

A Teleplay
by Christopher Hagelstein

Opening Scene

(1) Camera starts with a fade-in shot of an open window, gradually revealing the sunny haze coming from the window (it’s a late mid-summer after-noon). The camera begins to zoom out, revealing a sparsely-decorated living room, with a middle-aged man (whose name is Bunny) sitting in a lounge chair next to a coffee table piled with receipts, bills, and various letters and correspondence. An abnormally-large, old-fashioned rotary phone sits on top of the huge pile.

(2) The room is dusty, and the camera picks up the motes of dust floating through the rays of light coming through the window. The window is also abnormally large compared to the size of the living room. It looks as though it takes up almost half of the room. All during this scene, the sounds of the city are audible: cars swooshing by, birds chirping, shouts from teenagers playing outdoors, etc.

(3) After the camera stops the zoom-out, revealing the entire scene as depicted above, a ten-second or so span of complete silence ensues. After the span of silence ends, Bunny is seen answering the telephone after a certain number of rings. The sound of the ringing telephone is the only audible sound heard. After the call is answered, the scene returns back to its normal sounds as described along with the following conversation. The caller is named Teddy.

Teddy: Hello, Bunny?
Bunny: Yes, I’m here
Teddy: It’s me, Teddy, I’m talking to you on the telephone.
Bunny: I thought so. It just so happens I’m talking to you on the telephone as well.
Teddy: Really?! [*exasperated*]. It looks like it works. Is there a way I can confirm it’s really you talking and not myself.
Bunny: I don’t understand. What do you mean?
Teddy: Well, I went to the doctor’s today and it seems that I never fully recuperated after my surgery. When I call up somebody on the tele-phone, there usually is no one on the other end. They said to me that all my telephone conversations are really to myself.
Bunny: Interesting, I seem to have the same problem. Every time I pick up the phone to dial someone, it seems that they don’t know what I’m talking about. Any previous discussion I’ve had with them is just imaginary, so when I say anything to them regarding it, they just say, “I’ve never spoken to you in my life!”
Teddy: So, if we both have this problem, how can we tell if we are talking to each other for real?
Bunny: I got an idea. Hang up the phone and call me back right away. Then we can both know if we were just now talking to ourselves or to each other.
Teddy: Okay, Great! Let me give it a try. Let me give it a try.
Bunny: Okay, hang up the phone.
Teddy: Right. Bye!
Bunny: Bye!

(4) After Bunny hangs up the phone, the same 10 second-or-so span of silence ensues as it did in paragraph (3). Bunny is seen looking at the phone waiting for Teddy to return his call. Once the silence ends, the normal sounds are audible again, and Bunny is seen picking up the receiver and dial-ing a number. The dialing sound is normal and occurs with the audible city sounds.

(5) Suddenly, the normal audible city sounds cease, and there is a close-up of Bunny’s face, with the only audible sound being that of a busy signal coming from the telephone. The camera then starts to zoom out and away from his face in the same manner that it did in the opening scene from the window. The living room is revealed from its other side, with the same props described previously. A mirror is seen on the wall, once again, portrayed in the same manner that the window was portrayed in the opening scene. This mirror is seen by the audience to clearly reflect the entire window on the opposite side of the room even though the audience is aware that the window is much larger than the mirror, and cannot possibly be contained in the mirror as is.

(6) As the camera zooms out, the sound of the busy signal fades away, and gradually is overtaken by the normal city sounds. Once the zoom-out is completed, and the busy signal can no longer be heard, the scene cuts to black. Credits then roll, accompanied by a recording of the audience sounds, which was made before the movie began.

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