

BIRDMAN & ROBERT

By

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SAMPLE EXTRACT

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COLD OPEN:

SFX over dark screen: We hear the sounds of two young boys at play.

YOUNG LARRY (V.O)
Quickly! To the supercar!

YOUNG RUSS (V.O)
Atomic batteries are online! Let's
move out!

They make the sound of car noises as they run.

YOUNG RUSS (V.O CONT'D)
Don't let 'em get away! They turned
into that alley!

They make more sounds of a car decelerating, a screaming of tires. Now we hear the heavy sounds of the boys running, breathless - getting closer. THEN:

TITLES on dark screen: 'A LONG TIME AGO, IN A NEIGHBORHOOD NEARBY'

A DISSOLVE & then: '1999 - CLAY COUNTY, LOUISIANA'

FADE IN ON:

EXT. SHORT & KERLEY'S COOKIE FACTORY - DAY (FLASHBACK)

The outside of a factory. An ornate sign over the frontage reads "Short & Kerley's Famous Cookies(Est.1932)". A sign by the reception door says "NOW HIRING!"

A low brick wall outside on the street. The two boys, 10yo LARRY BURMAN and his friend RUSS ROBBINS are crouched on the sidewalk at the open gate, both in masks. They are wearing beach towels for capes.

YOUNG LARRY
Okay, they're hiding out in this
factory.

YOUNG RUSS
I've got a gun! (He has a pistol
sized stick and makes firing
sounds)

YOUNG LARRY
No guns, Russ! Superheroes don't
need guns. (He grabs the stick and
throws it on the sidewalk).

YOUNG RUSS

Okay then, what's the plan?

CLOSE UP: A sneakered foot crushes the discarded stick and breaks it. We PULL BACK to see three mean looking kids, about the same age as Larry and Russ.

BULLY #1

I got a plan for you dorks. We beat your asses and then you run home and cry to your mommies.

YOUNG LARRY

You're not allowed to bully us. Principal McCluskey said.

BULLY #2

(Mockingly)

Principal McCluskey said. Awww, you're not gonna rat on us again, are you Burman?

BULLY #1

C'mon - let's bash 'em!

The bullies mob the pair, tearing off Larry's mask.

YOUNG LARRY

Run, Russ...RUN!

Larry and Russ break away and run for their lives, pursued by the three bullies. Russ, the shorter of the two boys, loses his towel cape in the process.

BULLY #1

(Yelling in distance)

You'd better run, you LOSERS!

The sidewalk is peaceful again, and we PULL BACK to reveal Larry's mask lying by the factory gate where it fell.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SHORT & KERLEY'S COOKIE FACTORY - PRESENT DAY

The same POV outside of the factory. The ornate sign over the frontage is looking weather-beaten. A sign by the door now says "NO VACANCIES". The cars in the parking lot are newer, but the scene is somehow tired and jaded.

INT. SHORT & KERLEY'S COOKIE FACTORY - CONTINUOUS

A featureless, humorless production line manned by featureless, humorless employees in white coats and hairnets. We see a grown-up LARRY BURMAN and RUSS ROBBINS morosely sorting cookie packets at a conveyor belt.

RUSS

Have you ever asked yourself what they're famous for?

LARRY

Huh?

RUSS

The name of the place we've been working in for the past 5 years. "Short & Kerley's Famous Cookies"

LARRY

Yeah, so?

RUSS

So..what made them famous? How does a cookie become famous?

LARRY

I've never really thought about it. Hey Shirley..how did the cookies become famous?

A tired looking woman nearby responds without looking up.

SHIRLEY

What?

LARRY

Short and Kerley's Famous Cookies - how did they become famous? What did they do? I mean did they discover penicillin? Or abolish slavery? What?

SHIRLEY

I never thought about it, to be honest. They don't pay me enough.

Unbeknown to them, ERNIE SHORT (old, distinguished) and his admin manager EVELYN (dour, hawk-eyed) have been touring the production line and appear behind them.

ERNIE SHORT
 Something going on that I should
 know about, fellas?

LARRY
 Oh, hi Mister Short. No problems.
 We were umm..just wondering about
 the cookies.

ERNIE SHORT
 What about the cookies?

RUSS
 What exactly made them famous?

ERNIE SHORT
 Hmmm? What?

LARRY
 "Short & Kerley's Famous Cookies"
 We were wondering - how did they
 actually become famous?

The other workers notice the exchange with vague curiosity.

ERNIE SHORT
 (Off the workers glances)
 Gather around here will you? I want
 you all to hear this.
 (Addressing the crowd)
 I'll tell you how they became
 famous, son. The year was 1943 and
 Europe was engulfed in war. The 8th
 Air Force - the Mighty Eighth -
 were flying American bombers over
 Nazi Germany.

LARRY
 (To Russ)
 Happy you asked now, fool?

ERNIE SHORT
 Well, no sooner were those brave
 lads airborne and in formation,
 they would pull out their Short &
 Kerley's and share them around with
 their crew-mates. It became a
 ritual - a comfort in times of
 danger. Eventually when supplies
 ran out, those bomber crews
 protested. Major General Carl
 Spaatz personally made a call
 stateside demanding an

(MORE)

ERNIE SHORT (cont'd)
uninterrupted supply of Short &
Kerley's for his men. THAT is how
they became famous.

There are murmurs of quiet approval from the workers.

RUSS
(To Larry)
Do you think that was Karl from
school he was talking about?

LARRY
What?

RUSS
Karl Spadz. The kid who ate crayons
and got the runs in gym in the
third grade. Remember? Everybody
used to make fun of him. Spazzy
Spadz?

LARRY
Oh yeah..Spazzy Spadz. Well, it's
good to know he made something of
himself. Commander of the US Eighth
Air Force, no less.

ERNIE SHORT
(Hearing the pair whispering)
You two in the back. What are you
saying back there fellas? Something
you want to share with the rest of
us?

RUSS
Oh, we..err, we knew Karl Spadz in
primary school, Mister Short.

ERNIE SHORT
You two went to school with Major
General Carl Spaatz? The commander
of the US Eight Air Force in the
Second World War? Are you gentlemen
serious?

LARRY
Yeah, he ate crayons and got
explosive diarrhea in the school
gym.

ERNIE SHORT
Is this some sort of a joke?

RUSS
Well, Greg Del Vecchio didn't think
it was a joke!

ERNIE SHORT
What?!

LARRY
Greg Del Vecchio, sir. He was
standing under the rope when Spazzy
ummm..exploded..diarrhea-ley.

ERNIE SHORT
What are your names, you two?

LARRY
Larry Burman, sir.

RUSS
And ummm..Russ. Russ Robbins,
Mister Short, sir.

ERNIE SHORT
Burman and Robbins. I'll remember
you two. Every time I look at the
night sky and see a full moon.
(Muttered to Evelyn)
Pair of damn lunatics.

LARRY
OK, well, thank you Mister Short!

RUSS
Thank you, sir!

ERNIE SHORT
Right, people..let's get back to
work. Remember, we're facing hard
economic times. And in the hard
times..

The gathered workers finish the motto with Ernie Short.

ERNIE SHORT
..every crumb counts.

Evelyn sidles up alongside Ernie Short with her clipboard.

ERNIE SHORT

Every crumb counts, people. Now
let's get to work and make Short
and Kerley's famous again.

The process workers return to their stations.

ERNIE SHORT

Evelyn, add those two jokers to the
list. Do you have their names?

EVELYN

Yes sir, I do. Larry Burman. And
Russ Robbins.

ERNIE SHORT

Burman and Robbins. Smartass fools.

MUSIC CUE: "Blockbuster" - Sweet

OVER MONTAGE:

Larry and Russ are sacked. Taking their things out of the
factory and packing them in their old car. Clocking off for
the last time, watched by stern old Evelyn who gives a
sideways nod to Ernie Short who is seated in his office.
Ernie nods with a satisfied grimace.

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INT. BIRD CAVE - DAY

There is an opening cut into the wall at the back of the
cave - 2 metallic poles stand in the recess. They look oddly
out of place against the rock. Russ gazes up into the cavity
where the polished poles disappear upwards into darkness.

RUSS

Woah, check it out - stripper's
poles!

Where do you suppose they go to?

LARRY

I dunno..maybe the county fire
station?

RUSS

Since when do firemen dress like
the Village People?

Russ points to a glass walled display cabinet that has illuminated itself to one side of the pole recess. It seems to be a spandex and carbon-fiber 'battle armor' costume with a stylized "R" on one breast.

LARRY

Holy crap, there's one over here too.

A second cabinet has illuminated next to Larry, on the other side of the recess. Made from the same material, the suit resembles a dark, foreboding winged creature. Larry steps back to view it. As he does, a system of floor and ceiling lights illuminate across the cave, revealing arrays of computer consoles and equipment panels.

LARRY

Jesus, Mary and Joseph. Russ..look.

A formidable looking high-tech black vehicle is parked in the central area. Hulking, ominous. Emitting a foreboding low hum, it's metallic surfaces reflect the light from multiple consoles which have steadily sprung to life.

RUSS

No shit..this must be Area 52.

They cautiously approach the car and touch it gingerly.

RUSS (CONT'D)

Look at this thing. It's beautiful.

LARRY

Get in - it's open.

Inside the car's cockpit the dashboard is a confusing array of switches, screens and controllers. They all light up automatically; sensing someone has entered the vehicle. One panel has a bank of buttons, each with a symbol on it.

RUSS

Woahhhh!

LARRY

Ooh, so what have we got here?

(Looking at odd symbols)

Pair of shorts..some sort of cloud..oil can..something that looks like trousers or capri pants. Jesus, there's a lot of men's apparel type buttons here.

RUSS
Hit that one that looks like a
duck.

He hits the "Duck" button and suddenly the roof lowers.

LARRY / RUSS
(Ducking to avoid the roof)
DUCK! / DUCK!

Carefully, Larry pushes the button again and the roof raises to it's original position.

LARRY
Whew, OK. Let's try this other
panel. Right.."Sprinkler"

He pushes the "Sprinkler" button and machine guns fire through the radiator grille.

RUSS
Weapon.

LARRY
"Mushroom"

He pushes the "Mushroom" button and smoke bombs release.

RUSS
Weapon.

LARRY
"Icicle"

He pushes the "Icicle" button and flares fire from tubes behind the cockpit.

RUSS
Weapon.

LARRY
"Snorkel"

He pushes the "Snorkel" button and two snorkel-like breathing masks drop down from the roof.

RUSS
(With a shrug)
Snorkel.

LARRY
"Paperclip"

He pushes the "Paperclip" button and rocket pods raise from the lower sides of each of the car's doors.

RUSS

Jesus, Larry don't push that again!

LARRY

Weapon. Holy crap, these guys had serious anger management issues!

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