

THE CURRENT WAR



Screenplay by
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EXT. CONEY ISLAND BOARDWALK, 1903 - AFTERNOON

Winter.

A lone MAN in a wool coat crosses the CONEY ISLAND boardwalk.

He passes hibernating rides and shuttered booths, promising Freaks!, Tattooed Lady!, Werewolf Boy!, Wizards!

The MAN clutches his lapels, fighting the freezing wind. From a steely sky, fat snowflakes float onto the MAN's grey hair.

The MAN is THOMAS EDISON.

TITLE: "THE CURRENT WAR"

(Words appear as a fluttering silent film title card.)

EXT. CONEY ISLAND FROM ABOVE - CONTINUOUS

A far shot: Everything shut down - the red wooden coaster, the jumping horses, the shooting galleries, food stalls...

EXT. CIRCULAR WOODEN PLATFORM - CONTINUOUS

Rounding a corner, EDISON arrives at a wooden stage. At the center of this platform is an ELEPHANT.

The ELEPHANT shivers in the snow and flakes settle onto its eyelashes. It tries to blink them away.

Ropes as thick as forearms have been thrown over the ELEPHANT, firmly tethering it to the wooden stage.

Then, a long shot of just the small man and monstrous beast.

An unspoken salutation.

A deafening train whistle sounds.

TITLE: "23 YEARS EARLIER"

EXT. NEW JERSEY COUNTRYSIDE, 1880 - SUNDOWN

The roar of a locomotive as it blazes through farmland.

Burnt orange sunlight gasps over the treetops.

Pistons churning, the engine spews black smoke into the air and along the tops of three gorgeous crimson railcars.

INT. A PRIVATE RAILCAR - CONTINUOUS

Inside are plush velvet benches, uncorked bottles of Moët et Chandon, and fifty or so of the WEALTHIEST MEN ON EARTH.

They are finely dressed FAT CATS, each at least fifty pounds overweight. They sport beards, moustaches, muttonchops, etc.

EXT. THE WINDOWS OF THE THREE RAILCARS - CONTINUOUS

A row of top hats through the windows of the railcars as the train steams deeper and deeper out of civilization.

One particular FAT CAT looking out his window at the New Jersey farmland with vague repulsion.

INT. THE PRIVATE RAILCAR - CONTINUOUS

The train stops and the FAT CATS are thrown forward.

INT. THE PRIVATE RAILCAR - CONTINUOUS

Materializing from nowhere, FRANCIS, a blonde kid of 25, pokes his beaming, dimpled face into the aisle - -

FRANCIS
(Chipper as hell.)
Gentlemen, welcome to Menlo Park!

His face disappears.

The FAT CATS exchange glances, and because there are no other options, they reluctantly collect their belongings...

EXT. NEW JERSEY DIRT ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Six carriages bump down a dirt road, Top Hats bobbing.

EXT. MENLO PARK LABORATORY OF THOMAS EDISON - CONTINUOUS

A horse's foot clops down in the dust and the camera pans up to reveal a LABORATORY - a whitewashed two-story, jumbo barn. A warehouse wherein miracles are born.

In the distance, the sun is sliding down the tree trunks and disappears.

INT. MENLO PARK LABORATORY OF THOMAS EDISON - CONTINUOUS

The cavernous workroom has been converted into a banquet hall. The walls are outfitted with scientific machinery - tools, beakers, twisted pipes, etc.

The worktables are covered with white tablecloths, candelabras, silver, and china.

The FAT CATS sit up and down the tables, dining on Filet, gleaming Lobsters, Baked Alaska and free flowing Champagne.

The waiters bumble. It's almost as though these are slob scientists masquerading as waiters...

One FAT CAT, however, isn't imbibing and is, instead, peering around him at the walls packed full of scientific equipment. There is a spark of curiosity in this man's eyes.

This man is GEORGE WESTINGHOUSE.

One FAT CAT, mouth full of lobster meat, manages to snag the sleeve of a passing FRANCIS-

FAT CAT W/ LOBSTER MOUTH
Where is he?

FRANCIS
I'm sure I just saw him over the by
the - oh excuse me one moment-

FRANCIS breaks free from the FAT CAT's grasp and escapes. The FAT CAT turns to look, though he's being given the runaround.

INT. MENLO PARK LABORATORY OF THOMAS EDISON - LATER

In a dissolve that makes the men seem like ghosts at a dinner party, the FAT CATS are now satiated and drunk.

They are impatient now and a din grows with strains of "Where the hell is He?" and "Do you know who I am?," etc. And it is at this exact moment of total impatience that He, of course, bursts through the door.

He is visibly younger on this night - an electric current in his eyes. Dressed like a sloppy bum, his hair is askew. The room falls breathlessly silent.

We see WESTINGHOUSE gaze at EDISON - like that of a little boy seeing, in person, his very favorite ballplayer.

EDISON
Follow me.

EDISON spins and exits through door. The FAT CATS are frustrated but have no choice.

FRANCIS
You'll want to bring the candles.

Silver candelabras are snagged from tables.

EXT. CORNFIELD - CONTINUOUS

Fifty of the Richest Men on the Planet are stumbling through the uneven dirt of the cornfield.

These Captains of Industry, who have never touched dirt, are now ankle-deep in mud. Tuxedos sullied, bespoke shoes ruined. It's an unusually cold fall night and they are anxious. In the darkness, eyes strain to follow EDISON.

EDISON
This way, boys!

A PARTICULARLY ROTUND FAT CAT, stops a moment, puffing.

EXT. THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE, NEW JERSEY - CONTINUOUS

A shot from above of circles: top hats, bellies and butts, all alone in a dark cornfield - 30 sq. feet containing 70% of the world's wealth.

EDISON
Your candles, please.

Hesitant looks and then, one-by-one, the candles are blown.

The PARTICULARLY ROTUND FAT CAT is shaking his head 'no.' WESTINGHOUSE looks over at him - the one not obeying orders. A different FAT CAT nudges the PARTICULARLY ROTUND one in the ribs. Begrudgingly, the last candle is extinguished.

Black.

EDISON'S VOICE
And God said...

The sound of a heavy metal crank. Then, a roaring generator!

A FIELD OF LIGHT

Pop-pop-pop-pop-pop-pop-pop...

Rows and rows of light bulbs the size of cantaloupes, like falling dominoes in succession, are brought to pure life.

The bulbs stand on tall wooden poles. Rows and rows glowing white orbs disappear into the horizon.

It isn't a cornfield - it's a *field of light*.

A pan across the faces of the rich men, their mouths comically agape - their bushy white eyebrows raised.

In their eyes - the reflection of the field. On their faces - the recognition that they've just seen an absolute **miracle**.

WESTINGHOUSE turns away from the miracle, looking behind the men and off to the side where FRANCIS stands next to a metal generator, reading 'EDISON,' in beautiful red script.

EDISON

I trust you brought your
checkbooks?

The FAT CATS burst into a roar that overtakes the roar of the generator. They clamor, rushing EDISON with their checkbooks.

Opportunity!

INT. THE HOME OF WESTINGHOUSE, PITTSBURGH - DAY

Tranquility.

The wallpaper is a decadent, dark green paisley. A Civil War musket hangs on the wall.

WESTINGHOUSE stands beside a green billiards table, looking down at a the green felt where one of EDISON's large bulbs sits. There's a baby blue silk ribbon tied around the metal.

WESTINGHOUSE is impeccably dressed, in a black coat and starched shirt. Black bow tie. A bushy brown moustache connects to mutton chops. His hair is neatly combed. His face is like that of a child who never lost a drop of curiosity.

WESTINGHOUSE nudges the glass gift. It pirouettes.

WESTINGHOUSE

(Trying to speak.)

You...uh. I've been noticing. Um.

WESTINGHOUSE taps the bulb again, nervously. It spins.

WESTINGHOUSE (CONT'D)

So. Mr. Ames has spoken with you
four distinct times about
your...problem.

He pulls a glass of water from a pocket of the pool table and takes a swallow.

WESTINGHOUSE (CONT'D)

Your problem with alcohol.

Across the table is revealed an older man in shirt and vest. White hair and wrinkled brow. Sort of a wise rabbit. Beside him is a much younger WOMAN, dressed up. She's quite lovely.

WOMAN

Mr. Westinghouse, it's true that he likes to have him a cold drink at the end of a hard day of work, but, see, at the end of his hard day of work, I also got me *nine* children.

WESTINGHOUSE

Nine?

WOMAN

Peter, Sam, Hannah, Darlene-

MAN

Beatrice, Andrew, Sarah Alice-

WOMAN

And Nathan.

WESTINGHOUSE

That's eight.

WOMAN

Baby Zoe. Nine.

WESTINGHOUSE

Nine.

MAN AND WOMAN

Nine.

MAN

And my wife, she's got another coming.

WOMAN

We were gonna name him after...after *you*.

WESTINGHOUSE

But, but sir you've come to work *intoxicated*. Your negligence-

MAN

One more chance, Mr. Westinghouse. Please. Don't make me beg for my job. I struggle. I pray to the lord for help every day. But don't make me beg for my job.

A silence as WESTINGHOUSE looks to his dirty fingernails in thought. He looks up.

WESTINGHOUSE
One more chance.

MAN
No!

WOMAN
Oh for Pete's sake, *George!*

WESTINGHOUSE
Was that good?

MAN
Was that *good? Was that good?* No!
No, that was *not good.*

The MAN is MR. FRANK POPE, WESTINGHOUSE's friend, mentor, and employee. The WOMAN is WESTINGHOUSE's spunky wife MARGUERITE.

WESTINGHOUSE
He does have two children, right?

POPE
It doesn't matter if he just gave birth to a litter of kittens. He's slowing down progress. He's putting the other men at risk.

MARGUERITE walks to her husband, putting a hand on his chest.

MARGUERITE
Would you rather be *nice* or *right*?

WESTINGHOUSE
Both.

MARGUERITE smiles. POPE and picks up the bulb, studying it.

POPE
Quick - was it like we thought?

WESTINGHOUSE
It was a field of *light*...growing out of the ground like corn. Marguerite, it was the most beautiful thing...

POPE
Ha! What'd I tell ya! Who knows him better than me, huh?

MARGUERITE

So are we going to invest?

WESTINGHOUSE stares at the bulb. He shakes his head 'no.'

POPE

No!?! George, dollars will spew out of the earth like oil.

WESTINGHOUSE

I looked over the paperwork and...

POPE

And?

A knock at the door. WESTINGHOUSE takes the bulb from POPE.

POPE (CONT'D)

One minute!

WESTINGHOUSE

I need to talk with Edison. Send an invitation. A dinner.

MARGUERITE

Oh a dinner! With Thomas Edison himself? How fabulous!

POPE

Trust me, Edison can't be bothered to take a shower let alone-

WESTINGHOUSE

He'll take the meeting. Say his Electric Company depends on it.

The door opens and a MAN, 40's, enters. He's got the saggy face of a drunk. In his arms, he carries two babies...

POPE

Good god.

POPE and MARGUERITE exit as WESTINGHOUSE greets the man-

WESTINGHOUSE

Uh...Thank you...all...for coming.

EXT. FILTHY STREETS OF BUFFALO, NEW YORK - DAY

WILLIAM KEMMLER, a prickly mess of a man, pushes a rickety produce cart along a steaming rundown street.

KEMMLER

Apples. Apples. Apples.

He lets the cart alone for a moment, reaching into his back pocket to pull a whiskey flask. He drinks. Looking back at his cart, he sees a horse helping himself to apples.

KEMMLER (CONT'D)
 (Pushing away the head.)
 Outta...get yer...

A little girl approaches KEMMLER like he's a wild lion.

KEMMLER removes his hat and selects a good apple. He polishes it on his shirt hands the apple to the girl. She takes it, smiles, and moves on. KEMMLER lifts the cart and continues.

KEMMLER (CONT'D)
 Apples. Apples.

INT. MENLO PARK LABORATORY OF THOMAS EDISON - DAY

The laboratory is half-restored. On the two laboratory-long wooden tables, the plates and stained table clothes are now sharing space with burners, magnifiers, boilers, wiring, etc.

EDISON, enjoying a piece of blackberry pie, sits next to a small BOY, 6, eating pie in exactly the same way as the inventor - same hand, same twist of the wrist.

In the background are young men at work, testing the density of various metals, measuring fluids, etc. Directly behind Edison, at the other long table is FRANCIS, entering check amounts into a ledger. EDISON addresses MATTHEW, an assistant, who is filling out paperwork.

MATTHEW
 Headquarters...Menlo Park?

EDISON
 Yes. No.

He pops a huge forkful of pie into his mouth.

EDISON (CONT'D)
 (Pie falling out.)
 Manhattan. The Manhattan office.

MATTHEW
 It's not even set-up yet.

EDISON turns, addressing a young man in the distance.

EDISON
 Charlie! Set-up the Manhattan
 Office! Make it look professional!

CHARLIE
What does that mean?!

EDISON
I don't know. Carpets...or? I don't
know. Carpets?!

EDISON takes a bite off the BOY's plate.

CARSON, a kind-eyed, older man enters the lab. He wears a
cheap suit and hat. He carries a suitcase.

FRANCIS
Tom?

MATTHEW
And...I guess all that's left is
the official name.

EDISON crooks his head and glares at MATTHEW as if to say,
"You know what the name will be, dummy."

MATTHEW (CONT'D)
(Smiling and writing.)
'Edison Electric Company'

EDISON
(Hands to his heart.)
Ahhhh!

EDISON ruffles the BOY's hair.

FRANCIS
We've only got about half.

EDISON
HALF?! All these fat cats and *half*?

FRANCIS
Half. You know how much copper
you'll need just for one city?
We're going to haveta ask you-know-
who for the rest.

EDISON shrinks in his seat. He tosses down the fork.

CARSON approaches, hesitantly.

CARSON
Mr...Edison?

EDISON
Queen Victoria.

EDISON retrieves his fork. Then, an angry bite of pie.

EDISON (CONT'D)
 (Pointing to the BOY.)
This is also Mr. Edison. You mean
 him?

CARSON
 I'm...I'm Carson Schmidt?

EDISON
 Is that a question?

CARSON
 I was offered a position.

EDISON
 What kind of position? Sitting?
 Standing? Like this-

He thrusts his hands in the air like a 'V."

EDISON (CONT'D)
 Or *this*.

He thrusts his fists forward, like he's pulling something.

CARSON
 I'm Carson Schmidt. I was offered-

EDISON
 Christ. How old are you?

CARSON
 61.

A murmur from the younger men at the laboratory.

EDISON
 Who'd you speak with?

CARSON
 Well...*You*. I wrote to you and...
 (Fumbling, he produces a
 letter.)
 ...*You* said I might come work for
 you and...

EDISON takes the paper, squinting.

EDISON
 Uhuh-Uhuh-Uhuh-Uhuh.

EDISON stands and walks around the tables, CARSON follows.

EDISON (CONT'D)
 I don't remember any of this.
 Probably a forgery. A forgery boys!

CARSON
 I traveled from...from North
 Carolina?

EDISON
 Again, is that a question?

Shots of EDISON's employees grinning at one another, they've been through this hazing. Some start to clear the tables. They know what's coming... EDISON and CARSON are now at the heads of the two long tables.

EDISON (CONT'D)
 How are your legs?

CARSON
 Excuse me?

EDISON
 If I repeat everything twice, I'll
 say only half as much. I asked,
 "How are your legs?"

EDISON nods to MATTHEW and MATTHEW lifts the BOY from his seat, away from the table.

CARSON
 They are. Fine? They're fine.

EDISON heaves himself up onto one of the tables. He nods to CARSON. CARSON hesitates, then puts down his suitcase, and hoists himself up onto the other table.

EDISON
 Beat me down the table and I'll
 hire you.

CARSON
 But your letter, sir, I thought you
 already offered a job?

EDISON
 Another question and one year ago,
 this world was lit by fire. Times
 change my good fellow. Now do you
 want this job or not?
 (Addressing the 30 or so
 other employees.)
 Boys?

EVERYONE

One! Two! Three!

EDISON and CARSON take off, running the lengths of their respective tables! They jump over glass beakers and china plates. CARSON slips a little.

EDISON giggles to himself as he leaps over a silver pitcher, heaving a bit, and, he too, slips a little on a stray napkin.

The WORKERS whoop and holler, drumming their hands on the sides of the tables as the men RUN. The little BOY laughs.

EDISON

C'mon Carson!! Put some grease into it!!!

They're neck-and-neck! EDISON suddenly goes down, sliding on the table cloth, plates, silver, and bottles falling to the ground and shattering.

He rides the tablecloth to the very end of the table where he falls onto the floor, laughing. The BOY runs from MATTHEW's arms and jumps on his father, who throws his arms around the kid and playfully wrestles.

CARSON has stopped, 3/4 of the way down HIS table. He's confused and speechless. EDISON suddenly bounds to his feet. He rests a palm on the BOY's head, using him like a cane. The other hand he extends to CARSON. CARSON bends and shakes.

EDISON (CONT'D)

I applaud Mr. Schmidt. He got up on the table. The man actually got up on the table. All of you could learn a lesson from him.

(To CARSON.)

You're the first one to do that since Francis.

FRANCIS looks away, bashfully.

EDISON (CONT'D)

Welcome to Menlo Park, Mr. Carson. I'm Thomas Alva Edison and we're in the business of building miracles.

All the boys applaud and holler. It is raucous and *inspiring*. CARSON looks around and smiles broadly in disbelief.

FRANCIS

Not to ruin this touching moment but we're still short. You're going to have to proposition Beelzebub.

EDISON

No.

FRANCIS

Milt, where is Morgan this week?

A red-haired, round employee flips through a hand-made book, eyes quickly scanning a column.

MILT

Carnegie...Frick...Mellon...*Morgan*.
Washington. Meeting with the
President. Deregulation.

CARSON

(To FRANCIS.)

How does he know J.P. Morgan's
schedule?

FRANCIS smiles and shrugs, implying illegal activities.

EDISON

If you're going to visit a snake,
might as well go to a swamp.
Well...

EDISON (CONT'D)

As Jesus said before they strung
him up on the cross....."*fuck*."

INT. CARRIAGE ON THE STREETS OF PITTSBURGH - DAY

WESTINGHOUSE, clean as always and impeccably dressed, sits on the leather bench. He's holding a large notepad and has his fountain pen nib resting on the corner of the paper. MARGUERITE sits by his side.

MARGUERITE

I spoke with Mr. Edison's assistant
this morning. Oh, I'm thrilled!

She looks at her husband, lost in thought. His pen streams out a pool of ink.

MARGUERITE (CONT'D)

What's wrong George?

On the paper are some physics equations, some with 'check marks,' others crossed out. WESTINGHOUSE draws a box, then two lines from either side.

MARGUERITE (CONT'D)

You have breakfast on your face.

MARGUERITE picks something from WESTINGHOUSE's moustache. She can't get it off.

MARGUERITE (CONT'D)
It's really stuck in your...

She gets it free, tosses it out the window then kisses him on the cheek. WESTINGHOUSE drops the nib again on the box and thinks.

MARGUERITE (CONT'D)
Will Edison be like the papers make him out to be? I'll need a new dress. New draperies. Which means new rugs. Two days - Oh George. You've really sprung this on me. Will you at least ask your men to find out his favorite foods?

WESTINGHOUSE
(Absently.)
He's just a man like you or me.

MARGUERITE smiles at her distracted husband. A BUMP of the carriage and WESTINGHOUSE's head hits the top of the carriage. He looks up at the roof, surprised. Then, back to the paper.

WESTINGHOUSE (CONT'D)
Hmmm.

EXT. THE GRAND ESTATE OF GEORGE WESTINGHOUSE - NIGHT

A soaring mansion, surrounded by woods and gardens.

INT. BEDROOM OF WESTINGHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Darkness. Then, a gas lamp is suddenly lit. It's a stately bedroom - gold, ornate fixtures and white silk bedding. Heavy drapes. In two beds, side-by-side, are WESTINGHOUSE and MARGUERITE.

MARGUERITE
(Waking up.)
George? George what is it?

WESTINGHOUSE is clamoring for his fountain pen.

MARGUERITE (CONT'D)
George? What's the matter?

WESTINGHOUSE falls out of bed and hurriedly pats down the pockets of his coat, hanging from a valet. He finds a pen.

MARGUERITE (CONT'D)

George!

WESTINGHOUSE unscrews the cap of the fountain pen and, having no paper at hand, sinks to the floor on his knees and begins to sketch out an idea in ink onto the bedsheet.

MARGUERITE (CONT'D)

George!! Those were brought in from Egypt! George! What are you doing?!

WESTINGHOUSE can't stop - he's on a roll.

MARGUERITE (CONT'D)

George...

MARGUERITE's scowl melts into a reluctant smile. WESTINGHOUSE, imbued with inspiration, races to jot down his idea before it fades away. A shot from above the bed reveals a blue-print taking shape - a bleeding, ink schematic that tattoos the white bedsheet.

MARGUERITE (CONT'D)

(Laughing.)

Well, at least this means I can go shopping.

WESTINGHOUSE doesn't take notice. He's busy. Creating.

INT. TRAIN TO WASHINGTON, D.C. - EARLY MORNING

EDISON sits in a private car. With him are his son DASH, the boy from the laboratory, his daughter DOT, 5, and his wife MARY - a delicately beautiful blonde.

Also in the car are FRANCIS and CARSON, the new employee. EDISON stares out the window. MARY bounces DOT up and down. FRANCIS briefs CARSON on working for EDISON.

MARY

Are you excited to meet the President of the United States?

DOT

Yes.

EDISON

Ask her if she's excited to meet J.P. Morgan.

EDISON leans into the girl.

EDISON (CONT'D)

He looks like an ogre! His nose is BIG and BRIGHT RED, like a cherry. You'll wanna pop it in your mouth!

MARY

Don't say that!

(To DOT.)

Don't say anything about his nose. Do you understand?

EDISON pulls at his collar. He's dressed nicely.

EDISON

Mary, why in the hell do I have to dress like a monkey?

MARY

Oh you look *handsome*. Finally.

EDISON

Finally. Ho, ho, ho! Finally...

FRANCIS

(To CARSON.)

He gets distracted VERY easily. Always direct the conversation back to the issue at hand.

EDISON

(To MARY.)

This is pathetic. Should I have my hat in my hands when I beg?

FRANCIS

(To CARSON.)

He'll try to skip meetings - keep him on track. Remind him about the Westinghouse meeting.

EDISON

Or maybe I should place the hat on the rug and do a jig?

MARY

Hush.

FRANCIS

(To CARSON.)

Everyone lives and dies for his approval. Word to the wise - don't. Just do good work. If he doesn't say anything, that means you're doing fine.

EDISON

(In a funny voice.)
Pleeeeeease Mister Money Man,
pleeeeeease gimme some of your gold
so I can do something actually god
damned important.

DASH and DOT giggle.

MARY

Your words, Tom. Please. They're
children.

EDISON

I'm sorry about the swearing. I'm
god damn sorry.

DASH giggles.

EDISON (CONT'D)

(In the funny voice,
grabbing his head.)
Damn it!

The CHILDREN and MARY laugh. FRANCIS is looking over and
breaks a grin - he loves the man.

EXT. THE WHITE HOUSE - DAY

Snow falls on Washington. On the front steps of The White
House stand the coalition.

CARSON

Don't forget, Mr. Edison, we're
stopping to meet Westinghouse on
the way back.

EDISON seems not to hear. A door opens. They're ushered in.

INT. THE WHITE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A MANSERVANT escorts them into a magnificent drawing room
with grand piano, paintings, and priceless sculptures.

MANSERVANT

Of course, Mrs. Edison. The
President and Mr. Morgan are
finishing a meeting. Lunch will be
served shortly. May I get you
anything while you wait?
(Smiling at the children.)
Hot chocolate perhaps?

DASH
Hot chocolate!

MARY
Thank you.

The MANSERVANT exits. EDISON apes his voice.

EDISON
Hawwwt Chocolit, perhapthhhhhh?

The CHILDREN laugh.

MARY
Tom, we're in The *White House*.

EDISON
Paint it green and let's have some
yucks.

SERVANTS enter silver trays carrying mugs of hot chocolate
and stacks of gingerbread.

DOT
Gingerbread!

The CHILDREN are served and everyone takes cookies.

FRANCIS
(Mouth full.)
Tom, this is important. By this
point, Morgan knows you're...not so
good with money.

EDISON
(To CARSON.)
I have a tiny bad habit of losing
oodles of money-

FRANCIS
Because he invents and then drags
his feet on the way to market. If
we did just one thing at a time-

EDISON
No. Damn damn. No Francis. Thirty-
things at a time! I'm building a
Flying Machine. Flying Machine!

The MANSERVANT returns.

MANSERVANT
Lunch is served.

EDISON
Tell them to wait.

MANSERVANT
I-

EDISON
I'm not ready yet.

Everyone is quiet. The MANSERVANT's mouth is open in surprise protest. No one tells The President to wait.

MARY
Tom!

EDISON holds up one finger as if to say, "Wait." They all stand still. EDISON looks around the room. And whistles. He taps his foot on the floor. His eyes take in the rococo chandelier. He raises a brow in appreciation. Then -

EDISON
OK now I'm ready. Let's go.

EXT. YELLOW OVAL ROOM OF THE WHITE HOUSE - DAY

A door opens onto The Yellow Oval Room. There's a Christmas Tree covered in silver ornaments. A bearded, smiling man stands next to the tree, HARRISON. Another figure is backlit by huge windows, JP MORGAN. Upon spotting the tree, the children rush inside.

MARY
Come back!

INT. YELLOW OVAL ROOM OF THE WHITE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

EDISON approaches The President.

HARRISON
Good-looking children.

EDISON
Mary's fault, not mine. My wife-

MARY and HARRISON shake.

HARRISON
Delighted. She might be your most-impressive miracle.

EDISON
These two lowlifes looting your tree are Dot and Dash.

HARRISON
Dot and Dash! Charming!

From across the room, MORGAN chimes in.

MORGAN
Morse Code.

EDISON
Uh...Yes.

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. TRAIN CAR, YEARS AND YEARS EARLIER - DUSK

Filmed like the beginnings of cinema - flickering black and white. EDISON, much younger, sits next to a beautiful, shy girl - MARY. He reaches a hand over to her skirt.

EDISON (V.O.)
I proposed to Mary by tapping it
out on her knee. She was a
telegrapher who worked for me-

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. THE YELLOW OVAL ROOM OF THE WHITE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A sudden rupture in the memory.

MORGAN
Do you make it a habit of wooing
your employees?

EDISON and MORGAN shake. It's firm.

EDISON
Pierpont.

MORGAN
How much more of my money do you
want to wash down the drain?

EDISON
Oh as very, very much as possible.

CUT TO:

INT. WESTINGHOUSE'S HOUSE [MONTAGE ONE] - MORNING

Excited, lush music under-

The huge flutter of a satin sheet being tossed into the air
and down onto a bed. Then, the huge flutter of another.

The huge flutter of a pristine, white table cloth being tossed onto a long wooden dining table.

SERVANTS polishing silver flatware by hand. SERVANTS setting the table for a feast - 7 rows of forks and knives, etc. Candelabras set down.

INT. WHITE HOUSE DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Back in the White House, all parties sit around a beautifully set table, befitted with the remains of a decadent meal. The CHILDREN and EDISON eat iced cream. Coffee and tea.

HARRISON

Would you consider building a super-gun for us, Mr. Edison? One that could send bombs across the ocean?

EDISON

I don't build weapons. I'm much more interested in creating than destroying. Such as *my proposal*.

EDISON raises his brows. MORGAN takes the hint.

MORGAN

One square mile of Manhattan?

EDISON

I'm gonna light it up.

MORGAN and PRESIDENT HARRISON exchange a look of incredulity.

EDISON (CONT'D)

Look -

FRANCIS, primed and ready, hands EDISON a map of lower Manhattan. EDISON walks to MORGAN and spreads it out on his place setting. A pencil, from CARSON, is placed into EDISON's hand, without pause, and it circles the tip of the Island.

EDISON (CONT'D)

Here. This. Here. It will be a firework to civilization.

MORGAN

You figured the whole thing out?

EDISON

I did. We need to move fast before the jackals steal my ideas. Bell beat me with the telephone by one day. *One day*.

(MORE)

EDISON (CONT'D)
 I got spies figurin' out how I
 captured sound and they're gonna
poach. We need to move *fast*. I need
 a firework to civilization.

EDISON looks to his wife, then back to the men.

EDISON (CONT'D)
 This is the most important thing I
 ever will do. This is the crowning
 achievement of 1,000 years. It's
 the gateway to ten million
 inventions that we never could even
dream of before. We are talking
 about actual, *literal power*. ***POWER!***

Everyone is silent after EDISON's outburst.

EDISON (CONT'D)
 I need double what I raised.

MORGAN
 Double?

EDISON
 Dammit, don't you see this isn't
 about money?

DOT
 (Whispered to MARY.)
 Why is his nose like that?

MORGAN smiles. MORGAN hems and haws. Then -

MORGAN
No.

FRANCIS and CARSON look to a speechless EDISON.

HARRISON
 Hell, it sounds pretty grand to me,
 Pierpont. If I had your fortune-

MORGAN
 (Standing.)
 With respect, Mr. President, you
don't.

CUT TO:

INT. WESTINGHOUSE'S HOUSE [MONTAGE ONE CONT.] - DAY

A BUTLER on hands and knees picking at an oriental rug with
 tweezers, cleaning bits of matter.

Another BUTLER follows behind combing...MARGUERITE and FEMALE SERVANTS laying out dress options for the meal and chattering...WESTINGHOUSE shaving...POPE placing the light bulb gift from EDISON into a large glass vase and setting it as the centerpiece.

INT. WHITE HOUSE DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

EDISON
You're going to give me that money.

Silence. No one says this to JP MORGAN.

MORGAN
Oh I am?

EDISON
Make all checks payable to Edison
Electric Company.

MORGAN gets a look in his eye. HARRISON is beaming - this kind of excitement doesn't come to The White House every day.

EDISON (CONT'D)
And I want an apology. You hurt my
feelings.

Silence. Then, EDISON turns to HARRISON.

EDISON (CONT'D)
Thanks for lunch. We must be going.

EDISON leaves. Everyone scrambles to follow, save MORGAN.

CUT TO:

EXT. WESTINGHOUSE'S HOUSE [MONTAGE CONTINUED] - DAY

Freezing GARDENERS shoveling the walk and cutting the snow-capped hedges. Freezing PAINTERS putting touch-ups on the house.

INT. FOYER OF THE WHITE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

SERVANTS quickly help the guests into their coats.

EXT. FRONT STEPS OF THE WHITE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

EDISON's family and men get into a carriage.

EDISON
(TO HARRISON.)
Thank you for your hospitality.

HARRISON

After seeing the way you spoke to Morgan...any chance I can get you to talk to Congress?

EDISON shakes HARRISON's hand.

EDISON

Sorry, Mr. President. I know the difference between a challenge and a waste of time.

CARRIAGE DRIVER

(Whipping horses.)

H'yah!

The carriage bursts off.

INT. WESTINGHOUSE'S HOUSE [MONTAGE CONTINUED] - DAY

MARGUERITE putting small gifts onto two featherbeds - presents for EDISON's children.

INT. CARRIAGE - CONTINUOUS

The White House disappears into the distance of falling snow.

MARY

Do you know what you're doing?

EDISON puts DASH's face between his fingers. DASH squirms.

EDISON

This boy is far too handsome to be my son. Mary...what aren't you telling me?

MARY

(Shoving him.)

Oh!

EXT. WESTINGHOUSE'S HOUSE [MONTAGE CONTINUED] - DAY

Servants dragging a cut-down pine tree into the house.

Fast-forwarded tree-trimming by MARGUERITE and FEMALE SERVANTS. A silver, industrial 'W' ornament is placed at the top of the tree as the music climaxes.

INT. TRAIN FROM WASHINGTON - AFTERNOON

DASH and DOT are asleep on the plush seat, exhausted from their meeting with the PRESIDENT and mostly sugar-high.

MARY is also dozing, her temple resting on the window. Across from FRANCIS and CARSON, EDISON looks over papers.

EDISON
And our man in the patent office?

FRANCIS
It's being expedited.

EXT. PITTSBURGH TRAIN STATION - AFTERNOON

Feet are shuffling into place. Forming a line...

INT. TRAIN FROM WASHINGTON - CONTINUOUS

CARSON
Excuse me...um...Mr-

FRANCIS
Just call him *Tom* already.

EDISON
Just call him Dr. Francine Already.

CARSON
What happens if J.P. Morgan doesn't give you the money for all that copper?

In the condensation on the train window, EDISON draws a rifle. He puts his head next to the illustrated rifle.

EDISON
Pull the trigger.

They laugh.

EDISON (CONT'D)
(TO Francis.)
I bet you one month's wages we'll have the go-ahead from Morgan by the time we're home in New Jersey.

EXT. PITTSBURGH TRAIN STATION - CONTINUOUS

Camera pans along the torsos of a line of dressy people.

EXT. TRAIN FROM WASHINGTON - CONTINUOUS

Black smoke from the engine.

INT. TRAIN FROM WASHINGTON - CONTINUOUS

FRANCIS

No deal. The trip to Pittsburgh
buy's Morgan more time!

EDISON

Time is the one thing he *can't* buy;
neither can *we* and *what* in the name
of G.O.D. do you mean by... "the
trip to Pittsburgh?"

FRANCIS

Look out your window. George
Westinghouse is having the family
over for dinner. To stay the night.

EDISON

What? When?

FRANCIS

Tonight. You *know* about this.

EDISON

The hell I do and the hell I am. I
don't have time to discuss air
brakes with some Fat Cat.

FRANCIS and CARSON exchange a look.

FRANCIS

You can't just...uh...*skip*
Pittsburgh. He invited and you
accepted. Westinghouse wants to
talk with you *about electricity* -
his invitation said it's important.

EDISON

If he wants to invest, then let him
but remember - he doesn't get
special treatment. Morgan doesn't
get special treatment. No one does.
(He points over to MARY.)
She gets special treatment.

FRANCIS

C'mon, Tom - Westinghouse isn't a
Fat Cat. He's an inventor too.

EDISON

Some pudgy kitten who made it rich
building air brakes? Westinghouse
improved *upon* an idea.

(MORE)

EDISON (CONT'D)
 He didn't build a miracle out of
 the air and so, write this down
 carefully, Carson: **We're. Not.
 Stopping.**

EXT. PITTSBURGH TRAIN STATION - CONTINUOUS

Camera pans along the dignified and expectant faces -
 WESTINGHOUSE, MARGUERITE, POPE, and SERVANTS, who have
 flowers for MRS. EDISON and treats for the CHILDREN.

The sound of a train whistle pierces the silence.

MARGUERITE
 And here he comes...

THEY spot the little train chugging closer...but it doesn't
 seem to be slowing down at all.

POPE
 He's comin' rather fast, wouldn't
 ya say?

The train approaches...

POPE (CONT'D)
 It's not slowing-

A LOUD **BANG** and RUSH as the train speeds past them! The wake
 blows MARGUERITE's hair into WESTINGHOUSE's face and he takes
 a step back.

POPE (CONT'D)
 Maybe the brakes are busted.

WESTINGHOUSE fixes his gaze on the underside of the train.
 The brakes clearly read, "WESTINGHOUSE AIR BRAKES."

WESTINGHOUSE
 I seriously doubt that.

POPE
 (As the train disappears.)
 And there he goes...

INT. TRAIN FROM WASHINGTON - CONTINUOUS

EDISON
 (Leaning back.)
 Was that Frank Pope?

FRANCIS
 He's been with Westinghouse for
 maybe a decade? Head electrician.

EDISON
 You know I lived in his basement
 when I was just starting out. His
 wife still alive?

FRANCIS shrugs.

EDISON (CONT'D)
 I'd forgotten about him.

CARSON and FRANCIS don't respond.

EDISON (CONT'D)
 (To CARSON.)
 Send a...I don't know...what's a
 nice present? Send them an Edison
 Letter Opener or something from the
 drawer. Call it an 'oversight. '

EDISON looks over at his children a moment.

EDISON (CONT'D)
 I'm gonna catch forty winks.

EDISON slouches and brings a hat down atop his eyes.

EXT. TRAIN FROM BALTIMORE - CONTINUOUS

The train barrels down the tracks into snowcapped trees as
 the sun sets.

EXT. WESTINGHOUSE'S HOME - A LITTLE LATER

Snowflakes softly float and gaslights glow. Evening light.
 SERVANT opens the front door and EMPLOYEES file inside.

INT. ENTRY TO WESTINGHOUSE'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

The table is set for an exquisite dinner. Candles are lit.
 MARGUERITE approaches the CHEF and a line of SERVANTS who are
 looking expectantly for the most famous man on earth, EDISON.

MARGUERITE
 An emergency came up in New York.
 They're not coming.

An audible, collective sigh is heard from the staff.

MARGUERITE (CONT'D)
 Well.

MARGUERITE takes her place at one end of the table.

MARGUERITE (CONT'D)

Everyone sit.

The SERVANTS look at one another. They're not usually asked to dine at the table with the WESTINGHOUSES.

MARGUERITE (CONT'D)

Come now. We've got a lot of food that'll go rotten. Let's all sit.

WESTINGHOUSE and POPE watch as the SERVANTS each take a seat.

MARGUERITE (CONT'D)

Joseph. Let's get ten more bottles from the cellar.

The SERVANTS smile in anticipation of the great meal ahead. WESTINGHOUSE pulls FRANKLIN by the sleeve, nabbing the Edison light bulb centerpiece off the table as he passes through. The SERVANTS are digging in.

INT. KITCHEN OF WESTINGHOUSE'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

A grand kitchen; copper pots hang from the ceiling.

WESTINGHOUSE

Sally, is there a lemon about?

SALLY, a chef with powerful arms, fetches a lemon.

POPE

What's this about, George? What did you need to tell Edison? Ya can't hide things from *me*.

With a table knife, WESTINGHOUSE pries a nail from the floor.

WESTINGHOUSE

You have a penny?

POPE grumbles and pulls a handful of change. WESTINGHOUSE pushes the penny into the lemon, then the zinc nail.

WESTINGHOUSE (CONT'D)

Mr. Edison has made a fatal error.

From his pocket, WESTINGHOUSE produces a long copper wire, which he quickly wraps around the nailhead and the penny.

POPE

Which is...

WESTINGHOUSE

Which is - (Hand me the bulb.)

WESTINGHOUSE wraps the long loop of wire around the base contact of the bulb. It quickly and softly illuminates. WESTINGHOUSE hands the lemon to POPE.

WESTINGHOUSE (CONT'D)
Do you know what you're holding?

POPE
(Smiling)
Lemon.

WESTINGHOUSE
You're holding Edison's complete system of DC electricity. Which is, as it also happens, a *lemon*. Watch!

WESTINGHOUSE begins to back away with the lit bulb. As he does so, the glow of the bulb dims, then burps out.

WESTINGHOUSE (CONT'D)
Mr. Pope, we're going to pick a town, one little town somewhere north, and put on a show for Mr. Edison because I think I've found a flaw at the very heart of his system.

POPE takes in this revelation, resting a hand on the counter.

POPE
Well, we're gonna need more lemons.

INT. MENLO PARK FACTORY OF THOMAS EDISON - MORNING

Two bare feet hang off a bench. A body reclines.

VOICE OF EDISON
Ooooph.

The body rises. Two bare feet pad around the workshop. A hand locates a silver urn of coffee. One finger is inserted; the coffee is cold. The hands bring it to the lips. A glance at the hardwood bench where a night was spent. Hands feel the back - in a bit of pain. A stack of notebooks and some wiring lay about. A door swings open, a body backlit in early morning farm sunlight. EDISON's face squints.

EDISON
Francis?

FRANCIS takes a single step inside, he's holding a paper.

FRANCIS
You look like hell.

EDISON
 (Smiling.)
 Frannnnnnncissssss? What IS that in
 your HAND?

FRANCIS
 (Grudgingly.)
 A money order...From J.P. Morgan.

EDISON
 Bring me that chicken and lemme
 count the eggs.

FRANCIS
 (Bringing the paper.)
 So now what?

EDISON
 Now...

EDISON brushes past him, headed for the morning sunlight.

EDISON (CONT'D)
 We take Manhattan.

EXT. UPSTATE MASSACHUSETTS - EARLY MORNING

WESTINGHOUSE, MARGUERITE and POPE, in a carriage, draw into a small town of charming character. MARGUERITE is asleep on his shoulder. POPE stares out the window with excitement. As the BUGGY pulls to a stop along quaint main street, MARGUERITE blinks awake.

MARGUERITE
 Why did we have to come all the way
 up to Massachusetts?

WESTINGHOUSE
 If you fall on your face, you don't
 do it in front of a crowd.

POPE
 I grew up here. Nice to give
 something back. Well, here we **go**.

Doors are opened...

INT. / EXT. EDISON IN LOWER MANHATTAN / WESTINGHOUSE IN
 MASSACHUSETTS - DAY/NIGHT

MONTAGE TWO [**THE RACE IS ON!**]:

Rhythmic drums - or are they hammers and shovels? Then, a Dixieland explosion. The feeling of a Century lurching to the top of a tremendous hill.

EDISON and **FRANCIS** retrieve **MORGAN**'s money from banks in huge canvas sacks like bank robbers.

WESTINGHOUSE and **MARGUERITE** arriving a tiny hotel room - suitcases opened. **POPE** looks at a quaint New England street.

EDISON: Irish digging trenches in NYC streets, shoveling mounds of horse shit out of the way. Laying copper lines. **ONE PARTICULAR DIGGER**, in particular, has crazy eyes and **VERY** fancy shoes. He'll come back later...

WESTINGHOUSE and **POPE** in the town square as the **MAYOR** gives **WESTINGHOUSE** the **KEY** to the city. **WESTINGHOUSE** looks super uncomfortable. Flash bulbs go off in a **PUFF** of smoke!

EDISON grabbing a shovel away from a worker in the street - shoving it into the frozen earth. **FASTER!** **CARSON** and **FRANCIS** observe, astounded. Then, they join in.

WESTINGHOUSE supervises as a huge metal machine, the size of a tomb, is off-loaded from a truck by fifteen men. On it, a painted sign reads: WESTINGHOUSE.

EDISON: Men in office buildings over the square mile of Manhattan are pulling down gas fixtures and installing wires.

WESTINGHOUSE: Shots of men driving poles into the cold ground. Shots of men stringing up electric wires.

EDISON updating **MORGAN** over a fancy meal, reassuring him.

WESTINGHOUSE: A shot of **SHADY LOOKING MAN** observing the finished strung wires and **WESTINGHOUSE**, who walks the dark street alone, staring up at the good work his men have done. The **SHADY LOOKING MAN**, lights a cigarette.

EDISON being interviewed by the press. **EDISON** smiles a folksy grin and points up at buildings in lower Manhattan. He's hoisting his daughter **DOT** onto his shoulder.

WESTINGHOUSE: A load of crates arrive. **WESTINGHOUSE** cracks them open and inside are hundreds of light bulbs - but they're a different shape and size from **EDISON**'s. Copies...

Intercut with the MONTAGE: **CARSON** and **FRANCIS** cut wood, sand, and paint it. It becomes a map of the **WORLD**. Each territory has a small socket. **FRANCIS** take a small bulb and screws it into **MANHATTAN**. It glows. **EDISON** then walks forward and unscrews the light - they haven't done it yet.

BOTH EDISON & WESTINGHOUSE: Bulbs of both varieties are screwed into place, then each man inserts a final bulb as the sequence perfectly buttons.

INT. KEMMLER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A hammer comes down in the house of WILLIAM KEMMLER. From the nail, KEMMLER hangs a thin piece of twine, strung around two sections of hollow metal pipe, hanging in front of the door.

Darkness. Time passes. KEMMLER sits opposite the door, drifting in and out of sleep. Then, the jangle of the pipes hitting each other wakes him. It's his wife TILLIE. She's in a revealing dress and *drunk*.

KEMMLER

Where were you?

TILLIE scrambles to the stairs.

KEMMLER (CONT'D)

Tell me where you WERE!

TILLIE

You're drunk. Were's Ella?

ELLA (O.S.)

Ma?

TILLIE

Oh wonderful. You woke her.

KEMMLER

You screwin' around on me?

TILLIE

Drunk.

TILLIE walks up the stairs. We hear her comforting her daughter. KEMMLER takes a swig from a bottle.

EXT. STEPS OF THE NEW YORK STOCK EXCHANGE - EVENING

In the street, an enormous crowd is abuzz. Reporters and photographers are everywhere. Silk bunting is draped from the stone columns of the Stock Exchange. Snow falls.

An actual soap box sits at center of the top step. On one side are MORGAN'S MEN, rotund men in tails and top hats. On the other side of the box are EDISON'S family bundled up. DOT and DASH have sparklers and giggle. MARY, looking a bit weak, stands beside the EDISONS' oldest friends, THE GILLIANDS. To their side are FRANCIS and OTHER EDISON MEN.

INT. THE NEW YORK STOCK EXCHANGE - CONTINUOUS

A marble hall lit by gas. In shadows, J.P. MORGAN and EDISON. EDISON walks to a gas wall sconce and twists it off. EDISON strides back to MORGAN, extending a hand. MORGAN shakes.

MORGAN

This is the biggest moment of your life. Don't fuck it up.

MORGAN heads out the front door.

EDISON

(Calling after him.)
I'm just glad I didn't pay for it.

MORGAN snorts and EDISON follows him out the door but stops short, and turns to see his own reflection in the glass entry. He stares, and then in one brisk motion, messes up his hair. He smiles and throws open the door.

EXT. THE NEW YORK STOCK EXCHANGE - CONTINUOUS

A blurry shot of the pillars and bunting. Blurry snow flakes fall on lower Manhattan. EDISON's head suddenly steps into frame and focus. A wild roar of appreciation from the crowd.

EDISON

(Like a madman.)
Good evening. I'm Thomas Edison.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. DANK CHURCH BASEMENT - NIGHT

WESTINGHOUSE and POPE are crouching in front of the GENERATOR marked 'WESTINGHOUSE.'

WESTINGHOUSE

And the transformer-

POPE

Triple checked.

WESTINGHOUSE

The wires on Cowper the raccoon...

POPE

Patched. Insulated. Raccoon now
Raccoon hat.

WESTINGHOUSE

Oh grief - coal for the generator-

POPE turns WESTINGHOUSE around there's a HUGE pile of coal. A clomp-ing as MARGUERITE comes down the stairs. She's dressed to the nines.

MARGUERITE

Not a word more! Upstairs young man.

WESTINGHOUSE

How many are there?

MARGUERITE

It's a crowd, George. You make a miracle and you draw a crowd.

MARGUERITE ascends the stairs.

EXT. THE NEW YORK STOCK EXCHANGE - CONTINUOUS

EDISON

In the beginning...there was this nice fellow named 'God.' And he created what people call the 'heavens' and the 'earth.'

J.P. MORGAN shakes his head in amazement and disbelief.

EDISON (CONT'D)

And the earth, see, it had no...um...shape. And darkness reigned. And God looked upon the ocean. His big ol' face - a face that I can only assume was doggone HUGE, stared into the seas and a great roaring was heard.

Silence.

EDISON (CONT'D)

I said, "A great ROARING was heard."

The crowd begins to roar.

EDISON (CONT'D)

Ah, I see you read his bestseller!

EDISON laughs and turns to his family as if to say, "Look what I can do: I can make fun of God and they love me."

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. DANK CHURCH BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

A turn of a wrench. POPE stands and walks to WESTINGHOUSE. A head pops down the stairs again. MARGUERITE.

MARGUERITE'S HEAD

George!

WESTINGHOUSE

I'm coming, I'm coming.

POPE

When'll ya tell Edison about this?

WESTINGHOUSE

A day or so. I'll bring him up, he'll see how Alternating Current is better. Then we'll partner up. His bulbs, my generator.

POPE

Hell, why dontcha just take him on?

WESTINGHOUSE

Challenge Edison? That's the last thing I ever want to do.

EXT. THE NEW YORK STOCK EXCHANGE - CONTINUOUS

We pan among the faces of the crowd. Expectant faces.

EDISON

Tonight we are all part of something bigger than us. Bigger than anything that's come before. Bigger than anything that can ever come after. Tonight, we mark the fulcrum of human history.

EDISON's face is stone serious.

EDISON (CONT'D)

The Fulcrum. Of Human History.

He points to a dark building.

EDISON (CONT'D)

It's gonna happen right there!

He points to another dark building.

EDISON (CONT'D)

And THERE! And soon across this country, and Europe, this whole world; into the darkest corner of a wild forest that's never before felt the crunch of a human foot.

EDISON's face, tight.

EDISON (CONT'D)

Edison has captured in a jelly jar what has only before flashed across the night sky. And tonight...

(He snuffles in the cold.)

Whaddaya say we unscrew the lid and see what happens?

INT. DANK CHURCH BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

WESTINGHOUSE and POPE, eye to eye. A significant moment.

WESTINGHOUSE

I'd be proud if you pulled the switch.

POPE's eyebrows raise. He smiles. WESTINGHOUSE smiles. They shake hands.

WESTINGHOUSE turns and ascends the stairs.

INT. CHURCH SOCIAL HALL - CONTINUOUS

He emerges into a modest hall. There is table with punch and cookies. One reporter. One photographer. Townspeople in their Sunday best. Like a church social. A little brass band.

When the people spot WESTINGHOUSE, they cheerfully applaud. WESTINGHOUSE goes red in the face. He waves.

WESTINGHOUSE

(Spying the photographer.)

No photos!

The room goes a little quiet.

WESTINGHOUSE (CONT'D)

I mean, you should photograph the miracle that's going to be up and down *those streets*.

WESTINGHOUSE points to three HUGE windows offering a perfect view of Main Street, cloaked in dusk.

The camera sails forward, the crowd parting to accommodate...

WESTINGHOUSE (V.O.)
All ya have to do is stomp!

EXT. THE NEW YORK STOCK EXCHANGE - CONTINUOUS

EDISON
Ahhh, enough blither-blather.
Poetics aren't my thing. So I'll
quote my protege: Let there be
light.

The sound of a generator springing to life. The huge crowd turns suddenly to the sound. All heads on the platform turn to look up at the city. Then -

SHOT OF AN ENTIRE BUILDING LIGHTING UP!

THEN ANOTHER! THEN ANOTHER! THEN *ANOTHER!*

INT. MENLO PARK FACTORY OF THOMAS EDISON - CONTINUOUS

CARSON, fresh off a slip of paper from the telegraph, screws a bulb into MANHATTAN on the HUGE MAP. It glows bright white!

EXT. LOWER MANHATTAN SKYLINE - CONTINUOUS

The crowd roars!!!

A HUGE band plays. Confetti is strewn from windows.

MARY looks up at an unlit window and starts to fall backwards. MR. GILLIAND catches her with the palm of his hand. MARY rights herself.

MARY
Excuse me. I... Oh.

MR. GILLIAND looks her over a second - something's wrong.

INT. CHURCH HALL - CONTINUOUS

The camera continues lurching forward as the crowd parts and flies through the window space as WESTINGHOUSE shouts:

WESTINGHOUSE (O.S.)
Let's have it!

Everyone STOMPS on the wooden floor.

EXT. MASSACHUSETTS QUAIN T MAIN STREET - CONTINUOUS

The camera flies through the window and sails down the street as a flutter of electricity blinks forward and reveals:

A *perfect* American street, illuminated in soft, glowing white light from the poles and windows of the barbershop, the tailor, the butchershop, the cobbler...

INT. CHURCH HALL - CONTINUOUS

The band plays the 1812 overture as people cheer.

POPE, old man that he is, pounds up the stairs and looks out the window and grins broadly.

MARGUERITE hugs WESTINGHOUSE and kisses him on the cheek. His flushed face goes full RED. WESTINGHOUSE looks pleased, but his pleasure is reserved. It's restrained. It's dignified.

EXT. MASSACHUSETTS CHURCH OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

SHADY MAN hangs up a telephone.

INT. NEW YORK STOCK EXCHANGE - CONTINUOUS

An AID TO MORGAN hangs up a telephone on the trading floor of the stock exchange and briskly walks down the marble hall, slips a bit, rights himself, and continues outside.

The confetti is still falling. EDISON has DOT on his shoulders, the little girl catching confetti in her hands. Photographer's bulbs blast white smoke into the air.

The AID TO MORGAN whispers something into J.P. MORGAN's ear.

EXT. MASSACHUSETTS INN - A BIT LATER

WESTINGHOUSE and MARGUERITE prepare for bed. WESTINGHOUSE approaches his wife. He holds a letter.

MARGUERITE

That's the invitation to Edison?

WESTINGHOUSE

I'll send it off in the morning.

MARGUERITE

The way he dismissed you, George. I don't care what the man has achieved. It just wasn't *polite*.

WESTINGHOUSE

He's strongheaded is all.

MARGUERITE

Dance with me.

WESTINGHOUSE
There's no music.

MARGUERITE
George.

In silence, they sway. WESTINGHOUSE slowly brings an arm around her. His fingers relax against her back. They sway in the darkness, but out the window - a faint glow of *light*.

EXT. NEW YORK STOCK EXCHANGE - CONTINUOUS

EDISON finishes interviews with reporters - there is a buzz all around -- The Wizard of Menlo Park has done it again!

Dot and Dash play on the grand, marble steps with sparklers.

MORGAN shakes EDISON's hand, pulling him in. He whispers:

MORGAN
Westinghouse just lit up Great
Barrington, Massachusetts.

EDISON
George Westinghouse? He's in the
railroad business.

MORGAN
Not anymore.

EDISON's face goes ashen.

INT. MENLO PARK FACTORY OF THOMAS EDISON - DAY

Bangs! Crashes! EDISON, back at MENLO PARK. The mood is frantic. EDISON is off the leash, throwing things. He stands at a corner of the factory, facing the full staff of his company.

EDISON
Where'd he get the bulbs?
(No response.)
Are the lawyers on that? Get the
lawyers on that.
(No response.)
And *no one knew?*
(No response.)
What a roaring silence from the
brightest minds in America. A
roaring SILENCE!!!!

Everyone is taken aback. EDISON picks up a stray bulb from the wooden work table. He holds it above his head.

EDISON (CONT'D)

If Westinghouse stole even a socket. Even a single fucking screw from our design, we nail him to the cross. Do any of you even care about what we're trying to do here? Do any of you care about having our design *raped* right in front of us? Do any of you children understand that this is a RACE??

Shot of his employees both inspired and terrified.

EDISON (CONT'D)

Figure it out, beat the son of a bitch bloody and let's stick a goddamn EDISON flag in him.

CARSON wraps red cellophane around a bulb, fastens it, and screws it into the area of MASSACHUSETTS. Two bulbs - one pure white and one devil red.

EDISON's employees scatter as REPORTERS are let into the factory. EDISON's demeanor changes instantly to a cheerful, folksy scientist.

EDISON (CONT'D)

Gentlemen. Welcome! Aw, my hair's all a mess. Don't report on that!

The reporters laugh and all write it down. A cylinder phonograph is quickly placed onto the table.

EDISON (CONT'D)

My new miracle. The phonograph. A portable echo. The first time a man is able to hear the sound of his own voice repeated back, outside of a caveman calling into a ravine.

The men gather around a wax phonograph.

REPORTER

When are you bringing this to market?

EDISON

Soon. Hey - wanna know the names of the men who are stealing my design on this? I'll tell you. And you'll print them. First - Emile Berliner. Spelled the way it sounds, which to me, is the precise sound of a CHEAT, a COWARD, and a *THIEF*.

EDISON cranks the phonograph frantically then drops the reproducer.

EDISON'S VOICE
MARY HAD A LITTLE LAMB...

The men are astonished and applaud. A tight shot of EDISON's face - he's smiling too, but it's a different kind of smile - a darkness behind the eyes...

INT. WESTINGHOUSE AIR BRAKE COMPANY (WABCO) - MORNING

WESTINGHOUSE punches in at the factory. He looks around at his men at work, building air brake machine parts. He breathes in the air of his factory. He's home. A MAN with a friendly face enters behind WESTINGHOUSE.

FRIENDLY MAN
Oh my goodness. You're George Westinghouse?

WESTINGHOUSE
May I help you sir?

FRIENDLY MAN
I've only seen a photograph of you. Good thing I did. I would've walked right on by and not even-

The man pulls a handful of papers. They say "EDISON" in large letters across the top.

WESTINGHOUSE
I don't normally pose-

FRIENDLY MAN
I just came from Thomas Edison.

WESTINGHOUSE
What? From Edison? Well that's another story - Please, follow me.

A tracking shot as the two men walk the long length of the factor, passing flying sparks and men at work. The bedsheet blueprint hangs from a rafter. It's signed by all the employees who worked on the Massachusetts generator.

The two men enter WESTINGHOUSE's private office and WESTINGHOUSE closes the door. WESTINGHOUSE moves behind the desk and picks up a letter opener with the name, EDISON, forming the handle - in overlapping, attached metal letters. He gestures for the FRIENDLY MAN to sit; he does so.

WESTINGHOUSE (CONT'D)

Please tell Mr. Edison I received his gift and I thank him. He sent it, accidentally, to the Philadelphia office. It's a rather nice letter opener, I'd say...

FRIENDLY MAN

You want me to tell Mr. Edison?

WESTINGHOUSE

You're right. Very rude. I've already sent a note of thanks along with my invitation to Massachusetts, but I hadn't heard back. I guess he gets stacks of mail, no?

A silence. The FRIENDLY MAN squints.

FRIENDLY MAN

I think...Mr. Westinghouse...there must be some misunderstanding.

The door to the office opens and POPE slips inside.

WESTINGHOUSE

That's my friend Frank Pope. And this is-

FRIENDLY MAN

Sherman Quincy. Call me Sherm.

WESTINGHOUSE

Mr. Quincy works for Edison.

QUINCY

No I don't.

WESTINGHOUSE opens his mouth to continue, but is befuddled.

WESTINGHOUSE

You...

QUINCY

No, I'm sorry. It's just...I was sent to visit Edison's office in New York to examine the practicality of his proposal for local electricity...well, look-
(Spreading papers across WESTINGHOUSE's desk.)
I'm from Columbus.

POPE

Ohio?

QUINCY

What? Oh yes. Ohio. But these figures from Edison are...they're mighty *astronomical*. But *then* I saw your quoted price in this Massachusetts paper that's making the rounds...

He pulls a newspaper from his pocket and it's the photo that took WESTINGHOUSE by surprise up in Massachusetts.

QUINCY (CONT'D)

I think it would make much more sense for the taxpayers of Columbus to go with Westinghouse Electric.

WESTINGHOUSE

But, Mr. Quincy, there *is* no "Westinghouse Electric."

The man looks through the window of WESTINGHOUSE's office. He points to an electric generator, a duplicate of the tomb-sized one that they hauled up to Massachusetts. In bold red letters, it reads, "WESTINGHOUSE ELECTRIC."

WESTINGHOUSE (CONT'D)

Oh, that's a duplicate in case the first one...see, and the *sign* is a joke the boys played on...*Sir*. I'm *not* actually in the electricity business. It was only a demonstration for Edison's sake.

QUINCY

Oh I see how it is. Fine. I can play hard ball too, Mr. Westinghouse. I have *strong* associations with Mr. Fallows of Cleveland and Mr. Youmanns of Dayton. I'm sure if this is an issue of negotiation, I can persuade them to persuade their city councils to opt for Westinghouse Electric over Edison, but frankly, sir, your numbers make Westinghouse sell itself.

WESTINGHOUSE squints at the man, confused as hell.

POPE
 (To QUINCY.)
 Would you excuse us one moment?

WESTINGHOUSE
 But-

POPE
 Just one moment!

POPE pulls WESTINGHOUSE outside the office door.

INT. JUST OUTSIDE WESTINGHOUSE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

WESTINGHOUSE
 I'm not starting a utility company!
 I make air brakes!

POPE
 Has Edison replied to your letter?

WESTINGHOUSE
 No, but-

POPE
 By now he knows and just *doesn't*
care about getting it right. He
 just cares about *getting it*.

WESTINGHOUSE
 I don't want to step on any toes.
 This is just about ideas - about
 making sure the standard is the
 best it can be -

POPE
 Step on Edison's toes? You know
 what you did up in Massachusetts?
 You dropped a circus elephant right
 on top of the man's head!

A huge CRASH and both look over and see the DRUNK (who
 earlier had two babies in his arms) - the man WESTINGHOUSE
 was supposed to fire. He's shattered a morning's work.

POPE (CONT'D)
 Lordy, you didn't fire him?

WESTINGHOUSE sighs.

POPE (CONT'D)
 George, you want to get the
 attention of Thomas Alva Edison?
 (Smiling.)
 (MORE)

POPE (CONT'D)

Well, *Westinghouse* Electric Company
was just founded...

(Removing his pocket watch
and reading.)

At a quarter past nine this
morning.

WESTINGHOUSE's eyes dart over to the enormous, metal electric
generator bearing his name. The camera lingers.

INT. MENLO PARK FACTORY OF THOMAS EDISON / WESTINGHOUSE AIR
BRAKE COMPANY HEADQUARTERS- CONTINUOUS

WESTINGHOUSE, in fast motion, shaking hands with new men. RED
bulbs being screwed into the HUGE MAP - OHIO!

WESTINGHOUSE shaking hands with more men. VIRGINIA lights up
RED on the EDISON map.

WESTINGHOUSE shakes more hands. NORTH CAROLINA lights up in
RED...

EDISON, sitting at a long table, looks up from his paperwork
as the Carolina bulb is installed. He calls off -

EDISON

Matthew, contact the papers. I want
to have a little chat.

INT. PITTSBURGH BRIDGE CLUB - DAY

MARGUERITE sits with friends (ALICE, BEATRICE, GAIL,
PENELOPE) around a bridge table.

MARGUERITE

George started a whole company
without even consulting me. He
doesn't know how to comb his hair
without asking me which way the
part should be and yet he started a
whole company. *Electricity*.

GAIL

Like Thomas Edison did in New York?

BEATRICE

Oh I *like* Edison. He's got a
handsome...

(Wiggling her fingers in
the air, searching for
the word.)

...thing about him. Disheveled! I
just want to give him a good *bath*!

MARGUERITE

Yes, but George's system is *better*.
It uses *high voltage*.

PENELOPE

High voltage!

ALL THE LADIES

Ohhhhhhh!

MARGUERITE

Yes.

GAIL

I'd be careful, Marguerite. My
husband's brother Milt used to work
for Edison. He *actually met* Edison.
And guess what? My husband's
brother Milt said Edison is
vicious. I'd be careful,
Marguerite.

The women are nodding as the camera zooms in on MARGUERITE's
anxious face.

OVERLAPPING LAIDES

Yes, be careful. Be careful,
Marguerite, etc.

INT. NEWSROOM OF 'THE NEW YORK SUN' - AFTERNOON

THOMAS EDISON sits on a desk, surrounded by a slew of
reporters. They are enchanted by him. EDISON eats a bag of
peanuts, dropping shells on the ground. The men smoke cigars.

EDISON

...I-N-G-H-O-U-S-E. Spell it right,
boys, because people need to know
where the threat is coming from.

REPORTER 1

So why's his system bad, Tom? I say
maybe you just got bit by the green-
eyed monster.

EDISON

Westinghouse is using what is known
is ALTERNATING Current. Know what
that is?

The men are silent.

EDISON (CONT'D)
It's HIGH VOLTAGE! It means you touch one of the wires and YOU become a circuit.

REPORTER 2
And just to be clear on that point-

EDISON
You. Die.

All the men write it down. One of the mouths "You die," as he scribbles...

EDISON (CONT'D)
My system uses DIRECT CURRENT. D. C. It's safe. It works. And it's got the EDISON name on it, which makes it perty.

They laugh.

EDISON (CONT'D)
The Government has tried for years to get me to invent a weapon. A death ray. An exploding time-bomb. I won't do it. I will never do it. Never will I use this brain to invent something that hurts people. For that, you have to go shopping in Pittsburgh.

REPORTER 1
So you say that Westinghouse wants to hurt people?

EDISON
I can't say that...*but you absolutely should.*

They laugh.

EDISON (CONT'D)
Look - how much more money would you be willing to spend to make sure your wife was safe at night?

REPORTER 3
My wife? I think I'd buy Westinghouse.

They all laugh, including EDISON.

EDISON

This is not just about inventions
and profits. This is a battle over
the value of a human life.

EXT. TRAIN / BALTIMORE - DAY

Montage 3.

Quick shots to establish with mechanized electric music
under: EDISON on a train. Then, EDISON arriving in Baltimore.
EDISON at a city meeting. EDISON shaking hands with the
mayor. Trenches dug. Copper laid. Lights installed. Lights
turned on. Then, St. Louis. Then...Detroit.

INT. MENLO PARK FACTORY OF THOMAS EDISON - INTERWOVEN

CARSON SCREWS NEW WHITE BULBS INTO THE MAP - MARYLAND, ST.
LOUIS, DETROIT...

INT. GRAND LIVING ROOM OF WESTINGHOUSE'S HOME - NIGHT

A fire is roaring! A Christmas tree (with candles) glows.

MARGUERITE raises a copy of THE NEW YORK SUN above her head.
It reads: EDISON'S CHRISTMAS PRESENT TO WESTINGHOUSE: WAR.

MARGUERITE

He's calling you a profiteering
madman! *You!*

POPE and WESTINGHOUSE are shown sitting opposite MARGUERITE.
They are in low, comfortable chairs. They don't seem upset.

MARGUERITE (CONT'D)

I'll ask you once and I want a
quick answer: Is your high voltage
"AC" system more dangerous?

WESTINGHOUSE

No.

MARGUERITE is confused.

MARGUERITE

But-

POPE

Both Edison's DC and our system can
be lethal if you touch the live
current. That's why you should
NEVER TOUCH THE LIVE CURRENT.
George, I think you missed a spot
shaving. Look. Here-

POPE touches a spot high up on WESTINGHOUSE's cheek.

WESTINGHOUSE

Oh yes. I see. Why do I grow hair
so high on my cheek?

MARGUERITE

George!

WESTINGHOUSE

Bumblebee, the reason Edison is
jabbing me is that my system uses a
fraction of the amount of *copper*
because I use high voltage and
fewer generators. It's just about
dollars. May I have another cookie?

MARGUERITE

You're like a little boy!

MARGUERITE paces in silence back...Both MEN's eyes follow her
back...and forth...

MARGUERITE (CONT'D)

Then it's settled.

WESTINGHOUSE

What is?

MARGUERITE

Your name is my name and no one
drags *my* name through the mud.
We're going to write a response to
Edison's attacks. If he wants a
fight, well...he'll get one.

INT. / EXT. EDISON'S LAB / WESTINGHOUSE AT HOME, ETC. -
DAY/NIGHT

Montage 4 - the electric music increases in tempo and the
shots are intercut even faster:

RED and WHITE BULBS being screwed into the HUGE MAP all over
the US and even LONDON, which goes to EDISON.

EDISON, in his lab, working on a new device, looks up as
FRANCIS screws in two RED BULBS. EDISON picks up his device
and throws it down the table with fury and it breaks apart.

Men on ladders, stringing up wires for WESTINGHOUSE.

MORGAN yelling at EDISON. EDISON walking out on the argument.

Men in trenches, laying down wires.

Two men arguing with a very large woman. Their trench is leading directly under her house. She's quite against this.

Men installing an electric elevator in a swanky hotel.

MARGUERITE throws a paper down in front of WESTINGHOUSE that reads: "WESTINGHOUSE 'CURRENT OF DEATH,' SAYS EDISON."

Men building an electric stove in a swanky restaurant.

Night along the Rialto, Grand Canal, Venice. Glorious amber bulbs create a magical atmosphere. A young, attractive kisses beneath the lights.

A shot of the inked-up sheet hanging from the WABCO rafters in the empty Westinghouse Factory at night.

WESTINGHOUSE, MARGUERITE and POPE on train. MARGUERITE is helping WESTINGHOUSE to write a letter. She's marching up and down the aisle as she dictates, impassioned.

MORGAN yelling into a phone at EDISON. EDISON hangs up on him.

The WESTINGHOUSES and POPE arrive in WEST VIRGINIA. Shaking hands with the mayor. Trenches dug. Copper laid. Lights installed. More trains. PROVIDENCE. More handshakes. More installations. More lights on. LOUISVILLE. More handshakes. More installations. More lights on.

EDISON sitting with MARY, pale as hell. A Christmas Wreath overhead. EDISON eats forkfuls of pie. MARY isn't eating.

A shot of the glorious EDISON farmhouse, green lawns, and then a bright orange seam tears across the sky as the sun scuds behind clouds. A rumble in the heavens. Then...rain.

NEW RED BULBS SCREWED INTO THE MAP - WEST VIRGINIA, PROVIDENCE, LOUISVILLE...

EXT. LOUISVILLE TOWN STREET - DAY

MARGUERITE and WESTINGHOUSE walk down the quaint street. The street lamps are affixed with large domes of glass - bulbs. They are illuminated during the day, though they can't compete much with the sunlight. MARGUERITE carries shopping bags.

WESTINGHOUSE

Louisville is so excited to have the electricity, they keep it on in the *daytime.*

MARGUERITE

Mmmmm.

WESTINGHOUSE

Pope is already asleep, can you believe it? Tuckered out.

MARGUERITE

Mmmmm.

WESTINGHOUSE

Do you...would you like that necklace you were trying on?

MARGUERITE

I bought it.

WESTINGHOUSE

Oh. Well. Good.

There is a palpable awkwardness between them.

WESTINGHOUSE (CONT'D)

Bumblebee?

MARGUERITE

We wrote that response letter to the papers together. I saw the envelope *addressed*.

WESTINGHOUSE

Yes...

MARGUERITE

(Producing it from her purse.)

Then why did I find it in the wastebasket?

WESTINGHOUSE

After a good night's sleep, I've decided not to engage him. Edison wants to take a couple of slugs at me in the press, that's fine. A man who fights with air only tires himself out. My system can speak for itself.

MARGUERITE

You're making a mistake. You need to say something, George!

WESTINGHOUSE

This is going to be over in a month. He and I on the same side of things, Bumblebee. This is just how boys plays.

MARGUERITE

(Marching off.)

I'm taking a bath.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Two slender legs step out of a bathtub. A towel is pulled the body is patted dry. It belongs to MARY, EDISON's wife. She bends over and dries her white thighs and then, suddenly, she loses her balance and tips forward. Her hand catches the edge of the sink just in the nick of time. She stands straight. Breathes. She stands completely naked, staring at her hazy expression in the foggy mirror. Her hand reaches up to the corner of her mouth. Then, the finger touches the white towel. Blood.

INT. A DINGY ROOM IN BUFFALO NEW YORK - DAY

ALFRED BLACK, a new character, is show at home in Buffalo, New York. He's extremely well-groomed. Everything in his tiny, spare apartment is lined up at right angles - very A.D.D. BLACK spins wax into his mustache. He shines his shoes. BLACK lifts a hatbox from a chair, opens it and inside is a turtle. He feeds a piece of lettuce to the turtle.

EXT./ INT. BUFFALO PRISON - LATER

BLACK walking, then joining a line of men who all look like they are poor and/or drunk. The impeccable BLACK looks out of place. One-by-one they file into a building, past a policeman. One-by-one they take a seat on a bench.

WARDEN'S VOICE

Have you any last words?

An unintelligible murmur from a distance, muffled by a sack over a face.

WARDEN'S VOICE (CONT'D)

God have mercy on your soul.

The sound of a wood lever thrown and a gallows trapdoor. The shot changes to just the swinging feet of the hanged man. Suddenly, the feet start to twitch. BLACK stands up, in the blurred distance. The jangle of policemen and someone runs over and grabs the feet with his arms, like a hug, and gives them a heavy YANK. The sound of a neck snapping.

They'd botched the hanging. BLACK, from a distance and out of focus, is seen to sit back down.

INT. TRAIN FROM BALTIMORE - NIGHT

EDISON beside CARSON and opposite FRANCIS in the train car. The country flashes through the window. Skeleton trees.

FRANCIS

He...he has patents from all over the world. Sweden. France. His own. Tom, I've looked, the lawyers have looked and Westinghouse, *technically*, hasn't done anything... illegal. It's one thing to go around saying that Westinghouse makes dangerous electricity, but the thing is...people *aren't* dying. Like you always say, people have to see it to *believe* it.

EDISON looks into his lap.

FRANCIS (CONT'D)

Answer the man's letters. He wants our bulbs and we could use his current. Perfect! Everyone wins.

EDISON

I never understood that phrase. "Everyone wins." Don't you see that if everyone wins, no one does?

FRANCIS is stymied.

EDISON (CONT'D)

People need to see it to believe it, huh? Carson?

CARSON

Uh, yes?

EDISON

How do they kill dogs? Say...strays? Greyhounds?

CARSON

Gas, mostly. Sometimes they cut the throats.

EDISON looks out into the darkness.

INT. A DARK WOOD BOARD ROOM - DAY

Rain pelts the windows like stones.

EDISON, J.P. MORGAN, FRANCIS, and two other EDISON employees are sitting along a fancy wooden table. On the other side are two MEN OF ILL-REPUTE - crud under their nails, cheap torn clothing. These are men one hires to do bad things.

MAN OF ILL-REPUTE

Ain't no problem. We'll route it through Mexico, bring it up the coast.

MORGAN looks at EDISON. EDISON hesitatingly nods. FRANCIS looks distressed.

MAN OF ILL-REPUTE (CONT'D)

Say, uh, what're ya plannin' on doing with it?

EDISON

Some charity work for the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

MAN OF ILL-REPUTE

Come again?

EXT. SHOT OF WESTINGHOUSE WABCO FACTORY - NIGHT

Crickets. The Pittsburgh laboratory is silent. Suddenly, a window is broken. MEN climb in.

INT. WESTINGHOUSE AIR BRAKE COMPANY (WABCO) - CONTINUOUS

Using blackjacks, they begin to smash bulbs and pieces of machinery. They are searching for something. They find it. A WESTINGHOUSE ELECTRIC AC GENERATOR.

EXT. SHOT OF WESTINGHOUSE WABCO FACTORY - CONTINUOUS

We see them hoist the GENERATOR onto a horse cart. They whip the horses as the cart dashes off down a dirty road into the night, just as NIGHT WATCHMAN ambles onto the scene and takes in what has happened. His stumble turns into a run.

EXT. MENLO PARK ESTATE - AFTERNOON

A beautiful grass field. EDISON, MARY, and their two children, DOT and DASH, are taking an evening stroll. They are dressed in white. DASH is hitting a ball out into the field and he runs after it.

EDISON holds hands with DOT, the great inventor and the little girl. Behind them, in a flowing skirt, is MARY.

DOT
Why can't we do this every day?

MARY
Because your father is a busy man.

EDISON
We do this. We do this a lot.

DOT
No we don't.

DASH has retrieved the ball.

EDISON
(To DASH)
Now hit it hard - aim higher than
you think it can go.

DASH licks his lips, winds up, tosses the ball up, and hits it. It SOARS. EDISON, releasing DOT's hand, begins to RACE with DASH. They are laughing and DOT is giggling as the two boys gain distance. EDISON tackles his son and they roll through the grass. Then, a scream.

A shot of EDISON's face - he knows exactly what has happened.

EDISON scrambles to his feet and runs through the field, back to DOT who is just standing and crying.

A shot from above - MARY has collapsed in the grass field, her flowing white skirt billowing out among the green.

EDISON (CONT'D)
(Shouting to the empty
distance.)
Francis!! Francisssss!!

EXT. BUFFALO PRISON - NIGHT

ALFRED BLACK is in line, again, at a hanging.

He tries to enter but is stopped by a guard who puts a grimy hand against BLACK's pressed, white shirt.

GUARD
I see you at all these hangings.

BLACK raises his brow, as if to say, "So?"

GUARD (CONT'D)
I don't like the look'a you.

A brief standstill. Then, BLACK removes his billfold, takes out a fistful of money, and presses it to the guard's chest. BLACK enters the hanging.

INT. BUFFALO PRISON - CONTINUOUS

Only BLACK's eyes and the reflection in them, of a man dropping down through the trap of the gallows. BLACK doesn't even blink.

LOUD FAST
MUSIC - RED
BULB, WHITE
BULB, RED BULB,
WHITE BULB...

INT. WESTINGHOUSE AIR BRAKE COMPANY (WABCO) - NIGHT

POPE, alone, uses a ratchet on his motor prototype. He picks up a ham sandwich and takes a bite. He continues to work.

LOUD FAST
MUSIC - RED
BULB, WHITE
BULB, RED BULB,
WHITE BULB...

EXT. FILTHY STREETS OF BUFFALO, NEW YORK - DAY

KEMMLER in the street, a horse is eating out of his cart. KEMMLER sees his wife TILLIE flirting with some WELL-TO-DO MAN. ELLA, their daughter, is in the street, dragging a branch through the spokes of a wagon wheel. The WELL-TO-DO MAN touches TILLE's arm; she laughs.

A carriage tears around the corner, heading directly for ELLA.

A MAN is buying an apple from KEMMLER. As KEMMLER takes out a handful of change, he sees ELLA in the carriage's path. KEMMLER drops the change; it spills all over the dirt. KEMMLER runs to ELLA. Children, in the background, begin to steal KEMMLER's fallen change. KEMMLER grabs ELLA by the waist and pulls her out of the carriage's path just as she is almost struck. KEMMLER, still carrying his daughter as though she were a parcel, makes a b line directly for TILLIE. He grabs her arm.

TILLIE
Lemma' go!

He pulls her away.

WELL-TO-DO MAN
Is there a problem here?

KEMMLER
There could be.

The WELL-TO-DO MAN stares into KEMMLER's eyes, which are grey and deep. He backs off. ELLA squirms.

KEMMLER (CONT'D)
(To TILLIE.)
One'a these days yer gonna wake up
dead.

LOUD FAST
MUSIC - RED
BULB, WHITE
BULB, RED BULB,
WHITE BULB...

INT. WESTINGHOUSE AIR BRAKE COMPANY (WABCO) - DAY

WESTINGHOUSE pokes his head into an area where POPE is hard at work. A sparkling new WESTINGHOUSE ELECTRIC GENERATOR sits beside him. POPE is winding a spring around a gear.

WESTINGHOUSE
Any word on the break in?

POPE
Edison.

WESTINGHOUSE
The police haven't -

POPE
I don't need the police to tell me
what my gut knows is true.

WESTINGHOUSE
Does your gut know there's no
reason why he'd want to steal one
of our generators? I've invited him
about a dozen times to meet,
offering to show him how the whole
thing works. I want to be *partners*.

POPE
If this thing I'm building works,
then you don't need to partner on
anything.

WESTINGHOUSE

A motor?

POPE

That's Edison's only advantage with DC. But when I'm done -

The spring flies out of his hand.

POPE (CONT'D)

Damn arthritis.

WESTINGHOUSE

Just be careful.

POPE

It's a brand new generator and I know what I'm doin'. I'd rather die at the workbench than in my bed anyway.

This kind of talk makes WESTINGHOUSE uncomfortable.

WESTINGHOUSE

Yes, well. I don't like the way the winds are blowing these days.

INT. EDISON'S BEDROOM, MENLO PARK - CONTINUOUS

A shot from above of the bed. MARY is unconscious. On either side of the bed are EDISON's best friends MR. and MRS. GILLIAND, EDISON, DOT, DASH, and the DOCTOR.

Then, a shot down the bed. At the wall above the pillow is a wooden cross.

DOCTOR

Anything you can do to settle her heart; to lessen the stress, the better.

MRS. GILLIAND puts her hands on the childrens' necks.

MR. GILLIAND

Come on, children, your Momma needs some sleep. Let's have a bowl of cherry ice cream.

(Leading them out.)

Mmmm. I like to dig for the cherries like treasures, lost in the sand...

The DOCTOR packs his medicine bag. MRS. GILLIAND starts to follow her husband when she is stopped, on the arm, by EDISON. He points at the cross.

EDISON
What's that doing up there?

MRS. GILLIAND
I...it's what you DO when someone is ill.

EDISON
Not here.

MRS GILLIAND
Oh Tom, it could only help.

EDISON
Not. *Here.*

MRS. GILLIAND exits. The doctor is about to exit when he stops and addresses EDISON.

DOCTOR
You aren't looking well yourself, Mr. Edison. I recommend that you stay here on the farm. With Mary. You're getting older. Take some time off and you'll return with twice the energy.

EDISON shakes the DOCTOR's hand.

EDISON
Thank you. I will.

JUMP CUT TO:

EXT. THE MOUTH OF A TUBA - DAY

A LOUD brass fanfare!

EXT. MICHIGAN PUBLIC SQUARE - CONTINUOUS

Shot of EDISON from behind. He's dressed better than normal. He stands tall. On a wooden platform, he's addressing a sea of adoring fans and members of the press. People wave small American flags and hoist their children in the air. In the distance, white clapboard buildings are draped with bunting. A banner reads: MICHIGAN WELCOMES HOME THOMAS EDISON. Then, EDISON's face - tight.

EDISON

I will not rest. I will not sleep.
I will not kick off my shoes and
lay down my head 'til you are *safe*.

The crowd cheers. EDISON smiles broadly.

EDISON (CONT'D)

It's good to be home. Familiar
faces. Familiar streets.

(He points.)

When I was seven, I was arrested
for trying out my flying machine
from the top of *that* building, back
when it was the library. My father
made me spend a night in lock-up.

The crowd laughs.

EDISON (CONT'D)

Ya can't get it right every time.
And friends, there is a threat out
in this country. A man who *hasn't*
gotten it right.

EDISON thrusts a red book into the air.

EDISON (CONT'D)

"WARNING!" My new book outlines in
eighty-four plainspoken pages the
unspeakable dangers of utilizing
Mr. George Westinghouse's
Alternating Current for the
distribution of the "invisible
fluid" known as electricity.

A shot of a draped HUGE object. Two men pull the cover off-

The stolen WESTINGHOUSE generator from Pittsburgh! Below the
words WESTINGHOUSE ELECTRIC, someone has painted "DANGER!
LETHAL! HIGH VOLTAGE!"

EDISON (CONT'D)

(Smiling.)

But why read a book when I have
living proof?

(Calling off-)

Francis?

The band plays and FRANCIS leads on a huge brown work horse.

The horse doesn't want to go up on the platform and FRANCIS
tugs hard at the reins.

EDISON (CONT'D)

(Smiling.)

Oh! I don't blame Gus! He's smarter than the average consumer.

FRANCIS gives a hard YANK on the reins and the horse clops up onto the platform. The crowd cheers. As EDISON speaks, FRANCIS attaches leather straps with metal coils to the horse's feet and a huge leather and metal girdle around its mid-section.

EDISON (CONT'D)

A month ago, an order was given for Gus to become glue. Very sad, but just as we like bacon with our eggs, this is the way life goes. I asked Lawrence Reighter, Gus's owner, if he might let Gus live an extra month, such that Gus might be dispatched from this world without a trace of pain. Mr. Reighter is with us today and I would like us all to give him a hand.

Applause. A 250-pound farmer with full beard waves, stoically, from among the crowd.

EDISON (CONT'D)

My assistant is connecting Gus to a Westinghouse Alternating Current Generator. Mind you, this is the EXACT SAME GENERATOR that towns across America are investin' in...

The camera pans along more open and trusting faces.

EDISON (CONT'D)

The EXACT SAME GENERATOR people are using to power their schools, their churches...their homes.

The crowd looks shocked.

EDISON (CONT'D)

You may wonder how I, the "competition," obtained one. Well...

EDISON smiles a coy smile and lifts an eyebrow.

EDISON (CONT'D)

I got one.

EDISON winks and the crowd cheers. EDISON turns to the generator, but quickly takes a step back to the crowd.

EDISON (CONT'D)

Oh! There's no word yet coined to define "death by electricity." I've spoken with men at Universities, with the men who write the dictionary, heck, I even asked my own son Dash. And I heard back a few suggestions: Electro-dite, Electra-cremate, Flash-a-boom! (That's my favorite!)

The crowd laughs.

EDISON (CONT'D)

But just as the French doctor Joe Guillotine is given credit for his invention, I just can't see how we could deprive the rightful inventor of Death-By-Electrity of his due credit.

FRANCIS has completed attaching the horse to the generator.

EDISON (CONT'D)

Let's 'Westinghouse' this horsey. Whattaya say?

The crowd cheers. As EDISON speaks, we see that also in the crowd is ALFRED BLACK, the curious attendee of every hanging. He looks on with keen, but emotionless, interest. EDISON walks over the generator. He looks to FRANCIS. FRANCIS nods, looking uncomfortable.

EDISON (CONT'D)

I now ask that women and children look away. A-One-and-a-Two-and-a...

EDISON flips the switch and a RUMBLE and ZAP are heard. Then, the sound of a horse falling onto a wooden stage, but this coincides with a flashbulb and photograph of EDISON shaking hands with the mayor, who holds up a copy of EDISON's book WARNING! The band strikes up a buoyant, patriotic march!

EXT. EDISON AMONG THE PEOPLE - CONTINUOUS

A dense circle has formed around EDISON as he signs their WARNING! books with a thick, black pencil. ALFRED BLACK sews his way to the center of the circle and EDISON takes BLACK's book and scribbles a signature.

BLACK

Excuse me, Mr. Edison. My name is Dr. Alfred Black.

EDISON

To Dr. Alfred Black-

BLACK

May I have a word with you? briefly?

EDISON

Can't slow down, Dr. I have people to save, I'm sure you understand.

BLACK

Yes, yes I do, but...I've come to Michigan under directive of the Governor of New York.

EDISON's eyebrows rise. He squints at BLACK.

BLACK (CONT'D)

It is of grave importance.

EDISON

(Considering.)

Let's meet on the steps of the old library at one. But for now -

A flashbulb goes off.

Laughter and a PUFF of smoke.

EXT. LIBRARY STEPS - A BIT LATER

The smoke dissipates and EDISON is found sitting alone on the top step of six limestone stairs leading to the old library. He looks around the picturesque town square - pure Americana. A small boy, in the distance, rounds a corner. The boy stops at the base of the steps, a few feet from the inventor.

EDISON

What's your name?

THE BOY

(Not interested in being delayed.)

Tom.

EDISON

A good solid name.

The BOY kicks the dirt and looks up at the sky.

THE BOY
I think it's gonna rain.

EDISON looks up at the clouds.

EDISON
Oh no...it's just the passin' of
the clouds.

THE BOY
I think it's gonna rain.

EDISON stares at the boy.

EDISON
What's your last name, son?

THE BOY
I'm gonna jump off that library.

EDISON squints, looking hard at the boy.

EDISON
...What?

BLACK
Mr. Edison?

EDISON looks up sharply. At the base of the steps stands
ALFRED BLACK. The boy is gone. Vanished into vapor.

EDISON
Uh...yes sir?

BLACK
I am Dr. Alfred Black. I have been
hired by the Governor of New York
to discover a method of humane
execution.

EDISON
For...

BLACK
For homo sapiens.

A far shot of the two men in the empty town square. Then,
BLACK's earnest face.

BLACK (CONT'D)
You've no doubt read of the series
of botched hangings in the
Northeast?

(MORE)

BLACK (CONT'D)

Men who find their counter-balance
inadequately calculated - they
either choke to death or they
discover their heads
immediately...displaced.

EDISON

No doubt.

BLACK

They blink, Mr. Edison. I've seen
it. The dismembered head will blink
40 seconds after separation.

FRANCIS approaches, carrying too many bags for his comfort,
slung from his shoulders. He listens to the conversation.

BLACK (CONT'D)

A human weighs a fraction of a
horse. If you were to help-

EDISON

That is beyond my interest, sir.

EDISON stands.

EDISON (CONT'D)

The United States military has
attempted for years to use my brain
to build weaponry. A micro-poison.
A...floating death-ray. I won't do
it. There's a big difference
between a man and a horse.

(To FRANCIS.)

Is all ready?

FRANCIS

All aboard.

EDISON begins to exit.

BLACK

God humanely brings us into this
world. Why would you reject the
opportunity of being the first man
to humanely take us out of it?

EDISON walks away with FRANCIS.

FRANCIS

What was that about?

BLACK calls out to EDISON who is almost too far away for this
desperate outburst:

BLACK

You realize that no one will ever buy the electricity system that is explicitly used to kill a human being?

INT. / EXT. ANIMAL EXECUTIONS IN TOWNS ACROSS AMERICA - DAY/NIGHT

Montage Six - aka - *Death Menagerie*

The band strikes back up and the drums roar.

We go into a montage of ANIMAL EXECUTIONS:

Stray cat led up to a platform - *ZAP!*

Stray dogs led up to a platform - *ZAP!*

EDISON, touting his book, shaking it to heavens. The lever on the ridiculously labeled WESTINGHOUSE generator being pulled again and again.

Westinghousing a snarling hog - *ZAP!*

Westinghousing another horse - *ZAP!*

A shot of CARSON looking on with disgust, he walks away from the demonstration shaking his head.

Westinghousing a huge milk cow - *ZAP!*

Shots of WESTINGHOUSE hounded by reporters; WESTINGHOUSE retreating to his office where he is sweating profusely. He undoes his shirt collar. Sweat streams down his face.

Four sheep - *ZAP! ZAP! ZAP! ZAP!*

Westinghousing a zebra - *ZAP!*

A pony wanders the front lawn of WESTINGHOUSE's home. A sign tied over its back reads: "KILLER." Two WESTINGHOUSE servants try to catch it, but the pony trots quickly, eluding them.

INT. EDISON'S HOUSE - EVENING

In a darkened hallway, where paisley wallpaper and wooden floors seem to stretch to infinity, EDISON and FRANCIS are having it out. FRANCIS is dressed up.

EDISON

Cats, dogs, sheep, eleven HORSES.
What more do they need to see - the
entire London Zoo!? Westinghouse's
system is *dangerous!*

FRANCIS

The problem is that no one IS dying
from Westinghouse's system except
your cats, dogs, sheep, and eleven
horses.

EDISON

Pay the reporters *again* to
reinforce that my system will move
MOTORS. Westinghouse's DC can't.
Edison makes electric engines.
Edison makes electric elevators!

FRANCIS

The trouble is not many homes are
going to be buying elevators or
train engines. People are shopping
for *light*.

EDISON kicks the wall behind him with the heal of his foot.

EDISON

What's with the duds?

FRANCIS

Carson is introducing me to his
daughter.

EDISON

That little girl who's yay high?!

FRANCIS

(Uncomfortable to be
talking about girls with
EDISON.)

No...The *older* one...

They look at one another a moment.

EDISON

So you're just taking the day off?

FRANCIS

It's nighttime, Tom.

EDISON stares at the floor, not knowing what else to say.
FRANCIS claws a handwritten letter out of his vest pocket and
tries to get EDISON to take it, but EDISON won't even look.

FRANCIS (CONT'D)

Look, this is a peace pipe.
Westinghouse is CREDITING you with
leading the charge. The man is
ignoring every single one of your
attacks and *still* wants to meet!
How much longer can we afford to
ignore his generosity?

EDISON

My wife is DYING in that room
because of this competition. Don't
you see that?

FRANCIS is silent.

FRANCIS

At least *look* at this paper!

EDISON

I will go down in history as the
sole creator. You hear me?

EDISON puts his hand on the knob to his wife's room.

FRANCIS

What about the 400 of us who helped
the *sole creator*...

EDISON ignores FRANCIS and enters his wife's room. The scene
fades to black and then we are suddenly brought to the
haggard and drunken face of:

INT. BUFFALO BAR - EVENING

WILLIAM KEMMLER. He drinks a large glass of whiskey. Several
empty glasses surround him. In the corner of the bar, the
only other guest, a DRUNKEN LOON, is goading KEMMLER.

DRUNKEN LOON

An' you know what, Willy?

KEMMLER sips on the glass of whiskey.

DRUNKEN LOON (CONT'D)

If my wife fucked every man in
town, it wouldn't bother me that
she moved onto goats. I mean, where
do ya go once you've fucked every
man in town? It jus' makes sense.

The DRUNKEN LOON laughs hysterically to himself.

DRUNKEN LOON (CONT'D)

I saw...

(He throws back two shots
of rye.)

She had her fingers halfway up the
goat's rectory, ya know what I
mean? I mean, what was she lookin'
for? Diamonds?

He laughs hysterically. KEMMLER stares at the table top.

DRUNKEN LOON (CONT'D)

That is...unless you ain't sampling
her goods at all. In that
situation, I'd be the goat any day
of the week.

KEMMLER bursts to his feet and just stands. The LOON goes
quiet. Is KEMMLER gonna beat the shit out of him? What's
going to happen? KEMMLER sways a moment, then erupts out the
doorway as the bartender calls...

BARTENDER

Ay Kemmler!! You gotta pay for...

EXT. BUFFALO STREETS - CONTINUOUS

The camera moves haphazardly down the street. KEMMLER is on a
rampage, barely able to see straight, and certainly unable to
walk straight. He staggers into a horse trough and the water
spills suddenly, flowing down the dirt path. KEMMLER breaks
into a run. He's seeing double. He turns a bend, nearly
knocking into a young couple kissing.

WOMAN IN COUPLE

Watch it!

KEMMLER turns another corner and passes several houses. He
then reaches his doorstep, fumbling for his key. He tries to
fit it into the lock, but his drunkenness prevents him from
making contact with the keyhole. He scratches several nicks
into the knob. Then, he stops suddenly. He stares at the
knob. After all that, he simply turns the knob and it opens.

INT. KEMMLER'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A closet is flung open. A hand grabs an axe.

INT. KEMMLER'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The bedroom door is flung open. The axe approaches a sleeping
body. A hand fastens onto the sleeping body's arm.

TILLIE bolts upright in bed. Her eyes are wide. They fix on the intruder.

CUT TO:

BLACK.

INT. KEMMLER'S KITCHEN - MORNING

Silence.

Two eyelids open. It's morning as orange streams into a kitchen. It's blurry. It all comes into focus. KEMMLER is sitting on the kitchen floor, his back against the cabinets. He's hungover. From first look, it seems nothing is awry. Then, the camera slowly pulls back a few feet and reveals the mutilated body of his wife TILLIE, in a huge pool of blood. KEMMLER looks over. He registers what he's done.

EXT. BUFFALO STREETS - MORNING

KEMMLER walks through the streets, his wife's blood splattered all over him. People move to the side as he slowly passes. KEMMLER approaches the Buffalo Police Station.

INT. BUFFALO POLICE STATION - CONTINUOUS

A man, WARDEN DURSTON, is reading the morning paper at the front desk. He has a warm cup of coffee and a fresh roll. The paper says something about "Niagara Falls." He looks up at the blood-soaked KEMMLER.

DURSTON

William?

KEMMLER

I done killed my wife. Gimme the rope.

DURSTON takes in this information. He sets down the paper.

INT. NEWARK CAFE - EVENING

CARSON, FRANCIS, and EMMA (CARSON's daughter), sit around the remains of supper. EMMA is petite, but has a spunky nature, similar to MARGUERITE's. The men drink coffee; EMMA sips tea.

FRANCIS

(On a passionate and youthful tirade.)

And you've seen the map. Westinghouse is beating us on a ratio four-to-one.

(MORE)

FRANCIS (CONT'D)

The Thomas Edison is traveling around with the DC generator on the back of a wagon, putting on shows like some kinda...door-to-door potion salesman. Do you wanna know how many bootleg phonographs are going to be on the market - on actual STORE SHELVES - come June?

CARSON

No. No I honestly don't.

FRANCIS is taken aback.

CARSON (CONT'D)

Francis, if you're always looking to find the fastest way to the future, ya won't ever enjoy what's here and now.

FRANCIS looks at EMMA.

CARSON (CONT'D)

Francis, I...I'm retiring.

FRANCIS

You haven't even worked a year!

CARSON

I've been having some health matters...it's just - I gotta get my energy up or it's toes up.

EMMA

Oh don't you talk like that!

FRANCIS

Retiring?

CARSON

I'm old. Look at me. An old man. I thought I had a bit more adventure in me than I did.

(CARSON stands.)

I'm going to visit the necessary.

CARSON walks off.

FRANCIS

I don't understand.

EMMA

Killing animals? Peddling a system that everyone knows is inferior just because Mr. Edison didn't decide on AC at the start.

FRANCIS

It's easy to see the path if you can turnaround-

EMMA

No. What Mr. Edison is doing is clinging onto a bad idea because of *pride*. And my father doesn't have the stomach for that sort of thing.

FRANCIS is floored. He takes a sip of coffee.

EMMA (CONT'D)

And though I just met you, Francis, I don't think you have the stomach for it either.

FRANCIS looks into her eyes.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Now can we *please* stop talking about electricity and start discussing *important* things like the *weather*!

INT. WESTINGHOUSE AIR BRAKE COMPANY (WABCO) - NIGHT

3:18 AM in the cavernous, sleeping factory. POPE, on his back, is in a small crawl space looking upwards at a mess of wiring. The thin, copper wires are tangled and look like human ligaments. POPE squints and tries to get at a loose connection with needle nose pliers.

POPE

C'mere ya bugger.

A sudden 'zap' and flash of light. A shot of POPE's feet kicking up once, and then straight down.

EXT. WESTINGHOUSE AIR BRAKE COMPANY (WABCO) - MORNING

MARGUERITE, bustling, carries a paper sack and enters WABCO.

INT. WESTINGHOUSE AIR BRAKE COMPANY (WABCO) - CONTINUOUS

MARGUERITE walks along the factory floor, her white dress dragging along the sawdust. WORKERS nod and wish her "good day."

MARGUERITE
Hello...Good morning, etc.

MARGUERITE approaches WESTINGHOUSE's office door; she opens it suddenly.

INT. WESTINGHOUSE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

WESTINGHOUSE stands in front of his desk and FOUR MEN IN SUITS stand opposite him. Laid out on his desk is a long line of papers and WESTINGHOUSE signs them one-by-one. He looks up when the MARGUERITE enters.

WESTINGHOUSE
Marguerite! Gentlemen, this is my wife Marguerite.

MAN 1
Hello, Mrs. Westinghouse.

MAN 2
Mrs. Westinghouse.

MAN 3
Good morning, Mrs. Westinghouse.

MAN 4
A pleasure, Mrs. Westinghouse.

MARGUERITE laughs.

MARGUERITE
And you are?

MEN 1-3
North Dakota.

MAN 4
And South.

MARGUERITE
Very nice to meet you. My *husband* has *forgotten* his *lunch!*

She tries to hand it to him, but WESTINGHOUSE has reached into his desk and produced a lunch sack.

WESTINGHOUSE
You mean, *this?*

MARGUERITE smiles.

MARGUERITE

Looks like Sally has made you two lunches.

WESTINGHOUSE

I'll take it!

MARGUERITE

Oh no! While you worry about the middle of the United States, I worry about the middle of *you*. I'll give it to Franklin, he never eats.

WESTINGHOUSE

Should be around the corner.

MARGUERITE

Gentlemen.

They nod. MARGUERITE blows a kiss to her husband and exits the office.

INT. WESTINGHOUSE AIR BRAKE COMPANY (WABCO) - CONTINUOUS

Back on the factory floor, MARGUERITE walks around an iron caldron the size of a whale. She reaches a door whose window reads: FRANKLIN POPE, MASTER ELECTRICIAN. MARGUERITE knocks, but no answer. MARGUERITE opens the door.

INT. FRANK'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The floor is absolutely *covered* with gears, springs, tools, and the prototype motor. MARGUERITE smiles at POPE's mess. But POPE is not there.

MARGUERITE

Franklin?

MARGUERITE's gaze settles on a gleaming copper wire that snakes through the debris. She follows the wire, like a maze, out a second door, a half-sized door, to the rear.

INT. SPACE OUTSIDE FRANK'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

MARGUERITE ducks into this crawl space and calls out.

MARGUERITE

Franklin??

MARGUERITE, hunched, sniffs. Her eyes register a bad smell.

MARGUERITE (CONT'D)

Frank?

MARGUERITE bends and picks up the wire with her hands and follows it, like a guide, into the darkness. Her steps slow and she almost hits her head.

MARGUERITE (CONT'D)

Ow.

Still, she continues, hand-over-hand, around a turn, through a jungle gym of pipes...down a single step, and around one more turn. Then, a close shot of MARGUERITE's body lurching forward, taking in what she sees.

MARGUERITE (CONT'D)

Oh...

INT. EDISON'S BEDROOM, MENLO PARK - NIGHT

EDISON sits in a chair beside his bed, where his pale wife MARY sleeps. EDISON's pen rests on a notebook. He's written the word "OPTIONS:" MARY's eyes flutter a little. She moans.

MARY

Tom?

EDISON

(Looking up, suddenly.)

I'm here.

MARY

Tom.

EDISON

I'm here. Tell me what you want.

She says nothing.

EDISON (CONT'D)

There's good news, my dear. Men want to use Niagara Falls to power the entire Eastern Seaboard. If I can get that contract, do you know what that would mean for our company?

MARY doesn't respond. Her eyes close back a sleep. Her breasts rise and lower the bed sheet. EDISON sighs a sigh of relief. He returns to his notebook and sees that his fountain pen has created a black void next to the word "OPTIONS:"

INT. BEDROOM OF WESTINGHOUSE - EVENING

WESTINGHOUSE, solemn and broken, sits at the foot of the bed. MARGUERITE is a hurricane.

MARGUERITE

I'll never get it out of my head. Never. The *smell*. Do you *know* what burning human flesh smells like?

WESTINGHOUSE

I do. The Civil War afforded me-

MARGUERITE

I assume you've contacted his son?

WESTINGHOUSE

We're trying to locate him. They hadn't spoken in years. Bumblebee?

MARGUERITE

Don't call me that.

WESTINGHOUSE begins to pull of his socks.

MARGUERITE (CONT'D)

Forgetting that the papers will DRINK THIS UP - *forgetting* that Edison will use Franklin's death as a *tactic* -

WESTINGHOUSE

He won't. The man has **principles**.

MARGUERITE

If he has them, they've gone missing long ago.

WESTINGHOUSE

It was a *horrible* accident.

MARGUERITE stops and looks her husband in the eye.

MARGUERITE

You do not have the abilities to deal with what this *means*. I've had your secretaries contact men from each of the seven main New York papers. Tomorrow afternoon you will speak with them and explain that you are *dismantling* Westinghouse Electric and returning to what you love to do - building brakes which actually *save* human lives.

Silence.

MARGUERITE (CONT'D)

Did you hear what I said? I said you will tell the papers tomorrow that you are *dissolving* your company. You will sell off all your contracts. Sell them to Edison for all I care, but we are getting out of this deadly business.

WESTINGHOUSE looks at her. He blinks.

MARGUERITE (CONT'D)

Don't you dare protest.

WESTINGHOUSE

I'm not.

MARGUERITE softens. She kneels before her husband and puts her arms around him.

MARGUERITE

He was your friend.

WESTINGHOUSE, choked up, just nods.

MARGUERITE (CONT'D)

Let us try to rest. Soon all this terribleness will be over.

INT. MENLO PARK FACTORY OF THOMAS EDISON - LATE EVENING

EDISON sits at a long table, eating a piece of peach pie. Next to him, DOT twists a piece of copper wire, playing with it, forming it into the shape of a person. FRANCIS is standing before the huge map. The bulbs are red, 4:1 WESTINGHOUSE.

FRANCIS

What else do you want from me? We can't scare them. Unless you can figure a cheaper way for DC current-

EDISON

My system works! It's not BAD!

CARSON approaches the wooden map of the United States and tries to carefully changes a few white bulbs to red without EDISON's notice. It doesn't work.

EDISON (CONT'D)

What the HELL are you doing, quitter! If you want to quit, quit. Leave.

(MORE)

EDISON (CONT'D)

I don't need you to stay out the week but don't you touch that GOD DAMNED *map*.

DOT looks up at her father, recognizing the anger.

FRANCIS

Cities you've won are switching. They're eating the cost. Something has to change.

DOT

Daddy?

EDISON

(To his daughter.)
Please, monkey, quiet.

DOT resumes twisting her wire. CARSON and FRANCIS stand in front of the map. Their expression says, "What now?" Suddenly, the phone rings. FRANCIS walks over and answers.

FRANCIS

It's J.P. MORGAN.

EDISON

Hang it up.

A stand-off. Both parties know he has to take the call. EDISON stands and approaches the receiver.

INT. J.P. MORGAN'S LIBRARY - NIGHT

Dark wood, dark green carpet. Almost like a hunting lodge. Crimson books line the shelves. An enormous Lion's head is set above a roaring fire. MORGAN speaks into the telephone.

MORGAN

I have word that Westinghouse is hosting a press event tomorrow. He must be expanding overseas.

EDISON

They love me in Paris.

MORGAN

We are hemorrhaging money. Get on the train. Come immediately.

EDISON

You're ordering me?

MORGAN

Get ON a train, Edison. I'm not a wallet.

Silence on the line.

EDISON

(In a quieter tone.)

My wife is dying, Pierpont. I can't leave New Jersey.

MORGAN

This is not a request.

J.P. MORGAN hangs up the receiver.

INT. WESTINGHOUSE'S BATHROOM - MORNING

WESTINGHOUSE stands, in underpants, at the mirror. He shaves. MARGUERITE, groggy, passes behind him. She stops and points to a spot on his cheek that he missed. She kisses him lightly on the shoulder and passes by. WESTINGHOUSE shaves the spot.

INT. TRAIN CAR - LATER

It's 4 A.M. The first train of the day. EDISON is in a rumpled suit-and-tie. His eyes are bloodshot. He has a small notebook and tries to think of ideas. He's written down: "Electro-Hammer, Electro-Drill, Electro-Shovel." He puts down the pencil and looks out the window as the train begins to lurch forward. He watches the sun rise over the tiger lilies and buzzing dragonflies. He's Manhattan bound.

INT. BUFFALO PRISON - MORNING

KEMMLER is led into his cell. It's small, dusty, and bleak. A tiny, barred window looks out onto a brown, Buffalo morning. The metal door clangs shut. Kemmler slowly lowers himself down onto the dirt floor.

INT. BLACK'S HOME - MORNING

BLACK is home, running a comb through his wet hair. He twists wax in his mustache. He reaches into a paper bag and crosses to a box. He feeds a lettuce leaf to his turtle.

EXT. WESTINGHOUSE'S BREAKFAST ROOM - MORNING

WESTINGHOUSE, dressed up for reporters, takes his cup of coffee. Beside him is a stack of mail and the 'EDISON' carved letter opener. WESTINGHOUSE picks it up, looking at it a moment. The sound of a doorbell. WESTINGHOUSE sighs.

INT. TRAIN CAR - MORNING

EDISON has fallen asleep. The car jolts to a stop. EDISON wakes with the motion. He looks down at his notebook and sees he's written: "Electro-Westinghouuuu." He closes the book quickly. Out the window is rising steam and smoke. He's in New York.

INT. CARRIAGE THROUGH THE STREETS OF NEW YORK - LATER

EDISON in carriage, looking out at the dirty streets of Manhattan, at the poor lined up for breakfast.

EXT. WESTINGHOUSE'S GARDEN - MORNING

REPORTERS are easing into wooden lawn chairs, arranged in a semi-circle before a lectern. SERVANTS offer them scones and coffee.

EXT. CARRIAGE ARRIVING AT THE HOUSE OF J.P. MORGAN - LATER

Wearily, EDISON steps down from the carriage in front of MORGAN's monstrous house. EDISON takes it in.

INT. HOUSE OF J.P. MORGAN - CONTINUOUS

EDISON is brought into MORGAN's dark study where he waits. EDISON refuses coffee. He just waits.

INT. BUFFALO COURT ROOM - MORNING

KEMMLER stands before a judge in an all-wood courtroom. KEMMLER is cleaner. His beard is trimmed. His hair is parted. KEMMLER has no attorney. KEMMLER turns to the back of the court room and sees his daughter ELLA sitting next to a WOMAN OF THE STATE. The JUDGE, a very fat man with a moonface, takes a quick sip from a cup of coffee and clears his throat.

JUDGE

What say you, William Kemmler?

KEMMLER

I done killed my wife.

INT. HOUSE OF J.P. MORGAN - CONTINUOUS

EDISON continues to wait. He checks his pocket watch. He is restless.

INT. BUFFALO COURT ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The JUDGE nods to a squirrely BAILIFF who brings over a wooden portable writing desk with a fountain pen, ink well, and written confession.

JUDGE

Your wife-

KEMMLER

Tillie. I done killed Tillie.

The judge nods again and the BAILIFF hands KEMMLER the pen. The BAILIFF points to a line where KEMMLER must sign. After a moment, KEMMLER slowly draws an 'X' across the line. He's illiterate. The BAILIFF whisks the writing desk away.

JUDGE

William Kemmler. This court rules
that you shall hang by the neck
until you cease to breathe.

He brings down his gavel. KEMMLER stares forward, emotionless. ELLA is led out of the courtroom by a WOMAN OF THE STATE. The little girl is too young to really know what's happening.

EXT. WESTINGHOUSE'S GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

All seven of the REPORTERS are sitting, drinking coffee, and buzzing with anticipation regarding the mysterious announcement to come...

INT. MORGAN'S STUDY - MORNING

EDISON has started to doze again when the door to MORGAN's study flies open and MORGAN enters, downing a cup of hot coffee and munching on a croissant, the crumbs falling across his broad stomach and gold chain. EDISON stands.

MORGAN

(Through bites of
croissant.)

Has your phonograph gone to market?

EDISON shakes his head.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

Why the hell not?

EDISON

It will. But...the clock is running
out on electricity and I need more
time-

MORGAN

That's just bad business, Edison.
The phonograph could PAY for the DC
generators you're giving to towns
for FREE.

EDISON

I give them the generators so that they'll have no choice but to pay for the electricity-

MORGAN

Westinghouse SELLS his generators. Profit. *Profit*. God knows what he's telling the papers today and your refusal to abandon your flawed system-

EDISON

My system is NOT flawed. It works-

MORGAN

Your REFUSAL to adopt Westinghouse's current is causing me to hemorrhage money. EDISON ELECTRIC is tanking faster than-

EDISON

This will all change soon-

MORGAN

You change your current or you lose my funding. You get it?

EDISON

Yeah, yeah-

MORGAN

No. I *don't* think you're listening. Do you know how much of "your" company I own? One snap of my fingers-

EDISON

You make me come to Manhattan to tell me this? You could have told me over the telephone.

MORGAN

If I ask for someone, they come. That's how it works!

EDISON walks over to the richest man on earth.

EDISON

No. Here is how it works: I captured sound in a box. I caught lightning in a jar. I build miracles. You are nothing more than *grease*. My wife is dying.

(MORE)

EDISON (CONT'D)
 You will continue to give me as
 much money as I ask for. I'm Thomas
 Alva Edison.

EDISON gathers his things and walks to the door, not even
 turning while he says-

EDISON (CONT'D)
 Don't ever summon me again.

EXT. THE HOUSE OF MORGAN - CONTINUOUS

EDISON climbs into the carriage and closes the door.

DRIVER
 (To horses, cracking his
 crop to their rumps..)
 Heee-ya!

The carriage begins to roll away.

INT. CARRIAGE - CONTINUOUS

A hand suddenly appears at the glass of the door and BANGS
 furiously. EDISON jumps.

EDISON
 (Knocking his fist on the
 roof.)
 Stop! Stop!

The carriage stops and one of MORGAN'S BUTLERS opens the door
 of the carriage.

BUTLER
 Excuse me, Mr. Edison. A Francis
 Upton just telephoned?

A horse kicks his foot in the dirt.

EDISON
 She's dead, isn't she?

EXT. WESTINGHOUSE'S GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

The glass door to WESTINGHOUSE'S home opens and the man
 himself strides to the lectern. The REPORTERS quiet
 themselves.

WESTINGHOUSE
 Good morning.

REPORTERS
 Good morning.

MARGUERITE stands in the open doorway to the house.

WESTINGHOUSE

Yesterday, my head electrician
Franklin Leonard Pope, was killed
in an accident at the factory-

A REPORTER

Was alternating current electricity
the cause of death?

WESTINGHOUSE

Electricity was the cause of death.
It was an accident and -

ANOTHER REPORTER

Mr. Westinghouse - does this mean
that Thomas Edison's attacks are
not spurious?

WESTINGHOUSE

Not spurious...

MARGUERITE takes in a large breath.

WESTINGHOUSE (CONT'D)

Gentlemen, if you will please allow
me to say...

WESTINGHOUSE trails off. He looks into the garden, beyond the
MEN. He's silent. The MEN look at one another, confused. The
morning sunlight is ripping through the forest beyond the
garden. It causes WESTINGHOUSE to squint.

WESTINGHOUSE (CONT'D)

Frank and I began Westinghouse
Electric as an experiment. Up in
Great Barrington, the little town
that bore Frank, we wanted to
show...the world that there was a
better way to illuminate.

MARGUERITE licks her lips.

WESTINGHOUSE (CONT'D)

What was just a seedling has
blossomed into the de facto
standard of electricity
distribution. And...

A close-up on MARGUERITE's face. Then -

WESTINGHOUSE (CONT'D)

Though I mourn the loss of a great friend, misfortune does not trump progress. And as Franklin Pope would no doubt wish - Westinghouse Electric shall endure. Thank you.

WESTINGHOUSE leaves the lectern; the reporters are speechless. WESTINGHOUSE passes his wife in the doorway.

WESTINGHOUSE (CONT'D)

Cream will rise. I'm sorry.

MARGUERITE stops him.

MARGUERITE

That's it? *Cream will rise*? George, you're not a fighter and yet I *think* I just heard you declare war.

WESTINGHOUSE reaches into his pocket and pulls the 'EDISON' letter opener. He takes the letter opener and, in one swift motion, stabs it into the door frame. It sticks, easily.

WESTINGHOUSE

My dear, I think you just did. I'm going to New York.

EXT. HOME OF ALFRED BLACK - DAY

A knock at the door. BLACK opens it, a stack of books tucked under his arm. A MESSENGER stands on the step.

MESSENGER

Dr. Black?

BLACK nods. The MESSENGER hands BLACK a telegram.

BLACK's eyes light up with fire as he reads...

EXT. CORNFIELDS OUTSIDE THE EDISON HOUSE - DARK

The stars are shining pinholes through the dark. EDISON, in loose shirt and trousers, stands in the same field of light from the beginning of the film, except the bulbs are off. Clear glass balls covered in mud and gnats, they don't seem so magical anymore. Some have broken. One seems to be supporting a bird's nest. Across a bulb, like a crystal ball, is ALFRED BLACK. He's impeccably dressed. The two men speak in hushed voices.

EDISON

Two conditions. One: Your *electric* chair must use WESTINGHOUSE brand electricity. You must make that very well known.

BLACK

Of course.

EDISON

The generator from the animal executions...you may have it.

BLACK

Thank you.

EDISON

Two: My name must NEVER be associated with your death chair. It is the first and only credit I do not want.

BLACK

But it is noble to-

EDISON

I trust you can find your way to the train.

EDISON turns and walks into the darkness. BLACK is left alone. Fireflies dance around him. He looks for any sign of direction. He's lost.

LOUD FAST
MUSIC - RED
BULB, WHITE
BULB, RED BULB,
RED BULB.

EXT. GRAVEYARD OUTSIDE NEWARK, NJ - DAY

The rain falls in fat drops through the greenery and drums against the tops of two black umbrellas. EDISON and MR. GILLIAND stand before the 8 foot tall grave of MARY STILWELL EDISON. EDISON's name is enormous across the foot of the stone pillar and he can't look away from it.

MR. GILLIAND

Normally I wouldn't...I wouldn't divulge this as it is not yet announced but...

(He clears his throat.)

There's going to be a competition at Niagara.

EDISON

Niagara...

MR. GILLIAND

For who can harness the power of
the falls. Who can turn *water* into
power.

EDISON, using the toe of his shoe, moves a fallen leaf from
the stone monument to the grass.

MR. GILLIAND (CONT'D)

It will be a defining win. More
important, it will be a deathblow
to the competition. Westinghouse's
system can light up lights, but it
can't spin a motor. Only Edison can
do that. And a motor is what needs
to go under the Falls.

(Turning to EDISON.)

It doesn't matter what came before.
Whoever wins Niagara wins
everything. *Everything*. It will be
both the largest contract of all
and the largest symbol: Mankind
harnessing nature.

EDISON's eyes are fixed on his last name at the base of
MARY's grave.

EDISON

My boys agree that it's impossible
for Westinghouse's Alternating
Current to power a motor.
But...what if he somehow *does*
figure it out? He seems to have all
the luck...

MR. GILLIAND

That's why I need to distance
myself from you now, Tom.

EDISON looks up and into GILLIAND's eyes.

MR. GILLIAND (CONT'D)

I looked carefully at the bylaws
and it turns out...it turns out
that with my position on both the
Niagara Committee and the United
States Energy Advisory Board...I
have the deciding vote.

The two men look at each other.

MR. GILLIAND (CONT'D)
 You've just invented a machine that
 builds Luck. And it's me.

INT. COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY LECTURE HALL - DAY

An audience is full of reporters and academics. ALFRED BLACK is on stage with a WESTINGHOUSE generator and a GORILLA. BLACK holds the GORILLA's hand, like they are friends. The GORILLA looks around.

BLACK
 I am building a device that will
 dispatch the human soul without a
 trace of pain.

MEN in the audience take notes.

BLACK (CONT'D)
 Gorilla's are the closet relative
 to man. This is Sally...

EXT. CENTRAL PARK IN SPRING - DAY

WESTINGHOUSE walks through the Park in the direction of the Plaza. A newspaper is folded under his arm. Under his other arm is a package, wrapped in brown paper and twine. The trees are starting to bloom and WESTINGHOUSE glimpses the tops of the fancy apartments on the Upper East Side of Manhattan. FRANCIS and EMMA are walking towards WESTINGHOUSE, EMMA's hand around FRANCIS's arm. FRANCIS spies WESTINGHOUSE and immediately takes EMMA off the path and into the bramble.

EMMA
 What are you-

FRANCIS
 Shhh!

The two duck down, sitting behind a large boulder.

EMMA
 What-

FRANCIS cups a hand over her mouth.

EMMA (CONT'D)
 (Muffled.)
 What's going on?

FRANCIS closes his eyes. Then -

WESTINGHOUSE (O.S.)
 Francis Upton?

FRANCIS opens his eyes. He turns and looks up at WESTINGHOUSE who stands on the path watching the two young people with amusement.

FRANCIS
 (Standing, and helping
 EMMA to her feet.)
 Mr...Mr. Westinghouse.

WESTINGHOUSE
 Will you do me the honor of
 introducing-

FRANCIS
 Oh - this is. This is Ms. Emma
 Schmidt.

EMMA
 Soon to be Emma Upton.

WESTINGHOUSE
 Congratulations.

FRANCIS
 How did you...you know who I am?

WESTINGHOUSE
 You're next to Edison in almost
 every photo.

FRANCIS
 I am?

WESTINGHOUSE hands the newspaper to FRANCIS. FRANCIS unfolds it to the front page. Above the fold it says: "EDISON AND WESTINGHOUSE BATTLE FOR NIAGARA!" There is drawing of WESTINGHOUSE. There is a photo of EDISON smiling proudly. FRANCIS is by his side, looking off.

EMMA
 Look! It's you! You could have
 smiled, Francis.

FRANCIS
 I didn't even know they were taking
 my photograph.

WESTINGHOUSE
 With the number of unanswered
 letters I've sent to your boss,
 I've started to think I'd have
 better luck writing to Santa Claus.

FRANCIS

Tom's absent-minded as hell-

WESTINGHOUSE

Tell me this much - is he behind the death chair that ape-killing man is building?

WESTINGHOUSE reaches over and flips the paper over to below the fold. A picture of ALFRED BLACK and a gorilla! Beside them is a generator clearly marked "WESTINGHOUSE."

FRANCIS

No. Tom would never make a weapon.

WESTINGHOUSE looks at the young man's face. The two men stare at each other a moment. Then, WESTINGHOUSE smiles.

WESTINGHOUSE

It was very nice to meet you, Mrs. Upton-to-Be.

EMMA

Delighted.

FRANCIS looks down the path where WESTINGHOUSE is heading. It terminates at the PLAZA.

FRANCIS

So...uh...where are you...um...going?

WESTINGHOUSE

You're sweating, Francis. No need for subterfuge. I'll give you two clues. One: I'm going to the Plaza. Two: In this brown package are three shirts. Handmade. Silk. *Three.*

FRANCIS's mouth drops open.

WESTINGHOUSE (CONT'D)

Ah yes, I see you figured it out. Enjoy this beautiful day.

WESTINGHOUSE leaves. EMMA turns to FRANCIS.

EMMA

Where's he going?

FRANCIS

Oh no.

INT. PLAZA HOTEL HALLWAY, OUTSIDE ROOM 333 - DAY

WESTINGHOUSE knocks twice on a suite door marked '333.' No response. WESTINGHOUSE knocks twice again. No response. WESTINGHOUSE turns to leave, takes a few steps, then stops. He's figured something out. He returns to the door. WESTINGHOUSE knocks THREE times. The door swings open to reveal...NIKOLA TESLA. He's tall and wiry. A beak nose, dark moustache. His hair is slickly parted down the center. He's lavishly dressed in a bespoke cashmere coat with an almost comic number of buttons.

TESLA

(A thick, Serbian accent.)
Mister Westinghouse!

WESTINGHOUSE raises an eyebrow.

WESTINGHOUSE

Tesla-

TESLA

Come in, come in!

INT. TESLA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

It's a lavish hotel room - dark velvet curtains, a large 4-poster bed with satin sheets, etc. Shots of everything in THREES - three sets of shoes, three suits, three suitcases, three toothbrushes, three combs, three hats, even three beds. WESTINGHOUSE and TESLA are now sitting opposite one another in armchairs. WESTINGHOUSE is handed a glass of whiskey by TESLA. It is poured quite high. WESTINGHOUSE puts it immediately down on a side table. He doesn't drink. TESLA, in his Serbian lilt, is praising a brand new walking stick which he holds on his palms.

TESLA

Perfect balance. Surinamean Snake Wood. But, look, Mr. Westinghouse, (and this is why I simply could not let it go), a hand-carved Fibonacci sequence spirals down here and the PITCH of the wood is proportional to the sequence.

WESTINGHOUSE

The pitch?

TESLA smiles and puts the stick to both their ears, and then flicks the wood. Then, he raises a long bony finger as if to say, "Wait!" and he flicks the wood at a different part of the stick. It sounds exactly the same.

WESTINGHOUSE (CONT'D)
Very...nice.

TESLA
The craftsman is building a...how
would you say...a *bust* of me to put
atop the walking stick. It will
look exactly like this:

He turns his head to the side. He pauses. WESTINGHOUSE
doesn't know if he's waiting for something or...nothing.

TESLA (CONT'D)
But smaller, of course.

WESTINGHOUSE
Mr. Tesla, I appreciate your taking
time to meet with-

TESLA stands and begins to walk out of the room.

WESTINGHOUSE (CONT'D)
...me. I...are you going somewhere-

TESLA is now out of the room. WESTINGHOUSE, confused as hell,
looks around and doesn't know what to do. Then, a door click
is heard and TESLA reenters, carrying a large hand-drawn
blueprint. He takes it to WESTINGHOUSE who stares, befuddled,
at the blueprint.

WESTINGHOUSE (CONT'D)
How did you know this is what I-

TESLA
When I first came to this country,
I worked for Mister Edison. Did you
know that?

WESTINGHOUSE
I did not.

TESLA
He told me that if I could solve
two of five impossible challenges,
he would pay me fifty-thousand
dollars.

WESTINGHOUSE
Did you-

TESLA
(Leaning forward and
smiling.)
All five. One night.
(MORE)

TESLA (CONT'D)

I almost needed an additional morning, but I decided to think faster.

WESTINGHOUSE

To think *faster*?

TESLA

So, the next morning, when I came to Mister Edison, I said, "Mr. Edison, I have solved all of your challenges and you shall no doubt make a considerable profit off of this work, would you kindly pay me as you had promised?" Do you know what he said?

WESTINGHOUSE shakes his head.

TESLA (CONT'D)

(Impersonating, VERY POORLY, THOMAS EDISON.)

"Oh Mister Tesla. You do not understand the American sense of humor. I was...eh...how you...I was ribbing you about the fifty-thousand dollars."

WESTINGHOUSE gives a knowing smile.

TESLA (CONT'D)

I quit. I will not work for a man who does not value his workers. I will not work for a man who is not good on his word. But I had no money. And I was starving, Mr. Westinghouse. So I took the only job I could find. Ditch digging. For a system of electricity to be installed in the lower part of Manhattan.

WESTINGHOUSE

You went from working alongside Edison himself to-

TESLA

I was a ditch digger employed by EDISON ELECTRIC. A *digger* of *ditches*. Once...I saw Edison crossing the street and I had to hide my face. The pride. Oh what we will give for pride...

WESTINGHOUSE is now looking over the blueprint.

WESTINGHOUSE
This is a motor.

TESLA
I know.

WESTINGHOUSE
(Scouring the blueprint
- everything adds up in a
gorgeous way.)
A motor for my Alternating Current.
You designed this. You figured it
out.

TESLA
I know, yes.

WESTINGHOUSE
Is it...for sale?

TESLA pauses, he doesn't want to scare WESTINGHOUSE away.

TESLA
Two-hundred dollars?

WESTINGHOUSE breaks out laughing hysterically. We have never seen him laugh like this. His face is bright red.

WESTINGHOUSE
Nikola, this blueprint is the key
to winning the war. *Two-hundred
dollars?*

TESLA
Fine. One-fifty. But not a penny-

WESTINGHOUSE
I will give you two-dollars and
fifty cents.

The two men stare.

WESTINGHOUSE (CONT'D)
...For each HORSE-POWER of each we
build.

WESTINGHOUSE's eyes go wide. TESLA is doing a calculation on his fingers.

WESTINGHOUSE (CONT'D)
Don't bother. This will make you
one of the richest men on earth.

TESLA bolts to his feet and shakes WESTINGHOUSE's hand. He stands too.

TESLA
Thank you! Oh thank you!

They're still shaking.

TESLA (CONT'D)
A man may work in ditch, but a man
may not be treated as though he
belongs there.

A sudden pounding at the door.

TESLA (CONT'D)
Aw Fuck.

WESTINGHOUSE is taken aback by TESLA's language.

EXT. TESLA'S DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Two enormous Irish POLICEMEN stand with the HOTEL MANAGER. The door opens and we see WESTINGHOUSE. TESLA is cowering in the background.

HOTEL MANAGER
All right, Mr. Tesla, time to go.

TESLA
I will not!

HOTEL MANAGER
(To WESTINGHOUSE.)
He hasn't paid his bill for a
month.
(Nodding to the
POLICEMEN.)
The spindly guy in the back there,
with the moustache. Take him out of
here.

WESTINGHOUSE reaches into his pocket and pulls out a billfold. He removes a THICK STACK of hundred dollar bills.

WESTINGHOUSE
How much does he owe?

In the background, TESLA smiles a Cheshire grin.

TESLA
(Calling to the
POLICEMEN.)
Be gone! Be gone!

WESTINGHOUSE turns to hush him.

WESTINGHOUSE
Please, Mr. Tesla.
(Then, to the HOTEL
MANAGER, counting hundred
dollar bill after hundred
dollar bill into his
hands.)
How much to keep him in this room
for a year?

INT. BASEMENT OF THE HOUSE OF EDISON - NIGHT

Time-lapse sequence, overlapping slow fades: EDISON, himself, is nailing together wood, screwing in metal plates, building what slowly takes shape as the First Electric Chair. As the final nail is driven into wood, DASH, EDISON's son, comes down the stairs sobbing. EDISON quickly pulls a canvas over the chair. The boy is just standing before EDISON, crying.

EDISON
Dash? What's the matter?

The boy continues to cry. EDISON embraces his son. It is awkward and strained. Unnatural. The boy flings his hands around EDISON's neck.

EDISON (CONT'D)
There, there...There, there.

From the angle of EDISON's hug, EDISON sees only the chair, partially covered with canvas.

INT. EDISON'S BREAKFAST ROOM - MORNING

The next morning, EDISON, FRANCIS, EMMA, DOT, and DASH are enjoying a country breakfast. Thick fall light streams in waves through the bay windows. EMMA is showing DOT how to do a "cat's cradle" with a piece of string. DASH is pushing his hand into his oatmeal.

EDISON
Dash, stop it.

DASH looks at his father guiltily and stops.

FRANCIS
Are you building anything new in
the house?

EDISON
No.

FRANCIS

I heard...that you asked for a workshop to be built downstairs.

DOT walks over to FRANCIS and transfers the cat's cradle to his hands. DOT is smiling - she has a crush on FRANCIS. FRANCIS accepts the strings but doesn't seem to register it. He's focused on EDISON.

EDISON

The boys...are *wrong*.

EMMA eyes FRANCIS as if to say, "Go on..."

FRANCIS

Alfred Black needs the death chair built. And he's not a scientist...

EDISON

And I told him "No."

EMMA looks away.

EDISON (CONT'D)

Is there something you want to ask me Francis?

DOT looks up at her father. The room goes quiet.

FRANCIS

No.

EDISON exits. FRANCIS is left staring with his fingers entangled in the string web.

INT. BUFFALO PRISON - DAY

ALFRED BLACK stands next to WARDEN DURSTON. From a distance, they observe KEMMLER in his cell. He is sitting with a NUN who shows KEMMLER a children's bible. His head is bowed, carefully paying attention.

BLACK

And...and it's OK to have her in there with him?

DURSTON

Oh William is as meek as a bunny.

BLACK

Except that he struck his wife thirty-seven times with an axe.

DURSTON

Forty-one.

BLACK

What's she doing in there?

DURSTON

Teaching him to read.

They observe a moment.

DURSTON (CONT'D)

So the Governor has given the directive?

BLACK

He's to be the first man executed with electricity. Intentionally, that is.

DURSTON

God help him.

BLACK turns to DURSTON in disbelief.

BLACK

He's the most fortunate man to ever be put to death.

The camera pulls back as BLACK and DURSTON continue to observe.

DURSTON

Some people got all the luck.

EXT. PARIS - EVENING

A loud band plays!

Before a huge crowd of Parisians, WESTINGHOUSE and NIKOLA TESLA are standing along the Seine, posing for a photograph. WESTINGHOUSE looks miserable. TESLA poses grandly. A drumroll...and BANG - the ornate buildings along the Seine are beautifully illuminated. The crowd cheers.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Un. Deux...

WESTINGHOUSE

No, I...pardon.

WESTINGHOUSE walks off, leaving TESLA alone. He just can't do it. The photographer is confused. After a moment -

TESLA
 (To the crowd.)
 Try to capture my brilliance on
 film!!

A puff of white smoke!

TESLA (CONT'D)
 I am **glorious!!!**

CLOSE-UP OF A RED BULB SCREWED IN ON *PARIS*

INT. MENLO PARK LABORATORY OF THOMAS EDISON - NIGHT

EDISON himself has screwed in the bulb. He's not alone.

BLACK
 I hesitate to ask but...has there
 been...progress on the chair? Have
 you had a moment to draw the plans?
 I know how terribly busy you-

EDISON strides out of the laboratory. BLACK follows.

EXT. MENLO PARK GRASS - CONTINUOUS

The two shadowy figures walk across the wet grass. They enter
 the storm cellar.

INT. BASEMENT OF THE HOUSE OF EDISON - CONTINUOUS

A switch is flipped and THE ELECTRIC CHAIR, fully built, is
 illuminated in a warm glow. BLACK drags a single finger along
 the top edge of the chair, in an almost sexual way.

BLACK
 It's built?

He looks to EDISON who then nods. BLACK sits in the chair and
 relaxes back. He puts his arms on the arm rest. He closes his
 eyes, luxuriating in the moment. He opens his eyes.

BLACK (CONT'D)
 Shall we have a drink to celebrate?

EDISON
 I do not drink. Ever. And don't
 misunderstand this relationship. I
 am *not* your friend. I have arranged
 for the chair to be delivered to
 your office by way of Ohio.

BLACK

Ohio?

EDISON

And you better have destroyed all our correspondences. No one must ever know about this.

BLACK

I have followed your directions. All letters are burned.

EDISON

Good. Now get out.

INT. BLACK'S HOME - DAY

BLACK sits in his apartment. He feeds his turtle. From a locked drawer, BLACK removes a thick stack of letters tied with a satin ribbon. He sets each letter out, one by one, on his bed. The camera pans along the bottoms of the letters. Each letter is signed "T.A. EDISON." We see the words "destroy this" and "to be burned" many times. BLACK stretches out his fingers and pushes them down on the letters, feeling the paper. He closes his eyes.

FADE INTO: EDISON'S MAP OF THE WORLD - 2/3 RED BULBS

INT. WESTINGHOUSE DINING ROOM - EVENING

A terrible thunderstorm is shooting rain against the windows like bullets. WESTINGHOUSE, TESLA, and MARGUERITE are having dessert.

TESLA

Mrs. Westinghouse, this is the best Baked Alaska I've ever had. Better than Delmonico's!

MARGUERITE doesn't respond.

TESLA (CONT'D)

Mrs.-

MARGUERITE

I didn't make it.

Silence.

TESLA

(To WESTINGHOUSE.)
Is she cross with you?

MARGUERITE

Tell me, Mr. Tesla, when will that enormous motor be out of my living room?

A shot through the open doorway and a GIGANTIC motor, bigger than a grand piano, sits on the wooden floor.

TESLA

(Laughing.)

Soon, soon.

WESTINGHOUSE

He wanted to work at night and it was either build it here or make him sleep at the factory.

MARGUERITE

And why couldn't you do the latter?

TESLA laughs hard. The WESTINGHOUSES don't. A SERVANT enters.

SERVANT

Mr. Westinghouse. I'm sorry, sir, but the tracks have flooded. They won't be able to get you to Buffalo before the trial.

WESTINGHOUSE tosses his napkin to the table.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

The room is FILLED to capacity with reporter. Behind a small table, KEMMLER sits with SENATOR BOURKE. They are the only ones not laughing at EDISON who is at the stand. FRANCIS looks on from the back.

EDISON

If I'm shootin' an apple off a head, I'd want to use my best arrow.

The room laughs heartily. The most famous man on earth doesn't come to Buffalo every day... The LAWYER representing New York offers EDISON a cigar as he continues his questions. EDISON accepts.

LAWYER

And, would you please, Mr. Edison, tell the court what happens when electricity is applied to the human body?

EDISON

A high enough dosage of electricity
causes the heart muscles to
constrict instantly.

EDISON puts the cigar to his lips. The JUDGE himself offers
EDISON a light.

EDISON (CONT'D)

Ah, thank you, your honor.

JUDGE

No - it is *my* honor.

EDISON

The point is, gentlemen, it is my
expert opinion that the only humane
method of execution...

EDISON's eyes dart over to KEMMLER for just a moment. KEMMLER
is staring out the window.

EDISON (CONT'D)

...the...uh...it's electricity.

INT. ANTEROOM JUST OUTSIDE THE COURTROOM - A BIT LATER

EDISON shakes the hands of many men and signs a few
autographs as he makes his way out.

A FAN

Good luck with Niagara, Mr. Edison!

EDISON

I don't need luck. I just need the
better idea. And I got it!

He whispers to FRANCIS.

EDISON (CONT'D)

And you're SURE he's not here?

The doors close on the courtroom, leaving just FRANCIS and
EDISON.

FRANCIS

A squall in Pittsburgh has shut
down the railroads.

EDISON

Good, good. Make sure you wire-

TWO BODIES COLLIDE SUDDENLY. ONE, is EDISON's.

EDISON (CONT'D)

Oh, excuse me.

He looks up and sees the other belongs to...

WESTINGHOUSE

George Westinghouse.

The cigar hangs a bit from EDISON's lip. He's speechless. FRANCIS is bug-eyed.

WESTINGHOUSE (CONT'D)

You'll forgive my appearance. I've been in a carriage for the last two days.

EDISON is silent. Then, he springs to life, removing the cigar from his lips and offering out a hand.

EDISON

Thomas Edison.

WESTINGHOUSE shakes it.

WESTINGHOUSE

The pleasure is mine.

A shot of the round anteroom, the floor tiles forming a universe. The two titans stare at each other. Finally, EDISON's mind catches up with him -

EDISON

Look, it's nothing personal -

The doors to the courtroom are flung open and WARDEN DURSTON leads out KEMMLER in shackles. DURSTON, seeing EDISON, explodes with enthusiasm.

DURSTON

Sweet Jesus, I was afraid you were gonna leave before I got a chance-
(Shaking EDISON's hand quickly.)

The name is Warden Durston. I'm a big fan, big.

(To KEMMLER.)

One moment, William.

(To EDISON.)

I'm a bit of an amateur inventor myself. I invented a, uh, can I get yer autograph?

EDISON is extremely uncomfortable. He looks at WESTINGHOUSE.

EDISON

Uh, sure.

DURSTON claws a handkerchief out of his pocket. He hands it to EDISON.

DURSTON

(To WESTINGHOUSE.)

Hey mister, you got a pen?

WESTINGHOUSE reaches into his vest and produces a fountain pen, handing it to DURSTON. DURSTON hands it to EDISON.

DURSTON (CONT'D)

Bend forward, William.

KEMMLER, at the center of the round universe, bends. DURSTON spreads the handkerchief along his back.

DURSTON (CONT'D)

Will you make it out to Charles?

EDISON, using KEMMLER as a writing table, quickly signs the handkerchief and hands it to DURSTON who accepts it as a precious object. EDISON briskly screws the cap back on.

EDISON

(Turning.)

As I was saying-

EDISON stops short. WESTINGHOUSE is gone. As if by magic.

DURSTON

Where'd he go? He forgot his pen.

EDISON is speechless. He looks at FRANCIS who shrugs.

DURSTON (CONT'D)

Nice pen. Hey - can I keep this?

EXT. STREETS OF BUFFALO / BLACK'S HOUSE - DAY

BLACK jauntily walks through the streets, eating an apple. He reaches the staircase leading to his little apartment.

INT. BLACK'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

BLACK enters and turns on the electric lights. He suddenly stops. The place has been ransacked. Chairs are overturned, a vase smashed. The floor is littered with broken objects. BLACK slowly walks through the debris. It crunches. He walks over to his desk which is smashed in half. All the drawers are gone. And so...are the EDISON letters. The camera catches the turtle crawl by BLACK's foot.

INT. KEMMLER'S CELL - DAY

KEMMLER sits on his bench, quietly sounding out the words in the childrens' bible. The NUN sits beside him.

KEMMLER
Annnnd Chrrrrisst. Sssaid.

A sound makes them both look to the little window. Out the window, KEMMLER sees five men unloading the Electric Chair.

INT. EDISON'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

DOT sits at the piano and finishes playing a piece. EDISON and DASH applaud.

EDISON
Very good, Dot! What an ear! You didn't get it from me, I'll say.

FRANCIS bursts into the room and throws a newspaper at EDISON.

FRANCIS
You lied to me!

EDISON looks incensed. No one talks to him this way. Especially in front of his children.

FRANCIS (CONT'D)
You LIED!

EDISON
(To DASH.)
Take Dot out and play.

The children leave.

FRANCIS
You're the smartest man I know,
Tom. But beyond all your brains.
Beyond building miracles out of the
air, I wanted to work for you
because you had principles. Well,
your brain could have at least told
the maniac to burn the damn
letters.

FRANCIS storms out. EDISON opens the paper. The headline reads: "EDISON INVENTS DEATH CHAIR TO SHOCK WESTINGHOUSE!"

EDISON
No...no...no...

INT. MENLO PARK LABORATORY OF THOMAS EDISON - NIGHT

EDISON sits alone in his warehouse of a laboratory. A soft rain falls on the windowpane. EDISON looks around at the vastness of his workspace. At the tools. The half-built inventions. The photographs. He stands. He's holding a glass of scotch. There's a half-consumed bottle on the table beside him. EDISON walks over to the MAP OF THE WORLD. He reaches forward and unscrews a WHITE bulb. He carefully sets it down on the table. He reaches into a wooden box of RED bulbs and screws it in. MAINE goes to WESTINGHOUSE. The camera pulls back slowly and EDISON's body is now backlit by the glowing MAP OF THE WORLD, which, aside from a few white bulbs here and there, is illuminated in bright RED.

INT. EDISON'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

EDISON is drunk, fumbling at a telephone, knocking things over in the process.

INT. THE GILLIAND'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

MR. and MRS. GILLIAND are sleeping. A telephone begins to ring. MRS. GILLIAND awakens first. Then, MR. GILLIAND sits up. He looks at her.

INT. MR. GILLIANDS OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

GILLIAND is on the telephone.

MR. GILLIAND

Is that you, Tom?

EDISON

I need to win Niagara. It's slipping-

MR. GILLIAND

Are you...drunk?

EDISON

I need to win. Do you want money? I can get Morgan to pay you-

MR. GILLIAND

I'm your FRIEND, Edison. You don't bribe your friends. Your friends help you because they are your *friends*.

GILLIAND hangs up on EDISON.

INT. DASH'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Arms shake DASH awake. He shudders a moment, scared. Then, he sees the arms belong to his father.

EDISON
(Smiling.)
Hey Dash! Wanna have some fun?

DASH is confused by his father's behavior. He slowly nods.

INT. MENLO PARK LABORATORY OF THOMAS EDISON - CONTINUOUS

In pajamas, the little boy of 6 stands next to his father. EDISON takes a hammer from the wall and hands it to DASH. He leads DASH over to the huge, glowing, red MAP OF THE WORLD.

EDISON
It is so fun to create.

DASH nods, holding the heavy hammer with both hands.

EDISON (CONT'D)
But here's the secret nobody tells
you:
(Whispering.)
It's also a lot of fun to *destroy!*

DASH looks at his father.

EDISON (CONT'D)
Go ahead! It'll make a funny sound.

DASH walks forward and lifts the hammer, bringing it down on a red bulb. It pops and sizzles. DASH laughs a little.

EDISON (CONT'D)
Again.

DASH does it again.

EDISON (CONT'D)
Again!

DASH does it again- breaking three in a row.

EDISON (CONT'D)
Isn't this **fun???**

DASH
I'm tired, Daddy.

EDISON lowers himself to his knees, staring into his son's eyes. They are droopy. The kid is sleepy.

EDISON
 (Taking back the hammer.)
 I'm tired too.

EXT. A SPEEDING NORTHBOUND TRAIN - DAY

It tears through the wilderness, smoke billowing longer than the train itself.

INT. SPEEDING NORTHBOUND TRAIN - CONTINUOUS

TESLA sits by himself, quickly drawing a schematic into a notebook. He works so quickly, the pencil tip breaks and he switches pencils almost instantly. MARGUERITE sits opposite her husband. MARGUERITE reads and WESTINGHOUSE stares at her. After a moment, MARGUERITE looks up.

MARGUERITE
 What!?

WESTINGHOUSE
 I think you're beautiful.

MARGUERITE purses her lips.

MARGUERITE
 You think complimenting me solves anything?

She returns to her book. Suddenly, a PLOP lands in her lap. MARGUERITE picks up the tied parcel: letters. She scans them, one-by-one.

MARGUERITE (CONT'D)
 These are the stolen Edison letters!

MARGUERITE looks at her husband who is now reading the paper himself. He looks up, feigning (almost perfectly) surprise.

WESTINGHOUSE
 Did you say something?

MARGUERITE
 George!

WESTINGHOUSE
 Yes, Bumblebee?

MARGUERITE
 (Smiling.)
 GEORGE! Did you break into that madman's office and-

WESTINGHOUSE
 Break in? Why that'd be...
 ("Searching" for the
 word.)
 ...*illegal*.

MARGUERITE clasps the letters in her hands and gleefully grins.

MARGUERITE
 Niagara, here we come.

EXT. NIAGARA FALLS - DAY

The camera races across the roaring water and lifts suddenly, climbing UP the Falls and exploding up and back, capturing the majesty and impossible scale of this Goliath cataract. A Fair has been created along the observation area. A military band plays patriotic songs at brisk tempos - the 1812 Overture, the Star Spangled Banner, etc. An enormous crowd has gathered for the decision of who has won the contract. In a panoramic shot, the camera moves along the faces of the crowd - excited kids with sparklers, young men with dates, tons of press, women with umbrellas, shielding them from the mist of the Falls. In a separated area, EDISON and his children await the news. EDISON is dressed a little better than normal. J.P. Morgan and his MEN are set apart from EDISON by a short fence.

EDISON
 (Over the fence.)
 We're almost there.

MORGAN
 Sorry your wife's dead.

MORGAN turns away. EDISON, shaken a moment by the gruffness, hangs there. Across the way, in a different area, are WESTINGHOUSE, MARGUERITE, TESLA, and several senior WESTINGHOUSE employees. TESLA is dressed in a ridiculous tuxedo and top hat.

TESLA
 (Shouting to the crowd.)
 I love this country! I love
 America!

The crowd around them cheers. WESTINGHOUSE and MARGUERITE stand, patiently waiting. MARGUERITE holds her parasol over her head and gives it a little spin. WESTINGHOUSE looks at her and smiles.

MARGUERITE
 What are you thinking about?

WESTINGHOUSE

My father.

She sees something in his eyes.

MARGUERITE

What George?

WESTINGHOUSE

When...when I was around ten, I'd cut school for the umpteenth time, I don't know. I hated school.

MARGUERITE

I know.

WESTINGHOUSE

Well. I was remembering...my...my father couldn't stand it anymore and he grabbed me here, by my shirt collar, and he pulled me into the yard. He was yelling at me, looking around the yard for a stick. And he finds one. And he lifts it from the grass and he...he tells me to bend over. And he yanks down my britches.

MARGUERITE

Oh George-

WESTINGHOUSE

So he winds back with the stick and, hard as he can, he brings it down on my rump and...you know what happened?

MARGUERITE shakes her head.

WESTINGHOUSE (CONT'D)

The stick broke clean in half.

MARGUERITE

A tough rump. Believe me, I know.

WESTINGHOUSE

So...so I looked to my side and spotted a thicker fallen branch. And I reached down, grabbed it, and without looking at him, I handed him the new branch. I said, "Here, father, this is a better one."

MARGUERITE embraces her husband.

WESTINGHOUSE (CONT'D)
 (Over her shoulder.)
 Even at ten I could take a beating,
 but I had no patience for shoddy
 craftsmanship.

The band stops playing and the crowd is hushed. At a platform, before both competing parties, MR. GILLIAND walks to the front. Behind him sit a row of six well-to-do men. Everything is silent. GILLIAND clears his throat. As loud as he can, he announces the decision.

MR. GILLIAND
 After careful deliberations. And in consultation with the leading experts in the field. This committee has decided to award the Niagara Contract...

A close-up of EDISON's face. A close-up of WESTINGHOUSE's.

MR. GILLIAND (CONT'D)
 ...to Westinghouse Electric.

The crowd cheers and band strikes up! EDISON is expressionless. His shoulders seem to dip ever-so-slightly. J.P. MORGAN turns to EDISON and raises his brow. MARGUERITE and TESLA are screaming with delight.

MARGUERITE
 We won! We won! We won!

TESLA
 I won! I won! I won!

WESTINGHOUSE stifles his smile. Dignified to the end...

The camera cranes up and over the cheering crowd.

INT. NIAGARA HOTEL - NIGHT

EDISON sits alone, staring into the fire of the lobby. He has a tablet and a pencil. On the tablet, he draws a dark rectangle. His hand, with the pencil, falls to his side. GILLIAND approaches. EDISON looks up.

MR. GILLIAND
 I tried, Tom. You won't believe the performance I put on but...

EDISON
 He had the better system.

Silence, and then, MR. GILLIAND nods. He walks away. EDISON looks back at the tablet. Then, a voice-

MORGAN

Edison.

EDISON stands, slowly, and turns to see J.P. MORGAN, alone, in the expansive door way. The light from the fire flickers on his face.

EDISON

What do you want me to say?

MORGAN

Say whatever you want. I won.

EDISON

What do you mean?

MORGAN

Simply, I mean that I put money into *both* companies.

EDISON

You -

MORGAN

I don't lose. And the best way not to lose, is not to compete.

EDISON

(Sneering.)

What are you saying? You didn't invest with Westinghouse.

MORGAN

No, but I did invest quite a bit in about fifteen ankle-biting competitors. Little scrappy electric companies that are undercutting Westinghouse in little scrappy towns. Of course, they use Alternating Current.

EDISON sits back down, in front of the fire.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

You no doubt realize that by this point I own your entire company. I own it.

(MORE)

MORGAN (CONT'D)

And I'm going to take your infrastructure and I'm taking the contracts you somehow managed to retain, and I'm going to merge them with all these little scrappy companies and form *one big company*. And in time, I will beat Westinghouse. Because Thomas Alva Edison...*couldn't*.

MORGAN starts to leave.

EDISON

What are you calling it?

MORGAN stops.

MORGAN

Excuse me?

EDISON

You'd be a fool not to use my name on the company. My name is still worth more than anything else. You must still use my name. Electricity. Edison. The two are inseparable. I built the first system. For God's sake - the bulb, Morgan. The light bulb. You have to use my name.

MORGAN

I'm not. I don't attach a losing name to fledgling company.

EDISON

So what are you calling it?

MORGAN

We don't have a name yet. For right now, the contracts just say 'General Electric.' But I'm sure I'll think of something. I can be creative too.

MORGAN leaves. The door to the hotel slams shut. EDISON looks down at a table by his side. A newspaper headline reads: "BUFFALO MURDERER TO MEET DEATH CHAIR"

EXT. HOTEL HALLWAY - LATER

EDISON is hunched, banging as hard as he can on a door.

EDISON
Francis!! Francis!!

More banging. Finally, it opens. FRANCIS is spooked as hell.

FRANCIS
What IS it, Tom? You woke Emma.

EDISON
We have to...we have to get a carriage. I need to. I need to get to Buffalo. How long will that-

FRANCIS
(Checking a grandfather clock in the hall behind EDISON.)
It's 4 in the morning, Tom. It'll take half an hour at least for the hotel to get a driver-

EDISON
Now! I need one now! Dammit.

FRANCIS
What are you - wait. You want to stop the execution?

EDISON
Now.

EXT. NIAGARA STREETS - LATER

The sun is rising over the treetops. The wheels of a carriage are shaking almost off their axles. The driver cries, cracking the reins:

DRIVER
Hhhhyah!

The horses snort, their noses steaming into the cold morning.

INT. CARRIAGE - CONTINUOUS

EDISON, determined as hell, is breathing quickly. Across from him, FRANCIS sits, staring at his boss. EDISON wipes his brow.

EDISON
What time is the execution?

FRANCIS
6 AM.

EDISON
Tell the driver to go faster!!

DRIVER
Horses don't go faster than this.

EDISON
Tell him to add more horses!!!

FRANCIS smiles.

FRANCIS
Do you remember the night you
brought all those rich fat men to
Menlo Park-

EDISON
Francis...I'm gonna do something
so...so great that the world will
forget I ever had anything to do
with electricity in the first
place.

FRANCIS's smile disappears. He looks out the window.

EXT. BUFFALO CITY LIMITS - MORNING

The carriage barrages past a sign reading: "Welcome to Buffalo." The sun is rising.

EXT. BUFFALO PRISON GATE - MORNING

The carriage comes to a sudden halt outside the Prison gate. A large cloud of dust is spinning through the air. The door of the carriage is flung open and EDISON tears out of the car, racing to the gate of the Prison. A GUARD meets him.

EDISON
Open the gate!

GUARD
Who the hell are you?

EDISON
(Pointing with both index
fingers to his own face.)
Look at this face!

GUARD
Sweet Jesus on the Cross. You're
Thomas Edison!

EDISON
Open the gate!

The GUARD quickly opens the gate. FRANCIS leans his head out of the carriage.

EXT. BUFFALO PRISON ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

EDISON yells back to FRANCIS who stands at the gate.

EDISON
What time is!?

FRANCIS
It's ten to six!

EDISON scrambles over the door, tripping in the dust, falling over, getting back up. He reaches the door and pounds on it as hard as he can.

EDISON
Open the door! Open the door! Open
the door! Open the door!

The door opens and a FAT GUARD looks at EDISON.

FAT GUARD
You're-

EDISON
Get me Alfred Black immediately!
Run!

The FAT GUARD hustles, his keys jangling. EDISON enters the door of the prison and looks around frantically. It's a staircase. He looks left and right. He doesn't know where to go. He walks back out onto the step of the door. He squints and sees FRANCIS in the distance, leaning with an arm to his forehead against the gate, looking at him from afar. Suddenly, BLACK appears behind EDISON.

BLACK
Mr. Edison?

EDISON spins.

EDISON
Stop the execution!

BLACK
Excuse me?

EDISON
Stop the execution!

BLACK

He's being strapped into the chair now. I'm missing it.

EDISON

Missing it? You stop this execution! You don't know HOW MUCH electricity it takes to kill a human being.

BLACK

A gorilla-

EDISON

The man is not a monkey!

BLACK

You do not have the authority to interrupt the execution of justice.

EDISON

A man is not a monkey!

BLACK

This is happening.

EDISON

Too little electricity and he will feel a pain greater than any man has felt before!

BLACK

So we shall use a safe, larger-

EDISON

Too much electricity and the man will burn alive.

EDISON's face is pouring sweat. BLACK lingers, just a moment.

BLACK

The state thanks you for your expert opinions.

BLACK slowly closes the door on EDISON's face. EDISON is stunned. He turns to FRANCIS. He turns back to the door. He starts to bang and then begins to pace - it's futile. He's imprisoned on the outside of the jail...It begins to softly rain. EDISON stands in the mud, alone. By his foot, he sees a small basement window. He kneels down in the mud and lies on his stomach, placing his ear by the window. The camera stays close on EDISON's face. There is the sound of the jangling metal. Some murmurs that are unintelligible. Then, suddenly, the sound of a WESTINGHOUSE generator springing to life.

A bulb above the prison door dims considerably. The hum of the generator lasts 25 seconds. The longest 25 seconds of EDISON's life. Then, the sound vanishes and the bulb above the door returns to full. Silence. EDISON exhales a deep breath and lets his head relax down into the mud. Then-

VOICE (O.S.)

My god!

VOICE 2 (O.S.)

He's still breathing!

VOICE OF BLACK (O.S.)

Turn it back on! Higher! Higher!

VOICE 4 (O.S.)

Dear Lord!

The generator sound returns and the hum is much deeper. The bulb above the door goes almost completely out. During this intense BUZZ, flashes of the past rush forward in EDISON's mind like ghosts-

INT. TRAIN CAR, YEARS AND YEARS EARLIER - DUSK

Filmed like the beginnings of cinema - EDISON, much younger, sits next to a beautiful shy girl. He reaches a hand over to her skirt. He taps a message out on her knee. He smiles. She smiles. She reaches her hand over to his knee. She taps, with her pointer finger: Dash Dot Dash Dash / Dot / Dot Dot Dot . EDISON's face fills with delight. The reverie wavers back and forth with the prison and mud. Then, the sound of the generator is GONE and EDISON is snapped back to the present.

EXT. BUFFALO PRISON ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Nothing. Then, the light above the door returns. EDISON begins to blink. He blinks again. He blinks several times, rapidly. He sits up from the mud, quickly, as though he were a drowning man gasping for air. He brings the sleeve of his jacket to his nose. There is a smell coming from the little window. A terrible smell.

EXT. NIAGARA FALLS - MORNING

WESTINGHOUSE and MARGUERITE take a walk along the grass at the base of the falls. They hold hands. They round a bend and see a photographer who has a giant camera set up on an easel.

MARGUERITE

Oh George, let's go. It's one of the newspapers...

WESTINGHOUSE

No. I asked him to come.
 (Calling over to the
 photographer.)
 Where do you want us?

PHOTOGRAPHER

Oh, you know, maybe, I don't know,
 have the Falls in the back. She can
 open her umbrella. Should be a real
 nice shot. Gimme a second to, uh,
 this shutter's been givin' me
 trouble all week...

WESTINGHOUSE

(To MARGUERITE.)
 You don't mind, do you?

MARGUERITE

(In disbelief.)
 No...I don't mind at all.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Ah! OK Mr. Westinghouse. Now you
 two gotta stand real still - hell,
 what am I sayin'? I bet you get
 this done all the time.

MARGUERITE and WESTINGHOUSE stand, dignified, with the Falls
 at the backs.

PHOTOGRAPHER (CONT'D)

Ready? Here we go. One. Two...

CUT TO:

A FLASH!

A photograph fades up on the screen - The real GEORGE
 WESTINGHOUSE and MARGUERITE in front of NIAGARA FALLS.

Text fades up over the photo:

In 1911, in honor of a career of meritorious achievement in
 the electrical arts, The American Institute of Electrical
 Engineers awarded Westinghouse with their highest honor: The
 Edison Medal.

Westinghouse died on March 12th, 1914. He is buried in
 Arlington National Cemetery alongside his wife Marguerite,
 who followed him three months later.

To this day, there are only a dozen known photographs of George Westinghouse, inventor of the air brake, father of the World's system of electricity distribution, and winner of the War of the Currents.

THE PHOTOGRAPH
BEGINS TO
FLUTTER AND BURN
INTO...

EXT. CONEY ISLAND BOARDWALK, 1903

Grainy film of the lumbering elephant transitions to- REAL LIFE. EDISON is back as he was at the beginning of the film. The snow falls in large flakes, settling in his greying hair. Text fades up over EDISON:

"After losing the War of the Currents and after an aborted venture into mining, Thomas Edison was awarded a patent for the Kinetograph and began a new career - motion pictures.

TITLE CARD:

FLICKERING TITLE CARD READING:

"EDISON MOTION PICTURES PRESENTS!"

"ELECTROCUTING AN ELEPHANT"

The text fades away. The blinking elephant shifts slightly.

To the side of the elephant, the enormous WESTINGHOUSE generator, weathered by time, but still sporting the jumbo "WESTINGHOUSE ELECTRIC" sign, stands. EDISON looks up into the eyes of the elephant. A YOUNG EDISON EMPLOYEE nervously approaches the great inventor.

YOUNG EDISON EMPLOYEE
Mr. Edison?

EDISON turns, looking at the YOUNGSTER.

YOUNG EDISON EMPLOYEE (CONT'D)
(Clearing throat.)
Sir...they're all set to go. And
suffice it to say, we can only do
this *once*.

EDISON, left alone again, looks up and addresses the elephant softly -

EDISON
I'm sorry, Mr. Elephant.

VOICE (O.S.)
Tom! You're in the shot.

EDISON turns, smiling broadly.

EDISON
(Calling off to an unseen
camera crew.)
What? I thought you boys wanted to
shoot me! These legs'll sell!

EDISON does a tiny dance, like he's a burlesque dancer and
laughter is heard.

EDISON (CONT'D)
(Walking off screen.)
Camera!

TRANSITION TO:

The actual footage of EDISON's 10 second film:

"ELECTROCUTING AN ELEPHANT"

(Shot by Edison Manufacturing Company on January 12, 1903 at
Coney Island.)

It plays in silence.

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF FILM.