NETWORK

Written by Paddy Chayefsky

1976
FADE IN:

1. BLACK SCREEN

NARRATOR
This story is about Howard Beale who was the network news anchorman on UBS-TV —

A BANK OF FOUR COLOR TELEVISION MONITORS

It is 7:14 P.M., Monday, September 23, 1974, and we are watching the network news programs on CBS, NBC, ABC and UBS-TV, the network of our story. The AUDIO IS OFF; and head shots of WALTER CRONKITE, JOHN CHANCELLOR, HOWARD K. SMITH and HARRY REASONER, and, of course, the anchorman of our network, HOWARD BEALE, silently flit and flicker across the four television screens, interspersed with the news of the day — a hurricane in Honduras, Teddy Kennedy renounces his candidacy for President, Kissinger will address the UN General Assembly tomorrow on the energy crisis. NARRATION continues OVER —

NARRATOR (Contd)
-- In his time, Howard Beale had been a mandarin of television, the grand old man of news, with a 65 rating of 16 and a 28 audience share —

CAMERA MOVES IN to isolate HOWARD BEALE, who is everything an anchorman should be — 58 years old, silver-haired, majestic, dignified to the point of divinity. NARRATION continues OVER —

NARRATOR (Contd)
-- In 1969, however, he fell to a 22 share, and, by 1972, he was down to a 15 share. In 1973, his wife died, and he was left a childless widower with an 8 rating and a 12 share. He became morose and isolated, began to drink heavily, and, on September 23, 1974, he was fired, effective in two weeks. The news was broken to him by Max Schumacher —

2. EXT: 5TH AVE. SOUTH OF 57TH STREET — NIGHT

11:30 P.M. The area is deserted except for a few STROLLERS window-shopping the department stores. And way down near 55th Street, two roving drunk middle-aged men, HOWARD BEALE and MAX SCHUMACHER, feeling along and hooting it up. NARRATION continues OVER —
NARRATOR (Contd)
-- who was president of the News
Division at CBS and an old friend.
The two men got properly pissed --

CLOSER SHOT of HOWARD and MAX (who is a craggy,
 lumbering, rough-hewn, 51-year-old man), thoroughly
plastered and on a drunken laughing jag --

HOWARD
(clutching the corner
mailbox to keep from
falling)

When was this?

MAX

1951 --

HOWARD

I was at CBS with Ed Murrow in
1951. Didn't you join Murrow
in 1951? --

MAX

Must've been 1950 then. I was at
NBC. Morning News. Associate
producer. I was a kid, twenty-six
years old. Anyway, they were
building the lower level on the
George Washington Bridge, and we
were doing a remote there. Except
nobody told me! --

For some reason, this knocks them out. HOWARD,
 wheezing with suppressed laughter, clutches the
mailbox. MAX has to shout to get the rest of the
story out --

MAX (Contd)

-- ten after seven in the morning --
I get a call -- "Where the hell are
you? -- You're supposed to be on
the George Washington Bridge!" --
I jump out of bed -- I throw my
raincoat over my pajamas -- I run
down the stairs -- I get out in the
street -- I flag a cab -- I jump in
-- I say: "Take me to the middle
of the George Washington Bridge!" --

It's too much again. The TWO MEN dissolve into silent
wheezing spasms of laughter --
MAX (Cont'd)
(tears streaming down
his cheeks)
-- the driver turns around -- he
says -- don't do it, buddy --
(so weak now he can
barely talk)
-- he says -- you're a young
man -- you got your whole life
ahead of you --

He can't go on. He stomps around on the sidewalk. HOWARD clutches the mailbox.

3. INT: A BAR - 3:00 A.M. 3.

Any bar. Mostly empty. MAX and HOWARD in a booth, so soaked drunk they are sober --

HOWARD
I'm going to kill myself --

MAX
Ch, shit, Howard --

HOWARD
I'm going to blow my brains out
right on the air, right in the
middle of the seven o'clock news,
like that girl in Florida a
couple of months ago --

MAX
You'll get a hell of a rating,
I'll tell you that, a fifty
shares easy --

HOWARD
You think so?

MAX
We could make a series out of it.
Suicide of the Week. Hell, why
limit ourselves? Execution of the
Week -- the Madame Defarge Show!
Every Sunday night, bring your
knitting and watch somebody get
guillotined, hung, electrocuted,
gassed. For a logo, we'll have
some brute with a black hood over
his head. Think of the spinoffs
-- Rape of the Week --
HOVERD
(begining to get
caught up in the idea)
Terrorist of the Week? --

MAX
Beautiful!

HOVERD
How about Coliseum '74? Every
week we throw some Christians
to the lions! --

MAX
Fantastic! The Death Hour! I
love it! Suicides, assassinations,
mad bombers, Mafia hitmen, murder
in the barbershop, human sacrifices
in witches' covens, automobile
smashups. The Death Hour! A
great Sunday night show for the
whole family. We'll wipe Disney
right off the air --

They snigger and snort. HOWARD lays his head down on
the booth's table and verges on sleep --

INT: HOWARD'S BEDROOM - 4:30 A.M. - DARK

HOWARD, fully clothed, sprawled asleep on his still-
covered bed in the dark bedroom. Suddenly, he sits
bolt upright, SCREAMING out against unseen terrors --

INT: HOWARD'S APARTMENT HOUSE - LANDING

OUTSIDE HIS DOOR - 8:00 A.M. - TUESDAY, SEPT. 24

-- as HOWARD'S HOUSEKEEPER, a middle-aged lady, lets
herself into --

INT: HOWARD'S APARTMENT - ENTRANCE FOYER

The HOUSEKEEPER, unbuttoning her coat, is greeted by
the sound of a raucous clock ALARM, relentlessly
BUZZING o.s. She crosses the --

INT: LIVING ROOM

-- and opens the blinds letting in an eruption of
daylight. The shrill BUZZING getting louder, she
proceeds into the --

INT: BACK FOYER

-- where she pauses to look into the bedroom, the door
being ajar; the BUZZING is coming from here --
HOUSEKEEPER'S P.O.V. -- HOWARD BEALE,

still wearing the clothes he wore last night, curled
in a position of fatal helplessness on the floor in
the far corner of the room --

HOUSEKEEPER
(after a moment)
Are you all right, Mr. Beales?

HOWARD
(opens one eye)
I'm fine, thank you, Mrs.
Merryman --

With some effort, he contrives to get to his feet as
the HOUSEKEEPER crosses to the alarm clock and turns
it off --

6. CREDITS AND MUSIC ERUPT INTO THE SCREEN

TITLE:

"NETWORK"

UNDER AND INTERSPERSED WITH CREDITS, a montage of
scenes, occasionally audible, on this seemingly
routine day --

7. INT: HOWARD BEALE'S OFFICE - 5TH FLOOR -

9:20 A.M.

A small, unpretentious office, cluttered with books,
magazines, periodicals, photographs and awards on the
walls, various mementoes here and there. HOWARD
(necktie tied and in shirt sleeves), behind his desk,
rattling away his copy for that evening's broadcast
on his typewriter -- pauses to pour himself a quick
shot of Scotch --

8. INT: THE NIGHTLY NEWS ROOM - ROOM 517 -

10:30 A.M.

The common room off which Howard's office debouches.
A large room compactly filled with the desks of
producers, associate producers, head writer and
writers, production assistants, etc. The walls are
festooned like bulletin boards with sheaves of
newspaper pages and cutouts and reams of wire releases
(there are two wire machines in a corner). Large
blowups of HOWARD BEALE are prominently displayed.
There are small, shelfed libraries of books,
directories and magazines, here and there. And the
ever-present bank of four television monitors; and,
since it is 10:30 A.M., Tuesday, September 24, 1974,
and, since the AUDIO is OFF, the screens silently
flicker with whatever was on that dry at that time.
HOWARD comes out of his office, crosses through the
general RUN of Informal industry, an occasional
TYPEWRITER CLANGING, a more than occasional phone
ringing, as the Nightly News Room PERSONNEL, all in
their 20's and 30's, move. MUMMUR, confer about their
businesses. HOWARD BEALE makes for a ledge of
reference books to check out some fact. He spreads
the reference book out on an unoccupied desk. SOMEONE
in b.g. tells him he's wanted on the phone. He nods,
takes the call at the desk he is at. Throughout, he
belts away at his glass of BOOZE --

INT: OFFICE OF THE EXEC. PRODUCER OF UBS-
NETWORK NEWS - UBS BUILDING - 5TH FLOOR - 1:00 P.M.
TUESDAY

Another smallish office debouching off the main room
like Howard's, absolutely jampacked with nine PEOPLE, a
couple of them standing, the others sitting wherever
they can. The executive producer, NARRY HUNTER (early
40's), is behind the desk. HOWARD BEALE sits on the
small, Finnish modern couch, flanked by an ASSOCIATE
PRODUCER and a MAN from the Graphics Department. Aside
from BEALE and HUNTER, everybody else is in their 20's
or early 30's, and, with the same exceptions, they are
all casually dressed. This is the daily run-down
meeting at which the schedule for that evening's
broadcast is roughed out, and it sounds something like
this --

HOWARD
(reaching for the bottle
of booze on HUNTER's desk
to refill his glass)
-- let's do Rockefeller at the end
of two --

NARRY HUNTER
That strong enough to bump?

HOWARD
(sipping his booze)
In one then, I'll do a lead to
Ford-Kissinger --

ASSOCIATE PRODUCER
Then Yamani?

HOWARD
Yeah, Yamani in Chicago -- tag --

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT (GIRL)
That's forty-five --
HOWARD
What does that come out?

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

About four-fifty --

ASSOCIATE PRODUCER
Where we using Rumsfeld?

HARRY HUNTER
Let's do that in two -- Rumsfeld -- Rockefeller -- bump. Now, we using a map going into L.A.?

GRAPHIC MAN
I prefer a news-pix --

HOWARD pours himself another shot of booze and sips it --

HOWARD
What've we got left?

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

Nuclear thing, Nixon-hospital.
Ford amnesty, Watergate trial --

10. INT: 4TH FLOOR CORRIDOR - UBS BUILDING - 6:28 P.M. - TUESDAY

LOOKING INTO the small network-news make-up room where HOWARD BEALE is standing, Kleenex tucked into his shirt collar, getting a few last whiskers from the MAKE-UP LADY. Finished, HOWARD pulls the Kleenex from his collar, takes a last sip from a glass of booze on the make-up shelf, gathers his papers and exits, turns and enters --

11. INT: NETWORK NEWS STUDIO - 4TH FLOOR

Typical Newsroom studio -- cameras, cables, wall maps, flats and propping, etc. HOWARD nods, smiles to various PERSONNEL -- CAMERAMEN, ASSISTANT DIRECTORS, ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS -- as he makes his way to his desk facing Camera One. He sits, prepares his papers, looks up to the control room, nods --

MUSIC ABRUPTLY CUT:

END OF CREDITS:

12. INT: CONTROL ROOM - 4TH FLOOR

The wall clock reads: 6:39. Typical control room. A room-length double bank of television monitors
including two color monitor screens, the show monitor
to the pre-set monitor. Before this array of TV
shows sits the DIRECTOR, flanked on his left by the
PRODUCTION ASSISTANT (GIRL), who stopwatch the show,
and on his right by the TECHNICAL DIRECTOR who operates
a special board of buttons and knobs. (On the
TECHNICAL DIRECTOR's right sits the LIGHTING DIRECTOR.)
At the moment, the show monitor has the network's
Washington correspondent, JACK SNOWDEN, doing a lead-in
to the second day of Nelson Rockefeller's hearings
before the Senate Rules Committee on his nomination
for the Vice-Presidency --

SNOWDEN (ON MONITOR)
-- Rockefeller again supported
President Ford's pardon of former
President Nixon --

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR
(murmuring into his mike)
-- twenty-four --

SNOWDEN (ON MONITOR)
-- an act of conscience --

DIRECTOR
(murmuring into his mike)
-- Lou, kick that little thing
shut on ground level --

SNOWDEN (ON MONITOR)
-- an act of compassion --

The show monitor screen has switched over to show film
of Nelson Rockefeller testifying before the Rules
Committee --

SNOWDEN (V.O. ON MONITOR)
-- an act of courage --

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
(murmurs)
-- forty seconds --

DIRECTOR
(murmurs into mike)
-- twenty seconds to one --

ROCKEFELLER (ON MONITOR)
-- The constitutional process
worked --

DIRECTOR
-- headroll -- rolling --
ROCKEFELLER (ON MONITOR)

-- the information was brought out --

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

(murmurs into mike)

-- twenty-five, twenty-six --

ROCKEFELLER (ON MONITOR)

-- the President resigned --

In the back half of the control room, seated behind his shelf is HARRY HUNTER, who is flirting with his SECRETARY --

HARRY HUNTER

(to SECRETARY)

How the hell do you always get mixed up with married men? --

DIRECTOR

(leans back to say to SECRETARY)

-- Sheila, if you're hot for married men, why go to strangers? What's wrong with me? --

ROCKEFELLER (ON MONITOR)

-- the President accepted a pardon --

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

-- ten seconds --

DIRECTOR

(back to his mike)

-- ten seconds coming to one --

ROCKEFELLER (ON MONITOR)

-- which, in my opinion --

DIRECTOR

(on mike)

-- and --

ROCKEFELLER (ON MONITOR)

-- was tantamount to admitting guilt --

DIRECTOR

-- one --

HOWARD BEALE's image suddenly flips on-screen --

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

-- fifteen seconds to commercial freeze --
DIRECTOR
-- head roll --

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR
-- rolling --

The DIRECTOR and TECHNICAL DIRECTOR turn in their seats to join HARRY HUNTER and his SECRETARY in a brief gossip --

HOWARD (ON MONITOR)
-- Ladies and gentlemen, I would like at this moment to announce that I will be retiring from this program in two weeks' time because of poor ratings --

The DIRECTOR has whispered something to HARRY HUNTER'S SECRETARY which occasions sniggers from the SECRETARY and from HARRY HUNTER. The TECHNICAL DIRECTOR stands to get in on the joke --

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR
(to DIRECTOR)
-- what'd you say? --

HOWARD (ON MONITOR)
-- and since this show was the only thing I had going for me in my life, I have decided to kill myself --

HARRY HUNTER'S SECRETARY murmurs something which causes HARRY HUNTER to burst into laughter --

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR
(to the DIRECTOR)
-- so what'd she say? --

HOWARD (ON MONITOR)
-- I'll tell you what I'm going to do. I'm going to blow my brains out right on this program a week from today --

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
(frowning and very puzzled indeed by this diversion from the script)
-- ten seconds to commercial freeze --

HOWARD (ON MONITOR)
-- so tune in next Tuesday. That'll give the public relations people a
(MORE)
HOLLARD (ON MONITOR) (Cont'd)

Week to promote the show, and we ought to get a hell of a rating with that, a fifty share easy --

A bewildered PRODUCTION ASSISTANT nudges the DIRECTOR, who wheels back to his mike --

DIRECTOR

(into mike)

-- and --

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

(to the DIRECTOR)

Listen, did you hear that? --

DIRECTOR

-- two --

The monitor screen erupts into a commercial for a cat-food chow-chow --

AUDIO MAN

(leaning in from his glassed-in cubicle)

What was that about?

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

(to the DIRECTOR)

Howard just said he was going to blow his brains out next Tuesday.

DIRECTOR

What're you talking about?

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

Didn't you hear him? He just said --

HARRY HUNTER

What's wrong now?

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

Howard just said he was going to kill himself next Tuesday.

HARRY HUNTER

What do you mean Howard just said he was going to kill himself next Tuesday?

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

(nervously riffing through her script)

He was supposed to do a tag on Rockefeller-bump-commercial --
AUDIO MAN  
(from his doorway)  
He said tune in next Tuesday, I'm  
going to shoot myself  

Everybody's attention is now on the double bank of 
black-and-white monitor screens showing various parts  
of the studio, all of which show agitated behavior.  
Several of the screens show HOWARD at his desk in  
vehement discussion with a clearly startled FLOOR  
MANAGER with headset and no less startled ASSOCIATE  
PRODUCER  

DIRECTOR  
(on mike to FLOOR MANAGER)  
What the hell's going on?  

On the pre-set monitor screen, the FLOOR MANAGER  
with headset looks up  

FLOOR MANAGER (ON SCREEN)  
(Voice booming into  
the control room)  
I don't know. He just said he  
was going to blow his brains out  

DIRECTOR  
(into mike)  
What the hell's this all about,  
Howard?  

HOWARD (ON MONITOR)  
(shouting at the floor  
PERSONNEL gathering  
around him)  
Will you get the hell out of here?  
We'll be back on air in a couple  
of seconds!  

DIRECTOR  
(roaring into the mike)  
What the fuck's going on, Howard?  

HOWARD (ON MONITOR)  
I can't hear you  

DIRECTOR  
(bawling at the AUDIO MAN)  
Put the studio mike on!  

AUDIO MAN  
We're back on in eleven seconds  

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
(Stop-watching)
— Ten seconds —

HARRY HUNTER
(his voice now booming
out into the studio)
Howard! What the hell are you doing?
Have you flipped or what?

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR
(murmurs into his mike)
We start with 31 — 32 —

HARRY HUNTER
(tearing at the AUDIO MAN)
Turn the mike off!

AUDIO MAN
(now back in the
control room)
What the hell's going on?

HARRY HUNTER
(raging)
Turn the fucking sound off, you
stupid son of a bitch! This is
going out live!

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
(Stop-watching)
Three — two — one —

At which point, the TECHNICAL DIRECTOR pushes a button;
the jangling catfod commercial flips off the show
monitor to be instantly replaced by a scene of
gathering bedlam around HOWARD's desk. The AUDIO MAN
flees in panic back to his cubicle to turn off the
audio but not before HARRY HUNTER and the DIRECTOR
going out live to 67 affiliates can be heard booming:

HARRY HUNTER
Chriessakes! Black it out! This
is going out live to sixty-seven
fucking affiliates! Shit!

DIRECTOR
This is the dumbest thing I ever
saw! —

ROOM 509

MAX SCHUMACHER, behind his desk staring petrified at
his office console on which pandemonium has broken out.
The FLOOR MANAGER and the ASSOCIATE PRODUCER and now an ELECTRICIAN are trying to pull HOWARD away from his desk and HOWARD is trying to hit anybody he can with an ineffective right hand haymaker —

HOWARD (ON MONITOR)
Get the fuck away from me!

OTHER VOICES (ON MONITOR)
(coming from all directions)
— cut the show! —
— get him out of there!
— go to standby!
—
for Chrissakes, you stupid —

MAX'S PHONE RINGS —

MAX
(grabs the phone)
How the hell do I know? —
(he hangs up, seizes another phone, barks:)
Give me the network news control room!

On the MONITOR SCREEN, hysteria is clearly dominating. The SCREEN has suddenly leaped into a fragment of the just-done catfood COMMERCIAL, then a jarring shot of the bedlam of the studio floor. This particular camera seems unattended as it begins to PAN dementedly back and forth showing the confusion on the studio floor. Then abruptly the SCREEN is filled with Vice President designate Nelson Rockefeller testifying before the Senate Rules Committee —

MAX
(shouting into phone)
Black it out!

The SCREEN abruptly goes into BLACK as MAX slashes his phone back into its cradle. His PHONE promptly RINGS again, but MAX is already headed for the door. The SCREEN goes into STANDBY. His SQUAWK BOX suddenly blares —

SQUAWK BOX
What the hell happened, Max? —

MAX
(shouting as he exits)
How the hell do I know? I'm going down now!

He strides into —
14. INT: ROOM 509 - COMMON ROOM OF NEWS EXECUTIVES

A large common room where all the SECRETARIES of the News Division EXECUTIVES have their desks. It is empty now except for one SECRETARY just now putting the cover on her typewriter. MAX strides through and exits into --

15. INT: FIFTH FLOOR CORRIDOR

A long institutional corridor — part of an endless maze of similar corridors — with offices and technical rooms debouching on both sides. The corridor has begun to fill up with video-tape OPERATORS and other News Division PERSONNEL who happen to be working late — all of whom are either wondering what happened or are telling others what happened. MAX yanks an exit door open and disappears down a flight of steps to emerge into --

16. INT: FOURTH FLOOR CORRIDOR

— which leads directly to the doors for the control room and for the studio. Coming out of the control room is the TECHNICAL DIRECTOR, who, on spotting MAX striding down the corridor to him, says —

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR
Jesus Christ, Mr. Schumacher! --

He follows MAX into the --

17. INT: STUDIO

Everything seems to have quieted a bit. The hysterics down to mumbles and murmurs and occasional sounds of laughter. TELEPHONES are shrill and incessantly RINGING. In the far corner of the studio sits HOWARD BEALE surrounded by HARRY HUNTER, the DIRECTOR, the ASSOCIATE PRODUCER, the PRODUCTION ASSISTANT, and the FLOOR MANAGER. CUBES, GRIPS, and other FLOOR PERSONNEL are gathered in a flux of little clumps around the studio muttering and moaning and goggling over the whole absurd episode. MAX heads straight for the GROUP around HOWARD. They part to let him in —

HARRY HUNTER
(to MAX)
Tom Cabell wants you to call as soon as you come in --

MAX nods, stares at HOWARD --

Voice (O.S.)
Harry! Joe Sweeney on the phone! --
HARRY HUNTER
(bawls back)
I'm not taking any more calls!
Tell them Mr. Schumacher's here!
They can talk to him!

MAX
(staring at HOWARD)
Howard, you have got to be out of
your everloving mind. Are you drunk?
(to the others)
How much bootleg has he been doing
today?

PHONES O.S. RING and RING. VOICES O.S. SILENT --

-- Mr. Schumacher, Mr. Cabell
on the phone! --
-- Mr. Schumacher! Mr. Langwill
for you! --
-- Harry! Mr. Thackeray on Three! --

HOWARD slowly looks up to MAX who is still staring at
him. He suddenly smiles broadly at MAX and winks.

-- Harry! Thackeray wants to
talk to you right now! --
-- Mr. Schumacher! Mr. Gialmini
wants to talk to you! --

MAX
(to HARRY HUNTER)
You better get hold of Mr. Chaney
and Frank Hackett --

18. INT: FIFTH FLOOR - UBS BUILDING - ELEVATOR

FRANK HACKETT, Executive Senior Vice President of
the network, 41 years old, one of the new cool young breed
of management/merchandising executives, wearing a
tuxedo -- (he had been pulled out of a dinner party in
Westchester by this unfortunate business) -- comes out
of the elevator and turns briskly into --

19. INT: FIFTH FLOOR CORRIDOR

-- which is cluttered with network EXECUTIVES of assorted
sizes and ages. HACKETT, en route to Room 509, which
is clearly the humming hub of activity up here, pauses
to comment to one of the EXECUTIVES --
HACKETT
Lou, can't we clear out that
downstairs lobby? There must be
a hundred people down there, every
tv station and wire service in the
city. I could barely get in —

LOU
How'm I going to clear them out,
Frank?

HACKETT mutters and peels his way into —

20. INT: ROOM 509 - EXECUTIVES' OFFICES OF THE
NEWS DIVISION

HACKETT enters the common room, off which debouch the
offices of the President of News (MAX SCHUHACHER), the
VP News Division (ROBERT MCDONOUGH), the VP Public
Relations News Division (HILTON STEINMANN), the VP Legal
Affairs News Division (WALTER GIANINI), VP Owned
Stations News (EMIL DUBROVNIK), General Manager News,
Radio (MICHAEL SANDIES) — all of whom are here and a
number of other network EXECUTIVES. The VP Sales
(JOE DONELLY) is just taking the phone from the VP
News Sales (RICHMOND KETTERING) who is seated at the
desk of the secretary for VP Public Relations News
Division —

DONELLY
(on phone)
— how many spots were wiped out? —

HACKETT
(to GIANINI, who is seated
at another secretary's desk
studying a typescript of
the aborted news show)
Anything liti tabletop?

GIANINI
Not so far —

DONELLY
(on phone)
— We had to abort the show, Ed,
what else could we do? We'll
make good, don't worry about it —

HACKETT
(to ARTHUR ZANGWILL, VP
Standards and Practices;
now coming out of MAX's
office)
Is Nelson in there?
ZANCKWILL

Ha's talking to Wheeler. So far, over nine hundred fucking phone calls complaining about the foul language --

HACKETT

(mutters)

Shit --

P.R. MAN

(in b.g. on phone)

— come on, Mickey, what page are you putting it on?!

HACKETT is already crossing into

21. INT: MAX'S OFFICE

— which is pretty well jammed with NELSON CHANEY (President of the network), 52, a patrician, sitting behind MAX's desk and on the phone, looking up to note HACKETT's arrival --

CHANEY

(on phone)

Frank Hackett just walked in --

MILTON STEINHAN (VP Public Relations News Division), early 50's, a rumbled, ordinarily amiable man, is standing by the desk on the phone to someone at CBS --

STEINHAN

(on phone)

I can't release the tape, Marty, we're still studying it ourselves --

A P.R. MAN sticks his head into the office --

P.R. MAN

(calling to STEINHAN)

ABC again, wants the tape --

STEINHAN

Tell him to go fuck himself --

(to phone)

And that goes for you too, Marty --

HACKETT

(to HOWARD BEALE, sitting on the couch)

You're off the air as of now.
CHANEY
(extending his phone
to HACKETT)
He wants to talk to you --

HACKETT
(to MAX, leaning
against a wall)
Who's replacing Beale tomorrow?

MAX
We're flying up Snowden from
Washington.

STEINMAN
(leaning across HACKETT
to turn up the volume
knob on Max's desk)
All right, everybody hold it.
Let's see how the other
networks handled this --

He is referring to the four television monitors --
three on the wall and a large office console monitor
of UBS-TV, now blurring out their respective
commercials --

THACKERAY
(standing on phone
lounging in the doorway)
The ten o'clock news opened
with it --

HACKETT
(on phone)
Warner's drafted a statement, I
haven't seen it yet -- I just got
here. John, I was at a dinner party --

Suddenly, the faces of DAVE MARASH and ROLAND SMITH and
CHUCK SCARBOROUGH and ROGER GRIMSBY and BILL BEUTEL
and the UBS local news anchor, TIM MALLOWAY, are on
the screen. Affable DAVE MARASH on the CBS monitor
is saying:

MARASH
(affably)
An unusual thing happened at one of
our sister networks, UBS, this evening --

ROGER GRIMSBY
(almost simultaneously)
Howard Beale, one of television's
most esteemed newscasters --
CHIEF SCARBROUG

Howard Beale interrupted his network news program tonight to announce —

HACKETT
(muters)

Shit —

RIM HALLWAY

Secretary of State Henry Kissinger made a forceful address before the United Nations General Assembly —

HACKETT
(to MAX)
How are we handling it?

MAX

Halloway's going to make a brief statement at the end of the show to the effect Howard's been under great personal stress, et cetera —

HACKETT reaches to click off the bank of monitor screens. They abruptly go blank.

HACKETT
(on phone)
I'll call you back, John.
(resumes the phone to its cradle, regards the gathered EXECUTIVES)
All right. We've got a stockholders' meeting tomorrow at which we're going to announce the restructuring of management plan, and I don't want this grotesque incident to interfere with that. I'll suggest Mr. Ruddy open with a short statement washing this whole thing off, and, you, Max, better have some answers in case some of those nuts that always come to stockholders' meetings —

MAX
(back to leaning against the wall)
Mr. Beale has been under great personal and professional pressures —

HACKETT
(exploding)
I've got some goddam surprises for you too, Schumacher! I've had it (MORE)
HACKETT (Cont'd)

up to here with your cruddy division
and its annual thirty-three million
dollar deficit! ---

MAX

Keep your hands off my news division
Frank. We're responsible to
corporate level, not to you.

HACKETT

We'll goddess well see about that!

CHANDY

All right, take it easy. Right now,
how're we going to get Beale out of
here? I understand there's at least
a hundred reporters and camera crews
in the lobby.

MAX

We've got a limo waiting at the
freight entrance. Howard'll stay
at my place tonight. There's
bound to be press around his place.

22. EXT: SIXTH AVENUE - TELEVISION ROW - 22.
WEDNESDAY, 10:00 A.M. - DAY

HIGH WIDE ANGLE SHOT and/or SHOTS showing Television
Row -- that quarter mile of Sixth Avenue where the four
television networks have their chrome, marble and glass
buildings rearing futuristically into the sky -- 30
Rock (NBC-TV), Black Rock (CBS-TV), and Hard Rock (ABC-
TV), and, of course, the network of our story; UBS-TV.
It is a nice, sunny day --

23. INT: UBS BUILDING - 5TH FLOOR - MAX'S OFFICE 23.
- WEDNESDAY - 10:00 A.M. - DAY

SUNLIGHT streaming in. MAX at his desk, shirtsleeved,
on the phone --

MAX
(on phone)

-- I want Snowden here by noon.
Have Laster cover the Rockefeller
hearings and give the White House
to Doris --

MAX'S SECRETARY sticks her head in --

SECRETARY

You're late for your screening.
MAX hangs up, stands, gathers his jacket off a chair and heads for the door —

MAX

If John Wheeler calls, switch him to Screening Room Seven —

He exits —

24. INT: NINTH FLOOR - SCREENING ROOM 7

A middling-sized screening room with about 20 seats. There are two people already there — a whippet-like, casually-dressed man of 36, BILL HERRON, and the VP Programs, DINNA CHRISTENSEN, dressed in slacks and blouse, 34, tall, willowy, and with the best ass ever seen on a Vice President in charge of Programming —

MAX

(entering)

I'm sorry -- this Beale business --

MAX and DINNA exchange nods and professionally polite greetings —

HERRON

(buzzing the projectionist)

Diana asked if she could sit in on this —

MAX

Fine —

(sits, calls to DINNA)

How's it going?

DINNA shrugs, smiles. The lights in the room go down. A shaft of light shoots out from the projection room. The PHONE at MAX's elbow BUZZES. HE picks it up —

MAX

(murmurs into phone)

Max Schumacher -- I'm glad I got you, John. Listen, I got into a hassle with Frank Hackett last night over the Howard Seale thing, and he made a crack about the stockholders' meeting this afternoon. He said something about having some surprises for me. Is there something going on, John, I don't know about? ... John, I'm counting on you and Mr. Buddy to back me up against that son of a bitch ... Okay, see you this afternoon —
He hangs up, leans back, watches the documentary film which has just begun. ON SCREEN, a handsome black woman in her early 30's --

MAX
Who's that, Laureen Hobbs?

HERRON
Yeah.

--- is sitting in a typical panel discussion grouping, flanked by three MEN and a WOMAN, two white, two black, all very urban guerrilla, in fatigues, sun glasses and combat boots. MISS HOBBS looks coldly into camera and says:

LAUREN HOBBS (ON SCREEN)
The Comunist Party believes that the most pressing political necessity today is the consolidation of the revolutionary, radical and democratic movements into a United Front ---

The PHONE BUZZES softly. MAX picks it up ---

MAX
(murmurs into phone)
Yeah? ... Oh, goddamn, when, Louise? ... Well, did he say anything? ... All right, thanks.
(hangs up, promptly picks up again)
Four-eight-ch-seven ---

LAUREN HOBBS (ON SCREEN) (in b.g.)
Repression is the response of an increasingly desperate, imperialist ruling clique. Indeed, the entire apparatus of the bourgeois-democratic state especially its judicial systems and its prisons is disintegrating ---

MAX
(on phone)
Harry, Howard left my house about ten minutes ago presumably headed here. Let me know as soon as he gets here.

LAUREN HOBBS (ON SCREEN) (in b.g.)
The fascist thrust must be resisted in its incipient stages by the broadest possible coalition ---
INT: SCREENING ROOM 7 - TWENTY MINUTES LATER

Room still dark. ON SCREEN, NUMBERED WHITE LEADER is rolling down —

HERRON

What we're going to see now is something really sensational.
The FeaDstaff Independent Bank in Arizona was ripped off last week by a terrorist group called the Ecumenical Liberation Army, and they themselves actually took movies of the rip-off while they were ripping it off. It's in black and white, but wait'll you see it —

The SCREEN suddenly erupts into film of the interior of a bank being entered in the wake of THREE MEN, two of them black, and TWO WOMEN, one black and one white. They disperse to various parts of the bank as if they were here on legitimate business —

DIANA

The Ecumenical Liberation Army
— is that the one that kidnapped Patty Hearst?

HERRON

No, that's the Symbionese Liberation Army. This is the Ecumenical Liberation Army. They're the ones who kidnapped Mary Ann Gifford three weeks ago. There's a hell of a lot of liberation armies in the revolutionary underground and a lot of kidnapped hostesses. That's Mary Ann Gifford —

This last in reference to the young white woman on screen who is lugging a shopping bag as she joins a line at a teller's window —

DIANA

You mean, they actually shot this film while they were ripping off the bank?

HERRON

Yeah, wait'll you see it. I don't know whether to edit or leave it raw like this. That's the Great Ahmed Khan; he's the leader —
ON SCREEN, the film has gone out of focus a couple of times and bounced meaninglessly around the bank and finally settled on a large, powerful black man at one of the desks, presumably writing out a series of deposit slips —

DIANA
This is terrific stuff. Where did you get it?

HERRON
I got everything through Laureen Hobbs. She's my contact for all this stuff.

DIANA
I thought she was straight Communist Party.

HERRON
Right. But she's trying to unify all the factions in the underground, so she knows everybody.

ON SCREEN, the CAMERA has whooshed aimlessly about, unfocusses and focusses again to pick up MARY ANN GIFFORD bending over her shopping bag and pulling out a Coach service submachine gun 9 Parabellum which she points to the ceiling and apparently fires; the FILM is silent, but the reactions of everyone around suggest clearly something was fired. The FILM gets fragmented and panicky about here, as does the activity in the bank. The PHONE at MAX'S elbow BUZZES. MAX picks it up.

MAX
(on the phone, while in b.g. a bank hold-up goes on on screen)
Yeah? ... All right, put him on —

26. INT: THE NIGHTLY NEWS ROOM — ROOM 517

HARRY HUNTER, on phone, is using an empty desk in the main room. Normal news room activity in b.g. —

HARRY HUNTER
(on phone, leans back to call into HOGARD's office)
Howard — I've got MAX on four, would you pick up? —
27. **INT: HOWARD'S OFFICE**

**HOWARD**
(picking up phone)
Listen, Max, I'd like another shot —

28. **INT: SCREENING ROOM 7**

The silent footage of the frenetic bank robbery is still going on in b.g.

**MAX**
(on phone)
Oh, come on, Howard —

29. **INT: HOWARD'S OFFICE**

**HOWARD**
(on phone)
I don't mean the whole show. I'd just like to come on, take some kind of brief farewell statement and then turn the show over to Jack Snowden. I have eleven years at this network, Max. I have some standing in this industry. I don't want to go out like a clown. It'll be simple and dignified. You and Harry can check the copy —

30. **INT: NIGHTLY NEWS ROOM**

**ACROSS HARRY HUNTER** on phone, looking through the open door of HOWARD's office to HOWARD at his desk in b.g.

**HARRY HUNTER**
(on phone)
— I think it'll take the strain off the show, Max. How much time do you want, Howard?

**HOWARD**
(in b.g., on phone)
A minute forty-five, maybe two ...

**HARRY HUNTER**
All right, I'll give you two on the top, then we'll go to Jack Snowden with the Kissinger UN speech —
31. INT: SCREENING ROOM 7

The show is over, the room lights are on. In b.g., DIANA and HERON stand, murmur to each other

MAX
(on phone)
And no booze today, Howard

In b.g., DIANA and HERON move for the door, wave good-byes. MAX waves slackly in return. He can't help noticing as DIANA leaves that she has the most beautiful ass ever seen on a VP Program

32. INT: HOWARD'S OFFICE

HOWARD
(on phone)
No booze

And hangs up. For a moment, he just sits, scowling and making curious little grimaces. Then he stands, removes his jacket, dumps it on a chair. He rolls his sleeves up and suddenly makes a strange little GRUNT. He sits behind his desk, fits a piece of paper into the machine and, then, again, suddenly, he makes a strange little GRUNT

33. INT: NIGHTLY NEWS ROOM

Our PRODUCTION ASSISTANT, remembered perhaps from the control room scene, passes HOWARD's open door and is given pause by the strange little noises coming from HOWARD's office. She stands in the doorway a moment watching HOWARD GRUNTING, GROWLING and SHARLING as he CLACKS away at the typewriter

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
You all right, Mr. Beale?
(BEALE nods)
You want me to close your door,
Mr. Beale?
(HOWARD nods, types away, GRUNTS, GROWLS)

The PRODUCTION ASSISTANT closes the door.

34. INT: 14TH FLOOR - USB BUILDING - ELEVATOR AREA

DIANA and HERON come out of one of the elevators and turn left to the glass doors marked: DEPARTMENT OF PROGRAMMING. They continue into
35. INT: PROGRAMMING DEPARTMENT - RECEPTION AREA

(Needless to say, there is no one at the receptionist's desk.) DIANA and HERRON head down --

36. INT: PROGRAMMING DEPARTMENT - CORRIDOR

DIANA pauses en route to lean into one of the offices --

DIANA
George, can you come in my office for a minute?

She and HERRON continue on, turn into --

37. INT: PROGRAMMING DEPARTMENT - COMMON ROOM

Where the SECRETARIES are all slaving away, reading magazines and chatting among themselves. An occasional PHONE RINGS. At the far end of the room, a chunky WOMAN in her late 30's is instructing her SECRETARY in something. DIANA hails her --

DIANA
Barbara, is Tommy around anywhere?

BARBARA (in b.g.)
I think so.

DIANA
I'd like to see the two of you for a moment --

She leads HERRON now into --

38. INT: DIANA'S SECRETARY'S OFFICE

The SECRETARY hands a sheaf of telephone messages to DIANA which she carries with her into --

39. INT: DIANA'S OFFICE

DIANA enters, followed by HERRON. She sits, skims through her messages. The office is executive-size, windows looking out on the canyons of glass and stone skyscrapers on Sixth Avenue, desk piled high with scripts. GEORGE BOSCH (VP Program Development East Coast), a slight, balding man in 39, enters the office, nods to HERRON, takes a seat; and is immediately followed by BARBARA SCHLESINGER (Head of the Story Department), the chunky lady just called in by DIANA, and TOMMY PELICANNO (Assistant VP Programs), 36, swarthy, coiffed and mustachioed. They find seats on the chairs, the small couch. HERRON remains standing --
Diana
(introducing)
This is Bill Heron from our West Coast Special Programs Department — Barbara Schlesinger
— George Bosch — Tommy
Pellegrino — Look, I just saw some rough footage of a special Bill's doing on the revolutionary underground. Most of it's tedious stuff of Lauren Hobbs and four fatigue jackets muttering mutilated Marxism. But he's got about eight minutes of a bank robbery that is absolutely sensational. Authentic stuff. Actually shot while the robbery was going on. Remember the Mary Ann Gifford kidnapping? Well, it's that bunch of nuts. She's in the film shooting off machine guns. Really terrific footage. I think we can get a hell of a movie of the week out of it, maybe even a series.

Pellegrino
A series out of what? What're we talking about?

Diana
Look, we've got a bunch of hobgoblin radicals called the Eumenical Liberation Army who go around taking home movies of themselves robbing banks. Maybe they'll take movies of themselves kidnapping heiresses, hijacking 747's, bombing bridges, assassinating ambassadors. We'd open each week's segment with that authentic footage, hire a couple of writers to write some story behind that footage, and we've got ourselves a series.

Bosch
A series about a bunch of bank-robbing guerrillas?

Schlesinger
What're we going to call it —
DIANA

Why not? They've got Strike Force, Task Force, SWAT—you not Che Guevara and his own little mod squad? Listen, I sent you all a concept analysis report yesterday. Did any of you read it?

(apparently not)

Well, in a nutshell, it said the American people are turning sullen. They've been clobbered on all sides by Vietnam, Watergate, the inflation, the depression. They've turned off, shot up, and they've sucked themselves limp. And nothing helps. Evil still triumphs over all, Christ is a dope-dealing pimp, even sin turned out to be impotent. The whole world seems to be going nuts and flipping off into space like an abandoned balloon. So—this concept analysis report concludes—the American people want somebody to articulate their rage for them. I've been telling you people since I took this job six months ago that I want angry shows. I don't want conventional programming on this network. I want counterculture. I want anti-establishment.

She closes the door.

DIANA (Contd)

Now, I don't want to play butch boss with you people. But when I took over this department, it had the worst programming record in television history. This network hasn't one show in the top twenty. This network is an industry joke. We better start putting together one winner for next September. I want a show developed, based on the activities of a terrorist group. Joseph Stalin and his merry band of Bolsheviks. I want ideas from you people. And, by the way, the next time I send an audience research report around, you all (MORE)
DIANA (Contd)
better read it, or I'll sack the fucking lot of you, is that clear?
(apparently, it is).
She turns to HERRON
I'll be out on the coast in four weeks. Can you set up a meeting
with Laureen Hobbs for me?

HERRON
Sure.

40. INT: A BANQUET ROOM - NEW YORK HILTON - 40.
WEDNESDAY - 3:00 P.M.

LONG SHOT: A stockholders' meeting. Standing room
only. Some 200 STOCKHOLDERS seated in the audience;
others standing around the walls. On the rostrum, a
phalanx of US$ CORPORATE EXECUTIVES, seated in three
rows, including EDWARD RUDY, Chairman of the Board,
the PRESIDENTS and SENIOR VICE-PRESIDENTS of the other
divisions and other groups -- the US$ Records Group,
the US$ Publishing Group, the US$ Theatrical Chain, etc.
Representing the network are NELSON CHANEY and the
divisional heads -- GEORGE NICHOLS, President of the
Radio Division; NORMAN MOLANDER, President of the
Stations; General Counsel, WALTER AGUGLIANDI, and, of
course, MAX SCHROCHER, President of the News Division.
FRANK HACKETT, Senior Executive Vice President US$-TV,
is at the lectern making the annual report --

HACKETT
(in the droning manner
of such reports)
... but the business of management
is management; and, at the time
C. C. and A. took control, the
US$-TV network was floundering
with less than seven percent of
national television revenues,
most network programs being sold
at station rates. I am therefore
pleased to announce I am submitting
to the Board of Directors a plan
for the organization of the network
with the intention of creating
a subcorporate second line of
authority. For the coordination
of the main profit centers, and
with the specific intention of
making each division more
responsive to management --

ANOTHER ANGLE SINGLING OUT MAX SCHROCHER in the second
row of the phalanx of EXECUTIVES, bored with the proceedings, and whispering to NELSON CHANEY seated beside him. INCLUDE in frame the 67 year old, silver-haired brainin of television, EDWARD RUDDY, who is seated in the front row. HACKETT in b.g. It is some twenty minutes later —

HACKETT (Contd)
(reading from his report)
... Point Three. The division producing the lowest rate of return has been the News Division —

MAX suddenly begins paying attention —

HACKETT (Contd)
— with its 98 million dollar budget and its average annual deficit of 32 million. To me, it is inconceivable such a wanton fiscal affront go unresisted —

ANOTHER ANGLE ACROSS HACKETT with a smoldering MAX SCHUMACHER in b.g. —

HACKETT (Contd)
— The new plan calls for local news to be transferred to Owned Stations Divisions —

MAX in b.g., stares angrily down his row towards NORMAN MOLDAVIN, who studiously avoids his eye —

HACKETT (Contd)
— News-Radio would be transferred to the VBS Radio Division —

ACROSS MAX turning in his seat to scowl at GEORGE NICHOLS in the row behind him —

HACKETT (Contd) (in b.g.)
— and, in effect, the News Division would be reduced —

MAX leaning forward trying to catch the eye of EDWARD RUDDY in the front row. RUDDY is staring stonily ahead —

HACKETT (Contd)
— from an independent division to a department accountable to network —

MAX is about ready to blow his stack —
41. INT: BANQUET ROOM - NEW YORK HILTON - WEDNESDAY - 5:30 P.M.

The stockholders' meeting is over. The floor is a swirling CRUSH of STOCKHOLDERS mingling with EXECUTIVES. MAX SCHNACKER is allowing his way through the crowded aisle to get to where EDWARD RUDY is chatting away with a COUPLE of STOCKHOLDERS --

MAX
(to RUDY)
What was that all about, Ed? --

RUDY
(turning to MAX, urbane)
This is not the time, Max.

MAX
(barely containing himself)
Why wasn't I told about this? Why was I left onto that podium and publicly goosed in front of the stockholders? Goddamnit, I spoke to John Wheeler this morning, and he assured me the News Division was safe. Are you trying to get me to resign? It's a hell of a way to do it.

RUDY
(silken murmur)
We'll talk about this tomorrow at our regular morning meeting.

RUDY turns back to the clutch of STOCKHOLDERS around him. MAX wheels away in a rage --

42. EXT: NEW YORK HILTON HOTEL - SIXTH AVENUE - DUSK

The Sixth Avenue entrance to the hotel. TAXIS pulling in, disgorging PEOPLE; taxis pulling out with new fares. MAX comes striding out of the hotel, sore as a boil. PAN HIM as he bulls his way through the line of taxis and across jammed, clanging 5:30 P.M. SIXTH AVENUE --

43. INT: UBS BUILDING - 9TH FLOOR CORRIDOR

MAX, steaming, strides down the corridor to --

44. INT: ROOM 509 - NEWS DIV. EXECUTIVE OFFICES

Empty except for perhaps one SECRETARY pecking away at her typewriter. MAX strides across and into --
MAX takes off his jacket, throws it on the couch, sits behind his desk. But he’s too steamed to stay there long. A moment later, he’s up again, strides around, a caged lion. He thumps his desk angrily, strides around, then whips his jacket up from the couch and strides out —

The wall C O L C K reads 6:28. The DIRECTOR, TECHNICAL DIRECTOR, LIGHTING DIRECTOR and PRODUCTION ASSISTANT are at their long shelf in front of the double bank of television monitors. The AUDIO MIX is off in his glassed-in cubicle. HARRY HUNTER and his SECRETARY and the UNIT MANAGER are on the raised level in the back. HUNTER is on the phone, looks up as the door to the control room opens and MAX, carrying his jacket, comes in. Curious looks from the PERSONNEL here; presidents of news rarely come down to the control room. HUNTER finishes his phone call, offers his seat to MAX, but MAX prefers standing in the back —

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
... five seconds --
LIGHTING DIRECTOR
-- picture’s too thick --
DIRECTOR
-- coming to -- and one --

The show monitor, which has been showing color patterns, now suddenly flicks on to show HOWARD SEALS as he looks up from the shelf of papers on his desk and says:

HOWARD (ON MONITOR)
Good evening. Today is Wednesday, September the Twenty-Fifth, and this is my last broadcast. Yesterday, I announced on this program that I would commit public suicide, admittedly an act of madness. Well, I’ll tell you what happened -- I just ran out of bullshit --

HARRY HUNTER
All right, cut him off.

The MONITOR SCREEN goes black.
MAX
(from the back wall)
Leave him on --

HOWARD's image promptly flicks back on --

HOWARD (ON MONITOR)
(looking o.s.)
Am I still on the air?

Everybody in the control room looks to MAX --

MAX
If this is how he wants to go out,
this is how he goes out.

HOWARD (ON MONITOR)
I don't know any other way to say
it except I just ran out of bull-
shit ... 

The PHONE RINGS. HUNTER picks it up. ANOTHER PHONE
RINGS. HUNTER'S SECRETARY picks it up.

HUNTER
(on first phone)
Look, Mr. Schumacher's right here,
do you want to talk to him?
(extends the phone to MAX)

HOWARD (ON MONITOR)
Bullshit is all the reasons we give
for living, and, if we can't think
up any reasons of our own, we always
have the God bullshit --

HUNTER'S SECRETARY
(awe)
Holy Mary Mother of Christ --

MAX
(on phone)
Yeah, what is it, Tom? --

HOWARD (ON MONITOR)
We don't know why the hell we're
going through all this pointless
pain, humiliation and decay, so
there better be someone somewheres
who does know; that's the God
bullshit --
MAX
(on phone)
He's saying like is bullshit, and it is, so what is you screaming about? —

He hangs up. The PHONE promptly RINGS again. HUNTER'S SECRETARY picks it up. (HUNTER is on the phone that rang before.)

HOWARD (ON MONITOR)
If you don't like the God bullshit, how about the man bullshit? Man is a noble creature who can order his own world, who needs God?

HUNTER'S SECRETARY
(to MAX)
Mr. Amundsen for you, Mr. Schwachter.

MAX
I'm not taking calls.

HOWARD (ON MONITOR)
Well, if there's anybody out there who can look around this demented slaughterhouse of a world we live in and tell me man is a noble creature, that man is full of bullshit —

DIRECTOR
(staring in awe at HOWARD on the screen)
I know he's sober, so he's got to be just plain nuts —
(starts to giggle)

HARRY HUNTER
(screaming)
What's so godamn funny?

DIRECTOR
I can't help it, Harry, it's funny —

HOWARD (ON MONITOR)
I don't have any kids —

A PHONE RINGS. HUNTER'S SECRETARY picks it up.

HARRY HUNTER
Max, this is going out live to sixty-seven affiliates —
MAX
Leave him on.

HUNGRY (ON MONITOR)
-- and I was married for thirty-
three years of shrill, shrieking
fraud --

A breathless and distraught YOUNG WOMAN bursts into
the control room.

YOUNG WOMAN
Mr. Hackett's trying to get through
to you --

MAX
Tell Mr. Hackett to go fuck himself --

47. INT: DIANA'S OFFICE
DIANA, sitting alone in her office, watching HUNGRY
BEARD on her office console --

HUNGRY (ON CONSOLE)
I don't have any bullshit left.
I just ran out of it, you see --

48. INT: CONTROL ROOM - NETWORK NEWS Show

-- as FRANK HACKETT and his assistant, TOM CASELL,
 wrench the door open and stride in --

HACKETT
(racing)
Get him off! Are you people nuts?!

The TECHNICAL DIRECTOR taps a button, and the SCREEN
mercyifully goes black.

49. INT: LOBBY - UBS BUILDING

White-haired, patrician EDWARD RUDY, Chairman of
the Board, impeccably groomed, fastidious in a light
topcoat, making his way through the absolute CRUSH
of NEWSPAPER PEOPLE, WIRE SERVICE PEOPLE, CAMERA CREWS
from CBS, NBC, ABC, from the local stations, WPIX,
WOR-TV, METROMEDIA, and from Channel 13, the educa-
tional channel. A half dozen SECURITY GUARDS protect
the elevators, and three more half RUDY cut through
the GLARING CAMERA LIGHTS and the hordes of REPORTERS
thrusting mikes at him --
50. INT: 20TH FLOOR - LOBBY, LOUNGE, CORRIDOR

MAX, standing by the deserted reception desk, in the empty, silent lounge. This is the top-management floor, and the decor, which is posh-austere, reflects the eminence of the top executives who have their offices here. It is all silent and empty now, candelabra, chandeliers, echoing. Way down at the far end of the corridor, the double doors of the corner office open, and NELSON CHANEY leans out and beckons to MAX, who starts down the plush carpeting in response.

51. INT: MR. RUDDY'S OFFICE

Large, regal. Impressionist originals on these walls which are not glass through which the crepuscular grandeur of New York at night can be seen. RUDDY sits behind his desk. JOHN WHEELER, 5'9, silent, forceful, lounges in one of the several leather chairs. The door opens, and NELSON CHANEY and MAX SCHWACKER come in. Everybody nods at everybody else. MAX slumps into a leather chair.

RUDDY

(murmurs to CHANEY)

I'll want to see Mr. Beale after this.

CHANEY promptly picks up a corner phone and calls down to the Fourteenth Floor.

RUDDY (Cont'd)

(regards MAX briefly, murmurs)

The way I hear it, Max, you're primarily responsible for this colossal stupid prank. Is that the fact, Max?

MAX

That's the fact.

RUDDY

It was unconscionable. There doesn't seem to be anything more to say.

MAX

I have something to say, Ed.

(MORE)
I'd like to know why that whole debasement of the News Division announced at the stockholders' meeting today was kept secret from me. You and I go back twenty years, Ed. I took this job with your personal assurance that you would back my autonomy against any encroachment. But ever since CC and A acquired control of the UBS Systems ten months ago, Hackett's been taking over everything. Who the hell's running this network, you or CC and A? I mean, you're the Chairman, and Frank Hackett's just CC and A's hatchet man. Nelson here -- for Pete's sake, he's the president of the network -- he hasn't got anything to say about anything any more. Who the hell's running this company, you or CC and A?

RUDDY

(murmurs)

I told you at the stockholders' meeting, Max, that we would discuss all that at our regular meeting tomorrow. If you had been patient, I would've explained to you that I too thought Frank Hackett precipitate and that the reorganization of the News Division would not be executed until everyone, specifically you, Max, had been consulted and satisfied. Instead, you sulked off like a child and engaged this network in a shocking and disgraceful episode. Your position here is no longer tenable regardless of how management is restructured. I expect you to bring in your resignation at ten o'clock tomorrow morning, and we will coordinate our statements to the least detriment of everyone.

(to WHEELEER)

Bob Macconough will take over the News Division till we sort all this out.

(WHEELEER nods. RUDDY turns to CHANEY still in the corner of the room on the phone.)

(MORE)
RUDDY (Contd)
I'd like to see Mr. Beale now --

CHANCEY
(on phone)
They're looking for him, Ed. They
don't know where he is --

52. INT: LOBBY - UBS BUILDING

HOWARD BEALE, bleached almost white by the GLARE of
the CAMERA LIGHTS, and almost totally obscured by the
tidal CRUSH of cameras, REPORTERS, SECURITY GUARDS
around him --

--- every day, five days a week,
for fifteen years, I've been
sitting behind that desk -- the
dispassionate pundit --

53. INT: DIANA'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM

DIANA, naked, sitting on the edge of her bed in a
dark bedroom, watching HOWARD BEALE's impromptu press
conference on television --

HOWARD (Contd)
(on TV screen)
--- reporting with seenly detachment
the daily parade of lunacies that
constitute the news -- and ---

Also on the bed is a naked young STUD, who isn't really
that interested in the 11:00 News. He is fondling,
fingering, nuddling and nuzzling DIANA with the clear
intention of fucking her --

HOWARD (Contd)
(on TV screen)
--- just once I wanted to say what
I really felt ---

The young STUD is getting around to nibbling at DIANA's
breasts --

DIANA
(watching the TV set
with single-minded
intensity)
Knock it off, Arthur --
Bright morning sunshine. DIANA, in a pants suit and carrying half a dozen scripts, enters the building.

DIANA, pausing at the newsstand to pick up the morning papers, which she reads en route to the elevators.

DIANA briskly enters through the door marked DEPARTMENT OF PROGRAMMING, and whisks off down the corridor.

DIANA crosses to her own office. THREE SECRETARIES, including DIANA's, are abuzz in a corner over last night's Howard Beal show. DIANA's SECRETARY scurries to follow DIANA as, in h.e.g., BARBARA SCHLESINGER comes out of her office carrying four scripts.

DIANA, rummaging through the papers on top of the SECRETARI'S desk as the SECRETARY enters:

DIANA
Did the overnight ratings come in yet?

SECRETARY
They're on your desk.

DIANA
Have you still got yesterday's overnights around?

SECRETARY
Shall I bring them in?

DIANA
Yeah --

She exits into --

Morning SUNLIGHT blasting in. DIANA moves to her desk, stands behind it, scanning the front pages of
the newspapers piled on her desk, then sits and studies the overnight ratings also on her desk. The SECRETARY enters with yesterday's overnights, a sheet of paper, which she extends to DIANA, who promptly studies them. The SECRETARY exits as BARBARA SCHLESINGER enters, sinks onto a chair with a sigh --

SCHLESINGER
These are those four outlines submitted by Universal for an hour series. You needn't bother to read them. I'll tell them to you. The first one is set in a large Eastern law school, presumably Harvard. The series is irresistibly entitled The Young Lawyers. The running characters are a crusty but benign ex-Supreme Court Justice, presumably Oliver Wendell Holmes by way of Dr. Zorba. There is a beautiful girl graduate student and the local district attorney who is brilliant and sometimes cuts corners --

DIANA
(studying the overnights)
Next one --

SCHLESINGER
The second one is called The Amazon Squad --

DIANA
(studying the overnights)
Lady cops?

SCHLESINGER
The running characters are a crusty but benign police lieutenant who's always getting heat from the Commissioner, a hard-nosed, hard-drinking detective who thinks women belong in the kitchen, and a brilliant and beautiful young girl cop fighting the feminist battle on the force --

DIANA
(now studying the front page of the Daily Here)
We're up to our ears in lady cop shows.
SCHLESINGER

The next one is another investiga
tive reporter show. A crusty
but benign managing editor who's
always getting heat from the
publisher —

DILLA

You know, Barbara, today is Yom
Kippur, and they're worried about
another war in the Middle East.
They've discovered a blood clot
in Nixon's right lung, there's a
hurricane in Honduras, drought
among the Taregas, crop failure in
India. Two major banks have reduced
their prime rates and —
(she flips the Daily
News over so BARRABA
can read it)
— the whole front page of the
Daily News is Howard Beale.

ACROSS BARRABA SCHLESINGER, half-standing so she can
read the newspaper and showing the front page of the
Daily News — which consists of a 3/4 page blurb of
HOMARD BEALE topped by a 52 point black banner headline:
— BEALE FIRED —

DILLA (Contd)

— it was also a two-column story
on page one of the Times —
(calls to her SECRETARY)

Helen, call Mr. Hackett's office,
see if he can give me a few minutes
this morning —

INT: ROOM 520 — THE NETWORK NEWS ROOM
— 9:30 A.M.

MAX SCHNEIDER and BOB MADONOUGH (mid-40's) enter.
The Network News Room is something less than Frost
Park. But, nevertheless, a news room. It's a long,
large, windowless room, some 40 desks, mostly un-
occupied, a wire room, typewriters and banks of tele-
vision monitors on the wall. At the moment, work has
stopped, and the ENTIRE PERSONNEL of the news room,
alongside — PEOPLE — EXECUTIVES and SECRETARIES, PRODUCERS,
ASSISTANT PRODUCERS, HEAD WRITERS, WRITERS, DUTY AND
TAP EDITORS, REPORTERS, BROADCASTERS, and
AUDIOTECHNICIANS — are all gathered stam
ing about to hear MAX say —
MAX
Ladies and gentlemen, I've been
at this network twelve years, and
it's been on the whole a ball —

VOICE (in b.g.)
Louder —

MAX
— and I want to thank you all.
Bob McDonough here will be taking
over for me for the time being,
and, much as I hate to admit it,
I'm sure everything will go along
just fine without me —

61. INT: UBS BUILDING - 15TH FLOOR - 10:00 A.M.  61.
DIANA turning into —

62. INT: HACKETT'S OUTER OFFICE  62.
The SECRETARY waves DIANA straight into —

63. INT: HACKETT'S OFFICE  63.
where HACKETT sits unhappily at his desk poring over
memos from his Stations Relations Department and
reports from his Sales Department.

HACKETT
(not bothering to
look up)
WKGO Kansas City refuses to carry
our network news any more unless
Beale is taken off the air —

DIANA
(drops the sheet of
paper on HACKETT's
desk)
Did you see the overnights on the
Network News? It has an 8 in New
York and a 9 in L.A. and a 27 share
in both cities. Last night, Howard
Beale went on the air and yelled
bullshit for two minutes, and I
can tell you right now that tonight's
show will get a 30 share at least.
I think we've lucked into something.
DIANA

Yes, I think we should put Beals back on the air tonight and keep him on. Did you see the Times this morning? Did you see the News? We've got press coverage on this you couldn't pay for in a million dollars. Frank, that dumb show jumped five rating points in one night! Tonight's show has got to be at least fifteen! We just increased our audience by twenty or thirty million people in one night. You're not going to get something like this dumped in your lap for the rest of your days, and you just can't piss it away! Howard Beals got up there last night and said what every American feels -- that he's tired of all the bullshit. He's articulating the popular rage. I want that show, Frank. I can turn that show into the biggest smash in television.

DIANA

What do you mean, you want that show? It's a news show. It's not your department.

DIANA

I see Howard Beals as a latter-day prophet, a magnificent messianic figure, inveighing against the hypocracies of our times, a strip savonarola, Monday through Friday. I tell you, Frank, that could just go through the roof. And I'm talking about a six dollar cost per thousand show! I'm talking about a hundred, a hundred thirty thousand dollar minutes! Do you want to figure out the revenues of a strip show that sells for a hundred thousand bucks a minute? One show like that could pull this whole network right out of the hole! Now, Frank, it's being handed to us on a plate; let's not blow it!
HACKETT's intercom BUZZES.

HACKETT
(can intercom)
Yes? ... Tell him I'll be a few
minutes.
(clicks off, regards DIANA)
Let me think it over.

DIANA
Frank, let's not go to committee
about this. It's twenty after ten,
and we want to be in that studio
by half-past six. We don't want
to lose the momentum —

HACKETT
For God's sakes, Diana, we're
talking about putting a manifestly
irresponsible man on national
television. I'd like to talk to
Legal Affairs at least. And Herb
Thackeray and certainly Joe Donnelly
and Standards and Practices. And
you know I'm going to eyeball
Mr. Ruddy on this.
If I'm going to the mat with Ruddy,
I want to make sure of some of my
ground. I'm the one whose ass is
going on the line. I'll get back
to you, Diana.

64. INT: EXECUTIVE DINING ROOM - 12:20 P.M. 64.

A large room of white-lacquered tables, almost empty
save for the five men at one of the window tables, with
the spectacular view of midtown Manhattan.
The five are FRANK HACKETT, NELSON CHANEY, WALTER
AMUNSEN (General Counsel Network), ARTHUR GANOVICH
(VP Standards and Practices), and JOE CONNELLY (VP
Sales).

CHANEY
(who is standing)
I don't believe this! I don't
believe the top brass of a national
television network are sitting
around their Caesar Salads —

HACKETT
The top brass of a bankrupt national
television network, with projected
losses of close to a hundred and
fifty million dollars this year.
CHANNEY
I don't care how bankrupt! You can't seriously be proposing and the rest of us seriously considering putting on a pornographic network news show! The FCC will kill us!

HACKETT
Sit down, Nelson. The FCC can't do anything except rap our knuckles.

CHANNEY sits.

AMUNDESEN
I don't even want to think about the litigious possibilities, Frank. We could be up to our ears in lawsuits.

CHANNEY
The affiliates won't carry it --

HACKETT
The affiliates will kiss your ass if you can hand them a hit show.

CHANNEY
The popular reaction --

HACKETT
We don't know the popular reaction. That's what we have to find out.

CHANNEY
The New York Times --

HACKETT
The New York Times doesn't advertise on our network.

CHANNEY
(stands)
All I know is that this violates every canon of respectable broadcasting.

HACKETT
We're not a respectable network. We're a warehouse network, and we have to take whatever we can get.

CHANNEY
Well, I don't want any part of it.

(MORE)
CHANEE (Contd)
I don't fancy myself the president
of a whorehouse.

HACKETT
That's very commendable of you,
Nelson. Now, sit down. Your
indignation has been duly recorded,
you can always resign tomorrow.

CHANEE sits.

HACKETT (Contd)
Look, what in substance are we
proposing? — merely to add
editorial comment to our network
news show. Brinkley, Sevareid,
and Reasoner all have their columns.
So now Howard Beale will have his.
I think we ought to give it a shot.
Let's see what happens tonight.

DONELLY
Well, I don't want to be the
Babylonian messenger who has to
tell Max Schumacher about this.

HACKETT
(flagging a WAITER)
Max Schumacher doesn't work at
this network any more. Mr. Ruddy
fired him last night.
(to the WAITER)
A telephone, please —
(to his COLLEAGUES)
Bob McDonough's running the News
Division now —

A phone is placed before HACKETT, who promptly picks
it up and murmurs:

HACKETT (Contd)
(on phone)
Bob McDonough in News, please —

65. INT: MAX'S OFFICE — 1:40 P.M. 65.

MAX is on the phone and cleaning out his desk and
office at the same time. There are empty cartons
everywhere into which MAX is dumping his files. There
are piles of files on his desk, which he is skimming
through even as he talks on the phone —
MAX
(on phone)
— I'm just fine financially,
Fred. I cashed in my stock
options back in April when CC
and A took over the network...
(his other phone BUZZES)
That's my other phone, Fred, thanks
for calling —
(hangs up, picks up
the other phone)
MAX: Schumacher ... Hi, Dick,
how's everything at NBC? —

HOWARD walks in, carrying an 8 x 10 photograph —

MAX (Cont'd)
I don't know, Dick. I might teach,
I might write a book, whatever the
hell one does when one approaches
the autumn of one's years —

HOWARD puts the photograph on the desk in front of MAX.

MAX (Cont'd)
(studying the photograph)
My God, is that me? Was I ever
that young?
(on phone)
HOWARD: just showed me a picture
of the whole Ed Murrow gang when
I was at CBN. My God, Bob Scott,
Harry Reasoner, Cronkite, Hollebeke,
and that's you, Howard, right? —
I'll see you, Dick —
(hang up)

HOWARD
(points to the photo)
You remember this kid? He's the
kid I think you once sent out to
interview Cleveland Amory on
vivisection —

MAX
(beginning to shake
with laughter)
That's him — that's him —

They both begin wheezing with laughter. MILTON STEINMAN
pokes his head in —

STEINMAN
What the hell's so funny?
66. INT: ROOM 509 - EXECUTIVE OFFICES, NEWS DIVISION

BOB MCDONOUGH (VP Network News and interim head of the division) enters, frowning. There is a lot of PEOPLE spilling out from MAX SCHOFACHER's office from whence sounds of LAUGHTER and SHOUTING emanate. Even the SECRETARIES have left their desks to share the fun. MCDONOUGH, wondering what the hell it's all about, makes his way through the CRUSH at the door, murmuring: "Excuse me ... sorry, honey ... etc." When he finally gets through the outer office and into --

67. INT: MAX'S OFFICE

-- what he sees is a room filled with News Executives
-- MAX, HOWARD, HARRY HUNTER, WALTER GIANINI (Legal Affairs), MICHAEL SANDIES, MILTON STEINMAN, and a COUPLE of younger PRODUCERS, delightfully listening to this gang of middle-aged men remembering their maverick days --

MAX
-- I jump out of bed in my pajamas;
I grab my raincoat, run down the stairs, run out into the middle of the street, flag a cab. I jump in, I yell: "Take me to the middle of the George Washington Bridge!"

BOWL of LAUGHTER --

MAX (Contd)
-- The driver turns around, he says: "Don't do it, kid, you get your whole life ahead of you!"

The room ROCKS with LAUGHTER. When it subsides, BOB MCDONOUGH, standing in the doorway, says:

MCDONOUGH
Well, if you think that's funny, wait'll you hear this. I've just come down from Frank Nackett's office, and he wants to put Howard back on the air tonight. Apparently, the ratings jumped five points last night, and he wants Howard to go back on and do his angry-rant thing.

STEINMAN
What're you talking about?
McDONOUGH
I'm telling you — they want
Howard to go on yelling bullshit.
They want Howard to go on
spontaneously letting out his
anger, a latter-day prophet,
denouncing the hypocrisies
of our times —

HOWARD
Hey, that sounds pretty good —

MAX
Who's this they?

McDONOUGH
Mackett. Chaney was there, the
Legal Affairs guy, and that
girl from Programming.

MAX
Christenson? What's she got to
do with it?

GIANNINI (in b.g.)
You're kidding, aren't you, Bob?

McDONOUGH
I'm not kidding. I told them:
"We're running a news department
down there, not a circus. And
Howard Beale isn't a bearded lady.
And if you think I'll go along
with this bastardization of the
news, you can have my resignation
along with Max Schumacher's right
now. And I think I'm speaking
for Howard Beale and everybody
else down there in News."

HOWARD
Hold it, McDonough, that's my
job you're turning down. I'll go
nuts without some kind of work.
What's wrong with being an angry
prophet denouncing the hypocrisies
of our times? What do you think,
Max?

MAX
Do you want to be an angry prophet
denouncing the hypocrisies of
our times?
SHERIDAN

Yeah, I think I'd like to be an angry prophet denouncing the hypocrisies of our times.

MAX

Then grab it.

66. INT: 5TH FLOOR CORRIDOR - 3:00 P.M.

MR. RUDY, slim, slight, white-haired, imperially elegant in banker's gray, comes down the corridor towards Room 509. A VIDEOTAPE MAN, popping out of one of the rooms that Gebuch off this corridor, quickly stops, stands still --

VIDEOTAPE MAN

(murmurs)

Afternoon, Mr. Ruddy --

RUDY

(murmurs)

Good afternoon.

He passes on towards --

69. INT: ROOM 509

as RUDY enters. The SIX SECRETARIES peeping away at their typewriters all pause to murmur Hewd --

SECRETARIES

Good afternoon, Mr. Ruddy --

Good afternoon, Mr. Ruddy -- etc.

-- as RUDY passes through to --

70. INT: MAX'S OUTER OFFICE

where MITZI (MAX'S SECRETARY), at her desk, murmurs:

MITZI

He's waiting for you, Mr. Ruddy --

RUDY

(murmurs)

Thank you.

He goes into --

71. INT: MAX'S OFFICE

-- and closes the door.
Nelson Chaney tells me Seale may actually go on the air this evening.

MAX

As far as I know, Howard's going to do it. Are you going to sit still for this, Ed?

RUDY

(takes a folded piece of paper from his inside jacket pocket)

Yes. I think Hackett's overstepped himself. There's some kind of corporate maneuvering going on, Max. Hackett is clearly forcing a confrontation. That would account for his behavior at the stockholders' meeting. However, I think he's making a serious mistake with this Beale business. C. C. and A. would never make such an open act of brigandage, especially against the News Division. They are specifically enjoined against any manipulation of the News Division in the consent decree. I suspect C. C. and A. will be upset by Hackett's presumptuousness, certainly Mr. Jensen will. So I'm going to let Hackett have his head for awhile. He just might lose it over this Beale business.

(places the paper on Max's desk)

I'd like you to reconsider your resignation.

(moves to the couch, sits, crosses his legs, murmurs)

I have to assume Hackett wouldn't take such steps without some support on the C. C. and A. board. I'll have to go directly to Mr. Jensen. When that happens, I'm going to need every friend I've got. And I certainly don't want Hackett's people in all the divisional positions. So I'd like you to stay on, Max.

MAX

Of course, Ed.
MAX sitting alone behind his desk in a dark office lit
only by his desk lamp, watching the Network News Show
starring HOWARD BEALE on his office console —

NARRATION
The initial response to the new
Howard Beale was not auspicious.
The press was without exception
hostile and industry reaction
negative. The ratings for the
Thursday and Friday show were
both 14 and with a 37 share,
but Monday's rating dropped
two points, clearly suggesting
the novelty had worn off —

On the office console, Howard Beale doesn't seem too
much different than he had always been. He swells,
frowns, seems to be muttering —

NARRATION (Cont'd)
— Indeed, Howard Beale played
his new role of latter-day
prophet poorly. He was, after
all, a newsmen, not an author.
He was uncertain, uncomfortable,
sometimes inaudible. The general
feeling around the network was
that this new Howard Beale would
be aborted in a matter of days —

On the office console, the Network News Show has come
to an end; the CLOSING THEME MUSIC emerges into
SOUND, and the show's CREDITS begin to roll. MAX
clicks off the set, folds his hands on the desk and
sits glumly regarding his folded hands. After a
moment, he becomes aware of another presence in the
room and looks to the doorway where DIANA CHRISTENSEN
is standing, wearing a white blouse and dark slacks
and carrying her jacket and purse. If we haven't
already noticed how attractive she is, we do now —
standing as she is, framed in the doorway, backlit
by the lights of the deserted common room, suddenly
sensuous, even voluptuous.
DIANA
(entering the office)
Did you know there are a number
of psychics working as licensed
brokers on Wall Street?
(she sits across from
MAX, fishes a cigarette
out of her purse)
some of them counsel their clients
by use of Tarot cards. They're
all pretty successful, even in a
bear market and selling short.
I met one of them a couple of
weeks ago and thought of doing
a show around her -- The Wayward
Witch of Wall Street, something
like that. But, of course, if
her tips were any good, she
could wreck the market. So I
called her this morning and
asked her how she was on
predicting the future. She said
she was occasionally prescient.
"For example," she said, "I
just had a fleeting vision of
you sitting in an office with
a craggy middle-aged man with
whom you are or will be
emotionally involved."
And here I am.

MAX
She does all this with Tarot cards?

DIANA
No, this one operates on
parapsychology. She has trance-
like episodes and feels things
in her energy field. I think
this lady can be very useful
to you, Max.

MAX
In what way?

DIANA
Well, you put on news shows,
and here's someone who can
predict tomorrow's news for you.
Her name, aptly enough, is Sibyl.
Sybil the Seerseer. You could
give her two minutes of trance
at the end of a Howard Selleck show,
say once a week, Friday, which is
(MORE)
DIANA (Cont'd)  
suggestively occult, and she  
could oracular. Then next week,  
everyone tunes in to see how  
good her predictions were.  

MAX  
Maybe she could do the weather.  

DIANA  
(smirks)  
Your network news show is going  
to need some help, Max, if it's  
going to hold. Beale doesn't  
do the angry man thing well at  
all. He's too kvetchy. He's  
being irascible. We want a  
prophet, not a curmudgeon. He  
should do more apocalyptic doom.  
I think you should take on a  
couple of writers to write some  
jeremiads for him. I see you  
don't fancy my suggestions.  

MAX  
Well, you're not being serious,  
are you?  

DIANA  
Oh, I'm serious. The fact is,  
I could make your Beale show the  
highest-rated news show in  
television, if you'd let me  
have a crack at it.  

MAX  
What do you mean, have a crack  
at it?  

DIANA  
I'd like to program it for you,  
develop it. I wouldn't interfere  
with the actual news. But teevie  
is show biz, Max, and even the  
news has to have a little  
showmanship.  

MAX  
My God, you are serious.  

DIANA  
I watched your six o'clock news  
today -- it's straight tabloid.  
You had a minute and a half on  
(MORE)
that lady riding a bike naked in Central Park. On the other hand, you had less than a minute of hard national and international news. It was all sex, scandal, brutal crimes, sports, children with incurable diseases and lost puppies. So I don't think I'll listen to any protestations of high standards of journalism. You're right down in the street soliciting audiences like the rest of us. All I'm saying is, if you're going to hustle, at least do it right. I'm going to bring this up at tomorrow's network meeting, but I don't like network hassles, and I was hoping you and I could work this out between us. That's why I'm here right now.

MAX
(sighs)
And I was hoping you were looking for an emotional involvement with a crazy middle-aged man.

DIANA
I wouldn't rule that out entirely.

They appraise each other for a moment; clearly, there are the possibilities of something more than a professional relationship here.

MAX
Well, Diana, you bring all your ideas up at the meeting tomorrow. Because, if you don't, I will. I think Howard is making a goddamn fool of himself, and so does everybody Howard and I know in this industry. It was a fluke. It didn't work. Tomorrow, Howard goes back to the old format and this gutter depravity comes to an end.

DIANA
(smiles, stands)
Okay.

She leans forward to flick her ash into MAX's desk ash tray, Half-shaded as she is by the cone of light.
issuing from the desk lamp, it is nipple-clear; she is bru-less, and MAX cannot help but note the assertive swell of her body. DIANA moves languidly to the door and would leave but MAX suddenly says:

MAX
I don't get it, Diana. You hung around till half-past seven and came all the way down here just to pitch a couple of looney show biz ideas when you knew goddam well I'd laugh you out of this office. I don't get it. What's your scene in this anyway?

DIANA moves back to the desk and crushes her cigarette out in the desk tray.

DIANA
Max, I don't know why you suddenly changed your mind about resigning, but I do know Hackett's going to throw you out on your ass in January. My little visit here tonight was just courtesy made out of respect for your stature in the industry and because I've personally admired you ever since I was a kid majoring in speech at the University of Missouri. But sooner or later, now or in January, with or without you, I'm going to take over your network news show, and I figured I might as well start tonight.

MAX
I think I once gave a lecture at the University of Missouri.

DIANA
I was in the audience. I had a terrible school-girl crush on you for a couple of months. She smiles, glides to the doorway again.

MAX
Listen, if we can get back for a moment to that gypsy who predicted all that about (MORE)
MAX (Cont’d)
emotional involvements and
middle-aged men -- what're
you doing for dinner tonight?

DIANA pauses in the doorway, and then moves back
briskly to the desk, picks up the telephone receiver,
taps out a telephone number, waits for a moment --

DIANA
(on phone)
I can’t make it tonight, luv,
call me tomorrow.

She returns the receiver to its cradle, looks at MAX;
their eyes lock.

MAX
Do you have any favorite
restaurant?

DIANA
I eat anything.

MAX
Son of a bitch, I get the
feeling I’m being made.

DIANA
You sure are.

MAX
I better warn you I don’t do
anything on the first date.

DIANA
We'll see.

She moves for the door. MAX stares down at his desk.

MAX
(cutters)
Schmuck, what’re you getting into?

He sighs, stands, flicks off his desk lamp.

INT: A RESTAURANT

MAX and DIANA at the end of their dinner. In fact,
MAX is flagging a WAITER for two coffees, black --

DIANA
(plying away at
her ice cream)
You’re married, surely.
MAX
Twenty-six years. I have a
married daughter in Seattle who’s
six months pregnant, and a
younger girl who starts at
Northwestern in January.

DIANA
-- Well, Max, here we are --
middle-aged man reaffirming his
middle-aged manhood and a
terrified young woman with a
father complex. What sort of
script do you think we can
make out of this?

MAX
Terrified, are you?

DIANA
(pushes her ice cream
away, regards him
affably)
Terrified out of my skull, man.
I’m the hip generation, man,
righ on, cool, groovy, the
greening of America, man,
remember all that? God, what
humbugs we were. In my first
year at college, I lived in a
commune, dropped acid daily,
joined four radical groups and
fucked myself silly on a bare
wooden floor while somebody
chanted Sufi suras. I lost six
weeks of my sophomore year
because they put me away for
trying to jump off the top floor
of the Administration Building.
I’ve been on the top floor ever
since. Don’t open any windows
around me because I just might
jump out. Am I scaring you off?

MAX
No.

DIANA
I was married for four years and
pretended to be happy and had
six years of analysis and pretended
to be sane. My husband ran off
with his boyfriend, and I had an
affair with my analyst. He told
(MORE)
DIANA (Contd)

me I was the worst lay he had
ever had. I can't tell you how
many men have told me what a
lousy lay I am. I apparently
have a masculine temperament.
I arouse quickly, consummate
prematurely, and can't wait to
get my clothes back on and get
cut of that bedroom. I seem
to be inept at everything except
my work. I'm goddam good at my
work and so I confine myself
to that. All I want out of life
is a 30 share and a 20 rating.

The WAITER brings the coffee.

MAX

(sipping coffee)
The corridor gossip says you're
Frank Hackett's backstage girl.

DIANA

(sipping coffee, smiles)
I'm not. Frank's a corporation
man, body and soul. He surrendered
his spirit to C. C. and A. years
ago. He's a marketing-merchandising-
management machine, precision-
tooled for corporate success.
He's married to one C. C. and A.
board member's daughter, he
attends another board member's
church, his children aged two
and five are already enrolled
in a third board member's alma
mater. He has no loves, lusts
or allegiances that are not
consummately directed towards
becoming a C. C. and A. board
member himself. So why should
he bother with me? I'm not
even a stockholder.

MAX

How about your loves, lusts
and allegiances?

They smile at each other.

DIANA

Is your wife in town?
MAX

Yes.

DIANA

Well, then, we better go to my place.

75. INT: DIANA'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM

Dark. Blinds drawn. MAX and DIANA lying naked on a mass of sheets, both still puffing from what must have been an ebullient bout in the sack —

DIANA

Now, and you were the guy who kept telling me how he was going to be a grandfather in three months.

MAX

Hell, you were the girl who kept telling me what a lousy lay she was.

She bounces out of bed and stands naked in the shadowed darkness, arms akimbo, looking happily down at MAX on the bed.

DIANA

All right, enough of this love-making. Are you going to let me take over your network news show or not?

MAX

(laughs)

Forget it. Tomorrow, Howard Beale goes back to being a straight anchorman. I'll tell him first thing tomorrow morning.

76. INT: HOWARD BEALE'S BEDROOM

HOWARD BEALE, fast asleep in his dark, empty, hushed room.

HOWARD

(suddenly)

I can't hear you. You'll have to speak a little louder.

He gets up on one elbow, eyes still closed, cocks his head as if he were listening to someone mumbling from the rocking chair across the room.
HOWARD (Cont'd)
You're kidding. How the hell
would I know what the truth is?

He sits up, gets out of bed, walks around and perches
on the foot of the bed, stares at the empty rocker,
rods his head as if he is following a complicated
argument —

HOWARD (Cont'd)
What the hell is this, the
burning bush? For God's sake,
I'm not Moses —

Whoever he thinks he is talking to apparently gets up
and crosses the room to the overstuffed chair and sits
there, since HOWARD follows this movement with his eyes
and finally gets up and perches on the side of his bed
in order to continue the curious conversation.

HOWARD (Cont'd)
Why me? I'm a deteriorating
old man.

HOWARD listens, sighs, shrugs:

HOWARD
Okay.

77. EXT: IMS BUILDING - TUESDAY, OCT. 1, 9:00
A.M. - DAY
Bright sunny day to establish the next morning.

78. INT: ROOM 517 - NIGHTLY NEWS ROOM
MAX enters. The usual morning hum of activity. PHONES
RING. HARRY HUNTER, going over some wire releases with
his HEAD WRITER, looks up as MAX approaches —

MAX
Howard in his office?
(HUNTER nods)
Harry, I'm killing this whole
screwball angry prophet thing.
We're going back to straight
news as of tonight's show.

HUNTER
Okay.

MAX veers off for —
79. INT: HOWARD'S OFFICE

Howard at his typewriter, clicking away. MAX leans in through the open doorway —

MAX
Howard, we're going back to straight news tonight. You don't have to be the mad prophet any more.

HOWARD turns to regard MAX in the doorway with a sweet smile.

MAX
This gives MAX pause, to say the least.

MAX
You must make what, Howard?

HOWARD
I must make my witness. I must lead the people from the waters. I must stay their stampede to the sea.

MAX takes a step into the office and closes the door.

MAX
You must stay their what, Howard?

HOWARD
I must stay their headlong suicidal stampede to the sea.

MAX
(repeats Howard for a moment)
Well, hallelujah, Howard, are you putting me on or have you flipped or what?

HOWARD
(serenely)
I have heard voices, Max.

MAX
You have heard voices. Swell.
What kind of voices, Howard?

(MUSt)
MAX (Cont'd)
Still small voices in the night
on the mighty thunder of God?
Howard, you've finally done it.
You've gone over the edge.
You're nuts.

HOWARD
I have been called. This is
my witness, and I must make it.

MAX
Not on my goddamn network news
show.

He opens the door, goes back into --

80. INT: NIGHTLY NEWS ROOM

-- where he stops, turns and wheels back to HOWARD's
office --

MAX
Now, look, Howard, I'm not
kidding around about this.
You go back to being a straight
anchorman tonight. I'm the
tone you're hearing now, and
this voice is telling you
we're doing a straight news
show from now on. Okay?

HOWARD seems not to have heard him, continues pecking-
way at his typewriter. MAX scowls, turns, exits --

81. INT: NETWORK NEWS CONTROL ROOM

The wall CLOCK says 6:39. The control room STAFF are
all at their posts murmuring away. HARRY HUNTER is
on the phone --

HUNTER
(muttering into phone)
Max, I'm telling you he's fine.
He's been sharp all day, he's
been funny as hell. He had
everybody cracking up at the
rundown meeting ... I told him,
I told him ...}

82.

On the SHOW MONITOR, HOWARD BEALE at his desk,
shuffles his papers, looks up for his cue. The
wall CLOCK clicks to 6:48, the DIRECTOR murmurs into
his mike. HOWARD looks out from the screen to his vast audience and says:

HOWARD (ON MONITOR)

Last night, I was awakened from a fitful sleep at shortly after two o'clock in the morning by a shrill, sibilant, faceless voice that was sitting in my rocking chair. I couldn't make it out at first in the dark bedroom. I said: "I'm sorry, you'll have to talk a little louder." And the Voice said to me: "I want you to tell the people the truth, not an easy thing to do; because the people don't want to know the truth." I said: "You're kidding. How the hell would I know what the truth is?" I mean, you have to picture me sitting there on the foot of the bed talking to an empty rocking chair. I said to myself: "Howard, you are some kind of bango-brain sitting here talking to an empty chair." But the Voice said to me: "Don't worry about the truth. I'll put the words in your mouth." And I said: "What is this, the burning bush? For God's sake, I'm not Moses." And the Voice said to me: "And I'm not God, what's that got to do with it -- ."
HOWARD (ON CONSOLE)
And the Voice said to me: "We're not talking about eternal truth or absolute truth or ultimate truth! We're talking about impermanent, transient, human truth! I don't expect you people to be capable of truth! But, goddamit, you're at least capable of self-preservation! That's good enough! I want you to go out and tell the people to preserve themselves -- "

MAX
(mutters on phone)
Right now, I'm trying to remember the name of that psychiatrist that took care of him when his wife died --

05. INT: STUDIO - NETWORK NEWS
TIGHT SHOT OF HOWARD, his voice rising, his eyes glowing with increasing fervor --

HOWARD
(growing fever)
And I said to the Voice: "Why me?"
And the Voice said: "Because you're on television, dummy! --"

86. INT: DIANA'S OFFICE
DIANA watching HOWARD on her CONSOLE --

DIANA
Beautiful

HOWARD (ON CONSOLE)
"You have forty million Americans listening to you; after tonight's show, you could have fifty million. For Pete's sake, I don't expect you to walk the land in sackcloth and ashes preaching the Armageddon. You're on TeeVee, man! --"

87. INT: MAX'S OFFICE
MAX, no longer on the phone, is leafing through a loose-leaf address book --
MAX taps out a telephone number on his private line ---

MAX (on phone)
Doctor Sindall? My name is Max Schumacher, I'm at the Union Broadcasting Systems, and I hope you remember me, I'm a friend of Howard Beale when you treated for a few months last year ---

88. INT: FIFTH FLOOR CORRIDOR

as HOWARD and HARRY HUNTER, followed by the rest of the control room STAFF, come out of the stairway and head down the corridor to ---

89. INT: ROOM 517 - NIGHTLY NEWS ROOM

where HUNTER and HOWARD move towards HOWARD's office while the rest of the control room CREW disperse to their own desks and to exchange muttered comments with those Nightly News PERSONNEL still at their desks. HOWARD walks straight as a ramrod, eyes uplifted, serene to the point of beatitude. He and HUNTER go into ---

90. INT: HOWARD'S OFFICE

where MAX is sitting, waiting on the couch. He stands ---

MAX
Close the door, Harry ---

HUNTER does so.

MAX (Contd)
Sit down, Howard. Howard, I'm taking you off the air. I called your psychiatrist.

HOWARD
(serene, sits behind his desk)
What's happening to me, Max, isn't mensurate in psychiatric terms.
MAX
I think you're having a breakdown, require treatment, and Dr. Sindell agrees.

HOWARD
This is not a psychotic episode. It is a cleansing moment of clarity. (stands, an imbued man)
I am imbued, Max. I am imbued with some special spirit. It's not a religious feeling at all. It is a shocking eruption of great electrical energy! I feel vivid and flashing as it suddenly I had been plugged into some great cosmic electromagnetic field. I feel connected to all living things, to flowers, birds, to all the animals of the world and even to some great unseen living force, what I think the Hindus call prana.

(he stands rigidly erect, his eyes staring mindlessly out, his face revealing the anguish of so transcendental a state)
It is not a breakdown. I have never felt so orderly in my life! It is a shattering and beautiful sensation! It is the exalted flow of the space-time continuum, save that it is spaceless and timeless and of such loneliness! I feel on the verge of some great ultimate truth.
(he stares haggardly at MAX, his breath coming with great difficulty, now; he shouts)
You will not take me off the air for now or for any other spaceless time!

He promptly falls in a dead swoon onto the floor.

MAX
(hurrying to his friend's prostrate form)

Jesus Christ --
HUNTER
(from the door)
Is he okay?

MAX
(pent over HOWARD)
He's breathing anyway. I'll have to take him to my house again for the night --

A CRASH OF THUNDER --

91. INT: MAX'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

THUNDER CRASHES outside. RAIN pelts against the windows. The room is dark. MAX and his wife, LOUISE, are fast asleep in their hushed room. CAMERA PANS, DOLIES slowly out of the bedroom and into --

92. INT: LIVING ROOM

Dark, hushed, sleeping. HOWARD is asleep on the living room couch. Or rather he was asleep, for he now slowly sits up, then stands in his borrowed pajamas, goes to the hall closet, fetches out a raincoat, unchains, unbolts and unlocks the front door of the apartment, and goes out --

93. EXT: A STREET IN THE EAST 60'S - OVERCAST DAY

- WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 2 - 7:30 A.M.

Another CRASH and RUMBLE of THUNDER. RAIN slashes through the streets. The sky is dark and lowering --

94. INT: MAX'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM

ALARM CLOCK BUZZING. MRS. LOUISE SCHUMACHER, a handsome matron of 50, clicks it off and gets out of bed. MAX turns in the bed, sleeps on. THUNDER and RAIN o.s. LOUISE stands sleepily for the bathroom, pauses, then goes out into the --

INT: BACK HALLWAY

-- and down that to --

INT: LIVING ROOM

-- where she stands, frowning. The couch, which had been made up for a bed, has clearly been slept in but is now empty. She looks back up the hallway to the guest bathroom. The door is open, and there is obviously nobody in the bathroom. She pads across the living room-dining room area and pokes her head into the kitchen, and then back to the back hallway,
pauses a moment outside her daughter's closed bedroom
doors, opens it, locks it, closes it and then returns to --

INT: THE BEDROOM

She sits on MAX's side of the bed, shakes him awake.

LOUISE
Wake up, Max, because Howard's
gone. I'll make you some coffee.

She moves off.

MAX
(mutters)
Shit.

He slowly sits up.

INT: FRANK HACKETT'S OFFICE

HACKETT in a rage, shouting at MAX slumped in a soft
chair. Others in the room are DIANA and HERB
THACKERAY.

HACKETT
(rage)
What do you mean you don't know
where he is? The son of a bitch
is a hit, goddammit! Over two
thousand phone calls! Go down
to the mailroom! As of this
minute, over fourteen thousand
telegrams! The response is
sensational! Herb, tell him --

(THACKERAY starts to
tell him, but
HACKETT roars on)

Herb's phone hasn't stopped
ringing! Every goddam affiliate
from Albuquerque to Sandusky!
The response is sensational!

(Thatcher's phone rings,
HACKETT seizes it)

What? ... All right...

(rage)
It's your office, Herb. You
better get back there.

THACKERAY exits. HACKETT roars on --
BACKETT (Contd)

Moldanian called me! Joe
Donnelly called me! We've got
a goddam hit, goddam it! Diana,
show him the Times! We even
got an editorial in the holy
to Morality!" That crazy son of
a bitch, Beale, has caught on!
So don't tell me you don't know
where he is!

MAX

(roaring back)
I don't know where he is! He
may be jumping off a roof for
all I know. The man is insane.
He's no longer responsible for
himself. He needs care and
treatment. And all you
grave robbers care about is
he's a hit!

DIANA

You know, Max, it's just possible
that he isn't insane, that he is,
in fact, imbued with some special
spirit.

MAX

My God, I'm supposed to be
the romantic; you're supposed
to be the hard-bitten realist!

DIANA

All right. Howard Beale obviously
fills a void. The audience out
there obviously wants a prophet,
even a manufactured one, even
if he's as mad as Moses. By
tomorrow, he'll have a 50 share,
maybe even a 60 share. Howard
Beale is processed instant Fox,
and right now it looks like he
may just go over bigger than
Mary Tyler Moore.

MAX

I'm not putting Howard back on
the air.

DIANA

It's not your show any more,
Max, it's mine.
MAX
You're nuts. You're nuttier
than Howard!

HACKETT
I gave her the show, Schumacher.
I'm putting the network news show
under programming. Mr. Ruddy
has had a mild heart attack and
is not taking calls. In his
absence, I'm making all network
decisions, including one I've
been wanting to make a long time
—you're fired. I want you
out of this building by noon.
I'll leave word with the
security guards to throw you
out if you're still here.

MAX
Well, let's just say, fuck you,
Hackett. You want me out, you're
going to have to drag me out
kicking and screaming. And the
whole news division will walk
out kicking and screaming
With me.

HACKETT
You think they're going to quit
their jobs for you? Not in
this depression, buddy.

MAX
When Ruddy gets back, he'll
have your ass.

HACKETT
I got a hit, Schumacher, and
Ruddy doesn't count any more.
He was hoping I'd fall on my
face with this silly show, but
I didn't. It's a big, fat,
big-titted hit, and I don't have
to waffle around with Ruddy any
more. If he wants to take me
up before the C. C. and A.
board, let him. All they know
at C. C. and A. is they've got
a network that's in the shithouse
for a hundred and three million
dollars, and I'm going to hand
them this demented Howard Seale
show that's going to put this
(Murphy)
network into profit. Do you think Ruddy's stupid enough to go to the C. C. and A. board and say: "I'm taking our one hit show off the air?" And comes November Fourteen, I'm going to be standing up there at the annual C. C. and A. management review meeting, and I'm going to announce projected earnings for this network for the first time in five years. And, believe me, Mr. Jansen will be sitting there rocking back and forth in his little chair, and he's going to say: "That's very good, Frank, keep it up." So don't have any illusions about who's running this network from now on. You're fired. I want you out of your office before noon or I'll have you thrown out.

MAX
(to DIANA)
And you go along with this?

DIANA
Well, Max, I told you I didn't want a network hassle over this. I told you I'd much rather work the Beale show out just between the two of us.

MAX
(stands)
Well, let's just say, fuck you too, honey.
(to HACKETT)
Howard Beale may be my best friend! I'll go to court. I'll put him in a hospital before I let you exploit him like a carnival freak.

HACKETT
You get your psychiatrists, and I'll get mine.

MAX
heading for the door)
I'm going to spread this whole
(MORE)
MAX (Contd)
seeking business in every paper
and on every network, independent,
group, and affiliated station in
this country. I'm going to make
a lot of noise about this.

HACKETT
Great! We need all the press
we can get.

MAX exits. HACKETT calls his intercom.

HACKETT (Contd)
(on intercom)
Get me Mr. Cabell --
(to DIANA)
Something going on between
you and Schumacher?

DIANA
(sighs)
Not any more.

HACKETT
(his PHONE BUZZES,
he picks it up)
Tom, Howard Seale has disappeared.
Tell Harriman to prepare a big
statement for the news media.
And call the cops and tell them
to find the crazy son of a bitch --

96. EXT: UBS BUILDING - SIXTH AVENUE - NIGHT - 6:40 P.M.

THUNDER CRASHES -- RAIN lashes the street. PEDESTRIANS
struggle against the slashing rain. The streets glisten
wetly, the heavy TRAFFIC heading upown crashes and
HONKS along, erratic enfilades of headlights in the
shiny, black streets --

97. CLOSER ANGLE

of entrance to UBS Building. HOWARD SEALE,
wearin a coat over his pajamas, drenched to the
skin, his mop of gray hair plastered in streaks to
his brow, hunched against the rain, climbs the steps
and pushes the glass door at the entrance and goes
into --

98. INT: UBS BUILDING - LOBBY

TWO SECURITY GUARDS at the desk watch HOWARD pass --
SECURITY GUARD
How do you do, Mr. Beale?

HOWARD stops, turns, stares hazardously at the SECURITY GUARD.

HOWARD
(mad as a loon)
I have to make my witness.

SECURITY GUARD
(an agreeable fellow)
Sure thing, Mr. Beale.

HOWARD plods off to the elevators.

INT: NETWORK NEWS CONTROL ROOM

Murmured, efficient activity as in previous scenes.
DIANA stands in the back in the shadows. On the
SHOW MONITOR, JACK SNOWDEN, BEALE'S replacement,
has been doing the news straight --

SNOWDEN (ON CONSOLE)
... the Vice President designate
was on the road today and stopped
off in Provo, Utah, and, in a
speech in the basketball arena
at Brigham Young University --

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
Five seconds --

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR
Twenty-five in Provo --

DIRECTOR
And ... two --

SNOWDEN (ON MONITOR)
Mr. Rockefeller had some strong
words to say about the Arab oil-
producing nations. More on that
story from Edward Douglas --

All this is UNDER and OVERLAPPED by HARRY HUNTER
answering a call on his phone --

HUNTER
(on phone)
Yeah? ... Okay --
(hangs up, to DIANA)
He came in the building about
five minutes ago.
DIRECTOR
Get ready to roll her --

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
Ten seconds coming to one --

DIANA
Tell Snowden if he comes in the
studio to let him go on.

HUNTER
(to the DIRECTOR)
Did you get that, Gene?

The DIRECTOR nods, passes on the instructions to his
A.D. on the studio floor. On the SHOW MONITOR, we are
seeing footage of Rockefeller crowding his way to the
speaker's rostrum, and we are hearing the VOICE of
Edward Douglas in Provo, Utah --

DOUGLAS
(on the phone)
This was Rockefeller's first
public appearance since he was
named Vice President designate,
and he spoke sharply about
inflation and high Arab oil
prices --

On the SHOW MONITOR, Rockefeller flips onto the
screen to say --

ROCKEFELLER (ON MONITOR)
Perhaps the most dramatic
evidence of the political impact
on inflation is the action by the
OPEC countries and the Arab oil
countries in arbitrarily raising
the price of oil four hundred
percent --

Nobody in the control room is paying too much attention
to Rockefeller; they are all watching the double bank
of black-and-white monitors which show HOWARD SEALS
entering the studio, drenched, hunched, staring gauntly
off into his own space, moving with single-minded
purpose across the studio floor past cameras and
cables and nervous CAMERAMEN, SOUND MEN, ELECTRICIANS,
ASSISTANT DIRECTORS and ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS, to his
desk which is being vacated for him by JACK SNOWDEN.
On the SHOW MONITOR, the film clip of Rockefeller
has come to an end.

And one --

DIRECTOR
and, suddenly, the obsessed face of HOWARD BEALE, gaunt, haggard, red-eyed with worldy fervor, hair streaked and plastered on his brow, manifestly mad, fills the MONITOR SCREEN.

HOWARD (ON MONITOR)
I don't have to tell you things are bad. Everybody knows things are bad. It's a depression.

Everybody's out of work or scared of losing their job, the dollar buys a nickel's worth, banks are going bust, shopkeepers keep a gun under the counter, punks are running wild in the streets, and there's nobody anywhere who seems to know what to do, and there's no end to it. We know the air's unfit to breathe and our food is unfit to eat, and we sit and watch our tee-vees while some local newscaster tells us today we had fifteen homicides and sixty-three violent crimes, as if that's the way it's supposed to be.

We all know things are bad.

Worse than bad. They're crazy. It's like everything's going crazy. So we don't go out any more. We sit in the house, and slowly the world we live in gets smaller, and all we ask is please, at least leave us alone in our own living room. Let me have my toaster and my tee-vee and my hair-dryer and my steel-belted radials, and I won't say anything, just leave us alone.

Well, I'm not going to leave you alone. I want you to get mad --

ANOTHER ANGLE showing the rapt attention of the PEOPLE in the control room, especially of DIXIA

HOWARD (Cont'd)
I don't want you to riot. I don't want you to wash your congressmen. Because I wouldn't know what to tell you to write. I don't know what to do about the depression and the inflation and the defense budget and the Russians (MORE)
and crime in the street. All I know is first you got to get mad. You're got to say: 'I'm mad as hell and I'm not going
to take this any more. I'm a human being, goddammit. My life has value,' So I want you to
get up now. I want you to get out of your chairs and go to
the window. Right now. I want you to go to the window, open
it, and stick your head out and yell. I want you to yell:
"I'm mad as hell and I'm not going to take this any more!"

Diana
(grabs Hunter's shoulder)
How many stations does this
get out live to?

Hunter
Sixty-seven. I know it goes out
to Atlanta and Louisville,
I think --

Howard (on monitor)
-- Get up from your chairs.
Go to the window. Open it.
Stick your head out and yell
and keep yelling --

But Diana has already left the control room and is
scurrying down --

100. INT: CORRIDOR

-- yanking doors open, looking for a phone, which
she finds in --

101. INT: AN OFFICE

Diana
(seizing the phone)
Give me Stations Relations --
(the call goes through)

Herb, this is Diana Christensen, are you watching because I want
you to call every affiliate
Carrying this live -- ...
I'll be right up --
102. INT: ELEVATOR AREA - FIFTEENTH FLOOR

DIANA bursts out of the just-arrived elevator and strides down to where a clot of EXECUTIVES and OFFICE PERSONNEL are blocking an open doorway. DIANA pushes through to --

103. INT: THACKERAY'S OFFICE - STATIONS RELATIONS

HERB THACKERAY on the phone, staring up at HOWARD SEALE on his wall monitor --

HOWARD (ON MONITOR)
-- First, you have to get mad.
When you're mad enough --

Both THACKERAY's SECRETARY's office and his own office are filled with his STAFF. The Assistant VP Stations Relations, a 32-year-old fellow named RAY PITTSKY, is at the SECRETARY's desk, also on the phone. Another ASSISTANT VP is standing behind him on the SECRETARY's other phone --

DIANA
(shouting to THACKERAY)
Who are you talking to?

THACKERAY
WGGG, Atlanta --

DIANA
Are they yelling in Atlanta, Herb?

HOWARD (ON CONSOLE)
-- we'll figure out what to do about the Depression --

THACKERAY
(on phone)
Are they yelling in Atlanta, Ted?

104. INT: GENERAL MANAGER'S OFFICE - WGGG AFFILIATE

- ATLANTA

The GENERAL MANAGER of WGGG, Atlanta, a portly 58-year-old man, is standing by the open windows of his office, staring out into the gathering dusk, holding his phone. The station is located in an Atlanta suburb, but from far off across the foliage surrounding the station, there can be heard a faint RUMBLE. On his office console, HOWARD SEALE is saying --
HOWARD (ON CONSOLE)
— and the inflation and the oil crisis —

GENERAL MANAGER
(into phone)
Herb, so help me, I think they're yelling —

105. INT: TRACKERAY'S OFFICE

FITOFSKY
(at SECRETARY's desk,
on the phone)
They're yelling in Baton Rouge.

DIANA grabs the phone from him and listens to be people of Baton Rouge yelling their anger in the streets —

HOWARD (ON CONSOLE)
— Things have got to change.
But you can't change them unless you're mad. You have to get mad.
Go to the window —

DIANA
(gives phone back to FITOFSKY; her eyes glow with excitement)
The next time somebody asks you to explain what ratings are,
you tell them: that's ratings!
(exults)
Son of a bitch, we struck the mother lode!

106. INT: MAX'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

MAX, MRS. SCHNACHER, and their 17-year-old daughter, CAROLINE, watching the Network News Show —

HOWARD (ON THE SET)
— Stick your head out and yell.
I want you to yell: "I'm mad as hell and I'm not going to take this any more!"

CAROLINE gets up from her chair and heads for the living room window.

LOUISE SCHNACHER
Where are you going?
CAROLINE
I want to see if anybody's yelling.

BOWARD (ON TV SET)
Right now. Get up. Go to your window --

107.

CAROLINE opens the window and looks out on the rain-swept streets of the upper East Side, the bulging, anonymous apartment houses and the occasional brownstones. It is thunder dark; a distant clap of THUNDER CRASHES somewhere off and LIGHTNING shatters the dank darkness. In the sudden HUSH following the thunder, a thin voice down the block can be heard shouting:

THEN VOICE (G.G.)
I'm mad as hell and I'm not going to take this any more!

BOWARD (ON TV SET)
-- open your window --

MAX joins his daughter at the window. RAIN sprays against his face --

108. MAX'S P.O.V.

He sees occasional windows open, and, just across from his apartment house, a MAN opens the front door of a brownstone --

MAN
(shouts)
I'm mad as hell and I'm not going to take this any more!

OTHER SHOUTS are heard. From his twenty-third floor vantage point, MAX sees the erratic landscape of Manhattan buildings for some blocks, and, silhouetted REAWS in window after window, here, there, and then seemingly everywhere, SHOUTING cut into the slashing black RAIN of the streets --

VOICES
I'm mad as hell and I'm not going to take this any more!

A terrifying enormous CLAP of natural THUNDER, followed by a frantic brilliant FULGURATION of LIGHTNING; and now the gathering CHORUS of scattered SHOUTS seems to be coming from the whole, huddled, black horde of the
city's people, SCREAMING together in fury, an indistinguishable tidal roar of human rage as formidable as the natural THUNDER again ROARING, THUNDERING, RUMBLING above. It sounds like a Nuremberg rally, the air thick and trembling with it —

109. FULL SHOT - MAX

standing with his DAUGHTER by the open terrace window-doors, RAIN pouring against them, listening to the stupefying ROARS and THUNDERING rising from all around him. He closes his eyes, sighs, there's nothing he can do about it any more, it's out of his hands.

110. EXT: LOS ANGELES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 16 - 12:00 NOON - DAY

A jumbo 747 touches down at L.A. Airport —

NARRATION
By mid-October, the Howard Beale show had settled in at a 42 share, more than equalling all the other network news shows combined —

111. DIANA and BARBARA SCHLESINGER, carrying attache cases, scripts, hand luggage, deplane —

NARRATION
In the September rating book, the Howard Beale show was listed as the fourth highest-rated show of the month, surpassed only by All in the Family, Rhoda, and Chico and the Man — a phenomenal state of affairs for a news program —

112. EXT: UBS BUILDING - L.A. - DAY

A towering glass building on Santa Monica Boulevard. IDENTIFY.

NARRATION
And, on October the Sixteenth, Diana Christensen flew to Los Angeles —

113. INT: WEST COAST UBS BUILDING - A CONFERENCE ROOM

DIANA at a luncheon meeting (sandwiches and containers
of coffee), with her West Coast Programming Department.

NARRATION

-- for what the phone calls:
pow-wows and confabs with her
West Coast programming execs --

These are FOUR MEN and TWO WOMEN: GLENN KOSOFF and
BARBARA SCHLESINGER; the THREE OTHER MEN are the
Assistant VP Program Development West Coast, Head
of the Story Department West Coast, and a MAN from
Audience Research; the WOMAN is VP Daytime Programming
West Coast. They are all sitting around a typical
mod-shaped conference table except for DIANA who is
moving towards a large display board at the far end
of the table stretching the length of the wall. This
is an improvised programming "board." It shows --
through movable heavy cardboard pieces -- what all
four networks have on by the half hour for all seven
days of the week --

DIANA

Wednesday night looks weak on
all three of the other networks
for next September, so we
concentrate on Wednesday night.
We're going to expand the Howard
Beale show to an hour in
January, which'll give us a
hell of a lead-in to eight
O'clock. So, on Wednesday
nights, I want to follow that
with two strong dramatic hours,
no sit-coms, nothing lightweight --

BILL HERRON pokes his head into the room --

HERRON

(to DIANA)
I've got Lauren Hobbs' lawyer
on the phone. Is five-thirty okay,
and where would you like to meet,
here or at the hotel?

DIANA

(to SCHLESINGER)
Let's put by Norman at five --
(to HERRON)
Five-thirty is fine, and at my
-- office, if they don't mind.
(back to her "board"
and her exhortation
to the programming
people)

(MORE)
Diana (Contd)
-- What I want right now are movies of the week we can use for pilots.
I want five movies of the week ready by March at the outside, preferably sooner --

114. INT: UBS BUILDING WEST COAST - DIANA'S OFFICE

An utterly bland office kept for visiting firemen. Diana is behind the desk. Barbara Schlesinger is sitting on the couch. Glenn Kossoff is ushering two gentlemen out, spots someone in the outer office --

Kossoff (to anteroom)
By, come on in --

He ushers in a silver-haired, suntanned, fresh-from-the-tennis-court man dressed in California elegance, rakish blazer, archetype of all L.A. television packagers -- by Norman --

Kossoff (Contd)
By, I think you know Barbara Schlesinger, but I don't know if you know Diana Christessen --

Norman
(sinking casually into the visitor's chair, crossing his legs, flashing a fully-capped set of teeth)
As a matter of fact, I think we met during the 1972 McGovern-for-President campaign, of which, I am proud to say, I was a principal fund raiser --

Diana
(leaning across the desk to shake his hand)
No, I'm afraid not. Now, By, we're running a little late, so I'd like to get right to it. I have an idea for an hour television series, and I'd like to lay it in your lap.
Here's the back-up story. The hero is white-collar middle-class, an architect, aviation engineer, anything, a decent low-riding man. He lives with his wife and daughter in a large city. He
DIANA (Continued)
wife and daughter are raped and he's mugged. He appeals to the police, but their hands are tied by the Warren Court decisions. There's nothing but pornography in the movies, and vandals bomb his church. The animals are taking over. So he decides to take the law into his own hands.
He buys a gun, practices till he's an expert. He takes up karate, becomes a black belt. He adept in Kung Fu and all the other martial arts. Now, he starts walking the streets of the city, decoying muggers into prey ing on him. He kung fu's them all. Pretty soon, he's joined by a couple of neighbors. What we've got now is a vigilante group.
That's the name of the show -- the Vigilantes. The idea is, if the law won't protect the decent people, they have to take the law into their own hands.

NORMAN
That may be the most fascist idea I've heard in years.

DIANA
Right.

NORMAN
And a shameless steal from a movie called "Death Wish."

DIANA
I know. And, so far, "Death Wish" has grossed seventeen million domestic. It obviously struck a pulse in Americans. I want to strike the same pulse. Now, let me finish, Hy. The format is simple. Every week a crime is committed, and the police are helpless to deal with it. The victim turns to our group of vigilantes. What the hell, it's FBI, Mission Impossible, Kojack, except the heroes are ordinary citizens, your neighbors and mine.

NORMAN
(standing)
I find the whole thing repulsive.
DIANA
You give me a pilot script we can use as a movie of the week for
January, and I'll commit to twelve segments on the basis of that script.

NORMAN
(turns)
You'll commit on the basis of the pilot script?

DIANA
That's what I said. That's a three million dollar commitment. I figure
you could skim a quarter of a million for yourself out of that. Of course,
we all know you're a highly principled political liberal, and you may find
this kind of show repulsive --

NORMAN
(slowly sitting again)
Well -- not necessarily. I deplore vigilant tactics, of course, but
the vigilant tradition is a profound, even proud tradition in the American
social fabric. This sort of program also offers opportunities for coming
to grips with the burning issues of our times, to do meaningful drama and
at the same time providing mass enter-
tainment.

DIANA
Beautiful, Hy.

NORMAN:
Who do I talk numbers with,
Charlie Kinkaid?

DIANA
Right. I'll call Charlie and tell
him we'll go to forty thousand
for the first script. If you come
in with anything good, Hy, I'll
slot you on Wednesday nights at
eight coming right off the Howard
Beale Show, and that's the best
lead-in you'll ever get.

NORMAN opens the door to leave, looks out into the
outer office, closes the door, turns to DIANA.
NORMAN
Is that Laureen Hobbs out there?
What the hell is Laureen Hobbs
doing out there?

DIANA
We're going to put the Communist
Party on prime-time television. By.

NORMAN
I wouldn't doubt it for a minute.

115.

He opens the door and goes out. On his heels, GLENN KOSSOFF is already ushering in BILL MURPHY, LAUREEN
HOBBS, (a handsome black woman of 35 in Afro and dash-
hiki); SAN HAYWOOD, (late 50's, a shaggy, unkempt law-
wer in the Clarence Darrow tradition, galluses, string-
tie, folksy drawl and all); a younger lawyer, ROBERT
MURPHY, (early 30's, Harvard intellectual type); and
THREE AGENTS from the WILLIAM MORRIS OFFICE named LENNY,
WALLIE and Ed. (all in their mid-30's, all wearing trim
blue suits and all indistinguishable from each other).

DIANA rises to greet them, extends her hand to LAUREEN
HOBBS --

DIANA
Christ, you brought half the William
Morris West Coast office with you.
I'm Diana Christiansen, a racist lackey
of the imperialist ruling circles.

LAUREEN
I'm Laureen Hobbs, a bad-ass Commie
bitch.

DIANA
Sounds like the basis of a firm
friendship.
(to KOSSOFF)
We're going to need more chairs --

In h.g., meanwhile, SCHLESINGER is exchanging hellos
with the THREE WILLIAM MORRIS AGENTS and is being in-
troduced to the LAWYERS and looking at party pictures
preferred to her by one of the agents. It's all jolly
as hell, a lot of chuckling and smiling --

SCHLESINGER
(in h.g.)
Anybody want coffee?
LENNIE
Black with Suearyl

KOSSOFF and a SECRETARY are hauling in chairs--

LAUREEN
(Introducing to DIANA)

This is my lawyer, Sam Haywood,
and his associate, Robert Murphy--

Handshakes, nods, smiles, everybody begins to sit. The
SECRETARY goes around taking coffee orders--

HAYWOOD
(an old union lawyer,
given to peroration)

Well, Mr. Christenson, just what
the hell's this all about? Be-
cause when a national television
network in the person of hubby
here--

(indicates HERNON)

-- comes to me and says he wants
to put the ongoing struggle of the
oppressed masses on prime-time
television, I have to regard this
advance--

More chairs are brought in. DIANA would answer HAYWOOD
but he booms along, beginning to hit his stride--

HAYWOOD (Contd)

I have to figure this as an anti-
thetical distraction. The thesis
here, if you follow me, is that
the capitalist state is in a ter-
minal condition now, and the anti-
thesis is the maturation of the
fascist state, and when the corre-
relative appendages of the fascist
state come and say to me they want
to give the revolution a weekly
hour of prime-time television,
I've got to figure this is pre-
ventive co-optation, right?--

The necessary chairs are in by now, and everyone is
seated. The SECRETARY has gone off to fetch the coffee.
A sudden RUSH follows HAYWOOD's Hegelian instruction,
and DIANA would answer, but HAYWOOD is now center-stage,
into the full swell of rhetoric--

HAYWOOD (Contd)
The ruling classes are running
scared, right? You turned the full
(MORE)
HAYWOOD (Cont’d)
force of your cosack cops and
paramilitary organs of repression
against us. But now the slave masters
hear the rumble of revolution in their
ears. So you have no alternative but
to co-opt us. Put us on teeves and
pull our fangs. And we’re supposed
to sell out, right? For your gang-
ster gold? Well, we’re not going to
sell out, baby! You can take your
fascist teeves and shove it right
up your paramilitary ass! I’m here
to tell you, we don’t sell out! We
don’t want your gold! We’re not
going on your teeves!

A moment of RUSH, in which everybody digests this open-
ing statement.

DIANA
(sighs, mutters)
Oh, shit, Mr. Haywood, if you’re not
interested in my offer, why the hell
did you bring two lawyers and three
agents from the William Morris office
along?

MURPHY
(Mr. Cool)
What Mr. Haywood was saying, Ms.
Christensen, was that our client,
Ms. Robbs, wants it up front that
the political content of the show
has to be entirely in her control.

DIANA
She can have it. I don’t give a
damn about the political content.

WALLIE
What kind of show’d you have in
mind, Diana?

DIANA
We’re interested in doing a weekly
dramatic series based on the Ecumen-
ical Liberation Army, and I’ll tell
you what the first show has to be --
a two-hour special or Mary Ann Gifford.
We open this two-hour special with
that bank ripoff footage, which is
terrific stuff, and then we spill

(MORE)
DIANA (Contd)

the story of how a rich young heiress
like Mary Ann Gifford becomes a
flaming revolutionary. Would you
people be interested in making such
a movie for us?

Everybody looks to LAUREEN ROBB.

LAUREEN

The Ecumenical Liberation Army is
an ultra-left sect creating political
cfusation with wildcat violence and
pseudo-insurrectionary acts, which
the Communist Party does not endorse.
The American masses are not yet ready
for open revolt. We would not want
to produce a television show cele-
brating historically devotional
terrorism.

DIANA

Better. I see the story this
way. Poor little rich girl kid-
apped by ultra-left sect. She
falls in love with the leader of
the gang, converts to his irrespon-
sible violence. But then she meets
you, understands the true nature of
the ongoing people's struggle for
a better society, and, in an emotion-
drenched scene, she leaves her devia-
tional lover and dedicates herself to
you and the historical inevitability
of the socialist state.

LAUREEN

(smiles)
That would be better, of course.

ED

What kind of numbers are we talking,
Diana?

DIANA

We'll give you our top deal, which
I think is two fifteen and twenty-
five. You'll have to talk to
Charlie Kirkland about that. But
as long as we're talking series
now, I'll tell you what I want.
I want a lot more film like the
bank ripoff the Ecumenicals sent

(MORE)
DIANA (Continued)
in. The way I see this series is
every week we open with the authen-
tic footage of an act of political
terrorism, taken on the spot and
in the actual moment; then we go
into the drama behind the opening
film footage. That's your job, Ms.
Hobbs. You've got to get the
Ecumenicals to bring in that film
for us. The network can't deal
with them directly. They are,
after all, wanted criminals.

LAUREEN
The Ecumenicals are an undisciplined
ultra-left gang, and the leader is
an eccentric to say the least. He
calls himself the Great Ahmed Khan
and wears a hussar's shako.

DIANA
Ms. Hobbs, I'm offering you an hour
of prime-time television every week
into which you can stick whatever
propaganda you want. We're talking
about thirty to fifty million people
a shot. That's a lot better than
handing out mimeographed pamphlets
on ghetto street corners.

LAUREEN
I'll have to take this matter to
the Central Committee, and I'd
better check this out with the
Great Ahmed Khan.

DIANA
I'll be in L.A. until Saturday, and
I'd like to get this thing rolling.

(Smiles at SCHLEINGER,
HERRON and KOSSOFF)
That's going to be our Wednesday
night... Seven to eight -- Howard
Beale; eight to nine -- the
Vigilantes; nine to ten -- the Mao
Tse Tung Hour.

KOSSOFF
God, fascism and the revolution all
on one night.

DIANA
(tired, rubs her eyes)
I suppose that's what's called
balanced programming.
116. EXT: LOS ANGELES - WATTS DISTRICT - A GHETTO STREET - NIGHT

LAUREEN HOBBs, sitting on the stoop of a peeling cot-
tage talking to another member of the Central Committee, a middle-aged white man named WITHERSPOON. The door behind them opens, and DOWLING, a young white man in his 20's, wearing a fatigue jacket and torn levis and dark sunglasses, pokes his head out:

DOWLING

Okay --

LAUREEN and WITHERSPOON rise, go up the steps and follow DOWLING into --

117. INT: THE ECUMENICALS' HEADQUARTERS - ENTRANCE

POVER

Dark. An absolute shambles. Cartons, crates, newspa-
papers and scraps of food have been littered about. A young black man, WATKINS, (early 20's), standing on the stairway to the second floor holding an army rifle), watches LAUREEN and WITHERSPOON following DOWLING, and himself follows them into --

118. INT: DINING ROOM

-- or what had been the dining room. A naked overhead bulb is the only light in here. Sitting on a wooden folding chair is the GREAT AHMED KHAN, a powerful, brooding black man in his early 30's. He wears a hussar's shako and the crescent moon of the Midianites hanging pendant around his neck. The chair he sits on is the only visible piece of furniture. There are two tattered sleeping bags on the floor, part of a general wailer of torn newspapers, empty grocery bags, ham-
burger leftovers, etc. The walls are bare except for blowups of Che Guevara, Mao, Marlon Brando and Jane Fonda, scotch-taped to the torn wall-paper. Cartons and crates here and there, automatic guns leaning against the walls. Boxes of ammunition and grenades and mortar shells stacked against a wall. In atten-
dance on the GREAT AHMED KHAN is a young black woman in her late 20's,named JENKINS, and a young white woman in her early 20's, MARY ANN GIFFORD, who is a fire-eating militant with a bandolier of cartridges across her tom shirt and with a B.A.R. held in her hands. LAUREEN pulls up an empty crate, sits, waves a limp hand of hello to the others and regards the GREAT KHAN --
LAUREN
Well, Ahmed, you ain't going to believe this, but I'm going to make a television star out of you. Just like Archie Bunker. You're going to be a household word.

AHMED
What the fuck are you talking about?

MUSIC: A RATAPEAN OF KETTLEDRUMS AND A TARANTARA OF TRUMPETS.

119. INT: UBS BUILDING - NEW YORK - A CONTROL ROOM - 119.
MONDAY, JANUARY 27, 1975

Everybody murmuring away --

DIRECTOR
(murmurs into mike)
-- and one --

The Show Monitor cuts to a beaming ANNOUNCER --

ANNOUNCER
Ladies and gentlemen, let's hear it -- how do you feel?

SHOW MONITOR now shows packed AUDIENCE happily roaring:

AUDIENCE
(roaring out)
We're mad as hell, and we're not going to take this any more!

120. INT: THE STUDIO

The ANNOUNCER beaming away in front of a curtain --

ANNOUNCER
Ladies and Gentlemen! The Network News Hour! --

121. INT: CONTROL ROOM

The SHOW MONITOR --

ANNOUNCER (ON MONITOR)
-- with Sybil the Soothsayer, Jim Webster and his It's-the-News-
Truth Department, Miss Mata Hari, tonight another segment of Vox Populi, and starting --
ANNOUNCER (Contd) -- the mad prophet of the airways, Howard Beale! --

MUSIC: A FULL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA SCARS INTO AN IMPERIAL CRESCEndo --

122. -- as the HOUSELIGHTS go to BLACK. The curtain slowly rises. An absolutely bare stage except for one stained glass window, suspended by wires high above stage left through which shoots an overpowering SHARP OF LIGHT as if emanating from heaven. HOWARD BEALE, in an austere black suit with black tie shambles on from the wings, finds the SPOTLIGHT and stands there for a moment shielding his eyes from the blinding light. TUMULTUOUS APPLAUSE FROM THE AUDIENCE.

HOWARD (erupts into a Savanarola-type tirade)
Edward George Buddy died today! Edward George Buddy was the Chairman of the Board of the Union Broad-casting Systems -- the company that owns this network -- and he died at eleven o'clock this morning of a heart condition! And voe is us, we're in a lot of trouble! So a rich little man with white hair died, what's that got to do with the price of rice, right? Why is that voe to us? Because you and sixty-two million other Americans are watching me right now, that's why! Because less than three percent of you people read books! Because less than fifteen percent of you read newspapers! Because the only truth you know is what you get over this tube! There is a whole and entire generation right now who never knew anything that didn't come out of this tube! This tube is the gospel! This tube is the ultimate revelation! This tube can make or break presidents, popes, and prime ministers! This tube is the most awesome goddamned force in the whole godless world!

(MORE)
And we is us if it ever falls in the hands of the wrong people. And that's why we is us that Edward George Ruddy died. Because this network is now in the hands of CC and A the Communications Corporation of America. We've got a new Chairman of the Board, a man named Frank Hackett row sitting in Mr. Ruddy's office on the twentieth floor. And when the twelfth largest company in the world controls the most awesome goddamned propaganda force in the whole godless world, who knows what shit will be peddled for truth on this tube? So, listen to me! Television is not the truth! Television is a goddamned amusement park, that's what television is! Television is a circus, a carnival, a travelling troupe of acrobats and story-tellers, singers and dancers, jugglers, side-show freaks, lion-tamers and football players. We're in the boredom-killing business! If you want truth, go to God, go to your guru, go to yourself because that's the only place you'll ever find any real truth! But, man, you're never going to get any truth from us. We'll tell you anything you want to hear. We lie like hell! We'll tell you Robjack always gets the killer, and nobody ever gets cancer in Archie Bunker's house. And no matter how much trouble the hero is in, don't worry: just look at your watch -- at the end of the hour, he's going to win. We'll tell you any shit you want to hear! We deal in illusion, man! None of it's true! But you people sit there -- all of you -- day after day, night after night, all ages, colors, creeds -- we're all you know. You're beginning to believe this illusion we're spinning here. You're beginning to think the tube is reality and your own lives are unreal. You do whatever the tube tells you. You dress like the tube, you eat like (MORE)
the tube, you raise your children
like the tube, you think like the
tube. This is mass madness, you
maniacs! In God's name, you people
are the real thing! We're the illu-
sions! So turn off this goddam
set! Turn it off right now! Turn
it off and leave it off. Turn it
off right now, right in the middle
of this very sentence I'm speaking
now --

At which point, BOWARD BEALS, sweating and red-eyed with
his prophetic rage, collapses to the floor in a pro-
phetic swoon.

123. INT: CC AND A CONFERENCE ROOM - CC AND A
BUILDING - MONDAY, JANUARY 17

A Valhalla of a room taking up the 43rd and 44th floors
of the CC and A Building. It is dark and theatrical,
the lighting at the moment being provided by the shaft
of LIGHT issuing from a slide projector at the back of
the room onto a large SCREEN on the raised podium where
FRANK HACKETT in banker's gray stands making his annual
report. On the SCREEN, we see charts of figures, one
after the other, which accompany HACKETT's explanation.
A little red ARROW darts from one figure to another as
HACKETT drone on. Seated in a semi-circular arrange-
ment like a miniature United Nations are 21st SENIOR
EXECUTIVES, (late 40's, 50's, and 65's). They each
have their own little desks with swivel chairs, pin-
spot lights, piles of bound company reports, and name
plates giving their names and companies they represent.
NOTE one specific CHAIR in the dead center of the first
row that swivels back and forth, back and forth --

HACKETT
(on podium)
-- UBS was running at a cash-flow
break-even point after taking into
account one hundred and ten million
dollars of negative cash-flow from
the network. Note please the added
thirty-five million resulting from
the issuance of the subordinated sink-
ing debentures. It was clear the fat
on the network had to be flitched off --

ANOTHER CLOSER ANGLE on the CHAIR in the first row that
keeps swivelling back and forth,
HACKETT (Contd)
(on podium, as a new slide of charts flashes on screen)
please note an increase in pro-
jects initial program rev-
enues in the amount of twenty-one
million dollars due to the phenom-
ena! success of the Howard Beale
show. I expect a positive cash-
flow for the entire complex of
forty-five million achievable in
this fiscal year, a year, in short,
ahead of schedule --

ANOTHER ANGLE closer on the swivelling CHAIR but still
not revealing its occupant.

HACKETT (Contd)
I go beyond that. This network may
well be the most significant profit
center of the communications complex --

FULL SHOT of HACKETT barely concealing his pride --

HACKETT (Contd)
-- and, based upon the projected rate
of return on invested capital, and if
merger is eventually accomplished,
the communications complex may well
become the towering and most profit-
able center in the entire CC and A
empire. I await your questions and
comments, Mr. Jensen?

CAMERA PANS ACROSS the huge dark room of tiered seats
to the swivelling CHAIR in the front row which now
swivels to face CAMERA, revealing a short, balding,
bespectacled man with a Grant Woods face. This is
ARTHUR JENSEN, the President and Chairman of the Board
of CC and A.

JENSEN
(murmurs)
Very good, Frank. Exemplary.
Keep it up --

TIGHT SHOT of HACKETT, basking in this praise, suffused
with pride --

124. INT: TEMPLE EMANUEL - NEW YORK - TUESDAY.
JANUARY 28 - 10:30 A.M.

EDWARD GEORGE KUDDY lying in state.
ANOTHER ANGLE showing the vaulted reaches of the Temple packed with a standing room audience of condolers with the white yarmulka-ed RABBI in b.g. officiating. All the NETWORK BASS are spotted around the congregation.

CLOSER ANGLE ACROSS MAX among the condolers, following his eyes to several rows of pews down on the other side of the aisle where DIANA is sitting. Aware of MAX's eyes on her, she turns her face a bit so that their eyes meet briefly. She smiles, turns back to the RABBI's eulogy --

125. EXTERIOR 65TH STREET - MAIN ENTRANCE - TEMPLE 126.
EMMANUEL - DAY - SNOW

SNOW drifting down. CROWD of overcoated condolers flooding the sidewalk. A carriage of black limousines lined up in front of the temple as FUNERAL DIRECTORS guide condolers into their respective limousines. A curious crowd of PASSERSBY watch. MAX SCHUMACHER threads his way through the CRUSH to where DIANA CHRISTENSEN stands, murmuring to NELSON CHANEY and WALTER AMUNDSEN, all bundled up in winter coats. There are muttered "Hello, Max, how are you's" and "How's everything, Walter," etc.

MAX
to DIANA
Buy you a cup of coffee?

DIANA
Hell, yes.

Goodbyes all around, and MAX and DIANA move off through the fringe of the CRUSH on the sidewalk. CAMERA DOLLYS with them. They turn the corner onto --

125. EXTERIOR 5TH AVENUE - DAY - SNOW 126.

They head downtown. They walk silently. SNOW drifts down on them. CAMERA DOLLYS with them.

MAX
Do you have to get back to the office?

DIANA
Nothing that can't wait.

They walk on silently.

DIANA
(after a moment)
I drop down to the news studios every now and then and ask Howard

(MORE)
Diana (Contd)
Beale about you. He says you’re doing fine. Are you?

Max

No.

Diana
Are you keeping busy?

Max
After a fashion. This is the third funeral I’ve been to in two weeks. I have two other friends in hospital whom I visit regularly. I’ve been to a couple of christenings. All my friends seem to be dying or having grandchildren.

Diana
You should be a grandfather about now. You have a pregnant daughter in Seattle, don’t you?

Max
Any day now. My wife’s out there for the occasion. I’ve thought many times of calling you.

Diana
I wish you had.

They both suddenly stop on Fifth Avenue between 65th and 64th Streets and regard each other. An occasional snowflake moistens their cheeks, wets their hair.

Diana
I bumped into Sybil the Soothsayer in the elevator last week. I said: “You know, Sybil, about four months ago, you predicted I would get involved with a middle-aged man, and, so far, all that’s happened is one many-splendored night. I don’t call that getting involved.” And she said: “Don’t worry. You will.” It was a many-splendored night, wasn’t it, Max?

Max

Yes, it was.

Diana
Are we going to get involved, Max?
MAX
Yes. I need to get involved very much. How about you?

DIANA
I've reached for the phone to call you a hundred times, but I was sure you hated me for my part in taking your news show away.

MAX
I probably did. I don't know any more. All I know is I can't keep you out of my mind.

They stare at each other, bemused by the abrupt fragile explosion of their feelings. The snow drifts down. PEDESTRIANS move back and forth around them. The Fifth Avenue TRAFFIC honks and grinds its way downtown.

DIANA
My God, she's uncanny.

MAX
Who?

DIANA
Sybil the Soothsayer. We've got a modern-day Greek drama here, MAX. Two star-crossed lovers ordained to fall disastrously in love by the gods. A December-May story. Happily married middle-aged man meets desperately lonely young career woman. Let's say a violinist. They both know their illicit love can only end in tragedy, but they are cursed by the gods and plunge deweatably in love. For a few brief moments, they are happy. He abandons devoted wife and loving children, and she throws away her concert career. Their friends plead with them to give each other up, but they are helpless playthings in the hands of malignant gods. Their love sours, embittered by ugly little jealousies, cryptic riddles. The soothsayer appears again and warns the girl she will die if she persists in this heedless love affair. She defies the soothsayer. But (MORE)
DIANA (Contd)
now one of the man's children is rushed to the hospital with a mysterious disease. He rushes back to his family, and she is left to throw herself on the railroad tracks. Give me a two-page outline on it, Max. I might be able to sell it to NETWORK.

MAX
A bit too austere for teeseve, I think.

DIANA
You're right. We wouldn't get an ll gisting. How about a twist on Brief Encounter? Happily married man meets woman married to her career.

MAX
NBC did Brief Encounter last year, and it sank.

DIANA
Well, we're both a bit long in the tooth to try for Romeo and Juliet.

MAX
Why don't we just wing it?

She laughs, then he. A PASSENGER darts them a curious glance.

127. INT: MAX'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MONDAY, 127.
FEBRUARY 25TH

MAX and his wife, LOUISE, in the middle of an ugly domestic scene. LOUISE sits erect on an overstuffed chair, her eyes wet with imminent tears; MAX strides around the room. He is clearly under great stress.

LOUISE
(shrilly)
How long has it been going on?

MAX
'(prowling around the room)
A month. I thought at first it might be a transient thing and blow over in a week. I still (MORE)
MAX (Cont'd)

hope to God it's just a menopausal
infatuation. But it is an infa-
tuation, Louise. There's no sense
my saying I won't see her again
because I will. Do you want me
to clear out, go to a hotel?

LOUISE

Do you love her?

MAX

I don't know how I feel. I'm
grateful I still feel anything.
I know I'm obsessed with her.

LOUISE

(stands)

Then say it! Don't keep telling me
you're obsessed. You're infatuated.
-- say you're in love with her!

MAX

I'm in love with her.

LOUISE

(erupts)

Then get out, go to a hotel, go
anywhere you want, go live with
her, but don't come back! Because
after twenty-five years in building
a home and raising a family and all
the senseless pain we've inflicted
on each other, I'll be damned if I'll
just stand here and let you tell me
you love somebody else!

(now it's she striding
around, weeping, a
caged lioness)

Because this isn't just some con-
vention weekend with your secretary,
is it? Or some broad you picked up
after three belts of booze. This
is your great winter romance, isn't
it?, your last roar of passion be-
fore you sink into your emeritus
years. Is that what's left for me?
Is that my share? She gets the great
winter passion, and I get the dog? As
I supposed to sit at home knitting
and pulling till you sink back like
a penitent drunk? I'm your wife,
damn it! If you can't work up a

(MORE)
LOUISE (Cont’d)

Winter passion for me, then the least I require is respect and allegiance! I’m hurt! Don’t you understand that? I’m hurt badly!

She stares, her cheeks streaked with tears, at MAX standing at the terrace glass door, staring blindly out, his own eyes wet and welling. After a moment, he turns and regards his anguished wife.

LOUISE (Cont’d)

Say something, for God’s sake.

MAX

I’ve got nothing to say.

He enfolds her; she sobs on his chest.

LOUISE (after a moment)

Are you that deeply involved with her?

MAX

Yes.

LOUISE

I won’t give you up easily, Max.

He struggles to restrain his tears. She releases herself from his embrace.

LOUISE (Cont’d)

I think the best thing is if you did move out. Does she love you, Max?

MAX

I’m not sure she’s capable of any real feelings. She’s the television generation. She learned life from Bugs Bunny. The only reality she knows is what comes over her teeves set. She has devised a variety of scenarios for us all to play, as if it were a Movie of the Week. And, my God!, look at us, Louise. Here we are going through the obligatory middle-of-Art-Two scorned wife throws peccant husband out scene. But, no fear, I’ll come back home (MORE)
in the end. All her plot outlines have me leaving her and returning to you because the audience won't buy a rejection of the happy American family. She does have one script in which I kill myself, an adapted for television version of Anna Karenina in which she's Count Vronsky and I'm Anna.

LOUISE
You're in for some dreadful grief, Max.

MAX
I know.

128. INT: UBS BUILDING - H.Y. - DIANA'S OFFICE, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 1975

DIANA, murmuring into her squawk box and, at the same time, putting last minute things into a weekend bag. She is ebullient --

DIANA
(on squawk box)
... I know what NBC offered them, Marty, so I'm saying go to three point five, and I want an option for a third run on all of them...
... Marty, I'm in a big hurry, and you and Charlie are supposed to be negotiating this, so goodbye and good luck, and I'll see you Monday...

Clicks off her squawk box, snaps her weekend bag shut, whisked her sheep wool-lined coat out of her closet and strides out into --

129. INT: DIANA'S SECRETARY'S OFFICE

-- where there is no one sitting, and continues out into --

130. INT: PROGRAMMING DEPARTMENT - COMMON ROOM

where a few SECRETARIES are still at their desks. TOMMY PELLEGRINO is just coming out of his office --

PELLEGRINO
(calls to DIANA)
Jimmy Caan's agent just called and says absolutely nix.
Diana
(striding across the room)
You can't win them all.

Pellegrino
Where can I reach you later today?

Diana
(exiting)
You can't. I'll be gone all weekend.
Pellegrino turns to Barbara Schlesinger now poking her head out of her office --

Pellegrino
I think the Dragon Lady got herself a dragon fellow.

Schlesinger
Poor bastard.

131. Ext: UBS building - Sixth Avenue - Afternoon 131.

Diana, now wearing her sheep wool-lined coat and carrying her weekend bag, comes striding happily out through the entrance doors, heads for 55th Street, spots a double-parked car, and heads heedless of traffic across the street to --


Max Schumacher in a rented Chevy, leaning across to open the door for her. She slips into the front seat, slams the door shut, nestles her head on Max's over-coated shoulder, as he starts the ignition --

Diana
(happy and in love)
NBC's offering three point two and a half mil per for a package of five James Bond pictures, and I think I'm going to steal them for three point five with a third run --

They move out into the heavy traffic of Sixth Avenue --

133. Ext: Deserted Beach in the Hamptons - Dusk 133.

Traditional lyric love scene. The two mackinaw- ed lovers walking hand-in-hand on a lovely stretch of deserted winter beach. The tide is coming in --
DIANA
(bubbling)
The Vigilante show is sold firm.
Ford took a complete position at,
so help me, five-fifty CPT. In
fact, I’m moving the Vigilante
show to nine and I’m going to
stick the Mao Tse Tung Hour in
at eight because we’re having a
lot of trouble selling the Mao
Tse Tung Hour. This way we give
it a terrific lead-in from the
Howard Beale Show and we’ll back
into the Vigilantes, and it certainly
ought to carry its own time slot —

134. INT: A ROMANTIC LITTLE ITALIAN RESTAURANT

The obligatory Italian restaurant, checkered table-
cloth, candles, wine, etc. DIANA and MAX at dinner.
utterly rapt in each other —

DIANA
(pouring out her heart)
That Mao Tse Tung Hour is turning
into one big pain in the ass.
We’re having heavy legal problems
with the federal government right
now. Two FBI guys turned up in
Hackett’s office last week and
served us with a subpoena. They
heard about our Flagstaff bank
ripecoff files, and they want it.
We’re getting around that by
doing the show in collaboration
with the News Division, so Hackett
told the FBI to fuck off; we’re
standing on the First Amendment,
freedom of the press, and the
right to protect our sources —

135. EXT: MOTOR COURT - NIGHT

DIANA and MAX getting out of their car and heading
for one of the ground-level rooms, MAX unlocking the
door —

DIANA
(chirping merrily along)
— Walter thinks we can knock out
the misprision of felony charge —

They go into —
MAX flicks the light on, kicks the door shut, and they are instantly into each other's arms in a passionate embrace.

DANA
-- but he says absolutely no
on going to series. They'll hit
us with inducement and conspiracy
to commit a crime --

She busily removes her shoes and unbuttons her blouse and whisks out of her slacks; and, down to her bikini panties, she is now scouring the walls for a thermostat.

DANA (Contd)
Christ, it's cold in here --
(she turns up
the heat)
You see we're paying these nuts
from the Ecumenical Liberation Army
ten thousand bucks a week to bring
in authentic film footage on their revolutionary activities, and that constitutes inducement to commit a crime; and Walter says we'll all wind up in federal prison --

Nude and nearly naked, she entwines herself around MAX, who, by now, has stripped down to his trousers; and the two hungering bodies slide down onto the bed where they commence an affable moment of amative foreplay --

DANA (Contd)
efficiently unbuttoning
and unzipping MAX's
trousers)
-- I said: "Walter, let the government
sue us! We'll take them to the
Supreme Court! We'll be front page
for months! The Washington Post
and the New York Times will be doing
two editorials a week about us!
We'll have more press than Watergate!"

Groping, grasping, gasping and fondling, they contrive to denude each other, and, in a fever of sexual hunger, DANA mounts MAX, and the SCENIM is filled with the voluptuous writhings of love. DANA crying out with increasing exultancy --
DIANA (Contd)

(in the throes
of passion)
-- All I need -- is six weeks
of federal litigation -- and the
Mao Tse Tung Hour -- can start
carrying its own time slot!

She screams in consummation, sighs a long, deliciously
shuddering sigh, and sinks softly down into MAX's
embrace. For a moment, she rests her head on MAX's
chest, eyes closed in felixie contentment.

DIANA (Contd)

(after a moment,
she purrs)
What's really bugging me now is my
daytime programming. NBC's got a
lock on daytime with their lousy
game shows, and I'd like to bust
them. I'm thinking of doing a
homosexual soap opera -- The Dykes
-- the heart-rending saga of a
woman helplessly in love with her
husband's mistress. What do you
think? --

NARRATION

The Mary Ann Clifford pilot movie
went on the air March 14th --

137. EXT: A SMALL ISOLATED FARMHOUSE IN ENCINO

- NIGHT

A black LIMOUSINE winds its way up the dirt road to
the front porch, where the car is halted and checked
out by an armed guard (DOWLING) --

NARRATION

-- It received a 47 share in its
first hour, climbing to a 51 during
its second hour --

Slivers of light slither out from behind the drawn
shades of the farmhouse, and we can hear the sounds of
ANGRY VOICES.

TWO AGENTS from ICM diageorge from the limousine -- a
young man in his early 30's, FREDDIE, carrying a large
manila envelope, and a fat young woman in her mid-30's,
HELEN MIGGS, carrying an attache case --
NARRATION
-- showing sustained and increasing audience interest. The network promptly committed to fifteen shows --

MIGGS and FREDDIE go up the porch and into --

138. INT: THE FARMHOUSE - ENTRANCE FOYER

This is the current headquarters of the Ecumenical Liberation Army, and it is no less a shambles than their previous one in Watts. Cartons, crates, newspapers, scraps of food, torn grocery bags, stacks of pamphlets, cases of weapons and ammunition, broken furniture and sleeping bags are littered everywhere. There seems to be some sort of conference going on in the living room, o.s. left --

NARRATION
-- with an option for ten more --

139. As the TWO ICM AGENTS head for the living room, we can see LAUREN HOBBS and the three William Morris agents, WALLIE, LERNIE and ED, perhaps remembered from earlier scenes. We can also see the GREAT MANH LEGION, still wearing his shako, MARY ANN GIFFORD, still wearing her bandoliers of bullets, and OTHER MEMBERS of the Khan's group in fatigues and bearing arms. There is also a middle-aged LAWYER from ICM named WILLIE STEIN. Everybody -- with the exception of the GREAT MANH's retinue -- is seated on broken chairs and cartons and crates --

NARRATION
-- There were, of course, the usual production difficulties --

Everybody in the living room conference is studying 80-page contracts from which one of the agents (WALLIE) is reading --

WALLIE (mumbling along)
-- "Herein called either 'the Production Fee' or 'overhead' equal to twenty percent two-oh (except such percentage shall be thirty percent three-oh for ninety minute or longer television programs --

140. INT: THE FARMHOUSE - LIVING ROOM

STEIN
(a nervous man, to the new arrivals, now entering)
Where the hell have you been?
MIRGS
(embracing the
GREAT KHAN)
Ahmed, sweet, that dodo you sent
for a driver couldn't find this
fucking place.

There is a genial exchange of hellos and waves between
the phalanxes of AGENTS --

STEIN
Let's get on with this before
they said this place, and we all
wind up in the joint.

ED
(to FREDDIE now
pulling up a crate)
We're on Schedule A, page seven,
small c small i --

MIRGS
(whisking through her
copy of the contract)
Have we settled that sub-licensing
thing? We want a clear definition
here. Gross proceeds should consist
of all funds the sublicensee receives
not merely the net amount remitted
after payment to sublicensee or
distributor.

STEIN
We're not sitting still for over-
head charges as a cost prior to
distribution.

LAUREEN
(whose nerves have
worn thin, explodes!)
Don't fuck with my distribution
costs! I'm getting a lousy two-
fifteen per segment, and I'm already
deficitting twenty-five grand a week
with Metro. I'm paying William
Morris ten percent off the top!
(Indicates the
GREAT KHAN)
-- And I'm giving this turkey ten
thou a segment and another five for
this fruitcake --
(meaning MARY ANN GIFFORD)
(MORE)
LAUREN (Cont'd)

And, Helen, don't start no shit
with me about a piece again!
I'm paying market twenty percent of
all foreign and Canadian distribution,
and that's after recoupment! The
Communist Party's not going to see
a nickel out of this goddam show
until we go into syndication!

MIGGS

Come on, Lauren, you've got the
party in there for seventy-five
hundred a week production expenses.

LAUREN

I'm not giving this pseudo in-
surrectionary sector a piece
of my show! I'm not giving him
script approval! And I sure as
shit ain't cutting him in on my
distribution charges!

MARY ANN GIFFORD

(screaming in from
the back)

Fuggin' fascist! Have you seen the
movies we took at the San Marino
jail break-out demonstrating the
rising up of a seminal prisoner-
class infrastructure!

LAUREN

You can blow the seminal prisoner-
class infrastructure out your ass!
I'm not knocking down my goddam
distribution charges!

The GREAT KHAN decides to offer an opinion by SHOOTING
his PISTOL off into the air. This gives everybody
something to consider, especially NILLIE STEIN who
almost has a heart attack.

THE GREAT KHAN

Man, give her the fucking over-
head clause.

STEIN

How did I get here? Who's going
to believe this? I'm sitting here
in a goddam farm in Endino at ten
o'clock at night negotiating over-
head charges with cowboys!
THE GREAT KHAN
(flipping through
his copy)
Let's get to page twenty-two,
five, small a, subsidiary rights.

Everybody starts flipping through their contracts.

LENNIE
Where are we now?

WALLIE
Page twenty-two, middle of the page, subsidiary rights --
(begins to read)
"As used herein, 'subsidiary rights' means, without limitation,
any and all rights with respect
to theatrical motion picture
rights, radio broadcasting, legiti-
mate stage performances, printed
publications (including, but not
limited to, hard-cover books, but
excluding paperback books and comic
books) and/or any other uses of a
similar or dissimilar nature -- "

141. A HOTEL MASQUE which reads:

WELCOME USB AFFILIATES CONVENTION

EXT: FRONT OF THE CENTURY PLAZA HOTEL —
WEDNESDAY, MAY 21 - 6:00 P.M. - DAY

Across the marquee, looking down on the CRUSH of
station managers, program executives and sales
vice-presidents from the various affiliates, all
tuxedo-ed and evening-gowned and milling about.
Spotted in the cheerful CRUSH can be seen DIANA,
MR. AND MRS. AMUNSEN, MR. AND MRS. ZANGHILL,
jollying it up with the affiliates' executives.
and their wives —

142. INT: GRAND BALLROOM - COCKTAIL AREA —

A huge BANNER reading USB AFFILIATES 1975 hanging
high over the ballroom.

PAN DOWN to show 1000 tuxedo-ed and evening-gowned
PEOPLE, mostly middle-aged in the vast shuffle of
cocktail time — HUBBUB, intermingling flux and a
slow general shuffling surge through the doors
leading into —
143. INT: GRAND BALLROOM

CLOSER ANGLE of the CRUSH of PEOPLE at the doors. HERBERT HACKERAY, (VP Stations Relations,) and NORMAN MOLDAMIAN (VP Cemed Stations,) with their WIVES and carrying their drinks and exchanging pleasantries with the GENERAL MANAGER of KGIM Cincinnati and his WIFE and the GENERAL MANAGER of WGGK Albuquerque and his WIFE as well as the SALES MANAGER of that station and his WIFE. High CHARTER and MEBHR, lots of hearty chuckles and general Rotarian bonhommie. In b.g., FRANK HACKETT and his WIFE exchanging Rotarian bonhommie with some other GENERAL MANAGERS and PROGRAM DIRECTORS and SALES MANAGERS of various affiliates and their WIVES —

144. ANOTHER ANGLE as DIANA, evening-gowned, beau- tiful, glowing and effulgent, leans down from her place on the dais to accept congratulatory comments from the SALES MANAGER of WLET, Boise, and his WIFE standing on the floor level —

SALES MANAGER
(pumping DIANA's hand)
— Millard Villanova, Sales Manager, WLET Boise — my wife, here, Maureen —

DIANA
My pleasure —

SALES MANAGER
I just want to tell you we saw your great stuff this afternoon, Di — it was great —

DIANA
Great, Millard —

She turns to accept some more enthusiastic greetings from another GENERAL MANAGER and his WIFE being brought down the dais to her by WALTER AMUNDSEN, (General Counsel Network) —

145. WIDE ANGLE SHOT of the whole ballroom, dark, everybody seated at their tables now, listening to an address by NEILSON CHANCEY (President UBS Network), a spotlighted figure at the podium —

CHANCEY
— Over the past two days, you've all had opportunity to meet Diana (MORE)
CHANLEY (Contd)
Christenson, our Vice President in charge of programming. This afternoon, you all saw some of the stuff she's set up for the new season --

CLOSER SHOT of CHANLEY --

CHANLEY (Contd)
You all know she's the woman behind the Howard Beale show. We know she's beautiful. We know she's brainy. I just think, before we start digging into our chateau-briands, we ought to let her know how we feel about her --

An OVATION from the AUDIENCE. In response to CHANLEY's beckoning, DIANA rises from her chair in the glistening shadow of the dais and comes down to the podium. She stands there -- showered with APPLAUSE, beaming, exultant --

DIANA
We've got the number one show in television! (applause)
And, at next year's affiliates' meeting, I'll be standing here telling you we've got the top five!

(tumult)

ANOTHER ANGLE ACROSS HACKETT at the dais with DIANA in b.g. An ASSISTANT MANAGER leans across HACKETT and murmurs to him --

DIANA (Contd)
Last year, we were the number four network -- next year, we're number one!

(tumult)

HACKETT rises, murmurs apologies to his neighbors, follows the ASSISTANT MANAGER through the shadow of the dais and heads out --

DIANA (Contd)
It is exactly seven o'clock here in Los Angeles. And right now over a million homes using television in this city are turning their dials to Channel 3 -- and that's our channel!
MUSIC: A RATAPLAN OF KETTLEDRUMS AND A TARANTARA OF TRUMPETS.

146. INT: COCKTAIL AREA OF THE GRAND BALLOON

A portable TeeVee set perched on a bar —

ANNOUNCER (ON TV)
Ladies and gentlemen — let's hear it! — how do you feel?! —

STUDIO AUDIENCE (ON TV)
(happily roaring out)
We're mad as hell, and we're not going to take this any more!

FULL BACK to show we are in the vast cocktail area of the Grand Ballroom, now being cleared away by a staff of WAITERS and BUSBOYS — hors d'oeuvres, spreads and booze being carried away, tables and chairs being packed off, linens being whisked and folded. A couple of WAITERS are watching the Howard Beale show on the portable TV set perched on the room's bar —

STUDIO ANNOUNCER (ON TV)
Ladies and gentlemen — the mad prophet of the airways — Howard Beale!

On the TV set, the houselights go down. the curtain rises, and, as before, bare stage, shimmering stained glass window, an ethereal shaft of light, and HOWARD BEALE in his austere black suit trudges out and explodes —

HOWARD (ON TV)
All right, listen to me! Listen carefully! This is your goddam life I'm talking about today! In this country, when one company 'takes over another company, they simply buy up a controlling share of the stock. But first they have to file notice with the government. That's how C.C. and A. — the Communications Corporation of America — bought up the company that owns this network. And now somebody's buying up C.C. and A! Some company named Western World Funding Corporation is buying up C.C. and A! They filed their notice this morning! Well, just who the hell is Western World Funding Corporation? It's a consortium of (MORE)
HO\LAND (Contd).

banks and insurance companies who
are not buying C.C. and A. for them-
selves but as agents for somebody
else.

147. LONG WIDE ANGLE SHOT with TV set in f.g. show-
ing the spacious cocktail area being cleared
away, as far across the room the doors to the
Ballroom open and HACKETT follows the ASSISTANT
MANAGER in. HACKETT lingers at the doors while
the ASSISTANT MANAGER gets a WAITER to bring a
jack phone to one of the tables still standing —

HO\LAND (ON TV)
Well, who's this somebody else?
They won't tell you! They won't
tell you, they won't tell the
Senate, they won't tell the SEC,
the FCC, the Justice Department,
they won't tell anybody! They say
it's none of our business! The
hell it ain't!

REVERSE ACROSS HACKETT as a jack phone is brought to
his table; the cluster around the TV set in b.g.

HACKETT
(on phone)
This is Mr. Hackett, do you have
a New York call for me?
(calls to cluster
around TV set)
Do you want to turn that down,
please —

REVERSE ACROSS TV set with HACKETT in b.g.

HO\LAND (ON TV)
(volume a bit down)
Well, I'll tell you who they're
buying C.C. and A. for. They're
buying it for the Saudi-Arabian
Investment Corporation! They're
buying it for the Arabs!

REVERSE ON HACKETT.

HACKETT
(on phone, the
hearty executive)
Clarence? Frank Hackett here!
How's everything back in New York?
How's the good lady? —
(MORE)
HACKETT (Contd)
(his face sobered)
-- All right, take it easy,
Clarence, I don't know what
you're talking about ... When?
... Clarence, take it easy.
The Howard Seale show's just
going on out there. You guys get
it three hours earlier in New York
... Clarence, take it easy. How
the hell could I see it? It's
just on now -- Well, when did
Mr. Jensen call you? --

REVERSE ACROSS TV set. In b.g., HACKETT has hung up
and is slowly walking toward the group around the TV
set --

HOWARD (ON TV)
-- We know the Arabs have ten
billion dollars invested in this
country! They own radio stations
and the Ladies Home Journal and
big chunks of Exxon and Texaco and
Mobil Oil! We know they're into
Lockheed and Pan Am, hotel chains
and housing complexes in Atlanta.
That's what we know! --

HACKETT peers over the shoulder of a WAITER to watch
the television show --

HOWARD (ON TV)
What we don't know is this C.C.
and A. deals and all the other C.C.
and A. deals; --
(HACKETT winces)
Right now, the Arabs have screwed
us out of enough American dollars
to come back and, with our own
money, buy General Motors, IBM,
ITT, A T and T, Du Pont, U.S. Steel,
and twenty other top American
companies. Hell, they already
own half of England.

LOS ANGELES

HACKETT, NELSON CHANEY and WALTER ANNESEN, all
taxedo-ed, and DIANA, evening-gowned, sit and stand
in the dark smallish room, cluttered with electronic
equipment, watching a replay of the Howard Seale show
on the big screen. TWO TECHNICIANS fiddle with their
equipment --
HOWARD (ON SCREEN)
Now, listen to me, goddammit! The Arabs are simply buying us! They're buying all our land, our whole economy, the press, the factories, financial institutions, the government! They're going to own us! A handful of agas, shahs and emirs who despise this country and everything it stands for -- democracy, freedom, the right for me to get up on television and tell you about it -- a couple of dozen medieval fanatics are going to own where you work, where you live, what you read, what you see, your cars, your bowling alleys, your mortgages, your schools, your churches, your libraries, your kids, your whole life! --

AMUNDSEN
(mutters)
The son of a bitch is effective all right --

HACKETT, who's seen all this already, isn't even watching. He is sprawled in his chair, eyes closed, numbed, even serene with despair.

HOWARD (ON SCREEN)
-- And there's not a single law on the books to stop them! There's only one thing that can stop them -- you! So I want you to get up now. I want you to get out of your chairs and go to the phone. Right now, I want you to go to your phone or get in your car and drive into the Western Union offices in town. I want everybody listening to me to get up right now and send a telegram to the White House --

HACKETT
(sighs in soft anguish)
Oh, God --

HOWARD (ON SCREEN)
By midnight tonight I want a million telegrams in the White House! I want them wading knee-deep in telegrams at the White House! Get up! (MORE)
HOWARD (ON SCREEN) (Contd)
Right now! And send President Ford a telegram saying: "I'm mad as hell and I'm not going to take this any more! I don't want the banks selling my country to the Arabs. I want this C.C. and A. deal stopped now!"

HACKETT

Ch, cod --

HOWARD (ON SCREEN)
I want this C.C. and A. deal stopped now! I want this C.C. and A. deal stopped now!

At which point, HOWARD keels over in his now familiar prophetic swoon. On SCREEN, ATTENDANTS come and carry HOWARD off --

CHANEY
(to a TECHNICIAN)
Is that it? Does he come back later in the show?

TECHNICIAN
That's it. This is one of those shows he just zonks out.

CHANEY
(to HACKETT)
Do you want to see any more, Frank? (HACKETT sits in numb silence)
All right, turn it off --

The other TECHNICIAN pushes a button and the SCREEN goes white. The first TECHNICIAN flicks the room lights on.

AMUNDSEN
(to HACKETT)
Do you want to go to your office?

HACKETT stares silently into space.

CHANEY
(to the TECHNICIANS)
Look, could we have the room?

TECHNICIAN
Sure.
The two TECHNICIANS exit. SILENCE fills the cluttered room. AMUNDSEN and HACKETT sit in their chairs. CHANEY leans against a side wall, DRANA lounges against a rear wall. After a moment, AMUNDSEN stretches, stands —

AMUNDSEN

Well, I'd like to see a type-script and run it a couple of more times, but I don't think he said anything seriously actionable. But, as for this whole C.C. and A. deal with the Saudis, you'd know a lot more about that than I would, Frank, is it true?

HACKETT sighs.

HACKETT

(mumbles)

Yes. C.C. and A. has two billions in loans with the Saudis, and they hold every pledge we've got. We need that Saudi money bad. (he stands, so wretched he is tranquil)

A disaster. This show is a disaster, an unmitigated disaster, the death knoll. I'm ruined, I'm dead, I'm finished.

CHANEY

Maybe we're overstating Beale's clout with the public.

HACKETT

An hour ago, Clarence McElheny called me from New York. It was ten o'clock in the East, and our people in the White House report they were already knee-deep in telegrams. By tomorrow morning, they'll be suffocating in telegrams.

CHANEY

Well, can the government stop the deal?

HACKETT

They can hold it up. The SEC could hold this deal up for twenty years if they wanted to. I'm finished.

(MORE)
Any second that phone's going to ring and Clarence McElheny's going to tell me Mr. Jensen wants me in his office tomorrow morning so he can personally chop my head off.

(tears stream shamelessly down his cheeks as he shuffles, a broken man, around the room)

Four hours ago, I was the Sun God at C.C. and A., Mr. Jensen's hand-picked golden boy, the heir apparent. Now I'm a man without a corporation!

DINNA

(comes off the back wall)

Let's get back to Howard Beale.
You're not seriously going to pull Beale off the air.

RACKETT

Mr. Jensen is unhappy with Howard Beale and wants him discontinued.

DINNA

He may be unhappy, but he isn't stupid enough to withdraw the number one show on television out of pique.

RACKETT

(explodes)
Two billion dollars isn't pique! That's the wrath of God! And the wrath of God wants Howard Beale fired!

DINNA

What for? Every other network will grab him the minute he walks out the door. He'll be back on the air for ABC tomorrow. And we'll lose twenty points in audience share in the first week, roughly a forty million loss in revenues for the year.

RACKETT

I'm going to kill Howard Beale! I'm going to impale the son of a bitch with a sharp stick through the heart!
DIANA
And let's not discount federal action by the Justice Department. If C.C. and A. pull Beale off the air as an act of retribution, that's a flagrant violation of network autonomy and an egregious breach of the consent decree.

HACKETT
(beginning to like his new train of thought)
I'll take out a contract on him.
I'll hire professional killers.
I'll do it myself. I'll strangle him with a sashcord.

DIANA
No, I don't think Jensen is going to fire anybody. He's sitting up there in his office surrounded by lawyers and senior vice presidents, and right about now, they've begun to realize the extraordinary impact of television. That impact can be focused, manipulated, utilized. If Howard Beale can hurt them, he can help them.

The PHONE RINGS. A moment of anxious silence. HACKETT picks it up --

HACKETT
(on phone)
Hackett -- Yes, Clarence, I've already booked my flight... Well, can you give me a little more time than that? I've got the red-eye flight, I won't be back in New York till six tomorrow morning... That'll be just fine, I'll see you then --

He returns the phone to its cradle, regards DIANA for a moment.

HACKETT (Contd)
Mr. Jensen wants to meet Howard Beale personally. He wants Mr. Beale in his office at ten o'clock tomorrow morning --

150. EXT: THE C.C. AND A. BUILDING - PARK AVE. AND 46TH STREET - MORNING

A black limousine pulls to the curb in front of the
C.C. and A. Building, disgorging HACKETT, and, a moment later, HOWARD BEALE, both dressed in banker's gray. As they move for the building's entrance, HACKETT herding HOWARD along, it becomes clear that HOWARD is in a beatified state. His eyes glisten transcendentally, and he smiles the smile of the elevated spirit. He suddenly pulls up abruptly, raises his arms over his head, and announces at the top of his lungs:

HOWARD

(imbued)
The final revelation is at hand!
I have seen the shattering fulgurations of ultimate clarity! The light is impending! I bear witness to the light!

This outburst doesn't seem to bother most of the PEOPLE passing by except for ONE or TWO who murmur: "Hey, that's Howard Beale, isn't it?" The outburst does appall FROM HACKETT, who stares in distress and entreaty to some god in the heavens, and clutches at HOWARD's arm to get him moving again.

151. INT: ARTHUR JENSEN'S OFFICE

An enormous office with two walls of windows towering over the Manhattan landscape and through which SUN-LIGHT streams in. ARTHUR JENSEN is rising from behind his massive desk --

JENSEN

Good afternoon, Mr. Beale. They tell me you're a madman.

CAMERA DOLLYS to include HOWARD just coming into the room.

HOWARD

(closing the door behind himself)

Only desultorily.

JENSEN

How are you now?

HOWARD

(as mad as a hatter)

I'm as mad as a hatter.

JENSEN

Who isn't? Don't sit down. (MORE)
JENSEN (Contd)
I'm taking you to our conference room which seems more somberly a setting for what I have to say to you.

He takes HOWARD's arm and moves him to a large oaken door leading out of JENSEN's office --

JENSEN (Contd)
I started as a salesman, Mr. Beale. I sold sewing machines and automobile parts, hair brushes and electronic equipment. They say I can sell anything. I'd like to try and sell something to you --

They pass into --

152. INT: THE CONFERENCE ROOM - C.C. AND A. BUILDING

The overwhelming cathedral of a conference room remembered perhaps from an earlier scene where Frank Hackett gave his annual report. When last seen, it was in pitch darkness, but now the enormous curtains are up, and an almost celestial light pours in through the huge windows. Being on the 43rd and 44th floors, the sky outside is only sporadically interrupted by the towers of other skyscrapers. The double semi-circular bank of seats are all empty, and the general effect is one of hushed vastness --

JENSEN
Valhalla, Mr. Beale, please sit down --

He leads HOWARD down the steps to the floor level, himself ascends again to the small stage and the podium. HOWARD sits in one of the 200 odd seats. JENSEN pushes a button, and the enormous drapes slowly fall, slicing away layers of light until the vast room is utterly dark. Then, the little pinpoints at each of the desks, including the one behind which HOWARD is seated, pop on, creating a miniature Milky Way effect. A shaft of white LIGHT shoots out from the rear of the room, spotting JENSEN on the podium, a sun of its own little galaxy. Behind him, the shadowed white of the lecture screen. JENSEN suddenly wheels to his audience of one and roars out:

JENSEN
You have meddled with the primal forces of nature, Mr. Beale, and (MORE)
JENSEN (Contd)

I won't have it, is that clear?! You think you have merely stopped a business deal -- that is not the case! The Arabs have taken fifty billion dollars out of this country, and now they must put it back. It is ebb and flow, tidal gravity, it is ecological balance! You are an old man who thinks in terms of nations and peoples. There are no nations! There are no peoples! There are no Russians. There are no Arabs! There are no third worlds! There is no West! There is only one holistic system of systems, one vast and immane, interwoven, interacting, multi-variate, multi-national dominion of dollars! Petro-dollars, electro-dollars, multi-dollars! Reichmarks, rubles, rin, pounds and shekels! It is the international system of currency that determines the totality of life on this planet! That is the natural order of things today! That is the atomic, subatomic and galactic structure of things today! And you have meddled with the primal forces of nature, and you will atone! Am I getting through to you, Mr. Beale?

HOWARD
(from the darkness)
Amen.

JENSEN

You get up on your little twenty-one inch screen, Mr. Beale, and howl about America and democracy. There is no America. There is no democracy. There is only IBM and TMT and A T and T and Dupont, Dow, Union Carbide and Exxon. What do you think the Russians talk about in their councils of state -- Karl Marx? They pull out their linear programming charts, statistical decision theories and minimax solutions like the good little systems analysts they are and compute the
price-cost probabilities of their transactions and investments just like we do. The Moslem masses may be medieval, but every moment of their lives is determined—not by some savage desert god called Allahu— but by the primordial pull of profit and the primordial push of power. We no longer live in a world of nations and ideologies, Mr. Beale. The world is a college of corporations, inexorably determined by the immutable by-laws of business. The world is a business, Mr. Beale! It has been that way since man crawled out of the slime, and our children, Mr. Beale, will live to see that perfect world without war and famine, oppression and brutality— one vast and ecumenical holding company, for whom all men will work to serve a common profit, in which all men will hold a share of stock, all necessities provided, all anxieties tranquilized, all boredom amused. And I have chosen you to preach this evan gel, Mr. Beale.

HOWARD (humble whisper)
Why me?

JENSEN
Because you're on television, dummy. Sixty million people watch you every night of the week, Monday through Friday.

HOWARD slowly rises from the blackness of his seat so that he is lit only by the ethereal diffusion of light shooting out from the rear of the room. He stares at JENSEN spotted on the podium, transfixed.

HOWARD
I have seen the face of God!

In b.g., up on the podium, JENSEN considers this curious statement for a moment.

JENSEN
You just might be right, Mr. Beale.
NARRATION

That evening, Howard Beale went on the air to preach the corporate cosmology of Arthur Jensen.

153. INT: NETWORK NEWS CONTROL ROOM

The CREW at their various control panels. Business as usual. If anything, EVERYBODY in the control room appears a little more bored. On the SHM MONITOR, HOWARD BEALE stands in his stained-glass-filtered spotlight, but, rather than his old enraged self, he seems sad, resigned, weary —

HOWARD (ON MONITOR)

(sad, resigned, weary)

Last night, I got up here and asked you people to stand up and fight for your heritage, and you did and it was beautiful. Six million telegrams were received at the White House. The Arab takeover of C.C. and A. has been stopped. The people spoke, the people won. It was a radiant eruption of democracy. But I think that was it, fellas. That sort of thing isn't likely to happen again. Because, in the bottom of all our terrified souls, we all know that democracy is a dying giant, a sick, sick dying, decaying political concept, withering in its final pain. I don't mean the United States is finished as a world power. The United States is the most powerful, the richest, the most advanced country in the world, light-years ahead of any other country. And I don't mean the Communists are going to take over the world. The Communists are deader than we are. What's finished is the idea that this great country is dedicated to the freedom and flourishing of every individual in it. It's the individual that's finished. It's the single, solitary human being who's finished. It's every single one of you out there who's finished. Because this is no longer a nation of independent individuals. This is a nation of

(MORE)
two hundred odd million transistorized, deodorized, whiter-than-white, steel-belted bodies, totally unnecessary as human beings and as replaceable as piston rods --

NARRATION
It was a perfectly admissible argument that Howard Beale advanced in the days that followed; it was, however, also a very tedious and depressing one. By the end of the first week in June --

154. INT: FIFTH FLOOR - CORRIDOR - TUESDAY, JUNE 10 - 3:30 P.M.
DIANA, carrying a small booklet, striding down the corridor.

NARRATION
-- the Howard Beale show had dropped one point in the ratings, and its trend of shares dipped under forty-eight for the first time since last November --

DIANA turns into --

155. INT: THE NIGHTLY NEWS ROOM - ROOM 517
-- quietly busy, typewriters, telephones. DIANA heads straight for HOWARD's office --

NARRATION
Hysteria swept through the network --
DIANA wrenches the door to HOWARD's office open and strides into --

156. INT: HOWARD'S OFFICE
-- as DIANA strides in, interrupting an urgent colloquy between HOWARD at his desk and his agent, an urbane gentleman in his late 60's, LEW WEISKOPF --

DIANA
(drops the booklet she's carrying on HOWARD's desk)
In case you haven't seen this week's rating book, your share is down another point.
(MORE)
DIANA (Cont'd)
(to WEISKOFF)
I asked you to be here, Lew, because you're his goddam agent, and I'm counting on you to talk some sense into this lunatic. I'm sick of arguing with your client, Lew.

LEW
Patience, sweetheart, patience --

DIANA
Patience, my ass. We're starting to get rumbles from the advertisers. McCann-Erickson called Joe Donnelly this morning, and, when the agencies start calling the Head of Sales directly, that means in a week or two, we're going to start hearing about sponsors bailing out. He's got to stop this corporate universe kick --

HOWARD
(agitated)
I only say what my voices tell me to say.

DIANA
(rupturing)
Well, fire them! We'll get you new voices! We'll call the Writers Guild and get you all the goddam voices you want! Lew here represents a thousand voices. We'll get you the best voices in the business! We went you to go back to being crazy, Howard!

HOWARD
(stands, cries out)
I'm not an actor! I can't get up and perform mad scenes for you! I am impelled by an inner force! I do what I am told to do! I say what I am told to say! I have no control over it!

DIANA throws up her hands in frustration --

157. INT: DIANA'S BEDROOM - THURSDAY, JUNE 19 - 7:15 P.M.

-- as MAX lets himself into the apartment. MAX seems
depressed. HOWARD'S VOICE emanates from the o.s.
bedroom --

HOWARD (C/N TV O.S.)
-- Well, the time has come to say;
is dehumanization such a bad word?
Because good or bad, that's what's
so. The whole world is becoming
humanoid, creatures that look
human but aren't. The whole world,
not just us. We're just the most
advanced country, so we're getting
there first. The whole world's
people are becoming mass-produced,
programmed, wired, insensitive things
useful only to produce and consume
other mass-produced things, all of
them as unnecessary and useless as
we are --

MAX has crossed the living room, looks into --

158. INT: THE BEDROOM

-- where DIANA is perched on her bed, mumbling into
the phone --

DIANA
(on phone)
Yeah ..., Yeah ...

HOWARD (C/N TV)
-- that's the simple truth: you
have to grasp, that human existence
is an utterly futile and purposeless
thing. Because once you've grasped
that, then the whole universe becomes
orderly and comprehensible --

DIANA looks up to drop a surly glance on MAX in the
doorway, and returns to mumbling into the phone. They
are both clearly in foul tempers --

HOWARD (C/N TV)
-- We are right now living in what
has to be called a corporate society,
a corporate world, a corporate
universe. This world quite simply
is a vast cosmology of small
corporations orbiting around
larger corporations who, in turn,
revolve around giant corporations --
(overlapping)

I'm sorry I'm late. I spent the afternoon with my daughter —

DIANA, murmuring into the phone, doesn't even seem to have heard him. MAX turns away —

RONAR (on TV)
—and this whole, endless, ultimate cosmology is expressly designed for the production and consumption of useless things —

DIANA clicks the remote control thing on her bed, and the TV set goes black.

DIANA
(on phone)
Sooner or later, we'll have to pull him off the air, Barbara, so let's start looking around for replacements. I hear ABC's grooming a mad prophet of their own in Chicago as our competition for next season. See if you can get a tape on him. Maybe, we can steal him. And let's start building up the other segments on the show, Sybil the Soothsayer, Jim Webbing. The Vox Populi segment is catching on; let's make that a daily feature —

159. INT: THE LIVING ROOM

MAX sprawled morosely on one of the soft chairs. We notice that in the back of the living room, a bridge table has been set up as a makeshift desk. It has a typewriter on it and a walter of papers and books and filing folders. DIANA appears in the bedroom doorway, regards MAX coldly —

DIANA
(icyly)
Every time you see somebody in your family, you come back in one of these morbid middle-aged moods. I'm tired of your goddamned morbid, middle-aged moods, Max.

MAX
(exploding from the chair)
And I'm tired of finding you on the goddamned phone every time

(MORE)
MAX (Contd)
I turn around! I'm tired of being
an accessory in your life! I'm tired
of this hysteria about Howard Beale!

Storming about the room in his sudden volcanic rage, MAX
finds himself by the upstage typewriter, which he sweeps
crashing off the bridge table, sending the waster of
papers there flying off in a storm --

MAX (Contd)
-- and I'm tired of pretending to
write this dumb book about my
maverick days in those great early
years of television. Every
executive fired from a network
in the last twenty years has
written this dumb book about
the great early days of television!
Nobody wants another dumb book
about the great goddammed early
days of television!

DIANA
Terrific, Max, terrific. Maybe
you can start a whole new career
as an actor.

For a moment, it looks as if MAX is going to slug her.
Then he deflates --

MAX
It's the truth. After six months
of living with you, I'm turning
into one of your scripts. But this
isn't a script, Diana. There's
some real actual life going on
here. I went to visit my wife today
because she's in a state of depression,
so depressed my daughter flew in from
Seattle to be with her. And I feel
lousy about that. I feel lousy about
the pain I've caused my wife and kids.
I feel guilty and conscience-
stricken and all those things you
think sentimental but which my
generation called simple human
decency. And I miss my home because
I'm beginning to get scared shitless.
It's all suddenly closer to the end
than to the beginning, and death
is suddenly a perceptible thing to
me, with definable features. You've
got a man going through primal

(MORE)
MAX (Contd)

... doubts, Diana, and you've got to cope with it. Because I'm not some guy discussing male menopause on the Barbara Walters show. I'm the man you presumably love. I live right here. I'm part of your life. I'm real. You can't switch to another channel.

DIANA

Well, what exactly is it you want me to do?

MAX

I just want you to love me, Diana. I just want you to love me, primal doubts and all. You understand that, don't you?

For one brief moment, you could almost believe she does understand. She stares, eyes locked with MAX, her eyes threatening to well with tears. There are certainly tears in MAX's eyes.

DIANA

(small voice)

I don't know how to do that.

Then, shatteringly, the PHONE O.S. in the bedroom RINGS; and DIANA promptly turns to answer it --

DIANA

(matter-of-factly as she exits into the bedroom)

I'll be with you in a minute, Max --

He sighs, the inchoate moment of love evaporated --

NARRATION

By the first week in July, the Howard Beale show was down eleven points, and the panic had spread to even those people who had only a contractual connection to the network --

INT: DIANA'S OFFICE - MONDAY, JULY 7 - 160.

2:30 P.M.

LAUREN HOBBES in a shrill, wide-eyed panic, raging all over DIANA's office as DIANA's phone RINGS, and DIANA answers it --
LAUREN
(in a raging panic)
-- He's a plague! He's smallpox!
He's typhoid! I don't want to
follow his goddam show! I want
out of that eight o'clock spot!
I got enough trouble without
Howard Beale for a lead-in. You
guys have scheduled me up against
Tony Orlando and Dawn! NBC's got
Little House on the Prairie! ABC's
got that new Mel Brooks show! You
got to help me out! You got to do
something about Howard Beale! Get
rid of the plague! Get him off
the air! Do something! Do anything!

DIANA
(hanging up and
yelling back)
We're trying to find a replacement
for him! I'm going down to look
at audition tapes right now!

She is already out of her office --

161. INT: NINTH FLOOR - A SCREENING ROOM

C.U. of an imposing MOSAIC FIGURE, fully bearded and
wearing ankle-length black robe and thonged sandals,
standing on a lonely mountain spur inveighing against
the idolatries of the world. PULL BACK to show the
screening room half-filled with network and programming
executives, spotted around the room. DIANA is there
and her top assistants BARBARA SCHLITZER and TOMMY
PELLEGRINO. FRANK HACKETT is there; NELSON CHANEY,
HERB THACKERAY (Stations Relations); and JCE DONELLY
and HARRY RUTHER. In b.g., the ranting MOSAIC FIGURE
on the wall console roars out his inveighing until
otherwise indicated --

DIANA
(suddenly standing into
the shaft of light coming
from the projector)
No, damn it! If we wanted hell-
fire, we'd get Billy Graham! We
don't want faith-healers, tentshow
evangelists or Chanmargau passion-
players! What about that terrific
new messiah ABC was supposed to have
signed up as our competition?
PELLEGRINO
(indicating the
monitor screen)
That's him.

DIANA
That's him?

PELLEGRINO
Yeah.

DIANA
Jesus, turn him off.

The MONITOR SCREEN goes blank.

PELLEGRINO
I've got three more, but you've
already seen the best ones. I've
got a girl from Spokane and two
more hallucines who see visions
of the Virgin Mary.

DIANA sinks down in a chair and turns to HACKETT in the
row immediately behind.

DIANA
We're not going to find a replace-
ment for Howard Beale, so let's
stop kidding ourselves. Fully
fledged messiahs don't come in
bunches. We either go with
Howard or we go without him. My
reports say we'll do better with-
out him. It would be disaster to
let this situation go on even
another week. By then, he'll be
down sixteen points and the trend
irreversible, if it isn't already.
I think we should fire Howard.

HACKETT
Arthur Jensen has taken a strong
personal interest in the Howard
Beale show.

(Sighs glumly,
addresses the
room at large)
I'm having dinner with him tonight.
Let me talk to Jensen and then
let's meet in my office at ten
o'clock tonight. Diana, give me
copies of all your audience research
(MORE)
HACKETT (Contd)
reports. I may need them for
Jensen. Is ten o’clock convenient
for everyone?

Apparently it is.

162. INT: LANDING OUTSIDE DIANA’S APARTMENT — 8:00 P.M.
DIANA letting herself into her apartment.

163. INT: DIANA’S APARTMENT — FOYER
Dark, shadowed. She moves down to —

164. INT: LIVING ROOM
MAX has fallen asleep in one of the soft chairs. The
newspaper he was reading has fallen to his lap. His
mouth is a bit agape and he wheezes a little. In the
stark lighting of the lamp behind the chair, he seems
suddenly an old man. DIANA stands and regards him
with perceptible distaste. She slips out of her
jacket, crosses to the bedroom.

165. INT: BEDROOM
All the lights are on. DIANA, freshly scrubbed and
in a shower robe, is packing MAX’s things. A large
valise lies opened on the bed, and DIANA is fetching
MAX’s suits from the closet, folding them and packing
them away. MAX appears rumpled and in his shirt-
sleeves in the doorway behind her. She senses him
there, glances at him, continues with her packing.

DIANA
I think the time has come, Max,
to re-evaluate our relationship.

MAX
So I see.

DIANA
I don’t like the way this script
of ours is turning out. This whole
thing started out as a comedy,
remember? Now, it’s turning into
a seedy little drama. Middle-aged
man leaves wife and family for young
heartless woman, goes to pot. The
Blue Angel with Marlene Dietrich
and Emil Jannings. I don’t like it.
MAX
So you've decided to cancel the show.

DIANA
Right.

MAX
Listen, I'll do that.

He moves to the bed to take over the packing. She sits in one of the bedroom chairs.

DIANA
The simple fact is you're a family man, Max. You like a home and kids, and that's beautiful. But I'm incapable of any such commitment. All you'll get from me is another couple of months of intermittent sex and recriminations and ugly little scenes like the one we had last night. I'm sorry for all those vicious things I said to you last night. You're not the worst fuck I've ever had. Believe me, I've had worse, And you don't puff and snarl like a death-like rattles. As a matter of fact, you're rather serene in the sack.

MAX, who had gone into the bathroom for his toilet articles, comes out with them, stands, regards DIANA.

MAX
Why do women always think the most savage thing they can say to a man is to impugn his cocks-manship?

DIANA
I'm sorry I impugned your cocks-manship.

MAX
I stopped comparing genitals back in the schoolyard.

DIANA
You're being docile as hell about this.

MAX
Hell, Diana, I knew it was over between us weeks ago.
DIANA
Will you go back to your wife?

MAX
I'll try, but I don't think
she'll jump at it. But don't
worry about me. I'll manage.
I always have, always will. I'm
more concerned about you. Once
I go, you'll be back in the eye
of your own desolate terrors.
Fifty dollar studs and the
nightly sleepless contemplation
of suicide. You're not the
booser type, so I figure a year,
maybe two before you crack up or
jump out your fourteenth floor
office window.

Diana
(stands)
Stop selling, Max. I don't need
you.

She exits out into --

166. INT: THE LIVING ROOM

-- and across that to the --

167. INT: THE KITCHEN

-- where a kettle is steaming. She
fetches a cup and
saucer from the cupboard and
would make some instant
coffee but she is overtaken by a
curious little spasm.
Her hand holding the cup and
saucer is shaking so much
she has to put them down.
With visible effort, she
pulls herself together. She
moves out of the kitchen
to the --

168. INT: THE LIVING ROOM

-- where she stands in the middle of the room and
shouts at MAX through the opened bedroom doorway.

Diana
(cries out)
I don't want your pain! I don't
want your menopausal decay and
death! I don't need you, Max.

MAX
You need me badly! I'm your
last contact with human reality!

(MORE)
MAX (Contd)
I love you, and that painful, decaying menopausal love is the only thing between you and the shrieking nothingness you live the rest of the day.

He slams the valise shut.

DIANA
Then don't leave me!

MAX
It's too late, Diana! There's nothing left in you that I can live with! You're one of Howard's humanoids, and, if I stay with you, I'll be destroyed. Like Howard Beale was destroyed! Like Lauren Hobbs was destroyed! Like everything you and the whole institution of television touch gets destroyed! You are television incarnate, Diana, indifferent to suffering, insensitive to joy. All of life is reduced to the common rubble of banality. War, murder, death are all the same to you as bottles of beer. The daily business of life is a corrupt comedy. You even shatter the sensations of time and space into jagged fragments of minutes, split-seconds and instant replays. You are madness, Diana, virulent madness, and whatever you touch dies with you. Well, not me! Not while I can still feel pleasure and pain and love! Oh, hell, Diana, it's over with us. I'm not sure it ever really happened, but I know it's over.

He turns back to his valise and buckles it. DIANA finds a chair, sits in it. A moment later, MAX comes out of the bedroom, lugging a raincoat as well as the valise. He hugs his way across the living room, then pauses for a moment, reflects --

MAX (Contd)
It's a happy ending, Diana. Wayward husband comes to his senses, returns to his wife with whom he has built a long and sustaining love. (NONE)
MAX (Contd)
Heartless young woman left alone
in her arctic desolation. Music
up with a swell. Final commercial.
And here are a few scenes from
next week’s show.

He disappears down the foyer. We can hear the CLICK
of the front door being opened and the CLICK of the
door closing. DIANA sits in her chair, pulling the
shower robe around her, alone in her arctic desolation.

LOUNGE, CORRIDOR - 10:15 P.M.
A solemn FRANK HACKETT in blue suit walks down the long,
empty, hushed corridor to the large double doors of his
office (which had originally been EDWARD RUDY’S office).
At the doors, NELSON CHANEY is waiting for him.

CHANEY
How’d it go?
HACKETT signs, enters --

170. INT: SECRETARY’S OFFICE 170.
-- where HERB THACKERAY and JOE DONELLY are lounging.
Everybody follows HACKETT into --

171. INT: HACKETT’S OFFICE (ONCE RUDY’S OFFICE) 171.
Nighttime outside, the crepuscular grandeur of
Manhattan glittering below us. Waiting in the office,
seated here and there, are WALTER AMUNDSEN and DIANA.
HACKETT sits behind his desk. The others all find
places around the room.

HACKETT
Mr. Jensen was unhappy at the
idea of taking Howard Beale off
the air. Mr. Jensen thinks Howard
Beale is bringing a very important
message to the American people, so
he wants Howard Beale on the
air. And he wants him kept on.

Nobody has anything to say to this.

HACKETT (Contd)
Mr. Jensen feels we are being too
catastrophic in our thinking. I
argued that television was a volat-
tile industry in which success and
failure were determined week by
(MORE)
HACKETT (Contd)

weak. Mr. Jensen said he did not
like volatile industries and suggested
with a certain sinister silkiness
that volatility in business usually
reflected bad management. He didn't
really care if Howard Beale was
the number one show in television
or the fiftieth. He didn't really
care if the Beale Show lost money.
The network should be stabilized so
that it can carry a losing show and
still maintain an overall profit.
Mr. Jensen has an important message
he wants conveyed to the American
people, and Howard Beale is conveying
it. He wants Howard Beale on the
air, and he wants him kept on.
I would describe his position on
this as inflexible. Where does
that put us, Diana?

DIANA
(taking papers out
of her attache case)
That puts us in the shithouse,
that's where that puts us.
(holds up her
sheaf of papers)
Do you want me to go through this?

HACKETT

Yes.

DIANA
I have an advance TVQ report here.
The Beale show Q score, which was
forty-seven in the May book, is down
to thirty-three and falling. Most
of this loss occurred in the child
and teen and eighteen-thirty-four
categories, which were our core
markets. NBC Nightly News, by
contrast, has gone up to a twenty-
nine Q, and, at this rate, will
pass us by the end of July. Every-
body here knows the Nielsen and
share-trend scores. Let me just
capsulate our own AR demographic
reports which have been extensive.
It is the AR department's carefully
considered judgment -- and mine --
that if we get rid of Beale, we

(MORE)
DIANA (Contd)
should be able to maintain a
very respectable share in the
high twenties, possibly thirty,
with a comparable Q level. The
other segments on the Beale show
-- Sybil the Seacetherlands, Jim
Webbing, the Vox Populi -- have
all developed their own audiences.
Our AR reports show without
exception that it is Howard Beale
that's the destructive force here.
Minimally, we are talking about
a ten point differential in
shares. I think Joe ought to
spell it out for us. Joe?

DONELLEY
A twenty-eight share is eighty-
thousand dollar minutes, and I
think we could sell complete
positions on the whole. As a
matter of fact, we're just getting
into the pre-Christmas gift-sellers,
and I'll tell you the agencies are
coming back to me with four dollar
CPMs. If that's any indication,
we're talking forty, forty-five
million dollar loss in annual
revenues.

TEACHERAY
You guys want to hear all the flak
I'm getting from the affiliates?

HACKETT
We know all about it, Herb.

AMUNDSEN
And you would describe Mr. Jensen's
position on Beale as inflexible?

HACKETT
Intractable and adamantine.

CHANEY
So what're we going to do about
this Beale son of a bitch?

A sad silence settles over the top management of USB-TV
as they lounge about the enormous room.

HACKETT
(sighs)
I suppose we'll have to kill him.
Another long contemplative silence.

HACKETT (Contd)
I don't suppose you have any ideas on that, Diana.

DIANA
Well, what would you fellows say to an assassination? --

172. INT: THE LOBBY - UBS BUILDING - A FEW DAYS LATER - 6:00 P.M.

Bustling and crowded. Long lines of PEOPLE, four abreast, roped off and waiting to get into the HOWARD BEALE show. Uniformed USHERS here and there, occasionally chatting with the waiting CROWD. OVER THIS, the VOICES of the network meeting just interrupted CONTINUE:

DIANA'S VOICE (Contd)
-- I think I can get the Mao Tse Tung people to kill Beale for us. As one of their programs. In fact, it'll make a hell of a kick-off show for the season. We're facing heavy opposition from the other networks on Wednesday nights, and the Mao Tse Tung Hour could use a sensational show for an opener. The whole thing would be done right on camera in the studio. We ought to get a fantastic look-in audience with the assassination of Howard Beale as our opening show --

173. INT: THE LOBBY - UBS BUILDING - ELEVATOR AREA

-- as the waiting AUDIENCE is herded into the elevators. OVER THIS, the VOICES of the meeting CONTINUE:

AMUNSSEN'S VOICE
Well, if Beale dies, what would be our continuing obligation to the Beale corporation? I know our contract with Beale contains a buy-out clause triggered by his death or incapacity --

174. INT: UBS BUILDING - FOURTH FLOOR

-- as the elevator load of AUDIENCE is led out of the elevator and down the long, carpeted corridors, past the large wall photographs of TV stars, glass-enclosed
control rooms, and other showpieces of the network's electronic glory. OVER THIS, the VOICES CONTINUE:

HACKETT'S VOICE
There must be a formula for the computation of the purchase price.

AMUNDSEN'S VOICE
Offhand, I think it was based on a multiple of 1975 earnings with the base period in 1975. I think it was fifty percent of salary plus twenty-five percent of the first year's profits --

175. INT: HACKETT'S OFFICE

The meeting is still going on --

AMUNDSEN (Cont'd)
(continuing above speech)
--- multiplied by the unexpired portion of the contract. I don't think the show has any substantial syndication value, would you say, Diana?

DIANA
Syndication profits are minimal.

THACKERAY
(mutters to DONNELLY)
Bay, we're not seriously going to kill him, are we?

DONNELLY
(mutters back)
I don't know, are we?

176. INT: THE BEALS SHOW STUDIO AND AUDIENCE AREA

The new load of AUDIENCE finds seats in the rapidly-filling auditorium. On the floor of the studio, the CREW is setting the cameras, checking the booths. The stage curtain is down. OVER THIS, the VOICES of the meeting CONTINUE:

CHANEY'S VOICE
As Herb says, we're talking about a capital crime here, so the network can't be implicated.
AMUNDSEN'S VOICE
(chuckling)
I hope you don't have any hidden
tape machines in this office,
Frank --

177. INT: THE BEALE SITCOM STUDIO - SHOWTIME

The warmup is over; the stage footlights are on; the
AUDIENCE sits expectantly. The big wall CLOCK shows:
6:29, clicks to 6:30. On the studio stage, the
ANNOUNCER strides out from the wings, bellows happily
at the audience:

ANNOUNCER
Ladies and gentlemen, let's hear
it -- how do you feel?

178. REVERSE SHOT of the AUDIENCE. Suddenly SPOT
the GREAT AHMED KHAN and some of his FOLLOWERS,
right in the middle, happily joining all the others
in their communal response:

AUDIENCE AND THE KHAN
We're mad as hell, and we're not
going to take this any more!

ANNOUNCER
Ladies and gentlemen! The Network
News Hour! With Sybil the Scott-
sayer, Jim Webbing and his It's-
the-Times-Truth Department, Miss
Mata Hari, tonight another segment
of Vox Populi, and starring --

MUSIC: A FLOURISH OF DRUMS

ANNOUNCER (Cont'd)
-- the mad prophet of the airways,
Howard Beale!

MUSIC: A FULL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA SOARS INTO AN IMPERIAL
CRESCENDO --

179. -- as the HOUSELIGHTS go to BLACK. The curtain
slowly rises. The bare stage, the stained glass
window, the celestial SHAFT of light. HOWARD BEALE,
in his black suit and tie, strides on from the wings,
stands basking in the SPOTLIGHT. APPLAUSE UP.

180. INT: HACKETT'S OFFICE

The meeting is still going on.
HACKETT
Well, the issue is: shall we
kill Howard Beale or not. I'd
like to hear some more opinions
on that --

DIANA
I don't see we have any option.
Frank. Let's kill the son of a
bitch.

181. INT: THE BEALE STUDIO

The APPLAUSE for HOWARD BEALE has died. HUSH --
suddenly, the HUSH is shattered by a HORRENDOUS
ENFILADE of GUNFIRE. An embroidery of red bullet
holes perforates HOWARD's shirt and jacket, and we
might even see the impact of a head wound as he
pitches backwards dead.

182. A BANK OF FOUR COLOR TELEVISION MONITORS

It is 7:14 P.M., WEDNESDAY, July 9, 1975, and we
are watching the network news programs on CBS, NBC,
ABC and UBS-TV. The AUDIO is ON: headshots of
WALTER CRONKITE, JOHN CHANCELLOR, HOWARD K. SMITH,
HARRY REAVER, and JACK SNOWDEN, substituting for
HOWARD BEALE, interspersed with tapes of the horrible
happening at UBS the day before, flit and flicker
across the four television screens. Television
continues relentlessly on.

NARRATOR (OVER)
This was the story of Howard Beale
who was the network news anchorman
on UBS-TV, the first known instance
of a man being killed because he
had lousy ratings.

THE END