

FILM FATALE

Written by

Max Patrick Schlienger

Based on the animated series "American Dad"

FADE IN:

INT. THE SMITH HOUSE - THE KITCHEN - MORNING

STAN SMITH sits at the head of the kitchen table, his back to the cooking area. He is clad only in an undershirt and briefs, and has a despondent look on his face as he idly pushes scrambled eggs around on his plate. Stan's wife, FRANCINE, approaches from behind him, carrying a plate of bacon.

FRANCINE

Stan, what's the matter? You've barely touched your eggs.

STAN

Ugh, what's the point? Then they'd be gone and I'd be left with a plate of no eggs.

Stan's son, STEVE, walks in and takes his seat at the table. An empty chair remains between him and Stan.

STEVE

Good morning, parental units! How fare you on this fine Tuesday morning?

Francine puts a plate of eggs and bacon in front of Steve.

FRANCINE

My, you're in a good mood, Steve. Unlike some people I could mention.

STEVE

Why? What's wrong with Dad?

FRANCINE

Oh, something about his eggs being gone.

Steve stares at his father's plate for a moment.

STEVE

Is this one of those grown-up things that I won't understand until I'm older?

Francine's face adopts a mildly irritated expression as she stares toward the door to the living room.

FRANCINE

Where is your sister? We're supposed to see that poetry recital this morning.

ROGER comes trundling into the kitchen. He is carrying a length of metal pipe.

ROGER

I wouldn't expect her any time soon.

He sits down between Steve and Stan. Francine places a dish in front of him, at which point Roger puts his metal pipe in his mouth and uses it to suck up all of his food.

ROGER (CONT'D)

(With his mouth full)

Judging by the sounds I heard coming from the bathroom this morning, she's going to be tied up with some "plumbing problems" for a little while.

FRANCINE

I told her those vegan tacos would be nothing but trouble.

Roger closes his eyes and bursts out laughing.

ROGER

(Laughing)

Vegan tacos! Oh, that's hilarious!

He opens his eyes to see Steve and Francine staring at him.

ROGER (CONT'D)

Oh, sorry, was that not a euphemism? Anyway, I meant literal plumbing problems.

He holds up the length of pipe.

ROGER (CONT'D)

See? Honestly, it's like you people don't even pay attention. What's wrong with Stan?

STEVE

Everything is confusing and vaguely sexual!

ROGER

Yeah, well, that's adolescence for you.

Roger turns to face Stan, placing his hand on the man's arm.

ROGER (CONT'D)

Hey, buddy. What's wrong, huh? What's going on in that little noggin of yours?

Though still looking quite forlorn, Stan seems to come out of his stupor for the first time.

STAN

The CIA is up for its budget review, and we have a two-hundred-million-dollar surplus.

ROGER

(Nodding)

Uh-huh. And why is all that extra money getting you down?

STAN

Unless we can find a way of spending it before the review period is over, we'll lose it from all future budgets!

Francine folds her arms, still looking irritated.

FRANCINE

I don't see why you couldn't have shared that with me instead of just playing with your eggs.

STEVE

(Shouting)

Augh!

STAN

Why? Because you're a woman, Francine. At least Roger is a...

Stan trails off, staring at Roger.

STAN (CONT'D)

You... you are a man, right? Have we ever firmly established that?

ROGER

(Shrugging)

Eh.

FRANCINE

Stan, I'm offended. I don't appreciate the implication that women can't understand things.

STEVE

Yeah, and what about me? I'm a man!

Stan and Roger burst out laughing.

STAN

Heh. Thanks, Steve. I really needed some cheering up.

Stan starts eating his eggs. At the same time, HAYLEY enters the room, clad in a bathrobe.

FRANCINE

Oh, Hayley, there you are. I was worried we were going to be late.

HAYLEY

You can't be late to a poetry recital, Mom. They start whenever the mood is right.

ROGER

You mean they start whenever the audience feels like showing up.

Hayley goes to the refrigerator and pulls out a bottle of orange juice. She then opens a cupboard and stares inside.

HAYLEY

Where are all the clean glasses?

Steve jumps to his feet.

STEVE

Never fear, fair sister! I shall wash one for you!

HAYLEY

Oh. Thanks, Steve.

STEVE

As a man, it's important that I know my way around a kitchen!

Stan bursts out laughing again, spraying masticated chunks of egg across the table.

STAN

Oh-ho! Oh, that's rich.

He stands up and puts his hands on his hips.

STAN (CONT'D)
I'm going to go do what a real man
does: Get out there and solve
problems!

Stan leaves. A loud thump becomes audible shortly thereafter.

FRANCINE
Stan? Are you okay?

STAN (O.S.)
(Whimpering)
I... I'm fine. Ow.

Steve begins collecting the plates from the table, bringing them over to the sink. Hayley sits down at the opposite end of the table from Stan's spot, keeping the bottle of orange juice in front of her.

HAYLEY
Why is he acting so weird?

FRANCINE
There's some problem at the CIA. If
they can't spend two hundred
million dollars, they're going to
lose it from their next budget.

HAYLEY
(Sarcastically)
Like the CIA needs more money.

Having attempted to turn on the sink, Steve is suddenly sprayed by a violent geyser of water. He screams and flails, struggling to stymie the eruption, before finally turning the faucet off. He walks back over to the table, still dripping wet.

STEVE
Uh, so, that clean glass might take
a little while.

Roger looks at his pipe, glances toward the ceiling, then shrugs and tucks the object beneath the table.

HAYLEY
It's fine. I don't need one.

Hayley opens the bottle of orange juice and downs it in a series of gulps. Everyone else watches her.

ROGER

I really feel like I should have a snappy one-liner here, but I'm coming up dry.

STEVE

Hey! "Snappy one-liner!" That's it! The CIA should make an action movie!

Francine starts cleaning the globs of chewed egg off the table. Hayley finishes her orange juice and wipes her mouth with the back of her hand.

HAYLEY

That's actually not a bad idea, Steve. A government-sponsored film would have the opportunity to offer a lot of ideas on the nature of culture and sustainable development.

ROGER

I know there were words in there, but half of them didn't mean anything.

HAYLEY

They'd just have to be sure that it passes the Bechdel Test.

FRANCINE

"Bechdel Test?" What's that?

Hayley looks ready to answer, but Steve interjects.

STEVE

It means that the movie needs to have two women on-screen who talk about something other than a man.

FRANCINE

Really? There's a test for that?

HAYLEY

Women are still underrepresented in every form of media. The Bechdel Test is a way of calling attention to that.

Stan reenters the room. He is now clad in his standard suit and tie.

STAN

Well, I'm off to work.

STEVE

Dad! The CIA should use their budget to make an action movie!

FRANCINE

We could all help! Hayley and I could write the script, and Steve could get people water or something.

STAN

I'm not so sure about female scriptwriters for an action movie. The only blood or scary holes being discussed should be the ones made by bullets.

HAYLEY

(Annoyed)

See, this is exactly why we need the Bechdel Test. Women are just as capable of being compelling protagonists as men are.

STAN

(Laughing)

Oh, okay! Like "Rambo" would have been better if he'd had boobs!

A sudden look of realization crosses Stan's face as he considers the idea. Steve and Francine adopt similar expressions.

HAYLEY

You know what? I take it back. A movie made by the government is a terrible idea.

STAN

(Sarcastically)

I'm sure you could do so much better with your weird, liberal ideas.

Hayley stands up from her seat, looking defiant.

HAYLEY

Maybe I could! I bet you couldn't get two realistic women in a movie, even if it meant saving your precious budget!

STAN
 (Defensive)
 Oh, yeah? Well, I have two hundred million dollars!

HAYLEY
 I don't need two hundred million dollars! I'll have good writing and strong characters!

STAN
 Fine! Go make your little movie! We'll see how well it fares next to my blockbuster!

Stan storms off. The sound of the front door opening and closing becomes audible.

HAYLEY
 (Shouting)
 Blockbuster went out of business!

Roger stands up and approaches Hayley.

ROGER
 You know, if you're serious about making this movie, I have a producer friend who owes me a favor. You should look her up. She loves all that feminist crap.

Roger hands Hayley a business card, which she examines.

HAYLEY
 You know what? I will. I'll make my movie, and I'll blow Dad's misogynistic explosion-fest out of the water.

ROGER
 Kind of sending mixed signals there, but I like your attitude!

Hayley tosses off her bathrobe, revealing herself to be completely dressed beneath it.

HAYLEY
 Come on, Mom. Let's do this.

FRANCINE
 I'll get my coat!

STEVE
 (Enthusiastically)
 And I'll go to school!

Hayley, Francine, and Steve all rush from the room. Roger remains standing where he is, examining his fingernails. After a second, KLAUS, a goldfish in a tiny saucer of water, comes scooting in.

KLAUS
 Good morning, fami...

He trails off, seeing only Roger present.

KLAUS (CONT'D)
 (Disappointed)
 Aw.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE CIA - DAY

An American flag waves outside of the CIA's head offices.

CUT TO:

INT. THE CIA - BULLOCK'S OFFICE

AVERY BULLOCK is seated at his desk, looking up at Stan with a pensive expression.

BULLOCK
 So, what you're proposing is a cinematographic adventure of the action variety.

STAN
 Yes, sir. We could spend all of our remaining money on it, and send an uplifting message to the American people at the same time.

BULLOCK
 Well, it's a lovely idea, Smith, but action movies are a dime a dozen. We'd need something to set this one apart from the rest, if only to have the endeavor seem legitimate.

Stan looks uncomfortable for a moment.

STAN

What if we had... two women in it?

BULLOCK

You mean a *ménage à trois* with the hero?

STAN

Possibly, sir, possibly... but what if the women talked to each other?

Bullock narrows his gaze at Stan.

BULLOCK

What's gotten into you, Smith?

Stan sighs and slumps his shoulders slightly.

STAN

It's my daughter, sir. She thinks the CIA can't write a movie with two believable female characters in it.

Bullock looks aghast.

BULLOCK

What?! As if there's anything the CIA can't do. Just look at North Korea!

STAN

... Sir?

BULLOCK

Oh, it was a completely unrelated statement. I just can't help but grin when I imagine them pretending to play with the big boys.

Bullock giggles to himself.

STAN

About the movie, though, sir.

BULLOCK

Yes, the movie! I take it your daughter has plans to make one of her own, and that you'll be thoroughly emasculated if she manages to succeed where you fail?

STAN

Yes, sir.

BULLOCK

Well, that is a problem, Smith...
and as with all problems, we'll
simply throw money at it until it
goes away. Production begins
immediately!

STAN

Don't we need to do location
scouting or casting or anything?

BULLOCK

Nonsense! We'll just contract out
the more difficult work, and we'll
shoot everything on the sound stage
where we faked the moon landing
footage.

Stan's demeanor visibly brightens. He salutes Bullock with a
smile.

STAN

Yes, sir!

As Stan turns to leave the office, he pauses. He looks back
at Bullock, who has taken to rummaging in his desk.

STAN (CONT'D)

Actually, sir... is it a good idea
to let civilians know that the moon
landing was a hoax?

BULLOCK

Ah, but the moon landing wasn't a
hoax, Smith! We simply couldn't let
the Russians get a look at our
technology, so we faked the footage
while the actual moon landing went
completely unobserved.

Bullock goes back to rummaging in his desk.

BULLOCK (CONT'D)

Hm. I'm quite sure I had some
cocaine in here. No matter! We'll
include it as an expense in our
movie budget. Action, Smith,
action!

CUT TO:

EXT. A LARGE BUILDING - DAY

A sign reading "Phallopian Productions" is seen on the side of a large brick building.

CUT TO:

EXT. A LARGE BUILDING - THE SIDEWALK - DAY

Hayley and Francine approach the front doors of the building. Francine is dressed in a stylish suit, and Hayley is clad in her usual attire.

FRANCINE

When we get in there, maybe you should let me do the talking.

HAYLEY

Why? It's just going to be Roger in another one of his disguises.

CUT TO:

INT. A LARGE BUILDING

The two women walk into an expansive foyer. Potted plants and dark leather armchairs line the walls, and a broad desk is positioned in front of two elevators. Roger is seated behind the desk, wearing a suit, a brown mustache, and a matching wig.

ROGER

Good morning! Do you have an appointment?

Hayley pulls out the card she was given during breakfast.

HAYLEY

We're here to see... Felicia Phallopian.

ROGER

Of course you are, ma'am. This is Phallopian Productions, after all. Do you have an appointment?

HAYLEY

(Sighing)

Do we really have to go through all of this? Can't you just meet us upstairs?

ROGER

I'm afraid that Miss Phallopian has a very busy schedule. Without an appointment, I can't... hang on.

Roger pretends to answer a telephone.

ROGER (CONT'D)

Hello? Yes? They're expected? I'll send them right up.

He hangs up the telephone, hops from his chair, and shuffles over to the elevator.

ROGER (CONT'D)

Looks like you ladies are in luck. Take this elevator to the penthouse.

Roger presses the call button. One of the elevators opens, revealing a crowd of bound-and-gagged people.

ROGER (CONT'D)

Whoops! This one is out of service.

Roger reaches into the elevator and presses a button. The doors close, and he presses the call button again. This time, the other elevator opens. Hayley and Francine walk in.

FRANCINE

Aren't you going to come with us?

ROGER

Oh, I have to stay here and keep an eye on things. Good luck with your pitch!

The doors close.

CUT TO:

INT. A LARGE BUILDING - THE PENTHOUSE

Francine and Hayley step into a sparsely furnished penthouse. A high-backed leather chair is positioned behind an enormous desk, facing away from the rest of the room. As the two women move closer, the chair spins around to reveal Steve in a red wig.

HAYLEY

Steve?

STEVE

No, I'm Felicia Phallopian, woman of power and influence!

FRANCINE

Why aren't you in school?

HAYLEY

And where is Roger?
(Yelling)
Roger? Roger!

STEVE

Hey, you can't talk to me like that! I'm an important producer!

Roger comes walking up to Steve.

ROGER

Sorry, Steve. You're not ready.

STEVE

But...

ROGER

(Interrupting)
I'll take it from here.

Roger takes the wig from Steve's head and puts it on. Steve stands up and trudges away, leaving room for Roger to climb into the chair.

HAYLEY

Can we get this over with?

ROGER

Normally, I'd want to go through the whole song-and-dance of pretending we don't know each other. As it happens, though, I've had an idea of my own.

FRANCINE

A movie idea?

ROGER

Nothing so small. Picture this: Langley's first-ever Feminist Film Festival! Your movie up against Stan's movie in an event that's sure to draw sponsorship dollars from all over the country!

HAYLEY

Well... it would help to raise awareness of the male gaze problem.

FRANCINE

(Irritated)

Oh, now what's this "male gaze?"

HAYLEY

The male gaze refers to the fact that the visual arts - things like movies - are always made from a masculine point of view. Everything is depicted the way that a man would see it.

ROGER

Is that what "male gaze" means? Weird. I always thought it was a way of excluding lesbians from things.

FRANCINE

(Chuckling)

Hah, I get it. "Male gays."

Roger slams his fists on the desk.

ROGER

Now, to business! Tell me about this movie idea!

Hayley and Francine glance at each other.

FRANCINE

(Hesitant)

Well... uh...

HAYLEY

Maybe it could be autobiographical! Two women on a journey to make a successful film in a world that wants to see them fail!

ROGER

Oh, it sounds marvellous... if you're trying to put the audience to sleep.

Hayley looks ready to protest, but Roger continues speaking.

ROGER (CONT'D)

I'll tell you what: I've actually had a piece in the works for a while. It definitely passes that little test you mentioned earlier.

Roger shuffles away and then quickly returns, pushing a television on a wheeled stand. He presses a button on the set, and a film begins playing. Pensive but uplifting music accompanies images of Roger (sans disguise) putting butter, flour, and milk into a sauce pan, then painstakingly arranging noodles for a lasagna. The final shot shows him removing the lasagna from the oven and presenting it to the camera.

HAYLEY

(Angry)

What is this? There aren't any women! There's no story!

Roger stops the movie on a frame of him about to lick the lasagna.

ROGER

Look, I thought you wanted something that would pass the Béchamel Test.

HAYLEY

Béchamel is a sauce! We want something that empowers women and portrays them as viable characters! It's not just about passing some test; it's a question of making a movie from an inclusive perspective!

ROGER

Alright, I can see you're passionate about this. Why don't you come back later with a script, and we'll see what we can do with it?

FRANCINE

Later? Do we have the time? With the kind of money the CIA has, Stan's movie is probably halfway done by now.

ROGER

Oh, trust me. If it's anything like most big-budget pictures, they're running into all sorts of problems.

CUT TO:

INT. A SOUND STAGE - THE SET

Groups of people mill around an indoor film set. The backdrop has been set up to resemble a jungle. Stan is seated in a director's chair, and has a plastic megaphone on the floor next to him.

STAN

Okay, everyone! "Ramboobs," act one, scene two! This is when we first see our hero! Places! Lights! Camera... and action!

CUT TO:

INT. A SOUND STAGE - THE SCENE

Two voluptuous women creep into view amidst the plant life. These are CASSANDRA and CHELSEA, respectively. They are each clad in bikinis with camouflage print on them, and they carry M16 rifles.

CASSANDRA

What do you want to talk about while we sneak up on these villains to be determined?

CHELSEA

Let's discuss anything but a man.

CASSANDRA

Did you remember to bring mascara on this mission to save America?

CHELSEA

Yes, but I had to spend twelve hours deciding which shoes I should take.

Several dark-skinned VILLAINS jump into view, surrounding the women. They are all clad in camouflage that would be better-suited for a desert environment. They carry AK-47s and speak with badly imitated Arabic accents.

VILLAIN #1

Halt, Americans! We are your enemy,
as evidenced by every aspect of our
appearance!

VILLAIN #2

We will now capture you, and thus
be unhindered in our evil plot to
destroy a landmark or possibly more
nebulous concept like freedom!

CASSANDRA

No, because we are strong and
independent! We might also be
bisexuals, but the hot kind! Not
the kind that dress in flannel and
have weird hairdos!

The women struggle to point their weapons at the villains,
who easily disarm them by simply taking the guns away.

CHELSEA

Oh, no! We've been overpowered!

The sound of a bald eagle screeching becomes audible. Fast-
paced music plays, and a tall, attractive man jumps into
view. He is clad in green camouflage, and holds an M16 rifle
in each hand. This is JOHN AMERICA.

JOHN

Halt, fiends! I, John America, will
not stand for this!

VILLAIN #1

It's John America! Kill him!

CUT TO:

INT. A SOUND STAGE - THE SET

John and the villains begin firing their weapons. Bullets
tear through John, the villains, the set, several lights, and
even a few crew members. Cassandra and Chelsea scream and run
from view.

VILLAIN #1

(With an American accent)
Oh, god! Why? Why?!

Stan stands up from his director's chair, alarmed. He shouts,
but his voice is muffled by the gunfire.

STAN

Cut! Cut!

He snatches his megaphone from the ground and shouts through it.

STAN (CONT'D)

Cut! Everyone stop! Cut!

The gunfire finally subsides. A bell rings in the distance. Stan surveys the carnage with a look of shock on his face, until Bullock comes walking into view from behind him.

BULLOCK

Good afternoon, Smith! How goes the filming?

STAN

Sir, what happened?! Those guns are loaded with real bullets!

BULLOCK

Clever isn't it? Not only do they provide a much more visceral feeling of reality, but they also cost considerably more than those "blanks" you had requested.

STAN

They destroyed the set! Most of our actors are dead!

BULLOCK

(Enthusiastically)
Yes, as is half the crew!

STAN

(Shrugging)
Eh.

Bullock rubs his hands together, looking overjoyed.

BULLOCK

Now we'll have to spend even more money repairing the damage and hiring a replacement cast. That budget surplus will be gone in no time!

STAN

But... sir, what about the movie?

BULLOCK

I hope you're not losing sight of what's important here, Smith. Besides, I have it on good authority that our cinematic endeavor will be the talk of the town not long from now.

STAN

How? It's not like anyone here can say anything about it! They all signed non-disclosure agreements!

BULLOCK

A little bird told me that Langley will soon be holding its very first Feminist Film Festival. I intend to sponsor the event, thus securing our victory!

STAN

You mean you're going to bribe the judges?

BULLOCK

Heavens, no! No, I'm simply going to lobby for fair and impartial consideration... in our favor, of course.

Bullock pats Stan on the back.

BULLOCK (CONT'D)

Chin up, Smith!

He walks away. Stan sighs to himself, then brings the megaphone back to his mouth.

STAN

Okay, uh... take five to reset, everybody.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE SMITH HOUSE - DAY

Several white trucks and errant pieces of production equipment are gathered outside of the Smith house. Text at the bottom of the screen reads "One week later..."

CUT TO:

INT. THE SMITH HOUSE - THE KITCHEN

Steve - who is dressed in an ill-fitting undershirt, briefs, and a false beard - sits in Stan's spot at the kitchen table. Save for his presence, the scene appears to be almost identical to the one that ostensibly inspired it, including the plate of uneaten eggs. From off-screen, Hayley's voice can be heard.

HAYLEY (O.S.)

Action!

Steve sighs and pushes his eggs around on his plate. Francine enters the room from behind him, carrying a plate of bacon.

FRANCINE

(Reciting lines poorly)

What is the matter? You have barely touched your eggs.

STEVE

I wouldn't expect a woman to understand.

FRANCINE

(Reciting lines poorly)

It is wrong to suggest that I am less than you because of my gender.

STEVE

I refuse to hear your perspective. I am leaving.

Steve gets up and exits the room. As he does, Hayley comes walking in.

HAYLEY

Why are you so upset?

FRANCINE

(Reciting lines poorly)

My husband has been marginalizing me and...

Francine trails off.

FRANCINE (CONT'D)

(Normally)

Did I say that right?
"Marginalizing?"

Hayley growls to herself.

HAYLEY
 (Shouting)
 Cut!

Quiet commotion is heard from off-screen.

HAYLEY (CONT'D)
 Mom, I need you to take this seriously!

FRANCINE
 I'm sorry, Hayley... but do people really talk like that? I don't understand half of the words you want me to say.

HAYLEY
 That's the whole point! We're trying to shine a light on institutionalized sexism via informative social commentary!

FRANCINE
 That's really not helping.

Steve comes walking back into the room. He has removed his beard, and is carrying a thick script.

DAVE
 Hey, uh, Hayley? I had a couple of questions.

Hayley sighs to herself.

HAYLEY
 Yes, Steve, what is it?

STEVE
 So, I get that you're focused on women's empowerment, and that's really great... but you know that Bechdel Test?

HAYLEY
 What?! Of course I know about it! We were all talking about it the other day!

STEVE
 Did you know that your script doesn't pass it?

Hayley snatches the script and begins leafing through it.

HAYLEY

What do you mean?! The whole movie is two women talking!

STEVE

Yeah, and all they do is complain about the men in their life. It's like "Sex and the City" without the sex... or the city.

Roger peeks his head in from the other room. He is clad in a blond wig and aviator sunglasses.

ROGER

"Abstinence and the Outdoors!" Eh?

Nobody responds.

ROGER (CONT'D)

You're right. I can do better.

Roger leaves.

STEVE

Also, how are we supposed to film the scene that shows me getting rescued from the house fire? You're not actually going to set fire to the house... are you?

HAYLEY

Of course not! What's that thing directors always say? We'll fix it in post?

STEVE

Those kinds of special effects are really expensive. I didn't think we had that kind of budget.

A look of dawning realization shifts across Hayley's face as she reads through her script. She sinks into a chair, folds her arms on the table, and buries her face in them.

HAYLEY

Ugh, this is a disaster. If only I had access to the kinds of resources that Dad does.

FRANCINE

Would that really solve anything? Like Steve said... the script still sucks, Hayley.

STEVE

Yeah, nobody is going to watch this, least of all the people who need to hear the message.

Hayley sits up. At the same time, Roger sticks his head into the room again.

ROGER

"Chastity in the Suburbs!"

Once again, nobody responds.

ROGER (CONT'D)

Fine, screw all of you. I'm going to go do something naughty to the craft services table.

He leaves again.

HAYLEY

I need to rewrite the whole thing. This isn't just about some argument with Dad anymore. This is about making people understand!

STEVE

There's still the money problem. I mean... I'm not getting paid, but... yeah.

HAYLEY

Nothing is going to stop me from making this movie. I'll get it done... even if I have to give up my pride to do it.

FRANCINE

That's the spirit! I'll go get you a pen.

Francine leaves, exiting in the same direction that Roger went.

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

Roger, what are you doing?!

ROGER (O.S.)

Hey, watch it! This stall is occupado!

CUT TO:

EXT. THE CIA - AFTERNOON

Black vans and pieces of broken equipment are visible in front of the CIA, in an almost perfect mirror to the ones that were present in front of the Smith house.

CUT TO:

INT. THE CIA - BULLOCK'S OFFICE

An older man in a suit, DICK, walks into Bullock's office. Bullock is seated at his desk, sucking on something in his mouth.

DICK

Excuse me, sir? You have a visitor.

Hayley enters the office. She is carrying a laptop bag.

BULLOCK

Why, Hayley Smith! Hello!

(To Dick)

Leave us.

Dick leaves.

BULLOCK (CONT'D)

Would you like a jawbreaker? I'm afraid I only have the one... but we can share!

Bullock extracts a white, spherical object from his mouth.

HAYLEY

I, uh... I think that's a ping pong ball.

BULLOCK

You know, I thought as much myself, at first... but then I discovered that it had a most exquisite flavor.

He opens a desk drawer and drops the object into it. A sound not unlike a ping pong ball bouncing becomes audible.

BULLOCK (CONT'D)

Still, I'm sure you didn't come all this way to discuss my habit of sucking on balls. To what do I owe the pleasure?

Hayley takes a step forward.

HAYLEY

Mister Bullock... Avery... I've heard that you're trying to spend a lot of money very quickly.

BULLOCK

That is top-secret information, so I'd have been very surprised if you hadn't heard about it.

HAYLEY

Right. Well, I was hoping that you might help fund a little project that I'm doing.

Bullock steeples his fingers and stares at Hayley.

BULLOCK

Mmm. Would this be the propaganda film that has your father so concerned?

HAYLEY

What?! Did he call it that?!

BULLOCK

Not in so many words... but I think I know a young rabble-rouser when I lay eyes on one.

Hayley sighs and deflates.

HAYLEY

So, you won't give me anything, then.

BULLOCK

On the contrary! I find that healthy competition is the surest way to motivate people... and following a little accident on our film set, your father is in dire need of that motivation.

Bullock stands up from his desk and exits the office. Hayley follows him.

CUT TO:

INT. THE CIA - THE HALLS

Bullock and Hayley walk past several doors and a few viewing windows. A large group of monkeys in front of typewriters is seen behind one of them.

HAYLEY

"Accident?" What happened?

BULLOCK

Apparently some of the actors were poorly trained in the use of live ammunition. As such, your father has needed to rewrite his entire script while still incorporating the parts which were already shot.

The pair turn a corner. Lights flicker overhead.

BULLOCK (CONT'D)

Unfortunately, it seems as though inspiration eludes him... which brings us to my proposal: If you can help your father overcome his writer's block, I shall offer you the money that you requested.

Bullock and Hayley finally come to an ironclad door at the end of the hallway. They stop in front of it.

HAYLEY

You want me to work for you? For "the man?"

BULLOCK

Heavens, no! I only wish to pay you in exchange for your assistance... and I think you may appreciate what has been developed here. You see, we've spared no expense in creating the perfect writing environment.

Bullock opens a hidden panel next to the door and presses his thumb onto a scanner. The door opens.

CUT TO:

INT. THE CIA - THE COFFEE SHOP FACADE

Hayley steps through the door into what looks like a coffee shop. Several poorly disguised CIA agents - their true nature revealed by their sunglasses and earpieces - sit at tables, stand behind the counter, and pretend to clean various aspects of the facade. Stan is seated at a table in one corner, a laptop computer open in front of him.

BULLOCK

Best of luck! When you wish to leave the simulation, simply order a double-fat mocha with whipped cream and chocolate sauce.

The door closes behind Hayley. She looks over her shoulder, startled, then approaches Stan and sits down in the chair opposite him.

HAYLEY

Um... hi, Dad.

STAN

Hayley? What are you doing here?

Stan gasps aloud and protectively hugs his laptop.

STAN (CONT'D)

You've come to sabotage my movie!

HAYLEY

I didn't think you cared about that. Isn't all of this just a way of blowing through the CIA's budget?

Stan replaces his laptop on the table and slumps in his chair.

STAN

It started out that way. Now, I don't think I could forgive myself for not seeing this through.

HAYLEY

I get that... and actually, I'm here to help, if you can believe it.

STAN

Help? Why would you want to help me? I thought you'd be busy with your own crime against entertainment.

HAYLEY

Yeah, well, you were right, Dad. It turns out that making a movie isn't so easy when you don't have any money.

STAN

Hah. It's no picnic when you have money, either.

HAYLEY

That's why I came to see you. Bullock wants to pay me to help you rewrite your script.

Stan jumps to his feet and points an accusing finger at Hayley.

STAN

Aha! I knew it! Bullock wants to sabotage my movie!

The CIA agents around the room all touch their earpieces and murmur.

HAYLEY

What?

STAN

It's the only thing that makes sense! First he kills all the actors, and then he hires you to make my script terrible!

HAYLEY

You're being paranoid. Besides... I could actually use a little help with rewriting my movie, too.

Hayley pulls her own laptop from her bag and sets it up across from her father, the screen facing him. Stan eyes it for a moment, but remains standing.

STAN

Your movie? What about all that stuff you said? You know, "strong characters?"

HAYLEY

I got so caught up in sending a message that I never thought about how to do it effectively. I need help reaching the right audience.

Stan looks at his daughter for a few seconds, then sits back down.

STAN

Well, I started this to spend money and prove you wrong. I could only do one of those things without hating myself.

HAYLEY

Spend money?

STAN

No, prove you wrong.

Hayley sits upright, suddenly looking suspicious.

HAYLEY

(Defensively)

What?

STAN

You said Blockbuster went out of business. They still have a few dozen stores open.

Stan taps a button on his laptop, then turns it to face Hayley. They have now essentially switched computers.

HAYLEY

Oh. I... I didn't think that you'd heard me.

STAN

I always hear you, sweetie. Sometimes it just takes me a little while to understand.

He takes a deep breath and smiles.

STAN (CONT'D)

So, you want me to help you pen a feminist, liberal piece of visual garbage?

HAYLEY

And in exchange, I'll help you write a juvenile, exploitative abomination.

Stan smiles.

STAN

Sister... you've got yourself a deal.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE

An upbeat rock song plays as Hayley and Stan work together, occasionally trading computers. CIA agents bring them coffee, the cups for which pile up around them. At one point, Hayley is seen arguing with a CIA agent dressed as a barista, then tackling the man as Stan cheers for her. Bullock makes a brief appearance, chasing his ping pong ball as Hayley and Stan look on. An overhead shot of the two working slowly fades to black.

END MONTAGE

FADE TO:

EXT. THE SMITH HOUSE - DAY

An American flag flutters in the wind outside of the Smith house. All of the trucks and pieces of equipment are gone. Text at the bottom of the screen reads "Three months later..."

CUT TO:

INT. THE SMITH HOUSE - THE LIVING ROOM

Roger lounges on the sofa, flipping through a magazine. Klaus comes scooting into the room in his saucer.

KLAUS

Oh, hey, Roger. Um... where has everyone been lately?

ROGER

Well, Francine and Hayley have been using Steve's computer to edit their movie for the past few weeks, so Steve went to live with his little friend Snot for a while.

KLAUS

I see... and where is Stan?

ROGER

He's on a secret mission to the South Pole, where he's trying to stop the Moon People.

KLAUS

(Amazed)

Really?!

ROGER

(Laughing)

No, that would be stupid. The Moon People live in Wisconsin. Stan has been editing his movie at the CIA.

KLAUS

Oh. You know, with that festival only a few days away, I thought I might enter my own film for consideration.

Roger sits up and stares at Klaus.

ROGER

You made a movie?

KLAUS

Oh, *ja, ja!* I call it "*Die Lustige Fische.*" It is all queued up in the DVD player, if you would like to have a watch.

Roger grabs a television remote and presses a button. Dark, dramatic piano music plays for several seconds, during which time Roger and Klaus watch the screen. We do not see the film. After it's over, Roger looks thoroughly bored and Klaus looks expectant.

ROGER

So... that was... something.

KLAUS

Oh, I know, I know! Wasn't it *wunderbar?*

ROGER

Look, Klaus, I'll be honest with you: This Feminist Film Festival is probably going to be pretty dramatic already. If we were going to add another movie, we'd want it to be a comedy.

KLAUS

But... but... that was a comedy!

Hayley comes running down the stairs, a DVD clutched in her hand. At the same time, Stan bursts in through the front door.

Finished!

HAYLEY

Finished!

STAN

Hayley and Stan look at each other, both with eager expressions on their faces.

HAYLEY

You go first, Dad.

STAN

No, no, please! By all means!

Roger looks over with a quizzical expression on his face.

ROGER

Well, look at you two, being all friendly. If I didn't know any better, I'd say you've both been sleeping with the enemy.

Roger's eyes go wide, after which he covers his face with his hand.

ROGER (CONT'D)

Ugh, sorry, I didn't think that one through. Sometimes my mouth just moves faster than my head. Anyhoo, what's with all the nice-making?

HAYLEY

We were both having so many problems with our movies...

STAN

... until we started working together!

HAYLEY

I got to use some of Dad's money, he got the benefit of my perspective, and we wound up with two masterpieces!

Roger puts his hands on his hips.

ROGER
 Masterpieces, huh? I'll be the
 judge of that. Come on, hand them
 over.

Hayley looks over at Stan, who pulls a DVD from within his jacket. Both he and Hayley hold their movies out to Roger, who impatiently snatches them.

ROGER (CONT'D)
 This won't take a moment.

Roger puts both DVDs in his mouth and makes a humming noise.

HAYLEY
 Um... what are you doing?

ROGER
 (With his mouth full)
 Didn't you know? This is a thing
 that I can do. It saves me a
 fortune at the adult video store.

HAYLEY
 Gross.

The humming continues. After a few seconds, Roger removes the DVDs from his mouth with a look of distaste on his face.

ROGER
 (Annoyed)
 Are you people kidding me? I can't
 show these! They're awful!

STAN
 What?!

HAYLEY
 What?!

ROGER
 Stan, you can't make an action
 movie with so much dialogue!

HAYLEY
 It has a compelling message!

ROGER
 And Hayley, your movie is like a
 commercial parody from one of those
 late-night talk shows! One of the
 bad ones!

STAN
 It's social commentary!

Roger hands the DVDs back to Stan and Hayley, who look at them with a mixture of disgust and disappointment.

ROGER

That's what collaboration gets you.
The only way I could show them is
if I had something in the middle
to...

He doesn't finish his sentence. Instead, he looks down at Klaus.

KLAUS

(Expectantly)
Ehhhhhhh?

ROGER

Oh, whatever. This festival will
already stink worse than a
cesspool. Why not add another turd
to the mix?

CUT TO:

EXT. A MOVIE THEATER - EVENING

Searchlights move on the roof of a movie theater. The marquis reads "The Room" in large letters. Below it, the words "and Feminist Film Festival" are barely visible.

CUT TO:

INT. A MOVIE THEATER

Bullock stands behind a podium at the front of a large theater. On the screen behind him, the words "Feminist Film Festival" are projected at a slight angle. Crowds of people murmur to one another. The Smith family is seated in the front row, clad in tuxedos and gowns, with Klaus in a fishbowl (around which a bow tie has been secured) on Steve's lap.

BULLOCK

Hello, Langley! Thank you all for
coming to our very first Feminist
Film Festival. I'm Avery Bullock,
taking over for our previously
scheduled host, who was stricken by
a sudden case of not giving a damn.

KLAUS
 (Whispering)
 Where is Roger?

FRANCINE
 (Whispering)
 He said he couldn't risk being seen
 by all these people.

STEVE
 (Whispering)
 Oh, in case they found out he was
 an alien?

FRANCINE
 (Whispering)
 No, it was something to do with
 owing a lot of them money.

BULLOCK
 Before we start the screenings, I'd
 like to take this moment to remind
 you that we're here to promote a
 culture of acceptance and
 inclusiveness. I have therefore
 been asked to request that everyone
 leave their pants on.

A CIA agent rushes up to Bullock and whispers something in
 his ear.

BULLOCK (CONT'D)
 No... no, it seems that request was
 meant solely for me. The rest of
 you, feel free to air out your
 nethers!

The agent hurriedly whispers something else into Bullock's
 ear.

BULLOCK (CONT'D)
 (To the agent)
 Would you make up your mind, man?
 (To the audience)
 Sorry, folks, it appears that pants
 are the name of the game this
 evening. Now, without further ado:
 A film that was written and funded
 by your tax dollars, "Ramboobs!"

Applause accompanies the dimming of the house lights. Several
 CROSS FADES show the audience getting more and more bored.
 Sounds of gunfire and muffled voices from the movie are
 heard.

CHELSEA (O.S.)
 If unpaid housework was
 incorporated when measuring the
 GDP, it would increase by more than
 twenty-five percent!

CASSANDRA (O.S.)
 Look out! A female sniper!

Hayley and Stan continue to watch as if enraptured.

CHELSEA (O.S.)
 Don't you die on me, damn it!

CASSANDRA (O.S.)
 I've lost too much blood. If
 only... I'd brought... a tampon.

The house lights come up, and reluctant applause is heard.
 Bullock returns to the podium in front of the screen.

BULLOCK
 Wasn't that wonderful? I confess, I
 didn't actually watch it, but
 that's only because I was busy
 playing with a little mousey I
 found near the concession stand!

STEVE (O.S.)
 (Shouting)
 Aw, I knew those weren't
 Raisinettes!

BULLOCK
 Our next piece is a single-act
 short film, written and directed by
 one K. Goldfishstein: "*Die Lustige
 Fische!*"

Klaus smiles and claps his fins together excitedly.

STEVE
 "K. Goldfishstein?"

KLAUS
 Ja, I thought about going with
 "Isaac Goldfishstein," but I didn't
 want to sound too Jewish.

The lights go down again. Familiar piano music begins to play
 as black-and-white footage of Klaus in his fish bowl is seen.
 He is wearing a fish-sized dress and wig, which are
 apparently intended to make him look female.

Klaus waves to someone off-screen, then looks shocked and alarmed, then abjectly terrified. With panic in his eyes, Klaus leaps from his fishbowl. The final shot shows a toilet in the last stages of flushing. As the film fades to black and the lights in the theater come up, the audience applauds with barely restrained (and genuine) appreciation, giving Klaus a standing ovation.

FRANCINE

Huh. That was... something.

STEVE

I don't get it.

KLAUS

Well, see, the *Hauptfigur* sees her *Liebhaber*, when she suddenly... you know what? It's better if you figure it out for yourself.

Bullock returns to the podium once more.

BULLOCK

Our final entry this evening is a gripping, evocative piece about the struggles of being a woman in a world run by men. I am personally unaware of these struggles, and thus choose to assume that they were invented for this film. I present to you: "Examples of the Patriarchy in Advertising!"

Hesitant applause becomes audible as the scene FADES OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. THE SMITH HOUSE - THE KITCHEN - MORNING

Stan, Francine, Steve, and Hayley are all present around the kitchen table. Klaus is in his fishbowl near one end. Everyone is eating from their respective plates, when Roger comes running in. He waves a newspaper in the air.

ROGER

The reviews are in! The reviews are in!

Steve looks over and recoils from Roger.

STEVE

Augh! What is that?!

ROGER

Uh, it's called a newspaper, Steve. A few of us still like to get our current events somewhere other than the Internet.

STEVE

Not that. That!

Steve points at Roger's shoulder, which has been obscured until this point. Roger turns to reveal a pulsing boil on his back.

ROGER

Oh, that. Yeah, it turns out some of those DVDs come with a few "hidden extras." Anyway, let's see what the critics are saying!

Roger knocks everything (except Klaus's fishbowl) off the table and lays the newspaper out flat on it. He crawls up on top and runs a finger along some lines of text.

ROGER (CONT'D)

Ahem. "'Ramboobs' and 'Examples of the Patriarchy in Advertising' are terrible movies."

(To Hayley)

See? I told you so.

(Looking back at the newspaper)

"Neither one of them brings anything new or interesting to the screen, and both seem to have trouble deciding whether they're offering tired social commentary or just indulging in adolescent fantasies."

HAYLEY

Well. They might not have liked it, but I did what I set out to do. The message is out there, and it's not going away.

STAN

And the CIA's budget is intact. Mission accomplished!

ROGER

Hang on, there's more. "An attempt was made to bribe the review committee, but the man responsible was arrested on charges of indecent exposure." Is that a film joke? "Exposure?"

KLAUS

Ja, ja, that's all lovely. Roger, what did they say about my movie?

ROGER

Oh, right. "The undisputed best picture at the Feminist Film Festival was '*Die Lustige Fische*,' an unflinching condemnation of emotional abuse."

KLAUS

(In disbelief)

Whaaaaaat? It was a comedy! There was no abuse! The main character has to escape potential embarrassment from a sudden attack of diarrhea!

FRANCINE

Ohhh. I didn't get that from your movie at all, Klaus.

KLAUS

The punchline was implicit!

STAN

Well, the critics may not have listened... but I did, and I heard everything loud and clear: Women can be compelling characters, with an entire range of thoughts, emotions, and even ideas. They're more than props set up to respond to a man!

FRANCINE

Oh, Stan.

HAYLEY

Thanks, Dad.

ROGER

Now, if you people would only stop using minorities in gag roles, you'd be golden.

Roger's boil suddenly ruptures and sprays everyone with purple goop. A moment of silence passes.

ROGER (CONT'D)

Come on, you had to know that was coming.

FADE TO BLACK.