

SECOND REVISION
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TUCKER

Screenplay
by

Arnold Schulman

TO BE USED FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY

Under the MAIN TITLE, "TUCKER," and PRINCIPAL OPENING CREDITS there is no music; no sound whatsoever.

After last credit, we abruptly HEAR the music of a typical 1940's promotional film.

The PROMO FILM begins with a title card: "THE MAN AND HIS DREAM"

From the title, the PROMO FILM DISSOLVES TO:

INT. TUCKER'S OFFICE - DAY (PROMO FILM)

The year is 1945, Tucker is behind an impressive desk in an Art Deco office. Tucker picks up the phone and pretends to speak into it.

NARRATOR

(over above)

Acclaimed throughout the world,
as a brilliant engineer, inventor,
visionary, and one of the boldest,
most daring Captains of Industry
of this, or any other generation,
Preston Thomas Tucker has become
a legend in his own time.

INSERT: Hand opening family photo album.

NARRATOR

Born of humble beginnings in
Capac, Michigan, his father died
when he was two years old....

INSERT: A snapshot of his mother as a young woman, posing
with a class of children in front of a small-town grammar school.

NARRATOR

...and it was up to his mother, a
school teacher, to give him the
drive, determination and belief
in the American Dream.

INSERT PHOTO: Tucker, about six, is seated on his mother's
lap in their living room. Hanging on the wall above them,
are two framed needlepoint mottos. On their left: "HONESTY IS
THE BEST POLICY." On their right: "IN GOD WE TRUST, ALL
OTHERS PAY CASH."

NARRATOR

When he was nine, Tucker fell
in love.

INSERT PHOTO: Tucker, age nine, and a girl the same age are posing beside a car.

NARRATOR

....Not with the girl. With the car. All cars.

INSERT: Series of snapshots illustrating the following:

NARRATOR

At thirteen, he got his first job in the automobile industry -- the lofty position of office boy at a Cadillac plant. Determined to learn how cars were made, he worked his way through every section on the assembly line.

INSERT: Snapshot. Vera and Tucker, both eighteen.

NARRATOR

While working in the machine shop of the Ford Motor Company, Tucker met Vera Fugua, who worked for the telephone company in Detroit.

INSERT: Snapshot of Vera and Tucker's wedding.

NARRATOR

Two years later they were married and, wasting no time, began a family.

THROUGH A SERIES OF TYPICAL HOME MOVIES, we document the addition of each new child, as well as seeing them grow up -- beginning with the firstborn, Junior's, first birthday party, and including a fishing trip, picnic, etc. Typical small town, middle-America, Norman Rockwell family life.

NARRATOR

(during above)

By this time, Tucker had switched to the marketing end of the business, rising quickly from salesman to regional sales manager for the prestigious Pierce Arrow Company.

But never losing sight of his dream, which was to design and manufacture the finest automobile ever made, he spent every minute he could at the Indianapolis Speedway.

NEWSREEL SHOTS AND HOME MOVIES: Tucker and Harry Miller (1930) with racing cars.

NARRATOR

It was there he met Harry Miller, recognized throughout the world as one of the greatest designers of racing cars who ever lived.

NEWSREEL SHOTS AND HOME MOVIES: Including Dan and Jimmy working on engines, etc., as Miller and Tucker supervise.

NARRATOR

Soon Miller and Tucker became partners, and the cars they designed and built won fourteen out of sixteen races at Indy 500.

NEWSREEL SHOTS: VARIOUS CAR RACES. Miller and Tucker holding winner's trophies (with Dan as driver, Jimmy, captain of the pit crew), etc.

NARRATOR

In 1937, convinced that America would soon be at war, Tucker designed and built a high speed combat car.

HOME MOVIES: Various shots of combat car, during following. (Dan and Jimmy are in some of the shots.)

NARRATOR

Able to go a hundred and seventeen miles an hour, it was bullet proof, had air conditioning, and mounted a power-operated gun turret, also designed by Tucker.

The combat car was turned down by the Military. It had one drawback, they said. It was too fast. The War Department's policy, at that time, was no combat car should go over thirty-five miles an hour.

NEWSREEL FOOTAGE: Tucker's turret in various combat situations.

NARRATOR

His gun turret, however, was immediately put into service.

MORE NEWSREEL SHOTS: Tucker's turrets on bombers, PT boats, tanks, etc., in combat footage.

NARRATOR

Who can say how many brave
American boys owe their lives
to the Tucker turret?

PROMO FILM footage: Workers building the turrets, apparently
on a standard factory assembly-line.

NARRATOR

And where were those turrets
built? In the most practical
place Tucker could think of.

HOME MOVIES: The barn. Summer. (1942) (we see sign over
the entrance.) Tucker is posing with Dan and Jimmy in the door-
way, then with the WORKERS making the turrets, inside.

NARRATOR

In Tucker's barn at Ypsilanti,
Michigan, where he and his family
then lived.

INSERT SIGN OVER BARN: "YPSILANTI MACHINE AND TOOL COMPANY"

NARRATOR

And it was there, in that same
barn, that the amazing saga of
the man and his dream began.

During the above narration, as we SLOWLY PULL BACK from the
sign, the MUSIC from the PROMO FILM begins to fade and the
color and grain of the PROMO FILM begin to change to the
reality of OUR FILM.

When we are back far enough, we see an Army truck parked in
front of the barn. It is winter. Snow on the ground. Late
afternoon.

SUPERIMPOSE: "JANUARY, 1945"

Two of Tucker's turrets have already been loaded onto the
truck by THREE SOLDIERS with the help of DAN (fiftyish);
JIMMY (forty-five, Japanese); and JUNIOR (seventeen). They
are struggling to carry a third turret, which is very heavy,
from the barn to the truck.

From the house we HEAR a Benny Goodman record.

INT. TUCKER DEN - DAY (LATE AFTERNOON)

VERA is filling out an Army form on a typewriter. From her
POV we see into the living room directly across the hall.
MARILYN, sixteen and gorgeous, is jitterbugging with a BOY

from her class in high school. A SECOND BOY is awkwardly trying to copy the steps they are doing, as a THIRD BOY cuts in on the first boy.

FIRST BOY
I just started!

THIRD BOY
Ten minutes ago!

Vera looks up.

MARILYN
(skillfully avoid
ing an argument)
Let's all dance, the four of us
together! Come on! I'll show you.

She starts dancing with all of them at the same time.

Vera smiles, types the last word, takes the form out and starts putting it on a clipboard as she goes into the hall.

Marilyn, seeing Vera pass, runs into the hall after her.

MARILYN
Mom! Can I go to the picture show
tonight?

VERA
Aren't you the young lady who's
grounded?

MARILYN
Please! I promise I'll....

VERA
Thursday.

MARILYN
It's a different picture Thursday.

Vera continues down the hallway.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY (LATE AFTERNOON)

Vera comes in, crosses toward the back door. MILLIE, the housekeeper, is setting the table.

MILLIE
Mr. Tucker back yet?

VERA

Set a place for him anyway, just in case.

(she goes out)

EXT. BACK DOOR - DAY (LATE AFTERNOON)

Vera starts toward the barn. At a woodshed on the way NOBLE (thirteen), day-dreaming, is sprawled in the empty wheelbarrow he is supposed to be putting wood into. Startled when Vera stops beside him, he quickly sits up.

I'm thinking.

NOBLE

VERA

If you can get that wood in the house by thinking, I'm all for it.

As she continues, we see JOHNNY, ten, inside the chicken coop, some distance away, scattering the feed.

VERA

(calling)

Johnny! Don't forget to close the door this time when you come out!

EXT. BARN - DAY (LATE AFTERNOON)

The men finally get the turret on the truck as Vera gets to them. The soldiers and Vera ad lib warm hellos.

Vera hands the clipboard and a ballpoint pen to the Sergeant.

SERGEANT

(signing the form)

These are the last three, they said, we're picking up here. Is that true?

VERA

Not much need for gun turrets now, thank God, the war almost over.

We HEAR a car coming up the driveway; the horn blowing, the SOUND of many dogs barking. They all turn.

TUCKER is driving. In the car are twenty-six DOGS. Tucker parks beside the truck and gets out. The dogs jump out, too.

TUCKER

(singing)

"Hold that tiger! Hold that tiger!"

Dan and Vera look at each other.

DAN

Oh God. When he starts "Hold that tiger...."

The dogs, walking in a circle on their hind legs, begin a dog act as Tucker, ignoring them, opens the trunk of the car.

Vera and the others, including Noble and Johnny who come running to see them, watch the dogs.

From the trunk, Tucker takes a large folio-sized package and three magazines.

TUCKER

My friends, you are in for one doozie of a...what can I call it? Not some dinky little surprise. I'm talking about history in the making here. I'm talking about volcanos erupturing!

VERA

Is there anything you want to explain first about the dogs?

TUCKER

(having forgotten about them)

Oh. I traded the old Packard for them. Twenty-six dogs!

VERA

What're we going to do with twenty-six dogs?

TUCKER

What's the difference? You can't walk away from a trade like that.

By now, Marilyn and the three boys have come to see what's happening. Tucker displays the package.

TUCKER

Dying to know what's in here, ain't you? But first, a little quiz. Gallup took a poll last week to find out what people want most when the war's over. Guess what the top ten was.

MARILYN

Nylons. Pretty clothes.

TUCKER

Number five.

VERA

Permanent world peace.

TUCKER

Didn't even make the list.

DAN

Housing?

TUCKER

Number two.

JIMMY

Appliances.

TUCKER

Cars! Eighty-seven percent of the people in this country said the first thing they want is a new car.

He passes around the magazines, each opened to a full page ad from a different major company announcing their new car "coming soon!"

TUCKER

Here's what Detroit's coming out with. Now, which do you think the public would rather buy -- the same old models the Big Three gave us before the war, or, for exactly the same price...?

With a flourish, he rips the paper off the package, revealing a colored drawing of the first version of the Tucker car.

TUCKER (cont.)

...The car of tomorrow today!

Junior, Johnny, Noble, the soldiers, and high school boys are amazed and excited.

FIRST BOY

Holy moly!

NOBLE

Looks like it's going ninety miles an hour standing still!

Dan and Jimmy, both seasoned professionals, only see the problems.

TUCKER

And you know who's going to make these cars? We are!

VERA

Special orders, you mean, in the barn?

TUCKER

Mass production! In five years we'll put the Big Three out of business.

DAN

Who you going to sell them to, Buck Rogers?

TUCKER

(to each of the high school boys and soldiers)

Would you buy one? You? You? You?

BOYS AND SOLDIERS

You bet! And how! etc.

JIMMY

What's under the hood?

TUCKER

(showing another drawing)
Luggage.

(shows another drawing)
The engine's in the rear, where it ought to be. Remember the 589 we were working on at Indy when Harry Miller died?

DAN

The pancake? For a family car?

TUCKER

"Five by five, with lots of torque. That's the engine of the future," Harry said, and that's what we got. An opposed-six pancake, rear-mounted, with full independent suspension.
(shows another drawing)
And look at this...Individual torque converters connected to each of the....

DAN

Are you crazy? You'd need a
wheel track seventy inches wide.

TUCKER

(laughs)

The day Dan cracks a smile and
says, "I like it" about anything,
I drop dead on the spot.

JIMMY

The trouble, don't forget, with
torque converters...

On the back porch, Millie rings the bell.

MILLIE

Food's on!

TUCKER

Let's go! Everybody! You ain't
heard nothing yet.

(to soldiers)

You can stay for supper, can't you?

(to high school boys)

I know you can. Call your mothers.

(calling)

Millie! Six more plates for supper.

(notices the dogs,

still doing tricks)

And twenty-six bowls of dog food.

Vera bursts out laughing, spontaneously gives Tucker a very
sexy kiss, which continues after the others have started
toward the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Having finished dinner some time ago, Tucker, Dan, Jimmy,
and Junior are still at the table going over the drawings and
discussing the car.

The soldiers and high school boys have gone. Millie,
Marilyn, Noble, and Johnny are doing the dishes, having
formed an assembly line with Millie washing, Marilyn drying,
then handing them, alternately, to Noble then Johnny (stand-
ing on a chair) who put them in the cupboard.

Vera is refilling the coffee cups at the table.

TUCKER

...and with a light-weight big-inch engine that'll tick over real slow, by reducing the friction, not only will the engine last twice as long, but use half the gas.

DAN

(grudgingly beginning to give in)

Maybe if we laid the engine sideways, with the crankshaft pointing toward the rear wheels....

JIMMY

We could make the castings out of aluminum and magnesium, with metalized cylinder barrels, and....

SOUND of a car driving up to the house. Everyone, except Tucker and Vera, is surprised to get a visitor at this hour. They all go to look out the window.

From their POV we see ABE, about sixty, get out of a taxi. Due to a chronic breathing difficulty, he has a mannerism of which he is totally unaware. Suddenly, he'll flip the tip of his nose upward with his right thumb, ferociously, four or five times in rapid succession. Also, whenever he is worried, he mournfully hums "I'm Always Chasing Rainbows," as if it were a Yiddish folk song.

TUCKER

(to Vera)

It's him.

MARILYN

Who's that?

TUCKER

(to Vera)

We'll be in the den.

Tucker takes the drawings and goes out.

JOHNNY

(referring to Abe)

He's spooky.

NOBLE

Dad didn't say he was expecting company.

MARILYN

Isn't he going to introduce us?

JOHNNY

Not to me, he don't!

They all laugh.

VERA

(to Johnny)

He's not spooky. He's from New York.

EXT. TUCKER HOUSE - NIGHT

As Tucker comes out of the house to greet Abe, the TAXI DRIVER turns off the motor and headlights to wait. Abe is looking around with disgust. He despises the country.

TUCKER

Abe! How are you?

(walking him

toward the house)

I really appreciate your stopping by. How long you got between trains?

ABE

You like this, living here, the middle of nowhere? You want a cup of coffee two, three in the morning, you could die first.

TUCKER

Or go in the kitchen and make one.

ABE

Who wants coffee two in the morning? You sit there, read the paper, chew the fat with the waitress. Here, you look around, there's nothing but scenery.

TUCKER

We're stuck with the scenery, but how do you like your coffee?

ABE

In the city.

INT. DEN - NIGHT

INSERT: Tucker's hand pouring a cup of coffee.

ABE'S VOICE
(over insert)
Cars? You brought me here for
cars?

Tucker, bringing Abe the coffee, crosses to the sofa, as Abe tosses the drawings aside.

TUCKER
Does that look like a car to you?
That's a gold mine I'm handing
you on a silver platter.

ABE
(taking the coffee)
Forget it. You got no chance.

TUCKER
How do you know? You didn't hear
my ideas yet.

ABE
Ideas? Einstein's in the idea
business. He makes up numbers so
high only a dog can hear them,
but what does it cost him? A
piece of paper, a couple pencils?
To manufacture cars you need
millions of dollars.

TUCKER
That's what Wall Street is for,
to float stock issues.

ABE
For any crackpot who walks in off
the street?

TUCKER
Crackpot?

ABE
Who are you? Who knows you?
Anybody on Wall Street?

TUCKER
I've got a car so revolutionary
it'll change the way every car is
made from now on, and with your
connections...

ABE

I don't have connections. I have connections who have connections, and speaking for them, myself, and...who will you believe? God? Him, too. Forget about it. You got no chance.

Abe takes a sip of the coffee. He hates it. Putting the cup on the table, he gets up and starts out.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Vera, Dan, Jimmy and the kids are waiting tensely for the outcome of the meeting -- Vera having filled them in on what it's about. Hearing the taxi start, they go to the window.

From their POV we see Tucker walking Abe to the taxi. Abe gets in, the taxi drives off, leaving Tucker standing there. For an instant Tucker is devastated, then furious. He picks up a rock and throws it as hard as he can at a tree.

Vera and the others go outside.

EXT. TUCKER HOUSE - NIGHT

As Vera and the others come out, they are puzzled to find Tucker nowhere in sight. Then, suddenly, from behind the barn the combat car comes speeding toward them. Tucker is driving. He passes them, continuing around the circular driveway as if on a race track, skidding expertly around the curves, then showing off, he begins zig-zagging between the trees on the lawn before getting back on the driveway and starting another pass in front of them.

As he approaches, Vera, imitating Claudette Colbert in "It Happened One Night," holds out her thumb and lifts her skirt as if hitch-hiking. Tucker, laughing, skids to a stop.

TUCKER

Pile in, Cutie! Who wants ice cream? Let's go. Everybody!

They all get into the combat car. Tucker starts speeding toward the highway.

INT. COMBAT CAR - NIGHT

TUCKER

You should have seen him, the poor man, it was pathetic how he loved the idea. He was on his knees, practically, bringing up old times,

continued

TUCKER (cont.)

how we first met in Washington,
making up favors a mile a minute
he claims he did for me. It was
embarrassing, a man like that, try-
ing so hard to play on my harp strings.
Anything to get in on the deal, but
I'll make him sweat awhile first.

The kids cheer, but Vera and Dan look at each other, both
knowing Tucker always becomes manic when trying to cope with
a crushing disappointment.

Vera touches him tenderly, the touch telling him she knows
what really happened. He looks at her; his eyes secretly
admitting to her, and her alone, that she's right.

Spontaneously, she gives him a sexy, playful little bite on
his neck.

TUCKER

Watch this baby move!

He floorboards the accelerator.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

The combat car speeding along.

INTERCUT TO INSERT THE SPEEDOMETER: The needle climbing
from 70 to 80 to 90.

As they pass a billboard, a motorcycle POLICEMAN comes out
from behind it and, sirens blaring, starts after them.

INT. COMBAT CAR - NIGHT

Tucker laughs.

TUCKER

(referring to the
cop)

Won't he ever give up?

Tucker speeds even faster, the speedometer climbing from 100
to 110, as the kids cheer.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

The policeman falls farther and farther behind. Then, when
the combat car rounds a long curve, Tucker suddenly skids off
the highway onto a narrow country road, continuing to speed
as fast as he can until he is out of sight.

The policeman rounds the curve, passes the country road, then not seeing Tucker anywhere on the long stretch of straight highway ahead, the policeman pulls over and stops. He sits a moment, then laughs with admiration and affection.

POLICEMAN

That Tucker.

EXT. MAIN STREET - NIGHT

The combat car pulls up in front of the drugstore and stops. They all get out and start toward the store.

INT. DRUGSTORE - NIGHT

The only person inside is DOC, the owner and pharmacist, who is sitting on a stool at the counter reading "Pic" Magazine.

Tucker and the others come in.

TUCKER

How you doing, Doc?

DOC

Sodas all around?

TUCKER

Triple scoops tonight.

As Doc goes behind the counter and starts taking their individual orders, Tucker, taking Doc's stool, absently starts looking at the article Doc was reading.

DOC

(to Tucker; referring
to the article)

Ain't that something, them pre-fab houses? Gonna order one tomorrow for my son and his wife. He's getting discharged first of the month. Did I tell you?

TUCKER

Anybody seen one of these houses? How do you know they're any good? They're not even built yet.

DOC

Says so. In the magazine.

Suddenly, an idea occurs to Tucker with such force we can almost see the lightbulb go on over his head. He turns to Vera.

She doesn't know what the idea is, but his expression leaves no doubt that, in his mind, he has just found the solution to his problem. Unable to contain his excitement, Tucker spins off the stool and starts singing.

TUCKER

"Hold that tiger! Hold that tiger!"

Going down the row of stools, he spins everybody around, as fast as he can, as they all begin singing with him.

CUT TO PROMO FILM, continuing. TITLE: "IT PAYS TO ADVERTISE"

PROMO FILM DISSOLVES TO:

INT. TUCKER DEN - NIGHT (PROMO FILM)

Tucker and WRITER, both in shirt sleeves, are over-acting in a scene staged by the director of the PROMO FILM. The writer is at the typewriter. Tucker is pacing up and down.

NARRATOR

(over above)

Working with a writer he knew, Tucker got an article about the car published in "Pic" magazine.

INSERT: Article in "Pic." Along with drawings of the car, and a picture of Tucker, the headline says: "The First Completely New Car in Fifty Years, Off the Drawing Board and onto the Assembly Line."

NARRATOR

But nobody, not even Tucker, was prepared for what happened.

PROMO FILM DISSOLVES TO:

In a shot staged by the PROMO FILM director (re-enacting his version of what took place) Tucker, Vera, the kids, Dan, Jimmy, and Millie are standing outside their house as the postman unloads the last of thirty mail-bags full of letters. They all act stunned, then -- on cue -- cheer. (MOS)

NARRATOR

Within a week, more than a hundred and fifty thousand letters poured in. "Where can I buy a Tucker?" "How can I get a dealership?" Overnight, the nation had gone Tucker crazy.

INT. CERF'S OFFICE - DAY (OUR FILM)

FLOYD CERF, an ultra-conservative investment banker, in his fifties, is at his desk, looking at the article in "Pic." Abe, looking at another copy of the article, is sitting across from Cerf. Tucker, beside Abe, is watching their reaction, which is completely negative. Tucker is absently doodling, as he frequently does, with no conscious thought of what he is drawing, or even that he is drawing. (His sketches have as much innocence and as little skill as a six-year-old child, but with the clarity of an editorial page cartoon, they sum up what he is really feeling or thinking -- often in direct contrast to what he thinks he is feeling.) We see that what Tucker is drawing, without being aware of it, is a tombstone. On it is a drawing of the Tucker car.

ABE

(putting the magazine
down; turns to Tucker)

It's up to Floyd. It's his company and I brought you here in good faith, but my opinion -- it's one thing to build one car in a barn, but mass production is something else. To even try to compete with the Big Three....

TUCKER

What's the worse can happen? I go belly up? That's my problem. Your problem, Mr. Cerf, is to form a company, clear it with the SEC, and sell the stock.

CERF

All of which involves a considerable amount of time, effort and money, to say nothing of putting my prestige on the line.

TUCKER

Let me level with you. The only reason I'm giving you first crack is because of Abe, but I made a few calls to other companies, too, and every single one of them said if one article in one magazine got that kind of public response, they couldn't see any problem whatsoever in floating a fifteen, twenty million dollar

continued

TUCKER (cont.)
 stock issue -- the commission on
 which, for you, is what?...about
 two million, eight?

CERF
 More or less.

TUCKER
 Seems to me the only problem you
 got, Mr. Cerf, is the size of the
 finder's fee you give my friend Abe.

Abe and Cerf look at each other.

CERF
 (to Tucker)
 Give me a few days. I'll call
 you first of the week.

TUCKER
 Monday?

CERF
 Monday... Tuesday.

TUCKER
 Monday.
 (he goes out)

CERF
 (to Abe)
 Interesting.

ABE
 What do we need to make it
 happen?

CERF
 (thinking it over)
 A car....

ABE
 Which we got.

CERF
 A working prototype?

ABE
 Says so. In the magazine.

CERF

...We'll need big names on the Board for the prospectus. Top automobile executives with years of experience in Detroit.

ABE

Like who can we get?

CERF

Well...there's Fred Rockelman, vice president at Ford for years. He's president of Plymouth at the moment, but I heard he's getting kicked upstairs, so we might get him.

ABE

As window dressing? Or will he want a say in running the company?

CERF

Want a say? He'll run the company.

ABE

I'm not sure Tucker will go for that.

CERF

People don't buy stock, they buy people they can trust. Or think they can trust. And if...what's-his-name....

ABE

Tucker.

CERF

...is going to be a pain in the ass about the....

ABE

He's a good man. Don't worry about Tucker. What else do we need?

CERF

A factory.

ABE

That's it?

CERF

That's it.

ABE

The car we got. You get Rockelman.
I'll get the factory.

INT. TUCKER DEN - DAY (SPRING)

Vera is sticking pins on a map she has placed on the wall, as Noble and Johnny open letters still in piles all over the room.

Tucker is anxiously waiting for something.

NOBLE

Here's one from Alaska!

VERA

(sticking a pin in
Alaska on the map)
That's the first one from there.

JOHNNY

I thought they drove igloos.

Marilyn comes running down the hall, calling in as she passes the open door.

MARILYN

I'm going!

VERA

Promise?

MARILYN'S VOICE

Ten o'clock.

EXT. TUCKER HOUSE - DAY

TWO HIGH SCHOOL BOYS in a convertible are waiting for her.
(These are not the same boys she was jitterbugging with.)

As they go down the driveway toward the main road, they pass ALEX driving toward the house.

INT. DEN - DAY

TUCKER

(looking at his watch)
Abe should have been here an hour ago.

VERA

You know the trains now -- they're
always late.

They hear a car pulling up to the house. Tucker hurries out to the porch.

EXT. TUCKER HOUSE - DAY

Alex gets out of the car. Tucker is disappointed to see it isn't Abe. Alex sees Tucker on the porch and goes to him.

ALEX

Mr. Tucker? My name's Alex Tremulis. Can I have five minutes of your time, sir?

TUCKER

I'm waiting for somebody.

ALEX

Five minutes.

TUCKER

What for?

ALEX

I want to sell you something.

TUCKER

What?

ALEX

Me.

TUCKER

Five minutes.

Alex, carrying a portfolio, goes to Tucker who sits on the porch steps.

ALEX

I just got out of the army a few weeks ago, but before that I was studying automotive engineering, and I have to tell you, sir, when I saw that article about your car, it's been driving me crazy ever since. It's everything I ever dreamed of in a car, but if you don't mind my saying so, there's a few little things....

(takes drawings from his folio)

I made a few three-quarter perspectives, if you wouldn't mind, sir, taking a look at them.

(Tucker takes the drawings, looks at them)

continued

ALEX (cont.)

What you did with the streamlining is fantastic, but if we could apply real aerodynamics, like a rocket-ship, to a family car...

TUCKER

(pointing to a
drawing)

What're those for?

ALEX

Those are...well....your idea of putting the engine in the rear is brilliant, but instead of leaving the radiator up front, if we had these vents on each back fender, when the hot air comes out, it's like jet propulsion, giving us six percent less drag.

TUCKER

You changed my doors.

ALEX

Well, the thing is, sir, you've only got thirty-one inches headroom and a family car needs thirty-six, which I changed on the drawing, but even so, it's ten inches lower than every other car on the road, so everytime you open the doors they'll hit the curb, so I made them open into the roof, like an airplane, which....

(giving him a
detailed drawing
of the doors)

....see the way I've got the....

Tucker hears a car approaching. It is Abe in a taxi.

TUCKER

Time's up, kid.

ALEX

Just two more minutes. I didn't...

TUCKER

What do you want? A job? You got it.

ALEX
In the design department?

TUCKER
You are the design department.

Tucker, leaving Alex dumfounded, goes to meet Abe as the cab pulls up.

TUCKER
(to Abe)
Did you find it?

Abe glares at a bird, then sees a chicken walking around; droppings coming from its rear end.

ABE
Chickens, too, for godssake!

TUCKER
What's wrong with chickens?

ABE
On a plate with mashed potatoes,
fine. It comes from a menu. But
to eat a thing with feathers you
just saw take a crap...

Tucker laughs as he leads Abe toward the house. Ahead, Johnny is watching an OLD MAN load their weeks supply of newspapers onto his truck which is half filled with other people's old newspapers.

Johnny, seeing Tucker coming, calls to him.

JOHNNY
Dad? How come.....?

Suddenly realizing Abe is the man Tucker is with, Johnny stops.
Tucker and Abe go to Johnny.

TUCKER
Johnny, this is Uncle Abe.

Johnny still thinks Abe is spooky. Abe is as uncomfortable with children as he is with animals. They just look at each other, neither knowing what to say.

TUCKER
(to Johnny)
What'd you start to ask me?

JOHNNY

I know it's for the war effort,
but what can they do with old
newspapers?

TUCKER

Send them where it didn't happen yet.

Johnny laughs.

TUCKER

You left the chicken coop open again.

JOHNNY

Darn!

As Johnny starts trying to catch the chickens, Tucker and Abe
continue toward the house, passing Jimmy who is on his way
from the house to the barn.

TUCKER

Jimmy, this is Abe Karatz, my partner.

JIMMY

(shaking his hand)

Hi.

Abe looks at him, puzzled. Nods.

TUCKER

(to Jimmy)

Would you ask Dan to meet us in
the den?

JIMMY

You bet.

(he continues
toward the barn)

ABE

Didn't they put the Japs in
camps someplace?

Tucker struggles to control his anger.

TUCKER

We been together fifteen years,
me and Jimmy.

ABE

He's still a Jap.

TUCKER

I got the Military to put him in my official custody to work on the turrets, but his mother, father and twelve-year-old sister, who like Jimmy, was born in Los Angeles, are in a dandy little concentration camp in Colorado. Machine guns, barbed wire fences -- the works -- if it makes you feel any better.

Abe stops; truly shaken.

ABE

I could never understand how six million Jews could be killed in Germany, till I heard myself just now.

Millie comes out the back door to shake out a mop. Immediately, the twenty-six dogs appear from nowhere and, single file, start jumping over the mop handle.

Abe's reaction. Tucker laughs at Abe's expression, puts his arm around Abe. The tension is broken.

INT. DEN - DAY

Abe is talking. Tucker, Vera, and Dan are in the room.

ABE

...which leaves three war surplus plants we've got a shot at. A long shot, because everybody in the country's trying to get them, but it's worth a try.

One's perfect. Nice and little, the Air Force used to make propellers in it.

The other's too big. Cost twice as much to re-tool, but we could swing it if we had to.

TUCKER

What's the third one?

ABE

Impossible. The Dodge plant, where they built the B-29's in Chicago.

TUCKER

What's wrong with that?

ABE

It covers 475 acres for one thing, with sixteen buildings.

One of them, is seventy-three acres long. One building. The biggest building in the world under one roof.

Vera and Dan look at each other, knowing exactly what Tucker will say.

TUCKER

That's perfect!

INT. DODGE PLANT - DAY

Very high, wide shot. Tucker and Noble are walking through one part of the plant. Vera, Johnny, Junior, and Marilyn are walking through a different wing of the plant. Abe is speaking on a public phone on a wall. From this angle they look as insignificant as ants in the eerie vastness of this deserted factory.

NOBLE

(to Tucker)

Know what I'm going to do when I grow up and you're the richest, most famous man in the world? I'm going to have a factory ten times this big in every country in the world. Right, Pop? To keep the Tucker name alive forever.

TUCKER

You can do anything you want to, if you really want to. Don't forget that. All you need are the brains to be in the right place at the right time with the right idea.

NOBLE

And be a Tucker.

TUCKER

It doesn't hurt.

As Vera, Marilyn, Junior, and Johnny wander around, Johnny, unobserved, crawls under a piece of machinery to see how it works. Both Marilyn and Junior are lagging behind, each worried about something. Vera turns, sees how troubled Marilyn and Junior are, and goes to Marilyn.

MARILYN

Will we have to move here? Live
in Chicago?

VERA

You'll love it here. They've got
a department store in Chicago --
wait till you see it. You'll
think you went to heaven.

Marilyn laughs. Vera goes to Junior.

VERA

You don't look too happy about
this, either.

JUNIOR

(referring to the plant)
I'm plenty happy about this....
(takes a letter from
his pocket)
....it's this I don't know what
to do about.
(gives her the
letter as they
lag back to
speak confidentially)
Came about a week ago. From
Notre Dame. I've been accepted.

VERA

(puzzled)
That's what you wanted, isn't it?

JUNIOR

That's what Dad wanted.

VERA

Where do you want to go?

JUNIOR

Right here. In the plant, to
work on cars. I'm a grease monkey.
That's all I want to be. Not
President of the United States,
or something, which Dad wants me
to be, but I.....

JOHNNY

Mom! I'm stuck!

Vera, Junior and Marilyn start looking for Johnny, finding
him trapped inside a gigantic piece of machinery.

With considerable effort on Junior's part and a lot of reassurance and comforting from Vera and Marilyn, they finally manage to get him out. By now they are all laughing.

JOHNNY

It's really neat in there. It's like a clock. Only bigger.

Tucker and Noble come into the room, unaware of the excitement that just took place, as Abe hangs up and starts walking toward them.

TUCKER

It's fantastic! We can build everything I ever dreamed of in this plant. Family cars, sports cars, racing cars, convertibles, trucks -- even airplanes.

ABE

All we got to do is talk the government into giving it to us.

TUCKER

What'd they say? Did you reach them?

ABE

We finally got a meeting, at least.

TUCKER

With who?

ABE

War Assets Administration. In Washington. Monday. Three o'clock.

TUCKER

No good. It's got to be lunch someplace.

ABE

You know what I had to go through, just to get that meeting?

TUCKER

With roast beef. Rare. Very rare.

Abe looks to Vera for help.

ABE

He wants the meeting catered?

Vera laughs, but as the others start out, she stays behind to look around. Alone, she allows her face to reveal her apprehension, knowing that from this moment on their lives will never be the same.

INT. WAR ASSETS ADMINISTRATION CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

INSERT: A piece of bloody, roast beef, as a man's hands cut a bite-sized piece with a knife and fork.

A group of DISTINGUISHED GENTLEMEN ranging from middle age to old are eating lunch at a conference table. Feature OSCAR BEASLEY

At the far end of the room, across from the table where the committee is eating, Tucker is making his pitch. Beside him is a screen on which he is showing slides. The slide on now features the fenders which turn with the wheels.

Abe, out of sight, is watching from behind the committee.

100-255
TUCKER
Every twenty-five seconds somebody is killed or crippled in an automobile accident. Sixty percent of all night-time accidents happen on curves because there's a two-second blind spot between the time you turn the wheel and the time your headlights get to where you're going. With the Tucker, when you turn the wheels, you turn the fenders and headlights, too, so you can see where you're going before you get there.

He pushes a button. Another slide appears on the screen. It is a gory closeup of a young woman's face covered with blood.

TUCKER
This woman was thrown through the windshield of her car.

Some of the gentlemen push their plates away.

Another slide: The Tucker windshield. A beautiful MODEL is posing, as if pushing it from inside the car, causing it to pop out.

TUCKER
In a Tucker, the windshields pop out. And to make sure nobody's face gets cut...we have shatter-proof glass and seat belts.

continued

TUCKER (cont.)

Now why? Tell me why, gentlemen, the Big Three in Detroit have been allowed to make billions of dollars a year in profits without spending one dime on safety?

What I know, what you know, what the public knows is they don't give a damn about people. All they care about is profits.

Well, let me tell you -- and I mean this from the bottom of my heart -- the entire automobile industry in America is guilty of criminal negligence, and if I had my way, they'd be tried and convicted for manslaughter.

(takes a dramatic pause
before continuing)

I thank you gentlemen and appreciate the time you've given me.

Abe looks at the members of the board. Most of them seem as if they are in danger of throwing up. They sit a few seconds, have a brief whispered conversation, then leave the room without even looking at Tucker, which puzzles him. Abe, livid, goes to Tucker.

ABE

Congratulations. They hate you like poison, and so do I. How did I let you talk me into....

They turn as they hear someone coming. It is Beasley, crossing toward them.

BEASLEY

I'm Oscar Beasley, special assistant to the administrator. Could you be in my office tomorrow, three o'clock?

TUCKER

Well, I... Sure.

BEASLEY

Good. See you then.

He goes out.

TUCKER

See how much you know? They loved it! Would they see us again if they didn't?

ABE

You're talking logic? This is Washington. A Punch and Judy show.

TUCKER

Why would they...?

ABE

Politics! We're being set up for something. Believe me. We got no chance.

EXT. YPSILANTI HOUSE AND BARN - DAY

Vera drives past the barn to the house. Dan comes out of the barn and goes to her as she gets out of the car.

Get it?

DAN

She motions "no."

Sobered, they go to the porch and sit down.

VERA

How could we kid ourselves into thinking anybody would give us a loan? All we've got are debts and mortgages, all of them past foreclosure.

DAN

How does he do it, that genius you married? No matter how much he makes, he spends twice as much.

VERA

Abe, Cerf, everybody thinks we've got a working prototype.

DAN

So what're they going to do -- shoot us -- when they find out we don't?

VERA

Is there no way to get the parts to start on the engine, at least?

DAN

We could steal them, I guess, but
I can't run too good with this
leg anymore.

She touches him, affectionately; goes into the house.

INT. HALL - DAY

Vera, going toward the stairs, passes the living room where she sees Johnny on the floor, having taken a very expensive antique clock completely apart. This is almost the last straw for Vera. She stands a moment, struggling to control herself.

Johnny looks up; sees her.

JOHNNY

...Mom...? I know you told me
never touch the.... Mom...? You OK,
Mom? I've got an explanation.....
Mom...? All I did was take the
back off to see how the chimes
work, and a little wheel fell out,
from way in the back, so I had
to take the front out to find out
where the...say something Mom!

She goes up the stairs.

INT. TUCKER'S BEDROOM - DAY

She comes in, goes to the bathroom; takes two aspirins. The phone rings. She ignores it, until finally, as it continues to ring, she forces herself to answer it.

VERA

Hello.

INTERCUT: TUCKER IN WASHINGTON HOTEL SUITE.

TUCKER

Where the hell were you? I was
ready to hang up.

VERA

What happened? How'd it go?

TUCKER

Fantastic! I had them eating out
of my hand. When I got through, I
could have asked for the state of
California and got Arkansas, to boot.

Vera immediately sees through his bravado.

VERA

Oh, Darling.

TUCKER

(giving up the act)
It's not dead yet. We've got a meeting tomorrow.

VERA

What does Abe think?

TUCKER

What does he know? Did you get the loan?

VERA

They're going to think it over.

TUCKER

You're a worse liar than I am.

VERA

Guess what? They picked Marilyn to be queen of the Lions' Club parade next month, and that lovely little tool box you gave Johnny for Christmas? Thank you very much.

TUCKER

What'd he take apart this time? The kitchen stove?

VERA

He's way past simple little things like stoves. Remember our one and only heirloom, the Tiffany rose-petal clock? It's now an ex-clock.

TUCKER

Good. I hated that clock.

VERA

(almost breaking
down)

Come home. Please. Can you please come home? Your pillow keeps screaming at me like it's my fault you're not here.

INT. BEASLEY'S OFFICE - DAY

Abe and Tucker come in. Beasley, signing papers, motions for them to sit down, and, for a time, ignores them. Abe looks at Tucker as if to say, "See? A total waste of time." Finally Beasley searches through a pile of documents and finds the memo pertaining to them.

BEASLEY

Mr. Tucker? In brief, the committee has voted to give you the Dodge plant in Chicago.

(Abe and Tucker
are astonished)

We're willing to sign a letter of intent immediately, giving you possession on June first -- contingent upon the following: By August first you have certified assets of no less than fifteen million dollars, and to qualify as a legal manufacturing company, you're required to have ~~at least~~ ^{at least} fifty cars completed by October first. Is that satisfactory?

TUCKER

Well...I...Sure...I mean....Fine.

BEASLEY

The papers will be ready for signature at five o'clock tomorrow afternoon.

INT. W.A.A. HALLWAY - DAY

Abe and Tucker, side by side, are each on public phones.

TUCKER

(into phone)

I want to place a collect call to Vera Tucker in Ypsilanti, Michigan.

ABE

(into phone)

....but why?

- TUCKER

(into phone)

Elmore three, nine-oh-five-two....

ABE
(into phone)
Walter Reuther?

TUCKER
(into phone)
....her husband, Preston Tucker.

ABE
(into phone)
Go ahead, I'll hold.
(to Tucker)
United Auto Workers told
Roosevelt if he wants the labor
vote next election, he better
give that plant to a car company
and only a car company.

TUCKER
Why me, instead of Ford,
General Motors... one of the Big
Three?

ABE
They didn't want it. It's too big.

TUCKER
How can nobody want a plant like that?

ABE
Everybody wants it, but believe
it or not, you're the only lunatic
in the whole country dumb enough
to want it to make cars in.

TUCKER
(into phone)
Babe?
(singing)
"Hold that tiger! Hold that
tiger!"

ABE
(into phone)
He's right here. I'll ask him.
(to Tucker)
Hey! Songbird!

TUCKER
(into phone)
Hold a minute, will you?
(turns to Abe)

ABE

(to Tucker)

How soon can you have the car in New York? Monday? Tuesday? I got the best press agent in the business on the phone, and to kick off the sale of the stock, he wants to unveil the car on the street in front of the stock exchange, with a hundred piece band, the Rockettes...enough razz-a-ma-tazz to make every investor in the country get down on his knees and beg to buy that stock.

TUCKER

(into phone)

Listen, Babe? I'll call you back. We got it! The biggest plant in the whole damn world, and we're the ones who got it!

(as if it's the simplest, most natural thing in the world)
All we need is fifteen million dollars and a car.

(hangs up)

ABE

We need a car?

TUCKER

Let's go someplace, have a drink and....

ABE

Do we have a car or don't we?

TUCKER

It's not a question of....

ABE

(into phone)

I'll call you back.

(hangs up; turns to Tucker)

Is there anything else you better tell me?

TUCKER

I don't have a dime to build it with.

CUT TO PROMO FILM, continuing: TITLE: "WHERE THERE'S A WILL, THERE'S A WAY"

NEWSREEL: EXT. WHITE HOUSE - DAY (PROMO FILM)

Over shot of White House, the newsreel title: "World's Biggest Plant Given to Unknown Auto Maker."

ANNOUNCER'S VOICE

With V-J Day now clearly in sight, FDR plans to by-pass the industrial giants and give all the war surplus plants to small independent companies.

NEWSREEL: INT. OVAL OFFICE - DAY (PROMO FILM)

Roosevelt is behind his desk. Tucker is standing beside him.

ROOSEVELT

The largest industries in this country were begun by unknown men whose only asset was a dream -- The American Dream -- where competition is the backbone of free enterprise, and it gives me great pleasure to welcome to those ranks Mr. Preston Tucker.

Roosevelt and Tucker shake hands as STILL PHOTOGRAPHERS snap their picture.

INT. TUCKER KITCHEN - DAY (OUR FILM)

Around the table are Abe, Tucker, Vera, Dan, Jimmy, Junior, Alex, and all of the kids.

ABE

(looking at a sheet of figures)

Fifty thousand dollars? For one car?

TUCKER

It's hand built, don't forget. A prototype.

ABE

How much you need to get started? Forget the fifty thousand.

TUCKER

To get started...? At least ten thousand.

Abe takes out his checkbook, pen and starts writing a check.

ABE

I'll give you six, and if it turns out you're right, we really can sell a few dealerships now, which, frankly, sounds crazy to me....Why would anybody pay real money now for a car don't even exist yet?

(he stops)

I'm sitting here signing a check in my own handwriting, calling them crazy?

(he holds the check up, as a teaser, but doesn't give it to Tucker yet)

One thing. We need it, absolutely, in sixty days. Absolutely. Any problem?

Dan, Jimmy, and Alex react.

Sixty days?

Or never.

TUCKER

ABE

TUCKER

Why?

ABE

So far we didn't sell enough stock to buy a dead herring.

TUCKER

But the letters, all the excitement when the article came out.

ABE

There's people who buy cars and there's people who buy stock. No major investor will even consider us unless we hit them right between the eyes with the damndest advertising campaign since Wrigley convinced the public to chew a wad of God knows what you can't swallow, serves no useful purpose, and two minutes after you put it in your mouth, it don't even have a taste. Now that's what I call an advertising campaign and that's what Jerry-the-press-agent can deliver for us.

TUCKER

Wait a minute. We're not selling swamp land in Florida. We've got a car here fifty years ahead of its time.

ABE

Who's going to know if the public don't see it? And after they see it, you got to tell them what they saw.

TUCKER

Why sixty days?

ABE

In sixty days -- June first -- we take possession of the plant. On that day -- and not until that day -- will the mystery car, the car of the century be unveiled. By that time, the way Jerry-the press-agent works, he'll have the whole world so crazy with curiosity, St. Peter, himself, floating down from heaven with fifty angels -- count them -- fifty, tap dancing the "Star Spangled Banner" wouldn't get half the publicity he's going to get for us.

TUCKER

What if we can't?

ABE

We got fifteen million dollars to raise by August first, and not one minute to lose. If the public, when they see that car at the unveiling don't go crazy, it's all over.

TUCKER

You got it. Sixty days.

Dan, Jimmy, and Alex look at each other.

Abe hands the check to Tucker; unconsciously flips his nose.

JOHNNY

What do you do that for, with your nose, all the time?

VERA

Johnny!

ABE

What with my nose?

Johnny imitates him.

ABE

I do that?

Vera and Tucker exchange glances. He tries to break her up. Quickly, she turns away to keep from laughing.

VERA

OK. Everybody upstairs. There's homework to do.

Protests from the kids, as they go.

VERA

(to Abe)

I made a list of all the people who wrote about dealerships and worked out an itinerary, plus the phone numbers, hotels in every town, train schedules, it's in the den.

He and Vera start out.

ABE

I do that with my nose?

DAN

(to Tucker)

Sixty days? Impossible!

JIMMY

We got no castings, patterns -- nothing.

ALEX

It takes Ford nine months to go from drawing board to prototype.

JIMMY

We don't even know the engine's going to work.

TUCKER

(to Dan)

Call every pit man we know from Indy and have them here tomorrow.

continued

TUCKER (cont.)

(to Alex)

Get moving, right now, buy the
clay, get started on the model.

(to Jimmy)

We got enough steel left from the
turrets?

JIMMY

Just about.

TUCKER

There's twenty-four hours in every
day, don't forget. Can anybody
in this room look me in the
eyes and say we can't do it?

DAN

(looking him in
the eyes)

We can't do it.

TUCKER

Except you.

They all laugh. Dan, Jimmy, and Alex go out the back door.
Junior wants to talk to his father, but before he gets the
nerve, Tucker goes to join Abe and Vera in the den.

INT. TUCKER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tucker is putting on his pajamas. Glimpses of Vera, in her
nightgown, can be seen through the open door to the bathroom
as she passes, back and forth, getting ready for bed. She and
Tucker call to each other from the bedroom to the bathroom.

TUCKER

Abe was really impressed how you
had everything so organized.

VERA

(laughs)

When Johnny imitated the nose...

Tucker goes to the bed which is covered with proofs of photos
of him to be selected for publicity stills. Also on the bed
are some brochures. He picks one up.

INSERT: THE BROCHURE. Featured is a large picture of
Rockelman with a brief summary of his background. On each
side of him are two smaller pictures of the men he has chosen
for his team, each with his impressive background summarized.
The headline: "How Fifteen Years of Testing Produced the Car
of Tomorrow Today."

TUCKER'S VOICE

(over insert)

Did you see the brochures Abe brought?

VERA'S VOICE

I want to talk to you about that.

Back to Tucker.

TUCKER

That's some board of directors
they picked for us. I can't tell
if they're undertakers or the
stiffs they embalmed.

INTERCUT: TUCKER AND VERA

VERA

(calling in)

...."fifteen years of testing"?

TUCKER

I've been thinking about that car
a lot longer than fifteen years.

VERA

"Thinking about" is not exactly
"testing."

TUCKER

It's advertising! You're not
supposed to believe it. If you're
selling candy, what do you adver-
tise, it rots your teeth out?

Tucker puts the brochure down, looks at one of the stills of
himself, then goes to the mirror, where he begins practicing
different smiles.

Vera comes into the room. Quickly, he pretends to be exami-
ning an imaginary blemish on his chin, but seeing he hasn't
fooled her, gives her his most irresistible Peck's-bad-boy
smile.

TUCKER

Caught me, didn't you?

VERA

Don't you give me that crooked little
smile you stole from Clark Gable.

TUCKER

What do you mean I...?

VERA

I saw you, a million times,
practicing, when you thought I
wasn't looking.

(finding a specific
proof)

Now this smile. Here's my down-
fall. The real you. The canary who
ate the cat.

To his surprise, she kisses him with such passion, it's
almost violent.

TUCKER

That smile made you do that?

VERA

Everytime.

Vera reaches for another photo.

VERA
Know what this smile makes me
want to do?

TUCKER
Let's stick with the canary.

He kisses her passionately. They begin rolling across the
bed, scattering the photos in all directions.

INT. CLAY SUPPLY STORE - DAY

Alex and OWNER.

ALEX

How can you tell me you don't have
clay? There's tons of it back there.

OWNER

That's sold.

INT. AUTO DEALER'S OFFICE - SMALL MIDWESTERN TOWN - DAY

Abe is with A DEALER at his desk. Abe is showing him an
elaborate presentation of the car, with detailed drawings,
stats, etc.

DEALER

I'm a country boy. I got to scrunch
around the seats, kick the tires.
When you got a car I can do that to,
I'm plenty interested.

INT. DAN'S OFFICE IN BARN - DAY

Dan is on the phone.

DAN

Come on, Murray. You and every supplier in the business are out of cylinder liners? We've been doing business thirty years together. I won't tell who told me. The word's out -- right? Nobody sell us nothing?.....Thanks.
(hangs up)

INT. SMALL TOWN HOTEL RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Abe is the only customer in the shabby hotel dining room.

Reading the paper, he eats without tasting the food. The WAITRESS comes to him.

102 255
WAITRESS
You Mr. Carrots?

ABE
Depends.

WAITRESS

There's a call for Mr. Carrots at the front desk.

Abe gets up.

INT. TUCKER DEN - NIGHT

Tucker is on the phone.

TUCKER

Abe?

INTERCUT ABE AT FRONT DESK.

ABE

What's up?

TUCKER

They're putting the squeeze on. The Big Three. We can't buy nothing, not even to make a kiddie car with.

ABE

That don't surprise me.

TUCKER

I made an appointment with Senator Ferguson to straighten this thing out, eye-ball to eye-ball.

ABE

Listen....

TUCKER

You listen! The minute you spot trouble, you got to nip it in the butt.

ABE

What do you think, a big smile and a pat on the back's going to make him forget he's the Senator from Detroit?

TUCKER

He's my Senator, too, don't forget. And if a nice friendly little talk don't work, I'll break his face.

ABE

I'll be there tomorrow.

INT. SENATOR FERGUSON'S OUTER OFFICE - DAY

Two SECRETARIES. Very busy office. Phones ringing constantly. Tucker and Abe have been waiting a long time. Presently a secretary calls to them.

SECRETARY

The Senator will see you now.

Abe and Tucker go into the Senator's office.

INT. FERGUSON'S INNER OFFICE - DAY

As Abe and Tucker come in, FERGUSON comes to greet them. Tucker offers his hand.

TUCKER

Preston Tucker.
(they shake)

Ferguson looks at Abe.

FERGUSON

And you, sir?

ABE

A. H. Karatz.

FERGUSON

(to remember it)

K-A-R-A-T-Z.....?

TUCKER

Let's get right to the point.
You're one of the most powerful
men in Washington. I know that.
I also know your main job is to
make sure the Big Three....

They are interrupted by the Senator's AIDE, a bright young
man, who comes in.

AIDE

Limo's here, Senator.

FERGUSON

(to Tucker and Abe)

Sorry, gentlemen. It was just
getting interesting, but my plans
changed on me since we made this
appointment, as they always do
every two seconds, so I'm not
going to be able to....

MOVE WITH Senator as he goes into the outer office, followed
by the others.

FERGUSON (cont.)

(to second secretary)

What I asked you from the....

(makes motion with
his hand)

. SECOND SECRETARY

First thing in the morning.

FERGUSON

Good.

(to Abe and Tucker)

Walk me to the car.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING HALLWAY - DAY

Ferguson comes out and, walking at a very rapid pace, starts
down the hall. Abe, Tucker, and the Aide have to hurry to
keep up with him.

The first Secretary hurries out and calls to him.

FIRST SECRETARY
 Senator? Don't forget the four
 o'clock....

FERGUSON
 Got it.

SECOND SECRETARY
 (coming out)
 Senator....!

FERGUSON
 (calling back)
 Put everything on the sheet and
 bring it to the plane.

The Senator continues to stride briskly down the hall,
 followed by Abe, Tucker and the Aide.

102 255
 FERGUSON
 (to Tucker)
 So you're Tucker. Did one hell
 of a job with War Assets.
 (he calls to a man
 passing, going in the
 opposite direction)
 Bobby! Thanks for the tickets.

BOBBY
 Any time.

FERGUSON
 (to Tucker)
 You like Jack Benny? Fred Allen?
 Eddie Cantor? Very funny.

We hear the First Secretary calling from behind them.

FIRST SECRETARY
 Senator!

He stops as the Secretary comes running to him. She hands
 him an envelope. He continues toward the stairway.

FERGUSON
 (to Tucker)
 Problems are Mother's Milk to me.
 (turns to Abe)
 Karatz.

Another MAN passing them, going in the opposite direction
 calls to Ferguson.

MAN

How you doing, Senator?

FERGUSON

Get that thing we talked about?

MAN

Got a phone call.

FERGUSON

Call Tim. Tell him I told you.

(to Tucker)

When you were in Washington, did you meet Harry McDonald? Head of the SEC?

TUCKER

Not yet, no.

FERGUSON

Local boy. Good man. Loyal.

Being on the first floor, they start down a flight of very wide stairs, from which we can see the lobby and the street outside.

FERGUSON

Who's your favorite comedian, Mr. Tucker? Fanny Brice? Edgar Bergen and...not Charlie McCarthy.... The dumb one....

(to beautiful WOMAN

coming up the steps)

So that's how you keep that figure.

WOMAN

That's one way, Senator.

They both laugh lasciviously.

FERGUSON

(to Abe)

Funny idea, selling dealerships for cars that don't exist.

(laughs)

Having reached the lobby, they go outside.

EXT. BUSY DETROIT STREET - DAY

They start toward the limo parked in front of the building.

FERGUSON

Remember that song, "The Music Goes Round and Round?"....Mortimer Snerd! That's the one. Funny.

They are at the limo.

FERGUSON

(to Aide)

Get in. Get in.

(Aide gets in)

"The foxes have a home and the fishes have a home, but the son of man hath not a place to rest his head...."

(to Tucker)

"The Big Three should be indicted for manslaughter"?

(he laughs)

Funny line.

Still laughing, he gets into the limo. The car drives off, leaving Abe and Tucker standing there looking at each other.

TUCKER

What was that all about? Did he say anything? What'd he say?

ABE

Stay out of the car business, he said, or he'll cut your nuggies off.

EXT. JUNKYARD - DAY

Tucker and Junior are watching as a crane lifts a green 1940 Olds from the top of a junkpile and starts lowering it to Tucker's truck.

TUCKER

(to Junior)

Me? Far as I'm concerned, the two crummiest things a person can be is a lawyer and a politician, so why would I want you to be President, for God's sake? Most of them are both.

EXT. BARN - DAY

Alex and Tucker are walking toward the barn.

ALEX

We can't build the model without clay and we can't build the prototype without the model.

TUCKER

Easy, kid. Life is full of surprises.

They go into the barn.

INT. BARN - DAY

The barn is divided into three sections. A number of WORKMEN are busy in each section. In one, Jimmy is supervising work on the engine. In another, Dan is supervising work on the frame. (Among the men working here is Junior.) The third section is where the body will be built. As Alex follows Tucker to that section, we see the green Olds he got from the junkyard. Among the workmen in this section are HERMAN, a sweet little man, and AL, a big bruiser. They are supervising the men who will build the body. On the wall beside the Olds, is a full-size sketch of the Tucker, drawn precisely to scale.

TUCKER

Herman, Al...meet Alex, the designer.
(to Alex)

Who needs a clay model? These are the best damn body knockers in the business. They can go from your sketch, straight to metal. Right, boys?

AL

We can do anything with metal but eat it.

HERMAN

I could do that till I lost my teeth.

TUCKER

(to Al, referring
to the Olds)

This close enough to use for a buck?

AL

Fine.

HERMAN

(to Alex)

Don't worry, son. We could use a battleship for a buck and come out with a tricycle.

Dan and Jimmy come to Tucker.

DAN

(to Tucker)

We'd better face this right now.
We got problems with that engine.

JIMMY

Real problems if we can't talk
you out of using the 589.

DAN

You couldn't talk him out of
falling off a cliff, once he made
his mind up.

TUCKER

The concept is brilliant. Miller
thought so, I think so, and you
think so. Just work the damn thing out.

INT. AUTOMOBILE DEALER - ANOTHER TOWN - DAY

Abe is showing a DEALER the presentation.

ABE

...and the main thing -- it
don't have a transmission, which
saves you all the...

DEALER

No transmission? Let me see that.

INT. BARN - NIGHT

Dan and Tucker are with Jimmy, looking at the engine. A
couple of weeks have passed. We can see the progress made on
the frame and the buck.

JIMMY

It won't work, the double torque
converters. We need a transmission.

TUCKER

Why the hell won't it?

JIMMY

We don't have time to work it out.

DAN

Remember the Cord 810 Transaxle?

TUCKER

Four speed, manual shift?

DAN

That's the only transmission I
can think of with front drive and
the engine backwards like we got.

JIMMY

If we can find one.

DAN

(to Tucker)

OK?

TUCKER

What can I say? No? But only
for now. The minute that show's
over in Chicago, we start build-
ing the car we advertised.

Tucker goes to Junior who is working with the other men on
the frame.

TUCKER

Go to every junkyard from here to
Florida if you have to, and bring
back all the Cord 810 transmis-
sions you can find. I don't care
what condition they're in. If
Jimmy's got enough, he'll find
a part here, a part there -- put
something together that works.

INT. BARN - DAY

Another week has passed. At the body section, Alex is super-
vising as Herman, referring to the sketch, is cutting and
hammering sheet metal. Al, having taken off one of the Olds-
mobile doors, is replacing it with the unpainted metal door
they have made. A number of other workers are welding,
hammering, etc. The progress they have made is evident by the
number of other parts of the Olds which have been replaced
by the ones they have made. Alex, seeing Tucker pass, runs
to catch him.

ALEX

Mr. Tucker! One minute. Please!
It's important.

(Tucker stops)

Those fenders you want to turn
with the wheels.....

TUCKER

Don't you start! Leave
my fenders alone!

(Tucker starts off)

ALEX
(calling after him)
They're dangerous!

INT. ANOTHER DEALER'S OFFICE - DAY

Abe is across the desk from the DEALER, who is signing a check, which he hands to Abe.

DEALER
That fuel injection! My customers
know cars. They'll eat that up.

INT. BARN - DAY

Another week has passed. We can see the progress made on the frame and the buck, which is now beginning to look less like the Olds than the drawing of the Tucker. Dan, Tucker, and Jimmy are at the engine.

TUCKER
No fuel injection?

DAN
You want the car on time? The only hope we got is twin carburetors.

TUCKER
God damn it! Where's my car? What's left? Anything?

DAN
Yes or no?

TUCKER
Only for now. You got that?
And don't you forget it.

INT. DEALER'S OFFICE - DAY

Abe is making his pitch.

INT. BARN - NIGHT

Jimmy and Tucker at the engine. Another week has passed. More progress visible on frame and buck.

JIMMY
There's no way this engine's
going to work for a family car.

TUCKER
Now what?

JIMMY

The piston load during compression's three times a normal family car. It needs a twenty-four volt battery to start it, which don't exist.

TUCKER

(points to regular battery)
How many volts in here? Twelve, right? How much is twelve plus twelve? Use two batteries.
(he walks away)

JIMMY

(yelling after him)
That's adding another three hundred pounds.

EXT. TUCKER HOUSE MAIN ROAD - DAY

It is pouring rain.

A school bus stops. Johnny gets out and runs toward the house.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Johnny comes in with a glass of milk and cookies, and turns on the radio, switching stations until he gets to the Tom Mix show.

After a brief portion of the show, the program is interrupted by an announcer reporting that President Roosevelt is dead.

Johnny changes to several other stations, but hears the same news. He turns the radio off, knowing something catastrophic has happened, but isn't quite sure how it affects him.

INT. DEN - DAY

Vera is writing checks, doing the bookkeeping. Johnny comes in.

VERA

No Tom Mix today?

JOHNNY

The President died.

Vera's reaction. She takes Johnny in her arms. On the wall, seen over her shoulder, is an enormous blow-up of a photograph of Roosevelt with Tucker on one side, Walter Reuther on the other.

MONTAGE: SERIES OF SHOTS SHOWING TIME PASSAGE THROUGH PROGRESS BEING MADE ON THE CAR, with each section (the frame, body and engine) which started out merely as piles of junk and raw material, now beginning to have a personality of its own.

EXT. BARN - NIGHT

Junior arrives in a truck. He blows the horn. Dan, Jimmy, and Tucker rush out of the barn to him.

JUNIOR

I got twenty-five. That's all the Cord transmissions in the world, seems like. I called every place.

Dan, Tucker, and Jimmy look at the transmissions. They are a mess. Rusty, broken, etc.

TUCKER

(to Jimmy)

Hope you're good at jig-saw puzzles.

Vera has come out; goes to Junior.

VERA

Did you get the receipts like told you? For every penny.

EXT. SMALL TOWN TRAIN STATION - NIGHT

Abe, exhausted, is carrying a number of packages in addition to his suitcase. He has to run to catch the train which is already leaving. He barely makes it.

INT. BARN - DAY

Jimmy, surrounded by parts from all of the Cord transmissions, has managed to piece together part of a transmission and, at the moment, is trying to join two parts which won't fit.

Tucker comes to him.

TUCKER

How's it going?

JIMMY

Won't know till I try it.

TUCKER

That car has to leave here by eight o'clock in the morning.

JIMMY

Fine with me. Tell the transmission.

Vera, Millie, Marilyn, Noble and Johnny come in, bringing food for everybody.

EXT. BARN - LATE AFTERNOON

Everybody cheers as Jimmy drives the chassis out of the barn and around the driveway. Except for the body, which has not been put on, it is the completed car. After testing all the forward gears, he stops. Puts the car in reverse. Nothing happens. He tries again. Still nothing happens. Dan, Tucker, and the others hurry to him.

JIMMY

No reverse.

TUCKER

Can we fix it?

JIMMY

Not by morning.

Exhausted and depressed, Tucker walks away. Needing to be alone, he sits on a rock beside the stream. After a moment, he is joined by Alex.

ALEX

Mr. Tucker? Sorry to bother you, but I've got two things to tell you. One: Working on this car's been the one experience, no matter what happens the rest of my life, I'll never forget as long as I live. Two: I quit.

TUCKER

How come?

ALEX

To keep from getting fired.

(Tucker looks at
him, puzzled)

I didn't make the fenders turn with the wheels like you wanted.

TUCKER

Why the hell not?

ALEX

Remember, Frank Lockhart tried it on the Stutz? At high speeds, they acted like rudders, and he got killed in the crash. But I made the light in the middle turn with

continued

ALEX (cont.)
the wheels, instead, which does
what you wanted and works fine.

TUCKER
(furious)
If you ever do that again, some-
thing I told you not to, so help
me....I'll give you a raise.

They turn as they HEAR a car coming. It is Abe in a taxi.
Tucker goes to greet him.

In addition to his suitcase, Abe has the packages. He and
Tucker greet each other warmly, go into the house.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Vera and the kids come to greet Abe. He distributes the
presents, saving the last one for Marilyn. It is an evening
gown, much too sexy for a sixteen-year-old, and in terrible
taste.

Vera is appalled, but doesn't want to hurt Abe's feelings.

ABE
For the unveiling. I hope it's
all right. What do I know about
dresses?

Marilyn loves it. She gives Abe a big hug and kiss.

MARILYN
I love it, Uncle Abe! Love it!
(to Vera)
Can I try it on?

VERA
Of course.

Marilyn hurries to the adjoining room. Johnny and Noble take
the toys Abe brought them outside to play with them.

ABE
(to Tucker)
Tell me gently. Do we have a car?

TUCKER
We've got something.

ABE
Does it look like the car in the
ads at least?

TUCKER

It looks like it.

ABE

So what're you worried? All
they have to do is see it.

Marilyn comes in, wearing the dress Abe brought her. She looks like a hooker, but to Marilyn, she looks "grown up." Proudly, she models it.

MARILYN

I love it! Love it! Don't you
love it?

(kisses Abe)

Thank you, Uncle Abe!

Seeing Vera's face, Tucker tries not to laugh, but when she sees his face, they both burst out laughing.

TUCKER

(to Marilyn)

It's beautiful, honey!

He takes Marilyn in one arm, Vera in the other and gives them both kisses. Abe, proud of his taste, beams.

Junior comes in.

JUNIOR

(to Tucker)

You'd better get out there right
away. Oil's pouring from the
breather. Can't get the roof
sealed flush with the gutters.
Half the transmission fell
off. The whole thing, Dad,
it's falling apart.

Tucker and Junior rush out. Vera is desperately worried.

VERA

It's killing him, Abe. That damned
car, is he going to let it kill him?

ABE

He might.

Vera starts out, to be with Tucker.

INT. BARN - NIGHT

As Junior and Tucker come in, everybody is yelling at everybody else. They're all exhausted. Tempers are short. Everybody's nerves are raw.

TUCKER

(to Jimmy)
Where's Dan?

Jimmy motions toward the car.

Vera comes in as Tucker and Junior go to the car.

Alex and Dan are under the car.

TUCKER

Dan?

Both Dan and Alex slide out from under the car. A second later both the front and rear suspensions snap. If Dan and Alex were still under the car, they both would have been killed. Vera stifles a scream. Alex is stunned.

TUCKER

What the hell happened?

Interested only in the car, Tucker begins trying to find out what went wrong.

ALEX

(to himself;
in a daze)
I nearly got killed.

He goes outside. Vera goes after him.

TUCKER

No wonder! Aluminum suspensions? With all that weight? Herman! Al! We need four new arms of beryllium copper, machined from solid stock. Can you have it by morning?

HERMAN

No sweat.

EXT. BARN - NIGHT

As Vera comes out, Alex is trembling. Embarrassed, he turns away. Vera touches him gently, comfortingly.

INT,. BARN - NIGHT

DAN

(to Tucker)

What the hell are you turning into?
The kid, Alex, came this close to
being killed. You didn't even
notice. For what? This pile of
junk? We used to be proud of what
we made or we didn't make it.

Dan goes off. Tucker, sobered by what Dan said, turns to see
Junior looking at him. Junior goes out.

EXT. BARN - NIGHT

Tucker comes out. Junior and Vera are with Alex.

TUCKER

(to Alex)

We're going to make the car we
want. Exactly the way we want it.
Not now, but someday. Soon.
Believe me? Do you? Do you?

Suddenly, his frustration and anger at himself getting out of
control, Tucker starts breaking everything in sight until
Junior and Alex finally are able to stop him. Vera watches
helplessly, with pain, love, and compassion.

ALEX

(during above)

I do! I believe you!
Honest! I know we will!

JUNIOR

(during above)

Stop it! Dad! Please!
Stop it!

When Tucker has calmed down, he looks at his fist, which is
bleeding slightly; begins to laugh.

TUCKER

(to Alex)

How do you feel? Better? That's
what I came out for. To cheer you up.

ALEX

Plenty cheerful. Thanks. Too
cheerful.

TUCKER

If you think that's cheerful,
know what's even more cheerful
than watching a middle-aged man
lose his mind? Having ringside
seats at your own crucifixion.

continued

Vera holds him.

TUCKER (cont.)

We might have them. At Chicago.

EXT. DODGE PLANT - DAY

The day before the unveiling. An enormous sign: "TUCKER" is on the ground beside the building. WORKMEN are attaching it to the hoist which will lift it to the top of the building.

A taxi pulls up and stops in front of the building. Tucker gets out. He looks at the sign, the building, the vastness of the complex. Instead of being elated as he would normally be, he is exhausted and disgusted with himself for having made all the compromises he had to on the car. Depressed and irritable, he goes inside.

INT. DODGE PLANT - DAY

WORKMEN are scattered around, building bleachers, the stage, hanging banners, etc. Tucker comes in, looks around.

Nearby, Abe and Jerry are going over some papers together. When Tucker starts toward them, Abe sees him and, with JERRY, comes to meet him.

How's it going?

This is Jerry-the-press-agent.
Preston Tucker.

JERRY

"Jerry-the-press-agent" is one word to him.

TUCKER

(to Abe)

Did you get the security guards?

ABE

Two dozen. Three shifts, around the clock.

TUCKER

Nobody. Absolutely nobody, gets near that car. Did you tell them?

ABE

I told them.

Jerry calls to MEL, a young man making a movie with a 16mm camera, and motions for Mel to come to them.

JERRY

(to Tucker)

This is Mel. He's making a promotional film about you. A puff kind of industrial number for clubs, sales meetings, that kind of thing. What a giant you are among men.

Got any photo albums, snapshots, home movies, things like that he can use? He'll want to stage some scenes with you and your family, too.

TUCKER

What's the point?

JERRY

Selling stock.

TUCKER

We're not selling stock in my family.

JERRY

What do you think we're selling? Cars? We're selling you. An image which includes your family.

ABE

Who you think got that newsreel thing of you in the White House? Roosevelt woke up in the middle of the night, yelled "Get me Tucker"? You can't buy that kind of publicity.

TUCKER

You did.

ABE

For money, sure!

TUCKER

(laughs)

Nothing you say makes sense. How come I always know what you mean?

ABE

Because you talk worse than me the same language.

JERRY

(to Tucker)

I want some shots of you watching the sign go up.

(to Mel)

Dignified. Confident. No smiling like a schoolboy. Serious. Dependable. A Captain of Industry.

(to Tucker)

They're waiting for you.

TUCKER

Not even one sneaky little Clark Gable grin?

He and Mel start out.

CUT TO the PROMO FILM, continuing. Title: "FAME"

EXT. DODGE PLANT - DAY (PROMO FILM)

INTERCUT Close Shots of Tucker watching. Long POV shots of the sign being placed on top of the building. In the PROMO FILM this DISSOLVES TO the chaos of the parking lot the morning of the unveiling.

NARRATOR

The day of the official unveiling of the car, the largest parking lot in the world was completely filled by eight o'clock in the morning. By noon, a hundred extra policemen had to be called to handle the traffic. Three hundred people were invited. More than five thousand showed up.

INT. DODGE PLANT - DAY (PROMO FILM)

The CROWD. The HOSTESSES. The tram. MEDIA from a dozen different countries. A MARINE BAND playing. Happy faces. Very festive atmosphere.

NARRATOR

The Tucker was launched like a rocket to the moon!

TECHNICAL TRANSITION of color, grain of film, music, etc., from PROMO FILM to OUR FILM. In reality, far from being festive, the atmosphere is hostile.

BACKSTAGE. Dan, Alex, Jimmy, and Junior are working frantically under the car. The body of the car is covered. We can't see what it looks like.

A number of BEAUTIFUL GIRLS are waiting near props to be used in show, etc.

Tucker, anxious, comes back.

TUCKER

How much longer? We're an hour late already.

DAN

The wheels are locked.

One of the SECURITY GUARDS, guarding the backstage area, goes to get a drink of water a short distance away. A man, inconspicuously in the shadows, goes to the guard.

We'll call this man THE SHARK because from now on he'll keep appearing almost everywhere Tucker goes, the circles getting tighter and tighter as he closes in for the kill.

SHARK

(very casually;
laughing)

Having a little trouble back there, looks like.

The guard, falling into the trap of The Shark's geniality, also laughs.

GUARD

Been up all night, poor bastards, trying to hold that pile of junk together. It won't even back up. No kidding. It's got no reverse.

The Shark, now very interested, whispers something to the guard, at the same time slipping some money into the guard's hand. The guard looks around to make sure they are not being watched; looks at his watch, hesitates, then nods agreement.

GUARD

Four o'clock. When I get off.

Follow The Shark as he goes to a telephone booth and dials.

CUT TO Vera and the kids seated in the first row. Vera is very concerned about the delay. (Vera has covered a great deal of the cleavage on Marilyn's dress.)

One person in the audience begins stomping his feet and clapping. This is picked up by more and more people until almost everyone is doing it.

CUT TO Senator Ferguson's aide, watching from an almost hidden vantage point.

CUT TO ROCKELMAN and the MEMBERS OF THE BOARD, sitting with Cerf.

ROCKELMAN

(to Cerf)

What did you get me into?

BACKSTAGE. Abe and Jerry go to Tucker.

JERRY

Get this damn thing started.
Now!

ABE

Get out there! Stall. ~~Do some-~~
thing.

TUCKER

(to Dan)

Give me the signal when you're ready. From that corner. I can see you through the curtain.

ONSTAGE. Tucker comes out. The crowd applauds derisively. Tucker motions for the band to stop.

TUCKER

Ladies and gentlemen. Sorry for the delay, but maybe this'll perk you up. The Tuckerettes!

From backstage come half-a-dozen beautiful GIRLS. As they parade around the stage, Tucker keeps looking toward Dan.

BACKSTAGE. Jimmy comes out from under the car.

JIMMY

Back tires can't move, all that weight on the rear wheels.

Dan grabs a two-by-four and hands it to Jimmy.

DAN

Try this for a brace.

ONSTAGE. Tucker and the girls.

BACKSTAGE. Jimmy slides out from under the car.

JIMMY

Got it!

Dan signals "OK" to Tucker, then turns to the men.

DAN

Let's go!

They start pushing the car up the ramp.

ONSTAGE.

TUCKER

And now ladies and gentlemen,
finally, that history-making
moment you've all been waiting for...

BACKSTAGE. Jimmy calls to Dan.

JIMMY

Hold it! That leak again!

DAN

Junior, Stop your Dad! Jimmy,
get the soldering iron.

They let the car roll back to the bottom of the ramp.

Junior waves to Tucker, signaling for him to stop.

ONSTAGE.

TUCKER

(getting the signal)
...but first...You don't mind if
I introduce my family, do you?
(groans)

BACKSTAGE. Jimmy takes a soldering iron, turns it on and
slides under the car.

ONSTAGE. Tucker has gone to the first-row, where his family is.

TUCKER

My lovely wife, Vera....

(she stands)

My daughter, Marilyn....

(she stands)

My sons Noble and Johnny....

(they stand)

My other son, Junior, is backstage.

MAN IN AUDIENCE
Asleep in the car?
(laughter)

TUCKER
(to heckler)
I don't know where you grew up, but
when I was young, we could think
of lots better things to do in
the backseat of a car than sleep.
(laughter)

BACKSTAGE. Jimmy slides out from under the car.

JIMMY
All set.

DAN
Up the ramp!
(to Junior)
OK!

Junior signals Tucker, as Dan and the others start pushing
the car up the ramp.

ONSTAGE. Tucker gets the signal.

TUCKER
Anybody want to see the car?
(cheers, cat-
calls, applause)

BACKSTAGE. As they push the car up the ramp, Alex sees a
small flame coming from under the car. A piece of drop cloth
catches on fire.

ALEX
(to Dan)
Fire!

Junior signals to his father to stall again, as they let the
car roll down the ramp, and start putting out the fire.
Jimmy slides under the car.

ONSTAGE. Tucker, getting the signal, frantically searches for
another stall.

TUCKER
(to audience)
But first I want to show you one
of the car's main features.
(to girls)
Ladies, the Detroitmobile.

The girls go backstage.

BACKSTAGE. As the girls come back to get their props, the guys are trying to stop the fire. Jimmy slides out from under the car.

JIMMY

Sparks hit the oil dripping from the breather valve. Got it all, I think.

ONSTAGE. The girls bring out a cardboard replica of a conventional car, open the hood and start taking out cardboard parts, which they toss into a huge garbage can another girl has brought out.

TUCKER

Because of the revolutionary Tucker rear engine, we have eight hundred less parts than a conventional car, all totally use-
less, but the Big Three's been charging us for them, all the same.

(naming some of the cardboard parts as the girls take them out)
No differential, no long drive shaft, no universal joints...And the best part, drive a Tucker to the dumbest mechanic anywhere in the world, he'll be able to lift out the whole engine in one piece and replace it within twenty minutes.

CUT TO Rockelman who turns to Cerf.

ROCKELMAN

That's out! Didn't you tell him we're not doing that? What's he saying that for?

BACKSTAGE. The fire is out.

DAN

Push!
(to Junior)
OK!

As Junior signals Tucker, they push the car up the ramp.

ONSTAGE. Tucker gets the signal.

TUCKER
 (to four models with
 Medieval trumpets)
 Ladies.

They SOUND the trumpets. The curtains open.

BACKSTAGE. The guys manage to get the car to the top of the ramp and jump out of sight, a split second before the curtain has opened wide enough for the audience to have seen them.

ONSTAGE. The car, on a round platform, begins moving from backstage, on tracks, onstage where it begins slowly revolving. Dramatically, Tucker pulls the cord, removing the veil, to reveal the car for the first time. Theatrically lit, the effect is spectacular. There is an audible gasp, then the crowd, spontaneously, begins cheering.

BACKSTAGE. Dan, Alex, Jimmy, and Junior lie on the floor, exhausted.

ONSTAGE.

172 255
 TUCKER
 Ladies and Gentlemen, to christen
 the first completely new car in
 fifty years, my beautiful daughter,
 Marilyn, and my love, my inspira-
 tion, my wife Vera.

Marilyn and Vera go onstage. Marilyn, handed a bottle of champagne by one of the models, smashes it so hard it splashes all over Tucker.

TUCKER
 I don't usually take a bath till
 Saturday.

This gets a big laugh from the crowd.

INT. LAVISH CHICAGO HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT

Abe and Jerry are at a table in one section of the sitting room. They are going over some items. Tucker, troubled, is pacing restlessly.

JERRY
 (to Tucker)
 Want to go over the itinerary?
 We got the whole thing mapped out
 for you to take the car to every
 major city in the country. You

continued

JERRY (cont.)
personally. That's the only hope
we've got. Don't ask me why, but
people seem to love you.

Tucker, preoccupied, doesn't hear him.

ABE
(to Tucker)
I figured a deal we can buy a
plane and lease it back from our-
selves. There's no way you can cover
that much ground in time by train.

Tucker turns to them.

TUCKER
Know what we need? To buy a
steel mill.

ABE
How can we buy a steel mill till
we get the plant, which we can't
get till we raise the money?

TUCKER
If they wouldn't let us buy
enough clay to make a model,
you think they're going to let us
buy steel? Without steel, we're
not in the car business, no
matter how many plants we got.

ABE
(to Jerry)
Any surplus steel plants left?

JERRY
I'll check.

TUCKER
How do we get one?

JERRY
They go to the highest bidder.

TUCKER
Which better be us.

CUT TO PROMO FILM. The unveiling. What we saw really happen
has been edited to show only the festive atmosphere, the happy
faces, the unveiling of the car, the champagne christening,
and the crowd cheering.

NARRATOR

Responding to an excitement unprecedented in the entire history of the automobile, Tucker personally made sure the people of America saw for themselves the incredible technology advances.

SERIES OF SHOTS. THE TOUR. (PROMO FILM)

1. Tucker unveiling car in another location. The crowd cheers.
2. Tucker receiving the keys to a city from A MAYOR on the steps of a City Hall.
3. Series of shots, Tucker posing with famous people.
4. A parade. The Tucker car, along with several BEAUTIFUL GIRLS, is riding on a float. Tucker is riding in an open convertible directly behind his car. He is waving to the CROWD. In the car with him are a group of local DIGNITARIES.
5. A lavish Texas barbecue. Tucker is the center of attention, surrounded by beautiful WOMEN; rich and powerful MEN.

TECHNICAL TRANSITION from PROMO FILM to OUR FILM.

EXT. TUCKER'S PLANE - FLYING NIGHT (OUR FILM)

INT. TUCKER'S PLANE - NIGHT (OUR FILM)

Jerry is writing with a fountain pen. Tucker is reading about himself in Life.

TUCKER

That's a nice pen. Trade you my tie clip for it.

(gives clip to Jerry)
Fourteen karat gold.

JERRY

(puzzled)
Trade me? You can buy these pens anywhere.

TUCKER

What's the fun in that? What do you say? Deal?

JERRY

No deal.

EXT. TINY TEXAS TOWN - MAIN STREET - DAY

It is pouring rain. About a thousand PEOPLE are lined up in the rain outside a dealer's showroom where we see, through the window, the Tucker car inside on its platform. Tucker is working the room, charming everybody.

In the service area beside the showroom we see The Shark talking to one of the local MECHANICS.

EXT. TUCKER'S PLANE FLYING - DAY

INT. TUCKER'S PLANE - DAY

Jerry is writing with his pen. Tucker is looking at a two-column piece about himself in Time.

TUCKER

See the piece in Time?

JERRY

If you don't stop calling the Big Three a bunch of crooks and murderers....

TUCKER

Tell you what. I'll give you the tie clip, ~~this~~ genuine silk handkerchief, and the tie to match for the fountain pen.

Jerry gives him a look as if he's a total lunatic and continues writing.

CUT TO PROMO FILM: HOLLYWOOD SEQUENCE. Tucker on the set of an actual movie of the period. Poses with MOVIE STARS and MOGULS.

Technical TRANSITION from PROMO FILM to OUR FILM.

INT. BEL AIR MANSION - NIGHT (OUR FILM)

A lavish Hollywood party. Every glamorous and important person in the business is there.

Tucker, drink in his hand, is looking around, basking in the glamor. An incredibly beautiful, very elegant, very sexy young WOMAN comes to him. She is not a starlet, but a gorgeous woman of wealth and stature. She looks into his eyes, takes the drink from his hand, sips from it sensuously, then looks into his eyes again as if, by having her lips touch where his lips had touched the glass, they had shared an exquisite moment of intimacy.

ELEGANT WOMAN

I didn't expect that, from what I've read about you.

TUCKER

Expect what?

She takes his glass and touches it so lightly to his lips, it's like the gentlest of kisses, then she tilts the glass so slightly only one single drop touches the tip of his tongue.

ELEGANT WOMAN

(studying him)

It isn't knowledge, is it? Just instinct with you. Pure and simple.

TUCKER

Simple maybe. Not so pure.

ELEGANT WOMAN

The eyes are the erogenous zone of the soul, you know. Yours are.

TUCKER

They used to be, maybe, till my wife stopped getting jealous when I looked at other women.

ELEGANT WOMAN

Smart woman.

TUCKER

She knows about the soul, too. And the eyes.

ELEGANT WOMAN

Lucky man.

She looks into his eyes again, then with a sweet, warm smile, blows him a kiss, and walks away.

He watches her leave, rarely having been so tempted in his life.

INT. BEVERLY HILLS HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT

Tucker is in bed alone. He is looking through a group of photos of himself with famous people, at banquets, etc.

He puts the photos on the bedtable and leans back pensively. After a moment, he picks up the phone. (As he speaks on the phone, he absently doodles.)

INT. TUCKER'S BEDROOM - YPSILANTI - NIGHT

Vera, asleep, is awakened by the phone. Looks at the clock.

VERA

Hello?...

TUCKER
How you doing, Babe?

VERA
(worried)
You OK?

TUCKER
I know it's...what? Five-thirty
in the morning there? Just
wanted to...I don't know. You
leaving for Chicago today?

VERA
Want to tell me what's bothering you?

TUCKER
Nothing. I'm sorry I woke you.

VERA
Can't pick up a magazine with-
out a picture of you in it.

TUCKER
I've been working on some new smiles.

VERA
Your Captain of Industry smile
could use a little work.

TUCKER
How you doing, Babe?

VERA
Lots of beautiful women throwing
themselves at your feet?

TUCKER
Me?

VERA
Sell them stock first.

TUCKER
(laughs)
Love you, Babe. Drive careful.
(hangs up)

He notices what he has been doodling: a childlike cartoon of the stick figure with a bow tie and grin (which he uses to represent himself) being swallowed by a whale.

EXT. CHICAGO STREET - DAY

Vera and all the kids are in a station wagon with suitcases and boxes loaded on top. They are stuck in the middle of a very noisy, very hostile traffic jam.

JOHNNY

What's everybody so mad at
in Chicago?

EXT. TUCKER CHICAGO APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

This super luxurious high rise is in sharp contrast to the simplicity of their farm.

Vera, driving the station wagon, pulls up to the entrance and parks as the DOORMAN comes to them.

INT. TUCKER CHICAGO APARTMENT - NIGHT

Abe is listening to the radio as Drew Pearson's program ends. The door is opened by the ELEVATOR MAN. Vera and the kids come in, followed by building PERSONNEL carrying their suitcases, boxes, etc. Abe turns off the radio.

They are delighted to see each other, ad lib "How was the trip?" "How've you been?" etc.

The apartment is so lavish, Vera is intimidated.

ABE

Don't you like the place? I
picked it out myself.

VERA

Who's paying for this?

ABE

It's part of the deal.

VERA

You got bills, invoices, receipts
for everything?

(to Marilyn)

Let's find the sheets. I want
everything in this house covered.
And nobody touch anything. Ever.
As long as we live here.

As they hurry toward the hall, Vera notices Johnny looking at a very expensive antique clock. Without missing a step, she places it on a shelf, too high for him to reach, and continues to the hall.

Abe laughs.

INT. SAN FRANCISCO CIVIC CENTER - DAY

An AMA convention. The place is filled with booths, trying to sell new drugs, medical equipment, etc.

The Tucker display features the car on its platform. An ACTOR, dressed as a doctor, is giving a slide show about the safety features, attacking the Big Three for not having them.

The Shark is among those listening.

Tucker, Abe, and Jerry are having a conversation nearby.

TUCKER

If we were the highest bidder,
how could we lose the steel mill?

JERRY

Roosevelt's dead.

TUCKER

What's that got to do with it?

JERRY

The honorable Senator from
Detroit, your good friend Homer
Ferguson's got more clout now, and
he doesn't want you in business.

TUCKER

It's that simple?

ABE

Anymore surplus steel mills left?

JERRY

One, I think. The last.

TUCKER

Do we have a chance?

JERRY

Who knows? Every day in politics
you start from scratch.

INT. DODGE PLANT - BODY DESIGN SECTION - DAY

Alex is supervising the WORKMEN making the wooden mock-up.
Several ENGINEERS come to them.

HEAD ENGINEER
 (to chief carpenter)
 Here's the new specs. Sixty-four
 inches high, instead of fifty-
 six. Wheel track....

ALEX
 Wait a minute. Who are you?

INT. DODGE PLANT - ENGINE DESIGN SECTION - DAY

Dan, looking at new designs, is in the middle of an argument
 with a group of ENGINEERS.

DAN
 No rear engine?

INT. DODGE PLANT - ROCKELMAN'S OUTER OFFICE - DAY

Dan and Alex are at Rockelman's SECRETARY'S desk.

DAN
 (to secretary)
Can't see him? We represent Mr.
 Tucker. It's important.

SECRETARY
 I'm sorry. He's not here. He
 went out.

Not believing her, Dan goes to the door, opens it and sees
 Rockelman at his desk. Rockelman and Dan exchange looks, but
 Dan closes the door, without going inside.

DAN
 (to secretary)
 Next time Mr. Rockelman goes out,
 remind him to take his body with him.

EXT. DODGE PLANT - DAY

Dan's car is driving at the outer edges of the fence which
 surrounds the plant. Hundreds of acres from the actual plant
 is a tiny, beat-up, old trailer, which, surrounded by the
 prison-like fence, suggests a concentration camp.

Inside Dan's car: Alex is beside him, Junior is in the back
 seat.

INT. JIMMY'S DODGE PLANT TRAILER - DAY

Jimmy has made the place as neat as possible, but it is a
 shabby hole. He is working on a drawing of an engine when
 he hears Dan's car pull up and stop outside.

Dan and the others come in. They look around, shocked to see him in such quarters.

DAN

We've been looking everywhere for you.

JIMMY

(laughs)
The whole plant threatened to walk out if they didn't get rid of the Jap.

DAN

(to Junior)
Does your Dad know what's going on here?

JUNIOR

He will, soon as I get to a phone.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - DAY

Recording a radio commercial, Tucker is at a ~~micro~~ ~~with~~ ~~FOUR~~ ~~GIRLS~~ singing a jingle. ~~SEVERAL MUSICIANS~~ are at another mike. Mel is photographing it for the PROMO FILM. Jerry is in the control booth. There is also a SOUND MAN.

GIRLS

(singing)
If you want to save your money,
If you want to save your life,
If you're riding with your honey
If you're riding with your wife,
Every road you ride on,
 though it's cloudy and gray,

Makes you feel like you're riding
 on the road to Mandalay,
When you're riding in a Tucker,
When you're riding in a Tucker,
When you're riding in a Tucker,
The Car of Tomorrow
Today!

TUCKER

(reading from script)
Hi, folks. I'm Preston Tucker.
It's not polite to blow your own
horn, so I'll let the sound man
do it for me.

(SOUND: car horn)

But seriously...

continued

TUCKER (cont.)
(stops; to Jerry)
Who wrote this? I'll make up my
own stuff to say.
(tosses script
in wastebasket)

ENGINEER'S VOICE
(through speaker)
Telephone, Mr. Tucker.

TUCKER
I'll call them back.

ENGINEER'S VOICE
It's your son. Says it's
important.

Concerned, Tucker hurries into the control booth and picks up the phone. (During the conversation we HEAR the recording they have just made being played back by the engineer.)

INTERCUT: Junior in a phone booth.

JUNIOR
Dad? You'd better get back here
right away. Rockelman's changed
all the designs to a standard V-8
front mounted engine, changed the
whole look of the body....

TUCKER
Hold it! Junior? Don't worry
about it. It's all right.

JUNIOR
Alex said if Rockelman keeps
tooling up for the 1940 Plymouth
he's building, it'll cost
millions to re-tool for our car.

TUCKER
Tell the guys don't worry about
it. The only thing that matters
right now is raising that money.
If I don't, there won't be any
car to ruin, so forget about
Rockelman. The minute I get
home, I'll send him back to the
mortuary with the rest of the
undertakers.

(to engineer)
Can you shut that thing off?

INT. TUCKER APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Vera is being interviewed by a WOMAN REPORTER, very chic;
very callous.

CHIC REPORTER

...and the angle of the piece is
how middle-aged women can hold
onto very successful husbands.

VERA

There's no such thing as a middle-
aged woman. Only young and old.

EXT. TUCKER'S PLANE FLYING - NIGHT

INT. TUCKER APARTMENT - NOBLE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Noble is in bed. A DOCTOR is examining Noble's swollen
neck glands.

VERA

Don't tell me. Mumps?

DOCTOR

(laughs)

Better now than later.

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EXTREME CLOSE-UP OF BEAUTIFUL WOMAN'S FACE -DAY

A MAN the size of one of her teeth appears in frame. We
can't see his feet, so we have no idea how he manages to move
across her face. Another angle reveals the man is pasting a
new advertisement on a billboard over the ad featuring the
woman. The ad is for the Tucker car, half of which has
already been put up. Below are Tucker and Jerry. Mel is
photographing it for the PROMO FILM.

In the background we see the New York skyline.

INT. CHICAGO POLICE STATION - DAY

Johnny, terrified, is on the phone. POLICEMEN; the usual busy
activity b.g.

JOHNNY

Mom? I'm at...
(to policeman)
Where am I?

POLICEMAN

(takes phone)
Mrs. Tucker?

INTERCUT: VERA AT PHONE IN APARTMENT

VERA

Yes?

POLICEMAN

This is patrolman Magonni, 23rd Precinct. Your son's been arrested for shop lifting.
(hangs up)

VERA

Hello?....Hello...?....

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Abe, Vera, and Johnny are coming out of the station. Johnny is crying.

JOHNNY

I don't know why? I didn't plan to do it. What do I need a baseball glove for? I hate baseball. I was in the store and for no reason, I don't know. There's nothing to do in this town.

ABE

It's all right. I called a connection who has a connection. It won't be in the papers. It won't be on his record.

INT. TUCKER APARTMENT - DAY

Vera, Abe, and Johnny come in. A woman REPORTER and PHOTOGRAPHER are setting up a layout for a magazine. It is obvious from the way they are posing Marilyn, they are trying to make the Tuckers look ridiculous.

VERA

I'm Mrs. Tucker. Would you mind telling me who you are?

REPORTER

From the Sunday supplement. I called and made the appointment.

VERA

Would you mind leaving, please?

REPORTER

But you....

VERA

Not to make us look like idiots!

She goes to her bedroom, closes the door.

INT. TUCKER'S NEW YORK HOTEL SUITE - DAY

He is holding a copy of the Daily News in one hand, the telephone in the other.

TUCKER

Babe?

INTERCUT Vera in Chicago bedroom.

TUCKER

What I wouldn't give for you to see what I've got in my hand right now. The whole front page of the New York Daily News, my picture holding a check for fifteen million dollars. Me! The plow boy from the sticks! Fifteen million dollars in my hand!

VERA

That's wonderful...

TUCKER

Tuesday they're having a party for me at the Museum of Science and Industry. We're paying for it, but in the papers it's the Duke of Something who's giving it for me, and not just rich people, what Jerry calls International Society's going to be there. But what good is it if you're not here to see me? Will you come?

VERA

Of course.

TUCKER

Love you, Babe.

INT. MUSEUM OF SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY - NIGHT

The Tucker car is on its revolving platform, dramatically lit, surrounded by a red velvet cord and Security Guards.

The black tie GROUP, as Tucker described it, is indeed composed of International Society.

Jerry is walking Tucker and Vera around, introducing them to various important people. Each time they are introduced, Vera is politely acknowledged, then promptly ignored as a non-person.

Tucker is drinking too much. Each time a WAITER passes with a tray of drinks, he quickly drinks the one he has and exchanges his empty glass for a full one.

In the crowd we discover Senator Ferguson's Aide, hovering on the sidelines; observing without being observed. Also, present is the Shark.

Jerry sees someone across the room he wants Tucker to meet and for the moment, having completely forgotten Vera, takes Tucker's arm and leads him away, leaving Vera stranded and alone. At first she is angry -- then she laughs, and dutifully follows.

CUT TO Jerry introducing Tucker to a lovely WOMAN.

JERRY

Countess Felicia Gizycka,
may I present Mr. Tucker?

COUNTESS

How do you do?

Tucker is so impressed at meeting an actual Countess, he is caught off balance, doesn't know what to say. Awkwardly, he kisses her hand.

Jerry, seeing someone across the room, excuses himself and leaves.

COUNTESS

Congratulations, Mr. Tucker.
It looks like a marvelous car.

TUCKER

What're you the Countess of, and
how quick can I get there from here?

She turns to introduce Tucker to a distinguished GENTLEMAN who has come to them in time to hear Tucker's remark.

COUNTESS

Mr. Tucker, my husband, Drew
Pearson.

TUCKER

The commentator? I listen to
your program all the time.

PEARSON

(pleasantly)

I had no idea I had such a distinguished audience. Will you excuse us?

(they go)

As Tucker starts to finish his drink, Vera, coming to him, takes the glass from his hand.

VERA

How about some food instead?

TUCKER

Know what we're serving? No kidding! Peasants under glass.

VERA

And we're the peasants.

As they start toward the buffet, they pass an enormous column. From behind it we hear a group of people laughing, but cannot see who they are.

MAN'S VOICE

(British accent)

He's absolutely priceless, your Mr. Tucker. Quintessentially American. For twenty minutes, I'm not exaggerating, all he kept talking about was his "physical" year. I hadn't the foggiest what he was referring to, until finally I realized he meant "fiscal" year.

(they all laugh)

Tucker stops, listens.

WOMAN'S VOICE

He told me that being here with all these giants reminded him -- as he put it -- "of that little guy in Gullible's Travels."

(they all laugh)

COUNTESS

He's rather sweet, I think. He kissed my hand.

ANOTHER WOMAN

He kissed my hand, too. I think it was a kiss. He might have been washing it.

They all laugh.

Tucker goes around the column to see who is talking about him. He is particularly hurt to discover Drew Pearson and the Countess among them.

For Tucker, the illusion of himself as a gentleman of importance has been painfully shattered.

Vera takes his arm; walks him away. He is so humiliated he can't look at her.

INT. CHICAGO DODGE PLANT - DAY

Abe and Tucker are walking past the assembly line.

TUCKER

Explain it to me, how we lost
the second steel mill, too.

ABE

I told you.

TUCKER

Not tell me. Explain it ~~to~~ me!
We were the highest bidders again.
Right? This time, too?

ABE

Right.

TUCKER

But they gave it to Kaiser anyhow?

ABE

For half the price we offered.

TUCKER

Explain it!

ABE

What can I explain you? They're
in bed together. Politics.
Ferguson and Kaiser. It's not
fair? Join the Boy Scouts.
They'll explain you fair.

INT. BOARD ROOM - DAY

Rockelman, his group, Abe and Tucker, are at the conference table. They are in the middle of a heated argument. Rockelman, as always, is cool, calm, and infuriatingly patronizing.

ROCKELMAN

...for the last time, Mr. Tucker, the rear engine is out. I have fifty cars to produce by October first, and the Chair will recognize no further discussion on that matter.

TUCKER

The chair? Who made him the chair?

ROCKELMAN

Also denied and eliminated from further discussion are disc brakes, fuel injection, hydraulic valve lifters, seat belts....

TUCKER

Seat belts? How can you object to seat belts?

ROCKELMAN

Our marketing department says they imply cars are unsafe.

TUCKER

Let me tell you something, Rockelman. If one person gets killed in a Tucker because of a safety feature you eliminated, I swear to God, I'll drag you by the hair to the funeral.

ROCKELMAN

May I remind you, sir, you have no voice in matters of policy? I'm in complete charge of this company.

TUCKER

What company? My company?

ROCKELMAN

I think you'll find it stated, unequivocally, in my contract.

TUCKER

(to Abe)
Is that true?

ABE

We needed his name to sell the stock, you knew that, and we needed a man with experience to run things, but I had no idea, I swear to God, that was in his contract.

ROCKELMAN

You can't have Falstaff and have him thin, Mr. Tucker.

TUCKER

What does that mean?

ROCKELMAN

Little boats should be kept near the shore.

TUCKER

He talks like a fortune cookie.

ROCKELMAN

I was making cars twenty years before you were born, sir.

TUCKER

And I'll be making them twenty years after you're dead. And about your contract, either I buy you out, or throw you out. This is my company, and that means seat belts, fuel injection, disc brakes.....

The telephone rings. One of Rockelman's team answers the phone.

CHIEF ACCOUNTANT

Hello?....

(to Tucker)

It's for you.

TUCKER

Not now!

CHIEF ACCOUNTANT

It's urgent, she said.

TUCKER

(into phone)

Hello....Is this some kind of joke...?

continued

TUCKER (cont.)
 (what he hears
 leaves him speech-
 less for an instant)
 I'll be there.

He hangs up and goes out.

EXT. A 1945 PRIVATE PLANE FLYING - DAY

EXT. AN ISOLATED PRIVATE AIRFIELD - NIGHT

The plane, taxiing, finally stops near a waiting limousine. The airplane doors open. Tucker and Noble get out.

A CHAUFFEUR is holding the door open. Tucker and Noble get into the limo.

EXT. ISOLATED ROADS - NIGHT

In a series of shots we see the limousine traveling from one mysterious street to another, finally stopping in the middle of an enormous parking lot. The only building in sight is what looks like a gigantic warehouse a hundred yards away, at the far end of the parking lot.

The chauffeur opens the door for Tucker and Noble, who get out and look around, not seeing any logical place they might be expected to go.

The chauffeur motions toward the building, where we see the doors begin to open slightly.

Tucker and Noble start across the empty lot toward the building.

INT. THE HANGAR - NIGHT

It is lit only by a slice of light which comes through the narrowly opened doors. Tucker and Noble come in. To their astonishment, they see the Spruce Goose.

Some distance away, the figure of a MAN appears out of the shadows.

HUGHES
 Howard Hughes.

Noble and Tucker. Their reaction.

They go to Hughes. Tucker offers his hand. Hughes motions "no." He doesn't shake hands.

HUGHES

(to Noble)

What do you think of it?

NOBLE

It's too big.

HUGHES

That's what they tell me.

Hughes takes two handfuls of red pistachio nuts from his pockets and gives one each to Tucker and Noble.

HUGHES

Put the shells in your pocket.

Hughes takes another handful for himself. (Throughout the scene, they crack the shells, pop the nuts into their mouths and put the shells into their pockets.)

HUGHES

That Ferguson. He's after me, too. Subpoenaed me for a Congressional investigation, which either I show up for -- in person -- or they throw me in jail.

Suddenly Hughes is sobered by a blinding realization, which he finds at first fascinating, then frightening, then amusing.

HUGHES

(referring to
his body)

I'm already in jail.

For a time they are silent, eating nuts; then he looks around to make sure they are not being watched and whispers to Tucker.

HUGHES

You and me, we're the...
different skins, but...

(loses his train
of thought)

What was I...? Lawyers? "Won't get off the ground." That's all they...
Not you and me, though. Agreed?

Trouble is, they don't even know they've got it, but the density of altered dimensional....

(suddenly remembering)

continued

HUGHES (cont.)

Steel. There's a helicopter plant in Syracuse, which is not connected with the government so the politicians can't screw you out of it, and if you....

(loses his train
of thought again)

Was I?....Ferguson?

TUCKER

Steel.

HUGHES

Steel?...Correct. They've got all the steel you need, and they're in trouble financially, but the vultures on the street don't know it yet, so if you get there in a hurry, they're ready to deal. But for Godssakes, don't....

He notices his fingertips, which are stained red from the dye of the pistachio nuts. He stops, stares at them; genuinely perplexed. Then, inexplicably, grows sad.

HUGHES

How do they get the blood off, I wonder.

INT. HELICOPTER FACTORY - OFFICE - DAY

Tucker, Abe, a group of LAWYERS and OWNERS of the helicopter plant. Tucker signs some papers. Abe gives a check to one of their lawyers. They all shake hands.

INT. HELICOPTER PLANT - DAY

Abe, Tucker, and A FOREMAN are walking around, looking the plant over. As they go, Tucker stops to examine one of the engines; gets very excited the more he investigates it.

TUCKER

(to foreman)

I want four of these engines sent by plane today to my place at Ypsilanti, Michigan.

ABE

Helicopters? We bought this place for the steel.

TUCKER

(to Abe)

Call Dan. Tell him send me two
Tucker bodies from the plant to
the barn. Today.

INT. BARN - DAY

August. Tucker, Dan, Jimmy, Alex, and Junior are studying
the helicopter engine.

TUCKER

(to Jimmy)

What do you think?

JIMMY

We'll have to redesign it, of
course, from air cooled to water,
but as a starting point, maybe.

DAN

It's small, which is good, and simple.

TUCKER

With a smaller cross-section, we
can reduce the weight to less
than two pounds per horse-power.

ALEX

Take it apart, I'll make the
sketches.

TUCKER

Time! Time! The problem again
is time. To fight Rockelman in
court could take years, meanwhile
he's retooling for his car as
fast as he can, and if we don't
have this thing built and tested
soon, and I mean soon there's no
way we can afford to retool again
for our car.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BARN - NIGHT

The guys are looking at Alex's sketches.

JIMMY

We'll need a new camshaft.

DAN

And a flywheel.

JUNIOR

(timidly)

Excuse me, but...in a helicopter,
don't the engine stand straight
up? If we keep ours sideways,
we'll need an oil pan, won't we?

Tucker, very proud, looks at Junior. For the first time in his life, Junior's beginning to get enough confidence to come out of his shell.

MONTAGE: SERIES OF SHOTS. Time passing. Guys working night and day.

INT. KITCHEN - EARLY MORNING

They have set up an improvised assembly line.

TUCKER

Everybody ready? We'll have to
hurry before anybody wakes up. We
can't have any distractions of any
kind. If the timing's off a split
second, the whole thing's ruined.

They begin to work with the silence, precision, and concentration of brain surgeons. Dan is preparing a garbage can on the floor. A smaller can has been placed inside the garbage can. Dan puts the cylinder liner sleeves into the smaller can and covers it with naphtha, as Jimmy pours liquid oxygen in the space between the two cans.

Tucker and Junior, each wearing asbestos gloves, lift a heavy, hot engine block from the oven and put it on top of the stove, where all the burners are on, to keep the block hot.

At the same time, Alex and Jimmy, who has come to join him, take a second block and put it in the oven.

When Dan thinks the liner sleeves are cold enough, he motions to Tucker who, with Junior, takes the hot block from the top of the stove and puts it on bricks on the floor near the garbage can. (As they remove the block from the top of the stove, we see that the weight has caused the stove to sag drastically.)

As soon as the block has been put on the bricks, Dan, wearing asbestos gloves to protect his hands from the cold, takes a liner sleeve from the garbage can and, being very,

very careful, puts it into one of the cylinder openings in the engine block. It is crucial that it go in absolutely straight.

First we hear the liner sizzle, then it begins to hum.

The men react. This means it has gone right, so far.

Tucker, in the middle of a crucial maneuver, looks up and sees all twenty-six dogs come in.

TUCKER

Oh God! Now? Out! Get out of here! Out! Out! Out!

Unable to interrupt what they are doing, the men try to push the dogs aside before they ruin everything, but the dogs make it almost impossible for the men to function.

TUCKER

(shouting)

Vera! Get down here! Vera! Harry!

They keep trying, without success, to keep the dogs out of the way, until Vera, in her robe, sleepily comes down and manages to get the dogs out.

When she comes back in, she is not delighted to see the sag on top of her stove, but before she can mention it, the engine block in the oven falls through to the floor.

Vera's reaction.

DISSOLVE TO MONTAGE: Series of shots showing the guys working around the clock on the engine; going from night to day to night to day, etc.

During this montage, we see in one shot, as the others continue to work, Dan is stretched out on the floor taking a nap. In another shot, Dan is working and Jimmy is asleep on a work bench, etc. During the sequence, we see everybody taking a nap (one at a time), except Tucker, who not only stays awake the whole time, but is driven -- obsessed.

EXT. BARN - DAY

The men have put together the engine and are getting ready to test it on a make-shift stand. A garden hose is connected to the water inlet on a block. A five-gallon can of gas is hung overhead, and is connected to the carburetor with a length of rubber tubing. The exhaust will escape through another rubber tube.

TUCKER

It's very important we get the sound exactly right. It's got to be deep, throaty, but not like a racing car. You know the sound I want, don't you Dan? Jimmy?

DAN

No idea.

TUCKER

You'll know it when you hear it.

JUNIOR

Ready?

TUCKER

Put the primer in. Carburetor set?

JUNIOR

All set.

TUCKER

Click it over.

Dan tries to start the engine, but it won't catch.

TUCKER

Try the other battery.

They quickly make the change and try again to start it. This time the motor catches. All, except Tucker, cheer.

TUCKER

That's not it.

DAN

What's not it? It started, damn it. It works.

TUCKER

Adjust the carburetor a little to the left.

Dan does so.

TUCKER

The sound's not right.

DAN

What do you want? Glenn Miller?

TUCKER

A little more to the left -- the carburetor....

(the sound begins to change)

....a little more....a little more.... Just a hair back to the right.

After Dan has done this, Tucker indicates it's still not right, but he is too exhausted to concentrate. He gets his cup of coffee, goes to sit on the ground, leaning against the barn.

The guys look at each other, trying to figure out what Tucker wants and how to give it to him.

JUNIOR

Let me try something.

He takes his screwdriver and a wrench and leans into the engine.

Dan turns toward Tucker, who has fallen sound asleep, the mug of coffee in his lap. When Junior finishes his adjustment, he revs the motor. The SOUND has noticeably changed.

Dan, Jimmy, Alex, and Junior look at each other, convinced they've got it. They look at Tucker, who is still asleep. Dan revs the engine again; this time making a very loud VAROOOM, which wakes Tucker up.

They look at him, waiting for his reaction.

TUCKER

Again.

Dan races the motor again, making the same sound.

TUCKER

That's it.

They all cheer, slap Junior on the back, etc. Tucker goes to the engine and tries it himself. On the SOUND of the VAROOOM, we CUT TO:

EXT. TEST TRACK - DAWN

The car, making the same VAROOOM, is speeding around the track. Jimmy is driving.

Mel is photographing it for the PROMO FILM. Present are Tucker, Dan, Junior, and Alex.

TUCKER

(to Dan)

We'll drive in relays, keep it going twenty-four hours without a stop and push, push, push her to the limits. Give her every test in the book.

At the opposite side of the track, hidden from view, is The Shark, secretly there to watch the car perform.

SERIES OF SHOTS: (TEST DRIVE)

From dawn, all day, through the night, to dawn again, during which we see spins, near crashes, changing drivers, etc.

As they watch, at first anxiously, we see them get more and more relaxed until finally they're exuberant.

Finally, at dawn the next day, Tucker looks at his watch.

TUCKER

(to Dan)

We did it.

Tucker signals to Alex, who is now driving, to pull over and stop.

Dan puts on a helmet, starts toward the car.

TUCKER

Where the hell you going?

DAN

Got to do it, Tuck.

TUCKER

You don't have one bone in your body in working condition.

DAN

So much the better. If I buy it this time I won't even feel it.

Dan gets into the car and starts driving. After a few laps at incredible speed, Dan goes into a turn too close to the lower apron and, losing control, goes into the infield. The car skids on the grass, wet from the morning dew, hits a bump, which causes the car to roll over three times, finally landing right side up.

Tucker and the others run to the crash. When they get there, Dan is unharmed, except for a bruised elbow.

Dan points to the windshield which popped out as it was supposed to, probably saving his life.

DAN
(to Alex)
Bet you two bucks it still runs.

Alex gets in, drives it back onto the track. Dan, Tucker, and the others cheer.

DAN
(to Tucker)
One hell of a goddamn car.

CUT TO The Shark, in a phone booth, dialing a number.

INT. FERGUSON'S OFFICE - DAY

FERGUSON
(into phone)
....You sure?....Stay with him.
(hangs up, thinks
a moment, then
dials another number;
into phone)
Charlie? Homer. That son-of-a-
bitch Tucker built the damn thing...
not everything he advertised, not
yet, but ~~enough~~ right now to cost
billions just to keep up with him.

INT. CHICAGO PLANT - ASSEMBLY LINE FOREMAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Talking to the FOREMAN and several of his ASSISTANTS, Tucker, Dan, Jimmy, Alex, and Junior are going over the blueprints, stats, flow-charts, etc.

TUCKER
(to foreman)
Working from this original flow
chart, change the stats back to
the original, except from numbers
fourteen through twenty-three,
where you....

Rockelman and his men come in. Rockelman is stern, still patronizing, but the edges are wearing thin.

ROCKELMAN
(to Tucker)
I'm told you've begun major
retooling.

TUCKER

That's right.

ROCKELMAN

By whose authority?

TUCKER

By authority of your contract.

Tucker motions toward an enormous photographic blow-up which has been placed on the wall as decoration, along with other photos. It is of their first advertisement, which shows a picture of the car as first conceived by Tucker, along with a list of all the innovations, all of which had been vetoed by Rockelman.

TUCKER

According to my lawyer, that's the car you signed to make and that's the car we're making.

ROCKELMAN

If you think you're going to....

TUCKER

Little ships fine, Confucius say, but rowboats too long in tooth make big noise, go nowhere.

ROCKELMAN

(Blustering)

....I can assure you...if for one moment....You'll hear from my attorney.

Rockelman and his team go out. Tucker and the Ypsilanti team are exuberant.

TUCKER

(to foreman)

Where were we?

CUT TO PROMO FILM: Tucker driving his car, pulls into a gas station. TWO UNIFORMED ATTENDANTS hurry to the car; one to wash the windshield, the other to check the oil. As the one opens the hood, we see his expression which, staged by Mel, is overacted. We then CUT TO his POV and see luggage under the hood instead of the engine.

Tucker, laughing, gets out of the car and shows them where the engine is, in the rear.

NARRATOR

Yes, sir, when you drive your Tucker into a filling station, you won't just make the heads wag. At thirty miles to a gallon, you'll be saving a lot of money at the same time.

During the above we have noticed the image wavering slightly, then rippling, then the shadow of a man crossing behind what we now realize is a sheet the film is being projected on.

The man is Abe. (By now we have made the transition from the PROMO FILM to OUR FILM.)

TUCKER

Abe! Come in! I want you to see this. He just finished the promo film.

Abe puts his finger to his lips, telling Tucker to be quiet as he motions, with great urgency, for Tucker to come with him. The lights go on, revealing we are in Tucker's office at the Dodge plant. Mel turns off the projector.

TUCKER

(to Abe)
What's the...?

Abe motions for Tucker to shut up and come out.

TUCKER

(to Mel)
I'll be back in a minute to see the end.

Puzzled, Tucker goes out with Abe.

EXT. DODGE PLANT BUILDING - DAY

Abe and Tucker come out and start walking down a street between the other buildings in the complex.

TUCKER

What's all this cloak and dapper business?

ABE

Your office is bugged. The board room. The whole plant. Even the washrooms.

TUCKER

What?

ABE

Since you road tested the new car, forty G-men have been following you, around the clock.

TUCKER

What for?

ABE

You made the car too good.

TUCKER

That's the whole idea, isn't it, to build a better mousetrap?

ABE

Not if you're the mouse.

TUCKER

What're you talking about? We won! We did it! In two weeks we'll be turning out a hundred cats a day.

ABE

I just got off the phone with Jerry-the-Press-Agent. In two weeks you'll be dead and buried by the Big Three.

(takes a document
from his pocket)

Here's my resignation.

TUCKER

What the hell is this? You're bailing out? Is that it?

ABE

Captains go down with the ship.
Not businessmen.

TUCKER

You're my partner, from the beginning. Am I that stupid, both of us, to think this piece of paper's going to get you off the hook now?

(puts resignation
in Abe's pocket)

ABE

Who needs you? The enemies you got, smallpox I need better.

TUCKER
Dead and buried how?

ABE
Will you take this? I got a
train to catch.

TUCKER
Look me in the eyes.
(Abe turns away)
You're too good a salesman, Abe,
to not look a customer in the
eyes.

ABE
What do you think, I'm playing
games here?

TUCKER
I think you're trying to, some
double whammy kind of hustle,
backwards, but what for?

ABE
You got to make me say it, don't
you?

TUCKER
We could start from there.

ABE
I did three years in the pen for
bank fraud.

TUCKER
So?

ABE
They'll use it against you.

TUCKER
And with that piece of paper,
you think, now, they won't?

ABE
Will you leave me alone, for
Godssakes!

In the whole ten years since I
was in the pen, it never bothered
me two seconds I'm an ex-con.
Why should it? Who cared?

continued

ABE (cont.)

But Uncle Abe, eating supper in the kitchen....What would it kill you to hate me for being a cold hearted businessman? That, I could live with.

But you, Vera, the kids....to know I was....I'm ashamed.

(moment between them)

In the old country, I was maybe five years old, my mother, may she rest in peace, used to warn me, "Don't get too close to people. You'll catch their dreams."

Years later I realized I misunderstood her. "Germs," she said. Not "dreams." "You'll catch their germs."

I went into business with you for one reason. To make money. That's all. How did I know I got too close I'd catch your dreams?

He puts the resignation in Tucker's pocket.

ABE

Listen to Drew Pearson tonight on the radio.

He goes off, leaving Tucker standing there.

INT. TUCKER LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Tucker is turning the dial on the radio, searching for the right station. In the room are Vera, the kids, Jimmy, Dan, and Alex. Each is anxious, tense, concerned, frightened, etc., in keeping with his or her character. Johnny is on Vera's lap.

Tucker finds the proper station, and at the end of the jingle we HEAR the announcer.

ANNOUNCER

And now -- Drew Pearson.

PEARSON'S VOICE

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. The hottest news in Washington continued

PEARSON'S VOICE (cont.)
today is about Preston Tucker,
that promotion happy, self-styled
genius and revolutionary auto maker.

For several months he has been
under secret investigation by the
Securities and Exchange Commis-
sion, and now they're ready to
blow the lid off one of the
slickest, most cynical, multi-
million dollar frauds ever perpe-
trated on the American people.
Michigan has forbidden Tucker to
sell stock in that state, declaring
it to be -- and I quote -- "not a
legitimate company but a promo-
tional stock using showmanship to
mislead and defraud." Unquote.

Not only does the car have none
of the futuristic features adver-
tised, but it was put together,
piece by piece, from parts found
in city dumps and junkyards.

Local wags, who have dubbed it
"The Tin Goose" find it particu-
larly amusing that what Mr.
Tucker calls The Car of Tomorrow
can't even back up.

Neither can Mr. Tucker at this
point.

In addition to the SEC investiga-
tion, Senator Homer Ferguson,
head of the powerful War Surplus
Committee, will spearhead a Con-
gressional probe to find out
exactly what happened to the
twenty-six million dollars Tucker
raised.

One thing, for certain, he didn't
spend it making cars.

On a lighter note, the rumor around
Capitol Hill this week is that.....

Tucker turns off the radio. They sit in stunned silence,
then Tucker laughs.

TUCKER

Got to give 'em credit. That's one hell of a dirty punch they got there.

VERA

Everybody in the dining room. Marilyn has whipped up the most incredible chocolate walnut....

Noble, devastated, runs to his room. Vera and Tucker exchange looks, their eyes deciding which will go to Noble. Tucker decides he will.

INT. NOBLE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Noble, sobbing, is on his bed. Tucker knocks. Noble doesn't answer. (On the table beside the bed is a model of the car, about a foot long.)

TUCKER

Can I come in?

(no answer)

We can talk, can't we?

Noble hesitates; goes to the door and unlocks it. Tucker comes in.

NOBLE

How could you do that? Why?

TUCKER

How do you know it's true?

NOBLE

I was there! I saw you bring the stuff from the junkyard. Saw it won't back up.....

TUCKER

Think I stole the money, too?

NOBLE

He said you did. On the radio.

TUCKER

What people do sometimes, in business, some people, for money, it's hard to believe sometimes.

Noble goes to his bed, sits a moment, thinking it over, then he picks up the model of the car and looks at it.

NOBLE

It's pretty to look at, but....

He turns it upside down, revealing it's hollow underneath. After a moment he tosses the car into the wastebasket. It's a very painful moment for both of them.

TUCKER

I know how you.....maybe later you'll...
(he goes out)

EXT. TUCKER APARTMENT TERRACE - NIGHT

Tucker comes out. He paces for a time, then starts beating a chair against the wall. Finally, out of breath, he stops. For the first time he sees that Johnny, in the doorway, has been watching him. Johnny goes to him, gives him an enormous, bear-hug.

JOHNNY

Feel better now, don't you?

TUCKER

Lots.

JOHNNY

Mom taught me that. Whenever I feel kind of....She's a good hugger.

TUCKER

I know.
(his mood
now changed)
Let's go for a ride! OK?
Everybody!

They go inside.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Everyone has gone except Marilyn and Vera, who are cleaning up. Tucker and Johnny come in.

TUCKER

Where'd everybody go?

VERA

Tomorrow's a working day.

TUCKER

(to Johnny)
Will you look at those two faces?

continued

TUCKER (cont.)

(to Vera)

Who do you think they're dealing with, some cream puff here? They don't know it, but they just opened Aunt Dora's box.

MARILYN

(laughs)

I love you, Daddy.

(hugs him)

TUCKER

Now what'd I say?

MARILYN

Pandora's box.

Marilyn kisses him, takes the rest of the dishes into the kitchen, as Vera puts her arm around him, and leads him to their bedroom. As they go, Tucker imitates the woman at the party in New York.

TUCKER

"He kissed my hand, too. I think it was a kiss, unless he was washing it." That was Drew Pearson's wife, wasn't it, who said that? The Countess? They all sound alike to me.

VERA

I've got a few places I wouldn't mind kissing tonight, if it's all right with you.

INT. DODGE PLANT - TUCKER'S OFFICE - DAY

Early morning. Alex, Dan, and Jimmy are waiting for Tucker to arrive. His secretary is reading the morning newspaper which has a banner headline: "GIGANTIC TUCKER FRAUD. SEC CONFISCATES FILES."

Tucker comes in. Ad libs with the guys: "Did you see the paper?" etc.

TUCKER

(to secretary)

When did they take the files?
Last night? The SEC.

SECRETARY

Nobody touched anything, anywhere in the plant. I called every department the minute I got in this morning.

TUCKER

Get me the editor on the phone.

As Tucker and the guys go into his office, several MEN come into the secretary's office and, showing her their identification, go into Tucker's office where they show him their identification.

SEC AGENT

Mr. Tucker, we're from the Securities and Exchange Commission. We have a court order to confiscate all files, letters, account books, memos, records of....

SECRETARY'S VOICE

(through intercom)
Editor's on the phone.

TUCKER

(into phone)
That's one hell of a paper you got there, Mister. Only one I ever saw reported the news before it happened.
(hangs up)

Junior comes in.

JUNIOR

Rockelman's having a press conference in the board room.

TUCKER

When?

JUNIOR

Now.

Tucker, followed by Junior and the guys, hurries out.

INT. BOARD ROOM - DAY

Rockelman's press conference is in progress. Rockelman is at a table in front of the room. On both sides of him are the members of his team.

Jerry, standing, is observing from the back of the room.

ROCKELMAN

...but what we found was a hodge-podge of undeveloped ideas which, at best, can only be described as engineering monstrosities.

(continuing)

During Rockelman's speech, Tucker and the guys come in, see Jerry, and go to stand beside him.

ROCKELMAN (cont.)

I've never been associated with a failure, and speaking for myself and the other members of the Board, we hereby submit our resignations, effective immediately.

Tucker applauds. The members of the press, turning to see who it is, immediately surround Tucker.

1ST REPORTER

What about the hundreds of dealers who filed suit against you this morning?

2ND REPORTER

Any comment about the District Attorney confiscating the company assets?

JERRY

Gentlemen! Please! Address your questions to Mr. Rockelman.

3RD REPORTER

(to Rockelman)

How long will the plant stay open?

ROCKELMAN

The plant is officially closed.

Tucker goes out. He is followed by the guys and Jerry.

INT. DODGE PLANT HALLWAY - DAY

As Tucker and Jerry go down the hall; the others follow a brief distance behind.

JERRY
 There's always next time.
 (looks at
 his watch)
 Gotta run. Plane to catch.

Jerry takes the silk handkerchief from Tucker's breast pocket and puts the fountain pen Tucker wanted in its place. A moment between them.

Jerry goes off. The guys gather around Tucker.

DAN
 Should we....?
 (stops, seeing
 Tucker's expression)
 We'll be in the office.

Tucker goes to a window. From his POV we see dozens of FBI MEN and SEC AGENTS supervising the loading of file cabinets onto trucks.

INT. NOBLE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Noble is on his bed, leaning against the headboard. He holds the model of the car on his lap.

JOHNNY'S VOICE
 (calling through
 door)
 Supper's ready.

NOBLE
 (calling back)
 I'm not hungry.

JOHNNY'S VOICE
 (through door)
 Will you cut it out? You're making Mom feel terrible. All of us.

NOBLE
 Leave me alone.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Vera and Marilyn are putting the food onto plates. Johnny comes in.

JOHNNY
 He's not hungry.

VERA

You two start before it gets cold.

As Vera fixes a tray, Johnny starts looking at the current issue of "Collier's" magazine. The lead article is about Tucker.

JOHNNY

Better burn this before Noble sees it.

VERA

You can't burn feelings. You've got to talk them out.

She takes the magazine and tray and goes out.

INT. NOBLE'S ROOM - NIGHT

He's still on the bed, the car on his lap. Knock on the door.

VERA'S VOICE

(through door)
Can we talk a minute?

NOBLE

I don't feel like talking.

VERA'S VOICE

Neither do I, but we have to.

Noble hides the car under the bed, then opens the door.

NOBLE
(seeing the tray)
I'm not hungry.

VERA
It's not for you.
(gives him
the magazine)
This is for you.

She sits down, starts eating. He looks at the article.

VERA

If you think what you heard on the radio was bad, wait till you read that.

NOBLE

(tossing it
aside)

I don't want to.

VERA

Neither did I, but you have to.
It's important.

She patiently eats as he resists for a time, then picks up the magazine and forces himself to read it.

INT. DODGE PLANT - ASSEMBLY LINE SECTION - NIGHT

Except for a few dim security lights, it is dark and empty. Tucker is walking aimlessly. The car bodies hanging over the assembly line, and the shadows of the rest of the machinery look like strange creatures in a surreal landscape. When he gets to the end of the line, where the completely assembled cars are lined up, he stops, looks at one, touching it tenderly. Then he gets into it and begins driving as fast as it will go, backwards, zig-zagging insanely between every pillar and post.

INT. TUCKER'S DODGE OFFICE - NIGHT

Dan, Jimmy, Alex, and Junior, each with a bottle of booze in his hand, are sprawled around the office. A very morose group. When they hear the SOUND of the car, they go to see what's happening. When Tucker finally stops, they wait for him to get out, but he just sits there, so they go to him. Dan offers Tucker his bottle. Tucker takes a swig. They get into the car.

For a time, they just sit there. None of them feels like drinking or talking.

JIMMY

(to Tucker)

Remember the time...when was it?...thirty-five?...you talked Henry Ford into starting a whole department just to build cars to race at Indy?

TUCKER

Thirty-three's when I talked him into it. Thirty-five's when we got going.

DAN

That's when Miller put those transverse change-speed gears on the output side of the ring gear. Remember?

ALEX

Was that the time he used only
two forward speeds and synchro-
mesh shifting? That's history!
I read about that! And you
were part of it?

TUCKER

That Miller...he was something.

They grow silent; pensive.

DAN

What're we so gloomy about? If
we have the fifty cars by October
first, they can't take the plant
away. Right?

TUCKER

Not according to the contract.

DAN

(to Alex)

How many we got now? Assembled.

ALEX

Forty-seven.

JIMMY

All we need are three more?

TUCKER

Who's going to do it? Nobody's
on the payroll. The D.A.
confiscated every ~~time~~ we had.

DAN

Won't be the first time we worked
for nothing.

JIMMY

If we can't assemble three cars
in four weeks....

DAN

Can anybody in this car look me
in the eyes and say we can't do it?

TUCKER

(looking him
in the eyes)

We can't do it.

DAN

Except you.

EXT. PHONE BOOTH - NIGHT

Abe is speaking into phone.

ABE

Listen! You listening?

INTERCUT: TUCKER ON PHONE IN HIS APARTMENT. Vera is with him.

TUCKER

Abe?

ABE

Two policemen are on their way,
right now, to arrest you, and
at the police station are
reporters, photographers, even
newsreels waiting for you to get
there. Know why? They're going
to drag you out in leg-irons.

TUCKER

Leg-irons?

ABE

Will you get out of there?
Hurry! They're on the way.
(hangs up)

Tucker hangs up.

VERA

What'd he say?

102 TUCKER
They want headlines?
them a beaut.

I'll give

EXT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

REPORTERS, PHOTOGRAPHERS, and NEWSREEL CREWS are outside the
station. A gleaming Tucker car speeds up. Tucker gets out.
He is dressed as if going to a party. He smiles, waves,
poses for the photographers as a police car, sirens scream-
ing, comes speeding down the street chasing him.

TUCKER

(to reporters)
Ask these officers about the
hundred mile an hour chase I gave

continued

TUCKER (cont.)
 them in this poor old patched
 together junkyard wreck.

He goes into the station as the TWO POLICEMEN, embarrassed,
 are stopped by reporters with questions.

INT. DODGE PLANT - ASSEMBLY LINE - DAY

The guys are assembling the first of the three cars. A radio
 is playing as they work.

RADIO NEWSCASTER
 ...and in the local news, Preston
 Tucker goes on trial this morning
 in the same courthouse where Al
 Capone was convicted....(continuing)

EXT. CHICAGO COURTHOUSE - DAY

A taxi pulls up and stops. Tucker, Vera, Abe and the kids
 (except Junior) get out. They are immediately surrounded by
 PHOTOGRAPHERS and REPORTERS. (This is MOS.) Over this, we
 continue to HEAR the Radio Newscaster.

RADIO NEWSCASTER
 ...Tucker has been charged with
 twenty-five counts of using the
 mails to defraud, five counts of
 Securities and Exchange Commission
 violations, and nine counts of
 conspiracy to defraud....
 (continuing)

As Tucker, Vera, and the others continue up the steps, we
 HEAR the Newscaster continuing.

102-255
 RADIO NEWSCASTER
If convicted, Tucker, who is
 out on twenty-five thousand
 dollars bail, faces a maximum
 sentence of one hundred and
 fifty-five years in prison, plus
 a sixty thousand dollar fine.

INT. COURTROOM - WIDE ESTABLISHING SHOT - DAY

Tucker is at a table with his lawyer, BAILEY. KERNER is head
 of a team of expensive, highly efficient attorneys for the
 prosecution.

In the front row are Abe, Vera, and the kids -- including
 Noble, who is there reluctantly.

The Shark is present throughout the trial, in the back row, and from time to time we see Senator Ferguson's Aide.

Kerner is making his opening statement to the JURY.

KERNER

.....and we shall prove that the reason Mr. Tucker has not produced any cars is that he never intended to produce any cars.....

As we continue to hear Kerner's voice, Tucker turns to look at the jury. There are SIX MEN and SIX WOMEN.

THE MEN: A CARPENTER. (Early 40's; lean, mean, craggy, very hostile toward Tucker.) A HOUSEPAINTER. (Middle-aged, middle European. Throughout the trial he has a difficult time keeping awake.) A YOUNG MACHINE OPERATOR. (In his 20's, good looking, he spends much of the time flirting with the woman sitting next to him -- a telephone operator, in her 20's.) AN OLDER MACHINE OPERATOR. (About 45, he is a militant Union Man who hates "Bosses" on general principle.) A SALESMAN. (Late 30's, he is totally uninterested in the trial; spends much of the time making notes relating to his business.) A BOOKKEEPER. (Mid-40's, stern, meticulous; as rigid and sanctimonious as the Reverend in "Rain.")

THE WOMEN: A FRAIL YOUNG HOUSEWIFE. (Mid-20's, she looks and dresses like an exotic bird.) A TELEPHONE OPERATOR. (Flirting with the young machine operator. Her breasts are extraordinary, and everything she does -- how she dresses, sits, moves, etc. -- is calculated to show them off.) A pretty BLACK HOUSEWIFE. (Thirty, friendly, interested, intelligent.) A BITTER HOUSEWIFE. (Fortyish. Chronically unhappy about everything Life has deprived her of.) A LEFT-WING HOUSEWIFE. (Early 30's, very serious, radical, college-educated; considers it her civic duty to render a completely unbiased verdict -- against the Capitalist, if possible.) A WOMAN IN HER 60'S. (Meticulously coiffed blue hair. More affluent than the others on the jury.)

KERNER'S VOICE

(during above)

.....and regarding his revolutionary designs, we shall prove that the only thing Mr. Tucker designed was an elaborate scheme to defraud.

All he wanted was the public's money for nothing, and that's exactly what the public got -- nothing.

CUT TO Vera and Marilyn. It is very hot in the room. Vera is perspiring and having some difficulty breathing.

MARILYN

You OK, Mom? It's really hot in here.

VERA

As your father might say, it's not the heat, it's the humility.

Tucker turns; looks at Noble. Their eyes meet. Noble turns away.

CUT TO BAILEY, Tucker's attorney, making his opening statement to the jury.

BAILEY

....and the fact that he may or may not have mass produced any automobiles yet is not proof of fraud, neither is the question of whether the car works or not....

(NOTE: Beginning here, we use from time to time a series of MODIFIED MATCH DISSOLVE MONTAGES. The effect intended is to indicate PASSAGE OF TIME, the TEDIOUSNESS of the trial and the fact that each of these witnesses are essentially the same person, saying, almost by rote, what they have been carefully rehearsed by Kerner to say. What is important in this part of the trial is NOT the INFORMATION (most of which we already know), but TUCKER'S REACTION to the trial.)

DISSOLVE TO:

Witness stand. The JUNKYARD MAN (who sold Tucker the Olds body) is being questioned by Kerner. We see them speaking, but do not hear their voices.

Cut to Tucker. Having nodded off, he wakes up with a start, looks at the jury. The Housepainter, who has been unable to stay awake, is looking at Tucker, having seen him asleep. Their eyes meet. They both grin.

BAILEY'S VOICE

Objection!

The SOUND of Bailey's voice causes Tucker to look at him and the Judge.

JUDGE

Over-ruled!

The Judge makes no attempt to conceal the fact that he is trying to intimidate Bailey.

Tucker's reaction.

BACK TO WITNESS and Kerner.

MATCH DISSOLVE TO:

From exactly the same angle, filling exactly the same image on screen (only the faces of the witnesses are different) is Kerner and the SECURITY GUARD the Shark bribed at the premiere. We see them talking, but do not hear their voices.

INTERCUT to Tucker looking at various members of the jury. When he gets to the Carpenter, their eyes meet. The Carpenter looks as if he hates Tucker. Tucker absently begins to doodle.

Back to Witness and Kerner.

MATCH DISSOLVE TO:

Kerner and the MECHANIC the Shark spoke to in the garage on the rainy day in the small town on tour. We see them talking. Do not hear their voices.

Tucker is looking at the Young Machine Operator whisper something into the Telephone Operator's ear. It is obviously sexual. She stifles a giggle.

Tucker smiles.

102 255
KERNER'S VOICE
Object: Kerner

Kerner's voice causes Tucker to turn to see Kerner standing as Bailey cross-examines the witness.

JUDGE

Sustained.

The way the Judge relates to Kerner, in sharp contrast to his attitude toward Bailey, leaves no doubt about the Judge's lack of impartiality.

Tucker notes this and is troubled by it. He begins doodling again, absently, unconsciously. Only when he happens to look at what he is doodling, does he realize that he has connected the random dots, lines, circles, etc., and unconsciously turned them into a drawing of a vicious giant with the Judge's nose, glasses, and robe squashing the grinning stick-figure with the bowtie Tucker always draws to represent himself.

Seeing what he has drawn, Tucker laughs to himself, then deliberately draws a hand on his Tucker character giving the Judge a Hot Foot.

Cut to witness stand. MR. HARMON, in his late 60's, is being questioned by Kerner.

Tucker is watching Harmon, fondly.

HARMON
I was his shop teacher in high school.

KERNER
Having established that Mr. Tucker is not an Automotive Engineer as he has claimed to be, can you comment on his mechanical abilities?

BAILEY
Objection! Whatever opinion the witness may have formed when the defendant was fourteen years old is hardly....

JUDGE
Over-ruled!

HARMON
Well, he flunked mechanical drawing, mechanical arts, algebra and God knows what else till...he was a sophomore, I think....he quit, or got kicked out. I forget which. But as a mechanic?
(thinks a moment)
I wouldn't take my car to him.

Tucker laughs.

INT. DODGE PLANT - NIGHT

The guys, almost at the end of the assembly line, have nearly finished the first car.

As they work, they hear Walter Winchell on the radio.

WINCHELL'S VOICE
Good evening Mr. and Mrs. America and all the ships at sea. This is Walter Winchell.

continued

WINCHELL'S VOICE (cont.)

The latest Tucker joke making the rounds at Lindy's says the next thing he's coming up with is the Convertible of Tomorrow. The top stays up, but the company folds.

Jimmy laughs. Alex is furious. Junior, upset, turns off the radio. Dan makes a point of turning it back on.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

The Judge has not yet come in. The members of the jury are taking their seats. Tucker is with his family. Except for Noble, who is merely upset, confused, and quiet, not hostile, the Tuckers could be a Norman Rockwell painting of a warm, loving, typical American family.

JOHNNY

(to Tucker)
Here's my good luck Tom Mix ring.
All you have to do is say the
magic word, which is...
(whispers into
Tucker's ear)

In the jury box, the older, more affluent woman, watches them. She smiles warmly.

Cut to FIRST DEALER on witness stand. He is one of those we saw Able selling franchises to. We see him and Kerner talking, but do not hear what they say, as Kerner holds up an enormous blow-up of the advertisement which lists the innovations it claims the car will have and, using a pointer, asks the Dealer if he was promised these features.

INTERCUT Tucker looking at jury. To his surprise, the Salesman, for the first time, is listening. Business is the only thing the Salesman is interested in. Tucker's ass begins to hurt. He squirms just as the pretty Black Housewife also squirms, her ass also hurting. Their eyes meet. They smile. A rapport established.

Back to First Dealer and Kerner.

MATCH DISSOLVE TO:

SECOND DEALER on stand, as Kerner points to blow-up of advertisement. He is another one we saw Abe selling to.

113 255
KERNER
...and do you see the person
who sold you that dealership
in this courtroom?

THIRD DEALER
(pointing to Abe)

Him.

KERNER
Did he disclose he served three
years in a Federal penitentiary
for bank fraud?

BAILEY
Objection! Guilt by association....

JUDGE

Over-ruled!

Cut to Abe. He looks at Tucker, who has turned to look at him. Their eyes meet.

INT. DODGE PLANT - DAY

Car number one comes off the assembly line.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

TURNBULL, middle-aged, is on the stand. Kerner questioning.

TURNBULL

I'm an Investigating Accountant
for the SEC.

KERNER

What was the amount the Tucker
Corporation paid for the engine
and transmission in the proto-
type, which we have established
was built entirely from parts
found in junkyards?

TURNBULL

Two hundred and twenty-three
thousand dollars.

Cut to Vera: shocked.

Cut to Tucker and Bailey.

TUCKER

What?

Kerner and Turnbull.

KERNER

(to Turnbull)

A second engine and transmission
was built by Mr. Tucker.
According to the SEC report, how
much should that have cost?

TURNBULL

Forty thousand dollars. Tops.

KERNER

What was the amount the Tucker
Corporation actually paid for
that second engine and
transmission?

TURNBULL
Three hundred and fifty-seven
thousand dollars.

Tucker and Bailey.

TUCKER
That's a goddamn lie!

Tucker and Vera look at each other, both stunned by these
outright lies.

Turnbull and Kerner.

KERNER
Who was that money paid to?

TURNBULL
The Ypsilanti Machine and Tool
Company

KERNER
Can you describe the factory
the Ypsilanti Machine and Tool
Company has?

TURNBULL
No factory. It's a barn.

KERNER
A place where people keep horses,
hay, things like that?

TURNBULL
According to the report.

KERNER
Who owns the Ypsilanti Machine
and Tool Company?

TURNBULL
Mr. Tucker.

KERNER
Perhaps that explains why Mr.
Tucker, who was given the largest
factory in the world, chose,
instead, to build the engine in a
barn, which has so little equip-
ment most of the work had to be
done on the kitchen stove.

Time jump. The trial has been adjourned for the day. As the last people leave the courtroom, Tucker, Bailey, Abe, Vera, Noble, Johnny, and Marilyn are sitting around their table.

BAILEY

Are you sure? I can't believe they'd go that far. To forge an entire set of books?

VERA

I've got every check, bill, receipt, invoice, bank statement, everything -- to prove exactly, to the penny, what we spent and what they paid us, which is nowhere near what they said.

MARILYN

Why would they do a dumb thing like that, if they know we can prove it's a lie?

TUCKER

People believe what they read in the papers, even if they don't believe it, which makes no sense. Right? But if enough headlines say I'm a crook, that's the end of me and the car, which is what this whole thing's about, isn't it?

VERA

I'm going home and bring back every scrap of paper in the files. If they can make headlines with lies, we can make bigger headlines with the truth.

ABE

I'll call Jerry-the-Press-Agent.

TUCKER

(to Bailey)
What do you think?

BAILEY

They may have gone too far this time.

TUCKER

We got 'em? Have we got 'em, Bailey? Hot-damn-almighty! We finally got 'em by the short hairs!

INT. DODGE PLANT - NIGHT

The men are halfway through assembling the second car.

EXT. TUCKER'S YPSILANTI HOUSE - NIGHT

It is dark except for one light in the den.

INT. DEN - NIGHT

Vera and Marilyn are sitting on the floor, surrounded by stacks of papers, folders, bills, account books, etc.

Noble, in his pajamas, comes into the room.

NOBLE

I couldn't sleep.

Good. We can use some help.

NOBLE

Even if Dad didn't steal the money, he lied about things, didn't he, like they said?

VERA

It looks like lies, some of the things, but....it's hard to explain. Your father, once he gets an idea, in his mind it's already done, so it's not a lie to him. It really isn't. It's just....he lives in a different world than most people. Does that make any sense?

JOHNNY'S VOICE

Like the inside of a clock?

They turn to see Johnny, also in his pajamas, in the doorway.

VERA

(laughs)

Exactly!

NOBLE

What's that supposed to mean?

INT. DODGE PLANT - DAY

They are finishing car number two.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

During a recess, Abe comes in; goes to the table where Bailey and Tucker are huddled over some documents.

TUCKER

Did you get Jerry?

Abe sits down, looks around, whispers confidentially.

ABE

He's out of the country some-
place, but I called a connection
who's got a connection to the
stockbroker who handles Mrs.
Ferguson's account. Not the
Senator's account. She's got a
secret account of her own.

(takes several
documents from
his briefcase)

Thirty-four thousand dollars
worth of Chrysler stock was given
to Mrs. Ferguson three months
ago, by the Chrysler Corporation,
for what they listed as "Public
relations." Know what she billed
them for? One speech to her
bridge club.

TUCKER

Let's subpoena the son-of-a-
bitch!

BAILEY

Ferguson?

TUCKER

And his wife.

ABE

Everybody! All of them! The Big
Three! Everybody!

BAILEY

Fantastic!

INT. DODGE PLANT - NIGHT

The guys are working on car number three.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

KERNER

The final witness for the prosecution is Mr. Thomas Hart, Regional Administrator of the SEC in Chicago.

Cut to Hart on witness stand.

HART

.....conclusive evidence that Mr. Tucker diverted for his own personal use over a million dollars of the stockholders' money.

KERNER

No further questions.

As Kerner sits down and Bailey goes to the stand to cross examine Hart, Tucker is looking at the Carpenter, who is watching a roach climb the wall about a foot from him. The roach has injured one leg and is having a difficult time making it. The Carpenter takes his folded newspaper and gently flicks the roach to the floor.

Both the Carpenter and Tucker watch the roach, lying on its back, kicking its legs, desperately trying to get right side up again.

Tucker looks from the roach to the Carpenter. As the Carpenter looks at the roach, for the first time we see on the Carpenter's face a trace of compassion.

Cut to Hart and Bailey.

BAILEY

Mr. Hart, do you have the cancelled checks for the million dollars you claim Mr. Tucker misappropriated for his own use?

HART

Of course not.

BAILEY

Have they been entered as evidence?

HART

I have no idea.

BAILEY

For the information of the jury
-- they have not. Have you seen
those checks, Mr. Hart?

HART

I didn't say anything about
checks.

BAILEY

Have you seen the briefcase, then,
suitcase, whatever container Mr.
Tucker used to carry the million
dollars he stole in cash?

KERNER

Objection.

Sustained. And, I suggest you
end this frivolous line of
questioning immediately.

BAILEY

Tell me, Mr. Hart. Is it the
policy of the SEC to release
information about investigations
while they are still in progress?

HART

Absolutely not. All reports are
secret and confidential.

BAILEY

(holding up a copy of
the Detroit News)
Could you tell me how the Detroit
News got this information, all of
which comes directly from your
"secret and confidential" report?

HART

I have no idea.

BAILEY

(holding up an issue
of Collier's Magazine)
Can you tell me where and how the
writer of this article got his
information, which contains
entire paragraphs lifted almost
verbatim from your "secret and
confidential" report?

HART

I have no idea.

BAILEY

(holding up
a document)

Here's a deposition from Miss Susan McNamara, your private secretary, Mr. Hart, in which she states under oath that not only did she see you give the SEC report we're speaking of to the writer of this article in Collier's, but at your instructions, she got an office in the Federal building where he wrote the article.

(displaying
another document)

Here is a deposition from Martin S. Hayden, the Washington correspondent for the Detroit News, in which he testifies under oath that Harry A. MacDonald, Commissioner of the SEC, gave him the report in a room at the Statler Hotel in Washington.

He further testified that you, Mr. Hart, were in the room at the time.

(to jury)

Why would the SEC leak information against Mr. Tucker, which may or may not be true, when it is against agency policy to do so? But even more important, if Mr. Hart and the SEC can break their own rules for the specific purpose of slandering Mr. Tucker's name, then lie about it, as you just heard Mr. Hart do right now, under oath, how can we believe what he said about Mr. Tucker stealing a million dollars, when they have no shread of evidence to prove it?

As Bailey takes the depositions to the clerk to enter them as evidence, the Judge looks at Kerner.

KERNER

The prosecution rests.

INT. DODGE PLANT - NIGHT

Tucker, Vera, Abe, Bailey, and all the kids are watching as the guys take the third car, finished, off the assembly line. They all cheer. Tucker pops open two bottles of champagne, which Vera and Marilyn begin pouring into glasses.

TUCKER

(to Dan)

You did it, you grouchy old crumb-bum!

DAN

We did it.

JUNIOR

A week before the deadline!

Tucker looks at the fifty cars, lined up, all beautiful and gleaming, then walks down the line, touching each of them lovingly.

The others, watching him, are moved by the depth of his feeling.

TUCKER

I can't wait till tomorrow when it's our turn at bat. We're going to chop them up like cat food. We subpoenaed Ferguson, his wife, half the executives of the Big Three, everybody we need to prove who started this thing, why, and how.

Plus Vera's got proof they forged a phony set of books. Can you believe that? And the clincher --

(to Dan)

I want every car -- all fifty of them -- lined up in front of the courthouse tomorrow morning at eight-thirty.

Suddenly, spontaneously, unable to hold it in another second, Tucker lets out a ferocious yell of triumph and begins singing "Hold that Tiger."

EXT. COURTHOUSE STEPS - DAY

Tucker, Vera, Abe, Bailey, and all the kids are waiting on the steps, looking around for the cars, which are not there.

ABE

What happened to the cars?

VERA
Traffic, probably. It's rush
hour, don't forget.

TUCKER
(looks at
his watch)
Can't wait any longer.

As they turn to start up the steps, a reporter, coming down,
stops beside them.

REPORTER
Sorry about the news this
morning.

TUCKER
What news?

REPORTER
Didn't you see the paper?

He gives Tucker a copy of the morning paper. Banner
headline: "TUCKER LOSES DODGE PLANT."

Tucker, shocked, is unable for the moment to read the rest.
He hands the paper to Vera who reads it aloud.

VERA
Led by Wilson Wyatt, Federal
Housing Administrator, and
Senator Homer Ferguson, head of
the War Surplus Property
Committee, a special commission
appointed by President Truman
ordered the War Assets Admin-
istration to evict the Tucker
Corporation from the former
aircraft factory and give it to
the Lustron Corporation for the
development of low cost, pre-fab
houses.

SOUND of car horns blasting. They turn, see all fifty Tucker
cars pull up and stop in front of the steps. The guys get
out and run up the steps to join them.

DAN
Wouldn't you know, they're
digging up every street in town?
Had to detour to China and back.

Vera gives Dan the newspaper.

DAN

(puzzled)

It's only the twenty-fourth.
Didn't we have till the first?

TUCKER

We had till they dropped the
other shoe.

Tucker starts up the steps. Vera and the others follow.
Bailey runs to catch up to Tucker, walking beside him,
talking as they go.

INT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

As Tucker and Bailey come in, they pass an enormous WPA mural
of Justice.

TUCKER

(to Bailey)

Who's asking you? I'm telling
you.

BAILEY

We've got an air-tight case here.

MOVE WITH Tucker and Bailey as they continue down the hall
toward the courtroom.

TUCKER

Not if we play by their rules.
No matter what we do, we can't
win. If there's no legal way
they could take the plant away,
all they had to do was change the
laws and make it legal.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

As they come in, the spectators are milling about. The jury
is coming in. Tucker stops, seeing something halfway across
the room.

What he sees is Senator Ferguson surrounded by a group of
PHOTOGRAPHERS and REPORTERS. Tucker goes to him.

TUCKER

Good to see you, Senator.

He offers to shake the Senator's hand, but Ferguson, making a
point of refusing, puts both of his hands into his pockets.

TUCKER

Well, that's something I thought I'd never live to see. A politician with his hands in his own pockets?

Cut to Bailey speaking to the Judge.

BAILEY

Your honor, the defendant has chosen not to present a defense.

(reaction from
spectators and
jury)

He does not plead guilty, however, but due to the unusual nature of this case, begs the court's permission to make the closing statement himself in the belief that only he can put this trial in proper perspective.

Both Kerner and the Judge steal a glance at Ferguson who, after evaluating the reaction of the jury and spectators, turns to the Judge and, with a look, tells him to let Tucker speak.

Tucker sees the exchange between the Judge and Ferguson.

JUDGE

Permission granted, but if anything you say is unacceptable in a court of law, I'll stop you.

TUCKER

(to Ferguson)

Thank you, Senator.

(takes piece of
paper and goes
to jury)

I want to read you what the law says. My lawyer wrote it out for me in lawyer talk:

(reads)

"Erroneous judgment may be as consistent with good intentions as bad intentions. Good faith is a complete defense."

What that means in plain English is: The prosecution claims I never had any intention of making any cars. All I wanted was to

continued

TUCKER (cont.)

take the money and run. If you decide he's right, I'm guilty.

But according to the law, if I tried to make the cars, even if they turned out no good, even if I didn't even make them, if you believe I tried -- really tried -- I'm not guilty, because it's not against the law, thank God, to be wrong or stupid -- which I was both, making that prototype, but what nobody has let us say -- the whole trial -- is after the prototype, I built the car I said I would, and there's fifty of them, right ~~now~~, on Adams Street. All the Judge has to do is let you go downstairs and take a ride in one and that's it. The trial's over.

(to Judge)

Okay?

JUDGE

Permission denied.

TUCKER

Denied?

JUDGE

If you persist in....

TUCKER

Will you let them go in the hallway, then, and look down, through the windows?

JUDGE

I see no purpose in....

TUCKER

That's what this whole thing's about, isn't it? Did I intend to make the cars or not?

JUDGE

You've had your say, Mr. Tucker.

TUCKER

(to jury)

If all I wanted was to take the money and run....

JUDGE
Will the defendant....

TUCKER
....why'd I build another engine
when the first one didn't work?

JUDGE
(banging gavel)
Mr. Tucker....

TUCKER
Why'd I stick around to build
those fifty cars?

JUDGE
....I order you to sit down
immediately!

TUCKER
If all I wanted was to take the
money and run....

JUDGE
This is your final warning.

TUCKER
...with twenty-six million bucks
in my pocket...

JUDGE
Bailiffs!

TUCKER
...I'd be so far gone by now...

TWO BAILIFFS have gone to Tucker.

JUDGE
Restrain the defendant.

They grab him. Tucker struggles.

CARPENTER
Let the man speak!

For a few seconds, everyone is so taken by surprise there is
only stunned silence.

JUDGE
I have no choice but to declare
this a mistrial.

The murmur of disapproval from the spectators and jury causes Ferguson to tell the Judge, with a look, to reverse that decision.

JUDGE

However, to save the taxpayers the expense of a new trial, I'll use the discretionary privilege of the bench and overlook the incident, but I will not tolerate one more outburst of any kind from anybody in this courtroom.

(takes out his
watch)

You have one minute, Mr. Tucker.

TUCKER

When I was a boy, I read about Edison, Ford, the Wright Brothers. They were my heroes. "Rags to Riches" wasn't just the name of a book. It was what this country was all about.

We invented the Free Enterprise system where anybody, no matter who he was, where he came from, what class he belonged to, if he came up with a better idea for anything, there was no limit how far he could go.

But I grew up a generation too late, I guess. The way the system works now, The Loner, The Dreamer, The Crackpot with some damn fool idea everybody laughs at, which turns out to revolutionize the world, is squashed by Big Business before he knows what hit him, because the bureaucrats would rather kill a new idea than let it rock the boat.

If Ben Franklin was alive today he'd get arrested for flying a kite without a license.

We're all puffed up with ourselves right now because we just won the war, invented the Bomb,

continued

TUCKER (cont.)

but if Big Business closes the door to the little guy, we've not only closed the door to progress, we've lost everything this country stands for. And as crazy as it seems, we're liable to find ourselves at the bottom of the heap one day, instead of King of the Hill, with no idea how in the world we got there.

But I don't believe that's going to happen. I can't believe it's going to happen, because if I ever stop believing in the plain old common horse-sense of the American people, there's no way I'd be able to get out of bed in the morning.

Anyhow...sorry I...thanks for letting me...

He starts back toward the table. There's a pause. Then a spontaneous outburst of applause and cheers in the courtroom.

Tucker is amazed. All of our principles come to him -- Bailey, Abe, the guys, the kids, ending with Noble jumping into his arms, then Vera.

The jury files out.

SERIES OF SHOTS. TENSION. WAITING FOR THE VERDICT.

CUT TO FOREMAN reading the verdict.

FOREMAN

Not guilty on all counts.

A cheer goes up, not only from our principals, but from the SPECTATORS, as well.

Vera, Abe, the guys, the kids, everybody gets a moment with Tucker.

Tucker goes to the jury, shakes hands with each of them.

TUCKER

How about every one of you, right now, going for a ride in one of them Tucker cars that don't exist?

EXT. CHICAGO STREET - DAY

A parade of fifty Tuckers in a row is causing a major traffic jam.

INT. TUCKER'S CAR - DAY

Tucker, Vera, Abe, Dan, Jimmy, and Noble. Ignoring the cheering crowd, Tucker, preoccupied, is making a rough sketch of something.

DAN

Too bad that car won't be built.

ABE

We won the battle but lost the war.

TUCKER

I been reading in the paper, all the kids dying in South America from rickets, stuff like that.

He shows Dan and Vera a sketch of an innovative refrigerator.

TUCKER (cont.)

If they had little, inexpensive refrigerators that worked on gas or kerosene, or something, they could keep fresh milk in...Take a look at this.

Dan and Vera look at each other

NOBLE

They stopped the Tucker car, but they can't stop Dad!

DAN

(singing)

"Hold that tiger! Hold that tiger!"

Vera, laughing, starts singing with Dan. Tucker laughs, starts singing, too, as everybody in the car joins in.

CUT TO PROMO FILM continuing. Title: "TOMORROW'S CAR TODAY."

STILL SHOT: NINE YEAR OLD'S DRAWING OF A FUTURISTIC CAR.

NARRATOR

Where else but in America can a boy's dream come true?

MATCH CUT TO SHOT OF ACTUAL TUCKER CAR.

NARRATOR

Where else but in America can an ordinary man change the course of automotive history?

SHOT OF TUCKER SIGN ON TOP OF DODGE PLANT.

INT. DODGE PLANT - ASSEMBLY LINE - DAY

It is fully manned, cars are being turned out rapidly and with precision by happy workers.

NARRATOR

Already over a thousand cars a day are rolling off the assembly line and onto the roads.

SHOT OF TUCKER CAR DRIVING ON ROAD.

NARRATOR

But the supply is unable to keep up with the demand.

VARIOUS SHOTS OF THE PARTS MENTIONED BELOW.

NARRATOR

Chances are you've never heard of fuel injection, disc brakes, rear-mounted engine, seat belts, and the dozens of other innovations on the Tucker because they've never been on a commercial family car before. But one of these days, every car on the road will have them. So go for a test drive today, and if you don't put your name on the waiting list the minute you get out of the car, I'll eat my hat.

CUT TO SHOT OF DOG CHEWING ON A MAN'S HAT.

NARRATOR

Well...one of us will.

SHOT OF TUCKER AT DESK IN ART-DECO OFFICE AS IN BEGINNING OF PROMO FILM.

NARRATOR

And so ends the success story of Preston Thomas Tucker. The man, the dream, and the world's most exciting car, years ahead of its time. Try a Tucker, you'll buy a Tucker. Don't let the future pass you by.

PROMO FILM TITLE: "THE END"
