

BRAINSTORM

by  
D. Richard Tucker

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## CAST

MARTIN, the boss  
SHERRY, the romantic  
LINDA, the admin  
JAMES, the intern  
BOB, the yes man

TIME: The present.

SETTING: A corporate conference room.

Lights up on a conference room. BOB, JAMES, SHERRY, and LINDA are sitting around the table. MARTIN is conducting the meeting.

MARTIN

Okay, everybody listen- we don't have a lot of time. We need to get this wrapped up in the next half hour, okay? So, let's stay on course and get this done. What are we looking at, Linda?

LINDA

The city of Phoenix, Oregon is looking for a new official logo.

MARTIN

Okay, you heard her - we need a logo for the City of Phoenix. Something nice. Something sharp. A logo. Think visual representation, here. Come on, let's go, don't fart around – what have you got? What about you, Bob?

BOB

I didn't know there was a Phoenix in Oregon.

JAMES

Yes, there is. There's also a Phoenix in Illinois and Maryland.

MARTIN

(sarcastically)  
Thank you, Rand McNally, now what do we have here? Sherry? Anything?

SHERRY

I thought Phoenix was in New Mexico.

BOB

No, Arizona.

SHERRY

Then why did Linda say Oregon?

BOB

I don't know, maybe she read it wrong.

LINDA

I didn't read it wrong, Bob – this is Phoenix, Oregon.

JAMES

Like I said, there is more than one Phoenix, you guys.

MARTIN

Quiet, James, unless you have something constructive to say. Okay, anybody? Anybody? Anybody have an idea here?

JAMES

Well, Martin, why don't we go with the traditional? The bird.

MARTIN

(pause)

What?

JAMES

The bird. The Phoenix. We could do a silhouette of a flaming bird.

MARTIN

What are you talking about?

JAMES

You know, the Phoenix, it's a mythological bird-

SHERRY

Oh, yeah I read about those in college. They were these man-eating birds with real sharp metal feathers that they shot at you like arrows. And Hercules had to evict them from some island or something.

JAMES

No, that's the Orinthes Stymphalides. They lived on –

MARTIN

What are you talking about?

JAMES

The Orinthes Stymphalides .... They were mythological birds that had armor-like feathers and for his Sixth Labor, Hercules was required to-

MARTIN

And what has that got to do with Phoenix, Oregon?

JAMES

It's just that they aren't the same as the Phoenix, which is what we were discussing. I had suggested using a silhouette of the flaming bird, because the legend says that the Phoenix goes up in flames and then a new one rises from the ashes.

MARTIN

James, I'm not going to tell you again – stay on the subject. We don't have time to play around here. Hey, where's that artist guy?

BOB

Kenny?

MARTIN

Is he the guy with the pad and pencil that does those doodley things?

BOB

Yeah, that's Kenny.

LINDA

He's the artist. Works in Graphics.

MARTIN

Right, where the hell is he?

SHERRY

He may not have been available – you called this meeting at the last minute.

MARTIN

Okay – Linda, make sure you take good notes and get them to Kelly.

LINDA

Kenny.

MARTIN

Whatever. Okay, anybody? Huh?

BOB

You know, I remember a movie about Phoenix. It was about this airplane that went down in the desert in Africa. And they tore it apart, you know, and then they took one of the engines, and made another plane out of it by taking off a wing and kind of putting it like on top and then they all strapped themselves on the wing and flew it back to civilization.

SHERRY

I remember that.

MARTIN

Me, too. That was a good movie.

SHERRY

Who was in that movie?

LINDA

Jimmy Stewart.

MARTIN

Right.

BOB

And Richard Widmark.

JAMES

Richard Attenborough.

MARTIN

What?

JAMES

It wasn't Richard Widmark. It was Richard Attenborough. Actually, it was Sir Richard Attenborough. He's a knight, you know.

MARTIN

Oh, kind of like Elton John? Is he a knight?

BOB

Yeah, I think so.

SHERRY

Is that where the Queen hits you with sword?

BOB

Right.

JAMES

Actually, she just touches each of your shoulders with an epee.

MARTIN

A what?

JAMES

An epee. It's .... a sword.

MARTIN

So what's your point, James?

JAMES

Nothing, it's just that –

MARTIN

James, come on, let's talk "contribution" here. You're slowing us down. Okay, somebody give us an idea here. We need something.

LINDA

You know what movie I saw last week? Angela's Ashes.

SHERRY

Oh, that was so good. I just love Emily Watson.

BOB

Emily Watson? Wasn't she in that movie that Tim Robbins wrote?

SHERRY

Yeah, what was that called?

MARTIN

Was that the one about the theatre people?

SHERRY

Yeah, what was it again?

JAMES

"The Cradle Will Rock."

MARTIN

What?

JAMES

Nothing.

BOB

Oh yeah, “The Hand That Rocks the Cradle.” It was about an evil babysitter or something. It had that hot chick in it.

JAMES

Rebecca DeMornay.

MARTIN

Rebecca DeMornay was in the Tim Robbins movie?

JAMES

No, she was in “The Hand That Rocks the Cradle.” The Tim Robbins’ movie was “The Cradle Will Rock.”

MARTIN

Okay, thank you, Siskel and Ebert. Now, would you please quit dragging us off the subject? Can we get back to business here?

LINDA

You know who else was in that movie? John Cusack.

SHERRY

Yes! He is so gorgeous. I just love him. If he were here, I’d do him right now - on this very table.

LINDA

You’d have to take a number, honey, cause I’m way ahead of you there. Didn’t you just love him in “Bullets Over Broadway?”

SHERRY

He was wonderful. I couldn’t believe his girlfriend ran off with Rob Reiner.

LINDA

No kidding, who would go for Rob Reiner over him?

BOB

Only Sally Struthers. But hey, don’t knock Rob Reiner – he’s a great director.

MARTIN

That’s true. Just like that Richie Cunningham guy. They’re both great directors.

JAMES

Ron Howard.

MARTIN

What, James?

JAMES

Nothing.

MARTIN

That Cunningham guy directed “Apollo 13.” Did you notice how bald he is now?

BOB

Yeah, but so is Rob Reiner.

SHERRY

What did Rob Reiner direct?

BOB

Lots of stuff. My favorite is “Stand By Me.” It’s like the quintessential coming-of-age flick.

MARTIN

That’s a great movie. It had those guys in it.

LINDA

Will Wheaton.

MARTIN

Will Wheaton... what else did he do?

JAMES

He went on to become the romantic interest for Tina Yothers in the 80’s sitcom “Family Ties.”

ALL pause to look at JAMES.

JAMES (cont’d)

He also played Will Crusher on “Star Trek: The Next Generation.”

SHERRY

(pause)

There was also that guy... Corey.....Corey.....Corey something.

BOB, LINDA, and SHERRY look at JAMES expecting an answer. JAMES shakes his head.

MARTIN

And that other guy, too. What was his name?

JAMES

(hesitantly)  
River Phoenix.

BOB

Right. River Phoenix. He's great. He was in one of those Indiana Jones movies, too.

JAMES

Actually, he's dead.

MARTIN

Yes, James we know that Indiana Jones is dead. He was in World War II for crying out loud.

BOB

Yeah, if he were alive, he'd be like a hundred years old.

MARTIN

Hey, we need to wrap this up. So what have we got, huh?

BOB

I got zilch.

SHERRY

Same here.

LINDA

Nothing.

JAMES

(pause)  
Well, we could ..... I don't have anything.

MARTIN

What about that thing with the bird? Maybe we could use that – maybe a picture of the bird...with Hercules and those armored feathers, eating flesh and stuff.

JAMES

The Orinthes Stymphalides?

MARTIN

What's that? Orin-what?

JAMES

The Orinthes Stymphalides. Actually, that has nothing to do with Phoenix.

MARTIN

Then why do you bring it up? Damn it, James, we've got a job here, and you're just slowing us down. If you can't make a contribution to the group, than just keep quiet. Okay, anybody, any other ideas?

BOB

Well....

MARTIN

What is it?

BOB

Well, I'm not sure if it's appropriate.

LINDA

Go ahead, Bob. Give it a shot.

MARTIN

Sure, run it up the flag pole and see if anybody salutes it.

BOB

Well, I just remembered.....Glen Campbell sang a song about Phoenix.

LINDA

That's right – "By the Time I Get to Phoenix."

SHERRY

Oh, that was so sad – it was all about him leaving his girl, and he didn't think she'd notice he was gone.

MARTIN

(encouraging)

Okay, what can we do with that? Any ideas? We need a logo – a visual representation.

LINDA

We could show some musical notes, maybe a treble scale to represent the music.

MARTIN

I like it – I like it.

BOB

But that wouldn't differentiate "By the Time I Get to Phoenix" from any other song.

MARTIN

That's true.

SHERRY

Maybe we could use the bust of Glen Campbell.

MARTIN

I like it. I like it.

LINDA

But didn't we do that already?

BOB

Oh, yeah, we used that for the City of Wichita – for their transportation department – you know, "Wichita Lineman."

MARTIN

That's right. That was a great sculpture. That Glen Campbell had a great haircut.

SHERRY

Didn't Harry Belafonte record that song, too? "By the Time I get to Phoenix?"

LINDA

Yes, but we already used the bust of Harry Belafonte – you know, "Springfield Mountain" for that ski resort in Vermont.

MARTIN

Hold on a minute. Is there a river near Phoenix, Oregon?

LINDA

(checking notes)

Umm.....yes, there is.

MARTIN

Great. Maybe....maybe...we could make the logo look like River Phoenix.

LINDA

Yes!

BOB

Great idea.

MARTIN

Maybe...maybe.... maybe a big silhouette of River Phoenix.

SHERRY

Excellent.

LINDA

(taking notes)

I got it. I'll pass this on to Kenny to put together some preliminary sketches.

MARTIN

Okay, we're out of here. Thanks for all the good work. We'd probably gotten through this faster if James hadn't held us up with all his trivia stuff - but don't sweat it, James - with a little more experience, you'll be able to contribute, too. Okay gang, let's go.

SHERRY

Nice job, Bob.

BOB

Thanks - you, too.

MARTIN, SHERRY, and BOB exit.  
LINDA starts out and then turns back to  
JAMES who is still seated.

LINDA

James, listen, sorry about that, but would you do me a favor? I'm going to leave early - big date tonight - so would you mind taking these up to Kenny in Graphics?

LINDA hands notes to JAMES and turns to  
go, then stops and turns back to JAMES.

LINDA (cont'd)

And if you want, you can even tell him it was your idea - might make you feel better.

LINDA exits. JAMES stares at notes, does a  
take out front, and then bangs his head  
repeatedly on the table as the lights fade out.

END