

~~Blue (mm/dd/yyyy)~~

~~46.~~

~~LOUISE~~

~~Howard called here at three in the morning looking for you.~~

~~Max is busted but we concentrate on Howard.~~

~~HOWARD~~

~~(addressing the unseen force)~~

~~Yes, I am coming. I am coming.~~

~~Howard gets up and leaves.~~

~~LOUISE~~

~~What is going on?~~

~~MAX~~

~~Nothing is going on. It's been a very difficult week.~~

~~He kisses her takes the two glasses of whisky out of her hands and goes back to where Howard was sitting.~~

~~MAX (CONT'D)~~

~~Howard? Howard?~~

20. HACKETT'S OFFICE

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HACKETT

What do you mean you don't know where he is. The son of a bitch is a hit, goddamit, over two thousand phone calls. Go down to the mailroom. As of this minute, over fourteen thousand telegrams. The response is sensational. Harry, tell him. Harry's phone hasn't stopped ringing. Every goddam affiliate from Albuquerque to Sandusky. The response is sensational. We've got a goddam hit, a goddam hit. Diana, show him the Times. We've got an editorial in the holy goddam New York Times. That crazy son of a bitch Beale has caught on. So don't tell me you don't know where he is.

MAX

I don't know where he is. He may be jumping off a roof for all I know. He needs care and treatment.

(MORE)

47.

MAX (CONT'D)

And all you grave-robbers are concerned about is he's a hit.

DIANA

But Max what if he is in fact imbued with some special spirit.

MAX

Oh my God... I'm supposed to be the romantic. You're supposed to be the hard-bitten realist.

DIANA

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

MAX

I'm not putting Howard back on air. We're going back to straight news.

DIANA

It's not your show any more, Max. It's mine.

HACKETT

I gave her the show, Schumacher. I'm putting the network news under Programming.

MAX

Does Ruddy know about this?

HACKETT

Mr Ruddy has had a mild heart attack and is not taking calls.

MAX

A heart attack!

HACKETT

He'll live, most likely. But in his lamented absence, I'm making all network decisions, including one I've been wanting to make a very long time. You're fired. I want you out of this building before the show starts. I'll leave word with the security guards to throw you out if you're still here.

MAX

Well, let's just say, fuck you, Hackett. You want me out, you're gonna have to drag me out kicking and screaming. And the whole news division kicking and screaming with me.

HACKETT

You think they're going to quit their jobs for you? Not in a recession, buddy.

MAX

When Ruddy gets back he'll have your ass.

HACKETT

I got a hit, Schumacher, and Ruddy doesn't count anymore. He was hoping I'd fall on my face with this Beale show, but I didn't. It's a big, fat, big-titted hit, and I don't have to waffle around with Ruddy anymore. If he wants to take me up before the CCA Board let him. And do you think Ruddy's stupid enough to go to the CCA Board and say "I'm taking our one hit show off the air?" And come October Fourteenth, I'm going to be standing up there at the annual CCA management review meeting, and I'm going to announce projected earnings for this network for the first time in five years. And believe me, Mr Jensen will be sitting there rocking back and forth in his little chair, and he's gonna say "That's very good, Frank, keep it up". So don't have any illusions about who's running this network from now on. You're fired.

HARRY HUNTER

What are we going to do? It's three minutes to.

HACKETT

Put Snowden on while we track down Beale.
(to Max)
I want you out of your office immediately. Or I'll have you thrown out.

MAX

And you're going to go along with this?

DIANA

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

MAX

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

HACKETT

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

MAX

I'm going to spread this whole reeking business in every paper and on every network, independent, group and affiliated station in this country. I'm going to make a lot of noise about this.

HACKETT

Great. We need all the press we can get.

Max stalks out.

(to Diana)

Something going on between you and Schumacher?

DIANA

Not any more.