

SCENE 2

"MYSTERIES UNSOLVED" INTRODUCTION

Interior of conference room at Smoky City Promotions. All members of the staff are present, but visibly hung over. Father Abernathy and Al Hawaii are not present, and the meeting is called to order.

TEACHER COMMENTARY: THE *ORIGINAL G* SIM WAS UNIQUE IN THAT IT TOOK PLACE IN THREE DIFFERENT PERIODS OF HISTORY (1960S, 1980S/90S, 2000S), THE POINT BEING THAT THE IMAGE OF HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION SONNY LISTON WOULD BE APPROPRIATED DIFFERENTLY DEPENDING ON THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT AT THE TIME. IN THE FOLLOWING EPISODE, FROM THE EARLY 1960S, SMOKEY CITY PRODUCTIONS IS REELING FROM THE NEWS OF SONNY LISTON'S DEATH, PURPORTEDLY BY DRUG OVERDOSE. LISTON IS THEIR CHIEF DRAWING CARD AND, AS YOU WILL SEE, THIS TRAGEDY SHOWS IMPORTANT RIFTS IN THE SO-CALLED ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE.

IRENE:

I feel terrible! But let's get this started.

DAISY JAMES (DJ)

All right, sugar.

Johnny and Vivienne are clearly not paying attention and are more interested in each other

CAROLINE

Johnny. Johnny! JOHNNY!!

TEACHER COMMENTARY: I'M SERIOUS, BUT I DID NOT GET THE JOKE HIDDEN BY MY STUDENTS IN THE MOB NICKNAME "JOHNNY DOUGH" UNTIL *AFTER* THE COURSE WAS DONE. "JOHNNY DOUGH" OF COURSE REFLECTS AN INORDINATE PREOCCUPATION WITH MONEY, BUT IF YOU ALSO PRONOUNCE "JOHNNY DOUGH" OUT LOUD, IT SOUNDS LIKE "JOHN DOE," UNIVERSAL DESIGNATOR OF THE UNIDENTIFIED, WHICH IS HOW JOHNNY WOULD HAVE PREFERRED TO STAY, GIVEN THE MONEY HE OWES TO THE MOB. Hmm...

JOHNNY

Yeah, babe? No need to yell, everything is going to be all right.

(Looks around table.) We've got everything under control. Right, gals?

DAISY AND REGGIE (in unison)

Yes, Johnny...

DJ and Gladys stand up holding the print ad for the Liston-Chuvalo fight.

DAISY

As you can see, we decided to go with some color in the poster. Black and white would've been good for the urban, gritty vibe, but a little color attracts more attention.

TEACHER COMMENTARY: WHAT DAISY REFERS TO HERE IS THE AVAILABLE PROMOTIONAL RESOURCES. THIS IDEA WAS ONE OF THE BEST I'VE EVER HAD: BECAUSE THE THREE TEAMS WERE POSITIONED IN THREE DIFFERENT ERAS (THIS GENIUS-FLASH CAME FROM A STUDENT IN THE CLASS, MEGHAN WOODRUFF), I DECIDED TO ALLOW THEM ONLY THOSE PROMOTIONAL RESOURCES THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN AVAILABLE TO THEM AT THAT TIME IN HISTORY! THUS, FOR SMOKEY CITY, NO INTERNET, NO COPIERS, NO CELL PHONES, NO...LOTS OF THINGS. THEIR MOST IMMEDIATE APPEAL WAS THROUGH RADIO SPOTS AND POSTERS (LIKE THE ONE DAISY'S PUSHING) STAPLED TO TELEPHONE POLES. THINK ABOUT THAT FOR A SECOND...

GLADYS

The dates and location are right, right?

As Daisy and Gladys explain, Caroline is taking notes furiously.

IRENE

And what about the radio spot?

GLADYS

That turned out well, too. Here, give it a listen.

Plays radio spot.

CAROLINE

That does sound good. Anything else?

DAISY

Nope--as you can see, all the advertising's been finished.

IRENE

No thanks to Vivienne...

GLADYS

Shouldn't we turn on the show?

JOHNNY

Go ahead, darlin'.

Reggie plays the Chet Chesterton interview. As it plays, Johnny and Vivienne stop paying attention. Toward the end, the telephone rings.

DAISY

Aww, shug, we'll be all right. Everything is taken care of. That interview on Chet Chesterton went without a hitch.

CAROLINE

Is the phone ringing?

Caroline shrugs and everyone ignores the phone. The phone rings again and again no one seems to notice. Caroline, clearly annoyed, rubs her temples and gets up to answer it.

IRENE

What else can we add to this? I mean, we've done everything that we could. What do you think, Johnny?

Johnny seems like he is weighing decisions or he may not even be paying attention. Then he snaps to.

JOHNNY

What do you think, girls? *(He points to Daisy and Reggie but they just shrug as if everything is fine.)* Nothing? Well, what about you, babe? *(He points to a hungover Vivienne, as Irene clearly looks disgusted at Vivienne's input.)*

VIVIENNE

Thanks, hon. Well, I was thinking...

Just as Vivienne starts to say something possibly intelligent, Caroline bursts into the room and starts yelling.

CAROLINE

It's over! Sonny's dead!! It's over!!

Everyone looks confused. Irene throws her hands up as if to say, "What else?!" As Caroline starts to moan indecipherable sobs, everyone realizes what she means.

JOHNNY

No...no...NO!! Not again! That BLEEP!! Not again.

Johnny gets more irate as Irene, Daisy and Gladys are obviously still in shock.

Just then Al and Father Michael enter the room, still feeling the effects of the previous night. Vivienne is consoling Johnny as Daisy, Caroline, and Gladys talk animatedly. Irene is still dumbstruck. Johnny keeps mumbling some about a "waste of all that money" and "1964."

AL

(Breezily.) What's goin' on? What's up? Who died?

JOHNNY

(Turns, trembling with anger.) What? What did you say?

FATHER MICHAEL

He said, "Who died?" Ha ha, take it easy, guys!

JOHNNY

You ass!!! *(Johnny charges Father Michael, knocking Al out of the way.)*
You!! You did this to me! I've lost everything! EVERYTHING! AGAIN! How
COULD you?

Father Michael, Johnny, and Al scuffle as Daisy and Vivienne try to break it up. As the men are separated, Father Michael is consoled by Daisy and Johnny runs out of the room as Vivienne tries to console him.

VIVIENNE

Johnny! Wai-ai-ait!!

CAROLINE

Sonny! It's Sonny!! SONNY'S DEAD!!

DAISY

You really cared for him, didn't you, Father?

Father Michael nods and sobs a little. Al goes and talks to Irene and Gladys, leaving Daisy and Father Michael out of earshot of the others.

DAISY

Well, I've got to tell you something.

Daisy has abruptly dropped her southern accent, as Father Michael looks at her, amazed.

DAISY

I know this sounds weird, but I am a Federal agent and we are after Johnny for a number of crimes.

FATHER MICHAEL

(Still confused and drunk.) What?

DAISY

Father, listen, we do not have time for details, but know this. Sonny is safe. Johnny owes a lot of gangsters a lot of money. Word's out to them that Johnny was going to fix the fight; he stood to make a small fortune from this fight, but the mob wasn't about to let that happen. They were going to kill Sonny and anyone close to him.

TEACHER COMMENTARY: SO IT TURNS OUT THAT SONNY HAS BEEN SHUNTED INTO WITNESS PROTECTION. HERE IS A GREAT EXAMPLE OF HOW A PLOT DEVICE (THE OLD "WITNESS PROTECTION SWITCHEROO" GIMMICK) CAN TIE THE TWO ERAS TOGETHER. SONNY'S DEATH (WHICH REALLY DID OCCUR AND WAS OFFICIALLY INTERPRETED AS AN OVERDOSE) LEFT US WITH A PROBLEM: HOW TO TALK ABOUT SONNY IN THE 1980S/90S AND CURRENTLY, IF HE IS DEAD? I THINK I ORIGINALLY THOUGHT THIS COULD BE DONE BY SIMPLY REFERRING TO IT IN MODERN MESSAGES ("AUTHORITIES TODAY QUESTIONED XXX IN CONNECTION WITH THE DEATH OF SONNY LISTON"—THAT SORT OF THING), BUT CLEARLY THE CLASS HAD THE IDEA OF HIM LITERALLY COMING BACK FROM THE DEAD! BRILLIANT, JUST BRILLIANT! I LOVE MOST OF MY STUDENTS' CREATIVE WORK, BUT I HAVE TO TELL YOU: I *LIVE* FOR MOMENTS LIKE THIS!!

FATHER MICHAEL

(Starting to comprehend.) So Sonny is...

DAISY

Yes, he's safe for now, but you aren't! I told you, we don't have much time! There's a car waiting to take you somewhere where you'll be safe.

FATHER MICHAEL

I need some water. I can barely stand up...

As Daisy turns around to get him some water, Father Michael scribbles something in his Bible and closes it before Daisy can turn back around. He looks at the cup apprehensively and slams it down.

DAISY

You have to trust me. This is for your own safety.

FATHER MICHAEL

I do, DJ, or whoever you are. *(He gets up and is about to leave.)* Will you please see that this gets to Irene? Thank you. Thanks for everything.

Father Michael hands Daisy the Bible and exits.

AL

Hey! Where's the Padre going?

A distraught Johnny enters again, being consoled by Vivienne.

DAISY

(Her southern accent magically returned.) He's gone, sugar. He's gone.

Irene seems clearly about to lose it, as Johnny sits down with Vivienne. Caroline and Gladys sit together in silence, afraid anything they say might incite another outburst. Al pesters an irritated Irene for more information, information she clearly doesn't have. Johnny continues to mumble things like "hunt him to the ends of the earth" and "get what he deserves."

TEACHER COMMENTARY: ONE OF THE BEST THINGS ABOUT THIS SCENE IS HOW SKILLFULLY IT REVEALS THE CHARACTER FLAWS OF THE RATHER SLEAZY EMPLOYEES OF SCP. QUICKLY, SKILLFULLY, YOU GET TO SEE EACH OF THESE FOLKS, "WARTS AND ALL."

IRENE

What is going on?! People are dying and leaving!! Am I the only one who cares? Ah-h-h-h-h!!

Daisy gives the book to Irene who appears to completely regain her composure upon reading Father Michael's message.

IRENE

(Standing, obviously having reached a tough decision.) Well, due to this unforeseen development, I think it's in everyone's best interests that we...that we...go our own ways. I mean...I think we should break up this company.

Johnny looks bewildered and once again betrayed. He looks around and seems shocked as everyone nods in agreement.

AL

(Chuckling.) Well, everyone, it's been nice knowin' ya, but I got people to do and places to see.

Caroline and Gladys exit, talking excitedly about a possible new venture, an "All Girl" ad agency.

Irene and Daisy are the last to leave the table, where Vivienne is still consoling Johnny, who mumbles things like "penniless." Irene and Daisy exchange a look suggesting they have a common understanding of the situation. Before they exit, we see Johnny appearing to regain some of his composure, having reached a decision on a plan he has just hatched in his head.