

FADE IN:

INT. OFFICE- DAY

CLOSE. A TAPE RECORDER rolls on...

ELLIOT (V. O.)  
Many consider you the top authority  
on the matter.

ALBERT (V. O.)  
Yes. Well, when it comes to Maine  
and his works, I am an authority.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE- CONTINUOUS

ALBERT FUSHEN, an overweight, well dressed, middle aged  
intellectual sits behind his DESK, eating PISTACHIOS.

CLOSE. Albert cracks open a pistachio shell.

Seated opposite Albert, appearing quite intrigued, ELLIOT  
MANNERS nods. He is much smaller than Albert, but dressed  
well.

ELLIOT  
And your newest book is just out,  
correct?

ALBERT  
Yes. Its the culmination of my  
knowledge on Maine. I am pleased.  
Many hours of hard work went into  
it and I hope it pays off.

ELLIOT  
Being a writer is hard work. I know  
exactly what you mean.

ALBERT  
No. I don't think you do.

ELLIOT  
Excuse me?

Albert removes a HANDKERCHIEF from his breast pocket and  
wipes his fingers clean. He stops the tape recorder, leaning  
forward.

ALBERT

See, I don't know whether you've done any REAL writing but by the looks of it you haven't. I'm not sure of course, just guessing. Tell me though, is there something about Maine that you know? Something about him that, perhaps, I don't know?

ELLIOT

I didn't mean to imply that I'm a writer like you or--

ALBERT

--You're not. You're not even on the same level as me. I should end this interview right now.

Elliot's countenance screams of discomfort. He scans his NOTE PAD, attempting to pull himself together.

After a brief moment, Albert rubs his right eyebrow and turns the tape recorder "on."

ALBERT

What other questions do you have for me?

ELLIOT

(Relieved)

Do you consider yourself the most knowledgeable man alive on Sydney Maine? The world's foremost expert if you will?

ALBERT

Lets put it this way. When it comes down to it, I know more about Maine than you or anyone else.

CLOSE on Albert's confident expression.

INT. SYDNEY'S BEDROOM-NIGHT

BOOKSHELVES. Countless BOOKS side by side.

A wall with THREE FRAMED PHOTOGRAPHS. One of them a WRITERS MAGAZINE COVER, the other two PORTRAITS. Each frame depicts a young man. He appears happy and in good health.

(In the background) TAP, TAP, TAP, TAP, TAP, TAP.

A PILE OF TYPED PAGES.

An INHALER on the NIGHT STAND and a SILVER BELL.

CLOSE. Old, frail fingers smash down on the keys of a TYPEWRITER. They flow with skill, efficiency.

Propped up against several PILLOWS, SYDNEY MAINE rests upright in BED, focused.

Attached at his elbow, a CLEAR TUBE runs up and into an IV DRIP. Any resemblance of this old man to the younger man in the photographs has gone long ago.

KNOCK. KNOCK.

FRANK MATHERS, a tall elderly man with wide shoulders, routinely steps into the room balancing a TRAY of FRUITS. In Frank's left chest pocket the top of a PAPERBACK BOOK sticks out.

CLOSE. Next to the fruit, a WHITE CLOTH. On top, a NEEDLE.

FRANK

Mails here. Something else too.

Frank has a PACKAGE.

FRANK

Feels like a book.

Sydney doesn't respond and Frank doesn't care.

Frank places the MAIL and the package down on the night stand. He grabs a BEDSIDE TRAY and sets the fruit there.

Frank handles the needle, plugging it into a CHAMBER at the end of another TUBE. (This tube connects to the IV.) He pushes down on the PLUNGER, dispersing the CLOUDY OFF WHITE LIQUID. We watch it mix with the saline.

Frank removes the needle.

Briefly taking his eyes from the page, Sydney stops typing and scans the fruit.

SYDNEY'S POV

Part of a SLICED PEACH, bruised and brown.

SYDNEY (O. S.)

That peach is bruised.

Frank sneaks a peak at the stack of typed pages.

SYDNEY

How am I supposed to write if I'm eating bruised fruit? I wouldn't be able to write.

FRANK

There's nothing wrong with it.

Sydney goes right back to work. TAP, TAP, TAP, TAP, TAP, TAP.

Quietly, Frank shakes his head and leaves, shutting the door behind him.

INT. ALBERT'S STUDY-NIGHT

CLICK. The lights are on.

A large WOODEN DESK in the center with a BOOK on top. Its the only piece of furniture besides the CHAIR behind it.

On the wall, opposite the desk, TWO FRAMED PHOTOGRAPHS. In one, Albert holds a PLAQUE and shakes hands with a sophisticated gentleman. The other, the WRITERS MAGAZINE COVER of Sydney Maine. (The same one on Sydney's wall.)

Albert scoots to his desk managing a HAMBURGER and SODA and a GREASE STAINED BAG full of FRENCH FRIES. He gobbles a fry, takes a large bite of his burger.

Not wanting to ruin his clean desk, Albert disposes of his food in the TRASH.

A REMOTE. Albert wipes his greasy fingers with a NAPKIN then presses a BUTTON.

Across the room a CD PLAYER lights up and its MECHANICAL INNARDS begin to work. Moments later BERLOIZ begins. *Song d'une de sabbat.*

In front of Albert, his BOOK. Title reads: UNVEILING THE MAN BEHIND THE MYSTERY. ALBERT FUSHEN ON SYDNEY MAINE. The thing looks hot off the press.

Satisfied, Albert removes his CELL PHONE and shuts it off. He takes the DESK PHONE off the hook.

WIDE FROM BEHIND. Albert at his desk. The photo of him and Sydney in the background.

**INT. SYDNEY' S BEDROOM- NIGHT**

Sydney in the same position as earlier, but not typing. He's just sitting, staring straight ahead. He breaks the silence by scratching his chin, then he COUGHS. Seconds later more COUGHING. Its significantly worse this time.

Sydney glances at his inhaler. Its right there. More COUGHING. Instead of reaching for the inhaler, he grabs the silver bell.

**DING! DING! DING!**

**INT. SYDNEY' S BEDROOM- MOMENTS LATER**

Frank holds Sydney over the bed while he dry heaves into a BUCKET. Several times Sydney arches his back, but no vomit, only spit and bile. It looks dreadfully painful.

When Sydney's done and sitting upright again he takes multiple hits from his inhaler.

**SYDNEY**

God damn medicine. Might as well be poison.

Frank sets the bucket aside and moves to the DRESSER where he grabs one BLUE PILL from a CONTAINER of many more.

Frank pours a GLASS OF WATER. He hands both pill and water to Sydney.

**FRANK**

Doctor Jones said it'll help with the nausea.

Skeptical, Sydney checks the blue pill, turning it over. Then he eyeballs Frank.

**FRANK**

Your upset stomach.

**SYDNEY**

I know what nausea is. Anyway...I'd rather go to music. How bout it Frank?

**FRANK**

Absolutely.

SYDNEY  
I feel like Mozart.

Sydney tosses the blue pill back, washing it down with water.

Frank takes the glass and disappears.

Sydney pulls on the BED SHEETS, wiping the corners of his mouth. A small COUGH escapes his chest and he winces in pain. His eyes catch something across the room.

CUT TO:

NICOLAS POUSSIN'S THE SHEPARDS OF ARCADIA looms forward. The painting seems to be creeping, getting larger and larger.

CUT TO:

Sydney's hands strangle the bed sheets. He's terrified, still staring as if witnessing some sort of unspeakable horror.

FRANK (O. S.)  
(Warped)  
This is the only one I could find  
but I'm sure its good... Sydney?  
(Louder and more clear)  
SYDNEY!

CUT TO:

Frank positioned in the doorway holding a CD.

FRANK  
You okay?

SYDNEY  
Put the music on please.

Frank approaches the stereo, inserts the CD.

Sydney does whatever he can to avoid looking directly at the painting.

*MOZART* begins. *Andante Cantabile*

The physical change in Sydney's demeanor is obvious and instant. The music calms him and he lets go of the sheets, closing his eyes.

SYDNEY  
Much better. Thank you.

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