

LES SARGÉNTS - The Spoofical

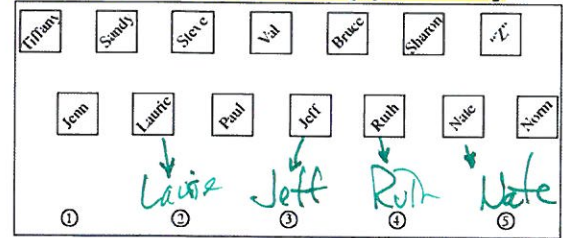
by Schönberg, Boubil, Kretzmer, and Wacome Stevick

0. Overture

NARRATOR: *Maestro!*

Welcome to another episode of Iconoclassics...

[During narration at "Mark Sargent," LAURIE(2), JEFF(3), RUTH(4), NATE(5) to mics.]



It's a story not unlike that of a leader we know, whose long journey to the halls of power began, like Jean Valjean's, in a place of punishment. This is *LES SARGÉNTS*: and the year is **1981**—when our hero finds himself confined in the dreaded Biola Prison. cve

1. Biola Prison ("Look Down")

PRISONERS: Look round and see Biola's prison gates;

Look down and serve Biola prison time;

RUTH: Your doom is here, say "*hola*" to your fate;

PRISONERS: Look out and fear Ebola-of-the-mind!

[LAURIE, RUTH and MARK sit.]

TENURE: Prisoner of English 90639,

Your term's undefined and your sentence runs on,

Do you know what that means?

SARGÉNT: Yes: it's a comma splice.

TENURE: *Clever...*

You spend nine hours in class each week,

And 90 reading books and student papers—

90639—

SARGÉNT: My name is *Mark Sargent*.

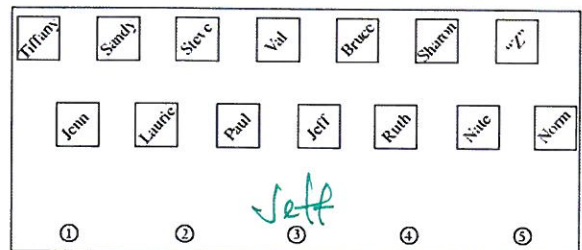
TENURE: And I'm *Tenúre!*

Do not forget my name!

You'll always have me—90639!

[NATE sits, meaningfully.]

2. Sargent Admits... ("On My Own")



NA: *Always have Tenúre?* Prof. Sargent has a heart-to-heart with himself about American Literature...

SARGÉNT: On my road, I've never liked Jack Kerouac,

Of myself, I've never sung Walt Whitman;

On this chain gang I'm just a scarlet number—

Condemned as Dr. English Prof,

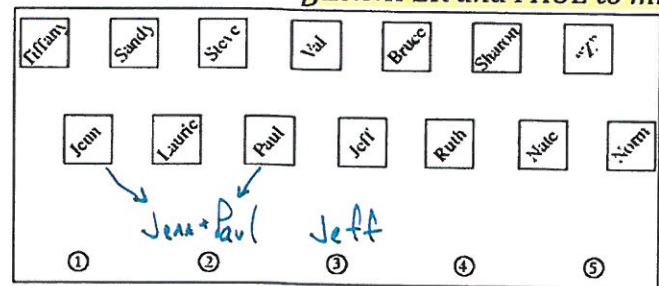
but Reverencing the Pilgrims.

How to escape? How may I flee?—

I will smuggle out my CV.

3. Sargént Applies ("Come in, sir, for you are weary")

[JENNIFER and PAUL to mic 2]



NAR: Prof Sargént does smuggle out his CV, and it wends its way to a desk at Spring Arbor College.

SP. ARBOR: Here's an applicant in fetters
 In a cell departmental
 Who never broke the law letters
 Or one rule grammatical.

SARGÉNT: But I consider William Bradford
 More transcendent than Thoreau,
 And John Winthrop more poetic
 Than *whose words I think I know...*

SP. ARBOR: Never fear!—you may retire
 From that cold anthology
 And rekindle now the fire
 Of your "Plymouth PhD."

You are welcome at Spring Arbor;
 Though we're not the Bay State,
 Think of us as Salem Harbor:
 Anchor and administrate.

Wipe your past – record clean
 As our governor/dean!

[JENNIFER and PAUL sit]

4. Sargént Debates ("Why Did I Allow That Man")

NAR: A job offer!—an offer of freedom. Prof. Sargént considers the costs...

Joining The dear hood ...

SARGÉNT: If in my two dozen semesters
 I read one paragraph of grace
 Here at Biola I'd endure
 If for literacy – and Arlyne's sake;

But now since that my doom is ceaseless
 Compositional manure,
Wherefore should I not this solace
Snatch before my office hour?

[ALL sing]

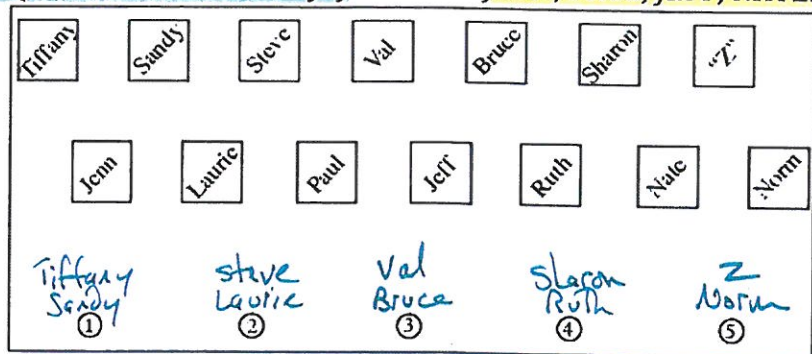
ENSEMBLE: O how anguished he has been
 Editing his students' work;
 They employ their English words
 Like a church employs a jerk—

SARGÉNT: I'll escape now from their words
 And the world of *Prof. Sargént*;
Prof. Sargént is nothing now,
 A new job title must begin!—

[JEFF sits.

Then ALL to mics except
 JENN, PAUL, JEFF, NATE.

5. *Are We Making the Grade?* ("At the End of the Day")



NAR: Sargént escapes Biola Prison, and takes the job at under the free sky at Spring Arbor. Meanwhile, half a continent away, a great hue and cry discord rises from a campus in Wenham, Massachusetts.

GORDON: Are we making the grade, are we getting promoted?
 'Cause that's how you reckon your worth and your flaws:
 And we're hungry for acclaim
 On our student e-evaluations,
 So we coddle and we curve—tending to cause
 Grade and ego inflations!

verse 2

We're not making the grade, so the faculty voted
 To appoint a new person to stiffen our spines:
 There are spirits to be raised,
 Our prides are easily wounded,
 There are cases to be heard,

VAL: *especially mine—*

Would that somebody soon did!

chorus

Are we making the grade, are we making exceptions?
 Are we making the grade, are we making it worse?
 All those outcomes to achieve *(in this hour we*
 And there's always accreditation; *need a leader*
 Can we advertise that we're *who can help us*
 A best bargain school in the nation? *be upbeater)*
 Our mark has yet to me made—
 When we're making the grade.

- 1 STEVE: Who can make Roger Green get along with Marv Wilson?
 2 BRUCE: Who can make David Rox get along with himself?
 3 SHARON: There are squabbles in our ranks,
 4 VAL: 'Cause our rank is increasingly urgent,
 5 SANDY: In the race to be number 1— we come in 12th:
 1,2,3,4,5: Guess we need a drill sergeant.

ENSEMBLE: Are we making the grade, are we making excuses?
 Are we faking the grade, are we faking our deaths?
 There's enrollment to be upped *(we need someone*
 And a goal for every September; *who can cure us*
 There is NEASC to be stopped— *or who can at*
 Why did we ask to be members? *least endure us)*
 Who will lead our learning crusade—
 Till we're making the grade?

*[ENSEMBLE sits immediately.
 Then JEFF to mic 3, center.]*

6. *I Dreamed of Deans* ("I Dreamed a Dream")

NAR: The cranky cry for help reaches all the way to Sargént in Spring Arbor, and he is tempted to respond. But then he has a dream that gives him serious pause...

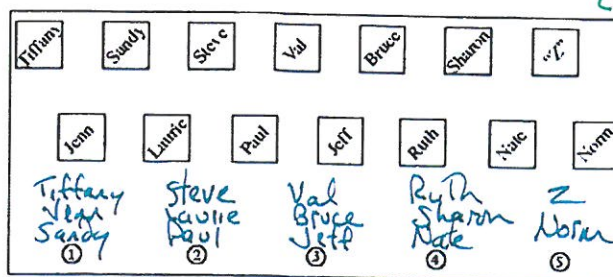
SARGÉNT: I dreamed of deans—and deans gone by
 Like Herma Williams and Dot Chappell
 Who in my dream was Dean of chai
 And Barry Loy was Dean of Snapple.
 And as I dreamed I grew afraid:
 Dan Russ was Dean of Body Armor,
 Dean Kina Mallard pulled a blade
 And made me Dean of Greg Carmer.

SARGÉNT: Then Cliff Hersey comes to fight
 ENSEMBLE: *Terry Charek by his side*
 SARGÉNT: With the grammar of John Skillen
 ENSEMBLE: *Please don't ask him to repeat*
 SARGÉNT: And he turns your mind to mush
 ENSEMBLE: *Yes, he turns it right to mush*
 SARGÉNT: And pretends to dock your
 ALL: paaay.

7. *Lovely Movies* ("Lovely Ladies")

NAR: The frightening dream causes Sargént to shun this title of "dean," and he becomes, instead, "Provost" at Gordon. Then he begins looking for things to do...

*[JEFF stays at mic 3; during narration
 FRONT ROW to mics, then BACK ROW]*



STUDENTS: Lovely movies – movies that delight;
It's awesome to invade the lives of others every night.

SARGÉNT: I could launch a series—

STUDENTS: That'd be great!—

SARGÉNT: —Show some boring foreign film and then pontificate.

STUDENTS: What a perfect chapel-credit date!

LADIES: Goodbye books—O movies, where art thou?

MEN: Swap our *Heart of Darkness* for “Apocalypse Now.”

LADIES: Reading Tolkien takes about a year;

MEN: Watching “Ran” with you means we don't
have to read *King Lear*;

ALL: Same thing with *The Constant Gardener*!

NORM's group: What's up with that new administrator?

LAURIE's group: Taught English Lit, thinks himself an auteur.

TIFFANY's group: The printed page he's replacing with fil-m;

RUTH's group: Daniel Defoe he's replacing with Willem!

ENSEMBLE: What's he doing? Wha-a-at's he doing?

SARGÉNT: I watch movies, watch 'em in my mind:
Keeps my outlook spotless and eternally sunshined;
Helps me cope with wingnuts of desire;
Turns my charred regard into a chariot of hire;
Burns away the fog of Gordon war!

ENSEMBLE: He makes movies, makes 'em in his head;

SARGÉNT: *Make 'em in my head*

ENSEMBLE: Making edukators out of people walking dead,

SARGÉNT: *People walking dead*

ENSEMBLE: Films that hint that life is beautiful

SARGÉNT: *Life is beautiful*

ENSEMBLE: 'Cause the big kahuna likes to live in Montreal—

SARGÉNT: *Live in Montreal*

ALL: Dreamed up in his loopy crucible!

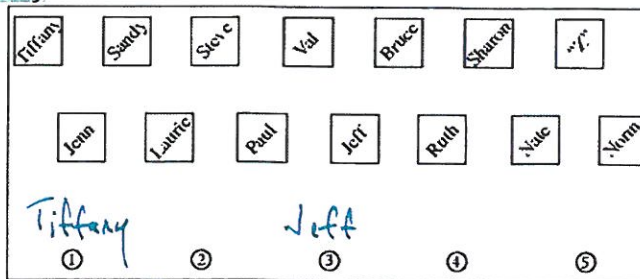
ZINGARELLI: Come on colleagues, what's all the fuss?

He's no better critic than the rest of us;

It takes a strange love and a cinematic wit:

To start a film series: why didn't I think of it?...

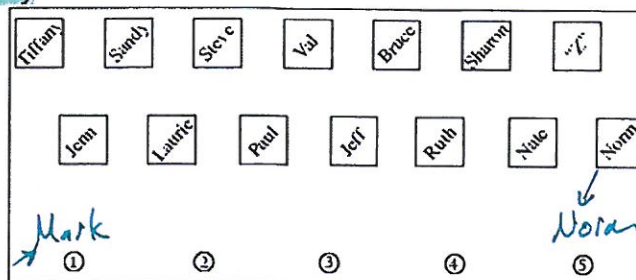
[ENSEMBLE murmurs and sits—
except for TIFFANY, who stays mic 1;
Jeff stays at mic 3.

8. *Campus Near a Mount* ("Castle on a Cloud")

NAR: The film series goes on and on; and Sargént goes on and on at Gordon.
Then one day an angel appears to him—with a musical hint about his future...

TIFFANY: There is a campus near a mount.
SARGÉNT: *Really? Where's this?*
TIFFANY: WEST of the MOUNT you find a beach.
SARGÉNT: *A beach "west of the mount"?*
TIFFANY: Sun in the fall-will-war-rm-ya—
SARGÉNT: *"Fall-will-warm-ya"... Which state are we talking?*
TIFFANY: Climate is calling-fo-rr-ya.
SARGÉNT: *"Calling-for-ya"... "Calling-for-ya"... Oregon?*

TIFFANY: Far out WEST where surfers pray.
SARGÉNT: *Surfers—OK, is it Hawaii?*
TIFFANY: WEST of the MOUNT where actors hike.
SARGÉNT: *West-mount... West-mount...*
TIFFANY: No one will scowl-or-scor-rn-ya—
SARGÉNT: *"Scowl-or-scorn-ya"... Jerry, can you help me out?*
TIFFANY: Some even call-it-Narnia.
SARGÉNT: *Call it Narnya? Just tell me, will you tell me?*
TIFFANY: Nobody shall-infor-rm-ya. Loser. [TIFFANY exits]
SARGÉNT: *Oh, come on!* [JEFF sits]

9. *Master of the Staff* ("Master of the House")

[MARK to mic 1; NORM to mic 5]

NAR: Sargént misses the angelic hint. Fact is other colleges are beginning to ask, "Just who is this guy?"

MARK: Who is Mark Sarge?
What is his deal?
Why's he in charge?
Ask Cathy Thiele...

NORM: Is he a geek?
Is he a sport?
We need a sec-
ret provost report...

NORM: Try to gauge his worth
By his taste in shoes,
MARK: And wonder why on earth
He's a teacher who's—

Master of the Staff, herder of the cats:
Wears a single title and a hundred hats;
Says a little word, makes a little joke,
Tells us with a punch line that we're almost broke;
Happy to head-up a meeting,
Faculty or otherwise—
And when he mentions "Babette's Feast"
Try not to roll your blooming eyes.

NORM: Master of the Staff, facer of the facts,
Suffers carpal tunnel signing our contracts;
Keeper of the goal, academic cop:
Solved a campus murder at a fall workshop;
As for sticky situations
There are lots of "things" he knows:
To him all and sundry
Bring their dirty laundry
And we surely must offend his nose.

ALL: Master of the Staff, quick to dot your *i*'s,
Never missed a moment to soliloquize;
Puller of the strings, sealer of the fates
Undermining overbearing candidates;
Everybody's trusted wingman;
Everybody's confidant:

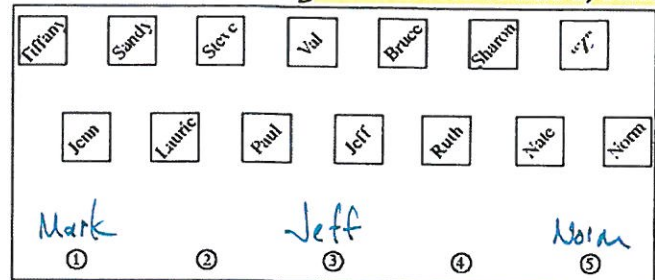
MARK: Discriminating as Javert
But with the flair of Jean Valjean.

verse 2 This Mark Sargént:
Does he wear clean
Socks and so on?
Let's ask Arlyne...

NORM: None of our biz?
 What can you do?—
 Make him write his
 16-year review...

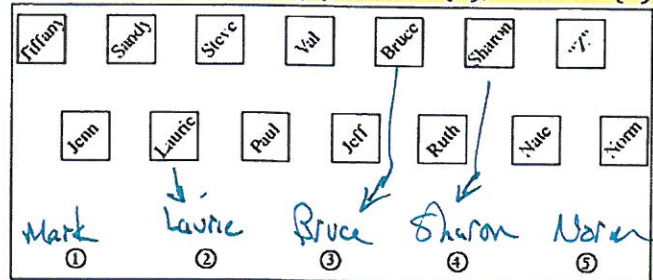
NORM: What does he get paid?

[JEFF hurries to mic 3, center]



SARGÉNT: —Maybe I'll step in:
 A pittance, I'm afraid,
 Which is why I've been—
 Charging when you're hired, twice when you've retired,
 Triple to retain you when you should be fired;
 All you Gordon profs have the wherewithal
 To ensure I'll grant your next sabbatical.
 Tenure here is no exception,
 A station that we both can "earn":
 Submit your application with
 A little favor I'll return...

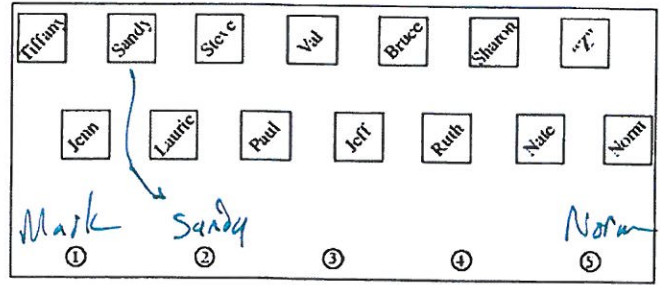
[JEFF sits; LAURIE(2), BRUCE(3), SHARON(4) to mics]



ALL: *Just kidding...* Master of the Staff, never took a bribe;
 BRUCE: Took instead the mantle of our host and scribe;
 LAURIE: Framed farewells, famous for awards,
 SHARON: Shaper of the ethos that we're tending towards;

NORM: He's the only Puritan scholar
 By whom I would fain be bossed:
 What I wish, when he goes off,
 Is to have (said with a cough)
 His office on the second floor of Frost!...

[BRUCE, LAURIE, SHARON agree
 and sit. SANDY to mic 2]



ARLYNE: I never dreamed I'd have servants in my house;
That's good – the only other person there's my spouse...

Master of the Staff, while the school bell rings
Has the proper habit of directing things;

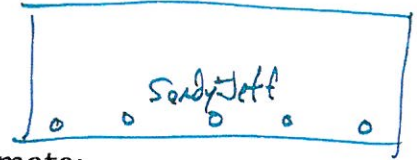
Then the day is done—and the tables turn
And we count the many ways he still can *learn*;

When he wields the toilet plunger,
It even makes the toilet laugh:

A master here at Gordon –
But at home he gets the short end
of the staff!

[SANDY pulls JEFF to his mic; BOTH at center]

ENSEMBLE: Master of the Staff, quick to count the *eyes*,
Never met a CORE he didn't half despise;
Puller of your chain, seer that you're late,
Working, thinking, family man, and lifelong mate;
Everybody bless the Provost,
And we bless his better half;



SARGÉNT: Everybody raise a toast—

ENSEMBLE:

[ALL cheer and stand]

ARLYNE: Raise it to the guy we roast—

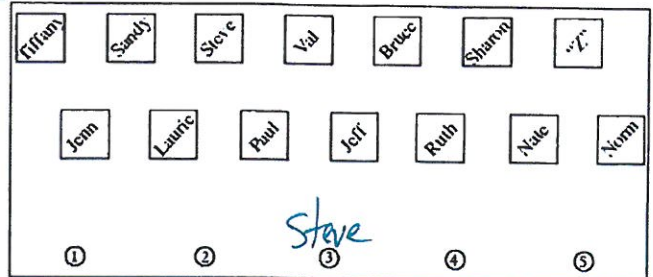
ENSEMBLE:

[cheer]

ALL: Everybody raise a toast to the Master of the Staff!

[ALL celebrate and sit; STEVE to mic x]

10. *Bring Them Home* ("Bring Him Home")



NAR: Well, the staff loves him at Gordon, and he _
But the angel had been right—another college needs

New narration.

WESTMONT: God on high, we implore
 Bring that genius that we're waiting for
 He is young-ish and brave—
 A select - intellect
 He has roamed
 They have roamed
 Bring them home
 They might have sojourned yet again
 And gone to countries yet unknown
 But You know why they're still drawn
 To native sky and childhood sun
 And now at home they may belong
 Bring him peace, bring her joy
 As they leave - keep him fleet as a boy
 You can break - you can mend
 Let them heed - let them in
 Should they fly—
 Let them fly!—
 Let them in—
 Bring them home
 Bring them home
 Bring - them - home.

[STEVE sits]

[drum; then a capella; be ready to stand]

11. ENSEMBLE: Do you hear the people sing,
 Singing a song of worthy friends?
 If you cannot, may we suggest
 You get your hearing checked again?
 We've been hinting at your praise
 Under the guise of making fun;
 If you're offended—well,
 Your torture is nearly done.

[ALL stand]

verse 2

Will you join our serenade?
 Who will sing Sárgent songs with me—
 Hailing the gifts they help discover
 And the good they help us be?
 We commend them to the One
 Who ever prospers-and-defends—
 Blessing the beauty and the work
 Of our worthy friends.

[repeat verse 2, with flourish ending]