

BEDLAM CURRENTS
(Blue Draft)

Written by

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Pilot

"Alternating Currents"

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OVER BLACK

THIS DRAMATIZATION IS INSPIRED BY TRUE EVENTS. HOWEVER, CERTAIN SCENES, CHARACTERS, NAMES, BUSINESSES, INCIDENTS, LOCATIONS AND EVENTS HAVE BEEN FICTIONALIZED FOR DRAMATIC PURPOSES.

FADE TO:

EXT. TESLA HOUSE - NIGHT

Rain beats down as a fierce lightning storm rages onto the property of a modest farmhouse.

SUPER: TESLA HOME - SMILJAN, CROATIA - 1873

More Thunder followed by more lightning fills the sky...

INT. TESLA HOUSE. HALL - NIGHT

A man MILUTIN TESLA (50's) holds his wife, MANDIC TESLA (50's) for comfort as she sobs in his arms. This is not as a result of the storm but something more intimate. Milutin is doing all he can to contain himself as well, he looks down the hall to notice his daughters together, peering from around the corner, ANGELINA TESLA (23), MIKA TESLA (21) and MARICA TESLA (15) all with looks of worry on their face-

A door opens revealing a DOCTOR (50's). He approaches Milutin. The girls listen anxiously.

DOCTOR (IN CROATIAN)
I have done what I can.

MANDIC (IN CROATIAN)
Will he be ok?

DOCTOR (IN CROATIAN)
(Somber)
He must rest.

Mandic races into the room.

MILUTIN (IN CROATIAN)
Thank you.

The doctor continues down the hall. Milutin stands with his eyes to the floor, he is a tough love father, but whatever is happening clearly has him shaken.

All three of his daughters hurry past him into the room.

Milutin looks to his hand that is clinching onto his rosary for dear life. He turns and enters into the room-

INT. TESLA HOUSE. ROOM - CONTINUOUS

-To where his girls surround a bed all holding hands in prayer.

The storm outside is going strong and steady.

Milutin looks around the room...

Books are scattered around the room, some opened some closed....

Stacks of Catholic transcripts on dressers...

Milutin looks down at the cluttered floor and notices something in particular. A piece of crinkled paper. He picks it up to examine.

ECU: The paper has a vaguely drawn image of NIKOLA TESLA'S first ideas for *ALTERNATING ELECTRICAL CURRENTS*.

Milutin calmly and neatly places the paper down on a dresser. He approaches his family. The girls part to make room for him. He edges towards the bed to see-

His son, NIKOLA TESLA (17) dazed, sickly bedridden, in a sweat, wet towels over his forehead. Milutin grabs hold of Nikola's feverish hand.

MILUTIN (IN CROATIAN)

Let us pray.

(The family gathers)

O Lord, we call upon thee in our time of need. That You give us the strength and will to bear this heavy burden, until we can again feel the warmth and love of Your divine compassion. Be mindful of us and have mercy on us while we struggle to comprehend your will. Amen.

The girls repeat "AMEN".

MANDIC (IN CROATIAN)

Oh Nikola, Nikola, my sweet boy. We are here my love. How strong you are. How strong you are.

Mandic kisses his hand.

Milutin looks to his wife, next to his daughters clinching on to one another, then to the bedpost that has a hanging shirt with a clerical collar suspended from it's shoulder. His emotions become conflicted as he hangs his head. He leans in and kisses Nikola's rag covered forehead and stands. His wife looks to him confused.

MANDIC (IN CROATIAN) (CONT'D)

Milutin, we must continue to have
faith...

Milutin ignores his wife and meanders back over to the dresser by the door. He picks up the crinkled paper with Nikola's drawing. Takes a beat and looks at it. He doesn't understand what it is but knows it is something that has much meaning to his son.

MANDIC (IN CROATIAN) (CONT'D)

You of all should know. We cannot
waiver, we cannot-

Mandic falls in Angelina's arms.

Milutin makes his way back to the bed and kneels.

MILUTIN (IN CROATIAN)

The glow retreats, done is the day
of toil; Upon it's track to
follow... Follow Soaring.

(Somber)

Follow soaring my son.

Milutin places the crinkled paper in Nikola's hand.

MANDIC (IN CROATIAN)

Be well Nikola. Be well from this
and I will no longer be selfish of
your future. You will become as
great and greater than I know you
to be in your own endeavors.

(Beat)

God wills it.

We CLOSE in on that crinkled paper Milutin is squeezing into Nikola's hand.

We hear the thunderstorm...

CUT TO:

EXT. CABARET - NIGHT

Clouds with flashes of lightning paint the sky as the rain continues on...

Under some kind of tarp, a MAN (20's) handsome features with a quirkiness about him, slender, dressed intelligently, paces in a corner a few feet away from the entrance. He tosses a cigarette in his mouth to help his nerves, then as most smokers do, fails to find a light.

SUPER: PARIS, FRANCE - 1883

The entrance door flies open and a BEAUTIFUL WOMAN (20's) walks out. She does not notice the man amidst the rain. She searches in her overcoat for a cigarette. She finds a VAUDAIN LIGHTER Lighter in her pocket instead.

BEAUTIFUL WOMAN (IN FRENCH)

Shit!

The man notices her frustration.

MAN (IN FRENCH)

Excuse me? Miss?

(Off her look)

A light?

She notices his cigarette.

BEAUTIFUL WOMAN (IN FRENCH)

You've got that taken care of.

MAN (IN FRENCH)

Ah, no match.

BEAUTIFUL WOMAN (IN FRENCH)

Another?

MAN (IN FRENCH)

(re: pack of smokes)

Trade?

She takes a smoke then lights it, she lights his after. The man has never seen a lighter before.

MAN (IN FRENCH) (CONT'D)

Merci.

(She smiles)

Your device? It produces fire?

BEAUTIFUL WOMAN (IN FRENCH)
Yes, of course. They call it the
Vaudaine Cigar Lighter. "It lights
and lights and keeps on lighting."

The man looks blankly.

BEAUTIFUL WOMAN (IN FRENCH) (CONT'D)
The advertisement? They're becoming
quite popular.

MAN (IN FRENCH)
(Gestures for the lighter)
May I?

She hands him the lighter. The man takes it with genuine
curiosity. She studies him just as curious.

BEAUTIFUL WOMAN (IN FRENCH)
Are you enjoying the show?

MAN (IN FRENCH)
(re: the lighter)
Fascinating... There seems to be
some sort of wheel that creates-

The Woman is dumbfounded that perhaps for once in her life a
man is not awestruck by her beauty.

BEAUTIFUL WOMAN (IN FRENCH)
The show is... Fascinating, I
suppose. Sir?

MAN (IN FRENCH)
(Not looking up)
Yes, no, the show, no I have no
interest in the geriatrics of half
naked women performing for the
amusement of-
(re: the lighter)
That's it! The spark of this tiny
wheel against the flint. Simple.
You see? The rope then allows for
the flame to oxidize. Fire in your
pocket...
(Off her confused look)
I'm sorry if I have somehow
offended you, but I simply find the
profession repulsive and very much
ineffectual.

BEAUTIFUL WOMAN (IN FRENCH)
Is that so...

The woman calmly takes back her lighter.

MAN (IN FRENCH)
(Realizing)
Unfortunately.

BEAUTIFUL WOMAN (IN FRENCH)
You will be pleased to know, I
neither work here nor am I a
dancer.

MAN (IN FRENCH)
No?

BEAUTIFUL WOMAN (IN FRENCH)
Typist. 200 characters per minute.
And I agree with you in part that
the profession is... Repulsive.
Though I think it is very much
effectual.

The man looks on impressed then a glance down the street.

BEAUTIFUL WOMAN (IN FRENCH) (CONT'D)
And you? What is it you do?

MAN (IN FRENCH)
What do I *do*? What do I do? I do a
lot. It is not so much *what* I do
but rather what I aim to
accomplish.

BEAUTIFUL WOMAN (IN FRENCH)
Ok, what is that?

MAN (IN FRENCH)
(Smiles)
Well my dear, I aim to orchestrate
the world into a new age of
progressive enlightenment.

She laughs.

BEAUTIFUL WOMAN (IN FRENCH)
What ambitions you have.

Beat.

MAN (IN FRENCH)
Don't we all? Wasn't it ambition
that has allowed for you to type
200 characters per minute?
(MORE)

MAN (IN FRENCH) (CONT'D)

A once domesticated woman now roams
out in the world, a lonesome dove,
vulnerable to the primal brutality
of man.

The woman is clearly taken back.

BEAUTIFUL WOMAN (IN FRENCH)

We are all exposed to the primal
vices of *men*.

MAN (IN FRENCH)

Yes, yes I suppose we are.

The man looks at a time piece. His nerves are beginning to
show again.

BEAUTIFUL WOMAN (IN FRENCH)

How do you expect to achieve this
great feat? Your... Progressive
enlightenment?

MAN (IN FRENCH)

Electricity.

BEAUTIFUL WOMAN (IN FRENCH)

Electricity?

MAN (IN FRENCH)

Precisely. Manipulating the
behavior of electric currents.

The woman is now adrift at sea. The man takes a quite large
puff of his cigarette then profusely coughs.

BEAUTIFUL WOMAN (IN FRENCH)

Is everything ok?

MAN (IN FRENCH)

No. Smoking is not my habit.

(Beat)

Actually. Men- Many men are coming
after me.

He puts out his smoke.

BEAUTIFUL WOMAN (IN FRENCH)

Why?

MAN (IN FRENCH)

I have... Debts.

BEAUTIFUL WOMAN (IN FRENCH)

Debts?

MAN (IN FRENCH)

Yes.

BEAUTIFUL WOMAN (IN FRENCH)

Money?

MAN (IN FRENCH)

Among other things.

BEAUTIFUL WOMAN (IN FRENCH)

A lot?

The man looks over his shoulder.

BEAUTIFUL WOMAN (IN FRENCH) (CONT'D)

Why don't you run?

MAN (IN FRENCH)

I did.

He reveals from under his coat his hand in some sort of cast, she hadn't noticed this man had been using one hand the entire time.

MAN (IN FRENCH) (CONT'D)

I am- Uprooted from my apartment.

(Off her look)

It would seem I've been at it all night. Then the storm. So, here I am.

BEAUTIFUL WOMAN (IN FRENCH)

So, what will you do?

MAN (IN FRENCH)

I will ask a favor of you.

BEAUTIFUL WOMAN (IN FRENCH)

What kind of favor?

MAN (IN FRENCH)

I will ask that if you do not hear of me ever again- that you remember on this night you conversed with a great man. No, that you conversed with the *greatest* of man.

Shouting from several men echoes from down the street.

BEAUTIFUL WOMAN (IN FRENCH)

Anything else?

MAN (IN FRENCH)

Yes, and remember... Electricity.

The men shouting are upon them...

She smiles, she kind of likes this dangerous game.

BEAUTIFUL WOMAN (IN FRENCH)

And what is the great electric
man's name I am to remember?

TESLA

Tesla. Nikola Tesla.

Tesla takes the woman's hand and kisses it then takes off
into the rain disappearing around a corner.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREETS - CONTINUOUS

Tesla sprints down a narrow street.

BROODING HENCHMEN in stylish trench-coats relentlessly chase
after him.

EXT. STREETS. ALLY - CONTINUOUS

Tesla turns a corner and hurries down a tight ally.

The Brooding Henchmen are gaining FAST!

EXT. STREETS - CONTINUOUS

Tesla slips down a smaller ally, the walls of the buildings
nearly kissing, he painfully forcing his way through with his
injured arm.

The Brooding Henchman stop and stare at the smaller ally. One
signals for the gang to split and the men oblige.

EXT. CANAL - CONTINUOUS

Tesla is around another corner. (The rain has subsided but
the ground is wet) He slips over a loose stone in the road.
He lands on his injured arm breaking his cast. He gets up,
grimacing holding his forearm. He looks around, nothing.

He goes to the water's edge of the quiet canal, looking over
the edge he pauses, taking in his reflection. Footsteps break
his moment as he turns TO SEE-

A Brooding Henchman standing in front of him smirking.

TESLA

You know, you have quite a lovely smile. You should do it more frequently.

The Brooding Henchman steps closer, his smirk widens to a smile revealing a checkered set of teeth.

TESLA (CONT'D)

Perhaps not so much...

BROODING HENCHMAN #1 (IN FRENCH)

The money.

TESLA

The money. What money?

Tesla steps back to the edge of the edge almost falling over in the process.

BROODING HENCHMAN #1 (IN FRENCH)

You are out of time little man.

TESLA

I can counter, though now would most likely not be the best-

The Brooding Henchman violently grabs Tesla's collar and pulls him close.

His two men approach. Tesla notices.

TESLA (CONT'D)

Oh, yes of course...

(Beat)

I don't have it. But I will at some point. And I can assure you that you, all of you, will be the very first to know once I do.

The Henchman notices something around Tesla's neck. He pulls it out to reveal Tesla's Father's rosary; it holds a small RUBY at it's center. Tesla's demeanor quickly shifts to desperation.

TESLA (CONT'D)

No, please. Not that.

(IN FRENCH)

I beg you.

The Brooding Henchman takes out a small knife.

TESLA (CONT'D)

I see...

The Henchman carves out the small jewel, lets go of Tesla's collar and inspects the Ruby up to the light of a gas lamp. He is satisfied and pockets it then nods to his two men.

They aggressively approach Tesla.

TESLA (CONT'D)
Gentlemen...

Both of the guards chuckle.

TESLA'S POV: A fist flies in towards his face UNTIL-

CUT TO BLACK:

OPENING CREDITS

FADE TO:

INT. EDISON ELECTRIC COMPANY. GENERATOR HALL - MORNING

In a gargantuan factory hall, steam fills the unforgiving congested atmosphere as dozens of *DIRECT CURRENT (DC) ELECTRIC DYNAMO GENERATORS* mercilessly work away.

Several WORKMEN in denim overalls man each of the elephant sized generators; hot, greasy and sweaty as they focus only on their task at hand.

We hear O.C a man speaking angrily in German.

INT. EDISON ELECTRIC COMPANY. BATCHELORS'S OFFICE - SAME

The German tirade continues in a room much more pristine than the conditions of the hall we have just left and now we know the voice's owner. A very animated GERMAN RAILWAY EXECUTIVE (40's) modestly dressed, red faced, seated in a leather chair. He is accompanied by his GERMAN TRANSLATOR (30's) in a calmer demeanor, seated beside him.

GERMAN TRANSLATOR
He says it has been five weeks since the new lighting systems have been installed, yet has failed to work for more than five days. The rail was embarrassed at the fires your lamps cause during it's opening ceremony.

The Executive speaks again.

GERMAN TRANSLATOR (CONT'D)

You tell me over wire that the systems will be fixed. You give assurances. They are not fixed they are more broken. My station remains dark and my cars cannot move. When they don't move I make no money.

The Executive speaks again.

GERMAN TRANSLATOR (CONT'D)

Now I am forced to come to Paris, I hate paris, to speak with this Thomas Edison and I only see you.

(Beat)

He says he would like for his money to be returned and the systems taken out.

Across a large table seated in a sizably bigger leather chair is CHARLES BATCHELOR (40) White collared American, smart, handsomely dressed with a mustache to match. He holds a tight smile that is borderline condescending as he digests the German's words.

BATCHELOR

My good man, apologies on your opening ceremony. I can most definitely understand your warranted frustrations. If you recall I am an associate of Mr. Thomas Edison. I manage all of his European based electric companies which means per our agreement you deal with me and I in turn directly deal with Mr. Edison.

The Translator speaks as Batchelor continues to respond.

BATCHELOR (CONT'D)

Now allow for me to reassure you need not worry and that all on our end is in proper form and operating as advertised.

Batchelor rises and approaches the German Executive, gesturing for the man stand with him. The angry man reluctantly does so. Batchelor walks over to large windows that overlook the entire Generator Hall.

BATCHELOR (CONT'D)

Witness for your very own. Every dynamo is in healthy impeccable working condition.

(MORE)

BATCHELOR (CONT'D)

But please allow for your surety,
that I send our best engineer
personally to inspect your rails.

The translator speaks. The German Executive gives Batchelor a menacing stare.

GERMAN EXECUTIVE (IN ENGLISH)

Last chance.

The Germans exit. Batchelor's smile quickly diminishes.

CUT TO:

INT. EDISON ELECTRIC COMPANY. GENERATOR HALL - MOMENTS LATER

Now in the trenches, Batchelor efficiently makes his way through the maze of generators, inspecting as he moves along with his foreman, CHASON GARNIER (30's)French.

GARNIER

Monsieur Batchelor, generator 3, 5, 8, 12 and now 9 are down. They cannot keep from overheating. The insulation has worn on all causing shortages sir.

BATCHELOR

Mr. Garnier, I can see that. I pay you to fix these shortages not to inform me that there are in fact shortages.

GARNIER

Yes sir, these problems are not mechanical. If the machine part breaks my men can fix. If belts become loose we can replace. This is not such things, this is functional problem.

BATCHELOR

What do you mean functional?

GARNIER

You produce too much electric watts too fast for dynamo.

Batchelor takes this in.

BATCHELOR

Can we manage what we have?

GARNIER

Oui Monsieur. But not for long
time.

BATCHELOR

Do what you can.

(Beat)

Where in God's name is my engineer?

INT. ALLY - MORNING

In the corner of an old ally Tesla is sleeping under his jacket on a hay stack. A WORKER comes out from a door dumping out a bucket. He notices Tesla then starts screaming angrily at him in French. Tesla vexatiously wakes. As he does the pain from the previous night rips through his body. We notice his eye swollen and his cast broken. He suddenly remembers the rosary around his neck, he checks for it. Nothing, then desperately searches in the impossible abyss of hay. Nothing. Then to his coat pockets until he notices it laying in muck on the ground at his feet. He picks it up and carefully cleans it off and puts it around his neck.

MOMENTS LATER:

Tesla stumbles out from the ally.

EXT. PARIS STREET - MORNING

The city is awake and its streets are a congested mess. Tesla navigates his way through the maze of people.

INT. PARIS CAFE - MORNING

Tesla meanders to the counter of a small cafe. The BARISTA is taken back by his swollen eye.

BARISTA (IN FRENCH)

Monsieur?

TESLA (IN FRENCH)

Coffee, please.

EXT. EDISON ELECTRIC COMPANY - MORNING

Garnier is posted outside of the Generator hall nursing a smoke and whiskey from a steel canteen when he notices Tesla looking a mess, walking upright headed towards him.

GARNIER (IN FRENCH)
Niko? You look like shit.

Tesla ignores Garnier.

GARNIER (IN FRENCH) (CONT'D)
I warned you about the Les Apaches
gangs.
(In English)
You must stop this. They will kill
you.
(Re: Canteen)
Breakfast?

Tesla takes a large gulp from the canteen.

GARNIER (CONT'D)
Five engines are down. Batchelor
looks worse shape than you.

INT. EDISON ELECTRIC COMPANY. BATCHELORS'S OFFICE - MORNING

Batchelor stands still behind his desk eyes fixed, concerned,
investigating Tesla's battered shape. He is attempting to
formulate the right words.

BATCHELOR
Your protracting nocturnal
activities have long been of
concern. Although now I fear the
worst...

Tesla ignores this. Batchelor wrestles with thoughts, staring
at Tesla. Then just as if a father scolding his child...

BATCHELOR (CONT'D)
I am sending you to Strasbourg.
Perhaps time away will serve you
better. Allow that brain of yours
to be productive.
(Beat)
These malfunctions have caused our
partners in the east to become
unsettled.

TESLA
Germany?

BATCHELOR
What's the matter? You speak
German. Their stations alone are
subsidizing over half of Edison
Continental here in Europe.
(MORE)

BATCHELOR (CONT'D)

We cannot afford to jeopardize that backing.

TESLA

But the damage done in Strasbourg was seismic, catastrophic. This is not just four or five generators. Your systems completely failed-

BATCHELOR

(Terse)

Our system.

Beat. Tesla relucts.

TESLA

You shut down my improvements upon the dynamo generators to only in turn ask for my aid in managing the damage your lack luster designs were the very catalyst of.

Batchelor is silent as he expects this response.

TESLA (CONT'D)

...It will take weeks, months perhaps. You want assurances, you must allow for me to do my work.

(Thinking)

Automatic Regulators, controlling the electric currents of the systems. If I cannot install the regulators the shortages will persist and the possibility of far greater damage.

Batchelor is again in thought.

BATCHELOR

(Finally)

Do it. You will be compensated double your standard fee upon completion and your arrival back in Paris.

EXT. TRAIN - DAY

As we hear the roar of the steam engine train moving along the tracks. Tesla sits motionless, head leaned on the window deep in thought as he caresses that familiar crucifix.

CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH. HALL - DAY

A man we will soon know as THOMAS EDISON (40's) dressed in a sharp all black suit with a bow tie around the collar. He stands stone-faced with an expensive pipe dangling from his mouth as he stares expressionless at a large CRUCIFIX on the wall - a statue of Jesus clinging from its arms.

We can hear a muffled voice O.C of someone giving what seems to be a sermon.

SUPER: NEW YORK - 1884

An USHER appears from behind a door.

USHER

Mr. Edison? They are ready sir.

Edison nods and approaches the door.

USHER (CONT'D)

Sir...

The Usher nods to Edison's pipe still in his mouth to which Edison puts it away.

EDISON

Of course, your God and his rules.
Apologies.

INT. CHURCH. CONGREGATION HALL - CONTINUOUS

Edison enters into the enormous hall with every pew occupied. Silence. All eyes turn to Edison and we now know this is in fact a funeral. Edison makes his way to the elevated podium at the front.

Now at the podium, he fidgets with the wooden edge trying to find his words.

EDISON

Friends, family, esteemed
colleagues, Father Jacobs... Thank
you for your unbridled love and
condolence. If you'll forgive me
for my abnormal manner, this is as
I am sure you all are aware, not of
my speciality. As I awaited this
dreadful moment just there in the
hall. I stood before the cherished
crucifix, contemplative. Pondering
on the how and the why of this
impossible situation.

(MORE)

EDISON (CONT'D)

We as the alpha species of this earth, imagine ourselves titans and leviathans capable of the incapable. And why not? A once dark world became embellished by the radiant colors of fire we scorched from its very ground. Now that same darkness is cast out curtesy of man's taming of Zeus and harnessing of his mighty lightning. The audacity of man... How dare we forget the fragility of the simple fact that we are no more than human. No more than flesh and blood. How dare we challenge that man on that crucifix. The burdening of this life can be so overwhelming that we become inferior. Inferior to our own hearts and minds. Our souls turn facile, we lose our sense of self, our sense of hope...

(Looking to the coffin)

I cannot comprehend her motives for wanting to depart from this world. But what I do know is my dearest wife Mary, believed your God to be a compassionate man, a merciful man, a forgiving man. So with that I conclude in her memory that we embrace and share in those values if even for only a moment.

Just as he Edison finishes the electric lights in the church flutter about then dim and quickly come back to full strength.

Edison looks up towards the ceiling then up to a picture of Jesus. Edison gives a "don't you dare" look to the picture.

INT. CHURCH. RECEPTION - LATER

Conversation fills the room as the service has concluded and the attendees are gathered in the reception area. We see Edison shaking hands and conversing.

In a corner towards the back of the large room we meet ROBERT JOHNSON (29) and his wife KATHERINE JOHNSON (27) both staring at Edison make his way around the reception.

ROBERT

What a profound eulogy, wouldn't you agree?

KAT

As if the public doesn't aggrandize him enough.

ROBERT

Kat, this is hardly the time or the place.

KAT

His wife dies and he incites provocation towards the Lord.

ROBERT

Well, Mr. Edison is of a different sort. Not of any specific religion. The new age intellectual...

KAT

Men who think of themselves as God.
(Beat)
Seems to be the most popular religion.

INT. CHURCH. RECEPTION - MOMENTS LATER

With Kat in tow, Robert has made his way through the maze of people up to Edison who is surrounded by several men in suits who look to be of a high class.

ROBERT

Mr. Edison, please accept our deepest condolences. In my limited encounters, I found Mary to be a lovely woman.

EDISON

Thank you. Gentlemen allow me to introduce Mr. Robert Johnson, tremendous editor of Century Magazine and his beautiful wife, whom I myself have not had the pleasure of meeting until now.

Edison takes Kat's hand and kisses it.

KAT

Katherine. It is a pleasure Mr. Edison and again we offer our apologies on your loss.

EDISON

The Johnson's have just recently moved from Washington D.C.

(MORE)

EDISON (CONT'D)

(To Kat)

Robert has spoken a great deal about you. I believe Mary and yourself would of gotten along fondly.

Kat forces a smile.

EXT. CHURCH - AFTERNOON

Robert and Kat make their way out into the brisk New York air. Robert notices two AFRICAN AMERICAN Men in their late 20's, dressed handsomely standing still, with serious expressions on their faces, staring right at him across the street from the church.

A hand is placed on Robert's shoulder breaking his concentration. He looks it's Edison.

EDISON

Katherine, may I?

Katherine nods and gives the two some distance. Her eyes steadily fixed on them.

ROBERT

All things considered it was a beautiful service.

EDISON

Agreed.

(Beat)

SO, how are you fairing.

ROBERT

Well sir. Although the pace of the city will take some adjusting to, I think in the long run it will be for the best.

EDISON

Certainly. I believe the best way to adjust to any new setting especially one with a social temperament such as New York, is to make friends.

ROBERT

I am inclined to agree with you.

EDISON

Friends of the right sort. Of the proper condition.

Robert stops at this, his journalistic instincts are buzzing.

ROBERT

Mr. Edison, forgive me if I seem crude it certainly is not meant in that manner, but I gather you are asking something of me.

EDISON

Your civil war stories of the Century Magazine have acquired quite the following. You have great influence on how the public perceives those seemingly ancient times.

Robert is trying to piece together Edison's meaning.

ROBERT

I believe the war was instrumental in shaping today's society.

EDISON

Yes... Perhaps these present times will have an equally profound effect on our future. Maybe even profound enough to write about.

ROBERT

Perhaps Mr. Edison, only time will tell.

EDISON

Please call me Al. We are friends and I'd like you for to call on me if ever you are in need of anything.

ROBERT

Why thank you sir, that's too kind.

EDISON

In fact we will be celebrating Pearl Street's 5 year anniversary. I insist you join.

ROBERT

Sir I'd be honored.

EDISON

Maybe bring your note-pad... For anything possibly note worthy.

Robert politely nods and Edison walks away. Robert looks across the street again. The men are gone.

INT. JOHNSON'S HOME - NIGHT

The Johnson's have made it back to their modest apartment. Entering from the door they are met by the nanny, COZETTA "COZY" (30's) African American, sweet, soft on the eyes; Carrying their son OWEN (5).

COZY
Mr. Robert, Mrs. Katherine.

ROBERT
Cozetta.

Owen hurries to Kat to which she lovingly embraces him.

KAT
Hello there my lovely.
(To Cozy)
How was he?

COZY
He slept most the afternoon. Still wrestling with that cough.

ROBERT
I told you Kat, he needs a doctor.

Robert kisses Owen on the forehead and continues into the living room.

COZY
I put today's reads on the table there for you.
(Robert Acknowledges)
Ms. Katherine, would you like me to make you up some tea.

KAT
No thank you Cozy, I am fine. You are relieved for the night.
(Beat)
And thank you for helping to ease our move from Washington. I know how hard it was for you to leave your family.

Cozy nods and gives a tight smile.

KITCHEN

Robert picks up the paper and scans the days headlines.

ROBERT

(re: newspaper)

Would you look at that...

(Reading)

Hope had been lost for the pioneering electric enterprise, Edison Continental. After the catastrophe of malfunctions involving their dynamo operated electric systems. It seems the Strasbourg railway is finally up and running, thanks to the sumptuous wizardry of the company's top man, Mr. Thomas Edison.

LIVING ROOM

Kat sits on the couch caressing Owen's hair.

KAT

Not only has he tamed Zeus, but now has mastered wizardry.

ROBERT

Kat-

KAT

There was a time women were mutilated for such convictions. Now men are praised.

ROBERT

That was witchcraft, entirely different circumstances-

(Beat)

The man grieves for his wife's sudden death.

KAT

I grieve for her shortened life.

(Beat)

You two had yourselves a lovely chat.

ROBERT

It was interesting yes.

KAT

Watch yourself with him Robert.

ROBERT

Why do I need to do that when I have you?

KAT

I just know what you will do for one of your stories. You become blind to everything else. A man who doesn't believe in Jesus is capable of anything.

ROBERT

I'm sure he's just fine.

(Beat)

Actually I will boil me up some tea. You sure you don't want some?

Kat gives a warm grin and shakes her head no. He places the paper back on the table with it still opened to the Strasbourg story. WE CLOSE IN-

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TESLA DREAM. SOMEWHERE - SOMETIME

(THIS WILL BE A FAMILIAR OCCURRENCE THROUGHOUT THE SHOW)

As a dense mysterious fog glides through the darkened atmosphere we realize we do not know where we are nor when this is. (*Thunder rumbles in the sky*) We see a familiar face, Tesla is on the ground on all fours gaining his bearings. He feels grass below him, he looks around lost, though we get the feeling this is not the first time he has been here. (*Thunder gets louder and more frequent*) As he crawls along the ground, drops of rain fall then slowly pick up as he continues to move. Suddenly Tesla picks something up in his hand.-

ECU: The vaguely drawn image of NIKOLA TESLA'S first idea for *ALTERNATING ELECTRICAL CURRENTS* that we first saw, is now a complete sketch with a drawing of Tesla's *INDUCTION MOTOR*.

Tesla goes into deep thought at this find. The rain has turned into a downpour. (*The thunder is loud and continuous*) Lightning is now striking next to Tesla as he looks down at the sketch and the ink has been drowned off the page. The lightning has become violent. STRIKING! STRIKING! STRIKING! White flashes UNTIL-

FADE TO:

INT. TRAIN - DAY

Tesla wakes from a day dream uncovering his eyes with a dark cloth. He looks around to notice the train has arrived at the station. He tucks his crucifix now around his neck under his shirt. Then grabs his bag seated next to him, finally getting up and exiting.

EXT. TRAIN STATION - MOMENTS LATER

Tesla makes his way into the packed station we see the pack of Brooding Henchmen posted among the sea of people. Watching. Waiting. They trail Tesla from a safe distance as to not be seen.

EXT. PARIS STREET - DAY

Tesla migrates unsuspecting through the city. The Henchmen patiently tailing.

Around a street corner...

Down another street...

EXT. EDISON ELECTRIC COMPANY - LATER

Just as Tesla approaches the factory he is APPREHENDED by the Brooding Henchman. The Big man HITS Tesla in the gut with several uppercuts, collapsing him to his knees. He then KICKS at Tesla's face drawing blood from his nose. He picks Tesla up now dazed.

BROODING HENCHMAN #1 (IN FRENCH)

You think you can run little man?
Now you die.

Tesla is too discombobulated to respond. WHACK! Another strike to Tesla's face then another JUST AS-

Batchelor sprints from out of the factory accompanied by three good sized FACTORY WORKERS.

BATCHELOR

Stop this nonsense! Stop! You will
kill the man!
(In French)
Stop this please!

The Brooding Henchman drops Tesla to the ground.

BROODING HENCHMAN #1

He pays or you pay.

Batchelor thinks this over.

BROODING HENCHMAN #1 (CONT'D)

Or we come back.

Batchelor ponders this statement. He knows these men need money or more trouble will come.

BATCHELOR

What is his debt?

CUT TO:

EXT. EDISON ELECTRIC COMPANY - MOMENTS LATER

Two large LEATHER CASES are dropped at the feet of the henchmen. The big man opens the cases, viewing their contents. He approves, closes the cases then nods to his men to pick them up. The henchmen turn and leave.

Garnier comes out to see a couple of workers helping Tesla to his feet. Batchelor walks back towards the factory past Garnier shooting him a disappointed glance.

INT. EDISON ELECTRIC COMPANY. GENERATOR HALL - LATER

From the nosebleeds of the factory Batchelor looks down through the large windows of his office. Contemplative.

Tesla is knee deep intensely disassembling one of the Dynamos. He is uncoiling yards of the copper wire tossing it to the ground as he does.

Garnier looks up to Batchelor then cautiously walks up to Tesla.

GARNIER

Niko?

(No response)

Niko...

TESLA

Monsieur Garnier you indeed were right in your diagnosis.

Garnier looks at tesla with confusion.

TESLA (CONT'D)

The problems were in fact functional. But fortunately, I have discovered the antidote to cure the ills of these dynamos.

GARNIER

How?

Tesla takes the last of the copper wiring out revealing the motor inside the Dynamo Generator.

TESLA

Seven months repairing the Strasbourg systems, I came to a realization. The regulators installed are only a temporary solution to the shortages. We must think long term, bigger.

(Thinking)

Let's start with its source. The heart. Currently all of these generators have motors that send the power flow in one simultaneous direction. Hence the Commutator here allowing for the controlled direct current. The motor produces torque that turns and turns as the electromagnetic field allows. But as we know electricity itself is not binding, not constricted. So when our motor rotates the electric current is sent alternating backwards. So what does this mean?

(Off Garnier's perplexed look)

Think, think!

GARNIER

We must change motors?

TESLA

No, yes of sorts. We must create a new kind of motor that harnesses the unpredictable nature of the electric currents.

GARNIER

And how do we do this?

TESLA

(Realizing)

I don't know... Yet.

(Beat)

(MORE)

TESLA (CONT'D)
But if we can capture this
alternating current...

Garnier notices blood dripping from Tesla's nose.

GARNIER (IN FRENCH)
Your nose. There is blood.

Garnier again looks up at Batchelor who has his eyes fixed on them.

GARNIER (CONT'D)
The boss needs to speak with you.

Tesla wipes his nose then looks up to see Batchelor is gone from sight.

INT. EDISON ELECTRIC COMPANY. BATCHELORS'S OFFICE - DAY

Tesla enters the office, wiping the remaining blood from his nose. He stands waiting for Batchelor to speak.

BATCHELOR
Do you have anything to say for
yourself?

TESLA
I was promised double my earnings
upon my return.

BATCHELOR
You will be receiving no such
compensation.

TESLA
Most often your jokes merit no
amusement but I must admit, that
there is a fine one.

Awkward silence.

BATCHELOR
(Serious)
Nikola, when you look at yourself
in the mirror, what image do you
see?

TESLA
Insatiable beauty.

BATCHELOR
My station in life has allowed for
me to know many unique individuals.
(MORE)

BATCHELOR (CONT'D)

Individuals who were revered,
idolized, adored. But of the many,
I have only considered two of them
truly great. Worthy of those
monikers. And it pains me because
they both are conflicted with the
naivety of baboons.

Batchelor makes his way over to his large windows and looks
out.

TESLA

Your point?

BATCHELOR

You know my goddamn point.

(Beat)

For whatever reason, you have a
brain vigilantly crafted by God
himself Nikola. A thing of beauty
when it is at work - art even. But
once the day is dark and
distractions gone, you are an
insomniac with self destructive
addictions.

TESLA

What I choose to do with my extra
curricular time is of no concern to
you.

BATCHELOR

No? When thugs of the Les Apaches
gangs show up at my place of
operation demanding money or blood
on your behalf it is every bit my
concern!

Tesla shoots Batchelor a look.

BATCHELOR (CONT'D)

Yes, I've known for sometime now.

TESLA

You did not have to pay them.

BATCHELOR

I didn't. You did.

(Off Tesla's look)

I saved you from yourself. The
money you earned from the
Strasbourg job is what I gave them.

TESLA

You did what?!

BATCHELOR

I had to ensure they would not come back to my doorstep.

Tesla is now up fuming and pacing.

TESLA

So you called me here to inform me that you would not be paying me what I am owed?

BATCHELOR

No, I called you here to tell you that I am firing you.

TESLA

You can't do that.

BATCHELOR

Well I just did.

TESLA

How?

BATCHELOR

Let me clarify. You will no longer be employed by Edison Continental.

TESLA

Charles, I have worked for nearly a year repairing and refining your devices. Machinery, that had my applications been approved to begin with, would not need salvaging. All to which I will receive neither credit nor compensation for improving. I have slaved for you, I have given this place everything....

(Tesla digresses)

What will I do?

Batchelor walks over to his desk and pulls out two envelopes he takes a beat to gather himself.

BATCHELOR

(Re: envelopes)

Here are two envelopes. One is a ticket that I- That you bought to New York.

(MORE)

BATCHELOR (CONT'D)

The other is a letter to one Thomas Alva Edison recommending you for immediate employment with his Illuminating company in America.

(Beat)

New York is beckoning for you Nikola. The center of the technological revolution. The only place on this earth that can keep up with that mind.

TESLA

I don't understand, you have continuously said Mr. Edison could never coexist with the likes of me.

BATCHELOR

I still believe that. But if you two somehow manage to find a marriage... The possibilities.

(Beat)

Or stay in Paris, allow the world to pass and your mind drowned by all that liquor you consume.

EXT. DOCKS - DAY

Tesla is in line to board an overpopulated steam boat for the voyage across the Atlantic when Garnier approaches. Tesla notices him, they both stop and take a moment. Garnier reaches into his pocket, pulls out a stack of folded bills and stuffs it into Tesla's pocket. Garnier hugs Tesla tight then turns and walks away. Tesla looks on unsure...

EXT. BOAT - MOMENTS LATER

Tesla looks back towards the mainland as the boat departs. His final goodbye.

INT. BOAT. STEERAGE HALLWAY - LATER

Tesla makes his way through the cramped hallway of the boat. He is searching for his quarters. As he moves through he notices something; Men, women, children, families all packed in. One thing they all have in common, they are poor.

He passes a bathroom with several people tightly packed in.

He finds some stairs and heads down to-

INT. BOAT. STEERAGE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The very bottom of the ship long but confined with wooden bunks lining the walls with dirty straw mattresses taking up most of the space and IMMIGRANT MEN taking up the remaining space. He manages to make his way to a bed and sits down taking it all in.

A HEBREW MAN (50's) approaches Tesla speaking his native language appearing to be asking for something. Tesla does not understand...

LATER

Tesla is in a sweat clinching on to his rosary, not for any religious reasons but his predicament has appeared to have made him nauseous. There is that feeling just before we throw up-

Tesla shoots up from his bed barging his way through the sea of immigrants up the stairs INTO-

BATHROOM

Forcing his way through people before finally throws up into a sink.

EXT. BOAT. DECK - NIGHT

Tesla makes his way over to a guard rail and looks out into the abyss. Dark. Eerie. Majestic. Tesla looks over to see one of the SEAMEN drinking out of a whisky tin. Exactly what he needs right now. Tesla pulls out some bills given to him by Garnier and goes over to the man.

They exchange...

EXT. BOAT. DECK - LATER

The ship is asleep, the only sounds come from the rumbles of the engine working against the sea. Tesla sits on a bench alone, drinking from his newly purchased flask. There's that insomnia. He looks up at a lantern lighting the deck, in thought. He pulls out his sketchbook and starts drawing...

ECU of sketchbook: Tesla is drawing the *INDUCTION MOTOR* we saw in his dream.

EXT. EDISON HOME - DAY

Two men in dress coats approach the entrance of a large luxurious home set on a luscious manicured lawn.

SUPER: EDISON ESTATE - MENLO PARK, NEW JERSEY

INT. EDISON HOME. LAB - MOMENTS LATER

Edison is concentrating on some sort of lighting experiment in his lab when his HOUSEKEEPER enters.

HOUSEKEEPER
Pardon Mr. Edison.

EDISON
In a moment.

HOUSEKEEPER
Sir?

EDISON
Not during my experiments, we've gone over this.

HOUSEKEEPER
Yes, apologies but there are two men of the law wanting to speak with you.

EDISON
(Thinking)
Oh, here?

She nods.

EDISON (CONT'D)
(Uneasy)
Ok...

HOUSEKEEPER
Should I send them off then?

EDISON
No, no it's fine, I will be there shortly.

INT. EDISON HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Edison opens the door to meet inspector REGAN O'LEARY (37) Irish, built like an ox, and inspector MICHAEL FLYNN (36) Irish, babyfaced, slender, quiet but his mind his always at work.

O'LEARY

Mr. Edison, let me just start off by sayin' sorry for interruptin' your day. I'm Chief Inspector Regan O'Leary and this here is my partner Michael Flynn. He's a big fan of yours.

Flynn's expression does not change and we get the feeling that he does not like Edison.

EDISON

What may I assist you gentlemen with today?

O'LEARY

This is quite the estate you've got yourself here. You put my pint little cottage in the city to shame.

EDISON

I've been fortunate.

O'LEARY

Yes, yes you have.

O'Leary steps to Edison.

O'LEARY (CONT'D)

May we come in?

The inspectors let themselves past Edison who seems a bit shaken.

INT. EDISON HOME. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The inspectors look around the spacious room in a bit of awe.

O'LEARY

You bought this house with your ex-wife? I'm sorry late wife.

EDISON

Yes, um, this was our second home together.

O'LEARY

She must of been proud of you. This is a mighty fuckin' achievement.

The two officer carefully migrate around the room, their eyes investigating everything. Edison is quickly losing patience.

EDISON

Inspectors I do have work I must attend to.

FLYNN

When was the last time you saw your wife alive, Mr. Edison?

EDISON

(Thrown off)

I have recounted to the police numerous times my actions leading up to...

(Gathering himself)

We went to bed that night. The next morning when I woke, she was unresponsive.

FLYNN

You are certain she was alive that previous night?

EDISON

Yes.

FLYNN

Nothin' strange in her demeanor prior.

EDISON

Inspectors, I believe your welcome is wearing.

O'LEARY

Apologies Mr. Edison, we are just doin' our due diligence.

EDISON

I was under the impression that the investigation was over?

O'LEARY

Yes, the initial investigation was concluded and ruled as a suicide.

(MORE)

O'LEARY (CONT'D)

Mary's family asked that we look into the matter further as a curtesy and if we found anything that might warrant a reopenin' of the case, we would act accordingly.

EDISON

So have you discovered anything?

FLYNN

In most suicides, particularly in overdoses, the victim leaves a partin' note. No such note was discovered with Mary.

O'LEARY

Know of any persons who might of taken issue with Mary?

EDISON

No, not to my knowledge.

Both inspectors look at Edison with suspicious eyes.

EDISON (CONT'D)

Are you insinuating that this was something else?

O'LEARY

No sir, just lookin' at all our options.

EDISON

Right...

INT. EDISON HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Edison watches from his window as the two inspectors leave.

INT. EDISON HOME. LAB - MOMENTS LATER

Edison enters his lab, heads back over to his work station and just as he sits down ALL THE POWER in the house cuts off.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREETS - DAY

Edison is now on his ELECTRIC CARRIAGE(a carriage automobile run on electricity) traveling through the streets.

EXT. PEARL STREET STATION - DAY

Edison pulls up to a Massive factory made of mostly brick.
Edison hops off and heads towards the entrance.

SUPER: PEARL STREET STATION

INT. PEARL STREET STATION. GENERATOR HALL - CONTINUOUS

Edison continues into the station hall in the same vein as his generator hall in Paris. Where he is met by the OPERATING MANAGER (35).

OPERATING MANAGER

Sir, the generators have been overheating all week. We're over working them fuses.

Edison goes over to one of the generators and begins checking fuses.

EDISON

Prep the steam generators. The systems are producing too many watts for the fuses to handle.

OPERATING MANAGER

Those generators ain't been used in months. How about we just put down more wires and fuses in the streets to get more of that electricity out?

Edison gives him a coy look.

EDISON

No, the *conduits* out in the streets merely transport the currents produced here. The *Amperes* are what you are referring to. The measuring units of the electricity. And the problem is not that we can't get electricity to the people, the problem is we can't produce enough of the Amperes or Amps to get to the people.

OPERATING MANAGER

Well I thought that was what all those big electromagnetic dynamos in the hall were for?

EDISON

Since we've installed these jumbo generators, the demand has grown astronomically. But as of now I'm afraid we've spread ourselves too thin.

INT. PEARL STREET STATION. STEAM HALL - MOMENTS LATER

With sleeves rolled up, Edison is in a much smaller hall with his Operating manager and several other workmen, powering up four *DC STEAM GENERATORS*. (They are putting mountains of coal into the generators, fanning the fires, checking instruments etc...)

EDISON

This won't sustain.

OPERATING MANAGER

But, I thought you were expanding?

Edison stops and takes a moment.

EDISON

I am. But that's not your concern.

We hear a LOUD HORN O.C.

EXT. ELLIS ISLAND. BOAT - DAY

The HORN sounds again.

There we are with Tesla looking over the guard rail as the boat approaches. He looks over towards the *STATUE OF LIBERTY*, optimistic.

ELLIS ISLAND DOCK

The boat docks.

EXT. ELLIS ISLAND PORT - MOMENTS LATER

Tesla walks off the ramp among the herd of passengers being chaperoned onto port. Several *PORT OFFICIALS* bark orders in different languages at them as they move.

PORT OFFICIAL #1

(Shouting)

Make your way into the main building for processing and Medical! Keep it moving!

PROCESSING OFFICER
Ok, yeah sure he'll be right down here.

TESLA
Oh, thank you. How do you know?

PROCESSING OFFICER
Because I'm a fuckin' magician.
Look, you got any kin over here?

Tesla is confused.

PROCESSING OFFICER (CONT'D)
Any friends, family, girlfriend?

TESLA
I have this letter of
recommendation for employment with
Mr. Edison's company.

Tesla pulls out Batchelor's letter and hands it to the Officer. He takes it and breaks the seal then opens it.

PROCESSING OFFICER
(Re: letter)
What the fuck is this? You playin'
games with me Frenchy? You could of
written this for all I know...

TESLA
I assure you that is not the case.

PROCESSING OFFICER
No?

TESLA
The truth is I am only here because
my former employer thought it would
be beneficial for my well being to
learn under his tutelage. I believe
the opposite. I believe that if I
were to gain access to a man with
the resources and financial
subsidization such as Mr. Edison,
it is he who would benefit more
from me.

PROCESSING OFFICER
It that so?

TESLA
Certainly.

PROCESSING OFFICER

Ok.

The Officer writes down Tesla's information then hands him back his letter. Tesla looks more confused.

TESLA

Ok? So Mr. Edison will meet me?

PROCESSING OFFICER

Ok, Welcome to America, get the fuck outta my face.

The Janitor shakes his head and continues out.

EXT. ELLIS ISLAND PORT - AFTERNOON

Tesla, seated on his suitcase, is out on the port watching another boat come in. The Janitor approaches him.

JANITOR

Hey man, was you serious about that mess you was talkin' up in there?

TESLA

I beg your pardon?

JANITOR

You said you know Mr. Edison. That true?

TESLA

I don't know him... Not yet. I am supposed to work for him.

JANITOR

What's your name?

TESLA

Nikola Tesla.

CLYDE

Clyde Woods.

They shake hands.

TESLA

Do you know where I might be able find him?

CLYDE

No sir, but my big brother Levi could probably help you out.

TESLA

Can you take me to him?

CLYDE

Certainly, long as you don't mind
bein' round niggas.

Tesla looks blankly.

CLYDE (CONT'D)

We stay over in Brooklyn. None of
yo white friends livin' down there.

CLYDE (CONT'D)

Forgive me but I don't catch your
meaning?

CLYDE (CONT'D)

Just meet me here after I'm off
work, I'll take you to him.

EXT. BROOKLYN STREETS - NIGHT

Tesla and Clyde walk briskly through the streets.

CLYDE

You speak some mighty high class
English to be fresh off the boat.

TESLA

I was forced to learn it in my
youth. The one sensible thing me
and my father could agree upon.

CLYDE

Well he must be proud of you,
learnin' English, comin' over here
like this.

Tesla ignores this.

TESLA

So does your brother work for Mr.
Edison?

CLYDE

Who Levi? Hell no.

TESLA

I do not understand.

CLYDE

Let's just say they got common interests.

They are interrupted by an imposing figure OTIS HAYWARD (30's) African American, muscular, towering.

OTIS

Who's this?

TESLA

He ain't meanin' no trouble Otis we just passin' through.

OTIS

The nigga don't speak?

TESLA

Nik-

CLYDE

Um, his English ain't that good.

OTIS

That right? You best be careful Clyde. Them white folk gonna find out us niggas is livin' good here. Next thing you know they gonna wanna take over.

CLYDE

Like I said, we just passin' through.

Otis slides out of the way and the two men continue on.

CLYDE (CONT'D)

Otis got his fingers in all the hot spots in Brooklyn. Don't wanna get on his wrong side and you most definitely don't wanna owe him money. Even if you is white.

Tesla takes this in.

INT. LEVI'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The two men walk into an apartment and to Tesla's and our surprise the house is a far contrast to outside. A look of an upper class about it.

We here from upstairs a woman screaming in ecstasy O.C

CLYDE

We'll wait till they done.

Clyde and Tesla head towards the kitchen.

INT. LEVI'S APARTMENT. KITCHEN - LATER

Tesla and Clyde are seated in the kitchen drinking some liquor as they wait.

WOMAN (O.C.)

Levi stop it! You know I love that!

Clyde jumps up.

CLYDE

Stay in here.

Clyde hurries over to the entrance. Tesla glances down the hall to where Clyde ran off to. He is shocked by what he sees-

LEVI (28) African American, moviestar looks, in shape, dressed in an expensive suit; he is kissing on a WHITE WOMAN.

WOMAN

Hey Clyde.

Clyde acknowledges her then whispers in Levi's ear. Levi looks down at Tesla. He signals for the woman to wait and heads towards Tesla.

LEVI

What business do you have with Edison?

TESLA

I am to work for him. Your brother says you can help.

LEVI

That all he tell you? Sometimes Clyde here can be a little overexuberant.

TESLA

Can you?

Levi stares at Tesla as if to study him.

LEVI

I can get you to him.

TESLA

Thank you.

LEVI

You have a place to stay?

TESLA

No.

LEVI

You can share rooms with Clyde.

CLYDE

What!? That nigga can't sleep with me!

LEVI

Don't you be using that slave talk in my house boy.

(Beat)

He's your guest.

Clyde scoffs at this but accepts.

LEVI (CONT'D)

Now if you'll excuse me there's a lady that needs me to escort her uptown. When I get back, be wearing something decent.

TESLA

Decent?

CLYDE

Something like what Levi here got on.

Tesla looks at Levi to which he nods and heads back towards the door.

INT. LEVI'S APARTMENT. CLYDE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Clyde has made up the couch in his room Tesla stands looking on.

CLYDE

Sorry you ain't sleepin' with me.

TESLA

I don't really sleep.

CLYDE

Well I do, so this gone work just fine.

TESLA

Your brother, is that-

CLYDE

No that's some fancy man's wife. He too old she too young and Levi is too black. I tell him, smartest man I know but them women gonna be the death of him.

TESLA

What is his profession?

CLYDE

Same as you.

TESLA

Same as me?

CLYDE

Yeah he make things, creates things. Same as you.

INT. PEARL STREET STATION. STEAM HALL - NIGHT

Steam fills the air as the generators are now in full working condition. Several WORKMEN slave away at each generator keeping the fires going.

INT. CEREMONIAL HALL. STAIRS - NIGHT

We hear commotion of a large crowd O.C

An INCANDESCENT LIGHT BULB attached to the wall, flickers. Edison, in a tuxedo and glass in hand watches the bulb anxiously. Just then a man's voice breaks his concentration-

MAN'S VOICE (O.C.)

To hell with God, when you have conquered Zeus!

Edison turns to see JOHN PIERPONT MORGAN (47) Weathered face, a drinker's belly, scruffy mustache; he is smiling ear to ear. He extends his hand and they shake.

EDISON

Mr. John Pierpont Morgan.

J.P MORGAN

If hearing that name in its entirety doesn't bring back thoughts of my mother.

EDISON

Grand thoughts I hope...

(Beat)

My mother was not an educated woman. But she always had the answers.

J.P MORGAN

(re: light bulb)

I find, that when you expect things to happen, strangely enough, they happen.

EDISON

As of right now, that is my worst fear.

J.P MORGAN

My dear friend, you are Thomas Edison. These people here have come because of what you have achieved and what remains of you to achieve; As do I.

Edison smiles.

EXT. CEREMONIAL HALL - NIGHT

Tesla stands with Levi, across the street looking out to the large building hosting the Edison party. Levi hands Tesla an INVITATION. Tesla looks at Levi unsure.

LEVI

I said I'd take you to him. You're on your own now.

TESLA

But this invitation has your name on it.

LEVI

So be me without this gorgeous tan.

TESLA

I can't. You should be there.

LEVI

You're damn right I should be there. Those are my colleges, my acquaintances, some even consider me as an equal. Unfortunately in the real world I am not held as an equal. No matter what I aspire no matter what I accomplish. So take this invitation as an opportunity to do what others can't.

Levi walks back down the street.

INT. CEREMONIAL HALL. ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Tesla walks into the entrance of the hall in awe at the size of it. He heads toward a crowd of men involved in deep conversation.

TESLA

Pardon, do you know where I might find Mr. Edison.

MAN #1

Possibly the bar if not I am at a loss.

Tesla nods and heads towards another group of men with no luck. Another same result-

Robert is watching Tesla from afar with his note pad in hand. He heads towards Tesla.

Robert approaches...

ROBERT

Over a hundred people here. You're the only one who looks as if he doesn't belong.

Tesla shoots Robert a look.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Robert Johnson, Century Magazine.

TESLA

Do you know where I can find-

EDISON

Me, I believe is who you are looking for.

Tesla and Robert turn to see Edison, standing next to them.

TESLA

Are you-

EDISON

Thomas Edison himself. You are quite persistent. I've never seen you before, who are you?

TESLA

Nikola Tesla...

Edison is drawing blanks.

EDISON

Never heard of you.

Tesla pulls out the letter of recommendation and hands it to him.

EDISON (CONT'D)

(Re: letter)

That's Charles' seal.

(Reading)

So you were fired.

TESLA

It was mutual sir.

EDISON

So why should I re-hire you? I have engineers, ones whom I trust and can depend upon.

Tesla looks over at the INCANDESCENT BULB that Edison was staring at.

TESLA

As of right now you have one electrical power plant, sourcing all of the electrical currents throughout the city.

EDISON

Yes of course that's why we are here tonight. Five years since its inception and Pearl Street is only growing stronger.

TESLA

The Amps being produced are not powerful enough to sustain at its present rate. Your bulb flickers like a candle, it is suffocating.

Edison looks around, a little embarrassed but holds a poker face.

MAN FROM CROWD

You are mistaken, the light is perfect as is. It has a soft and mellow glow that is pleasant on the eyes.

EDISON

You see you have much to learn young Tesla. The consumer, those who pay for your livelihood, is always right.

The crowd chuckles.

TESLA

No, he obviously is naive in the understanding the ebb and flow of electricity. Perhaps you have become blinded as well for accepting this.

The crowd becomes unsettled. Robert scribbles in his note pad, intrigued.

TESLA (CONT'D)

I was under the assumption New York was the mecca of progression. Perhaps not.

EDISON

Tesla, eh? You helped to repair Strasbourg.

Awkward Silence.

EDISON (CONT'D)

You're passionate. I like that. We need more of you around here.

(Beat)

Ok, you'll start Monday. Pearl Street. If there's any problems to be solved I want the best and brightest.

The crowd gives a collective clap. Edison puts his arm around Tesla and speaks low.

EDISON (CONT'D)

Let me make clear, you ever speak out like that again I will have it so you won't be able to scrape shit from a horse's ass in this city.

Edison turns and disappears in the crowd.

MOMENTS LATER

Robert approaches Tesla.

ROBERT

Well that sure is one way to do it.

Tesla heads towards the exit Robert follows close behind.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Mr. Tesla, you were in Strasbourg.

Tesla stops.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

So you aided in the repairs of the station?

Tesla turns.

TESLA

No. I was responsible for the repairs.

Tesla exits. Robert stands shocked with his pen on he pad.

FADE TO:

INT. CEREMONIAL HALL - NIGHT

Edison stands tipsy, surrounded by his peers. They look to him like students to the teacher.

EDISON

Gentlemen. It has been just over 20 years since the great civil war severed a divide right down the center of this country. A way of life once known to all, vanished into history with the blood and gallantry of ghosts past.

He lights a cigar.

EDISON (CONT'D)

What will we become? How will we be forgotten a thousand years hence?

INT. LEVI'S APARTMENT. LAB - NIGHT

Levi is standing shirt unbuttoned, drink in hand, over a table congested with tools and parts. In this dimly lit room we see, this is a small Lab.

EDISON (V.O.)

Or how will we be remembered? For who we are? No. Men must achieve biblical feats that surpass who they are. Contributions that will echo throughout the fabric of time.

Levi hurls his glass at the wall in a rage.

INT. JOHNSON'S HOME. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Katherine lays in bed penciling a beautifully sketched picture of a wolf.

EDISON (V.O.)

Heroes and villains. Who decides? What decides? Alexander killed thousands in his conquests. But we have Rome.

She looks around at the room. Alone.

INT. LEVI'S APARTMENT. CLYDE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Clyde takes out a locked CHEST from under his floorboard. He unlocks it to reveal stacks of cash. He smiles.

EDISON (V.O.)

And what is this life but a conquest. To secure our place among society here and forevermore. To each his own in his endeavors in conquering that which has yet to be obtained.

EXT. BROOKLYN BAR - NIGHT

Tesla approaches the bar to where Otis and several other imposing AFRICAN AMERICAN men accompany him by the entrance.

Tesla drinks from his flask staring right at Otis. Otis smiles and lets Tesla in.

EDISON (V.O.)

But the temptation to be prosaic,
to settle for mediocre. I assure
you, no species in the fight for
survival has that luxury. And
luxury is not afforded to the
content.

INT. BROOKLYN BAR - MOMENTS LATER

Tesla sits at a table, a bottle and glass in front of him. He sits with his note pad open and father's crucifix in hand. He stares...

EDISON (V.O.)

The glow retreats, done is the day
of toil; Upon its track to
follow... Follow Soaring.

Tesla downs a shot.

Note Pad ECU: Drawing of Tesla's INDUCTION MOTOR.

We hear the crowd clapping O.C

INT. CEREMONIAL HALL - NIGHT

The crowd continues to clap as Edison takes it in.

EXT. EDISON HOME - NIGHT

Edison parks his electric carriage in front of his house. He stumbles off drunk.

He walks to his door. He looks up in the sky.

Thunder rumbles in the rain clouds.

He enters the house-

INT. EDISON HOME - CONTINUOUS

Edison meandering through the hall.

He makes his way to stairs that descend.

BASEMENT

Edison unlocks a door to a large storage room and enters.

He travels through miscellaneous property, cases, furniture, house pieces etc...

He makes his way to the very back and reveals behind a curtain another locked door. He takes his pipe and pulls it apart and pulls a key from inside. He unlocks the door and opens-

INT. EDISON HOME. MYSTERIOUS ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Edison flips on the light in this tiny room with a leather restraining bed taking up the majority of the space. The bed is covered in burn marks and scratches.

Edison picks a small locket from the arm of the bed and looks at it.

Locet ECU: Picture of Edison and his wife.

Edison stares at the locket with deep sorrow.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END