

MARC TRUJILLO

1053 Burbank Boulevard, 2011
Oil on polyester, 24.5 X 30.75 In



COURTESY: WINFIELD GALLERY

ROBERT KERWIN

Dinny

I was in Hollywood on business and had a few hours before I had to be at the airport, so I walked to Sunset and Vine to see if I could find any trace of the Merry-Go-Round, my uncle's café, or maybe even my uncle. "Sunset and Vine, just near the Brown Derby" is how relatives described it when they returned home from trips to the coast—"all the big famous stars go in there." I'd called my uncle and left a message saying I'd be in town, but of course didn't hear anything from him.

Well, the Brown Derby was still at Sunset and Vine but my uncle's place wasn't. All my life I'd been hearing "Merry-Go-Round, just near the Brown Derby," and from as far back as I can remember, I'd looked forward to seeing the Merry-Go-Round in person some day. But now that I finally got here, it's not here.

I stood wondering if Sunset and Vine ever did have the Merry-Go-Round on it, "just near the Brown Derby," or if all the stories brought back by my relatives had, like everything else, been a bunch of family bull.

After I'd finished goosenecking and squinting, determining who were the stars adjacent to the Roosevelt Hotel (Irving Thalberg, Lily Pons, and Walter "Woody Woodpecker" Lantz), I resumed my casual stance in the alcove; then, as I searched along the boulevard traffic for the shuttle back to the airport, I saw an approaching figure that, despite the years, I recognized.

That's right: it was my famous uncle, the star of our family, from the Merry-Go-Round, "Sunset and Vine, just near the Brown Derby."

My uncle had been eyeing the pavement as if looking for dropped coins, and immediately—though I hadn't seen him since I was a boy—I recognized in his walk my posture, my attitude, my walk. When he reached the alcove he looked in as I looked out.

My uncle turned away quickly. But too late. I caught him, caught our family's crafty eyes, the hairline, brow, nose, and jaw of my father, same as that of my grandfather from the photo on our mantelpiece back home. My uncle, when our eyes met, held the shocked expression of not having been prepared for me materializing here on Hollywood Boulevard, of having been caught unawares. His corrupt, scared, yellowed eyes heightened as they met mine, displaying that fleeting out-of-control expression that I know so well—that look of panic that was part real, part act. In