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NIGHT GALLERY

"THE CLASS OF '99"

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NIGHT GALLERY

"THE CLASS OF '99"

CAST

PROFESSOR
TEMPLETON
McWHIRTER
WHEETON
JOHNSON
POHLMAN
EVANS
BRUCE
CLINTON
BARNES
ELKINS
ASSISTANT I
CHANG
FIELDS
PETERSON

SETS

INTERIOR:

CLASSROOM
AUDITORIUM

NIGHT GALLERYTHE CLASS OF '99

FADE IN

1 EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS - LONG SHOT - DAY (STOCK) 1

Favoring the complex of concrete and glass buildings arranged around a large mall. There are distant chimes and equally distant a cappella voices singing a traditional college song.

DISSOLVE THRU TO

2 INT. CLASSROOM - DAY - FULL ESTABLISHING SHOT 2

A large amphitheatre-type room with graduated benches looking down at an instructor's diadem. The room is filled with perhaps fifty young men and women sitting there, conversing quietly.

3 FAVORING A CLOCK 3

on the wall as it hits "10:00." Camera pans down, the voices dying off as a Professor and Two Other Men enter the room through the lower door, move to the diadem and face the students. The Professor puts on glasses, takes a large manila folder from one of the other men, opens it, starts to spread sheets of paper out in front of him in some special order. He then looks up and, with a frosty professorial smile, peers over his glasses at the audience.

PROFESSOR

Well, good morning, young ladies
and gentlemen.

(takes out a pocket
watch, looks at it
briefly, lays it in
front of him)

This is a rather anointed day at our
University -- the occasion of the
oral section of your final examina-
tion.

There is a murmuring from the audience.

4 HIGH ANGLE - LOOKING DOWN ON THE WHOLE SCENE 4

The most definitive description would be -- normality. Beyond a certain predictable tensing up on the part of the class, it's like a small cameo of the academe as played out for hundreds of years.

5 THE PROFESSOR

5

his two assistants standing behind him. As he speaks, he looks down at his notes:

PROFESSOR

Let me review briefly our procedure. I will direct random questions to various of you and will grade you immediately. Keep in mind, however, that the question may be repeated at any time to someone else.

(again the frosty smile as he looks up)

Needless to say, I wish you all very good luck. It is the hope of the University -- its faculty -- its administration -- that this class of '99, already so scholastically distinguished, continue its extremely high level of performance in this, the final examination. And with that, ladies and gentlemen, we shall begin.

An assistant hands him another manila folder which he opens, studies briefly.

6 THE STUDENTS

6

in rapt, silent attention.

7 PAST STUDENTS TO PROFESSOR

7

PROFESSOR

General heading -- Science. Sub-heading -- Propulsion. In the middle of the thirteenth century, a scientific work appeared in the Greek language written by Marcus Graecus. Annotate this work for me, please --

(consults roster)

Mr. Templeton.

8 REVERSE ANGLE

8

as Templeton rises to his feet.

TEMPLETON

The publication in question was an extract from the works of Albertus Magnus and Roger Bacon.

CONTINUED

PROFESSOR

Mr. McWhirter, Roger Bacon was called what?

MCWHIRTER

The English Powder Monk.

PROFESSOR

Miss Wheeton. This work is now available in what language and how is it identified?

WHEETON

It is available in a Latin translation. Its sub-title: "Liber Ignium Ad Zomburendum Hostes."

PROFESSOR

The names of four men in the past three centuries whose experiments have related to Propulsion. Mr. Johnson.

Johnson, a tall, nervous-looking student, rises.

JOHNSON

Sir William Congreve, William Hale, Dr. Robert Goddard ---

He closes his eyes, ponders, sweats. Camera moves slowly in for an extreme closeup during the following:

PROFESSOR'S VOICE

A fourth name?

JOHNSON

(looks up, eyes glazed)

C...C....

PROFESSOR'S VOICE

A shining body of water...or the Spanish affirmative. Can you proceed, Mr. Johnson?

Johnson half closes his eyes in the last desperate struggle for recall, then he looks up, anguished.

JOHNSON

It's a name with two initials.

Camera shifts, pans the faces of the other students who look rigidly forward.

9 THE PROFESSOR

9

We see him scratch out a name on the roster sheet.

PROFESSOR

That will be all, Mr. Johnson.

10 FAVORING JOHNSON

10

who stands there, head down, motionless. The Professor looks up, raising his voice slightly.

PROFESSOR

I said that would be all, Mr. Johnson.

JOHNSON

(looks up; in a soft voice which carries over the silence)

Part of my answer was correct.

PROFESSOR

I'm sorry -- what is your point?

JOHNSON

I said part of my answer was correct. I gave three names.

PROFESSOR

(nods amiably)

Yes, Mr. Johnson -- and I asked for four.

JOHNSON

(desperation showing)

I gave you three out of four.

The Professor studies him.

11 ANOTHER ANGLE - FAVORING THE STUDENTS

11

as if by effort, they stoically refrain from looking at either principal and, at this moment, we get the first sense of "tilt" in what is being played out; a preliminary suggestion that we are observing an upper strata of something that goes much deeper and is notably far from the norm.

11-A FAVORING PROFESSOR

11-A

He takes off his glasses.

CONTINUED

11A CONTINUED

11A

PROFESSOR

Indeed you did, Mr. Johnson -- and by giving me three out of four, you proved that you were incompetent. You're proving now, by your behavior, that you are even less responsive to authority than you are to the scholastic criteria established for graduation.

(the amiability departs;
his voice is cold and
caustic)

Well, Mr. Johnson -- will you sit down -- or shall I....

12 CLOSEUP - JOHNSON

12

his eyes wide with fear, his voice a frantic shout:

JOHNSON

No, sir -- please. No, sir --
(then, very softly)
I'll do as I'm told.

He slowly sits down, lowers his head, stares at the floor.

13 THE PROFESSOR

13

who smiles again, looks around the room.

PROFESSOR

I apologize for the delay.
(a beat)

Mr. Pohlman. The fourth name, if you will.

14 POHLMAN

14

POHLMAN

C. N. Hickman.

15 FULL SHOT - THE SCENE

15

PROFESSOR

The portion of the Newtonian theory most relevant to Propulsion, Mr. Bruce.

BRUCE

To every action on any object, there is an equal opposite reaction on some other object.

CONTINUED

15 CONTINUED

15

PROFESSOR

(studies him, not
completely convinced of
his ability)

Mr. Bruce...given 'M' as the mass of
a rocket and 'V' as the velocity, con-
tinue that equation.

BRUCE

The equation as follows. Exterpolated,
'M' would also be the mass of the
propellent and with 'V' as the velo-
city, the equation would read V equals
V LOGe.

PROFESSOR

(grudgingly)

Very good.

16 THE PROFESSOR

16

as he checks the stop-watch, makes some notations on the roster
sheet, then reaches for another manila folder handed him by one
of his assistants.

PROFESSOR

We'll move now into the Behavioral
Sciences.

(again the glasses go off,
then on; looking up,
studies class)

As you know, ladies and gentlemen,
this is perhaps the most important
facet of the University curriculum.
Your capacity to function in society
and to contribute are of the essence.
Now, Mr. Clinton -- in the area of social
interrelationships, a hypothetical
case. Look at Mr. Barnes on your left.

17 FAVORING CLINTON

17

who looks toward another student across the aisle: Barnes, a
black student.

PROFESSOR

The hypothesis as follows. Mr.
Barnes is in competition with you
for an extremely important profess-
ional position. Now, Mr. Clinton,
first of all, describe Mr. Barnes
for me.

CLINTON

About five foot eleven. Approxi-
mately one hundred and eighty pounds.

professor

His age?

CONTINUED

17 CONTINUED

17

CLINTON

(shrugs)

Twenty-one....

PROFESSOR

Look at him now...is there any other salient feature which you might consider relevant?

CLINTON

(in a flat voice)

He's black.

PROFESSOR

So, being black, he may pose a special problem?

(as Clinton nods)

What sort of special problem?

CLINTON

Pushy...aggressive.

PROFESSOR

Anything else?

CLINTON

Possibly inferior.

(looks toward Barnes)

Being black, he might be inferior.

PROFESSOR

So we have Mr. Barnes over there as an irritant...a possible block to your ambitions...an inferior man trying to usurp your superiority.

(a beat)

What would you do to a man like that, Mr. Clinton?

CLINTON

On the primary emotional level ---

PROFESSOR

That's all I want from you now.

CLINTON

(tonelessly)

I'd slap him.

PROFESSOR

(nods)

Quite correct.

(looks toward Barnes)

Do so, Mr. Clinton.

CLINTON

Yes, sir.

18 FULL SHOT - THE SCENE

18

Clinton turns, moves down the row of seats to the aisle, reaches Barnes, looks down at him.

PROFESSOR

Rise, if you will, Mr. Barnes.

Barnes rises, faces Clinton who hauls off with an open-palmed blow that comes up from the floor. Barnes recovers, stands there, his face a flat mask revealing nothing.

PROFESSOR

All right, Mr. Barnes. Describe the gentleman who just slapped you.

BARNES

Five-foot-nine. One hundred and fifty pounds. Twenty-one years of age. Blonde hair.

PROFESSOR

Complexion.

BARNES

White.

PROFESSOR

A Caucasian.

BARNES

(nods)

A Caucasian.

PROFESSOR

Primary emotional level again, please -- a reaction.

BARNES

Bigoted. Aggressive. Pre-set prejudices. Illogical attitudes.

PROFESSOR

(nods)

And your response to him?

BARNES

Slap him back.

PROFESSOR

Do so, if you will.

Barnes turns and hits Clinton with his open hand; a blow delivered with stunning force. Throughout all this, the entire class onlooks with no visible reaction to the proceedings.

CONTINUED

18 CONTINUED - 2

18

PROFESSOR

All right, gentlemen. Independently,
please -- a reaction to what you
have just done.

CLINTON

Satisfaction.

PROFESSOR

Mr. Barnes?

BARNES

Satisfaction.

PROFESSOR

All right, gentlemen...take your
seats.

The two men return to their desks and sit down quietly. The
Professor looks down at his roster, looks up again.

PROFESSOR

Miss Peterson.

19 FAVORING PETERSON

19

who rises.

PROFESSOR

In the area of stimuli to subconscious
hostility, look around the room, if
you will, please. Pick a subject
whom you instinctively respond to
in a primarily negative way.

Peterson looks around the room. Camera follows her gaze,
settling on another girl, Fields - an absolutely stunning,
mini-skirted blonde - very chic.

PETERSON

Joanne Fields.

20 FULL SHOT - THE SCENE

20

PROFESSOR

Stand, if you will, Miss Fields.
Face Miss Peterson.

The blonde rises, turns toward Peterson.

PROFESSOR

Association, Miss Peterson.

CONTINUED

20 CONTINUED

20

PETERSON

Well-dressed...obviously wealthy family...social register...that kind of thing. Tends toward snobbery.

PROFESSOR

The source of the hostility. Relate, if you can.

PETERSON

My...my family. Southern Pennsylvania. Father dead. Mother uneducated. Many brothers and sisters. Very poor. No...no social distinction at all.

PROFESSOR

(nods)

Proceed then.

Peterson sidesteps her way down and in front of the row of seats across the aisle to Fields. She looks at a large gold pendant hanging around the girl's neck, reaches out and rips it off, looks down at it clutched in her fist, then suddenly flings it across the room where it lands on the floor near the Professor. He looks at it briefly, then up and across at Fields.

PROFESSOR

Miss Fields -- a reaction, please.
(as Fields turns toward Peterson)
Hostility source first.

FIELDS

White trash. Ignorant. No...no graces. Envious. Money conscious. Social climber.

PROFESSOR

Proceed then.

Fields deliberately walks past Peterson, goes down the steps, picks up the pendant, carries it back up the steps over to Peterson, lifts up one of Peterson's hands, shoves the pendant into it, then spits in her face. The class stares at this entire episode emotionlessly. The Professor, his voice flat and bland, murmurs:

PROFESSOR

Take your seats, please.
(consults roster;
eyes narrow)
Mr. Elkins.

21 FAVORING ELKINS 21

a spare, dark-haired kid who rises near the front row.

PROFESSOR

The hypothesis as follows. A society
made up of your kind...and an enemy.
Pick out a potential enemy, please.

Elkins turns very slowly to survey the room behind him.

22 ELKINS'S POINT OF VIEW - THE LAST ROW 22

An Oriental student named Chang sits in the aisle seat.

23 FULL SHOT - THE SCENE 23

ELKINS

William Chang.

PROFESSOR

Stand up, Mr. Chang.

Chang rises. Elkins is in the f.g. The Professor's voice
now takes on a softer tone, almost suggestive:

PROFESSOR

How do you view a possible relation-
ship here, Mr. Elkins?

ELKINS

No possibility of a relationship.
A question only of survival.

PROFESSOR

Mr. Chang or you?

ELKINS

(nods)
One or the other.

PROFESSOR

(almost a whisper)
And how would you translate this
into a form of action?

24 CLOSE SHOT - ELKINS 24

who turns and looks toward Chang.

25 CLOSE SHOT - CHANG 25
who stares back at him.

26 HIGH ANGLE - LOOKING DOWN 26

ELKINS
(in a soft voice)
Kill him.

PROFESSOR
A little louder, please, Mr. Elkins.
I'm not sure I heard you.

ELKINS
(voice now over-loud)
I'd have to kill him.

27 FAVORING THE PROFESSOR 27

who nods, looks over his shoulder toward one of his assistants who reaches into a briefcase, takes out a gun, hands it to the Professor who puts it down on the table.

PROFESSOR
The modus operandi, Mr. Elkins.
Proceed, if you will.

Elkins steps out into the aisle, moves to the table, picks up the gun, turns, faces the class. He starts slowly up the steps, gradually lifting the gun high so that it's pointing straight ahead of him.

28 CHANG - ELKIN'S POINT OF VIEW 28

as he looms up larger and larger with Elkin's walk toward him.

29 FAST CHANG TO ELKINS 29

Elkins now points the gun at Chang's chest. Over Elkin's shoulder we see the Professor in the b.g.

PROFESSOR
All right, Mr. Elkins. Proceed.

Chang stares directly into Elkin's face and Elkins returns the stare. Angle slowly tightens on the gun as we see the safety catch released and Elkin's index finger starting to squeeze the trigger.

30 INTERCUT - SERIES OF CLOSE SHOTS 30
thru
33 Chang, Elkins, the students, and finally the Professor. 33
For the first time, we see the flicker of emotion on his face.

34 EXTREME CLOSEUP - THE GUN 34
as the trigger is squeezed off.

35 THE GLASS DOOR 35
behind Chang as it explodes into shattered, cascading glass.

36 TWO SHOT - CHANG AND ELKINS 36
The latter slowly lowers the gun, stands there silently with his head down.

PROFESSOR'S VOICE
Mr. Elkins.
(no response; louder)
Mr. Elkins!

Elkins lifts his head but does not turn. Camera shifts slightly, bringing the Professor into view.

PROFESSOR
You deliberately missed killing the enemy.

ELKINS
(softly)
Yes, sir.

PROFESSOR
I didn't hear you, Mr. Elkins.

ELKINS
I deliberately missed him, sir.

PROFESSOR
Why, Mr. Elkins?

ELKINS
I...I can't say.

37 REVERSE ANGLE - PAST THE PROFESSOR TO ELKINS AND CHANG 37
The Professor comes out from behind the lecturn to stand at the foot of the stairs.

CONTINUED

37 CONTINUED

37

PROFESSOR
You can't say, Mr. Elkins? Was
that what I just heard? Reflect a
moment, if you will. Explain to me
why you failed to kill the enemy.

ELKINS
(very softly)
I'm not sure...he is the enemy.

PROFESSOR
(pouncing on every word)
You are not sure that he is the
enemy?

Elkins starts to walk slowly down the stairs.

ELKINS
He's not the enemy.

ELKINS
(pauses half-way down,
looks back toward
Chang, then to the
Professor)
He's not the enemy. I can't just...
just kill without knowing why I'm
killing...or who I'm killing...I
just can't do that. I mean...I
can't deliberately take a gun --

38 THE PROFESSOR

38

with his assistants behind him looking on tensely.

39 THE CLASS - FROM THE PROFESSOR'S POINT OF VIEW

39

For the first time, there is a murmur of reaction.

40 FAVORING THE PROFESSOR

40

His eyes dart left and right. He's conscious of the reaction.
He turns abruptly toward one of his assistants, snaps his
fingers, barking in a terse, high, brittle voice:

PROFESSOR
He's infecting the others. Deactivate
all of them!

Angle widens slightly as an assistant moves to a panel of
buttons behind him, flicks three switches, then turns.

41 SERIES OF SHOTS - THE STUDENTS 41
thru
46 The classroom lights dim briefly. There's a loud electronic hum. Elkins stops abruptly on the last step and freezes, one foot in the air. Each of the other students likewise freezes in whatever he or she is doing. 46

47 BACK TO PROFESSOR AND HIS ASSISTANTS 47

PROFESSOR
(grimly)
Unusual...

ASSISTANT I
Sir?

PROFESSOR
To find such total resistance.

ASSISTANT I
And unpleasant.

He looks questioningly at the Professor whose narrowed gaze pans the classroom.

PROFESSOR
Give me selective control over here.

Assistant I moves back over to the panel, flicks one switch. The Professor steps away from the lecturn, looks around the room of silent frozen people.

48 PANNING SHOT - THE FACES - PROFESSOR'S POINT OF VIEW 48

The pan stops on Johnson.

PROFESSOR'S VOICE
Mr. Johnson. Your attention, please.

Johnson very slowly looks up, the only person in the room to show movement.

PROFESSOR'S VOICE
We have previously set up the hypothesis of a major social and political problem. Do you recollect it?

Johnson slowly looks around toward Chang, then to Elkins, then beyond to the Professor.

JOHNSON
Yes, sir, I do. You had established the presence of the enemy. And you had requested Elkins to --

49 THE PROFESSOR

49

PROFESSOR

Never mind what I asked him to do.
You will assume his role, Mr. Johnson,
but in the process, you will explain
to me the new ramifications of the
problem.

50 PAST THE PROFESSOR TO JOHNSON

50

as he moves from his seat, walks down the steps to stand near
the frozen Elkins, his voice flat, factual:

JOHNSON

Elkins has refused to respond to
his responsibilities. He's failed
to kill the enemy.

PROFESSOR

(a thin smile)

Very good. Go on.

Johnson takes the gun from Elkin's hand, saying:

JOHNSON

So what evolves is yet a second
enemy.

PROFESSOR

In the nature of -- ?

JOHNSON

Traitor. Subversive. An unreliable.

51 FAVORING THE PROFESSOR

51

who looks briefly and satisfiedly at his assistants, then
smiles at Johnson.

52 CLOSE SHOT - JOHNSON

52

He lifts up the gun, aims, presses the trigger.

53 HIGH ANGLE - LOOKING DOWN ON THE CLASS

53

Concurrent with the explosive roar of the gun, the students
are galvanized back into an existence.

54 EYE-LEVEL ANGLE - THE STUDENTS 54

as all eyes look down toward Johnson. A slow pan along the rows of faces to the face of Johnson, then a pan down to Elkins, lying on his back at Johnson's feet. Zoom in tight on Elkin's face...or what remains of it. The destroyed face is the inside of a wrecked computer -- torn, smoking wires, cracked light bulbs, and one phony eye dangling.

55 UP ANGLE - JOHNSON 55

who stares briefly and emotionlessly down, then looks up toward the Professor.

56 THE PROFESSOR 56

He nods and smiles.

PROFESSOR

Very good, Mr. Johnson. You've reinstated yourself most admirably. You get an "A".

DISSOLVE TO:

57 INT. AUDITORIUM - CLOSE SHOT - FEET - DAY 57

marching in tune to "Pomp and Circumstances." The feet and the portion of the legs visible are encased in black graduation robes. The music ends. The shot from the floor now moves up to take in a row of robed graduates, then pans up to Johnson in his robe and mortar board standing in front of a microphone.

JOHNSON

Fellow students of the graduating class of 1999, it is my pleasant duty as representative of the class to make these few remarks during this commencement ceremony.

(a beat)

We need not be reminded of recent history and why we are here. It's sufficient that we recollect that major wars, pestilence, pollution, have reversed the over-population trend and left a world depleted and diminished. It is for this reason that we have been created -- to repopulate society. We have been created by man in his image. All that we know...our attitudes...our values...are part of the integral

CONTINUED

57 CONTINUED

57

JOHNSON (Cont'd)
data fed into us and we shall use
them as a point of beginning. We
must be just...but ruthless in terms
of survival.

Camera starts to pull away past the rows of graduates.

JOHNSON'S VOICE
We must recognize that many of the
ancient virtues are simply weak-
nesses. For example, to tolerate
an inferior is an act of misplaced
compassion and, as such, interferes
with our function as members of the
society ---

LAP DISSOLVE THRU TO

58 INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

58

The room is empty save for the sprawled-out body of Elkins
-- the wrecked cavern of the once human face -- the sightless
artificial eye staring straight up and Johnson's voice pro-
viding an obligato to the tableau.

JOHNSON'S VOICE
We shall repay our debt to man by
emulating him. We shall act as men
...react as men.
(a beat)
We shall be men.

SLOW FADE OUT

THE END