



SNL 1975

Written by

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The following movie takes place in real time between 10:00pm and 11:30pm on October 11th, 1975. The audience is a fly on the wall for this straight shot roller coaster, all leading to the very first declaration by Chevy Chase - "Live From New York, It's Saturday Night!"

We will film as an ensemble inside a living/breathing fully recreated Studio 8H at Rockefeller Center. The tone is hyperreal and should be brought to life with wild-hearted abandon for the cast and crew that changed television forever.

White Draft	1/18/24
Pink Revisions	2/08/24
Yellow Revisions	2/29/24
Green Revisions	3/05/24
Goldenrod Revisions	3/08/24
Salmon Revisions	3/24/24
2nd White Revisions	4/8/24
Final Revision	5/3/24

A Brazilian rosewood CABINET TELEVISION. A well used crystal decanter on top. The light is moody. The legs of unknown EXECUTIVES pass in front of camera.

On screen - the ORIGINAL SCREEN TESTS for SNL. Pieces of Chevy Chase, Gilda Radner, John Belushi, Laraine Newman, Garret Morris, Jane Curtin, and Dan Aykroyd. It's loose and freestyle. Their names are identified with chyrons.

We hear snippets of the executives speaking, but it's mostly background noise. Something about the Tonight Show ratings and the Saturday numbers.

Every once in a while, a comment about the screen test... *Jesus, where'd you find this guy... Nice face. Real downtown look... She's cute, is she dating someone...?*

The sound of New York City hits us like a punch to the face.

The sidewalk is awash with trash bags from the garbage strike. Families fleeing Broadway shows desperately searching for taxis as others in trench coats are drawn towards the tenderloin of Time Square. Cops and vagrants don't pay each other any mind. Traffic moves forward in violent jolts.

Amongst the chaos, a young man in a sports coat stands on the curb, checking his watch. LORNE MICHAELS, 29 years old. It's night, but he's sweating.

From a cab radio-- *At the sound of the tone, the time will be 10pm... Boop.*

SOMETHING AFLAME floats from above. Lorne clocks - SHEAFS OF PAPER ON FIRE, fluttering down. As they land, Lorne stamps them out, bewildered.

We clock a scraggly NBC PAGE mindlessly handing out flyers.

NBC PAGE

Free show... Free show... Plenty of seats... Hey, check it out.

Lorne takes a flyer. Clearly the first time seeing it. *Yikes.*

LORNE

How's it coming?

NBC PAGE
Yeah, not good. What kind of asshole tapes a show on Saturday?

LORNE (CONT'D)
No, it's not... There is no tape. It's live. We go live in...
(checks watch)
ninety minutes.

NBC PAGE (CONT'D)
(excited for him)
Oh, far out, man! Congrats!

LORNE (CONT'D)
Thanks... Thanks...

NBC PAGE (CONT'D)
Does it have a name? Cause I don't know what to tell people...

LORNE
The show? It's called Saturday Night.

NBC PAGE
(beat)
I like it.

LORNE
What are you telling people?

NBC PAGE
(reads from placard)
"You are invited to a new variety spectacular, featuring a parade of comedy and musical acts ripped from the charts..."
(acting)
Where did they unearth such a cavalcade of talent?"

LORNE (CONT'D)
A parade? Truly? A parade? Was *clown car* under copyright? Did some genius beat us to *goat rodeo*?
(done)
Please, just stop.

NBC PAGE (CONT'D)
So, if this show is about to go live, what are you doing down here?

LORNE
Looking for one of the most brilliant entertainers of our time.

Just then a well-worn brown Jaguar stops mid traffic. CAR HORNS immediately. ANDY KAUFMAN steps out carrying a portable record player.

LORNE (CONT'D)
It's 10pm Andy...

ANDY
(already in character)
Hello Mr. Michaels.

MORE CAR HORNS.

SECURITY GUARD
(doesn't look up)
Deliveries use the back.

LORNE SECURITY GUARD (CONT'D)
I'm producing a show here... Where's your badge?

Lorne, frustrated, fumbles out an ID BADGE.

SECURITY GUARD (CONT'D)
(re: Andy)
Where's his badge?

LORNE
My name is Lorne Michaels. I am the
producer of Saturday Night.

SECURITY GUARD
The whole night, huh?

EBERSOL (O.S.) LORNE
Hey, he's good, he's good, You see, I'm good.
let him in.

DICK EBERSOL, a 27 year old NBC junior executive in a Sports
Coat of checkerboard denim patches, flies in for the rescue.
He's six foot something and arrived via sports broadcasting.

He flashes his Saturday Night show badge. The security guard
unlocks the glass doors with a shrug.

SECURITY GUARD EBERSOL (CONT'D)
Live on a Saturday night. Okay, thanks, you're doing a
Must be some show. * great job.

SECURITY GUARD (CONT'D)
What kind of name is Saturday Night?

Lorne pulls Andy in and slides past the guard.

LORNE
Only way NBC remembers when it's on.

4

ELEVATOR TO 8TH FLOOR

4

Among the many holdovers from broadcasting's ancient history,
the elevator is manned by an ELEVATOR MAN in livery.

EBERSOL
(to Elevator man)
Eighth floor
(adding)
... and book it.

ELEVATOR MAN

Okay folks, put on your seat belts.

Andy looks for seatbelts.

EBERSOL

(to Lorne)

So... Big night...

LORNE

(to Andy)

Andy, have you had dinner?

ANDY

Yes, I had spaghetti.

LORNE

Well, that sounds delicious.

EBERSOL

Hey, so, I'm getting calls from upstairs... You ordered a llama?

ANDY

A llama!

LORNE

Yes, we all decided, it was much funnier than a donkey.

EBERSOL

Right, the guys at the loading dock just weren't expecting livestock.

LORNE

NBC did ask for something fresh and unexpected.

*

*

EBERSOL

Yeah - True - Just, no one expected you to demand an overhaul of the entire sound and lighting package. Lorne. Studio 8H, *your home - for tonight - is, is...*

*

*

*

*

LORNE

Eroding, neglected, in disrepair...?

*

*

*

EBERSOL

Pretty legendary!

LORNE (CONT'D)

Thank you for reminding me. No one ever reminds me.

*

*

EBERSOL (CONT'D)

I'm not sure if you know this, but the eighth floor was designed for Arturo Toscanini, the greatest conductor of the 20th century.

*

LORNE

Did they ask Edison what a lightbulb was before he harnessed electricity?

EBERSOL

Wait, who are you in this metaphor?

ANDY

The lightbulb?

LORNE

You can't expect people to recognize something that's never been seen before.

*

*

EBERSOL

Okay - sure - fine, how about just a final script?

*

*

LORNE

I mean, it's not that kind of show.

EBERSOL

What kind of show is it? Do you even know what the show is?

LORNE

Of course I do.

EBERSOL

Are you going to share it with the rest of us?

LORNE

Yes.

(checks watch)

In eighty eight minutes.

Elevator opens. Lorne already exiting.

5

8TH FLOOR - ELEVATOR LOBBY

5

*

LORNE

(shifts gears)

When was the last time they tested the sound system?

*

EBERSOL

Also, it's a comedy. *

We take a right turn into the make up room to find GILDA in the mirror prepping her voice for a scene. *

JOE DICSO

Come on Gilda! We need you in rehearsal. *

We follow Gilda into the wardrobe room, passing..

EDIE BASKIN, painting PRINTS from the opening sequence.

LORNE

Monumental work, Edie.

EDIE *

Careful, they're still drying. *

We see JANE CURTIN in an ancient Roman costume that is still connected to a working sewing machine. *Chunk, chunk, chunk...*

JANE

(running lines)

Would you tell the audience, just how you became a victim of shark bite... *

(gets up) *

Oh, Lorne... *

DRESSER *

Jane, you're still attached! *

Behind her, LARAINNE NEWMAN is standing uncomfortably in a PADDED YELLOW ONESIE. We will soon recognize this as a bee costume. A DRESSER is about to spray-paint black stripes with a cardboard guide. *

DRESSER (CONT'D)

(cigarette in mouth)

Hold your breath, sweetheart.

The dresser begins spraying. Laraine begins coughing.

We turn onto MAIN STREET to find Andy PETTING THE LLAMA. *

ANDY *

So soft. *

Lorne walks by. *

LORNE

Come on, Andy. *

We arrive at the famous STAGE 8H doors, ANNE BEATTS (27),
dark comedy writer, stops Lorne. *

ANNE *
You cut my Nazi Dr. Doolittle? *

LORNE *
Remind me... *

ANNE *
He had ways of making the animals *
talk. *

LORNE *
(walking away) *
I'll check the run of show. *

We find TOM DAVIS and AL FRANKEN at the reception desk. *

TOM DAVIS	*	AL FRANKEN	*
Can you check again?	*	The package was addressed to	*
		Al Franken and Tom Davis.	*

TOM DAVIS (CONT'D)	*	AL FRANKEN (CONT'D)	*
Twenty eight gallons...	*	... of Kensington Gore	*
		synthetic blood.	*

The DOORS TO 8H fly open as a RACK OF LIGHTS wheel through. *

We see HOME BASE and the famous CHAPMAN CRANE wheel by. *

JOE DICSO crosses as the older camera guys slowly push their
camera peds into position... *

JOE DICSO *
Eighty five minutes to showtime! *
Come on gentlemen, these *
transitions need to be crisp. *
Pretend there's a hooker with a *
sandwich waiting for you on stage *
right. *

TOM SCHILLER takes us under the scaffolding where we find
GARRETT MORRIS holding a prop pistol. *

GARRETT *
Say, Schiller, what are you up to? *

SCHILLER *
Burning sage. Removing demons. *

GARRETT *
Good luck with your hocus pocus. *

We pop through the side doors back onto BROADWAY, just as Lorne appears with Andy.

*
*

Lorne approaches two comedians sitting on benches, they are BILLY CRYSTAL (26) and VALRI BROMFIELD (25).

BILLY CRYSTAL
(already familiar)
Andy!

*
*
*

LORNE
(dad mode)
Andy, this is Billy Crystal and Valri Bromfield. Just stay with them, ok?

*
*
*
*
*

VALRI
Nice to meet you, Andy.

*

BILLY CRYSTAL
(to Valri)
Andy's a certifiable genius.
Wait'll you see - Practically reinvents the form - We're in the presence of greatness.

Long beat.

ANDY
(as foreign man)
Hello. Where is the bathroom?

VALRI
I don't know.

LORNE
* Neil, show Andy to the bathroom.

Neil peels off with Andy in tow, still holding his turntable.

JIM FOX (O.S.)
There you are--

JIM FOX (40's), A straight-laced NBC unit manager.

JIM FOX (CONT'D)
Lorne, I can't approve the purchase of an antique chandelier that isn't in any of the sketches.

*

Lorne doesn't make eye contact, instead motions to Ebersol.

LORNE
Uh, Dick? Jim has a question about something.

AUDREY

Audrey thinks it's time to make
some hard decisions.

*
*
*

EBERSOL

So just cut a couple things...

*
*

CHEVY (O.S.)

Am I still in the show?

CHEVY CHASE (31), gangly and beaming, walks THROUGH a trash can, spilling garbage across the hallway. He topples awkwardly then instantly springs up like a gymnast.

CHEVY (CONT'D)

Sorry, tripped over my penis.

His fiancée, JACQUELINE CARLIN, 25, People-magazine-pretty, tries to keep pace.

LORNE

Still in, Chevy.

CHEVY

(cocky)

I know. (pivoting) Hey, remember Jackie, my girlfriend.

JACQUELINE

Fiancée.

Jackie waves and Chevy reacts to her engagement ring as though being blinded, actually walking into a wall.

LORNE

Looks expensive.

CHEVY

She is... It is.

Jacqueline PUNCHES him hard.

JACQUELINE

I never know when you're kidding.

Lorne pulls Chevy in for a moment.

LORNE

Hey, look, can you show a little goodwill towards your co-star?

CHEVY

Who, Belushi? (sighs) Oh, what the fuck's the matter now?

LORNE

This is a new dynamic. So many expectations. Perhaps he's just...

CHEVY

I'll tell you what the issue is. We're not doing a radio hour anymore and he's built like an Albanian cheeseburger.

JACQUELINE

Chevy can't help if people are responding to his face.

CHEVY

I mean I could. But, I won't.

LORNE

Right. No one's asking you to deny your own magnetism, Chevy.

JACQUELINE

Maybe there's other roles for John to play like a hobo or a troll...

CHEVY

(walking away)
Or a fire hydrant? or a Volkswagen?
(spots Ebersol's coat)
Looking sharp, Patches.

EBERSOL

What?

As Chevy continues walking, Lorne approaches the Control Room. Audrey from behind...

AUDREY

You need to cut something.

LORNE

We'll figure it out.

Lorne pulls on the door, but it's locked. Lorne knocks. An imposing portrait of the fabled conductor Arturo Toscanini stares him down. Lorne bangs on the door. Neil runs up.

LORNE (CONT'D)

(still knocking)
Get me a key to this door. In fact,
I want keys to all the doors...

NEIL

... In the building?

LORNE

If you can.

Someone finally lets Lorne into the darkened control room.

7

CONTROL ROOM

7

Lorne clearly feels like an outsider as he slides between the console and monitors... *Out of the way... down in front...*

LORNE

Apologies.

Four live cameras broadcast from the stage. We also see NBC programming and various Commercials:

Up in the valley of the Jolly Green Giant... Heat the meat and gravy from the top can and add the crisp oriental vegetables from the bottom can... My old watch always stopped. Then I got my Timex Electric.

Lorne stops at DAVE WILSON (40s), a soft man in a tight sweater vest - The director.

DAVE WILSON

(into headset)

Hey Stew, line up on camera three, will you?

LORNE (CONT'D)

Dave, how we looking?

DAVE WILSON (CONT'D)

Still working out the forty seven notes you gave on your last visit.

DAVE WILSON (CONT'D)

(into headset)

Earth to Stew... Focus up buddy.

LORNE

How's the morale out there?

DAVE WILSON (CONT'D)

The morale? Oh, I think I can speak for the entire crew when I say this is exactly how we wanted to spend our Saturday evening.

LORNE

Right. Well, keep up the good work.

Lorne finds a spot in the back row. He picks up a bag of chips, opens it, but notably never eats one.

Lorne checks the WALL CLOCK - 10:14pm.

Barbara Gallagher, associate producer reads out credits to a pony-tailed graphics dude, POOK.

BARBARA GALLAGHER
 Okay, next card, Al "Bud" Franken. Next card, Tom "Bud" Davis...
 POOK
 Is this, like, a bit?

BARBARA GALLAGHER (CONT'D)
 I don't get half the shit they do,
 next card, Rosie "Bud"...
 (quietly to Lorne)
*Is Rosie going with Michaels or
 Shuster?*

LORNE
 Good question.

BARBARA GALLAGHER
 Should I ask Rosie?

LORNE
 No, I'll take care of it.

ON MONITOR - We see a clip of the cast on a talk show.

We find a man sporting a vintage waistcoat and fedora in the dark, lighting a cigarette on a short stemmed cigarette holder. MICHAEL O'DONOGHUE, head writer and prince of darkness. He's staring at a matronly woman in the front row -

JOAN CARBUNKLE (50), NBC Standards. Red lipstick, golden cross and a pillbox hat. Attacking a script with a RED PEN.

LORNE (CONT'D)
 Don't stare, Michael.

O'DONOGHUE
 She's been at it for hours.

LORNE
 She's simply doing her job - we have to comply with NBC standards.
 O'DONOGHUE (CONT'D)
 I refuse to comply.

Carbunkle turns her attention to Mike and Lorne.

JOAN
 Mr. O'Donoghue, on page twelve,
 what is "*clam diving*?"

Lorne stifles a laugh.

O'DONOGHUE
 I believe, the act of harvesting
 mollusks, right Lorne?

LORNE

Uh huh.

Joan shakes her head and crosses the dialogue out.

JOAN

And, what is... *zipper dinner*?

Now, the room cracks up.

Joan crosses that out too.

LORNE

(quietly)

How many of these did you hide in the script?

O'DONOGHUE

(quietly)

Maybe a dozen. It's like a scavenger hunt.

JOAN

I know what "*blue balls*" are.

O'DONOGHUE

You don't say.

LORNE

I'm glad you're having fun, but this isn't helpful.

O'DONOGHUE

(quietly to Lorne)

If that piglet actually disfigures my work, I'm going to turn her uterus into a sock puppet.

LORNE

I can't picture that.

O'DONOGHUE

I can and I have.

LORNE

Patience. Once we're live, there's nothing they can do.

On MONITORS, the "Home Security" sketch lines up.

DAVE WILSON

Rehearsals up. Let's see if we can get through one of these skits.

Lorne takes a step towards the glass window to 8H.

8

STAGE FLOOR

8

An OLD CHAIN RATCHET is lifting up a LIGHTING BOOM into the rafters. It's loaded with lights and the chain is struggling.

STEW SORRENTINO (55), lighting director, losing his patience.

STEW SORRENTINO

Give me lights 25B, 25D, half down
on 31. Half Down on 31. That's 32.

(notices the boom)

Jesus, that's a lot of lights on
the left wing boom. Anyone know the
load bearing on the booms?

A LIVING ROOM SET is being painted by hand.

Sitting on a sofa are GILDA RADNER (29) and a bearded JOHN
BELUSHI (26).

A dresser places GLASSES on John's face. He flinches,
irritated. John is clearly moody. Gilda clocks it.

GILDA

Hey John...

Gilda quickly makes a face. John raises an eyebrow.

GILDA (CONT'D)

(yelling whisper)

John...

John darts his eyes back and forth.

GILDA (CONT'D)

(yelling whisper)

There's something very important I
need to tell you.

John satellites his ear in her direction. Gilda moves to the
coffee table.

GILDA (CONT'D)

*I schtooped one of our costars last
night... one of the muppets.*

Gilda hooks a thumb back at a TABLE OF LIFELESS MUPPETS.
Crates underneath are stenciled HENSON ASSOCIATES.

GILDA (CONT'D)

*Don't look... I'm still pulling
felt out of my teeth.*

(interestingly...)

Turns out he just has a big floppy
hole between his legs. So I stuck
my hand all the way...

JOE DICSO

Okay, quiet please.

We hear the raspy boom of the stage manager JOE DICSO.

9

CONTROL ROOM

9

In the room, we see Audrey Dickman click her stopwatch.
Cameras are cued. Corrections are made in real time.

DAVE WILSON

POOK

Cue... What's his name?

Danny Aykroyd.

DAVE WILSON (CONT'D)

Cue Aykroyd... Cue Aykroyd...

A faint, dull thud can be heard through the speakers.

BARBARA GALLAGHER

He can't get through the door.

On Monitor - We see someone trying to get through the door.

DAVE WILSON

LEO YOSHIMURA

You fucking kiddin me? Put
your shoulder into it kid...

Eugene found an antique door
in salvage. Sixty pounds of
oak.

Wham! - DAN AYKROYD (22) muscles through the door and enters.

BARBARA GHALLAGER

DAVE WILSON (CONT'D)

That's one way to do it.

He's going to tear a muscle.

O'DONOGHUE

He's 22. He'll heal.

AYKROYD (ON SCREEN)

(mile a minute)

*Hi there! Please don't be alarmed,
this is only a simulated assault
and burglary, I repeat, this is a
simulated assault and burglary.
This could happen to you at any
time, in fact it just has.*

As the actors give it their all, the stage hands talk amongst each other, paying little mind to the performers.

GILDA
Call the police!

AYKROYD
(removes mask)
Don't call the police, I am the police... I might be anyway...

DAVE WILSON
Ha! This kid ain't half bad.

We continue to hear camera directions, lighting cues...

LORNE
(to Neil, taking notes)
He's got to hold the gun in his other hand or we don't see it.

SNAP! - ON MONITOR - A LIGHTING BOOM CRASHES through the coffee table. The Actors leap back.

Everyone in the control room jumps to their feet in panic. We're following Lorne as he shoulders his way out and into...

10

STUDIO 8H

10

Lorne continues pushing through everybody to set. We hear Aykroyd continue, not missing a beat.

AYKROYD
We also offer sudden catastrophic roof collapse policies. Have your girders been checked?

The sofa CATCHES FIRE. Joe Dicso is already in there with an extinguisher, dousing it. People scatter further.

LEO YOSHIMURA (20s), art director, surveys the damage.

YOSHIMIURA
We're going to need another sofa.

LORNE
Grab one from the 17th. Not from my office.

TOM SCHILLER, 28, new wave vibe, walks by BURNING SAGE.

LORNE (CONT'D)
What are you up to, Tom?

AYKROYD

The script specifically called for a Smith and Wesson K-Frame Model 19 Combat Magnum.

WALLIE

Kid, this ain't an armory. No one's going to notice the difference.

AYKROYD

I'll tell you who's gonna notice. The fine folks at home who lugged M-16's through four feet of swamp juice in Quang Nam.

WALLIE

Wow, you really put a lot of thought into this.

(Note: One by one, the crew will come to like the SNL cast. Wallie is the first to come around.)

LORNE

Let's go again.

BELUSHI

In that death trap?

GILDA

I still think it was kind of funny.

Gilda hops into the lap of AL, the Chapman Camera Operator.

GILDA (CONT'D)

How high will this thing go, Al?
Give me a tour of the city!

CHAPMAN CRANE OP

How 'bout a tour of the stage.

GILDA

Deal!

LORNE

Gilda...!

The crane rises into the sky and WE RISE WITH IT. We leave behind Lorne arguing with Stew the lighting director.

Moving through 8H like a sky tour. Gilda waves like a float queen and crew wave back.

CHAPMAN CRANE OP

First stop, home base, you got your stage hands...

The stage hands wave up to Gilda.

HENSON

Hey! Come on man.

GARRETT MORRIS

Oh hi Jim, sorry for... shooting
your muppets.

HENSON

They're not just... Garret, they're
your co-stars.

GARRETT MORRIS

Yeah, okay. Are you alright there?

HENSON

Yeah, uh... No. I don't think the
writing staff here speak muppet.

GARRETT MORRIS

Have you spoken to Chevy or
O'Donoghue?

HENSON

Yes, they tied a belt around Big
Bird's neck and left him hanging
from my dressing room door...

Henson suddenly quiet as O'Donoghue approaches.

O'DONOGHUE

Hey, I heard about Big Bird. I'm so
sorry. Auto-Erotic Asphyxiation.
Who knew...?

HENSON

Bologna.

O'DONOGHUE

Uh oh. Cursing.

GARRETT MORRIS

(walking away)
Sorry... I guess.

Garret passes by the STAGE HANDS and CAMERA BOYS. They're
figuring out a scene change. How to move a set into the wings
between the cameras peds in twelve seconds.

Garrett approaches a pianist and his band, waiting in the
wings. It's musical guest BILLY PRESTON (30). They're working
out a musical flourish together.

A stage hand placing audience chairs inches from the band.

BASSIST

Shit, is this a sing-a-long? You
can't get the audience any closer?

Garrett looking for a way to start a convo with Preston.

GARRETT MORRIS

Sounding good, guys.

BILLY PRESTON

Yeah, okay...

GARRETT MORRIS

(still on his back foot)
We actually worked together before.
I sang back up for Belafonte.

BILLY PRESTON

(to his band mates)
Catch that? He was a Belafonte
Singer.
(singing "Cocoanut Woman")
Get your cocoanut water...

BAND MATES

Four to five!

BILLY PRESTON

Man, it's good for you daughter...

BAND MATES

Four to five!

GARRETT MORRIS

Coco got a lotta iron...

They all laugh. Hard to tell if they're making fun of him.

BILLY PRESTON

This guy singing too. Man, how many
folks they have playing tonight?

GARRETT MORRIS

No, no... I'm one of the comedic
performers. I'm in the cast.

BILLY PRESTON

(disbelief)
You're a comedian?

GARRETT MORRIS

Well no, not by trade. I'm actually
a playwright.

(MORE)

GARRETT MORRIS (CONT'D)

Perhaps you saw my work at the
Black Arts Repertory Theater in
Harlem.

BILLY PRESTON

Yeah, I must have missed that.

GARRETT MORRIS

I don't actually know why they
hired me.

BILLY PRESTON

You seem a little nervous.

GARRETT MORRIS

I do? I mean, yes (laughs) I am.

BILLY PRESTON

(turns to drummer)

Alvin, hook Mr... (looks back)
What's your name?

GARRETT MORRIS

Garrett Morris...

BILLY PRESTON

Hook Mr. Garret Morris up with a
little confidence.

Preston's drummer hands Garrett a SMALL VIAL.

DRUMMER

Medical grade. Shit so light, air
is at the bottom of the bottle.

GARRETT MORRIS

Oh... thanks... Great...

Garrett now stumbling away, checking out his gift.

STEW SORRENTINO (O.C.)

Consider me the first rat off the
ship!

We whip across to see Stew, the lighting director, quitting
and storming off. The stage hands applaud Stew for leaving.

LORNE

What can I say, bon voyage.

EBERSOL

Lorne, he was our lighting
director. We need lights.

LORNE

There must be someone in the building who can press a button...

JOE DICSO

He's the only one who knows the location of the two hundred lights you asked for.

Ebersol looks up... That is a lot of lights.

LORNE

(onto something else)
What's the meaning of this?

On the back of a director's chair - *CHILDREN'S TELEVISION WORKSHOP*. Lorne rips it off. It was his chair.

LORNE (CONT'D)

This isn't helpful.

SHOP STEWARD

I thought we were making a comedy.

Tight laughter from the old stage hands of 8H. For the first time, we notice that they're an older generation.

JOE DICSO

Okay, everyone quiet for sound check! Sound Check!

This is repeated through the stage as Lorne gets a burst of energy and runs up into the bleacher seats. He wants the audience experience as the Preston band takes its marks.

EBERSOL

(tagging along)
This should be fun.

LORNE

Have you heard Billy Preston live before? You know he was the fifth Beatle.

DRUMMER

2, 3, 4...

The bands comes to life... They sound fantastic.

Lorne now at the sound board. He tries on a pair of HEADPHONES. Frowns. In the headphones, it sounds tiny.

LORNE

Is this full volume?

SCOTTY, the sound engineer, nods.

SCOTTY
Whole enchilada.

EBERSOL
(always the bright side)
Sounds pretty adequate.

LORNE
This isn't Wimbledon. It needs to
feel like a rock concert.

EBERSOL
(smoothing)
Lorne has such a deep appreciation
for music.

Lorne eyes the one mic, hanging sadly from above.

LORNE
Shouldn't we have more mics?

SCOTTY
One band. One mic.

LORNE
You always put this much care into
your work?

SCOTTY
Only when the honcho is this
inspiring.

Lorne already walking away... Turns to Ebersol.

LORNE
This needs to be fixed. Tonight.

Below, the FREIGHT ELEVATOR OPENS, revealing a wardrobe rack.
A sign on the front says BELUSHI. A BEE COSTUME at the front.

ROSIE SHUSTER (O.C.)
Wo, wo, wo... This John's?

We turn to find a buoyant young writer with a pencil behind
her ear, ROSIE SHUSTER.

WARDROBE ASST
Yeah, I heard he's in make up.

ROSIE SHUSTER
You got a death wish or something?
Come on, I got it.

Rosie grabs the rack and starts driving it herself.

ROSIE SHUSTER (CONT'D)
Out of my way, everybody... Beep,
beep... Morty, pick a lane!

Rosie under the bleachers, navigating the Cue Card Kids working furiously, the painters listening to the world series, the cable guys playing cards.

ROSIE SHUSTER (CONT'D)
Nice hand, Jimmy.

12 **8TH FLOOR HALLWAY - BROADWAY** 12

The wardrobe cart slaloms around an old STAGE HAND eating MACARONI AND GRAVY.

ROSIE SHUSTER
Easy on the Macaroni, Carmine.

We turn into the...

13 **DRESSING ROOM** 13

Rosie pulls the rack to a hard stop. We find Belushi sitting on a folding chair, changing out of his clothes from "Home Security". He clocks the bee costume and rolls his eyes.

ROSIE SHUSTER
There he is. Star of the show.

BELUSHI
Come on Rosie, not the fucking bees.

An asst costumer goes to place ANTENNI on John's head, but he flinches away. Rosie pulls out a CIGARETTE PACK and shakes out a couple for John. He reluctantly takes them as the slinky antenna are slid over his unkempt dome.

BELUSHI (CONT'D)
I'm not a dashboard ornament.

ROSIE SHUSTER
You're adorable is what you are.
Every girl's going to want to squeeze you.

A naughty look crosses John's face. He *buzzes* like a bee.

ROSIE SHUSTER (CONT'D)
Watch where you point that stinger.

BELUSHI
(super serious while
bouncing his antenna)
I am a trained professional.

Rosie breaks up laughing at Belushi.

LARAINÉ NEWMAN (23) wanders in to see a rack of costumes.

LARAINÉ
What happened to my reporter
costume? Blaine Hotel?

WARDROBE ASST
It's a five second change over from
the reporter to ancient Greece.
Lorne didn't think you'd have time
to get into your toga.

LARAINÉ
Oh, okay...

Laraine sighs and steps back out into...

14

8TH FLOOR HALLWAY - BROADWAY

14

Deep background, Jackie Carlin is going over the run of show board with Audrey Dickman, angling for a scene.

Franken and Davis are also present, unpackaging a box with a lot of tubes. A delivery with a heavy box arrives for them.

Laraine is basically JUMPED by Aykroyd. He picks her up and twirls her back to the ground.

LARAINÉ
Danny! Stop!

AYKROYD
(in character)
Ma'am, you're dealing here
with a fully qualified male
strumpet...

LARAINÉ (CONT'D)
Come on... Danny...

AYKROYD (CONT'D)
I can assure you professional
hygiene, discretion, and animal
gratification...

LARAINÉ
Listen strumpet...

AYKROYD
Fred Garvin, male prostitute.

LARAINÉ
How much is this going to cost me?

AYKROYD
This one's on the house.

An EDITOR crosses frame.

15 **COSTUMES**

15

The editor pops his head in to find Rosie.

EDITOR
Hey Rosie, got the latest cut on
"New Dad".

Rosie kisses Belushi on the forehead.

ROSIE SHUSTER
Behave. (winks) Bee-have.

Rosie runs out into the...

16 **8TH FLOOR HALLWAY - BROADWAY**

16

Rosie passes Danny talking to Laraine and slaps his ass.

ROSIE SHUSTER
They need you in costumes. I told
them to make those hot pants...
extra hot.

Before Danny can protest, Rosie is calling down the hallway.

ROSIE
(to Lorne)
Hey, we're going to check the cut
on "New Dad". Wanna see?

As Lorne approaches, directly in front of him - *THUD!!* - The clothing rack with the bee costume is kicked into the hallway. Exploding against the wall.

LORNE
You know he hates the bee costume.

ROSIE

This isn't a costume problem. He thinks he's Brando.

LORNE

He's better than Brando. More important even.

ROSIE (CONT'D)

Do you hear yourself?

LORNE (CONT'D)

He'll be studied.

ROSIE (CONT'D)

They'll study his liver.

Lorne smiles. Schiller walks by with the Sage.

LORNE (CONT'D)

Thanks Tom.

ROSIE (CONT'D)

Thanks Tom.

ROSIE (CONT'D)

John's better when he's angry.

LORNE

You understand, in an hour, I owe a television program. I made a covenant with the National Broadcast Company.

ROSIE (CONT'D)

A covenant. Okay, Abraham.

LORNE (CONT'D)

I'm on the hook for ninety minutes of live television.

A beat.

ROSIE

No one said it needs to be good.

LORNE

Must you turn him into a bee?

ROSIE SHUSTER

(entering the edit bay)

I'm not 'turning him into a bee'. He's a man in a bee costume. There's a difference. It's the kind of image you can't get out of your head. It's post-modern. It's Warhol. It's iconic.

LORNE

Where the heck do these ideas come from?

She points to her temple.

BARBARA

Lorne! NBC execs are in the green room, waiting for you!

LORNE

(already off)
Fuck.
(to Editor)
This is really close.

EDITOR

VTR needed this yesterday!

18

8TH FLOOR HALLWAY - BROADWAY

18

Lorne goes for the stairwell door, but stops at the sight of Belushi in his *antenni*, entranced by a TV playing an NBC SHOWREEL. John looks like he might vomit.

LORNE

Young man, I need you to sign your contract or they won't let you go in front of the cameras.

Belushi just *buzzes* back like a bee.

Lorne turns and stops. The show's youngest writers, TOM DAVIS and AL FRANKEN are prepping some sort of pump.

LORNE (CONT'D)

Tom? Al? What's this all about?

AL FRANKEN

A last minute piece.

TOM DAVIS

Just in case you need it.

LORNE

I don't. What's the gag?

AL FRANKEN

We're going to dress Aykroyd up as Julia Childs. *

TOM DAVIS

America's favorite chef.

LORNE

Okay...

TOM DAVIS

And right as she's carving up a turkey on live television,

AL FRANKEN

She slices opens an artery.

AL FRANKEN (CONT'D)

Blood. Everywhere.

TOM DAVIS (CONT'D)

Everywhere.

A quiet beat.

LORNE

Oh, got it. That's the whole pitch.

EBERSOL

I don't know, Lorne. Are we just making fun of the audience for not knowing any better?

LORNE

(pivots)

Hardly. It's Comedia Del Arte. We are engaging in a bit of theater. If anything, we will make the other commercials feel all the more real. The sponsors will probably thank you.

EBERSOL

Oh.

20

9TH FLOOR CORRIDOR

20

Speed walking to the Green Room.

LORNE

So, who's in here? Should I be concerned?

EBERSOL

No... Just... You know, try not to use words like *underground* or *revolutionary*.

LORNE

I'm not exactly Che Guevara.

They pass a door with a hand written sign - The Departure Lounge - Music pours out. They keep walking.

EBERSOL

I know but sometimes, you get a little... I don't know. Look, this is TV. It's in your living room. It's supposed to relax you.

LORNE

How positively scintillating.

Lorne opens the door to the green room and hits a wall of FIFTY DRUNK MIDDLE AGED MEN IN SUITS WITH COCKTAILS.

Lorne flinches back and pulls the door shut.

LORNE (CONT'D) EBERSOL
 What the hell? There's like a Fifty. The affiliates. From
 thousand people in there! across the country. They're
 excited to see the show.

LORNE (CONT'D)
 I don't have time for glad handing!

EBERSOL
 Lorne. These are the people that
 will decide whether or not we have
 a hit. They choose what goes on
 air. We need them.

Lorne steels himself.

LORNE EBERSOL (CONT'D)
 Three minutes. Tops.

21

GREEN ROOM

21

Lorne reenters the room with a big smile. Starts shaking every mitt that's presented his way. The crowd is decidedly midwestern and sprinkled with attractive NBC PAGES.

We push through the suits to find one man turned away from the crowd. For the moment, he's more interested in the drink he's pouring. We only clock his hands and his SIGNET RINGS.

Above the crowd we see CHEVY and O'DONOGHUE on a small stage. Chevy holding a FULL GLASS OF WATER.

CHEVY
 Ladies and gentlemen, who am I
 kidding, gentlemen, I've always
 liked to say that...

Chevy motions casually with his hand, tossing the water from his glass across the room. HUGE LAUGH.

CHEVY (CONT'D)
 Oh, I'm sorry...

Chevy steps towards one of the affiliates and uses their tie to mop his own brow.

CHEVY (CONT'D)
 Much better.

He steps back, fumbling along the way, perhaps knocking something over.

CHEVY

Let me introduce you to our head
writer, the prince of darkness...
My husband... My lover... Michael
O'Donoghue. I hear you have a
little impression for us.

O'DONOGHUE

Thank you Chevy.

(to room)

I'm certain you all know Mr.
Rogers, perhaps the most kind and
gentle man on television. This is
my impression of Mr. Rogers
plunging eighteen inch steel sewing
needles into his eyes.

WHAM! - O'Donoghue slams his empty fists against his face and
falls to the ground in agonizing screams.

A beat. Then THUNDEROUS applause and laughter.

Chevy pulls Lorne up on stage.

LORNE

(taking the mic)

Hi, uh, well, now you see why they
put us on at midnight.

The room grows quiet.

LORNE (CONT'D)

We have a great show for you
tonight... George Carlin... the
great Billy Preston. Next week, my
good friend Paul Simon hosting...
Look, there has never been a show
made for and by the generation that
was raised by television...

Even quieter.

LORNE (CONT'D)

(screw it)

Gentlemen, this is the revolution.

Puzzled looks. Ebersol shaking his head.

CHEVY

(stepping into the void)

We're storming the Bastille. Who's
with us?!

They just love Chevy. They cheer!

CHEVY (CONT'D)
 (doubling down)
 No prisoners, heads on pikes, blood
 will run in the streets.

NBC Pages open CURTAINS to reveal the stage floor behind a window. The affiliates are immediately drawn to the glass.

CHEVY (CONT'D)
 Behold... In all its filth... If
 you listen closely, you can still
 hear Buffalo Bob shuckin' the cob
 with Howdy Doody.

We push through the swarm to find the JEWELLED SIGNET RINGS of DAVE TEBET, NBC's head of talent, speaking with Ebersol.

TEBET
 Blood in the streets - Well - that
 sounds delightful. How much are we
 spending on this insurrection?

EBERSOL
 Two fifty an episode.

TEBET
 I guess revolutions aren't cheap.

EBERSOL
 Right. It's Schlosser's baby.

TEBET
 I guess we'll have to see how this
 baby crawls.

<p>EBERSOL Lorne Michaels is a rare bird. He really believes in his vision...</p>	<p>TEBET (CONT'D) Well, that's nice.</p>
--	---

EBERSOL (CONT'D)
 ... and he doesn't really bend.

TEBET
 Well, we know how that story goes.

Just around them, Lorne is squeezing his way out of the room, followed by O'Donoghue and Chevy. They step out onto the...

Lorne notices the electricians installing "APPLAUSE" LIGHTS.

LORNE

Absolutely not. We're not going to beg for their approval.

The electricians shrug.

Tebet puts his arm around Chevy as they walk.

TEBET

You handled that like a pro.

CHEVY

Oh, thank you.

TEBET

I'm Dave Tebet, head of talent. I handle the Tonight Show, you know.

CHEVY

I didn't know that.

TEBET

Between us... Johnny Carson won't be around forever. Think about it. You're a handsome funny gentile. That means something.

23

ELEVATOR TO 17TH FLOOR

23

Tebet, Ebersol, Lorne, Chevy, and O'Donoghue step inside.

LORNE

(to the elevator man)
Seventeen.

TEBET

(smiles)
Fifty four.

EBERSOL

Lorne, you remember Dave Tebet...

LORNE

Of course, I remember everyone who gives me a job.

TEBET

Smart kid. Quite a line up this evening.

LORNE

I understand that we are bending some of the rules...

EBERSOL

Lorne, this is NBC. There's a way things are done. The Peacock way.

LORNE

Right, well, we're thinking a little different...

O'DONOGHUE

... Maybe an emu.

EBERSOL

I just don't think...

TEBET

Dick, shut the fuck up.

The mood shifts. The elevator man looks down.

TEBET (CONT'D)

(to Ebersol)

Can't you see talent when it's standing inches from your face. What do you think he's going to do? Embarrass us with some half ass ratfuck donkey show?

O'DONOGHUE

Frankly, that's exactly what I signed up for.

LORNE

Michael.

TEBET

(to Lorne)

I expect you to be an unbending force of seismic disturbance. Light up the NBC switchboard like a bomb went off.

O'DONOGHUE AND CHEVY

Yes... Yes, sir.

LORNE

I promise not to play the music too loud.

TEBET

Fuck that. This isn't the Moosejaw Jazz Festival, It's Saturday Fucking Night. I want you to be thunderous and deafening. If my ears don't bleed, I'll be asking for a refund.

LORNE
 Okay... Great, because I always saw this as a collision that erupts from every screen in America. A prism that captures the light of an emerging generation...

TEBET (CONT'D)
 Yes,
 yes,
 yes,
 yes...

TEBET (CONT'D)
 Stop. Don't say another word. Don't question another instinct. Ebersol, we're standing in the presence of a prophet. A man with a vision...
 (to Lorne)
 I want you to take that vision like a Sherman Tank and plow it through any fuck who gets in your way.
 (gets close)
 Even me.

DING! - Elevator door opens on the writers floor.

O'DONOGHUE
 Use emotion for the many and reserve reason for the few.

TEBET
 I like that. I'm putting it on my wall.

Lorne, O'Donoghue, and Chevy exit and the elevator closes.

LORNE
 (turns to O'Donoghue)
 Hitler quote?

O'DONOGHUE
 Atrocities aside, the man was a wordsmith.

24

17TH FLOOR - WRITERS ROOM

24

Lorne enters the hive of activity with Ebersol, Chevy, and O'Donoghue. PAs are collating freshly printed script pages on the floor. It's like an obstacle course. Paul Shaffer noodles on a STAND UP PIANO.

NEIL
 (handing memos)
 You missed a call from Johnny Carson. I accidentally picked up your phone cause it was ringing.

LORNE
 What did you tell him?

NEIL

I don't remember. He hung up on me.

Aykroyd and an INTERN almost hit Ebersol with a BUNK BED.

EBERSOL

Is that a bunk bed?

NEIL

Danny ordered one for his office.

LORNE

That's confidence. Find me something to eat. Anything.

We spin to find Franken and Davis hovering over O'Donoghue.

AL FRANKEN

Are you nervous?

O'DONOGHUE

Nervous about what?

TOM DAVIS

Performing on live TV?

AL FRANKEN

I'd be shitting bricks.

O'DONOGHUE

Television is merely a lava lamp with slightly better audio - Colored beads to fascinate the animal. I could do this in a narcoleptic coma.

Chevy stops at HERB SARGENT's desk. At 50, he is the elder statesman. Quiet and brilliant. Stack of newspapers.

CHEVY

Hey Herb, how's Update coming?

HERB

(reading)

South Vietnam has seized and burned 100,000 Playboy magazines... Still working on a punchline.

CHEVY

For miles, all anyone could smell was roast bunny.

Herb chuckles, writes it down.

HERB

You alright there, Chev?

CHEVY

Well, things are *kooper kippy* Herb. I think it happened. I just got the shoulder tap.

HERB

The what?

CHEVY

You know, from the folks upstairs. What's going to happen to me? I mean, Herb, you've been around the block. Where am I going from here?

HERB

Well, I don't know Chevy. I've never gotten a shoulder tap. I've just made a fortune, won a few Emmys, and slept with Gloria Steinem. My instinct is America will fall in love with you. You'll be hideously overcompensated for prat falls and cute jokes. You'll waste away most of your life with purchased company. Eventually you'll self-medicate with hookers and amphetamines. Probably die alone in some French hotel.

CHEVY

Jesus, I can't wait.

A couple stage hands enter frame.

STAGE HAND

That one. Grab it.

We pan to find Gilda and Laraine picking away at their dinners on a sofa. The stage hands GRAB THE SOFA and the actresses leap off! The sofa is immediately hauled away to replace the burned furniture from earlier.

Gilda and Laraine turn to find interns laying out SCRIPTS down the length of the corridor in a collating effort. A train of paper that goes on forever.

LARAINÉ

Wow, you're in so many scenes.

GILDA

Yeah, but I'm always everyone's kid sister. You're the hot one.

LARAINE
I think Jane's the hot one.

GILDA (CONT'D)
I mean you're the (growls)

LARAINE (CONT'D)
You're everybody's favorite.

GILDA
Oh, I'm just a ball of yarn,
looking for a cat. A parrot with
nothing to squawk.

LARAINE
I keep feeling like any minute,
Lorne's gonna realize he made a
huge mistake and ship me back.

GILDA
On this budget?
(snorts)
We can't afford the postage.
(adds)
Lorne's got a way of seeing
something in people and knowing
where their talent fits. There's a
reason you're here. You may not
know it, but Lorne does.

Laraine moves along the pages, compiling a script as she goes. Something in one of the scenes makes her chuckle. She's aligning the pages, when she hears familiar dialogue...

AYKROYD (O.C.)
*Ma'am, you're dealing here with a
fully qualified male strumpet.*

Laraine turns to find Aykroyd with Gilda up in his arms.

GILDA
Hey, I'm not a prop, mister.

Laraine can't hide her reaction and Gilda sees it. They lock eyes and mutually understand what's happening.

AYKROYD
*I can assure you professional
hygiene, discretion...*

GILDA
Why don't you assure me a little
peace and quiet Mr. Strumpet. Geez.

Gilda slides to the ground. Laraine pretends to *laugh along*, but it's paper thin. Danny turns and catches Laraine's look. An uncomfortable pause. Before anything can be said...

Tom Schiller crosses frame, carrying the SAGE and we follow him into Lorne's office. Desk, chair, and a sofa. Rosie sitting on a filing cabinet. O'Donoghue on the floor.

O'DONOGHUE

(re: the sage)

Get that hippie shit out of here.

Schiller exits quickly as Lorne leans into the doorway.

LORNE

Hey, I need the Muppet pages.

O'DONOGHUE

I already turned in that one script.

ROSIE

Was Jim Henson uncomfortable with Muppets on a plantation?

O'DONOGHUE

It was a musical number.

LORNE

I don't think that was the problem.

O'DONOGHUE

I just can't write for those little hairy facecloths.

LORNE

I need something for Henson. We go live in an hour.

ROSIE

What if you sent him a little felt toe in a newspaper?

Before Lorne can respond, Anne pushes through and hands O'Donoghue a script covered in red ink.

ANNE

Did you see what that evangelical cunt did to our pages?

We follow Lorne's look back to find Franken and Davis speaking with the NBC standards troll, Joan Carbunkle.

CARBUNKLE

You cannot say *horny* on NBC.

AL FRANKEN

You want us to say *sexy* instead of *horny*?

TOM DAVIS

Sexy and *horny* just don't mean the same thing.

CARBUNKLE

I struggle to see the difference.

AL FRANKEN

Well, if a dog is humping your leg, it's *horny*.

TOM DAVIS

It is certainly not *sexy*.

That's when we notice O'Donoghue LIGHTING HIS PAGES ON FIRE.

CARBUNKLE

What on Earth are you doing?

People watch as O'Donoghue walks to the window and tosses the flaming script out the window to the street below.

O'DONOGHUE

I'd rather buttfuck cancer than make these changes.

The office goes quiet. Tension mounts.

CARBUNKLE

Your words don't scare me Mr. O'Donoghue. I'm a woman of God.

O'DONOGHUE

I've heard God's love is blind. Now I know why.

Carbunkle presents her RED PEN.

CARBUNKLE

You see this? I know it looks like an ordinary red marker, but this one is special. It has kept America safe for the better part of a decade. It is a weapon against vulgarity, sex, communism, and heathenism.

O'DONOGHUE

What about violence? Does it
protect America from violence?

CARBUNKLE

Yes, that too.

O'DONOGHUE

How 'bout infanticide?

CARBUNKLE

Excuse me?

O'DONOGHUE

Apologies. Just a two dollar word
for a parent who kills their own
child.

CARBUNKLE

The mere thought makes me nauseous.

O'DONOGHUE

Understandably - Me too, by the way
- It's just, I had this idea for a
sketch... I'm not sure if it's
funny, you can be the judge. It's
about this powerful temperamental
guy who rapes this virgin in the
middle of the night - I know, awful
- He knocks her up without ever
saying hello, buying her flowers,
whatever... And then, and then,
here's the funny part, he has their
bastard son publicly mutilated and
tortured to death on a cross.

(a beat)

Wait, you've heard this one before.

CARBUNKLE

You're a vile human.

O'DONOGHUE

I know. We both are. I'm just more
entertaining.

Carbunkle pulls off her pill box hat and goes to leave.

HERB

No, it was funnier with the hat.

CARBUNKLE

(turns back)

Mr. O'Donoghue...

O'DONOGHUE

Are we still being formal? Please,
just call me Satan.

CARBUNKLE

You will be forgotten... I'm going
to make sure of it.

And with that, she storms out.

LORNE

Are you out of your mind?!

O'DONOGHUE

Look for better or worse, I call it
as I see it.

LORNE

That was worse.

Meanwhile, Barbara runs up to Lorne.

BARBARA

They need you at the loading dock!

LORNE

Surely someone else can sign for
whatever...

(to O'Donoghue)

You're back on Muppets.

O'DONOGHUE

Fuck you! I'll quit.

LORNE

No, you won't.

BARBARA

It's Leo. He's fighting with
security. There's blood.

25

FREIGHT ELEVATOR

25

Lorne enters and Neil hands him a sandwich. He will notably
never get to take a bite. Before the elevator doors can
close, Ebersol hops on with a smile.

EBERSOL

Hey, while I've got you... I know
you always want to be on the
cutting edge, well check this out--

He produces a Polaroid *instamatic* camera from a bag.

EBERSOL (CONT'D)

We can have the actors demo the camera live. Maybe write it into sketches, do live commercials. Funny ones! The payout is bonkers!

LORNE

The cast didn't sign up to do live commercials. Frankly, neither did I. Some of the cast might find it... unseemly.

EBERSOL

Television's driven by advertising. That's what makes the motor run.

LORNE

Just don't show this to the talent. We don't want them thinking they're back on the Kraft Macaroni Hour.

EBERSOL

We're over budget.

LORNE

You don't need to tell me that.

EBERSOL

Somebody needs to tell you that.

LORNE

We don't even know what the show IS exactly yet. How could we possibly know the budget?

EBERSOL

If you don't know what the show is, what the fuck are we doing here?

LORNE

I know the ingredients. Just not the amounts.

Elevator DINGS.

LORNE (CONT'D)

We just need to get to 11:30...

Lorne drops his uneaten sandwich and runs out onto the...

Lorne, Ebersol, Barbara, and Neil emerge quickly. We whip

around just as Leo Yoshimura takes a punch to the face from a meathead SECURITY GUARD (45). His glasses are broken (they will be taped-up for the rest of the film).

LEO
 Fuck you, fascist!
 (steadying himself)
 fucking pig.

Lorne gets in the face of the security guard.

LORNE
 You want to lose your job?

SECURITY GUARD
 You want to lose your teeth?

LORNE
 I'm the producer of NBC'S Saturday
 Night and you just hit a man with a
 Tony...

SECURITY GUARD
 I've punched plenty of Tonys.

Ebersol has had enough, and he's bigger than all of them.

EBERSOL
 (separating them)
 Goddamn it... We're done, alright?
 I'm your fucking boss, idiot.

Ebersol gives the guy his card. The guard cools slightly.

SECURITY GUARD
 Tell your friends - No deliveries
 after 6PM.

He points to a sign -- NO DELIVERIES AFTER 6PM.

Ebersol examines the delivery as it's carted to the elevator. A large pallet of bricks. He picks one up. It's heavy. Ebersol clearly confused by the delivery of actual bricks.

27

FREIGHT ELEVATOR

27

The elevator is GROANING. It can barely carry the weight of the bricks.

EBERSOL
 (beside himself)
 Guys, am I missing something?
 (MORE)

EBERSOL (CONT'D)

Why do we need real bricks? Can't
we just roll out linoleum?

LEO
(still plugging nose)
Hey, FUCK YOU.

EBERSOL (CONT'D)
Okay, Jesus, just relax...

LORNE
(handing a brick)
The vision for home base is a
street corner with all the grit and
texture of New York City.

EBERSOL
You going to use real blood and
vomit too?

LEO
(wiping his bloody nose)
I'll give you fucking blood.

DING! - The elevator stops.

LORNE
Why are we stopping...?

Ebersol opens the VERTICAL DOOR to reveal a A DARK FLOOR and
a lone figure standing there with a record player. Andy.

ANDY
Hello, Mr. Michaels.

LORNE
Andy, you can't just wander
off like that.

ANDY (CONT'D)

EBERSOL
(back to the bricks)
Lorne... Hm?

LORNE (CONT'D)

LORNE (CONT'D)
Brick is honest. Workmanlike. It
has its pockets out. It's critical
to the success of this show.

EBERSOL
And what is this show,
exactly? It's...

LORNE (CONT'D)

A beat. Lorne reaching for a vision that won't quite come
into focus, when... DING! The Elevator reopens back in 8H.

LORNE (CONT'D)

(exiting)

I mean honestly, Dick, if you don't know by now...

EBERSOL

(to himself)

I tell you what I do know. New York streets aren't paved with bricks.

28

STUDIO 8H

28

Hammering. Speakers popping. Lights flickering.

Lorne takes the opportunity to walk Andy away. Meanwhile, Ebersol passes velvet voiced announcer DON PARDO (60).

DON PARDO

*CHEVY CHASE...! GILDA RADNER...!
DAN... AYK... how the fuck do you
pronounce...?*

PAUL SHAFFER

Aykroyd.

DON PARDO (CONT'D)

DAN AYKROYD!

JOE DICSO

Fifty minutes everybody!

CAMERA floats up above the stage floor up to the bleachers.

We find Garrett Morris and JANE CURTIN (30) watching the chaos below. The bricks are wheeled by.

GARRETT

You nervous?

JANE

No, not really. I only have a few bits. The jury thing. News host.

GARRETT MORRIS

Hm. You ever stop and wonder what you're doing here?

JANE

Like on the show?

GARRETT

Uh huh...

JANE (CONT'D)

Yeah... I have a pretty good idea.

GARRETT

And what is that?

JANE

Well Garrett, I like to give 100%
to everything I do...

(now in commercial voice)

...And I want a dish soap that does
too... So alive, so young,

(shifting moods)

so alluring, so exotic, so
hypnotic, so manipulative, so
sadistically abusive, so
cartoonishly abhorrent...

Garrett is not quite sure what's happening here.

JANE (CONT'D)

(sudden sunny shift)

When it comes to my skin and my
sensitive parts, I only trust 100%
American steel wool. Made strong
enough for a man, but whimsical and
helpless enough for a woman. So
before you invest in one of those
high priced other labels, bend over
and experience a Philadelphia blast
furnace on your satin slipcovers.

(critical)

Don't wait - Act now. Act like your
very life depends on it. Act like
your children's lives depend on it.
Act like the children in Africa
depend on it.

GARRETT MORRIS

What the fuck was all that?

JANE

That was my twenties Garrett. And
that's what I'm doing here.

GARRETT MORRIS

Shit, I'm just here to play the
butler, the shoe shine guy, and the
pimp.

JANE

You seem a little nice for a pimp.

GARRETT MORRIS

You're a little pretty for a
comedian.

JANE

Here's to staying out of the
spotlight.

A SPOTLIGHT HITS Jane and Garrett, but immediately abandons them and floats up to the top of the bleachers. From the stage's feeble speakers, we can just hear DON PARDO, the show's baritone announcer -

DON PARDO (O.S.)

Your host, George Carlin!

PAUL SHAFFER noodles out a riff on the piano. Comedian GEORGE CARLIN (40), amped, walks by Garrett and Jane towards HOME BASE. He makes his way down a finicky staircase.

CARLIN

I can't just come out from behind a
god damn curtain? I've got to
descend like fucking Norma Desmond.

(to the audience)

And fuck you... and fuck you... and
fuck you...

(to the stage hands)

And fuck you...

The stage hands love it. They give him a good *Fuck You* back. Carbunkle, the NBC censor is on the floor, twitching her nose. Lorne leans over to Neil and motions towards Carbunkle.

LORNE

Try to distract her.

NEIL

How?

LORNE (CONT'D)

With your sparkling wit.

Neil nods. We follow him as he sidles up to Carbunkle. He pulls out a DECK OF CARDS and begins a magic trick.

NEIL

Ma'am? Would you agree this is a
normal deck of cards? No marks, no
folds, or blemishes?

Carbunkle barely acknowledges Neil. She is focusing her energy on George Carlin, who passes SHAFFER on the piano and continues to home base.

CARLIN

Welcome to the show, blah-de-blah,
going to be some music, some
laughs, plug the record...

Neil continues with his card trick. Buzzing in Carbunkle's ear like a persistent fly.

CARLIN (CONT'D)

(begins a bit)

You ever look at the crowds in old movies and wonder if they're dead yet?

Some laughs from the stage hands.

CARLIN (CONT'D)

Does that make you uncomfortable? It shouldn't. Why is death so unsettling? What's going to happen tonight? I'm either going to kill up here or die...

CRASH! - A pile of BRICKS is dumped at Carlin's feet. Brick dust plumes as Carlin flinches back.

CARLIN (CONT'D)

Christ! Are you serious with this shit?

JOE DICSO

And throw to Janis...

CARLIN

(looks into our camera)

Ladies and Gentlemen, Janis Ian.

CAMERA PANS to find JANIS IAN with an acoustic guitar. She begins to play her hit single *At Seventeen*. Quiet, plaintive.

JANIS IAN

*I LEARNED THE TRUTH AT SEVENTEEN,
THAT LOVE WAS MEANT FOR BEAUTY
QUEENS...*

Carlin hops down as Carbunkle approaches home base.

CARBUNKLE

Mr. Carlin, I am Joan Carbunkle, NBC standards...

CARLIN

I didn't know they had any...

JANIS IAN

*THE VALENTINES I NEVER KNEW, THE
FRIDAY NIGHT CHARADES OF YOUTH,
WERE SPENT ON ONE MORE BEAUTIFUL,
AT SEVENTEEN I LEARNED THE TRUTH.*

Lorne quickly interjects.

LORNE

He's busy, Joan. Why don't you share your concerns with me?

CARLIN

No, I'd like to hear her concerns personally, if you don't mind.

CARBUNKLE

Mr. Carlin, I know you have a propensity for the obscene and a lurid interest in colorful language. You'll be happy to know there is one delay button and my finger is on it.

CARLIN

I'd never have guessed you'd found the button, let alone touched it.

JANIS IAN

WHO CALLED TO SAY, "COME DANCE WITH ME", AND MURMURED VAGUE OBSCENITIES, IT ISN'T ALL IT SEEMS, AT SEVENTEEN.

Carlin already walking away. Neil jumps in!

NEIL

(holding up a card)

Is this your eight of diamonds --

He tries to slip a card like a smooth operator but fumbles.
THE DECK SCATTERS TO THE FLOOR.

Oblivious to the stand-off, Leo the art director hops down and begins laying bricks with a trowel. He looks up at a SHOP STEWARD with a handful of STAGE HANDS sitting nearby.

LEO

Are you gonna help?

SHOP STEWARD

Yeah, we don't do bricks.

(to his mates)

Which guild does the bricks? Is it 422?

STAGE HAND ONE

Nah, that's carpenters. How about 303?

STAGE HAND TWO

Nah, that's the pipefitters.

*

The stage hands chuckle but don't move a muscle. Leo fumes.

SHOP STEWARD

Don't know why you're laying brick.
You're going to be gone in 2 weeks.

JANIS IAN

*A BROWN EYED GIRL IN HAND-ME-DOWNS,
WHOSE NAME I NEVER COULD PRONOUNCE,
SAID, "PITY, PLEASE, THE ONES WHO
SERVE, THEY ONLY GET WHAT THEY
DESERVE."*

29

8TH FLOOR HALLWAY - BROADWAY

29

Carlin walks by Billy Crystal, who is holding a large bowl of potato chips. Carlin grabs a chip.

BILLY CRYSTAL

Hey! That's a prop.

Carlin turns and bows mid-stride. Billy flashes him a smile. Valri watches, sitting on the discarded BURNED SOFA.

(Note: the hallway is decidedly less chaotic for this sequence. The quiet before the storm.)

BILLY CRYSTAL (CONT'D)

(to Valri)

It's like one of those 1950's
Safari Flicks. The ones that
starred Rhonda Fleming and Susan
Hayward... Every time I take a step
you put your hands in the bowl and
crunch the potato chips. Try it...

Billy mimes taking steps through tall grass. With every step, Valri crunches her hands in the chips. The effect is remarkably convincing. Valri adds bird calls. Billy adjusts his *pretend safari helmet* and aims his *pretend safari rifle*. In his sights....

Lorne at the Run of Show Board. He unpins a couple cards and swaps them. Can't make heads or tails out of it. Walks away.

BILLY CRYSTAL (CONT'D)

(breaks character)

There's no way they can fit all
this show. Something's got to go.

VALRI

You think?

BILLY CRYSTAL
 (calls over)
 Hey Lorne - Can we talk minutes?

LORNE
 (barely looks over)
 Doing great, Billy.

Lorne disappears around a corner. A BEAT.

VALRI
 That was weird.

BILLY CRYSTAL
 Yep, we're fucked.

Garrett Morris turns on Main Street. As he passes the costumes room, we see Laraine working on some sort of QUICK CHANGE with the wardrobe assistants. It's not going well.

We continue with Garret, up to Belushi who begins to sniff him like a hound... like a police dog... He somehow just knows that Garrett is copping drugs.

Belushi now seriously sniffing, making Garrett blush. John pats him down and comes up quickly with the vial of cocaine.

BELUSHI
 What do we have here?

GARRETT MORRIS
 Billy Preston's band hooked me up.
 It's medical grade. Floats in the
 bottle. Then you float.

Belushi pops the top and hoovers the entire vial up in one snort. He hands the empty vial back to Garrett.

BELUSHI
 Yep, checks out, medical grade.

Garrett is stunned. Belushi walks off.

30

HAIR/MAKE-UP ROOM

30

Belushi enters to find Chevy doing an audio interview with a young reporter holding a wired microphone. Jackie looks for a way into the interview herself. Jane and Laraine are in black leotards and BEE HEADPIECES.

CHEVY

We have many talented improvisors from Toronto and Chicago and I'm sure they'll find their way on to the program, but yes, I think you'll be seeing me fairly regularly.

Belushi watches him with contempt, SNORTS derisively. Starting to feel the coke. Chevy looks over, notices a bit of powder on Belushi's nose.

CHEVY (CONT'D)

You missed a little there.

Belushi nonchalantly works the residue into his nose as a make-up gal approaches him with a shaving razor and foam.

Lorne enters, holding Belushi's contract.

LORNE

While I've got you captive.

BELUSHI

They want to neuter my chin.

LORNE

You are getting a little wooly.

CHEVY

Be careful, there's no jaw under that beard. Just 10 pounds of neck.

Belushi HURLS an NBC ashtray at Chevy's face. It hits our camera instead, BREAKING THE LENS.

Belushi lunges for Chevy. BOTTLES and BRUSHES go flying. It's a quick melee in a small room. Gilda and Laraine react with genuine concern. Hair and Make-up artists look for cover.

Janis Ian playing ironically against the violence.

Rosie escorts the reporter out as Lorne wedges his way in between the yet-to-be-comedy-giants.

LORNE

(dad)

For God's sakes. Chevy - Out. Out!

Chevy leaves in a huff.

LORNE (CONT'D)

We're throwing things now?

BELUSHI
He started it!

Rosie drops into Belushi's lap.

ROSIE
It's just a shave, John.

BELUSHI
So NBC owns my fucking face?

ROSIE
Would Jimi Hendrix play in mittens?

LORNE
It's a valid point, John. You will go down as one of the giants of character expressionism of the twentieth century. Chaplin. Brando. Why hide your gifts?

ROSIE
... Beards are for pussies.

John considers this. Nods to the woman with the razor. She gets to work tying a cloth around his neck, prepping foam.

BELUSHI
(snorts)
And the bees are bullshit. I didn't sign up for that theme park shit.

LORNE
You think I don't know that? Of course they are. The bees are *ridiculous*. They're stupid. They're post-modern. They're Warhol. Sgt. Pepper They're a commentary. I'm glad you get it.

Rosie smiles, watching Lorne use her language. They make eye contact. Lorne slides John's deal memo over.

LORNE (CONT'D)
We go live in less than an hour. I need you to sign.

John is considering when Lorne notices something.

ROSIE
What? What happened?

Lorne looks around... The music has stopped.

LORNE

Pull up Weekend Update.

Commotion again - Cables are lifted as sets move and the Weekend Update flat is swiftly rolled out in front of home base, where Leo is slowly LAYING BRICKS WITH A TROWEL. Costumers slide a jacket onto Lorne. He sits behind the desk and swallows before staring into the dark abyss of the lens.

We hear Audrey click her stopwatch.

DON PARDO

From Saturday Night news headquarters, this is Weekend Update with Lorne Michaels.

LORNE

(nervous)

Our top story tonight, some world news: Japan Emperor Hirohito met Mickey Mouse at Disneyland this week. The Emperor presented Mickey with a Hirohito wristwatch.

Tepid laughter. Herb Sargent and O'Donoghue concerned.

LORNE (CONT'D)

How was that...?

O'DONOGHUE

Horrible.

Lorne nervously looks to his side to find Belushi, now shaven, wearing a suit jacket over his bee costume.

LORNE (CONT'D)

And now with a weather report, we turn it over to meteorologist John Belushi. What's it looking like out there John?

BELUSHI

Thank you Lorne. It's often said that March comes in like a lion, and goes out like a lamb. At least that's how March works here in the United States.

(beat)

But did you know that March behaves differently in other countries? In Norway, for example, March comes in like a polar bear and goes out like a walrus.

32A **CONTROL ROOM**

32A

Dave Wilson and team watching Belushi on MONITOR.

BELUSHI

Or, take the case of Honduras...

DAVE WILSON

Where'd they find this guy? A
butcher shop?

BARBARA GALLAGHER

I've got a mechanic that could be
his brother.

32B **STUDIO 8H**

32B

Lorne and crew watch as Belushi builds with steam. A camera
guy zooms in.

BELUSHI

... And there's a country where
March hops in like a kangaroo, and
stays a kangaroo for a while, and
then it becomes a slightly smaller
kangaroo. Then, for a couple of
days it's sort of a cross between a
frilled lizard and a common house
cat...

Lorne now inching away from Belushi - The volcano on the
verge of eruption.

The crew meanwhile is transfixed.

BELUSHI (CONT'D)

Now, now, and it's not Australia!
You'd think it would be Australia,
but it's not!

A couple of the stage hands even laughing now and murmuring
to each other.

BELUSHI (CONT'D)

(spinning out)

And there are nine different
countries, where March comes in
like a frog, and goes out like a
golden retriever. But that- that's
not the weird part! No, no, the
weird part is, is the frog. The
frog- The weird part is...

Belushi works himself into an intense physical convulsion.

For a moment, the crew shows concern, completely entranced by Belushi's performance. He performs a coronary over the desk, splaying out onto the floor.

And then, wild laughter gives way to the chatter of awe.

Lorne jumps down to help John off the floor.

LORNE

I surrender. You're a genius. Now I need you to sign your contract.

Belushi grunts.

LORNE (CONT'D)

I think that's a yes.

Lorne places the contract on the Update desk.

LORNE (CONT'D)

Neil! I need a pen!

Whip to Neil, who is mid-card trick. His cards go sputtering. Meanwhile, Barbara runs up, breathless.

BARBARA

Lorne, there's a call from Burbank waiting in your office...

LORNE

It's Carson . Okay, I'll be right back. Get Belushi a pen.

(then)

Don't let him use it as a straw.

Lorne exits swiftly. Running upstairs.

LORNE (CONT'D)

Rehearse something... Anything!

JOE DICSO

Bee Hospital to stage left.

We see BEE HOSPITAL being set up. Again, cameras on the move, cables are lifted for moving flats. Actors in Bee Costumes entering and taking places. Belushi, annoyed at the costumes.

We follow Lorne out of 8H --

Lorne rushing up the stairwell trailed by Neil. As they round a corner in the stairwell, we find Jim Henson waiting in ambush. He starts following Lorne up the stairs. Lorne doesn't slow down.

HENSON

Mr. Michaels...

LORNE

Mr. Henson, excited to see what you and your merry band of creatures have in store for us tonight...

HENSON

Well, Lorne, we don't have any script pages. We're flying blind here. Muppets don't riff.

LORNE

Absolutely. This is the first I'm hearing of this. It's unacceptable.
(to Neil)
Neil, Jim needs his pages!

HENSON

Thank you. And can you please remind your crew not to leave the muppets in compromising positions?

LORNE

That doesn't sound like them...

HENSON

They left a note.

LORNE

They didn't.

HENSON

It said... (quietly) "Fuck-Rags For Rent."

LORNE

(stifles a laugh)
I'll speak to Michael.

34

9TH FLOOR CORRIDOR

34

Lorne heading with steam to his office.

Lorne passes the green room door. Affiliates pour out, still drinking, Lorne navigates through them like Frogger...

35

LORNE'S 9TH FLOOR OFFICE

35

Lorne takes a breath. His office is cleanly appointed. Black leather and old lamps. A LARGE WINDOW looking over Studio 8H.

LORNE

Oh, hey Bernie...

Turn to find BERNIE BRILLSTEIN on the sofa, with his whiskey. He motions to leave, but Lorne stops him.

LORNE (CONT'D)

(kindly waving him off)

No, no, you're good.

(picks up the receiver)

Hello, this is Lorne.

JOHNNY CARSON (O.C.)

I was beginning to think you didn't like me.

LORNE

Of course not, Mr. Carson. You're the voice of a generation.

JOHNNY CARSON (O.C.)

I just wanted to reach out,
say good luck tonight...

LORNE (CONT'D)

That's very kind...

JOHNNY CARSON (CONT'D)

And also, I suppose I just wanted to make sure we don't end up stepping on each other's dicks.

LORNE

Uh... Okay...

JOHNNY CARSON (CONT'D)

I do five shows a week - They could run seven, but Saturday is a dumping ground, a graveyard. Who the fuck is watching TV then?

Carson opines, but we barely listen. Lorne drops the jelly beans and goes to his WINDOW, looking over the stage floor.

The CAMERA BOYS and STAGE HANDS are still working on that scene change.... *You go this way... I'll go that way.*

Lorne spots Belushi surrounded by bee costumes - still mulling over his contract. Barely listening to Carson now.

LORNE (CONT'D)

Right, of course....

(quietly)

Sign it, you bastard.

JOHNNY CARSON

I do five shows a week - They could run seven, but Saturday is a dumping ground, a graveyard. Who the fuck is watching TV then? You know how this all started, don't you?

LORNE

With a kite and a key?

CARSON

Don't be a dipshit for a second, kid. I do five shows a week - They could run seven, but Saturday is a dumping ground, a graveyard. Who the fuck is watching TV then?

Belushi clicks the pen and is just about to sign his contract when... Ebersol interrupts him...

LORNE

No, No, No...

CARSON

So I told Dave Tebet, look, you got to find something for the weekends. I don't give a shit if it's game shows or skin flicks.

Ebersol presents Belushi with a POLAROID CAMERA. A cute polaroid rep nearby. Ebersol demos the instant film.

Belushi takes the camera with false interest...

LORNE

... Oh, don't let him hold the...

CARSON

Who knows kid, maybe you'll carve out a little home amongst the dead beats and the bagheads.

Belushi hurls the camera. The Polaroid Rep takes chase.

CARSON (CONT'D)

But here's a little friendly advice... Stay the fuck away from Burbank. Stay the fuck away from my guests. Stay the fuck away from me...

Lorne, nose to the glass now. We finally hear Johnny Carson.

Neil stops at Jim Fox's office.

NEIL

Have you seen Belushi?

Fox on the phone, can't be bothered.

Neil tries a couple more rooms.

NEIL (CONT'D)

You guys seen Belushi...? Hey, I'm looking for Belushi, anyone seen him...? Anyone got eyes on John...?

Everyone just brushes him off. Anne doesn't even pause.

ANNE

I'm not an animal wrangler.

Neil finally arrives at a closed door. Magic marker on white tape reads - *THE DEPARTURE LOUNGE*. Light music can be heard.

39

THE DEPARTURE LOUNGE

39

Neil opens the door and an Olympian cloud of smoke escapes. This is the green room for the Saturday Night band.

Inside, a few instrumentalists play tunes, but mostly, they're just getting high before the show. PAUL SHAFFER (26), massive glasses and long hair (already thinning).

NEIL

Anyone seen Belushi?

PAUL SHAFFER

Sure, yeah, he was up here hanging with us yesterday.

NEIL

(impatient)

No, I mean lately?

A musician hands Neil a TIGHTLY ROLLED JOINT.

PAUL SHAFFER

You sound stressed, you need a hit?

Neil considers this for a moment.

PAUL SHAFFER (CONT'D)

Hey, what's the best that could happen?

Neil nods and takes a long hit.

PAUL SHAFFER (CONT'D)
Good luck on your quest amigo.

Shaffer closes the door in Neil's face.

40

9TH FLOOR CORRIDOR

40

Neil now counting his steps. The weed is powerful and works quickly. Neil feels off balance.

Garrett Morris, in bee costume, is suddenly in Neil's face.

GARRETT MORRIS
Neil, who do you think I am?

NEIL
You're a human bumble bee?

GARRETT MORRIS
No man, what would you say my
identity is on the show?

NEIL
I can't answer that question! I
don't have all the answers! I can't
do this right now!

Neil bugs out and runs ahead. He stops at Gilda (in toga)
talking to Billy Crystal.

NEIL (CONT'D)
Have you guys seen Belushi?

GILDA
Sweetie, are you okay?

BILLY CRYSTAL
Yeah buddy, why are you
holding your face?

NEIL
I don't know. I can hear my own
blood. AM I GOING TO BE OK?

BILLY CRYSTAL
She's not a nurse, kid.

NEIL
I know that!

Neil runs off, leaving us with Gilda and Billy.

BILLY CRYSTAL
Should I be worried?

GILDA

About Neil?

BILLY CRYSTAL

No - Fuck Neil - About my set. I can't get a straight answer out of Lorne.

GILDA

(holds his face)

You're family, Billy.

41

8TH FLOOR HALLWAY - MAIN STREET

41

Meanwhile, Lorne searches room to room for Belushi when he runs smack dab into DAVE TEBET and a TUXEDOED COMEDIAN with greased back hair, tie undone, and a cigar.

TEBET

Lorne, you know Milton Berle.

LORNE

Absolutely. Big fan. Grew up on your work.

MILTON BERLE

Who didn't? Heard it's your big night.

TEBET

We're counting on it. How's it all coming?

LORNE

Just... perfect.

TEBET

Really. Nothing I can help with? I have a little pull, you know.

LORNE

Honestly, it's been smooth sailing.

TEBET

Well, you never hear that.

MILTON BERLE

You certainly don't.

LORNE

Yep. Being here must bring back all kinds of memories.

They take the cross street towards Broadway. Milton takes a look into the wardrobe room. Sees Jackie doing her make-up.

MILTON BERLE

Sure. Used to call it the RCA Radio tower - Radio, that wonderful invention by which I could reach a million people... who fortunately couldn't reach me.

TEBET

You know Milt's TV show once pulled a ninety seven share. Ninety seven percent of the American audience was watching Uncle Miltie.

As if on cue, some of the stage hands notice Milton. They all know him. *Hey buddy! Uncle Milty! Miss you!*

LORNE

You ever miss being Mr. Television?

MILTON BERLE

(frowns)

What is he talking about?

TEBET

Lorne - Milton remains one of the peacock's brightest feathers.

MILTON BERLE

It's quite a feather.

LORNE

Of course...

MILTON BERLE

And I'm looking forward to hosting your show.

They stop on Broadway.

LORNE

Well (coughs) we'd be honored. There are still so many decisions.

MILTON BERLE

I'm hearing episode five.

TEBET

Boys upstairs love it.
Affiliates ate it up.

MILTON BERLE (CONT'D)

They're the real boss.

LORNE

It's a late show. Are you suited for midnight?

MILTON BERLE

At sixty seven, I still feel like a
twenty year old, but unfortunately,
there's never one around.

LORNE

Your reputation precedes you.

MILTON BERLE

Yeah, by about eleven inches.

Milton eyes Jackie in costumes and pursues his conquest.

MILTON BERLE (CONT'D)

Excuse me a second.

TEBET

Any sign of Belushi?

LORNE

Hm? Oh, John? I believe he's in
wardrobe. Why?

TEBET

Legal is frantic for his paperwork.

LORNE

Strange. I'll look into that...

Lorne turns and goes for the CONTROL ROOM DOOR. Locked. He
embarrassingly has to knock again. For a moment, Lorne makes
eye contact with the TOSCANINI PORTRAIT.

TEBET

Lorne, I can imagine what must be
racing through your mind... the
thought, no matter how improbable,
that you might not make it to air.

LORNE

Hadn't even occurred to me.

There's a hive of energy around them. No one seems to notice
the tension of the coming conversation.

TEBET

Really? I heard you're having some
technical difficulties?

LORNE

Not that I know of...

TEBET

Oh, it's just that I had heard your writers were stoned, your actors were physically assaulting each other, the sound system was down and a fire broke out earlier...

Lorne frozen. Tebet plows forward with a smile.

TEBET (CONT'D)

I've been doing this job a long time. I've seen it all. I'm sure you have it all under control.

LORNE

(smiles)

Yes. Minor issues. Already addressed.

TEBET

(smiles back)

Well, that's reassuring.

LORNE

Oh, this whole conversation is a soothing shower of relief.

Tebet knocks on the control room door for Lorne.

TEBET

Good - Good. Look, if for some reason, you *can't* lock your script or commit your cast to legally binding contracts, please rest assured, the country would be happy to watch Johnny Carson.

LORNE

I mean, we could always run the tape of dress rehearsal. Worst case scenario.

TEBET

(smiles)

That's not the worst case.

The control room door finally opens. Lorne slips inside.

Gilda and Billy at a locked door. Knocking with concern.

GILDA

Neil, everything okay in there?

Gilda looks to others in the hallway for help.

JANE

What's the matter?

GILDA

The band gave Neil a big fat whale honker and now he's freaking out.

A small gathering forms outside the door... *Come on Neil... Neil... It's okay bud... Open the door, Neil...* Chevy Chase works his way to the front of the group.

CHEVY

(ala Landshark)

*Special Delivery for Neil Levy...
Flowers... Candygram...*

Gilda finds Aykroyd.

AYKROYD

What's with the convention?

GILDA

Neil took a hit of something. He's locked himself in.

AYKROYD

(nods)

Hey Buddy, you freaking out in there?

NEIL (O.S.)

I took a hit in the departure lounge.

AYKROYD

Who's grass was it?

NEIL (O.S.)

One of the horn players.

AYKROYD

Degenerates. That's a potent dragon you're riding, kid. What you smoked was a sacred strain from the Isaan plateau of Thailand. Make no mistake, that stick is stronger than a bull elephant. But you're going to be OK. We're all a little freaked out.

(MORE)

AYKROYD (CONT'D)

Now, first things first, open the door so I can make sure your face isn't inside out.

(winks to Gilda)

Click - Neil unlocks the door and emerges. Danny gets really close, right in his mug.

AYKROYD (CONT'D)

(mock terror)

Oh Dear God!

(breaks)

Ah, you're going to be fine. Just need a little studio fuel. We'll wrestle you up some amphetamines and you'll be fit as a flea. You might even like it. You know Robert Louis Stevenson did some of his best work on nose candy. He was a real freak for the Peruvian Lady.

BARBARA runs up in a panic.

BARBARA

Hey! We need everyone in togas!
Everyone down to the eighth floor!

And with that, they're off! War cries, howling into...

43 **STAIRWELL DOWN TO 8TH FLOOR** 43

The actors hoot and holler like kids on a rollercoaster. They pass Jim Fox who covers his ears in a panic.

44 **8TH FLOOR HALLWAY - MAIN STREET** 44

The mob of actors storm down the hallway like whirling dervishes, picking up props and pieces of wardrobe.

They pass Bernie Brillstein eating mac and gravy.

They burst through the stage doors into 8H.

45 **CONTROL ROOM** 45

On the screens we watch the actors invade studio 8H.

POOK

(to Lorne)

Did Rosie tell you what she wants for her credit?

LORNE

Yeah... she was of two minds...
She, uh...

Something catches Lorne's eye. He frowns. On one of the MONITORS. Lorne gets closer.

It's an episode of THE TONIGHT SHOW.

LORNE (CONT'D)

What is this? Why are you cueing up Carson?

The room goes a little quiet. No answer.

LORNE (CONT'D)

Who is that?

EBERSOL

(uncomfortable)

Uh... I think it's Tony Curtis. That's pretty normal for a live show, right Dave?

DAVE WILSON

Yeah, anything goes wrong, we bump to tape.

LORNE

Right...

Lorne is interrupted by BARBARA. She's out of breath.

BARBARA

Lorne! We found a lighting director!

LORNE

Great! Go get him.

BARBARA

He's lighting a show right now. This will take massaging.

LORNE

We don't have time... What floor?

Already leaving the control room.

46

8TH FLOOR HALLWAY - BROADWAY

46

Speed walking to the elevators.

BARBARA

Sixth floor. Some variety show.

LORNE

He knows I'm coming...?

Barbara doesn't know.

Garret Morris sees Lorne and jumps into the procession.

GARRETT MORRIS

Is this a bad time?

LORNE

It's the perfect time. What's on your mind, Garrett?

GARRETT MORRIS

Why'd you hire me?

LORNE

You were cheap.

GARRETT MORRIS

Really?

LORNE

I'm being ironical, Garrett.

Lorne slips into an elevator and it shuts behind him.

Garret steps away and almost runs into Gilda.

GILDA

Hey Garrett... What's wrong?

GARRETT MORRIS

Nothing. I'm just trying to figure out exactly what I'm doing here.

GILDA

What do you mean?

GARRETT MORRIS

Well, I just can't help feeling like an outsider.

GILDA

... Because you're so much older?

GARRETT MORRIS

No. I'm... I'm not that much older.

GILDA

You are a little bit older.

GARRETT MORRIS

No, look, I went to Juilliard. I've been on Broadway. I'm a published playwright. You know how many operas I've done?

GILDA

I have no idea, Garrett.

GARRETT MORRIS

Shit, while Danny and Laraine were eating Fruit Loops, I was performing La Traviata... in Italian. You dig?

GILDA

Of course I dig, Garrett, but...

(a thought)

No one is saying you can't sing on the show.

Garret is about to say something but stops short.

Prelap - DING!

47

6TH FLOOR HALLWAY

47

Elevator doors open revealing Lorne and Barbara. The 6th floor feels like a time warp to old school variety TV.

Lorne quickly moves between show girls, magicians, animal acts, a barbershop quartet. A minefield of mediocrity.

Lorne makes it to the STAGE DOORS and plows through into...

48

STAGE 6G

48

Lorne is stopped by the ARM of a production assistant. He's gestured to wait and be quiet until rehearsal is over.

The stage - A SPLASHY 1970s design of starbursts and white risers. Showgirls in sequins and feathers separate to reveal none other than - MILTON BERLE. Singing. A Conga line forms.

We swing back to Lorne and realize he is fixated on something else. A DIGITAL CLOCK - 10:49... becomes 10:50.

Lorne breaks past the production assistant. He runs up the stairs of the empty bleachers, two at a time, past a couple unimpressed smoking grips all the way to the light booth.

At the lighting desk is a GRIZZLY OLD LIGHTING DIRECTOR, arms covered in Navy tattoos. He spills over the board with his cigarette, barking at his long-haired young assistant - CARL.

GRIZZLY LIGHTING DIRECTOR
 Fuck Carl, get your head out of
 your ass. Prep the cupcake lights
 and bring up the glitter.

Lorne clocks the lighting director, then turns to Carl.

LORNE
 Carl, I have a job offer. It comes
 with no guarantees, no perks, and
 no weekends.

CARL
 How's the pay?

LORNE
 That's the worst part.

Carl removes his headset. Follows Lorne. They run back down the bleachers, just as fast. A magician sets up on stage.

49 **6TH FLOOR HALLWAY**

49

PLOWING through the stage doors and back down the hallway. Lorne falls over a PRODUCT DISPLAY for La Choy canned Chinese food, knocking cans everywhere.

50 **8TH FLOOR HALLWAY - BROADWAY**

50

We turn to find Billy Crystal and Valri Bromfield.

CRYSTAL
 What's the fastest you could do
 your set? Top to bottom.

VALRI
 5 minutes.

CRYSTAL
 Yeah, me too. Could you do it in 4?

VALRI
 Probably.

CRYSTAL
 Yeah, me too. They're gonna offer
 3, but we draw the line at 4.

VALRI

Okay. I want to do the show.

CRYSTAL

We're doing the show. We just can't get jerked around.

VALRI

But we're doing the show?

CRYSTAL

Of course. We just need to be in this together.

51

STAGE 8H

51

GREEK COLUMNS are being wheeled out as a BREAK ROOM set is wheeled in. Actors and actresses in Hair and Make-Up. A make-up assistant presents a Kleenex and Gilda spits out her gum.

Leo has notably only laid down about 30% OF THE BRICKS.

NBC Pages hand out updated pages. Cast and crew zip through, looking for changes. Chevy comes through like a lost dog.

CHEVY

Anyone seen Jaqueline? My fiancee?

Meanwhile - Gilda, Laraine, and Jane are switching costumes in QUICK CHANGE BOOTHS. They emerge in construction worker costumes. Rosie is there to direct them.

ROSIE

Gilda, why don't you put your foot up over on that bench there...

CHEVY

(wandering through)

You gals seen Jackie?

The actresses shake their heads. They can't help him.

We turn to find Danny, wearing a small courtesy robe. He's tugging away at whatever costume he's wearing underneath. It's clearly too tight and riding up his ass.

AYKROYD

(to Rosie)

Hey... is this really necessary?

ROSIE

(flirty)

Are you kidding hot stuff, you're going to melt every TV in America.

We catch Danny using the same line he used on Gilda earlier.

AYKROYD

Ma'am, you know, you're dealing with a fully qualified male strumpet.

ROSIE

Oh yeah?

AYKROYD

I have a work order here which specifies that I am to roger your roundly...

Laraine looks over to see Danny flirting with Rosie. She tries not to react. Gilda catches the moment as well and distracts Laraine by fixing her helmet.

Aykroyd looks close enough to kiss Rosie when Lorne approaches and there's just no time to recover.

LORNE

(to Danny)

Any idea where Belushi might be?

ROSIE

Haven't seen him.

Aykroyd is a deer in headlights.

ROSIE (CONT'D)

Danny...?

AYKROYD

Well... John is an anarchist and an Illinois Alpha Male.

LORNE

What does that mean?

AYKROYD

You know... uh... You and I might approach this vast space like 15th century peasants entering the Vatican, but Mr. Belushi's a whole other animal. He's a skeptic and a troublemaker. I'd give O'Houlihans a recce.

ROSIE SHUSTER
(translating)
He's at the bar next door.

Lorne nods and turns to Rosie.

LORNE
Barbara is still asking about your
credit on the show.

ROSIE SHUSTER
Whatever you think.

LORNE
Hey, it's your name.

Lorne finds another problem. Half the bricks at Home Base are still in a pile. Leo trowels as fast as he can. Lorne checks his watch and eyes the shop steward.

SHOP STEWARD
We'd help if we could, but we're
routing for the little guy.

LORNE
At least your heart's in it.

Lorne steps away and we pan back to Aykroyd.

AYKROYD
Are we good? Is he alright?

ROSIE
Young man, whatever's happening
here between you and me is the last
thing on his mind right now.

AYKROYD
The man doesn't wrestle with the
green-eyed monster?

ROSIE
Hardly. Look, one day, on his way
home from grade school, Lorne stops
at a construction site, and just
watches these two wild maniacal
girls jumping on boards. He just
stood there, forever, transfixed by
- me - The girl with the toilet
paper tits.

AYKROYD
You can get arrested for that.

ROSIE

We were kids.

STAGE HAND

(interrupting)

Hey Rosie, sweetheart, mind stepping off that cable.

ROSIE

Yeah, you got it, Moose.

(back to her story)

Anyhow, Lorne lost his dad at fourteen. His mom sold everything. He went a year without furniture. I thought he was just a stray, looking for a warm piece of carpet. Like he wanted to be a part of my family and I was his kid sister or something. But then, hormones, turns out I am NOT his little sister. So we started dating and I thought, alright, he wants to build a family - With me. So we got married, bought a house and stuff. No ring or anything, I think those are pretty stupid. But linens. China. Anyhow, it turns out, I'm not the kid sister or the wife. I'm the writer.

DANNY

And who's he...?

Aykroyd won't get his answer just yet.

JOE DICSO (O.C.)

Everyone on their marks!

DON PARDO steps up to a mic, holding his headphones.

DON PARDO (O.C.)

We now take you to Ancient Greece
as...

STAGE HANDS hear this and are caught off guard. They begin moving GIANT COLUMNS INTO PLACE...

JOE DICSO

Wo, wo, wo... Not yet, Don! Wrong sketch, buddy.

Stage almost barrel into the camera boys.

JOE DICSO (CONT'D)

Back to one...

Rosie now next to the camera to direct the rehearsal.

ROSIE SHUSTER

Okay, action girls.

Gilda tips her construction helmet and smiles.

GILDA

(brassy New York)

Now that you've mastered all the technical know-how, it's time we work on your sidewalk skills.

(gestures to Danny)

Daniel over here has kindly offered to aid us in a live demonstration.

ROSIE SHUSTER

(directing)

Danny, enter from the right.

Danny, clearly uncomfortable, steps into the stage space.

ROSIE SHUSTER (CONT'D)

(directing)

And take off the robe...

Danny sighs and does so, revealing a skin tight red shirt and suffocating Daisy Dukes.

Immediately, whistles from off camera. Danny is clearly genuinely embarrassed in front of the crew. Rosie smiles, having engineered this moment.

GILDA

Now, when a little piece of heaven like Danny walks by...

(to Danny)

Strut your stuff, cupcake.

(to the girls)

Here's how you make him feel right at home...

Danny is visibly embarrassed and struggling to stay in character. We can see Gilda already enjoying this.

GILDA (CONT'D)

Hey, beefcakes, yeah you!

Gilda nods to Jane, who nervously approaches.

ROSIE SHUSTER

(directing)

And Jane, try putting your foot up
on the bench.

JANE

(to Rosie)

This good?

(adorably nervous)

Yeah, dreamboat, what's da matter?
A smile isn't gonna cost ya
anything.

GILDA

(to Danny)

Okay, be a doll and move those gams
for us...

Danny gives a little walk in his costume. Gilda follows
closely with her hands out.

GILDA (CONT'D)

Voom, va-va-voom! Voom, va-va voom!

Stage hands eating this up.

SHOP STEWARD

Show him how to do it, Gilda.

Gilda nods to Laraine - *Give it to him.*

LARAINÉ

Hey stud muffins, want to make
bouncy bouncy?

Rosie whistles from off camera.

The crew joins in with a few more whistles. Comments start to
fire off from behind camera. Danny seems genuinely
embarrassed and is barely in character.

DANNY

(breaking character)

Are we still doing the scene?

JANE

What's the matter, joy chunks?

LORNE

(under his breath)
Joy chunks?

ROSIE SHUSTER

They're just rolling with it
now.

LARAINÉ
 (tosses a glove)
 Hey, you dropped something.

Danny plays along. He pick the glove up, bending over.

LARAINÉ (CONT'D)
 Nice. Work that little caboose.

GILDA LARAINÉ (CONT'D)
 Hey, hey, hey, come on, baby. Yeah, crazy pecs! Why don't
 ya flex'em for me, butch?

DANNY GILDA (CONT'D)
 Okay, okay... They are so cute when they're
 mad.

Danny has fully broken character and is now just blushing.

ROSIE
 (tosses him his robe)
 Alright, cover yourself up...

Gilda puts her arm around Laraine.

GILDA LARAINÉ
 Nice scene... * Yeah, strumpet.

DON PARDO (O.C.)
We now take you to Ancient Greece
as Alexander the Great attends his
Ten Year High School Reunion!

JOE DICSO
 Okay, that's you, Rocky, Hal...
 cameras are on the move... columns
 are in... five, four... Hey Frank,
 you still on the clock?

Stage hands on the move with columns... Cameras peds whip out
 of the way... The sound booms whips up to make room... A
 cable is lifted on a pole so a flat can slide through...

It's actually working when...

CARLIN (O.C.)
 ARE YOU SHITTING ME WITH THIS
 COSTUME?!

Carlin bounds onto the stage floor at full volume. He's
 dressed as Alexander the Great. All attention is now on him.

Everything crashes to a stop.

Lorne sees Tebet watching everything and swoops in.

LORNE

How can I help, George?

CARLIN

I mean what is this shit? Why am I
dolled up like a fucking towel boy
at Caesar's?

LORNE

You're playing Alexander the
Great at his...

DON PARDO

... Ten Year High School
* Reunion!

CARLIN

Uh huh.

O'DONOGHUE

Exactly - So, when Chevy asks what
you've been up to, your response is
"Oh you know, mostly conquering the
known universe."

CARLIN

And this is for television?

LORNE

(one eye on Tebet)
Yes, what's your concern?

CARLIN

My concern is why I let my agent
convince me to do your show.
(waving sides)
I mean, what is this script? Feels
like a Spruce Goose. Lotta wood, no
lift off.

O'DONOGHUE

(flat)
Is that right?

LORNE

Perhaps a rewrite... We have...
(checks his watch)
Jesus Christ...

O'DONOGHUE

(mulls this over)
George, I hear you.

CARLIN

Thanks.

O'DONOGHUE

I think I understand the reason you
might be struggling.

LORNE

Yes and we want to make it work.

O'DONOGHUE

Yeah, you see these are
'scenes'

LORNE (CONT'D)

Sketches.

O'DONOGHUE (CONT'D)

... That revolve around
'acting'.

LORNE (CONT'D)

... Michael...

O'DONOGHUE (CONT'D)

That must feel foreign when you're
just a ponytailed vulture, feeding
off the corpse of Lenny Bruce.

Lorne just stares at O'Donoghue.

CARLIN

(smiling)

You know, you're right. I'd hate to
make these *skits* any worse than
they already are. Thank god no one
will be watching. Enjoy your
fucking circle jerk.

Carlin storms off. Leaves his crown.

A beat as Schiller walks by with the SAGE.

For a moment, Lorne is lost in the chaos of the set.
Carpentry, masonry, lights buzzing, speaker futzing.

Lorne looks over to see Dave Tebet whispering something to
Dick Ebersol. Lorne exits.

Meanwhile, Chevy rounds the back of the ancient greek set to
find Jackie in a toga... and Milton Berle all over her.

CHEVY

Hey hon, they need us in Athens.

MILTON BERLE

Jesus, who's this guy?

JACKIE

Chevy, Milton taped a show
here back in 1956, isn't that
neat?

CHEVY

She's taken.

MILTON BERLE

What hours? I'll take the rest of the evening.

CHEVY

Excuse me...?

JACKIE

He's kidding...

MILTON BERLE

Yeah, buddy, I'm kidding.

CHEVY

That's sweet. I remember when you used to do comedy.

MILTON BERLE

Funny, cause I've never heard of you.

CHEVY

Probably the Alzheimers. What's the matter, did you wander off onto an actual TV set? Hey darling, look, it's the ghost of television past. He used to be an institution. Now he needs one.

MILTON BERLE

If you want my comeback, you're going to have to scrape it off the back of your mom's teeth.

Jackie guffaws.

CHEVY

You're going to laugh at that?

MILTON BERLE

Listen sweetheart, there's plenty more where that came from.

JACKIE

Oh god...

And just like that, Milton Berle unzips and unravels his prodigious third leg. Jackie and Chevy stammer.

MILTON BERLE

Oh, do I have your attention? I have two stars on the walk of fame. Who gives a shit. I once held ninety percent of the television viewing audience. *Pleh*. That's not what they're going to remember.

(MORE)

MILTON BERLE (CONT'D)

They're gonna remember Mr. Television. Their Uncle Miltie. Who the fuck are you? You're not a star, kid. You're barely in the building. You're not even a swinging dick.

(to Jackie)

Call me after he's done crying.

Milton zips up and walks away.

Over the speakers, we hear the strum of a harp, followed by the voice of Don Pardo.

DON PARDO (O.C.)

We now take you to Ancient Greece
as...

JOE DICSO (O.C.)

We're not going to Ancient Greece!

52

8TH FLOOR HALLWAY - BROADWAY

52

Lorne pops through the Main Street doors, running immediately into Laraine in her reporter's costume, flanked by a couple costume assistants.

LARAINÉ

I think we figured it out!

LORNE

Figured what out?

And just like that, in a flash, Laraine transforms from reporter into her ancient Greek toga. Like a magic trick.

LORNE (CONT'D)

We cut the toga sketch.

LARAINÉ

Oh.

Lorne strides towards Broadway. Audrey joins him in step.

AUDREY

(direct as ever)

Even without Alexander, we're still thirty over. Perhaps we don't need four musical performances...? Or we could trim one of the Carlin monologues...

Lorne nods. He goes to the Run Of Show board and rips everything off it. It's cacophonous as all the cards fall in a pile on the floor.

LORNE

Are we under now?

Lorne turns to go but is stopped by Billy and Valri.

BILLY CRYSTAL

Lorne... We've been talking, and we can't accept less than four minutes a piece. That's four for me and four for Valri. We've worked too hard on our material to accept anything less. I'm afraid it's four or nothing.

LORNE

Two minutes.

BILLY CRYSTAL

You need me to cut two minutes?

LORNE

No, I need two minutes of material. It's two minutes or nothing.

Billy cocks his head. Trying to read the moment.

BILLY CRYSTAL

Lorne, is this for real? I killed at dress... I was the only act that killed at dress.

LORNE

Can you do it in two?

BILLY CRYSTAL

I can't even set it up in two.

LORNE

Then I don't know what to say. I'm sorry it didn't work out.

(turns to Valri)

Can you make it work in two?

VALRI

(without hesitating)

Yes. Yes I can.

Lorne nods, walks away.

Billy turns to look at Valri. His world shatters.

We chase Ebersol as he follows Lorne into the stairwell.

53

STAIRWELL

53

Ebersol approaches Lorne carefully.

EBERSOL

I was thinking... Why don't we
punt? Come back stronger next week,
debut with Paul Simon...

LORNE

Oh, was that what you were
thinking?

EBERSOL

We're just not ready.

LORNE

We don't go on because we're ready.
We go on because it's 11:30.

EBERSOL

Hey, no one wants this show to
succeed more than I do.

LORNE

Is that so?

EBERSOL

I mean, yeah, I hired you, Lorne. I
stayed up all night at the fucking
Chateau Marmont listening to your
heady theories on comedy because I
believe in you. I take it up the
ass from this network every day,
because I believe in this show. And
I'm telling you, we should run the
dress rehearsal and claw back a win
next Saturday. It's in everyone's
best interest - Mainly yours.

LORNE

Are you...? Was that a threat?

EBERSOL

No, I'm trying to give you advice.

Neil pops his head in at the exact wrong moment.

NEIL

(chipper)
Twenty Five minutes!

LORNE

Thank you Neil.

Neil disappears. Lorne turns to Ebersol.

LORNE (CONT'D)

Thanks for the advice. We can't.
It's a live show.

EBERSOL

No one will know the difference.

LORNE

We just can't.

EBERSOL

Lorne, you need to start adjusting
your concept of what you can and
cannot do...

LORNE

We can't because there is no tape,
alright?! I didn't record the dress
rehearsal. Now we don't have to
argue about it.

Ebersol is stunned. His face tightens.

EBERSOL

Are you fucking kidding me?

LORNE

(deep breath)

We just need to make it to air.

EBERSOL

I'm not going to be able to protect
you.

LORNE

I'm used to that.

EBERSOL (CONT'D)

Screw you.

EBERSOL (CONT'D)

Do you know how much bullshit never
makes it to your ears because I am
the wall they hit.

LORNE

Tell that to your Polaroid rep.
She's cute.

EBERSOL

Oh, I'm sorry you need a sponsor
for a show that can't pull a single
advertiser. You know they're giving
out the ads for free? For free.

LORNE

Frankly, NBC is lucky to have something as relevant as this show.

EBERSOL

Lucky? They don't even want it!

LORNE

Yes, that's logical, that's why they've paid us all to be here - Because they don't want our show.

EBERSOL

They want you to fail.

Lorne scoffs.

EBERSOL (CONT'D)

They're betting on it. NBC makes more money playing reruns of the Tonight Show on Saturday.

LORNE

So why don't they?

EBERSOL

Contract dispute. They need to prove to Johnny Carson that the reruns are inevitable. So, they built a show that was guaranteed to fail.

Lorne doesn't have a quick response this time.

EBERSOL (CONT'D)

Ninety minutes of live television by a group of kids in their twenties who've never made anything? Did you ever stop to wonder why they said yes?

He didn't.

EBERSOL (CONT'D)

A counter culture show starring total unknowns with zero narrative and even less structure? Are you so arrogant that you never even questioned this?

Lorne is speechless.

EBERSOL (CONT'D)

Look, this is what's going to happen at 11:30 tonight. Okay? All your actors will be on their marks. Band's tuned up. Joe's hollering out the count down. You'll be in the control room and Dave Tebet will be standing, probably right next to you. And right as the screen goes black, Tebet will point with his big ass jeweled up index finger and say "Go to Carson". And that'll be that.

Ebersol begins to exit. Stops at the door.

EBERSOL (CONT'D)

I know you all make fun of me and my clothes behind my back. But I'm killing myself for this show.
(then, quietly)
Also... Polaroid is cool.

Ebersol exits. Lorne is alone in the stairwell. He just breathes in a long silence. Out of chess moves.

Deep breath. Gathers.

Lorne approaches the door back into the hallway. Steps through and...

SPLASH! - A GALLON OF BLOOD HITS LORNE IN THE CHEST!

54 OMITTED 54

55 **8TH FLOOR - BETWEEN MAIN ST AND BROADWAY** 55

A beat as Lorne takes in the moment. Dripping gore.

TOM DAVIS (O.C.) AL FRANKEN (O.C.)
Oh shit, Lorne! It worked!

Reveal Tom and Al holding the blood pump.

LORNE

(quiet)
Nice work, fellas. A little heavy on the flow. But very funny.

TOM DAVIS AL FRANKEN
Sorry about the clothes. And your face.

LORNE

Art is but a measure of sacrifice
and tears. Not quite ready for
tonight, but we'll keep it on a
special list.

He taps the wall and begins to walk away with a SIGH.

Lorne rounds the corner onto MAIN STREET. He encounters the a
growing audience lining up. He makes eyes with a few folks,
smiles meekly, still dripping.

Finally past the gauntlet, he arrives at an open elevator --

56

ELEVATOR

56

Jim Henson is standing quietly inside the elevator.

HENSON

Is this an OK time?

LORNE

Ideal.

Lorne is dripping fake blood on the elevator floor. The
elevator man eyes him warily.

HENSON

Look, I know what people say when
they see a man with his arm up a
muppet. But this isn't just kid's
stuff. There's room for high stakes
puppetry on grown-up TV and... I
get the sense that some of the
writers on the 17th floor don't
respect us.

LORNE

Strong words.

HENSON

I don't use them lightly.

LORNE

You didn't like the pages.

HENSON

There were no pages.

LORNE

Fair criticism.

DING! Elevator doors open.

ELEVATOR MAN

Lobby.

Lorne walks through the lobby and out into the night.

56A **50TH STREET**

56A

We follow Lorne into the quiet of midtown Manhattan late on a Saturday night. True to form, no one flinches as a blood-soaked man meanders on the sidewalk.

Still struggling to fill his quota, the NBC PAGE calls out -

NBC PAGE

Hey, any interest in free tickets
to a taping tonight--

Without saying a word, Lorne grabs the Page's clipboard and HURLS IT into the middle of the road. A truck runs it over.

NBC PAGE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Hey!

Lorne stumbles a couple doors down. O'HOULIHANS BAR. Lorne goes to enter when he sees Billy Crystal at a subway entrance. Debating whether to descend and go home. He thinks, then walks downstairs, a broken man.

Lorne sighs and we follow him into --

57 **DIVE BAR**

57

A crummy midtown watering hole. Lorne walks in, looks around.

A smattering of old drunks and a few bridge and tunnel couples looking for some fun in the big city. At one end of the room sits a long walnut bar. Opposite the bar is a low stage set against a red brick wall.

On the stage, a BORSCHT BELT COMEDIAN.

BORSCHT BELT COMEDIAN

My family, they never quite fit in
here... My great grandfather even
fought in the civil war - He fought
for the West!

Lorne sits at the bar, cleans off his face with a bar-cloth.

LORNE

Vodka, double, fast.

BORSCHT BELT COMEDIAN
A drunk stands before the bench.
Judge says, *You've been brought
here for drinking.* The drunk says -
Okay, what are we having?

Some GROANS from the crowd. The comedian singles someone out
in the audience.

BORSCHT BELT COMEDIAN (CONT'D)
You think you're so funny? Look at
you... Was anyone else hurt in the
accident?

The bartender pours out a shot.

LORNE
Thanks.

YOUNG MAN
Fuck! Bullshit.

Lorne turns to stare at the agitated young man sitting beside
him. He sits poised over a composition NOTEBOOK.

The man seems to shudder every time the audience misses a
joke, crossing out lines in his notebook like a violent
stenographer. This is ALAN ZWEIBEL (23).

Lorne turns to the young man.

LORNE
What's happening here?

ZWEIBEL
I get paid seven bucks a joke - if
it gets a laugh. This putz is
taking bulletproof material and
filling it with lead.

Lorne putting it together.

LORNE
You wrote his jokes?

BORSCHT BELT COMEDIAN
Yesterday, I told my doctor, I've
got a ringing in my ear. He said,
Don't answer it.

A few chuckles. Alan deflates again.

LORNE

Why don't you perform them
yourself?

ZWEIBEL

Look at me. This is how much I
sweat - off stage.

Behind them, the comedian closes to tepid applause.

Lorne points to a thick binder on the bar.

LORNE

This your joke book? How many you
got in here?

ZWEIBEL

Eleven hundred. Single spaced.

LORNE

Mind if I...?

Alan slides the notebook on the bar. Lorne starts leafing
through. Smiles at a joke.

BORSCHT BELT COMEDIAN (O.C.)

That was rough. Shit crowd.

ZWEIBEL

Yep, that was it.

The comedian joins them. He fishes out a change purse and
starts pulling out crumpled singles and a handful of change.

ZWEIBEL (CONT'D)

Hey, what's with the quarters?

BORSCHT BELT COMEDIAN

I changed the punchline from 46 to
49 on the one about the Buick -
Much bigger laugh, so I figure I
only owe you 3.50 for that one.

LORNE

(to Zweibel)
Do you want a job?

ZWEIBEL

I want a defibrillator.

BORSCHT BELT COMEDIAN

You serious? This kid?

(to Zweibel)

Tell him what you really do.

(to Lorne)

He's a deli boy.

(MORE)

BORSCHT BELT COMEDIAN (CONT'D)

He's the schmuck with the little paper hat who slices the pastrami behind the counter... and he can barely do that.

LORNE

(to Zweibel)

How much do you need to live?

ZWEIBEL

I make three bucks an hour at the deli. Match that.

Lorne extends a hand.

LORNE

You're hired. Lorne Michaels.

BORSCHT BELT COMEDIAN

... Are you fucking kidding me?

ZWEIBEL

Alan Zweibel.

BORSCHT BELT COMEDIAN

(to Lorne)

You're better off buying the pastrami.

Lorne gets up and downs the shot.

LORNE

Let's go.

Zweibel gathers his things and follows Lorne out.

ZWEIBEL

When do we start?

Lorne checks his watch.

LORNE

Jesus christ.

And just like that, Lorne and his newest hire are outside.

58

SIDEWALK

58

They step outside and begin walking back to the NBC entrance.

ZWEIBEL

You hear Mr. Ed died?

LORNE

Condolences.

ZWEIBEL

I'm thinking, maybe we should go to Mrs. Ed for comment.

LORNE

(laughs)

Next week. Go to Claremont Stables on 89th and pick out a Tennessee Walker or something.

ZWEIBEL

How bout a Palomino. I think Mr. Ed would have graduated to fucking blondes.

Lorne hears something and PEELS OFF, turns back to Zweibel.

LORNE

8th floor. Follow the trail of blood.

Lorne continues to follow a sound - The unmistakable *slicing* sound of skating. He smiles.

For a moment, just quiet. We walk with Lorne as he takes in the magnitude of what he's trying to pull off. He walks by pedestrians and pays them no mind.

However, we begin to notice something unusual about the people that brush by. Their clothes... their hair... there's something recognizable. Each person who passes is a vision of SNL's future -

Wayne and Garth, Roseanne Roseannadana, Mr. Robinson, Stefon, the Church Lady, the Blues Brothers, Mary Katherine Ghallager, Hanz and Franz, the Cheerleaders, the Nerds, Samurai, Pat, Stuart, Mango, Dieter, Two Wild and Crazy Guys.

Lorne is on the precipice of changing comedy as we know it... yet he has no idea. Right now, he's just a 29 year old, wondering if he'll make it to tomorrow.

59

ROCKEFELLER ICE SKATING RINK

59

Twinkling Tchaikovsky plays. Golden Sculpture of a God in repose. John Belushi, still dressed as a bee, elegantly doing turns with care and beauty. Gilda watches from a ledge, cheering him on.

GILDA

Faster...! Faster...! Give us a twirl!

John throws her a look and goes into a spin.

GILDA (CONT'D)

Maybe this is the last time we'll
be just a couple of shmos.

JOHN

Hm. Maybe.

GILDA

You ever have nostalgia for a
moment while you're still in it?

JOHN

I don't know.

GILDA

I mean you're in the moment, but
you're also looking back on it.
Like right now - I'm here - But I'm
also thinking about this moment
twenty years from now. We're
walking by this rink, maybe it's
Christmas, our kids are dragging us
by our pinkies, and all we can
think about is this moment, right
before we went on TV.

JOHN

Who says we need to be on TV?

LORNE (O.C.)

The NBC liability clause forbids
you from ice skating.

We pan over to reveal Lorne, now standing next to Gilda.

GILDA

(quietly)

I found John.

LORNE

Thank you, Gilda.

BELUSHI

(annoyed)

Good thing I didn't sign my
contract.

LORNE

So, what's the deal?

(off camera)

What are we doing down here?

*
*
*

BELUSHI

I want to try a double axel. *

LORNE *

(off camera) *

Can I interest you in... (on camera) a single axel? *

Belushi is already off. He starts a fast circle, around the perimeter. His legs chopping at the ice like a thoroughbred. For a moment, we remember that he was a high school athlete. He might actually pull this off... He's right on the edge... he takes flight, spins... and comes crashing down, sliding across the ice and hitting the boards - *THUMP*. *

Gilda yelps in fear! Lorne leaps up and slides over the ice in his dress shoes. *

LORNE (CONT'D) *

Jesus... I yield, alright? I yield. *

BELUSHI

I accept your surrender. *

Belushi still getting his bearings. *

LORNE *

Can I help you up? *

BELUSHI *

I'm just going to lay here for a moment. *

LORNE *

Sure. We have all the time in the world. *

Belushi looks over at the golden sculpture. *

BELUSHI *

Who is that asshole anyway? *

LORNE *

(glances) *

Prometheus. He stole fire from the gods and shared it with man so we could have science and the arts. *

BELUSHI *

How'd it work out for him? *

LORNE

They strung him to a cliff and a giant eagle visited him every day to claw open his torso and feast on his liver.

*

BELUSHI

Ouch.

*

*

LORNE

It's better not to think about it.

(standing)

I'm going to head back up. We've got a show to put on and I'd like to be there when I get fired.

(adds)

I really hope I see you up there.

*

*

*

*

*

*

*

*

Lorne approaches the nearest door to the lobby of the building. Of course, it's locked.

*

Lorne spots the first object he can find... a SCULPTURAL PEACOCK. He picks it up and BREAKS THE WINDOW with it.

60

ELEVATOR LOBBY, RCA BUILDING

60

Lorne approaches just as - *Ding* - an elevator opens. Inside, Rosie is waiting with a costume asst and a clothing rack.

ROSIE

I heard you needed a quick change for the last act.

LORNE

Thank you. I found Belushi.

ROSIE

(taking in the blood)

Yeah? Did you murder him?

61

ELEVATOR TO 8TH FLOOR

61

The costume assistant helps Lorne into a corduroy jacket. Lorne complies as though this is perfectly normal.

LORNE

What do you think I should say when I get up there?

ROSIE

How should I know?

LORNE
You're the writer.

ROSIE
You're the talker.

LORNE
I'm the...? You have all the
restraint of a Wurlitzer...

ROSIE
You talk the peel off a grape.

LORNE
(nods)
That's good.

Rosie fastens a DUCK PIN to Lorne's lapel.

LORNE (CONT'D)
I, uh, I won't be offended if you
don't want to take my last name.

ROSIE
Hey, it's not even your last name.

62

8TH FLOOR HALLWAY - MAIN STREET

62

Lorne walks passed the WAITING STUDIO AUDIENCE. They're
getting impatient. The NBC Page from earlier is present.

NBC PAGE
Check it out! Full house!

LORNE
What did you tell them?

NBC PAGE
I mean, I lied a little, but
they're all super excited. I think
we might need to let them in.

LORNE
Almost.

NBC PAGE
(to the waiting audience)
Okay folks, we're almost there...
It's going to be a wild night!

63

STUDIO 8H

63

Lorne walks back into the stage. Still hammering.

He passes a ROCK SOUND CREW, long hair, torn jeans. Then he hears it -- NEW SOUND. Audio Cables being connected. Lorne makes a silent prayer to the gods. Maybe Prometheus.

We pass Alan Zweibel hiding behind a FAKE PLANT. Suddenly, Gilda joins him, in the plant.

GILDA

(conspiratorially)

Are you the writer that Lorne found on the street?

ZWEIBEL

That's a slightly romantic read of the story, but yeah, I guess so.

GILDA

You got any characters for me?

ZWEIBEL

I don't know...

(squawks)

You want to be a parrot?

GILDA

(squawks, snorts)

You want to be a parrot?!

Bernie Brillstein walking by.

GILDA (CONT'D)

Oh, Alan, do you need an agent?
This is Bernie. He represents...
all of us, I think?

We see that Leo has notably finished only 60% OF THE BRICKS!

A BOOM SOUND quiets the entire stage.

ZWEIBEL

The fuck was that?

JOE DICSO

Quiet! Work stops now! Sound
Check!! Who wants to sound check?

A lone Boom Operator steps into frame. Casual. Not a care in the fucking world. Extends the boom.

GILDA

Garret! Don't you know a song?!

Garrett Morris enters frame and steps up to the boom. He parts his lips and out comes an OPERA NOTE of such purity and beauty, you almost forget what movie you're watching.

We begin to circle Garrett as he holds this impossible note... and then a smile comes over his face as he suddenly segues into a song of his own writing...

GARRETT MORRIS

*...IIIIII I'M GONNA GET ME A SHOTGUN
AND KILL ALL THE WHITIES I SEE...
I'M GONNA GET ME A SHOTGUN AND KILL
ALL THE WHITIES I SEE...*

We move through the room, catching reactions. Apprehension, humor, confoundment...

Billy Preston's Band loves it and offers accompaniment.

GARRETT MORRIS (CONT'D)

*...WHEN I KILL ALL THE WHITIES I
SEE... AND WHITEY, HE WON'T BOTHER
ME... I'M GOING TO GET ME A SHOTGUN
AND KILL ALL THE WHITIES I SEE...*

Garrett crescendos and bows to thunderous applause.

LORNE

Bravo!

It's then that Lorne notices Ebersol standing with Tebet... and all FIFTY AFFILIATES from the Green Room. Now on the stage floor. Lorne nearly double takes (but doesn't).

LORNE (CONT'D)

Oh hello, gentlemen, how long have you been standing there?

TEBET

Long enough.

AUDREY

We need to let the audience in.

TEBET

Perhaps you kids aren't quite ready for prime time.

LORNE

What are you talking about?

TEBET

Look around Lorne. You haven't locked a script. Your actors are missing. Your crew's in open rebellion. Forget what standards and practices have to say. They'd be laughing at you in Burbank.

Rosie steps in.

ROSIE

But this isn't Burbank. It's New York fucking City.

It's gone quiet. Lorne looks over at Rosie.

LORNE

We have a hell of a show. We have two bands.

ROSIE

Three if you count Janis Ian.

LORNE

We have seven of the brightest comedy minds alive...

TEBET

Do you even know where they are?

LORNE

M-Most of them. Yes.

TEBET

(dismissive)

Maybe we'll try again next Saturday.

LORNE

Come on man. Everybody in this room has been killing themselves all week to make something special. To make something innovative and actually good. Have you done this so long, that you can't recognize the *potential for greatness* when it's right in front of your eyes?

TEBET

Do you even know what this show is?

And finally, Lorne is able to answer the question.

LORNE

It's an all nighter in the city.
It's catching Richard Pryor at a
drop in, or finding Paul Simon
strumming in the back of a dive
bar. It's meeting a girl outside a
bodega and getting lucky in a phone
booth. It's everything you think is
going to happen when you move to
the city.

The words play through the room beautifully.

TEBET

(locks eyes)
Show me.

LORNE

Show you what?

TEBET

Show me the *greatness*.

LORNE

We're going to be live in... Ten minutes!

JOE DICSO

TEBET

No you won't. Show me.

ROSIE

We could show them the
Muppets...?

LORNE

God, no...

AUDREY

Bee Hospital...

LORNE (CONT'D)

You're not helping...

The sound of a NEEDLE HITTING A RECORD interrupts them.

We turn to find ANDY KAUFMAN on stage with his RECORD PLAYER.
The MIGHTY MOUSE theme song begins to play. Lorne, jaw on the
floor, doesn't know quite what to do.

The affiliates start bobbing along to the music. We move
through the room catching smiles and nods from the whole
crew. It's a unifying moment.

We arrive back at Andy just in time for the chorus...

ANDY KAUFMAN

HERE I COME TO SAVE THE DAY!

The crew APPLAUDS. Lorne spins to the Affiliates... They find
it hilarious. They're on board!

Lorne runs up to Andy. Lifts the needle off the record.

LORNE
(pats Andy on the back)
Save your voice. BRING IN UPDATE!

DON PARDO
AND NOW... WEEKEND UPDATE...

The Weekend Update Set comes sliding in.

The Affiliates take a step closer to see what's next.

Lorne comes running down to the desk. A costume assistant is waiting with Lorne's wardrobe change.

Lorne turns to Chevy, who is still stinging from his moment with Milton Berle. Lorne puts a hand on his shoulder.

LORNE
You take it.

CHEVY
Are you sure?

LORNE
The show needs a face.

CHEVY
Should I make up a name for the news anchor?

LORNE
Use Chevy Chase. No one will believe it anyway.

Chevy hops up and takes the desk, measuring it with his arms.

LORNE (CONT'D)
Remember, when you look in the lens, you make eye contact with America.

Before Chevy can absorb that...

DON PARDO
WEEKEND UPDATE... WITH CHEVY CHASE!

The affiliates light up! They LOVE Chevy.

Just then, AL SIEGEL, the cue card guy fumbles the cards. They tumble to the ground. He scurries to grab them.

Chevy improves a beat. Picks up the phone on the desk.

Lorne is taking in all the action. Barbara Gallagher presents Carl from the 6th floor.

BARBARA GALLAGHER
Lorne, remember Carl?

LORNE
Carl?... Oh Carl!!
(to the lighting board)
You ever used one of these?

CARL
Not-a once.

LORNE
You'll pick it up in no time.

We look up as the SKYLIGHT PIECE swings out over Home Base.

LORNE (CONT'D)
Keep it steady boys.

We see Neil warming up the audience with a magic trick.

Carbunkle, NBC Standards, stops Ebersol mid-stride.

CARBUNKLE
(referencing the script)
Dick, question on page 26 of the
script. What is a "golden shower"?

Some of the stage hands look up. Ebersol stammers. Lorne opens his mouth to cover, but Rosie jumps in --

ROSIE
(pure bullshit)
... It's a yoga practice... in
which practitioners greet the new
day... by allowing the warm rays of
the golden sun... to 'shower' over
their skin and warm their chakras.
(adding)
It's a California thing.

Carbunkle nods skeptically. Tom Schiller enters with sage.

TOM SCHILLER
(pitching in)
Oh yeah, started at Esalen. I've
had at least fifty golden showers.

EBERSOL

(with sudden authority)

You heard him Sue, sign the damn script. We're going to air!

Carbunkle is shaken into focus and SIGNS the script in an officious way. She hands it over to Ebersol. He looks over at Lorne, finally a full blood member of the family.

JOE DICSO

We're live in five minutes!

The "Wolverines" set is slid into place. Even as it lands, artists are painting the furniture on to the wall.

LEO

Will this work?

ROSIE

Of course it will. It's nostalgic. It's Honeymooners. It has to work.

Lorne looks up at the audience settling in as he disappears under the bleachers. Zweibel is flipping through his joke notebook and dictating to the cue card writers.

64

8TH FLOOR HALLWAY - BROADWAY

64

Inside the Make-Up Room, Jackie Carlin is doing a touch up on Chevy's make up.

Nearby, Jane is running her lines in the mirror.

JANE CURTIN

I'm Jane Curtin, and welcome to another episode of Victims of Shark Bite.

A the Run Of Show board. Lorne takes a deep breath. He begins to pin the show back up. He discards sketches and pins others with confidence. A small crowd begins to gather.

LORNE

Can you get that wig on in thirty seconds?

AYKROYD

You got it boss.

LORNE (CONT'D)

Will the crane get there?

DAVE WILSON

It'll happen.

LORNE (CONT'D)

Did you make the trims to that...?

ANNE

Already on cue cards.

LORNE (CONT'D)

Laraine, I just don't think there's
time for you to get from the
reporter to the...

Right there and then, Laraine does a three second quick
change from her reporter costume into a flight attendant or
bunny cocktail waitress.

LORNE (CONT'D)

I stand corrected.

Lorne pins the final card into the board, he turns to Audrey.

AUDREY

Is that our show?

LORNE

That's our show.

JOE DICSO

Three minutes!

Lorne turns and bumps into a TABLE OF HANDGUNS.

LORNE

What the hell is this...?

Aykroyd picks up a HANDGUN.

DANNY

Smith and Wesson K-Frame
Model 19 Combat Magnum!
Nicely done Wallie.

WALLIE

Hey, you asked...

LORNE

Where did you find these?

WALLIE

I asked the stage hands.

LORNE

Don't share anything further...

Lorne steps over to...

Lorne approaches gingerly. Trying to contain his enthusiasm.

LORNE

Hey, George, I just wanted to apologize for the way you were treated earlier. The buck stops with me, and I just wanted you...
(frowns)
What's wrong?

GEORGE CARLIN

Maaaahh-jjjsss-trrrrrrk.

LORNE

Jesus, are you having a stroke?

Carlin points to his jaw, then at some cocaine on the table.

LORNE (CONT'D)

You need more coke?

Carlin frowns. Points at his mouth again.

LORNE (CONT'D)

(to the hallway)
Danny!

Aykroyd pops in, half dressed. Quickly assesses.

AYKROYD

Lockjaw! Too much coke ceasing up the old mandibulars.

Aykroyd already behind Carlin, grabs his face and begins to massage his thumbs into the jaw joint. It's painful.

Lorne ignores the screams of pain and steps back out almost bumping into Michael O'Donoghue. Lost in the moment.

We follow O'Donoghue back into...

66

STAGE 8H

66

The crew is working like a well oiled machine! The way the stage hands and camera boys move together is a ballet.

Michael nervously approaches the set, ignoring the audience. He takes a seat on stage. The lights really hitting him. Painters are drying a fresh coat with hair blow dryers.

JOE DICSO

Two minutes!

Al and Tom pay him a visit.

TOM DAVIS
Can you imagine being first up!

AL FRANKEN
Opening the show and all!

Make-Up and Hair are patting O'Donoghue down. Someone removes his glasses, wipes them, and places them back on his face.

TOM DAVIS
Millions of people trying to decide.

AL FRANKEN (CONT'D)
How they want to spend their Saturday Night.

TOM DAVIS (CONT'D)
And what's the first thing they see...?

TOM DAVIS (CONT'D)
No logo, no intro.

AL FRANKEN
Just a close-up of your face.

AL FRANKEN (CONT'D)
But who gives a fuck, right?

TOM DAVIS
It's just a bunch of animals watching their lava lamps!

AL FRANKEN (CONT'D)
You're going to do great!

TOM DAVIS (CONT'D)
Oh yeah, we can't wait!

AL FRANKEN (CONT'D)
We're pulling for you!

Tom and Al wander off laughing as Wally hands a very nervous O'Donoghue a BOOK and places a PIPE in his mouth.

We turn with Lorne to find the final bricks of home base going down. He looks up, the skylight still swaying.

Billy Preston and his band come to a rousing conclusion. APPLAUD FROM THE AUDIENCE. It kind of catches our cast and crew off guard... as they look up and notice THE AUDIENCE!

Gilda comes running out to set, dragging Laraine.

GILDA
Come on, I want a photo!

JOE DICSO
There isn't time!

GILDA (CONT'D)
Come on! Family photo! It'll never be the same after this! I'm not gonna leave until I get my photo!

JOE DICSO
Fuck - Everyone in! Come on!

O'DONOGHUE (O.C.)
1... 2... uh, 3...

DAVE WILSON
(to the room)
Someone's got the yips.

JOE DICSO (O.C.)
Twenty Seconds!

DAVE WILSON
George Carlin to his mark. Mr.
Carlin, can I get a sound check?

GEORGE CARLIN (O.C.)
1, 2, Fuck You.

JOE DICSO (O.C.)
Ten Seconds!

POOK
Carson still cued.

DAVE WILSON
Are we going live or going to
tape?

DAVE WILSON (CONT'D)
Ready camera three...

POOK (CONT'D)
Pre-Roll VTR 24...

Lorne looks into the engineering room. They begin pre-roll.

On a PREVIEW MONITOR, the countdown for Carson begins.

JOE DICSO
Eight... Seven...

DAVE WILSON (CONT'D)
Take Camera three. Ready on
the fade.

Ebersol looks to Tebet.

POOK
Pre-roll at *Six...*

JOE DICSO (CONT'D)
Six... Five...

The room turns around. Hands on button. At the ready.

JOE DICSO (CONT'D)
Four... Three...

We push in on Tebet...

JOE DICSO (CONT'D)
Two...

Everyone waiting for the final word... Tebet raises his big
ass jewel encrusted index finger....

TEBET
(quietly)
Go live.

BUTTONS ARE QUICKLY PRESSED! ALL SCREENS GO DARK. Everyone collectively holds their breath.

DAVE WILSON
And, we, are, live...?

MONITOR - Fades up on Michael O'Donoghue. Sweating.

DAVE WILSON (CONT'D) BARBARA GHALLAGER
Ready camera one... Push in Cue Belushi...
on one...

Nothing happens.

DAVE WILSON (CONT'D)
(holding his headset mic)
Cue John, cue John, cue John...

Lorne swallows. Eyes darting back and forth. He's off...

69

STAGE 8H

69

Lorne enters the studio swiftly, gingerly, making it to camera. Time stands still. We hear a *cough* from the audience.

Rosie, Ebersol, Audrey, follow...

Lorne keeps getting closer to the stage, watching the audience squirm in their seats...

And then - *Click*... The set door opens...

Belushi enters, wearing a wooly earflap hat. He descends the stairs and sits across from O'Donoghue.

Lorne doesn't blink. Cameras move in.

Belushi using a brilliant foreign unplaceable accent. Perhaps one of his Albanian relatives.

O'DONOGHUE
Let us begin. Repeat after me. I
would like...

BELUSHI
I would like...

O'DONOGHUE
To feed your fingertips...

BELUSHI

To feed your feengerteeps...

O'DONOGHUE

To the wolverines...

BELUSHI

To the wolver-eenes...

The audience is laughing. Lorne looks around. It's working. As we listen to the sketch, we continue to move around the room, gathering every reaction. The writers. The cast members. The crew, now united, watching the show with pride. The audience absorbing this bonkers sketch.

O'DONOGHUE

Next - I am afraid...

BELUSHI

I em afred...

O'DONOGHUE

We are out...

BELUSHI

We are out...

O'DONOGHUE

Of Badgers...

BELUSHI

Of Badjoors...

O'DONOGHUE

Would you accept...?

BELUSHI

Wood you assept...?

O'DONOGHUE

A wolverine...

BELUSHI

A woolver-eene...

O'DONOGHUE

In it's place...

BELUSHI

Een is plase...

The audience is in fact loving it. As are the crew. Lorne turns and we watch as everyone in the room is transfixed.

O'DONOGHUE

Next...

O'Donoghue suddenly GASPS. Grabs his heart. Falls out of his chair on to the ground, feigning a dramatic heart attack.

For a moment, Belushi is puzzled. But he shrugs, clutches his chest in a perfect imitation, seizes his face and falls to the ground. Hard.

Huge laughter. Lorne soaks in the sound. Looks around and back to stage. Again, we move through everybody taking in this moment... No one has any idea what they're watching - the beginning of a revolution.

In the silence, we find an empty piece of wall. Chevy stumbles into frame, wearing a headset as though a member of the crew. He surveys the bodies on the floor casually. Mumbles something into his headset.

Then he looks directly into our camera. Smiles.

CHEVY

Live from New York...
It's Saturday Night!

SLAM TO BLACK

MUSIC - The Saturday Night Live Band