

EDITING SAMPLE

An edited scene from

NANOSHARKS

As an experimental exercise, I teamed up with my filmmaking partners to write a made-for-television science fiction screenplay. It was a very collaborative process, each of us able to contribute our greatest assets. I am particularly skilled at tightening dialog, maintaining a well-paced story line and working quickly, so my participation was in the initial brainstorming, organization of the story outline and the final rewrite.

In the end we wound up with something I am surprisingly proud of. NANOSHARKS is exactly what it is supposed to be. It has just the right amount of pseudoscience paired with more than enough self-awareness to become a cult hit. There is a suspension of disbelief that must occur to enjoy the script, but once the science is accepted, the story itself is quite solid. Each character is accurately written and necessary to the story; the pace and flow is formulaic indeed, but easily digestible; and in the dialog there are even some real gems.

The basic premise of NANOSHARKS is that an evil, rich industrialist – Mr. Tiburon – wants to build on land around a lake but can't because of an endangered bird population. In his misguided effort to rid the lake of the birds, his pet scientist uses a laser to shrink sharks to nano-size and release them into the water. This causes much death, and Mr. Tiburon is able to frame the town's water specialist for the catastrophe until she and her cohorts prevent the dam from opening, save the town and destroy Mr. Tiburon. This scene takes place early in the script after Mr. Tiburon has requested that Ray Mora find him a solution. Ray Mora has visited Dr. Jones, who has a device that piques both evildoers' interest.

The editing process and purpose for this scene was to add length and the opportunity for a more complex outcome. I also tweaked dialog in an effort to create more intrigue and to give each character a more individual voice.

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NANOSHARKS SCENE BEFORE

INT. MR. TIBURON'S OFFICE - DAY

Mr. Tiburon sits at his giant mahogany desk, watching the sharks again. Man, he can't get enough of those things!

MR. TIBURON

The world's perfect predator. Cold blooded, razor sharp instincts and an irrefutable will to survive. You truly are magnificent creatures.

There's a short knock on the door and it opens, revealing BETTY, Mr. Tiburon's secretary.

BETTY

Mr. Tiburon, your associates are here.

MR. TIBURON

Thank you, Betty. Show them in, please.

Betty turns, but Ray is already on his way in, dragging the hapless Dr. Jones behind him. The scientist pushes a small cart with the S.H.A.R.C device on it, covered by a sheet.

RAY

Boss, you remember our old pal Jonesy, right?

MR. TIBURON

Ah yes, Dr. Jones. And how are you fairing these days? Still pulling in big grants for the lab?

DR. JONES

I think you already know the answer to that.

RAY

Why don't you just tell him about that machine?

The Minion nudges Dr. Jones forward.

DR. JONES

Well, I still don't know how this is going to help you. Basically, I designed this device to shrink small robots that could travel the bloodstream. These robots were programmed to target cancer cells and destroy them. It was meant to be an alternative to chemotherapy.

MR. TIBURON
I'm sensing a *but*.

DR. JONES
As I tried to explain to your associate, the problem was that while it succeeded in shrinking the robots, it also made them multiply at an alarming rate, and they became a far worse threat than the cancer cells.

Mr. Tiburon has his fingers templed, like a real life Mr. Burns. He is not impressed.

MR. TIBURON
I am far from impressed.

He stands up from the desk, making both Ray and the scientist jump. He walks over to Ray.

MR. TIBURON (CONT'D)
I ask you to bring me a solution, and instead, you bring me this scared pathetic loser? You're not even good enough to be shark food!

He turns to the scientist.

MR. TIBURON (CONT'D)
And you! After all I've done for you; all the money I pump into your little science experiments, you cannot even use your big brain for something useful!

On this last syllable, he shoves Jones, who falls into the S.H.A.R.C device, activating it. It's pointed straight at the shark tank! It fires a bright blue laser beam and the sharks disappear!

RAY
What the hell?

Mr. Tiburon is not happy.

MR. TIBURON
My sharks! What have you done?

All three run to the tank. They are completely flabbergasted. They stare at the water. Ray, dumb as he is, decides action is the best solution.

RAY
Must be a trick of the light or
something.

He rolls his sleeve slowly start to reach into the tank.

DR. JONES
Uh, you probably shouldn't--

RAY
Don't tell me what to do!

He sticks his hand into the water. It's not in there for two seconds before the water boils with activity and, as they watch, his hand begins to dissolve! Ray screams bloody murder and jerks his hand out of the water, collapsing on the floor nearby. Mr. Tiburon and Jones jump away like Ray is on fire.

Mr. Tiburon collects himself, smooths his jacket and goes to his desk. He sits down. Ray's screams begin to weaken. Dr. Jones is in shock.

MR. TIBURON
Now I'm impressed.

He motions for Jones to come to him. In the meantime, he opens a desk drawer and takes out a check book. He begins to write as the pale, shaking scientist joins him.

MR. TIBURON (CONT'D)
Here. This should be enough to keep
your lab in business.

He rips off a check and hands it to Jones. He trembles, but tries to take the check.

Mr. Tiburon snaps it back.

MR. TIBURON (CONT'D)
No, no, no, Dr. Jones. Not so fast.
You saw nothing. Agreed?

The scientist shakes his head. Mr. Tiburon gives him the check. He tries to leave.

MR. TIBURON (CONT'D)
Meet me tonight. At the lake.
Midnight.

Dr. Jones flees quickly. He has to step over the body of Ray.

NANOSHARKS SCENE AFTER

INT. MR. TIBURON'S OFFICE - AS BEFORE

Mr. Tiburon stands, watching the sharks again. Man, he can't get enough of those things!

MR. TIBURON

The world's perfect predator. Cold-blooded, razor sharp instincts and an irrefutable will to survive. You truly are magnificent creatures.

There's a short knock on the door and it opens, revealing BETTY, Mr. Tiburon's secretary.

BETTY

Mr. Tiburon, your associates are here.

MR. TIBURON

Thank you, Betty. Show them in, please.

Betty turns, but Ray is already on his way in, dragging the hapless Dr. Jones and the S.H.A.R.C device behind him.

MR. TIBURON (CONT'D)

Well, well, Ray Mora. You might turn out to be more than just a clinger-on, after all.

RAY MORA

Thank you, sir. I'm sure you remember our old friend, Dr. Jones.

MR. TIBURON

Ah yes, Dr. Jones. You look well. How is your laboratory? Well-funded enough?

DR. JONES

I think you already know the answer to that.

Mr. Tiburon smiles, and moves to sit at his giant mahogany desk. Ray Mora and Dr. Jones stay near the door.

MR. TIBURON

Gentlemen, please, join me.

He motions to two chairs in front of the desk. Ray and Dr. Jones walk over and sit, Dr. Jones still holding the S.H.A.R.C.

There is an awkward moment of silence.

MR. TIBURON (CONT'D)

Perhaps we should start with you telling me about that machine in your lap.

RAY MORA

He claims it's nothing, but I've never seen anyone so worried about nothing before. I think he'll do whatever we want just so he can keep that machine.

MR. TIBURON

Mr. Mora, perhaps I'd like to hear Dr. Jones explain the machine.

DR. JONES

Like he said, it's nothing. It can't help you. I can't help you. Please, just let me go back to the lab.

MR. TIBURON

Of course you can return to your lab. Any time you'd like.

Ray looks shocked. Dr. Jones looks confused, but he starts to stand.

MR. TIBURON (CONT'D)

But you can leave the machine here.

DR. JONES

Mr. Tiburon, I swear, it doesn't even work correctly. It's supposed to use a sapphire diode to hyper reduce the reversed magnification of a hydrogen laser to, simply put, shrink robotic instrumentation for amoeboid movement through the bloodstream--

MR. TIBURON

Dr. Jones. In plain English, please.

DR. JONES

It shrinks biological robots small enough to go inside a body and fight cancer cells.

Mr. Tiburon and Ray Mora have a moment of understanding.

DR. JONES (CONT'D)

But it doesn't work. As I tried to explain to Ray, the problem is that while it does shrink the robots, it also causes them to multiply at an alarming rate, and they become a far worse threat than even the cancer cells.

Mr. Tiburon has his fingers templed, like a real life Mr. Burns.

MR. TIBURON

Dr. Jones, please put the device on my desk and leave.

DR. JONES

Mr. Tiburon, I beg of you. It doesn't even work!

MR. TIBURON

All I need it to do is make you focus on finding me a solution to my problem, and it certainly does that.

Dr. Jones hesitates, but Ray Mora flexes a little and cracks his knuckles. Dr. Jones puts the device on the desk.

DR. JONES

I can just build another. I'm not helping you.

Mr. Tiburon stands.

MR. TIBURON

I don't think you're in the position to turn me down. I can ruin you, Dr. Jones. Your fate is entirely in my hands.

He reaches over the desk to grab Dr. Jones' collar. He pulls him close, lifting Dr. Jones slightly out of his chair.

MR. TIBURON (CONT'D)

I covered up your little vaccination project, but I can change that any time I want. I can take away your money, your freedom... your life.

He shakes Dr. Jones, then releases him. Dr. Jones bumps into the machine and it makes a POWER ON SOUND. It's pointed straight at the shark tank!

The three men look worried. A LIGHT TURNS ON on the S.H.A.R.C.

Suddenly, with a LASER NOISE, it fires a bright blue beam into the shark tank. There's a bright white light, and the sharks disappear!

RAY MORA
What the hell?

Ray jumps up from his seat. Mr. Tiburon is in shock.

MR. TIBURON
My sharks! What have you done?

All three run to the tank. They are completely flabbergasted. They stare at the water. Ray, dumb as he is, decides action is the best solution.

DR. JONES
They're gone--

RAY MORA
Must be a trick of the light or something.

He rolls up his sleeve slowly starts to reach into the tank.

DR. JONES
No, don't!!

It's too late. Ray puts his hand in the water. The water immediately BOILS with activity and, as they watch, Ray's hand begins to dissolve!

Ray SCREAMS bloody murder and jerks his hand out of the water, collapsing on the floor nearby. Mr. Tiburon and Dr. Jones jump away like Ray is on fire.

Ray holds his arm, his screams becoming quiet, his breaths becoming labored but controlled.

Mr. Tiburon collects himself, smooths his jacket and returns to his desk.

He motions for Dr. Jones to come to him. In the meantime, he opens a desk drawer and takes out a check book. He begins to write as the pale, shaking scientist joins him.

MR. TIBURON
I'm quite impressed. Care to explain to me what just occurred?

Dr. Jones is in shock.

DR. JONES

I... I think it nanofied your
sharks.

Mr. Tiburon hands Dr. Jones the check.

MR. TIBURON

This should cover whatever you
need. Take your machine and make
more... nanosharks.

Dr. Jones leaves Mr. Tiburon's office, stepping over a
whimpering, armless Ray Mora.