

ED TV

by

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This is the first eRelease for the script of the movie "Ed TV"  
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1 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 TRAT 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)

Qutters! ... Qutters!

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.

7 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.

8 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 SNIFFS. 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)

Oh!

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. Id 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.  
(sees 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.

JEANTTE

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:

15 INT. ED'S APARTMENT - DAY

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 unrehearsed. 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 moment.

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.

47 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 wowing 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)

(quickly, 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.

92 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.

93 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.

94 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.

GIRLS

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, Beatle 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. DELICATESSAN - 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)

Page three of the Post.

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...  
(checks her watch)  
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

Vll 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's 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  
noises)

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.

SEAVER

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

SCHARLACH

Cynthia ...

He wants it accomplished.

SEAVER (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.

151 EXT. STREET

Ed's car turns the corner and he sees a CROWD gathered around Jill's building.

152 EXT. BUILDING

ED

(understating)

I'm starting to feel a little pressure.

Ed carrying his wine enters to APPLAUSE and CHEERS.

153 EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET

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

154 INT. JILL'S KITCHEN

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.11  
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  
they were special. Now people  
are considered special just for  
being famous. Fame, itself, is  
now a moral good in this country.  
It's its own virtue.

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.

CUT TO:

OLD WOMAN

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

CUT TO:

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 an 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

(distracted)

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 of  
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".

182 EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

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.

183 EXT. GRAVESITE - A LITTLE LATER

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  
(exiting)

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  
That book sucked. I want my  
money back.

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.

187 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.

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."

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 rubberneckerers 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  
I 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