

AN ALMOST PERFECT CRIME

AN ALMOST PERFECT CRIME

FADE IN:

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE on framed David Hockney pool painting illuminated by a bouncing flashlight beam shining through a window.

EXT. FRONT WINDOW - NIGHT

MARIO, Mexican American, and Craig, Anglo, both in their early 20's, garbed in black, wearing black gloves and black beanies (not pulled down), peer through the window.

Mario, passive, conventional, constantly broke, unable to parlay his good looks into a steady girlfriend. He carries an opened duffle bag.

Craig, selfishly ingratiating, a schemer, non-violently amoral, except he does love his mother. He holds the flashlight. Mario whispers.

MARIO

How many?

Craig trains the light on a window sensor, a corner motion sensor, and the center of the painting.

Mario removes a large magnet, with duck tape already affixed, from the duffle and tapes it directly opposite the window sensor. He then takes out two portable, wide angle infrared lights, holds one and turns it on.

After pointing the light at the corner motion sensor, he nods to Craig, who jimmys the window open. The two coordinate their movements as Craig opens the window, while Mario keeps the light aimed at the sensor.

Then Craig lifts the other light, duct tape attached, turns it on, focuses it on the sensor, and tapes it to the window sill.

Mario turns his off and the two climb into the room.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Modern, expensive contemporary furnishings: glass coffee table between parallel couches that bracket a fireplace, with the painting hung on the wall above it.

Craig carefully avoids blocking the infrared light with this body, as he fires a silicon spray at the motion detector. Mario visually inspects all four sides of the painting, then hand mimes that there is something behind the painting.

Craig takes out two hand held devices: a frequency monitor and an acoustic sound wave machine. He hands the sound wave machine to Mario as he dials up various frequencies. Once he gets the right one, he shows Mario. Mario turns his sound wave machine to that frequency, steps back and aims the machine at the painting.

Craig lifts the painting off the wall, turns it to show a small micro sensor attached to the back. He removes it, keeping it as Mario's target, until he places it on the floor.

As the two turn to leave, with Craig carrying the painting, bright lights come on. The two look up.

ARI and KIARA stand on a balcony, above the mock up room. Ari, late fifties, Rolex, Italian loafers, expensive suit, no tie, knows what he wants and won't let others get in his way. Kiara, African American, mid 30's, stylish business attire, charismatic saleswoman, efficient business manager.

KIARA

Thanks guys. Return the painting.
I can take it from here.

(Beat)

So what do you think Mr Weingold?

ARI

I think I need to upgrade my
security system.

KIARA

Determined thieves will still
figure out a way to get in.

ARI

But I buy art to see it, not to
store it in some warehouse.

KIARA

We're more than just a warehouse
Ari. Let's head down to the
conference room so we can talk.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Craig and Mario change into casual clothes, each wearing a Polo shirt emblazoned: Beverly Hills High Value Storage.

MARIO

You wanna grab some lunch?

CRAIG

Sure, but not with you. I got a better offer.

MARIO

Where you going?

CRAIG

Someplace you'll never see the inside of.

MARIO

Is it a client?

CRAIG

In a manner of speaking, I guess.

MARIO

If Key finds out, you're toast, you know. Dating clients.

CRAIG

She won't, as long as you don't rat me out, Mr. Rules Guy. You need to loosen up, man.

MARIO

Easy for you to say. Your parents were born here, not looking over their shoulders for La Migra every time they did anything wrong.

CRAIG

So *they* toe the line. Doesn't mean you have to. Never gonna get ahead if you do bro.

MARIO

This from a guy who's still paying off the IRS for what, three years now?

CRAIG

Hey, not my fault. Who knew they taxed bingo winnings?

MARIO

Clearly not your mother. You know, as long as you let her keep playing, you're gonna be paying them through the nose.

CRAIG

It's the only thing she's got man. And with what I got going on the side, I can cover anything she owes and, unlike you, put some away for plans of my own.

MARIO

I got plans. College.

CRAIG

Yeah, but you already bombed outta one. Who's gonna pay to let you try it again? Not this job, that's for damn sure.

MARIO

At least when I get some dough, it'll be legit. I don't even wanna know what you're doing to get yours.

CRAIG

Man, I'm like a tree falling in the forest. As long as no one catches on to what I do and nobody gets hurt, it's like free money.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Kiara and Ari sit in nice cushioned chairs, drinking wine, on each side of a small conference table.

KIARA

Our facility is one of the most secure in the world. Solid steel bars on the inside and out. Surveillance, 24/7.

INTERCUT

EXT. CRAIG'S LEXUS - DAY

Craig drives up to a large gated estate. As he reaches out to ring the buzzer, a private neighborhood security guard slows, then drives by after Craig waves.

EXT. ENTRANCE TO STORAGE FACILITY - DAY

Interior barred door with camera pointed down towards the entrance.

 KIARA (V.O.)
Our closed circuit TV monitors
anyone entering or leaving.

EXT. INSIDE ESTATE GATE - DAY

Craig looks at the camera aimed at the gate entrance, as he drives to the front of an elaborate house. He parks. DERMONT opens the door to greet Craig. Dermont, early 50's, Old World butler type, stiff, serious.

EXT./INT. STORAGE FACILITY - DAY

Unidentified woman inserts a key card and a green light blinks on. Mario opens the door and invites her inside.

 KIARA (V.O.)
Once you become a client, you're
issued a personal key card to allow
access. But even with that, you
must be escorted inside like you
were this morning.

INT. ESTATE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Dermont leads Craig through the room, decorated in antique furniture, fine Old World and impressionist art, and decorative vases. Craig totes a paper sack as he scans the room.

 CRAIG
Your boss sure has a lot of nice
stuff in here. Musta cost a pretty
penny.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

 KIARA
Collectors such as yourself use our
facility to store antiques,
collectibles, and other things that
they do not wish to store in their
homes.

 ARI
And that includes fine wine?

KIARA

Absolutely. Unlike other parts of the country, homes in Los Angeles are not constructed with basements or wine cellars.

INT. ESTATE - DAY

Dermont ushers Craig into an elevator. Three buttons: 2, 1, and B. Dermont slides the inspection certificate to the right to reveal another unmarked button, that he presses.

CRAIG

This part always freaks me out.

DERMONT

Mr. Wilson prefers privacy when he views his personal collection.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

KIARA

The space we're in now can be reserved as a viewing gallery, for private sales or simply temporary showings. Our team is quite discrete and can configure your art and adjust lighting for an optimal viewing experience.

INT. SUB-BASEMENT

Large circular room around a plush chair in the center, where ROY WILSON sits. Rich, egocentric, corporate raider in his late 40's. Publicly pleasant, privately ruthless.

A dozen post-impressionist or contemporary art canvases adorn the walls, along with a few empty spaces.

ROY

Dermont, can you check the temperature? It feels a bit too warm to me.

DERMONT

Of course, sir.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

KIARA

We have a computerized climate control system throughout, monitored daily by in-house engineers.

(MORE)

KIARA (CONT'D)
Temperature at 70 degrees
Fahrenheit and humidity at 50%.
Both, museum standard levels.

 ARI
What about for the wine?

 KIARA
We have several oenophile clients.
They agree with our experts that
the ideal temperature to help age
wine is 55 degrees, and the
humidity 65%.

INT. SUB-BASEMENT

Craig hands his paper sack to Roy.

 CRAIG
I didn't have time to gift wrap it,
but I think you'll like it.

Roy takes the bottle out.

INSERT

CLOSE on label: Opus One 2016 Cabernet.

 ROY
Somewhat early for this. Dermont,
please place it in cabinet number
three, and bring me something from
cabinet one.

Dermont nods "yes," takes the bottle and returns to the
elevator.

INT. STORAGE FACILITY, WINE STORAGE AISLE - DAY

Mario stands on a lift and the shivering woman on the ground
hands him her key card. He rises to the top, third tier of
bins. He uses two key cards to unlock a bin, revealing
dozens of wine bottles stored in cases and on racks.

 KIARA (V.O.)
Each bin can store up to 25 cases
of wine. And our staff can
retrieve any bottle you desire at
any time of the day or night.

INT. HOME WINE CELLAR

The room holds three large, temperature controlled wine
cabinets, each with a full complement of wine bottles.

Dermont opens cabinet #3 and places Craig's wine inside. He then opens cabinet #1.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

KIARA

So you see, Ari, why our facility is used by art galleries, museums, restaurants, and wine merchants. As well as private collectors like yourself.

ARI

But I don't want to have to come here every time I want to enjoy my art.

KIARA

I understand. But at home, you may experience rising temperatures that can affect the framing and appearance of your pieces.

INT. SUB-BASEMENT

Roy rises to his feet, talking to Craig with his back turned as he ambles over to a framed canvas on the floor, propped up against a wall, painting side facing the wall. This canvas sits right below a blank space on the wall above.

ROY

Craig, do you know why I asked you here today or --

CRAIG

No sir.

ROY

Or why this painting remains on the floor?

Roy lifts the canvas and turns it towards Craig. It is a Wayne Thiebaud cake painting.

CRAIG

No sir. Is it too small?

ROY

No. Come over here.

Craig quickly walks over.

ROY (CONT'D)

Who painted this, Craig?

Craig leans in.

INSERT

CLOSE on signature: Thiebau

CRAIG
Somebody named Theebau.

Long pause as Roy looks down at the painting he holds in his hands. Then he violently smashes the frame on his knee and rips the canvas to shreds as he screams,

ROY
It's Thai bowd [emphasizing the
"d"]! With a D! This is a fake!
Do you think I'm an idiot! That I
wouldn't recognize a copy!

Roy tosses the wreckage to the side as Craig steps back.

CRAIG
I'm sorry, sir. I thought it was
the original. I must have gotten
them mixed up after I used the
machine.

Dermont returns, toting a bottle of white wine. He pauses, outwardly nonplussed as he glances at the ruined painting. Roy lifts his palm towards Dermont. Focusing his steely glance at Craig, Roy calmly takes a deep breath.

ROY
Dermont, Craig will be leaving us.
Please escort him out.

As Craig begins walking towards the elevator, Roy turns to the empty space on the wall and talks with his back turned.

ROY (CONT'D)
I expect this space to be filled by
the end of the week. Am I
understood, Craig?

CRAIG
Yes sir.

INT. STORAGE FACILITY HALLWAY - DAY

Kiara walks with Ari towards a door marked: "Authorized Personnel Only." She uses her key card before punching in a code.

KIARA

This is why you should use our
facility to store your paintings.

They enter a large room, dominated by a combination table scanner/copier/computer. Hanging parallel on the wall opposite the door are five framed, numbered, seemingly identical paintings, all depicting the Hockney pool scene.

KIARA (CONT'D)

Mr. Weingold, is this first
painting an original work?

He glances at it from several feet away.

ARI

No, it is a photographic
reproduction, like they sell in
museum stores.

KIARA

How about the next one?

Ari remains some distance away.

ARI

No. It appears to be hand painted,
by someone with talent, but it is a
forgery, yes?

KIARA

(Chuckling)

No, merely a copy that we
commissioned the artist to paint in
the museum, with permission.
Number Three?

Ari looks at the remaining three from a distance, then moves over to them, sticking his nose right up to the number three canvas.

ARI

Who made this? It is remarkable.

KIARA

I'll tell you, but first, your
verdict.

ARI

The texture and brush strokes are
there, but the colors, particularly
the blue and yellow, just seem a
fraction off.

KIARA

Excellent eye, Mr. Weingold. This was made by a 3D printer. It uses an algorithm to determine which of 11 different shades of ink to apply. But it has trouble with cobalt blue and cadmium yellow.

Ari has already moved to examine the last two, nose right up close to both, bobbing from one to the other.

ARI

These are identical. But that can't be. Which is the original?

KIARA

(Chuckling)

I honestly don't know Ari. I have one of my staff switch them back and forth whenever he feels like it, without telling me. But one was made by the artist and one by this machine.

She places her hand gently on the machine.

KIARA (CONT'D)

There are only two of these in the world. Unlike other 3D printers, it doesn't just reproduce a painting, it re-creates it.

ARI

How?

FLASHBACK

CLOSE on machine as it scans a painting.

KIARA (V.O.)

It begins with several scans, capturing the image, of course, but also it's texture and color. The height of every millimeter of the painting surface is determined to the tolerance of a human hair.

END FLASHBACK

INT. MACHINE ROOM

ARI

Does it sample the paint used?

Kiara frowns as she shakes her head "no."

KIARA

Would you like your painting to be marred by hundreds of microscopic pin pricks?

He also shakes his head "no."

KIARA (CONT'D)

No one would. This machine has a built in spectrometer that records the molecular composition of pigments or materials. Then the magic begins.

She walks Ari to the side of the machine, revealing a mini supercomputer running from end to end.

KIARA (CONT'D)

This custom built computer system contains our proprietary software and uses an algorithm that determines which paint colors, or combination of paint colors, were used in the original.

ARI

So it doesn't reproduce the colors in ink?

KIARA

No, that's what separates this machine from others around the world.

She opens two wide, floor-to-ceiling cabinet doors to reveal an array of colorful tubes, all linked to the machine by tubing.

KIARA (V.O.)

Whether it's oil, acrylic, watercolor, gouache, or encaustic, that exact substance is painted, layer by layer to match the texture of the original painting.

ARI

What keeps the paints from bleeding into one another as the layers are built?

KIARA

Each layer is instantly dried or cured by ultraviolet light.

ARI

Impressive, but all of this sounds quite expensive.

KIARA

It's all relative Mr. Weingold. Let's head to my office to finish our discussion.

INT. CLOSED MUSEUM GALLERY WING - DAY

A rope extends across the opening with a sign: "Special Exhibition Coming Soon." Three workers in overalls and caps erect temporary walls.

STAN

Are these pictures that are going up here worth much?

HEATHER

Not as much as they should be, but a few that haven't arrived yet are valued in the millions.

KLAUS walks up to the rope. In his 50's, overly serious museum curator. Ever so slight German accent.

KLAUS

Heather, may I speak to you?

She comes over, goggles on, hair pulled back. Late 20's, intelligent, independent, opinionated, and passionate, particularly about under-appreciated women artists. Currently unattached, a rare condition for her, she is single-mindedly wedded to her career.

HEATHER

Yes boss.

KLAUS

Are you ready to do some actual museum work?

HEATHER

But this is museum work.

KLAUS

Yes, and these workmen can continue with it. But I need my assistant to do some curator work.

She turns to the other two workers as she doffs her cap, tosses the goggles on the ground, and begins unzipping her overalls.

HEATHER

Guess you're on your own boys. I've got to slip into something a little less comfortable.

KLAUS

(Aghast)

Heather, not here. Use the locker room.

She turns in mock surprise to reveal she has a business suit on underneath, along with tennis shoes.

HEATHER

Why Klaus, you didn't think...really Klaus.

Laughing, she steps out of the overalls, goes over to a corner and retrieves her high-heeled shoes.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

So what's up?

KLAUS

Let's discuss it in my office.

INT. STORAGE FACILITY LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Mario sits, holding a piece of paper, with a half-eaten sandwich next to him. Craig enters carrying a wrapped sub sandwich and sits.

CRAIG

Looks like we're lunching together after all.

Mario doesn't react or look at him.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Hey, earth to Mario. What's going on?

Without turning fully around, Mario hands him a letter.

INSERT

First line of letter on college stationary: "We regret to inform you that your application for financial aid has been denied."

Craig hands the letter back.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Shit man. Bummer. What you gonna do?

MARIO

I don't know. Damn, I was counting on this.

(Beat)

What's with the sandwich? Thought you were going to lunch.

CRAIG

Fell through.

He stops unwrapping his sandwich.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

So how 'bout we drown your sorrows together? I got something in the car. C'mon.

MARIO

Naw. I still got two hours before my shift is over.

He waves the letter in the air.

MARIO (CONT'D)

Can't risk losing my only source of income.

Craig stands.

CRAIG

Just one glass of vino. I swear. You need it bro. And, I got a proposition for you that will solve your problem.

INT. KIARA'S OFFICE - DAY

Small, one wall-size bookcase filled with art books, an antique desk, table with small sculpture on it, two plush chairs and contemporary art paintings throughout.

Ari sits before Kiara at her desk and waves his arm around the room.

ARI

This is the wrong decor, if you're here to convince me your fees are reasonable.

KIARA

All knock offs I assure you. The company put its money into the facility and the scanner.

ARI

So, how much for one of your recreations?

KIARA

Depends on the size, but they average about \$10,000 each.

ARI

Are the storage fees that high, too?

KIARA

Collectible storage bins only run between 250 and 500 dollars. So no.

ARI

But I can avoid your fees entirely by just keeping everything at home, for free.

KIARA

True, but think about it. Insurance alone runs somewhere between 1 and 2% of the value of your artwork. For a million dollar painting, that's ten to twenty thousand dollars, each year.

ARI

Do your fees include full insurance?

KIARA

(Nodding)

Of course, and we also have state of the art smoke detection and fire suppression systems throughout. You are fully protected against burglary, fire, even earthquakes.

Ari pauses in thought for a few seconds.

ARI
How much to store wine?

KIARA
A locker that holds up to 25 cases
of wine costs \$350 a year.

ARI
What's to prevent some employee
from stealing my property?

She flashes her key card.

KIARA
All the bins here require two
access cards, just like a bank.
And we employ rigorous inventory
management procedures, as well as
bi-monthly examinations of every
locker.

EXT. SMALL PARKING LOT - DAY

Mario and Craig sit in Craig's new Lexus as Craig pours each
a paper cup of red wine. Craig glances at the label.

CRAIG
This wine really deserves something
better than paper cups.

MARIO
The label looks expensive. How
much?

CRAIG
Wouldn't know. I didn't buy it.
Here's to better days.

They toast, then sip.

MARIO
Whoa. This *is* good. So, now that
my world is shot to shit, tell me
how somebody who didn't have a pot
to piss in now tools around and
drinks like a one percenter.

CRAIG
Sudden change of heart, huh?

He puts his hands in the air.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Before, it was always, "Don't tell me. I don't wanna know."

MARIO

Well now I do. And no bullshit.

CRAIG

Okay, the car is leased, for now. But in a coupla months I'll have cleared enough to buy it outright and keep mom in bingo cards for as long as she wants.

MARIO

How in the hell is that possible?

CRAIG

It's all in who you know bro and I got a guy who values what I can do for him.

Mario lifts his cup.

MARIO

Is that where this came from?

CRAIG

Nah. Just something left over from a side hustle I, uh, used to run.

MARIO

So what is it you're doing now?

CRAIG

If you really wanna know, just say the word and I'll deal you in.

MARIO

To do what?

CRAIG

To take over for me at night. Key told me she's moving me back to the day shift next week.

MARIO

So who's doing graveyard?

Craig tilts his head, raises his eyebrows, and lifts his cup towards Mario.

MARIO (CONT'D)

Me? No way dude.

CRAIG

It's two more hours, so that means more money. It puts you in solid with Key, so no chance she'll dump you. And, if you don't take it, our partnership is dead before we even start.

MARIO

What do I gotta do? If it's illegal, I'm out.

CRAIG

That's the beauty of it. It's a no harm, no foul operation. Everybody gets what they want. Including mom, me, and you.

MARIO

So it is illegal.

Craig shrugs.

CRAIG

Technically, I guess. But it's the ideal crime, I tell you. I been doing it for months man and nobody has a clue.

MARIO

What is it you're doing?

CRAIG

Better if I show you. I'm by myself tonight. Meet me here at midnight. But park on the street and don't use your access card. I'll come out and get you.

INT. CURATOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Modest size, lined with book cases filled with art books. Heather stands perusing the books as Klaus sits behind his desk.

KLAUS

When will your book be completed?

HEATHER

They begin pressing the hard copies next week. The exhibit catalogue is finished.

KLAUS

And the audio for the exhibition?

HEATHER

Still working on it.

KLAUS

Our opening is only three weeks away. Perhaps you should concentrate on that rather than doing work others can do.

HEATHER

I know Klaus, but when you live with something this long, you want everything to be perfect.

KLAUS

You've accomplished a great deal Heather. Not many PHD students are able to turn their thesis into a major exhibition.

HEATHER

Hold back the kudos until we see if it lands me a curator position.

KLAUS

It will. Especially if you get back to doing curator work. And that's what I wanted to talk to you about. We need to collect the remaining paintings.

HEATHER

I know, the Cassatt, the Izquierdo, and the Frankenthaler. I'm still working with two owners to set up a delivery schedule.

KLAUS

What about the third?

An irritated Heather shakes her head in disgust.

HEATHER

I'm meeting tomorrow with the people in charge of storing it.

(Beat)

It's criminal, you know, what they're doing.

KLAUS

I wouldn't go that far Heather.

Heather takes a deep breath as she steels her eyes.

HEATHER

I would. No person who appreciates art sticks a masterpiece in some warehouse.

KLAUS

Perhaps your show will change all that. At least with respect to this painting.

INT. STORAGE FACILITY SECURITY OFFICE - NIGHT

Craig sits before a few CCTV screens that alternate with random shots of various parts of the facility. Clock on the wall says 11:55, as he disables the TV before leaving.

EXT. FRONT ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Mario stands outside the barred gate as Craig exits the facility and lets him in. Mario looks at the TV camera.

CRAIG

Don't worry, it's off. Long as you don't use your key card, nobody'll know you were here.

INT. ART STORAGE AISLE - NIGHT

The two walk halfway down the aisle before stopping in front of one bin. Craig removes two key cards from his pocket.

MARIO

Where'd you get the second card? I thought only clients had 'em.

Craig uses the two cards to open the bin.

CRAIG

Flaw in the system. Key's master works just like the customers' cards.

MARIO

So how'd you get it?

FLASHBACK

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Craig sits at a booth with Kiara. She has her purse on the seat next to her; Craig, a backpack next to him. As she gets up,

 KIARA

 Watch my purse. I'll be right
 back.

After she's walked away, Craig removes her key card from the purse, takes a hand held key card copier out of his backpack and quickly copies her card just before she returns.

END FLASHBACK

INT. STORAGE AISLE - NIGHT

Craig opens the bin and takes out a painting that we can only see from the back. Leaving the bin open, they head back down the aisle.

INT. SCANNING MACHINE ROOM

The lights are on and the machine running. Craig sets the painting down, removes a test sheet from the machine, and examines it.

 MARIO

 What are you doing?

 CRAIG

 Checking the paint jets. A couple
 of 'em were clogged. They're good
 to go now.

Craig lifts the painting off the floor. It is the Thiebaud cake painting. He gently lays it on the machine, painting side down. He points to the paintings on the wall.

 CRAIG (CONT'D)

 When you switch the paintings in
 here for one of Key's demos, how do
 you remember which is the original?

 MARIO

 Easy. I carve a notch in the back
 of the frame of the original.

Craig scratches his car key on the back frame. Then he walks to the computer side of the machine, where he turns on various knobs and switches. The painting is shown on a computer screen.

CLOSE ON THE MACHINE

A set of LED lamps pass over the top, scanning the painting in different directions. Then a spectrometer scans the painting.

MARIO

Who's painting is this?

CRAIG

Thai Bowed (emphasis on the D).

MARIO

No, not the painter, the owner.

CRAIG

No clue. But if it's here, he's loaded.

As the machine works, Craig picks up a blank canvas propped up on the floor.

MARIO

Aren't you gonna measure it?

CRAIG

Don't need to.

He inserts it into the machine.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Now we gotta kill some time while it layers on the paint.

MARIO

How long you figure?

CRAIG

It took four hours the last time.

MARIO

How many copies of this have you made?

CRAIG

Don't worry, just one. And it's long gone.

MARIO

So what do you plan to do with this one?

CRAIG

Put it back where we got it from.

MARIO

No, I mean the copy.

CRAIG

You still don't get it, do you? My buyer's paying me for the original, so that's what he gets. The copy takes its place in storage.

MARIO

So that was all bullshit about no harm, no foul. Whoever owns the original is sure as hell getting burned.

CRAIG

How? He stuck his damn painting in storage. That's how much he cares about it. And when he ever takes it out, as far as he can tell, it's the original.

MARIO

But he's getting a forgery. A high tech one, but still not the genuine article.

CRAIG

So what? The guy paying me said that according to Ernest Hemingway, no less, you're allowed to steal art, if you can make it better. And he figures turning it over to somebody who really appreciates it, is making it better.

MARIO

Who is he? The buyer. And what's he pay you for doing this?

CRAIG

I'll let you know after I check with him. He might freak if I tell him I'm working with somebody.

(Beat)

And I'm still waiting to hear you say the magic words, I'm in.

MARIO
Is this all you're doing here,
switching paintings?

CRAIG
Uh huh.

Mario is skeptical. Craig crosses his heart (two fingers on the other hand crossed behind his back).

CRAIG (CONT'D)
I swear.

MARIO
What about the wine we had for
lunch? Did you lift that outta
somebody's bin?

CRAIG
Couldn't, even if I wanted to. Our
inventories, remember? They show
every bottle going in and every one
taken out.

MARIO
Okay. Let me think about it. But
right now, I'm outta here.

CRAIG
The longer you wait bro, the higher
tuition's gonna be.

EXT. FRONT ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Craig holds the gate as Mario exits. He walks to his car, a very used Honda, as Craig returns inside.

Mario pulls out and begins driving just in time to hear a police siren. He pulls over and watches the flashing lights approach through his side mirror.

MARIO
Shit.

But the car speeds right by him. After a deep sigh,

MARIO (CONT'D)
I haven't even done anything yet
and I'm freaking out. Get a grip
man.

INT. STORAGE FACILITY, WINE STORAGE AISLE - NIGHT

Craig stands on the lift, at the third tier, holding a bottle of wine. He removes two key cards from his pocket and uses them both to open the bin. He lifts a case off to get to the case underneath. He takes a bottle out, replacing it with another, seemingly identical bottle, before re-stacking the cases.

CRAIG

(Sotto voce) Sorry Mario, this operation is all mine.

INT. PRIVATE ART GALLERY - DAY

Roy strolls through the gallery, ignoring contemporary pieces, concentrating only on impressionist or earlier paintings. ELIZABETH comes over. Late 30's, smartly dressed, pleasant saleslady manner.

ELIZABETH

Mr. Wilson, so nice to see you again.

Without turning to look at her or greet her,

ROY

You indicated you recently received some new works.

ELIZABETH

Yes, three in fact. In anticipation of the upcoming show at the County Museum. A Cecilia Beaux portrait of her niece, a Lee Krasner, and a Helen Frankenthaler.

ROY

Is the Krasner a collage?

ELIZABETH

Yes, would you like me to move the two we have here to the viewing room?

ROY

Which one is not here?

ELIZABETH

The Frankenthaler. It's still in storage until the owner returns next week. I do have a photo of it that I can show you.

(MORE)

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

It would make an excellent addition to your collection.

ROY

Perhaps, but I'm actually looking for a donation to the museum.

ELIZABETH

Oh. I'd have to check with the owners. We're only the exhibitors, you know. And they may prefer to sell it. But --

ROY

It would be *my* donation Elizabeth, if I decide to purchase it.

ELIZABETH

Of course, of course. Just give my staff a few minutes to set up the room.

Roy continues his stroll through the gallery, without acknowledging her in any way.

SERIES OF INT./EXT. SHOTS - DAY

1. Mario sits in a small office, facing KEN, 50 years old in an off-the-rack suit. Behind Ken is a poster: The ABC's of College Financial Aid.

KEN

I assume you applied for aid through FAFSA first.

MARIO

Yes sir. But the form said I didn't qualify because I defaulted on some federal student loans when I was 19.

KEN

Did you pay them back?

MARIO

I'm in the process. I caught a break during the pandemic, but now I'm back in what they call rehabilitation.

KEN

What about the loan forgiveness program?

MARIO

It helped, but only wiped out some.

KEN

I'm afraid until you repay all your obligations, we can't help you. Every aid package must be processed through FAFSA.

2. Mario sits in the lobby of a bank, re-reading his scholarship rejection letter.

TOM

Mr. Saucedo, let's go into my office.

CAMERA tracks them into a small office. TOM, early 30's, sits behind a desk with a nameplate: TOM PULLIAM, Loan Officer.

TOM (CONT'D)

I might as well cut to the chase. Until you pay back your student loans, your credit rating will remain in the basement.

MARIO

But I'm paying them back and I'm not behind on any other bills.

TOM

I saw that on your loan application. But your current salary can't support any more debt, and clearly not in the amount you're asking.

MARIO

Are there any other alternatives?

TOM

Not from lending institutions, I'm afraid.

3. Mario walks out of a convenience store, scratching off two lottery tickets. He tosses the first one in a bin, but gets excited as he scratches through the second one, only to have his hopes dashed with the last scratch.

END SERIES OF SHOTS.

INT. MARIO'S STUDIO APARTMENT - NIGHT

Mario slouches on his couch, holding the TV remote, as he drinks a beer and channel surfs his small TV.

Very sparsely furnished in second hand IKEA style. A few sports posters tacked on the wall.

MARIO

It wouldn't be like I was kidnapping or killing somebody. Forgery, for sure, despite what Craig says. But forged art is still a painting. And if nobody *would* ever know...

INT. CLOSED MUSEUM GALLERY WING - DAY

Heather, in her business suit talks to the two workers, STAN and JOHN, both mid 30's.

HEATHER

I'm afraid you two are on your own from now on. Will you be able to finish it in time?

STAN

No problem, if you authorize some overtime.

HEATHER

(Smiles) Done. I'll get Klaus to sign off --

Her cell phone rings. She holds up her hand signaling wait, then turns her back but remains in place.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

(On the phone)

Hi Mariam...That's cutting it pretty close to the opening...I understand. I was hoping to have your work picked up tomorrow.

Heather drops her gaze and silently thinks to herself for a few seconds before getting back on the phone.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

Mariam, I think it's doable. I'll reschedule the pick up date for Monday afternoon. Bye bye.

After hanging up,

HEATHER (CONT'D)

Damn it!

STAN
Everything okay?

HEATHER
(Distracted)
Huh? Yeah, no. The armored car company is already charging us an arm and a leg. Now they'll tack on a fee to reschedule. Klaus will be furious.

STAN
John and I could pick it up if you want. We could use the museum's van.

HEATHER
(Chuckling)
That's sweet of you Stan, but the insurance company, and me, insist on an armored transport. No, I'll just have to soften up Klaus before breaking the bad news.

As she begins to walk away, she talks out loud to herself.

HEATHER (CONT'D)
Maybe a bottle of wine. That should do it.

As she leaves, Stan and John look at each other and nod ever so slightly.

INT. OFFICE DEPOT - DAY

Craig walks towards the back of the store, holding a cloth shopping bag. He makes eye contact with CHRIS, a young 20 year old woman in the photocopy section. Chris looks around, but there's no one watching. She motions for Craig to meet her to the side and carries a laptop with her.

CHRIS
How many you got?

Craig hands her his phone.

CRAIG
Three more.

Chris takes out a computer cable, hooks it up to her laptop and Craig's phone.

INSERT

CLOSE on computer screen as it copies three, separate wine labels.

CHRIS
Got 'em. When you need 'em?

CRAIG
Depends. You got the other ones?

Chris scans around again, reaches under the counter and hands Craig a large manila envelope that Craig puts in his bag.

CRAIG (CONT'D)
Any problems?

CHRIS
Nah, they're cool.

Craig takes out a twenty from his wallet and hands it over.

CRAIG
Good, then take your time on the new ones.

CHRIS
You know, I looked up the names of those on the internet. They're pretty pricey dude. You stick one of 'em on a bottle of two buck Chuck, and whoever drinks it is gonna know.

CRAIG
Not if they don't drink it. See ya.

INT. CRAIG'S ONE BEDROOM APARTMENT - DAY

Leather sofa and chair, framed museum posters, big screen TV. Craig sits at his kitchen table with the manila envelope and a glass of wine.

He gets up and enters his kitchen, where three inexpensive Trader Joe's wine bottles float in the sink. All have cork tops. As he lifts one out of the water, the label falls off.

INT. KITCHEN TABLE - DAY

The three wine bottles no longer have labels. Craig pulls over a short board, presses one bottle against it, and laying an erase-able marker on the board, carefully spins the bottle to get a straight line.

He then takes one printed label from out of the manila envelope, cuts it to the correct size, peels off the backing and carefully places the label on the bottle. He uses a cloth to rub out any creases.

CRAIG

Good, this one should cover the feds.

Setting that bottle aside, he grabs another.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Now, a little something for me.

INT. MOMENTS LATER

Three bottles lined up in front of Craig. All with expensive labels. He takes a long, very thin needle and pushes through the top of one bottle, looking closely to insure it got all the way through the cork. After pulling the needle out, he holds it in front of him.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Expensively decorated, techie millionaire home. HARRY looks at the same label before pouring wine into HOLLY's glass. Both in their late 20's. She sips it, then puckers up.

HOLLY

Harry, this is simply awful. It's turned to vinegar. What happened?

Harry sniffs the bottle and rears his head back before examining the cork.

HARRY

There's a tiny little hole in the cork. It must have let air in. I'll let the winery know. But for now, let's just open something else.

INT. CRAIG'S TABLE - DAY

Craig's phone pings. He looks at the text:

INSERT

I'm in. See you tonight. Mario.

Craig lifts his glass of wine and toasts.

CRAIG
To Mario, finally breaking the
rules.

INT. MACHINE ROOM - NIGHT

Craig scans another painting. Mario, standing nearby, leans over to take a peek at it. It's an abstract expressionist work by Helen Frankenthaler.

MARIO
How often do you do this?

CRAIG
Whenever the boss sees something he
likes. This is a rush order. Has
to be done this week.

MARIO
Am I gonna meet him once I take
over for you?

CRAIG
Not yet. I'm still gonna make the
deliveries. I'll show you where to
store the originals for me to pick
up after your shift is over.

MARIO
You gonna give him my name?

CRAIG
Eventually, but I gotta wait till
the right time.

MARIO
So I'm not getting paid till then?

CRAIG
No way. We're partners, man. How
'bout we go 60/40 on this one,
50/50 on the rest?

MARIO
And how much is that?

CRAIG
(Chuckling)
Enough for room and board.
Tuition'll take a little longer.

MARIO
You ever worry about being caught?

CRAIG

By who?

MARIO

Key for starters.

He walks to the side of the machine and points.

MARIO (CONT'D)

The counter changes with every copy.

CRAIG

And yet, I'm still here. C'mon, gimme some credit dude. I disabled it. I'll show you how. When you're done, flip it back on.

MARIO

Okay, but what if somebody tries to sell their copy and they bring in an expert to examine it?

CRAIG

Trust me. No geeky art guru can tell it's not an original.

INT. SUB-BASEMENT

Roy and Craig stand together as Dermont hangs the Frankenthaler painting. Off to the side, the formerly empty space now holds the Thiebaud cake painting.

ROY

Excellent. You are to be complimented Craig.

CRAIG

If you say so sir.

ROY

Tell me, what do you see?

When Craig hesitates,

ROY (CONT'D)

A philosopher once said, treat a work of art like royalty. Let it speak to you first. So what does this say to you Craig?

CRAIG
Something I can't translate. It's
pretty abstract to me.

Roy shakes his head in disgust.

ROY
Pearls before swine Dermont.
Pearls before swine.

Roy sits in his chair and swivels it to face the newest
addition.

ROY (CONT'D)
That's why you are perfect for this
enterprise Craig. There is never a
danger that you would steal one of
these masterpieces for yourself.
You are a true Philistine when it
comes to art.

CRAIG
A what?

ROY
An ignoramus. A person who has no
understanding of culture or beauty.
All you understand is money.

CRAIG
Speaking of which?

ROY
Dermont.

Dermont comes over to Craig and hands him \$10,000 in cash,
all hundreds. Roy does not take his eyes off the painting.

ROY (CONT'D)
The bonus is for your alacrity.
And for remaining discrete.
Anything you need to tell me?

CRAIG
No sir, nothing new. I'm good.

ROY
Any new items being stored?

CRAIG
Yeah, we got a new client, he's
bringing in a coupla paintings and
some wine.

ROY
Oh? What painters?

CRAIG
I can't say boss. I haven't seen
'em.

ROY
Then copy the inventory list after
they arrive. Its description would
be more accurate than yours anyway.
Dermont?

Dermont puts his arm on Craig's shoulder, to usher him out.
Craig begins counting the bills as he leaves.

EXT. CRAIG'S LEXUS - NIGHT

Craig sits in the driver's seat while he finishes counting
his money.

CRAIG
Damn. Ten grand. Kiss goodbye to
the IRS Mom.

He starts the car and drives off, passing an old Jeep
Cherokee with the driver obscured, going in the opposite
direction.

EXT. ENTRANCE TO STORAGE FACILITY - DAY

Heather buzzes.

KIARA (O.S.)
Yes?

HEATHER
Heather Sanders from the County Art
Museum.

KIARA (O.S.)
Welcome. I'll send someone to
escort you in.

EXT. ENTRANCE, TWO MINUTES LATER

Mario opens the door. They both stare at each other in
silence for a few seconds. She smiles. He takes a deep
breath.

HEATHER

Hi, I'm Heather. From the County Art Museum.

They shake hands, with neither losing eye contact. She's not as far gone as he is, but seriously intrigued.

MARIO

Mario. Wow. I expected a delivery boy, uh a delivery person, I mean.

HEATHER

(Chuckling)

Sorry to disappoint you.

MARIO

What? Oh no. No disappointment whatsoever.

HEATHER

Well, you'll be happy to know, I'm actually not delivering anything today. Just arranging a pick up.

MARIO

Great. C'mon in.

INT. KIARA'S OFFICE - DAY

The three sit.

KIARA

So you've never been to our facility?

HEATHER

No. I've driven past it a few times, but never been inside.

KIARA

I can have Mario give you a tour if you'd like. We have several art galleries in town as clients. And a few small museums as well.

HEATHER

(Aghast)

They store paintings *here*?

KIARA

Yes, particularly during the pandemic, when their businesses were shuttered. Much more secure.

(MORE)

KIARA (CONT'D)

We also have dozens of private collectors who store their purchases here.

HEATHER

But who gets to see the art if it's hidden away?

KIARA

Ah, I gather you don't approve of what we do. How about a look around? It might change your mind.

HEATHER

Oh, I don't think that's necess --

KIARA

But I insist. Mario, please gives Ms. Sanders the grand tour.

INT. ART STORAGE AISLE - DAY

As they walk down the aisle,

MARIO

As you can see, it's a very secure facility. It cost something like \$10 million to build.

HEATHER

As opposed to the LA County Art Museum, which spent \$490 million on its latest renovation.

MARIO

But the art here isn't just protected against theft or fire. The temperature and climate controls insure no color fading, decomposition, or aging of the art.

HEATHER

(Exasperated)

But no one gets to see it.

MARIO

That's not really true. Here, let me show you something that's truly unique to this place.

They arrive at the door marked "Authorized Personnel Only." You can hear the machine inside humming.

CAMERA follows them as Mario escorts her inside. Craig is there, copying an unseen painting.

MARIO (CONT'D)

Craig, this is Ms. Sanders. She's from the LA County Art Museum.

Craig smiles as he gives her a somewhat creepy once over.

CRAIG

Nice to meet you. Is this for you?

HEATHER

What?

He extends his hand towards the machine.

CRAIG

This. You gonna hang this in the museum?

HEATHER

Art museums do not display copies. Only originals.

MARIO

You'd be surprised Ms. Sanders. As Kiara said, we have a few museum clients who actually store their originals here with us and display our re-creations.

HEATHER

(Flabbergasted)

You can't be serious. That's outrageous!

Craig points to the five paintings on the wall.

CRAIG

Why don't you give the little lady our show and tell.

Heather bristles, but says nothing. Mario sees her reaction.

MARIO

No, that's Key's department.

HEATHER

(Brusquely)

And I have to be going. Nice to meet you.

As she turns to go, Craig looks at Mario with a grin and raised eyebrows. Mario looks concerned as he hurries after Heather.

INT. ART AISLE - DAY

MARIO

Sorry. Is there something wrong?

HEATHER

Yes. Little lady. Really?

MARIO

Sorry, sorry. Craig can be a jerk sometimes, but he's actually pretty harmless.

She stops walking and turns to face him.

HEATHER

Harmless? You know that's not true. Showing art to the public, pretending it's genuine. It's a complete lie.

She turns and begins walking away.

MARIO

Wait. I can explain. I really can. But if you go back to Kiara like this, she might decide to fire me for upsetting you. Please don't.

Heather stops and takes a few deep breaths before she turns.

HEATHER

Okay, explain.

MARIO

It might take awhile.

He looks at his phone.

MARIO (CONT'D)

It's almost noon. How 'bout I treat you to lunch?

HEATHER

No, no, you don't have to do that.

MARIO

I'd say I insist, but I'm not sure how you'd take that.

They both chuckle.

MARIO (CONT'D)

So let me just beg. Please. I'm switching to nights soon, so it's your last chance to see if I can measure up.

HEATHER

For what?

MARIO

For a date.

Heather steps back and frowns as she gives him a slow once over.

HEATHER

What makes you think I'm interested, or not already attached?

MARIO

The audacity of hope.

HEATHER

(Chuckling)

Okay Barack. You're on.

INT. DELI - DAY

Veggies for her, meat sandwich for him.

MARIO

So what brought you to us in the first place?

HEATHER

I'm curating an exhibition and you're storing one painting that we're showing.

MARIO

What's the exhibition?

HEATHER

Under-appreciated women artists of the past century.

MARIO

Like?

HEATHER

Lee Krasner, Maria Helena Vieira Da Silva, Dorothea Tanning, Carmen Herrera.

MARIO

Sounds like a lot.

HEATHER

Too many. But we begin with a painter who was recognized, Helen Frankenthaler That's the painting you have.

MARIO

But why the personal visit? You could have just called Key and let her know when you want it delivered.

HEATHER

I was hoping to see the piece itself. I'd only seen pictures of it.

She looks down as she takes a bite and speaks without looking up.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

No doubt made by some machine like yours.

MARIO

Oh no, what I showed you is a whole lot more than a photocopier. It actually recreates paintings.

Heather sets down her fork and looks at him sternly.

HEATHER

That machine of yours is a remarkable scientific achievement, but you realize it's not making art. By presenting copies as originals, you're committing a crime.

MARIO

No, we're committing art. Our duplicate originals are made with the same paint, the same brush strokes, the same textures.

HEATHER

But they were not painted by the artist. Pretending otherwise is criminal.

MARIO

Really? A crime requires somebody get hurt. But here, the owner of the painting is protected. The artist gets his, uh, her work shown. And the public sees something that is indistinguishable from the original.

HEATHER

You really think that? That pawning off a copy to the public is not a crime?

MARIO

If it is, it's a perfect one. Like killing someone without anyone knowing there's been a murder.

HEATHER

Perfect for the killer, maybe, not so much for the dead guy. Whenever someone displays a copy or a forgery as an original that spark of originality also dies.

MARIO

You might not think that if you saw some of our recreations.

Her phone pings. She looks at it.

HEATHER

Afraid I need to get back.

MARIO

Look, I feel bad that you came out here and never got to see your painting. How 'bout I tag along with the armored car guys? That way I can see for myself the spark in your eyes when you first see it.

Heather stares at him for several seconds, with a half smile.

HEATHER

Deal.

INT. MUSEUM SHIPPING ROOM - DAY

Mario stands alongside Heather as Stan and John, carefully open the wooden shipping container. Mario stares at Heather's face as she looks at the painting. Just a slight smile and nod.

MARIO
(Puzzled)
Not exactly the spark I expected.

HEATHER
That only comes with an original view.

MARIO
Oh no, this is the real deal. I was the one who opened the bin. And --

HEATHER
And that spark you were hoping to see happened several months ago, when I first laid eyes on this masterpiece, at the owner's home.

Mario sighs, clearly disappointed. She pats him on the shoulder.

HEATHER (CONT'D)
I'm sorry Mario. I should have told you. But I, well I, didn't think you'd come if you knew that.

MARIO
(Chuckling)
Trust me, all you had to do is ask.

HEATHER
(Smiling)
Great. You got time to stick around and see us hang it?

MARIO
Sure.

STAN
Heather, what about the other ones we're missing?

HEATHER
They're gonna be picked up in a few days. Check the delivery schedule.

As she and Mario walk out, Stan looks at John and slightly nods his conspiratorial head.

INT. EXHIBITION - DAY

In the first room, next to an empty space is a painting by Morris Louis. Above the empty space is the name Helen Frankenthaler and her photo.

MARIO

So that's what she looked like?

HEATHER

Yes. Helen was a very significant American abstract expressionist, who would not approve of displaying a forgery of her work.

MARIO

We call them re-creations.

(Beat)

But I thought you said this was an exhibition of women painters. Morris Louis, I'm guessing, was a guy.

HEATHER

Correct, but by juxtaposing a woman artist's *creation* alongside a more famous man's, the viewers will hopefully agree that they have been under-appreciated.

(Beat)

By the public, not by other artists. Helen, for example, was both a mentor and an inspiration to Louis.

Stan and John arrive to hang the painting.

MARIO

You know, I can't get over the feeling I've seen this before.

HEATHER

Duh, like an hour ago. It was stored at your place.

MARIO

No, before today. It'll come to me.

They watch as the painting is hung on the wall.

MARIO (CONT'D)

Where are the security wires?
Don't museums have like a picture
rail way up high, hooked up to
wires that suspend the pictures?
You know, so if anybody touches
them, an alarm goes off.

HEATHER

Not a great idea in earthquake
country. We don't want our
masterpieces slapping up against
the walls.

MARIO

You mean they're anchored to the
walls?

HEATHER

Yep. Why? You thinking of
stealing one? Copying them isn't
enough of a crime for you?

MARIO

No reason to steal it. If this was
one of our creations, even you
wouldn't know that.

Stan and John leave as a thought gets in Mario's head.

FLASHBACK

Craig lifting the Frankenthaler painting onto the machine to
be copied as Mario stands nearby.

END FLASHBACK

MARIO (CONT'D)

Hey, any chance I can take a peek
at the back? You know, just to see
your security system.

HEATHER

Now you are making me nervous.

MARIO

Sorry, never mind. Just
professional curiosity. So, what is
this painting all about?

HEATHER

You tell me.

Mario cups his chin in his hand and pretends to think deeply.

MARIO

I think it shows women's inherent struggle for freedom against male tyranny and oppression.

She punches him on the shoulder.

HEATHER

You are so full of shit.

MARIO

Ouch! (Grinning) I was just trying to keep on your good side.

HEATHER

Try as much as you'd like, but you're never gonna convince me that exhibiting forgeries is a victimless crime.

MARIO

Recreat --

Heather gives him a death stare. He puts his hands in the air.

MARIO (CONT'D)

Okay, I give up. I'm outta my league here. Any hope of switching to a sport I can play?

HEATHER

Maybe. But I'm willing to give you one more at bat, if you agree to go with me when we pick up two other paintings.

MARIO

Aren't you using armored trucks?

HEATHER

Of course. But I like to go along to reassure the owners.

MARIO

Then count me in. When are we going?

HEATHER

Sometime in the next coupla days.

MARIO

Can you do it tomorrow? I'm off all day.

HEATHER

Sure. I'd like to head out around three, but if you get here after one, I can give you a tour of the exhibition.

Stan once again looks at John and nods ever so slightly.

MARIO

You got it. See you then.

Heather eyes him as he leaves. After she's turned to walk the other direction, Mario looks back at her.

INT. CURATOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Klaus sits at his desk, shuffling papers as Heather walks in the open door.

HEATHER

Klaus, we've installed the Frankenthaler.

KLAUS

And?

HEATHER

It's perfect. And you won't believe what condition it's in. It looks like it was painted yesterday.

KLAUS

Well I understand it has been in storage for some time, preventing any light deterioration.

HEATHER

Yes, I suppose. Are you sure you can't tell me who donated it?

KLAUS

I'm afraid not Heather. The most recent owner wanted his donation to remain anonymous.

HEATHER

What a shame. I'd love to talk to a male collector with a discerning eye for the intrinsic value of art by women.

Klaus looks furtively around the room and lowers his voice to a whisper.

KLAUS

I probably shouldn't tell you this, but if you talk to enough benefactors at the gala, perhaps you could discern the painting's provenance by yourself.

Heather grins and kisses Klaus on the cheek.

HEATHER

Brilliant idea. And if I do, I promise I won't rat him out.

She looks at her Apple watch.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

But right now, I think I'll just head home. Is that okay?

KLAUS

Certainly. Enjoy your evening.

INT. CURATOR'S OFFICE - NIGHT

GRAPHIC: Three Hours Later

Klaus and Roy stand before Klaus's desk as the two shake hands.

KLAUS

Mr. Wilson, I must thank you again for your generous donation. Would you care to see it now that it has been placed in the exhibition?

ROY

No need. I am pleased enough that the painting now have a worthy steward.

KLAUS

May I ask how you acquired it?

ROY

From a private sale that I asked to remain private.

KLAUS

And, as you requested, the exhibition catalogue simply says from a private collection.

ROY

How has your exhibition progressed?

KLAUS

I'm happy to say, we're on schedule. Will you be attending the gala?

ROY

No, I must be in New York that weekend.

KLAUS

Pity. Our assistant curator will be disappointed at your absence.

ROY

I'm sure there will be time to converse in the future.

KLAUS

So, now that you have a hole in your collection, any plans to replace it?

ROY

Not immediately. But I always like to see what is coming on the market. Goodbye Klaus.

EXT. STORAGE FACILITY - DAY

Craig and Kiara stand together in the parking lot, next to a pull cart.

CRAIG

Who is the dude we're waiting for?

KIARA

Ari Weingold. He watched your demo break in, remember?

CRAIG

What's he storing?

KIARA

Just a case of wine today and one painting. But I think I've got him leaning towards storing more later.

A Maserati pulls in, Ari driving. Kiara hands Craig her I-Pad.

KIARA (CONT'D)

After you load the cart, take it inside to record the inventory. But be extra careful. Ari says everything he's storing with us is super expensive.

Ari gets out, opens the trunk, and the two walk over.

INT. WINE STORAGE AISLE - DAY

Craig kneels on the lowered lift, with a closed wooden case of wine next to him labeled "Domaine de la Romanée-Conti Romanée-Conti Grand Cr." He takes out his phone.

CRAIG

(Sotto voce) Let's see if this guy's just blowing smoke.

Craig punches in the name on his phone.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Holy shit! \$15,000 a bottle.

He reads his phone.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Aging potential, fifty-three years.

He mentally calculates,

CRAIG (CONT'D)

1972 plus 53, that means 2024.
What the hell.

After grabbing a pry bar, Craig hovers it over the case.

A thin strip of tape connects the top and bottom.

Craig, ignorant of the tape, pries open the case, then removes one dusty bottle and sets it on the lift.

INT. HALLWAY STORAGE FACILITY - DAY

Kiara and Ari walk down the hallway. He holds his key card.

KIARA

I'll e-mail you a copy of the inventory, which we'll update any time you add or remove anything.

INT. CRAIG ON THE LIFT

He rubs the dust off the label with his hand, then takes a photo of the label.

INT. HALLWAY

Kiara and Ari approach a corner.

INT. LIFT

Craig puts the bottle back in the case and closes the lid. He glances down the aisle as the two round the corner, then gently presses the case closed.

KIARA

All set?

Craig nonchalantly hands her the I Pad.

CRAIG

Yep. Here's the inventory.

Kiara and Ari scan it together. Ari nods.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Your card?

Ari hands him his card before Craig activates the lift to the second tier, opens a bin and vary carefully inserts the case. He closes the bin and hands Ari back his card.

KIARA

Remember, any time you want to retrieve a bottle, just let us know.

ARI

That won't be happening until they're sufficiently aged.

craig flashes a very slight, smug grin.

EXT. STORAGE FACILITY - DAY

Mario walks briskly to the parking lot as Craig arrives and parks. Craig leans out his window.

CRAIG

Hey, I thought it was your day off.

MARIO

It is. Just picked up my check.
Gotta go, I'm meeting somebody.

CRAIG

Is it that museum chick?

MARIO

Yep.

Craig shifts to a whisper.

CRAIG

Don't you want your real dough
first? Hop in.

Mario gets in. Craig takes a handful of hundreds from his
center console, and hands them to Mario.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

2,000. Forty-percent. All yours.
Next time, it'll be 50/50.

MARIO

Cool. Thanks. You know where the
copy we made went?

CRAIG

You mean it's not still here?

MARIO

Nope. It's hanging at the County
Museum of Art.

CRAIG

(Chuckling)

Perfect. Even your girlfriend
doesn't know.

MARIO

She's not my girlfriend, yet. And
won't be if she ever finds out.

Mario hops out and rushes to his car.

EXT. MUSEUM SCULPTURE GARDEN - DAY

Mario and Heather stroll along the path.

HEATHER

Does your machine only forge
paintings, or does it do sculpture,
too?

MARIO
Recreate, not forge.

HEATHER
And the owners all agree to that?

MARIO
Uh, to answer your first question,
no, the machine can't do sculpture.
Seems like somebody could, though.

HEATHER
Is there any honest work you aspire
to do?

MARIO
Sure, once I get a degree.
Probably not in art history,
though. Is that what you studied?

HEATHER
In graduate school. Back East.

MARIO
Is that where you're from?

HEATHER
No, I grew up here in L.A. You?

MARIO
Uh huh, born here after my parents
came up from Mexico.

HEATHER
You know, one of the painters we're
spotlighting in the show is María
Izquierdo, one of the greatest
Mexican painters of the past
century.

MARIO
Is her work inside?

HEATHER
No, that's one we're picking up,
along with another painting.
Should we go? The armored car will
meet us there.

They turn to walk away.

INT. HEATHER'S JEEP CHEROKEE - DAY

MARIO

Where we headed?

HEATHER

Bel Air first, then the Palisades,
for the Cassatt.

MARIO

Great. Two places that'll freak at
a Mexican coming into the
neighborhood without a lawn mower
in the back.

HEATHER

You still get that? Even in L.A.?

MARIO

Not where I live, but that's not
the Westside. Which I'm guessing
is where you lived when you scored
your first Barbie.

They turn off Sunset through the Bel Air gates.

HEATHER

And my first Ken. No, wait, that
wasn't until college.

She ignores his double take.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

But you're right. I grew up right
here, I'm afraid.

MARIO

What did your parents do?

HEATHER

My dad calls it business investing.
To everybody else, he's a corporate
raider. Real estate for mom, after
they split.

MARIO

How old were you?

HEATHER

Ten. Dad kept the house, Mom, me.
We both dropped the hyphen and kept
her maiden name.

MARIO
You ever see him?

HEATHER
After Mom died, and I moved back to California, I decided it was time to bury the hatchet. So I see him fairly regularly now. Why? You wanna meet him.

MARIO
Maybe, but only if you let me see more of you first.

HEATHER
Does that mean you're not sold on the parts you can see so far?

MARIO
(Flummoxed)
Wha, no, I like --

HEATHER
(Laughing)
Relax. I'd like to see more of you, too.

EXT. DRIVEWAY, GATED ESTATE - DAY

Heather and Mario walk to the front door. SALLY, in her 70's, greets them.

SALLY
Hi, Heather. I didn't think you were coming.

HEATHER
What do you mean?

SALLY
Your crew was already here. (To Mario) Nice to meet you. I'm Sally.

MARIO
Mario.

HEATHER
(Perplexed)
What crew?

SALLY

The two from the museum. They crated up the painting and left me with the paperwork. Should I get it for you?

Heather takes a deep breath as she becomes noticeably anxious.

HEATHER

What did they look like?

SALLY

Young. In suits. Very polite.

Mario gets it as he looks at Heather, who is now frozen in fear.

MARIO

What were they driving?

SALLY

A white van. From the museum. Why?

HEATHER

When did they leave?

SALLY

Not that long ago.

Just then, an armored car pulls up. Heather rushes over to the driver.

SALLY (CONT'D)

(To Mario)

Why are they here? Is something wrong?

MARIO

No, these guys probably just got their signals crossed. They were supposed to go to the Palisades.

HEATHER

Do you have the other painting?

DRIVER

No, your guy from the museum said to come here first.

HEATHER

Shit! Get over there now.

The armored car begins to leave.

SALLY

Is everything okay Heather?

Heather reaches out to hold Sally's hands in hers and tries to flash a sincere smile as she speaks rather quickly.

HEATHER

Yes, absolutely Sally. I just need to show the driver where to go for the next painting. Thanks again Sally. See you at the gala.

Heather quickly turns and heads to her car, Mario rushing after her. They peel out of the driveway.

EXT. SUNSET BOULEVARD - DAY

Heather flies past the armored car as she speeds west down Sunset. Furious, she slams her hand on the steering wheel.

HEATHER

Damn him!

MARIO

Somebody's trying to steal it, right?

HEATHER

Shit, yes. And not just this one.

Heather takes her cell phone and looks up a number. As she does, her car veers into oncoming traffic. Mario grabs the wheel, yanking them back.

MARIO

Here, gimme that. You drive.

She hands him her phone before flooring it, flinging Mario back in his seat.

HEATHER

Call Mariam McArthur. See if they're there.

Mario finds and dials the number as Heather roars through red lights, cars honking and breaking to avoid her. Mario on the phone.

MARIO

Ms. McArthur? My name is Mario Saucedo. No, we've never met.

Heather yanks the phone back.

HEATHER

Mariam, this is Heather. Has anyone come by from the museum?

EXT. PACIFIC PALISADES HOME - DAY

Mariam stands near the entry with her phone, as Stan and John, both in suits, tote a wooden box towards the van.

MARIAM

Yes, they are loading the painting now. Do you want to speak to them?

INT. HEATHER'S JEEP - DAY

Heather takes a deep breath before speaking calmly.

HEATHER

No, no. Have you completed the paper work? Good. Take your time. I'll be there soon to answer any questions.

EXT. PALISADES HOME - DAY

Stan holds a clipboard with papers as he walks back to Mariam.

INT. JEEP - DAY

HEATHER

Call the police and tell them there's a robbery in progress.

MARIO

And an accident if you don't slow down. The police will nail 'em Heather. Don't worry.

Heather speeds up even more.

HEATHER

Fine! But they are not taking my paintings and sticking them in some evidence locker.

EXT/INT. JEEP ON SUNSET BLVD. - DAY

Mario is on the phone.

MARIO

It's some private security cop.
He's at the house, but they're not
there.

HEATHER

Shit! Which way are they gonna go?

MARIO

He says he called the police.
They'll put out an APB Heath --

HEATHER

Which way!?

MARIO

From the Palisades? The quickest
way out is down to PCH, then to the
10.

Heather reaches the intersection with Chautauqua, just as a white van turns off Sunset.

HEATHER

There they are!

She plows through the red light and gets right behind them. She honks her horn repeatedly.

Stan looks at his mirrors. He can see Heather driving.

STAN

Damn! Scare her off.

His passenger, John, removes a handgun from the glove compartment, unhooks his seat belt, leans out the window, and fires at Heather's jeep. She veers over the midline, only to get back in the face of horns from oncoming traffic.

As both vehicles approach an intersection, a slow moving car starts to turn left in front of them both from a side street. The van slams on its breaks, sending John bouncing off the dash and releasing the gun into the back of the van.

Heather veers to the van's right side, into the cross street, before whipping her car directly in front of the van. She hops out and rushes to Stan's window. Mario jumps out his side, ducks down and runs to the back of the van.

HEATHER

You asshole! You are not stealing these paintings.

She grabs the door handle and tries to yank it open. At the same time, Mario opens the back door of the van.

STAN

Let go Heather. It's too late.

Stan puts the van in reverse and looks at his rear view window, to see Mario inside the van, lifting one boxed painting. He guns the engine, causing Mario to fall forward and Heather to fall to the side.

STAN (CONT'D)

Get him outta here!

The van backs up several feet, then tires screech as it lurches forward directly at Heather. She rolls off to the side, just in time. Meanwhile, Mario and John slug it out in the back.

EXT. CHAUTAUGUA BLVD. - DAY

As Heather drives after the van, she can see fleeting glimpses inside as the van's back doors swing open and closed. Mario and John continue fighting.

Stan looks at the van floor and spies the gun. He's reaching out for it, but as he does, he presses the gas. The van speeds up and the paintings begin to slide back. Mario grabs them to pull them back in.

STAN

Grab the gun. Shoot him!

John gets the gun, and turns to face Mario. Mario sees this, so he rolls onto his back, holding the paintings on top.

STAN (CONT'D)

No, not the paintings.

John gets on his knees, trying to wrench the paintings off Mario with one hand. Heather sees this and slams her Jeep into the van from behind. Both doors open wide as John falls backward.

Stan looks at his rear view mirror, taking his eyes off the road, as they approach a sharp curve. He looks forward. Too late.

STAN (CONT'D)

Shit!

He slams on the brakes, causing the van to skid, turning its front end towards Heather. She slams on her brakes, but not before ramming the front of the van, causing it to roll. When it comes to a stop, Heather gets out of her Jeep and runs towards it.

HEATHER

Mario! Mario!

She opens the back of the van to see Stan's bloody, limp body slumped in the driver's seat and John's bloody corpse upside down. No Mario. No paintings.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

Mario!

MARIO (O.S.)

(Weakly)

Over here.

Peering off to the side, there he is, on his back, cut up and bleeding, but still holding the two wooden crates. He tries to laugh.

MARIO (CONT'D)

This wouldn't a happened if these were copies.

EXT. CHAUTAUGUA - SEVERAL MOMENTS LATER

A tow truck lifting the wrecked van. Heather's Jeep off to the side. Several police vehicles and two ambulances. Several yards away is the armored truck.

Stan, with oxygen, already loaded into one ambulance. John's body being zipped into a body bag. Mario, on a stretcher in another ambulance, rears his head up. Heather hovers over him.

MARIO

I think I'll ride with these guys, Heather. Safer, don't you think?

Heather's teary face smiles.

HEATHER

I'm so sorry Mario. I'll meet you at the hospital.

MARIO
After all this, no way.

He groans as he points to the armored car.

MARIO (CONT'D)
You make sure those guys take 'em
to the museum first.

He tries to sit up, but can't.

MARIO (CONT'D)
Ow! Are they all right?

HEATHER
I won't know till I open the
crates, but they look fine from the
outside. Unlike you.

She leans over and kisses him.

HEATHER (CONT'D)
Thank you.

As she turns away,

MARIO
Wait. I think I need a second dose
of painkiller.

They kiss again, longer this time.

INT. MARIO'S APARTMENT - DAY

Mario, splayed out on the couch in a t-shirt and shorts,
watching his small TV, with his head perched on Heather's
lap. The doorbell rings and Heather gets up to open the door
to Craig, holding a bottle of wine.

CRAIG
How's the patient?

HEATHER
Well on the road to recovery.
Which is where I need to be, on the
road. You all right, hon?

MARIO
Yeah. Check in after work to see
if I need some more medicine.

Heather chuckles as she gathers her purse. Craig lifts the
bottle.

CRAIG
You sure you don't want a drink?
To toast the hero.

MARIO
Craig has a pretty good nose for
fine wine Heath.

HEATHER
I'm tempted. What is it?

Craig hides the label.

CRAIG
Oh no. Treat wine like royalty.
Let it speak to you first.

Heather is taken aback.

HEATHER
What did you say?

CRAIG
Something some guy I know said
about art. But vino speaks my
language. So, wanna try it?

HEATHER
No, uh, thanks, but I really better
go.

She kisses Mario and leaves.

CRAIG
Pretty tight with her, huh?

MARIO
Yeah. It took an accident that
almost killed me, but it was worth
it. Can we say the same thing
about your bottle? Where'd you get
it?

CRAIG
Something I had for awhile.

Craig shows him the label.

INSERT

Planeta Frappato Vittoria Doc 2018

MARIO
Is that a good year?

CRAIG

How the hell would I know? Since when did you care?

MARIO

Awhile back, I was talking to one of the customers and she went on and on about how great her vintages were.

CRAIG

Does it really make all that much difference?

MARIO

According to her it did. She said one year a bottle from some winery might go for hundreds, but for thousands another year.

As Craig opens the bottle,

MARIO (CONT'D)

Wouldn't it be great if you bought a bottle that was mislabeled somehow? Wonder how a thousand dollar bottle tastes.

CLOSE on Craig's face as he's thinking up something.

CRAIG

Probably the same as a hundred dollar bottle.

MARIO

How would you know?

CRAIG

The boss has some really expensive wines and he gives me a glass every once in awhile.

They clink glasses and sip.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Speaking of which, he wants another painting. A new one.

MARIO

You sure it's safe?

CRAIG

A hundred p. Same plan. I give you the name and bin.

(MORE)

CRAIG (CONT'D)

You copy it, leave it for me, and I'll pay you your 50% after delivery. When you coming back?

MARIO

Tomorrow night. How much longer we gonna do this?

CRAIG

Who cares? It's a great gig dude. And tuition ain't cheap.

MARIO

Yeah, but Heather'd kill me if she found out what we're doing. And I don't wanna lose her.

CRAIG

Duh, then don't tell her. If you stop now, you can kiss goodbye to college. What's it cost, like fifty grand a year?

Mario reluctantly nods.

MARIO

At least.

CRAIG

That's a hell of a lot more than what my mom owed the IRS. It took me three paintings to pay that off.

MARIO

So what do you do with the money now?

CRAIG

Like I said, she's still binging on bingo, so some goes to her taxes when she wins, but the rest I'm saving up. I got plans remember.

MARIO

Okay, I'm still in. What you gave me before is gonna be eaten up pretty soon by my deductible. Just make sure Heather never hears about this.

CRAIG

She won't, college boy. I'll drop by later with the particulars.

As Craig turns to leave.

MARIO
What about your drink?

CRAIG
You finish it. I got something to do.

INT. WINE MERCHANT'S STORE - DAY

Craig enters the small, boutique store. He's the only customer. The proprietor, MAURICE, is in his 30's. Can't tell if his French accent is fake or not.

MAURICE
Monsieur Craig. How have you been?
Anything new for me?

CRAIG
Maybe Maurice. I got a question first.

Craig takes out his phone and shows it to him.

INSERT

Photo of label, Domaine de la Romanée-Conti Grand Cru.

MAURICE
They produce perhaps the most expensive wines on the market.
Don't tell me you have one.

CRAIG
Not yet. But I wanna know if that winery sells less expensive vintages.

MAURICE
Sure, but none of them is cheap.

CRAIG
Damn.

Maurice points to Craig's phone.

MAURICE
Listen, Craig. You get your hands on one of those bottles and I can sell it in China for more than you can imagine.

CRAIG
I can imagine a lot.

MAURICE
At least fifty thousand dollars.

CRAIG
For one fucking bottle of wine!?

MAURICE
If it's the right vintage, that'd
just be the opening bid. One of
their wines sold for over \$500,000.

CRAIG
Holy shit. Okay, you keep all this
under your hat. I'll get back to
you.

INT. HEATHER'S JEEP CHEROKEE - NIGHT

Exterior: drivable, but still severely dented. Interior:
Heather and Mario.

MARIO
Are you sure it's safe to be
driving this?

HEATHER
You mean me or the car?

MARIO
Both. Maybe we should just head
back to my place and get take out.

HEATHER
Don't tell me you're scared. You
risk getting killed to save
paintings that you've never even
seen. But now you're worried.
C'mon, you deal with rich people
every day in your job.

MARIO
Yeah, but this is different. He's
not just rich. He's --

HEATHER
Here we are.

EXT. FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Heather is about to ring the doorbell, when the door opens.
It's Roy.

HEATHER

Hi Daddy.

Cheek kisses.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

This is Mario. He's the one who
saved the paintings.

ROY

And my daughter. I am in your debt
young man, as is the art world.

They shake hands.

HEATHER

Where's Dermont?

ROY

He's retrieving a celebratory
apertif. Come in.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Dermont stands to the side as the three sit, drinking
champagne. Mario looks at the paintings on the wall, all by
Dutch Masters or Impressionists.

MARIO

You have quite an art collection
sir.

HEATHER

I'm trying to get him to replace
these with some of the more
contemporary pieces he has
upstairs. It would brighten up the
room.

ROY

Since she returned to Los Angeles,
Heather has advised me on what to
buy and where to hang it. Are you
equally as opinionated about art?

MARIO

Not that much. I know what I like,
but that's about it.

ROY

Schopenhauer once said that one should treat art like royalty, let it speak to you first.

CLOSE on Heather's furrowed brow.

ROY (CONT'D)

So what do your favorite works say to you, Mario?

MARIO

That I have to be careful what I say about art when I'm with your daughter.

Roy is puzzled.

HEATHER

He works at a place where they copy paintings to make them look like originals.

Roy hesitates and takes a deep breath, but keeps a poker face.

ROY

Really?

MARIO

Beverly Hills High Value Storage. Have you been there?

ROY

If I have, I have no recollection of it. I really have no interest in copies of fine art, you see.

MARIO

I can understand that Mr. Sanders, when you can afford to purchase the originals.

Heather grimaces.

HEATHER

It's Wilson Mario. Roy Wilson. Remember, I told you mom and I changed our names back to her maiden name.

ROY

I was somewhat perturbed when you first told me. But I'm pleased that rancor is behind us.

He rises to his feet.

ROY (CONT'D)

Shall we?

DERMONT

Sir, what wine would you prefer? In honor of Ms. Sanders, the menu is entirely vegetarian. So I believe the choice of libation is entirely open.

HEATHER

How thoughtful of you Dermont. How about if I select it? That way I can show Mario Daddy's basement.

ROY

Dermont, please escort them --

Heather grabs Mario's arm and hustles him in the direction of the elevator.

HEATHER

No need Daddy. I know the way.

Dermont gives Roy a slightly concerned look, but Roy imperceptibly shakes his head to say, "no, don't worry."

INT. ELEVATOR

MARIO

You dad has his own elevator? What is he, Bruce Wayne, with a secret bat cave?

HEATHER

He's got some secrets.

Her hand floats over the inspection certificate.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

But I don't think this is one of them.

She presses B.

INT. WINE CELLAR

As Heather pores over the bottles in cabinet #1, Mario gawks at the size of the collection.

MARIO

What kinds of secrets?

HEATHER

For one, how about that bullshit that he's never been to your work.

MARIO

Are you sure? I've never seen him there.

HEATHER

You friend Craig certainly has. He admitted some dude he knows said art is like royalty. It's classic Daddy. He even repeated it tonight.

MARIO

So what are you gonna do? Ask him about it?

HEATHER

No, you grill Craig first. Find out what's going on.

SERIES OF INT. SHOTS - DAY

1. Craig at the copier store, comparing the image on his cell phone with a label Chris hands him. He nods approvingly and hands over a twenty.

CHRIS

And I thought those other wines were pricey, but this one dude is off the charts.

Craig gets out another twenty.

CRAIG

Just keep that to yourself, okay? This one little baby is my future, man.

2. Craig and Maurice taking various bottles off the shelf to compare with the image on Craig's phone. Maurice finds one and the two both shake their heads "yes." Maurice opens a drawer, removes a foil top, and hands it to Craig.

MAURICE

This capsule is an exact duplicate
of the ones at Romanée-Conti.

CRAIG

How'd you get it?

Maurice rubs his fingers together (signifying money). Craig leaves with the bottle and the top capsule.

3. Craig at his apartment table affixing the forged capsule to the top of the label-less new bottle.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

(Sotto voce) Perfect Maurice.
You're a genius.

4. Craig at Ari's opened storage locker. He opens the wooden case, removes the dusty real bottle and substitutes the new one.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

(Sotto voce) A little fairy dust
and we're good to go.

Reaching into his pocket, he removes a vial filled with dust. After sprinkling it on the new bottle, he blows the excess off.

5. CLOSE on side of the case as Craig closes it. The broken ends of the tape don't quite match up.

6. Craig puts the real bottle in a brown paper sack.

END SERIES

EXT. STORAGE FACILITY PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Mario parks as Craig exits the facility. Craig waves, but doesn't say anything as he hurries to his car. Mario gets out and approaches him.

MARIO

Hey, wait up. I need to ask you
something.

Craig stashes the bottle in his car, then turns to Mario.

CRAIG

Yeah, make it quick. I'm in a
hurry.

MARIO
I can see that. What's going on?

CRAIG
Nothing. I'm just meeting
somebody. (Lowers his voice) If
I'm late getting back, I put the
master key card and the
instructions on what to do in your
locker.

MARIO
Okay, uh, great. But I gotta ask
you. Are we doing this for Roy
Wilson?

Craig is shocked.

CRAIG
How in hell do you know that?

MARIO
So it is him. Damn.

CRAIG
What are you talking about?

MARIO
He's Heather's father. She asked
me to find out if he's involved in
something. What do I say?

CRAIG
Shit.

Craig thinks in silence for several seconds.

CRAIG (CONT'D)
Okay, look. Don't tell her
anything. Tonight's job is the
last one we're doing for him.

MARIO
Why? I still need the money Craig.

CRAIG
Too risky. If you figured it out,
somebody else will too. And I
don't know what he'll do to us.

MARIO
So you told him about me?

CRAIG
What? Yeah, yeah.

MARIO
He hid it pretty well last night.

CRAIG
You met him? Where?

MARIO
At his house. With Heather. But
if he's the boss, where does he
keep the paintings you copied for
him?

Craig stares at him in silence for a few seconds.

CRAIG
Who cares? Look, just make this
copy tonight and I'll deliver it to
him tomorrow.

MARIO
But what are you gonna say about
me?

CRAIG
I'll think of something. Look, I
gotta go.

MARIO
What's going on dude?

CRAIG
Nothing man, nothing. I'll call
you when I'm on my way back here.

Craig gets in his car and drives off, leaving Mario looking
at him with a puzzled look.

INT. WINE MERCHANT'S STORE - DAY

Craig hands the bottle to Maurice, who is impressed.

CRAIG
Get as much as you can for this
man. Looks like my other gig has
dried up.

MAURICE
I'll let you know in a few weeks.

They shake hands and Craig leaves.

INT. STORAGE FACILITY SECURITY ROOM - NIGHT

Mario sits behind the TV monitors. His phone pings.

INSERT

Mario's phone: I'm here.

EXT. FRONT ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Mario lets Craig in.

SERIES OF SHOTS

1. Craig opens a painting bin labeled Ari Weingold and removes a painting. He leaves the bin door ajar.
2. Mario sits in the control room, TV cameras off.
3. Craig at the machine's controls, copying a painting.

END SERIES of SHOTS

INT. CONTROL ROOM

An intercom buzz. Mario looks at the monitors, but they're off.

MARIO
Yes, can I help you?

ARI (O.S.)
I need to get into one of my
storage bins.

MARIO
And your name sir?

ARI (O.S.)
Ari Weingold.

MARIO
I'll be right out sir.

Mario releases the "talk" button.

MARIO (CONT'D)
Shit!

Mario calls Craig on his cell phone.

MARIO (CONT'D)
He's fucking here. The owner of
the painting you're copying.

INSERT

CLOSE on Ari's art bin, with the door ajar.

Mario is back on the talk button.

MARIO (CONT'D)
Which bin sir? Art, wine,
collectibles?

ARI
What difference does it make?

MARIO
I, uh, may need to see if our
equipment is needed.

ARI
My wine. It's on the second tier.

Mario gives a big sigh of relief.

MARIO
No problem sir. I'll be right out
to escort you in.

Back on the phone.

MARIO (CONT'D)
Stay cool. He's here for his wine.
Gotta go.

INT. STORAGE FACILITY - NIGHT

Ari and Mario pass the machine room and they can hear it
humming.

ARI
You making one of your copies
tonight?

MARIO
Yes sir.

ARI
Mind if I take a look?

INSERT

A very worried Craig hears this and stares at the door.

MARIO
I'm afraid not. Our collectors
prefer that no one knows which of
their paintings we're recreating.

ARI
Pity. Oh well.

They keep walking.

INT. MACHINE ROOM - NIGHT

Craig breathes a deep sigh of relief. He whispers to the
computer screen.

CRAIG
C'mon finish already.

INT. WINE STORAGE AISLE

Mario up on the lift, opens Ari's bin.

ARI
Bring down the entire case,
carefully.

Mario does that and Ari inspects the outside of the wooden
case.

INSERT

CLOSE on side. The tape has been severed and separated.

ARI (CONT'D)
Have you opened this?

MARIO
Me? No sir. I've never been
inside your bin before.

INT. ART STORAGE AISLE - NIGHT

Craig sticks the copy in the bin, locks it, and hurries off
carrying the original.

INT. WINE AISLE - NIGHT

Ari pries open the case and scans the bottles. He lifts out the one Craig switched.

CLOSE on bottle as Ari turns it in his hand to reveal no dust at all on the backside.

ARI

I knew I couldn't trust you people.
Who opened this case?

MARIO

I don't know sir.

ARI

Take me back to that machine room.

EXT. FACILITY PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Craig exits, carrying the painting, gets in his car, and zooms out of the lot.

INT. OUTSIDE MACHINE ROOM - NIGHT

ARI

Open it.

Mario hesitates, but complies. It's empty.

ARI (CONT'D)

Where's the person who was in here?

MARIO

I don't know sir. We can check the
office.

Ari takes out his phone and presses speed dial.

ARI

Make sure nobody leaves this
building...What?...Then follow him.

EXT. STORAGE FACILITY - NIGHT

A car parked across the street speeds off in the same direction as Craig.

INT. SUB-BASEMENT

After Roy hangs an abstract landscape by Richard Diebenkorn on the wall, he nods to Dermont, who hands Craig a wad of bills. While he settles into his chair,

ROY
Craig, do you work with someone
named Mario?

Craig takes a deep breath, trying not to show anything.

CRAIG
Yes, sir. Why do you ask?

ROY
Does he know anything about
our...arrangement?

CRAIG
No sir. We work different shifts,
and --

ROY
Good. Make sure he remains in the
dark.

Roy wheels his chair around to stare at Craig.

ROY (CONT'D)
Understood?

CRAIG
Yes sir.

EXT. ROY'S ESTATE - NIGHT

Craig leaves the house, tucking the bills into his pocket.

CRAIG
Sorry buddy, but if you and your
girlfriend spill the beans, I'm
gonna need all of this to lay low
for awhile.

As he drives off, a car parked across the street (the same one from before) follows him.

INT. CRAIG'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Craig sits on his bed, packing a duffle bag with clothes, until he gets up to answer A LOUD KNOCK at the door. As he walks to the door,

CRAIG

Chill bro. You're in the clear
with Heather's old man.

He opens the door.

CLOSE on visitors, Craig's POV. Two men wearing gloves, faces covered in black beanies. One holds a bottle of wine. They grab Craig as they storm in.

INT. OUTSIDE CRAIG'S FRONT DOOR - DAY

KNOCKING.

MARIO (O.S.)

Craig, you in there? That was too
damn close last night.

Mario pushes the unlocked door open and enters.

MARIO (CONT'D)

Craig, it's Mario.

Mario's POV: Craig's bloodied and beaten body slumps on a chair. His head is covered in red wine and a broken wine bottle sits on the floor next to him. Mario rushes over and moves his head up.

MARIO (CONT'D)

Shit! Craig, Craig.

Craig barely opens one eye.

MARIO (CONT'D)

What happened?

He swipes Craig's face with his fingers, then tastes them.

MARIO (CONT'D)

Why are you covered in wine?

Before passing out, Craig croaks out,

CRAIG

Wine...Wine.

Mario takes out his cell phone and dials 911.

MARIO
 Yes, he needs an ambulance
 immediately. 450 Le Conte,
 Apartment 1. Hurry!

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING AREA - DAY

As a police officer departs a seated Mario, a nurse comes over.

MARIO
 Is he gonna be all right?

NURSE
 His injuries are quite severe, but
 he'll recover.

MARIO
 Can I see him?

NURSE
 Not until tomorrow, I'm afraid.
 He's heavily sedated right now.
 (Beat)
 Do you know who did this to him?

MARIO
 The cop asked me the same thing,
 but I don't have a clue.

Mario follows the nurse to her station, where a news ticker scrolls along the bottom of a news reporter's soundless story.

CLOSE on ticker, Mario's POV:

Burglary at the Beverly Hills Wine Shoppe, Or Not?

MARIO (CONT'D)
 Can you turn that up, please?

The nurse does.

CLOSE on TV screen.

REPORTER
 When the police responded to the
 silent alarm, no one was inside and
 here's what the owner had to say.

Reporter interviewing Maurice, whose wrist is bandaged.

REPORTER (CONT'D)

You have some very expensive bottles of wine in your store. But is it true none was taken?

MAURICE

Um, no. I did a full inventory and all our stock is still there.

REPORTER

How did you hurt your hand?

MAURICE

Oh, uh, on some glass, when I was cleaning up.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Mario glances downward, closes his eyes, and thinks.

SERIES of FLASHBACKS

1. Craig croaking out "wine, wine."
2. The broken bottle on Craig's floor with the label: Domaine de la Romanée-Conti Romanée-Conti Grand Cru.
3. Ari's case, with the same label.
4. Ari's art bin, with his full name on it.

END FLASHBACKS

Mario looks up.

MARIO

It wasn't wine. It was Winegold. Craig was stealing his fucking wine. Shit, what if he finds out about his painting? I gotta get it back.

Mario runs out.

INT. MUSEUM - DAY

Heather surveys the exhibition, with a sign, "Opening Soon." Mario rushes to the stanchion and steps over it. Immediately, two guards accost him.

MARIO

I need to talk to Heather.

She hears this, looks over, smiles, and comes over.

HEATHER
It's all right fellas. He's with
me.

As she goes to kiss him, he backs away.

MARIO
We need to talk. Somewhere in
private.

INT. UTILITY CLOSET - DAY

MARIO
Craig's in the hospital.

HEATHER
What happened?

MARIO
Somebody broke into his place and
beat the shit outta him.

HEATHER
Burglary?

MARIO
No, he was running some sort of
wine scam at work. And I'm pretty
sure one of the customers figured
it out and got to him.

HEATHER
You need to tell the police.

MARIO
I can't.

HEATHER
What do you mean you can't? You
weren't involved, were you?

MARIO
Not in that, no. But I helped him
with something else.

He looks down at his feet for several seconds.

MARIO (CONT'D)
Involving the paintings.

HEATHER

But you said your business was legit. That it wasn't a crime.

MARIO

It is. I mean, it is legit.
Except --

HEATHER

(Very suspicious)
Except what?

MARIO

Except Craig has been recreating paintings on the side and selling the originals to someone.

HEATHER

And you helped him? Please tell me you weren't helping him.

MARIO

Only on two of them.

HEATHER

(Shocked)
How many did you two steal?

MARIO

I don't know. Really, I don't.
But one of the two I helped with is here.

HEATHER

In the museum!?

MARIO

Yes. It's the Frankenthaler.

HEATHER

You knew that? You knew I was exhibiting a forgery?

She shoves him with both arms.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

You used me. You asshole.

He moves towards her, but she pushes him away.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

Get away from me! Don't come near me. Who has the original?

MARIO
I don't know, but I think it might
be --

HEATHER
Who?

MARIO
Your father.

Heather closes her eyes and takes a deep sigh. She looks at Mario with tears in her eyes.

HEATHER
I hate you! You are despicable.

She storms out of the closet. Mario slumps to the ground.

INT. SUB-BASEMENT - NIGHT

Roy admires his paintings, Dermont standing nearby. Roy's wine glass is empty.

ROY
Dermont, I'd like some sherry
before Heather arrives.

DERMONT
Yes sir.

INT. WINE CELLAR - NIGHT

Dermont carries a bottle of sherry to the elevator. He enters, slides the inspection certificate over and presses the button. But he absent-mindedly fails to slide it fully back in place.

INT. DINING ROOM TABLE - NIGHT

Heather has eaten very little of her dinner.

ROY
Are you all right honey? You've
barely eaten.

HEATHER
Daddy, can I ask you something?

ROY
Of course.

HEATHER

Are you the person who donated the Frankenthaler to the museum?

Roy slightly shakes his head.

ROY

I'm disappointed in Klaus. He was not authorized to reveal that. But yes. I thought you'd be pleased.

She takes a few breaths as she stares at him.

HEATHER

I am. I am. I'm just tired. Can I crash upstairs tonight?

ROY

Absolutely. You'll need to be fresh for your gala. I'm sorry I can't make it.

Heather rises to her feet.

HEATER

I'm sorry, too. I'll see you in the morning.

They cheek kiss and she leaves the table.

INT. UPSTAIRS BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nicely appointed bedroom, with a large Queen Anne bed and other antique furnishings. Several darkened 18th century British landscapes on the walls.

Armed with a flashlight, Heather scans all the art in the room. She whispers to herself,

HEATHER

It's got to be somewhere in this house.

CAMERA tracks her as she tip-toes past her father's room and heads downstairs. She spies the elevator.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

He wouldn't put it in the basement, would he?

Entering the elevator, she's just about ready to press B, when she hesitates.

CLOSE on askew certificate.

Heather slides it over to reveal the button. She takes a wide-eyed, deep breath and presses it.

INT. SUB-BASEMENT

Heather enters in darkness, flashlight on, searching the wall for a light switch. She illuminates the room. Heather's POV as she slowly scans the room, aghast, stopping when she spies the Frankenthaler.

HEATHER

Oh, Daddy, what have you done?

SPLIT SCREEN

Heather sits on her bed, Mario asleep in his. Heather calls him. It rings several times before he picks it up. She keeps her voice low.

MARIO
(Groggy)

Hello?

HEATHER
Mario, you were right.

MARIO
I'm sorry, Heather. I really am.

HEATHER
Why would he steal art? He's got more money than God. And how could you help him?

She starts crying.

MARIO
I never meant to hurt anyone, especially you. Are you okay?

HEATHER
No, of course I'm not all right. My father and my boyfriend are both thieves.

MARIO
What can I do? Tell me, anything.

HEATHER

I don't know. I don't even know why I called you. There's nothing you can do.

MARIO

Wait Heather, there's got to be a way for me to make this right.

HEATHER

What? Go to the police? I don't want my father going to prison.

MARIO

Well, I don't want to go there either.

They each sit in silence for several seconds.

MARIO (CONT'D)

You still there?

HEATHER

Yes.

MARIO

I've got an idea. But I need your help.

HEATHER

What?

MARIO

Take your phone back to where the paintings are and take a picture of each one.

HEATHER

Why?

MARIO

I'll tell you later. But before you leave the house, take one more photo.

INT. MARIO'S APARTMENT - DAY

Heather and Mario sit together on the couch as they scroll through her phone.

HEATHER

But what if the copies are no longer in a storage unit?

MARIO

They will be. That's why they're there in the first place.

HEATHER

Not the Frankenthaler. It's in my exhibition, asshole.

MARIO

I know, I know.

HEATHER

But your idea won't work with the others. Swapping them out one at a time, will take months. Daddy or Dermont will figure out what we're doing.

MARIO

Not if we switch them all at the same time. Did you take the other picture.

HEATHER

Yeah.

She shows it to him, but not us.

MARIO

Perfect. I've still got the \$2,000 from, well, never mind where it came from. We'll use that. The hell with college.

HEATHER

Even if this works, what do we do about my show?

MARIO

I don't know yet. We'll have to leave it where it is for now.

HEATHER

But it's a fake, Mario. It goes against everything I stand for. Not to mention that if anyone finds out, my career is over before it even starts.

MARIO

Trust me Heath, I'll fix this. I'll think of something.

(MORE)

MARIO (CONT'D)

But the sooner we start with your father, the better. When does he leave the house?

HEATHER

He's gone the weekend of the gala. He's got some board meeting in New York. He leaves on Thursday, comes back late Sunday.

MARIO

What night is the gala?

HEATHER

Sunday.

MARIO

Perfect.

INT. ART STORAGE AISLE

GRAPHIC: Midnight, Thursday

Heather consults a print out as she and Mario walk down the aisle. Mario pushes a cart with five paintings stacked on it.

HEATHER

The next one is in bin #76. A Thiebaud cake painting.

MARIO

Yeah, I remember that one. It was the first one I helped Craig copy.

HEATHER

I still haven't forgiven you for doing that, you know.

He opens the bin, pulls out a painting, and closes the bin.

MARIO

I know. But if we fix it...

(Beat)

What's next?

HEATHER

Bin 89.

They reach that bin.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

It's empty.

MARIO
Who's is it?

HEATHER
Somebody named Ari Weingold.

MARIO
He's the fucker who put Craig in
the hospital.

HEATHER
So what do we do?

MARIO
Nothing. Let him keep his fake.

INT. ARI'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Sleek, modern contemporary furniture. The abstract Diebenkorn is prominently displayed over the mantle. Ari stands, holding a glass of wine, talking to two women and a man.

ARI
I actually had this stored in a
warehouse for awhile, can you
believe it?

GUEST
Why? It's beautiful.

WIFE
For insurance purposes. They
offered to make a duplicate for us
to display.

ARI
But even if it fooled some people,
it wouldn't have fooled me. I know
an original, like this, when I see
one.

INT. STORAGE AISLE - NIGHT

HEATHER
That's it. Only two missing on the
list are the Diebenkorn and (stern
look) the Frankenthaler. Asshole.

MARIO
 We'll deal with that later, I
 promise. Right now, let's load
 these up. The van's outside.

HEATHER
 Will they all fit?

MARIO
 Yeah. It's almost empty. We better
 hurry. Kiara's taking over for me
 at eight.

EXT. ESTATE FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Dermont opens the door. Mario balances a six-foot high
 package wrapped in blankets, on a dolly, with Heather
 standing next to it.

DERMONT
 What is this?

HEATHER
 It's a present, for Daddy. A
 surprise, for donating the
 painting.

DERMONT
 Do you need help?

HEATHER
 Just with the door. We'll use the
 elevator.

INT. ELEVATOR

Heather presses B.

MARIO
 But I thought --

HEATHER
 In case Dermont's watching.

INT. ELEVATOR, MOMENTS LATER

HEATHER
 That should be enough.

She slides the certificate over and presses the button.

INT. SUB-BASEMENT

Mario backs the package out of the elevator. Heather turns the lights on as Mario spins around. He gapes at the room.

MARIO
Holy shit!

HEATHER
I know. I gotta hand it to Daddy.
If you're gonna steal, at least do
it with style. Ready?

Mario nods.

SERIES OF SHOTS

1. The blankets lay to the side of a wine cabinet, identical to the ones in the cellar.
2. Mario hands one painting to Heather, who scans the room, sets it on the floor, under the same painting.
3. Heather takes a painting off the wall and hangs the copy.
4. As Heather hangs yet another painting, Mario takes the original and carefully stacks it inside the cabinet.

END SERIES

Heather and Mario look at the room. One empty space. As she turns to go, she stops, turns and walks over to one painting to level it. Mario meanwhile drapes the blankets back around the cabinet.

INT. ELEVATOR DOOR

The two wheel out the draped package. Dermont comes over.

DERMONT
Anything wrong?

MARIO
Wrong size. We'll take it back and
bring another one tomorrow.

HEATHER
See you then Dermont.

After they exit the house, Dermont stands in place, staring at them.

INT. MACHINE ROOM - NIGHT

Mario lifts the Frankenthaler onto the machine, takes his keys from his pocket, and chisels a small mark on the frame.

HEATHER
What's that for?

MARIO
To ID the original.

MOMENTS LATER

The painting is being copied.

HEATHER
That didn't take much to set up.
How long will it take?

MARIO
(Yawning)
There aren't that many layers or colors, so three, maybe four hours.
You got your phone?

Heather nods and shows it to him.

HEATHER
You all right? When's the last time you slept?

MARIO
I'm fine. I need you to stay here in case something happens, while I put the rest of them back. I can bring you a book from Kiara's office.

HEATHER
Thanks. Much as I hate to admit it, this is kinda fun.

She pecks him on the cheek.

MARIO
Does that mean I'm outta the dog house?

HEATHER
No, but you've unlocked the doggie door. We've still got a ways to go. Any ideas about getting this to the museum?

MARIO
Yeah. Have you got a mower?

EXT. ESTATE'S FRONT DOOR - DAY

Dermont again opens the door to the pair with their blanketed cabinet. He lets them in.

INT. SUB-BASEMENT

High five as they look at the Frankenthaler on display. Then Mario stuffs the blankets inside the cabinet as Heather presses the elevator button.

HEATHER
We drop this in the wine cellar,
then on to step two.

INT. WINE CELLAR

Mario backs out the cabinet and turns to see Heather frozen in place.

Dermont sits in a chair, holding a glass of wine.

DERMONT
Are you finished redecorating down
below?

HEATHER
When did you know?

He takes a sip of wine.

DERMONT
When you declined my assistance
yesterday.
(Beat)
When did you know?

HEATHER
After dinner the other night. Have
you told Daddy?

Another sip, followed by a long pause.

DERMONT
And what would I have said, that
your daughter is trying to keep you
from going to prison.

Heather rushes over to hug him.

HEATHER

Oh, thank you Dermont. Thank you.
Do you think it will work?

DERMONT

I believe the paintings you're hung
downstairs will still speak the
same language to your father.

(Beat)

But what are your plans for the one
you replaced today? I assume you no
longer have the same access to its
copy as with the others.

HEATHER

No, it's in the museum. Part of my
exhibition, that opens tomorrow
night.

DERMONT

Do you need my assistance?

MARIO

Now that you mention it, yes.

EXT. SCULPTURE GARDEN - DAY

Dozens of elaborately set tables await that night's gala.
Heather walks amongst them, adjusting flower arrangements and
table settings.

The white-clothed catering staff moves about and some
gardeners primp up the landscaping. One Mexican gardener
uses an electric mower along the edges of the carpeted entry.

HEATHER

Senor, can you help me?

The mowing gardener stops and looks over. It is Mario with a
fake mustache, Dodger cap, and sunglasses.

MARIO

Si, senorita.

HEATHER

I need you to trim some of the
plants inside. Can you do that?

Mario trades the mower for a pair of plant shears with
another gardener and follows her inside.

INT. MUSEUM - DAY

They stop just outside the utility closet and look around. No one looking, so they enter the closet. Once inside, Heather lifts a tablecloth covering the unframed Frankenthaler.

MARIO

No problems getting it inside?

HEATHER

None.

FLASHBACK

INT. UNDERGROUND PARKING GARAGE - DAY

Heather carries the covered painting from her car towards the guarded museum entrance.

FRED

Morning Ms. Sanders. What you got there?

HEATHER

It's a secret. One of the prizes for the silent auction tonight.

She motions to pull back a corner of the cloth.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

Wanna see?

FRED

Naw, that's all right. I'll see it later. I'm working your exhibition tonight.

HEATHER

Terrific. See you then.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. CLOSET

HEATHER

Good to know that if curating doesn't pan out, I might have a future as an art thief.

Mario tilts his head with a "You're not serious" look. She laughs and gives him a quick kiss.

MARIO

So now I sit in the penalty box.
How long do you think?

HEATHER

Not as long as you deserve. But I
brought you something to read.

She grabs a book off a shelf and hands it to him.

INSERT

CLOSE on cover: The Art of the Con: The Most Notorious
Fakes, Frauds, and Forgeries in the Art World.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

Just to show you that, despite what
I just said, there's no such thing
as a perfect crime.

A peck on the cheek and she leaves.

INT. EXHIBITION - NIGHT

Dinner is over outside and the exhibition's opening is in
full swing. Kiara stands before the Frankenthaler, next to a
heavily disguised Dermont, speaking with a French accent.
Both hold champagne glasses.

DERMONT

A wise man once said you should
treat a work of art like a servant
treats his employer, let it speak
to you first. What does this say
to you madam?

KIARA

That I need more to drink before I
understand it. Oh look, there's
Ms. Sanders.

Heather walks into the room and Kiara leads Dermont
immediately over to her.

HEATHER

Hello, nice to see you again Kiara.

KIARA

And you Ms. Sanders. This is Mr. De
Hory. We were seated together at
dinner and he offered to walk me
through your exhibition.

Dermont kisses Heather's hand.

DERMONT
Enchante mademoiselle.

HEATHER
So, Mr. De Hory, are you an art dealer?

DERMONT
Oh no, I would find it very difficult to acquire a work such as this, only to part with it. You are fortunate that your anonymous donor does not share that sentiment.

He crooks his arm to lead Kiara,

DERMONT (CONT'D)
Shall we continue, madam?

KIARA
Lead the way monsieur.

Before they take two steps,

ROY (O.C.)
Before you go. Mr. De Hory, was it? May I ask you something?

They turn to face Roy. Heather is surprised, then anxious. Dermont remains impassive.

HEATHER
Daddy! I thought you couldn't make it.

They peck each other's cheek.

ROY
I caught an earlier flight. I'd given Dermont the night off, so I took a cab. Missed the dinner, I'm afraid.

Turning to Dermont.

ROY (CONT'D)
Are you related by any chance to Elmyr de Hory?

DERMONT
Sadly yes. A distant cousin.

KIARA

Who is he?

ROY

The most notorious art forger of the past century. It is believed that many of his forgeries hang in several museums throughout the world.

KIARA

Do you think...(Lowers her voice)
Do you think there could be some fakes here, in this museum?

ROY

There are some who believe that about everything here. Picasso himself said all art is a lie, a lie that makes us realize the truth. Do you agree, Heather?

HEATHER

Well, I do think that sometimes you can discern the truth from lies.

Dermont raises his glass.

DERMONT

And at other times they may blend together, particularly with alcohol. Shall I get you a drink, sir?

Roy tips his head a bit to the side, thinking as he stares at Dermont; but only for a second.

ROY

No, I just wanted to stop by. I'm still on East Coast time, so I'll just head home.

They peck again.

HEATHER

Thanks for coming Daddy. I appreciate it.

After he turns to leave, Heather, after a deep sigh and eye roll, nods imperceptibly to Dermont, who heads into the next room with Kiara.

INT. SAME ROOM, MOMENTS LATER

Dermont walks in alone, carrying two glasses of champagne. The room is otherwise empty except for Heather and Fred, the guard. She nods to Dermont. He feigns being tipsy.

DERMONT

Oh madame, this is such a wonderful show.

He bows, totally spilling his drinks.

DERMONT (CONT'D)

Mon dieu. Pardon madame.

HEATHER

Don't worry monsieur. Fred, can you escort our guest to his companion? I'll get someone to clean this up, while you keep our guests from returning until it's done.

CAMERA tracks Heather as she leaves the room and opens the utility room.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

We're on.

She and Mario hurry out, Mario pushing a janitor cart. The room is empty when they arrive. Mario pulls out a utility knife. Heather looks into the portable trash bin. Then they both pause, looking with wide eyes at each other.

INT. OTHER ROOM IN THE EXHIBITION - NIGHT

Dermont waves his arms as he lectures Kiara on one painting, sounding tipsy.

DERMONT

You can feel the power of her brush strokes. Her technique. It is magnifique.

KIARA

Yes, yes. But you need to calm down Mr. De Hory.

DERMONT

But madame, I am overcome when I see these paintings. I must embrace them.

He does just that, setting off a very loud alarm. As he backs away, he hits the other painting on the wall, making the alarm even louder.

INT. FIRST ROOM

HEATHER

Now!

Heather grabs the unframed original out of the trash bin, as Mario slices the painting on the wall to ribbons. Then he quickly, but meticulously, cuts along all four sides.

INT. DERMONT'S ROOM

Fred has corralled Dermont.

DERMONT

Pardon, pardon.

Klaus rushes into the room.

KLAUS

What's going on?

FRED

This guest triggered the optical sensors, sir. But nothing has been harmed.

KLAUS

Then turn that damn alarm off.

INT. FRONT ROOM

Heather and Mario insert the original into the frame.

INT. BACK ROOM

Fred takes out his walkie talkie.

FRED

Turn the alarm off. Then reset it.

INT. FRONT ROOM

The canvas doesn't quite fit, so they struggle to juggle it in.

INT. BACK ROOM

Klaus whispers to Fred.

KLAUS
Escort our guest out.

Fred begins to walk Dermont towards another room.

The alarm stops.

INT. FRONT ROOM

Heather and Mario both have their hands in the air as they step back from the painting. They look at each other and breath sighs of relief.

INT. ADJACENT ROOM

Dermont and Fred approach the front room.

INT. FRONT ROOM

Mario spots little pieces of the torn painting on the floor.

Dermont and Fred enter the front room, then stop. Heather stands over Mario, on his hands and knees with a cloth.

HEATHER
You missed a spot.

She turns to Fred.

HEATHER (CONT'D)
Is everything all right?

FRED
Yes ma'am I'm gonna help him get a
LYFT.

DERMONT
Merci, merci.

He winks at Heather as he passes them. Klaus pokes his head in the room.

HEATHER
It's okay Klaus. It's all taken
care of. (To Mario) You can go now.

As Mario begins to wheel the cart out, he doesn't see a piece of the shredded painting stuck to a wheel.

KLAUS
Hold up, please.

As Klaus walks to Mario, Heather sees the piece. She walks over as well.

KLAUS (CONT'D)
I don't believe we've met.

HEATHER
Klaus, this is Jose. He's with the catering crew.

Heather motions with her eyes and a tilt of her head to try and get Mario to look down at the wheel. He's puzzled, but clueless.

MARIO
Si señor. Nice to meet you.

KLAUS
Where did that come from?

MARIO
What?

Klaus points at the cart.

KLAUS
That. It looks like part of a painting.

Mario now sees the stuck piece. Long pause as everyone looks at it. Klaus begins to bend down, but Mario gets to it first, picks it off, looks at it briefly, then crumples it up and tosses it into the trash bin.

MARIO
Just a piece of a program, senor.

HEATHER
Thank you Jose.

As Mario walks away, Klaus stares at the Frankenthaler. The painting is not quite square inside the frame.

KLAUS
Does that look a little off to you?

HEATHER
I know, I'm surprised I didn't notice it before. I'll take a look at it tomorrow before we open.
(Beat)
But I'll make sure the alarm's off before I do.

KLAUS

Good idea. Quite a night, huh?

INT. HEATHER'S BEDROOM - DAY

SUPERTITLE: Six Months Later

Heather packs a suitcase as Mario sits on the bed. The walls are empty except for the Hockney pool painting.

MARIO

When do you start the new job?

HEATHER

Two weeks.

MARIO

How big is the museum?

HEATHER

Not as large as LA County, but it has an excellent collection for a college art museum.

MARIO

So you've seen it?

HEATHER

Uh huh. I used to visit the school when I dated the crew team.

MARIO

Really? How many guys on a crew team?

HEATHER

Eight and a coxswain.

MARIO

How many did you go out with?

HEATHER

All of the rowers.

She comes over to kiss him.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

Why, are you shocked?

MARIO

What about the cox?

HEATHER

You don't really want to know Hon.

She goes back to packing, softly singing "Row, row, row, your boat."

HEATHER (CONT'D)

One thing I'd like to know is what happened to your friend Craig?

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Craig exits the driver's side of a very used Toyota. The lot sits in front of a church, with a large banner proclaiming "Bingo Tonight."

MARIO (V.O.)

Key fired him once she heard what he was doing. Knowing him, I'm sure he's lined something up by now.

Craig opens the passenger door and helps a late 40's woman get out.

MOTHER

I liked your old car much more.

MARIO

So did I mom. But maybe you'll have a good night and we can splurge on a new one.

She rests her head on his shoulder as they walk arm and arm towards the church entrance.

MOTHER

It was so nice of you to volunteer to call the numbers.

INT. HEATHER'S BEDROOM - DAY

She comes over and sits by Mario on the bed before kissing him again.

HEATHER

You have nothing to fear lover boy. So, have you decided on a college?

MARIO

Not yet. Paying back the loans ate up most of my paychecks.

(MORE)

MARIO (CONT'D)

So I won't be applying for another year. But the suggestions your dad made are all out of my league.

HEATHER

He's always been that way. College snob, art snob.

INT. SUB-BASEMENT

Roy sits in his chair, drinking wine, and admiring the Frankenthaler. Dermont stands to the side.

ROY

Dermont, I believe it was Degas who said, art is not what you see, but what you make others see.

DERMONT

I certainly agree with that, sir.

INT. HEATHER'S BEDROOM - DAY

MARIO

Do you think he knows what we did?

HEATHER

No, and Dermont promised to warn us, if he thinks about doing it again.

(Beat)

Gonna be next to impossible, though, after your storage place tightened up it's security.

Mario gets up from the bed and walks over to admire the painting hanging on her wall.

MARIO

When did you get this?

HEATHER

Awhile back, when you were still working at the storage place.

INT. KIARA'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Heather shelves one art book and grabs another. She walks out, past the control room, where she stops and opens the partially ajar door.

Mario sits, fast asleep, in front of the TV monitors. She smiles, then hesitates, clearly thinking something. Her POV focuses on Mario's keys and key card lying next to him.

INT. MACHINE ROOM

Heather takes down painting #4 from the wall, removes it from its frame and places it on the machine. Then she walks to the computer side and flexes her fingers.

HEATHER

Okay, let's see what we can do here.

INT. HEATHER'S BEDROOM - DAY

MARIO

It's a really good copy.

(Beat)

Wait a minute. Did you make this?
On the machine?

HEATHER

Uh huh.

MARIO

It's a copy, right? Heather?

She shrugs, then grins widely.

HEATHER

Let's just say it's a reminder to you that there's no such thing as a perfect crime.

CLOSE ON HOCKNEY PAINTING.

FADE OUT.

THE END.