

"THE HUDSUCKER PROXY"

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September 1992 Draft

BLACK

No image. A bleak WIND MOANS. HOLD.

With a STINGING CHORD we --

CUT

TO:

CITY SKYLINE - NIGHT (CIRCA 1958)

Lights twinkle. Snow falls. The WIND MOANS.

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

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The's right... New York.

streets

We are TRACKING HIGH THROUGH the night sky. From the

falling

far below we hear the sounds of TRAFFIC muffled by the

snow, and the DISTANT sound of many VOICES SINGING.

skyscrapers

We are DRIFTING AMONG the buildings; the tops of

slip by left and right.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

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

is

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

"Auld Lang Syne."

NARRATOR (V.O.)

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

top

We are MOVING IN TOWARDS a particular skyscraper. At its

is a large illuminated clock.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Yep...

We hear a SERIES OF POPPING sounds.

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

A big band WALTZ MIXES UP on the track.

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

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

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

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

we

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

reads

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

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

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

the

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

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

out

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

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

perhaps

on

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

He looks with nervous determination into the void.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

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

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

NARRATOR (V.O.)

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

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

NARRATOR (V.O.)

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

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

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

NARRATOR (V.O.)

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

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

NARRATOR (V.O.)

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

OVER BLACK

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

CUT

TO:

DESTINATION DISPLAY

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

LINE OF BAGS

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

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

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

TO: DISSOLVE

STREET

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

YOUNG MAN

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

WESSELS EMPLOYMENT AGENCY

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

REVERSE

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

Norville stands pat, watching.

HIS POV

An entry flips over to reveal EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT.

NORVILLE

He brightens.

BOARD

We PAN ALONG the executive entry to EXPERIENCE REQUIRED.

NORVILLE

He frowns.

apply

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

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

PANNING

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

EXPERIENCED ONLY... EXPERIENCED... EXPERIENCED...  
EXPERIENCED...

TO:

CUT

CLOSE SHOT - EXECUTIVE

and

A middle-aged, mousy-looking man in a conservative suit  
wire-rimmed spectacles is addressing his remarks to

someone

O.S. Behind the Executive we see only the skyline of New  
York City.

EXECUTIVE

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

TRACKING

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

Executive

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

EXECUTIVE

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

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

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

This is WARING HUDSUCKER.

REPORTING EXECUTIVE

He drones on.

EXECUTIVE

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

big  
picture

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

EXECUTIVE (V.O.)

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

FOLDED-BACK WANT ADS

PARTNER --

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

pencil

WIDER

stirs

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

down

change,

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

CLOSE ON COUNTER

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

counter.  
been

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

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

wafts

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

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

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

WARING HUDSUCKER

the

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

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

TO:

CUT

NORVILLE'S BACK

his

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

it

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

it

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

against

The newspaper eddies around some more, then plasters  
Norville.

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

NEWSPAPER SCRAP

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

BACK TO NORVILLE

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

CUT

TO:

CLOSE SHOT - WARING HUDSUCKER

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

EXECUTIVE (O.S.)

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

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

EXECUTIVE (O.S.)

...new record in gross...

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

EXECUTIVE (O.S.)

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

sets

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

EXECUTIVE (O.S.)

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

He deliberately unstraps his wristwatch and looks at its face.

that

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

EXECUTIVE (O.S.)

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

Hudsucker lays the watch carefully on the table.

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

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

EXECUTIVE  
...we're loaded.

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

HUDSUCKER  
Ahem...

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

He swings his chair out.

He steps up onto the chair.

The board stares.

He steps up from the chair onto the board table.

The heads of the board members swing up in unison.

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

EXECUTIVE  
...Mr. Hudsucker?

CLOSE ON WANT ADS

THE CIRCLED AD

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

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

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

is

the motto "THE FUTURE IS NOW."

the

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

ANOTHER ANGLE

flying

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

HUDSUCKER

Aaaaaaaaaahhhhhhhhh...

SECRETARIAL AREA

typing

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

beside

HUDSUCKER

...aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaahhh...

secretary

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

papers

TRACKING

he

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

hair.

FREEZE FRAME and SUPER A TITLE.

HOT DOG VENDOR

is

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

HUDSUCKER,

FREEZE FRAME and SUPER A TITLE.

PASSERBY ON SIDEWALK

LOW

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

the

Hudsucker Building.

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

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

SUPER the title of the film: THE HUDSUCKER PROXY.

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

DUTCH ANGLE

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

DISSOLVE THROUGH

TO:

EXT. TOP FLOOR

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

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

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

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

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

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

We hear only the HUM of the HUDSUCKER CLOCK.

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

middle-

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

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

members'

The CAMERA FOLLOWS him INTO the room. The other board

desperately

heads swivel to watch him, all staring, searching

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

Mussburger perches on the board table by his own chair.

suicide's

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

MUSSBURGER

Pity to waste a whole Monte Cristo.

confirmed.

The other board members unfreeze, their worst fears

AN EXECUTIVE

He could've opened the window.

ELDERLY EXECUTIVE

Waring Hudsucker never did anything the easy way.

ADDISON

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

MUSSBURGER

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

ADDISON

He didn't look unhappy!

EXECUTIVE

Yeah, well, he didn't look rich.

ELDERLY EXECUTIVE

Waring Hudsucker was never an easy man to figure out.

(reminiscing)

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

MUSSBURGER

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

PRECISE EXECUTIVE  
Forty-five --

ELDERY EXECUTIVE  
Counting the mezzanine --

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

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

MUSSBURGER  
Meaning?

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

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

Stillson shrugs.

STILLSON  
The company bylaws are quite clear.

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

PRECISE EXECUTIVE  
Forty-four --

ELDERLY EXECUTIVE  
-- Not counting the mezzanine.

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

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

controlling interest.

MUSSBURGER

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

STILLSON

January first.

AN EXECUTIVE

Thirty days.

ANOTHER EXECUTIVE

Four weeks.

ADDISON

A month at the most.

MUSSBURGER

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

AN EXECUTIVE

We play up the fact that Hud is dead.

ALL

(in unison)

Long live the Hud!!

ANOTHER EXECUTIVE

We depress the stock --

YET ANOTHER EXECUTIVE

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

PRECISE EXECUTIVE

Fifty-one.

ELDERLY EXECUTIVE

Not counting the mezzanine.

CAUTIOUS EXECUTIVE

It could work.

OPTIMISTIC EXECUTIVE

It should work.

PRACTICAL EXECUTIVE

It would work.

MUSSBURGER

(at ticker tape machine)

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

ENTHUSIASTIC EXECUTIVE  
Yeah, a puppet!

ANOTHER EXECUTIVE  
A proxy!

YET ANOTHER EXECUTIVE  
A pawn!

CHATTERING  
Hudsucker's  
exhales

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

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

TO:

CUT

wears  
criss-

Norville  
bowels

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

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

NORVILLE  
What's exte --

AGENT  
Punch in late and they dock ya!

envelopes  
his

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

FIRST SCREAMER

This goes to seven! Mr. Mutuszak!  
Urgent!

AGENT

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

SECOND SCREAMER

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

AGENT

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

THIRD SCREAMER

This one's for Morgatross! Chop chop!

AGENT

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

FOURTH SCREAMER

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

AGENT

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

FIFTH SCREAMER

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

AGENT

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

CUT

TO:

NORVILLE

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

NORVILLE

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

TO

others.

He is COASTING ACROSS the "K" mail slots, finally COMES  
Max Kloppitt, Sr. His hand moves to the next slot, Max  
Kloppitt, Jr. This slot is half the size of all the  
The envelope will not fit in.

He frowns.

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

in

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

CLOSEUP - ANCIENT SORTER

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

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

ANCIENT SORTER'S SHELF

slots.

As his letters fly furiously but neatly into their mail

NORVILLE

He raises his voice over the mailroom din:

NORVILLE

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

whisking

The ANCIENT SORTER considers this as he continues  
his mail.

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

Whisk. Whisk. Whisk.

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

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

INSERT - LETTER

Thank

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

After a moment he adds:

Your friend in the mailroom.

BACK TO SCENE

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

ANCIENT SORTER  
Terrific.

NORVILLE  
Ya know, entry level!

ANCIENT SORTER  
Tell me about it.

NORVILLE  
I got big ideas, though!

ANCIENT SORTER  
I'm sure you do.

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

handing

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

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

from

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

NORVILLE

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

The Ancient Sorter looks questioningly from the circle to Norville.

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

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

ANCIENT SORTER  
Terrific.

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

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

He resumes his sorting.

NORVILLE  
How long've you been down here?

ANCIENT SORTER  
Forty-eight years...

Whisk. Whisk.

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

Whisk. Whisk. Whisk.

ANCIENT SORTER  
...If I'm lucky.

A BELL CLANGS.

The PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEM SPUTTERS to life.

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

All HUBBUB ABRUPTLY STOPS and the sounds of HEAVY

MACHINERY,

total

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

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

return

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

A STEAM WHISTLE SCREECHES.

ALARM BELLS go OFF.

From the PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEM:

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

The mail room is thrown into pandemonium.

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

his

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

MAN  
Blue letter!!

Animated for the first time:

ANCIENT SORTER  
Jumpin' Jehosephat, a blue letter!

of

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

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

which

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

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

He is holding aloft a letter.

He takes loping drawf strides down the aisle.

CLOSEUP - LETTER

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

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

BACK TO SCENE

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

ANCIENT SORTER

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

Norville gulps.

HUTCHINSON

You!

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

HUTCHINSON

...Yeah, you! Barnes!

As he points, the people around Norville shrink away.

HUTCHINSON

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

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

COMPLEMENTARY TIGHT DUTCH ANGLE ON HUTCHINSON

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

HUTCHINSON  
Mussburger!!

TO: CUT

ELEVATOR DOORS

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

As Norville enters the elevators:

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

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

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

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

BUZZ  
...Hang it up to dry.

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

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

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

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

NORVILLE  
I --

BUZZ

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

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

Buzz opens the door and a couple of people enter.

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

MR. LEVIN  
Thirty-six.

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

An obese MAN enters, smoking a cigar:

FAT MAN  
Buzz.

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

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

NORVILLE  
Well, I --

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

He turns to look at Norville.

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

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

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

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

The ELEVATOR SCREAMS into overdrive and we:

TO:

CUT

ELEVATOR DOORS

Sweeping open. Norville staggers out.

BUZZ  
(hissing)  
Good luck, buddy!

The door sweeps shut. Norville looks nervously around.

Behind him the elevator doors suddenly open again.

BUZZ  
-- You'll need it!

SCREAM

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

Norville turns toward the executive offices.

Plush, thick-carpeted silence.

Norville starts walking.

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

of  
the

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

NORVILLE  
...Mr. Mussburger's office?

The scraper looks sullenly over his shoulder at Norville.

With a jerk of his thumb he indicates the direction.

Norville enters the adjacent office.

OUTER OFFICE

office.

Two secretaries are in Mussburger's outer reception

folder,

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

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



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

CLICK

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

INT. MUSSBURGER'S OFFICE

its door swinging open to admit Norville.

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

The door closes behind Norville.

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

NORVILLE'S POV

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

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

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

His BACK TO us, into the phone:

MUSSBURGER

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

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

MUSSBURGER

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

He covers the mouth piece.

MUSSBURGER

...Who let you in?

NORVILLE

I --

Into the phone:

MUSSBURGER

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

The INTERCOM BUZZES fiercely.

VOICE (V.O.)

Mr. Bumstead is waiting downstairs.

Mussburger hits the intercom.

MUSSBURGER

Tell him I'll be right there...

(looks at Norville)

Well, what is it?

NORVILLE

I --

from

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

MUSSBURGER

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

(looks up at Norville)

...Make it fast, make it fast.

NORVILLE

You --

The INTERCOM SQUAWKS.

VOICE (V.O.)

Mr. Bumstead is getting very --

MUSSBURGER

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

(to Norville)

...What're you, a mute?

The second PHONE on Mussburger's desk RINGS.

MUSSBURGER

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

Norville clears his throat.

NORVILLE

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

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

NORVILLE

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

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

NORVILLE

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

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

NORVILLE

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

sweet baby --

MUSSBURGER

Wait a minute!

Sudden quiet.

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

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

desk.  
His eyes locked on Norville's, Mussburger circles the  
He stands toe-to-toe with Norville.

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

Finally he draws his head back.

MUSSBURGER

Hmmm...

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

MUSSBURGER

Umm-hmm...

chair  
He steps back, eyes still on Norville.  
He jerks his thumb over his shoulder, indicating his  
behind the desk.

MUSSBURGER

Siddown.

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

MUSSBURGER

...Go ahead. Try it on.

Norville obeys, reluctantly, stiffly.

MUSSBURGER

...Put your feet up.

Norville is again reluctant.

MUSSBURGER

...Go ahead.

Norville obeys. Mussburger studies.

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

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

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

Norville beams.

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

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

MUSSBURGER  
...education, were you?

NORVILLE  
Well, I'm a college graduate --

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

NORVILLE  
Well, I made the dean's list.

MUSSBURGER  
(worried)  
Hmmm.

Norville sputters out some more cigar smoke.

NORVILLE  
At the Muncie College of Business  
Administration.

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

Norville shakes his head.

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

NORVILLE  
No, sir.

MUSSBURGER  
Not even behind your back?

NORVILLE  
Sir! They voted me most likely to  
succeed!

MUSSBURGER  
(curtly)  
You're fired.

NORVILLE  
But, sir! --

MUSSBURGER  
Get your feet off that desk.

As he struggles to comply:

NORVILLE  
But --

MUSSBURGER  
Get out of my sight.

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

MUSSBURGER  
My God! The Bumstead contracts!!

NORVILLE  
Oh my God, sir!

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

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

NORVILLE  
Oh my God, sir!

Norville runs across the office to a large water cooler.

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

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

circle on the top sheet of the contract.

toward  
knees.

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

water.

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

place

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

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

NORVILLE  
Oh my God, sir!

desk,

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

flecks

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

MUSSBURGER  
Now out of here! Out!

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

MUSSBURGER  
Not that way! Through the door!

NORVILLE  
But, sir!

up

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

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

MUSSBURGER  
Right away, buster! Out of my office!

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

MUSSBURGER

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

NORVILLE  
Sir, my leg is on fire!

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

MUSSBURGER  
Get out of this office, you dithering  
nincompoop!

Norville picks up the flaming trash receptacle.

NORVILLE  
Oh my God, sir!

He winds up and throws it through the closed window.

The GLASS SHATTERS and the flaming basket plummets to  
oblivion.

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

CLOSE SHOT - BUMSTEAD CONTRACTS

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

MUSSBURGER  
My God! The Bumstead contracts!

NORVILLE  
Oh my God, sir!

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

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

MUSSBURGER  
Eeeeeeeaaaahhhh!

CUT

TO:

INT. EXECUTIVE WAITING ROOM

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

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

jump out a window too?!

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

CUT

TO:

NORVILLE

Desperately hanging onto Mussburger by his legs.

NORVILLE

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

Mussburger's screaming abruptly stops.

(THE

CLOSEUP - MUSSBURGER'S HORROR-STRICKEN FACE REMEMBERING

SCREEN GOES WATERY):

MUSSBURGER

tailor,

is in a basement tailor shop. LUIGI, an old Italian

is just running his tape up Mussburger's inseam.

LUIGI

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

MUSSBURGER

(barking)

No! Single stitch is fine.

LUIGI

(begging)

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

MUSSBURGER

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

CUT BACK

TO:

CLOSEUP OF PANICKED MUSSBURGER

MUSSBURGER

Damn!

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

QUICK WIPE

TO:

LUIGI AT HIS SEWING MACHINE

LUIGI

(musing to himself)

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

BACK TO MUSSBURGER'S PANTS

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

MUSSBURGER

sighs with relief.

He looks up.

NORVILLE

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

MUSSBURGER

Looking. Thinking.

NORVILLE

Struggling to hold on.

MUSSBURGER

Calm. Contemplating.

MUSSBURGER

Hmmm...

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

NORVILLE

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

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

Mussburger's legs are gone.

Norville throws his head back and laughs, it seems,

insanely --

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

Mussburger's

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

LAUGHING MONTAGE

Montage silent but for MUSIC.

of  
the

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

B) CLOSE SHOT - Board member laughing.

C) Another board member. Laughing.

D) Mussburger. Laughing.

E) Norville laughing.

F) FREEZE FRAME ON Norville's laughing face.

ANGLE

newspaper

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

Its headline reads: UNTRIED YOUTH TO HELM HUDSUCKER.

reads:

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

The article is under the byline of Amy Archer.

around  
Norville  
laughs

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

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

chair

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

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

FREEZE ON Norville's laughing face.

ANGLE

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

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

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

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

Norville laughs merrily and also throws his arms up wide.

BOARD MEMBER

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

FLOOR

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

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

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

TRACK IN TOWARDS him.

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

As Mussburger opens the newspaper, the CONTINUED TRACK IN

Just

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

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

PHOTOGRAPH

COMES TO LIFE and Norville unfreezes, laughing.

oak

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

OFFICE

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

leaving

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

His LAUGHTER ECHOES in the bright bare office.

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

FADE

OUT:

FADE IN:

NEW YORK SKYLINE - DAY

by

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

man

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

building,

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

his

mouth and waves it, as if painting a headline.

EDITOR

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

(exploding)

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

REVERSE

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

of  
never-  
disgust.

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

EDITOR

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

REPORTER

Come on, chief, give us a break.

EDITOR

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

REPORTER #2

Chief, if we had more access --

EDITOR

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

Whack! --

slammed  
one  
the

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

EDITOR

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

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

REPORTER #3  
Everybody has parents.

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

PARKINSON  
Uhhh...

REPORTER NEXT TO HIM  
Still waters run deep, chief.

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

He thrust his face into that of the Reporter.

EDITOR  
...Well?!!

No answer.

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

WOMAN (O.S.)  
Fake.

EDITOR  
Huhh!!

WOMAN

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

AMY  
I tell ya the guy's a phony.

EDITOR  
Phony, huh?

AMY

As a three-dollar bill.

EDITOR

Sez who?

AMY

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

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

REPORTER

Five bucks says she mentions her Pulitzer.

OTHER REPORTER

Again? You're on.

AMY

(as she picks up the morning paper)

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

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

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

AMY

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

EDITOR

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

AMY

I filed it yesterday.

EDITOR

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

REPORTERS

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

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

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

Slam!

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

The door bursts open and Amy sticks her head in.

AMY  
I'll stake my Pulitzer on it!

CUT

TO:

ELEVATOR DOORS

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

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

outfit. Norville is entering the elevator in his new executive

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

elevator. Buzz is instant decorum as Mussburger enters the

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

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

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

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

BUZZ  
Right away, Mr. Mussburger sir.

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

MUSSBURGER

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

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

BUZZ

My pleasure, sir.

NORVILLE

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

MUSSBURGER

Sure, sure...

The elevator doors open.

BUZZ

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

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

BUZZ

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

MR. MUSSBURGER

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

NORVILLE

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

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

MUSSBURGER

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

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

EXT. SIDEWALK

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

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

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

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

MUSSBURGER  
Damn it, where's my car!

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

A black limousine pulls up to the curb.

MUSSBURGER  
Finally.

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

Mussburger is getting into the back seat --

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

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

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

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

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

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

CUT

TO:

INT. COFFEE SHOP

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

She is holding her wallet upside down.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The woman starts crying.

VETERAN #2 (O.S.)

Yellowstone.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Norville is rising to his feet.

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

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

As Norville turns to leave:

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

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

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

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

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

Norville holds her awkwardly, looking around for help.

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

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

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

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

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

REVERSE ANGLE

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

VETERAN #1  
Bromo.

Beat.

VETERAN #2  
...Bromo.

INT. NORVILLE'S OFFICE

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

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

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

the door and get the knob with his other hand.

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

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

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

Weakly, still cradled in Norville's arms:

AMY

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

NORVILLE

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

AMY

(pointing languorously)  
The couch, please.

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

NORVILLE'S POV

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

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

BACK TO SCENE

NORVILLE

Just a minute.

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

AMY

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

Speaking into his knees as he wheezes:

NORVILLE

Hungry, anyway.

AMY

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

her Norville rises and starts putting throw pillows behind  
head.

AMY

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

She screams, staring down at the couch.

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

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

AMY

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

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

Distracted but still modest:

NORVILLE

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

He unbuckles his trousers.

NORVILLE

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

Buzz enters holding a brown paper bag.

BUZZ

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

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

NORVILLE

(flustered)

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

Leering:

BUZZ

Happy days, buddy...

As he turns to leave:

BUZZ

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

He snaps the elastic strap under his chin.

After the doors shut behind Buzz:

AMY

(shuddering)

What a horrible little person.

NORVILLE

Oh, Buzz is pretty harmless, really --

AMY

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

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

AMY

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

NORVILLE

I myself --

He crosses back to the desk.

AMY

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

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

NORVILLE

Cigarette?

AMY

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

OVER NORVILLE'S SHOULDER

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

AMY

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

NORVILLE

Mind if I join you?

He is pouring himself a drink.

AMY

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

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

HIS POV

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

NORVILLE

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

NORVILLE

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

He staggers out a side door.

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

AMY

Are you all right?...

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

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

AMY

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

From the washroom:

NORVILLE (O.S.)

No, I --

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

AMY

Is the a la king repeating on you?

Amy shoves the appointment book back into the drawer.

NORVILLE (O.S.)

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

She mutters:

AMY

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

(aloud)

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

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

AMY  
...Muncie, Indiana.

BEING

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

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

NORVILLE  
You're from Muncie?!

AMY  
Why yes, do you know it?

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

He starts singing, off-key:

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

last,  
quickly

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

of

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

NORVILLE  
...Goooooo Eagles!

Amy awkwardly imitates.

Norville excitedly sits behind his desk.

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

AMY  
Oh, no, really, I --

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

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

He hits the intercom.

NORVILLE  
...Mail room.

To Amy:

NORVILLE  
...This'll only take a moment.

INTERCOM (V.O.)  
Yeah?

NORVILLE  
Good afternoon to ya, this is Norville Barnes --

INTERCOM (V.O.)  
Barnes! Where the hell have you been!  
And where's my voucher?!

Norville thumps at his pockets.

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

INTERCOM (V.O.)  
I need that voucher! I told you a week ago it was important!

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

INTERCOM (V.O.)  
I don't care if you're president of the company! I need that voucher!  
Now!

CLICK. The intercom goes dead.

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

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

Norville excitedly smacks a fist into a palm.

NORVILLE  
-- A Muncie girl! Can you beat that!

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

NORVILLE  
Please! Norville!

As he reaches to shake:

NORVILLE  
...It's my pleasure!

and,  
makes

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

NORVILLE  
...Gooooooooo Eagles!

wings,  
and,

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

AMY  
Goooooooooooo Eagles!

newspaper  
reporter

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

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

typing

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

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

SMITTY  
Adenoids?

AMY  
Lumbago.

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

Smitty gives a low whistle.

SMITTY  
That gag's got whiskers on it!

The PHONE RINGS and Smitty reaches for it.

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

SMITTY  
(into phone)  
Yeah.

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

Without a break in her typing:

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

Smitty holds the phone away from his ear.

SMITTY  
Chief.

Still typing, Amy whistles and nods to her shoulder.

Smitty tucks the phone into it as she continues typing.

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

Smitty is looking at his watch.

SMITTY  
About seven minutes.

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

To the Ancient Puzzler:

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

Back into phone:

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

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

Her eyes narrow.

AMY

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

ANCIENT PUZZLER

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

AMY

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

To Morris:

AMY

-- Gnu --

Into phone:

AMY

-- who couldn't find --

To Morris:

AMY

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

Into phone:

AMY

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

To Morris:

AMY

-- or emu.

She slams down the phone. To Smitty:

AMY

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

Smitty bursts out laughing.

SMITTY

Better off falling for a rattlesnake.

As she continues to type:

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

SMITTY  
He didn't offer you money.

AMY  
A sawbuck!

SMITTY  
Ten dollars? Let's grab a highball!

AMY  
On Norville Barnes!

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

AMY  
...Copy!

TO: DISSOLVE THROUGH

PRESSES

rolling, churning out great quantities of newsprint.

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

DELIVERY MAN

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

BALED PAPER

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

PAPER BOY

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

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

All of the above --

DISSOLVING

WITH:

NEWSPAPER

spinning TOWARDS the CAMERA and STOPPING FULL FRAME.

"IMBECILE  
Head."

Its headline, over a picture of Norville smiling, is  
HEADS HUDSUCKER." The subheadline: "Not a Brain in his

ANOTHER ANGLE - NEWSPAPER

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

the

His face twisting with fury, he leans forward and hits  
intercom.

NORVILLE

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

Muttering to himself:

NORVILLE

...of all the cockamamie...

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

pace

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

NORVILLE

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

AMY

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

NORVILLE

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

AMY  
-- or lack thereof?

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

He drifts into thought.

AMY  
Is that all, Mr. Barnes?

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

AMY  
I'm sure I --

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

AMY  
Well, I --

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

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

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

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

Amy is bewildered. Norville explains:

NORVILLE

...You know! For kids!

AMY

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

NORVILLE

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

AMY

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

NORVILLE

Well, she probably had a deadline...

AMY

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

NORVILLE

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

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

NORVILLE

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

Amy turns at the door.

AMY

Confused?

NORVILLE

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

AMY

(through clenched  
teeth)

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

NORVILLE

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

AMY

Oh, is that it!

NORVILLE

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

AMY

Smitty.

NORVILLE

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

AMY

Maybe she puts her work ahead of her personal appearance.

NORVILLE

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

Whap! Amy slaps him.

He stares.

NORVILLE

...How about Oklahoma?

As she stalks out of the office:

AMY

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

He stares, rubbing his cheek.

NORVILLE

Say, what gives?

WHISTLE

SHRIEKING.

SWISH PAN

TO:

CLOCK

Reading five o'clock.

SWISH PAN

TO:

WORKERS

putting

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

TIME CLOCK

Busy hands punch out.

INT. EMPTY HALLWAY

hall,  
door  
goes

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

INT. NORVILLE'S OFFICE

flips

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

BOOK

Grammer  
drawn

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

AMY

looks around the office -- notices something.

DOOR

plaque:

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

Amy tries the knob, which turns, and enters.

INT. ROOM

the  
cogs,  
window

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

sweeping  
Hudsucker

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

she

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

She stoops to peek through its keyhole.

HER POV

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

Mussburger sits at his desk barking into a Dictaphone.

desk

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

Mussburger, it seems, never sleeps.

MUSSBURGER

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

BACK TO SCENE

VOICE (O.S.)

Watchoo doin' down they, Miss Archuh?

AMY

Huh?!

She straightens and turns.

jumpsuit  
across  
who

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

AMY

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

MOSES (BLACK MAN)

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

AMY

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

MOSES

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

AMY

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

MOSES

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

AMY

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

MOSES

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

AMY

That smart?!

MOSES

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

AMY

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

MOSES

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

He draws a circle with his finger in the air.

MOSES

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

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

MOSES

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

AMY

Well, maybe I --

MOSES

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

AMY

(bristling)

It's hardly the same --

MOSES

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

AMY

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

MOSES

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

AMY

(uncomfortably)

I'm happy enough.

MOSES

(chuckles)

Okay, Miss Archuh.

(turns and walks away)

...I got gears to see to.

AMY

(calls after him)

I'm plenty happy!

She is answered only by WHIRRING MACHINERY.

MOSES

a  
ECHOES

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

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

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

As OMINOUS MUSIC SWELLS, we --

OUT:

FADE

FADE IN:

INT. CHIEF'S OFFICE

He slams down a typescript.

CHIEF  
I can't print this!

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

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

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

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

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

AMY  
I don't know...

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

CHIEF

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

SMITTY

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

CHIEF

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

AMY

Muncie.

CHIEF

Whatever. That's what sells newspapers.

AMY

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

CHIEF

Watch it, Archer --

AMY

It's about a dimwitted editor who --

SMITTY

Easy, Amy...

He gives her a companionable goose.

SMITTY

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

She whirls and slaps him.

AMY

Back off -- smoocher!

Smitty rubs his cheek, staring as she storms off.

SMITTY

(angry)

Say, what gives?

ENGRAVED INVITATION

IT READS:

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

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

DANCING COUPLES

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

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

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

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

She throws her head back and roars with laughter.

ANGLE - THEIR FEET

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

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

NORVILLE  
I haven't had --

MRS. MUSSBURGER  
Sidney and I are planning a trip to

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

Mussburger has ENTERED FRAME.

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

MIXING DOWN as they leave her:

MRS. MUSSBURGER  
Well, frankly, I...

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

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

ENTRYWAY

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

NORVILLE

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

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

Ignoring Norville's proffered hand:

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

Norville gives him a forced but hearty laugh of

reassurance.

NORVILLE

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

CARDOZO

So I'm yella, am I?!!

He starts peeling off his tuxedo jacket:

CARDOZO

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

starts

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

MRS. CARDOZO

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

As he reluctantly starts shrugging back into the jacket:

CARDOZO

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

MUSSBURGER AND NORVILLE

mopping

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

NORVILLE

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

into

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

MUSSBURGER

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

Norville nervously pumps Findlandsen's hand.

NORVILLE

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

Norville's

Findlandsen raises his hand to look quizzically at

having

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

He hands it back to Norville.

NORVILLE

Thank you, sir...

the

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

NORVILLE

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

the

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

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

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

NORVILLE (O.S.)

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

forward

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

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

MRS. FINDLANDSEN

Ahhh!

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

EMCEE

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

EMCEE

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

Vic Tenetta takes the microphone from the Emcee who backs

white  
forehead

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

CUT

TO:

SEVERAL BOARD MEMBERS

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

his

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

As Mussburger joins them:

EXECUTIVE #1

How's it going, Mr. Mussburger?

MUSSBURGER

Bad.

EXECUTIVE #2

Good.

MUSSBURGER

But not bad enough.

EXECUTIVE #3

Too bad.

MUSSBURGER

It could be better, it could be worse.

ALL THREE EXECUTIVES

Hmmmmmm.

MUSSBURGER

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

EXECUTIVE #1

Then it can't be bad!

EXECUTIVE #2

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

ALL

Hmmmmmm.

EXT. PENTHOUSE - TERRACE

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

facing  
posture,  
hand

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

REVERSE

him.

Amy, having just emerged onto the terrace, squints at

AMY  
...Norville?

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

AMY  
...What happened?

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

AMY  
Let me look.

He does.

NORVILLE  
Sid found me the icepack.

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

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

AMY  
...I'm sorry.

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

As she rolls the pack gently across his eye:

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

NORVILLE

I know that, Amy.

AMY

...You do?

NORVILLE

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

AMY

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

NORVILLE

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

AMY

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

They gaze out at the city.

AMY

...Certain people are --

NORVILLE

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

AMY

...Huh?

NORVILLE

You know, on farm route 17.

AMY

Oh yes! In Muncie!

NORVILLE

No! In Vidalia! Farm Route 17!

AMY

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

NORVILLE

You don't say.

AMY

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

NORVILLE

(puzzled)

Every year?

AMY

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

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

AMY

...The people look like ants.

NORVILLE

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

AMY

What a beautiful thought.

NORVILLE

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

AMY

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

NORVILLE

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

AMY

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

NORVILLE

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

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

AMY

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

NORVILLE

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

Morosely:

AMY

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

NORVILLE

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

He slaps his fist into his palm.

NORVILLE

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

Sadly:

AMY

Oh, Norville --

NORVILLE

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

AMY

Sure, Norville, sure...

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

AMY

...Oh, Norville!

She embraces him. They kiss again.

Norville's eyes widen.

VIC TENETTA

Crooning the end of his song.

DANCING COUPLES

Turn to the bandstand and applaud.

NORVILLE AND AMY

In the midst of a passionate kiss.

FADE

OUT:

FADE IN:

DOUBLE OAK DOORS

hanging

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

INT. BOARDROOM - CLOSE ON NORVILLE

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

NORVILLE

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

CLOSE ON MUSSBURGER

one

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

NORVILLE (O.S.)

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

BOARD

like

previous

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

NORVILLE (O.S.)

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

WIDER ON NORVILLE

hula

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

NORVILLE

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

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

The Board is staring.

ELDERLY EXECUTIVE

Yeah but... What is it?

EXECUTIVE #2

Does it have rules?

EXECUTIVE #3

Can more than one play?

EXECUTIVE #4

(to #3)

What makes you think it's a game?

EXECUTIVE #3

Is it a game?

EXECUTIVE #5

Will it break?

EXECUTIVE #6

It better break eventually!

EXECUTIVE #2

Is there an object?

EXECUTIVE #3

Are you supposed to make it fly off?

EXECUTIVE #5

Does it come with batteries?

EXECUTIVE #4

Could we charge extra for them?

EXECUTIVE #7

Is it safe for toddlers?

EXECUTIVE #3

How can you tell when you're done?

EXECUTIVE #2

How do you make it stop?

EXECUTIVE #1

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

EXECUTIVE #3

Can a parent assemble it??

EXECUTIVE #7

What if you get tired before it's done?

EXECUTIVE #6

Is there a larger model for the obese?

EXECUTIVE #4

Can you do it around your neck?

ELDERLY EXECUTIVE

And finally... what is it?

NORVILLE

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

MUSSBURGER

It's brilliant.

The Board looks at Mussburger.

MUSSBURGER

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

He smiles weakly at Norville.

MUSSBURGER

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

NORVILLE

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

As furiously BUSY MUSIC STARTS:

CUT

TO:

TELETYPE

Furiously PRINTING out "EXECUTIVE DIRECTIVE #37451-JL7.

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

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

The capsule is popped into a pneumatic tube.

ANGLE - LENGTH OF PNEUMATIC PIPING

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

ANGLE ON ANOTHER LENGTH OF PIPING

Once again we hear the CAPSULE APPROACH and ROCKET past.

BLINDING RED LIGHTS

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

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

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

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

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

Under the caption VERTICAL SIDE ANGLE is a vertical line.

EXTREME LOW ANGLE - SEVERAL TECHNICIANS

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

TO: CUT

RENDERING

as a hand ENTERS FRAME and stamps the drawing approved.

TO: CUT

TWO MORE LENGTHS OF PNEUMATIC PIPE

as we hear the CYLINDER ROCKETING by.

SWISH PAN

TO:

FROSTED DOUBLE GLASS DOORS

glass

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

we can see the three admen working inside.

silhouette

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

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

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

AD MAN #1 (O.S.)

We'll call it the Flying Donut!

AD MAN #2 (O.S.)

The Dancing Dingus!

AD MAN #1 (O.S.)

The Jerky Circle!

SWISH PAN

TO:

PNEUMATIC PIPING

With the cylinder rocketing by.

SWISH PAN

TO:

"ACCOUNTING DEPARTMENT" WALL PLAQUE

CUT

TO:

HUGE POSTER

WILL

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

THIS COST?"

of

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

are

accountants sitting at their rows and rows of desks; all

manual

looking up at the wall poster as they operate their

adding machines to the same beat.

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

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

TO: CUT

HUGE BOOK

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

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

TO: CUT

EXECUTIVE

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

The executive grimly shakes his head.

BACK TO BOOK

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

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

TO: CUT

ROCKETING PNEUMATIC PIPES

TO: CUT

ADVERTISING DEPARTMENT CREATIVE BULLPEN

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

Something short.

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

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

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

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

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

Drawing a circle in the air:

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

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

TO: CUT

ROCKETING PIPES

TO: CUT

MEN

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

EXPLOSION SUBSIDES:

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

THEIR POV

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

TO: CUT

ROCKETING PIPES

TO: CUT

ADVERTISING DEPARTMENT CREATIVE BULLPEN

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CUT

TO:

PIECE OF ART PAPER

Printed at the top: Hudsucker Industries Proudly Presents

PAN DOWN to reveal: THE HULA HOOP

PAN DOWN to reveal:

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

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

As the page is ripped off the art pad:

MATCH CUT

TO:

PAGE

who  
enormous  
sweaty

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

CUT

TO:

MACHINES

GRINDING into motion.

CUT

TO:

DONUT SPOUT

As it begins to spit hula hoops in massive numbers.

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

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

IRON GRILL

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

various  
diorama --

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

"You know... for Kids!"

we

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

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

INT. NORVILLE'S OFFICE

sits  
emerging  
her

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

BACK TO SHOP WINDOW

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

INT. NORVILLE'S OFFICE

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

BACK TO SHOP'S PRICE DISPLAY

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

ALLEY BEHIND SHOP

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

HULA HOOP

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

RINGING.

INT. NEARBY SCHOOLHOUSE

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

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

TO: CUT

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

TO: CUT

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

AMY  
...Norville!

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

TO: CUT

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

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

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

ANOTHER ANGLE

Picture dissolves to a pan up the Hudsucker Building.

noticing

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

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

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

ANOTHER ANGLE

rolls

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

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

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

ANOTHER ANGLE

hoop

starts

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

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

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

ANOTHER ANGLE

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

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

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

ANOTHER ANGLE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Flash bulb explosion effects a...

TO: CUT

NORVILLE

Facing a battery of REPORTERS at a news conference.

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

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

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

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

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

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

He is surprised by a burst of laughter.

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

NORVILLE  
Well sure, I guess --

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

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

Flash bulb explosion effects a...

CUT

TO:

NEWSREEL

smock,

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

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

as

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

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

TRACKING IN

TO:

INT. NORVILLE'S OFFICE

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

accompanied

his elevation to the presidency. Or perhaps it is only imagination, for while still some distance away from him:

our

Flash bulb explosion effects a...

CUT BACK

TO:

NEWS CONFERENCE

Newsmen follow Norville as he walks through the lobby of the Hudsucker Building.

the

REPORTER #1

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

NORVILLE

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

REPORTER #2

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

NORVILLE

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

REPORTER

Mr. Barnes, are you --

NORVILLE

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

This TIRED old joke brings some polite laughter.

Norville is smiling as he enters the elevator. As its doors start to close, leaving Amy behind:

doors

NORVILLE

...And you can quote me on that!

Flash bulb explosion effects a...

CUT BACK

TO:

NEWSREEL

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

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

ANOTHER ANGLE

highballs  
waists.

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

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

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

ANOTHER ANGLE

A young couple stands before the altar hula hooping.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

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

ANOTHER ANGLE

they

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

TRACKING IN

ON:

ANOTHER ANGLE

that

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

Flash bulb explosion effects a...

CUT

TO:

NORVILLE

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

REPORTER #1

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

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

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

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

He looks to one side.

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

SWISH PAN

TO:

sort

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

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

The newsmen react.

REPORTER #2  
Ho-leeee!

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

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

shave

Norville's

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

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

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

NORVILLE

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

END TRACK IN

ON:

ANOTHER ANGLE

CLOSE  
as  
gazing

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

NORVILLE

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

PULL BACK

FROM:

WEEPING EXECUTIVE

around  
table

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

MUSSBURGER

Pull yourself together, Addison.

Addison snuffles.

ADDISON

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

MUSSBURGER

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

ADDISON

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

MUSSBURGER

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

ADDISON  
Cheap! Cheap! It's never been more  
valuable! And I'm ruined! Ruined!

He climbs up onto the board table.

ADDISON  
I'm getting off this merry-go-round!

EXECUTIVE  
Addison!

ANOTHER EXECUTIVE  
Myron!

ADDISON  
Aaaaahhh!

toward He runs down the length of the table and hurls himself  
the window and:  
Thwok!

CUT

TO:

MUSSBURGER'S OFFICE - ANGLE FROM OUTSIDE

his LOOKING IN, as Addison flattens against the f.g. glass,  
face squushing, his outflung hands likewise.

All stare in horror for a long silent beat.

floor, With the sound of a SQUEEGEE being drawn across glass,  
Addison, still frozen, slides down the window, hits the  
and falls stiffly back like a fallen tree.

Mussburger sits up and sticks a cigar into his mouth.

MUSSBURGER  
Plexiglas. Had it installed last  
week.

EXECUTIVE  
...Myron?

MUSSBURGER  
All right, so the kid caught a wave.  
So right now he and his dingus are  
on top. Well, this too shall pass.  
Myrtle J. Mussburger didn't raise  
her boy to go knockkneed at the first  
sign of adversity. I say, we made  
this kid and we can break him. I  
say, the higher he climbs, the harder  
he drops. I say, yes, the kid has a  
future, and in it I see shame,  
dishonor, ignominy and disgrace.

spin Sure, sure, the wheel turns, the music plays, and our  
ain't over yet.

NORVILLE'S OFFICE

playing A small chamber orchestra, the musicians in tails, sit  
in "Eine Kleine Nachtmusik". Norville, eyes closed, reclines  
his desk chair, one uniformed woman stooping in front of  
him, manicuring his nails, another, behind, massaging his  
temples. A tailor is pinning up his pant cuffs.

goatee A French sculptor wearing a white smock, a beret, and a  
a squints at Norville and chisels at a block of marble with  
stone chisel and hammer.

head, A GOON sits off to one side, hat insolently atop his  
reading the funny papers.

upright, At length Norville stirs, opens his eyes, sits bolt  
massager. batting away the hands of the manicurist and temple-

NORVILLE  
Hold it!...

The musicians' playing dribbles away to silence.

NORVILLE  
...Nobody move, nobody breathe...

All sit frozen. You could hear a pin drop.

NORVILLE  
...An idea... is coming...

Eyes narrowed, he gazes off into space, squinting for his  
idea.

CLOSE ON TAILOR'S KIT

A straight pin is rolling across the top -- it drops off

--

EXTREME CLOSE ON FLOOR

Where the PIN -- PING! -- hits.

NORVILLE  
Deflates. He glares at the tailor.

NORVILLE  
It's gone now.

The musicians resume playing. Everyone else resumes work.  
The INTERCOM BUZZES and a female voice announces:

FEMALE (V.O.)  
Miss Amy here to see you.

Norville leans forward to hit his intercom.

NORVILLE  
Is she in the book? --

The door bursts open and Amy storms in.

AMY  
For Pete's sake, Norville!

NORVILLE  
Oh! Hello, Amy -- was it -- I thought  
she said, Mamie --

AMY  
Never mind about that...

She shakes a piece of paper at Norville.

AMY  
...You know what those nincompoops  
in the boardroom are doing?

NORVILLE  
Well, I wouldn't call them nincom --

AMY  
They're going to discharge eight  
percent of the work force here at  
Hudsucker. Why, in New York alone  
that means eighteen hundred people  
out of work, people with wives and  
children and families --

NORVILLE  
Well yes, we're pruning away some of  
the dead wood, but if --

AMY  
You mean you know about this?

NORVILLE  
Know about it? You think the Board  
would do anything like this without  
my authorization? No, this was my  
idea from the start.

AMY  
Your i --

NORVILLE  
We have to be realistic, Amy. You  
know things have slowed down a little  
here at Hudsucker --

AMY

You're awful kind to yourself,  
Norville Barnes -- the fact is you've  
slowed down, sitting up here like a  
sultan, not doing a lick of work!  
Why you know it's ideas that are the  
lifeblood of industry and you haven't  
come up with one since the hoop and  
the reason's plain to see! You've  
forgotten what made your ideas  
exciting for you in the first place --  
it wasn't for the fame and the wealth  
and the mindless adulation of --  
would you get out of here?!

playing  
rise  
office.

This was addressed to the chamber orchestra, whose  
dribbles off. They look inquisitively at Norville, then  
to pack up their instruments and sheepishly leave the

AMY

...I've been watching you, Norville  
Barnes, even though you've been trying  
to avoid me --

NORVILLE

Now, Aim --

AMY

Shutup! -- and don't think I haven't  
noticed how you've changed. I used  
to think you were a swell guy --  
well, to be honest I thought you  
were an imbecile --

NORVILLE

Now, Aim --

AMY

Shutup! -- but then I figured out  
you were a swell guy, a little slow  
maybe, but a swell guy! Well, maybe  
you're not so slow, but you're not  
so swell either and it looks like  
you're an imbecile after --

NORVILLE

Now, Aim --

AMY

Shutup! -- after all! You haven't  
talked to me for a week and now I'm  
going to say my piece. I've got a  
prediction for you, Norville Barnes:  
I predict that since you've decided  
to dedicate yourself to greed and  
sloth and everything bad, you're  
going to lose all the good things  
that your good ideas brought you.

You're going to throw them all away  
chasing after money and ease and the  
respect of a Board that wouldn't  
give you the time of day if you...  
if you...

NORVILLE

Worked in a watch factory?

The Goon looks up from his funnies.

GOON

Huh-huh-huh!

AMY

(to the Goon)

Shutup!

(to Norville)

Exactly! Don't you remember how you  
used to feel about the hoop? You  
told me you were gonna bring a smile  
to the hips of everyone in America,  
regardless of race, creed or color.  
Finally there'd be a thingamajig  
that would bring everyone together --  
even if it kept 'em apart, spacially --  
you know, for kids? Your words,  
Norville, not mine. I used to love  
Norville Barnes -- yes, love him! --  
when he was just a swell kid with  
hot ideas who was in over his head,  
but now your head is too big to be  
in over!

NORVILLE

Now, Amy --

AMY

Consider this my resignation --

Thwock -- She slaps him.

The bodyguard is on his feet.

GOON

Hey!!

Crack -- Amy kicks him hard in the shin.

GOON

...Awooooo!

AMY

-- Effective immediately!!

She strides to the door, leaving Norville rubbing his  
cheek  
and the Goon hopping around on one leg.

FADE

OUT:

FADE IN:

CLOSE SHOT - PICTURE OF AMY

Hudsucker  
one  
triplets.  
Receives

PULL BACK SHOWS it to be her identification in her personnel file.

A hand brings INTO FRAME another picture of her -- this a newspaper clipping. She stands on a podium accepting an award; standing behind her are middle-aged identical

The caption says, "Amy Archer of the Manhattan Argus Pulitzer Prize."

WIDER ANGLE

his  
just

We are in Mussburger's office. Mussburger is seated at desk looking at the file picture and clipping; the sign letterer/scraper is leaning over his shoulder, having put them down.

MUSSBURGER

Hmmm... Thank you, Aloysius. This may be useful.

Aloysius nods wordlessly and turns to leave.

As we TRACK IN ON the picture of Amy, we:

FADE

OUT:

FADE UP TO:

PERFECT WHITE

white  
trailing  
sensuous  
with  
Norville  
loosened.

After a beat, a woman ENTERS against the unblemished background, dressed in a flowing white dance robe, a long, diaphanous veil. She performs a flowingly dance moderne; the MUSIC is a sensuous saxophone solo lasciviously bending blue notes.

After the woman has been dancing for several beats enters, dancing after her, pursuing her. He is wearing a coatless suit, his sleeves rolled up, his thin tie

The woman dances around him, letting her diaphanous veil trail sinuously around his body.

We hear an ECHOING voice:

VOICE (O.S.)  
Buddy... Say, buddy...

CLOSE SHOT - NORVILLE

closed,  
Sitting in his desk chair, sheened with sweat, eyes  
licking his lips.

CLOSER NOW:

VOICE (O.S.)  
Buddy... Ya busy?

NORVILLE  
Huh-whuh?

He opens his eyes and looks stuporously about.

elevator  
Buzz is grinning down at him in his little pillbox  
cap.

BUZZ  
Looks like ya nodded off there, buddy!  
Say, ya got a minute?

Norville clears his throat.

NORVILLE  
Oh, uh... Buzz... Is it important?

BUZZ  
I like to think so! It's this little  
idea I been working on!

He turns an easel to face the desk.

BUZZ  
...Ya see, I don't intend to be an  
elevator boy forever! Take a look at  
this sweet baby!

The easel displays an oversized sheet of graph paper.

Onto it has been rendered a top view, which is a perfect  
circle, and a side view, which is a vertical line.

Norville gazes stupidly at the circle.

BUZZ  
...Ya get it, buddy? Incredibly  
convenient, isn't it? Ya see --

in  
He produces a tall glass of lemonade with a straw sitting  
it.

BUZZ

-- this is how it works, it's these  
little ridges on the side that give  
it its whammy! See, ya don't have to  
drink like this anymore --

vertical  
He holds his head over the glass to drink from the  
straw.

BUZZ

-- Now you can drink like this --

He bends the straw to drink from it at the horizontal.

BUZZ

...I call it the Buzz-Sucker, get  
it, buddy? -- After me! Buzz! Why,  
people are just dyin' for a product  
like this, and the great thing is we  
won't have to charge an arm and a --

Norville, who has been stewing, finally barks:

NORVILLE

Wait a minute!

He grabs the lemonade glass, looks at it, sneering.

NORVILLE

...Why, this is worthless.

BUZZ

Huh?! But, buddy --

Norville yanks the straw out and crumples it up.

NORVILLE

This is the most idiotic thing I've  
ever seen in my life!

BUZZ

Yeah, but, buddy --

NORVILLE

Nobody wants a hare-brained product  
like this! Ya see, Buzz, it lacks  
the creative spark, the unalloyed  
genius that made, uh...

He pauses to belch.

NORVILLE

...say, the hula hoop such a success.

BUZZ

But, buddy --

NORVILLE

And what do you mean barging in here  
and taking up my valuable time! I've  
got a company to run here --

BUZZ

But, buddy, you were --

NORVILLE

-- I can't have every deadbeat on the Hudsucker payroll pestering me with their idiotic brainwaves!

BUZZ

Geez, I'm sorry, buddy --

NORVILLE

An example must be made!

Buzz looks over his shoulder, turns back to Norville.

BUZZ

Wuddya mean, buddy?

NORVILLE

Fired! You're fired! Is that plain enough for you, buster!

Buzz's jaw drops. His elastic chin strap snaps under the pressure.

BUZZ

Awww, buddy --

NORVILLE

And don't call me buddy! Out of here! Out!

pathetically Buzz sinks to his knees, weeping. He clutches at Norville's pants legs.

BUZZ

Aw, please, sir -- this job, it's all I got!

NORVILLE

Get up!

BUZZ

I understand if ya don't like the Buzz-Sucker! Just lemme keep my job, I'm prayin' to ya!

NORVILLE

We don't crawl at Hudsucker Industries! Get out of my office! Leave your uniform in the locker room!

Buzz stumbles away, still weeping.

BUZZ

I'm sorry, buddy... I'm sorry...

NORVILLE

Buzz... off! Ha-ha-ha-ha!

As we TRACK IN ON Norville, laughing, there is a low, unearthly RUMBLE, and his face seems to DISSOLVE INTO:

FLAMES

We PULL BACK FROM the flame of Sid Mussburger's oversized lighter as he finishes lighting a cigar.

He is sitting alone in the boardroom, but its door swings open and Norville enters wearing plaid knickers, a little cap, and a knit shirt that shows his waist starting to

bulge.

He has a full golf bag over his shoulder.

NORVILLE

Sorry I'm late, Sid. That back nine at Riverdale is really murder.

MUSSBURGER

Sure, sure, it's a tough course. Well thanks for coming, kid. I thought the board room would be a swell place to chat undisturbed -- it seems we're having some security problems here at the Hud.

NORVILLE

Ya don't say.

MUSSBURGER

Mm. Ordinarily I wouldn't bother you with it, but -- this is embarrassing, kid -- it seems to concern you directly.

NORVILLE

How's that, Sid?

MUSSBURGER

It's not important in itself -- some elevator boy you fired came to me claiming you'd stolen the idea for the, uh, the hoop dingus from him --

NORVILLE

Huh?! He -- no, I -- he's just -- maybe I was a little rough on the boy, ya see I --

MUSSBURGER

Ah forget it, kid, ya don't have to explain to me. He's a little person. He's nothing. Like I say, ordinarily it would just be a nuisance. But it seems -- well, there was a spy in the company...

He is shoving a file towards Norville, who opens it.

MUSSBURGER

...Sure, sure, we tried to kill the story. But her newspaper won't play ball... Looks like her story's coming out...

We TRACK DOWN the length of the board room table TOWARD Norville, who stares horrified at the file.

MUSSBURGER

...See, kid, the problem the Board'll have... you hired this woman. Kept her on, while she made a chump out of you. Serious error of judgment... I mean, business is war, kid -- ya take no prisoners, ya get no second chances. And a boner like this... I'm afraid when the Board meets, after New Year's, your position... well, it looks like you're finished... stick a fork in ya, you're done... washed up...

We LOSE Mussburger FROM FRAME as we TIGHTEN FURTHER ON Norville, Mussburger continuing off:

MUSSBURGER (O.S.)

...I'm sorry, kid. I understand this dolly who betrayed you, she used to be a friend of yours...

Norville is slowly dragging the golf cap off his head.

MUSSBURGER (O.S.)

...And this elevator dope used to be a friend, too...

Norville stares, perfectly still.

MUSSBURGER (O.S.)

...Well, they've got your throat pretty well slit. And when you're dead, ya stay dead. Ya don't believe me, ask Waring Hudsucker... Yeah, looks like curtains. Well, condolences, kid...

Norville's IMAGE TURNS TO:

BLACK-AND-WHITE IMAGE OF NORVILLE

We PULL BACK to show that it is on the front page of the Manhattan Argus.

The headline, in screaming nine-point type:

FAKE!

Next to the picture of Norville is the subhead: Idea Man

a

Fraud.

elevator-  
Elevator

Next to the sub-subhead is a picture of Buzz in his operator's pillbox hat: Stole Hoop Idea from Genius Jockey Clarence "Buzz" Gunderson.

AMY (O.S.)  
You can't print that!

CHIEF  
He grins wolfishly.

CHIEF  
We are printing it! She's hittin' the streets this evening --

SWISH PAN

TO:

SMITTY  
-- and she's dynamite!

AMY  
But, Al, it's the bunk! Norville showed me his design for the whatsit the day I met him! Why Buzz couldn't have invented it -- look at the man -- he's an imbecile!

CHIEF  
Archer, you're a broken record. Fact is Gunderson did design it -- apparently he's some kind of prodigy --

AMY  
Says who?!

SMITTY  
You're not the only one with sources, Amy --

CHIEF  
Smith has a source on the Hud board -- very senior, very hushhush --

AMY  
Yeah, and I'll bet his initials are Sidney J. Mussburger!

SMITTY  
You've lost it, Aim. You've gone soft by the looks of it -- soft on the dummy from Dubuque --

AMY  
Muncie!

CHIEF

Whatever! It's no dig on you, Archer,  
but this story is hot and you're no  
longer on top of it. Why, it's the  
scoop of the century -- the other  
papers won't have the Gunderson dope  
'til tomorrow -- The Allemeinischer  
Zeitung, Le Figaro, they'll be choking  
on our dust come mornin' --

AMY

You're fools, both of you! It's  
obvious they're out to crucify  
Norville! They're trying to destroy  
him!

CHIEF

(gently)

Amy -- take a break. You've worked  
hard on this story -- heck, you broke  
it for us! But it's passed you by  
and Smith here has taken up the slack.

She is near tears.

AMY

You want slack, I'll give you slack.  
You're not putting me out to pasture,  
Al, I quit! Consider this my  
resignation --

She turns to Smitty --

AMY

-- effective immediately!

-- and swings -- but he catches her before contact, holds  
her by the wrist, and sneers:

SMITTY

...Soft.

other Amy swings her free arm to -- thwack -- blindside his  
cheek.

NORVILLE

that In flickering black-and-white, he is lying on a couch  
is has been brought into his office, gazing listlessly at a  
bend straw, being interviewed by someone O.S. The footage  
rough, taking a moment to find focus; the sound is TINNY.

GERMAN VOICE (V.O.)

Dell me vat is first zing droppensie  
head ven I menzhon ze vord... Zex?

NORVILLE (V.O.)

(listlessly)

Aww, what's the difference.

BOARD MEMBER

Sitting in a darkened board room, gazing off at a screen that sends flickering light onto his face.

GERMAN VOICE (V.O.)  
Und ven I zpeak of authority?

NORVILLE (V.O.)  
Awww, I dunno.

BACK TO SCREEN

GERMAN VOICE (V.O.)  
Eggzplain please ze zignifikanz of  
ze straw.

NORVILLE (V.O.)  
Nuthin', really.

ANOTHER ANGLE

into  
Freudian  
down  
hand  
emphasis.

A shadow is thrown across the screen as a figure steps  
the beam. He throws the sharp silhouette of a strict  
ANALYST: Van Dyke beard, pince-nez with chain trailing  
to his vest, one thumb hooked into the vest, the other  
holding a cigar wreathing smoke, which he waves for

ANALYST  
Patient dizplayed liztlessness,  
apathy, gloomy indifference und vas  
blue und mopey.

sweeps

The image on screen cuts to four inkblots. The Analyst  
in a pointer and thwoks each image as he comments on it.

ANALYST  
...Ven asked vut four Rhorschach  
stains reprezented, patient replied,  
'Nussink much,' 'I don't know,' 'Chust  
a blotch,' und 'Sure beats me.'

ANOTHER ANGLE

the

The image onscreen cuts to a close shot of Norville on  
couch, mouth listlessly agape.

ANALYST  
...Patient shows no ambition, no get-  
up-und-go, no vim. He is riding ze  
grand loopen-ze-loop --

Image cuts to a sine wave on a graph, the top of which is

"Despair,"  
"Normal."

labeled "Euphoria," the bottom of which is labeled  
and a reference line through the middle labeled  
There is an X on the declining side of the wave, near but  
not yet at the bottom, which is labeled "Patient."

ANALYST

-- zat goes from ze peak of delusional  
gaiety to ze trrrroff of dezbaair.  
Patient is now near -- but not yet  
at! -- ze lowest point; ven he  
reachensies bottom he may errrrrupt  
und pose danger to himself und uzzers.

MUSSBURGER

Casually puffing on a cigar.

MUSSBURGER

Diagnosis, Dr. Bromfenbrenner?

BROMFENBRENNER (ANALYST)

Patient is eine manic-depressive  
paranoid type B, mit acute schizoid  
tendencies.

MUSSBURGER

So patient is...?

He interrogatively twirls a finger 'round his temple.

BROMFENBRENNER

Prezizely. Knots.

The board murmurs.

MUSSBURGER

Prescription?

BROMFENBRENNER

Sree sinks! Kommitment.  
Electroconfulsif therapy. Maintenance  
in eine zecure wazility.

behind  
brawny,  
on a  
steel-  
  
white.

As he scores each point it is illustrated on the screen  
him: A patient is forced into a straitjacket by two  
unshaven attendants; electricity arcs between two leads  
wire cap being wielded by a technician; and lastly, a  
barred door is slammed shut behind a stooped and broken  
patient who is led, shuffling, away.

Here the FILM runs out, CHATTERING, and the screen goes

The projector is shut off and the lights go on.

The board politely applauds.

INT. BAR - CLOSE ON BARMAN

He has a Vandyke beard and wears a cut-off sweatshirt and dungarees and dark glasses, and has the phone wedged into his shoulder as he tears open a large cardboard box.

BARMAN

Yeah, just get down here -- he says  
he's a friend of yours... He won't  
say, but man, is he from squaresville.

the  
He hangs up and we HINGE WITH him to bring the length of  
bar into view. Norville dishevelled, is on the other side  
bellowing.

NORVILLE

I want a martini! It's New Year's  
Eve and I want a Martini!

BARMAN

Daddy, it's like I been tellin' ya --

NORVILLE

I thought you served misfits here!

The barman is taking rolled-up blow-beepers out of the  
cardboard box and loading them into tumblers to set along  
the bar.

BARMAN

Yeah, daddy, that's a roger, but we  
don't sell alcohol.

NORVILLE

What kind of bar is it if ya can't  
get a martini?!

BARMAN

It's a juice and coffee bar, man,  
like I been tellin' ya --

NORVILLE

I want a martini! On this bar, right  
now! I've had a martini in every bar  
on the way down here, and I'm not  
about to --

BARMAN

Martinis are for squares, man.

Suddenly enraged:

NORVILLE

What'd you call me?!

He starts awkwardly peeling off his suit coat.

NORVILLE

...You son of a --

AMY (O.S.)  
Norville!

NORVILLE  
Huh?!

around He looks stupidly about, the shoulders of his coat down  
his elbows. He sees Amy rushing up.

NORVILLE  
...Oh, it's you! Lookin' for a nitwit  
to buy your lunch?!

AMY  
Oh Norville, I --

the Norville's attention has already left her. He looks for  
missing bartender.

NORVILLE  
(swaying)  
Barman! Set'm up, fella!

AMY  
Norville, I'm sorry, I... I tried to  
tell you... so many times... It's  
hard to admit when you've been wrong.  
If you could just... find it in your  
heart to -- to give me another chance --

NORVILLE  
Hey! Where's that martini?!

AMY  
Just give me another chance, Norville --  
I can help you fight this thing. I  
know this last story was a lie! We  
can prove it! We can --

NORVILLE  
Aww, what's the difference. I'm all  
washed up... When you're dead, ya  
stay dead... Hey, fella!

AMY  
Well that just about does it! I've  
seen Norville Barnes, the young man  
in a big hurry, and I've seen Norville  
Barnes the self-important heel, but  
I've never seen Norville Barnes the  
quitter, and I don't like it!

She starts pumping her arms, slowly chanting.

AMY  
...Fight on, fight on, dear old  
Muncie.

She steps back off the stool. Norville watches her dully, his head swaying.

AMY  
...Fight on, hoist the gold and blue;  
You'll be tattered, torn and hurtin'  
Once 'The Munce' is done with you!  
Goooooo Eagles!

She looks hopefully for some effect, but after staring at her for a slack-jawed beat Norville can only bring out:

NORVILLE  
You lied to me! I can't believe you  
lied to me! a Muncie girl!

He lurches off his stool toward the door. Watching him, despair fights with confusion on Amy's face.

AMY  
But Norville... I...

simple She realizes that, though shattered, he is still the  
innocent she loved --

AMY  
... Oh, Norville!

-- and bursts into tears.

a Two loud REVELERS reel INTO FRAME, one of them uncurling  
blow-beeper at the weeping Amy.

REVELER #1  
Happy Newby-Newby-New!

REVELER #2  
1959 we dig you the most!

EXT. ANNE'S

As Norville exits. It is night, snowing.

PAN We PAN WITH Norville OFF the bar facade and, ENDING the  
in the f.g.:

NEWSPAPER

Walking WIPES UP INTO FRAME. Next to a picture of Norville is the  
headline "MUNCIE MENTAL CASE." The subhead: "Hud Chief to  
Tend Daisies." Sub-subhead: "Headshrinker Calls Him  
Time Bomb."

NEWSIE (O.S.)  
Extra! Extra! New Year's Eve Edition!

and  
ENTERS  
coat

Norville's hand ENTERS FRAME to push the newspaper away  
leave us looking up the empty street. Norville's back  
as he stumbles off alone up the street, pulling up his  
collar as he recedes, the NEWSIE's VOICE continuing:

NEWSIE (O.S.)  
...Ring out the old! Ring in the  
new!

CLOSE ON NORVILLE

Norville:

trudging. VOICES WELL UP, ECHOING. A face looms with each  
voice, hellishly lit, superimposed over the walking

VOICES (V.O.)  
...You're not so slow but you're not  
so swell either and it looks like  
you're an imbecile after all!...  
Noooo, I don't guess you will be  
here long... Sure, sure, but even  
there they called you dipstick...  
lamebrain... dope... schmoe... And  
is this sap from chumpsville?!...  
imbecile after all... Norville, you  
let me down... You let Mrs. Eisenhower  
down... You let the American people  
down... imbecile after all...  
imbecile... I predict you're going  
to lose all the good things your  
ideas brought you... Please, buddy...!  
When you're dead, ya stay dead...  
Sure, sure, the kid's screwy -- it's  
official...

This last voice and supered face is Mussburger's.

Norville DISSOLVES away to leave us ON Sidney in the:

INT. BOARDROOM

only

Hellishly bottom-lit board members sit around the table,  
conical New Year's hats on their heads. Mussburger, the

one not wearing a cap, waves his cigar as he continues to  
talk:

MUSSBURGER  
...The barred-window boys are out  
looking for him now, and we'll see  
how Wall Street likes the news that  
the President of Hudsucker Industries  
is headed for the booby-hatch. Why,  
when the doc gets through with him  
he'll need diapers and a dribble  
cup...

The board murmurs appreciatively.

MUSSBURGER

...Let me remind you that our secret post-New Year's party will be held in the office of the President shortly after midnight tonight. Remember, it's strictly stag, so leave the wives at home; we'll be showing some films and, yes, gentlemen, there will be exotic dancers.

spittle Louder murmuring. One board member leers, a trace of at the corner of his mouth.

MUSSBURGER

Well, if that's all...

we... With an unnatural rumble he straightens his papers and

TO: JUMP UP

HIGH NIGHTMARISH DUTCH ANGLE

of the assembled around the table.

ALL

Long live the Hud!

NORVILLE

Norville trudges on, faster, sweatier.

VOICE (O.S.)

Ring out the old! Ring in the new...!

noisemakers, People come and go, laughing, talking, blowing making merry.

VOICE (O.S.)

...Ring out the old! Ring in the new! Ring out the --

dazed. Thoomp!! Norville has run into someone. He looks up,

VOICE (O.S.)

Hey, watch where you're -- Say, buddy!

tuxedo over It is Buzz, the elevator boy, dressed in an ill-fitting and a conical party hat. Za-Za is on his arm, towering him, leering at Norville.

NORVILLE

-- Uh... Buzz, I'm sorry, I -- Buzz, you gotta forgive me! I shouldn't a

fired you, I didn't know what I was doing! I was a little funny in the head, I --

BUZZ

Aw, buddy, I don't care about that.

Norville is stunned.

NORVILLE

...You don't?

BUZZ

Nah, that's all forgotten.

NORVILLE

...It is?

BUZZ

Sure, Mr. Muss -- uh, Sid said I could have the job back.

NORVILLE

Absolutely, Buzz, I'm glad he --

BUZZ

But he told me you stole that swell hoop idea from me. What gives!

NORVILLE

But, Buzz --

BUZZ

Say, that was a swell idea!

NORVILLE

But, Buzz, you know I never --

BUZZ

And Sid says you stole it!

NORVILLE

But Buzz --

ZA-ZA

Well wuddya waiting for, Clarence --  
? Pop him one!

Boffo!

Buzz swings and Norville hits the snow hard.

BUZZ

Think about that, idea man!!

Norville groggily raises his head.

PASSERBY

Say, isn't he that lunatic?

Norville looks dopily up at the people in furs and party

hats starting to gather.

VOICES

...that big-shot faker... the Wall  
Street fraud guy... nuttier than a  
fruitcake... they say he's a menace...  
wuddya waitin' for, call a cop!...

We hear SIRENS.

Norville staggers to his feet. The crowd cringes.

VOICES

...He's on his feet... We can take  
him!

Norville bursts through the crowd, running.

Buzz starts giving chase, followed by the braver souls,  
followed by the entire mob.

NORVILLE

runs, gasping, turning a corner.

VOICES

...Down here! He went down here!

Buzz.  
Behind Norville, the crowd rounds the corner, led by

unshaven  
the  
chase.  
A VAN is SCREECHING to a halt and out jump two burly  
men in white, one of them holding open a straitjacket,  
other carrying a large butterfly net. They join in the

lamppost  
Norville turns down an alley. A DRUNK drooping off a  
gaily waves a bottle at him.

DRUNK

Ring out the old! Ring in the new!

The crowd is running past the mouth of the alley, missing  
the turn-off.

LIMESTONE FLOOR

breaking  
run  
sweating,  
Norville, gasping, crashes down INTO FRAME, his hands  
his fall against the limestone. The CAMERA SPINS NINETY  
DEGREES to reveal that it is not floor but wall he has  
into and is now leaning against. Norville looks up,  
gasping.

HIS POV

the  
The massive Hudsucker Building looms dizzily up towards  
stars, capped by the huge Hudsucker Clock.

DISTANT VOICES (O.S.)  
Ring out the old! Ring in the new!

HUDSUCKER LOBBY

with  
Norville staggers in. A gust of icy air that comes in  
him flaps a dropcloth off a huge shape that dominates the  
lobby:

him  
It is the heroic statue of Norville that we earlier saw  
posing for.

Norville reels over to it, stares dumbly.

STATUE

Mutely -- mockingly -- dignified.

NORVILLE

He staggers off to the elevators.

MUSSBURGER'S OFFICE

cigar.  
We are TRACKING ACROSS the office TOWARD Mussburger, his  
feet up on his desk, laughing demonically, smoking his

swing  
CLICK-CLICK-CLICK-CLICK -- the PERPETUAL MOTION BALLS  
clock,  
on his desk; THRUMMMMM -- the SWEEP SECOND HAND of the  
the  
illuminated now, casts a moving shadow that rolls across  
floor. Evil prevails.

APPROACH  
A piece of paper and a pencil lie on his desk; as we

Mussburger  
WE PAN DOWN and SWING AROUND to read it, LOSING  
but still hearing his LAUGHTER.

MOVING IN ON THE PAPER:

red.  
Musssucker Industries. Hudberger Industries. Sidsucker  
Industries. This last alternative has been circled in

Below it has been scribbled:

Sidney J. Mussburger, President.

Evil LAUGHTER. Sweeping shadows.

TO:

CUT

NORVILLE'S OFFICE DOOR

We are TRACKING IN TOWARD the back of Aloysius, the sign painter, who is stooped in front of the door. He looks  
back  
away,  
over his shoulder, leering PAST the CAMERA, to reveal his work: Under PRESIDENT Norville's name has been scraped and painted in is SIDNEY J. MUSSBUR...

NORVILLE

He pushes past the sign painter.

INT. OFFICE

Dark and empty. Norville is peeling off his coat as he staggers over to the closet.

We can hear DISTANT REVELRY and the STRAINS of "AULD LANG SYNE."

Norville has pulled his old mailroom apron from the closet  
Now.  
and is putting it on: HUDSUCKER MAIL ROOM/The Future Is

Norville looks at the door.

THROUGH the glass we see the tail of the last R of "Mussburger" being painted into place.

Norville throws open the window.

WIND WHISTLES.

He climbs out.

LEDGE

Norville, back against the wall, looks cautiously down.

We hear DISTANT CHANTING:

VOICES (V.O.)  
Ten... nine... eight... seven...

HIS POV

A sickening drop. Receding snowflakes. On the street far, far below, a lone car's headlights cut through the  
falling  
snow.

VOICES (V.O.)  
Six... five... four...

WIDER ON NORVILLE

We are FLOATING IN; it is the SHOT with which the movie began.

approaching  
the

The sweep second hand of the Hudsucker Clock is  
the 12 of midnight, the New Year. In sync with the clock  
CHANTING continues:

VOICES (V.O.)  
Three... two...

his

We have COME IN CLOSE ON Norville. A lone tear runs down  
cheek.

VOICES (V.O.)  
...One...

BONG! The toll is right at Norville's ear. Startled, he  
reaches up to press hands against his ears. Distantly:

VOICES (V.O.)  
Happy New Year!

BONG!!

edges

He can't stand it. Whimpering, hands to his ears, he  
his way back toward the window.

HIS POV

it

The open window at a steep angle. Someone inside slides  
shut.

BACK TO SCENE

Norville waves.

NORVILLE  
No --

BONG!!

he

His gesticulation and a shuffle step upset his balance --  
trips -- falls -- catches the ledge --

NORVILLE  
-- No, please!

feet

He is hanging onto the icy ledge by his fingertips. His  
dangle away. Snow falls.

HIS POV

Looking STEEPLY UP.

CLOCK

Its second hand is making its descent.

NORVILLE

Falling.

MUSSBURGER

Laughing.

SECOND HAND

Descending.

NORVILLE

a  
head  
Falling, turning lazily in the air -- and suddenly, with  
great moaning sound -- he stops, suspended in mid-air,  
down, feet in the air.

It is much like the freeze frame on Waring Hudsucker that  
the title of the film was supered over.

He waves his arms, to no effect, looks around.

PEOPLE IN STREET

Frozen in attitudes of laughter, celebration. Snow sifts  
silently down around their motionless bodies.

MUSSBURGER

In his office, frozen with an idiotic laugh pasted to his  
face.

HIS PERPETUAL MOTION BALLS

falls.  
Frozen, one ball swung out but suspended, hanging at the  
apex of its arc. Outside the great arched window, snow

NORVILLE

about,  
He alone can move, but doesn't fall. He looks awkwardly  
his body in a dive-bomber attitude, canted steeply down.

EXT. HUDSUCKER CLOCK

Its sweep second hand is arrested on its downward sweep.

WHINING NOISES emanate from within.

CLOSE SHOT - GREAT GEAR

stopping  
has  
The broom handle has been jammed between two cogs,  
them. We PULL BACK ALONG the handle to reveal Moses, who  
thrust it there, and who now TURNS back over his shoulder

to

address the CAMERA.

MOSES

Strictly speakin', I'm never spozed  
to do this but... have you got a  
better idea?

NORVILLE

DISTANT --

Twisting back to look up over his shoulder; there is a  
very distant -- SINGING.

HIS POV

or  
down

Looking up the length of the Hudsucker Building. Someone  
something wrapped in white is flying toward us, coming  
from the stars.

We can make out a male voice, accompanied by STRUMMING:

VOICE (V.O.)

She'll be comin' around the mountain  
when she comes, She'll be comin'  
around the mountain when she comes...

NORVILLE

He gapes.

ANGEL

wearing  
comes

-- For it is an Angel, arrives. He is a balding man,  
rimless glasses, in a white robe, large feathery wings  
sprouting from his back and beating heavily until he  
to rest, in midair. He puts aside the harp he has been  
strumming on a nearby windowsill.

ANGEL

Love that tune. How ya doin', kid?

NORVILLE

Mr... Mr. Hudsucker?

HUDSUCKER (ANGEL)

Ta-daaaa!

forward  
to  
balance.

Presenting himself, he spreads his arms and stamps his  
foot, forgetting that there is nothing beneath his foot  
stamp. He lurches forward, momentarily losing his

HUDSUCKER

...Woooooo!

He rights himself. The halo spinning lazily over his head has been jarred askew. With a flick of his forefinger he rights it.

HUDSUCKER  
...How d'ya like this thing? They're all wearin' em upstairs now.

He blows a dismissive raspberry.

HUDSUCKER  
...It's a fad.

He pats at his robe, produces a white cigar.

HUDSUCKER  
...Anyway. I hear you've been having, uh...

He casually flicks his thumb out of his fist, lighting it.

He lights the cigar off his thumb, takes a puff.

HUDSUCKER  
...Been having some problems with the board. The more things change, know what Iyayayeeeeee...

Pain reminds him that he has forgotten to extinguish his flaming thumb, which he now waves frantically about.

HUDSUCKER  
...Jesus Christopher -- That smarts... Where was I? Oh yeah, the board. I guess Sidney's been puttin' the screws to ya, huh, Norman?

NORVILLE  
Norville.

HUDSUCKER  
Mm. Well, say what you like about the man's ethics, he's a balls-to-the-wall businessman. Beat ya any way he can. Straight for the jugular. Very effective.

NORVILLE  
Yes sir...

HUDSUCKER  
Anyway. Any particular reason you didn't give him my Blue Letter? I mean, Jesus, Norman, just a dying man's last words and wishes, no big deal.

NORVILLE  
Huh? Oh, geez, Mr. Hudsucker, I apologize, there was an awful lot of

excitement and I guess I must've  
mislaidd --

HUDSUCKER  
It's sittin' in your apron pocket,  
right where you left it. Imbecile.

Norville reaches in and -- pulls out the wrinkled Blue  
Letter.

NORVILLE  
Oh, geez.

HUDSUCKER  
Failure to deliver a Blue Letter is  
grounds for dismissal.

NORVILLE  
Geez, I --

HUDSUCKER  
Ah, it's New Year's, I'm not gonna  
add to your woes. I'm just saying.

NORVILLE  
Yessir.

HUDSUCKER  
Well, why don't ya read it.

NORVILLE  
Sir?

HUDSUCKER  
Yeah, go ahead. Might learn somethin'.

NORVILLE  
Yes sir...

He tears open the envelope, reads:

NORVILLE  
'From the desk of Waring Hudsucker.  
To. Sidney J. Mussburger. Regarding.  
My demise. Dear Sid. By the time you  
read this, I will have joined the  
organization upstairs -- an exciting  
new beginning. I will retain fond  
memories of the many years you and I --  
,

HUDSUCKER  
Yeah, yeah, it's the standard  
resignation boilerplate -- go down  
to the second paragraph.

NORVILLE  
'Many years, uh... I know that you  
will be wondering why I have decided  
to move on, ending my tenure at  
Hudsucker, and here on Earth. You

will be thinking, Why now, when things are going so well? Granted, from the standpoint of our balance sheet and financials, sure, sure, we're doing fine. However, Sid. These things have long since ceased to give me pleasure. I look at myself now and no longer see the idealistic young man who started this company. Now I see only an empty shell whom others call a 'success.' How has this come to pass? When and why did I trade all of my hopes, dreams and aspirations, for the emptiness of power and wealth? What the heck have I done?

As Norville reads Hudsucker casually examines his fingernails, then pats down a yawn.

NORVILLE

'...Looking back now, Sid, I see that I allowed time and age to corrupt my dreams. Instead of fiercely guarding what was timeless inside of myself, I let the hubbub of earthly commerce erode my character, and dissolve my better self. How is it that some manage to preserve themselves where I have failed? Sidney, I do not know. Perhaps if others love you, you may more securely love yourself -- but I am alone. I loved a woman once, Sid, as you well know -- a beautiful, vibrant lady, an angel who in her wisdom saw fit to choose you instead of I...'

Norville is interrupted by loud blubbering. He looks up.

Hudsucker is weeping loudly into a white handkerchief.

He sniffs at his nose, gives it a loud honk, and urgently quavers in a voice strangled with emotion:

HUDSUCKER

Skip this part...

He waves his hankie in get-on-with-it circles.

HUDSUCKER

...Last paragraph, last paragraph.

Norville looks down the page.

NORVILLE

'...And so, Sid, the future does not belong to such as I -- nor even you. We have made our compromises with time. The future belongs to the young,

who may more energetically wage the battle against corruption. Accordingly, in the spirit of hope, and the ringing in of the new, I hereby bequeath my entire interest in the company, and my seat on the board, to whomever is Hudsucker's most recent employee at the time of my demise. I know this will disappoint you -- you, Sid, who have served so diligently and for so long. But --'

HUDSUCKER  
-- tough titty toenails!

He roars with laughter.

HUDSUCKER  
...That'll show the bastard!

He merrily wipes his eyes.

HUDSUCKER  
...Yeah, go ahead.

NORVILLE  
'...But Sid, let me urge you to work closely with the new president, and to keep giving Hudsucker Industries all your energies -- but not your soul. For while we must strive for success, we must not worship it. Long live the Hud. Waring Hudsucker...'

Norville gives a musingly appreciative nod.

HUDSUCKER  
...Geez.

Pleased with himself:

HUDSUCKER  
Yup. It's all there. Well, see that it gets delivered in the morning.

Hudsucker picks up his lyre and heads back up toward the stars.

HUDSUCKER  
Sheeel beeee...

MUSSBURGER'S OFFICE

Mussburger still sits frozen in his chair. Outside the arched window Hudsucker rises, through the falling snow, his way back to the heavens.

HUDSUCKER

great  
on

...Ridin' six white horses, She'll  
be ridin' six white horses She'll be  
ridin' six white horses When she  
comes...

door. We hear a great WRENCHING SOUND from the GEAR ROOM next

GEAR ROOM

Moses pries the broom handle loose from the Great Gear.

With a LOW MOAN the CLOCKWORKS start to shudder and turn

--

SWEEP SECOND HAND

Lurching forward --

PERPETUAL MOTION BALL

Swinging down --

EXT. PAVEMENT

As Norville falls the last few feet and lands on his face  
with one last mighty BONG of the HUDSUCKER CLOCK.

BOOM DOWN

FROM a tavern sign that says ANN'S 440, DOWN TO the front  
door, which Norville is entering.

INT. ANN'S

into a Sitting halfway down the bar is Amy, staring morosely  
coffee cup. AT the CUT we are TRACKING BACK, PULLING AWAY  
FROM her.

Eagles Norville enters, comes up next to her and makes the Go  
sign, hooking his thumbs in front of his nose and  
spreading his fingers.

Two familiar voices narrate the scene, sounding a little  
tipsy:

LOU (O.S.)

What the heck's he doin', Benny?

Amy looks at Norville, startled. After a moment she  
reciprocates the sign.

BENNY (O.S.)

What the heck's she doin', Lou?

LOU (O.S.)

What the heck they doin'?

Norville and Amy embrace.

BENNY (O.S.)  
You know what they're doin' now,  
Lou.

LOU (O.S.)  
This I know, Benny.

BENNY (O.S.)  
This you're familia' with.

TOWARDS

Our PULL BACK ENDS LOOKING ACROSS an elbow of the bar,

Norville and Amy, now in WIDE SHOT. Resting on the bar in  
the extreme f.g. are two champagne glasses, half-full of  
fizzing champagne.

Norville and Amy kiss.

LOU (O.S.)  
...Geez.

BENNY (O.S.)  
...Geez.

We hear LABORED, RASPY BREATHING.

LOU (O.S.)  
...Y'all right, Benny?

In a quavering voice:

BENNY (O.S.)  
...Yeah, I'm... It's just... It's  
beautiful, Lou!

Lou also is beginning to sound choked up:

LOU (O.S.)  
It is beautiful, Benny.

embrace:  
Almost weeping as Norville and Amy continue their

BENNY (O.S.)  
...It's the most beautiful t'ing I  
ever saw.

LOU (O.S.)  
It's the most beautiful t'ing I ever  
saw.

a  
at

A BARTENDER ENTERS to BLOCK our VIEW of Norville and Amy.

He is youngish, with a beat goatee, wearing dungarees and  
sweatshirt with cut-off sleeves. He looks to either side

Benny and Lou.

BARTENDER  
You cats comin' from a party?

BENNY  
Cabbies' affair.

LOU  
Hacks' New Year's gala.

BARTENDER  
Crazy. Get you anything else? Sangria?  
Carrot juice? Herbal tea?

REVERSE ANGLE

long  
him

We see Benny and Lou are sitting side by side at the bar.  
Lou wears a fake wispy beard and white eyebrows and a  
flowing robe; he holds a fake scythe. On the bar next to  
sits a large hourglass.

LOU  
Bromo.

Benny is wearing nothing but an oversized diaper, a baby  
bonnett and a sash across his hairy chest and thick belly  
that says "1959."

in

He chucks himself in the heart, cocks his head and sucks  
air, then blows it back out.

BENNY  
...Bromo.

BLUE LETTER

Lying on the boardroom table. As a hand enters to lay a  
wristwatch on the table next to it, we hear the voice of  
Moses, the old maintenance man.

MOSES (V.O.)  
And so began 1959. The new year...

deposit

The hand reenters to lay down a wallet, and then to  
a burning cigar in an ashtray.

MOSES (V.O.)  
...And the start of a new business  
cycle. When he learned that Norville  
owned the comp'ny, ol' Sidney was  
upset at first.

We TILT UP to show that Mussburger is walking toward the  
boardroom window. Board members silently remonstrate with  
him as he tries to wrench it open.

MOSES (V.O.)

...It's a good thing Doc  
Bromfenbrenner was there...

Doctor Bromfenbrenner stands to one side watching, brow  
furrowed, a pencil pressed to his lips.

MOSES (V.O.)  
...'cause he was able to keep Sidney  
from harmin' his ol' self.

We...

CUT

TO:

BARRED DOOR

puffing being slammed behind Sidney who, straight-jacketed, is  
on a cigar as he is led away.

MOSES (V.O.)  
...Now Norville, he went on an' ruled  
with wisdom and compassion...

BOARDROOM

on Again. Norville is eagerly pointing at a design he has up  
The an easel: Under the heading BRAND NEW is a large circle.  
side view is a flat line.

MOSES (V.O.)  
...and started dreamin' up them  
excitin' new ideas again. You know,  
for kids!

The board members look at the design, puzzled.

a Norville takes a drop cloth off of a piece of plastic on  
pedestal. He has the board's complete attention.

MOSES (V.O.)  
...An' that's the story of how  
Norville Barnes climbed away up to  
the forty-fourth floor of the  
Hudsucker Buildin'...

He picks up the plastic disc and as he sails it we...

CUT

TO:

OUTSIDE

As it floats out the boardroom window.

MOSES (V.O.)  
...an' then fell all the way down,

but didn't quite squish himself.

Hudsucker We BOOM UP, AWAY FROM the boardroom, to the great  
Clock.

MOSES (V.O.)  
...Ya know, they say there was a man  
who jumped from the fortyfifth  
floor... but that's another story.  
Heh-heh-heh! Ya-heh-heh-heh!

We FADE OUT on the clock as Moses' LAUGHTER grows distant  
and END MUSIC SWELLS.

THE END