Amazing Maleeni/Albert Pinchbeck
Dude/Billy LaBonge
Cissy Alvarez
Female Employee
Courier Guard
Driver
Bulletheads
Bank Officer
Uniform Cop
Officer

(X)

TEASER

1 EXT. SANTA MONICA PIER - DAY.

1

It's a bright, cloudless day. Jutting out over the calm Pacific is a long PIER packed with game booths, a roller coaster, Flying Bobs, a ferris wheel. We're above it all, to establish.

We CRANE DOWN to include the famous, ARCHING SIGN. Underneath it, people come and go. It's a weekday. Not particularly busy.

2 EXT. PIER - BEHIND THE BOOTHS - DAY

2

We're in a sort of "Employees Only" area, an alley behind the food booths and the games of chance. We PAN to REVEAL...

... An old utility van, one of those tiny, early 70's Dodge or Ford deals. On the side is painted "THE AMAZING MALEENI -- PERFORMER OF FEATS TO ASTONISH AND ASTOUND -- (818) 555-0126." TRACKING FURTHER, we find...

... A man seated on the rear bumper. He's bearded, with a face pleasant but intense. He's dressed in a performer's tuxedo, spotless and impeccable. He checks his bow tie, then sits inert, hands in his lap, waiting. He's deep in concentration.

Behind him, the rear doors of his van are open. We get a peek into the cargo area, stuffed with magic cabinets and costumes, props and makeup, anything and everything to suggest that this man -- MALEENI -- carries his whole life with him. We CREEP IN on his thousand-yard stare. Finally:

YOUNG BOSS (O.S.)

Hey, guy. You ready to rumble?

Maleeni comes out of his reverie, turns his head to see:

A YOUNG GUY

A gawky, early 20s snot who wears a Garth Brooks-style radio mike and a t-shirt that says "STAFF" in big letters.

MALEENI

If by "rumble" you mean "perform" -- yes, I am.

YOUNG BOSS

Cool. Oh, you know how they said you'd get 125 for the day?

The Young Boss winces sympathetically, shakes his head.

YOUNG BOSS

Gonna be seventy-five instead. The gate's for crap. But hey, the show's gotta go on, right?

CONTINUED

2 CONTINUED:

Maleeni closes and locks his van doors, shoots his cuffs.

MALEENI

This will be my greatest show ever.

YOUNG BOSS

Right on. Uh, what's your name again?

The older man, tempered by a lifetime of slights and disappointments, isn't offended. He hooks a thumb over his shoulder at his van, framed hugely prominent behind them.

MALEENI

It's on the side.

YOUNG BOSS

Oh, yeah. Hey, break an arm.

Maleeni exits frame past us. We hold on the Young Boss, who glances back at the van, then clicks on his radio mike. We hear his voice REVERB through a bassy, offscreen P.A. SYSTEM.

YOUNG BOSS

Alright, folks... please give it up for the AMAZING... MA-LEEEENI!

From o.s., we hear a tepid smattering of APPLAUSE. Off this:

CUT TO:

3 EXT. PIER. - PERFORMING AREA - LATER

3

Deft hands begin a wonderful cups and balls routine -- the specifics of which we'll leave to the artist who portrays Maleeni (as such, descriptions of it will be brief and generic).

We PULL BACK to include Maleeni's face as he works.

MALEENI

Ladies and gentlemen... damas y caballeros... shinsa fun yo... I aim today not just to entertain, but to educate. Not simply to proffer mirthful miracles of legerdemain and prestidigitation, but to instruct and inform in the ancient and venerable history of my art. To share with you my profound love of that history.

CONTINUED

3 CONTINUED:

WIDER - THE CROWD

Such as it is -- there are only maybe two dozen ONLOOKERS here. Some sit on backless benches while others stand. It's not much of a venue -- just a shallow, three-sided canvas booth.

A SLOW TRACK across the onlookers reveals mostly listless teenagers. We see the kind of vacant, slack-jawed stares that make us fear for the future of our country. We also note a RETIREE in b.g. videotaping the show with a camcorder.

MALEENI

Observe the magical cups and balls, a sleight of hand which dates back to the conjurors of ancient Egypt. Observe with your young eyes the selfsame feats which astounded the courts of Snefru and Cheops nearly five thousand years ago.

We end our TRACK on a charismatic young DUDE who stands in f.g., sipping from a Big Gulp-size SODA. He, unlike the others, is sharp and intense. He watches closely, scornfully.

DUDE

Can't you do something new?

A few TITTERS from the audience. Maleeni shoots the Dude a sideward glance, then continues.

MALEENI

For it is the sorceries of Dedi of Dedsnefru which have traversed the sands of time to thrill us anew in our computerized, vacuum-packed age. Witness: the balls vanish, to be replaced by...

The magician lifts the cups, revealing three small PHARAOH HEAD SCULPTURES. Very nice. A few oohs and ahhs, some applause...

... But none from the Dude. He snorts.

DUDE

That ain't old school, man -- that's decrepit. That's like, from a box of "Lucky Charms."

The Dude has the audience's attention -- the Young Boss is here, watching too. Maleeni is angered, struggles not to show it.

CONTINUED

3 CONTINUED: (3)

Shown-up and forgotten by the crowd, the Dude has a sour expression on his face. He SLURPS the last of his soda and tosses the cup in a nearby trash can as he slouches out of frame.

Off Maleeni, victorious:

CUT TO:

4 EXT. PIER - BEHIND THE BOOTHS - DAY

The familiar van is parked up ahead. Maleeni and the Young Boss pass us, heading toward it. We STEADICAM after them.

YOUNG BOSS
Guy, you rock! That kicked ass!

REVERSE - MALEENI

Manages a faint smile as the kid trots along beside him. Maleeni puts a hand to his neck like he's got a crick in it.

YOUNG BOSS
I mean, it looked completely real! How'd you do that?!

Maleeni fixes him with a mock-dramatic look, doesn't answer. He climbs behind the wheel of his van.

YOUNG BOSS
Oh, yeah -- right. Magic.
(remembering)
Hey, your money! Hold up!

The Young Boss dashes back the way he came. We CREEP IN on Maleeni in his van, waiting. He rubs his neck, closes his eyes.

OVER BY THE BOOTHS - THE YOUNG BOSS

Reappears, counting out cash as he walks. He passes us, and we FOLLOW him back to the van. As we approach it from the rear...

YOUNG BOSS
Seventy-five! You earned it!
(silence)
Mr. Maleeni...?

We see Maleeni from behind, sitting in the driver's seat, his hand propped to his neck. He's motionless, doesn't answer. The Young Boss taps his arm through the open window.

YOUNG BOSS
Mr. Maleeni...

CONTINUED

4 CONTINUED:

Still no response. The Young Boss pokes a little harder.

Maleeni's head... FALLS OFF! Right out the open window -- it THUNKS on the ground like a melon, right at the kid's feet. The arm flops down, dangles out the window. The horrified Young Boss stares down, speechless and aghast, at:

HIS POV - MALEENI'S HEAD

It lies before the toes of his sneakers, rocking slightly.

THE YOUNG BOSS

Just now starts to YELL. He backs off, turns and flees. Off the tableau of a headless, tuxedoed body behind the wheel of an old van, a ferris wheel turning in b.g...

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

5 A TABLEAU OF THE DEATH SCENE

5

Fills our screen -- it's Maleeni's van, with his headless corpse behind the wheel and his head lying by the front tire. This is a digital color PHOTOGRAPH we're looking at, though we shouldn't realize it at first. But now the photo is LOWERED, and...

... We're staring at the van from the EXACT SAME ANGLE -- only Maleeni's body is GONE. Magic? No, it's:

EXT. PIER - BEHIND THE BOOTHS - DAY

MULDER. He's the one who holds this police photo, checking out how the scene looked yesterday. LEGEND: 24 HOURS LATER.

If this is indeed a crime scene, it's an ice-cold one. There's some police line tape and a couple of UNIFORMED COPS -- that's about it. In distant b.g., rides spin and colored lights blink. Mulder steps closer to peer into the driver's window of the van.

CLOSER - AS SEEN THROUGH THE VAN

Scully's head appears behind the open passenger's side window. She's peering inside, too. She and Mulder look across at each other for a beat. Scully finally shrugs.

MULDER

Neat trick, right?

SCULLY

I can think of a neater one.

(off his look)

How you convinced me to drop everything and jump on the first plane to Los Angeles.

MULDER

Scully... come on. This isn't intriguing enough for you? A magician turns his head completely around to the delight of young and old? After which it plops off onto the pier?

(holds up photo)

Did you see the picture?

SCULLY

I saw the picture. As for the... "Amazing Maleeni" turning his head around: like you said, neat trick.

CONTINUED

5 CONTINUED:

MULDER

But...?

Scully rounds the front of the van, joins her partner.

SCULLY

But... I'd guess it was an event completely removed from his subsequent murder.

MULDER

You think this was a murder?

Scully is surprised by the question.

SCULLY

Don't you?

(off Mulder's shrug)

The man's head was cut off, Mulder.

Mulder smiles. He gives a magician-like flourish of his arm, directing her attention to the driver's seat of the van.

MULDER

Observe: the nearly complete absence of blood. Observe the paucity of fingerprints, as revealed by the LAPD's liberal application of lycopodium powder.

SCULLY

Why are you talking like Tony Randall?

MULDER

(ignoring her)

Know that the Amazing Maleeni was alive one moment and expired the next -- that no one witnessed a fleeing attacker, nor heard the dying man's cries.

SCULLY

I admit I don't know how it was done, but I still say he was murdered. What's your theory?

MULDER

A magic trick gone horribly wrong. One which claims the lives of all who attempt it.

CONTINUED

5 CONTINUED: (2)

Scully looks askance at him. He addresses a nearby Cop.

MULDER

Can I see that camcorder again?

The Cop nods, quickly moves to retrieve something from the front seat of his nearby cruiser. Mulder turns back to Scully.

MULDER

A tourist taped Maleeni's show.
You gotta see this -- it's great.

The Cop hands Mulder the camcorder -- he extends the side screen and rewinds the tape. Scully leans in to have a look.

HER POV - ON THE CAMCORDER SCREEN

Up comes a wide, handheld proscenium shot of Maleeni performing his show. The DUDE stands with his back to us in f.g., soda in hand and heckling Maleeni (we never get a look at his face from this angle). We hear the audio over a tinny little SPEAKER.

DUDE

That ain't old school, man --
that's decrepit. That's like,
from a box of "Lucky Charms."

MULDER (O.S.)

Ah, I rewound it too far. Keep
watching...

CLOSE - SCULLY

Watches the tape closely as it continues -- onscreen, the Dude and Maleeni are trading barbs. Scully points to the Dude.

SCULLY

Who's the heckler?

Mulder shrugs.

MULDER

Got me. Wait -- check this out.

SCULLY'S POV - ON THE CAMCORDER SCREEN

Mulder FAST-FORWARDS a bit. Back to normal speed -- Maleeni holds forth with his familiar (to us) spiel:

CONTINUED

5 CONTINUED: (3)

MALEENI

... History knows of three previous attempts at recreating this Noachian feat -- all three ending in... tragedy.

(eyes the crowd)

This will be the fourth. May I have complete silence, please.

Exactly as before, a pause... then Maleeni's head TURNS AROUND.

CLOSE - SCULLY

Blinks, surprised -- great trick. She looks to Mulder, then back at the screen.

MULDER

He says it himself, Scully. It's a magic trick that always ends in tragedy.

SCULLY

If that's the case, we have no crime to investigate. Right?

Mulder shrugs -- she's got him there. She still stares at the little camcorder screen.

SCULLY

Only, I think we do. Let me see it, would you?

Mulder hands her the camcorder. She rewinds the tape a little, then hits PLAY again. She holds the screen for him to see.

MULDER'S POV - THE CAMCORDER SCREEN

On the screen, the audience goes nuts for Maleeni's head-turning trick. Scully's finger points to the Dude, who we still see only from behind. He's the only person not clapping.

SCULLY (O.S.)

This heckler... very hard to impress, wouldn't you say?

(beat)

And now he leaves... in a huff...

Onscreen, the Dude chucks his soda cup and slouches out of frame.

CLOSE - MULDER

Gets her drift, studies her.

CONTINUED

5 CONTINUED: (4)

MULDER
You're thinking he's a murderer?

SCULLY
(shrug)
Worth looking into.

MULDER
That'll be a trick in itself.
You never see his face.

SCULLY
Ah, but observe...

She REWINDS the tape a little, hits PLAY once more.

MULDER'S POV - THE CAMCORDER SCREEN

On it, the Dude is about to toss his soda cup in the trash when Scully FREEZES the image. Her fingertip points out the tiny cup, about to be tossed. She hits PLAY, and INTO THE TRASH IT GOES (it should go without saying that all of this takes place on the periphery of the shot -- it was in no way focused on).

SCULLY
The hand may be quicker than the eye. But it still leaves fingerprints.

Off Mulder looking to Scully, begrudgingly impressed:

CUT TO:

6 EXT. PIER - PERFORMING AREA - THE FAMILIAR TRASH CAN

6

Is half-full, but we don't see any cups at first. We ADJUST to Scully and Mulder standing over it in the deserted performing area. Scully pulls out the top layer of refuse, latex exam gloves on her hands.

She quickly comes up with a familiar, generic SODA CUP, complete with straw. Holding it triumphantly:

SCULLY
Hopefully he's got a record, and
NCIC gives us a name.

Mulder sifts the remaining trash with his own gloved hands.

MULDER
Scully...

CONTINUED

6 CONTINUED:

Following his gaze, Scully looks down into the trash.

THEIR POV - DOWN IN THE CAN

Lie three or four more IDENTICAL SODA CUPS -- and those are just the ones we see.

SCULLY

Looks to Mulder, disappointed. He shrugs.

MULDER

What, you had plans for the evening?

Off them, fishing out the cups one by one...

CUT TO:

7 EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD THEATER - MORNING

We establish a small, downmarket theater space set amidst a block of storefronts. It's early, and the place looks deserted. LEGEND: NORTH HOLLYWOOD, CA.

A movie-style marquee over the entrance advertises, in large letters, "NoHo Players Present... PIPPIN." Below that, an afterthought in smaller letters, "Sat/Sun Matinee -- The Magic of Billy LaBonge." (X)

8 INT. NEIGHBORHOOD THEATER - MORNING

This place is deserted -- just rows of empty, threadbare seats. In f.g. on the small stage, under a pool of light, stands the Dude. He rehearses with a deck of cards.

Behind him, Mulder and Scully walk down the aisle toward him. They climb the steps and join the Dude onstage.

CONTINUED

8 CONTINUED:

SCULLY
Billy LaBonge..?
(shows her ID)
Agents Scully and Mulder, FBI.

The Dude -- LABONGE -- turns to face them. He gives them a nod, his expression guarded.

SCULLY
Sir, were you at the Santa Monica Pier yesterday morning?

LABONGE
Yeah.

MULDER
You attended a magic show? The Amazing Maleeni?

LABONGE
Yeah. He sucks. Why?

SCULLY
He's dead. Under extremely suspicious circumstances.

LaBonge stares for a moment, thinks about it. He shrugs.

LABONGE
He still sucks.
(beat)
How'd you find me?

SCULLY
By your fingerprints. You have a criminal record.

MULDER
A conviction for pickpocketing.

LABONGE
Man, that was performance art! Anyway, that's ancient history.
(beat)
What are you saying -- you think I killed him?

SCULLY
You are on videotape, heckling the deceased.

CONTINUED

8 CONTINUED: (2)

MULDER

What did you have against Mr. Maleeni?

LaBonge snorts and shakes his head, doesn't know where to begin.

LABONGE

First of all, his name isn't "Maleeni." That's the name of a real magician, a guy from the turn of the century. Max Malini -- ever hear of him?

Mulder and Scully shake their heads.

LABONGE

Too bad -- you should have. Anyway, your Maleeni couldn't hold the real Malini's coat. But he's always gotta come on all old school, right? So he steals his name and spells it a little different, then does a bunch of tired crap that wouldn't cut it at a kid's birthday party.

MULDER

What about him turning his head completely around?

LaBonge sets his cards on a nearby table, squats down low.

LABONGE

Check it out.

LaBonge lays the palm of his hand flat on the floor. Mulder and Scully watch, impressed, as LaBonge seems to rotate his wrist a full 360 degrees. Great trick. LaBonge stands up -- tah dah.

LABONGE

(to Scully)

You like that? How about this?

Playing more now to Scully, LaBonge does two or three quick and wonderful close-up magic tricks (the specifics of which we'll leave to the artist who portrays him). There may be a little ad-libbing here, too. Mulder brings it back to the subject at hand.

MULDER

Those are great. But I don't see they're any better than the tricks Maleeni did.

CONTINUED

8 CONTINUED: (3)

8

This pushes LaBonge's buttons. He looks at Mulder, annoyed.

LABONGE

Mozart and Salieri sound pretty much the same, to a layman. But they ain't. Know what I'm saying?

(performs a trick)

It's originality, man. It's style. And more than that, it's soul. That's what separates the great ones from the hacks.

(playing to Scully)

Can't do it halfway. We're talking about powerful forces at play here... energies far beyond mere mortal understanding...

MULDER

The kind that could make a magician lose his head?

LABONGE

Could be.

LaBonge drops the seductive tone, gets matter-of-fact again.

LABONGE

That, and I hear Maleeni racked up some big gambling debts. Who knows who he might have pissed off?

Mulder and Scully look to each other.

SCULLY

Thank you, Mr. LaBonge. We'll be in touch.

LABONGE

Please do.

He smiles meaningfully at her. She looks uncomfortable, but probably doesn't hate the attention. Mulder warily eyes them both as he and Scully turn to leave.

LABONGE

Agents..?

LaBonge produces Scully's ID, then Mulder's -- both of which he somehow PICKPOCKETED. Surprised and not a little annoyed, Mulder and Scully retrieve their items, then head down the steps.

CONTINUED

8 CONTINUED: (4)

DOWN IN THE AUDITORIUM

We STEADICAM ahead of Mulder and Scully. As they leave LaBonge behind, Mulder surreptitiously checks his wallet. It's there. The agents talk under their breath.

MULDER
Mozart and Salieri... only which one's which?

SCULLY
(nod)
Professional jealousy's as good a motive for murder as any.

MULDER
If this was a murder. I'm still not convinced.

Scully checks her watch.

SCULLY
Well, if I can get Mr. Maleeni into an autopsy bay, hopefully we'll lay this issue to rest once and for all.

Sounds good to Mulder. Off them, passing out of frame:

CUT TO:

9 INT. MORGUE - DAY - CLOSE ON A LATEX GLOVE

Which gets yanked off with a loud, rubber band SNAP. We TILT UP from Scully's hand to her face. She's dressed in blood-speckled scrubs and is vaguely annoyed. She looks at someone o.s.

SCULLY
Alright. I'm stumped. And I think I'm supposed to be.

She's addressing:

WIDER ON ROOM - MULDER

Steps forward, approaches the autopsy table she's been working at. Atop it lies the two discreet pieces of the Amazing Maleeni.

MULDER
What did you find out?

Scully considers, then launches into it.

CONTINUED

9 CONTINUED:

SCULLY

Well... first of all, and sorry to disappoint you... but Maleeni's head didn't just magically fall off. It was very carefully sawed.

Scully shows him what she's talking about -- pulls Maleeni's head a little further from his body so Mulder can get a better look. We show the ogey stuff fairly discreetly, of course.

SCULLY

Very slow, exacting work. Probably done with a fine-toothed meat saw. And then there's this little detail:

Scully points to the neck. Mulder leans in closer to see.

MULDER'S CLOSE POV - THE NECK

We're so CLOSE, the wound is sort of abstract. Atop the dried blood inside the wound, we see traces of something that looks a bit like RUBBER CEMENT. Scully points it out with a fingertip.

SCULLY (O.S.)

Spirit gum. It held the head to the body. Just barely, of course.

MULDER

Peers at this, surprised by it.

MULDER

So he was murdered.

Scully looks uncomfortable, hesitates a moment.

SCULLY

No. Apparently, he wasn't. As near as I can tell, this man died of advanced coronary disease.

MULDER

Natural causes.

Scully nods. Mulder studies her closely.

CONTINUED

9 CONTINUED: (2)

MULDER

Basically, he died of a heart attack, at which point someone crept up, sawed his head off and glued it back on -- all inside of thirty seconds.

(off her shrug)

That make sense to you?

SCULLY

No. And it gets stranger still. Seeing as this man may have been dead a month or more.

(off his reaction)

I see signs this body's been refrigerated.

Mulder looks to the body again -- curiouser and curiouser.

MULDER

And yet he performed yesterday. What a trouper...

SCULLY

Somebody performed yesterday.

Mulder nods knowingly. Off the two agents:

CUT TO:

10 EXT. POOL HALL - NIGHT

10

We're in a bad part of town. Hopefully, some great old BUZZING NEON SIGN of billiard balls and such tells us what this place is.

A figure eases into frame in f.g. -- Billy LaBonge. He checks the place out, heads across the street and enters.

11 INT. POOL HALL - NIGHT - LABONGE

11

Walks through the dark, smoky hall like he owns the place. He's looking for someone. We STEADICAM LOW ahead of him.

REVERSE - FOLLOWING

We STEADICAM LOW behind him, get a look at the joint: a dozen tables, half of which are being played. Judging by the clientele, this would be a good place to hire a contract killer.

LaBonge heads for one man in particular -- a mean-looking sumbitch perched on a stool in the back.

CONTINUED

11 CONTINUED:

11

LABONGE
Cissy Alvarez!

The man looks up from a TINY BLACK NOTEBOOK he's writing in. We see he has distinctive TATTOOS on his arms and hands.

CISSY
Who are you?

This catches LaBonge off-guard, though he tries not to show it.

LABONGE
You don't remember me. Ain't that a bitch.
(off Cissy's stare)
My name's LaBonge. I did time with you about eight years ago. You were in for bank robbery.

CISSY
Name don't mean nothing to me, man. What do you want?

LaBonge considers this man, not having made the entrance he hoped to make. Nevertheless, he doesn't lose one drop of cool.

LABONGE
I hear you're a poker player. You won big from a guy who calls himself The Amazing Maleeni?
(beat)
Also went by the name of Herman Pinchbeck.

CISSY
Pinchbeck.

LABONGE
He's dead.

CISSY
I saw in the paper. Sumthin' about his head fell off.
(very unfriendly)
What's it to you?

LABONGE
I'm the guy who made his head fall off.

Cissy's face stays deadpan-unfriendly. He slowly tucks his notebook in a breast pocket, glances to...

CONTINUED

11 CONTINUED: (2)

... Two goateed BULLETHEADS who shoot pool nearby -- hired biker muscle. They're paying close attention to this conversation.

LABONGE

You took his marker, right?
What he owe you? Fifteen grand?

CISSY

Twenty.

LaBonge shrugs, includes the Bulletheads in the conversation.

LABONGE

Ah. He owed me money, too.
Anyway, I don't think he was
ever gonna pay you.

(X)

CONTINUED

11 CONTINUED: (3)

17

CISSY

He sure as hell ain't now.

(beat)

You wanna cut to the chase? Get a little more of your story out before we stomp you to death?

LABONGE

How'd you like to make back the money he owed you, times ten?

CISSY

Two hundred thousand. How?

LABONGE

Helping me.

CISSY

Do what?

LABONGE

Magic.

That's it -- Cissy looks to the two Bulletheads, pissed off. They ease forward, ready to make good on his threat.

LaBonge coolly holds up a hand to stop them. He SNAPS his fingers, and the hand suddenly BURSTS INTO FLAME.

The guys back off, eyes wide. LaBonge's whole hand is ENGULFED. He WAVES it hard ONCE, TWICE to put it out -- and we see that Cissy's NOTEBOOK has magically appeared in his smoking hand.

LABONGE

Pinchbeck had a big secret -- one I made sure he didn't take to the grave. One that'll make some smart guys a lot of money.

(holds out notebook)

Wanna hear more?

Cissy checks his empty breast pocket, guardedly impressed. He takes back his notebook, never lets his eyes off the man.

CISSY

I'm listening.

Off LaBonge, a man in total control of the situation...

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

12 EXT. DOWNTOWN BANK - DAY

We establish a big, dignified old bank building from the turn of the century. LEGEND: CRADOCK MARINE BANK, LOS ANGELES, CA.

13 INT. DOWNTOWN BANK - LOBBY - DAY

Mulder and Scully enter the ornate lobby, moving with purpose -- looking for someone. It's business hours, with the standard number of CUSTOMERS. Mulder stops a passing FEMALE EMPLOYEE.

MULDER

Excuse me. Where can we find Albert Pinchbeck?

FEMALE EMPLOYEE

He's right over there... the poor man.

What? The woman shakes her head sympathetically, walks off. Mulder and Scully go where she indicated. They slow to a stop upon seeing something ahead. They look at each other, surprised.

MULDER

He look familiar, Scully?

SCULLY

He certainly does.

They are both staring intently at:

THEIR POV - A MAN

He sits behind a desk, alone in a little office separated from the lobby by a glass wall. He's working on something, and isn't looking our way. He's the SPITTING IMAGE of THE AMAZING MALEENI.

Also, he's wearing a padded NECK BRACE.

MULDER AND SCULLY

Keep staring, speak quietly.

MULDER

The plot thickens.

SCULLY

He may try to run...

Mulder nods. The two cautiously approach the man's office. They're ready for anything as they rap on his closed door.

CONTINUED

13 CONTINUED:

13

MAN (O.S.)

Come in.

14 INT. DOWNTOWN BANK - OFFICE - MULDER AND SCULLY

14

Ease open the door, eye the man closely. Just like the name on the door, we'll call him ALBERT PINCHBECK. He doesn't rise.

ALBERT PINCHBECK

Good morning. Mr. and Mrs..?

MULDER

Agents. Mulder and Scully. FBI.

They flash their IDs. Pinchbeck looks a bit confused.

ALBERT PINCHBECK

You're not here for a home loan,
I take it.

Scully stares hard at this man whom she's previously seen dead. She launches into it.

SCULLY

Sir, we're investigating the death of a magician who called himself The Amazing Maleeni.

ALBERT PINCHBECK

(nods; saddened)

Herman Pinchbeck. My twin brother.

SCULLY

We know. We checked his next of kin.

MULDER

(points at his brace)

What happened to your neck?

ALBERT PINCHBECK

I was in a car accident.

MULDER

Car accident...

Mulder looks to Scully meaningfully. She closes the office door behind them. Mulder takes a seat across the desk from the man.

CONTINUED

14 CONTINUED:

MULDER

So, your injured neck had nothing to do with a magic trick you performed at the Santa Monica Pier two days ago? One which involved you turning your head around 360 degrees?

ALBERT PINCHBECK

Uh. No. That wasn't me. This happened in a bad car accident, in Mexico.

MULDER

(mock sympathy)
Bad Mexican car accident. In Mexico...

SCULLY

Do you know any magic, Mr. Pinchbeck?

Pinchbeck looks to her, nervous as only an honest man can be.

ALBERT PINCHBECK

Yes. I do. Back in the seventies, my brother and I performed together.

MULDER

Why did you stop?

The man smiles wistfully.

ALBERT PINCHBECK

You never really stop.

He reaches in a desk drawer, pulls out a deck of playing cards. He does one short, great trick which involves MULDER PHYSICALLY PULLING A CARD OUT OF THE DECK. Whatever else the trick entails, it ends with the card Mulder picked lying alone on the desk (the reason for this will become apparent).

MULDER

Very impressive.

ALBERT PINCHBECK

It gets in your blood. But as far as performing for a living, working with my brother...

(shrug)

We're just two different people, I guess.

CONTINUED

14 CONTINUED: (2)

14

MULDER

Huh.

ALBERT PINCHBECK

We both wanted to do the absolute best magic the world had ever seen. The difference was... I knew we'd never get there. But he always believed we would.

(lowers his eyes)

We didn't talk much after I quit the act.

The man lapses into a sad reverie. Scully looks to Mulder, who is thinking hard. Silence for a beat, then Mulder speaks up.

MULDER

I have a theory, Mr. Pinchbeck. I'll tell you how it goes.

(beat)

I think your brother Herman died of heart disease, never having made it as the world's greatest magician. I think that hurt you... just as your estrangement from him hurt you.

(leaning closer)

I think what you did was perform his last show for him. One last show for which he would forever be remembered. One last show that would end with such a shock, such a denouement, as would forever be remembered in the annals of magic.

(beat)

That's what I think.

Scully is impressed by this conclusion. Truly, deeply impressed. But her reaction is nothing compared to that of Pinchbeck, who is... moved. Tears shine in the man's eyes.

He stares at Mulder for a silent beat, struggling against real emotion. He manages a smile through his tears, speaks quietly.

ALBERT PINCHBECK

I so wish that were true.

As we ponder this statement, the man rolls back from his desk... then out from behind it to a place where we can see him. He's in a short-backed WHEELCHAIR. He doesn't have any fucking LEGS.

CONTINUED

14 CONTINUED: (3)

Mulder slowly stands up from his seat, staring down at this revelation -- taken completely off-guard by it, as is Scully.

ALBERT PINCHBECK

It was a very bad car accident,
in Mexico. Three months ago.

Mulder and Scully look to one another, neither knowing what to say -- seeing as their prime suspect couldn't possibly have done it. Mulder absently scratches at the back of his neck.

SCULLY.

Thank you for your time, sir.

The two agents exit. Mulder gives the man a self-conscious little nod as he gently shuts the door behind them.

Pinchbeck stares after them a beat, wipes his eyes. His expression is impossible to read. He wheels himself back behind his desk. From a drawer, he pulls out a small ZIPLOCK BAG.

CLOSE - THE LONE PLAYING CARD

That Mulder drew still lies where he left it on the desktop. Pinchbeck takes a pencil and, using the eraser, drags the card toward him. Never once touching it with his fingers, he lets it drop into the Ziplock bag.

He lifts the bag, studies the card inside. Off this strange act:

CUT TO:

15 EXT. DOWNTOWN BANK - DAY - MULDER, AND SCULLY

15

Exit onto the sidewalk. We STEADICAM, pulling them along.

MULDER

Oy.

SCULLY

No kidding. What now?

Mulder shakes his head, doesn't know. They get to their car. Mulder leans against it, ruminating..

MULDER

A guy's head falls off. It's
the world's greatest trick.
Only, there's no discernible
point to it. What's the reason
for doing it in the first place?

CONTINUED

15 CONTINUED:

1

SCULLY

(shrug)

Why do people do magic? To impress, to delight... to gain attention...

MULDER

This one's gained mostly police attention.

(considers)

Or, maybe that's the point.

Scully thinks about this. Finally:

SCULLY

I say we consult an expert.

(off his look)

Someone who knows magic and who witnessed the "world's greatest trick" should be able to help us figure it out, right?

Mulder gets her drift.

MULDER

Mozart.

CUT TO:

16 INT. POLICE EVIDENCE GARAGE - DAY

16

DARKNESS. Overhead lights FLICKER ON, illuminating the scene. We're facing something big and rectangular, covered by a TARP.

LABONGE (O.S.)

Hold up. What's in it for me?

REVERSE - BILLY LABONGE

Stands in this deserted garage, accompanied by Mulder and Scully. He's staring at the tarped object, hands on his hips.

LABONGE

I mean, say I help you out.

What do I get in return?

He looks from Mulder to -- meaningfully -- Scully. She stares back at him coolly.

SCULLY

The feeling of pride that comes from performing your civic duty.

CONTINUED

16 CONTINUED:

LaBonge makes a sour face -- big deal. Mulder pulls off the tarp with a magician's flourish, revealing... Maleeni's VAN.

MULDER

How about... the chance to root through the professional secrets of your least-favorite magician?

LaBonge shrugs, grudgingly agrees.

LABONGE

Good for a laugh, I guess.

LaBonge opens the van's back doors, looks inside. The first thing he finds is an old-fashioned magician's TOP HAT.

LABONGE

Oh, man... it's even worse than I thought.

He plops it on Scully's head. Holding her temper impressively, she removes it. LaBonge chucks out garish MAGIC PROPS, unloading the packed van. A couple of white doves go flying.

LABONGE

Gotta feed those things, you know.

(handing off items)

Maleeni wasn't murdered?

SCULLY

It would seem not.

LaBonge shakes his head to himself, surprised. He finds a PROP PISTOL -- one that looks pretty real. He pulls the trigger and a flag pops out: "BANG!" Cornball. He drops it in the pile.

LABONGE

So, someone impersonated him and his crappy act. Impressive.

(thinks about it)

I'd say the twin brother did it, except he's probably not any better a magician than Maleeni.

MULDER

That, and he's got no legs.

LABONGE

Big deal. You ever hear of Johnny Eck?

They shake their heads. LaBonge pauses his unloading.

CONTINUED

16 CONTINUED: (2)

16

LABONGE

The astounding half-a-man. He ended right here.

With his hand, he indicates a point near his navel.

(X)

LABONGE

Back in the thirties, there was this act where they'd pick a guy out of the audience and do the old saw-em-in-half routine. Guy gets sawed in half, he's fine, heads back to his seat... on the way, he breaks in two! His legs go running in one direction and his torso crawls off in the other. People would mess themselves! Turns out it was Johnny Eck riding on the shoulders of this midget who's hiding in a big pair of pants.
(beat)

It was Johnny Eck's full-size, identical twin brother who they picked out of the audience in the first place.

Mulder looks to Scully, then back to LaBonge.

MULDER

How does that explain what happened to the Amazing Maleeni?

LABONGE

It doesn't. It was just a hell of a trick.

(shrug)

Okay, so it wasn't Maleeni's twin brother -- too obvious. But you're looking for a magician who's the same height and build. A good makeup job, the right wig... no one would know the difference.

SCULLY

Not even you, I guess.

LABONGE

(defensive)

I had a couple of Jello shots in me...

CONTINUED

16 CONTINUED: (3)

MULDER

How did this impersonator make
the switch with the dead body?

LaBonge climbs into the van now, chucks the remaining stuff out.
It's nearly empty.

LABONGE

With ease. You're gonna kick
yourselves when I show you how
he did this -- it's so simple.
Because magic is all about
misdirection.

He slides out one last, larger item, squats in the empty van.
The floor of the cargo area is sheathed in PLYWOOD PANELS.

LABONGE

Your impersonator simply made
sure everyone was looking the
other way when he pulled
Maleeni's body out of its hiding
place... in a secret compartment
underneath... the floor.

Dramatically, LaBonge yanks up a panel of plywood, revealing...
bare STEEL. Uh-oh. He pulls up another panel, then another.
He raps on the steel floor, sounding it.

It quickly becomes obvious that there is no secret compartment.
LaBonge clears his throat, looks a little sheepish.

LABONGE

Damn... this guy is good.

He doesn't know what more to say. Scully folds her arms.

SCULLY

Thanks for that expert opinion.
(sotto; to Mulder)
We're right back where we
started.

Mulder is looking at something amidst the pile of magic junk at
his feet. He bends down, picks up a folded slip of PAPER.

MULDER

Maybe not.

He shows it to her.

CONTINUED

16 CONTINUED: (4)

SCULLY'S POV - THE PAPER

Is a page torn from a tiny notebook. It has a list of names and figures on it. Mulder's finger points out one name among them: "PINCHBECK -- 20K -- 11/4/99."

SCULLY

Stares at this. Mulder looks to LaBonge, getting out of the van.

MULDER

You said the Amazing Maleeni had gambling debts?

LABONGE

That's what I heard.

MULDER

(to Scully)

Here's a big one -- twenty thousand dollars. It's a page from a gambler's marker book.

SCULLY

What was it doing in Maleeni's van?

Mulder's very question. Off them:

CUT TO:

17 INT. DOWNTOWN BANK - VAULT AREA - DAY

We're in a vault stacked with canvas CURRENCY BAGS (we should get tech advice about how this might look -- but the point is that the vault is clearly full of dough). A barred DAY GATE closes with a CLANK, separates us from the money.

A day gate KEY gets turned in the lock. We see it belongs to... wheelchair-bound Albert Pinchbeck. He tucks it around his neck, wheels himself out the huge, open vault door to join...

... An armed COURIER GUARD and DRIVER. These men stand by a handtruck loaded with more canvas BANK BAGS.

COURIER GUARD

Thank you, Mr. Pinchbeck. If you could sign here for me...

ALBERT PINCHBECK

With pleasure.

CONTINUED

17 CONTINUED:

Pinchbeck takes a clipboard from the man, signs it. The Courier Guard glances into the open vault.

COURIER GUARD

Heck of a lot of cash on-hand.

ALBERT PINCHBECK

Yeah. Social Security checks get mailed tomorrow. We have to be ready for the rush.

The man nods. As Pinchbeck hands back the clipboard, his eyes linger on the PISTOL the Courier Guard wears on his hip.

ALBERT PINCHBECK

Anthony, what kind of gun is that?

COURIER GUARD

A Glock 17. Nine millimeter.

ALBERT PINCHBECK

Is that a good one?

The Courier Guard looks to the Driver, who shrugs and nods.

COURIER GUARD

Yeah. Hopefully, we'll never have to find out how good.

Pinchbeck smiles along with the men.

ALBERT PINCHBECK

I hear you. I was thinking of maybe buying a gun, since my accident.

COURIER GUARD

Here. Take a look.

The Guard very properly unloads the pistol and opens the slide, then hands it to Pinchbeck. He holds it like it's uranium.

ALBERT PINCHBECK

Gosh. Heavier than I thought.

He plays with it a little, sights it, hands it back. The Guard reloads the clip and slips the pistol in his holster.

ALBERT PINCHBECK

Thank you, Anthony... Marvin...

CONTINUED

17 CONTINUED: (2)

17

COURIER GUARD

You ever want, I'll take you to
the shooting range. Have a good
one, Mr. Pinchbeck.

ALBERT PINCHBECK

You, too.

CONTINUED

17 CONTINUED: (3)

The Guard and Driver head out the back with their load of money. Pinchbeck wheels himself into f.g., rolling toward his office. He exits frame past us, a pleasant smile on his face.

18 INT. DOWNTOWN BANK - OFFICE

The door opens, and Pinchbeck wheels into his office. It's still business hours -- we can see a few CUSTOMERS in b.g. Sunlight slants into the lobby, backlighting everything.

As Pinchbeck works his wheelchair into place behind his desk, a SHADOW falls over him. He looks up, smiles professionally.

ALBERT PINCHBECK
Hello, may I help you?

IN THE DOORWAY, - CISSY ALVAREZ

Casts the shadow. He's dressed so as not to stand out in this setting. He steps into the office, takes a seat like he owns the place. He stares coldly at Pinchbeck, who is made a little nervous by this quiet, ominous presence.

CISSY
Damn, man. You look just like him.

ALBERT PINCHBECK
I... I'm sorry?

CISSY
Your no-good, malapaga brother. Died owing me money. Lotta money.

(leans forward)
You gonna make good.

ALBERT PINCHBECK
I'm sorry, but my brother's debts were his own. I, uh --

Pinchbeck swallows hard. His hand eases toward the phone. Cissy watches this calmly. Then... fast as a rattlesnake, he SLAPS his own hand atop Pinchbeck's, holds it still.

CONTINUED

18 CONTINUED:

18

CISSY

I said, you gonna make good.
'Cause me and my friends, we
know where you live.

Scared into submission, Pinchbeck looks at Cissy's hand atop his.

PINCHBECK'S POV - CISSY'S HAND

On the back is a very distinctive TATTOO. A BLACK WIDOW SPIDER.

Off Cissy and his scary smile:

CUT TO:

19 EXT. URBAN STREET - DAY - AN ARMORED TRUCK

19

Turns a corner into view. It rumbles past, driving through a
mostly commercial section of Los Angeles.

20 INT. ARMORED TRUCK - DAY

20

The Courier Guard rides shotgun. The Driver drives. They
travel in silence for a beat, then...

... THUMP. THUMP-THUMP. The two men look to one another --
what was that?

LOUDER now... THUMP-THUMP. It's coming from behind them, from
behind the wall that separates the cab from the cargo box.

DRIVER

Sound like the rear diff?

As the Guard considers... BUMP-BUMP. Right behind their heads.

COURIER GUARD

Uh-uh. Pull over.

The driver slows the truck, stops at the curb. The Guard checks
his side mirror.

COURIER GUARD

Stay here and call it in. I'll
check it out.

The Driver gets on the radio. The Guard climbs down out of the
cab, locks the passenger's door behind him.

21 EXT. URBAN STREET - CONTINUOUS

The truck idles at the curb. We STEADICAM after the Guard as he slowly walks toward the back. On the way, he stoops to check underneath. Nothing's amiss.

We FOLLOW CLOSE ON the man's holster -- he unsnaps it as he walks.

ANGLE - ON THE REAR DOOR

The Guard checks out his surroundings, then puts his key to the lock. He draws his gun, unlatches the door and swings it open. He takes aim inside.

GUARD'S POV - SIGHTING DOWN THE PISTOL

As we scan the dim interior of the truck, nothing looks amiss at first. But then we notice... the sole of a SNEAKER sticking out from behind the canvas bank bags.

COURIER GUARD
YOU IN THE TRUCK -- GET UP WHERE
I CAN SEE YOU!

A HIDING MAN reluctantly rises up into view, rises to his knees. His back is to us, stays that way throughout.

COURIER GUARD
Hands where I can see them. UP!
HANDS UP!

The man slowly raises his hands in surrender. As one of them rises up into a slash of sunlight, we clearly see a very familiar BLACK WIDOW SPIDER TATTOO.

COURIER GUARD
Alright. Get out here.
(no response)
Mister, get out of the truck.

The man doesn't comply. The Guard's aim stays steady. Suddenly, the man REACHES LIGHTNING-QUICK to his waist as he simultaneously RISES and starts to TURN. He never gets all the way around as --

-- The Courier Guard is quicker. BLAM-BLAM-BLAM-BLAM! The man pitches forward, sprawls on the deck.

The Guard keeps his smoking pistol raised, eyes wide and breathing hard. The man lies lifeless on the floor of the truck.

DRIVER (O.S.)
Anthony! --

CONTINUED

21 CONTINUED:

21

We STEADICAM with the Guard as he runs around the driver's side of the truck. The Driver has taken position with his pistol by his open door, wondering what the hell is going on.

COURIER GUARD

I got a guy down back here!

The Driver follows as the Guard returns to the back of the truck -- we're still with them in one uninterrupted take as they discover... the truck is empty. NO DEAD BODY.

The Guard can't believe it.

COURIER GUARD

It was a guy with tattoos. I-I shot him four times. I don't understand...

As the two men look all around...

NEW ANGLE - THE GUARD AND DRIVER

Can be seen from a distance, checking out their armored truck and its surroundings. We're across the street and a ways away, peering out from an alley or from behind a dumpster.

We PULL BACK to include a man peering out, watching the truck crew. We're looking past his familiar back, which shows absolutely NO EVIDENCE OF HAVING BEEN SHOT.

CLOSE - THE BACK OF THE MAN'S HAND

On it is the BLACK WIDOW TATTOO. As we watch, his other hand wipes the tattoo with a moist towelette, ERASING IT completely away. We TILT UP to the man we assumed was Cissy Alvarez, only to find...

... It's really BILLY LABONGE. Off his faint, satisfied smile:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

22 INT. POOL HALL - DAY - GREEN FELT

22

Fills the frame -- the surface of a pool table. A clear plastic EVIDENCE BAG falls into view, Pinchbeck's MARKER visible inside.

SCULLY (O.S.)

This is your handwriting, is it not?

We ARM UP to Cissy, who stares down at the evidence before him. He's stone-faced, but clearly troubled. He looks up to:

MULDER AND SCULLY

Who stand before him. We see the place is empty -- except for the two Bulletheads who shoot a rack in b.g., keeping a wary eye on the proceedings.

SCULLY

Mr. Alvarez, please answer the question.

CISSY

That ain't mine, man. I don't know where you got that.

MULDER

That's funny... the only fingerprints on it are yours.

SCULLY

We ran them through the California State Penal System database -- to which you're quite well-known.

A beat. Cissy knows he's caught -- at least on this one thing.

CISSY

So it's my marker. So Pinchbeck owed me money.

(shrug)

It was a friendly game of poker.

MULDER

Very friendly -- twenty thousand dollars. You must be friendly, too... letting it go unpaid since last November.

CISSY

Yeah. I'm friendly.

CONTINUED

22 CONTINUED:

MULDER

So, you didn't go looking to
take a pound of flesh.

CISSY

(re: marker)

Where'd you find that?

SCULLY

In Herman Pinchbeck's van.

Cissy's mind goes a mile a minute, trying to figure out who's framing him. Mulder watches him closely throughout. Scully collects the evidence bag, slips it into her coat pocket.

SCULLY

Where were you last Thursday?

CISSY

Here. All day. Ask 'em.

He nods toward the Bulletheads. Mulder and Scully give them a cursory glance. The Bulletheads both NOD. Not much of an alibi.

CISSY

Man, I don't know what it is you think I did to Pinchbeck, but what's in it for me? If I kill him, he ain't gonna pay me. And if I go mess him up, it ain't gonna be in the middle of a crowded pier. Right?

He's got a point. But Mulder's got something else on his mind.

MULDER

Why did you play poker with him in the first place? He was a professional magician.

CISSY

Man, I didn't know what he was. He sure as hell couldn't play worth a damn.

Mulder thinks about this. Done with Cissy, he looks to Scully.

SCULLY

Don't leave town, Mr. Alvarez.

Mulder and Scully exit. Off Cissy, feeling paranoid:

CUT TO:

23 EXT. POOL HALL - DAY - MULDER AND SCULLY

Exit onto the seedy street. Traffic is sparse -- this is not the side of town morning commuters tend to cut through. Mulder wonders aloud as they make for their rental sedan.

MULDER

How does that strike you, Scully? The Amazing Maleeni was a lousy poker player. A man adept at manipulating cards.

SCULLY

Maybe he wasn't so adept. LaBonge certainly has a low opinion of his skills.

MULDER

There's another possibility...

SCULLY

Which is?

Mulder stops, removing something from his pocket and holding it up for Scully to see -- a QUARTER.

MULDER

Behold -- an ordinary, household quarter. I place it in my left hand...

Scully watches, trying to be patient as Mulder makes a point of passing the coin from one hand to the other. He holds up his left fist, presumably with the coin inside.

MULDER

... Like so. Or, did I?

Scully taps Mulder's right fist, reluctantly playing along.

SCULLY

It's in your right hand.

Mulder opens his right fist... revealing no coin. He open his left fist... no coin, either. Scully seems mildly impressed.

SCULLY

Not bad.

MULDER

Now, blow your nose.

He holds his right hand over her nose.

CONTINUED

23 CONTINUED:

27

SCULLY

Mulder...

MULDER

Come on, Scully. Blow.

She self-consciously obliges... and the coin appears to drop magically from her nose, Mulder catching it in mid-air.

MULDER

Ta-da!

SCULLY

Amazing. And the point is..?

MULDER

Misdirection. It's the heart of magic, just like LaBonge said. I made you look one place, while the coin was in another.

SCULLY

You're thinking that's what's happening in this case.

MULDER

(nods)

I think we're being led around by our noses.

SCULLY

By whom? Maleeni is dead.

MULDER

It certainly looked that way. But then, you thought the coin was in my right hand.

Mulder steps around the sedan, makes for the driver's seat. Off Scully, wondering at his point:

MATCH CUT TO:

24 SOMEONE'S POV

24

From across the street. We're peering down the block a ways, watching Scully climb into the sedan. WE ADJUST to see it is:

BILLY LABONGE

Who's watching covertly, standing at a corner pay phone. He smoothly turns his back to the sedan as it passes behind him.

CONTINUED

24 CONTINUED:

Once Mulder and Scully are gone, he picks up the receiver, dials 911. After a moment, he speaks in a nervous, disguised WHISPER:

LABONGE

Yeah, hello? I wanna report a man with a gun. He's--he's threatening to kill somebody.

(beat)

No, I can't speak up. I can't --

LaBonge casually lets the receiver DROP out of his hand.

LOW ANGLE - PAST THE RECEIVER

It swings lazily. In b.g., LaBonge walks toward the pool hall.

CUT TO:

*25 INT. POOL HALL - DAY - CONTINUOUS - A WALL SCONCE

25

Gets a tattooed hand jammed down into it -- the hand comes out with a familiar, tiny black NOTEBOOK.

CISSY

Flips quickly through the book, drifts to a nearby pool table on which he sets it down. The two Bulletheads are behind him, jockeying for a look.

CISSY'S POV - THE NOTEBOOK

Amidst the handwritten pages of MARKERS, one page has clearly been TORN OUT. Only a ripped edge of paper remains.

CISSY

And the Bulletheads stare at this, astounded.

CISSY

Son of a bitch...

The sound of the FRONT DOOR opening turns their heads. They see:

LABONGE

Strolling toward them, not a care in the world.

LABONGE

Hey, partner. Hey, guys.

Cissy stares at LaBonge, murder in his eyes.

CONTINUED

25 CONTINUED:

25

CISSY

Pendejo son of a bitch --

LABONGE

I'm sorry?

CISSY

Rata desgraciado! You try to
frame me?! Hijo de tú...

Sputtering for words, Cissy advances on LaBonge, slowly at first. The Bulletheads are right behind him. LaBonge backs off.

LABONGE

Guys, I didn't... guys, wait.
We've got a deal!

CISSY

Deal's off! I'm gonna bleed
you, you little bitch!

LaBonge looks scared now, glancing around for help and fumbling backward toward the exit. In another second, Cissy and his biker muscle will be on him. Nothing to do but --

-- Yank a PISTOL from under the back of his windbreaker. This pistol may look familiar to us. LaBonge waves it unsteadily at Cissy and the Bulletheads. They stop advancing.

LABONGE

Back off!

Cissy stands his ground, boiling. LaBonge runs out the door.

CISSY

You're dead! --

A26 EXT. POOL HALL - CONTINUOUS - LABONGE

A26

Tears ass out the door, gun in hand -- just as an LAPD CRUISER SCREECHES to a stop in the street. TWO UNIFORM COPS draw their guns, take position in their open car doors.

UNIFORM COP

FREEZE! HANDS IN THE AIR!

LaBonge comes to a stop, his back to them. He raises his hands.

ANGLE - ON THE POOL HALL WINDOW

Cissy and the Bulletheads covertly peer out behind the glass. They look from LaBonge to the cops, then split.

CONTINUED

A26 CONTINUED:

CLOSE - LABONGE

Stands with his arms high, his gun still in his hand.

UNIFORM COP
DROP YOUR WEAPON!

LaBonge complies.

AT HIS FEET - THE GUN

Hits the ground, bounces. A goofy FLAG pops out the barrel -- it says "BANG!" It's the PROP PISTOL from Maleeni's van.

CLOSE - LABONGE

Calmly laces his fingers behind his head as the cops approach from b.g. Off them grabbing and cuffing him:

CUT TO:

26 INT. DOWNTOWN BANK - OFFICE - DAY - ALBERT PINCHBECK

Sits behind his desk, typing up a blue streak on his keyboard, eyes glued to the computer monitor on his desk. He glances up, practically double-takes as...

Mulder and Scully approach across the sparsely-peopled lobby. As they step into his office, we can see the Female Employee in b.g., eyeing them suspiciously.

Smiling up at them, Pinchbeck smoothly CLICKS OFF his MONITOR.

ALBERT PINCHBECK
Agents. What an unexpected surprise. Good afternoon.

SCULLY
Mr. Pinchbeck, we'd like a word.
In private.

Scully glances back at the nosy Female Employee, who moves on.

ALBERT PINCHBECK
Uh... I'm fairly busy, actually.

Mulder crosses behind him, takes hold of his wheelchair.

MULDER
I'll bet.

CONTINUED

26 CONTINUED:

Mulder quickly wheels the legless man out of the office. Passing Scully, who looks a bit surprised. As she follows:

CUT TO:

27 INT. DOWNTOWN BANK - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Mulder wheels Albert into the spacious, deserted room. Scully follows, closing the door behind her.

ALBERT PINCHBECK

W-What is this about?

MULDER

It's about misdirection, Mr. Pinchbeck. Or should I say, The Amazing Maleeni...

Mulder suddenly PUSHES Albert's wheelchair, tipping it forward like a wheelbarrow, sending ALBERT TUMBLING TO THE FLOOR!

SCULLY

Is horrified by this act of cruelty...

SCULLY

Mulder?! --

... until she sees:

ALBERT - PANNING HEAD-TO-TOE

He has legs. He lies in a heap on the carpeted floor, his perfectly-intact calves and feet sticking out from holes cut in his pants. The cuffs of his pant legs are tied off at the knees, making it look like he's wearing knickers.

MULDER

Shows Scully the seat of the wheelchair... where we can see TWO HOLES have been fashioned in a false bottom -- two holes to hide a man's legs. MIRRORS beneath the seat complete the illusion.

MULDER

It's a trick, Scully.
(to Pinchbeck)

Voila.

Pinchbeck rises, shakes his legs to get the blood back in them.

ALBERT PINCHBECK

Had you fooled...

CONTINUED

27 CONTINUED:

SCULLY
You are Maleeni?

MALEENI (ALBERT)
(a beat)
Call me Herman.

Off the glum Maleeni, a man caught...

CUT TO:

28 INT. DOWNTOWN BANK - CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

28

Maleeni sits across from Mulder and Scully, a styrofoam cup of water before him. He looks spent, subdued. He holds a deck of cards in hand, shuffling them absently.

He continues to manipulate the cards throughout the scene, fancy shuffles, aces appearing and disappearing, etc. All without flourish, as if to relax himself.

MALEENI
I was afraid for my life. It's
why I did what I did. I'm not
proud of that.

(looking up)
I owe a lot of money I can't
possibly pay back.

SCULLY
We know. Gambling debts to a
man named Alvarez.

MALEENI
That tattooed psychopath. I've
since heard terrible stories
about him. Things he did in
prison to fellow inmates...

MULDER
So, why play poker with him?

MALEENI
He runs a good game. I gamble
to supplement my income. God
knows magic barely pays.

MULDER
Why did you lose to him?
(taps the deck)
Why not manipulate the cards?

CONTINUED

28 CONTINUED:

2

Maleeni squints at Mulder like he's speaking Greek.

MALEENI

Cheat? You're asking me why I
don't cheat at cards?

MULDER

(shrug)

You could, right?

Maleeni crisply SNAPS an Ace off the top. He FLIPS IT ACROSS
THE ROOM. In the same shot, we see it WEDGE in a bulletin board.

Mulder and Scully are silently impressed. Maleeni is indignant.

MALEENI

Of course I could. But how
would I live with myself?

(squints at him)

Who raised you?

Mulder looks offended. Scully steers the conversation elsewhere.

SCULLY

Sir, what does any of this have
to do with your twin brother
being found decapitated at the
Santa Monica Pier?

Maleeni lowers his eyes. Speaking about it is difficult for him.

MALEENI

My brother the banker. He and
I weren't close the last ten
years, as I told you. But I was
desperate -- I needed to pay
Alvarez.

(bitter smile)

I went to my brother for a loan.
Just my luck and his...

MULDER

... You found your brother dead
of a heart attack.

MALEENI

He was still warm. It was... an
opportunity to vanish, to become
someone else. As I said, I'm
not proud of what I did.

SCULLY

You refrigerated the body.

CONTINUED

28 CONTINUED: (2)

Maleeni nods. He gives the cards a last shuffle, sets them down.

MALEENI

I needed time to figure out how I was going to pull it all off. Impersonating my brother, I called the bank -- told them I was taking a vacation week, a trip to Mexico. Then they received word I'd been in a terrible accident. It gave me plenty of time away from work.

SCULLY

Why pose as an amputee? To allay suspicion that you weren't your brother?

MALEENI

(sheepish)

That, and I rather liked the sympathy. Especially from the women in our office.

~~(beat)~~

Besides, this is Los Angeles -- nobody walks anyway.

Mulder listens to all of this evenly. He speaks up.

MULDER

You still haven't explained why you left your brother's body at the Pier. Why you arranged for his head to fall off.

MALEENI

You explained it. You put it so eloquently, when we last spoke.

They don't follow. Maleeni smiles sadly, quotes Mulder.

MALEENI

It was my final performance. I wanted to go out with such a shock, such a denouement, as would forever be remembered in the annals of magic.

(beat)

In his heart, I know it's what my brother would have wanted.

Silence for a beat. Mulder looks to Scully, the two agents digesting all that they've just heard. Mulder finally stirs.

CONTINUED

28 CONTINUED: (3)

28

MULDER

It was your final performance?
(off Maleeni's nod)
I don't think so. I think
you've got more up your sleeve.

Scully looks to Mulder, wonders what he means. Maleeni's expression is innocent, inscrutable. Off Mulder, studying him:

29 INT. DOWNTOWN BANK - OFFICE - DAY - HANDS

29

Rifles through Maleeni's desk. We TILT UP to reveal this is Mulder, searching the place.

MALEENI

Stands near the open door, shame-faced. His hands are cuffed before him. Scully flanks him, as does an upset BANK OFFICER. The familiar Female Employee and a few other betrayed WOMEN are gathered outside, peeking in through the door. The gist of their whispered conversation is "He's got legs!"

The Bank Officer stares at Maleeni, more nervous than pissed.

BANK OFFICER

Good god, man -- we gave you
handicapped parking! We built
you a ramp!

Maleeni lowers his face. Mulder turns to the Bank Officer.

MULDER

Did he have access to the vault?

BANK OFFICER

Well... yes. He has a key to
the day gate. Several of us do.

SCULLY

What are you looking for, Mulder?

MULDER

Any hint why Maleeni here is
really impersonating his brother.

So far, zip. Scully fixes on... the COMPUTER. She taps it.

SCULLY

What about this?

Mulder picks up on her point, quickly turns to the Bank Officer.

CONTINUED

29 CONTINUED:

MULDER

Could he have stolen money electronically?

BANK OFFICER

(shakes his head)

He didn't have security clearance for EFTs -- electronic funds transfer.

MULDER

Maybe he got around security. Can I check the bank's withdrawal records?

BANK OFFICER

It would require your thumbprint and badge number -- and probably a federal subpoena, to boot.

We're extra cautious with EFTs -- you can understand why.

(rounds to computer)

There may be an easier way... if I call up a transaction list for this terminal...

Mulder lets him go to work. He types fast. After a beat or two:

BANK OFFICER

No. Everything's in order.

Mulder checks over the man's shoulder, then looks to Maleeni, who shrugs innocently. Mulder turns to Scully, frustrated.

The Bank Officer realizes something. He speaks up hesitantly.

BANK OFFICER

Agents..? The armored transport service we contract with?

Yesterday, there was a robbery attempt made on it.

(off their interest)

No money was taken, and no suspects were caught. But I realize now... Mr. Pinchbeck was the employee who signed out the truck. He knew their schedule.

Mulder considers this. Everyone looks to Maleeni.

MALEENI

I-I had nothing to do with that!

CONTINUED

29 CONTINUED: (2)

2'

MULDER

Maybe -- maybe not. We'll hold you till we find out.

SCULLY

... Make sure you don't pull a vanishing act.

Mulder and Scully escort the man from his office. The threesome heads across the lobby, leaving behind a small group of stunned employees. As Maleeni's pleas of innocence fade in the distance:

30 OMITTED

30

A31 INT. HOLDING CELL BLOCK - NIGHT - A STEEL DOOR

A31

BUZZES open. Maleeni -- hair tousled, sans suit jacket and tie -- gets herded into the block by a big OFFICER.

MALEENI

Wait, don't I get a phone call?
Sir...? Sir? --

The Officer says nothing as he deposits Maleeni into a small, empty cell -- one in a row of at least two or three. He shuts the barred door with a heavy steel CLANG, then exits.

Maleeni is left alone in the quiet cell block. His expression of fear and panic slowly relaxes into an unreadable deadpan.

There's a faint RAPPING on the cinderblock wall next to him: "shave and a haircut." Maleeni smiles, RAPS back: "six bits."

We ANGLE AROUND Maleeni's cell to get a look at who is in the next cell over. It's LABONGE, his rival -- or so we thought.

LABONGE

How'd it go?

MALEENI

Swimmingly.

Though they can't see each other, both men smile. Life is good.

LABONGE

Abracadabra, man.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

31 EXT. DOWNTOWN BANK - MORNING

31

It's nine a.m. at the Cradock Marine Bank. An employee appears behind the glass front doors, unlocks them. Open for business.

32 INT. DOWNTOWN BANK - VAULT AREA - MORNING

32

An empty handtruck SQUEAKS along, being pushed by the Courier Guard. The Driver accompanies him. Both men look confused.

COURIER GUARD

You're saying Mr. Pinchbeck
isn't Mr. Pinchbeck..?

We INCLUDE the Bank Officer, walking just ahead of them. The three men come to a stop at the locked vault door.

BANK OFFICER

No. He is Pinchbeck -- he's
just not the Mr. Pinchbeck.

DRIVER

But how'd he get legs?

The Bank Officer shakes his head, tired of talking about it. The two armored truckers wait as the man unlocks the vault. With a muffled THUNK, the bolts retract. The Bank Officer takes firm hold of the door handle, puts his back into it.

ANGLE - FROM INSIDE THE VAULT

The three-ton door slowly swings away, revealing the three men. As they stare in past us, their slow-dawning reactions tell us something is seriously amiss. After a long moment:

BANK OFFICER

Oh, damn.

THEIR POV - INSIDE THE VAULT

As seen through the bars of the day gate, the vault floor is EMPTY. No pile of canvas currency bags. There's no overt signs of a break-in, either... no safe deposit boxes are open. But the big pile of cash has definitely been CLEANED OUT.

THE BANK OFFICER

Swallows hard, moves to grabs up a nearby phone.

CONTINUED

32 CONTINUED:

32

BANK OFFICER
Call the police. We've been
robbed.

CUT TO:

33 INT. DOWNTOWN BANK - VAULT AREA - LATER - FINGERPRINTS

33

Glow like fluorescent paint underneath a special BLACK LIGHT. Dozens, hundreds of fingerprints glow here in the vault, where the lights are out. Two CRIME SCENE TECHS work in here, shining their black light lamps over every inch of steel.

We PULL BACK from this scene to find Mulder standing outside the vault, looking in. He turns to face Scully, who walks toward him. She's got her cell phone to her ear, finishes up a call.

SCULLY
Alright. Alright, thank you.

She clicks off.

MULDER
Maleeni?

SCULLY
(shakes her head)
Still in city lock-up, where he's been since we arrested him last night. It certainly doesn't look like he did this.

Mulder thinks about it, isn't ready to agree. Scully peers into the vault, which is lit up like a teenage stoner's bedroom.

SCULLY
Lots of fingerprints.

MULDER
I guarantee you none of them match our thieves. They're too clever to leave clues.
(half to himself)
They only leave the ones we're meant to find...

Before Scully can ask what he means, the Bank Officer approaches.

BANK OFFICER
May I show you something?

Mulder and Scully follow after the man.

34 INT. DOWNTOWN BANK - MONITORING ROOM - MORNING

The glow from several SECURITY MONITORS provides most of the light in this small, windowless room. The Guard and Driver are here, shuttling a VCR back and forth. They look to...

... Mulder and Scully, who enter followed by the Bank Officer.

BANK OFFICER

We thought the security camera footage might show the robbers.

SCULLY

Does it?

BANK OFFICER

No. They all mysteriously go blank from about three a.m. to three-twenty. But that's not what we wanted you to see.

The Bank Officer looks to the Courier Guard, who points to a monitor. On it is a black and white freeze-frame of the BANK'S ENTRANCE VESTIBULE. It's daylight hours -- a high, tight angle.

COURIER GUARD

This is from two days ago.

The Courier Guard presses PLAY. On the monitor, we see Cissy Alvarez saunter into the building. He pauses, glances around the place -- this is the day he came to threaten Maleeni.

Interested, Mulder and Scully lean closer for a better look. Onscreen, Cissy does something -- checks his watch or cracks his knuckles -- that gives us a chance to see his BLACK WIDOW TATTOO.

The Courier Guard FREEZES the video on a glimpse of the TATTOO.

SCULLY

Cissy Alvarez... convicted bank robber.

COURIER GUARD

(surprised)

You recognize this man?

MULDER

Yeah. Who is he to you?

The Courier Guard points to the distinctive TATTOO.

COURIER GUARD

I know that tattoo. He's the man who tried to rob my truck.

CONTINUED

34 CONTINUED:

3/

Off Mulder and Scully, who look to one another:

CUT TO:

35 INT. POOL HALL - MORNING - CISSY ALVAREZ

35

Looks mildly hung-over, stirs his coffee in a mug that says "RACK 'EM UP!" It's too early in the morning for customers -- the place is empty except for the two Bulletheads, who sit with their feet up in b.g., trading sections of the paper.

Cissy slurps his coffee, stares out the window. His eyes focus on something over the rim of his mug. He has one of those classic "oh, shit" moments as...

CISSY'S POV - THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR

A HALF-DOZEN COPS come pouring in like the wrath of god, guns drawn. Mulder and Scully are right there among them.

UNIFORM COP

LAPD! --

SCULLY

Cissy Alvarez! Put your hands in the air!

MULDER

Get 'em up -- get 'em up!

Cissy puts down his coffee, complies. Cops swarm him, spin him around and cuff his hands behind his back. Other Cops do the same to the Bulletheads.

CISSY

Yo, man -- what the hell? What did I do?!

Mulder and Scully don't answer, simply begin searching the place -- look behind the front counter, glance under pool tables.

The Cops keep Cissy and the Bulletheads in b.g., maybe sit them down. Cissy calls after them.

CISSY

If you're gonna play, it's four bucks an hour. You got enough guys here, maybe I'll swing you a group discount --

SCULLY

Shut up.

CONTINUED

35 CONTINUED:

35

CISSY
(to the nearest cop)
Seriously -- what are they
looking for?

He gets no answer. Meanwhile, Mulder and Scully don't see anything amiss. The Uniform Cop appears from the back room, shakes his head.

UNIFORM COP
There's nothing back there.

Mulder and Scully look to each other -- dead end? Not yet. Something catches Mulder's eye now. He stares up at something on the ceiling. He picks up the nearest pool cue, moves closer.

MULDER'S MOVING POV - THE CEILING

If there's a suspended ceiling in this joint, great -- we're looking up at a sagging BULGE in it. Otherwise, we're peering up at a big, suspended box light, the kind they hang over pool tables. This one is BULGING a little funny.

MULDER

Reaches up with the pool cue, prods at the bulge. Once, twice...

... BOOM! It breaks loose and fat canvas CURRENCY BAGS come RAINING DOWN! One breaks open, spilling CASH across the floor.

CLOSE - CISSY

His jaw drops -- what the fuck?! Behind him, the Bulletheads are every bit as amazed.

CISSY
Wh... What? Who --

Cissy spins to look to the Bulletheads... they shake their heads, utterly befuddled.

MULDER AND SCULLY

Study these men as the odd, stray BAG falls down behind them.

SCULLY
Saving for a rainy day?
(checks out bags)
This looks like all of it.

MULDER
(a thoughtful beat)
Yeah. How 'bout that?

CONTINUED

35 CONTINUED: (2)

35

Something is bothering Mulder -- it's too easy. He watches as the Uniform Cop begins reading Cissy and the Bulletheads their rights. Cissy shouts over the man, yelling to Mulder and Scully.

CISSY
FBI -- WE GOT FRAMED! THIS IS
A FRAME-UP! IT WAS THE MAGICIAN!

MULDER
The magician. Maleeni?

The Cops frog-march Cissy and his boys toward the exit.

CISSY
No man, not the dead one! That
little pendejo LABONGE! LABONGE
SET ME UP! --

With that, the struggling Cissy is out the door and gone. Mulder looks to Scully, who is as surprised by this as he is. It takes a moment for it to register.

SCULLY
Billy LaBonge...

MULDER
(nod)
... And the Amazing Maleeni. (X)
That's a double bill I'd
definitely like to catch.

Scully gets his meaning. Off the two agents:

CUT TO:

36 INT. HOLDING CELL BLOCK - DAY - A CELL DOOR

(X) 36

Is opened by the big Officer.

(X)

OFFICER
Pinchbeck, you made your bail.

(X)

(X)

Pinchbeck -- Maleeni -- steps out of the cell, shoots his cuffs (X)
and straightens his tie-less collar. He looks none the worse (X)
for wear after his night in the pokey. (X)

OFFICER
You too, LaBonge.

(X)

(X)

LaBonge gets let out of the cell next door. The two men smile (X)
knowingly to one another -- it's been a good night's work. As (X)
they head for the exit, led by the Officer... (X)

CONTINUED

36 CONTINUED:

THE CELL BLOCK DOOR

BUZZES open -- Mulder and Scully enter. Mulder plants himself in their path.

MULDER

Good morning, gentlemen. Did you sleep well?

MALEENI

Agent Mulder... Agent Scully...

Maleeni and LaBonge are cool and collected. Mulder and Scully show their IDs to the Officer.

SCULLY

I think releasing these two may be a bit premature.

MULDER

We're going to have a little talk with them. We cleared it with your captain.

The Officer glances at them -- whatever -- and exits. Now it's just Mulder and Scully, alone with the two magicians.

MULDER

Bravo. Really...

LABONGE

What do you mean?

SCULLY

Last night, the Cradock Marine Bank was robbed of 1.8 million dollars. This morning, that entire amount was found in the possession of Mr. Cissy Alvarez.

MALEENI

Wow. See, I told you he was bad news. Bravo to you. That was expeditious police work.

MULDER

Wasn't it, though? It's just that Alvarez is so obviously guilty. A convicted bank robber, caught red-handed...

(to LaBonge)

... Witnessed attempting to rob an armored car just days earlier.

CONTINUED

36 CONTINUED: (2)

36

SCULLY

He'll need a good lawyer...

(X)
(X)

MULDER

He's up a creek. Just like you
two want him.

(X)
(X)
(X)

Maleeni looks to LaBonge, who shrugs innocently. Both men are
as unruffled as ever.

(X)
(X)

MALEENI

I don't quite see where you're
headed with this.

(X)
(X)
(X)

Mulder smiles faintly. He's unruffled, too.

(X)

MULDER

I have a theory, Mr. Maleeni.
I'll tell you how it goes.

(X)
(X)
(X)

(beat)

I think your twin brother Albert
died of a heart attack -- at
which point you and your protege
here saw a golden opportunity.

(X)
(X)
(X)
(X)
(X)

LABONGE

To do what, exactly?

(X)
(X)

Mulder looks to LaBonge a beat, faint sympathy in his eyes.

(X)

MULDER

To get revenge on the man who
made your time in prison a
living hell.

(X)
(X)
(X)

(beat)

Alvarez. Eight years ago, you
and he were on the same cell
block.

(X)
(X)
(X)
(X)

LaBonge still acts cool, but his eyes blink faster now.

(X)

LABONGE

He doesn't even remember me.

(X)
(X)

(flat)

That's not an admission of
guilt, by the way.

(X)
(X)
(X)

Scully turns back to Maleeni.

(X)

SCULLY

It was a set-up from the start.
You played poker with Alvarez
and made sure you lost big.

(X)
(X)
(X)
(X)

CONTINUED

36 CONTINUED: (3)

36

MULDER

-- Which gave LaBonge an in with Alvarez, once everyone thought you were dead.

(X)
(X)
(X)
(X)

SCULLY

You used Alvarez's greed to ensnare him. And then last night... you two robbed the bank.

(X)
(X)
(X)
(X)

Maleeni and LaBonge glance to one another. Maleeni gives a rap on the bars behind him. Solid.

(X)
(X)

MALEENI

Don't you think we have pretty good alibis? Seeing as last night, we were both in the care of the city?

(X)
(X)
(X)
(X)
(X)

MULDER

You have beautiful alibis. The world's finest -- which is why you both got yourselves arrested in the first place.

(X)
(X)
(X)
(X)
(X)

SCULLY

With your expertise in sleight-of-hand, pickpocketing, escapology, I believe you could have gotten out of here by pilfering a guard's key.

(X)
(X)
(X)
(X)
(X)
(X)

MULDER

-- And then returning it without him ever knowing. You could have escaped, stolen the money, framed Alvarez, and been back here by breakfast.

(X)
(X)
(X)
(X)
(X)
(X)

Maleeni smiles faintly, appreciatively.

(X)

MALEENI

Scrambled eggs and sausage.
(beat)

That would be the world's greatest trick, wouldn't it?

(X)
(X)
(X)
(X)
(X)

MULDER

There was a better one to come. We asked ourselves -- why did you need so elaborate a set-up? One so high-profile? Why draw the attention of the FBI?

(X)
(X)
(X)
(X)
(X)
(X)

CONTINUED

36 CONTINUED: (4)

36

Maleeni and LaBonge say nothing, slightly less unflappable now. (X)

SCULLY

We were the last piece of the puzzle. (X)
(X)
(X)

LABONGE

How's that? (X)
(X)

MULDER

EFT -- electronic funds transfer. You didn't have the security clearance for them. So you needed a little federal law enforcement intervention: (X)
(X)
(X)
(X)
(X)

FLASH TO: (X)

37 INT. NEIGHBORHOOD THEATER - MORNING (FLASHBACK) (X) 37

In SLOW MOTION, we see LaBonge holding up Mulder's ID, which he pickpocketed. He's about to hand it back to Mulder. It's OPEN. (X)
(X)

MULDER (V.O.)

Specifically, my badge number... (X)
(X)

LABONGE'S POV - CLOSE ON THE BADGE (X)

We're TIGHT enough to favor Mulder's BADGE NUMBER. (X)

CLOSE - LABONGE (X)

Takes a quick glance down at it, then smiles up at Mulder. (X)

FLASH TO: (X)

38 INT. DOWNTOWN BANK - OFFICE - DAY (FLASHBACK) (X) 38

We're LOW-ANGLE CLOSE on a DECK OF CARDS. Mulder's hand reaches into frame in SLOW MOTION, picks a card during Maleeni's trick. His hand with the card is huge in f.g., his face in b.g. (X)
(X)
(X)

MULDER (V.O.)

... And my thumbprint. (X)
(X)

CUT TO -- SLOW MOTION -- Maleeni dropping the lone CARD into a Ziplock bag without touching it. (X)
(X)

FLASH TO: (X)

39 INT. HOLDING CELL BLOCK - CONTINUOUS - MULDER

(X) 9

Smiles faintly, lowers the boom. The magicians are stone-faced. (X)

MULDER

With those two items, you could (X)
pull off a funds transfer -- (X)
steal enough electronically to (X)
make the 1.8 million look like (X)
cigar-lighting money. (X)

SCULLY

You could wire it to an off- (X)
shore account. By the time the (X)
dust settled from that bit of (X)
misdirection last night -- (X)

MULDER

-- The vault robbery -- (X)

SCULLY

-- You both could be living (X)
under assumed names, sipping (X)
margaritas on a third-world (X)
beach. (X)

Maleeni and LaBonge say nothing, glance glumly to one another. (X)
They're busted. Mulder... and Scully... can't help but feel a (X)
little sympathy for the two men, as well as respect for their (X)
skill and panache. (X)

MULDER

It would have been one hell of (X)
a trick. (X)

MALEENI

... One forever remembered in (X)
the annals of magic. (X)

Scully smiles gently. Maleeni, a gentleman to the end, accepts (X)
defeat gracefully. His protege does, as well. Off the two (X)
magicians: (X)

CUT TO: (X)

40 INT. BREEZEWAY - LATER

(X) 40

Mulder and Scully round a corner into view. They walk slowly (X)
down an empty corridor in the jail building. They're heading (X)
for the exit. (X)

They walk in silence. Both seem almost wistful -- especially (X)
Mulder. After a beat or two: (X)

CONTINUED

40 CONTINUED:

40

SCULLY (X)
What are you thinking, Mulder? (X)

MULDER (X)
(a beat) (X)
I'm still wondering how he did (X)
that great trick -- turned his (X)
head completely around. (X)

SCULLY (X)
Observe. (X)

Scully moves to the nearest wall, presses the palm of one hand (X)
against it. Without any trick shots or cuts, she... ROTATES HER (X)
HAND A FULL 360 DEGREES. (X)

Mulder is amazed. (X)

MULDER (X)
How'd you do that? (X)

SCULLY (X)
(shrug) (X)
Magic. (X)

REVERSE - LOOKING DOWN THE HALL (X)

Scully walks away from us, heading for the exit. Mulder follows (X)
after her, bugs her the whole way. (X)

MULDER (X)
Seriously. How'd you do that? (X)
Scully... It's not the same (X)
thing, you know. Scully..? (X)

She never answers. As they recede into the distance, Mulder's (X)
voice fading away... (X)

FADE TO BLACK. (X)

THE END (X)

