

The Farnsworth Invention

a screenplay
by

Aaron Sorkin

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Without Main Titles, just the studio logo, we

FADE IN:

EXT. POTATO FIELD - DAY

It's a vast expanse and we're still for a moment before the screen fills with a plow, drawn y three horses and digging three parallel lines in the dirt at once.

TITLE:

Rigby, Idaho

Riding the plow is a 14 year old boy. This is young PHILO FARNSWORTH and he doesn't know it yet but in a minute he's gonna realize the key to the most influential invention is history. Before that can happen though, we HEAR a Russian soldier shout--

CAPTAIN (VO)
Kommendah! Zazhgite fakuly!

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. UZLIAN SHTETL - NIGHT

Tevye the milkman could've lived here, in fact he did. Right now, in a light snow, the small, rural, impoverished village is being emptied of its 200 citizens. Horses and mules are pulling some households into the night while others are in the final stages of packing up. This is all happening peacefully but under the supervision of two dozen soldiers.

The Russian is subtitled.

CAPTAIN
Zazhgite fakuly! (*Light the torches!*).

TITLE:

Uzlian Shtetl Russia

The CAPTAIN continues shouting his commands as he walks past one particular house where a soldier is waiting as ABRAHAM and LEAH finish their packing.

ABRAHAM
(calling)
Leah! We have to go now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LEAH

I need to find the candlesticks.

ABRAHAM

Leah, please, this man is being very patient with us.

LEAH

My grandmother's candlesticks. They were a wedding present. I don't know if I packed them.

SOLDIER

Take your time, ma'am. They're yours, they belong to you. We're not monsters.

LEAH

I just need another minute.

SOLDIER

We're not monsters.

Next to LEAH and ABRAHAM's wagon, unnoticed until now, is a 10 year old boy. DAVID. The SOLDIER looks at him and smiles warmly.

SOLDIER (CONT'D)

How 'bout you? You want me to help you up on the wagon? Ride on top of the wagon like the Czar?

DAVID looks back at the soldier but doesn't say anything...

SOLDIER (CONT'D)

Hm?

DAVID keeps looking at him, and then, with a cool strength well beyond his years, says simply--

DAVID

Fuck you.

The SOLDIER couldn't have heard right...

SOLDIER

(beat)

What did you say?

DAVID

(beat)

I didn't say anything.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SOLDIER
(pause)
Good.

DAVID
Except fuck you.

SOLDIER
Listen my friend--

DAVID
*Take your hand off me before I make you
shoot a 10 year old boy in front of 200
people.*

The SOLDIER stares back. Then calls out--

SOLDIER
(calling)
*Burn this house! This house is ready!
Burn this house!*

Several SOLDIERS with torches hustle over, and as the house is set on fire, we

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. POTATO FIELD - DAY

And PHILO continues his plowing, adding to several parallel lines in the dirt and we

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - DAY

As we FOLLOW a WOMAN who's hurrying to the corner against the flow of pedestrian traffic. AS she gets closer to the corner, she begins calling, in Russian--

WOMAN
(calling)
David!
(again)
David!

TITLE:

Manhattan

The WOMAN gets to the corner, where DAVID is making change for a customer who's just taken a Yiddish newspaper off the stack--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WOMAN (CONT'D)

David, your mother says you should come home now.

DAVID

I can't.

WOMAN

Your father's gotten sicker. Your mother says you should come home.

DAVID

(pause)

I can't. I'll lose my corner.

He pauses another moment...then says it again in English, with absolutely no trace of an accent...

DAVID (CONT'D)

I'll lose my corner.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. POTATO FIELD - DAY

The plowing continues. PHILO wipes the sweat off his face with a rag and we

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. NEW YORK HERALD/MAIN LOBBY - DAY

As DAVID comes in from the street. He looks at the lobby directory and finds the name he wants as we

CUT TO:

INT. HERALD NEWSROOM - DAY

DAVID knocks on a half-open office door and walks into--

INT. OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

It's small with three people at work. There's a guy, LESTER, at a filing cabinet and another guy at a desk. In the corner, with his back to us, is a man at a telegraph set wearing headphones and tapping out a message from a piece of paper.

DAVID lets his eyes take it in a moment. This isn't the room he expected.

LESTER

Can I help you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAVID

The paper said you need messenger boys
and I'd like the job.

LESTER

This isn't the *Herald*, you're in the
wrong office, you want to go down the
hall.

DAVID

I'm sorry?

LESTER

This isn't the newspaper, we just lease
office space here. This is the Commercial
Cable Company.

DAVID

Sorry.

LESTER

Not a problem.

And he starts to leave, but stops--

DAVID

What do you do?

LESTER

We send and receive cable messages.

(beat)

Radio, you heard of it?

DAVID's transfixed...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE POTATO FIELD

And the young PHILO turns the team of horses and the plow and
starts a new row as we

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. COMMERCIAL CABLE COMPANY - DAY

DAVID's standing in front of his boss as LESTER looks on
impotently.

BOSS

We can't have operators picking their own
holidays. There's Christmas and there's
Thanksgiving.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAVID
It's Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, I
didn't pick them.

BOSS
Kid, if you don't come in to work Monday,
don't come in to work Tuesday.

DAVID nods that he understands, picks up his jacket and walks
out as we

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. POTATO FIELD - DAY

And discs dig into the soil as we

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WANNAMAKER'S DEPT. STORE - NIGHT

A CROWD has gathered on the street outside and COPS are making
sure things don't get out of hand.

A TAXI pulls up and WACHTEL, early-20's in a suit, hops out of
the cab and makes his way through the crowd, telling a police
officer as he passes--

WACHTEL
I'm with American Marconi.

--which gets him through and he heads into a side door and up--

INT. BACK STAIRWAY- CONTINUOUS

--and WACHTEL can already hear the din of activity upstairs
and he reaches--

INT. AMERICAN MARCONI - CONTINUOUS

It's a space the company leases in the department store and
right now a CROWD is being kept at bay while a small group of
people are huddled over the shoulder of DAVID, who's manning a
wireless machine.

He scribbles something down while calling out--

DAVID
(calling)
James Cooley. James W. Cooley.

And the CROWD near the door looks around to see if that name
belongs to someone. It doesn't.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

And now WACHTEL has found SIMMS, who's the man in charge.

WACHTEL

What the hell is going on, I've been on a train from Chicago since--

SIMMS

Eddie, another passenger ship, the *Parisian*, got a radio message from the *Carpathia*, telling 'em they've got 712 survivors on board.

WACHTEL

And they've got the names?

DAVID

(calling out)

Mrs. William Christiansen.

SIMMS

We've got the names.

WACHTEL

You're telling me we're the only ones?

SIMMS

We got all the other wireless stations in the vicinity to close to avoid interference.

WACHTEL

You're kidding me.

SIMMS

No.

WACHTEL

Would there have been interference?

SIMMS

No.

WACHTEL

Your idea?

SIMMS

(indicating DAVID)

His.

DAVID

Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Meriweather.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

WOMAN IN THE CROWD
(calling)
And Julianne? Julianne Meriweather?

DAVID holds up his hand to indicate "just a moment"--

SIMMS
He's been at it for 28 hours straight, he
won't give up the chair.

DAVID
Julianne Meriweather.

WACHTEL
Where did he come from?

SIMMS
He got fired by the Commercial Cable
Company 'cause he wouldn't work on the
Jewish holidays.

WACHTEL
What's his name?

SIMMS
Sarnoff. David Sarnoff.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. POTATO FARM - DAY

--as the horses are brought to a stop. PHILO dismounts and
moves to the front to begin unbuckling the horses when for the
first time he looks at the total of his day's work...

...and something hits him like a brick to the head. We don't
see it yet but he sure does. The entire world has gone away
except for what he's focusing on.

And now we see it.

Hundreds and hundreds of horizontal lines, rolling and
vibrating and traveling to infinity. He stares and performs
dozens of complex scientific calculations behind his eyes.

And he points at the field.

And from far off in the distance we hear his mother call--

MOTHER (OS)
(calling)
Philo...Philo...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

And that's when we

FADE TO BLACK

And these first few minutes have served as a kind of overture.

FADE IN:

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

A teacher, TOLMAN, is getting an otherwise empty classroom ready for the first day of school.

PHILO stands in the open doorway and knocks.

TOLMAN

Yes.

PHILO

Mr. Tolman?

TOLMAN

Yes..

PHILO

Are you Mr. Tolman?

TOLMAN

What can I do for you?

PHILO

My name's Philo Farnsworth and my family just moved here from Indian Creek, Utah. We live on my uncle's farm and I start school here on Monday.

TOLMAN

Well you're gonna have me for Basic Science.

PHILO

Yes sir, that's why I'm here.

TOLMAN

What do you need?

PHILO

I'd like to skip Basic Science and take your Chemistry class instead.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TOLMAN

Chemistry's for people who've taken Basic Science first.

PHILO

Yes sir, I just thought I'd ask.

TOLMAN

I'll see you Monday. Welcome to Rigby High School.

PHILO

Thank you.

But PHILO just stands there...

TOLMAN

(beat)

Anything else?

And this is what PHILO really came to ask--

PHILO

Mr. Tolman, photoelectric material releases a stream of electrons whenever light hits its surface, right?

Did that sentence just come out of the mouth of a 14 year old kid from Indian Creek, Utah?

TOLMAN

(pause)

Hm?

PHILO

Photoelectric material, Like say, selenium, it releases a stream of electrons when light hits it.

TOLMAN

Yeah.

PHILO

And cathode rays essentially do the opposite, they make invisible electrons glow.

TOLMAN

(beat)

I think so.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PHILO

Well then I think there's a way to transmit pictures electronically through the air to a receiver the way we transmit sound to a radio. Can I use a piece of paper?

TOLMAN doesn't know what planet this kid's from or if he's the butt of a practical joke, but he slides a piece of paper across the desk to PHILO.

As PHILO speaks now, he'll casually sketch out a drawing worthy of DaVinci's notebook. He's drawing a cathode tube.

PHILO (CONT'D)

You trap light in an empty jar, roughly the size of what your mother would use to keep fruit fresh only it would have to be a vacuum tube. A vacuum tube, and the inside of the tube is treated with a special surface that reacts to the light and converts it into electrical impulses. The light image has to be broken down into a series of lines, horizontal lines, fifty, sixty horizontal lines, five hundred lines, I don't know, that would be scanned in milliseconds, line by line the same way we read a book. The same way we plow a field.

He's done with the sketch...

TOLMAN

(doesn't know what to make of the display he's just seen)
That's...well, okay.

PHILO

Yeah. Thanks again, I'll see you Monday.

TOLMAN

Yeah.

And PHILO walks out into--

INT. SCHOOL CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

--where a PRETTY GIRL has been watching most of this through the open door.

PRETTY GIRL

Hi.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PHILO
Hi.

And PHILO heads off and we

CUT TO:

INT. TOLMAN'S CLASSROOM - DAY

class is in session and TOLMAN'S finishing--

TOLMAN
The definition of "down" is toward the center of the earth. The definition of "up" is away from the center of the earth. And at this point in your academic career, Joe, I shouldn't have to tell you why people in South America don't fall off.

JOE
It still doesn't make sense, sir.

TOLMAN
Okay.

The BELL rings--

TOLMAN (CONT'D)
Leave last night's homework assignments on the desk.

And the class starts to file out, leaving a two page homework assignment on TOLMAN'S desk. One, then another, then another--

--then PHILO gets there and puts down what appears to be 150 pages or so.

TOLMAN (CONT'D)
Whoa, whoa. What is this?

PHILO
(quietly)
It's the homework.

TOLMAN
This is last night's homework?

PHILO
No, I just went ahead and did it for the whole year.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TOLMAN looks at PHILO. He takes the 150 pages and thumbs through it...and thumbs through it...he can't believe it...

TOLMAN
(to PHILO)
Stand right here for a second.
(to the other students)
Come on, let's go.

The other students file past and drop their assignments on the desk. Once the room is empty--

TOLMAN (CONT'D)
Who are you?

PHILO
I'm--

TOLMAN
And who the hell was your science teacher in Utah?

PHILO
Well for Biology--

TOLMAN
Kid, your father, he works for the Government or something? He's a scientist?

PHILO
My father's a potato farmer.

TOLMAN
You read at home?

PHILO
Yes sir.

TOLMAN
Tesla?

PHILO
Yeah.

TOLMAN
Edison?

PHILO
Yes.

TOLMAN
Marconi?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PHILO

Yes.

TOLMAN

What else?

PHILO

I like the Sears-Roebuck catalogue.

TOLMAN

(pause)

Okay, well you've passed Basic Science.

PHILO

Hey, that's great, thank you.

And PHILO walks out and we

CUT TO:

EXT./EST. BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY - DAY

And while we look at the beautiful campus, we HEAR a PROFESSOR saying--

PROFESSOR (VO)

Which would mean that all actions do not happen in constant time everywhere, he said. And by way of example, he said imagine that you're riding in an open automobile--

CUT TO:

INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

--and while the PROFESSOR continues his lesson, we find one student who, while not being rude, is not paying much attention either. He's looking at the Sears-Roebuck catalogue. This is PHILO FARNSWORTH at 20 years old and this is pretty much the way he's gonna look for the rest of his life.

Also in the class, we're gonna notice a guy who's very, very, big. We're gonna meet him in a moment.

PROFESSOR

--driving toward a person at 20 miles an hour. That person throws a baseball at you at 30 miles an hour. That ball will be coming toward you at a speed of what, Miss Harris?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STUDENT (HARRIS)
50 miles an hour.

PROFESSOR
That's right. Now imagine that you're standing in an open automobile driving away from that same person at 20 miles an hour. He throws you a baseball at 30 miles an hour and it hits your hands at what speed, Mr. McNulty.

MCNULTY was horsing around with one of his friends and wasn't paying attention...

MCNULTY
(beat)
The baseball was going how long?

PROFESSOR
(pause)
Mr. Farnsworth, would you tell Mr. McNulty, who apparently is pursuing a career as a rodeo clown, at what speed the baseball would hit his hands.

FARNSWORTH
Oh don't do this to me.

PROFESSOR
Would you educate him please, as my best efforts seem to be failing.

MCNULTY
He wasn't listening either, he was reading a catalogue.

PROFESSOR
Mr. Farnsworth?

FARNSWORTH
Ten miles an hour.

PROFESSOR
Ignorant and happy about it is an excruciating thing to observe in a young man, Mr. McNulty. Ten miles an hour. Now in this theory he discusses--

The PROFESSOR continues his lecture as MCNULTY looks at PHILO, who gives MCNULTY a half-wave and goes back to his SEARS-ROEBUCK catalogue before we

CUT TO:

EXT. BYU/SCIENCE BLDG. - DAY

STUDENTS are crossing the quad as PHILO heads out of the Science Building. MCNULTY comes out a few moments later, along with TWO BUDDIES, and MCNULTY catches up to PHILO, falls in step with him and puts his arm over his shoulder. This isn't the world's most menacing threat to PHILO, just kind of annoying.

MCNULTY
I don't like looking dumb.

PHILO
Huh?

MCNULTY
You heard what I said.

PHILO
Actually I didn't

MCNULTY
I don't like looking dumb. We've talked about this.

PHILO
He called on me, what do you want me to do?

MCNULTY
My buddies here would've pretended not to know the answer either.

PHILO
Your buddies here wouldn't have had to fake it.

BUDDY #1
Hey--

BUDDY #2
Are you being a smart guy?

MCNULTY
He is.

PHILO
it's a college physics class, we were subtracting 20 from 30, I got 10, I wasn't trying to show off.

MCNULTY
I don't like to look dumb.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PHILO

Well you're probably gonna have to get used to that.

MCNULTY

Hold his arms.

PHILO

We're in college.

But before anybody can hold anything, one of the BUDDIES is casually shoved aside by the very, very big guy we saw in the classroom. The is CLIFF GARDNER and he's about to become PHILO's best friend.

CLIFF

(to the BUDDIES)

Hold his arms and I'll break both of yours.

MCNULTY

hey is this your business now?

CLIFF

Get outa here, I'm not kidding.

MCNULTY

(to PHILO)

I don't like looking dumb.

PHILO

Got it.

MCNULTY and his BUDDIES head off.

PHILO (CONT'D)

(to CLIFF)

Thanks a lot.

CLIFF

He's nothing, he just thinks he's a cowboy.

PHILO

Well I appreciate it.

CLIFF

And he doesn't like people from the East.

PHILO

Okay, well I'm from here, but--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CLIFF

You moved back to Provo from somewhere,
though, right?

PHILO

Idaho.

CLIFF

Yeah.

PHILO

Philo Farnsworth.

CLIFF

Cliff Gardner. You talked to the school
kids at our church last week.

PHILO

Was that your church?

CLIFF

Yeah.

PHILO

Yeah.

(beat)

I think the Bishop didn't take much to
it.

CLIFF

Well 'cause they usually expect you to
talk about, you know--

PHILO

The Mormon Church.

CLIFF

Yeah. And you talked about, I guess,
electro...magic.

PHILO

Magnets, electro-magnets.

CLIFF

Yeah, so my sister Pam was there 'cause
she works with the kids and she said
isn't that the boy from your college
class and I said yeah and she said she
liked you and you should come Friday
night to a dance at Lowery Hall.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

PHILO

(pause)

Did you stop me from getting punched to
ask me to meet your sister?

CLIFF

Yeah.

CUT TO:

EXT. LOWERY HALL - NIGHT

A college social is going on inside but there's plenty of socializing outside too as kids are drinking punch and laughing and smoking cigarettes. As LEWIS tells a story, another guy nudges PHILO and offers to spike his punch a little. PHILO indicates "sure". A few very pretty girls are standing by, one of whom we'll get to know in a moment.

LEWIS

...and it hits your hands at fifty miles
an hour. Then he asks, you're driving
away at 20 miles an hour and the ball's
thrown to you at 30 miles an hour and he
sees that McNulty's just messin' around
and not following the thought and he
calls on Farnsworth over here, who says--
(and this cracks him up)
--"Oh don't do this to me."

Everyone who's listening to the story laughs at the punchline.

PEM

What was the point?

LEWIS

Farnsworth didn't want to answer the
question 'cause it was so easy and he
knew he'd get punched for making McNulty
look bad.

PEM

No I meant what wasn't the point the
professor was illustrating with the
story?

And no one really knows. Or they do, but they only understand
part of it but can't really explain it. Anyway, there's
silence a moment. Everyone ends up looking at PHILO...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PHILO

He was talking about something called the Theory of Relativity which was proposed by a man at Princeton University named Einstein. The next thing the professor was gonna say was imagine you're standing next to a stationary train that has its lights on. The light would be traveling 186,000 miles per second. But if the light was coming from a train moving 20 miles per hour--

PEM

--the light would appear to be moving faster to the people on the ground than the people on the train?

PHILO

Uh--no. It wouldn't, because the speed of light is constant.

And PHILO is momentarily distracted by the beauty of this girl and the fact that she's smiling at him and asking the right questions.

PHILO (CONT'D)

(beat)

It's constant. It doesn't speed up or slow down relative to the viewer's vantage point. It's--the speed of light never changes.

PEM

(she knows she's getting to him)

In other words, it's constant.

PHILO

Yes.

PEM

That's why the scientific symbol for the speed of light is c .

PHILO

Yes.

PEM

Small c .

PHILO

For constant.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PEM
So what's the answer?

PHILO
Hm?

PEM
What happens to the extra 20 miles per hour?

PHILO
Well...speed can only be measured by a clock and we don't have the kind of clocks yet that measure super-high speeds with any accuracy, but if we did, and you put one clock on a train moving *toward* the light source and another on a train moving away from it, from the point of view of the light beam--

COLLEGE BOY
The trains would be moving at two different speeds.

PHILO looks for a moment at the COLLEGE STUDENT, who broke the bubble on what was becoming a more intimate moment for PHILO and PEM...

PHILO
The *clocks* would be moving at two different speeds.

PEM
How is that possible?

PHILO
Because while the speed of light is constant, the measurement of time isn't.

PEM
That doesn't make sense.

PHILO
I know. Are you Pam?

PEM
Yes.

PHILO
I'm supposed to meet you tonight.

CUT TO:

INT. LOWERY HALL - NIGHT

PHILO and PEM are dancing slowly to the music of Jerome Kern. PEM's looking in PHILO's eyes and he's looking back and after a moment they both get kind of embarrassed and smile. Then...

PEM

Electro magnets for a talk at the church?

PHILO

No good, huh?

PEM

Are you insane?

PHILO

No, I'm an electrical engineer.

PEM

What's your plan?

PHILO

I don't understand, do the Latter Day Saints object to electricity? Who do they think put it here?

PEM

What's your plan?

PHILO

I'm going to invent a device that's going to allow everyone in the world instantaneous access to all visual information.

PEM

(pause)

What does something like that pay?

PHILO

I don't know.

EXT. PROVO STREET/PHILO'S CAR - DAY

PHILO, in his best (only) suit, is driving down the street with his sister, AGNES, a very pretty girl a year younger than PHILO. PHILO's going to see some people he's nervous about impressing and AGNES is tagging along.

AGNES

You and Pem have been seeing a lot of each other.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PHILO

Yes.

AGNES

You like Pem, I can tell.

PHILO

Yes.

AGNES

I like Pem.

PHILO

Good.

AGNES

Are you gonna propose?

PHILO

I really don't know.

AGNES

I think you should.

PHILO

I'll take that under advisement.

PHILO pulls the car up--

AGNES

Talk at regular speed in there, okay,
with words that people are familiar with.

PHILO

Wait here.

PHILO hops out of the car and walks into--

INT. COMMUNITY CHEST/WAITING AREA - CONTINUOUS

It's a small, storefront operation that's empty right now. There are a couple of magazines out on the coffee table, and PHILO sees and picks up a copy of the Sears-Roebuck catalogue but just as he sits, the office door opens and EVERSON sticks his head out.

EVERSON

Mr. Farnsworth?

PHILO

Yes.

PHILO goes into--

INT. EVERSON AND GORRELL'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

EVERSON and GORRELL, two men of 60 are like an old married couple.

EVERSON
I'm George Everson and this my partner,
Leslie Gorrell.

PHILO
Philo Farnsworth.

GORRELL
What'd you say your name was?

PHILO
Philo.

GORRELL
Family name?

PHILO
It was my grandfather's. He was an
officer in the Civil War and his men--

GORRELL
Which side?

PHILO
Hm?

GORRELL
Which side in the War?

EVERSON
Leslie--

GORRELL
I'm not allowed to ask which side in the
War?

EVERSON
It's not polite.

GORRELL
It was a war, George.

EVERSON
Please.
(to PHILO)
Mr. Gorrell's upset today because our car
won't run.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GORRELL

He made me go in on a car with him.

EVERSON

(to PHILO)

A beautiful Chandler roadster. Used, of course, but--

GORRELL

A hundred and fifty dollars, I sunk seventy-five dollars into that car.

EVERSON

Mint condition. Reliable, comfortable, speeds up to 50 miles per--

GORRELL

Reliable?

EVERSON

Excuse me, but we've had that car for--

GORRELL

It's sitting out in front of the--*it's inert!* What shall we rely upon it for exactly?

EVERSON

All I'm saying is--

GORRELL

Perhaps if we exhibited a more businesslike decorum and returned to the matter at hand.

EVERSON

Of course.

GORRELL

(pause)

What the hell was your name again?

PHILO

Philo Farnsworth.

GORRELL

And what do you want?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PHILO

I need \$25,000 to set up a lab and create a device which will transmit pictures, moving pictures, electronically through the air, and then reassemble them at great distances, all in a fraction of a second.

GORRELL

(pause)

Hm?

PHILO

You see, if you can convert a light image into many horizontal lines--

GORRELL

No, you want how much?

PHILO

\$25,000

(beat)

It's a lot, but it's what I believe it'll take to crate a working model. And that's bare bones, I've looked for every cost-cutting--

GORRELL

This is the Community Chest.

PHILO

Yes.

GORRELL

We're fundraisers.

PHILO

Yes.

GORRELL

We raise money for charities. There's a flood, a town needs a new school, that's what we like.

PHILO

Your letter said that you might be interested in investing in a new--

GORRELL

What letter?

EVERSON

I sent him a letter.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

PHILO

It was in response to my letter.

GORRELL

(beat)

Which said?

PHILO

That I was seeking investors for an idea
that I have for something that would
transmit moving pictures electronically.

GORRELL stares a dagger at EVERSON...

PHILO (CONT'D)

(pause)

Sound, by the way, would be synchronized
and broadcast simultaneously.

GORRELL

(pause, then to EVERSON)

And you wrote back saying?

EVERSON

We might be interested.

GORRELL

Really.

EVERSON

Yes.

GORRELL

We're not interested.

EVERSON

We don't know for sure.

GORRELL

One of us does.

EVERSON

We've always talked about maybe getting
involved with an endeavor.

GORRELL

(to PHILO, to end the argument)

What is it you want me to do again?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

PHILO

Transmit moving images electronically
through the air, capture them again in a
cathode ray tube, and then project them
onto a screen in your house.

GORRELL

(back to EVERSON)

Yeah, not *that* endeavor.

EVERSON

Why no?

GORRELL

Because I don't understand what the hell
this guy just said *and neither do you*.

EVERSON

So let's hear him say more.

GORRELL

Why?

EVERSON

What?

GORRELL

Why?

PHILO

'Cause while you're listening I'm gonna
fix your car.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY

As PHILO comes out followed by EVERSON and GORRELL.

PHILO

Aggie, toss me my tool bag, would you?
This is my sisters, Agnes. This is Mr.
Everson and Mr. Gorrell.

EVERSON

Miss.

AGNES

Pleased to meet you.

PHILO

Key?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EVERSON
(handing PHILO the ignition
key)

Yeah.

And with this, PHILO takes the tool bag and gets under the hood of the Chandler roadster which is parked in front of his own car.

EVERSON (CONT'D)
Your letter said you were in the Navy.

PHILO
Yes sir.
(to GORRELL)
The U.S. Navy.

EVERSON
So how does it work?

PHILO
It's been demonstrated repeatedly that electrons can be influenced to travel in a beam if they're shot through a vacuum and aimed with a properly shaped magnetic field, did that mean anything to either one of you?

GORRELL
No.

EVERSON
Sure.

GORRELL
Shut up.

PHILO
A glass vacuum tube. The beam of electrons is aimed at lines of phosphor dots. Magnetic fields of precise shape, strength and duration.

GORRELL
I understood the words tube and dots.

PHILO
Okay, an electron behaves in the following matter:

GORRELL
You're saying you can send a photograph from here to there electronically?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PHILO

Well I can, but that's not what I'm saying. I'm saying I can send a live moving image from here to there electronically.

PHILO gets out form under the hood--

GORRELL

Well I wouldn't say it out loud to that many people, kid, but just for the sake of amusing myself, how far and how fast?

PHILO

As far as you want and roughly at the speed of light.

And PHILO turns the key and the engine turns over...

PHILO (CONT'D)

I also adjusted your timing.

GORRELL looks at the running car...then at PHILO...

GORRELL

We don't have \$25,000.

EVERSON

We don't. We don't have \$25,000, but we do have \$3000 earmarked--

GORRELL

George--

EVERSON

Leslie, for an endeavor.

GORRELL

You like using that word.

EVERSON

I say we take him to see Crocker.

GORRELL

No.

EVERSON

He likes science. He loves science. He funded the radiation lab up there where they're doing cancer research.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

GORRELL
(to PHILO)
You're thing--what are you calling it?

PHILO
Television.

GORRELL
Does it prevent cancer?

PHILO
No.

GORRELL
(to EVERSON)
No.

EVERSON
We're going there anyway.
(pause)
Come on.

GORRELL
He fixed our car, so I'll blow him to a
train ticket and I'll arrange the meeting
but that's the end of it for me.

PHILO
A train ticket, where are we going?

GORRELL
San Francisco, California.

CUT TO:

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREET - DAY

As PHILO, EVERSON and GORRELL make their way past a parting
cable car to reveal the front of the CROCKER FIRST NATIONAL
BANK.

EVERSON (VO)
William Crocker is a regional director
for the Community Chest and the president
of Crocker First national Bank. His
family built the Union Pacific Railroad.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BANK LOBBY - DAY

As PHILO, EVERSON and GORRELL are greeted by WILKINS, ATKINS
and PERKINS.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GORRELL (VO)
You'll do a brief presentation in a room
he's got at the back of the bank. Say
whatever you have to say and be done.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LARGE MEETING ROOM - DAY

With a large dry-erase board. CROCKER, an affable but serious looking person, his associates, ATKINS, WILKINS and PERKINS and EVERSON and GORRELL are being offered water from a pitcher by a couple of BANK SECRETARIES.

GORRELL (VO)
He'll have associates there, people he
relies on for counsel and they'll
probably do most of the talking. Keep it
to 20 minutes if you can, Mr. Crocker
doesn't like having his time wasted and
he'll blame me.

And as PHILO glances up at the wall clock which tells us it's
a few minutes before ten a.m., we

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LARGE MEETING ROOM - DAY

And the pitch is underway, with PHILO starting to make a
diagram on the dry-erase board.

GORRELL (VO)
tell him what you're gonna do, tell him
how you're gonna do it, tell him what
it'll cost. 20 minutes.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LARGE MEETING ROOM - DAY

And the dry-erase board is filling with a diagram of Philo's
image dissector and another of what can only be described as a
television set and we

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LARGE MEETING ROOM - DAY

While we've caught glimpses of it before, we're seeing PHILO's
talent at full throttle now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Part minister in a pulpit, part detective unraveling a mystery for a captive audience, he calls on a member of the 'class', who gives an answer, and PHILO nods his head 'yes', before going to the dry-erase board and further illustrating the point and we

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LARGE MEETING ROOM - DAY

almost every inch of the huge dry-erase board is filled with what looks like plans for Tomorrowland. PHILO tosses his marker on the dry-erase rack. He's done.

He's run a marathon. He takes a sip of water and looks up at the clock. It's a little after two.

The men in the room are silent...if Philo isn't a once-in-a-generation scientific genius, he did a good job faking them out.

PHILO

I need lab space, a glassblower and a high quality vacuum pump. I'll need to make some precision tools.

(pause)

Are there any questions?

WILKINS

Who else is working on television?

PHILO

There are five others that I know of. Paul Nipkow in Germany, John Baird in England, Herbert Ives at the Bell Lab, Ernst Alexanderson at GE and a Russian named Vladimir Zworykin who's working at the Westinghouse lab in Schenectady, New York.

PERKINS

If this works, aren't they gonna beat you to it?

PHILO

No sir.

PERKINS

Why not?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PHILO

Because they're working on mechanical television which is based on a spinning wheel that's got a series of pinholes in it. There's no practical way to spin the wheel fast enough to get a picture and if you could you'd have to reduce the viewing screen to about an inch and a half wide in order to see it. Zworykin's system is electronic and he filed for a patent four years ago but it wasn't granted.

PERKINS

Why not?

PHILO

It didn't work.

(pause)

Any other questions?

WILKINS

Mr. Crocker?

CROCKER

Do you play a musical instrument?

PHILO

(beat)

I'm sorry, sir?

CROCKER

Do you play a musical instrument of any kind?

PHILO

I play the violin.

CROCKER

No foolin'?

PHILO

Yes sir.

CROCKER

So did I. My father taught me some songs when I was a kid. Just Turkey in the Straw, that kind of thing. I never practiced but I liked the lessons. I keep a violin in the office and I fiddle with it for a few minutes after lunch every day. I didn't intend that pun.

(beat)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CROCKER (CONT'D)
 Son, if you go out that door and make
 your first left, that's my office, would
 you wait there a moment please?

PHILO nods and we FOLLOW him out into--

INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

--and then through a door marked WILLIAM B. CROCKER -
 PRESIDENT and into--

INT. CROCKER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

--where he stands a moment. He sees the open violin case
 behind the desk. He picks up the neck and lazily plucks a
 string as we

CUT TO:

INT. LARGE MEETING ROOM - DAY

CROCKER, EVERSON, GORRELL and the ASSOCIATES sit or stand
 around silently.

After a moment...

ATKINS
 He's not particularly credentialed in the
 field.

PERKINS
 No one's credentialed in the field.

WILKINS
 (looking at the board)
 The signal only travels in a straight
 line. So to get over a mountain he'd
 bounce it off a stationary balloon.
 Is there even such a *thing* as a
 stationary balloon?

Another silence...then...

EVERSON
 (to CROCKER)
 Why did you ask him if he played an
 instrument?

CROCKER
 I'm struck by the number of times people
 who excel in math and science also excel
 at music. They look at a staff, they look
 at an instrument, and they just get it.
 (beat)
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CROCKER (CONT'D)

Here's what I'm gonna do, I'm gonna give him \$10,000 but he's gotta get a picture in six months. If he does, he gets more money, if he doesn't, that's the end of it. Leslie, why don't you go get him.

ATKINS

Hang on, Les. Bill, say it does work. What do you imagine the practical application being? To say nothing of the marketable one.

CROCKER

Well I doubt it's gonna work but if it did, I would imagine it would be the most influential invention in history.

(beat)

Go on and get him, Les, the boy's ready to go, let's start the clock.

And GORRELL steps out to get PHILO--

INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

--where he walks up to Crocker's office and is about to tap on the open office door when PHILO, in the office with his back to the door, casually but crisply whips off a short series of complicated arpeggios on Crocker's violin, stopping briefly to quickly tune a string that only he can hear is slightly off, then launching into the first eight bars of a Vivaldi concerto.

GORRELL turns quietly around and walks back into--

INT. LARGE MEETING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

--where the group discussion continues, interrupted by--

GORRELL

Bill?

CROCKER

Yeah.

GORRELL

You're investing seven-thousand. Everson and I are in for three.

CUT TO:

INT. PRESS CONFERENCE/NEW YORK CITY - DAY

OWEN YOUNG is making an announcement for an audience of REPORTERS, PHOTOGRAPHERS, EMPLOYEES and WELL-WISHERS.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

YOUNG

...to announce that, by Congressional mandate, the General Electric Corporation has acquired American marconi, the American arm of the Marconi Wireless Telegraph company, and is converting its assets into a new company, the Radio Corporation of America.

And the RCA logo is revealed to applause.

Looking on from the back, cool as a cucumber and likely to be the smartest person in any room he walks into, is 26 year old DAVID SARNOFF.

YOUNG is taking questions as WACHTEL comes up behind SARNOFF.

WACHTEL

(quietly)

David. I just heard Jim Harbord's gonna name you commercial manager. Congratulations.

SARNOFF

Thank you.

CUT TO:

INT. GENERAL ELECTRIC/LOBBY - DAY

A big party's underway for the launch of the new company. SARNOFF is winding his way through the well-dressed crowd with his beautiful fiancée, LIZETTE HERMANT, who's French.

GUEST

David, congratulations.

SARNOFF

Thank you, this is my fiancée, Lizette Hermant.

LIZETTE

Hello.

GUEST

Nice to meet you.

Moving on--

MIKE

(to SARNOFF)

Congratulations.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SARNOFF

DeForest sold the audion tube to AT&T,
we're gonna have to buy it.

MIKE

Why?

SARNOFF

'Cause the audion tube is what's gonna
make music sound good on the radio.

MIKE

No, I mean why do we have to buy the
patent? Won't AT&T license it to us?

SARNOFF

Sure they will, but we shouldn't be
paying royalties, we should be collecting
them. This is my fiance, Lizette.

MIKE

Nice to meet you.

LIZETTE

Nice to meet you.

MIKE

(to SARNOFF)

It's gonna cost a lot of money maybe 10%
of preferred stock.

SARNOFF

We gotta own the patents, Mike, it's how
you build a monopoly. Excuse us.

BETTY JORDAN, a young woman, comes up--

JORDAN

Mr. Sarnoff?

SARNOFF

Yeah.

JORDAN

I'm Betty Jordan, I'm with the GE
secretarial pool and they've assigned me
to start working with you tomorrow.

SARNOFF

Okay, Miss Jordan, do you know anything
about prize fighting?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JORDAN
Prize fighting?

SARNOFF
Jack Dempsey's gonna defend his
heavyweight title against a French
challenger named Georges Carpentier. He's
gonna do it in six months at Boyle's
Thirty Acres in Jersey City and I want
RCA to broadcast it on the radio.

JORDAN
Really?

SARNOFF
Really. I'll see you seven o'clock
tomorrow morning.
(seeing someone)
Lawrence.

LIZETTE
(to BETTY)
He's much warmer once you get to know
him.

LAWRENCE
Congratulations, David.

SARNOFF
Thank you, you got a second?

LAWRENCE
Sure. You two really look like you're in
love.

SARNOFF
We are. Listen, I was in my office today
and I tuned over to WEA--

LAWRENCE
--yeah.

SARNOFF
There was a man named H.M. Blackwell and
he was identified as a representative of
the Queensboro Corporation.

LAWRENCE
I know what you're gonna say.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SARNOFF

He chatted about the carefree life in the suburbs, free from the hustle of the city.

LAWRENCE

yeah.

SARNOFF

And ended by using us to "Hurry to the apartment house near the green fields for the community life and friendly atmosphere that Hawthorne advocated." You know what the name of the apartment house is near the green fields?

LAWRENCE

David, let's not do this in front of all these--

SARNOFF

Hawthorne Estates.

LAWRENCE

Look--

SARNOFF

We'll forget for the moment that your radio station fucked Hawthorne all up to high heaven and focus on the issue which is that the apartment house is owned by...?

LAWRENCE

He never mentioned rates.

SARNOFF

The Queensboro Corporation.

LAWRENCE

He never mentioned--

SARNOFF

I don't give a shit he never mentioned rates, it was an advertisement on the radio.

LAWRENCE

it was--

SARNOFF

It was bad taste masquerading as something better.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

LAWRENCE

Jesus, David, it was heard by a hundred people.

SARNOFF

Gimme three years, it'll be a hundred million and credibility, like virginity, cant' be regained.

LAWRENCE

It's AT&T's radio station, David, it's out of your jurisdiction.

SARNOFF

It's our equipment, Lawrence, I'm making it my jurisdiction. I don't want to hear advertisements on the radio. Tell Walker Gifford, tell your bosses at AT&T. I have to come back to you about this, I come back angry, you understand?

LAWRENCE

yeah.

SARNOFF

This is my fiance, Lizette.

LIZETTE

Nice to meet you.

LAWRENCE

Nice to meet you.

LAWRENCE walks off.

LIZETTE

Wow.

SARNOFF

You liked that.

LIZETTE

I'm marrying the right man.

SARNOFF

You chose wisely.

LIZETTE

Can I ask you something?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

SARNOFF
(pulling two glasses of
champagne from a tray)
Yeah.

LIZETTE
What's a kinescope?

SARNOFF
You know everything you say sounds sexy.

LIZETTE
Tatiana Zworykin said Vladimir's working
on a kinescope.

SARNOFF
Yeah, at the Westinghouse lab. A
kinescope is--I guess you'd have to
call it a television set. What's
television?

LIZETTE
Wait. *Tele's* Greek. Distant. Distant
vision.

SARNOFF
Vision from a distance. He's trying to
electronically transmit images.

LIZETTE
That would be astonishing.

SARNOFF
It would be, but no one's gotten a
picture yet.

LIZETTE
Will they?

SARNOFF
I don't know, but if television gets
invented it's gonna be invented by RCA.

CUT TO:

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO/GREEN STREET - DAY

PHILO's car, with PEM driving and PHILO in the passenger seat
with an open newspaper, is making its way up and down the
hills.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PEM

If there's anything you want me to change about myself, you should let me know. In addition to my drafting skills, I'm very adaptable.

PHILO

(from the paper)

There's a guy named Clarence Birdseye who's working on a method of flash freezing vegetables, freezing them in an instant so that the cellular structure remains intact.

PEM

Are you listening to me?

PHILO

Food's gonna last longer.

PEM

There's nothing you would change?

PHILO

You leave cigarettes burning in ashtrays. You stub them out but you don't do it all the way, you don't do it with commitment. So a thick line of smoke curls up to the ceiling for an indefinite period of time.

PEM

I was being romantic.

PHILO

When?

PEM

when I asked you if there's anything you'd change.

PHILO

Dammit. Sorry, no, nothing, you're perfect.

PEM

There his is.

CLIFF is sitting on his suitcase in front of 202 Green Street.

PHILO

(calling out)

Cliff!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CLIFF
(calling back)
Phil!

PEM
I'm his sister, he says hi to you first.

PHILO hops out of the car--

CLIFF
I beat you here.

PEM
We had some car trouble.

CLIFF
What kind of trouble?

PHILO
she drove into a salt flat. This is it.

CLIFF
202 Green Street.

There's a small sign on the building that says CROCKER
LABORATORIES. They stand there a moment.

PHILO
Let's go up.

They walk in the building and we

CUT TO:

INT. FARNSWORTH LAB - DAY

A 20x30 space, completely empty. The windows look out onto San
Francisco Bay.

PHILO, PEM and CLIFF walk up the one flight to the lab and
walk in. They take it in...

CLIFF
I want to help.

PHILO
You're gonna, there's gonna be plenty to
do.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLIFF

No, I mean I want to help build it. I mean I can't figure it out but Pem says you're gonna need glass tubes that are specially made and I figured we might save some money if I made them.

PHILO

God...Cliff...glassblowing is hard. These guys apprentice for a long--and it's dangerous, they're working with very high temperatures. And this particular thing has very unusual contours and other requirements that--

There's a tap at the door--

HARLAN HONN and STAN WILLIS, who's younger than HARLAN, are standing in the doorway.

HARLAN

Dr. Farnsworth?

PHILO

Yeah. Mister.

HARLAN

I'm sorry?

PHILO

I'm not a doctor.

HARLAN

Forgive me. Harlan Honn, I'm in the lab next door, I'm working on new methods of refrigeration.

PHILO

How do you do?

PEM

What's wrong with the old method?

HARLAN

If it leaks, there's a risk to consumers that they might die because of the poisonous gas that's emitted.

PEM

Well let's get on that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

STAN
(shaking hands)
Stan Willis.

PHILO
From Cal Tech.

STAN
Mr. Crocker's office hired me to help
you.

PHILO
I'll take all you can spare. This is my
wife, Pem, who's gonna be doing the
drafting and keeping the lab notebooks
and my brother-in-law, Cliff Gardner,
who's gonna be helping in various ways.

STAN
Mrs. Farnsworth.

PEM
Pem's fine, and gentlemen, I'm gonna go
find us a place to live.

PHILO
You know what? I hadn't thought of that.
Good.

PEM
Yeah.

PEM exits...

HARLAN
If you need anything I'm in the lab
downstairs, if you need any equipment or
another pair of eyes.

PHILO
Well I wouldn't want to distract you from
what you're doing.

HARLAN
Refrigeration? No you should feel free to
distract me.

HARLAN exits.

PHILO
Stan?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

STAN

Yes sir.

PHILO

What do you know about moving pictures?

STAN

I know you have to move a series of still photographs past the human eye at a rate of 24 frames per second to fool the brain into believing it's watching fluid movement.

PHILO

Well that's as good a place to start as any. We're gonna need a work table and a generator.

And now we go to a SERIES OF DISSOLVES, with PHILO's snippets of VOICE OVER bleeding into one another--

INT. LAB - DAY

PHILO (VO)

United States Patent application 1-773-980, made by Philo T. Farnsworth of Berkley, California. This invention relates to--

The floor's being swept clean and a worktable hammered together while two delivery guys bring in a generator and we

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LAB - DAY

PHILO (VO)

--the apparatus and process for the transmission of a moving image to a distance. The transmission is by electricity.

PEM lays out paper on a drafting table in the corner and opens a notebook which she's titled GREEN STREET LAB NOTES - BOOK 1 and we

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GLASSBLOWER'S SHOP - DAY

PHILO (VO)

Heretofore attempts have been made to transmit an image, these prior attempts have generally embodied a method and apparatus in which each particular elementary area...

A couple of GLASSBLOWERS are working in their caldrons, PHILO's talking to a third, showing him a diagram of the tube he needs as we

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LAB - NIGHT

PHILO (VO)

...human eye will retain a picture is of such short duration that the conversion of the light shades of the original image of the object to electricity and reconversion of said electricity to light...

PHILO and STAN are delicately coiling copper wire around two peg-like objects as HARLAN looks on in fascination and CLIFF sets down coffee for everyone and we

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LAB - DAY

PHILO (VO)

...cross section of such electronic discharge from the plate, in which each portion of the cross section will correspond in electrical intensity with the intensity of light imposed on...

A photo-electric coating, potassium, is being applied to various objects as a test and we

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GLASSBLOWER'S SHOP - DAY

PHILO (VO)

...a beam of light developed, fluctuating in intensity to the variations of the light current transmitted without the necessity--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The GLASSBLOWER is showing PHILO the tube he made. PHILO examines it for a moment. Gives it a ping with his finger and it shatters as we

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LAB - NIGHT

PEM is drafting specific diagrams at her table as PHILO argues with HARLAN--

PHILO (VO)
...Figure 2 is a diagrammatic view of the
television receiver. Figure 3 is...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LAB - DAY

They're getting ready for a test. PHILO and STAN are making some last minute adjustments. EVERSON and GORRELL are now standing in the room.

PHILO (VO)
...Figure 16 is a perspective view of a
biaxial crystal showing the refraction
of...

PHILO (VO) (CONT'D)
...Figure 22...

PHILO (VO) (CONT'D)
...Figure 44 is a...

PHILO (VO) (CONT'D)
In testimony whereof, I have heretofore
set my hand. Philo T. Farnsworth.

PHILO (CONT'D)
All right, let's try it.

STAN flips a toggle and

BLAM!!

The whole thing blows up. A small electrical fire which melts most of what they've built. CLIFF, HARLAN and STAN throw a few buckets of sand on the thing...

They all stare at it...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STAN

(pause)

That was a power sure, Phil, it wasn't anything we did wrong.

PHILO

It was the generator?

STAN

Yeah, You know sometimes they--

PHILO

It was the *generator*?!

There's another silence...

GORRELL

Do you have anything to show for our money?

PHILO

(pause)

The table works.

GORRELL

You have five weeks left.

GORRELL and EVERSON exit...

PHILO

All right well...we'll fix the generator. But once we do, is there a photoelectric material that's better conductor than potassium?

HARLAN

Sodium.

STAN

We tried sodium.

HARLAN

Topaz?

PHILO

No.

HARLAN

Willemite?

PHILO

I was thinking of cesium.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

STAN

Yeah, but where are we gonna get it?

PHILO

Don't they use cesium pellets in the tubes they put in radio kits? That you see in the Sears Roebuck catalogue? Little cesium pellets?

STAN

They do. I know it. I had one.

CUT TO:

INT. HOBBY STORE - DAY

PHILO's holding up a small box to the MANAGER--

PHILO

Excuse me, sir? How many of these radio kits do you have in your stockroom?

MANAGER

I just got 'em in, I've got a dozen.

PHILO

I'll take 'em all.

MANAGER

You want twelve radio kits?

PHILO

No, I'm gonna need a couple of hundred, can you tell me any other hobby stores around that might have them?

CUT TO:

INT. LAB - NIGHT

As PHILO, HARLAN and STAN pull radio kits out of boxes, pull the glass tubes out of the kits, smash the glass tubes with hammers and pour out the two or three cesium pellets into a bowl and we

CUT TO:

INT. GLASS BLOWER'S SHOP - DAY

PHILO's still not happy with the tube and he's showing the GLASSBLOWER why. The guy nods and PHILO tosses the tube as he walks away and we

CUT TO:

INT. LAB - NIGHT

More whiskey is poured over a glass with some ice. PHILO takes a sip before he starts crushing cesium pellets into a powder with a mortar and pestle, adding a little whiskey to the powder and we

CUT TO:

INT. LAB - DAY

And HARLAN's got his sleeves rolled up working with STAN on the carpentry of a crude cabinet and we

CUT TO:

INT. LAB - NIGHT

PEM writing feverishly in the lab book to keep up with events and we

CUT TO:

EXT. THE ROOF - NIGHT

PHILO's up there alone with a glass and a bottle of wine. He's mumbling to himself...

PHILO
(mumbling)
Cesium'll send a spray of
electrons...manipulated through
the...maybe celestite or rubidium...

PEM comes out on the roof--

PEM
Phil?

PHILO
Yeah.

PEM
You want your violin.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PHILO

No thanks. Thanks though.

PEM

(pause)

You know George said that Crocker says there's a correlation between music and science.

PHILO

Music is what mathematics does on a Saturday night.

PEM

I've been thinking. If you can't get it to work when Crocker comes tomorrow morning, I'm probably gonna start having affairs with other men.

PHILO

Yeah.

PEM

Let's go home.

They walk down the half-flight into--

INT. LAB - NIGHT

CLIFF is standing there.

PHILO

Cliffy, what are you doin' here this late?

CLIFF

I made this.

CLIFF holds out a tube...PHILO looks at it...it may not look like anything to us but it's the greatest work of art PHILO's eyes have ever seen...

PHILO

You made this?

CLIFF

He let me watch for a few weeks, and then showed me some things and...you've talked about what it needed and what it was missing so--

PHILO

When did you do this?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLIFF

The first two were no good, but I did this one yesterday and, you know, had to let it cool. I did this during lunches you know, I didn't want to waste--

PEM

(is this for real?)
Phil?

PHILO

He made a cathode tube.

(beat)

This is what we're using, we're staying here tonight, get Stan and Harlan.

CUT TO:

INT. LAB - DAY

CROCKER is there with WILKINS, PERKINS and ATKINS. EVERSON and GORRELL are there. AGNES is there. She's smoking a cigarette with PEM at her drafting table. A PHOTOGRAPHER is there.

A makeshift curtain divides the room in half. In PEM's half of the room is the Image Dissector. It's on a tripod, focused on a painted triangle which hangs on a peg so that it can swing back and forth. The triangle is lit with photographers lamps.

On the other side of the curtain, where all the people are, is the first television set.

STAN is making last minute adjustments.

GORRELL

Are we ready?

PHILO

Yeah.

AGNES heads over to the audience side, kissing her brother on the cheek.

AGNES

Good luck.

PEM comes by and gives her husband a pat as she joins the audience.

PHILO

Okay, Cliff, would you--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLIFF goes over to the camera side where he's alone. He pushes the triangle and sets it in motion the way you would with a pendulum on a clock.

He starts back to the audience side but his foot catches the cameras tripod as he does, knocking it ever so slightly. No one sees him do this but he knows he did it and he freezes. Did he break something, should he say anything?

PHILO (CONT'D)
(calling)
Cliff?

CLIFF leaves the tripod alone.

CLIFF
(quietly)
Yeah.

CLIFF goes over to the audience side.

PHILO
(to STAN)
Okay.

STAN flips a toggle.

PHILO (CONT'D)
It's gonna warm up a second.

The receiver warms up and after a moment the screen fills with electric fog.

Nothing.

Nothing.

EVERSON looks down...so does PEM...

Nothing.

CROCKER
It was a damn good effort, son.

ATKINS
Damn.

Nothing.

CROCKER
I mean it. Don't let this get to you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

But PHILO sees something. He's staring at the screen and he sees something.

CLIFF

Phil.

PHILO

Hang on...

PHILO's slowly moving in closer to the TV...

CLIFF

I knocked into it. On my way--on my way
back from the triangle, I--

PHILO

Hang on.

CLIFF

I tripped into the--just now, I broke it,
I should've--
(to the room)
It'll work, I just--

And PHILO calls out much louder than he needs to but he's totally lost in the emotion--

PHILO

PEM!

PEM

It's okay, we're gonna--

PHILO

Did you leave a cigarette burning in an
ashtray?

PEM

(beat)
What?

PHILO

Did you--

PEM

(beat)
I don't--

PHILO runs to other side of the curtain and then runs back and looks at the TV--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

PHILO

You didn't break it, Cliff, you moved it.

(the screen)

*That's a line of smoke from the
cigarette.*

CROCKER

I'll be God damned.

PERKINS

Shit.

EVERSON

It is, that's the cigarette. Leslie, look
at this, that's the cigarette smoke.

HARLAN

Oh my God.

EVERSON

Oh my God.

PHILO

WE GOT A PICTURE!

PEM

PHIIIIIL!

HARLAN

Look at that.

STAN

That's a goddamn television picture!

The place has erupted into shouts of joy and disbelief and
jubilation.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Aaaand, everybody, faces front please for
the *San Francisco Chronicle*--

And PHILO, CLIFF, STAN, HARLAN, EVERSON, GORRELL and CROCKER
face front as a flashbulb explodes and the uptown sound of a
Fats Waller big band kicks up and we

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - DAY

The Empire State Building is three years away from being
built, men wear hats and despite a top price of \$4.50, *Porgy
and Bess* is the hottest ticket on Broadway.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RIDLEY, 21, is in a swell mood as he heads down the block on one of his weekly errands. Maybe he does a 180 as he walks to get a better look at a couple of SECRETARIES passing on their lunch hour.

He arrives at a very large newsstand, goes to the section marked OUT OF TOWN NEWSPAPERS, tosses a quarter in a dish and grabs copies of *The Chicago Daily News*, *The Washington Evening Star*, *The Philadelphia Ledger* and *The San Francisco Chronicle*.

He tucks three of the newspapers under his arm as he heads back to the office, starting to read the fourth as he walks.

After a moment, he sees it. The three newspapers under his arm fall to the ground and he breaks into a dead run and we

CUT TO:

INT. RCA OFFICES - DAY

RIDLEY comes off the elevator, with the *Chronicle* and out of breath. He heads down a hallway and runs into BETTY JORDAN, Sarnoff's secretary.

JORDAN

You can't go in there.

RIDLEY

I need to see David.

JORDAN

He's meeting with the marketing group right now and he's pretty angry. I mean I've never seen him like this.

RIDLEY

All right, I'm gonna wait here okay?

JORDAN

Yeah.

CUT TO:

INT. SARNOFF'S OFFICE - DAY

SARNOFF and four LIEUTENANTS are listening to a radio broadcast. It's a commercial for a hardware store. It's monotonous and relentless. I won't end.

RADIO VOICE

Razor Blade Michigan Pattern Ax: \$1.85.
Fulton Razor Blade Double Bit Michigan
Pattern Ax: \$2.40. Fulton Hunter's
Hatchet: \$.95.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RADIO VOICE (CONT'D)

Handy Hand Saws, 24 inches: \$2.35.
Universal fuse plugs, made to fit *all*
universal hollow ware: \$1.10. All this at
Robinson's Family Hardware, located at
77th Street and Broadway and open from
9am to 6pm. Fulton perforated lance tooth
saw: \$3.60. Lufkin folding aluminum--

SARNOFF

How long does this go on?

PHELPS

Ten minutes.

RADIO VOICE

--Lufkin flat-end three-quarter inch and
half-inch--

SARNOFF

Really.

PHELPS

He's selling ten minutes of commercial
time for 50 dollars.

SARNOFF

Gifford's selling time on WEAJ in ten
minute blocks?

PHELPS

Yeah.

SARNOFF

For 50 dollars?

PHELPS

Well it's his station, David, he gets to--

SARNOFF

Hang on.

RADIO VOICE

Reversible type handle ratchet wrench,
\$.75.

SARNOFF

If you listen carefully you can hear
people throwing their radio sets out the
window, buying a phonograph and shooting
me in the fucking head.

RADIO VOICE (VO)

General Purpose Wheelbarrow--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SARNOFF
You can't do this.

RADIO VOICE
Manual Purpose Band Saw--

SARNOFF
And can somebody tell me what the hell
you've got in a hardware store you need
ten minutes to sell me? Is there
clairvoyance in this store?!

RADIO VOICE
All this at the Robinson's Family
Hardware Store, located at--

SARNOFF
I've got a meeting.

And SARNOFF walks out of the room, into--

INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

--where RIDLEY is standing with the paper.

RIDLEY
David--

SARNOFF
Ten minutes on a hardware store.

RIDLEY
There's an item here on the front page of
last Sunday's *San Francisco Chronicle*. A
guy named Philo Farnsworth--

SARNOFF
Excuse me, I'm sorry. You need to know
the Dempsey fight's gonna travel 500
miles, so from Jersey city, that's West
Virginia, Ohio, we've gotta get some
radio sets where the people live.

RIDLEY
Harry's group is working on that, but I
wanted to mention that Philo Farnsworth--

SARNOFF
What's the name?

RIDLEY
Philo.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SARNOFF
Spell it.

RIDLEY
P-H-I-L-O.

SARNOFF
That's not a dog?

RIDLEY
He's been working on television.

SARNOFF
Who isn't?

RIDLEY
No, not the spinning wheel, I mean
electronic television.

SARNOFF
Well lemme know when he gets a picture
'cause Vladimir Zworykin says it can't be
done. For that matter so do Paul Nipkow
and Ernst Alexanderson in Europe. Why's
the *San Francisco Chronicle* interested in
this guy?

RIDLEY
He got a picture.

SARNOFF looks at RIDLEY. RIDLEY hands him the paper and we

CUT TO:

INT. RCA CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

A meeting is underway and everyone seems to be enjoying
themselves. HARBORD is at the head of the table.

WACHTEL
Tex Rickard is promoting the fight as a
contest between good and evil.

TALLEY
Which one's which?

WACHTEL
Jack Dempsey's evil. Wife beater, draft
dodger--

SARNOFF comes into the meeting during this and takes a seat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILSON

Plus he's got that face.

TALLEY

And Carpenter's our hero?

WACHTEL

A French combat pilot...speaks French.

HARBORD

He *is* French.

WACHTEL

...everyone loves a French hero.

LARRABY

We do?

HARBORD

David, we're hearing about how Tex Rickard's promoting the fight at Boyle's Thirty Acres.

WILSON

The French fighter pilot vs. the Manhattan Mauler.

SARNOFF

(not paying much attention)

Manassa, he's the Manassa Mauler.
Manassa, Colorado.

WACHTEL

Anyway--

While the meeting continues, SARNOFF will try scribbling some names on a legal pad. Then crossing them out.

HARBORD

Is the signal gonna travel 500 miles, is this confirmed?

WACHTEL

Listen to how. A 150 watt transmitter that was going by train to the Navy Department in DC, we diverted it to a Lackawanna Railroad shed a tenth of a mile from the arena.

HARBORD

Who got that done?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

EVERYONE
(who else)
Sarnoff.

WACHTEL
Anne Morgan's been recruited to set up
charity events all up and down the coast.
People come and listen to the broadcast.

HARBORD
This is J.P.'s daughter?

WACHTEL
Yes sir. All in, we're anticipating
200,000 listeners.

LARRABY
And it could be as high as 300,000.

HARBORD
This broadcast is gonna make us bigger
than Westinghouse, David, it's gonna *give*
us Westinghouse, it's gonna make radio.
What do you have to say for yourself?

SARNOFF
I just listened to ten minutes of
information about a hardware store on
WEAF.

HARBORD
Huh?

SARNOFF
The CFO of AT&T is running his radio
station like a whorehouse.

TALLEY
You'd think it'd be more popular then.

HARBORD
It's Gifford's station, leave him alone.

SARNOFF
It's RCA's equipment, which no one will
buy if the airwaves are filled with the
price of a socket wrench for ten minutes.
And it's not just the paid advertisements,
last night they had Eloise Winthrop
singing patriotic songs. Eloise is a
seventh grader at P.S. 92 on Coney Island.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SARNOFF (CONT'D)

Jim, after the Dempsey fight we're gonna be responsible for entertaining a nation and it's gonna need to be good. We don't have an executive in new York or an engineer in Schenectady that knows how to do it. I'll be the broken record and say that we need to create a new company, an entertainment group, possibly owned by all three members of the radio combine. Westinghouse, AT&T and RCA are gonna need to create a group--the American Radio Company or the Public Radio Network--something--and bring in people who are experts in forming public taste.

WACHTEL

You want us to form public taste?

SARNOFF

This is gonna be a massive communications device and we have an opportunity to lead. Those opportunities come along a couple three times a century and I don't follow behind AT&T which has demonstrated it could give a damn what goes out over the air as long as they're getting their fifty dollars.

HARBORD

All right, let's get through the Manassa Mauler and then we can talk about being in charge of public taste. Thank you. David, would you stay a moment?

SARNOFF

Yes sir.

As the room begins clearing, DAVID looks at his legal pad, scribbles something, looks at it, circles it, and slides it down to a man at the end of the table.

SARNOFF (CONT'D)

Jerry, do me a favor, just for the hell of it ask legal to run a clearance on this trademark for me, see if anyone's using it.

And as JERRY caches the pad, we see that Sarnoff has written down--then crossed out--AMERICAN RADIO COMPANY, AMERICAN RADIO NETWORK, PUBLIC RADIO CORPORATION, and one or two others, but circled his winner--

--NATIONAL BROADCASTING COMPANY.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

JERRY

Sure.

The room has cleared out now except for SARNOFF and HARBORD.

HARBORD

What's in the San Francisco paper?

SARNOFF

A guy out there who's been working on electronic television got a picture last week.

HARBORD

Really?

SARNOFF

yeah.

HARBORD

Who's backing him?

SARNOFF

William Crocker and a couple of ham and eggheads. He's got two years as a Navy signalman, a semester at Brigham Young and a \$10,000 budget.

HARBORD

Where's Zworykin on this?

SARNOFF

Well the '23 patent hasn't been approved yet.

HARBORD

Why not?

SARNOFF

it doesn't work.

HARBORD

When will it.

SARNOFF

He's working hard on modifications.

HARBORD

All right, forget television. What did you mean when you said sole responsibility for entertaining a nation?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

HARBORD (CONT'D)

You said *possibly* a broadcast network would be owned by all three members of the combine.

SARNOFF

AT&T's gotta get out of the radio business.

HARBORD

AT&T isn't gonna take a back seat to RCA.

SARNOFF

I don't want them to take a back seat, I want them out of the car.

HARBORD

Don't make it personal with Gifford.

SARNOFF

(cool and rhetorical)
Why would it be personal?

HARBORD

I'm not kidding.

SARNOFF

Look, you're the one who's gonna be dealing with Gifford on *this*, you're gonna be--

HARBORD

No, you're the one who's gonna be dealing with him. As of Monday I don't work here anymore.

SARNOFF

(beat)
They called you?

HARBORD

They called me last night. I'm gonna go work for Herbert Hoover. On Monday, Owen Young is gonna announce that you're the new president of RCA.

(beat)
So don't fuck up.

SARNOFF

(pause)
Yeah, you too.

And as a popular song strikes up, we HEAR the VOICE of a fight announcer, J.O. SMITH, giving us the end of the broadcast--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

J.O. SMITH (VO)
 ...seven...eight...nine--he's out!
 Carpentier is out! One minute, 22 seconds
 into Round--

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - DAY

--as we track along a sidewalk of storefronts on the Upper
 West Side--

J.O. SMITH (VO)
 --Four, after a blistering combination of
 body shots, followed by a left to the
 jaw, referee Donald Hassey has counted
 Georges Carpentier out, and Jack Dempsey
 remains the heavyweight champion of the
 world, At 3:34:26 pm at Boyle's 30 Acres
 before a crowd of over 90,000--

--but we're actually looking at a different crowd now. As
 we've been tracking down the sidewalk, we've picked the end of
 a line of people and are following the line to its origin.

J.O. SMITH (VO) (CONT'D)
 --Jack Dempsey has landed a knockout
 punch to the French challenger--

And now we get to the front of the line, which goes right into--
 of all places--ROBINSON'S FAMILY HARDWARE. And as a STOCKBOY
 places a freshly made sign in the window, we see why:

We Have RADIOS in Stock

And sure enough we see two happy CUSTOMERS leaving the store
 carrying large, heavy cartons bearing the imprint of RCA.

And now the vocals of the popular song kick in--Fats Waller's
The Ladies Who Sing With the Band--as we

CUT TO:

EXT. ANOTHER STOREFRONT - DAY

As the STORE OWNER places a sign in the window--

We have RADIOS

And we

CUT TO:

EXT. ANOTHER STOREFRONT - DAY

Another STOCK CLERK places a sign--

RADIOS

And we

CUT TO:

EXT. LITTLE ITALY/ANOTHER STOREFRONT - DAY

And another STOCK CLERK placing a sign--

*Aperto Tardi
Ce Abbiamo delle RADIO*

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY

And a different kind of line. People are standing with sheet music to sing and musical instruments to play. Mothers have daughters in tow. Beautiful young women are re-touching their make-up and they're all standing at the doors of the broadcast facility for--

*WEAF
Wind, Earth, Air and Fire*

CUT TO:

INT. WEAF/LOBBY - DAY

SCOTT, a young employee, is trying to bring order to the CROWD that's inside the lobby.

SCOTT
Ladies and gentlemen, if you could just--
yes--ladies and gentlemen--

FRANKLIN, a superior, comes out of his office--

FRANKLIN
Excuse me. This is not how we conduct business here. My name is Mr. Franklin and I'm the general manager of WEAF. Give your name and your address to Scott, and tell him what it is you want to do on the radio.

CUT TO:

INT. ANOTHER STORE - DAY

Which has now devoted a section to radio receivers. A CLERK helps a CUSTOMER.

CLERK
Now this is the standard RCA model over here. This is Westinghouse. You can't go wrong with RCA or Westinghouse, right? The Deluxe model, which, as you can see, is bigger--

CUT TO:

INT. ANOTHER STORE - DAY

Another CLERK is helping another CUSTOMER--

CLERK
You plug it into common electrical household current.

CUSTOMER
It's not dangerous?

CLERK
No.

CUT TO:

INT. ANOTHER STORE - DAY

Another CUSTOMER, another CLERK--

CLERK
I'll tell you another secret. If you hang the antenna out your kitchen window--

CUT TO:

INT. WEAFF/FRANKLIN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

FRANKLIN is at his desk as SCOTT comes in--

SCOTT
Mr. Franklin?

FRANKLIN
What is it?

SCOTT
There's someone else here to talk to you about--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANKLIN

Jesus Christ, it's after eleven o'clock.
You'd think this'd be the one time of day
I'd be able to accomplish something
without people trying to get on the--

And this takes FRANKLIN out into--

INT. WEAFF/LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

--where a 20 year old GIRL is standing. She's just off the bus
but she knows what she looks like.

ADELAIDE

Mr. Franklin, my name is Adelaide Warren,
I just came to New York City from Wilkes
Barre, Pennsylvania and I think if you
hear me sing you'll want to put me on the
radio.

FRANKLIN

(pause)

Scott, you can go home for the night.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL BANQUET HALL - DAY

OWEN YOUNG is at the podium speaking to an SRO crowd. He's
just gotten a huge laugh from his audience. He continues...

OWEN YOUNG

I figured it was time to have him up to
the boardroom for lunch. After talking to
me for 20 minutes about the relative
evils of advertiser financed broadcasts--

Another appreciative laugh...

OWEN YOUNG (CONT'D)

--I interrupted him and said, "David,
you're a young man, you're gonna get an
ulcer." He said, "I don't get ulcers, Mr.
Young. I give them."

A huge laugh--

OWEN YOUNG (CONT'D)

Fellow stockholders, it's my pleasure to
introduce RCA president David Sarnoff.

And SARNOFF takes the podium to great applause. He's making
these people some money.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SARNOFF

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. RCA began this day trading at 44 and three-eighths.

Huge applause as we

CUT TO:

INT. AUTOMAT - MORNING

A line of YOUNG BUSINESSMEN, almost identically dressed, are having eggs and coffee at the breakfast counter. Newspapers open.

BUSINESSMAN

RCA's up another point and a half.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE BUILDING LOBBY - MORNING

As a group of BUSINESSMEN and SECRETARIES wait at an elevator bank. Newspapers open.

BUSINESSMAN

RCA is up

CUT TO:

EXT. OFFICE BLDG. - NIGHT

As the building releases its JUNIOR EXECUTIVES for the evening. Evening papers.

JUNIOR EXECUTIVE

RCA is trading at 58 and a quarter.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

A middle class family of four eats breakfast. The high school age SON reads the morning business section while the FATHER reads sports.

SON

Pop, didn't you sell our radio stock at 55?

FATHER

We all did very nicely on the radio stock. Why, where are they today?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SON
71.

FATHER
Gimme that.

SON
and five-eighths.

CUT TO:

INT. WEAFF STUDIO - NIGHT

An ANNOUNCER in a slow...slightly halting...monotone, is reading copy.

ANNOUNCER
...the Fulton Perforated Hand Tooth Saw,
the Fulton Michigan Ax and the Fulton 22"
Multi-Use Ballpean Hammer, all on sale at
Robinson's Family Hardware. Listeners, we
have a treat for you now. Here in our
studio, from Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania,
is Miss Adelaide Warren withe selection
from Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein's
Showboat.

An ACCOMPANIST starts playing an upright as ADELAIDE steps to the microphone and begins to sing--

ADELAIDE
(singing)
Fish gotta swim, and birds gotta fly--

CUT TO:

INT. SARNOFF'S OFFICE - NIGHT

SARNOFF's working late and has the radio on, which he's staring at in disbelief.

ADELAIDE (FROM THE RADIO)
--I gotta love one man till I die...

SARNOFF
Son of a bitch!
(calling)
Miss Jordan!

And JORDAN comes in--

JORDAN
Yes sir.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SARNOFF

Set up lunch with Walter Gifford.

JORDAN

Yes sir, at his earliest convenience?

SARNOFF

No, I don't care if it's convenient.

JORDAN

Yes sir.

ADELAIDE (FROM THE RADIO)

...Can't help lovin' that man of--

CUT TO:

INT. DELMONICO'S - DAY

A power lunch spot for Manhattan's captains of industry. SARNOFF sits at a table, the first to arrive for lunch, and looks quietly at the crowd for a moment as he lights up a cigarette. WALTER GIFFORD comes in the door. A popular staple of Delmonico's GIFFORD stops to say a few hellos on his way to join SARNOFF at the table as the maitre'd steps over.

MAITRE D'

Good afternoon, Mr. Gifford.

GIFFORD

Jeffrey, could I get a martini, please.

MAITRE D'

It's right here, Mr. Gifford.

The MAITRE D' motions over the WAITER who's carrying a tray with a perfect dry martini up.

GIFFORD

What do you drink, David?

SARNOFF

I'll have the same.

MAITRE D'

Right away.

GIFFORD

(sitting)

You're a lieutenant colonel now.

SARNOFF

Yes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GIFFORD

I say you're a lieutenant colonel now, in the reserves?

SARNOFF

I am.

GIFFORD

that's unusual isn't it? To be commissioned as a lieutenant colonel without holding any previous rank?

SARNOFF

Well I served in the Signal Corps actually but yes it is unusual. Walter, I'm concerned about--

GIFFORD

(to a passing crony)

How are you?

CRONY

I'd complain, but who'd listen?

GIFFORD

You're coming up to the house next week?

CRONY

We'll be there.

The CRONY heads off--

GIFFORD

(explaining)

Wilson Rich from Union-Carbide.

SARNOFF

I'm concerned about the programming on WEAf.

GIFFORD

What's your concern?

SARNOFF

There isn't any.

GIFFORD

Son--

SARNOFF

You sell advertising in ten minute blocks--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GIFFORD

Is this--

SARNOFF

And in between you feature what you
and I can call music if you want but
nobody from the Juilliard School would,
you know what I'm saying? A girl
performing Jerome Kern?

GIFFORD

I like Jerome Kern.

SARNOFF

So did I, which is why I prefer to hear
his music sung by singers.

GIFFORD

You don't have enough problems without
worrying about WEA?

SARNOFF

I'm paid to worry about WEA and to be
candid I wasn't aware I had any problems.

GIFFORD

Well now, you got this guy Phillip
Farnsworth in San Francisco who--

SARNOFF

Philo Farnsworth, and he's not the
subject of this lunch.

GIFFORD

He's gonna be the subject of a lot of
lunches once he gets granted the patents
for television.

SARNOFF

You're giving people little incentive to
buy my product.

GIFFORD

Your product?

SARNOFF

That's right.

GIFFORD

I sit on the Board of Directors of RCA
and I do so as a representative of the
radio combine.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SARNOFF

You've violated the agreement of the combine

TAD

(passing by)
Walter.

GIFFORD

Tad. How's your family?

TAD

Just fine, thanks for asking.

GIFFORD

(pause--back to SARNOFF)
I'm sorry?

SARNOFF

You've violated the agreement of the combine

GIFFORD

Says who?

SARNOFF

Me and seven lawyers. The agreement is clear. Westinghouse and GE manufacture receiving sets with RCA the sales agent. Your company manufactures transmitters, that's it, that's the cross-licensing agreement.

GIFFORD

The radios we've manufactured are for internal communications.

SARNOFF

Also to legitimize future commercial sales which is a violation of the patent pool.

GIFFORD

Well me and *my* seven lawyers say it's not.

And HARRY WARNER is walking by--

GIFFORD (CONT'D)

Harry. Harry, do you know David Sarnoff?

HARRY

By reputation, David, I'm Harry Warner.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

SARNOFF
Nice to meet you.

GIFFORD
I heard you had a successful test.

SARNOFF
We did.

GIFFORD
(to SARNOFF)
Harry's been working on sound.

SARNOFF
Sure.

GIFFORD
Are you gonna make a feature length picture?

HARRY
We're doing one right now with Jolson.
Nice meeting you, David.

GIFFORD
When are we gonna make a deal?

HARRY
I'm sorry?

GIFFORD
(to SARNOFF)
We want to put sound systems in all his theatres but we're not getting anywhere.

HARRY
Take care.

GIFFORD
You gonna take every nickel off the table or what, Harry, what's it gonna take?

HARRY
Honestly?

GIFFORD
Yeah.

HARRY
We can make a deal right now if you want.

GIFFORD
I do.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

HARRY

We can make it right now. Just do this for me.

GIFFORD

What.

HARRY

Gimme the name of one Jew who works for AT&T.

GIFFORD

(pause)

You sure you want to do this in the middle of Delmonico's?

HARRY

One Jew. Anywhere. The switchboard. Bookkeeping, Walter?

GIFFORD

You're a shrill pain in the ass.

HARRY

Maybe so, but if it's the policy of AT&T not to hire Jews, then it's the policy of Warner Brothers not to do business with AT&T. Don't have your people call me anymore. On the other hand, you should definitely see *The Jazz Singer* coming to theatres in October, Jolson's gonna knock your socks off.

(serious as a heart attack to SARNOFF)

You should know better.

HARRY leaves...

GIFFORD

(taking the embarrassing moment out on SARNOFF)

Fuck you.

SARNOFF

Really?

GIFFORD

You're gonna use this infraction to get me out of radio.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

SARNOFF

Yes.

GIFFORD

Because Harry Warner says I don't like Jews?

SARNOFF

(beat)

No. My interest is radio.

GIFFORD

And?

SARNOFF

You're not very good at it.

GIFFORD

You know there are a lot of people in the communications business who'd like to see me take you down and put you away.

SARNOFF

Almost everyone I would think.

GIFFORD

I'm gonna bust RCA's monopoly on radio, and let's see the rabbit you pull out of the hat then. You want arbitration?

SARNOFF

I do.

GIFFORD

You got it.

GIFFORD gets up and leaves. SARNOFF sits there. His martini, identical to Gifford's, is set down in front of him as we

CUT TO:

INT. GREEN STREET LAB - DAY

PHILO, STAN, HARLAN, AGNES. A chair, with metal arms, has been set in the middle of the room under four incredibly powerful klieg lights. The camera and television are set up, both slightly revised.

STAN's demonstrating for a skeptical PHILO.

STAN

All right, Harlan and I modified the lights last night.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PHILO

So I see.

STAN

Agnes, I want you to sit in this chair,
take this brush--

(demonstrating)

--and brush your hair at about this
speed.

AGNES

Right side/left side?

STAN

Right side.

PHILO

How long have the lights been on.

STAN

About a half hour.

PHILO

Hang on.

PHILO steps over to a side table that holds snacks, including bread and butter. He takes some butter on a knife and walks over to the chair and slides it onto one of the metal arms. They watch as the butter sits there a moment, then almost instantly melts off to the sides.

STAN

Hm.

STAN grabs a towel and cleans up the butter, then touches the arms with his hand to test it--

STAN (VO) (CONT'D)

Ow! God! That is *hot*!

PHILO

What was surprising about that?

STAN

All right, Agnes, that's too dangerous
for you to sit down in. Harlan, sit in
the chair.

HARLAN

What are you kidding me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

HARLAN (CONT'D)

What if we--

But STAN turns the projector on and HARLAN is staring into an incredibly bright beam but only for a second 'cause he jumps out of the chair--

HARLAN (CONT'D)

Jesus!

STAN

Too bright?

HARLAN

It's like walking into a supernova!

STAN

Sorry.

HARLAN

(still blinded by dots)

If I could see you I'd kill you.

AGNES

He's right here, I'll direct you with my voice.

PHILO

While these guys work out some kinks, Mr. Crocker, what can I do for you?

CROCKER

Don Lippincott thinks we should file the application and so that's what we're gonna do.

PHILO

Well...

(beat)

...it's not ready yet.

CROCKER

You have a picture.

PHILO

And that was the first step and the second is to get one with practical value.

CROCKER

You're the only one who's got a picture at all and I want to protect that. I want you to file the application.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

PHILO
All right.

CROCKER
Good.

CROCKER exits.

HARLAN
Stan, you know, I was thinking if I stood
closer to the light source, and then set
myself on fire, you could--

PHILO
All right. All right.
(pause)
We've got to figure this out. Why do we
need so much light? It's right in front
of us.
(pause)
It's right in front of us.

And we HEAR SARNOFF in VOICE OVER--

SARNOFF (VO)
"Nothing will ever replace radio as the
most powerful communications tool in the
world.

CUT TO:

INT. SARNOFF'S OFFICE - NIGHT

SARNOFF's dictating a speech to JORDAN, his secretary.

SARNOFF
"-I'm frequently asked about the future
of broadcasting. My questioners no doubt
expect me to visualize for them unknown
or revolutionary uses of radio. To these
questions I answer that the things of the
future are with us today. In other words--

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL BALLROOM - DAY

National Press Club luncheon. SARNOFF at the podium--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SARNOFF
--we do not need to look to the unknown
for radio possibilities. The
possibilities to raise ourselves up--

CUT TO:

INT. UNION CLUB - DAY

New York Chamber of Commerce. SARNOFF at the podium--

SARNOFF
--culturally, intellectually,
economically and spiritually, the
opportunity for us to come together in
times of crisis, to be informed, to be
equipped to participate in our democracy
And these opportunities are limited only
by our judgement.

CUT TO:

INT. ARMORY - DAY

United Federation of Teachers. SARNOFF at the podium--

SARNOFF
When you can transmit the human voice
into the home, when you can make the home
attuned to what is going on in the rest
of the world, you've tapped a new source
of influence, a new source of pleasure
and entertainment and culture that the
world thus far has not been able to
provide with any other known means of
communication.

CUT TO:

INT. WALDORF-ASTORIA BALLROOM - NIGHT

A black tie function, SARNOFF at the podium--

SARNOFF
RCA doesn't own the airwaves.

He gets an appreciative laugh...

SARNOFF (CONT'D)
And neither does General Electric and
neither does Westinghouse and neither
does American Telephone and Telegraph.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SARNOFF (CONT'D)

We don't own the airwaves anymore than we own the air and it's only a matter of time before someone taps Congress on the shoulder and reminds them of that, and my friends, that's gonna be bad for business. Radio stations should be run like public libraries.

(beat)

Like libraries.

(beat)

The day is coming, perhaps not so far distant, when a man will be ashamed to admit that his home is not equipped with a radio, just as a man today would be ashamed to admit that his home is not equipped with a bathtub. To deny the influence on our society of such a device is to deny our own standards of citizenship. We are limited only by our judgement. And here's hoping we never need to be tapped on the shoulder and reminded of that. Thank you very much.

A standing ovation. Hard to say if any of these people understood what he was talking about but, no question about it, David Sarnoff's a star.

OWEN YOUNG shakes hands with him as the applause continues--

YOUNG

Well done, David.

SARNOFF

Thank you, sir.

YOUNG

Go ahead and buy Victor for me.

SARNOFF

Excuse me?

YOUNG

Go ahead and buy Victor.

CUT TO:

INT. RCA MEETING ROOM - DAY

SARNOFF is letting his people do the talking at a table with JENNER and his people.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WACHTEL

We would acquire your manufacturing plant in Camden and annex it to our own with the intention of building combination phonograph/radio sets. And, un...well it should go without saying that we're also acquiring...uh...

SARNOFF

(pause)

The dog.

JENNER

The dog.

SARNOFF

What's his name?

WACHTEL

Nipper.

SARNOFF

People have confidence in the dog.

CUT TO:

INT. RCA/PRESS CONFERENCE - DAY

A crowd of REPORTERS, PHOTOGRAPHERS and WELL WISHERS. SARNOFF at the podium--

SARNOFF

...to announce that RCA has acquired Victor Talking Machines and is converting its assets into a new subsidiary, RCA Victor.

And the familiar gramophone logo is unveiled, complete with Nipper, the dog that hears his master's voice.

CUT TO:

INT. PRESS RECEPTION - LATER

Mid-day cocktails. SARNOFF holding informal court with REPORTERS.

REPORTER (TOM)

David how soon before RCA Victor forms its own record label?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SARNOFF

You lookin' for a new line of work, Tom?
Show us what you go?

TOM

(singing)
"Ol' man ribbuh..."

SARNOFF

Send this guy to WEA.

REPORTER (JOE)

David, yesterday, on almost every issue, the arbitrator, Mr. Boyden, found in favor of you and against Walter Gifford. I know you were expecting victory, but were you expecting such a complete victory?

SARNOFF

Well, the decision was for RCA and against AT&T, there weren't personalities involved, and yes, I was expecting a complete victory, but today, we're talking about a new phonograph company.

TOM

David, I don't need to tell you that people routinely refer to radio and RCA synonymously, as in "How much radio stock do you own?"

REPORTER (JIMMY)

And "Why the hell did I sell radio before it hit 100?"

Everyone laughs...

SARNOFF

What was your question?

TOM

Well now that you've eliminated AT&T from the radio business--

SARNOFF

Christ, Tom, you make me sound like Dutch Schultz.

TOM

I apologize.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SARNOFF

No, I was flattered.

But during this, RIDLEY has caught SARNOFF's attention from a distance away. And he's holding a newspaper. The *San Francisco Chronicle*. Which in the past year has never held good news for David.

TOM

I meant to say--

SARNOFF

Excuse me just one moment, would you.

SARNOFF walks over to RIDLEY, who shows him in the paper that--

RIDLEY

Philo Farnsworth's patent application was granted.

CUT TO:

INT. SARNOFF'S OFFICE - NIGHT

he's with some LAWYERS and DEPUTIES and JORDAN is helping him with his cuff links as he gets into his tuxedo. Some of the others are already dressed for an evening event.

JAMES

Well the way I read it, Farnsbrook's been granted proprietary status on three separate patents. The first is--

SARNOFF

Farnsworth. Philo Farnsworth.

JAMES

Farnsworth. The first is for something called an electric oscillator system. The second is for what he's calling an image dissector. The third is for a television receiving system.

SOLOMON

(reading from a paper)

"In my laboratory at the present time I have a system in operation which requires a wave band of only six kilocycles to carry the images from the transmitter to the receiver," Mr. Farnsworth continued.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SOLOMON (CONT'D)

"It is perfectly possible to reduce this wave band to five kilocycles to it can be sent out by regular broadcasting stations."

LENNOX

(also reading from a paper)

"I expect the receiving device will be able to be sold at retail for under \$300."

SARNOFF

That's last week's *Chronicle*?

WACHTEL

They're reading from tomorrow's *New York Times*.

SARNOFF

How long do you think before the Commerce Department approves it for commercial use?

WACHTEL

He's transmitted still and moving images but not human images.

SARNOFF

Why not?

WACHTEL

The lights he needs to get a picture are much too hot.

SARNOFF

But that's just a matter of engineering, right?

LENNOX

I think so.

SARNOFF

He could have it in a year?

WACHTEL

An under-funded, under-staffed, ill-educated Mormon in a one-room lab?

SARNOFF

He got this far somehow, he didn't make the thing out of Bibles and moonshine.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SARNOFF (CONT'D)

Howard, is there any part of a television operating system he doesn't own right now?

JAMES

The console's made out of pine.

SARNOFF

So you're saying he doesn't own the patent on wood.

JAMES

Yes.

SARNOFF

(pause)

As of today, more people have invested money in radio than own radios.

(beat)

We're about to pay Armstrong a million dollars for the technology on frequency modulation. A million dollars for the FM band. And AT&T's gonna use us in Federal Court, alleging an illegal monopoly on the radio business which, let's face it, is how this company was born.

WACHTEL

The stock's healthy, David.

SARNOFF

More people have invested in radio than own radios. If the stock heads in the other direction we're gonna need to reinvigorate the company. The five of you--legal, commercial and engineering--drop whatever it is you're doing, you're the Get Around Farnsworth Department, that's all you're working on.

SYKES

The thing's a monstrosity, David. It's huge and unsightly. Think of a person's home, where are people gonna put it?

SARNOFF

They're gonna put it where they used to put their radio.

JAMES

Well...like my father used to say, rest easy in the knowledge that anything that can happen is already happening and nothing's gonna happen next.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SARNOFF

Due respect, I think your father was wrong. It's been my experience that something always happens next.

And SARNOFF exits as we

CUT TO:

INT. NEW YORK STOCK EXCHANGE - DAY

TRADERS, RUNNERS, OPERATORS...everyone is preparing for the trading day to start as a large clock ticks down the seconds until 10:00.

A RUNNER manually changes a wall display to an ominous day and date:

Thursday, October 29, 1929

At a long phone bank, dozens of traders are on the phones with brokers getting early instructions. We move down the line of traders until we stay on one in particular--

TRADER

500 Montgomery Ward, yes sir. I'll get market price, I don't know if I'll get a buy at 93 but we'll get--

DING DING DING--

TRADER (CONT'D)

We're open.

He hangs up the phone and walks to the MONTGOMERY WARD trading pit. A SALES REP is on the phone in the center of the pit and a dozen traders surround him. Everyone here has to shout at the top of their lungs.

TRADER (CONT'D)

(shouting)

Selling 500!

SALES REP

(shouting)

I'm taking 82.

TRADER

(shouting)

What the hell are you talkin' about!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SALES REP
(shouting)
Bobby--

TRADER
(shouting)
You closed at 97!

SALES REP
(shouting)
I've got 25 sell orders at 82!

TRADER
(shouting)
We just opened ten seconds ago!

The TRADER looks down and around...nobody likes being at the beginning of an avalanche but better that than being at the end of one, so...

TRADER (CONT'D)
(shouting)
Selling 500 shares of Montgomery Ward at
\$2 dollars a share!

And with this, the other traders around the pit, convinced that the price is only heading in one direction, start shouting--

TRADERS
(top of their lungs)
Selling 2000 shares at 81!/Selling!/Get
me 79! 79!/ 1500 shares at 78!

And while the shouting's been going on, the SALES REP has scribbled down the opening trade and stuck the order slip in a glass tube. He shoves the glass tube in a pneumatic system that shoots it to the center of the trading floor--

-- where it's grabbed by a RUNNER and passed to a TELETYPE OPERATOR.

The OPERATOR types it out onto a strip, which runs between two reflectors and thus projects onto the walls the current stock quotes and we

CUT TO:

INT. SARNOFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Where an ANALYST is examining the stock quotes as they come out of the ticker tape machine.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SARNOFF, WACHTEL and a few others are standing and waiting for this man to tell them what's happening.

ANALYST

It's the volume. It's the volume of the trades. 45,000 shares of Anaconda Copper? 50,000 Standard Oil? I'm looking at--I can't believe I'm adding this right-- 630,000 shares traded in the first 26 transactions.

SARNOFF

Where did we open?

WACHTEL

One-oh-one.

SARNOFF

We closed at 118. We dropped 17 points a share while we were sleeping?

ANALYST

They're called air pockets.

SARNOFF

(shouting)

Miss Jordan!

ANALYST

You can fall 115, 20, 25 points at a time before you find a buyer.

SARNOFF

Air pockets.

WACHTEL

Yeah.

JORDAN steps in--

JORDAN

Yes sir.

SARNOFF

Get Jim Harbord on the phone.

(to the others)

Let's see what the Fed's gonna do.

And we

CUT TO:

INT. BOARDROOM - DAY

And an austere engraving on the wall tells us we're at the

United States Federal Reserve

Powerful men are gathered at the ticker tape machine as the
CHAIRMAN strides in--

CHAIRMAN

The discussion will be do we lower the
discount rate from 6% to 5%.

MILLER

Absolutely, people are gonna require
liquidity to meet what are going to be
devastating margin calls.

COWHER

If we intervene and the market continues
to crash then the Fed is going to appear
impotent.

MILLER

this isn't an academic exercise,
confidence is being destroyed and
fortunes are being lost.

CHAIRMAN

Is the market crashing?

MILLER

Mr. Chairman, we ain't seen nothin' yet.

And we

CUT TO:

INT. NEW YORK STOCK EXCHANGE - DAY

Chaos. A din of noise. The floor's covered with paper.

Everywhere we turn the market's selling. "Union Carbide!"
"Blue Ridge!" "ITT!" "U.S. Steel!", "Dow Chemical", "Selling!"
"Sell it!"

And we move to the phone banks and find a BROKER who's already
lost his voice is trying to make himself heard through the
noise--

BROKER

(shouting into phone)

The ticker is 88 minutes behind.

(shouting again)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BROKER (CONT'D)

I said the ticker is 88 minutes behind. Clients are giving us sell orders based on what they thought the market price was an hour and a half ago! The bankers are gonna have to step up and roll back margins! People are gettin' killed, we need the bankers!

And we

CUT TO:

INT. THE HOUSE OF MORGAN - DAY

Where the presidents of National City Bank, Chase National Bank, Bankers Trust and Guaranty Trust are coming from the street into the marble halls of this old investment house, which someday will be called Morgan-Stanley. They talk urgently among themselves.

POTTER

The stocks are being sold in huge blocks and they're selling to market. That means they're telling their brokers to sell at any price.

WIGGEN

The ticker's an hour and forty-five minutes behind, when they say market price to their brokers they don't know what they're saying.

They walk into--

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Where THOMAS LAMONT and a few others are already waiting.

LAMONT

Do we reduce the margins and do we use our resources to prop up prices.

WIGGEN

It didn't work Thursday it's not gonna work today.

POTTER

Al--

WIGGEN

The fact that Charley Mitchell buying U.S. Steel didn't keep the price up means--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LAMONT

What about the margins?

(silence)

What about the margin calls, gentlemen?

PROSSER

Some people are gonna get hurt.

CUT TO:

INT. STOCK BROKER'S OFFICE - DAY

Every broker in the place is trying to call all of their clients at once, which is impossible. We find one particular BROKER on the phone--

BROKER

(into phone)

James. James, do you understand? Your stock is impaired, it's fallen below the price.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. OFFICE - SAME TIME

Where a man, JAMES, sits almost motionless at his desk with the phone. We see other people walking around, but JAMES is alone in the world right now.

JAMES

(into phone)

Yes.

BROKER

(into phone)

It's a margin call, James. You owe your account \$18,000.

JAMES fingers the little clay pencil holder his kid made for him in art class that says "Dad's Pencils."

BROKER (CONT'D)

(into phone)

James do you understand? There's nothing left and you owe the bank \$18,000.

JAMES

Yes I understand.

CUT TO:

INT. CROCKER FIRST NATIONAL BANK/CROCKER'S OFFICE - DAY

CROCKER is in there with his ACCOUNTANT and his son, who's seven. The SON is holding CROCKER'S violin as his father and the ACCOUNTANT argue.

CROCKER
I'm not sellin' it.

ACCOUNTANT
bill--

CROCKER
My family helped build their plant. They
run their parts on our railroad.

ACCOUNTANT
And loyalty is fine, but--

CROCKER
But what? America's gonna stop makin'
airplanes now?

SON
Pop?

CROCKER
The people who can afford to stay in this
have an obligation to stay in this.

ACCOUNTANT
Bill, you've lost over half your personal
worth today.

CROCKER
I understand.

SON
Pop?

CROCKER
Yes.

SON
Is it time for my lesson?

CROCKER
Yes it is, it is time for your lesson,
'cause someone in this family's gonna
learn how to play music.

But CROCKER takes a moment to regard his young son, runs his hand through the boy's hair and knows what he has to do.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CROCKER (CONT'D)
Howard. Sell Boeing. All of it.

And we

CUT TO:

INT. NEW YORK STOCK EXCHANGE - DAY

Ankle deep in paper. The ticker projection flying across the walls--all down arrows, "Selling!" "Selling!", the clock ticks it's way to 3:00 and then finally, mercifully--

Clang Clang Clang

--the trading day ends.

CUT TO:

INT. SARNOFF'S OFFICE - EARLY EVENING

SARNOFF skims the ticker tape...looking...looking...looking... and there it is...

RCA: 22

He leans against his desk. There, off to the side, is the copy of the *San Francisco Chronicle* trumpeting Philo getting a picture. SARNOFF looks at it and we

DISSOLVE TO BLACK

Then

FADE IN:

EXT. 202 GREEN STREET - DAY

The small sign on the building now reads Farnsworth Television Company. CLIFF is standing out front waiting along with three PHOTOGRAPHERS.

A taxi cab pulls up and TWO MEN and a WOMAN step out. They're dressed stylishly but not ostentatiously. This is United Artists head JOSEPH SCHENCK, along with two of its founders, DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS and MARY PICKFORD.

Three flashbulbs fire as they're greeted by CLIFF and led into--

INT. 202 GREEN STREET - CONTINUOUS

The Farnsworth Television Company now occupies the entire building, which isn't saying much except that the place has grown. There are maybe 12 or 14 employees now, including some secretaries, all of whom are now hanging around the corridors to catch a glimpse of the visitors as they come through.

FAIRBANKS and PICKFORD acknowledge the employees with small, friendly "Hi"'s and "how do you do"'s while SCHENCK speaks with CLIFF.

JOSEPH

I understand you've been getting quite a few visitors through here.

CLIFF

I suppose we have.

JOSEPH

marconi's been here?

CLIFF

yeah, Mr. Marconi visited just a short while after Philo got his first picture.

JOSEPH

Who else?

CLIFF

We see Mr. Edison from time to time.

JOSEPH

Thomas Edison?

CLIFF

Yeah. Right in here.

And CLIFF leads them into--

INT. LAB - CONTINUOUS

Both the lab and the television apparatus have made progress. It's a far cry from General Electric, but more time and a little more money have been put in.

EVERSON, GORRELL, STAN, HARLAN and a few new LAB AIDES are standing around waiting.

EVERSON

Good morning, I'm George Everson.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SCHENCK
Good morning.

PICKFORD
How do you do.

FAIRBANKS
Good to see you.

GORRELL
Leslie Gorrell.

SCHENCK
Please thank Bill Crocker for arranging
this.

EVERSON
No, no, thank you.
(pause)
Philo should be here any moment. Oh, this
is Stan Willis.

STAN
Hello.

PICKFORD
Hello.

FAIRBANKS
Hello.

EVERSON
And Harlan Honn.

HARLAN
Hello.

FAIRBANKS
Good to see you.

PICKFORD
Hello.

EVERSON
He should be here any moment.

There's a long uncomfortable silence...

EVERSON (CONT'D)
Was it a good train ride?

FAIRBANKS
Very nice, yes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PICKFORD

Yes.

Another uncomfortable silence...

EVERSON

(pause)

Harlan's been doing some excellent work
with freon.

GORRELL

(to EVERSON)

You gonna be all right?

EVERSON

I thought while they were waiting they
might like to hear about--

GORRELL

Refrigeration.

EVERSON

It's actually--

But AGNES has come in--

GORRELL

Agnes, where is he?

AGNES

Good morning.

GORRELL

He's not with you?

AGNES

He stayed here last night, he didn't come
back to the house.

EVERSON

sometimes he stays in his office. Agnes,
could you--

AGNES

Yeah.

(to PICKFORD and FAIRBANKS)

Hello.

FAIRBANKS

How do you do.

PICKFORD

Hello.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

And AGNES heads off into--

INT. BACK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

There's a cot and a desk and a bunch of glass tubes and not much else. A whiskey glass that still has a couple of ice cubes in it sits next to the cot.

AGNES

Phil.

(pause)

Phil!

And the cot pops up. PHILO was sleeping under it. It's been four years since the last time we saw him and he hasn't gotten much sleep in that time.

PHILO

(simply--used to it)

Ow.

AGNES

They're here.

PHILO

Now?

AGNES

yes, they're in the lab. Straighten yourself up.

PHILO

What's the woman's name?

AGNES

Mary Pickford.

PHILO

Pickford, Pickford, got it.

AGNES

Yes, she's the most famous woman in the world so it's unlikely that you would have heard of her.

PHILO

I didn't say I hadn't heard of Mary Pickford, I just didn't know that it was United Artists that was coming today.

(losing his legs a little)

Whoa. All *kinds* of gravity in here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AGNES

Why were you under the cot?

PHILO

I don't know, but that's not an unreasonable question.

AGNES

Let's go.

They walk into--

INT. LAB - CONTINUOUS

As PHILO and AGNES come in.

PHILO

good morning everyone, I'm sorry, I'm Philo Farnsworth.

EVERSON

Phil, this is Joseph Schenck.

PHILO

Nice to meet you. This is the lab gang.

PEM has come in with two small boys, 3 and 1.

PHILO (CONT'D)

And this is--hi--this is my wife, Pem and my two boys--hey fellas--Pem, this is Joseph Schenck from United Artists.

PEM

Nice to meet you.

SCHENCK

Likewise.

PHILO

Mary Pickford.

PEM

I'm a great admirer of yours.

PICKFORD

Aren't you sweet.

PHILO

And of course, a man who needs no introduction, Mr. Charlie Chaplin.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FAIRBANKS

(pause)

Were you talking about me?

PHILO

Yes.

FAIRBANKS

(to PEM)

I'm Doug Fairbanks.

PHILO

Dammit.

PEM

Of course you are, and you're wonderful.

PHILO

I apologize, Mr. Chaplin. Mr. *Fairbanks*.

GORRELL

This is going very well.

FAIRBANKS

Chaplin's shorter and considerably more talented.

PICKFORD

Charlie did want to be here, by the way, but he's on a scoring stage.

EVERSON

Why don't we start the demonstration.

PHILO

sure.

PEM

Excuse me, please. Phil?

PHILO

Excuse me.

PHILO and PEM, with the BOYS, step out into--

INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

PEM

(quietly)

Kenny's still got the cough. I want to take him to the doctor Bill recommended.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PHILO
Sure, absolutely.

PEM
It's gonna cost \$30.

PHILO
Yeah, that's okay.

PEM
Okay.

PHILO
(to the baby)
Open your mouth for a second, lemme look
in there.

PEM
What are you looking for?

PHILO
I don't know.

PEM
Go demonstrate.

PHILO
Okay.

PHILO goes back into--

INT. LAB - CONTINUOUS

--and launches right into his demonstration.

PHILO
When light hits Mary Pickford it gets
excited. The electrons--light is made up
of electrons--the electrons get excited,
that means they move. Once they move,
they can be manipulated by photoelectric
material and captured in this tube. Then
it can be sent, by an electronic
transmitter to a cathode. A cathode makes
electrons glow. So what have we done,
we've reconstructed the light image of
Mary Pickford, formed by the electrons
she excited. And though the effect is
almost instantaneous, it's done line by
horizontal line. The way we plow a field.

FAIRBANKS
Magnificent.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PHILO
You would think so, wouldn't you? Here's
the problem.

FAIRBANKS
What.

PHILO
It doesn't work.

And GORRELL lightly bangs his head against the wall--

PHILO (CONT'D)
Well it works, you're gonna see it work,
but it doesn't work well. The amount of
light needed to get a picture you'd be
interested in is impractical. You know
why?

(pause)
No, I'm really asking, does anyone know
why? We're going out of our minds in
here.

CUT TO:

INT. CROCKER BANK/CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

The bank's being closed for the day as PHILO sits with
CROCKER, EVERSON and GORRELL.

CROCKER
It doesn't work?

PHILO
Bill--

CROCKER
You told the owners of United Artists
that it doesn't work?

PHILO
Not all the owners, Chaplin was on a
scoring stage.

CROCKER
It doesn't work?

PHILO
I didn't say it didn't work, I said it
didn't work well.

EVERSON
He did, that's true.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CROCKER

Really gave 'em the hard sell, huh.

PHILO

United Artists wasn't gonna be buying,
Bill

CROCKER

How do you know?

PHILO

Because it doesn't work.

GORRELL

I think your presentation could've been a
little sunnier.

PHILO

You think *I* could be sunnier?

GORRELL

I do.

PHILO

I shouldn't be showing it yet, it's not
ready. It's embarrassing to me.

GORRELL

How do you mix up Charlie Chaplin with
Errol Flynn.

PHILO

I mixed him up with Douglas Fairbanks but
that should be the least of our concerns.

CROCKER

what should be the most of our concerns?

PHILO

Well I've always thought it was Gorrell.

GORRELL gives him a look. CROCKER's waiting for an answer...

PHILO (CONT'D)

(pause)

I have light falling on the cesium oxide
coating and I charge it up with
electrons. I move the charged image along
an electrode, an aperture. And that's
where the light dissipates. Bill, it is
impossible that this problem can't be
solved. It's something small and it's
right under our noses.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GORRELL

How many times have you built and torn
apart the image dissector?

PHILO

I don't know, I'd have to check the
journals.

GORRELL

Guess.

PHILO

A thousand times.

EVERSON

does that help?

PHILO

Yes, absolutely, sure.

(beat)

No, no, not yet.

(beat)

It's right under our noses.

CROCKER

Lemme talk to Philo a minute.

CROCKER and EVERSON start to leave...

EVERSON

(to PHILO)

Chaplin is the comedian, Fairbanks is the
swashbuckler.

PHILO

I don't think they walk around town like
that, George.

EVERSON

Fair enough.

EVERSON exits...

CROCKER

you know what happened on the morning
Wall Street crashed? At dawn that
morning? A huge flock of blackbirds and
starlings on their migratory route south,
landed at City Hall Plaza in New York.
Traffic on Fourth Avenue was blocked for
four minutes. When the flock took off
again about a hundred birds lay dead on
the ground.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

CROCKER (CONT'D)

They'd died from starvation and exhaustion. Three hours later the markets opened and the birds ended up having a better day than the rest of the country.

PHILO

If you're trying to tell me that money's tight, I know that.

CROCKER

And now it's two years later and 25 percent of American adults are unemployed. It's not that money's tight, it's that it's not there at all, not for this anymore. We've gotta find a buyer for the company.

PHILO

You mean a buyer for the patent.

CROCKER

The only asset the company has is the patent.

PHILO

This isn't--

CROCKER

Listen--

PHILO

No really, that isn't what you do. An inventor doesn't sell his patent, it'd be like an author selling his copyright. You license it and you use the royalties to fund more work.

CROCKER

I don't--

PHILO

In the meantime, you retain a reasonable amount of control over how the thing is used.

CROCKER

The economy doesn't seem to be turning around is my point.

PHILO

It will.

CROCKER

Of course it will. Do you know when?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

PHILO

No.

CROCKER

Do you know when you'll have a picture
suitable for commercial use?

PHILO

No.

CROCKER

yeah, those two answers work terrible
together.

PHILO

If you sell it now you will get,
relatively speaking, nothing for it.

CROCKER

I know that.

PHILO

Before this century is over, a man is
gonna walk on the moon, I promise you
that will happen. And everyone in the
world is gonna watch him do it on
television.

CROCKER

I know that too.

PHILO

Well how well do *those* two answers work
together?

CROCKER

(pause)

Magnavox, ITT...nobody wants it.

(beat)

We're sure it's just engineering, right?

PHILO

yeah.

CROCKER

I'm gonna keep funding the project.

PHILO

Thank you.

CROCKER

While I do I'm gonna keep looking for a
buyer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

CROCKER (CONT'D)

(pause)

That's the best you're gonna get from me.

PHILO

Thank you.

CROCKER

Phil?

PHILO

(exiting)

Yeah.

CLIFF

What's gonna be on the moon?

PHILO

(smiling a little)

I don't know.

CROCKER

All right.

PHILO exits and we

CUT TO:

INT. CHESS CLUB - NIGHT

Rows and rows of men being charged a nickel a piece to play chess and backgammon. PHILO comes in from outside and maybe nods to one or two people as he goes to the back of the place.

PHILO

Henry, okay if I go back?

HENRY

Yeah, most of your guys are here already.

PHILO goes through a nondescript door and into--

INT. SPEAKEASY - CONTINUOUS

PHILO gets a warm welcome from the people back here as he comes in. Everyone seems to know him. He looks around. This has clearly become the after-hours hangout for the Lab Gang. He notices one table, where CLIFF, STAN and HARLAN are entertaining three YOUNG WOMAN. HARLAN's telling them a story as STAN and CLIFF see PHILO.

CLIFF

Phil.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PHILO motions for CLIFF and STAN to come over to where he is...

STAN
Everything go all right over there?

PHILO
Yeah.

CLIFF
We're all right?

PHILO
Yeah. Where did you meet the women?

STAN
Harlan did, he's got the eye.

CLIFF
They're secretaries from back east.
They're on vacation in San Francisco,
they got in here somehow.

STAN
Phil seriously, working in television
makes it easier to meet girls.

PHILO
(beat)
All right, well, good then.

CLIFF
And that man up at the end of the bar has
been asking if you'll be in.

PHILO
Who is he?

CLIFF
He's Russian.

PHILO
You guys get the secretaries, I get the
Russian guy at the end of the bar?

STAN
That's the only reason Pem lets us live.

PHILO nods that he can identify with that as he heads to the bar and stands a few feet from a lone man nursing a drink. SALLY, a nice looking woman, is behind the bar.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SALLY
Bourbon rocks?

PHILO
Thanks.

SALLY starts making the drink...

PHILO (CONT'D)
Leslie Gorrell says I'm drinking too much. So does Pem.

SALLY
Nah, I'll let you know.

PHILO
(to the MAN)
Excuse me. Some people were saying you were asking about me. I'm Philo Farnsworth.

MAN
Relative to what?

PHILO
I'm sorry?

MAN
they say you drink too much relative to what?

PHILO stares at this man for a long moment...

PHILO
Are you Vladimir Zworykin?

ZWORYKIN
Yes. And I've come to meet you.
(beat)
I drink much more often than I used to. I drink all the time now. Prohibition has not served as a formidable impediment for me.

PHILO
I'm very happy to meet you, Mr. Zworykin. Everyone in our lab follows your work at Westinghouse.

ZWORYKIN
What I would like, I would like to have a drink with you.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ZWORYKIN (CONT'D)

Then we go across the street and you show me your image dissector.

PHILO

We're gonna do better than that. We're gonna have a drink, go across the street and build one right in front of you.

(calling to CLIFF, STAN and HARLAN)

Fellas. Come meet Vladimir Zworykin.

CUT TO:

INT. LAB - NIGHT

PHILO, STAN, HARLAN and ZWORYKIN are watching CLIFF make a glass tube in an oven. They have more drinks. CLIFF at this point is an expert glassblower, his hands moving like a magician. HARLAN will hand him something at the precise moment he needs it.

ZWORYKIN

I was in Berlin when war broke out in 1914 after leaving the lab of Paul Langevin in Paris. I went back to St. Petersburg, which is now Petrograd, and was--what is the word for when you're taken into the army--

PHILO

Conscripted.

ZWORYKIN

I was conscripted. I was a lieutenant assigned to the Russian Wireless Telegraph and Telephone Company and I made a close study of the latest in vacuum tubes. I also made a close study of a young dental student named Tatiana Vasilieff.

STAN

Your wife.

ZWORYKIN

Correct.

HARLAN

This rod'll be hot, Mr. Zworykin, you don't want to--

ZWORYKIN

I know exactly how hot it is.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HARLAN

Yes sir.

ZWORYKIN

I was certain after my success with Rosing, with Langevin and with the vacuum tubes, I would develop a method by which we could see from a distance. Then I found out the police were looking for me.

STAN

Why?

ZWORYKIN

Turns out we were having a revolution. Tatiana went to Germany and I went to Pittsburgh.

CLIFF

Here it is.

PHILO

Now that'll cool for a couple of days, but let me show what it'll look like when it does.

PHILO grabs a cathode tube and hands it to ZWORYKIN.

STAN

Pittsburgh's all right, I've been to Pittsburgh. The confluence of which three rivers?

HARLAN

The Monongahela, Allegheny--

ZWORYKIN

(handling the tube)

I don't understand.

HARLAN

And either the Missouri or the Mississippi rivers.

ZWORYKIN

I don't understand.

PHILO

What is it?

STAN

It's the Ohio, isn't it? The Ohio, the Allegheny and Monongahela?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ZWORYKIN

The seal on the tube. The Pyrex seal.
You've sealed an optically clear disk of
Pyrex onto the end of the dissector tube.

PHILO

Yeah.

ZWORYKIN

I've been assured, both at Westinghouse
and GE, I'd been assured that this
couldn't be done.

PHILO

I'd been assured of the same thing by
every glassblower in San Francisco.

ZWORYKIN

(to CLIFF)

How did you do it?

CLIFF

I didn't know any better.

And we HEAR a loud round of APPLAUSE go up as we

CUT TO:

INT. HUGE AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

As SARNOFF, in a follow spot, is standing from his seat in the
audience and acknowledging the applause. A SPEAKER resumes.

SPEAKER

Now I don't want to say that David
Sarnoff is territorial...

This gets an affectionate laugh from many in the audience...

SPEAKER (CONT'D)

...but when RCA and it's new subsidiary,
the National Broadcasting Company,
announced their plan to move into the new
office building that had just been built
at 30 Rockefeller Center, David looked at
the blueprints and drew a circle around
one wing of the seventh floor. "This is
for NBC", he said, and he called it Radio
City. Well we found the name catchy.
Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the
opening of the greatest auditorium on
earth. Welcome to the Radio City Music
Hall.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

And with that, the orchestra strikes up, rising from a platform in the pit, as the audience breaks into applause.

The door opens in the back of the auditorium and RIDLEY steps in from the lobby. He makes his way down the aisle, peering a little in the dark until he finds SARNOFF, who's sitting next to LIZETTE. RIDLEY whispers something quick to SARNOFF and SARNOFF stands and head up the aisle as we

CUT TO:

INT. RADIO CITY/LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

As SARNOFF comes out of the auditorium. WACHTEL is standing with a FEMALE PAGE at a public phone, holding the phone out for SARNOFF, who takes it.

SARNOFF
(into phone)
This is David.

SARNOFF listens...then turns to WACHTEL and smiles.

CUT TO:

EXT. RADIO CITY - NIGHT

As the well-dressed crowd exits the theatre. A car is waiting for SARNOFF and LIZETTE and they step in the back.

INT. SARNOFF'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

SARNOFF
Peter, we're gonna stop by the El Morocco
for a drink before we go home

DRIVER
Yes sir.

LIZETTE
(reading from a pamphlet)
The theatre has 25,000 lights. The pipes
for the Wurlitzer organ are housed in 11
separate rooms.

SARNOFF
I got a good phone call back there,
that's why I stepped out.

LIZETTE
What was it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SARNOFF

Charlie Strauss. They got a television picture in Camden.

LIZETTE

A good picture?

SARNOFF

Charlie says it's the clearest picture that's ever been transmitted, I'm gonna take the train down in the morning.

LIZETTE

(beat)

I don't understand.

SARNOFF

I'm gonna go to Camden in the morning and see the picture.

LIZETTE

And then what?

SARNOFF

What do you mean?

LIZETTE

I don't understand.

SARNOFF

I'm not sure where you're--I'm taking a railroad train to Camden in the morning and looking at the picture.

LIZETTE

And then what do you do with it?

SARNOFF

Create a broadcast network, have you forgotten what I do for a living?

LIZETTE

Peter, stop the car.

SARNOFF

Lizette--

LIZETTE

I'm getting out.

SARNOFF

What are you--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LIZETTE
I'm getting out.

The car has stopped and LIZETTE gets out. SARNOFF sits there a moment--

SARNOFF
it's a lot of fun being me.

SARNOFF gets out of the car onto--

EXT. SIDEWALK - CONTINUOUS

SARNOFF
(calling)
Liz--

LIZETTE
(calling)
Tatiana Zworykin said her husband went to San Francisco last month.

SARNOFF
Let's get back in the car.

LIZETTE
Did he visit Farnsworth's lab?

SARNOFF
I have no idea.

LIZETTE
Yes you do, David, 'cause you sent him there.

SARNOFF
My thought is, if we have this conversation in the car then there's less of a chance I'm gonna read a transcript of it in the papers tomorrow.

LIZETTE
How is it that for ten years Zworykin couldn't get a picture, then he comes back from San Francisco and Charlie Strauss says he's got the clearest--

SARNOFF
I don't know.

LIZETTE
What's the Get Around Farnsworth Department?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SARNOFF

What the hell's happened to you tonight?

LIZETTE

Did you just steal television?

SARNOFF

I've been sitting next to you all night.

LIZETTE

I don't want you to joke right now.

SARNOFF

Let's get in the car.

LIZETTE

I'm tired of hearing you called territorial. I'm tired of hearing you called ambitious and ruthless and mostly I'm tired of you not realizing those are three different words that mean Jewish.

SARNOFF

Listen, Liz, accuse me of whatever you want but you can't think I don't recognize anti-Semitism in the communications business when it smacks me in the head and shows me identification.

LIZETTE

Look--

SARNOFF

They gave me broken fucking toasters to fix!

LIZETTE

Tell me why you're obsessed with this ridiculous thing which at best will be a toy for rich people.

SARNOFF

Because that's not what it's gonna be, it's gonna be something that's gonna change everything. It's gonna end ignorance and misunderstanding. It's gonna end illiteracy. It's gonna end war.

LIZETTE

How?

SARNOFF

By pointing a camera at it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LIZETTE

You think if Germany knows we can see
them they'll stop marching across Europe?

SARNOFF

I think we'll stop them, but that's not
the point.

LIZETTE

What's the point?

SARNOFF

NBC Radio's gonna have a baby and it's
gonna be called NBC Television and it's
not gonna be a gimmick it's gonna be the
face and voice of the free world.

LIZETTE

David, I think you need a vacation.

SARNOFF

And so you've brought me out here to the
sidewalk?

LIZETTE

David--

SARNOFF

He applied for a patent four years before
Farnsworth.

LIZETTE

His didn't work.

SARNOFF

U.S. patent law is very complicated.

LIZETTE

Is it?

SARNOFF

In '23, Zworykin made what are called
generic claims which, with modifications--
engineering--*now work*.

LIZETTE

How?

SARNOFF

I don't know yet, I'm taking a train to
Camden in the morning.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

LIZETTE

I understand what you did to Gifford and why you did it and I understand what you did to Armstrong and DeForest and I'm sure you're about to go after Bill Paley, But I don't--

SARNOFF

Paley's gonna charge his affiliates, Liz, he's gonna charge 'em to carry his signal, they're not gonna have any choice but to make their living selling advertising time.

LIZETTE

David, those were all serious people who play at your level. Now you're stealing from a potato farmer.

SARNOFF

I'm not stealing from anybody.

LIZETTE

Something happened in San Francisco, though.

SARNOFF

I don't decide who owns patents, Liz. A Federal Court's gonna do that and they'll do it based on law.

LIZETTE

But--

SARNOFF

Based on law.

CUT TO:

INT. CROCKER BANK/CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

CROCKER, EVERSON, GORRELL and someone new. The mood is tense as they wait. Then the door opens and PHILO enters. He's run there.

PHILO

What's happened?

CROCKER

This is Donald Lippincott. He's your lawyer, I'll pay the bills.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LIPPINCOTT

Mr. Farnsworth, I want you to know that I got a degree in electrical engineering from the University of California at Berkley before attending San Francisco law School and becoming president of the Patent Law Association of San Francisco.

PHILO

(pause)

That's great. What the hell is going on?

CROCKER

Vladimir Zworykin at the Westinghouse lab transmitted an electronic image.

PHILO

I'm sure he did, we showed him how to.

CROCKER

You showed him how to?

PHILO

Yeah.

EVERSON

When?

PHILO

He was out here last month.

CROCKER

What are you telling us?

PHILO

(pause)

Bill, he was out here. He came into the place, he wanted to see the lab. We built an image dissector for him.

GORRELL

He went back to Camden, new Jersey and reverse engineered it.

PHILO

Listen, fellas, he didn't have to come to 202 Green Street to find out how I make an image dissector. A patent application's public. I have to say exactly what I'm gonna do and how I'm gonna do it. It's an instruction manual, all he had to do was read it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LIPPINCOTT
That's not all he had to do.

PHILO
What do you mean?

CROCKER
Apparently it's a very good picture.

PHILO
(pause)
You're saying he's got something I don't have?

CROCKER
He has to.

PHILO
What?

LIPPINCOTT
We don't know.

PHILO
What do you mean you don't know, let's get on the phone and ask him.

CROCKER
You're not understanding, Phil. He's got something you don't have but you obviously had something *he* didn't have.

EVERSON
Well he has it now.

PHILO
Listen, not for nothin' but you men are a little paranoid.

CROCKER
Phil--

PHILO
There is an international community of scientists which, at this level, shares--

CROCKER
Donald, would you take over, please.

LIPPINCOTT
David Sarnoff's buying Westinghouse. And with good reason. Vladimir Zworykin's patents are not gonna be owned by RCA.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

PHILO

Zworykin's application was never approved.

LIPPINCOTT

He made generic claims which he's modified.

PHILO

What does that mean?

LIPPINCOTT

He's saying that what he's produced now is what he described in his 1923 application, four years before you. Do you remember this newspaper story?

LIPPINCOTT's holding up the *Chronicle* story from the day Philo got the first picture...

PHILO

(beat)

Sure.

LIPPINCOTT

From the day it showed up in New York City, you've been at war with David Sarnoff only you haven't known it. The reason Bill can't find a buyer for the company is that everyone he's tried does business with RCA.

(beat)

So what we're gonna do is this. We're gonna file a patent interference suit. We're gonna take depositions and submit briefs to a lay court in Delaware. We're gonna ask the judge to grant a priority of invention.

PHILO

And what happens then?

LIPPINCOTT

A judge in Delaware is gonna decide who invented television.

EVERSON

Phil, is there anything you can think of offhand that he may have seen in the lab that wasn't in your original application?

Cesium, potassium...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

PHILO

The Pyrex seal. He didn't know there was a way to seal the tube.

CUT TO:

INT. SPEAKEASY - NIGHT

PHILO steps in. He's in a bit of a daze, but he sees CLIFF and HARLAN and a few of the lab guys entertaining some WOMEN. STAN steps over from the bar.

STAN

Hey, boss, you all right?

PHILO

Yeah.

STAN

We had a new idea we wanted to try. It's gonna strike you as--

PHILO

(nodding to the WOMEN)

More secretaries?

STAN

Yeah. World must be out 'cause this has become the spot. Anyway, what we were thinking was--

PHILO

Excuse me, Stan.

PHILO walks slowly over to the table where CLIFF and HARLAN are entertaining the WOMEN.

HARLAN

Phil. Ladies, this is the boy genius, this is Philo Farnsworth.

CLIFF

(introducing)

This is--

PHILO

What's your name?

PHILO's talking to the WOMAN in the corner of the booth. Maybe we can't quite see her face yet, but this is JORDAN, Sarnoff's secretary.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLIFF

(pause)

This is Betty. And this is Helen. And
this is--

PHILO

Where do you work?

CLIFF

They're on vacation from New York, Phil.
They said they saved up for the trip by--

PHILO

where do you work?

HARLAN

They're secretaries.

PHILO

Where do you work?

BETTY

I work at RCA.

PHILO

Who's your boss?

CLIFF

Phil, what's going on?

BETTY

It's David Sarnoff.

CUT TO:

EXT. ST. THOMAS CHURCH - DAY

A well-dressed crowd of MOURNERS are filing out of the church on Fifth Avenue. We hear organ music. A small corkboard sign tells us this is a memorial service for Thomas Alva Edison.

A MAN has button-holed SARNOFF, who's doing his best to be polite.

MAN

He was a *businessman* and *that's* something people should realize. He was a *businessman* and I'll tell you why. He saw the electrical lines were an eyesore. So he said to the city, I will form a company, and you will pay us to put the lines underground, under the streets.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAN (CONT'D)
Consolidated Edison. You see how he got
paid twice?

SARNOFF
(quietly)
The widow's stepping over.

MAN
What?

SARNOFF
The widow's stepping over here so maybe
stop talking.

MINA EDISON has made her way over.

MINA
David.

SARNOFF
Mina.

MINA
This is a wonderful turnout. Thank you.

SARNOFF
This is all for Tom.

MINA
There's someone I want you to meet.
(calling a little)
Pem?

SARNOFF
I wanted to let you know that the lights
in Rockefeller Center will go dim for two
minutes tonight.

MINA
That's very nice, David.

PEM has come over--

MINA (CONT'D)
Pem, this is David Sarnoff. David, this
is Pem Farnsworth, the wife of Tom's
young friend in San Francisco.

It's an immediately awkward moment between PEM and SARNOFF.

SARNOFF
(pause)
I'm pleased to meet you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PEM

Yes.

MINA

I'm sorry, what time did you say the
lights would--

SARNOFF

8 pm.

MINA

I should join the kids.

SARNOFF

Yes. Mrs. Farnsworth, could I have a
moment?

PEM nods yes, and SARNOFF leads her off to the side...once he
has...

SARNOFF (CONT'D)

I understand your son died recently.

PEM

(pause)

Our younger son, Kenny, yes.

SARNOFF

I'm sorry. Was it sudden?

PEM

Philo couldn't be here, he had to stay in
San Francisco.

SARNOFF

For the depositions.

PEM

Yes.

SARNOFF

Well I just wanted to say--

PEM

What.

(pause)

The judge isn't gonna believe he invented
it right? 'Cause he only has a year of
college and he doesn't work for a
company?

(pause)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

PEM (CONT'D)

You know Ford had a problem initially with people stealing their customer's cars off the street and they held a contest in *Science and Invention* Magazine to see who could come up with the best solution. Philo wrote in that you could magnetize the starting mechanism near the steering column and if you magnetized a key in the exact same way, then only that key would be able to start the car and he won the contest.

(beat)

My husband invented the ignition lock. Which may not sound like much except he was 12 years old at the time. What were you doing when you were 12, Mr. Sarnoff?

SARNOFF

Well that would've been two years after my parents and I were run out of our house by cossacks, Mrs. Farnsworth. So I was teaching myself how to speak English.

(pause)

I'm sorry about your little boy.

CUT TO:

EXT./EST. EVANS AND LIPPINCOTT - DAY

It's raining outside this modest San Francisco patent firm. In VO we HEAR

LIPPINCOTT (VO)

Here's Herbert Hoover talking about television. "This invention--

INT. LIPPINCOTT'S OFFICE - DAY

PHILO, CLIFF, STAN, HARLAN and LIPPINCOTT are working. Papers and manuals and diagrams and notepads are everywhere. LIPPINCOTT's reading from a newspaper article. PHILO's not listening, he's studying a thick bound stack of papers. While he does this he pours himself another glass of whiskey on the rocks. The rain continues against the windows.

LIPPINCOTT

--again emphasizes a new era in approach to scientific discovery. It is the result of *organized, planned and definitely directed* scientific research, magnificently coordinated in a *cumulative group* of highly skilled scientists."

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STAN

He was talking about us?

LIPPINCOTT

No, he was talking about AT&T. It was 1927, he was Commerce Secretary, and he'd just been shown a demonstration of mechanical TV. This was two weeks after your demonstration, which was not a coincidence, and it was back when AT&T and David Sarnoff were friends and when Sarnoff's boss, Jim Harbord could ask the Secretary of Commerce for a favor.

HARLAN

You lost me.

LIPPINCOTT

As early as '27, Sarnoff was planting the idea in the public consciousness that it would be RCA that would break television. "...coordinated in a cumulative group of highly skilled scientists, loyally supported by a great corporation devoted to the advancement of the art. The intricate processes of this invention could"--are you ready--"*never have been developed under any conditions of isolated individual effort*", this is for anybody who still thinks I'm paranoid, Philo are you listening?

He's not. He's studying the thick volume of papers.

PHILO

No.

There's a tap on the door and Lippincott's SECRETARY enters--

SECRETARY

Mr. Lippincott?

LIPPINCOTT

(to PHILO)

What are you doing?

PHILO

Trying to figure out how Vladimir got a picture I couldn't get.

LIPPINCOTT

Your heart needs to be in this.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PHILO

It's not.

LIPPINCOTT

Then at least your head.

PHILO

Good luck.

LIPPINCOTT goes to the doorway and the waiting SECRETARY...

SECRETARY

(quietly)

There's a man here who says he knows Mr.
Farnsworth and can help.

LIPPINCOTT

What's his name?

SECRETARY

Uh...Justin Tillman?

LIPPINCOTT

(to PHILO)

Phil, you know anyone named Justin
Tillman?

PHILO

No.

LIPPINCOTT and the SECRETARY step out into the waiting room.

STAN

The Coating? Something with the
photoelectric coating? He's got magic
photoelectric coating?

LIPPINCOTT re-enters with a man we've seen before--

LIPPINCOTT

Phil?

MAN

Philo, do you remember who I am?

PHILO looks up...In his present state of mind, this is almost
like a mirage...

PHILO

(pause)

Mr. Tolman?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

LIPPINCOTT

So you do know each other.

TOLMAN

I taught Philo high school chemistry for a year.

(beat)

And basic science for two days.

LIPPINCOTT

(beat)

Well nice job with that.

PHILO

Mr. Tolman, what are you doing here?

TOLMAN

My wife and I moved here last year and I read about this in a local paper. I'm not sure if this'll mean anything, but I thought maybe you could use it.

TOLMAN's taken out an old science textbook. He opens to a certain page and takes out a folded piece of paper that he's been keeping in there for some time. He unfolds the paper on the coffee table. It's PHILO's diagram of a cathode tube.

TOLMAN (CONT'D)

You drew this for me. First week of September, 1922.

They all look fondly at the diagram for a moment before--

LIPPINCOTT

(pause)

Did you say twenty-two?

TOLMAN

That's right.

LIPPINCOTT

(still staring at the paper)

Mr. Tolman, would you allow me to take your deposition in this matter?

TOLMAN

Yes sir.

CUT TO:

A SERIES OF SCENES -

DEPOSITIONS BEING GIVEN IN VARIOUS LAW OFFICES, CONFERENCES ROOMS, ETC.

Lawyers take turns questioning various witnesses. PHILO's in attendance but is much more interested in reading the various documents being entered as exhibits than he is in anyone who's speaking.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

STENOGRAPHER

Would you state your full name please?

TOLMAN

Justin Tolman.

INT. ANOTHER CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

STRAUSS

Charles Strauss.

INT. ANOTHER CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

ALEXANDERSON

Ernst Alexanderson.

INT. ANOTHER CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

HARLAN

Harlan, Honn. H-O-N-N.

INT. ANOTHER CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

JORDAN

Betty Jordan.

INT. ANOTHER CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

PEM

Elma Farnsworth.

INT. ANOTHER CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

WACHTEL

Edward Wachtel. W-A-C-H--

INT. ANOTHER CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

TALLEY

I have a Bachelor's Degree and Master's Degree from M.I.T. in Mechanical Engineering.

INT. ANOTHER CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

LARKIN

--a Ph.D in electrical Engineering.

INT. ANOTHER CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

WERNER

--I got my doctorate in Physics--

INT. ANOTHER CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

HAMILTON

--a Ph.D in Chemistry--

INT. ANOTHER CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

BOATMAN

--the faculty of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute--

INT. ANOTHER CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

WYATT

--the Princeton Institute of Advanced Studies--

INT. ANOTHER CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

WITT

--The United States naval Academy at Annapolis, Maryland.

INT. ANOTHER CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

STAN

I left Cal Tech after my junior year to start working with Philo Farnsworth.

INT. ANOTHER CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

TOLMAN

I taught him high school science at Rigby High School in Rigby, Idaho.

INT. ANOTHER CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

LAWYER

Have you ever seen a device constructed
as disclosed by the Zworykin application?

WILLIAMS

Yes, I have seen a device.

LAWYER

Did it operate?

WILLIAMS

It did operate.

LAWYER

How was this device constructed?

WILLIAMS

The device consisted of a thin aluminum
plate held in a frame, a thin oxide film--

INT. ANOTHER CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

LACK

--deposited on that frame and a
photosensitive film. At a distance of a
few millimeters from this plate--

INT. ANOTHER CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

SMITH

--a grid was placed which connected to
the grid of an amplifying tube.

LAWYER

Would you be able to sketch for the
device which you saw operate?

SMITH

Yes.

LAWYER

Will you please make such a sketch?

INT. ANOTHER CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

JONES is standing in front of a large diagram being questioned
by a different RCA lawyer. PHILO's still studying the papers.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LAWYER #2

Would you explain please the various legends which you've applied to your sketch?

JONES

Yes. I've shown the television tube which contains an aluminum plate covered with an oxide film, and the oxide film having photo-sensitive material deposited upon it.

INT. ANOTHER CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

STAN

We broke open the tubes with hammers and took out the cesium pellets.

INT. ANOTHER CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

HARLAN

I'm not an electrician by trade. My specialty is refrigeration.

INT. ANOTHER CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

STENOGRAPHER

Would you state your full name please?

ZWORYKIN

Vladimir Kosma Zworykin. Z-W-O-R-Y-K-I-N.

LAWYER

Mr. Zworykin, did you make a patent application in 1923?

ZWORYKIN

Yes.

LAWYER

Would you describe your invention?

ZWORYKIN

The system disclosed by my application utilizes a cathode tube as the element for translating the optical image into the electrical wave train of energy which is to be transmitted to a receiving point, so as to reconstruct there an electro-optical representation of the impressed or in-falling optical image.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

During this, PHILO's seen something in a document that knocks his eyeballs out. It's the word "storage". He flips back a page to read from the beginning. He flips forward two pages--

LAWYER

In the 11 years since you filed your application have you made modifications?

ZWORYKIN

yes.

LAWYER

Would you name one of those modifications?

PHILO

(right to Zworykin)

You store the light.

Everyone looks at PHILO...silence...

LIPPINCOTT

(quieting him)

Philo--

PHILO

You store the light.

LAWYER

Mr. Lippincott, your client--

PHILO

(reading)

"In place of the usual fluorescent end wall portion for the tube, Zworykin replaces this structure by a new type of composite or mosaic electrode--"

LIPPINCOTT

Philo--

PHILO

You store the light.

ZWORYKIN

Yes.

LAWYER

Gentlemen.

ZWORYKIN

You were using a *continuous* potassium coating--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LIPPINCOTT
Please don't address--

PHILO
No listen to him, he's got it.

ZWORYKIN
The coating was continuous.

LAWYER
Mr. Zworykin.

ZWORYKIN
I used droplets or globules. The mosaic.

PHILO
And the different elemental areas stored
the light.

ZWORYKIN
Yes.

PHILO
You did it, you found it.

LIPPINCOTT
I'd like to take a five minute break now.

LAWYER
You sure?

LIPPINCOTT
Philo, let's step outside a second.

PHILO
Hey come on. Fellas. I mean whichever way
this ends up going...I mean, it's done.
We've got it.
(beat)
That's good.

LIPPINCOTT
Let's step outside.

CUT TO:

INT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

An engraving on the wall tells us this is United States
District Court--Dover, Delaware.

PHILO, CLIFF, STAN and HARLAN are sitting on a bench and
waiting.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

After a moment...

HARLAN

I don't understand why that Hungarian
can't go back to Hungaria and invent
things there.

STAN

(pause)

Hungary. Hungarians aren't from Hungaria
and neither is Zworykin, who's Russian.

There's silence...

CLIFF

Little beads instead of a continuous
surface. You'd have found that.

The front doors open and a grim procession of CROCKER,
EVERSON, GORRELL and LIPPINCOTT head in and nod to PHILO.
PHILO and the lab guys stand and they all walk into--

INT. COURTROOM - CONTINUOUS

--where they walk down and take seats on the left side of the
room. Already seated on the right side are ZWORYKIN and the
RCA LAWYERS.

A JUDGE enters from hi chambers and everyone stands.

JUDGE

You can sit, this'll just take a second.
The Court's reviewed the briefs submitted
by the parties and is ready to rule. The
only question in controversy is whether
the optical Pyrex seals at the end of the
cathode tube constitutes new matter in
Zworykin's 1923 application. I find that
it does not, and that it does in fact
fall within the generic claims made in
that application--

This is when PHILO and his people know they lost--

JUDGE (CONT'D)

A decree will be entered awarding
priority of invention to Vladimir
Zworykin and authorizing the Commissioner
of Patents to grant the original 1923
patent. This matter is adjourned.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

And that's that. On the left side, PHILO's getting condolences from his people. On the right side, ZWORYKIN's being congratulated by his.

Watching the whole thing from the back of the courtroom, we now see SARNOFF. He watches as PHILO steps over to ZWORYKIN and the two exchange a few words.

People are filing out. PHILO sees SARNOFF standing back there and indicates to his group to go ahead, he'll be just a minute.

Once the room is empty...

SARNOFF
I'm David Sarnoff.

PHILO
Philo Farnsworth.

SARNOFF
Sure.

PHILO
You came all the way down from New York?

SARNOFF
Yeah.
(beat)
What did you say to Zworykin?

PHILO
Hm?

SARNOFF
For posterity's sake. What did you just say to Zworykin? Did you tell him to fuck off?

PHILO
No. I asked him how he fell on the mosaic pattern for light storage.

SARNOFF
How did he do it?

PHILO
A lab assistant left a tube in an oven too long. The potassium boiled up into little pieces. You should find out the name of that lab assistant, you should write it down somewhere. He and Cliff Gardner built the first television.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SARNOFF

Listen, I'm sure your lawyer's told you that this decision has no legal effect on your patent?

PHILO

Is that right?

SARNOFF

No, I mean it.

PHILO

You ever hear of Elisha Gray?

SARNOFF

No.

PHILO

He invented the telephone. Then showed up at the patent office exactly 120 minutes after Alexander Graham Bell.

SARNOFF

This isn't like that.

PHILO

David--

SARNOFF

You're free to license your patent until it expires, which it doesn't do for another six years.

PHILO

And you've got 17 starting today, plus in a side by side comparison between the Radio corporation of America and the Farnsworth Television Company, I don't think you have to be a Wall Street analyst to understand where the manufacturers are gonna go. I just lost television so please don't patronize me.

SARNOFF

How did your son die?

PHILO

What?

SARNOFF

I'm sorry. How did your son die?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

PHILO

He died of strep throat.

SARNOFF

What are you gonna do now?

PHILO

I have to call my wife and apologize for wasting her time for seven years.

SARNOFF

Come work for RCA. We have a lab in Camden, we have a lab in Schenectady. You move your family there, you're put on salary.

PHILO

I appreciate it, but no thank you.

SARNOFF

Why?

PHILO

I don't want to be told what to invent and once I invent it I don't want someone else owning it.

SARNOFF

So what are you gonna do?

PHILO

(pause)

Well...people are starting to talk about fusion.

SARNOFF

What's fusion?

PHILO

Fusion is what powers the rest of the universe. The sun gets its energy from atomic particles crashing into each other at hellacious speeds. If we can recreate that then theoretically all the energy you need to power the world can be found in this pen.

SARNOFF

Where you gonna get the hydrogen?

PHILO

The whole place is made out of hydrogen.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

SARNOFF

You're saying we're not gonna use petroleum.

PHILO

A gallon of water has 300 times the energy as a gallon of gasoline. It's two-thirds hydrogen. It doesn't cost anything and you're never gonna run out.

SARNOFF

That's crazy.

PHILO

I heard that a lot when I suggested we could transmit pictures electronically, which was 1922 by the way, and there was no reason for your people to humiliate Justin Tolman like that.

SARNOFF

Come work for RCA.

PHILO

You came to Delaware to offer me a job?

SARNOFF

No.

(Pause)

I don't make a lot of miscalculations when it comes to radio but the one I made was huge. I didn't understand how successful it was gonna be at delivering consumers to advertisers. Once you're good at that you're gonna have a hard time being good at anything else. I think your invention is extraordinary and I think your motivation for building it was honorable. And whether you believe me or not, I take its future as seriously as you do. I'm gonna take care of it, Philo.

PHILO

Good luck.

SARNOFF

Good luck

PHILO exits, leaving SARNOFF alone, as we

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BAR - DAY

It's not too populated--just people who are in bars in the middle of the day.

As we slowly scan the bar, we HEAR--

VOICE OVER

We passed the 60 second mark, power transfer is complete.

(beat)

We're on internal power with the launch vehicle at this time.

(beat)

40 seconds away from Apollo 11 lift-off.

The VOICE OVER is coming from a television set that's mounted in the corner. This is the launch of Apollo 11 being broadcast live.

VOICE OVER (CONT'D)

All the second stage tanks now pressurized.

(beat)

35 seconds and counting.

(beat)

We are still go with Apollo 11.

(beat)

30 seconds and counting.

As we move slowly down the bar, we come to a pair of hands drawing a complex diagram on several cocktail napkins. It's a diagram of a supercollider. Fusion.

VOICE OVER (CONT'D)

T-minus 25 seconds.

MAN AT A BOOTH

Here it comes.

VOICE OVER

20 seconds and counting.

And now we see that the man drawing on the cocktail napkins is PHILO--age 63.

VOICE OVER (CONT'D)

T-minus 15 seconds, guidance is internal.

PHILO subtly raises his glass to the TV--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PHILO
(under his breath)
Godspeed, fellas.

VOICE OVER
*We have lift-off in 12, 11, 10, 9--
ignition sequence starts--6, 5, 4, 3--*

BLACKOUT

RUN MAIN TITLES

FINAL FADE OUT

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