

The Only Living Man With A Hole in His Head
by

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(Based on a true story)

Registered WGAw

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EXT. LAUREL HILL CEMETERY, SAN FRANCISCO - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: DECEMBER 1867

A panorama of the city, barely more than a port with wooden buildings along the shore, each one belching smoke from a wooden stove, can barely be seen through the rain and fog. The Western-most city in America, it's nearly impossible to imagine its squalor before the Gold Rush.

DRIZZLE dissolves mud. SWACK! - A fresh shovelful hits it. The foggy morning turns the cemetery even more macabre than usual. Silhouettes of two horses, and a small HUT breaks up the trees and graves on this hill crest. Three MEN with umbrellas watch the two GRAVE DIGGERS. One of the men, JUDGE JOHNSON, 65, finely dressed, stands impatiently, suffering with a cold. He turns to DR. JOHN HARLOW, 49, with a neatly trimmed greying beard, attired in a fine suit, thin and slightly haunted looking, but still distinguished.

JUDGE JOHNSON

Just how long will this be, Harlow?

DR. HARLOW

Does the act of digging up a corpse creep you out, Judge?

JUDGE JOHNSON

Certainly not. I shall have other commitments to attend to.

Shovel hits wood.

JUDGE JOHNSON (CONT'D)

It's official.

(coughing)

He's exhumed.

The Judge shoves a legal document into the hands of DAVID SHATTUCK, 45, holding a flask.

DAVID SHATTUCK

Thank you, Your Honor.

Grave Digger bears down his shovel again with force, hitting and splintering wood.

DR. HARLOW

For God's sake, be careful.

David takes a swig from his flask, and extends it in his hand to Harlow, his eyes strangely alert, an edgy man that does not seem to notice the bottle at all.

Both Grave Diggers kneel beside the coffin to tie a thick rope around the handles. They hop out of the grave. Taking the rope in hand, they attach it to the saddles of two horses and slap their rumps.

JUDGE JOHNSON

He has been dead for seven years. What could you possibly hope to find?

DR. HARLOW

I hope to find the truth.

Suddenly, the rope slips off the coffin and it starts a slide down six feet of mud.

DR. HARLOW (CONT'D)

For God's sake!

Harlow, the closest to it, dives to his knees to grab the handle to slow the crashing, but the weight of the coffin pulls him with it. Part of the coffin cracks open, and a foot bone comes out. Grave Diggers jump back into the grave to re-attach the rope.

INT. CEMETERY HUT - MOMENTS LATER

Lit by lanterns. The rain now heavier and splashing through holes in the roof. As the Grave Diggers remove the heavy lid, Harlow and David watch. The corpse, rotted black, creaks as Harlow touches the head, specifically, a large lump on the top of the skull.

DR. HARLOW

David. You're second kin. By law...well, I won't force you. Do you want to...?

DAVID SHATTUCK

I reckon it's fitting.

David positions himself at the top of the coffin, puts a hand on either side of the head, and, with Harlow holding the body down, David twists off the head, the movement punctuated with sickening sounds.

David hands Harlow an open hat box filled with cotton, who takes the skull from David, and nestles it in the bed of white. Suddenly Harlow snaps his head back toward the coffin.

DR. HARLOW

Where is it?

Harlow searches the coffin frantically and breaks off a piece of coffin wood and impulsively tosses it aside.

DR. HARLOW (CONT'D)

Not here. I know he was buried with it.

David takes another sip from his flask as he and the Grave Diggers look at each other confused. Dr. Harlow grabs a lantern and uses it to peer into the coffin.

DR. HARLOW (CONT'D)

It simply must be...A HA!

Harlow lifts up a Tamping Iron - three feet in length, 1/2" diameter, thirteen pounds, with one end pointed, the other end with a crowbar tip. He takes the iron in one hand while resting his other on the decayed body in the coffin.

DAVID SHATTUCK

Extraordinary.

GRAVE DIGGER #1

Sir, shall I remove the remains?

DR. HARLOW

That's quite all right. I have what I came for. Do you mind finishing? I haven't much time to prepare it for the train ride.

GRAVE DIGGER #1

I'll put him to rest with what dignity is left him.

Harlow places the cover on the box, and carries both the head and the Tamping Iron out of the hut.

FADE OUT.

INT. PHINEAS'S CABIN, CAVENDISH, VERMONT - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: SEPTEMBER 13, 1848

In this cozy, rustic cabin, PHINEAS GAGE, 26, average height, dark eyes and a strong build, gets ready for work while his pretty girlfriend, ELISA, 21, looks on.

ELISA

Phineas, do tell. Please.

PHINEAS

I have informed you of my knowledge on the matter.

ELISA

Surely, as a close friend of Harrison's, you must be privy to knowledge as none other would.

PHINEAS

When we labor, we must keep our focus on what is at hand. It is not a social call.

ELISA

But still! Marriage is but once in a lifetime.

PHINEAS

How go the wise words, which you yourself, Elisa, are so fond of stating? "Patience is bitter, but the fruit is sweet."

ELISA

The Cavendish Ball! So romantic a setting for a man to ask for a woman's hand. Under the autumn sky, stars shining bright, with the whole of Cavendish in attendance to witness such a joyous event. How I envy Rose.

(moves in close to Phineas)

Your beloved is getting on in her seasons.

PHINEAS

Hardly. Twenty-one is but a child still.

ELISA

When mother was thus, she already bore three children.

PHINEAS

That was a different era. This is 1848. We reside in a more enlightened time. There's even talk at work of one day soon a railroad connecting the whole of the United States territory. Can you imagine - being able to travel from the Atlantic clear out to the Pacific in only one train compartment? Now, that's progress.

ELISA

I attempt to see another vision. One that includes marriage and happy children and...

Phineas places his arm gently around Elisa.

PHINEAS

Elisa, you are my angel. My precious flower. I can not and will not imagine my days without your beauty, intelligence and grace. Please bear my patience. I have made foreman and it is with that responsibility that I endure. When the new addition of the Rutland and Burlington is complete, I shall grace your wishes. And mine too.

(kisses her)

I must go.

Phineas exits.

ELISA

The Cavendish Ball. How romantic!

EXT. RUTLAND + BURLINGTON RAILROAD CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

CONSTRUCTION GANG, consisting of rugged, young men, is in the process of moving the railroad through the wilderness and granite bedrock. The lead gang, the BLAST GANG, is in constant movement between the front of the right-of-way, to the safety area just ahead of men laying track. Standing among the workers laying track, including HARRISON and EDWARD, is Phineas, holding his Tamping Iron.

PHINEAS

The blasters bet a nickel they'll lose you today.

HARRISON

(glancing at a nearby spot)

Not with that wall of rock.

Phineas lifts his Tamping Iron and points it to the front line of workers.

PHINEAS

If I was you, I'd bet 'em a dime you'll be licking their heels like dogs all afternoon.

EDWARD

Don't fall for it. Phineas could trick the Devil into shoveling twice the brimstone...

HARRISON

And make him think it was his idea of fun.

PHINEAS

(with a wink)

Aye, and he'd be smiling.

HARRISON

We'll win that one, if old soft-hands Edward here keeps on the straight and narrow.

EDWARD

What kind of thing you implying by calling me soft-hands?

HARRISON

You know damn fine what I mean.

BLAST ASSISTANT shouts from the front line near the granite rock.

BLAST ASSISTANT

Foreman!

Hearing this, Phineas turns to walk away.

EDWARD

Bet those boys a shot of whiskey.

HARRISON

That's an honest challenge.

ANGLE ON FRONT LINE:

A smaller gang of about 12 men deal with chisels, hammers, picks and wedges to break holes in the granite. They then hoist their tools and move to the safety of the back line.

PHINEAS

(to blast gang)

The back line says their sisters could blast faster, and bet you a shot of whiskey they'll catch you.

The blast gang bellows a rally cry, which, some 40 yards away, is echoed by the track gang.

The Blast Assistant, a young man with powder burns on his face, lifts a small urn and pours BLACK GUNPOWDER down a 3 inch wide hole driven into the solid rock. He works meticulously until all the gunpowder disappears down the hole...then backs up so Phineas can move in.

Phineas kneels in front of the blast hole. He carefully loops a piece of FUSE over the tip of the Tamping Iron. Then lowers the point end of the Iron down the hole. Slowly he crams the point down a few inches...then lifts out the Iron. Blast Assistant watches cautiously as Phineas reverses it so the flat end can enter the hole.

Phineas nods, pulls out his Iron, and the Assistant pours SAND from a bag over the gunpowder and fuse buried deep in the hole. Phineas slowly tamps down the gunpowder until--

PHINEAS (CONT'D)

CUT OUT!

Pulling the Iron up, Phineas and the Blast Assistant dash from the charged hole.

LOUD EXPLOSION. As rock settles to reveal a 10 foot void that seconds ago was solid granite, the Blast Line admires their work.

BLAST ASSISTANT

She a beauty, Mr. Gage?

PHINEAS

It'll do.

The blast crew rushes forward as the track crew rallies a war cry. Phineas strides to the front, Tamping Iron in hand, his Blast Assistant dogging his heels.

BLAST ASSISTANT

Mr. Gage, what do you plan on doing after you finish with the railroad?

PHINEAS

Have myself some tea and get me some sleep.

BLAST ASSISTANT

I reckon to mean, after your time with the railroad is done?

PHINEAS

Have me some tea and get me some sleep.
And not answer questions.

Phineas slaps the hat off the Blast Assistant, who obviously admires him.

BLAST ASSISTANT

Mr. Hayes says you're the best he's seen.
You could be foreman anywhere. Set your
paycheck aside and buy you some farm.
That's what I'm gonna do. Buy me a few
acres, get me some horses.

PHINEAS

Horses? Never got along with them. Since
one threw me. Can't stand them.

BLAST ASSISTANT

Yeah well, you don't need to work 'em.
Not the way you get men on the right side
of a job. Not you, Mr. Gage.

Behind Phineas, a few Track Workers load excavated rock onto a platform car. Two of them drop a big one that rolls near Phineas.

WORKER #1

You mind throwing that back to us, Boss?

PHINEAS

Tarnation. The next time I crew up I'll
hire the Sisters from Saint Mary's.
They'll get the job done. Maybe even let
them do some blasting.

WORKER #2

Yeah, but they ain't as pretty as we.

Phineas LAUGHS. He looks ahead at the front line, busy with their chisels, and bellows--

PHINEAS

Prepare!

INT. CAVENDISH HOTEL - DAY

A SICK MAN lies in a bed, face sweated from fever, his stomach covered with black leeches.

Sitting beside the bed and dabbing the blood tracks is a younger DR. HARLOW, dapper in dress, his beard neatly trimmed, and his face reflecting the spirit of a man in his thirties. Near the door, the WIFE of the Sick Man watches.

WIFE

He's just fretting awful. What on Earth made him collapse like that? He wasn't even doing nothing much. Are you sure we ain't going to catch his spells? The preacher says he got the Devil.

DR. HARLOW

The days of superstition are behind us, thankfully. Spells are an imbalance, like all sickness. We heal it with what we call antiphlogistic remedy. These leeches will balance the humors in your husband. Purge his bowels, and his system will be right as rain.

WIFE

God willing.

Harlow scrapes the last of the leeches off the man's stomach. He wipes the blood with the filthy rag. Harlow closes up his doctor kit.

DR. HARLOW

Blot him until the blood forms a scab. He'll be weak, so keep him in bed.

INT. LOBBY, CAVENDISH HOTEL - MOMENTS LATER

Harlow descends the stairs and makes his way over to the receptionist of the hotel, STUART.

STUART

Saving souls once again, good doctor?

DR. HARLOW

Our first rule is "do no harm." Upholding that is challenge enough.

STUART

Born with the hands of God, you are.

DR. HARLOW

(chuckling)

And the haunting limitations of Faust.

STUART

Frost?

(handing him muffins in a
basket)

The little woman who bakes molasses
muffins?

DR. HARLOW

Faust. A fictional character. From the
book of Faust.

STUART

I read a book once.

DR. HARLOW

(biting into a muffin)

Faust was a doctor, who was idolized by
the villagers, but was haunted by the
realization that the more he learned, the
more he could never comprehend as much as
God. Ergo, even his successes were merely
detours in a long line of defeats
learning the secrets of the human body
and soul. A being that God creates, and
only God can understand.

Stuart listens with rapt attention, but his blank facial
expression reveals he understood nearly nothing said to
him. Harlow pats Stuart on the hand.

STUART

You sure use some big words.

DR. HARLOW

Tell Miss Frost her hands work molasses
far better than mine heal.

A FARM WOMAN rushes into the foyer, spots Harlow.

FARM WOMAN

Dr. Harlow, my husband cut his foot on
the plow. Can you come right quick?

Harlow gathers his things quickly, and follows her.

EXT. RUTLAND + BURLINGTON RAILROAD CONSTRUCTION SITE -
LATER

Phineas and his Blasting Assistant are once again
settling around the hole bored in another stretch of
granite blocking the railroad. The Assistant carefully
pours the gunpowder down the hole.

Phineas watches him do this, and now loops the fuse around the tip of the Iron. He dips it into the hole as far as it goes...wiggles it to plant the fuse.

Not far behind Phineas, a trio of Blasting Gang is arguing, around the platform car.

PHINEAS

Gentlemen, we have a tight schedule.

HARRISON

Don't blame me, Boss. Someone 'round here ain't holding their own.

(turns to Edward)

I said you ain't holding your own!

EDWARD

I'm working as hard as you! You're just upset that Rose danced with me at the Winter Ball and you ain't forgot it, not all this time. This ain't got nothin' to do with my work.

Pulling out the Tamping Iron, Phineas looks over his shoulder. He does not notice that his Assistant fumbles the bag and sand pours out.

EDWARD (CONT'D)

I'm busting my ass.

Phineas eyes them while his hands slowly turns the Tamping Iron upside down, so the flat end can tamp down the powder.

HARRISON

(shoving Edward)

NO, YOU'RE SLACKING! And them pansies is gonna catch up to us and we're gonna lose that bet!

EDWARD

Shove me one more time and you'll forever be part of the Rutland Burlington Rail.

Phineas absent mindedly leans directly over the point of his iron as he turns his head to shout back.

PHINEAS

Ladies!

The WORKERS freeze, seldom hearing such a stern tone from their foreman.

The Blast Assistant comes up behind Phineas with a full sack of sand. He notices that the pointed end of the Iron sticks up. Phineas lifts the Tamping Iron about 3 inches to tamp down the powder.

PHINEAS (CONT'D)
 (lowering the Iron)
 We have work to...

P.O.V RACING PAST PHINEAS, ONTO THE IRON AS IT DROPS,
 INTO THE HOLE--

E.C.U. ON A SPARK BETWEEN THE IRON AND THE GRANITE -
 BOOM!

SPECIAL EFFECTS: THE BLAST SHOOTS THE IRON UP THE GUN
 BARREL SHAPED HOLE WITH THE SPEED OF A BULLET

THE POINTY END OF THE IRON ROD ENTERS UNDER PHINEAS'S
 CHEEK

THE IRON ROD BORES BEHIND HIS EYE, THROUGH HIS SKULL AND
 BRAINS

THE IRON ROD RAMS OUT THE TOP OF HIS SKULL

The Tamping Iron, covered in blood and brain tissue, soars through the air. All this happens in the blink of an eye. Phineas is thrown onto his back by the upward momentum of the Iron - the Rod lands with a loud CLANG on granite thirty yards away. All around it, pieces of rock rain down. For a moment...just echoes of the explosion, everyone stand frozen. A surreal dust settles around Phineas.

BLAST ASSISTANT
 Mr. Gage!

Both gangs run forward to their Boss, now lying flat on his back, on the ground about 10 feet from the blast hole. As they reach him, Phineas sits up. The Men freeze.

WORKER #1
 Good God!

Blood pours down Phineas's face from his forehead, but he is conscious. His hands and forearms are black with powder burns. His face quickly covers with blood.

PHINEAS
 (stunned)
 That was a might charge.

WORKER #2

Boss! Boss!

PHINEAS

I have to report...

WORKER #1

He's hurt bad.

Workers crouch around him, inspecting his burned arms. One tries to hold down the bleeding forehead, but the tissue is so soft he yanks back his hand and stares in horror at flesh stuck between his fingers.

HARRISON

That's his brains.

PHINEAS

It is?

EDWARD

God damn.

(pointing to Tamping Iron)
His rod went clear through his head.

WORKER #3

That's impossible. He would be dead.

PHINEAS

Indeed...I reckon it did, though.

Phineas sticks his finger into the hole in his cheek and it disappears. He has a distant look on his face.

PHINEAS (CONT'D)

Right through this hole.

HARRISON

(shouting)
Get the ox cart up here!

PHINEAS

It sure felt like that's what it done do.

EDWARD

What's that feel like?

PHINEAS

Like a quick sting. A burn. Odd.

WORKER #3

Take your damn fingers outta your head.
You'll hurt something.

WORKER #2

You need a doctor.

(To Men)

Help me move him.

PHINEAS

I can make it myself.

To their disbelief, Phineas slowly attempts to stand - GASPS all around - but then can't.

WORKER #2

Come on, hurry up and help him.

The Workers support Phineas, who appears conscious but in mild shock. They carry him to the ox cart wheeling toward him. They gently place him to sit with his back to the boards and his feet straight up in front.

BLAST ASSISTANT

Somebody go on ahead and warn the doctor.

A MAN hops on a horse and gallops away. Phineas waves weakly to his Gangs.

PHINEAS

Get me my time book. And bring me my iron.

The OX CART DRIVER urges the oxen forward. Before it gets far, Worker #1 runs alongside it, handing the time book and Tamping Iron to Phineas. The Blast Assistant hops onto the cart.

PHINEAS (CONT'D)

(handing him time book)

Write me off the clock.

The Gangs walk off the site, surrounding the cart.

EXT. MAIN STREET, CAVENDISH - DAY

The ox cart stops in front of the Cavendish Hotel. The elderly hotel owner, JOSEPH ADAMS, who sits in a chair on the porch, sits forward, slack-jawed at what he sees.

The Blast Assistant jumps down. Others move to help Phineas out.

BLAST ASSISTANT

Help him, carefully.

PHINEAS

I ain't dead yet. Let me alone.

Phineas, holding his Tamping Iron, steps down from the cart without help. He climbs the steps of the hotel, notices the blood pouring off his body, and takes a seat on the porch.

Phineas bleeds profusely from his mouth and forehead. He turns his head stiffly towards Joseph.

JOSEPH

Good God, Phineas. What kind of trouble-?

PHINEAS

Accident...

(spits out blood)

...at the rail.

(holds up Iron)

See this here, iron?

Phineas's Men and TOWNSFOLK start gathering around as he speaks.

PHINEAS (CONT'D)

It went clear through my head. Just like you shoving a knife through a deer to skin it.

GASPS from everyone.

EDWARD

We seen it.

PHINEAS

That's what this here iron did to me.

Phineas closes his eyes. Everyone leans forward, expecting him to be passing away at this moment. But his eyes open again. He's gazing around with his right eye. He covers it with his hand, curious and in some pain.

PHINEAS (CONT'D)

Can't see too good.

WORKER #3

You should be dead.

PHINEAS

I reckon.

His good eyes pans the crowd.

PHINEAS (CONT'D)

Gawk. Go on. A rod don't fly through a head every day.

WOMAN

This is the Devil's work.

Her DAUGHTER leans forward, her mouth open.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Come along, Rachel.
(pulling her daughter)
And close your mouth.

HARRISON

Or you'll catch the devil's flies.

JOSEPH

Now Phineas, tell me the truth. Did a rock strike you? It's important to know this if you pass out from the pain.

WORKER #1

It was that bar. Look. It's all blood and brains.

PHINEAS

Can someone please call my mother and sister up north in Proctorsville?

TOWNSFOLK #1

(running away)
I gots to go to Proctorsville. I'll ride up right now, Phineas.

JOSEPH

If it was the rod, how did it happen?

PHINEAS

Charge didn't blow proper. Went off too soon.

Phineas coughs up a small piece of brain, then holds up the piece.

PHINEAS (CONT'D)

Anybody seen live brain before?

BYSTANDER

(exiting)
I'm gonna be sick.

The Man who rode away on the horse hustles down the street with a Doctor right behind him. DR. EDWARD WILLIAMS bustles up. Phineas sits with one hand pressing up against his head.

DR. WILLIAMS
You're a sight, Phineas.

Williams pulls a cloth from his bag and uses it to wipe at Phineas's head.

DR. WILLIAMS (CONT'D)
Does this hurt?

PHINEAS
Not so much.

As blood is wiped away, more pours over the cleared area, but the Doctor manages his inspection.

DR. WILLIAMS
What hit you?

PHINEAS
This bar. Went clean through.

DR. WILLIAMS
This is no time for stories.

WORKER #3
We seen it.

DR. WILLIAMS
He'd be dead. Your eyes saw something, but not that. I'm going to clean you up out here. No sense messing up the hotel.

EXT. UP MAIN STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Doctor Harlow approaches. TOWN BOY runs up to his carriage. From the distance, Harlow gets the news. He snaps his whip to get his horse moving. Dozens of people gather around. Harlow jumps down, his medical bag in hand. The Townsfolk part to let him through.

Phineas is having enough trouble seeing out of his one good eye that he has to turn his head around like an owl to watch.

DR. HARLOW
(confidentially, to Williams)
Is it true?

DR. WILLIAMS

(hushed)

That he's dying, yes. That the bar passed through a skull and left the man alive - preposterous. Whatever struck him, he'll be dead by morning. Can you tend him? I'm due to deliver the Brookens baby.

DR. HARLOW

Yes, yes, go.

Harlow's left standing in front of Phineas.

PHINEAS

Well, here's work enough for you, Doctor.

DR. HARLOW

I was told of a terrible injury. I can see it was not exaggeration.

(to Workers)

Help me get him inside.

INT. ROOM, CAVENDISH HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Phineas sits on a bed as Harlow uses a wet towel to clean off his head.

DR. HARLOW

You bear your pain with heroic firmness.

PHINEAS

Don't have much choice.

Harlow picks up a razor to shave his head.

DR. HARLOW

Do you have the strength to hold this towel in place while I shave you?

PHINEAS

I reckon.

Phineas sits holding the towel as Harlow uses a straight razor to shave his scalp. Bloody hair and bits of skull and brain are flipped off the blade and float around the bowl of water. Both he and Phineas observe this for a moment.

DR. HARLOW

Most...remarkable.

CLOSE SHOT ON HEAD: HARLOW CLOSELY EXAMINES THE OPEN WOUND FROM THE TOP...THEN UP THROUGH THE CHEEK HOLE.

DR. HARLOW (CONT'D)

Do you have any family?

PHINEAS

My sister and mother. In Proctorsville.
Someone fetched them.

DR. HARLOW

This might hurt.

Harlow cautiously inserts a finger into the cheek hole.

PHINEAS

It don't.

Harlow lets his whole finger disappear into the hole.

DR. HARLOW

You say it went all the way through?

PHINEAS

Yep.

Then he takes his other finger and slowly places it into the hole on top of his head...and lets it disappear until, by the look on Harlow's eyes, we know his fingers meet somewhere inside of Phineas's skull - and the reality demands that Harlow suddenly pull out his fingers.

PHINEAS (CONT'D)

I feel...tired.

Harlow helps Phineas to lie down.

DR. HARLOW

You've lost a lot of blood.

PHINEAS

Am I gonna die?

DR. HARLOW

I...I...

Phineas suddenly throws up blood. Harlow tends him with more urgency, moving quickly around the room to prepare for the next phase of care.

DR. HARLOW (CONT'D)
Don't choke, Phineas. Breath. Spit it
out.

Harlow rushes to the door and throws it open, shouting
down the hall.

DR. HARLOW (CONT'D)
Joseph! I need towels and water and...

Phineas's mouth erupts more blood. Harlow rushes back to
him.

DR. HARLOW (CONT'D)
(working quickly)
And all God knows to save him.

BACKGROUND MUSIC PLAYS OVER THE FOLLOWING MONTAGE/DIALOG:

PHINEAS GOES INTO CONVULSIONS.

HARLOW PLACES LEECHES ON HIS CHEST.

PHINEAS PASSES OUT.

HARLOW USES A MOUNTAIN OF TOWELS TO CLEAN PHINEAS.

HARLOW'S WIFE, CHARLOTTE, ARRIVES WITH A CHANGE OF
CLOTHES. SHE IS REPULSED BY THE SMELL, SO HE SENDS HER
AWAY.

HARLOW CAREFULLY EXTRACTS PIECES OF BONE FROM PHINEAS'S
OPEN HEAD WOUND...THEN STICKS HIS FINGER IN AGAIN.

DR. HARLOW (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Exhausted from the hemorrhage, which was
profuse internally and externally, the
blood finding its way to his stomach,
which rejected it as often as every
fifteen minutes.

HARLOW USES TOWELS TO DRAIN THE WOUND.

FOOD ARRIVES, BUT HARLOW DOESN'T TOUCH IT. HE IS CONSUMED
WITH DRAWING AN ILLUSTRATION OF THE WOUND.

DR. HARLOW (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I passed the index finger it's whole
length, without resistance, in the
direction of the wound in the cheek,
which received the other finger in the
like manner.

HARLOW HOLDS THE TAMPING IRON UP TO PHINEAS'S UNCONSCIOUS HEAD, LINING UP AND ACTING OUT THE TRAJECTORY.

HARLOW GENTLY PRESSES THE TOP OF PHINEAS'S SKULL BACK IN A SMOOTH SHAPE.

DR. HARLOW (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I had to, in a most delicate manner,
remove about an ounce of brain tissue
protruding through the scalp.

PHINEAS LIES SLICK WITH SWEAT ON THE BED AS HARLOW USES COLD TOWELS TO COOL HIM.

MORE LEECHES ARE APPLIED.

DR. HARLOW (V.O.) (CONT'D)

...The fragments of the bone being
uplifted and the brain protruding, it was
evident that the fracture was occasioned
by some force acting from below upward.

HARLOW LISTENS FOR A HEARTBEAT...AND SIGHS WITH RELIEF WHEN HE FINDS ONE.

HARLOW FALLS ASLEEP AT THE SIDE OF THE BED, HIS HAND PRESSED OVER PHINEAS'S HOLE IN THE HEAD.

INT. PHINEAS'S ROOM, CAVENDISH HOTEL - MORNING

Harlow, his head bowed, wakes up to the feeling of Phineas prying his hand off his head, as it has stuck to Phineas's skin and bandages.

PHINEAS

Doc?

DR. HARLOW

A thousand pardons.

It's awkward for a moment as Harlow peels his sticky hand off.

DR. HARLOW (CONT'D)

How do you feel?

PHINEAS

I can't see out my right eye.

DR. HARLOW

You might not again. How's your pain?

Harlow begins removing the old bandages to apply new ones.

PHINEAS

Felt worse.

DR. HARLOW

Are you a church going man, Phineas?

PHINEAS

Should I be praying now?

DR. HARLOW

No, but it would be fitting to believe in miracles. You're a walking, talking one.

PHINEAS

And a hungry one. But I feel sick still.

DR. HARLOW

I have to purge your system further before you eat. Elisa has been by. I told her I thought it best to give you a few days before a visit. She seems like a fine girl.

PHINEAS

How long you been known as a doctor? You don't look a hair older than me.

DR. HARLOW

I had my training at Jefferson Medical College. Graduated class of 1844.

PHINEAS

Hmmm...Four years hence.

DR. HARLOW

Four years. I can attest to that.

PHINEAS

Four years...ouch!

DR. HARLOW

I have to change these. You'll lose some skin.

PHINEAS

Go ahead then.

(he winces)

Four years ain't a whole lot. Barely enough time to build a rail line.

KNOCK on the partially open door. Joseph opens it.

JOSEPH

Should I prepare them for...
 (shocked upon seeing Phineas
 sitting up)
 Lord! Would you look at that.

As Joseph lets the door open more, Phineas's sister, PHEBE, 23, and mother, HANNAH, 54, but looking older than her years, rush past him to the bedside.

HANNAH

(frantically)
 Phineas! We rode all night.

PHINEAS

Don't fret, mother. I'm still here. Be working end of the week, I reckon.

PHEBE

Doctor, can this be true?

DR. HARLOW

I do not presume that to be the case. Whatever miraculous recovery he's had, he's far from well. Infection, that's my worry. And living with only what's left of his brain.

PHEBE

Will he regain his health ever?

DR. HARLOW

I dressed him, God can only heal him.

HANNAH

We should pray then.

DR. HARLOW

It wouldn't hurt. If you want to stay, you'll have to sit back. And, I must warn you, what you see is enough to make the strongest man weak.

PHINEAS

I think they best leave. I'll be here when you come back after prayer.

Phineas slowly pushes his mother away so that the doctor can continue dressing his bandage.

HANNAH

Is it true what they tell us?

PHINEAS

That I got a hole in my head from that
there iron?

DR. HARLOW

By all accounts, yes.

HANNAH

We love you, Phineas.

PHINEAS

You're good family. Ain't never heard of
one turning a man away for a hole in his
head, but you could have been the first.

PHEBE

This is no time for humor.

DR. HARLOW

Oh, but it's a good sign.

PHINEAS

Don't fret over me.

As he talks, Harlow notices his energy wane quickly.

PHINEAS (CONT'D)

I'm fine. Be working...working soon.

Hannah and Phebe, suddenly more concerned, are urged to
exit by Harlow.

PHEBE

Bless you, Doctor.

The women exit. As soon as the door closes, Phineas
collapses back on the bed, shuddering. Harlow quickly
begins to apply leeches.

INT. PHINEAS'S ROOM, CAVENDISH HOTEL - NIGHT

The room is dark. Elisa sits beside the bed, holding
Phineas's hand. His head is elevated and bandaged
completely.

Harlow writes in his journal.

DR. HARLOW (V.O.)

Ten P.M., same evening. The bandages are saturated with blood. But the hemorrhage appears to be abating. Has only vomited twice since being dressed.

INT. DR. HARLOW'S ROOM, SAN FRANCISCO HOTEL - NIGHT

1867

With lantern light, Harlow sits and reads in his old journal. There is a big bucket next to his heels.

DR. HARLOW

(reading aloud)

Sensorial powers remain as yet unimpaired.

(looks to the bucket)

Could you recall this now, Phineas, if you were alive?

Harlow peers into the bucket, at what, we cannot see. But what he sees urges him to stand and reach into the bucket and pull out...the bleached white skull of Phineas, now showing the hole quite clearly. Bleach drips off Harlow's hands and the skull until he dries it.

He walks to the light, to study the skull, never breaking his tempo of reading. He knows the words so well by now, he can recite them like a play actor.

DR. HARLOW (CONT'D)

Mister Gage has survived the gravest injury I have yet witnessed in my modest time of practicing medicine.

(turns the skull in the light so that he can look through the hole)

If he can regain his health...

Harlow then sets the skull on some cloth on another table. On that table are pieces of bleached skull that he must have removed from the head.

DR. HARLOW (CONT'D)

...This will be a miracle...

He starts to piece together the small bones like a puzzle.

DR. HARLOW (CONT'D)
 ...and I will feel honored to have had a
 hand in it.

INT. PHINEAS'S ROOM, CAVENDISH HOTEL - DAY

Harlow kneels beside the bed, no longer calm and at the desk. He's trying to capture what Phineas mutters in his sleep.

DR. HARLOW
 (while writing)
 19 September. Has slept some; appears to
 be in pain.

PHINEAS
 (shouting)
 My eye...
 (garbled talk)
 ...it burns...

DR. HARLOW
 Speaks with difficulty. Pulse 70.

KNOCK-KNOCK on the door. Harlow breaks away, walking backward, so he doesn't miss anything.

CHARLOTTE (O.S.)
 My dear? It's your wife.

Harlow opens the door and briefly embraces his wife, CHARLOTTE, 25, plain but sweet looking, who carries a basket of food.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
 If you're going to sleep here again, you
 should have decent food.

She peers at Phineas, lying in a bed stained red with blood.

PHINEAS
 (ranting)
 God damn rock!

CHARLOTTE
 Oh my!

DR. HARLOW
 I'm sorry, my dear. You shouldn't hear
 such talk.

CHARLOTTE

He's positively horrid. Oh!
 (sees the rod)
 This...?

DR. HARLOW

Yes. I am quite sure, each moment more
 so, that I am partaking in medical
 history.

Charlotte, visibly upset, sets the basket on the table.
 Harlow guides her back to the door.

CHARLOTTE

Are you sleeping at all?

DR. HARLOW

In between his fits. The brain doesn't
 need to be whole for a man to talk, or
 even walk, and see around the room. He
 lost as much as a shot glass full, and
 other than the bleeding, he's functioning
 as a normal human being with an
 infection.

Phineas flails his arms about and starts to slap at his
 face.

CHARLOTTE

Oh, that can't be good. He's mad.

DR. HARLOW

(bidding her off with a quick
 squeeze of the hand)
 I'm filthy with blood. You best not
 embrace me, my love. Thank you for the
 food. Good night.

CHARLOTTE

You need sleep, too.

Charlotte exits. Harlow closes the door and rushes back
 to Phineas, who is in a fit of pain, almost all the way
 out of bed. Harlow holds him down until Phineas rests.

INT. PHINEAS'S ROOM, CAVENDISH HOTEL, TWO DAYS LATER -
 MORNING

Phineas sits up in his bed as Harlow checks his vital
 signs.

KNOCK at the door.

DR. HARLOW

Enter.

Harrison and Edward walk in softly. Harlow recognizes them. He observes how Phineas reacts.

DR. HARLOW (CONT'D)

You know them as the men who work the railroad with you?

PHINEAS

Work or not, yes I do.

Harlow writes notes in his journal.

DR. HARLOW

Interesting.

PHINEAS

Did you sign out of the time book, I reckon?

EDWARD

Always the foreman.

DR. HARLOW

(softly)

Don't rile him.

His friends nod. They approach the bed.

HARRISON

We heard you was dead.

PHINEAS

You're no angel, so I know I ain't yet. Who's foreman in my pit?

EDWARD

Jesse Gruber.

PHINEAS

Heaven help the Rutland and Burlington. He's too slow to know you're missing.

DR. HARLOW

(strolls over to the desk to dip his pen)

Remembers work protocol perfectly.

EDWARD

Oh, he knows.

HARRISON
We took his carriage.

The Workers LAUGH heartily, but Phineas seems to be searching for what's funny.

HARRISON (CONT'D)
(whispering)
Hey, hey, we got something for your recovery.
(reveals a bottle of liquor)
My own bottler.

PHINEAS
I don't know if Dr. Harlow will consent.

HARRISON
What he don't know, he don't know.

EDWARD
Take my word, that'll get you right and back to work.

PHINEAS
(shouting, clenching in pain)
God damn it!

His friends seem shocked. Harlow rushes back. Phineas growls in anger.

PHINEAS (CONT'D)
Bastards!

DR. HARLOW
This is the sign of a bad spell coming on to him. You men best leave.

EDWARD
Yeah, yeah. We should go. We're holding your job for you, Phineas.
(to Harlow)
Tell him.

HARRISON
Don't die, Phineas. The rail needs you.

They scoot out the door. Harlow sees the bottle. After a moment of thought, he takes a swig himself, then gives one to Phineas.

DR. HARLOW

In your situation, this won't help you,
but it might ease the pain. And my
fatigue.

PHINEAS

I want my pants!

DR. HARLOW

Too soon for you to walk. Rest.

PHINEAS

The devil! All I do is rest.

The door opens to allow a thin, strange looking man to enter: JOSEPH SMITH, 55, town undertaker. He recoils instantly from the stench. Harlow walks over to talk to him near the door.

JOSEPH SMITH

Dead men don't smell this bad.

DR. HARLOW

Discharge from the wound.

JOSEPH SMITH

I met some of his companions just a while ago. They told me they visited him and he was able to talk to them.

DR. HARLOW

A miracle, really. Can you watch him while I place a telegram to his mother and sister?

JOSEPH SMITH

Surely. I'll measure well. But let me wait on cutting it. He looks like he might recover.

DR. HARLOW

Let's hope so.

Harlow exits the room.

INT. LOBBY, CAVENDISH HOTEL - DAY

Harlow approaches the front desk.

DR. HARLOW
 (hands him a paper)
 Stuart, can you take this over to the
 post and have them send this telegram?

STUART
 Just came back.
 (hands Harlow a telegram)
 All the way from the capitol.

Surprised, Harlow opens it, and reads. He hurries
 upstairs.

INT. PHINEAS'S ROOM, CAVENDISH HOTEL - MOMENTS LATER

Harlow enters and immediately begins packing his medical
 bag.

DR. HARLOW
 Phineas. I've been called to the capitol.
 A very important meeting. Do you feel
 well enough to be on your own?

PHINEAS
 If it's more important to you than me,
 you go to it. I'll be fine.

DR. HARLOW
 I won't go until I'm sure you're
 rational. I'm going to ask you some
 questions. They're to determine how well
 your brain functions.

PHINEAS
 All right.

DR. HARLOW
 How long has it been since you were
 injured?

PHINEAS
 Two weeks this afternoon. At three and a
 half o'clock.

DR. HARLOW
 You got angry with your friends. Is that
 what you wanted to do?

PHINEAS
 I did not think about what to do or what
 not to do.

DR. HARLOW

Hmm...I see.

Harlow glances around the room and spies a jar filled with pebbles. He takes out a handful and brings them back to Phineas, and pours some of them into his hands.

DR. HARLOW (CONT'D)

These pebbles are yours. Are they of any sentimental value?

PHINEAS

Nope. Just rocks. Use them to prop open the door when it gets too hot.

DR. HARLOW

I'd like to buy them.

PHINEAS

All right.

DR. HARLOW

I'll buy them for \$1,000.

Suddenly Phineas's expression changes completely, to one of agitation and distrust.

PHINEAS

A thousand dollars?

DR. HARLOW

Yes. One thousand dollars.

PHINEAS

No. You're crazy.

DR. HARLOW

Why? They're rocks. You can get them anywhere.

PHINEAS

I'm not selling!

DR. HARLOW

You won't sell them for that price?

Phineas crosses his arms in front of him, defiantly.

PHINEAS

Not for a thousand dollars, I'm not.

DR. HARLOW

Interesting.

PHINEAS

Get your own damn pebbles.

DR. HARLOW

It's all right, Phineas.

PHINEAS

And don't try stealing none.

DR. HARLOW

Yes, I won't. I'll hand them to you when I leave. I'll be out of town for three days. Stay inside and follow my instructions. My wife will look in on you.

PHINEAS

I shall be dandy, Doctor.

DR. HARLOW

Very well. I shall take my leave now.
Rest.

Harlow picks up his bag. He brings the whole jar of pebbles over to Phineas. When Harlow exits the room, Phineas, still agitated, reaches to the side and grabs his bottle of whiskey.

PHINEAS

Just dandy.

EXT. CAVENDISH HOTEL - DAY

Harlow hurries to his buggy, tethered to a post. With a few snaps of the whip, the horse trots off.

EXT. HARLOW'S HOUSE, CAVENDISH - DAY

Harlow's buggy stops in front of a modest square home set on the outskirts of the town. He hops down quickly and disappears in the house.

INT. BEDROOM, HARLOW'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Harlow rapidly packs up his clothes, as Charlotte observes him.

DR. HARLOW

...He's prone to arguing. Not his nature.
But if you distract him, he'll forget he
spoke out.

CHARLOTTE

Sounds like a child.

DR. HARLOW

(pauses a moment to consider
this)

Hmm. Yes, indeed.

CHARLOTTE

What if he takes a turn for the worse?

DR. HARLOW

Wire me in the capitol. An invitation to
participate in this level of government
debate comes once in a lifetime.

He embraces her briefly.

DR. HARLOW (CONT'D)

You are the love of my life. My beacon of
goodness, my sanctuary of heart, and, at
times like this, my pillar of strength.

CHARLOTTE

Thank you, my dear. Such kind words. I
shall live up to them.

Harlow hurries out of the house holding his wife's hand.

EXT. HARLOW'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

As Harlow puts on his overcoat and settles behind the
reins, Charlotte ties her apron.

DR. HARLOW

He has strong broth and bread for supper
tonight. And Stuart will spend until nine
o'clock tonight with him.

CHARLOTTE

I'll bring him an egg for breakfast.

DR. HARLOW

Not too much more. His system is weak.

Harlow snaps his whip and is off in a hurry.

INT. PHINEAS'S ROOM, CAVENDISH HOTEL - MORNING

Charlotte opens the door slowly, a basket in her hand.

CHARLOTTE

Mr. Gage? It is Dr. Harlow's wife. I do not want to enter if you are not decent or awake for visitors.

Charlotte pauses.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

Mr. Gage?

(under her breath)

Oh please, Lord, let him be alive.

She peers in to find his bed is empty.

EXT. STREETS OF CAVENDISH - DAY

On this cold day, in the rain, his head heavily bandaged, Phineas roams the sidewalks with no coat and thin boots. He's a fright to see, he's only got one good eye, so to see most things, he has to turn his head wildly, making him appear even more monstrous.

A PASSERBY, slowing in his buggy, spots first the small crowd, then Phineas leading them like he's an oddity Pied Piper.

PASSERBY

My goodness!

(calling out)

Phineas!?

Phineas tries to spot who called out to him. In his spinning around, arms flailing about, he frightens a WOMAN, who lets out a peep of fear and rushes away.

PHINEAS

Pleasant day to you, ma'am.

INT. GENERAL STORE, CAVENDISH - CONTINUOUS

Phineas trudges into the busy shop, where several Townsfolk around the pot-bellied stove. His disregard for the weather makes him just as much a target of suspicion as his bloody, bandaged head, as one end of it had unraveled due to his movement.

CLERK

Phineas?

PHINEAS

(approaching counter)

I am journeying to my mother's and need supplies.

CLERK

You're not well, Phineas. You should...
(clearly repulsed by the
blood)

You should be in bed.

SHOPPER

(holding his nose)

Or a grave.

Phineas casts his "good eye" around the room, and when it sets on people, they cringe or GASP. Mothers hide their children.

PHINEAS

I look worse than I feel. Now, for food, scrag, chitterlings, crullers.

CLERK

You have a carriage?

PHINEAS

No, I'll walk, same as always. Cambric tea. Jerky...

Charlotte sees Phineas through the window and nudges her way through the crowd.

CHARLOTTE

Mr. Gage. Oh my, oh my, oh my.

She approaches, but does not know what to do, he appears so ghastly. She overcomes her disgust enough to take his arm. The other Townsfolk glare at her as if to dissuade her from getting too close to him.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

(to Townsfolk)

He's just a man who's had a bad accident is all.

(to Phineas)

What on Earth are you doing out of bed?

PHINEAS

If I'm strong enough to walk, I shouldn't be in bed.

CHARLOTTE

Even if you are, no right man goes out in the rain without a hat and some proper boots.

PHINEAS

(to Clerk)

I reckon she's right. Add a hat. My old one got blown clean off to pieces.

CLERK

He plans to walk to Proctorsville.

CHARLOTTE

No one can walk to Proctorsville in this rain.

PHINEAS

I don't see why not.

BYSTANDER

It's a day by horse is why not, you ninny.

CHARLOTTE

(leading him to the door)

You're walking as far as your bed, and no farther, Mr. Gage. My husband left you in my care and I will not allow you to hurt yourself needlessly.

INT. PHINEAS'S ROOM, CAVENDISH HOTEL - DAY

Phineas strides into the room on his own power.

CHARLOTTE

Sit at the table. I've brought you broth and herbs and bread.

The moment he sits on the chair, Phineas starts to shake violently. Charlotte helps him back to bed.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

Lord, Lord...look what you've done to yourself.

He is not convulsing, but is shaking and "hissing" through clenched teeth in a painful sounding way.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

You've got the spells now. Really, Mr. Gage? Going out in such weather dressed as you were. What am I going to do with you?

PHINEAS P.O.V.: THE ROOM GOES OUT OF FOCUS.

As he reclines, and the camera moves in close to his face, the overall effect is that we enter his mind, which seems to see into the future through SFX:

INT. BARN, SOUTH AMERICA - DAY

PHINEAS'S P.O.V: THE BARN GOES OUT OF FOCUS.

The whole scene never gets into focus enough for us to know for sure what we're looking at. It's like a shadowed glimpse into a nightmare, but it isn't frightening, just unclear and dark.

Phineas, looking older and totally healed, collapses on the dirt floor of the barn. The only witnesses to this are the animals, which he tries to focus on as he loses consciousness.

CUT TO:

INT. CAPITOL BUILDING - DAY

Dozens of MEN, such as DR. THEODORE GRANT, 53, and DR. MARSHALL BANNER, 38, attired in proper dark suits, discuss political, medical and financial topics.

DR. HARLOW

Humorous, I find it, that we doctors come here to the capitol because we're fascinated with politics, only to meet with men so fascinated with science and medicine that we never debate the future of the country.

SENATOR

Ahh, that is why talking politics tires us so much. The uncertainty. Science deals in absolutes. In what man "knows". Why, decades ago, we were in the dark ages. Look at us now.

Light chuckles from all the men confirm this. But not from Harlow, who seems distant.

DR. GRANT

If only we could simply get past the problems we encounter after surgery. We have come so far, we are practically magicians when it comes to curing the sick.

DR. HARLOW

I beg to differ.

The Doctors give him a look of disapproval.

DR. BANNER

Dr. Harlow?

DR. HARLOW

I've just treated a man who had a thirty-six inch iron pass through his brain. An explosion sent it like a bullet.

(motioning to illustrate)

It entered below his eye, dislodged it, bore a hole through his brain, and out the top of his skull. Took a cylinder out so cleanly, that I could put my fingers in each opening and touch them together...right about here. And he was conscious throughout most of my care.

Reactions from the Men around him vary from scoffs to downright disbelief.

DR. BANNER

How many minutes before he died?

DR. HARLOW

That's my point. He's still alive. Today. Almost four weeks after the accident. Talking, eating, sitting up. But strangely, he has trouble with the value of things.

Doctors erupt in LAUGHTER.

DR. GRANT

Then make him a lawyer.

The Politicians don't know what is funny, but smile and join in the laughter lightly.

DOCTOR #3

Such superb wit should not be lost in the hospitals.

DR. BANNER
I should say not.

DR. HARLOW
(urgently)
This is deathly serious. What I'm
discovering upsets everything we know. A
brain survives. Where does the memory go,
what part controls what action in the
limbs? Recovering like this could cure
lunacy, or even paralysis.

Louder LAUGHTER.

DOCTOR #3
Senator, is there an opening in your
forum for comedy?

DR. HARLOW
Return with me and see for yourself.

DR. BANNER
Too far to travel for a parlor trick.

DR. GRANT
John, I didn't know you had a taste for
the spirits. If I didn't know the wiser,
I would swear you had your fill today.

SPEAKER
(loudly, calling out)
We shall re-convene.

Harlow hides his bruised ego behind a weak smile. The Men
shuffle into an adjacent lecture hall. Harlow walks the
slowest, confused and upset over the reaction he
received.

INT. PHINEAS'S ROOM, CAVENDISH HOTEL - DAY

When Harlow enters, he's surprised to see his wife,
Charlotte, tending Phineas, who lies in a sweat on his
sheets.

CHARLOTTE
Bless the Lord.

Immediately, Harlow rushes to her side and hugs her. They
both kneel beside Phineas.

DR. HARLOW
(checking temperature)
How long has he been like this?

CHARLOTTE
Three o'clock in the P.M., one day prior.

DR. HARLOW
You've been keeping his fever down with
towels?

Harlow begins removing Phineas's clothes.

CHARLOTTE
As much as I could.

DR. HARLOW
The blacksmith told tale he walked into
the general store.

CHARLOTTE
The fool planned to walk to
Proctorsville.

DR. HARLOW
He has profound difficulty with judgment -
what is acceptable risk or trade, and...

Suddenly Phineas spasms, coughs, then slumps into total
weakness. Charlotte clutches her breast, then backs away
from the bed. Harlow hugs her, then slowly escorts her to
the door.

DR. HARLOW (CONT'D)
Go, my dear. Your role as guardian angel
has passed. For him to live even this
long is a blessing to his family, and a
gift to science, but I feel he shall pass
'fore the morning. Do what you can to
remove these visions from your mind. No
mild woman should carry such a burden.

Charlotte exits. Harlow strides back to the bed. His
first instinct is to grab his glass of leeches. But as he
kneels beside Phineas, he looks at the man. Phineas lies
covered with blood, his head bandages half-off.
Eventually, Harlow puts down the leeches.

DR. HARLOW (CONT'D)
Phineas. Poor Phineas. You do not suffer
in vain.

Harlow takes off the bandages from his head. The doctor find the Tamping Iron in the bed. He lines up the iron rod with the holes in his head, then sets it down. Finally Harlow takes a quill pen and begins to carefully draw what it looked like when Phineas first came to him.

EXT. PHINEAS'S ROOM, CAVENDISH HOTEL - NIGHT

Looking into the old hotel room through the window, we watch Harlow draw.

LATER THAT NIGHT:

Harlow now works by candlelight, carefully picking through the scab on Phineas's forehead to once again view his brain. After viewing, he draws another picture.

FADE OUT on the drawing.

INT. PHINEAS'S ROOM, CAVENDISH HOTEL - MORNING

FADE IN on the completed drawing.

Harlow slumps over in the chair he has pulled up close to the bed. A SOUND OF PAPER awakens him. He's startled to see Phineas, his head now cleanly bandaged, sitting up, studying the drawing Harlow made of his brain.

DR. HARLOW

You're awakened.

PHINEAS

And just in time, I figure. The next drawing would be my head in a casket.

Harlow quickly checks Phineas's forehead for fever.

DR. HARLOW

Your fever...gone. Do you remember walking to the store?

Phineas checks his pocket watch.

PHINEAS

Of course. I'm over an hour late. Could you fetch me my pants?

DR. HARLOW

(hands him his pants)

Do you hunger?

PHINEAS

Mightily.

Harlow writes down notes in his journal, and mutters as he watches Phineas.

DR. HARLOW

Has no disorientation or dizziness. Puts on pants without my help.

PHINEAS

If'n I didn't, I wouldn't want you telling no one.

DR. HARLOW

Oh no, no, don't worry, this is just for my peers in the medical field. None of them could believe you lived.

Phineas searches around for something...the Tamping Iron. He grabs it firmly in his left hand, and shakes hands with his right.

PHINEAS

Send them over to the Rutland/Burlington. I ain't no freak, but...I'll put on a show, I reckon.

With a thoroughly incredulous look on his face, Harlow watches as Phineas walks out. He picks up the drawings and studies them. Then, he hears VOICES outside his window.

TOWNSFOLK #2 (O.C.)

Lands sake, it's Phineas!

Harlow looks out the window.

P.O.V. OUT WINDOW: PHINEAS STRIDES SURELY, THE TAMPING IRON IN HIS HAND, TOWARD THE RAILROAD.

CLOSE ON TAMPING IRON HELD TIGHTLY IN HIS FIST.

EXT. RAILROAD CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

Phineas approaches the site. As he's recognized, a CHEER spreads like a wave, and men rush up to him.

BLAST ASSISTANT

Phineas!

WORKER #1

Looky there! It's Phineas.

Phineas plows through the crowd, a smile on his face, but then becomes serious when he sees the progress.

PHINEAS

That's enough lolly gagging. Thirty-seven days pass. You should be another two rods up the line by now.

BLAST ASSISTANT

We lost a rod the day we lost you.

PHINEAS

(holding up his Tamping Iron)
And here it be. Back to work before I dock you ten and five!

Most of the men hustle back to their jobs. But his closer friends from before dog his heels.

EDWARD

It ain't our fault. The Burlington sent Gruber.

BLAST ASSISTANT

He does fail us.

HARRISON

(placing his arm around
Phineas)
And he don't know us like you.

Suddenly Phineas erupts into a rage. He flails his arms around wildly, shaking off his friend's touch and yelling.

PHINEAS

He don't know you like lazy good for nothings! God damn it! I said work!

The men recoil, glaring at him as they break off into groups.

Phineas strides toward the front line. A man we have not seen approaches him with his hand out for a welcoming shake.

GRUBER

As you walk and talk, if it isn't Phineas Gage.

Phineas slaps Gruber's hand aside with the Tamping Iron and grabs the man's arm instead.

PHINEAS

(fiery)

I ain't running a church welcome. I'm running a rail crew. Pack your God damn bags.

(bellows at Blast Assistant)

Powder! Before I drive this iron up your arse!

As Phineas strides toward the blasting hole, men move out of his way.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TRAIN STATION, SAN FRANCISCO - MORNING

The earliest extensions of the railroad draws a good crowd of travelers. Among them walks Harlow. A PORTER pushes his bags, but he carries the HAT BOX.

A rushing PIONEER bumps him in the squeeze.

DR. HARLOW

Dear God, man, watch yourself.

PIONEER

Pardon.

As Harlow reaches the steps up into the train, the Porter reaches for the hat box.

DR. HARLOW

No, this is far too precious a cargo to entrust to anyone but myself, thank you.

INT. TRAIN STATION, SAN FRANCISCO - MOMENTS LATER

Harlow takes a seat in a private berth. His loneliness fills the berth, and his gaze looks out to the rail workers finishing other tracks.

His sight settles on one MAN, sitting all alone, his hands bloody and his face enraged. In the distance behind him, several men point in his direction. One has a bloody nose. As the train Harlow rides begins to move, Harlow turns his body so he can watch as the San Francisco FOREMAN give the "thumb" to the lonely man (signaling he is fired)

EXT. RAILROAD LINE, LUNCH WAGON AREA - DAY

Phineas sits and eats alone, his back turned to his men.

WORKER #3

Say what you want, the devil took him and sent that bastard back in his place.

WORKER #2

Can't be the same man, not with a rod through his brain. No how.

Phineas stands up, stretches, then walks back toward his men. He's as easy going as when we saw him before.

PHINEAS

(as he passes)

That's what I like to see. A strong team, one that can get me to the bend at Ferry Bridge by Friday.

EXT. RAILROAD LINE, ANOTHER AREA - ANOTHER DAY

The back line of the rail crew seems to be far away from their posts.

A short man in a suit, MR. GILES, 42, wearing a humorless expression, gets out of a buggy and makes his way toward the front line.

GILE'S P.O.V.: EVERY MAN SEEMS TO BE CROWDED AROUND SOMETHING, BUT WE DON'T SEE WHAT.

The Blast Assistant, wandering near the front blast hole, sees Giles coming and runs toward him.

MR. GILES

What's this I hear about an impasse?

BLAST ASSISTANT

It's, it's not an impasse, sir.

MR. GILES

Then what, by Jesus, is it?

Mr. Giles follows the Blast Assistant to the front. All the men are trying to use wedges and picks to roll a huge boulder aside.

PHINEAS

You're not putting your backs into it.

The men GROAN in disagreement.

MR. GILES

Phineas?

Phineas turns, serious but cordial.

PHINEAS

We'll roll this beast aside in two shakes.

(shouting)

Push!

Mr. Giles surveys the situation. The men, covered with dirt and sweat, work the boulder with all their might.

MR. GILES

(shouting)

Hold it!

The men collapse in total exhaustion.

MR. GILES (CONT'D)

Phineas? That rock has to weigh twenty tons.

PHINEAS

Nah.

MR. GILES

Phineas! Look at it. You can't move it.

PHINEAS

Sure we can.

BLAST ASSISTANT

(to Giles)

All he had to do was curve the track, but he wouldn't listen to us.

PHINEAS

Get up, men!

The men GROAN and look to Mr. Giles.

PHINEAS (CONT'D)

Don't look at him. Get up!

BLAST ASSISTANT

He ain't right since the blast. He's a ornery cuss that can't see right from wrong.

PHINEAS
It's just a rock.

MR. GILES
Phineas.

PHINEAS
Don't fret. Just a tick of a wait and
it'll be clear.

MR. GILES
It's all right, Phineas. Come with me and
let's talk about this.

PHINEAS
No sense in losing time over chit-chat.
Talk while I watch my men work.

MR. GILES
Please, Phineas, take a walk with me.
(to Workers)
You men relax.

Phineas does not understand, but obeys. There is silence
as the men watch Phineas walk alongside Mr. Giles. Then
suddenly Phineas shoves the smaller man aside, and stands
ready to strike.

PHINEAS
(yelling loudly)
Like hell I am! Bastard!

Men rush to prevent bloodshed.

INT. PHINEAS'S CABIN - NIGHT

Phineas sits, quietly, holding his Tamping Iron as if a
delicate flower. A KNOCK on the door. Phineas ignores it.
The door slowly opens to reveal Elisa. She runs to him.

ELISA
Oh, Phineas, my darling. I heard what
happened. I am so sorry.

Elisa hugs Phineas, but she stays motionless.

ELISA (CONT'D)
It's so awful. A great miscarriage of
justice.
(pauses to take a deep look
at Phineas)
(MORE)

ELISA (CONT'D)

Phineas, dear, are you all right? May I get you something? Soup, perhaps.

PHINEAS

I would rather remain here, just me and my trusty companion.

ELISA

Surely a rod can't provide comfort, or hugs, or meaningful conversation.

PHINEAS

If a man can't count on his tamping iron, who can he count on? Certainly not a silly old railroad.

ELISA

You are one of the most experienced, respected foreman in the state of Vermont. Any railroad would call it an honor to have Phineas Gage leading a crew.

Phineas just stares straight ahead, caressing the Tamping Iron.

ELISA (CONT'D)

I know, Phineas, it's a lovely evening and the autumn leaves have turned the most wonderful shade of color. It would do us both good to take a stroll and enjoy the fresh night air.

PHINEAS

I shall not.

ELISA

My darling...

PHINEAS

At work, they say Gage is no longer Gage.

ELISA

That is silly talk, to be banished far away.

PHINEAS

Gage is no longer Gage.

ELISA

I will hear none of that.

(takes his hand)

Gage is very much Gage. My darling Gage.

Elisa goes to take the Tamping Iron; Phineas impulsively pulls it closer to his chest.

ELISA (CONT'D)
Come, Phineas. Please.

PHINEAS
(like a little child)
No!

ELISA
We can pay a visit to the store and enjoy a cream biscuit.

PHINEAS
No!

ELISA
Then, I think it best I be on my way.
Will you be all right?

PHINEAS
I will survive. I have already.

ELISA
Very well then. I will call on you tomorrow.

Elisa hugs Phineas, but he stays still. She exits.

PHINEAS
(cradling the iron)
Yep, if a man can't count on his tamping iron, jus' who in the hell can he count on?

INT. HARLOW'S HOUSE, CAVENDISH - DAY

Harlow has papers spread over a big table. Each one is either a drawing or writing on Phineas.

INT. MEDICAL LECTURE ROOM, BOSTON - MORNING

SUPERIMPOSE: APRIL 1849

Dozens of DOCTORS, including Dr. Banner, mill about in the general seating area of the room. At the front of the room sits a podium, blackboard, and several objects, including the Tamping Iron and a model of a skull sit on a nearby table.

INT. BACK CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Dr. Williams, who we remember as the first doctor who saw Phineas, listens to Harlow, who speaks with such enthusiasm, it's almost impossible to interrupt him. Harlow holds a skull in his hand, and revolves it as he explains.

DR. HARLOW

...The entire frontal lobe, removed. And still the patient can walk and talk.

DR. WILLIAMS

Yes, though...

DR. HARLOW

What I find equally fascinating, and surely as important, is his inability to balance, or make choices that even a simpleton could make. The first test...

DR. WILLIAMS

John.

(Harlow stops)

I cannot agree.

DR. HARLOW

But you saw him. You're witness to his injury.

DR. WILLIAMS

No. I was not witness to his injury.

DR. HARLOW

Not the moment of injury, but his actions immediately thereafter.

DR. WILLIAMS

I saw a man who claimed a rod passed through his skull, but was clearly in so much pain, his words could not be trusted.

DR. HARLOW

But, but this alters everything we know about the human brain.

DR. WILLIAMS

Think about what you're doing.

DR. HARLOW

I'm...

DR. WILLIAMS

You're ridiculing yourself, John.

DR. HARLOW

My presentation is based on carefully documented fact.

DR. WILLIAMS

Your presentation could ruin your standing within the medical field, and I cannot be part of it. My greatest favor would be to remain silent. If you include my name in your presentation, I shall mock you.

Dr. Williams exits in a huff. Harlow looks out the open door, to his peers, who obviously do not take this seriously. A CHIME is sounded, and the men take their seats.

INT. MEDICAL LECTURE ROOM, BOSTON - CONTINUOUS

With trepidation, Harlow walks to the podium and table. As the room turns silent, Harlow begins to speak.

DR. HARLOW

Doctors, my peers, thank you for attending.

Harlow looks out onto faces that, though distinguished and bearded, mock him already with their smiling eyes.

DR. HARLOW (CONT'D)

On September 13, 1848, in Cavendish, Vermont, I treated a patient named Phineas Gage, who, while working as a railroad foreman, set a gunpowder blast that blew a thirteen pound iron through his skull and out an opening in the top. And yet the man lives today.

Murmurs of disagreement disrupt the room. Harlow picks up the Tamping Iron in one hand, and a stack of drawings in the other.

DR. HARLOW (CONT'D)

Mr. Gage lost a cylinder of brain tissue that in all our understanding should have rendered him an idiot, or comatose. None of his daily functions, save losing his eyesight in the one eye, could be observed.

(MORE)

DR. HARLOW (CONT'D)

The case I recorded down to the finest detail. My drawings and papers will be made available for your scrutiny for exactness and honesty.

Doctor Banner, near the back, gets up and leaves. Harlow stalls...then continues.

DR. HARLOW (CONT'D)

I shall start by reading several accounts of the accident.

Another Doctor leaves.

TIME LAPSE.

Harlow continues in his presentation. Slowly the field of Doctors shrinks to half the original one. Harlow uses every possible tool to convince the ones who stay.

LATER.

The presentation is over. Harlow stands at the podium.

DR. HARLOW (CONT'D)

I could bring the man here so that you can observe him yourself.

UNKNOWN DOCTOR

If the wound on his skull healed, then how could we prove that the injuries were the result of the rod passing through his brain without opening the wound and killing him?

DR. HARLOW

You couldn't, but his first hand account should answer any doubts. I'm sure that he will oblige. Any other questions?

Not one doctor approaches him. He is finally left alone.

EXT. MEDICAL HALL, BOSTON - MOMENTS LATER

The street bustles with activity. Harlow follows his buggy driver, who carries the wooden crate of proof that he brought to the presentation. As Harlow approaches the buggy, another buggy stops. Inside it is Dr. Williams. Harlow smiles weakly at him.

DR. HARLOW

You gave sage advice.

DR. WILLIAMS

I regret your embarrassment.

DR. HARLOW

Then it's obvious, my fellow, that you have never been struck with an epiphany of medical discovery.

DR. WILLIAMS

Nor have I ever been struck with a glove.

Harlow smirks and thinks before answering as he settles in his buggy seat.

DR. WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

The sting of the glove fades quickly. The memory of never lifting yours to defend what is true, however, lasts a lifetime.

EXT. HARLOW'S HOUSE, CAVENDISH - NIGHT

The sun is close to setting as Harlow's buggy approaches. He's surprised to see a man hidden mostly by his big hat, sitting on the ground, his back hunched over as he leans against his picket gate. As he gets closer, he realizes it's Phineas, by the Tamping Iron he holds in his hand. Harlow hops down from his buggy with urgency and kneels at Phineas's side.

DR. HARLOW

Phineas? Are you all right?

A certain kind of sadness, the type people wear after a major unthinkable tragedy occurs, is reflected in the two faces.

PHINEAS

Am I?

Harlow seems to immediately understand Phineas's feeling.

PHINEAS (CONT'D)

I don't have the...the mind to know.

Harlow slumps down a bit himself.

DR. HARLOW

If mind was all it took.

PHINEAS

A friend says, he says,
(louder)
"Gage is no longer Gage."

DR. HARLOW

I understand completely, my dear friend.
The doctors who know me best, say it is
not like me to be so reckless in my
career. So I do believe that humiliation
is our shared hell.

PHINEAS

I could hurt people.

Harlow puts his hand on Phineas's shoulder.

DR. HARLOW

As could I. With scalpel or theory, many
more than you could.

PHINEAS

But I would have no feeling either way.
(pause)
They fired me.

Hearing this, Harlow's face drops.

PHINEAS (CONT'D)

Can't make...can't make
decisions...simple God damn decisions.
(afterthought)
And I cuss. I never cussed.

DR. HARLOW

What are you going to do?

PHINEAS

They laugh when I leave the store, the
saloon and hotel.

DR. HARLOW

Phineas, listen to me. You are a walking
miracle.

PHINEAS

I won't let them treat me like a freak.
I'll work hard, if they let me. I'll stay
quiet, if I'm left alone. You went to
Boston. To the doctors. Do they know?

DR. HARLOW

They disbelieve. I present a radical discovery that might lead to relief for everything from seizures to paralysis - and they mock me.

PHINEAS

But they don't call you a freak.

DR. HARLOW

No. They call me reckless. Foolish. And charlatan is not far behind.

Phineas gets up easily, ignoring Harlow's helping hand.

DR. HARLOW (CONT'D)

(glancing at Tamping Iron)

Always with you now?

PHINEAS

It's part of me. Can't stand it out of my hand.

DR. HARLOW

Comforts you?

PHINEAS

Like'n it was my dog, I reckon.

PAUSE.

PHINEAS (CONT'D)

(to Tamping Iron)

You and me...

(to Harlow)

You and me.

DR. HARLOW

Yes, Phineas.

PHINEAS

I suppose one person that understands is better than none.

Phineas offers his hand. Harlow firmly shakes it.

PHINEAS (CONT'D)

I'm going where they don't know me.

DR. HARLOW

I envy you your anonymity.

Phineas walks off alone. Harlow watches him, then walks to his front door and disappears inside. Through the window, Harlow can be seen hugging his wife, Charlotte.

EXT. NEW YORK DOCK AREA - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE; NEW YORK, 1850

Squatting on a horse water trough, Phineas devours a turkey leg, sold by a street front cookery. He ignores the stares of PEDESTRIANS. He finishes and tosses the bone to a hungry dog. He leans over to wash his hands in the trough, and sees his reflection in the water. His hands touch the huge scar on his forehead, and then his closed eye. Phineas notices the reflection of a BOY in the water and looks up at him. The boy holds the rope tied around the neck of the dog Phineas just fed.

BOY

You from the museum?

PHINEAS

What museum?

BOY

(points at a building)

That museum. A museum for freaks.

EXT. BARNUM'S AMERICAN MUSEUM - MOMENTS LATER

The bright lights and candles befitting a huckster's show palace make the whole block of the city come alive. A huge building, bearing the name: BARNUM'S AMERICAN MUSEUM, fills the entire block. Dozens of buggies crisscross the street.

Phineas strolls into camera frame, taking in the view. He notices how the people gawk at the old-style posters that advertise human curiosities. He eavesdrops as a FINE DRESSED MAN reads them aloud for his family.

FINE DRESSED MAN

The only living Zulus ever exhibited in America...

(Phineas follows the family
and listens)

Jo-Jo, the Dog Faced Russian Boy...

(kids squeal)

Gentle Tom Thumb.

The crowd separates Phineas from the family. He notices people stare at him. With a numb look on his face, he holds up his Tamping Iron near his jaw, but says nothing.

INT. BARNUM'S AMERICAN MUSEUM - MOMENTS LATER

P.T. BARNUM, 39, short, balding, fast-talking, jots memos at his desk when he looks up and sees Phineas standing there.

BARNUM

You got something for me?

(Phineas approaches)

Step up, boy. I got a show to give.

Suckers are waiting. What do you got?

(studies him)

What? A scarface? What am I looking at?

PHINEAS

(lifts Tamping Iron high)

The only living man with a hole in his head.

INT. HALROW'S HOUSE, CAVENDISH - DAY

Harlow treats an INJURED BOY who has a cut on his arm. It is bandaged, and Harlow puts it into a sling. The boy grimaces, then hops down from the high table.

DR. HARLOW

Take a little more care with the plow.

You don't want to lose an arm over a crop, do you?

INJURED BOY

No, sir.

The MOTHER of the Injured Boy lets Harlow walk them to his front door. As they get there, the MAILMAN rides up.

INJURED BOY'S MOTHER

Thank you, Doctor.

Mailman dismounts and trots up to the front door.

MAILMAN

Telegram.

Harlow takes the telegram and reads it in the open doorway.

DR. HARLOW
 (reading aloud)
 Have read your papers on review in
 Boston. Stop. Remarkable and believable.
 Stop. Might support your claims with my
 own research. Stop. Send telegram
 confirming interest and letter adding
 latest discoveries. Dr. Henry Jacob
 Bigelow, Harvard Medical School.

Harlow runs to his horse and gallops into town, his face
 lit with conviction for the first time since Boston.

INT. TELEGRAM OFFICE - DAY

Harlow earnestly writes a telegram.

INT. HARLOW'S HOUSE, CAVENDISH - NIGHT

Harlow writes under candlelight.

DR. HARLOW (V.O.)
 (as he writes)
 ...Emotions seem like a foreign language
 to Phineas. Where he can walk, he cannot
 navigate the simplest personal responses.

INT. BARNUM'S AMERICAN MUSEUM - MORNING

It's early, before the museum opens. Like a traveling
 carnival show, a few of the more helpless freaks, like
 the HUMAN TORSO and SQUID BOY, live in the building.
 Others, like the PINHEADS, DOG BOY, and WORLD'S FATTEST
 MAN are led into the eating area by the mean-spirited,
 hungover MEN exploiting them.

PINHEAD MANAGER
 (shoving Pinhead)
 Where the hell are you going! Damn
 idiots.

The Pinhead Manager forces the frightened and cowering
 Pinhead into a seat.

PINHEAD MANAGER (CONT'D)
 (waving a fist in the
 Pinhead's face)
 Don't you move.

The Pinhead Manager walks to the food line.

PINHEAD MANAGER (CONT'D)

(to Cook)

A bowl of gruel for the pinhead.

Moving off the Pinhead over to the Human Torso is upset and arguing with the man who ignores him in favor of finishing a huge helping of food.

HUMAN TORSO

I know when I got to go. I'm a grown man.
You shouldn't make me beg like this.

HUMAN TORSO MANAGER

You shit in your pants again and you're
sitting in it all day long, ya' hear?

PANNING OFF the Human Torso, to Phineas, who watches from the wings with a forlorn and lonely look on his face. He holds the Tamping Iron in his hand, and checks out the scene.

Phineas walks up to the food line. Freaks study him, not in a welcoming manner.

COOK

No worker men.

PHINEAS

I'm new.

COOK

You eat outside and pay for it.

PHINEAS

I'm a new attraction.

COOK

(eyes him suspiciously)

Let me see your pass.

PHINEAS

My what?

COOK

Your pass, your pass. Ah, shit, you
another idiot.

PHINEAS

I'm not.

COOK

Here.
 (throws slop onto a plate)
 Hash.

PHINEAS

 (raising his Iron)
 This iron went through...

COOK

Yeah, yeah, tell it to the Zulus.

Phineas turns away from the food line, unsure where to sit. The Fat Man shoving food into his mouth is repulsive. He positions to sit with the LIZARD MAN and SIAMESE TWINS.

PHINEAS

Is the cook always such a rotten egg?

SIAMESE TWINS

We don't mix kindly with your kind.

PHINEAS

But I'm part of the show like you.

LIZARD MAN

Like us? Not even close.

SIAMESE TWINS

A metal rod don't make you different, it just makes you ugly.

Phineas turns away and looks for another place to sit. The Dog-Face Boy and other attractions move to take up space, so he knows he's not welcome there.

Finally, Phineas takes a place at the end of a table all by himself. While he eats, he receives hostile looks from everyone he sets eyes on.

EXT. MAIN HALL, HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL - DAY

MUSIC PLAYS OVER THE FOLLOWING SCENES:

Harlow enthusiastically meets DR. HENRY JACOB BIGELOW, 47, with a distinguished appearance.

INT. MAIN HALL, HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL - LATER

Dozens of documents in tidy piles cover the table where Bigelow and Harlow compare notes.

INT. NORGUE - AFTERNOON

Harlow and Bigelow try to copy the projection of the Tamping Iron through the skull of a corpse. It is a thoroughly grisly, bloody experiment that seems to end in failure.

INT. HARVARD MEDICAL LAB - EVENING

Still wearing his bloody clothes, Harlow demonstrates how he had to pick brain out of the blood.

MUSIC ENDS.

INT. HARVARD MEDICAL LAB - MORNING

Harlow wears a fresh shirt. Bigelow offers him tea as they both settle for more experimenting.

DR. BIGELOW

More tea, Doctor?

DR. HARLOW

I am quite fine, thank you.

DR. BIGELOW

We are in the rare situation, that our greatest obstacle seems to be that our patient is still alive.

DR. HARLOW

The thought came to me many times, that only his skull could prove it happened as he claims.

DR. BIGELOW

I support the whole brain theory, as you know. This case merely proves my point. That is why it is so important to promote it as true.

DR. HARLOW

It supports both the Whole Brain theory and the phrenologists. We must be careful not to demand people take sides yet.

DR. BIGELOW

Understood Doctor, but, I shall be driven to emphasize my opinion.

DR. HARLOW

As you are entitled. Lord only knows where he is now.

Bigelow casts a somewhat guilty look that Harlow does not notice. They continue working on their notes.

INT. HARLOW'S HOUSE, CAVENDISH - DAY

Harlow reads medical books in his office when Charlotte enters, holding a letter.

CHARLOTTE

Something from the mother of Phineas. I thought you would want to see it right away.

DR. HARLOW

(excited)

Thank you, dear. Yes.

Harlow opens the letter and reads as his wife stands by.

DR. HARLOW (CONT'D)

He's living in New York.

CHARLOTTE

He must be feeling well then.

DR. HARLOW

He found work on the railroad...but was fired two days later.

CHARLOTTE

How sad. He was so good at foreman before the accident.

DR. HARLOW

(flashes a look of concern)

Oh no, this is not right.

Harlow stands up immediately.

DR. HARLOW (CONT'D)
I must go to New York at once.

INT. BARNUM'S AMERICAN MUSEUM - DAY

Walking through this huge museum, the tourist is overwhelmed with the drone of CARNIVAL BARKERS standing in front of WAX FIGURES, STUFFED DEAD FREAKY ANIMALS, DRAWINGS, POSTERS and even some LIVE EXHIBITS.

PULL BACK to include Harlow, walking with urgency, a look of repulsion on his face.

EXHIBIT BARKER #1
See the Feegee Mermaid. Wonder at her body. But, whatever you do, don't look into her eyes!

MOVING.

EXHIBIT BARKER #2
You ask yourself, "What would the link between man and monkey look like?"

MOVING.

EXHIBIT BARKER #3
Chang, the Chinese giant, tall enough to reach into a second story window.

Finally. Harlow rounds a corner to see a small crowd in front of PHINEAS GAGE: THE ONLY LIVING MAN WITH A HOLE IN HIS HEAD.

A FAMILY stands in front of the low stage where Phineas sits calmly in a chair. He's not as expressive as other humans in their freak show attire. He's just Phineas, calmly talking to people.

FATHER
...Who pulled it out?

PHINEAS
The blast sent it clean through.
Landed...oh, about as far away as that post.

Another FAMILY has approached him. This one obviously has less class, and acts in a gruff fashion, reaching out and touching Phineas without cause or warning.

GRUFF GIRL
Can I feel your head?

PHINEAS
If you're gentle.

The Girl reaches out, but is scared until her Father guides her hand to his hair and hands Phineas a dime with his other hand.

PHINEAS (CONT'D)
And for another dime, you can part my hair and see my brain move.

She parts his hair.

E.C.U.: UNDER A THIN FLAP OF SKIN, PHINEAS'S BRAIN PULSES.

GRUFF GIRL
Look, daddy.

She touches the soft scar tissue over the hole.

GRUFF GIRL (CONT'D)
Is that your brain?

PHINEAS
Doctors say no. My brain is gone from there. It's just a hole now.

GRUFF FATHER
He's a moron now.

PHINEAS
I'm not a moron. I can do exactly like I did before.

GRUFF MOTHER
Open your eye so we can see it's blind.

PHINEAS
I can't open it.

GRUFF MOTHER
Try again.

When Phineas looks around the room, trying to open his eye, his sight lands on Harlow. Instantly, he's oblivious to the gawking families. Harlow worms through the thin crowd, his gaze likewise locked onto Phineas.

GRUFF GIRL

Open up your mouth so we can see the hole.

GRUFF FATHER

That there the rod?

The Gruff Father tries to pick the Tamping Iron from Phineas's grip, but PHINEAS holds it tighter.

DR. HARLOW

You are no freak, Phineas.

GRUFF MOTHER

You wants to see a real freak, son. See the dog-face boy!

The Mother, Girl and Father laugh like idiots, until the Father gets rough trying to pull the rod from Phineas's grasp.

GRUFF FATHER

Gimme the damn bar!

Suddenly Phineas erupts in anger, shoving away the Gruff Father and holding his Tamping Iron high. The tourists scream and run as he bellows.

DR. HARLOW

You don't belong here!

PHINEAS

What the hell do you know? They laughed you out of Boston!

Phineas swings his Tamping Iron wildly around him, in a violent fashion. Only Harlow braves the danger, others run screaming, but gather as a gawking crowd in the distant hallways.

DR. HARLOW

Your emotions - you're a good man, Phineas. Try to remember who you are.

PHINEAS

(yelling, raising Iron over his head over his head like it blasted off)

I AM THE ONLY LIVING MAN WITH A HOLE IN HIS HEAD!

Phineas smashes a coat rack in half with the Tamping Iron.

DR. HARLOW
 (rushing to him)
 But you are NO FREAK.

BARNUM
 (rushing up hallway)
 Wonderful, wonderful!
 (clapping)
 More of that. More of that, Mr, Gage.
 (shouting)
 See the raging man with a hole in his
 head!

Phineas eyes Barnum, the consummate showman in front of a man that's as mad as a lion, and just as deadly. Phineas reaches for Barnum's lapel, but Harlow shoves Barnum away just in time. Phineas storms out, making the people watching down the hall flee screaming.

EXT. BACK LOADING DOCK, MUSEUM - MOMENTS LATER

Harlow and Phineas, rage burning in him, pace in circles around each other, both still upset over what just happened. All around them, there are new exhibits being unloaded from wagons - stuffed animals, freaks, live animals and wax statues of all kinds.

DR. HARLOW
 Outside my house, you said you were NOT a
 freak, and now I find you here!

PHINEAS
 What else am I good for?

DR. HARLOW
 You still have your soul.

PHINEAS
 What kind of soul? Last week, a boy
 teased me real good. I ran after that
 boy, and if I'd a caught him, I don't
 know what I've have done.

DR. HARLOW
 A good soul. You are a man, a worthy man,
 with a strong back and mind.

PHINEAS
 What mind? My mind's half gone.
 (holds out the Iron)
 I want the part this thing took back. I
 want who I was!

DR. HARLOW

And so do I. I want who I was. But we will never be left alone by this. Like your tamping iron, we will carry it for the rest of our lives.

Hearing this, Phineas calms down.

DR. HARLOW (CONT'D)

It is up to us what we do with this burden.

LONG PAUSE.

Phineas suddenly stops being enraged when he spies a horse being whipped by its owner. The change is so dramatic that Harlow observes him more than talks to him.

PHINEAS

I never used to like horses.

DR. HARLOW

But now you do?

PHINEAS

Like them more than people.

DR. HARLOW

Phineas, we cannot choose the path the God has us walk. We can only make of it what is humanly possible.

(pause)

Help me to make this possible. There is some goodness to come from this.

PHINEAS

Namely?

DR. HARLOW

I have found some support, from Harvard Medical School. Doctor Henry Bigelow, whom I have met with, believes the fact of your injury. He has studied my papers on the case.

PHINEAS

About the only ones who believed are you and my boys on the rail crew. But none of them will have nothing to do with me no more. And rightly so.

DR. HARLOW

With Dr. Bigelow's help, I can us before
an assembly of doctors and surgeons.

PHINEAS

I though they laughed at you.

DR. HARLOW

They can't once they meet you.

PHINEAS

They'll find a way.

DR. HARLOW

The human ability to inflict cruelty is
always eclipsed by the human ability to
rise above it, Phineas. I suffered
humiliation. You suffered it. In this, we
might find redemption.

Phineas frets.

PHINEAS

I could make it worse. You saw me inside.

DR. HARLOW

Your change in personality is a
consequence of the accident, and part of
what I am attempting to prove.

Phineas suddenly starts yelling and waving his Tamping
Iron in a threatening manner in Harlow's face. Harlow
shrinks from the fury.

PHINEAS

You want a freak show just like Barnum!

DR. HARLOW

No! No, Phineas. Not like Barnum.

PHINEAS

Show me what's different! Huh!? God damn
it! You want a freak.

DR. HARLOW

I want people to believe. To understand.

PHINEAS

Believe I got half my brain?

DR. HARLOW

I have to make them believe it happened.
If they believe, they will use my records
to cure people who suffer like you
suffer.

PHINEAS

You can't cure a walking dead man!

DR. HARLOW

But we might cure seizures and headaches
and mental decay. We might...through
understanding you.

The mood calms down. Phineas thinks and sits down on a
crate, forcing himself out of his rage. Harlow searches
for the right words and takes a seat on a crate, facing
Phineas.

DR. HARLOW (CONT'D)

It takes a special kind of man to want to
improve life through science.

PHINEAS

I'm just a foreman. Plain. Simple.

DR. HARLOW

You don't believe that. Not any more.

PHINEAS

Don't tell me what I believe.

DR. HARLOW

Then at least allow me what I believe.
(pause)
Selflessness survives beneath your
suffering. Of that I am sure.

DISTANT ANGLE of Harlow and Phineas sitting facing each
other as the world moves around them.

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM, MEDICAL HALL, HARVARD - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: JANUARY, 1850.

ANGLE UP: FOCUSED ON A SKYLIGHT

DR. HARLOW

You're relaxed?

PHINEAS

I reckon.

Harlow's head comes into view from the side as he leans over the exam table.

DR. HARLOW

There might be as many as thirty of them.

PHINEAS

Don't matter.

WIDEN: TO INCLUDE THE ROOM FROM A NORMAL ANGLE.

Phineas lies on the examination/operating table, which is little more than a slab of wood. Before electricity, rooms like this were lit with sunlight or gas lanterns, a few of which burn from their places on the walls.

Harlow nervously peers to the door.

DR. HARLOW

If they ask you to do something that makes you feel uncomfortable...

PHINEAS

Doc?

DR. HARLOW

Yes, Phineas?

PHINEAS

It's me that's on the table being examined...but I know it's you they're judging.

(pause)

So how's you feel? Relaxed?

DR. HARLOW

Yes, thank you, Phineas.

PHINEAS

Then let's let them fellows with the beards in and let them have a time with me.

Two dozen BEARDED DOCTORS waddle into the room. Each one seems to give a different variation of disbelief when he sees Phineas.

DR. HARLOW

I've started with him lying down.

After taking off their jackets, the Doctors form a half circle around the examination table.

DR. HARLOW (CONT'D)

Mr. Gage. If you could hold still while the doctors examine you.

PHINEAS

Yes, sir.

Harlow stands back to let the other Doctors lean forward to inspect Phineas's head area.

DOCTOR #1

Mr. Gage, could you open your mouth?

Phineas does this, and that Doctor holds a mirror up to reflect light into the mouth. Several doctors take turns looking in as others touch the scar on his head.

Harlow hands the Tamping Iron to the Doctors. They hold it up to his head, muttering things to each other we cannot hear.

DOCTOR #1 (CONT'D)

I would like to see his position at the time of the accident.

DOCTOR #2

Yes, and without any guidance from you, Dr. Harlow, I'd like to hear it in his own words.

Phineas sits up. Harlow predicted this, and has a fake hole made up using wood nailed to a floorboard. Phineas takes the Tamping Iron in his fist. He crouches on the floor in the middle of the circle of Doctors, holding the Iron between his legs as he talks.

PHINEAS

The hole is about three inches around. Thirty inches deep or so. Narrow. Like a gun barrel. Make it with chisels. I tamp down the gunpowder after my assistant puts in the sand. Like so.

Phineas puts his knees around the base of the Tamping Iron.

PHINEAS (CONT'D)

Only this time, I got careless and looked away. I thought the sand was in, but it weren't. When my Iron dropped into the hole, it hit granite and gunpowder. BOOM!

Phineas erupts with that sound so fast the doctors scatter back from him, muttering, Harlow grins at their fright.

PHINEAS (CONT'D)

The rod shoot like a bullet right up!

DOCTOR #2

Didn't the blast blow you backward?

DOCTOR #3

And out of the way?

PHINEAS

Before the blast hits anything, it has to clear out that hole. The Iron flies up, the point enters under my cheekbone, and goes out my head so fast it's gone before I hit the ground.

DOCTOR #3

You didn't feel it?

PHINEAS

Nope. Felt something. Didn't know what. Smelled awful. Burning skin. Only I couldn't tell it was mine.

DOCTOR #1

You're sure it didn't just enter your open mouth and exit the cheek?

PHINEAS

Yes sir, I am sure.

DOCTOR #2

But no one saw it go through your skull?

PHINEAS

When a blast happens, the first thing you do is close your eyes. By the time everybody opened 'em, there's my brains stuck all over the hot Iron.

DOCTOR #3

Interesting.

DOCTOR #1

You maintained consciousness most of the time, yet felt no pain?

PHINEAS

Nothing more than usual. But I lost my eye. It don't work no more.

DOCTOR #2

That could have happened with the Iron exiting the cheek too, though, with the right path.

DOCTOR #1

And otherwise you have recovered fully, the same man?

PHINEAS

No, sir. I act up awful. Scare people. I never used to scare no one. I get headaches, bad ones, like never before. And I can't...

DOCTOR #2

We're only interested in what we can prove.

PHINEAS

Oh ask anyone. I was the top foreman, and they fire me after I come back on account I can't reason.

DOCTOR #1

Blasting never demanded much reasoning skill, though, Phineas, did it?

The Men chuckle at him.

DOCTOR #1 (CONT'D)

Dr. Harlow wrote in his medical journal of being able to insert one finger in your upper wound, and one in the lower, and touch his fingers inside of your brain.

Phineas gives a queer look to Harlow.

PHINEAS

Maybe so.

DOCTOR #2

While you were awake?

PHINEAS

I felt a lot of strange things in my head that day. That might of been one of them.

(pause)

(MORE)

PHINEAS (CONT'D)

If you part my hair, you can see the thin skin over my hole. Under it, you can watch my brain move.

Several Doctors crowd around and part his hair. After a few moments, there is a COLLECTIVE GASP from the Doctors.

DOCTOR #3

But that could be from another wound.

PHINEAS

But it ain't.

DOCTOR #2

May we now inspect your eye?

PHINEAS

Can't see how it could hurt. It don't work.

The Doctors crowd tightly around him.

ANGLE ON HARLOW: PEERING NERVOUSLY AT THEM AS THEY EXAMINE.

INT. HALL OUTSIDE LECTURE ROOM, HARVARD - AFTERNOON

Phineas sits in the cavernous hallway, all alone. He can hear muffled talk come inside the adjacent closed door lecture room. Then the sound of men moving chairs back from desks is heard...and the big doors open.

The Doctors shuffle out, most talking amongst themselves. Phineas searches their eyes for any clue as to how the forum went, but the signs are not good. Most Doctors make a point of looking away from him. Others give him a doubtful look or shrug.

Phineas hears a few passing remarks.

DOCTOR #3

...Worthless speculation...

DOCTOR #2

...Unsubstantiated and preposterous, without a whit of use...

DOCTOR #1

...Could do more harm than good...

DOCTOR #3

My fear exactly. It upsets the very nature of phrenology.

DOCTOR #4

I am surprised that someone as savvy as Dr. Harlow would risk a public presentation of this sort.

DOCTOR #5

It was good for a laugh.

A small circle of Doctors chuckle.

DOCTOR #4

He's dug himself into a hole.

DOCTOR #2

And threw out the shovel. His next presentation will suffer this incredibility issue, that much can be sure.

DOCTOR #1

In this era, where through the discovery of ether, we have conquered pain, this sort of seminar sheds an unfavorable light on our profession.

DOCTOR #5

Can I buy you gentlemen whiskey?

As the last Doctors leave, Phineas walks into the lecture room.

INT. LECTURE HALL - CONTINUOUS

It's shaped with half-circles of desks facing the lecture podium. There, Harlow stands, his head down as he collects his papers for transit. When he hears feet approaching, Harlow looks up, and forces a smile. Phineas knows this means the worse.

He waits to speak until he is standing right in front of Harlow.

PHINEAS

I failed the test, didn't I?

DR. HARLOW

No, my friend. It grieves me to confess, that I failed you.

Harlow tries to keep a stoic face, but he cringes when he sees his detailed drawing of the accident before he rolls it up.

DR. HARLOW (CONT'D)

They could not accept my notes, or your testimony, because we had no witnesses.

PHINEAS

The other doctor, Williams.

DR. HARLOW

Williams was smart to distance himself from me. And Bigelow came in too late, and has been ill received before, when it comes to research. Besides, he is not a direct witness to the accident.

PHINEAS

What would it take to make them believe you? You got my friends to swear that's what happened. You got the hotel man, he saw it.

Harlow has finished folding his papers and putting them safely into his leather carry case.

DR. HARLOW

The only way to convince them was if you had died and I had your skull here, with the Iron Rod still protruding through your brain. But of course, that would make this whole issue worthless. The remarkable, noteworthy factors all lie in the fact that you are indeed alive, fully functioning. And...they chose to laugh at me, rather than learn from what I have discovered.

PHINEAS

You came here knowing they'd do this?

DR. HARLOW

It was the probable outcome.

PHINEAS

And you still came.

Harlow nods YES. Phineas frets, visibly. Harlow smiles and pats him on the back.

DR. HARLOW

Don't fret. Two steps forward, one step back. Science has advanced that way for centuries. Come on, let me buy you a supper.

EXT. MEDICAL LECTURE ROOM, BOSTON - CONTINUOUS

As Harlow and Phineas walk, they loosen up and talk, but we cannot hear them.

EXT. HOTEL RESTAURANT - NIGHT

It's dusk. The streets are fairly empty.

ANGLE IN THROUGH WINDOW.

We can see in through the window, to the table where Phineas and Harlow ate. They're standing now, putting on coats to leave.

FOLLOWING THEM THROUGH WINDOWS TO FRONT DOOR.

Harlow and Phineas exit. They both look a bit tipsy, and are smiling.

DR. HARLOW

Where would you like me to take you?

PHINEAS

To the coach station.

EXT. STAGE COACH STATION - MOMENTS LATER

Phineas, bag in hand, waits to board the coach. Whenever a horse comes close to him, Phineas backs away quickly.

DR. HARLOW

Don't like horses?

PHINEAS

Never trusted 'em.

DR. HARLOW

You're sure you would rather go to New York than to your mother's in Vermont?

PHINEAS

I trust myself less than I trust horses. I could hurt her, or anybody else close to me, and not even know why.

DR. HARLOW

I don't think you'd hurt anyone you love that much.

PHINEAS

What I need is work. It sets my mind right. I get fired pretty regular now. But New York's big enough, it's easier to find some place they ain't heard of me.

Harlow shakes hands with Phineas.

PHINEAS (CONT'D)

I don't know who I am, Doctor. I might turn worse. Might not. But I'll try to make you proud you saved me.

DR. HARLOW

I am proud, Phineas. I am. This affair with my peers couldn't change that. A man struggling to understand his life is always a man worth respecting.

They step back and study each other's face, as if remembering how many hours they stared at each other during recovery.

DR. HARLOW (CONT'D)

Never forget who you are, Phineas.

PHINEAS

And who is that?

DR. HARLOW

A man with a hole in his head.

They both burst out LAUGHING.

DR. HARLOW (CONT'D)

You are, you are a man who has been spared death. For whatever reason, we do not know. But we do both know, you live on borrowed time. Make each day count.

PHINEAS

And what about you?

DR. HARLOW

(smiles)

My reputation will not recover until after I've published in journals on a field of medicine that has nothing to do with brains, that much I do know.

(laughs)

I've always had an interest in politics.

PHINEAS

You'd be a fine politician.

They nod. Harlow begins to walk away, as Phineas walks in the other direction toward the stage coach. Phineas stops after only about 10 feet and turns half way around, but seems to not want to face Harlow for this.

PHINEAS (CONT'D)

Doctor?

Harlow stops, turns.

PHINEAS (CONT'D)

I owe you my life.

DR. HARLOW

You owe me nothing.

Phineas looks into the coach, at the well-to-do FAMILY occupying the inside of it. Then he looks up at the STAGECOACH DRIVER, rough and swigging from a flask.

PHINEAS

Mind if I ride up top?

STAGECOACH DRIVER

I don't talk much.

PHINEAS

Me neither.

Phineas climbs up. Harlow raises a hand to wave, but it closes in a fist, as if he's trying to give Phineas some of his power to take with him.

DR. HARLOW

You will change what we know of the human brain, Phineas. I swear to it.

PHINEAS

Ain't you embarrassed yourself enough over me, Doctor?

DR. HARLOW

They laughed at Copernicus, too.

PHINEAS

Who?

DR. HARLOW

Another man with a hole in his head. And he filled it with new ideas of the universe that almost got him executed.

PHINEAS

I wouldn't take it that far, Doctor.

They both smile. A stagecoach hand closes the door.

Harlow waves as the coach takes off. Phineas nods, and turns his head to watch Harlow. He raises his Tamping Iron high, as a final farewell.

EXT. HARLOW'S HOUSE, CAVENDISH - DAY

Winter has dropped a blanket of snow on the ground. It's deathly quiet. Harlow's buggy trots up to the house.

INT. HARLOW'S HOUSE, CAVENDISH - MOMENTS LATER

Charlotte is sewing in front of the fireplace when she hears the door open. She gasps when she sees her husband stomp the snow off his boots. Quickly her sewing is on the floor and she rushes to Harlow's open arms.

CHARLOTTE

I was worried about you, dear.

DR. HARLOW

That I'd fallen ill?

DR. HARLOW (CONT'D)

That you'd stay with him.

Harlow LAUGHS.

DR. HARLOW (CONT'D)

We are bonded. However, only as doctor and patient. My heart is here with you.

He lets her settle in front of the fire; he sits beside her.

CHARLOTTE

How was he?

DR. HARLOW

Haunted. Lost. Truly tormented.

CHARLOTTE

Poor man.

DR. HARLOW

I didn't expect to ever see him alive again.

Charlotte takes his hand in a comforting way.

CHARLOTTE

You did more for him than any surgeon could. You remained his friend.

DR. HARLOW

When he had his more peaceful moments, he was gentle as a kitten. And compassionate. He asked me what I intended to do, medicine in Cavendish aside.

CHARLOTTE

I know what you told him.

DR. HARLOW

(surprised)

How so?

CHARLOTTE

Someone speaks politics and you come alive.

DR. HARLOW

You wouldn't mind moving to the capital?

CHARLOTTE

I've been waiting for the day that you'd outgrow this town.

DR. HARLOW

Would your heart be joyful removed from the only town it's ever known?

CHARLOTTE

It would, if it was with you, my dear.

They hug and kiss lightly.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE, NEW YORK - DAY

On this cold morning, Phineas huddles around the FOREMAN for a large building construction site on the edge of the city. He won't know it, but it will end up being known as GRAND CENTRAL STATION. He gets chosen to work a team.

MUSIC PLAYS OVER THE FOLLOWING SCENES.

EXT. HARLOW'S HOUSE, CAVENDISH - DAY

Harlow and his wife ride in their buggy, ahead of two large wagons of their belongings.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE, NEW YORK - AFTERNOON

Phineas is in the middle of an extremely bloody fist fight with two other workers until other men pull him back. The Foreman comes up and fires him.

INT. ENTRY, HARLOW'S HOUSE IN THE CITY - DAY

Charlotte orchestrates the delivery of crates of clothing and dishes to their new house.

INT. SITTING ROOM, HARLOW'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The room already is set up with a medical desk, padded high table for examination, and a screen behind which patients can change clothing.

Dr. Harlow organizes his medical equipment. He opens up a crate. From inside, he pulls out the drawings of Phineas. He smiles warmly upon seeing them, but then his smile drops as he sighs.

He puts the lid back on the crate. Then he carries it into a big closet, where it will obviously sit for a long time.

INT. SQUALID WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

POOR MEN and FAMILIES encircle a large fireplace along the wall of this warehouse building.

Phineas sits on the ground by himself, holding his head in his hands, rocking, as if in pain. He lifts his head up enough to look around.

PHINEAS'S P.O.V.: HE'S IN SO MUCH PAIN, THAT IT DISTORTS WHAT HIS ONE GOOD EYE CAN SEE OF PEOPLE. THEIR FACES BECOME WARPED AND HIDEOUS.

Phineas gets up with great effort. People cringe away from him as he veers their way. They mutter curses.

POOR PEOPLE

Stay away.

Phineas staggers toward the dark corner, where the horses are kept. He leans against a horse. It eyes him with sympathy. He pats the animal. Then he lies down on the hay, between the horses, to sleep.

INT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING, MASSACHUSETTS - DAY

Harlow speaks to a small crowd of the city council, obviously honing his skills as a public speaker.

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - AFTERNOON

It's a sweltering day in the poverty-stricken Five Points area of Manhattan. Phineas leans against a post, watching several other men fight. He's saddened by it. Then, a MAN nails a poster on a post near him. He reads it.

CU ON POSTER: IT WARNS OF WAR, AND ENCOURAGES MEN TO ENLIST.

MUSIC ENDS.

EXT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING, MASSACHUSETTS - AFTERNOON

Harlow exits the building with a small group of men when he hears a voice.

DR. BIGELOW

Dr. Harlow?

Harlow glances around until he spots Dr. Bigelow.

DR. HARLOW

Dr. Bigelow! What a fine turn of fate.

They pat each other on the shoulders as they shake hands.

DR. BIGELOW
I heard you had entered politics.

DR. HARLOW
I am simply representing my district in assembly now. But I must admit, I plan to extend my influence, should the public support me. And you? What brings you to the capitol building?

DR. BIGELOW
Raising funds for new additions to the hospital near Harvard.

DR. HARLOW
A good cause.

DR. BIGELOW
Life has gotten the best of our poor friend, Phineas.

DR. BIGELOW (CONT'D)
You speak of him gravely.

DR. BIGELOW (CONT'D)
My last visit to New York, I found him in a most miserable state.

DR. HARLOW
I must keep up with my entourage. Can you walk with me?

DR. BIGELOW
It would be my pleasure.

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - DAY

Construction goes on at almost every corner, with the city building up fast. Old wooden hotels and warehouses stand next to more modern buildings. A trolley line runs through the city streets.

Phineas, filthy, clothes tattered, a beggar, still with his Tamping Iron, sits on the step of an old building.

A STRANGER stops in front of him.

STRANGER
You look like an able bodied man.

PHINEAS
I am.

The Stranger shoves a piece of paper into Phineas's hand.

STRANGER

Come down to the docks tomorrow.

Stranger walks off. Phineas studies the paper - an advertisement for the CONCORD STAGE COACH COMPANY.

PHINEAS

(squinting with his one good eye)

Stage coach drivers needed in Chile, South America. Good pay. Concord Stage Coach Company hiring.

He folds the paper and places it in his pocket as a shadow envelopes him. He looks up, his squinting eye having trouble focusing on the silhouette against the blinding sun...then he recognizes Elisa.

ELISA

Phineas, is that really you?

PHINEAS

I reckon it's me. But, is my mind playing tricks on my eye?

ELISA

Mother and I have traveled to New York for my auntie's sixtieth birthday festivities, special occasion and all. Word in Cavendish is that you been staying here, so I had the notion to ask passerby if they seen you, and well, didn't take long for a kindly gentleman to steer me in this direction. You took off so sudden. I've been worried about you.

PHINEAS

I'm just another freak here in the big city. Ain't nothing special.

ELISA

You're special to me, Phineas. You shouldn't be living like this. Come back to Cavendish.

PHINEAS

I'm headed to South America. Gonna be a stage coach driver.

ELISA

I thought you hated horses.

PHINEAS

Always did. But that changed. Now I like them. Can't explain why it changed, except maybe they can see the old me and people can't. The iron rod took out the good part, left the bastard in me, I reckon.

ELISA

You think you can handle a team of horses?

PHINEAS

I reckon.

ELISA

They speak Spanish in Chile.

PHINEAS

That would sit fine with me. Won't get into fights with people I can't talk to.

ELISA

Phineas, are you sure that traveling all the way to Chile to take a job that you can get here in New York is a good idea?

PHINEAS

Feel it's what I should do.

ELISA

If you go, please stay in contact with me.

PHINEAS

I reckon I'll write my mother regular.

ELISA

If you don't mind letting her know to expect a letter or two from me.

PHINEAS

I'm sure that would be fine.

A terrible headache coming on, Phineas flinches and lets out a GROAN. There is an awkward silence.

ELISA

Are you all right, Phineas?

PHINEAS

Don't worry none about me. Get a headache now and then. Doctor said that's to be expected.

ELISA

I should be going. Mother is expecting me at the terminal. You take care of yourself, Phineas.

Elisa gives him a light hug.

PHINEAS

Elisa...somewhere there's a feller waiting for you. Hell, any guy would be the holder of a mighty lucky straw to have your company. It just can't be me.

ELISA

(tearfully)

I know.

EXT. CONCORD STAGE COACH COMPANY - DAY

Phineas walks up to the man at the hiring desk.

EXT. DOCKS, NEW YORK - DAY

Steamships, freighters line the docks. Numerous people either work the cargo, or walk up the gangplank. Amongst the people, Phineas walks alongside the huge carriages that are ready for transport. Phineas looks over his shoulder to the street, high above, and a passing train.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. RAIL YARD, 1868 - EVENING

Harlow steps off a train and into the more modern terminal.

PULL BACK to include hundreds of travelers, dressed more modern. Harlow carries his hat box as a Porter pushes his trunks on a rolling cart.

EXT. OCEAN FREIGHTER, 1852 - DAY

While many ships on the dock were fancy ocean liners, the ship that Phineas travels in is just an old freighter.

INT. OCEAN FREIGHTER - CONTINUOUS

Deep in the dark-lit cargo hold, Phineas, holding his Tamping Iron, as always, sits on the planks, rolling back and forth against some sacks of food, suffering an intense headache. But this time, he's aiming the Iron at his cheek, where it went in, and GROANS out his pain.

PHINEAS

Damn! God damn me. God damn this Iron.

(hit with pain, grabs his
head with both hands)

Damn. Damn. You left me enough brain to hurt, but not enough to live. Damn you.

Damn. Damn.

EXT. STAGE COACH OFFICE, VALPARAISO, CHILE - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: VALPARAISO, CHILE, 1852.

The stage coach office is a rustic, stucco building with a dirt floor. Men wearing dirty clothing go about their work. Some seem to be arriving, others departing. Outside, we hear the sound of horses, carriages and orders barked from one man to the next. This place demands toughness.

Phineas stands in front of the stage coach line manager, JUAN, who hands over papers and maps.

JUAN

...The first trip, you'll get half pay. Keep your eyes open. You'll ride behind Chappy. Marteen Speaks both Spanish and English. He'll explain everything.

PHINEAS

Yes, sir.

JUAN

Now I don't know nothing about you. But most men come down here, trouble followed 'em. If it didn't, you'll find plenty here. Stage coaches are easy dinero for the banditos. If your coach gets stopped, we don't want no dead man riding the reins. Hand over what they want.

PHINEAS

Yes, sir.

JUAN

The most important cargo we got is the passengers. If we lose them, we go out of business.

PHINEAS

I understand.

JUAN

The coach you're on is worth more than a dozen horses. It's got wheels made of pure steel and oak. You can ride over anything. If you crash it, you're fired. If you're drunk, you're fired. If you shoot off your pistol for no reason, you're fired. If you steal, you're fired. If you steal a horse, you're hung. If you manhandle the whores, you're shot, usually by the whore. That's all I got to say about that.

PHINEAS

Yes, sir.

JUAN

And don't talk to the passengers. You'll have your hands full enough with what you're doing.

PHINEAS

I ain't too sociable.

JUAN

Good. Keep it that way.

Receiving the last of the papers, Phineas shakes hands and walks out the door.

EXT. SANTIAGO, CHILE PASS - DAY

The roads leading out of Valparaiso are wide dirt trails that zig-zag ahead over the passes and scenic countryside.

The carriage is a monster, about 10 feet high at the buckboard. The wheels are shoulder height, and the springs make it ride smooth inside, but on top, the passengers sway quite a bit.

Phineas holds on to the suitcases and trunks he sits on. The COACH DRIVER, a man with muscular arms, holds four reins in each hand.

His eyes concentrate on the trail ahead. MARTEEN, a small Chilean man, sits shotgun, and talks over his shoulder.

MARTEEN

You see his foot, always on the brake.

Phineas studies it.

MARTEEN (CONT'D)

The other brake, it is on his left side. Every muscle in your body will hurt the first time you drive a team.

(points to Tamping Iron)

What you bring that for?

PHINEAS

Bad luck.

MARTEEN

You'll find plenty of that. He-yah!

Phineas flies back as they hit a big rock in the road.

INT. ASSEMBLY HOUSE, CITY - DAY

About 50 CONGRESSMEN mingle in the room. Harlow talks with a few.

CONGRESSMAN

War is inevitable.

CONGRESSMAN #2

As is the outcome.

CONGRESSMAN

The only question is, how long it will last. What do you think, Dr. Harlow?

DR. HARLOW

I believe that war is like surgery.

CONGRESSMAN

How so?

DR. HARLOW

No matter how quickly the war is won, or how exact the surgery, the greater battle is how well we recover.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CIVIL WAR BATTLEFIELD - DAY

The room dissolves into a battle scene. As SOLDIERS are shot and lay screaming for a doctor, we hear Harlow's words:

DR. HARLOW (V.O.)

Survival, in itself, is no guarantee that it was a pleasant victory over death.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PASS, CHILE - DAY

Guns shoot at the stagecoach as it rides hard and fast past drunken BANDITOS. Phinea is driving the team now, no longer on his first trip.

PHINEAS

You think a bullet in my head can kill me?!

He ducks, holding his Tamping Iron up in his fist, defiantly.

PHINEAS (CONT'D)

Not if this won't.

ANGLE INSIDE CARRIAGE: THE TRAVELERS COWER IN FEAR.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. AMBULANCE WAGON, CIVIL WAR BATTLEGROUND - AFTERNOON

GUNSHOTS in the distance.

Harlow and several other WAR DOCTORS muster their courage. They cannot see out, because ambulance wagons were like paddy wagons with no windows, for safety. They all take a swig of whiskey before they open the wagon door.

EXT. CIVIL WAR BATTLEFIELD - CONTINUOUS

When the Doctors hop out, they are stunned: Bodies of men lie as far as they can see on this battlefield.

INT. BARN, CHILE - EVENING

The stagecoach line has several big horse stables set up along the route. Dozens of horses rest in stalls inside.

Phineas leads his horses into the barn. Juan follows him and talks.

JUAN

If you know the rules, why you no stop
and give them what they want?

PHINEAS

Don't like people.

JUAN

You were lucky this time.

PHINEAS

Luck is something you don't know nothing
about.

Juan stops.

JUAN

I know about running a stage line and I
know about people who drive for me and
how they got to follow my rules. Can't go
and get the customers killed. Word get
around real fast. Soon, there be no more
customers. One more time, you'll be
packing up your things, Gage.

(mutters)

Ornery bastard.

Phineas leads the horses into their large stall, which is big enough for four of the horses. Hay is already down for them to eat.

Phineas suddenly gets a pain in his head so intense that he doubles over. He falls onto the ground. In seconds, he's having full seizures, convulsing and spitting foam.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CIVIL WAR HOSPITAL TENT - EVENING

In the same light, a SOLDIER convulses intensely due to a head wound, which seems similar to Phineas's, only smaller. Harlow stands over him.

DR. HARLOW
I won't let you die.

The Soldier seems to come out of his fits, enough to look at Harlow.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BARN, CHILE - CONTINUOUS

Phineas comes out of his fits. But the only faces he has to look up into are the faces of his horses, crowded around him. They zoom in and out of focus, closer, then farther, as he regains control of his body.

He stares off, as if embarrassed, but is too exhausted to get up. He hears the sounds of footsteps approaching, and forces himself to get up to his knees. He grabs a horse's hoof and pretends to be checking the horseshoe as the STABLE HAND enters with a bale of hay. After the hay is dropped off, Phineas collapses, sweating profusely.

PHINEAS
Dr. Harlow...

CUT TO:

EXT. HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL - DAY

Harlow carries his hat box up the steps into the building.

CUT TO:

INT. BARN, CHILE - CONTINUOUS

Lying on his back, Phineas watches the head of a horse come close to sniff him, as if curious. Phineas takes the head of the obedient horse in his hand and studies it.

PHINEAS
...What use is a man with a hole in his head?

INT. HARVARD MEDICAL LAB - CONTINUOUS

Harlow pulls Phineas's skull out of the hatbox and places it on the table. Then he takes the Tamping Iron and uses it to point at the skull.

DR. HARLOW

At last, the skeptic shall become the student.

FADE OUT.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD, CHILE - AFTERNOON

Phineas drives his team of horses, pulling his carriage, over the dirt highways.

ANOTHER AREA

As Phineas rounds boulders, BANDITOS, on horses, spring from hiding. Phineas reacts instantly, slapping the reins.

PHINEAS

Hii-yahhh!

The Banditos chase after, riding to intercept Phineas.

PHINEAS (CONT'D)

Damn bastards!

The PASSENGERS scream as the ride tosses them around the carriage like dolls. The Stage Hand drops down to lie on top of the bags. Phineas pushes his team of horses faster.

The Stage barely negotiates the road, wooden wheels become locked in furrows cut from the rains, and yet he pushes the coach onward.

PHINEAS (CONT'D)

Death don't scare me!

GUNFIRE zings all around the stage.

RACING DOWN A MOUNTAIN CURVE

The Stage barely makes it around a tight corner. But then, it hits a boulder and flies up. The wheels hit furrows, and suddenly the carriage flips half way on its side but rights itself as Phineas is thrown off into the dirt/rocks.

Without a driver, the stage quickly slows to a stop. Passengers scream as Banditos surround it, firing pistols into the air.

Phineas, shocked but conscious, staggers to his feet, seeing the Banditos around the Stage. He runs toward them, screaming obscenities.

PHINEAS (CONT'D)

Bastards! Damn you!

The Passengers shout at Phineas as they throw their valuables onto the dirt.

PASSENGER MAN #1

Shut up you fool!

PASSENGER MAN #2

You can't fight ten of them!

Not able to make a rational judgment, Phineas runs for the Banditos.

PHINEAS

(brandishing his Iron)

I'll break your heads!

Just before he gets close enough that he can cause any trouble, he stops dead in his tracks. For a moment, he stands, staring at the terrified Passengers and hostile Banditos. Then he drops to the ground in a strong spell of convulsions.

The Banditos all LAUGH grotesquely as he flips on the ground; spit turns to foam around his mouth. The Passengers recoil in horror.

ANGLE ON PHINEAS: HE HAS LOST ALL CONTROL OVER HIMSELF AND LOOKS LIKE A DYING ANIMAL IN THE DIRT.

A Bandito walks over and kicks Phineas. Another Bandito reacts, scared that he's got the Devil in him, and kisses his cross.

BANDIT #1

El Diablo!

BANDIT #2

(shouting to Passengers)

Give! Or we kill!

This convulsion fit for Phineas last longer and is stronger than the rest. But it slowly subsides. He lies sweaty and panting through foam on his side, his good eye barely focusing.

PHINEAS'S P.O.V.: FROM HIS SIDE ANGLE, HE CAN BARELY FOCUS ON HIS PASSENGERS BEING ROBBED.

As a final insult, the Banditos all walk past and spit on him. His vision blurs in and out of darkness.

Phineas's blurred and spinning stare at his Tamping Iron, lying in the dirt, DISSOLVES TO --

EXT. STEAMSHIP, OPEN OCEAN - DAY

--Blurred ocean. It isn't until a spray of foam splashed across the screen that we realize we're in the open ocean.

Phineas, incredibly seasick, hangs over the rail. Although now not as caked with dirt as he was in the previous scene, he looks almost as bad.

INT. SMALL STORAGE ROOM, STEAMSHIP - DAY

The door flies open to this empty room. Phineas collapses into it. He's in the beginning stages of a seizure, and it's clear by his entrance that he came here for privacy. His seizure is so violent, he hits his head on a metal corner and it starts to bleed.

INT. BUNK ROOM, STEAMSHIP - EVENING

Phineas lies on his bunk bed. Other SAILORS and TRAVELERS observe him as he sleeps.

SAILOR

Ain't never seen nobody so seasick in my life.

TRAVELER

How long has he been asleep?

SAILOR

Three days now, except for meals and the crapper.

TRAVELER

Let's hope it isn't contagious.

SAILOR

Why does he always carry that iron around with him?

TRAVELER

Maybe he's got a stash of gold he's protecting.

SAILOR

He don't look like he's got two nickels to rub together.

TIME PASSAGE.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO BAY, CALIFORNIA - DAY

The steamship ties up to the docks.

EXT. PHEBE'S HOUSE, SAN FRANCISCO - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: MAY 1857

The door opens to a pleasant-looking woman now in her mid 30's, Phebe. Her smile drops, as she's instantly concerned and saddened at the sight of the man before her.

PHEBE

Phineas!

REVERSE: PHINEAS APPEARS WEAK AND SICK AS IF HE JUST HAD CONVULSIONS.

PHEBE (CONT'D)

(calling out)

David!

PHINEAS

I'm all right.

PHEBE

No you're not.

PHINEAS

Just seasick. Never took well to sailing the ocean.

David appears and helps Phineas into the house.

PHEBE

(calling upstairs into the house))

Mother!

Phineas drops his Tamping Iron and holds back until David puts it back into his hand, but he's too weak and it drops out again. They leave it on the porch.

INT. PHEBE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Phineas sweats and pants for breath as he is helped to lie down on the sofa.

PHEBE

David, dear, get me some water and cloth to clean him.

HANNAH (O.S.)

(calling out)

Phineas?! Is that Phineas?! Oh Lord! Oh Lord!

Hannah descends the stairs too quickly, she trips and almost falls, but recovers and dives to her knees alongside the sofa.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

(kissing, hugging, and petting his hair)

Phineas. Oh Phineas. My son.

PHEBE

We thought you died.

HANNAH

We haven't heard from you for months. Oh, you are so sick.

PHINEAS

Bad voyage. Never took well to sailing the ocean. I'll get better.

David rushes in with clean wet rags.

HANNAH

Make some weak tea for him.

They all tend to him. Phineas starts to shake so hard in his fever that Hannah begins to weep.

INT. PHEBE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Hannah wipes her son's forehead down with cloths. Phebe enters.

PHEBE

Momma, go get some rest. I'll watch over him.

Hannah, weak from fatigue, staggers to her bed.

INT. PHEBE'S HOUSE - MORNING

David helps Phineas sit at the table while Phebe serves food.

PHINEAS

Glad to get back to some good American cooking.

Phineas weakly feeds himself. Hannah brings him some more tea and sits next to him.

HANNAH

Don't push. You always push too hard and too fast. Take your time. You're very sick, Phineas. Treat every day like it's a blessing.

PHINEAS

I want to work.

HANNAH

You don't have to prove anything to anyone.

PHINEAS

(suddenly upset)
Got nothing to do with it!

Everyone cringes back a bit.

PHINEAS (CONT'D)

I like to work! I'm good at it. Let a man do what a man can do!

This outburst weakens Phineas. He struggles for breath and to keep going. This helps him to calm down.

PHINEAS (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I'm...I'm difficult to be around, I know. Kids and animals is the only ones who can stand me. But, but I'm..I won't hurt nobody. Except myself.

HANNAH

Phineas, you are my son and I love you. I always will.

PHINEAS

(weakly)

I know, mother.

INT. FIREPLACE ROOM, PHEBE'S HOUSE - DAY

Phineas sits on the sofa, surrounded by five CHILDREN, all listening to him like he's the greatest storyteller in the world.

PHINEAS

(animated, holding Tamping Iron)

...Eight horses, charging down the mountain like a locomotive!

Hannah and Phebe smile while watching from the kitchen.

PHINEAS (CONT'D)

The reins in my left hand, my iron in my right. "Stop or we'll shoot!", then bandits yell at me. I hold up my iron. Bang! Bang!

(flashes his iron about)

Zing! Zing! The bullets hit the iron and fly off to the rocks.

(standing up)

I shout, "I'm Phineas Gage, and if this here iron can't kill me, no bullet can!"

The Kids CHEER. Hannah and his sister roll their eyes.

EXT. PHEBE'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Another day, David chops wood. Phineas picks up the freshly cut pieces and carries them inside. David is splitting the next piece when--

PHEBE (O.S.)

(screams)

DAVID!

David drops his ax and runs into the house.

INT. FIREPLACE ROOM, PHEBE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

David rushes in but stops dead in his tracks when he sees Phineas suffering a horrifyingly violent seizure.

INT. BEDROOM, PHEBE'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Phineas lies in bed on his stomach. The DOCTOR places leeches on his back.

INT. KITCHEN, PHEBE'S HOUSE - ANOTHER DAY

Phebe cries into David's shoulder as Phineas suffers another violent seizure.

INT. BEDROOM, PHEBE'S HOUSE - MORNING

SUPERIMPOSE: 5:00 A.M., MAY 21, 1860

The Doctor tries to take the Tamping Iron from Phineas's fist, but it's impossible because he is convulsing so intensely. His mouth is bleeding, his face covered with foam. And suddenly - his body stops moving completely.

The Tamping Iron falls out of the bed onto the floor.

INT. HARLOW'S GRAND BOSTON HOUSE - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: 1867.

Harlow, older, as he looked in the opening scene, supervises the move into another house, this one a grand manor, fitting for such a distinguished politician and doctor.

Harlow walks into the library, where many boxes are open. He reaches into one, and pulls out a few bundles of papers. Then, below these top papers, he pulls out the drawings of Phineas. A sad smile crosses his face. He reaches into the box again, and a letter falls from his hand. He picks it up and reads it.

E.C.U. ON LETTER: IT'S A LETTER FROM PHINEAS'S MOTHER

With a smile, Harlow sits down at his desk and begins to write. We hear his voice as he does so.

DR. HARLOW (V.O.)

Dear Mrs. Gage. It has been years since we corresponded; therefore excuse my intrusion if this brings you any sorrow. Throughout all of my medical career, no person has so intrigued me and moved me more than your son, Phineas. Your last letter to me mentioned his move to Chile, In the years since, has he...

EXT. HARLOW'S HOUSE - DAY

Harlow sits on the front deck, reading a letter from Mrs. Gage.

MRS. GAGE (V.O.)

...The lonely life of the stage coach fit him rightly. He said so in his letters. He entertained us with the most fabulous recitals of his wonderful feats and hairbreadth escapes. But he refused to tell me of his fits, which became more violent. By the time he reached my house in San Francisco, the doctors said he was beyond help. He had fits almost every day, until one day, the Lord reached down to take him from his painful days. My dear Phineas passed on to a more peaceful life on May 21, 1860. As for me, I am enjoying life in San Francisco with my daughter and her husband. I can't say I mind the mild weather.

Reading this, Harlow cannot help but shed a quiet tear.

EXT. TRAIN STATION, BOSTON - DAY

Harlow walks to the train, a determined look on his face.

EXT. PHEBE'S HOUSE, SAN FRANCISCO - DAY

Harlow lightly knocks on the door. Hannah, now older and more frail, answers.

HANNAH

Dr. Harlow.

DR. HARLOW

Please, Mrs. Gage, call me John.

HANNAH

All right. But only if you call me Hannah.

INT. PHEBE'S HOUSE, SAN FRANCISCO - CONTINUOUS

Hannah takes Harlow's hand and leads him inside, escorting him to a sofa.

HANNAH

My house isn't much for company.

DR. HARLOW

It's fine. I do not need much, Mrs...Hannah.

HANNAH

A man of the government now? And a doctor? I should have tea and cakes. I'm so unprepared. Tea? I can make some.

DR. HARLOW

No, thank you. I'd like to get right to the point of my visit.

HANNAH

Please do.

DR. HARLOW

Hannah, I know that this might be difficult for you, but I pray that you recognize the medical significance of your son's tragic experience.

HANNAH

Oh yes. I do.

DR. HARLOW

The good that Phineas hoped would come from his accident might finally become a reality, but it would require the most unkindly act of exhuming his body from its resting place.

HANNAH

(gasps)

Oh dear.

DR. HARLOW

I know it is a ghastly thought. He being deceased already for so many years, But if you could hear my plans for him.

(MORE)

DR. HARLOW (CONT'D)

I hope that you might consider this, for the benefit of all mankind.

HANNAH

Of course, John. If it were any other person, I might object. You clearly devoted your life to helping him save his, I am willing to listen. Pray go on.

EXT. PHEBE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

ANGLE FROM OUTSIDE THE WINDOW: HARLOW PRESENTS HIS PROPOSAL TO HANNAH. SHE SEEMS TO APPROVE MORE AND MORE AS SHE LISTENS AND VIEWS HIS DRAWINGS.

INT. PHEBE'S HOUSE - LATER

Harlow, standing, is putting on his overcoat with the help of Hannah.

DR. HARLOW

...More than anything, Phineas wanted to understand his condition, and wanted others to understand it too.

HANNAH

Yes. I think that the old Phineas would want this as much as the Phineas we had after the accident.

DR. HARLOW

Your compassion and generosity will never be forgotten in the medical world, Hannah. Thank you so very much.

They shake hands, and Hannah watches him walk off.

EXT. LAUREL HILL CEMETERY, SAN FRANCISCO - DAY

Harlow walks up to the grave site with David.

DR. HARLOW (V.O.)

If this request in any way disturbs you or your religious beliefs, please disregard it, with my most sincere apologies.

MOMENTS LATER.

The body is exhumed as in the opening scenes, with Judge Johnson observing.

INT. LECTURE HALL, HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: 1868

Harlow stands at a podium inside the crowded hall, which includes many of the Doctors from 1849, including Dr. Banner. Phineas's skull, the hat box he kept it in as he traveled, and Tamping Iron beside him. Papers showing drawings of brains and another skull are also present.

DR. HARLOW

This case of Phineas Gage, of the man who had an iron rod drive through his brain, has been debated, and previously rejected by the medical establishment.

DR. BANNER

Dr. Harlow, this matter has been decided quite some time ago. A man of your standing...

DR. HARLOW

Dr. Banner, please. New audience to support my claims has become available.

DR. BANNER

Very well. Proceed.

DR. HARLOW

Your grace in allowing me to prove shall improve our understanding of the human brain, how it functions, heals, and decides how we evolve and socialize. The case has been cited as one of complete recovery, without any impairment to the intellect. However, Phineas's personality changed drastically. To the point that, as a friend put it, "Gage was no longer Gage." He went from being the most efficient and capable foreman, to a man who could not be trusted.

Harlow stands behind Phineas's skull.

DR. HARLOW (CONT'D)

I shall begin by inviting you all to inspect the skull, which in itself tells so much of the case that words cannot.

MONTAGE BEGINS.

The Doctors all stand to inspect the skull. As Harlow lifts the top cranium off it, the Doctors murmur, gasp, cluck and otherwise react to the amazing skull.

- 1) HARLOW TAKES THE TAMPING IRON IN ONE HAND, AND THE SKULL IN ANOTHER, AND PASSES IT THROUGH THE SKULL.
- 2) DOCTORS CAN SEE WHERE THE TAMPING IRON BORE THROUGH THE BONE BEHIND THE CHEEK.
- 3) HARLOW POINTS OUT TWO LARGE PIECES OF SKULL BONE LYING ON THE TABLE, WHICH HE PLACES LIKE PUZZLE PIECES INSIDE THE SKULL.

DR. HARLOW (CONT'D)

Though I could not see what I was touching through the blood, here are the two large pieces of skull that I pressed into place from within the brain itself, as documented in my post operative notes.

- 4) HARLOW PASSES OUT PAPERS DIAGRAMING THE AREAS OF THE BRAIN. DIAGRAMS LOOK LIKE SIMPLE DRAWINGS OF A HUMAN HEAD WITH THE BRAIN MAPPED OUT IN ZONES ACCORDING TO PERSONALITY TRAITS.

DR. HARLOW (CONT'D)

Our current understanding of the brain, which we call phrenology, divides the brain up into organs, each one representing a different aspect of personality.

(points to brain map)

The organ of Veneration, and the organ of Benevolence, both were stricken and nearly removed by the iron rod. However, if our map of the organs of the human brain are correct, how then did Phineas walk and talk? Dr. Bigelow, as well as myself, believes in the whole brain theory, that every part is connected to the other parts. This recovery supports both. And therefore must be considered for the future of healing.

- 5) DOCTORS TAKE NOTES FEVERISHLY.
- 6) DOCTORS WHO PREVIOUSLY MOCKED HIM, INCLUDING BANNER, ASK QUESTIONS WITH INTENSITY.
- 7) HARLOW TAKES ANOTHER SKULL FROM A CORPSE AND DRIVES THE IRON THROUGH IT TO SIMULATE THE DAMAGE.

DR. HARLOW (CONT'D)

If phrenology indeed decides the functioning of the brain, then Phineas would be dead, or immobile.

8) SPIRITED DISCUSSION GROWS AMONG THE DOCTORS, CLEARLY WITH MANY, BUT NOT ALL, BEING WON OVER.

DR. HARLOW (CONT'D)

It is my hope, that Phineas, and the tragic accident that ultimately took his life, shall reveal new understanding of the brain, for decades to come.

9) THE DOCTORS APPLAUD HARLOW, WHO IS SO MOVED BY THIS APPROVAL THAT HIS EYES WELL UP.

10) BANNER SHAKES HARLOW'S HAND.

DR. BANNER

Dr. Harlow, I am not entirely convinced of your conclusions, but...let me just say, sometimes an old dog can learn new tricks.

11) DOCTORS WATCH AS THE SKULL AND TAMPING IRON ARE PLACED BEHIND A GLASS CASE, ON DISPLAY JUST OUTSIDE THE DEAN'S OFFICE AT THE MEDICAL SCHOOL.

12) HARLOW, ALONE WITH THE SKULL, SITS IN A CHAIR ACROSS FROM IT, TALKING IN A VERY PLEASED MANNER TO IT AS IF IT IS STILL HIS FRIEND PHINEAS.

END MONTAGE.

DR. HARLOW

(talks to skull)

...well, Phineas, wherever you may be, I hope you have found the inner peace you so much desired. As for me, I have been elected to the U.S. Senate, representing Massachusetts. I do get to do a bit of traveling, and, whenever I board a train or hear a train whistle off in the distance, I always think of a very brave soul. Take care, my friend.

Now late at night, Harlow blows out the lantern that illuminated the room, and walks out.

A SCROLL ROLLS ON THE SCREEN.

SCROLL

Over the next century, quantum leaps in the world of medicine, starting with the discovery of germs and X-rays, and continuing through the study of brain functions, referred to Dr. Harlow's case on Phineas. After 150 years, the skull and Tamping Iron were moved down the street to the Countway Library of Medicine. Psychologists, surgeons, and neurologists come from all over the world to view it to support scientific papers on frontal cortex injuries.

A MONUMENT WITH A BRASS PLAQUE ON IT SITS IN A PARK IN CAVENDISH, VERMONT.

SCROLL (CONT'D)

In 1998, 150 years after the accident, the town of Cavendish held a medical seminar and festival to honor Phineas Gage, and to dedicate a memorial to the man who helped change our understanding of the human brain forever.