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Network

By Paddy Chayefsky

This story is about Howard Beale...
...who was the Network News anchorman
on UBS TV.
In his time, Howard Beale
had been a mandarin of television.
The grand old man of news, with a HU rating of 16 and a 28 audience share.
In 1969, however,
his fortunes began to decline.
He fell to a 22 share.
The following year 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...
...who was the president
of the news division at UBS.
The two old friends got properly pissed.
I was at CBS with Ed Murrow in 1951.
Must've been 1950, then.
I was NBC, uh, associate producer,
Morning News.
I was just a kid, 26 years old.
Anyway....
Anyway, they were building the lower level
of the George Washington Bridge.
We were doing a remote from there.
And nobody told me.
Then after 7 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,
throw my raincoat over my pajamas.
I run down the stairs,
I run out in the street, hail a cab.
And I say to the cabby, "Take me to the
middle of the George Washington Bridge."
And the cabbie turns around
and he says....
He says, "Don't do it, buddy."

You're a young man.
You got your whole life ahead of you."
Didn't I ever tell you that one before?
I'm gonna kill myself.
Oh, shit, Howard.
I'm gonna blow my brains out
right on the air.
Right in the middle of the 7:00 news.
Well, you'll get a hell of a rating,
I'll guarantee you that.
-50 share easy.
-You think so?
Well, sure.
We could make a series out of it.
Suicide of the Week.
Hell. Why limit ourselves?
Execution of the Week.
Terrorist of the Week.
I love it.
Suicides.
Assassinations.
Mad bombers, Mafia hit men...
...automobile smashups.
The Death Hour.
Great Sunday night show
for the whole family.
We'll wipe that fucking Disney
right off the air.
Hmm.
Let's do the Lenin deportation
at the end of three.
That strong enough to bump?
In one then, I'll do a lead on Sara Jane
Moore to Mayberry in San Francisco.
In the film I saw,
it was the chief of detectives.
I think we've got about 10 seconds
on the shooting itself.
The whole thing is 1:25.
-What does that come out?

About 4:

We using Squeaky Fromme?
Let's do that in two.

Squeaky, Ford at the airport, bump.
Now, you using a map
going into San Francisco?
Um, I prefer our news pics.
What have we got left?
Gun control, Patty Hearst affidavit.
Guerrillas in Chad, OPEC in Vienna.
All right, fine. I'll see you later.
-Hello, Howard, how are you?
Hi. Okay.
Don't forget, Howard,
Ron Nessen is now 16, okay?
Mm-hm.
The first attempt on President Ford's life
was 18 days ago...
...and again yesterday in San Francisco.
In spite of the two attempts...
...Mr. Ford says he will not become
a prisoner of the Oval Office...
...a hostage of would-be assassins.
The American people are good people:
Democrats, Independents,
Republicans and others.
How the hell you always get mixed up....
Under no circumstances will I...
...and I hope no others, capitulate...
...to those that want to undercut...
...what's all good in America.
Two, cue Howard.
Ladies and gentlemen...
...I would like to announce
that I will be retiring from this program...
...in two weeks' time
because of poor ratings.
Since this show was the only thing
I had going for me in my life...
...I have decided to kill myself.
So, what did she say?
I'm gonna blow my brains out
right on this program, a week from today.
Ten seconds to commercial.
So tune in next Tuesday.
That should give the public-relations people
a week to promote the show.

We ought to get a hell of a rating
out of that. A 50 share, easy.

Take Tellison.

-Listen.

-Uh, did you hear that?

-What was that about?

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

What are you talking about?

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

-What's wrong now?

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

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

He was supposed to do a tag
on Ron Nessen--

He said, "Tune in next Tuesday.

I'm gonna shoot myself."

What the hell's going on?

He said he

was going to blow his brains out.

What the fuck's going on, Howard?

They wanna know

what the fuck's going on.

-I can't hear you.

-Turn the studio mike on.

-We're back on in 11 seconds.

Ten seconds.

Howard, what are you doing?

-Have you flipped?

-I think we better get him off.

-Get him off.

-What's the matter with you?

-Get your fucking hands off.

-Turn the sound off. He's going out live!

We're in a lot of fucking trouble
down here.

-This is the dumbest thing I've ever seen.

That's my head.

Go to standby. You dumb schmuck!

Lou, can't we clear out

that downstairs lobby?

-There must be a hundred people.

-How?

Every TV station and wire service
in the city. I could barely get in.

-Arthur, anything litigable?

-Not so far.

How many spots were wiped out?

-Frank just walked in.

We had to abort. What could we do?

He's talking to Wheeler.

Over 900 phone calls...

-...complaining about foul language.

Shit.

Come on, Mickey,

what page are you putting it on?

Hackett just walked in.

-ABC again, they want the tape.

Tell him to go fuck himself.

That goes for you too.

You're off the air as of now.

He wants to talk to you.

-Who's replacing Beale tomorrow?

-We're flying Snowden up from Washington.

-Everybody, hold it.

Let's see how the other networks
handle this.

Ten o'clock news opened with it.

Good evening.

Howard Beale, one of television's....

They're all gonna make it their lead story.

Howard Beale interrupted his

Network News program tonight...

...to announce

that he was gonna kill himself.

An unusual thing happened at one

of our sister networks, UBS, this evening.

How are we handling it?

Halloway's going to make a brief statement
at the end of the show...

...that Howard's been under

great personal stress, et cetera.

I'll call you back, John.

All right. We've got

a stockholders' meeting tomorrow...

...at which we're gonna announce

the restructuring-of-management plan.
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.
You, Max,
you better have some answers...
...for those nuts
that come to stockholders' meetings.
Mr. Beale has been under
professional and personal strain.
I've got some surprises
for you too, Schumacher.
I've had it up to here with your cruddy
division and its annual \$33 million deficit!
You keep your hands off
my news division, Frank.
We're responsible to corporate level,
not you.
-Well, goddamn, we'll see about that.
-All right, take it easy.
Right now,
how do we get Beale out of here?
I understand there's at least a hundred
reporters and camera crews in the lobby.
We got a limo at the freight exit.
Howard, you're gonna spend the night
at my place.
There's bound to be press around yours.
I want Snowden here by noon.
Have Lester cover the CIA hearings...
...and give the White House to Doris.
You're late for your screening, Max.
Right. Okay.
If John Wheeler calls,
switch him to Projection Room 7.
Margot, come in here a minute.
-I'm sorry. This Beale business....
-It's all right.
Sit down.
Diana asked if she could sit in on this.
Fine. How's it going?
I think you'll like this footage better
than the stuff I showed you last time, Max.

Max Schumacher.
Goddamn it. When, Louise?
Laureen?
Well, did he say anything?
--Communist Party to be these--
All right, thank you.
--splintered underground groups?
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.
Harry, Howard Beale left my house
about 20 minutes ago. Has he come in yet?
--of the bourgeois democratic state....
Well, let me know when he arrives, huh?
That's Laureen Hobbs, isn't it?
Yeah. This is from
a David Susskind thing a while back.
I think we can use some of this stuff.
--by the broadest possible coalition....
What we're going to see now
is something really sensational.
The Flagstaff Independent Bank of Arizona
was ripped off last week...
...by a terrorist group called
the Ecumenical Liberation Army.
They actually took movies of the rip-off
while they were ripping it off.
-Wait till you see it.
-The Ecumenical Liberation Army.
That's not the one
that kidnapped Patty Hearst?
No, 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 lot of liberation armies
in the revolutionary underground...
...and a lot of kidnapped heiresses.
This is Mary Ann Gifford.

That's the Great Ahmed Kahn,
he's their leader.
You mean, they actually shot this film...
...while they were ripping off the bank?
Wait till you see it. I don't know
whether to edit or leave it raw like this.
This is terrific stuff.
Where did you get it?
I got everything through Laureen Hobbs.
She's my contact for all this stuff.
-Yeah?
I've got Howard on the other line.
All right, put him on.
Howard, I've got Max on 4.
Would you pick up?
-Listen, Max, I'd like another shot.
-Oh, come on, Howard.
I don't mean the whole show....
I'd just like to come on,
make some brief farewell statement...
...and then turn the show over
to Jack Snowden.
I have 11 years at this network, Max.
I have some standing in the industry.
I just don't wanna go out like a clown.
It'll be simple, dignified.
You and Harry can check the copy.
I think it'll take the strain
off the show, Max.
Well, what do you think?
Well, okay.
And no booze today, Howard.
No booze.
Summaries have been received.
We're forwarding them....
George, can, uh, you come into my office
for a minute?
Right.
-Barbara, is Tommy around anywhere?
-I think so.
I'd like to see the two of you
for a moment.
Uh, this is Bill Herron from our
West Coast Special Programs Department.

George Bosch, Barbara Schlesinger,
Tommy Pellegrino.
Look, I just saw some rough footage
of a special Bill's doing...
...on the revolutionary underground.
Most is tedious stuff...
...of Laureen Hobbs and two 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.
You remember
the Mary Ann Gifford kidnapping?
It's that bunch of nuts. She's in the movie
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.
A series out of what?
What are we talking about?
Look, we've got a bunch
of hobgoblin radicals...
...called the Ecumenical
Liberation Army...
...who go around taking home movies
of themselves robbing banks.
And maybe they'll take movies
of themselves kidnapping heiresses...
...um, hijacking 747s, bombing bridges,
assassinating ambassadors.
We'd open each week's segment
with that authentic footage...
...hire writers to write some story
behind that footage...
...and we've got ourselves a series.
A series about a bunch
of, uh, bank-robbing guerillas?
What are we gonna call it,
The Mao Tse-Tung Hour?
-Ha, ha!
Why not?

They've got Strike Force, Task Force,
SWAT, why not Che Guevara...
...and his own little mod squad?
Look, I sent you all
a concept-analysis report yesterday.
Did any of you read it?
Well, in a nutshell, it said
the American people are turning sullen.
They've been clobbered by Vietnam,
Watergate, inflation, the Depression.
They've turned off, shot up and fucked
themselves limp. And nothing helps.
So this concept-analysis report concludes
the American people want somebody...
...to articulate their rage for them.
I've been telling you people
since I took this job six months ago...
...that I want angry shows.
I don't want conventional programming
on this network, I want counterculture.
I want antiestablishment.
I don't wanna play butch boss
with you people.
When I took over this department...
...it had the worst programming record
in television history.
This network hasn't one show
in the top 20.
This network is an industry joke.
And 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.
That is what you're paid for.
And, by the way, the next time I send
an audience research report around...
...you'd all better read it, or I'll sack
the fucking lot of you, is that clear?
I'll be out on the coast in, uh, four weeks.
Will you set up a meeting
with Lauren Hobbs?

Sure.

But the business of management
is management.

And at the time CCA took control
of the UBS TV Network...

...it was foundering with less than
...most network programs being sold
at station rates.

I am pleased to announce I am
submitting to the board of directors...

...a plan for the coordination
of the main profit centers.

And with the specific intention...

...of making each division
more responsive to management.

Point one.

The division producing the lowest rate
of return has been the news division...

...with its \$98 million budget and
its average annual deficit of 32 million.

I know that, historically, news divisions
are expected to lose money.

But to our minds, this philosophy
is a wanton fiscal affront...

...to be resolutely resisted.

The new plan calls for local news to be
transferred to owned stations' divisions.

News radio would be transferred
to the UBS Radio Division and in effect...

...the news division would be reduced
from an independent division...

...to a department accountable
to network.

-What was that all about, Ed?

-This is not the time, Max.

Why wasn't I told about this?

Why was I led up onto that podium
and publicly humiliated...

...in front of the stockholders?

Goddamn it,

I spoke to John Wheeler this morning...

...and he assured me

the news division was safe.

That's one hell of a way

to get me to resign.
We'll talk about this tomorrow
at our regular morning meeting.
Eleven, 10...
Roll VTA.
...nine, eight, seven, six.
In five, four, three, two....
One.
One, cue VTA.
Cue announcer.
The UBS evening news
with Howard Beale.
Ready, two?
Two, cue Howard.
Good evening. Today is Wednesday,
September the 24th...
...and this is my last broadcast.
Yesterday I announced on this program
that I was going to commit public suicide.
Admittedly an act of madness.
Well, I'll tell you what happened.
I just ran out of bullshit.
-All right, cut him off.
-Leave him on.
Am I still on the air?
If this is how he wants to go out,
this is how he goes out.
--except I just ran out of bullshit.
Mr. Schumacher's right here.
Wanna talk to him?
Bullshit is all the reasons
we give for living.
If we can't think up any reasons
of our own, we have the God bullshit.
Holy Mary, Mother of Christ.
-Tom, what is it?
--through all this pointless pain,
humiliation and decay...
...so there better be someone
who does know.
That's the God bullshit.
He's saying that life is bullshit and it is.
What are you screaming about?
Man is a noble creature that can order

his own world. Who needs God?
If there's anybody out there...
...that can look around this
slaughterhouse of a world we live in...
...and tell me that man
is a noble creature...
...believe me, that man is full of bullshit.
-What's so goddamn funny?
-I can't help it, Harry. It's funny.
Max, this is going out live
to 67 affiliates.
Leave him on.
And I was married for 33 years
of shrill, shrieking fraud.
-Mr. Hackett's trying to get through to you.
-Tell Mr. Hackett to go fuck himself.
So I don't have any bullshit left.
I just ran out of it, you see.
Mr. Ruddy, could we have
just one statement from you?
Sorry, I don't have all the information yet.
One question.
Could we--? If we could just
have one statement about Mr. Beale.
Max.
I'll want to see Mr. Beale after this.
The way I hear it, Max,
you were primarily responsible...
...for this colossally stupid prank.
-Is that the fact, Max?
-That's the fact.
It was unconscionable.
There doesn't seem
to be anything more to say.
I have something to say, Ed.
I want to know why that whole debasement
of the news division...
...announced at the stockholders' meeting
this afternoon was kept secret from me.
You and I go back 20 years, Ed.
I took this job
with your personal assurance...
...that you'd back my autonomy
against any encroachment.

But ever since CCA acquired control
of UBS Systems 10 months ago...
...Hackett's been taking over everything.
Now who the hell is running this network?
You or some conglomerate called CCA?
I mean you're president
of the Systems Group...
...and Hackett's nothing
but a hatchet man for CCA.
Nelson here, president of a network...
...and he hasn't a thing
to say about anything anymore.
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 that
I thought Frank Hackett precipitate...
...and that the reorganization
of the 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 is no longer tenable...
...regardless of how management
is restructured.
I will expect your resignation

at 10:

...and we will coordinate our statements
to the least detriment of everyone.
Bob McDonough will take over
the news division...
...until we can sort all this out.
I'd like to see Mr. Beale now.
They're looking for him, Ed.
They don't know where he is.
Every day, five days a week for 15 years,
I've been sitting behind that desk.
The dispassionate pundit...

...reporting with seemly detachment
the daily parade...
...of lunacies that constitute the news.
And just once I wanted to say
what I really felt.
Knock it off, Arthur.
It was, after all, my last....
-Did the overnight ratings come in yet?
-They're on your desk.
Have you still got yesterday's overnights?
Shall I bring them in?
Yeah.
These are those four outlines submitted
by Universal for an hour series.
You needn't bother to read them.
I'll tell them to you.
The first one is set in a large
Eastern law school, presumably Harvard.
The series is irresistibly entitled
The New 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 district attorney who
is brilliant and sometimes cuts corners.
Next one.
The second one is called
The Amazon Squad.
Lady cops?
The running characters include
a crusty but benign lieutenant...
...who's always getting heat
from the commissioner...
...a hard-drinking detective
who thinks women belong in the kitchen...
...and a brilliant and beautiful
young girl cop...
-...who's fighting the feminist battle.
We're up to our ears in lady cops.
The next is another one
of those investigative reporter shows.

A crusty but benign managing editor
who's always--
You know, Barbara...
...the Arabs have decided to jack up
the price of oil another 20 percent.
Uh, the CIA has been caught opening
Senator Humphrey's mail.
There's a civil war in Angola,
another one in Beirut.
The-- New York City's still facing default.
They finally caught up
with Patricia Hearst.
And the whole front page
of the Daily News is Howard Beale.
There's also a two-column story
on Page 1 of the Times.
Helen, call Mr. Hackett's office.
See if he can give me
a few minutes this morning.
KTNS, Kansas City, refuses to carry
our Network News show anymore...
...unless Beale is taken off the air.
Did you see the overnights
on the Network News?
It has an eight in New York, a nine 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.
For God's sakes. Are you suggesting
that we put that lunatic...
...back on the air yelling "bullshit"?
I think we should put Beale back
on the air tonight and keep him on.
Did you see the news this morning?
Did you see the Times?
We've got press 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 gotta be at least 15.
We just increased our audience

by 20 or 30 million people in one night.
You're not gonna get this
dumped in your lap...
...for the rest of your days.
You can't piss it away.
Howard Beale 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 on television.
What do you mean? It's a news show.
It's not your department.
I see Howard Beale
as a latter-day prophet.
A magnificent, messianic figure inveighing
against the hypocrisies of our times.
A strip Savonarola,
Monday through Friday...
...that I tell you, Frank,
could just go through the roof...
...and I'm talking about a \$6 cost
per thousand show.
I'm talking about a hundred--
A 130,000-dollar minutes.
Do you wanna figure out
the revenues of a strip show...
...that sells for 100,000 bucks a minute?
One show like that could pull
this network out of the hole.
Frank, it's being handed to us on a plate.
Let's not blow it.
Yes?
Tell him I'll be a few minutes.
Let me think it over.
Frank, let's not go to committee on this.
It's 20 after 10.
We want Beale in that studio.
We don't wanna lose the momentum.
For God's sake, 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
in 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 wanna 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.
I don't believe this.
I don't believe the top brass...
...of a national television network
are sitting around their salads--
The top brass of a bankrupt
national television network...
...with projected losses
of close to \$150 million.
I don't care how bankrupt.
You can't be seriously proposing,
and the rest of us seriously considering...
...putting on a pornographic
Network News show.
-The FCC'd kill us.
-Sit down, Nelson.
The FCC can't do anything
except rap our knuckles.
I don't even wanna think about
the litigious possibilities, Frank.
-Could be up to our ears in lawsuits.
-The affiliates won't carry it.
Affiliates will kiss your ass,
if you can hand them a hit show.
The popular reaction--
We don't know the popular reaction.
We have to find out.
The New York Times--
The New York Times
doesn't advertise on our network.
All I know is this violates every canon
of respectable broadcasting.
We're not a respectable network.
We're a whorehouse network.
We have to take whatever we can get.
Well, I don't want any part of it.
I don't fancy myself

the president of a whorehouse.
That's very commendable of you, Nelson.
Now, sit down.
Your indignation has been duly recorded.
You can always resign tomorrow.
Now look,
what in substance are we proposing?
Merely to add editorial comment
to our Network News show.
Brinkley, Sevareid, Reasoner,
all have their comments.
Now Howard Beale will have his.
I think we ought to give it a shot.
Let's see what happens tonight.
Telephone, please.
I don't wanna be the messenger
that has to tell Max Schumacher.
Max doesn't work
at this network anymore.
Mr. Ruddy fired him last night.
Bob McDonough's running
the news division now.
Bob McDonough in News, please.
Oh, I don't know.
I may teach or I may write a book...
...whatever the hell one does
when one approaches...
...the autumn of one's years.
My God, is that me?
-Was I ever that young?
-Ha, ha.
No. Howard just brought
in a picture of Ed Murrow...
...and the whole CBS gang
when we were there.
You wouldn't believe it.
Walter Cronkite, Harry Reasoner,
Hollenbeck, Bob Trout.
-Is that you, Howard?
-Mm-hm.
Yeah.
-Okay, Dick, we'll be in touch. Right.
-You remember this kid?
He's the kid I think you once sent out to

interview Cleveland Amory on vivisection.
What's so funny?
So I jump out of bed in my pajamas,
I grab my raincoat, I run downstairs.
I run out in the street and I hail a cab.
And I jumped in and I yell at the driver:
"Take me to the middle
of the George Washington Bridge."
And the driver turns around and he says:
"Don't do it, buddy, don't do it.
You're young,
you got your whole life ahead of you."
Ha-ha-ha!
Wait a minute! Wait a minute!
If you think that's funny--
No, if you think that's funny,
wait till you hear this.
I've just come back
from Frank Hackett's office.
He wants to put Howard on the air.
-You're kidding.
-Apparently...
...the ratings went up
five points last night...
...and he wants Howard to go back on
and do his angry-man thing.
What are you talking about?
I'm telling you. They want Howard
to go back on and yell "bullshit."
They want Howard to go on spontaneously
letting out his anger.
A latter-day prophet denouncing
the hypocrisies of our times.
Hey, that sounds pretty good.
Who's this "they"?
Hackett. Chaney was there.
The Legal Affairs guy.
Oh, and that girl from Programming.
Christensen?
What's she got to do with this?
You're kidding, aren't you?
-I'm not kidding.
I told them. I said:
"Look, we're running a news department,

not a circus.

And Howard Beale's not a bearded lady.

If you think I'm gonna go along

with this bastardization...

...you can have my resignation along

with Max Schumacher's right now.

I think I'm speaking for Howard Beale

and everybody else--"

That's my job you're turning down.

I'd 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?

Do you want to be an angry prophet

denouncing the hypocrisies of our times?

Yeah, I think I'd like to be an angry prophet

denouncing the hypocrisies of our times.

Then grab it. Grab it!

-Afternoon, Mr. Ruddy.

-Good afternoon.

Good afternoon, Mr. Ruddy.

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

Thank you.

Nelson Chaney tells me Beale

may actually go on the air this evening.

As far as I know,

Howard's going to do it.

You going to sit still for this, Ed?

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.

I suspect CCA will be upset

at Hackett's presumptuousness.

Certainly Mr. Jensen will.

So I'm going to let Hackett

have his head for a while.

He just might lose it over

this Beale business.

I'd like you to reconsider
your resignation, Max.
I assume that Hackett
wouldn't take such steps...
...without some support
on the CCA 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 of the divisional positions.
So I'd like you to stay on, Max.
Of course, Ed.
Thank you, Max.
This has been the UBS
evening news with Howard Beale.
The initial response to the new
Howard Beale Show was not auspicious.
The press was without exception hostile
and the industry reaction negative.
The ratings for the Thursday
and Friday shows were both 14.
But Monday's rating dropped a point...
...clearly suggesting
the novelty was wearing off.
Did you know there are
a number of psychics...
...working as licensed brokers
on Wall Street?
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 last week
and thought of doing a show around her.
The Wayward Witch of Wall Street,
something like that.
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.
And she does all this with tarot cards?
No. This one operates on parapsychology.
She has trance-like episodes
and feels things in her energy field.
I think this lady could
be very useful to you, Max.
-In what way?
-Well...
...you put on a news show
and here's somebody who can predict...
...tomorrow's news for you.
Her name, aptly enough, is Sibyl.
Sibyl 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 suggestively occult,
and she could oraculate.
Then next week everyone tunes in to see
how good her predictions were.
Maybe she could do the weather.
Your Network News is going to need
some help, Max, if it's gonna hold.
Beale doesn't do
the angry-man thing well at all.
He's too, uh, 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.
Hell, you're not serious, are you?
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.
-What do you mean, "have a crack at it"?
-I'd like to program it for you. Develop it.

I wouldn't interfere with the actual news
itself, but TV is showbiz, Max.
And even the news
has to have a little showmanship.
My God, you are serious.
Oh. I watched your 6:00 news today.
It's straight tabloid.
You had a minute and a half of that lady
riding a bike naked in Central Park.
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.
I don't think I'll listen to any protestations
of high standards of journalism...
...when you're soliciting audiences
like the rest of us.
All I'm saying is, if you're gonna hustle,
at least do it right.
I'm gonna bring this up
at tomorrow's meeting.
I don't like network hassles. I was hoping
you and I could work this out.
Now that's why I'm here.
And I was hoping that you were looking
for an emotional involvement...
...with a craggy middle-aged man.
Oh, I wouldn't rule that out entirely.
All right, Diana.
You bring up all your ideas
at the meeting tomorrow...
...because if you don't, I will.
I think Howard's making
a goddamn fool of himself...
...and so does everybody
that Howard and I know in this industry.
It was a fluke. It didn't work.
So tomorrow,
Howard goes back to the old format...
...and all of this gutter depravity
comes to an end.
Okay.

I don't get it, Diana.
You hung around until 7:30
and then came all the way down here...
...just to pitch a couple
of loony showbiz ideas...
...when you knew goddamn well
I'd laugh you right out of the office.
I don't get it.
What's your scam in this?
Max, my little visit here tonight...
...was a gesture made out of your stature
in the industry...
...and because I personally admired you
since I was a kid majoring in speech...
...at the University of Missouri.
Sooner or later, with or without you...
...I'm going to take over
your Network News show...
...and I figured
I might as well start tonight.
I, uh, think I once gave a lecture...
...at the University of Missouri.
I was in the audience.
I had a terrible schoolgirl crush
on you for a couple of months.
If we could get back for a moment
to that gypsy...
...who predicted all that about, uh, emotional
involvements and middle-aged men.
What are you doing for dinner tonight?
I can't make it tonight, love.
Call me tomorrow.
-Do you have a favorite restaurant?
-I eat anything.
Son of a bitch,
I get a feeling I'm being made.
You are.
Ah, I've got to warn you,
I don't do anything on my first date.
We'll see.
Schmuck, what are you getting into?
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 me I was the worst lay
he'd ever had.
I can't tell you how many men
have told me what a lousy lay I am.
I apparently have
a masculine temperament.
I arouse quickly,
consummate prematurely...
...and can't wait to get my clothes back on
and get out of that bedroom.
I seem to be inept at everything
except my work.
I'm good at my work.
So I confine myself to that.
All I want out of life
is a 30 share and a 20 rating.
You're married, surely?
Twenty-five years.
I have a married daughter in Seattle
who's six months pregnant...
...a younger girl who's starting
at Northwestern in January.
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?
Corridor gossip, uh, says that you are
Frank Hackett's backstage girl.
Ha, ha. I'm not.
Frank is a corporation man,
body and soul.
He has no loves, lusts or allegiances
that are not consummately directed...
...toward becoming a CCA board member.
So why should he bother with me?
I'm not even a stockholder.
What about your loves,
lusts and allegiances?

Is your wife in town?

Yes.

Well, then, we better go to my place.

I can't hear you.

You will have to talk a little louder.

Yes. I hear you.

Yes.

Yes.

Why me?

I said, "Why me?"

Okay.

Howard in his office?

Oh, Harry, I'm killing this whole screwball, angry-prophet thing.

-Tonight we go back to straight news.

-Okay.

Fifteen seconds, 14, 13....

Yeah? What?

Max, I'm telling you, he's fine.

He's been sharp all day.

He's been funny as hell. Had everybody cracking up at the rundown meeting.

I told him. I told him.

Up. Cue VTA.

Ready, two.

Cue announcer.

The UBS Evening News

with Howard Beale.

Take 2, cue Howard.

Last night, I was awakened

from a fitful sleep...

...shortly after 2:00 in the morning...

...by a shrill, sibilant, faceless voice.

I couldn't make it out at first

in the dark bedroom...

...and I said, "I'm sorry,

you will have to talk a little louder."

-What do you want me to do?

-Nothing.

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."

And I said, "You're kidding.

What the hell should I know
about the truth?"
But the voice said to me,
"Don't worry about the truth.
I will put the words in your mouth."
I said, "What's this, the Burning Bush?
For God's sake, I'm not Moses."
The voice said to me, "And I'm not God.
What has that got to do with it?"
The voice said to me:
"We're not talking about eternal
or absolute or ultimate truth.
We're talking about impermanent,
transient, human truth.
I don't expect you people
to be capable of truth...
...but at least you're capable of
self-preservation."
And I said, "Why me?"
And the voice said,
"Because you're on television, dummy.
Beautiful.
You have 40 million Americans
listening to you.
After this show, you could have 50.
I'm not asking you to walk the land
in sackcloth, preaching the Armageddon.
You're on TV, man."
So I thought about it for a moment...
...and then I said, "Okay."
Close the door, Harry.
Howard, I'm taking you off the air.
I think you're having a breakdown.
Require treatment.
This is not a psychotic episode.
This is a cleansing moment of clarity.
I'm imbued, Max.
I'm imbued with some special spirit.
It's not a religious feeling at all.
It's a shocking eruption
of great electrical energy.
I feel vivid and flashing,
as if suddenly...
...I'd been plugged into some

great electromagnetic field.
I feel connected to all living things.
To flowers...
...birds, all the animals of the world...
...and even to some great
unseen living force.
What I think the Hindus call prana.
It is not a breakdown.
I've never felt more 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.
And you will not take me off the air
for now, or for any other spaceless time.
Oh, boy.
Is he okay?
He's just fainted.
I'd better get him back
to my house again tonight.
Help me get him up.
Everyone's going crazy.
The whole place has gone crazy.
Sitting in their house
and they don't do anything about it.
Wake up, Max, because Howard's gone.
I'll make you some coffee.
You don't know where he is?
The son of a bitch is a hit, goddamn it!
Over 2000 phone calls.
Go down to the mail room.
As of this minute, over 14,000 telegrams!
The response is sensational! Tell him.
Herb's phone hasn't stopped ringing.
Every goddamned affiliate
from Albuquerque to Sandusky.
The response is sensational!
Yes. All right. For you, Herb.
Get back to your office.
Moldanian called me.

Joe Donnelly called me.
We got a goddamn hit, goddamn it.
Diana, show him the Times.
We got an editorial
in the holy goddamn New York Times.
-"A call to morality."
-I don't know where he is.
That son of a bitch Beale
has caught on.
-Don't tell me you don't know.
-Could be jumping off a roof for all I know.
The man is insane.
He's not responsible for himself.
He needs care and treatment.
And all you grave robbers
think about is that he's a hit.
You know, Max,
it's just possible that he isn't insane.
That he is, in fact, imbued
with some special spirit.
My God,
I'm supposed to be the romantic...
...you're the hard-bitten realist.
All right.
Howard Beale obviously fills a void.
The audience out there 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.
Howard Beale is processed,
instant God.
It looks like he may just go bigger
than Mary Tyler Moore.
I am not putting Howard back on the air.
It's not your show anymore, Max,
it's mine.
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 call the security guards and have you
thrown out, if you're still here.
Well, let's say, "Fuck you, Hackett."
You want me out, you're gonna have to
drag me out kicking and screaming...
...and the whole division
kicking with me!
Gonna quit their jobs for you?
Not in this recession.
When Ruddy gets back
he'll have your ass.
I got a hit, Schumacher,
and Ruddy doesn't count anymore.
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 anymore.
If he wants to take me up
before the CCA Board, let him.
Think Ruddy is stupid enough
to go to the CCA Board and say:
"I'm taking our one hit show off the air"?
And comes November 14,
I'm going to be standing up there...
...at the annual CCA
management meeting.
I'm gonna announce projected earnings
for this network...
...for the first time in five years.
And believe me, Mr. Jensen's going
to 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."
Don't have any illusions about who's
running this network. You're fired!
I want you out of your office before noon
or I'll have you thrown out.
You go along with this?
Max, I told you I didn't want
a network hassle on this.

I told you I'd much rather work the
Beale Show out just between the two of us.
Well, let's just say,
"Fuck you too, honey."
Howard Beale may be my best friend.
I'll go to court.
I'll put him in a hospital before I'll let you
exploit him like a freak.
You get your psychiatrists,
I'll get mine.
I'm gonna spread this whole
reeking business in every newspaper...
...on every network, group
and affiliate in this country.
-I'm gonna make a lot of noise about this.
-Great. We need all the press we can get.
Something going on
between you and Schumacher?
Not anymore.
-How do you do, Mr. Beale?
-I must make my witness.
Sure thing, Mr. Beale.
Oil ministers of the OPEC nations meeting
in Vienna still haven't decided...
...how much more to increase
the price of oil.
-Ready, VTA?
-Yeah. Okay.
He came in the building
about five minutes ago.
Tell Snowden when he comes in
to let him go on.
Did you get that, Paul?
Six, five, four, three, two...
-...one.
VTA?
This has been the most divisive
meeting the oil states have ever had.
The 13 nations of OPEC have still
not been able to decide by how much...
...to increase the price of oil.
Saudi Arabian....
How much time we got?
--yesterday for further consultations

with his government.
He returned to the Vienna....
-This is Ed Fletcher in Vienna.
-Take two, cue Howard.
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.
There's nobody anywhere who seems to
know what to do, and there's no end to it.
We know the air is unfit to breathe
and our food is unfit to eat.
We sit watching our TVs while
some local newscaster tells us...
...that today we had 15 homicides
and 63 violent crimes...
...as if that's the way it's supposed to be.
We know things are bad.
Worse than bad, they're crazy.
Everything everywhere is going crazy,
so we don't go out anymore.
We sit in the house and the world
we're living in is getting smaller...
...and all we say is, "Please,
at least leave us alone in our living rooms.
Let me have my toaster and my TV,
and my steel-belted radials...
...and I won't say anything.
Just leave us alone!"
Well, I'm not gonna leave you alone.
I want you to get mad!
I don't want you to protest, to riot.
Don't write to your congressmen.
I wouldn't know what to tell you.
I don't know what to do
about the depression...
...and the Russians,
and the crime in the street.
All I know is that first,

you've got to get mad.
You've got to say, "I'm a human being,
goddamn it. My life has value."
So I want you to get up now.
I want all of you to get up
out of your chairs.
I want you to get up right now
and go to the window...
...open it and stick your head out

and yell:

"I'm as mad as hell
and I'm not gonna take this anymore!"
-I want you to get up right now, get up...
-Stay with him.
...go to your windows, open them
and stick your head out and yell:
"I'm as mad as hell and I'm not going
to take this anymore!"
-Things have got to change....
-How many stations does this go to?
Sixty-seven.
It goes to Louisville and Atlanta.
"We're not going to take this!"
Then we'll figure out the depression
and the inflation...
...and the oil crisis,
but first get up out of your chairs...
...open the window, stick your head out
and yell and say it!
"I'm as mad as hell
and I'm not gonna take this anymore!"
-Who are you talking to, Herb?
WCGG, Atlanta.
-They yelling in Atlanta?
-Are they yelling in Atlanta?
But first you've got to get mad.
You've gotta say:
"I'm mad as hell and I'm not going
to take this anymore!"
They're yelling in Baton Rouge.
Goddamn it.
Get up, get up out of your chairs.
Son of a bitch,

we struck the mother lode!
Stick your head out of the window,
stick your head out.
And keep yelling and yell:
"I'm as mad as hell.
I'm not gonna take this anymore!"
Just get up from your chairs,
right now, go to the window!
-Where you going?
-I wanna see if anybody's yelling.
Open it, and stick your head out,
and yell, and keep yelling--
I'm as mad as hell
and I'm not gonna take this anymore!
I'm as mad as hell
and I'm not gonna take it anymore!
I'm as mad as hell
and I'm not gonna take it anymore!
I'm as mad as hell.
I'm not gonna take it anymore!
I'm as mad as hell
and I'm not gonna take it anymore.
I'm not gonna take it anymore.
I'm mad as hell!
I'm mad as hell!
I'm mad as hell!
I'm mad as hell!
I'm mad as hell!
I'm mad as hell!
I'm mad as hell!
I'm mad as hell!
I'm not gonna take this anymore.
I'm mad as hell!
I'm not gonna take this anymore.
By mid-October...
...the Howard Beale Show
had settled in on a 42 share...
...more than equaling all the other
network news shows combined.
In the Nielsen ratings,
the Howard Beale Show...
...was listed as the fourth highest
rated show of the month...
...surpassed only
by The Six Million Dollar Man...

...All in the Family and Phyllis.
A phenomenal state of affairs
for a news show.
And on October 15,
Diana Christensen flew to Los Angeles...
...for what the trade calls
powwows and confabs...
...with our West Coast
programming execs...
...and to get production rolling
on the shows for the coming season.
Christ.
You brought half the William Morris
West Coast office along with you.
Hi, I'm Diana Christensen, a racist lackey
of the imperialist ruling circles.
I'm Lauren Hobbs,
a bad-ass commie nigger.
Sounds like the basis of a firm friendship.
We're gonna need more chairs.
-Anybody want coffee?
I'd love some.
You changed your tailor.
Coffee? Okay.
Want to come take some coffee orders?
This is my lawyer, Sam Haywood,
and his associate, Merrill Grant.
Ms. Christensen,
just what the hell's this all about?
Because when
a national television network...
...in the person of booby here,
comes to me...
...and says they want to put the ongoing
struggle of the oppressed masses...
...on prime-time television,
I have to regard this askance.
What Mr. Haywood was saying,
Ms. Christensen, was that our client...
...Ms. Hobbs, wants it up-front
that the political content of the show...
...has to be entirely in her control.
She can have it. I don't give a damn
about the political content.

-What kind of show did you have in mind?
-I'm interested in a weekly dramatic series...
...based on the Ecumenical Liberation Army.
And I'll tell you right now...
...what the first show has to be:
a special on Mary Ann Gifford.
Let me tell you what I want.
I want a lot more film like the bank rip-off
the Ecumenical sent in.
The way I see the series is...
...each week we open with an authentic act
of political terrorism...
...taken on the spot,
in the actual moment.
Then we go to the drama
behind the opening film footage.
That's your job, Ms. Hobbs.
You gotta get the Ecumenicals to bring in
that film footage for us.
The network can't deal with them directly.
They are, after all, wanted criminals.
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...
...celebrating historically
deviational terrorism.
I'm offering an hour
of prime-time television every week...
...into which you can stick
whatever propaganda.
The Ecumenicals are an undisciplined
ultra-left gang...
...whose leader is an eccentric,
to say the least.
He calls himself the Great Ahmed Kahn
and wears a hussar's shako.
Ms. Hobbs, we're talking about

It's a lot better than handing out...
...mimeographed pamphlets
on ghetto street corners.
I'll have to take this matter
to the central Committee...
...and I'd better check it out
with the Great Ahmed Kahn.
I'll be in L.A. until Saturday,
and I'd like to get it rolling.
Okay?
Well, Ahmed,
you ain't gonna believe this.
But I'm gonna make
a TV star out of you.
Just like Archie Bunker.
You gonna be a household word.
What the fuck are you talking about?
Thirty seconds.
All right, ready VTA.
One, you have the audience to pan.
-Two, you have the window to pull.
Twenty-five.
Three, you're on the announcer.
Twenty.
Stand by, VTA.
Fifteen, 14, 13, 12...
-...eleven, 10, nine, eight, seven...
Roll VTA.
...six, five, four, three...
-...two, one.
Three, cue announcer.
Ladies and gentlemen, let's hear it.
How do you feel?
We're mad as hell
and we're not going to take this anymore!
Ladies and gentlemen, the Network
News Hour with Sibyl the Soothsayer!
Jim Webbing and his
It's-the-Emes Truth Department.
Ms. Mata Hari
and her Skeletons in the Closet.
And tonight,
another segment of Vox Populi.
And starring the Mad Prophet

of the Airways, Howard Beale!
Edward George Ruddy died today.
Edward George Ruddy
was the chairman of the board...
...of the Union Broadcasting Systems
and he died at 11:00 this morning...
...of a heart condition, and woe is us,
we're in a lot of trouble.
So a rich little man with white hair died.
What has that got to do
with the price of rice, right?
And why is that woe to us?
Because you people...
...and 62 million other Americans
are listening to me right now.
Because less than 3 percent
of you people read books.
Because less than 15 percent of you
read newspapers.
Because the only truth you know
is what you get over this tube.
Right now, there is a whole
and entire generation...
...that never knew anything
that didn't come out of this tube.
This tube is the Gospel.
The ultimate revelation.
This tube can make or break presidents,
popes, prime ministers!
This tube is the most awesome
goddamn force...
...in the whole godless world!
And woe is us if it ever falls
into the hands of the wrong people.
And that's why woe is us
that Edward George Ruddy died.
Because this company is now
in the hands of CCA...
...the Communication Corporation
of America.
There's a new chairman.
A man called Frank Hackett...
...sitting in Mr. Ruddy's office
on the 20th floor!

And when the 12th largest company
in the world...
...controls the most awesome,
goddamn propaganda force...
...in the whole godless world...
...who knows what shit will be peddled
for truth on this network.
So you listen to me. Listen to me!
Television is not the truth.
Television's a goddamned
amusement park.
Television is a circus, a carnival,
a traveling troupe of acrobats...
...storytellers, dancers, singers, jugglers,
sideshow freaks, lion-tamers...
...and football players.
We're in the boredom-killing business.
So if you want the truth, go to God.
Go to your gurus.
Go to yourselves.
Because that's the only place
you're ever gonna find any real truth.
But, man, you're never gonna get
any truth from us.
We'll tell you anything you want to hear.
We lie like hell.
We'll tell you that, uh,
Kojak always gets the killer...
...and that nobody ever gets cancer
in Archie Bunker's house.
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 gonna win!
We'll tell you any shit you want to hear.
We deal in illusions, man.
None of it is true.
But you people sit there,
day after day, night after night...
...all ages, colors, creeds.
We're all you know.
You're beginning to believe
the illusions we're spinning here.
You're beginning to think the tube is

reality and that your own lives are unreal.
You do whatever the tube tells you.
Dress like the tube,
you eat like the tube...
...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 are the illusion.
So turn off your television sets.
Turn them off now.
Turn them off right now.
Turn them off and leave them off.
Turn them off right in the middle of
the sentence I'm speaking to you now.
Turn them off!
UBS was running
at a cash flow break-even point...
...after taking into account
\$110 million...
...of negative cash flow
from the network.
It was clear the fat on the network
had to be flitched off.
Please note an increase in projected
initial programming revenues...
...in the amount of \$21 million...
...due to the phenomenal success
of the Howard Beale Show.
I expect a positive cash flow
for the entire complex of 45 million...
...achievable in this fiscal year,
a year, in short, ahead of schedule.
I go beyond that.
This network may well be
the most significant profit center...
...of the communications complex.
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 profitable center...

...in the entire CCA empire.

I await your questions and comments.

Mr. Jensen?

Very good, Frank. Exemplary. Keep it up.

Buy you a cup of coffee?

Hell, yes.

-Do you have to get back to the office?

-Nothing that can't wait.

I....

I drop down to the news studios

every now and then...

...and ask Howard Beale about you,

and he says you're doing fine. Are you?

No.

-Are you keeping busy?

-Oh, in a fashion.

This is the, uh, third funeral

I've been to in two weeks.

I have two other friends

in the hospital whom I visit regularly...

...and, uh, been to a couple of christenings.

All my friends seem to be dying

or having grandchildren.

You should be a grandfather yourself

about now.

You have a pregnant daughter

in Seattle, don't you?

Any day now.

My wife's out there for the occasion.

I've thought many times of calling you.

I wish you had.

You know, I bumped into Sibyl

the Soothsayer in the elevator last week.

I said, "You know, Sibyl,

about four months ago you predicted...

...I would get involved

with a craggy, middle-aged man...

...and so far, all that's happened

has been 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?

Yes, it was.

Are we going to get involved, Max?

Yes.

I need to become involved very much.

How about you?

I've reached for the phone to call you
a hundred times.

I was sure you hated me for my part
in taking your news show away.

I probably did. I don't know anymore.

All I know is,

I can't get you out of my mind.

Marty.

Marty, I know what NBC offered them...

...so I'm saying go to 3.5...

...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, good luck,

I'll see you Monday.

Jimmy Caan's agent just called
and says absolutely nix.

Can't win them all.

-Where can I reach you later?

You can't. I'll be gone all weekend.

NBC's offering \$3.25 mil...

...per package

of five James Bond movies...

...and I think I'm gonna steal them
for \$3.5 million with a third run.

And I'm gonna stick

The Mao Tse-Tung Hour in at 8...

...because we're having a lot of trouble
selling The Mao Tse-Tung Hour.

This way....

That Mao Tse-Tung Hour's

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

rip-off film and they want it.
Hackett told the FBI to fuck off.
No, but we're getting around the FBI...
...by doing the show in collaboration
with the news division.
We're standing on the First Amendment,
Freedom of the Press...
...and the right to protect our sources.
Walter thinks we can knock out
the misprision of felony charge. Ha, ha.
But he says absolutely nix
on going to series.
They'll hit us with conspiracy
and inducement to commit a crime.
Christ, it's cold in here.
See, we're paying these nuts
from the Ecumenical Liberation Army...
...\$10,000 a week in order to turn in
authentic film footage...
...of their revolutionary activities...
...and that can constitute inducement
to commit a crime.
And Walter says we'll all wind up
in federal prison.
I said,
"Walter, let the government sue us.
Let the federal government sue us.
We'll take them to the Supreme Court.
We'll be front page, mm, for months.
The New York Times
and The Washington Post...
...will be writing two editorials a week
about us.
We'll be front page for months.
We'll have more press than Watergate."
All I need is six weeks' federal litigation...
...and The Mao Tse-Tung Hour
can start carrying its own time slot.
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-rendering saga
about a woman hopelessly in love...
...with her husband's mistress.
What do you think?
How long has it been going on?
A month.
I thought it was a transient thing,
blow over in a week.
And I still pray to God
it's just a menopausal infatuation.
But it is an infatuation, Louise.
There's no sense in my saying
I won't see her again, because I will.
Do you want me to leave?
Check into a hotel?
Do you love her?
I don't know how I feel.
I'm grateful I can feel anything.
I know I'm obsessed with her.
Then say it.
Don't keep telling me that
you're obsessed, that you're infatuated.
Say that you're in love with her.
I'm in love with her.
Then get out!
Go anywhere you want. Go to a hotel,
go live with her, but don't come back.
Because after 25 years...
...of building a home and raising a family
and all the senseless pain...
...that we have inflicted on each other,
I'm damned if I'm gonna stand here...
...and have you tell me
you're in love with somebody else.
Because this isn't a convention weekend
with your secretary, is it?
Or some broad that you picked up
after three belts of booze.
This is your great winter romance,
isn't it?
Your last roar of passion before you settle
into your emeritus years.

Is that what's left for me?
Is that my share? She gets
the winter passion and I get the dotage.
What am I supposed to do?
Am I supposed to sit home knitting
and purling while you slink back...
...like some penitent drunk?
I'm your wife, damn it.
If you can't work up
a winter passion for me...
...the least I require
is respect and allegiance.
I hurt, don't you understand that?
I hurt badly.
Oh, say something, for God's sake.
I've got nothing to say.
I won't give you up easily, Max.
I think perhaps it is better
if you move out.
Does she love you, Max?
I'm not sure she's capable
of any real feelings.
She's television generation.
She learned life from Bugs Bunny.
The only reality she knows
comes to her over the TV set.
She's very carefully devised
a number of scenarios...
...for all of us to play,
like the Movie of the Week.
My God, look at us, Louise.
Here we are going through
the obligatory middle of Act 2...
...scorned-wife-throws
peccant-husband-out scene.
But don't worry,
I'll come back to you in the end.
All of her plot outlines
have me leaving her...
...and coming back 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...

...where she's Count Vronsky
and I'm Anna.

You're in for some dreadful grief, Max.
I know.

The Mao Tse-Tung Hour
went on the air March 14.

It received a 47 share.

The network promptly committed
to 15 shows with an option for 10 more.

There were the usual
contractual difficulties.

"Equal to 20 percent, 20, except that
such percentages shall be 30 percent, 30...

...for 90-minute or longer
television programs."

Have we settled that sublicensing thing?

-No.

-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 the sublicensee or distributor."

We're not sitting still for overhead charges
as a cost prior to distribution.

Don't fuck with my distribution costs.

I'm making a lousy 215 per segment.

I'm already deficitting \$25,000 a week
with Metro!

I'm paying William Morris

I'm giving this turkey \$10,000

and another five to this fruitcake.

Don't start no shit

with me about a piece.

I'm paying Metro 20 percent for all foreign
and Canadian distribution after recoupment.

The Communist Party's not gonna see
a nickel until we go into syndication!

Come on, Lauren. The Party's in
for 7500 a week production expenses.

I'm not giving this pseudo-insurrectionary
sectarian a piece of my show.

I'm not giving him script approval. I'm not cutting him in on my distribution charges. You fucking fascist!

Did you see the film we made of San Marino jail breakout... ..demonstrating the rising up of the seminal prisoner-class infrastructure? You can blow the seminal prisoner-class infrastructure out your ass!

I'm not knocking down my goddamn distribution charges. Man, give her the fucking overhead clause. How did I get here? Who's gonna believe this? I'm sitting here in a goddamn farmhouse in Encino....

Let's get back to Page 22, Where are we now? Page 22, middle of the page. Subsidiary Rights. "Subsidiary rights' means without limitation any and all rights...." Over the past two days, you've all had opportunity to meet Diana Christensen... ..our vice president in charge of programming. This afternoon, you all saw some of the stuff she's set up for the new season. You all know that she is the woman behind the Howard Beale Show. We all know she's beautiful. We all know she's brainy. I was thinking, before we start digging into our Chateaubriands... ..let's show her how we feel about her. We have the number-one show in television! At next year's affiliates' meeting... ..I'll be standing here telling you we've got the top five. Last year, we were the number-four network... ..next year we're number one! We're number one! We're number one!

We're number one!
We're number one!
We're number one!
We're number one!

It is exactly 7:

And right now, over a million homes
using television in this city...
...are turning their dials to Channel 3
and that's our channel!
Howard Beale!
Stop it, stop it!
Now you listen to me.
And listen carefully because this is your
goddamn life I'm talking about today.
In this country, when one company wants
to take over another company...
...they buy up a controlling share
of the stock...
...but first they have to file notice
with the government.
That's how CCA took over the company
that owns this network.
But now, somebody's buying up CCA.
Somebody called
the Western World Funding Corporation.
They filed the notice this morning.
Well, just who in the hell is
the Western World Funding Corporation?
It is a consortium of banks
and insurance companies...
...who are not buying CCA for themselves,
but as agents for somebody else.
Who is 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 FTC,
they won't tell the Justice Department....
This is Mr. Hackett.
Do you have a New York call for me?
The hell it ain't!
-Do you wanna turn that down, please?
I will tell you

who they're buying CCA for.
They're buying it for the Saudi Arabian
Investment Corporation.
They're buying it for the Arabs!
Clarence? Frank Hackett here.
How's everything back in New York?
How's the good lady?
All right, Clarence, take it easy.
I don't know what you're talking about.
When? Tonight's show?
Clarence, take it easy.
The Howard Beale Show
is 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 going on now!
And there's not a single law
in the books to stop them.
When did Mr. Jensen call?
We all know that the Arabs control
\$16 billion in this country.
They own a chunk of 5th 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...
...part of a 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 of those Arab petrol dollars...
...are washed through
Switzerland and Canada...
...and the biggest banks in this country.
For example, what we don't know
about is this CCA deal...

...and all the other CCA deals.
Right now the Arabs have screwed us
out of enough American dollars...
...to come right back and, with our
own money, buy General Motors...
...IBM, ITT, AT&T, Dupont, U.S. Steel...
...and 20 other American companies.
Hell, they already own half of England.
So listen to me.
Listen to me, goddamn it.
The Arabs are simply buying us.
There's only one thing
that can stop them. You!
You!
So I want you to get up now.
I want you to get up out of your chairs.
I want you to get up right now
and go to the phone.
I want you to get up from your chairs,
go to the phone, get in your cars...
...drive into the Western Union
offices in town.
I want you to send a telegram
to the White House.
-Oh, my God.
-By midnight tonight...
...I want a million telegrams
in the White House.
I want them wading knee-deep
in telegrams at the White House.
I want you to get up right now and write
a telegram to President Ford saying:
"I'm as mad as hell
and I'm not gonna take this anymore.
I don't want the banks
selling my country to the Arabs.
I want the CCA deal stopped now.
I want the CCA deal stopped now.
Come on.
I want the CCA deal stopped now!
I want the CCA deal stopped now!
I want the CCA deal stopped now!
I want the CCA deal stopped now!
-Look, could we have the room?

Sure.

Well, I'd like to see a typescript
and run through a couple more times.

But as for this whole CCA deal
with the Saudis...

...you'd know a lot more
about that, Frank, than I would.

Is it true?

The CCA has 2 billion in loans
with the Saudis...

...and they hold every pledge we've got.

We need that Saudi money bad.

Disaster. The show is a disaster.

Unmitigated disaster. The death knell.

I'm ruined. I'm dead. Finished.

Maybe we're overstating

Beale's clout with the public.

An hour ago, Clarence McElheny
called me from New York.

It was 10:

in the White House report...

...they were already knee-deep in telegrams.

By tomorrow morning,

they'll be suffocating in telegrams.

-Can the government stop the deal?

-They can hold it up.

The SEC could hold this deal up
for 20 years, if they wanted to.

I'm finished.

Any second that phone's gonna ring
and Clarence McElheny is gonna tell me...

...Mr. Jensen wants me in his office
tomorrow morning...

...so he can personally chop my head off.

Four hours ago,

I was the sun god at CCA.

Mr. Jensen's hand-picked golden boy,
the heir apparent.

Now, ha, ha,

I'm a man without a corporation.

Let's get back to Howard Beale.

You're not seriously gonna pull Beale
off the air?

Mr. Jensen's unhappy with Howard Beale
and wants him discontinued.
But he may be unhappy,
but he isn't stupid enough...
...to withdraw the number-one show
on television out of pique.
Two billion dollars isn't pique!
That's the wrath of God!
And the wrath of God
wants Howard Beale fired!
Every other network will grab him
the minute he walks.
He'll be back on the air for ABC
and we'll lose 20 points--
I'm gonna impale the son of a bitch
with a sharp stick!
Forty million loss in revenues.
-I'll take out a contract.
-Let's not discount federal action....
-I'll hire professional killers.
No, I'll do it myself.
I'll strangle him with a sash cord!
--and a breach of the consent decree.
I don't think Jensen's gonna fire anybody.
Hackett.
Yes, Clarence.
I've already booked my flight.
Uh, 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 6 tomorrow morning.
That'll be just fine.
I'll see you then.
Mr. Jensen wants to meet
Howard Beale personally.
He wants Mr. Beale in his office

at 10:

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!

Good morning, Mr. Beale.

-They tell me you're a madman.

-Only desultorily.

-How are you now?

-I'm as mad as a hatter.

Who isn't?

I'm going to take you
into our conference room.

Seems more seemly a setting
for what I have to say to you.

I started as a salesman, Mr. Beale.

I sold sewing machines
and automobile parts...

...hairbrushes and electronic equipment.

They say I can sell anything.

I'd like to try to sell something to you.

Valhalla, Mr. Beale. Please, sit down.

You have meddled with the primal forces
of nature, Mr. Beale.

And I won't have it! Is that clear?

You think you've 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 immane...

...interwoven, interacting, multi-variate...

...multinational dominion of dollars.

Petrol dollars, electro-dollars,
multi-dollars.

Reichsmarks, rins, rubles,

pounds and shekels.
It is the international system of currency
which determines...
...the totality of life on this planet.
That is the natural order of things today.
That is the atomic...
...and subatomic...
...and galactic structure
of things today.
And you have meddled...
...with the primal forces of nature!
And you will atone.
Am I getting it through to you, Mr. Beale?
You get up on your little 21-inch screen...
...and howl about America
and democracy.
There is no America.
There is no democracy.
There is only IBM and ITT and AT&T...
...and Dupont, Dow,
Union Carbide, and Exxon.
Those are the nations of the world today.
What do you think the Russians talk about
in their councils of state? Karl Marx?
They get out their
linear programming charts...
...statistical decision theories,
minimax solutions...
...and compute price-cost probabilities
of 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 bylaws of business.
The world is a business, Mr. Beale.
It has been since man
crawled out of the slime.
And our children will live, Mr. Beale...
...to see that...
...perfect world...
...in which there's no war or famine...
...oppression or 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 tranquillized...
...all boredom amused.
And I have chosen you, Mr. Beale...
...to preach this evangel.
Why me?
Because you're on television, dummy.
Sixty million people watch you every night
of the week, Monday through Friday.
I have seen the face of God.
You just might be right, Mr. Beale.
That evening,
Howard Beale went on the air...
...to preach the corporate cosmology
of Arthur Jensen.
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 CCA
has been stopped.
The people spoke, the people won.
It was a radiant eruption of democracy.
But I think that was it, fellas.
That sort of thing is not likely
to happen again.
Because at the bottom
of all our terrified souls...
...we know that democracy
is a dying giant...
...a sick, sick, dying, decaying,
political concept writhing in its final pain.
I don't mean that the United States
is finished as a world power.
The States is the richest
and most powerful...

...the most advanced country,
light years ahead of any country.
I don't mean the communists
are gonna take over the world.
The communists are deader than we are.
What is 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
that's finished.
It's every single one of you out there
that's finished.
Because this is no longer...
...a nation of independent individuals.
It's a nation of some 200-odd million...
...transistorized, deodorized...
...whiter than white steel-belted bodies,
totally unnecessary as human beings...
...and as replaceable as piston rods.
Well, the time has come to say...
...is "dehumanization" such a bad word?
Whether it's good or bad,
that's what is so.
The whole world is becoming humanoid,
creatures that look human but aren't.
The whole world, not just us.
We're just the most advanced country,
so we're getting there first.
The whole world's people are becoming
mass-produced, programmed...
...numbered insensate things.
It was a perfectly admissible argument...
...that Howard Beale advanced
in the days that followed.
It was, however,
also a very depressing one.
Nobody particularly cared to hear
his life was utterly valueless.
By the end of the first week in June...
...the Howard Beale Show
dropped one point in the ratings...
...and its trend of shares dipped under 48

for the first time since last November.
You're his goddamn agent. I'm counting
on you to talk some sense into the lunatic.
Nobody wants to hear about
dying democracy and dehumanization.
I'm sorry I'm late.
We're starting to get rumbles
from the agencies.
Another couple of weeks
and the sponsors will be bailing out!
This is a breach of contract.
This isn't the Howard Beale we signed.
Get him off that corporate universe kick,
or so help me, I'll pull it off the air!
I told him, Lou! I've been telling him
every day for a week!
I'm sick of telling him. Now you tell him!
Jesus Christ.
You could help me out
with Howard if you wanted to.
He listens to you. You're his best friend.
I'm tired of all this hysteria
about Howard Beale.
Every time you come
from seeing somebody in your family...
...you come back in one of these
middle-aged moods.
I'm tired of finding you on the telephone
every time I turn around.
I'm tired of being an accessory
in your life.
And I'm tired of pretending to write
this dumb book...
...about my maverick days
in the great early years of television.
Every goddamned executive fired
from a network in the last 20 years...
...has written this dumb book
about the great early years of television.
And nobody wants
a dumb, damn, goddamn book...
...about the early days of television.
Terrific, Max! Maybe you can start
a whole new career as an actor.

It's the truth.
After living with you for six months,
I'm turning into one of your scripts.
Well, this is not 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 that my daughter flew
all the way from Seattle to be with her.
And I feel lousy about that.
I feel lousy about the pain
that I've caused my wife and my kids.
I feel guilty and conscience-stricken...
...and all of those things
that you think sentimental...
...but which my generation
calls simple, human decency.
And I miss my home...
...because I'm beginning
to get scared shitless.
Because all of a sudden it's closer
to the end than it is to the beginning.
And death is suddenly
a perceptible thing to me...
...with definable features.
You're dealing with a man
that has primal doubts, Diana...
...and you've got to cope with it.
I'm not some guy discussing male
menopause on the Barbara Walters Show.
I'm the man that you presumably love.
I'm part of your life.
I live here. I'm real.
You can't switch to another station.
What exactly is it you want me to do?
I just want you to love me.
I just want you to love me,
primal doubts and all.
You understand that, don't you?
I don't know how to do that.
I'll be with you in a minute, Max.
By the first week in July...
...the Howard Beale Show

was down 11 points.
Hysteria swept through the network.
He's a plague. He's smallpox.
He's typhoid.
I don't wanna follow his goddamn show.
I want out of that 8:00 spot.
I've got enough troubles
without Howard Beale as a lead-in!
Scheduled me against
Tony Orlando and Dawn.
NBC's got Little House on the Prairie.
ABC's got The Bionic Woman.
Do something! You gotta do something
about Howard Beale!
Get him off the air! Get him off!
Do something! Do anything!
We're trying to find a replacement
for him!
I'm going to look
at audition footage now!
And how when the sick heal...
...man, I tell you I saw it!
It was heavy, baby.
I saw the earth quake.
And I saw the moon became like blood.
And every mountain and island
was moved from its place.
No, no, no. Damn it.
If we wanted hellfire
we'd get Billy Graham!
Don't want faith healers, evangelists
or Oberammergau passion players!
What about that messiah
that ABC was supposed to have signed up...
-...as our competition for next year?
That's him.
-The bottomless pit is here.
That's him?
His ass ending.
Jesus. Turn him off!
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.
We're not gonna find a replacement for
Howard Beale. Let's stop kidding ourselves.
Fully fledged messiahs
don't come in bunches.
We either go with Howard Beale
or we go without him.
My reports say
we'll do better without him.
It would be disaster to let this situation
go on another week.
By then, he'll be down 16 points...
...and the trend irreversible,
if it isn't already.
I think we should fire Howard.
Arthur Jensen has taken a strong personal
interest in the Howard Beale Show.
I'm having dinner with him tonight.
Let me have another crack at Jensen...
...and then let's meet in my office

at 10:

Diana, give me copies
of all your audience research reports.
I may need them for Jensen.

Is 10:

I think the time has come
to re-evaluate our relationship, Max.
So I see.
I don't like the way this script of ours
is turning out.
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.
-So you're gonna cancel the show.
-Right.
Here, let me do that.
The simple fact is, Max,
that you're a family man.
You like a home and kids. That's beautiful.
I'm incapable of any such commitment.

All you'll get from me is
a couple months of intermittent sex...
...and recriminate and ugly little scenes
like the one we had last night.
I'm sorry for all those things
I said to you last night.
You're not the worst fuck I've ever had.
Believe me, I've had worse.
You don't puff or snorkle...
...and make death-like rattles.
As a matter of fact,
you're rather serene in the sack.
Why is it that a woman always thinks...
...that the most savage thing she can say
to a man is to impugn his cocksman-ship?
Well, I'm sorry I impugned
your cocksman-ship.
I gave up comparing genitals
back in the schoolyard.
You're being docile as hell about this.
Oh, hell, Diana,
I knew it was over with us weeks ago.
Will you go back to your wife?
I'll give it a try,
but I don't think she'll jump at it.
But don't worry about me. I'll manage.
I always have, I always will.
I'm more concerned about you.
You're not the boozier type.
So I figure a year, maybe two,
before you crack up.
Or jump out of your 14th floor
office window.
Stop selling, Max. I don't need you.
I don't want your pain. I don't want
your menopausal decay and death!
I don't need you, Max.
-Now get out of here!
-You need me! You need me badly.
Because I'm your last contact
with human reality.
I love you.
And that painful, decaying love
is the only thing between you...

...and the shrieking nothingness
you live the rest of the day.
Then don't leave me.
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 that you
and the institution of television touch...
...is destroyed.
You're television incarnate, Diana.
Indifferent to suffering, insensitive to joy.
All of life is reduced
to the common rubble of banality.
War, murder, death...
...all the same to you
as bottles of beer.
And 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're madness, Diana.
Virulent madness.
And everything you touch dies with you.
But not me.
Not as long
as I can feel pleasure and pain...
...and love.
And it's a happy ending.
Wayward husband comes to his senses...
...returns to his wife...
...with whom he's established
a long and sustaining love.
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.

How did it go?

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.

Mr. Jensen feels we're too catastrophic in our thinking.

I argued that television was a volatile industry in which success and failure...
...were determined week by 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 care if Howard Beale was the number-one show or the 50th.

He didn't really care if the Beale Show lost money.

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?

That puts us in the shithouse, that's where that puts us.

-Do you want me to go through this?

Yes.

The Beale Show Q score's down to 33.

Most of this loss occurred in the child and teen and 18-34 categories...

...which were our key core markets.

And as the AR department's carefully considered judgment and mine...

...that if we get rid of Beale, we should maintain a respectable share...

...in the high 20s, possibly 30, with a comparable Q level.

The other segments of the show, Sibyl the Soothsayer...

...Jim Webbing, the Vox Populi,

have all developed their own audiences.
Our AR reports show
that it is Howard Beale...
...that is the destructive force here.
Minimally, we're talking about
a 10-point differential in shares.
I think Joe ought
to spell it out for us. Joe?
A 28 share is 80,000-dollar minutes.
I think we can sell complete positions
on the whole.
We're just getting
into the pre-Christmas gift sellers...
...and I'll tell you the agencies are coming
back to me with \$4 CPM's.
If that's any indication, we're talking 40-
Wanna hear the flak from the affiliates?
We know all about it, Herb.
And you would describe Mr. Jensen's
position on Beale as inflexible?
Intractable and adamantine.
So, what do we do
about this Beale son of a bitch?
I suppose we'll have to kill him.
I don't suppose you have any ideas
on that, Diana?
Well, what would you fellows say
to an assassination?
I think I can get the Mao Tse-Tung people
to kill Beale for us...
...as one of their shows.
In fact, it'll make a hell of a kickoff show
for the season.
We're facing heavy opposition on the
other networks for Wednesday nights...
...and The Mao Tse-Tung Hour
could use a sensational opener.
It could be done
right on camera in the studio.
We ought to get
a fantastic look-in audience...
...for the assassination
of Howard Beale as our opening show.
Well, if Beale dies, what would

our continuing obligation...
...to the Beale corporation be?
I know our contract with Beale
contains a buy-out clause...
...triggered by his death or incapacity.
There must be a formula
for the computation of the purchase price.
Offhand, I think it was based
on a multiple 1975 earnings...
...with the base period in 1975.
I think it was 50 percent of salary
plus 25 percent of the first year's profit...
...multiplied by the unexpired portion
of the contract.
I don't think the show has
any substantial syndication value...
...would you say, Diana?
Syndication profits are minimal.
We're talking about a capital crime here.
The network can't be implicated.
I hope you don't have any hidden
tape machines in this office, Frank.
Well, the issue is,
shall we kill Howard Beale or not?
I'd like to hear
some more opinions on that.
I don't see we have any option, Frank.
Let's kill the son of a bitch.
Ladies and gentlemen, let's hear it.
How do you feel?
We're mad as hell
and we're not going to take this anymore!
Ladies and gentlemen,
the Network News Hour...
...with Sibyl the Soothsayer.
Jim Webbing and his It's-the-Emes
Truth Department.
Ms. Mata Hari and her
Skeletons in the Closet.
And tonight,
another segment of Vox Populi.
And starring the Mad Prophet
of the Airways, Howard Beale!
The Network News anchorman

on the UBS Network News show...
...known to millions as the Mad Prophet
of the Airways...
...was shot to death tonight
in a fusillade of automatic-rifle fire...
...just as he began
this evening's broadcast.
We never compromise,
so why should you?
Canada Dry mixers, why compromise?
--identified themselves as
the group responsible for the killing.
Ahmed Kahn, a massive man of well
over 6 feet, carrying an automatic weapon.
--supposed to be good for you.
-Did you try it?
I'm not gonna try it, you try it.
-I'm not gonna try it.
-Let's get Mikey.
Yeah. He won't eat it.
He hates everything.
The extraordinary incident...
...occurred in full view
of his millions of viewers.
The assassins were members
of a terrorist group...
...called the Ecumenical Liberation Army,
two of whom were apprehended.
The leader of the group, known
as the Great Ahmed Kahn, escaped.
This was the story of Howard Beale...
...the first known instance
of a man who was killed...
...because he had lousy ratings.