

INT. REUBEN'S STUDIO, SUB HEAVEN

On REUBEN in front of the glass wall. Behind it his SHARKS circle. CAESAR serves coffee.

CAESAR  
Um cafezinho mais...

Thanking, in Portuguese,

REUBEN  
Muito obrigado.

Showing the cup of coffee to an approaching Shark,

REUBEN  
Want a cafezinho? -- Oh, what do you understand, you aren't a Brazilian shark.

Caesar laughs as he withdraws.

Mystica materializes in Reuben's deck chair near the swimming pool. Caesar passes by, pleased.

CAESAR  
Hello, querida!

MYSTICA  
Can I have one of your fabulous cafezinhos?

CAESAR  
Oh, pleasure!

Lifting up his cup in the air,

REUBEN  
Hey, Mystica!

MOMENTS LATER

She gets a cup of coffee from Caesar, and turns to Reuben.

MYSTICA  
D'you know anything about this Moses rumor on Earth? In LOS ANGELES?

REUBEN  
Yeah, that's a project I have in mind to create. Once they're tired of airing Cecil B. DeMille's version every Easter.

MYSTICA

D'you know what it is about?

REUBEN

Yeah, it's about God punishing the Egyptians for not paying workman's comp and retirement to the Israelites.

MYSTICA

You're truly well informed. Now, is that all you know?

REUBEN

Well, Moses left the pharaoh's guild because he intended to become a union leader himself.

MYSTICA

That's... another way of looking at things. What else?

REUBEN

Is this some history examination or what?

MYSTICA

Very informal. No written tests. While you're enjoying your cafezinho. -- What else comes up to your mind?

REUBEN

He may not have drank a lot of... Brazilian coffee, but he surely was a very vigorous man.

MYSTICA

Keep going.

REUBEN

Consider the age at which he fathered.

MYSTICA

Anything else?

REUBEN

He was entrusted the marketing of the first version of "The Ten Commandments."

MYSTICA

A task of high responsibility.

REUBEN

You bet. Cecil B. DeMille had it much easier with the remake.

Mystica nods.

REUBEN

Tested grounds. Less risky.

MYSTICA

So, the way you see it, Moses had more to lose in terms of personal reputation?

REUBEN

You kidding? It was at stake big time.

MYSTICA

How would Moses restore his reputation, if he had to, nowadays?

REUBEN

Mystica, this sounds like one heck of an interesting project...

MYSTICA

We're waiting.

On him, in his best grin,

CUT TO:

neon frog in a chef's hat, looking from the roof of:

INT. FINE RESTAURANT -- EVENING

The MAITRE'D is busy. Moses, in his biblical robes, staff in hand, and Mystica-resembling Ida, wait in line behind PATRONS and HOLLYWOOD TYPES (CAMEOS/LOOK ALIKES welcome) to be seated.

IDA

Maybe we should go somewhere else?

MOSES

Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established.

IDA

I just thought this might be too tiring for you.

MOSES

Thou art thinking too much.

LATER

It is their turn. More PATRONS gather behind them.

Glancing at Moses's clothing, sniffing,

MAITRE'D

Sir, I'm afraid we are completely full.

MOSES

I can wait.

Maitre'd goes to the next Patrons in line and escorts them to a table.

To Moses,

IDA

This is really working.

Moses smiles.

IDA

Not only can you discharge the  
Almighty's wrath, you even convince as  
an actor.

The Maitre'd comes back, glances at Moses, moves on to the next Patrons, and accompanies them to a table.

IDA

What's going to happen, Moses?

MOSES

I knoweth not. Something original, I  
hope.

Maitre'd comes back, performs the same ritual, and withdraws with yet other Patrons.

All of a sudden some of the Patrons COUGH. More join in. Within a short while the whole restaurant COUGHS.

Moses and Ida cannot but LAUGH when the stupefied Maitre'd reapproaches, the remaining Patrons in line leave, and COUGHING Patrons stream out. A FROG jumps around. Women Patrons SCREAM in disgust right under the restaurant's neon sign.

LATER

The restaurant is empty. Only Ida and Moses sit at a table and study the menu. Friendly, the Maitre'd comes.

MAITRE'D  
Have you decided?

MOSES  
Got fresh locusts from the desert?

On Maitre'd, confused,

CUT TO:

EXT. ROOFTOP OF HIGH RISE HOTEL -- MORNING

on Moses in his biblical robes, looking at the surroundings.  
He extends his arms. Ida shows up.

IDA  
Quite a show. But don't give it away  
like that.

Staring at Beverly Hills,

MOSES  
God take's care.

IDA  
One never knows if a photographer with  
a telephoto lens was around...

MOSES  
The Lord is in charge.

IDA  
Another lightning bolt?

MOSES  
This is one Tower of Babel.

IDA  
Yeah, they have them also in Los  
Angeles. But what do YOU know anyway?  
Babel was after your time.

MOSES  
Fresh breeze here.

IDA  
If you're hot you could have turned on  
the air conditioner --

MOSES  
That's not the same.

IDA  
Or take off your costume.

MOSES  
I'm Moses. Not Adam.

IDA  
There's a swimming pool right behind  
you.

MOSES  
I cannot suffer chlorinated water.

IDA  
Next time get a safer white dye on  
your beard then.

MOSES  
Longcomb does not have it. In white.

IDA  
So divide the water from the chlorine.

MOSES  
Like dividing the sea?

IDA  
It's only a swimming pool. This time.

MOSES  
Thou soundest too much like my manager.

IDA  
That's what I am.  
(beat)  
Moses, how about getting ready? An  
intense day awaits us.

On Moses, amused,

CUT TO:

INT. TV STUDIO -- DAY

with lots of movement.

Female Makeup Artist works on Moses as Ida is about to leave  
for the director's cubicle.

IDA  
Be kind to them, they're only common  
mortals, understand?

MOSES  
Telleth me not.

LATER

MOSES  
(to Makeup Artist)  
I've been observing you. Thou shalt  
not scratch off my suntan!

MAKEUP ARTIST  
I'm sorry sir.

MOSES  
Enough of this anyway.

MAKEUP ARTIST  
I've done only one side of your face.

Looking in the mirror,

MOSES  
What's the difference?

He stands up and goes, leaving behind the Makeup Artist open  
mouthed.

LATER

Moses takes a seat opposite Hortensia Baybridge. Camera  
People, Director, P.A.s, a selected small Audience, everybody  
ready.

Interview program JINGLE runs.

HORTENSIA  
Hello America from the personalities  
guru, Hortensia Baybridge. An hour of  
invigorating, upbeat revelations, not  
one dull moment guaranteed.

INSERTED APPLAUSE

HORTENSIA  
My today's guest is nobody less...  
than a man called... Moses.

Nodding,

MOSES  
Shalom.

HORTENSIA  
Hello and thank you for coming.

MOSES  
Yes, let's go on.

From behind the glass Ida signals to Moses to take it easy.  
He acknowledges her.

HORTENSIA  
You know if anybody a year ago asked  
me how I would interview somebody like  
Moses if I ever had the chance to  
interview him, I would not have known  
where to start.

MOSES  
I hope you are prepared today.

HORTENSIA  
(smiles)  
Other hosts might have asked him what  
toothpaste he uses --

He pulls out his denture.

MOSES  
What sort do you need for this?

HORTENSIA  
What his favorite soft drink is --

MOSES  
Goat latte.

HORTENSIA  
What kind of shorts he wears --

MOSES  
They're all too tight.

HORTENSIA  
Or what he thinks of Disneyland.

MOSES  
I'm missing the sand.

HORTENSIA  
He misses the sand there --

MOSES  
And some desert rats, if you want.

HORTENSIA  
Please let me finish.

MOSES  
Hurry up! This balderdash challenges  
the Lord's patience.

HORTENSIA  
We don't want that.

MOSES  
Move on!

HORTENSIA  
I will only ask him this: What do you  
make of Hollywood?

MOSES  
It's the glitziest lightning rod for  
the Lord's wrath.

HORTENSIA  
Thank you so much, that was tight and  
yet one of the most suspenseful answers  
in my career, it knocks my socks off,  
Moses.

MOSES  
You just wait till the lightening  
strikes.

HORTENSIA  
I can only hope not to be around?

MOSES  
You ought to PRAY that you're not  
around. But already in heaven.

Recovering from shock,

HORTENSIA  
And now, open day, the mic to the  
audience.

Several hands raise.

HORTENSIA  
Yes, the young lady over there.

Louise, the late sixties feminist leftover.

LOUISE

I'm Louise and my question is: Why has Moses deceived us all these years?

HORTENSIA

Deceived?

MOSES

You can only deceive yourself.

HORTENSIA

Louise, can you rephrase your question please?

LOUISE

Why did you men keep women deceiving themselves?

MOSES

Because if we did not they would have deceived us even more.

LOUISE

So it's your inferiority that you're hiding behind your smart beard, is it not?

MOSES

Better a beard than gossiping and back sassing all the time.

LAUGHTER.

HORTENSIA

The young lady in the back.

Drusilla, fifties, dressed and made up as if she were half her age.

DRUSILLA

Hi. I'm Drusilla and I wonder what your sex live is like.

MOSES

As I wonder if in God's Name there isn't anything else that comes up to your brilliantly degenerate mind to ask to a prophet of the Lord?

Drusilla is miffed but Hortensia does not pay any attention to her.

To Edmund, with glasses, raising his hand:

HORTENSIA

Yes, the gentleman with glasses.

EDMUND

Edmund. Moses, are you still suffering of the prophet syndrome?

MOSES

No, I'm enjoying the fear-of-God syndrome. And you'd better do the same.

HORTENSIA

The man with the beard, yes?

BARNABY

Barnaby. Moses, you're a fake.

MOSES

If I'm so may God smite me down straight away.

BARNABY

How about if God doesn't care?

Ida is surprised.

BARNABY

If you aren't worth it?

Barnaby experiences sudden pain and lets out a YELP.

HORTENSIA

It looks like we need an ambulance. Somebody call an ambulance!

Commotion in the room.

Ida looks satisfied and gives her thumbs up to Moses. He acknowledges her gesture.

MOSES

God knows what is in our hearts.

Suddenly Moses clutches his chest. He collapses.

HORTENSIA

Wow. Two ambulances right away!

Ida comes charging with pills and a glass of water. She approaches Moses on the floor.