



Male 40s (traditionally a Jewish actor)

**SIGHT UNSEEN by Donald Margulies**

JOHNATHAN:

My father, God! My father *loved* seeing my name in print. *My name* after all was *his name*. Got such a kick out of it. Eight pages in the the SundayTimes. He couldn't believe *The New York Times* could possibly have much to say about *his kid*. "All these words," he said "are about *you?*" He was serious, he wasn't just teasing. Oh, he was teasing too, but it threatened him. No, it did. It pointed up the fact that he could be my father and still not know a thing about me. Not have a clue. What did the fancy-schmancy art world see that he didn't? What were those big dirty paintings about, anyway? So then, when all the hype started...that's very seductive in the beginning, I got to admit. Vindicating, even. "Ah hah, *see?* I *am* a genius! *Now* maybe my father will respect me." But it had the opposite effect on him. It bewildered him. It alienated him. How could *he* have produced a "visionary"? It shamed him somehow. I can't explain. (*beat*). I went to pack up his house the other day? My parents' house? All his clothes, my old room, my mother's sewing machine, all those rooms of furniture. Strange being in a place where no one lives anymore. (*A beat*)

Anyway, what I found was, he'd taken all the family pictures, everything that was in albums, shoved in drawers—hundreds of them—and covered an entire wall with them, floor to ceiling, side to side. I first saw it years ago.. when he'd started. It was his Sistine Chapel; it took him years. He took my hand (I'll never forget this) he took my hand—he was beaming: "You're an artist," he said to me, "you'll appreciate this." He was so proud of himself I thought I was gonna cry. Proud and also in a strange way...competitive.