

Toward a Theory of the Evolution of the Turkey

By Brandon Arnold

INT. SCHOOL CLASSROOM. DAY.

On the chalkboard is written, in clean, elegant handwriting: "Happy Thanksgiving!" and "Art Project: Color a Picture of a Turkey." Beneath these instructions is a chalk diagram of a turkey (formed around an outline of the teacher's left hand) with each part labeled by color.

The camera tracks backward to reveal CHILDREN (ages 6 and 7) busy at work. Their turkeys look exactly like the one on the chalkboard. Some of the turkeys are light brown with dark orange legs. Some of them are dark brown with light orange legs.

The children are efficient and finish quickly. But while they throw crayons and paper at each other, EVA is still busy coloring. MRS. STEWART (40's) approaches and looks at her drawing. Eva has used every color in the box. The turkey has an orange body and black dragon's wings and a yellow lion's tail and pink flamingo's legs and his beak is long and twisted and looks like, well, a baritone clarinet.

INT. SCHOOL CLASSROOM. TEN MINUTES LATER.

Mrs. Stewart has stapled the pictures above the chalkboard. The turkeys look very clean and elegant, and on each picture, in red ink, are comments like "very precise!" or "correct!" or "excellent form!" And there are grades: A, A, A-, A, A-, A. . . The turkeys are talking to each other, posing, showing off their best parts.

But on the far right side, in the corner, is the turkey that looks like a pumpkin with a clarinet beak, and in red ink are the words "NEXT TIME PAY ATTENTION!" and there is a letter F.

And while the children are busy singing "Granpa Killed the Turkey and We Ate It All Up," Eva can't bring herself to sing along or even do the chopping actions.

Eva's Turkey is also ashamed. He tries to talk to the other turkeys, but only strange clarinet squeaks come out

A B C D E
 of his beak. He tries to hide, but it's no use, so he rips himself off the page and flies out the open window.

② EXT. A NEARBY POND. CONTINUOUS.

A B C D E E
 DR. WEBB (60+) is looking through the lens of his camera. He focuses on a bird way up in the tree. Click! He takes the camera from his eye and refers to his bird field guide—A Scott's Oriole. Very Rare! Again, looking through the lens, he spots a Hooded Merganser out on the pond. Click! And there's a Short-billed Dowitcher on the shore. Click!

G H I
 But what is this coming through the trees? It looks like a turkey, but it has a dragon's wings and a lion's tail a flamingo's legs and has the longest, curviest beak he's ever seen. Dr. Webb consults his field guide. Nothing. Hands shaking in anticipation, he raises the camera. There it is, the newly discovered species, sitting on a log playing a sad song through it's beak... Click!

④ INT. MUSEUM LOBBY. DAY.

A
 Now Dr. Webb's picture of the turkey is featured on a giant poster. Beneath the picture is the caption "Webb's Turkey; Gallina Webbus" and the words "Performance Today!" PULL BACK to reveal the poster positioned in the museum lobby. There is a crowd gathered in anticipation. The Museum hasn't been this busy in years.

⑤ INT. MUSEUM: THE TURKEY EXHIBIT. CONTINUOUS.

A B C E F G
 There, inside a small, dirty cage, is Eva's Turkey. He sits hunched on a small log, too dejected to play any music. Dr. Webb is there, shaking hands with men in suits. Camera flashes are going off. And there at the front of the crowd is Mrs. Stewart with her class. She is talking and the students have notebooks and are drawing pictures of the orange and blue and red turkey with a clarinet for a beak.

H I
 Mrs. Stewart is counting them, supervising their work. She looks up at the turkey, and almost imperceptably, she realizes she's seen this turkey before. Hasn't she? She quickly looks around at the students, searching... And there is Eva, having wandered off as usual, standing at the back of the crowd.

SHOT LIST

2A. Hold on Henry's Turkey. But on the far right side, in the corner, is the turkey that looks like a pumpkin with a clarinet beak, and in red ink are the words "NEXT TIME PAY ATTENTION!" and there is a letter F.

2B. MS, tracking left to right. And while the children are busy singing "Granpa Killed the Turkey and We Ate It All Up," (2B. Hold on Henry.) Henry can't bring himself to sing along or even do the chopping actions. He looks up at his failure of a picture.

2C. CU Henry's Turkey is also ashamed. He is moving around on the page, trying to hide, but his wings can't reach his face. So he rips himself off the page and...

2D. MS. flies out the open window.

2E. Henry's reaction.

3. EXT. UTAH LAKE. MORNING (OR EVENING)

3A. Webb's POV. DR. WEBB (60+) is looking through the lens of his camera. He focuses on a bird way up in the tree. Click!

3B. MCU of Webb. He takes the camera from his eye and refers to his bird field guide...

3C. POV OF FIELD GUIDE.—A Scott's Oriole. Very Rare!

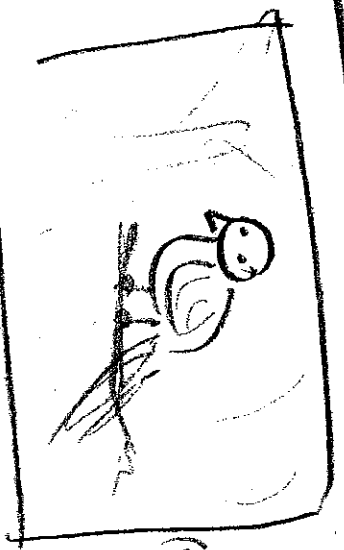
3B. MCU OF WEBB. Again, looking through the lens...

3D. POV THROUGH CAMERA. He spots a Hooded Merganser out on the pond. Click!

3E. POV AGAIN. And there's a Short-billed Dowitcher on the shore. Click!

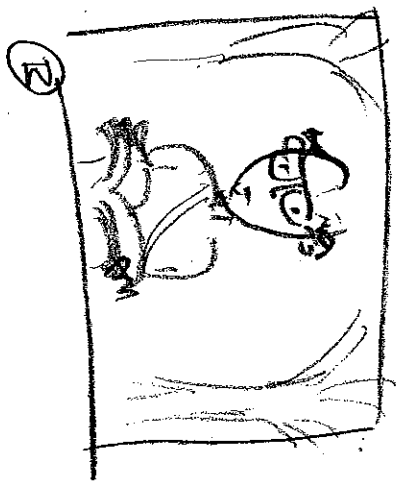
3F. MS. WEBB REACTION. But what is this coming through the trees?

3G. MS WEBB POV WITHOUT CAMERA. It looks like a turkey, but it has a dragon's wings and a lion's tail a flamingo's legs and has the longest, curviest beak he's ever seen.

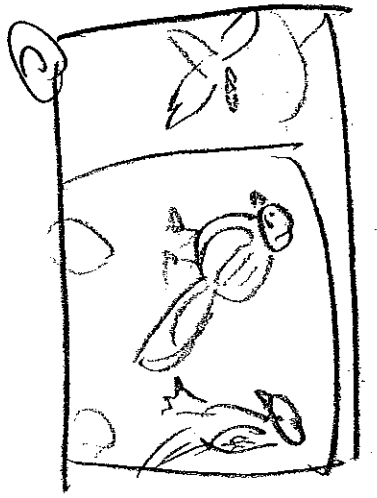


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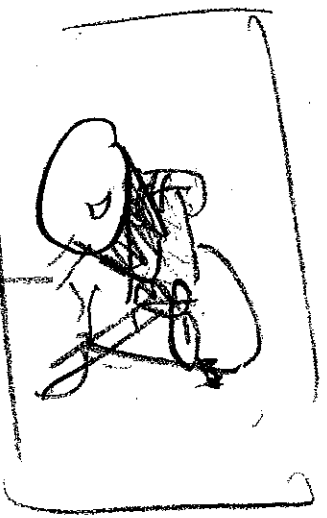
(A)



(B)



(C)

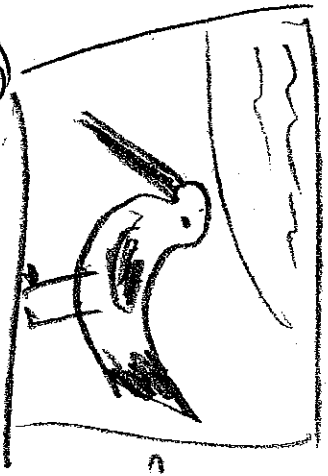


(B)



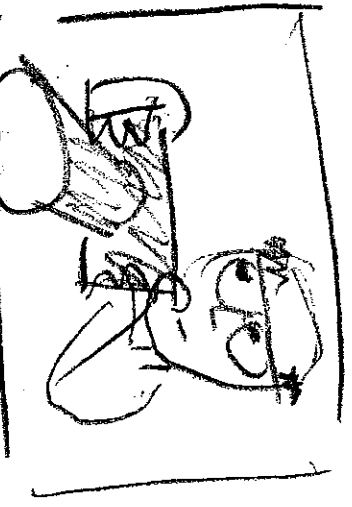
(D)

click



(E)

click



(F)



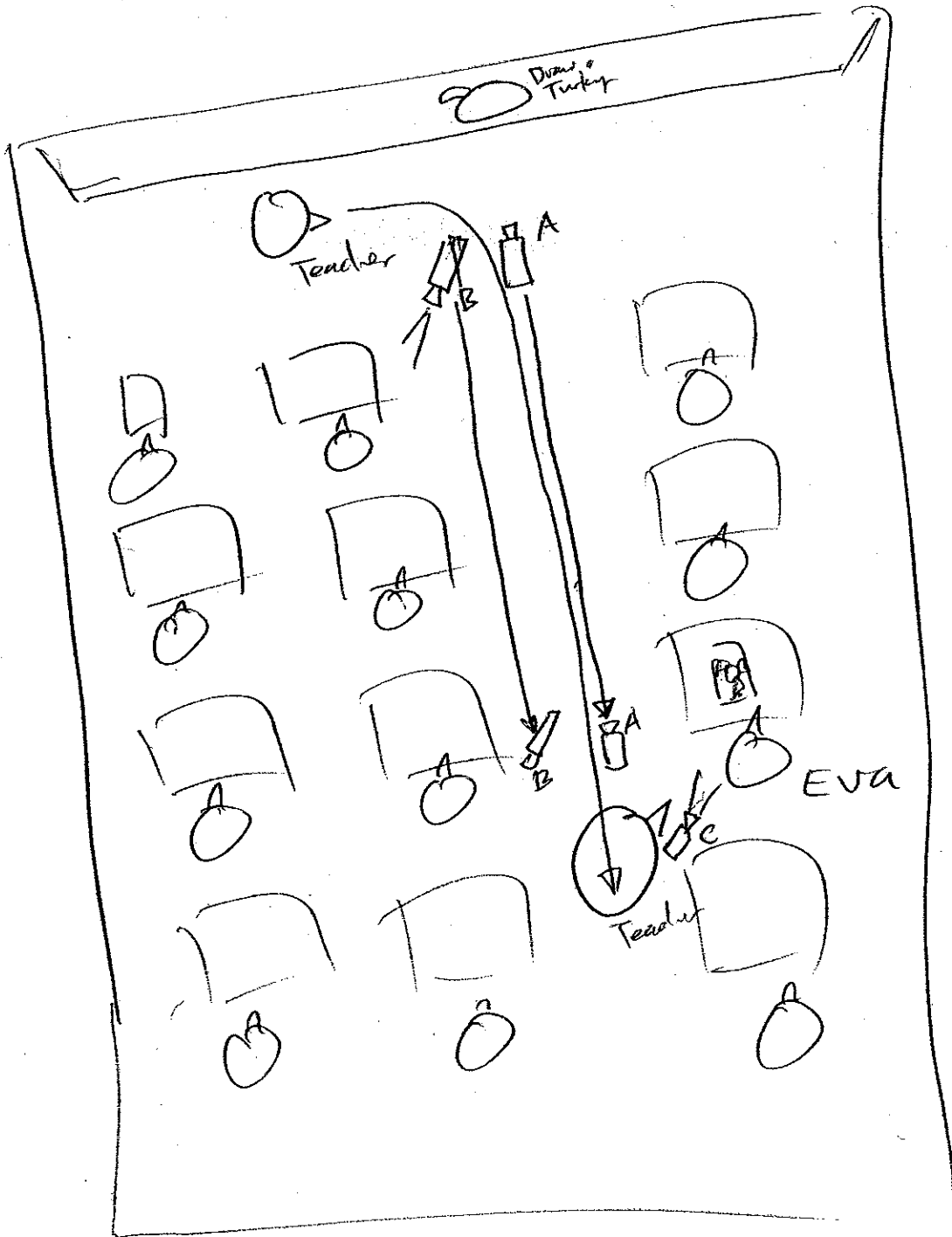
(G)



(B)

SCENE 1

Classroom



SCENE 2 LAYOUT

Utah Lake

