

TALES FROM THE SCRIPT

by Butch Maxwell and Bert Furioli

PROGRAM NOTES

The Time: 1950

The Place: Universatile Studios, Hollywood, USA

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Universatile Pictures has great expectations for it's newest release, now in production. With box office receipts declining ever since the nation has become enamored with the advent of television, all the movie makers have been struggling to get people back in the theaters.

Universatile's high hopes are invested in the teaming of a trio of horror stars who used to pack audiences into the movie houses back in the 30s and 40s.

The question is, in 1950, is anybody really going to get scared at seeing Boris Kisoﬀ do his Rankenstein Monster again? Was anyone ever really that unnerved when Ron Cheyney, Jr. snorted and growled through countless turns as the Woofman? In the modern age, who is really going to think it is frightening when Bela Lagrossi unburies his Count Dragula?

This reporter thinks Universatile could save some money by dropping the former stars and just doing a thriller starring the Invisible Man and his evil twin...

I'll keep you posted on this one: Hollywood is expecting a visit from Congressman Beauregard “Foghorn” Jackson IV, along with his secretary, Miss Honeydew Thistlewhistle. During his visit to Los Angeles, Congressman Jackson promises to offer a startling revelation about certain very famous movie stars.

FUN FACTS

Woofman star Ron Cheyney Jr. has been touring the County Fair circuit lately. He placed Best in Show twice.

Dragula star Bela Lagrossi was once fired as spokesman for the Red Cross for “drinking the donations.”

Rankenstein Monster star Boris Kisoﬀ has been working at the Actor's Studio with a lot of other actors he is sure will never amount to anything – James Dean, Marlon Brando and Wally Cox.

Congressman Beauregard “Foghorn” Jackson IV is desperate to get national attention to clinch his re-election, which will assure that his love life won't be restricted to his wife.

Miss Thistlewhistle got her job with Congressman Jackson when she told him she wanted to work in Washington to “service her countrymen.”

AUDIENCE PARTICIPANTS

Director

Producer

Tech Crew Man

Woman

ACT ONE

SFX: Spooky music and sound effects.

BELA, as DRAGULA, enters with his cape held before him.

BELA (AS DRAGULA)

Good evening.

[To an audience member.]

Ah, Renfield. I see you are eating a salad. So good to see that you have expanded your diet from your usual insects. But I must ask - Do you want flies with that?

RON, as THE WOOFMAN enters and crouches wolf-like.

RON (AS WOOFMAN)

[Sniffing.]

I smell dead people.

[Romps over to an audience member and sniffs.]

So many fresh victims. I always enjoy a smorgasbord.

BELA (AS DRAGULA)

Voofman, please. Let our guests eat. Then it will be your turn to eat. Now, bring in the creature!

BORIS, as THE MONSTER, enters lumbering with his arms outstretched.

BORIS (AS THE MONSTER)

[Stumbles forth, roaring.]

Aaaaaahhhhh!

[He pauses.]

Uhhhhhhh!

[He breaks character.]

Cut! Cut!

DIRECTOR

[An audience member.]

Hey! I'm supposed to say "Cut!" I'm the director!

BORIS

Oh, I am sorry, Chumway, but I'm having a problem with my motivation in this scene.

DIRECTOR

Your motivation? You are a monster. You just grunt!

BORIS

But, Chumway, I must know what the monster is feeling. For instance, in this scene, I say “Uhhhhh!” Now, is this an aggressive “Uhhhh!” -

[He demonstrates aggressiveness.]

- or is it a frightened “Uhhhh”?

[He demonstrates fear.]

DIRECTOR

Look, I don't care about your “Uhhhhh!” They all sound to me like you have to go to the bathroom.

BORIS

Well I never –

DIRECTOR

That's not what I heard.

BORIS

Don't treat me as if I were simply a clown in cheap make-up. I am an *actor*!

RON

It's still cheap make-up, honey.

BORIS

[To Ron.]

Back off, precious.

[Generally.]

I knew I shouldn't have agreed to make this movie. I should just return to New York and resume my work in legitimate theatre.

RON

[To an audience member.]

He's mopping the floors at an adult cinema on 42nd Street.

BELA

Yes, Boris, the only acting work you have had since the last monster movie was playing the Jelly Green Giant.

BORIS

That's Jolly! I was the jolliest green giant that ever ho-ho-hoed.

RON

I always heard he was a ho.

BELA

You are so catty for a verevolf.

BORIS

You can hardly talk, Ron. I heard you were the dog-faced boy at Ringling Brothers.

RON

I was, but I've got a better job. I'm going to be the new Breck girl.

BORIS

And you, Bela, you have been reduced to hosting a local TV show. It's a children's show, isn't it? What is it called? "Our Fang?"

BELA

"Drac's Pack" is the highest rated show in the tri-state area!

RON

Boris is just jealous. Why, he's green with envy.

BORIS

Chumway, I demand that furry fruitcake be fired at once!

DIRECTOR

[Still that audience member.]

Boris, if anyone gets fired, it should be you. It's your fault we're three days behind schedule.

BORIS

Is it my fault I want perfection?

DIRECTOR

Frankly, yes. We can't afford perfection with our budget. We can barely afford lousy. So, say "Uhhh!" any way you want. Just keep that constipated quality.

BORIS

Well, I never –
[Exit.]

BELA

That's not what I heard.

RON

Everyone's heard but me.

[Calling off.]

Boris, give me the dish.

[Exit.]

BEAUREGARD enters.

BEAUREGARD

[Singing.]

Oh, I wish I was in the land of cotton, home of politics so rotten –

[Speaking.]

This looks like as good a place as any for a major *ex-po-se*.

BELA

I beg your pardon, but this is a closed set. “Moonshine Mama” is shooting vahn soundstage over.

BEAUREGARD

Excuse my tonsorial recitation, son.

[Extending his hand.]

The name’s Congressman Beauregard “Foghorn” Jackson the Fourth.

BELA

From Vashington, D.C.?

BEAUREGARD

I only work there, boy! I’m a proud son of the south. The deeeeep south, that is.

BELA

[To audience.]

It is already getting quite deeeeeep in here.

[To Beauregard.]

Vhat do you vant?

BEAUREGARD

I’m here on what ‘cha call an *a-non-y-mous* tip. I hear tell this whole motion picture is swarming with Red Rats.

BELA

Ve have no rats on this project. Ve have a volf, but no rats. Other than, perhaps, the director.

BEAUREGARD

No, no, boy! You don't git it at all! I'm talking about Communists!

BELA

Ah! Good! I was hoping we would get some journalists here. We need the publicity.

BEAUREGARD

Not columnists, boy! Communists! I'm gonna call a press conference right here on the set of this movie in exactly one hour – and expose this production as a cell-u-oid cesspool front for Commie traitors and spies.

BELA

Even if it is not the truth.

BEAUREGARD

The truth ain't got nothing to do with it, son. I have to get re-elected every two years, and this is my ticket. Ain't nothing like hunting down public enemies in *Holly-weird* to get me headlines – and votes.

BELA

So this is a vitch hunt?

BEAUREGARD

Witches, warlocks, whatever you got.

SFX: “Thank God I’m a Country Boy”

[Singing.]

Well, life in the dome is kinda laid back,
Ain't much an old good ole boy like me can't hack
Ain't nothing like power as an aphrodisiac
Thank God I'm a Good Ole Boy

When I'm wrapped in the flag I feel so protected
Gonna point out some Reds before the country gets infected
It's all about votes and getting re-elected
Thank God I'm a Good Ole Boy

[Singing.]

Well, I'm looking for Reds and I got a subpoena
Gonna get me some votes, Red Scare's my arena
All the way to the polls laughing like a hyena
Thank God I'm a Good Ole Boy

[Beauregard dances during instrumental break]

When I find my life's road is coming to a fork
 I ain't making no deal with some liberals from New York
 I'm bringing home the bacon, and I do mean pork
 Thank God I'm a Good Ole Boy
 Well, I'm looking for Reds and I got a subpoena
 Gonna get me some votes, Red Scare's my arena
 All the way to the polls laughing like a hyena
 Thank God I'm a Good Ole Boy

BELA

I am in Hoedown Hell.

BEAUREGARD

Watch the four-letter words, son!

[Gesturing to audience.]

There are ladies present.

[Scrutinizing him.]

You know, you seem pretty un-American to me. I betcha we
 already got a file on you!

[Calling offstage.]

Miss Thistlewhistle!

THISTLEWHISTLE enters. She wears oversized glasses, a conservative business suit and carries a steno pad and pencil.

BELA

And who is this lovely voman?

BEAUREGARD

This is my secretary, Miss Honeydew Thistlewhistle.

THISTLEWHISTLE

Charmed, I'm sure.

BELA

[Taking Twistlewhistle's hand.]

Such a beautiful name for a beautiful voman.

[Kisses her hand.]

Bela Lagrossi, at your service. Have you ever acted before,
 my dear? You have a face that was made for the casting
 couch.

THISTLEWHISTLE

[Giggles.]

I played the part of a sunflower in my pre-school pageant.

BELA

And you have certainly blossomed since then.

BEAUREGARD

You get away from my secretary's blossoms.

BELA

Sorry, but I love vomen – all vomen. No matter vhat the blood type.

BEAUREGARD

Well, put your fangs back in your mouth, Romeo. So what kind of a Ruskie name is Bela Lagrossi?

BELA

I am not Russian. I am Hungarian.

BEAUREGARD

Hunkie – Ruskie – they're all Commies. I'd like to send everyone one of you Lenin-lovin' Reds back to the Kremlin.

BELA

You misunderstand. I am a simply an immigrant.

BEAUREGARD

Ignorance got nothin' to do with it, boy! Look at me! I'm ignorant and I'm a Congressman.

BELA

No, no – I am a loyal American. I believe in Mom, the flag and pumpkin pie.

BEAUREGARD

That's apple pie, Count Commie.

[To Thistlewhistle.]

Miss Thistlewhistle, hand me my dossier.

THISTLEWHISTLE

Your what, Congressman?

BEAUREGARD

My dossier! Remember, I told you to be sure to pack the dossier.

THISTLEWHISTLE

Oh, I thought you said pack the bustier.

BEAUREGARD

Miss Thistlewhistle! Why do I keep you as my secretary?

THISTLEWHISTLE

Because I let you catch me when you chase me around the desk.

BEAUREGARD

Oh, yeah. I like chasing you when you're wearing your bustier.

[Clears throat.]

Miss Thistlewhistle, get ready to take notes.

THISTLEWHISTLE

Okay, Congressman. Do you want me to sit on your lap as usual?

BEAUREGARD

[Embarrassed; confidentially to Miss Thistlewhistle.]

Miss Thistlewhistle, we only do the lap thing in the office, remember?

THISTLEWHISTLE

Oh, that's right. Only in the office. And the elevator. And the limo.

BEAUREGARD

That'll be enough, Miss Thistlewhistle.

[To Bela.]

The girl can't keep her hands off me. Must be my manly scent.

[Aside.]

She's a fine little filly. Why, if I wasn't married – oh, wait, that's never stopped me before.

BELA

You, sir, are a svine.

BEAUREGARD

Boy, I take that as a compliment. There ain't nothin' finer than a pig in slop.

BELA

[To audience.]

Is this a murder mystery or Hee Haw?

[To her.]

Miss Thistlethistle, you have my deepest sympathy.

THISTLEWHISTLE

You movie stars are so debonair. I've always wanted to be a star. Do you think there is some part I could play in this production?

BEAUREGARD

[Stepping in between them; to Bela.]

You ain't producing nothing with my secretary, Bucky.

THISTLEWHISTLE

Please, Congressman. Let me be in the movie. My second biggest dream is to become an actor.

BELA

What is the first?

THISTLEWHISTLE

To be a brain surgeon.

BELA

[Aside.]

She would need a brain for that.

BEAUREGARD

[To Thistlewhistle.]

You're not gonna be playing dress-up with these Jollywood kooks, so get that silly little notion outa your silly little head.

THISTLEWHISTLE

Oh, poo!

BELA

C'est la vie.

THISTLEWHISTLE

"La vee."

BELA

I would love to stay for some more down-home banter, but I must go polish my fangs.

BEAUREGARD

Your what?

BELA

My fangs! Fangs!

BEAUREGARD

You're welcome.

Bela exits.

THISTLEWHISTLE

Goodbye, Mr. Lasagna.

BEAUREGARD

It ain't Lasagna. It's Linguini.

THISTLEWHISTLE

Don't be a Grumpy Gus. Would you like me to sit on your lap?

BEAUREGARD

Don't you be trying to use your feminine wiles on me. I ain't changing my mind!

THISTLEWHISTLE

[Aside.]

If I was a brain surgeon I could change his mind.

RON

*[Enters singing, looking at himself in a mirror
and combing his hair with a brush.]*

I feel pretty, oh so pretty –

BEAUREGARD

Hold it right there, Twinklepaws. Are you now or have you ever been Ron Cheney, Junior?

RON

I don't kiss and tell. Who wants to know?

BEAUREGARD

Why, I'm Congressman Beauregard "Foghorn" Jackson, Commie Hunter.

RON

Well, I'm Ron Cheney, Junior, man hunter.

BEAUREGARD

So, you're one of them Merry Fairies. How'd you ever become the Woofman? You act more like the Poodleman.

RON

Sticks and stones, Congressman. Don't hate me because I'm beautiful.

THISTLEWHISTLE

[To Ron.]

I love your hair. How do you get it so shiny?

RON

A little lemon and a little lovin'.

THISTLEWHISTLE

[Picking hair from him.]

Oh, dear! You're shedding.

RON

Sorry, it's molting season.

[Touches Thistlewhistle's hair.]

You know, I could really do something with your hair, honey. You'd look so cute in a bob.

BEAUREGARD

Get your paws off her, Fruit Brute. That seals it; you must be a Communist. Why, you people put the pink in pinko!

RON

Oh, I'd never be a Communist, honey. Their flag is so tacky. A hammer and a sickle? That's so butch.

BEAUREGARD

Well, pardon me, pansy, if I don't believe you. I know all about you gay deceivers. I'm going to expose you.

RON

And we haven't even had our first date yet.

BEAUREGARD

You shut your Commie piehole, boy! Do you know who you're talking to? I could have you in chains!

RON

So, you like to play rough, eh?

BEAUREGARD

[Sputtering.]

You – you – I'll send you back to Commie Fairyland! I'm going to call J. Edgar right now and get the dirt on you.

RON

Buy me a Mint Julep and I'll tell you all the dirt you want.

THISTLEWHISTLE

I love Mint Juleps. They make me so happy, I want to take my clothes off.

RON

I wish I could get *my* boyfriends that happy.

BEAUREGARD

Stop with all that fairy talk! It's *ag-gi-tat-in'* my hormones.

[To Thistlewhistle, as he exits.]

Let's see if that *an-non-o-mous* tipster dropped off that list of Commies. Come on, Miss Thistlewhistle, and bring your lap. I have to give you some dictation.

Beauregard and Thistlewhistle exit.

RON

Now, that's a man's man! Why, this room is positively teeming with testosterone.

[To a man.]

So, you're on the tech crew, right? What does it mean, really, to be a "Best Boy?"

TECH CREW MAN

[An audience member.]

That's not my job. I'm a key grip.

RON

Oh, I like the sound of that!

BELA

[Entering.]

Good evening. If you would stop your shameless flirting, perhaps you would have noticed we have a situation with a deranged politician. Have you seen him?

RON

I've not only seen him; I've smelled him. There's nothing like the scent of righteousness and Old Spice.

BELA

We must get rid of him before he ruins our careers.

RON

What careers?

PRODUCER

[An audience member.]

You won't have any careers if we don't make this movie.

RON

Oh, look! It's the producer! What an idea! I have a barn. Let's build a stage.

[Calling off.]

Boris – we're going to do a show!

[Singing.]

Overture, hit the lights! This is it – the night of nights.

[Exit.]

PRODUCER

Bela, I have great news. I've got a whole new concept for this picture. We're going to make this monster movie into a spectacle!

BELA

I will not wear glasses on camera.

PRODUCER

No, no, we're going to make it a monster movie musical! Think of it! Blood, gore, murder, music, dancing. We may be able to get the Creature from the Black Lagoon to do an Esther Williams thing.

BELA

What are we going to call this musical? "Funny Ghoul?" I will not be a singing vampire!

PRODUCER

Too bad. Because the movie is now a musical. And you can be replaced, you know. I bet the Mummy does a mean jitterbug.

BELA

All right, all right. I will give it a shot.

SFX: “Mack the Knife”

[Singing, flirting.]

Oh the vampire, has sharp teeth, dear, and he shows them
 pearly white
 Just a blood thirst is old Drac's greif, babe, but he keeps it,
 ah, out of sight
 You know when that vamp bites with his teeth, babe Scarlet
 billows start to spread
 Like a bat, oh, from far beneath, babe, flies the demon, to
 your bed
 Now in a castle, huh, huh, whoo, Transylvania, uh huh
 Lies a body just oozin' life, eek And someone's changin' into
 a bat, babe
 Could that someone be Drac the Knife?
 There's a casket, huh, huh, down by the river, dontcha know
 And that coffin's not in the ground
 Oh, it's a rest stop, for the undead, dear
 Five'll get ya ten old Dracie's back in town

[With increasing style.]

Now d'ja hear 'bout Louie B. Mayer? He disappeared, babe
 After drawin' out all his hard-earned cash
 And now Old Drac spends just like a sailor
 Could it be our boy's done somethin' rash?
 Now Jack Warner, ho, ho, yeah, Cecil DeMille
 Ooh, David O. Seltnik and old Sam Goldwin
 Oh, the line forms on the right, babe
 Now that Dracie's back in town
 I said Jack Warner, whoa, Cecil DeMille
 Look out to David O. Seltznik and old Sam Goldwyn
 Yes, that line forms on the right, babe
 Now that Dracie's back in town – look out old Dracie's back
 in town

[Speaking.]

You know, this might vork. Maybe I should change my name
 to Fred Ascare.

THISTLEWHISTLE

[Entering.]

Excuse me, Mr. Linguini, but they're in a tizzy backstage.
 They can't find the wooden stake for your next big scene.

BELA

I will get it for them, but the only vooden steak I have seen back there is last week's prime rib.

[Exit.]

THISTLEWHISTLE

Oh, I've lost the Congressman.

[Bends over and starts clapping her hands.]

Here, Congressman, here, boy.

Boris enters and sees Thistlewhistle's posterior.

BORIS

That's just what a monster movie needs – a full moon.

THISTLEWHISTLE

[Startled.]

Oh, you're not him.

BORIS

I could be him. After all, I am an *actor*.

THISTLEWHISTLE

You know, that vampire guy Mr. Linguini said I should be an *actor*. Do you think I have talent?

BORIS

You have some of the best talent I've ever seen. I am Boris Kisoﬀ, master thespian.

THISTLEWHISTLE

I thought only girls could be thespians.

BORIS

[To audience.]

She's everything I like in a woman – beautiful and clueless.

[To Thistlewhistle.]

Would you like to see my dressing room? I'd love to show you my prop.

Beauregard enters.

BEAUREGARD

Hey, Gumby, get your hands off my Honeydew.

BORIS

I haven't touched her honeydews yet. But who are you?

BEAUREGARD

I'm Congressman Beauregard Jackson the Fourth, anti-Commie Crusader!

[To Thistlewhistle.]

Miss Thistlewhistle, our *a-non-y-mous* tipster didn't show up at the *ron-day-voos*.

BORIS

[To audience.]

This is what you get when you let Ma and Pa Kettle breed.

THISTLEWHISTLE

Look, Congressman, I found this in my bustier.

[Hands him paper.]

BEAUREGARD

This is it, girl! The name of every Commie working at this studio. I'm so happy I could sing –

[Pause.]

– but I've already done my song in this show. Let's go get ready for that press conference!

Beauregard and Thistlewhistle exit.

BORIS

[To audience.]

Did he say "Commie"? Oh! I'm in such big trouble!

Ron enters.

Ron, you've got to hide me before that pea-pickin' politician pinches me.

RON

Take a chill pill, Boris. What's the matter?

BORIS

He is looking for Communists and – well, I once I dated a girl with Socialist leanings –

[Starting to hyperventilate.]

Help me, Ron. I can't go to jail. I don't want to be locked up with a bunch of burly thugs.

RON

[To audience.]

Sounds like my kind of place.

[To Boris.]

How could you date a Socialist? I swear, all you heteros ever think about is sex.

BORIS

She was so beautiful. And I was so innocent! I wasn't thinking straight.

RON

I never think straight. Sounds to me like you let the wrong brain do your thinking.

BORIS

You've got to hide me! Look, you're a wizard with makeup. Can't you give me a makeover?

RON

[Looks at Boris's face.]

Honey, there's not enough plaster in the world to hide this mug.

BORIS

Oh, why must I be cursed with this handsomeness!

Bela enters.

Bela, that redneck is going to ruin us!

[Breathes heavily.]

And I don't want to go to jail!

BELA

Boris, you must get a hold of yourself!

Boris hugs himself.

That is not what I meant, but if it worked –

RON

I hate to be the pooper at this party, but Boris is right. If we want this movie to be finished, Colonel Cornpone is trouble with a capital T.

BELA

We must find a way to stop this politician! Perhaps I can think of a way to put a bite on him.

RON

I bet he tastes like southern fried chicken.

BORIS

I don't want to go to jail and end up a boy toy! This is the fault of that little Marxist – with her firm propaganda and her heaving manifesto.

BELA

Do not worry, my friend. I think I may have a plan that will work – involving the woman – Thistlewistle.

BORIS

Oh, good! Women are easy for you. You've got that whole mysterious stranger thing going.

[Indicating crotch.]

All I have are spare parts.

BELA

Certainly. Allow me to demonstrate.

[To audience member.]

Do not be frightened. I just want to – suck your blood!

WOMAN

[An audience member.]

Boy, you're a smooth operator. How can a girl resist a hickey from a sweet talker like you?

BELA (AS DRAGULA)

You are not – frightened?

WOMAN

Nah, I've dated guys scarier than you in kindergarten.

BELA

All the women here and I have to pick the thespian.

Beauregard and Thistlewistle enter.

BEAUREGARD

Cut! By the *au-thor-a-tah* infested in me by the *US of A*, I hereby claim this set for my press conference. Ladies and gentlemen of the press – I have here in my hand a list of every sub-versive Stalin huggin' traitor workin' right here in this motion picture –

BORIS

[To Bela and Ron.]

Ahhh! Save me!

[He starts flitting around in circles.]

BEAUREGARD

What's all the caterwaulin'?

BELA

It is nothing. His bolts are just loose.

BEAUREGARD

Looks like he's got a screw loose, too.

THISTLEWHISTLE

I feel sorry for him. I bet it's not easy being green.

BEAUREGARD

[Looking at his list.]

And the first commie on the list is – Jack Daniels!

[Double-takes the list.]

Hold on a minute, that's my shopping list.

[Embarrassed.]

I musta left the real list backstage. I'll be right back.

[Exit.]

BORIS

We've got to stop him!

RON

But how? He's a man on a mission. Now, normally I like a missionary man –

BELA

[Looking at Thistlewhistle.]

Vait! I have – a plan.

[To her.]

Miss Thistlevistle – ve must shoot an important scene and our leading lady just broke her leg tripping over Voofman's tail. Would you be villing to grace us with your screen debut?

THISTLEWHISTLE

You want me to be an *actor* in your movie? Sure! Gee! Her big break is my big break!

BELA

Excellent! But if your Congressman insists upon having his press conference now, ve vill not be able to shoot!

THISTLEWHISTLE

Then my big break will be broken! Don't worry – I'll do anything to be a star.

BEAUREGARD

[Entering with a list in hand.]

I am now properly prepared to drain this pinko swamp with the suck pump of freedom! I'm gonna roto-rooter the Reds.

THISTLEWHISTLE

[To Beauregard.]

Oh, Congressman, they want me to be in the movie! Please, can I do it? Just one scene before your press conference?

BEAUREGARD

I ain't delaying my press conference so you can go prancin' around actin' like some escapee from the looney bin.

RON

[Aside.]

In her case, it's not acting.

THISTLEWHISTLE

Oh, please, Congressman! If you just let me do one scene, I'll be so grateful. I've always wanted to see my name up in lights. "Starring Honeydew Thistlewhistle."

BORIS

[Aside.]

You're going to need a lot of lights for that name.

BEAUREGARD

Sorry, Miss Thistlewhistle, but duty calls. I will now read my list of Tinseltown Traitors.

END OF EXCERPT