

ED WOOD

by Scott Alexander & Larry Karaszewski

Directed by Tim Burton

FIRST DRAFT

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FADE IN:

INT. HAUNTED MANSION PARLOR - NIGHT

We move through a spooky shrouded parlor, as a storm rages outside. THUNDER roars, and lightning flashes in the giant windows. In the center of the room lies an oak coffin.

Suddenly the lid starts to creak open. A hand crawls past the edge... and then the lid slams up! Famed psychic CRISWELL pops out. Criswell, 40, peers at us intently, his gleaming eyes framed under his striking pale blonde hair. He intones, with absolute conviction:

CRISWELL

Greetings, my friend. You are interested in the unknown, the mysterious, the unexplainable... that is why you are here. So now, for the first time, we are bringing you the full story of what happened...

(extremely serious)

We are giving you all the evidence, based only on the secret testimony of the miserable souls who survived this terrifying ordeal. The incidents, the places, my friend, we cannot keep this a secret any longer. Can your hearts stand the shocking facts of the true story of Edward D. Wood, Junior??

EXT. NIGHT SKY

Lightning CRACKS.

We drift down past the dark clouds... through the torrential rain... and end up...

OPTICAL:

EXT. HOLLYWOOD - NIGHT

We've landed in Hollywood, 1952. We're outside a teeny, grungy playhouse. The cracked marquee proclaims "'THE CASUAL COMPANY,' WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY EDWARD D. WOOD, JR."

Pacing nervously in the rain is ED WOOD, 30, our hero. Larger-than-life charismatic, confident, Errol Flynn-style handsome, Ed is a human magnet. He's a classically flawed optimist: Sweet and well-intentioned, yet doomed by his demons within.

The doors open, and Ed's pal JOHN "BUNNY" BRECKINRIDGE, 45, hurries out. Bunny is a wealthy, theatrical fop wearing a string of pearls.

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Suddenly the rest of the cast runs up, frantically upset. In a flowing white dress is DOLORES FULLER, 23, a sharp, hungry-for-a-career ingenue. She's near tears.

DOLORES

Eddie, my dove just flew out the window!

CREW MEMBER

She goes on in two minutes! What are we gonna do??

They all look to Ed, awaiting a response. He thinks a second, then excitedly CLAPS his hands.

ED

Dolores, give me your shoes.

DOLORES

What?

ED

The ghost can be barefoot. Give me your shoes!

She hands Ed her white shoes. He snatches one, grabs a pair of scissors, and starts CUTTING up the shoe. Everyone is baffled. He keeps cutting the shoe... and it slowly takes on the shape of a dove!

Ed then grabs some pipe cleaners, works them into a shape, and sprints into the dressing room. He takes some green eye shadow and excitedly smears it on the pipe cleaners. Ed then hurries back out, jams the green pipe cleaners into the cut-up shoe... and it looks like a dove with an olive branch in its mouth!

The cast is flabbergasted.

CREW MEMBER

Wow.

BACK ONSTAGE

The soldiers suddenly look up.

ACTOR #1

Hey, I think I see something!

Dolores floats down onto the stage, holding out the dove.

DOLORES

I offer you mortals the bird of
peace, so that you may change your
ways and end all this destruction.

CUT TO:

INT. SCRUFFY COFFEE SHOP - LATER THAT NIGHT

Ed and his gang celebrate opening night in a dirty 24-hour diner. They're noisily slugging down drinks, in a big red booth.

ED

What a show! Everyone was terrific!
Paul, your second-act monologue
actually gave me chills,

He grins at Actor #1, aka PAUL MARCO, a young eager beaver who's loyal like a dog.

PAUL MARCO

Aw thanks, Eddie.

Actor #2, aka CONRAD BROOKS, a friendly, simple-minded lug, runs up waving a newspaper.

CONRAD

I got the early edition! It was just
dropped off at the newsstand.

ED

(he smiles at everyone)
This is the big moment...!

Ed opens the paper to the entertainment page.

INSERT - THE NEWSPAPER. Ed turns to a column, "The Theatrical Life, By Victor Crowley." Under this is a photograph of an old man with an ascot.

WIDE

Everybody excitedly crowds around and starts reading. A moment... and then their faces drop. Clearly, this is a disastrous review. Their faces get sadder, and sadder... and then they finish. A melancholy beat, until --

BUNNY

What does that old queen know? He
wasn't even there!

(he knocks back a drink)

Sending a copy boy to do his dirty
work. Well fuck him!

DOLORES

Do I really have a face like a horse?

PAUL MARCO

What does "ostentatious" mean?

Ed calmly waves his arms for attention. He tries to smile.

ED

Hey. Hey, it's not that bad. You just can't concentrate on the negative. He's got some nice things to say...

(he scans the review)

See, "The soldier costumes are very realistic." That's positive!

Everyone kind of stares at their drinks, depressed. Ed launches into an upbeat speech.

ED

Hell, I've seen a lot worse reviews. I've seen ones where they didn't even like the costumes! Like, that last "Francis the Mule" picture -- it got terrible notices. But it was a huge hit.

PAUL MARCO

Lines around the block.

ED

So don't take it too seriously. We're all doin' great work.

CONRAD

You really think so?

ED

Absolutely! It's just the beginning. I promise this: If we stick together, one day I'll make every single one of you famous.

He smiles at everyone at the table. They all believe what he says, and there is a hushed moment of dream-filled hope.

CUT TO:

INT. DOLORES' APARTMENT - LATE NIGHT

Ed and Dolores lie in bed, in the dark. He stares vulnerably at her.

ED

Honey, what if I'm wrong? What if I just don't have it?

DOLORES

Ed, it was only one review.

ED

Orson Welles was 26 when he made "Citizen Kane." I'm already 30!

DOLORES

Ed, you're still young. This is the part of your life when you're supposed to be struggling.

ED

I know... But sometimes I get scared

this is as good as it's gonna get...

Dolores kisses Ed affectionately.

DOLORES

Things'll change for us. Nobody stays on the fringe forever.

She gets out of bed. We see her tiny apartment is drab and crumbling. Dolores turns on the shower, then walks to the closet. She looks inside.

DOLORES

God, where's my pink sweater? I can never find my clothes anymore...

ANGLE - ED

He rolls over in bed, away from her.

CUT TO:

INT. STUDIO WAREHOUSE - DAY

CU on Ed reading "The Hollywood Reporter." A RUDE BOSS in suspenders suddenly strides up.

RUDE BOSS

Hey big shot, get off your ass. They need a potted palm over in the Carl Laemmle Building.

ED

Sure thing, Mr. Kravitz.

Ed jumps up. We WIDEN, revealing he's in a giant greenhouse, packed with rows of potted plants and shrubs. Ed grabs a small palm tree and hurries out.

EXT. MOVIE STUDIO - DAY

Ed strolls across the busy movie lot, lugging the palm. He passes a soundstage and notices the stage door open a crack. Ed glances around, then puts down the palm and hurries in.

INT. SOUNDSTAGE , SAME TIME

A big-budget foreign legion movie is shooting, with a huge cast and crew. A giant desert set has been erected, with camels and real sand dunes. Ed is blown away.

ED

Whoa, look at all this sand. This is real sand! My God, where'd they get all this sand?!

A SECURITY GUARD sees him.

SECURITY GUARD

Hey, YOU. This is a closed set.

Ed is caught. He hurries out.

EXT. MOVIE STUDIO , DAY

Ed continues across the lot, carrying his palm tree. An OLD CRUSTY MAN sticks his head out an office window.

OLD CRUSTY MAN
Hey, Eddie! Come in here. I got
some great new stuff to show you.

Ed puts down the plant again and runs in.

INT. EDITING ROOMS , DAY

The old guy is proudly showing Ed STOCK FOOTAGE on a moviola.
The footage is totally random: Giant explosions, buffalos
stampeding, tanks, an octopus swimming, etc.

Ed is dazzled.

ED
This is fantastic! What are you
gonna do with it all?

OLD CRUSTY MAN
Eh, probably file it away and never
see it again.

ED
It's such a waste. If I had half a
chance, I could make an entire movie
out of this stock footage!

(getting inspired)
See, the story opens with these
mysterious explosions. Nobody knows
what's causing them, but it's
upsetting all the buffalo. So the
military is called in to solve the
mystery.

OLD CRUSTY MAN
Ya forgot the octopus.

ED
No, I'm saving that for the big
underwater climax!

The old guy cackles.

EXT. MOVIE STUDIO - DAY

Ed finally carries the tree into the Laemmle Building.

INT. STUDIO OFFICES - SAME TIME

Young SECRETARIES in June Cleaver hairdos are giggling.

SECRETARY #1
They say he was a girl trapped in a
man's body.

SECRETARY #2
I'll bet it hurt when they snipped
his thing off.

EEWWW! All the girls shriek in horror. Ed walks in and puts
down his plant.

ED
What are you ladies gabbin' about?

SECRETARY #1

You know that Christine Jorgensen
freak? He/she/it's in "Variety."
Some producer is making a biopic.

ED

(startled)

R-really? I didn't see the story.

SECRETARY #1

Ah, it was buried in the back. The
guy's a real small,time operator.

She holds up her "Variety." Ed hurriedly takes it.

CUT TO:

INSERT - VARIETY

The story headline says "BOY,TO,CHICK FLICK TO CLICK." We PULL
OUT, revealing we're now in

INT. ED'S APARTMENT - DAY

Ed holds the newspaper while he paces around his apartment.
The place has threadbare carpet, faded wallpaper, and an
electric burner for a kitchen. A handful of mangy DOGS run
around. Tacked-up are movie posters for "DRACULA," "FREAKS,"
and "THE MAGNIFICENT AMBERSONS."

Dolores talks on the phone, while Ed silently coaches her.

DOLORES (on phone)

Yes, I've got Mr. Edward Wood on the
line. Could you please hold?

Ed gives her a thumbs up -- perfect! He confidently takes the
phone.

ED (on phone)

Hello, Mr. Weiss? I heard about your
new project and was curious if you
signed a director. Oh -- you
haven't? Well, if we could get
together, I could explain why I'm
more qualified to direct this than
anyone else in town.

(beat)

Uh, I'd rather not go into it over
the phone... Alright. Great! I'll
see you then!

Ed hangs up and YELPS excitedly. He kisses Dolores. She pulls
away.

DOLORES

Eddie, I don't understand. Why are
you the most qualified director for
the Christine Jorgensen Story?

ED

(nervous, he lies)

Aw, er, it's just a bunch of hot air.
I had to say something to get in the
door.

CUT TO:

INT. LOW-RENT HALLWAY - DAY

Ed walks jauntily along, wearing a snappy suit. He reaches a door that says "SCREEN CLASSICS , George Weiss, President." Ed fixes his hair, checks his clothes, then enters.

INT. SCREEN CLASSICS , SAME TIME

It's a crowded room, piled with paperwork and files. Film cans are stacked everywhere, and framed one-sheets for "TEST TUBE BABIES," "BLONDE PICKUP" and "GIRL GANG" litter the cracked walls. Sitting behind the messy desk is GEORGIE WEISS, 60, a rug merchant turned exploitation film producer. He juggles a large sandwich and angrily barks into the phone.

GEORGIE (on phone)

Look, when I said you could have the western territories, I didn't mean all eleven states! I meant California, Oregon, and uh, what's that one above it... Washington. Oh really?! Well screw you!

Georgie slams down the phone. He smiles warmly at Ed.

GEORGIE

Can I help you?

ED

Yes, I'm Ed Wood. I'm here about directing the Christine Jorgensen picture.

GEORGIE

Yeah, well a couple of things have changed. It ain't gonna be the Christine Jorgensen story no more. Goddamn "Variety" printed the story before I had the rights, and now that bitch is asking for the sky.

ED

(disappointed)

So you're not gonna make the movie?

GEORGIE

No, of COURSE I'm gonna make the movie! I've already pre-sold Alabama and Oklahoma. Those repressed Okies really go for that twisted pervert stuff. So we'll just make it without that she-male. We'll fictionalize it.

Georgie bites into his sandwich. Ed is dazed.

ED

Is there a script?

GEORGIE

Fuck no! But there's a poster.

Georgie pulls out artwork of a hermaphrodite: Man on the left side, woman on the right. The lettering screams, "I CHANGED MY SEX!"

GEORGIE

It opens in nine weeks in Tulsa.

ED

(mustering up his courage)
Well, Mr. Weiss, I'm your guy. I work fast, and I'm a deal: I write AND direct. And I'm good. I just did a play in Hollywood, and Victor Crowley praised its realism.

GEORGIE

Hmm. There's five-hundred guys in town who can tell me the same thing. You said on the phone you had some kind of "special qualifications."

Ed takes a measured piuse. This is his big revelation.

ED

Well, Mr. Weiss, I've never told anyone what I'm about to tell you... but I really want this job.

(he gulps)

I like to dress in women's clothing.

GEORGIE

Are you a fruit?

ED

No, no, not at all! I love women. Wearing their clothes makes me feel closer to them.

GEORGIE

So you're not a fruit?

ED

Nah, I'm all man. I even fought in WW2.

(beat)

'Course, I was wearing ladies' undergarments under my uniform.

GEORGIE

You gotta be kiddin' me.

ED

Confidentially, I even paratrooped wearing a brassiere and panties. I'll tell ya, I wasn't scared of being killed, but I was terrified of getting wounded, and having the medics discover my secret.

Georgie sits back. It's a hell of a story.

GEORGIE

And this is why you think you're the most qualified to make my movie?

ED

Yeah. I know what it's like to live with a secret, and worry about what people are gonna think of you... My girlfriend still doesn't know why her sweaters are always stretched out.

Georgie shrugs.

GEORGIE

Ed, you seem like a nice kid, but
look around you...

(he gestures at the posters)

I don't hire directors with burning
desires to tell their stories. I
make movies like "Chained Girls."
I need someone with experience who
can shoot a film in four days that'll
make me a profit.

(beat)

I'm sorry. That's all that matters.

CUT TO:

INT. BAR , DAY

Ed sits morosely in a scuzzy bar, three empty shot glasses in
front of him. A BARTENDER ambles over.

BARTENDER

Are you gonna get something else?

Ed glumly empties his pocket. All he has is change. Ed sighs,
and staggers out.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD - DAY

Ed shuffles down the street, his head hanging low. A
restaurant door opens, and an EISENHOWER ERA NUCLEAR FAMILY
exits. Whitebread Dad, Mom, Son, and Daughter stride out in
their starched clean clothes.

They march obliviously past Ed. He watches them go, then
continues. Ed reaches a building, "HOLLYWOOD MORTUARY," and
glances in the window. A pause, then he does a doubletake.

THROUGH THE WINDOW

The showroom is filled with sample coffins. Lying inside one
is BELA LUGOSI.

ANGLE - ED

He is flabbergasted.

INT. HOLLYWOOD MORTUARY - SAME TIME

Lugosi slowly sits up inside the coffin. Bela is an aged 70-
year-old man, once a great star, now a faded memory trying to
hang on to his nobility. Quite frail and tired, he is still a
master of the grand gesture.

An UNCTUOUS SALESMAN steps up. Bela speaks, in a thick
Hungarian ACCENT which gives him an Old World elegance.

BELA

Too constrictive. This is the most
uncomfortable coffin I have ever been
in.

SALESMAN

Gee, Mr. Lugosi, I've never had any
complaints before.

BELA

The selection is quite shoddy. You are wasting my time.

Mildly annoyed, Bela climbs out. He straightens his cloak and walks to the exit -- where he bumps into nervous Ed.

ED

Excuse me, Mr. Lugosi??

BELA

(irritated)

I told you, I don't want any of your goddamn coffins.

ED

No. I don't work here.

BELA

Huh?

Bela peers at Ed, then glances confusedly over his shoulder at the salesman. Oh. Bela looks back at anxious Ed.

BELA

Who are you? What do you want?

ED

I don't want anything. I'm just a really big, big fan. I've seen all your movies.

BELA

Ha!

Bela strides out.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD - SAME TIME

Bela hurries along. Ed chases after him.

ED

Why were you buying a coffin?

BELA

Because I'm planning on dying soon.

ED

(concerned)

Really?

BELA

Yes. I'm embarking on another bus-and-truck tour of "Dracula." Twelve cities in ten days, if that's conceivable.

Bela pulls out a large smelly cigar and lights it.

ED

You know, I saw you perform "Dracula." In Poughkeepsie, in 1938.

BELA

Eh, that was a terrible production. Renfield was a drunk!

ED

I thought it was great. You were much scarier in real life than you were in the movie.

BELA

Thank you.

ED

I waited to get your autograph, but you never came outside.

BELA

I apologize. When I play Dracula, I put myself into a trance. It takes me much time to re-emerge.

A CITY BUS approaches.

BELA

Oh, there's my bus.

(he checks his pockets)

Shit, where's my transfer?!

ED

Don't you have a car?

BELA

I refuse to drive in this country. Too many madmen.

The bus pulls up, and the doors open. Ed is worried he's about to lose his new friend. He gets an idea...

CUT TO:

INT. 1948 NASH RAMBLER - DAY

Ed drives anxiously. Bela sits next to him, filling the car with smoke from his big cigar.

ED

Boy, Mr. Lugosi, you must lead such an exciting life. When is your next picture coming out?

BELA

I have no next picture.

ED

Ah, you gotta be jokin'! A great man like you... I'll bet you have dozens of 'em lined up.

BELA

Back in the old days, yes. But now -- no one give two fucks for Bela.

Bela puffs on his oversized cigar.

ED

But you're a big star!

BELA

No more. I haven't worked in four years. This town, it chews you up, then spits you out. I'm just an

ex-bogeyman.
(he points)
Make a right.

EXT. BELA'S NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Ed drives past pumping oil wells and into a seedy neighborhood. They reach a tiny, well-manicured house. Ed and Bela get out.

BELA
(bitter)
They don't want the classic horror films anymore. Today, it's all giant bugs, giant spiders, giant grasshoppers -- who would believe such nonsense!

ED
The old ones were much spookier. They had castles, full moons...

BELA
They were mythic. They had a poetry to them.
(he lowers his voice)
And you know what else? The women prefer the traditional monsters.

ED
The women?

BELA
The pure horror, it both repels and attracts them. Because in their collective unconsciousness, they have the agony of childbirth. The blood. The blood is horror.

ED
I never thought of that.

BELA
Take my word for it. You want to "score" with a young lady, you take her to see "Dracula."

Bela's eyes twinkle. He reaches his front door and unlocks it. INSIDE... it's awful. Squalid, dark, with skulls and strange voodoo objects scattered about. Up front hangs a large photograph of shockingly young Bela, handsome and regal.

Ed is stunned by this dismal place, but doesn't say anything. Within, DOGS start BARKING crazily.

BELA
Ugh, what a mess.
(beat)
My wife of twenty years left me last month. I'm not much of a housekeeper.

The dogs BARK louder.

BELA
Shh! I'm coming! I will feed you!

ED

Well... I guess I should go. Perhaps we could get together again?

BELA
(he shakes his hand)
Certainly. But now the children of the night are calling me.

Bela smiles and steps inside. The door closes.

CUT TO:

INT. DOLORES'S APARTMNT - DAY

Dolores is in her 1950's kitchenette, making a green jello mold. Ed bursts in, euphoric.

ED
Sweetie, you won't believe it! I've got the most incredible news!

DOLORES
(excited)
You got the job?!!

ED
Huh?!
(confused)
Oh, uh, no, I didn't get the job. But something better happened!

DOLORES
Better than not getting a job?

ED
Yeah! I met a movie star! Somebody really big!

DOLORES
Who? Robert Taylor?!

ED
(annoyed)
No! A horror movie star!

DOLORES
Boris Karloff!?

ED
Close! The other one!

DOLORES
You met Basil Rathbone!

ED
Oh, the hell with you. I met BELA LUGOSI!

DOLORES
I thought he was dead.

Ed's eyes pop.

ED
No! He's very alive. Well... sort of. He's old, and frail -- but he's still Bela Lugosi! And he's really

nice.

DOLORES

Boy, I can't even remember the last time he was in a picture.

ED

It's a shame. He's such a rest actor, and nobody uses him anymore.

DOLORES

So did you get his autograph?

Ed calms down. He smiles beatifically.

ED

No. It wasn't like that at all. It was just the two of us, and we were talkin'... and he treated me like -- a friend...

CUT TO:

INT. STUDIO WAREHOUSE - DAY

Ed is back in the plant department, arguing with his boss.

RUDE BOSS

He's a bum.

ED

No he's not! Do you realize how much money he made for this studio over the years? "Dracula"! "The Raven"! "The Black Cat"!

RUDE BOSS

Yeah? Well now he's a junkie. He don't deserve to work.

ED

That's not true --

RUDE BOSS

He's so great, you hire him.

ED

(defensive)

Well, uh, if I could I would...

The guy takes a mocking face and struts out. Ed glares.

CUT TO:

EXT. BELA'S ROUSE - NIGHT

It's Halloween night. CHILDREN in trick-or-treating costumes parade up and down the streets. Through Bela's window, we see him and Ed watching TELEVISION -- a small fuzzy screen in a huge console.

INT. BELA'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

ON THE TV, one of Bela's old '30s horror films plays. Bela's evil character is hypnotizing somebody: His eyes stare the famous stare, then his hand does the famous hypnotic gesture.

ON ED AND BELA

They are entranced. The men drink beers in silence. Bela's TWO DOGS lie at his feet.

ON THE TV

The old movie suddenly stops, and VAMPIRA appears on the TV screen. Vampira, 25, is the sexy "Creature Feature" hostess, a pale ghoul slipped into a tight black dress.

She leers in front of a corny fog-shrouded set. There is a pumpkin, a broomstick, and a sign reading "Happy Halloween."

VAMPIRA (on TV)

Ooo! Those eyes! He gives me the willies! The only thing scarier than him is this guy I dated last week: Charlie from Pittsburgh. Boy, talk about the living dead...

ON THE MEN

Ed is disgruntled.

ED

Ugh! I hate the way she interrupts the pictures. She doesn't show 'em the proper respect.

BELA

(glued to the TV)

I think she's a honey. Look at those jugs.

Ed LAUGHS. Bela waves his arm and starts doing his hypnotic hand gesture at the TV.

BELA

Vampira! You will come under my spell! You will be my slave of love.

ED

(fascinated by Bela's hand)

Hey Bela, how do you do that?

BELA

You must be double-jointed, and you must be Hungarian.

(back at the TV)

Vampira, look at me! Stare into my eyes.

Ed joins Bela in this activity. The two of them wave their arms spookily at the TV.

Bela becomes fatigued.

BELA

I am getting tired. I need to take my medicine.

ED

Do you want me to get it for you?

BELA

No thank you, Eddie. I'll be

alright.

Bela smiles. He gets up, shuffles across the room, and steps behind a curtain. Ed is puzzled. Bela's thin arm appears and draws the curtain tight. We hear mysterious CLANGING, drawers opening and closing, and then silence.

Ed sits, waiting.

Behind the curtain, something DROPS. We hear a muffled "Shit!"

Ed is getting worried. But then the curtain whips open, and Bela bounds out, grinning. He's a bundle of energy.

BELA

I feel better now.

AT THE DOOR

The doorbell RINGS. Kids SHOUT "Trick or treat!" Bela jumps up gleefully.

BELA

Children! I love children.

Bela puts on his famous cape, then gets a pair of fangs and sticks them in his mouth.

OUTSIDE

Little kids in Lone Ranger and Howdy Doody costumes giggle expectantly.

Suddenly the door flies open, and standing there is Count Dracula! The real Count Dracula. YEOWWWW!!! The kids SCREAM and run.

Bela chuckles. Every kid is gone... except one TOUGH BOY.

BELA

Aren't you scared, little boy? I'm going to drink your blood!

TOUGH BOY

Ehh, you're not a real vampire. You can't turn into a bat, and those teeth don't frighten me.

Suddenly Ed lurches out, menacingly.

ED

Well how about these teeth?!!

Ed RIPS HIS TEETH out of his head and thrusts them at the kid. The boy SCREAMS in terror and races away.

Bela is wowed.

BELA

Hey, how'd you do that?

Ed smiles impishly, then sticks the teeth back in his mouth.

ED

Dentures. I lost my pearlies in the war.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - LATER THAT NIGHT

Ed and Bela run toward us, Bela's cape flapping in the wind. Ed takes a swig from Bela's flask. They're a bit tipsy.

ED

Are you sure this is okay?

BELA

Don't worry. I do it every Halloween.

EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT

The moonlight shines down on a rickety old cemetery. The wind blows hauntingly, and tombstones gleam in the blackness.

Ed and Bela reach the locked gates. They glance at each other, then start to climb over. Ed helps Bela. They jump down, and Ed peers nervously.

ED

Now what?

Bela looks like a child on Christmas morning. He takes another swig, then starts running giddily.

He disappears into the cemetery.

BELA

I am DRACULA!

Bela darts happily through the graves.

His cape flies behind him.

BELA

I am the BAT!!

Ed's eyes light up. He starts chasing after Bela.

Bela's heart is racing. He zig-zags past ancient crypts. Gargoyles peer down. The wind howls through the skeletal trees, silhouetted against the cloudy sky.

Ed runs through the shadows, trying to catch up.

Bela flaps his cape up and down. We almost think he's going to fly.

Ed races up, then quietly stops. He eagerly watches Bela, practically expecting him to turn into a bat. It's a magical, crazed moment.

BELA

I am DRACULA! I will LIVE FOREVER!!!

Bela laughs, then lies down on the grass.

WIDE

Ed slowly walks over and lies next to Bela. They're happy, eyes alert, on top of the world.

Ed peers in wonder at his new friend.

CUT TO:

INT. SCREEN CLASSICS OFFICE - DAY

Ed sits across from Georgie. Ed's very excited.

GEORGIE

So what's the big news you couldn't tell me over the phone... again?

Ed gulps excitedly. He has a spiel all planned out.

ED

Mr. Weiss, I was thinkin' about what you said, about how all your movies have to make a profit. And I realized, what's the one thing, that if you put in a movie, it'll be successful??

GEORGIE

(he thinks)

Tits.

ED

No. Better than tits -- a star!

Georgie shakes his head.

GEORGIE

Eddie, you must have me confused with David Selznick. I don't make major motion pictures. I make crap.

ED

Yeah, but if you took that crap and put a star in it, you'd have something!

GEORGIE

Yeah. Crap with a star.

ED

(impassioned)

No! It would be something better! Something impressive. The biggest moneymaker you've ever had!

GEORGIE

Fine, maybe you're right. But it doesn't friggin' matter. I can't afford a star, so I don't even know what we're talking about.

Ed grins.

ED

What if I told you you could have a star for \$1000??

GEORGIE

(skeptical)

Who?

Ed opens his valise and whips out an 8x10 GLOSSY OF BELA.

GEORGIE

Lugosi?

ED

Yeah! Lugosi!

GEORGIE

Isn't he dead?

ED

(annoyed)

No, he's not dead! He lives in Baldwin Hills. I met him recently, and he wants to be in our picture.

GEORGIE

OUR picture?

ED

(sheepishly)

Uh, yeah. Our picture.

Georgie mulls this over. He's interested.

GEORGIE

Why would Lugosi want to be in a sex-change flick?

ED

Because he's my friend.

Georgie stares carefully at Ed, then finally smiles.

GEORGIE

Alright, fine! You can direct it. I want a script in three days, and we start shooting a week from Monday.

ANGLE - ED

He leaps up euphorically. He eagerly pumps Georgie's hand.

ED

Thank you! Bless you, Mr. Weiss!
I promise I won't let you down!

CUT TO:

INT. ED'S APARTMENT - DAY

CU on a ROYAL TYPEWRITER. Ed's hands whirl across the portable typewriter, frantically feeding in pages as fast as he can type. We PULL OUT.

Ed sits on the bed, typing. He's a blur of activity, juggling a cigarette, coffee, and a telephone, while he writes.

ED (on phone)

But Bunny, you're perfect for this job! You're so good at organizing.

His adrenalin is pumping. Ed pours some booze into his coffee.

ED

You know these people. I need all the transsexuals and transvestites you can get.
(he sucks on his cigarette)

No, I don't care if they're not actors. I want realism. I want this film to tell the truth! I've waited my whole life for this shot, and I'm not gonna blow it.

There's a KNOCK at the door. Ed carries the phone on a long cord and answers it. Bela hurries in, smiling broadly.

BELA

Eddie, you got a new movie for me?!

ED

Yeah, it's gonna be a great picture! You'll love your character!

(back into the phone)

Bunny, Bela's here. Look, hit the bars, work some parties, and get me transvestites! I need transvestites!

Ed hangs up and resumes typing. Bela is puzzled.

BELA

Eddie, what kind of movie is this?

ED

Well, It's about how people have two personalities. The side they show to the world, and then the secret person they hide inside.

BELA

(delighted)

Oh, like Jekyll and Hyde! Ah, I've always wanted to play Jekyll and Hyde! I'm looking forward to this production.

Ed stops typing. He pours Bela a drink.

ED

Ehh, your part's a little different. You're like the God that looks down on all the characters, and oversees everything.

BELA

I don't understand.

ED

Well... you control everyone's fate. You're like the puppetmaster.

BELA

(getting it)

Ah, so I pull the strings!

ED

Yeah. You pull the strings --
(he suddenly gets a look)
"Pull the strings"... hey, that's pretty good!

Ed quickly starts typing again.

CUT TO:

INT. ED'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ed and Dolores sit at a card table, finishing up dinner. The dogs eat scraps below them.

ED

Wipe off your hands. I've got a little surprise for you...

(he smiles nervously)

I finished my script.

Ed anxiously pulls out a pile of pages. Dolores looks in awe at the cover: "'GLEN OR GLENDA' By Edward D. Wood, Jr."

DOLORES

Ed, I'm so proud! I'll read it as soon as I get home.

ED

(apprehensive)

Well, I'd really like to know what you think. Why don't you go in the bedroom and take a look at it? I'll wait...

There's an uneasy moment between them. She senses something funny. Dolores takes the script and goes into the bedroom. The door closes. Ed starts pacing...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Dolores reads the script. She finishes the last page, then looks up. She is very shaken.

Dolores stands. She grabs the door and opens it.

THROUGH THE DOORWAY

Ed stands somberly in drag. He's in a pantsuit, heels, and pink angora sweater.

Dolores is totally rattled. She struggles for a response.

DOLORES

So that's where my sweater's been.

Ed silently nods.

DOLORES

How long have you been doing this?

ED

Since I was a kid. My mom wanted a girl, so she used to dress me in girlie clothing. It just kinda became a habit.

DOLORES

Jesus Christ! And you never told me?

ED

This is my way of telling you --

DOLORES

(furious)

What, by putting it in a fuckin'

script, for everyone to see?! What kind of sick mind would operate like that?

Ed is terribly hurt. Dolores shakes tht script.

DOLORES
And what about this so-called "Barbara" character? It's obviously ME! I'm so embarrassed! This is our life!

ED
(quiet)
Of course it is. And that's why you should play the part.

DOLORES
Oh! You got nerve, buddy.

He calmly points at the script.

ED
It's a damn good role.

DOLORES
That's not the issue!!
(she suddenly stops)
Ugh! How can you act so casual, when you're dressed like that?!

ED
It takes me comfortable.

DOLORES
Oh, just like in the script!

Ed smiles serenely.

ED
Exactly.
(he takes her hand)
So what do ya say? Do you wanna break up... or do you wanna do the movie with me?

Dolores sighs.

CUT TO:

INT. SCREEN CLASSICS - DAY

The hallway is filled with eager TRANSVESTITES. It's a very festive atmosphere, and Bunny tries to create some order.

Inside the busy office, Paul types, and Conrad cranks a mimeograph machine.

CONRAD
It's good to have a job. Now I can get my phone reconnected.

In a corner, Georgie angrily waves the script at Ed.

GEORGIE
I thought this was gonna be a sex-change film!

ED
(defensive)
There's still a sex-change --

GEORGIE
Yeah! Five pages right before it ends! The rest of the show is about some schmuck who likes angora sweaters.

ED
I don't think he's a schmuck.

GEORGIE
And what's with this new title?! My poster says "I CHANGED MY SEX"!

ED
So change the poster. Trust me, you'll be better off. This is a story that's gonna grab people.
(he goes into a pitch)
It's about this guy. He's crazy about this girl but he likes to wear dresses. Should he tell her? Should he not tell her? He's torn. George, this is DRAMA.

Georgie throws up his hands

GEORGIE
Fine, shoot whatever baloney you want! I give up. Just make sure it's seven reels long.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - EARLY MORNING

We are on location for Ed's first film! A SMALL CREW of a dozen unpacks the camera and reflectors from their cars. Ed's voice rises above the hubbub.

ED (O.S.)
Excuse me, could I have everyone's attention?! Could you gather around? I've got something to say.

The crew members put down their things and gather in a circle. In the middle, we reveal Ed, in complete drag. Dress, nylons, pumps, lovely blonde wig... he's quite a sight. Like an eager Scoutmaster, he addresses his troops.

ED
Everybody, we're about to embark on quite a journey. Four days of hard work... but when it's over, we'll have a picture that'll entertain, enlighten, and maybe even move millions of people.

A COUPLE GRIPS glance at each other.

ED
Now the only way we're gonna achieve all this is if we stay on schedule.

Day one -- TODAY -- we'll start easy.
We have eighteen silent scenes that
can be shot quickly: Cars parking,
Patrick's suicide, me strolling as
a man, me strolling as a woman, etc.

(beat)

After lunch, we'll bring in the
Inspector and the Doctor. The Doctor
is very important to the plot, so we
might have to spend time on retakes.
But it's worth it. Scene totals for
the first day is thirty-four.

(he catches a breath)

Day Two, we'll be a little busier --

Veteran CAMERAMAN BILL, an old guy with thick glasses, speaks.

CAMERAMAN BILL

Excuse me Eddie, I don't mean to
interrupt... but I'm gettin' a little
worried about those clouds.

He points up. Everybody looks at the sky. The clouds are
gray.

Ed nods in agreement.

ED

Good thinkin'. We'll talk about Days
Three and Four later. Now let's get
that first shot off! It's Scene 17,
Glenda looking in the window.

THE CREW

disperses. Ed quickly runs in his heels over to the burly
make-up man, HARRY.

ED

Okay, do I need any touch-up?

MAKE-UP MAN HARRY

I'm telling ya, eyelashes are the way
to go.

ED

(irritated)

Harry, we've discussed this a million
times. I don't want to look like a
girl. I want to look like myself.

MAKE-UP MAN MARRY

(disgruntled)

Fine. Then you look beautiful.

Harry humorlessly powders Ed's nose. Ed turns away and
suddenly SHOUTS into a giant megaphone.

ED

PLACES, EVERYONE! ROLL CAMERA!

CAMERAMAN BILL

(nonchalant)

Rolling.

WIDE

Ed chucks the megaphone and runs crazily past the camera and behind a building.

ED'S VOICE

And -- ACTION!

A pause, and then Ed, in character as Glenda, calm and dignified, steps out and walks down the sidewalk.

Ed stops at a store window. He's totally in shadow.

A grip grimaces. He TURNS ON a light

Ed lights up. He looks in the window, admires a dress on display, then silently walks out of frame.

A beat. Ed SCREAMS.

ED

And, CUT! PRINT IT! LET'S MOVE ON!

CAMERAMAN BILL

Don't you want a second take, for protection?

ED

(exhilarated)

What's to protect? It was perfect!

Suddenly a police car turns the corner.

CREW MEMBER

Cops!

ED

We don't have a permit. RUN!

Everyone grabs equipment and takes off.

WIPE TO:

INT. LARCHMONT STUDIOS - DAY

The company is now shooting inside a dinky soundstage. There are dirty mattresses tacked on the walls. They prep Bela's set: A fishnet-draped armchair in front of a flat. Ed is perched high in his director's chair, back in men's clothes.

ED

The set doesn't look right! It looks too... empty. Clutter it up. Put a skeleton in the corner. And what's that thing over there?

PAUL MARCO

I don't know.

ED

Well it looks good. Let's use it!

Georgie hurriedly strides over. He holds the script.

GEORGIE

Ed! What's with these revised pages?! A scene in a smelting factory? A buffalo stampede??
Three-hundred soldiers storming Anzio

Beach??! What's going on here? I can't afford to film this nonsense!

ED

Don't worry. We're not gonna film any of it.

GEORGIE

Then how's it gonna get in the picture?!

ED

I know a guy in Universal's stock house -- he's giving me the footage for free. This movie's gonna look like a million bucks.

Georgie nods. Oh, okay.

O.S. VOICE

Mr. Lugosi has arrived!

Ed jumps excitedly.

ED

Oh my God!

(he YELLS)

Mr. Lugosi is here! Now everyone, when he walks on the stage

(nobody is listening; so Ed uses his MEGAPHONE)

Now everyone, when he walks on the stage, treat him normal. I know Bela Lugosi is a world-famous star, and you're all a little excited, but we're professionals. So if you treat him with respect, everything will be alright.

AT THE STAGE DOOR

The door swings open, and Bela strides in, looking dapper. He glances at the teensy stage, and his face falls imperceptibly.

Ed runs up, bounding with enthusiasm.

ED

Bela! It's so great to see you!

(he glances at his watch)

And eight o'clock on the dot. Right on time!

BELA

I am always on time.

ED

Of course! Well, we got a big day planned for you... First, we're gonna start off a little easy, with you in that armchair over there. Then, once you're up to speed and cooking, we'll reset and bring out the laboratory equipment --

BELA

(he leans in and WHISPERS)

Uh, Eddie, do you have my money?

ED

Huh?! Oh yeah, of course.

Ed and Bela step over to a corner.

ACROSS THE ROOM

From a distance, Ed pulls a wad of money from his pocket and peels off a few bills for Bela. The crew watches, fascinated.

WIPE TO:

LATER

Bela is seated in the ratty armchair on the set. Harry does his make-up. Harry glances at Bela's arm, and it is full of TRACK MARKS. Harry grimaces, but doesn't say anything.

Conrad eagerly scurries up.

CONRAD

Mr. Lugosi, I know you're very busy,
but could I have your autograph?

BELA

(cordial)

Of course.

Conrad hands him a scrap of paper. Bela signs it.

CONRAD

You know which movie of yours I love,
Mr. Lugosi? "The Invisible Ray."
You were great as Karloff's sidekick.

Bela's face suddenly hardens. He snaps.

BELA

"Sidekick"?? "KARLOFF"??!

Bela insanely RIPS up the autograph.

BELA

Fuck you!! Karloff doesn't deserve
to smell my shit! That limey
cocksucker can rot in hell, for all
I care!!!

WIDE

Ed panickedly runs up.

ED

What happened?! Jesus, Connie, what
did you do?

CONRAD

(upset, close to crying)

Nothin'! I told him he was great.

BELA

How dare that asshole bring up
Karloff?! You think it takes talent
to play Frankenstein?! NO! It's
just make-up and grunting! GRRR!
GRRR! GRRR!

Ed is frozen in fear. He glances across the stage.

Georgie is flabbergasted. He points urgently at his watch.

Ed nods. He motions to Conrad: Get out of here. Conrad runs away. Ed leans in to Bela.

ED
You're right, Bela. Now Dracula,
that's a part that takes acting.

BELA
Of course! Dracula requires
presence. It's all in the voice, and
the eyes, and the hand --

Bela waves his outstretched arm. Ed tries to calm him.

ED
Look, you seem a little agitated.
Do you maybe wanna take a little
break, go for a nice walk... and then
we'll come back and shoot the scene?

BELA
BULLSHIT! I am ready now! Roll the
camera!!

The crew is baffled. Ed shrugs at them.

ED
Um, okay... roll camera

CAMERAMAN BILL
(unsure)
Rolling.

ED
Sound!

SOUNDMAN
Speed.

CAMERA ASSISTANT
Mark. Scene Thirty-One.

The Assistant CLAPS the slate in front of Bela, then runs.

ED
And... action?

It's dead quiet. Nobody knows what's about to happen.

WE MOVE IN TO BELA. And... he suddenly assumes character. Like the consummate pro he is. Bela gets a wicked, sinister leer, then starts intoning threateningly:

BELA (as the SPIRIT)
"Beware. Beware! Beware, of the big
green dragon that sits on your
doorstep. He eats little boys!
Puppy dog tails! Big fat snails!
Beware. Take care. Beware!"

CLOSEUP - ED

He is blown away. He quietly mumbles in amazement.

ED

Brilliant.

WIPE TO:

INT. STAGE - NEXT DAY

Dolores studies her script, as the crew lights a flimsy kitchen set. Ed strolls past, nonchalantly removing a ladies' wig and earrings. She stares in disbelief.

DOLORES

How can you just walk around like that, in front of all these people?

ED

Hon', nobody's bothered but you.
(he gestures)
Look around -- they couldn't care less.

DOLORES

Ed, this isn't the real world!
You've surrounded yourself with WEIRDOS!

ED

Say it a little louder. I don't think Bela heard you in his trailer.

Dolores quiets down. She feels bad.

ED

Dolores. I need your help...

WIPE TO:

FILMING IN PROGRESS - LATER

A scene is being shot, on camera. Ed (as Glen) and Dolores (as Barbara) stare into each other's eyes. He's dressed normal, and she wears a fuzzy angora sweater.

ED (as GLEN)

"My mind's in a muddle. I thought I could stop wearing these things. I tried, honestly I tried..."

DOLORES (as BARBARA)

(tentative)

"Glen, I don't fully understand this. But maybe together -- we can work it out."

She stands up, dramatically takes off her angora sweater, and gives it to Ed.

He holds it meaningfully, then smiles proudly.

ED

Music swells... and CUT and PRINT IT!

Ed and Dolores hug.

CUT TO:

INT. EDITING ROOM - DAY

On a MOVIOLA, we see the black-and-white image of Dolores taking off her angora and giving it to Ed.

WE PULL OUT. Ed and Georgie are hunched over, watching the movie. Ed smiles proudly.

ED

And we fade out. "The End."
(the film runs out)
What do you think?

Georgie peers at his watch. He shakes his head.

GEORGIE

I think it's fifty-seven minutes long.

ED

Yeah? Whatever. So did you like it?

GEORGIE

(like a lecturing teacher)
Ed, what was the one thing I asked you to do? Make it seven reels long. I've got contracts with my exhibitors. If it ain't over an hour, they won't play it.

ED

Gee, I used every frame of film we shot. Maybe they won't notice.

GEORGIE

They'll notice.
(beat)
Look, why don't you let me take over from here? I can do a few tricks: Pad it out with more stock footage, add establishing shots...

ED

Um, I guess --

GEORGIE

Good. And one more thing. I think your "Written, Directed, and Starring Ed Wood" credit is a bad idea.

ED

Why?! I did all those things! Hell, I even built the props.

GEORGIE

And you did a bang-up job, too. But you don't want other producers to know that's you in drag. Trust me. It's a career killer.

Ed is quite upset.

ED

But I'm proud. I wrote, directed, and starred in it just like Orson Welles in "Citizen Kane"!

GEORGIE
Yeah?? Well Orson Welles didn't
wear angora sweaters, did he??!

Ed is beaten.

CUT TO:

INT. SCREENING ROOM - NIGHT

It's the cast and crew screening! The eager two-dozen people are packed into a tiny screening room.

The lights dim, and the movie starts. A LIBRARY MUSIC fanfare, and then: "Bela Lugosi in GLEN OR GLENDA"

Everyone APPLAUDS excitedly. Bela smiles.

Credits continue: "Featuring Daniel Davis and Dolores Fuller"

The audience is audibly baffled. Bunny BLURTS out.

BUNNY
Daniel Who??!

Dolores leans in to Ed.

DOLORES
Ed, who is Daniel Davis?

ED
(sour)
Some weirdo who likes to wear
dresses.

DISSOLVE TO:

LATER IN THE MOVIE

ON-SCREEN, Dolores looks tenderly at Ed.

DOLORES (on screen)
"Glen. Is it another woman?"

Ed as Glen nervously ponders his response.

But suddenly -- MUSIC THUNDERS in. The movie cuts to buffalo stampeding. Bela's angry face is superimposed over this.

BELA (on screen)
"Pull the string! Pull the string!"

IN THE AUDIENCE

People are impressed by this technique. Bela nods in approval.

ON-SCREEN

Out of nowhere, CHEAP JAZZ MUSIC starts, and the movie abruptly cuts to SLEAZY STAG PARTY-STYLE FOOTAGE! A bare-chested man whips a bound woman! A woman dominates another tied to a large stick! A brunette violently rips off her dress and does a hoochie-coochie dance!

IN THE AUDIENCE

The crowd is stunned.

CAMERAMAN BILL

I didn't shoot that!

Ed looks back at Georgie, who's wearing a big satisfied grin.

ED

Georgie, what's with the stag
footage?? You said you were cutting
in establishing shots!

GEORGIE

I did. I established some tits and
ass.

Ed rolls his eyes. He turns back to the movie.

INT. PARTY - LATER THAT NIGHT

Everybody is CELEBRATING, with a raucous party. People are
boozing it up. BIG BAND MUSIC plays. Ed dances with Dolores.
Paul smokes a joint. Conrad falls over a table and breaks a
lamp. Bela dances happily with a cute young REDHEAD.

BELA

Wasn't I something..? Did you see
how I command the screen?!

Ed's giddy buddies stumble over with foaming glasses of beer.

BUNNY

Ed, it was superb.

CONRAD

A great show! A little strange...
but great -- especially my scenes.

ED

Just like I always promised. Now
you're among the immortals. You're
movie stars.

PAUL MARCO

(he raises his glass)

Here's to Ed. For making us into
something.

It's a warm moment. They all CLINK their glasses.

Dolores kisses Ed.

CUT TO:

EXT. BUNGALOW HOUSE - DAY

We're outside a cute little Spanish bungalow house. Ed and
Dolores are moving in. They lug furniture from a rented truck.

ED

From today on, our lives are
different! We'll be swimming laps
in the same pool Jean Harlow did.

DOLORES

I don't know. It's so much money...

ED

Who cares?! We're on a ROLL! These are the moments in life you're supposed to grab.

DOLORES

But Ed, we're not even married. And you don't have a job.

ED

But you do! And anyway, I've got tons of new scripts. And now that I have a track record, studios are bound to hire me!

She just stares. Ed shrugs, semi-reassuringly.

ED

Look on the bright side. If we miss the rent, what's the worst they can do?

DOLORES

Toss us out on our ass.

ED

Exactly.

INT. BUNGALOW - DAY

The house is moved in. Ed's unkempt dogs run about. Pumped-up Ed sits on the bed typing fiendishly fast while wearing an angora sweater. A cigarette dangles from his mouth, and a bottle of booze lays in his lap. Bela sits quietly nearby.

ED

How 'bout a western? People love westerns.

BELA

But, I don't like horses. Do I have to get on one?

ED

Eh, forget it. What else is big?
(his face lights up)
Teenagers! Jailbait pics! Yeah...
You got the juvenile delinquent, his girlfriend from the wrong side of the tracks --

BELA

Who do I play?

ED

Uh, a cop. NO! You play the father. He's angry! He doesn't like seeing his son -- no -- he doesn't like seeing his daughter behave this way!

BELA

(cautious, not to offend)
Well... can't I play the romantic part? I'm tired of always being the bad guy. You know, back in Hungary, I played Romeo! I would like to be the lover again -- me, in a boat,

with the girl...

Ed considers this.

ED

Sure. Romance, that's great! To engineer your comeback, we're gonna need a whole slate of pictures. Once "Glen Or Glenda" takes off, we'll slam you into one, then another, then another!

BELA

(he smiles)

That's good. I could use the money.

ED

But we need to start off with a bang! Something we know the audience will want to see. Mmm. What was your biggest hit?

BELA

(he thinks)

Hmm... my biggest hit? That would probably be "Dracula."

ED

Of course!

Ed crabs a pen and excitedly scrawls out the word "DRACULA."
Bela frowns.

BELA

Those bastards at Universal. I made so much money for them, and now I can't get the time of day.

ED

So let's make another "Dracula."
Let's make "The Return of Dracula"!

BELA

We can't. Those sons-a-bitches control the rights.

ED

They do? Shoot. There must be a way to get around that...

Ed's mind is working. He holds out the paper and stares at it. Suddenly, he grins. He grabs the pen and makes a period after the "DR." It now says "DR.ACULA"

ED

Ha-ha! Dr. Acula!

BELA

Dracula?

ED

No! Doctor Acula! You can still wear the cape, have the fangs... but you're a doctor! Not a count.

BELA

Ah! This is very exciting.

ED
(inspired)
I gotta type this up, while it's
still fresh!

Ed rips the paper from his typewriter, puts in a blank page,
and starts typing.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOVIE STUDIO GATE - DAY

We're outside the imposing gates of MGM. The lion logo is
overhead. Ed drives up in his dirty Nash Rambler convertible.
He wears his nicest suit. Ed peers nervously at the GUARD.

ED
Excuse me, I'm here to see Mr.
Feldman.

The Guard stares suspiciously at Ed. His filthy car is leaking
oil.

GUARD
What's your name?

ED
Edward D. Wood, Junior.

The man frowns. He looks through his files -- then finds a
parking slip with Ed's name. He is surprised.

GUARD
Oh. Eh, he's in the Executive
Building. You can park in the
reserved section.

Ed smiles.

INT. EXECUTIVE WAITING ROOM - DAY

The room is very posh, with fancy paneling and marble floors.
Ed sits nervously under posters for "GRAND HOTEL" and "QUO
VADIS." Film cans labled "Glen Or Glenda" rest in his lap.

SECRETARY
Sir, Mr. Feldman will see you now.

She hits an electric button. A large oak door swings open.

INT. OFFICE

Behind a giant desk is MR. FELDMAN, a glib, thin over-
caffeinated man. He jumps up, smiling.

MR. FELDMAN
Mr. Ward, it's a delight to meet you.

ED
(shaking his hand)
It's Wood. Ed Wood.

MR. FELDMAN
Wood? Ward? Wood.
(puzzled, he glances at his
appointment book)

Hey, what do you know. It is Wood.
Dang secretaries, you can never get
a good one. Right?

Ed shrugs. Feldman grins.

MR. FELDMAN

So what are you bringing me? Looks
like you got some film cans.

ED

Well, Mr. Feldman, some people have
resumes to show. I've got my own
movie.

MR. FELDMAN

Really?! Well good for you.

ED

I just made this picture, over at
Screen Classics. It opens next week.

MR. FELDMAN

Screen Classics? Hmm, don't know
them.

ED

Nobody in town has seen it, so I'm
givin' you first crack at my talents.

MR. FELDMAN

I can't wait to take a look.
(he claps his hands)
So what's up next?

Ed leans in.

ED

Well, Mr. Feldman, I don't believe
in thinking small. So I've got a
whole slate of pictures for you: "The
Vampire's Tomb," "The Ghoul Goes
West"... and "Doctor Acula"!

MR. FELDMAN

Doctor Acula? I don't get it.

ED

Dr. Acula!

Ed writes it out, "DR. ACULA," then waves it in Feldman's face.
Feldman nods.

MR. FELDMAN

Oh, "Dr. Acula." I get it.
(beat)
I don't like it.

ED

But Bela Lugosi's in it!

MR. FELDMAN

Lugosi's washed-up. What else you
got?

Ed grimaces. Lugosi was 90% of his pitch. He vamps.

ED

Well... I've got another project I wasn't gonna tell you about. Lugosi's in it, but he's got a smaller part. The lead is an ingenue, a sterling young actress named Dolores Fuller. The title is "Bride Of The Atom."

MR. FELDMAN

Ah! Atomic Age stuff, huh? I like it.

(he smiles)

I'll tell you what, Mr. Ward. Why don't you leave those film cans, and my associates and I will take a look at your little opus. Maybe we can do business together.

Ed is elated.

INT. STUDIO SCREENING ROOM - DAY

Feldman and his fellow SMARMY EXECUTIVES sit in a plush screening room. They are viewing "Glen Or Glenda."

ON-SCREEN, Ed is in drag. A SOLEMN NARRATOR within the movie speaks:

SOLEMN NARRATOR (V.O.)

"Give this man satin undies, a dress, and a sweater... and he's the happiest man in the world. He can work better, think better, even play better -- and be more of a credit to his community and his government."

ANGLE ON THE EXECUTIVES

They are stupefied. Yikes!

EXECUTIVE #1

What the hell is this?!

EXECUTIVE #2

Is this an actual movie?!

EXECUTIVE #1

It can't be.

EXECUTIVE #2

It's fuckin' ridiculous!

Feldman squints at the screen.

FELDMAN

Wait a minute. That guy in the dress -- he's the one I met with today! This must be a big PUT-ON!

(he CHUCKLES)

It's probably another one of Billy Wellman's practical jokes!

Everybody suddenly starts HOWLING with laughter.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEWSSTAND - DAY

Ed zooms up and chipperly jumps from his car. He buys a "Los Angeles Herald-Express," eagerly opens it to the entertainment pages... and then gets a confused look. Ed quickly starts rifling through the pages -- something is wrong.

EXT. PHONE BOOTH - DAY

Ed angrily shouts into the phone.

ED

Georgie, what happened?! I thought "Glen Or Glenda" was opening next week! Where's the ads?

An OLD-FASHIONED SPLIT SCREEN of Georgie on the phone appears.

GEORGIE

(pissed-off)

"Where's the ads"?! The ads are in Alabama, Indiana, and Missouri! You schmuck, it ain't gonna play L.A.!

ED

Why not??

GEORGIE

Because I can't sell it to save my life! You made a goddamn feathered fish. Is it an art film, a horror show, a hygiene flick? Nobody knows! I'm beggin' people to book it.

ED

(insulted)

Maybe it needs special handling.

GEORGIE

Screw you, Wood! I even sunk more money into different titles: "Transvestite" "He Or She?" "I Led Two Lives"... It DOESN'T MATTER! Nobody wants to see the piece of shit.

ED

You can't talk that way about my movie.

GEORGIE

"Your movie"?! I wish it was your movie! I wish I hadn't blown every dime I ever made into this stinkbomb. If I ever see you again, I'll kill you!!!

Georgie SLAMS down the phone. His split screen WIPES off, leaving Ed standing alone.

Ed stares at the phone, then quietly hangs it up.

CUT TO:

INT. OLYMPIC AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

WHAM! A WRESTLER throws another WRESTLER at the mat. The

crowd CHEERS raucously. We're at the Saturday Night Wrestling Matches!

In the stands are Ed, Dolores, Bunny, and Bunny's new YOUNG MALE "FRIEND." Seated around them are hollering truckers and ex-Marines. Bunny giggles and nudges gloomy Ed.

BUNNY

So guess where I'm going next weekend?

ED

I don't know. Where?

BUNNY

Mexico! And guess what I'm going to do there?!

ED

(not enjoying this game)

I dunno. Lie on the beach?

BUNNY

WRONG! I'm getting my first series of hormone shots! And once those babies kick in, they're gonna remove my organs, and MAKE ME A WOMAN!

Ed is astonished.

ED

Jesus! Are you serious?

BUNNY

Yes! I've dreamed of it for years, but your movie made me realize I've got to take action. GOODBYE, PENIS!

The truckers nearby stare. Dolores covers her face.

DOLORES

Ssh! Will you keep it down?

The crowd suddenly ROARS and jumps up. A favorite wrestler has entered the ring, massive TOR JOHNSON, 50. Tor is an incredible sight: A bald, lumbering behemoth.

RING ANNOUNCER (amplified)

Now entering the ring, in the gold trunks, 350 bone-crunching pounds of pure strength, the "Swedish Angel"... Tor Johnson!!!

The crowd goes apeshit. The stands are going to collapse from the SHOUTING.

Ed's eyes are the size of saucers.

ED

My God, look at that guy. He's a mountain!

The bell RINGS. Tor quickly grabs his OPPONENT, a man in a blue mask, and throws him at the ground. Then Tor jumps onto his stomach, easily picks him up, and heaves him at the ropes.

People CHEER. Ed is flabbergasted.

ED

I've never seen anything like him!

BUNNY

And once I'm a woman, Jean-Claude and
I are getting married --

ED

(eyes glued to the ring)

Ssh! He's so big! He's a monster!
Can you imagine what that guy would
be like in a movie?

ON TOR

He screams maniacally in Swedish. Tor lifts the Opponent over his head and tosses him into the stands. Three rows of chairs get knocked over.

CUT TO:

EXT. WRESTLER'S BAR - NIGHT

A tiny miniature European car pulls up. Tor Johnson is squeezed inside -- ludicrously oversized for this vehicle. Tor carefully wedges himself out and enters the bar.

INT. WRESTLER'S BAR - SAME TIME

This rowdy bar is packed with burly WRESTLERS. Tor walks in, and men cheerily yell out: "Hey, Tor!" "Hi, Tor!" Tor grins. In person, he actually seems a jolly, outgoing fellow.

Ed waves from the corner

ED

Mr. Johnson, over here!

Tor smiles and lumbers over

ED

Glad you could fit me in your
schedule.

TOR

(in a hoarse SWEDISH ACCENT)

Da pleasure be mine.

They shake hands. Ed's hands look like a baby's in Tor's giant mitts.

Tor tries to sit in the booth. But he can't fit.

TOR

Could we moovf to table?

ED

Oh, of course!

Ed jumps up. They move to a large table. Now Tor is happy. He starts shoveling beer nuts into his mouth.

ED

So, Mr. Johnson --

TOR

Tor!

ED

Tor. Have you ever thought about becoming an actor?

TOR

(he CHUCKLES)

Mm, not good-lookink enough.

ED

I think you're quite handsome.

TOR

No. With hair, yah. But I must shave head for wrestlink. It scare da crowds. Dey like that.

Ed smiles.

ED

Well, I think you'd be a sensation in pictures.

TOR

But what bout accent? Some people tink I haf too much accent.

ED

Nah, that doesn't matter! It's a visual medium.

A WAITRESS saunters over.

WAITRESS

Tor, what can I get ya?

TOR

I'll haf eight beers.

WAITRESS

(nonchalant, to Ed)

And you?

ED

Uhh, I'll have just one.

She walks off. Tor shakes the now-empty nut bowl.

TOR

And more nuts!

Ed tries to grab Tor's attention.

ED

So anyway, I've got this new script, "Bride Of The Atom," and there's a part you're ideal for: "Lobo." He's tough. A brute. But he has a heart -- and at the end he saves the girl.

TOR

(he laughs merrily)

I like. When do movie shoot?

ED

Hopefully, very soon. I'm just

awaiting the final okay from Mr.
Feldman at MGM.

CUT TO:

INT. ED'S BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

Ed and Dolores are asleep. Suddenly the phone RINGS. Ed fumbles for it and groggily answers.

ED
Wood Productions...

We hear Bela's weak VOICE.

BELA (on phone)
Eddie... help me...

ED
Bela?

BELA (on phone)
Eddie... please come over --

CLICK. The phone hangs up. Ed is very alarmed.

EXT. BELA'S HOUSE - LATE NIGHT

The wind is blowing. Ed's Nash roars up, and he jumps out, a coat over his pajamas. He runs up and POUNDS on Bela's door.

ED
Bela?!

Ed tries the door. It's unlocked.

INT. BELA'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

Ed steps into the dark room, and is stunned by what he sees: Bela is slumped on the floor, pasty white, eyes glazed. A rubber tube is tied on his arm, and a HYPODERMIC NEEDLE lies next to him.

The dogs crouch behind him, whimpering, despondent, Bela looks up through half-opened eyes.

BELA
Eddie... my friend.

Aghast, Ed runs over.

ED
Bela, what happened?!

BELA
I didn't feel well...

ED
Let me take you to the hospital.

BELA
No hospital. Just take me to the couch...

Ed nods. He picks up the old man and carries him across the room to the couch. The large portrait of Bela, young and robust, peers down.

ED
Should I call a doctor?

BELA
Nah. This happens all the time...

Ed puts a pillow under Bela's head.

ED
Is there anything I can get you?
Water? A blanket?

BELA
Goulash.

ED
(distressed)
I don't know how to make goulash.

Ed sits next to him. An awkward pause.

ED
What's in the needle?

BELA
Morphine, with a demerol chaser.
(he starts crying)
Eddie, I'm so broke. I don't know
what I'm gonna do...

ED
Don't worry. I'll do something.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOVIE STUDIO GATE - MORNING

Ed stands outside MGM, talking into a phone at the guard gate.

ED (on phone)
Mr. Feldman! I haven't been able to
get through, so I just showed up.
Yeah, out front! So, are we gonna
be working together?
(his face slowly falls)
Really? Worst film you ever saw...?
(beat)
Well, my next one will be better.
(beat)
Hello?

INT. ED'S HOUSE - DAY

Dolores tries to cheer up gloomy Ed. He's wearing angora.

ED
I'm no good.

DOLORES
Ed, it's just one man's opinion!

ED
Bela needs a job... I can't even get
a film going...
(listless)
But of course I can't -- I made the

worst movie of all time.

DOLORES

That's ridiculous.

Ed sighs.

ED

All I wanna do is tell stories. The things I find interesting...

DOLORES

Well maybe you're not studio kind of material. Maybe you just need to raise the money yourself.

Ed looks up.

INT. BANK - DAY

Ed sits opposite a LOAN OFFICER.

ED

The movie is called "Bride Of The Atom"...

INT. DENTIST'S OFFICE - DAY

Ed continues, pitching to three DENTISTS in white coats.

ED

...It will star Bela Lugosi. Each of you would put up \$20,000...

EXT. PHONE BOOTH - DAY

Ed stands at a busy intersection. He YELLS into a phone.

ED

Yes, that's right. The Bela Lugosi. He's still alive.

(beat)

Huh? Is he available Friday night? Gee, I suppose so... Why?

cut TO:

INT. TV STUDIO - NIGHT

We're backstage at a '50s variety show. It's exciting live TV: Showgirls, techies, and cast members dart about in a state of hyped-up tumult.

INT. DRESSING ROOM - SAME TIME

Bela and Ed sit in his dressing room, running lines. Bela is in his Count outfit: Cape, jet black hair, red lips, etc. They both read off SCRIPTS.

BELA

"Greetings. I am the Count."

ED

"Greetings. I am Slick Slomopavitz, Seeker of Adventure." Audience laughs. Applause. "Say, that's a funny place to sleep."

BELA

"It is my home."

ED

"Oh, tract housing, huh?" Laugh.
"You need a new real estate agent."

BELA

"Beg to differ. This casket
incarpbrates, er, incorporates --"

Ed interrupts.

ED

No Bela, that's "incorporates." Look,
just say "This casket has..."

BELA

(upset)

Ach! How do they expect a Hungarian
to pronounce this dialogue? This
live television is madness!

An ASSISTANT knocks and sticks her head in.

ASSISTANT

Five minutes, Mr. Lugosi.

INT. BACKSTAGE - MINUTES LATER

Ed and Bela stand in the wings. Onstage is the SHOW HOST, a
cheesy comedian. He is doing a routine with Criswell, the
famed psychic who opened this movie. Criswell wears a tux and
a turban and is acting mysterious.

HOST

And then what's gonna happen?

CRISWELL

In 1960, the automobile will have
retractable wings, so it can fly.

HOST

Sounds like a heck of a way to beat
traffic.

Audience LAUGHS. Criswell rubs his temples enigmatically.

CRISWELL

By 1970, Man will have colonized
Mars. Millions of people will live
there.

Ed is mesmerized.

ED

Wow! Ain't that something.

INT. STUDIO - LATER

We're out in the audience. The curtain rises on a SPOOKY SET:
Shadows, cobwebs, and a coffin in the center. The Host walks
onstage, to huge APPLAUSE. He's playing his "Slick" character,
a befuddled moron in a funny hat. The Host shines a flashlight
around, and then the coffin opens. Bela sits up. There's more
APPLAUSE.

BELA
Greetings. I am the Count.

HOST
Greetings. I am Slick Slomopavitz,
Seeker of Adventure.

The audience LAUGHS. Then APPLAUSE.

HOST
Say, that's a funny place to sleep.

BELA
It is my home.

HOST
Oh, tract housing, huh?
(he starts AD-LIBBING)
I guess I shouldn't complain about
my duplex in Burbank. What a dump.
Some places have a Murphy bed, this
place has a Murphy shower. I still
don't know where to hang the towels!

The audience HOWLS with laughter. Bela is totally lost. He
seems incredibly confused.

BELA
Uh, beg to differ.

HOST
"Beg to differ?!" Hey, I'm talkin'
about my duplex in Burbank!

BELA
(terrified, groping)
Uh, Greetings. I am the Count...

BACKSTAGE

Ed covers his face in embarrassment.

CUT TO:

INT. STUDIO HALLWAY - LATER

The Host angrily storms past.

HOST
I told you we should've gotten
Karloff.

He exits. A door opens, and Ed and Bela quietly step out.

ED
Bela, don't worry. You're better
than all this crap.

BELA
(distracted)
I never said I could ad-lib...

ED
Forget about it. We'll make our new
movie, and you'll be a star again.

They shuffle away... until Criswell and his snazzy ENTOURAGE burst around a corner. Even in person, Criswell is ethereal and quite self-important. He is delighted to see Bela.

CRISWELL

Mr. Lugosi! It is an unparalleled privilege to meet you. Allow me to introduce myself... I am CRISWELL!

BELA

(morose)

It's a pleasure...

CRISWELL

Ah, cheer up! Don't lose heart over what happened tonight.

(he points at his temple)

I predict that your next project will be an outstanding success!

ED

Wow.

CRISWELL

And who may you be?

ED

Edward Wood, Sir.

CRISWELL

Ah. The director of "Glen Or Glenda."

ED

(startled)

H-how'd you know?!

CRISWELL

I'm Criswell. I know all.

Criswell winks.

CUT TO:

INT. MOCAMBO ROOM - NIGHT

Latin horns blast onstage of this hopping '50s nightclub. Cigarette girls roam about. Seated at a front table is Ed, Bela, and Criswell's group. Everyone's plastered and laughing. Criswell shouts above the din at a WAITER.

CRISWELL

Bring me two more Beefeater martinis. Eddie will have another whiskey, Dagmar's a Rum-and-coke, Moustapha and King are chablis -- hey Bela, would you like a wine?

BELA

No. I never drink -- wine.

The whole table CRACKS UP. Bela cheers up. Ed turns to Criswell.

ED

Hey Cris, how'd you know we'd be living on Mars by 1970? How'd you

know it wouldn't be 1975, or even
1980?

CRISWELL

I guessed.

ED

I don't understand.

CRISWELL

I made it up. It's horseshit!

Ed's jaw drops.

CRISWELL

There's no such thing as a psychic.
People believe my folderol because
I wear a turban and a black tuxedo.

ED

It's that easy?

CRISWELL

Eddie, we're in show biz! It's all
about razzle-dazzle. Appearances.
If you dress nice and talk well,
people will swallow anything.

Criswell smiles knowingly. Ed nods at this profound wisdom.

CUT TO:

EXT. BROWN DERBY - NIGHT

We're outside the legendary hat-shaped restaurant. A large
Eldorado pulls up, and a CONSERVATIVE MAN and his PLUMP WIFE
step out and approach the DOORMAN.

CONSERVATIVE MAN

Excuse me. We're here for the Wood
party.

DOORMAN

Ah, that would be in the Venetian
Room, sir.

The couple raise their eyebrows. They're impressed.

INT. BROWN DERBY - NIGHT

A large banner says "BRIDE OF THE ATOM - NEXT YEAR'S SMASH
HIT!"

In a private back room, Ed is throwing a LAVISH BACKERS PARTY.
All his riff-raff friends are dressed in tuxedos and gowns,
strutting about with flutes of champagne like they're extras
in "The Great Gatsby."

Bewildered POTENTIAL BACKERS wander around. Ed shmoozes them.

ED

We're gonna have the most terrifying
monster ever seen on film! A ghastly
creature created from an atomic
mutation!

BACKER'S WIFE

I don't like scary movies. I go more for ones with love stories.

ED

(without dropping a beat)
Well that's what this movie is...
a heartbreaking romance! It's about
a young reporter, Janet Lawton, in
love with a young cop, Dick Craig.

ACROSS THE ROOM

Conrad and Paul sit in a corner. Conrad has a shoe off and is scratching his foot. Ed alarmedly runs over.

ED

What do you think you're doin'?!

CONRAD

These shoes are itchy.

ED

You can't sit! You gotta walk
around, with good posture. You want
these people to think we have class.
Otherwise they'll never invest in our
movie.

ACROSS THE PARTY

Two AMAZED BACKERS have their hands around Tor's giant arm.

AMAZED BACKER

Bernie, get a load of this guy!

TOR

(proud of his size)
Biceps 22! Chest 62! Stomach 54!

AMAZED BACKER

Whew! You're quite a specimen.
(beat)
And you're gonna be in the picture?

TOR

Yes. I play Lobo!

ACROSS THE ROOM

An excited HICK BACKER shakes Bela's hand.

HICK BACKER

Mr. Lugosi, I can't believe I'm
meeting you in person. This is one
of the most exciting moments of my
life.

BELA

Thank you. And you are?

HICK BACKER

Charlie Johnson! I manufacture
toothpaste tubes.

ACROSS THE PARTY

Criswell struts in the b.g., talking to someone.

CRISWELL

I predict "Bride Of The Atom" will
be the biggest moneymaker of all
time!

In the f.g., Ed introduces Dolores to a SOUTHERN BACKER.

ED

And this is lovely starlet Dolores
Fuller, who will play Janet Lawton.

SOUTHERN BACKER

And how much will this picture cost?

ED

In a normal studio it would be
half-a-million, with all their
wasteful overhead and fancy offices.
But because we're more efficient, we
can bring it in for seventy grand!

SOUTHERN BACKER

Hmm. Well I'll consider it...

EXT. BROWN DERBY - LATER THAT NIGHT

Ed and his buddies wave goodbye to the departing backers.

ED

Goodbye! Goodbye!

BELA

(to Ed)

So how'd we do?

ED

(faking a big smile, but SOTTO

VOCE to Bela)

We didn't make a dime.

IN THE PARKING LOT

A VALET hands the car keys to the Conservative Backer.

VALET

That's twenty-five cents, sir.

The man glances at his Wife. She shrugs.

WIFE

I gave all my money to the
babysitter.

The man grimaces. He checks his pockets, pulls out a handful
of PENNIES, and counts them out...

CUT TO:

EXT. ED AND DOLORES'S BACKYARD - DAY

Ed sits in a chaise lounge by the pool, studying papers and
drinking shots of whiskey. He's in a woman's pantsuit and
fuzzy slippers. Dolores marches out.

DOLORES

Ed, the landlord called again. He

wants his money.

ED

Tell him "Bride" is in pre-production.

DOLORES

Ed, the landlord doesn't care.

ED

That's the problem! Nobody cares about my movie! I'm tryin' so hard, I don't know what else to do!

DOLORES

Don't get angry at me. Maybe you just need a day job.

ED

(upset)

Dolores, don't you understand? I'm a director now! I made "Glen Or Glenda." Directing is my day job.

DOLORES

(irate)

All I know is, ever since "Glen Or Glenda," all you do is booze it up and wear my clothes!

Suddenly Paul hesitantly steps through the back gate.

PAUL MARCO

Uh, yoo-hoo. Excuse me! Sorry to interrupt, but I got some big news.

ED

(dour)

Yeah...?

PAUL MARCO

Well my cousin Fred met this dame from back East. She's from "old money," and he thinks she's loaded. And here's the kicker: She's very interested in the picture business!

ANGLE - ED

He slowly smiles. It's like sun breaking through rain clouds.

CUT TO:

EXT. RESTAURANT PATIO - DAY

We're at a fancy outdoor brunch. Ed is shaking hands with pretty LORETTA KING, 25, a pale brunette in a classy dress.

LORETTA

Pleased to meet you. I'm Loretta King.

ED

I understand you just moved here?

LORETTA

Yes. Hollywood is oh so exciting.

A WAITER walks over, with a water pitcher.

WAITER

Water, Ma'am?

LORETTA

(suddenly freaking out)

No! No water! NO LIQUIDS! I'm
terribly allergic to them!

The waiter is bewildered. He hurries away. Ed leans in.

ED

So my associate Mr. Marco tells me
you may be interested in investing
in a motion picture.

LORETTA

Perhaps a small amount of money.

(she smiles)

How much do one of your motion
pictures cost?

ED

For this one, we need \$60,000.

LORETTA

That's all?? That seems very
reasonable for an entire picture.

Ed perks up. She's a live one!

Ed pulls a script from his briefcase and hands it to her.

ED

Perhaps you'd like to look at the
photoplay.

LORETTA

Oh my, this is very interesting.

(she skims the pages)

Say... do you think it would be
possible for me to maybe play one of
these parts?

ED

(very enthused)

Oh, of course!! There's a couple
characters you'd be perfect for: The
secretary at the newspaper office,
or the file clerk!

LORETTA

Hmm. Those sound kind of small.

(stopping at a page)

Oh, here's one that looks good: Janet
Lawton. I'd sure like to play her.

Ed blanches.

ED

J-Janet Lawton???

LORETTA

Yes, Janet Layton is clearly the part
to play. She's got some real meaty

scenes! Can't you just see me in that part??

CU - ED

He is aghast. What a stomach-churning decision. He stares at Loretta, then slowly croaks a response.

ED
Uh... yeah...
(beat)
You'd be perfect.

CUT TO:

EXT. ED AND DOLORES'S HOUSE - DAY

We HEAR dishes being violently thrown. Dolores SCREAMS inside.

DOLORES (o.s.)
You bastard! You two-timing,
dress-wearing son-of-a-BITCH!!

INT. HOUSE - SAME TIME

Dolores is crying and screaming angrily. Ed ducks the objects she hurls at him.

ED
It was the only way I could get the movie made!

DOLORES
Who do you think's been paying the rent?! Who helped type your script, and did all your grunt work?!

ED
I'm sorry! What did you want me to say?

DOLORES
I wanted you to say, "No! I wrote the part for my girlfriend Dolores."

ED
But there's plenty of other parts.

DOLORES
Like what?!

ED
(nervous)
The secretary. Or the file clerk.

Dolores is stunned.

DOLORES
YOU ASSHOLE!

She hurls a pot at Ed. WHACK! It slams him in the head.

CUT TO:

INT. SOUNDSTAGE - DAY

The sets are being erected for "Bride Of The Atom"! The crew

hurries about the small stage, as Ed energetically supervises. He has a large band-aid on his head.

ED

This is gonna be Bela's laboratory, so it should be real impressive! Like one of those mad scientist movies. I want beakers, and test tubes, and one of those electrical things that buzzes!

BUNNY

You mean a Tesla coil?

ED

If you say so.

Tor lumbers over, in his ripped Lobo outfit. His face has fake gashed-up scars. Tor holds the script.

TOR

Edvard! I haf question 'bout script. My wife Greta, she read. And she no like.

ED

Really? Was the third act too intense?

TOR

(trying to be polite)

No. She tink Lobo is waste of my time. Lobo don't talk.

ED

But Tor, it's a starring part! You're second billed.

TOR

Bela, he talk. Loretta, she talk. But Tor, he no talk.

Ed thinks. He quickly puts a spin on this.

ED

Tor, dialogue is overrated. You look at the classic film actors, who are they? Fairbanks. Chaplin. They didn't talk! They did it all with their face.

TOR

(still bothered)

But Greta say --

Loretta walks over, holding two dresses.

LORETTA

Eddie, which dress do you like better?

ED

I don't know.

(he yells o.s.)

Hey Bill, which dress is better for you, the green or the red one?

Cameraman Bill is standing at the camera. He squints.

CAMERAMAN BILL

Which one is the red one?

ED

(confused)

What do you mean?

CAMERAMAN BILL

I mean I can't see the difference.

I'm color-blind.

(beat)

But I like the dark gray one.

WIPE TO:

LATER

The crew is shooting on a spooky castle foyer set.

ED

ACTION!

Bela enters, wearing a lab coat costume. As he slowly crosses, the old man rubs his hands fiendishly. Ed YELLS live direction through a megaphone.

ED

Okay, you're Dr. Eric Vornoff.
You're upset. You've worked so hard
on this experisent, and you don't
want to see it fail.

(Bela stops, to "emote")

No, you're not that upset. You want
to keep moving. You wanna cross the
room.

(Bela exits)

Okay, CUT! BEAUTIFUL! PRINT IT!

Ed claps his hands triumphantly.

ED

Alright, let's go immediately to
Scene 52. Tor, are you in place?

TOR'S VOICE

Yah.

ED

Okay, CUE RAINSTORM!

Behind the window, Conrad pours a watering can.

ED

And roll camera! ACTION!

Tor enters, but can barely squeeze his bulk through the door.
Finally he enters. Ed YELLS through the segaphone.

ED

Okay, you're Lobo. You're upset.
You've worked so hard helping Dr.
Vornoff on this experiment, and you
don't want to see it fail.

(Tor stops, to "emote")

No, you're not that upset. You want

to keep moving. You wanna cross the room.

(Tor exits)

Okay, CUT! PERFECT! PRINT IT!

OFF STAGE

Bela talks to Tor.

BELA

At Universal, they shot two scenes a day. Eddie can knock off twenty or thirty! He's incredible.

BACK ON SET

Cameraman Bill leans in to Ed.

CAMERAMAN BILL

Hey Ed, shouldn't we do another take? Big Baldy kinda got stuck in the doorway.

ED

No, it's fine. It's real! In actuality, Lobo would struggle with that problem every day.

WIPE TO:

LABORATORY SET - LATER

They are back on the completed lab set. Beyond the bunsen burners and beakers is a kitchenette in the corner.

ED

Wow, this lab looks great. Except why is there a stove and refrigerator?

PAUL MARCO

We couldn't afford any more props. If it seems weird, maybe you can add a scene where they eat dinner.

ED

Nah, it'll work. Where's Bela?

Bela is asleep on a couch. Ed nudges him.

ED

Bela, are you ready?

BELA

(he groggily wakes up)
Mmph? Where am I?

ED

You're shooting "Bride Of The Atom."
Scene 85.

Bela nods. He stands up, then grimaces in pain. So he pulls two BRIGHT LITTLE PILLS from his pocket and swallows them.

Ed walks Bela onto the lab set.

ED

You'll be sitting on the right.

BELA

(he glares at the sparking Tesla coils)

I'm not getting near that goddamn thing. One of those burned me on "The Return Of Chandu."

ED

Okay. Then you'll be sitting on the left.

Ed turns to Tor and Loretta. She wears a wedding gown.

ED

Here's the scene. Loretta, you're in a trance. You glide in and get on the operating table. Now Tor, you're supposed to tie her down. But you have an angora fetish... and when you rub that swatch of angora, it makes you refuse so Bela has to discipline you.

TOR

Okey-dokey.

WIPE TO:

SHOOTING - LATER

The scene begins.

ED

ACTION!

BELA (as VORNOFF)

"Now we are ready for the girl."

Bela does his patented hypnotic arm wave. He actually has a powerful intensity. Loretta staggers in, eyes glazed. Like a zombie, she climbs onto the operating table.

BELA

"Dear, you are a woman of super strength and beauty. A lovely vision of exquisitely beauty -- shit!"

(he breaks character)

Damn! Eddie, I'm sorry I can't remember all this. I'm an old man. It's too long.

ED

That's fine, Bela. We're still rolling. Just say "Dear, you're lovely."

BELA

(he snaps back into character)

"Dear, you're lovely."

(he turns to Tor)

"Strap her to the table."

Tor starts to tie Loretta down, then gets distracted by a piece of angora hooked to his waist. He rubs it lovingly, calmed, then suddenly refuses.

Bela is furious.

BELA

"Do as I command you!"

Bela pulls out an oversized BULLWHIP and starts WHIPPING Tor. Tor screams in agony.

BELA

"I'll teach you to disobey me!"

Bela chases Tor around the set, WHIPPING him.

ED

And, CUT!!! Impeccable!

ON TOR

He dances about happily.

TOR

I love being movie star!

Tor jubilantly hugs Loretta. She grimaces.

LORETTA

Ow. Not so hard, Tor.

ON ED

A SURLY STAGE MANAGER strides over to Ed.

SURLY STAGE MANAGER

Hey, Wood. Your check bounced.

ED

Okay, I'll get you the money later.

SURLY STAGE MANAGER

No. I need it NOW.

Ed nods grimly. He grabs Loretta and takes her aside.

ED

Sorry to bother you while we're shooting, but the guy who owns the stage needs his money.

LORETTA

Well then you should pay him, shouldn't you?

ED

(he smiles)

Yeah. Exactly!

There's a pause. They stare at each other.

ED

I kinda need it now.

LORETTA

(baffled)

What are you looking at me like that for? I already gave you my three hundred.

ED

Yeah. Well I need the other
sixty-thousand.

LORETTA

What other sixty-thousand?

ED

The other sixty-thousand you said
you'd give me.

LORETTA

You misunderstood. I gave you
everything I have in the world:
Three-hundred dollars.

CLOSEUP - ED

He looks like he s going to throw up.

ED

Oh my God.

CUT TO:

EXT. SOUNDSTAGE - DAY

The large stage door SLAMS shut.

Ed's disoriented cast and crew stand in the street. Bela, Tor,
and Loretta are still in costume.

Ed looks totally dazed. He blinks in the bright sunlight.

CUT TO:

INT. BROWN DERBY - NIGHT

We're back at the Brown Derby, for another backers party. The
same banner is hanging: "BRIDE OF THE ATOM -- NEXT YEAR'S SMASH
HIT!"

The whole crowd is there, dressed up. Bela sits in the corner,
knocking back a drink.

BELA

Here we go again.

Paul whispers to Bunny.

PAUL MARCO

So is Dolores coming?

BUNNY

(very catty)

I can't imagine why. I wouldn't put
up with a boyfriend who sold me out
for three-hundred dollars...!

ON ED

Ed stands with a circle of POTENTIAL BACKERS. He has an edge
of desperation we've never seen before.

ED

...lemme tell you, you can't lose.

It's scary! And if you don't like that, it's romantic! Bela Lugosi portrays Dr. Vornoff, and lovely ingenue Loretta King is reporter Janet Lawton.

POTENTIAL BACKER

Hmm. Lugosi looks pretty old.
(he squints across the room)
Which role is Vampira playing?

ED

Vampira...?
(bewildered)
Why do you ask??

POTENTIAL BACKER

Well I see her standing over there.

The guy points. Ed turns and looks and Vampira is standing in the next room. She's at a different party.

ED

Well... she's playing --
(beat)
Could you excuse me one moment??

Ed dashes from the room.

NEXT ROOM OVER

Vampira is drinking with a bunch of artsy-fartsy types. She's in street clothes, but clearly recognizable. Ed runs up.

ED

Excuse me, Miss Vampira?

VAMPIRA

Yes?

ED

(sweaty)

You don't know me, but my name is Ed Wood. I'm a film producer. I'm currently in production on a science-fiction piece, with Bela Lugosi and Swedish wrestler Tor Johnson. And I saw you here, and I thought: Kismet!

Vampira stares, totally uncomprehending.

VAMPIRA

I don't understand. Do you want my autograph?

ED

No. I think my film is perfect for you.

VAMPIRA

You want me to show it on my TV program? Well I got nothing to do with that. You should call up the station manager at Channel Seven --

ED

(unyielding)
No! I don't want you to show the movie, I want you to be in it! See, maybe I should explain: We started shooting, but then after three days we got shut down. So we're having a backers party, to raise some more money. Perhaps you'd like to come next door and meet some of the backers...?

Vampire glances at her friends. They uncomfortably turn away.

VAMPIRA
Uh, look, I'm with some friends, and we're about to eat --

ED
(begging)
Please! It'll only take a minute. You can have some hors d'oeuvres, and meet my backers! There's a really nice dentist from Oxnard...

VAMPIRA
(pissed off)
Look buddy, I'm a big star. I've got real offers from real studios. I don't need to blow some dentist for a part. So forget it!

BACK AT THE PARTY

The backers glance into the next room. Ed is in front of Vampira, begging on his hands and knees.

BACKER
(to another backer)
I'm getting a bad feeling about this. Let's get out of here.

The backers pick up their coats. Through the doorway, Ed sees this. He jumps up and frantically runs back in.

ED
Where are you guys going?! You can't leave!

BACKER
(running out)
Goodbye, Mr. Wood.

ED
(insane)
You can't go! You haven't seen the storyboards!

The backers run out of the room. They're gone. Ed shouts after them.

ED
Fine! SCREW YOU! If you don't have the balls to roll the dice, then I don't want your stinking money!!

No response.

ED
Please, come back!

CUT TO:

EXT. ED AND DOLORES' HOUSE - DAY

Ed and Dolores are being evicted. Their belongings are scattered in front. They bitterly carry furniture out of the house. Ed stumbles and slurs his speech. He is drunk.

ED
Goddamn landlord.

DOLORES
I told you this was gonna happen.

ED
Maybe if you'd come to the backers party, I would've gotten the money.

DOLORES
That's moronic. Why would a bit player impress a backer?

ED
(he starts yelling)
Look, how many times can I say I'm sorry? I blew it! I thought she was rich.

DOLORES
That's a good reason to dump your girlfriend.

ED
I didn't dump you! Get it through your skull -- I just recast the part!

Ed drops the furniture. He flops onto the sidewalk.

DOLORES
You're a fuckin' mess.

ED
So WHAT?? Look, we gotta figure out where we're gonna stay.

DOLORES
I'm going to my mother's.

ED
Does she have room for me?

Dolores shakes her head.

DOLORES
I think you should stay with one of your friends.

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWERING TEMPLE - NIGHT

Ed and Bela stroll through a parking lot. Ed is sobered up and remorseful. Bela wears a beret and smokes a huge cigar.

ED

Bela, I don't know what I'm doin'
anymore...

BELA

Stop worrying. This is going to
raise your spirits.

They reach the strange entrance to an avant-garde, Eastern based quasi-religious temple. Bela puts out his cigar, and they enter the oversized doors.

INT. TEMPLE - SAME TIME

Sphinxes and Bodhisatvas peer down from the marble walls. A service is in progress. A wiry, enigmatic LECTURER speaks.

LECTURER

Thou eternal sun, who has covered the
consciousness with thy golden disc,
do thou remove the veil so that I may
see the truth within?

Bela leads Ed to a seat, stepping past men in fezzes and odd elderly women in fur coats. As the lecture continues, Ed WHISPERS in bafflement.

ED

What is this place?

BELA

This is the Philosophical Research
Society. A refuge for free thinkers.
I've been coming here for twenty
years.

LECTURER

...for the truth which is within thee
is within me. And I am Truth.

BELA

Most people in this country, they
know nothing, about Eastern mysticism.
They are afraid of it.

(beat)

But I am open-minded. It gives me
hope.

LECTURER

We have the wisdom to govern and the
divine right to inherit the earth in
good condition. We have the power
to build worlds.

Ed leans in to Bela.

ED

Was I wrong to cast Loretta?

BELA

Bad decisions are easy to live with.
Forget. Just keep looking forward.

ED

But was it a bad decision? At the
time, I thought her money would save
the movie.

BELA
Eddie, you screwed up.

ED
(he nods)
Yeah, I did.

CUT TO:

LATER

The lecture is over. The speaker shakes hands with people.
Bela leads Ed along.

BELA
In life, the decisions that haunt you
are the ones where you just don't
know... where right or wrong will
never be answered.
(beat)
Years ago, the Hungarians contacted
me. The government wanted me to come
home, to be Minister of Culture.

ED
Really?

BELA
It was a very impressive offer.
Fancy offices, a big home... I'd be
treated like a king.

ED
So why didn't you do it?

BELA
I didn't know if it was a trick.
They might arrest me and throw me in
a gulag.

(pause)
I am Hungary's most famous emigrant.
they'd use me as a lesson to anyone
who tries to leave.

ED
But maybe not.

BELA
Correct. So instead, I stayed here,
waiting for my comeback. Always
hoping... the next film, the next
film... that would be the one.

They reach the exit. Ed stops in the huge doorway.

ED
Your next film. That will be the
one.

Bela smiles sweetly.

CUT TO:

INT. MCCOY MEATPACKING PLANT - DAY

We're in a noisy meat-packing plant. WORKERS in blood-stained

aprons slam cleavers into hunks of beef.

Ed walks down an aisle with DONALD E. McCOY, a wealthy Texan meat man. Old Man McCoy is a tough-talking, tobacco-chewing, straight shooter.

ED

...and then Dr. Vornoff falls in the pit, and his own octopus attacks and eats him! The End.

OLD MAN McCOY

Whew! That's quite a story. So you made the movie, and now you want to make it again?

ED

(gently correcting him)

No. We shot ten minutes of the movie, and now we're looking for completion funds.

OLD MAN McCOY

Son, you're too vague. I come from the world of business. I need to know what I get for my investment.

ED

Movies are very popular. You could make a lot of money.

OLD MAN McCOY

Yeah, but most of 'em flop, don't they? What am I tangibly guaranteed?

ED

Well... you get "Executive Producer" credit.

OLD MAN McCOY

That don't mean diddley.

(he suddenly SHOUTS angrily)

BILLY BOB! You're cutting 'em TOO LEAN.

McCoy grabs a CLEAVER from a worker and slams it into a chop.

ED

Mr. McCoy, how can I make you happy?

OLD MAN McCOY

Cut to the chase, heh? That's good! That's very good.

McCoy SPITS his tobacco.

OLD MAN McCOY

Okay, two things. Number one: I want the movie to end with a big explosion. Sky full of smoke.

ED

But the story ends with Dr. Vornoff falling in the pit --

OLD MAN McCOY

Not anymore. And number two: I've

got a son. He's a little slow -- but
a good boy. And something tells me
he'd make a hell of a leading man...

Under Ed's cheery frozen smile, his face clearly falls.

CUT TO:

INT. SALT LAKE CITY AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

We're at a ROWDY wrestling match. Tor Johnson is in the middle of a screaming, four-man tag-team event. Tor THROWS his opponent to the ground; then tags with his partner and goes to the corner.

Suddenly a WRESTLING COACH runs up, dragging a telephone on a very long cord.

WRESTLING COACH

Tor, you got a phone call!

TOR

Heh? NOW?

WRESTLING COACH

They said it was an emergency!

He hands sweaty Tor the phone. Tor speaks into it.

TOR

Hallo?

ED'S VOICE

Tor, this is Ed! Glad I could find you! I got the money, and we resume shooting tomorrow morning!

TOR

But I'm in Utah.

ED'S VOICE

Then you'll have to drive all night! I'm counting on you, big guy. Breakfast is at seven.

CLICK. Ed hangs up. Tor is flabbergasted.

CUT TO:

INT. SOUNDSTAGE - EARLY MORNING

"Bride Of The Atom" is back in production! Ed's stock company is reunited. People drink coffee and gossip.

PAUL MARCO

This is unbelievable! I woulda bet a million bucks that Ed wouldn't finish this picture.

CAMERAMAN BILL

It ain't finished yet. Anything could happen.

The stage door opens and standing there, in silhouette, is Dolores. Everybody quiets. People glance nervously at Loretta.

BUNNY

Uh-oh. Stay out of scratching distance.

AT DOLORES

Ed runs over. Dolores is beautifully made-up, and wearing a furry angora sweater. Ed speaks, awkwardly.

ED

Honey, you made it! I wasn't sure you got my message.

DOLORES

(icy)

Of course I'm here. Today is the file clerk's big scene.

ED

That's right...

DOLORES

I see the usual gang of misfits and dope addicts are here.

(she looks around)

Say, who's the lug?

In a corner, standing by himself, is dumb TONY McCOY, Old Man McCoy's worthless son. He's a good-looking, moody hunk. Tony is practicing his lines from a script, but he's terribly stiff.

TONY

"Now Janet, I want you straying away -- oops -- staying away from the old Willows Place."

Ed shrugs.

ED

That's Tony McCoy. He's playing Lieutenant Dick Craig.

DOLORES

Oh really? How much money did he put up?

ED

None.

(beat)

But his dad gave me fifty grand.

DOLORES

(snide)

Wood Productions. The mark of quality.

ED

Hey, the movie's getting made. That's the main thing.

Dolores shakes her head contemptuously. Then she strides off.

Ed stands alone, feeling bad.

WIPE TO:

ON STAGE

The set is a one-wall "office hallway": A doorway and a water cooler. Loretta sits in a make-up chair, as Harry works on her.

DOLORES (O.S.)

Hey Harry -- long time no see.

Harry turns, surprised. Dolores stands behind him. There's a thick tension. He smiles anxiously.

MAKE-UP MAN HARRY

Hi Dolores...

LORETA

Oh, you're Dolores?! I've heard so much about you! I'm Loretta King.

(she chipperly jumps up)

Here, take the chair.

DOLORES

(bitchy)

Don't be silly -- let Harry finish. You still need more work.

LORETTA

No, I'm done. All I needed was a touch-up.

DOLORES

Mm, that mole still shows.

Loretta frowns. Ed quickly steps in.

ED

Ladies! You both look fine. Why don't we talk about the scene?

(beat)

Okay. Janet Lawton has discovered that Dr. Vornoff bought the old Willows estate. So now she wants to prove that all the monster stories are true.

Dolores nods sourly. She's in a trouble-making mood.

DOLORES

Eddie, what's my motivation?

ED

(thrown off)

Oh. Er... well you're the file clerk. You're hurrying into the next room, when you bump into Janet.

DOLORES

But what's our relationship? Are we good friends, or is she just a casual acquaintance?

ED

(annoyed)

Dolores, I got five days to shoot this movie. Quit kidding around.

WIPE TO:

INT. SCREENING ROOM - NIGHT

We're watching DAILIES. Projected ON SCREEN, a camera assistant claps the slate. We hear Ed yell: "Action!"

Loretta hurries down the hallway. Dolores sees her run past and shouts out.

DOLORES (as File Clerk)
"Janet, the boss has been looking for you."

LORETTA (as Janet Lawton)
"Thanks."

Loretta runs out. Dolores just stands there. We HEAR Ed:
"CUT! PERFECT!"

Dolores turns deadpan to the camera.

DOLORES
Of course it was.

The FILM runs out.

ON THE AUDIENCE

The screening room lights come up on the crew. Ed sits in gloomy haze.

Suddenly, there's loud CLAPPING from the back of the room.

CRISWELL
Bravo! Bravo! Magnifico!

ED
(he smiles)
Cris, you made it. Thanks a lot.

CRISWELL
My pleasure. I'm always happy to assist in a little larceny.

CUT TO:

INT. CADILLAC - NIGHT

A pink Cadillac convertible races down the street. Ed and Criswell are in front, and Tor, Conrad and Paul are in the back.

TOR
My head is cold.

CRISWELL
You know how much this car cost me?

CONRAD
Ten thousand dollars.

CRISWELL
ONE DOLLAR! Miss Mae West herself sold it to me. She said, Cris, you belong in a pink Cadillac!

Criswell turns to Ed.

CRISWELL

Incidentally, you promise you're not going to scratch my car...?

ED

(cocky)

I told you, the octopus is made of rubber. This is a piece o' cake.

EXT. REPUBLIC STUDIOS - NIGHT

The five men climb over a fence. They're breaking into Republic Studios. Paul is panicked.

PAUL MARCO

Ed, you said you were getting permission.

ED

Uh, I couldn't reach the guy... he was in meetings all day. But this'll be great, I promise!

Ed smiles at Conrad. Conrad shrugs. Tor struggles.

TOR

I'm no good at climbink.

Tor gives up, and simply BASHES through the locked gate. Everyone is amazed. Tor laughs.

TOR

I'm good at bashink!!

CRISWELL

Hey, keep it down. My publicist will throttle me if we get caught.

They all sneak across the shadowy lot. Remnants of old scary sets tower over them.

OUTSIDE A SOUNDSTAGE

They reach a stage door. Ed tries it -- but it's locked.

ED

Oh. I thought they kept this open.

A pause. Everyone looks at Tor. He grins.

TOR

Lobo will fix!

Tor grabs the heavy door and easily SNAPS the lock.

INT. SOUNDSTAGE - SAME TIME

This place is the mythic eclectic prop room. Guillotines, rocketships, a stuffed vulture... strange mysterious props from untold movies loom everywhere in the darkness.

It's a place of wonderment and fear.

The men stare in awe.

CONRAD

Wow.

PAUL MARCO

This place gives se the creeps.
Let's get the hell out of here.

ED

Not so fast. First we have to get
it down.

Ed gestures above. Everyone glances straight up.

THEIR POV

A giant OCTOPUS is lashed to the ceiling.

CUT TO:

LATER

Conrad and Criswell are way up on the catwalk, holding onto
dangling Paul by his belt. Paul leans way out, reaching for
the octopus. He shouts nervously.

PAUL MARCO

You're sure this is gonna work?

ED (O.S.)

Yes!

PAUL MARCO

You're sure???

ED (O.S.)

YES! JUST DO IT!

WIDE VIEW

Standing straight below is Tor. The Swede has his arms
outstretched, waiting.

Ed supervises a good distance away. He motions to Paul.

Paul gulps, then unties the octopus.

It drops incredibly fast. The thing must weigh half a ton.

Tor's eyes widen.

And the octopus smashes straight on top of him.

BAM!

Tor is gone from sight. One of the eight tentacles snaps off.

UP IN THE CATWALK

Criswell moans.

CRISWELL

Oh my God. We killed him.

ON THE GROUND

Ed runs to the octopus and looks for Tor underneath.

ED

Tor! Are you okay?!

A beat. And then the octopus flips over. Tor sits up, battered but smiling.

TOR
Bedder than wrestlink!

EXT. REPUBLIC STUDIOS - NIGHT

The five men hurry across the lot, carrying the hubongous octopus on their shoulders.

Suddenly, a FLASHLIGHT shines on them.

ANGRY VOICE
Hey! What are you doing?!

The men jump with fear. They break into a fast waddling run.

CRISWELL
Thank God Tor broke the fence.

The team runs through the busted gate and escapes.

EXT. STUDIOS - NIGHT

The Cadillac SCREECHES away. The octopus flops on top of the five men.

WIPE TO:

EXT. GRIFFITH PARK - NIGHT

The movie crew is setting up for a big night shoot. Lights and generators are sprawled across this isolated area.

Tony McCoy perches goofily on his own personalized chair. He runs lines by himself.

TONY
"Now Janet, I want you staying away
from the old Willows Place."

The octopus lays in a dried-up riverbed. There's only about an inch of water. Ed yells at Conrad.

ED
You don't understand! The octopus
is supposed to live in a lake!

CONRAD
This is kind of a stream--

ED
NO! It has to be UNDERWATER!

Ed storms away. Conrad scratches his head.

IN A DUSTY PARKING LOT

Bela sits inertly in the back of an open car. He weakly hails over Ed.

BELA
Eddie, I'm so tired... I don't know
if I can handle a night shoot...

ED

Nonsense! You look great --
(suddenly he catches himself; he
speaks more sincerely)
Look, uh, why don't you lie down and
take a little nap? We'll film around
you for a while.

ED

Thanks, buddy...

Ed smiles warmly, then walks off.

Bela stares after him, then absent-mindedly searches through
his pockets. Finally, he finds what he's looking for -- a
rubber tube. Bela looks to make sure no one's around, then
ties the tube around his upper arm...

AT THE SET - LATER

Crew members have dammed up the end of the river, and Bunny
fills it with a hose. There is now a foot of water.

Ed stands at the shore, admiring it.

ED

Hey. This is looking good!
(he turns to Paul)
Paul, where's the octopus motor?

PAUL MARCO

What octopus motor?

ED

You know, to make the legs move --

PAUL MARCO

(defensive)

Hey, don't blame me! You didn't say
anything about no motor when I was
up on that ceiling!

Bela stumbles up, with a dazed smile.

BELA

Let's shoot this fucker! Where do
I go?

ED

You'll be fighting with the octopus.

BELA

Out there?!
(he points at the water)
What happened to the stream?

ED

This'll look a lot better. We have
to match the stock footage of the
octopus underwater.

BELA

Oh, for Christ's sake.

Bela rolls up his pants and wades out, into the water. He
screams.

BELA
Goddamn, it's cold!

ED
Once you're in it, it warms up.

BELA
Fuck you! You come out here.
(beat)
Hey, toss me that J.D.

A crew member throws Bela a bottle of Jack Daniels.

Bela pops the cap and chugs half the bottle in one swig. He licks his lips, then climbs onto the octopus.

BELA
Okay! How do we turn this thing on?

ED
Bela, somebody misplaced the motor.
So when you wrestle the octopus,
shake the legs a bit, to make it look
like it's killing you.

Bela stares, deadpan.

BELA
Do you know I turned down
"Frankenstein"?

ED
Huh?

BELA
After I did "Dracula," the studio
offered me "Frankenstein"! But I
turned it down, the part wasn't sexy
enough. It was too degrading for a
big star like me.

The crew glances at Ed.

ED
Bela, I've got twenty-five scenes to
shoot tonight.

BELA
Don't let me slow you down.

ED
Alright! Let's put it on film.
CAMERA! SOUND!

Bela takes another swig of J.D., then throws it off-camera.

ED
ACTION!

Bela starts flailing around the octopus legs and SCREAMING in horror. This image is truly ridiculous.

Ed is pleased.

Some crew members nod: Pretty good.

ED

And CUT!

Everybody cheers.

Then suddenly the dam walls BURST.

WHOOSH! The water rushes from the lake and floods the park below.

WIPE TO:

EXT. DINKY SOUNDSTAGES - EARLY MORNING

Crew members straggle in for the final shoot. Everybody looks bleary-eyed from last night. Ed stands cheerily at the entrance, greeting them.

ED

C'mon! Just one more day! Just have some coffee, you'll feel better!

Tony staggers up.

TONY

Mr. Wood, I only got one hour of sleep.

ED

Yeah? Well I got no sleep, and I feel great!

Ed sees Bela slowly shuffling along. Ed runs over to him.

ED

Bela. I just wanna thank you again for last night.

BELA

(exhausted)

That's fine, Eddie. All in the line of duty.

ED

No. Seriously. I want you to know how much I appreciate what you've done for me. A great man like you shouldn't have to run around in freezing water at four in the morning.

BELA

Well, there aren't too many other fellas I'd do it for...

ED

(he smiles, then pulls out a script page)

I wrote something special for you. I got to thinking about all the sacrifices you've made... and so I wrote you a new final speech.

Ed hands him the paper. Bela starts reading it, as Ed watches anxiously. Bela is very touched.

BELA

(still reading)
Eddie, this is quite a scene.

ED
I know it's a lot to give you at the
last second.

Bela looks up.

BELA
These lines -- I'll have no problem
remembering.

WIPE TO:

INT. SOUNDSTAGE - DAY

They are shooting. Ed watches off-camera, as Bela acts a
somber scene with an actor playing PROFESSOR STROWSKI, a
threatening European.

STROWSKI
"Our government wants you to
return... to continue your
experiments there. Where you can
have everything at your disposal."

BELA (as VORNOFF)
"My dear Professor Strowski, twenty
years ago I was banned from my home
land. I was classed as a madman --
a charlatan -- outlawed in the world
of science which previously honored
me as a genius!"

(he gets very subdued)
"Now here in this forsaken jungle
hell, I have proven that I am
alright."

STROWSKI
"Yes, the authorities have learned
how correct your findings were. So
I am here -- sent to bring you home."

BELA
(impassioned)
"Home. I have no home. Hunted...
despised... living like an animal
-- the jungle is my home! But I
will show the world that I can be
its master. I shall perfect my own
race of people -- a race of atomic
supermen that will conquer the
world!"

It's an incredible performance of crowning tragedy. Bela is
totally drained.

CU - ED

He is very moved. He whispers, barely audible.

ED
Cut. It's a wrap.

CUT TO:

INT. MEAT PACKING PLANT - NIGHT

The wrap party is being thrown in the meat packing plant. People laugh and shout and carry on. Tor pours booze in the punch. R&B MUSIC plays. Old Man McCoy dances with Loretta. Bunny dances with a young stud. Dolores stands by herself.

Bela and Criswell are giggling.

CRISWELL

So you sleep in coffins?!

BELA

Yes. There is nothing more comfortable.

CRISWELL

I can't believe this! I sleep in coffins!

BELA

No.

CRISWELL

YES! My father ran a mortuary -- it's an old habit!

They CLINK beers.

EXT. MEAT PACKING PLANT - SAME TIME

Outside, Vampira and two GIRL FRIENDS walk up. They peer at a tin sign.

GIRLFRIEND #1

"McCoy Meat Packing"? Are you sure there's a party here?

VAMPIRA

(holding an INVITATION)

Yeah, I got this invitation. It's a "Bride Of The Atom" party, whatever that means.

They open the large steel door, and INSIDE is the wild bash.

INT. PARTY

Across the room, Paul and Conrad chat.

PAUL MARCO

"Glen Or Glenda," now that was a hell of a picture.

CONRAD

Well, this new one's gonna be a hundred times better.

PAUL MARCO

Is that possible?

Dolores overhears this. She stares in disbelief.

AT THE TURNTABLE

Someone changes the record. Brassy STRIPPER MUSIC begins.

A door opens, and Ed struts out, in full gaudy drag.

Everybody turns. They start WHISTLING and HOLLARING.

Ed grins, and starts into a wacky bump-and-grind.

VOICE

Go, baby, go!

Bunny runs up and sticks a dollar bill between Ed's fake tits. People LAUGH hysterically.

Dolores is appalled.

Ed shimmies to the music, blowing kisses all around. He sees Vampira and waves.

Vampira's jaw drops in recognition.

VAMPIRA

I don't believe it. It's him!

Ed sashays up to Bela and dances a few steps with him. The music is building to a climax. Ed hurries off to center stage -- and as the MUSIC ENDS, he does a final swing of his hips, then suddenly yanks out his teeth!

This brings down the house. Everyone STAMPS their feet and CLAPS crazily.

ANGLE - DOLORES

Everyone, except Dolores. Suddenly, she explodes.

DOLORES

You people are INSANE! Take a look around -- you're all FREAKS!

The room quiets. Dolores has snapped.

DOLORES

You're wasting your lives making SHIT! Nobody cares! These movies are TERRIBLE!

(beat)

I can't take it any longer!

The group is shocked. Nobody speaks.

Dolores runs out of the party.

Ed just stands, dumbstruck. Then he chases after her, in his high heels and dress.

EXT. MEAT PACKING PLANT - SAME TIME

Dolores runs across the parking lot, in tears. Ed catches up with her.

ED

Dolores, wait!

DOLORES

Ed, it's over. I need a normal life.

ED

(hurt)

Did you really mean those things you
said..?

Dolores stops.

DOLORES
I'm tired of living on the fringe.

ED
But you used to say --

DOLORES
Ed... I just stuck it out so you
could finish your movie.
(pause)
Now that it's done, so am I.

She turns and walks away. Ed is crushed. He stands
motionless, in his dress, in the dark.

CUT TO:

INT. ED'S NEW APARTMENT - DAY

Ed's new home is a single apartment, still filled with moving
boxes. Half-eaten plates of food are scattered about. Ed lies
asleep in bed, unshaven, in the middle of the day.

The phone RINGS. Ed awakens and woozily answers it.

ED
Yeah...

TOR (on phone)
Ed, dit I wake you? It's two in
avternoon.

ED
No, I was just doin' a little work...

TOR (on phone)
Bullshit! You been like dis too many
days. I want to cheer you up.

EXT. TOR'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Ed drives his Nash through a tract Valley neighborhood and
reaches Tor's little house. Ed gets out, still looking groggy.
He walks up the tulip-lined path and rings the DOORBELL.
Clanging SWEDISH CHIMES bong inside.

The door flies open, and Tor appears, beaming.

TOR
Edvard, you come!

Tor gives Ed a back-breaking hug.

INT. TOR'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

Ed steps in. The house is filled with cuckoo clocks and little
Swedish knick-knacks. Tor gestures proudly.

TOR
I'm so happy you visit. Meet my
family! Greta, Karl, and Connie!

THREE COLOSSAL PEOPLE lumber out. Tor has the largest family we've ever seen. Not fat -- but big-boned. GRETA is Tor's gigantic Swedish wife, and KARL and CONNIE are their two elephantine children. They ADLIB greetings: "Hallo!" "Welcome!" "Is a pleasure!"

Ed cannot believe what he's seeing.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Everyone noisily eats dinner. The table looks like a Smorgasbord. Entire hams, turkeys, a full case of beer, incredible quantities are being shoveled in. Tor empties a beer in one gulp, then opens another.

CONNIE

Pass the meatballs.

KARL

This strudel is delicious, Mama.

Ed is stupefied. He picks at a little dainty serving.

TOR

Hey! You're not eatink.

ED

Uh, I don't have much of an appetite lately.

TOR

The food will make you feel bedder. Look at me -- I'm da happiest guy I know!

All the Johnsons CHUCKLE.

ED

I'd be happy too, if I had such a great family.

TOR

Don't worry. You just haven't met right woman yet.

(beat)

Oopsy. That cabbage goes right through me.

Tor stands and hurries from the room. Ed awkwardly makes conversation.

ED

Greta, your husband is a terrific actor. You should come down and visit the set.

GRETA

I don't think so.

ED

No, it's really no problem at all!

GRETA

(steely)

I do not approve of what you do with my husband Tor. He is not a monster. These horror pictures are

humiliating.

Ed has no response. Suddenly -- CRASH! There's a loud o.s. SLAM, falling porcelain, then Tor SHOUTS FURIOUSLY in Swedish.

TOR (O.S.)

OUCH! GODDAMMIT!

Earl and Connie begin giggling. Ed is totally baffled. Tor runs out, angrily holding a BROKEN TOILET SEAT. It is split in two.

TOR

Look, it happened again!

Ed is boggle-eyed. This house is sadness.

ED

Tor, I should be getting home.

TOR

Nonsense! You must try our hot glug.

DISSOLVE TO:

LATER

It's very late. Tor and Ed sit in the living room, drinking from a steaming pot of hot stilled wine. They are smashed.

TOR

My friend, you tink Greta is first woman I ever see? No! Many duds, before I find her.

ED

But I thought me and Dolores had something.

TOR

Forget her! Move on. A good lookink boy like you as you can have any girl you wish.

Tor finishes his glug, and then his eyes roll back into his head, and he falls off the couch. He starts SNORING.

Ed stares at Tor, then gets up. Ed turns off the lights and goes home.

CUT TO:

INT. ED'S APARTMENT - LATE NIGHT

Ed smokes a cigarette and watches TV.

ON THE TV

Vampira is doing her shtick.

VAMPIRA (on TV)

Ooo! That was so scary, it gave me goosebumps.

(someone QUACKS os.; she pretends to be angry)

No, dummy! I didn't say "goose," I said "goosebumps." Ugh! Well, be

sure to join me next week, for
"THE MUMMY'S CURSE." Until then...
pleasant nightmares.

Vampira blows a kiss, then disappears into the mist. A USED
CAR COMMERCIAL abruptly comes on.

ON ED

He stares at the TV, then picks up the phone.

CUT TO:

INT. TV STUDIOS - SAME TIME

Vampira is walking off stage. She removes her black wig.

VAMPIRA

God, we need some better jokes on
this show.

A PRODUCTION ASSISTANT carries over a phone.

ASSISTANT

Vampira, you got a phone call.

VAMPIRA

At this hour?
(she takes the phone)
Hello?

ED'S VOICE

Vampira! Hi, this is Ed Wood.

VAMPIRA

Who?

ED'S VOICE

Ed Wood! You came to my party. I
directed "Bride Of The Atom"!

VAMPIRA

Oh. Yeah. You.

Ed pauses, nervously.

ED'S VOICE

Well, I was wondering if maybe
sometime you'd like to go out, and
maybe grab some dinner.

VAMPIRA

You mean like a date? I thought you
were a fag.

ED'S VOICE

ME?! No, uh, I'm just a
transvestite.

VAMPIRA

Isn't that the same thing?

ED'S VOICE

No, no! I like girls. So how 'bout
Friday?

VAMPIRA

(uncomfortable)
Look, you seem like a nice guy, Ed,
but you're just not my type.

(beat)
But keep in touch. Let me know when
your movie opens.

CUT BACK TO:

CLOSEUP - ED

Click. The phone hangs up. Poor Ed just stands there,
forlorn.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Ed shuffles down the street, Mr. Lonely Guy, feeling sorry for
himself.

He glances in a coffee shop, and sees a sweet young woman
inside. Her name is NORMA McCARTY. She wears a bow in her
hair, Mary Jane shoes, and a fuzzy white angora sweater.

Ed's eyes widen.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - SAME TIME

Innocent Norma sits by herself, eating.

ED'S VOICE
Excuse me. Is that angora?

Norma looks up. Standing over her is Ed, smiling.

NORMA
Why... yes.

ED
Don't you think angora has a tactile
sensuality lacking in all other
clothing?

NORMA
I suppose. It's very expensive.

ED
It's made from specially-bred rabbits
that live in the Himalayas.

NORMA
What are you, an angora wholesaler?

ED
No, I work in pictures. I'm a
director-actor-writer-producer.

NORMA
(she laughs)
Ah, c'mon! Nobody does all that.

ED
Two people do. Orson Welles and me.

NORMA
Wow.

ED

You know, you're a very attractive girl.

Norma blushes.

NORMA

My goodness, you're embarrassing me.

ED

You shouldn't be embarrassed by the truth.

(he smoothly sits down)

Mind if I order some hotcakes...?

CUT TO:

INT. CRISWELL'S CADILLAC - NIGHT

Criswell and Paul drive at night. They're dressed-up. SWING MUSIC plays on the radio.

CRISWELL

So who's the surprise for?

PAUL MARCO

I dunno. Ed was real mysterious. All he'd say was it's a surprise party.

CRISWELL

Isn't that like him!

(beat)

And isn't that like us -- that we show up anyway.

They pull up to a GUARD GATE. They're at a studio.

CRISWELL

Excuse me. We're here for the Wood party.

GUARD

They've rented Stage 12. Drive straight back.

INT. SOUNDSTAGE - NIGHT

There is another rambunctious party in progress. Crepe paper streamers hang down. Bela approaches Tor.

BELA

So what are we doing here?

TOR

Nobody knows. But there's a lotta booze.

Suddenly Ed steps into the middle of the room. He's extremely handsome in his tuxedo, and beaming happily.

ED

Excuse me! Could everyone please quiet down?

(the room quiets)

First of all, I want to thank you,

all my good friends, for being here tonight. And second, if you're wondering what the big surprise is... well, TONIGHT I'M GETTING MARRIED!!

The crowd is stunned.

Many people DROP their glasses.

Ed proudly pulls out Norma. She's in a wedding gown.

ED

Everybody, this is Norma!

ON BELA AND TOR

They're bewildered. Bela WHISPERS.

BELA

Who the fuck is she??

TOR

I never heard of her.

Ed walks over. He hugs Bela.

ED

And Bela, I want you to be the best man!

Bela smiles -- trying to hide his total confusion.

DISSOLVE TO:

LATER

The wedding is in progress. The crowd is seated. A MINISTER performs the ceremony with Ed and Norma.

MINISTER

...Norma, do you promise to love, honor, and cherish...

IN THE CROWD

Everybody is QUIETLY GOSSIPING.

BUNNY

I didn't even know he had a girlfriend.

PAUL MARCO

(he taps him on the shoulder)

I hear she's an actress who gave him money.

CONRAD

Nah, I heard she's his childhood sweetheart from Poughkeepsie.

CRISWELL

I predict it's Dolores in a mask.

AT THE ALTAR

The Minister is speaking to Ed.

MINISTER
...in sickness and in health, till
death do you part?

ED
I do.

MINISTER
(he smiles)
Then I now pronounce you man and
wife.

Ed kisses Norma.

The crowd doesn't applaud. They're too baffled by this whole
event.

DISSOLVE TO:

THE RECEPTION

Everyone's drinking and dancing. Ed proudly introduces Norma
to his buddies.

ED
Norma, this is Bela -- Bela, this is
Norma. Norma, this is Tor -- Tor,
this is Norma. Norma, this is Paul
Paul, this is Norma.

PAUL MARCO
(he can't resist)
So how long have you known Eddie?

NORMA
(sweetly)
Since Tuesday.

Criswell grabs Ed and pulls him aside.

CRISWELL
Edward, are you sure you know what
you're doing?

ED
Yeah. It seems a little crazy, but
sometimes you just know. She's
perfect for me.

Outside, a car HONKS.

ED
Oop, that's our cue!
(to Norma)
Honey, we gotta go. GOODBYE,
EVERYBODY!

Ed and Norma run out the door. The crowd hurries after them.

OUTSIDE

Ed and Norma jump into his Nash. It says "Just Married" and is
festooned with dangling tin cans. The car screeches away. The
cans RATTLE NOISILY, then slowly fade into the distance...

CUT TO:

EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT

We're at a desert roadside motel, the San Bernardino Arms. A "Vacancy" light flashes.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - SAME TIME

Ed excitedly carries Norma over the threshold. He throws her onto the bed, and they start ardently making out.

NORMA

Eddie, I'm just a small-town girl.
I've never done this before.

ED

(kissing her)
Don't worry, I'll teach you.

He helps her remove her wedding dress. She is very shy.

NORMA

Be understanding. I don't know anything.

Ed removes his jacket, then gestures to his shirt. Norma nervously starts unbuttoning it.

Ed bites his lip in anticipation.

Norma opens the shirt... and inside, Ed is wearing a bra!

Norma is horrified.

NORMA

What the heck is THIS?!!

ED

Honey, I have a little secret to share with you.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOTEL - SAME TIME

There's a loud woman's SCREAM.

Then the door slams open, and Norma runs hysterically out, clutching her dress about her.

NORMA

Stay away from me! You're perverted!

Ed runs out after her.

ED

Please, be compassionate. I'm your husband!

NORMA

No you're not! This marriage was never consummated. I'm getting an annulment!

CUT TO:

EXT. LOS ANGELES STREETS - LATE NIGHT

Ed drives sadly through the streets, alone. His car still says "Just Married," and the tin cans RATTLE behind him.

CUT TO:

EXT. BELA'S HOUSE - LATE NIGHT

Ed's car pulls up. Ed stumbles out, yanks off the tin cans, and throws them in someone's trash.

Ed despondently approaches Bela's. Inside, a light glows, and the dogs BARK.

Ed is relieved. Bela's awake. He BANGS on the door.

ED

Bela, let me in! Bela, it's Eddie.

He keeps BANGING. Finally the door opens -- and Bela stands there, shakily waving a gun! Bela is doped up, glassy-eyed, and disturbingly haggard.

BELA

Why are you here??

ED

Shit! Bela, what's with the gun?

BELA

Why aren't you on your honeymoon?
Where's Myrna?

ED

Norma. She changed her mind. She doesn't wanna marry me.

(beat)

Can you put down the gun?

Bela weakly lowers the gun.

INT. BELA'S

Ed walks in, in a near-stupor. Needles and drug paraphernalia are scattered about

ED

What are you doing?

BELA

I was thinking about killing myself.

ED

Jesus Christ, what an evening.

(he looks around)

What happened?

BELA

(near tears)

Eddie, I received a letter from the government. They're cutting off my unemployment. That's all I've got. Without it, I can't pay the rent...

ED

Don't you have any savings?

BELA

I'm obsolete. I have nothing to live for. Tonight, I should die.

(distraught)

And you should come with me.

Frail Bela points the gun at Ed. Ed is terrified.

ED

Buddy, I don't know if that's such a good idea.

BELA

It'll be wonderful. We'll be at peace. In the afterlife, you don't have to worry about finding work.

ED

Bela, I'm on your side. C'mon, give me the gun...

(he cautiously steps forward)

If you give me the gun, I'll make you a drink. What are you drinking?

BELA

Formaldehyde.

Ed stares in anguish.

ED

Straight up or on the rocks?

Bela drops the gun. He starts weeping.

Ed walks over and hugs the shaking old man.

ED

Don't worry.

BELA

I'm sorry, Eddie. I'm so sorry.

ED

Don't worry. Everything's gonna be all right.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOSPITAL - STILL LATER THAT NIGHT

Ed's car pulls up at the South Metropolitan State Hospital. It's a grim, unwelcoming edifice.

Ed helps weak Bela from the car. They look at each other, then Ed gingerly leads Bela in.

INT. HOSPITAL - SAME TIME

The lobby is clammy and dim. Ed and Bela reach the desk. A NURSE looks up, startled.

NURSE

My goodness, you gave me the willies. You look like that Dracula guy.

BELA

(very somber)

My name is Bela Lugosi. I wish to

commit myself.

NURSE

For what reason?

BELA

I have been a drug addict for twenty years. I need help...

The nurse nods. She takes Bela's arm and leads him away. Bela glances at Ed, then steps through a wide door. As it swings shut, we see a DOCTOR walk over and shake Bela's hand.

Ed stares at the door, dazed by all that's happened. He sits down in a chair, exhausted.

Ed's eyes slowly close, and he falls asleep...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - MORNING

Ed is still asleep, but now sunlight beats in.

Ed stirs and wakes up. He groggily looks around, and sitting across from him is a woman, knitting. This is KATHY O'HARA, 26, solid, reflective, with a dry sense of humor. Ed peers at her.

ED

Hello.

KATHY

Hello.

(beat)

You're sleeping in a tuxedo.

ED

I got married last night.

KATHY

Oh. Congratulations.

ED

The marriage already ended.

KATHY

Oh. My condolences.

Ed watches her knit.

ED

What are you making?

KATHY

Booties for my father. He gets cold in this hospital.

ED

How long's he been here?

KATHY

This is my thirteenth pair.

Ed nods. He spots the Doctor walk by.

ED

Excuse me.
(he runs to the Doctor)
Doctor? I'm with Mr. Lugosi. How
is he?

DOCTOR
Well... there's a lot of junk in his
system for such an old man.
Apparently, he was addicted to
morphine, tried to kick it, and got
re-addicted to methadone.

ED
Will he be okay?

DOCTOR
We'll do our best.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

We are outside Bela's room. He can be glimpsed inside,
strapped to the bed and SCREAMING in pain. He is going through
painful withdrawal and shakes horribly.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOSPITAL LOBBY - ANOTHER DAY

Ed strides into the hospital, wearing different clothes, and
carrying a box of chocolates. He waves at the nurse.

ED
Hi, Lillian.

NURSE
(she smiles)
Hi, Ed. Boy, he's got a lot of
visitors today.

ED
He does?

Ed is puzzled. He hurries back.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

A crowd of NEWSPAPER REPORTERS and PHOTOGRAPHERS overflow
Bela's room. Ed is astonished.

ED
What's going on here?! Excuse me!

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM

Decrepit Bela is propped up in his bed, as the mob of reporters
throw questions at him and SNAP shots: "Bela, how long have you
been a junkie??" "Bela, look this way!"

Ed angrily pushes through.

ED
Everybody out! This is a hospital!
Get out of here.

Ed forces them out, then SLAMS the door.

ED
What happened?!

BELA
(in a hoarse whisper)
Isn't it wonderful? After all these years, the press is showing an interest again in Bela Lugosi.

ED
(surprised)
Bela, they're parasites! They just want to exploit you.

BELA
Fine. Let them! There is no such thing as bad press. A man from New York even said he's putting me on the front page! First celebrity to ever check into rehab.
(he smiles feebly)
When I get out of here, I will be healthy. Strong! I will be primed for my comeback!

Bela starts COUGHING heavily. Ed stares sadly.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LOBBY - ANOTHER DAY

Ed sits tensely in the lobby, holding vigil. Kathy O'Hara walks by.

KATHY
Oh, it's you again.

ED
Oh, hi.

KATHY
You look beat.

ED
I am. How's your father?

KATHY
He's better. Thank you for asking.
(pause)
How's your friend?

ED
Not good...

Kathy reaches in her purse and pulls out two black booties.

KATHY
Well, I made him some booties to cheer him up.
(beat)
They're black -- to match his cape.

She smiles.

Ed slowly smiles in response. But this isn't his normal slick smile. It's gentler. Sincere.

ED
Would you maybe like to get a
coffee..?

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

Ed and the Doctor stand in a doorway, talking.

DOCTOR
We thought Mr. Lugosi was insured
though the Screen Actors Guild.

ED
Isn't he?

DOCTOR
No. They say his eligibility ran out
years ago.

ED
Look, he doesn't have any money...
but I'll give you everything I've
got. I have a few hundred dollars.

The Doctor shakes his head grimly.

DOCTOR
That won't even begin to cover it.
He's going to have to leave.

INT. BELA'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Bela lies sleeping in bed, pasty and pale. NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS
of his hospital stay are tacked up.

Ed anxiously tiptoes in. He quietly speaks.

ED
Bela, wake up.

Bela stirs lethargically. Ed puts on a fake smile.

ED
I've got some good news. The doctor
says you're all better. You can come
home.

BELA
(so weak, he's barely audible)
Really? I don't feel so great.

ED
No, you look good. And the tests
came back fine.
(a poignant pause)
C'mon...

Ed gingerly helps Bela up.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Bela slowly gets into Ed's car.

BELA

Eddie, I wanna make another picture.
When are we gonna make another
picture?

ED
Soon, Bela... Soon.

CUT TO:

INT. CAMERA RENTAL HOUSE - DAY

Ed is desperately trying to cut a deal with the OLD MANAGER.

ED
Please, I just need it for one
afternoon!

OLD MANAGER
Ed, if I cut a deal for you, I gotta
cut one for everybody.

ED
This is different! It'll mean so
much to me. All I need is a camera
and a tripod. No lights, no sound.
Nothin' fancy.

OLD MANAGER
And that's it?

ED
And one roll of film.

The old guy gives Ed a tough look.

CUT TO:

EXT. BELA'S HOUSE - DAY

Bela is dressed in his Sunday finest, standing in front of his
little house. He wears a cloak and a wide-brimmed hat.

BELA
This is so exciting. Another
production!

WE WIDEN. Out on the lawn... is just Ed. With the camera.

BELA
So Eddie, don't we need a sound crew?

ED
No, this is just the second unit.
We'll do the main footage later.

BELA
Oh. So what is the scene about?

ED
(improvising)
Uh... you're a very important and
respected man. You're leaving your
house... and you're in a hurry to a
big social event.

Bela nods. He mulls this over.

BELA

Okay. But what if I'm not in too big a hurry? What if I take a moment to slow down and savor the beauty of life? To smell a flower?

ED

(he smiles)

That's great. Let's do a take.

WIDE

Bela goes in the front door. Ed gets behind the camera, then turns it ON.

ED

Okay, roll camera! Rolling. Scene One, Take One!

(pause)

And... ACTION!

There's a moment. And then Bela slowly steps outside, calm, dignified, walking with a cane. He looks about -- and then something catches his eye. He leans down and picks a flower.

Bela smells the flower, then abruptly drops it. He starts crying. A pause, and then he composes himself. The old man slowly shuffles out of frame.

Ed peers emotionally from behind the camera.

ED

And, cut...

BELA

Eddie, how was I?

ED

(quiet)

Perfect.

Bela is pleased.

BELA

Good.

(beat)

Now what about my close up?

CUT TO:

EXT. HOLLYWOOD DUPLEX - DUSK

Ed's Nash convertible pulls up outside a neat little duplex in a nice neighborhood. Ed is dressed up for a date. He checks his hair nervously in the mirror, revealing an anxious boyishness we've never seen before.

Ed carries a bouquet of flowers to the front door. He rings the bell. Kathy opens the door. She looks very pretty in a full skirt with a crinolin.

KATHY

Oh, flowers! I didn't know you were so traditional.

ED

(a little embarrassed)

I just picked them up on the way
over...

KATHY

They're very nice.
(she smiles sweetly)
Let me get my coat.

EXT. CARNIVAL - NIGHT

Ed and Kathy are at a tattered traveling carnival. Rattling steel rides and flashing lights spin about them. They stroll through the crowds eating cotton candy. Kathy wears one of Ed's flowers on her dress.

KATHY

So have you always lived in L.A.?

ED

No. I'm from back east. You know,
All-American small town... everybody
knew everybody, I was a Boy Scout,
my dad worked for the post office...

KATHY

Sounds like you lived in Grovers
Corners.

INT. SPOOK HOUSE - NIGHT

Ed and Kathy ride through the old mechanical spook house.

KATHY

Did you find it boring?

ED

Nah, 'cause I had my comic books.
And I read pulp magazines. And I
listened to the radio dramas...

A wooden WITCH jumps out at them. They ignore it.

KATHY

Oh. I loved those shows! "Inner
Sanctum"... "The Shadow" --

ED

(getting excited)
Yeah! Don't forget "Mercury
Theatre"... And then every Saturday,
I'd go to the little movie theater
down the street. I even started
ushering there.

A creaky GHOST flies overhead.

KATHY

You're not gonna believe the first
picture I ever saw. Your friend's.

ED

What do you mean?

KATHY

"Dracula."

Ed freaks out.

ED

That's INCREDIBLE! That's the first picture I ever saw!!

WIDE

Mechanical BATS drop down and flap around them.

KATHY

That is incredible!

(beat)

You know, I had to sleep with the lights on for a week after seeing that movie.

ED

I had to sleep with the lights on for a month.

(he smiles)

But I never missed a Lugosi picture after that.

KATHY

A few years ago, I actually saw him do "Dracula" live. I thought he was much scarier in person.

CLOSEUP - ED

He starts at Kathy in wonder. He is overcome.

Their car SMASHES through the tin exit doors.

EXT. SPOOK HOUSE - SAME TIME

Ed and Kathy's little car comes to a stop. He gets very serious.

ED

Kathy, I'm about to tell you something I've never told any girl on a first date. But I think it's important that you know.

(beat)

I like to wear women's clothes.

KATHY

Huh?

ED

I like to wear women's clothes: Panties, brassieres, sweaters, pumps... it's just something I do. And I can't believe I'm telling you, but I really like you, and I don't want it getting in the way down the road.

Kathy is amazed. She contemplates all this.

KATHY

Does this mean you don't like sex with girls?

ED

No! I love sex with girls.

KATHY

Oh. Okay.

ED

(surprised)

Okay?

Kathy slyly grins.

KATHY

Okay.

Ed grins back. A moment.

CUT TO:

INT. ED'S HOUSE - DAY

Ed is on the telephone. We SPLIT-SCREEN with Vampira.

ED (on phone)

Vampira! Hi, it's Ed Wood.

VAMPIRA (on phone)

Ed, I told you, I don't wanna go out!

ED

No, don't worry, I moved on. I was just calling to see if you want to attend the world premiere of my new film, "Bride Of The Monster."

VAMPIRA

(confused)

Didn't you just make one called "Bride Of The Atom"?

ED

It's the same film. But the distributor wanted a punchier title. C'mon! It's gonna be a big event -- we're going all out! Bela, Tor, and Cris are coming. You'll have fun!

Vampira rolls her eyes.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

Hundreds of KIDS and TEENAGERS enter a dilapidated second-run theater. A banner says "'Bride Of The Monster' World Premiere! Celebrities In Person!"

EXT. DARK CITY STREET - SAME TIME

An antique limousine HEARSE drives down a dingy street.

INT. HEARSE

Ed drives. Tor, ill Bela, Vampira, and Criswell are crammed in with him, along with bewildered Kathy.

Everyone is dressed in gaudy "scary" outfits. Tor wears his frightening WHITE CONTACT LENSES.

TOR
My eyes are killink me.

ED
Don't worry. We're almost there.

BELA
(still hoarse)
Eddie, where are we? We passed that
carwash twenty minutes ago.

CRISWELL
I predict we're lost.

VAMPIRA
(to Bela)
Hey! You wanna watch the hands??

Bela sheepishly removes his hand from her thigh.

BELA
Sorry...

ED
(he looks around, baffled)
Has anyone ever been to Downey?

INT. MOVIE THEATER - SAME TIME

The audience is so restless, they're practically rioting. They
CLAP AND CHANT angrily.

A fat patronizing MANAGER steps on stage.

THEATER MANAGER
Children, if you don't calm down,
there won't be the entertainment.

ANGRY KID
It was supposed to start an hour ago!

INT. HEARSE - SAME TIME

Tempers are flaring.

TOR
My eyes are burnink.

KATHY
Hey look! There's the theater.

TOR
Where? I can't see nothink!

EXT. THEATER - SAME TIME

The hearse pulls up. A FRANTIC USHER runs over.

FRANTIC USHER
Thank God, you're here! They're
tearing the place apart!

The gang awkwardly steps out of the hearse. Tor gets out and
blindly walks straight into a lamp post. WHACK! He yelps.

TOR
Ow.

Bela moves slowly, very feeble. Vampira smooths out her slinky black dress, then puts her arm around Bela to help him.

FRANTIC USHER

C'mon! This way!

INT. THEATER - SAME TIME

Criswell points Tor in the right direction, and the group stumbles in. Ed escorts excited Kathy.

KATHY

I've never been to a premiere before.

The Usher opens the auditorium doors.

INSIDE

It's PANDEMONIUM. People are screaming and shouting. Kids jump up and down, on top of the chairs.

Bela, Tor, Vaspira, and Criswell are alarmed.

The lights dim on and off. Scratchy SPOOKY MUSIC blasts over the sound system.

ED

Wow. Go knock 'em dead!

Criswell pushes blind Tor towards the stage. Tor sticks out his arms and scarily staggers down the aisle. Criswell nervously follows. Vampira escorts Bela.

The crowd BOOS. They pelt our gang with popcorn.

Tor GROWLS like a monster. Kids LAUGH and jeer.

ON ED AND KATHY

In back, Ed speaks in a frightening manner into a MICROPHONE:

ED (amplified)

Ooooo! At the stroke of midnight,
the witching hour, the ghouls arise
from the dead!

DOWN THE AISLE

Tor slips in some butter. He tumbles and falls.

A WOMAN'S VOICE cackles.

WOMAN'S VOICE

It's the blind leading the blind!

Tor staggers to his feet. All disoriented, he starts walking the wrong direction and falls over a chair. People HECKLE.

Criswell quickly helps his up.

TOR

Dis is a nightmare.

CRISWELL

It's show biz.

Criswell pushes Tor in the right direction. Some roughnecks knock down Criswell and snatch his wallet.

A MEAN BOY jumps on his chair, ripping the stuffing out of the seat. He throws the fibers in the air, and they float over Bela and Vampira.

BELA

What is that?

VAMPIRA

I think they're getting ready to burn this place down.

A HIGH SCHOOL PUNK runs up and grabs Vampira's breasts.

HIGH SCHOOL PUNK

Hey Vampira, how 'bout a little love?

VAMPIRA

Fuck off!

She impulsively swings her arm and SLAMS the kid.

ON STAGE

The Manager pleads to the mob.

THEATER MANAGER

Children, please! Be calm!

Somebody throws a bottle and HITS him in the head. He goes down.

WIDE

The lights suddenly go off. Some girls SCREAM.

Ed's panicked. He grabs Kathy and runs down to his friends.

ED

C'mon! We're getting the hell out of here!

Ed rounds up Bela, Tor, Criswell, and Vampira.

The crowd BOOS louder. Blind Tor is totally confused.

TOR

What is happening?

ED

We're escaping!

The group runs up the aisle and leaves. As the doors close, "Bride Of The Monster" starts unspooling on the screen.

EXT. THEATER - SAME TIME

The gang frantically runs out, scared for their lives.

They look over. Some JUVENILE DELINQUENTS are stripping the hearse.

VAMPIRA

We're gonna die.

The theater doors CRASH open. The angry mob pours out.

Ed spins wildly around... and sees a cab approaching.

ED

Stop!

KATHY

STOP!

Kathy runs frenziedly into the street and throws herself at the cab. It screeches to a halt.

Everybody sprints over and jumps in. The cab ROARS away.

INT. CAB - SAME TIME

All of them are breathing heavily. They watch in the rear window as they drive away from the rampage.

A nervous silence. Until Bela speaks.

BELA

Now that was a premiere.

All of them LAUGH.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD - DAY

Bela and Ed stroll down the street, in high spirits. Bela smokes a big fat cigar.

BELA

Last night was quite a romp.

ED

Did you see that kid grab Vampira's tits?

BELA

I envied him.

(he chuckles)

Hell, I envied you too, having a girlfriend that would jump in front of a car like that.

ED

Yeah, she's really somethin'.

BELA

I know none of my wives would've.

Ed laughs. Bela puffs his cigar.

BELA

Eddie, I want to thank you. These last few days have been a good time.

ED

I just wish you coulda seen the movie.

BELA

No problem. I know it by heart...

Bela stops walking. And in a BOOMING, THEATRICAL VOICE, he suddenly launches into his impassioned, climactic speech from "Bride Of The Monster."

BELA

"Home. I have no home. Hunted... despised... living like an animal -- the jungle is my home! But I will show the world that I can be its master. I shall perfect my own race of people... a race of atomic supermen that will conquer the world!"

Ed is touched.

A few people around them APPLAUD.

Bela's face lights up, proud. An awed MIDWESTERN TOURIST hands him a pen and paper.

TOURIST

Mr. Lugosi, could I have your autograph?

BELA

Certainly.

TOURIST

Boy, that was incredible. You're just as good an actor as you always were.

Bela puffs out his chest majestically.

BELA

Better.

(beat)

I'm seventy-four, but I don't know it. If the brain is young, then the spirit is still vigorous... like a young man.

Bela turns and smiles wanly at Ed.

Ed smiles back.

CUT TO:

INT. ED'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Ed and Kathy stand in his kitchen, making dinner. She sticks her finger in a pot.

KATHY

Ed, this spaghetti sauce is delicious.

ED

Thanks. It's actually the only thing I know how to make.

(he motions)

Hey, can you grab that strainer?

She holds a strainer. Ed pours the spaghetti over it.

Suddenly the PHONE rings. Ed groans.

ED
Ugh! Always at the wrong time.
(he ANSWERS the phone)
Hello?

He listens.

And then, he gets a very somber expression.

ED
Oh no...

Ed HANGS UP the phone. He looks pained.

KATHY
What was that?

ED
(quiet)
Bela died.

CUT TO:

INT. FUNERAL HOME - DAY

It's Bela's funeral.

Ed sits crying in the front row, with Kathy at his side.

All Bela's friends are there. They're very subdued.

THE CASKET

Bela lies inside, made up in his full Dracula outfit. His hair is died black, and he wears the famous cape.

EXT. HOLY CROSS CEMETERY - DAY

On a grassy hill, Bela is laid to rest. The small crowd of mourners stands silhouetted against the dark gray clouds.

The coffin is lowered into the ground. Ed stands at the front, silently watching.

AT A DISTANCE

A few TABLOID PHOTOGRAPHERS snap pictures.

PHOTOGRAPHER #1
Whose crazy idea was it to bury him
in the cape?

PHOTOGRAPHER #2
I heard it was in the will. It was
how he wanted to be remembered.

CUT TO:

INT. SCREENING ROOM - DAY

Ed is alone in a darkened screening room, depressed.

Playing on the SCREEN is the last footage of Bela: Bela stumbles around in front of his house and smells the flower.

Ed drinks out of a flask.

The film runs out. A VOICE comes over a loudspeaker.

VOICE

Do you want me to run it again?

Ed silently nods.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ED'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ed's apartment has gone to hell. Ed is in a robe, unshaven and clutching a bottle of whiskey. Newspapers are everywhere.

Bela's and Ed's dogs eat out of the trash.

Kathy tries to straighten things up. Ed stares listlessly.

ED

I'd seen him in a coffin so many times, I expected him to jump out...

KATHY

Ed, you've got to snap out of this. Bela's dead -- you're not!

ED

I might as well be. I made shitty movies that nobody wanted to see.

(beat)

I blew it. All he wanted was a comeback... that last glory...

KATHY

Well you tried --

ED

(angry)

I was a fuckin' HACK! I let people recut the movies, cast their relatives...

(beat)

I let Bela down...

CUT TO:

EXT. ED'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

A new Studebaker pulls up. A bumper sticker says "JESUS SAVES"

A man in a plain brown suit steps out. This is J. EDWARD REYNOLDS, 50, Ed's santironious southern Christian landlord. Reynolds assertively bangs on Ed's front door.

REYNOLDS

Mr. Wood?!

ED (O.S.)

Hruphh...?

REYNOLDS

Mr. Wood, this is Mr. Reynolds, your landlord. Could you please open up?

The door opens a crack. Bleary Ed peers out.

ED

Yeah...?

REYNOLDS

Mr. Wood, you have bounced your third
and final rent check.

ED

(he sloppily lies)

I'm real sorry. My stockbroker must
have transferred the wrong account...
C'mon in, I'll write you another one.

INT. APARTMENT - SAME TIME

Ed motions Reynolds in. Reynolds peers unsurely at the tornado
inside. Then he notices a framed one-sheet for "BRIDE OF THE
MONSTER." Reynolds admires it.

REYNOLDS

Hmm, so you're in the picture
business?

ED

(rummaging for a check)

You could say that --

REYNOLDS

I'm interested in the picture
business. My associates and I wish
to produce a series of uplifting
religious films, on the Apostles.
But unfortunately, we don't have
enough money.

ED

(distracted)

Raising money is tough.

REYNOLDS

Oh! Our church has the money for one
film. We just don't have it for all
twelve...

ANGLE - ED

His eyes suddenly pop.

The color comes back to his face. A plan is quickly boiling
over inside Ed's head. He starts feverishly pacing around.

ED

Okay -- you know what you do? You
produce a film in a commercially
proven genre. And after it's a hit,
you take the profits from that, and
make the twelve Apostles' movies.

REYNOLDS

Would that work?

ED

Absolutely! You see this script..?

Ed randomly grabs a script off the messy floor, then glances
down, to see which one he picked up. It says "Graverobbers
From Outer Space."

ED
"Graverobbers From Outer Space"!
It's money in the bank.

REYNOLDS
Graverobbers from what??

ED
From outer space! It's science-
fiction. Very big with the kids!
If you make this picture, you'll have
enough money to finance a HUNDRED
religious films!
(beat)
And pay my back rent from the
profits.

Reynolds scratches his head.

REYNOLDS
I don't know... this is all a lot to
absorb.

ED
It's a guaranteed blockbuster!

REYNOLDS
Um, I understand that this science
friction is popular -- but don't the
big hits always have big stars?

ED
(in a frenzy)
Yeah, well we've GOT a big star!
Bela Lugosi!!

REYNOLDS
(mystified)
Lugosi??! Didn't he pass on?

Ed grins maniacally. He grabs a SMALL REEL of 35mm film.

ED
Yes, but I've got the last footage
he ever shot!

REYNOLDS
Just, it doesn't look like very much.

ED
It's plenty! It's the acorn that
will grow a great oak. I'll just
find a double to finish his scenes,
and we'll release it as "Bela
Lugosi's Final Film"

A beat. Reynolds stares, intrigued...

CUT TO:

INT. ED'S APARTMENT - LATER

The place is cleaned-up. Ed shouts excitedly into the phone.

ED
Bunny! We're making another film!

Yeah -- I got the Baptist Church of
Beverly Hills to put up the cash!

Paul sticks his head in.

PAUL MARCO

Ed, I got the Lugosi lookalikes
outside.

ED

Great! Bring 'em in! Bunny, I gotta
run.

Ed hangs up.

Paul leads in THREE. They look nothing like Bela. One is
a HOMELESS BUM, one is a SHORT FAT MAN, and one is CHINESE.

Ed inspects them.

ED

Too tall... too short...
(he glances at the Chinese guy)
And this guy doesn't work at all.

PAUL MARCO

Well I was thinkin' like, when Bela
played "Fu Manchu."

ED

That was Karloff.
(beat)
Paul, you gotta try harder. I don't
want this film to be haif-assed.
This time, we go for the quality.

Paul turns to go.

ED

And by the way, keep Sunday free.
The producers want all of us to get
baptized.

CUT TO:

INT. KATHY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Kathy reads a newspaper while knitting an angora sweater. Ed
is typing deliriously fast -- in one of his artistic fevers.

ED

You know, when you rewrite a script,
it just gets better and better!

KATHY

Do you want your buttons on the left
or the right?

ED

The left. It's more natural.
(he squints at his script)
Hey, I've got a scene where the
aliens have the ultimate bomb. What
would that be made of?

KATHY

Uh, atomic energy?

ED
No. They're beyond that! They're
smarter than the humans. What's more
advanced?

KATHY
Dynamite --

ED
No, BIGGER! What's the biggest
energy??

KATHY
The sun.

ED
(ecstatic)
Yes! BINGO! Solar energy! Oh
that's gonna seem so scientific.
(he resumes TYPING)
This movie's gonna be the ultimate
Ed Wood film. No compromises.

Kathy suddenly jumps up, shocked.

KATHY
Oh my God. Look at this!

She runs over and shows Ed the newspaper.

INSERT - THE NEWSPAPER

A small headline says "VAMPIRA REVEALED TO BE RED." Underneath
is the story: "Channel 7 has fired popular horror hostess
Vampira, after learning of her suspected communist leanings..."

ON ED AND KATHY

They're astonished.

ED
Those assholes.

KATHY
The poor girl's out of a job.

ED
Yeah...
(he looks up)
I should give her a call.

CUT TO:

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Ed and Kathy sit with a shaken-up Vampira.

ED
I'm really sorry...

VAMPIRA
It's terrible. People won't even
return my calls. It's like I don't
exist.

ED

I know what that's like.
(he pulls out his SCRIPT)
Anyway, I brought a copy of the
script. You would play the "Ghoul's
Wife."

VAMPIRA
(she grimaces)
The Ghoul's Wife?! God, I can't
believe I'm doing this...

KATHY
You should feel lucky. Ed's the only
guy in town who doesn't pass judgment
on people.

ED
(he laughs)
Hell, if I did, I wouldn't have any
friends.

Vampira smiles uncomfortably.

VAMPIRA
Look... would it be possible to make
the "Ghoul's Wife" a little less
prominent, so people won't really
notice me in the movie?

ED
You don't wanna be noticed?

VAMPIRA
Exactly. Hey, how 'bout this -- what
if I don't have any lines? I'll do
the part mute!

Kathy suddenly sees someone.

KATHY
Look, it's Dr. Tom.
(she SHOUTS)
Hey, Dr. Tom!

ED
Who's Dr. Tom?

KATHY
My chiropractor!

DR. TOM MASON, a tall, slender 35-year-old chiropractor,
strides over. He smiles.

DR. MASON
Kathy, how are you?! You're looking
in alignment today.

KATHY
Actually, my neck's a little funny.

Dr. Mason grabs Kathy's neck and CRACKS it loudly.

ON ED

Ed stares at the Doctor in astonishment. Ed is riveted.

ED

Wait a second. Don't move!

Ed excitedly jumps up, takes his NAPXIN, and covers the Doctor's face from the nose down.

ED

It's uncanny.

VAMPIRA

What's uncanny?

ED

LOOK AT HIS SKULL!

CUT TO:

INT. BAPTIST CHURCH OF BEVERLY HILLS - DAY

Services are in progress. J. Edward Reynolds leads a CHOIR singing an emotional SPIRITUAL.

Ed, Tor, Criswell, Paul, Conrad, Vampira, Kathy, Bunny, and Dr. Tom Mason sit in back. They're all wearing white robes and arguing about the doctor.

TOR

He look nutink like Bela!

CONRAD

He's kinds got his ears.

TOR

You're stupid!

KATHY

No, cover up his face.

Kathy lifts Dr. Mason's robe over his bewildered face.

CRISWELL

Ah! Now I see it.

DR. MASON

(goofily imitating Bela)

"I want to suck your blood!"

Everybody CRACKS up. Ed waves his arms.

ED

SHHH! We want these Baptists to like us.

Like bad kids, they quiet down. Ingenuous Southern REVEREND LYN LEMON speaks up front.

REVEREND LEMON

Brothers and Sisters, we've reached a special part of the service. The baptism of our new members!

(beat)

If the congregation will oblige, we'd like to adjourn and reconvene at Emma DuBois's back yard.

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

The straight-laced, devout CONGREGATION is gathered around a

large SWIMMING POOL. Reverend Lemon, Reynolds, and our misfits stand in the shallow end, in their white robes.

Criswell whispers to Vampira.

CRISWELL

Why couldn't we do this in the church?

VAMPIRA

Because "Brother Tor, couldn't fit in the sacred tub.

MONTAGE:

THE REVEREND BAPTIZES ED

REVEREND LEMON

...Do you accept the Lord Jesus Christ as your savior?

ED

I do.

Reynolds DUNKS Ed in the water.

THE REVEREND BAPTIZES BUNNY

REVEREND LEMON

...Do you reject Satan and all his works?

BUNNY

(hiding a smirk)

I do.

Reynolds DUNKS Bunny.

THE REVEREND BAPTIZES TOR

REVEREND LEMON

...Do you repent for all your sins?

TOR

I do.

Tor winks slyly at Criswell.

Reynolds DUNKS Tor. But Tor slips from Reynolds' grasp and sinks to the bottom of the pool.

REYNOLDS

Oh my God, I dropped him --

Tor lies on the bottom, staring lifeinsly.

CRISWELL

(mischievous)

I don't think he's coming up!

REVEREND LEMON

Lord no! The man's drowning!

REYNOLDS

(scared)

What do we do?!

REVEREND LEMON

Help! HELP!!!

The whole Congregation starts JUMPING IN. Men and women in their Sunday finest leap into the pool and start tugging on Tor. But nobody can budge the big whale.

REVEREND LEMON

(near tears)

Dear Jesus, please forgive us!

ON TOR

He suddenly rises, Poseidon-like, from the pool.

Tor spits out water, then lets out a hearty BELLY LAUGH.

TOR

Tor make good joke!

The Baptists aren't amused.

CUT TO:

INT. CITY BUS - MORNING

A bus drives along. Every PASSENGER stares at something up front -- Vampira, in her slinky black outfit. She reads a "Grave Robbers From Outer Space" script.

EXT. SCUMMY NEIGHBORHOOD - SAME TIME

The bus stops in a scary, run-down neighborhood. Vampira off and warily looks around.

VAMPIRA

This can't be the right address...

She nervously walks down a dingy alley. Vampira gets to an unmarked grimy door, gulps, then slowly opens it...

INT. WAREHOUSE SOUNDSTAGE - DAY

And inside is the "Grave Robbers From Outer Space" famous CEMETERY SET! The film is in production! Packed into a stinking little studio are a few scrawny twigs, branches, and flimsy cardboard tombstones set against a black drop.

Tot struts about gregariously, in his "Inspector Clay" suit. He chats up the CREW.

TOR

I am so happy! Finally I am star wit dialogue! I memorized every wordt. Eddie will be so proud!

The Baptists chase Ed around. They wave the script.

REYNOLDS

Before we start shooting, Mr. Wood, we have a few questions --

REVEREND LEMON

The script refers on numerous occasions to graverobbing. Now we find the concept of digging up consecrated ground highly offensive.

It's blasphemy.

ED

(very annoyed)

What are you talking about?! It's the premise of the movie. It's even the title, for Christ's sake!

REVEREND LEMON

(shocked)

Mr. Wood!

REYNOLDS

Yes, about that title, it strikes us as very inflammatory. Why don't we change it to "Plan Nine From Outer Space"?

Ed shakes his head.

ED

That's ridiculous!

WIPE TO:

CEMETERY SET

They're filming the COPS arriving at the pitch-black cemetery. There's a prop police car, and an assistant blows fog in.

ED

And, ACTION!

Tor steps onto the set

TOR (as Inspector Clay)

"Medicul eksaminer been aroundt yet?"

COP

"Just left. The morgue wagon oughta be along most any time."

TOR

"You get statement frumk vitnesses?"

COP

"Yeah, but they're pretty scared."

TOR

"Findink mess like dis oughta make anyone frightened. Have one of da boyz take dem back to town. You take jarge."

ON THE CREW

Everybody grices, trying to understand Tor. The SCRIPT GIRL shakes her head.

The Baptists angrily pull Ed aside.

REYNOLDS

What'd you give him all the lines for?? He's unintelligible!

ED

Look, Lugosi is dead and Vampira

won't talk. I had to give somebody
the dialogue.

REVEREND LEMON

That's not an answer.

WIPE TO:

ANOTHER SCENE BEING SHOT - LATER

As Inspector Clay, Tor wanders around the "cemtery," waving
his flashlight and nervously fingering his gun.

Ed grins at the Baptists.

ED

See, no talking. Isn't he good?

(he grabs his MEGAPHONE)

CUE DR. TOM!

DR. TOM (o.s.)

Now?

ED

YES, NOW! LURK HIM. AND BE SURE TO

KEEP YOUR FACE COVERED!

The door of a large paper-mache crypt creeps open. Dr. Tom
uncertainly steps out, impersonating Bela. He holds the cape
over his face and stalks Tor.

Ed is pleased as punch. He whispers to the Baptists.

ED

Isn't it wonderful? Bela lives!

REVEREND LEMON

Doesn't this strike you as a bit
morbid?

ED

No, he would've loved it! Bela's
returned from the grave -- like
Dracula.

(he grabs the MEGAPHONE)

CUE VAMPIRA!

Vampira steps out, walking in a trance. Tor is now cornered.
He fruitlessly FIRES his gun, but bullets can't stop zombies.
Vampira and Dr. Tom kill him. Tor screams.

WIPE TO:

ANOTHER SCENE GETS SHOT - LATER

Paul and Conrad are scared cops exploring the cemetery.

CONRAD (as a cop)

"Let's go down and find out whose
grave it is."

PAUL MARCO (as a cop)

"Why do I always get hooked up with
these spook details? Monsters!
Graves! Bodies!"

ED
CUE THE FLYING SAUCER, RAY!

Off-stage, a grip on a ladder pans a 10K SEARCHLIGHT.

The LIGHT crosses the actors. They look up in horror, then clumsily fall down. A rickety fake tombstone tips over.

ED
And PERFECT. CUT!

REYNOLDS
(freaking out)
"Perfect"? Mr. Wood, do you know anything about the art of film production?!

ED
I like to think so.

REYNOLDS
That cardboard headstone tipped over. This graveyard is obviously phony!

ED
People won't notice. Filmmaking isn't about picky details -- it's about the big picture.

REYNOLDS
Oh, you wanna talk about the "big picture"?! How 'bout that the policemen arrive in the daylight, but now it's suddenly night???

Ed suddenly flips out. He's livid.

ED
YOU DON'T KNOW ANYTHING! Haven't you ever heard of "suspension of disbelief"?!

A STRAPPING YOUNG MAN walks up. He smiles at the Baptists,

STRAPPING YOUNG MAN
Reverend, I'm here.

ED
(baffled)
Who's he?

REVEREND LEMON
This is our choir director. He's gonna play the young hero.

ED
(furious)
Are you IN5ANE? I'm the director! I make the casting decisions around here!

REVEREND LEMON
I thought this was a group effort.

ED
NOOOOO!!!

Ed spastically storms away.

INT. DRESSING ROOM - SAME TIME

Ed bursts in. He paces about, hysterically traumatized.

ED
They're driving me crazy! These
Baptists are stupid, stupid, STUPID!

Ed glances at a clothing rack -- and sees an ANGORA SWEATER.

Ed is taken aback. He slowly removes it from the hanger and rubs it against his face. His breathing slows.

ED
Mmm. I need to calm... Take deep
breaths...
(he rubs the angora)
Ohh, it's so smooth...

INT. SOUNDSTAGE - SAME TIME

The dressing room door flies open. Ed slowly struts out, in the sweater, pantsuit, and pumps. He is calmed and at ease.

The stage quiets. People are staring.

ED
Okay, everyone! Let's set up for
Scene 112! Move the crypt stage left
and get ready with Tor's make-up
effect.

The crew resumes working. But the Baptists charge up, aghast.

REVEREND LEMON
Mr. Wood? What do you think you're
doing?!

ED
I'm directing.

REYNOLDS
Not like THAT, you're not!

REVEREND LEMON
Remove that get-up immediately. You
shame our Lord.

Ed throws up his hands.

ED
That's it. I give up!

CUT TO:

EXT. SOUNDSTAGE - DAY

Ed frantically marches out of the building. He's still in his ladies' outfit. Ed sees a cab and WHISTLES loudly.

The cab pulls over. Ed jumps in.

ED
Take me to the nearest bar.

CUT TO:

INT. MUSSO & FRANKS - DAY

The place is quiet, mid-morning. Frazzled Ed enters and sits at the bar.

ED

Imperial whiskey, straight up.

The bartender nonchalantly pours a shot. Ed takes the drink. He quietly sips his booze and reflects upon his day.

Ed glances around. And then, suddenly -- his eyes widen.

Sitting at a table is ORSON WELLES! The portly, world-famous filmmaker sits alone, eating lunch with one hand and drawing STORYBOARDS with the other.

Ed is thunderstruck.

ED

Oh my God. It's Orson Welles...

Ed nervously stands. He starts to step forward -- when he catches his own reflection in a mirror. He's still in drag.

ED

Oh shit.

Ed rolls his eyes. He runs his hand through his hair, then slowly approaches Orson Welles. Ed is terrified.

ED

Excuse me, Sir...?

ORSON WELLES

(he casually looks up)

Yes?

ED

Uh, uh, I'm a young filmmaker, and a really big fan... and I just wanted to meet you.

ORSON WELLES

(he extends his hand)

My pleasure. I'm Orson Welles.

ED

Oh. Um, I'm Ed Wood!

(he smiles anxiously)

So, what are you working on now?

ORSON WELLES

Eh, the financing just fell through for the third time on "Don Quixote." So I'm trying to finish a promo for something else. But I can't find the soundtrack --

(he shrugs)

I think I left it in Malta.

Ed is astonished.

ED

I can't believe it. These sound like my problems!

ORSON WELLES

It's the damn money men. You never know who's a windbag, and who's got the goods. And then they all think they're a director...

ED

Ain't that the truth! I've even had producers recut my movies --

ORSON WELLES

Ugh, I hate when that happens.

ED

(on a roll)

And they always want to cast their buddies -- it doesn't even matter if they're right for the part!

ORSON WELLES

Tell me about it. I'm supposed to do a thriller at Universal, and they want Charlton Heston to play a Mexican!

Ed shakes his head. He's discouraged.

ED

Mr. Welles, is it all worth it?

ORSON WELLES

It is when it works.

(solemn)

You know the one film of mine I can stand to watch? "Kane." The studio hated it... but they didn't get to touch a frame.

(he smiles warmly)

Ed, visions are worth fighting for. Why spend your life making someone else's dreams?

CLOSEUP - ED

He has seen God.

ED

Wow.

CUT TO:

INT. SOUNDSTAGE - DAY

Ed bursts onto the stage, a changed man. Re-energized, he confidently grabs the Baptists.

ED

Mr. Reynolds!

REYNOLDS

Yes?

ED

We are gonna finish this film just

the way I want it! Because you can't compromise an artist's vision!

REVEREND LEMON

(flustered)

B-but it's our money --

ED

And you're gonna make a bundle. This movie's gonna be famous! But only if you SHUT UP, and let me do it my way!

Reynolds and Rev. Lemon are speechless.

CLOSEUP - ED

He beams, turns and SHOUTS TRIUMPHANTLY into the soundstage.

ED

ALRIGHT! ACTORS IN POSITION! LET'S FINISH THIS PICTURE!!

WIPE TO:

"PLAN 9" MONTAGE:

SCENE IN THE CEMETERY SET

Tor plays a zombie rising from the dead. He wears the scary white contact lenses. Tor's so big, he has trouble lifting himself from the grave.

EDITING ROOM

Ed and his stock footage buddy watch a moviola.

ED

Okay, I want that tank! And I want that bomb!

SOUNDSTAGE

Harry paints Bunny's face GREEN, like a Martian. Ed yells.

ED

NO! The aliens should look like people.

MAKE-UP MAN HARRY

I'm tellin' ya, aliens are always green.

ED

Not in my movie, they're not!

SCENE IN THE SPACESHIP SET

Bunny's make-up is now normal. He wears an alien suit. A HAMMY ALIEN enters and salutes with a bizarre crossing gesture.

BUNNY

"What plan will we follow?"

HAMMY ALIEN

"Plan Nine."

BUNNY

"Plan Nine..."

(he consults his papers)

"Ah yes. Plan Nine deals with the resurrection of the dead."

SCENE IN THE CEMETERY

Tor staggers up to Paul Marco and CLOBBERS him.

OFF-STAGE

Ed smiles at the Baptists.

ED

Maybe you guys were right. "Plan Nine" is a good title.

MINIATURE CITY SET

Ed shoots the famous flying saucers. Paul holds a paper plate and Conrad lights it on fire.

The "saucer" soars on fishing line over a little miniature town.

SCENE IN THE BEDROOM SET

Dr. Tom glides in, his cape over his face. A woman SCREAMS.

COCKPIT SET

Ed stands in front of a masonite board and two chairs. An actor playing the AIRPLANE PILOT walks up.

PILOT

Where's the cockpit set?

ED

You're standing in it.

(he yells off)

Alright, bring in the shower curtain!

A shower curtain gets lowered into the doorway.

EXT. DUSTY ROAD

A car zooms by. Kathy drives, as Ed shoots handheld out the back window.

SCENE IN THE SPACESHIP SET

Th Hammy Alien argues with the humans.

PILOT

"So what if we develop this solarnite bomb? We'd be even a stronger nation."

HAMMY ALIEN

"Stronger? You see! You see!! Your stupid minds! Stupid! STUPID!"

PILOT

"That's all I'm taking from you."

He WHACKS the alien. A brawl breaks out.

SCENE WITH CRISWELL

Criswell lectures behind a desk, with mysterious lighting

CRISWELL

"Perhaps on your way home, someone will pass you in the dark, and you will never know it. For they will be from outer space."

SCENE IN THE CEMETERY SET

The famous shot: Tor and Vampira walk in a trance through foggy cemetery.

Off-stage, Ed stands with the crew. He shouts gleefully.

ED

More fog! More fog!!

(he beams)

And CUT! PRINT IT! IT'S A WRAP!

END MONTAGE.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY - NIGHT

It's pouring rain. Standing in the drench is Ed. He's wearing a tux, and fighting with his open convertible top. The Rambler is filled with water.

Kathy stands under an awning. She wears a pretty gown.

ED

I can't get it to go up.

KATHY

Ed, you're gonna miss your own premiere.

ED

(he gives up)

C'mon! Let's just go.

Ed impulsively opens the car door. Water pours out. Kathy scurries out and jumps in the wet car with him.

EXT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

The rain is gushing down. The marquee proclaims "WORLD PREMIERE: PLAN 9 FROM OUTER SPACE!"

People hurry in. Ed and Kathy roar up in the open convertible, totally soaked. He jumps out, opens her door, and they run inside.

INT. THEATER - NIGHT

The theater is packed. All the gang, and their friends and families, are gathered.

Criswell stands on-stage, speaking into a mike.

CRISWELL

You are about to see an extraordinary motion picture. But before it begins, I think we ought to give a hand to the man without whom we wouldn't be here tonight... Eddie, take a bow!

The crowd ERUPTS in applause. Everybody goes crazy -- even the Baptists. People YELL "Speech! Speech!"

Ed smiles proudly. Kathy kisses him. Ed runs down front, hugs Criswell, then takes the microphone.

ED

Thanks a million. I just wanna say... this film is for Bela.

The lights dim.

DISSOLVE TO:

MINUTES LATER

The title "PLAN 9 FROM OUTER SPACE" is projected onto the screen. As random IMAGES from the film play out, we drift over the happy faces of our friends watching.

Paul and Conrad stare, enthralled.

Tor laughs as he sees himself.

Vampira giggles. Bunny nudges her playfully.

Criswell mouths his own lines.

ON SCREEN

Bela appears, in his little suit. In the last footage he ever shot, he shuffles around in front of his house, then tenderly smells the flower.

ON ED

He watches, entranced. Then he smiles to himself.

ED

This is the one. I know I'll be remembered for this film.

CUT TO:

INT. THEATER LOBBY - LATER

The BOISTEROUS crowd is in high spirits. People congratulate Ed and pat him on the back. "It was great!" "It's your best one yet!" "Bela would've loved it!"

Ed drifts through the crowd, basking in the glory. It's like a wonderful dream.

EXT. THEATER - SAME TIME

The rain comes down in sheets. The doors burst open, and Ed and Kathy run out.

KATHY

Ed, I'm so happy for you.

ED
Let's get married.

KATHY
(startled)
Huh?!

ED
Right now. Let's drive to Vegas!

KATHY
But it's pouring. And the car top
is stuck!

ED
(he gives his killer grin)
So? It's only a five-hour drive.
And it'll probably clear up, once we
hit the desert. Heck, it'll probably
clear up once we drive around the
corner. I promise.

Kathy stares in disbelief. Then she smiles. They kiss.

Ed and Kathy jump into the open convertible. The engine starts, and they drive away, disappearing into the pouring rain.

A moment.

And then, we move up, up, into the black clouds. Lightning CRACKS across the sky.

OPTICAL:

We slowly PULL OUT from the sky, move through a window... and we're back inside

INT. HAUNTED MANSION PARLOR - NIGHT

Criswell is sitting inside his coffin. He stares at us.

CRISWELL
My friend, you have just seen the
story of Edward D. Wood, Junior.
Stranger than fact... and yet every
incident based on sworn testimony.
(his eyes gleam)
A man. A life. Can you prove it
didn't happen?

A beat, to ponder this. And then Criswell slowly lies back in his coffin, and the lid mysteriously closes over him.

FADE OUT.

THE END