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The Scandalized Martians

by

Arnold Marmor

David Fry wanted to make an epic movie in the realistic school. The trouble was, his ideas wouldn't pass the censors — here or anyplace else

DAVID Fry was a realist. And also slightly crazy. Maybe that helped in this buggy business but David Fry overdid it. "I want her nude," he screamed. "Naked."

"Impossible," I informed him as calmly as I could.

"Naked," he bellowed.

"The Breen office won't allow it and you know it."

"I defy them. Those radicals! It'll be my most realistic picture. A milestone in film making."

"It won't get the seal of approval."

"So what? I don't need it."

"Every state will ban it."

"Nevada won't ban it."

"Besides, you couldn't get Harriet Desmond to strut around in the raw."

"Oh, no?"

"No."

"Her option comes up in three months."

"So what? You're a director. You have nothing to do with it. That's Dwight Howard's department. Look, David, I'll have her in a slip or a bathing suit."

"Ronnie," he said, shaking his head. "I like you. You're a writer but I like you anyway. I feel that the audience will get the proper impact only if she's naked."

"It'll be an impact all right."

"You write the script the way I tell you. I don't want to argue anymore. I like you, Ronnie."

"If you want a sexy script I'll make it sexy without being lewd."

"Sexy? Don't be vulgar. I want a down to earth picture like the French and Italians make. I want to surpass them with my realism."

"David, what good would it do if I did write the scenario your

way? The scene would never be shot."

"Enough," he screamed. He clutched his chest. "I feel an attack coming on. Leave me. Get out."

DWIGHT Howard was chief production man at Silver Studios. He listened gravely as I spilled my heart out to him.

"He's a great director," Dwight Howard said. He was a large man with tiny ears, liquid blue eyes, and the cigars he smoked cost a buck a stogie.

"Sure," I said. "A great goofy director. He's nuts just like all directors."

He grinned at me. "Directors believe all writers are crazy and writers believe all directors are crazy."

"You want me to write the script his way? You want that scene shot with Harriet Desmond nude?"

"No, no. Of course not. The whole idea is too ridiculous for words." He sighed. "I'll have a talk with him."

David Fry resigned the following day. Tortured and abused actors and actresses celebrated for three days and three nights. Dwight Howard didn't have to accept the resignation as Fry was bound to Silver Studios by an iron clad contract. But a director's work gets

sloppy if his heart isn't in it. So out went David Fry, the realist.

Nobody in Hollywood heard from Fry in seven months. And nobody seemed to care.

One night, as I came home from a party, I was greeted by the screaming of the telephone. I held the receiver to my ear. "Maternity hospital," I said.

"Ronnie." It was David Fry.

"Oh. Hello. How's everything?"

"Fine. Great. I've got to see you."

"Well . . ."

"I'll hop right over."

He hung up and I sighed. I built myself a solid drink and got comfortable.

He showed up twenty minutes later. He was thinner, more nervous than before.

He flopped on a divan. "You wouldn't believe it," he said.

"Believe what?"

"I want to do a picture. A science picture about a trip to Mars."

"It's been done. And more than once."

"With real Martians?"

I blinked. "I'll get you a drink."

"No. I want a clear head. Hear me out. I've met them."

"Who?"

"Martians. A whole gang of them. Real honest to goodness Martians. It's fantastic. But it's true.

They landed in the San Fernando Valley."

"That figures."

"I've got my home there. They asked for directions to Hollywood. You know what? They came to revolutionize the industry."

"Maybe they're Commies?"

"You should see their equipment. Fantastic. I talked them into staying over at my place. They dismantled their ship and have it stored away. I want you to do the screen play. It'll be great."

"They . . . er . . . weren't detected flying over?"

"They use an anti-radar beam."

"Oh."

"They can speak every language under the sun."

"Look, David. I'm tired and I want to go to bed. So be nice and go sober up."

"You don't believe me?"

"No. In plain language, no."

He extracted a square shaped box from a pocket. "See this gadget? I can make myself disappear."

"Do that."

And he did.

"Yow!" I screamed.

He reappeared.

I staggered to the liquor cabinet and made myself a double triple whiskey and soda.

"Well?" There was a look of triumph on his face.

"They give you that?"

"A present."

"I've got nothing doing for a week. I'll be there tomorrow morning."

"No. Tonight. You're liable to blab about it."

"Don't you trust me?"

"No. I know you went to see Dwight Howard about me."

"Then why do you want me to write the story?"

"I feel you owe me that. You're honest in some ways. Well?"

"Right. I'll pack a grip if I'm staying over."

"Do that. I've got my car downstairs."

DAVID Fry's home was a Spanish-style ranch which consisted of a herd of cattle and horses.

The Martians looked like us except they had no necks and no finger or toe nails. Their leader was a giant of a Martian with the name, Dooma. They wore slacks and sport jackets which Fry had bought for them. They seemed pleasant enough.

I got some sleep and woke that afternoon. Dooma, Fry, and myself sat in the front room and talked over the story we were to do.

"We can't trust anyone," Fry said, "so you and I will play the

earthlings in it. We'll land on Mars and discover life on the planet. Dooma and his crew will play the Martians. Real type casting."

"What about sets?" I asked.

"Plenty of background on Mars," Dooma said.

"What?" I exploded.

"Sure," Fry said. "We'll go to Mars and shoot most of the picture there. Has anyone ever done that before?"

"Sure," Dooma said.

"I mean anyone on earth," Fry said.

"I don't like it," I said.

"We'll bring you back," Dooma said.

"I still don't like it."

"And we'll do that nude scene," Fry said. "We'll have a couple of Martian girls taking a bath nude."

"Oh, no," Dooma said. "That's out."

"But why?" Fry wanted to know.

"The Martian Censors. They won't go for it."

I grinned. "There too?"

"But I want to film life in the raw," Fry said.

Dooma shook his head. "Out of the question."

"We'll do it my way," Fry snarled, "or we won't do it at all."

Dooma stood up. "Well if that's the way you feel about—"

"Now wait a minute," I said. "Hold on. David, we've got a great thing here. Don't mess it up."

"I'm the director," Fry screamed. "Nobody is going to tell me my business."

"Is everybody in Hollywood like him?" Dooma asked me.

"Some of them are worse."

"I realize we made a grave mistake."

"I made the mistake of taking you into my home," Fry shouted. "I treated you like human beings. And this is the thanks I get."

"I won't hear another word." Dooma turned and marched out.

"Now see what you've done?" I was as mad as a wet hen.

"What have I done? All I wanted to do was make a great picture."

"You insulted him. Why, he's liable to go back to Mars and talk them into invading us."

"That idiot. What does he know about making pictures?"

Activity brought me to the window. I looked out and saw the Martians putting their ship together.

Fry came up behind me.

The ship blasted off and the Martians went back home.

"They were hammy actors anyway," Fry rationalized.

THE END