

DIANA

~~Frank, let's not go to committee on this. It's twenty after ten and we want Beale in this studio by five thirty. We don't want to lose the momentum.~~

HACKETT

~~For God's sake Diana, we're talking about putting a manifestly irresponsible man on national television!~~

DIANA

~~Yes.~~

HACKETT

~~I'd like to talk to legal affairs at least; you know I'm going to be eyeball to eyeball with Mr Ruddy on this. I need to be sure of my ground. I'm the one whose ass is on the line.~~

DIANA

~~A hundred thousand a minute, Frank. Fuck Ruddy.~~

HACKETT

~~Let me talk to Chaney.~~

~~{we should fact check the claims on these statements of ratings, etc}~~

11. A WORKING LUNCH

Chaney and Hackett at a working lunch in the boardroom:

CHANEY

You're not seriously asking me to consider this. I don't believe the top brass of a national television network / are sitting round --

HACKETT

The top brass of a bankrupt television network with projected losses close to a hundred and fifty million dollars.

CHANEY

The FCC will kill us.

HACKETT

The FCC can't do anything except rap our knuckles.

CHANEY

I don't even want to think about the litigious possibilities, Frank. Anyway, no affiliates are gonna carry it.

HACKETT

The affiliates will kiss your fat ass if you hand them a hit show.

CHANEY

But The Times...

HACKETT

The New York Times doesn't advertise on our network.

CHANEY

All I know is that this violates every canon of respectable broadcasting.

HACKETT

We're not a respectable network. We're a whorehouse network - and we have to take whatever we can get.

CHANEY

Well, I don't want any part of it. I don't fancy myself the president of a whorehouse.

HACKETT

That's very commendable of you, Nelson. Now, sit down. Your indignation has been duly recorded, you can always resign tomorrow. Look, what in substance are we proposing? Merely to add editorial comment to our network news show. Brinkley, Severeid and Reasoner all have their comments. So now Howard Beale will have his. I think we ought to give it a shot. Let's see what happens tonight. Telephone.

CHANEY

I maybe in charge here but I don't want to be the Babylonian messenger who has to tell Max about this.

HACKETT

Max Schumacher no longer works at this network. Harry Hunter is running the news Division now. Phone.

Chaney passes Hackett the phone.