INT. HIGH SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - NIGHT
The following is shot DOCUMENTARY-STYLE.
A GIRLS VOLLEYBALL GAME has just ended. It was a big game. Some kind of championship.

ONE TEAM is CELEBRATING -- jumping up and down, squealing and hugging each other. We are focused on the bench of the TEAM LOST. They're very sad -- several are crying.

One girl, in particular, (AMY) is really sobbing. She's sweat-stained, tired and just blubbering. Stuff's coming out of her eyes, her nose, her mouth and the camera is seeing it all.

The COACH, a fortyish man looks at all the weeping girls -- Amy in particular.

COACH
You quit! You gave up!

He KICKS a CHAIR.

Now Amy is really a mess. She's crying, coughing, shaking.

COACH (CONT'D)
(right in Amy's face)
You quit!!

The Coach storms off.

COACH (CONT'D)
Quitters! ... Quitters!

Amy is wailing and choking on her own tears.

This IMAGE FREEZES.

TERRY (V.O.)
And that would be it. I don't think you need any narration at all. Just end it right there.

REVEAL

2 INT. OFFICE - DAY
BEGIN CREDITS

We're in New York City. We're in the conference room of a modestly successful cable TV station called "Real TV." The people are young, energetic, clever. It's crowded, noisy - the furniture is beaten up, bulletin boards cover the walls, with large index cards all over them. This room is not for show -- work gets done here.

SEVEN OR EIGHT PEOPLE are present. One of them is CYNTHIA REED. She's the boss.

TERRY
(to Cynthia)
What do you think?

CYNTHIA
It's horrible, it's depressing, I love it. What else?

ALICE
I want to re-pitch that pregnancy idea. Find six women early in their pregnancies and follow them all right through to the births.

KEITH
(negative)
Yeah, when all that stuff comes out.

Mixed reactions, mostly negative.

CYNTHIA
I have an idea.
IMMEDIATE ATTENTION

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)
This is something I've been thinking about for a long time. We're "Real TV" right? I mean that's the name of the station.

AGREEMENT

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)
So let's go real. We find someone. Just a regular person, someone. And we put their life on television - live... all day long.

Silence. No movement at all.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)
Calm down.

KEITH
What do you mean, like PBS did in the seventies? What was that family?

GREG
The Louds.

KEITH
Yeah.

CYNTHIA
No. We go way beyond that. We don't film it and edit it and put it on later. We go on the air live every morning and the show goes off each night, when our subject goes to bed. In between, we're on live all day, every day - the same person, -- for (shrugs) let's say a month.

No one is wild for this. Some hate it -- some are unconvinced.

FELICIA
That's not a show that's a surveillance camera.

GREG
You can't do that.

**CYNTHIA**
The hell we can't. Look, the beauty of being a cable channel is we can take chances. I've thought about this and I'm telling you, I think this can make a noise. A loud one. There are twelve thousand channels. You've got to do something that says "Look at me!" Hell, people look at fish tanks all day. This is people!

(more firmly)
Someone's real life -- an TV, all day long - live... And, you know what? I'm doing it.

Pause. The others know the argument is over.

**GREG**
In that case, we love it.

**END CREDITS**

3 **EXT. POOL HALL - DAY**
A BUS passes. On the bus is an ad. It says, "Would you like to star in your own TV show? Call Real TV (and a phone number) Coming (and a date)."

4 **INT. POOL HALL - NIGHT - PARAMUS NEW JERSEY**
This is a nice upscale pool hall. A party is in progress in a special private area -- a room upstairs let's say -- a loft. Thirty or forty PEOPLE in their twenties and thirties are informally celebrating the engagement of two of their friends.

It's NOISY, it's fun, it's informal. It's not a high-end group. By that we mean, not, for the most part young lawyers or stockbrokers. They're mostly blue-collar. Community college graduates.

WE OPEN ON ED PEKURNY. He's an attractive man, about thirty. There's still something a little juvenile about him -- not stupid, just boyish.

SOMEONE is VIDEOTAPING HIM for one of those congratulation montage things that are done at parties these days. Ed is good at this. He's not professional but he's a loosey-goosey guy who's kind of good on camera.
ED
I want to congratulate
Kevin and Tracy on their engagement.
I knew you guys were meant for each
other from the moment Tracy told us
she was pregnant.

TRACY
You asshole!

Everyone else is cracking up.

ED
(innocently)
What? What did I say?

TRACY
My mother's going to see this!

5 INT. PARTY - LATER
Other people are being "interviewed" on tape. Ed is SHOOTING
POOL
with his buddy, JOHN. John's had a couple of drinks. He's a
little
melancholy.

He is looking across the room, thoughtfully.

ED
What?

JOHN
Look at this -- people are
getting married, they're
getting married...

ED
You said that.

JOHN
We're falling behind.

Ed waves dismissively.

JOHN (CONT'D)
You know who we are?

ED
Tell me.
JOHN
We're the guys who clean up after the parade.

ED
I'm gonna stick this right in your eye.

JOHN
I was at this comedy club last week and this comedian says "If you're over thirty and your job requires you to wear a name tag, you screwed up your life." And I'm laughing and then I realize I wear a nametag.

ED
So do I. So what? I'm doing all right.

JOHN
Your brother's here.

ANGLE ON THE DOOR
Ed's brother RAY and Ray's girlfriend SHARI arrive at the party. Shari is pretty in an unglamorous kind of way. They both wave and then Shari goes off to talk to some of the LADIES and Ray joins Ed and John.

RAY
What's up?

ED
Where were you?

RAY
(reluctantly)
I was... having dinner with Shari and her parents.

JOHN/ED
(taunting)
Oooh!

RAY
I'm telling you, it's closing in on me. All of a sudden it's like a thing, it's a whole thing.
ED
What do you mean all of a sudden? You've been going with her six months.

RAY
I know. I mean I'm sitting there and her father's asking me about my "career prospects" and I'm playing "Risk," with her kid brother, Leon and at dinner the dog's sniffing at my balls -- at least I hope it was the dog. 'Cause her mother disappeared for a while.

They LAUGH.

6 INT. PARTY - LATER
It's getting wild. Some of the girls are dancing raucously.

ANGLE ON A TABLE (NOT A POOL TABLE, AN EATING-TABLE)

Ed, Ray, John, Shari and maybe another WOMAN.

Ray is holding a big tray of SHRIMP BALLS. During the conversation, Ray throws them in the air and catches them in his mouth like popcorn. Once, he even bounces one off the wall into his mouth.

ED
You know, those are for everybody.

Ray waves dismissively, then gets an idea.

RAY
Oh!
(to Shari)
Show them that thing you can do.
(to the others)
This is great. I just found out she can do this, her brother told me.
(to Shari)
Come on.

SHARI
(thinks it's stupid)
I don't -

RAY
Come on...

She hesitates, but she really doesn't mind. Slightly, amused she takes her FIST and fits it completely INTO her MOUTH.

ED
Whoa!! Oh!

Ray is cracking up.

RAY
Is that unbelievable?

She removes her hand.

SHARI
And that concludes today's show.
(to Ray)
This is where you go around and collect the money.

Ed LAUGHS. Ray gives her a KISS.

Shari's roommate RITA sits down.

RITA
Hi.

SHARI
You guys know my roommate, Rita.

They do, vaguely.

ED
What's going on over there?

RITA
Everybody's making audition tapes for that Real TV thing.

JOHN
Oh, that thing. Yeah. Did you hear about this?

ED
(not sure)
Yeah, what - they put some schmuck on TV all day long or something?

RAY
You know, that would be like a great thing.

ED

What?

RAY

That! Being that guy. Being the guy they watch.

ED

What are you drunk?

RAY

Yeah, but let's stay on one subject. Whoever that person is is going to be famous. They'll be able to get whatever they want. They'll ... trust me, this is my business.

ED

What is?!

RAY

Show business.

ED

You're in show business?

RAY

Yeah. I service video equipment.

ED

That's like... those people stitching Nikes in Panama saying they're in the NBA.

RAY

(insulted)
I'm not stitching Nikes in Panama! ... Bedwetter!

ED

Thumbsucker!

RAY

I'm making a tape.

ED

We're excited.
INT. BAR  -  A FEW MINUTES LATER
Ed and Shari, waiting for drink orders.

   ED
   So Ray met the family.

   SHARI
   Yeah...

   ED
   I hear the dog really liked him.

   SHARI
   Oh, the whole family loved him.
   Of course, they loved the last guy I went out with, and he strung me along for three years and dumped me.

   ED
   Really? You see, to me, you shouldn't have any trouble with men. There should be, like, a line behind you.

She takes Ed's beer.

   SHARI
   You shouldn't drink.

They LAUGH.

INT. TABLE  -  A LITTLE LATER
Ed and Shari ARM-WRESTLING. After a struggle, Ed wins. Ed is impressed.

   ED
   Jesus!

Shari wrings out her arm and picks up her beer.

   SHARI
   (continuing a previous conversation)
   And, you know, every guy I ever broke up with, the minute it was over, I could tell you what went wrong, how it went wrong, why it had to go wrong... but when I'm in it... lost. I'm like a love coroner. Bring me the corpse,
I'll tell you what killed it.
But how to prevent it? Lost.

Ed LAUGHS.

ED

Ray's on.

They walk over.

ANGLE ON RAY

RAY
(to camera)
Hi. I'm Ray Pekurney. I'm from Paramus, New Jersey...

9 INT. CYNTHIA'S OFFICE - DAY
She's watching Ray's tape. Ray thinks he's funnier and cuter than he is.

RAY (ON TAPE)
All my friends tell me "Ray, you've got too much personality for one guy."
It's like at a party -- I'm at the center of the attention. Everybody loves me.

He gets hit in the face by a hors d'oeuvre.

RAY (CONT'D)
Ha, ha, ha. I'll kick your ass.
No really, let me show you my girlfriend. She's really cute.

He reaches out and grabs Shari's wrist. Shari is struggling to stay out of frame. We just see her arm and Ray pulling on it. Ray lets go.

RAY (CONT'D)
She's strong, 'cause she's a Fedex girl. She lifts those packages. But she's not dikey at all, she's really pretty.

CYNTHIA FAST-FORWARDS

WE SEE the camera shooting an empty space.

Then Ed's head appears sideways right in front of the CAMERA.
ED
Hello I'm Ed.

He starts to sniff.

ED (CONT'D)
What smells?

He steps back from the camera and straightens his head as he SMELLS. He's more relaxed than Ray.

ED (CONT'D)
What is that smell? Oop, I think it's this idea. One person on TV all day long?
(screams)
Are you nuts?

WE HEAR LAUGHS

The Real TV Staff are enjoying Ed's tape while they eat lunch out of styrofoam containers.

ED (CONT'D)
Seriously, get your resumes in order. When my brother Ray -- whose personality you were just dazzled by -- told me he was going to try out for this -- I said, "why in the world would anyone want to be on TV all day long, no privacy, everybody knowing your business, exposing every single detail of your life I mean... why would anyone want to do that? But then I thought of a reason...
(loudly)
Why the hell not?

He KISSES the LENS, smudging it.

Cynthia, watching, cracks up. The others seem to like him to.

10 INT. VIDEO STORE - DAY
This is a video store in Paramus, New Jersey. It's busy. PEOPLE are in line to check out tapes.

WE OPEN ON a WOMAN -- a mother -- who is rummaging through her purse for her Blockbuster card. She looks up and sees that her TWO CHILDREN have opened several boxes of candy from the candy
display and are eating from the boxes.

MOTHER
   Oh for -- Put those -- Oh God...

She grabs the boxes from them. The boxes are ripped more than she thought and candy goes flying all over. She bends to pick it up.

Ed appears. He works here.

ED
   (to the Mom)
   We'll take care of it.

Someone arrives with a broom.

ED (CONT'D)
   (to the broom guy)
   Here. This time throw it out, don't eat it.

LOU, the Manager passes.

ED
   Lou, can I talk to you a second?

Lou seems like he'd prefer to avoid this.

LOU
   Um, yeah, I was gonna ...

ED
   What's the deal?
   Did anybody make a decision -

LOU
   Ed, look, uh... you're not getting the job. They're gonna transfer someone from another store to manage this store when I leave to manage the new store. I'm sorry.

ED
   Oh, Christ. Did you go to bat for me?

LOU
   I batted!

ED
You batted or you bunted?

**LOU**

Hey. I went as far as I felt comfortable. I mean, you know, let's face it -- you come and go here as you please. You work when you feel like it -- you know, Bruce Springsteen's birthday is not a legal holiday.

**ED**

Well, then I'm quitting.

**LOU**

Ed, come on. What's that gonna do? You're gonna bring Blockbuster to their knees. Let me recommend a movie to you. It's called "Get your shit together before it's too late."

**ED**

(wise-ass)

Who's in it?

**CLERK**

Ed, telephone.

Ed goes to the phone.

**ED**

(into the phone)

Yeah... Are you serious? ... Come on, no kidding, who is this? ... Holy shit!

11  INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - ANOTHER DAY

Ed is being interviewed by the "Real TV" staff whom we met earlier.

He's slightly less comfortable than on his tape, but he's good.

**ED**

I had one year of college. And then one year of junior college.

**CYNTHIA (O.C.)**

What did you study?

**ED**

Oh, see, studying would've been a huge help. Where
were you, then?

They LAUGH.

CUT TO:

11A  INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

ED

Well, there's Ray, my brother. He's... ambitious. Like a few years ago, he started this mobile dog-grooming business. But, like, out of his Camry. He had this bathtub in his trunk -  
(Ed starts cracking up)
he's throwing the dogs in there, they're fighting and splashing, then he'd slam the trunk down, let 'em run around inside screaming getting all wet... then he'd use the car exhaust to dry'em.  
(wiping his eyes)
Ah, Ray... he just can't get a break.

CUT TO:

11B  INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

ED

My sister -- Marcia, I mean she can't get a break. About seven years ago she falls in love with this Vietnamese guy who wants to marry her so he can stay in the country. So they get married, they have a kid, he gets his citizenship, immediately divorces my sister and marries this Vietnamese woman who, he was probably already married to all along. She can pick 'em.  
(pause)
She's got a nice little boy, though. My nephew, Andy.

CUT TO:

11C  INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER
ED
My Mom's okay. Kinda.
I knew a guy who hated his mother –
Stuey Shwam. He hated his mother so
much, he had his belly button
removed.

CUT TO:

11D INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

ED
No, I've never been married.

The interviewer seems to be waiting for him to elaborate.
He doesn't. He shrugs -- that's it.

CUT TO:

11E INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

ED
Oh, my father – what an asshole. When I was
twelve, my mother needed a
hysterectomy -- my father ran
off with her nurse! And that's
the last I heard of him.

CUT TO:

11F INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

ED
Al, my stepfather he's
opinionated. And you have to
listen because he's like in a
wheelchair.

CUT TO:

11G INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

ED
I like my job -- I
mean I'm doing all right. I'm
not sure how long I want to stay
there, you know... I mean, I'm
thirty-one... I'm not sure I want to be a video store clerk when I'm forty... Of course, I didn't expect to be doing it 'til I was thirty-one, either. But... you know I'm... keeping my options open. Anything comes along, I'm ready to pounce.

(growls like a cougar)

CUT TO:

11H INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

ED
A dream? Of course I have a dream I just don't know what the hell it is.

(shrugs and smiles)

Ed's image freezes, while he has a funny-cute expression on his face.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL a TV in a conference room with Ed's frozen image on it. Cynthia is there with her bosses, the people who run the network that owns Real TV. The top man is MR. SCHARLACH. His deputies are MS. SEAVER and MR. McILVAINE. This is not the same place where we met Cynthia and her staff. This is richer, more corporate and formal.

CYNTHIA
He's who we want to go with.

SCHARLACH
(doubtfully)
This guy.

CYNTHIA
I polled my staff. The men say they'd hang around with him and the women say he's fuckable. And one of the men said he's fuckable.

SCHARLACH
I'm not sure about the entire concept.

Cynthia is frustrated.

CYNTHIA
Look it's not like we're burning up the airwaves now. We're running neck-and-neck with The Gardening Channel. If people just tune in to this twice a day for five minutes, we're a hit. Plus we can sell advertising every second, running at the bottom of the screen... and the beauty is this guy doesn't even have to be good. I mean if he's good, great. But if he winds up making an ass of himself, better.

McILVAINE
How is that better?

CYNTHIA
Come on. People cannot turn away from an accident. You drive by, you say "Ooh, I hope there's not a head lying in the road" but you look! See, nobody in America wants to be nobody. This guy wants to be famous. So, basically, the deal is he agrees to drive down the highway a hundred miles an hour blindfolded and we get to see if his head winds up rolling down the highway. Fun for the whole family. So let's do it.

She stops, waiting for approval.

12 INT. VIDEO STORE

SCHARLACH
(coldly)
Good luck.

Ed's RE-STOCKING the SHELVES

He gets goosed from behind

RAY (O.C.)
(very loud and happy)
Hey...

ED
(goosed)
Ed DROPS the BOXES. Ray is there with Shari.

**RAY**
I got your message. Way to go!

**ED**
Hi, Shari.
(to Ray)
Let's go in the stockroom.

13 **INT. STOCKROOM**
Ed and Ray enter.

**RAY**
So when do you start?

**ED**
I ... I'm not gonna do it.

**RAY**
What?

**ED**
Look -- there's a million ways to humiliate yourself --
I gotta think of a new way? I mean, it's all day! Every minute. I'd be like a monkey at the zoo. I just...

**RAY**
(disgusted)
Oh man! They couldn't pick me! They had to pick you!

He slaps a tape off a shelf.

**ED**
You would do this? You would actually --

**RAY**
In a second! In a hot second. Let me ask you something --

**ED**
Why do you do that?

**RAY**
What?

ED
Whenever you ask me something why do you always say "Let me ask you something?" Why don't you just ask me?

RAY
(impatiently)
All right. Let me ask you something... are you happy like this?

ED
I'm doing all right.

RAY
Oh Yeah? What's your master plan here?

Shari enters, curious about the yelling. She stands there quietly, unnoticed by the guys.

RAY (CONT'D)
You're gonna be a video store clerk for the rest of your life? This is your big ambition, rearranging the "Ernest" movies?

ED
Screw off.

RAY
How many opportunities are you going to get in your life?

ED
I don't know.

RAY
That's right. You don't know. Doors don't fly open for guys like us.

ED
Hey. You know-- we're not the same. I got a good life, this job suits me. I come and go when I please --
RAY
Oh, don't bullshit a bullshitter. If you're happy like this you're an idiot, and you're not an idiot.
(see Shari)
Hi.

Ed turns and sees Shari. She's self-conscious. She feels like she's been caught eavesdropping.

SHARI
Oh. I -- I heard Ray yelling.
I didn't mean to --

RAY
(to Ed)
Give me a chance. I'm begging you. I need a break. Look, I'll cover your ass. I'll ride shotgun. Just bring those cameras over to me and I'll make something happen for both of us. I swear. Come on, Eddie

Pause.

ED
All right.

RAY
Yeah?!

ED
Yeah.

Ray lifts Ed up.

Ray kisses Ed.

RAY
(to Shari)
Is this guy a brother?!

14 INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT
Moderate-priced, restaurant.

WE OPEN ON a CLOSE-UP of AL. He's about seventy.

REVEAL THE FAMILY
AL

What happens when you go to the bathroom? Do they go in with you?

Ed, Ray, Al, JEANETTE and MARCIA. Al is in a WHEELCHAIR and has an oxygen mask connected to a tank. He periodically takes a hit of oxygen. He's a little short of breath, but loves to talk. Jeanette is Ed's mother -- about sixty. Marcia is a little older than Ed.

ED

No. The bathroom is off limits -- and when I go to sleep they go to other programming. Unless I get up. Then they go back on the air. Unless I get up to go to the bathroom, I guess, then --

AL

What if -- you're vomiting?

ED

(amazed by the question)
What if I'm vomiting?

AL

Do they show it?

ED

I guess -- I don't -- it's all in the contract. There's this million-page contract --

RAY

Look, can we all just sign the releases so we can get on with this?

MARCIA

(accusing, to Ed)
What happened? You described this "crazy-kooky" family who'd be a million laughs on TV?

ED

No! I barely even mentioned -- it's just that, my
friends, the people at work, whoever I'm regularly in contact with they want releases from.

    MARCIA
    (angrily)
    They're gonna mock our foibles.

    ED
    Our what?

    MARCIA
    Our foibles, our foibles!

    RAY
    We don't have foibles.

    MARCIA
    Everyone has foibles. Then the whole country sees them on TV and mocks them. Then we have... mocked foibles.

    JEANETTE
    Eddie, please don't let them mock our foibles.

    ED
    (losing it)
    Stop saying foibles!

    MARCIA
    Look, my life is not so great, that I want it shown on television. And neither is yours.

    RAY
    That's the point -- this could change things.

    MARCIA
    How?

    RAY
    For instance... me and my friend Bucky are buying out my boss. His equipment, trucks, client list, the whole shmear.

    MARCIA
    (points to Ed)
What does that have to do with...?

RAY
If they keep Ed on for one full month, he gets a balloon payment.

Ed nods.

Pause.

RAY (CONT'D)
I borrow against that now, at the bank. Buy the business. And Ed becomes a silent partner. Now here's the beauty part. While we're on TV I plug the shit out of the business. Free advertising.

AL
How about sex?

A STUNNED pause. They all look at Al.

ED
I'll have to pass, Al. And it's not an age thing --

AL
No! Do they show you having sex?

ED
No. Kissing and hugging, okay, but if it's actual sex they have to cut away.

AL
At what point?

ED
At the point -- I don't -- Look you'd be on TV maybe one or two times each. I'll try to avoid I'll go out of my way to avoid, getting together with you. Believe me.

WE HEAR: A loud drilling sound.

CUT TO:
A WORKMAN is drilling a hole in the wall.

Ed is there with a TV CREW. They're running cable and drilling holes and examining the apartment.

Cynthia is going around supervising. Ray and Shari are there. Ray is fascinated. Ed is tense. Shari is observant. Ray separates from Ed and Shari and asks one of the Installers a technical question.

SHARI AND ED

Ed thinks.

Ed joins Cynthia.

SHARI
Are you sure about this?

ED
Hey, believe me - I know I've got a great chance of making a fool of myself, here.

SHARI
Why do it?

ED
I saw this show once. It was about logging. I was home sick, there was nothing else on. Do you know how they break up really bad log jams? You know, when they're really tangled... ?

SHARI
Cream rinse?

ED
(laughs)
Dynamite.

SHARI
So?

ED
So maybe this is my dynamite.

SHARI
Dynamite is dangerous.
CYNTHIA
Ed, can I see you a second.

ED
(to Shari)
Excuse me.

CYNTHIA
Okay, so you understand? We're installing a permanent camera in your bedroom, one in the kitchen, one in the living room, plus, of course, there'll always be a couple of steady-cams following you.

ED
(overwhelmed)
Cool.

CYNTHIA
I want you to take this.
She gives him a card.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)
That has my work number, my home number, my pager number. I sleep three hours a night. Call me whenever you want to talk. Off the air, on the air, whenever. Okay?

ED
(barely listening)
Um, yeah -- thanks.

Ed looks kind of overwhelmed. She doesn't like this.

CYNTHIA
Now look. Don't freeze up on me. I picked you because you had kind of a relaxed, go-with-the-flow quality. You're not going to lose that, are you?

ED
No, uh...

CYNTHIA
I bet my career on you. You'd better be good.
ED
(annoyed)
Don't say that. That's like...
telling a guy before you have sex
you'd better be good. You don't do
that.

CYNTHIA
I do.

Ed reacts.

ED
Oh.

16 INT. ED'S BEDROOM - NIGHT
He's in bed, watching TV. The news is on. He glances up at one
of
the cameras. On the news, they go to a story about him.

ENTERTAINMENT REPORTER
Tomorrow morning, the cable
channel known
as Real TV, begins broadcasting
one of the most heavily promoted
concepts in the history of cable
television. In an experiment that
they say will last at least a month.
They're going to follow -- live --
every waking minute of a thirty-one
year old video store clerk from
Paramus New Jersey. The Real TV
press release on this promises that
none of it will be scripted, none of
it will be edited and in my opinion,
none of it will be interesting. we're
all just supposed to sit in front of
our TV's and watch this guy... live.
(rhymes with "give")

ANCHOR
(to the Entertainment Reporter)
What would be the interest here?
What would... get people to tune in?

ENTERTAINMENT REPORTER
Betas me.

SIDEKICK
I don't know. I might check it out.
ANCHOR
Well, Len's here to check out sports. Len, would you watch this video clerk?

LEN
I'd sooner watch soccer.

They all CRUCKLE.

17 INT. CYNTHIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT
She's watching the same show. She's edgy. She's CRACKING her KNUCKLES.

TV SCREEN

LEN
Speaking of disasters, at the Meadowlands tonight...

The set goes off. Ed, once again, stares up at the camera.

FADE TO BLACK

FADE IN:

18 INT. CONTROL TRUCK
Written on the screen -- "Day one."

A DIRECTOR and TECHNICAL CREW with all the modern equipment.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
Here we go. Ten-nine-eight-seven-

19 INT. REAL TV - OFFICES
Cynthia and her staff are gathered to watch the show begin. They're TENSE and EXCITED. A commercial is on.

20 INT. TRUCK

21 INT. OFFICE

A.D.

two... one.

On the TV, the commercial ends and the Real TV logo appears.
A CRAWL BEGINS

It says "The following is unedited, unscripted, and unreharsed. It is the real life of one American citizen named Ed Pekurny."

The logo fades away and we see Ed, in bed, sleeping. His ALARM RINGS and he wakes up.

He's groggy from sleep. Instinctively, he begins SCRATCHING his balls. As he does, it hits him that this is not a normal morning. He looks up and sees two steady-cam guys at the foot of his bed, aiming their cameras at him. Ed, then, looks at his hand on his balls. Gently, he moves his hand away.

22 INT. OFFICE

KEITH
(mock cheerful)
Well, we're off to a great start.

NOTE: The camera operators will change in shifts. We'll see about four regulars over the course of the film. The one we will see most often is shooting Ed right now. His name is CARLOS.

23 INT. BEDROOM

Ed, wearing shorts and a T-shirt, gets out of bed. His hair is sticking up. He passes a mirror and notices his hair.

ED
Oh, great.

He turns to the camera and seems about to offer an excuse for his appearance, but, then, just moves on.

ED (CONT'D)
Excuse me.

He grabs some clothes and enters the bathroom.

24 INT. OFFICE

They're not enjoying this. Everyone's staring at Cynthia. She doesn't flinch.
NOTE: Silent advertising runs along the bottom of the screen.
25  INT. KITCHEN - A FEW MINUTES LATER
Ed enters, dressed and showered. The Steady-cam is in his face.

Ed is tight. He's much less comfortable than he expected to be. He smiles stiffly at the camera. He's misplaced his natural charm.

He gets a box of Pop-tarts out of the freezer. As he does, other stuff falls out of the freezer on to the floor. He's embarrassed. He bends down to pick things up, showing his ass to the camera.

26  INT. OFFICE

GREG
(to Cynthia)
Start clearing a place for your Emmy.

27  INT. KITCHEN - A LITTLE LATER
Ed is sitting up on the kitchen counter eating his Pop-tarts and a bowl of cereal.

ED
(nervously)
Same people like to put the milk in first and then the cereal. I like to put in the milk first - I mean the cereal first and then the milk. Yeah, that's it. Now, watch this.

He takes a KNIFE and a BANANA. He peels the banana. He holds the knife, blade up, over the cereal and chops down on it with the banana, several times, rapidly, slicing it into the cereal. He's proud of this.

28  INT. RAY'S APARTMENT
Ray is watching the show. His head is in his hands. He's horrified by how bad Ed is.

29  INT. PARENTS' HOUSE
Jeanette and Al watching Ed.
JEANETTE
(being positive)
So far...

30    INT. OFFICE

KEITH
Somebody shoot me.

31    INT. NETWORK OFFICE
Scharlach, Seaver and McIlvaine watching, grim-faced.

32    INT. OFFICE
Cynthia is ON the PHONE.

CYNTHIA
Get him out of the house! I want him moving!

33    INT. CONTROL TRUCK

DIRECTOR
(on the phone)
Hey, I want him dead, but what can I do.

34    INT. KITCHEN
Ed is EATING. He peers confused at the camera.

ANGLE ON
CAMERA OPERATORS. They're signaling Ed to get out.

ANGLE ON ED
Bewildered, imitating their gestures.

ED
What... You want me to swim?

35    INT. CONTROL TRUCK
The Director is still on the phone. She's watching Ed on a monitor.

DIRECTOR
Oh God...
Ed gets it.

ED
Oh, out? You want me to go out.

36   EXT. BUILDING
Ed exits the building with the Operators walking backwards in front of him, bumping into PEOPLE—People watch, curiously.

Ed reaches his car. He takes out his keys and drops them in a muddy puddle. Disgusted, he fishes them out.

CUT TO:

36A   INT. NETWORK BUILDING
Scharlach, watching impassively.

CUT TO:

36B   INT. ED'S CAR
Ed, in the car. He can barely fit the key into the ignition. Carlos, in the passenger seat taps him on the arm. Ed looks up. Carlos holds up a hastily-made sign. "It's okay. Relax, man." Carlos WINKS. This does help Ed. He appreciates it. He drives.

WE SEE the control truck in motion. We also see another car with another Steady-cam OPERATOR, shooting Ed's car as they travel.

37   EXT. STREET - MONTAGE
Ed is doing his morning errands. A little shopping -- a little banking -- always ON CAMERA. At one point, he WALKS INTO a GLASS DOOR with the word "Pull" on it. He pushed, banging his forehead. A CHILD points to the word "Pull." Ed turns to the camera, embarrassed. Later he buys a slice of pizza at a little place that's doing no business.

ED
(to the camera)
Best pizza in New Jersey.

As he walks down the street, PEOPLE call out "Hey Ed!" People in windows show him that they're watching him at that exact
The camera shoots some of the people in the windows. They see themselves on TV and they go wild. Ed also is confronted by GUYS grabbing their crotches mockingly, calling out things like "Hey, Ed, holding your own?" or "Hey, Ed, howls the grand ballroom." Ed is slightly chagrined by all this, but handles it with good grace. He seems to be loosening up.

38 INT. VIDEO STORE - DAY
Ed arrives at work. The store is already open. (Ed usually gets there in the afternoon and stays until closing.) CUSTOMERS are a little stunned by the arrival of a camera. Some know what it's about some don't.

The CLERKS are aware of what's going on. They all signed releases. Ed's BOSS greets him stiffly. Clearly he's trying to get face-time on camera.

    ED
    Hey, Lou.

    LOU
    (stiffly)
    Welcome to work, Ed.

He shakes Ed's hand and smiles at the camera. He WAVES a little.

The BROOM GUY crosses, staring transfixed at the camera. He blocks Ed and Lou. He FREEZES, then panics. He tries to get out of the way and trips over his broom. He tumbles face-first into the camera lens, hurting himself.

ANGLE ON ED, observing.

    ED
    (mutters)
    Oh, Jesus, I'm dying.

39 INT. CONTROL TRUCK

    DIRECTOR
    Carlos, give him some air, give him some room. Use a longer lens. We'll mostly go with the stationary cameras in here. Less intrusive.
    (to the crew in the truck, sarcastically)
    Have any of you
thought about your next career?

40  INT. A KITCHEN - SAME TIME
A WOMAN is serving dinner. She's watching Ed on TV -- really just glancing at it. Her HUSBAND is helping her bring the food to the table.

      HUSBAND
      Why are we watching this?

      WIFE
      (a little guilty)
      No reason. just... I just want to see what happens.

      HUSBAND
      Nothing's gonna happen. He's just... working.

      WIFE
      Oh, come on, they wouldn't put it on if nothing was gonna happen.

      He changes the channel. She changes it back. He doesn't get it at all.

      RAPID CUTS of VARIOUS PEOPLE around America, watching -- A couple, a young guy, a woman alone -- ending with a few college-age girls in what appears to be a dorm room.

      ONE GIRL is watching intently. Her roommates are mostly just hanging around not really watching.

      COLLEGE GIRL
      I think he's cute.

      one of her roommates glances over to see what she's so excited about.

41  EXT. STREET - NIGHT
Ed is walking. He passes the little pizza place he touted earlier.
      There's a LINE out into the street. The STOREOWNER is working hard -- deliriously happy. Ed passes, oblivious to what he's created.
42 INT. ED'S APARTMENT - NIGHT
The Camera Operator is shooting Ed in the bathroom CLIPPING his TOENAILS

ED

Some guys work from
the big toe down to the little toe.
Not me. I save the big one for
last. That's the one I really
enjoy. It's thick, it's big, it's
a challenge. Did you ever see old
people's nails?
   (makes a disgusted
   noise)

43 INT. RAY'S APARTMENT
Ray and Shari watching Ed. Ray is BANGING HIS HEAD on the table.

RAY

This is not working.
   (to Ed on TV)
   Come to me!

44 INT. CYNTHIA'S OFFICE - NIGHT
It's late. She's alone. She's ON the PHONE. She's coming apart.

CYNTHIA
   (into phone)
No, I haven't seen the spot
ratings...
   (she winces)

As she talks, she tries to LIGHT a CIGARETTE. She's shaking too
much to use her lighter.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)
   (into phone)
I think that's a number
from which we can hopefully, uh...
build...

ANGRY at her lighter, she throws it breaking a window.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)
I disagree... No, I am not ready
to pull the plug... Yes, Mr.
Scharlach, I know they shoot
horses...
  (getting angry)
Look, it's been one day. Can I have
a week with this and then have
you fly up my nose?!
  (hangs up)

She immediately regrets her outburst.

45   INT. BAR - NIGHT
Written on the screen -- "Day Two."

OPEN ON TURTLES racing (as only turtles can) across the floor.
The turtles have little plastic men, seated on their backs.
The CROWD CHEERS and SCREAMS for their favorite turtles. Ed is
being followed by the steady-cams but seems to be ignoring it.

Ed is in a group which includes John, and Ray. The race ends
John looks very uncomfortable.

    BARTENDER
    The winner... Dashing Danny.

Ed wins. MONEY changes hands.

    ED
    Next round's on me.

One of the cameras is very close to John. He's very
SELFCONSCIOUS. He doesn't look where he's walking. He
trips. PEOPLE LAUGH.

    ED
    (off-hand joke)
Polish acrobat.

    RAY
    (loudly)
Hey. Check this out.
    (to the cameramen)
Look at this.

Ray TAKES OUT a big stack of QUARTERS and sets them on the bar
next
to a SHOT GLASS

46   INT. CONTROL TRUCK

    DIRECTOR
    Go with the desperate brother.
INT. BAR

The cameras go with Ray. Ray does a "spit the quarters off the bar into the shot glass" trick, while PEOPLE CHEER.

Ed is standing next to Shari. They're OFF-CAMERA.

   ED
   Whoa, God bless Ray.
   First time I'm off-camera in two days. This is hard, you know? I'm, like, exhausted.

ANGLE ON RAY

He's BALANCING a BAR STOOL on his forehead.

ANGLE ON ED AND SHARI

   SHARI
   (calmly)
   He did that at my parents' house.

ANGLE ON RAY

As Ray drones on...

   RAY
   (selling hard to the camera)
   Okay, I just wanted to get your attention. My name is Ray and my friend Bucky and I design video systems. You've got an office or a big home, we'll come out there design you an entire system.

ANGLE ON ED AND SHARI

   ED
   See, they should've picked him. Look how comfortable he is out there.

ANGLE ON RAY

   SHARI
   He is so wound up. He bought all new clothes for this.
He flips the BAR STOOL and catches it. He accepts the plaudits of the crowd. He returns to Ed and Shari. So do the cameras. Ray is fired-up.

**RAY**
Whew! I am kicking hairy ass!

Ray is still full of energy.

**RAY (CONT'D)**
Hey, Ed. Did you hear about Marcia?

**ED**
(worried)
No. What happened?

**RAY**
(to the camera)
That's our sister.
(to Ed)
She's got a new boyfriend.

**AL AND JEANETTE**

Watching TV.

**JEANETTE**
Who?

**BACK TO BAR**

**RAY**
He's living with her!

**ED**
(camera-conscious)
Ray, maybe this isn't...

**RAY**
No, this is great.
(to the camera)
You'll love this.
(to Ed)
He's a singer.

**ED**
Marcia's living with a singer?

**CUT TO:**
RAY
Yeah. You know, piano bars. plays the piano and sings. That's how they met.

SHARI
He sang to her and they fell in love?

RAY
(enjoying this)
No! Some drunk hit him over the head with his snifter -- you know, that thing they keep on the piano for tips -- and Marcia yanked a big hunk of glass out of his head.
(cracks up, pounds the table)

48      INT. MARCIA'S APARTMENT
Marcia is staring at the TV in UNHAPPY SHOCK. Next to her is a good-looking, but slightly sleazy-looking GUY with a bandage on his head.

49      INT. BAR

RAY
I mean my question is what was she doing in a bar in the first place?

ED
Ray --

RAY
She's an alcoholic, for Christ's sake.

ED
Oh, Jesus.
Marcia, watching, HORRIFIED.

BACK TO BAR

RAY
Remember the
last guy she got involved with? What was his name?

ED
What's the dif --

RAY
Richie!
(to Shari)
She spent six months dating a criminal

ED
(to Shari)
She didn't know he was a criminal. They had a relationship. They --

RAY
"Quick pull off the highway" is not a relationship. Oh man, I gotta pee.

He KISSES Shari. She COVERS her FACE with her hand.

RAY (CONT'D)
What are you, hiding from the Police?
(pulls her hands down)
Show your face, you look great.
(to Ed)
Doesn't she look great.

ED
Great.

RAY
(to Ed)
While I'm gone, tell them about our cousin Lenny who's gay. We knew from when he was five.

He minces off' effeminately, to the bathroom, LAUGHING. It's like a hurricane has just passed through. Everyone is sitting, STUNNED.

ED
You do though, you look great.

SHARI
Right.

ED
No, no, I -- as soon as you came in tonight I said to John, "Boy Shari looks beautiful." I said it on TV so you can ask anybody who saw it.

She LAUGHS. They smile at each other. They make intermittent eye-contact a little self-consciously.

Ed finally looks somewhere else and Shari, for just a moment, stares right at him.

PULL BACK to TWO GUYS, watching this on TV in a bar -- more of a neighborhood bar.

50    INT. BAR - NIGHT

        TAD
        Did you see that?

        BARRY
        What?

        TAD
        Her. That look. She likes the Ed guy better than she likes the brother.

        BARRY
        You're nuts.

        TAD
        Okay, I'm nuts.

CUTS OF OTHER VIEWERS,

WATCHING REAL TV

A BEDROOM

The COUPLE we met earlier are in bed, the wife is holding the remote.

        HUSBAND
        Give me the remote.

        WIFE
        Just a few more minutes. Read your book.
A LIVING ROOM

A GAY COUPLE

FIRST GUY
What do you like about it? I don't understand.

SECOND GUY
I don't know -- it just it's I don't know. Just let me watch.

51 INT. ED'S BEDROOM - MORNING
"DAY THREE"

The ALARM goes off. Ed starts to scratch his balls, but stops halfway down. He WINKS at the camera and starts his day.

52 EXT. EWS BUILDING

Ed comes outside and he's accosted by a GROUP of angry Polish Americans, many of whom are carrying signs decrying Polish jokes and anti-Polish attitudes. They SCREAM ANGRILY when they see Ed. Ed is completely shocked. He runs back inside. He locks the door, leaving Carlos outside. The demonstrators attack Carlos.

53 INT. ED'S APARTMENT

Ed is at his kitchen table with several burly DEMONSTRATORS arrayed behind him. Ed is NERVOUSLY, READING from a sheet of paper while Carlos shoots.

ED
... my "Polish acrobat" remark was ill-considered. Although, I meant no harm, I should have recognized that such (trouble with the next word) stigmatizing remarks bring pain and anguish to...

He's having trouble reading the next word.

ED (CONT'D)
I can't read my own writing.
It's like Chinese -- (quickly backtracking)
It's not like Chinese! Chinese
is, I'm sure, a beautiful language and they write ... beautifully. It's not Chinese.

He wipes sweat away.

ED (CONT'D)
Jesus, I'm sweating like a Mexican fruit-picker.
(realizes)
Oh, Christ!

QUICK CUTS of Ed, getting his laundry, doing some shopping, getting his oil changed, all being shot by a CAMERA PERSON.

54  INT. DENTAL OFFICE
A YOUNG DENTAL HYGIENIST is cleaning Ed's teeth. The camera is practically right in his mouth. It's making the Hygienist NERVOUS. She's distracted. She hurts Ed. He SCREAMS. She SCREAMS. She drops her tools.

HYGIENIST
(near hysterics)
Can I have some room please?!

ED
(talking with the suction in his mouth)
Gi hu roo.

55  INT. TV STUDIO
It's an educational-type panel discussion involving various eggheads and pundits. It's called "Viewpoint."

MODERATOR
Let's change topics for a moment. Does anybody have a viewpoint on something going on now called "Ed TV".

PANEL MEMBER #1
This, I believe, is a new low point in American culture.

PANEL MEMBER #2
I agree. What it reveals is the absolute creative bankruptcy in the television business. What they're saying, basically, is "We're giving up. We have no
ideas."

PANEL MEMBER #3
It's worse than that! They don't select someone with any talent, or with something to say -- they seem to celebrate the fact that this guy is a boob. It's a joyous celebration of boobery.

PANEL MEMBER #4
I think we've already spent far too much time discussing this.

They all agree.

56 INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - NIGHT
OPEN ON Ray with chopsticks up his nose, imitating a walrus. Also, he has lo mein noodles protruding from between his lips. Ed is forcing a smile. Ray is wearing a tee-shirt that says "Ray and Bucky- Video Kings" with a phone number.

57 INT. REAL TV OFFICE
Cynthia is alone working late. She's drinking. She's watching Ray. She's not enjoying him.

ED (V.O.)
Ray, don't throw the shrimp, you're gonna choke again.

CYNTHIA
Choke to death, you boring bastard.

58 INT. EWS BEDROOM - NIGHT
Ed is sitting up in bed, wearing shorts and a tee-shirt, eating directly out of a cereal box.

TERRY
The audience likes you when you're moving.

ALICE
Yes. Try not to stay in one place too long. Get outside as much as you can.

KEITH
Also, we have some notions. Have
you thought about becoming a Big Brother?

GREG
Or coaching a Little League team?

FELICIA
How about a date?

ED
Are you asking me?

FELICIA
No, I mean...

KEITH
It's just, the ratings are still soft.

LONG PAUSE

ED
(nervously)
Are you going to cancel me?

CYNTHIA
Let's not worry about that vet.

ALICE
You're testing well.

FELICIA
There's another problem.

GREG
It's ... Ray.

ED
What about Ray?

GREG
Well, the walrus impression – delightful as it was -- is just not wow-ing the audience. This is some audience research.

He hands Ed a PRINTOUT. Ed doesn't know how to interpret the figures.

ED
What does this mean?
FELICIA
It means they hate his freaking guts. It means if he were on fire they wouldn't put him out.

ED
He's just ... trying a little too hard --

CYNTHIA
Ed, the audience can smell the desperation coming through the screen.

TERRY
Could you... see him a little less often?

ED
How much less?

FELICIA
Never would be plenty.

ED
I can't do that to him. He's pushing a little too hard - but... I just can't do that to him.

SILENCE

ED (CONT'D)
He'll be fine.

59 INT. CAR - DAY
"DAY FIVE"

Ed is driving slowly on a busy street. Suddenly an EIGHTEEN YEAR-OLD BOY lands heavily on Ed's windshield. Ed is badly startled. He can't see. He swerves and stops. The boy is not hurt. He's banging on the windshield, waving at the camera. Ed, furious, gets out.

60 EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

ED
What the --?!
BOY
I'm on TV! I'm on TV!

Ed just stares in disbelief.

61 EXT. STREET - LATER
Ed is walking. PEOPLE YELL at him.

GUY
Ed! Your show stinks!

The Guy LAUGHS like he really got in a good one. Ed ignores him.

TWO TEENAGERS run in, one has a camera and quickly snaps a picture of Ed and the other Guy. Merrily, they shake his hand and run off, whooping.

There are PEOPLE who trail along. Many of them will show up again and again, throughout the movie, following Ed. Some of them will look mentally or emotionally impaired.

62 INT. VIDEO STORE - NIGHT
QUICK SHOTS of Ed with CUSTOMERS - One or two show a bit of camera-consciousness. A little group has gathered to observe Ed's "show".

63 INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY - NIGHT
Ed rings the bell.

ED (to the camera)
This is Ray's apartment. Ray's got a big-screen TV and the Knicks are playing in L.A. tonight, so sometimes I come over after I work late and we watch the game here. He makes funny comments. He's really a good guy. He just...

RAY (O.C.)
Who is it?

ED
It's me, Ed.

The door opens a crack, revealing Ray in a bathrobe. Ray's look is unwelcoming.
RAY

Hi.

ED

You watching the ballgame?

RAY

Uh, no, uh I'm a little tired. I fell asleep.

ED

Oh. All right. I'll watch at home, then.

RAY

Yeah...

WOMAN (O.C.)

Ray, where do you keep the glasses?

ED

Oh, is Shari here? Why didn't you just say so? Why are you giving me a song-and-dance about being tired?

ED (CONT'D)

(calls out)

Hi, Shari.

WOMAN (O.C.)

Who's Shari?

ED

Who's --

Ray looks pained. Ed realizes what's happening and freezes Ray's phone RINGS.

RAY

Oh shit...

He turns to answer his phone, allowing the door to swing open a little. Ed can see into the kitchen. He sees a WOMAN, wearing just panties, facing away from him, searching for glasses.

RAY

(into phone)

Hello... Shari, hi... Oh no! ...
Oh God!

ED
(to the camera)
We'd better go...

RAPID CUTS of VIEWERS loving this, some screaming "Don't go!,
don't leave, stay" etc.

BACK TO SCENE

RAY
(into phone)
No, honey, it's not what it looks
like--

She hangs up on him. He holds his head.

RAY
Oh God ... Ed!

64  INT. HALLWAY
Ed is TIP-TOEING away. He stops when Ray calls him. Ray 'runs
out into the hallway after him. They speak with lowered
voices.

RAY
That was Shari. She saw the
whole thing on TV--

ED
What is this? What's going on,
who is that?

RAY
(embarrassed)
It's the receptionist at one of
the places I service video
equipment -- she's very pretty
and, you know, she never even
talks to me and then today I come
in and she's all "I saw you on TV
the other night... You were so
great ... " Next thing I know
we're ...

ED
Next thing you know! Why didn't
you stop?

RAY
Stop? I'm a guy. I don't stop. The woman's supposed to stop. We're the gas, they're the brakes.

WOMAN (O.C.)
(calls out)
Ray, I finished the Snapple.

RAY
Fine!

WOMAN (O.C.)
Is there more?

RAY
In the cabinet, but it's warm. There's ice in the tray. I
(to Ed)
Talk to her.

ED
I don't even know her. All I know is she likes Snapple.

RAY
No, not her. Shari. Go over there and talk to her

65  INT. CYNTHIA'S BEDROOM

CYNTHIA
Yes! Go!

She throws something at the screen.

She picks up the phone.

66  INT. HALLWAY

ED
Why me?

RAY
You brought the cameras here!

ED
You brought the girl!

RAY
Please!

**ED**
If I go over to Shari, the camera's going there, too.

The Camera Operators are vigorously nodding and mouthing "Yes, Go."

Ray is oblivious to this, but Ed picks it up.

**RAY**
That's good. She'll -- you know control herself. Look. If I go over there, she's just gonna slam the door on me. Just go over and beg her to talk to me, that's all. Please. You owe me for this!

Ed accepts the irony of Ray's attitude without comment

67 **INT. ANOTHER HALLWAY- NIGHT**
The door opens, revealing RITA, Shari's roommate.

**RITA**
(nervously)
Um... Shari knew you were coming over because she saw ...

**ED**
Right, yeah --

**RITA**
(apologetic)
She really doesn't want you and the camera in here right now.

**ED**
No, I understand. That's - where is she, is she all right?

Rita isn't sure how much she should reveal.

**RITA**
I ... gave her a drink. I thought it ... but she's not much of a drinker, so it's made her a little... belligerent.

Shari appears in the doorway over Rita's shoulder. she's holding a liquor bottle and she's a little drunk.
SHARI
What do you want?!

ED
(awkward)
Shari, I'm just really sorry.
Look, I know this is... unbelievably awkward, but if I could come in for like a second and -- you know -- just say... two words, then...

Shari indicates with her head, that Ed can come in.

Ed and Carlos enter. Rita shuts the door. Shari crosses to a couch. Ed indicates for Carlos to give them some distance.

68   INT. CONTROL TRUCK

DIRECTOR
Don't lose them, Carlos. This is gold. Stay out of their way, but get everything.

69   INT. SHARI'S APARTMENT

Carlos settles across the room. He rests the camera down as if he's not even shooting, but he's still guiding it where he wants it throughout the scene.

RITA
I'm gonna go to bed.
(to Shari)
You okay?

Shari shrugs.

RITA (CONT'D)
Good night.

She gives the camera a quick glance.

RITA (CONT'D)
 quicky, with a small wave)
Hi, Mom.
(she exits)

ED
Shari, Ray feels --
SHARI

(starting to cry)
Don't defend that horse's ass to me.

ED
I'm not. I'm not. I'm just
Look -- you know, in a way, it's
good. He got this out of his
system now and he knows it's
not worth it and, you know,
someday if you guys got married
or something --

SHARI
Ha!

ED
Okay ... 

SHARI
(poking Ed as she
talks)
I've got news for you-- I never
intended to marry him.

ED
Oh... how come?

70  INT. RAY'S APARTMENT
Ray, watching on TV.

71  INT. SHARI'S APARTMENT

SHARI
Well, for one thing, he's a bad
lay.

72  INT. RAY'S APARTMENT
His eyes bulge out and he begins to gasp.

RAPID SHOTS of viewers reacting-- "Whoa!" laughs, etc. The
college girls applauding. one of them SCREAMS "Tell it!"

73  INT. SHARI'S APARTMENT
Ed realizes that Ray's been called a "bad lay" on television.
ED
Oh my God.

SHARI
(directly into the camera)
I mean bad.

ED
Look, not having been there... I just think you're hurt and you're saying this to, you know, get back at him.

She starts to cry.

ED (CONT'D)
Look... whether you get back together or not, you're too terrific a person to... lower yourself like this.

74 INT. RAY'S APARTMENT
Ray, still in shock.

75 INT. SHARI'S APARTMENT

ED (CONT'D)
I mean, I told Ray -- a couple of times -- that I thought you were one of the best and... smartest and... most attractive women I've ever seen so...

In comforting her, he's gotten his face very close to hers.

76 INT. DORMITORY
Same dorm girls as before.

DORM GIRL
Kiss him! Kiss him!

BACK TO SCENE

SHARI
Really?

ED
Yeah.
She tilts her head forward a little, hesitates, then kisses him, at first warmly, then passionately.

77    INT. DORM ROOM
The girls are going wild-- SCREECHING.

78    INT. TAD'S HOUSE

TAD
I'm nuts, hah?! I knew it! I said!

He dials the phone.

79    INT. JOHN'S HOUSE
John is stunned.

JOHN
Oh, Jesus!

80    INT. RAY'S APARTMENT
He stares, amazed.

The WOMAN he was found with appears behind him.

WOMAN
I found the Snapple.

81    INT. CYNTHIA'S BEDROOM
She sees the kiss.

CYNTHIA
Yes! Yes! I win! Scharlach, you schmuck! I am the golden goddess of television!

She begins beating her chest, one fist at a time while she SCREAMS in triumph.

82    INT. SHARI'S APARTMENT
Shari and Ed have stopped kissing. They both look stunned. Shari is suddenly sober.

SHARI
Oh my God.
She looks at Carlos who has now moved closer to them

    SHARI (CONT'D)
    Oh my God.

    ED
    It's... okay

    SHARI
    I kissed my boyfriend's brother on television!

    ED
    Well, when you put it that way.

    SHARI
    Leave. Go.

    ED
    Can't we just --

    SHARI
    Go!

    ED
    (exiting)
    All right. Okay. I'll ... see you.

He and Carlos exit. Going through the door, he gives Carlos a little push then quickly steps back inside, slams the door and locks it.

83     INT. CONTROL TRUCK

    CARLOS (V.O.)
    I'm locked out.

    DIRECTOR
    Stay calm. Shoot the door.
    We're running sound. And we've got a camera in the street.

84     EXT. BUILDING
    A CAMERA is shooting at a second-story window. We SEE SILHOUETTES.

85     INT. SHARI'S APARTMENT
Ed is at the door. Shari is across the room. They stare at each other silently. Then they run to each other. They kiss again.

86  EXT. BUILDING
We can SEE them KISSING...

87  INT. APARTMENT
Ed and Shari are all over each other. They're breathless.

SHARI
What are we doing?

ED
I've got to tell you something. I have had a big thing for you for months.

INTERCUT WITH SHOTS OF VIEWERS
They're seeing the door or the silhouette shot, but they're hearing every word. They're mesmerized.

SHARI
Really?

ED
Yeah. I mean for months I've been seeing you with Ray you being his girlfriend and I kept wishing you were my girlfriend... But, you know, what could I do?

SHARI
Me too. I mean I'm going out with Ray and I'm... thinking about you.

ED
Really?

SHARI
Oh God, this is so weird.

ED
Weird? If this happened last month it would've been weird. Now with... the TV and... now it's just too weird.
They look at each other. They don't know what to do.

ED (CONT'D)
I'd better go.

She nods. He walks to the door.

ED (CONT'D)

Once more?

She nods. They run back to each other and kiss.

88 EXT. BUILDING
The silhouettes are kissing.

89 INT. RAY'S APARTMENT
Ray staring at the TV.

90 EXT. PRIVATE HOME - LATER
"DAY SIX"

This is a fairly old, modest private home. Ed pulls up. He and Carlos get out of the car. Ed hurries up to the front door and enters.

91 INT. HOME - CONTINUOUS
Ed enters. He's a little AGITATED

ANGLE ON AL

ED
Hi, Al.

Al is in his wheelchair and taking periodic hits off an oxygen mask connected to a tank. Al's watching himself on TV.

AL
(excited)
Look. It's me.

He WAVES.

ED
Yeah. I brought you some movies.

AL
Anything good?
They LAUGH.

ED
No, I intentionally picked out a lot of crap 'cause I don't like you.

ED (CONT'D)
Is Mom here? I gotta talk to her.

AL
She's in the kitchen. I'd yell for her, but I'd die. (sucks more oxygen)
You had a busy night last night.

ED
(calls)
Yeah. Ma...

JEANETTE (O.C.)
Eddie?...

ED
Yeah?

JEANETTE (O.C.)
Are the TV people with you?

ED
Yeah. The camera guy is here.

JEANETTE (O.C.)
Send him away.

ED
Send him? Ma, I can't.
it's -- just come out here. Please, I --

JEANETTE (O.C.)
No.

ED
Do you want us to come in the kitchen?

JEANETTE (O.C.)
No. It's a mess.

ED
Look, Ma, come on out. Really.
I need to talk to you.

After a pause, Jeanette enters, very camera-conscious.

ED (CONT'D)
(to the camera)
This is my mother.

STIFFLY, he gives her a kiss.

ED (CONT'D)
Ma, do you know where Ray is? I've been calling him and I'm getting his machine and --

JEANETTE
Eddie, how could you do it? Your brother's girlfriend.

ED
Hey, he cheated on her.

JEANETTE
He made a mistake.

ED
I don't want to -- do you know where he is?

JEANETTE
No. Maybe he's watching. (indicates the camera) Tell him you're sorry. Tell him you'll stay away from that girl.

ED
No! And that girl has a name.

AL
What do you love her or something?

ED
(embarrassed)
Come on...

AL
(teasing)
Look at your face. I had a car that color.
VARIOUS REACTIONS OF VIEWERS really liking this.

BACK TO SCENE

JEANETTE
I know you. This Shari is a passing fancy.

ED
No! I -- All right, look, if you hear from Ray.... tell him to call me, okay?

He KISSES her again.

ED (CONT'D)
How's Marcia? She all right?

JEANETTE
I don't know.
She's living with that "entertainer"...

ED
(trying to make his mother feel better)
Well, who knows? Maybe she finally picked a winner this time.

JEANETTE
(unconvinced)
Mm.

ED
You and Al lived together a few months before you got married -- after Dad left.

JEANETTE
(looks at the TV)
Oh my God!

ED
I mean, that worked out.

JEANETTE
Oh my God!!

She gets in the closet and closes the door.
INT. OFFICE

ED
(to the camera)
I think we're through here.

The Real TV group is there.
They're smiling. Cynthia is ON the PHONE

CYNTHIA
(into phone)
I will. I'll tell them.
(hangs up)
That was Scharlach. All of you, scrub your asses. He's coming over to kiss them.

They all WHOOP and LAUGH.

INT. SHARI'S APARTMENT - DAY
Shari and Rita are watching Ed leave his parents house on TV.
Rita is very excited. Shari is ON the PHONE.

SHARI
(into phone)
Um, I'd like to get a new phone number, please... Because I'm getting calls from every nut case in America... Right, unlisted... Sure.
(she holds)

RITA
Aren't you excited? He said he loved you on television!

SHARI
He didn't say it. His stepfather said it.

RITA
(joking)
Well, the stepfather's cute...
Seriously, how do you feel about Ed?

Pause.

SHARI
I think he's great. He just makes me feel... oh, I'm really
gonna get hurt, this time - Hello ...

CUTS OF VARIOUS VIEWERS WATCHING REAL TV

End on TAD and BARRY in a health club. This is the refreshment area. They've played racquetball and they're sweaty. They're watching Real TV.

TAD
I'll tell you something else. The old guy in the wheelchair? The stepfather? They're gonna have him die.

BARRY
What do you mean "they're gonna have him die?"

TAD
You know, for a tearjerker. The audience falls in love with this loveable old geezer in a wheelchair and then he dies, it's ... They know what they're doing.

BARRY
This is real, Bananahead!

TAD
So?

BARRY
So if it's a show and they have a guy die that's writing, but if it's real and they have a guy die that's murder.

EXT. VIDEO STORE - DAY
Ed arrives for work.

People CALL OUT to him-- PEDESTRIANS, PEOPLE FROM CARS, TRUCK DRIVERS. "Hey Ed, my man." Ed waves. People shake his hand. A teenage boy looks into the camera, making a funny face. Someone else looks into the camera and says, "Hi, Ma."

Suddenly, Ray is there with a WOMAN. Ray is not happy. He's wearing DARK GLASSES and a HAT.

RAY
Hi.
Ed stops.

ED
... Ray?

RAY
Yeah.

ED
Oh, man, I've been trying to call you.

RAY
I know.

ED
Look, we gotta talk.

RAY
Save it.

A GUY in a car appears and points at Ray.

GUY
Hey, you're that French guy on TV.

RAY
French guy?

GUY
Monsieur Bad-a-lay.

The guy drives away. Ray is steaming.

RAY
Let me just do what I came here to do.

Ed thinks he means to fight. Ed tries to calm him.

ED
What are we gonna fight? Ray, please, listen to me --

RAY
(beckoning)
Cassie...

CASSIE, a woman about Ray's age, steps forward. She's slightly self-conscious.
RAY (CONT'D)
Go ahead.
Ray points Cassie to the camera.

CASSIE
This is really hard.

RAY
You promised me.

CASSIE
(to the camera)
I went out with Ray a few years ago for... a couple of months. And we... were intimate. And he's really not as bad as that girl said he was.

Ray nods.

CASSIE (CONT'D)
I mean, I've definitely had worse.

RAY
That's enough.

Ed is amazed that Ray would do this.

RAY (CONT'D)
(to Ed)
Good-bye, brother!

ED
Ray, come an--

Ray leaves, still angry.

Cassie lingers.

CASSIE
(flirting slightly)
So you're Ed.

Ray returns and yanks Cassie away with him. Ed still hasn't recovered from the bizarreness he just witnessed. Two girls YELL in unison from across the street.

GIRES
Ed... we love you!
95  INT. REAL TV OFFICE - NIGHT
Cynthia and her staff, around a conference call box.

CYNTHIA
We're not going to be able to come over there for anymore midnight meetings. People are starting to watch your building. The interest level in you is soaring.

INTERCUT WITH:

95A  INT. ED'S BEDROOM.
Ed's OFF-CAMERA

ED
Soaring is good, right? I mean, that means you're not gonna cancel me, right?

KEITH
(sotto)
Man, he wants that balloon payment.

ED (V.O.)
Huh?

TERRY
Ed, why didn't you go over to see Shari today? That's what all our viewers were hoping you'd do.

ED
Isn't she great? I mean, maybe just to me, but... I don't know, she's just --

TERRY
(impatiently)
She's great, she's great. Why didn't you go see her?

ED
I wanted to! I was dying to! But...

GREG
Is it Ray?
(pulls out research)
The audience hates Ray. Females, 18 to 35 --

ED
No, I don't need to hear that. Cynthia?

CYNTHIA
Yes, Ed.

ED
Could we just talk alone for a second? I --

CYNTHIA
Good idea.
(to her staff)
Could you all leave us alone for a few minutes?

She PANTOMIMES for them to stay in the room, but be quiet. The staff scrape chair legs and feign movement and ad lib "Bye Ed", "See you, buddy" etc. They all stay.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)
How you doing, Ed?

ED
I feel like when I was a kid and my mother sent me to school in orange corduroy pants.

CYNTHIA
(no clue)
Uh-huh?

ED
And all the kids stared calling me "Pumpkin Ass." "Hey Pumpkin Ass," -- for like a year. So, now, I feel like everyone's watching me and, you know, I'm "Pumpkin Ass" again.

The staff are stifling giggles.

CYNTHIA
Can I tell you something? I think you are fantastic. I think you have taken an idea and turned it into something explosive.

The staff stifle laughter. One of the guys is doing a jerk-off
gesture. Cynthia gives them the finger.

ED
Yeah?

CYNTHIA
Can I give you one bit of advice? About Shari?

ED
Sure.

CYNTHIA
A woman wants to be pursued.

96  EXT. SUBURBAN HOME - DAY
Shari, in her Fed-ex uniform is making a delivery. A WOMAN's signing for it.

WOMAN
This is so exciting! A real celebrity delivering my figs.

SHARI
(uncomfortable)
Sign here, please.

WOMAN
That Ray was a pig. Ed is doll. You latch on to him honey.

SHARI
By the X.

WOMAN
Some more make-up wouldn't do you any harm. On TV you look a little washed out.

SHARI
What would I actually have to do to get you to sign this?

WOMAN
(insulted)
Oh, an TV a minute and already an attitude.

SHARI
(annoyed)
By the X. That's were two lines cross -- forming an X.

ANGRILY, the Woman signs and slams the door.

She heads back to her truck. She looks up and Ed is there with flowers. The TV cameras are there also. Shari is startled. But she's also glad to see him.

SHARI
What are you doing?

ED
I missed you.

She's camera-shy.

ED (CONT'D)
You know, I never saw you in your uniform before.

SHARI
Yeah, well...

They both LAUGH.

ED
It's really a tremendous turnoff.

SHARI
You should see the one we wear when it rains.

ED
Sunday night at the Devils game, I'm driving the Zamboni.

SHARI
The what?

ED
You know, the big machine that cleans the ice.

SHARI
Oh yeah.

ED
It's quite an honor. Will you come with me?

She looks at the camera.
ED (CONT'D)

(gently)
Look, I know this is weird.
But... I don't want to wait. I really think we might have something together. Don't you?

EMBARRASSED, she nods.

ED (CONT'D)
Come on. Be my zamboni date.

She doesn't say "no."

They KISS -- a little hesitantly, not passionately, but affectionately. She's still self-conscious, but she's going with the flow.

97      INT. CYNTHIA'S OFFICE
They're watching. They CHEER and high-five each other.

98      INT. SHORT MONTAGE
Ed and Shari dating. She's shy, but she really likes Ed. He likes her and is very sweet to her.

1) Ed and Shari some place like "Tavern on the Green." She looks pretty. He's very happy.

2) They come out of a club. TOURISTS photograph them. Shari is a little disconcerted. Ed takes out a little camera of his own and photographs the tourists. This makes Shari laugh and relaxes her.

3) HOCKEY ARENA

CLOSE-UP of Ed, driving the Zamboni. He's loving it. He WAVES to Shari.

SHARI IN THE STANDS, watching. She waves and smiles.

The ice, a WIDER SHOT.

The Zamboni is, basically out of control. Carlos is sliding along the ice, shooting Ed as the Zamboni zig-zags dangerously, eventually crashing into the boards, shattering the Plexiglas.

99      INT. LOCAL ROCK CLUB - NIGHT
It's very CROWDED. Claustrophobic. Loud. Ed and Shari enter
just to see the show. They're spotted.

The Crowd, which is already fired up by the music, sees them. It starts out okay, people crowding around, patting Ed on the back.

A CHANT begins "Ed, Ed, Ed..." Pretty soon it drowns out the music.

More people press towards Ed. It's too crowded -- dangerous. Shari is swept away from Ed. She's buffeted about, violently. She goes down. Ed can't move. The Crowd is friendly and happy, but the effect is scary.

100  EXT. ROCK CLUB - A FEW MINUTES LATER
BOUNCERS squeeze Ed and Shari out the door, protecting them. Ed is unnerved. Shari is somewhat bedraggled. Her clothing is torn.

101  INT. ED'S KITCHEN - DAY
Ed is ON the PHONE.

    INTERCUT WITH:

    CYNTHIA'S OFFICE

    Yeah?!

    ED
They tore her dress! ... 

    CYNTHIA
We're going to get you a bodyguard, don't worry. Ed, I have some news for you. We're picking up Ed TV for another month!

    ED
(excited)
Yeah?!

    CYNTHIA
That means a balloon payment and a big raise for the second month.

    ED
Stand back -- I'm about to do my Happy Dance.

He does.
102  INT. RESTAURANT
Ed and Shari are EATING. So is a HUGE MAN sitting between them. His name is MOE.

103  INT. ROLLER RINK
Ed and Shari are SKATING. Up ahead of them, Moe, (on skates) is plowing into people, knocking them over.

104  INT. PIZZA JOINT - NIGHT
Ed and Shari get up to leave. They look at each other, very affectionately. They want to kiss. The cameras are close.

Ed is wearing a jacket. He spreads it out wide to block Shari's face from the cameras. He leans in and they KISS on the lips, several times, while Ed's jacket screens off the cameras. They're in love.

105  INT. TV NEWS SHOW - THREE WEEKS LATER
Written on the screen -- "Day 26."
It's the same news team we met earlier.

ANCHOR
Well, we've had pet rocks, hula hoops, Davy Crockett, Beatles wigs, and leisure suits. But America's latest craze is a guy named Ed. Here with that story is entertainment reporter, Rick Douglas.

ENTERTAINMENT REPORTER
Pat, four weeks ago, no one in America had even heard of Ed Pekurny. Today, this thirty-one year-old video store clerk has become something of a national obsession. The words viewers use to describe him are "charming," "natural," and "appealing." And ratings indicate that "Ed TV" is being watched by more people, each day, than any show in the history of cable television.

CUT TO:
A SHOT of Scharlach being interviewed. A CAPTION identifies him.

SCHARLACH
This idea just came to me. I told my staff -- if people just tune in twice a day for five minutes we're a hit. Sometimes you gotta go with your gut feeling.

CUT TO:

106 INT. CYNTHIA'S OFFICE
She's watching. She's ANGRY.

CYNTHIA
Sure it came to you! Because I brought it to you!
   (raises her fist)
You want a gut feeling?!! How about a groin feeling?!!
   (raises her foot)

BACK TO NEWS REPORT

ENTERTAINMENT REPORTER
Ed TV has become so popular that when Ed goes to sleep Real TV is running highlights of Ed's day all night. Some viewers have become obsessed with Ed. They wake up when Ed wakes up, they go to sleep when Ed goes to sleep, and in between they try to watch as much of him as possible.

A SERIES OF MAN-IN-THE-Street INTERVIEWS.

WOMAN #1
   (casually)
Yeah, I watch it... More than I'd like to admit sometimes.

MAN
   (about fifty)
Never... no...

YOUNGER MAN
Honestly? ... I try not to go to the bathroom until Ed goes to the bathroom so I won't miss
anything.

A GUY in an ice cream store.

    ICE CREAM GUY
    Watch this! Like Ed.

He slices a banana the way Ed does.

    WOMAN #2
    I just kind of leave it an, you
    know, so it's... there.

THREE TEEN-AGE GIRLS

    TEEN-AGER #1
    I don't like Shari. She's ... needy.

    TEEN-AGER #2
    I like her. She's sweet.

    TEEN-AGER #1
    She just rubs me the wrong way.

    TEEN-AGER #3
    I'm so glad they got rid of Ray.
    He was creepy.

    CUT TO:

YOUNG GUYS

    GUY #1
    To me, this Shari is like
    nothing.

    GUY #2
    She's not even hot. I mean Ed's
    a celebrity. If that was me, I'd
    be dating the goods.

    GUY #1
    There's something wrong with her.
    She's definitely not hot.

    GUY #2
    Not hot. Not.

107  INT. SHARI'S APARTMENT
    She's watching this, wearing a bathrobe.
Her self-esteem is being crushed.

108  INT. TV STUDIO
This is an "E TV" kind of gossip show. The host -- a YOUNG
WOMAN -- is showing film of Ed and Shari getting out of Ed's
car. The film freeze-frames. Shari has an
unflattering look on her face.

          GOSSIP QUEEN
What's wrong with her! Everytime
you look at this chick, it's like
she badly needs a Tampax. Ed, you
can do better.

Shari watching, in horror.

109  INT. DELICATESSEN - NIGHT
Ed and Shari are on a date. A WAITRESS is taking their order.
Shari still seems a little self-conscious, but Ed is having a
ball.

          ED
I'll have...
          (to Shari)
Get this --
          (to the waitress)
I'll have the "Ed."

          SHARI
I'm stunned.

A WOMAN with her young SON approach.

          WOMAN
Mr. Pekurny. I'm sorry to bother
you. My son would just love to
have your autograph.

          ED
No problema.
          (to the boy)
You want a picture?

The boy nods.

          ED (CONT'D)
          Moe.

MOE, the Bodyguard, in the next booth hands Ed a glossy of Ed
and a pen. Ed signs it.
ED (CONT'D)
Take this around the corner to Frame World, they'll give you a discount.

The Woman and Child leave.

ED (CONT'D)
(to Shari)
Oh -- Sunday is good for me to meet your folks. We get a big family audience on Sundays so it works out.

SHARI
(ironic)
That's lucky.

ED
Saturday, I think we should

A PHONE RINGS

Ed takes a phone out of his pocket.

ED (CONT'D)
(plugging)
Compliments of Motorola.
Hello... Marcia??
(to Shari)
My sister. -- What? ... What, right now? ... I'm eating, I'm on a date! ... Well, where's your boyfriend -- what's his name? Cliff .... Then, call a cab... (wearily)
All right. Look, just don't start any trouble okay. Just sit there quietly 'til I get there... you're welcome.

He HANGS UP. He's disgusted.

110   INT. CAR - A FEW MINUTES LATER

ED
This used to be a regular thing. And the worst part, is while she'd be waiting for me to come down to some bar and get her,
she'd start up with some guy and say "Wait 'til my brother gets here, he'll kick your ass." So then I walk in and there's some rhinoceros in a windbreaker who tries to shove me into a shot glass. And Marcia's drunk and screaming "Kick his ass, Ed. Kick his ass."

(looks out)
I think this is it.

111 INT. BAR
It's not a seedy dive. Ed and Shari and the camera operators enter. A CUSTOMER approaches.

CUSTOMER
Hey, hey, hey, hey, hey. You're the guy on TV.

ED
What was the tip-off? The enormous camera?

CUSTOMER
Watch this.

The guy does Ed's "Happy Dance."

CUSTOMER (CONT'D)
See, like you.

ED
Yeah. Keep up the good work.

Ed brushes by him. He sees a WOMAN passed out at a table.

ED (CONT'D)
Oh great.

He prepares to lift her.

MARCIA (O.C.)
Ed.

He turns and sees Marcia standing there.

MARCIA (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

ED
Hm? I'm, uh... Why isn't this drunken woman you?

He lets go of the woman.

Her head bounces on the table.

**ED (CONT' D)**
What's going on? Why did you want me to come down here?

Marcia guides them into chairs.

**MARCIA**
Cliff is here. He's performing. I wanted you to see him.

For a second, Ed doesn't get it. Then.

**ED**
Oh! Oh -- okay, now I get it. It's "Star Search." You wanted me here because the camera comes with me.

**MARCIA**
Ed, he needs a break. You don't know what kind of bad luck he's had --

**ED**
I can imagine. You said you wanted nothing to do with this. You swore to me. "Don't come near me. Don't bring this into my life..."

**MARCIA**
For God sakes, you said two words about some lousy pizza joint, the guy's a millionaire now. This could be my whole future we're talking about.

(to Shari)
Hi, I'm Ed's sister.

**SHARI**
(politely)
I've heard so much about you.
112  INT. BAR - LATER
Cliff is in the middle of his show.

He's wearing a PORTABLE ORGAN. He's not great. He's a smalltime professional with a lot of pep. Marcia is beaming. Ed's cameras are shooting him.

CUTS OF Cliff, singing every type of song, imaginable. This guy is desperately trying to cover all the bases -- i.e. Sinatra-type standards, something from "Lion King", "Do Ya' Think I'm Sexy," "Smokin' in the Boy's Room," "Hey, Hey, We're the Monkees," the theme from "Hawaii Five-0," a rap number, and "Ave Maria."

ANGLE ON ED AND SHARI

ED
(sotto)
I wish my stepfather was here.

SHARI
Why?

ED
He could give me some oxygen.

113  INT. SHARI'S APARTMENT - LATER
Ed and Shari are KISSING.

CUTAWAYS TO VIEWERS

TAD AND BARRY

BARRY
Oh boy! Here we go!

Ed is passionate.

JEANETTE AND AL

JEANETTE
(cringing)
Euuw...

RAY
Fuming.

BACK TO ED AND SHARI

SHARI
Um...

ED

What?

She indicates the camera. Ed tries to allay her fears.

ED (CONT'D)

I told you. If we... you know do it, they go away until ... we're done.

SHARI

I know, but even if they go away, everybody in America knows what we're doing because... they went away.

ED

So? What do they think -- we're not kids --

SHARI

(overlapping)

I know, I ... 

ED

(overlapping)

Shari, I really like you...

SHARI

(overlapping)

I really like you too...

ED

...if this ...

(the camera)

... weren't here... ?

SHARI

... yeah, then, but...

CUTAWAYS

ED

So...?

SHARI

Ed... I think we should stop seeing each other.

The guys who said she wasn't hot.
They applaud.

**THE DORM GIRLS**

They're booing Shari.

**A BAR**

A very attractive woman (JILL) and her friend.

**JILL**

That girl's an idiot.

**BACK TO ED AND SHARI**

**ED**

What?... Why?

**SHARI**

(starting to weep)

I can't take it anymore...

**GUYS WHO DON'T THINK SHE'S HOT**

They mock her, crying "Boo hoo hoo" and pretending to rub their eyes.

**BACK TO ED AND SHARI**

**SHARI**

(crying)

I have no privacy. Even now!

I'm crying and I can't stop and they won't go away. And now it's going to be another month!

**ED**

Shari...

**SHARI**

Everybody hates me!

**ED**

No. Who?

**SHARI**

Look at this.

She picks up a N.Y. POST.

**SHARI (CONT'D)**
ED (knows what it is)
Ohh...

SHARI
A poll. "Is Shari Good Enough for Ed?" Seventy-one per cent said "no."
(crying)
They hate me!

ED
Who cares? I don't ca -- No. I do care.
(to the camera)
Shame on everybody. Shame on you! Well, just the seventy-one percent. The other...
(he can't do the math)

SHARI
Twenty-nine.

ED
Exactly. Boy, you're smart.
(to the camera)
Why are you so mean to her? What did she do to you?
(picks up newspaper)
"Is she good enough for Ed?" Who the hell am I?
(sarcastically)
Who the hell do you think I should be dating?

SHARI
There's a list.

ED
Really?
(he looks)

SHARI
Ed?
He doesn't hear her. He's scanning the list.

ED
Wow...
114 INT. DAVID LETTERMAN SHOW (OR SOMETHING)
   Ed is a guest.

   DAVE
   I'm out here an hour a night and
   I feel like a dork. You're on
   every minute! Doesn't it just
   drive you nuts?

   ED
   (cheerfully)
   Yeah.

   LAUGHS.

   DAVE
   All this fame and the money
   you're making. Is this going to
   change you, do you think?

   ED
   God, I hope so.

   BIGGER LAUGHS.

115 INT. GREEN ROOM - LATER
   It's after the show. Ed is getting ready to leave. John is
   with him, keeping him company. A. P.A. is giving Ed a bag of
gifts. (Of course, Ed is still on Ed TV.)

   PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
   You've got a ham in there and
   Dave's book and --

   ED
   Hey, if it's free, it's me.
   (to John)
   You ready?

   JOHN
   Yeah. You did good. What's
   wrong?

   ED
   Aah, I wanted Shari to come.

   JOHN
   Oh -- so I'm just, what -- a poor
   substitute?
He KISSES John.

ED (easily)
Yeah. (to the camera)
Honey, if you're watching this is for you.

JOHN
No! Don't -- (new subject)
Oh, wow.

ED
What?

ANGLE ON JILL IN THE HALLWAY (We met her earlier in a cutaway.)
She's saying good-bye to a CASTING ASSISTANT.

JOHN
No more calls, we have a winner.

Jill looks up, sees Ed and walks right up to him

JILL
Hi.

ED
Hi.

SECURITY steps forward.

ED (CONT'D)
It's all right.

They step back.

JILL
I'm Jill. I really like your show. I think you're great.

ED
Thanks... That's ...

Shari, watching this on television.

JILL
You must be John.
JOHN
I'm trying to remember.

JILL
(to Ed)
Well, I don't want to bother you,
I'm just -- I was here
auditioning for a skit. You
know, one of those things where
Dave goes around town with models
and whatever...

ED
Oh, yeah, I love those. Yeah...
those are funny...

JILL
Well, it was really nice meeting
you and, uh...
(chuckles)
I'd better get a cab.

But she doesn't leave.

ED
Um... They gave me a limo, uh...

JILL
Oh, great! Thanks. I'm just
going uptown.

She takes his arm and leads him out.

116 INT. HEALTH CLUB - NEXT DAY
Written on the screen -- "Day 28"

Two WOMEN on Stairmasters.

WOMAN
Vill bet he goes out with her.
It's like those actors -- as soon
as they get famous -- Pfft --
there goes the wife.

117 EXT. COLLEGE
The dorm girls.

118 INT. POKER GAME
COLLEGE GIRL
He'll never cheat on Shari!

The game includes Tad and Barry.

119 INT. TV STUDIO

BARRY
You think she really likes him?

TAD
She doesn't give a shit about him.

BARRY
You know what would be great?

TAD
What?

BARRY
If Ray would steal this girl from Ed. That would be great.

POKER PLAYER #2
You know what would be even better?

BARRY
What?

POKER PLAYER #2
If you shut your hole and played cards. Goddam pineapple brothers.

The same eggheads who, earlier, had no interest in Ed. Now they're all worked up.

PANEL MEMBER #1
But he's not a normal person anymore. He's a celebrity. We're no longer observing anyone's "real life."

PANEL MEMBER #2
(disagreeing)
But that's what's interesting! The effect of celebrity on an otherwise average person.
PANEL MEMBER #3
But do you really feel that Ed is an average person? I mean this guy seems to have a... magnetism, a charisma that, I think, transcends the entire concept.

PANEL MEMBER #4
I agree. He's special.

They all nod.

120 INT. EWS APARTMENT – DAY
"DAY 34"

Ed is opening letters and packages. There are piles of them

ED
This is from a girl named Tawny... this goes in the nude picture pile. Thank you, Tawny.

He places it in a large pile. He opens another envelope.

ED (CONT'D)
Let's see.

Ed stares and his smile disappears.

ANGLE ON THE MAIL

A picture of Ed's face with his body drawn underneath it. The body is spurting blood and is mutilated. Ed stares at it.

ED
Well. This is creative. This goes in the psychopath pile.

The DOORBELL RINGS.

ED
Oh, I hope that's not this guy.
(indicates psycho letter)

He PICKS UP a baseball bat and crosses to the door.

He opens the door. A handsome man in his early sixties is there. His name is HANK.
HANK
Hello.

ED
Hi.

Ed waits.

HANK
You don't recognize me.

ED
No. Am I supposed to?

Hank shrugs. Ed stares at him, then begins to look a little shaken.

121 INT. EWS MOTHER'S HOUSE
Jeanette is putting a jar in the refrigerator. She glances at the television. She drops the jar. It SHATTERS...

122 INT. MARCIA'S APARTMENT
Marcia is with her half-Asian son ANDY. She's serving his dinner. OFF-CAMERA we HEAR Cliff SINGING and the DOG HOWLING in distress. Glancing at the television, Marcia gasps.

123 INT. RAY'S APARTMENT
Ray is TYPING on a word processor. He stares curiously at the television.

124 INT. ED'S APARTMENT
Ed is staring at Hank doubtfully.

HANK
It's me, Hank -- your father.

RAPID CUTS of VIEWERS, excited. Many of them reach for the phone.

125 INT. REAL TV OFFICE
The Real TV staff react. Cynthia looks over-- stunned.

ALICE
(to Cynthia)
Did you do this? Did you find him and get him to--
CYNTHIA
No way... Oh, this just keeps getting better.

126 INT. AL AND JEANETTE'S HOUSE - DAY
Written on the screen -- "Day 35"

Ed and his mother are arguing. Al is sucking oxygen and has a pile of "People" magazines with Ed on the cover. A REPAIRMAN is fixing the refrigerator. All their food is out and melting.

Jeanette is trying to preserve food in an ice chest while she argues with Ed.

JEANETTE
I can't believe you're taking his side.

ED
I'm not! I'm just trying to get some facts.

AL
(to Ed)
Sign this one to Nancy. She's the nurse who handles my urine.

Ed signs.

JEANETTE
I told you the facts! He abandoned us -- those are the facts.

ED
So everything he told me yesterday was a lie. Everything.

Al takes a loud breath.

JEANETTE
Yes! ... practically

ED
What do you mean practically? Did he really run away or did you throw him out like he says.

REPAIRMAN
I need to replace the coil.
JEANETTE
(to Ed)
He ran away after I threw him out.
(to repairman)
How much is a new coil?

REPAIRMAN
A hundred and fifty bucks.

ED
So he was telling the truth you threw him out.

REPAIRMAN
Should I go ahead?

JEANETTE
Yes.

ED
Yes to me or yes to the coil?

JEANETTE
Both.

ED
Holy sh--

AL
This one to Dr. Bamajian. Maybe he won't make me wait an hour.

Ed signs.

JEANETTE
He had girlfriends!

ED
He says --

JEANETTE
I don't care what he says. Look, I don't need to relive this. On television!

AL
Whatever happened to Norman Rockwell?

ED
Who?
AL
Norman Rockwell. He painted magazine covers. Folksy. A mailman, a boy scout, a kid visiting a doctor...

ED
Yeah, so... ?

AL
They celebrated the common person.

ED
Well, I don't think you can get more common than me, Al.

AL
No. Only celebrities now. Now, if you put a mailman on the cover of a magazine he'd better have killed someone or no one will buy it. This one to Dr. Rumpley.

Jeanette storms back in.

JEANETTE
All right -- do you want to know the truth? I took you and Marcia and Ray to my sister's on the train for the weekend and you all got chicken pox. So I took you home a day early and there was your father with a woman in our bed. Okay?

ED
Chicken pox? I was six. He didn't leave 'til I was twelve.

JEANETTE
He... apologized, he begged me. He can be very... charming when it suits his purpose.

ED
But what was that whole story about him and a nurse?

JEANETTE
She could've been a nurse.
ED
Could've been a nurse?

JEANETTE
She had white shoes.

ED
So does Grandma. So does Shaquille O'Neal. You told me you had a hysterectomy and he ran off with your nurse.

JEANETTE
What's the difference?

ED
The difference is for twenty years I thought one thing and now it's another thing.

Ed nods.

JEANETTE
He was no good. Do you remember how he used to scream at me? You used to cover your ears with dinner rolls.

JEANETTE (CONT'D)
Also, no job was ever good enough for him. "Small potatoes, small potatoes." Al, you remember --

Al breathes loudly.

ED
Wait a minute. I thought you didn't know Al, 'til after Dad left.

Pause. Even the repairman pokes his head out of the refrigerator.

ED (CONT' D)
Oh my God. You and Al were -- and that's why you threw him out.

JEANETTE
He had a woman in my own bed! And how dare you call him "Dad" in front of Al.
(shakes Al by the shoulder)
This is your father. This is who was there for you when you needed someone.

**AL**
Jeanette, you're hurting me.

**ED**
(on the defensive)
I'm not -- I didn't -- Al, you know how I feel about you...

Al breathes loudly.

**ED (CONT'D)**
(uncomfortably)
If I don't call you "Dad" it just because...
I was already a big boy when you came into our lives --
(pointedly to his mother)
or when I thought you came into our lives --

**JEANETTE**
And what did he come back now for?

**ED**
Who?

**JEANETTE**
Hank! All of a sudden. Because now you're famous and he can get something from you. I don't wan you to become a victim like Marcia.
(to the TV)
Not that you're a victim, honey. You're not. Life's just been a little hard on you, sweetie.

**ED**
(to Al)
What do you think. I mean about... him. Should I just... have nothing to do with him? I mean...
AL
(to Ed)
Have I ever said a bad word to you about your father?

ED
No.

AL
Well, now I will. He was a crazy mean, son-of-a-bitch.

Al starts to wheel himself out. Ed looks weary.

AL (CONT'D)
But he was your father.

127   INT. ED'S BEDROOM - NIGHT
He's asleep.

128   INT. CONTROL TRUCK
They're monitoring him. They see Ed WAKE UP. They stir. Sleepy, and scratching his ass, he goes into the bathroom.

129   INT. BATHROOM
Ed shuts the door. He takes his PORTABLE PHONE OUT of a bathroom drawer. (He stashed it there.) He makes a call and waits.

       ED
       (whispering)
       Hi... it's me, Ed. It's been two days, I want to see you... No, I won't let them follow me, I'll sneak out... No it's not allowed, but I'm going for it... I'm on my way.

       He takes CLOTHING OUT of the bathroom hamper. until he finds something acceptable.

130   INT. CONTROL TRUCK
They're monitoring the empty bed.

131   INT. BATHROOM
Ed is dressed. He CLIMBS OUT his bathroom window.
132 INT. SHARI'S APARTMENT - LATER
Shari opens her front door.

ED
Hi.

She looks down the hallway.

ED (CONT'D)
They're not here.

He goes in, grabs her and kisses her passionately.

SHARI
I tried to tell you over the phone -- my parents went to Atlantic City.

ED
So?

SHARI
So my little brother's staying here. I'm sleeping with Rita.

ED
Oh Je -- couldn't he sleep with Rita? We'll all have a good time.

SHARI
I'm sorry.

ED
Come on, let's go.

SHARI
Where?

ED
Somewhere.

133 INT. ED'S CAR - A FEW MINUTES LATER
They get in. They look at each other.

ED
Do you want to go to a motel?

SHARI
I feel like a criminal or, like
we're cheating on someone.

ED
(nicely)
Just... just relax. Okay? We won't do anything. We'll just sit here for a while.

SHARI
Okay.

ED
Come on...

Gently he puts his arm around her. At first, she hesitates, but then curls up against him and relaxes.

ED (CONT'D)
I need to talk.

SHARI
Are you all right?

ED
She lied to me. I mean all my life, she's telling me one story and then... it turns out to be a completely different story. Come to me at some point -- tell me the truth. No. Not in my house. The truth is a stranger. And this is why Ray and Marcia are the way they are. Marcia gets involved with all these losers and sees no problem with herself - "How do they find me" she says. Ray cheats on you and then blames me for it. I'm the only one in the family who takes any responsibility for himself... Oh, man... Are you all right?

SHARI
(hesitantly)
Yeah... I saw that girl come on to you at the TV show.

ED
Oh that was... no, I ... she just kind of trapped me into giving her a ride. It's you. I want you.
SHARI

...yeah?

He TOUCHES her. They KISS. Then again. Their hands are roaming. They're hot. They're breathing hard. He's unbuttoning her blouse. Their hands are all over each other. Her blouse comes off. LIGHTS GO ON. They see cameras, shooting at them. Shari SCREAMS and covers her breasts.

134   INT. TV - DAY

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Good morning. Welcome to another day of Ed TV. Last night, while most of us were asleep ... this happened.

135   INT. FRAT HOUSE - MORNING

FOUR GUYS in a disgustingly messy room, watching the replay of Ed and Shari.

FRAT GUYS

Yes!!

They GYRATE LEWDLY.

136   EXT. STREET - DAY

Shari is working. Ed is following her around. Shari is ANGRY. The cameras are there.

SHARI

Get them away from me.

She takes PACKAGES OUT OF the TRUCK and THROWS them at the cameramen.

ED

It's not their fault.

SHARI

No. It's your fault.

She throws a package at him.

ED

What do you want me to do? You want me to quit the show?!
SHARI
No... Could you?

ED
No. If I quit I don't get the balloon payment.

SHARI
The what?

ED
Ray borrowed this whole tub of money against this balloon payment that I don't get if I qu -- it's too complicated. I -- Besides...

SHARI
What?

Pause.

ED
You see how people look at me. Like when they ask for my autograph or say "Hi" to me... It's like I'm a basketball player or a... you know, like I'm someone.

SHARI
Everybody's someone.

ED
Well, yeah, everybody's someone. But I mean someone they want to be. I mean let's face it, I'm working in the video store, no one's coming in saying "oh, I wish I was that guy. I wish was rewinding that huge pile of tapes." At least for a month I'm not just a guy with a name tag. I'm famous.

A GUY YELLS from across the street.

GUY
Shari! Nice nipples.

ED
And so are you.
GUYS keep YELLING "Shari!"

She tries to go after them. Ed holds her back.

SHARI
I don't want to be famous for
getting caught with my shirt off.
If I'm going to be famous --

The camera is right in her face. She grabs it.

SHARI (CONT'D)
(to the camera person)
This is going right up your ass.

ED
Come on.

He returns the camera.

Shari starts for her truck.

SHARI
Look... maybe we just better put
us on hold until this is over.

She gets in her truck.

ED
Come on! Loosen up.
(trying to joke)
See -- this is why seventy-one
per cent of the people don't like
you.

She SLAMS the TRUCK DOOR.

ED (CONT'D)
It was a joke! A... vicious,
thoughtless stupid joke.

He bangs himself in the head.

She drives away.

He BOWS.

ED (CONT'D)
(to the camera)
And that, for you kids out there,
is how you screw up a relationship.
137  **INT. ED'S APARTMENT**  
Ed enters. He's worn out. He plops down, and puts on the TV.  

**ED**  
(to the camera)  
I'm gonna watch anything but me.  

Ed is flipping stations. Something makes him stop.  

**ANNOUNCER (V.O.)**  
Coming in two weeks to the  
Lifestyle Channel -- Joma. His  
Dad's a cop, his brother's a  
bouncer in a topless bar, his  
sister is a black-belt social  
worker -- and Joma's living with  
two gals.  

**ANGLE ON THE TV**  

We see JOMA. He has a lot of charisma. He seems a little  
dangerous, but in an exciting way.  

**JOMA**  
Hey, Ed! I'm coming to get you,  
man! I'm gonna eat you right up!  
(makes gobbling-up  
oises)  

**ANGLE ON ED**  
Watching. He's stunned.  

138  **INT. NETWORK CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY**  
They're watching a tape of Ed TV. Ed has just entered his own  
apartment. A WOMAN is there, sitting on his sofa. She's  
caressing Ed's undershorts against her cheek. Ed is highly  
agitated.  

**ED**  
How did you get into my  
apartment?!  

The BODYGUARD is pulling her out.  

REVEAL that Scharlach, McIlvaine, Seaver, Cynthia and Greg are  
all watching.  

**McILVAINE**  
What is she holding?
GREG
(calmly)
A pair of Ed's underwear.

McILVAINE
Oh my God!

ON the TAPE, the woman while being forcibly evicted, offers the underwear to Ed. Ed recoils.

ED
No -- keep it.

WOMAN
I love you! I want to marry you!

She's hauled out. They stop the tape.

SCHARLACH
See -- that's television! This other thing, this Jama, that has "stink" written all over it.

GREG
The break-up with Shari was very big. Big ratings.

SEAPER
Only, Cynthia, seriously. Tell Ed not to sneak out anymore.

SCHARLACH
Cynthia ...

He wants it accomplished.

139 EXT. STREET - DAY

SEAPER (CONT'D)
It's in violation of his contract and if we wanted to be hard-nosed about it, he could forfeit all pay, including money he's already received.

CYNTHIA
(dutifully, but a tad resentfully)
I will see that he's properly threatened.
SCHARLACH
Now what? What's on the young man's agenda? We don't want to see him sitting around like a lovesick puppy.

GREG
Young males do not want to see Ed get back with Shari.

SCHARLACH
(impatiently)
Enough with her. That sailed.

McILVAINE
Could Ed live with two girls?

GREG
You know who the audience is requesting a lot? That girl, Jill, that Ed met at the Letterman show. She really scored.

SCHARLACH
Cynthia...

He wants it accomplished.

139  EXT. STREET - DAY
Ed is walking from his car to a building. CROWDS are behind barricades. They YELL at Ed as he passes. Ed is used to this.

140  INT. SHARI'S BUILDING - DAY
Rita OPENS the door and sees Ed.

RITA
(nervously)
Oh. Ed.

ED
Hi. Is Shari here?

RITA
No.

ED
What is she, at work?
RITA
She left.

ED
Well, when will she be back?

RITA
She won't.

ED
What are you talking about?

RITA
She left. She moved. She got Fed-Ex to give her a transfer and she left. She couldn't stand it anymore. We had people, news people, regular people, just sleeping in our hallway, going through our mail, our garbage. I mean it was she couldn't take it anymore. Now I've got to move. I can't afford this place by myself.

ED
I'm sorry. Where'd they send her?

RITA
She wouldn't tell me.

141 INT. ED'S BEDROOM - NIGHT
He's off the air. He's a little down. He's ON the PHONE-

INTERCUT WITH:

142 INT. CYNTHIA'S BEDROOM
She's working out an a contraption.

ED
Remember when you were interviewing me?
(details to follow)

143 EXT. PARK - DAY

CYNTHIA
Yeah.
ED
You asked me if I had a dream. I said "Sure, I have a dream. I just don't know what it is yet."

CYNTHIA
Great line.

ED
What if Shari's the dream?

CYNTHIA
Ed, do you want my advice?

ED
Yeah, that's why I called. I mean, maybe Fed-Ex would tell me where she moved --

CYNTHIA
Leave her be.

ED
You said a woman likes to be pursued.

CYNTHIA
Pursued, not harassed. Give it some space. Can I tell you something -- as a friend? My sister was going with a guy they hit a little rough spot they started seeing other people they got back together and last month they had their third child For what it's worth.

OPEN ON ANDY, Ed's half-Asian nephew. He's eight. He's wearing a baseball glove.

ANDY
Throw me a high one, Uncle Eddie.

ED (O.C.)
Okay.

REVEAL ED, also wearing a baseball glove. He throws a high pop up to Andy. Andy staggers around and almost catches it.

ED
Oh!!
JILL (O.C.)
We have to stop meeting like this.

ED
Hm?

REVEAL JILL, walking a DOG. it takes just a second to recognize her.

ED (CONT'D)
Oh, hi.

Ed is hit with the ball.

ANDY
Sorry.

REVEAL the Real TV Staff watching this on television in their office. As Ed and Jill chat in the background.

ALICE
(to Cynthia)
Did you arrange this?

CYNTHIA
(points to the TV)
Whose dog is that?

ALICE
(surprised)
That's your dog.

Cynthia doesn't even smile.

MONTAGE

INTERSPERSED IN THE MONTAGE ARE SHOTS OF PEOPLE WATCHING THEM ON TV

1. Ed and Jill going into a chic club -- ushered in immediately. Here, as in the other times we see her, Jill is comfortable with the situation. She's the opposite of Shari. She poses willingly. She chats easily with paparazzi. She clings to Ed. There's nothing overt or obnoxious about her. She's just comfortable and good at it and always looks great.

2. INTERVIEW with the guys who didn't like Shari.

GUY #1
Way to go, Ed!
GUY # 2

Now, we're talking!

3. A N.Y. Post story:

"Readers Pick Jill over Shari."

Pictures of both women. Jill looks great. Shari is in her uniform and looks like a mouse.

4. SHARI

In a new apartment. Watching Ed and Jill on TV. She's very unhappy. She turns it off.

5. Ed and Jill at the nice restaurant he was at with Shari earlier. It looks like he's starting to like her.

6. Ed is refereeing a pro-wrestling match. He counts out the villain who, then, jumps up and chases him out of the ring.

144 INT. JILL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

"DAY 47"

Ed and Jill are in a HEAVY LIPLOCK. Carlos is right there with the camera. Unlike Shari, Jill seems unself-conscious. She's getting Ed pretty turned-on.

SHOTS of VIEWERS, also turned on, especially the men.

JILL

You want to?

It's clear what she means. Ed is conflicted. He's clearly aroused.

ED

Um... It's kind of ...

He looks for his watch on the wrong wrist, then seems to check all around his body until he discovers it.

JILL

Are you busy tomorrow night?

ED

No.

JILL

Why don't you come over. And
I'll make dinner. And you bring a movie. And ... We'll make a night of it ... okay?

ED
(nervously)
Sure.

145 EXT. STREET - DAY
Written on the screen -- "Day 48"

Ed is walking, the camera following. He looks tense. People SHOUT "Hey, Ed" "Ed-die" etc.

ANGLE ON A NEWSPAPER VENDING MACHINE

The New York Post front page -- "Is tonight the Night?" with a picture of Ed and Jill kissing.

ANGLE ON ED

ED
Oh man...

CON ED GUY

Hey, Eddie.

Ed looks up.

CON ED GUY (CONT'D)
(giving the "thumbs up")
Go for it!

Ed continues down the street. People YELL to him "Good luck tonight," "We're rooting for you" etc.

A STREET CHARACTER walks alongside for a minute.

STREET CHARACTER

Hey, man. This is Haitian Love Juice.
(he produces a vial)
You give her this, she be yours.

Security grabs him and the vial falls and breaks. The liquid hits the pavement and smokes up.

ED
(looking at the smoke)
Jesus!
More shouts "Be gentle", "We'll be watching", "Use a condom" etc.

A SCHOOL BUS passes. The KIDS YELL out the window to Ed.

KIDS
(in unison)
Good luck!

146   EXT. MOVIE THEATRE - NIGHT
There is no line. At TICKET TAKER sits, bored. No one is going in or coming out.

147   EXT. STREET
It's deserted.

148   EXT. RESTAURANT
It's empty. The HEADWAITER stands in the doorway with nothing to do.

149   INT. LIVING ROOM
A PARTY is in progress. The TV is on. On TV Ed is in a liquor store, buying a bottle of wine. Ed is dressed for his date. The people at the party are watching TV and commenting. It's like a Super bowl party.

VOICE (O.C.)
What's he doing?

PARTYGOER
He's buying wine!

150   INT. BEDROOM
Several high-school age BOYS. They have made themselves look like Ed. They're very excited.

TEEN-AGE BOY #1
You think he's gonna do it?

TEEN-AGE BOY #2
Hell yeah. The guy hasn't had any sex in six weeks.

TEEN-AGE BOY #3
Neither have we.
Ed's car turns the corner and he sees a CROWD gathered around Jill's building.

Ed carrying his wine enters to APPLAUSE and CHEERS.

A LONG SHOT encompasses all the houses on the block. Their living room TV's are visible. All but one are tuned to Ed.

Something is cooking. Jill picks up a plate of something - dip and cut vegetables for instance. She starts to exit the kitchen as Ed and Carlos enter. Ed and Jill have a soft collision.

JILL
Oh.

ED
Can I help with anything?

JILL
No. It's going to be about a half-hour.

ED
What is? Oh, dinner!

SELF-CONSCIOUSLY. He takes a vegetable, dips it and eats it.

ED (CONT'D)
Mm.

JILL
Good?

ED
Mm.

They look at each other. Jill leans forward and kisses him.
She puts the tray of vegetables on the counter. They continue to kiss.

155  INT. BEDROOM
The high school boys are CHANTING.

156  INT. DORM ROOM

BOYS
Ed -- Ed -- Ed -- Ed...

COLLEGE GIRLS (same ones as before).

COLLEGE GIRL #1
Oh, I hope she makes love to him!

COLLEGE GIRL #2
I thought you didn't like her.

COLLEGE GIRL #1
I don't, but I want him to be happy--

RAPID SHOTS of other VIEWERS, watching, transfixed --

157  INT. JILL'S APARTMENT
Ed and Jill are making out. They begin taking each other's clothes off. They're passing the point of no return. It's going to happen right there in the kitchen.

Ed and Jill, in heavy heat, back up to the kitchen table and climb on to it. They continue to pull at their own and each other's clothing. They're making passionate noises.

158  INT. SHARI'S APARTMENT
Shari is not watching television. She's eating a little meal she's made for herself. She HEARS PEOPLE in her building cheering and whooping. She looks miserable.

159  INT. CONTROL TRUCK

DIRECTOR
(slightly panicky)
Someone say the word, how far can we go here?
160   INT. REAL TV OFFICE
Cynthia and her staff are watching. Cynthia is ON THE PHONE-

CYNTHIA (into phone)
Stay with them ... don't leave
yet... not yet ...

Jill is on top of Ed. Carried away with passion, Ed attempts
to roll her over and get on top. He does, but rolls too far.
He crashes off the table, to the floor, face up.

ED
(in pain)
Ohhh...

JILL
Ed?

ED
Ohh... do you own a cat?

JILL
Yeah. Why?

He looks at her apologetically.

161   EXT. JILL'S BUILDING
Ed is being loaded into an AMBULANCE. He looks humiliated.
PEOPLE in the street are applauding politely as if Ed were an
injured ballplayer being carried off the field. Jill is by the
ambulance. She's PETTING a CAT who looks all right.
PHOTOGRAPHERS are taking her picture. She's posing willingly.
The ambulance drives off as Jill continues to pose.

162   INT. TV STUDIO
Written on the screen -- "Day 49"

The taping of "The Tonight Show" or "the Late Show" -- once
again, whichever we have a prayer of getting. The MONOLOGUE is
in progress.

JAY (OR DAVE)
(mock annoyed)
So I guess you were all watching
Ed last night.

The AUDIENCE goes wild.

JAY (CONT'D)
This got the highest rating of
the year, since the Super Bowl. I guess that makes sense. After all, Ed is now the Buffalo Bills of sex.

BIG LAUGHS

163 INT. RESTAURANT - DAY
Scharlach EATING. He's stunned.

SCHARLACH
What?!

REVEAL CYNTHIA

CYNTHIA
Take him off the air.

SCHARLACH
What are you talking about? He's fine. He's out of the hospital already. The ratings are higher than ever.

CYNTHIA
I'm telling you, it's peaked. Ed TV is an over-inflated balloon. Get it off before it explodes all over us.

He thinks.

SCHARLACH
With all due respect, Cynthia you're nuts. I'm giving him another month!

CYNTHIA
(coldly)
Good luck.

164 EXT. STREET - DAY
"DAY 54"

Ed is walking. He's wearing a white, Velcro support around his waist. He's agitated. He's carrying a copy of the New York Post.

ED
Look at this!
WE SEE a headline -- "Ed: She Broke My heart."

ED
She did not!
(venting)
You know what she did?

ED (CONT'D)
She went out to California and
got one of those scandal agents.
One of those agents who handle,
like... Gennifer Flowers and...
Kato Kaelin and Joey Buttafuco.
That's what she --

A GUY YELLS AT ED

GUY
Hey Ed! ... She was a little too
much for you, huh? Must run in
the family.

ED
(angry)
Oh -- like this guy's ever been
with a woman.
(yells)
How about I kick your ass 'til
the crack goes the other way?
(to the camera)
All of a sudden, I'm like fair
game for everyone. I'm like --

He stops and looks like he's in shock. He stares in through
the display window of a bookstore.

ANGLE ON,

a big DISPLAY of cheap, rushed-out, exploitation books. On the
cover we read "My Brother Pissed On Me By Raymond L. Pekurny." And there's an old photo of two little boys. (Ed and Ray)

ED
Oh my -- He wrote a book?! Ray
wrote a book?! He never read a
book!

165 INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT
"DAY 58"
It's the hallway of a cheap hotel. Ed and the camera come off the elevator. Ed looks at room numbers. He can HEAR the noise from all the rooms. A radio -- a domestic disturbance -- a baby crying -- it's a horror. He KNOCKS ON a door.

    HANK (O.C.)
    Who is it?
    ED
    It's Ed.

The door opens REVEALING Ed's father.

    HANK
    Ed! Come in -

They enter.

166  INT. HOTEL ROOM
    It's depressing. There's a liquor bottle on the dresser. Ed sees it.

    HANK (CONT'D)
    How've you been?

Ed SHRUGS.

    HANK (CONT'D)
    They don't get cable here, so I can't watch you.

Ed just GRUNTS.

Hank takes LAUNDRY off a chair.

    HANK (CONT'D)
    Sit down.

He does. He looks around.

    HANK (CONT'D)
    Quite a shithole, isn't it?

    ED
    It could be, if you fixed it up. How did you...? I mean how does anyone...wind up like this?

    HANK
    I was in jail.
ED
The whole time? Eighteen years?

HANK
No. Two times.

ED
What...

HANK
Check forging.

ED
Oh, man! So...

HANK
The last two years, I've been a limousine driver, but I don't see well anymore, so...

ED
So you saw me on TV and you said "Hey, let me jump on this."

HANK
I need help. How many times if just one little thing that I needed would've happened, it would've changed everything. If I had a few dollars when an opportunity came along or... the tumblers just never clicked for me.

Ed doesn't know what to say. He's bitter towards Hank, but there's also some empathy.

ED
(to the camera)
All right... This is my father, I don't know what the hell he can do, but if anyone out there can help him -- get him a job -- I'll ... help you. I'll ... mention your business or ... I don't know, we'll figure it out.
(quickly, to Hank)
I gotta go.

HANK
Ed... I'm sorry.
ED
(still bitter)
Yeah? That's good. Sorry is good. You know I finished that model.

HANK
What...

ED
The pirate ship.

Hank looks blankly at him.

ED (CONT'D)
-- That we were doing "together."
I finished it. It came out great!
Because no one was standing over my shoulder bothering me -
"That's too much glue. You're using too much glue."

HANK
Do you still have it?

ED
No. Ray sat on it. I'll see you.

He exits. Out in the hallway, he leans back against the door, drained. The camera is right on him, soaking it up.

167 INT. TV STUDIO
The same PBS-type panel of smart-looking people we met earlier.
WE OPEN ON about half the panel.

MODERATOR
Let's hear from our guest panelist. You've expressed some interesting thoughts on this, subject. What do you see as the meaning, if there is any, of Ed TV, John.

REVEAL JOHN, sitting comfortably on the panel, looking very wise.

JOHN
I feel that Ed is the apotheosis of a prevailing American syndrome. It used to be that someone became famous because
The others NOD appreciatively as John puts a PIPE in his mouth.

**TV INTERVIEWS**

**OLD GUY**
I was Ed's Little League coach. He had no coordination. The big game, he struck out with the bases loaded. Then he cried like a woman. It was sickening.

**OLD WOMAN**
I was his third grade teacher. I said "Take him for tests. There's something wrong with him." They didn't listen.

**ANOTHER GUY**
He used to steal things from my store. At least I think it was him. Yeah, it was probably him.

168 **EXT. ED'S APARTMENT - DAY**
A MAN, on the sidewalk, has a STUFFED CAT stuck to his back to tease Ed.

**CAT MAN**
Hey, look, I just fell off a table!

Suddenly, a TUBFUL OF WATER crashes down on him.

169 **INT. ED'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS**
Ed at the window, with a now empty plastic tub.

**ED**
(yelling down) Okay, is that funny?

Then he throws the tub out the window.
ED (CONT'D)
(to the camera)
How was that? Was that funny?!

170 INT. NETWORK OFFICE
"DAY 78"

Again, everyone there, including Cynthia. A Honcho is reading a report.

HONCHO #1
Of more concern than the sag in Ed's ratings is what viewers are feeling about him now. The positives are down and the negatives are up. There's a feeling that Ed isn't cool anymore. We're starting to see a big L.F.

GREG
Hm?

HONCHO #1
L.F. Loser Factor.

HONCHO #2
That's deadly.

McILVAINE
Not necessarily. I mean instead of running from the L.F., run with it. Create more moments like the table thing. We can package a video "Ed's Goofiest Moments." Let him be America's Goofball.

CYNTHIA
Isn't this getting kind of pathetic. I mean we drank the juice, now we're just licking peel. Let it go!

SCHARLACH
Cynthia, I think you're laboring under a misconception. You seem to believe that because you happened to predict this, we should be impressed. We're not.
Anybody in any business can predict failure. I need people who prevent failure. I want to see this thing turned back in the right direction. Remember this was your baby.

171 INT. BAR - NIGHT
"DAY 94"
Tad and Barry -- as we met them, originally -- are watching TV. They're really enjoying it -- laughing, pounding the table.

   TAD
   I don't know, I still love this guy.

   BARRY
   Yeah only I wish they had the sister on more.

   TAD
   Ooh, the sister! She is hot.

   BARRY
   You know it.

REVEAL that they are watching Joma. On the TV -- Joma is eating dinner in his apartment with TWO attractive WOMEN, who, apparently, both live there. Joma is upset (but he's funny when he's upset). What's upsetting him is that across the alley, in a window of another building, he can plainly see an OVERWEIGHT MAN, with his shirt off, exercising. The overweight man is apparently watching an exercise video and is bouncing up and down in place causing everything to jiggle unpleasantly.

   JOMA'S FRIEND
   Ignore him.

   JOMA
   I can't! It's like a mudslide.
   (screams out the window)
   Put on a shirt!

ANGLE ON TAD AND BARRY, HYSTERICAL

ANGLE ON TV

   JOMA (CONT'D)
   (yelling)
   I support the fact that your exercising but, for the love of
God, put on a shirt.

**JOMA'S FRIEND**
(to Joma)
Shut the curtains.

**JOMA**
No! Let him shut the curtains.

**TAD AND BARRY**
Laughing and wiping their eyes.

172 **INT. ED'S BEDROOM**
Off the air. Ed ON the PHONE.

**INTERCUT WITH CYNTHIA**

**ED**
This Joma is so phoney! I mean, those things aren't really happening. I think they have writers making that stuff up for him. Hey, couldn't we do that? Hire some writers and have them write up some crazy situations I could get into?

She's listening, amazed.

**CYNTHIA**
Ed, everything goes off. "Cheers" went off. "Mash" went off --

**ED**
(getting angry)
Yeah, but when they went off people weren't making fun of them. They weren't bozos! I'm Pumpkin Ass again!

**CYNTHIA**
(getting annoyed)
Ed --

**ED**
You know, everything you asked me to do I did. I call you for advice about Shari you say -

(mocking imitation)
"Leave her be, see other people
for a while." You just wanted me to get involved with Jill because it made for a better show.

CYNTHIA

Ed --

ED
No. You screwed up my life just so you could get higher ratings. You never gave a shit about me.

CYNTHIA
Yeah? Well I'm not starting now.

She HANGS UP and has an acid reflux.

173 INT. POOL HALL - NIGHT
Ed and John are playing.

JOHN
Look, you put anybody on TV sixteen hours a day, at some point they're going to wind up rolling off a table on to a cat. I mean with no privacy, there's no... dignity.

Ed thinks.

Pause.

ED
You know about that fireman who rescued that little girl?

JOHN
When? Today?

ED
No! Like, ten years ago. In Texas. Baby...
   (tries to remember)
Jessica!

JOHN
Oh right, right! She fell down, like a...

ED
Yeah, a thing. He became a big
hero. He was on TV and there was a parade and a movie about him.

JOHN
Right, right...

ED
And then, uh... you know it blew over and he went back to being a fireman again.

JOHN
(cheerfully)
Right.

ED
So he killed himself.

JOHN
(a little shaken)
Oh.

SILENCE. The cell phone RINGS.

Ed PICKS UP the phone.

ED
Hello.

INTERCUT WITH JEANETTE IN A HOSPITAL

She's crying.

JEANETTE
Eddie...

ED
Mom?

JEANETTE
I'm at the hospital.

ED
What's the matter?!

JEANETTE
He's dead! Eddie, he's dead! It was his heart.

ED
Oh God. What hospital?
JEANETTE
St. Joseph's.

ED
I'm coming right over. I'll be right there.

He hangs up.

174  INT. TAD'S HOUSE
Tad is watching TV and talking on the phone.

TAD
I told you! I told you he was gonna die!

175   INT. HOSPITAL - AN HOUR LATER
Ed rushes in. He goes up to the desk. Carlos is with him.

ED
Hi. I'm looking for my mother.
Her name is --

A DOCTOR spots him.

DR. GELLER
Mr. Pekurny.

ED
Yes?

DR. GELLER
I'm Dr. Geller. Your mother is just lying down for a few minutes. we gave her something to calm her down.

ED
Thank you. Can I see her?

DR. GELLER
Just wait here. She's coming right back out.

ED
Mm...

   (wearily)
Oh, man...

DR. GELLER
(sympathetically)
ED
What about him -- did he suffer any or was it quick? I'd hate to think he...

DR. GELLER
Very quick. Between you and me, it's not a bad way to go. Making love to your wife... it's very sweet.

ED
Really? They were..

DR. GELLER
(nods)
According to your mother. When the paramedics got to the hotel, she told them that --

ED
Hotel? What were they doing in a hotel?

DR. GELLER
I ... don't know. I ...

VOICE (O.C.)
Eddie. Thank God you're here.

Eddie looks across the room and sees Al in his wheelchair, just entering from outside. He wheels towards Ed.

AL
How's your mother?

ED
(shocked)
Al!

AL
Our neighbors gave me a ride.

ED
Al!!

AL
Where is she? Is she all right?

Ed turns to the doctor.
ED
I thought -- I thought he was dead.

DR. GELLER
Who?

ED
Al!

DR. GELLER
No.
(reads his chart)
The deceased is ... Henry Pekurny.

176   INT. TAD'S HOUSE

TAD
(stunned)
Good twist!

177   INT. HOSPITAL

AL
You thought it was me?

ED
Yes!

AL
It's your father. Hank. Your mother went to see him and he had a heart attack.

ED
Went --

Again, Ed turns to the doctor.

NURSE
Dr. Geller, Dr. Stack wants to see you.

DR. GELLER
(to Ed)
Excuse me.

NURSE
(to Ed)
Could I get your autograph for my niece?

ED
Um... yeah...

Jeanette enters.

JEANETTE
Al! How did you --

AL
The Burkharts drove me. Are you all right?

JEANETTE
(nervously)
I'm fine. I ...

AL
Good. I gotta pee.

He wheels off. Jeanette and Ed are left alone.

ED
(loud whisper)
What happened?

JEANETTE
It was horrible. He called me up.

ED
Who?

JEANETTE
Hank! He said he wanted to talk to me to apologize for everything he begged -- he cried. So I went to this horrible hotel he was staying in... I felt so sorry for him --

ED
So you had sex with him?

Jeanette GASPS.

JEANETTE
What?

ED
The doctor said you were having sex.

JEANETTE
(horrified)
To you? In front of him?
   (indicates Carlos)
With the...

ED
Yes. He assumed Hank was your husband. He didn't know.

JEANETTE
Oh my god! On TV!

ED
Why? How...

JEANETTE
One thing led to another. He was my husband once.

ED
But Al is your husband now!

JEANETTE
Do you think it's been easy for me? It's been years. Al can't have sex.

ED
Apparently, neither can Hank. What the hell did you do to him?

Al comes rolling back, SINGING.

AL
"Lovely Rita, the Meter Maid...

178  INT. TV STUDIO

JEANETTE
(whispers)
Don't tell Al. He doesn't know.

ED
(points to the camera)
Well, he's the only one in America who doesn't!

OPRAH or RICKI or GERALDO or someone.

OPRAH
Women who remarry but have sex with their first husbands. on
today's Oprah.

179  INT. TV STUDIO
Our same panel of pundits.

PANELIST #3
Ed's family is the tip of the iceberg. You watch the daytime tabloid shows it's the same thing. I'm telling you, America is fast becoming a trailer park.

PANELIST #2
Let's not overstate the case. There are millions of hard-working, sensible, moral, educated people in this country. Not every family is like Ed's.

REVEAL ED watching this discussion on TV.

180  INT. TV STUDIO
DAVE OR JAY

A CHART is set up with little pictures.

DAVE/JAY
So let's recap. The mother's too good at it, both brothers stink at it.

  (there's a drawing of a figure falling off a table)
The stepfather can't do it at all and the father did it but it killed him.

  (there's a drawing of a tombstone)
How did this family ever reproduce in the first place?

181  EXT. CEMETERY GATES - DAY
Ed is driving Jeanette and Al to the funeral. A CROWD is held back by POLICE. Someone yells "Adulterer". Someone else tries to offer Ed a lunchbox. Someone else is carrying a sign "What a Way to Go".
Hank's COFFIN is being carried to his gravesite. Ed, Ray and Marcia are pall bearers. One of the others pall bearers is Ed's BODYGUARD. The OTHERS TWO are two guys who work for the mortuary. Carlos is shooting.

ED
(to Ray)
You're not going to talk to me?
You're not even gonna say hello?

RAY
I have nothing to say to you.

Ed gives up. He turns to Marcia.

ED
How are you doing? Is Cliff here?

She doesn't answer. Ed reacts.

RAY
Cliff left her, thanks to you.

ED
Me?!

RAY
That's right. You put Cliff on television. So then he decided he was too good for her and he left.

ED
I put his -- who --
(to Marcia)
Look, Marsh, he's not that good a singer, he'll be back.

MARCIA
(too loudly)
That's not funny!!

Ed CRINGES.

The service ends. The small group begins to walk away. Ray and Marcia go off together, ignoring Ed. Jeanette is attempting to wheel Al away from the grave, but she's hitting
ruts. Ed approaches.

ED
I'll take it.

JEANTTE
(to Al, uncomfortably)
Sweetheart, I'm gonna go ahead and sign all the papers.

AL
Right.

She touches him but he pulls away. Ed wheels Al.

ED
Are things gonna be okay with you and Mom? Is there anything I can --

AL
I'm moving out.

ED
What?!

AL
I'm going to be living with my brother. He's not in such good shape as I am, but... I'm looking forward to the pillow fights.

ED
(really upset)
Oh, Al ... This is just...

AL
Hank was always good with the ladies. Always good-looking. Hell, he's been dead for two days, he still looks better than me.

He stops wheeling and crouches down next to Al.

ED
I want to tell you something... I love you. You're my father.

Pause.

AL
I love you, too.
Al KISSES him.

AL (CONT'D)
I'll build a pirate ship with you.

Ed wheels him away.

184 INT. CYNTHIA'S OFFICE
She's watching. She's genuinely moved. She wipes her eyes.

185 INT. BAR - NIGHT
This place is sleazy. Ed enters, worn out. He crosses to the bar where we find, Jeanette nursing a drink. She's not drunk, but she is wallowing.

ED
Hi, Ma.

JEANETTE
(startled)
Ed! How did you know I was here?

ED
You're famous. Somebody called me. What are you doing in a place like this?

JEANETTE
Why shouldn't I be in a place like this? I'm a whore!

ED
(cringes)
Ma...

JEANETTE
I'm a tramp
(pulls on the sleeve of the man next to her)
Meet your new father. The whole nation is laughing at us!

ED
And how is this helping? come on say, good-night to all your new friends and let's go home.

JEANETTE
I'm a whore!
(yells at an employee)
Your bathrooms are filthy!

They're out.

186  EXT. BAR - CONTINUOUS
Ed is helping Jeanette. Ray arrives. He's ANGRY.

RAY
I'll take her. You humiliated our mother on national television. You've single-handedly destroyed this family.

ED
I -- Oh, but that book you wrote was a real love-letter. That... toilet paper with covers.

Bystander #1

ED
Oh great. Where's Moe?

He looks around. Moe is gone.

RAY
Come on, Ma.

ED
(to Ray)
Let's remember how I got into this. "Please, Eddie, do this for me. I can't get a break."
(pretends to cry)

RAY
You know what your problem is?

ED
Yeah. My problem is I've got a brother who writes a sentence like "We grew up in a small, little bedroom." As opposed to a big, little bedroom?

RAY
I got paid by the word! No!
Your problem is you don't ever
want anything to be your fault.

**ED**
Me?! That's you!

**RAY**
I commit. I take a chance. You
wanted to be the guy on TV, but
you didn't want to say you wanted
to. So you have me talk you into
it so you get what you want, but
if it goes bad it's not your
fault.

**Bystander #2**
Right. Like you say you love
Shari, but, you wouldn't mind
noodling that model.

**ED**
Moe!

**Bystander #3**
The truth hurts.

**ED**
Yeah? So does a kick in the
nuts.

**RAY**
For once in your life, be honest
with yourself. I know you, Ed.
I know you look at me and Marcia
and Mom and you think you're
different.
You're like "How did I end up in
this family?" You're not
different. you're worse.
Because you have no guts.
You drift around, you don't commit,
you make fun of me -- okay. Just
don't kid yourself.
    (to Jeanette)
Let's go.

**Jeanette**
You're both good boys.

Ray and Jeanette leave.
INT. NETWORK CONFERENCE ROOM – DAY

Ed is there along with Cynthia and the Network Execs. There are more execs than before. Cynthia's people are not there. This entire meeting is on ED TV. Cynthia is quiet—observing. Ed looks whipped.

ED
Three more months?

MR. SCHARLACH
Absolutely! Ed TV is more popular than ever. Congratulations.

McILVAINE
Only, Ed, we want you, in the next few weeks to spend a lot more time with your family.

ED
You do?

SEAVER
Definitely. Cynthia, explain it to him.

Cynthia just stares at her, COLDLY.

SEAVER (CONT'D)
I'll do it.
(to Ed)
People want to see what happens to them now. Do your mother and step-father get back together? How does your sister handle being alone? Your feud with your brother.

SCHARLACH
In fact, we have a new concept. Since your family signed releases, we can follow them on camera even when you're not with them. We can cut around from family member to family member. Whoever's the most exciting at that moment.

McILVAINE
And, of course, it's another big bonus payment for you.
Pause.

ED
A couple of years ago my Uncle Roy got bit on the ass by a dog.

Silence. What the hell is he talking about?

ED (CONT'D)
So he gave me his tickets to the U.S. Open -- the tennis matches.

They still have no idea what he's talking about.

ED (CONT'D)
So me and Ray, we tell our friends "Watch when Andre Agassi is gonna serve for the first time. When he's bouncing the ball and it's real quiet, we'll yell "Whoop". And you'll all hear us."

Pause.

SCHARLACH
I see.

(he doesn't)

ED
You know what that is? It's sad. I mean it was just so we could be heard. So we could stand out from the crowd for a second. So we did it. But we had nothing to say. Just "Whoop". That's it. And the stupid part I mean the really stupid part is we thought it like... elevated us above the crowd. Where the fact is it made us stupider than the crowd.

SCHARLACH
I see.

ED
Stop saying "I see." You don't see. Cynthia, I owe you an apology.

CYNTHIA
I don't think so.

ED

Yeah. Because, you didn't talk
me into anything. Everything you
wanted me to do, I wanted to do.

188 INT. SHARI'S PLACE
Shari watching Ed TV.

189 INT. CONFERENCE ROOM

ED
(to the camera)
Ray, you were right. It's like
in school. I was always saying
"the room was too hot, the
teacher didn't like me" -- but it
was me! Everything that's wrong
with my life I did. Okay? So
now this is it. My family has
problems. Which are our fault.
And TV is not the place to solve
them. So I quit. I'm taking
what very little dignity I've got
left and I quit. Can someone
validate my parking?

Pause. SHOCK.

MR. SCHARLACH
Well, Ed, that's ... not really
possible.

ED
All right, I'll pay for the
parking. Big network!

Scharlach speaks carefully - gently. He's aware of the camera.
He doesn't want to come off as a villain.

SCHARLACH
No, I mean you can't quit.

Ed thinks.

ED
I can't?

MR. SCHARLACH
(very gently)
Well, no. You agreed to stay on the air as long as we asked you to. The station entered into this on that understanding. If you had refused we'd have begun this with somebody else. You can't just change the rules in the middle of the game, son. It's not fair to us. More importantly, it's not fair to the viewers. They're interested in you. They've devoted hours and days and weeks of their lives to you.

ED
Look, if you don't let me out of this... I'll just... I'll just sit in my apartment all day. I won't go anywhere, I won't do anything. What kind of show will that be?

MR. SCHARLACH
Not too good. That's why it states in your contract that if you do not continue to live a normal life, you're in violation and are liable for the station's financial losses. Ed, I urge you to reconsider. I urge you on behalf of all those people out there whose lives have become so entwined with yours. Play fair with them, Ed.

ED
All right. Let them decide.

He turns right to the camera.

ED (CONT'D)
I'd like you all to do me a favor. Turn me off. Just grab the remote and change the channel. I mean, basically, all you're watching now is a guy deteriorate. The only thing missing is the smell. You're better than that. Turn me off. Thank you.
190 INT. CYNTHIA'S OFFICE
Greg bursts in, carrying a sheet of paper.

GREG
Ratings are up across the board.
Look at this!
(drones on)
Men 18 to 35, women 18 to 35 ...

Cynthia stares, amazed.

191 EXT. STREET
Ed WALKING ZOMBIE-LIKE- CROWDS SWARM.

192 INT. LAWYER'S OFFICE - DAY
Ed is with STEVE, a lawyer. Steve has a huge contract on his desk.

STEVE
This contract you signed? ... It's a masterpiece. Don't go to war with these guys. You fart in the wrong direction they can take everything you own and leave you naked by the side of the road. You ever going to get back with that Jill? Ooh -- she was nice. Shari, I didn't like that much ("imitates" a gabby girl)
"yet-tet-tet-tet-tet-tet-tet-tet."

ED
Shut up.

193 INT. DINER - NIGHT
Ed is sitting alone, eating lunch. He's surrounded by cameras and shielded by BODYGUARDS.

OUTSIDE the diner a CROWD of rubberneckers is out on the sidewalk, looking in at him, some of them acting up, some just staring in. Ed is tired. He glances out the window and makes a MONKEY FACE. Suddenly, he FREEZES.

He sees Shari's face in the crowd. She puts her fist in her mouth.
194  EXT. STREET - NIGHT
Ed and Shari are walking -- on camera.

SHARI
1 bailed. I bailed on you.

ED
Kinda'.

SHARI
It's what I do. I yell "Geronimo" and jump out of a relationship.

He laughs.

Pause.

SHARI (CONT'D)
You weren't able to make me feel safe or secure -- no easy job for any man, I admit -- and my problem is, if I think I'm losing, I pull myself out of the game. I bail. See? I told you, I'm the love coroner.

ED
What did you do to your hair?

SHARI
My truck overheated, so I opened the hood and my hair got caught in the fan belt. So I had to get a haircut.

ED
It's nice.

He touches her hair. They leap on each other. They're KISSING.

195  INT. NETWORK CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY
Big meeting. Many Honchos, including Scharlach and Cynthia. All but Cynthia are focused. Cynthia looks bored.

HONCHO #1
I think this could be great.
What if Ed and Shari decide to get married? A wedding? The
cute, little half-Asian nephew in a tuxedo, carrying the ring on one of those big fluffy pillows - we'll kill. A sixty share.

A secretary (MILDRED) enters. She's a little flustered.

MILDRED
Um... Mr. Scharlach, um -- you're not watching TV?

SCHARLACH
No, Mildred, we're working.

MILDRED
Um... Ed -- and Shari are --

SEAVER
Engaged?

MILDRED
No. Here. They're in the building. They're on their way up.

Scharlach indicates that he wants someone to turn on the TV. Someone does and they see Ed and Shari coming down the hall. They enter the conference room. The cameras, of course, are with them. Ed is carrying a CARTON.

ED
Hi, kids. Busy?

MUCH CONFUSION

ED (CONT'D)
I just came up to pass out these Ed TV hats.

He takes a lot of HATS out of the carton and begins placing on the heads of the Honchos.

ED (CONT'D)
A guy made these up for me. He spelled Ed with two D's. Okay, listen. The real reason I came up here -- and then I'll get out of your way -- is I've been thinking about what you said. About let's start having more fun with this show, you know? Let's give it a big kick in the ass.
HONCHO #1
Well, we were thinking --

ED
(cheerfully)
Shut up.

He takes back that Honcho's hat.

ED (CONT'D)
Let's have a contest. Now this would mostly be open to professional investigators and detectives. But anyone can join in.

SHARI
(rehearsed)
What do we have to do?

ED
My lovely assistant, Shari. I'm glad you asked. The contest is who can dig up -- legally, of course -- I'm not suggesting that anyone break any laws -- the most embarrassing and humiliating facts about any of the executives here at the North American Broadcasting System which owns Real TV.

The Honchos staring blankly.

ED (CONT'D)
But facts! They have to be verified. Anything from their past, their present, business, personal -- arrests, affairs ... And whoever comes up with the sleaziest, most degrading material -- I'll give you ten thousand dollars. And you get to be on Ed TV.

(to the Honchos, excitedly)
Hah?

SHARI
So act now. Here's Ed's home phone number.
She holds up a CARD.

196  INT. CONFERENCE ROOM
It's packed with LAWYERS and EXECS. Everyone is agitated, except Cynthia, who seems relaxed—Ed and Shari are gone.

SCHARLACH
Legal?! How can this be legal?
It's defamation! It's slander!
It's...

LAWYER
Not, technically. He is not showing a reckless disregard for the truth.

SCHARLACH
You're fired!
The meeting continues ANGRILY.

197  INT. CONFERENCE ROOM — LATER
The Honchos are watching Ed TV. They look STRAINED, ANXIOUS.

In Ed's home a BANK OF PHONES have been set up like for a telethon. Manning the phones are Ed, Shari, Ray, Marcia, Al and Jeanette. The PHONES KEEP RINGING.

RAY
(into phone)
Uh-huh... uh-huh... Really?! She was how old?

In the conference room one of the Execs looks DIZZY.

The CAMERA PANS to Al on the phone.

AL
(shocked)
He pays a prostitute to do what to him? I don't even want that on my shoes.

IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM

FEAR and SHOCK, except for Cynthia, who is LAUGHING and can't stop.

SCHARLACH
Stop laughing or you're fired.

She stops.
Then she gets up.

**SCHARLACH (CONT'D)**

Where are you going?

**CYNTHIA**

I've got this great idea. We put together a video. "The Network Executives Goofiest Moments." And listen, I've really loved working here.

On the word "loved" she shot Scharlach THE FINGER. She exits, LAUGHING.

198  **INT. ED'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

Ed is off the phone,

**ED**

Okay. We have a winner. Now please don't feel badly if yours wasn't selected. In our eyes, you're all winners.

**RAY**

And each contestant gets one of these.

(holds up a tee-shirt with writing on it)
An "I tried to screw a network executive" tee-shirt.

**ED**

A hundred per cent cotton. Okay, here we go, Andy.

Ed grabs a sealed ENVELOPE. Andy plays a DRUM ROLL -- not terribly well.

**ED (CONT'D)**

Andy's available for executions.
And the winner is ...

As he opens the envelope.

199  **INT. CONFERENCE ROOM**

The Executives staring, HORRIFIED.
200  INT. ED'S APARTMENT
He takes out the card and registers mock-surprise.

   ED
   Hey, the winner is from right here in New York city.
   Carl Bowers a former orderly at the Martin Center -- a clinic
   that specializes in, what they call, male enhancement
   procedures.

201  INT. CONFERENCE ROOM
Scharlach's EYES WIDEN in HORROR.

202  INT. ED'S APARTMENT

   ED
   (to the camera)
   How many of you know what a penile implant is? As it was
   explained to me, what happens is--

203  INT. CONFERENCE ROOM
As Ed explains, Scharlach reaches for the phone, fumbling it
for a moment.

204  INT. ED'S APARTMENT

   ED
   And the man of the hour -- the executive with the winning secret
   the man who, thanks to the miracle of space-age science and
   a pump he keeps in his pocket, can now --

A SHOT OF a television set tuned to Ed. Suddenly Ed is
replaced by a Real TV logo.

   ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
   And that concludes Real TV's coverage of Ed TV. Stay tuned
   for new programming information.

   MUSAK
205   INT. CONFERENCE ROOM

206   INT. TV STUDIO
An ENTERTAINMENT REPORTER.

207   INT. TV STUDIO
The PANEL.

208   EXT. CHURCH

ENTERTAINMENT REPORTER
A spokesperson for Real TV announced that Ed received a check covering his four months on the air, his balloon payment and an additional bonus to show the Network's appreciation for all his -- quote -- hard work and loyalty -- unquote. When asked --

CUT TO:

The Panel.

PANELIST #1
In five years no one will even remember this person.

PANELIST #4
Five years! Six months. He's the "macarena." He's --

CUT TO:

A NEWS REPORTER is reporting on a wedding.

REPORTER
Marcia Pekurny, the woman known to most Americans as "Ed's sister" was married here today to Carlos Coto, who some of you may remember as the primary camera operator on "Ed TV" --

CUT TO:

209   INT. TV STUDIO
A news show.

NEWS ANCHOR
The current rage of "Reality Television" got a real dose of reality today. Lifestyle Televisions Joma was shot this evening, outside his apartment. Because Joma was on television twenty-four hours a day, Lifestyle's cameras were there to record the shooting.

WE SEE Joma walking into his building. Somebody steps forward with a GUN. The ASSAILANT is jostled as he shoots and the bullet hits Joma in the ass. He falls to the sidewalk.

JOKA
Ohhhh!!! ... my ass! He shot me in the ass!

The CAMERA PANS to the Assailant, who we might recognize as someone who we've seen following Ed from time to time.

ASSAILANT
Now I'm famous.

REVEAL Ed and Shari watching this on television.

ED
I know him. I gave him an autograph.

Shari turns it off.

THE END