

Other Notes

Organization

I believe the size of this project would require a detailed and efficient system of organization. I can't rely on my memory to capture the entire story.

Let's see how long the best rated movies are:

The Shawshank Redemption: 142 min = 2 hours and 22 minutes

The Godfather: 175 min = 2 hours and 55 minutes

The Godfather Part II: 200 min = 3 hours 20 minutes

The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly: 161 min = 2 hours and 41 minutes

There's a clear range here. I would say my movie should be between 2 hours and 20 minutes and 3 hours.

This means a script of 140-180 pages.

So why the great length? I believe it's just more effort. It's one thing to see a TV show, which lasts either 22 or 43 minutes, I believe. That's a small amount of entertainment. To truly create a masterpiece, you need the time to allow a story to develop.

Also, I want to be critically well received. I don't want people to complain that a movie just two hours long isn't a masterpiece.

I understand this. When you're watching a great movie, you don't want it to ever end. That's how I felt about Wall E.

Anyway, I want to divide up my notes in the following sections:

Simple Timeline: Brief descriptions of each potential scene or quick moment in total chronological order. If I'm not exactly sure when, I will write "(imprecise)".

Style

I believe that understanding my style is extremely important. It must remain consistent throughout.

I'm not sure if I've mentioned it before, but ultimately what I want is a movie I am absolutely proud of. A movie I could watch with anyone, anywhere, at any scene, and be proud of what I am presenting to them. A movie people are impressed by – one that earns me respect. Also, a movie that will allow me to make other projects – new films.

I want a movie that is successful in every possible way: A movie I love, critics love, and the general public loves.

I want a movie that can be taken as a serious work of art. I want to make it as highly rated on IMDB as possible. I will always attempt to create the greatest movie possible.

Now we get to specific details of the current film. This Tesla project must obviously be taken as a drama.

It is first and foremost a drama.

What other genres should be woven into this?

Without a question, at least some comedy. Comedy where it is appropriate.

I don't believe it's a romance. As far as I understand, Tesla completely blocked out a love life. But it is possible I integrate some yearning in his character, if this is realistic.

This should be a "spectacle" film. Even though we're talking about things that were developed about a hundred years ago, I can still make this spectacular visually:

Tesla's appearance. His X factor. His style. The gentleman, the scientist, the partially insane. So far I believe him to be partially insane – of course, not voluntarily. It's as if he had some kind of disease that made him imagine objects and be completely isolated. As far as I know, he had severe obsessive compulsive disorder. This makes just Tesla, the man, a reason to view the movie. We are curious about his personality. We love seeing him.

Secondly, and perhaps most importantly, are the unique visual effects I will employ for Mr. Tesla's imagination. At this point in development, I believe I will very frequently show him imagining things – objects forming in front of him in his imagination, totally real to us and to him. It should be as mind-blowing as possible. Yes, this movie will probably rely heavily on visual effects. Pretty unusual for a biopic – but that's part of what makes it so unique.

Third, and this is woven into the first and second parts, electricity. Tesla was a recluse, but a definite showman. He loved presenting useful scientific concepts, as well impressing people with his inventions visually. Right now, I believe I should show as much of this as possible, even if it's for a fleeting moment. In the trailer, perhaps.

This isn't quite a "genre", but since drama doesn't state it explicitly, this movie should be a "tearjerker". But this is far from calling it a chick-flick. However much I like light-hearted movies, this one isn't. But it shouldn't take itself too seriously. Again, it's a movie as many people as possible will love. A movie people will find very hard to criticize.

What does "tearjerker" mean? Extreme sympathy with Tesla and his ups and downs. We should absolutely adore him, and feel for him every step of the way. How do you make the audience love a character? The same way you love someone in real life – you see it's a good, selfless character. Someone who deserves better than he is receiving.

There are moments I will probably include which will make audience cry, if possible: The death of his older brother while Tesla was five. Tesla's frequent sicknesses, especially the one in which he was in bed for nine months. Of course, Tesla's death at the very end. And any other time that seems appropriate.

One more thing regarding style: It should be a movie I, and everyone else, would want to see multiple times. A movie you don't get tired of, because you love it so much.

Maybe some more comments will follow.

It should be a movie people find hard to believe someone my age made it. A mature film. Original, witty, sensational. All the best.

Trailer

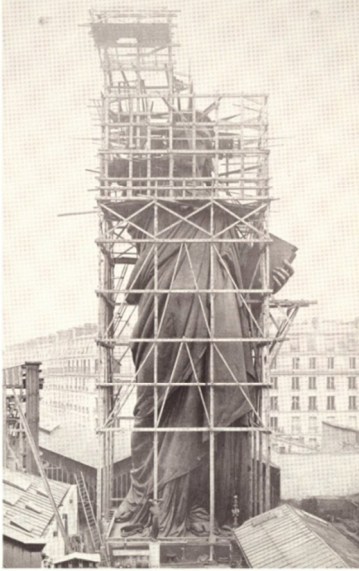
Revision: For possibly the very best intro, scroll down to the copy and paste of the Oscillator scene for the trailer. Another thing. Specifically for the trailer – it might be useful to superimpose the text: “New York City, 1898”. It makes it all the more interesting. It seems like historical fact. And then with the shaking of building – science fiction based at this time. But no, this is fact! This actually happened! That makes it all the more fascinating! Terrific introduction for a trailer. It's just that amount of mystery, charm, and wit which makes it a must-see.

Revision: Tesla sees the Statue of Liberty in Paris (this part is fictional, but historically plausible – perhaps even actually happened), and thought about going to America. The Land of Golden something... what did he call it? Either in *Man Out of Time* or his autobiography he calls it something like that. But yeah, this revision still means he can go to America. This statue is being sent to America. Are you coming with it? Some line like that maybe goes through his head or a friend says it. The trailer can still begin with a shot of the Statue of Liberty under construction (just about done), except in Paris. What coincidence.

It might be way too early to even consider what the trailer will be like, but I always give trailers the highest importance. I can almost always tell how good a movie will be depending on its trailer. Even though simple word of mouth can make a movie successful regardless of the quality of the trailer, I will view the trailer as a work of art. Something truly important.

I don't know yet which way I will handle the trailer, but here are a few ideas: Clearly present the subject of the movie. Make it absolutely clear: This is a movie about a real, genius inventor who lived between the 19th and 20th centuries. Present the global environment – electricity is a new thing, it is something exciting, and it is a growing field. Present Tesla himself – born in the middle of nowhere, on a farm in Yugoslavia, and immigrated to the US.

Ah – something possibly brilliant, if it is realistic: The very first image of the trailer could be the Statue of Liberty, under construction. And Tesla passing by it? What does it say? It gives the audience a rough estimate of the time. Not quite in the 20th century, a bit before it. Not only that, it's a pretty fascinating sight.



Just this image alone makes it an interesting time period. America is still under construction.

And, of course, how could I forget – it shows that Tesla was an immigrant arriving to the United States.

Oh, I love this movie! So in the trailer, you have Tesla, with his bowler hat, entering New York city for the first time. He is impressed by the sights, and even sees this statue of liberty under construction. Immediately we know everything we need to know at that point. He is an immigrant who came to New York city.

Next we view the meeting of Tesla and Edison (possibly). I want people to refer to Edison as something like, “Mr. Edison”. People will find this fascinating. And probably the quote will be read, something to the effect of – I know of two great men, and Mr. Tesla is one of them. We see an immediate rivalry.

And then we get to Edison being impressed by Tesla. The part where Tesla comes back – Edison calls him the Serbian who wanders through the night – Tesla says he finished there and then. Edison says he’s a damn good man as he walks. We notice Tesla’s unbelievable hearing.

And then we possibly get to Tesla visualizing things – inventing things. And maybe we get to a voice over – he describes how he doesn’t need paper, he visualizes it from his mind. Maybe steal the quote directly from his autobiography. And we find this man to be a genius. And we find this movie to be fascinating. Who is this man? Some people have heard of him, but everyone wants to know more about him.

Without a question, in the trailer we show him presenting all of his amazing visual effects. Not only is he building things, but he is stunning the world – we really get that feeling. In the 1890s, he was the most celebrated scientist in the world. That is something I want to present. Back then, how audiences were absolutely shocked by this man.

And then, of course, show his isolation.

Show his major struggles – such as getting his projects to work.

In the end, we are left with a terrific impression of this movie, and most importantly:

We are not satisfied yet – we had an incredible taste of a movie, and we want the whole thing!

Okay, how about this – a little revision:

The first shot is of the Statue of Liberty under construction.

Then we see Tesla look up at it in awe, with his bowler hat on.

Then we get to the part where Tesla walks by somewhere and sees a man yelling at a machine. Tesla is a delicate man, a gentleman, tall. Thin.

And Tesla comes in: “Excuse me.”

The man looks at him: “Who are you? What are you -”

Tesla, in some brilliant way, fixes the machine that makes everyone in the place just stare in awe. And all very quickly. Just total brilliance that the people on the screen, as well as in the theater, can be highly impressed by.

Tesla looks at the stunned man: “They call me Mr. Tesla.”

That sounds like a God damn famous line. Just that. It’s brilliant for some reason.

“They call me Mr. Tesla.”

And as Tesla is leaving, the man gives him twenty dollars.

“Here.”

Tesla looks back at him, with the twenty.

“If you insist.”

I love it. This is such a unique character. So fascinating. If only I can keep this for the length of the entire film.

And then probably get to Tesla’s meeting with Edison. Maybe straight to the line about how the guy only knows of two great men. This is a fascinating movie.

I guess maybe this story has something to with the American dream. Being cheated, no matter how talented you are. We’ll see.

In the trailer, probably show him working in his laboratory, like a mad scientist – lightning everywhere.

Definitely show his Tesla coil at some point.

What is the remark I want from the trailer? Just his:

“Dude, we have to see that movie.”

Maybe include Tesla meeting high society, and someone saying:

“My associates tell me you’re the great inventor in all history.”

And he says something modest and preferably witty.

Here’s a crude attempt – something to the effect of: “Perhaps in this room, but not in all history.”

I’m pretty sure this is one of the best trailer intro ideas I’ll be able to come up with. It’s the Oscillator scene:

This may make a phenomenal trailer introduction. New York City, 1898. Suddenly in the city, buildings shake. Then windows begin to shatter. Citizens pour into the streets in Italian and Chinese neighborhoods.

Then we see a man’s hands. He is working with some machinery in a laboratory. Suddenly we see his face. He looks to the side and begins to sense an ominous vibration in the floor and walls. Knowing that he must quickly put a stop to it, he seized a sledgehammer and smashed the little oscillator in a single blow.

With perfect timing the two policemen rushed through the door, allowing him to turn with courteous nod.

The two police officers just stare in frightened awe.

“Gentlemen, I am sorry,” he said. “You are just a trifle too late to witness my experiment.”

Fucking badass. You have to love Tesla. I think that’s a perfect trailer introduction. And it’s all one hundred percent real.

This scene is truly amazing – the spectacle of it, the drama of it, is too much to skip, It’s absolutely fascinating. Especially about the part that he could destroy the Brooklyn Bridge in a matter of minutes if he felt like it.

Now, what makes this so phenomenal as a trailer opening? One it’s misleading. You think it’s aliens, or a disaster movie. But no, not at all. But it’s definitely intriguing. And then we get these two cops going up flights of stairs. Also – this gets us thinking. And then we have Tesla, in his strange mad scientist lab. And then Tesla realizes the vibration and smashes the oscillator with a sledge hammer. Amazing. Dramatic.

It’s over.

And then the cops come in, with frightened awe.

What really gets us is Tesla's character. And the line. It's an instant classic. It's so witty – in how it avoids the danger and makes it a playful situation – yet I didn't write it at all. This is absolute historical truth.

It's so perfectly phrased. It just makes the perfect introduction for the trailer.

"Gentlemen, I am sorry," he said. "You are just a trifle too late to witness my experiment."

What I'll Read

Since I'm taking a new, more organized approach, I'll have to reread *Tesla: Man Out of Time*.

My goal is to put in enough information that I don't need references. All of my information will be right here, on the computer. No books, no online articles, nothing. Just look at these files. So I'm in the process of gathering information.

I already read through Tesla's autobiography, except for the detailed scientific parts. If I don't have enough information by the end of *Tesla: Man Out of Time*, I'll reread at least some parts of Tesla's autobiography.

I also have a large collection of Tesla's own lectures and articles online. This should not only give me an idea of his thoughts and positions, but will give me a better idea of his voice – how his character will speak.

So my process will be this: Reread *Man Out of Time*, marking down all details in full form – so I don't have to reference the book again.

Without a question, I will acquire excess information. But think of it this way: I need two and a half hours of film. This means a ton of information. Probably anything I can get will in some way be useful.

Meanwhile, I'll be updating my character page.

I'll have a ridiculously long simple and especially detailed timeline. It will truly be impressive all in itself.

It will be a lot of work, but it will also be a lot of fun. Think about how the movie will look like on screen. Enjoy it. And remember, I am always going for the best movie of all time.

Think about how beautiful the final product will be. That's all.

Manipulation of Time

There are a number of ways I can tell this story. From beginning to death in a straight line. A retrospect from his old age, as he talks to the white pigeon, which might be unrealistic in that he wasn't that crazy in real life. I don't want to portray him unrealistically in any way. As realistic as possible.

I can skip to middle age and have flashbacks of childhood. There are a lot of ideas. For now, I'm interested in a retrospect. But I will definitely consider alternatives. Hell, it might be a complete confusing mess of time like *Eternal Sunshine*. We'll see.

Tesla's Animal Abuse

Not only Tesla – but everyone. It was the time. We're still slowly growing more humane toward animals. But Edison was much worse – paid children to steal cats and dogs to electrocute. Tesla tortured frogs and insects. Even a chicken, I believe. Lots of animals. Probably for most of his life. He curiously became a vegetarian later in his life. I definitely do not want to show this. I want to make a movie I enjoy, and I would hate to see animal torture. I might make a reference to it – maybe regret if Tesla had it in his old age.

What to use when writing

Both timelines and character descriptions. Also think stylistically.

Rereading Tesla's autobiography

Don't worry. It's not long. I need to do so because some of *Man Out of Time* is just a copy of the autobiography, which goes in more depth. Reread it and take notes when I finish this book. I can skip the parts included in *Man Out of Time*, copied from the autobiography.

Name of the film

A few ideas have come into mind. I think all of them so far are inadequate, but might influence a better version of the title.

The Solitary Mind

Tesla (this one is especially lame)

The Inventor (also lame)

Nevertheless, I include these uninspired examples because they might be useful – as I said – to influence better ideas.

But, qualities the title should have include:

A clear significance to the story, eye catching, unique. The title itself should make people want to see the movie.

Maybe something to do with the pigeons.

Something like the man who wanders blank park.

Or the dreamer, or visionary, or poet. Machinist.

Something provocative.

Voice over or no voice over?

A terrific, and important question. This can change the style of the movie.

Right now my philosophy is this: If possible, do without the voice over. However, if I find it absolutely indispensable, I will have to use it carefully.

Casting

At the moment, the absolute perfect person for the role seems to be Edward Norton. I love his acting. I love him in every movie he does. He would make a brilliant Nikola Tesla. And this is a unique, intelligent, interesting, challenging, and Oscar-worthy role. He would have every reason in the world to play this part. As I'm making this story, I might as well imagine Norton as Tesla. Maybe.

Portraying characters

How can I tell if a character is awesome? If an actor wants to play it. If an actor loves the part, then I know the audience will, too. That's my philosophy. This means the character is unique, interesting, and has great dialogue. Oh, and that the character is complex – not a simple caricature.

What else?

Of every character, I want it to be said that that is one of the greatest characters in cinema.

Of course – I can set my goals as high as I want. The higher I set my goals, the clearer my performance will be. I will know what I want and how to accomplish it.

Even though these are real people, it takes an artist to present them uniquely in their dramatic form.

This means that I want people saying the following three characters are without a question some of the best ever in cinema:

Tesla, Edison, and Twain.

What does this mean? Each character is totally original, has a unique voice, and is memorable. Characters we love to see on the screen.

My ultimate goal, character-wise is this:

I want everyone, critics and audiences alike, to say that my portrayal of Nikola Tesla is the most incredible character to ever hit cinema.

Quite a tremendous goal – but I need it to know what I'm doing. To go for the goal. For focus.

Who is this most remarkable character in cinema?

An idiosyncratic genius from Yugoslavia in the late 19th century. A masterful inventor who visualizes his machines constructed in front of his eyes, who spends his life in isolation, who speaks with total elegance. Everything about him – his look, his personality, his intelligence – is utterly original and fascinating. The greatest character in cinema. That is my goal.

Musical Score:

Three ways to do this. One, have the music of the time.

Two, have me write the music.

Or three, have a professional, established composer make the score. I say, whatever. All three are good. Whichever works is fine. But best original score is another potential Oscar. I want to win every Oscar possible, of course.

Additional Sources:

Cheney borrows ridiculous amounts of her text directly from Tesla's autobiography and Prodigal Genius. At this point, I see no reason not to read Prodigal Genius after this. It will most likely contain more complete descriptions of each scene. Give more in depth information. So, if I get through this entire book, and am still going strong, I'll order the other book online.

And of course, whenever I feel uncertain, look it up. Maybe there's more information online.

And as for Tesla's speaking style – there is boundless writing to put me in the right direction. Just read his articles on that link.

Movie Poster

I'll just jot down ideas as I get them.

I'm thinking maybe Tesla there – either full body, just upper body or something like that – with a Tesla coil. Just not cheesy. But the Tesla coil shows the lightning effect which is awesome.

Here's another idea – one inspired by actual photos – Tesla sitting on a chair, reading a book nonchalantly while next to him an insane fury of lightning rages. The contrast of his calmness with the striking imagine of the lightning makes it an eye-catching sight. Who is this man – the viewer will think. But of course, the title of the movie must complement the poster.

Any Interesting Pictures

Guess which one your teachers decided not to tell you about.

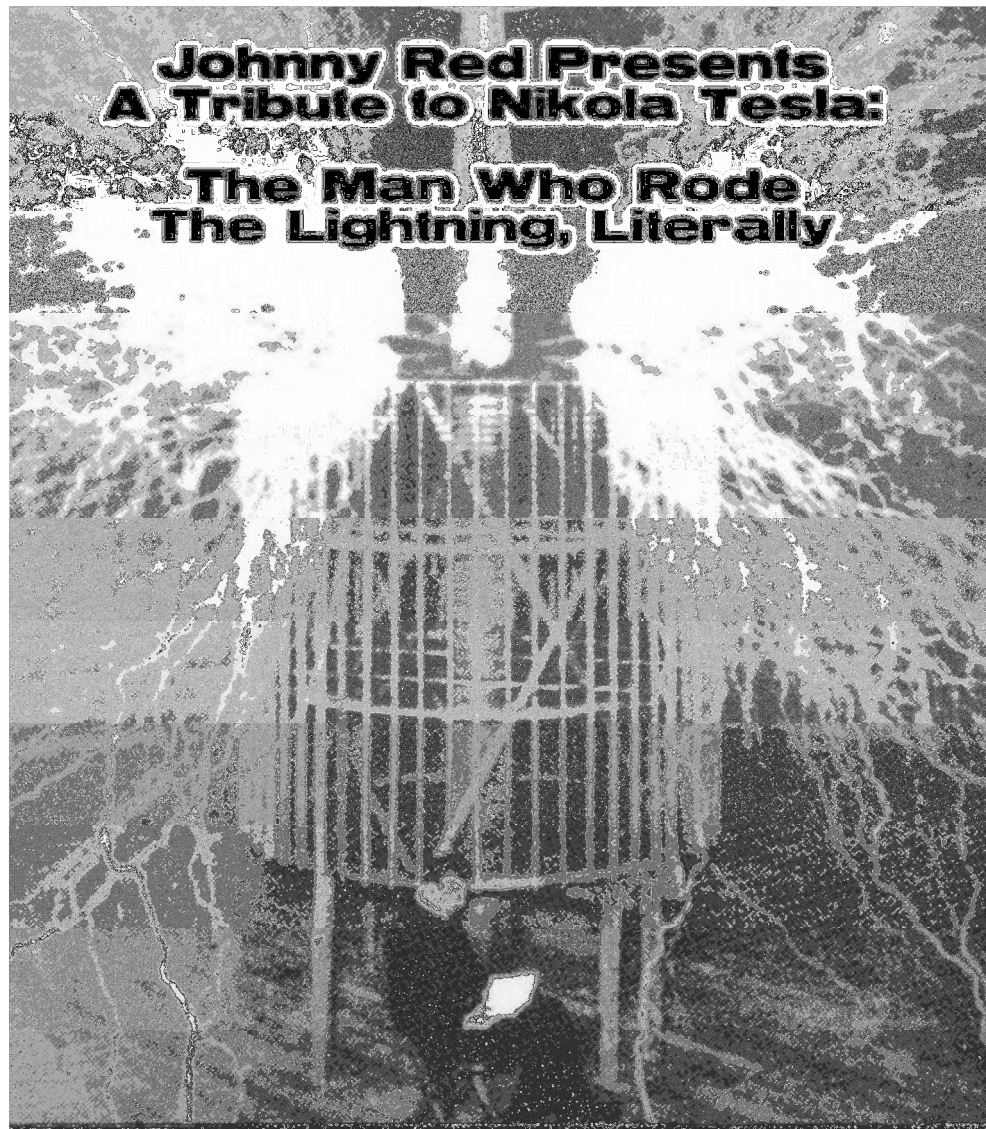


Thomas Edison, seen pondering his collapsed scrotum.



Nikola Tesla detaches his balls to give you a better look.

So that's what his orbs looked like. Pretty cool.



Absolutely insane. And yeah, the established scientific community called him a mad scientist. Yet he's our protagonist. Awsome.

Oh yeah:



Oh, and Edison's electrocutions. Maybe just show the body, or the photographs. Or maybe show the living elephant, and how Edison went to execute him. But mention the stuff the cats and dogs. Edison took it to a whole new level – execution.



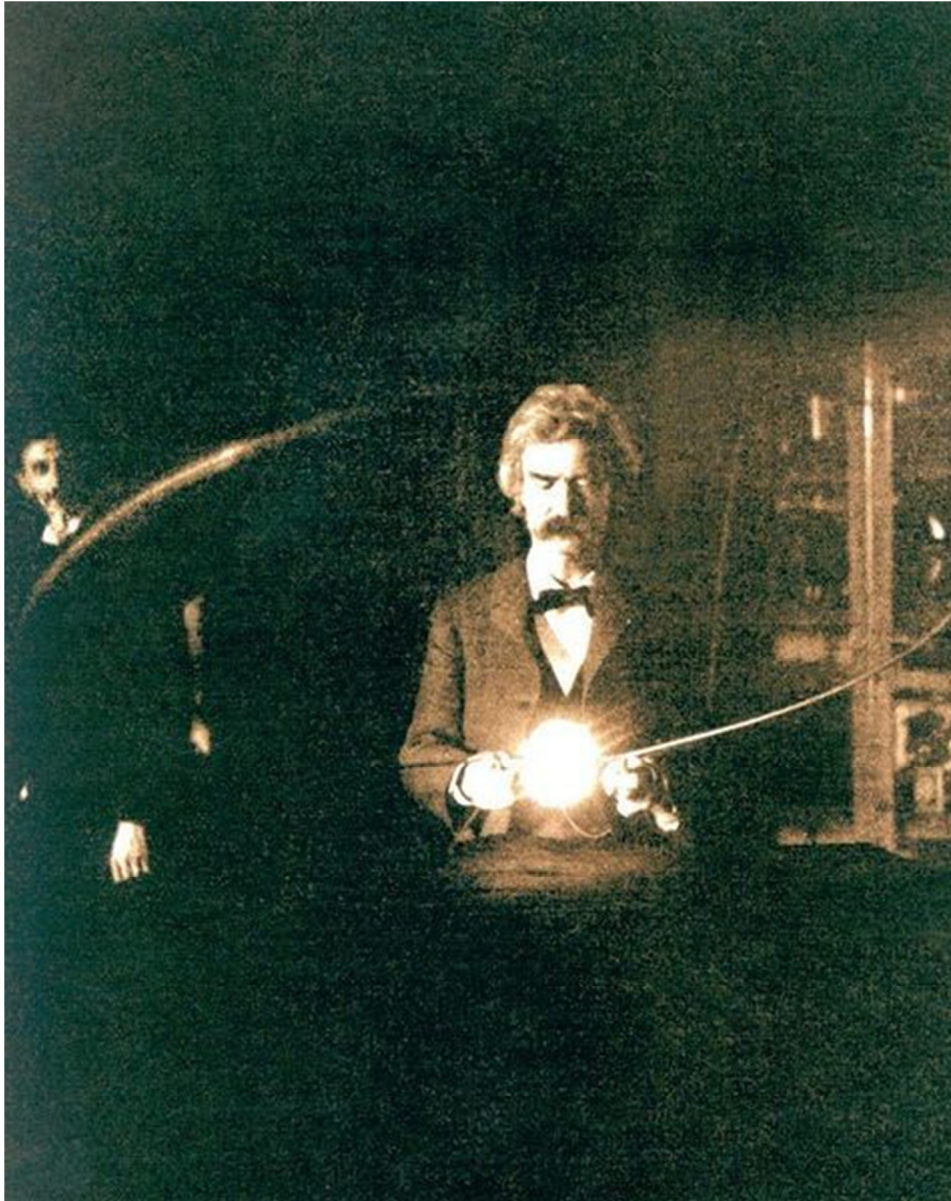
Tesla coil:



What makes this incredible at the time is that there was no wire. Electricity transferred through the air itself:



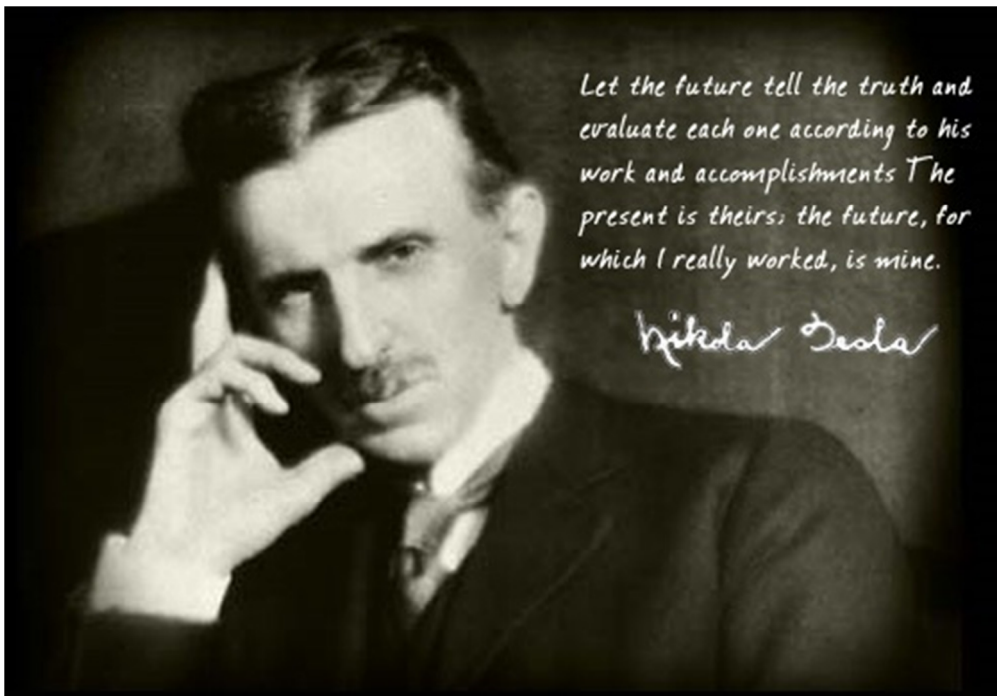
Tesla and his friend Mark Twain. Two men everybody will love. The good guys. Edison was a bad guy.



Wardenclyffe tower:



Ah, the quote:



An incredible part of the story:

How J. P. Morgan destroyed Tesla's work because Tesla wanted to create free power to the world. How generous was he? He didn't want money. But Morgan destroyed Tesla's work because that would remove his own profit. What a remarkable story, and what a remarkable man Tesla was. Everyone can only love him.

Synopsis

Forgotten by history. Denounced as a "mad scientist", he changed the world.

This is actually a **tragedy**, but we, as an audience, remember him. We fulfill Tesla's request! I love you, Nikola Tesla! You are awesome!

Yes, crude, crude, crude, crude, crude, but for now it gets the message across:

"This is the story of an obscure inventor, forgotten by history, but whose contributions have benefited mankind incredibly. Never caring for money or fame in his lifetime, Tesla's reputation was made obscure by rivals such as Thomas Edison. The idiosyncratic genius was born in a small village in Eastern Europe, and immigrated to America, with four cents in his pocket. He became the most celebrated scientist of the late nineteenth century, but over time, vanished in the pages of history."

So crude. But you get the idea. Tesla is struggling, he is suffering. But he will get what is his.

By this movie.

This movie is for you, Mr. Tesla.

And you get the last word.

You get the quote which will earn you respect.

This movie will totally revitalize the memory of you and your contributions to the world. This is what you've been waiting for for a century.

A movie that makes grown men cry

That's definitely a goal.

When Tesla dies, this generous man who we so love – penniless, forgotten by history, we cry for him in sadness.

But then at the very end we see the quote – that he knew he would be remembered in the future. And we have. And so it was all good. It was all worth it. We made his dream come true.

How I came to this project

In case I forget, I'll write it down. I was working on a bunch of comedy script ideas, but then I thought maybe I'll do something more serious. And then I considered doing a biography. I had been working on a Napoleon one for a while, but didn't want to go back to that. I really wanted to do Einstein, but I thought that I'll save the best for last. But for now, I went online and looked at lists of important people in different centuries. When I was reminded of Tesla, I threw myself into that project.

About O'Neill – biographer

"O'Neill gave Tesla far too much credit, Kaempffert said, as a result of adolescent hero worship."

Little timeline help

Tesla had his mustache definitely at 37 – probably way before also – and that was the time he was meeting people, going to the Johnsons. A famous New York cosmopolitan.

Tesla's Sexuality

"Among the animadversions against Tesla were whispers that he was a homosexual. In another time or another country it might have made little difference to his career; but in Victorian America, in the sober company of engineers, such rumors were to become a virulent part of the arsenal of his enemies. Since he could never be bothered to repudiate gossip of any kind, at any time, the only explanation he ever cared to advance for his celibacy was the exclusive demands imposed by his work. This, however, was unacceptable to the society of the time, and the pressures upon him to marry were unrelenting."

I don't want to hint that he was a homosexual. It's cheap, it's irrelevant, it's cliché. What does it matter? I don't want to dwell at all on that in my film.

Which inventions to show

It is important to keep the plot moving. Keep the audience as deeply emotionally involved as possible. Keep it going. That means I can't linger on all of Tesla's lectures, all of his inventions, all of his struggles. I must be selective.

I plan to make a nice little list of his inventions at the very end. Part of the purpose of this film is commemorate Tesla, and give him the respect that he deserves.

So I can include inventions if appropriate, but not dwell on it.

Remember: Emotion first.

My attitude toward fiction

This is a work of historical fiction. Yes, it's a biography. But it is also dramatized in the sense that I am filling in blanks. I am making up the dialogue. It is not a hundred percent real, although the situations were.

What I ask myself is whether I'll allow myself to completely make up scenes – for example, Tesla lying in bed, thinking about his life.

Or going to the Statue of Liberty in Paris.

This is giving myself some liberty. But how much should I take?

The reason this came up is because I encountered upon a very personal interview with Tesla.

It is the very first time, to my recollection, that Tesla openly discusses his personal life, his emotions.

Now, it may be a terrific artistic technique to open up to Tesla's emotions verbally for the first time this late in the story. But I want to know what to know what I'm doing.

This is important. I want to make a decision based not on simply finding some information and having to use it. If I don't want to use it, I won't.

So my conclusion is that throughout my second phase of filtering my research findings, I must think about the story, and how I portray Tesla. How close we as an audience get to him. Are we viewing him personally? Are we getting voice over?

At this point, with the interview, it seems there should be absolutely no voice over.

But that is all a matter I will decide later. There is still much to research.

Just continue thinking about style. It is still too early to decide what to exclude and what to include, and especially how I'll tell the story – voice over or not, how many visual effects – how much imagination, how close we get to Tesla emotionally, the timing – as in, retrospect, totally crazy, from middle – I use with scenes, and so forth. Too soon to make up my mind. Just continue thinking about it.

Fictional quotes

Things I make up. Right now I like this one, which would work in a trailer.

People in the press are accusing me of being a mad scientist.

Tesla thinks for a second.

Regardless of whether this is true or not, I don't like being accused of things.

The question is then just this: does it fit with his character. This isn't Iron Man. He has to be his own character. Mine is gentle, modest, caring. A poet. A philosopher. He is emotional, when you get to know him. He is Yugoslavian.

What kind of movie am I making?

This occurred to me. I believe clarifying and remembering my position on this will help guide me to my goal.

I want to make a movie Steven Spielberg and Martin Scorsese would want to direct.

I want to make a movie Al Pacino, Robert De Niro, Jack Nicholson, and Clint Eastwood would want to star in.

A movie John Williams and Hans Zimmer would want to write scores to.

What kind of movie is this?

Not a trifling movie. Not a joke. Not a parody. Not a caricature. Not something that can be captured, predicted, and discarded in a matter of seconds. This is not an immature, typical, commercial, Hollywood movie. It's not filled with cheap jokes, over-used characters, meaningless romance, or a predictable plot.

This is a work of art on the level of the Shawshank Redemption and The Godfather.

And everything I ever consider in this movie I am making should take all that I have just said into consideration.

What do I think about Tesla's negative traits?

He as an anti-Semite – said never to trust Jews, he electrocuted animals for science and sometimes frivolously, just for display, and he told women they were fat without concern for their feelings.

What do I think about this? This dark side of the hero?

One, I don't know anything about what Jews were like, or even are like for that matter. I don't know anything about the reality of the world. So I don't know if that was the right thing to say in the real world. Certainly, not politically correct, but maybe practically, statistically, true.

The animal part – people are still like that. People have their negative sides. What can I say? Nobody's perfect.

Power

I think it was Coppola who talked about how power made a movie interesting. Seeing someone in power, people contenting for power, fear of power, gaining and losing power – that might be what makes drama.

So my point is to try to create dramatic situations. Dramatic tension. Someone has power and someone doesn't. This is interesting to watch.

Parodies of my movie

I want to make a movie that's hard to make fun of.

To be sure, it's a serious film on all accounts. I want to remove little lines that make it seem frivolous and light-hearted. It's not. It's not a silly little movie with fast lines that come to no effect.

More important than anything else is drama.

It has to have deep emotion, tension, and above all, struggle.

Struggle.

Struggle we take seriously.

Struggle that goes through the entire movie.

What will make or break this movie is a continuous, deep, and emotional:

STRUGGLE.

Telling the story - Beginning

It's all coming to me. And it's perfect.

First mention the most gorgeous setting. Make the audience enthralled with the beauty. Maybe make a poetic description of it all – definitely make it beautiful. Invite the audience into a magical story!

Some caption like Yugoslavia, 1855 – or whenever Daniel died.

A flock of geese in perfect formation lands in the mountains of rural Yugoslavia. The most beautiful, dark green forests cover the land forever.

A 5-YEAR-OLD NIKOLA TESLA watches the geese in a trance.

Tesla plays with his childhood friends.

Tesla, outdoors in Yugoslavia – watching the geese come in in perfect formation, goes home for food.

He goes over there in the village – women hunched over, working on the fields.

Nikola enters the home and finds that his mother is preparing dinner.

In the meantime, Nikola's father is practicing with Daniel – who is twelve. Daniel repeats long sentences from the Bible after his father. We are actually impressed by the twelve year old, he seems very bright.

Nikola's father hugs Daniel, who he loves so much. Nikola looks up to Daniel, we see.

They all get toward eating – whatever family members are there. All three sisters, I believe as well.

Around this time, before or after actually eating, Nikola's father tells him that one day he'll be as great as his older brother, who shows so much promise.

Then, we see Nikola with his flashes. The objects. Nikola has a strange look on his face, breathing hard.

His older brother Daniel sees him.

“You have it, too, don’t you?”

Nikola looks at his brother. “What?”

“The flashes.”

We establish a bond between them. Daniel is caring of his younger brother. They hug. This makes Daniel’s death the greatest heartbreak ever. It’ll make the audience weep for Nikola, the poor boy – so young.

Then, later, someone comes home and tells Nikola that his brother died. Maybe his mother. Maybe both together. Maybe the father.

The father comes home, with the most dramatic expression, and tells his wife.

Nikola comes over to see what’s wrong. He has that innocent childish expression. Eventually it is revealed by his mother that Daniel died.

“What happened?”

“It doesn’t matter now.”

Maybe she calls Nikola with some affectionate term.

We must distill from this that Nikola wanted to be just as great as his brother – he had to work harder, do everything better.

At some point, definitely the umbrella scene. Definitely the candle.

But anyway, what do we have so far in the telling of this tale? An unusual place, an unusual time, a mysterious affliction, a complex family – priests, and complex relationships. A five year old in trauma. Everything about it is completely intriguing.

At this point, I don’t see the backwards tale at all – no retrospect.

The story needs drama, and here it is. It couldn’t be much more dramatic than this.

What happens? We are invited into a magical world, a magical story of a strange young boy. Everything about it has to be on the level of the most beautiful moments in film, the deepest emotions, the greatest stories.

A story for all ages. It does not rely on profanity, or anything vulgar. It is something Steven Spielberg would want to direct.

The title has to reflect the magical atmosphere of the story.

That's how I imagine it. That's what the story is.

It's not A Beautiful Mind – just observing a genius's brilliance.

This is a story of deep, engrossing emotion from START to VERY END. It is a magical world that we are totally sucked into. And we forget reality. We experience the deepest emotions. And we sympathize with Nikola.

That's the kind of story this is.

Let me retry this:

The beautiful mountainside. Green. Gorgeous.

The caption, something like: "Smijan, Austrian Empire, 1861"

Five-year-old Tesla is doing something. Maybe carving a sword from wood, at such an early age. Reread the autobiography for this.

He sees a flock of geese in perfection formation fly above him. He is awe-inspired by the beautiful sight.

Then – Nikola, with some friends wanders through the mountainside. They might be playing in some way as they go.

Then Nikola arrives at the village. He sees in the distance his father, a priest, walking alongside his twelve-year-old brother DANIEL.

They recite a bible verse – that's the very first line in the movie. Something from the bible.

Nikola's father hugs Daniel. He goes away toward the house. Daniel comes up to his little brother.

They say something. Maybe indicating Nikola will also be a priest. Then Nikola has a flash, and his brother tells him he also has that. Look earlier for that dialogue.

Maybe then – assuming he didn't invent anything before that like carved swords – Nikola sees his mother inventing something. Tesla gets the flashes again and decides to invent something himself.

And then news of Daniel's death comes. His parents weep and make Nikola grow up with little confidence because everything he accomplished only reminded his parents of their loss with Daniel. Shows this. Maybe show Tesla imagining ghosts and such. From here, I don't have anything pressing that immediately comes to mind.

Tesla's Loss of Fame: I've read more and have more informed ideas at this point.

One, Tesla made extraordinary promises that he never fulfilled.

Two, Tesla went a very long time since creating any commercially successful invention.

Three, he diminished his reputation with his absurd claims to be communicating with Martians.

Incorporating the Johnsons

They are interesting people – meeting celebrities, and inviting Tesla. Probably his best friends. And possibly most importantly, Kate would be the only female presence in the story, with the exception of Tesla's mother.

It just seems so dry, so empty without a single woman to play a major role in the story. That alone makes me consider using them.

Also, the fact that Tesla once went often to the Johnsons and then began to avoid them shows his demise. Ignoring invitations from old friends. That seems dramatic. Possibly use this. It adds another layer to the story. Hopefully, more comes from the Johnsons. We'll see if I'll use them.

Narration: I have a great idea. What if the story were told from Kate's perspective? That she, such a close friend of Tesla wrote about him. It gives an air of mystery. I like that. A definite possibility. A female presence.

Talking to Himself: This might change everything! This is big news.

"His employees said that he had always talked to himself."

What does this mean? One, the figure is more eccentric.

Two, a whole new avenue of possibilities opens up. As he works, he can describe what he's working on.

He's talking to himself. This is ever closer to an Oscar.

People who talk to themselves when I'm trying to work on something are infuriating. I wish they would shut up because they're distracting me. But talking to yourself without bothering anyone – especially as eloquently as Tesla was – is only strange, but not bothersome.

And so this might allow Tesla to discuss things that relate to the plot – struggles and emotions.

And if he isn't necessarily talking to his white pigeon – maybe he's talking to himself. Certainly a possibility. Talking aloud. Maybe.

Nightmares of Daniel: My only fear is that this too closely resembles Ray. That's it. Just differentiate it. But it should be important. Because he sought to outperform his dead brother.

Portrayal of Electricity

It should not be something dull and scientific. It should be an ethereal, mystical force that, as Tesla said at 83, he doesn't yet understand. He never could decide what electricity was.

Telling the Story

This will be a little disorganized.

I imagine a possible introductory scene: Tesla's cat – Macak. The static electricity.

And then maybe a montage of other scenes in his childhood. Maybe so. Maybe not.

Definitely include Tesla with his machines – constructing in mid-air – floating machines with parts all around gathering. Measurements of angles, properties, and mathematical formula abound in a fascinating range.

Kind of forgot about the umbrella.

Possibly begin with the hotel. New York. Lighted at night. And probably end the movie exactly where it started – New York, lighted at night. And all the lights represent the power he brought to the world.

From Hotel New Yorker

The Images

Peaked at twenty-five. Happened when he was exhilarated.

With Twain

"One day I was handed a few volumes of new literature unlike anything I had ever read before and so captivating as to make me utterly forget me hopeless state. They were the earlier works of Mark Twain and to them might have been due the miraculous recovery which followed. Twenty-five years later, when I met Mr. Clemens and we formed a friendship between us, I told him of the experience and was amazed to see that great man of laughter burst into tears... My studies were continued at the higher Real Gymnasium in Carlstadt, Croatia, where one of my aunts resided. She was a distinguished lady, the wife of a Colonel who was an old war-horse having participated in many battles, I can never forget the three years I passed at their home. No fortress in time of war was under a more rigid discipline. I was fed like a canary bird. All the meals were of the highest quality and deliciously prepared, but short in quantity by a thousand percent. The slices of ham cut by my aunt were like tissue paper. When the Colonel would put something substantial on my plate she would snatch it away and say excitedly to him; "Be careful. Niko is very delicate." I had a voracious appetite and suffered like Tantalus. But I lived in an atmosphere of refinement and artistic taste quite unusual for those times and conditions. The land was low and marshy and malaria fever never left me while there despite the enormous amounts of quinine I

consumed. Occasionally the river would rise and drive an army of rats into the buildings, devouring everything, even to the bundles of fierce paprika. These pests were to me a welcome diversion. I thinned their ranks by all sorts of means, which won me the unenviable distinction of rat-catcher in the community. At last, however, my course was completed, the misery ended, and I obtained the certificate of maturity which brought me to the crossroads.”