NETWORK

by

PADDY CHAYEFSKY

Producer:
Howard Gottfried

Director:
Sidney Lumet

Revised November, 1975
NETWORK
Revised 12/31/75

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 22, 1975, 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 -- President
Ford's new Energy Program, a hearing on Patty Hearst's
bael, truce violations in Beirut, busing trouble in Boston... NARRATION continues OVER --

NARRATOR (Contd)
-- In his time, Howard Beale had
been a mandarin of television, the
grand old man of news, with a HUT
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, magisterial, 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 22, 1975, 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 roaring drunk middle-
aged men, HOWARD BEALE and MAX SCHUMACHER, reeling
along and hooting it up. NARRATION continues OVER --
NARRATOR (Contd)
-- who was president of the News
Division at UBS 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 --
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MAX (Contd)
(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.

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

HOWARD
I'm going to kill myself --

MAX
Oh, 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 last
year --

MAX
You'll get a hell of a rating,
I'll tell you that, a fifty
share 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 --
HOWARD
(beginning to get
cought up in the idea)
Terrorist of the Week? --

MAX
Beautiful!

HOWARD
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 --

4. 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
b bolt upright, SCREAMING out against unseen terrors --

5. 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 fetal helplessness on the floor in the far corner of the room --

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

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 ONTO 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 (necktied and in shirtsleeves), 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, shelved 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 23, 1975,
and, since the AUDIO is OFF, the screens silently 
flicker with whatever was on that day at that time. 
HOWARD comes out of his office, crosses through the 
general HUM of informal industry, an occasional 
TYPEWRITER CLACKING, a more than occasional phone 
ringing, as the Nightly News Room PERSONNEL, all in 
their 20's and 30's, move, MURMUR, 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 --

9. 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 jammed with nine PEOPLE, a 
couple of them standing, the others sitting wherever 
they can. The executive producer, HARRY 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 the Lennon deportation 
at the end of three --

HARRY HUNTER
That strong enough to bump?

HOWARD 
(sipping his booze)
In one then, I'll do a lead on 
Sarah Jane Moore to Mayberry in 
San Francisco --

ASSOCIATE PRODUCER
The film I saw was the Chief 
of Detectives --
GRAPHICS MAN
I think we got maybe ten seconds
on the shooting itself --

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
The whole thing is one-twenty-five--

HOWARD
What does that come out?

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
About four-fifty --

ASSOCIATE PRODUCER
Are we using Squeaky Fromme?

HARRY HUNTER
Let's do that in two -- Squeaky --
Ford at the airport -- bump. Now,
we using a map going into San
Francisco?

GRAPHICS MAN
I prefer a news-pix --

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

HOWARD
What've we got left?

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
Gun control, Patty Hearst affidavit,
guerillas in Chad, OPEC in Vienna --

10. INT: 4TH FLOOR CORRIDOR - UBS BUILDING - 10.
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 OUT:

END OF CREDITS:

12. INT: CONTROL ROOM - 4TH FLOOR

The clock wall reads: 6:30. Typical control room. A room-length double bank of television monitors including two color monitor screens, the show monitor and the preset monitor. Before this array of TV screens sits the DIRECTOR, flanked on his left by the PRODUCTION ASSISTANT (GIRL), who stop-watches 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 follow-up on the attempted assassination of President Ford in San Francisco --

SNOWDEN (ON MONITOR)
--the first attempt on President Ford's life was eighteen days ago -- and again yesterday in San Francisco --

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

SNOWDEN (ON MONITOR)
--In spite of two attempts --

The show monitor screen has switched over to show film of President Ford arriving at the San Francisco airport--

SNOWDEN (V.O. ON MONITOR)
--Mr. Ford says he will not become --

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
(mumurs)
--forty seconds --

DIRECTOR
(mumurs into mike)
--twenty seconds to one --
DIRECTOR
-- one --
HOWARD BEALE's image suddenly flips on-screen --
PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
-- thirty 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 --

ASSISTANT 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 --

ASSISTANT 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

HOWARD (ON MONITOR)
-- so tune in next Tuesday. That'll give the public relations people a (hope)
HOWARD (ON MONITOR) (Contd)
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
Take VT A.

The monitor screen erupts into a commercial for cat food.

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 riffling through
her script)
He was supposed to do a tag on
Ron Nesson and into 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 --
SLOCUM (on floor)
They want to know what the fuck is 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.

ASSOCIATE PRODUCER
Harry, I think we better get him off --

HARRY HUNTER
(roaring at the Audio Man)
Turn his 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 --

DIRECTOR
Take 2--

At which point, the TECHNICAL DIRECTOR pushes a button; the jangling catfood 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
Chrissakes! Black it out! This is going out live to sixty-seven fucking affiliates! Shit!

DIRECTOR
This is the dumbest thing I ever saw! --
13. INT: MAX SCHUMACHER'S OFFICE - FIFTH FLOOR - 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 EXECUTIVE OFFICES

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 hysteria down to mumbles and murmurs and occasional sounds of laughter. TELEPHONES are shrilly 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. CAMERAMEN, GRIPS and other FLOOR PERSONNEL are gathered in a FLUX of little clumps around the studio murmuring and muttering and giggling 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 boozing has he been doing
today?

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

VOICES (O.S.)
-- Mr. Schumacher, Mr. Cabell
on the phone! --
-- Mr. Schumacher! Mr. Zangwill
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.

VOICES (O.S.)
-- Harry! Thackeray wants to
talk to you right now! --
-- Mr. Schumacher! Mr. Gianini
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
AREA - 10:47 P.M.

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 clotted 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 murmurs 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 SCHUMACHER), the
VP News Division (ROBERT MCDONOUGH), the VP Public
Relations News Division (HILTON STEINHAN), 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 litigable? --

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?
ZANGWILL
He'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 STEINMAN (VP Public Relations News Division), early 50's, a rumpled, ordinarily amiable man, is standing by the desk on the phone to someone at CBS --

STEINMAN
(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 STEINMAN)
ABC again, wants the tape --

STEINMAN
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.
CHANÉY
(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 blurtin out their respective
commercials --

THACKERAY
(VP Stations Relations,
lounging in the doorway)
The ten o'clock news opened
with it --

HACKETT
(on phone)
Walter'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 anchorman, TIM HALLOWAY, 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 --
CHUCK SCARBOROUGH
Howard Beale interrupted his network news program tonight to announce --

HACKETT
(mutters)
Shit --

TIM HALLOWAY
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 black.

HACKETT
(on phone)
I'll call you back, John.

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 (Contd)
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 goddam well see about that!

CHANLEY
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 -
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 -
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 Lester 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, DIANA CHRISTENSON, 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 DIANA exchange nods and professionally polite greetings --

HERRON
(buzzing the projectionist)
Diana asked if she could sit in on this --

MAX
Fine --
(sits, calls to DIANA)
How's it going?

DIANA 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 Beale 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. Ruddy 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 guerilla, in fatigues, sun glasses and combat boots. MISS HOBBS looks calmly into camera and says:

LAUREEN HOBBS (ON SCREEN)
The Communist 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, goddamit, when, Louise? ... Well, did he say anything? ...
All right, thanks.
(hangs up, promptly picks up again)
Four-eight-oh-seven --

LAUREEN 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.

LAUREEN HOBBS (ON SCREEN)(in b.g.)
The fascist thrust must be resisted in its incipient stages by the broadest possible coalition --
25. 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 Flagstaff 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 heiresses. 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 amateurishly about, unfocuses and focuses again to pick up MARY ANN GIFFORD bending over her shopping bag and pulling out a Czech 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 HOWARD'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, make 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 --
The show is over, the room lights are on. In b.g., DIANA and HERRON stand, murmur to each other --

MAX
(on phone)
And no booze today, Howard --

In b.g., DIANA and HERRON 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 Programs --

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 GROWL --

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 SNARLING 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.

DIANA and HERRON 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 of 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 PELLEGRINO (Assistant VP Programs), 36, swarthy, coiffed and moustachioed. They find seats on the chairs, the small couch. HERRON remains standing --
DIANA
(introducing)
This is Bill Herron 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 Laureen 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
Ecumenical 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 guerillas?

SCHLESINGER
What're we going to call it --
the Mao Tse Tung Hour?
DIANA
Why not? They've got Strike
Force, Task Force, SWAT -- why
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 fucked 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 counter-culture. 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 -
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 UBS CORPORATE EXECUTIVES, seated in three
rows, including EDWARD RUDDY, Chairman of the Board,
the PRESIDENTS and SENIOR VICE-PRESIDENTS of the other
divisions and other groups -- the UBS Records Group,
the UBS Publishing Group, the UBS Theater Chain, etc.
Representing the network are NELSON CHANEY and the
divisional heads -- GEORGE NICHOLS, President of the
Radio Division; NORMAN MOLDANIAN, President Owned
Stations; General Counsel WALTER AMUNDSEN, and, of
course, MAX SCHUMACHER, President of the News Division.
FRANK HACKETT, Senior Executive Vice President UBS-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
UBS-TV network was foundering
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 organisation 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 SCHUMACHER 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 brahmin 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 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 MOLDANIAN, who studiously avoids his eye --

HACKETT (Contd)
-- News-Radio would be transferred to the UBS 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 SCHUMACHER is elbowing his way through the crowded aisle to get to where EDWARD RUDDY is chatting away with a COUPLE of STOCKHOLDERS --

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

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

MAX
(barely containing himself)
Why wasn't I told about this? Why was I led onto that podium and publicly guillotined 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.

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

RUDDY 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 5:50 P.M. Sixth Avenue --

43. INT: UBS BUILDING - 5TH 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 --
INT: MAX'S OFFICE

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 --

INT: CONTROL ROOM - NETWORK NEWS SHOW

The wall CLOCK 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 MAN 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 BEALE as he looks up from the sheaf of papers on his desk and says:

HOWARD (ON MONITOR)

Good evening. Today is Wednesday, September the Twenty-Fourth, 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 life is bullshit,
and it is, so what're 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. Schumacher.

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 goddam 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.

HOWARD (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 HOWARD BEALE on her office console --

HOWARD (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 CABELL, wrench the door open and stride in --

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

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

49. INT: LOBBY - UBS BUILDING

White-haired, patrician EDWARD RUDDY, 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 educational channel. A half dozen SECURITY GUARDS protect the elevators, and three more help RUDDY get through the GLARING CAMERA LIGHTS and the horde of REPORTERS thrusting mikes at him --
RUDDY
(moving through the crowd)
-- I'm sorry, I don't have all the facts yet --

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, cathedral, hushed, 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 those 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, 59, silent, forceful, lounges in one of the several leather chairs. The door opens, and NELSON CHANEY and MAX SCHUMACHER 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.

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

RUDDY (Contd)
(regards MAX briefly, murmurs)
The way I hear it, Max, you're primarily responsible for this colossally 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)
MAX (Contd)
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 CCA acquired control of the UBS Systems ten months ago, Hackett's been taking over everything. Who the hell's running this network, you or some conglomerate called CCA? I mean, you're the Chairman of the Systems Group, and Frank Hackett's just CCA'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 anymore. Who the hell's running this company, you or CCA?

RUDDY
(murmurs)
I told you at the stockholders' meeting, Max, that we would discuss all that at our regular meeting tomorrow morning. 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 WHEELER)
Bob McDonough will take over the News Division till we sort all this out.

(WHEELER 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 --  

CHANNEY  
(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 --  

HOWARD  
-- 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 seemly 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, noodling and nuzzling DIANA with the clear  
intention of mounting 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 --
54. EXT: UBS BUILDING - 9:00 A.M., THURSDAY, SEPT. 25 - DAY

Bright morning sunshine. DIANA, in a pants suit and carrying half a dozen scripts, enters the building --

55. INT: UBS BUILDING - LOBBY

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

56. INT: UBS BUILDING - 14TH FLOOR - 9:15 A.M.

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

57. INT: PROGRAMMING DEPARTMENT - COMMON ROOM

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

58. INT: DIANA'S OUTER OFFICE

DIANA, rummaging through the papers on top of the SECRETARY'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 --

59. INT: DIANA'S OFFICE

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, pre-
sumably Harvard. The series is
irresistably 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 News)
We're up to our ears in lady cop
shows.
SCHLESINGER
The next one is another investigative reporter show. A crusty but benign managing editor who's always getting heat from the publisher --

DIANA
The Arabs have decided to jack up the price of oil another twenty per cent, and the C.I.A. has been caught opening Senator Humphrey's mail, there's a civil war in Angola, another one in Beirut, New York City's facing default, they've finally caught up with Patricia Hearst, and --
(she flips the Daily News over so BARBARA can read it)
--the whole front page of the Daily News is Howard Beale.

ACROSS BARBARA 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 blowup of HOWARD BEALE topped by a 52 point black banner headline: -- BEALE FIRED --

DIANA (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 --

60. INT: ROOM 520 - THE NETWORK NEWS ROOM 60.
- 9:30 A.M.

MAX SCHUMACHER and BOB McDONOUGH (mid-40's) enter. The Network News Room is something less than Front Page, but, nevertheless, a news room. It's a long, large, windowless room, some 40 desks, mostly unoccupied, a wire room, typewriters and banks of television monitors on the wall. At the moment, work has stopped, and the ENTIRE PERSONNEL of the news room, some 60 PEOPLE -- EXECUTIVES and SECRETARIES, PRODUCERS, ASSISTANT PRODUCERS, HEAD WRITERS, WRITERS, DUTY AND ASSIGNMENT EDITORS, and DESK ASSISTANTS, ARTISTS, and FILM AND TAPE EDITORS, REPORTERS, NEWSCASTERS and CAMERA AND AUDIO MEN -- are all gathered standing and sitting about to hear MAX say --
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
(louder)
-- 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)
KTNS 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.
HACKETT
Oh, for God's sakes, are you suggesting we put that lunatic back on the air yelling bullshit?

DIANA
Yes, I think we should put Beale 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 buy for 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 Beale 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.

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

DIANA
I see Howard Beale as a latterday 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
(on 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 Beale 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 be eyeball to eyeball with 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-linened 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 AMUNDESEN (General Counsel Network, ARTHUR ZANGWILL (VP Standards and Practices,) and JOE DONNELLY (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 whorehouse network, and we have to take whatever we can get.

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

CHANNEY sits.

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

DONNELLY
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 BEALE walks in, carrying an 8 x 12 photograph --

MAX (Contd)
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 (Contd)
(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 CBS. My God, Bob Trout, Harry Reasoner, Cronkite, Hollenbeck, and that's you, Howard, right? -- I'll see you, Dick --
(hangs 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 clout of PEOPLE spilling out from MAX SCHUMACHER'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, delightedly 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!" --

HOWL of LAUGHTER --

MAX (Contd)
-- The driver turns around, he says: "Don't do it, kid, you got 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 Hackett'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-man 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 latterday prophet,
denouncing the hypocrisies
of our times --

HOWARD
Hey, that sounds pretty good --

MAX
Who's this they?

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

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

GIANINI (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?
HOWARD

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

MAX

Then grab it.

68. INT: 5TH FLOOR CORRIDOR - 3:00 P.M. 68.

MR. RUDDY, 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 debouch off this corridor, quickly
stops, stands still --

VIDEOTAPE MAN
(murmurs)
Afternoon, Mr. Ruddy --

RUDDY
(murmurs)
Good afternoon.

He passes on towards --

69. INT: ROOM 509 69.

as RUDDY enters. The SIX SECRETARIES pecking away at
their typewriters all pause to murmur awed --

SECRETARIES
Good afternoon, Mr. Ruddy --
Good afternoon, Mr. Ruddy -- etc.

-- as RUDDY passes through to --

70. INT: MAX'S OUTER OFFICE 70.

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

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

RUDDY
(murmurs)
Thank you.

He goes into --

71. INT: MAX'S OFFICE 71.

-- and closes the door.
RUDDY
Nelson Chaney tells me Beale 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?

RUDDY
(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.
RUDDY
(stands)
Thank you, Max.

He opens the door and leaves.

72. INT: MAX'S OFFICE - WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 1 - 72.
7:00 P.M.

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 scowls, frowns, seems to be muttering --

NARRATION (Contd)
Indeed, Howard Beale played his new role of latter-day prophet poorly. He was, after all, a newsmen, not an actor. 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 --

73. 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 Soothsayer. You could give her two minutes of trance at the end of a Howard Beale show, say once a week, Friday, which is (MORE)
DIANA (Contd)
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

(smiles)
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

Hell, 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)
DIANA (Contd)
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 craggy 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 goddam 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 bra-less, and MAX cannot help but note the assertive swells 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 scam 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 a 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 schoolgirl 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 (Contd)
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
(mutters)
Schmuck, what're you getting into?

He sighs, stands, flicks off his desk lamp.

74. 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, right 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 aroused quickly, consummate
prematurely, and can't wait to
get my clothes back on and get
out 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 maelstrom of sheets, both still puffing from what must have been an ebullient bout in the sack --

DIANA

Wow, 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.
Revised 12/31/75

HOWARD (Contd)
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, nods his head as if he is following a complicated argument --

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

HOWARD listens, sighs, shrugs:

HOWARD
Okay.

77. EXT: UBS BUILDING - THURSDAY, OCT. 2, 9:00 77.
A.M. - DAY

Bright sunny day to establish the next morning.

78. INT: ROOM 517 - NIGHTLY NEWS ROOM 78.

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 --
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.

HOWARD
I must go on with what I'm doing, Max. I have been called. This is my witness, and I must make it.

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
(regards 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? (MORE)
MAX (Contd)
Still small voices in the night
or 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 goddam 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
voice 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
away at his typewriter. MAX scowls, turns, exits --

81. INT: NETWORK NEWS CONTROL ROOM

The wall CLOCK says 6:29. 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 6:30, 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 banjo-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 -- "

83. INT: NETWORK NEWS CONTROL ROOM

HARRY HUNTER still on the phone as the rest of the control room STAFF just sit there staring at HOWARD on the MONITOR --

        HUNTER
        (on phone)
        What do you want me to do? --

84. INT: MAX'S OFFICE

MAX behind his desk on his phone, chin cupped in his right hand, staring glumly at HOWARD on his CONSOLE --

        MAX
        (on phone)
        Nothing --
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 --

85. INT: STUDIO - NETWORK NEWS

TIGHT SHOT OF HOWARD, his voice rising, his eyes glowing with increasing fervor --

HOWARD
(growing fener)
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 --
HOWARD (ON CONSOLE)
So I thought about it for
a moment --

MAX taps out a telephone number on his private line --

HOWARD (ON CONSOLE) (Cont'd)
And then I said: "Okay --"

MAX
(on phone)
Doctor Sindell? 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 whom 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 (Cont'd)
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 if 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 loveliness! 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
(bent 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,
DOLLIES 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
-- FRIDAY, OCTOBER 3 - 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 starts 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 door, opens it, looks in, 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.

95. 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!

(the PHONE RINGS, HACKETT seizes it)

What? ... All right ...

(he hangs up, snaps at THACKERAY)

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

THACKERAY exits. HACKETT roars on --
HACKETT (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
graverobbers 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 God,
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 Beale 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. And do you think Ruddy's (MORE)
HACKETT (Contd)
stupid enough to go to the CCA 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 CCA 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. Jensen 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)
reeking 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 clicks 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 Beale 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 gleam
wetly, the heavy TRAFFIC heading uptown crushes and
HONKS along, erratic enfilades of headlights in the
shiny, black streets --

97. CLOSER ANGLE

of entrance to UBS Building. HOWARD BEALE,
wearing 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 haggardly 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.

99. 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 MONITOR)
...Oil ministers of the OPEC nations meeting in Vienna still haven't decided how much more to increase the price of oil next Wednesday. Iran and some of the Arab states want to jack up the price by as much as twenty percent --

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
Five seconds --

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR
Twenty-five in Vienna --

DIRECTOR
And ... two --

SNOWDEN (ON MONITOR)
The Saudi Arabians are being more cautious. They just want a ten percent increase. More on that story from Edward Fletcher in Vienna --

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

HUNTER
(on phone)
Yeah? ... Okay --
(hangs up, to DIANA)
He came in the building about five minutes ago.
PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
Ten seconds coming to one --

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

HUNTER
(to the STAGE MANAGER)
Did you get that, Paul?

The STAGE MANAGER nods, passes on the instructions to his A.D. on the studio floor. On the SHOW MONITOR, we see footage of the OPEC Vienna meeting, lots of Arab headdresses and bearded Levantine faces at conference tables, and we are hearing the VOICE of Edward Fletcher in Vienna --

FLETCHER (ON MONITOR)
This has probably been the most divisive meeting the oil-producing states have ever had. The thirteen nations of OPEC have still not been able to decide by how much to increase the price of oil --

On the SHOW MONITOR, the footage flicks to Sheikh Zaki Yamani being interviewed by a corps of correspondents outside the meeting hall --

FLETCHER (V.O.)
Saudi Arabian oil minister Sheikh Zaki Yamani flew to London yesterday for further consultations with his government. He returned to the Vienna meetings today--

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

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
Ready 2.

DIRECTOR
Take 2.
-- and, suddenly, the obsessed face of HOWARD BEALE, gaunt, haggard, red-eyed with unworlidy 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 rooms. 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 DIANA --

HOWARD (Contd)
I don't want you to riot. I don't want you to protest. I don't want you to write 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)
HOWARD (Contd).
and crime in the street. All
I know is first you got to get
mad. You've 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
go 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 Christenson,
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 BEALE 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 PITOFSKY, 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)
Whom are you talking to?

THACKERAY
WCGG, 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 - UBS AFFILIATE

- ATLANTA

The GENERAL MANAGER of WCGG, 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 BEALE 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: THACKERAY'S OFFICE

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

DIANA grabs the phone from him and listens to the
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
    PITOFSKY; 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. SCHUMACHER, 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 SCHUMACHER
Where are you going?
CAROLINE
I want to see if anybody's yelling.

HOWARD (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 bulking, 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:

THIN VOICE (O.S.)
I'm mad as hell and I'm not going to take this any more!

HOWARD (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 HEADS in window after window, here, there, and then seemingly everywhere, SHOUTING out 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 PULGURATION 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 spraying 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 baggage, 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 Christenson 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 trade calls
pow-wows and confabs with her
West Coast programming execs --

These are FOUR MEN and TWO WOMEN; GLENN KOSSOFF 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 Laureen 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 Hy 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 114.

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)
Hy, 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 -- HY NORMAN --

KOSSOFF (Contd)
Hy, I think you know Barbara Schlesinger, but I don't know if you know Diana Christenson --

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, Hy, 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 law-abiding man. He lives with his wife and daughter in a large city. His
DIANA (Contd)
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, an adept in Kung Fu and all the other martial arts. Now, he starts walking the streets of the city, decoying muggers into preying 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 his most fascistic 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 entertainment.

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.

He opens the door and goes out. On his heels, GLENN KOSSOFF is already ushering in BILL HERRON, LAUREEN HOBBES, (a handsome black woman of 35 in Afro and dashiki); SAM HAYWOOD, (late 30's, a shaggy, unkempt lawyer 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 LENNIE, 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 HOBBES --

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

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

DIANA
Sounds like the basis of a firm friendship.

(to KOSSOFF)
We're going to need more chairs --

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

SCHLESINGER
(in b.g.)
Anybody want coffee?
LENIE
Black with Sucaryl --

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

(indicates HERRON)
-- 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
askance --

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-
thesisal distraction. The thesis
here, if you follow me, is that
the capitalist state is in a ter-

mental condition now, and the anti-
thesis is the maturation of the
fascist state, and when the corre-
lative 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 HUSH 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 cossack 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 teevee 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 teevee 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 teevee!

A moment of HUSH, 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.
Christenson, was that our client,
Ms. Hobbs, 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 on Mary Ann Gifford.
We open this two-hour special with
that bank ripoff footage, which is
terrific stuff, and then we tell
(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 HOBBS.

LAUREEN
The Ecumenical Liberation Army is
an ultra-left sect creating political
confusion 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 deviantional
terrorism.

DIANA
Even better. I see the story this
way. Poor little rich girl kid-
napped 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 Kinkaid 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 SCHLESINGER,
HERRON and KOSOFF)
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.

KOSOFF
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: A SMALL ISOLATED FARMHOUSE IN ENCINO - NIGHT

LAUREEN HOBBS, sitting on the stoop of the front porch 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 FOYER

Dark. An absolute shambles. Cartons, crates, newspapers 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 welter of torn newspapers, empty grocery bags, hamburger 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 attendance 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 torn 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 --
LAUREEN
Well, Ahmed, you ain't going to believe this, but I'm going to make a teevee 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 RATAPLAN 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 Webbing and his It's-the-Emmes-Truth Department, Miss Mata Hari, tonight another segment of Vox Populi, and starring --
MUSIC: A FLOURISH OF DRUMS.

ANNOUNCER (Contd)
-- the mad prophet of the airways,
Howard Beale! --

MUSIC: A FULL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA SOARS INTO AN IMPERIAL CRESCEPDO --

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 SHAFT 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 Savonarola-type tirade)
Edward George Ruddy died today!
Edward George Ruddy was the Chairman of the Board of the Union Broadcasting Systems --

(MORE)
HOWARD (Contd)
And woe is us if it ever falls in the hands of the wrong people.
And that's why woe 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 now 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 Kojack 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)
HANCOCK

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, HOWARD BEALE, 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 27

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 explication.
A little red ARROW darts from one figure to another as
HACKETT drones on. Seated in a semi-circular arrange-
ment like a miniature United Nations are 214 SENIOR
EXECUTIVES, (late 40's, 50's, and 60'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
breakeven point after taking into
account one hundred and ten million
dollars of negative cash-flow from
the network. Note please the added
thirty-five millions 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-
jected initial programming rev-
enues in the amount of twenty-one
million dollars due to the phenom-
enal 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 RUDDY lying in state.
ANOTHER ANGLE showing the vaulted reaches of the Temple packed with a standing room audience of condolers with the white yarmalka-ed RABBI in b.g. officiating. All the NETWORK BRASS 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. EXT: 65TH STREET - MAIN ENTRANCE - TEMPLE
EMANUEL - DAY - SNOW

SNOW drifting down. CROWD of overcoated condolers flooding the sidewalk. A cortege 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, muttering 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 DOLIES with them. They turn the corner onto --

126. EXT: FIFTH AVENUE - DAY - SNOW

They head downtown. They walk silently. SNOW drifts down on them. CAMERA DOLIES 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 dementedly 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 rancors. 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 Xerox.

MAX
A bit too austere for teevee, I
think.

DIANA
You're right. We wouldn't get
an ll rating. 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 PASSERBY darts them a curious
glance.

127. INT: MAX'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MONDAY,
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 (Contd)

hope to God it's just a menopausal infatuation. But it is an infatuation, 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 of 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 convention 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 before 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 dotage? Am I supposed to sit at home knitting and purling till you slink back like a penitent drunk? I'm your wife, damn it! If you can't work up a

(MORE)
LOUISE (Contd)
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 (Contd)
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?

Yes.

MAX

LOUISE
I won't give you up easily, Max.

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

LOUISE (Contd)
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 teevee 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-Act-Two scoured wife throws peccant husband out scene. But, no fear, I'll come back home

(MORE)
MAX (Contd)
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 - N.Y. - DIANA'S OFFICE, 128.
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, whisks her sheep wool-lined coat out of her closet and strides out into --

129. INT: DIANA'S SECRETARY'S OFFICE 129.
-- where there is no one sitting, and continues out into --

130. INT: PROGRAMMING DEPARTMENT - COMMON ROOM 130.
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 her-
self a dragon fellow.

SCHLESINGER
Poor bastard.

131. EXT: UBS BUILDING - SIXTH AVENUE - AFTERNOON

DIANA, now wearing her sheep wool-lined coat and carry-
ing 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 --

132. EXT: 55TH STREET - DAY

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

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 CPM. 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 tablecloth, 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 ripoff film, and they want it. We're getting around that by doing the show in collaboration with the News Divison, 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.

DIANA
-- but he says absolutely nix 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.

DIANA (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 --

Nubile 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 --

DIANA (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, DIANA mounts MAX, and the SCREEN is filled with the voluptuous writhings of love, DIANA 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 feline 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 Gifford 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 lights slither out from behind the drawn shades of the farmhouse, and we can hear the sounds of ANGRY VOICES.

TWO AGENTS from ICM disgust 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
Cartons, crates, newspapers, scraps of food, torn grocery bags, stacks of pamphlets, cases of weapons and ammunition, broken furniture and sleeping bags are littered every which way about. 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 LAUREEN HOBBS and the three William Morris agents, WALLIE, LENNIE and ED, perhaps remembered from earlier scenes. We can also see the GREAT AHMED KHAN, 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 KHAN’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?
MIGGS
(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 raid 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 --

MIGGS
(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)
LAUREEN (Contd)
And, Helen, don't start no shit with me about a piece again! I'm paying Metro 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, Laureen, you've got the party in there for seventy-five hundred a week production expenses.

LAUREEN
I'm not giving this pseudo insurrectionary sectarian 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!

LAUREEN
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 WILLIE STEIN who almost has a heart attack.

THE GREAT KHAN
Man, give her the fucking overhead clause.

STEIN
How did I get here? Who's going to believe this? I'm sitting here in a goddam farm in Encino at ten o'clock at night negotiating overhead charges with cowboys!
THE GREAT KHAN
(flip over
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 MARQUEE which reads:

WELCOME UBS AFFILIATES CONVENTION

EXT: FRONT OF THE CENTURY PLAZA HOTEL -
WEDNESDAY, MAY 28 - 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. AMUNDSEN, MR. AND MRS. ZANGWILL,
jollying it up with the affiliates’ executives
and their wives --

142. INT: GRAND BALLROOM - COCKTAIL AREA -
CENTURY PLAZA HOTEL

A huge BANNER reading UBS 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 THACKERAY, (VP Stations Relations,) and NORMAN MOLDANIAN (VP Owned Stations,) with their WIVES and carrying their drinks and exchanging pleasantries with the GENERAL MANAGER of WJGL Cincinnati and his WIFE and the GENERAL MANAGER of KBEX Albuquerque and his WIFE as well as the SALES MANAGER of that station and his WIFE. High CHATTER and HUBBUB, lots of hearty chuckles and general Rotarian bonhomie. In b.g., FRANK HACKETT and his WIFE exchanging Rotarian bonhomie with some other GENERAL MANAGERS and PROGRAM DIRECTORS and SALES MANAGERS of various affiliates and their WIVES --

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

SALES MANAGER
(pumping DIANA's hand)
-- Millard Villanova, Sales Manager, KGIM, 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 NELSON CHANEY (President UBS Network), a spotlighted figure at the podium --

CHANEY
-- 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 CHANEY --

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-
bridsands, we ought to let her know
how we feel about her --

An OVATION from the AUDIENCE. In response to CHANEY's
beckoning, DIANA rises from her chair in the glisten-
ing shadows 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 shadows 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 BALLROOM 146.

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!

PULL 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, table 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)
banks and insurance companies who are not buying C.C. and A. for themselves but as agents for somebody else!

147. LONG WIDE ANGLE SHOT with TV set in f.g. showing 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 --

HOWARD (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.

HOWARD (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)
(MORE)
HACKETT (Cont'd.)

(his face sobers)
--All right, take it easy, Clarence,
I don't know what you're talking
about...When?...Clarence, take it easy.
The Howard Beale's show's just going on
out here. 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 control more than
sixteen billion dollars in this country!
They own a chunk of Fifth Avenue, twenty
downtown pieces of Boston, a part of
the port of New Orleans, an industrial
park in Salt Lake City. They own big
hunks of the Atlanta Hilton, the Arizona
Land and Cattle Company, the Security
National Bank in California, the Bank
of the Commonwealth in Detroit! They
control ARAMCO, so that puts them into
Exxon, Texaco and Mobil Oil! They're
all over -- New Jersey, Louisville,
St.Louis, Missouri! And that's only
what we know about! There's a hell of
a lot more we don't know about because all
those Arab petro-dollars are washed through
Switzerland and Canada and the biggest
banks in this country!

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

HOWARD (ON TV)

For example, what we don't know about
is this C.C.A, deal and all the other
C.C.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,
Dupont, U.S. Steel, and twenty other top
American companies. Hell, they already
own half of England.
HACKETT, NELSON CHANEY and WALTER AMUNDSEN, all tuxedo-ed, and DIANA, evening-gowned, sit and stand in the dark smallish room, cluttered with electronic equipment, watching a replay of the Howard Beale 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 office 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!
HOWARD (ON SCREEN) (Cont'd)
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
Oh, God --

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 --

CHANEX
(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.

CHANEX
(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.

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

Sure.

TECHNICIAN
149. The two TECHNICIANS exit. SILENCE fills the cluttered room. AMUNDSEN and HACKETT sit in their chairs, CHANEY leans against a side wall, DIANA 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 knell. 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)
HACKETT (Contd)
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!

DIANA
(comes off the back wall)
Let's get back to Howard Beale. You're not seriously going to pull Beale off the air.

HACKETT
Mr. Jensen is unhappy with Howard Beale and wants him discontinued.

DIANA
He may be unhappy, but he isn't stupid enough to withdraw the number one show on television out of pique.

HACKETT
(explodes)
Two billion dollars isn't pique! That's the wrath of God! And the wrath of God wants Howard Beale fired!

DIANA
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.

HACKETT
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. pulls 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 focussed, 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. 150. 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 FRANK 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 SUNLIGHT streams in. ARTHUR JENSEN is rising from behind his massive desk --

JENSEN

Good afternoon, Mr. Beale. They tell me you're a madman.

CAMERA DOLLIES 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 seemly a setting for what I have to say to you.

He takes HOWARD's arm and moves him to a large oak 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 pinspots 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
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
billions of 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 immense, 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
going through to you, Mr. Beale?

JENSEN
You get up on your little twenty-
one inch screen, and howl about America and democracy.
There is no America. There is no
democracy. There is only IBM and
ITT 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 solu-
tions and compute the
(MORE)
JENSEN (Contd)
price-cost probabilities of their transactions and investments just like we do.

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 since man crawled out of the slime, and our children, Mr. Beale, will live to see that perfect world — 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 evangel, 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 SHOW 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, fellers. 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, writhing 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)
153. CONTINUED

HOWARD (ON MONITOR) (Contd)
two hundred odd million tran-
sistorized, 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. DIANA'S APARTMENT—THURSDAY—JUNE 19 --
ENTRANCE FOYER — 7:15 P.M.

--as MAX lets himself into the apartment. MAX seems depressed--

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 --

MAX moves into the living room as DIANA'S VOICE erupts
shrilly from the bedroom --

DIANA (O.S.)
--You're his goddam agent, Lew!
I'm counting on you to talk some
sense into the lunatic!

155. INT. DIANA'S BEDROOM

DIANA perched on her bed, shrilling into the telephone --

DIANA
We're starting to get rumbles from
the agencies. Another couple of
weeks of this, and the sponsors will
be bailing out:... This is breach of
contract, Lew! This isn't the Howard
Beale we signed. You better get him
off this corporate universe kick or,
so help me, I'll pull him off the
air:... I told him, Lew! I've been
telling him every day for a week:
I'm sick of telling him! Now, you
tell him!
155. CONT'D.

She slams the receiver down, sits in silent rage on the bed, turns up the volume on her remote control unit. HOWARD'S VOICE suddenly emanates from the television set across the room from her --

HOWARD (ON TV)
--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 --

DIANA reaches for the phone again, dials briskly. She looks up to note MAX regarding her from the doorway. She regards him sullenly. They are both clearly in foul tempers.

HOWARD (ON TV)
--The whole world's people are becoming mass-produced, programmed, wired, insensate things useful only to produce and consume other mass-produced things, all of them as unnecessary and useless as we are --

MAX
I'm sorry I'm late --

They exchange dully sullen looks. MAX turns back into --

156. INT. THE LIVING ROOM

--where he sprawls morosely on one of the soft chairs --
156. CONT'D.

HOWARD (ON TV O.S.)
--that's the simple truth you
have to grasp, that human existence
is an utterly futile and purposeless
thing--

157.
158. INT. THE BEDROOM

DIANA perched on her bed, cross-legged --

DIANA
(on phone)
Barbara? Diana --

HOWARD (ON TV)
--because once you've grasped that,
then the whole universe becomes
orderly and comprehensible --

DIANA
(on phone)
Listen, I had another howling
session with Howard Beale today,
and he's impenetrable. We better
start shoring up the dykes--

HOWARD (ON 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 --

DIANA
(stares at set, mutters)
Jesus Christ --

HOWARD (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, and the TV set goes black.

**DIANA**
(on phone)
Let's start looking around for possible replacements. I hear ABC's grooming a mad prophet of their own in Chicago as our com-
petition 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 seg-
ment is catching on; let's make that a daily feature --

159. **INT. THE LIVING ROOM**

MAX sprawled on the soft chair. 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 welter of papers and books and filing folders. DIANA appears in the bedroom doorway, regards MAX coldly --

**DIANA**
You know, you could help me out with Howard if you wanted to. He listens to you. You're his best friend --

**MAX**
(exploding off the chair)
I'm tired of this hysteria about Howard Beale!

**DIANA**
(erupting herself)
Every time you see somebody in your family, you come back in one of these morbid middle-aged moods!
Revised 12/31/75

MAX
(raging around the room)
And I'm tired of finding you on the
goddamned phone every time I turn
around! I'm tired of being an
accessory in your life!

He finds himself by the upstage typewriter, which he
sweeps crashing off the bridge table, sending the
welter of papers there flying off in a storm --

MAX (cont'd)
-- and I'm tired of pretending to
write this dumb book about my
maverick days in those great early
years of television! Every execu-
tive 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
goddamned 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
(MORE)
Revised 12/31/75

MAX (cont'd)
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
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 evanesced --

NARRATION
By the first week in July, the
Howard Beale show was down eleven
points. Hysteria swept through
the network, even to those people
who had only a contractual connec-
tion to it --

160. INT: DIANA'S OFFICE - MONDAY, JULY 7 - 2:30 P.M. 160.
LAUREEN HOBBS in a shrill, wide-eyed panic, raging
all over DIANA's office as DIANA's phone RINGS, and
DIANA answers it --
LAUREEN
(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 troubles 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 robes 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 SCHLESINGER and TOMMY
Pellegrino. FRANK HACKETT is there; NELSON CHANEY,
HERB THACKERAY (Stations Relations); and JOE DONELLY
and HARRY HUNTER. 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 Oberammargau 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 guru from Spokane and two
more hellfires 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 gloomily,
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 recriminate 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 snortle and make 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 boozer 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)
You need me badly. I'm your last contact with human reality.

MAX (Cont'd)
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 Laureen Hobbs was destroyed! Like everything you and the institution of television touch is 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 split-seconds and instant replays. You are madness, Diana, virulent madness, and you touch dies with you. Well, not me! Not while I can still feel pleasure and pain and love!

and everything

---

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 lugs his way across the living room, then pauses for a moment, reflects --

MAX (Cont'd)
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. (MORE)
MAX (Cont'd)
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 CLACK 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 RUDDY's office).
At the doors, NELSON CHANEY is waiting for him.

CHANLEY
How'd it go?

HACKETT sighs, enters --

170. INT: SECRETARY'S OFFICE 170.

-- where HERB THACKERAY and JOE DONNELLY are lounging.
Everybody follows HACKETT into --

171. INT: HACKETT'S OFFICE (ONCE RUDDY'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 (Cont'd)
Mr. Jensen feels we are being too
catastrophic in our thinking. I
argued that television was a vola-
tile industry in which success and
failure were determined week by
(MORE)
HACKETT (Cont'd)

week. 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. Everybody here knows the Neilsen and share-trend scores. Let me just encapsulate 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 Soothsayer, 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?

DONELLY
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.

THACKERAY
You guys want to hear all the flak
I'm getting from the affiliates?

HACKETT
We know all about it, Herb.

AMUNDESEN
And you would describe Mr. Jensen's
position on Beale as inflexible?

HACKETT
Intractable and adamantine.

CHANNEY
So what're we going to do about
this Beale son of a bitch?

A sad silence settles over the top management of UBS-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,
ocasionally chatting with the waiting CROWD. OVER
THIS, the VOICES of the network meeting just inter-
rupted 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:

AMUNDSEN'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 (Contd)
(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.

176 INT: THE BEALE 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 booms. The stage curtain is down. OVER THIS, the VOICES of the meeting CONTINUE:

CHANNEY'S VOICE
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 SHOW STUDIO - SHOWTIME

The warmup is over; the stage footlights are on; the
AUDIENCE sits expectantly. The big wall CLOKCH 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 Sooth-
sayer, Jim Webbing and his It's-
the-Emmes-Truth Department, Miss
Mata Hari, tonight another segment
of Vox Populi, and starring --

MUSIC: A FLOURISH OF DRUMS

ANNOUNCER (Contd)
-- 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 179.
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 perforate 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 REASONER, 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