

JERRY!

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INT. SPRINGER SHOW SET - HALLWAY - DAY

CHYRON: SOMETIME IN 1999, BEFORE Y2K

SECURITY GUARDS in BLACK T-SHIRTS walk, accompanied by GUESTS including: LITTLE PERSON STRIPPERS, A BLIND PIMP, and OTHERS.

RICHARD DOMINICK (40s), a cigar-smoking producer with a more-to-love body, holds a CLIPBOARD, breaking down the itinerary to JERRY SPRINGER (50s) who wears JEANS and a SWEATSHIRT.

DOMINICK

So after the midget stripper we'll cut to the lady-boy and then we have to decide whether we go to the Cajun cousin fucker, or the Appalachian horse fucker.

A TIRED Jerry looks into the distance, distracted by a GUEST'S CLEAVAGE. Dominick SNAPS HIS FINGERS.

DOMINICK (CONT'D)

Paging Mr. Springer!

JERRY

Sorry, Richard. I've just got other things on my mind.

DOMINICK

What's more important than a simple mountain man physically expressing love for and to his horse?

JERRY

I was thinking of leaving early today. I'm not feeling too hot.

DOMINICK

Jerry, you can't start phoning it in! We're number one, baby! I want us at the zenith of all the sweeps if Y2K doesn't wipe us out. So horse fucker or cousin fucker?

JERRY

Obviously the horse.

DOMINICK

A horse! A horse! He's cumming in a horse! You can't be too bad, you've still got a sense of distaste.

JERRY

I'm gonna relax for a while.

Dominick hands Jerry a STACK OF DISHEVELED CUE CARDS.

DOMINICK

You can relax after you're done.
Here are some of today's topics.
You know the drill: start thinking
up some good one-liners and we'll
start filming when makeup finishes
with the debauchees.

As Jerry organizes the cards and walks, a *JSS PAGE* stops him.

JSS PAGE

Mr. Springer, Micki called. She
sounded upset and--

JERRY

I can't deal with her right now.
Take a memo, put it on my desk.

INT. SPRINGER SHOW SET - SOUNDSTAGE - MOMENTS LATER

The set is empty. Jerry sits in a CHAIR atop the DAIS as he
ABSENTMINDEDLY FLIPS through the cue cards and READS ALOUD.

JERRY

Sounds like he's a stallion in bed.
Does he keep his shoes on?

Jerry puts the cards down and MASSAGES HIS TEMPLES.

JERRY

Focus. Focus. Focus. Don't think
about Micki, don't think about the
ratings, focus on today...

As he takes NOTES, his eyes grow heavy. Giving up, Jerry
LEANS BACK, CLOSES HIS EYES, and quickly FALLS ASLEEP. TIME
PASSES. Gradually, the LIGHTS turn off. There's a brief
DARKNESS, until FLOODLIGHTS ILLUMINATE the dais. Jerry enters--

DREAM - INT. SPRINGER SHOW SET - SOUNDSTAGE - DAY

Identical to the Springer Show set, but a DREAM. There's a
renewed energy and the rumbling of an AUDIENCE.

AUDIENCE

Jer-ry! Jer-ry! Jer-ry!

Leading this horde of bloodthirsty gawkers is ANOTHER JERRY
SPRINGER (known from this point as HOST JERRY), identical to
the first, except Host Jerry wears an ARMANI SUIT.

HOST JERRY

My guest today says his relationships are damaged beyond repair. Please meet Jerry!

JERRY

The fuck is going on? Who are you?

HOST JERRY

Tell us from the beginning. Have you always been a mess?

Jerry GETS UP from his chair and TRIES TO EXIT, but TWO SECURITY GUARDS, including STEVE WILKOS, block the exits.

HOST JERRY

Can't run away from your problems today, Jerry. How about you take a seat, relax, and tell us how you ended up as a guest on my show.

Jerry returns to his seat, puts his hands together, takes a deep breath, and recounts his larger-than-life story.

JERRY

I believe in America. My parents raised me to climb the American social ladder. They were German refugees who escaped the horrors of the Holocaust and started a new life in the land of opportunity.

INT. JERRY'S CHILDHOOD APARTMENT (QUEENS) - DAY

1956. A 12 YEAR OLD JERRY lies on the floor while his FAMILY-- RICHARD SPRINGER (40s), Jerry's short, rotund father, MARGOT SPRINGER (40s), Jerry's tall, thin mother, and EVELYN SPRINGER (16), Jerry's older sister, SIT ON THE COUCH.

JERRY (V.O.)

I was born in England during the war, but once I found out I couldn't be king, there was no reason to stay.

They're watching their BLACK AND WHITE, WOOD CABINET TV. ON SCREEN: JOHN F. KENNEDY is delivering his 1956 DNC speech.

KID JERRY

Dad, do you think someday I could be president?

RICHARD SPRINGER

Unfortunately, you weren't born in this country. But if you study hard, maybe your son could be!

MARGOT SPRINGER

President Springer! It's got a ring. And we've got a German in the White House right now.

RICHARD SPRINGER

But not yet a Jew!

EXT. SOUTHERN BUS STATION - DAY

1961. A BUS with a sign that reads "NEW ORLEANS" pulls in. PASSENGERS disembark, including JERRY, NOW 17 YEARS OLD.

JERRY (V.O.)

After my folks lost everything, it was up to me to rebuild beyond their wildest dreams.

Jerry holds his LUGGAGE as he makes his way inside.

INT. SOUTHERN BUS STATION - MOMENTS LATER

Jerry stands in line for a WATER FOUNTAIN. A BLACK MAN is ahead of him and takes a drink.

JERRY (V.O.)

After high school, I enrolled at Tulane. It was my first time leaving my New York bubble and seeing the rest of America.

The Black man finishes and Jerry approaches for a sip. As he drinks, a HAND grabs him by the nape and PULLS. It's a FAT WHITE MAN with a FLAT TOP--a bus station SECURITY GUARD.

GUARD

Can't you read, boy?

Jerry sees a SIGN above him that reads: "COLORED". The guard points to a LINE OF WHITES forming at a different fountain.

JERRY (V.O.)

My time in the South taught me that America isn't all high hopes. Sometimes, America gets real ugly.

EXT. FRENCH QUARTER - BOURBON STREET - NIGHT

There's a PARTY in the streets.

JERRY (V.O.)

Me and my fraternity brothers
rented a bus and registered Black
voters. But at night, we went to
Bourbon Street for a different type
of grassroots activity.

Jerry SPARKS A JOINT. Jerry and THREE OF HIS FRATERNITY
BROTHERS STAGGER DRUNKENLY through the CROWDS. Jerry and
company DRINK OPENLY. PEOPLE DANCE in the streets. SCANTILY
CLAD WOMEN line the BALCONIES.

JERRY (V.O.)

I wasn't experienced before New
Orleans. I dare any young man to go
to the Big Sleazy and not get laid.

A MADAME (40s) wearing RED SILK with BOUFFANT HAIR and a
BEAUTY MARK stands by a BORDELLO DOORWAY as she locks eyes
with Jerry. The group carries on until ONE OF THE FRAT BOYS
clutches his gut and VOMITS.

FRANK

Ah, shit. I think Moe's done for
the night. Let's turn in.

Jerry still looks in the direction of the madame.

JERRY

I think I'm going to walk off some
of my drinks before going back.

FRANK

It's a long way. Sure you got it?

JERRY

I know where I'm going.

INT. BORDELLO - MOMENTS LATER

The room is dark and LAVISHLY DECORATED. Jerry clutches his
YANKEES HAT as the madame lies on her BED.

MADAME

Is this your first time?

JERRY

In New Orleans? No, I've actually
been going to school here...

MADAME

That's not what I meant, but I'll give you the student discount.

Jerry pulls out CRUMPLED BILLS and tosses them to her.

JERRY

Can I wash my hands first? There's beer on them and I don't like having sticky fingers.

Jerry picks up a BAR OF SOAP and WASHES HIS HANDS. He LOOKS IN THE MIRROR and sees Host Jerry.

HOST JERRY

You washed your hands before sleeping with a woman you know nothing about?

JERRY

It seemed respectful.

HOST JERRY

Always the gentleman when it comes to women, I see.

The madame walks over to a RECORD PLAYER. She pulls out a RECORD and plays "MASHED POTATO LOVE" by CHUBBY CHECKER.

JERRY

On second thought, I think I should get going. You can keep the mon--

She starts KISSING Jerry.

MADAME

Shhhh, relax.

JERRY (V.O.)

I still think about that night. Not because I feel guilty. It was the first time I felt free. I wasn't focused on career, education, or the future. Solely my pleasure.

Later, A NAKED JERRY relaxes in bed with his head on the madame's chest. She SMOKES while STROKING HIS HAIR.

JERRY

Amazing. You weren't bad, yourself.

The madame looks at Jerry and HOWLS with LAUGHTER.

MADAME

So what's a greenhorn like you
doing in a swamp like this?

JERRY

Me and my buddies were out all day
registering colored voters and we
decided to let off a little steam.

MADAME

This is how you let off steam?

JERRY

Sure beats Vietnam!

BACK TO:

DREAM - INT. SPRINGER SHOW SET - SOUNDSTAGE - DAY

Jerry is in a HAPPY DAZE reminiscing.

HOST JERRY

So the summer of love came early?

JERRY

It was just a weekend escape. I had
to get back to what mattered. The
Vietnam War ramped up during my
time in college. Daunted that our
elected officials would support
such an immoral, unethical war, I
enrolled in law school hoping to
change the system from within.
However, until then, bills needed
to be paid. I needed a job.

INT. LAW OFFICES OF FROST AND JACOBS - DAY

FROST (50s) and JACOBS (50s) of the eponymous firm SIT AT A
TABLE with a WASPY APPLICANT (20s). The men RISE AND SHAKE
HANDS. As the applicant leaves, Frost and Jacobs converse.

JACOBS

He comes from great pedigree.
Strong grades, firm handshake.

Frost looks through his notes and presses an INTERCOM BUTTON.

FROST

Peggy, be a doll and send in Mr.--
Gerald Springer?

The secretary, PEGGY (20s), ushers Jerry in. He's dressed in JEANS, a SWEATSHIRT, his YANKEES HAT and HUARACHES. Jerry PLOPS into a chair and leans back casually.

JERRY

Hey, fellas! Jazzed to be here!

JERRY (V.O.)

It wasn't wise to show up looking like Abbie Hoffman. But what better way to show the establishment I was from a new wave of principled young people here to shake things up?

INT. JERRY'S CHILDHOOD APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jerry is home for Hanukkah. DECORATIONS abound. Evelyn and Margot cook. Jerry and Richard sit at the table.

RICHARD SPRINGER

You were wearing what, Gerald?!

JERRY

I also mentioned my devotion to the anti-war movement.

RICHARD SPRINGER

Boychik, what's wrong with you?! It's about image! How can you get your foot in the door when you don't have the shoes for it? First you get the job, *then* you can have convictions. How are you supposed to feed a family with convictions?

JERRY

I'm standing up for my beliefs like you taught me. Don't you want the world to change so no one goes through what our family had to?

Richard's demeanor softens. He puts his arm around Jerry.

RICHARD SPRINGER

You know your uncle, my brother, was a lawyer...may he rest in peace. Integrity is one thing, but being a *shmuck* in another.

Richard SLAPS THE BACK of Jerry's head playfully.

RICHARD SPRINGER
Let's hope the other candidates
suddenly become illiterate.

Margot and Evelyn ENTER with the DINNER (BRISKET, LATKES,
KUGEL, CHALLAH, etc). They set the table and everyone sits.

EVELYN
Dad, ready for the blessing?

RICHARD
Gerald's got some hair on his
knaidlakh, he can lead.

Jerry SMILES as the family BOWS THEIR HEADS IN PRAYER.

JERRY (V.O.)
I made my father proud. And he was
right: a message is only as good as
the packaging it comes in.

LATER the family has finished dinner. Jerry, Richard, and
Evelyn sit around the table laughing. Margot is in the
kitchen cleaning when the TELEPHONE RINGS. She answers it.

MARGOT
Springer residence...Yes, one
moment. Gerald, it's for you.

Jerry rises and takes the phone.

JERRY
Hello?

FROST (O.S.)
Hi Jerry, I'm calling from Frost
and Jacobs...

After some UNHEARD WORDS, Jerry hangs up.

JERRY
I got the job! I'm moving to
Cincinnati!

EVERYONE except Jerry CHEERS. Margot HUGS AND KISSES her son.

RICHARD
Zayst? It pays to have integrity!

EXT. HIGHWAY 75 - NIGHT

Jerry drives his FIAT CONVERTIBLE to CINCINNATI. He passes a
sign that reads "WELCOME TO CINCINNATI".

EXT. DOWNTOWN CINCINNATI - MOMENTS LATER

Jerry's Fiat approaches DOWNTOWN. The streets are filled with RIOTERS and COPS. BUILDINGS BURN, CARS ARE SMASHED.

JERRY (V.O.)
Cincinnati rolled out the red
carpet. My first night there was
the start of the 1967 Riots.

Rioters SURROUND his car, BANG ON THE HOOD, and SHAKE THE CAR. A frightened Jerry COWERS. SECONDS LATER, some KNOCKING on his window. Jerry turns his head and sees a POLICE OFFICER IN RIOT GEAR. Jerry manually rolls down the window.

RIOT COP
First time in Cincinnati?

INT. YMCA - MOMENTS LATER

The riot cop opens the door and shows Jerry to his quarters. It's a DANK, DILAPIDATED room with COTS and LEAKING PIPES.

RIOT COP
It ain't the Ritz, but you'll be
safe. Say a prayer for your car.

The officer leaves. Jerry grabs an ITCHY BLANKET and lies on a cot. The HOWLS and NOISE of the city keep him awake.

INT. LAW OFFICES OF FROST AND JACOBS - THE NEXT MORNING

Jerry shows up for his first day of work tired and greasy. He's wearing the same clothes, which are wrinkled. He walks past Peggy, who is working on a TYPEWRITER.

PEGGY
Hello, Mr. Springer. How are you
finding Cincinnati?

JERRY
Nice town!

BACK TO:

DREAM - INT. SPRINGER SHOW SET - SOUNDSTAGE - DAY

HOST JERRY
It says here that Cincinnati is
where you met your wife, Micki.

JERRY

Ex-wife. Micki's great. I couldn't have asked for a better partner.

HOST JERRY

She sounds lovely. Let's hear her side of things. Here she is, Micki!

MICKI (50s), a WHITE WOMAN with SHORT, BLONDE HAIR emerges from back stage. She SPRINTS over to Jerry and ATTACKS HIM.

MICKI

You fucking pig!

Jerry SHIELDS himself, but Micki continues to SLAP and HIT him. Jerry's GLASSES fall off. The security guards PULL MICKI off Jerry. As she's being dragged, she LOSES A SHOE.

MICKI

The sight of this self-absorbed man brings out the worst in me.

HOST JERRY

While Micki's readjusting, let's go back to Jerry. Was the relationship always this contentious?

JERRY

There was a time when she loved me. Back when I was deserving of love.

INT. JERRY'S CINCINNATI APARTMENT - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Jerry STYLES HIS HAIR in the mirror. He wears a NICE SUIT.

JERRY (V.O.)

I spent the first two years making a name for myself at work. Seeing that I was lonely, the husband of an old flame set me up with some of his friends. The problem was I was so buried in cases, the only way I could fit Micki in was to make the evening a double feature.

EXT. REBECCA'S APARTMENT - LATER

Jerry is in his Fiat. His NICELY DRESSED DATE-REBECCA (early 20s) waits at the curb. Jerry SLIDES OVER and OPENS THE DOOR. Rebecca WADDLES into the car while HOLDING HER STOMACH.

INT. JERRY'S FIAT - MOMENTS LATER

The car drives along. Jerry's got his hands at 10 and 2, while Rebecca STARES AHEAD looking NAUSEOUS.

JERRY

I heard about a great Italian spot.
I hope you're ready for the best
osso buco this side of Dixie!

REBECCA

That sounds--delicious. Sorry,
I had some Skyline for lunch and
it's disagreeing with me. Nothing
some club soda can't fix.

JERRY

I love Skyline! The 3-Way is my
favorite: spaghetti dripping with
chili, slathered in cheese--

REBECCA

Can we talk about something else?
Tell me about yourself.

JERRY

I grew up in New York; Go Yankees.
I come from a Jewish family--

After some STOMACH GURGLING, Rebecca VOMITS on Jerry.

JERRY

Yeah, we get that a lot.

INT. FANCY RESTAURANT - LATER

Jerry HOLDS A MENU, obscuring his clothing. MICKI VELTON
(20s) walks into the restaurant. She's in NICE EVENING WEAR.
The HOSTESS directs her to Jerry's table.

MICKI

Jerry?

Jerry LOWERS THE MENU revealing a YANKEES SWEATSHIRT.

JERRY

Micki! Let me get your chair.

Jerry stands to pull out her chair. She sits. Jerry sits.

MICKI

Judging by your attire, I wouldn't
take you as one for formality.

JERRY

I had a little hiccup earlier. I have nice clothes, I promise.

MICKI

I just thought you were a big Yankees fan.

JERRY

Oh, I am. Do you like baseball?

MICKI

I'm from Kentucky so I root for the Reds across the river.

JERRY

Kentucky? The South? So you *really* don't like Yankees.

MICKI

Only if they're charming. And handsome. Like JFK.

Jerry is SMITTEN. LATER the FOOD comes as the two CONTINUE TO HIT IT OFF and DRINK WINE. Micki takes a SIP OF HER WINE.

MICKI

...if all goes well, I should get my teaching degree soon. I want to work with special needs children.

JERRY

That takes heart. The closest I get to working with special needs children is representing CFOs.

MICKI

I bet the youngsters are better behaved!

Jerry and Micki both laugh. They continue to eat and chat.

MICKI

I'm having a great time, but I have to ask you: why the sweatshirt?

JERRY

I lost track of time at work and this is what I had in my car.

Micki looks at Jerry suspiciously. Jerry breaks.

JERRY

You're my second date tonight. I took another gal out and she rocketed her lunch onto my suit. I think she might be an anti-Semite.

MICKI

While I don't care for men who play the field, I do appreciate your honesty. That's rare. And since I haven't ruined your sweater...yet, I guess that means I like you.

JERRY

I should've been honest up front. Lying's not my strong suit.

MICKI

You must not be much of a lawyer!

JERRY

Being a lawyer isn't necessarily the end-all-be-all for me.

MICKI

Most people would consider passing the bar an accomplishment. But it's not enough for Jerry.

JERRY

In a way, you're right. This might sound a little brash, but if I could have it my way, I'd want to be president. Or a king.

MICKI

Like a tyrant?

JERRY

No, I'd be an "enlightened despot". The kind who makes problems go away. *Without* the guillotine.

MICKI

(raising her glass)
Here's to Jerry and his empire!

JERRY

I appreciate it, despite your mocking. Maybe I'll be lucky enough to find a queen to rein me in.

Micki takes a SIP OF WINE and RAISES AN EYEBROW at Jerry.

JERRY (V.O.)
Micki was everything I wasn't:
Protestant, rural, shy. I was
Jewish, urban, and eager to be
heard. But we clicked.

INT. JERRY'S CINCINNATI APARTMENT - NIGHT - MONTHS LATER

Jerry and Micki are KISSING on the COUCH. WALTER CRONKITE is
on TV reporting on the Vietnam War. Jerry is DISTRACTED.

JERRY
All this senseless killing. Let's
hope America ends this war.

MICKI
Jerry, can you turn that off?

JERRY
I want to run for congress.

Micki LAUGHS until she realizes he's serious.

MICKI
Run? In this district? This is
Nixon country!

JERRY
A lot of folks think like us. If
they get out to vote, we can win.

MICKI
You sound ridiculous right now.

JERRY
To change the system, I need to be
part of it. I have to at least try.
After Jack and Bobby, someone's
gotta keep up the good fight.

MICKI
If it's that important, I'll
support you. But do me a favor?
Please turn off the TV.

Jerry STANDS, turns off the TV and returns to the couch.

EXT. CINCINNATI - FOUNTAIN SQUARE - DAY

Jerry wears a collared shirt, tie, and slacks. He holds a
CLIP BOARD with VOTER REGISTRATION FORMS and tries to talk to
a MIDDLE AGED PASSERBY.

JERRY
Excuse me, sir! Washington isn't
working for the people--

The passerby ignores him. Some YOUTH (20s) walk by.

JERRY
Youth voting is at an all time low!
Register and spring for Springer!

YOUTH #1
Whatever, square.

The youth laugh and walk away. Jerry looks at himself.

JERRY
Square?

Jerry TAKES OFF HIS TIE and THROWS it into the fountain. He
undoes his top shirt buttons and TUSSELES his hair.

JERRY (V.O.)
I remembered what my father said
about image, and for once, the *real*
Jerry was the man for the job.

Jerry approaches ANOTHER GROUP OF YOUTH.

JERRY
The war pigs in Washington have
fucked this country over. They're
sending our friends to die and
expect you to not do anything about
it. A vote for me means ramming a
boot up Nixon's ass.

Youth approach, register to vote, and chat with Jerry.

BACK TO:

DREAM - INT. SPRINGER SHOW SET - SOUNDSTAGE - DAY

Micki is back in her seat on the opposite side of the stage
from Jerry. She's undisheveled herself.

HOST JERRY
So I'm guessing you had a plan? You
canvassed, all that? How'd that go?

MICKI
He lost. But it was closer than any
of us expected.

(MORE)

MICKI (CONT'D)

A Democratic strategist saw potential in Jerry and how he connected with people. After some help from the DNC, Jerry won a seat on the Cincinnati City Council. Life started moving fast.

INT. VALLEY TEMPLE SYNAGOGUE - DAY

CHYRON: 1973

A nice JEWISH WEDDING CEREMONY officiated by RABBI GREENBERG. Jerry and Micki are dressed for the occasion. The PEWS are filled with MEMBERS OF THE SPRINGER CLAN and VELTON POSSE.

RABBI GREENBERG

You may kiss the bride.

Jerry and Micki KISS. Jerry STEPS ON A GLASS and BREAKS IT.

CONGREGATION

Mazel tov!

INT. CINCINNATI CITY HALL - COUNCIL CHAMBERS - NIGHT

A CITY COUNCIL MEETING is underway. Jerry stands on the FAR LEFT holding a NOTE PAD, GUY GUCKENBERGER (40s) sits on the FAR RIGHT. MAYOR TOM LUKEN sits in the MIDDLE.

JERRY (V.O.)

We got married and I spent my nights fighting the good fight in the numinous halls of government.

JERRY

According to the latest numbers, over 2 million American men have been drafted to fight in an unconscionable war. This act of unchecked aggression--

Guckenberger RAISES HIS HAND to interject.

GUCKENBERGER

Springer, you can't be serious.

JERRY

I'm very serious about our boys dying in undeclared wars. By limiting the number of draftees--

GUCKENBERGER

This isn't the House Armed Forces Committee. Don't waste the peoples' time with this grandstanding. Motion to dismiss this empty resolution. All in favor?

ALL COUNCIL MEMBERS EXCEPT JERRY

Aye.

GUCKENBERGER

All opposed?

JERRY

Nay.

TOM LUKEN

On to more pressing matters, item 41: a resolution to modify title 14 of the Cincinnati zoning code...

INT. CINCINNATI CITY HALL - HALLWAY - LATER

Jerry heads to the exit after the meeting. Guckenberger comes down the hall after him and flags him down.

GUCKENBERGER

Jerry! Some advice? Not as a councilman, but man to man.

JERRY

Make it quick. It's late and I gotta get home and see my wife.

GUCKENBERGER

We're on opposite sides, but don't interpret that as hostility. I admire your candor, but you need to take this job for what it is.

JERRY

Let me guess, a paycheck?

GUCKENBERGER

This job, and life, they require compromise. Not just with the other council members, but with yourself. Don't let your work consume you. You'll end up isolated.

JERRY

See ya next week, Guckenberger.

INT. SPRINGER HOME - BEDROOM - LATER

The lights are off as Jerry ENTERS QUIETLY. Micki is FAST ASLEEP. Jerry slides into bed and falls asleep.

JERRY (V.O.)

City council was more of the same:
Long nights arguing my resolutions
into oblivion as Micki tended to
our home, alone. A councilman's
salary wasn't much, so I still had
to clock in at the firm. Needless
to say, I wasn't around much.

INT. SPRINGER HOME - BEDROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

Micki WAKES UP and turns in bed, seeing Jerry's half EMPTY.

INT. CINCINNATI CITY HALL - JERRY'S OFFICE - LATER

Jerry is BURIED in PAPERWORK. Jerry's intern, SAM KLEIN (20s), enters carrying PAPERS and a BAG OF FOOD.

SAM

Here's that sandwich you wanted.
Also, I've got a copy of the latest
proposal. I've taken the liberty of
highlighting all the relevant--

JERRY

Will you please shut the fuck up?!
(beat)
I'm sorry, Sam. Those reactionary
jackals have me on edge. And I've
got so much damn work, I haven't
seen Micki in days...

Sam sets down the food and SITS on the EDGE OF JERRY'S DESK.

SAM

You need a break. There's a health
club and spa across the river. We
can get you oiled and rubbed.

JERRY

Sounds great, actually. My
shoulders are tighter than the
public transit budget. I'm thinking
of opening the next meeting with
that joke. What do you think?

SAM

I think you're better at writing
policy than writing jokes.

Jerry PULLS OUT HIS WALLET. CLOSE UP on the wallet as Jerry
pulls out the LAST REMAINING BILLS.

JERRY

This is for lunch. Keep the change.
I was an intern once.

INT. PRESIDENT MOTOR INN - LOBBY - NIGHT

The decor is CHEAP WOOD PANELING and DYING POTTED PLANTS. A
FAT, BALDING MAN (50s) in a HAWAIIAN SHIRT, GEORGE LEWIS,
sits by the FRONT DESK. CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS ABOUND.

SAM

My friend and I would like two of
your massage specials.

LEWIS

Rooms 3 and 4, down the hall.

They WALK DOWN THE HALL. Lewis eyes Jerry as he walks.

INT. PRESIDENT MOTOR INN - ROOM 4 - MOMENTS LATER

Jerry enters and closes the door. The room has WOOD paneled
walls, a MASSAGE TABLE, and a SILK SCARF over the LAMP giving
the room a PINK GLOW. PAMELA JEAN KNIGHT (21) sits on the
table with her legs crossed, SMOKING.

KNIGHT

My name's Pam. What can I do, sug?

JERRY

I'm here for the massage special.

Knight PUTS OUT HER CIGARETTE in an ASHTRAY.

KNIGHT

Ok, take off your clothes.

Knight turns on the RADIO and tunes it to the COUNTRY
STATION. Jerry REMOVES HIS CLOTHES down to TIGHTY WHITIES and
BLACK SOCKS with SOCK GARTERS. He LIES DOWN on the table.

JERRY

If you could focus on my shoulders--

SUDDENLY, Knight PULLS OFF JERRY'S UNDERWEAR.

JERRY

Woah! What are you doing?

KNIGHT

You asked for the special.

JERRY

Look, Pam, you seem like a nice gal, but I've got a wife and--

Jerry sees Host Jerry in the mirror. He talks to him.

HOST JERRY

You kept your cool under pressure and stuck to your convictions?

Knight INCHES CLOSER to Jerry. Her hand is out of frame, but the STROKING MOTION makes it clear what's going on.

KNIGHT

It'll be our little secret.

Jerry looks back to the mirror. Host Jerry SHAKES HIS HEAD. Jerry cracks a SMALL SMILE and LIES BACK DOWN. Knight MOUNTS JERRY as "BED OF ROSES" by THE STATLER BROTHERS plays.

TIMES PASSES and Jerry PUTS HIS CLOTHES BACK ON.

JERRY

I have to say, Pam, that really took my mind off zoning.

KNIGHT

Never heard that one before.

Knight AWKWARDLY WAITS for payment. She CLEARS HER THROAT.

JERRY

That's right. How much do I owe?

KNIGHT

An even \$20 is fine.

Jerry pulls out his WALLET. It's EMPTY.

KNIGHT

If there's a problem, George can come in and sort out your tab.

JERRY

No! No, that's not necessary.

Jerry PATS HIS POCKETS until he feels his CHECK BOOK.

JERRY
Do you take checks?

KNIGHT
Czechs, Slovaks, Poles, anything.

Jerry writes a CHECK for \$25.

JERRY
I left the name blank.

Knight takes the check and TUCKS IT INTO HER BRASSIERE.

KNIGHT
Don't be a stranger, cowboy.
Remember, I can keep a secret.

She ZIPS her lips with a swipe across her mouth.

INT. SPRINGER HOME - DINING ROOM - MORNING - DAYS LATER

Jerry and Micki are SEATED AT THE TABLE eating breakfast.

JERRY
I don't know what it is, but I'm
revitalized. Even Guckenberger's
obstructionism isn't getting to me.

MICKI
That's great, Jerry.

JERRY
How have your students been?

MICKI
They're doing just fine. They're
still getting used to me, but
everything will come together.

JERRY
They're lucky to have you. As am I.
I love this life we've built.

Jerry gets up and starts KISSING Micki. It quickly gets
passionate, and Micki brushes him aside.

MICKI
Slow down there, tiger. We've both
got to get to work soon. We can
finish what we started later.

Micki KISSES Jerry on the cheek and leaves for work.

INT. SPRINGER HOME - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Jerry is on the COUCH watching the NEWS. NORMA RASHID (30s) reports as A MUGSHOT OF GEORGE LEWIS appears on screen.

NORMA

(on television)

Federal agents raided a brothel operating out of a North Kentucky motel late last night. George Lewis, seen here, is believed to be the head of the prostitution ring.

JERRY (V.O.)

Pam was right. That tryst would be our little secret. But much like me, the secret didn't last long.

Jerry's JAW DROPS.

INT. CINCINNATI CITY HALL - JERRY'S OFFICE - LATER

Jerry PACES as Sam stands. Jerry is IRATE and WAVES A NEWSPAPER. The HEADLINE is about the FBI raid.

JERRY

Why couldn't we have just played a round of golf?

SAM

You're worried about nothing. Besides, neither one of us is getting into any country club.

JERRY

You're cracking jokes? It's *my* fucking career on the line! And God forbid Micki finds out!

SAM

Jerry, your career is fine and Micki won't find out. There's nothing tying you to the club.

Jerry's EYES WIDEN as he remembers his PAYMENT METHOD.

SAM

Take a moment for yourself. I'm gonna run over to the clerk's office and file some paperwork.

Sam EXITS. Jerry SITS DOWN and RUBS HIS TEMPLES at his desk.

JERRY

The fucking check. I'll just say I
lost my checkbook...

Jerry sees the paper, which lies next to a PHOTO OF MICKI.

JERRY (V.O.)

I wanted to blame Sam, but it was
my fault. It's easy to talk about
integrity when there's nothing on
the line, but now, I had to be the
leader I always pretended I was.

Jerry PICKS UP THE PHONE and dials the operator.

JERRY

Cincinnati Federal Building.

INT. SPRINGER HOME - DINING ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Jerry sits PENSIVELY at the table in DARKNESS. Micki comes in
through the front door.

MICKI

Why's everything so dark?

Micki sees Jerry sitting at the table.

JERRY

Micki, I think you should sit down.

BACK TO:

DREAM - INT. SPRINGER SHOW SET - SOUNDSTAGE - DAY

The audience BOOS Jerry as Micki CRIES in her seat. She gets
up and SLAPS Jerry before security guards pull her away. Host
Jerry walks up the steps into the audience and HANDS THE
MICROPHONE to an AUDIENCE MEMBER.

AUDIENCE MEMBER #1

My question is for Micki. PLEASE
tell me you didn't stay with his
sorry ass. I woulda tossed him to
the curb with the other trash!

The audience HOOTS AND HOLLERS. Host Jerry takes the mic.

HOST JERRY

For a lot of couples, adultery
usually signals the end.

INT. CITY HALL - HALLWAY - DAY

Jerry walks down the hall, escorted by Tom Luken as PAPARAZZI snap photos. Micki walks by his side. As he's about to enter the room, he reaches to HOLD HER HAND. She PUSHES IT AWAY.

INT. CITY HALL - MEETING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Jerry STANDS AT THE PODIUM. Micki and OTHERS SIT BEHIND HIM. The room is filled with REPORTERS and CITY OFFICIALS.

JERRY

As I resign, I do so because I believe there are some problems which are better faced as a private citizen. I was a customer of a "health club" and engaged in activities which are questionable.

Jerry looks over to Micki, who QUIETLY SOBS.

JERRY

The public deserves a high standard and I have violated that trust. I hope that at least in my public service I've set a good example.

CAMERAS FLASH. Jerry walks away from the podium. Micki and others leave the room. A JOURNALIST approaches Jerry.

JOURNALIST

Any plans for the future?

JERRY

Right now I'm concerned with picking up the shattered pieces of my life. All I have is the fact that I have told the truth.

Micki stands in the DOORWAY and listens to Jerry's response.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Jerry LIES AWAKE in a bed. He WEEPS softly.

JERRY (V.O.)

Micki kicked me out, only allowing me to return to pick up my things.

INT. SPRINGER HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAYS LATER

Jerry enters and finds his BELONGINGS in boxes. Micki emerges, still hurt.

MICKI

Your shit's on the couch.

Jerry walks over to the couch and sees his life packed in a BOX. Jerry finds his YANKEES HAT, OLD PHOTOS, and CLOTHES. He puts on the Yankees hat and picks up a PHOTO OF HIMSELF AND MICKI from happier times. He gathers the rest of the photos.

JERRY

You can give the rest to Goodwill.

Micki notices that Jerry is heading out with only SENTIMENTAL ITEMS. She CALLS OUT TO HIM just as he's at the door.

MICKI

Why'd you do it, Jerry? Was I not enough? Was this not enough?

JERRY

No, of course you're enough.
I'm a weak man.

Jerry THROWS HIMSELF at her, but Micki BACKS AWAY. Jerry SLIDES DOWN to the floor and GRASPS at her legs.

JERRY

Please let me try again.

Micki tries to NUDGE Jerry off of her, but he's holding on tight. She sees the despair in his eyes.

MICKI

You can't expect me to just move past this like nothing happened.

JERRY

That's not what I'm asking. I desecrated our home. I love you more than anything. I made vows and I broke them. Right now it's not about me, it's about you.

Micki starts to TEAR UP and HUGS JERRY.

MICKI

No, it's about us. We'll take it one day at a time.

INT. THERAPIST OFFICE - DAY

Jerry SITS ON A COUCH as he speaks to a THERAPIST.

JERRY (V.O.)

I worked on myself to prove I was worth forgiving. The things you love are worth fighting for.

INT. SPRINGER HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jerry and Micki KISS in bed.

JERRY (V.O.)

Eventually, Micki let me share a bed with her again. It was the most time we'd spent together, and we got to know each other all over again. And again. Until...

INT. HOSPITAL - DELIVERY ROOM - DAY

MEDICAL STAFF SURROUNDS MICKI while Jerry holds her hand.

DOCTOR

Push!

JERRY (V.O.)

Katie Springer, the first Springer eligible for the presidency, arrived on July 7th, 1976.

The BABY, KATIE SPRINGER, IS BORN, but is NOT CRYING.

DOCTOR

Nurse, take this baby to the NICU. She isn't breathing properly.

JERRY

What's wrong?!

The NURSE carries Katie away. The doctor PUSHES JERRY BACK. The doctor exits, leaving Jerry and Micki alone. Jerry and Micki STARE AT EACH OTHER, uncertain of what's to come.

JERRY (V.O.)

For the next few months, Katie would be subjected to endless prodding and countless surgeries.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY - MONTHS LATER

Jerry and Micki sit in OFFICE CHAIRS. Micki holds Katie (6 months). DR. ROSEN (female, 40s), sits across from them.

DR. ROSEN

Katie has recovered well from the operations. While examining her, we found she has coloboma. She was born with a damaged optic nerve and will have vision loss, but until she can talk, we won't know how severe. She also shows indications of partial deafness.

Micki starts BAWLING. Dr. Rosen pushes her a BOX OF KLEENEX.

JERRY

Is there anything we can do?

DR. ROSEN

Early intervention is key. I can give you the names of some reputable specialists.

Jerry and Micki rise. Jerry shakes Dr. Rosen's hand.

INT. JERRY'S FIAT - LATER

Jerry drives and looks in the REARVIEW and sees Micki HOLDING KATIE. Micki is DESPONDENT.

JERRY (V.O.)

Micki worked with special needs kids and knew the challenges Katie would face. That we all would face.

INT. SPRINGER HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jerry sits on the couch holding Katie as Micki watches from the hallway, covered in SHADOWS.

JERRY (V.O.)

I had saved enough to take time off work. I set everything aside to be there for our growing family.

INT. SPRINGER HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Katie sits in a HIGH CHAIR as Jerry AIRPLANES FOOD to her. Most of the food makes it to her mouth. Jerry gently WIPES the remainder. Katie SPITS UP her food, but in a cute way.

JERRY

Not even one and you're already
spewing crap like your old man.

Katie KNOCKS the JAR OF BABY FOOD onto the floor. It BREAKS.

JERRY

And making messes like him, too.

INT. SPRINGER HOME - BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Micki is LYING IN BED. Jerry GLOWINGLY enters the room.

JERRY

You won't believe it! Katie just
did the best impression of Nixon.

Micki doesn't respond.

JERRY

I'll be sure to snap a Polaroid for
you next time. Unrelated, but Katie
and I need to go get some more baby
food. Anything we could get you?

Micki doesn't respond.

JERRY

Ok, love you! See you soon!

EXT. CINCINNATI - DOWNTOWN - LATER

Jerry pushes Katie in a STROLLER. BYSTANDERS SMILE. Jerry points out landmarks to Katie. CITIZENS recognize Jerry.

CITIZEN

Miss seeing you on TV, Springer!

A SMALL CROWD starts to form. Katie gets OVERWHELMED.

JERRY

(to himself)

They only know me from my scandal?
I gotta get Katie outta here.

Jerry WAVES and SCOOTs PEOPLE ASIDE as he escapes the crowd. He SMILES to himself. Jerry and Katie make their way to--

INT. SUPER MARKET - DAY

Jerry skims through the aisles with Katie SITTING IN THE CART. As Jerry examines PRODUCE, Guy Guckenberger spots him.

GUCKENBERGER

Do my eyes deceive me, or is that former councilman Jerry Springer? Who's this little bundle of joy?

JERRY

Hello, Guckenberger. Meet Katie: my daughter and the future President of the United States.

Guckenberger CROUCHES DOWN to Katie's level.

GUCKENBERGER

Even out of the public eye, you still think about politics.

JERRY

Right now, I'm just a family man.

GUCKENBERGER

Good man. I'll leave the president and her bodyguard to their business. By the way, everyone at City Hall misses you. Your seat's still empty, not that anyone but you could properly fill it.

JERRY

Nice to know I have the unlikeliest of fans. Good to see you, Guy.

Jerry smiles. As Guckenberger turns his back to leave, Jerry GIVES HIM THE FINGER.

Jerry heads to the BABY AISLE. He scans until he finds Katie's food and puts SEVERAL JARS in the cart. He sees a WOMAN with a BABY and TODDLER talking to an EMPLOYEE.

WOMAN

Excuse me sir, do you have any cheaper formula?

EMPLOYEE

What you see is what we've got.

WOMAN

Oh dear, I see. Thank you.

Jerry watches the woman as she and her children shuffle away.

INT. SUPER MARKET - CHECKOUT LINE - LATER

Jerry holds Katie. A CASHIER (teen), rings up ITEMS including the baby food, CEREAL, and a HEART SHAPED BOX OF CHOCOLATES.

CASHIER

Will there be anything else, sir?

Jerry sees the mom and kids waiting at a BUS STOP outside.

JERRY

Yeah, one more thing actually.

EXT. BUS STOP - MOMENTS LATER

The woman sits with her children. She's smoking and CRYING. Jerry's SHADOW looms over her. He presents her with a BAG.

JERRY

Ma'am, you left this behind.

The woman takes it and looks inside and sees SEVERAL CANS OF BABY FORMULA. She is SHOCKED.

WOMAN

But I didn't--

JERRY

I've got a kid of my own. I know how easy it is to forget things.

INT. SPRINGER HOME - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Micki sits on the couch watching TV. Jerry enters juggling Katie, a FOLDED STROLLER, and a BOX OF CHOCOLATES. Jerry sets the stroller aside and makes his way to the couch. He hands the chocolates to Micki.

JERRY

Katie and I were trying to figure out what to give the sweetest, most beautiful woman in the world. And then she got an idea: chocolate.

Micki does a HALF SMILE and EATS ONE OF THE CHOCOLATES.

JERRY

People were fawning over her. She's already polling well!

Jerry's charm breaks through Micki's gloom and she LAUGHS.

MICKI

Mmm, these chocolates are really good. Where did you find them?

JERRY

At the market! And I bumped into Guckenberger. He said my seat on the council is still--

MICKI

Oh God?! And you're trying to butter me up with chocolates?

JERRY

Being out there with the people--I need to get back to the action!

MICKI

"Action". What a great choice of words! And you can't get enough "action" at the law firm? Frost and Jacobs want you to become partner!

JERRY

And settle in a comfortable cage? It's not about the money. It's about the people!

MICKI

I don't know if I can trust you. People like you. They *love you*. That's the problem.

JERRY

There's no excuse for what I did. I hope in the time that's passed you see how committed I am to you and Katie. I'll work on your terms.

MICKI

You promise?

Jerry NODS. Micki kisses him.

MICKI

I know this means a lot to you. And I know we do, too. You can go play with your friends, Jerry.

INT. CINCINNATI CITY HALL - COUNCIL CHAMBERS - NIGHT

1977. A council meeting is in progress. MAYOR JAMES LUKEN (50s) addresses the COUNCIL.

JERRY (V.O.)

After a decisive reelection, I returned. Little did I know, I was in for a huge surprise.

JAMES LUKEN

All in favor of electing Gerald Norman Springer 63rd mayor of the City of Cincinnati?

COUNCIL

Aye.

JAMES LUKEN

The motion passes unanimously. Congratulations, Mayor Springer.

Luken BANGS THE GAVEL. Everyone rises from their seats and Jerry hugs and shakes hands with everyone.

JERRY (V.O.)

Given my notoriety, I wouldn't typically be the council's first choice for mayor. But my landslide reelection proved I was the most popular politician in Cincinnati. The city was my personal Camelot.

Luken approaches Jerry.

JERRY

(to Luken)

I can't believe it. Let's set an announcement for 9:30. My place.

Jerry hugs James Luken and kisses his cheeks.

JAMES LUKEN

Don't do anything stupid like you did three years ago...even though that seemed to help you.

Jerry NODS and RUNS EXCITEDLY through city hall. He stops at a PAY PHONE and calls Micki.

JERRY

May I speak with the First Lady?

MICKI (O.S.)
Jerry? What are you talking about?

JERRY
We're Cincinnati's First Family!
I'm holding a press conference at
the house tomorrow. I'll help clean
up after we put Katie to bed.

MICKI (O.S.)
Here? Why here?

JERRY
This is the start of our legacy!
I've gotta go, I love you.

Jerry HANGS UP and SWAGGERS down the hall.

INT. SPRINGER HOME - KATIE'S BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

The CLOCK reads 9:00 PM. Katie is asleep in her CRIB. Jerry
and Micki look at her lovingly.

MICKI
Our little angel.

JERRY
She's going to do grand things.

INT. SPRINGER HOME - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Jerry POLISHES THE COFFEE TABLE while Micki PICKS UP TOYS.
The DOOR BELL RINGS.

MICKI
Who could that be at this hour?

Jerry ANSWERS THE DOOR and there is a FLOOD OF JOURNALISTS,
CAMERAMEN, and CITY OFFICIALS. CAMERA FLASHES BLIND Jerry. As
his sight returns, Jerry sees Mayor James Luken.

JAMES LUKEN
Ah, Mayor Springer. Hope you don't
mind that we're a little early.

JERRY
Yeah, by about 12 hours.

JAMES LUKEN
You said 9:30!

JERRY
I meant AM. Tomorrow.

James Luken LOOKS AROUND at the crowd and SHRUGS.

MAYOR JAMES LUKEN
Well, here we are!

The crowd enters. Micki is SHOCKED and WIPES BABY VOMIT off her SHIRT. She FRANTICALLY CLEANS AND MOVES FURNITURE.

JOURNALIST
Mayor Springer, what will your first priority be as mayor?

JERRY
Definitely engaging with our city's youth. The rejuvenation of our city begins with galvanizing our young people and getting them involved.

CAMERAS FLASH. Micki is blinded.

MICKI
(whispering to Jerry)
I hate this so much.

INT. RADIO STATION - SOUND BOOTH - DAY

A RECEPTIONIST leads Jerry into the sound booth where station DJ ROBIN WOOD (30s, female) finishes up a segment.

JERRY (V.O.)
The hardest part of being a mayor isn't the policy making. It's connecting with your constituents. It's tough to get young folks jazzed about reduced bus fare, but I had the help of rock and roll.

ROBIN
(into microphone)
That was Santana with "She's Not There". And after these messages, we'll be joined by Mayor Jerry Springer himself for a special announcement. Stick around.

Robin PUSHES A BUTTON and TURNS AROUND IN HER SWIVEL CHAIR. She gets up and SHAKES JERRY'S HAND.

ROBIN

We've never had a mayor address his people via rock station.

JERRY

Here's my transcript. I have a song request to punctuate the message.

Jerry pulls out a FOLDED PAPER and hands it to Robin. She SHRUGS and places a RECORD on the TURNTABLE.

ROBIN

(to microphone)

Alright, we're back. As promised, here's the Mayor of Cincinnati himself: Jerry Springer.

JERRY

Cincinnati! Mayor Jerry with the Springer Memorandum! The only better way to get around town than Grand Funk Railroad is the city bus. We lowered fares to a nickel, leaving you more change to drop in the juke box. Ayyy!

Robin PRESSES A BUTTON and "Money" by Pink Floyd plays.

EXT. HEALTH CLINIC - DAY

DOCTORS hand Jerry OVERSIZED SCISSORS. Jerry CUTS A RIBBON, opening a clinic for LOW INCOME CITIZENS. CAMERAS FLASH.

JERRY (V.O.)

The only thing more popular than my policies was me! I became everyone's favorite mayor and I loved the spotlight.

INT. SPRINGER HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Micki sits with a REPORTER. Katie (4) PLAYS in the back.

REPORTER

What's it like being the First Lady of Cincinnati?

MICKI

It's hard adjusting to the media hubbub. I'm a quiet person. But Jerry loves it. He's charismatic.

(MORE)

MICKI (CONT'D)

People either love him or hate him,
but this town really loves him.

INT. CITY HALL - MAYOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Jerry sits at his desk surrounded by HIS STAFF. Some AIDES flip through PAPERS and talk through them with Jerry.

AIDE

Absolutely not. You're out of your
fucking mind, Jerry.

JERRY

Permits aren't just for church
ladies reserving gazebos. It's a
public right.

AIDE

We're talking about The National
Socialist Movement, aka Nazis,
rallying in Fountain Square. I'll
put this in the shredder--

JERRY

No. Grant the permit.

AIDE

Are you serious? You're a Jew!

JERRY

I'm also an American. If anyone
abhors what these guys stand for,
it's me. Alas, I believe in the
Constitution. As a public servant,
I can't let my own biases enter
this office. Grant these *schlumps*
the permit.

The Aide NODS.

JERRY

By the way, make sure you let the
PD know. I have a feeling our
residents will have a thing or two
to say to these upstanding gents.

EXT. CINCINNATI - FOUNTAIN SQUARE - DAY

A LARGE PLAZA in the heart of downtown Cincinnati. A DOZEN UNIFORMED NAZIS stand around the TYLER DAVIDSON FOUNTAIN holding SIGNS and FLAGS promoting their cause.

A GARRISON OF RIOT COPS hold back HUNDREDS OF COUNTER PROTESTERS. The mob of angry residents makes the Nazi group look pathetic by comparison.

JERRY (V.O.)

Hatred is a social virus.
Nevertheless my moral pulchritude
made me a stalwart for free speech,
no matter how repulsive. My stint
as mayor temporarily satiated me,
but I still had high hopes.
Cincinnati was a fine fiefdom, but
I still craved an empire.

INT. NEWS STATION - EDITING BAY - NIGHT

CHYRON: 1982

FOCUS ON: a GROUP OF TV SCREENS stacked on top of each other.
On the MAIN SCREEN is JERRY'S GUBERNATORIAL CAMPAIGN AD.

JERRY

(on TV)

I'm Jerry Springer, and I want to
be your governor. After sharing
some specific solutions for our
state's problems, it looks like the
nomination is within grasp. Which
makes what I'm about to tell you
even more difficult. Years ago, I
spent time with a woman I shouldn't
have. I wish I hadn't done that.
But in the rough world of politics,
opponents are not about to let
personal embarrassments lay to
rest. I'm not afraid of the truth,
even if it hurts. C'mon, join me.
We're gonna turn this state around.

During the ad, the CAMERA PANS OUT and reveals JOE LEWIN
(50s) and PRODUCERS watching the ad.

PRODUCER

So do you think he can win?

JOE LEWIN

Not a chance. But he's got grit and
this town knows it. He's staying in
Cincinnati. Tell his people Joe
Lewin from WLWT wants a meeting.

INT. CHRISTOPHER INN HOTEL (COLUMBUS) - BALLROOM - NIGHT

It's PRIMARIES NIGHT. Jerry and his family are in FORMAL ATTIRE and gather with SUPPORTERS for a DINNER.

Jerry TAKES THE STAGE and GRABS A MICROPHONE.

JERRY

The reason I brought you here is because if tonight doesn't go right, I need a job. Thank you for your support. I don't want to sound corny, but whatever happens, it's all been worthwhile.

Jerry WAVES and EXITS. The crowd CLAPS. Jerry enters--

INT. CHRISTOPHER INN HOTEL - BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Jerry is greeted by Joe Lewin who approaches while CLAPPING.

JOE LEWIN

(extending hand)

Excellent speech, Mayor Springer. Joe Lewin. General Manager of Cincinnati's NBC affiliate, WLWT. Do you have a second?

JERRY

You're *that* Joe Lewin. Usually when someone doesn't return your calls, it means they're not interested.

JOE LEWIN

Let's cut to the chase: I love what you have to offer. I'm looking for a new anchor. You'd be a great fit.

JERRY

I'm flattered, but my place is in politics, not on the TV screen.

JOE LEWIN

Jerry, we both know how to read numbers. Do you really think you have a chance at winning?

JERRY

Well, Joe, since we *both* know how to read numbers, have you seen your station's latest?

JOE LEWIN

Yes, we are the underdog in town. That's why we want some fresh blood. I believe in you so much, I'm willing to put you on screen as soon as you sign a deal.

JERRY

I'm out here to serve the people. TV seems a bit shallow.

JOE LEWIN

I'm not going to beg. Best of luck. If things don't work out, you know where to find me.

JERRY

Channel 5?

JOE LEWIN

Bingo!

INT. CHRISTOPHER INN HOTEL - JERRY'S SUITE - LATER

Micki sits on the couch and Katie (6) sits at a table PLAYING WITH TOYS. Jerry is PACING AROUND THE ROOM.

MICKI

What's wrong with a traditional 9 to 5? We'd see each other more. And you'd earn more than as governor!

JERRY

How would I be making a difference projected through the idiot box?

MICKI

The "idiot box"? Jerry, you won't shut up about how seeing JFK on TV as a kid changed your life.

JERRY

Saying scripted words isn't the same as policy making.

MICKI

How many times are we going to pack up our lives? There's no shame in taking the sure thing. If you have to be something, be a good father and husband. Whatever else you do doesn't matter. Pick one life.

JERRY

This will be my last shot. I want to be a good governor, but more importantly, I want to be a good husband. And father.

Jerry looks over at Katie who's YAWNING.

JERRY

I'm not sure she'll make it until results. I'm gonna tuck her in.

LATER, Jerry sits by the TV as Norma Rashid reveals the results. Micki lies in BED while Katie SLEEPS.

NORMA RASHID

And with 42% of the vote, Dick Celeste has secured the Democratic nomination for governor.

Jerry TURNS OFF THE TV. He's DEFLATED.

MICKI

It's Ohio's loss. How do you feel?

JERRY

I'm not a voice for the little guy anymore. I'm gonna miss writing up laws--most of which get shot down anyway. And I won't have to congregate with a bunch of self-serving jackals, which will leave me more time for you guys.

Jerry TURNS ON THE RADIO AND PICKS UP KATIE who's waking up.

JERRY

I kind of feel like dancing.

They DANCE AROUND THE ROOM to Patsy Cline's "SHE'S GOT YOU".

DREAM - INT. SPRINGER SHOW SET - SOUNDSTAGE - DAY

Jerry sits in a chair on the dais.

JERRY

It was the 80s. America, and by extension, the world, was entering scary times. It seemed like the Earth's destruction was nigh. And I was there to cover it all.

INSERT: VARIOUS SCENES OF NOTEWORTHY 80s EVENTS.

CUT TO:

EXT. CINCINNATI ZOO - GORILLA HABITAT - DAY

Jerry and his FILM CREW interview a ZOO KEEPER. Jerry wears a COAT and holds a MICROPHONE.

JERRY

Jerry Springer here at the Cincinnati Zoo talking with Zookeeper Bob. What can visitors expect to see on their next trip?

ZOOKEEPER BOB

Well Jerry, it's exciting times here at the zoo. Bongo is currently in labor and in the next couple hours, we're going to have a new baby gorilla joining our habitat.

JERRY

Exciting stuff. So quit monkeying around, Cincinnati, and make your way down to congratulate Bongo and see her baby. Back to you, Norma.

INT. WLWT STATION - LEWIN'S OFFICE - LATER

Jerry STORMS IN. Lewin is ON THE PHONE and PUTS HIS FINGER UP for Jerry to wait. Lewin HANGS UP THE PHONE.

JOE LEWIN

Just got word that a baby who looks like Bob Hope was born at Booth Hospital. You down to cover this?

JERRY

What's up with the fluff pieces? I want to cover some real stories!

JOE LEWIN

Bob Hope is an American icon.

JERRY

Our war mongering President is sending troops into Grenada, and I'm reporting on this schmaltz?

JOE LEWIN

Research shows this "schmaltz"
increases viewership by 4%. People
need a break from doom and gloom.

JERRY

I built my reputation on integrity.
That's how Cincinnati knows me.

JOE LEWIN

Right now I'm trying to keep the
lights on and pay your salary.

JERRY

I get it. You need to pay bills.
I've got no problem with stories
that give people a little hope--

Lewin BRIGHTENS UP in a EUREKA MOMENT.

JOE LEWIN

That's the headline! "A Little Hope
for Cincinnati!" Get to Booth and
interview that baby. Remember,
"everyone needs a little Hope".

JERRY

That's a good one, Joe, but--

JOE LEWIN

Get to the hospital! Go! Go! Go!

Jerry EXITS ANGRILY.

MUSIC: "HUNGRY HEART" BY BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN PLAYS

JERRY (V.O.)

This was my life for the
foreseeable future: covering
stories that your aunt would read
in a grocery store tabloid rag.

BEGIN MONTAGE:

EXT. LOVELAND SPRINGER HOME - DAY

Jerry moving his family to a nicer home. A MOVING VAN is
PARKED by the curb. FURNITURE is brought inside.

INT. LOVELAND SPRINGER HOME, KATIE'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER
 MOVERS bring in BOXES. The room is MUCH BIGGER than her last.

JERRY (V.O.)
 It wasn't without its rewards. My salary as an anchor finally allowed me to provide Micki and Katie with all the things they deserved.

INT. LOVELAND SPRINGER HOME - DAY

Jerry presents Micki with an EXPENSIVE NECKLACE.

EXT. CAR DEALERSHIP - DAY

Jerry SHAKES HANDS with a SALESMAN as he buys a NEW JAGUAR.

JERRY (V.O.)
 And I had more than enough to spoil myself as well. We were living the Reaganomic fever dream.

END MONTAGE

INT. SPRINGER SHOW SET - DAY

Back to the present. Jerry is FAST ASLEEP with his NOTECARDS on the floor. Dominick and a PAGE discover him.

PAGE
 Aw, he's all tuckered out. Should we wake him?

DOMINICK
 Let him sleep. The horse isn't even here yet.

INT. LOVELAND SPRINGER HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT

CHYRON: 1986, COUNTLESS FLUFF PIECES LATER

Micki WATCHES the NEWS with Katie (9), who's COMPLETELY DECKED OUT IN CARE BEARS ATTIRE. Jerry is ANCHORING.

JERRY
 (on TV)
 President Reagan and Soviet General Secretary Gorbachev spoke over the phone today.
 (MORE)

JERRY (CONT'D)

The leaders discussed the need for maintaining peace between their two countries--

KATIE

When's Dad getting home? We're going to miss the movie!

MICKI

When he's done with the last report, he'll come get you.

INT. WLWT STATION - JERRY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Jerry is at his desk, SHOULDERING the PHONE as he PACKS UP.

JERRY

Just wrapping up here. I'll pick Katie up in about 30. Then off to the Care Bears.

MICKI

(over phone)

It's so nice that you two have a father-daughter date. And I really appreciate the break.

JERRY

See you soon!

Jerry makes KISSING SOUNDS and HANGS UP the phone. He exits his office to--

INT. WLWT STATION - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Jerry walks towards the EXIT when Lewin RUSHES down the hall.

JOE LEWIN

Jerry! The US just started bombing Libya. We need you to go on air.

JERRY

Can't Norma do it? I've got plans with my daughter.

JOE LEWIN

Norma already left. You wanted serious pieces? Here you go. Otherwise, we'll get Chip from sports to do it.

Lewin leaves. Jerry SIGHS and waves down a PAGE.

JERRY

Call my wife. Tell her I won't be able to take Katie to the movies.

PAGE

Will do. I guess Gaddafi ain't the only one making enemies tonight!

INSERT: WLWT SPECIAL NEWS BULLETIN

JERRY (O.S)

We interrupt *The Newlywed Game* for a special bulletin.

INT. WLWT STATION - NEWS DESK - MOMENTS LATER

Jerry sits at the news desk and looks into the camera.

JERRY

NBC is reporting that American planes have been spotted over Libya. And now, for more on that, we go to Tom Brokaw in New York.

The camera remains on Jerry as the link doesn't happen.

JERRY

As I said, American planes have fired at Libyan forces. Whether or not this is a final showdown with Gaddafi, we don't know...

A CAMERAMAN SIGNALS to Jerry. Nothing happens. Suddenly, all the SCREENS in the studio CUT BACK TO THE NEWLYWED GAME.

INSERT: A 1986 EPISODE OF THE NEWLYWED GAME

Jerry's mic is HOT and his feed is still tied to the signal.

JERRY (O.S.)

No Brokaw? I'm just seeing Bob Eubanks. Did we cut?

BACK TO:

INT. WLWT STATION - NEWS DESK - CONTINUOUS

JERRY

What is this crap? Somebody get Joe. Thanks for making me look like a real asshole.

JOE LEWIN
 What the fuck's going on here?
 Jerry's mic is still on!

CAMERAMAN
 And it just picked you up, Joe.

JOE LEWIN
 Fu--

CUT TO:

TOM BROKAW REPORTING ON 1986 BOMBING OF LIBYA.

INT. WLWT STATION - NEWS ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The PHONES are LIGHTING UP. INTERNS and ASSISTANTS are picking up calls from ANGRY VIEWERS.

CALLER (O.S.)
 What's the big idea over there? I was watching with my kids!

INT. WLWT STATION - BREAK ROOM - LATER

Jerry and Joe SIT AT A TABLE. Jerry is dumping HEADACHE POWDER into WATER and Joe is SMOKING.

JOE LEWIN
 The network and the FCC are gonna eat our asses for this.

The page from earlier walk in.

PAGE
 Jerry, we had some angry phone calls come in.

JERRY
 About my language?

PAGE
 Well, yes, but also your wife. She said to congratulate you for making your daughter cry. And the network called. They want to talk to both of you later this week.

JOE LEWIN
 Shit. If the bigwigs come down in person, no one is safe.
 (MORE)

JOE LEWIN (CONT'D)

Better start drafting our
apologies. Go home to your angry
wife, Jerry. I'll see you tomorrow.

INT. LOVELAND SPRINGER HOME - JERRY'S OFFICE - DAY

Jerry sits at his desk DRAFTING an apology a LETTER to the network. He struggles to write anything substantial. NOISES emanate from the living room. He GETS UP to examine.

INT. LOVELAND SPRINGER HOME - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Micki is on the couch watching an episode of *THE OPRAH WINFREY SHOW*. Jerry emerges from the hallway.

JERRY

Hey Mick, can you keep it down? I need to draft up a phony apology. What're you watching anyway?

MICKI

Just your competition. It's a new talkshow out of Chicago. Normally I'd watch WLWT, but lately that handsome anchor's been using too much foul language for my taste.

JERRY

Can you believe that shit? I accidentally curse while President Jellybean bombs a third world country, and I'm the bad guy?

MICKI

Katie thinks you're the bad guy too. You really let her down.

JERRY

I bought her all the VHS cassettes last night to make it up to her!

MICKI

That's not the point. You made a promise to your daughter and you didn't keep it. She'll get over it, but try harder next time.

Jerry and Micki focus on the TV. OPRAH talks to some AT-RISK YOUTH. The theme for her show is "Youth on the Streets".

MICKI

Wow, it's really incredible what so many people go through.

JERRY

I gotta hand it to her, she's making great television.

INT. WLWT STATION - JOE LEWIN'S OFFICE - DAYS LATER

Jerry and Joe sit as they're CHEWED OUT by an EXECUTIVE.

NETWORK EXECUTIVE

(to Lewin)

You dropped an f-bomb on live television! Are you fucking stupid?

(turning to Jerry)

And you! This wouldn't have happened if you knew how to keep calm under pressure! Do you want to be associated with filth, Jerry? We have standards here!

JERRY

Oh, you have standards? Most of the shit I'm reporting on is a complete waste of time. We should be focusing on the real ills of society, not the crap I'm assigned.

NETWORK EXECUTIVE

That "crap" is what keeps you employed, which I'm not so sure will be true for much longer.

JERRY

Look, I know we've gotten some heat from the FCC, but people are tuning in! The apology I gave the other day brought more viewers than ever before. Use the outrage to manufacture a brand here.

NETWORK EXECUTIVE

I'm listening.

JERRY

Back when I was mayor, people loved how I delivered policy. Let me shake the news up too. I want to go undercover for a special report.

The room is SILENT. The network executive STARES at Jerry. The executive STARTS LAUGHING.

NETWORK EXECUTIVE

I like you. You've got moxie. You don't see that much these days.

JERRY

I don't just have moxie, I have ideas. Gonzo journalism: me living as a homeless man. I'll enter their world, and remind our viewers that these are *real people* trying to survive in the urban jungle.

NETWORK EXECUTIVE

That's exciting. I'll be in touch.

He shakes hands with Jerry and Lewin.

NETWORK EXECUTIVE

It's been a pleasure, gentlemen.

JOE LEWIN

The pleasure was all ours.

The executive heads for the door. Before exiting, he turns.

NETWORK EXECUTIVE

Next time, stay fuckin' wholesome. Families watch this shit.

He CLICKS HIS TEETH and leaves. Jerry and Joe COLLAPSE into their chairs.

JOE LEWIN

Incredible. He came to reprimand us, possibly fire us, and you end up pitching a special report. You're really something, Springer.

JERRY

That's right. I'm a personality.

INT. LOVELAND SPRINGER HOME - BATHROOM - DAYS LATER

Jerry sits at the VANITY and applies MAKEUP to look like a VAGRANT with a WIG, MUSTACHE, and BEARD. He finalizes the outfit with a TATTERED COAT and FINGERLESS GLOVES.

Micki walks in and is AGHAST by Jerry's transformation.

MICKI

Jesus, Jerry! When you said you were reporting on homelessness, I thought you'd be visiting shelters.

JERRY

I am! This is how you get unadulterated truth. Don't worry, it won't be long. I'll be finished before Katie's birthday.

MICKI

Please stay safe. And what should we get Katie? She's at that age where it's hard to shop for her.

Jerry hands Micki a WAD OF CASH from his wallet.

JERRY

I'll leave that to you. I can't be carrying money around anyways. I'll see you in a few days, my love.

Jerry KISSES her on the cheek and leaves a SMUDGE.

EXT. CINCINNATI STREETS - DAY

A WLWT NEWS VAN pulls into an alley and HOMELESS JERRY exits. Jerry walks down the street with an EMPTY COFFEE CUP. The BYSTANDERS look right through him.

MUSIC: "EVERYBODY'S TALKIN'" BY HARRY NILSSON

JERRY

Change? Spare some change?

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - LATER

Jerry sits next to a TRASHCAN near the entrance. He holds his cup out to INCOMING CUSTOMERS.

JERRY

Anything helps.

The WIND HOWLS and Jerry pulls his JACKET TIGHT.

JERRY (V.O.)

I finally got a taste of the American dream, deferred.

EXT. PARK - LATER THAT NIGHT

The park is DESERTED. Jerry TAKES OFF HIS SHOES and LIES DOWN on a BENCH. He himself with NEWSPAPERS and manages to FALL ASLEEP. Moments later, Jerry is awoken by a POLICE OFFICER who JABS him with his BATON.

POLICE OFFICER
You know the rules. Clear the park!

JERRY
Officer, I have nowhere to go.

POLICE OFFICER
Not my problem. Move along.

Jerry starts PUTTING ON HIS SHOES.

POLICE OFFICER
I said get moving!

Jerry stops and walks away holding his shoes.

EXT. CINCINNATI STREET - LATER

Jerry walks along the street, checking TRASH CANS for food. He's SHIVERING in a corner when A HOMELESS MAN approaches.

BILL
Hey there, friend. Hungry?

Bill hands Jerry a PIECE OF BREAD and extends his hand.

BILL
Name's Bill.

Jerry SHAKES HIS HAND and looks NERVOUS, hoping he won't be recognized. There's a PAUSE as he CHEWS.

BILL
Normally when someone gives you their name, you reciprocate.

JERRY
Sorry--Charlie. Charlie Silvera.

BILL
What's your story, Charlie? How'd you end up my neighbor?

JERRY

I don't like to talk about it. Born in Queens, left my wife and kid. What about you?

BILL

Originally from Florida. Came for a job that never worked out then had some health issues. Heart attack. Got denied by every program. Now I belong to the city.

JERRY

Only in America, right?

Jerry SHIVERS a bit. Bill notices Jerry's unpreparedness.

BILL

There's a shelter nearby. They can provide some clothes and a meal.

Jerry nods and the two start walking.

BILL

Us folks gotta stick together. Take care of ourselves and each other.

INT. HOMELESS SHELTER - LATER

A RUN DOWN SHELTER in an AUDITORIUM, with a FOLDING TABLE set up as a front desk and COTS filling the floor. Some HOMELESS MEN are gathered around a SMALL, BLACK AND WHITE TV.

Jerry and Bill enter, and Jerry is IMMEDIATELY taken aback by the SMELL. SHANNON (30s), a SOCIAL WORKER, greets them.

SHANNON

Just sign in here, gentlemen.

BILL

Thanks, Shannon. You're an angel.

Jerry and Bill make their way to SOME VACANT COTS.

BILL

We got lucky! Cold night like this, there aren't usually any beds!

JERRY

Do you know where I can wash up?

BILL
Man, this really is your first
time. You'll stay cleaner avoiding
the bathrooms altogether.

JERRY
How about a phone?

BILL
Over there. You'll need a quarter.

Jerry REACHES FOR HIS WALLET, but it's not there.

BILL
Here, I've got one for you.

Bill gives Jerry a QUARTER.

JERRY
Thanks, Bill.

Jerry walks over to a PAYPHONE and dials home.

JERRY
(to phone)
Hello, Micki.

MICKI (O.S.)
Jerry! Are you safe?

JERRY
I'd rather be home with you and
Katie, but I'm safe in a shelter.

MICKI (O.S.)
Just come home, Jerry! You don't
need to do this to prove that
homelessness is hard!

JERRY
I'm fine. This is really an eye-
opener. It's not just a story I'm
covering, it's a revolution! I'm
going to give this station the
biggest scoop they ever had!

MICKI
Jerry, come home.

JERRY
How about you and Katie meet me at
McDonald's this Friday? It would be
nice to see you and catch up on
everything.

MICKI

Ok. I'll meet you at the one
downtown at noon.

JERRY

Great. I love you. Tell Katie I
love her, too.

Jerry hangs up the phone and heads back and sees Bill and
OTHER MEN gathered around the TV. They're watching WLWT news.

HOMELESS MAN

Hey! Where's Springer? He's usually
on right now!

BILL

Did you hear him freak out the
other night? Finally, a suit who
talks like the rest of us.

Jerry SMILES WARMLY to himself.

BILL

Hey Charlie! Come join us!

Jerry walks over to join them.

HOMELESS MAN

At least that fox Norma is on.

INT. MCDONALD'S - THAT FRIDAY

Micki and Katie wait in a BOOTH. There are THREE MCPIZZAS on
the table. Jerry, still in costume, ENTERS. PEOPLE STARE as
he joins his family. Katie is VISIBLY DISTURBED.

JERRY

Thanks, I haven't had a warm meal
in days. Can you believe it? Pizza
at McDonalds! I never thought--

MICKI

When you told me you wanted to meet
us here, I assumed you'd be dressed
as yourself, not Fagin.

Jerry REACHES ACROSS THE TABLE to Katie, who SQUINTS at him
to see, RECOILS and starts to CRY.

KATIE

Go away! He smells like trash.

JERRY

It's just me, Katie. Daddy!

Katie BURIES her face in Micki's arm.

MICKI

This has gone too far, Jerry.

JERRY

I'm getting a lot of juicy stuff here. I'll finish the weekend and--

MICKI

Tell the station you've got enough and write this up over the weekend. But not before you take a shower.

JERRY

I've only scratched the surface!

MICKI

As usual, we'll be waiting at home whenever you're ready to return to the people who need you.

Micki GETS UP and she leaves with Katie. Jerry is left alone.

INT. WLWT STATION - NEWS DESK - NIGHT - THE NEXT WEEK

Jerry sits at the news desk.

JERRY

Home. What a word that is. But for thousands stricken by indigence, the streets are where they reside.

INSERT: FOOTAGE OF PEOPLE PANHANDLING and in shelters.

JERRY (V.O.)

I lived as a homeless man fighting for the comforts we take for granted. Yet no matter the discomfort, I always knew there'd be a hot shower, a warm bed, lots to eat. I suffered physically for a time, but I didn't experience the emotional or psychological trauma of realizing that the abject poverty might never end. I met a man who, through no fault of his own, fell through the cracks no one is trying to fill.

(MORE)

JERRY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Although he has nothing to his name, he shared what little he had. While public policy fails, these souls have created a community whose members take care of themselves, and each other.

EXT. LOVELAND SPRINGER HOME - BACKYARD - DAY

The backyard has been FESTOONED with BIRTHDAY DECORATIONS. Katie sits at a LARGE TABLE surrounded by FRIENDS and GIFTS. Micki guides a game of PIN THE TAIL ON THE DONKEY as Jerry is SCHMOOZED by PARENTS.

PARENT #1

Great party, Jerry.

JERRY

It's all thanks to Micki.

PARENT #2

And great piece the other night. You were out there for a week?

JERRY

Oh yeah, but that's just the tip of the iceberg. There are guys who have been doing this for years--

THE KIDS are clearly getting RESTLESS and ready for cake.

MICKI

Hey Jerry, I think it's time we do the cake and presents.

JERRY

Sure thing!

Jerry heads to--

INT. LOVELAND SPRINGER HOME - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Jerry enters and he is followed by PARENTS.

JERRY

Some guys are complete pros at surviving. I was there on a summer night, but can you imagine doing this in winter?

From outside, Micki can see that Jerry is distracted and not doing what she asked. She shouts from outside.

MICKI
Who's ready for cake?!

The kids CHEER and JUMP in anticipation.

MICKI
They're ready, Jerry!

JERRY
Be right there!

Jerry grabs the CAKE but is stopped by a BLONDE MILF (30s).

MILF
Your story really spoke to me. What
can I do to get involved?

She LEANS IN a bit and Jerry BLUSHES and PUTS THE CAKE DOWN.

JERRY
Well if you really want to make a
difference, there are all sorts of--

Micki MARCHES into the kitchen and grabs the cake herself.

MICKI
For fuck's sake, Jerry! Are you
always on? It's Katie's day. We
have the rest of the week for you
to hog the spotlight.

Micki takes the cake and exits to--

EXT. LOVELAND SPRINGER HOME - BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

Micki does a COMPLETE EMOTIONAL 180 as she presents the cake.

MICKI
(singing)
Happy birthday to you...

Micki sets the cake before Katie. The song ends. Katie BLOWS
OUT THE CANDLES and GLARES at Jerry. Micki does the same.

INT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

The auditorium is DECORATED with LOCAL EMMY ORNAMENTATION and
FILLED WITH PEOPLE at TABLES. A PRESENTER stands at a PODIUM.

Jerry sits at a table with Micki, Katie, Norma, and Lewin.

PRESENTER #1
 And the Emmy for Best Special
 Report goes to...
 (opens envelope)
 Jerry Springer of WLWT Cincinnati,
 "When the Streets are Home".

Jerry gets up from the table as the AUDIENCE claps. He approaches the DAIS, accepts his AWARD, and HOLDS IT UP.

BEGIN MONTAGE:

INT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Another AWARDS SHOW with similar setup.

PRESENTER #2
 And the Emmy for Best News
 Commentary goes to...
 (opens envelope)
 Jerry Springer!

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

A SPECIAL EDUCATION CLASSROOM. CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES are guided in work by TEACHERS. Jerry and a CAMERA CREW record.

JERRY
 (to camera)
 And thanks to the efforts of
 devoted educators, kids like these
 have futures as bright as anyone's.

INT. LOVELAND SPRINGER HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jerry, Micki, and Katie (13) sit and watch the report.

JERRY (O.S.)
 (on TV)
 Reporting from Cincinnati, I'm
 Jerry Springer.

Katie CLAPS, Jerry and Micki kiss.

END MONTAGE

BACK TO:

DREAM - INT. SPRINGER SHOW SET - SOUNDSTAGE - DAY

Jerry sits on the dais alongside Micki.

JERRY

My star was quickly rising. I turned the lowest rated station into Cincinnati's most watched.

HOST JERRY

That's no small feat. I imagine you started getting offers?

JERRY

After my 10th Local Emmy, I got the phone call that changed my life.

INT. CINCINNATI SPRINGER SHOW SET - SOUNDSTAGE - DAY

CHYRON: 1990

An EMPTY STUDIO in Cincinnati. This set served as the original home of *The Jerry Springer Show*.

JERRY (V.O)

Burt Dubrow, a big-shot producer behind the *Sally* show, wanted to meet with me and discuss giving this mug his own talk show.

BURT DUBROW (40s), a TAN PRODUCER with BRIGHT WHITE TEETH walks with Jerry as they tour.

DUBROW

That about wraps it up. If you're willing, this is your new home. Well, temporarily. Until we find a more permanent arrangement.

JERRY

This is a lot. All this for me?

DUBROW

I've followed your career for years. Your exposés are incredible. We're on the precipice of a new media landscape. I want Jerry Springer leading that charge.

Burt puts his HANDS on Jerry's SHOULDERS and LOOKS HIM RIGHT IN THE EYES.

DUBROW

I can't make any promises, but I have a feeling you'll be bigger than Geraldo Rivera.

Jerry smiles, flattered by the prediction.

DUBROW

You see that fight on his show? Unbelievable.

INSERT: CLIP OF THE FAMOUS 1988 GERALDO FIGHT.

DUBROW

Rumor has it Donahue's retiring soon. We plant the seeds now, you'll be his rightful successor.

JERRY

Is this how you woo all the other applicants?

DUBROW

There are no others. The development team thinks you're the only man for the job. Soon as you sign the contract, it's *The Jerry Springer Show*. No Jerry, no show.

Jerry mulls it over. He LOOKS AROUND the studio. He IMAGINES AUDIENCE APPLAUSE and ALL CAMERAS on him.

JERRY (V.O)

Had I been elected governor, I'd only reach the people of one state. On TV, I could reach millions. I'd never be JFK, but there are worse things than becoming a household name like Cronkite.

Jerry SHAKES HIS HAND.

JERRY

Let's make some magic, Burt.

BACK TO:

DREAM - INT. SPRINGER SHOW SET - SOUNDSTAGE - DAY

Jerry sits in his chair on the dais.

JERRY
And just like that, *The Jerry
Springer Show* was born.

INT. CINCINNATI SPRINGER SHOW SET - SOUNDSTAGE - DAY

A CREW builds the set. HAMMER AND DRILL SOUNDS abound. Jerry is on set, looking for Dubrow. Jerry finds Dubrow chatting up Richard Dominick in the hall.

DUBROW
Speak of the devil! There's the man
who's making it all happen.

JERRY
Burt, I have a few questions--

DUBROW
Jerry, meet Richard Dominick. He's
a writer and producer helping us
get off the ground.

Jerry and Dominick SHAKE HANDS.

JERRY
You're a writer? Written for
anything I might have read?

DOMINICK
SNL, National Lampoon, Cracked,
Penthouse, Weekly World News.

JERRY
Sleaze and comedy. I like it.
Except I'd say Weekly World News is
more obscene than Penthouse. Burt,
can I talk to you for a second?

Dominick WALKS AWAY.

JERRY
Do you think this smut broker is
the type of guy to help us?

DUBROW
Don't worry, Jerry. He's young and
he knows what's happening. Being
hip is a form of intelligence!

JERRY
But his credentials...

DUBROW

Those are all famous outlets. Maybe not for the right reasons, but you can see why I hired him.

JERRY

Fine. Anyway, I had some questions--

Dubrow NOTICES something. He SIGNALS Jerry to hold.

DUBROW

Hold that thought.

Dubrow leaves. Jerry is clearly FRUSTRATED. Jerry wanders the set. He's amazed by the monument erected in his honor. As he walks, he bumps into Dominick by some SOUND EQUIPMENT.

JERRY

That Burt, he's kind of all over the place.

DOMINICK

Burt's in his own little world. He's the one who's gotta make sure everything is running smooth on all levels. If it ain't related to ratings, it's a lower priority.

JERRY

The least he could do is listen to my questions.

DOMINICK

Don't take it personal. That means he's got faith in you. I'd be happy to try and answer any questions.

JERRY

Great, thank you. First question: do I get my own parking space?

INT. CINCINNATI SPRINGER SHOW SET - DRESSING ROOM - LATER

Jerry sits before a VANITY as a HAIRDRESSER (20s) PARTS HIS HAIR to the side.

Later, Jerry puts on a STIFF, DONAHUE-ESQ JACKET. He MODELS for Dubrow, Dominick, the Hairdresser, and a STYLIST.

DUBROW

Looks like we've got a winner!

JERRY

It's nice; a bit stiff. This is the kind of suit I'd get buried in.

DUBROW

That's because you're drop-dead gorgeous, my friend! Give it some time, you'll get used to it.

INT. LOVELAND SPRINGER HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAYS LATER

Jerry, Katie, and Micki sit on the couch watching TV.

ON SCREEN: A 1990 EPISODE OF DONAHUE WHERE DONAHUE DISCUSSES POLITICAL AND RACIAL MATTERS WITH MINISTER LOUIS FARRAKHAN.

JERRY

These are the discussions my show needs: contemplating the legacies and failures of civil rights.

KATIE

Will that be the show's focus?

JERRY

Eventually. Production wants us to start off wholesome, secure a base. Then we start doing Donahue stuff.

Jerry POINTS at the TV.

JERRY

That's my future.

MICKI

So two different channels will air the same show? You should be yourself, Jerry.

JERRY

I will be myself. Just in a different wrapping.

INT. CINCINNATI SPRINGER SHOW SET - SOUNDSTAGE - DAY

It's the first episode of *The Jerry Springer Show*. Jerry wears a STIFF GRAY SUIT. An AUDIENCE of RESPECTABLY DRESSED PEOPLE mindlessly CLAP.

Jerry holds a MICROPHONE and LOOKS AT THE CAMERA as the show is underway. Jerry is STIFF, but COMFORTABLE.

JERRY

Hello. Welcome to the Jerry Springer Show. My first guest today is Jane: a woman who hasn't seen her children in 35 years.

Jerry walks over to the DAIS where JANE (50s) sits in a chair. Jerry takes a seat next to her.

JERRY

Jane, tell us how this happened to you and your family.

JANE

Well Jerry, my first husband was quite abusive...

Dubrow and Dominick stand in a corner monitoring Jerry.

DUBROW

(to Dominick)
He's a natural.

Jane SOBS and Jerry hands her a TISSUE.

JERRY

I think it's time we take some questions from the audience.

Jerry walks up the AISLE and hands the microphone to a MAN.

MAN

Do you think you'd recognize your son if you saw him today?

JANE

I'm not sure...

MAN

Hi Mom!

The man RUNS DOWN THE AISLE and HUGS JANE. The audience CHEERS AND GOES WILD.

INT. LOVELAND SPRINGER HOME - LIVINGROOM - DAY

Micki watches Jerry's show.

ON SCREEN: JANE AND HER SON HUG AS JERRY CLAPS.

JERRY
(on TV)
That's what we do here--bring
families together.

INT. CINCINNATI SPRINGER SHOW SET - DUBROW'S OFFICE - DAY

Dubrow and Dominick sit at Dubrow's DESK as they look over
the initial sweeps.

DOMINICK
So here are the ratings for our
first batch of shows.

DUBROW
They're respectable, like Jerry. Do
you think it's enough?

DOMINICK
I was talking to some friends over
at Penthouse and I got some ideas.

Jerry STORMS into the room.

JERRY
Burt, Burt, I got it: Oliver North.

Dubrow and Dominick STARE at Jerry.

DUBROW
What?

JERRY
Let's get him while he's hot!

DOMINICK
You think Oliver North is hot?

JERRY
The election's coming up. Bush
isn't polling well, so we might be
reaching the end of the Reagan era.
Might as well cover it before all
these guys become dinosaurs.

DOMINICK
With all due respect, Jerry, I
think I have something a little
more interesting.

JERRY
More interesting than high-treason?

DOMINICK

Nudists.

JERRY

Nudists?

DOMINICK

Nudists.

JERRY

Look, I want a chance for Oliver North to be fully exposed here.

DOMINICK

Or we could have people who literally expose themselves.

Dubrow SITS BACK in his chair and assesses the options.

DUBROW

Jerry, you know, your ratings are fine. We're middle of the pack, so we've got to find a direction.

JERRY

I had the same problem when I was an anchor. People want the hard-hitting stuff. Nudists and that other crap is a cheap ploy. People get desensitized to that.

DUBROW

You wouldn't be here if I didn't trust your gut. I'll have our people contact North and we'll try to get his butt in the hot seat.

JERRY

Believe me, this show will be a real eye-opener.

INT. CINCINNATI SPRINGER SHOW SET - SOUNDSTAGE - DAY

Jerry interviews OLIVER NORTH (late 40s) on the dais.

JERRY

You knew when talking with the Iranians about the hostages, that the President said, 'We will not deal with the terrorists', he was telling other countries 'please don't deal with the Iranians,' you knew that was wrong.

NORTH

And even to this day, in his own memoirs, President Reagan says we didn't *really* trade arms for hostages because...

Dubrow stands next to the CAMERAMAN. The Cameraman YAWNS. Dubrow struggles to stay engaged.

INT. CINCINNATI SPRINGER SHOW SET - DUBROW'S OFFICE - LATER

The next ratings sweep has been released. Dubrow and Dominick sit at the desk and look them over. Jerry is with them.

DUBROW

We actually did worse. They're gonna pull the plug on us.

JERRY

I don't get it. That was a thoughtful conversation with a major political figure.

DOMINICK

You say that like it's a good thing. That's the problem.

Dubrow starts PACING the room.

DUBROW

This show needs retooling. Let's think big. We'd have a larger market in Chicago...

DOMINICK

Chicago is doing great right now, what, with Oprah and all.

JERRY

I don't know if Micki would be alright with us moving to Chicago.

Dubrow gets closer to Jerry.

DUBROW

If you want to stay on air, you're going to have to make some sacrifices. Which reminds me: Rich, what were those ideas you had?

DOMINICK

(wiping hands in air)
"Dwarves are People Too".
(MORE)

DOMINICK (CONT'D)

Dwarven equality is the final frontier of civil rights! Plus, think how adorable they'll look in their little suits!

JERRY

Mocking the disabled is your solution?

DUBROW

You've got it all wrong!

DOMINICK

If they're going to cancel us, why not go out with a final hurrah and do what no one else is doing.

JERRY

I don't know if I can do this.

DUBROW

We've got a couple more ratings cycles to fix this thing. If you want to captain a sinking ship, be my guest. But Rich's offering us a life raft. It's your call, captain.

JERRY

I love what I'm doing and I'll do whatever it takes to stay on air.

DOMINICK

Excellent. But before you go, how do you feel about strippers?

Jerry RAISES AN EYEBROW.

DOMINICK

On the show. You can learn more about America in the cocaine-laced dressing rooms of strip clubs than you can in the halls of congress.

JERRY

Like I said: whatever it takes.

INT. CHICAGO O'HARE AIRPORT - GATE - NIGHT

Jerry waits to board his plane. The SIGN at his gate reads: CHICAGO-ON TIME.

JERRY (V.O)

Micki refused to move. All of Katie's resources were in Cincinnati, and I promised our days of moving were over. I was back to irregular work hours, commuting to Chicago with an increasingly irregular work setting.

MUSIC: "LIVING IN AMERICA" BY JAMES BROWN

INT. SPRINGER SHOW SET - SOUNDSTAGE - LATER

The current Springer Show set. On the dais, a LITTLE PERSON (30s) sits in a chair while Jerry STANDS WITH THE AUDIENCE. There's a TITLE at the bottom NEXT TO THE JERRY SPRINGER LOGO that reads: "DWARVES ARE PEOPLE TOO!".

LITTLE PERSON

And I think clearing up these misconceptions will show that we're just like everyone else, Jerry.

JERRY

Of course, regardless of our skin color or size, we're all people deserving of love and respect.

The AUDIENCE RESPECTFULLY CLAPS.

INT. SPRINGER SHOW SET - SOUNDSTAGE - A DIFFERENT DAY

On the dais, a GUEST, MOTHER OF AN ALBINO (40s) sits with her ALBINO SON (8) while Jerry stands with the AUDIENCE. There's a TITLE at the bottom NEXT TO THE JERRY SPRINGER LOGO that reads: "I GAVE BIRTH TO AN ALBINO!".

GUEST MOTHER

And I think once people get past cheap stereotypes, they'll find these kids are like everyone else.

JERRY

It's important to understand that, while people may have physical differences, we all want the same things out of life.

The AUDIENCE RESPECTFULLY CLAPS.

JERRY (V.O)

The show got raunchier and our audience got younger. Just like when I was mayor, I resonated with the youth.

INT. SPRINGER SHOW SET - SOUNDSTAGE - DIFFERENT DAY

On the dais, a SCANTILY CLAD PORNSTAR sits while Jerry STANDS WITH THE AUDIENCE, who looks noticeably younger. There's a TITLE at the bottom NEXT TO THE JERRY SPRINGER LOGO that reads: "I SLEPT WITH 250 MEN IN 10 HOURS!".

PORNSTAR

I think the choices I make empower me as a woman and a performer.

JERRY

Whatever 2 or 251 consenting adults do behind closed doors is really none of our business and undeserving of society's scorn.

The YOUNG AUDIENCE CLAPS THUNDEROUSLY and WHISTLES.

JERRY (V.O)

We tried to keep things respectful, but the more out-there things got, the better the ratings. The show snowballed from there.

INT. SPRINGER SHOW SET - SOUNDSTAGE - A DIFFERENT DAY

On the dais, THREE MALE STRIPPERS each DANCE on STRIPPER POLES. Jerry stands with the AUDIENCE which seems to be mostly COLLEGE STUDENTS. There's a title at the bottom that reads: "MALE STRIPPER COMPETITION!"

JERRY (V.O)

Given enough time, a snowball will turn into an avalanche.

The AUDIENCE HOOTS AND HOLLERS as MUSIC BLASTS.

JERRY

Wow, the audience loves the competition. Me, personally, strippers rub me the wrong way.

Dominick sits as BY A SOUND BOARD and presses the WOMP WOMP sound effect. The audience LAUGHS.

INT. SPRINGER SHOW SET - DUBROW'S OFFICE - DAY

CHYRON: A COUPLE HUNDRED SHOWS LATER

Jerry, Dubrow, and Dominick look at ratings, ecstatic.

DUBROW

We're turning this ship around! NBC
wants to syndicate us!

Dubrow REPEATEDLY KISSES Dominick on the forehead.

DUBROW

It's all thanks to you two!
Especially this wunderkind!

Dominick LIGHTS A CIGAR as Dubrow continues to kiss him.

DOMINICK

I do what I can.

DUBROW

And what you do is a lot! Any ideas
for next season?

DOMINICK

I've got some things brewing.

Dominick CRACKS HIS FINGERS.

JERRY

Now that we've secured some nice
shares, I have some ideas.

Dubrow WAVES DISMISSIVELY.

DUBROW

That's great Jerry, we'll get to
you. But Dom, gimme the good stuff!

DOMINICK

(puffing on cigar)
I was thinking...
(exhales)
More strippers and pornstars.

DUBROW

Genius!

Jerry THROWS HIS HANDS IN THE AIR.

JERRY

We're doing strippers and pornstars
to death!

DOMINICK

I wish.

JERRY

I saw an interesting piece on the news about hate groups. We should bring them on to be challenged.

DUBROW

Hate groups are yesterday's news. We're in a colorblind society.

DOMINICK

Hang on. I found this family: the dad is a Nazi minister and he's raising his kids to be the Fourth Reich. They could make for some thought-provoking TV.

JERRY

Yes! When I was mayor...

DUBROW

Sure, sure. Dom, set it up. Let's keep this train wreck going.

INT. SPRINGER SHOW SET - SOUNDSTAGE - DAY - WEEKS LATER

On the dais sits REV. AUGUST KREIS (40s), a BURLY MAN WITH A BEARD AND GLASSES WEARING A BLACK SHIRT AND CLERICAL COLLAR, he sits with TWO DAUGHTERS (TEENS), also WEARING BLACK.

Jerry stands with the AUDIENCE as Kreis speaks.

KREIS

People can be whatever religion they want. I choose to raise my children Christian Identity.

JERRY

Call it what you will, you're teaching your children to hate.

KREIS

I teach them to love the good, hate the bad. The Jews are the race of the devil and I hate you.

JERRY

He's just mad I didn't invite him to my bar mitzvah.

Richard plays HAVA NAGILA on the sound board. The audience LAUGHS AND CLAPS.

KREIS

Invite me to your hanging and we'll
be fine, Jew Boy.

Jerry is a little shook. Dominick and Dubrow congregate in the corner and talk to each other.

DUBROW

Should we cut to commercial?

DOMINICK

Let's hold off. I think the real
show is just getting started.

Jerry composes himself and continues the interview.

KREIS

I'm sick of my family being
indoctrinated in a multicultural
society, in universities, with this
Holocaust myth--

JERRY

I know you're just trying to get my
goat with the insults--

KREIS

Get your goat? I got your mom in
the trunk of my car. Weren't they
all turned into soap, lampshades...

The audience HOWLS with anger as Jerry approaches the dais.

JERRY

You know the difference between me
and you is I don't hate you. I hate
what you've done to your children.
They're ruined.

KREIS

My children aren't ruined. They're
doing just fine.

DAUGHTER #1

Oh, I'm ruined?

JERRY

(to daughter #1)
Yeah, you are.

The audience ROARS.

JERRY

And it's not about the six million
we know died--

KREIS

We don't know.

JERRY

We *do* know. They're not hiding.

KREIS

You say six million, I say six
million more.

Jerry GETS IN KREIS'S FACE WITH HIS FINGER.

JERRY

You shut your fucking face!

Kreis STANDS UP as SECURITY rushes over to PRY the men apart.
Jerry and Kreis get close, but no hits are exchanged. The
audience goes CRAZY.

AUDIENCE

Jer-ry! Jer-ry! Jer-ry!

DOMINICK

Cut to commercial!

ON SCREEN: A SURVIVAL INSURANCE COMMERCIAL

BACK TO:

INT. SPRINGER SHOW SET - SOUNDSTAGE - MOMENTS LATER

The Kreis family is back in their chairs and Jerry walks
amongst the audience.

JERRY

Ok, welcome back. Let me first
apologize, cause no matter how bad
it gets, I should never lose my
cool, and I did. I didn't think
he'd get under my skin--he did, and
I'm sorry about that. Let's try to
continue with the show and get some
more peaceful discussion going.

INT. LOVELAND SPRINGER HOME - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Jerry is home having dinner after the racist incident. He's
clearly distraught as Micki and Katie (18) eat.

KATIE

Mom, me and my friends were looking at prom dresses today. I've got some picked out. What do you think?

Katie pulls out some POLAROIDs of PROM DRESSES.

MICKI

Ooh, these are cute! You gals get to show off your figures a lot more than we did! We basically wore wrinkled doilies. Want me to go with you to try them on?

KATIE

That would be great!

MICKI

Take a look, Jer.

Jerry, still in his own head, doesn't look at the photos.

JERRY

Lookin good, Katie.

Micki STARES at Jerry, but moves on.

MICKI

Have you got a date yet?

KATIE

We're going as a group, but there's one guy...

MICKI

Tell! Tell! You hear that Jerry?

Jerry is still in his own world.

JERRY

Yeah, that's really something.

MICKI

Jerry, this is an important moment in your daughter's life. You're hardly home as it is, and even when you are, your mind is in Chicago.

KATIE

It's ok, Mom. Dad, how was work?

Jerry ignores Katie's question.

JERRY

Do you have any idea the stress I'm under? I'm catching two flights a day, interviewing perverts and degenerates so I can give you all this. And you have the audacity to tell me I don't do enough?

MICKI

Jerry, you know that we appreciate your sacrifices, but--

JERRY

I tune out of one conversation and suddenly I'm the villain.

MICKI

Don't take that tone with me. Not in front of our daughter.

Katie STARTS CRYING, GETS UP, and LEAVES THE TABLE.

JERRY

Katie! Come back!
(to Micki)
She's gone. Now do you want to have this conversation?

MICKI

You so don't get it.

Micki stands up, takes her plate and WALKS AWAY.

JERRY

Now you're leaving? I'll wait here until you're ready to be civil.

Jerry goes back to EATING HIS DINNER.

BACK TO:

DREAM - INT. SPRINGER SHOW SET - SOUNDSTAGE - DAY

Jerry and a CRYING Micki sit on the dais. Host Jerry TAKES A KNEE next to Micki and offers her a BOX OF TISSUES.

HOST JERRY

It seems like Micki wasn't the only one hurting. Let's bring Katie out here and get her side of the story!

Jerry GETS UP from his seat and BLOCKS the ENTRANCE DOORS.

JERRY

Absolutely not! I never want her to be a part of this circus.

HOST JERRY

It's not great for ratings, but we'll focus on you two then.

BEGIN MONTAGE

-ON SCREEN: FOOTAGE FROM MORTAL KOMBAT VIDEO GAME. KANO RIPS OUT SONYA BLADE'S HEART

-ON SCREEN: CRAZY FOOTAGE FROM THE JERRY SPRINGER SHOW

-ON SCREEN: FOOTAGE OF GEORGE H.W. BUSH AT THE 1992 RNC

BUSH

We're going to keep trying to strengthen the American family. To make them more like the Waltons and less like the Simpsons.

-ON SCREEN: FOOTAGE OF THE LATE SHOW WITH DAVID LETTERMAN

LETTERMAN

There are more rumors circulating that President Clinton may have had extra-marital affairs. Clinton's a big admirer of JFK, and now America has gone from Camelot to Cum-alot.

PAUL SHAFFER PLAYS FUNNY NOTES on his KEYBOARD

END MONTAGE

INT. NEWS DESK - NIGHT

A LIMBAUGH-ESQUE PUNDIT looks at the camera.

PUNDIT

That is the latest sample of the Hollywood cesspool. With the wanton disregard for morality in the White House, it's no surprise that the media is following suit.

INT. SPRINGER SHOW SET - SOUNDSTAGE - DAY

Jerry and Dominick look over IDEAS for the show.

DOMINICK

How about a 70-pound baby? His name is Zack and, I'm telling you, this kid is massive. I bet mom's real cavernous after passing Shamu.

JERRY

Let's skip the big baby for now. Although I do like the idea of someone shitting where they eat.

DOMINICK

Ok, well we've got a 700-pound woman whose kid has to take care of her. I bet we can get junior to talk about wiping mama's shitbox.

JERRY

That's disgusting. Viewers will love it. Book it.

Dominick gives Jerry a PLAYFUL SLAP on the cheek.

DOMINICK

That's my boy!

JERRY (V.O.)

The right amount of success can desensitize you to a lot of life's obscenities. I kept working on the show and tried to make time for Micki, but it was hard.

INT. CONVENTION CENTER - MULTIPURPOSE ROOM - DAY

Jerry sits at a BOOTH, SIGNING AUTOGRAPHS. A LONG LINE OF FANS FILLS the room. Jerry's clearly the most popular attraction, outshining adjacent C-LIST CELEBRITIES.

JERRY (V.O.)

I couldn't leave the house without being mobbed by adoring fans. I felt like a rockstar, like a Jewish Jagger. Being recognized everywhere felt like home. To me, at least.

INT. LOVELAND SPRINGER HOME, BEDROOM - EVENING

Micki is DOLLED UP sitting on the bed as Jerry looks through his TIES. He's torn between TWO GREEN TIES that are almost identical. He holds up BOTH OPTIONS.

JERRY

What do you think, Mick. Should I go with the basil or the pine?

MICKI

Those ties are identical.

JERRY

Perhaps to the undiscerning eye!

MICKI

Can we just do something quiet tonight? Maybe catch a movie?

JERRY

C'mon, I deal with screens all day! I want to take the love of my life out on the town and show the world how beautiful she is! And I don't think I'm looking half bad these days. But I'll look like a real schmuck if I pick the wrong tie.

MICKI

Every outing doesn't need to be an event, Jerry. And not every meal needs to be paired with Armani.

Jerry approaches his wife.

JERRY

This is one of the few nights I have off. I'm sorry I get carried away, but I want tonight to be about us.

MICKI

In that case, I vote for the sage.

Jerry SMACKS his head for not going with the obvious answer.

JERRY

Of course! I know you said every meal doesn't need to be paired with Armani, but it hides all my flaws!

Jerry turns and smiles at Micki, who FORCES A SMILE.

INT. FANCY RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A CANDLE-LIT DINING ROOM with WHITE TABLE CLOTHS and a JAZZ BAND. The WHO'S-WHO of Cincinnati dine here. There's a LINE in the LOBBY, but Jerry leads Micki to the MAÎTRE D'.

MAÎTRE D'
I'm sorry sir, but there's a line--

He LOOKS UP and sees Jerry.

MAÎTRE D'
Mr. Springer! I will seat you and
your lovely wife right away.

The maître d' leads them to the nicest table in the center.

MAÎTRE D'
Your waiter will be with you
shortly.

Jerry and Micki sit and look at the MENU. PATRONS STARE.

MICKI
Jerry, this is lovely, but is it
really necessary?

JERRY
I've been a real jerk lately, and
I'm sorry for that. No one deserves
to unwind more than you do.

MICKI
I *could* go for a glass of wine.

Micki looks over the WINE LIST but notices FANCY PATRONS
MURMURING amongst themselves staring. She looks concerned.

MICKI
That couple over in the corner
keeps looking at us.

JERRY
Let 'em look. You get used to it.

A COUPLE (blue-nose types, 50s), flag their WAITER down.

BLUE-NOSE MAN
Excuse me. Would it be possible to
dine in another section?

WAITER
Is something wrong, sir?

BLUE-NOSE WOMAN
(looking at Jerry)
We don't care for the view.

The couple RISES and the waiter takes them to another area.

MICKI

They just left. They kept staring at us and now they're gone.

JERRY

So the wasps go back to their hive. Big whoop. This menu looks great. Anything catch your eye?

MICKI POV: Another COUPLE POINTS and ROLLS THEIR EYES at Jerry. Another PATRON makes a DISGUSTED FACE.

MICKI

Jerry, I think all these people are talking about us.

JERRY

No, they're talking about me. Or rather, my show. Pay them no mind. This night is about us.

People continue to leave the dining room. A WAITER escorts a DOWAGER (70s) as she leaves.

DOWAGER

You should be ashamed of yourself. The filth you produce--it's no wonder America is turning into a third-world country.

JERRY

Always nice to meet a fan.

Micki BURIES HER FACE in embarrassment. A COLLEGE-AGED WAITER approaches the table.

YOUNG WAITER

Welcome to the Precinct. I'll be your waiter this evening. Can I start you off with some hors d'oeuvres or an aperitif?

MICKI

Actually, we were just leaving.

Micki RISES FROM HER SEAT and walks off. Jerry QUICKLY RISES.

JERRY

Micki, wait!

YOUNG WAITER

Mr. Springer, I'm a huge fan of your show. Me and my roommates try to watch or record every episode.

INT. DINER - LATER

A run-of-the-mill diner, which caters to the rank and file. Jerry and Micki sit in a BOOTH, finishing CHEESEBURGERS.

JERRY

You were right. Nice and quiet was the way to go.

Micki is clearly still upset. Jerry pulls out WADS OF CASH and lays down a GENEROUS TIP.

JERRY

You ready to leave?

MICKI

Sure. Let's go home.

As they rise to leave, some BLUE COLLAR FANS block their path. A NERVOUS FAN with his CAP IN HIS HANDS leads the pack.

NERVOUS FAN

Excuse me, Mr. Springer. I didn't wanna bother you while you and the Mrs. were eating. But me and the ol' ball and chain are entirely enamored with your show. Could we trouble you for an autograph?

Micki tugs at Jerry's jacket.

MICKI

Jerry, I'm tired. Can we please go?

JERRY

Micki, these are the people that paid for this meal. The least I can do is give them my Johnny Hancock.

Jerry hands his KEYS to Micki.

JERRY

Go ahead and start the car. I'll be out in 5 minutes, tops.

As Micki leaves, fans SWARM Jerry until their presence completely obstructs Jerry from her view.

EXT. DINER - PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Micki sits in the passenger seat of their BENTLEY. She's holding back tears. She waits.

CHYRON: TWENTY MINUTES LATER

Micki has her head on the DASHBOARD. She's SOBBING.

Jerry EXITS the diner, WAVING GOOD BYE to the HORDE OF FANS.

JERRY

Thank you for watching! You guys made me who I am. If you want to see me, you know where to find me.

Jerry enters the car BEAMING, not noticing Micki.

JERRY

They really love me. What a night. We should do this more often.

He finally notices Micki crying.

JERRY

What's wrong?

MICKI

This isn't what I signed up for.

JERRY

Fame has its cost, but look at the luxuries it's afforded us.

MICKI

What kind of man makes his wife sit in a car while he abandons her for a bunch of strangers? Especially on a date that he planned!

JERRY

I'm sorry--

MICKI

I took you back after you betrayed my trust and since then you've done it over and over again. This time it's not with a hooker, it's with any soul who gives you a sliver of attention. You're the whore, Jerry. And I'm fucking sick and tired of being an afterthought. I'm done.

Jerry starts to get teary-eyed.

JERRY

Mick, I'm really sorry. I thought--

MICKI
Just drive me home, Jerry.

BACK TO:

DREAM - INT. SPRINGER SHOW SET - SOUNDSTAGE - DAY

Jerry sits in his chair, saddened by the memory.

JERRY
Looking back, I'm surprised Micki
stuck around as long as she did.
Even now, I'm surprised she's here--

Jerry looks over and Micki's chair is EMPTY. The audience is gone. He's alone on stage. His only company, his other self.

INT. LOVELAND SPRINGER HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

MOVERS HAUL BOXES of Jerry's possessions outside. Jerry stands by Katie. Micki has her back turned.

JERRY
(to Katie)
I know you're off to college soon,
but you can visit me in Chicago on
the weekends.

Katie TEARFULLY NODS and HUGS him. Jerry walks over to Micki and stands in front of her.

JERRY
Mick, I want to apologize--

MICKI
Just go.

Jerry PICKS UP A BOX and heads for the door.

INT. JERRY'S CHICAGO HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A LUXURIOUS HOME. There is no furniture set up yet. Jerry is surrounded by PILES OF BOXES.

MUSIC: "THE GRAND TOUR" BY GEORGE JONES

Jerry sits on the floor eating a meal alone. He eventually falls asleep amidst his boxes.

JERRY (V.O.)
 With my marriage over and my family falling apart, the only constant was my surrogate family that made up *The Jerry Springer Show*.

INT. SPRINGER SHOW SET - OFFICE - DAYS LATER

Burt sits at his desk. Jerry and Dominick sit across.

DUBROW
 Jerry. I'm leaving you.

JERRY
 Why?! The ratings are great!

DUBROW
 Exactly. The boys upstairs love what I've done with this once sinking ship. They're calling me up to the big leagues.

JERRY
 What's going to happen to the show? I thought we were family!

Dubrow rises from his seat.

DUBROW
 This is like going off to college. You don't need me anymore. In this crazy experiment, you've got the best lab partner you could ask for.

Dubrow GESTURES to Dominick.

DUBROW
 Richard, I told them I want you to be the executive producer. This show is a family. And I'm a proud father. Me and Jerry made beautiful love and created this baby.

Jerry WINCES at the thought of making love to Dubrow.

DUBROW
 There comes a day when every man must send his daughter into the throes of another man. You are that man, Rich.

Dubrow KISSES Dominick REPEATEDLY on the forehead.

DUBROW
(whispering in Dom's ear)
You made me a very rich man. I
could kiss your forehead forever.

Jerry is STILL WINCING. Dominick takes the kisses with poise.

DOMINICK
Do you have any thoughts on where
the show should go?

Dubrow STOPS KISSING and WIPES his lips with a HANKERCHIEF.

DUBROW
That's not up to me anymore. Oprah
is still queen of Chicago, but
you're not far from the throne.
Just keep doing what you're doing.

Dubrow SHAKES Jerry and Dominick's hands, then SALUTES.

DUBROW
It's been an honor, gentlemen.

Dubrow EXITS, leaving Jerry and Dominick alone.

DOMINICK
(hyperventilating)
I've got so many ideas. Where to
begin? What do you think, Jerry?

JERRY
Honestly, I've just got so much
going on between the divorce and
Katie going off to college--I don't
know how much I've got left in me.

Dominick puts his hand on Jerry's shoulder.

DOMINICK
Sorry about Mick.

JERRY
It's probably for the best. Her
best, at least.

DOMINICK
I don't know much about women,
Jerry. But I do know that an idle
mind can be dispiriting. How bout
we focus on new show ideas to take
your mind off your troubles?

JERRY
Yeah, sure. Sounds good.

DOMINICK
(tents fingers)
I'll grab my stripper rolodex.

BACK TO:

DREAM - INT. SPRINGER SHOW SET - SOUNDSTAGE - DAY

Jerry sits as Host Jerry stands among the empty seats.

HOST JERRY
So you put all your eggs in one
basket and the handle broke.

JERRY
I had no choice at that point.
Katie was growing up so fast and
Micki wanted nothing to do with me.

Jerry looks at his feet.

JERRY
What else could I do?

INT. SPRINGER SHOW SET - HALLWAY - DAY

Jerry holds a 90s MOTOROLA CELLPHONE as he PACES the hall.
He's calling Katie.

JERRY
(to phone)
Hey! I've been calling. You ok?

KATIE (O.S.)
(through phone)
Sorry, Dad. I've been busy with
school. Everything's going great.

JERRY
I got us tickets to a Yankee game
this weekend if you're free.

KATIE
I've got some plans with friends.

JERRY
What about the next weekend?

KATIE
Mom's coming to visit.

JERRY
Well when you're free, don't forget
to give your dad a call. I love
you. Tell your mom hi for me.

KATIE
Love you too.

Jerry FLIPS HIS PHONE SHUT as Dominick approaches.

DOMINICK
You busy, Jerry? I can come back
when you're done on the phone.

JERRY
Nothing important. What's up?

DOMINICK
We should get more cultural, more
international. What do you think of
this? "Tijuana Strip Club Girls".

HOST JERRY (V.O.)
So you're the one who signed off on
this madness?

JERRY (V.O.)
I didn't just sign off on it--I
embraced it.

JERRY
Let's do it. Bring on the girls.

INT. YANKEE STADIUM - BOX SEATS - DAY

A YANKEE GAME IS UNDERWAY. WADE BOGGS hits a HOME RUN. The
CROWD ROARS. Jerry HOOTS and HOLLERS and CLAPS.

JERRY
We might have a chance to win this
year. Having a good time, honey?

A BUSTY LATINA (20s) sits next to Jerry holding a HOT DOG.

BUSTY LATINA
Of course! You are so nice to me.

JERRY
You were great today. It's my way
of thanking you.

(MORE)

JERRY (CONT'D)

After this I'm taking you to the 21 Club. New York's finest.

The Busty Latina is EXCITED.

BUSTY LATINA

Then I'll pass on this hot dog and save my appetite for later.

She WINKS at Jerry and SUCKS on the hot dog before taking a SMALL BITE. Jerry SMILES and BLUSHES.

BEGIN MONTAGE:

MUSIC: "SHORT DICK MAN" BY 20 FINGERS FT. GILLETTE

INT. SPRINGER SHOW SET - HALLWAY - DAY

GUESTS of ALL SHAPES AND SIZES fill the halls, including PORN STARS, OBESE PEOPLE, A SMOKING CHILD, and A LEATHER GIMP.

JERRY (V.O.)

With Dominick at the helm, our ratings continued to climb. We had to keep things dialed to 11. I grew close to some of my guests.

A PRODUCER beckons CONJOINED TWINS from the hall.

INT. FANCY HOTEL - LOBBY - DAY

A CROWD exits a conference room into the lobby. They bump into KENNY (20s), A MAN MISSING HIS LOWER HALF.

JERRY (V.O.)

Other talk show guests are alike; they keep their problems contained to the show. Jerry Springer guests are their own breed.

Angered by their literal oversight, Kenny CLIMBS atop a LUGGAGE CART and SWINGS around the top bar.

KENNY

Hey, fuckers! Do you see me now?!

PEOPLE start SCREAMING and RUNNING. Kenny CACKLES.

INT. FANCY HOTEL - ROOM - DAY

A BELLHOP holding FOOD knocks on the door. An unseen MOTHER (40s) and DAUGHTER (20s) are in the room.

MOTHER

It's open. Come on in.

The bellhop opens the door and enters.

BELL HOP

Who ordered the chicken tenders--

The bellhop sees the women NAKED and DROPS the food.

DAUGHTER

We was hopin you'd be dessert...

The bellhop FLEES IN TERROR.

INT. FANCY HOTEL - ROOM - THE NEXT DAY

The same mother and daughter are PACKING. They stuff ANYTHING THAT ISN'T NAILED DOWN into their luggage.

JERRY (V.O.)

Our guests caused so much chaos they were blacklisted from most Chicago hotels. Even in less discerning environments, they still suffered from rent-a-car syndrome.

I/E. MOTEL - ROOM - DAY

A HOUSEKEEPER stands outside the room and KNOCKS.

HOUSEKEEPER

Housekeeping!

No one answers, and she unlocks the door and enters. The housekeeper is in COMPLETE SHOCK, as the ENTIRE HOTEL ROOM is covered in FECES. She does the SIGNS OF THE CROSS.

INT. SPRINGER SHOW SET - PHONE BANK - DAY

INTERNS sit as PHONES RING. An INTERN answers a phone.

CALLER #1

I stole my 13-year-old's boyfriend.

Another INTERN answers a phone.

CALLER #2
I cut off my manhood.

Another INTERN answers a phone.

CALLER #3
My mother's my sister *and* my wife.

The intern's EYES WIDEN.

JERRY (V.O.)
After a while, every show tried to
be like mine. Which isn't saying
much; a monkey could do my job.
He'd look better on camera, too.

END MONTAGE

INSERT: CLIPS FROM VARIOUS 90S TALKSHOWS. RICKI LAKE, MAURY
POVICH, WITH THE FINAL CLIP BEING THE INFAMOUS JENNY JONES
INCIDENT INVOLVING THE MAN WHO KILLED HIS GAY ADMIRER.

INT. NEWSROOM - NIGHT

Evening news program with an ANCHOR and Jerry.

CHYRON: IMAGE OF JENNY JONES SHOW AND THE MURDERED MAN

ANCHOR
Following the murder of Scott
Amedure after he professed love to
his male neighbor on the Jenny
Jones show, Americans ask, "Are
talkshows dangerous?". Joining us
tonight is host of his eponymous
talkshow, Jerry Springer.

JERRY
Thanks for having me.

ANCHOR
Jerry, do you think shows like
yours and Jenny Jones' nurture a
culture of violence?

JERRY
Mr. Amedure's murder tells us more
about society than it does about
our shows. Why, in 1995, do we
consider same-sex love humiliating?
The issue is violent homophobia.

ANCHOR

In light of the recent tragedy, Oprah Winfrey described some of her competitors' shows as "base" and had this to say:

INSERT: CLIP OF OPRAH

OPRAH

My intentions are much better. People see that. I know the difference. They may choose to watch the spectacle for a while. But it will have a short lifespan.

ANCHOR

Do you think there's any truth to Oprah's words?

JERRY

I respect Oprah. If you put her name on the ballot, I'd vote for her. But I'm going to respectfully disagree. America was built by iconoclasts who believed in this radical notion of freedom of speech. And I see myself as a purveyor of these values. These are real people with real problems. This is real life. I believe in democracy via the television screen. And our ratings prove that most Americans would agree.

ANCHOR

But what about the children, Jerry? Surely you can't think your show is appropriate for them.

JERRY

It's not! But it's the parents' job to monitor their children. And there are a lot worse displays of violence and immorality on TV than my show. I can assure you, no child has ever been hurt by my show.

INT. JERRY'S CHICAGO HOME - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Jerry is hosting Hanukkah, joined by Katie (20) who is visiting from college with her BOYFRIEND, MITCH (20). They are also joined by Micki, who is BEGRUDGINGLY there.

Everyone quietly eats. Jerry attempts to make eye contact with Micki, but she looks away.

JERRY

Mitch, what're you studying at the ol' learning factory?

MITCH

Polisci. Emphasis on public policy.

JERRY

Policy! You know, before the show I used to dabble in politics.

KATIE

You were mayor, Dad.

JERRY

I guess I was, wasn't I? Back then I remember--

MICKI

Can we talk about something else? Katie, how did you and Mitch meet?

KATIE

Through friends at a party.

MICKI

Are you guys taking things slow or--

MITCH

We're still figuring things out...

KATIE

Mom! Stop!

JERRY

You guys should figure things out sooner rather than later or you'll end up on my show.

Only Jerry laughs. There's an AWKWARD SILENCE.

INT. JERRY'S CHICAGO HOME - KITCHEN - LATER

Jerry stands at the sink doing dishes while Micki dries them.

JERRY

I'm so proud of Katie. All that she's accomplishing...

Micki remains silent.

JERRY

Sky's the limit with her. I'm glad we got her the help she needed.

MICKI

Otherwise she'd be a guest on your show?

JERRY

I meant that as a joke.

MICKI

With your daughter as the punchline?

JERRY

What's that supposed to mean?

MICKI

That show of yours where you gawk at people's hardships. It's a good thing Katie's so smart or you'd exploit her too.

JERRY

How dare you. I'm trying to help these people and give them a platform. Mainstream society--

MICKI

Just shut the fuck up, Jerry. It's not about your guests. It's always about you. Jerry always has a way to justify what Jerry wants.

Jerry is TAKEN ABACK.

MICKI

I'm only here because Katie begged me. I can't stand looking at you after all you put us through. You're lucky I love my daughter more than I hate you. Otherwise, you'd never see either of us again. You can finish cleaning this mess up. Happy Hanukkah, Jerry.

Micki puts the towel down and exits.

INT. SPRINGER SHOW SET - HALLWAY - DAY

Steve Wilkos talks to KLANSMEN who will be guests on today's show. The klansmen wear their ROBES, but hold their HOODS.

STEVE

Listen up. I don't want any funny business out there. All of us on security are active Chicago PD. Any crimes you commit here are within our jurisdiction and we will not hesitate to arrest and charge you. Have I made myself clear?

KLANSMAN #1

Yessir.

KLANSMAN #2

We're not looking for a fight, but we *will* defend ourselves if the Heebz want trouble.

STEVE

You are not security. You are not the law. Follow the rules.

INT. SPRINGER SHOW SET - DRESSING ROOM - LATER

Jerry gets dressed for the show, putting on his TIE. Dominick comes in accompanied by a FILM CREW.

DOMINICK

Hey Jerry baby. You ready to rock? Meet my friends from *48 Hours*. They're joining us today to get a look at how our show is made.

Jerry SHAKES HANDS with the crew members.

JERRY

Hey! Welcome to the American Dream.

The CAMERAMAN points the CAMERA at Jerry and *48 HOURS* PRODUCER holds a MICROPHONE up to Jerry.

48 HOURS PRODUCER

What can we expect to see on the show today?

JERRY

Richard and I were looking at the latest hate crime statistics and I couldn't believe how prevalent they still are in our supposed "colorblind" society. Today we have members from two extremist groups to help find the root of the issue.

48 HOURS PRODUCER

Which groups are your guests from?

JERRY

We've got some new KKK recruits and the Jewish Defense League. Their leader, Irv Rubin, is here. Should be a great discussion.

INT. SPRINGER SHOW SET - SOUNDSTAGE - LATER

We join mid-shoot. One of the klansmen is on a racist tirade. He wears his robes and hood, but with his face uncovered. Jerry stands in the audience looking nonplussed.

KLANSMAN

...you come from a Turkish mongrel race, a tribe from the Middle East that you don't even know what nationality you are! And half of the negroes in here don't either!

The CROWD boos. The klansman points at a BLACK MAN.

KLANSMAN

What country are you from, Black boy? You don't even know! You were a slave! And so were the Jews! And you still are!

Jerry looks at the camera and starts talking while the klansman continues to shout.

JERRY

When we come back we'll meet a controversial civil rights leader who says he's here to put the klan in their place. Stay with us.

Jerry walks over to Dominick and the 48 Hours crew offstage.

DOMINICK

How you doin' out there, Jerry?

JERRY

Nothing I haven't heard before. Irv and his guys ready?

DOMINICK

They're all set.

Steve Wilkos approaches the klansmen on the dais.

STEVE

Keep your insults directed at Jerry and the other guests. Attack our audience again and you're out.

The klansman grabs SOMETHING out of his pocket and slides it beneath his hood.

JERRY

Welcome back. Today we're talking to Klan members to see if they will give up their racist beliefs. My next guest says he's fighting-mad over the things our guests said today and he's going to set them straight. He's a controversial civil rights leader. He's the founder of the JDL, the Jewish Defense League. Here is Irv Rubin and his bodyguards Al and Joseph.

IRV RUBIN (50s) and his BODYGUARDS (30s) enter and WAVE TO THE CHEERING CROWD. The klansman STANDS UP and REMOVES HIS HOOD to reveal he is wearing a WHITE KIPPAH.

Angered, Rubin tries to SNATCH IT from the klansman's head. They begin to SCUFFLE and BOTH PARTIES DIVE INTO THE FRAY. SECURITY GUARDS and AUDIENCE MEMBERS join the brawl. CHAIRS and STOOLS FLY. Chaos reigns for several minutes.

The 48 Hours crew film Dominick as he JUMPS UP AND DOWN.

DOMINICK

Holy shit, this is great TV!

Dominick notices he's being recorded and COMPOSES HIMSELF. He rushes onstage to assist Jerry.

DOMINICK

Are you hurt?

JERRY

No. But we are so fucked.

INT. NEWSROOM - NIGHT

An ANCHOR sits at his NEWS DESK. FOOTAGE from the Irv Rubin/Klan fight is in the square.

ANCHOR

A decade ago, a fight on a talkshow would be news.

(MORE)

ANCHOR (CONT'D)

Now, fights like these are commonplace on *The Jerry Springer Show*. Parents gathered to protest what they see as a degeneration of common decency.

EXT. TV STUDIO - PARKING LOT - DAY

A GROUP OF ANGRY MOMS hold up PICKET SIGNS against sex and violence on TV. Some signs read: "CANCEL SPRINGER".

INT. SPRINGER SHOW SET - OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Jerry stands at the WINDOW looking out on a SEA of PROTESTERS. Jerry SHAKES HIS HEAD.

JERRY

Don't these people have jobs?

INT. SPRINGER SHOW SET - HALLWAY - DAY

Dominick BRISKLY WADDLES down the hall. He grips the LATEST SWEEPS like a baton.

INT. SPRINGER SHOW SET - OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Dominick BURSTS into the office with the BIGGEST SMILE YOU'VE EVER SEEN. He walks up to Jerry's DESK and SLAMS the papers.

DOMINICK

Hark! At your service, my liege.

Dominick takes a KNEE.

JERRY

The hell are you talking about?

DOMINICK

I bring tidings from the network most high!

JERRY

You seem the most high. Did they say anything about the protests? I'm afraid to go to my car!

DOMINICK

Pay the rabble no heed. For today, you are King Gerald, the Jew.

JERRY

In English? Modern American
vernacular?

DOMINICK

Our ratings. Since last year, we've
gone up 200%.

Dominick guides Jerry to the sweeps papers.

DOMINICK

You're number one. You beat Oprah.

Jerry sits down at his desk and composes himself.

JERRY

You serious?

DOMINICK

The Queen is dead. Long live the
King of Trash.

JERRY

I can't believe it. Even with all
this, we're on top.

Jerry gestures out the window.

DOMINICK

It's *because* of all that you're on
top. And no one can touch you.

Jerry's PHONE RINGS. Jerry ANSWERS.

JERRY

(to phone)

Yes, this is he. How did you get
this number? Oh, I see. Yes, I can
be there. No, thank you.

Jerry HANGS UP.

DOMINICK

Lemme guess, some news show wants
you on to start brown-nosing?

JERRY

No, it was someone from Harpo
Productions. Oprah beckons me.

DOMINICK

Don't drink anything she gives you.
I was never here.

Dominick SLINKS AWAY.

EXT. OPRAH'S CHICAGO MANSION - DAY

An OPULENT MANSION. Jerry wears his NICEST SUIT. As he raises his arm to knock on the door, the door OPENS first.

At the door is Oprah's BUTLER (50s, British).

BUTLER

Mr. Springer, we've been expecting you. Won't you come in?

INT. OPRAH'S CHICAGO MANSION - CONTINUOUS

The butler takes Jerry on a tour.

BUTLER

And here we have the awards room.

The room is FILLED WALL TO WALL with AWARD TROPHIES and PHOTOS, including MULTIPLE DAYTIME EMMY AWARDS, PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARDS, NAACP IMAGE AWARDS, and a PEABODY AWARD.

Jerry examines the Peabody Award and sees his reflection.

JERRY

Oprah's quite the underachiever.

BUTLER

Yes, very good, sir. If you'd follow me...

The butler leads Jerry to--

INT. OPRAH'S CHICAGO MANSION - SOLARIUM - DAY

An Edenic monument to Oprah. OPRAH (44), wearing ALL PURPLE, sits at a table READING *PARADISE* by Toni Morrison.

Accompanying her are OTHER DOMESTIC STAFF. Her butler approaches with Jerry.

BUTLER

Madame Winfrey, your guest.

Oprah LOWERS HER SUNGLASSES and PUTS DOWN HER BOOK.

OPRAH

Excellent. You're dismissed. As are the rest of you.

The domestic staff BOWS and exits.

OPRAH

Jerry! So glad you could make it.
Have a seat, please.

Jerry sits across from Oprah. She's GLOWING.

JERRY

This is quite the exquisite
domicile you've got here.

OPRAH

Years of hard work *have* paid off.

JERRY

For you and me both.

OPRAH

So I take it everything is well in
the Springer household?

Jerry hesitates.

JERRY

Yeah. Life is good.

OPRAH

Even after the divorce?

JERRY

Oh, you heard about that?

OPRAH

Jerry, I'm Oprah. I know
everything.

JERRY

It was for the best. We hadn't seen
eye-to-eye for a while. Or much of
each other for that matter.

OPRAH

And how's your daughter?

JERRY

Good! I hope...we're both so busy.
The show takes up most of my time.

OPRAH

Success is unforgiving. It steals
the best years of our lives. And
what do we have to show in return?
Material items. Lots of them.

(MORE)

OPRAH (CONT'D)

As a child, did you ever imagine you'd be beamed into millions of homes across the country?

JERRY

Not like this. I wanted to be president. Or at least a respected politician. Now I'm neither.

OPRAH

(smirking)

Do you not find yourself respectable? Are you not proud of your legacy?

JERRY

I'm sorry, did you bring me here to discuss my shortcomings?

OPRAH

I'm just making small talk. On the contrary, I brought you here to congratulate you. The ratings confirm that talk TV is Jerry's world and I'm just taking up space. I've wanted to take a step back for a while now, and you signed my show's death certificate.

JERRY

What? No! There could never be a Jerry without an Oprah. America needs both. My silly show is candy. Your show is medicine.

OPRAH

Thank you, Jerry. Alas, America has chosen junk food. TV is steadily turning into a circus of vulgarity. Pretty soon we'll have live sex and murder on daytime television. Your show isn't far behind. I'm sure you'll get there next season.

JERRY

I didn't *mean* to ruin America.

OPRAH

It's not your fault. You happened to have the right show at the right time. A good performer knows when to bow out, and that day might be coming for me.

JERRY

But America needs you!

OPRAH

Jerry, you misunderstand. This isn't a eulogy. It's a celebration. I have what I want. I'm focusing on what's truly important in my life. Sure, I could fight you for the top ratings slot, and I'd probably win that fight. But what would I sacrifice in the meantime?

Jerry TAKES IT ALL IN. SERVICE STAFF appear, pushing a CART with PLATES covered with CLOCHES. Jerry and Oprah are served LEMON HERB PASTA and CHICKEN.

OPRAH

Let me know what you think of the meal. I might feature it in the magazine I'm working on.

Oprah starts eating GRACEFULLY.

JERRY

Oprah, forgive me, but I think I'm going to skip the meal.

OPRAH

Is something not to your liking?

JERRY

Yeah, but it's not the food. This looks delicious and I expected nothing less. But I've got more on my plate than I can handle.

(beat)

And Oprah, you're a deliverance. I'm a dunce. America needs some portion control.

OPRAH

I'll take that into consideration.

JERRY

And one more thing. Can I have an autograph? I'm a really big fan.

Oprah LAUGHS and AUTOGRAPHS a MONOGRAMMED NAPKIN.

INT. JERRY'S CHICAGO HOME - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Jerry sits on the couch with his CELL PHONE. He looks at a FRAMED PHOTO of him, Katie, and Micki. He calls Micki.

MICKI
(over phone)
Hello?

JERRY
Micki, please don't hang up. I know it's too late to save our marriage but I think it's important that we have some kind of relationship to support Katie. I was hoping we could start a dialogue to--

MICKI
Goodnight, Jerry.

JERRY
Wait! I--

Micki HANGS UP. Jerry THROWS his cellphone.

BACK TO:

DREAM - INT. SPRINGER SHOW SET - SOUNDSTAGE - DAY

Jerry sits on the dais as Host Jerry takes it all in.

JERRY
That happened last week and its all I've been able to think about. I built an entertainment empire, but it's not enough. I'm the king of talk TV, but I feel like a jester.

HOST JERRY
I don't know any jesters that are ornamented with Armani suits and Swiss watches. Greedy words from the man who has it all.

JERRY
I *don't* have it all.

HOST JERRY
You certainly have everything that you've been coveting. You said it yourself: you made sacrifices to get what you really wanted.

JERRY

I guess professionally speaking, I have the Midas touch--

HOST JERRY

That's all that mattered to you. Everything else was disposable.

JERRY

Don't talk about my family that way. Everything I did was for them!

HOST JERRY

And where are they? You threw them out--no, no, you *drove them away* with your addiction to the limelight. If there's one thing I've learned, it's that there are some people *so poor*, all they have is money. Your show is all you have. Live in your gilded cage, and know it's one of your own making.

JERRY

That's not true--

HOST JERRY

This guy's beyond help. Steve, get him out of here. Let's move on to our next guest.

Steve Wilkos approaches and GRABS Jerry by the arm. Jerry JERKS out of his grip.

JERRY

Get your hands off me!

ANGERED, Jerry RISES from his seat and CHARGES Host Jerry in the stands. Host Jerry tries to PUSH HIM ASIDE but Jerry LUNGES at him and starts SWINGING.

Jerry TACKLES Host Jerry and starts WAILING ON HIM.

JERRY

I love my family! I would do anything for my family!

Jerry continues PUMMELING Host Jerry, whose FACE becomes a SMASHED AND BLOODY PULP. After some more punches, the lights GO DARK and Jerry is left alone with his BLOODY HANDS.

The dream studio and the actual studio MERGE.

Jerry is ASLEEP in the same chair. A PAGE wakes him.

PAGE

Mr. Springer, we need to get you to makeup.

Jerry is clearly BEWILDERED.

JERRY

Where's Dom?

PAGE

In his office--

Jerry JUMPS UP, PUSHES the page aside, and RUSHES AWAY TO--

INT. SPRINGER SHOW SET - OFFICE - DAY

Jerry BURSTS into Dominick's office. Dominick reads *THE WEEKLY WORLD NEWS* and smokes a CIGAR.

DOMINICK

Woah, sleeping beauty. Where's the fire?

JERRY

Rich, we need to talk. This isn't working for me.

DOMINICK

The horse?

JERRY

The show. I don't know if I can keep doing it.

DOMINICK

But Jerry, you're number one!

JERRY

This show has taken over my life. I'm estranged from my family, all I do is work, and what do I have to show for it? The money is nice but--

DOMINICK

Jerry, relax. You're rambling.

Jerry stops and TAKES SOME BREATHS.

DOMINICK

You're number one. You're allowed to take a break. You've earned it.
(MORE)

DOMINICK (CONT'D)

The show is pretty self-sufficient at this point. We've got the formula down.

JERRY

Earlier you said I couldn't leave and that we need to keep our momentum.

DOMINICK

I was just getting you psyched up for the show. We are daytime TV. All you need to do is show up. You got yourself to the top, and now you can coast.

JERRY

I really need to see my family.

DOMINICK

Then see them!

JERRY

Great. I'll see you later.

DOMINICK

Wait. We still have to film. Do you know how hard it is to transport a horse from rural Tennessee to Chicago? We had to pump him full of more trans than Bob Dole.

JERRY

Ok, well *next week* I'm taking time to rebuild the bridges I've burned.

DOMINICK

Good man. But today, your butt belongs to the show.

JERRY

Fair. I'm headed to makeup. I'll see you in a bit.

Jerry EXITS and goes to--

INT. SPRINGER SHOW SET - DRESSING ROOM - DAY

Jerry sits in front of a mirror. A MAKEUP ARTIST begins work on him. A PAGE approaches him.

PAGE

Mr. Springer, would you like that message from Micki now?

JERRY

Yeah, lay it on me.

PAGE

She was pretty vague, but she said it's about your daughter.

JERRY

Katie?!

Jerry RIPS OFF the BARBER CAPE and jumps out of his chair.

JERRY

Tell Richard I'm taking my vacation starting now. I'll deal with the repercussions later.

Jerry runs to--

INT. SPRINGER SHOW SET - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Jerry sees the HORSE TRAINER escorting the star of today's show--a LARGE, DAPPLE GREY STALLION.

HORSE TRAINER

Where should I put the horse?

JERRY

Not my job. Find a PA.

Jerry passes the horse and PATS IT on the nose.

JERRY

We got the day off today, buddy.

The horse NICKERS and Jerry rushes away.

I/E. NBC TOWER - PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Jerry pulls out his CELL PHONE and dials Micki.

MICKI

(through phone)

Well look who finally called.

JERRY

(to phone)

Sorry, I was caught up with work.

MICKI

What a surprise.

JERRY

You're right. I should have called as soon as I heard. You were always right. I should've been more available. But I just stopped the show so I could call you. What happened to Katie?

MICKI

What? Nothing happened.

JERRY

My assistant told me there was a problem with Katie.

MICKI

She's got a problem, but it's a good problem. She's graduating summa cum laude and Mitch won't be here for her graduation. She's trying to figure out who's going to walk her across the stage.

Jerry EXHALES with relief.

JERRY

That's great news!

MICKI

Yeah! Rest easy. You can call her after you...did you really cut the show short?

JERRY

When I heard there was something wrong with Katie, I sprang into action. I didn't even tell I production. I just left.

MICKI

Who are you and what've you done with Jerry?

JERRY

I assure you it's the same Jerry.

MICKI

I'm speechless. There's no fire to put out. Call Katie when you can.

JERRY

I will. And Micki? I love...our daughter. Thanks for being there when I wasn't.

MICKI

I love our daughter too, Jerry. I'll see you later.

Jerry hangs up the phone. He walks towards THE STUDIO but pauses before reentering. He CONTEMPLATES before pulling out his phone again. He PRESSES ZERO.

JERRY

(to phone)

Hello, operator? Connect me to the O'Hare ticketing office.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - LATER

Jerry stands in the hallway of a FANCY NEW YORK APARTMENT COMPLEX. He KNOCKS FRANTICALLY.

Katie OPENS THE DOOR. She ADJUSTS HER GLASSES.

KATIE

Dad? You're here already?

JERRY

Took the first flight I could get!

KATIE

When you said you were coming, I thought you meant this weekend.

JERRY

I've missed so much of your life. I needed to see you and tell you how important you are to me and--

KATIE

Dad, Dad, slow down. Come in, have a seat. Do you want some water?

INT. KATIE'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Jerry ENTERS the apartment and sits on the couch.

JERRY

I haven't stopped running since...well, the cab dropped me off. I didn't run from the airport.

KATIE

Don't overexert yourself.

JERRY

Katie, I'm sorry I haven't been there. That changes today. Today is all about you. I took work off.

KATIE

I really appreciate that, but I have plans tonight.

JERRY

I get it. Your friends have always had your back when I haven't--

KATIE

But Dad, I'm free this weekend.

JERRY

So am I!

KATIE

Perfect. We can spend some good quality time together.

JERRY

I'll grab a hotel and stay there so I won't cramp your style. I'll be here first thing Saturday, *not* unannounced. Think of some things you want to do.

KATIE

You're *my* guest too. You can also pick what we do.

JERRY

I was thinking we could go catch a Broadway show, maybe grab a bite at Katz's, and we could--

KATIE

We've got time to figure things out. Right now I *really* need to go. But I'm exited for a fun weekend. I love you, Dad.

Jerry breathes a SIGH OF RELIEF.

JERRY

I love you too, Katie. Be safe.

Jerry and Katie HUG and Jerry EXITS.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Jerry's phone VIBRATES. He puts it on silent. He looks at the screen, sees he has several voicemails, and listens.

DOMINICK (O.S.)
 (on phone)
 Jerry! What's the big idea?! Do you
 know how expensive stables are?

Jerry CLOSES THE PHONE.

JERRY
 (to himself)
 My weekend starts now.

EXT. YANKEE STADIUM - BOX SEATS - DAY

A GAME is underway. DEREK JETER hits a HOME RUN as the CROWD ROARS. Jerry STANDS and APPLAUDS.

JERRY
 Jeter's looking great! Another good
 year to be a Yankees fan. You
 having a good time, honey?

Katie is revealed to be sitting next to him EATING NACHOS.

KATIE
 Yeah! I can't remember the last
 time you took me to a Yankees game!

JERRY
 You were never a sports fan, but
 you've always loved stadium nachos.

A FLY BALL goes into the stands and A FIGHT breaks out. The crowd starts CHANTING as the fight plays on the JUMBOTRON.

CROWD
 Jer-ry! Jer-ry! Jer-ry!

KATIE
 Looks like you've got some fans
 here, Dad.

JERRY
 Eh, I'm off the clock. Tell me,
 who's walking with you? Because I'd
 be honored to walk my daughter...

The camera ZOOMS OUT. Katie and Jerry's conversation becomes INAUDIBLE as the fight continues.

INT. WEDDING VENUE - HALLWAY - DAY

Years have passed. Jerry is wearing a BLACK SUIT. He looks at himself in a MIRROR and adjusts his BLACK TIE before entering-

INT. WEDDING VENUE - DRESSING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Katie is being MADE UP by a WEDDING TEAM. She's accompanied by BRIDESMAIDS and Micki.

JERRY

Hey, Katie, ready to walk?

KATIE

Get out, Dad! We're still adding the final touches.

Everyone continues to help Katie prepare. Micki FLUFFS Katie's dress train. Jerry looks on lovingly.

KATIE

You're not supposed to see me yet!

Jerry smiles and exits to--

INT. WEDDING VENUE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Jerry waits in the hallway. Micki comes out shortly after.

MICKI

You're actually ready early.

JERRY

I wouldn't miss this for the world. Doesn't she look great?

MICKI

Beautiful.

JERRY

Looks like you lost your title of most beautiful bride.

Micki smiles.

JERRY

You did a good job raising her.

MICKI

We both did.

JERRY

It was mostly you. But I'm learning. You know, Katie could still be president someday...

Micki RAISES AN EYEBROW.

JERRY

Hey, I mean, who ever thought that I would be where I am?

They both laugh. Jerry looks at Micki.

JERRY

I love you, Micki.

Micki hesitates.

MICKI

I love you, Jerry.

They HUG and Jerry gives her a KISS ON THE CHEEK. One of the BRIDESMAIDS enters the hallway.

BRIDESMAID

Katie's ready to go.

INT. WEDDING VENUE - LATER

The BRIDAL MARCH plays. Katie WALKS DOWN THE AISLE with Jerry on her arm. They reach the ALTAR and Jerry HUGS HER and heads to his seat. The GROOM and RABBI are already at the altar.

RABBI

We're gathered here today...

EXT. WEDDING RECEPTION - LATER

A GARDEN COURTYARD with TABLES, CHAIRS, and a DANCE FLOOR. GUESTS sit at the tables. Jerry sits at the head of a LONG TABLE. Along the table are Micki, Katie, her husband, and FAMILY MEMBERS. Jerry has his empire.

Jerry RISES from his seat and RINGS HIS GLASS with a spoon. The guests fall silent as Jerry draws their attention.

JERRY

My parents, Katie's grandparents, couldn't be here today. But because of them, we are. They escaped the horrors of the Holocaust so that we could achieve the American dream.

(MORE)

JERRY (CONT'D)

I've been a lot of things in my life, but the thing I'm most proud of is being a father to Katie. I wish her and her husband, my new son, nothing but the best. I hope, one day, you're blessed with children that you'll be as proud of as we are of you. Mazel tov!

The guests CLAP as Jerry WIPES A TEAR. The BAND starts to play and the EMCEE speaks into the microphone.

EMCEE

And now we ask Katie and Jerry to come to the dance floor for the father-daughter dance.

Katie and Jerry meet on the dance floor as "You Are the Sunshine of My Life" by Stevie Wonder plays. They dance.

KATIE

That was a lovely toast, Dad.

JERRY

I've got some experience with public speaking. But tonight's all about you.

TITLE CARD: Although Jerry and Micki never remarried, they remain close friends.

NEXT CARD: Katie lives her life as a private citizen. She is now an educator working with disabled children.

NEXT CARD: Although Oprah contemplated leaving her show in the late 1990s, *The Oprah Winfrey Show* continued until 2011. Her show remains the highest-rated talkshow in American history. She has been dubbed "The Queen of All Media."

NEXT CARD: Jerry hosted *The Jerry Springer Show* until 2018. From 1991-2018, Jerry filmed nearly 5,000 episodes.

NEXT CARD: Jerry is responsible for leaving an indelible mark on American culture as well as ruining a generation of young adults. For that, we thank him.

CREDITS ROLL. INTERCUT with WILD SCENES from the Jerry Springer Show, including the HORSE EPISODE.

MUSIC: "TALK DIRTY TO ME" by POISON.