

"THE HUDSUCKER PROXY"

Written by

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September 1992 Draft

BLACK

No image. A bleak WIND MOANS. HOLD.

With a STINGING CHORD we --

CUT

TO:

CITY SKYLINE - NIGHT (CIRCA 1958)

Lights twinkle. Snow falls. The WIND MOANS.

After a beat, the voice of an elderly black man:

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The's right... New York.

streets

We are TRACKING HIGH THROUGH the night sky. From the

falling

far below we hear the sounds of TRAFFIC muffled by the

snow, and the DISTANT sound of many VOICES SINGING.

skyscrapers

We are DRIFTING AMONG the buildings; the tops of

slip by left and right.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

It's 1958 -- anyway, for a few mo'
minutes it is. Come midnight it's
gonna be 1959. A whole 'nother
feelin'. The New Year. The future...

is

The SINGING, a little MORE AUDIBLE, but still not close,

"Auld Lang Syne."

NARRATOR (V.O.)

...Yeah ole daddy Earth fixin' to
start one mo' trip 'round the sun,
an' evvybody hopin' this ride 'round
be a little mo' giddy, a little mo'
gay...

top

We are MOVING IN TOWARDS a particular skyscraper. At its

is a large illuminated clock.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Yep...

We hear a SERIES OF POPPING sounds.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
...All over town champagne corks is
a-poppin'.

A big band WALTZ MIXES UP on the track.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
...Over in the Waldorf the big shots
is dancin' to the strains of Guy
Lombardo... Down in Times Square the
little folks is a-watchin' and a-
waitin' fo' that big ball to drop...

The LOMBARDO MUSIC gives way to the CHANTING of a distant
CROWD: "Sixty! Fifty-nine! Fifty-eight!"

NARRATOR (V.O.)
...They all tryin' to catch holt a
one moment of time...

The CHANTING has MIXED back DOWN AGAIN TO leave only the
WIND. Still TRACKING IN TOWARD the top of the skyscraper,

we

begin to hear the TICK of its enormous CLOCK. The clock

reads

a minute to twelve. Above it, in neon, a company's name:
"HUDSUCKER INDUSTRIES." Below it, in neon, the company's
motto: "THE FUTURE IS NOW."

NARRATOR (V.O.)
...to be able to say -- 'Right now!
This is it! I got it!' 'Course by
then it'll be past.
(more cheerfully)
But they all happy, evvybody havin'
a good time.

We are MOVING IN ON a darkened penthouse window next to
clock. The window starts to open.

the

NARRATOR (V.O.)
...Well, almost evvybody. They's a
few lost souls floatin' 'round out
there...

A young man is crawling out of the window onto the ledge.
With the opening of the window, "AULD LANG SYNE" filters
with greater volume.

out

NARRATOR (V.O.)
...This one's Norville Barnes.

The man gingerly straightens up on the ledge. He is
in his late twenties. He wears a leather apron. Printed

perhaps

on

the apron: "HUDSUCKER MAIL ROOM/The Future is Now."

He looks with nervous determination into the void.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

...Let's move in for a closer look.

CLOSE. The CAMERA obliges. We TRACK IN SLOWLY, ENDING VERY

NARRATOR (V.O.)

...That office he jes stepped out of
is the office of the president of
Hudsucker Industries. It's his
office...

grows Norville sways in anguish as the TICKING of the CLOCK
louder and the WIND blows in his face.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

...How'd he get so high? An' why is
he feelin' so low? Is he really gonna
do it -- is Norville really gonna
jelly up the sidewalk?

Norville is tensing his body, peering out over the ledge,
preparing to make a swan dive into oblivion -- but the
CAMERA'S continued MOVEMENT is LOSING him FROM FRAME.

We are MOVING IN ON the enormous CLOCK, whose MECHANICAL
THRUM becomes very loud indeed.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

...Well the future, that's something
you can't never tell about...

bare MIXES The second hand of the clock is nearing the twelve --
seconds to midnight. Distant CHANTING from Times Square
UP: "Nine! Eight! Seven!"

NARRATOR (V.O.)

...But the past... That's another
story...

OVER BLACK

and The HUM of the CLOCK SINKS UNDER the HISS of an AIRBRAKE
GRINDING GEARS as we...

CUT

TO:

DESTINATION DISPLAY

On the front of a bus just rocking to a halt. The display
says "MUNCIE-NEW YORK."

LINE OF BAGS

a is being set out on the pavement. A man with the cuffs of
redcap uniform swings one into the f.g.:

thumbs It has a sticker on it: CLASS OF '58, and below an
illustration of crossed right and left hands, their
hooked and fingers spread like wings: MUNCIE COLLEGE OF
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION.

up. After a beat the hand of its claimant ENTERS to pick it

TO: DISSOLVE

STREET

street. FOLLOWING the bag as its owner carries it down the
He pauses, sets it down.

YOUNG MAN

at: Fresh-faced, eager -- NORVILLE BARNES. He is gazing off

WESSELS EMPLOYMENT AGENCY

picture The sign is over a ground floor office; an exterior clock
shows 9:00. A curtain is just being pulled open in its
departures window to reveal a great job board. It is like the
individual board in a great train station, with each of its
entries flipping over occasionally to reveal a new
STEAMFITTER, opportunity. On offer are jobs like: PASTRY CHEF,
LAY-OUT MAN, GRAVEDIGGER, etc.

REVERSE

dug On the small crowd gathered to, like Norville, watch the
heads, board -- men in search of jobs, of various classes and
chattering vocations, but alike in their intent gaze, their hands
into their pockets, their hats pushed back on their
bobbing occasionally to get a better view of the
board. Men occasionally head for the office as they see a
prospect they like.

Norville stands pat, watching.

HIS POV

An entry flips over to reveal EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT.

NORVILLE

He brightens.

BOARD

We PAN ALONG the executive entry to EXPERIENCE REQUIRED.

NORVILLE

He frowns.

apply

Around him, the crowd is thinning out as men trot in to
for their respective jobs.

We see other entries: JUNIOR EXECUTIVE. PAN TO EXPERIENCE
ONLY. EXECUTIVE MANAGER... MUST HAVE EXPERIENCE.
BUSINESSMAN... EXPERIENCED.

PANNING

The CROSS-CUTTING ENDS in a wash of SUPER-IMPOSITIONS
OVER Norville, now alone on the sidewalk:
EXPERIENCED ONLY... EXPERIENCED... EXPERIENCED...
EXPERIENCED...

TO:

CUT

CLOSE SHOT - EXECUTIVE

and

someone

A middle-aged, mousy-looking man in a conservative suit
wire-rimmed spectacles is addressing his remarks to
O.S. Behind the Executive we see only the skyline of New
York City.

EXECUTIVE

-- So in the third quarter we saw no
signs of weakening. We're up 18
percent over last year's third quarter
gross and, needless to say, that's a
new record...

TRACKING

DOWN the LENGTH OF the board room table. Executives line
either side. We are APPROACHING the man at the far end of
the table, to whom the report is being directed.

Executive

He is late middle-aged, dressed expensively but
conservatively, his attention smilingly fixed on the
who drones on.

EXECUTIVE

...The competition continues to flag
and we continue to take up the slack.

Market share in most divisions is increasing and we've opened seven new regional offices...

The TRACK has ENDED IN a CLOSEUP of the man at the end of the table, who still smiles benignantly at the droning Executive. The smile is serene, almost otherworldly.

This is WARING HUDSUCKER.

REPORTING EXECUTIVE

He drones on.

EXECUTIVE

...Our international division has also shown vigorous upward movement in the past six months and we're looking at some exciting things in R&D...

big
picture

The CAMERA SLOWLY PANS OFF the droning Executive as the man's attention apparently wanders; we FRAME UP ON the window skyline of New York.

EXECUTIVE (V.O.)

Sub-franchising. Don't talk to me about sub-franchising; we're making so much money in sub-franchising it isn't even funny.

FOLDED-BACK WANT ADS

PARTNER --

A hand with pencil goes down a list of positions, ticking each one: STREETSWEeper -- EXPERIENCED; LINOTYPE MAN -- EXPERIENCED; CANTOR (REFORM) -- EXPERIENCED; SPARRING EXPERIENCED.

pencil

WIDER

stirs

Norville, sitting at a coffeeshop counter, sets the down. His chin is sunk disconsolately into his palm. His hat is pushed back dejectedly on his head. He idly stirs his coffee with his spoon.

down

change,

He takes one last gulp of the coffee, then sets the cup on the want ads, stands, and digs into his pocket for turning it inside-out.

CLOSE ON COUNTER

As Norville puts all his change on the counter. His hand hesitates; he takes a little of it back. He LEAVES FRAME.

counter.
been

A waitress's hand ENTERS from the far side of the
She clears away the saucer, then the cup -- which has
resting on the want ads. It leaves a perfect brown circle
around one entry:

THE FUTURE IS NOW.
Start building yours at Hudsucker Industries.
Low pay. Long Hours.
NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY.
Apply Personnel, 285 Madison Avenue.

wafts

As we hear the COFFEESHOP DOOR OPENING O.S., a draft
the sheet of newspaper off the counter and OUT OF FRAME.
NEW YORK CITY SKYLINE

Again LOOKING THROUGH the WINDOW as, O.S., the reporting
Executive drones on.

EXECUTIVE (O.S.)
...Our owned-and-operateds are
performing far above expectations
both here and abroad, and the Federal
Tax Act of 1958 is giving us a swell
writeoff on our plant and heavies...

WARING HUDSUCKER

the

looks dreamily out the window. His attention returns to
droning Executive and the benignant smile returns to his
lips.

EXECUTIVE
...The news in the money market isn't
good -- it's excellent...

TO:

CUT

NORVILLE'S BACK

his

He walks dejectedly down the street, hands shoved into
pockets.

it

A sheet of newspaper eddies INTO FRAME. The wind tosses
this way and that.

it

Slap! -- It plasters against another pedestrian, who bats
away.

against

The newspaper eddies around some more, then plasters
Norville.

He peels it off and is about to toss it away but stops, noticing something.

NEWSPAPER SCRAP

It is a section of the want ads. One entry is perfectly circled by a coffee stain.

BACK TO NORVILLE

He looks up from the paper. There is purpose in his gaze. Wind whips his hair.

CUT

TO:

CLOSE SHOT - WARING HUDSUCKER

As the Executive drones on, O.S., Hudsucker is carefully winding his wristwatch.

EXECUTIVE (O.S.)

...Our nominees and assigns continue to multiply and expand extending our influence regionally, nationally and globally. So, third quarter and year-to-date, we've set a new record for sales...

Hudsucker looks up from his watch, smiles, runs his palms back over his fringe of hair.

EXECUTIVE (O.S.)

...new record in gross...

Hudsucker pulls his sleeve cuffs to expose just the right amount under the suit.

EXECUTIVE (O.S.)

...new record in pre-tax earnings...

sets

Hudsucker takes one puff from his cigar and carefully it in his ashtray.

EXECUTIVE (O.S.)

...new record in after-tax profit...

He deliberately unstraps his wristwatch and looks at its face.

that

The sweep second hand is starting the last revolution will end at precisely noon.

EXECUTIVE (O.S.)

...and our stock has split twice this year...

Hudsucker lays the watch carefully on the table.

EXECUTIVE (O.S.)
...In short...

table. Savoring a pause, the Executive looks around the board

EXECUTIVE
...we're loaded.

cut This draws an appreciative chuckle from the board. It is
off by:

HUDSUCKER
Ahem...

The board turns expectantly to Hudsucker, who sits in the
f.g. Beyond him is the length of the board table and the
large picture window. He rises to his feet, slowly and
deliberately, and rubs his palms together.

He swings his chair out.

He steps up onto the chair.

The board stares.

He steps up from the chair onto the board table.

The heads of the board members swing up in unison.

tension Hudsucker is FRAMED FROM MID-TORSO DOWN. He shakes the
his loose from each leg, then waggles both arms dangling at
sides, like an athlete preparing for a sprint.

EXECUTIVE
...Mr. Hudsucker?

CLOSE ON WANT ADS

THE CIRCLED AD

THE FUTURE IS NOW.
Start building yours at Hudsucker Industries.
Low pay. Long Hours.
NO EXPERIENCED NECESSARY.
Apply Personnel, 285 Madison Avenue.

office The hand holding the paper DROPS AWAY and we TILT UP, as
Norville walks AWAY FROM us into the b.g., towards the
building across the street. Its street number tops its
imposing entryway in large gilt letters: 285.

reveal We continue TILTING UP the length of the skyscraper, to
a huge clock capping its facade. Above the clock is the
identification "HUDSUCKER INDUSTRIES." Below the clock

is

the motto "THE FUTURE IS NOW."

the

The huge clock's sweep second hand is just approaching position that will make the time 12:00 sharp.

ANOTHER ANGLE

flying

As the second hand hits the twelve, the CLOCK TOLLS, the board room WINDOW SHATTERS and Waring Hudsucker comes out.

HUDSUCKER

Aaaaaaaaaahhhhhhhhh...

SECRETARIAL AREA

typing

beside

Somewhere in the Hudsucker Building. A secretary sits next to an open window, finished pages sitting stacked her. As we hear ANOTHER TOLL of the CLOCK.

HUDSUCKER

...aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaahhh...

secretary

papers

As Hudsucker shoots past the window, his draft sends the stack of papers wafting this way and that. As the turns to look out the window, FREEZE FRAME (wafting have their motion arrested) and SUPER A TITLE.

TRACKING

he

hair.

WITH Hudsucker, the building slipping by behind him. As yells he calmly runs his palms back over his fringe of The CLOCK TOLLS.

FREEZE FRAME and SUPER A TITLE.

HOT DOG VENDOR

is

HUDSUCKER,

on the street, handing a steaming frank to a customer who handing him some change. As we hear the APPROACHING both men look up. As the CLOCK TOLLS:

FREEZE FRAME and SUPER A TITLE.

PASSERBY ON SIDEWALK

LOW

the

The man, wearing a fedora, is in the f.g. of an EXTREME ANGLE whose b.g. is the bottom three or four stories of

Hudsucker Building.

just The passerby reacts to the approaching yell, looking up
as Hudsucker ENTERS FRAME.

above FREEZE FRAME to suspend Hudsucker a good twenty feet
The the sidewalk, arms and legs splayed, comically arrested.
disbelief. The passerby is frozen in an attitude of surprise and

SUPER the title of the film: THE HUDSUCKER PROXY.

to UNFREEZE to send Hudsucker plummeting THROUGH the FRAME
his rendezvous with the sidewalk, BELOW FRAME.

DUTCH ANGLE

woman The Hudsucker Building lists up into the distance. A
AT in a fancy fruited hat with a black veil rises INTO FRAME
sends an OPPOSING SLANT. Looking down at the sidewalk, she
two dismayed hands to her cheek and screeeeeeeeeeams.

DISSOLVE THROUGH

TO:

EXT. TOP FLOOR

are With the LAST TOLL of the CLOCK punctuating the CUT, we
FLOATING IN TOWARDS the shattered board room window.

The woman's SCREAM on the street below is FAINT, ECHOING,
MIXING INTO the sound of an APPROACHING SIREN.

THROUGH the window we see the BOARD MEMBERS still sitting
around the table, paralyzed in attitudes of horror and
disbelief. All stare at the shattered window in the f.g.

and At the far end of the table, Hudsucker's chair is empty
oddly askew. His cigar still smokes in its ashtray.

There are dust footprints down the middle of the long oak
table.

to One Executive sits with a pluming cigarette held halfway
his mouth; another holds a carafe suspended on its way to
his water glass; another holds his spectacles inches from
his nose.

We hear only the HUM of the HUDSUCKER CLOCK.

SID MUSSBURGER ENTERS FRAME at the window. He is a tall

middle-

aged executive with lean and rugged good looks and a commanding presence.

He knocks a last piece of glass out of the sill with his knuckle, looks out, grunts, and draws his head back in.

members'

The CAMERA FOLLOWS him INTO the room. The other board

desperately

heads swivel to watch him, all staring, searching

for some hint as to the fate of their fallen leader. Apparently, some absurd hope still lingers.

Mussburger perches on the board table by his own chair.

suicide's

He reaches over to pluck the smoking cigar from the ashtray.

MUSSBURGER

Pity to waste a whole Monte Cristo.

confirmed.

The other board members unfreeze, their worst fears

AN EXECUTIVE

He could've opened the window.

ELDERLY EXECUTIVE

Waring Hudsucker never did anything the easy way.

ADDISON

My God, why?! Why did he do it?! Things were going so well!

MUSSBURGER

What am I a headshrinker? Maybe the man was unhappy.

ADDISON

He didn't look unhappy!

EXECUTIVE

Yeah, well, he didn't look rich.

ELDERLY EXECUTIVE

Waring Hudsucker was never an easy man to figure out.

(reminiscing)

He built this company with his bare hands. Every step he took was a step up. Except of course this last one.

MUSSBURGER

Sure, sure, he was a swell guy, but when the president, chairman of the board and holder of eighty-seven percent of the company's stock drops forty-four floors --

PRECISE EXECUTIVE
Forty-five --

ELDERY EXECUTIVE
Counting the mezzanine --

MUSSBURGER
-- Then the company has a problem.
Stillson, what exactly is the
disposition of Waring's stock?

STILLSON
Well, as you know, Hud left no will
and had no family. The company bylaws
are quite clear in that event. His
entire portfolio will be converted
to common stock and will be sold
over the counter as of the first of
the fiscal year following his demise.

MUSSBURGER
Meaning?

STILLSON
Meaning simply that Waring's stock,
and control of the company, will be
available to the public on January
first.

MUSSBURGER
You mean to tell me that any slob in
a smelly T-shirt will be able to buy
Hudsucker stock?

Stillson shrugs.

STILLSON
The company bylaws are quite clear.

ADDISON
My God! You're animals! How can you
discuss his stock when the man has
just leapt forty-five floors --

PRECISE EXECUTIVE
Forty-four --

ELDERLY EXECUTIVE
-- Not counting the mezzanine.

MUSSBURGER
Quit showboating, Addison, the man
is gone. The question now is whether
we're going to let John Q. Public
waltz in and buy 87 percent of our
company.

PIPE-SMOKING EXECUTIVE
What're you suggesting, Sidney?
Certainly we can't afford to buy a

controlling interest.

MUSSBURGER

Not while the stock is this strong.
How long before Hud's paper hits the
market?

STILLSON

January first.

AN EXECUTIVE

Thirty days.

ANOTHER EXECUTIVE

Four weeks.

ADDISON

A month at the most.

MUSSBURGER

One month to make the blue-chip
investment of the century look like
a round-trip ticket on the Titanic.

AN EXECUTIVE

We play up the fact that Hud is dead.

ALL

(in unison)

Long live the Hud!!

ANOTHER EXECUTIVE

We depress the stock --

YET ANOTHER EXECUTIVE

-- to the point where we can buy
fifty-percent.

PRECISE EXECUTIVE

Fifty-one.

ELDERLY EXECUTIVE

Not counting the mezzanine.

CAUTIOUS EXECUTIVE

It could work.

OPTIMISTIC EXECUTIVE

It should work.

PRACTICAL EXECUTIVE

It would work.

MUSSBURGER

(at ticker tape machine)

It's working already. Waring Hudsucker
is abstract art on Madison Avenue.
All we need now is a new president
who will inspire real panic in our
stockholders.

ENTHUSIASTIC EXECUTIVE
Yeah, a puppet!

ANOTHER EXECUTIVE
A proxy!

YET ANOTHER EXECUTIVE
A pawn!

CHATTERING
Hudsucker's
exhales

Mussburger strides across the room from the still
TICKER TAPE MACHINE and lowers himself into Waring
chair. He takes a last puff from his cigar and slowly
a cloud of smoke.

MUSSBURGER
Sure, sure. Some jerk we can really
push around.

TO:

CUT

wears
criss-
Norville
bowels

SWINGING STEEL DOORS
that read, "MAILROOM." They burst open as Norville, who
a mail clerk's leather apron, imprinted: HUDSUCKER
MAILROOM/The Future is Now. The hellish mailroom is
crossed by pipes that emit HISSING jets of STEAM.
As he wheels a piled-high mail cart down the aisle,
is accompanied by an orientation AGENT who bellows at him
over the clamor and roar of many men laboring in the
of a great corporation.

AGENT
You punch in at 8:30 every morning
except you punch in at 7:30 following
a business holiday unless it's a
Monday and then you punch in at eight
o'clock! You punch in at 7:45
whenever we work extended day and
you punch out at the regular time
unless you've worked through lunch!

NORVILLE
What's exte --

AGENT
Punch in late and they dock ya!

envelopes
his

People on either side bellow at Norville and stuff
and packages under his elbows, into his pockets, under
chin, between his clenched teeth, etc.

FIRST SCREAMER

This goes to seven! Mr. Mutuszak!
Urgent!

AGENT

Incoming articles, get a voucher!
Outgoing articles, provide a voucher!
Move any article without a voucher
and they dock ya!

SECOND SCREAMER

Take this up to the secretarial pool
on three! Right away! Don't break
it!

AGENT

Letter size a green voucher! Folder
size a yellow voucher! Parcel size a
maroon voucher!

THIRD SCREAMER

This one's for Morgatross! Chop chop!

AGENT

Wrong color voucher and they dock
ya! Six-seven-eight-seven-zero-four-
niner-alpha-slash-six! That is your
employee number! It will not be
repeated! Without your employee number
you cannot cash your paycheck!

FOURTH SCREAMER

This goes up to twenty-seven! If
there's no one there bring it down
to eighteen! Have 'em sign the waiver!
DON'T COME BACK DOWN HERE WITHOUT A
SIGNED WAIVER!!

AGENT

Inter-office mail is code 37! INTRA-
office mail is 37-dash-3! Outside
mail is 3-dash 37! Code it wrong and
they dock ya!

FIFTH SCREAMER

I was supposed to have this on twenty-
eight ten minutes ago! Cover for me!

AGENT

This has been your orientation! Is
there anything you do not understand?
Is there anything you understand
only partially? If you have not been
fully oriented -- if there is
something you do not understand in
all of its particulars you must file
a complaint with personnel! File a
faulty complaint... and they dock
ya!

CUT

TO:

NORVILLE

his

standing in front of a shelf of cubbyholes. As we FOLLOW
hand drawing an 8 X 10 envelope across the line of
alphabetized mail slots. The envelope is addressed to Max
Kloppitt, Jr.

NORVILLE

(muttering to himself)
...Bring it down to fif(?)...
fifteen... sign the voucher, uh,
waiver... cover for Mr. Anatole...
he's a swell guy... Morgatross...
He was on, uh...

TO

He is COASTING ACROSS the "K" mail slots, finally COMES
Max Kloppitt, Sr. His hand moves to the next slot, Max
Kloppitt, Jr. This slot is half the size of all the

others.

The envelope will not fit in.

He frowns.

He is about to fold the envelope, but notices something
stamped in red on its face. DO NOT FOLD.

in

Norville frowns. As he stares at the envelope, we see
envelopes swishing across the f.g., whipping one by one
rapid succession, left to right.

CLOSEUP - ANCIENT SORTER

An old man sitting at the adjacent shelf, sorting mail.

Without ever even looking up, with a constant high-speed
back and forth flicking of his right hand, he is whisking
pieces of mail one by one out of the pile of mail in his
left hand.

ANCIENT SORTER'S SHELF

slots.

As his letters fly furiously but neatly into their mail

NORVILLE

He raises his voice over the mailroom din:

NORVILLE

Say, what do you do when the envelope
is too big for the slot?

whisking

The ANCIENT SORTER considers this as he continues
his mail.

ANCIENT SORTER
Well... if ya fold 'em, they fire
ya...

Whisk. Whisk. Whisk.

ANCIENT SORTER
...I usually throw 'em out.

Norville takes out a pencil and writes on the face of the envelope:

INSERT - LETTER

Thank

Dear Mr. Kloppit, Please give this letter to your son.
you, Norville Barnes.

After a moment he adds:

Your friend in the mailroom.

BACK TO SCENE

NORVILLE
(talking as he writes)
Just got hired today!

ANCIENT SORTER
Terrific.

NORVILLE
Ya know, entry level!

ANCIENT SORTER
Tell me about it.

NORVILLE
I got big ideas, though!

ANCIENT SORTER
I'm sure you do.

NORVILLE
For instance, take a look at this
sweet baby...

handing

Norville is taking an envelope from his pocket and
it to the Ancient Sorter.

NORVILLE
...you look like you can keep a
secret...

from

The Ancient Sorter is pulling a ragged piece of paper
the envelope. On the paper is a crudely-drawn circle.

NORVILLE

...Something I developed myself.
Yessir, this is my ticket upstairs.

The Ancient Sorter looks questioningly from the circle to Norville.

NORVILLE
(explains)
...You know, for kids!

Norville
The Ancient Sorter nods with feigned understanding as
takes the paper back.

ANCIENT SORTER
Terrific.

NORVILLE
So ya see, I won't be in the mailroom
long.

ANCIENT SORTER
(deadpan)
Nooo, I don't guess you will be.

He resumes his sorting.

NORVILLE
How long've you been down here?

ANCIENT SORTER
Forty-eight years...

Whisk. Whisk.

ANCIENT SORTER
...Next year they move me up to
parcels...

Whisk. Whisk. Whisk.

ANCIENT SORTER
...If I'm lucky.

A BELL CLANGS.

The PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEM SPUTTERS to life.

PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEM (V.O.)
Attention Hudsucker employees. We
regretfully announce that at 12:01
this afternoon, Hudsucker time, Waring
Hudsucker, Founder, President, and
Chairman of the Board of Hudsucker
Industries, merged with the infinite.
To mark this occasion of corporate
loss, we ask that all employees
observe a moment of silent
contemplation.

All HUBBUB ABRUPTLY STOPS and the sounds of HEAVY

MACHINERY,

total

HISSING STEAM PIPES, and GENERATORS WIND DOWN TO leave
SILENCE. After a moment:

PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEM (V.O.)
...Thank you for your kind attention.
This moment has been duly-noted on
your time cards and will be deducted
from your pay. That is all.

return

The MACHINERY GROANS back INTO ACTION and the people
to their jobs just as:

A STEAM WHISTLE SCREECHES.

ALARM BELLS go OFF.

From the PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEM:

PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEM (V.O.)
'Blue letter! Blue letter!'

The mail room is thrown into pandemonium.

VARIOUS VOICES
Blue letter...! It's a blue letter...!
They're bringing down a blue letter!

his

One MAN spins to face the CAMERA, his hands pressed over
ears. STEAM JETS and HISSES behind him.

MAN
Blue letter!!

Animated for the first time:

ANCIENT SORTER
Jumpin' Jehosephat, a blue letter!

of

Mail carts and other paraphernalia are abruptly swept out
the crowded aisle to form a clear path running down to an
elevator in the b.g.

With a SIREN SOUND, a light above the elevator goes on.

which

The elevator door sweeps open. It reveals a wall into
a four-foot high hinged door is set.

This door swings open and an old dwarf emerges: Old man
HUTCHINSON, the boss of the mailroom. He emerges from the
blinding light of the interior of the elevator.

He is holding aloft a letter.

He takes loping drawf strides down the aisle.

CLOSEUP - LETTER

b.g., TRACKING ON letter as Hutchinson bears it along. In the
the faces that the letter passes are agog.

CROSSCUT the approaching blue letter WITH: Norville and
the Ancient Sorter.

BACK TO SCENE

Norville's The Ancient Sorter is leaning over to whisper into
ear.

ANCIENT SORTER

It's a blue letter... top, top
level... confidential communication
between the brass... usually bad
news... they hate blue letters
upstairs... Hate 'em!

Norville gulps.

HUTCHINSON

You!

has Norville looks over his shoulder, but the Ancient Sorter
disappeared.

HUTCHINSON

...Yeah, you! Barnes!

As he points, the people around Norville shrink away.

HUTCHINSON

...You don't look busy! Think you
can handle a blue letter?
(laughs sadistically)
...This letter was sent down this
morning by the big guy himself! 'At's
right, Waring Hudsucker! It's
addressed to Sid Mussburger!
Hudsucker's right-hand man! It's a
blue letter! That means you put it
right in Mussburger's hand. No
secretaries! No receptionists! No
colleagues! No excuses!

thrusts DRAMATIC TRACK IN ON Norville. As Hutchinson talks, he
it the blue letter into Norville's face. Norville looks at
we with terrific apprehension. As Hutchinson's speech ends,
are TIGHT ON Norville's sweating face.

COMPLEMENTARY TIGHT DUTCH ANGLE ON HUTCHINSON

the We can see the veins in his eyes, the veins in his nose,
hairs in his ears.

HUTCHINSON
Mussburger!!

TO: CUT

ELEVATOR DOORS

ROCKETING OPEN. We MOVE IN ON the young elevator operator who leers INTO CAMERA. He wears a brass-buttoned uniform, white gloves and a pillbox hat. The name BUZZ is stitched onto his breast pocket.

As Norville enters the elevators:

BUZZ
Hiya, buddy! The name is Buzz, I got
the fuzz...

his He lifts his pillbox hat to reveal a white crewcut, then
lets the elastic chin strap snap the cap back down onto
head.

BUZZ
...I make the elevator do what she
duzz!

he He holds out his hand but as Norville reaches to shake it
snaps it away and pats down his crewcut:

BUZZ
...Hang it up to dry.

accustomed He cackles and powers the ELEVATOR into GEAR. Norville's
knees buckle under a huge upward surge; Buzz is
to it.

BUZZ
...What's your pleasure, buddy?

NORVILLE
(regaining his balance)
Forty-fourth floor, and it's very --

BUZZ
Forty-four, the top brass floor say,
buddy! What takes fifty years to get
up to the top floor and thirty seconds
to get down?

NORVILLE
I --

BUZZ

Waring Hudsucker! Na-ha-ha-ha-ha!
Say, buddy!

elevator
inertia,
elevator.
With a powerful DOWN-SHIFTING SOUND, Buzz brakes the
to a sharp halt. Norville continues upward with the
painfully smacking his head against a corner of the

Buzz opens the door and a couple of people enter.

BUZZ
Mr. Kline, up to nine. Mrs. Dell,
personnel. Mr. Levin, thirty-seven.

MR. LEVIN
Thirty-six.

BUZZ
Walk down. Ladies and gentlemen,
step to the rear; here comes
gargantuan Mr. Grier.

An obese MAN enters, smoking a cigar:

FAT MAN
Buzz.

elevator
Buzz has already thrown the doors shut and sent the
into its power-rise. Norville, bracing himself now, sinks
only a little under the G-force.

BUZZ
Say, buddy! Who's the most liquid
businessman on the street?

NORVILLE
Well, I --

BUZZ
Waring Hudsucker! Na-ha-ha-ha-ha!
Say, buddy! When is the sidewalk
fully dressed? When it's 'wearing'
Hudsucker! Na-ha-ha-ha!

He turns to look at Norville.

BUZZ
...Ya get it, buddy, it's a pun,
it's a knee-slapper, it's a play on
Jesus, Joseph and Mary, is that a
blue letter?!

those
All heads in the elevator turn, aghast, to look, and
near Norville shrink away.

BUZZ
...Cripes a'mighty, whyn't ya tell a

guy?! Hold on, folks, we're express
to the top floor!

The ELEVATOR SCREAMS into overdrive and we:

TO:

CUT

ELEVATOR DOORS

Sweeping open. Norville staggers out.

BUZZ
(hissing)
Good luck, buddy!

The door sweeps shut. Norville looks nervously around.

Behind him the elevator doors suddenly open again.

BUZZ
-- You'll need it!

SCREAM

The elevator doors slam shut and we hear its ENGINES
as it power-dives away.

Norville turns toward the executive offices.

Plush, thick-carpeted silence.

Norville starts walking.

A SCRAPING SOUND stands out in the high-powered executive
quiet. Norville looks to one side.

of
the

A workman in painter's overalls squats in front of a pair
heavy oak doors. With a razor blade he is scraping off
name "WARING HUDSUCKER."

NORVILLE
...Mr. Mussburger's office?

The scraper looks sullenly over his shoulder at Norville.

With a jerk of his thumb he indicates the direction.

Norville enters the adjacent office.

OUTER OFFICE

office.

Two secretaries are in Mussburger's outer reception

folder,

The first is a filing secretary who stands frozen in the
f.g., her hand poised over an open drawer to deposit a

as she stares at Norville with an amused and supercilious
sneer which stays pasted on throughout.

As her wail becomes deafening and we TRACK INTO her mouth and the SCREEN GOES BLACK and:

CLICK

sound The blackness and the wailing are both cut short by the
of a DOOR OPENING. We are:

INT. MUSSBURGER'S OFFICE

its door swinging open to admit Norville.

rag In the b.g., in the outer office, we can see the filing
her secretary leaning back motionless in a chair with a damp
draped across her forehead. The Receptionist is fanning
with a towel.

The door closes behind Norville.

We hear a rhythmic CLICK-CLICK-CLICK and the HUM of VENTILATION.

NORVILLE'S POV

which Across miles of carpet is a huge executive desk, behind
the is a large executive chair facing the window. From above
cord back of the chair cigar smoke wreathes up. A telephone
from snakes around to the man sitting in the chair, hidden
us. On the desktop is a perpetual motion machine of large
swinging ball bearings. Click-click-click.

the A TICKERTAPE MACHINE occasionally BURPS information in
far corner of the office.

by A huge MECHANICAL ARM -- the sweep second hand of the
throws Hudsucker clock on the facade of the building -- RUMBLES
immediately outside the window, describing an arc that
a moving shadow across the office.

His BACK TO us, into the phone:

MUSSBURGER

-- Sure sure, Parkinson's stupid but
he's ambitious, too hard to control...

deferentially He swivels around to face Norville, who stands
waves at the door. Still listening at the phone, Mussburger
Norville forward.

MUSSBURGER

...No! Not McClanahan; sure he bungled the Teleyard merger, but that means he's got something to prove...

He covers the mouth piece.

MUSSBURGER

...Who let you in?

NORVILLE

I --

Into the phone:

MUSSBURGER

Atwater? Tremendous. Except I fired him last week --

The INTERCOM BUZZES fiercely.

VOICE (V.O.)

Mr. Bumstead is waiting downstairs.

Mussburger hits the intercom.

MUSSBURGER

Tell him I'll be right there...

(looks at Norville)

Well, what is it?

NORVILLE

I --

from

But Mussburger is listening to the TINNY VOICE issuing the PHONE.

MUSSBURGER

You, maybe you're the company's biggest moron. We can't use Morris, he's been with us too long, he's a nice guy, too many friends. Matter of fact, why don't you fire him. No -- scratch that; I'll fire him.

(looks up at Norville)

...Make it fast, make it fast.

NORVILLE

You --

The INTERCOM SQUAWKS.

VOICE (V.O.)

Mr. Bumstead is getting very --

MUSSBURGER

I'll be right there. Give him a magazine.

(to Norville)

...What're you, a mute?

The second PHONE on Mussburger's desk RINGS.

MUSSBURGER

...Yeah, how's the stock doing?
...Bad, huh? Well it's not bad enough.
(into the first phone)
...Look, chump, either you find me a
grade A ding-dong or you can tender
your key to the executive washroom.
(into the second phone)
And that goes double for you.
(into the first phone)
Ear-clay?
(into both phones)
Ood-gay!
(slams down both
phones, looks at
Norville)
This better be good. I'm in a bad
mood.

Norville clears his throat.

NORVILLE

Well, sir. I've got something for
you from the mailroom, but first if
I could just take a minute or so
from your very busy time...

paper
He reaches into his mailroom apron and hands a scrap of
paper across the desk to Mussburger, who stares, frozen, at
Norville, making no move to take the paper.

NORVILLE

...to show you a, uh...

Norville, undaunted, holds up the paper since Mussburger
will not take it. Mussburger doesn't even look at it; his
eyes are locked on Norville's. Mussburger smolders.

NORVILLE

...a little something I've been
working on for the last two or three
years...

look
at
Mussburger's burning eyes finally shift momentarily to
at the crudely drawn circle; he looks back incredulously
at
Norville.

NORVILLE

...You know, for kids! Which is
perfect for Hudsucker -- not that I
claim to be any great genius; like
they say, inspiration is 99 percent
perspiration, and in my case I'd say
it's at least twice that, but I gotta
tell ya, Mr. Mussburger, sir, this

sweet baby --

MUSSBURGER

Wait a minute!

Sudden quiet.

With one last click the perpetual motion ball bearings abruptly stop.

As Mussburger's eyes burn in on him, Norville stands mute and paralyzed.

desk. His eyes locked on Norville's, Mussburger circles the

He stands toe-to-toe with Norville.

He thrusts his face into Norville's, whose head moves reflexively back. Mussburger's nose is almost touching Norville's, his eyes are burning, searching, studying, evaluating.

Finally he draws his head back.

MUSSBURGER

Hmmm...

that With one hand he thrusts his cigar into Norville's gaping mouth. With his other hand he raises Norville's chin so

his teeth clench it.

MUSSBURGER

Umm-hmm...

chair He steps back, eyes still on Norville.

He jerks his thumb over his shoulder, indicating his behind the desk.

MUSSBURGER

Siddown.

ciger, Norville, his lips puckered around the unaccustomed looks bemusedly from the chair to Mussburger.

MUSSBURGER

...Go ahead. Try it on.

Norville obeys, reluctantly, stiffly.

MUSSBURGER

...Put your feet up.

Norville is again reluctant.

MUSSBURGER

...Go ahead.

Norville obeys. Mussburger studies.

MUSSBURGER
Hmmm... Let's get to know one
another, shall we?

Norville's eyes squint against the cigar smoke wreathing
from between his teeth. Mussburger seems to relax.

MUSSBURGER
...Let's chat!
(beams)
...Man to man!

Norville beams.

MUSSBURGER
...You weren't blessed with much...

He waves vaguely towards his head and searches for a
euphemism.

MUSSBURGER
...education, were you?

NORVILLE
Well, I'm a college graduate --

MUSSBURGER
All right, but you didn't excel in
your studies...?

NORVILLE
Well, I made the dean's list.

MUSSBURGER
(worried)
Hmmm.

Norville sputters out some more cigar smoke.

NORVILLE
At the Muncie College of Business
Administration.

MUSSBURGER
(relieved)
Sure, sure. And did your classmates
there call you 'jerk' or...
(searches again)
... 'schmoe'?

Norville shakes his head.

MUSSBURGER
... 'Shnook'? 'Dope'? 'Dipstick'?
'Lamebrain'?

NORVILLE
No, sir.

MUSSBURGER
Not even behind your back?

NORVILLE
Sir! They voted me most likely to
succeed!

MUSSBURGER
(curtly)
You're fired.

NORVILLE
But, sir! --

MUSSBURGER
Get your feet off that desk.

As he struggles to comply:

NORVILLE
But --

MUSSBURGER
Get out of my sight.

cigar
groping
a
Norville, squinting against the cigar smoke, pulls the
out of his mouth as he doubles forward, feet still up,
for a place to set down the cigar. He sets it blindly on
loose stack of papers.

MUSSBURGER
My God! The Bumstead contracts!!

NORVILLE
Oh my God, sir!

the
The top page radiates a circle of incipient flame from
cigar's live end.

MUSSBURGER
You nitwit! I worked for three years
on this deal!

NORVILLE
Oh my God, sir!

Norville runs across the office to a large water cooler.

MUSSBURGER
I'll take care of it. Just get out!

it
against
orange
Mussburger plucks the cigar off the contract and tosses
into a wastebasket. He pats the fingertips of one hand
his tongue and then efficiently pats out the crinkling

circle on the top sheet of the contract.

toward
knees.

At the other end of the office, Norville is wrapping his arms around the glass water tank, which he pulls off its base. He runs back across the vast expanse of office the desk, hugging the water tank whose WATER GLOOB-GLOOBS out its open bottom and splashes down onto his pumping

water.

As he reaches the desk, the near-empty tank is now light enough for him to hoist with one arm, which he does, and cups his other hand under it to catch its last glub of

place

He tosses the TANK to the floor where --
CRASH -- it SHATTERS, and stands looking about for a place to dump his handful of water.

MUSSBURGER
Why you nitwit. You almost destroyed
the most sensitive deal of my career!

NORVILLE
Oh my God, sir!

desk,

He is reacting to the wastebasket on his side of the desk, which Mussburger cannot see.

flecks

It is sprouting flame, at which Norville ineffectually flecks his remaining drops of water.

MUSSBURGER
Now out of here! Out!

Norville is already running to the window, which he runs both palms over, desperately seeking a way to open it.

MUSSBURGER
Not that way! Through the door!

NORVILLE
But, sir!

up

The windows do not open. Norville furiously stomps on the flames in the wastebasket and -- his foot sticks.

Further stomping only makes the flaming wastebasket roar up and down with his foot.

MUSSBURGER
Right away, buster! Out of my office!

Norville has dropped to the floor, trying to wrench the flaming wastebasket off his leg.

MUSSBURGER

Up on your feet! We don't crawl at
Hudsucker Industries!

NORVILLE
Sir, my leg is on fire!

wastebasket
Norville finally succeeds in getting the flaming
off his foot. Now the problem is what to do with it.

MUSSBURGER
Get out of this office, you dithering
nincompoop!

Norville picks up the flaming trash receptacle.

NORVILLE
Oh my God, sir!

He winds up and throws it through the closed window.

The GLASS SHATTERS and the flaming basket plummets to
oblivion.

through
With the picture window broken a FEROCIOUS DRAFT ROARS
the penthouse office.

CLOSE SHOT - BUMSTEAD CONTRACTS

On the desk. The pages are sucked away by the draft.

MUSSBURGER
My God! The Bumstead contracts!

NORVILLE
Oh my God, sir!

out
Mussburger lunges for the contracts as they are sucked
the window.

He runs, jumps onto the sill, grabs -- his fist clenches
around one wafting page -- he is about to fall --

MUSSBURGER
Eeeeeeeaaaahhhh!

TO: CUT

INT. EXECUTIVE WAITING ROOM

in
BUMSTEAD, a short, fat, heavily perspiring executive, is
screaming at an O.S. secretary. He holds a pot of coffee
one hand and a copy of Boy's Life in the other.

BUMSTEAD
No magazine. No coffee. Mussburger!
I wanna see Mussburger! Or did he

jump out a window too?!

In the window behind him we see loose sheets of paper fluttering down.

CUT

TO:

NORVILLE

Desperately hanging onto Mussburger by his legs.

NORVILLE

Don't worry, Mr. Mussburger! I gotcha.
I gotcha by your pants!

Mussburger's screaming abruptly stops.

(THE

CLOSEUP - MUSSBURGER'S HORROR-STRICKEN FACE REMEMBERING

SCREEN GOES WATERY):

MUSSBURGER

tailor,

is in a basement tailor shop. LUIGI, an old Italian
is just running his tape up Mussburger's inseam.

LUIGI

Meester Moosaburger, I give-a you
pants a nice-a dooble stitch. Make
'em strong, and they look-a real
sharp.

MUSSBURGER

(barking)

No! Single stitch is fine.

LUIGI

(begging)

But please-a, Meester Moosaburger,
the dooble stitch she last-a forever --

MUSSBURGER

Why on earth would I need a double
stitch? To pad your bill? Single
stitch is fine!

CUT BACK

TO:

CLOSEUP OF PANICKED MUSSBURGER

MUSSBURGER

Damn!

We hear a LOUD TEARING sound O.S. Mussburger drops a few
inches.

QUICK WIPE

TO:

LUIGI AT HIS SEWING MACHINE

LUIGI

(musing to himself)

What the heck. Meester Moosaburger
such a nice-a guy, I give him dooble
steech-a anyway. Assa some-a strong-
a steech-a, you bet!

BACK TO MUSSBURGER'S PANTS

of The tearing fabric abruptly catches and stops; the rest
the pants hold intact.

MUSSBURGER

sighs with relief.

He looks up.

NORVILLE

the Norville's arms are wrapped around Mussburger's ankles;
heels of Mussburger's shoes are digging into his face.

MUSSBURGER

Looking. Thinking.

NORVILLE

Struggling to hold on.

MUSSBURGER

Calm. Contemplating.

MUSSBURGER

Hmmm...

sticks He absently removes a cigar from his breast pocket and
not it in his mouth. He holds his lighter under the cigar,
noticing that the flame is pointing the wrong way.
He looks at Norville.

NORVILLE

His face drawn with effort, still struggling to hang on.

A PULL BACK FROM the EXTREME CLOSE SHOT REVEALS, however,
that Norville's arms are now wrapped around -- emptiness.

Mussburger's legs are gone.

Norville throws his head back and laughs, it seems,

insanely --

but CONTINUED PULL BACK REVEALS that Norville is merely pantomiming the adventure for the benefit of the board members, including Mussburger. They stand around

Mussburger's

office, laughing gaily. All safe now, no harm done. This inaugurates:

LAUGHING MONTAGE

Montage silent but for MUSIC.

of
the

A) Norville is entertaining the board with his depiction of the near-disaster. Mussburger is slapping him merrily on the back.

B) CLOSE SHOT - Board member laughing.

C) Another board member. Laughing.

D) Mussburger. Laughing.

E) Norville laughing.

F) FREEZE FRAME ON Norville's laughing face.

ANGLE

newspaper

PULL BACK to reveal that the frozen picture is the photo on the front page of the Manhattan Argus.

Its headline reads: UNTRIED YOUTH TO HELM HUDSUCKER.

reads:

The subhead reads: Stockholders Wary. The sub-subhead Meteoric Rise From Mailroom.

The article is under the byline of Amy Archer.

around
Norville
laughs

CONTINUED PULL BACK REVEALS that we are looking at the newspaper OVER someone's SHOULDER. The person swivels and away -- his face now TO us, we see that it is looking at the newspaper. He throws his head back and merrily.

As he laughs -- thwack -- a steaming towel is thrown onto his face and he continues to swivel. CONTINUED PULL BACK REVEALS that he is in a barber chair.

chair

His head drops back and OUT OF FRAME as the swiveling is cranked down, but immediately -- still spinning -- -- his head reappears as the chair is cranked up again.

Still laughing, Norville is now freshly shaven and has a slicked-back haircut, heavy with pomade.

FREEZE ON Norville's laughing face.

ANGLE

to PULL BACK to reveal it is another front page photo next
the headline: Hud Board To Street: GIVE MAN FROM MUNCIE A
CHANCE. Subhead: Has Fresh Ideas.

to CONTINUED PULL BACK REVEALS that the paper is lying on a
chair. Norville's mailroom apron is tossed onto the chair
cover it.

on a PAN TO where the apron was tossed from. Norville stands
takes tailor's stage, laughing, as the tailor, also laughing,
his measurements. Norville in shirtsleeves, boxer shorts,
hose stockings and garters.

and The tailor rises, laughing merrily, throwing up his arms
tape. spreading them wide with hands stretching the measuring

Norville laughs merrily and also throws his arms up wide.

BOARD MEMBER

stretching laughs merrily, his arms thrown wide, tickertape
tickertape. between his hands. He joyously tosses away the

FLOOR

discharged where the tickertape lands on a pile of previously
tape.

its PAN UP to reveal that the tickertape continues to burp
disastrous tale of good news for the board.

Mussburger's PAN UP FURTHER to reveal that the machine is in
office. At the far end of the room, behind his desk,
Mussburger laughs as he looks at a newspaper.

TRACK IN TOWARDS him.

rumbles On his desk the perpetual ballbearings swing; outside his
window the sweep second hand of the Hudsucker clock
by, sweeping a shadow across the floor. Evil prevails.

As Mussburger opens the newspaper, the CONTINUED TRACK IN

Just

shows its front page headline: HUD STOCK DIPS. Subhead:
Good Is He?

TRACK IN ON the front page photo: Norville laughing, his
chin propped in his hand.

PHOTOGRAPH

COMES TO LIFE and Norville unfreezes, laughing.

oak

We are now TRACKING BACK FROM him. He sits behind a huge
desk, newly coifed and tailored.

OFFICE

The brass plaque on the desk confirms that he is in the
OF THE PRESIDENT.

leaving

TRACK BACK CONTINUES THROUGH the large elegant office,
Norville looking quite small IN LONG SHOT.

His LAUGHTER ECHOES in the bright bare office.

Norville's laughter is just winding down, leaving him
exhausted, as if he has been laughing nonstop for several
days. He finally sighs and wipes a tear from his eye.

FADE

OUT:

FADE IN:

NEW YORK SKYLINE - DAY

by

In the skyline we can see the Hudsucker building topped
the Hudsucker clock.

man

A cigar ENTERS FRAME in the f.g., then the face of the
smoking it. Staring contemplatively at the Hudsucker

building,

he takes a puff from the cigar and then plucks it from
his

his

mouth and waves it, as if painting a headline.

EDITOR

'The Einstein of Enterprise.' 'The
Edison of Industry.' 'The Billion-
Dollar Cranium'... 'Idea Man'!

(exploding)

And not one of you mugs has given me
a story on him!!

REVERSE

shows the Editors glassed-in office filled with REPORTERS
for the staff meeting. Although they listen quietly, they
are more bored than attentive.

of
never-
disgust.

THROUGH the glass walls we can see the furious activity
an army of reporters, editors, and copy boys waging the
ending battle to put out a quality daily newspaper.
The Editor slams a newspaper down onto his desk in

EDITOR

Facts, figures, charts! They never
sold a newspaper! I read this
morning's edition of the Argus and
let me tell you something: I'd wrap
a fish in it! I'd use it as kindling!
Hell, I'd even train my poodle with
it if he wasn't a French poodle and
more partial to the pages of Pairee
Soir! But I sure wouldn't shell out
a hard-earned nickel to read the
dadblamed thing!

REPORTER

Come on, chief, give us a break.

EDITOR

Suuuure, Tibbs, take a break! Go to
Florida! Lie in the sun! Wait for a
coconut to drop, file a story on it --
it'll be more of a grabber than your
piece on the commie grain surplus!
The human angle! That's what sells
papers! We need a front page with
heart and the whole idea of the 'Idea
Man' idea can put it there!

REPORTER #2

Chief, if we had more access --

EDITOR

Yeah, and if a frog had wings he
wouldn't bump his ass a-hoppin'! I
don't want excuses, I want results!

Whack! --

slammed
one
the

Without even looking in its direction, the Editor has
down the lid of the cigar box on his desk, towards which
Reporter's hand had been idly reaching.
The Reporter jerks his fingers away as the Editor spares
briefest moment to glare at him.

EDITOR

I wanna know what makes the Idea Man
tick! Where is he from? Where is he
going? I wanna know everything about

this guy! Has he got a girl? Has he got parents?

REPORTER #3
Everybody has parents.

EDITOR
All right, how many? How 'bout it, Parkinson, you've been awful quiet over there.

PARKINSON
Uhhh...

REPORTER NEXT TO HIM
Still waters run deep, chief.

EDITOR
The only thing that runs deep with Parkinson is the holes in his ears. Yes, the Idea Man! What're his hopes and dreams, his desires and aspirations? Does he think all the time or does he set aside a certain portion of the day? How tall is he and what's his shoe size? Where does he sleep and what does he eat for breakfast? Does he put jam on his toast or doesn't he put jam on his toast, and if not why not and since when?

He thrust his face into that of the Reporter.

EDITOR
...Well?!!

No answer.

EDITOR
...Ahh, you're useless. Yes, Idea Man! Creator! Innovator! Cerebrator! Tycoon!--

WOMAN (O.S.)
Fake.

EDITOR
Huhh!!

WOMAN

Star reporter AMY ARCHER -- attractive, smartly-dressed.

AMY
I tell ya the guy's a phony.

EDITOR
Phony, huh?

AMY

As a three-dollar bill.

EDITOR

Sez who?

AMY

Sez me! Amy Archer. Why is he an Idea Man -- because Hudsucker says he is? What're his ideas? Why won't they let anyone interview him?...

low: One Reporter is leaning into another to keep his voice

REPORTER

Five bucks says she mentions her Pulitzer.

OTHER REPORTER

Again? You're on.

AMY

(as she picks up the morning paper)

...And just take a look at the mug on this guy -- the jutting eyebrows, the simian forehead, the idiotic grin. Why he has a face only a mother could love --

again Whack! The Editor has slammed down the cigar box lid
but: Amy, smiling, raises a cigar INTO FRAME having
beaten him.

She tosses it to the Reporter who failed to get one.

AMY

...On payday! The only story here is how this guy made a monkey out of you, Al.

EDITOR

Yeah, well, monkey or not I'm still editor of this rag. Amy, I thought you were doing that piece on the F.B.I. -- J. Edgar Hoover: When Will He Marry?

AMY

I filed it yesterday.

EDITOR

Well, do a follow-up: Hoover: Hero or Mama's Boy? The rest of you bums get up off your brains and get me that Idea Man story!

REPORTERS

All right, chief... We'll do our

best, chief... I'll give it a shot,
chief...

AMY
(at the door)
Al, he's the bunk.

Slam!

One of the waging Reporters grins at the other, who is
taking out a five dollar bill.

The door bursts open and Amy sticks her head in.

AMY
I'll stake my Pulitzer on it!

CUT

TO:

ELEVATOR DOORS

elevator Sweeping open to reveal the leering face of Buzz, the
gnat.

BUZZ
Say, buddy! Where'd ya get the new
duds?

outfit. Norville is entering the elevator in his new executive

BUZZ
...and say, buddy! How'd old
bucketbutt like his blue letter?
Na-ha-ha-ha-ha! Did he bust a gut?
Did he die? Did he -- Well, hello,
Mr. Mussburger, sir...

elevator. Buzz is instant decorum as Mussburger enters the

BUZZ
...How're you this fine morning,
sir?

the Norville has been worriedly patting at his pockets since
mention of the blue letter.

NORVILLE
That reminds me, Mr. Mu... uh, Sid.
I never did give you that--

MUSSBURGER
(to Buzz)
Lobby. We haven't got all day.

BUZZ
Right away, Mr. Mussburger sir.

out a As he talks, Mussburger pats at his suit pocket, takes
cigar, inspects it.

MUSSBURGER

Well I'm starved. I understand it'll
be quite an affair this afternoon,
and the executive roast tom turkey
at the Bohemian Grove redefines the
word superb.

there He puts the cigar in his mouth and Buzz's hand is right
with a lighter.

BUZZ

My pleasure, sir.

NORVILLE

Roast tom turkey. Gee, I'm hungry
too --

MUSSBURGER

Sure, sure...

The elevator doors open.

BUZZ

It's been a pleasure serving you,
Mr. Mussburger.

it: Buzz turns to Norville. He is puzzled but trying to hide

BUZZ

...and it's been a pleasure serving
you too, uh... buddy.

MR. MUSSBURGER

lope is already striding through the lobby; Norville has to
to catch up.

NORVILLE

Say, Mr. Muss -- uh, Sid! Shouldn't
we be a little bit concerned with
the downward spiral of our stock
these last few days? I mean, you're
the expert, but at the Muncie College
of Business Administration they told
us --

Mussburger gives an artificially hearty laugh and claps
Norville on the shoulder.

MUSSBURGER

Relax, Norville. It's only natural
in a period of transition for the
more nervous element to run for cover.

NORVILLE
Okay, Sid. Like I said, you're the
expert, but --

EXT. SIDEWALK

keep
Norville is still loping behind Mussburger, trying to
up with his long strides.

NORVILLE
...You don't happen to remember the
plan I outlined to you the day I set
fire to your office -- uh, the day I
was promoted?

MUSSBURGER
I do remember and I was impressed.
Anyway, that's all forgotten now.
Driver!

NORVILLE
Thank you, Sid, but the reason I
mention it is, it would require such
a small capital investment -- again,
you're the expert here --

MUSSBURGER
Damn it, where's my car!

NORVILLE
-- But there's such an enormous
potential profit-wise given the
demographics -- baby boom --
discretionary income in the burgeoning
middle class --

A black limousine pulls up to the curb.

MUSSBURGER
Finally.

NORVILLE
-- So if you think it's appropriate,
I'd like to bounce the idea off a
few people at lunch --

Mussburger is getting into the back seat --

behind
him.
Mussburger
Sure, sure, tell whoever you want...
And, to Norville's surprise, slamming the door shut

MUSSBURGER
...And I'd like to hear more about
it at some point, too.

to
SCREEEECH -- the CAR pulls away. Norville is left talking
himself on the empty sidewalk.

NORVILLE
But, Sid, I thought you and I were...

DOORMAN
Say, bud, could you keep the sidewalk
clear here?

NORVILLE
But I'm the president of this --
aww, forget it.

CUT

TO:

INT. COFFEE SHOP

counter.
cup
A cheap coffee shop a half-flight down from the street.
We are LOOKING ACROSS an elbow of the coffee shop
In the middle b.g., Norville sits dejectedly stirring a
of coffee.

Behind him, THROUGH the window wells, we see the back and
forth feet of pedestrians bustling by on the sidewalk.

In the extreme f.g. sit two steaming mugs of coffee.

They belong to two VETERANS of the coffee shop, who, from
O.S., narrate the scene.

VETERAN #1 (O.S.)
I got gas, Bennie.

VETERAN #2 (O.S.)
Yeah, tell me about it.

VETERAN #1 (O.S.)
No kiddin', Bennie. I got gas.

VETERAN #2 (O.S.)
Ya get the special?

VETERAN #1 (O.S.)
Fah from it...

around.
it
He gives a low whistle under his breath as a woman enters
from the street and hesitates by the door, looking
Still attractive but looking somewhat down-at-the-heels,
is Amy Archer.

VETERAN #1 (O.S.)
...Enter the dame.

VETERAN #2 (O.S.)
There's one in every story.

VETERAN #1 (O.S.)
Ten bucks says she's looking for a
handout.

VETERAN #2 (O.S.)
Twenty bucks says not here she don't
find one.

VETERAN #1 (O.S.)
She's looking for her mark.

the
The woman's eyes settle on Norville, and she heads for
empty stool next to his.

VETERAN #2 (O.S.)
She finds him.

VETERAN #1 (O.S.)
She sits down.

exits.
The woman says something to the counter waitress, who

VETERAN #2 (O.S.)
...and awduhs a light lunch.

VETERAN #1 (O.S.)
She looks in her purse...

She is holding her wallet upside down.

VETERAN #2 (O.S.)
...No money.

VETERAN #1 (O.S.)
The mark notices.

Beat. Norville, however, is not noticing: He is staring
intently at his coffee spoon, his hat pushed back on his
head, his other hand propping up a cheekbone; the woman's
presence does not seem to have registered yet.

VETERAN #2 (O.S.)
...He's not noticing, Benny.

VETERAN #1 (O.S.)
Maybe he's wise.

VETERAN #2 (O.S.)
He don't look wise.

VETERAN #1 (O.S.)
Plan two: Here come the waterworks.

The woman starts crying.

VETERAN #2 (O.S.)

Yellowstone.

VETERAN #1 (O.S.)
Old Faithful.

VETERAN #2 (O.S.)
Hello, Niagara.

VETERAN #1 (O.S.)
He notices.

As the woman cries, she accidentally-on-purpose jostles
Norville and he finally does indeed notice.

VETERAN #2 (O.S.)
He's concerned.

The woman mouths words at Norville who reacts
sympathetically
and waves his hands at the waitress.

VETERAN #1 (O.S.)
She explains her perdicament, and...

VETERAN #1 & #2 (O.S.)
(in unison)
...entuh the light lunch.

The waitress is entering to set a plate in front of the
woman.

The woman continues to talk to Norville, smiling wanly at
him.

VETERAN #2 (O.S.)
She's got other problems, of course...

VETERAN #1 (O.S.)
...Her mother needs an operation...

VETERAN #2 (O.S.)
...adenoids.

VETERAN #1 (O.S.)
No, Bennie: Lumbago.

Veteran #1's enunciation of "lumbago" falls into perfect
sync with the woman's moving lips.

Norville is listening sympathetically, but he suddenly
notices
his watch.

VETERAN #1 (O.S.)
(alarmed)
She's losing him, Bennie.

Norville is rising to his feet.

VETERAN #2 (O.S.)
Maybe he's wise.

VETERAN #1 (O.S.)
He don't look wise.

As Norville turns to leave:

VETERAN #2 (O.S.)
How does she pull this out?

She puts the back of her hand dramatically to her forehead.

VETERAN #1 (O.S.)
(disbelieving)
She isn't!

VETERAN #2 (O.S.)
(thrilled)
She is!

And indeed she does: Faint dead away, falling backwards on the stool, so that Norville has no choice but to catch her.

Norville holds her awkwardly, looking around for help.

VETERAN #1 (O.S.)
She's good, Bennie.

VETERAN #2 (O.S.)
She's damn good, Lou.

A WAITRESS enters extreme f.g. to BLOCK OUR VIEW of the swooned woman and the embarrassed Norville. The Waitress

is FACING the CAMERA and the two O.S. Veterans; the CROPPING she gives us only her torso and the steaming pot of coffee holds.

WAITRESS
(bored, nasal voice)
Can I get you boys anything else?

REVERSE ANGLE

beyond Back of the Waitress's torso in f.g.; on either side They her, the two Veterans are looking up at her O.S. face. caps. sport extremely bored expressions, topped by "cabbie"

VETERAN #1
Bromo.

Beat.

VETERAN #2
...Bromo.

INT. NORVILLE'S OFFICE

just
Looking at its frosted-glass door; the sign painter is
finishing lettering in: NORVILLE BARNES, President.

he
The sign painter makes way as we see Norville's shadow
approaching; even from inside the room we can hear that

against
is WHEEZING HEAVILY. He is apparently carrying the girl,
cradled in his arms. He tries to reach down to get the
doorknob; can't manage it; turns to press his back

the door and get the knob with his other hand.

The door opens as Norville swings around to enter. He is
wheezing like a gas pipe about to explode.

see,
He swings around to kick the door shut. We see that the
lettering on the door is now terribly smudged; we also

ellivron
in wet ink, on the seat of Norville's pants: senraB
tnediserp.

Weakly, still cradled in Norville's arms:

AMY

I'm sorry we had to take the stairs.
It was just that horrible little
elevator boy...

NORVILLE

Not at all. You're light as a feather.

AMY

(pointing languorously)
The couch, please.

couch
looks
Still wheezing horribly, Norville staggers over to the
and deposits her gently on it. He straightens up and
at her.

NORVILLE'S POV

PULSATES
She is smiling wanly AT the CAMERA. The entire IMAGE
as the blood pounds behind Norville's eyeballs.

inside
as
We hear the LOUD, RASPING of his BREATH, resonating
his head. Amy is talking but her voice is barely audible,
if coming from a long way away.

BACK TO SCENE

NORVILLE

Just a minute.

his He perches drunkenly on the edge of the couch and puts
head between his knees, still fighting for breath.

AMY

I don't know what came over me. I
suppose it was the shock of eating
after so long without; the enzymes
kicking in after so long, or whatever.
But then you couldn't possibly know
what it is to be tired and hungry...

Speaking into his knees as he wheezes:

NORVILLE

Hungry, anyway.

AMY

I don't want to bore you with all
the sordid details of my life; it's
not a happy story...

her Norville rises and starts putting throw pillows behind
head.

AMY

...Suffice it to say that I'm jobless --
though not for want of trying, that
I'm friendless, with no one to --
thank you -- take care of me; and
that had you not come along at just
exactly the moment that you did --

She screams, staring down at the couch.

looking. Norville jumps, startled, then looks where she is

On the white sofa cushion where he had been sitting is
printed, in wet ink, right side around: NORVILLE BARNES,
President.

AMY

Norville, I didn't know you were
president here!

the Norville stares dumbfounded at the sofa cushion. When the
nickel finally drops, he spins around to try to look at
seat of his pants.

Distracted but still modest:

NORVILLE

Oh, it's nothing really. Just
determination and hard work...

He unbuckles his trousers.

NORVILLE

...Of course, when I started in the mailroom last Tuesday I thought it might take more time --

Buzz enters holding a brown paper bag.

BUZZ

Say, buddy, here's the whiskey you asked f --

He freezes, taking in the scene: Amy reclining on the couch; Norville standing in front of her with his pants around his ankles, still breathing heavily; the bottle of whiskey in his own hand.

NORVILLE

(flustered)

Thank you, Buzz, just leave it on the desk.

Leering:

BUZZ

Happy days, buddy...

As he turns to leave:

BUZZ

...and I'll tell your secretary you're not to be disturbed. Yowzuh!!

He snaps the elastic strap under his chin.

After the doors shut behind Buzz:

AMY

(shuddering)

What a horrible little person.

NORVILLE

Oh, Buzz is pretty harmless, really --

AMY

At any rate I arrived in town not ten days ago, full of dreams and aspirations, anxious to make my way in the world --

Norville pours a glass of whiskey and brings it over to her.

AMY

A little naive perhaps but -- thank you -- armed with determination, a solid work ethic, and an indomitable belief in the future --

NORVILLE

I myself --

He crosses back to the desk.

AMY

Only to have that belief, that
unsullied optimism, dashed against
the marble and mortar of the modern
work place --

box
Norville takes a cigarette from a large wood cigarette
on the desk and sticks it in his mouth.

NORVILLE

Cigarette?

AMY

No thank you. Seek and ye shall find,
work and ye shall prosper -- these
were the watch words of my education,
the ethics of my tender years --

OVER NORVILLE'S SHOULDER

lazily
We
of
He has been pushing the box towards her. The box tilts
forward and then disappears over the far lip of the desk.
hear the THUD of the BOX landing amid the pitter-patter
cigarettes raining onto the carpet.
Amy's brow crinkles. Continuing:

AMY

-- these were the values that were
instilled in me while I was growing
up in a little town you've probably
never heard of --

NORVILLE

Mind if I join you?

He is pouring himself a drink.

AMY

Be my guest. A little town you've
probably --

eyes
He tosses back his drink, gags, looks at Amy with his
bulging.

HIS POV

and
Once again her IMAGE PULSATES. There is a ROARING SOUND
an AIRY STEAM WHISTLE as she silently moves her lips.

NORVILLE

He waves his arms and talks with a thick rasp as he staggers to his feet.

NORVILLE

Excuse me -- I -- executive washroom...

He staggers out a side door.

his On his exit Amy leaps to her feet and scurries over to desk. At the top of her voice:

AMY

Are you all right?...

lead She throws open the top desk drawer. Inside two lonely pencils roll through the otherwise empty drawer.

a Amy expertly flips a cigarette into her mouth and strikes match off the desktop.

AMY

...Is it your lunch? The chicken a la king?

From the washroom:

NORVILLE (O.S.)

No, I --

after Amy throws open another drawer, empty except for an appointment book. As she hurriedly flips through page only blank page an arctic WIND WHISTLES emptiness. One page Junior has a notation: 11:45. Address Wilkie Grammar School Achievers Club.

AMY

Is the a la king repeating on you?

Amy shoves the appointment book back into the drawer.

NORVILLE (O.S.)

...I'm fine, I... You were saying?

She mutters:

AMY

Values... watchwords... uh, tender years...

(aloud)

-- A little town you've probably never heard of...

She hastily stubs out her cigarette and waves her hand to disperse the smoke.

AMY
...Muncie, Indiana.

BEING

She scurries back across the room as we hear the FAUCET
TURNED OFF: she re-strikes her languid pose on the couch
just as the washroom door opens.

Norville gapes, one hand pressing a dripping rag to his forehead.

NORVILLE
You're from Muncie?!

AMY
Why yes, do you know it?

Norville starts making pumping motions with his fists and loud syncopated grunting noises. Amy gapes at him.

He starts singing, off-key:

NORVILLE
'Fight on fight on dear old Muncie
Fight on -- Hoist the gold and blue
You'll be tattered, torn and hurtin'
Once 'The Munce' is done with you!'

last,
quickly

Amy lamely fakes singing along, coming in louder on the
obvious rhyme. Norville jumps an octave on it; she
follows sit, also pumping her fists.

of

As Norville crosses his hands and locks thumbs in front
his nose to make bird wings of his extended fingers:

NORVILLE
...Gooooooooo Eagles!

Amy awkwardly imitates.

Norville excitedly sits behind his desk.

NORVILLE
...A Muncie girl! Talk about the
cat's pyjamas! Tell you what, Amy.
I'm gonna cancel the rest of my
appointments this afternoon and get
you a job here at the Hud.

AMY
Oh, no, really, I --

NORVILLE
Don't bother to thank me, it's the
easiest thing in the world. Matter

of fact, I know where a vacancy just came up.

He hits the intercom.

NORVILLE

...Mail room.

To Amy:

NORVILLE

...This'll only take a moment.

INTERCOM (V.O.)

Yeah?

NORVILLE

Good afternoon to ya, this is Norville Barnes --

INTERCOM (V.O.)

Barnes! Where the hell have you been! And where's my voucher?!

Norville thumps at his pockets.

NORVILLE

...Well, I'm not sure where I --

INTERCOM (V.O.)

I need that voucher! I told you a week ago it was important!

NORVILLE

But look, I'm president of the company now and I --

INTERCOM (V.O.)

I don't care if you're president of the company! I need that voucher! Now!

CLICK. The intercom goes dead.

NORVILLE

Oh, of all the foolish... Listen, do you take shorthand? Are you familiar with the mimeograph machine?

AMY

Of course -- I went to the Muncie, uh, Secretarial Polytechnic!

Norville excitedly smacks a fist into a palm.

NORVILLE

-- A Muncie girl! Can you beat that!

AMY

Well, I just don't know how to thank you, Mr. Barnes --

NORVILLE
Please! Norville!

As he reaches to shake:

NORVILLE
...It's my pleasure!

and,
makes

She reaches for his hand but Norville snatches it away
winking at her, hooks thumbs in front of his nose and
wings of his fingers.

NORVILLE
...Gooooooooo Eagles!

wings,
and,

AMY
likewise hooks her thumbs in front of her nose, makes
and, winking back:

AMY
Goooooooooooo Eagles!

newspaper
reporter

But we PULL BACK to reveal that the girl is now in a
office, demonstrating the fight sign to SMITTY, a
wearing a fedora with a bent-back brim. Smitty howls with
laughter.

SMITTY
(wheezing)
...Once 'The Munce'... Holy...

typing

Amy sits down behind a typewriter and, as she starts
at 80 words per minute:

AMY
And is this guy from chumpsville?!
I pulled the old mother routine --

SMITTY
Adenoids?

AMY
Lumbago.

Behind her an ancient man wearing an inksman's visor and
sleeve garters toils over a large checkerboarded surface
over which he shuffles letter blocks and black spaces.

Smitty gives a low whistle.

SMITTY
That gag's got whiskers on it!

The PHONE RINGS and Smitty reaches for it.

AMY
I'm telling you, Smitty, the board
of Hudsucker is up to something --

SMITTY
(into phone)
Yeah.

ANCIENT PUZZLER
Say, Amy, what's a six-letter word
for an affliction of the hypothalamus?

Without a break in her typing:

AMY
-- And it's a cinch -- Goiter --
it's a cinch this guy isn't in on
it. How much time to make the Late
Final?

Smitty holds the phone away from his ear.

SMITTY
Chief.

Still typing, Amy whistles and nods to her shoulder.

Smitty tucks the phone into it as she continues typing.

AMY
Hiya, Chief, just the person I wanted
to apologize to...

Smitty is looking at his watch.

SMITTY
About seven minutes.

AMY
(still typing)
Yeah, I was all wet about your idea
man... Well, thanks for being so
generous... It is human, and you are
divine... No, he's no faker. He's
the 100% real McCoy beware-of-
imitations genuine article: the guy
is a real moron --

To the Ancient Puzzler:

AMY
-- as in a five-letter word for
imbecile --

Back into phone:

AMY
-- as pure a specimen as I've ever
run across... Am I sure he's a nitwit?

Heck, if working at the Argus doesn't make me an expert then my name isn't Amy Archer and I've never won the Pulitzer Prize...

Her eyes narrow.

AMY

...In 1957... My series on the reunited triplets -- come on down here, hammerhead, and I'll show it to ya...

ANCIENT PUZZLER

Amy, what's a three-letter word for a flightless bird?

AMY

Not now, Morris, I'm busy -- That's right, I said hammerhead, as in a ten-letter word for a smug bullying self-important newspaperman --

To Morris:

AMY

-- Gnu --

Into phone:

AMY

-- who couldn't find --

To Morris:

AMY

-- That's G-N-U --

Into phone:

AMY

-- couldn't find the Empire State Building with a compass, a road map and a native guide.

To Morris:

AMY

-- or emu.

She slams down the phone. To Smitty:

AMY

...And that's just the potatoes, Smitty, here comes the gravy: The chump really likes me. A Muncie girl!

Smitty bursts out laughing.

SMITTY

Better off falling for a rattlesnake.

As she continues to type:

AMY
I'm tellin' ya, this guy's just the
patsy and I'm gonna find out what
for. There's a real story, Smitty,
some kind of plot, a setup, a cabal,
a -- oh, and say, did I tell ya?!

SMITTY
He didn't offer you money.

AMY
A sawbuck!

SMITTY
Ten dollars? Let's grab a highball!

AMY
On Norville Barnes!

chair She rips the page out of the typewriter, swivels in her
to FACE CAMERA as we TRACK IN CLOSE and she hollers:

AMY
...Copy!

TO: DISSOLVE THROUGH

PRESSES

rolling, churning out great quantities of newsprint.

Papers piling up one on top of the other, very many, very
quickly.

DELIVERY MAN

truck. throwing a baled stack of papers off the back of his

BALED PAPER

wires rolling into the f.g. A hand ENTERS FRAME to snip its
and wipe off the top paper.

PAPER BOY

"Extra!
Extra!" wearing an apron and a little paper boy cap, mouthing
Extra!" as he holds one of the papers aloft.

towering PAN UP his arm TO the newspaper and, BEYOND it, the
Hudsucker Building.

All of the above --

DISSOLVING

WITH:

NEWSPAPER

spinning TOWARDS the CAMERA and STOPPING FULL FRAME.

"IMBECILE

Head."

Its headline, over a picture of Norville smiling, is

HEADS HUDSUCKER." The subheadline: "Not a Brain in his

ANOTHER ANGLE - NEWSPAPER

is angrily slammed down to reveal that Norville has been reading the inside.

the

His face twisting with fury, he leans forward and hits

intercom.

NORVILLE

Miss Smith, can you come in please to take a letter...

Muttering to himself:

NORVILLE

...of all the cockamamie...

Amy is bustling in holding a steno pad and a pencil.

pace

As she seats herself in front of his desk, he rises to

behind it.

NORVILLE

...Did you happen to see the front page of today's Manhattan Argus?

AMY

Well, I... didn't bother to read the article. I didn't think the picture did you justice.

NORVILLE

The picture was fine! It's what that knuckle-headed dame wrote underneath! Of all the irresponsible... Amy, take this down: Dear Miss Archer. I call you 'Miss' because you seem to have 'missed' the boat completely on this one! How on earth would you know whether I'm an imbecile when you don't even have the guts to come in here and interview me man to man! No, change 'guts' to 'courage.' No, make it 'common decency.' These wild speculations about my intelligence --

AMY
-- or lack thereof?

NORVILLE
(nodding)
-- these preposterous inventions,
would be better suited to the pages
of Amazing Tales Magazine. If the
editors of the Manhattan Argus see
fit to publish the rantings of a
disordered mind, perhaps they will
see fit to publish this letter! But
I doubt it. I most seriously doubt
it. As I doubt also that you could
find a home at Amazing Tales, a
periodical which I have enjoyed for
many years. Yours sincerely, et
cetera.

He drifts into thought.

AMY
Is that all, Mr. Barnes?

NORVILLE
...Well, you know me, Amy, at least
better than that that dame does. Do
you think I'm an imbecile?

AMY
I'm sure I --

NORVILLE
Go on, tell the truth; I trust you
and I put a lot of stock in your
opinion.

AMY
Well, I --

NORVILLE
Oh sure, you're biased -- you're a
fellow Muncian. But would an imbecile
come up with this?

circle
He whips the cover sheet off a display pad resting on an
easel to reveal a large piece of graph paper with a
rendered onto it.

Amy looks, puzzled, from the circle to Norville's proudly
beaming face.

NORVILLE
...I designed it myself and this is
just the sweet baby that can put
Hudsucker right back on top.

Amy is bewildered. Norville explains:

NORVILLE

...You know! For kids!

AMY

...Why don't I just type this up...

NORVILLE

Aww, naw, Amy, that won't be necessary. I shouldn't send it; she's just doing her job, I guess.

AMY

Well, I don't know; maybe she does deserve it. Maybe she should've come in to face you man to man.

NORVILLE

Well, she probably had a deadline...

AMY

Sure, but -- she could still have gotten your side for the record!

NORVILLE

Well, it's done now -- what's the use of grouching about it. Forget the letter, Amy, I just had to blow off some steam...

She gets up to leave, and is heading for the door when Norville adds:

NORVILLE

...She's probably just a little confused.

Amy turns at the door.

AMY

Confused?

NORVILLE

Yeah, you know, probably one of these fast-talking career gals, thinks she's one of the boys. Probably is one of the boys, if you know what I mean.

AMY

(through clenched
teeth)

I'm quite sure I don't know what you mean.

NORVILLE

Yeah, you know. Suffers from one of these complexes they have nowadays. Seems pretty obvious, doesn't it? She's probably very unattractive and bitter about it.

AMY

Oh, is that it!

NORVILLE

Yeah, you know. Probably dresses in men's clothing, swaps drinks with the guys at the local watering hole, and hobnobs with some smooth talking heel in the newsroom named Biff or Smoocher or...

AMY

Smitty.

NORVILLE

Exactly. And I bet she's ugly. Real ugly. Otherwise, why wouldn't they print her picture next to her byline?

AMY

Maybe she puts her work ahead of her personal appearance.

NORVILLE

I bet that's exactly what she tells herself! But you and I both know she's just a dried-up bitter old maid. Say, how about you and I grab a little dinner and a show after work? I was thinking maybe The King and I --

Whap! Amy slaps him.

He stares.

NORVILLE

...How about Oklahoma?

As she stalks out of the office:

AMY

Norville Barnes, you don't know a thing about that woman! You don't know who she really is! And only a numbskull thinks he knows things about things he knows nothing about!

He stares, rubbing his cheek.

NORVILLE

Say, what gives?

WHISTLE

SHRIEKING.

SWISH PAN

TO:

CLOCK

Reading five o'clock.

SWISH PAN

TO:

WORKERS

putting

Rising from their desks, collecting personal effects,
on their hats and coats.

TIME CLOCK

Busy hands punch out.

INT. EMPTY HALLWAY

hall,
door
goes

Of the executive floor. A security man walks down the
whistling, swinging a ring of keys. After he passes the
to the ladies' room it opens, Amy peeks out, emerges,
into Norville's office.

INT. NORVILLE'S OFFICE

flips

She goes to the desk, takes out the appointment book,
through it.

BOOK

Grammer
drawn

Still empty except for the one date with the Wilkie
School Junior Achievers Club, which now has a red line
across it with the notation CANCELED.

AMY

looks around the office -- notices something.

DOOR

plaque:

Set into the wall to one side it is topped by a small
AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY.

Amy tries the knob, which turns, and enters.

INT. ROOM

the
cogs,
window

It is big and dim, several stories high, with spiral
staircases reaching into, and catwalks criss-crossing,
gloom above. It is filled with contraptions -- works,
gears. There is no window, but on what would be the

sweeping
Hudsucker

wall there is an enormous iron ring with a metal rod
an interior circle. It is the backside of the great
clock.

she

Amy gazes about. She crosses to a door opposite the one
entered from.

She stoops to peek through its keyhole.

HER POV

We are LOOKING INTO Sidney J. Mussburger's office.

Mussburger sits at his desk barking into a Dictaphone.

desk

CLICK-CLICK-CLICK -- the PERPETUAL MOTION BALLS on his
are going full-tilt; THRUMMMMMMM -- the CLOCK'S exterior
second hand sweeps a shadow across the office.

Mussburger, it seems, never sleeps.

MUSSBURGER

Memo. From the desk of Sidney J.
Mussburger. Executive order number
530 slash A49. To: Director of the
Jacksonville Facility. Copies to:
Legal Affairs, Business Affairs,
Central Files. Re: Movement of Raw
Materials from the Huron Facility.
Due to unfavorable news in the slag
markets, Jacksonville inventory must
be reduced by 15 percent with overflow
diverted to the Waukegan Stamping
Facility. Memo. From the desk of
Sidney J. Mussburger. Executive order
number 530 slash A50. To: Director
of --

BACK TO SCENE

VOICE (O.S.)

Watchoo doin' down they, Miss Archuh?

AMY

Huh?!

She straightens and turns.

jumpsuit
across
who

Facing her is a very old BLACK MAN in a janitor's
with HUDSUCKER INDUSTRIES/The Future Is Now emblazoned
it. We might recognize his voice as that of the narrator
opened the movie.

AMY

Who are you? How did you know who I am?

MOSES (BLACK MAN)

Ah guess ole Moses knows jes about ever'thing, leastways if it concerns Hudsuckuh.

AMY

But -- who are you -- what d'you do here?

MOSES

Ah keeps the ol' circle turning -- this ol' clock needs plenty o' care. Time is money, Miss Archuh, and money -- it drives that ol' global economy and keeps big Daddy Earth a-spinnin' on 'roun'. Ya see, without that capital fo'mation --

AMY

Yeah, yeah. Say, you won't tell anyone about me, will you?

MOSES

I don't tell no one nothin' lessen they ask. Thatches ain't ole Moses' way.

AMY

So if you know everything about Hudsucker, tell me why the Board decided to make Norville Barnes president.

MOSES

Well, that even surprised ole Moses at fust. I didn't think the Board was that smart.

AMY

That smart?!

MOSES

But then I figured it out: they did it 'cause they figured young Norville for an imbecile. Like some othuh people ah know.

AMY

Why on earth would they want a nitwit to be president?

MOSES

'Cause they's little pigglies! They's tryin' to inspire panic, make that stock git cheap so's they can snitch it all up fo' themselves! But Norville, he's got some tricks up his sleeve, he does...

He draws a circle with his finger in the air.

MOSES

...you know, fo' kids? Yeah, he's a smart one, that Norville, heh-heh, he's a caution. Wal, some folks is square, an' some is hip --

To punctuate, he gives a little jerk of his hips.

MOSES

...But I guess you don't really know him any better than that board does, do ya, Miss Archuh?

AMY

Well, maybe I --

MOSES

An' only some kind a knucklehead thinks she knows things 'bout things she, uh -- when she don't, uh -- How'd that go?

AMY

(bristling)

It's hardly the same --

MOSES

Why you don't even know y'own self -- you ain't exactly the genuine article are you, Miss Archuh?

AMY

Well, in connection with my job, sometimes I have to go undercover as it were --

MOSES

I don't mean that! Why you pretendin' to be such a hard ol' sourpuss! Ain't never gonna make you happy! Never made Warin' happy.

AMY

(uncomfortably)

I'm happy enough.

MOSES

(chuckles)

Okay, Miss Archuh.

(turns and walks away)

...I got gears to see to.

AMY

(calls after him)

I'm plenty happy!

She is answered only by WHIRRING MACHINERY.

MOSES

a
ECHOES

Elsewhere in the great room, he is hunkered down next to
catchment which he buffs with a greasy rag. Amy's VOICE
UP:

AMY (O.S.)
...Hello?

MOSES
(muttering to himself)
Them po' young folks. Looks like
Norville's in fo' the same kind o'
heartache ol' Warin' had. But then,
she never axed me 'bout dat...

As OMINOUS MUSIC SWELLS, we --

FADE

OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. CHIEF'S OFFICE

He slams down a typescript.

CHIEF
I can't print this!

AMY
Why not, it's all true! The board is
using this poor guy! They're
depressing the stock so they can buy
it cheap!

CHIEF
It's pure speculation! Why, they'd
have my butt in a satchel!

SMITTY
(chuckling)
Ol' satchel-butt...

AMY
I know they're gonna buy that stock --

CHIEF
You don't know anything! Fact is
they haven't bought it! The stock is
cheap, Archer! What're they waiting
for?

AMY
I don't know...

SMITTY
Amy's hunches are usually pretty
good, Chief.

CHIEF

You don't accuse someone of stock manipulation on a hunch, Ignatz! The readers of the Manhattan Argus aren't interested in sensationalism, gossip and unsupported speculation. Facts, figures -- those are the tools of the newspaper trade! Why it's almost as if you're trying to take the heat off this Barnes numbskull -- like you've gone all soft on him!

SMITTY

Come on, Chief, that's a low blow. Archer's not gonna go goey for a corn-fed idiot.

CHIEF

All right, I was out of line. But you're out of line with this stock swindle story. Gimme some more of that Moron-from-Sheboygan stuff --

AMY

Muncie.

CHIEF

Whatever. That's what sells newspapers.

AMY

I've got an even hotter story -- The Sap from the City Desk.

CHIEF

Watch it, Archer --

AMY

It's about a dimwitted editor who --

SMITTY

Easy, Amy...

He gives her a companionable goose.

SMITTY

...Let's grab a highball and calm down.

She whirls and slaps him.

AMY

Back off -- smoocher!

Smitty rubs his cheek, staring as she storms off.

SMITTY

(angry)

Say, what gives?

ENGRAVED INVITATION

IT READS:

Board
Annual
Sidney J. Mussburger President Norville Barnes and The
of Hudsucker Industries CORDIALLY INVITE YOU TO The
Fancy-Dress Hudsucker Christmas Gala Music, Dancing,
Refreshments (Dainties) Formal Evening Attire de Rigueur.

Hudsucker
The MUSIC OVER the invitation -- "WE WISH YOU A MERRY
CHRISTMAS" -- SEGUES INTO the dance music of the

Chamber Orchestra.

DANCING COUPLES

cut
FILL the SCREEN; we GLIDE AMONG them and FINALLY COME to
follow one couple: Norville and MRS. MUSSBURGER, a large
middle-aged woman of the Margaret Dumont-mold in an
elaborately flowered and old-fashioned evening gown, low-
in spite of her overly-heavy figure. She wears a large
flowered hat with a rolled-up veil.

MRS. MUSSBURGER

-- So we'd gone out to the Hamptons
and the garden was in positive ruins!

NORVILLE

That must have been quite a
disappointment, Mrs. Mussburger.

MRS. MUSSBURGER

Disappointment? J'etais destroyee! I
was in bed for a week! Positively
sick with fury! I called in the
gardener and said, 'Monsieur Gonzalez,
either those azaleas come up next
spring or you are terminee!

She throws her head back and roars with laughter.

ANGLE - THEIR FEET

planted
As the large woman leans back to laugh, her feet stay
on the ground and Norville's rise to be dragged with his
toes scraping the floor through the continuing dance.

MRS. MUSSBURGER

I'm brushing up on my French with
the most charming man, Pierre of
Fifth Avenue. Do you know him?

NORVILLE

I haven't had --

MRS. MUSSBURGER

Sidney and I are planning a trip to

Paris and points continental --
Aren't we, dear?

Mussburger has ENTERED FRAME.

MUSSBURGER
Sure, sure. I'm going to borrow
Norville for a while, if you don't
mind, dear.

MIXING DOWN as they leave her:

MRS. MUSSBURGER
Well, frankly, I...

NORVILLE
You have a charming wife, Mr.
Muss -- uh, Sid.

MUSSBURGER
So they tell me. Norville, let me
shepherd you through some of the
introductions here. Try not to talk
too much; some of our biggest
stockholders are, uh -- scratch that:
Say whatever you want.

ENTRYWAY

As Amy enters in a simple yet stunning evening gown. She
looks around the room, then starts across the crowded
floor
towards the punch bowl.

NORVILLE

As Mussburger introduces him to a tall, imposing
BUSINESSMAN
in a tuxedo and a ten-gallon hat.

MUSSBURGER
Norville Barnes, allow me to introduce
Mr. Zebulon Cardozo, one of Hudsucker
Industries largest and most loyal
stockholders.

Ignoring Norville's proffered hand:

CARDOZO (BUSINESSMAN)
Dammit boy, what's this I hear about
you bein' an embecile? What the hell
is ailin' ya?! A week ago my stock
was worth twice what it is now! I'm
considering dumping the whole shootin'
match, unless I see some vast
improvement! Dammit, boy, It's a
range war! Either you pull our wagons
into a circle or I'm pullin' out of
the wagon train!

Norville gives him a forced but hearty laugh of

reassurance.

NORVILLE

No need for concern, sir; it's only natural in a period of transition for the more timid element to run for cover --

CARDOZO

So I'm yella, am I?!!

He starts peeling off his tuxedo jacket:

CARDOZO

...We'll see who's yella!!

starts

His WIFE, a small wiry woman, steps in as Mussburger dragging Norville away.

MRS. CARDOZO

Zebulon, you mind now and quit bein' sech an ole grizzly.

As he reluctantly starts shrugging back into the jacket:

CARDOZO

Aw, I wasn't gonna hurt the boy, Lorelei...

MUSSBURGER AND NORVILLE

mopping

As they make their way through the room Norville is at his brow with a handkerchief.

NORVILLE

I'm sorry, Sid, I thought maybe if I showed him the long view we might --

into

Thump! Dabbing at his brow, Norville has walked square the back of a debonaire man holding a martini. The drink sloshes and the man turns testily to face him.

MUSSBURGER

Norville, this is Thorstensen Findlandsen, who heads a radical splinter group of disgruntled investors.

Norville nervously pumps Findlandsen's hand.

NORVILLE

Hello, Mr. Findlandsen, so sorry to meet you -- uh, happy to walk into y -- uh, pleased to make your --

Norville's

Findlandsen raises his hand to look quizzically at

having

handkerchief which he now holds himself, apparently
been given it during the handshake.

He hands it back to Norville.

NORVILLE

Thank you, sir...

the

He stuffs it nervously into his outside breast pocket as
Findlandsen stares at him. Mussburger stands watching in
executive at-ease, hands dug into his pockets.

NORVILLE

...I understand your concern about
the down-ward, you know, but I think
you'll find under our strong new
leadership...

the

As Norville's hand drops from his breast pocket the
handkerchief, perhaps caught on his sleeve, whips out of
pocket and follows his hand down.

Findlandsen looks down and Norville follows his look, and
stoops BELOW FRAME to retrieve the hanky.

Findlandsen leans quizzically forward and peers down at
Norville, who continues, O.S.

NORVILLE (O.S.)

We anticipate, in short order, an
upward...

forward

In rapid fire, Norville straightens up into -- crunch --
Findlandsen, whose head snaps back, eyes rolling, a hand
pressed to his nose, drink sloshing; Norville, one hand
pressed to the back of his own head and the other wildly
waving his hanky for balance, takes a staggering step

onto the toe of an elegantly-gowned MRS. FINDLANDSEN.

MRS. FINDLANDSEN

Ahhh!

There is a drum roll and, as the lights dim:

EMCEE

grabs the large old-fashioned microphone in front of the
band and grins.

EMCEE

Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished
members of the Hudsucker board. I
give you the king of swing, the rajah
of romance, the incredible, the
unforgettable Mister Vic... Tenetta!

Vic Tenetta takes the microphone from the Emcee who backs

white
forehead

away, applauding as Tenetta starts to croon. He wears a
dinner jacket. His jet black hair sweeps out over his
in a roguishly pompadoured mat; one forelock droops and
bounces across his forehead.

CUT

TO:

SEVERAL BOARD MEMBERS

Clustered in a dim corner of the room, smoking cigars.

his

In the b.g., brilliantly spotlit, Vic Tenetta continues
song.

As Mussburger joins them:

EXECUTIVE #1

How's it going, Mr. Mussburger?

MUSSBURGER

Bad.

EXECUTIVE #2

Good.

MUSSBURGER

But not bad enough.

EXECUTIVE #3

Too bad.

MUSSBURGER

It could be better, it could be worse.

ALL THREE EXECUTIVES

Hmmmmmm.

MUSSBURGER

The stock's got to drop another five
points if we expect to get controlling
interest. Norville tells me he's got
some hot idea. Can't be good.

EXECUTIVE #1

Then it can't be bad!

EXECUTIVE #2

Couldn't be better if it couldn't be
worse.

ALL

Hmmmmmm.

EXT. PENTHOUSE - TERRACE

where the PARTY NOISE is DISTANT, TENETTA'S SONG just
FILTERING OUT.

facing
posture,
hand

We are on a FULL SHOT of the back of a man who stands the twinkling cityscape, but in an odd, leanedback with one hand reaching up to his hidden face, his other pressed against the small of his back, like a man with a stiff neck tossing back a drink.

REVERSE

him.

Amy, having just emerged onto the terrace, squints at

AMY
...Norville?

He turns and we see that it is indeed Norville, holding a dripping icepack against one eye.

AMY
...What happened?

NORVILLE
Oh. Nothing, really, just... the more timid investors are no longer running for cover.

AMY
Let me look.

He does.

NORVILLE
Sid found me the icepack.

AMY
Let me hold it, or you'll have a real shiner.

NORVILLE
Thanks. People seem to be pretty hot over this imbecile story.

AMY
...I'm sorry.

NORVILLE
Oh, it isn't your fault, Amy. You're the one person who's been standing by me through all this.

As she rolls the pack gently across his eye:

AMY
Norville... there's something I have to tell you. You see, I'm not really a secretary.

NORVILLE

I know that, Amy.

AMY

...You do?

NORVILLE

I understand that you're not very skilled yet in the secretarial arts. I'm not that skilled as president. Oh sure, I put up a big front --
(massages his eye)
-- not that everyone's buying it.

AMY

I believe in you, Norville --
At least I believe in your... intentions --

NORVILLE

Oh, I don't blame them, really. I guess I have sort of made a mess of things. These folks have to protect their investment. Most of them are very nice people --

AMY

Norville, you can't trust people here like you did in Muncie...

They gaze out at the city.

AMY

...Certain people are --

NORVILLE

Didja ever go to the top of old man Larson's feed tower and look out over the town?

AMY

...Huh?

NORVILLE

You know, on farm route 17.

AMY

Oh yes! In Muncie!

NORVILLE

No! In Vidalia! Farm Route 17!

AMY

Uh -- Yes. Seventeen. Yes, I -- well no, I -- I never really... There's a place I go now, the cutest little place near my apartment in Greenwich Village. It's called Ann's 440. It's a beatnik bar.

NORVILLE

You don't say.

AMY

Yes, you can get carrot juice or Italian coffee, and the people there -- well, none of them quite fit in. You'd love it -- why don't you come there with me -- they're having a marathon poetry reading on New Year's Eve. I go every year.

NORVILLE

(puzzled)

Every year?

AMY

Well -- this year -- if it's good I plan to make it a tradition. Uh, my it certainly is beautiful --

She nods out at the city to avoid Norville's quizzical look.

AMY

...The people look like ants.

NORVILLE

Well, the Hindus say -- and the beatniks also -- that in the next life some of us will come back as ants. Some will be butterflies. Others will be elephants or creatures of the sea.

AMY

What a beautiful thought.

NORVILLE

What do you think you were in your previous life, Amy?

AMY

Oh, I don't know. Maybe I was just a fast-talking career gal who thought she was one of the boys --

NORVILLE

Oh no, Amy, pardon me for saying so but I find that very farfetched.

AMY

Norville, there really is something I have to tell you --

NORVILLE

That kind of person would come back as a wildebeest, or a warthog. No, I think it more likely that you were a gazelle, with long, graceful legs, gamboling through the underbrush. Perhaps we met once, a chance encounter in a forest glade. I must

have been an antelope or an ibex.
What times we must have had --
foraging together for sustenance,
picking the grubs and burrs from one
another's coats. Or perhaps we simply
touched our horns briefly and went
our separate ways...

AMY

I wish it were that simple, Norville.
I wish I was still a gazelle, and
you were an antelope or an ibex.

NORVILLE

Well, can I at least call you deer?
Ha-ha-ha-ha-ha! Seriously, Amy, the
whole thing is what your beatnik
friends call 'karma' -- the great
circle of life, death and rebirth.

Morosely:

AMY

Yeah, I think I've heard of that.
What goes around comes around.

NORVILLE

That's it. A great wheel that gives
us each what we deserve...

He slaps his fist into his palm.

NORVILLE

...Tomorrow's my big presentation to
the board. I've gotta show Sidney
and the guys that I deserve all their
confidence!

Sadly:

AMY

Oh, Norville --

NORVILLE

Kiss me once, Amy! Kiss me once for
luck!

AMY

Sure, Norville, sure...

She gives him a peck. They look at each other.

AMY

...Oh, Norville!

She embraces him. They kiss again.

Norville's eyes widen.

VIC TENETTA

Crooning the end of his song.

DANCING COUPLES

Turn to the bandstand and applaud.

NORVILLE AND AMY

In the midst of a passionate kiss.

FADE

OUT:

FADE IN:

DOUBLE OAK DOORS

hanging

Labeled "Executive Conference Room." A secretary is up a sign that reads: "Quiet Please! Board Meeting in Session."

INT. BOARDROOM - CLOSE ON NORVILLE

Chest and up. His upper torso is swaying, his shoulders rhythmically rolling as he talks. We hear a WHOOSH WHOOSH sound from O.S.

NORVILLE

-- So we have economy, simplicity, low production cost and the potential for mass appeal, and all that spells out great profitability...

CLOSE ON MUSSBURGER

one

Staring. Holding a just-lighted but forgotten cigar in hand, and a still burning match in the other.

NORVILLE (O.S.)

...I had the boys down at R & D throw together this prototype so that our discussion here could have some focus...

BOARD

like

previous

Staring, mouths hanging open, in arrested motion much when Waring Hudsucker jumped out the window at the board meeting.

NORVILLE (O.S.)

...and to give you gentlemen of the Board a first-hand look at just how exciting this gizmo is...

WIDER ON NORVILLE

hula

Still gyrating. We now see that he has accelerated the hoop around his waist to quite a good speed.

NORVILLE

...It's fun, it's healthy, it's good exercise; kids'll just love it, and we put a little sand inside to make the whole experience more pleasant. And the great part is we won't have to charge an arm and a leg!

Mussburger's forgotten match has burned down to his fingertips. With a wince, he shakes it out.

The Board is staring.

ELDERLY EXECUTIVE

Yeah but... What is it?

EXECUTIVE #2

Does it have rules?

EXECUTIVE #3

Can more than one play?

EXECUTIVE #4

(to #3)

What makes you think it's a game?

EXECUTIVE #3

Is it a game?

EXECUTIVE #5

Will it break?

EXECUTIVE #6

It better break eventually!

EXECUTIVE #2

Is there an object?

EXECUTIVE #3

Are you supposed to make it fly off?

EXECUTIVE #5

Does it come with batteries?

EXECUTIVE #4

Could we charge extra for them?

EXECUTIVE #7

Is it safe for toddlers?

EXECUTIVE #3

How can you tell when you're done?

EXECUTIVE #2

How do you make it stop?

EXECUTIVE #1

Is that a girl's model or a boy's?

EXECUTIVE #3

Can a parent assemble it??

EXECUTIVE #7

What if you get tired before it's done?

EXECUTIVE #6

Is there a larger model for the obese?

EXECUTIVE #4

Can you do it around your neck?

ELDERLY EXECUTIVE

And finally... what is it?

NORVILLE

You know, for kids! It's... it's ... well, it's...

MUSSBURGER

It's brilliant.

The Board looks at Mussburger.

MUSSBURGER

...It's genius. It's just exactly what Hudsucker needs at this juncture. Sure, sure, a blind man could tell you that there's an enormous demand for this, uh...

He smiles weakly at Norville.

MUSSBURGER

...Congratulations, kid, you've really outdone yourself. Reinvented the wheel. I'm going to recommend to the Board that we proceed immediately with this, uh... with the, uh... that the dingus be mass-produced with all deliberate speed. Of course, as president of the company the ultimate decision is yours.

NORVILLE

Well... I'm for it...

As furiously BUSY MUSIC STARTS:

CUT

TO:

TELETYPE

Furiously PRINTING out "EXECUTIVE DIRECTIVE #37451-JL7.

A hand ENTERS FRAME and rips the directive from the teletype,

a then hurriedly rolls it into a cylinder and slips it into
cylindrical metal capsule.

The capsule is popped into a pneumatic tube.

ANGLE - LENGTH OF PNEUMATIC PIPING

Hudsucker somewhere in the labyrinthine substructure of the
Building. We hear a MISSILE furiously HURLING towards
us, inside the pipe, and ROCKETING by.

ANGLE ON ANOTHER LENGTH OF PIPING

Once again we hear the CAPSULE APPROACH and ROCKET past.

BLINDING RED LIGHTS

DESIGN as a SIREN BLARES. On a huge board that says HUDSUCKER
DIRECTIVE! DEPARTMENT, flashing red letters announce: INCOMING

hand The pneumatic tube spout shoots out a cylinder, and a
eagerly picks it up and yanks it OUT OF FRAME.

crowd A technician in white laboratory smock is reading the
directive as several other white-jacketed technicians
their heads around his shoulders, also reading.

eagerly All of their eye and head motions synchronize as they
read, devouring the document line by line.

perfect A large sheet of graph paper is whipped down on top of a
line. drafting table. Under the caption OVERHEAD ANGLE is a
circle. Under the caption HORIZONTAL is a horizontal

Under the caption VERTICAL SIDE ANGLE is a vertical line.

EXTREME LOW ANGLE - SEVERAL TECHNICIANS

looking thoughtfully down at the rendering. The head
technician is stroking his beard and nodding.

TO: CUT

RENDERING

as a hand ENTERS FRAME and stamps the drawing approved.

TO: CUT

TWO MORE LENGTHS OF PNEUMATIC PIPE

as we hear the CYLINDER ROCKETING by.

SWISH PAN

TO:

FROSTED DOUBLE GLASS DOORS

glass

Lettered on the frosted glass is: "ADVERTISING DEPARTMENT Creative Bullpen." In sharp silhouette on the frosted

we can see the three admen working inside.

silhouette

Two pace back and forth, smoking cigarettes, as they toss out ideas. The third sits slumped in front of a

typewriter, his head resting on one hand, his other hand resting on a half-empty bottle of whiskey.

In the f.g., outside the frosted glass and so not in silhouette, sits a bored secretary reading War and Peace, Volume One.

AD MAN #1 (O.S.)

We'll call it the Flying Donut!

AD MAN #2 (O.S.)

The Dancing Dingus!

AD MAN #1 (O.S.)

The Jerky Circle!

SWISH PAN

TO:

PNEUMATIC PIPING

With the cylinder rocketing by.

SWISH PAN

TO:

"ACCOUNTING DEPARTMENT" WALL PLAQUE

CUT

TO:

HUGE POSTER

WILL

Up on the wall of the accounting floor is an enormous reproduction of the design department's rendering of the hula hoop. Over the poster is an enormous banner: "WHAT

THIS COST?"

of

PAN FROM the poster TO a HIGH ANGLE SHOT of a floor full

are

accountants sitting at their rows and rows of desks; all

manual

looking up at the wall poster as they operate their

adding machines to the same beat.

garters,
All accountants wear identical vests, shirtsleeves,
visors and spectacles.

overseeing
and
The head accountant stands in front of the room
their efforts. He wears a full three-piece suit, a visor
a pince-nez.

TO: CUT

HUGE BOOK

COST
Being dropped onto a desk. Its cover reads: SUMMARY OF
ANALYSIS.

numbers,
\$0.79
The book is opened and its pages, filled with rows of
are flipped to the last page where we QUICKLY PAN DOWN TO
the bottom line: Unit Cost... \$0.59 Suggested Retail...

TO: CUT

EXECUTIVE

over
Looking down at the book as the head accountant hovers
his shoulder, waiting for his reaction.

The executive grimly shakes his head.

BACK TO BOOK

in
As the accountant's hand ENTERS FRAME to scratch in "\$1"
front of the suggested retail of \$0.79.

A hand ENTERS FRAME to stamp the bottom line: APPROVED.

TO: CUT

ROCKETING PNEUMATIC PIPES

TO: CUT

ADVERTISING DEPARTMENT CREATIVE BULLPEN

Volume
The secretary in the f.g. is now reading War and Peace,
Two.

Something short.

AD MAN #2 (O.S.)
Sharp.

AD MAN #1 (O.S.)
Snappy.

AD MAN #2 (O.S.)
With a little jazz.

AD MAN #1 (O.S.)
The Shazzammeter!

AD MAN #2 (O.S.)
The Hipster!

Drawing a circle in the air:

AD MAN #1 (O.S.)
The Daddy-Oh!

AD MAN #2 (O.S.)
The Circle-o'-Gaiety!

TO: CUT

ROCKETING PIPES

TO: CUT

MEN

scurry in asbestos suits throwing down their visors as they
and dive for cover behind banks of sandbags. A fierce
EXPLOSION harshly illuminates the sandbags. As the

EXPLOSION SUBSIDES:

flip The workmen cautiously peek out over the sandbags, then
back their visors and rise to their feet.

THEIR POV

hula Bouncing among the flaming debris of the explosion is a
hoop, still intact.

TO: CUT

ROCKETING PIPES

TO: CUT

ADVERTISING DEPARTMENT CREATIVE BULLPEN

at
The secretary in the f.g. is now reading Anna Karenina.
The silhouetted ad men, frustrated and hoarse, are still
it.

AD MAN #1 (O.S.)
The Hoopsucker!

AD MAN #2 (O.S.)
The Hudswinger!

AD MAN #1 (O.S.)
The Hoop-dee-doo!

AD MAN #2 (O.S.)
The Hudsucker Hoop!

up
The third ad man, slouched motionless at the typewriter
until now, finally raises his head.

AD MAN #3 (O.S.)
Fellas. Fellas!

AD MAN #1 (O.S.)
Ya got somethin'?

AD MAN #2 (O.S.)
Ya got somethin'?!

AD MAN #3 (O.S.)
Fellas! I got somethin'!

CUT

TO:

PIECE OF ART PAPER

Printed at the top: Hudsucker Industries Proudly Presents

PAN DOWN to reveal: THE HULA HOOP

PAN DOWN to reveal:

hula
if
An artist's hand working in fast motion to render the
hoop logo: A grinning, healthy 1950s boy with a spray of
freckles, one fist thrown forward, the other behind, as
doing an athletic frug, a hula hoop spinning with action
lines around his waist.

also
the
In seconds the artist has completed the logo and now,
in fast motion, he writes the slogan on either side of
boy: "You know... For Kids!"

As the page is ripped off the art pad:

MATCH CUT

TO:

PAGE

who
enormous
sweaty

being carried away in a continuous motion by an engineer
looks at it, nodding. We see that we are now in an
plant area. The engineer, grimy from his labors in this
industrial realm, reaches up to pull an enormous lever.

CUT

TO:

MACHINES

GRINDING into motion.

CUT

TO:

DONUT SPOUT

As it begins to spit hula hoops in massive numbers.

The hoops are spit onto a long metal arm where they rest,
hanging.

A bale of hula hoops is loaded into a Hudsucker truck to
complete its load. The truck door is slammed shut.

IRON GRILL

is thrown up to reveal the display window of a shop just
opening for the day.

various
diorama --

In the window is an enormous hula hoop display, with
hoops strung up on wire in front of a large cardboard

"You know... for Kids!"

we

Reflected in the display window we see crowds of people
scurrying by, indifferent to the display. Inside the shop

see the proprietor by the cash register, his chin propped
glumly in his hands.

INT. NORVILLE'S OFFICE

sits
emerging
her

Norville sits anxiously awaiting the verdict of Amy who
hunched over the ticker-tape machine, studying the
tape. Amy finally looks up at Norville and sadly shakes
head.

BACK TO SHOP WINDOW

stands Crowds still scurry indifferently by. The shopkeeper
idly in his doorway, smoking a cigarette.
of We TRACK IN ON the cardboard display. The displayed price
"Reduced: \$1.79 has been crossed out. Underneath it, inked in:
\$1.59."

INT. NORVILLE'S OFFICE

ticker- Norville is nervously pacing. Amy still studies the
tape. Once again she is forced to shake her head sadly.

BACK TO SHOP'S PRICE DISPLAY

FRAME The old \$1.59 is suddenly covered as the hand ENTERS
FRAME to slap on a sticker: \$1.49. A beat. The hand ENTERS
to slap on a new sticker: \$1.29. Then in rapid-fire
succession: \$0.99. \$0.79. \$0.49. Two for \$0.25. Free with
any purchase.

ALLEY BEHIND SHOP

collection: where garbage and garbage cans sit waiting for
of Hands appear at the back door of a shop hurling a clutch
towards hoops towards the trash heap. One errant hoop rolls
the mouth of the alley.
The mouth of the alley. The escaped hula hoop emerges and
starts rolling down the street.

HULA HOOP

a It rolls across the street. CARS VIOLENTLY BRAKE to avoid
it.
It rounds a corner and rolls up to a little boy, rolls in
circle around him, and finally wobbles to the pavement.
The little boy looks at it, steps inside it, raises it to
his hips and starts hula hooping. Somewhere a BELL is

RINGING.

INT. NEARBY SCHOOLHOUSE

home, where the BELL is RINGING, the front doors fly open and
hundreds of schoolchildren run out, screaming, heading
but all in a dense pack.

--
The screaming pack of schoolchildren round a corner and
stop short, their screams abruptly halting.
They are staring, fascinated, at the hula-hooping
youngster.
The children are dumbfounded. It is a moment the likes of
which they have never dreamed.

TO: CUT

SCREAMING PACK
once again running, maniacal, possessed. We don't know
where they are running, but we can guess.

TO: CUT

STORE
Jam-packed with screaming children, grabbing hula hoops
off the shelves.
BACK TO NORVILLE'S OFFICE
Norville sits slumped behind his desk, his head resting
on the desktop, utterly dejected.
Suddenly the TICKER-TAPE HUMS to life and starts spitting
tape. Amy looks at it with mounting excitement. Finally
she looks breathlessly up:

AMY
...Norville!

scrap
STARTS
Norville lifts his head from the desktop. A piece of
paper is sticking to his cheek. Dramatic FANFARE MUSIC
TO SWELL.
We HOLD ON Norville's expectant face. We HOLD. The MUSIC
BUILDS. We HOLD. We:

TO: CUT

NEWSREEL TITLE
We can see the "Tidbits of Time" logo as a solemn-voiced
announcer intones:

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Rockwell News presents... 'Tidbits
of Time!' World news in pictures, we
kid you not.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Picture dissolves to a pan up the Hudsucker Building.

noticing

Cut to candid film of Norville getting out of a car,
the camera, grinning and waving as he walks, and taking a
pratfall.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

...What began as the brainchild of
this Madison Avenue whiz kid is now
a craze sweeping the nation. The
'hula hoop,' product of Hudsucker
Industries, is a recreational device
that some experts predict may eclipse
the television as a means of
entertainment...

ANOTHER ANGLE

rolls

A television sits against a neutral b.g. A hula hoop
into frame and bumps the TV, pushing it out of frame.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

...This dancing dingus of delight,
this jerky circle of gaiety, is
proving to be the toy of choice of
most American youngsters. -- Whoa-
ho! Did I say youngsters?! Here's
mom, taking a break from her household
chores...

ANOTHER ANGLE

hoop

starts

A woman switches off her vacuum cleaner, takes a hula
that is conveniently leaning against a nearby wall, and
hula hooping.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

...and even dad is 'swinging' into
the act!

ANOTHER ANGLE

In the office, dad, smoking a pipe, is also hula hooping.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

...and so the congratulations pour
in for up-and-comer Norville Barnes,
inventor of the hoop -- including
one very special call!

ANOTHER ANGLE

sticking In jerky cinema-verite footage, a woman is excitedly
her head in Norville's door.

WOMAN (V.O.)
He's on! He's on the line!

Swish over to Norville, agog, who picks up his phone and,
voice breaking:

NORVILLE (V.O.)
...Hello?

CRACKLING VOICE (V.O.)
Hello, Norville. This is the
President...

Ike A half-wipe leaves a split screen with half of the screen
remaining Norville, the other half becoming a still of
standing in a tank turret, pointing commandingly.

Under the photo: VOICE OF GENERAL DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER.

NORVILLE (V.O.)
Oh my God, sir!

IKE (V.O.)
...I just wanted to congratulate
you. I'm very proud of you,
Norville...

NORVILLE (V.O.)
Oh my God, sir!

IKE (V.O.)
...Mrs. Eisenhower is very proud of
you. The American people are very
proud of you.

Flash bulb explosion effects a...

TO: CUT

NORVILLE

Facing a battery of REPORTERS at a news conference.

REPORTER #1
Mr. Barnes, how'd ya come up with
the idea for the hula hoop?

the Norville is holding one hand up to shield his eyes from
unaccustomed light. Amy stands next to him, beaming.

NORVILLE
Well, it was no great idea, really.
A thing like this, it takes a whole

company to put it together, and I'm just grateful for the opportunity --

REPORTER #2
Mr. Barnes, did you have any idea there'd be such a huge response?

NORVILLE
Well, frankly, I don't think anybody expected this much hoopla --

He is surprised by a burst of laughter.

REPORTER #3
'Hoopla on the hula hoop' -- can we quote you on that, Mr. Barnes?

NORVILLE
Well sure, I guess --

REPORTER #4
Mr. Barnes, are you thinking of giving yourself a nice fat raise?

NORVILLE
Ha-ha-ha-ha. Come on, guys...

Flash bulb explosion effects a...

CUT

TO:

NEWSREEL

smock,

A scientist with a Van Dyke beard, wearing a laboratory
is facing the camera. Behind him we see other scientists studying a hoop that has been hooked up to a gyroscopic-looking device that analyzes its various movements and properties.

NEWSREEL ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
What scientific principle explains the mind-bending motion of this whipping wheel of wonder?

as

A title supered over the Scientist's chest identifies him
Professor Erwin Schweide.

SCIENTIST (V.O.)
Ze dinkus is kvite zimple, really. It operates on ze same principle zat keeps ze earth spinning 'round ze sun, and zat keeps you from flying off ze earth into ze coldest reaches of outer space vere you vood die like a miserable shvine! Yes, ze principle is ze same, except for ze piece of grrrit zey put in to make ze whole experience more pleasant --

TRACKING IN

TO:

INT. NORVILLE'S OFFICE

The mean laugh. Norville, behind his desk in LONG SHOT, laughing, as we begin to TRACK IN. There is something disconcerting about his laugh -- it is harder, more businesslike, colder than the dopey laugh that

accompanied

his elevation to the presidency. Or perhaps it is only

our

imagination, for while still some distance away from him:

Flash bulb explosion effects a...

CUT BACK

TO:

NEWS CONFERENCE

Newsmen follow Norville as he walks through the lobby of

the

Hudsucker Building.

REPORTER #1

Mr. Barnes, did the board consider you an 'idea man' when they promoted you from the mail room?

NORVILLE

Well, I guess so -- I don't think they promoted me because they thought I was a jerk.

REPORTER #2

Mr. Barnes, what's the next big idea for you and Hudsucker Industries?

NORVILLE

Jeez, I don't know. An idea like this sweet baby doesn't just come overnight...

REPORTER

Mr. Barnes, are you --

NORVILLE

-- Although I'll tell you one thing: I certainly didn't expect all this 'hoopla'!

This TIRED old joke brings some polite laughter.

doors

Norville is smiling as he enters the elevator. As its

start to close, leaving Amy behind:

NORVILLE

...And you can quote me on that!

Flash bulb explosion effects a...

CUT BACK

TO:

NEWSREEL

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Yes, it's hula hula everywhere! From
the cocktail parties of the Park
Avenue smart set...

ANOTHER ANGLE

highballs
waists.

A group of people in formal evening wear are sipping
and chatting as they keep hoops in motion 'round their

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

...to sweethearts who want to be
married in the 'swing' of things...

ANOTHER ANGLE

A young couple stands before the altar hula hooping.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

...To our friend the Negro, in the
heart of the dark continent.

ANOTHER ANGLE

they

Pan down from elephant to two natives hula hooping as
grin into the newsreel camera.

TRACKING IN

ON:

ANOTHER ANGLE

that

The mean laugh. Yes, as we draw closer, it seems clear
his laugh is colder than before.

Flash bulb explosion effects a...

CUT

TO:

NORVILLE

Sitting in a barber chair, face lathered up, as Reporters
crowd in.

REPORTER #1

Mr. Barnes, Mr. Barnes, Rumpus
magazine has called you the most
eligible bachelor of the year, and

the society pages have been linking
you with high-fashion model Za-Za.
Would you care to comment?

A burning cigar emerges from the lather around Norville's
face. It waggles as he talks.

NORVILLE
There's no truth to the rumors; we're
just dear friends...

He looks to one side.

NORVILLE
...Isn't that right, Za-Za?

SWISH PAN

TO:

sort

ZA-ZA. Standing nearby. Every man's dream, in a tarty
of way.

ZA-ZA
(sexily)
Gr-r-r-r-r-r-oww!

The newsmen react.

REPORTER #2
Ho-leeee!

REPORTER #3
Mr. Barnes, whither Hudsucker?
Whither Norville Barnes?

REPORTER #4
How do you respond to the charges
that you're out of ideas? Has Norville
Barnes run dry?

shave

Norville's

The barber is periodically pinching Norville's nose to
under it; as he alternately pinches and releases,
voice breaks from nasal to normal and back.

NORVILLE
Not at all. Why, just this week I
came up with several new sweet ideas.
A larger model hula hoop for the
portly. A battery option for the
lazy and handicapped. A model with
more sand for hard-of-hearing. I'm
earning my keep.

REPORTER #5
Speaking of that, Mr. Barnes, do you
expect to get a raise?

NORVILLE

Well, by anyone's account I've saved
Hudsucker Industries; our stock is
worth more than it's ever been. So,
yes, I expect to be compensated for
that.

END TRACK IN

ON:

ANOTHER ANGLE

CLOSE
as
gazing

The mean laugh. FURTHER TRACK IN ON Norville ENDS in
SHOT, his hands clasped on the desktop in front of him,
he finishes his hard, square-jawed, man-on-top laugh,
flintily INTO the CAMERA.

NORVILLE

-- ha-ha-ha-ha-ha!

PULL BACK

FROM:

WEEPING EXECUTIVE

around
table

The PULL BACK FROM a blubbering executive REVEALS that we
are at a Board meeting. All of the Board members sit
the table except for Mussburger, who, a towel around his
waist, is receiving a choppity-chop massage on a padded
from a muscular man in a bulging T-shirt.

MUSSBURGER

Pull yourself together, Addison.

Addison snuffles.

ADDISON

Nobody told me! Nobody told me!
You sold all of our stock?

MUSSBURGER

We dumped the whole load. Now quit
showboating, Addison --

ADDISON

I had twenty thousand shares! I'd be
a millionaire now!

MUSSBURGER

Sure, sure, we'd all be millionaires.
There's no point in looking back. At
the time, Stilson thought dumping
our position would panic the market,
further depress the stock -- then
we'd buy it all back, and more of
course, once it got cheap --

ADDISON
Cheap! Cheap! It's never been more
valuable! And I'm ruined! Ruined!

He climbs up onto the board table.

ADDISON
I'm getting off this merry-go-round!

EXECUTIVE
Addison!

ANOTHER EXECUTIVE
Myron!

ADDISON
Aaaaahhh!

toward He runs down the length of the table and hurls himself
the window and:
Thwok!

CUT

TO:

MUSSBURGER'S OFFICE - ANGLE FROM OUTSIDE

his LOOKING IN, as Addison flattens against the f.g. glass,
face squushing, his outflung hands likewise.

All stare in horror for a long silent beat.

floor, With the sound of a SQUEEGEE being drawn across glass,
Addison, still frozen, slides down the window, hits the
and falls stiffly back like a fallen tree.

Mussburger sits up and sticks a cigar into his mouth.

MUSSBURGER
Plexiglas. Had it installed last
week.

EXECUTIVE
...Myron?

MUSSBURGER
All right, so the kid caught a wave.
So right now he and his dingus are
on top. Well, this too shall pass.
Myrtle J. Mussburger didn't raise
her boy to go knockkneed at the first
sign of adversity. I say, we made
this kid and we can break him. I
say, the higher he climbs, the harder
he drops. I say, yes, the kid has a
future, and in it I see shame,
dishonor, ignominy and disgrace.

spin Sure, sure, the wheel turns, the music plays, and our
ain't over yet.

NORVILLE'S OFFICE

playing A small chamber orchestra, the musicians in tails, sit
in "Eine Kleine Nachtmusik". Norville, eyes closed, reclines
his desk chair, one uniformed woman stooping in front of
him, manicuring his nails, another, behind, massaging his
temples. A tailor is pinning up his pant cuffs.

goatee A French sculptor wearing a white smock, a beret, and a
a squints at Norville and chisels at a block of marble with
stone chisel and hammer.

head, A GOON sits off to one side, hat insolently atop his
reading the funny papers.

upright, At length Norville stirs, opens his eyes, sits bolt
massager. batting away the hands of the manicurist and temple-

NORVILLE

Hold it!...

The musicians' playing dribbles away to silence.

NORVILLE

...Nobody move, nobody breathe...

All sit frozen. You could hear a pin drop.

NORVILLE

...An idea... is coming...

Eyes narrowed, he gazes off into space, squinting for his
idea.

CLOSE ON TAILOR'S KIT

A straight pin is rolling across the top -- it drops off

--

EXTREME CLOSE ON FLOOR

Where the PIN -- PING! -- hits.

NORVILLE

Deflates. He glares at the tailor.

NORVILLE

It's gone now.

The musicians resume playing. Everyone else resumes work.
The INTERCOM BUZZES and a female voice announces:

FEMALE (V.O.)
Miss Amy here to see you.

Norville leans forward to hit his intercom.

NORVILLE
Is she in the book? --

The door bursts open and Amy storms in.

AMY
For Pete's sake, Norville!

NORVILLE
Oh! Hello, Amy -- was it -- I thought
she said, Mamie --

AMY
Never mind about that...

She shakes a piece of paper at Norville.

AMY
...You know what those nincompoops
in the boardroom are doing?

NORVILLE
Well, I wouldn't call them nincom --

AMY
They're going to discharge eight
percent of the work force here at
Hudsucker. Why, in New York alone
that means eighteen hundred people
out of work, people with wives and
children and families --

NORVILLE
Well yes, we're pruning away some of
the dead wood, but if --

AMY
You mean you know about this?

NORVILLE
Know about it? You think the Board
would do anything like this without
my authorization? No, this was my
idea from the start.

AMY
Your i --

NORVILLE
We have to be realistic, Amy. You
know things have slowed down a little
here at Hudsucker --

AMY

You're awful kind to yourself,
Norville Barnes -- the fact is you've
slowed down, sitting up here like a
sultan, not doing a lick of work!
Why you know it's ideas that are the
lifeblood of industry and you haven't
come up with one since the hoop and
the reason's plain to see! You've
forgotten what made your ideas
exciting for you in the first place --
it wasn't for the fame and the wealth
and the mindless adulation of --
would you get out of here?!

playing
rise
office.

This was addressed to the chamber orchestra, whose
dribbles off. They look inquisitively at Norville, then
to pack up their instruments and sheepishly leave the

AMY

...I've been watching you, Norville
Barnes, even though you've been trying
to avoid me --

NORVILLE

Now, Aim --

AMY

Shutup! -- and don't think I haven't
noticed how you've changed. I used
to think you were a swell guy --
well, to be honest I thought you
were an imbecile --

NORVILLE

Now, Aim --

AMY

Shutup! -- but then I figured out
you were a swell guy, a little slow
maybe, but a swell guy! Well, maybe
you're not so slow, but you're not
so swell either and it looks like
you're an imbecile after --

NORVILLE

Now, Aim --

AMY

Shutup! -- after all! You haven't
talked to me for a week and now I'm
going to say my piece. I've got a
prediction for you, Norville Barnes:
I predict that since you've decided
to dedicate yourself to greed and
sloth and everything bad, you're
going to lose all the good things
that your good ideas brought you.

You're going to throw them all away
chasing after money and ease and the
respect of a Board that wouldn't
give you the time of day if you...
if you...

NORVILLE

Worked in a watch factory?

The Goon looks up from his funnies.

GOON

Huh-huh-huh!

AMY

(to the Goon)

Shutup!

(to Norville)

Exactly! Don't you remember how you
used to feel about the hoop? You
told me you were gonna bring a smile
to the hips of everyone in America,
regardless of race, creed or color.
Finally there'd be a thingamajig
that would bring everyone together --
even if it kept 'em apart, spacially --
you know, for kids? Your words,
Norville, not mine. I used to love
Norville Barnes -- yes, love him! --
when he was just a swell kid with
hot ideas who was in over his head,
but now your head is too big to be
in over!

NORVILLE

Now, Amy --

AMY

Consider this my resignation --

Thwock -- She slaps him.

The bodyguard is on his feet.

GOON

Hey!!

Crack -- Amy kicks him hard in the shin.

GOON

...Awooooo!

AMY

-- Effective immediately!!

She strides to the door, leaving Norville rubbing his
cheek
and the Goon hopping around on one leg.

FADE

OUT:

FADE IN:

CLOSE SHOT - PICTURE OF AMY

Hudsucker
one
triplets.
Receives

PULL BACK SHOWS it to be her identification in her personnel file.
A hand brings INTO FRAME another picture of her -- this a newspaper clipping. She stands on a podium accepting an award; standing behind her are middle-aged identical
The caption says, "Amy Archer of the Manhattan Argus Pulitzer Prize."

WIDER ANGLE

his
just

We are in Mussburger's office. Mussburger is seated at desk looking at the file picture and clipping; the sign letterer/scrapper is leaning over his shoulder, having put them down.

MUSSBURGER

Hmmm... Thank you, Aloysius. This may be useful.

Aloysius nods wordlessly and turns to leave.

As we TRACK IN ON the picture of Amy, we:

FADE

OUT:

FADE UP TO:

PERFECT WHITE

white
trailing
sensuous
with
Norville
loosened.

After a beat, a woman ENTERS against the unblemished background, dressed in a flowing white dance robe, a long, diaphanous veil. She performs a flowingly dance moderne; the MUSIC is a sensuous saxophone solo lasciviously bending blue notes.
After the woman has been dancing for several beats enters, dancing after her, pursuing her. He is wearing a coatless suit, his sleeves rolled up, his thin tie
The woman dances around him, letting her diaphanous veil trail sinuously around his body.

We hear an ECHOING voice:

VOICE (O.S.)
Buddy... Say, buddy...

CLOSE SHOT - NORVILLE

closed,
Sitting in his desk chair, sheened with sweat, eyes
licking his lips.

CLOSER NOW:

VOICE (O.S.)
Buddy... Ya busy?

NORVILLE
Huh-whuh?

elevator
He opens his eyes and looks stuporously about.
Buzz is grinning down at him in his little pillbox
cap.

BUZZ
Looks like ya nodded off there, buddy!
Say, ya got a minute?

Norville clears his throat.

NORVILLE
Oh, uh... Buzz... Is it important?

BUZZ
I like to think so! It's this little
idea I been working on!

He turns an easel to face the desk.

BUZZ
...Ya see, I don't intend to be an
elevator boy forever! Take a look at
this sweet baby!

The easel displays an oversized sheet of graph paper.

Onto it has been rendered a top view, which is a perfect
circle, and a side view, which is a vertical line.

Norville gazes stupidly at the circle.

BUZZ
...Ya get it, buddy? Incredibly
convenient, isn't it? Ya see --

in
He produces a tall glass of lemonade with a straw sitting
it.

BUZZ

-- this is how it works, it's these little ridges on the side that give it its whammy! See, ya don't have to drink like this anymore --

vertical
He holds his head over the glass to drink from the straw.

BUZZ

-- Now you can drink like this --

He bends the straw to drink from it at the horizontal.

BUZZ

...I call it the Buzz-Sucker, get it, buddy? -- After me! Buzz! Why, people are just dyin' for a product like this, and the great thing is we won't have to charge an arm and a --

Norville, who has been stewing, finally barks:

NORVILLE

Wait a minute!

He grabs the lemonade glass, looks at it, sneering.

NORVILLE

...Why, this is worthless.

BUZZ

Huh?! But, buddy --

Norville yanks the straw out and crumples it up.

NORVILLE

This is the most idiotic thing I've ever seen in my life!

BUZZ

Yeah, but, buddy --

NORVILLE

Nobody wants a hare-brained product like this! Ya see, Buzz, it lacks the creative spark, the unalloyed genius that made, uh...

He pauses to belch.

NORVILLE

...say, the hula hoop such a success.

BUZZ

But, buddy --

NORVILLE

And what do you mean barging in here and taking up my valuable time! I've got a company to run here --

BUZZ

But, buddy, you were --

NORVILLE

-- I can't have every deadbeat on the Hudsucker payroll pestering me with their idiotic brainwaves!

BUZZ

Geez, I'm sorry, buddy --

NORVILLE

An example must be made!

Buzz looks over his shoulder, turns back to Norville.

BUZZ

Wuddya mean, buddy?

NORVILLE

Fired! You're fired! Is that plain enough for you, buster!

Buzz's jaw drops. His elastic chin strap snaps under the pressure.

BUZZ

Awwww, buddy --

NORVILLE

And don't call me buddy! Out of here! Out!

pathetically Buzz sinks to his knees, weeping. He clutches at Norville's pants legs.

BUZZ

Aw, please, sir -- this job, it's all I got!

NORVILLE

Get up!

BUZZ

I understand if ya don't like the Buzz-Sucker! Just lemme keep my job, I'm prayin' to ya!

NORVILLE

We don't crawl at Hudsucker Industries! Get out of my office! Leave your uniform in the locker room!

Buzz stumbles away, still weeping.

BUZZ

I'm sorry, buddy... I'm sorry...

NORVILLE

Buzz... off! Ha-ha-ha-ha!

As we TRACK IN ON Norville, laughing, there is a low, unearthly RUMBLE, and his face seems to DISSOLVE INTO:

FLAMES

We PULL BACK FROM the flame of Sid Mussburger's oversized lighter as he finishes lighting a cigar.

He is sitting alone in the boardroom, but its door swings open and Norville enters wearing plaid knickers, a little cap, and a knit shirt that shows his waist starting to

bulge.

He has a full golf bag over his shoulder.

NORVILLE

Sorry I'm late, Sid. That back nine at Riverdale is really murder.

MUSSBURGER

Sure, sure, it's a tough course. Well thanks for coming, kid. I thought the board room would be a swell place to chat undisturbed -- it seems we're having some security problems here at the Hud.

NORVILLE

Ya don't say.

MUSSBURGER

Mm. Ordinarily I wouldn't bother you with it, but -- this is embarrassing, kid -- it seems to concern you directly.

NORVILLE

How's that, Sid?

MUSSBURGER

It's not important in itself -- some elevator boy you fired came to me claiming you'd stolen the idea for the, uh, the hoop dingus from him --

NORVILLE

Huh?! He -- no, I -- he's just -- maybe I was a little rough on the boy, ya see I --

MUSSBURGER

Ah forget it, kid, ya don't have to explain to me. He's a little person. He's nothing. Like I say, ordinarily it would just be a nuisance. But it seems -- well, there was a spy in the company...

He is shoving a file towards Norville, who opens it.

MUSSBURGER

...Sure, sure, we tried to kill the story. But her newspaper won't play ball... Looks like her story's coming out...

We TRACK DOWN the length of the board room table TOWARD Norville, who stares horrified at the file.

MUSSBURGER

...See, kid, the problem the Board'll have... you hired this woman. Kept her on, while she made a chump out of you. Serious error of judgment... I mean, business is war, kid -- ya take no prisoners, ya get no second chances. And a boner like this... I'm afraid when the Board meets, after New Year's, your position... well, it looks like you're finished... stick a fork in ya, you're done... washed up...

We LOSE Mussburger FROM FRAME as we TIGHTEN FURTHER ON Norville, Mussburger continuing off:

MUSSBURGER (O.S.)

...I'm sorry, kid. I understand this dolly who betrayed you, she used to be a friend of yours...

Norville is slowly dragging the golf cap off his head.

MUSSBURGER (O.S.)

...And this elevator dope used to be a friend, too...

Norville stares, perfectly still.

MUSSBURGER (O.S.)

...Well, they've got your throat pretty well slit. And when you're dead, ya stay dead. Ya don't believe me, ask Waring Hudsucker... Yeah, looks like curtains. Well, condolences, kid...

Norville's IMAGE TURNS TO:

BLACK-AND-WHITE IMAGE OF NORVILLE

We PULL BACK to show that it is on the front page of the Manhattan Argus.

The headline, in screaming nine-point type:

FAKE!

Next to the picture of Norville is the subhead: Idea Man

a

Fraud.

elevator-
Elevator

Next to the sub-subhead is a picture of Buzz in his operator's pillbox hat: Stole Hoop Idea from Genius Jockey Clarence "Buzz" Gunderson.

AMY (O.S.)
You can't print that!

CHIEF
He grins wolfishly.

CHIEF
We are printing it! She's hittin' the streets this evening --

SWISH PAN

TO:

SMITTY
-- and she's dynamite!

AMY
But, Al, it's the bunk! Norville showed me his design for the whatsit the day I met him! Why Buzz couldn't have invented it -- look at the man -- he's an imbecile!

CHIEF
Archer, you're a broken record. Fact is Gunderson did design it -- apparently he's some kind of prodigy --

AMY
Says who?!

SMITTY
You're not the only one with sources, Amy --

CHIEF
Smith has a source on the Hud board -- very senior, very hushhush --

AMY
Yeah, and I'll bet his initials are Sidney J. Mussburger!

SMITTY
You've lost it, Aim. You've gone soft by the looks of it -- soft on the dummy from Dubuque --

AMY
Muncie!

CHIEF

Whatever! It's no dig on you, Archer,
but this story is hot and you're no
longer on top of it. Why, it's the
scoop of the century -- the other
papers won't have the Gunderson dope
'til tomorrow -- The Allemeinischer
Zeitung, Le Figaro, they'll be choking
on our dust come mornin' --

AMY

You're fools, both of you! It's
obvious they're out to crucify
Norville! They're trying to destroy
him!

CHIEF

(gently)

Amy -- take a break. You've worked
hard on this story -- heck, you broke
it for us! But it's passed you by
and Smith here has taken up the slack.

She is near tears.

AMY

You want slack, I'll give you slack.
You're not putting me out to pasture,
Al, I quit! Consider this my
resignation --

She turns to Smitty --

AMY

-- effective immediately!

-- and swings -- but he catches her before contact, holds
her by the wrist, and sneers:

SMITTY

...Soft.

other Amy swings her free arm to -- thwack -- blindside his
cheek.

NORVILLE

that In flickering black-and-white, he is lying on a couch
is has been brought into his office, gazing listlessly at a
bend straw, being interviewed by someone O.S. The footage
rough, taking a moment to find focus; the sound is TINNY.

GERMAN VOICE (V.O.)

Dell me vat is first zing droppensie
head ven I menzhon ze vord... Zex?

NORVILLE (V.O.)

(listlessly)

Aww, what's the difference.

BOARD MEMBER

Sitting in a darkened board room, gazing off at a screen that sends flickering light onto his face.

GERMAN VOICE (V.O.)
Und ven I zpeak of authority?

NORVILLE (V.O.)
Awww, I dunno.

BACK TO SCREEN

GERMAN VOICE (V.O.)
Eggzplain please ze zignifikanz of
ze straw.

NORVILLE (V.O.)
Nuthin', really.

ANOTHER ANGLE

into
Freudian
down
hand
emphasis.

A shadow is thrown across the screen as a figure steps the beam. He throws the sharp silhouette of a strict ANALYST: Van Dyke beard, pince-nez with chain trailing to his vest, one thumb hooked into the vest, the other holding a cigar wreathing smoke, which he waves for

ANALYST
Patient dizplayed liztlessness,
apathy, gloomy indifference und vas
blue und mopey.

sweeps

The image on screen cuts to four inkblots. The Analyst in a pointer and thwoks each image as he comments on it.

ANALYST
...Ven asked vut four Rhorschach
stains reprezented, patient replied,
'Nussink much,' 'I don't know,' 'Chust
a blotch,' und 'Sure beats me.'

ANOTHER ANGLE

the

The image onscreen cuts to a close shot of Norville on couch, mouth listlessly agape.

ANALYST
...Patient shows no ambition, no get-
up-und-go, no vim. He is riding ze
grand loopen-ze-loop --

Image cuts to a sine wave on a graph, the top of which is

"Despair,"
"Normal."

labeled "Euphoria," the bottom of which is labeled
and a reference line through the middle labeled
There is an X on the declining side of the wave, near but
not yet at the bottom, which is labeled "Patient."

ANALYST

-- zat goes from ze peak of delusional
gaiety to ze trrrroff of dezbaire.
Patient is now near -- but not yet
at! -- ze lowest point; ven he
reachensies bottom he may errrrrupt
und pose danger to himself und uzzers.

MUSSBURGER

Casually puffing on a cigar.

MUSSBURGER

Diagnosis, Dr. Bromfenbrenner?

BROMFENBRENNER (ANALYST)

Patient is eine manic-depressive
paranoid type B, mit acute schizoid
tendencies.

MUSSBURGER

So patient is...?

He interrogatively twirls a finger 'round his temple.

BROMFENBRENNER

Prezizely. Knots.

The board murmurs.

MUSSBURGER

Prescription?

BROMFENBRENNER

Sree sinks! Kommitment.
Electroconfulsif therapy. Maintenance
in eine zecure wazility.

behind
brawny,
on a
steel-

white.

As he scores each point it is illustrated on the screen
him: A patient is forced into a straitjacket by two
unshaven attendants; electricity arcs between two leads
wire cap being wielded by a technician; and lastly, a
barred door is slammed shut behind a stooped and broken
patient who is led, shuffling, away.

Here the FILM runs out, CHATTERING, and the screen goes

The projector is shut off and the lights go on.

The board politely applauds.

INT. BAR - CLOSE ON BARMAN

He has a Vandyke beard and wears a cut-off sweatshirt and dungarees and dark glasses, and has the phone wedged into his shoulder as he tears open a large cardboard box.

BARMAN

Yeah, just get down here -- he says
he's a friend of yours... He won't
say, but man, is he from squaresville.

the
He hangs up and we HINGE WITH him to bring the length of
bar into view. Norville dishevelled, is on the other side
bellowing.

NORVILLE

I want a martini! It's New Year's
Eve and I want a Martini!

BARMAN

Daddy, it's like I been tellin' ya --

NORVILLE

I thought you served misfits here!

The barman is taking rolled-up blow-beepers out of the
cardboard box and loading them into tumblers to set along
the bar.

BARMAN

Yeah, daddy, that's a roger, but we
don't sell alcohol.

NORVILLE

What kind of bar is it if ya can't
get a martini?!

BARMAN

It's a juice and coffee bar, man,
like I been tellin' ya --

NORVILLE

I want a martini! On this bar, right
now! I've had a martini in every bar
on the way down here, and I'm not
about to --

BARMAN

Martinis are for squares, man.

Suddenly enraged:

NORVILLE

What'd you call me?!

He starts awkwardly peeling off his suit coat.

NORVILLE

...You son of a --

AMY (O.S.)
Norville!

NORVILLE
Huh?!

around He looks stupidly about, the shoulders of his coat down
his elbows. He sees Amy rushing up.

NORVILLE
...Oh, it's you! Lookin' for a nitwit
to buy your lunch?!

AMY
Oh Norville, I --

the Norville's attention has already left her. He looks for
missing bartender.

NORVILLE
(swaying)
Barman! Set'm up, fella!

AMY
Norville, I'm sorry, I... I tried to
tell you... so many times... It's
hard to admit when you've been wrong.
If you could just... find it in your
heart to -- to give me another chance --

NORVILLE
Hey! Where's that martini?!

AMY
Just give me another chance, Norville --
I can help you fight this thing. I
know this last story was a lie! We
can prove it! We can --

NORVILLE
Aww, what's the difference. I'm all
washed up... When you're dead, ya
stay dead... Hey, fella!

AMY
Well that just about does it! I've
seen Norville Barnes, the young man
in a big hurry, and I've seen Norville
Barnes the self-important heel, but
I've never seen Norville Barnes the
quitter, and I don't like it!

She starts pumping her arms, slowly chanting.

AMY
...Fight on, fight on, dear old
Muncie.

She steps back off the stool. Norville watches her dully, his head swaying.

AMY
...Fight on, hoist the gold and blue;
You'll be tattered, torn and hurtin'
Once 'The Munce' is done with you!
Goooooo Eagles!

She looks hopefully for some effect, but after staring at her for a slack-jawed beat Norville can only bring out:

NORVILLE
You lied to me! I can't believe you
lied to me! a Muncie girl!

He lurches off his stool toward the door. Watching him, despair fights with confusion on Amy's face.

AMY
But Norville... I...

simple She realizes that, though shattered, he is still the
innocent she loved --

AMY
... Oh, Norville!

-- and bursts into tears.

a Two loud REVELERS reel INTO FRAME, one of them uncurling
blow-beeper at the weeping Amy.

REVELER #1
Happy Newby-Newby-New!

REVELER #2
1959 we dig you the most!

EXT. ANNE'S

As Norville exits. It is night, snowing.

PAN We PAN WITH Norville OFF the bar facade and, ENDING the
in the f.g.:

NEWSPAPER

Walking WIPES UP INTO FRAME. Next to a picture of Norville is the
headline "MUNCIE MENTAL CASE." The subhead: "Hud Chief to
Tend Daisies." Sub-subhead: "Headshrinker Calls Him
Time Bomb."

NEWSIE (O.S.)
Extra! Extra! New Year's Eve Edition!

and
ENTERS
coat

Norville's hand ENTERS FRAME to push the newspaper away
leave us looking up the empty street. Norville's back
as he stumbles off alone up the street, pulling up his
collar as he recedes, the NEWSIE's VOICE continuing:

NEWSIE (O.S.)
...Ring out the old! Ring in the
new!

CLOSE ON NORVILLE

Norville:

trudging. VOICES WELL UP, ECHOING. A face looms with each
voice, hellishly lit, superimposed over the walking

VOICES (V.O.)
...You're not so slow but you're not
so swell either and it looks like
you're an imbecile after all!...
Noooo, I don't guess you will be
here long... Sure, sure, but even
there they called you dipstick...
lamebrain... dope... schmoe... And
is this sap from chumpsville?!...
imbecile after all... Norville, you
let me down... You let Mrs. Eisenhower
down... You let the American people
down... imbecile after all...
imbecile... I predict you're going
to lose all the good things your
ideas brought you... Please, buddy...!
When you're dead, ya stay dead...
Sure, sure, the kid's screwy -- it's
official...

This last voice and supered face is Mussburger's.

Norville DISSOLVES away to leave us ON Sidney in the:

INT. BOARDROOM

only

Hellishly bottom-lit board members sit around the table,
conical New Year's hats on their heads. Mussburger, the

one not wearing a cap, waves his cigar as he continues to
talk:

MUSSBURGER
...The barred-window boys are out
looking for him now, and we'll see
how Wall Street likes the news that
the President of Hudsucker Industries
is headed for the booby-hatch. Why,
when the doc gets through with him
he'll need diapers and a dribble
cup...

The board murmurs appreciatively.

MUSSBURGER

...Let me remind you that our secret post-New Year's party will be held in the office of the President shortly after midnight tonight. Remember, it's strictly stag, so leave the wives at home; we'll be showing some films and, yes, gentlemen, there will be exotic dancers.

spittle Louder murmuring. One board member leers, a trace of at the corner of his mouth.

MUSSBURGER

Well, if that's all...

we... With an unnatural rumble he straightens his papers and

TO: JUMP UP

HIGH NIGHTMARISH DUTCH ANGLE

of the assembled around the table.

ALL

Long live the Hud!

NORVILLE

Norville trudges on, faster, sweatier.

VOICE (O.S.)

Ring out the old! Ring in the new...!

noisemakers, People come and go, laughing, talking, blowing making merry.

VOICE (O.S.)

...Ring out the old! Ring in the new! Ring out the --

dazed. Thoomp!! Norville has run into someone. He looks up,

VOICE (O.S.)

Hey, watch where you're -- Say, buddy!

tuxedo over It is Buzz, the elevator boy, dressed in an ill-fitting and a conical party hat. Za-Za is on his arm, towering him, leering at Norville.

NORVILLE

-- Uh... Buzz, I'm sorry, I -- Buzz, you gotta forgive me! I shouldn't a

fired you, I didn't know what I was doing! I was a little funny in the head, I --

BUZZ

Aw, buddy, I don't care about that.

Norville is stunned.

NORVILLE

...You don't?

BUZZ

Nah, that's all forgotten.

NORVILLE

...It is?

BUZZ

Sure, Mr. Muss -- uh, Sid said I could have the job back.

NORVILLE

Absolutely, Buzz, I'm glad he --

BUZZ

But he told me you stole that swell hoop idea from me. What gives!

NORVILLE

But, Buzz --

BUZZ

Say, that was a swell idea!

NORVILLE

But, Buzz, you know I never --

BUZZ

And Sid says you stole it!

NORVILLE

But Buzz --

ZA-ZA

Well wuddya waiting for, Clarence --
? Pop him one!

Boffo!

Buzz swings and Norville hits the snow hard.

BUZZ

Think about that, idea man!!

Norville groggily raises his head.

PASSERBY

Say, isn't he that lunatic?

Norville looks dopily up at the people in furs and party

hats starting to gather.

VOICES

...that big-shot faker... the Wall
Street fraud guy... nuttier than a
fruitcake... they say he's a menace...
wuddya waitin' for, call a cop!...

We hear SIRENS.

Norville staggers to his feet. The crowd cringes.

VOICES

...He's on his feet... We can take
him!

Norville bursts through the crowd, running.

Buzz starts giving chase, followed by the braver souls,
followed by the entire mob.

NORVILLE

runs, gasping, turning a corner.

VOICES

...Down here! He went down here!

Buzz.
Behind Norville, the crowd rounds the corner, led by

unshaven
the
chase.
A VAN is SCREECHING to a halt and out jump two burly
men in white, one of them holding open a straitjacket,
other carrying a large butterfly net. They join in the

lamppost
Norville turns down an alley. A DRUNK drooping off a
gaily waves a bottle at him.

DRUNK

Ring out the old! Ring in the new!

The crowd is running past the mouth of the alley, missing
the turn-off.

LIMESTONE FLOOR

breaking
run
sweating,
Norville, gasping, crashes down INTO FRAME, his hands
his fall against the limestone. The CAMERA SPINS NINETY
DEGREES to reveal that it is not floor but wall he has
into and is now leaning against. Norville looks up,
gasping.

HIS POV

the
The massive Hudsucker Building looms dizzily up towards
stars, capped by the huge Hudsucker Clock.

DISTANT VOICES (O.S.)
Ring out the old! Ring in the new!

HUDSUCKER LOBBY

with
Norville staggers in. A gust of icy air that comes in
him flaps a dropcloth off a huge shape that dominates the
lobby:

him
It is the heroic statue of Norville that we earlier saw
posing for.

Norville reels over to it, stares dumbly.

STATUE

Mutely -- mockingly -- dignified.

NORVILLE

He staggers off to the elevators.

MUSSBURGER'S OFFICE

cigar.
We are TRACKING ACROSS the office TOWARD Mussburger, his
feet up on his desk, laughing demonically, smoking his

swing
CLICK-CLICK-CLICK-CLICK -- the PERPETUAL MOTION BALLS
clock,
on his desk; THRUMMMMM -- the SWEEP SECOND HAND of the
the
illuminated now, casts a moving shadow that rolls across
floor. Evil prevails.

APPROACH
A piece of paper and a pencil lie on his desk; as we

Mussburger
WE PAN DOWN and SWING AROUND to read it, LOSING
but still hearing his LAUGHTER.

MOVING IN ON THE PAPER:

red.
Musssucker Industries. Hudberger Industries. Sidsucker
Industries. This last alternative has been circled in

Below it has been scribbled:

Sidney J. Mussburger, President.

Evil LAUGHTER. Sweeping shadows.

TO:

CUT

NORVILLE'S OFFICE DOOR

back
away,
We are TRACKING IN TOWARD the back of Aloysius, the sign painter, who is stooped in front of the door. He looks over his shoulder, leering PAST the CAMERA, to reveal his work: Under PRESIDENT Norville's name has been scraped and painted in is SIDNEY J. MUSSBUR...

NORVILLE

He pushes past the sign painter.

INT. OFFICE

Dark and empty. Norville is peeling off his coat as he staggers over to the closet.

closet
Now.
We can hear DISTANT REVELRY and the STRAINS of "AULD LANG SYNE."
Norville has pulled his old mailroom apron from the and is putting it on: HUDSUCKER MAIL ROOM/The Future Is

Norville looks at the door.

THROUGH the glass we see the tail of the last R of "Mussburger" being painted into place.

Norville throws open the window.

WIND WHISTLES.

He climbs out.

LEDGE

Norville, back against the wall, looks cautiously down.

We hear DISTANT CHANTING:

VOICES (V.O.)
Ten... nine... eight... seven...

HIS POV

falling
A sickening drop. Receding snowflakes. On the street far, far below, a lone car's headlights cut through the snow.

VOICES (V.O.)
Six... five... four...

WIDER ON NORVILLE

began.
We are FLOATING IN; it is the SHOT with which the movie

approaching
the

The sweep second hand of the Hudsucker Clock is
the 12 of midnight, the New Year. In sync with the clock
CHANTING continues:

VOICES (V.O.)
Three... two...

his

We have COME IN CLOSE ON Norville. A lone tear runs down
cheek.

VOICES (V.O.)
...One...

BONG! The toll is right at Norville's ear. Startled, he
reaches up to press hands against his ears. Distantly:

VOICES (V.O.)
Happy New Year!

BONG!!

edges

He can't stand it. Whimpering, hands to his ears, he
his way back toward the window.

HIS POV

it

The open window at a steep angle. Someone inside slides
shut.

BACK TO SCENE

Norville waves.

NORVILLE
No --

BONG!!

he

His gesticulation and a shuffle step upset his balance --
trips -- falls -- catches the ledge --

NORVILLE
-- No, please!

feet

He is hanging onto the icy ledge by his fingertips. His
dangle away. Snow falls.

HIS POV

Looking STEEPLY UP.

CLOCK

Its second hand is making its descent.

NORVILLE

Falling.

MUSSBURGER

Laughing.

SECOND HAND

Descending.

NORVILLE

a
head
Falling, turning lazily in the air -- and suddenly, with
great moaning sound -- he stops, suspended in mid-air,
down, feet in the air.

It is much like the freeze frame on Waring Hudsucker that
the title of the film was supered over.

He waves his arms, to no effect, looks around.

PEOPLE IN STREET

Frozen in attitudes of laughter, celebration. Snow sifts
silently down around their motionless bodies.

MUSSBURGER

In his office, frozen with an idiotic laugh pasted to his
face.

HIS PERPETUAL MOTION BALLS

falls.
Frozen, one ball swung out but suspended, hanging at the
apex of its arc. Outside the great arched window, snow

NORVILLE

about,
He alone can move, but doesn't fall. He looks awkwardly
his body in a dive-bomber attitude, canted steeply down.

EXT. HUDSUCKER CLOCK

Its sweep second hand is arrested on its downward sweep.

WHINING NOISES emanate from within.

CLOSE SHOT - GREAT GEAR

stopping
has
The broom handle has been jammed between two cogs,
them. We PULL BACK ALONG the handle to reveal Moses, who
thrust it there, and who now TURNS back over his shoulder

to

address the CAMERA.

MOSES

Strictly speakin', I'm never spozed
to do this but... have you got a
better idea?

NORVILLE

DISTANT --

Twisting back to look up over his shoulder; there is a
very distant -- SINGING.

HIS POV

or
down

Looking up the length of the Hudsucker Building. Someone
something wrapped in white is flying toward us, coming
from the stars.

We can make out a male voice, accompanied by STRUMMING:

VOICE (V.O.)

She'll be comin' around the mountain
when she comes, She'll be comin'
around the mountain when she comes...

NORVILLE

He gapes.

ANGEL

wearing
comes

-- For it is an Angel, arrives. He is a balding man,
rimless glasses, in a white robe, large feathery wings
sprouting from his back and beating heavily until he
to rest, in midair. He puts aside the harp he has been
strumming on a nearby windowsill.

ANGEL

Love that tune. How ya doin', kid?

NORVILLE

Mr... Mr. Hudsucker?

HUDSUCKER (ANGEL)

Ta-daaaa!

forward
to
balance.

Presenting himself, he spreads his arms and stamps his
foot, forgetting that there is nothing beneath his foot
stamp. He lurches forward, momentarily losing his

HUDSUCKER

...Woooooo!

He rights himself. The halo spinning lazily over his head has been jarred askew. With a flick of his forefinger he rights it.

HUDSUCKER
...How d'ya like this thing? They're all wearin' em upstairs now.

He blows a dismissive raspberry.

HUDSUCKER
...It's a fad.

He pats at his robe, produces a white cigar.

HUDSUCKER
...Anyway. I hear you've been having, uh...

He casually flicks his thumb out of his fist, lighting it.
He lights the cigar off his thumb, takes a puff.

HUDSUCKER
...Been having some problems with the board. The more things change, know what Iyayayeeeeee...

Pain reminds him that he has forgotten to extinguish his flaming thumb, which he now waves frantically about.

HUDSUCKER
...Jesus Christopher -- That smarts... Where was I? Oh yeah, the board. I guess Sidney's been puttin' the screws to ya, huh, Norman?

NORVILLE
Norville.

HUDSUCKER
Mm. Well, say what you like about the man's ethics, he's a balls-to-the-wall businessman. Beat ya any way he can. Straight for the jugular. Very effective.

NORVILLE
Yes sir...

HUDSUCKER
Anyway. Any particular reason you didn't give him my Blue Letter? I mean, Jesus, Norman, just a dying man's last words and wishes, no big deal.

NORVILLE
Huh? Oh, geez, Mr. Hudsucker, I apologize, there was an awful lot of

excitement and I guess I must've
mislaidd --

HUDSUCKER
It's sittin' in your apron pocket,
right where you left it. Imbecile.

Norville reaches in and -- pulls out the wrinkled Blue
Letter.

NORVILLE
Oh, geez.

HUDSUCKER
Failure to deliver a Blue Letter is
grounds for dismissal.

NORVILLE
Geez, I --

HUDSUCKER
Ah, it's New Year's, I'm not gonna
add to your woes. I'm just saying.

NORVILLE
Yessir.

HUDSUCKER
Well, why don't ya read it.

NORVILLE
Sir?

HUDSUCKER
Yeah, go ahead. Might learn somethin'.

NORVILLE
Yes sir...

He tears open the envelope, reads:

NORVILLE
'From the desk of Waring Hudsucker.
To. Sidney J. Mussburger. Regarding.
My demise. Dear Sid. By the time you
read this, I will have joined the
organization upstairs -- an exciting
new beginning. I will retain fond
memories of the many years you and I --
,

HUDSUCKER
Yeah, yeah, it's the standard
resignation boilerplate -- go down
to the second paragraph.

NORVILLE
'Many years, uh... I know that you
will be wondering why I have decided
to move on, ending my tenure at
Hudsucker, and here on Earth. You

will be thinking, Why now, when things are going so well? Granted, from the standpoint of our balance sheet and financials, sure, sure, we're doing fine. However, Sid. These things have long since ceased to give me pleasure. I look at myself now and no longer see the idealistic young man who started this company. Now I see only an empty shell whom others call a 'success.' How has this come to pass? When and why did I trade all of my hopes, dreams and aspirations, for the emptiness of power and wealth? What the heck have I done?

As Norville reads Hudsucker casually examines his fingernails, then pats down a yawn.

NORVILLE

'...Looking back now, Sid, I see that I allowed time and age to corrupt my dreams. Instead of fiercely guarding what was timeless inside of myself, I let the hubbub of earthly commerce erode my character, and dissolve my better self. How is it that some manage to preserve themselves where I have failed? Sidney, I do not know. Perhaps if others love you, you may more securely love yourself -- but I am alone. I loved a woman once, Sid, as you well know -- a beautiful, vibrant lady, an angel who in her wisdom saw fit to choose you instead of I...'

Norville is interrupted by loud blubbering. He looks up.

Hudsucker is weeping loudly into a white handkerchief.

He sniffs at his nose, gives it a loud honk, and urgently quavers in a voice strangled with emotion:

HUDESUCKER

Skip this part...

He waves his hankie in get-on-with-it circles.

HUDESUCKER

...Last paragraph, last paragraph.

Norville looks down the page.

NORVILLE

'...And so, Sid, the future does not belong to such as I -- nor even you. We have made our compromises with time. The future belongs to the young,

who may more energetically wage the battle against corruption. Accordingly, in the spirit of hope, and the ringing in of the new, I hereby bequeath my entire interest in the company, and my seat on the board, to whomever is Hudsucker's most recent employee at the time of my demise. I know this will disappoint you -- you, Sid, who have served so diligently and for so long. But --'

HUDSUCKER
-- tough titty toenails!

He roars with laughter.

HUDSUCKER
...That'll show the bastard!

He merrily wipes his eyes.

HUDSUCKER
...Yeah, go ahead.

NORVILLE
'...But Sid, let me urge you to work closely with the new president, and to keep giving Hudsucker Industries all your energies -- but not your soul. For while we must strive for success, we must not worship it. Long live the Hud. Waring Hudsucker...'

Norville gives a musingly appreciative nod.

HUDSUCKER
...Geez.

Pleased with himself:

HUDSUCKER
Yup. It's all there. Well, see that it gets delivered in the morning.

Hudsucker picks up his lyre and heads back up toward the stars.

HUDSUCKER
Sheeel beeee...

MUSSBURGER'S OFFICE

Mussburger still sits frozen in his chair. Outside the arched window Hudsucker rises, through the falling snow, his way back to the heavens.

HUDSUCKER

great
on

...Ridin' six white horses, She'll
be ridin' six white horses She'll be
ridin' six white horses When she
comes...

door. We hear a great WRENCHING SOUND from the GEAR ROOM next

GEAR ROOM

Moses pries the broom handle loose from the Great Gear.

With a LOW MOAN the CLOCKWORKS start to shudder and turn

--

SWEEP SECOND HAND

Lurching forward --

PERPETUAL MOTION BALL

Swinging down --

EXT. PAVEMENT

As Norville falls the last few feet and lands on his face
with one last mighty BONG of the HUDSUCKER CLOCK.

BOOM DOWN

FROM a tavern sign that says ANN'S 440, DOWN TO the front
door, which Norville is entering.

INT. ANN'S

into a Sitting halfway down the bar is Amy, staring morosely
coffee cup. AT the CUT we are TRACKING BACK, PULLING AWAY
FROM her.

Eagles Norville enters, comes up next to her and makes the Go
sign, hooking his thumbs in front of his nose and
spreading his fingers.

Two familiar voices narrate the scene, sounding a little
tipsy:

LOU (O.S.)

What the heck's he doin', Benny?

Amy looks at Norville, startled. After a moment she
reciprocates the sign.

BENNY (O.S.)

What the heck's she doin', Lou?

LOU (O.S.)

What the heck they doin'?

Norville and Amy embrace.

BENNY (O.S.)
You know what they're doin' now,
Lou.

LOU (O.S.)
This I know, Benny.

BENNY (O.S.)
This you're familia' with.

TOWARDS

Our PULL BACK ENDS LOOKING ACROSS an elbow of the bar,

Norville and Amy, now in WIDE SHOT. Resting on the bar in
the extreme f.g. are two champagne glasses, half-full of
fizzing champagne.

Norville and Amy kiss.

LOU (O.S.)
...Geez.

BENNY (O.S.)
...Geez.

We hear LABORED, RASPY BREATHING.

LOU (O.S.)
...Y'all right, Benny?

In a quavering voice:

BENNY (O.S.)
...Yeah, I'm... It's just... It's
beautiful, Lou!

Lou also is beginning to sound choked up:

LOU (O.S.)
It is beautiful, Benny.

embrace:

BENNY (O.S.)
...It's the most beautiful t'ing I
ever saw.

LOU (O.S.)
It's the most beautiful t'ing I ever
saw.

A BARTENDER ENTERS to BLOCK our VIEW of Norville and Amy.

a
at

He is youngish, with a beat goatee, wearing dungarees and
sweatshirt with cut-off sleeves. He looks to either side

Benny and Lou.

BARTENDER
You cats comin' from a party?

BENNY
Cabbies' affair.

LOU
Hacks' New Year's gala.

BARTENDER
Crazy. Get you anything else? Sangria?
Carrot juice? Herbal tea?

REVERSE ANGLE

long
him

We see Benny and Lou are sitting side by side at the bar.
Lou wears a fake wispy beard and white eyebrows and a
flowing robe; he holds a fake scythe. On the bar next to
sits a large hourglass.

LOU
Bromo.

Benny is wearing nothing but an oversized diaper, a baby
bonnett and a sash across his hairy chest and thick belly
that says "1959."

in

He chucks himself in the heart, cocks his head and sucks
air, then blows it back out.

BENNY
...Bromo.

BLUE LETTER

Lying on the boardroom table. As a hand enters to lay a
wristwatch on the table next to it, we hear the voice of
Moses, the old maintenance man.

MOSES (V.O.)
And so began 1959. The new year...

deposit

The hand reenters to lay down a wallet, and then to
a burning cigar in an ashtray.

MOSES (V.O.)
...And the start of a new business
cycle. When he learned that Norville
owned the comp'ny, ol' Sidney was
upset at first.

We TILT UP to show that Mussburger is walking toward the
boardroom window. Board members silently remonstrate with
him as he tries to wrench it open.

MOSES (V.O.)

...It's a good thing Doc
Bromfenbrenner was there...

Doctor Bromfenbrenner stands to one side watching, brow
furrowed, a pencil pressed to his lips.

MOSES (V.O.)
...'cause he was able to keep Sidney
from harmin' his ol' self.

We...

CUT

TO:

BARRED DOOR

puffing being slammed behind Sidney who, straight-jacketed, is
on a cigar as he is led away.

MOSES (V.O.)
...Now Norville, he went on an' ruled
with wisdom and compassion...

BOARDROOM

on Again. Norville is eagerly pointing at a design he has up
The an easel: Under the heading BRAND NEW is a large circle.
side view is a flat line.

MOSES (V.O.)
...and started dreamin' up them
excitin' new ideas again. You know,
for kids!

a The board members look at the design, puzzled.
Norville takes a drop cloth off of a piece of plastic on
pedestal. He has the board's complete attention.

MOSES (V.O.)
...An' that's the story of how
Norville Barnes climbed away up to
the forty-fourth floor of the
Hudsucker Buildin'...

He picks up the plastic disc and as he sails it we...

CUT

TO:

OUTSIDE

As it floats out the boardroom window.

MOSES (V.O.)
...an' then fell all the way down,

but didn't quite squish himself.

Hudsucker We BOOM UP, AWAY FROM the boardroom, to the great
Clock.

MOSES (V.O.)
...Ya know, they say there was a man
who jumped from the fortyfifth
floor... but that's another story.
Heh-heh-heh! Ya-heh-heh-heh!

We FADE OUT on the clock as Moses' LAUGHTER grows distant
and END MUSIC SWELLS.

THE END