

BIRD HEADED MONSTER

a journey of Hieronymus Bosch

a screenplay by Joseph Minion

What is the meaning, Hieronymus Bosch,
of that frightened eye of yours?
Why that pallor on your face?
It seems as if you were seeing
Spectres and apparitions of Hell flying
face to face
--D. Lampsonius, Effigies (1572)

BIRD HEADED MONSTER

OPEN ON:

PITCH BLACK SCREEN - HOLD for 10-15 seconds. Then,

BEGIN *VERY SLOW* FADE IN:

EXT. SKY - DAY

A mostly clear, BLUE SKY, with assorted CUMULUS CLOUDS, discreet. We hear the SOUND of a GENTLE WIND. The grandeur of the heavens. HOLD for 10-15 seconds.

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

Vast, PANORAMIC SHOT of an OCEAN with absolutely nothing on the horizon. The sweeping immensity of the sea. HOLD 10-15 seconds.

EXT. SEASHORE - DAY

A PERFECTLY UNSULLIED BEACH. The WAVES break onto the SAND, on which there isn't a single trace of human or animal life.

In the background rises perfectly lush, untrammelled FOLIAGE of some kind. SLOW PAN so that the vegetation takes up more of the frame. HOLD, 10-15 seconds.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

The stillness of a dark, wildly overgrown FOREST. While there are no *other* animal sounds of any kind, we hear FLIES BUZZING.

SLOWLY DOLLY IN to a strange, gnarled TREE. The tree should be in dark shadow, the pattern of knots and striations on it giving it an eerie, threatening cast, almost as if it had an ugly face.

EXT. VALLEY / HIGH HILLS - DAY

HOLD for 10-15 seconds on an enormous VALLEY, with HILLS beyond.

EXT. WHEAT FIELD - DAY

The wind is blowing through this WHEAT FIELD seen in a WIDE SHOT; HOLD for 10-15 seconds.

CUT TO VARIOUS CLOSER SHOTS, USING DIFFERENT ANGLES. The wind is much more extreme now, and the wheat bends horizontally from its

(cont'd)

force. FAST CUTTING gives a sense of agitation, even violence. Rising, along with the WIND, is the SOUND of JET TURBINES. Then,

CARRY-OVER SOUND OF JET TURBINES and CUT TO:

EXT. AIRPORT - DAY

A modern day airport. MONTAGE of several jets taxiing close to gates, the high pitched screaming turbines overlapping. It's a rude plunge into contemporary techno-noise.

INT. AIRPORT BAR - DAY

...CARRY-OVER the ROAR, now muffled, though, as the prominent SOUND is the CLINKING of BOTTLES and general CACOPHONY of this PACKED bar. Through a window, though, we can see the image of one of the enormous JETS taxiing to or away from a gate.

Also, there is a large-screen TELEVISION mounted at one end of the bar. It is broadcasting newsreel footage of devastation incurred by atomic bombs: the effect is unnerving, bathing the bar in an unspoken tension - as if it could happen for real, again, at any moment.

There is also the feeling that this broadcast is the ultimate "reality TV" - the only kind of imagery left that has the power to entertain a jaded populace. We will CUT these images intermittently throughout scene.

Along one entire side of the bar is a huge, floor-to-ceiling reproduction (perhaps duplicated over and over so there is a series, a la Andy Warhol) of the familiar Leonardo Da Vinci drawing demonstrating how man's reach is equal to his height (naked, proudly-rendered man with circumscribing circle and rectangle, etc).

Two well-dressed men are sitting on BARSTOOLS next to each other. They're in their 50's. Their bearing is intelligent, intense. They're engaged in a heated conversation, gesticulating. One of these men is Hieronymus Bosch; the other is Leonardo Da Vinci.

HIERONYMUS BOSCH

There's no need, Leonardo...

Snippets of desultory conversations from CORPORATE EXECUTIVE TYPES, either on-camera or simply overheard, are caught on the SOUNDTRACK, mixed up, randomly, with the two mens' conversation:

CORPORATE EXECUTIVE #1

-the expiration date.

(cont'd)

EXECUTIVE #2

-you take a helio--...a helo--...
a *something*-copter, no, not copter,
foil, a heliofoil, or...what's Latin
for 'water'?"

LEONARDO DA VINCI

(to Hieronymus)

You're mad to think a plane shouldn't
come back down, you know that, don't
you?

HIERONYMUS

Look around you and tell me who's
mad. Your faith in man is...*has*...
backfired...and I knew it all along.

EXECUTIVE #3

You try neo-anarchism on for size,
you'll see...agriculture was a fall
from grace, poopsie.

EXECUTIVE #4

I love the shadows on the wall of
Plato's cave so fuck fuck fuck fuck you.

EXECUTIVE #5

-never thought the Celirdor should ac-
commodate the moon. The orbit's al-
ready wobbled too far to-

EXECUTIVE #6

No, I am not being ironic. I am sim-
ply asking: why not just kill every-
one in sight?

HIERONYMUS

(to Leonardo)

Is *this* what being alive is? This
sixty-year-long whitewash?

EXECUTIVE #2

-*hydrofoil!*

The sound of a FLY BUZZING enters the conversational din.

EXECUTIVE #7

-that the people at the top are
ruthless sons-of-

(cont'd)

EXECUTIVE #8

-new diet.

Female flight attendants are in the bar, too, lurking in the shadows, sipping drinks, mere set dressing.

INTERCUT during all this chatter, along with the atomic bomb devastation images, successive shots of planes taking off (fast, hard CUTS), as well as landing. The FLY BUZZING gets LOUDER.

LEONARDO

(to Hieronymus)

The only place to look for answers is within ourselves, dammit. Anything else is dangerous.

EXECUTIVE #9

Let's agree that we must never lose control. That the ego is supreme. We must protect it and defend it. Are we straight on this or are you going to stand there peeling chives off your teeth?

EXECUTIVE #10

-they're setting up a whole aluminum Mafia over there and they're profiling every goddam-

EXECUTIVE #11

If it weren't for thumbs and Jesus, we'd all be in cages.

EXECUTIVE #12

-property taxes.

Hieronymus Bosch's temper seems to be even more heated up. His gestures keep involving pointing upwards, then upon making a downward-pointing gesture he grimaces, as if in disgust. Captain Da Vinci keeps shaking his head, as if Bosch is missing a point.

HIERONYMUS

Your vision excavates a vacuum, a cleverly disguised vacuum, my friend. You're pointing the way to a world of only more and more elaborately distracting tinsel!

LEONARDO

I am the more remembered, though.

(cont'd)

HIERONYMUS

That's the test? Your fame?

LEONARDO

You're on the road to insanity.
Look what happened to Nietzsche.

EXECUTIVE #3

The experience of religious belief is, neurologically, the same as the experience of trying to remember a word that keeps flitting in and out of one's consciousness but that forever, ultimately, eludes.

HIERONYMUS

(to Leonardo)

You will not dissuade me from my God-consciousness. I will not be distracted. *I will not.*

EXECUTIVE #13

Are you as overwhelmed as I am?
Admit it, damn you!

LEONARDO

(to Hieronymus)

You are *damned*, then!

After "damning" Hieronymus, Leonardo looks to one of the flight attendants, snaps his fingers, and leaves in a hurry. Another flight attendant goes up to Bosch and hands him a plane ticket. A close-up reveals that the destination of the ticket is: Amsterdam. A FLY lands on it and Hieronymus shoes it away.

The nervous energy that has, up till now, been very cranking up, results in a FIGHT breaking out in a corner of the bar. Cross-cut with more horrific IMAGES on the television: VICTIMS of exposure to atomic bomb radiation, crying CHILDREN, Japanese CITIZENS with third degree burns, dead BODIES charred beyond recognition...

A LUNATIC climbs over people in the bar, trying to swat the fly. Others join in, stomping on CUSTOMERS' hands, heads, torsos, in a frenzy to squash it. Bottles and glasses are knocked over, shattering on the floor. SCREAMS are heard from all over.

Out from the shadows emerges a hideous RAT-HEADED FRIAR, (from the Hieronymus Bosch painting "Temptation of St. Anthony"), rising, as if in witness...or as a further provocation.

(cont'd)

CUT TO more shots of jets moving slowly on an airport runway, the very loud JET NOISE mingling with the screaming. Then, CUT TO:

CLOSE-UP: Hieronymus' face, from outside the bar (through the window). His expression appears tortured. His body movements suggest he is tearing up the ticket, though that's not definite. He appears to SCREAM OUT, but by now it's inaudible...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ROAD, OUTSKIRTS OF HERTOGENBOSCH, NETHERLANDS - DAY

Begin on another CLOSE-UP of Hieronymus' face. This time he appears to be walking, but walking in an almost trancelike, determined way, as if he has been walking across half a continent, and as if his body is just perpetuating the act of walking out of sheer grinding momentum, like an athlete who is performing on pure adrenaline.

The year is 1499. [Optional, considering unorthodox opening, whether a title card indicating year is appropriate -- perhaps best to let the scenery, clothing, props, etc. do the talking.]

CUT TO WIDE: the great Dutch painter HIERONYMUS BOSCH (not as clean shaven as he was in opening scene) is walking down this dirt path, or road, in northeast Europe, in the Middle Ages.

He wears a tunic, leggings, laced shoes, and a cloth hat. He carries a canvas bag or satchel of some sort -- something suited for travel in the period. He looks traumatized. Along with the SOUND of his footsteps, we hear the SOUND of FLIES BUZZING.

As he walks, Hieronymus passes a small group of ratty, PEASANT BOYS, who are just hanging out in a field beside him. Then...

After a few dozen yards he begins to come upon a small stone cottage. A WOMAN, looking panicked, comes out the front door of the house. She walks hurriedly directly towards Hieronymus who, though he sees her, does not slow down.

Undaunted, she walks right over to Hieronymus, walking (pleadingly) beside him:

WOMAN

My husband is covered in flies!

Hieronymus ignores her. She tugs at his clothing.

WOMAN (cont'd)

We are good Christians, I swear

(cont'd)

WOMAN (cont'd)
to you, and it has been so long
since the crusades, yet my hus-
band's face...can you help me?

HIERONYMUS
("shooing" her away from him)
Leave me alone...

WOMAN
Please, I can't get them to leave!
Perhaps a man of your obvious intel-
ligence--

HIERONYMUS
How do you know it's still him? Is
he breathing? Can you see his face?
Maybe he *deserves* it!

WOMAN
My husband doesn't touch his feces, I
Swear good sir! He doesn't touch his
feces, no!

HIERONYMUS
Away!

CUT TO VERY WIDE: The woman keeps getting "shooed off" of Hieronymus so that from this distance angle, it almost looks like a man on a road shooing off a human-size fly, over and over.

We again see the group of peasant boys enter the frame. This time we focus on one of them. He stops suddenly and begins looking up at the sun, squinting. CUT TO the boy's POV of the BRIGHT ORB of the SUN.

EXT. CITY WALL, HERTOGENBOSCH - EVENING

Hieronymus approaches the walls of Hertogenbosch, a small Dutch city. A man (CHRISTIAAN) stands guard. As Hieronymus approaches, there is mutual recognition.

CHRISTIAAN
Hieronymus...It's you? God in hea-
ven.

HIERONYMUS
Not even there, I should say. Chris-
tiaan, would you tell me something if
you knew?

(cont'd)

CHRISTIAAN

What?

HIERONYMUS

While I've been gone has my wife been dishonored?

CHRISTIAAN

(taken aback by the forthrightness)

Uh...why...

HIERONYMUS

Tell me what you know.

CHRISTIAAN

She does act like someone attacked, but to my eyes it is attacked more by loneliness than brutality. Anyway, I witnessed nothing...

HIERONYMUS

I asked only if you've heard, not *witne--*

CHRISTIAAN

Nothing of that nature, by God's grace.

Hieronymus nods, walks past Christiaan.

CHRISTIAAN (cont'd)

Well, welcome home, fine sir...

EXT. TOWN - DUSK

Hieronymus walks through the town square, keeping his head lowered as if he wasn't in the mood to talk to anybody. There is a modicum of pedestrian activity, but not much. As he passes it, Hieronymus looks up at the CATHEDRAL OF ST-JAN.

From out of the twilight, a man (HORST) sitting on a stone is heard, speaking to no one, really:

HORST

Als hoy...als hoy...

Hieronymus, passing the man, shoos away a buzzing fly.

INT. / EXT. BOSCH HOME - NIGHT

A small pot is suspended over a fire in the kitchen area of a

(cont'd)

sparsely furnished home of the period. ALEYT, Hieronymus' wife, is walking in small, slow circles. Suddenly she stops dead in her tracks and reaches her arms into the empty air in front of her. She giggles:

ALEYT

Tee-hee-hee. No, I'm *not* going up to the roof again! Last time I did that I walked in ever widening circles until, oof! Right on my bum!

From outside we see Hieronymus mischievously put on a surgeon's "bird mask", then come up to the house and peer inside. He watches Aleyt resume walking in small circles.

HIERONYMUS

Now you talk to yourself?

Aleyt doesn't seem to hear. She keeps walking in circles. Then, almost imperceptibly, she goes over to the hanging pot.

Hieronymus still watches through the window. She grabs a cloth so that she can unhook the pot and move it away from the fire.

Aleyt rushes to the window and hurls the contents of the pot -- boiling oil -- towards it.

Hieronymus ducks just in time, as the boiling oil sprays out the window, landing on the ground in a hissing, steaming splatter.

In the steam that rises from the cold ground, we see the faint, superimposed (but discernable) image of a COUPLE COPULATING (Hieronymus and Aleyt), which fades away with the steam until we see only the evening sky, then:

FADE TO BLACK / FADE IN:

INT. BOSCH HOME - NIGHT (LATER)

Hieronymus (without mask on) is sitting at a wooden table with Aleyt. He is slowly taking items out of his satchel as the hushed scene plays out. (There is *not*, in fact, the feeling that they have made love -- it feels more like Hieronymus has just entered the house minutes earlier.)

There is food set out on a round platter, which sits on the table. Hieronymus seems somewhat shaky.

HIERONYMUS

Things are very advanced in Italy.

(cont'd)

ALEYT

You disapprove.

HIERONYMUS

I took the longest route back. I wanted to see if the crusades changed anything...As if I'd be surprised...

He takes out of his satchel a rolled up piece of parchment.

ALEYT

You haven't asked about me. You haven't asked about your own wife-

HIERONYMUS

I want to show you something, Aleyt. I collected a thing or two in my travels...

ALEYT

--I've had pains.
(indicates lower back)
Here--

He holds the parchment in front of him, regarding it.

HIERONYMUS

...In Italy I met an artist...

He unrolls the parchment. It is a drawing by Leonardo Da Vinci. The sketch has a scientific quality - a blueprint for a flying contraption. Also, there is writing in Latin, backwards, on one side of it. Hieronymus, oblivious to Aleyt, gazes at it, not in admiration, but in disgust.

SOUND of crying...we CUT TO Aleyt, who is weeping, hurt by the inattention of her husband, who is totally caught up in the drawing he holds out in front of him.

HIERONYMUS (cont'd)

(gesturing towards drawing)
The lines are sharp, the representation is admittedly expert, but the perspective is brought down...down to the eyes of men. This artist is obsessed with the glorification of man...The magic here is in *men*...

Aleyt's weeping becomes louder, getting Hieronymus' attention for a moment, but he wants to continue his point:

(cont'd)

HIERONYMUS (cont'd)

Man-centered. *Man-centered*. It makes me ill. Why paint pictures? Why not just put up reflecting glass? This is a waste of talent, this...Da Vinci--

SCREAMING, now, from Aleyt, who is now curled up in a corner, holding her abdomen. Hieronymus drops the parchment, goes over and lifts Aleyt up, carries her.

CUT TO a shot of the Da Vinci drawing which rolls back up into itself, becoming a tube.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

He carries Aleyt into another room where he lays her down on a bed made of straw. She is writhing in pain.

Long pause as he sits beside her, looks at her, helpless to do anything. Many shots of his POV of her face, contorted in agony.

HIERONYMUS

Haven't you heard what I've been saying? No one can help anyone now...I love you.

CLOSE-UP of Aleyt, screaming -- so close-up, in fact, that the blackness of her open mouth practically fills up the entire frame, then camera ZOOMS IN slightly so that her mouth's blackness *does* take up the entire frame.

MATCH CUT* TO:

*(i.e. the "blackness" on either side of the cut should be absolute, making the cut *invisible*: pitch black cutting to pitch black)

INT. BOSCH HOME (EARLIER) - NIGHT

From Aleyt's POV, the window that looks outside into the night. So that again we see Hieronymus' earlier movement - his bird-masked face moving towards the window, this time from *inside* the house. And it appears quite spooky: intrusive and even threatening.

HIERONYMUS

Now you talk to yourself?

Aleyt again makes for the pot hanging over the fire, grabs it and runs to the window (all from a different angle than earlier). She hurls the boiling oil out the window just as Hieronymus

(cont'd)

ducks, calling out from where he has pulled away to protect himself.

HIERONYMUS (cont'd)

Noooo! Aleyt, it's me, it's me!
I've returned!

Aleyt drops the pot and rushes to the door, unlatching it quickly. She opens it and stands in the doorway as Hieronymus steps up, the mask off.

There is a pause as they take each other in. Hieronymus drops his satchel to the floor. They embrace, Aleyt weeping.

FADE TO BLACK / FADE IN:

INT. BOSCH HOME - NIGHT (LATER)

They are sitting at the table holding hands. There is a palpable *gravitas* as they sit there, looking at each other -- the feeling as though Aleyt has just told Hieronymus grim news.

HIERONYMUS

This was how long ago?

ALEYT

(stumblingly)
Not...not a fortnight...perhaps a
fortnight.

Pause.

HIERONYMUS

The wall is coming down. I saw...

ALEYT

Don't leave me again. What did you--

HIERONYMUS

We have to re-fortify the wall. The
village...

ALEYT

There's a petition, but---

HIERONYMUS

Commerce.

ALEYT

Yes.

(cont'd)

Pause.

HIERONYMUS

Aleyt...what does it mean to be
damned?

CLOSE-UP of Aleyt, agitated, perplexed -- this question is too much for her to wrap her mind around (or, it frankly scares her).

They both sit there, looking frightened. WIDER SHOT, their lit (by candle) figures a spot of illumination in the dark room.

EXT. BOSCH HOME - NIGHT

The thatch-roofed house, similarly, small and vulnerable, a bit of light coming through the window in the almost total blackness of night against the vast horizon.

CUT TO a creeping, moving shot, camera pushing through tall grass, as if to suggest a presence. SHOTS of the night landscape, each composed so as to convey ominousness.

Next a shot of Hieronymus, peering out a small window. The camera TRACKS his gaze until it stops at a TOAD sitting on top of a post, as if the toad is staring right back at him.

Hieronymus lifts his gaze, and we see his fleeting POV of a WHITE GHOUL sitting in a BASKET (also from "Temptation of St. Anthony") wielding a SWORD over its head -- a strange hybrid creature.

INT. STUDIO - DAY

Hieronymus is painting in his studio, a small outbuilding on the Bosch property. The painting he is working on could be any of several of his famous paintings, a work-in-progress. The images are quintessentially Boschian: grotesque miniature hybrids, etc.

All around are other sections, panels, half-finished canvasses.

There is something "off" about the scene. Hieronymus looks as though he is wearing make-up. The studio is too clean. Though his garments are of his era, they are too new looking, or old in a false way, like pre-washed jeans at the Gap.

Aleyt enters the studio carrying a small wooden tray with pieces of fruit or cheese. Her garment, a freshly pressed tunic down to her ankles, also appears too "new".

She carries the tray over to him as Hieronymus keeps painting, never looking up from his work.

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As she walks over to him we can hear, *very faintly*, a VOICE both amplified and muffled:

TOUR GUIDE (O-S)

...and here we see Hieronymus Bosch's wife, Aleyt, whose family money made it possible for the artist to dedicate his life to his painting...

Aleyt sets the tray on a small table next to Hieronymus' easel. We hear the BUZZING of FLIES, faintly. Aleyt steps back and regards the painting.

ALEYT

My God...it's as if you can see the future...

HIERONYMUS

Not the future.

He continues painting. Both he and Aleyt seem vaguely aware of a presence nearby. Aleyt bends down, lowering her mouth to Bosch's ear to whisper. CLOSE-UP of this:

ALEYT

Don't they know this is *it*? They don't expect us to *fuck*, do they?

CUT TO WIDER, then QUICK PAN to side of the studio, which is--a GLASS WALL. Behind it are what appear to be contemporary TOURISTS, the kind you'd see any day at Disneyland or Marine World. Families, dirty-faced KIDS. They stare dumbly at the Hieronymus and Aleyt...as if it's a computer screen.

[For as long as this shot holds, the SOUND of FLIES BUZZING gets so loud it distorts.]

EXT. ROAD - DAY

CLOSE-UP of a fly-covered CRUCIFIX (CARRY-OVER SOUND from previous). The FLIES are so closely nestled onto the cross that the carving of Christ is totally obliterated.

CUT WIDER and we see the cross is being carried in a procession. The SOUND of the flies diminishes as we hear the CHANTING of the HOODED MONKS in the procession. The road on which they proceed bisects a large wheat field in the middle of low hills.

The MONK leading the procession is a black man with his face covered in white powder. He, and the entire line of monks

(cont'd)

(Caucasian) behind him seem to be in their own separate universe, bearing a countenance borne of rigorous religious devotion.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Similar CLOSE-UP of Hieronymus to the one we saw earlier, where he is walking along a country road, traveling on foot, as if to convey it is "pre-arrival" at Hertogenbosch. We hear the same "amplified", tour guide-like VOICE we heard two scenes previous:

TOUR GUIDE (O-S)

Though there are no records of Bosch's having ever left his home town in the Netherlands, it's conjectured that he may have traveled to Venice and met his contemporary, Leonardo Da Vinci...

In background Hieronymus passes (without even regarding it) a TORTURE WHEEL attached to a long pole planted into the ground - a common sight in medieval Europe.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ROAD (FARTHER DOWN) - DAY

Hieronymus walks off, to the side of the road, finding a rock on which to sit. He opens his bag and pulls out an APPLE, takes a bite. He keeps looking around at the landscape. He takes out a small section of board on which he places a scrap of parchment, begins sketching.

Before long we can hear the SOUND of ROOSTERS CLUCKING. Hieronymus stands, glances over his shoulder. From his POV we see far into the distance a circle of BOYS.

EXT. FIELD CLEARING / CU's of HIERONYMUS' SKETCH PAD - DAY

The boys are circled around several roosters, engaging them in a loud, violent cockfight.

INTERCUT SHOTS of the laughing, whooping boys with CLOSE-UPS of Hieronymus' drawings: crude but assured drawings of freaky, misshapen human/insect creatures, until towards the top of the as yet unfilled-in parchment Hieronymus begins a sketch of what appears to be (certainly, at least, in contrast to the other figures) a likeness of Christ, far above the jumbled activities of the weird creatures towards the bottom of the paper.

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In the clearing a new boy - JEROME, 13 (whom we saw earlier, when Hieronymus was first seen entering the city) - walks towards the circle.

He seems to have walked in from nowhere. He is not as enthused as the other boys as they goad the roosters into pecking at each other. He remains standing outside their circle, a bit aloof.

Eventually the other boys, one by one, seem to notice that JEROME isn't participating. They open their circle and one of the boys motions him into it, but he declines.

BOY #1

Who's *this* tulip, then?

BOY #2

Not game for a chicken joust,
crusader?

Jerome takes a step back, shakes his head.

JEROME

No.

Jerome begins, again, to look up at the sun, squinting. Some of the other boys look only briefly in the same direction, puzzled.

BOY #2

Jyne us or go back to yer mother.

BOY #1

You think he has a mother? My mother ain't 'is mother, sure 'nuf.

BOY #3

He's too stryngge to 'ave a mother.

BOY #4

I say he don't wanna watch chickens fight reason be he *is* a chicken 'n he's rue to the speck'l of 'is fraternal fowl nickin' their own pebbly eyes out!

The other boys begin guffawing. One of them picks up a rock and hurls it at JEROME, who turns and runs, disappearing into the higher grass, the boys making chase.

CLOSE-UP of the parchment: Hieronymus is setting the Christ figure in a bed of clouds.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CATHEDRAL OF ST-JAN - DAY

The sketch of Christ MORPHS into an oil painting being completed by Hieronymus, brush in hand. WIDE: He's standing on a scaffold, positioned so that he can paint the image high on a wall of the cathedral. Next to him is the top of a gothic church window.

Below him a priest, FATHER LUKAS (30's), enters the cathedral.

FATHER LUKAS

Closer to heaven than the rest of us, are you, Hieronymus?

Hieronymus stops painting, turns to regard the priest. He doesn't know what to make of the comment - doesn't get the joke.

HIERONYMUS

I'm sure I'm only a humble servant of the Lord.

FATHER LUKAS

Yes yes, but you are closer to heaven, aren't you?

He makes a gesture indicating how high up Hieronymus is.

HIERONYMUS

(still not getting it)
You mea-...it's true I'm older than most of the parishioners. But-...
Do you-
(perplexed)
Have you been speaking to my wife?

FATHER LUKAS

Your *wife*? Hieronymus...how *did* you get up there?

HIERONYMUS

(finally gets it)
Oh! Oh yes...the ladder...Allart is doing some work on one of the gargoyles...but I'm almost finished.

FATHER LUKAS

I'll alert him. We're taking confessions in a few minutes and I'm afraid with you up there it may scare away some of our more timid penitents.

(cont'd)

HIERONYMUS

I'll be down directly.

FATHER LUKAS

Father Matthys has your payment.
Fine work, as usual, Hieronymus,
my poor artist.

HIERONYMUS

Poor?

FATHER LUKAS

I always meant to ask you, Hieronymus, how does it feel to know that no matter how well the church pays you, you will always be thought of as a lowly craftsman who works with his hands, just the same as any brute farmer, mule driver or ditch digger?

Long pause. Hieronymus doesn't dignify the question. Instead:

HIERONYMUS

Early for confessions, isn't it, Father Lukas?

CLOSE-UP on the priest. He seems to take pleasure in what he says next:

FATHER LUKAS

People are sinning more.

Father Lukas looks away and disappears into a confessional booth.

Hieronymus turns around. He adds another couple of brushstrokes, then picks a rag up from the scaffold and begins wiping the brush clean.

As he does this he peers out the top of the gothic window, which looks out onto a hill adjacent to the church property. He sees:

EXT. GRASSY HILL - DAY

THREE NITWITS are playing leapfrog. One of them knocks another's hat off. The one whose hat is knocked off kicks the other in the butt. They start kicking each other. The third man intervenes, and the same thing starts happening to him, like the 3 Stooges.

PAN UP, and we see a HERON VESSEL (another detail from "The Temptation of St. Anthony" painting) soaring across the sky.

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INT. CONFSSIONAL BOOTH - DAY

Father Lukas slides open the semi-opaque partition between him and the CONFESSOR.

FATHER LUKAS
In vita retro, in vita ultra,
domine padre.

We only see a shadow, but the Confessor's voice is Hieronymus':

HIERONYMUS
Afraid I'll scare everyone away?

FATHER LUKAS
What?

HIERONYMUS
It has been five thousand years since
my last confession. This will take
some time, father.

FATHER LUKAS
We have as much time as you need.

HIERONYMUS
Good. You're comfortable?

FATHER LUKAS
I am ready to hear your sins. Comfort
is of no importance.

HIERONYMUS
Oh really? Great Yahweh...I should
have crucified you instead, father.
To say that! *Comfort* of no importance!
Do you really believe that? If you
do, I'm impressed.

INT. CATHEDRAL - DAY

A DEACON knocks on the door of Father Lukas' confessional booth. There is a line of PARISHIONERS standing next to the booth, hands together in prayer. Father Lukas comes out; the deacon hands him a note, which he reads quickly as the deacon leaves.

HIERONYMUS (O-S)
Where are you going, father? Have
I scared you away? I haven't even
begun...

(cont'd)

EXT. CATHEDRAL / TOWN - DAY

Father Lukas, looking concerned, along with the deacon, leaves the church quickly.

As they hurry off, they pass a MAN whipping a DONKEY, which doesn't budge. The donkey is laden down with several torn burlap bags with grain spilling out the holes. We continue to hear Hieronymus rant as Father Lukas and the deacon pass through the town:

HIERONYMUS (O-S)

I've been damned by Da Vinci anyway
so I might as well be damned for
everything...I might as-...I have
seen so much, so much.

HOLD ON the Man whipping the donkey and SLOWLY DOLLY towards it..

HIERONYMUS (O-S, cont'd)

By their fruits shall ye know them,
isn't it so, Father? I've ordered
the beheading of John the Baptist,
the persecution of the disciples,
the stoning of Stephen and the exe-
cution of James. I was Nero covering
Christians in animal skins so the
vicious dogs would tear them to
pieces.

As the dolly continues, the image - man whipping donkey - goes into SLOW MOTION.

HIERONYMUS (O-S, cont'd)

I've compelled men under threat of
death to build the Khufu pyramid,
and I've watched them be crushed,
stood by as their own families wit-
nessed their blood drench the soil
beneath stones of thirty tons, fif-
ty-nine men at a time...

As the dolly gets closer, the donkey's head takes up the frame.

INT. BOSCH HOME - DAY

CLOSE-UP Hieronymus, lying on the straw bed, sweaty, continuing:

HIERONYMUS

I carved Romanus to the bone,

(cont'd)

HIERONYMUS (cont'd)
 knocked his teeth out, tore off
 his eyelids, branded his cheeks
 with hot knives and plucked his
 beard out a little at a time be-
 fore covering his face with lime.

WIDER, we see Aleyt beside herself, helpless at the spectacle of
 her fever-dreaming husband spewing this strange report. There is
 a KNOCK at the door and she rushes to it.

Father Lukas enters with the deacon, both looking very concerned.

FATHER LUKAS
 I came as soon as I got your note.

ALEYT
 Thank you.
 (makes sign of the cross)
 Father...I-...I don't understand
 what's happening...first he says
 he's been to Italy and now he...
 he acts like a *madman*...

The three of them walk over to the bed where Hieronymus is lying,
 continuing to spew.

HIERONYMUS
 I collared Cusi's father like a dog
 and ransomed him for a trunk of gold.

They look at Hieronymus like it's some sort of entertainment

FATHER LUKAS
 Has he been to Italy? We remember
 his absence—

ALEYT
 He...he set out...he left for Italy
 but...he returned too soon to have
 been able to...he...he *couldn't*—...

Aleyt goes to a shelf to fetch something.

HIERONYMUS
 I ordered the drawing and quarter-
 ing of Condorcanqui and I watched
 four horses pull him apart in the
 same square where I beheaded his
 great-grandfather.

(cont'd)

Aleyt returns with a small TOY:

It is one of those little discs with glass on the top, about the size of a computer mouse, but *round* - with a steel ball inside which, by maneuvering the disk, you try to get the ball to settle into a little hole that fits it perfectly. This particular disk has as its backdrop an image from the left panel of "The Garden of Earthly Delights"

ALEYT

Wherever he went, he came back with this...You may recognize the drawing...it's *his*, but...

Father Lukas handles the toy. He seems to delight in it.

HIERONYMUS

I sat by as Evard Beneš and Neville Chamberlain appeased an Aryan dictator, watched them capitulate to an orgy of mass slaughter in the name of purification. I saw untold millions gassed, starved to death, bodies blasted with hot chunks of metal.

The deacon, too, wants to play with the toy but Father Lukas doesn't let him.

ALEYT

What is he *talking* about?

FATHER LUKAS

(handling toy)

This is delightful...did he bring back any more?

HIERONYMUS

Nagasaki, My Lai, Khmer Rouge. I stuck Gao Feng with cattle prods. I rode to hell on the backs of worms and I fornicated with pigs.

ALEYT

Father...I'm frightened. Does my husband need an exorcism?

The deacon grabs the toy away from the priest.

DEACON

Gimme that, goddammit!

(cont'd)

Swiping it away, the Deacon makes it fly out of Father Lukas' hands and it falls to the floor, rolling.

They both go for it, getting onto the floor on their hands and knees, pushing each other out of the way and, like a man who keeps kicking his hat in front of him, it eludes them.

As the two clergymen are on their hands and knees, one of them FARTS loudly. Then, gradually, the SOUND of a JET PASSING can be heard, getting louder. It is obviously coming from outside, and Aleyt, noticing it (the others are oblivious), runs out.

EXT. BOSCH HOME - DAY

Aleyt runs out of the home, looks towards the sky. We do not follow her gaze; we simply watch her expression turn to one of horror. The JET SOUND becomes deafeningly loud as Aleyt puts her hands up to her ears and a shadow crawls up her face.

CUT TO what may very well be Aleyt's POV: a fleeting image, again from "The Temptation of St. Anthony", of a HOODED STOMACH with a tail, and a knife sticking out of it that seems to pull itself, very quickly, back into a bush, disappearing. Aleyt SCREAMS.

INT. STUDIO - NIGHT

CARRY-OVER SCREAM into scene; first shot is a CLOSE-UP of one of Bosch's many tortured souls in hell. WIDER: Hieronymus is painting furiously at his easel. We see an image from the right panel of "Earthly Delights": a fiery inferno blazes near the top.

The SCREAMING should multiply, and amplify, as if there was a legion of the damned burning in hell. CUT TO SHOTS of various images from this panel: the TREE MAN, the humongous EARS AND KNIFE, etc...ending on the BIRD HEADED MONSTER.

INT. CATHEDRAL OF ST-JAN (BACK ROOM) - DAY

Hieronymus is sitting quietly in a back office of the cathedral. (He is posed exactly the way Bird Headed Monster is, sitting on same type CHAIR.) There is some red paint on his hands, still wet from his recent work. A small stained glass window is directly across from where he sits showing an image of Christ carrying the cross. A NOISE startles him.

He looks towards the noise: a RAT scurries across the floor, hiding under a CHASUBLE.

FATHER MATTHYS (25) enters. He is carrying two POUCHES that clink with coins.

(cont'd)

FATHER MATTHYS
 (holding one of them out)
 Your fee, Hieronymus.

Hieronymus takes it, bows his head.

HIERONYMUS
 Thank you, Father Matthys.

FATHER MATTHYS
 The new work, as usual, dazzles.
 What are you working on now?

HIERONYMUS
 Same theme as always. The promise of time.

FATHER MATTHYS
 And this trip to the east you've been talking about for so long... to see the work of the Italians? Do you still plan-

HIERONYMUS
 I've been there and back, haven't you heard?

FATHER MATTHYS
 But...how could you have possi-... I mean...when-

ALLART DU HAMEEL, (late 40's) enters. He is covered in dust.

ALLART
 Father Matthys...

FATHER MATTHYS
 Allart...
 (indicates pouch on desk)
 Fifty stuivers, well earned...

Allart walks to the desk, picks up the pouch, feeling its weight.

ALLART
 Thank you, father.

There is an awkward pause. Father Matthys looks at Allart.

FATHER MATTHYS
 Allart, I wonder if I can talk to

(cont'd)

FATHER MATTHYS (cont'd)
 Hieronymus privately for a moment.

ALLART
 Of course.
 (to Hieronymus)
 I'll be washing up.

Hieronymus nods. Allart leaves, closing the door behind him.

FATHER MATTHYS
 I cannot divulge more than this,
 Hieronymus: I took Aleyt's con-
 fession this afternoon.

HIERONYMUS
 I thought—

FATHER MATTHYS
 —anonymity, yes, but she let her
 name be known to me, repeatedly.
 Unsolicited, of course.

HIERONYMUS
 Of course.

FATHER MATTHYS
 I felt this was her way of...try-
 ing to get me to say something to
 you. But I can't. All I can do
 is tell you that...
 (suggestively, loaded)
 I took her confession.

Pause. Hieronymus looks down at his red paint-stained hands.

HIERONYMUS
 Well.

He gets up, looks at Father Matthys.

HIERONYMUS (cont'd)
 I must go. It seems I've blood
 on my hands.

INT. BOSCH HOME - NIGHT

Aleyt is preparing dinner. Hieronymus kicks open the door, his hands still red. He stands at the doorway for a moment looking at Aleyt, seething, breathing heavily.

(cont'd)

ALEYT

I want you to stop saying you've gone to Italy.

Hieronymus makes a beeline for a wall on which there is a CRUCIFIX hanging. He pulls it off the wall violently. Aleyt follows him, reaching out to him. He pushes her off, then he grabs the crucifix and with his bare hands he pulls out the three NAILS that are going through the CHRIST FIGURINE's hands and feet so that the cross falls to the floor.

ALEYT (cont'd)

No, stop! What are you doing?

He grabs a stone from the floor and places the figure of Christ against the wall - so that the figurine's *front* faces the wall. Then, using the stone he pounds the nails in, one by one, through the backward-turned figurine's hands and feet so that it adheres to the wall.

ALEYT

No, Hieronymus...*Enough!*

CUT TO an angle from opposite side of wall so we see the front of the Christ figurine (shot through glass) being crucified onto the wall by Hieronymus from behind.

INTERCUT above with:

EXT. FIELD / MEUSE RIVER - DAY

JEROME, the boy we saw being harassed by the boys, is splayed out against a FISHING NET, his arms out in the same position as the Christ figurine. Aleyt's SCREAMS should meld into those of Jerome, as though he is being whipped, or maltreated in some way.

CUT TO the opposite side of Jerome just as the other boys, huddled together, holding sticks and jeering, dart off in all directions, so we see the by-product of their handiwork:

Jerome remains hanging on the drying-out net (his wrists coiled up in it). His clothing is torn and there are lines of blood, the result of many lashings, on his back. A FLOWER is sticking out of his ass, the stem planted firmly in his anus.

The SOUND OF CHANTING is heard in the distance. Slowly Jerome uncoils his wrists from the net. He removes the flower. In a WIDER SHOT we see that he's near a RIVER (the Meuse River).

He goes to the edge of the river and wades in to clean off,

(cont'd)

pulling his torn clothes around him as best he could. While in the river up to his shoulders he looks around and sees:

Large, SNAPPING TURTLES are huddled together - seeming to have appeared out of nowhere. They're grouped closely together on LOGS that are half- jutting out of the river's surface. From Jerome's POV as he looks around: there are *so many* turtles that they appear creepy, even threatening.

He gets out of the river quickly and begins walking in the direction of the chanting, back through the field's high grass. The chanting grows louder as we see from Jerome's POV:

-to the left of him, a sound: a RUSTLING draws his attention: through the tall grass he sees a large SNAKE, with a MOUSE sticking halfway out of its gaping mouth.

-to the right of him, another sound: a MOANING -- a WOMAN is being gangbanged by VAGABONDS. Through the thicket of bodies, she looks up and sees Jerome.

WOMAN

(to Jerome, between moans)

You don't belong here. Damn you.

As Jerome walks on, in addition to the sound of chanting we hear, increasingly loud, the SOUND, again, of FLIES BUZZING. We see several FLIES passing through the frame.

He continues on, coming to a HILL. He goes to the top of the hill from where he can see the source of the chanting: It is the slow procession of hooded monks, just about to pass by the road that stretches in front, moving from left to right. CUT TO Jerome's POV of:

The crucifix (CLOSE-UP) being carried by the monks that is covered in flies. We hear an echo of the gangbanged WOMAN's earlier line:

WOMAN (O-S, repeated exactly)

You don't belong here. Damn you.

Slowly, Jerome looks farther and farther up, into the sun. PAN UP with his POV until the sun is center frame. CLOSE-UP of Jerome's EYES, the pupils irisng to pinpoints.

SLOW ZOOM INTO the sun, the frame whitng out with its orb. HOLD for a beat, then:

-CUT TO BLACK

(cont'd)

Silence. Then, during the black screen, we hear the SOUND of the boys (the ones who harassed Jerome) laughing. Their laughing becomes a bit echoey as its volume rises.

INT. INDOOR POOL AREA - DAY

CARRY-OVER SOUND of boys laughing as they run into this indoor pool area, something like the pool area of a modern-day exclusive health club. The boys are wearing the same period clothes they were wearing when they were humiliating Jerome.

Sitting around poolside CHAISE LOUNGES is a group of overweight CEO-TYPES in SWIMSUITS. They have pasty complexions. Some have TOWELS on their shoulders; one is smoking a CIGAR. They're in the middle of discussing some corporate bullshit:

CEO TYPE #1
(robotic)

If you scope creep the out-of-town loop I don't care if the leverage metrics to four thousand you still got deliverables and your touch base is still completely result driven, embrace and extend...

The running, cacophonous boys start surrounding the men, drowning out their words.

CEO TYPE #2
Well you're the subject matter expert, if you can get the team to sync up and de-hire the bottleneck-

This guy stops himself short because the boys have converged on the group and they're so loud it becomes impossible for them to continue. The cigar-holding guy goes:

CEO TYPE #3
Hey hey! Pipe down, what's with you fellas?

BOY #1
Just like you told us! We found someone!

CEO TYPE #3
All right, all right-

BOY #2
Name's Jerome. He's your patsy!

(cont'd)

CEO TYPE #3

Okay, good, that's...something...
 (notices boys waiting expectantly)
 What is it?

BOY #1

You promised...

CEO TYPE #3

Ohhh...oh yeah, sure...no prob-
 lem...

He reaches into a brown paper BAG next to his chaise lounge and pulls out a bunch of those round ball-toys we saw earlier. He begins handing one each out to all the boys.

CEO TYPE #3 (cont'd)

Here you go...now try to quiet down,
 fellas, we're in the middle of a
 meeting.

The boys make off with the toys. The men continue talking: mumbled corporate-speak.

As the boys divide up and get lost into the masturbatory pleasure of these ridiculous toys, we see splashing around in the swimming pool the CEO-types' WIVES.

They're all ugly, wearing hideous BATHING CAPS and unflattering SWIMSUITS, bobbing around in the water like idiots, maybe tossing a BEACH BALL back and forth.

VARIOUS SHOTS INTERCUTTING the CEO-types, their wives, the boys.

The boys, collectively tiring of the toy, re-converge and, starting their laughing up again, they run out of the pool area as fast as they ran into it, dropping their toys onto the floor.

CEO-TYPE #4

After the crucifixion I say we burn
 it down and go for the insurance mo-
 ney, cut our losses...We've all seen

CEO-TYPE #4 (cont'd)

the marketing reports for Apocalypse
 World...Sooner the better, I say.
 Responses?

During his line (after which we hear successive, overlapping affirmative RESPONSES).

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Yet again, a matching CLOSE-UP of Hieronymus - similar to the one we saw earlier, where he is walking, about to enter the town of Hertogenbosch. He stops, looks, sees:

The city wall. CUT TO a sign engraved in metal in gothic style lettering: **Medieval World**

EXT. A SQUARE - DAY

The boys run into this square where a WOMAN in rags is tied to a stake, surrounded with hay and sticks. Her hair is chopped off; she is bleeding from having endured torture. A YOUNG MAN, a GUARD and an EXECUTIONER watch as a CLERIC drones on:

CLERIC

...she hereby confesses to the heresy of dulia, trampling of the cross, perverted sacraments, idolatry, ritual disinterment, as well as the crimes of gallows robbing, disemboweling, and kissing the ass of a cat.

Hieronymus passes by the scene, pushing his way through the CROWD, which begins to LAUGH and TAUNT the cleric throughout:

CLERIC (cont'd)

And finally she is guilty of collecting male organs in great numbers, as many as twenty or thirty members together, and putting them in a box where they move themselves about, eating oats and corn, as has been claimed by many, but now has been witnessed by a member of the Illustrious Brotherhood of Our Lady.

He puts his hand on the frightened young man's forehead and blesses him. In the background Hieronymus, against his better instincts, stops to watch the proceedings.

CLERIC (cont'd)

Luckily our Brother was able to get back his own member...

There is much SNICKERING during this speech, but this last line

(cont'd)

gets a ROAR, drowning out the next few lines from the Cleric.
Some PEOPLE in the crowd shout heckles:

MALE VOICE

He picked the wrong one!

CLERIC (cont'd)

...And for that act...

MALE VOICE

He took the biggest in the pile!

CLERIC

...Her punishment...

More LAUGHTER mixed with BOOS and WHISTLES, then a FEMALE VOICE:

FEMALE VOICE

Ooooh, Faaaather! He must have
got yours!

GALES of laughter. The Cleric, furious, motions to the guard to light the fire, which he does. Hieronymus, disgusted, disappears around a corner. The SHOUTS turn angry. Fighting breaks out as SCREAMS and CRIES rise with the flames (SLOW ZOOM IN).

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. STUDIO - DAY

Hieronymus is painting. There is a KNOCK on the door of the studio. He says nothing.

EXT. STUDIO - DAY

Allart is knocking on the door, Aleyt next to him. She leans towards him:

ALEYT

Tell him if he does it right...
there'll be more work for him!
Tell him Philip *likes* his paintings and won't interfere. Tell him it can be in his own style. He'll like that. Perhaps this will get his mind off-

ALLART

"Italy". Right. I'll see if I can persuade him to the pub.

(cont'd)

He continues knocking as Aleyt walks away.

ALLART
 (calls out)
 Hieronymus...It's me...Allart.
 Open the door! Open up!

INT. BROTHEL - DAY

Hieronymus is seated on a chair in a room of a brothel, near the bed, on which there is a naked PROSTITUTE lying on her back, eyeballing Hieronymus lasciviously. Allart KNOCKS on the door:

ALLART (O-S)
 You're still in there? Hello?

PROSTITUTE
 That yer friend callin' you?

HIERONYMUS
 Yes, he's my friend. We stain
 glass together.

CLOSER ANGLE on the prostitute and we see that ropes of her hair are pulled back, entering holes in the wall behind her. They undulate slightly, like snakes moving slowly through tunnels.

PROSTITUTE
 And you go to whorehouses.

More KNOCKS.

ALLART (O-S)
 Hieronymus! Open up!

INT. BROTHEL ROOM / HALLWAY

Hieronymus opens the door; Allart is standing there, concerned.

ALLART
 Hieronymus...We have to get
 out of here...

HIERONYMUS
 I want more time.

PROSTITUTE
 (calling out)
 Your friend doesn't do anything,

(cont'd)

PROSTITUTE (cont'd)
 he just watches me lay here! I
 like him, leave us alone!

ALLART
 There's plague in this brothel,
 Hieronymus! I heard the doctor
 talking in the room next to mine.
 If he tells the magistrate this
 place will be boarded up with
 everyone left inside to rot-

HIERONYMUS
 Not yet. I'm not leaving yet.

Hieronymus looks behind him, then back at Allart again.

HIERONYMUS (cont'd)
 I haven't gotten what I've come
 here for...

Desperate, Allart grabs Hieronymus by the sleeve, pulling hard.

ALLART
 We've got to-

Hieronymus pulls away.

HIERONYMUS
 Leave me alone!

He slams the door closed.

EXT. BROTHEL - DAY

Allart leaves the brothel. As he does we PAN UP to a SIGN with a SWAN painted on it.

Allart appears worried as he walks away. He turns around and sees a GRIZZLED MAN urinating on the building.

GRIZZLED MAN
 I baptize this whorehouse, in the
 name of the Father, the Son-

INT. BROTHEL - NIGHT

Now Hieronymus is watching the same prostitute having coitus with another man (CLIENT). The prostitute keeps looking at Hieronymus during the entire act; she has a kind of vacant, doll-eyed look.

(cont'd)

PROSTITUTE

Just like the gentleman ordered.
I ain't taken my eyes off you the
whole time...I love you, you know.

HIERONYMUS

And I love you. Thank you.

Hieronymus seems to be studying her, as though he is trying to see what of her soul he can glean in her milky, dead eyes.

PROSTITUTE

One time I was with a man who said he studied the stars. Right here in this very room. He was sitting where you're sitting now and we started talking. He said in his opinion he thinks there's a lot more stars than the ones we see at night. Why he said he thinks there's more stars than there are drops in the ocean.

HIERONYMUS

How many drops are there?

The Client on top of her starts to come.

PROSTITUTE

Well he ain't probably never even seen the ocean, it was just a way of saying something...but the-

The Client starts grunting faster and faster, on the verge.

PROSTITUTE (con'td)

...the really interesting thing is when I asked 'im if that's so, then why isn't the night sky all lit up like it is in daytime? You know, seein' there'd be so many stars, like this ocean of stars.

The Client comes, his weight falling down on her.

PROSTITUTE (cont'd)

And you know somethin'? He didn't know!...an intelligent gentleman like that! He walked out of here saying over and over... "why isn't

(cont'd)

PROSTITUTE (cont'd)
 the night sky on fire?...why isn't
 the night sky on fire?" Like it
 was going to make him crazy, not
 being able to figure that out---

HIERONYMUS
 You mean you didn't make him happy?

PROSTITUTE
 Oh, he was happy enough all right,
 for a minute or two, until we start-
 ed getting on this *stars* subject.
 But oh yes, the gentleman was hap-
 py for a minute there...

Suddenly one window in the room is being covered over with
 BOARDS, and the SOUND of the boards being POUNDED is heard all
 around.

From outside a BOOMING VOICE is heard calling:

VOICE (O-S)
 By order of the Magistrate, by reason
 of suspicion of plague, all occupants
 of this house of ill repute are here-
 by consigned to quarantine to the sat-
 isfaction of the Medical Examiner...

The spent Client, upon hearing this, jumps up in a panic.

MAN
 Plague!

He frantically gets dressed, tripping all over himself.

MAN (cont'd)
 I'm not being locked up in here!

INT. BROTHEL - HALLWAY / VARIOUS ROOMS

CUT TO VARIOUS SHOTS, in quick succession, of BOARDS being put up
 against WINDOW after WINDOW, followed by the SOUND of POUNDING.
 The Client runs out into the hallway, desperate, scared shitless.

CLIENT
 Lemme out of here! How do I get
 out've here???

The VOICE of a MINISTER, outside, is heard, LOUDLY ECHOING:

(cont'd)

MINISTER'S VOICE (O-S)

Pater noster, qui es in cælis, sanctificetur nomen tuum. Adveniat regnum tuum. Fiat voluntas tua, sicut in cælo et in terra.

A LEPER WOMAN starts approaching him from other end of hall.

LEPER WOMAN

No luck, gent, we're all together 'til it's over now...But tell you what, we'll give you a special rate on all our girls seein' you didn't bargain on the plague... How 'bout me first...Ever fuck a leper? You can't throttle me around too hard or my parts'll start flyin' all around like a broken pinwheel - what a sight!

CLIENT

I want to leave!

The Client pushes open door after door, only, in each room, to see other CLIENTS and/or PROSTITUTES clawing with futility at the windows; some are on their backs clawing insanely at the air; OR-
Going out in flames, other Clients and prostitutes are FUCKING.

MINISTER'S VOICE (O-S)

Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie, et dimitte nobis debita nostra sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris.

The Leper Woman puts her hand on the Clients' shoulder. He turns around, his face close to hers: a ravaged, SCALY FACE (CLOSE-UP):

LEPER WOMAN

All of eternity is this moment.

The Client cringes, buckling down to the floor, his head in his hands, sobbing hysterically. The Leper Woman overtakes him, as if engulfing him in her scabrous body. DOLLY BACKWARDS UNTIL:

MINISTER'S VOICE (O-S)

Et ne nos inducas in tentationem, sed libera nos a malo. Amen.

--The first room, where Hieronymus still sits calmly in the same

(cont'd)

chair. The SOUND of SCREAMS coming from other rooms can be heard coming through the walls. Along with the screams, the Minister:

MINISTER'S VOICE (cont'd)
 Salve, Regina, Mater misericordiae;
 vita, dulcedo et spes nostra, salve.
 Ad te clamamus, exsules filii evae.

The Prostitute is no longer there. And against the wall where the bed used to be there is a large, reel-to-reel TAPE RECORDER, which is running.

Hieronymus gets up, walks over to the tape recorder, lays his finger on a button.

MINISTER'S VOICE (cont'd)
 Ad te suspiramus, gementes et flentes
 in hac lacrimarum valle. Eia ergo,
 Advocata nostra-

He shuts it off: There is *COMPLETE SILENCE*. After a long pause:

HIERONYMUS
 Da Vinci...your inventions will
 kill us off worse than any plague...

INT. PUB - EVENING

Hieronymus sits at a table with Allart. Allart is drinking BEER from a STEIN. Hieronymus is drinking water. OTHER PATRONS are loud and raucous, always breaking out in guffaws.

A JESTER is leaping about, entertaining the crowd. Hieronymus and Allart have to speak loudly in order to hear each other.

ALLART
 But how can you *know* that?

Allart calls out to the BARMAID who is walking past the table.

ALLART (cont'd)
 A plate of pig's trotters here!

BARMAID
 Nothing for your famous friend?

ALLART
 Come on, Hieronymus, *one* brew!
 A commission from Philip the
 Fair is something to celebrate!

(cont'd)

Hieronimus shakes his head and waits for the barmaid to leave.

HIERONYMUS

You're not listening...

ALLART

All right, all right...but...I don't know what to say when you tell me about these...*thoughts*...

HIERONYMUS

You're afraid? Afraid of associating with what...a heretic, eh?

Allart thinks, takes a swig of his beer, not answering. The Jester prances around from table to table as he tells his story.

JESTER

Eduwart the grave robber finally died and went to hell, and he got to say hello to the Devil himself!

Hieronimus' and Allart's lines are spoken over the Jester's.

HIERONYMUS

(disgusted)

Let's get out of here.

ALLART

I haven't eaten yet!

JESTER

The Devil said you are a lucky grave robber...we now have a new way of running my fiery kingdom! We offer you a choice of eternal damnation, three different types! It's your pick, my stupid friend!

PATRON #1

This cat piss beer's 'nuff hell for anyone dontcha know!

PATRON #2

My three dead wives, there's a rosy choice for anyone goin' to hell! That's where *they* be!

The other drunken patrons LAUGH UPROARIOUSLY. The barmaid brings a large PLATE of PIG'S TROTTERS to the table.

(cont'd)

JESTER

"I'll open three doors for ya," says the Devil, "and you take a peek at each way I humbly offer...your wish is my command."

ALLART

(to Hieronymus)

So you're saying there's no such thing as progress...is that it?

HIERONYMUS

We're becoming exaggerated versions of ourselves...that's what I'm saying. Everyone's God is the part of them that's clever. Merely clever...*only* clever...

JESTER

He opens the first door and the grave robber takes a gander into a room filled with five million folk standin' on their heads on an enormous slab of hard stone, big as the country of Holland...

PATRON #3

My head's already flat...sounds easy...

GALES of LAUGHTER. Allart starts chowing down his meal.

JESTER

"You can jyne them for the rest of eternity if ya choose," says the Devil. "Or if ya like, take a look behind this one 'ere..." And the Devil opens this second door and what's there but five million folk standin' on their heads on acres and acres of hay, big as the continent itself!"

Another extremely drunk PATRON keels over, holding his stomach.

ALLART

You think these nitwits are in danger of being too clever? I say let them be more clever, it has to be better than this!

(cont'd)

JESTER

"Or ya might prefer the third, take a look," and the Devil opens a door and there's a couple ol' sinners standing knee-high in cow shit nibbling away at flat heels of stale bread...Why, the grave robber says "I can take that, Devil...it may be shit up to my knees but at least I'm standing up!" "Get in" orders the Devil and shuts the door behind the grave robber who wades into the shit, when the Devil bellows like thunder from behind the door, "Supper is over, assholes, back on your heads!"

GALES of laughter as the very drunk patron begins VOMITING.

Allart looks at Hieronymus who, fed up with this scene, gets up.

HIERONYMUS (cont'd)

We're no different. In one end and out another. That's all it comes to.

The Jester blocks Hieronymus on his way out.

JESTER

Hey, painter, you're not laughing!

Hieronymus SHOVES him away and leaves. Allart runs after him.

ALLART

Hieronymus, wait!

EXT. PUB - EVENING

Allart runs to the pub door. He looks around, but Hieronymus is already gone. Then Allart notices through the corner of his eye:

HORST is pushing large WHEELBARROW filled with HAY. He wears a prominent GOLD RING. He keeps stopping, taking out a bunch of the hay, and stuffing it in the crevices of a building.

ALLART

Hey there, you...what are you-

(cont'd)

As if being caught red-handed, Horst grabs the wheelbarrow and pushes it away, fast, disappearing around the building.

EXT. CATHEDRAL OF ST-JAN - EVENING

SHOTS of several of the GARGOYLE SCULPTURES that ornament the outside of the cathedral. From one high angle, we see Hieronymus enter the cathedral.

INT. CATHEDRAL OF ST-JAN

The evening sunlight coming in through the STAINED GLASS WINDOWS, and pockets of lit VOTIVE CANDLES provide the only illumination, bringing out the intense colors of Hieronymus' own handiwork: altarpieces and the stained glass that he and Allart worked on.

There are a handful of PARISHIONERS in assorted PEWS, in prayer. Hieronymus is slowly walking past the windows, each stained glass image capturing one of the fourteen STATIONS OF THE CROSS.

Every so often, as he walks past the stations, starting at the fourteenth and, crossing to the other side of the cathedral, passing the first seven (from sixth on towards the first), he hears TITTERS coming from the parishioners seated in shadows.

Finally he arrives at the first station of the cross: JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH. It is a beautiful piece of stained glass, but something catches Hieronymus' eye. He walks closer to it.

In the foreground is, of course, Jesus being condemned by Pontius Pilate. Next to Pilate is a man that looks something like the Da Vinci we saw in the first scene, but that isn't what worries him.

In the background, rising behind the angry mob, as if being held up on a long pole, is a gigantic yellow "M" (the McDonalds logo). Hieronymus takes a closer look, squinting: indeed, it's an "M". He turns around, looking at the scattered congregation.

HIERONYMUS

What happened to...This is not
my work...Who defaced my work?

More titters from the people in shadows.

HIERONYMUS (cont'd)

What is this...Who did this?

We see Hieronymus' POV as he scans the pews, trying to recognize a face. But the people, for the most part, keep their heads bowed. The ones he can make out are ugly, giggling, grotesque.

(cont'd)

They are either whispering or tittering. Hieronymus looks left, right, left, until his eyes land on a singular FIGURE in a HOOD.

The figure raises his hood: he is wearing a BIRD HEAD MASK and appears to look directly at Hieronymus as the others giggle.

Hieronymus makes a beeline for this figure, who bows his head again, hiding his face as Hieronymus enters the pew and goes over to confront him. He grabs the kneeling figure by the shoulder, violently pulling him backwards to expose his face. We see:

It is an OLD MAN, toothless, shaking, terrified at suddenly being accosted.

OLD MAN
Aaagghh! What devil is this?

Hieronymus takes a good look at him, then lets him go. All around him, the tittering increases, like high school students.

Hieronymus exits the pew, walks quickly to the clergy's DOORWAY at one side of the ALTAR, slamming the door closed behind him.
INT. CATHEDRAL (REAR CLERGY OFFICES) - EVENING

In the hallway that annexes the clergy's quarters and offices, Hieronymus starts pounding on door after door. No one responds.

HIERONYMUS
Father Lukas! Father Matthys!
It's *Hieronymus Bosch*! Where
are you?

He looks around desperately. He sees, braced way up in a corner of the high ceiling, a SURVEILLANCE CAMERA.

INT. CLOSED-CIRCUIT TV ROOM

In a very dark, disembodied room somewhere, the SILHOUETTES of TWO MEN sit in front of a black and white TV SCREEN: the image on the screen is of Hieronymus, angry, looking up at the TV screen.

We can see, but not hear, Hieronymus mouthing the words: "What is happening?" as the men calmly look on.

TV WATCHER #1
This one's a troublemaker...

TV WATCHER #2
He does take things seriously.
What is it with these artists?

(cont'd)

TV WATCHER #1

Well I wouldn't worry about it.

TV WATCHER #2

Oh, I'm not worried. I don't
find that type threatening.

On the screen, we see as Hieronymus goes out the way he came in.

One of the TV Watcher's changes a channel on the TV set, and there appears on the screen a news story about a transparent cow that eats only alarm clocks. We see a graphic of a COW, through which you can see its churning belly, filled with ALARM CLOCKS.

INT. CATHEDRAL - NIGHT

Hieronymus walks quickly out from the clergy doorway, turns to walk down the center aisle of the cathedral. But all the other people who were sitting in the pews are crowding into it. He starts down the aisle but it becomes increasingly difficult for him to move as, from either side, the grotesque congregation surrounds him, blocking his way.

Hieronymus is practically smothered in a sea of jeering, ugly faces, the people poking and taunting him as he pushes his way to the front entrance, as if in slow-motion, like a nightmare. Finally he pushes past the crowd and runs out the front door.

EXT. CATHEDRAL OF ST-JAN - NIGHT

Hieronymus is standing at the side of the cathedral, mostly in dark - night has fallen. He is adjacent to the stained glass window portraying the first station of the cross.

He picks up a STONE and hurls it right at the offending window.

INT. CATHEDRAL OF ST-JAN - NIGHT

The stone SMASHES through the window, landing in the aisle. The cathedral is *empty*, but in a few moments, disturbed by the loud noise, Father Lukas rushes out from the clergy doorway. He makes a sign of the cross as he passes the altar, then sees the window.

FATHER LUKAS

Madness...

INT. PERFECT CUBED ROOM

Hieronymus is sitting on a CHAIR in the exact center of a room, that has light evenly distributed. The walls, floor and ceiling

(cont'd)

are white. No shadows anywhere. The room is about twenty feet by twenty feet by twenty feet. A perfect cube.

Also there is one of the WOMEN who was in the airport bar. She is dressed as she was there, in a FLIGHT ATTENDANT'S UNIFORM. She is pushing her hands along the walls, as if looking for a door.

Hieronymus and the Flight Attendant notice each other.

HIERONYMUS & FLIGHT ATTENDANT
(in unison)
What are you doing here?

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
What am *I* doing here? I happen
to be your wife, remember? I
thought you were in your studio.

HIERONYMUS looks all around. A sense of wonder overtakes him.

HIERONYMUS
Incredible!

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
What?

HIERONYMUS
There's no light source. Yet...(looking
at his hand) That's impossible!

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
Did you wash your brushes, or
are you waiting for me to do
it for you, as usual?

HIERONYMUS
No...don't you...look, I'm a
painter, I can appreciate these
things...no light source is im-
possible...unless...

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
Unless what, Einstein?

HIERONYMUS
What'd you call me?

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
I don't know...it slipped out.

(cont'd)

HIERONYMUS

The only way it's possible that there's no light source is if *this* is the source...it can't come from anywhere else because it's coming from...from *here!*

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Look, I don't know what you're going on about but...one, the roof needs repairing, two, the chickens need feeding, three, the clothes need laundering and you, my dear husband, need to stop leeching my dowry and get to work on that commission.

(pause)

At least *I'm* doing something useful and trying to find a way out of this fucking place...

HIERONYMUS

I haven't even met with Philip yet...so how can I know what he wants me to paint?

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Don't split hairs.

Hieronymus, annoyed at her nagging, glares at her.

HIERONYMUS

The way I see it, there's only one thing wrong with this room.

(looks around room,
then back at her)

One flaw.

INT. CATHEDRAL OF ST. JAN (BACK ROOM) - DAY

Begin on CLOSE-UP of Father Lukas.

FATHER LUKAS

There *can't* be any flaw.

WIDER, Father Lukas at his desk, Father Matthys stands opposite.

FATHER MATTHYS

That's what the boy said. He said he saw *spots* on the sun.

(cont'd)

FATHER LUKAS

Spots on the sun. *Blasphemy!*

FATHER MATTHYS

He swears it. He insists he saw spots on the sun...just before he was struck blind.

FATHER LUKAS

Blind? The boy is *blind*?

FATHER MATTHYS

Yes...blind...undoubtedly from staring at the very sun which he names imperfect. Why, he was discovered just this morning wandering the cathedral grounds, crying out for help...

FATHER LUKAS

I see. This morning?

Father Lukas eyeballs the stone sitting on his desk - the one he found after it was thrown threw the window the night previous.

FATHER LUKAS (cont'd)

Well...then...I would say God has exacted His justice with fastest possible dispatch. And proven the boy mistaken, quite handily, at the same instant. Matthys, I see no reason for ecclesiastical intervention in the matter. Justice has prevailed, the subject is closed.

FATHER MATTHYS

Good Father Lukas...
(indicates chair)
May I?

FATHER LUKAS

Please.

Father Matthys sits down on the opposite side of the desk.

FATHER MATTHYS

I'm afraid it isn't quite as simple as that. The doctor who examined the boy admitted that the

(cont'd)

FATHER MATTHYS (cont'd)

blindness most assuredly could have been caused by the scorching of the boy's retinas by the intense light - in other words, there is a scientific explanation. Anyone who stares at the sun for too long will go blind, or so declare the doctors...

FATHER LUKAS

All right, all right, so...even if it wasn't God that caused it, the boy is suffering just as badly, isn't he?

FATHER MATTHYS

Perhaps. Yet, even in his suffering the boy persists that the sun is imperfect, with spots. I am afraid his rather insistent tone has riled up the citizenry, and there are already chatterings to the effect that if the sun is flawed, then isn't God, the sun's creator, in the chain of causality? Obviously the repercussions for the church would be-

FATHER LUKAS

"Chatterings"?

FATHER MATTHYS

The township is already awash with the news, and though the notion is of course erroneous, I'm afraid the fact of this rumor being started in our own village will not reflect well on our archdiocese...unless...

FATHER LUKAS

Unless?

FATHER MATTHYS

Unless remedial action is taken at once. Severe remedial action. I remind your lordship, Philip the Fair arrives tomorrow.

Father Lukas thinks for a moment, the wheels are turning...

(cont'd)

FATHER LUKAS

The boys' parents?

FATHER MATTHYS

We are still in the process of locating them. The boy is still quite disoriented and hasn't been able to tell us much. He is fortified only in his conviction that the sun is flawed!

Father Lukas picks the stone off the desk, handles it.

FATHER LUKAS

Matthys...someone threw a stone through the Cathedral's window last night.

FATHER MATTHYS

I am so aware.

FATHER LUKAS

This makes me very angry. I don't suppose a blind boy can catch a stone very well, but it seems to me there's nothing stopping him from throwing one, wouldn't you agree?

FATHER MATTHYS

I have no argument.

FATHER LUKAS

Of course you don't. The statement is irrefutable.

(pause)

What is this servant of Satan's name?

FATHER MATTHYS

Jerome. He is being held...

INT. HOLDING ROOM - DAY

Jerome sits in an almost pitch black room. He is alone. He sits perfectly still, eyes open. He's talking to himself.

JEROME

Science is repeatable and falsifiable. Science is repeatable

(cont'd)

JEROME (cont'd)
and falsifiable. Science is...

He keeps repeating this.

Another ANGLE and we see that one of the walls contains a MIRROR, built right into the wall, like a modern-day police holding cell.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM

Semi-darkness. One of the CEO-types (CAINE) we saw in the pool scene is standing there, looming over Jerome's seated PARENTS.

The MOTHER is the woman we saw being gangbanged in the field; now she is wearing modern (cheap) clothes. The FATHER is dressed in blue collar attire. They're both sitting in FOLD-OUT CHAIRS.

MOTHER
Yep, that's him, Mr. Caine.

CAINE
You're sure?

MOTHER
Of course I'm sure, you don't think I'd recognize my own son?

CAINE
(to Father)
And you?

FATHER
That's Jerry, all right. Jesus... what happened to the little fella?

MOTHER
(to CAINE)
Did he say anything about seeing... I mean...this sun spot thing...that's all he said he saw? Nothing else?

CAINE
Like what?

MOTHER
(guilty look)
Nothing, nothing...Just asking.

CAINE
Well as we stated, the proceedings

(cont'd)

CAINE (cont'd)
 I described to you, we feel certain,
 would bring in a great deal more
 revenue if they have the feeling
 of total authenticity. Today's
 audiences are very sophisticated
 and we like to put on a convincing
 show. You understand.

FATHER
 That's our son we're talking about.

CAINE
 A right little vandal, I'll remind
 you.

FATHER
 You ain't proved nothin'.

CAINE
 Well, that's where the trial comes
 in. The boy will be given a fair
 trial. After all, we're not bar-
 barians. Of course your coopera-
 tion in bringing the boy to proper
 justice would smooth things along.
 We are on a tight schedule but we
 do feel we can turn this ugly lit-
 tle episode to our advantage.

Caine hands a PROSPECTUS to Jerome's father, who takes it.

CAINE (cont'd)
 ...Into *all* our advantages.

FATHER
 (reading)
 "Eee-ni-tee-l...stock...awwf-er-"

The Mother, impatient, grabs the paper out of the Father's hands.

MOTHER
 You illiterate slob...
 (reads, smoothly)
 "Preferred initial stock offering
 and accompanying prospectus for Med-
 ieval World, Ltd., parent corpora-
 tion of Apocalypse World, construc-
 tion to coincide with crucifixion
 of the accused..."

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - DAY

The Mother's reading continues as we see Horst (the one seen earlier, outside the pub), who is again pushing his wheelbarrow. He stops, grabs a bunch of hay and furtively stuffs handfuls of it into whatever crevice happens to be handy.

MOTHER (cont'd)

...of the accused, Jerome, in the event said accused is found guilty by fair trial of vandalism against the Church of Rome, heresy, sedition, blasphemy, public nuisance, arrogance, indulgence, incitation to mass hysteria, vagrancy..."

Her voice FADES DOWN...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Repeat of Jerome coming upon the woman (Mother) being gangbanged.

MOTHER

(to Jerome, between moans)
You don't belong here. Damn you.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. STUDIO - DAY

Hieronymus is asleep on a COT. Gradually we hear the SOUND of DRUMS getting louder and louder, the noise awakening Hieronymus.

He gets up and begins resuming work on the painting on the easel: "The Temptation of St. Anthony". But he stops, drawn to another of his paintings, still unfinished. He takes the "Temptation" down and now mounts his painting "Ecce Homo". He gazes at it.

CARRY OVER SOUND OF DRUMS...

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - DAY

Begin on a LINE OF DRUMMERS, marching into the center of town, heralding the arrival of the ORDER OF THE GOLDEN FLEECE, a huge festival bringing ARTISANS, MUSICIANS, CRAFTSMEN from all over.

TOWN CRIER

Good citizens of Hertogenbosch...

(cont'd)

TOWN CRIER (cont'd)

As ordered by the Knighthood founded in Burgundy in the Year of Our Lord 1429 and herewith commencing its Dutch chapter as laid down by good Philip of Spain from the illustrious cathedral of Ghent...so Commences the Order of the Golden Fleece! Drink and be merry!

SCENES of different craftsmen and ENTERTAINERS at work, selling their wares, performing tricks, etc.

Bad ACROBATS perform daring leaps onto each other, though most of the time they just topple all over each other.

There is a PUPPET SHOW in progress. Throughout the sequence, we keep returning to the puppet show. Every time, there is some scene with two puppets acting very violently towards each other.

There is an AUDIENCE gathered in front of every performer and artisan. They are easily awed by whatever they see.

There is a LEATHER TANNER, a BLACKSMITH, a GLASSBLOWER. There is even a COFFIN BUILDER - all of them displaying their goods.

TAILORS have all sorts of period CLOTHING for sale. There is a PRINTER showing off some BOOKS - a rarity in 1499.

Some men playing BAGPIPES are moving throughout crowd. Between the drummers and the bagpipers and the laughing and whooping and hollering, the square is abuzz with frenetic, NOISY ACTIVITY.

Also, a BARBER is giving fast cuts, using a BOWL - just putting the bowl on the client's head and cutting around the edge. We notice the Father of Jerome in line to get such a cut (dressed in period clothes now).

A CANDYMAKER has a table with a display of enticing SWEETS.

There are several GAMES OF CHANCE going on, including the proverbial three cups and a ball game.

A FURRIER and his team are at another tent selling ERMINE STOLES. A CANDYMAKER, a JEWELER, a SILVERSMITH, all at the marketplace.

Also, GYPSYS are in attendance. They are under a TENT from which exotic incense is burning, with an assortment of HERBS for sale. One of them sits in a separate corner behind a tattered CURTAIN,

(cont'd)

telling some CUSTOMER's fortune. The customer has a SILVER BALL for one of his eyes. During this exchange, we SLOWLY ZOOM INTO the silver ball-eye:

CUSTOMER

I don't know whether I should pay for passage to the new land or stay here and work the soil.

GYPSY

Do you have the money to pay for passage?

CUSTOMER

Yes.

GYPSY

If you give me that money, I can tell you what you should do. Otherwise you will never know and that would be a shame.

CUSTOMER

But if I give you the money I've saved up for the voyage, I will not be able to go on the voyage.

GYPSY

But it's useless to have the money saved for that when you don't even know if you should go. Don't you see that?

CUSTOMER

Yes, that's true, but...

GYPSY

If you give me the money and I tell you you shouldn't go, then think how much better you would feel. Instead of trying to feel better by embarking on a long and difficult voyage.

CUSTOMER

They told me you were wise...I will give you my money...But you must be brutally honest with me!

By now the silver ball eye is taking up the entire frame.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SKYRIDE ENTRANCE - DAY

The same customer we saw with the gypsy is now dressed in modern clothes. He is standing in line at the kind of ride you'd see at Disneyland or the World's Fair. A BARKER is selling tickets.

BARKER

See Medieval World from a bird's
eye view! A breathtaking ride,
only \$10...Step right up!

The Customer arrives at the head of the line as a SKI LIFT-TYPE CHAIR swings into position, coming to a full stop. He hands the barker his ticket.

BARKER (cont'd)

(indicating chair)

Step right in, sir...

The customer gets in and the barker fastens him into his seat.

BARKER (cont'd)

Enjoy the ride!

The chair is pulled out of the entrance area, starts soaring...

EXT. BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF MEDIEVAL WORLD - DAY

From the POV of this customer's ski lift chair, we glide over all the activities described - the hubbub of the hectic festival, the various tents, the musicians and acrobats, etc.

In the distance, we can see an arriving ROYAL CARAVAN, still on the outskirts "Medieval World". Then,

The customer sees himself(!) far below, sitting with the gypsy...

EXT. TOWN SQUARE (1499) - DAY

A SQUIRE is pushing his way through the crowd. He stops, looks around, sees a house, decides, and goes over to it. He knocks. The Homeowner (BASTIAAN ARENT) opens the door, impressed by the Squire's attire.

BASTIAAN ARENT

G'day! What may I do for you?

SQUIRE

His Royal Highness Philip the
Fair kindly requests the use

(cont'd)

SQUIRE (cont'd)
of your home during his stay
in the district of Brabant,
village of Hertogenbosch...

INT. NARROW DIRT PATH, OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN (LATER)

The man whom we recognized as being kicked out of his house
trudges on with his family. They are carrying basic supplies in
torn BURLAP BAGS. The SOUND from the festival is very faint.

From schlepping all the stuff, his family appears disgruntled.

WIFE
The *children*, Bastiaan...

BASTIAAN ARENT
(earnest)
Now now, it'll only be for a
short while I've no doubt, and
in the meantime we can have the
satisfaction of knowing we've
served the most noble statesmen
of Burgundy...be happy, my wife
and fair children, be very happy!

INT. VILLAGE HOUSE - DAY

PHILIP THE FAIR, of Spain (age 21) and his wife, JUANA (19), are
in the main room of the house Philip took over for their "visit".
The Squire's also there.

JUANA darts her head around nervously.

JUANA
I saw a cat. A cat.

PHILIP
(to JUANA)
I want you ready for the festi-
val by the time I finish my toilet.
(to Squire)
And I want to meet this Hieron-
ymus Bosch, do you understand?

SQUIRE
I'll bring him at once, sir.

PHILIP
No, not at once. I just *said* I

(cont'd)

PHILIP (cont'd)
 am about to perform ablutions.
 So if the man arrives at once I
 can't very well see him, can I?

SQUIRE
 I'm sorry...perhaps...I'll...
 (moves towards door)
 I'll wait for-

PHILIP
 (steps close, whispers)
 And didn't I tell you to find
 a house without a cat? Do
 you have any idea what we're
 in for now?

SQUIRE
 With all due respect, are you
 sure Her Highness isn't just
imagin-

PHILIP
Get out!

Philip slams the door. He looks at JUANA, who continues darting her head as if she sees a cat.

JUANA
 We'll have to feed it. Feed
 it. The cat. Feed the cat.

Philip rubs his hands over his eyes, shakes his head wearily.

PHILIP
 (to himself)
 Lord help us...how shall we
 be judged?

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. STUDIO - NIGHT

Begin on a CLOSE-UP of the right panel of "The Haywain", which shows a Boschian vision of hell, with assorted TORTURED SOULS. We hear WHISPERING VOICES, one of them Aleyt's:

ALEYT (O-S)
 I think he needs an exorcism...
 I'm afraid he's hearing voices.

(cont'd)

ALEYT (cont'd)

He scares me sometimes...I don't know what to do, Father.

CLOSE-UP of Hieronymus looking out the door of his studio, which is lit inside by candles. He is jittering, as if in a fever.

FATHER MATTHYS (O-S)

I know you are suffering, dear Aleyt. He isn't performing his husbandly, Christian duty, by siring children with you...

ALEYT (O-S)

It's no use. He says he refuses to bring children into this fallen world, Father.

CUT TO Hieronymus' POV of the house, also candlelit inside.

FATHER MATTHYS (O-S)

Aside, even, from that, dearest Aleyt...your physical body must long for your husband's touch...

ALEYT (O-S)

Yes. I need to be touched. I imagine all God's children need to feel the touch of others...

Back to EXTREME CLOSE-UP of Hieronymus, as if he is *seeing* this:

FATHER MATTHYS (O-S)

You are correct. We all need to feel loved. Even I...

A long pause. A slight swooning noise from Aleyt. Pause.

ALEYT (O-S)

That's all right. He's not here. He's never here...

LUBBERT DAS

Hello!

Hieronymus jumps, startled at the sight of this strange-looking man who, without his knowing it, has crept up to the studio door.

HIERONYMUS

Who are you?

(cont'd)

LUBBERT DAS

My name is Lubbert Das. I'm a fly keeper traveling with the fair. Ooh, it's dark out now!

HIERONYMUS

Yes I suppose it is.

LUBBERT looks like a half-wit, with drool running down his chin.

LUBBERT DAS

I was walking along and suddenly I felt very lonely. May I show you some of my flies?

HIERONYMUS

Flies?

LUBBERT DAS

Yes, I have flies. Here...

He reaches into his sack and pulls out a JAR of BUZZING FLIES. Hieronymus bends slightly, looks closely at the flies.

LUBBERT DAS (cont'd)

But it's lonely, just me and my flies. We want friends.

Hieronymus stands straight again.

HIERONYMUS

I'm sorry...I'm working now.

LUBBERT DAS

Well then, I'll go elsewhere.

Without missing a beat, Lubbert Das puts the jar back in his sack, turns around and heads back down the road, WHISTLING. CLOSE-UP on Hieronymus as he watches him disappear down the road, then looks upwards, into the night sky.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PLANETARIUM TENT - NIGHT

Begin on the CEILING of this ad-hoc, constructed "planetarium" tent. The ceiling isn't a perfectly smooth concave surface, but it is a crude, 15th century version of any modern day planetarium.

We see a scattered assortment of "stars" and constellations, the

(cont'd)

constellations being made obvious by outlines drawn around them: Virgo, Perseus, Scorpio, Orion, Hydra, Taurus, Cassiopeia, etc.

PLANETARIUM GUIDE (O-S)

Hydra, the multi-headed monster.

The PLANETARIUM GUIDE, a scrawny, bearded little man in a funny hat and STRIPED LEGGINGS, holds a long POINTER out.

The images on the ceiling are being formed by a candle held fast beneath a METAL GLOBE with tiny glass-covered holes around it.

He talks as if he's speaking to an audience of children, but in a WIDER SHOT we see it is mostly ADULTS, citizens of Hertogenbosch. They are rapt with attention, fascinated by the wonderful show.

PLANETARIUM GUIDE

Whenever one of Hydra's heads was chopped off, two more would grow in its place! Until Hercules had Iolaus *burn* the stump of each head with a hot iron and then bury it under a rock!

The audience can be heard swooning with terror. Hieronymus is in the audience, but remains silent, contemplative throughout.

Another angle: we see that Philip, too, is in the audience. Both he and Hieronymus, though interested, seem somewhat distracted.

The Planetarium Guide points to Orion:

PLANETARIUM GUIDE (cont'd)

Orion was able to walk on water! He had greater strength than any other mortal. He was a cunning blacksmith, known to have built a subterranean palace for Vulcan. He also walled in the coasts of Sicily against the encroaching sea, where he built a temple to the gods...

A FRIGHTENED MAN in the audience stands, points to a "red" star:

FRIGHTENED MAN

Wha-...what about th-that one?

PLANETARIUM GUIDE

Why it's just a planet, sir, mo-

(cont'd)

PLANETARIUM GUIDE (cont'd)
 ving about the earth as they all
 do, nothing to be afr-

FRIGHTENED MAN
 Why *red*? Is it the Devils's eye?

PLANETARIUM GUIDE
 Why, it's red because...uh...

He obviously doesn't know. He's stalling for time.

AUDIENCE MEMBER #2
 It's Hydra's blood! Splattered
 onto the far away world whenever
 Hercules shook off his blade af-
 ter cutting off a head or two!

The audience swoons with delight. They love that explanation.

AUDIENCE MEMBER #3
 It's the face of Hera, red with
 jealousy at all of her husband
 Zeus' philanderings!

The audience goes wild. During this, the Guide is gauging the
 audience, sees they like hearing the melodramatic explanations.

PLANETARIUM GUIDE
 You're all wrong...I'll tell you
 why it's red! Why...don't you
 know what you're seeing?

The Planetarium Guide points, pausing for effect.

PLANETARIUM GUIDE (cont'd)
 This is the future of our very
 own planet! Yes, if you look
 far enough into the night sky
 you can see...*the future!*

The audience eats this up. They quake with terror.

PLANETARIUM GUIDE (cont'd)
 I remind you, ladies and gentle-
 men...that we are in the Year of
 Our Lord 1499. Why, this red pla-
 net presents to us no less than the
 the spectacle of *our own ghastly*
fate as we hurtle forward in time!

(cont'd)

Nobody is laughing anymore. They sit there, petrified with fear.

PLANETARIUM GUIDE (cont'd)

A planet on fire, a planet become
Hell in the year 1500! *That is
our fate, ladies and gentlemen!*

FRIGHTENED MAN

It's the end of the world! *The
end of the world, I say!*

The man's fear is infectious. Everyone starts shouting:

VARIOUS AUDIENCE MEMBERS

*The end of the world! The end
of the world!*

Everyone but the Planetarium Guide, Hieronymus and Philip start getting out of their seats, agitated. They pile out of the tent. This is a little more than the guide had in mind.

PLANETARIUM GUIDE

No, don't leave! The show's not
over...

(then, seeing it's useless)

Well send your friends! Only
two stuivers a show! Tell your
friends to come to the show!

He keeps yelling out, using the opportunity to make more sales. Left there are Hieronymus and Philip, who looks at Hieronymus.

PHILIP

Hieronymus Bosch?

Hieronymus nods.

PHILIP

I am Philip, Duke of Burgundy.

HIERONYMUS

Yes...

Pause. The Planetarium Guide ignores them as he busies himself, as if Philip and Hieronymus are communicating on another plane.

PHILIP (cont'd)

(to Hieronymus)

This planetarium guide, though
of course a con man of the low-

(cont'd)

PHILIP (cont'd)
 est order...still...has a little wisdom, I think.

The Planetarium Guide starts waving new people into the tent.

PHILIP (cont'd)
 I also play at predicting the future. Would you like to play at predicting with me, Bosch?

INT. INDOOR TENNIS COURT - NIGHT

A modern-day INDOOR TENNIS COURT lit with FLUORESCENT LIGHTS. Philip and Hieronymus are dressed in modern tennis OUTFITS and stand at opposite sides of the court. They are VOLLEYING.

Along the edges of the court, PEOPLE sit in a gallery, watching. They are dressed in period garb, as if it was just another show they came to watch at the 1499 Order of the Golden Fleece fair.

PHILIP
 Do you believe in God?

HIERONYMUS
 I believe—

PHILIP
 Don't answer. Why would I care what you think in regards to the existence of God. Do you think men are born with eternal souls?

HIERONYMUS
 I think—

PHILIP
 Don't answer. There are too many opinions on the matter, already, don't you agree?

HIERONYMUS
 I've read a number.

PHILIP
 Ah, yes. The printed word. Books. Opinions put down on parchment and bound together to tell us stories. Are you

(cont'd)

PHILIP (cont'd)
familiar with "Vaderboek" or
"The Lives of Saints"?

Hieronymus is about to answer but Philip cuts in:

PHILIP (cont'd)
Of course you are. I can tell
from your paintings. "Peleri-
nage de vie humaine"?

HIERONYMUS
I've read it.

PHILIP
And Augustine, no doubt?

HIERONYMUS
"De Divinatione Daemonium"

The people in the gallery APPLAUD Hieronymus' nice shot.

PHILIP
That as well. Why, I wonder,
do we fill our heads with all
this nonsense?

HIERONYMUS
Perhaps—

PHILIP
Don't answer. I don't want
an answer to that from you, a
common Dutchman. Is that why
you think I summoned you?

Philip misses the ball, goes to pick it up, prepares to serve.

PHILIP (cont'd)
As a member of the court of
Spain I am privy to writings
that even you will never see.

He serves, the volley continues.

PHILIP (cont'd)
(turns to Squire)
Read. The one from Columbus.

The Squire opens a FOLDED SHEET of PARCHMENT, reads:

(cont'd)

SQUIRE

"The Indians are so naïve and so free with their possessions that no one who has not witnessed them would believe it. When you ask for something they have, they never say no. To the contrary, they offer to share with anyone."

PHILIP

(again, to Squire)
The dispatch from Hispaniola...

The Squire takes out another SHEET, begins reading:

SQUIRE

"Finding no gold in the interior we instead went on a great slave raid. We rounded up fifteen hundred Arawak men, women and children, put them in pens guarded by dogs, then picked the five hundred best specimens. We loaded them onto ships. Of those five hundred, two hundred died en route. The rest arrived alive in Spain, put up for sale by the archdeacon, who reports that, though the slaves were naked as the day they were born, they showed no more embarrassment than animals. Let us in the name of the Holy Trinity go on sending all the slaves that can be sold!"

After Philip hits a difficult one, the audience applauds again.

PHILIP

What do you think, Bosch?

HIERONYMUS

I—

PHILIP

Don't answer.

He lets a ball fly right past him. He stands there, panting.

PHILIP (cont'd)

I am very tired.

(cont'd)

With that he drops his TENNIS RACQUET and leaves, Hieronymus following, walking through a door leading to the MENS SAUNA.

The people who were watching from the sidelines rush onto the court, everyone trying to grab onto the two racquets, like a pack of vicious dogs fighting over a piece of hamburger meat.

INT. SAUNA

Philip and Hieronymus are naked, TOWELS draped over them, sitting in this white tiled SAUNA. There are OTHERS there, decrepit OLD MEN with bad skin, overweight, pale.

PHILIP

Enjoy fellatio, Hieronymus?

HIERONYMUS

I-

PHILIP

Don't answer...Even if you did you probably wouldn't understand what I'm about to admit to you, but they call me a great communicator, so I'll try anyway...

Philip stands, turns a THERMOSTAT up, sits back down.

PHILIP (cont'd)

Right then. Basically, what makes men like me different from men like you...that is to say, poor people who have to work hard for a living... is simply that I...we...have figured out that the key to life is simply to enjoy fellatio *all the time*. Oh, I don't mean that we're always engaged in the physical act. No, I don't mean it literally. What I mean is, we understand how the pleasure derived from fellatio can be, well, sort of cranked way up and parsed out into the rhythm and discipline of political life. You see, if you're clever, with a little mortar and gunpowder, ap-

(cont'd)

PHILIP (cont'd)

plied at just the right time, you can, essentially, get the *whole world* to perform fellatio on you. One learns how to maneuver oneself into the wonderfully enviable position in which one doesn't have to do much of anything but sit back and watch as the entire world kneels down in front of you and...*sucks your cock*. And the rest of the time you get to play tennis, just as we were doing a moment ago! And what fun *that* is, eh?

INT. SHOWERS

Philip and Hieronymus are taking showers in this large shower room. Again, a couple other FAT GUYS are also taking showers.

PHILIP

Now, of course...having cultivated this delightful paradigm, a responsible statesman must, as frequently as possible, allow himself to be serviced in the actual, *physical act*. No, one mustn't lose touch with the very template upon which one has built an entire empire, so to speak...

INT. LOCKER ROOM

Philip and Hieronymus are getting dressed into their 1499 garb. There are one or two OTHERS also donning period clothing.

PHILIP

Naturally I take lovers wherever I go. One cannot let the pleasure impulse atrophy. It's important to practice the art, time and time again...to understand how, always, to maximize pleasure. One must be expert at delaying ejaculation for as long as possible. *Premature* ejaculation, experienced too

(cont'd)

PHILIP (cont'd)
 frequently, the sensation internalized, will eventually lead to unfortunate political choices, like invading a country without adequate armies or weaponry. Conversely, never ejaculating tends to lead to a soft, laissez faire foreign policy - not the smartest, I venture, if your eyes are set on taking over the world.

Pause.

PHILIP (cont'd)
 Besides, my own dear wife is a near total crackpot. But enough of me...Where do you paint, Bosch? May I see?

EXT. VILLAGE HOUSE / BARN - DAY

Juana is supervising the unloading of her precious CHIHUAHUAS. A bevy of FOOTMEN are laying boxes side by side on the ground behind the house she and Philip have taken over.

JUANA
 We must find a suitable place to walk my beauties...

Juana looks around, sees a BARN.

JUANA (cont'd)
 Ah, over there!

She walks across a field, preceded and followed by the footmen. The barn is, of course, filled with TOOLS and bound HAYSTACKS.

JUANA
 (ordering footmen)
 All right...clear this stuff out...just clear it out...

FOOTMAN #1
 Certainly, your Highness.

JUANA
 And I want you to lay in some flat stones, understand? All

(cont'd)

JUANA (cont'd)

over the floor. I can't appreciate my chihuahuas' walks unless I can hear the clickclick of their little nails on a hard surface, so cover up this dirt, will you?

FOOTMAN #2

Stones, your Highness? Where-

JUANA

Find some, buy some, there's a whole marketplace going on in town in case you haven't noticed...let's get to it, my dogs need walking! Now!

INT. STUDIO - DAY

Hieronymus and Philip (dressed now in their period garb) are in Hieronymus' studio. Like a drill sergeant inspecting the troops, Philip is walking along a wall lined with Hieronymus' paintings. Hieronymus stands aside.

PHILIP

From my earliest disillusionment with the way of men in this scurvy world, my experience of life, my dear Bosch, is one of God always running away from me, and I couldn't endure living that way. One day I decided I would switch things around...

Philip pauses to admire the roundel of "The Seven Deadly Sins".

PHILIP (cont'd)

Mmmm...Quite remarkable...is this one commissioned as well?

HIERONYMUS

It's for-

PHILIP

Never mind, I'll buy it. I'll double the price. I want this. Anyway...Now...I run away from

(cont'd)

PHILIP (cont'd)
 God, but it feels less and less
 like a running away than a run-
 ning toward - at a faster pace
 than I could have imagined had
 I been born of humble origins.

Philip turns around, looks directly at Hieronymus.

PHILIP (cont'd)
 What do you think of what I've
 said? What's your...*opinion*?

This time, Hieronymus doesn't try to respond. Philip pushes on:

PHILIP (cont'd)
 I would like from you a work
 depicting a *Last Judgment*...
 as in, well...*God's* judgment.

HIERONYMUS
 How big?

PHILIP
 A triptych...
 (points)
 Like those over there.

HIERONYMUS
 I want 500 stuivers. Half of
 it paid in advance.

PHILIP
 Done. And remember...I've
 no interest in your *own* o-
 pinion, Bosch, no. I'm in-
 terested in the judgment of
 whatever prophet it is that
 flows through you when you
 paint these paintings. And
 I'm convinced that *that* is
 another entity, entirely.

SLOW PAN of "The Seven Deadly Sins" scenes as Philip continues:

PHILIP (cont'd)
 I want to see *that* spirit's
 opinion of how we will be
 judged - every one of us.
 Because, my dear Bosch, I

(cont'd)

PHILIP (cont'd)
 am certain that if you...
 lowborn commoner Hieronymus
 Bosch from this sorry Dutch
 province of Brabant...were
 the one responsible for all
 of this fantastic and terri-
 ble imagery...

Pause. He bores right into Hieronymus, imposing:

PHILIP (cont'd)
 You would've killed yourself
 a long time ago...

CLOSE-UP of Hieronymus, a silent, intense moment. Then, suddenly Philip swings around abruptly, saying quickly as he leaves:

PHILIP (cont'd)
 Get to work. Have it shipped
 to Castile when you're done.
 In the meantime your priests
 tell me we may be having a
 crucifixion...*quel joie!*

INT. VILLAGE HOUSE - DAY

Juana, with a MAIDSERVANT in attendance, is trying to feed an imaginary cat. She is on her hands and knees, holding out a SARDINE. The Maidservant seems used to this sort of behavior.

JUANA
 Come, kitty...*please...*

Juana turns, looks desperately at the Maidservant.

JUANA (cont'd)
 It's a bad omen...I know it.
 It's a sign that we should
 not be staying in this house.

MAIDSERVANT
 I suppose so, your Highness.

JUANA
 You do? You think it's a
 sign, too?

MAIDSERVANT
 Shall I try for a bit, while

(cont'd)

MAIDSERVANT (cont'd)
 your Highness rests? Perhaps
 I'll have better luck.

JUANA
 But if the cat takes the food
 from you it will only be a sign
 that *your* soul is not damned
 for all eternity. It will say
 nothing about my own soul.

MAIDSERVANT
 Still, perhaps you should take
 a small rest. Perhaps the cat
 isn't *hungry* now.

JUANA
 Not hungry...perhaps...yes...

MAIDSERVANT
 Why not go to the barn and check
 on your wonderful collection of
 chihuahuas? They need your at-
 tention as well, I think.

JUANA
 But the floor...the floor...I
 told the men-

MAIDSERVANT
 The floor is completed, as you
 requested, your Highness. The
 men are walking the dogs now!

JUANA
 Well then...yes...yes!

EXT. YARD / INT. BARN - DAY

Juana walks across the yard behind the house to the barn, where a dozen or so footmen are now each, individually, walking a single Mexican CHIHUAHUA on a LEASH, taking up the entire barn floor.

Juana gets on her knees at the barn entrance, totally entranced.

JUANA
 Oh...oh yes...such grace!
 Such delicacy! My beauties!

And the barn has, indeed, been completely emptied out, the floor

(cont'd)

lined from wall to wall with sections of SLATEROCK, so that the toenails of the dogs make a CLICKING SOUND as they're led around.

HOLD ON this spectacle for a bit, so that its surreally indulgent quality really registers - a barn filled with yapping chihuahaus, circling around and around, their little toenails clacking away.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. STUDIO

"The Seven Deadly Sins" roundel: SLOW DOLLY IN to the center of the roundel - the image of Christ, as if sensing all the insanity going on in the world around Him, as though He's given up on Man.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOLDING ROOM

CLOSE ON Jerome's face, eyes open, again staring vacantly out.

PHILIP (O-S)

Do you know who I am?

WIDER, we see that Philip, Father Lukas, Father Matthys and the Magistrate (seen earlier at the witch burning) are gathered around, sitting in chairs in a semi-circle. Jerome doesn't answer.

PHILIP

(to Father Lukas)

His hearing is gone, too?

FATHER LUKAS

No, Your Majesty. According to the doctor, the boy is truly blind, but can hear.

PHILIP

Jerome, I'm talking to you.
I asked if you know who I am.

JEROME

I believe you're an ordinary man. Frightened. Weak.

Everyone, including Philip, starts laughing loudly.

PHILIP

Oh, how right the boy is!

(cont'd)

FATHER LUKAS

The impropriety!

PHILIP

Now, Father...after all, the boy's been recently blinded!

FATHER MATTHYS

(to Jerome)

I would like to remind you, boy, that you are being addressed by no less than Philip, son of the great Maximilian of Habsburg and Mary of Burgundy...son-in-law of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain. I advise you to show proper respect-

PHILIP

(to Father Matthys,
holding up hand)

That's all right, Father...

(to Jerome, intimate)

Shortly before I was born, a great city in the east, Constantinople, was laid to waste by an invading horde of Janissaries, who snuck in through the sea town of Kerkoportat. The Turks massacred the citizens of Constantinople, renamed the city Istanbul, and to this day whatever Christians remain are forced to heed Muslim law under the command of a scoundrel named Mehmed, an enemy to God and the Holy Church of Rome...

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM

Caine is watching this proceeding along with Jerome's parents.

PHILIP (O-S, cont'd)

Naturally the only way the invasion could have been successful is if there were insurgents, in constant collu-

(cont'd)

PHILIP (O-S, cont'd)
 sion with the Turkish leader,
 who could notify him when the
 city was at its most vulnera-
 ble...

INT. HOLDING ROOM

PHILIP (cont'd)
 Do you know what an insurgent
 is, Jerome?

Jerome shakes his head.

PHILIP (cont'd)
 Mmm...

Philip stops, turns to Father Lukas and motions. Father Lukas
 hands him the stone that was thrown through the church window.

PHILIP (cont'd)
 Well, on the first day of the
 attack, in order to distract
 the people of Constantinople,
 and in order to sound a sig-
 nal for the attack, do you
 know what one of these insur-
 gents did?

Philip forces the stone in Jerome's right hand, then stands up:

PHILIP (cont'd)
 Do you have *any idea*, Jerome,
 what *single act* symbolizes the
 fall of, second only to Rome...
 (his tone rising,
 angrier)
 ...*the greatest Christian ci-
 vilization the world has ever
 known?*

INT. STUDIO - DAY

One of the studio WINDOWS CRASHES, the glass BURSTING out onto
 the floor inside the studio as the JAR that Lubbert Das had shown
 Hieronymus comes flying through it, hurled from outside.

WIDER, Hieronymus, who was painting, puts down his brush, steps
 away from his easel. The jar, too, BREAKS OPEN, and FLIES - many
 hundreds of them - come buzzing out, flying all over the studio.

(cont'd)

CLOSE-UP of Hieronymus, watching the flies swarming around him.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Again, a matching CLOSE-UP of Hieronymus - similar to the one we saw twice before, where he is walking along the country road.

WIDER, Hieronymus is passing some HIGH GRASS from which he can hear the SOUND of POUNDING, like carpentry work.

Curious, he walks off the main, dirt road, and pushes his way through this high grass until he comes upon:

EXT. SHIPBUILDER'S CLEARING - DAY

A dozen CARPENTERS are, indeed, constructing something. Laid out on the ground is the contour, made with many WOODEN PLANKS, of what appears to be the bottom of a huge SHIP.

They go about their business even when they notice Hieronymus.

HIERONYMUS

But we're nowhere near water.

The carpenters are unflustered by the comment; they keep working.

HIERONYMUS (cont'd)

It will take a thousand men to carry this ship to the sea...

One of the carpenters stops, looks up at Hieronymus:

CARPENTER

Unless the sea comes to us...
Haven't you heard?

He resumes working. Hieronymus looks at the ground, where he sees a CARP flopping around in the grass - as if stupidly arriving too early for a Great Flood. DIALOG OVERLAP:

HIERONYMUS (O-S)

What were you talking to Father Matthys about?

INT. BOSCH HOME - NIGHT

Hieronymus is with Aleyt in the main room of the house. As usual, they do not sit close together. Aleyt appears nervous.

(cont'd)

ALEYT

I...I wasn't talking to Father Matthys...what are you asking me...when?

HIERONYMUS

Nothing.

(pause)

You've been out to the fair?

ALEYT

Yes. I bought some things.
May I show you?

HIERONYMUS

I do not care.

ALEYT

But I...I found some paints,
some interesting paints for
you...I thought you might—

Aleyt gets up brings over from the table several BOTTLES of paint which she shows Hieronymus, who looks them over, sniffing them.

ALEYT (cont'd)

...the colors...I thought
you would appreci—

Hieronymus angrily knocks them out of her hand, onto the floor. A bottle of red paint spills out like a bleeding pig.

HIERONYMUS

(standing)

That is colored tree sap, do you understand? It's fool's paint. Do you have any idea how long they would last on a canvas? About a month.

ALEYT

I'm...I'm sorry...I thought—

HIERONYMUS

It's a waste of money. What else did you waste money on? The *gypsies*, no doubt? Perhaps you had one look into a crystal ball...tell you your future?

(cont'd)

ALEYT

All right. Yes. I admit, I did go to the gypsy tent. I wanted to listen, that's all...

HIERONYMUS

Listen? To what?

ALEYT

Well, as it happens I was passing the gypsies' tent and I overheard one of them talking to Hillegont.

HIERONYMUS

The old midwife.

Hieronymus, calmer now, sits back down.

ALEYT

Yes, the midwife. I heard her talking to one of the gypsies about how her whole life she's helped other women deliver babies...how she somehow fell into doing that and...how she never had any children herself. How she... how she-...

Aleyt starts weeping. Pause, as she regains her composure...

ALEYT (cont'd)

Well...the gypsy told her... that at the beginning of time God created a certain number of human souls...only a very small number...and...and long ago, when there were very few people, each person had exactly one soul. But with time, as more and more people were born...

Pause as she weeps again...only it seems she's weeping happily. During this, Hieronymus seems genuinely interested in the point.

ALEYT (cont'd)

...the souls had to divide up. So that...people were

(cont'd)

ALEYT (cont'd)
 born with smaller and smaller bits of the original finite number of souls. And... she said...she said that as this continues, soon every child born into this world will be born with...such a small piece of a soul that each generation beyond will become more and more *soulless*...their remnant of soul divided so small that they will barely be able to be called even, well...*human*.

Finished, she seems relieved to have gotten that off her chest. She looks up at Hieronymus, teary-eyed but smiling.

ALEYT (cont'd)
 (wiping tears away)
 I couldn't help but overhear that...and I thought it was...
 (pause, looks at Hieronymus)
 Hieronymus?

Hieronymus seems transported upon hearing this wild, horrific insight. CLOSE-UP and SLOW ZOOM INTO Hieronymus.

ALEYT (cont'd)
 Are you all right?

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PERFECT CUBED ROOM

The room we saw earlier, now with the SOUND OF FLIES BUZZING. Hieronymus is there, again, sitting on a chair. This time no one else is there. But the broken jar is there, and there are flies flying all about (VARIOUS ANGLES). We hear Aleyt again:

ALEYT (O-S)
 Are you all right?

HIERONYMUS
 What is marriage, Aleyt?

We see a FLY alight on Hieronymus' hand. CLOSE-UP on the fly.

(cont'd)

ALEYT (O-S)

What? What is *marriage*?

HIERONYMUS

Is marriage men and women hav-
their own private Christ to cru-
cify?

ALEYT (O-S)

What?

Sound of flies becomes LOUDER, and is CARRIED OVER as we CUT TO:

INT. BOSCH HOME

A SHOT of Aleyt putting her hand on Hieronymus' hand (with a fly on it, which she doesn't notice), but he pulls away.

The sound of the flies gets very low as Hieronymus speaks, as if he'd only just now clearly understood what he is about to say:

HIERONYMUS

You think evil comes from hell?
Or from us? It comes from that
Olympus we call the future. The
creatures you will find there are
just men, but with a more powerful
science than Da Vinci could have
dreamed of. They reach their filthy
hands into our time, grab us like
fish trapped in shallow water, and
use us to do their bidding. Some in
our time think they are God, others
pretend they are: their greed is so
enormous it cannot be quenched in a
single era. I will not have a child
because I will not subject another
human being to their inhumanity;
if I do not father a child, the
chain of lives that leads from us
-- you and I, Aleyt -- to that evil
future, stops here.

CUT TO Aleyt, who, though speechless, has tears in her eyes.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PERFECT CUBED ROOM

Hieronymus sitting there, alone.

(cont'd)

SOUND OF FLIES CONTINUES. HOLD BRIEFLY; SOUND FADES as we

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. STUDIO - DAY

Hieronymus is painting. SHOTS of images of insect-like, winged CREATURES descending from what appears to be Heaven.

HIERONYMUS

(to himself)

No one looks upward. All are
happy to remain on earth...

That amplified/muffled Voice we heard earlier now intrudes:

TOUR GUIDE (O-S)

Here is Hieronymus Bosch painting the left panel of "The Haywain" triptych...

Hieronymus notices this voice, looks up and sees that the glass wall again, with a bunch of different TOURISTS staring at him. The TOUR GUIDE can be seen talking into a MICROPHONE:

TOUR GUIDE (O-S, cont'd)

...which depicts people of every class clamboring onto, or being crushed by the wheels, of a huge cart filled with hay...a pictorial representation of the Dutch proverb "The world is like a haywain, each grabs from it what he can."

Furious, Hieronymus stands, rushes to the window, screaming.

HIERONYMUS

GET OUT OF HERE YOU...

He picks up a large PIECE OF WOOD and SLAMS it onto the glass.

HIERONYMUS (cont'd)

GOD DAMN...PARASITES!

The tourists back away from the wall, shrinking from his fury.

Hieronymus watches as they scuttle away, one or two looking back at him.

(cont'd)

TOUR GUIDE

Whoa!...Sorry about that, ladies and gentlemen...I'll report this at once, be assured...

The Tour Guide, leading the group away, turns around and gives Hieronymus a severe look.

DIALOG OVERLAP:

TOUR GUIDE (O-S)

Well I was personally embarrassed and that's *not* what I signed up for! Who in *hell*-

INT. CORPORATE OFFICE - DAY

Caine sits at the head of a long wooden TABLE in a fluorescent-lit OFFICE. Along each side of it are seated other MEN IN SUITS (the ones at the pool), including the Tour Guide, who is in a UNIFORM with a little badge that says "Medieval World". Also there, in period garb, is Horst, the man we saw sticking hay into the crevices of buildings. Jerome's Mother and Father are there as well. The Father is sporting his new "haircut".

In the middle of the table there is a MODEL of something (we don't yet see it up close), encased under a large GLASS SPHERE.

TOUR GUIDE (cont'd)

-does he think he is, scaring paying customers away like that? The *nerve!*

Caine raises his arm reassuringly to quiet down the Tour Guide.

CAINE

All right, all right...all your complaints are being dealt with...you have to trust us...

(turns to a CEO-TYPE)

Davis?

CEO-TYPE #1

(to the rest)

The marketing surveys are all in. Now, your employ-

(cont'd)

CEO-TYPE #1 (cont'd)

ment contracts guarantee everyone that the terms will be flipped in accordance with the company profits on "Apocalypse World" so the transition should be painless.

Caine turns towards everyone in the room:

CAINE

Be patient...we want to time this for maximum affect. If you've been a loyal worker then you've nothing to worry about.

Pause, CUT TO CLOSE-UP of the model: A MOCK-UP of the village of Hertogenbosch with tiny cardboard FLAMES shooting up all over it.

CAINE (cont'd)

As for the rest...they'll just have to burn...Now, Johnson...let's pass out those spec portfolios...

INT. BOSCH HOME - EVENING

Begin on CLOSE-UP of the two outer panels of Bosch's "The Garden of Earthly Delights" triptych. These panels exactly match (in size, anyway) the image we just saw of the model in the office:

Drawn in various shades of gray, a transparent SPHERE, inside of which is a half-formed LANDSCAPE with trees and other strange, evil-looking foliage creeping along the edges. The sky consists of dark, rumbling CLOUDS. Outside the sphere all is dark gray except for, at the top left, the CREATOR: God? Or is it Satan?

ALEYT

Why'd you bring that in?

WIDER, Hieronymus is gazing at his creation, which is leaning against a wall of the main room. Aleyt stands beside him.

HIERONYMUS

I don't know...I had a premonition of a storm. A great and terrible storm...

(cont'd)

ALEYT

How is your painting for Philip coming?

HIERONYMUS

"The Last Judgment"? Oh, it's coming, it's coming. The last judgment is definitely coming...

EXT. BOSCH HOME - EVENING

LOW-ANGLE of the home under a dark, gray, foreboding SKY. FAST-MOTION SHOT of CLOUDS above roiling into an ominous formation... We hear SOUND of THUNDER. CARRY-OVER THUNDER & DIALOGUE OVERLAP:

FATHER LUKAS (O-S)

As thoroughly as Assyria, I will *shut up* Hezekiah...

INT. CATHEDRAL OF ST. JAN (BACK ROOM) - EVENING

Father Lukas slams his fist on his desk. Also in attendance are Father Matthys and the Deacon, sitting in chairs opposite.

FATHER LUKAS (cont'd)

...like a bird in his cage!

DEACON

If I may, Father...

FATHER LUKAS

(impatient)

What is it?

DEACON

It seems the boys' parents have offered further evidence of their son's seditious tendencies...it will serve as damning testimony, to be sure...

EXT. MONASTERY (FLASHBACK) - DAY

Coming out, in single file, from a MONASTERY is the procession of monks that we saw twice earlier, the crucifix held aloft...

DEACON (O-S, cont'd)

Just across a hill from the boy's home there is an order

(cont'd)

DEACON (O-S, cont'd)
of Cistercians...they were
housed in a monastery built
over five hundred years ago
and their order is said to
have been worshipping there
ever since, only seen when
collecting alms, or tilling
the land...or else burying
their dead in the gravesite
nearby...

INT. MONASTARY (FLASHBACK) - DAY

A WOMAN bearing a BASKET OF FRUIT enters the monastery only to
find it completely empty. She goes from hall to hall...nobody.

DEACON (O-S, cont'd)
On the very day the boy was
discovered a local farmwoman
who regularly brought food
to the monastery arrived to
find it empty...not a single
monk remained! The entire
monastery...abandoned!

INT. MONK'S CHAMBER (FLASHBACK) - DAY

The boys who we saw harassing Jerome are drawing, on a wall of
the chamber, a TURKISH CRESCENT. They are just finishing the
drawing when, appearing to hear someone, they scamper out.

DEACON (O-S, cont'd)
The farmwoman searched every
quarter of the monastery...

EXT. MONASTERY (FLASHBACK) - DAY

The boys, laughing, run out of the monastery, into the field,
looking over their shoulders to make sure they haven't been seen.

INT. MONK'S CHAMBER (FLASHBACK) - DAY

The WOMAN walks in, sees the drawing.

DEACON (O-S, cont'd)
...only to discover, drawn on
a wall of one of the chambers,
the same crescent drawn on a
parchment found in the pocket
of the boy's own shirt on the
day of his arrest!

INT. HOLDING CELL (FLASHBACK) - DAY

We see Jerome's parents standing in front of seated, blind Jerome. The father bends down, slips something in his clothes.

FATHER MATTHYS (O-S)

You mean the parchment discovered on the boy directly after being visited by his parents?

DEACON (O-S)

The very same!

INT. CATHEDRAL OF ST. JAN - EVENING

DOLLY INTO the stained glass WINDOW depicting the Twelfth Station of the Cross (Christ crucified). More SOUNDS OF THUNDER.

DEACON (O-S, cont'd)

We have solid evidence of the boy's sympathies with forces of evil...evil strong enough to purge even the Cistercians from their Holy sanctuary!

INT. VIP ROOM - DAY

The VIP room at the airport, seen in film's beginning, the SOUND of JETS, again, very loud. CLOSE-UP of Hieronymus after being left there by Da Vinci. As he tears up the ticket, he hollers:

HIERONYMUS

Why does DaVinci say *he* is the more remembered, as if it granted truth to his ideas...? Dear Father, he is one of the few who know that the future, in which the memory he speaks of resides, is a hideous serpent that must change our history, which it drags with it across time, bound as a prisoner, so that each time it devours itself, it can create anew, from our bodies and souls, the seed from which it sprang.

He looks up, helpless, eyes filled with tears and rage.

HIERONYMUS (cont'd)

Father...*why have you forsaken me?*

INT. COFFIN MAKERS SHOPPE, HERTOGENBOSCH - NIGHT

A COFFIN MAKER (RYKAARD) is working on a PINE BOX COFFIN, sanding its sides, when Horst enters, wiping sweat off his brow. We see that he has newly forming SCARS on his cheek, courtesy of Aleyt.

Again, we hear the SOUND of approaching THUNDER. Rykaard continues sanding:

HORST

A stormy evening, eh?

RYKAARD

Hello Horst...how are you?

HORST

Als hoy, als hoy. Join me for a pint?

RYKAARD

I can't, brother...I'm on a job for Father Lukas and I must keep at work-

HORST

I've a message from the very same, it's why I'm here.

Rykaard stops sanding, stands up, regards Horst. More THUNDER.

RYKAARD

Oh?

HORST

A coffin won't be needed after all, he instructs. Still, you'll be paid...

RYKAARD

No coffin? The body's to lie on the ground and rot?

HORST

He wants no coffin...

Rykaard puts down his SANDING TOOL, brushes off his hands.

RYKAARD

Fair 'nuf...no reason not to join you in a pint then, eh?

(cont'd)

As he leaves, a SLOW DOLLY INTO the uncompleted coffin. OVERLAP:

MONKS (O-S)

En ego, o bone et dulcissime
Iesu, ante conspectum tuum
genibus me provolvo...

EXT. COW PASTURE - EVENING

The procession of monks continues its journey. Some hold LIGHTED CANDLES. Again, we hear THUNDER, even LOUDER. The monks PRAY:

MONKS (cont'd)

...ac maximo animi ardore te
oro atque obtestor, ut meum
in cor vividos fidei, spei
et caritatis sensus, atque
veram peccatorum meorum po-
nitentiam, eaque emendandi
firmissimam voluntatem velis
imprimere...

A HERD of CATTLE, agitated by the THUNDER, BLEAT in confusion.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOLDING CELL - NIGHT

SLOW DOLLY to CLOSE-UP of Jerome, eyes open, PRAYER CARRIED OVER:

MONKS (O-S, cont'd)

Dum magno animi affectu et
dolore tua quinque vulnera
mecum ipse considero ac men-
te contemlor, illud præ oc-
ulis habens, quod iam in ore
ponebat tuo David propheta
de te, o bono Iesu: Foderunt
manus meas et pedes meos di-
numeraverunt omnia ossa mea.

As Jerome closes his eyes we hear the VOICE of a single MONK:

MONK (O-S)

Populus vult decipi, ergo
decipiatur. Amen.

The LOUDEST CLAP OF THUNDER so far - *the STORM has arrived.*

EXT. COW PASTURE - NIGHT

The cattle start running into each other as the STORM DESCENDS.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE, HERTOGENBOSCH - NIGHT

The WIND is up now, and it's blowing many of the TENTS set up by the various VENDORS. They try to "batten down the hatches".

SHOTS of individual VENDORS, and their FAMILIES, trying to keep their wares from being blown away. Pandemonium is beginning...

EXT. HERTOGENBOSCH - NIGHT

VARIOUS ANGLES: different areas of the village as the STORM HITS, the wind blowing whatever isn't held down all over the place.

INT. BOSCH HOME - NIGHT

Hieronymus and Aleyt in the house; the wind raging around them.

Hieronymus looks out the window towards his studio, moves towards door. Aleyt reaches out to him. He ignores, determined.

HIERONYMUS

It's all right...let me...

He runs out.

EXT. STUDIO - NIGHT

Hieronymus runs across the yard to the studio. He begins going around the building, making sure the windows are shut and secure. At one point he looks into the sky: a BOLT OF LIGHTNING FLASHES.

EXT. BRAMBLES - NIGHT

The FAMILY that was kicked out of its house, led by BASTIAAN ARENT (the father), runs out from under a thicket of BRAMBLES, which is quickly getting DRENCHED from the ensuing RAIN.

More THUNDER. One of the two children, carried by the Mother, is CRYING.

BASTIAAN ARENT

Quickly! To the barn!

INT. VILLAGE HOUSE - NIGHT

As the STORM RAGES outside, Juana and Philip elegantly dine (as much as possible) on the humble wooden TABLE of the small house.

Philip is drinking wine with his meal (prepared by SERVANTS, seen in background), and Juana is her usual strange, spacey self:

(cont'd)

JUANA

I would like it, Philip...
this evening...if we try an
experiment...

PHILIP

Oh! What's that, dearest?

JUANA

Well I've noticed a pattern
in our dinner conversations.
I thought it might be very
interesting to break that
pattern. I would like to
see how that would manifest.

PHILIP

(humoring)

Really? And what is that,
my love?

Philip eats noisily, slurping away. LOUD CLAP of THUNDER.

JUANA

When we eat the meat, I've
noticed that what you usual-
ly talk about is the wonder-
ful plans you are making for
the Spanish empire...all the
fortunes that will accrue to
the House of Castille and the
citizens of Burgundy...much
of it due to the expansion
and conquests on the conti-
nent, as well as your plans
for infiltration of England
and the northern territories.

PHILIP

Yes, I suppose that's true.

(pause)

I *like* talking about those
things, dear...I would ima-
gine it would give you, my
lovely wife, great pleasure
to hear of the blossoming
cornucopia of wealth and
good bounty the Good Lord
has seen fit to shower upon
His Majesty's Kingdom.

(cont'd)

JUANA

When we're done eating the meat, we often eat a fine dessert.

PHILIP

And tonight will be no exception! I'm looking forward to a fine custard—

JUANA

During that part...the *desert*...I've noticed that you habitually spend *that* time, the time eating the dessert, saying a few token words about the unfortunate...you call them *savages*, usually, whose freedom, or whose lives, must be curtailed in order that this "cornucopia" as you put it, may flourish, and in fact even exist in the *first place*.

PHILIP

Juana, what are you saying?

JUANA

Well, I just...it seems... I don't—...I think it's interesting that you feel a compulsion to bemoan the consequences of these actions that only moments before...during the eating of the *meat*...you're always proclaiming in such a *triumphant* tone.

PHILIP

Juana...*what*???

JUANA

You sound *happy* during the meat, which takes a longer time to eat, and then you sound *sad* during the *desert*, which takes a short time to eat.

(cont'd)

PHILIP
 (rolling his eyes)
 Happy...sad...*Juana*--??

Another CLAP of THUNDER, the RAIN really coming down now. The SOUND of VOICES can be heard from outside, near the barn.

JUANA
 What if you *switched it around* tonight! Spend more time talking about all the atrocities we're committing in the name of the "glory of Castille"—

PHILIP
 (standing)
 Shut up! Shut the *hell* up!

The VOICES outside are making themselves unavoidable.

PHILIP (cont'd)
LUNACY! Why don't you mind your own bus—

Philip and Juana are both distracted by the voices outside. Philip goes to a window facing the barn, followed by Juana.

PHILIP (cont'd)
 Who is that? *What's going on out there?*

EXT. BARN

Bastiaan Arent, surrounded by his family, in the WIND and the RAIN, are outside the barn, trying to get in, seeking shelter.

BASTIAAN ARENT
 Hold on, I'll get the door!

As Bastiaan Arent is pulling on the door, the torrential WIND—
 —*RIPS the ROOF off of the barn!* It FLIES AWAY, into the TREES.

Juana can be heard from inside of the house:

JUANA (O-S)
Nooooo!

Then, the entire structure weakened, a WALL of the barn, pushed by the raging gale, TUMBLES to the ground.

(cont'd)

Almost immediately, the yapping chihuahuas come darting out into the night, running around in all directions.

The family, nonplussed, stands there, shivering and confused, as these little dogs zip out.

JUANA (O-S, cont'd)
My beauties!!!

EXT. VILLAGE OF HERTOGENBOSCH - NIGHT

VARIOUS SHOTS of individual chihuahuas running into the main area of the village - frantic, confused, scampering about pell-mell...

Mixing in with the Vendors and Craftsmen who are in the midst of pulling down tents and loading carts, the chihuahuas run right under the WHEELS of wagons as they're being pushed along. Others are simply not seen, STEPPED ON by the hectic pedestrian traffic.

INT. STUDIO - NIGHT

Hieronymus finishes covering all his paintings with large SHEETS of CANVAS, securing them down with ROPE. He leaves the studio.

EXT. BOSCH HOME - NIGHT

Hieronymus runs back across the yard, Aleyt opening the door for him as he reaches the front door.

INT. BOSCH HOME - NIGHT

Hieronymus shakes off some of the rainwater, stomping his feet. Aleyt goes up to him.

ALEYT
Everything all right?

HIERONYMUS
Yes...(pause). Funny, I always thought it would end in fire...Perhaps my paintings are a lie!

EXT. BARN - NIGHT

The storm still raging, Juana is walking towards the barn, getting completely drenched, her arms out in a futile gesture.

JUANA
Come back...please...

(cont'd)

Philip comes out, followed by the Squire.

PHILIP
 (to Juana)
 Get back inside, dammit!
 (to Squire)
 Keep her inside!

The Maidservant now comes out, too, running over to Juana.

PHILIP
 (to Maidservant)
 Get her inside, now!

Juana is pointing, in the rain, accusingly at Bastiaan Arent.

JUANA
 You...you brought this!

MAIDSERVANT
 (grabbing Juana)
 Come, mistress, you'll catch
 your death!

The Maidservant starts leading Juana back to the house. Juana keeps turning around, looking accusingly at Bastiaan Arent.

JUANA
 You did this!

PHILIP
 (to Squire, indicating Bastiaan)
 Seize him!

The Squire grabs hold of Bastiaan Arent, his wife screaming out:

BASTIAAN'S WIFE
 Nooo! What are you doing?
 We were looking only for
 shelter! *Leave him!*

The Squire ignores her, pulling Bastiaan Arent away with him. The two children are CRYING, clinging onto their mother.

BASTIAAN'S WIFE
What justice is this???

INT. HOLDING ROOM - NIGHT

SLOW DOLLY INTO Jerome. The SOUND of the storm begins to RECEDE.

(cont'd)

An echo of the wife's plaintive cry:

BASTIAAN'S WIFE (O-S)
What justice...?

Jerome slowly begins to open his eyes...

INT. BOSCH HOME - DAY

Hieronymus, in bed, opens his eyes. The *absence* of the sound of the storm is salient. SUNLIGHT is pouring in through a window.

He looks over at the still-asleep Aleyt. Quietly, he rises.

INT. STUDIO - DAY

Hieronymus has several of his paintings lined up against a wall. He is looking at them with curiosity, almost studying them.

SHOTS of SECTIONS of Bosch paintings that depict a fiery inferno, the damned being tortured by demons, etc...

A SOUND...Hieronymus looks at the floor to see, as if being rolled into the studio by some unseen entity, one of those toys with the little ball that goes into a hole against the backdrop, in miniature, of one of his paintings.

CLOSE-UP of the toy as it rolls to a stop right near him, then circles upon itself, landing with the right side up. OVERLAP:

CAINE (O-S)
 No, we're not going to give
 any tickets *back*...It says
 right in the contract...

INT. CORPORATE OFFICE - DAY

Caine is re-gathered with some of the other CEO-types.

CAINE
 (motor-mouthed)
 In the event the parties are
 unable to enter into a formal
 execution of the contract by
 said date, either party, who
 acted in good faith blah blah
 blah the aforesaid date may be
 extended by mutual agreement
 of the parties and/or their
 attorneys by virtue blah blah

(cont'd)

CAINE (cont'd)

blah, oh for godssake, we've got that...we're covered by that clause..."acts of God". The rain has just caused a *delay*, that's all. Yes, yes, we're covered for this in our policy..."acts of God."

CEO-TYPE #1

But nobody here believes in God.

CAINE

(dismissive)

Well the stockholders don't have to know that, idiot... Besides, I've been talking with the board and I think we've come up with a way to turn this unfortunate weather around so the show will be even better than before. Don't worry...a little rain can't hurt us. We just need a third now and I guarantee you...we'll give 'em exactly what they all want...

CEO-TYPE #2

A third? I don't follow... a third *what*?

INT. VILLAGE HOUSE - DAY

Juana is lying in bed, sick, shivering, weeping. The Maidservant is in attendance, administering HOT COMPRESSES.

Philip is pacing back and forth in another room, adjacent.

PHILIP (O-S)

The utter *humiliation*...

JUANA

It's because the cat wouldn't eat. The house is cursed...

MAIDSERVANT

Please, mistress, I beg you, rest now...try to get well...

(cont'd)

PHILIP (O-S)
 (to off-screen Squire)
 Find the man who *built* that
 infernal barn...I want him.

SQUIRE (O-S)
 Yes, my lord.

PHILIP (O-S)
 I've already notified the
 Church and Lukas is ready
 to assist in any way.

INT. ROOM IN HOUSE - DAY

CLOSE-UP of Philip, his expression quite calcified.

PHILIP
 I want this business done.
 And then back to Spain...
 I want out of this wretched
 province. Go on, find him,
 and we'll send them all to
 hell...

INT. HOLDING ROOM - DAY

Jerome is now in the room with Bastiaan Arent, his clothes still
 wet. He sits, bedraggled, on the floor in a corner of the room.
 We hear the SOUND of a HEAVY DOOR being unlocked and opened:

VOICE (O-S)
 (stentorian)
 You.

Bastiaan Arent looks up.

VOICE (O-S, cont'd)
 Get up...

INT. CATHEDRAL OF ST. JAN (BACK ROOM) - DAY

A GUARD stands behind Bastiaan Arent, whose wrists are MANACLED.
 They are opposite Father Lukas, sitting behind his desk. He
 takes a deep breath, then speaks quite deliberately.

FATHER LUKAS
 You have the opportunity to
 honor His Highness by answer-
 ing a simple question.

(cont'd)

BASTIAAN ARENT

I believe I've already "honored" His Lordship by allowing him and Her Ladyship free reign of my own home while my family and I have lived in the province's *bushes* for-

FATHER LUKAS

(standing, angry)

Enough! You arrogant fool! What right do you think you have to put a *measurement* on how much you may or not have honored a great statesman and nobleman? You...who sells us *rotten meat*? Do you realize we're giving you a chance to redeem yourself?

BASTIAAN ARENT

Redeem myself...for *what*?

FATHER LUKAS

For allowing Philip and his Queen to inhabit your abode when your barn was so obviously built by the Devil's own hand! Was it you who built it, then?

BASTIAAN ARENT

(confused)

No, I didn't build the barn, nor the house...but I don't understand how you can say-

FATHER LUKAS

(fire & brimstone)

Because only a barn built by the Devil could not withstand the wind raged by the Almighty Himself! Had it been built with the blessing of Our Holy Father in Heaven, clearly it never would have collapsed, no matter what the force of the tempest that struck it!

Pause. Father Lukas sits down again, still staring at Bastiaan.

(cont'd)

FATHER LUKAS

That's not all, old butcher.
It's not only the *barn*...

BASTIAAN ARENT

Not only...*what do you mean?*

FATHER LUKAS

Her Ladyship tells us even
your home is infested with
the spirit of a demonic cat.
And *still*...knowing all of
this...you permitted Philip
and her entry. Even know-
ing your abode was harbor
for a minion of the devil!

BASTIAAN ARENT

A cat...a *cat*...this is all
too much...What are you say-
ing, Father? We...we have
no *cat*...none at all...

FATHER LUKAS

This persistence, it is my
duty to warn you, will send
you speedily to the gallows.

BASTIAAN ARENT

I...I don't understand what
you want. I only know that
I would like to be reunited
with my family, and I would
like to return them to the
sanctuary of my good home.

FATHER LUKAS

I want the name of the man
who constructed your barn.

BASTIAAN ARENT

But...I fear if I do, harm
will come to this man...in
light of the harsh prejudice
that...for a reason known
only to God sternly attaches
itself to the matter of the
barn's faulty construction-

Furious, Father Lukas stands again.

(cont'd)

FATHER LUKAS

*YOU...are in NO position to
decide what wrath should or
should not befall the man
responsible for Her Lady-
ship's suffering!*

Father Lukas walks around his desk, grabs Bastiaan by the collar.

FATHER LUKAS (cont'd)

*YOU'RE TO GIVE ME THE NAME
OF THIS SCOUNDREL OR YOU'LL
FORCE ME TO USE EVERY MEANS
AT MY DISPOSAL TO GET IT OUT
OF YOU! DO YOU UNDERSTAND,
BUTCHER?*

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

SHOT from a HALLWAY in a modern office building, facing a DOORWAY that is slightly ajar. We only hear VOICES; we see only SHADOWS.

HORST (O-S)

The hay is well placed, sir.
I could do nothing about how
wet it may still be from the
recent storm...

CAINE (O-S)

Of course not, no one could.
You've done very well.

HORST (O-S)

Thank you, sir.

CAINE (O-S)

We called you in because we
wondered if you might do us
an additional favor.

HORST (O-S)

What's that, sir?

CAINE (O-S)

Well...we just want to make
sure everything goes accord-
ing to plan and...well...we
wondered if you might just,
well...sprinkle a little of
this...

(cont'd)

We see a large, (1499-style) CANTEEN of some sort being handed across the space that is still visible through the open door. CUT TO a CLOSE-UP of the Horst's HAND; he wears a GOLD RING.

CAINE (O-S, cont'd)
...just to...you know...in-
sure proper inflammation...

HORST (O-S)
"Proper inflammation"...you
gentlemen use all them fancy
words...

CAINE (O-S)
Any problem?

HORST (O-S)
No, sir...I'll get right to
it...thank you, sir...Thank
you kindly...You've treated
me right good, all right, I
couldn't be happier, yep...
Not a problem at all, sir.

During above dialogue his voice FADES as we-

DISSOLVE TO:

A FIELD - DAY

Hieronymus is sitting alone in a field. He has a stack of parchment and a PENCIL. On the ground beside him is the sketch that he was looking at early in the film - the one by Da Vinci.

He is sketching what will be the left outer wing of the "Last Judgment" triptych - St. James is alone, traversing a barren landscape, supporting a stick and a heavy bag on his shoulder.

On the road several dozen yards in front of him is passing what could very well be some of the WAGONS pushed along by attendees of the Order of the Golden Fleece, which is coming to an end.

A WIND rustles through the high grass surrounding Hieronymus. He keeps looking up and we see his POV of various sections of the field. They are shot in a way to convey an invisible presence. There is, accompanying this, a sort of SIGHING, or PAINED SOUND.

Something suddenly drops onto the Da Vinci sketch. Hieronymus looks, sees: a dying, writhing baby BIRD. He looks up and there is, however, no tree, or anything it could have fallen out of.

(cont'd)

ANGLE on one of Hieronymus' EARS and move into EXTREME CLOSE-UP. Gradually we hear a MARCHING SOUND - an incongruously regimented sound for 1499, as the marching has a distinctive MILITARY aura.

CUT TO WIDE, so we are no longer on just the ear, but Hieronymus. The sound FADES DOWN but there is still a definitive "presence".

A bit later SOUND UP again, this time it sounds a lot like HITLER addressing his TROOPS. It has a very distant quality, like on-air noise picked up in a 1939 Berlin radio broadcast.

SOUND FADES as we-

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CATHOLIC CHURCH AND SCHOOL - DAY

WIDE SHOT of church. Catholic SCHOOL CHILDREN are playing; we hear their jubilant SHOUTS and CRIES. A NUN appears in a doorway of an OUTBUILDING annexing the church and starts ringing a hand-held BELL. The children begin filing into the outbuilding.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

SISTER FRANSCYNTJE (the nun) stands at the head of the classroom, lined with small DESKS in perfect rows. At each desk is seated a young BOY or GIRL. One of them is JEROME.

Each desk has on it a pair of SCISSORS and a PIECE OF PARCHMENT.

SISTER FRANSCYNTJE
Today we are making angels. I
want your angels to look exact-
ly like Leonora's...

She picks up from the desk a perfect CUT-OUT ANGEL. CUT TO a shot of a little girl, LEONORA, sitting there looking smug.

SISTER FRANSCYNTJE (cont'd)
...who has made a *perfect* one.

A little boy, WILLEM, raises his hand.

WILLEM
Sister Franscyntje?

SISTER FRANSCYNTJE
Yes, Willem?

Willem stands up next to his desk to ask his question.

(cont'd)

WILLEM

If I make a good one will
you put it up on the wall?

SISTER FRANSCYNTJE

Yes. That goes for all of
you. If you make a perfect
angel I will put it up on the
wall for all your parents to
see and to be *proud* of you.

She attaches Leonora's angel on the wall to serve as a "model".
CUT TO a CLOSE-UP of Jerome looking, then back to a CLOSE-UP of
the angel. Sister Franscyntje turns around to face them again:

SISTER FRANSCYNTJE (cont'd)

Now...you may begin.

Each student simultaneously picks up the scissors on his or her
desk. Emphasize that each student grabs the scissors with his or
her RIGHT HAND. CUT TO Jerome, who picks it up with his *LEFT*...

The students go at it with excitement, all of them having no
trouble cutting the contours of the angel into the parchment.

Jerome, though, with his left hand, is making the edges of his
cuts very FRAYED. He keeps trying but it's always the same. He
begins looking around him nervously, breaking out in a sweat.

INT. STUDIO - DAY

The St. James sketch is attached to Hieronymus' easel. Now he is
adding* to the background of the scene: a DEMON about to thrust a
knife into someone lying beside an embankment. VERY SLOW ZOOM IN.

*NOTE: In all scenes heretofore showing Hieronymus painting or
drawing, he will always have been doing so with his *right* hand.

EXT. BOSCH HOME - DAY

Aleyt is hanging CLOTHES out to dry on a suspended ROPE in the
yard on the opposite side of the studio. She hears a noise.

Horst is standing beside the house. He's pouring
LIQUID from the canteen onto the foundation. Aleyt walks over.

ALEYT

Horst, is that you?

As if caught doing something he shouldn't, he stops pouring.

(cont'd)

HORST

G'day misses. How are you
on this fine, fair day?

ALEYT

I'm fine. What brings you?

HORST

Oh, I'm just...I was wonder-
ing if you might be in need
of any repair after the aw-
ful storm we had last night.

ALEYT

What were you-...
(indicates canteen)
What's that?

Weird pause. Horst looks at her menacingly, like a trapped rat.

HORST

Do you think I've been doing
wrong, is that what you think?
Man lookin' out for himself?

ALEYT

Doing wrong? What do you
mean? And what is-

She bends down, touches her hand to the foundation and sniffs her
fingers. She does it repeatedly. Horst comes up close behind.

ALEYT

(sniffing)
What *ungodly*-

Horst drops the canteen and grabs her waist, puts his free hand
over her mouth, drags her into the house and kicks shut the door.

INT. BOSCH HOME - DAY

Horst tries manhandling Aleyt, pressing her up against a wall.

HORST

I c'n take ya with me when the
time comes.

Aleyt reaches up and scratches her nails into one of his cheeks,
causing Horst to let go long enough for Aleyt to run back out of
the house.

Horst feels the blood with his hand. He looks at it, terrified.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Defeated, Horst, walks out of the house, sees Aleyt far away in the yard, holding a PITCHFORK defensively. He picks up his canteen and puts its strap over his shoulder, then faces her:

HORST
 (calling)
 Lil' good that'll do when it
 gets hot, and then wontcha wish
 you'd cock a leg...

He begins whistling, walking down the road, away from the house.

INT. DUNGEON - DAY

Bastiaan Arent is lying on his back on a TABLE. A torture device called the "boots" is bound to his lower legs. TWO GIGGLING NUNS are also there, spying from the shadows. One of them is holding a HAMMER; Father Lukas stand beside the table.

FATHER LUKAS
 His name...a simple request
 from His Highness...and then
 you can go...Who is this in-
 competent?

Bastiaan doesn't answer. He looks up at the giggling nuns, sees as the one holding the hammer hands it to the other, then the second hands it back to the first. They do this, back and forth a few times. Father Lukas pulls Bastiaan's head back down.

FATHER LUKAS (cont'd)
 Is it Karel, the bell caster?
 His son Tymen, perhaps? Wouter,
 the glassblower, was it he?

Still not answering, Father Lukas nods to the nuns. The one who happens to be holding the hammer then steps forward, reels back with it, and hits an iron wedge, causing Bastiaan to SCREAM OUT.

CARRY-OVER SOUND OF SCREAMING...

INT. BOSCH HOME - NIGHT

...to the CRIES of Hieronymus, who jolts up in bed, frantic, also screaming. Aleyt, lying next to him, is woken by the screams.

ALEYT
 What is it?

(cont'd)

Hieronymus is panting; his brow is covered in perspiration.

HIERONYMUS

I had a dream...I...

Still terrified, he gets up. He walks over to a BASIN filled with WATER, dips his hand into it and, bending down, pours some over his head and the back of his neck. He sits back on the bed.

HIERONYMUS (cont'd)

I dreamt...I saw...

He holds his hands apart as if grasping an invisible basketball, pulling them even wider apart as he explains:

HIERONYMUS (cont'd)

...pools of fire, souls twisting on mountains of skulls, men strangled by eels with suction cup mouths and poison dagger teeth, harpies wielding blue steel swords, live men's moving faces stitched onto rat bodies screaming, screaming...

An upside down, gaping-mouthed MANTA RAY flaps across the floor.

HIERONYMUS (cont'd)

Five headed dogs tearing men's limbs, their torsos, the heads still alive, in pain, begging for annihilation, mile high jungles and crimson monkeys...

CUT TO ANGLE that emphasizes the space separating, right now in this room, Hieronymus and Aleyt.

During next part of monologue SLOWLY DOLLY INTO this space so it takes up the whole frame.

HIERONYMUS (cont'd)

Purple orange opera comets shooting tendrils of blood... cold chattering cold teeth, pig figures filling basins, ground glass...screeching nails into black bone...

Passing between both of them, the camera starts getting close to a wall, on which something, not yet discernable, is attached.

(cont'd)

But whatever it is is blocked from view momentarily by another image from "The Temptation of St. Anthony" passing quickly across the screen - the horse-skulled, harp-playing figure with the blue cowl, which turns to peer directly at us before moving on.

HIERONYMUS (cont'd)

Sand crabs deep in my pores,
climbing out of my pores, crabs
with faces of devils, white
haired caterpillars crawling
up spines, a million burning
worms like pillows of Satan
burrowing depth into depth,
demons with square handled
eyes, ogling, kidneys raked
with seven pronged awls...

The form of a rather MANGLED ANGEL made from parchment starts to become discernable on the distant wall.

HIERONYMUS (cont'd)

Cross-hatched scars on under-
bellies spelling out the sins
of the damned...

CLOSING IN, now, on this parchment angel attached to the wall.

HIERONYMUS (cont'd)

Heads on icy fire under V of
strafing skeleton geese and
discarded zebras jawbones flying,
landing, growing roots into the
charred earth...a universe of
suffocation, a universe of soft
torture and hard imploding with
the horrible weight of its un-
holy detritus...

We see, now, that the angel has a BLACK MARK on its center.

HIERONYMUS (cont'd)

Irregular heartbeats pumping
bilious seeds, I am damned, I
am the damned, I lick the seed
I am born into a smiling death.

KEEP GOING, until the black mark takes up the entire frame.

HIERONYMUS (cont'd)

Leftover sky scraping bottom,

(cont'd)

HIERONYMUS (cont'd)
 briny black well where the world
 is quietly mad and deliver us
 unto the swift, violent wrath
 that is the only event we're
 properly dressed for...

With the screen COMPLETELY BLACK now, Hieronymus whispers:

HIERONYMUS (cont'd)
 Forgive me, father, for I have
 sinned...

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

SISTER FRANSCYNTJE is walking down each row of desks, inspecting the students' angels like a general inspecting the troops. She makes little approving comments as she glances down at each one.

Then she stops at Jerome's desk. His angel is a mess, the edges frayed all the way around (it is the same cut-out we just saw on the wall in the Bosch home). Jerome is sitting there, trembling.

Long pause as she gazes at Jerome's angel with disgust. Without saying a word she walks up to her desk, opens a drawer and takes out an INKBLOT. She walks calmly back to Jerome's desk.

She presses her thumb onto the inkblot, then lowers it onto the center of the angel, leaving a big, incriminating black BLOTCH. She looks at Jerome, her expression mortifying. CLOSE on her:

SISTER FRANSCYNTJE
That mark is on your soul.

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DUNGEON - NIGHT

MELDING the image, in the center, of Sister Franscyntje, carried-over from previous scene, to the image of the two giggling nuns, each positioned on either side of the frame so that the effect is one of a hideous, THREE-HEADED NUN MONSTER, the middle nun with a stern expression, flanked by two laughing ones on either side...

CUT TO Bastiaan Arent, as if looking up at the monster. He looks as though he has been tortured for hours. Then, back to his POV, and, as if his pain has caused him to hallucinate, he sees:

The BIRD HEADED MONSTER, wearing a clerical ROBE, standing at the foot of the table. The voice, though, is Father Lukas':

(cont'd)

BIRD HEADED MONSTER / FATHER LUKAS
Are you ready to name him?

CUT BACK TO: CLOSE-UP of Jerome, now, lying there, depleted:

JEROME
Y-...Yes...Father...

EXT. SKYSCRAPER - EVENING

We see a section of some modern SKYSCRAPER in an urban setting, close enough to discern, through an open window, a fluorescent-lit office, the only one lit up, as it is after business hours.

CEO-TYPE #3 (O-S)
But he's worked with us from the beginning...he's a preferred *stockholder* for chris-sake...

CAINE (O-S)
Yes, it's a shame. We'll divide up his shares, I suppose. That's how the cookie crumbles.

CEO-TYPE #3 (O-S)
He has a wife. A family.

CAINE (O-S)
Well...I'm sorry about that. Look, I liked the guy, too.

CEO-TYPE #3 (O-S)
Couldn't we just-

CAINE (O-S)
This conversation is over.

CEO-TYPE #3 (O-S)
Bu-

The SOUND of a PHONE HANGING UP.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Horst is alone a field, shoving handfuls of hay into a large BAG.

HORST
(to himself)
Good lady, your beauty's so

(cont'd)

HORST (cont'd)
 fine...that Gabriel himself
 does pine. But we know that
 you might be burned at his
 sight, so he'll come in this
 body of mine...

He's WHISTLES for a bit, then recites another limerick:

HORST (cont'd)
 Isabetta, you insolent pimple,
 you've been caught, so your
 guilt is most simple. And
 you'll get a sound beating
 if you keep up this bleating
 concerning the state of my
 wimple...

Horst starts whistling again, notices something, looks up, sees:

Approaching him is a MAN in a BLACK SUIT (modern attire). He walks stealthily towards Horst, almost robot-like. Then, Horst senses something from another direction, turns around, sees:

From every direction, equidistant in a circle around him, MEN in black suits are CLOSING IN on him, like a Mafia hit.

HORST
 What sight is *this*?

The SUITS surround him. One of them YANKS away his bag and puts a BLACK BLINDFOLD over his head, as two others grab him by his arms and start leading him away. Horst WAILS OUT like a child.

INT. STUDIO - DAY

Hieronymus is painting the "Arrest of Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane". Gradually, we hear the SOUND of LOW-FLYING PLANES. Hieronymus, hearing the noise, too, puts down his brush.

EXT. YARD - DAY

Hieronymus is standing in the yard outside his studio. The SOUND of the planes is getting LOUDER. He hears the occasional SCREAM.

He turns around in different directions and sees:

Just the wisp of SCREAMING FIGURES, here and then there, glimpsed just barely, as he or she runs through a distant line of TREES or behind thick SHRUBS. As if the world is going out of control...

(cont'd)

The sound still louder, Hieronymus looks up in the sky, but there is nothing, only the SOUND, getting louder and louder. OVERLAP:

FATHER TIEBOUT (O-S)

You! Jerome!

INT. BARRACKS - DAY

MATCH CUT to Jerome, looking out a window, to the sky, standing beside a military-like BUNK BED in this strange, disembodied location. Hearing the command, he swings his head to face:

FATHER TIEBOUT (cont'd)

Pay attention! Or have you decided you'd rather let the Devil have His way with you?

WIDER, Jerome quickly runs to the foot of the bed, joining an entire BARRACKS of other boys his age. He stands at attention. FATHER TIEBOUT walks right up to Jerome and SLAPS his face, hard.

FATHER TIEBOUT (cont'd)

I asked you a question!

JEROME

No, sir?

FATHER TIEBOUT

No, sir, *WHAT?*

JEROME

No, sir, I don't want the Devil to have his way with me.

Father Tiebout slaps Jerome again.

FATHER TIEBOUT

I CAN'T HEAR YOU!

JEROME

NO, SIR, I DON'T WANT THE DEVIL TO HAVE HIS WAY WITH ME!

FATHER TIEBOUT

No, *WHO?*

JEROME

NO, FATHER TIEBOUT, I DON'T WANT THE DEVIL TO HAVE HIS WAY WITH ME!

(cont'd)

FATHER TIEBOUT
 THEN *PAY ATTENTION*, SINNER!
 DO YOU KNOW WHERE YOU ARE?

JEROME
 YES, FATHER TIEBOUT, I AM
 IN THE CIRCLE OF HELL FOR
 LEFT HANDED BOYS, SIR!

Father Tiebout slaps him again, even harder.

FATHER TIEBOUT
 WRONG! YOU ARE HERE BECAUSE
 MONSIGNOR VAN ZUIDER HAS BE-
 QUEATHED TO YOU THIS OPPORTUNITY
 TO *AVOID* THE CIRCLE OF HELL
 RESERVED FOR LEFT HANDED BOYS!

Father Tiebout pulls out of his robe pocket the botched cut-out angel Jerome made in Sister Franscyntje's class. He practically shoves it in Jerome's nose.

FATHER TIEBOUT
 ARE YOU RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS?
 DID YOU USE YOUR LEFT HAND TO
 CUT OUT THIS ANGEL?

JEROME
 YES, I DID, SIR!

FATHER TIEBOUT
 SO YOU ADMIT YOU'RE POSSESSED
 BY THE DEVIL?

JEROME
 I...

FATHER TIEBOUT
 ANSWER ME *GODDAMMIT!*

JEROME
 Ye-...YES, SIR, FATHER TIE-
 BOUT, QUITE OBVIOUSLY, SIR!

Father Tiebout hauls off and KNOCKS Jerome onto the floor.

INT. CORRECTION ROOM

Jerome is BOUND to a chair positioned in front of a table with other boys, lit with HARSH LIGHTING. In front of each boy is a

(cont'd)

PIECE of PARCHMENT, and a PAIR of SCISSORS.

Father Tiebout is holding a STOPWATCH. He clicks it on.

FATHER TIEBOUT

START!

Each boy picks up the pair of scissors. Jerome picks it up with his right hand, but one of the boys (HENRICK) picks it up with his left. Jerome and the others begin trying to cut out an angel.

Father Tiebout rushes over to Henrick and knocks him on the head.

FATHER TIEBOUT (cont'd)

WRONG HAND!

Henrick drops the scissors, picks it up with his right hand, starts cutting...but he cannot control the cutting. He shifts it over to his left hand again, and again Father Tiebout CLOUTS him.

FATHER TIEBOUT (cont'd)

(bends down, screaming)

RIGHT HAND, RIGHT HAND!

Again Henrick tries but his cutting is completely out of control.

FATHER TIEBOUT (cont'd)

YOU'RE GOING TO BURN IN HELL,
BOY! YOU'RE GOING TO *BURN!!!*

Terrified, all the other boys try to cut with their right hand as Father Tiebout grabs Henrick and pulls him out of his seat, holding him by his EAR. He clicks the stopwatch again.

FATHER TIEBOUT (cont'd)

TIME'S UP!

INT. PROJECTION ROOM

Begin on a 1920's PORNO MOVIE being projected onto a SCREEN. Father Tiebout then enters the frame, holding his stopwatch, the images projected onto his body as he shouts at the boys:

FATHER TIEBOUT

Since you're *already* all possessed by the Devil what we're gonna do is *turn the Devil on his head!*

WIDER: The boys, including Jerome, are tied into chairs in a

(cont'd)

projection room. Their left arms are STRAPPED DOWN onto the ARMRESTS so that only their right arms and hands are free.

An ANGLE near the projection room's floor reveals that all the boy's PANTS are down around their legs.

FATHER TIEBOUT (cont'd)
We'll turn the sin of Onan into your
own individual salvations...*now*...

He clicks on the stopwatch.

FATHER TIEBOUT (cont'd)
Begin! *Right hand!*

We SLOWLY DOLLY INTO the pornographic scene unfurling...

FATHER TIEBOUT (O-S, cont'd)
Right hand, right hand...

INT. CORRECTION ROOM

There are far fewer boys now (i.e. Henrick is gone), but Jerome sits at the table, again with parchment and scissors. Father Tiebout clicks the watch on.

FATHER TIEBOUT
Start!

This time the boys all have an easier time. They each, including Jerome, begins cutting out decent angels. We hear the SOUND of PLANES, the same sound we heard in last scene with Hieronymus...

In a SLOW PAN around the room we see that, attached to the walls behind the boys are literally HUNDREDS of BOTCHED ANGEL CUT-OUTS.

DURING THIS IMAGE, WE CARRY-OVER SOUND OF PLANES as we-

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. YARD (SKY) - EVENING

Back to Hieronymus' earlier POV of the sky, right away, now, we see LOW-FLYING MILITARY PLANES appearing from over the treetops, the sound quite loud now.

CUT TO Hieronymus, standing exactly where he was before, as if he was standing right there for hours, expectantly...

His gaze follows the planes as they fly past but soon DOZENS, if

(cont'd)

not HUNDREDS, of FIGURES are visible jumping, one by one, out of the planes, their PARACHUTES opening like swarms of PARATROOPERS invading enemy territory - bizarre apparitions filling the sky!

Hieronimus lowers his gaze to ground level and again, he sees these furtive movements, this time closer, and in greater number.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BOSCH HOME - NIGHT

Very barely lit by CANDLELIGHT. Aleyt is holding Hieronimus, who seems petrified with fear. She is rocking him like a child.

HIERONYMUS

I'm sorry I haven't loved you
more...

ALEYT

(comforting)
Shhh...

Hieronimus notices a SPIDER crawling across the wooden floor.

HIERONYMUS

By the time that spider reaches
that broom my heart could
stop. And then what?

ALEYT

Quiet now...I'm with you...
You're tired...you're just
tired...rest now...

Hieronimus closes his eyes, falling asleep as Aleyt continues gently caressing him. CLOSE-UP of Hieronimus' sleeping face...

EXT. MEUSE RIVER (RIVERBANK) - DAY

A BARKER* is standing on the bank of the Meuse River.

BARKER

Crucifixion in Hertogenbosch!
Crucifixion in Hertogenbosch!
A *triple* crucifixion! Buy a
set for three and see a fourth
for free...maybe even *your own*!

*[Note: at this point, as far as people's costumes, we can mix up the time periods. The Barker can be dressed in medieval garb, or

(cont'd)

he can look like Crazy Eddie - it doesn't matter now. Likewise, the costumes of the MOB that invades the banks of the river can be a veritable pot-pourri of fashion. THROUGHOUT SCENE, ACTORS AD-LIB VULGAR, LOUTISH EXPLETIVES AS THEY JOCKEY FOR POSITION.]

There are people all over: people already on the riverbank, and HORDES more rushing from inland.

There are several small BOATS stopped along the riverbank. Each has its own TICKET VENDOR selling passage. People are mobbing into lines in front of each one.

There is a PACK of WILD DOGS, to the side, fighting over a piece of meat. Throughout, the sound of their SNARLING can be heard.

People are pushing others out of the way to get ahead in line, or tricking each other. One person grabs the HAT of the person in front of them and throws it backwards as far as he can, forcing the person to get out of line.

Fistfights break out in scattered places. A SCALPER is selling marked up tickets to the Crucifixion. People are STAMPEDING each other, heads crushed underfoot.

At various spots, to keep the excitement of the crowd up, BAGPIPE PLAYERS are playing their obnoxious instruments with screeching indelicacy, as if giving the mob the music they deserve.

LITTLE KIDS who are crying get slapped in the face by MOTHERS. PICKPOCKETS, or TEAMS OF PICKPOCKETS, work the crowd. If they get caught, it's a punch in the face or a kick in the balls.

CUT TO a SHOT of several CROCODILES farther down the riverbank, sensing a hot lunch, crawling into the water.

BARKER (cont'd)
See the triple crucifixion!

EXT. CATHEDRAL OF ST-JAN - DAY

SLOW DOLLY into the cathedral followed by a DISSOLVE to the window that was broken - Father Lukas is looking out.

The most prominent SOUND is the WIND, and under that a very faint ECHO of CRIES, as if Father Lukas is hearing the approaching MOB.

INT. CATHEDRAL OF ST-JAN - DAY

Shot of Father Lukas in same position, from behind him as he looks out the window. We hear the Deacon's voice:

(cont'd)

DEACON (O-S)
 Father Lukas...

Father Lukas turns around.

DEACON (cont'd)
 We're ready.

INT. HOLDING CELL - DAY

Jerome, Bastiaan Arent, and Horst are each grabbed by a GUARD and, though their legs are chained, they are dragged out, the blind Jerome extending his arms out, flailing.

BASTIAAN ARENT
 Please...let me see my wife
 and child-

The Guard hits him in the stomach with a club, shutting him up. Horst wails the whole time, crying "No, no, no!" over and over.

EXT. VILLAGE HOUSE - DAY

Philip and Juana step into a CARRIAGE, the door held open by the Squire. Before Philip gets in, he says to the DRIVER:

PHILIP
 Head south.

The Squire, overhearing, gestures to Philip before he gets in.

SQUIRE
 But Your Excellency...the
 Crucifixion is in the other
 direction...north of here.

PHILIP
 Nevertheless we're leaving.
 It takes *hours* to die on
 the cross and we really do
 want to be out of the pro-
 vince by nightfall. Juana
 wants to purchase some new
 perfumes in Antwerpen. You
 know how Her Ladyship gets
 if she's not properly per-
 fumed...a trifle *moody!*
 (again, to driver)
 South. Hurry.

Philip climbs into the carriage. The Squire closes the door after him. The driver WHIPS the HORSE and they're off.

EXT. CITY WALL - DAY

There is also a mob gathered at the city wall, the entrance too narrow to accommodate everyone. People start throwing METAL HOOKS attached to ROPES over the wall, trying to get in.

EXT. COURTYARD - DAY

Father Lukas stands behind Jerome. Father Matthys stands behind Bastiaan; the Magistrate stands behind Horst. The prisoners are all restrained by Guards.

The Deacon brings in, on a TRAY, three CROWNS OF THORNS. He walks over to Father Lukas, who takes one, then the same with Father Matthys, then the same with the Magistrate.

The three officials hold the crowns, poised right over the heads. They lower them simultaneously; CRIES from the three prisoners...

INT. BOSCH HOME - NIGHT

SCREAMS are heard and, at the same time, Hieronymus grabs his own head in agony, as if a crown of thorns was being lowered onto it.

EXT. THE RIVER - DAY

People are still trying to pile into boats that are already full. Consequently, the PASSENGERS already on don't hesitate in pushing away the clambering wannabes, even if it means into the water.

PASSENGER

Every man for himself!

(to Wannabe, kicking him)

Why should I care about *you*?

One boat is so preposterously full that one MORON* is climbing the MASTHEAD just to make room. This makes the boat unsteady, and, of course, it TIPS OVER; everyone PLUNGES into the river.

*[NOTE: Every character in this River sequence should be, more than ever in the film, extremely grotesque in look and behavior!]

EXT. UNDERWATER - DAY

SHOTS of the MORONS falling into the water, all of them unable to swim. They sink downward, downward. There is NO SOUND AT ALL.

What ensues is a grotesque underwater ballet of these hapless, flailing FOOLS falling to the bottom of the river. We go lower, lower, cross-cutting from one agonized, drowning FACE to another.

(cont'd)

Out of one of their pockets falls one of the disc-shaped toys with the little balls inside. We then follow *it* as it sinks to the bottom of the river, landing face-up. HOLD for a bit, then:

A last STILL SHOT of many drowned bodies just hovering, bumping into each other underwater, like astronauts in zero gravity...

OVERLAP:

HIERONYMUS (O-S)

We can't save each other's souls!

INT. BOSCH HOME - DAY

Hieronymus is pacing, crazed, screaming, lost in another world. Aleyt watches, listens, beside herself, unable to reach him.

HIERONYMUS

I can't save your soul and you
can't save my soul! We are re-
sponsible for only *our own* soul!
What is this comedy?

ALEYT

I never asked you to *save my*
soul! I never asked you!

HIERONYMUS

WHAT IS THIS COMEDY? GOD HELP
US!

Hieronymus suddenly turns to Aleyt, rushes right up to her and starts grabbing and shaking her.

HIERONYMUS (cont'd)

*ARE YOU THE GOOD THIEF OR THE
BAD THIEF? WHICH ARE YOU? WHO
ARE YOU???*

Aleyt hauls off and SLAPS Hieronymus hard, but it's like he can't even feel it.

HIERONYMUS

We can't help each other!!!

ALEYT

(terrified whisper)
What brings this pain, this
perpetual *pain*...Oh God, oh
pray for us! *Lord God*...

(cont'd)

She falls to her knees, crying.

ALEYT (cont'd)
Lord God pray for us...

EXT. HERTOGENBOSCH - DAY

Begin on an ELDERLY WOMAN, on her knees, hands clasped together, PRAYING. There are several OTHERS on either side of her, also praying. Some stand behind her, burning SAGE and praying aloud.

The CITIZENS of the village are lined up all along the streets. Some are praying, but most are JEERING, SHOUTING VULGARITIES and PUMPING their arms in a gesture of rooting the Crucifixion on...

CUT TO a SLOW-MOTION SHOT of Jerome carrying a crucifix, being pushed along by a Guard. A few yards behind are Bastiaan Arent and, last, Horst, also carrying crucifixes, also being pushed by Guards. The three of them are surrounded by a SEA of grinning, leering, filthy GROTESQUES with a malevolence in their eyes.

Then, (still SLOW MOTION) we see Hieronymus in the crowd. He looks at Jerome, at the cruel mob poking, laughing and cavorting.

HIERONYMUS (V-O)
 Forgive them, Father...they
 know exactly what they do.

Back to Jerome, who, through blind, makes eye contact with Hieronymus. We hear his voice, as if he is telepathically communicating with him:

JEROME (V-O)
 If after I'm crucified, they
 don't remember me, that's how
 you'll know I'm The One.

EXT. CITY WALL - DAY

A WRECKING BALL smashes into the city wall. The *Medieval World* sign TOPPLES to the ground. Other men are beginning to HOIST up a new sign: Apocalypse World

EXT. HILL - DAY

Similar to Golgotha, the three prisoners are forced to a stop by the Guards, who remove their shackles. The MOB, now, is bigger than ever - people stuffed into every available square foot. TV CREWS, even, with their CAMERAS are well positioned on ROCKS.

(cont'd)

Bastiaan's wife is crying, to no avail, held back by more Guards.

BASTIAAN

My husband is a good man! A
good man! Stop this! Some-
body stop this, I beg you!

Horst's wife, too, cries desperately for the proceedings to stop.

Jerome, Bastiaan and Horst are forced down onto their crucifixes. Each is assigned a dutiful pair of CRUCIFIERS, who bring MALLETS and large NAILS, positioning a nail over, first their wrists.

The HOOTING and HOLLERING of the crowd, goading the crucifiers on, is deafening. In the background, Father Lukas is observing.

Mallets raised, then, *THWACK!*, as the first nails are HAMMERED.

INT. STUDIO - DAY

A MONTAGE of shots of every apocalyptic image Hieronymus Bosch ever painted - from the last panels of "The Haywain" and "The Garden of Earthly Delights" to the ocean of tortured souls in center and right panels of "The Last Judgment".

Hieronymus is sitting absolutely still in front of his easel, on which is a blank CANVAS. He picks up a paintbrush with his right hand. He stops himself, noticing the hand he's picked up the brush with.

CUT TO WIDE as he continues to sit perfectly still, having caught himself in the act of grabbing the brush with his right hand.

CLOSE on Hieronymus again, then he looks up; CUT TO his POV of:

The blank canvas. A FILM being projected onto it. But it is...

INT. OFFICE - NIGHT

...a 1920's porno film, again, being shown on a screen in the corporate office. SLOW DOLLY BACK, and we see all the CEO-TYPES we've seen before GETTING IT ON with different NAKED WOMEN.

DOLLY BACK farther, until we get to the head of the table, where Caine is sitting, having FELLATIO performed on him by a REDHEAD.

The PHONE RINGS; Caine picks up the receiver. A muffled voice:

VOICE ON PHONE (O-S)

It's time.

(cont'd)

Caine looks at his watch.

CAINE

Excellent. Burn it down.

He hangs up, lifts us a GLASS of CHAMPAGNE, looks at everyone.

CUT TO a reverse angle on him - he *is* the Bird Headed Monster:

CAINE (cont'd)

Everyone...to our history!

Everybody halts their fornicating to APPLAUD and CHEER wildly.

EXT. STREETS OF HERTOGENBOSCH - DAY

Begin on CLOSE-UP of a HAND lighting a TORCH with an already lighted, rolled-up piece of parchment.

WIDER, and an EMPLOYEE begins lighting every bit of hay that Horst had stuffed into the crevices of the various buildings.

EXT. HILL - DAY

The crucifixes are raised. Jerome is in the middle. Bastiaan is to his left; Horst is to his right. The two of them are writhing in agony, but Jerome is suffering in silence.

In the mob, a couple of GRAVEROBBERS are grabbing each other with excitement as they point to the gold ring on Horst's finger.

A TV JOURNALIST, wearing an EARPHONE is facing a TV CAMERA, holding a MICROPHONE:

TV JOURNALIST

...and then a much *longer* nail that manages to penetrate *both* ankles as well, of course, at the base of the upright crucifix which is made of pine-

The journalist stops as if a message is being communicated to him through the earphone. Pause, then he resumes:

TV JOURNALIST (cont'd)

Sorry, no... we've just learned is the crucifix is made of *Dutch elm*, not pine, so we stand corrected on that...

PAN UP to the sky where the GOOD YEAR BLIMP is hovering overhead.

(cont'd)

Back on ground level, FLAMES beginning to appear all around. No one seems to notice, or care. Or, they notice, and they *like* it.

CUT TO an EXTREME CLOSE-UP of Jerome, his eyes open. He looks up, towards the SUN. We see, slowly, a shadow coming over him.

CUT TO the SUN: a TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE is occurring.

Back to WIDE: the entire landscape is quickly cast into DARKNESS, emphasizing the raging FIRES that are now consuming the horizon.

People begin to CATCH ON FIRE. The entire scene becomes...*HELL*.

INT. STUDIO - NIGHT

Hieronymus is painting frantically...he is using his *left* hand.

Aleyt is POUNDING on the door, but it is as if he is completely transported into some other world now, and he can't even hear it.

Outside the windows, there appear to be FLAMES rising everywhere.

Hieronymus finishes his painting. He puts down his brush and we see his POV as regards it: It is his "Ascent to the Empyrean", depicting a few SAVED SOULS at the entranceway to a beautiful, bright TUNNEL OF LIGHT.

SLOW ZOOM INTO the painting, past the equivocating figures in the foreground, past even the winged figures kneeling in prostration at the entrance of the circle, and farther in, into the circle of bright light so that it takes up the entire frame, all white...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PERFECTLY CUBED ROOM

Hieronymus is sitting, again, all alone, in the exact middle of the room. There is no light source. There is no sound; it is absolutely silent. HOLD for 10-15 seconds.

CUT TO a CLOSE-UP of Hieronymus as he looks straight ahead, his face seeming to get even lighter, as if the light was emanating from him. His expression reflects a blissful recognition.

HIERONYMUS

Adonai...

CUT TO BLACK

END CREDITS BEGIN