

TESLA

The Poet of Electricity

by

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Inspired by the life of Nikola Tesla

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NOTE

The story of Nikola Tesla is intended as to be a 4-part mini series.

FADE IN:

EXT. NEW YORK CITY, 1943 - WINTER NIGHT

A black limo pulls up to the New Yorker, a less than ritzy hotel a few blocks from the Empire State Building. TITLES superimpose. The limo DRIVER gets out and opens the door for an ELEGANT WOMAN. She enters the hotel and proceeds up a creepy flight of stairs. Arriving at room number 3327, she knocks on the door just below a "Do Not Disturb" sign. Nothing. She knocks louder. Still nothing... then, through the door:

ANGRY VOICE (VO)
Who is it?

ELEGANT WOMAN
(after a pause) It's Marguerite.

ANGRY VOICE (VO)
What do you want?

MARGUERITE'S voice breaks up as she hears this.

MARGUERITE
Let me in Nikki.

ANGRY VOICE (VO)
(after a long moment)
Marguerite, go away.

MARGUERITE
(with tears in her voice)
Nikki ... why are you rejecting me?

A long silence, then in a softer, broken voice.

MARGUERITE
Nikki?

More silence. Marguerite puts her head against the door.

SLOW DISSOLVE:

EXT. NEW YORK CITY, 1884 - SPRING DAY

From a high angle of a New York street, CAMERA cranes down through a maze of wires some thirteen tiers deep. A plume of smoke rises in the distance as sirens grow louder. PEOPLE go about their business, even as they carefully step around a HORSE that has just been electrocuted. NIKOLA TESLA (28), a tall, handsome man with dark hair, blue eyes and a mustache, emerges from the crowd and sits on a park bench. Four pennies fall to the ground, as he pulls a ragged letter from his pocket. He quickly picks them up, noticing a STYLISH LADY approaching.

TESLA
Excuse me madam, might you know how
I get to this address?

Tesla takes the letter -- which we can now see is from Edison Electric Company in Paris -- and shows it to her.

STYLISH LADY
(looking at letter)
Are you from Paris?

TESLA
No, I'm from Austria but I worked
in Paris as an electrical
engineer.

STYLISH LADY
What an interesting field.
(noticing his good looks)
So many possibilities.

Tesla smiles shyly. She takes the letter and carefully observes the address. A horse-drawn carriage passes in the background as she points out the direction.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. EDISON'S OFFICE - DAY

Tesla is sitting in a chair before the desk of the great THOMAS EDISON (34), his letter of introduction in hand. Thomas Edison is the opposite of Tesla in almost every way. A short and portly man six years Tesla's senior, Edison is a self-taught, street-smart inventor with an eye to the practical which made him famous and wealthy. Sirens are still in the distance as MARTHA MANNING, Edison's personal secretary, barges in screaming.

MARTHA
A curtain caught fire in Mrs.
Vanderbilt's mansion. She wants
you to remove your electrical
contraptions immediately.

But Edison is on the phone handling another crisis. Tesla continues to wait patiently. Then to Martha:

EDISON
Okay, okay.
(then into the phone)
The horse was electrocuted where?
The driver is nowhere to be found?
For damn sakes....

Another phone rings. Edison impulsively grabs it ... anything to avoid the current problem. It's the MANAGER of the SS Oregon.

OREGON MANAGER

Mr. Edison, do you have any plans
to get your dynamos on my ship
repaired so I can stay in business?

By now Tesla is thinking he should come back later when
Edison gruffly waves for him to hand over the letter.

EDISON

You'll have your generators fixed.
(to Tesla)
What can I do for you, good sir?

TESLA

(extending the letter)
My letter of introduction.

EDISON

(back to first phone, as
he starts Tesla's letter)
I'll send a crew down to Pearl and
Nassau shortly. Find the carter, I
need to know exactly what happened.

MARTHA

(impatiently)
What should I tell Mrs. Vanderbilt?

EDISON

Tell her to go to hell. Second
thought, tell her I'll have the
dynamo fixed by Tuesday.
(reading Tesla's letter)
"I know of two great men. You are
one of them and the gentleman
standing before you is the other."
(irritated)
Doesn't look like you're "standing"
to me.

TESLA

Yes, that's from Mr. Batchelor, at
your Paris facility.

EDISON

(phone rings)
Ignore it Martha. Okay, Mr. Tesla
is it? Think you're great enough
to handle some generators?

TESLA

I could try, but what I actually
was hoping I could do was discuss
my ideas for a new system of
electricity, a system I call
polyphase ...

Tesla pulls out a schematic diagram and unfurls it on
Edison's desk. Edison glances at the schematic.

EDISON
Speak up damnit?

TESLA
... a system I call polyphase
alternating current...
(cutting him off)

EDISON
(brusquely)
This system will never work. You
want to put me out of business?

TESLA
No sir, just make electricity safer
and cheaper.

EDISON
(bristling)
Tell you what. Fix those
generators on the SS Oregon. I bet
50,000 you can't do. Forget the
pie-in-the-sky Mr. Tesla.

Tesla, a quasi-functional savant challenged by American
expressions, looks out the window at the sky.

INT. SS OREGON, GENERATOR ROOM - SUNRISE

Tesla has been working all night on Edison's cumbersome DC
generators. After soldering a final connection in a maze of
wires and bolting the face plate back on, he closes his
toolbox and leaves to get some sleep.

EXT. SS OREGON GANGPLANK - SUNRISE

The SS Oregon, a huge ship, sits in its slip as Edison
approaches with a group of ASSOCIATES. As they start up the
gangplank they encounter a weary Tesla disembarking.

EDISON
(obnoxiously cheery)
A hah! Here's our Parisian running
around all night ... with the
ladies, no doubt?

TESLA
(concealed resentment)
Your generators are fixed Mr.
Edison ... both of them.

Edison stares in disbelief, but manages a small nod, as he
marches into the Oregon. CAMERA follows Tesla some distance
down the street as his telescopic ears overhear Edison mutter
to his associates:

EDISON
Now that is a damn good man.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. EDISON ELECTRIC COMPANY, JUMP CUTS - FALL MORNING

Tesla arrives at work at 10 AM and is dressed immaculately. He walks through the plant conferring with one electrical engineer after another, examining various contraptions. Other times he's sitting at his desk designing electronic circuits or working out complicated mathematical expressions as narration explains.

NARRATOR

Edison hired Tesla and during the next year the immigrant established himself as a serious engineer. Preferring to visualize complex ideas in his head, Tesla often worked until 5AM, arising just five hours later to continue work. Frustrated at having to place his dream of alternating current on hold, Tesla was glad to be in America, the land of opportunity, and he worked diligently. Nikola Tesla didn't think of himself as merely an inventor, but as a discoverer, if not a benefactor of humanity.

While walking through Edison's lab, Tesla passes an elegant lady singing into a thing called a "microphone." The famous actress, SARAH BERNHARDT (37), is here to immortalize her voice on a new contraption Edison calls a "phonograph." A small ENTOURAGE and her PRODUCER surround her as she notices the good-looking Serbian now working at a nearby lab bench.

PRODUCER

Okay, Miss Bernhardt, you can take a five-minute break.

Miss Bernhardt wanders over near Tesla where tea and biscuits happen to be laid out. After pouring a cup, she walks away, mischievously dropping her handkerchief. Tesla, ever the observer, swoops it up and extends it to her, unable to look her in the eye.

TESLA

Excuse me madam, you dropped this.

SARAH

(dynamically)

Oh, thank you darling.

Tesla notices she's wearing pearl earrings, which he can't stand, so he quickly goes back to work.

SARAH

(reacting to the vacuum)

What are you working on?

TESLA

DC generators.

SARAH
How interesting. What do they
generate?

TESLA
(dryly)
Electricity.

SARAH
(reaching)
How modern.

TESLA
(all business)
I suppose. I made a bet with Mr.
Edison that I could get them done
within a month.

SARAH
(taking the hint)
I see, well I better not bother you
then ... for at least a month.

Tesla squeezes out a smile, oblivious to her flirting.

NARRATOR
Tesla and women were like oil and
water. Even though he said many
visionary things, such as women
will someday be as well-educated as
men, it confounds the mind to
ponder how such a genius with
electricity could be so obtuse with
women. Thankfully the obtuseness
ended there, for Tesla never
envisioned anything in his head he
couldn't build in a lab, if only he
had one.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. EDISON'S OFFICE - WINTER DAY

Edison, his ATTORNEY, and Tesla are having a heated meeting
several months later. Tesla sits in the usual chair before
Edison's desk holding a generator schemata. The attorney
sits on the couch.

EDISON
... but unfortunately, you still
don't understand our American
humor, Mr. Tesla.

TESLA
(waving the schemata)
You wagered me \$50,000 I could not
re-design these generators so they
wouldn't catch fire. I did as you
asked.

ATTORNEY

Surely Mr. Tesla, you don't think my client was serious. 50,000 thousand dollars? You are dreaming!

TESLA

(waving schemata again)
I deliver this dream in less than a month and you stand to earn sums well in excess of our wager. So either keep your end of the bargain or I'll be forced to also deliver a resignation.

EDISON

If you do, Mr. Tesla, I warn you. Future jobs may be scarce.

Feeling Edison isn't a man of his word, Tesla throws the schemata on his desk and walks out. An incredulous Edison looks on.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. NEW YORK STREET, DITCH - SPRING MORNING

Tesla is digging in a ditch installing large cables, known as "mains." Burnt, fused wires lay all over.

NARRATOR

Unfortunately, Edison was right, my buddy found himself laying "mains" for the very system he so detested. Edison and his investors, among which was the powerful J.P. Morgan, had sunk a mountain of cash into thousands of DC generators, motors, plants and miles of telephone poles carrying obnoxious copper wires all over the city. In addition, Morgan's railroads transported the materials for Edison's DC system. It was a foregone conclusion that no outsider was going to jeopardize this Empire.

As Tesla shovels dirt, he shares his vision with fellow workers OTIS POND, KOLMAN CZITZO and son JULIUS.

TESLA

Can you imagine, every house in this city ... the world for that matter ... someday lit by a safe, universal system of inexpensive electricity?!

KOLMAN

What a dreamer, but I will say more light *would* come in handy.

I could better see Otis when he
cheats at poker.

OTIS
(shovels dirt at Kolman)
See that, Kolman?

TESLA
It's not only a dream. I have
already been granted seven patents.

JULIUS
(looking at Tesla)
I see. Looks like those patents
are really paying off too. (laughs)

TESLA
They will. DC is not the future.
The future is AC, polyphase
alternating current.

KOLMAN
Huh?

JULIUS
(sarcastic)
Why, isn't that what we're
installing now?

TESLA
(ignoring the cruelty)
Know why Edison and his investors
like DC ... because they get to
build a transmission station every
mile to make it FLOW.

OTIS
Bet that translates into lots of
DOUGH.

TESLA
Ah, a rhyming poet.

OTIS
(sarcastic)
Actually I'm a famous engineer. I
too am waiting for my patents to
sell. (laughs)

JULIUS
(to Tesla, mimicing his
father)
Keep digging dreamer, we're all
undiscovered geniuses.

TESLA
(annoyed)
It's okay to dream. A dream is
just a reality that has yet to
arrive. Everything in this entire
world started as a dream.

KOLMAN
Even this entire ditch?

As Tesla and his buddies deliberate ontological questions, the FOREMAN suddenly approaches with three suits: ALFRED BROWN, CHARLES PECK and their attorney, EDWARD RANKINE.

FOREMAN
Tesla, some more guys want to talk to you. Keep it short.

TESLA
(to the suits)
No more gaslights, arc lights or DC please. I won't have my time wasted with nonsense.

OTIS
(laughs)
Yeah, us professional trench-diggers are busy guys.

BROWN
(ignoring the comment)
Mr. Tesla, we have been studying your patent filings and believe we may have a common interest.

TESLA
And that is what?

PECK
Alternating polyphase current.

RANKINE
To get to the point: my clients are prepared to offer you an initial capitalization of \$500,000 to establish an electrical research company which you are welcome to name whatever you desire.

Kolman, Julius and Otis freak as these words sink in. Tesla, the "dreamer," turns to his ditch-digging colleagues, bows and gently sets his shovel up against a large coil of wire. CAMERA moves in on the shovel blade, which reads "Edison Electric Company" as we ...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT/INT. TESLA'S LAB, SOUTH STREET - SUMMER NIGHT

CAMERA pulls back from a sign reading "Tesla Electric Company" and tracks past windows where, inside, we see all sorts of electrical equipment and drafting boards. Tesla sits motionlessly working, as sparks fly from coil to coil. He has hired his ditch-digging "professionals" to help him out as the mechanics and engineers they dreamed of becoming.

TESLA
(looking up)
Okay, close the circuit Julius.

JULIUS
(now with respect)
Yes sir.

A large AC generator smoothly fires up and runs an AC motor a short distance away. The generator hums quietly and without sparking, unlike Edison's DC generators and motors.

OTIS
You were right Nik, it works
exactly like it did in your head.

TESLA
Don't give ME any credit, my ideas
come from somewhere else. I'm just
here to serve humanity, perhaps
make Life a little less miserable.

KOLMAN
You're a good man Nikola. I sure
appreciate you freeing me and my
son from that con artist Edison.
Everything I came up with he filed
a patent on ... but in HIS name.

TESLA
You're welcome, but don't be harsh
on Mr. Edison. After all, he did
believe in me enough to give me my
first job here in this wonderful
country. But now we have to bring
our important work to fruition ...
in time for the Fair.

INT/EXT. MONTAGE - FALL DAY

Shots of New York City, with its maze of wires and expensive DC electrical installations, contrast with delicate, high-society invitations arriving by mail.

NARRATOR
Even though today's equivalent of
hundreds of billions had been
invested in Edison's DC system, Nik
knew where he was going - despite
what anyone thought. Having
finally created a prototype AC
generator, he was now on the
lecture circuit. The thing worked
so smoothly, it wasn't long before
he became somewhat famous among his
peers. Soon after, invitations to
prestigious social events began to
arrive.

For the first time, Nik was becoming rich and respected even beyond HIS dreams. One day he would even get to meet me.

SETTLING ON:

INT. COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY - WINTER EVENING

Tesla is back stage waiting to be introduced to the American Institute of Electrical Engineers (AIEE) by the respected Columbia professor, MICHAEL PUPIN. He is prepared to present his paper on alternating current to perhaps the most prestigious audience of peers in the world. In the audience are men who will become important to his career, amongst these are GEORGE WESTINGHOUSE (38), GEORGE SCHERFF (30) and COL. JOHN JACOB ASTOR IV (55).

PUPIN

And now ladies and gentlemen I would like to introduce Nikola Tesla, who will speak to you about his most promising polyphase rotating magnetic induction system for generating alternating electrical power, also known simply as AC.

TESLA

(after applause)

I am so grateful to be here, not only with the AIEE, but here in this magnificent city and country. Thank you so much for having me. (more applause) Many years ago, when I was a boy, I was walking with a friend reciting Goethe's Faust ... The glow retreats, done is the day of toil; It yonder hastes, new fields of life exploring; Ah, that no wing can lift me from the soil upon its track to follow, follow soaring.

(pause)

Follow, follow. With those words I suddenly got the idea of one magnetic field following another, around and around, induced by a soaring alternating current. Then, with a stick, I drew a diagram in the sand. This diagram has now materialized into the dynamo before you - a new system to generate electrical energy and transmit it hundreds, if not thousands, of miles. But that's not all one can do with AC.

Tesla goes to a black board, looks for chalk to do a sketch.

NARRATOR

Had Nik stopped there, everyone probably would have accepted his vision. But no, the poet of electricity kept stretching everyone's mind way beyond the snapping point.

TESLA

... one day we may be able to harness the very wheelwork of nature and transmit AC thousands of miles without wires... perhaps pull electricity from the very Earth or the ionosphere and, in doing so, we may be able to control the weather.

NARRATOR

Even I, who knew nothing about electricity OR weather, could see that this was horseshit. But then he talked about making it cheap, if not free. As a stockholder in Edison's DC franchise, I didn't see how that was going to do ME any good. Amazingly, half the crowd loved Tesla and the other half didn't know WHAT to think.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DELMONICOS RESTAURANT - LATER THAT NIGHT

A pair of pigeons sit on a wall next to Delmonicos as a stately black coach pulls up. The DRIVER gets down and opens the door. Tesla and George Westinghouse emerge and enter for dinner. Several OTHER ASSOCIATES from the AIEE lecture accompany them.

ANGLE ON TABLE

As Tesla and Westinghouse make their way to a table, we sense a major deal is brewing.

WESTINGHOUSE

... you're going to love this restaurant, it's one of my favorites.

TESLA

Delmonicos.

WESTINGHOUSE

Yep. I have to say, great presentation Nik ... no wires sounds a little mysterious however ... but whatever you say. I totally believe in polyphase.

TESLA
I appreciate that Mr. Westinghouse.

WESTINGHOUSE
Please, call me George.

TESLA
Sorry. George. I really appreciate that.

WESTINGHOUSE
I'm interested in hiring you as a consultant and possibly developing some of your patents. How many have you filed so far?

TESLA
About forty now sir. George.

A WAITRESS stops to take an order. She wears pearl earrings.

WAITRESS
Can I get you gentlemen a drink?

Tesla, upon noticing the pearls, starts sneezing.

WESTINGHOUSE
Are you all right, Nik?

TESLA
(controlling his sneezes)
Yes. I'll have a glass of cognac, please.

WESTINGHOUSE
And I'll have a scotch and water.

Tesla's sneezing attracts the attention of a woman sitting at the next table. The woman turns out to be Sarah Bernhardt, who doesn't happen to be wearing pearls this time.

SARAH
Hi dear, don't I know you from somewhere?

TESLA
Yes, you are the one with the beautiful voice at Mr. Edison's lab. (beat) Oh, this is my associate, Mr. Westinghouse.

SARAH
I know who Mr. Westinghouse is. Hello Georgie, how are you?

WESTINGHOUSE
Fine Sarah, how's Broadway?

SARAH
(to Tesla)
I opened a new opera tonight. Come see it sometime.

I'll arrange comps. By the way,
what's your name handsome?

TESLA

Tesla. Nikola Tesla.

SARAH

Well nice to finally meet you
Nikki. Want to hear all about your
bet with Mr. Edison sometime. Bye,
bye sweeties.

With this, Sarah Bernhardt, and her ENTOURAGE, leave.

WESTINGHOUSE

What bet?

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. NEW YORK STREETS - SPRING DAYBREAK

CAMERA tracks down various streets of New York as narration starts. We pass from the gaslight district, to the carbon arc district to the upscale district where Edison's DC is prevalent. In this district we see telephone polls topped with so many wires they practically blot out the sky. As narration ends, we pass the Vanderbilt mansion and move in on the house next doors -- which has burnt to the ground.

NARRATOR

Edison continued to install DC all over the city. The twisted maze of copper is the result of 20 different electric companies all competing to burn down your house. One advantage if AC was, if the wires touch each other, they just spark out and that is it. DC, on the other hand, when it shorts out, the cables melt all the way back to the power station. Then the streets have to be dug up and new cables laid down all over. If a short happens in a house or hotel, it usually starts a fire. Not only did Edison and his stockholders make money selling generators, the construction and ditch-digging businesses were booming. I even own a small piece of a framing company ... until my conscience got the better of me.

EXT. HOUSE OF MORGAN - DAY

As the streetlights go out with the approaching dawn, we come to the firm of Drexel, Morgan & Co., also known as the House of Morgan.

INT. HOUSE OF MORGAN, LAVATORY - DAY

CAMERA pulls back from the bottom of a urinal -- the drain holes arranged in a \$ pattern -- and up to a pair of large hands. Since the zipper has not yet been invented, the hands button up the pants of J.P. MORGAN (53), as he turns to a large mirror and rubs cream on a bulbous nose set in the middle of a fierce, red face.

INT. HOUSE OF MORGAN, CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

An early meeting is about to take place at the offices of Morgan's powerful investment company. Waiting for Morgan are Edison and his legal COUNSEL. Also present are MORGAN COUNSEL and Michael Pupin, who in addition to his duties as a professor, is an independent consultant, if not a bit of an industry gossip. Morgan enters and sits at the head of the conference table. He starts in without wasting a second.

MORGAN

Mr. Edison, I bet you could give me a simplified overview of your progress on indirect current if you really want to.

EDISON

Sure J.P. But that's DIRECT current we would be talking about.

MORGAN

As you wish Tom.

EDISON

Some of you gentlemen are aware that a new company has entered the market to compete with our standard DC, the current that services greater New York.

PUPIN

Are you talking about the Tesla Electric Company?

EDISON

(suppressing anger)
Yes, but let me assure you this so-called, alternating current is extremely dangerous and we will be staging some demonstrations to make this point.

MORGAN

I understand they want to put up a massive exposition at the Chicago World's Fair.

EDISON

Probably.

MORGAN

(interjecting)

I have no idea what the difference between AC and CD is but whatever I'm invested in better show up at that fair and make a damn good impression. Many of my colleagues have followed my initiative in supporting you for years, so I don't want any embarrassments. I will assure you I don't mind extending additional funds to construct transmission stations so long as the public keeps buying electricity. And your shares in Edison Electric are sufficient collateral to expand these operations when you need loans.

MORGAN COUNSEL

Are you aware that Mr. Tesla has filed over 40 patents on alternating current? Won't this have a negative impact on my client and his collateral package?

EDISON COUNSEL

Absolutely not. We have carefully reviewed all the Tesla patents and they will have about as much effect on the future of electrical generation as a poem.

MORGAN COUNSEL

Then you assure us that this will create no liability for any Morgan interests or the new company we plan to consolidate even though Westinghouse has purchased all of Tesla's patents and hired him as a consultant?

EDISON

(exploding)

Westinghouse?! Tesla is partnering with Westinghouse!!!

PUPIN

Yep. In fact I hear he paid Tesla \$60,000 for all 40 patents of which 5,000 was advanced in cash and the balance distributed as 150 shares of Westinghouse stock.

MORGAN COUNSEL

(sarcastically)

But here's the funny part, Westinghouse is so ... confident in Tesla, he gave him a royalty contract that's too good to be true: 93 cents for each horsepower of AC sold to the public.

EDISON

(even more furious)

And it never will be true, because AC will never happen. Westinghouse is a moron. Him and Tesla are the perfect couple. I had Tesla working over at my Pearl Street lab several years ago and he was an idiot. A dreamer.

MORGAN

(now yelling)

Alright AC, DC, BC. Who gives a damn as long as we make money. But more importantly, as long as I don't LOSE any money. And I'm getting tired of being the lender of last resort for this ungrateful town.

EXT. ALLEYS AND BACK STREETS, MONTAGE - FOGGY NIGHT

A RAT is suddenly captured in a net. A CAT, stretching into a garbage can outside a restaurant, is suddenly snatched by a pair of gloved hands. A DARK FIGURE, holding a stray DOG by the collar, shoves it into a truck while a CREEPY DRIVER waits. The truck speeds off into the night.

INT. PLAYERS CLUB - SUMMER NIGHT

Invitations to prestigious social events are now beginning to come in from members of NEW YORK'S ELITE, the so-called, 400 Club. At the Players Club, Tesla is surrounded by ATTRACTIVE PEOPLE all vying for a chance to get near enough to hear what the tall genius has to say.

TESLA

... so one day we will be able to provide your businesses with all the cheap electrical power they need. The human consumption of energy will never decrease, it will always increase and increase at the rate of two and a half times per generation. Count on it.

An attractive woman, MARGUERITE MERINGTON(28), becomes so infatuated with Tesla, she is practically holding her breath. Tesla seems to be attracted to her too, made possible in part because she's not wearing any pearls.

TESLA

(extending his hand)

Come here, I have to show you something unbelievable.

MARGUERITE
(shocked)
Me?!

TESLA
Yes, you.
(to the group)
Please excuse us for a moment.

Tesla leads Miss Merington toward an outside terrace where they can get away from the crowd.

EXT. PLAYERS CLUB, TERRACE - NIGHT

The night sky over New York hasn't yet been polluted by light. It's beautiful and romantic as are the couple that look up at the piercing multitude of stars.

TESLA
Aren't they unbelievable. How many
can you see?

MARGUERITE
Millions I suppose.

TESLA
Actually you can only see maybe
3,000 with the unaided eye, but all
that will change in about 50 years.

MARGUERITE
Really, what happens then?

TESLA
Well, there will be so many
electrical lights all over the
city, the stars will eventually be
washed out.

MARGUERITE
So I guess we should enjoy them
while they last.

TESLA
(off dreaming)
Last? No one knows how long the
stars will last ... nor how long
they have been there. For that
matter, no one even knows what
makes them shine. All we know is
they are suns like our own, but so
far away they appear as tiny,
colored dots.

MARGUERITE
How far away?

TESLA

Some say they're here in the galaxy, but I say many of them are galaxies in their own right. Therefore they may be trillions of miles away.

MARGUERITE

What do you do?

TESLA

Oh, I dabble in the sciences.

MARGUERITE

How exciting? Which ones?

TESLA

Mainly electrical engineering. What about you?

MARGUERITE

I dabble on the piano and write a little poetry.

TESLA

Poetry. That's exactly what I would be doing if I didn't feel a calling.

MARGUERITE

Called to do what?

TESLA

Help build a better world.

MARGUERITE

How so?

TESLA

Since energy is needed for almost all industry, I want to create abundant supplies of it, inexpensive, if not virtually free.

MARGUERITE

I don't need any energy to write a poem.

TESLA

Actually it takes vast amounts of energy, mental energy, to write a poem. Thus, that's a mission I will happily leave to others.

Marguerite laughs, as a REPORTER barges in.

REPORTER

Can I get a shot Mr. Tesla? Your friend, Miss Merington, is welcome too.

TESLA

Sure.

The reporter points a Speed Graphic at Tesla and Miss Merington and FLASHES a picture.

NARRATOR

Good thing the reporter mentioned Marguerite Merington's name otherwise the genius would probably never have realized who he was talking to.

INT. NEWS HEADLINES, MONTAGE - DAY

Over the picture of Tesla and Marguerite Merington, headlines flash the following: TESLA'S AC KILLS. PREVENT SHOCK BY USING EDISON'S DC. Edison's PR machine is hard at work putting out a non-stop series of newspaper and magazine articles, press interviews and demonstrations to falsely characterize Alternating Current.

EXT. SMALL PLATFORM - FALL NIGHT

A CROWD of New Yorkers surrounds a small platform where a young Edison MUCKER holds a rat with gloves. ANOTHER MUCKER is coming at it with a pair of tongs, each prong connected to a wire that runs a short distance to a generator clearly labeled, "Westinghouse AC Current."

MUCKER

(gleefully)

Here is what AC can do if given a chance?

(zaps the rat)

Is this the type of electricity you want in your house?

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TESLA'S LAB, SOUTH FIFTH STREET - NIGHT

Tesla is having one of his own demonstrations to show that AC is quite safe. Members of the PRESS, Westinghouse, PROFESSOR ANTHONY from Cornell, and Michael Pupin are there in support. Tesla is allowing millions of volts of AC to run through his body. As Tesla demonstrates, Professor Anthony speaks.

PROFESSOR ANTHONY

As you can see ladies and gentlemen, members of the press, it's completely bogus to make the claim that AC is dangerous, otherwise our friend, Mr. Tesla, would be quite dead by now.

PUPIN

I will second that.

All clap as Tesla gives an impressive demonstration of sparks flowing all around his body and lighting lamps in his hands.

NARRATOR

Thanks to the staunch support of Westinghouse and prestigious engineers, such as professors Anthony and Pupin at Columbia, Edison's black bag of tricks was exposed as the fraud it was.

INT. MORGAN'S MANSION - WINTER MORNING

J.P. Morgan is having breakfast and reading the morning paper. At the table is his second wife, FRANCES, and their youngest daughter, Anne. ANNE MORGAN (26) is a tall, substantial woman with piercing, tawny eyes that resemble her father's. A nearby ticker tape chatters as a SERVANT brings a clipping of stock quotes over.

MORGAN

(reading)

Damn that poet! Now I see what Edison was saying about alternating current.

ANNE

What poet, father?

MORGAN

Tesla.

FRANCES

That handsome Serbian? We should have him over for dinner sometime John.

MORGAN

Over my dead body.

ANNE

Is this him in the paper?

(reading)

"Edison staging horrendous capers to invalidate alternating current." What's alternating current?

MORGAN

I have no idea, but it's costing me plenty.

The morning Wall Street Journal also has a society picture of Tesla and Westinghouse standing with a number of prominent people, among which are Michael Pupin, Professor Anthony and Marguerite Merington. Anne knows Marguerite, being a society girl herself.

ANNE
(a little jealous)
There's Marguerite ... with Mr. Tesla. ... He *is* cute, mom. Can you introduce me to him, father?

MORGAN
No!

ANNE
John, don't be that way.

This prompts Anne to grab the paper and avidly read the details.

NARRATOR
Unaware of the love and hate developing around him, Tesla became a consultant for Westinghouse in Pittsburgh. Fortunately or unfortunately, Nik didn't seem to get along with 9 to 5 types.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. WESTINGHOUSE ELECTRIC COMPANY - SPRING DAY

Tesla is in a passionate argument with STAFF ENGINEERS who are now ganging up on him.

ENGINEER 1
Tesla, your specs are ridiculous. This generator needs to run at 133 cycles per second. All Edison equipment is standardized at 133.

TESLA
No. It needs to run at 60.

ENGINEER 2
Why?

TESLA
Although a time-base is arbitrary, 133 Hertz is not stable ... no matter who standardized it.

ENGINEER 3
How so?

TESLA
Well, for one thing, 133 is NOT divisible by three and 60 is.

ENGINEER 1

Huh?

TESLA

Just as three points define a plane, an armature must be moved by an electromagnetic field divisible by three oscillations, otherwise the entire mechanism will vibrate and you will get noise, hence thermal loss.

ENGINEER 2

So?

TESLA

So, 60 cycles per second needs to be the universal standard for alternating current.

SENIOR ENGINEER

(exasperated)

All right, all right, I give up.
We'll make it 60 cycles per second as you wish.

EXT. MEDIUM PLATFORM - NIGHT

Edison's agents have set up a larger platform before a GROUP OF CITIZENS. This time a SCARED DOG is leashed to a pole next to a dynamo labeled "Westinghouse AC Generator."

EDISON AGENT 1

Ladies and gentlemen, I stand before you to demonstrate how dangerous 60 cycles per second, AC electricity is.

With this, the agent touches the dog, which yelps in pain. It's pathetic. (Note: we don't hurt or show anything graphic)

EDISON AGENT 2

Would you want this kind of electricity in your house?

A REPORTER takes a shot which dissolves into ...

INT. SARAH BERNHARDT'S APARTMENT - SUMMER DAY

... an article in the hands of Sarah Bernhardt which she is reading in her swank apartment. Abhorred, she throws the pathetic article down, picks up the phone and dials.

SARAH

Hi Nikki. I got your number from Georgie. Another year's up and you still haven't called!

I've been reading about you so I thought I'd see if any of it's true.

TESLA
Not a word, especially what Edison is saying.

SARAH
Well how about dinner to celebrate your becoming an American citizen? That's true, isn't it?

TESLA
Yes, and that sounds divine, Sarah. Where would you like to go?

SARAH
Meet me in the lobby of the Waldorf-Astoria, Saturday at 9.

TESLA
Okay, on one condition. No pearls.

SARAH
Nikki, wouldn't dare?

INT. TESLA'S ROOM, PITTSBURGH - SUMMER DAY

Tesla hangs up the phone, shakes his head subtly and looks at a picture of New York City. Even though he is staying in a splendid room at Homewood, the estate of George Westinghouse, he longs for the grand city. He also can't wait to get away from Pittsburgh and all the recalcitrant engineers that are deluging him with insane small-thought.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT/INT. TRAIN FOR NEW YORK - FALL DAY

From a high shot of a train winding through a beautiful Autumn in western Pennsylvania, CAMERA moves in on a window where we see Nikola Tesla ... asleep.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. WALDORF ASTORIA, DINING ROOM - EVENING

Nikola Tesla and Sarah Bernhardt are seated at an elegant table defaced by a pile of napkins. As Tesla uses one after another to feverishly polish his silverware, Sarah looks straight ahead, feigning oblivion. As promised, she has worn no pearl jewelry.

TESLA

I suppose you are wondering why I have an aversion to pearls.

SARAH

(now watching him polish)
Okay, let's start with that.

TESLA

Pearls are the porous remains of tormented sea creatures. We grow them for no other reason than to display them on our bodies. But alas, they get their revenge. They absorb our sweat, retain it long after it has putrefied, and then stink us up to high-heaven.

SARAH

I see?

TESLA

Unfortunately I have an acute sense of smell and don't care for rank odors, especially on a woman.

SARAH

Okay fair enough. Now, what about the napkins?

Tesla is on his 9th napkin, polishing a knife as he speaks.

TESLA

I polish silverware to kill germs. Realize where you are. You're in a huge city with millions of people, many with poor hygiene ... a cesspool writhing with every germ imaginable. On top of that, smokers pollute the air with tobacco, a practice that will someday be banned.

Miss Bernhardt, feeling paranoid, looks around but continues to listen with rapped attention.

SARAH

I don't see any germs dear.

TESLA

It's not a matter of seeing them. It's a matter of killing them. By rubbing this silverware I am creating intense heat from friction. The number of germs I kill varies directly with the amount of heat times the square of the duration. $Ng = Hf \cdot t^2$, if you want to reduce it to an equation.

SARAH
(teasing, a' la Mae West)
Yes, I always do like to reduce
things to an equation, Nikki.

She grabs a napkin and starts polishing her silverware.

TESLA
I expect you do.

SARAH
Since you can't make things as hot
as you would like, you just rub a
little longer.

TESLA
The story of my life. You either
kill them with heat or with time.

SARAH
So that's the technique.... Let's
talk about me now Nikki. Sometimes
I don't want to be an actress any
longer, I want to settle down.

TESLA
(changing the subject)
Speaking of settling down, I think
I'm going to get a place here at
the Waldorf someday.

SARAH
(remembering)
Some day you said you were going to
tell me about your bet with Mr.
Edison.

TESLA
Not much to tell. I bet him I could
improve his generators and I did.
But there's more to be done.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TESLA'S LAB, SOUTH STREET - EARLY WINTER MORNING

Tesla has been working all night on the coil for a more
powerful generator. CAMERA moves in on some of his drawings
and mathematical calculations.

NARRATOR
I always thought Tesla was way too
serious about life, his high
purpose and all that. What's wrong
with relaxing a little, maybe
having some fun with the ladies, as
even J.P. did from time to time,
whether New York-society approved
or not?

INT. TESLA'S HOTEL, ASTOR HOUSE - NIGHT

As Tesla moves into his new space at the Astor House he works with a CUTE MAID to set up his wardrobe closet. As the narrator fills us in on some personal facts, the maid looks like she is overwhelmingly attracted to Tesla.

NARRATOR

I guess Nik felt there was no way he could lump his gifts upon the world if he had to cater to the demands of women and children, something most women want whether they admit it or not. Unfortunately for Nikki, gorgeous women seem to love geniuses, even if they act like idiots most of the time. I guess that's why there's so much hate in the world ... love and genius are rare.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LARGE PLATFORM - DAY

Edison has erected a large platform off a busy street. A generator prominently labeled "Westinghouse AC Generator" is present, as usual. This time an elephant named TOPSY stands on a metal sheet before a barrel of water where HAROLD BROWN and his THUG ASSISTANT are trying to make her drink. A thick cable attaches to the metal sheet and another runs into the barrel of water. Topsy finally takes a drink and is electrocuted. The crowd gasps as one of Edison's inventions, the "motion picture camera," records the event for posterity.

BROWN

Is this the kind of hateful electricity you want in your house?

THUG ASSISTANT

Tell your congressman you want Edison DC, not Westinghouse AC.

BROWN

Protect your kids from being "Westinghoused."

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. VARIOUS MAGNIFICENT HALLS, MONTAGE - SPRING DAY

Tesla is continuing with his lectures, visiting various colleges, universities and electrical societies around the country.

NARRATOR

While Edison and his muckers do their best to discredit Westinghouse and AC, Nik took the high road addressing many prestigious organizations, such as the Institution of Electrical Engineers, The Society of Electrical Engineers and The French Society of Physics. In these lectures, he relates his discoveries using his latest invention, what has become known as the "Tesla Coil" and its potential for transmitting electrical power using what's now known as the "radio" spectrum.

INT. TESLA'S LAB, SOUTH STREET - NIGHT

As Tesla works on his Tesla Coil, a group of ASSOCIATES and PRESS MEMBERS are present. To demonstrate the new coil, he places an incandescent lamp in his right hand and extends his arm towards the coil, about twelve feet away. The lamp mysteriously lights up.

TESLA

The electricity ... a million volts AC in fact ... is transmitting through the air, through my body and into the lamp. As you can see, alternating current is completely harmless, provided the amperage is not too high.

One of the guests present is ROBERT JOHNSON, editor of Century Magazine. Johnson, who also happens to be an amateur poet, takes a keen interest in Tesla.

JOHNSON

How does the electricity actually get to the lamp? Through the air or through the ground?

TESLA

(enthusiastically)

It travels through the air but it may be able to travel through the ground as well. The same principle that allows an alternating electric current to travel through the air can be used to send a modulating electrical current upon which the human voice will someday ride.

JOHNSON

Your work is amazing Mr. Tesla.

TESLA

(even more enthusiastic)

Not only this, AC is universal!
Just one set of wires is sufficient
for lamps and motors. Not true
with DC which is much more
expensive because you need two sets
of wires, thus twice the amount of
copper and waste.

JOHNSON

(totally excited)

I would like to do a special series
about your system for our magazine.

(hands Tesla a card)

My name is Robert Johnson.

TESLA

(reading, impressed)

Century magazine. Why thank you
Mr. Johnson. I will surely keep
you on my guest list for updates
and future events.

JOHNSON

Actually it is I who would like to
invite you to a future event. My
wife and I are having a dinner
party the 30th. Some of our guests
may be of great service to your
enterprise. I hope you'll join us.

INT. MORGAN'S MANSION, DINING ROOM - NIGHT

J.P. Morgan is having dinner with one of his senior
associates, CHARLES COFFIN. They're discussing the formation
of a new company which Morgan will heavily invest in.

MORGAN

Our railroads are transporting
copper in larger quantities than
ever.
You will be in charge of founding
General Electric to make sure it
stays that way. The House of
Morgan will be the lead investor.
I am getting fed up with
Westinghouse and Tesla. I want you
to have our brokers gradually
purchase voting stock in Thomas-
Houston Company until we have a
controlling interest. We will then
use this entity to under-sell our
competitors.

COFFIN

I see, if we can weaken their
balance sheets, it will make it
more difficult for them to raise
money on Wall Street.

Then I assume you will want to buy a controlling equity position in each company at a discount.

MORGAN

That's the tune Mr. Coffin.

NARRATOR

This strategy worked well for Morgan on all his businesses, from railroads and mining companies to banks and trusts. Even Edison is crippled by the price wars and is eventually forced to consolidate his company with the Thomas-Houston Company. As soon as Morgan had merged with as many electric companies as he could, he simply re-named Thomas-Houston, General Electric, or GE for short. Now the new entity was under control of Morgan and his cronies. But he didn't stop there. The House of Morgan then went after the Westinghouse Electric Company by floating rumors on Wall Street that George Westinghouse was mismanaging his company and was doomed unless he merged with GE. Morgan and Edison would stop at nothing to crush Westinghouse and Tesla, even the grotesque.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. AUBURN STATE PRISON, DEATH ROW - SUMMER NIGHT

The "War of the Currents" now takes an ugly and desperate turn. On a raised platform is WILLIAM KEMMLER, blind folded and strapped into an electrified wooden chair. Off to the side we see Edison standing next to a 2,000-volt Westinghouse AC generator, prominently labeled and displayed as usual. DR. ALFRED SOUTHWICK and members of the PRESS are assembled in rows of chairs watching as the prisoner is given one horrifying jolt after another ... but he just won't die.

NARRATOR

Unbeknownst to Westinghouse, Harold Brown, an Edison apologist, managed to get hold of a Tesla generator and have it installed in the Auburn Prison. Poor William Kemmler, a murdering dog, was chosen the very first human to be electrocuted. As this audience of perverts finds out, AC is way too safe to kill anyone ... at least very dead. Perhaps the prison should have used DC.

Seemed to have worked pretty good
on horses that encountered Edison's
power mains all over the city.

Finally Kemmler seems to be dead. Edison steps before those
assembled, somewhat shaken and embarrassed, as a lumped-over
body smolders in the background.

EDISON

As you can see, Mr. Kemmler has
been Westinghoused. Is AC the kind
of electricity you want in your
house, near your children and pets?

PRESS MEMBER

But Mr. Edison, why did it take so
long to kill him?

EDISON

Criminals have extremely thick
skin, therefore it takes even
electricity a while to get through.

SOUTHWICK

(piping up)

But if this had been you, or your
loved ones, you would have been
killed instantly.

EDISON

That's right, believe me, you do
not want the AC hazard in your
house. Stick with General
Electric's safe system of DC.

Suddenly, Kemmler moves in the background. All let out a
gasp. Edison turns around and seeing this, quickly draws a
curtain to shroud the viewing platform.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GEORGE WESTINGHOUSE'S OFFICE - FALL MORNING

A meeting has been called to discuss other urgent matters. A
movie of Topsy's gruesome electrocution has just finished
playing in the background as George Westinghouse reads a
stock ticker and walks around behind his desk. As he takes a
seat before his legal COUNSEL and investment banker, AUGUST
BELMONT, he does not look happy.

WESTINGHOUSE

I have called this emergency
meeting because our war to counter
Edison's insane shenanigans has
placed the company into a position
where we have not been able to
declare any dividends for quite
some time. Consequently, our stock
price has been falling.

BELMONT

And that's why I, and my associates, urge you to merge with Morgan's new company. Stop bickering amongst yourselves and join forces.

WESTINGHOUSE

I wouldn't merge with that scoundrel for all the money in the world.

WESTINGHOUSE COUNSEL

What about merging with several other companies, such as U.S. Electric and Consolidated Light?

WESTINGHOUSE

That's a possibility. How about pulling Tesla's company into the mix as well?

BELMONT

I don't know, it may be more prudent to just keep his firm as a consultancy. Never know when the company will have to distance itself from some of his more eccentric ideas.

WESTINGHOUSE

All right, let's file Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing.

WESTINGHOUSE COUNSEL

I suggest we make it a Delaware C corporation and authorize 500,000 shares of convertible preferred. Westinghouse Electric will own these new shares and we can use the new entity to go after the contract for the World's Fair.

WESTINGHOUSE

Fine. We must get this contract even if we have to underbid our competitors and sustain a loss ... the publicity alone will make it worthwhile.

INVESTMENT BANKER

At the very least, you should take a serious look at rescinding Tesla's royalty agreement, because, if you can, we may be able to recoup some of these losses.

WESTINGHOUSE

I'll take that under advisement.

INT/EXT. WAR OF THE CURRENTS, MONTAGE - WINTER

As the narration below proceeds, we see the infrastructure of the Chicago World's Fair being constructed. We also see the following: a score of bids from various electrical companies; thousands of all-glass lamps being manufactured and placed in Edison-labeled boxes; Edison and Westinghouse sitting in court as their lawyers argue about patent infringement; LEONARD CURTIS filing new patents on Westinghouse's new, two-piece stopper lamp; an IRATE JUDGE hammering out a verdict; thousands of stopper lamps being manufactured and placed in Westinghouse-labeled boxes.

NARRATOR

Actually, far from the way the bankers were trying to twist it, Tesla's superior system of polyphase alternating current is the only reason Westinghouse was able to underbid General Electric and all his Morganized competitors. Edison bid \$19 per lamp for 100,000 lamps whereas Westinghouse came in at \$4 per lamp, a total of a million and a half bucks cheaper. Happily the Commission awarded the contract to Westinghouse. Morgan and Edison were furious, so this was where Edison played his card: Edison owned the patent rights on the screw-base of the incandescent lamp so Westinghouse had just eleven months to literally re-invent the light bulb. Of course Edison's lawyers and detectives were not going to let that happen. Fortunately, one of Edison's lawyers was overzealous and managed to annoy the judge so much, he ruled in favor of Westinghouse. Thus the stopper-lamp was born and Tesla technology lit up the World's Fair.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WORLD'S FAIR, COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION - SPRING NIGHT

From a magnificent wide shot of the 1893 World's Fair in Chicago, CAMERA pulls back past the first Ferris wheel holding 36 cars with 60 people each; past the first Ford Model-T and over to a high stage where President GROVER CLEVELAND stands before thousands of SPECTATORS. An orchestra plays Handel's Hallelujah Chorus.

CLEVELAND

Ladies and gentlemen, I now give you the City of Lights, courtesy of George Westinghouse and the gifted inventor that made it possible, Nikola Tesla.

With this, Cleveland throws a giant knife-switch and over 100,000 lamps burst to brilliance as fountains of water shoot up, cannons boom and flags from every nation wave in the gentle spring breeze.

EXT. WORLD'S FAIR, GROUNDS - NIGHT

CAMERA tracks through the fair grounds past various exhibitions, such as Edison's new Kinetoscope; past DANCING GIRLS from Algiers; past a demonstration of the first zipper; past the huge Westinghouse Switch Board and into the Hall of Machinery where twelve magnificent, 1,000-horsepower Tesla generators power the entire Fair.

NARRATOR

After this grand event, Nik was subjectively and objectively at the height of his prestige. Millions now openly recognized the young Serbian inventor, not only publicly on the covers of magazines, but privately in an endless procession of parties and events he was invited to. Polyphase AC had become a household word, as had the name, Nikola Tesla.

INT. WORLD'S FAIR, TESLA'S EXHIBIT - NIGHT

Tesla has his own smaller exhibit where he's continuing to demonstrate the wonders of alternating current. In the background is one of Tesla's many inventions: florescent lights. The names of his favorite scientists - Maxwell, Faraday, Henry and the poet, Zmaj - are spelled out in neon. A small iron egg spins on a metal patten as Tesla speaks to a mixed crowd of SPECTATORS and REPORTERS. He wears shoes with 4-inch thick cork soles.

TESLA

The egg spins because the electric field around it is alternating. This is the principle of AC. I will now allow two million volts of AC to run through my body.

With this Tesla steps up to one of his giant coils and turns a rheostat. Slowly his entire body begins to glow like a human florescent lamp.

NARRATOR

For the thirty million people that attended the World's Fair, it became dramatically clear that AC was the kind of electricity they wanted to have in their homes.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. JOHNSONS' HOUSE, GRAND BALLROOM - SUMMER EVENING

From a CLOSE UP of one of many lamps on a huge chandelier in the home of Robert and Katherine Johnson, CAMERA pulls back to reveal a ballroom where the ELITE OF NEW YORK are dancing and enjoying each other's company. The Johnsons have a unique ability to attract a mixed crowd, thus, amongst the guests, are industrialists, musicians, politicians, actors, multimillionaires, dilettantes and beautiful heiresses. A number of famous friends stop by as well, among which are author, MARK TWAIN (54), the famous Czech composer, ANTHONY DVORAK and popular poets, RUDYARD KIPLING and JOVAN ZMAJ. Tesla is backed into a corner by KATHERINE JOHNSON - petite, pretty and sharp, if not a little restless with her role as a wife and mother.

KATHERINE

Robert and I were worried the electric company wouldn't get your system installed before the party. Can you imagine how embarrassing that would have been?

TESLA

Not at all, it will take time to convert the world. So tell me, what are your interests Mrs. Johnson?

KATHERINE

I dabble in astrology and palm-reading.
(looking at him intensely)
Your eyes are a much lighter blue than I expected. You must think a lot.

TESLA

If so, it's not because I choose to. I just feel one should not waste any God-given ability they may have.

She suddenly grabs his hand ... to read his palm.

KATHERINE

My God, your thumbs are huge.
(teasing)
I know what that means.

Just then Robert Johnson wanders over with Mark Twain, having overheard that last.

JOHNSON

No, what does that mean, honey?

TWAIN

(interjecting)
It means you have thumbs up on the competition?

KATHERINE
(polite laugh, then)
Mr. Tesla, I want you to meet Mr.
Twain. Some people know him as Sam
but his friends know him as simply
Mark.

Twain extends his hand to Tesla, but Tesla has an aversion to
touching other people whether it be hands or a woman's hair.

TESLA
Nice to meet you Mr. Twain, but I
don't shake hands.

TWAIN
And why is that, Mr. Tesla?

TESLA
I get sick easily. But strangely
enough, you actually cured me once.

JOHNSON
Oh, how so?

TESLA
I was reading one of Mr. Twain's
books and it made me laugh so much,
I utterly forgot my hopeless state.

TWAIN
Well, my friend, I'm glad to hear
at least one person has survived my
sometimes-sotted prose.

KATHERINE
(gesturing to the room)
Tell Mr. Twain about your AC
inventions which will revolutionize
the world as much as you have
brightened up this room.

TWAIN
(with possibly a tear)
Yes, do tell.

TESLA
Well there's not much to tell. AC
is safer, cheaper and can be
transmitted hundreds of miles
without significant loss. My
associates and I will prove this by
harnessing Niagara Falls and
sending the power of water to
Buffalo, and eventually here.

TWAIN
Incredible! I guess this means I
should sell my shares of GE and
perhaps look for a better
investment.

JOHNSON

That could make a lot of sense
Mark.

TESLA

I'll put you on my guest list, Mr.
Twain, and keep you apprised of
developments, like my shadow-graph.

TWAINE

Please, call me Mark. What is a
shadow-graph?

TESLA

While I was experimenting with
molecular bombardment of my carbon-
button lamp I discovered strange
rays that travel right through
flesh and make a shadow of the
bones on a photographic plate.
This can perhaps be used to peer
inside the human body.

TWAINE

What about peering through a
woman's dress? I would be
interested in investing in that!

Just then Rudyard Kipling and Jovan Zmaj wander near.
Katherine, ever the socialite, pipes up.

KATHERINE

Spicy, Mark. Mr. Tesla, I want you
to meet two poets whose work I just
adore ... Rudyard Kipling and Jovan
Zmaj. Jovan's from Serbia.

TESLA

Dr. Jovan Jovanovic Zmaj, how
delightful to meet you.

ZMAJ

I have heard that you are quite the
bard of electricity.

TESLA

But it was you that was the poet of
my childhood.

(recites)

*Tell me, tell, How should I call
you; Tell me, which Name I should
give you, - Will I my "pride" Or my
"strength" veneer, Or will I
"treasure" Or "my little deer",
Will I "soul", or "my dear" -
Tell me, which name I should give
you! Each of these is a sweet And
beautiful name with which a Serb
His gold will nickname ...*

The poet of electricity at his best, Katherine breathes even more heavily as Tesla turns and addresses her directly.

TESLA
*... But I would spend One whole
 life Searching for beautier,
 Prouder and sweeter, Dearer name,
 yet unheard by world to call with
 it my flower yet furled.*

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TENNIS CLUB - FALL DAY

Morgan and Edison are playing a little tennis at Morgan's private estate on Jekyll Island.

MORGAN
 What's happening with my DC investments, Tom?

EDISON
 Tesla will never be able to send AC very far.

MORGAN
 That's good, because if he does, we're out a lot of money.

EDISON
 Don't worry, their hopes will be squashed by their incompetence.

INT. SQUASH COURT - DAY

Competition is in the air. George Westinghouse has invited Tesla to play a game of squash and talk over some business. Tesla, who usually wears jet black clothes and works in a dim laboratory stuffed with ominous dark machines, looks quite out of place in this pure-white, empty box.

WESTINGHOUSE
 Nik, the Niagara Commission says they're not going to pay off on our contract until after we demonstrate the hydro-electric plant works. This is going to be a great risk.

TESLA
 Don't worry, I'm absolutely positive my generators will perform exactly as I imagine them to.

WESTINGHOUSE
 This is also going to take a great deal of money.

TESLA

Money is just a means to an end.
It's no different than the flow of
water.

WESTINGHOUSE

While that may be true, it's going
to take a lot of water to float
this new boat, but more to the
point, my principal investment
banker, August Belmont, is giving
me a difficult time.

TESLA

(exhausted)
About what?

WESTINGHOUSE

He says the company is out a lot of
money countering Edison's black
propaganda campaign, developing
stopper lamps and litigating over
them, not to mention what we spent
on the Columbia exposition. To put
it bluntly, he won't arrange for
any more capital until I address my
royalty agreement with you.

TESLA

Address? What does that mean?
Don't tell me, I bet I can guess.

WESTINGHOUSE

Yes, but consider: he has a
relationship with the House of
Rothschild in Europe. If we please
them, we could place ourselves in a
position to negotiate significant
capitalization for future projects
of mutual interest.

TESLA

I see. Some carrot and stick.
Mostly stick. Okay, I understand.

WESTINGHOUSE

Well if that's true, please allow
me to propose a simple modification
of our original deal. If you will
void the royalty agreement we made,
I'll give you \$215,000 for the
outright purchase of your patents.

Tesla pauses the game and, after a long tense moment
contemplating the floor, slowly looks up, directly at
Westinghouse.

TESLA

\$215,000. You want to give me
\$215,000 for all my precious
patents?! No way, George ...

but if you make it \$216,000, you have a deal.

WESTINGHOUSE
(stunned)
I do?

TESLA
Not because of the money, but because you have been the best friend an inventor could have. I want to show my appreciation for your patronage.

WESTINGHOUSE
(stunned)
Thanks Nik, I will never forget this ... or let you down.

TESLA
(they shake)
Now, can we get out of this insipid box.

As the two begin to leave, Westinghouse looks over at Tesla quizzically.

WESTINGHOUSE
But why two hundred and *sixteen* thousand?

TESLA
Because two hundred and *fifteen* thousand is obviously *not* evenly divisible by three.

NARRATOR
True to his word, Tesla tore up his royalty agreement. In doing this, the genius performed an act of unsurpassed generosity, if not pure stupidity, for that royalty agreement would have eventually yielded him well over \$17 million over the course of his life. By 1905 alone, the world had consumed over seven million horsepower! Had Tesla retained royalties, his heirs would have become megabillionaires, and every place you now see the GE logo, you would instead see a TESLA logo.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. NIAGARA FALLS - SPRING DAY

The breathtaking power of the falls waits to serve humankind and thus partner with Tesla in the fulfillment of a dream.

INT. NIAGARA FALLS, GENERATOR STATION - SPRING DAY

The last of the first three Tesla generators is being installed. Edward Rankine, the attorney for Tesla's first investors, is in charge of the overall project. Tesla is present with his new business manager, GEORGE SCHERFF, and his engineer, Otis Pond. Also present, and nervously watching the progress, are an assortment of VIPs, among which are John Astor, LORD ROTHSCHILD, THOMAS FORTUNE RYAN, W.K. VANDERBILT, LORD KELVIN, EDWARD ADAMS and FRANCIS STETSON - all major investors in the Niagara project or directors of the construction company, Cateract Construction. The pressure is on as Tesla stands next to his chief mechanic, Kolman Czito, and directs FRITZ LOWENSTEIN, his new engineer, in the operation of a huge crane which lifts the 88-ton generator from a truck into its exact place.

TESLA

Okay Fritz, just 3 more centimeters
and you'll clear the truck.

FRITZ

(yelling)
To the left or right?

TESLA

(keeping his cool)
To your left.

Edward Adams approaches Tesla and Scherff. John Astor, Lord Rothschild and Lord Kelvin are in tow. Scherff immediately acknowledges Adams, as Tesla continues to give ad-lib directions in the background, oblivious of the VIPs' presence.

SCHERFF

Mr. Adams, so glad to see you at
this momentous event. I'm Mr.
Tesla's new business manager and
accountant. We really appreciate
the work your construction company
has done here at Niagara Falls.

ADAMS

Well the feeling is mutual. In
fact I'm so pleased with your
progress I want to introduce you to
my most cherished associates, Lord
Rothschild, Colonel Astor and Lord
Kelvin.

SCHERFF

Gentlemen, pleased to make your
acquaintances.

Scherff shakes each investor's hand, something Tesla could never have done, not only because of his aversion, but because he's totally absorbed by the task at hand.

ASTOR

I'm very happy to meet you and look forward to saying hello to Mr. Tesla when he gets a break.

KELVIN

(arrogantly)

I have to say, I felt alternating current was the work of the devil right up until the Chicago exhibition. But now I'm skeptical as to whether you can deliver this power twenty miles to Buffalo.

Tesla, overhearing this, tears half of his attention away from directing the massive generator ...

TESLA

(confidently)

If the company will put 400,000 horsepower upon a wire, I will deliver it 450 miles to the city of New York at a commercial profit.

Tesla goes back to his work.

KELVIN

Well, I'll reserve my judgement until the turbine wheels start spinning and usable electricity actually arrives where it's supposed to.

ROTHSCHILD

(skeptical)

Let's say it doesn't work, or we hit a big obstacle, what other inventions are you working on?

As Tesla again turns to counter any possible negativity, the massive generator starts banging up against its mounting. We can hear Fritz yelling in the background.

TESLA

(ignoring Fritz)

There is no obstacle in the way of the successful transmission of power from here to Buffalo as soon as the power company is ready to do so. All the problems have been solved, Lord Rothschild.

We suddenly hear a huge CRASH.

OTIS

Look out boss.

Tesla swings around and instinctively grabs the generator, steadying it.

TESLA

Otis, George, give me a hand.

Otis Pond and George Scherff grab the generator. Scherff, ever the promoter, continues talking to the investors without missing a beat.

SCHERFF

As far as breakthroughs, Mr. Tesla and I feel we are close to a major breakthrough on wireless transmission of electric impulses.

ASTOR

That sounds positive. Could it work for the cold lamps you demonstrated at the Fair?

TESLA

(overhearing)

Yes. In fact, if you would like to come down to the laboratory sometime, we would be happy to give you a personal demonstration.

ROTHSCHILD

Isn't a Marchese Marconi working on a similar invention? I think he's an Englishman.

SCHERFF

I don't know, but I do know our tuned circuits patent was granted at least two months before Marconi even filed in America.

TESLA

Marconi's a good man, let him continue, he's using 12 of my patents, in particular patent 645,576 to individualize signals and selectively tune them in.

As work progresses, Edward Rankine continues to talk to Mr. Stetson, Mr. Vanderbilt and Mr. Ryan across the room.

RANKINE

I worked with Mr. Brown and Mr. Tesla in funding Tesla Electric several years ago.

VANDERBILT

Would you advise me to sell my shares in General Electric?

RANKINE

Well all I can say is Mr. Brown has been very pleased with his association with both Mr. Tesla and Mr. Scherff.

RYAN

So Mr. Brown got in early I presume.

RANKINE

Oh, the best is yet to come.

STETSON

Speaking of the best to come, I hope you will all join us at the opening gala at the Ellicott Club.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT/EXT. TRANSMISSION ROUT, NIAGARA TO CHICAGO - FALL DAY

CAMERA starts with the completed Edward Dean Adams power station at Niagara Falls, where ten 5000-horsepower Tesla AC generators are humming away, and tracks along high tension wires through rural country on their way to Buffalo, New York City and Chicago. Narrator fills us in on the details.

NARRATOR

Yep, the poet of electricity was sure causing some hairs to bristle. Not only would the AC flow 23 miles to Buffalo and arrive where it was supposed to, but after seven more 5000-horsepower generators were installed, the power flowed 500 miles to New York City and Chicago as well. But for one horrible detail, my buddy said his dream had become a reality. What was the horrible detail? The Niagara Commission had only installed a total of ten generators and ten is not evenly divisible by 3 ... but that's not what bothered Morgan.

INT. HOUSE OF MORGAN, MORGAN'S OFFICE - MORNING

Morgan is reading his morning newspaper as we hear phones ringing in the background. He suddenly slams his paper down on the desk and yells for his secretary, EDITH.

MORGAN

Edith, get Edison on the phone.

CAMERA catches the headline of what he was reading:
Westinghouse Transmits AC From Niagara Falls to Chicago.

EDITH

Yes sir, but you have two calls waiting, one from Mr. Carnegie and the other from Mr. Vanderbilt.

Morgan reluctantly grabs the phone.

MORGAN
(overly civil)
Andrew, how are you?

CARNEGIE
(irate)
Not good John! At your recommendation I invested a fortune in Edison's DC scheme and now my shares in General Electric are turning into dust.

MORGAN
Let me call Edison and find out what's going on. I'll get back to you. (hangs up, then louder than ever) Edith, get me Edison gadamit.

EDITH
Should I keep Mr. Vanderbilt on hold?

Morgan grabs another phone.

MORGAN
J.P. Morgan. Hi Mr. Vanderbilt how are you doing?

VANDERBILT
Not good J.P. First my house burns down and now my GE portfolio is going up in smoke. Why are you leading me into these hare-brained investments?

MORGAN
Now don't lay all the blame on me Bill. You know I'm a big believer in hedging my bets and, if you have been following my moves, you should be having no problems.

VANDERBILT
Okay, I'll just consider this an anomaly. Thanks J.P.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GENERAL ELECTRIC, EDISON'S OFFICE - SUMMER MORNING

Edison has moved into his plush new offices at GE and is also aware of the news. He is literally foaming at the mouth as he screams to his new secretary, SAMUEL INSULL.

EDISON
Samuel, will you please get me Morgan on the phone.

SAMUEL

I'm sorry Mr. Edison. I have been trying, but his line has been busy all morning ... oh, wait, it's ringing now ... Mr. Edison's office calling for Mr. Morgan ... okay will do. (to Edison) I think I have him on the line Mr. Edison.

Edison grabs the phone.

EDISON

Hello J.P. Hello? (Morgan finally picks up) Hi, J.P.

MORGAN

Hi Tom.

EDISON

I guess you heard the news.

MORGAN

Yep, looks like AC is a blinding success ... my DC investments down the drain.

EDISON

Looks that way, but remember, I have a lot invested as well ...
(impulsively)
... Sometimes I wish that bastard's lab would burn to the ground.

Edison says this so loudly, Samuel looks over.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ELLICOTT CLUB - FALL NIGHT

To celebrate the opening of the Niagara Falls generating plant, the Cataract Construction Company sponsors a large gala. It's the dead of winter, but over 400 GUESTS show up to honor "the company" and Nikola Tesla, the inventor. All of Tesla's friends, partners, investors and associates are present and FRANCIS STETSON is the MC. There are also some new faces, among which are HELEN HUNT JACKSON, JOHN MUIR, JAY GOULD, EDWARD HARRIMAN, JOSEPH JEFFERSON, MARION CRAWFORD and HENRY FORD. Backstage, while Tesla is waiting to be announced, he's pegged in a corner by beautiful women. This time it's Sarah Bernhardt; the beautiful heiress, FLORA DODGE(35); and Katherine Johnson. The romantic grapevine travels fast, as not one of these women has any pearl jewelry on. Tesla couldn't be having a better time.

SARAH

They look blue enough to me Katty. Maybe you're a little color blind.

KATHERINE

I don't think so Sarah.

FLORA
Nikki, were you always interested
in electricity?

TESLA
(somewhat attracted to
Flora)
As far as I can remember, Flora.

KATHERINE
And you have a good memory.

FLORA
Katherine said you recite the most
wonderful poetry. Have you written
any yourself?

TESLA
Yes, I creep out into the limelight
and write one every once and a
while, Flora.

SARAH
You don't strike me as the writer-
type, Nikki.

Off CAMERA we hear Stetson announce Tesla.

STETSON
... And now ladies and gentlemen,
the moment you have been waiting
for, the man who made the Niagara
generating plant possible, Nikola
Tesla.

Tesla, dressed in his Prince Albert coat, white silk shirt,
green suede boots and kidskin gloves, comes on stage. He
looks great on the outside, but something weird happens.
Inside, Tesla is suddenly unable to accept the happiness of
the moment. Thus, at the height of his power, he begins a
speech of self-deprecation, as visions of horrible events
from boyhood jam his mind.

TESLA
I scarcely have the courage to
address you, so please understand
these remarks are not made with the
selfish desire of winning your
kindness and indulgence of my short
comings, but with the honest
intention of offering you an
apology for your disappointment. I
am hopeful that in my formless and
incomplete statements there may be
something of interest benefitting
this unique occasion ...

FLASH BACK:

EXT. TESLA'S YOUTH, MONTAGE - SPRING DAY

As narration proceeds, we see a 7 year old Nikola Tesla rolling in tall grass with his older brother DANE, his older sisters, ANGELINA and MILKA, and his younger sister, MARICA. We see Nik catching frogs in a stream; building water wheels with Angelina; jumping off a barn roof with a parasol and consequentially lying in bed with a broken leg. We see Tesla watching his friend eating June bugs with disgust; falling into a large kettle of milk and being saved by Marcia; we see him getting swept over a water fall; ringing a bell in a belfry with Angelina; watching as Dane gets bucked off a horse; and diving into a lake to remove the water-stopping kink from a firehose to become the town hero.

NARRATOR

Nik had a very active childhood and loved his older brother, Dane. He also had two older sisters, Angelina and Milka, and a younger sister, Marica. They used to play together and, inspired by their mother, invented all sorts of things. Dane was extremely talented and accomplished, but one day he was bucked off an Arabian horse ... and died.

INT. TESLA'S CHILDHOOD HOME, SMILJAN - DAY

Tesla is in the kitchen with his mother, DJOUKA, and his father, MILUTIN.

TESLA

Father, I got straight A's again.

MILUTIN

Haven't I warned you? You are risking your health by such obsessively long hours you study.

DJOUKA

Dane used to get straight A's and look where he is now.

As narration continues, Tesla tries to show his parents another unique invention he has just made: a propeller driven by sixteen June bugs. As Tesla taps the bugs, the wheel spins furiously, driven by pure bug-power. Djouka and Milutin barely pay any attention.

NARRATOR

... Nik's parents were so devastated by Dane's death there was nothing anyone could do or say to fill the vacuum.

No matter how much Nik tried to cheer them up or impress them with accomplishments, Djouka and Milutin couldn't stop talking about Dane's accomplishments. Nik's accomplishments even upset them because they brought up thoughts of Dane's accomplishments. Nik often went to bed in tears.

Young Tesla runs out, tears in his eyes as his parents continue talking amongst themselves, oblivious.

NARRATOR

... Thus, at the height of my buddy's accomplishment of conquering Niagara Falls, past insecurities implanted by his parents, kicked in and did their best to ruin him. To combat this, Nik sometimes reacted the opposite of how he felt, with his god-complex that he could invent or do anything, like split the Earth in half or control the weather.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ELLICOTT CLUB - LATER

Somehow Tesla manages to pull his mind out of the past and end his speech on a more positive note.

TESLA

... Among the many departments of research, there is one which is of the greatest significance for the comfort and existence of Mankind, and this is the transmission of electrical power.

Electrical power signifies the subjugation of natural forces to the service of Man, the discontinuance of barbarous methods and the relieving of millions from want and suffering, for energy is our mainstay and the primary source of our many-sided accomplishments, accomplishments that will someday colonize the Galaxy.

As Tesla continues, Stetson suddenly comes up to him at the podium and whispers in his ear. Tesla's face goes grey.

TESLA

Thank you for your attention ladies
and gentlemen. I must be going now
as I am informed that my laboratory
is on fire.

The audience, thinking this a joke, laughs and gives Tesla a
grand applause, as the poet of electricity rushes off.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TESLA'S LAB, SOUTH STREET - WINTER NIGHT

Mysteriously, the lab that gave birth to AC, actually has
caught fire. Tesla stands in the street watching helplessly
as heavy machinery crashes through the floors. Firemen are
attempting to put out the blaze as Tesla's exquisite plans
for an energy-starved world go up in smoke.

SLOW DISSOLVE:

EXT. TESLA'S LAB, SOUTH STREET - DAWN

Tesla is now standing motionlessly in the ashes of his
uninsured lab when suddenly a beautiful WHITE DOVE lands on
his shoulder. Taking this as an omen of better times, he
turns to George Sherff, standing a little farther back.

TESLA

We will rebuild and be successful
no matter what.

Farther back, we see all of Tesla's LAB ASSISTANTS as well as
a number of his CLOSE FRIENDS standing in the cold air,
silent and shocked at their friend's horrible misfortune.
Katherine Johnson, Flora Dodge and a number of other female
admirers are weeping.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. NEW YORK STREETS - EARLY MORNING

As Tesla wanders the streets of New York contemplating his
loss, we see him from HIGH ANGLES through Edison's grotesque
cobweb of black, DC wires. He wanders past open ditches
where the remains of fused thick wires lay like burned
cadavers in muddy coffins. He also walks past the remains of
stores, hotels and homes that have burned from Edison's
ubiquitous system of DC.

NARRATOR

Newspapers from all over the world
reported Nik's misfortune.

The New York Sun said that "the destruction of Nikola Tesla's workshop with, its wonderful contents, is more than a private calamity. It is a misfortune to the whole world." Only his closest assistants really understood the scope of the disaster, for it was they who worked with him on experiments that would someday lead to such things as radar, florescent lighting, cathode ray tubes, radio, X-rays, TV, laser, atom smashers, liquid oxygen, bladeless turbines, aluminum and aviation.

Finally Tesla comes to the very park bench he sat on before his interview with Edison in 1884. He sits down and places his head in his hands as CAMERA moves in close.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. TESLA'S HOTEL, THE GERLACH - WEEKS LATER

Tesla has relocated from the Astor House to the Gerlach Hotel. He's lying in bed sleeping when a KNOCK is heard on the door. He gets up to answer as CAMERA tracks through his functionally-appointed suite. At the door stands Mark Twain.

TWAIN

I thought I'd stop by to see if I can still make you laugh.

TESLA

You have my fullest permission to try.

TWAIN

(after a beat)

Katherine Johnson tried to send you a letter, but said she couldn't figure out how to enclose tears.

TESLA

(managing a small laugh)

That's a good start.

TWAIN

She said she wants me to extend an invitation to you. She and Robert are going to have a fund-raising party for you. A lot of powerful people in this town want to see you up and running again.

TESLA

(bursting out)

Now that's funny. Just as many probably want to see me broke and in my present spirit.

TWAIN
Speaking of, got any whiskey around here?

TESLA
No, but if you're not doing anything, want to join me for a night at a sad opera?

TWAIN
Is there a happy bar? My wife, Livy, wants a separation.

TESLA
I believe so, a very happy bar, and YOU can be my laugh therapist.

TWAIN
Sounds good to me. And for my first prescription I advise you to get as sotted as necessary to erase all prickly memories about the fire.

TESLA
I usually have one glass a day - for medicinal purposes - but tonight I may have more.

TWAIN
Is Sarah Bernhardt in this show?

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. METROPOLITAN OPERA, BALCONY - EVENING

Tesla and Twain are sitting in a balcony enjoying the opera - each in their own way. Tesla's way is to actually watch and listen to the opera. Twain however, being reasonably crooked, is enjoying the opera by peering through binoculars at various PRETTY WOMEN sitting in other balconies.

TWAIN
(slurring)
I'll tell you, the real scenery ain't on the stage. Have a look.

Twain hands the binoculars to Tesla, who reluctantly puts them up to his eyes.

BINOCULAR POV

A somewhat attractive woman comes into focus.

TESLA
Who is that?

After a brief study of the woman, Tesla pans over to a serious, mean-looking gentleman sitting next to her.

TWAIN
It's Anne Morgan.

Quickly realizing who the "gentleman" is, Tesla pans back over to Anne but is shocked to see that she's now looking back at him through her binoculars. Tesla quickly hands the binoculars back to Twain who puts them up to his eyes and starts obnoxiously waving to Anne. Tesla, the master of electricity, tries to suppress a laugh but it's no use, he's in the grip of the master of humor.

EXT. NEW YORK STREETS - NIGHT

Twain and Tesla are now walking down the street, both apparently drunk. Twain is bowing and pretending to goose WOMEN as they pass. Tesla has lightened up, but will never be that light. As they pass two STREET WALKERS, Twain stops and blatantly pulls out his wallet.

TWAIN
Well I guess I'll be paying for the
both of us tonight.

Twain offers his arm to one of the street walkers, who takes it. He waits for Tesla to offer his arm to the other but he does not, so Twain offers his free arm to her, which she takes. The four continue down the street, dimly lit by sputtering arc lamps.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. JOHNSONS' HOUSE, DINING ROOM - EVENING

The Johnsons, ever the loyal friends, have thrown a magnificent dinner party in honor of Nikola Tesla. Around the table sit many of NEW YORK'S ELITE, including Edward Adams and John Astor.

JOHNSON
I would like to propose a toast to
the greatest inventive genius of
our time, Nikola Tesla.

All hold up their glasses in firm agreement.

KATHERINE
And not only that, he speaks nine
languages fluently and writes
beautiful poetry in at least one.

TESLA
Writing poetry is a skill of which
I am but a novice. I defer to my
good friends, Robert and Rudyard,
on these matters.

Edward Adams then holds up his glass and proposes a toast.

ADAMS

I propose we finance a new company
for Mr. Tesla so he can carry on
his important work.

KATHERINE

Great idea! I second that.

ADAMS

I propose this company be
capitalized with \$500,000 and I
hereby pledge 100,000 for the first
subscription of stock. Here's an
advance on my pledge.

With this, Adams pulls a check for \$40,000 out of his inner
breast pocket and hands it to Nikola Tesla.

ADAMS

Any other subscribers?

ASTOR

Count me in too.

Almost everyone around the table holds up their glass and
exclaims that they are in as well, even Mark Twain.

TWAIN

I sold all my GE stock and want you
to know, I can't think of a better
place to reinvest the proceeds.

With this Twain hands Tesla a check - but it's not the money
that causes Tesla's eyes to water, it's the fact that he has
so many dear friends, friends that believe in his dreams.
The White Dove was right.

TESLA

We will rebuild and be successful
no matter what. I love you all.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOUSE OF MORGAN, PIERPONT LIBRARY - SPRING DAY

Morgan is reading a newspaper having the usual heart attack,
courtesy of the poet of electricity.

MORGAN

(reading)

Tesla to broadcast signal to
miniature remote-controlled boat at
Madison Square Garden. Broadcast!
What the hell does that mean? Why
can't this poet just go away?

EXT. TESLA'S LAB, HOUSTON STREET, MONTAGE - DAY

As narrator speaks, we see a montage of Tesla's new lab being assembled. We see stock subscriptions being filled out and heavy machinery being moved off trucks into the lab. Tesla and his ASSISTANTS direct the operation as the Johnsons direct various additional fund-raising events.

NARRATOR

My buddy wasted no time getting a new lab together, this time on East Houston. Tesla without a lab is like a writer without a pen, or should I say a bottle of booze. No maybe I *shouldn't* say that!

EXT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - DAY

Tesla is standing in front of a set of bleachers where a CROWD of reporters, scientists and enthusiasts are assembled in front of a large rink of water. He has what looks like a giant remote control in his hand.

TESLA

And now I will cause the boat to turn to the right, stop and switch on its lights.

Tesla hits a series of buttons. Weird sparks are emitted in the direction of a 3-foot, flat-topped boat about 20 feet out on the water. The boat turns to the right, stops and three lights come on. The audience gasps and we hear someone in the background exclaim, "it's witchcraft."

TESLA

(overhearing this)

This is nothing more than the electrical phenomenon, a unique force of nature, with its attractions, repulsions and rotations, all mysterious agents in an infinitesimal world, a miniature universe complete with molecules and atoms spinning in orbits much the same way as celestial bodies. Later I will demonstrate the same thing, but 20 miles up the Hudson.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TESLA'S HOTEL, THE GERLACH - SUMMER DAY

Every year on the 9th or 10th of July, Tesla has a birthday party. Since he was born at the stroke of midnight in 1856, Tesla has his birthday party on alternating dates each year.

TESLA

With the development of my remote-controlled boat, we have the beginnings of what could eventually turn into a race of robots ... mechanized men which will do the laborious work of the entire human race. To deliver this to the world, is one of the reasons I was born.

REPORTER 1

(back to reality)

But upon which day do you actually consider you were born?

TESLA

I prefer to think I was born on the 9th of July rather than the 10th.

REPORTER 1

(joking)

And why is that? Couldn't wait to get to work no doubt.

TESLA

(laughs)

Good thought, but actually, the 9th is evenly divisible by 3.

REPORTER 2

And what's with these threes you are always going on about?

TESLA

Three is the most stable number, so stable, the reverse of a number divisible by three, is a number also divisible by 3.

REPORTER 3

Huh?

TESLA

Try it. Let's generate a multiple of 3, say 3 times 1,687 which happens to be 5,061. Reverse the order of the digits in 5,061 and you get 1,605, a number also evenly divisible by 3.

Just then a bug lands on Tesla's chest. He brushes it onto the floor. Continuing to talk throughout, Tesla takes a napkin and gently picks up the bug in a wad. He then tosses the wad into a trash can and walks back to his chair.

TESLA

... Take another multiple of 3, say 3 times 81,672 which is 245,016. Now reverse this number and you get 610,542. 610,542 is evenly divisible by 3. 203,514.

The reporters, skeptical about this, are taking down Tesla's impromptu numbers to later check his math.

TESLA

This is why I like threes and why my polyphase electrical system is based on a trinity of phases.

With this Tesla sketches what he's talking about on a napkin.

TESLA

In a 3-phase voltage system, each leg of the current is advanced by a third of a cycle, 120-degrees, from the last ...

Tesla suddenly gets up and goes over to the trash can. He takes the wad with the bug out and walks over to the window. He releases the bug into the air by shaking it from the wad.

TESLA

... There you go little fellow. Who am I to deny you freedom and life?

The reporters really enjoy Tesla's birthdays and attend each year religiously. Where else can they get such a variety of strange entertainment for free.

REPORTER 1

Tell me Mr. Tesla, will you ever marry and raise a family?

TESLA

I am often asked this question, so for you, my good friends of the press, I will give you my deepest feelings on the subject.

(returning to his chair)

I do indeed believe in marriage for people of an artistic temperament. An artist, yes. A musician yes. A writer, yes. But for an inventor, no. It's a pity, too, for sometimes we feel so lonely. The first three must gain inspiration from a woman's influence and be led by her love to finer achievement, but ... I do not think you can name many great inventions that have been made by married men.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MORGAN'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Anne Morgan is sitting with her father and mother, Frances, reading the article about Tesla's feelings on marriage.

ANNE

(reading)

Father, will you PLEASE introduce me to Mr. Tesla. There's an article here about him. He says sometimes he feels lonely, but marriage is not for inventors.

MORGAN

That's the first reasonable thing I've heard out of him. People like Tesla should definitely not multiply.

ANNE

(inspired)

Well you know what, I don't think I'm going to marry either.

MORGAN

(in jest, but irritated)

Watch yourself. You indeed will marry if it's the only thing you do. I don't want you around here driving me crazy for the rest of my blessed life.

FRANCES

Honey, didn't you say you saw Mr. Tesla at the opera the other night?

ANNE

(softly)

I believe I did, mother.

FRANCES

Sounds cultured to me John. As well as smart and handsome.

ANNE

Father, please? Please!

Morgan, irritated by the fact that all the females in his house are ganging up on him, buries himself even deeper in the paper.

INT. EDISON'S OFFICE - DAY

Edison, a married man, after reading the same article, yells for his new secretary, RUTH FERGUSON.

EDISON

Miss. Ferguson, will you please get Morgan on the phone.

He slams the article on his desk.

EDISON

(irritated)

I'm a married man! I have no problems inventing!

What's this idiot saying?! Do you think he was referring to me?

RUTH
I don't know Mr. Edison. I've only been working here a week.

EDISON
(not the answer he was hoping for)
Just get me Morgan, gadamit.

INT. TESLA'S LAB, HOUSTON STREET - DAY

Tesla is on the phone with JOSEPHUS DANIELS trying to interest the Navy in his robot boat.

TESLA
I think my remote-controlled boat could also be turned into a remote-controlled submarine, or underwater missile. Surely the Navy would be interested in that.

DANIELS
I don't know. The submarine seems kind of flimsy to me. And how far could it really go before the batteries were dead?

TESLA
I am confident that I will be able to not only send it directions, but electricity as well. That way no batteries will even be needed.

DANIELS
I'll talk it over with my superiors, but I'm pretty sure the Navy will feel there's no future in either robots or underwater vehicles.

After Tesla hangs up, Otis Pond and Julius Czitzo, his lab assistants, come over and sit down.

OTIS
And those are the people responsible for our national security?!

TESLA
Actually they're paid to create the illusion of security.

JULIUS
Rather pathetic.

TESLA
Don't worry, they will come around
sooner or later.

George Scherff enters the office.

TESLA
George, you think the Germans would
take my submarine idea seriously?

SCHERFF
I don't know. Let's solicit them
on your bladeless turbine, but
before we do, why not try J.P.
Morgan?

OTIS
What would you have to loose? He's
sure to have a certain amount of
respect for you by now.

TESLA
You mean disdain. But you're
right, why not shoot for the stars.
Try to set up a meeting for me, Mr.
Scherff.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DELMONICOS RESTAURANT - FALL NIGHT

Tesla is at his usual table having dessert. A pile of 9 used
napkins sits on the table as a WAITER approaches.

WAITER
Will that be all sir?

TESLA
Yes, thank you.

Tesla gets up and walks over to an area of the restaurant
where the pool tables are. He encounters STANFORD WHITE
standing next to a pool table talking with a cute young girl
named JILL BOWDOIN. Jill is the daughter of one of Morgan's
partners, George Bowdoin. White immediately recognizes
Tesla as he enters the room, looking dapper as usual.

WHITE
(a little drunk)
Mr. Tesla, I heard you speak at
Columbia University a while back.
I'm Stanford White.

TESLA
How pleased to finally meet you,
Mr. White. You couldn't have done
a finer job on the design of the
Niagara Falls station.

WHITE

Thank you.... Oh, this is my friend, Jill, Jill Bowdoin.

TESLA

Miss Bowdoin.

JILL

(slightly tipsy)
Very pleased to meet you, Mr. Tesla. I have read some of your interviews of late. (looks him up and down) Sorry you feel that way. (snickers)

WHITE

And what way is that, sweets?

Used to the marriage evaluation, Tesla defers.

TESLA

No matter. Tell me, Mr. White, do you play pool?

WHITE

Sure do.

JILL

Actually Stan and I were in a game, but why don't you finish out my turn, Mr. Tesla.

TESLA

I'm somewhat of a novice at pool, but I played a little billiards when I was at University of Prague.

JILL

I trust you'll do a good job.

Tesla grabs a cue stick, chalks the tip and bends down near the table for a shot. As he looks over the field, his mind SUPERIMPOSES a network of lines between each ball indicating every possible angle of incidence and reflection. Tesla takes his shot: five balls meticulously find their pockets.

WHITE

(in jest)

A little billiards, Mr. Tesla?!

Jill giggles, as White gives her a playful swatt on the derriere, something one rarely sees in proper New York society of the time.

WHITE

Mr. Tesla, you and I will have to get together. I'm interested in seeing your new lab, and oh, by the way, I'm terribly sorry to hear about the fire ...

next time get me to design a fireproof building for you if you don't plan on carrying insurance.

NARRATOR

Not only did Stanford White design the Niagara Falls station, he designed Madison Square Garden, the Boston train station, the Player's Club and the new extension for the White House. Yes, Stanford was a talented architect ... that is, when he wasn't sleeping around with everyones' wife and girls of dubious age. But, being a buddy of J.P., I guess he could do as he damn-well pleased. Ironically, Tesla's new investor, John Astor, was estimated to have a net worth of over \$100 million whereas Morgan was probably closer to 30. But few suspected that because J.P.'s roar was evidence of at least 200 million.

INT. HOUSE OF MORGAN, MORGAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Morgan, usually kicked back at his desk smoking one of his obnoxious cigars, is standing in the middle of the office roaring at GEORGE BOWDOIN, who is frozen at attention.

MORGAN

I am so fed up with this banking system. You tell August Belmont that I will help him secure 60 million from Rothschild on two conditions: Cleveland makes me exclusive U.S. agent and Belmont keeps the pressure on Westinghouse.

BOWDOIN

(terrified)

Yes, sir. I will inform all parties exactly what you expect.

MORGAN

(loudly)

And Bowdoin, I must have that 60 million loan in gold, NOT paper! Cleveland has spent this country into bankruptcy and now we have to rely on a bunch of Jews in England to bail us out?! That will not look good to the rest of the world. I will broker the transaction only if Rothschild also makes me his exclusive agent.

Just then, Morgan's secretary, Edith, enters.

EDITH
Excuse me for interrupting Mr.
Morgan, but Mr. Tesla is here.

MORGAN
(still irate)
Okay, I'll be right there. (to
Bowdoin) You tell him, those are
the terms or no deal. (beat) Send
Tesla in.

Bowdoin slinks out as Tesla struts in.

MORGAN
(suddenly very pleasant)
Mr. Tesla, how nice of you to stop
by. Your good name proceeds you.

TESLA
It's an honor to finally meet you
Mr. Morgan. Thank you for seeing
me on such short notice.

MORGAN
Please. Call me J.P.

TESLA
Okay, J.P. The reason I'm here is
I want to talk to you about one of
my new inventions. I think it will
have great promise if I can develop
it properly.

MORGAN
(condescendingly)
And what invention is that, son?

TESLA
It's called the bladeless turbine.
It will make all other turbines
obsolete.

MORGAN
(in slight jest)
Just like AC has made DC obsolete?

TESLA
In a way.

MORGAN
(with controlled passion)
Let's back up a bit Mr. Tesla.
(pause) I don't mean to be blunt,
but I read your article and quite
frankly it's all a bunch of crap.
I've been following your career for
quite some time now, and indeed you
have a lot of talent, but for
Christ's sake, be a team player.

You're off in left field stirring everyone up, changing everything, causing losses, and making everyone gang up on me. You're a damn loose cannon. Why don't you shape up and fly right?

TESLA
(composed)
Well I'm sorry you feel that way sir.

MORGAN
(more conciliatory)
Ah, look, I don't mean to come off as a hard ass. As I said, you're extremely talented. I recognize that.

TESLA
Well that's nice of you to say so Mr. Morgan. I'm truly sorry about what happened with AC and I would like to try and make it up to you.

MORGAN
How so?

TESLA
Well, as I mentioned, I have a new project, in fact several new projects, one of them involves wireless telography. But the project at hand could be developed much more quickly.

Tesla has weathered Morgan's rage and still maintains such a polite dignity, it gets Morgan thinking the unthinkable.

MORGAN
Nik, may I call you that?

TESLA
Sure, sir.

MORGAN
How would you like to go into business with the House of Morgan? And I mean big time. Join the family, literally?

TESLA
That would be great sir. What did you have in mind?

Morgan pauses, thinks and then spills out a DEAL that he hopes will hit two birds with one rock.

MORGAN

I will finance your venture -- to any tune you desire -- IF you put down your cocky ways AND marry my daughter, Anne. (beat) Shape up and fly right ... join our team AND become a good husband to my daughter and I will finance your wildest dreams to kingdom come ... BUT Anne, and especially my WIFE, must never know a word about this DEAL. This is strictly between you and me.

TESLA

(recovering from shock)
I am deeply honored Mr. Morgan, I mean J.P. Really, I can't tell you. And, I think, your daughter is beautiful ... but I would have to sleep on it first.

Realizing the awkwardness of how that last came out, Morgan jumps in to cover Tesla's embarrassment with a joke.

MORGAN

Now Nik, you don't get the milk until you buy the cow ... not that Anne's a cow or anything.

Tesla, more embarrassed than ever by the vulgarity, seeks to just end the conversation. As he gets up to leave:

TESLA

Again, thank you so much J.P. I will carefully consider this arrangement and contact you as soon as possible.

MORGAN

(around Tesla's shoulder)
Okay Nik, remember, any deal you want. Don't be a loose cannon. Join our team. Join my family. Marry my daughter and get her out of my hair. Only kidding.

TESLA

Okay, thank you sir.

MORGAN

Bye, Nik.

TESLA

Bye, Mr. Morgan.

Tesla leaves the House of Morgan with a whole new vision. Of what, no one can say.

INT. TESLA'S OFFICE, BROADWAY - DAY

Otis and Julius are boxing up a prototype of Tesla's bladeless turbine. Scherff is sitting at a desk filling out paperwork.

TESLA
Give me ADMIRAL VON TIRPITZ of the
German High Command please....
Nikola Tesla.

As Tesla cuts a deal in the background, narration progresses.

NARRATOR
My buddy had now found a way to the top of the financial world and all he had to do was marry someone he had never met and become a 9 to 5 slave to the House of Morgan. This would have been a convenient arrangement for Morgan, for what better way to control a wild card than to own him and saddle him to a daughter and babies? Since divorce is not an option among New York's elite, Tesla decided he would rather be in bed with the Germans. After all, they seemed to be the only ones smart enough to see merit in his bladeless turbine.

From the look on Tesla's face, he has closed a deal for one of his patents.

INT. TESLA'S LAB, HOUSTON STREET - WINTER NIGHT

Surprisingly, Twain appears at the door with Jill Bowdoin. He has his arm around her and she's drunk. No surprise.

TESLA
Mark Twain and Jill Bowdoin ...
come on in. Perfect timing.

TWAIN
(drunk)
How you doing Nik? Congratulations on the Germans. They may take over the world yet.

JILL
(drunk)
Hi Nikki. I hear you haven't had much great sex lately.

TESLA
No, but I have been thinking about it, when I'm not working on more important things. Where's Stanford?

JILL
 Oh that bastard dumped me for
 Flora. But Mark has been a real
 sweetheart.

TESLA
 (to Twain)
 I see, the therapist helping her
 through the loss.

Mark nods in the negative.

JILL
 Flora also told me she thinks
 you're really intelligent.

TESLA
 (not jealous at all)
 Well that's very kind of Flora. Is
 she coming?

JILL
 I hope not..... Nikki, show me the
 machine that makes the big sparks.
 Mark said you have all sorts of
 contraptions around this place.
 (looks around)
 What is this place?

Tesla's lab is a strange place. All sorts of equipment -
 dynamos, motors, vacuum bulbs, radio transmitters, huge coils
 of wire, florescent tubes and contraptions (there aren't any
 names for yet) populate the neon-lit space.

TESLA
 Okay, I'll show you my pulsating
 coil experiment.

TWAIN
 Pulsating coil?! Now that sounds
 useful, right Jill. Maybe I should
 give Nik a swig first.

Twain gooses her good as she lets out a playful yelp.

TESLA
 No thanks Mark, you all are
 intoxicating enough.

As narrator speaks, Tesla walks his guests over to his
 pulsating coil, a 2-foot device clamped to one of the girders
 of the building. The thing is pulsating.

NARRATOR
 Every now and then Tesla stayed up
 until the wee hours of the morning
 partying and discussing the
 universe ... all the while running
 his experiments. Tonight he ran
 his pulsating coil for a number of
 hours ...

said it transmitted pulses into
objects in the form of standing
waves, whatever they are.

The pulsating coil is getting quite loud.

JILL
(wrapping herself around
the pole)
Wow, Nikki I can really feel the
pulses now.

TWAIN
Here, let me feel.
(offers her a swig)

JILL
Thanks Sam. Should I call you Sam
or Mark?

NARRATOR
The theory behind the pulsator was
like pushing a swing. You just
give a little push each time and
the swing goes higher and higher.
You have to push at the exact right
moment, the exact right frequency
of pushing. That's what the
pulsator did. It pushed on the
beam over and over at the exact
right frequency until the whole
building started vibrating. This
frequency is known as its harmonic
frequency. See, I learned
something from the mad scientist
over the years! So when he said he
could split open the Earth with
this principle, I would have been
mad to doubt him.

Suddenly a small detachment of THREE POLICE and a SERGEANT
burst into the lab.

SERGEANT
Mr. Tesla, buildings downtown are
shaking. Do you have any idea
what's happening?

TWAIN
(butting in)
I know exactly what's happening: a
damn good year for bourbon. Want a
swig?

SERGEANT
(recognizing Twain)
No thanks. (star-struck) But I love
your short stories. Would you give
me an autograph for my daughter?

As Twain manages to sign a scrap of paper, Tesla goes over to the sergeant and puts his arm around his shoulder.

TESLA
(god-complex)
It must be a minor earthquake
sergeant. I'll see what I can do
to stop it.

SERGEANT
(having no doubt)
Okay, Mr. Tesla, I would appreciate
that. Nice to meet you Mr. Twain.

As Tesla nods, the police back out of the lab.

TESLA
I think I'm going to have to find a
more isolated place.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TESLA'S LAB, COLORADO SPRINGS - DUSK

CAMERA is tracking down a string of 201 edison-type lamps stuck in the sand. Suddenly the lamps furthest in the distance begin to glow, dimly at first and then to brilliant white. As CAMERA tracks down the array of lamps through miles of remote prairie, we pass a sign reading KEEP OUT, GREAT DANGER and settle on a large, barn-like wooden building with a funky pole on the roof. The pole extends 141-feet into the air and supports a 3-foot copper ball from which 135-foot bolts of man-made lightning scream into the atmosphere. Claps of thunder can be heard for fifteen miles.

INT. TESLA'S LAB, COLORADO SPRINGS - NIGHT

Tesla is standing in a tower window looking out at the distant necklace of lamps with powerful binoculars. In the lab, sparks are flying from a 51-foot coil to three smaller coils. Tesla's mechanic, Fritz Lowenstein and his assistant Colman Czito, are walking around adjusting dials.

NARRATOR
Confident that he was onto a major
breakthrough for humanity, and to
avoid disturbing his fellow New
Yorkers, Nik built a lab in a
sparsely-populated area near a
place called Colorado Springs.
John Astor, who co-owned the
Waldorf-Astoria with his brother,
had stepped forward to finance the
construction ... and marriage to
his daughter was not required.

Out in the middle of the prairie,
Nik was obsessed with what he said
was his most important experiment
for his new World System.

TESLA
(still looking through
binoculars)
Fritz, turn the pressure on the
large coil up to 3 million volts
and Kolman, please attenuate the
third coil down from 15 Hertz until
I say stop.

KOLMAN
You got it boss.

TESLA
(carefully observing the
lamps)
... okay ... stop. They seem to be
at their brightest right now Fritz.
(observing some more) Just as I
thought, the Earth is literally
alive with electrical energy.

FRITZ
I guess that makes us the very
first to set up stationary waves
using the entire Earth.

TESLA
I believe you are correct Fritz.
And it looks like the exact
resonance frequency of the planet
is what Kolman?

KOLMAN
(looks at dial)
Exactly 12 Hertz boss. That's
fantastic!

TESLA
What else could it be. Okay,
Kolman, just hold the pressure
there and let's see if it remains
stable until daybreak.

KOLMAN
You got it.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. REMOTE PRAIRIE, COLORADO SPRINGS - DAYBREAK

Tesla, Fritz and Kolman have journeyed by horse-drawn
carriage miles down the array of 201 lamps which have been
burning brightly all night, with no flickering.

FRITZ
(running up to the array)
Magnificent.

KOLMAN
Truly. You are going to change the
world Mr. Tesla.

TESLA
As we can see, not only is it
practical to send telegraphic
commands, it's practical to
transmit power, possibly in
unlimited amounts, to significant
terrestrial distances and almost
without any loss.

NARRATOR
On the way to the goal of
transmitting electricity without
wires, Nik had stumbled across the
secret of sending signals from a
transmitter to a tuned receiver.
This invention later became known
as "radio" and indeed Tesla had
filed patents demonstrating the
critical 4-tuned circuits to prove
that he was its inventor well
before Marconi. But radio was the
easy problem. What my buddy really
wanted to do was extract
electricity from the core of the
Earth and transmit it to everyone
for free! This last was a secret
because Tesla knew that, if the
money-grubbing powers-that-be ever
found out about this, he would be
shut down forever ... or who knew
WHO he would have to marry. Nik
therefore entrusted this secret to
no one, not even a ghost ... well
that's not exactly true, he
entrusted the secret to Fritz,
Kolman and me.

Suddenly the 201 lamps flicker dimmer and dimmer. Knowing
instinctively what must have happened, Tesla looks in the
direction of the town of Colorado Springs where the lights
also flicker, and then go out.

TESLA
Oops.

INT. EL PASO POWER STATION, COLORADO SPRINGS - MORNING

A huge generator is smoking and making weird sounds. Tesla's
experiments have drawn so much power they have blown the
power station's generator and the entire town has gone dark.

ATTENDANT

Shut down the other generators. I have to get Leonard Curtis on the phone. The mayor and townsfolk will not be pleased about this.

ASSISTANT

I knew that Tesla was trouble from day-one.

ATTENDANT

He's staying over at the Alta Vista Hotel, see if you can get a hold of him. He may be in for a law suit unless he can fix this generator.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM OF ANDREW CARNEGIE - DAY

While all this is happening in Colorado Springs, Edison and Pupin are now in a meeting with MARCHESE GUGLIELMO MARCONI and financier, ANDREW CARNEGIE.

NARRATOR

While Tesla and his friends were having fun playing with lightning in Colorado, the mice were gnawing away at the wires back in New York. Edison, who was still bristling from his defeat in DC, swore this wouldn't happen again and decided to team up with a wealthy nobleman named Guglielmo Marconi. The two of them then set up a meeting with financier, Andrew Carnegie, after Pupin got them stirred up about Tesla's plans.

CARNEGIE

Are you positive you're onto wireless telography and your work isn't infringing on any of Tesla's patents? I don't want to be sued.

MARCONI

Yes. I can deliver in short order and my system won't require that much money to bring to fruition.

CARNEGIE

And you're positive Tesla is going for wireless telography too?

PUPIN

That's right, I saw him sending electrical waves in his lab with my very own eyes. And he said it was an insignificant step before he could send the human voice.

CARNEGIE

Alright, then we're agreed. We will join forces and beat Tesla and Westinghouse at their own game ... and to hell with Morgan. I'm not going to follow him around by the apron strings any more.

EDISON

Well remember, J.P. has been good to me and he lost as much over DC as I did. I'm sorry you got embroiled in the deal, but we really have Westinghouse to blame. After all it was he that made the mistake of funding a fringe nut-case.

CARNEGIE

That's true. We have to be very careful about who we acknowledge with financial support. Either they're a team player or they're a loose cannon.

EDISON

And there is no doubt Tesla is a loose cannon. I won't say I'm glad his lab burned down, but you get what you deserve.

PUPIN

I hear he's out in Colorado now. Astor is funding his experiments.

CARNEGIE

Astor?!

PUPIN

That's right.

EDISON

What about Morgan? Is he involved?

PUPIN

Not to my knowledge.

EDISON

Well then, nothing is happening. You don't fool J.P. Morgan for very long, just remember that Mr. Pupin.

CARNEGIE

All right gentlemen, I could make a comment here, but I'll refrain. I will say this however, Astor's involvement gravely concerns me. I think I'm going to have to have a talk with the Colonel.

MARCONI

Maybe we can bring Colonel Astor
into our deal ... and Morgan as
well.

EDISON

The more the merrier. I have a
feeling wireless telography is
going to be real big, especially if
we can turn Tesla into a non-person
in the process.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TESLA'S LAB, COLORADO SPRINGS - SUMMER NIGHT

It's an extra warm night and Tesla is taking a break lying
under the stars as Fritz and Kolman wrap up an experiment.
In the distance we can see the town of Colorado Springs with
its lights now back on. As Tesla enjoys the beauty of the
heavens, a 6-inch ball of bright plasma suddenly floats by.
Just then we hear a SCREAM from Kolman. Tesla dashes toward
the door to the lab.

INT. TESLA'S LAB, COLORADO SPRINGS - NIGHT

Inside the lab a number of balls of plasma, ranging from 2 -
12 inches in diameter, have Kolman and Fritz backed into a
corner. They're terrified. Tesla holds out a pole and
touches one. It pops. Fritz and Kolman jump away.

TESLA

Relax, it's just ball lightning.

FRITZ

Oh, it's not a visitor from outer
space?

TESLA

Afraid not.

KOLMAN

What's ball lightning?

Tesla systematically explodes the other balls which are
creeping around the lab, some passing through glass
containers and others through the windows.

TESLA

It's a plasma: free-roaming
electrons stuck on dust particles.

FRITZ

We were just shutting down the
coils.

TESLA

I would expect something like this
to happen if a stray oscillation
hits one of the coils.

KOLMAN

Glad to hear that's all it is.

TESLA

Why don't you two get some sleep.
I want to run a few last
experiments with the low frequency
receiver.

FRITZ

Okay, see you tomorrow.

KOLMAN

Good night.

TESLA

Good night. Thanks for your good
work helping me get the town
generator back on line.

With this, Kolman and Fritz leave Tesla alone in the lab.
It's now 11:30 PM.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TESLA'S LAB, COLORADO SPRINGS - LATER

It's now 3:30 AM and Tesla is tuning his low frequency
receiver and poking an occasional ball lighting that floats
by. He suddenly hears a distinctive rhythmic noise coming
from the speaker. He listens carefully to what sounds like
an intelligent signal and then looks out the window at the
night sky. Amongst the stars is a small red dot, the planet
Mars was never brighter.

NARRATOR

Done with some important work in
Colorado Springs, the genius made
the mistake of writing a letter to
the American Red Cross announcing
that he may have been the first to
hear the greeting from one planet
to another. When the newspapers
got wind of this story, they had a
field day.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - WINTER NIGHT

The city is brighter than ever - AC has helped make New
Yorkers more prosperous than they could have imagined. Tesla
decides to move into the nicest hotel he can find.

NARRATOR

Tired and low on money, not only from the expedition but several expiring patents, my buddy moved back to New York and took up residence in the posh Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, a small dream come true. In this environment, where investors were a dime a dozen, Tesla was confident he'd be back to financial health in short order.

INT. TESLA'S HOTEL, WALDORF ASTORIA - DAY

Tesla is moving into the Waldorf-Astoria, courtesy of John Astor. A SEXY MAID unpacks the famous inventor's ever-finer wardrobe. As Tesla dresses for a fund-raising gala, the maid looks like she could jump his bones.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE PLAYERS CLUB - NIGHT

Dressed impeccably as usual, Tesla is hobnobbing with GORGEOUS WOMEN and SAVVY FINANCIERS who hang out after a hard day on the street. At the pool table, Tesla is surrounded by a small group of friends and associates, among which are Mark Twain, Stanford White, Katherine Johnson, Sarah Bernhardt, Jill Bowdoin, Flora Dodge, Lord Kelvin and Michael Pupin. Mark Twain is sitting in a love seat with Sarah Bernhardt and it looks like Stanford is now trying to put the make on Katherine Johnson even though her husband, Robert, is nearby.

KATHERINE

... So good to have you back Nikki.

TESLA

Yes, it's good to be back to civilization.

WHITE

I hear there were lots of Martians out there on the prairie?
(puts his arm around Katherine)

TESLA

Not exactly, but I do believe they showed excellent taste in choosing Colorado Springs as the place with which to open communications.

KELVIN

Oh, that's a bunch of malarkey! There is no one on Mars or Venus, and I don't care what Percival says.

FLORA

With all those stars, I believe the universe is teeming with life. I just wish I could have been there to hear them talk to you Nikki.

TESLA

(warm smile)

Well as soon as I get my new lab, I'll have you out and let you hear them for yourself.

KELVIN

(still skeptical)

New lab?! And what's this venture going to be?

TESLA

I am going to build a new world system.

PUPIN

For what?

TESLA

It will be a global network allowing humans anywhere to send messages to humans anywhere else. Not only will my world system be able to send and receive the human voice, but photographs, motion pictures, music and data will be sent as well.

KATHERINE

Wow, that's so exciting Nikki.

JILL

Yes, I can't wait.

FLORA

You are unbelievable Nik.

KELVIN

Well I think it's a bunch of horseshit, Nik.

TESLA

I suggest you get in bed with me early Lord Kelvin, don't wait until we meet at another Niagara Falls.

Sarah Bernhardt, hearing something about Tesla wanting to go to bed, drags Twain over.

SARAH

(quite drunk)
I'll get in bed with you Nikki, how
about right here on this pool
table? (turns to Twain) Only
kidding sweetie.

KATHERINE

I should hope so. (smacks Stanford,
who is now trying to nibble on her
hand) Stop it Stanford, I am
married.

TWAIN

Well Nik, looks like you have your
work cut out for you.

KELVIN

Well, we'll see.

JILL

(flirting)
Oh, I'm sure whatever Mr. Tesla
puts his mind to will work.
Remember that night you started the
earthquake with your pulsator
Nikki?

WHITE

Oh, now we're talking! What
pulsator?

TESLA

(god-complex)
With that same principle I can
split the Earth in half.

KELVIN

Oh please leave me alone Tesla.

WHITE

You're free to go anytime Lord
Kelvin.

PUPIN

I guess you have heard, Edison and
a chap named Marconi are planning
on beating you to wireless
telography, Nik.

TESLA

Let them try, I'm working on
something far more important, and
those that invest with me will see
rewards beyond their wildest.

WHITE

I'll give you my services for free
Nik.

Robert Johnson wanders close and overhears this last.

TWAIN

You got my support too Nik.

TESLA

Thanks Mark. And Stanford, this time I want you to help me make it fireproof.

SARAH

(a little hostile)

He will help, or he won't get any more free tickets for my plays.

JOHNSON

Say Nik, why don't you write an article on your discoveries in Colorado as well as your new plans?

TESLA

Funny you should suggest that. I have been working on an article I call *The Problem With Increasing Human Energy*. Would you like me to send it over when it's done?

JOHNSON

Please do. We'll make it a special in our illustrated edition of *Century Magazine*, so feel free to include photographs.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. STANFORD WHITE'S DESIGN STUDIO - SPRING DAY

Tesla's "World System" is on the drafting boards. To build this, Tesla plans on purchasing 201 acres of farming country in Shoreham, Long Island. Tesla is standing with White next to a drafting table.

TESLA

Well Stanford, you did a beautiful job designing the new lab. I have decided to call it Wardencliffe.

WHITE

Thanks Nik. I hope it all works out.

TESLA

Only thing I need to do now is raise the pin money to build it. I need about a million dollars, given the price of copper and steel don't go up.

WHITE

If they do, it's probably Morgan at work, manipulating the markets again.

TESLA

Probably.

WHITE

Say, Jill and I are attending an event at the White House next weekend. They're celebrating the opening of the new wing I designed. Why don't you be my guest. Colonel Astor and Jill's father will be there.

TESLA

You're back with Jill?

WHITE

I guess so. Her father has been very helpful to me and you know how it is for an artist, you're always looking for your next patron.

TESLA

Indeed I do. I will be happy to join you Stanford. Thank you.

INT. TESLA'S LAB, HOUSTON STREET - NIGHT

It's late one night and Tesla is working on his article for *Century Magazine*. Experiments are running as he works. Sparks and ball lightning are all over. A soft breeze blows through the door where suddenly Flora Dodge appears. Tesla looks up a little shocked.

TESLA

Flora.

FORA

Sorry to stop by unannounced Nikki, but I couldn't wait to hear those messages from the Martians.

TESLA

Of course, I'm happy you stopped by. Come on in.

Flora is wearing an alluring dress and looks more attractive than ever. Tesla, who usually dresses up even though he works in a lab, doesn't look bad either.

FLORA

It was great to see you at the Players Club. (She moves a little closer)

TESLA

Yes it was.

FLORA

(moving still closer)

Sometimes I get lonely and there
aren't many places I can meet men
that like me just for myself.

TESLA

(moving away)

Well I like you for just for your
self, Flora.

FLORA

You do?!

TESLA

Sure. You're a wonderful person,
full of energy and curiosity.

FLORA

That's for sure.

Seeing the perfect way to satisfy her curiosity, she
approaches Nik close enough for him to kiss her. Sparks are
flying in the lab tonight and even Tesla responds by running
his hands through her hair. But the pressure is too great,
he backs away. He can't destroy his mission over a romance.

NARRATOR

Even though Flora was six years
Nik's senior, you never would have
known it. It's also doubtful that
my genius friend knew that Flora
could have been another answer to
all his money problems, for she had
inherited millions from her
family's mining ventures. Ever
hear of Dodge City?

FLORA

Oh, Nik, I know you must be lonely
... as lonely as me.

TESLA

Yes, Flora, it is true, I do have
thoughts of you.

FLORA

So why are you so hesitant?

TESLA

I'm sorry Flora, it's not you.

FLORA

I could help you out. We would be
a great team ...

TESLA

I know we would Flora.

FLORA
 (blurting out)
 ... and think of the babies we
 could create.

Tesla, who has been backing away, suddenly bumps into a wet mop. Startled, his vivid imagination momentarily pictures the mop as Flora's head. Just then there's a crash, and who enters the lab but Mark Twain. He's drunk and has just knocked over a rack of incandescent lamps, about 9 of them.

TESLA
 (with ambivalence)
 Mark, how good to see you.

TWAIN
 I hope I'm not butting in.
 Scherff said you were here. Hi
 Flora.

FLORA
 Well I guess I should be going now.

TESLA
 Okay Flora. Let's talk some more
 later. I'll try to call you.

FLORA
 Whatever you want Nikki.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE WHITE HOUSE - SUMMER EVENING

A grand event is taking place in the new wing of the White House. Tesla is chatting with Stanford White while Jill Bowdoin stands near, now flirting with BENJAMIN HARRISON, President of the United States who also happens to be a bachelor. Across the room, Jill's father, George Bowdoin, is chatting with George Westinghouse. Investment banker, August Belmont, is chatting with Edison. Many others from the NEW YORK and WASHINGTON ELITE are scattered around the room, including Flora Dodge and Anne Morgan. Not surprisingly, as many people surround Tesla as the President.

ANNE
 So ... is he courting you?

FLORA
 No, we're just good friends. Nikki
 doesn't seem to want a commitment
 with anyone. Says his work is too
 demanding.

ANNE
 That's what he said in his article
 some time back. Did you see that?

FLORA

No, I didn't. What did it say?

ACROSS THE ROOM

We can see the grapevine is doing what it does best. While Anne and Flora are comparing notes on Tesla, others are sizing each other up. Tesla isn't ready to talk to Flora.

WHITE

I'm very happy you could make it Nik. I'll try and introduce you to the President as soon as there is an opportunity.

TESLA

That would be very exciting. By the way, you did great work on the new wing.

WHITE

Thanks. We actually finished before we ran low on funds, if you can believe that.

Jill is standing about 5 feet away with a GROUP OF PEOPLE talking to President Harrison. She is crooked as usual.

JILL

So how do you like living in this huge house all alone?

HARRISON

It's not bad. Actually there are a lot people here at all times, so I never get the feeling of being alone.

JILL

Have you met Nikola Tesla? He's a bachelor too.

Jill turns to Stanford, who is now just an arm's length away.

JILL

Stanford, bring Nikki over here, I want him to meet the President.

Tesla and White turn to speak to Harrison.

HARRISON

How are you doing Stanford? Good to see you again. Real nice work on the wing.

WHITE

Thank you sir. It was a pleasure.

JILL
Ben, this is Nikola Tesla, the inventor. And Nik, you of course know President Harrison.

TESLA
President Harrison. Very nice to make your acquaintance. Thank you for welcoming me into your home.

HARRISON
I have been following your work for years, Mr. Tesla and I have to say, you have done this nation a real service.

TESLA
Thank you, sincerely.

HARRISON
Well, as you can see, Stanford made certain we outfitted the White House with alternating current as soon as we could.

JILL
What's alternating current?

WHITE
I'll explain later.

TESLA
I tried to interest your Navy in my bladeless turbine, but they passed.

HARRISON
Well that doesn't surprise me at all. You are aware that Mr. Edison sits on the Armed Services Board?

TESLA
I'm sure that doesn't mean anything.

HARRISON
Maybe not, but your new system caused Edison and GE some real headaches so I'd be surprised if they're not quite paranoid about your bladeless turbine.

TESLA
I see. Yes it's always a thin line between making advancements and inhibiting the amortization of dated technology.

HARRISON
Indeed it is.

TESLA

But don't you think, sir, that the advances always end up benefitting society in the end? Look at what cheaper electricity has done for the city of Niagara and even Buffalo. If the electricity wasn't now cheaper, Chester Hall never would have been able to have established Alcoa Aluminum. This cheap, lightweight metal will now make it more possible for the aviation industry to develop.

HARRISON

You do have a point.

JILL

(getting obnoxious)
Unfortunately, there's always pigs out there that just wanna make money.

HARRISON

(winks)
That's right Jill. But I didn't say it.

Anne Morgan, seeing Tesla talking to the President, wanders to the nearby food table, probably anxious to talk to Tesla if possible. Tesla notices her and mentally disengages from his conversation, as Jill more intensely flirts with the President to monopolize his attention.

JILL

(crudely)
I bet it's a real pain in the ass being President.

HARRISON

(accommodatingly)
It does have its pains, and I'll refrain from describing the exact part of the anatomy most effected. But mostly it's an honor.

JILL

(looking at Tesla)
So, have any plans to grant some lucky girl the honor of marriage?

HARRISON

Oh, no. No one would have me, so there's no point in even thinking about it.

JILL

Mr. President, you could have anyone you wanted ... especially me.

Tesla, realizing that the conversation is going to places he can do without, wanders over to Anne Morgan as a sotted Jill and a sober President continue "flirting" in the background.

ANGLE BY BUFFET

TESLA
Hi, you must be Miss Morgan. I'm
Nikola Tesla.

Anne Morgan is now beside herself. She finally gets to meet the Poet.

ANNE
(softly)
It truly is a pleasure to meet you,
Mr. Tesla.

TESLA
I almost feel like I should
apologize for my childish behavior
at the opera a while ago.

ANNE
Oh, think nothing of it.

TESLA
My friend put me up to it. He was
just trying to cheer me up.

ANNE
You mean Mark Twain?

TESLA
Yes.

ANNE
I wish I could count Mr. Twain
amongst my friends.

TESLA
Yes, he's a really funny man. He's
actually my laugh therapist.

ANNE
Your laugh therapist?! Don't you
ever laugh?

TESLA
Well that night I wasn't.

ANNE
Oh, that's right, you had that
terrible fire. I'm so sorry. I
would be surprised if my father
didn't have something to do with
it, your AC caused him such a loss.

Anne says this last in such a way we have no idea whether she's kidding.

TESLA

I'm sure he had nothing to do with it, and as for his loss, I'm sure he'll land on his feet.

Tesla says this last in such a way we have good reason to believe that someone else may have been the culprit.

ANNE

You mean claws. I love my dad but he's quite stubborn. I have been asking him to introduce me to you for years, but he simply refused.

TESLA

That's just the way great men are: they get some idea in their head and no one can change their ways.

ANNE

Please forgive me for being forward, but doesn't that actually apply to you somewhat?

TESLA

How so?

ANNE

I read your article about women and marriage.

TESLA

Oh, that. I should never have given that interview. It's caused me nothing but trouble.

ANNE

Why is that?

TESLA

Because somehow, society infers that a man is defective if he chooses to not marry.

ANNE

Yes, I know what you mean. I too have no intention to marry.

TESLA

(shocked)

Really?! Why is that?

ANNE

I want to pursue my work, like you. My position in the family gives me great potential to do good for society. I feel there's more to life than just enjoying the fruits of wealth and motherhood.

TESLA

Your attitude is truly unusual for a woman.

ANNE

You have been a good influence on me, even though you were probably completely unaware.

TESLA

I am stunned, yet honored!

With this, John Astor wanders over.

ASTOR

Hi Anne, how are you Dear?

ANNE

Hello Colonel Astor. Nice to see you. You know Nik Tesla, I'm sure.

ASTOR

Sure, how are you Nik? Like your new place?

TESLA

I love it. There is no finer hotel than the Waldorf.

ASTOR

True, but I'll tell you, there was a time when I almost passed on it. My brother was trying to get me to go in on the deal, but I was just too damn conservative for my own good.

TESLA

That can happen.

ASTOR

Well, I've learned my lesson, and that's why I've decided to give George Scherff a call. I'm going to continue to back your new cold lamps. Their potential is unlimited so push hard on that line, son. (turning to Anne) Sorry to interrupt, I guess the boys can't stop talking business.

ANNE

That's okay Mr. Astor.

ASTOR

Give my best to your father. I'm going to see if I can get a word with the President. Excuse me.

After Astor moves away.

TESLA

He's been very generous to me and I am exceedingly grateful.

ANNE

Yes, he's a wonderful man.

TESLA

You should come out to the new lab I'm hoping to build in Shoreham. I may even be able to introduce you to my "friend."

ANNE

I would love to come out. Just call me and we'll arrange it.

NARRATOR

Well, the genius finally made the most important connection of his life. Too bad he had no idea. What's more, he had no idea how much Miss Morgan wanted him. That line about her having 'no intention of getting married' was only partially true. Anne had no intention of getting married to anyone other than Nikola Tesla. Of course, had the heiress mentioned that, she would probably be in the same dust bin as Sarah Bernhardt, Flora Dodge and Jill Bowdoin.

DISSOLVE TO

EXT. BANK, MIDTOWN NEW YORK - FALL DAY

Unfortunately there has been another run on the banks, and BANK DEPOSITORS are standing in line.

DEPOSITOR 1

If they don't give me back my savings, my oldest won't be able to go to college.

DEPOSITOR 2

I know what you mean. Damn banks.

DEPOSITOR 1

I don't know if Morgan is going to come through this time.

DEPOSITOR 3

He will, he always does.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. WALDORF ASTORIA - PLAYER'S CLUB, MONTAGE - NIGHT

Tesla gets together with Mark Twain often, and just as often tries to avoid various INFATUATED WOMEN while speaking to INVESTORS around the room. Montage settles down on George Westinghouse who is having dinner with Tesla at the Waldorf.

NARRATOR

In order to raise capital for his new World System, my buddy hit the usual posh spots investors occasion, including the Waldorf and Players Club. Unfortunately his attempt at finding investors, other than John Astor, seemed to be waning due to the recent panic.

INT, PALM GARDEN RESTAURANT - WINTER EVE

Westinghouse and Tesla are discussing business at the Waldorf-Astoria's beautiful Palm Garden restaurant. The usual pile of napkins at Tesla's side is now ignored by Westinghouse.

WESTINGHOUSE

That's great about the Germans, but did Colonel Astor go in on your bladeless turbine as well?

TESLA

No he said he's just interested in the cold lamps. Why do people have such limited vision?

WESTINGHOUSE

Oh, you really can't blame him. Who knows what the market will do.

TESLA

My World System will do more for the market and Mankind than 1,000 Niagara Falls. I don't understand why you can't see that George.

WESTINGHOUSE

Now that you explain it Nik, I can see that your World System holds great potential, but I'm simply going to have to pass.

TESLA

Have I ever led you wrong George?

WESTINGHOUSE

No you haven't Nik, but the project is just too grandiose for me. The economy is too shaky, no doubt due to that bastard Morgan.

TESLA

Why is that?

WESTINGHOUSE

Well, word on the Street is he's fed up with being the lender of last resort. Says he is going to start refusing to bail out any more banks in these panics.

TESLA

I understand from Stanford - actually his girlfriend Jill - that the bankers are planning some sort of consolidation.

WESTINGHOUSE

Oh, they've been planning that for decades.

TESLA

A central bank would be very unhealthy for the country. Look at Europe and what the Grand Old "bank" of Threadneedle Street has done by facilitating endless wars with fiat money.

WESTINGHOUSE

What's fiat money?

TESLA

It's paper money that's not redeemable in gold or silver.

WESTINGHOUSE

And what's so bad about that?

TESLA

It gives the banks too much power.

WESTINGHOUSE

And what's wrong with that?

TESLA

Because each time in our nation's history a private group gets control over the creation of money, they inflate it so much it becomes worthless.

WESTINGHOUSE

How so?

TESLA

They print up too much and lend it out at artificially low interest rates. It floods the economy and eventually loses value.

WESTINGHOUSE

But if I can borrow money at low rates, the company doesn't have to put its own money at risk.

TESLA

But borrowing money that's artificially cheap puts society at risk.

WESTINGHOUSE

As a businessman, I don't really care about society. I care about my profits and I can't profit if I have to pay high interest rates.

TESLA

Well that's a short-sighted view George. You borrow capital from banks that literally print it and you will eventually undermine capital formation. This is the same mentality that refuses to invest in cheap electricity. Cheap electricity will float every industry. Eventually, the energy savings will manifest as increased profits and society will benefit as a whole.

WESTINGHOUSE

You're dreaming as usual Nik.

TESLA

No dream at all. Maybe it will take longer for civilization to get going, but once it does on cheap energy and real capital -- not capital based on debt -- you will see a worldwide renaissance.

WESTINGHOUSE

Nik, if I were you, I would just focus on developing your inventions at hand, the bladeless turbine and your cold lamps. Then, when the market is more stable go after your so-called World System.

TESLA

Okay George, I will take that under consideration.... So, your answer to investing in Wardencliff is no?

WESTINGHOUSE

That's right, it's a no.

NARRATOR

Nik never said "no" to George, in fact he could have reminded him of the royalty agreement he forgave, but he was too much of a gentleman.

Becoming aware of the nasty environment shaping up around him, my buddy instead decided to finish his article for *Century Magazine*. This visionary article explained why iron will continue to be important, but will eventually be replaced by aluminum and give birth to flying machines. He discussed how war set progress back and how it could be remedied using robots to fight instead of men. Nik talked about wind, solar and thermal powers as energy sources of the future and how they could be transmitted through the air to any point in the world.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. RAILROAD YARD - SPRING DAY

From a close up of a train loaded with huge rolls of copper and ingots of iron, CAMERA pulls up and out to reveal a busy railroad yard.

INT. MORGAN'S OFFICE/TESLA'S LAB, INTERCUT - DAY

Looking out a window at the railroad yard - but a portion of his vast empire - Morgan places a call.

NARRATOR

Fortunately or unfortunately, Nik's visionary article caught the attention of J.P. Morgan, who, by now, was sipping a very stiff cocktail of fear and disdain for the young inventor who had trampled his plans for a DC empire, and worse, commandeered his daughter's heart without reciprocating. Seeing a way to reel in the poet of electricity once and for all, the King of Wall Street waited for Tesla to come on the phone.

MORGAN

Nik, J.P. Morgan. How are you?

TESLA

Hi J.P. Sorry I haven't been in touch.

MORGAN

Don't worry, you don't have to marry my daughter.

TESLA

Actually I met her the other day
and I have to say, she's a most
remarkable woman.

MORGAN

Indeed she is. But that's not why
I'm calling. I read your article
in *Century Magazine* and some of
what you speculate on intrigues me.

TESLA

How wonderful?

Tesla knows something is up, but he's willing to play along.

MORGAN

This idea of wireless communication
is very interesting. Might it allow
me to more easily communicate with
my overseas exchanges and banks?

TESLA

I assure you, it would.

MORGAN

How much do you need to develop
this?

TESLA

About 1 million.

MORGAN

A million?! Why so much?

TESLA

The world would be getting so much.

MORGAN

I don't give a damn about the
world, I just want to make money.

TESLA

Well, you will be able to do that
too.

MORGAN

Tell you what, I'll advance you the
sum of 150,000.

TESLA

Well I suppose I could get started
with that.

MORGAN

Good. I'll send you a check by the
end of this week.

TESLA

Okay J.P. that would be great.
Thank you so much.

MORGAN

Good to finally be in business with you son. Let's dine sometime after you get under construction.

After Morgan hangs up, CAMERA pans over to Anne Morgan sitting comfortably in a sofa by the office fire place.

MORGAN

(to Anne)

Okay, I invited him to dinner. Happy now?

ANNE

Thank you father.

MORGAN

But the only reason I'm going to invest in this poet is to hedge my bets in case he develops wireless telegraphy before Marconi.

All Anne hears is the word poet.

ANNE

I can't wait to tell mother.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TESLA'S LAB, WARDENCLYFFE - SUMMER DAY

Tesla's "World System" is well into construction. Conceived as a huge broadcasting tower extending 177 feet into the air and 420 feet into the ground, a sophisticated laboratory accompanies the tower 351 feet away to avoid electrical shocks. Tesla stands with Stanford White and ROBERT PEARY in front of the new laboratory as work continues on the tower in the background.

NARRATOR

Although Nik really needed in excess of a million dollars, he naively accepted Morgan's bait of 150,000.

WHITE

(kicks the rock wall)

I'll tell you Nik, no fire is going to burn this building down.

TESLA

I sure appreciate you doing this project gratis.

WHITE

My friend here, Mr. Robert Peary, will be making his second trip to the North Pole.

TESLA

Very exciting. Exactly when do you anticipate arriving there?

PEARY

We should arrive, God willing, on June 30th, 1908.

TESLA

I will try to send an electric pulse to a spot just south of the Arctic Circle at the 90th meridian on that exact date.

PEARY

Let's see, south, 90th meridian. That would be somewhere in Siberia, near the Tunguska forest.

TESLA

Yes. Let me know if you notice any anomalies in your compass readings on that exact date?

PEARY

Okay, but how are you going to do this?

TESLA

With my magnifying transmitter. Allow me to show you the tower that Mr. Crow is constructing for me.

ANGLE ON TOWER

Tesla, White and Peary are having a closer look at the tower. WORKMEN, under the guidance of W.D. CROW, are hoisting a 55-ton hemispherical steel dome up to the top of the tower.

NARRATOR

As construction proceeded, Nik was invited over to Morgan's house for dinner where Anne got to better acquaint herself with him. Her infatuation grew as she realized how exquisite this tall, handsome genius was. She was careful to not seem too eager, and above all, wore no offensive jewelry.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MORGAN'S HOUSE, DINNING ROOM - SUMMER NIGHT

At one end of the dining-room table is Morgan and at the other is his wife, Frances. Along the sides sit Tesla and Anne. The scene is very tense: Tesla has no pile of napkins.

MORGAN

Anne never mentioned you two met at Stanford's opening.

TESLA
Oh, really?

FRANCES
Well, she told me.

TESLA
I see.

MORGAN
How come I don't get to know
anything around this house?

ANNE
(teasing)
Because you get to know it all at
the office, father.

Tesla is subtly rubbing utensils under the table. He hardly
eats anything and doesn't let his lips touch the silverware
when he does.

MORGAN
And what does that mean, young
lady?

ANNE
It means that you're a know-it-all
at the office.

FRANCES
(changing the subject)
So how is the project coming Nikki?
It sounds so exciting.

TESLA
It's going well. We just finished
the tower and I will be getting
some specially-designed generators
and transformers from George
Westinghouse soon.

FRANCES
That's wonderful. I can't wait to
see it after we get back.

TESLA
Going on a trip?

MORGAN
Yes, I'm going on a trip. A
business trip to Europe.

FRANCES
Business?

MORGAN
Yes, business, and you're not
coming.

FRANCES
I thought you said we were going
together. On the Corsair.

MORGAN
No, you must have misunderstood me.

FRANCES
(simmers)
You're going with Stanford White
aren't you?

MORGAN
(arrogantly, to shock her)
No, actually I'm going with Ava
Willing. Divorce me if you don't
like it.

With this Frances throws her napkin on the table and storms
out of the room. Morgan, gets up and storms after her,
leaving Tesla and Anne sitting there astonished.

ANNE
He's been seeing other women and
Mom thinks Stanford is a bad
influence.

TESLA
Stanford definitely has a lot of
... influence.

ANNE
(laughs)
Yes, he does. And how is your
laugh therapist, I could use one
right about now?

TESLA
I don't know. Why don't you join
me at the Player's Club sometime
and maybe we'll run into him.

ANNE
I would like that. But I wouldn't
be going to just meet Mr. Twain.

Tesla gives a polite, but awkward smile. His untouched
dessert is still in front of him.

ANNE
Don't you want your dessert either?

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. AIRSHIP - FALL DAY

Edison, Marconi and Andrew Carnegie are on the Luftschiff Zeppelin LZ1 headed to Newfoundland to witness the finishing touches on their wireless telography experiment. Attended by TWO STEWARDESSES, they enjoy cocktails as the ship silently drifts over New York City and northeast up the coastline.

MARCONI

We are going to transmit the letter
"S" from Cornwall, England to
Newfoundland on December 12th.

CARNEGIE

Are you sure this is going to work?

MARCONI

It will work, even though we have
had to use various outside patents.

CARNEGIE

And what does that mean?

MARCONI

It means Tesla's patents would
never have produced the results by
themselves.

CARNEGIE

Still so, doesn't that expose us?

EDISON

Of course not, there are at least
twelve elements necessary to make
this work, not the least of which
is De Forest and Fessenden's
devices. Fessenden worked for me
so I own his patents.

MARCONI

But, Fritz Lowenstein, who was
working for Tesla out at Colorado
Springs, told me that the chief
feature of a practical wireless
telegraph system, and the key to
secret transmissions, is tuned
circuits.

CARNEGIE

And what the hell does that mean?!

EDISON

It means we'll have to find another
way around this or just use part of
the Tesla patent.

CARNEGIE

So we would be exposed!

MARCONI

Just a little, but let Tesla sue.
This issue is so complicated it'll
take decades to iron out, and I
have the resources to keep him tied
up in court for the rest of his
life ... if need be.

EDISON

Meanwhile, our new company will
make enough money to pay the lawyer
bills indefinitely.

The three money-making businessmen, toast to their strategic
brilliance as the world becomes aware of none of this.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TESLA'S LAB, WARDENCLYFFE - WINTER NIGHT

Back at the lab, Tesla is going over the costs of
construction with George Scherff.

SCHERFF

(reading)

Stanford says construction is going
to cost much more than anticipated,
not to mention the special
generators and transformers we
ordered from Westinghouse.

TESLA

Don't worry George, we're in good
hands. Our benefactor won't let us
down.

SCHERFF

I don't know, his installments have
been coming in ever slower.

TESLA

That's because he's out of the
country.

SCHERFF

Just the same, I would feel more
comfortable if we didn't have to
rely entirely on Mr. Morgan.

TESLA

As you wish, we'll promote
additional investors.

SCHERFF

Good idea. I'll see you tomorrow.

As Scherff leaves the lab, Katherine Johnson appears at the front door. She has stopped by to see how things are going.

SCHERFF

Oh, hello Mrs. Johnson. He's in the office. Go through there and you will see the light.

KATHERINE

Thanks George.

In search of the light and the tall Serbian, Katherine, in a beautiful white chiffon dress, wanders the lab past glass-blowing equipment, X-Ray devices, coils of all sizes, a radio-controlled boat, fountains, hundreds of incandescent and florescent bulbs, generators, oscillators, delicate measuring instruments, transformers, tools, huge coils of wire and all sorts of contraptions.

NARRATOR

Nik eventually firmed up a plan to seek an additional 10 million smackers. Thanks to Morgan and Carnegie's machinations on Wall Street, the price of copper had sky rocketed. Not only that, Morgan had demanded 51% control over all of my buddy's precious income-producing patents as collateral for the deal. Why Nik gave all this away is beyond me. Maybe he was trying to please Morgan, like he tried so desperately to please his father.

ANGLE ON OFFICE AREA

Katherine finds the office glowing in an erie florescent light, but Tesla isn't there. The door to the outside is open however, so Katherine starts down the narrow, semi-lit dirt path out to the tower.

NARRATOR

The bank panic forced Morgan to return early from his "business" trip as construction on Wardenclyffe continued.

EXT. WARDENCLYFFE TOWER - SPRING NIGHT

Tesla is working about 4-stories up the incomplete structure as Katherine approaches the base of the tower.

KATHERINE

(yelling up)
Nikki?

TESLA
(yelling down)
Katherine, how devine of you to
stop by. Come on up the ladder.
Where's Robert?

KATHERINE
Oh, he's on a business trip until
the end of the month.

Katherine climbs the stairways of the huge phallic tower,
uncertain where her steps will lead.

TESLA
I see. Where to?

KATHERINE
Newfoundland.

TESLA
That's nice territory.

KATHERINE
Have you been receiving my letters?

TESLA
Yes, but I have been extremely
busy.

She arrives on the platform where Tesla is installing some
wires. Breathing heavily, the warm spring evening plays with
her mind as she thinks about the fact that this is the first
time she's ever been alone with the poet of electricity. She
suddenly slips on a plank, but Tesla grabs her.

TESLA
Careful, it's risky up here.

KATHERINE
But, somehow I have never felt
safer, Nikki.

Tesla lets go of her arm as soon as she's stable. The fact
that he's being the perfect gentlemen, is driving her wild.
But she somehow keeps the lid on. Tesla continues working.

TESLA
We're going to cover the frame with
stainless steel sheeting and the
dome with copper as soon as the
rest of my money comes in.

KATHERINE
Why are you building this?

TESLA
To give the world abundant cheap
electrical power.

KATHERINE
Does it really deserve it?

TESLA

That's a good question my dear. I would say most of them do deserve it, but there's a certain percentage that probably doesn't.

KATHERINE

Why is that?

TESLA

Most people are good and decent. They just want to raise a family, live in peace and work at some vocation that interests them. Their demands of this infinite universe are modest.

KATHERINE

You have such a transcendent way of putting things.

TESLA

(laughs)

Thanks ... but the other part of Mankind is obsessed to own and dominate. These people are only interested in feathering their own nests and maintaining their status no matter what outrageous things they do. The challenge for the human race should not be to war with each other, but to work together to tame the lethal universe. To the degree we do these things, all of humanity rises.

KATHERINE

You make it sound so simple, but I think you should be very careful of Morgan.

TESLA

J.P. is a good fellow. He has my best interests at heart, I can assure you....

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PLAYERS CLUB - SUMMER NIGHT

At the Player's Club, Tesla is explaining the real purpose of his World System to a CROWD OF PEOPLE while Anne Morgan languishes with a BUNCH OF ELDERLY LADIES at the far end of the lounge. Among the crowd present tonight are Colonel John Astor and his stunningly beautiful wife, AVA ASTOR, as well as the famous astronomer, PERCIVAL LOWELL.

NARRATOR

... But when J.P. received news that Marconi had just radioed the letter "S" across the Atlantic from Cornwall, England to Newfoundland, the announcement galvanized, not only the House of Morgan, but investors around the world. Unfortunately, this began a process which eventually undermined Tesla's credibility.

TESLA

I have no concern about Marconi. Let him proceed. He's now using sixteen of my patents.

TWAIN

But I wouldn't trust that worm on any account.

TESLA

The transmission of Morris code or even the human voice is an insignificant accomplishment compared to my goal of transmitting electrical power without wires.

AVA

And just how are you going to do that Mr. Tesla?

(turning to John Astor
standing next to her)

John says you should be focusing on your cold lights. After all, he wants to make money off you, right little piggy?

With this Ava "lovingly" twists the end of Col. Astor's mustache, as he smiles and takes his "medicine."

TESLA

(taken back somewhat)
Colonel Astor has been very good to me and I will be good for him.

Holds up his glass to toast the Colonel as Ava, unhappy unless she's tormenting her husband, adds:

AVA

(flirting)
And how good are you Nikki?
Stanford showed me that shadow of your hand?

TWAIN

I think even Stanford is impressed.

PERCIVAL

(oblivious)

Make no mistake, as a fellow scientist, I can see that the medical profession will be able to someday predict and prevent disease by peering into the human body.

AVA

(looking at her husband)

How boring. Would you mind getting me another beer sweetie. Try making yourself useful on some level.

ASTOR

Sure sweetheart.

After, John Astor, richest man in the United States leaves:

AVA

And what heavenly bodies have you been peering into lately, Percival?

PERCIVAL

Just Mars, Ava. Maybe Venus.

AVA

That's not what Stanford tells me.

TWAIN

(changing the subject)

So you really think they're up there?

PERCIVAL

Absolutely. And Nik, I'm sure you can confirm that.

TESLA

I see no reason to believe we're alone.

AVA

Don't bet on it honey. Even money doesn't always buy companionship.

ACROSS THE ROOM

As Tesla talks shop and holds the attention of GORGEOUS AND PROMINENT PEOPLE, Anne Morgan is not having a very good time.

FIRST ELDERLY LADY

I thought you were here with Mr. Tesla?

ANNE

I thought I was too.

SECOND ELDERLY LADY
How's your father?

ANNE
Oh he's fine.

FIRST ELDERLY LADY
My broker says Mr. Tesla is going to be suffering now that Mr. Marconi has been successful with his experiment.

ANNE
It's really too early to know yet.

With this Anne Morgan proceeds over to Tesla.

ANGLE ON TESLA

Ava Astor is now flirting rather intensively with Tesla. He's laughing and enjoying himself as Anne approaches.

NARRATOR
The genius had somehow managed to wedge himself between his primary investor's family members. Fortunately or unfortunately, Ava Willing Astor, the sharp-tongued new wife of Colonel Astor, had no interest in her husband beyond his money and she embarrassed him in public whenever possible. Who knows what she did in private. Anne Morgan, to her credit, kept her mouth shut about her father in public but needled him to death in private. And to his credit, Nik never used the private things he knew about the Morgans or the Astors for personal advantage.

ANNE
Nik, I thought you were going to get us drinks.

TESLA
Yes, I'm sorry. I was side-tracked by my good friends here. By the way, you wanted to meet my laugh therapist?

ANNE
Yes.

TESLA
(without hesitation)
Mark I want you to meet Anne Morgan. Anne, Mark Twain.

ANNE
An honor to meet you Mr. Twain.

TWAIN
Call me Mark. Great to meet you
too Miss Morgan.

AVA
(with familiarity)
Hi Anne.

ANNE
(similar familiarity)
Hi Ava.

TESLA
And Anne, this is Percival Lowell,
the great astronomer.

ANNE
Hi Mr. Lowell, pleased to meet you.

PERCIVAL
Same here Miss Morgan.

AVA
(to Anne)
How's your father?

ANNE
(bored)
Oh, he's fine.

AVA
That's good. Tell him we had a
wonderful time at Italiante.

ANNE
I will. (then to the men) Would
you gentlemen please excuse us. We
need to go to the powder room.

Anne puts her arm around Ava and ushers her off. Neither
woman looks very happy.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOUSE OF MORGAN, CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Disappointed with Tesla's performance, Morgan calls a meeting
to have a word with his general counsel, investment banker,
August Belmont, Professor Pupin and his CFO to address the
Wardenclyffe project and Marconi's wireless feat.

CFO
(reading a ledger)
We have so far allocated the sum of
\$145,000 for the Wardenclyffe
project.

MORGAN

And how far along is it to date?

PUPIN

I was out there last week and I hate to say this J.P., but I think this scheme is a big waste of money. Tesla hasn't even completed the tower yet.

MORGAN

So why the hell is it so expensive? Marconi has already done twice as much on a quarter the amount.

PUPIN

It's expensive because Tesla is trying to do much more than Marconi.

MORGAN

Don't tell me ... he's still trying to transmit electrical power.

PUPIN

That's right. And if he's successful, he may be able to undermine your entire railroad system, not to mention your ability to charge for electrical power.

MORGAN

And how is that?

BELMONT

If Tesla is able to transmit electrical power through the air or ground, how are you going to place a meter on it? No meter means no ability to bill for services.

PUPIN

And what's worse, there will be no need for copper wires or thousands of telephone poles your railroads currently deliver to industry. If Tesla is successful in extracting electrical power from the Earth, or transmitting it from foreign sources, your coal interests are also in grave jeopardy.

GENERAL COUNSEL

It's one thing to finance a wireless teletype system so you can communicate with ships and brokerage houses abroad, but transmitting electrical power is risky as hell. Better cut this deal off, soon as possible.

CFO

You currently have over \$7 billion invested in railroads and 3 billion in manufacturing and mining operations that support the current electrical infrastructure.

BELMONT

What this comes down to is this: if Tesla is successful, you will never meet your financial goals of consolidating competing industries under the House of Morgan. Accordingly, my client, Mr. Rothschild, will be very disappointed and, under such circumstances, will not be able to guarantee you will continue to be his exclusive agent in America.

GENERAL COUNSEL

I would concur with Mr. Belmont.

CFO

Me too.

MORGAN

All right gentlemen, I will take all this under advisement, but I think you're being a little pessimistic. Mr. Tesla is about to become a member of my family. I have every confidence he will do what's right. There is no need for concern.

INT. JOHNSON'S HOUSE - FALL EVENING

The Johnsons are having a Halloween party to promote for investors and to have a good time. Stanford White (dressed as a Martian) is present with Jill Bowdoin (dressed as a vampire). They are drunk in the corner kissing as Rudyard Kipling (dressed as a pirate) stands a little way off talking to Robert Johnson (dressed as a book) and Katherine Johnson (dressed as a stopper lamp).

NARRATOR

Unaware of the machinations around him as usual, Nik attended a Halloween party given by his good friends, Robert and Katharine Johnson. Sensing that he could have treated Anne Morgan better at the Player's Club, he invited her to go with him.

ANGLE NEAR FIREPLACE

Anne Morgan (dressed as Pocahontas) and Tesla (dressed as a mad scientist) are standing near the fireplace. Marguerite Merington (dressed as a French maiden) plays Liszt on a grand piano not too far away.

TESLA

I wasn't a very good date for you at the Player's Club so I'm sorry and happy you were free tonight.

ANNE

That's all right. The important thing is we can share some time now. How is your project going?

TESLA

It's going well, but Stanford says it will cost much more than anticipated.

ANNE

My father is a little disconcerted that Marconi has been successful with his wireless transmission, but I have tried to explain to him that your project is important for society.

As Marguerite plays, Tesla looks over at her repeatedly but continues his conversation with Anne.

TESLA

That's really grand of you Anne. I admire your selflessness.

ANNE

Well the feeling is mutual Nik.

TESLA

What did you need to talk to Ava about, if you don't mind my asking?

ANNE

(in jest)

I just wanted to remind her to keep her distance from you.

TESLA

No need to do that, she's married.

ANNE

I have a feeling she and the Colonel won't be much longer.

TESLA

That's terrible. A marriage is such a valuable union. In fact the family unit is the only thing that keeps society together.

Destroy the family unit and you
destroy society.

As Anne Morgan and Nikola Tesla talk, Rudyard Kipling slips
closer, possibly to listen to the beautiful piano music.

ANNE
Funny how you and I, who have no
desire to have families, work so
hard to promote them.

TESLA
So how are you tonight Rudyard?
You know Anne Morgan.

ANNE
Hi Rudyard. Yes we have met.

KIPLING
Hi Anne. Nik, good to see you
again.

TESLA
I love your poems, especially Gunga
Din and The Road to Mandalay.

KIPLING
Why thank you so much.

TESLA
I think the meter you established
in Gunga Din was quite forceful.

KIPLING
Actually I didn't intend for it to
be forceful, just emphatic.

TESLA
Well it's difficult to control
subtleties in iambic pentameter ...

Tesla is ignoring Anne Morgan again. She's standing there as
Tesla and Kipling get into it deeper. Suddenly she walks
off. Tesla notices, but continues his conversation.

KIPLING
Sometimes. (changing subject) So
what attracts you to inventing?

TESLA
The allure of the unknown I guess.
The power to change the course of
human events. Creating something
out of nothing ... will you please
excuse me Rudyard, my date seems to
have vanished.

KIPLING
Sure Nik.

VARIOUS ANGLES

Tesla takes off after Anne and wanders the party past all sorts of COSTUMED GUESTS. Not finding her anywhere, he returns to the window. Kipling is gone, but Marguerite looks over with a half-smile as she plays. Tesla, remembering who she is, strolls over, entranced by strains of her melody.

NARRATOR

Nik didn't realize it then, but his career was in more serious jeopardy than he could have imagined. Nevertheless the eternal optimist proceeded with his exploration of the unknown.

MARGUERITE

(as she plays)

Hi Nikki.

TESLA

Hi Marguerite.

MARGUERITE

I'm surprised you remember me.

TESLA

I have thought often of that night we had on the balcony.

MARGUERITE

Every night since, I have watched the stars in the sky fade ... as your star has risen.

TESLA

How come you don't wear jewelry like all the others?

MARGUERITE

It's not in my nature. Even if I could afford it, I can think of better places for money.

TESLA

And where's that?

MARGUERITE

A house in the country. Some horses, perhaps.

TESLA

That's a wonderful dream, the most important thing one can have.

MARGUERITE

Not more important than love ... I would suppose.

TESLA

Marguerite, I did try to call, but couldn't.

MARGUERITE

I understand your passion Nik. No need to be someone you aren't.

TESLA

Marguerite, I can't let my mission it go to waste.

MARGUERITE

(having seen Anne walk off)
Speaking of waste, what about Anne Morgan?

TESLA

She's just a good friend.

MARGUERITE

Just? Well that must make you just a good friend of her father's then.

TESLA

Hopefully. But the prices we're asked to pay are high. Please play some more, Marguerite, I love your style. Someday I may buy you that country estate.

Marguerite smiles warmly, perhaps there is hope.

NARRATOR

Of all the women Tesla ever knew, Marguerite was the only one that seemed to capture his heart. She was poor, but rich in ambition and passion. Nik admired this.

INT. TESLA'S LAB, WARDENCLIFFE - RAINY DAY

It's a lousy day at the office. Stanford White and George Scherff have joined in for a meeting.

WHITE

Oh brother, do I ever have a headache.

TESLA

Well come over here near the large coil, the magnetic fields will give you relief.

Stanford stands next to a large coil and small sparks surround his body.

WHITE

I feel better Nik, but you're not going to feel good when you hear what I have to say.

SCHERFF

And what's that Stanford?

WHITE

Well, this building, as you currently have it planned, is going to cost much more than anticipated.

TESLA

Have we contacted Morgan about this?

SCHERFF

I have a letter into him now for additional funds.

TESLA

Maybe I should call him. Better yet, go see him personally. Will you set up a meeting for me George?

INT. MORGAN'S MANSION, BEDROOM - NIGHT

Morgan is weary and getting ready to go to bed. Frances is already asleep in the background as J.P. brushes his teeth in the adjoining bathroom. Anne Morgan suddenly comes in to say good night. She looks a little sad.

ANNE

Good night Father.

MORGAN

Don't wake your mother for God's sake.

ANNE

I won't.

MORGAN

Good night.
(noticing her sadness)
What's wrong honey, you look sad?

ANNE

I'm fine.

MORGAN

How did your date with Mr. Tesla go?

ANNE

Oh, it went okay.

MORGAN

Just okay?

ANNE

I don't think he's that interested in me.

MORGAN

What?! How can he not be interested in you?

ANNE

It's not me in particular. He's just really loyal to his mission.

MORGAN

And what's that?

ANNE

To dedicate his life to his work.

MORGAN

Well how does that make you feel sweetheart?

ANNE

(tearing up)
Lonely I guess.

MORGAN

Why don't you get more aggressive with him?

ANNE

That's just not my style father.

MORGAN

Well maybe I should get a little more aggressive.

ANNE

No, please don't. He is counting on you. Don't do anything rash on account of me. Please.

MORGAN

Okay, I won't. I have a meeting with him next Tuesday. We'll just wait and see how things turn out.

ANNE

Okay father.

Anne leaves and Morgan gets into bed. He lies there looking straight up thinking.

INT. TESLA'S HOTEL, BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tesla is weary as he puts the finishing touches on an updated business plan. The White Dove suddenly lands on the windowsill to say good night. It looks a little sad.

TESLA
Hello little fellow. Are you here
to pass judgement on my plans? I
bet you like my World System?

INT. HOUSE OF MORGAN, MORGAN'S OFFICE - MORNING

Morgan was willing to grant Tesla a meeting to see if he can salvage the situation. Tesla sits in the same small chair opposite the same huge, oak desk. They have been at it for some while.

TESLA
... but the great waves you have
raised in the industrial world have
struck MY little boat. Prices for
copper have gone up perhaps two or
three times what they were.

MORGAN
Nik, again, I invested \$150,000 in
you for the express purpose of
achieving wireless telegraphy, not
to electrify the world.

TESLA
That may be true, but had there
been only faint-hearted and close-
fisted people in the world, nothing
great would ever have been
accomplished. Raphael could not
have created his marvels, Columbus
could not have discovered America,
the Atlantic cable could not have
been laid ...

MORGAN
I just want to keep my girls and
stockholders happy.

TESLA
But you, of all people, should look
at the larger picture. Be the man
who will embark on an enterprise of
inestimable value to mankind.

MORGAN
I just want to be able to instantly
talk to my business interests in
Europe.

TESLA

(God-complex)

But what we can accomplish is not just a simple transmission of messages without wires, it's a transformation of the entire world into a Sentient Being, a Being that can feel in all its parts and through which thought may be flashed as though a GLOBAL BRAIN!

(getting desperate)

From one single plant we will be able to operate thousands of trillions of electrical instruments, each costing no more than a few dollars and each situated all over the World. I may even be able to harness the very wheelwork of nature and extract unlimited electricity from the very core of the earth itself. Will you help me or let my great work, almost complete, go to naught?

MORGAN

Nik, forget the Global Brain for now ... WHAT are your intentions towards my daughter?

TESLA

(dragged back to reality)

Only the most noble sir ...

MORGAN

So then ... you have decided to marry her?

Tesla sits there with a blank expression on his face.

SLOW DISSOLVE:

INT. TESLA'S HOTEL, BATHROOM - NIGHT

Tesla is at the mirror staring at himself with the same blank expression. As narration begins, he starts his fanatical ritual of cleaning. This ritual consists of shaving; washing his face with peppermint soap; flossing with silk; brushing his teeth with baking soda; gargling with apple vinegar; cleaning his ears with cotton dipped in peroxide and swabbing his fingernails, face and toes with rubbing alcohol. He then clips excess hair from his nose and ears and combs his hair back three times. After this superficial cleaning, he drops his towel and passes his entire body past two large coils where every possible germ is then zapped into oblivion. Getting into bed, he lays there looking up, thinking.

NARRATOR

All Nik had to do was utter one little word -- YES -- and he would have received his GLOBAL BRAIN.

But no, my idiot-savant buddy went on and on. Morgan wanted to hear nothing about a global brain -- he just wanted to hear about his daughter. Can anyone blame him?

And can anyone really blame him if he simply did not want to give the world unlimited free energy?!

It was thus no wonder Morgan saw the perfect opportunity to rid his life of poet of electricity once and for all.

INT. TESLA'S OFFICE, BROADWAY - SNOWY DAY

Tesla is with George Scherff crumpled up in a mohair chair. He knows he has screwed up. The only question is how much. Scherff is opening a letter.

SCHERFF

It's from Morgan.

TESLA

(weakly)

Would you read it George, I'm not feeling very entergetic.

SCHERFF

Well the good news is, it's a very short letter.

TESLA

And?

SCHERFF

And he says here, "I have received your letter and I do not feel disposed to make any further advances."

TESLA

So, we will simply raise money elsewhere.

SLOW DISSOLVE:

INT. PALM GARDEN RESTAURANT, MONTAGE - WINTER EVENING

Undaunted, Tesla seeks support from other Wall Street investors, like THOMAS RYAN (a corporate head), HENRY CLAY FRICK (Andrew Carnegie's former partner) and COL. OLIVER PAYNE (John D. Rockefeller's partner). Each person sits at the table in a TEMPORALLY ROTATING montage.

TESLA

I am looking for additional investors for my Wardencllyffe project.

RYAN

How far along are you now?

TESLA

Thanks to the good graces of Mr. Morgan, we have finished the laboratory and are about three quarters done with the tower.

FRICK

Word on the Street is Morgan pulled out? Why?

TESLA

He felt his aspirations for wireless can be fulfilled by Marconi's pursuits.

PAYNE

What about Astor? He's still involved, isn't he?

TESLA

Yes, he's been one of my most staunch supporters.

ASTOR

Well how are the cold lamps going Nik? They're almost developed by now ... right?

TESLA

Well actually this project has been placed on hold. I'm working on something much more important.

RYAN

And what could possibly be more important than making money?

TESLA

Giving civilization a boost.

FRICK

Who cares about civilization? My stockholders care about the bottom line.

TESLA

Yes, the bottom line is very important, but unless companies are also concerned about society, there will be adverse repercussions over the long-term.

PAYNE

And how do you propose to solve that?

TESLA

My Wardenclyffe project will make it possible to transmit energy all over the world for a fraction of its cost today.

ASTOR

Lord Kelvin and Professor Puppin say that's nonsense. It will never work.

TESLA

I don't think Lord Kelvin or Pupin are aware of my latest experiments which indicate it WILL work.

RYAN

Even if you are successful in transmitting electricity, you will undermine our other ventures. One must, at all costs, keep people paying, and there is nothing quite as lucrative as collecting monthly electric bills.

TESLA

I can see your consideration from a business point of view, but cheap omni-present electrical power will open the doors to more industry and opportunities than you can imagine.

FRICK

Don't tell me what I can imagine. I'm sorry, but I'm going to have to pass on your venture, Mr. Tesla.

TESLA

I think you're being short-sighted.

PAYNE

I'm sorry, I can't justify the risk in this uncertain market.

TESLA

Everything around you was born of risk.

RYAN

The answer is no, Mr. Tesla.

ASTOR

I'm disappointed in you Nik. You assured me you were going after cold lamps and now I see you squandering your time on nothing but a grandiose dream.

EXT. WARDENCLYFFE TOWER - WINTER DAY

The tower stands unfinished but grandiose. WORKERS haul pieces of copper to the top to complete the dome.

NARRATOR

It soon dawned on Nik that he had been blackballed by the Wall Street cattle that stepped around every Morgan dumping. Angry, Tesla fired off a letter to Morgan telling him that he's a big man but his work is superficial whereas his is immortal. Nevertheless, Tesla finally managed to get Wardenclyffe completed by going into serious debt with loans from Robert Johnson, George Scherff and a few other close friends. To celebrate completion, and cheer Tesla up, a few friends dropped by with whisky and fireworks. But Nik had his own fireworks in mind as he and Otis fired up a powerful oscillator.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TESLA'S LAB, WARDENCLYFFE - SPRING NIGHT

Mark Twain has arrived with Marguerite Merington and Sarah Bernhardt as OTHER GUESTS arrive. Stanford White is now with Ava Astor, who looks stunning as usual. Marguerite and Sarah are talking a little way off as are Stanford and Ava. Tesla is putting the finishing touches on his latest invention, the electric water fountain.

TESLA

(aside)

Thanks for bringing Marguerite out Mark.

TWAIN

You're welcome Nik. I think I see sparks fly when you two talk.

TESLA

(looking lost)

Sparks?

TWAIN

Nik, don't spend so much time in the lab, okay?

TESLA

Among the many skills I have not been graced with, is the ability to play a musical instrument or sing. Oh how such arts captivate me.

TWAIN

(tilting a bottle)

What captivates me is being out of my brand in the middle of nowhere.

TESLA

Yes, just take the carriage into town, five minutes. You'll see a liquor store on the right.

TWAIN

Thanks. I might take Sarah with me for company.

With this, Mark Twain leaves and Marguerite wanders over.

TESLA

Hi Marguerite, just in time to see my latest contrivance.

Tesla throws a knife switch and the most charming illuminated copper water fountain starts up. Her heart is touched.

MARGUERITE

Oh my, that is wonderful Nikki!

TESLA

You inspired me the other night.

MARGUERITE

I thought inventors were too busy to be ... inspired.

TESLA

Don't tell me you read that article too?

MARGUERITE

Actually I had it read to me, by Sarah. She keeps a copy of it in her purse evidently.

Ava and Stanford White suddenly approach as we hear fireworks in the background.

WHITE

He's here.

TESLA

Who?

AVA

The President.

TESLA

What president?

AVA
President Harrison, dummy.

TESLA
Here?!

AVA
Stanford set it up.

WHITE
I couldn't tell you, for security reasons. Besides we wanted it to be a surprise.

TESLA
Well show him in. I'll get the oscillator going. Want to help me Marguerite?

MARGUERITE
I would love to.

BOILER ROOM

Tesla and Marguerite leave for another section of the lab where Otis Pond is shoveling coal into a boiler to fire up the generator.

TESLA
Is the generator running at top speed?

OTIS
Yes, sir, we're ready.

TESLA
Okay, Marguerite, you're going to have the honor. I want to do a final test to make sure it's working properly.

MARGUERITE
Okay, just tell me what to do.

TESLA
Throw that knife-switch and then come with me.

With this Marguerite throws the switch, as Otis makes adjustments in the background.

EXT. BOOZE STORE, SHOREHAM - NIGHT

Mark Twain (64) is taking a guzzle as he leaves the booze store for his parked carriage. When he touches the store's door knob, static electric sparks jump between his hand and the knob. Not noticing, he walks toward the carriage.

As he walks, sparks jump from his shoes to the ground. A cat walks by with all its hair standing on end. Twain notices the cat.

TWAIN
(to Sarah)
Did you see that?

Looks over at Sarah in the seat of the carriage. Her hair is standing on end.

SARAH
See what?

Twain, blinks and takes a gander down the street. As people walk by, all the ladies' hair is standing on end. A small pack of dogs marches by, all hairs on end. Sparks jump the gap between everyone's feet and the street. Sparks are jumping from every fire hydrant and metal pole to every other possible metal object. It's a crazy sight. One guy is even running from a piece of ball lightning floating after him. Twain gently puts the cork back in his bottle.

TWAIN
Never mind, sweetheart.

INT. TESLA'S LAB, WARDENCLYFFE - NIGHT

Back at the lab, Tesla is giving a splendid performance for the President and the ACCUMULATED GUESTS. He is standing on a small platform and his body is glowing with static electricity. Water fountains and flashing neon lamps are all over as sparks fly between metal objects. Each time a wad of ball lightning creeps by, Tesla explodes it with a poke from his cane. Explosions and light are everywhere as Tesla's audience claps in astonishment. President Harrison is laughing and clapping too, as he stands next to Jill Bowdoin, who is latched onto his arm.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WARDENCLYFFE TOWER - LATER

From the tower, streams of lightning 100 times bigger than Colorado Springs zap into the star-studded night sky. As CAMERA pulls back, two forms are revealed sitting on a bench kissing. It's Nikola Tesla and Margerite Merington.

INT. HOUSE OF MORGAN, BOARDROOM - SUMMER DAY

Around a large boardroom table sit Nikola Tesla's competitors, if not coconspirators: Marconi, Edison, Carnegie, Professor Pupin, Henry Frick, Oliver Payne, Thomas Ryan, John Astor, Lord Kelvin, Fritz Lowenstein, Morgan General Counsel, Edison General Counsel, August Belmont and ALFRED ISNER from the U.S. Patent Office. J.P. Morgan hammers the meeting to order.

MORGAN

We are here to perfect the founding of a new company and contribute assets to the venture. The name of the company is Marconi America. Counsel has filed articles of incorporation authorizing 3 million shares of common and 500,000 shares of series A convertible preferred. On behalf of Mr. Marconi and my esteemed colleagues, Mr. Edison and Mr. Carnegie, the stockholders welcome you all to the new board of directors. Is there any old business since articles were filed last Tuesday?

CARNEGIE

If I come in with matching funds or additional stockholders, I may want to change the name of the company to Radio Corporation of America.

MORGAN

That's fine. Does anyone have any objections? (none) Okay, any more old business? (none) All right, new business. I move we contribute patent assets to the corporation and issue preferred stock pro rata with capital contributions.

EDISON

I would like to introduce the Board to my associate, Mr. Alfred Isner of the U.S. Patent Office, who will present the salient patents.

Alfred Isner nods his head to identify himself.

MORGAN

Welcome Mr. Isner. Tom.

EDISON

Mr. Isner and I have worked together for 30 years. He has helped me file over 500 patents.

ISNER

Thanks Tom. Hello gentlemen.

Isner opens a legal-sized folder and lays patents down on the large mahogany table as he talks.

ISNER

I have here all salient patents in connection with wireless telegraphy and so-called radio spectrum transmission. This includes the patents filed by Mr. Edison, Mr. Marconi, Mr. Braun, Mr. DeForest, Mr. Morris, Mr. Tesla and others.

MORGAN COUNSEL

I can vouch for the record that all of these patents, with the exception of patent 645,576, have been acquired or licensed by the corporation.

MORGAN

Why is patent 645 ... 57 whatever not included in the bunch?

MORGAN COUNSEL

Because that patent is still owned by Mr. Tesla.

Lord Kelvin grabs patent 645,576 off the table and starts reviewing it.

MORGAN

But that's impossible, I have acquired a 51% interest in all of Mr. Tesla's patents in consideration of my funding of his Wardencllyffe project.

EDISON COUNSEL

Well apparently you forgot one.

MORGAN

Is that correct, Mr. Isner?

ISNER

Yes it is. The patent holder of record is indeed Mr. Nikola Tesla.

EDISON

(flying off the handle)
Damn it. We don't need that one anyway.

KELVIN

Not so fast gentlemen, you are going to need this patent otherwise none of these other patents will have any meaning.

PUPIN

Let me see that.

Pupin grabs the patent and he and Fritz look it over.

MARCONI

I'm sure this is just a technicality. As I explained to Mr. Carnegie, there are many routes to wireless technology. This patent is but one.

FRITZ

No, I'm afraid Lord Kelvin is correct. This patent underlies all the others because it specifies the four tuned circuits. I was present with Mr. Tesla when we did the initial experiments.

MARCONI

(angry)

How the hell can this happen? I came up with tuned circuits years before Tesla.

KELVIN

Four tuned circuits?! I doubt that.

MARCONI

I beg your pardon, Lord Kelvin, but are you implying that I prevaricate?

KELVIN

You're damn right. None of you are going to have a chance in hell to get this company off the ground unless you get this patent from Tesla.

MORGAN

(roaring)

Damn that poet! Why can't he leave me alone!

ASTOR

I'm fed up with him too, J.P. He promised me cold lamps and all he's done is pour my money into a rat hole that will never materialize.

KELVIN

Well unless you get that patent from Tesla, this company will be a rat hole that will never materialize.

BELMONT

(agitated)

So what am I doing here? I thought you had all the details on this transaction worked out Morgan?

RYAN

Me too. I have more important things to attend to.

MORGAN COUNSEL

Gentlemen, I'm sure we can make an arrangement with Mr. Tesla.

MORGAN

(angry)

Not on your life. I would rather be burned at the stake. After how he treated my daughter ... (catching himself)

PAYNE

(irritated)

Well I have a good notion to void my subscription.

CARNEGIE

Me too.

MORGAN

No need to do that gentlemen.

(looks over at Isner and Edison)

Isner, Edison. Follow me.

With this, Morgan makes a forced march out of the room with Isner and Edison in tow.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TESLA'S OFFICE, BROADWAY - FALL DAY

Tesla is working with George Scherff and a new secretary named DOROTHY SKERRITT.

SCHERFF

There are a lot of bills that need attention Nik. The most impressive ones are \$5,800 for coal deliveries and \$20,000 in outstanding Waldorf-Astoria bills.

TESLA

I thought Mr. Astor was covering the hotel as part of my deal with him.

SCHERFF

Well, apparently no longer.

DOROTHY

Wait, here's another one, an invoice from the Westinghouse Company for \$23,500 ... various generators and transformers.

SCHERFF

There's more bad news Nik, a number of your patents on the AC induction motor are about to expire.

DOROTHY

(reading letter)

But that's not the worst, it seems that the U.S. Patent Office has reversed itself on one of your patents, patent 645,576. It appears a Mr. Marconi has a prior claim.

TESLA

I have given these people the means to create a multi-billion dollar industry and I can't even pay my rent. I swear, when I get out of this hole nobody will ever again catch me without cash.

EXT. WARDENCLYFFE TOWER - WINTER DAY

The tower stands barren and silent. The usual workmen are no longer climbing all over it.

INT. TESLA'S LAB, WARDENCLYFFE - WINTER DAY

Tesla is in the lab working at a bench on his bladeless turbine. He wears a heavy coat because the place is cold.

NARRATOR

As if it wasn't bad enough that Nik's patents were expiring and being stolen, his enemies were now taking advantage of the situation by more intensively portraying him as an unsound visionary and worse, a dreamer.

Otis, Kolman and Julius stop by the bench and shake Tesla's hand goodbye. It's a sad and pathetic site.

NARRATOR

Finally, when Nik could no longer pay his workers, or even afford coal to fire up the boilers, he was forced to close Wardencllyffe, referring to the loss as not a dream, but a simple feat of electrical engineering which was apparently too expensive for a blind, fainthearted and doubting world.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TESLA'S LAB, WARDENCLYFFE - WINTER NIGHT

From a close up on a sign on the lab door saying "Lab Temporarily Closed," CAMERA pulls back to first reveal the entire lab, dark and quiet, we then see the tower in the background, dark and tall. Tesla, a lone figure, sits on the bench peering into the night sky.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. HOUSE OF MORGAN, PIERPONT LIBRARY - WINTER DAY

Morgan is at his desk in the library talking on the phone with Vanderbilt. He plays solitaire as we intercut the conversation.

MORGAN

Are you happy with the deal now Mr. Vanderbilt? Mr. Frick, Mr. Carnegie, Mr. Payne, Mr. Belmont, Mr. Ryan and Col. Astor are now in the Marconi deal.

VANDERBILT

Okay, I'll go in too, but we agree to change the name to RCA.

MORGAN

Yes, we already agreed that would be okay, as soon as you match Mr. Carnegie and Col. Astor's purchases of 250,000 shares.

VANDERBILT

Is Tesla involved?

MORGAN

(lying)
No, it turns out his patents were irrelevant.

VANDERBILT

Okay, I'll come in for 250,000 shares. I assume you do not recommend funding any of Tesla's future projects.

MORGAN

Unfortunately he's simply not a team player. And as far as I'm concerned he's now a non-person.

VANDERBILT

But I understand his bladeless turbine shows great promise. At least that's what Lord Kelvin said.

MORGAN

That turbine threatens the turbines built by Curtis and Parsons.

These are performing, lucrative, patents of both GE and Westinghouse? I am going to make certain he gets nowhere with this, and all other inventions, by making certain Edison stays on the Armed Services Board.

VANDERBILT

Good. There's no way I want a war of the turbines.

MORGAN

There will be no war because there will be no more Tesla. And I plan on handling Westinghouse next. I'm sure he wants to renew his option on the Curtis and Parsons patents of which Edison and I jointly own 51%.

VANDERBILT

Okay J.P. Looks like you have everything back under control.

MORGAN

Until the next bank panic.

After Vanderbilt laughs and hangs up, Morgan to himself:

MORGAN

We'll see whose work is wrought in passing form and whose work is immortal ... Mr. Tesla.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. NICKERBOCKER TRUST - WINTER DAY

The bankers have caused another panic in order to "justify" the establishment of a new central bank, this one to be called the "Federal Reserve System." Angry depositors are lined up outside the Nickerbocker Trust. The CROWD is starting to riot as CAMERA tilts to the 6th floor of Tesla's Hotel.

INT. TESLA'S HOTEL, WALDORF ASTORIA - NIGHT

Tesla is sick in bed. The rioting crowd can be heard out the window as a knock is heard on the door. Tesla gets up and answers. It's Marguerite Merington.

TESLA

Oh, Marguerite, come in.

MARGUERITE

Your laugh therapist said you were not feeling well.

TESLA
That's a laugh. Where is he when I
need him?

MARGUERITE
I understand he's sick too. We're
all worried about you so much.

Tesla gets back into bed. She sits by his side and places
her hand lovingly on his forehead.

TESLA
I feel amazingly better already
Marguerite.

MARGUERITE
What are you going to do?

TESLA
I don't know yet, but I'll figure
something out. These bank runs
aren't helping my efforts to raise
money.

MARGUERITE
Why don't you develop some of your
other inventions?

TESLA
I was thinking the exact thing.
Sometimes one has to put their
dreams on hold to service this
money-grubbing world.

MARGUERITE
People would love your fountains,
your cold lamps, your new turbine.

TESLA
I will do all that, but first I
have one last experiment to
perform. June 30th, I want you to
be with me.

MARGUERITE
You know I will.

She leans down to kiss him. Surprise of all surprises, Tesla
responds in kind with a loving embrace.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WARDENCLYFFE TOWER - SPRING NIGHT

A final experiment waits to be performed by the now-
rejuvenated poet of electricity. The tower is fired up to
test the magnifying transmitter's big coil.

NARRATOR

It was June 30th, 1908 the exact day Tesla determined to test the big coil by sending a message to Robert Peary's expedition.

Tesla, Marguerite and George Scherff are on top of Wardencllyffe tower making ready the transmitter.

TESLA

We want to aim it across the Atlantic towards the North Pole but at a spot well south of Peary's expedition ... just in case it works.

MARGUERITE

Why is that Nikki?

TESLA

We don't want to kill anyone.

SCHERFF

Even if we did, the Army probably still wouldn't buy it.

TESLA

Okay, George, switch on the device.

George closes a knife-switch. A few moments go by but nothing seems to be happening.

MARGUERITE

What's suppose to happen?

TESLA

I'm not sure, but it looks like it's a failure.

A few more moments go by. Suddenly an OWL flies in the path of the beam and is instantly disintegrated.

SCHERFF

Did you see that?

Tesla and Marguerite are hugging. Tesla looks up.

TESLA

No, what George?

SCHERFF

I thought I saw something explode.

EXT. TUNGUSKA FOREST - NIGHT

The equivalent of a 12-megaton explosion is taking out 500,000 square miles of forest in Tunguska, a remote area in the Siberian wilderness. As debris rises into the atmosphere...

NARRATOR

Upon hearing no news from Peary, Tesla confirmed in his mind that the experiment was a failure. But then news arrived several days later that Peary had actually heard a powerful explosion on June 30th over 600 miles away. Even though the report said no one was killed, Nik decided to dismantle his so-called "death ray" in the event it did have anything to do with the Tunguska incident. My midnight buddy felt this was far too dangerous a weapon for the human race at this time.

INT. NOBEL PRIZE ASSEMBLY - SUMMER EVENING

Marconi and CARL BRAUN are called up on the stage to receive a Nobel. The CROWD applauds as photographers take pictures.

NARRATOR

Along with the indignities to date, the "Establishment" awarded Marconi and Carl Braun of Germany, a Nobel Prize in physics for their development of wireless telegraphy. But Tesla, more desperate for capital than ever, yet more positive than ever that his energy transmitter works, paid little attention.

INT. EDISON POWER STATION, CAFETERIA - DAY

Tesla is sitting in a chair in what looks like a corporate cafeteria. He's on break looking at a photograph in the paper showing Marconi and Braun getting the Nobel for wireless telegraphy.

NARRATOR

Nik decided to step up his plan to re-capitalize Wardenclyffe by earning money from his new bladeless turbine. To this end he buried his pride and tested the new device at the Edison Waterside Power Station in New York City.

On the most unfriendly turf
possible, Tesla's revolutionary
invention was literally laughed
down the drain.

INT. EDISON POWER STATION, MACHINE SHOP - DAY

Tesla is standing with a group of stuffy, clone CORPORATE
ENGINEERS demonstrating the bladeless turbine.

TESLA
It will reach 16,000 RPMs.

ENGINEER 1
And my grandmother will live for
400 years.

TESLA
Well, go on ... place a tachometer
on it.

An engineer places a tachometer on the turbine.

ENGINEER 2
It measures 16,322 RPMs!

The engineers look at each other in astonishment!

NARRATOR
Nevertheless, the hostile Edison PR
machine had written its report even
before Tesla had walked in the
door: "Tesla's turbine spins too
fast and flies apart at the seams."

DISSOLVE TO:

INT FUNERAL HOME - FALL DAY

Then, as if nothing worse could happen in this year of 1910,
Tesla's best dreaming and drinking buddy, Mark Twain, dies at
the age of 74. His casket is being closed as narration
somehow continues.

NARRATOR
Well, that's me. They're going to
take me out and put me in a hole
now. If only my buddy knew that
better days are ahead, for him and
the world.

Tesla is standing next to Twain's casket. We see he's one of
hundreds, as CAMERA pulls back to reveal MOURNERS.

TESLA
Goodbye trusty laugh therapist.
This miserable life is not the end.

NARRATOR

Okay, I know what you're thinking. How can I be dead, if I'm still talking? Well, the simple fact is, only part of me is dead. The rest is timeless. So, when I tell you the future is my buddy's world, you have no choice but to believe me -- because I have been there. One of the advantages of being dead is you can go backward or forward in time. But for now, let me go back and finish the story. It's what I do, alive or dead.

INT. OFFICES OF WESTINGHOUSE - DAY

Tesla is sitting in a chair before the desk of George Westinghouse. Westinghouse is reviewing the tachometer readings for the bladeless turbine.

NARRATOR

Desperate for a friend, a break, a million dollars, Tesla went to his old financial mentor, George Westinghouse.

TESLA

As you can see it hit 16,322 RPMs ... and that's in the presence of Edison's engineers, so you know the figures weren't made up by me.

WESTINGHOUSE

(irritated)

Nik, I can't get involved with this. I have a deal with Morgan and Edison now and the company can't be involved in any conflicts of interest with respect to our use of the Curtis and Parsons patents.

TESLA

So, it seems you too have at last been reorganized ... along with all the rest.

WESTINGHOUSE

(irritated)

Call it what you will Nik.... By the way, when are you going to pay up on your past due account?

Westinghouse refers to an invoice on his desk. Apparently he had pre-planned this whole meeting.

WESTINGHOUSE

You still owe \$23,500.

TESLA

You are unbelievable George. I forgive you patents worth millions and you're squabbling over 23,000.

WESTINGHOUSE

It's not me, it's the accounting department. I don't have the say in this company I used to.

TESLA

I am really disappointed in you George. I always felt you were better than Edison.

With this Tesla gets up and walks out.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TESLA'S OFFICE, BROADWAY - WINTER DAY

Dorothy Skerritt looks out the window with compassion. From her point of view, we can see Brandt Park.

EXT. BRANDT PARK - DAY

Tesla, a kind, broken man is feeding the pigeons more and more often.

TESLA

My sincere little friends ... you wouldn't treat me like my human associates do.

Tesla wanders the Park tossing grain as if it were money.

NARRATOR

The man who gave the world cheap, safe and reliable electricity, next took his turbine to Allis Chalmers Manufacturing in Milwaukee who reported the same old Edison line that the disks distort due to their "overly-high rotational velocity." My buddy, incredulous and more weary than ever, walked out uttering ...

TESLA

... I told them, of course there will be problems unless stronger metals were used. But they would not build the turbines as I suggested.

At this point, we aren't sure whether Tesla is talking to himself or the pigeons.

INT/EXT MONTAGE OF EVENTS - DAY

As narrator continues, we see several funerals with thousands; we see a bunch of dignified men boarding a railroad car; we see the clubhouse on Jekyll Island; we see the U.S. Congress deliberating with hardly anyone in the room; we see the new Federal Reserve Building.

NARRATOR

Meanwhile, several bittersweet events happened: J.P. Morgan died and was quickly replaced by the Federal Reserve System. Old J.P. was finally relieved of his obligation to be lender of last resort. George Westinghouse also died. This turkey probably felt so guilty every time he passed an AC lamp, he threw up thinking of how he wronged Nik. But you know, Nik still respected George. After all, were it not for George Westinghouse and his belief in Nikola Tesla, the world would be an even worse place.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TESLA'S OFFICE, WOOLWORTH BUILDING - SUMMER NIGHT

Tesla, having fallen behind in rent, has moved into a modest office in the Woolworth Building. Though waning in money, patents and credibility, Tesla has invited several REPORTERS from the New York Sun to his annual birthday party.

TESLA

So good of the New York Sun to be here. I may be low on money but I'm not low on ideas.

REPORTER 1

And what's your latest idea Mr. Tesla?

TESLA

I have figured out what causes wars to persist.

REPORTER 2

And what is that?

TESLA

The duration of a war is inversely proportionate to the magnitude of weapons times the number of combatants.

REPORTER 3

So can they be ended?

TESLA

Yes. War can be reduced to zero only with weapons of sufficient magnitude or robotic combatants.

NARRATOR

As I know, being able to travel into the future, this idea later became the basis for the strategic defense policy of the United States in its cold war with the Soviet Union: mutual assured destruction. The weapons of "sufficient magnitude" to "reduce war to zero" are the atomic and hydrogen bombs. Unfortunately Tesla's problems at this point were of sufficient magnitude to reduce his dreams to zero as John Astor, Nik's last investor and hotel patron, had just gone down on the Titanic. A noble and generous man, that Astor: he gave his place in a lifeboat to a woman and child.

EXT. TESLA'S LAB, WARDENCLYFFE - DAY

Tesla is signing the deed to Wardenclyffe over to GEORGE C. BOLDT, new owner of the Waldorf-Astoria.

TESLA

(joking)

Here you go George. Hope you do some worthwhile experiments in the place while I'm gone.

BOLDT

I'm sorry it has come to this Mr. Tesla, but your account has been over due for many years.

TESLA

I know, but this is only a temporary condition. I'm embarking on a new project with the U.S. Military to solve some of the problems of war.

BOLDT

Okay, well just contact me with your payment within a reasonable period of time and you'll have your deed back.

INT. ANNE MORGAN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Anne is reading the New York Times which announces "Tesla to Share Nobel Prize." Her eyes have tears in them.

NARRATOR

The Nobel Prize Committee listed Tesla and Edison as candidates to share the Nobel Prize in physics but when my buddy became indignant, the Nobel Foundation claimed the award was slated to go to William Bragg and his son. Then they denied they would even think of changing an award merely because a recipient would not accept it. Boy what a pompous bunch. What could you expect from the boys that invented dynamite. My buddy, frustrated and angry at the world, filed a lawsuit against Marconi, the person he believed was the source of his biggest problems.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

A JUDGE is hearing argument as MARCONI COUNSEL, EDISON COUNSEL, CARNEGIE COUNSEL, MORGAN COUNSEL and U.S. Patent Clerk, Isner, gang up on Tesla, who has NO COUNSEL.

TESLA

(angry)

Marconi has obviously stolen and infringed my patents.

MARCONI COUNSEL

Well, you're just going to have to prove that Tesla.

JUDGE

Present your proof Mr. Tesla, or I'm going to have to dismiss this case. We have already heard testimony from Mr. Isner that patent 645,576 had a prior claim filed by Mr. Marconi.

TESLA

That's just not the case your honor.

JUDGE

Nevertheless, I find for the defendant. (hits gavel)

NARRATOR

Unfortunately Nik had too little money to sustain his action against the Italian nobleman, who had joined forces with the likes of Edison, Carnegie and Morgan. Thus it was not long before Tesla had to abandon his case.

Surrounded by lawyers, Marconi sits at a table glaring at Tesla with a smug smile on his face.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TESLA'S HOTEL, ST. REGIS - SUMMER NIGHT

Tesla is again sitting with REPORTERS for his annual birthday event, an event that seems to come ever more quickly each year. Now, in even greater frustration (and perhaps with a mind predisposed to think only thoughts of destruction), the once-gentle poet of electricity decides to make an announcement.

TESLA

Regardless of how my case against Marconi went, I want to make an important announcement ... the results of my super weapon research.

REPORTER 1

What's that Mr. Tesla?

TESLA

I have perfected a death ray which is capable of destroying 500,000 square miles in a single blast.

The reporters eagerly soak up the details, trying to refrain from laughing.

INT. PLAYERS CLUB - NIGHT

Several members of the WALL STREET CROWD are reading Tesla's latest article, failing to refrain from laughing.

BUSINESSMAN 1

He's a raving loon!

BUSINESSMAN 2

Who's that?

BUSINESSMAN 1

Tesla, says his death ray can destroy an entire city.

BUSINESSMAN 2

Nothing could ever have that amount of power.

BUSINESSMAN 3

Too bad. It would sure come in handy when the Martians land.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TESLA'S OFFICE, WOOLWORTH BUILDING - FALL NIGHT

Tesla is in the office with his bankruptcy attorney, LAWRENCE COHEN. George Scherff, Dorothy Skerrit and a new young secretary, MURIEL ARBUS, are also present. Muriel is going over the mail, as the others deal with the issue at hand.

TESLA

Muriel, would you please close the blinds.

MURIEL

Sure Mr. Tesla.

COHEN

(indicating)

Okay, Mr. Tesla, just sign here and the bankruptcy court will afford you temporary protection from creditors.

TESLA

I have some investors lined up for my bladeless turbine so I should be able to remedy this soon.

MURIEL

Mr. Tesla, here's something of interest.

Since Tesla is occupied signing, Scherff takes the letter.

SCHERFF

(reading)

Looks like your friends at the American Institute of Electrical Engineering have recommended you for the Edison Medal.

Scherff hands Tesla the letter who speaks with emotional anger as he peruses it.

TESLA

That's wonderful. They propose to honor me with the Edison Medal?! A medal which I could pin upon my coat and strut for a vain hour before the members and guests of their Institute. They would decorate my body and continue to let it starve for failure to supply recognition of my mind and its creative products which have supplied the foundation upon which the major portion of their Institute exists.

And then they want to go through the vacuous pantomime of honoring Tesla when it is Edison, who has previously shared unearned glory from every previous recipient of this medal. Tell them to go to hell.

Dorothy places her hand on his shoulder and hands him a handkerchief. Tesla dabs the tears swelling up in his eyes and places his head down on the table. George Scherff goes over and hugs him, as we hear muffled little coughs coming from the once-proud inventor.

DISSOLVE TO:

COVER OF NEW YORK TIMES - WINTER DAY

The front page of the New York Times announces U.S. entrance into World War I. CAMERA tilts down to a smaller, front-page article: TESLA FILES BANKRUPTCY. We can read a little of the text, which says: No Buyers for Mad Scientist's Death Ray.

NARRATOR

Call me a conspiracy nut, but I think the sinking of the Lusitania was a pre-planned event to get us into the War. Anne Morgan told my buddy that the House of Morgan had invested a lot of money in the European war effort through the Rothschild Bank and when it looked like Germany's U-boats would kick our butts into oblivion, her father had President Wilson persuade Congress to declare war on the Krauts so any future loans could be collateralized by the American taxpayers. Of course this war was bad news for Tesla, because his last source of income was German royalties on his bladeless turbine. Nik felt the honorable thing to do, as an American citizen, was to forfeit this income.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TESLA'S HOTEL, ST. REGIS - SPRING DAY

Tesla is sitting in the dark as a KNOCK reverberates. Opening the door, Robert Johnson stands there with a caring colleague, B.A. BERNARD.

JOHNSON

(to Bernard)

Here he is. (to Tesla) We stopped by your office but they said you would be here.

TESLA
Well here I am ... celebrating.

JOHNSON
Celebrating what?

TESLA
Marconi's success.

JOHNSON
What happened?

TESLA
He was so arrogant, he felt he could sue even the U.S. Government over "his" wireless patents. He successfully lost.

JOHNSON
Well that's good news then.... Nik, I want to introduce you to Mr. Bernard, he's here to help us continue this streak of good luck.

BERNARD
Mr. Tesla, we really feel you should accept that Edison Medal, it will give you a lot of recognition.

JOHNSON
And this is what you need to get back on your feet.

TESLA
THAT continues my luck?! THAT is why you are here?! No. I won't accept it. Edison can go to hell. I have more important things to do.

Tesla stuffs a piece of bread into a cage housing a pigeon.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PUBLIC LIBRARY BANQUET HALL - NIGHT

The room is filled with electrical engineers, physicists, media and others as Mr. Bernard addresses the audience.

BERNARD
It took a lot of persuading as he didn't feel he deserves this award. Isn't that ridiculous coming from the man who almost single-handedly changed the course of human civilization?

BACK STAGE

Robert Johnson, Dorothy Skerrit and Nikola Tesla are standing, intently listening to the introduction on stage.

ANGLE ON BERNARD

BERNARD
... Allow me to go over Nikola
Tesla's list of accomplishments,
because we will never be able to
get him to do it himself ...

BACK STAGE

Robert Johnson and Dorothy Skerrit are still listening to the introduction, but Robert looks over and notices that Tesla is suddenly missing.

JOHNSON
Where's Nik?!

DOROTHY
I don't know, but I have a hunch.

EXT. BRANDT PARK - NIGHT

Tesla is feeding his "sincere little friends" in the park just behind the public library as Dorothy and Johnson approach.

JOHNSON
Nik?! What are you doing? They're
announcing you now.

TESLA
I changed my mind. I won't go.
Tell them to all go to hell.

INT. PUBLIC LIBRARY, BANQUET HALL - NIGHT

Bernard is just finishing up his introduction, oblivious to the happenings of the moment.

BERNARD
... all this from one creative
mind. Hard to believe. So it
gives me gives me great pleasure to
present to you the man H. Otis Pond
once called, the greatest inventive
genius of all time, Nikola Tesla.

The audience claps, but no Tesla appears. They continue clapping. Bernard looks to stage-left then stage-right, but no Tesla. He then walks to stage-left and goes behind the curtain.

BACK STAGE

Clapping continues. Bernard is panicked, searching in the semi-dark calling for "Mr. Tesla." Suddenly we hear Tesla's voice off CAMERA.

AUDITORIUM STAGE

Tesla is at the podium. As clapping settles down, he gives the audience a stern look and tilts his head down.

TESLA

So, you want to award me tonight.

(long pause)

Well let me say this ... I am deeply honored to receive the Edison Medal, for it represents not only my small and insignificant achievements, but the achievements of one of the greatest men to ever grace the world, Thomas Edison. When I first came to America, who was it that gave me a job? It was Mr. Edison. Who was it that believed in me so much he allowed me to make important design decisions? Mr. Edison. Yes, ladies and gentlemen, were it not for the work of Thomas Edison, humanity would still be in the dark ages ...

EXT. WARDENCLYFFE TOWER - DAY

As Tesla gives his speech, DEMOLITION WORKERS are meticulously planting sticks of dynamite around the tower.

TESLA (VO)

... work would be all the more laborious, and enjoyment of the arts ... all the more scarce. For after all, is it not the phonograph and the motion picture that is transforming the mind of society? Someday we will all stand in witness of the intellectual explosion now upon our great nation. Again, thank you for remembering me; and thank you for mentioning me in the same breath as Thomas ... Alva ... Edison.

With this, three explosions go off and Wardenclyffe tower, with its 55-ton steel sphere, crashes to the ground. As the dust settles, a few pages of Tesla's potentially world-changing schematics can be seen blowing in the wind.

NARRATOR

George Boldt didn't care if Tesla was the greatest inventive genius of all time ... he just wanted his \$20,000 hotel bill paid. So, in order to do this, he decided to sell Wardenclyffe. But in order to give Tesla's property better "curb appeal," he decided to dynamite the "offensive" 178-foot phallic tower. Boldt "justified" his insensitive greed by claiming that German spies were using it for surveillance against Allied operations along the coast.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. TESLA'S HOTEL, ST. REGIS - NIGHT

It's a stormy night as Nikola Tesla sits in his large, mohair chair before an open window. Each time lightning strikes, he applauds, as if acknowledging another master of electricity on par with himself. Then, addressing a cage of pigeons, Tesla reveals his latest plan.

TESLA

(god-complex)

I'll sell my bladeless turbine to the Pyle National Company and use the money to build an even better World System.

INT. TESLA'S OFFICE, WOOLWORTH BUILDING - DAY

But to hedge his bets against a possible failure of the bladeless turbine, Tesla again phones Josephus Daniels of the U.S. Navy.

TESLA

Hi Mr. Daniels. Nikola Tesla. I have a new invention the Navy might be interested in.

DANIELS

And what might that be?

TESLA

It's a sending device that can emit exploratory waves thus enabling its operator to determine the exact location of a distant object.

DANIELS

Okay Mr. Tesla, I'll check with the War Department and see if they have any interest.

TESLA

Thank you so much Mr. Daniels.

INT. TESLA'S HOTEL, LIVINGROOM - SUMMER DAY

Still undaunted, Tesla invites REPORTERS over for his annual birthday celebration. Fewer reporters than usual are present.

REPORTER 1

Mr. Tesla, I'm from Electrical Experimenter Magazine. What is your latest invention?

TESLA

I have been hesitant to go public with this, but it looks like the U.S. Navy isn't going to do anything with it.

NARRATOR

An article entitled "Tesla's Views on Electricity and the War" appeared in *Electrical Experimenter Magazine* and everyone had a good laugh. Accordingly, the War Department rejected Nik's proposal of "exploratory waves" citing they were of no use. A generation later, this exact invention -- now known as "radar" -- helped the Allies win World War II. Of course, the rejection was no surprise to anyone but Tesla.

INT. TESLA'S OFFICE, WOOLWORTH BUILDING - FALL DAY

Tesla is sitting at his desk facing his two secretaries, Dorothy Skerritt and Muriel Arbus. It doesn't look like a very busy day.

TESLA

Miss Arbus, I thought I told you to not wear pearl earrings in my presence.

Tesla takes a box from his drawer and places it before her.

TESLA

Please dispose of them in the box, and get this THING out of here!

He puts on new gloves and pushes the thing, a billiard ball, off his desk. The ball rolls obnoxiously across the floor.

MURIEL

I'm sorry, Mr. Tesla.

TESLA

And Miss Skerritt, would you please keep the blinds closed. The light hurts my eyes.

DOROTHY

I'm sorry, Mr. Tesla. I thought the sunlight would do you some good.

TESLA

I hate sunlight.... Are those applications done?

NARRATOR

Nik, more desperate than ever, filed a barrage of patents for various inventions, hoping that one would generate money or credibility. Among the patents were variations on his fluid propulsion turbines, an automobile speedometer, a frequency meter, an electric water fountain, a ship's log and a flow meter - all successful inventions in their own right - but inventions nowhere near the level of his dream for a world system of free energy. Several projects looked promising but Tesla had been so blackballed by the likes of Morgan, Edison and Marconi, he was virtually a non-entity in the private sector, so he decided to try the U.S. Government again.

INT. WAR DEPARTMENT OFFICE - WINTER DAY

Tesla decides to make a personal visit to the War Department as they have granted him audience before the Armed Services Board. Seated at center is Thomas Edison. Mr. Daniels and DICK WILLIAMSON flank him.

DANIELS

I'm sorry Mr. Tesla, this Board finds your proposal for long-range ballistic missiles unnecessary.

TESLA

Why's that?

WILLIAMS

A peace treaty will be signed tomorrow at Versailles. The war is over.

EDISON

(glaring)

We have won, Mr. Tesla.

INT. TESLA'S HOTEL/OFFICE, ST. REGIS - SPRING DAY

Maybe not. Tesla is sitting in his stripped-down office at the St. Regis with two EXECUTIVES. At last, someone big is interested in his work.

EXECUTIVE 1

We saw the announcement of your gasoline-fired bladeless turbine and thought we would pay you a visit, Mr. Tesla.

TESLA

You're from the Ford Motor Company?

EXECUTIVE 2

Yes, we are.

TESLA

(brightening up)

My gasoline turbine will revolutionize the auto industry because it's fast, efficient and can use any fuel: gasoline, methanol or ethanol.

EXECUTIVE 1

That may be so, but what we really wanted to talk to you about is your possible involvement in one of our experiments on psychic phenomena.

EXECUTIVE 2

We saw your Kirlian photographs of the human aura and found them to be very interesting.

TESLA

(angry)

THAT'S all you want?! Get out of here!

Tesla escorts the Ford Executives to the door. Only the White Dove, which lands on its usual resting place at the windowsill, can comfort him now. No sooner has the genius settled down than there's a knock. Tesla opens the door to find the SHERIFF and TWO MOVERS.

SHERIFF

Are you Mr. Tesla?

TESLA

Yes I am.

SHERIFF

We're here with an order to repossess certain items of office furniture.

The movers move out the desks, chairs and lamps Tesla has rented, as narration proceeds.

NARRATOR

Tesla was broken and stripped of his dreams, if not his mind, when the sheriff shows up to strip him of even his physical possessions. It was not long before the genius was so impecunious he could no longer pay his secretaries, so he devilishly offers each of them his Edison Medal.

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. TESLA'S HOTEL/OFFICE, ST. REGIS - LATER

Dorothy and Muriel squeeze in the large, mohair chair while Tesla sits in a small, wooden chair before them. The "office" is otherwise empty. Both girls are shaking their heads "no" as Tesla places a pair of wire cutters over the Edison Medal to chop it in two.

DOROTHY

No Mr. Tesla, please don't.

MURIEL

We don't mind working for free.

TESLA

I will have nothing of the sort.

With this, Tesla cuts the silver Edison Medal in two and hands each of them a piece. They reluctantly take them as tears swell up in their eyes.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BRANDT PARK - TWILIGHT

As the city hum winds down for the day, Tesla is bent over examining the injured leg of a pigeon.

TESLA

Let me tend to that, my little friend.

He gets up with the pigeon snugly in hand.

INT. TESLA'S HOTEL/OFFICE, ST. REGIS - NIGHT

As Tesla enters with the injured pigeon, we see a NOTICE OF EVICTION on the door.

Unable to build his dream, Tesla now builds pigeon cages and becomes quite popular with his loyal feathered friends. The room has cages all over, each one housing a respectful little pigeon.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TESLA'S HOTEL, NEW YORKER - SUMMER DAY

Tesla looks up at his new, more cost-effective residence. The Great Depression has begun, both in the streets of New York and in Tesla's head. A BEGGAR comes up to him with a cup. Tesla digs into his pocket and tosses him a coin.

INT. TESLA'S HOTEL, NEW YORKER - DAY

Thankfully the number of pigeons has doubled to keep Tesla company. Surrounded by more pigeon cages than ever, Tesla invites his human friends in the press over for tea and ices.

REPORTER 1

So Mr. Tesla, you're now 78.
What's your latest invention?

TESLA

I'm perfecting my invincible death beam.

REPORTER 2

And what's that do?

TESLA

With this I can generate 50 million volts of electricity, enough power to instantly vaporize 10,000 airplanes or 1,000,000 soldiers.

REPORTER 3

Wow! Do you think the Military will be interested?

TESLA

Probably not. They even passed on the airplane, I understand.

Tesla suddenly realizes he's late for an appointment.

TESLA

Oh, my gosh, I forgot. I have an important appointment. Will you all please excuse me.

With this Tesla grabs a bag of pigeon feed and runs out.

EXT. TESLA'S HOTEL, NEW YORKER - DAY

Tesla darts out the main entrance of the New Yorker towards Brandt Park. Suddenly he's struck by a taxi cab. Barely able to walk -- because of three broken ribs and a wrenched spine -- Tesla crawls back to his room.

INT. TESLA'S HOTEL, NEW YORKER - DAY

The stunned reporters are still sitting there as Tesla hobbles in, holding his ribs, and dashes for his phone book.

TESLA

Quick, I have to make a phone call
... (dialing in terrible pain)
Hello ... Mr. Kerrigan, it's an
emergency. Will you please meet me
at the Hotel New Yorker, room 3327.
I have some food I want you to
deliver to some friends in Brandt
Park. Okay, see you in 21 minutes.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. STANFORD WHITE'S RESIDENCE - FALL NIGHT

Stanford is sitting by the fireplace reading the New York Times to his latest conquest, MRS. EVELYN NESBITT.

WHITE

It says here that "Tesla stands ready to divulge to the United States Government the secret of his teleforce with which he says airplane motors will be melted at a distance of 252 miles so that an invisible Chinese Wall of Defense will be built around the country." Make me a another drink, will you sweetheart. He says "this new type of force can operate through a beam one hundred-millionth of a square centimeter in diameter, and could be generated from a special plant that would cost no more than \$3,000,000 and would take only about three months to construct."

MRS. NESBITT

Maybe you can design that for him too dear.

WHITE

I don't think he can afford even me these days sweetheart.

Suddenly, MR. NESBITT, the irate husband of Mrs. Nesbitt, barges into the room.

MR. NESBITTE
(yelling)
I told you to stay away from my
wife.

With this he pulls out a gun and shoots Stanford White in the chest. He stumbles backwards into a balsa wood model of the Wardencllyffe tower.

LONG DISSOLVE:

INT. TESLA'S HOTEL, BEDROOM - WINTER NIGHT 1943

Tesla, still sick and injured, is lying in bed philosophizing with pigeons that surround him. He weakly reaches over to a night stand and grabs a set of electrodes attached to a meter embedded in a black box. The meter's needle reacts as he talks.

TESLA
You know what the secret to peace
on this Earth is, my fine friends?
It's not my weapons or even mutual
assured destruction ... it's this
little black box. (beat) This
little box will revolutionize the
Human race.

Stretches over to give a pigeon a piece of bread as he feels a stab of pain in his heart. The needle flies to the left.

TESLA
You ask, what is in this little
black box? I'll tell you what's in
it. It's a wheatstone bridge.
With this little meter, people like
Edison, Morgan and Marconi will
never be able to get away with
their lies or crimes. Oh, the
Establishment will curse it and try
to bury it along with me and my
other inventions, but the future
belongs to us: those who can fly
high -- whether by feather or
thought.

Suddenly there's a knock on the door. The needle on the meter slams back and forth. Tesla is angry at the interruption.

TESLA
Who is it?

ANGLE ON OUTSIDE OF DOOR

CAMERA pans from a "Do Not Disturb" sign, to a knocking hand and tilts down an arm adorned with Bulgari jewelry. Throughout the balance of this scene CAMERA stays on Tesla.

MARGUERITE (VO)
It's Marguerite.

TESLA
What do you want?

MARGUERITE's voice breaks up as she hears this.

MARGUERITE (VO)
Let me in Nikki.

TESLA
(after a long moment)
Marguerite, go away.

MARGUERITE (VO)
(with tears in her voice)
Nikki ... why are you rejecting me?

There's a long silence.

MARGUERITE (VO)
Nikki?

More silence. Then in a softer, broken voice.

TESLA
Because you remind me...

Tesla then notices the needle on the wheatstone bridge jump as the pain in his chest becomes almost unbearable.

TESLA
... of all that I loved.

MARGUERITE (VO)
Nikki, let me help.

TESLA
(God-complex)
Thanks, Marguerite, but it's too late now. Besides I have to get ready for an appointment, a most important appointment.

Hearing this craziness, Marguerite totally breaks down. Tesla can hear her through the door, but his passion for life, and all that he loved, is gone. CAMERA stays close on his face, as Marguerite's sobbing eventually fades away. A lone tear streams down his cheek as he closes his eyes and falls asleep, forever.

SLOW DISSOLVE:

INT. TESLA'S HOTEL, BEDROOM WINDOW - SPRING MORNING

The White Dove silently looks at Tesla's motionless body from a windowsill.

NARRATOR

My buddy had his appointment on the 7th or 8th of January ... but the fact is, Nikola Tesla died well before midnight, 1943. Alone, without a permanent home, literally and metaphorically heartsick, Tesla fended off those who loved him the most, in order to serve a world that has almost forgotten him.

As narration continues, we hear keys and the door cracks open. A HOTEL MAID enters followed by 3 FBI AGENTS. The two-room suite which is now "furnished" with five filing cabinets, a safe, 3 cages of pigeons and the mohair chair.

HOTEL MAID

On the 4th he complained of chest pains. I cleaned his room but he just sat there in that chair, talking to someone.

As the agents rummage around Tesla's room, the Hotel Maid retires the "Do not Disturb" sign from the door of suite 3327 and moves down the hallway with her utility cart.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. CATHEDRAL OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE - DAY

Actual black and white footage of the funeral services for Nikola Tesla proceed.

NARRATOR

As is often the case with great and unselfish beings, their true value is not fully appreciated during their lifetime. The 2,000 people that attended the funeral of Nikola Tesla remind us of this point. But Tesla himself summed it up like this: *"let the future tell the truth and evaluate each one according to his work and accomplishments. The present is theirs, the future, for which I really worked, is mine."*

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TESLA'S HOTEL, BEDROOM WINDOW - LATER

The White Dove is still sitting motionless on Tesla's windowsill looking at something in the now-empty room. Suddenly the dove comes to life and flies up and away. As CAMERA follows from high angle, a black and white image of 1943 New York turns into vivid color and morphs into a beautiful, futuristic city, blazing with an electrical presence everywhere.

AS TITLES ROLL:

The White Dove flies up as far as the eye can see and out of frame. CAMERA pulls back to encompass the Eastern seaboard and then the entire United States, glowing with electric lights west of the terminator. CAMERA continues up and away revealing, the balance of a sun-lit Earth. As we pull back still farther into the Solar System, we pass Mars, which begins to light up with cities. CAMERA continues to pull back farther, past the rings of Saturn and its sixth moon, Titan, which lights up as well. CAMERA then pulls out of the Solar System and into the galaxy-studded universe, the real domain of the Poet of Electricity.

TITLE ROLL

On June 21, 1943, in case #369, the United States Supreme Court ruled that Nikola Tesla had indeed invented radio because his 4-tuned circuits were, not only essential, but predated all relevant patents of Marconi and his corporate co-conspirators.

In 1960, The International Commission for Electrical Engineering recognized Nikola Tesla posthumously by designating the "tesla" as the unit of magnetic induction. Tesla thus joined the ranks of Watt, Volta, Ampere, Coulomb, Joule, Faraday, Kelvin and Newton.

Today the World uses over 16 trillion watts of electrical power each year -- most generated by Tesla technology on the 60-cycle, AC standard. What kind of electricity do you have in your house?

FADE OUT.