

MAN OR RO-MAN

By

Matthew Muhl

INT. LOS ANGELES TIMES HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Date "December 15, 1953" appears, and 1953 song "I See The Moon" by the Mariners plays.

Man sits at desk with "Editor, The Mirror" nameplate. He grabs envelope sitting atop his inbox. He opens envelope, places it on desk, and reads enclosed letter.

Close-up of envelope on desk reveals return address as "1202 S. Bronson Avenue". Man silently reads letter, followed by voice-over of the letter by Phil Tucker.

PHIL TUCKER (V/O)

As you read this, I am quite dead in a room at the Hollywood Knickerbocker Hotel. Since I am writing this before I check in, I don't know which room it is but I am registered under my name. You may wonder why I write to you at a time like this - I will explain.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Camera slowly enters hotel room. There is a night stand with a packet of sleeping powders beside pulp copy of "Fantastic Tales". Next to it is a bubble on a toy wand, which bursts.

Close-up of man's pants pocket. Pass from psychopathic ward of West L.A. VA Hospital falls out of pocket. Pass states that patient Philip Jay Tucker was returned ("in fair condition") after treatment at Hollywood Emergency Hospital.

Two men, police officer and hotel manager, enter room and approach the man's body on the bed. Close-up of the closed eyes of the man on the bed.

PHIL TUCKER (V/O) (CONT.)

I want everyone to know why I'm doing as I am but I want that information given in a dignified way. I am only 26 but I feel that even self-inflicted death must be treated with dignity. I was not a good businessman. Had I been, I would be alive now. I produced and directed at the very height of the 3-D craze, a 3-D picture...

(CONTINUED)

CUT TO:

EXT. BRONSON CAVE TRAIL ENTRANCE - DAY

"Nine Months Earlier", underscored by date "March 21, 1953".
Fade in on Hollywood sign, viewed from a far distance.

RUNNER

Mr. Tucker? Mr. Tucker?

Zoom out to reveal man PHIL TUCKER, a twenty-something of tall, average build. Tucker continues to look at the sign in the far distance, and hears the voice of the set RUNNER, another twenty-something man of average build.

RUNNER

Phil?

Tucker snaps out of his trance, and turns toward the runner.

PHIL TUCKER

Yeah?

RUNNER

You okay?

PHIL TUCKER

Yes, I am. Just realized that today
is the first day of spring.

RUNNER

Feels like a fresh start, huh?

Tucker smiles, and looks back at the sign in the distance.

PHIL TUCKER

Fresh start.

Tucker takes a deep breath and looks around.

PHIL TUCKER

Is everyone here?

RUNNER

Yup, all cast and crew present and
accounted for, shuttled them all
myself straight from the rendezvous
at Formosa Grill.

PHIL TUCKER

Great, what time is it?

Runner looks at his watch.

(CONTINUED)

RUNNER

Almost 8 o'clock.

PHIL TUCKER

Good, giving us roughly 10 good hours of light before sunset. Go tell the crew that we'll be setting up for the opening scene adjacent from the East end of the cave.

RUNNER

You got it, boss!

Runner runs over to inform the crew. As he runs away, AL ZIMBALIST, a mustached man in his 40's of average height and build and wearing a visor, walks up to Tucker.

AL ZIMBALIST

Hey, Phil! How goes it?

PHIL TUCKER

Hey, Al. It goes good. Third and final shooting day with just under 15 pages shooting pages scheduled.

Zimbalist pulls out hard candy from his pocket and eats it out of his hand.

AL ZIMBALIST

Wonderful! Sorry I wasn't able to visit you on-set these past couple days of your shooting schedule. Busy week at the office. Candy?

PHIL TUCKER

No, thanks.

Zimbalist continues eating while looking around at the Bronson canyon area.

AL ZIMBALIST

Gee, Phil, this location sure is perfect for this sort of picture, very spacious and otherworldly, almost like we're on the moon!

PHIL TUCKER

As far *removed* as the moon, too. Like a closed set.

Zimbalist looks back toward Tucker.

(CONTINUED)

AL ZIMBALIST

Say, how did the *rest* of the shoot go over at Chavez Ravine?

PHIL TUCKER

Smoothly. We shot all the scenes we needed for the barricaded camp site, all without a permit, and...

MAN

Al!

Middle-aged man of stocky build, ED MOSK, walks over to Tucker and Zimbalist with a cigar in his mouth.

AL ZIMBALIST

Ed!

Mosk shakes Zimbalist's hand.

AL ZIMBALIST

Phil, you know Ed Mosk.

PHIL TUCKER

Of course. How are you, sir?

ED MOSK

Morning, Phil.

ED MOSK

What is this one called, again?
"Robot Killer"?

PHIL TUCKER

"Monster".

ED MOSK

"*Monster* Killer"?

PHIL TUCKER

No, no, no. "Robot-

Zimbalist interrupts.

AL ZIMBALIST

Uh, you remember me mentioning this picture to you, Ed! It's the one about a nuclear *family* who survives a nuclear *fallout*! That's what it's about, right, Phil?

PHIL TUCKER

Right, but it's *also* about...

Zimbalist interrupts again.

AL ZIMBALIST

And not only *that*, it's a hell of a great way to capitalize on those atom bomb tests that made all the headlines this past week!

ED MOSK

Oh, sure, the Yucca Flats tests over Nevada! Saw them myself!

AL ZIMBALIST

You saw them?

ED MOSK

Sure, on television!

PHIL TUCKER

They're *televising* them?

Mosk nods.

ED MOSK

First time, they say.

AL ZIMBALIST

How about that? So, Ed, Phil here was just telling me about the progress on our picture here.

Zimbalist addresses Tucker.

AL ZIMBALIST

You said you were able to film out at Chavez *without* a permit? How were you able to swing that, Phil?

PHIL TUCKER

Simple. The government's housing authority annexed an area out by Elysian Park as part of some redevelopment plan. As a result, the area now looks as desolate as a nuclear fallout zone, which works perfectly for the film.

AL ZIMBALIST

So Harry Truman did the production design for us! That's great, Phil!

(CONTINUED)

PHIL TUCKER

Not great for the residents,
though. Every home in that area is
being razed for this development
project. No clue what they'll
build, but there's enough land to
fit a whole *stadium* out there.

ED MOSK

Urban renewal, one of the
cornerstones for cuttin' corners.
Next to *casting*, that is.

PHIL TUCKER

Casting?

ED MOSK

Of course! For one, see George over
there? The lead in your picture?

Mosk points over to actor GEORGE NADER, a muscular brunette
man in his thirties, who is a long distance away in relation
to Tucker, Zimbalist and Mosk.

PHIL TUCKER

Yeah?

AL ZIMBALIST

Under contract. He's in a whole
slate of projects we're working on.

ED MOSK

Not to mention, we got a great deal
out of your *female* lead as well.

Mosk points over to actress CLAUDIA BARRETT, a thin brunette
woman in her twenties, who is also a long distance away in
relation to the three men.

PHIL TUCKER

Well, I figured that about *her*.
After all, she was hired just a
couple days prior to production.

ED MOSK

Here's something you probably
didn't figure. You know the elder
dame that plays her mother?

Mosk points over to actress SELENA ROYLE, an average
brunette in her 40's, who is also long distance away in
relation to the three men.

(CONTINUED)

PHIL TUCKER
What about her?

AL ZIMBALIST
Blacklisted.

PHIL TUCKER
What?

ED MOSK
One of a hundred-fifty listed in
Red Channels.

AL ZIMBALIST
*Two, if you count another actor we
got to do ADR over your monster.*

Tucker looks at Royle in the distance.

PHIL TUCKER
Did she testify before the
committee?

AL ZIMBALIST
No, instead she appealed her case
straight to the American Legion.

PHIL TUCKER
How?

ED MOSK
How *else* in this business?
She took out a page in *Variety!*

PHIL TUCKER
Did it work?

AL ZIMBALIST
Seeing as how she's on *our* payroll?

PHIL TUCKER
Good point.

ED MOSK
Publishing that letter sealed the
fate of her career. Drummed her
right out of the mainstream...

AL ZIMBALIST
...and into *our* stream.

PHIL TUCKER
How'd *that* come about?

Zimbalist turns to Mosk.

AL ZIMBALIST
That would be *Ed's* department.

ED MOSK
Met her through her attorney, she
came to me for legal advice.

PHIL TUCKER
You advised her?

ED MOSK
No, I *hired* her.

Mosk and Zimbalist laugh.

PHIL TUCKER
That's how we're securing our
contract players?

ED MOSK
Hey, communist or no, if she had
enough talent to play Ingrid
Bergman's mother in that Joan of
Arc picture awhile back, I'd say
she's fit to play the last mother
on Earth for *our* picture.

PHIL TUCKER
True, but you don't really believe
she's a communist, do you?

Mosk puffs on cigar.

ED MOSK
I believe in my bottom line.

Tucker shrugs.

AL ZIMBALIST
That reminds me, Phil. I know you
don't have the books with you, but
what *is* your picture's projected
budget so far at this stage?

PHIL TUCKER
Well, assuming we either wrap today
or add one more for pick-ups, I'd
venture to guess that we can bring
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

PHIL TUCKER (cont'd)
this in somewhere in the
neighborhood of 15, 20 thousand.
That's before prints, of course.

AL ZIMBALIST
Never mind the prints, let
distribution worry about that. Just
remember, Phil - once you *do* get a
final figure, let *me* know so that I
can inflate it for the trades.

PHIL TUCKER
Why? Shouldn't we be proud to bring
in the picture under budget?

ED MOSK
Think of it this way. You start
telling everyone that you spent too
little on a film and they'll think
to themselves, 'Jesus, your film
must be a piece of shit'. You tell
them too *high* a figure, they'll
think to themselves, 'Jesus, I
can't believe you spent so much
money on that piece of shit.'

PHIL TUCKER
Never thought of it that way.

ED MOSK
Anyway, I'm needed downtown, so
I'll see you fellas later. Keep
cuttin' those corners, Phil!

PHIL TUCKER
Thank you, sir.

Mosk walks away from Tucker and Zimbalist.

PHIL TUCKER
He's been around a lot lately.

AL ZIMBALIST
And for good reason. He's one of
the best entertainment lawyers in
this town.

PHIL TUCKER
Listen, Al, I was wondering if
you've heard back about my other
project?

AL ZIMBALIST

Which one, Phil? You got so many.

PHIL TUCKER

My biopic project? The one about
Lucky Luciano?

Zimbalist sighs.

AL ZIMBALIST

Sorry, kid, you may as well leave
that one on the shelf. Got off the
phone with Lucky's agent in Naples
last week. He still won't budge on
the ending that he came up with for
the picture.

PHIL TUCKER

Are you kidding?! You mean the
ending that portrays him as a
victim? The ending that makes
society at fault for him being
deported? He knows I can't do that!
The man was convicted of 62 counts
of sex and drug trafficking! What,
does he expect me to white-wash
everything in order to get him to
license out his story?

AL ZIMBALIST

You won't have to. The final word
already came through from his
estate. He's already relinquished
the 300 grand that he had earmarked
for the picture. Beyond that, you'd
have to fly out to talk with him
personally.

PHIL TUCKER

What's the point? He barely knows
who I am as it is. Besides, the
State department turned down my
request for a passport last fall.

AL ZIMBALIST

Listen, forget about, Phil, the
trades almost *always* kill pictures
long before they ever move into
production. Right now our concern
lies with sealing the lid on this
project *here* if we're gonna succeed
in meeting the new deadline.

(CONTINUED)

PHIL TUCKER

New deadline?

AL ZIMBALIST

We went over this already, Phil, remember? We're aiming to get this movie out before 'House of Wax'!

PHIL TUCKER

I remember, Al, but that film is slated for release next month! Ours will only be in *post* by then.

AL ZIMBALIST

I know it's a long shot, but you know as well as I do the importance of timing. Things haven't been the same since congress passed that antitrust law back in '48.

PHIL TUCKER

Didn't that only prohibit the studio monopolization of theaters?

AL ZIMBALIST

It did, but we all took a hit as a result! Every studio from top to bottom had to divest their holdings on the market. No more block-booking theaters, we're on our own.

PHIL TUCKER

I just don't think we'll be ready by then, Al.

AL ZIMBALIST

Again, it's a long shot, but we gotta strike while the iron's hot! This 3-D technology only became commercially available a few months ago! And, here, look!

Zimbalist tosses Tucker a trade journal, of which he reads the front page headline: "Cinemascope Demonstration at Fox".

AL ZIMBALIST

Today's edition. They just completed tests on CinemaScope technology over at Fox, and they went gangbusters! The writing's on the wall: *Wide is in, 3-D is out!*

Tucker reads article.

(CONTINUED)

PHIL TUCKER

Says here that their stereophonic sound system tested well, too.

AL ZIMBALIST

Oh, they exceeded monophonic practices tenfold! *That's* why we've rented the latest equipment from Master Tone for *this* picture!

PHIL TUCKER

Really, the *latest*?

AL ZIMBALIST

This picture's gotta look and sound terrific, Phil! Anyway, I gotta go, I have some calls to make if I'm going to book your pic's premiere!

PHIL TUCKER

Alright. By the way, where *is* 'House of Wax' opening?

AL ZIMBALIST

The old El Capitan.

PHIL TUCKER

The Hollywood Paramount?

AL ZIMBALIST

One and the same. Play your cards right, Phil, and this film of yours could play there, too.

PHIL TUCKER

You kidding? *That's* the best theater in town!

AL ZIMBALIST

We'll see. Good luck on your last shooting day today, Phil!

PHIL TUCKER

Thanks, Al.

Zimbalist takes the newspaper out of Tucker's hands and walks away. Tucker takes a deep breath.

CUT TO:

EXT. BRONSON CAVE SURROUNDING AREA - DAY

Recreation of scene from original film.

Boy GREGORY MOFFETT (in character as Johnny) enters from off-screen right. Wearing a space helmet and shooting a toy gun, he walks from right to left where girl PAMELA PAULSON (in character as Carla) is sitting down playing with a doll.

PAMELA PAULSON (AS CARLA)
Am I dead?

GREGORY MOFFETT (AS JOHNNY)
You're disintegrated.

PAMELA PAULSON (AS CARLA)
Good, does that mean we can play house, now? You promised.

Moffett (in character as Johnny) blows bubbles out of a toy. Cut to: Film crew are surrounded by bubbles. Motioning towards the bubbles, one crew member rolls his eyes at another crew member. Cut to: The scene continues.

GREGORY MOFFETT (AS JOHNNY)
These woods are full of Spacemen.
It's either them, or us. Come on.

Moffett (in character as Johnny) signals for Paulson (in character as Carla) to stand up and follow him. She does, and both Moffett and Paulson walk from screen-left to screen-right, exiting the scene.

PHIL TUCKER
And, cut!

Reveal the film's production crew, of whom are capturing the actions by Moffett and Paulson.

PHIL TUCKER
Okay, that was pretty good. I guess now we should probably move in for a close-up angle.

Cinematographer JACK GREENHALGH, a man in his late 40's and of average build, addresses Tucker.

JACK GREENHALGH
Say, shouldn't we run through the scene again first, Phil?

(CONTINUED)

PHIL TUCKER
Why's that?

JACK GREENHALGH
You didn't call sound.

PHIL TUCKER
Oh, right. Hey, kids! Go back to
your mark, we're going again!

Moffett and Paulson return to their beginning marks as the crew all give each other a rolling-eyed look.

JACK GREENHALGH
By the way, Phil, what's with all
these bubbles, anyway?

PHIL TUCKER
Showing off our expensive
three-dimensional technology, what
else?

JACK GREENHALGH
Sure, but...bubbles?

PHIL TUCKER
Look, it's hokey, I know, but keep
in mind that this movie's for the
matinee crowd. You know, *kids*.

JACK GREENHALGH
You really think kids'll understand
this picture?

PHIL TUCKER
Why wouldn't they?

JACK GREENHALGH
Because *I* sure as hell don't.

PHIL TUCKER
Anyone *else* confused by what this
picture is about?

Crew all raise their hands. Tucker silently gulps.

CUT TO:

EXT. BRONSON CAVE WEST ENTRANCE - DAY

Recreation of scene from original film.

GEORGE NADER, JOHN MYLONG, Moffett and Paulson (all four in character) are situated in front of the cave's entrance.

JOHN MYLONG (AS PROFESSOR)
 We are archaeologists, boy. People who try to find out what Man was like way back before they could read or write, when the only way he could pass on what he knew was through pictures like this here.

Mylong points to a hieroglyphic image of an ape-like creature on the cave's inner wall.

GEORGE NADER (AS ROY)
 You see, our job is to chip it out carefully and take it to a museum so people can study it.

GREGORY MOFFETT (AS JOHNNY)
 Gee. Are you scientists?

GEORGE NADER (AS ROY)
 That's even better than being cowboys, huh?

GREGORY MOFFETT (AS JOHNNY)
 You bet.

PAMELA PAULSON (AS CARLA)
 Was he a Spaceman Robot?

JOHN MYLONG (AS PROFESSOR)
 So far as we know, there were no Spacemen in those times. And robots, either.

GREGORY MOFFETT (AS JOHNNY)
 He looks like some of the people I saw last time I was on Pluto.

JOHN MYLONG (AS PROFESSOR)
 What's your name, son?

SELENA ROYLE (AS MARTHA)
 Johnny!

(CONTINUED)

GEORGE NADER (AS ROY)
Uh oh, Johnny, it looks like you
strayed a little out of your orbit,
doesn't it?

GREGORY MOFFETT (AS JOHNNY)
Here we are, in the cave.

CLAUDIA BARRETT (in character as Alice) and SELENA ROYLE (in
character as Martha) enter the cave from off-set.

GREGORY MOFFETT (AS JOHNNY)
It's my mother and sister. I bet
you'd like her.

Nader (in character as Roy) gives Barrett an eyeful.

GEORGE NADER (AS ROY)
No doubt.

SELENA ROYLE (AS MARTHA)
Johnny, that wasn't fair.

CLAUDIA BARRETT (AS ALICE)
You kids promised you'd take a nap
right after lunch if we took you on
this picnic. And off you scoot.

CLAUDIA BARRETT (AS ALICE)
I hope he hasn't given you any
trouble.

GEORGE NADER (AS ROY)
Not at all. (to Johnny) Johnny, at
the camp I used to go to we used to
have to take a nap after lunch,
right up until we were fourteen.

GREGORY MOFFETT (AS JOHNNY)
You did? Well, will you be here
when I get back?

JOHN MYLONG (AS PROFESSOR)
If we are, you're welcome to join
us!

PHIL TUCKER
Cut. Great, now let's reset this
cave from the archaeological site
to the site of Ro-Man's lair.

Man in his 30's with average build, SAM LEACOCK, approaches
Tucker from a distance.

(CONTINUED)

SAM LEACOCK

Hey, Phil!

PHIL TUCKER

Sam! You didn't tell me you were in town! What brings you way out here?

SAM LEACOCK

Flew in yesterday. Came by to wish you luck on your last day of filming! How's it going here?

PHIL TUCKER

Pretty well, we just finished shooting the first scene.

SAM LEACOCK

Which first scene is that?

PHIL TUCKER

You know, the first scene with the family, right before humanity is wiped off the face of the Earth by Ro-Man's calcinator death ray.

Leacock looks confused.

SAM LEACOCK

Oh, right...*that* first scene.

PHIL TUCKER

You haven't the foggiest idea what I'm talking about, do you?

SAM LEACOCK

Sorry, Phil, but I've already told you many times before that this film confuses me to no end.

PHIL TUCKER

You have. And that's okay, Sam. Most everyone on this set shares your confusion.

Leacock reaches in his pants pocket.

SAM LEACOCK

Well, here. *These* may cheer you up!

Leacock hands Tucker a box of business cards, and pulls one out to show to him. Close-up on the business card reads, "Lea-Tuck Telefilms, Inc."

(CONTINUED)

PHIL TUCKER

Hey-hey, here they are! And I see you got 'em incorporated!

SAM LEACOCK

Yup, registered with the IRS, and picked them up this morning!

PHIL TUCKER

That's wild, Sam. They look just great.

SAM LEACOCK

Thanks. So, I suppose you heard about the Luciano biopic.

Tucker sighs.

PHIL TUCKER

Yeah, Al told me.

SAM LEACOCK

Did he mention your *other* biopic? The one on Julius Caesar?

PHIL TUCKER

The one for *television*, you mean? He did not. Why? Don't tell me *that* one fell through, too.

SAM LEACOCK

Fraid so. Every studio I've pitched this to says that a six-hour epic set in ancient Rome is far too ambitious for them, and for us!

PHIL TUCKER

You told them that the six hours would be divided into 13 different parts, didn't you?

SAM LEACOCK

I did.

PHIL TUCKER

And?

SAM LEACOCK

They said no in 13 different ways.

Tucker holds the business card back up to his face.

(CONTINUED)

PHIL TUCKER

Well, the card *still* looks great.

SAM LEACOCK

C'mon, Phil, we're not dried up completely just yet!

PHIL TUCKER

What are you talking about, Sam? I'm plum out of ideas!

SAM LEACOCK

Hogwash! What about that *other* science-fiction film of yours?

PHIL TUCKER

Which one?

SAM LEACOCK

You know, the one that takes place on Mars and Venus!

PHIL TUCKER

Oh, *that*. I doubt it, Sam.

SAM LEACOCK

What do you mean? Remember your idea of color-tinting the filmstrips so that all the scenes on Mars looked red and all the scenes on Venus look green? That's a great gimmick, Phil!

PHIL TUCKER

Was a great gimmick, until that same color-coating technique was used in two *other* recent films!

SAM LEACOCK

Really? Which films?

PHIL TUCKER

Ask my producer. He's already licensed footage from *both* those movies to be used for *mine*!

SAM LEACOCK

Well, *whichever* project we decide to run with, we won't be able to get *anything* greenlit unless we get backing from the investors at American Artists Film Corp.

(CONTINUED)

PHIL TUCKER
Oh, I don't want *their* money.

SAM LEACOCK
You *don't*?

PHIL TUCKER
Absolutely not, those guys are just interested in keeping their shares!

SAM LEACOCK
You sure about that, Phil?

PHIL TUCKER
Very sure...I mean, unless, of course, they want to give me money *personally*. I'm fine with *that*.

Leacock grins.

SAM LEACOCK
Well, assuming *that* doesn't transpire, at least we *do* have the option to states-right our picture.

PHIL TUCKER
States-right? You mean, just auction it off to a bunch of fly-by-night investors who know nothing about film or the industry?

SAM LEACOCK
That may end up our only option, Phil. Unless...

PHIL TUCKER
Unless what?

SAM LEACOCK
Unless we resurrect your guild.

PHIL TUCKER
Forget it. That's over and done.

Leacock digs an old Variety newspaper out from his back-pocket.

PHIL TUCKER
What's that?

SAM LEACOCK
Variety article about your guild!

(CONTINUED)

PHIL TUCKER

You kidding me? You *kept* a copy?

Leacock recites from the article.

SAM LEACOCK

When asked about the Independent Producer's Guild, a one Mr. Phillip J. Tucker says the purpose of the aforementioned guild is to, quote, "maintain equitable standards in working conditions throughout the industry for all people involved, not just a minority that has long outworn its welcome."

PHIL TUCKER

Can you stop?

SAM LEACOCK

"I could not find out if a writer can do the kind of work I want until after I pay for it," Tucker continued. "I think that it's high time that the producers of this town started making the same demands on unions. We have just as many mouths to feed as writers do. We have just as many expenses, in addition to which we have to take the gamble with our money."

PHIL TUCKER

Are you through?

SAM LEACOCK

Listen, Phil, it's only been six months since you floated this guild idea to the press...

Tucker interrupts.

PHIL TUCKER

Yeah, and six months since the press *buried* it, Sam! Why are you reminding me of all this, anyway? Were you not the one who told me it was a bad idea in the first place? The one who told me that I should just comply with the terms set by all the existing guilds?

SAM LEACOCK

I was speaking to you as a *friend* then. Now I'm telling you as a *colleague*: if this guild of yours gained some traction, it could open up a whole new labor union! One with *less* labor, *more* union!

PHIL TUCKER

I just don't know, Sam.

SAM LEACOCK

Well, at least think about it, Phil. Anyway, I better run. After I make a stop at Goldwyn, I gotta catch the next flight home. One of my nightclubs needs attention.

PHIL TUCKER

Something wrong?

SAM LEACOCK

Nothing big, just another meeting with the other club owners. We're petitioning to the city council to allow later closing times.

PHIL TUCKER

Sounds rough.

SAM LEACOCK

Ha, well, I'm bucking for committee chairman of the Moose Christmas Benefit this year, so my presence there is critical. Plus, if I'm gonna moonlight as an independent movie producer with you down *here*, I better make sure that all my ducks are in a row up *there*!

PHIL TUCKER

Read you loud and clear. Fly safe. Oh, and here.

Tucker motions to hand back the business card.

SAM LEACOCK

Keep it, and keep *me* posted, Phil!

PHIL TUCKER

Ditto, Sam.

Leacock walks away. Tucker looks back at the card.

(CONTINUED)

CUT TO:

EXT. BRONSON CAVE SURROUNDING AREA - DAY

PHIL TUCKER

Action.

Recreation of scene from original film.

GEORGE NADER (in character as Roy) and CLAUDIA BARRETT (in character as Alice) appear from off-screen right and walk from screen-right to screen-left. Nader removes his shirt and wipes his chest with it as they are walking. Tucker continues to give direction to the actors.

PHIL TUCKER

And...stop. There's a noise,
and...look behind you!

Nader and Barrett stop in place and look behind them.

PHIL TUCKER

And...pick her up and run!

Nader sweeps Barrett up and runs back off-screen in the direction they came from. The camera stays in place. Tucker continues with his direction.

PHIL TUCKER

Cue Ro-Man!

GEORGE BARROWS (in character as Ro-Man) appears in the background and slowly moves closer to the foreground. The camera stays in place. Tucker continues to prompt actors.

PHIL TUCKER

And...stop. Now, look all around.

Barrows looks in all directions.

PHIL TUCKER

And...walk out of frame.

Barrows walks out of frame.

PHIL TUCKER

And, cut.

Once he is out of frame, he starts to dance, making the crew all laugh. Tucker smiles and shakes his head.

(CONTINUED)

PHIL TUCKER

Okay, take five, everyone.

The crew stops filming. Barrows approaches Tucker, speaking through his costume.

GEORGE BARROWS

What do you think, Phil?

PHIL TUCKER

I think that you should've been a dancer, George.

Barrows laughs.

GEORGE BARROWS

If I was, you couldn't afford me.

Tucker wipes sweat off his brow while Barrows proceeds to take off his costume's helmet.

PHIL TUCKER

Ha, I can barely afford you *now*. What I *really* think, though, is you should find some shade quick before you die of heat stroke in that.

GEORGE BARROWS

That's what Henry in wardrobe said, after he helped build this infernal helmet. Good news is, I've been able to leave this plastic plate off the head which makes it easier for all those *long* shots...

PHIL TUCKER

And the bad news?

Barrows takes the face plate off his costume's helmet, and wheezes very heavily.

GEORGE BARROWS

That.

PHIL TUCKER

Ah, yeah, breathing *is* essential.

Barrows sets the helmet down and loosens his costume.

GEORGE BARROWS

And *impossible*. See, if this were just a *regular* gorilla head, I

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

GEORGE BARROWS (cont'd)
could breathe through the mouth
with the air coming in and out of
it, but with this aluminum helmet,
it's a different story entirely.

PHIL TUCKER
Yeah, I'm awful sorry about that,
George. Tell you what, if you like,
we can shoot around you for awhile
to give you a break.

GEORGE BARROWS
Thanks, but don't sweat it, Phil,
I'm partly to blame. After all, it
was my own dumb idea to suggest
adding this damn stocking.

PHIL TUCKER
It *does* give off a hell of an
effect. The less you see of your
eyes, the less human you *look*.

GEORGE BARROWS
Hell, if I look even *halfway*
human-like in this get-up, then
we'll *really* be up a creek.
Anyway, don't concern yourself
about me, Phil, I'll manage okay.

PHIL TUCKER
Great. And thanks again for doing
this for your minimum amount,
George. I know 500 isn't much.

GEORGE BARROWS
Eh, don't mention it, Phil. I can
survive the pay cut. Now, whether
or not I survive this *hernia*?
That's anyone's guess!

PHIL TUCKER
Good attitude.

Moffett approaches Tucker and Barrows.

GREGORY MOFFETT
Hey, Mr. Barrows, we have
refreshments by the cave if you're
thirsty!

GEORGE BARROWS
You read my mind, kid!

Barrows puts his arm around Moffett and starts a new conversation as they both walk away from Tucker.

GEORGE BARROWS
Say, did you know that right after the first World War, this rugged piece of ground surrounding that cave used to be a quarry?

GREGORY MOFFETT
It was?

GEORGE BARROWS
You bet! You see, rocks all around here were gathered to pave the streets of Hollywood and the San Pedro Breakwater, and...

Barrows and Moffett's conversation fades. Tucker is by himself calling out to his crew.

PHIL TUCKER
Okay, what page are we on? Anyone have a shooting script?

WYOTT ORDUNG
Heads up!

Script is tossed to Tucker from off-screen, which he barely catches. Man, WYOTT ORDUNG, walks up to Tucker.

WYOTT ORDUNG
Heya, Philly!

PHIL TUCKER
Well, I'll be. Wyott Barney Ordung, as I live and breathe.

WYOTT ORDUNG
Please, just plain ol' Barney!

Ordung looks around and whistles.

WYOTT ORDUNG
Sure a hell of an odd place to look for your big break, Philly!

Tucker smiles while thumbing through shooting script.

PHIL TUCKER

That it is, Barn, and I'm sure that it's around here somewhere. So, what brings you way out here?

WYOTT ORDUNG

Came by to see how this artistic opus of yours is going, what else?

PHIL TUCKER

Opus? *Right*. You know as well as I do that this picture is nothing more than just a quickie. You helped write it, after all.

Ordung laughs.

WYOTT ORDUNG

Don't you pawn this off on *me*, Phil! It may be my credit on the screen and a 10% stake, but this movie is 100% *you*! All I did was type it up, add a touch here, a flourish there, you know...

PHIL TUCKER

All of which was greatly appreciated. But yeah, I mean, it's going *only* okay here, but what do you expect with second-rate actors who couldn't carry a tune in a basket of apples?

WYOTT ORDUNG

Or a *third*-rate director who gave them the basket in the first place?

PHIL TUCKER

Fourth-rate, thank you very much.

Both laugh.

WYOTT ORDUNG

Well, count yourself lucky to be able to shoot out here at all!

PHIL TUCKER

How do you mean?

WYOTT ORDUNG

You didn't hear? Big fire all around this area couple weeks back.

Tucker looks around.

(CONTINUED)

PHIL TUCKER

Fire?

WYOTT ORDUNG

Yep. In fact, *another* film with my writer's credit just finished filming out here *last* week. Fortunately, the film was supposed to look like war-torn Korea, so the fire sure did the trick!

PHIL TUCKER

That *is* fortunate. Who did you do that film for?

WYOTT ORDUNG

For a fellow named Jack Broder.

PHIL TUCKER

Who?

WYOTT ORDUNG

Jack Broder, the head of Realart Studios. I'm writing a whole *barrage* of pictures for his operation. A war picture, a western...

PHIL TUCKER

Can't say I've ever heard of him, nor the studio for that matter.

WYOTT ORDUNG

Well, they do a few originals here and there, but they specialize in the distribution of *reissues*!

PHIL TUCKER

Reissues?

WYOTT ORDUNG

Oh yeah, nothing to it, really! What they do is strike a deal with the majors to re-release their older films back into theaters!

PHIL TUCKER

Which movies?

WYOTT ORDUNG

Oh, you've seen 'em around! Y'know, "Dracula", "Frankenstein", the stuff that still packs houses!

(CONTINUED)

PHIL TUCKER

Ah, I *have* seen them around. So,
just the blockbusters then?

WYOTT ORDUNG

Not always. Oftentimes what they'll
do is slap a new title on some old
stinker, and modern audiences lap
it up like cream of wheat!

PHIL TUCKER

No kidding.

WYOTT ORDUNG

Remember last summer when they put
"King Kong" back on the marquee
nationwide? Huge business! It was
out-performing *new* movies!

PHIL TUCKER

That huge, huh?

WYOTT ORDUNG

Last year, Time Magazine called it
the 'Movie of the Year', and that
movie is 20 damn years old!

PHIL TUCKER

Makes me wonder what we're doing
making *new* pictures.

WYOTT ORDUNG

I'm telling ya, Phil, don't be
surprised if, someday, someone
reissues *this* flaky film of yours!

PHIL TUCKER

God, that *will* be the day.

WYOTT ORDUNG

Stranger things have happened!
Hell, remember a year ago, when you
came up to Sun Valley to *pitch* this
cockamamie idea of yours to me?

PHIL TUCKER

Oh, *I* remember.

Tucker thumbs through shooting script.

WYOTT ORDUNG

'I have a comedy I want you to help
me write', you said. 'A comedy

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

WYOTT ORDUNG (cont'd)
about the last family on the face
of the Earth after an atom bomb
attack'. And remember what *I* said?

Tucker continues to thumb through script.

WYOTT ORDUNG
*Two things! 'First of all,' I said,
'that's not funny!'*

Tucker keeps his nose buried in the script.

PHIL TUCKER
This is true.

WYOTT ORDUNG
*'Secondly,' I said, 'I don't even
write comedy'!*

Tucker keeps his eyes on the script.

PHIL TUCKER
This is *also* true.

WYOTT ORDUNG
But then, there *you* were, talking
all about this space guy with these
big, protruding 'goo-goo' eyes...

Tucker interrupts.

PHIL TUCKER
'Googie' eyes...

WYOTT ORDUNG
And three days later, there *I* was
in East L.A. wearing a fire suit
with a fish bowl over my head with
TV rabbit ears while you stood
there blowing that damn whistle you
had around your neck while we
filmed those silly 3-D tests for
eight straight hours!

PHIL TUCKER
...and which came out *great*.

Ordung looks around.

WYOTT ORDUNG
Phil, when are you going to come to
your senses?

PHIL TUCKER
What are you talking about?

WYOTT ORDUNG
You are *no* director.

Tucker looks up from his script.

WYOTT ORDUNG
And believe me, I don't mean that
as an insult. Aren't you the one
who is always talking about how you
would rather be an editor?

PHIL TUCKER
Yeah, so?

WYOTT ORDUNG
So why not stick with post
full-time? It's *your* life!

Runner calls out from afar.

RUNNER
Phil! We're ready for you!

PHIL TUCKER
Be right there!

Tucker looks at Ordnung.

PHIL TUCKER
I'll have to get back to you on
that, Barney.

WYOTT ORDUNG
Just remember, Philly. It's not
just your *life* for you to think
about. It's your *career*.

Tucker nods, turns around, and leaves.

CUT TO:

EXT. BRONSON CAVE WEST ENTRANCE - DAY

Near the cave's entrance, Barrows is sitting on a rock drinking a bottled refreshment. He's in the middle of telling stories to Moffett and Paulson. Moffett engages in the conversation while Paulson merely sits and listens.

(CONTINUED)

GEORGE BARROWS

So, the *first* movie I was in, that was during the Depression. I worked in a furniture store in those days, and I was at the YMCA when they were looking for extras to appear in some big, brassy production!

GREGORY MOFFETT

What production?

GEORGE BARROWS

"Cleopatra", directed by none other than *the* Mr. DeMille!

GREGORY MOFFETT

How much did he pay you?

GEORGE BARROWS

Ten bucks a day for a three week job, a lot of green back then! So then I became a stunt man before deciding to make a living off of wearing *this* monkey suit!

GREGORY MOFFETT

Who made your suit?

GEORGE BARROWS

Yours truly!

GREGORY MOFFETT

Really?

GEORGE BARROWS

Yak hair, sewn one strand at a time!

GREGORY MOFFETT

Do you have a lot of time on your hands?

GEORGE BARROWS

Don't get smart, kid.

Barrows cracks open another bottled refreshment, and continues with his stories.

GEORGE BARROWS

So, *anyway*, this *other* time back when I was in the *service*...

(CONTINUED)

CUT TO:

EXT. BRONSON CAVE SURROUNDING AREA - DAY

PHIL TUCKER

Action.

Recreation of scene from original film.

Barrows (in character as Ro-Man) carries Barrett (in character as Alice) from off-screen left to the center of the frame, then stops to deliver his line.

GEORGE BARROWS (AS RO-MAN)

I am ordered to kill you. I must do it with my hands.

CLAUDIA BARRETT (AS ALICE)

How is it you're so strong, Ro-Man? It seems impossible.

GEORGE BARROWS (AS RO-MAN)

We Ro-Mans obtain our strength from the planet Ro-Man, relayed from individual energizers.

CLAUDIA BARRETT (AS ALICE)

Small enough to carry with you?

GEORGE BARROWS (AS RO-MAN)

No. Mine is in the cave.

Barrows (in character as Ro-Man) carries Barrett (in character as Alice) from center-screen to off-screen right. Zoom out to reveal Tucker and his crew capturing the action.

PHIL TUCKER

And, cut.

CUT TO:

EXT. BRONSON CAVE EAST ENTRANCE - DAY

Near the entrance of the cave, middle-aged man of average build, GORDON AVIL, is working on an Éclair camera (marked Stereo Cine). Set runner walks up to Avil, and points to a prop that is nearby the both of them.

RUNNER

Excuse me, sir? What's that?

GORDON AVIL
Not with the props department, son,
I'm part of the camera crew.

RUNNER
Oh, sorry.

GORDON AVIL
But, if memory serves, what I
believe you're looking at is a
tabletop logarithm device which
will be used by the monster.

RUNNER
Wow, what's it made of?

Avil looks closely at the device.

GORDON AVIL
Looks like your garden-variety, '19
model IP-501 receiver/amplifier.

RUNNER
Wow! And *that*?

Runner points to another prop.

GORDON AVIL
Viewing screen, likewise to be used
by the monster.

RUNNER
And what's *that* made of?

GORDON AVIL
Nothing. It's just a dresser.

RUNNER
Huh.

Tucker shouts from off-screen.

PHIL TUCKER
Gordon!

Tucker walks towards Avil and the runner.

GORDON AVIL
Heya, kid!

Tucker stops and turns toward the runner.

(CONTINUED)

PHIL TUCKER

Hey, can you go tell the crew that we're going to set up here at the cave's entrance next for the scene with Ro-Man and Alice?

RUNNER

Sure thing, Phil!

Runner leaves Tucker and Avil alone together. Avil watches the set runner as he runs away.

GORDON AVIL

Look at him go, Phil! Marching off to carry out *your* marching orders!

Avil turns toward Tucker.

GORDON AVIL

Hell, look at you! I told you that someday you would be in the big director's chair someday!

PHIL TUCKER

Now if I only had time to *sit*.

Both laugh.

PHIL TUCKER

Thanks again for coming out to help, Gordon.

GORDON AVIL

I wouldn't miss it, kid! You've sure come a long way since all those silly soaps we used to work on together at Larchmont!

PHIL TUCKER

It was you who taught me everything I know! How long can you stay?

GORDON AVIL

You got me today only, Phil. I gotta be heading out to DP for a western for United Artists.

PHIL TUCKER

Quite alright, just glad you're here at least for a bit. Where's this western of yours being shot?

(CONTINUED)

GORDON AVIL
Death Valley, leaving tomorrow for
principal photography.

PHIL TUCKER
Good Lord, you and your rugged
locations!

GORDON AVIL
Gotta go where the money is, kid.
But look around, it doesn't get
much more rugged than *this*!
Seriously, how you holding up?

PHIL TUCKER
Just a little nerve-wracked.

GORDON AVIL
Well, just remember, kid, all I
need from your end is a minimum of
1500 good feet of 3-D film to
shoot, and I'll handle the rest.

Tucker takes a deep breath.

PHIL TUCKER
Fifteen-hundred feet.

GORDON AVIL
Right, that's about eight minutes
worth so we can send it off to
Eagle-Lion for processing.

Runner walks back to Tucker and Avil.

RUNNER
Phil? I told them what you said,
but the crew all thought it would
be a better idea to shoot the
picnic scene *first* while the sun is
still in the right position.

Tucker looks up at sun.

PHIL TUCKER
Hmm, that *is* a better idea. I'll be
right back. You okay, Gordon?

GORDON AVIL
Go right ahead, kid. I'll be here
making some adjustments to the
blimp rig if you need me.

(CONTINUED)

PHIL TUCKER

Great.

Tucker walks toward crew, and away from Avil and the runner.

RUNNER

Now *there* goes one inexperienced director.

GORDON AVIL

He's got it where it counts. Hand me that, will you?

Runner hands Gordon a tool for the camera.

RUNNER

Say, how *does* this contraption work, anyhow?

Avil works on camera while talking.

GORDON AVIL

You see these two cameras?

RUNNER

Yeah?

GORDON AVIL

Well, these two cameras are run by two operators running on two separate projectors simultaneously, interlocked precisely for frame accuracy. Now, see these filters?

Avil shows the runner some filters.

RUNNER

Uh huh.

GORDON AVIL

Both of the projectors have one of these filters mounted on the projection port in front of it, which polarizes the light.

RUNNER

Then what?

GORDON AVIL

That's *it*. Sound, speed, shoot, and there you have it. You got yourself a 3-D presentation.

(CONTINUED)

RUNNER

You really think that this stuff is going to take off? I mean, those red-and-blue glasses give me a headache.

GORDON AVIL

Not the *red-and-blues*, son, those are for *anaglyphic* images, like for comics and magazines. Here.

Avil grabs a pair of polarized 3-D glasses out of his pocket and hands them to the set runner.

GORDON AVIL

These are the *grayish hues*, for *polarized* images. Now, what do those look like to you?

RUNNER

Like regular glasses.

GORDON AVIL

Put them on.

Runner puts the polarized 3-D glasses on his face.

GORDON AVIL

What do you see?

RUNNER

Everything's a bit fuzzy, but they still look like regular glasses.

GORDON AVIL

Keep 'em on, and look through this viewfinder.

Runner looks through the camera's viewfinder.

RUNNER

Wow!

Runner continues to look at the image inside the camera's viewfinder lens as Avil continues to explain.

GORDON AVIL

Those are the kind of glasses that matinee audiences will be wearing during *this* picture.

(CONTINUED)

RUNNER

It looks so real, almost like I can touch the scenery!

GORDON AVIL

That's the idea. The left projected image is seen by your left eye, and the right image is seen by your right eye. Simple as that.

Runner takes his head away from the camera's viewfinder, and removes the glasses.

RUNNER

I think I get it! So, you shoot it like a regular flat movie, and when the image is projected on movie screens it will look like that?

GORDON AVIL

Hell, we're not just *projecting* it, we're *shooting* this bitch in 3-D!

RUNNER

What? How?

GORDON AVIL

Again, see these two cameras?

RUNNER

Yeah.

GORDON AVIL

Well, to cut down on cost, we're shooting on only one of these two cameras, and printing the film from the one camera as well.

RUNNER

But how does shooting on one produce a 3-D image on the *other* camera once it's projected?

GORDON AVIL

That's the *clever* part. We simply match the slates from that of the *first* camera, to that of the *second* camera. Once the footage is in post, we make a watermark on the soundtrack where the slates start for the second camera.

(CONTINUED)

RUNNER

Oh! So, you make a print from the *first* camera, then use *that* print to make a *separate* print for the *second* camera...

GORDON AVIL

...*then* we cut the negative to match both sets of footage. And, voila, three dimensions on two prints for half the price of one!

RUNNER

Wow, that's brilliant! Did you come up with that?

GORDON AVIL

Wish I could claim credit, but it wasn't me.

RUNNER

Then who?

Avil points to Tucker in the distance.

GORDON AVIL

Your inexperienced director over there.

Runner looks at Tucker in the distance. Avil gets back to work on the blimp rig.

CUT TO:

EXT. BRONSON CAVE WEST ENTRANCE - DAY

Recreation of scene from original film.

Barrows and Barrett (both in character as Ro-Man and Alice) are positioned near the entrance of the cave. Tucker and the film crew are in front of them filming the action.

PHIL TUCKER

Action.

GEORGE BARROWS (AS RO-MAN)

Suppose I were hu-man? Would you treat me like a man?

Barrows struggles with Barrett.

(CONTINUED)

CLAUDIA BARRETT (AS ALICE)
Ro-Man. You haven't told me yet
where the energizer is kept!

GEORGE BARROWS (AS RO-MAN)
Silence, girl!

Barrows pulls down the halter straps of Barrett's dress.
Tucker and his crew look at each other.

PHIL TUCKER
Cut. Okay, take five, everyone.

The cast and crew take a break.

PHIL TUCKER
George!

Barrows walks over to Tucker.

PHIL TUCKER
George, what the hell was that?

GEORGE BARROWS
What?

PHIL TUCKER
Why did you strip her dress? That
wasn't in the script.

GEORGE BARROWS
I dunno, I was just in the moment.

Tucker pauses.

PHIL TUCKER
Well, we're keeping that take.

Leacock yells from off-screen.

SAM LEACOCK
Phil!

Tucker walks over to greet Leacock.

PHIL TUCKER
Sam? I thought you were flying out?

SAM LEACOCK
Delayed, taking a red eye later
tonight.

PHIL TUCKER

You came all the way over here to tell me that?

SAM LEACOCK

No, I came over here because I found out some *other* news.

PHIL TUCKER

What is it?

SAM LEACOCK

You remember the firm that Al and Ed Mosk formed a few months back?

PHIL TUCKER

Sure, *Z-M Productions*. That was right around the time that you and I started *our* company. Why?

SAM LEACOCK

Well, turns out that Z-M is also debuting its *own* stereophonic sound system, meaning they plan to supply the kind of systems that would be utilized by independents like us.

PHIL TUCKER

What are you talking about?

SAM LEACOCK

You know Goldwyn studios, where my friend works up at?

PHIL TUCKER

Sure, we're scheduled to do post for *this* picture at Goldwyn.

SAM LEACOCK

Well, the rep for Tru-Stereo works up at Goldwyn as well, which is how I found out about it.

PHIL TUCKER

Tru-Stereo?

SAM LEACOCK

That's what Z-M is *calling* this operation of theirs. They made a deal and are announcing it in the trades in a couple weeks from now.

(CONTINUED)

PHIL TUCKER

You sure?

SAM LEACOCK

Sure, I'm sure. Tru-Stereo is planning to supply unlimited equipment and technical staffs to each client for 30 grand a pop.

PHIL TUCKER

Thirty thousand dollars? Who's going to pay that?

SAM LEACOCK

No one, he's hoping. Which is why he's also offering the same deal for *half* that amount.

PHIL TUCKER

Half? What's the catch?

SAM LEACOCK

Tru-Stereo would stand to get a small percent of the profits.

PHIL TUCKER

How small?

SAM LEACOCK

Two, maybe 3%.

PHIL TUCKER

You don't say.

SAM LEACOCK

I do say. Craziest part about it is, he's essentially selling a process he doesn't actually own.

Tucker turns away, and thinks.

PHIL TUCKER

No. He's just renting it out. Just like he did for *this* production.

SAM LEACOCK

Bingo. Thought you should know. Anyway, gotta head for the airport now to catch the next red-eye.

PHIL TUCKER

Okay. Safe flight.

Leacock begins to walk away, while Tucker stands frozen.

(CONTINUED)

SAM LEACOCK
And, hey, Phil!

Tucker turns to face Leacock.

SAM LEACOCK
I still can't make heads-or-tails
what this movie of yours is about,
but I'm sure glad *one* of us *does*!

PHIL TUCKER
Thanks, Sam.

Leacock walks away.

CUT TO:

EXT. BRONSON CAVE EAST ENTRANCE - DAY

Tucker walks by the entrance of the cave, and looks around. He takes out a pack of cigarettes and a lighter. He lights up a cigarette, and takes a drag. He hears a voice.

MAN
Heya, Tuck!

Tucker reflexively tosses the cigarette away and looks around for the source of the voice. He finally looks up to see the silhouette of a man standing on the lip of the cave entrance, blocking out the sun. Tucker, blinded by the sunlight, shades his eyes with his hand.

PHIL TUCKER
Who's there?

MAN
Boy, I sure do love it out here at
Griffith, someday I hope to make
all my pictures out here.

PHIL TUCKER
Ed?

Man climbs down the lip of the cave entrance to reveal himself as none other than ED WOOD. He makes his way down to the ground level and approaches Tucker.

PHIL TUCKER
Ed, what brings you out here?

(CONTINUED)

ED WOOD

Would you believe me if I said I was just out scoutin' locations?

PHIL TUCKER

No, I wouldn't.

ED WOOD

And you would be *right*. I'm actually here with someone, we just came from the studio.

PHIL TUCKER

Which studio?

ED WOOD

You know the one.

PHIL TUCKER

Oh, you mean...

ED WOOD

Yup, good ol' Quality Studios, otherwise known as that dumpy little soundstage on Santa Monica!

PHIL TUCKER

Eesh, don't remind me.

ED WOOD

Sure haven't seen you there much lately, Phil. Finally had it with the main street picture business?

PHIL TUCKER

You could say that. I mean, sure, I learned a lot at Quality, but, boy, do I try to forget that place as much as I can.

ED WOOD

You may forget the place, Phil, but you'll never forget the *smell*!

PHIL TUCKER

That building should have been condemned years ago. Why doesn't George renovate it already?

ED WOOD

You kidding? George Weiss putting money into that dingy dungeon, as tight as he is with a dollar?

(CONTINUED)

PHIL TUCKER

Yeah, I guess we're lucky just to have that place as it *is*.

ED WOOD

And luckier that it's right next door to a *bar*!

Tucker grins and shakes his head.

ED WOOD

Anyway, how's your first feature coming along, Phil? Shouldn't you be directing right now?

PHIL TUCKER

They're still setting up.

ED WOOD

It looks like you're holding everything together.

PHIL TUCKER

Just barely. So who's this *someone* that you're here with?

ED WOOD

Just my lawyer, Sam Arkoff. He came over to talk to your producer. I just tagged along.

PHIL TUCKER

My producer's here?

ED WOOD

Over yonder.

Wood points in the distance where SAM ARKOFF is talking with Zimbalist.

PHIL TUCKER

What do you need a lawyer for, Ed?

ED WOOD

No big deal, just stuck in the middle of some legal matter.

PHIL TUCKER

Legal matter? Over *what*?

ED WOOD

Oh, just the title of a screenplay I co-wrote with a producer friend

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ED WOOD (cont'd)
of mine, Alex. We wrote it awhile
back, so more than likely, the
other side's gonna settle.

PHIL TUCKER
Well, that's good for you.

ED WOOD
Sure, but between you, me and the
cave, it makes very little
difference to me in the long run.
After all, titles get changed all
the time in our business!

PHIL TUCKER
I'm finding that to be true. So,
who exactly are you in litigation
with, if I may ask?

ED WOOD
You may. It's with Realart Studios.
Some fellow named *Jack* somebody.

PHIL TUCKER
Realart? You mean *Jack Broder*?

ED WOOD
That's him! And here's the
interesting part. This *Jack Broder*
guy? Someone in his sales
department and *my* lawyer over
there are venturing into their *own*
studio, and I don't mean some
two-bit one like *Quality*. I'm
talking *major* leagues!

PHIL TUCKER
Wait. You're saying that because of
some silly movie title, someone at
Realart is forming a *major* studio
with *your* lawyer?

ED WOOD
Well, for one thing, if this deal
goes through, he ain't gonna be my
lawyer no more, ha ha!

PHIL TUCKER
Does the studio have a name?

(CONTINUED)

ED WOOD

I'm hearing American Releasing Corp, though that, *too*, may change. But, really, who the heck *cares* what they call it? This is a *huge* opportunity for guys like us!

PHIL TUCKER

How do you mean?

ED WOOD

Think about it! We're already on the outer rims of these guys' business *and* social circles, right?

PHIL TUCKER

Right, so?

ED WOOD

Don't you see? We get in good with them, we can finally finance our projects without having to sell our kidneys as well as our souls!

PHIL TUCKER

But didn't you say that this all started with a legal battle? How do you call that 'getting in good'?

ED WOOD

Screw the title, Phil, that's just window dressing as far as anyone's concerned! What these upstarts *really* need in this stage of the game are *ideas*, and that's where we swoop in to save the day!

PHIL TUCKER

I don't know...

ED WOOD

Remember my co-writer, Alex? The one who's in this legal rigmarole with me? Well, he and I are prepping for a crime film next year - "Jail Bait", we're calling it - and perhaps this new studio might foot the bill! Who knows?

PHIL TUCKER

What makes you so confident?

(CONTINUED)

ED WOOD

Easy! This script of ours has a twist ending that'll knock audiences' socks off!

PHIL TUCKER

Ah.

ED WOOD

And besides, they *have* already committed to back *another* feature that my co-writer is producing!

PHIL TUCKER

Ah.

ED WOOD

Of course, *that one is* based on a screenplay by my lawyer's brother-in-law, so, there *may* be some conflict of interest going on...

PHIL TUCKER

Ah. Well, *shoot*, Ed, why not just work for Jack Broder directly and let *him* put up the money?

ED WOOD

Eh, I don't think so, Phil.

PHIL TUCKER

Why not? You said there's no bad blood between you in terms of the movie title lawsuit, didn't you?

ED WOOD

I did, but I just think that it's in my best interest to steer clear of Broder's orbit, is all.

PHIL TUCKER

Why's that?

ED WOOD

Well, for *one thing* - and actually, you should find this amusing, Phil, seeing as how your film's about a gorilla from another planet...

PHIL TUCKER

He's not from another planet.

(CONTINUED)

ED WOOD

Regardless, another friend of mine
- Bela - he starred in a picture
for Broder last year, a comedy in
which he meets a Brooklyn gorilla.

PHIL TUCKER

What was the title?

ED WOOD

That was *it*.

Tucker gives a quizzical look. Wood grins, puts one arm
around Tucker and extends the other outward.

ED WOOD

"Bela Lugosi Meets a Brooklyn
Gorilla".

Tucker stares at Wood.

PHIL TUCKER

That's the title?

Wood laughs, taking his arm off Tucker.

ED WOOD

God as my witness, dreamed up by
Jack's 10-year-old son, no less!
And get this, Bela's hardly even *in*
the darn thing! It's mainly just
about a coupla schmucks who look
and act like Martin and Lewis!

PHIL TUCKER

You're kidding.

ED WOOD

Wish I was! You should see these
guys! The resemblance was so
uncanny that the studio behind the
real comic duo nearly sued!

PHIL TUCKER

Why *didn't* they?

ED WOOD

Ready for *this* one? So Broder
offers to sell the picture to the
studio that represents Martin and
Lewis in exchange for keeping
'Brooklyn Gorilla' on the shelf.

(CONTINUED)

PHIL TUCKER
For how long?

ED WOOD
Forever.

PHIL TUCKER
And?

ED WOOD
Paramount turned Broder down, and
he released the film!

PHIL TUCKER
Just like that?

ED WOOD
Just like that! Beautiful, ain't
it? This Jack Broder is an
exhibitor's dream come true!

PHIL TUCKER
Well, so why don't you want to work
for him, then?

ED WOOD
And worry about potential
litigation every time I make a
picture? Not having it! Marketing
genius though Broder may be, I'd
rather spend less of my time in
court, and more of my time on set.

PHIL TUCKER
Makes sense. Working on anything at
the moment?

ED WOOD
As a matter of fact, I'm currently
in post for my own debut feature!
It's due out later next month!

PHIL TUCKER
And what's *it* about?

Wood pauses.

ED WOOD
It's about...leading *two* lives.

PHIL TUCKER
Two lives?

Wood laughs.

(CONTINUED)

ED WOOD

Hard to explain. Guess I just have
a thing for split-personalities.

Tucker pauses.

PHIL TUCKER

Funny...me, too.

ED WOOD

At any rate, I've got a feeling
that my pride and joy is *right*
around the corner!

PHIL TUCKER

Pride and joy?

ED WOOD

You know, the *one*! The *one* picture
that will be remembered long after
we shove off this mortal coil!

PHIL TUCKER

The *one*, huh?

ED WOOD

Yup! Of course, it's not up to us
what that one will be, that's for
history to decide! For all you
know, Phil, this film that you're
working on now will be *your one*!

Tucker winces.

PHIL TUCKER

Good grief, I hope not.

ED WOOD

Well, if not *this one*, got any
other pictures in development?

Tucker shrugs.

PHIL TUCKER

Several of mine have already fallen
by the wayside, unfortunately.

ED WOOD

C'mon, not even *one* on the ol'
back-burner? Rule of thumb, always
book projects while you're in the
middle of *other* projects! Next best
thing to job security!

(CONTINUED)

Tucker pauses.

PHIL TUCKER

Well, there is *one* film I have in mind. It's about a space crew who leave *this* planet to go and explore *other* planets. They're on a reconnaissance mission - you know, to gather information about Venus and Mars and such - and to send all this back to *Earth*. And they *do* it. They accomplish their mission and *conquer infinity!* But...

Wood leans in.

PHIL TUCKER

...they don't make it back. However, right after they succeed in their mission, the lead in the picture looks up and says...

Tucker looks up.

PHIL TUCKER

...'Now the stars are *ours*.'

ED WOOD

Sure over the moon for this science fiction genre, ain't you, Phil?

PHIL TUCKER

Have a thing for *space*, I guess.

Wood looks up.

ED WOOD

Funny...*me*, too.

Tucker and Wood share a look, and Wood looks at his watch.

ED WOOD

Oh! Speaking of, better vacate *this* space and get back to the studio!

PHIL TUCKER

Thanks for stopping by, Ed.

Wood begins to leave, then stops.

ED WOOD

Say, maybe you could give me a hand in the cutting room sometime, Phil!

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ED WOOD (cont'd)
I hear you've got a knack for film editing, I could use your help to cut one of my pictures!

PHIL TUCKER
Perhaps, assuming *this* picture doesn't cut *me* out of the picture.

Wood pats Tucker on the back.

ED WOOD
That's the spirit! I'll give George your best when I see him!

PHIL TUCKER
Great. And, oh yeah, tell him again that we appreciate the extra equipment he lent us for this.

ED WOOD
Shall do! And, remember, if things don't work out here, there's always a place for you back at Quality!

PHIL TUCKER
Thanks, Ed.

Wood begins to walk away, then stops and turns around.

ED WOOD
Hey, Phil!

Tucker turns toward Wood.

ED WOOD
Semper Fi!

Tucker grins.

PHIL TUCKER
I went AWOL.

ED WOOD
Still counts! Later, Tuck!

Wood walks away from Tucker. He's passed by Zimbalist, who walks towards Tucker.

AL ZIMBALIST
Phil! I have great news!

PHIL TUCKER
Al, we need to talk.

AL ZIMBALIST
Can I tell you the news first?

PHIL TUCKER
What is it?

AL ZIMBALIST
You're booked for the Paramount!

PHIL TUCKER
What? Really?

AL ZIMBALIST
Top half of a double bill! I hope you don't mind it not opening on a horse-opera night, though, it's set for a Wednesday premiere!

PHIL TUCKER
That's fine, Al, but...

AL ZIMBALIST
Not only that, I've licensed some more stock footage from an old Hal Roach picture to further save on costs, and the effects in *this* film were even nominated for an Oscar!

PHIL TUCKER
Al...

AL ZIMBALIST
And not only *that*, I've also hired a nightclub comedian to appear in a 3-D short that will play before your feature! Hilarious impressionist, this guy, you should hear his Cary Grant!

PHIL TUCKER
That's all great, Al, but...

AL ZIMBALIST
But *what*, Phil?! Is it about adding another shooting day to your schedule? I already told you, no problem, it's done! We're still coming in well under budget!

PHIL TUCKER
It's not about that.

AL ZIMBALIST
Well, *what*, then?

PHIL TUCKER
Do you know Jack Broder?

AL ZIMBALIST
Jack Broder? Yeah, I know Jack,
known him for years. In fact, I
introduced him to the same composer
that's signed on to score *your*
movie here.

PHIL TUCKER
Well, I heard that someone on his
staff is forming a studio called...

AL ZIMBALIST
...American Releasing Corp?

PHIL TUCKER
Yes.

AL ZIMBALIST
Well, I'm hearing they may
eventually broaden and call it
American International, but sure,
that deal was struck in Broder's
office weeks ago! Why do you ask?

PHIL TUCKER
Are you collaborating with them on
anything?

AL ZIMBALIST
Let me guess, you want to get them
to back a project of yours?

PHIL TUCKER
Well, the thought *had* crossed my
mind...

AL ZIMBALIST
Too early to tell at this point,
but anything's possible. How about
I get back to you on that, Phil?

PHIL TUCKER
Oh. Ok, sure...

(CONTINUED)

AL ZIMBALIST

Is that what this is *really* about, Phil, or is there something *else* on your mind?

PHIL TUCKER

Well, yes. It's about that firm that you formed with Mosk...

AL ZIMBALIST

Z-M Productions? What about it?

PHIL TUCKER

Well, you told me earlier that you're renting out stereophonic equipment for *my* movie.

AL ZIMBALIST

That's right.

PHIL TUCKER

But what you're really doing is co-opting this equipment for your own sound supply company?

AL ZIMBALIST

Who told you this?

PHIL TUCKER

Is it true?

AL ZIMBALIST

Yes, it's true. Not only that, I but I also got a racket on the side selling widescreen converters for standard ratio projectors. I mean, I'm not exactly George Pal, Phil. I need to branch out for bucks however I can.

PHIL TUCKER

So, what happens now? You know, with *my* movie?

AL ZIMBALIST

Towards the end of the summer, after your film exhausts its theatrical run, I'll be making regular trips to New York where I have a contact at Astor Pictures.

(CONTINUED)

PHIL TUCKER

For the prints...

AL ZIMBALIST

Exactly, but also in *addition* to that, Astor will have first option rights on financing our *next* film, "Cat Women of the Moon", as well as picking up domestic rights to *your* film, followed by negotiations to show it in Canada and the UK.

PHIL TUCKER

So they're just going to buy the property in one felt swoop?

AL ZIMBALIST

Not exactly. Your film is not fully paid for as of yet, so more than likely we'll place a mortgage on your film to pay for the lab work and the prints.

PHIL TUCKER

Mortgage? Wait, you mean that even *after* my film is released, it *still* won't be fully paid for yet?

AL ZIMBALIST

Right. Money coming in *now* will be bankrolled for a host of *other* productions in our wheelhouse.

PHIL TUCKER

Like what?

AL ZIMBALIST

Well, "*Cat Women*", for one - half your crew *here* are contracted to work *that* 3-D feature after they wrap here on *yours*! Then we've also got a string of "*Robinson Crusoe*" adaptations down the pike, and...

PHIL TUCKER

Wait, back up! *Another* 3-D feature? Didn't you say that the technology is just a trend that's phasing out?

AL ZIMBALIST

Of *course* it's phasing out, Phil, but we have to phase out *with* it if we're going to cover the premium cost of the third dimension *itself*!

(CONTINUED)

PHIL TUCKER

Premium?

AL ZIMBALIST

A nearly 5 million-dollar premium! From the prints all the way down to the 20 million pairs of polarized glasses we had specially ordered and patented for these pictures!

PHIL TUCKER

Glasses?

AL ZIMBALIST

Listen, Phil, *after* New York, I'm making arrangements with the film lab at General for a handful of pictures - including yours - and the specifications that all 3-D projects in the next 12 months be processed there! So, yes, Phil, the trend is passing, but it's still a hot commodity now, and we gotta ride it out to the bitter end!

Tucker walks a few steps away, turning from Zimbalist.

PHIL TUCKER

I just can't believe we're releasing something that doesn't yet belong to *anyone*.

AL ZIMBALIST

This is how the business works, Phil! Look, depending on how long it'll take to pay off the loan for your film, we can then begin to lease out the *worldwide* rights.

Tucker turns back towards Zimbalist.

PHIL TUCKER

Television? *Already*?

AL ZIMBALIST

That's the endgame. Of course, when *that* happens we'll most likely sell it under a different name.

PHIL TUCKER

Different name?

(CONTINUED)

AL ZIMBALIST
Yeah, like "Monster from Mars",
"Monster from the Moon", whatever.

PHIL TUCKER
First of all, my monster is not
from *any* of those places.

AL ZIMBALIST
Where the hell is he from, then?

Tucker looks up, then back at Zimbalist.

PHIL TUCKER
I don't know.

Zimbalist sighs.

AL ZIMBALIST
Phil, this was all part of the
agreement.

PHIL TUCKER
I remember the agreement. I also
remember we agreed that I owned a
quarter of the picture's profits!
Tell me, Al, just how do I profit
from a frozen asset?!

AL ZIMBALIST
Calm down, Phil...

PHIL TUCKER
*Calm down?! Al, I left behind a
career in advertising for this! I
don't think you realize just how
much I was counting on the revenue
from this picture just to live on!*

Zimbalist takes a deep breath.

AL ZIMBALIST
Phil, sit down.

PHIL TUCKER
Al...

AL ZIMBALIST
Sit down, Phil.

Tucker stares at Zimbalist, then sits on a rock by the cave
entrance. Zimbalist sits down next to Tucker.

(CONTINUED)

AL ZIMBALIST

Years ago, during the war, I was working over at Warners, and I made it up the ranks as head of their publicity department, so *just like you*, Phil, I *also* started out in advertising. One time, I sent a letter to the Prime Minister at the time, Winston Churchill, and in the letter I asked him to endorse one of our films that had already opened some weeks before, a Kay Francis picture. Well, I waited and waited for a response, almost to a point where I almost gave up. But then, one day, we *finally* get a response from the British Bulldog's secretary, only to find out that although he considered it, he politely declined our offer.

PHIL TUCKER

Then what happened?

AL ZIMBALIST

Nothing. Churchill lead the British allies to victory, and *I* left Warners for RKO.

PHIL TUCKER

I'm so confused.

AL ZIMBALIST

Point is, Phil, I didn't get what I wanted, but guess what? I moved on, and that's what you should do.

PHIL TUCKER

That's your advice? Just *move on*?

Tucker looks down at the ground.

AL ZIMBALIST

Phil, who hired you when no one would? Who hired you when your guild fell through? Believe it or not, Phil...I'm *sympathetic*.

Tucker sighs.

PHIL TUCKER

Believe it or not, Al...I'm *broke*.

Zimbalist stares at Tucker, then looks at his watch.

(CONTINUED)

AL ZIMBALIST
It's getting late, Phil. Wrap it up
here, and get some rest.

Zimbalist walks away, while Tucker stands frozen. As
Zimbalist gets farther away, Tucker calls to him.

PHIL TUCKER
Al?

Zimbalist stops and turns toward Tucker.

PHIL TUCKER
You said that my film's playing on
the top end of a double bill.
What's playing the bottom end?

AL ZIMBALIST
Comedy called "Run for the Hills".

PHIL TUCKER
Who's film is *that*?

AL ZIMBALIST
Jack Broder.

Tucker remains frozen.

AL ZIMBALIST
Move on, Phil.

Zimbalist walks away.

Tucker slowly walks by the cast and crew, most of whom
approach Tucker one-by-one with production problems.

GORDON AVIL
Hey, Phil, the sun's over the
horizon, we're gonna have to shoot
the final scene with the family on
another day to get the right light!

Tucker continues walking, oblivious to Avil.

GORDON AVIL
Hey, you all right, Phil?

JACK GREENHALGH
Phil, we *gotta* do something about
these kids. They've been on the set
for well over four hours now. We
should get 'em outta here if don't
want to be penalized by the child
labor union!

GEORGE BARROWS

Hey, Phil, someone on your crew's asking to sketch me while I wear this helmet. Can you tell 'em to do that on the wing while I'm working? I have to breathe!

RUNNER

Phil! I just got word from the owner of the bubble machine, he needs it back for the Ice Capades!

Tucker clasps his head with both hands as he continues to walk toward the East entrance to the cave, leaving the chattering cast and crew behind him. Tucker runs into the cave and away from the noise, the camera close behind him.

CUT TO:

EXT. BRONSON CAVE WEST ENTRANCE - DAY

Projection reel cue mark.

Tucker runs until he reaches the entrance on the opposite side of the cave, then exits out that side.

Ten-to-twelve-minute 3-D fantasy sequence involving bubbles, multiple Ro-Men and original stop-motion animation.

Fantasy sequence ends, and Tucker runs back into the cave, with the camera close behind him.

Projection reel cue mark.

CUT TO:

EXT. BRONSON CAVE EAST ENTRANCE - DAY

Tucker emerges from the cave to find the cast and crew still bickering and chattering away. Tucker, ignoring all this noise, walks until he reaches Moffett, who is on the ground reading a comic book by himself. Tucker sits.

PHIL TUCKER

Hey, what'cha you readin'?

GREGORY MOFFETT

Comic.

(CONTINUED)

PHIL TUCKER

Really? What comic you reading?

GREGORY MOFFETT

Superman.

PHIL TUCKER

Superman, huh? *Another* guy from space. Let's see it.

Moffett hands Tucker the comic. Tucker thumbs through it.

PHIL TUCKER

Do you know what this film's about?

GREGORY MOFFETT

No.

PHIL TUCKER

It's about a little boy. A boy named Johnny. For as long as Johnny can remember, he's been surrounded only by *women* - mother, two sisters. And he loves them, of course, but what he *really* wants is a *male* role model, like a father, a brother. Johnny lives in a fantasy world. He fantasizes about space, about cowboys, dinosaurs, everything in these comics of yours. One day, Johnny meets two scientists, he fantasizes that the scientists are part of *his* family.

Cast and crew's chattering begins to soften as they, one by one, start to eavesdrop on Tucker's conversation. Tucker continues, not noticing that he is attracting a crowd.

PHIL TUCKER

Then the *world* ends, and the only survivors are this *family*. Then we meet this guy named Ro-Man who has been sent to our planet in order to finish off this family. But here's the thing about Ro-Man: he's not used to the way things are here on Earth. The longer he's here, the more and more human he becomes. After awhile, he learns so much about *being* human. In a way, Earth contaminates Ro-Man, changes the way he thinks and feels.

(CONTINUED)

Tucker, still crouching, sits down on the ground.

PHIL TUCKER

Meanwhile, in the face of certain death and destruction, the humans find a way to carry on. Two of them -- the boy's sister and the young scientist -- get *married*, and they all have a big party to celebrate *life*. The life that they *do* have, *together*. And in this, Ro-man learns from the *humans*. He learns that even as bad as things are here on Earth, there are still things to be *happy* about, to be *hopeful* about. For Ro-Man, the idea of finding hope and happiness from death and destruction seems *strange*, seems *wrong*. But the more he begins to *think* and *feel* like a human, the less he believes it to be strange or wrong. In fact, to Ro-Man, happiness and hope start to seem terribly *right*.

Tucker pauses, looking off in the distance.

PHIL TUCKER

I didn't have a father. Or a mother, for that matter, they both died when I was a baby.

GREGORY MOFFETT

Really?

Tucker looks back at Moffett.

PHIL TUCKER

Yup. Grew up in an orphanage. Got out when I was about your age. And when I did, I had to start over. I had to *move on*, just like the family in the movie. And, remember, Johnny is the one who made *all* this up. *He* made up the perfect family. *He* made up the end of the world. *He* made up Ro-Man and his own longing to be human like us. He made it *all* up. And then he *wakes up*.

Moffett's eyes widen.

(CONTINUED)

PHIL TUCKER

It was *all* a dream. And that's what this movie is about.

Tucker takes a deep breath. He turns his head, and notices that the cast and crew are all surrounding him and Moffett, which surprises Tucker. He addresses the cast and crew.

PHIL TUCKER

It's getting late, so that's a wrap, everyone. Let's break everything down and reconvene back here day after tomorrow. Then we'll shoot the last scenes for our *fourth* and final shooting day.

Cast leaves while the crew begins breaking down the set's equipment. Tucker hands the comic back to Moffett, who takes the comic and joins the cast as they leave.

Tucker stands up, turns around and spots the set runner, who is standing right behind him. Tucker addresses set runner.

PHIL TUCKER

Fresh start.

Tucker, looking dejected, walks away as the crew continues to break down the set.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BRONSON CAVE - DAY

Recreation of scene from original film.

Moffett (in character as Johnny) walks from off-screen right to screen left, and stops. He then waves his arm in attempt to attract attention.

GREGORY MOFFETT (AS JOHNNY)

Here I am, Ro-Man!

Barrows (in character as Ro-Man) walks from off-screen left towards Moffett. Barrows begins to strangle Moffett, then stops. Barrows keels over and eventually falls to the ground and onto his back. Barrows, lying down on the rocky ground, stops moving completely. Both Barrows and Moffett lie motionless on the ground, until Tucker walks into frame.

PHIL TUCKER

Cut.

Moffett looks up at Tucker.

(CONTINUED)

GREGORY MOFFETT

Now what?

PHIL TUCKER

Now it's time for you to wake up.

Tucker helps Moffett up, and Moffett runs off. Tucker calls out to his crew.

PHIL TUCKER

Okay, let's all break for lunch for half an hour, then set up for the final scene by the cave.

Cast and crew disperse, leaving Tucker and Barrows alone. Tucker walks up to Barrows, still lying motionless on the ground, crouches down and lies down right next to him.

CUT TO:

Overhead view of both Tucker and Barrows on the ground, both looking towards the camera.

PHIL TUCKER

That's a wrap for you, George.

Barrows, still lying down, removes his helmet.

GEORGE BARROWS

Phil, you know that I was not enthusiastic about the idea of doing this picture.

PHIL TUCKER

I know.

GEORGE BARROWS

And you *also* know that I was not wild about the idea of terrorizing children for this picture.

PHIL TUCKER

I know.

GEORGE BARROWS

And you know that anytime you ever need this suit again for any *more* of your pictures, it's *yours*.

PHIL TUCKER

I know.

(CONTINUED)

GEORGE BARROWS

Good, but do me one favor. Next
time, just rent the *suit*.

Barrows gets up, and leaves. Tucker stays on the ground.

CUT TO:

Tucker's POV of the sky above. Seconds pass, and Ordnung
walks into frame, looking down at the camera.

WYOTT ORDUNG

Now there's a real *odd* place to
look for your big break!

CUT TO:

Tucker on the ground.

PHIL TUCKER

I gave up looking.

Ordung looks up.

WYOTT ORDUNG

See any stars?

Tucker shakes head.

PHIL TUCKER

Can't see anything through that
deep blue sky.

Ordung lies down next to Tucker.

WYOTT ORDUNG

Yeah, well, there was a *cavalcade*
of stars the other night!

PHIL TUCKER

What do you mean?

WYOTT ORDUNG

The *Oscars*, of course! Did you
catch it?

PHIL TUCKER

No, I don't own a radio.

WYOTT ORDUNG

Neither do I.

Tucker turns toward Ordnung.

PHIL TUCKER
Television?

WYOTT ORDUNG
Live from Pantages!

Tucker turns back toward at the sky.

PHIL TUCKER
I'm in the wrong medium, Barney.
They're televising atomic tests
now, award shows now, what *next*?
It's gonna get to a point where no
one even leaves their *homes*.

WYOTT ORDUNG
Say, that reminds me! Bob Hope had
a great bit about TV in his opening
monologue. 'Television is
wonderful', he says. 'Today you can
see Broadway shows and go to church
in your own living room. You don't
have to go outside for *anything*!'

PHIL TUCKER
Yeah?...

WYOTT ORDUNG
Bob gives that signature dramatic
pause of his and says, 'I was born
on a *farm*, where you had to go
outside for *everything*!'

Tucker grins.

PHIL TUCKER
Well, he's right. Soon, no one will
even go to the *movies* anymore.
Movies will come to *them*.

Tucker sighs.

PHIL TUCKER
You know where I'd like to be right
now?

WYOTT ORDUNG
Where?

PHIL TUCKER
Alaska.

(CONTINUED)

WYOTT ORDUNG

Alaska?

PHIL TUCKER

Yup.

WYOTT ORDUNG

Is that where you're from?

PHIL TUCKER

Me? Heck no, I'm from Kansas.

WYOTT ORDUNG

Then why do you want to live in Alaska?

PHIL TUCKER

I don't want to *live* there, I want to *work* there.

WYOTT ORDUNG

I don't follow.

Tucker takes the "Lea-Tuck" business card out of his pocket and hands it to Ordnung.

PHIL TUCKER

Business partner of mine is based up in Fairbanks. Spent my last couple summers there. Alaska is where I want to make all my movies.

WYOTT ORDUNG

Why up there?

PHIL TUCKER

Are you kidding? Not only do you save a bundle on production costs up there, but you're not tied up body and soul by labor unions.

WYOTT ORDUNG

No labor unions, huh? Makes sense, considering Alaska is not even part of the *American* union.

PHIL TUCKER

Oh, they *have* labor unions up there, all right, but the same regulations don't apply. The scales are higher but there's no minimum. If you don't need a worker, you don't have to take him. If I need

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

PHIL TUCKER (cont'd)
Tom on location, I don't have to
take Dick and Harry along, too.

WYOTT ORDUNG
Sounds nice.

PHIL TUCKER
And you know what's even nicer? The
whole area *itself* out there is one
big, wonderful sound stage! No
noise interruption, none of that.
You can make practically any type
of movie you want out there!

WYOTT ORDUNG
That does sound *nicer*.

PHIL TUCKER
And you know what the *nicest* thing
about it up there? Nicest part
about it is...it's not *here*.

Ordung looks around.

WYOTT ORDUNG
Phil, you're a hell of a long way
from Alaska!

PHIL TUCKER
This industry is suffocating. They
tell you what to write, how to
produce it, when to direct it, who
to put in it and when to try and
sell it. You know what it's like?
It's like a tight little island of
rulers, an island where's it's hard
to breathe free.

WYOTT ORDUNG
Well, it's like someone once told
me when I got into this business:
'If you can't raise a million
dollars, you shouldn't try to make
a million dollar movie.'

Tucker quickly stands up and paces.

PHIL TUCKER
And that's just it, Barney! I don't
want to make a million dollar
movie! I don't want to make the
next "King Kong", or any other
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

PHIL TUCKER (cont'd)
 movie that lasts 20 years! I'd be
 happy if it just lasted 20 weeks! I
 just want to make apples.

WYOTT ORDUNG
 Another apple analogy?

PHIL TUCKER
 Sure! See, imagine this film is an
 apple, and you put this film up
 against *another* apple, and it will
 be successful. But, put it up
 against an *orange*, then you got a
 problem. But whether I make an
 apple or an orange, I still achieve
 it, with what I have to work for.
 If I waited until I had enough to
 work for to make it easy, I would
 never have achieved anything. I
 would have done nothing. Maybe it's
 better that I shouldn't have. You
 know what I mean?

WYOTT ORDUNG
 Not really, but suddenly
 I'm hungry for fruit.

Tucker sighs.

PHIL TUCKER
 Maybe you were right, Barn. I'm not
 a director. I'm an *editor*. In the
 cutting room, everything's *done*.
 Every set has *already* been built
 and dismantled. Every foot of film
 has *already* been shot and
 processed. All *that is done*, and
 now it's just *me* in a *room*, putting
 the pieces together. In that room,
 there's *no* pressure, only *peace*.

WYOTT ORDUNG
 So, *be* an editor, then, Phil!
 What's the big deal?

Tucker turns away from Ordung.

PHIL TUCKER
 It's not as simple as that,
 Barn! There's all the same kind of
 politics with the folks at the
 A.C.E.! There's the interview with

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

PHIL TUCKER (cont'd)
the membership committee, the
approval by the director's board,
the requirement for sponsors...

WYOTT ORDUNG
You need a sponsor? I know a guy.

PHIL TUCKER
Whatever you do, *don't* say Jack
Broder!

WYOTT ORDUNG
Ah, so *that's* what this is about?

PHIL TUCKER
No, not exactly. Look, I have
nothing against this Jack Broder.
In fact, I've never even met the
guy! It's because...because of...

WYOTT ORDUNG
Because of American International?

Tucker turns back toward Ordung.

PHIL TUCKER
That's right, you know about them?

WYOTT ORDUNG
Well, they're not exactly a *them*
just yet, but yeah, we met them to
discuss a film we're prepping for!

PHIL TUCKER
We?

WYOTT ORDUNG
Me and my producer for the picture,
young bloke named Roger Corman.

PHIL TUCKER
What's the picture?

WYOTT ORDUNG
Thriller about a sea monster from
the ocean floor, due next summer!

PHIL TUCKER
You wrote it?

Ordung shakes head.

WYOTT ORDUNG

Just directing this one. And if you ask me, the script for this picture *belongs* on the ocean floor!

PHIL TUCKER

Think they'll put it out?

WYOTT ORDUNG

Unlikely. Then again, my producer, Roger? He hit it off famously with those guys, so who knows?

PHIL TUCKER

Going the 3-D route?

WYOTT ORDUNG

You nuts? A high-end premium to a project that I may *already* end up hocking my life insurance to fund?! Believe me, *two* is more than enough dimensions for me!

PHIL TUCKER

Smart, especially considering that the technology is already fast becoming obsolete. Besides, it seems as if 3-D doesn't even really exist to showcase my *movie*. My *movie* exists to showcase 3-D.

WYOTT ORDUNG

Say, Bob had *another* bit in his monologue at the Oscars, this one was about 3-D. 'It's hard to say what effect 3-dimensional pictures will have on the world', he says. 'The *next* generation of kids may be born with *square* eyes!'

Tucker smiles.

PHIL TUCKER

Well, better *square* eyes than *googie* eyes, right?

Ordung laughs.

WYOTT ORDUNG

You said it, not me! Anyway, gotta be moving on myself! Good luck on your *last last* shooting day, Phil!

(CONTINUED)

PHIL TUCKER
Thanks, Barn.

Ordung starts to walk away. Tucker calls out to him.

PHIL TUCKER
Hey, Barney?!

Ordung stops and turns toward Tucker.

PHIL TUCKER
About your 10% stake in this
picture...

WYOTT ORDUNG
Don't sweat it, Phil. Besides, my
agent already doubts this film will
affect my career one way or the
other anyway, so it works out!

Tucker smiles.

PHIL TUCKER
Great. Also, thanks, you know, for
everything. You were right before
-- this *is* my career, and my life.

WYOTT ORDUNG
Anytime, Phil. And hey, if it makes
you feel any better, at least
you're not in Kansas anymore, Toto!

Ordung smiles and walks away. Tucker sighs and looks at the
Los Angeles skyline in the distance.

CUT TO:

EXT. BRONSON CAVE WEST ENTRANCE - DAY

Recreation of scene from original film.

Nader, Moffett and Mylong (all three in character) are at
the cave's entrance. Moffett has make-up to look like a bump
on his forehead.

GEORGE NADER (AS ROY)
That's quite a bump there, boy,
what happened?

Barrett, Paulson and Royle (also all three in character)
enter from off-screen right, joining Nader, Moffett and
Mylong at the cave's entrance.

(CONTINUED)

SELENA ROYLE (AS MARTHA)
Johnny! Are you all right?

GEORGE NADER (AS ROY)
You gave your mother quite a scare.
Here it was, getting dark, and no
Johnny!

CUT TO:

Close-up of Tucker, who is crouching by the camera.

GREGORY MOFFETT (AS JOHNNY)
You're alive? (Turns around toward
Carla) Her, too? (Turns toward Roy)
Boy, was that a dream, or was it?

CUT TO:

Back to the cast.

SELENA ROYLE (AS MARTHA)
Well, I must try to repay you for
all the trouble you've gone
through. Won't you and your
assistant join us for dinner?

CLAUDIA BARRETT (AS ALICE)
Do.

GEORGE NADER (AS ROY)
Done.

PAMELA PAULSON (AS CARLA)
Will you play house with me when we
get home?

GREGORY MOFFETT (AS JOHNNY)
Well, all right. But I gotta keep
an eye out for Ro-Man!

CLAUDIA BARRETT (AS ALICE)
Really, Johnny. You're over-doing
this spaceman act. There simply
aren't any such things.

The cast laughs, then all exit off-screen left.

CUT TO:

Back to close-up of Tucker crouching. He looks around.

(CONTINUED)

CUT TO:

Extreme wide shot of cave's surrounding area, of which Tucker looks to find that he is completely alone.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Two men, police officer and hotel manager, enter room and approach the man's body on the bed. Close-up of the closed eyes of Phil, who is lying on the bed.

PHIL TUCKER (V/O)

I produced and directed at the very height of the 3-D craze, a 3-D picture. I admit it was not a masterpiece, but it takes a little ability - a little something on the ball - to shoot a picture that opens at a first-run theater. I have never even received my wages as a director for that picture.

In spite of what I have done in the recent past I cannot find a job. When I was refused a job as even an usher I finally realized that my future in the industry was bleak. If I can't go on working there is no reason to continue to breathe...to sleep...to eat...for this is not living. Had I been able to find a job...any kind of a job in the film industry, I would not have taken this way out. Who knows...in 15 or 20 years I might have been able to make many worthwhile contributions in the work I loved so much. Au revoir, Phillip Jay Tucker"

CUT TO:

Extreme close-up of Phil's face. His eyes open. Close-up of the bubble on the toy wand. It remains intact.

FADE OUT.

Biography coda over cast/crew group photo. End credits as 1953 song "No Moon At All" by the Ames Brothers plays.