

JERRY

START →
SCENE

SCENE ONE

PA
Excuse me--

WES
(to the PA)
I want Jack Rudolph on the phone.

JERRY
Wes--

PA
Sir, I don't know how to call--

JERRY
Jack's at a dinner party.

WES
Let's disturb him.

JERRY
Jack pays me to make these calls.

WES
And Jack pays me to do this show, you
ridiculous fat-ass.
(to the PA)
What's your name?

PA
Suzanne.

WES
Get me the Chairman of UBS.

PA (SUZANNE)
(way over her head)
I can ask someone for the number and--

JERRY
(to SUZANNE)
Stay where you are.

WES
Now you're telling my people where to--

JERRY
I'm trying to save us all a lot of tsuris.

WES
Jerry, it's a funny sketch. It killed at
dress and funny has been in short supply
around here lately.

JERRY
I'm in charge of Broadcast Standards and
Practices, I'm not in charge of funny.

WES

Who's gonna be offended by this?

JERRY

Wes--

WES

Who?

JERRY

People who--religious people. God, Wes, and you knew that when you--what do you want me to say to the 50 million people who are gonna go out of their minds as soon as it airs?

WES

Well first of all, you can tell 'em we average 9 million households so at least 41 million of them are full of crap. Second, you can tell 'em that living where there's free speech means sometimes you're gonna get offended.

JERRY

You gotta cut the sketch.

WES

And replace it with what?

JERRY

Whatever you want. Peripheral Vision Man is ready, you can--

WES

Peripheral Vision Man isn't funny and it's never been funny. I want to talk to Jamie McDeere.

JERRY

You can't.

WES

She's at a dinner party too?

JERRY

Yes, yes she is, it's the same dinner party. It's a dinner party for Jamie McDeere. You don't have a lot of time.

WES

(beat)

What happens if I say no. What if I go on the air with the sketch?

(CONTINUED: (4))

JERRY
I'm not gonna answer that.

WES
Why?

JERRY
'Cause if you still had the muscle to do it you wouldn't have asked.

WES
(pause--then to SUZANNE)
Tell the control room we're cutting 4A and filling with Peripheral Vision Man.

SUZANNE heads off...

JERRY
Thank you.

And JERRY heads off...

WES stand there a moment. He looks out onto the stage from the back of the vomitorium and sees RICKY and RON--two guys we'll get to meet later. They catch his glance and give him a nod. WES looks at them the way a king looks at illegitimate sons who are plotting to take his throne. Then he heads off as we

CUT TO:

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Three tiers of seats facing banks of monitors--one of which, we'll notice, is marked "DELAY". Three clocks, Eastern, Central and Pacific and a large digital read-out counting us down to airtime. The room's being very capably run by CAL, the Director, and LILLY, the Assistant Director.

We HEAR a man's voice over LILLY's console phone--

MAN
(over phone)
Studio 7, this is the broadcast center, you're up on Router 2, have a good show.

LILLY
(into phone)
Thank you.
(hangs up)
Two minutes.

ASSISTANT
(pushing a button)
Two minutes to cold open. We need Tom and Dylan set. Larry standing by. Felicity Huffman standing by.

(CONTINUED)

3/3

JERRY

CONTINUED:

at the edges of the stage, cast and crew are starting to grow nervous. Just not sure what's happening or what they're supposed to do.

WES (CONT'D)

We were about to do a sketch you've already seen 500 times. Yes, no one's gonna confuse George Bush with George Plimpton, we get it. We're all being lobotomized by the country's most influential industry which has thrown in the towel on any endeavor that does not include the courting of 12-year-old boys.

TOM has been silently joined by SIMON, who we saw give him the low five backstage. At one point, SIMON will make a gut reaction move to go out and get WES, but TOM will just hold his hand out to stop him.

WES (CONT'D)

And not even the smart 12-year-olds, the stupid ones, the idiots, of which there are plenty thanks in no small part to this network. So change the channel, turn off the TV. Do it right now.

JERRY, the network executive we saw before, bursts into the control room as WES continues.

START SCENE →

JERRY

Get him off!

CAL

How?

JERRY

Get the camera off of him!

CAL

And put it on what?

JERRY

Cut the boom mic, then!

CAL

It's his show, I take my instructions from him.

WES

...and there's always been a struggle between art and commerce, but now I'm telling you art is getting its ass kicked, and it's making us mean, and it's making us bitchy, and it's making us cheap punks and that's not who we are.

SCENE TWO

1/3

(CONTINUED: (2))

JERRY
(to the DELAY MAN)
Are you bleeping this out?

DELAY MAN
He hasn't said anything you're not
allowed to say.

JERRY
He's telling people to change the
channel.

CAL
I don't think you have to worry about
anybody changing the channel right now.

JERRY
Get him off or you don't have a job
tomorrow.

CAL
I'm running a live national broadcast,
can you threaten me later?

JERRY
I'm the network executive in charge here
and I'm threatening you now. Get us outa
this!

WES
...We're eating worms for money, "Who
Wants to Screw My Sister", guys are
getting killed in a war that's got theme
music and a logo. That remote in your
hand is a crack pipe...

JERRY
Cal--

CAL
I'm waiting for him to say something that
isn't true.

JERRY
(turning on the room)
Who else in here knows how to do this?

CAL
Don't talk to my staff.

JERRY
Get him off!

LILLY
(quietly to CAL)
You got two kids in school.

(CONTINUED)

2/3

WES: (3)

CAL

What?!

JERRY

She said you got two kids in school whose father's five seconds away from never working again.

WES

...and it's not even *good* pornography. They're just this side of snuff films, and friends, that's what's next 'cause that's all that's left.

END

LILLY

(gently urging)

Cal.

WES

And the two things that make them scared gutless are the FCC and every psycho-religious cult that gets positively horny at the very mention of a boycott.

Cal's almost made up his mind. It's like he's a trained and experienced policeman but this is the first time he's faced live fire.

CAL

All right--I think we're just gonna go to titles. Stand by VTR.

WES

These are the people they're afraid of, this prissy, feckless, off-the-charts greed-filled whorehouse of a network you're watching. This thoroughly unpatriotic---

CAL

Go VTR! Go VTR! Roll titles! Now!

And we

SMASH CUT TO:

OUR MAIN TITLESEND OF TEASER