

ONCE UPON A FORTNIGHT
an original screenplay by
Stephen Settimi

An imaginative story based on historical facts.

Stephen Settimi
134 Rada Rd.
Purgitsville, WV 26852
stephensettimi@gmail.com
+1304.359.4254

OVER BLACK

SUPER: "ART IS A LIE THAT MAKES US REALIZE TRUTH, AT LEAST THE TRUTH THAT IS GIVEN US TO UNDERSTAND." - PABLO PICASSO

FADE IN

1 EXT. BUDAPEST, HUNGARY (1956) - STATE PUPPET THEATER - DAY

SUPER "BUDAPEST, HUNGARY OCTOBER - 1956"

SUPER BENEATH: "DAYS UPON A FORTNIGHT"

HENRÍK MÜESER (19), brooding artist, dark brown curly hair, a three day beard approaches the sidewalk to the STATE PUPPET THEATER.

He stops to watch a band of DEMONSTRATORS stream into a large park across the street, and a clutch of AVH SECRET POLICE observing them from afar. Henrík quickly turns away to enter the Theater.

2 INT. STATE PUPPET THEATER - LOBBY

WORKING CLASS FAMILIES of KIDS, MOMS, DADS, making their way to the stage area to watch the puppet show. They talk in hushed voices.

Henrík stands out among the patrons and observes a few STREET DEMONSTRATORS enter the lobby, leaving their picket signs at the doorway. They appear to be organizing, conspiring.

They blend in with the crowd greeting compatriots with hugs and handshakes.

3 INT. STATE PUPPET THEATER - AUDIENCE HALL

Henrík sits among the AUDIENCE as the puppet show begins:

SUPER: "TOLDI ON A HORSE"

Henrík studies the PUPPETS, smiles at their broad antics.

He looks around through the audience and spots JÓZSEF JAKOVITS (40), a banned artist, curly-haired, wearing a tweed cap and coat. Henrík tries for József's attention, but he is consumed watching the performance.

Henrík's eyes shift and now fixed on an UNDERCOVER AVH AGENT (30s) in the audience who is also watching József.

On the stage, Puppets continue to act out the popular legend of the heroic 12th century knight.

The who's-watching-who continues intensely as the puppet show reaches its climax.

AUDIENCE cheer, APPLAUD, and file out of the Hall.

Henrik tries to weave his way through the exiting crowd to catch up with József, but he's too late. Undercover AVH Agent quickens his pace and comes up behind József, and follows him closely out the door.

4 EXT. STATE PUPPET THEATER - MOMENTS LATER

József among audience members exit the theater.

STUDENTS protesters carry picket signs reading:

"RUSSIANS OUT OF HUNGARY - MAGYARÉ NOT YOUR PUPPETS!"

Undercover AVH Agent continues to track József down the sidewalk.

Just then an UNMARKED CAR pulls up. AVH OFFICIAL #1 (40) and AVH OFFICIAL #2 (20) jump out.

Henrik watches the action and slows his pace.

Undercover AVH Agent pushes József into the clutches of the other AVH Officials. They strong-arm him, and lead him down a quiet tree-lined street, despite his vehement protests.

Henrik follows at a safe distance.

5 EXT. JAKOVITS' STUDIO - DAY

The AVH Officials and Undercover AVH Agent with József in arm proceed along a sidewalk flanked by attached row-homes.

AVH officials #1 AND #2 Stand outside the Studio door and impatiently wait as József complains while stalling to unlock it.

Meanwhile, standing outside, Undercover AVH Agent spots Henrik a few yards down the sidewalk and fixes an eye on him. Henrik sees he's being watched and ducks behind a large tree.

6 INT. JAKOVITS' STUDIO

AVH Officials and József enter the studio.

Avant-garde SCULPTURES sit on pedestals and shelves. ETCHINGS hang on the walls and in stacks. SCULPTING MATERIALS AND TOOLS rest nearby. On a table sits a SMALL PRINT MACHINE, a SHORT STACK OF leaflets near it.

The Officials randomly examine pieces of Art.

AVH Official #2 quietly scours the studio looking closely at every item encountered. He picks up an etching.

AVH OFFICIAL #2
What is this supposed to be?

JÓZSEF JAKOVITS
It's an etching. Can't you see?

AVH OFFICIAL #1
This so-called art isn't tolerated.
It does nothing to promote the People.
Are you aware of that?

JÓZSEF JAKOVITS
It lifts the spirit. If that does
not promote people, what does?

AVH OFFICIAL #1
Don't get smart with me.

AVH Official #2 picks up a leaflet and reads it.

AVH OFFICIAL #2
And of this?!
(to Official #1)
Here, comrade take a look. It's
something by Khrushchev.

AVH Official #1 takes the leaflet and looks it over.

AVH OFFICIAL #1
(to József)
So, you work for the State do you?

JÓZSEF JAKOVITS
What do you mean?

AVH OFFICIAL #1
This almost reads like something out
of Moscow.

AVH Official #2 picks up another leaflet, reads it, and
laughs.

AVH OFFICIAL #2
I don't think so, comrade. It reads
more like a condemnation of Hungary...
out of Moscow. It's Nikita calling
out Ernő!

AVH OFFICIAL #1
I see no mention of Ernő.

AVH Official #2 shakes his head at the display of ignorance, exasperated.

AVH OFFICIAL #2
Read between the lines.

AVH Official #1 dismisses the suggestion and stuffs the leaflet into József's coat pocket.

AVH OFFICIAL #1
(laughs)
Read between the lines, he says!

He continues to survey the room landing on a colorful abstract painting.

AVH OFFICIAL #1 (CONT'D)
This style of art... What do you
call it.

JÓZSEF JAKOVITS
Avant-garde.

A moment pause and a look of confused ignorance.

AVH OFFICIAL #1
Yes, exactly.

Systematically, the Officials take the sculptures and etchings piece by piece out the door.

JÓZSEF JAKOVITS
Hey! Stop! Wait!

7 EXT. JAKOVITS' STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

Henrik watches the Officials bring the art pieces onto the sidewalk. He sees the same UNMARKED CAR pull up in front of the studio.

The DRIVER (27), goatee, dark hair, steps out. He retrieves a sledge hammer from the trunk and proceeds to viciously smash the sculptures.

Henrik watches, horrified. Approaches and tries to intervene, but Driver pushes Henrik aside.

HENRIK
The Party claims to promote art in
Hungary, yes? Then why are you doing
this?

Driver stops a moment and levels a dark, hollow stare at Henrik.

DIRECTOR

There's a limit to art, and to our
patience. You should mind your own
business, comrade.

AVH Official #2 brings the last pieces out of the studio and
throws them on the pile. He holds on to a DRAWING not yet
revealed. Then passes it on to AVH Official #1 as he comes
out of the studio. They descend on to Henrík and Driver.

AVH OFFICIAL #1

What is the matter here?

(to Henrík)

Who are you?

Driver lights the heap on fire. A devastated József calls
out from the doorway.

JÓZSEF JAKOVITS (V.O.)

Stop!

AVH Official #2 re-enters the studio and immediately returns
carrying the small print machine and the short stack of
leaflets. He momentarily stumbles at the doorway -- a beat --

He then pushes the print machine off onto József, while
holding on to the leaflets. József, powerless, his eyes go
to the fire at the street.

AVH Official #2 carries the leaflets to the fire, tosses
them on top. BREEZE scatters a few leaflets before they light
ablaze.

AVH OFFICIAL #2

(to AVH Official #1)

There are some small pieces still in
there on a shelf.

AVH OFFICIAL #1

Let him have them as keepsakes.

HENRÍK

This is art! Don't you understand
what you're doing?

Undercover AVH Agent stands at the perimeter diverting curious
PEDESTRIANS away from the scene.

AVH OFFICIAL #1

This type of Art is banned. What
is your business here anyhow?

HENRÍK

I'm a friend of József Jakovits.

AVH OFFICIAL #2
Are you an artist too?

HENRÍK
I am.

AVH OFFICIAL #1
Are you registered?

Henrík looks nervously at the other Officials.

HENRÍK
Yes, I suppose. I don't know.

AVH OFFICIAL #2
You either are or you aren't.
What kind of art?

HENRÍK
I'm a painter.

AVH OFFICIAL #1
Where is your studio?

HENRÍK
In Jozsefvaros.

AVH OFFICIAL #2
(laughs)
Figures.

AVH OFFICIAL #1
Your name is...

HENRÍK
Henrík Müeser.

AVH OFFICIAL #1
(yelling to Driver)
Müeser, Henrík, in Jozsefvaros!

The driver acknowledges this and returns to the car and retrieves a registry. He scans a list of names, occupations, and addresses.

DRIVER
Yes.

Henrík, first uncertain of the reply, breathes a sigh of relief.

AVH OFFICIAL #1
Can we give you a lift?

HENRÍK
I'm heading the other way.

AVH OFFICIAL #1
Where?

HENRÍK
The State Puppet Theater.

UNDERCOVER AVH AGENT
Funny. You just came from there.

HENRÍK
I forgot the playbill.

AVH OFFICIAL #1
A tragedy. Best hurry. They close soon.

AVH Officials #1 and #2 chuckle and head towards the car talking among themselves.

AVH Official #1 hands AVH Official #2 the Drawing now revealed:

"THREE BROTHERS FIGHTING BROTHERS"

AVH OFFICIAL #1 (CONT'D)
See that this gets to the Gündt.

Henrík lost in thought stares into the dwindling flames.

A LEAFLET, among others, lays on the sidewalk partially scorched. Henrík picks it up, looks at it, then stuffs it in his pocket.

Turns again and sees József still standing at the studio door as if in a trance. He calls out.

HENRÍK
József!

József halfheartedly waves, turns, shakes his head in despair, and carries the print machine back into his studio. The door closes.

UNDERCOVER AVH AGENT (O.S.)
Here, You needn't go back to the theater. I have one for you.

HENRÍK
What's that?

Henrík turns to Undercover AVH Agent, who pulls a PLAYBILL out from his inside pocket. Hands it to Henrík and smiles.

UNDERCOVER AVH AGENT
Don't anger the puppets.

8 EXT. NYC - THE CANVAS SIDEWALK CAFE - MORNING - PRESENT DAY

SUPER: "NEW YORK CITY, PRESENT DAY"

THE CANVAS is an arty bistro house. LUSH GREEN PLANTS set in artisan pottery accent SCULPTURES on pedestals. Myriad ABSTRACT PAINTINGS are suspended from an overhead, vined trellis.

ANONYMOUS, of no guessable age, well-heeled -wearing a pair of Louis Vuitton Minister Derby shoes, conservative yet stylishly dressed, sits at an outside table. He leisurely drinks ESPRESSO and eats a BRIOCHE and peruses the NEWSPAPER.

He raises his hand - that of an older gentleman, and tugs at his ear. The high pitched ringing sound we've been hearing diminishes and fades into the sounds of the city.

NEWSPAPER HEADLINE: "IDAHO COLLEGE CENSORS REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CARE ART".

ADVERTISEMENT: "IBSEN ART GALLERY -- BANNED AVANT-GARDE ART OF HUNGARY."

JUST BEYOND the raised newspaper sit struggling actors, SHELLY (27), lithe and raven-haired beauty with an angular presence, and GENE MCGADDEN (28), a thin, strikingly handsome and somewhat effeminate young man.

Shelly stares off into the distance sips on a coffee, turns to watch a YOUNG WOMAN (19) carrying on giddily with TWO MEN at a nearby table.

SHELLY
Hey, have you noticed Stan lately?

GENE
You mean being so pissed-off at us?
Dah! Yeah!

SHELLY
There's not a single line where he doesn't give someone that shitty smirk of his - if I didn't need this gig I'd bail on him.

Anonymous's hand tightens slightly on the newspaper. A slow crease forms across its pages. He slowly sets the Espresso cup down without a sound.

GENE

Who wouldn't! What do you expect?
The guy's always on the edge. This
is probably his last chance at a
Broadway production. Come on, let's
go. I wanna get back. Got a hot
date tonight.

SHELLY

Oh? Do tell.

Gene throws money on the table. Waits for Shelly to collect
her phone. She picks up a SCRIPT - "THE MÁGI PAINTING".

She shoves both into a small backpack.

The two walk off down the sidewalk. We see Shelly
gesticulating intensely. Gene laughs. They continue arm-in-
arm and cross a sidewalk into CENTRAL PARK.

SHELLY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Got your lines down?

GENE (V.O.)

Flagg is an easy role! Had'em
memorized after the first rehearsal.

BACK TO ANONYMOUS

A WATCH on his wrist shows the Time of day. A bright gold
Masonic ring on his pinky finger reflects a beam of sunlight
illuminating the familiar square and compass.

He finishes his coffee, folds paper on table, stands, places
a \$20 NOTE down and walks off still faceless.

9 EXT. NYC - CENTRAL PARK - SAME

Crossing 5TH AVENUE into the park, Anonymous heads down a
pathway.

SIDEWALK ARTISTS display paintings. KIDS RUN past. COUPLES
STROLL. CITIBIKES stream by. Suddenly out of no where...

An eccentric, grizzled PANTOMIME ARTIST leaps out in his
path.

After a beat, Pantomime Artist gestures Anonymous to follow
him. He Does. A moment later, the Pantomime Artist vanishes
among the throngs of passersby.

Anonymous turns about seeking the lost pantomimist. His
eyes then spot the IBSEN ART GALLERY ahead. He heads in
that direction.

10 EXT. NYC - IBSEN ART GALLERY - DAY

Anonymous approaches the IBSEN ART GALLERY, a building boasting a statement of architectural modernism. In stark contrast, a placard advertisement:

BANNED AVANT-GARDE ART OF HUNGARY, OCTOBER 26 - NOVEMBER 24TH.

PROTESTERS with picket signs and banners among some that read:

"END CENSORSHIP OF THE ARTS"

"ART IS FREE SPEECH"

"FUND K-12 MUSIC & ART"

He passes through the small gathering unaffected and walks up the marbled stairs. He clearly steps to the side of a particular PAINTING in the window that depicts an abstract street scene of a square in Budapest Hungary.

BLOOD RED graffiti scrawled on the canvas reads -- "BUDAPEST THEN, USA NOW. RESIST!"

He turns to look back. An OLD WOMAN of no guessable age catches his attention just at the side and foot of the steps wearing a paint-flecked coat.

The Old Woman artist sets up a folding easel facing him. She squeezes a worm of CADMIUM RED paint onto her palette.

Anonymous tilts his head to the side in a questionable look -like the RCA dog's head cocked at sound coming out of a Victrola megaphone.

He slowly turns back and walks into the Gallery.

11 EXT. NYC - STARLIGHT THEATER - ALLEYWAY - DAY

Anonymous turns his head up back up the alley. We now see his face. REVEALED: STAN FARKAS, wearing a Flap Cap, is an irascible, weathered, pushing his later Eighties, silver-maned stage director - the one we have heard described despairingly by Shelly and Gene and not yet met. He rounds the corner into the alley and heads to the back stage door.

12 INT. STARLIGHT THEATER - BACKSTAGE - DAY

The door opens and a slice of light beams in.

The door closes. Darkness, then work lights.

Stan hangs the cap on the prop rack with terrible neatness, rolls his shoulders back, and walks around the curtains to a half-lit stage.

Lying about on a near empty stage -save for a sofa, a stool, easel, and a window hanging upstage from the fly loft, are members of his cast whom we shall meet latter.

STAN

Again. From the knock.

13 EXT. NYC - STARLIGHT THEATER - DAY

Now a closer look at the ART-DECO relic straight out of the 1920's. The facade is adorned with insets of geometric shapes and stark linear projections pointing upwards to the boldly lit marquee.

STARLIGHT THEATER-- the letters set in with a myriad of bulbous lights, entirely outlined with burgundy and white colored neon tubing -- *you should see it at night!* --

Shelly and Gene come up the sidewalk. Shelly looks up at the marquee. Gene pulls out a CELL PHONE from back pocket and checks the time.

GENE

We're late. C'mon!

Shelly fumbles through her backpack.

SHELLY

Yeah, yeah. Hold on. I can't find my phone.

GENE

(laughs)

It's in there somewhere. Dig, honey.

SHELLY

You go ahead. Let Stan know I'll be there in a second.

GENE

Right. I can hear him already, "Where the fuck is she?"

(beat)

See you inside.

Gene takes to the side alley at the rear of the building.

Shelly trails behind still searching her bag.

14 EXT. BUDAPEST - JOZSEFVAROS DISTRICT - DAY

SUPER OVER BLACK: "JOZSEFVAROS DISTRICT - BUDAPEST 1956"

On the streets TRUCKS, BUSES, BICYCLES, and a few LADA CARS.

Building walls and facades are splattered with GRAFFITI overwriting pro-Soviet propaganda.

"MINDEN SZOVJET KI MAGYARORSZÁGRÓL MOST!"

-- *Slogans, chants and banners, and some speech in Hungary scenes to be translated by subtitle. In this case "ALL SOVIETS OUT OF HUNGARY NOW" --*

A large banner on a brick building depicts Mátyás Rákosi smiling. GUNFIRE is heard in the distance.

On a crowded sidewalk, BELLA GILDER (18), a demure and sophisticated artist wearing a drab washed-out brown, mid-calf skirt, a worn turtleneck sweater. She carries an ARTIST PORTFOLIO under arm.

She glances at the opposite side of the street where AVH AGENTS whitewash over an Avant-garde style painted mural:

JAZZ ARTIST PLAYING A SAX

A pair of CHILDREN dutifully peel off posters pasted on telephone poles reading "REVOLT AGAINST THE REGIME". They occasionally look up at a supervising AVH AGENT for approval.

He gives it to them with a nod and smile.

15 INT. STARLIGHT THEATER - ONSTAGE

HOLD ON: An AVANT-GARDE PAINTING of a posing nude male.

The painting is positioned on an easel on the stage now dressed as an artist studio - a replica of Henrik's studio in Budapest which we have yet seen.

The set reveals a myriad of paintings on the walls - all seemingly renditions of a Bohemian studio out of the past.

Shelly steps into character and dabs a thin brush of RED PAINT on to the canvas.

SOUNDS OF ARTILLERY FIRE AND FLASHES OF LIGHT AT AN UPSTAGE SCRIM

PHILIP (20s), young and innocent-looking with a mischievous manner poses in the nude on a weathered Chesterfield sofa just on the other side of the easel.

AT THE UPSTAGE WINDOW

TIM SCHMIDT (28), having a well trimmed muscular physique, and an ego to boot, has eyes fixed viewing a scene 'outside'.

SOUND FROM OFFSTAGE: KNOCK. KNOCK.

Through the 'studio' door walks KEVIN (28), tall, lanky, with a neatly cropped black beard who plays the role of Julio.

Tim takes note.

-- All actors speak with a hungarian accent when playing their roles in the staged play --

TIM

Ahh, Julio. Come in! Look who's here Bella.

SHELLY

Julio! You're back! How have you been? When did you arrive from Vienna?

KEVIN

Earlier today. Customs at Hegyeshalom was awful!

Kevin joins Tim at the upstage window and takes a quick look.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

And what the hell is happening on the streets?

A moment, then exhausted from travel, he plops down on the sofa next to Philip. Checks out Philip up and down. Unaffected that Philip is naked, and unimpressed with what he sees as he takes a quick glance at Philip's member.

TIM

You've been out of Hungary too long. The government's clamping down.

KEVIN

I would have been here sooner but Customs decided to look through all our bags this time. I think they believe... They believe...

Kevin having momentarily forgot his lines.

PROMPTER (V.O.)

The Soviet Union is going to rise like some --

KEVIN

The Soviet Union is going to rise
like some Phoenix and re-ignite
Stalinism.

BACKSTAGE

PROMPTER (20's) in the wings with script in hand. She follows the dialogue diligently, looking up periodically to watch the actors on stage.

KEVIN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

You know the baggage handlers dig through your luggage just to see what's new and unusual. I guess they think anyone who arrives here from anywhere but the Union has baggage loaded with cash.

PHILIP (O.S.)

You mean coming in from the West?

KEVIN (O.S.)

East, West anything but the USSR. They don't know the difference. They're new to the country. Their heads are like compasses looking for the North Pole.

ONSTAGE

STAN (O.S.)

Okay, enough! Stop! Enough!

Stan, marches up on stage from a front row seat in the audience section. He paces.

A handful of other CAST and CREW MEMBERS (who will largely remain nameless throughout) stand around the stage of an otherwise empty theater.

STAN (CONT'D)

Nothing but false notes. Didn't clock a single real moment here. Shelly, Tim, I'm saying this to you as a friend: you've got to do better. Am I clear?

Shelly and Tim share an irritated glance.

STAN (CONT'D)

You think this is a costume drama, Kevin? Wigs and accents? Let me tell you what October in Budapest was.

Stan steps up onto the stage. Stands in the false studio among the false paintings. Closes his eyes.

STAN (CONT'D)
It's the smell of turpentine and coal smoke. Both at once, in every room, always.

MATCH CUT TO:

16 INT. HENRÍK'S STUDIO

Bella enters through the door of a cramped, but alluring studio

A gray CAT gathers at her legs and PURRS. A myriad collection of AVANT-GARDE PAINTINGS are stacked against the walls.

Bella glances at the painting OF PÉTER (23) - a boyish yet sharp-witted nude model posing just on the other side of an easel manned by Henrík.

BELLA
Hello, Péter.

PÉTER
Afternoon, beautiful.

Bella nods, 'hello' to Péter. She puts her portfolio down and picks up the cat, then walks into a SMALL KITCHEN alcove.

Heads to a table with a HOT PLATE on it and SMALL RATIONS of bread and potatoes. She finds a clear spot at a grimy glass window framed with dingy curtains and looks down at the street below.

POV - BELLA

Protesters in the streets stream in one direction toward a Plaza in the distance. She spots the same children removing placards unfavorable to the regime and the same vigilant AVH Official.

RANDOM GUNSHOTS RING OUT AT A DISTANCE

BELLA (V.O.)
Henrík... how can you work with all that shooting outside?

HENRÍK (V.O.)
Things are getting weird. On one hand, it's scary, on the other, it's exhilarating.

BACK TO SCENE

Bella turns away from the window.

BELLA
(to Henrík)
You were here all night?

Henrík concentrates on his painting, does not respond.
Péter poses out of sight on the other side of the canvas.

PÉTER
We were both here.

BELLA
Posing?

HENRÍK
Painting.

Bella looks at both of them suspiciously, and steps over to her own easel whereon sits another, more abstract, rendition of Péter.

Henrík drags a PAINT BRUSH over RED PAINT on a PALETTE and scrupulously applies it to the canvas adding meticulous detail to the painting.

Bella and Péter exchange glances while Henrík paints.

BELLA
(to Péter)
You stayed over then?

No response from Péter has Bella conveying a questioning look to Henrík.

HENRÍK
I thought that was clear. I don't ask you of your comings and goings. Of which there have been many recently.

BELLA
I'm allowed to have friends outside of our friendship, Henrík.

HENRÍK
A friend, or perhaps that poseur Bálint sniffing around?

Ignoring these provocations, Bella examines the painting of Péter on Henrík's easel and then the rendition of Péter on hers. She picks out a few TUBES OF OILS, squeezes them on to a palette and mixes them into an array:

FRACTALS OF SWIRLING COLORS OF PAINT DOMINATED BY RED

Bella looks at Henrík and then again at Péter. Péter's eyes are fixed on Henrík. He furtively glances at Bella. She picks up a brush and refocuses on the painting in front of her.

HENRÍK (CONT'D)

(to Péter)

Take a break, man.

BELLA

(objecting)

You do no such thing! I have to get my chance.

PÉTER

Let me have a smoke first.

Péter stands, half covers himself with a robe, lays back on the sofa. He lights a CIGARETTE, watches Henrík and Bella.

Bella dabs color on the painting.

Henrík comes up from behind her and rests his head on her shoulder. He talks in a hushed tone.

HENRÍK

What is it?

BELLA

You think I have these colors mixed right?

HENRÍK

That's not it.

BELLA

What do you mean?

HENRÍK

The color is fine, but your hue isn't. What's wrong?

A beat, then Bella glances into Henrík's eyes, then to Péter's, then toward the window, then back at the painting:

17 INT. CAFE FESTMÉNY

SUPER: "CAFE FESTMÉNY - BUDAPEST"

Bella stands at the counter of the tight, smoke-filled coffee shop.

Small groups of people cluster around bistro tables talking in muffled tones.

She sips espresso while she scans the room, intrigued by hearing different snippets of conversations above the din.

A woman's voice is heard speaking giddily.

FEMALE (O.S.)
It's happening today, I'm certain of
it. I can feel it! Can't you?

MALE 1 (O.S.)
(laughing)
You sound pretty certain of yourself
for a Huszáros!

Bella zeros in on the conversation between the FEMALE (19) dressed in stylish attire not all of the same class as her MALE COMPANIONS (20s) both of the working class, dressed less stylish.

POV - BELLA

MALE 1 (CONT'D)
Veres is right!

MALE 2
And Imre Nagy? What of him?

FEMALE
Oh, he's definitely on our side. I
just know it!

Female scans the room.

FEMALE (CONT'D)
Do we have to always meet here?

Female takes a bite of pastry and sips on a cup of coffee.

Her male companions catch her gawking disdainfully at the rougher looking patrons of the cafe.

FEMALE (CONT'D)
These people are not very dignified.

The two men shake their heads at her pretension.

18 EXT. BUDAPEST - **VÖRÖSMARTY CAFE (1956) - DAY**

POV - ANONYMOUS - ACROSS FROM VÖRÖSMARTY CAFE

An AVH OFFICIAL directs two STATE WORKERS as they paint over remnants of the imprinted sign of the formerly Swiss-owned shop, GERBEAUD.

CUSTOMERS at bistro tables on sidewalk talk among themselves, looking askance at State Workers. Their displeasure evident.

Henrik sits at a table talking with three others as he watches the workers carry off the Gerbeaud sign. Unblinking eyes forward, he sips a coffee in heavy thought.

His thought is interrupted by a COUPLE walking arm-in-arm crossing the sidewalk onto the plaza, one gesticulating intensely to the other.

Across from them, boisterous STUDENT PROTESTERS with PICKET SIGNS chanting "RUSSIANS OUT OF HUNGARY" -- "CIVIL LIBERTY NOW."

Above them, a PROPAGANDA BANNER strung from tree to tree:

IMAGE OF STALIN EMBRACING FACTORY AND FARM LABORERS

A MOTHER coaches her CHILD to pass out FLYERS to bystanders and passersby. Child drops a FLYER and it flutters to the concrete sidewalk.

CLOSE IN - HAND

Reaches down and picks up the flyer. It's of a FEMALE TEEN among similarly aged friends. They close in to check out the announcement.

"FREEDOM BEGINS TODAY! LIBERTY! VERES SPEAKS - BEM PLAZA 1PM".

The Teens show vague interest. Female Teen drops flyer to the ground. A second one picks it up and slips into her skirt pocket.

19 EXT. BUDAPEST - MARGARET BRIDGE OVER THE DANUBE - DAY

We follow Bella cross over the Margaret Bridge. Ahead of her on the opposite bank she spots the gathering at BEM PLAZA.

20 EXT. BUDAPEST - BEM PLAZA - DAY

At the center of the Plaza is a STATUE OF GENERAL JOZSEF BEM surrounded by a large GATHERING OF PROTESTERS crowding sidewalks and into the street.

VERES (59), a boisterous, wizened figure, stands at the base of the Bem Statue, finishing a sixteen-point impassioned speech. A chaotic crowd watch with pent-up exuberance.

VERES
... Number thirteen, we demand that
the statue of Stalin, symbol of
(MORE)

VERES (CONT'D)
Stalinist tyranny and political
oppression, be removed as quickly as
possible and be replaced by a monument
in memory of the martyred freedom
fighters of 1848 and '49. Number
Fourteen we demand the replacement
of emblems foreign to the Hungarian
people by the old Hungarian arms of
Kossuth. We demand new uniforms for
the army which conform to our national
traditions...

Bella watches Veres speak to the enthralled crowd. She
then spots Henrík.

Henrík makes his way through the crowd to Bella, elated to
see her.

BELLA
Henrík!

Bella and Henrík embrace with two pecks on the cheeks.

HENRÍK
What are you doing here?

BELLA
Just taking it in.

Bella snatches one of the flyers off the ground and hands it
to Henrík, who looks at it but is totally disinterested in
reading it.

HENRÍK
Tsk. You and I should be painting
and forget all this political
drudgery. Come on, let's go.

Veres' speech ends and the crowd roars its approval. Veres
steps down, makes his way through the Protesters to lead
them over Margaret Bridge toward the Parliament on the
opposite bank.

The Crowd streams over the DANUBE from Buda to Pest.

Henrík puts his arm around Bella's waist as they stream past.
His mind momentarily wanders.

HENRÍK (CONT'D)
It's captivating... I could see this
on canvas!

BELLA
Hey, Henrík, did you see the new
painting I'm working on?

HENRÍK
No. What is it?

BELLA
It's of Péter.

HENRÍK
(uneasily)
Another one? Is that so?

BELLA
(smiling)
Your favorite model, no?

Henrík tightens subtly at this.

Bella looks at the crowd streaming over the bridge and then
back to Henrík visibly torn.

BELLA (CONT'D)
Hey, why don't we join the march for
a bit?

HENRÍK
The State is the State, marching
won't put an end to it. Come on now,
I want to see what you've done.

She looks back at the crowd, slightly wistful.

BELLA
Okay. Let the regime be damned!
You're right. They can't tell us
what to paint, right?

HENRÍK
Who knew you were such a dissident!

Bella and Henrík make their way through the crowd.

HENRÍK (CONT'D)
Hey, did you see Jakovits' "Dove of
Peace" at the museum yet?

BELLA
No.

HENRÍK
You've got to! It's this abstract of
a dove with these fat wings, claws,
big breasts, and... guess what else!

Henrík ruffles his eye brows and smiles at Bella.

BELLA
Well, don't keep me in suspense!

HENRÍK
A cock!

BELLA
Oh my word!

HENRÍK
It's unbelievable! I'm surprised
the regime lets it stay.

The commotion continues to pull at Bella and competes with
another thought taking her yet somewhere else.

HENRÍK (CONT'D)
What is it? You're elsewhere.

BELLA
I suppose I ought to tell you.
The tour is moving forward!

Henrík stops cold. He's stoked!

HENRÍK
Really! Bella that's incredible.
How did you manage it?

BELLA
I managed.

HENRÍK
Oh come on! Tell me.

An excited PROTESTER (19) dark hair, very thin, Hungarian
flag bandanna around his neck walks up to Henrík and Bella.

PROTESTER
Hey! We're all going this way.
Come on!

Protester points to the crowd crossing the Bridge.

HENRÍK
Why?

PROTESTER
Crap, man! Weren't you listening?
We're going to march on the
Parliament!

A surprised Henrik looks across the bridge to see hundreds of protesters now marching alongside the Danube on the Pest side toward the PARLIAMENT BUILDING.

21 EXT. BUDAPEST - VÁROSLIGET PARK (STALIN SQUARE) - NIGHT

DOZENS OF PROTESTERS clustered together carry arms, sticks and bricks.

Two among the Crowd break away and mount a SIXTY FOOT STATUE OF STALIN with steel ropes and cables in hand, pulling them up to fasten around the head of the Stalin Statue.

Protesters below pull on the ropes and cables.

Nearby Bella stands on her toes feverishly looking for her someone in the Crowd.

FADE TO BLACK

PRE-LAP - A STAGE WEIGHT CRASHES ON TO THE BOARDS

22 INT. STARLIGHT THEATER - ONSTAGE - RESUME - PRESENT DAY

A GRIP flinches, apologizes. The actors stand in a loose ring around Stan, who opens his eyes as if surfacing from the deepest depth of thought, shifting quickly to the Grip.

STAN
Get that off the set.

Silence.

GENE
(carefully)
Stan... the turpentine. The coal
smoke. That's not in the script.

STAN
(the smirk)
It's in the walls.

He steps off the stage and back up the aisle into the dark.

23 EXT. BUDAPEST - STREETS - DAWN

A SOVIET T-34 tank grinds down a boulevard, treads chewing cobblestone. Shopkeepers pull shutters. A BOY runs past with a bundle of rifles wrapped in a curtain.

24 EXT. BUDAPEST - CAFE FESTMÉNY - DAY

The street is busy, an eerie calm. One stray gunshot. Pedestrians hustle along the sidewalk carrying a concerned,

focused look in their eyes. BICYCLES AND MOTORBIKES stream by.

Henrik and Bella step on to the sidewalk to take a seat at a table. They push empty BOTTLES OF BEER and an ASHTRAY aside. A young WAITER appears.

WAITER

Coffee?

HENRIK

Make it two.

Bella takes Henrik's hand. Looks into his eyes. Henrik looks past her at groups of protesters seemingly coming out of nowhere, swarming together, moving quickly, all in one direction toward the center of town. Their pace picking up with every step.

CAR WITH LOUDSPEAKER ON ROOF drives past broadcasting in a loop.

LOUDSPEAKER (V.O.)

STOP THE ERNO GERO REGIME! THE SOVIET UNION IS SET TO DESTROY US. COMRADES, ATTENTION! TODAY IS THE DAY TO PROTECT HUNGARY. STOP THE ERNO GERO REGIME! THE SOVIET UNION IS SET TO DESTROY US. COMRADES, ...

POV - BELLA

In among the growing crowd, a small gang of VERY YOUNG BOYS stride past, rifles slung over their shoulders.

BACK TO SCENE

Approaching on a bicycle ISTVÁN GILDER (17), Bella's impulsive brother, reddish hair, tall, burly, wearing an overcoat, Hungarian flag-printed scarf around his neck. He rides up to the table and dismounts. Excited. Smiling.

ISTVÁN

Sister. Henrik. Come on! Today's the day we take back our country! Look around! It's happening!

Henrik and Bella get up and embrace István.

BELLA

Little brother, all grown up.

Henrik feels an object under István's overcoat.

HENRÍK

What's this?

István pulls back the coat to reveal a MOLOTOV COCKTAIL wedged in the inside pocket.

BELLA

István! Are you mad?! What if you're stopped?

ISTVÁN

The AVH? They're outnumbered today! Look around.

Bella looks even closer at a few of the men and women. She eyes their overcoats, tries to discern if they are carrying weapons as well.

HENRÍK

I'm ready.

Henrík pulls back his jacket and displays a PISTOL.

Bella aghast, looks at Henrík warily. István smiles and embraces Henrík.

BELLA

You don't say anything about this.

HENRÍK

We have to be prepared.

ISTVÁN

Yes! Everyone's to meet at Stalin Square. There will be thousands of us! We can't let this go on. Come along, Bella.

BELLA

(hedging)

I want to but... Ernő is ruthless. I heard dozens have disappeared. They're being tortured! We just need to get out of Hungary.

ISTVÁN

Running isn't the answer. It has to be this way. Fight fire with fire. It will be a blood bath on their end unless our demands are met. Are you coming?

Henrík and István wait for Bella to respond. She doesn't.

Henrík embraces Bella and kisses her on the cheek.

HENRÍK
Don't worry. We'll meet you back at
the studio.

Bella, concerned, watches Henrík and István leave to join a growing number on the street. All heading toward the Square.

25 INT. STARLIGHT THEATER - ONSTAGE - PRESENT DAY - LATER

The actors rehearse their last scene.

FLASHING LIGHTS through upstage window represent artillery shelling. Off stage SOUND EFFECTS of shooting and explosions.

Shelly now paints a scene that she sees outside the 'window' of a city under siege.

CUBIST STYLE PAINTING OF A CITY UNDER SIEGE

Tim at her side, mentors and points to elements on the canvas as she paints. Gene and other cast and crew all appear totally drained, shifting foot to foot, look on impatiently for their cue and rehearsal to be over.

STAN (V.O.)
Again!

Tim and Shelly stop acting instantly.

TIM
Stan! This is the fifth time.

SHELLY
Yeah, Stan, it's late. I need to go.

Stan sits in a front row seat.

STAN
And it was done five times wrong.
Damn it! What is it with you people?
Stick to the damn script and my
directions! Damn it! Now again!

Shelly and Tim steam and go back into position.

STAN (CONT'D)
Tim, from your line!

Tim repositions offstage then enters from behind Shelly through the 'studio door'. He watches Bella paint.

TIM
Things are getting bad, Bella.

Shelly reacts.

SHELLY
Henrík! You surprised me! How
long have you been standing there?

TIM
Long enough. It's incredible how
your work looks so much like mine!
You've matched the color tone
perfectly. You astonish me.

Tim takes Shelly around the waist, kisses her neck. She
shuns him and tries to paint.

SHELLY
Let me just finish up.

SHELLING AND BLASTS

Shelly and Tim are stunned. They stop to look off to the
window, pause then cross up stage.

Out of nowhere, Stan now on stage, halts Shelly mid-cross.

STAN
Bella stands at the left of the
window. Behind the drapes. Not just
looking at the window!

Shelly flips pages. Checks the stage direction. Looks up.

SHELLY
...It doesn't say that anywhere.

STAN
(already walking away)
It didn't have to.

PRE-LAP - LOUD CROWD YELLING - RANDOM RIFLE SHOTS

26 EXT. KOSSUTH SQUARE - OUTSIDE PARLIAMENT - DAY

Crowds swarm on the lawns outside Parliament en masse.

HENRÍK (V.O.)
And you think this will end well?

CROWD
(Chant)
END CENSORSHIP! DOWN WITH THE PUPPET
REGIME! FREEDOM OR DEATH!

27 EXT. KOSSUTH SQUARE - OUTSIDE PARLIAMENT - DUSK

FADE IN FROM BLACK

Sound dynamics have changed, extreme tension in the air likened to the calm before a storm. We're in the eye of a hurricane.

STUDENTS, SHOP OWNERS and WORKERS are amassed in the Square.

PROTESTERS' SIGNS "DOWN WITH ERNÖ GERÖ" - "SOVIETS OUT OF HUNGARY NOW!"

ARMED AVH POLICE encircle the Park.

Henrík is among the gathered crowd.

Bella a short distance from him. He spots her and waves to get her attention. She sees him. They head toward each other through the crowd, and meet at beneath the Kossuth Statue.

HENRÍK
You're actually here!

BELLA
I am! Where's István?

Henrík points vaguely into the large crowd.

HENRÍK
Off over there.

Bella searches through the hundred as she and Henrík climb onto the pedestal at the base of the statue and canvass the surrounding chaos. They're captivated by the mass of humanity.

THREE MEN on the roof of an adjacent building pull down a huge RED COMMUNIST STAR.

LOUDSPEAKER (V.O.)
THIS IS IMRE NAGY TALKING TO YOU.
HUNGARIANS! THE GOVERNMENT WILL BEGIN
NEGOTIATIONS ON THE WITHDRAWAL OF
SOVIET FORCES. A NEW, BROAD NATIONAL
GOVERNMENT WILL BE FORMED. RETURN TO
YOUR HOMES — ORDER AND CALM NOW SERVE
THE NATION.

GUNSHOTS ring out, not far away from Henrík's and Bella's position. Startled, they duck down, only to realize it's the same band of Very Young Boys seriously joyous in firing their rifles into the air.

Something in Bella is triggered.

Henrík looks into her eyes and sees FURY! EXCITEMENT!

HENRÍK
We're right in being here, Bella.

She leans in and kisses him.

SUDDENLY the AVH opens fire on a group of protesters reveling in the speech of Imre Nagy. Several fall to the ground.

A STORM IS IGNITED! The hurricane now makes landfall. The casual demonstration escalates into a bloody Thursday afternoon.

28 INT. PARLIAMENT BUILDING - RECEPTION CHAMBER

SUPER: "RECEPTION ROOM - HUNGARIAN PARLIAMENT"

At a Baroque wooden table across from ENVER HOXHA (48), portly and self-satisfied, sits ERNÖ GERÖ (58), gaunt with a long, narrow face, hollow cheeks -almost skeletal with a high forehead, thinning dark hair. He wears round wire-rimmed spectacles, and dressed in a drab, dark suit and plain tie.

On the table is a BOWL OF FRUIT, some CHEESE AND BREAD, HAM, an open BOTTLE OF WINE and WINE GLASSES. Ernő's glass is untouched.

SUPER: "ENVER HOXHA, LEADER OF ALBANIA (1944-1985)"

ERNÖ GERÖ
... Our army is weak, we have no cadres. The officers are old ones from the Horthy army, so we take ordinary workers from the factories of Csepel and put them in officers' uniforms.

ENVER
Without a strong army you'll be replaced, Ernő. I'm telling you -- purge the Horthy men, now!

ERNÖ GERÖ
To what end? I sit in Rákosi's chair, Enver. Moscow never lets you forget whose chair it is.
(sighing)
Tell me, how do you do it?

ENVER
Do what, comrade?

ERNÖ GERÖ
Stay in favor with Moscow.

Enver laughs deeply, takes a sip of wine.

ENVER

Albania is of little consequence.
Stalin cared for us -- Khrushchev
merely tolerates us, while he romances
that gangster Tito. But you, you
have Hungary. Moscow keeps Hungary
the way it keeps the Crimea. So you
follow orders. Stick to the script.

ERNÖ GERÖ

I have just come from the Crimea.
Three weeks at Khrushchev's dacha.

ENVER

And?

ERNÖ GERÖ

And he watched me swim. The way a
man watches a horse he is deciding
whether to keep.

ENTER: JÁNOS KÁDÁR (44) stocky, square-faced, with machinist's
hands; everything Ernő Gerő is not — stands from the table
as the leader among his peers. He wears a PATCH over his
left eye. He moves to the center of the room.

Both Enver and Gero take pause and displeasure as they watch
János take a seat at the HEAD OF THE TABLE.

ERNÖ GERÖ (CONT'D)

How was Moscow?

JÁNOS

Moscow was... Moscow. And the eye is
greatly improved. Thank you for
asking.

ENVER

(laughs)

Moscow can be a strong astringent.

JÁNOS

Under Stalin, perhaps. Khrushchev,
I'm not so certain.

János squeaks out a grimacing smile.

Ernő is stoic and quiet.

ERNÖ GERÖ

János, meet Comrade Hoxha of Albania.

János stands and shakes Enver's hand.

JÁNOS
A pleasure, sir.

ENVER
My pleasure, comrade. Though I believe
we met a year ago, in Moscow. At the
Summit. You don't recall?

JÁNOS
I was... away for some years. Much
escapes me.

An awkward moment. Gero breaks the chill.

ERNÖ GERÖ
Why are you here today, János? Our
meeting is not until tomorrow.

JÁNOS
Some things can't wait.

János looks over toward the window.

ENVER
Beautiful day, isn't it?

JÁNOS
Beautiful in here.

János picks up the bottle of wine to check the vintage. Sets
it down. He walks to the window and looks out.

JÁNOS (CONT'D)
Not so fine out there, I'm afraid.

POV - JÁNOS - AT THE WINDOW

The DANUBE flows under the Margaret Bridge. No smoke. No
banners. Instead: a VAST CROWD moving slowly along the
embankment toward -- tens of thousands, dressed in black, in
TOTAL SILENCE -- a river of mourners beside the river.

ERNÖ GERÖ (V.O.)
The Rajk reburial. A funeral, nothing
more. We permitted it. It lets the
steam off.

JÁNOS (V.O.)
Indeed. Two hundred thousand people,
comrade. Frankly, We needed to get
Imre to confess.

BACK TO SCENE

JÁNOS (CONT'D)

Sadly it went sideways for him

Silence. Only the clock in the chamber.

JÁNOS (CONT'D)

They don't chant. They don't sing.
That is what should worry you. A
crowd that shouts wants something. A
crowd that says nothing has already
decided.

ERNÖ GERÖ

The plan is to bring Imre Nagy into
the Party. That will calm things.

JÁNOS

Imre Nagy will calm this? I don't
think so, comrade. Warsaw thought
the same, and look at Poland this
very week. We are in for serious
trouble here.

Gero is unsettled with János' comments.

ENVER

They're student rabble-rousers is
all. You squash them like beetles in
the spring. As soon as they come out
of the thaw.

ERNÖ GERÖ

We'll catch up tomorrow, János. I
have a little business to settle
with Enver here. Do you mind?

János ponders the suggestion.

JÁNOS

Not at all. There are things I must
attend to as well. Ernő -- tomorrow,
then. Yes?

ERNÖ GERÖ

Yes, of course.

Gero watches János pensively as he leaves the chamber.

ENVER

Such a quiet man. Where was he, that
he was "away for some years"?

ERNÖ GERÖ
Prison.

ENVER
Whose?

ERNÖ GERÖ
Ours.

Enver stops chewing.

ERNÖ GERÖ (CONT'D)
Three years. Rákosi's doing -- the confessions, the interrogations, all of it. The eye is a souvenir. Rehabilitated now, of course. Moscow insisted. They even mended the eye for him -- their little gift.

ENVER
And he sits at your table.

ERNÖ GERÖ
At the head of it, you'll notice.

ENVER
But is he trustworthy?

ERNÖ GERÖ
We jailed him for three years, Enver. You tell me. Things are getting out of control, and he flies off to Moscow for surgery. Lays all this on my lap!

Gero stands abruptly, goes to the window and looks out.

Enver stands and crosses the room to the avant-garde painting on a wall. A RED TAG hangs from its frame.

ENVER
Never mind all that. It will take care of itself in time. Now -- tell me about this.

Gero looks over his shoulder to the painting, which depicts

A SWORD PIERCING A WOMAN'S HEART.

ERNÖ GERÖ
It's a Müeser.

ENVER
A Müeser? How is it you came by it?

Gero joins Enver and looks at the painting.

ERNÖ GERÖ
Confiscated... as evidence. This too.

Gero goes to a desk and lifts up the "Three Brothers Fighting Brothers" etching.

ENVER
Not sure what to think of that. A bit too abstract for my liking --

Just then, BÁLINT EZÜSTMANN (21), young in stride, rangy and bespectacled Bohemian Brit, meticulous and controlling to a degree, enters the chamber with a swagger.

BÁLINT
Ernö! How are you?!

Gero is caught off guard.

ERNÖ GERÖ
Ah! Mr. Ezüstmann! What a surprise. What brings you to Budapest?

Bálint looks first at the window, then at Enver and Gero.

BÁLINT
What brings Budapest to me, I should ask. What is going on? I leave the country for a few months and come back to -- to funerals in the streets. The Minister of Culture asked that I stop by to see you. Some important assets, he mentioned.

ERNÖ GERÖ
It's not all that urgent, I assure you. Bálint, this is --

Bálint extends his hand to Enver.

BÁLINT
No need. The First Secretary and I are on familiar terms.

ERNÖ GERÖ
I see.

ENVER
Mr. Ezüstmann. On some grand quest again?

(MORE)

ENVER (CONT'D)

(to Gero)

Bálint was extremely helpful in
securing some invaluable artifacts
from the old guard.

Bálint is distracted by the Müeser painting on the wall.

BÁLINT

Say -- is that a Müeser?

ENVER

That's what I understand from Ernő.

BÁLINT

Frightful bit of business. The state
frowns upon his work, with good reason
no doubt.

ERNÖ GERÖ

Since you're here -- follow me.

Gero leads Enver and Bálint down a narrow hall off the
chamber.

29 INT. BUDAPEST - VAULT ROOM OFF OF RECEPTION CHAMBER

Ernő unlocks a door to a secure space. The three go in.

The Vault is a bright, thirty-foot rectangular room lined
with statues on makeshift pedestals and illuminated by
fluorescent lights overhead.

The walls are adorned with a myriad of paintings and etchings.

Enver and Bálint leave Ernő's side and stroll about the
'gallery' -- all pieces are avant-garde modernist style.

Some have a RED TAG affixed to them.

Enver stops at a unique sculpture and chuckles at a profane,
winged statue exhibiting an upright phallus:

"STALIN'S DOVE FOR PEACE"

ENVER

And what is this to be?

ERNÖ GERÖ

My guess is it was to be a joke.

BÁLINT

I would like that one!

Enver looks cautiously at Bálint with a jaundiced eye.

BÁLINT (CONT'D)
... Another joke, of course.

ENVER
What's it called?

ERNÖ GERÖ (V.O.)
Stalin's Dove of Peace. Just
retrieved. It was found in the
Museum. Done by József Jakóvits.

ENVER
Really! What an insult!

Enver crosses the floor to a painting on a wall:

"THE JAZZ MUSICIAN" BY SCHEIBER HUGÓ

ENVER (CONT'D)
This one I recognize. It's a Schüber
Hugó.

BÁLINT (O.S.)
Scheiber Hugó.

Enver, corrected, delivers a resentful look at Bálint. He
continues to look around at the collection.

ERNÖ GERÖ
We confiscated it from the National
Gallery.

It's Western propaganda. A replica of it was painted as a
mural in Jozsefvaros District.

We found the artist responsible. He'll tell us more.

BÁLINT
After some prodding, no doubt.

ENVER
Smart! But Scheiber was Hungarian,
no?

ERNÖ GERÖ
He was tainted in his youth. Grew
up in Vienna.

BÁLINT
Grew up rich, no less! Are these the
paintings the Minister told me to
appraise for the Tour? The ones
with the red tags?

ERNÖ GERÖ

Those are set aside for the Good Will Tour, yes. Something Moscow is insistent about.

ENVER

So what is to become of this entire collection?

ERNÖ GERÖ

Oh, this is just a small amount of what we've been able to seize.

ENVER

And all these others -- without the tags? What are you to do with them?

Bálint's fingers find a dangling tag. Turns it over. A stamped number. He lets it fall and it swings on its wire.

Ernö looks at Bálint, then Enver. He avoids the question as he surveys "his" collection.

A shift in Bálint eyes tells us he has plans of his own.

ERNÖ GERÖ

These I will keep here... For safety purposes. And security.

ENVER

Security?

ERNÖ GERÖ

Evidence, of course.

Bálint stares at Ernö flintily.

Enver turns and heads for the door and follows him out.

ERNÖ GERÖ (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Very valuable --Coming, Bálint?

Bálint exits the room. As Ernö closes the door to the vault we get a last glimpse of the entire collection. The room goes black.

30 INT. STARLIGHT THEATER - ONSTAGE - DAY

GUNFIRE SOUND CUES stutter and misfire.

Stan explodes in silence raising his hands high above his head. A long beat, then slowly lowers them. Demonstrably proud of himself for getting back into control. He calmly calls out the tech crew.

STAN
You want to know what gunfire sounds
like when it is aimed at people you
know? It doesn't sound like that.

He walks out through the fire door into daylight. Insistently
he slams the door shut: BOOM!

Cast and crew stunned. Nobody moves.

PRE-LAP - BREAKING GLASS AND CROWD SCREAMS

31 EXT. KOSSUTH SQUARE - OUTSIDE PARLIAMENT - NIGHT

Protesters hurl rocks at the windows. István suddenly races
in and hurls the Molotov cocktail at the second story window.

32 INT. PARLIAMENT BUILDING - RECEPTION CHAMBER

Molotov cocktail flies in through the window.

The incendiary rapidly spreads flames. CURTAINS IGNITE!

The liquid runs onto a PERSIAN RUG on the floor. It too begins
to burn.

33 EXT. KOSSUTH SQUARE - OUTSIDE PARLIAMENT - CONTINUOUS

Henrík and Bella watch as FLAMES ROAR out the second-story
window.

AVH Police try in vain to douse the flames with water cannons.

WOUNDED PROTESTERS lie on the ground bleeding.

István spots Henrík and Bella, runs back to them.

ISTVÁN
You see what's happening!

HENRÍK
You're a madman! But a brave one!

ISTVÁN
We've struck the heart of the beast
and it's wailing!

WHOOM! A burning window colonnade falls from the building as
the flames spread.

SMOKE CLOUDS FILL THE AIR

AVH Security Police take aim and shoot at protesters.

POW! Abruptly, Henrík is struck by a bullet to the shoulder and thrown backwards onto the ground.

BELLA

Henrík!

Bella rushes to Henrík and hovers over him.

István joins her. He takes the Hungarian-flag bandanna from around his neck presses it down firmly on the wound.

ISTVÁN

Bella, hold this here.

RANDOM GUNSHOTS above their heads. They cower lower to the ground. Henrík struggles to his feet.

BELLA

Henrík, just wait.

Henrík winces in pain.

HENRÍK

We need to get out of here quick!

Bella aids Henrík as he staggers. István hoists Henrík's arm over his shoulder. Henrík groans in pain.

ISTVÁN

Come on, man.

BELLA

We've gone too far, Henrík. It's a blood bath. We've done our part. We got to go!

Henrík looks into Bella's eyes.

HENRÍK

There's no going back. We have no choice now but to fight.

BELLA

There has to be another way!

ISTVÁN

That hour has passed. You see what we're up against? This won't stop until we win!

(dismissive)

Just go! You shouldn't be here. Go and do your painting!

Bella glowers at him resentfully, then looks around at the crowd.

BELLA
No! I don't think I will!

She looks for a safe path through the crowd.

BELLA (CONT'D)
This way, we'll cross the bridge.
There!

Bella leads them through the crowds toward Margaret Bridge.

Suddenly, something RED DRIPS onto her shirt. She looks up to see a DEAD BODY hanging from a post overhead.

She recoils in horror, then forges on bravely.

MORE ARTILLERY FIRE

The crowd runs in all directions as many of them are mowed down by gunfire. The scene is nothing less than outright war; PURE CHAOS!

THROUGH THE SMOKE AND SCREAMS

István stops. He sees a wounded STUDENT and retreats to recover him.

BELLA (CONT'D)
István, no. Come on!!

István cradles the STUDENT and tries for a covered archway.

SHOT RINGS OUT

34 INT. STARLIGHT THEATER - ONSTAGE - CONTINUOUS - PRESENT DAY

The stage is set similarly to the Vault room at the Hungarian Parliament.

The principal actors stand half-attentive to Stan.

CORY (30's) dusty looking beaten-down actor, lowers the script in hand and lifts his glasses above his forehead.

CORY
Is that what you're looking for?

STAN
No. You play him like a thief.
Gerö didn't feel like a thief. He stood in a room of stolen beauty and called it safekeeping. He believed it. That is the horror.

CORY
(half a laugh)
Who was Gerö?

Stan doesn't answer. Holds Cory's eyes one second too long.

STAN
Again.

35 EXT. STREETSIDE HENRÍK'S STUDIO - DAY

DAMP AND DREARY - DRIZZLING RAIN

Bella walks out from the gated doorway of the warehouse taking in the frenetic street scene, struggles to pull a hood over her head. Several ROLLED UP CANVASES under her arm and a BOX OF BRUSHES in her hand.

BÁLINT (V.O.)
Are you free now?

Bella, startled, turns around, dropping a couple of the rolled up canvases.

Bálint bends down to pick up the canvases. He smiles at Bella while handing them to her. Bella forces a smile.

BÁLINT (CONT'D)
Not so happy. Why?

Bella, nervous, an obvious swallow.

BELLA
Who said I'm not?

BÁLINT
It took a bit of doing with the Gündt to get your work into the tour. Don't you think it's something to celebrate?

BELLA
I can't tonight.

BÁLINT
Please, you must. I waited all day, Bella. Let's celebrate! These opportunities don't last long.

Bella stands quiet, troubled. He puts his arm around her shoulders and leads her down the crowded sidewalk. They disappear in a crowd.

36 INT. HENRÍK'S STUDIO

Péter, fully clothed, lounges on the sofa smoking as he watches Bella at her easel carefully mixing paint on a palette to match the scene she takes in outside the window. Her eyes shuttle between her painting and the window.

Both are distracted by the sound of rattling GUN FIRE from outside.

Almost as a surrender to the raucous, Bella stops painting

RED PAINT DRIPS FROM THE BRUSH IN HER HAND ONTO THE FLOOR

Cat races up to the red puddle to take a lick as if it's blood. As cats do, it snobs and strays away.

Henrík rushes into the studio. He looks about the space, past Bella and Péter. Unable to focus. Distracted.

He paces the floor, looking about aimlessly for something... for anything to take his mind off of what his world is coming to.

BELLA
Henrík, what is it?

Henrík throws down a PLAYBILL FROM THE PUPPET THEATER and a partially burnt leaflet on a table near the sofa.

He looks at Bella and Péter, distraught. He goes to the window. Looks out.

POV - HENRÍK

SMOKE IN THE AIR. More GUNSHOTS ring out.

Crowds moving quickly down sidewalks toward a Plaza.

PÉTER (V.O.)
Come now, what's the matter?

Just beyond, TROOPS set up BARRICADES. MILITARY JEEPS
RAPIDLY CRISSCROSS SIDE STREETS.

HENRÍK (V.O.)
We have to do something.

BELLA (V.O.)
But what can we do? You said yourself,
the State is --

BACK TO SCENE

Henrík turns on Bella angrily.

HENRÍK

I know what I said! I'm sorry. I just... Well, we can't cower here and think we are safe. It's not safe!

BELLA

Then let's join them.

PÉTER

We don't know how to fight. What are we going to do, paint nasty caricatures of the regime?

There's no place to go.

Bella puts down her brush, stands and looks about the studio.

BELLA

Let's gather up our work now and get out of this fucking place. Let's plan a way out.

Henrík watches Bella go to a stack of framed paintings along the wall. She frantically, almost hysterically, starts pulling the canvases off their frames and tries to roll them up. Henrík goes to her side.

HENRÍK

Bella. Stop. There's nowhere to run. This is all around us. There's no escape. We're not strong enough --

Bella stops, looks at Henrík with contempt.

BELLA

You mean you're not strong enough! I only see one coward here, and it's you, Henrík! It's you!

Henrík roughly GRABS Bella by the arm, causing her to gasp.

HENRÍK

Don't call me that.

BELLA

Then don't act like one!

Bella beside herself pulls away hastily goes to back to her easel and with a PALETTE KNIFE quickly throws RED AND YELLOW PAINT mixing them to hues of ORANGE on the canvas now showing a CITY ON FIRE engulfed in flames.

Annoyed at Bella's annoyance, Henrík retreats back to the window.

INTERCUT WITH

37 EXT. OUTSIDE HENRÍK'S STUDIO - DAY

HENRÍK (V.O.)
(loud sigh)
Fine. You say we fight. Then we need
to fight!

CROWDS moving ever faster in one direction, GANGS OF TEENAGERS
light tires on fire in the street. PLUMES OF BLACK SMOKE
rise in the air.

HENRÍK (V.O.) (CONT'D)
No art anymore. No life for me, Bella.
There's no life for anybody. They
can't take away our right to be free,
to be who we are. These are our
lives they're fucking with. Our
city. We are the people here. We are
the fucking people!

BACK TO SCENE

Henrík turns back to Bella. He exhales and grows calm as he
watches Bella, her anger dissipated, continues to paint the
scene he just turned away from.

38 INT. STARLIGHT THEATER - CONTINUOUS - PRESENT DAY

On stage, are Tim as Henrík, Shelly as Bella, and Philip as
Péter re-enacting the prior scene

Gene stands in the wings watching the rehearsal.

Tim hold up a PLAYBILL and waves it in front of Shelly and
Philip.

TIM
I was at the puppet show... József
Jakovits was there. The bastards
went to his house... his studio. I
followed them.

Tim turns to Philip. Their eyes lock for an instant. Tim
continues blankly.

TIM (CONT'D)
I saw them take him when he left the
puppet theater. I followed them to
his studio.
(MORE)

TIM (CONT'D)

They took all of his work to the street and completely destroyed everything. Sculptures, prints, etchings... All of it! Ruined in the blink of an eye. A life's work shattered!

SHELLY

But why? It's never been this horrible before.

Philip turns to look at the painting of himself on Shelly's easel.

PHILIP

I think we know why.

TIM

Don't read this. Don't say that. Don't listen to that music; it's forbidden. Who can stand the repression?!

SHELLY

But we have rights. They promised they'd leave the arts alone. Promised that they'd promote our work!

TIM

A promise from them is worth nothing. But art, the true meaning of it, is another story.

Tim leafs through a stack of paintings against the wall.

TIM (CONT'D)

This art, no... This art, no. None of this!

His tirade suddenly stops as he picks up another painting and examines Bella's signature on the canvass.

SHELLY

There has to be something we can do. Maybe we have no choice. We'll go to - Romania and forget about the U.S. tour.

PHILIP

Romania! That's a scream! You think they have it any better? The Soviets never left after the War.

TIM
 (laughing)
 Jesus, Bella! I can still see my
 signature!

Shelly joins Tim's side and laughter.

SHELLY
 Give it to Me, Henrík.

She takes the painting to the easel.

Philip puts on his clothes, goes to the window and looks
 out.

TIM (O.S.)
 Here you're promoted only if you're
 The right type of artist. A Stalin-
 Inspired, regime tolerated shill!
 The only way we got on the tour was
 by chicanery.

SHELLY
 It works! So, what of it?

Tim comes up behind Shelly, vies for her attention as she re-
 applies her signature over Henrík's.

TIM
 How is it that your signature on my
 works gets Gündt approval for the
 tour? Bella. Explain it to me.

PHILIP (O.S.)
 (laughs)
 The Gündt? A bunch of censorship
 cronies of the State.

A long silence ensues.

TIM
 It's Bálint, right!? I get it. All
 his connections. How many times did
 you have to fuck him?

Shelly turns on him, raises her hand about to strike.

BOOM! A canned SOUND EFFECT of an explosive blast.

STAN (V.O.)
 (angrily)
 Stop! Just stop!

Stan stands abruptly and dashes up on stage with script in
 hand. He paces back and forth.

A handful of OTHER ACTORS and CREW MEMBERS mill about behind him looking concerned over his outburst.

STAN (CONT'D)
I'm not feeling it. I'm not feeling anything! None of it. I might as well be paralyzed!
(huffing)
Tim, where did you get that line "The only way we got on the tour was by chicanery."? The line is "by trickery." Follow the damn script!

Tim takes a script from his back pocket, opens to the scene.

TIM
It's basically the same.

STAN
Basically the same is not exactly the same.
(shaking the script in hand)
I wrote drama here, not a fucking thesaurus! The script is not a suggestion, it's an exact formula!

Stan shoves the script into Tim's chest.

STAN (CONT'D)
Read it!

He pauses and takes in a breath, extends arms to Philip, and leads him aside.

Shelly takes a second look at the switch in Stan's behavior in kindling Philip. She takes out a handkerchief, wipes make-up off her eyes, then exits stage left.

Stan pokes softly at Philip's chest.

STAN (CONT'D)
(to Philip)
I told you before: Get a hold of that Hungarian accent and don't let it go.

Stan turns away and looks back at the others.

STAN (CONT'D)
Shelly, you too! Where's Shelly?

Shelly re-enters on stage through the 'studio door'.

SHELLY
Here! I'm right here.

STAN
Did I say break? Did I?

Shelly gives Stan a sneer and shrugs. Stan mocks and mimics her, shrugging his shoulders.

STAN (CONT'D)
What's that? What does that mean?
Phil, do you know what this means?

All actors and crew are in awe, unsure how to respond. They look at each other, then sympathetically to Shelly.

Philip speaks up weakly...

PHILIP
I don't know.

STAN
It means that Shelly here is another
pretty face with no talent, that's
what it means --

TIM
Hey, lay off her.

STAN
Who's the director here?

TIM
(rolling eyes)
You are, Stan! You never let us forget
it.

Tim and Shelly stare. He paces in front of his cast.

STAN
I can find amateurs on fucking
Craigslis who could act the pants
off every one of you.

TIM
Maybe you should get them.

Tim jumps up off the sofa and heads offstage. Stan stops
pacing and stomps to the foot of the stage.

STAN
(top of his lungs)
Get back here or I'll see that you
don't get a part in this city for
(MORE)

STAN (CONT'D)
the rest of the season... or the
rest of your goddamn career!

Tim stops in his tracks. He turns, stares down Stan. A long
beat, then reluctantly returns to the stage.

SHELLY
It's not really that good, Stan.

Stan turns on Shelly, gets in her face.

STAN
Question is, sweetheart, have you
been offered any part in anything
better? I for one highly doubt it!
So it's either my material or dinner
theater in Weehawken!

Shelly's eyes well up.

SHELLY
I think I know what a good script
is.

TIM
It's shit, Stan. Face up to the
facts!

Stan continues to stare down Shelly.

STAN
You ingenu "talent" are all the
same.
(whips around to Tim)
You think because some director liked
ogling your sexy ass that you can
snatch any role you want?

TIM
Does that mean you still like my
pretty ass?

STAN
It means I plucked you out of
obscurity for a lead because I thought
you fit the part... and this is how
you repay me. The sorry part of it
is that you wouldn't even make for a
supporting role. Your delivery makes
the script drag. Accent sucks. How
can any director work with talent
like you?

TIM
Barry had no problem.

STAN
Barry Silvermon wanted you on your knees, not on the stage. And I'll bet you obliged him --

Tim attacks Stan pushing him down on the floor.

TIM
Fuck you, Stan! Go ahead and find your starving actor out there on the street if you think there's a line waiting at your door. But opening night and closing night for this bloated hunk of crap are gonna be the same fucking date!

Stan gets up on his feet.

STAN
I'm a millisecond away from shit-canning you. Unless you'd rather solve this in the alley out back!

TIM
I'm outta here. I don't know why I expected better from you.

STAN
Three years together does not a marriage make, sweetheart. Especially when one partner is disloyal.

Tim turns, grabs Stan by the collar.

TIM
Stan, we had nothing together. Got it? Nothing!

PHILIP
Please! Enough drama!

Philip reaches for a BACKPACK at the wings, pulls out some street clothes, and is about to leave. Stan pauses, looks up and down at Philip.

STAN
And what did I tell you about leaving the robe on for that scene?

PHILIP

It's supposed to be a period piece during the Modernist movement! Every emerging artist painted nudes, Stan!

STAN

Not in this play. There are patrons to please. Don't ever forget that! And follow the god damn script!

Philip's upper lip curls and he throws Stan a disdainful look, gathers his clothes and script and saunters off backstage.

STAN (CONT'D)

Be here tomorrow, on time!

PHILIP (V.O.)

Jawohl, commandant!

Stan tears off stage chasing after him, a frozen cast and crew remain.

39 INT. STARLIGHT THEATER - ONSTAGE - DAY

Alone on stage, Stan sits on the sofa. He sips on a glass of wine. He wildly pages through a SCRIPT, marking it up.

JASMINE (37), a red-headed avaricious talent agent enters down the aisle from the audience section.

She is with NEAL DREYFUS (30), lackadaisical hunk, with long combed-back blond hair. She has him by the hand, pulling him down the aisle to the stage.

JASMINE

Come on, Neal.

Jasmine points at Neal to take a seat in the front row. She steps up on to the stage.

JASMINE (CONT'D)

Stan! Stan! I got your call. I brought Neal.

Stan raises his head for a second to see Jasmine and Neal sitting in the audience section.

STAN

I called a week ago!

JASMINE

Been a crazy week. Up-fronts, you know. Did we miss today's rehearsal?
(MORE)

JASMINE (CONT'D)
So sorry. My assistant is out to lunch most of the time. Anyway, Neal would be perfect for the lead.

Jasmine looks back at Neal. He's inattentive and on his phone, checking messages and texting.

STAN
Henrík's been taken. I think Neal knows that.

JASMINE
You two have already met?

Stan shoots a sharp glance at Neal, who looks up momentarily.

JASMINE (CONT'D)
Taken? By who?

STAN
Tim Schmidt.

JASMINE
Tim Schmidt? I had a part for him with the Circle Theater.

STAN
An unfortunate turn of events for Mr. Silvermon. Ran into him at the Circle about back weeks back when I was casting the roles. He wanted Tim and I already had him... Was he ever livid!

Stan issues a quiet, wicked laugh.

Neal looks up at Stan and Jasmine. Newly motivated, he jumps up on stage. Extends his hand to Stan.

NEAL
Hello again.

STAN
(dismissive)
Neal.

NEAL
Jasmine thought for sure there'd be something for me but I guess she didn't get the memo.

STAN

Jasmine has been a little out of step lately. You know casting was done over four weeks ago.

JASMINE

Not fair Stan. I knew the roles were cast but you said there might be revisions in the script... Something about it not being complete? Unhappy with certain actors... So, I thought I'd take a chance and bring Neal by. Didn't know there was a history here.

Stan flashes a look at Neal, who just stares blankly.

JASMINE (CONT'D)

(beat)

Do you think Tim might need an understudy? I mean, just in case things don't work out.

Stan lays the script down and moves canvases around on stage.

STAN

I'm not sure if there's budget for it. Kent is holding back on more financing, tightwad that he is.

JASMINE (O.S.)

There goes your safety net. Why not just pencil Neal in as an understudy? That way you've got him on contract. Insurance. Everybody will be happy. We can defer salary. Right, Neal?

Jasmine turns to Neal. Neal is unenthusiastic, barely reacts.

JASMINE (CONT'D)

What do you say, Stan? This might work out for both of you. You never know what might happen. What if Tim walks out on you? Even Kent would have to see reason in --

NEAL

(blurts)

Kent's a Barry Man.

Stan is taken off guard. Turns quickly to Neal.

STAN

What do you mean by that? What do you know of it?

NEAL

Kent's been in Barry's vest pocket for years. I hear he does some plays and undoes others. Remember "Mania"? Barry had Kent pull the purse strings a week before tickets went on sale. If you want me, take me. If not, don't.

Stan stares down Neal suspiciously trying to gauge his motivation. Neal walks off the stage. Jasmine quickly follows. Takes Neal by the arm. Mid-aisle, she stops him.

They talk in confidence.

STAN

(long pause)

If Kent signs off, I'll consider it.

JASMINE

(to Neal)

You hear that? At least you'll have some cash until something else opens up. You don't have to wait tables at Sardi's now. Or go back to busking in Union Square. Now for the love of God and all that's holy, accept his offer and stick to it. If you skip another production, that's the end of your short-lived career in the blink of an eye.

NEAL

You don't know the whole story. Shelly and I hooked up and Barry found out the fifth week into rehearsals. He pulled financing. He holds grudges.

JASMINE

Forget that! Just jump on this.

A long beat as Neal calculates the angles, then nods. Jasmine goes back on stage. Neal follows.

Stan back to thrashing through the script, making edits. He pulls out some sides and hands the pages to Neal.

STAN

Take a look at these.

Neal steps aside to read a few lines.

Behind him, Stan and Jasmine quietly negotiate.

NEAL (O.S.)
I want the role of Henrík.

JASMINE
Neal, come on.

STAN
I told you it's taken! I'm offering
you Bálint.

A sly smile comes over Neal's face. He turns to them,
pretends to be hedging a decision.

JASMINE
He'll take the role. Thanks again,
Stanley. Come on Neal I'll treat
you to lunch.

NEAL
Thanks, already got my meal ticket
today.

OVER BLACK

SUPER: "THE OCTOBER CEASE FIRE"

40 INT. HENRÍK'S STUDIO

Péter stands posing nude at the window; the red, white and
green Hungarian flag -now with a hole in its center where
once showed the Rákosi Coat of Arms, is draped over his right
shoulder. Dusty light shines through the window casting
dramatic shadows on his frame. MOMENTS LATER he sees a
partially burnt leaflet sticking out from under a PLATE OF
LEFTOVER POTATOES on a small table. He breaks his pose.

BELLA
Hey! I need you back in pose!
Come on!

Péter pulls out the leaflet, gives it a glance, and goes
back to the window and strikes the same pose.

BELLA (CONT'D)
The light just shifted, can you turn
a bit to your left?
(beat)
Yes. Better.

Bella looks up from the canvas at Péter as she paints.
Her eyes and his meet each time she looks at him.

PÉTER
How are you and Henrík getting on?

BELLA
We're not. Can you put that down?

Péter drops the leaflet.

PÉTER
Why?

BELLA
He's depressed.

PÉTER
Everyone's depressed.

Péter looks down at the leaflet and picks it up.

BELLA
Hey! Please stay in pose! Don't
move! Damn it! We're losing light.

PÉTER
(reading)
"On the Cult of Personality and Its
Consequences..."

BELLA
Oh damn it Péter! The light will
be gone.

PÉTER
Hey, this is Khrushchev's speech.

Bella stops painting. Gestures quote marks with her fingers.

BELLA
You mean the "secret" one?

PÉTER
(chuckling)
The same. Not so secret, I guess.

BELLA
Really?

Bella puts down the paint brush.

PÉTER
Yeah. Listen.

As Péter reads aloud, the door BUZZER RINGS.

BELLA
Hold on.

POV - BELLA

Bella goes to window and looks down to see István at the front gate. She goes to push a button to unlock the door.

She looks off to the distance.

PÉTER (V.O.)

"It is impermissible and foreign to the spirit of Marxism-Leninism. Elevate one person, to transform him into a superman possessing..."

Bella moves to linger at Péter's side as he reads.

PÉTER (CONT'D)

Wow, get this... "Such a man supposedly knows everything, sees everything, thinks for everyone, can do anything."

With a KNOCK, István enters and goes up to Bella and kisses her cheek. Turns to Péter and kisses him as well.

ISTVÁN

(to Péter)

Hey, Csávó!

PÉTER

Hold on! "... and is infallible in his behavior. This actually is a vestige of the 'theory of genius'."

Bella takes the leaflet from Péter. She looks to where he stopped reading and picks up from there.

BELLA

"... But Marxism-Leninism openly declares that the collective is the only 'genius'"

ISTVÁN

Should I even ask what you're reading?

PÉTER

It's Khrushchev's secret speech.

Bella's look confirms it. A beat as István absorbs this.

ISTVÁN

You're holding it? Do you know what they do to people holding it?

Péter turns away and attempts to resume his pose at the window.

BELLA

You know maybe with him at our side
we might have a chance.

ISTVÁN

That is, when hell freezes over.

BELLA

These words about Stalin should have
Ernö shitting his pants! I mean, he
might as well been talking about
Ernö himself!

ISTVÁN

He is talking about that Pártkatona!
Doesn't change the fact nothing will
be done about it.

PÉTER

Come on, my cynical sisters.
There's still light yet.

41 INT. HENRÍK'S STUDIO

SHELLING AND BLASTS pierce the interior of the studio.

Bella stands distraught. Her figure shrouds the canvas on
her easel at the nearby window where stands Henrík looking
out. Her eyes shift back and forth from window to painting
to Henrík who is focused on the scene outside below

POV - HENRÍK

A growing number of PEDESTRIANS spill off the sidewalk on to
the street most heading in one direction, others darting in
and out of a frenzied crowd. CARS blocked in the street unable
to move.

SPORADIC GUNFIRE

BACK TO SCENE

Henrík turns to Bella, who now stares at the nude painting
of Péter on Henrík's easel.

Just beyond reclines a nude Péter on the weathered sofa.

HENRÍK

What's wrong, love?

BELLA

It's all too surreal.

HENRÍK

Out there, or your painting?

BELLA
No, your painting. I think it's
too abstract. It won't pass.

HENRÍK
You think not? Why?

Bella takes a more critical look at his work.

ABSTRACT PAINTING OF PÉTER IN THE NUDE

Bella looks seriously at the painting, then to Péter lying nude on the couch smoking a cigarette. She looks at his eyes, eyes in the painting, his eyes again, and then a quick glance down at his groin. She smiles, then stares at the painting.

BELLA
Well, it's better than mine. But,
yes! That's him! I'd recognize
his... Pair of eyes anywhere!

Bella and Henrík laugh. Péter pulls on his robe and tightens the belt, walks over to view the painting.

PÉTER
I'm not sure if you captured me right.
I feel so... diminished!

Henrík grabs Péter around the neck and kisses him on his forehead.

Bella looks on, forcing a tight smile.

BELLA
(to Henrík)
So... may I? Do I have your approval
maestro?

HENRÍK
Yes! It's the only way I'll ever get
my work out of Hungary.

Bella picks up a SMALL THIN BRUSH, dabs on RED PAINT.
She signs Henrík's painting, "Bella Gilder, 1956"

BELLA
What do you call it?

HENRÍK
The Roman.

Henrík shoots a quick smile to Péter. Goes up to Bella.

HENRÍK (CONT'D)
You're the best, Bella. I love you.

Péter, dejected, looks away crosses to the window and looks out.

HENRÍK (CONT'D)

You still haven't told me how you did it. How is it that our paintings are going on tour?

BELLA

I met someone. He works for the Gündt. He said he could help... A brush of luck, I guess. A painted on smile? Not so difficult.

HENRÍK

So, who is he? This mysterious and charming man. Have you fucked yet? Oh let me guess. Bálint!

BELLA

Tsk! Shut up, Henrík!

Henrík kisses Bella as they both chortle. He picks up Bella's rendition of Peter and places it on the easel on top of his own. He takes on an upright posture of elitism and pretends to be a snobbish art critic of her work.

HENRÍK

I like how you did his brows the way they hang heavily over his eyes, as if to say, This is me, take it or leave it.

BELLA

I think you'd tell me that if this was a coloring book and I simply managed to stay within the lines.

Péter assumes the same pretension as Henrík and looks over their shoulders at the piece.

PÉTER

Nonsense. The Americans will love your style, darling. And it will sell.

BELLA

Why not a show here in Budapest!

PÉTER

Promote... Tolerate... Ban. It's the policy of this authoritarian regime we must put up with it, darling.

Henrík and Bella turn a soft look at Péter surprised at his political astuteness.

BELLA
Well, I despise it!

HENRÍK
You really should be more excited.
Besides, it doesn't seem to apply to you! How many first time artists receive an endowment for a traveling exhibition to the United States!

CHAOTIC ABSTRACT OF RIOTERS

HENRÍK (CONT'D)
This one too! Really top drawer.
Seriously, Bella.

Bella laughs and Henrík takes her in his arms.

Péter levels a slight scowl and saunters to the window to take in the chaos below.

42 EXT. STREETSIDE HENRÍK'S STUDIO - MOMENTS LATER

ELDER WOMAN (65) pulling a grocery cart up the sidewalk passes below the warehouse studio window. She glances up to Henrík's studio window where Péter stands posing.

POV - ELDER WOMAN

Péter standing naked at the window.

After a long beat, she reflects... Closes her eyes and smiles, then continues to walk down the sidewalk.

BACK TO SCENE

BOISTEROUS GROUPS OF PEDESTRIAN move quickly past her in the opposite direction toward the Plaza.

FADE TO BLACK

43 INT. HENRÍK'S STUDIO - NIGHT

Studio is dark and dimly lit.

LIGHT FLASHES from BLASTS AND SHELLING, almost harmonizing with SPORADIC GUNFIRE and yelling CROWDS on the street below.

The cat chases a MOUSE scuttling across the floor, captures it and starts GORING it violently with its claws.

We GLIDE PAST the violent scene to an --

ABSTRACT PAINTING OF HORSES RUNNING. It serves as a headboard where Bella lies on the bed restlessly. She peers toward the window. Then hears --

SOUND OF FOOTSTEPS CLIMBING THE STAIRS TO THE STUDIO

DOOR KNOB TURNS SLOWLY - SHAFT OF LIGHT FROM THE HALL ENTERS THE STUDIO SPACE.

A suspenseful beat.

BELLA
Henrík?

HENRÍK (O.S.)
Yes, it's me.

He comes in. Bella gets up quickly, turns on a small lamp and goes to him.

BELLA
I was worried sick!

Henrík is wet with sweat and out of breath.

HENRÍK
I'm alright.

BELLA
We have to talk.

Henrík is wound up. Goes directly to the bed and throws himself down. Restless. Eyes shifting back and forth.

BELLA (CONT'D)
Henrík... what's happened?

Henrík sits up and pulls off his shirt and trousers. He wipes his face with his shirt. Bella watches Henrík undress. Henrík deeply distressed is buried in his own head. He lies restless and silent.

Bella lies down next to him. She stares at him. He's oblivious.

BELLA (CONT'D)
Henrík, I fear it's getting worse.
I've come to think it's hopeless.

Henrík breaks from his spell.

HENRÍK
Don't be like that!

BELLA
Only practical.

Sounds from the streets and distant shooting fill the space. Bella and Henrík stare at the dusty CEILING FAN, rotating overhead.

BELLA (CONT'D)
We have to get out, Henrík.

HENRÍK
We will if we have to. But not yet.

Henrík turns to Bella.

HENRÍK (CONT'D)
We still have each other, don't we?

BELLA
Of course. Always. Things will get better. Right?

HENRÍK
They have to.

Bella moves in closer to Henrík. She embraces a rigid body. She stares into his eyes.

His mind is off in the distance and doesn't engage.

HENRÍK (CONT'D)
The whole world is on our side. Just wait! We are at the end of the Ernő regime and Moscow. They're done here. I just know it's going to work out. The people will win.

Bella places her fingers over Henrík's lips to stop him from talking. She straddles his side and kisses on his neck.

She takes hold of a PENDANT attached to a leather tie hung from Henrík's neck of THE MAGYAR WARRIOR.

Henrík takes in a deep breath, exhales, looks into Bella's eyes, allows for a small smile.

HENRÍK (CONT'D)
Thanks, Bella.

BELLA
For what?

HENRÍK
For being here. For being you.

BELLA
Where would I go?

Henrik, now calmed, Bella pulls away on to her back. The two stare up to the ceiling.

CEILING FAN IN ITS CIRCULAR MOTION BECOMES AN ABSTRACTED SWIRL OF COLORS, STREAKING THROUGH THE DARKNESS.

44 INT. CAFE FESTMÉNY - AFTERNOON

Bella enters the crowded bistro. She surveys the room

POV - BELLA

STUDENT #1 (23) female and very Bohemian in dress stands among a GROUP OF FRIENDS. She Glances at Bella as she walks in.

PATRONS drink down shots of Pálinka and espresso at the bar.

Others crowded at bistro tables. A GROUP OF STUDENTS at a table across the room talk intensely, planning, gesticulating their wildest dreams of beating down the State.

Outside the window, outside on the street, protesters mingle chaotically.

BACK TO SCENE

Bella walks up to the counter, sits on a stool and orders espresso.

STUDENT #1 (O.S.)
(calling out)
Hey! Come join us. You're alone,
aren't you?

Student #1 walks up to Bella and hands her a PROTEST FLYER.

The same Old Woman we saw watching Péter at the window earlier follows behind with a satchel, unnoticed.

STUDENT #1 (CONT'D)
Coming to the protest?

BELLA
Still?
(pause)
Yes, but...

STUDENT #1
Not sure?

BELLA
I just don't know.

STUDENT #1
What? Can't you see what's going on?

BELLA
I've seen it.

Bella looks nervously about.

BELLA (CONT'D)
Yes, but it's too dangerous.

STUDENT #1
Of course it is! But we have to fight.
We've been left no choice. Come
with us. We're the people!

BELLA
I know.

Bella scans the cafe sees the intensity in the eyes of the other patrons, then back again to Student #1 in front of her.

Outside, Protesters are geared up. The spirit in the air swelling,

BELLA (CONT'D)
But I'm... an artist.

STUDENT #1
Artist?
(beat)
Me too! Then you should know what's at stake! They are censoring our art! Come on, sweet! This is our time to ... to paint the world we want. Tell me. Has your art been censored? Truthfully, now!

BELLA
I suppose, yes. Well, not mine, but yes.

STUDENT
See! You think that will go away if we do nothing? It won't! They start with the arts, then civil rights, then complete repression! They're fascists! All of them. We have to show them that freedom and liberty is a human right!

BELLA
(hesitantly)
Yes, I suppose.

STUDENT
Then come with us! You'll be safe.
Just stay close.

Bella ponders the prospects. Time stands still. Then,
after a long beat.

BELLA
Yes. Yes, I will go!

STUDENT
(joyous)
Do you have a gun? Any weapon?

Bella is taken aback.

BELLA
No, I don't.

STUDENT
Any weapon at all? A palette knife?
Something to protect yourself.

BELLA
Why, no.

Old Woman pushes her way front and center and pulls out a
pair of SCISSORS from her satchel.

OLD WOMAN
You can use these, dear. They're
sharp. Can cut right through flesh.

Bella nods her thanks, then takes the scissors, slips them
under her BELT and covers them with her jacket.

STUDENT #1
That's my mum! --Hey guys!

Student #1 calls out to her friends.

STUDENT #1 (CONT'D)
Come on! Let's go!

Bella leaves with the contingent and joins others in the
street.

45 INT. STARLIGHT THEATER - ONSTAGE - DAY - PRESENT DAY

A muted exchange of lines between Gene and Kevin.

A noticeable high pitch ringing in the background.

Their lines abruptly cut off by Stan. He has stopped speaking English.

STAN
(in Hungarian)
...se akkor Henrik megfordul -- lassan --

Off their faces Stan curtly responds.

STAN (CONT'D)
What.

KEVIN
(gently)
Stan. What did you say?

A beat. The smirk arrives a half-second late.

STAN
It was a Hungarian play before what
we are dredging out here.

He taps his script, TUGS AT his left ear, the high pitched ringing diminishes. He steps off the stage.

Gene and Kevin exchange bewildered looks then track him up the dark aisle where Stan sits and glowers at them.

46 INT. STARLIGHT THEATER - ONSTAGE

A large, slow turning ceiling fan reminiscent of that in Henrik's studio brings us down on to the stage set as the artist studio.

The actors in full rehearsal.

Shelly places a painting on the easel. Steps back to admire it. Steps in closer and makes minor touch-ups.

Stan off stage.

STAN (V.O.)
Bálint! This is your cue. Knock,
then enter upstage right. Shelly,
pick it up from the signature.

Shelly picks up a small brush and palette.

She dabs the brush into RED-MAGENTA paint. Mixes it with YELLOW and CYAN-BLUE, slowly the color BLACK emerges. She paints over the signature of HENRIK MÜESER, blots the paint, then picks up a thin small brush, dips it in RED and signs the painting "BELLA GILDER, '56".

STAN (CONT'D)
Knock! Knock! Bálint! Now!

Neal enters out of character through the studio door with script in hand.

STAN (CONT'D)
Stop! You knock! And where is the painting?

NEAL
What painting?

STAN (V.O.)
Consult the fucking script! Grab one of those paintings off the wings and re-enter. Come on, Neal! Use your head!

Neal stops. He clicks his heels together, gives Stan the fascist salute, and exits off the stage.

Tim stands in the wings and allows for a slight smile.

STAN (CONT'D)
Continue. And no script!

KNOCKING

Neal enters on stage through the studio door with a painting. He closes in behind Shelly.

IN AUDIENCE SECTION

Stan stands up, DISTURBED. He violently shakes his head.

STAN (CONT'D)
Absolutely not! No! No! No!

Shelly and Neal stop action.

Stan walks up on stage. Arms crossed over his chest. Angry and impatient but trying to hold back. He paces and then reads from the script.

STAN (CONT'D)
Right here! "Bálint puts the painting down next to easel!" It's like you're actively trying to undermine me here, Neal! What's going on!

NEAL
Uh... I just lost my place... Okay!

STAN
Well find it and get it right!

Stan storms off stage.

Neal does an about-face, walks off stage. After a beat -- he KNOCKS, and enters with painting in hand.

Shelly startled, quickly removes the painting just signed.

SHELLY
Bálint! You startled me. What are you doing here?

NEAL
We need to trade this one out. The Gündt won't accept it. Too avant-garde they say.

ABSTRACT PAINTING DEPICTS A NUDE COUPLE HAND-IN-HAND WALKING THROUGH A FOREST.

Neal puts the painting down next to the easel.

SHELLY
Of course. Anything for you.

Shelly thumbs through paintings leaning against the wall, carefully checking the signatures for the right one, skipping over those bearing Henrík's signature.

SHELLY (CONT'D)
Here's one they will like.

REAR OF AUDIENCE SECTION

Jasmine enters from the back of the theater. She walks down the aisle and stands alongside where Stan is sitting. She silently watches the rehearsal.

SHELLY (CONT'D)
(sotto)
What do you think?

NEAL (O.S.)
Beautiful! That will be perfect.

SHELLY (O.S.)
Bálint, you cannot stay here long. Henrík might come, and you know how jealous he is.

NEAL (O.S.)
I won't stay long...

Jasmine leans into Stan to talk.

JASMINE
I told you he was good.

Stan ignores her.

STAN
(to the actors)
All right! Better. Let's continue.
Neal, Shelly, Tim, and Philip next
scene. Places!

47 INT. CAFE FESTMENY - AFTERNOON

The bistro is unusually quiet. A lull from the early excitement.

Bella sits opposite Bálint. Between them, two coffees that neither touch, and a folded LETTER.

BELLA
They say the endowment committee
answers to the Gündt. And the Gündt
answers to you.

BÁLINT
(pleasantly)
Everyone answers to someone, Bella.
That is the whole music of it.

Bálint turns the letter around with one finger and pushes it to Bella. He looks kindly up at her for a long time.

BÁLINT (CONT'D)
Come to the studio on Buday Laszlo
tomorrow evening. Bring the portfolio.
(standing, hat on)
Only the portfolio. And this letter.
It's their permission.

He leaves coins on the table. Bella stares at the coins.

48 EXT. NYC - THE CANVAS SIDEWALK CAFE - LATE AFTERNOON -
PRESENT DAY

From the sidewalk, through the window, we see Tim, Shelly and Philip at a bistro table littered with BOTTLES OF BEER.

ASHTRAY OVERFLOWING WITH BUTTS. Philip is smoking.

Tim is telling a funny story. They laugh. Shelly takes a last swig of beer and stands up.

SHELLY
Hey, we need to get back! Stan will
have a fit.

She notices Tim and Philip aren't as anxious to leave as she
is.

SHELLY (CONT'D)
Well, are you guys coming?

TIM
Yeah, yeah. We're coming.

Philip sits unusually quiet.

SHELLY
Phil?
(beat)
Okay, whatever. See you guys! Please
don't roil the old man any more. If
he dies of a heart attack we're all
screwed.

TIM
(laughs)
Wouldn't think of it.

Shelly bounces and leaves Tim and Philip at the table. They
watch her take off down the sidewalk.

Tim pulls out a wad of bills and slaps them on the table.

TIM (CONT'D)
Your cut.

PHILIP
Barry's totally down on this dude,
isn't he?

TIM
Yeah, and Stan's totally fucked.

PHILIP
So, if this all goes down what about
us?

TIM
Rodenbury Team, mean anything to
you?

PHILIP
Barry's doing Rodenbury! I'm down,
man!

TIM
(laughs)
Thought you'd be!

Philip spots Neal walking up the sidewalk to their table.

Philip slips the cash into his pocket. The two walk off from the cafe.

ON THE SIDEWALK

PHILIP
Look who's coming!

TIM
Our beloved Bálint.
(sarcastically)
Hey Neal, so you think you'll be
coming back after that rehearsal?

NEAL
Wish I didn't have to.

TIM
Now you know how the rest of us feel.
What made you sign up for this
torture?

NEAL
Rent, mostly. Oh, and that annoying
human need for food too.
(lying through his
teeth to Tim)
You know, Stan wanted me for your
part originally.

Tim simmers fueling more contempt for Stan.

TIM
Shocker.

NEAL
I know, right? You guys heading down
there?

TIM
Yep. Ready, Phil?

PHILIP
Yeah, let's go.

TIM
He actually said you could play
Henrik? Really?

NEAL
 Afraid so. He was begging me, but I
 turned him down. I think it's a lousy
 part.

Tim murmurs an affirmative, as he and Philip walk away.

TIM
 (Hungarian accent)
 Don't push your luck, comrade.

NEAL
 Hey, hold up. I'll join you.

Neal carries on with Tim and Philip down the sidewalk.

Shelly races by them in a hurry, turning to the boys as she
 does.

49 EXT. BUDAPEST - STREETS - EVENING

Church bells. POLITICAL PRISONERS walk out of
 Kozma Street Central Prison into the arms of weeping
 strangers. Surrounding pedestrians elated. The city believes
 it has won.

50 EXT. BUDAY LASZLO NEIGHBORHOOD - BUDA SIDE OF BUDAPEST -
 NIGHT

A misty, foggy night Henrík steps away from a converstaion
 with a sidewalk vendor selling flowers, now in his hand. He
 follows the sidewalk that leads to the Margaret Bridge.

51 INT. BÁLINT'S STUDIO - BUDAY LASZLO

An array of scattered art work in no particular order fills
 the space leaving no room for personal affects.

On a hand-hewed wooden table sits Bella and Bálint. Her
 portfolio is opened. Bálint draws out a few sheets slowly,
 saying nothing, making her wait inside a dark silence. He
 first speaks without looking up.

BÁLINT
 The endowment letter is yours. It
 was yours before you sat down at the
 cafe.

BELLA
 Then why am I here?

BÁLINT
 (closing the portfolio)
 Because I wanted to know if you would
 be my model forever to paint. Be
 with me.

He moves in closer to her. Stops too close but does not touch her.

BÁLINT (CONT'D)
 Henrík paints you like a country he
 already owns. I would paint you like
 a border. Something a man gives his
 life trying to cross.

Bella sits still, shows no emotion, then flatly remarks.

BELLA
 And the stamps. And exit visas? For
 Henrík's paintings. For Henrík.

BÁLINT
 Everything has a stamp, Bella.

A long, long moment. Bella reaches up and undoes the top button of her coat, then the remaining ones. She lays it aside. Playing his game, she answers his innuendo in the most insincere way.

BELLA
 So now what do you need?

52 EXT. BÁLINT'S STUDIO - BUDAY LASZLO - STREET SIDE - SAME

Bella steps out from the apartment on to the tree-lined sidewalk. She hastens to finish buttoning her blouse and coat while at the same time juggling to hold fast to legal papers bestowed her. She presses into place a mess of hair.

Bálint steps off the stoop to deliver a peck on her cheek, bids her good-bye and retreats indoors.

On the same sidewalk approaching from a distance, Henrík with flowers held close to his chest, sees the exchange and hastens his pace, at least until he is in clear view of her. His presence stays unnoticed.

The flowers drop to his side then slide gently out of his hand on to the cold concrete as he witnesses her putting herself together

MATCH CUT TO:

53 INT. STARLIGHT THEATER - ONSTAGE

In the middle of rehearsal of the same encounter. Tim, as Henrík, plays the revelation over-the-top with Bella, alarmed and furious.

STAN
(quiet, from the dark)
No.

Stan comes into the light off the wings. Stands in the false doorway.

STAN (CONT'D)
Jealousy isn't loud. Jealousy stands in a doorway and says nothing. It counts the buttons. It memorizes the floor. And it never, ever puts the flowers down gently.

A confused dead silence on stage. Shelly, legal papers and portfolio in hand. She straightens her hair. She feigns being baffled.

SHELLY
Stan... were you there or something?

The smirk. Held too long.

STAN
Again. From buttoning the coat.

54 INT. HENRÍK'S STUDIO - MORNING

Bella enters with bread and the stamped endowment letter from Bálint.

Henrík stands at his easel. He painted all night and looks every bit of a diminished man. Bella is portrayed on his canvass in acid, cruel greens, beautiful and merciless.

Bella stops at the sight of her on canvas. Understands instantly.

BELLA
Henrík --

HENRÍK
Was it a good price?

BELLA
It was the only price. Your canvases leave the country or they burn with it. He has the stamps, Henrík. He has everything.

HENRÍK
 (ruined)
 He does now.

He steps away from her, takes his coat and a RIFLE leaning by the door and heads down the stairs.

Bella calls down the stair well from the railing.

BELLA
 HENRÍK! Everyone says The Russians
 are coming back.

The street door BOOMS below. She is talking to an empty stairwell.

55 INT. STARLIGHT THEATER - STAN'S OFFICE - NIGHT - PRESENT DAY

Shelly slips in looking for tomorrow's sides. Papers, maquette mock-ups, a coffee ring on everything. She lifts a script --

Beneath it: an old SKETCHBOOK, cracked spine, a Cyrillic customs stamp. She shouldn't, but she opens it.

Charcoal studies -- the studio set, exact. The window. The drapes, LEFT of the window. And a photograph tucked in the gutter: FOUR YOUNG PEOPLE outside a Budapest cafe, 1956. A young woman with a Magyar pendant. A young man with a smirk, wearing a Flap cap, Shelly sees every day of her life.

A smile moves her hand to take the cell phone from her back pocket.

'Got it' she thinks to herself with another smile.

Footsteps in the hall. She closes the book, replaces the script, and is examining a prop when Stan passes by the door.

She says nothing.

SUPER OVER BLACK: "NOVEMBER 1, 1956 - HUNGARY DECLARES NEUTRALITY"

56 INT. MAGYAR RÁDIÓ STATION - BRÓDY SÁNDOR

IMRE NAGY, broad dark mustache, balding black hair, glasses, wearing a dark suit.

BROADCAST BOOTH.

He stands up, leaves the booth and goes to a window that overlooks a gathering on the streets below.

POV - IMRE NAGY

An eerie calmness fills the street below as if everything is back to normal. Scrutinizing details reveal shop owners clearing out damaged inventory and boarding up broken windows. A horse-drawn cart -perhaps from the countryside wheels a wrapped corpse. A nearby church holding a funeral of its own.

Jumpy AVH SECURITY FORCES cluster in small groups. They check their weapons and wearily eye an otherwise calm crowd looking for vengeful protesters looking to get even.

RADIO PRODUCER (50) approaches Imre Nagy. Both men take in the fractured calm they see below.

A hurried AIDE (19) enters with a Teletyped note. He delivers it to the Producer and leaves. Producer reads the note.

RADIO PRODUCER

The Soviets are maneuvering tanks just outside the city. They are positioning! How will this ever end?

IMRE NAGY

Not well. But we *will* win this battle. The sun never rose in the East, until now. I'm afraid it's the twelfth hour. No more time for reconciliation or amens. I fear the Party has gone too far. We've lost the will of the People.

RADIO PRODUCER

Then Hungary is lost too.

The two men peer out the window into a darkening scene as night shadows crawl in.

57 EXT. BUDAPEST - STREETS - CONTINUOUS

Strangers embrace. Someone has chalked FREE HUNGARY across a burned tank. Bella stands in the celebrating crowd utterly alone, searching every passing face for Heník. He is not any of them.

58 INT. STARLIGHT THEATER - ONSTAGE

SOUNDS OF THE WAR IN BUDAPEST FADE

In a similar darkness, the theater lies empty. Eerily quiet.

Stage and house lights dimly lit revealing the stage set as an ART GALLERY.

Several Avant-garde PAINTINGS are hung on the back flats.

There are two MODERN SCULPTURES sitting on PEDESTALS. One in particular is a replica of STALIN'S DOVE OF PEACE. Cushy seats are artfully situated around the exhibits.

Tim, drunk and staggering, enters up the audience aisle. He steps up on stage.

BACKSTAGE

Stan examines flats and props backstage. He hears a commotion on the other side of the curtains. Paranoid, he draws a DERRINGER out from an inside jacket pocket. Cocks the trigger, and pulls back a thin opening in the curtain to see who is in the theater. He spots Tim on stage, smiles ruefully, and puts the gun away, grabs a bag sitting on the floor near some flats.

ONSTAGE

Tim aimlessly wanders the stage looking up at the lights, the PROPS, the ENTIRE SET, and the EMPTY SEATS in the audience section.

STAN (O.S.)
Looking for this? You left it behind
in your mad rush to leave our last
rehearsal.

Tim startled, swaggers as he brings Stan into focus.

Tim snatches the bag out of Stan's hand.

TIM
You treat all your actors like shit.

STAN
I do whatever it takes to get you
guys to perform. Anything more you
got to say to me?

TIM
Yeah. You're right about my act on
53rd. I was acting. And let me tell
you Stan, playing the role of your
butt boy for the past three years
was the toughest acting job I ever
had.

STAN
Consider it rent paid.

TIM

(slurring his words)

I wouldn't come back here if it wasn't for Shelly, Gene, Philip... and everyone else. They deserve to know. But if it was just you... I wouldn't bother. Oh, and you might just wanna know what's going on with Neal.

STAN

(dismissive)

What is it you want to say? I'm busy.

TIM

Just for the record Stan, Neal showing up when he did was no coincidence. He coming to audition for a part with you was all planned.

STAN

What do you mean?

TIM

And when I told you to fuck off yesterday. It really didn't even matter at that point. Barry offered me a role in his new production.

STAN

Jolly good. So what. You want congratulations? Well, congratulations. But really, Tim, who couldn't play the role he carved out for you? The character's one dimensional. Type casting. You should play that perfectly.

TIM

You know... He's trying to do you in. Maybe...just maybe, Barry doesn't want this play to go on at all!

STAN

Why? Because Neal and Shelly's little tryst he's going to try to destroy the Starlight and me? Ahh huh. Do tell, Tim. What a tangled web he weaves. Or should I say you weave. Now get lost.

TIM

Let me ask you this... Do you have an understudy for Neal?

Stan stops in his tracks. There's a long beat. Stan anxiously nervous.

Tim watches Stan and laughs.

STAN
For Neal?

TIM
Yes, for Neal - Bálint.
(pause)
Hmmm... I didn't think so.

Stan ignores Tim and goes backstage into the wings to kill the lights CLICK... CLICK... Breakers go off one at a time. Lights go out on stage.

Tim stumbles off stage, walks up the aisle and exits out the theater.

DIM EERIE LIGHTS fill the hollow space.

59 EXT. STARLIGHT THEATER - NIGHT (MOMENTS LATER)

RAIN DRIZZLES

STREET NOISE: CARS - BUSES - TAXIS.

Tim, unsteady on his feet. He stands under the marquee. He tries several times to light a cigarette as he takes in the traffic and occasional pedestrian that step out of his way.

The theater door opens. Stan comes out. He sees Tim, waits a beat, then slowly walks up to Tim in a cruising mode.

STAN
You want a part?

TIM
(slurring)
I dunno know any more... Depends.

A PEDESTRIAN passes on the sidewalk. Cars and taxis pass on the street.

A long extended beat occurs as Stan looks at Tim. The two men scope each other out up and down in what looks to be a well-rehearsed man-on-man hookup.

RAIN CONTINUES

SEXUAL TENSION. MOMENTS PASS.

Stan and Tim casually walk away together.

WET SIDEWALK, REFLECTING AN ABSTRACT IMAGE OF THE CITY LIGHTS.
STREAMS OF WATER CHASE TRASH DOWN STREET GUTTERS.

60 EXT. NYC - CENTRAL PARK - DAY

Stan with a blank stare sits on a bench along the sidewalk at the Park's edge. The Starlight Marquee beckons down the way.

POV - STAN

PLEIN AIR PAINTER sits at her easel painting the ART DECO FACADE of the Starlight.

PANTOMIME ARTIST approaches and performs shenanigans, and teases Stan for attention.

Stan glares at the Pantomime Artist, he stands then quickly reseats himself on the other side of the bench. The Pantomimist leaps back into Stan's view now with a sympathetic frown. Stan's eyes flare! He hears Jasmine's voice in his head.

JASMINE (V.O.)
Why not just pencil Neal in as an understudy? That way you've got him on contract. Insurance. Everybody will be happy. We can defer salary.

The Pantomime Artist squats down and "draws" a window, shifts his eyes back and forth and sticks his tongue out to Stan.

STAN
Get the hell out of here! Miming is a dead art! Don't you know that!

Stan leans into the "window", and just as he does the Pantomimist vanishes in thin air.

61 INT. PARLIAMENT BUILDING - VAULT ROOM - NIGHT

Bálint's extended hand carefully checks each piece bearing a red tag against a MANIFEST in his other hand. He moves down the rows touching frames like a man choosing which children to save. At Heník's canvases he stops longest.

He folds the manifest into his breast pocket.

62 EXT. HUNGARIAN PLAIN - NIGHT

SUPER OVER BLACK: "NOVEMBER 2, 1956 SOVIET REINFORCEMENTS SECRETLY SURROUND HUNGARY"

HOLD

63 INT. STARLIGHT THEATER - ONSTAGE - DAY

Stage set as the Art Gallery. The actors finish dressing the stage. Stan supervises and insures final placement of a few props.

Tim looks at the displays, adjusts already hung paintings.

Picking up others to hang as Shelly and Philip help him.

Neal watches idly on a cushy chair.

NEAL

(to Tim)

Opening night coming up! You ready?

TIM

Born ready.

SHELLY

Really?

PHILIP

I'm about to piss my pants.

TIM

(cheerily)

I hear that!

Tim and Philip exchange a knowing laugh.

SHELLY

(to Tim)

You seem to be in a good mood today.
What happened?

NEAL

You get lucky last night or something?

Tim smiles coyly. Philip motions him over.

PHILIP

You think he knows?

TIM

Not a chance.

Shelly catches this and throws a cocked head of 'what's up' to Tim and Philip.

STAN

Okay, enough business.

Just then, Gene in costume as FLAGG, a buttoned-down, fastidious type with a thin tie, thick rim stylish glasses, well pressed slacks, polished black leather shoes.

NEAL
(Hungarian accent)
Uh, can I help you?

GENE
(Hungarian accent)
I'm James Flagg. I'm here to play
the gallery manager here at the
gallery!

Tim, Philip, Shelly and Neal crack up at Gene's entry and mockery of their roles,

STAN
Just get on with it already. Last
run through!

Stan steps off the stage and takes a seat in the front row.

Tim jumps off stage and heads over to sit alongside Stan.

Gene goes to wait in the wings just off-stage.

Neal takes a deep breath. Summons his character. Then, entering the 'gallery', the performance begins:

NEAL
Bella, don't you think that one next
to The Roman should go a little closer
to the Nomads at the top left?

SHELLY
This one here, Bálint?

NEAL
Precisely. I'll give you a hand.

Neal helps Shelly take down The Roman and re-hangs it next to Nomads. He takes a closer look at the SIGNATURE.

NEAL (CONT'D)
The signature is smudged.

SHELLY
What?

NEAL
Your signature. It's smudged.

Shelly seems alarmed. Quickly she steps up to Neal and reaches for the painting.

SHELLY
Here, I will take it.

Neal takes the painting back from Shelly.

NEAL
No need. I'll take care of it.
Finish up the hangings.

SHELLY
The oil must have separated from the
pigment. It happens when you apply
the paint in hot weather. I'll just
clean it up.

Shelly tries to take the painting back from Neal.

NEAL
Let me. Have a little linseed oil?

Neal takes the painting to a side table. Shelly tries to
stop him.

SHELLY
Really, don't bother. Let me do it.

NEAL
We can't show it like this. It looks
terrible.
(laughing)
Looks like you signed it twice.

SHELLY
(laughs)
Maybe I did. I'll take care of it.

Shelly stops as Gene walks up to her.

GENE
Hello there! Excited about tonight's
gala, are we?

Neal grabs a small ARTIST SUPPLY BOX, reaches in and produces
a small JAR OF LINSEED OIL and a BURNISHING CLOTH. He begins
to clean the smudge off the canvas.

SHELLY
Bálint, please.

NEAL (O.S.)
I'm handling it.

Gene with hands clasped behind his back strolls by paintings
hung on the walls.

GENE
 So bold and fresh. And what style!
 Where did you learn to paint like
 this?

Shelly is distracted as she watches Neal.

GENE (CONT'D)
 I love them all. Especially that one
 there.

SHELLY
 Oh, Nomads! It's one of my favorites
 too.

Neal takes notice of what appears to be another signature
 below that of Bella's. He looks closer and curiously.

NEAL (O.S.)
 Bella!

GENE
 Go ahead, Ms. Gilder. We'll put the
 empty packing crates in the storage
 area.

Shelly crosses over to Neal on the opposite end of the stage,
 as he closely examines the revealed signature. Gene struggles
 to pick up a few crates

NEAL
 Bella! This is a Henrík Müeser
 painting!

SHELLY
 I... I... I don't --

GENE (O.S.)
 Mr. Ezüstmann, will you give me a
 hand? Apologies, but budget cuts
 have stripped us to the bone.

NEAL
 (to Shelly)
 What are you trying to do to me? To
 the show? A Henrík Müeser work in
 with your exhibit? Have you totally
 taken leave of your senses? What I
 went through with the Gündt to allow
 this showing for you.

SHELLY
 It's only one painting Bálint. I
 promised Henrík that if I ever made
 it to the States that --

NEAL

You promised Henrík? I thought you told me you'd move on from him. That you'd tell him you wanted a clean break!

Tim watches the scene play out from the audience area, subtly impressed by Neal's performance. This, in contrast to Stan who squirms anxiously.

GENE (O.S.)

Mr. Ezüstmann... again, I hate to bother you, but I would be greatly indebted if you helped me with this.

NEAL

(agitated)

One minute Mr. Flagg!

(sotto, to Bella)

Don't you care about me? For all I've done for you? For your career?

Gene takes note of the argument that has ensued and carries off the crates.

NEAL (CONT'D)

I helped you get your grant. I arranged a private showing with officials at the Gündt! Then you stab me in the back by bringing one of Müeser's paintings?

SHELLY

I have done nothing of the kind! Just look at his work! When you thought it mine, it was fine, but now that it's Henrík's, it's not worth showing?

NEAL

I'm taking this out of here.

Neal starts to walk off with the painting.

SHELLY

No one has to know it's his. I'll paint over his signature with mine.

NEAL

You already did that, didn't you?

SHELLY

Please, Bálint. Let it be. Show Henrík's work. Show it as the work
(MORE)

SHELLY (CONT'D)
of the Maestro that taught me
everything I know.

NEAL
Never!

Neal takes the painting and puts it in one of the remaining
empty crates.

NEAL (CONT'D)
Help me with these others. Let's get
them up on the walls. I hope there
are no more of Müeser's here.

Gene re-enters the exhibition space.

GENE
Is there something wrong? Do you
need more lighting? How can I help?

NEAL
No, Mr. Flagg. It's nothing. But we,
err, we think we might be missing a
painting.

GENE
The manifest said twelve.

NEAL
Yes, it seems we are short one. We
have eleven.

GENE
My word! I'll call security
immediately!

NEAL
No, please don't. I'm certain it's
not here.

Shelly steps aside to hang another painting.

GENE
Oh! Let me be of assistance.

Gene helps Shelly to hang the painting.

Neal closes the crate with the Müeser painting. He rejoins
Shelly and Gene to hang the remaining pieces.

Gene leaves with more empty crates.

SHELLY

(exhaling)

You don't know what Henrík's works mean to me. He was my inspiration.

NEAL

I thought I was your inspiration. I got you to this place. Helped you up the ladder. We share a special connection, do we not?!

SHELLY

I'm sorry Bálint, but I don't love you!

Ouch. Bálint is wounded. Gut-punched. He grabs another painting and brashly hands it over to Shelly.

NEAL

(coldly)

Take this one and hang it somewhere.

Neal picks up the crated Müeser painting.

Gene re-enters.

GENE

I will take that for you. Are there any others?

NEAL

That's quite all right. Just show me where we're storing these.

GENE

Follow me, if you would.

NEAL

Thank you very much. I'll be back for you later Bella. I need to arrange for our hotel.

Neal and Gene exit out the exhibit hall.

Stan paces in front of the stage. Glares at Tim, still sitting at his side, engrossed and preoccupied with the scene.

STAN

Henrík enters now! On that line!

A beat, Stan turns to Tim.

STAN (CONT'D)

Tim!

(MORE)

STAN (CONT'D)
What the hell are you doing with
your thumb up your ass?! It's your
line!

Tim jumps up and hustles on to the stage. Frantically looks off to one side of the stage, then the other., not certain where he's to enter. He walks off into the wing. After a beat, Tim enters the exhibition.

Stan jumps up on stage, halting the action.

STAN (CONT'D)
Where were you? Why weren't you back stage for your entrance? Your cue was to enter on "I'll be back for you later Bella." Don't tell me you're on that shit again. You are completely unprofessional!

TIM
(hurt, bristling)
I was waiting for my cue, Stan.
And that isn't it.

STAN
Waiting off set, with me, in the audience!?

Stan pulls the script from his back pocket and opens it. He frantically turns to the scene, pointing at lines, pages frantically looking for lines that aren't to be found. He casts confusion. Tries to save face.

STAN (CONT'D)
Obviously this is an old script.
Someone... must have switched them out.

TIM
Serious?

A confused cast and crew, now totally bewildered. They whisper among themselves.

STAN
(awkward pause)
I must have been thinking of the next scene.

TIM
Yeah, you were. That's why I didn't know my place.

Stan casts his eyes to each of his actors suspiciously.
Then smiles neurotically.

TIM (CONT'D)

Now, I think you owe me an apology.

Stan ignores Tim's arrogant insistence. After a long
protracted beat

STAN

Next scene! Take your places!

The actors surrender their astonishment and take their places.

SUPER: "NOVEMBER 3, 1956"

64 INT. PARLIAMENT BUILDING - CABINET ROOM - DAY

A long table under a chandelier missing half its crystal.
Tall windows taped against blast. The room is half government,
half museum: along the back wall lean CONFISCATED PAINTINGS
AND SCULPTURES -- some charred, some half burnt, many still
wearing RED TAGS on wire.

At the table: Imre Nagy, Maléter, and FERENC ERDEI (46),
Minister of State, a farmer's heavy hands on state papers.
GENERAL ISTVÁN KOVÁCS (45), Chief of Staff, who has not smiled
in ten days. A cast of MINISTERS and AIDES AS MARIONETTES
sit faceless along the wall with strings attached to their
limbs.

And at Nagy's right hand, a guest: YURI ANDROPOV (42), Soviet
Ambassador -- tall, lean, professorial behind heavy dark-
rimmed glasses. A soft voice, a courteous half-smile, the
patience of a chess player. He looks like the one man in the
room incapable of lying, which is his entire function.
What is all this?

AIDE

Confiscated works from the vault.
Maybe a few hundred more.

Nagy rises. Crosses to the wall of paintings. Lifts a red
tag on its wire, turns it over. A stamped number. He lets it
fall.

IMRE NAGY

Evidence. That was the word, I
believe.

(to the room)

A state that fears a painting is a
state confessing something.

(to Aide)

Find the artists. Living or dead,
find them -- give everything back.

Frustrated Aide exits retracing his steps with art pieces in hand.

Andropov, who has drifted to the wall, stops before one canvas:

A SWORD PIERCING A WOMAN'S HEART -- SIGNED MUESER.

ANDROPOV

(soft, genuine)

Remarkable. Your avant-garde is very direct.

(reading the tag)

A sword through a heart. In Moscow our painters would need forty meters of wheat field to say this much.

IMRE NAGY

It was banned, Ambassador.

ANDROPOV

Hmm. That was yesterday's error. Moscow does not want Hungary's heart, Prime Minister. Merely its friendship.

A beat. Nagy studies him -- wanting it to be true. He returns to the table. Back to business.

IMRE NAGY

Pál. The morning session.

PÁL MALÉTER

Better than we dared hope. General Malinin was correct, even cordial. A timetable of withdrawal by garrison. Guarantees against demolition of rail and bridges on departure.

(almost embarrassed)

They asked that we arrange ceremonies. Honors. They wish to leave with bands playing, as friends.

ERDEI

Then let there be bands. God knows we can afford trumpets if it buys tanks.

Low laughter around the table. Not from Kovács. He slides a folder down the polished wood to Nagy.

GENERAL KOVÁCS

Before we tune the trumpets. Overnight reports.

(MORE)

GENERAL KOVÁCS (CONT'D)

(slow paced)

Armor crossing at Záhony -- westbound,
not east. Columns at Szolnok. Every
airfield in the country ringed by
tanks since Thursday.

All eyes go to Andropov. Who removes his glasses. Polishes
them. Puts them back on. When he speaks it is with the sorrow
of a man personally wounded by doubt.

ANDROPOV

General, I will tell you what I have
told the Prime Minister each day
this week, and what Moscow confirms
to me each night. The units entering
are relief formations -- rotations,
so that the garrisons leaving may
leave. The columns secure the rail
lines that will carry them out.

(gently)

And the airfields... comrades, we
are evacuating our wounded. Our
families. Officers' wives and children
have been dragged from cars in this
city. You will not begrudge us tanks
around the children.

GENERAL KOVÁCS

Fifteen divisions of relief,
Ambassador?

ANDROPOV

One should not mistake logistics for
intentions, General.

Silence. The clock. Somewhere below, faint, a BRASS BAND
rehearsing a farewell march -- badly.

MINISTER (O.S.)

And where is Kádár? No one has seen
him since Thursday. He records a
speech praising the revolution and
vanishes.

A fractional pause. Andropov aligns his pen with the table's
edge.

ANDROPOV

I share your concern. These are
dangerous streets.

-- OFF NAGY: THE SMALLEST FLICKER - GONE. THE NEED TO BELIEVE
IS STRONGER --

IMRE NAGY

The evening session, then. Time and
place.

PÁL MALÉTER

Ten o'clock. They propose their
headquarters - Tököl. The airbase.

GENERAL KOVÁCS

Their base. At night. Why not here,
where the morning went so well?

ANDROPOV

The technical staffs are there. The
maps, the signals officers. It is a
question of convenience, nothing
more.

GENERAL KOVÁCS

(to Maléter; quiet)

Pál. Send colonels.

PÁL MALÉTER

(long beat)

If the Minister of Defense will not
sit at their table, we are saying we
do not trust them.

(standing)

And if we say that, the bands stop
playing.

He gathers the folder. At the door he pauses -- looks back
past the ministers, past Andropov, to the wall of red-tagged
paintings.

PÁL MALÉTER (CONT'D)

(to Nagy; a soldier's
smile)

Have them home by the time I'm back,
Prime Minister. I should like to
return something to its owner myself.

He goes. Nagy watches the door a moment too long.

Andropov consults his watch, stands and leaves.

65 INT. STARLIGHT THEATER - ONSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

FLECKS OF DUST flutter in the air before STAGE LIGHTS bring
the set to life. The rehearsal continues.

Gene enters the exhibition space with a crate in hand.
He sees Bella on a STEP LADDER adjusting the lights.

GENE
Say, I found another crate.

He sets the crate down and opens it up.

GENE (CONT'D)
Ms. Gilder... Is this the painting
you thought missing? I almost put it
away with the empty crates.

Shelly turns and sees Henrik Müeser's "The Roman". It bears
her signature. She quickly dismounts the ladder.

SHELLY
Uh, Why, yes! That is it. Let me
have that, will you? I'll hang it.

She takes the painting from Gene.

GENE
May I hang it for you?

SHELLY
(beat)
Yes, Of course.

Gene looks proudly over the exhibit space.

GENE
Let me see... Perhaps here...
(flustered)
Ms. Gilder, I'm really of two minds!
I feel it really needs more space
around it. More light.

Shelly spots an open space on the wall.

SHELLY
Let's put it over here.

GENE
Perfect.

Gene holds the painting while Shelly works to secure a hanger
on the wall.

Gene notices the smudge at the signature line on the painting.

He puts it down. He takes out a handkerchief and rubs it
lightly. His eyes widen at what he sees.

GENE (CONT'D)

Henrík Müeser! Why, this is a Henrík Müeser!

Shelly is momentarily paralyzed.

SHELLY

You know of him?

GENE

Of course! Müeser is on what our directors benevolently call the "endangered species list."

SHELLY

Endangered species?

GENE

Why, yes. I saw his earlier works in Hungary, years ago. Before... well, before problems started. Ever since, he's been like a ghost!

SHELLY

Not for lack of trying.

(off Gene's confused look)

There has been no attempt to defraud here, Mr. Flagg.

GENE

Naturally. I can see his signature here. But why cover it up?

SHELLY

I promised him that if I got to the West... to New York with my exhibit, that somehow I would try to get his paintings shown. It's been horrid for Henrík and us. We can't show our work anywhere in Eastern Europe.

GENE

Ms. Gilder, I assure you, we have long wanted to show Müeser's work but he has been more of a... a cloistered cause *dé celebre*, making it extremely difficult to even arrange a showing,

SHELLY

It's because they won't allow him the contacts in the art world he needs. Henrík, and others like us

(MORE)

SHELLY (CONT'D)
 have all been censored. We have to
 bend and shape our work to fit the
 Party narrative. Do you understand?

GENE
 More than you know, we are beginning
 to face similar constraints even
 here. But not your work. Why? How is
 it that you were able to win an
 endowment but not the great Henrík
 Müeser? No offense, naturally.

SHELLY
 (beat)
 Bálint Ezüstmann. I... I sought him
 out. He has connections with the
 Gündt. You could say I was forced
 into entering a... a social contract
 with him.

Gene looks sympathetically at Shelly.

GENE
 I see.

NEAL (V.O.)
 There's a crate missing.

Neal walks in and notices Shelly and Gene talking over the
 Müeser painting. He acts curiously innocent.

NEAL (CONT'D)
 Where did that painting come from?

GENE
 I found it around back. It must be
 the missing painting off the manifest.

Without missing a beat.

NEAL
 Well, thank goodness it was found!
 Please, let me have it. It surely
 was shipped by mistake. It was not
 to be included in the show. I will
 remove it.

GENE
 No. No, please Mr. Ezüstmann.

Neal looks again at Henrík's signature on the painting, and
 is now on the spot.

NEAL

I apologize for this. It was a terrible miscalculation on Ms. Gilder's part. There was no intention to defraud the Ibsen Gallery.

GENE

Not at all. In fact, this is a wonderful discovery. If indeed it was a mistake, it was a serendipitous one.

Neal reaches up and removes the painting. Gene grabs the painting from Neal.

GENE (CONT'D)

Mr. Bálint, I'm afraid that I cannot allow this painting to be removed from the exhibit.

Our board is vehemently adamant over its right to exhibit all art regardless of the censor practices of its financial backers, be it here in the U.S., Russia, China --even Hungary. It will not happen in this gallery.

Gene puts the painting back on the hanger. Neal turns beet red.

NEAL

I demand the painting back. It is an embarrassment!

GENE (O.S.)

I am sorry, but I must be firm. Now it would be different if the artist, or in this case an artist of the Müeser school, Ms. Gilder, perhaps, requested it not be shown, then naturally I would have no choice but to comply.

Neal looks sternly at Shelly, who returns a defiant stare.

AUDIENCE SECTION

Stan leaps to his feet and goes on stage. A 180 turn.

STAN

Nice, nice! Tech crew, take a break! Everyone except Neal take a ten minute break.

TIM

What about me? You want to run my part again?

STAN
 If I wanted that I would have said
 so.
 (coldly)
 Neal, stay. I need a word with you.

Tim dejected, glares at Stan.

Tim and Neal's eyes meet in a quick instance. They both
 hold back a shared smile.

The stage empties out, save for Neal. A beat as we LINGER
 CLOSE ON Stan's face.

BACKSTAGE

Off in the wings, Tim and Shelly whirl and eavesdrop on Stan
 and Neal.

ON STAGE

POV - STAN

The stage lights seem to become unnaturally bright. The WALLS
 OF THE BLACK BOX start to close in and twist around him like
 a boa constrictor -a retracting trap.

Stan is wild-eyed.

NEAL
 Yeah, Stan, what?

Startled out of his VISION, Stan's world reshapes and returns
 to normal.

Neal stares at Stan with trepidation.

NEAL (CONT'D)
 Why so nervous?

STAN
 You know damn well why.

NEAL
 No... I really don't.

STAN
 Silvermon.

NEAL
 What about him?

STAN
 Don't act coy with me Neal. I know
 what you're up to.

NEAL

What am I up to?

STAN

You know Barry wants to put the kibosh on this production. Don't you?

NEAL

What are you talking about?

Stan goes ballistic. Tongue-tied, he points randomly to the set, props, up to the lights. Wild-eyed, Stan RANTS while Shelly, Tim, and now Gene watch from behind the curtains.

STAN

You play the role when you have no real intentions of sticking with this show! You've been bought and paid for by Barry the big greedy Matzo Ball of Broadway.

Shelly throws a disturbed glance to the others.

NEAL

Matzo Ball? Really, Stan?

STAN

You're the same. Deceitful traitor! Can't be trusted!

Stan angrily grabs Neal by the collar. The others alarmed charge back to the stage.

STAN (CONT'D)

(to the others)

What are you all looking at! I told you to go!

(back to Neal)

You think I don't know why Jasmine brought you in for an audition? Who put you up to this... this charade?

NEAL

You're fucking delusional!

STAN

You cross me up, I'll kill you. I've worked too hard for too long to let you and that greedy Shylock take this moment away from me!

Stan goes to CHARGE at Neal, but Philip surges in time to grab him and pulls him back.

PHILIP

Stan! Easy! What's wrong with
you, man?!

Stan turns to the others, now watching nearby.

STAN

The Starlight's been infiltrated!

Stan points to Neal, his finger shaking at the surroundings
and then at each of his actor.

STAN (CONT'D)

Barry sent this traitor over here to
play his part until opening night.
And then he's going to leave us high
and dry at the last minute!

Isn't that right, Neal? You and Jasmine planned all of
this.

SHELLY

Oh, this is ridiculous!

STAN

Is it? Ask him! Ask him! Barry
wants to kill this show.

GENE

No! That's a flat out lie. Who
even put this into your head.

Tim gives Stan a sheepish look. Stan catches this and turns
quickly at him and then to all the others, before catching
air to breathe.

STAN

You! You! You! --All of you are
traitors!

Stan rushes up the aisle to the exits.

Shelly breaks the shock and awe by showing the others the
image on her cell phone, captured in Stan's office.

NEAL

Is that Stan?

TIM

Let me take a look.

Tim mocks the image of Stan's smirk with one of his own.

Philip points to signage in the background.

PHILIP
What language is that?

GENE
Hungarian.

SHELLY
Festmény. Cafe Festmény.

66 EXT. STARLIGHT THEATER - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

He frantically pushes out from the front door onto the sidewalk. Unnerved. He fidgets to light a cigarette. Looks all around him. PEDESTRIANS jostle to get out of his way. Busy street traffic streams by.

Stan peers suspiciously at each pedestrian.

SUDDENLY a couple of cops on their beat spot a paranoid-acting Stan. As they approach they MORPH and appear as AVH AGENTS. They point at him and take after him, or so he believes. They MORPH back and greet him with a pleasant smile.

Frazzled, Stan frantically jaywalks across the street to the park.

HONK! HONK! A TAXI narrowly misses Stan.

SUPER OVER BLACK: "NOVEMBER 4, 1956 - OPERATION WHIRLWIND"

67 INT. HENRÍK'S STUDIO - DAY

István blows a mouth full of cigarette smoke out through the window. He peers down to the trashed street below.

Péter crouched over on the edge of the sofa with a TRANSISTOR RADIO at his ear, listening to a news report spewing about the unrest. Henrík sits next to him rapidly paging through a tattered copy of IRODALMI ÚJSÁG writers' journal.

Bella sits hunched up on the floor sifting through a small stack of sketches.

INTERCUT WITH

68 EXT. STREET BELOW HENRÍK'S STUDIO - DAY

Below the studio window, KIDS scramble over an abandoned T-54 SOVIET TANK. One pops out from inside the hold. The others point and laugh.

HENRÍK (V.O.)
Listen to this: "Artistic freedom is
the pulsating heartbeat of our
creations."

ISTVÁN (V.O.)
Who wrote that?

HENRÍK (V.O.)
Some Ukrainian.

BACK TO SCENE

Henrík continues reading an excerpt from the magazine and chortles.

HENRÍK (CONT'D)
Here, wait. Listen, "Artistic freedom is the pulsating heartbeat of our creations. Guiding our hands to unveil the hidden realms of emotion and thought, and reminding us that the true avant-garde spirit is found in breaking chains, not conforming to them."

Bella holds up a sketch of LADY LIBERTY wrapped in an Hungarian flag.

BELLA
What do you think?

HENRÍK
I like it.

BELLA
It will be incredible to get back into the galleries now that this is all over!

István at the window looking out.

ISTVÁN
I'm not so sure it is.

HENRÍK
And you'll be touring the United States!

Meet Uncle Sam! You are so lucky.

BELLA
We're lucky.
(beat)
I think we're past the worst of it.

HENRÍK
How many pieces?

Henrik looks to where the paintings once stood against the wall and sees just a couple standing.

BELLA

A good number. Maybe eight or ten of ours... yours!

ISTVÁN

Where are the rest?

PÉTER

They say they're stored in a vault at Parliament.

István, Henrik, and Bella exchange horrified looks.

69 EXT. STREET BELOW HENRIK'S STUDIO - DAY

Above the sidewalk, István is seen looking out the studio window. Moments later, Péter is seen joining him at his side looking down on this very street.

A Soviet tank and a jeep pull up to the abandoned tank, scattering kids and blocking traffic.

A soldier jumps down into the tank, pushing one child out from inside the hold. Soon a billow of dark smoke plumes from its stack and signals their departure as both tanks pull out.

PÉTER (V.O.)

They're all leaving. I think we need to plan a celebration.

ISTVÁN (V.O.)

It's not over. The Soviets won't rest until it's dead quiet.

70 INT. HENRIK'S STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

István takes a seat next to Péter on the sofa. A RADIO BROADCAST of Imre Nagy spiels from the transistor radio.

ISTVÁN

Hey! Turn that louder will you? That's our man.

IMRE NAGY (V.O.)

"... THIS FIGHT IS THE FIGHT FOR FREEDOM BY THE HUNGARIAN PEOPLE AGAINST THE RUSSIAN INTERVENTION, AND IT IS POSSIBLE THAT I SHALL ONLY BE ABLE TO STAY AT MY POST FOR ONE OR TWO HOURS. THE WHOLE WORLD WILL SEE HOW THE..."

HENRÍK

Turn it up more! This isn't a library!

Henrík stands, winces in pain from his wound, goes to sit next to István and Péter at the sofa, listening intently. Bella joins.

INTERCUT WITH

71 INT. BUDAPEST - MAGYAR RÁDIÓ BUILDING

Imre Nagy sits in the broadcasting booth in front of a MICROPHONE reading from a SCRIPT.

IMRE NAGY

In these final moments, I urge the Revolution's leaders to leave the country if possible. I request that the contents of my broadcast and our agreements with the revolutionary leaders be recorded in a memorandum. They should seek global assistance, emphasizing that after Hungary, other nations will face similar threats. Moscow's imperialism knows no boundaries and is merely biding its time.

BELLA (V.O.)

No! This can't be. I thought it was over!

BACK TO SCENE

Henrík puts his arm around a distraught Bella.

Péter, deflated, looks at Bella and Henrík, who extends his other arm to embrace Péter.

István, stands resolute and goes off to look out the window as GUN SHOTS once again echo out from the streets.

Henrík stands, his one hand protective of the wound, goes to István's side and takes his arm. He leads him to the corner of the studio. Henrík takes the rifle and a PISTOL stowed from behind a set of canvases. He slings the rifle over his shoulder and goes to hand the pistol to István.

After a beat, István withdraws his own handgun tucked in his trousers and acknowledges his readiness to Henrík.

ISTVÁN

No need.

Bella clocks all this.

HENRÍK

I see now that these politicians
will do nothing to help. We all need
to regroup.

(beat)

We must finish this or it will never
be finished.

ISTVÁN

Now you're talking sense.

Henrík and István turn to go out the door.

PÉTER

Henrík!

BELLA

Henrík, you've done enough! István --
don't! You'll both be killed. Let
the militants finish it. Now is the
time we plan an escape.

ISTVÁN

We are the militants now, Bella.
And so are you!

István goes out the door without looking back. Bella is
crestfallen.

BELLA

I'm going with you.

Bella races to the corner and grabs the pistol left behind.

HENRÍK

No! This time you stay!

BELLA

No! I'm coming along!

HENRÍK

(begging but insistent)

No... please, Bella. I can't lose
you. Stay! Just stay. Please! I'm
begging!

BELLA

I can't. I wouldn't be able to go
on without you.

Their eyes lock.

HENRÍK

You can, and you will.
(MORE)

HENRÍK (CONT'D)

(long beat)

Whatever happens never let them stop
you. We can't let them win! Art
will tell this story like nothing
else!

A loaded beat. Henrík leans in and kisses Bella passionately
on the lips.

He removes the pendant of the Magyar Warrior hanging from
his neck. He kisses it, puts it over Bella's head and around
her neck, then goes out the door.

HENRÍK (CONT'D)

Péter, you coming?

Péter embraces Bella. He tries to pull away. Bella pulls him
back to her. She kisses him on the cheek.

BELLA

Watch out for Henrík please. He needs
someone to take care of him.

PÉTER

I will.

Péter follows Henrík and István out.

Bella goes to the window and watches for them. The sidewalk
gate opens. They step out.

72 EXT. KOSSUTH SQUARE - OUTSIDE PARLIAMENT - LATER

Shellfire spits across the skyline. Parliament's roof line
burns against a black-orange sky. Smoke. Running figures.

Through it, incongruous, parked hard against a service
entrance: a BOX TRUCK, rear doors open.

AVH MEN in gray coats hustle CRATES up the ramp. Stenciled
on the crates: inventory numbers. From one crate's slats, a
corner of gilt frame -- and a swinging RED TAG.

Bálint stands by carefully counting his quarry.

In a roar from across the street.

HENRÍK

Ezüstmann! Bálint **Ezüstmann**.

Bálint hearing his name, seeks the source and finds Henrík,
Péter and István through the dark smoke. Their eyes lock
across the fifteen meters of pavement to see Bálint.

Bálint momentarily flares with shame. He holds the look one second -- two --

BOOM! - A TANK ROUND lands astride of Henrík, István, and Péter and the crowd they're in, and the world goes white.

WHEN THE SMOKE THINS

Devastation surrounds Henrík where he there now lies wounded with shrapnel. His paramour, Péter lies dead at his side. Grave sorrow fills Henrík's face, he breaks down. Tears blend into blood and flow pink down his cheeks.

Around him blood and carnage surrounds him. He looks frantically for his two friends, blood spreading at his shoulder and hip.

Suddenly, István severely wounded with blood streaming down his face races across the street toward a flailing Bálint struggling to step on to the truck as it pulls away.

A SINGLE SHOT RINGS OUT. István drops to the pavement.

CLOSE IN AND HOLD: PISTOL in Bálint's hand.

He latches on to the truck already in motion.

In the closing gap of the truck's rear doors: Bálint's pistol still in hand, he watches István fall dead. The view of Henrík falls out of sight as the doors slam shut.

MATCH CUT TO:

73 INT. STARLIGHT THEATER - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT - PRESENT DAY

A LOADING DOOR slams at the rear stage door.

Opening-night sets rolling in. Stan flinches nervously. Self conscious, he tries to mask his paranoia, checking his watch.

STAGE MANAGER (V.O.)
(over a god mic)
COMPANY: THIS IS YOUR TWENTY-FOUR-
HOUR CALL. TOMORROW WE OPEN.

SUPER OVER BLACK: "BUDAPEST - NOVEMBER 1956 - DAYS LATER"

74 INT. HENRÍK'S STUDIO - DAWN

FADE IN FROM BLACK

Bella stands at the side of the window behind the drab spindly drapes. Her easel at her side. Takes a brush off the palette.

Her careful hand slowly applies paint to canvas.

Time lapses and a ghostly image slowly reveals itself:

FALLEN STATUE OF STALIN SLOWLY EMERGES FROM A BACKGROUND OF
THE BURNT AND RUINED CITY OF BUDAPEST.

A last look out the window

POV - BELLA

Henrik, filthy, bandaged shoulder. In his good arm, pressed
to his chest: a loaf of BREAD and a bottle of wine, scavenged
from the ruins.

BACK TO SCENE

She is down the stairs before we can follow. The gate. Her
hands through the bars, then the bolt, then she has him
carefully, around the wounds -- and she breaks down.

Her eyes pierce his with heart-felt joy and empathy.

BELLA

István?
(beat)
Péter?

HENRIK

(barely)
No.

The bread crushed between them, they hobble up the stairwell.

At the window a red sun begs passage through hazy fog.

A quiet communion, no words, just a silent relief of both
their safety and togetherness.

HENRIK (CONT'D)

Austria. Tonight, with the Kovacs
family.

They know the marsh crossing at Andau.

BELLA

The paintings --

Henrik tightens and glares at the floor, then casts contempt
toward Bella, ingesting her intimate betrayal with Bálint.
The silence deepens.

Bella moves close in, desperate.

BELLA (CONT'D)
 There was nothing between us, Henrík.
 You must believe that.

Bella closes her fist around the Magyar pendant.

HENRÍK
 (long beat)
 The paintings are gone. Let him keep
 them. I hope the canvasses rot off
 their frames.

A long beat and Henrík looks deep into Bella's eyes.

HENRÍK (CONT'D)
 We'll keep what we have.

FADE TO BLACK

75 EXT. STREET BELOW HENRÍK'S STUDIO - PER DAWN

EMPTY DIMLY LIT STREETS

FOG and SMOKE SIFTS THROUGH THE AIR RANDOM SPORADIC SHELLING
 and EXPLOSIONS IN THE DISTANCE

Bálint Ezüstmann stands on the sidewalk below Henrík's studio.

POV - BÁLINT

Across the street a TEENAGER runs up to a poster of Ernő Gerő
 on a BRICK WALL and paints "TYRANT" over it.

INTERCUT WITH

76 INT. HENRÍK'S STUDIO - SAME

At the studio window Bella is watching Bálint. She steps
 back slightly as he looks up to the window from below.

RING OF DOOR BUZZER

Henrík rises quickly from the sofa and reaches for the nearby
 rifle.

BACK TO SCENE

An anxious beat, Bálint looks up to the window again. Bella
 absent.

With a look of loss in his eyes, and a deserted street
 stretching in both directions, he casts his eyes to the sky.

RED SUN BREAKS THROUGH THE FOG OVER THE HORIZON.

A CREAK AND SLIP OF THE LOCKED GATE BREAKS THE QUIETNESS OF THE STREET

Out from the warehouse gated door steps Bella.

BELLA
(flat)
Bálint.

He turns with elation. Steps in close to her, takes both her hands in his.

BÁLINT
I knew you'd come.

Coldly, Bella replies but not as he had wished.

BELLA
Not for you.
(beat)
Stamps for my dead brother and our friend.

BÁLINT
(confused)
What do you mean?

BELLA
My brother lay dead in Kossuth Square.
And I could not even claim his body without a stamp.

BÁLINT
Yes. Yes. I can do that for you!

BELLA
It's the only thing you can do for me.

77 INT. STARLIGHT THEATER - BACKSTAGE

POV - ANONYMOUS

Handheld tracking through the backstage winding through the set of flats, props and busy stage crew. All the details of a production about to go on. There, in a gaggle are Shelly, Tim, Philip, Neal, and Gene all in costume and makeup, laughing among themselves about what might appear from the outside as an inside joke.

STAGE MANAGER (V.O.)
Fifteen minutes and counting people.

78 INT. STARLIGHT THEATER - LOBBY

OPENING NIGHT

ABSTRACT PAINTINGS hang in the lobby setting the tone for the play about to go on. A PATRON browses a PLAYBILL. A banquet table with wine and hors d'oeuvre laid out in the center of the room.

Enter Stan from the outside, dressed nicely and wearing an ascot.

POV - STAN

Weaving through the Crowd. A YOUNG COUPLE look through him as if he's not there, then turn and walk away. A 360 degree turn. GADFLIES! A WOMAN points at him. He approaches her. She passes him by - or through him - to greet another couple standing behind him.

BACK TO SCENE

Stan looks back at the Crowd, then passes through a door into the theater.

79 EXT. STARLIGHT THEATER - NIGHT

LIMO pulls up to front of the Starlight Theater. The beautiful Art-Deco theater is brilliantly lit by the Marquee in an array of burgundy and white neon tubing and lights. -- Indeed, it's truly stunning at night! --

A well-heeled, conservative yet stylishly dressed BARRY SILVERMON (80) steps out of the Limo. -- We don't yet see his face --

We track him up the steps of the Theater. He glances at the Marquee above: "THE MAGI PAINTING - OPENING NIGHT!"

Barry enters the lobby of the Starlight.

POV - BARRY SILVERMON

Small groups of THEATER-GOERS mill about the lobby with drinks in hand. Chit-chatting. COUPLE stands at the WILL CALL WINDOW exchanging cash for tickets. SMALL CROWD at the BAR order drinks and chatter among themselves.

Barry passes through the throng of theater-goers and through the theater doors.

BACK TO SCENE

Barry ambles down the center aisle, past soft whispering theater-goers, and takes a center seat in the second row

directly behind Stan. He leans in. We hear a gravelly voice but still cannot see his face.

BARRY SILVERMON

Hello Stan.
(beat)
Good luck!

STUNNED! Stan freezes! That voice! Stan wants to turn to look at him straight in the face but deep fear holds him back. He freezes up and stares hauntingly straight ahead at the stage curtains.

HOUSE LIGHTS DIM

AUDIENCE APPLAUSE

As the curtains slowly open,

SOUNDS OF ARTILLERY FIRE AND FLASHES OF LIGHT AT AN UPSTAGE SCRIM

Philip poses in the nude on a weathered Chesterfield sofa just on the other side of the easel.

AT UPSTAGE WINDOW

Tim is fixed on watching a scene street-side.

KNOCK. KNOCK.

ENTER Kevin.

Tim takes note.

TIM

Ahh, Julio. Come in! Look who's here Bella.

SHELLY

Julio! You're back! How have you been? When did you arrive from Vienna?

KEVIN

Earlier today. Customs at Hegyeshalom was awful!

Kevin joins Tim at the upstage window and takes a quick look.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

And what the hell is happening on the streets?

Exhausted, Kevin plops down on the sofa next to Philip. Checks him out up and down. He takes a quick glance at Philip's member. Unimpressed.

TIM

You've been out of Hungary too long.
The government's clamping down.

KEVIN

I would have been here sooner but
Customs decided to look through all
our bags this time. I think they
believe the Soviet Union is going to
rise like some Phoenix and re-ignite
Stalinism.

QUICK CUT - BACKSTAGE

Prompter in the wings smiling as she turns the page in the script.

INTERCUT WITH

80 INT. BUDAPEST - HENRÍK'S STUDIO - MORNING

A colorful ABSTRACT PAINTING OF A BEHEADED STATUE OF STALIN glows from Bella's canvas in a sepia tone studio lit by a bright ray of morning sun beaming in from the window.

Bella picks up a thin brush with RED PAINT and signs the piece "BELLA GILDER (1956)"

PRE-LAP - AUDIENCE APPLAUSE

RETURN TO SCENE

The stage curtain slowly closes.

House lights come up.

81 EXT. STREETSIDE HENRÍK'S STUDIO - NIGHT

We track through a maze of eerily quiet streets, isolated lone gunshots echo in the distance.

A couple STRAGGLERS wander down the middle of the street.

The maze ends outside the Kozma Street Prison. A group of AVH police stand idle smoking cigarettes and joking among themselves

82 INT. STARLIGHT THEATER - BACKSTAGE

SOFT LOUNGE MUSIC permeates the curtains from the front of the house.

Stan wild-eyed enters backstage searching for someone.

We follow Stan as he heads down a short corridor to the Green Room.

Kevin and Shelly laughing softly at something just said.
Philip is on his cell phone.

STAN

Tim here?

Philip quickly ends the call.

KEVIN

Maybe in the kitchen.

Unnoticed by Stan, Kevin and Philip exchange a quick smile.
Shelly catching the exchange takes on a look of suspicion.

We again follow Stan as he walks out of the room.

PHILIP (V.O.)

Check the bathroom.

KITCHEN

A SNACK MACHINE against the wall. A couple glasses and plates
next to a MICROWAVE. He scans the room -- *NO ONE THERE* --

He walks further down the hall to a washroom. Opens the
door. He sees feet under the stall.

STAN

Tim.

GENE (O.S.)

Jeez! Can't even take a crap.

Stan exits.

GENE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Hey! Don't say I didn't warn you
about that asshole.

He follows the passage back, a frantic look shrouds his face.

He comes upon the Prompter and Stage Manager - an inaudible
inquest.

Shelly, Kevin, Philip approach.

STAN

Shelly, Where is Tim?

SHELLY
Not sure. How would I know? I'm
sure he's here somewhere. Probably
with Neal.

STAN
With Neal!

STAGE MANAGER (40+)
(sotto)
Quiet. And places please. Five
minutes.

Stan, panics. He shakes violently. His cast shaken too by
his reactions.

STAN
Where the Hell are they? They're
both in this act. They should be
here ready to go on!

Neal and Tim approach the group. Stan stares them down.
A beat. A glare. Now satisfied, Stan hastens off in a huff.

STAGE MANAGER
(sotto)
Places.

The back lights go dark. A thin sliver of house lights shining
below the curtains fade to black.

HOUSE CHATTER DWINDLES AND GROWS SILENT

TECH CREW initiates backstage lighting and sound effects.

FLASHES OF LIGHT - SHELLING AND ARTILLERY FIRE

AUDIENCE APPLAUSE

83 EXT. TÖKÖL AIRBASE - SOVIET HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

SUPER: TÖKÖL AIRBASE - SOVIET HEADQUARTERS. — 11:58 P.M."

A small contingent of SOVIET OFFICERS are stationed around
the entrance.

A BLACK OFFICIAL CAR approaches and pulls up to front of
building.

SOVIET OFFICERS come out of the building and meet Pál Maléter
getting out of the car.

SOVIET OFFICER
Pál Maléter, you are under arrest.

PÁL
What's the meaning of this?

Ignoring his complaint, they lead Pál up the steps into the building.

84 INT. STARLIGHT THEATER - CONTINUOUS

ISOLATED SHOTS AND LIGHT FLASH AGAINST UPSTAGE FLAT

We pick up somewhere in the middle of a scene where Bella is painting Philip posing in a new position standing near the window, still nude. A beat, then he breaks his pose.

PHILIP
I have to go.

He begins to dress, looks up at Bella, sees an anxiousness befall her.

PHILIP (CONT'D)
(beat)
You know there's nothing between
Henrík and me.

SHELLY
(shaking it off)
Oh, yeah. No. Yeah, I know that,
No, it's fine.

Philip kisses Shelly on the cheek then, out of character, whispers something in her ear.

Philip exits.

Shelly, does a double-take as he walks off stage. She sheds a look of confusion, then forces herself to stay in character, takes up a cloth and wipes paint from her brush, contemplating what is to come.

A VERY LONG BEAT

Shelly grows nervous waiting on Tim's entrance. She improvises and hums nervously.

INTERMITTENT SOUNDS OF SHOTS AND BLASTS - LIGHT FX -

Shelly looks up and off to the wings while trying to stay in character. She catches the eyes of the Prompter who shrugs her shoulders while craning her head looking for Tim. She shakes her head worriedly and mouths, "I don't know!"

Shelly's careful hand mixes a pool of red paint on the palette.

Her quick glance out into the audience catches a glimpse of Stan's twisted anguished face, restless in his seat, his eyes shifting frantically side-to-side across the stage. Behind, and just from the nose down, a smiling Barry Silvermon.

Shelly continues to improvise, paints, nervously mixes colors on the palette. She waits on Tim's entrance

-- TIME STANDS STILL --

SHELLY (CONT'D)
(improvising)
I miss Henrík so much.

OUT OF NO WHERE A CAT wanders on stage.

The Audience anxious that something is awry reacts with hushed giggles.

Shelly wildly surprised now sees a convenient prop, she puts down her brush and picks up the cat.

SHELLY (CONT'D)
My little, Puss, Puss. Have you been
out hunting? Where's Henrík today?

The Cat leaps from her arms and runs off stage.

AUDIENCE LAUGHTER

AUDIENCE MEMBER (V.O.)
"Kitty, kitty".

Some of the audience snicker, others look at each other in wonderment questioning what's gong on. Is this part of the scene? Something is off.

Shelly continues to improvise and paints. She again looks off to the wings. She sees the Prompter nervously looking behind the backstage curtains conferring with the Stage Manager. She turns back to Shelly and shakes her head - a definite no. Tim's nowhere to be found.

85 EXT. BUDAPEST - KOZMA STREET PRISON YARD

SUPER: "BUDAPEST COLLECTION PRISON ON KOZMA STREET,
JUNE 16, 1958"

AERIAL FRONT AND REAR OF PRISON YARD

CAMERA DOWN - Four SOVIET SOLDIERS exit a double door at the rear of the prison. They lead Pál Maléter out.

Not 50 meters away, a GALLOWS PLATFORM

Pál Maléter is escorted up the stairs of the gallows platform.

86 EXT. BUDAPEST - KOZMA STREET PRISON - GALLOWS

SOLDIERS place a noose over his head. The Soldiers descend the platform.

MOMENTS LATER UNDERNEATH PLATFORM - GALLOWS DOORS DROP OPEN

87 INT. STARLIGHT THEATER - AUDIENCE SECTION

Stan is dying watching Shelly try to salvage the scene.

The Audience is still laughing and commenting about the cat.

Above it all is the graveled laughter of the Barry Silvermon.

SUDDENLY! Stan leaps from his seat and yells at the top of his lungs.

STAN
Tim! What the hell are you doing
with your thumb up your ass?!

The Audience GASPS!

Stan bolts from his set and rushes on to the stage in a rage.

Audience alarmed!

Shelly watches in pure horror as Stan crosses the stage frantically from left to right and then off into the wings.

OFF STAGE Stan spots Tim and Philip standing side by side, arms folded, laughing. Neal behind them.

POV - BARRY SILVERMON

Shelly stands arms draped to her side gazing off into the wings.

RUSTLING OF FEET. CURTAINS RUFFLE.

Feet tramping across back stage.

Suddenly...

BANG! - GUNSHOT

Tim falls dead through the upstage 'window' on to the set.

Now visible, the Crew standing behind the flat scatter.

Stan backs Neal through the gaping hole with a gun at his head pushing him on to the foot of the stage.

STAN (CONT'D)

TRAITOR!

HORRIFIED, the Audience chase each other to the exit doors.

Shelly stands at the easel frozen in shock. She watches Stan with Neal at the edge of the stage.

BANG! - GUNSHOT

BACK TO SCENE

Neal falls on his back face up into the first row seats.

His head hangs backwards over the chair into the second row.

POV - NEAL - UPSIDE DOWN THROUGH A CLOUD OF BLOOD OCCLUDING HIS SIGHT

A chaotic scene of a fleeing hysterical audience

-BARRAGE of flashing stage lights

-SOUNDS of screams and yells

- SIGHT of Barry Silvermon the man looking down at him from the second row seat.

SLOW FADE TO BLACK

BACK TO SCENE

Stan wild-eyed standing in the shadow is fixed on the devastating scene. His eyes dart upwards, he stares into lights.

Audience out of their minds and out of their seats flee in terror. Shelly still standing frozen in time with palette and brush in hand dripping RED PAINT.

With a look of profound anguish, Stan raises the loaded pistol to his own temple --

SHELLY

(a scream from the
guts)

BÁLINT

The name hits him like a caliber. His eyes find *her* across the stage.

He envisages Bella standing at the easel with brush in hand. Whatever was about to finish him instantly unravels.

Stan raises the gun toward Shelly. The face of Bella is reflected back at him.

STAN
(cynically)
I really believed you could capture
who she was. Who she really was to
me.

A Booming voice from the rear of the audience blasts through.

VOICE OF AUTHORITY (V.O.)
Stop! Lower your weapon!

SIRENS SWELLING OUTSIDE POUR INTO THE SPACE

Stan lowers the gun, and darts back stage.

The fire door BOOMS.

88 EXT. NYC - CENTRAL PARK - NIGHT

Bálint (Stan) walks, then runs, then slows himself. His hand holds down the hat reacquired on his head. He squares his coat, eager to quickly become anonymous.

Siren sounds turn into a high pitch ringing of tinnitus. Cross behind him and keep going.

Pantomime Artist stands below the lamplight entertaining a cast of drunks -- the white face turns and tracks Bálint as he passes by.

TWENTY METERS BEHIND

AGED HENRÍK - with a slight limp has stopped mid-stride on the path: heavy build gone soft, paint under his nails, a paper bag of food and a bottle of wine in one arm. Supper for someone who paints late.

His eyes narrow at the figure ahead. Surely not --

Ahead, the figure, hastening in the same direction. Henrík sees him reaches up and tug at his left earlobe.

The ringing sound diminishes for a moment replaced again by the sound of sirens. Then rebounds in vengeance. A high pitch white noise in his head joining the surrounding scream of sirens.

Henrík's face empties of the present tense. Trance-like, he races forward to Bálint - a memory thrusting him forward.

They near the Ibsen Gallery.

89 EXT. NYC - IBSEN ART GALLERY - NIGHT

Under the gallery lights, the OLD WOMAN (AGED BELLA GILDER) from the first morning paints the night protesters. The Magyar pendant hangs loosely around her neck.

Bálint rounds a corner in the path and stops as if hitting glass.

Aged Bella lifts her eyes from the canvas. Lock on his.

-- A LONG SUSPENSEFUL MOMENT --

AGED BELLA GILDER

...Balint?

Behind him, closing up the sidewalk, a voice like a gunshot across Kossuth Square:

AGED HENRÍK (O.S.)

BÁLINT!

Henrík drops the bag -- the wine shatters, fruit rolls across wet pavement.

Henrík goes after him, as fast as a maimed ninety year old can go.

Bella left standing, brush wet, a smear of cadmium red across the back of her hand.

AGED HENRÍK (CONT'D)

Stay there, Bella.

He turns back and see Bálint disappear down another pathway.

90 EXT. SIDE STREET OFF CENTRAL PARK - NIGHT

Ears still ringing, Bálint's pace slows as he walks down a quiet, tree-lined street in an upscale neighborhood a few blocks off from Central Park. Head turning back in paranoia. Traffic diminished, sounds of cars and buses of the city fall off sharply, leaving in its void a high pitched ringing.

CLOSE IN Bálint takes hold of his left earlobe and gives it a shake. The ringing dims allowing city night sounds to fill the void.

91 EXT. THREE-STORY BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

Bálint walks up the stained concrete steps of the elegant brownstone with color-patterned, leaded glass windows framed in climbing English Ivy. Short pillars at either side of the stoop are topped with a raised relief of the Star of Lakshmi.

Bálint unlocks a thick oak and black, iron-hinged door and steps inside.

92 INT. THREE-STORY BROWNSTONE - FOYER

Bálint tosses his Flap cap on a bureau having wooden BALL-IN-CLAW footings.

He passes through the foyer into the living room.

An astounding collection of PAINTINGS and ETCHINGS are tastefully displayed on the walls, some lit with small fluorescent lamps attached to the frame. All seemingly from the AVANT-GARDE and CUBIST periods. Among these, Scheiber Hugó's, "THE JAZZ MUSICIAN".

Propped up on BAROQUE-STYLE PEDESTALS sitting on a lush PERSIAN RUG are SMALL SCULPTURES of the same artistic period.

Among these "STALIN'S DOVE OF PEACE".

Lovely, PAISLEY-PATTERNED, OVER-STUFFED CHAIRS and SOFAS are meticulously arranged for the viewing of this fine collection.

-- *In sum, we are seeing what appears to be a collection of the guarded art in the vaulted room, at the Parliament Building in Budapest during the Ernő regime some seven decades earlier* --

ON THE STAIRWELL WALL, commanding the staircase:

A LARGE CANVAS: THE BURNING OF BUDAPEST -- Parliament's roof line in flame against a black-orange sky -- hung where he must pass it every night of his life.

FRONT DOOR

Not quite latched, eases open.

HENRÍK enters.

He moves through the gallery one canvas at a time. We watch recognition land, piece after piece, like blows to the heart and soul.

He stops cold.

HIS OWN PAINTING. Signature: MUESER. Lamp-lit like a trophy. Wired to its frame, after all these years, still dangling: a RED TAG - like what hunters might attach the ear of their quarry.

Henrík's hand rises toward it -- trembling

FROM THE DARK behind him:

BÁLINT (O.S.)
 (the old smirk, audibly
 cracked)
 I kept them safe. Seventy years. Not
 one of them so much as faded.

Henrík turns. There, Bálint's shadow in the archway. A PISTOL
 in his hand - once strong, now shaking.

HENRÍK
 Safe?
 (a step)
 István! And me. Only wished you
 had killed me.
 (another step)
 Say, 'safe' again.

BÁLINT
 Stay --

Henrík cannot stay; he moves in closer and charges at him
 with a scream.

OLD MEN GRAPPLING -- a lamp goes over -- a pedestal --
 STALIN'S DOVE OF PEACE drops and explodes on the parquet --
 the gun between four hands, then two --

BANG! -- wild, into the ceiling. Plaster falls like snow.

They break apart. The gun now in Henrík's hands.

Bálint sights his own empty fingers, then Henrík -- And
 runs for the stairs.

93 INT. THREE-STORY BROWNSTONE - STAIRCASE - CONTINUOUS

Bálint stumbles beneath the Burning of Budapest, robbed of
 breath, one hand clawing the banister --

At the bottom, Henrík raises the pistol. It shakes. He
 steadies it with the painter's hand.

AT THE LANDING

Bálint at the top, under the painted flames. Faces him.

BÁLINT
 (barely air)
 Henrík. I only ever wanted --

HENRÍK
 I know what you wanted.

BANG!

Bálint thrown back against the wall -- BLOOD SPATTERS ACROSS THE PAINTED FLAMES -- and he slides down beneath it, shoes splayed on the landing. The high pitch shrill stops.

The impact walks the painting off its hook. It drops, lands canted against the wall beside him.

Blood runs down the gilt frame. Gathers at the corner. And beads -- drop by drop by drop -- over a dangling RED TAG.

IN THE FOYER DOORWAY

Bella, even as aged, followed the only man she ever loved and the one she hated so deeply to the only place they could be joined. Sirens build outside; red light sweeps the leaded glass.

Not looking at Bálint, her eyes find the wall --

Henrik's canvas, lamp-lit, red-tagged: their stolen life, recovered seventy years too late.

Henrik lowers the gun. Bella crosses to him through the museum of everything they lost, and takes his empty hand.

FADE IN FROM BLACK

MONTAGE: ARCHIVED BLACK AND WHITE PHOTO CLIPS AND FILM FOOTAGE FROM 1956 HUNGARY INTERMIXED WITH FULL COLOR PHOTOS OF CURRENT PROTESTS AGAINST CENSORSHIP, INCLUDING ONES IN MOSCOW AND FLORIDA. FLURRIES OF COLORFUL ART WORK FLIES BY.

THE UPRISING WAS CRUSHED BY SOVIET FORCES ON NOVEMBER 4, 1956. SOME 2,500 HUNGARIANS WERE KILLED AND 20,000 WOUNDED. NEARLY A QUARTER-MILLION FLED THE COUNTRY.

LEADERS SYMPATHETIC TO THE CAUSE WERE TRIED FOR TREASON AND EXECUTED. AMONG THEM IMRE NAGY SECRETLY TRIED AND EXECUTED IN 1958.

FADE TO BLACK

THE END