

"THE PEOPLE VS. LARRY FLYNT"

by

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Producer: Ixtlan

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FADE IN:

EXT. APPALACHIA - DAY

Eastern Kentucky, 1952. The land is dusty, brown, ferociously unpromising.

A little boy appears above a hill. He is chunky, barefoot, with freckles and a puff of red hair. This is LARRY FLYNT, all of 10 years old. Larry is backwoods, dirt poor, barely educated, yet bursting with Huckleberry Finn industriousness.

Larry tugs a wooden cart loaded with JUGS. He drags it around a curve in the lane, coming upon a group of MEN sitting on logs. They are literally hillbillies: No teeth, foul-looking, disturbingly inbred.

HILLBILLY

Finally! Sun's goin' down, boy.

LARRY

Keep yer pants on. It's worth the wait.

(he dramatically uncorks a jug)

Now today -- I'm askin' a nickel a bottle, or two bits a jug.

HILLBILLY

(shocked)

"Two BITS"?!

LARRY

Yeah yeah, I know that's pricy...
but take my word -- this is the
harshest sauce you done ever drank.

A few glances, then the leader hesitantly buys a bottle. He guzzles the brew thirstily -- then GASPS, overwhelmed.

CUT TO:

EXT. LOG CABIN - DAY

The Flynt family home is a pitiful, crumbling log cabin in a field. Larry jauntily strides up, pulling his now-empty wagon.

Suddenly younger, less-clever brother JIMMY runs out, panicked.

JIMMY

Larry, Larry, come quick! Pa found
the still!!

LARRY

Aw Christ!

Larry and Jimmy hurriedly run behind the house.

Back in the woods is a tin shed. They whip open the door -- and inside is grizzled PA FLYNT, sucking on a rubber tube coming out of a moonshine still.

LARRY
HEY! What're you doin' in here?!!

PA FLYNT
(startled)
You leave me alone!

LARRY
I told ya, I make that for peddlin'!

PA FLYNT
I'm your father. You show me some respect!

Larry snaps. He suddenly grabs an empty jug and CRACKS it over Pa's head.

SMASH! Pa goes down.

Jimmy is stunned.

JIMMY
Oh no.

Pa staggers up, livid.

PA FLYNT
You're gonna pay...!

OUTSIDE

Their MOTHER steps out on the front porch.

MA FLYNT
Supper's ready!

Suddenly -- BAM! BAM!

Larry and Jimmy come running for their lives, followed by Pa SHOOTING a rifle at them.

LARRY
Ma, help!

MA FLYNT
(shocked)
Boys, RUN!

The two boys disappear into the woods. Pa stumbles a few more feet, then passes out.

IN THE WOODS

Larry and Jimmy dash through the trees.

JIMMY
Why you always antagonizin' people?!

LARRY
S'matter of principle. He was
drinkin' my profits.

Exhausted, Larry stops and flops down on the cool grass.

LARRY
I can't wait to grow up and get outta
here.

JIMMY
Yeah. Then we can go work in the coal-
mines.

LARRY
(he frowns)
I'm not wastin' my life in no coal
mine. I wanna be rich.

JIMMY
That's what I'm tryin' to tell ya.
Some of those guys make five dollars
a day!

LARRY
Ain't good enough. America's a big
place. A boy doesn't have to stay
in Appalachia.

JIMMY
That's crazy talk. God put us here
for a reason.

CLOSEUP - LARRY

He solemnly shakes his head.

LARRY
You're wrong, Jimmy. God wants us
to make somethin' of our lives.
(sincere)
That's why he created the USA. He's
givin' us a chance. It's the only
country in the world where anybody
can be a success.

CUT TO:

SUPER: "20 YEARS LATER"

A pair of pasty-covered tits get shaken in our face.

It's Columbus, Ohio, 1972. And we're in...

INT. HUSTLER LOUNGE - NIGHT

A rowdy party rocks under a banner, "Hustler Club #8 -- Now Open!" This go-go bar is a tacky, poor man's version of a Playboy Club: Waitresses in bikinis, pool tables, black velvet paintings of nudes, and ROCKABILLY MUSIC. The CROWD is dressy white trash. They hoot and hollar as the STRIPPER shimmies her stuff. Finally she removes her pasties, and the song ends.

The stripper exits, and LARRY pats her ass and jumps onto the tiny stage. Not much has changed: He's now 30, but still chunky, freckled, and hugely ambitious. Larry's spent his life trying to improve himself, yet he'll never transcend his impulsive, crude Kentucky roots. He grins, having a helluva good time.

LARRY

Thank you! Ain't she somethin'?!
Ain't this a party?! Am I not
bringin' you the finest tail in
southern Ohio???

The crowd CHEERS. Larry beams.

LARRY

And they said it couldn't be done!
Eight clubs in three years. If you
haven't joined up, lifetime
memberships are still available, for
\$10. That entitles you to our
backroom swinger parties,
complimentary limousine service, half-
price well drinks, and starting
today... a 10-cent luncheon buffet!

More cheers.

Suddenly -- CRASH!

VOICE

You son bitch!

Everyone turns. It's a brawl. TWO REDNECKS punch each other at the pool table.

Larry frowns. He shouts.

LARRY

Jimmy! You sleepin' back there?
These gentlemen need assistance.

AT THE BAR

is grown-up JIMMY, bartending. He nods dimly.

Jimmy reaches under the counter and pulls out a LEAD PIPE. He strides over to the fighters.

JIMMY

Fuckin' hicks. Show a little class!

Jimmy starts wailing on them with the pipe. Crack! Smack! Blood gushes from their heads. Jimmy efficiently grabs the two guys under his arms and throws them out the door.

A beat -- then the crowd APPLAUDS. Wow. That's entertainment.

ANGLE - LARRY

He stares at this odd mob behavior, then shrugs and plays along.

LARRY

The Hustler Club! Where somethin's always happening!!

CUT TO:

LATE THAT NIGHT

The club is closed. Larry sits at a table with an adding machine and cashbox, quietly going over receipts.

Jimmy sweeps up.

JIMMY

What a night, huh? We sure packed 'em in!

LARRY

(deadpan)

We're broke.

JIMMY

Say what?!

LARRY

The giveaways are eating up our profits. It's costing us too much money to get the customers through the door.

JIMMY

(confused)

But, people like the smorgasbord.

LARRY

That ain't the point. They don't come here to eat. They come here to see titty.

Jimmy nods. The strippers walk up, now in street clothes.

STRIPPER #1

Larry, we're ready to go.

LARRY

Okay.

(as they file past, he comments
and pays each girl a TWENTY)
Nice work... I liked your routine
tonight... I'll stop over in an
hour... hey, good job... I've never
seen a candle blown out that way...
bye bye...

The girls leave. Larry watches them.

IN THE DOORWAY

The strippers sashay out, their curvy bodies silhouetted in the
neon lights outside.

ON LARRY AND JIMMY

Larry is entranced.

LARRY

Look at those jugs... look at that
ass! Man, if I could just advertise
what great lays those girls are, we'd
be packed every night!

JIMMY

Yeah, well no newspaper is gonna print
that.

Hmm. Larry thinks...

CUT TO:

INT. PRINTSHOP - DAY

A greasy printshop. A FRIENDLY OLD PRINTER behind the counter
talks to Larry.

PRINTER

A promotional newsletter, huh? Well,
let me show you examples of some
others we've done: The YMCA, the
Gardening Club --

LARRY

That's alright. I've got my own
artwork.

Larry pulls out a handful of black-and-white PHOTOS of topless
women. He casually spreads them on the counter.

The old printer is shocked.

PRINTER

Whew! This stuff is pretty strong.

(beat)

Mister, what kind of business is this?

LARRY
I run the Hustler strip clubs. I'm
sure you've heard of them.

PRINTER
(confused)
Mm... no...

Larry shrugs.

LARRY
Well that's why I need the newsletter!
(beat)
So I was thinkin' we'd do maybe ten,
twelve pages an issue.

PRINTER
(worried)
With nothing but nudie pictures?

LARRY
Yeah! And I thought we could do it
on that nice, smooth paper --

PRINTER
That's called slick. But... I could
get in trouble for printing these
pictures. There's laws! You gotta
have some sort of text.

LARRY
(bewildered)
Why?

PRINTER
Because! To keep it from being called
obscene, you gotta have ideas...
anything... something about something.
(beat)
Writing.

Larry thinks.

LARRY
Okay. We'll do a joke page.

CUT TO:

EXT. HUSTLER LOUNGE - DAY

BLUENOSE PICKETERS walk in circles outside Larry's club.

PICKETERS
No more smut! No more smut!

The door opens. Larry shuffles out, carrying a pile of
"HUSTLER" NEWSLETTERS. He cheerily hands them out.

LARRY

Anybody need our new schedule? I
~~thought you'd wanna know that~~ Patty's
 doin' her hot sausage number Friday
 night.

The picketers are repulsed.

PICKETER

God punishes the wicked!

Larry chuckles. He goes back inside.

INT. HUSTLER LOUNGE - SAME TIME

The bar is half-filled. A bored stripper is going through her motions. At the luncheon buffet, Larry piles a plate with biscuits, then pours molasses over them. He smacks his lips.

Onstage, the COUNTRY-WESTERN SONG ends. The stripper exits, to scattered applause.

Suddenly -- POUNDING ROCK 'N ROLL. People look up. The curtains part, and a wild young woman in hot pants and halter top strides out. She is crazed, shaking with the rhythms, having a blast. 17 years going on 35, this is the woman who's going to change Larry's life. Her name is ALTHEA LEASURE.

LARRY

slowly glances over -- then looks again. What the?!

ALTHEA

struts across stage. Waif-like, strangely pretty, she is a compelling pile of contradictions: Driven, kinky, desperate for love, tempered with small-town ignorance and innocence. She teasingly removes her top.

LARRY

slowly swallows a biscuit. He waves over Jimmy.

LARRY

Jimmy, who is that?

JIMMY

New girl. I hired her last week.

(admiring her)

She really moves, don't she?

LARRY

She sure does...

(he squints)

but she ain't eighteen.

JIMMY

Course she is. Take my word for it
 -- I saw her I.D. and everything.

LARRY

(annoyed)

You idiot, my fuckin' dog can get I.D.

(beat)

Don't even know why I keep you around here. Look -- when she's done takin' off her clothes... you send her up to my office.

CUT TO:

LARRY'S OFFICE - MINUTES LATER

Up in his spartan office, Larry peeks down through a small window. We hear the SAME SONG reaching its climax. Larry's eyes are wide -- he can't take 'em off the stage. Finally the MUSIC ENDS, to raucous applause.

Larry quickly shuts the window. He runs behind his desk, straightens his jacket, and composes himself. Larry waits. Finally -- KNOCK KNOCK!

Althea peeks in. She's back in street clothes.

ALTHEA

You wanted to see me, Sir?

LARRY

(surprised)

"Sir"?? Now I know you're under eighteen! Nobody's called me "Sir" in my entire life!

(beat)

Honey, an underage creampuff like you could cost me my liquor license.

ALTHEA

(nervously acting tough)

I'm legal. Here.

Althea whips out a DRIVER'S LICENSE and tosses it over.

THE LICENSE - is pathetically fake. The name says "Jane Smith," and the birthdate is smudged and liquid-papered over.

Larry CHORTLES merrily.

LARRY

And this fooled my brother?! Jesus Christ is he stupid!

ALTHEA

(insulted)

Hey, it's fooled lots of people. I've danced in clubs all over town.

Larry stares at her.

LARRY

So how old are ya?

ALTHEA

Sevente -- uh, seventeen and a half.

LARRY

What does your family think... that you strip for a livin'?

ALTHEA

My family's dead.

(beat)

What does your family think, that you PAY girls to strip for a livin'?

She smiles devilishly. He raises an eyebrow.

LARRY

They think, "Larry, as long as you keep sendin' us those nice checks, we'll keep our fuckin' mouths shut"!

Larry laughs. Althea laughs too.

ALTHEA

You got a cute smile.

LARRY

(startled)

Er... thank you, Jane.

ALTHEA

Eh, the I.D.'s total bullshit. My name's Althea.

(she grins)

So... I hear you balled all the girls in the club. Is that true?

LARRY

Most rumors are.

ALTHEA

So how come you haven't tried to ball me?

Larry leans forward, impressed. This chick is something.

LARRY

Well, gee, Althea... I only met ya three minutes ago.

CUT TO:

OUTSIDE LARRY'S OFFICE - LATER

Jimmy walks past, eating a sandwich. Inside the door, he hears SOUNDS OF CRAZED, INTENSE FUCKING.

Jimmy stops, dumbfounded. He shakes his head.

JIMMY
How's he do it?! Fires a girl and
fucks her at the same time!

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LOUNGE - LATE NIGHT

The neon "Hustler" sign turns off.

INT. LOUNGE - SAME TIME

Larry's door is still closed. Jimmy POUNDS on it.

JIMMY
Larry! Closin' time.

LARRY'S VOICE
(distracted)
Ehhh... okay! Just leave the keys.
I'll lock up.

JIMMY
But we were gonna stop at the night
deposit, with the receipts --

LARRY'S VOICE
JIMMY, GET THE FUCK OUTTA HERE! GO!
I'LL SEE YA!

Jimmy looks hurt. He marches off.

INSIDE THE OFFICE

The place is totally disheveled. Everything is knocked down.
Larry and Althea are sweaty and naked, half-on half-off a sofa
bed. Larry pants exhaustedly. Althea climbs on him.

ALTHEA
C'mon Larry, one more fuck.

LARRY
(overwhelmed)
Baby, be reasonable! Even Superman
has his limits.

Althea shakes her head.

ALTHEA
See, this is why women are superior.
Their batteries don't run down.

LARRY
So go fuck a woman.

ALTHEA
I do.

Larry does a take.

LARRY
Excuse me?

ALTHEA
(she grins wickedly)
You're not the only one that's had
every girl in this club.

Larry is amazed.

CUT TO:

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

In a dirty diner, Larry eats breakfast with Jimmy. Larry excitedly shovels eggs and grits into his mouth.

LARRY
This chick is unbelievable! She's
a monster. I've never met anyone more
deviant than me!

JIMMY
(incredulous)
So one night, and she's movin' in with
you??

LARRY
What can I do?! Ever since she
escaped from the orphanage, she's got
nowhere to stay.

JIMMY
Orphanage?!

LARRY
(pouring Tabasco on his food)
Yeah. Her daddy went buggy, shot her
mama, her grandparents, a bunch of
other folks, then blew his own brains
out! Althea's all fucked up.
(he chews)
I thought she could use a break.

Suddenly a BIG BELLIED TRUCKER lopes up, grinning.

TRUCKER
Hey! Aren't you the guy in that
little sex paper?

LARRY
(surprised)
Uh, yeah. How can I help ya?

TRUCKER
Well hang on a minute! I got some
naked pictures of my wife out in the
truck -- I think they'd be perfect
for your next issue.

Larry is bewildered.

LARRY

Look, it's not a community bulletin board. I run photos of my dancers, to promote the clubs.

TRUCKER

What clubs?

LARRY

The Hustler strip bars.

TRUCKER

(he shrugs)

Hmm, don't know nothin' about that. My cousin Mickey loans me the issues. I'm a big fan! I just wish the pictures were in color.

LARRY

Well... maybe some day.

Jimmy chuckles stupidly.

JIMMY

Yeah, right! Blow more money!

Jimmy laughs hard, then pours half a bottle of ketchup onto his food and chows down. Larry stares at him.

EXT. NEWSSTAND - DAY

Larry strolls down a street, totally preoccupied. He glances at a newsstand, then notices a stack of "Playboys." A beat -- then Larry walks back.

LARRY

Hey, gimme one of those Playboys.

CUT TO:

INT. LARRY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Larry's apartment is a small plasterboard one-bedroom affair. His BLUE COLLAR FRIENDS are over for Sunday football, rowdily CHEERING the TV. Althea walks in, with a tray of snacks.

ALTHEA

Here ya go, boys. Try to keep the dip off the carpet.

They grab the food. One of them takes a pen and starts drawing a rude cartoon on a paper plate. He giggles. This is DWAIN, a moronic, stunningly crude hick.

DWAINÉ

Hey guys, look. He's got "foot
balls"!

(he waves the drawing)

Get it? His balls are shaped like
foots!

Everyone looks at the stupid cartoon and LAUGHS.

Larry sits in back, glaring at his Playboy. Althea leans over,
smiling, and gives him a soul kiss. She admires the centerfold.

ALTHEA

Mmm, nice ass.

LARRY

Of course it's nice! It's all been
painted over. Don't even look real!

(very irritated)

I just don't understand nothin' about
this magazine. Ten pages of fuzzy
photos, and articles about I don't
know what the hell they're talkin'
about!

(to his friends)

Hey, you guys read Playboy, don't ya?

FRIENDS

(adlib)

Yeah! Sure! You bet! It's the
greatest!!

LARRY

Did you enjoy this month's article
about hooking up your own quadraphonic
sound system?

The guys scratch their heads.

FRIEND #1

Uh... no, Larry. I skipped that one.

LARRY

(bitterly sarcastic)

Oh. Well did you follow the advice
on how to fix a perfect martini?

The guys glance unsurely at the BEER BOTTLES in their hands.

LARRY

And looky here! Porsche was named
"Car of the Year." Again! Jimmy,
what're you drivin' these days?

JIMMY

(baffled)

Larry, you know I drive a '65 GM
pickup.

Larry angrily flips through the magazine.

LARRY
Yeah, right. And then there's the
world famous Playboy Interview!
Dwayne, did you read the interview
with Alan Jay Lerner?

DWAINE
Umm... no, Larry.

LARRY
Do you know who Alan Jay Lerner is?

DWAINE
(ashamed)
Umm... no, Larry.

CLOSEUP - LARRY

He's at the boiling point.

LARRY
This is what I'm talkin' about! Who
is this magazine for?! Says here they
got a circulation of seven million!
Seven million people a month buyin'
it, and not a single person knows what
they're reading!!
(livid)
Gentlemen, PLAYBOY IS MOCKING YOU!!!

WIDE

The room is deadly quiet. A glum beat.

TV ANNOUNCER
I don't believe it! He makes the
kick!! The Bengals WIN!!!!!!!

The guys stare silently at the TV. They missed the win.

CUT TO:

INT. BANK - DAY

Larry grins ebulliently in a cheap polyester three-piece suit.
He's bulldozing a bespectacled, disturbed LOAN OFFICER.

LARRY
It'll be HUGE! All pictures topless
bottomless. No punches pulled. The
first magazine for Joe Lunchbox...
for our people!

LOAN OFFICER
Our people??
(uncomfortable)
Mr. Flynt... do you know how difficult
it is to start a magazine?
(more)

LOAN OFFICER (Cont'd)
 You need writers, photographers, a whole talent pool... I'm not aware of one national publication run out of Ohio --

LARRY
 It don't matter. We'll be small, but a lean machine!
 (he lowers his voice)
 See, here's the deal. I run enough bars that I can buy Schoenling Beer at below wholesale. So I'm gonna quietly lay off sixty cases a month on the paper manufacturer. In return, he's gonna slip me the paper at half-price, provided I do the typesetting at the printshop owned by his brother.

The loan officer is overwhelmed.

LOAN OFFICER
 Look, Mr. Flynt, this is all quite fascinating. But I'm afraid --

LARRY
 Please! There's no risk for you. I'm willin' to put my neck on the line! I'll take all my clubs, my car, everything I own and use 'em to secure the loan!

LOAN OFFICER
 (he shakes his head)
 I'm sorry. Our bank's just not interested.

A tense moment -- then unrelenting Larry pulls out a photo of a GORGEOUS BLONDE.

LARRY
 What if I brought in Blowjob Bambi to close the deal?

The loan officer gulps.

CUT TO:

EST. BRICK BUILDING - DAY

A low-rent, crumbling number. A hand-painted sign says "Hustler Magazine."

INT. MAGAZINE OFFICES - DAY

The first day. In junky offices, Althea, Jimmy, Dwaine, and a few long-haired, rebel STAFFERS work at bridge tables. One guy sloppily assembles a page mock-up with scotch tape.

STAFFER

Do we type the numbers on the pages,
or will the printer do it for us?

People shrug.

At a typewriter, a bearded hippie smokes a joint. This is ARLO CASEY, a sarcastic high i.q. underachiever. He pokes the guy.

ARLO

Hey -- how'd you end up working here?

STAFFER

I'm a regular at Larry's bar.

(beat)

What about you?

ARLO

Just got outta journalism school at OSU. It was either work here, or go back to my hometown paper. Porno chic-seemed more subversive.

IN A BACK ROOM

is a photo shoot. Against bare concrete, a groovy black photographer, TONY, arranges a naked MODEL on a bed. Larry watches impatiently.

TONY

Baby, try holding the flower in your right hand. No... put it in your left. Nah, that ain't no good. Try it against the satin sheet.

LARRY

For Christ's sake, Tony, I don't give a shit about sheets and flowers! All we're selling is the girl! Now c'mon.

Larry strides behind the tripod and peers through the CAMERA. Suddenly, he frowns.

LARRY

HEY. What is wrong with this camera??! It's all murky!

TONY

Yeah, that's a trick of the trade. It's vaseline on the lens -- it makes the girls soft and pretty.

LARRY

(freaking out)

Why would you want that?! It's dishonest!

TONY
(unnerved)
B-but, uh, it's dreamy. Like a
fantasy --

LARRY
Why d'ya need to fantasize?! You got
a real naked woman here! Look how
good she looks.

MODEL
Why thank you, Mr. Flynt.

Larry glances at her. Suddenly he gets a look.

LARRY
In fact... Tony, why don't you take
a thirty-minute break and let her and
me get acquainted...?

TONY
(warily)
Aw, c'mon, Larry! I already got my
equipment set-up and everything.

LARRY
Oh, fine.
(pouting)
Well, do it, then.

Tony nods. He gets behind the camera and starts CLICKING shots
of the girl.

TONY
Okay baby, that's great!
(CLICK)
That's nice! Yeah, a little more arm.
(CLICK)
Now spread your legs. A little
wider...
(CLICK)
A little wider...
(CLICK)
A little wider... OOPS! That's a
little too wide. Uh, you better put
that back in --

LARRY
NO! WAIT A SECOND. That was GOOD!
(wide-eyed)
Do it again!

Tony is flustered. He stops shooting.

TONY
B-but, Larry... you can't show that...

LARRY
Why not?! God made the genitals --
who are we to say they aren't
beautiful??

Tony grimaces.

CUT TO:

INT. HUSTLER OFFICES - DAY

Staffers hold photo SLIDES up to a bright window. They gawk in disbelief.

ARLO
These are gonna blow people's minds!

STAFFER
We're not really runnin' these??

LARRY
Sure we are. The vagina has as much
personality as the face.
(beat)
We wanna make a nice impression on
our inaugural issue.

Arlo LAUGHS crazily. Dwaine shuffles in, holding a phone.

DWAINE
Larry, I got the printer on the line.
He says to do my cartoons, I gotta
supply him with a color separation.

LARRY
Yeah...?

DWAINE
So what is a color separation?

Hmm.

Everybody glances around. No answers.

LARRY
Gimme that phone.
(into receiver)
Look Bo, don't bother my creative
staff with these technical questions.
They're very busy. You just get those
200,000 copies out on the street.

Larry angrily HANGS UP.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEWSSTAND - DAY

A delivery truck pulls up, and the driver tosses out a pile of "HUSTLER" magazines! The old codger NEWS DEALER cuts open the pile, then thumbs through the top issue.

Suddenly -- he freezes in horror.

NEWS DEALER

Jesus Christ.

The man quickly hides the magazines up on the top shelf.

CUT TO:

INT. HUSTLER OFFICES - DAY

Tony's model is now working as a Hustler secretary. She answers the phone.

SECRETARY

Hustler Magazine. Think pink.

A door opens, and Larry scoots in, carrying a bakery box. He hurries past the staffers and bounces up to Althea. He beams.

LARRY

Happy birthday, baby!

He pops open the box. Inside is a BIRTHDAY CAKE: It has a jolly plastic naked girl and the message, "YOU'RE 18! JAILBAIT NO MORE!" But Althea doesn't even smile.

Larry looks about. Everybody is gloomy-faced.

LARRY

What?

ARLO

The distributor called. We only got a 25-percent sellthrough.

LARRY

Which means...?

JIMMY

Which means they're sendin' back 150,000 copies!

Larry collapses in a chair.

LARRY

Oh shit.

JIMMY

(panicked)

Larry, we're practically wiped out!

Larry's face goes ashen.

CUT TO:

INT. LARRY'S OFFICE - DAY

Larry lies on a ratty couch, staring glumly at the ceiling.
Althea sits with him.

LARRY
I'm so stupid. Why'd I ever think
I could pull this off?!
(beat)
I'm just a fuckin' hillbilly...!

ALTHEA
Aw c'mon, honey -- cheer up. Look!

Althea tugs the little naked lady off the cake and teasingly
licks her crotch.

Larry can't laugh. So she consolingly puts her arms around him.

ALTHEA
At least ya tried. You got balls.

LARRY
But I don't got the smarts!
(terribly upset)
It's over. Another couple issues,
and we're in the poorhouse.

ALTHEA
So what. Being poor ain't so bad.

LARRY
(enraged)
It sure fuckin' is! I'm not goin'
back! I spent my childhood watchin'
my mama cry, cause I didn't have shoes
to go to school.
(beat)
Never again.

AT THE DOOR

Arlo enters.

ARLO
Hey Larry, I got a guy on the phone,
callin' from Italy. Says he's got
naked pictures of Jackie O.

LARRY
(scoffing)
Yeah, right.

ARLO
I dunno... claims he already went to
"Playboy" and "Penthouse," but they
said the photos were too tasteless.

Hmm?! Larry perks up.

INT. LARRY'S OFFICE - LATER

Larry is on the phone, listening to a HEAVILY-ACCENTED JOVIAL
ITALIAN MAN.

ITALIAN MAN (V.O.)
I was on-a that old fishink boat,
watchin' the island of Skorprios for
four months! For four months I rented
that telephoto lens... waiting,
waiting... but the Jackie O. never
come out.

(very dramatic)
And then-a one day, the cabana door
opens -- and Mama Mia! -- out comes
the Jackie O. in the raw!

LARRY
So what do you see??

ITALIAN MAN (V.O.)
(he laughs)
You see everything, my friend!!

Larry is starstruck. He GASPS.

LARRY
Jesus Christ.
(beat)
First Pussy!

ITALIAN MAN (V.O.)
And she's the good one! This ain't-a
no Mamie Eisenhower or Lady Bird.

Larry shakes with excitement.

CUT TO:

INT. PRINTING PRESSES - DAY

Magazines fly out of rumbling printing presses. A blur of
colorful paper rushes by.

CUT TO:

INT. NEW YORK SUBWAY STATION - NIGHT

A train pulls in. The doors open, and 100 MIDDLE CLASS JOES
trudge off, end of the day. The mob passes a newsstand. A
banner hangs: "AUGUST HUSTLER: JACQUELINE KENNEDY ONASSIS NUDE!"

A beat.

Suddenly, everyone stops and looks back. The crowd is stunned. They stare -- then suddenly STORM the newsstand. Guys are knocking each other over, trying to get at the magazines first.

CUT TO:

INT. HUSTLER OFFICES - DAY

Salesmen scream into a bank of phones.

SALESMAN #1

You want another three hundred -- oh
-- you want another three thousand
copies!?

SALESMAN #2

Yeah, we're doing a fourth printing!
But not till Friday!

(beat)

WHAT? Huh?! My God -- Larry, turn
on Channel Ten!!!

INT. LARRY'S OFFICE

Staffers frantically run in. They gather around a little TV.

ON THE TV

A svelte REPORTER stands in front of the Ohio Statehouse.

REPORTER (on TV)

...everyone's talking about local boy
done good -- or bad -- Larry Flynt,
whose Hustler magazine has reached
national sales of an astonishing two
million copies.

(beat)

Well in a stunning disclosure, WBNS-TV
has learned that Ohio Governor Jim
Rhodes himself was spotted today at
a newsstand, buying a copy of the
infamous Jackie O. issue.

THE STAFFERS

go crazy. What?!!!! They're WHOOPING, HOLLARING in disbelief.

ON THE TV

White-haired GOVERNOR RHODES appears. He looks nervous and
confused.

GOVERNOR RHODES (on TV)

Well, er, uh... everybody knows I've
been a historical buff on First Ladies
for a long time.

THE STAFFERS

SCREAM happily and LAUGH their heads off. People smack Larry on the back. He grins, flabbergasted and proud.

CUT TO:

INT. GOVERNMENT OFFICES - NIGHT

A door is stenciled "Cincinnati Citizens for Decent Literature."

INSIDE

is a hushed gathering of DEADLY-SERIOUS MEN -- all acting as if the fate of the world rested on their strong shoulders. They pass around a copy of Hustler sealed in a zip-loc bag.

DECENT CITIZEN #1

Reprehensible.

DECENT CITIZEN #2

Morbidly shameful.

A spooky, Karloff-like man frowns -- SIMON LEIS, Hamilton County Prosecutor.

LEIS

Bestiality. Dismemberment.
Excretion.

(beat)

What this pervert has done is take
a dirty bookstore, slap it between
two covers, and sell it in our
neighborhood grocery!

DECENT CITIZEN #3

In plain sight, where anyone can see
it.

LEIS

Good people are being corrupted! Just
look what happened to our fine
Governor.

They all shake their heads.

DECENT CITIZEN #1

Society has become a sewer.

DECENT CITIZEN #2

First "Oh Calcutta." Now this!

At that, a sinister HAWKLIKE MAN stands behind his desk.

HAWKLIKE MAN

Gentlemen, do not relent. Remember
our duty as written in Romans 13: God
has appointed ministers on earth to
carry out His wrath against evildoers.

A beat, then we PUSH IN to a nameplate on the guy's desk. It says "CHARLES KEATING."

CUT TO:

INT. LARRY'S OFFICE - LATE NIGHT

FRAMED Hustlers hang proudly on the wall. There are now six issues. Below, Althea sleeps on the couch.

Larry sits at his desk, totaling receipts with his old adding machine. He's munching on Ritz crackers with little swirls of Cheez Whiz. Larry punches in numbers -- when he suddenly gets an odd expression. On the adding machine, the TOTAL is \$1,001,205.

Larry's eyes widen. He gasps in wonder.

LARRY
Althea... Althea!

He rouses her. Smiling, he excitedly gives her a joyful hug.

LARRY
I'm a millionaire...!

WIPE TO:

EST. TUDOR MANSION - NIGHT

A gorgeous tudor mansion stands on a lush green property. A sign says "Flynt Manor."

INT. MANSION - SAME TIME

A BIG PARTY is rocking. The house is an inadvertent parody of tasteless nouveau riche. Gurgling fountains, animal skins, a black velvet portrait of Larry and Althea... it's stroke-inducing decor. A "HAPPY BICENTENNIAL" banner drapes over a lavish fried chicken buffet. Red, white, and blue bunting is everywhere.

Hundreds of PARTYGOERS dance, drink, and do drugs. Some are naked and make out. A Japanese MAID serves canapes in the commotion. Suddenly -- we HEAR MILITARY-STYLE DRUMMING. Everyone rushes out back to see what's happening.

OUTSIDE

On the lawn, four high-school DRUMMERS march in drill formation. They part -- and Larry strides out, proudly dressed as a Revolutionary War soldier. He salutes the crowd.

LARRY
Happy Birthday, America!

Fireworks EXPLODE! Everyone cheers. Red, white, and blue fireworks light up arranged as the American flag. Then another display erupts, depicting two women's nude bodies groping.

Larry beams.

LARRY
I put the "bi" back in Bicentennial!

People LAUGH.

Larry looks over, and his parents are standing off to the side. They seem vaguely overwhelmed. Aged Pa Flynt in a heavy coat, and Ma Flynt clutching her purse. Larry runs over and hugs them.

LARRY
Ma! Pa! You made it!

MA FLYNT
(quiet)
Larry, this house is so large. We got lost.

LARRY
(he chuckles)
Well let me show you around.

INT. MANSION

Larry leads his parents upstairs.

LARRY
It has servant's quarters, library, formal dining room...

PA FLYNT
(puzzled)
"Formal" dining room...?

LARRY
Yep! Twenty-four rooms in all. Same number as Hugh Hefner's house.

MA FLYNT
I ain't never seen anything like this. You really made it, Larry.

LARRY
That's right. And you won't believe the size of the bedrooms --

Larry goes to open a door.

BEDROOM

And inside, Althea is having sex with TWO WOMEN.

Larry sees this -- and quickly blocks his parent's view. Semi-amused, he chides Althea.

LARRY
Hey, there is a party out here.

ALTHEA
(teasing)
I'm just warmin' them up for you.

Larry glances at the women.

LARRY
Hmm. Well, I'm givin' my parents a
tour. I'll be back in fifteen
minutes.

BACK IN THE HALL

Larry quickly turns his parents around.

LARRY
Never mind that room. The bed's all
messed up.
(he starts walking)
Come here. I got something better
to show you.

They pass by Jimmy, playing bumper pool. He looks up.

JIMMY
Hey, hey!

Pa pulls Larry aside.

PA FLYNT
Larry, we appreciate you takin' care
of your little brother, the way you
do.

LARRY
Of course. He's family.
(beat)
Jimmy, come here!

INT. BASEMENT

Larry guides Jimmy, Ma, and Pa down some dark stairs.

LARRY
Okay, now that I got you three, I have
somethin' I want you all to see at
the same time.
(mysterious)
What I got down here is real special.
I bought a house with an extra-large
basement, so I'd have room for this...

Larry flicks on the LIGHTS.

And sitting in the basement is an exact replica of Larry's
childhood home. It's the FLYNT'S KENTUCKY CABIN.

Ma, Pa, and Jimmy are flabbergasted.

MA, PA, JIMMY
My GOD. Sweet Jesus, look at that...!

LARRY
(proud)
Have ya ever seen anything like it?!

JIMMY
Well -- yeah. Our old house!

PA FLYNT
It's even got the tar stains on the
front steps!

Ma Flynt shakes her head.

MA FLYNT
Why, Larry? Why'd you do it?

CLOSEUP - LARRY

He smiles sincerely.

LARRY
Simple. No matter how rich or famous
I get, I always wanna remember where
I came from.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MANSION YARD - LATE THAT NIGHT

The party's over. Litter is everywhere, and the butler and maid clean up. Across the yard, they hear MOANING. Way off in the dark, submerged in the jacuzzi, Larry and Althea are having sex.

The maid shrugs and continues her business. She clears used plates and paper cups off a table and throws them away. Underneath, a pile of cocaine is revealed. Oh. Totally indifferent, she scoops it in the trash with everything else.

AT THE JACUZZI

Larry and Althea tumble about in the bubbling water. He awkwardly glances off at the butler.

LARRY
Hey hon' -- I have trouble keepin'
it hard with the help watching.

ALTHEA
Aw, you're so cute when you're shy.

She smiles perkily and kisses him on the nose. He beams.

Then, an unsure moment. Althea gulps like a little child.

ALTHEA
Larry... you ever think about gettin'
married?

LARRY

No.

ALTHEA

(careful, not pushy)
Why not? Don't you think it shows
a nice level of commitment...?

LARRY

Nope.

(he shakes his head)
See, I was married a lot when I was
young. I got ex-wives and kids
scattered all over Ohio. It just
don't work.

ALTHEA

But --

LARRY

Cause here's the problem: I just love-
poon too much. Different kinds of
poon. Poon is a glorious thing. I
can't imagine ever committing to just
one poon.

Althea is hurt.

ALTHEA

Not even me?

LARRY

Baby, don't get me wrong: You're the
best. You're the 100-percent finest
woman I ever met in my life. I'd love
to be married to you --
(beat)
But, my dick runs the show.

Silence, except for the bubbles. Althea is thinking.

ALTHEA

Well... what if it wasn't a problem?
What if it was okay for you to hump
whoever you wanted, as long as I knew
that I was the one you loved?

Larry squirms nervously.

LARRY

Jeez, I dunno, Althea. All of a
sudden you're really puttin' the
screws on me.

ALTHEA

(sincere)
Look, after my parents, I didn't think
I'd ever want to get married. But
then I met you.

LARRY
(staring into her eyes)
So you're really serious...?

ALTHEA
Like a hemorrhoid.

Larry slowly nods, mulling this over.

She waits for a response.

Finally -- he smiles slyly.

LARRY
Ummm, Althea?

ALTHEA
(grinning expectantly)
Yes, Larry.....?

LARRY
Would you like to get married?

Althea SQUEALS happily and hugs him. They kiss excitedly.

CUT TO:

INT. MAGAZINE OFFICES - DAY

An editorial meeting is in progress. Althea sits alone in a starry-eyed daze, transfixed by a sparkling WEDDING RING on her hand.

At the table, male staffers lustily examine a PHOTO PORTFOLIO of a gorgeous brunette.

LARRY
What do ya think? Ain't she hot?

ARLO
Yessir! Totally fuckable!

LARRY
You think so? Okay, turn the page.

They do so. Suddenly -- they all GROAN IN HORROR. AaaahHH!

JIMMY
Oh NO!! She's got a DICK!

LARRY
Heh, heh! Meet our new cover girl!

The group is appalled.

STAFFER #1
Why?! Who would enjoy these pictures?

LARRY

(unsure)

Uh... women.

STAFFER #2

Nah, women wouldn't enjoy them.

LARRY

Okay... men.

(he shrugs)

Look, it don't matter. It's like when people slow down at a car crash, so they can sneak a peek.

ARLO

(he LAUGHS)

Fuck convention. This magazine dares its readers to look.

LARRY

Exactly! We're breakin' taboos like Lenny Bruce! So what else y'all got for me...?

Larry looks about the room. People think. Finally --

JIMMY

Uh, I know a girl with three nipples.

LARRY

Very good, Jimmy! What else?

ARLO

(deadpan)

How about a guide to necrophilia?

DWAINE

How about a 50-year-old centerfold?

ALTHEA

How 'bout "The Wizard Of Oz??"

Hmm. Everybody is totally baffled by this suggestion.

ARLO

What do you mean?

ALTHEA

You know, dirty. With the Scarecrow, and the Lion, and the Tin Man pullin' a train on Dorothy.

The group is shocked.

STAFFER #1

I dunno. There's some things that are sacred...

LARRY
(offended)
~~Hey, shut up.~~

STAFFER #1
But Larry, you gotta know where to
draw the line --

LARRY
(he snaps)
You're fired! Pack your bags and GET
OUT! Althea's idea is the best
fuckin' thing I've heard all day!

Larry and Althea smile at each other.

Suddenly -- the door gets SLAMMED against the wall, and two
POLICE DETECTIVES stride in! They stare grimly.

POLICE DETECTIVE
Lawrence Claxton Flynt?

LARRY
(puzzled)
Um, uh... yes?

POLICE DETECTIVE
You're under arrest, on charges of
pandering obscenity in Cincinnati and
engaging in organized crime.

They SLAP handcuffs onto Larry. He's dumbfounded.

CUT TO:

INT. JAIL CELL - DAY

Larry sits motionless behind bars.

A GUARD walks up, leading a well-dressed man of effortless
charm. This is HERALD ISAACMAN, Larry's sharp, well-paid
lawyer. Larry jumps up, bewildered.

LARRY
Herald! Why am I here?!!

INT. LAWFIRM CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

A giant polished conference table, marble floors, gentle
recessed lighting... this office smells like money. Larry is
surrounded by Isaacman and his fellow LAWYERS.

LARRY
But this don't make any sense! I
don't even publish in Cincinnati!

ISAACMAN
You've stumbled into a war. These guys hate pornography, and they're going to use you to further their national agenda.

LARRY
Which is what?

LAWYER #1
(grim)
Censorship.

LARRY
That's ridiculous! I got a right to say whatever I want -- uh, don't I?

ISAACMAN
Well, technically the First Amendment protects your rights to free speech and a free press. But lately, communities have gone haywire trying to impose their own values. We've got cases all over the country.

LAWYER #1
See, three years ago, the Supreme Court copped out and changed the rules. Now, "obscenity" is defined by community standards.

LAWYER #2
Every town, every local court has its own definition.

LAWYER #1
In North Dakota, they even banned a dictionary because it had the word "fuck"!

LAWYER #3
It's chaos. So what's okay in New York ain't okay in Birmingham and sure as hell ain't okay in Cincinnati.

Larry gets angry.

LARRY
That's retarded! I can't publish a different edition for every city.

ISAACMAN
Exactly. So they're hoping you'll take the watered-down Cincinnati version and make that the one that everyone reads.

This sinks in. The lawyers pull out their files.

LAWYER #1

Mr. Flynt, what makes your case odd is the organized crime charge. They've upped the stakes.

LARRY

That's bullshit. I'm not in the Mob!

ISAACMAN

Nobody thinks you are. But the prosecutors are exploiting an obscure Ohio statute which says "organized crime" is five or more people conspiring in an illegal activity.

LAWYER #2

The law was passed after Kent State, to keep troublemakers from assembling.

LAWYER #3

So suddenly, your pandering misdemeanor has been inflated into a severe felony. You're looking at twenty-five years.

LARRY

Jesus Christ!

The color drains from Larry's face. He slumps back, stunned at the enormity of this charge.

LARRY

All I'm guilty of is bad taste...!

CUT TO:

INT. LARRY'S OFFICE - DAY

Larry marches furiously in a tirade. The staff watches.

LARRY

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! How can our country do this?!

ARLO

Larry, it ain't nothin' new. The fuckin' Post Office burned "Ulysses."

LARRY

Twenty-five years!!! My cousin Bobby shot a preacher and only got seven!

ARLO

(sarcastic)

Well cousin Bobby only hurt one person. You're polluting the minds of millions.

Althea thinks about this.

ALTHEA

Hey, you ever notice that sex is legal, but you can't show pictures of it -- yet murder is illegal, and you can show pictures of it??

Hmm. They all scratch their heads. Suddenly the phone RINGS. Larry grabs it.

LARRY

Yeah?

VOICE ON PHONE

Mr. Flynt! I'd like to introduce myself. My name is Don Hewitt -- I produce the TV show "60 Minutes."

(beat)

We're very interested in your case...

CUT TO:

EXT. MANSION - DAY

Larry's backyard is filled with a 60 MINUTES CAMERA CREW. They set-up lights and reflectors by the swimming pool.

Larry hides around the corner, panickedly watching. Isaacman, Arlo, and Althea are with him.

LARRY

Christ almighty! Why'd I agree to this? Morley Safer's gonna eat me alive!

(he spins around)

Quiz me again.

ISAACMAN

(referring to some notes)

Okay. Tell me about the First Amendment.

Larry concentrates, furrowing his brow like a schoolkid giving a speech.

LARRY

"Congress shall make no law reserving"--

ARLO

(correcting)

"Respecting."

LARRY

"Uh, respecting an establishment of religion, or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press."

Althea CLAPS giddily. Larry breathes a sigh of relief.

ISAACMAN

Good. Okay, give me the Picasso line:

CUT TO:

LATER

The interview. Cameras ROLL on Larry and MORLEY SAFER.

LARRY

...and as Pablo Picasso said, "The only true enemy of creativity is good taste."

(beat)

See, only two types of people oppose pornography. Those that don't know what they're talkin' about, or those that don't know what they're missing.

Morley Safer laughs.

MORLEY SAFER

In your opinion. This is a publication nicknamed "Gynecology Today."

LARRY

Look, Moses freed the Jews. Lincoln freed the slaves. Lenny Bruce freed the dirty word. Larry Flynt would just like to free a lot of prudes --

MORLEY SAFER

And make a lot of money.

LARRY

That's beside the point.

(impassioned)

Look, how can a country founded on the printed word, at its 200th birthday, still be questioning what kind of book or movie you can see?! Because when the government interferes in this, they're interfering with our thought process! And nobody has that right.

CUT TO:

INT. TOWNCAR - DAY

Driving to the trial. Larry sits nervously with Isaacman in the back seat.

ISAACMAN

I've got a little surprise for you.

Isaacman pulls out a New York Times and opens it to a full page ad. Hubongous four-inch type screams "LARRY FLYNT: AMERICAN DISSIDENT." Underneath is a petition signed by a hundred names.

Larry is astonished. Overwhelmed, he reads the ad...

LARRY

"...we the undersigned wish to protest the infringement of Mr. Flynt's right under the First Amendment, because it is a threat to the rights of all Americans..."

(slowly reading)

Woody Allen...! Norman Mailer...!
Gore Vidal...!

(awestruck, he looks up)

Look at all these famous people! Does this mean they read Hustler?

ISAACMAN

No. It means they don't want the government telling us what to do.

EXT. CINCINNATI COURTHOUSE - SAME TIME

A series of towncars pull up to the courthouse. As Larry and his gang stride out, he's surprised by a riled-up SWARM OF PICKETERS. The two sides hurl ANGRY EPITHETS at each other: "Remember Sodom and Gomorrah!" "Don't fuck with the Bill of Rights!" "There's no 'SIN' in Cincinnati!"

Larry marvels at all this.

INT. COURTROOM - MORNING

The trial. Pudgy JUDGE WILLIAM MORRISSEY presides over the room. Larry sits at the defendant's table with Isaacman and his team. Charles Keating and his Decent Citizens watch from the front row.

Prosecutor Leis addresses the TWELVE JURORS in a heavy monotone.

LEIS

Good morning, Ladies and Gentlemen. Before we begin, I must apologize for the dirty, unpleasant task we have set before ourselves. But it is entirely necessary, to cleanse our community of pornographic trash.

(he grimaces)

What you are going to see will take your breath away. Hustler depicts women and men posed together in a lewd and shameful manner. It depicts women and women posed together in a lewd and shameful manner. It depicts men and men posed together in a lewd and shameful manner.

(a long beat)

It even depicts Santa Claus posed in a lewd and shameful manner.

The jury GASPS.

AT THE DEFENDANTS

~~Isaacman leans in and frantically WHISPERS.~~

ISAACMAN
What's he talking about?

LARRY
(whispering)
December '76. Santa takes it up the
ass.

Isaacman groans.

ISAACMAN
Oh Jesus.

CUT TO:

LATER

Isaacman approaches the Judge. A stack of MAGAZINES sit on the
evidence table.

ISAACMAN
With the court's permission, at this
time I'd like to introduce into
evidence twenty-seven other men's
magazines widely available in
Cincinnati. Titles such as Swank,
Cheri, Players --

LEIS
Objection!

ISAACMAN
Juggs, Gallery --

LEIS
OBJECTION!

ISAACMAN
(barreling ahead)
These titles have contents virtually
identical to Hustler, with stories
on bestiality, incest --

JUDGE MORRISSEY
Mr. Isaacman, what are you driving
at?

Isaacman abruptly spreads out the magazines.

ISAACMAN
How can they be legal if Hustler is
not?? These magazines are sold in
massive quantities in this city! They
truly reflect this community's level
of tolerance.

The Judge stares.

JUDGE MORRISSEY

No.

ISAACMAN

(startled)

Excuse me??

JUDGE MORRISSEY

NO. I won't allow these into evidence. They're irrelevant to the case.

ANGLE - ISAACMAN

He turns pale.

ISAACMAN

B-but -- Your Honor, they demonstrate community standards. They are the crux of our argument...

JUDGE MORRISSEY

No, counselor. The jury is representative of the community -- NOT a pile of magazines. You can't admit them.

The Judge BANGS his gavel.

Isaacman glowers.

The Decent Citizens smile mysteriously.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

A hotel suite is Flynt Command Central. Each room's TV is tuned to a different channel. Magazine staffers rush in and out, as Larry runs Hustler and assesses the trial simultaneously. He examines a Cincinnati Enquirer editorial -- "LOCK FLYNT AWAY."

LARRY

Can you believe this garbage?!

ARLO

Sure. Check out the masthead: Keating's brother runs the paper.

Dwaine shuffles up with new CARTOONS for Larry.

DWAINE

Here's some artwork to approve.

LARRY

Tell ya what... if you're gonna show Jimmy Carter's dingle, it should be shaped like a peanut.

ALTHEA
Hey, WE'RE ON CHANNEL FIVE!

LARRY
TURN ON THE BETAMAX!

Everybody runs frantically to the TV. Somebody punches a VCR.
ON THE TV

Larry is being interviewed by a NEWS REPORTER.

LARRY (on TV)
...and I say to my critics, if you
don't like Hustler, put it down!

REPORTER (on TV)
Well what about children looking at
your magazine in a store?

LARRY (on TV)
(angered)
Hey! These same places sell booze
and cigarettes, and we KNOW kids end
up with those! If a minor got caught
drinkin' beer in a tavern, would
Budweiser be banned across the entire
(BLEEP! BLEEP!) country?

ON THE GROUP

They all LAUGH and cheer, "Yeah!" "Real good, Larry!" "You're
a movie star!" But Larry stares, thoughtfully.

LARRY
Hmm. Maybe I don't look my best in
a checkered suit.

CUT TO:

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

The courtroom is crowded. Larry is on the stand in a
conservative grey suit, testifying.

LARRY
I've got 15 million readers. That's
15 million voices that can't be
ignored! Now we either have a free
press or we don't!

ISAACMAN
But surely communities are entitled
to limitations?

LARRY
 NO, Sir! That's just a disguise for
 "Censorship"! And one of the greatest
 things we have as American citizens
 is the right to be left alone.

CUT TO:

LEIS CROSS-EXAMINING

LEIS
 But do you imagine that when our
 Founding Fathers wrote the
 Constitution, they envisioned
 charlatans like you exploiting the
 Bill of Rights?

LARRY
 (angry)
 Hey, you can't slice it up! The
 Constitution don't say freedom of the
 press for everybody, except Larry
 Flynt!

The jury is fascinated.

IN THE GALLERY

Arlo notices a cluster of mysterious BLUE-SUITED COPS, operating
 TAPE RECORDERS. Baffled, he nudges one of Isaacman's lawyers.

ARLO
 Hey. Who're the goons?

LAWYER #1
 Detectives from other states. They're
 studying the case, so they can do
 their own local prosecutions.

Arlo shakes his head.

CUT TO:

LATER

Isaacman is giving his closing speech.

ISAACMAN
 Ladies and Gentlemen of the jury:
 Freedom is never lost in one fell
 swoop. Rather, it is eroded little
 by little... one book, one film, one
 newspaper at a time. In the Soviet
 Union, eighty-five percent of all the
 literature condemned is suppressed
 on obscenity statutes.

He stares each juror in the eye, letting this sink in. Leis
 glares.

ISAACMAN

Am I proud of Hustler? No, I can't say in good conscience that I admire everything Hustler says... but I'll tell you what I am proud of. I'm proud of the fact that I live in a country where I can read Hustler if I want to, or throw it in the trash can. That's what I'm proud of.

(very quiet)

My friends, watch out about building walls of decency. Someday, you might find the walls have grown up all around you.

Isaacman drops his head.

The room is silent.

CLOSEUP - LARRY

His eyes well up with tears. Then, overcome, he bizarrely starts crying.

CLOSEUP - LEIS

He glowers skeptically. Is Flynt a big put-on?

CUT TO:

INT. COURTHOUSE CORRIDOR - DAY

Larry and Althea sit on a bench, waiting nervously. He chews his fingernails.

Down the hall, Leis, Keating, and the out-of-state police stand in a circle, laughing.

Larry is scared.

ALTHEA

It's like waitin' on death row.

LARRY

I might not get out of jail til I'm 60. We should've fucked some more.

ALTHEA

(sly)

There's always the bathroom stall.

Larry glances up -- then leers and starts to stand.

Suddenly Isaacman runs up.

ISAACMAN

The verdict's in.

CUT TO:

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

The packed room is dead silent. The JURY FOREMAN stares
emotionlessly at Larry.

JURY FOREMAN

Guilty.

ANGLE - LARRY

He is stunned.

WIDE

The courtroom goes CRAZY. Applause breaks out. Larry is put in handcuffs. Photographers' cameras FLASH. Keating smiles.

Larry SCREAMS furiously over the din.

LARRY

All I do is print a magazine! ARE
WE REALLY LIVING IN A FREE COUNTRY?!

Larry is hustled out by the bailiffs.

CUT TO:

EXT. DUSTY ROAD - DAY

A Lincoln Continental drives down a rural road. Althea is at the wheel. Ma Flynt sits next to her.

They round a turn -- and pull up to a looming PENITENTIARY.

INT. PRISON - DAY

Althea and Ma Flynt somberly march along with a GUARD. Ma carries a pie in her hands.

VISITING AREA

A locked gate is opened, and they enter and sit in wooden chairs. Ma hoarsely whispers to Althea.

MA FLYNT

Try to be cheery. Larry needs all
the strength he can get.

Behind a WALL OF GLASS, a door flies open. Suddenly, Larry bounds in, wearing prison stripes, grinning his head off!

LARRY

Hey baby, how ya shakin'?!!!
(beaming)
Ma! You look great!!!

MA FLYNT

(confused)
Larry...?

LARRY

Have you heard the sales figures?!?
We sold half a million copies
yesterday!!

ALTHEA

How do you know? --

LARRY

I been on the telephone all morning!
 Newsdealers are going crazy! They
 say people can't wait to get their
 hands on what's obscene!

Ma and Althea glance strangely at each other.

MA FLYNT

But Son... aren't you sad to be in
 jail?

LARRY

(ecstatic)

I was -- til I learned acquittals
 don't sell magazines. CONVICTIONS
 do!

ALTHEA

But Larry... you're lookin' at
 twenty-five years. You won't get
 outta jail until the next century.

LARRY

Nope, I'm gettin' out on Monday.
 Isaacman says no appellate court will
 uphold the conviction. It's too
 screwy. So baby, smile! Hustler is
 unstoppable!!!

CUT TO:

INT. CINCINNATI ARENA - NIGHT

A red, white, and blue RALLY is in progress. Supporters whistle and cheer. Bright banners say "AMERICANS FOR A FREE PRESS." Workers at tables register people. Girls wearing American flags pass out buttons and bumper stickers with the slogan, "WARNING: A CINCINNATI JURY HAS DETERMINED THAT READING HUSTLER IS DANGEROUS TO YOUR HEALTH."

Large reproductions of recent, angry political cartoons adorn the walls. One from Oliphant depicts a man from Cincinnati chopping up a library's Literature section with an axe. Conrad has one showing Lady Justice in a jail cell, weeping. Above her, it says "HUSTLED."

BACKSTAGE

Larry is chowing down at a fancy buffet. Isaacman brings over black political comedian DICK GREGORY.

ISAACMAN

Larry, I've got somebody you should meet -- Dick Gregory.

DICK GREGORY

(enthusiastically shaking hands)
Man, it's a pleasure to meet you!
We need more agitators shaking up the power elite.

LARRY

(impressed)
Hey, I know you... I saw you on the Mike Douglas Show!

DICK GREGORY

Eh, that was a long time ago. They won't book me since I made Nixon's Enemies List.

LATER

An ANNOUNCER blaers over the P.A.

BOOMING ANNOUNCER

And now... Americans For A Free Press is extremely pleased to welcome to Cincinnati, dissident publisher and freedom fighter Larry C. Flynt!!

The crowd WHOOPS and CHEERS!

Larry and Jimmy peek around the curtain. Jimmy's overwhelmed.

JIMMY

Wow! It was really nice of Americans For A Free Press to invite us here tonight.

LARRY

(startled)
You dummy -- that group is ME. I'm the one paying for all this!

OUT FRONT

To massive applause, Larry marches out centerstage. Beaming, flushed with pride, he waits for the clapping to die down... then speaks, with a building Baptist fervor:

LARRY

This is not a pep rally for pornography! You don't have to read Hustler to join our cause. My conviction is simply a reminder that what we fought for 200 years ago can't be taken for granted!

CUT TO:

INT. HUSTLER OFFICES - DAY

The secretary nonchalantly opens mail -- envelope after envelope contains polaroids of nude women. She stacks them up. Then the last envelope has a shot of a gross naked guy.

The lobby door opens, and TWO INDIANS IN WARPAINT walk in. They fiercely approach.

INDIAN

Mr. Flynt, please.

SECRETARY

(flustered)

Um, may I ask who's calling?

INDIAN

The Chippewa Nation.

Disoriented, the secretary hurries away.

Down a hallway, a closed door says "Larry Flynt, President." Sitting outside are THREE BLACK MUSLIMS in bow ties, and a tense EX-CIA AGENT with a buzzcut and black glasses. He discreetly whispers.

EX-CIA AGENT

...see, killin' Castro was overstrategized. All it needed was one poisoned cigar...

The door opens, and Larry pops his head out.

LARRY

Okay, who's next?

CUT TO:

INT. BIG BOY - DAY

Larry and his staffers sit around a big table, eating sandwiches. Dick Gregory is also there, with a pile of mimeographed Left Wing publications. Larry is ranting.

LARRY

See, you wouldn't believe the shit that's goin' on around us! I had no idea. And what this trial has made me realize is that we've got a forum -- an opportunity to say whatever we want -- and people are gonna read it!

STAFFER

But Larry, folks buy us for the pink.

LARRY

And we're not gonna touch that. But the truth of the matter is that our articles are useless -- just fillin' up space!

(beat)

See, why can't we have pussy on one page, and an article on how the Indian Nations got screwed out of their land on the other?

A MOTHER with KIDS walks by.

MOTHER

I think you're disgusting.

LARRY

Yeah? Suck my Johnson.

The woman blanches. She pulls her kids away.

The staffers laugh. Larry leans in.

LARRY

See...? People are uninformed. They don't realize how the system is fuckin' with them. Cause we're the only independent major publication.

DICK GREGORY

Every other magazine and newspaper is tied-in to Big Business and corporations. So they don't discuss this stuff.

STAFFER #2

What stuff?

LARRY

(he pulls out a handwritten list)

Who shot Malcolm X? Who shot JFK?
Where's the cure for V.D.? Blow the lid off the KKK. Explain the Libertarian Party. Child Abuse. Nuclear Disasters. TV evangelists ripplin' off poor folk.

(very cavalier)

We pissed off the establishment with our pictures. Why can't we piss 'em off with our articles?

The group is stunned. Nobody knows what to say. Finally --

ARLO

Jeez, Larry, you're a regular Thomas Paine.

CLOSEUP - LARRY

Who? LARRY

CUT TO:

INT. MAGAZINE ART DEPARTMENT - DAY

An ART DIRECTOR works at a drafting table, assembling a mock-up of a full-page ad parody. It says, "SOME THINGS GO TOGETHER: SMOKING AND SUICIDE." Below this is a photo of CANCEROUS, ROTTED LUNGS. He shows it to Larry.

ART DIRECTOR
Is this what you wanted?

LARRY
(he grins blissfully)
Perfect.

INT. LARRY'S OFFICE - DAY

The door SLAMS open, and a hot-tempered AD SALES GUY bursts in. He furiously flings the smoking ad down at Larry.

AD SALES GUY
What is this shit?! You're not gonna run this in the magazine!

LARRY
(nonchalant)
It's a public service announcement.

AD SALES GUY
Larry, I gotta sell ad space. I guarantee if you run this, Kool Cigarettes will pull out!

LARRY
So what? Let 'em go.

AD SALES GUY
(terribly frustrated)
But they're our only national advertiser! We need the income!

LARRY
The hell we do. I'm gonna make 20 million dollars this year. I don't need their blood money.

The guy is stupefied.

LARRY
Don't slam the door on your way out.

The ad guy staggers away.

Larry starts opening mail. He rips opens a letter: Inside, cut-out magazine letters spell out "LARRY FLINT MUST DIE."

Larry shrugs. He opens a drawer, revealing dozens of threatening letters inside. He tosses the note in and shuts the drawer.

CUT TO:

INT. PHOTOGRAPHY STUDIO - DAY

A shoot is being set-up. A flamboyant EUROPEAN PHOTOGRAPHER is arranging colored lights. He smiles at Larry and Althea.

EURO PHOTOGRAPHER
(with HEAVY ACCENT)
Three more minutes, I ready!

Althea glances at Larry.

ALTHEA
Who is this guy?

LARRY
I stole him from Vogue. He's costin' me a fortune, but the man's an artist.
(beat)
This centerfold's gonna be so hot, even the mailman will be jackin' off!

ALTHEA
(she grins)
Thanks, 'hon.

A beat -- then Althea releases a strap and DROPS HER CLOTHES.
She's the model.

Althea struts naked across the room and plops down in front of the lights. The photographer adjusts his camera.

ALTHEA
I was thinkin' maybe I should hold a snake.

EURO PHOTOGRAPHER
No, no! A beauty like yours needs no props.

ALTHEA
Then what should I do?

LARRY
Hey, show Ludwig the position that girl did to me last night.

ALTHEA
The redhead?

LARRY
No, the blonde.

ALTHEA
Oh, okay.

She begins to pose...

ANGLE - LARRY AND THE PHOTOGRAPHER

The man excitedly CLICKS away.

EURO PHOTOGRAPHER
Magnifique!

LARRY
Now this is class.

AT THE DOOR

Arlo enters, upset.

ARLO
Larry, I got shitty news! A Georgia
prosecutor has arrested --

Arlo stops, and suddenly does a doubletake. He stammers.

ARLO
Oh. Um, hi, Althea...

ALTHEA (o.s.)
Hi!

ARLO
(trying to get back on track)
Er, the prosecutor's arrested some
newsdealers for selling Hustler. So
other retailers are scared -- they're
pulling copies off the shelves.

Larry is shocked -- then enraged.

LARRY
Screw that noise!!
(he grabs a PHONE)
Morgan, fuel the plane!!

CUT TO:

EXT. SKY - DAY

A bright PINK Commander Jet airplane soars through the sky.
"Hustler" is painted on the tail.

INT. HUSTLER PLANE

A lavish private plane, with thick carpeting and sofa seating.
A uniformed BARTENDER hands out drinks to incensed Larry and
a CIRCLE OF REPORTERS.

LARRY

Good hard-workin' newsvendors are being threatened. Intimidated! If that's not censorship, I don't know what is.

REPORTER

So Larry, what's your plan?

LARRY

Stick myself in their face! If they wanna arrest someone, they can arrest the sonofabitch at the top of it all!

He leers wild-eyed. The reporters are shocked.

AT THE BAR

stand Althea and Dick Gregory. She frowns.

ALTHEA

I think he's crackin' up. Only a madman gets himself arrested on purpose.

DICK GREGORY

Nah... it's classic Yippie behavior. If you're willing to spend a couple hours in the pokey, you can accomplish a lot.

BACK ON THE GROUP

A reporter finds a lump under his seat cushion. He scrounges around, lifting out a SEQUINED WHITE JUMPSUIT.

REPORTER

Hey, weird. Look what I found.

LARRY

(he grins)

Oh, didn't I tell you? I bought this plane from Elvis!

CUT TO:

INT. BOOK SHACK - DAY

Book Shack is a ratty shop of magazines, paperbacks, and candy. The room is packed with REPORTERS AND FILM CREWS ogling Larry.

Outside sits a COP CAR.

Althea quietly gives orders to husky BODYGUARDS.

ALTHEA

Look, he's pissin' off a lot of people today. So keep your eye out for any cranks in the crowd.

ON LARRY

He theatrically counts out money to a GRIZZLED OWNER.

LARRY

Eight, nine, one thousand dollars!
I have now rented the Book Shack for
the next twenty-four hours.

Larry slips a "Book Shack" visor on. He grins, then shakes his fists at the cops outside.

LARRY

C'mon, coppers, COME AND GET ME! What
are you afraid of??!

REPORTER

Hey Larry, what do they got against
your magazine?

LARRY

(he skims a copy)
Hmm. Could it be this month's
interracial photo spread, "Butch and
Peaches"? She's white and perky.
He's black and hung.

(with a twinkle in his eye)
I guess Georgia just ain't ready for
equality yet.

The reporters GASP.

OUTSIDE

The cops wait, fuming.

COP

This guy makes me sick.

INSIDE

A WRINKLED OLD SHARECROPPER hobbles up to the counter.

OLD SHARECROPPER

Mr. Flynt, would you sell me an
autographed Hustler?

LARRY

Ah! A true patriot. You see, some
things in America are worth fighting
for!

(beat)

Uh, if you could clear the doorway,
I think it's picture-time.

The man pulls out his cash. Larry dramatically hands over the Hustler. As FLASHES explode, the cops suddenly burst in, ferociously pushing everyone aside.

COP
 ALRIGHT! LARRY FLYNT, STEP OUT FROM
~~BEHIND THE COUNTER!~~ YOU'RE UNDER
 ARREST!!

Larry laughs impishly and thrusts his hands out for cuffs. More cameras FLASH.

CUT TO:

INT. GEORGIA JAIL - DAY

Isaacman irritably escorts Larry from a jail cell.

ISAACMAN
 I wish you'd WARN me, before you pull
 one of your stunts!

LARRY
 Yeah yeah yeah. Hey, do me a favor
 and give me a lift to the edge of
 town. A guard gave me a tip on a hot
 whorehouse.

CUT TO:

INT. LARRY'S OFFICE - DAY

An editorial meeting is in progress. The staff gapes at a mockup of the next issue. The back cover says "HELP BRING JFK'S KILLERS TO JUSTICE. \$1,000,000 REWARD!"

STAFFER
 You ain't actually gonna pay a million
 bucks?!

Larry sucks up a big line of coke.

LARRY
 If it solves the murder, I will. The
 government gets away with too much
 shit. The so-called "mainstream"
 media doesn't care.

ARLO
 Let's hear it for the crazy man with
 the big roll of cash.

LARRY
 They're all whores!
 (he throws down a newspaper)
 I mean, check out today's New York
 Times. These stupid bastards wrote
 an editorial makin' fun of the people
 who signed my free speech petition!
 Well FUCK THEM!

Larry sucks up more coke.

ARLO

That's right. But movin' on, we do have a magazine to close. Since we haven't picked our "Asshole Of The Month," I nominate Jerry Falwell.

ALTHEA

No, Anita Bryant.

STAFFER #1

Frank Rizzo.

LARRY

Me!

Some strange looks. Larry shrugs.

LARRY

Well everyone hates Larry Flynt.
(he whips out a glossy brochure)
Hey, what do you think of this mansion in Beverly Hills? I'm thinking of scoopin' it up -- it used to belong to Sonny Bono.

The intercom BUZZES.

SECRETARY (v.o.)

Larry, you got a phone call --

LARRY

Take a message! I'm not here.

SECRETARY (v.o.)

(tentative)

Mmm... it might sorta be important.
Her name is Ruth Carter something.
She says she's the President's sister.

The group is shocked.

STAFFER

Ruth Carter Stapleton?!

ARLO

She's a woman of God!

JIMMY

What does she want with YOU??

Everybody looks at Larry. He's on the spot.

LARRY

Uh, I don't know...

An anxious silence. He glances down at the telephone.

The phone sits there, ominously.

Pause.

ALTHEA
What, are you scared of a fuckin'
phone??

ANGLE - LARRY

Upset at his fear, he PUNCHES on the speakerphone.

LARRY
Hello. This is Larry Flynt.

RUTH speaks. She has a gentle, calming voice.

RUTH (v.o.)
Well Praise the Lord, I found you!

LARRY
(uncomfortable)
Umm, Praise the Lord to you to. How
can I help ya?

RUTH (v.o.)
Well, we have a mutual friend, a
producer at "60 Minutes." He found
you to be quite a dynamic person, and
he suggested that you and I get
together. He thought we would hit
it off.

Althea raises an eyebrow. Larry is baffled.

LARRY
But you're an evangelist. I'm a smut
peddler...

RUTH (v.o.)
Larry, I don't believe in labels.
I think you and I could teach each
other a lot.
(beat)
So are you free for dinner tomorrow
night?

LARRY
(wiping his powdery nose)
Eh, eh, um... I'm probably busy...
Really full schedule --

RUTH (v.o.)
(cutting him off)
You know what's nice about people like
you and me, Mr. Flynt? We can do
anything we want.

Larry glances awkwardly around the room. Everybody stares.

CUT TO:

EXT. RUTH'S HOUSE - EVENING

A large, stately home. The flower beds are tasteful and neat. Larry and Althea stand in front, decked out in conservative evening clothes. Gaping in fear, they nervously smoke a joint.

ALTHEA
What're we supposed to do now?

LARRY
I dunno. Ring the bell.

ALTHEA
No, you ring the bell.

LARRY
(he smirks)
What, are you scared of a fuckin' house??

Althea laughs.

ALTHEA
Try to watch it with the "F" word tonight.

Althea RINGS the bell. Larry tosses the joint. Finally the door opens... and RUTH CARTER STAPLETON, 47, appears. A blonde, lilting Southerner with a beatific disposition, Ruth exudes a warm, direct love.

RUTH
Well howdy-do! Right on time!

INT. RUTH'S - NIGHT

Larry, Althea, Ruth, and Ruth's straight-up husband ROBERT eat dinner. It's friendly, family-style eating: Chicken, green beans, potatoes. Everyone chomps down.

LARRY
Dandy chicken!

ALTHEA
Good spices.

RUTH
Thank you.
(beat)
So Larry, do you go to church?

Urgh. Silence. Larry and Althea glance nervously.

LARRY
Oh. Er, um... I go for the big days.
Y'know, Easter, Christmas...

RUTH
Really? I hardly attend myself. I'm not a traditionalist.

Larry thinks. Then he laughs.

LARRY

Actually, I was fibbin'! I never go.

ALTHEA

Not since I've known him.

RUTH

That's alright. The rituals are unimportant. What matters is what's inside.

(she smiles)

See, I'm not Baptist, Methodist, or Protestant. I'm just a Christian who goes straight to the teachings of Jesus.

ROBERT

And does she love that man!

LARRY

Are you a faith healer?

RUTH

Goodness no -- I do spiritual healing. I don't mend bones, I mend troubled souls.

The Flynts are surprised -- and pleased.

ALTHEA

Whew, that's a relief! We figured you were one of those revival tent fakes rippin' off old ladies!

LARRY

Yeah, I hate those people. Like the preachers that used to come around when I was a kid, scarin' everybody. Wicked this, wicked that... makin' us miserable!

RUTH

Hellfire and damnation. I remember a pastor who never talked about love. He only believed in the terrible things -- Catholics would burn in hell and black people were less than human.

(beat)

That talk is unforgivable.

Beat.

LARRY

Well how about that. We've got something in common.

RUTH
Actually... there's something else.
We're both trying to release people
from sexual repression.

Larry's eyebrows raise.

DISSOLVE TO:

LATER

The house is darkened. A ticking clock says 12:15. Althea and Robert sit bored on a couch, watching "The Midnight Special." WOLFMAN JACK howls on the TV.

In the dining room, Larry and Althea still talk intently.

LARRY
So, have you ever actually seen my
publication?

RUTH
Well... I gotta admit I bought the
Jackie O issue, like everyone else.

LARRY
Wow.
(curious)
Did you show it to Jimmy?

RUTH
No. After that Playboy interview,
he's sorta bitter toward adult
magazines. He confessed he had
committed adultery in his heart, and
then Billy Graham and Oral Roberts
badmouthed him in public.

They both laugh. She thinks.

RUTH
But I'm more ambivalent toward what
you do. Sexuality is a God-given
gift.

LARRY
You bet it is! I wish more folks
knew that.
(impressed)
I figure people are too uptight.
Nothing wrong with enjoying their
bodies.

RUTH
That's right! When I counsel
Pentecostal women in bad marriages,
I forget the Bible at first.
(more)

RUTH (Cont'd)
I tell 'em to get some make-up, hair
conditioner and electric curlers,
because Jesus wants you to be
beautiful!

DISSOLVE TO:

MUCH LATER

3 a.m. Althea and Robert are fast asleep.

Larry and Ruth converse in a quiet hush.

RUTH
My work is mostly with broken people.
When I say broken, I mean those who
have had problems with any kind of
excessive escapes -- alcohol, drugs,
sexual perversion... People who are
suffering.

LARRY
(getting a little nervous)
Look, Ruth -- I can see where this
is going. But I'm not unhappy. I
love my life.

RUTH
And so does Jesus.

LARRY
Hey, I don't need saving!

RUTH
I'm not saying you do.
(beat)
But we can all use inner healing, to
achieve spiritual wholeness.

She smiles angelically.

Larry is silent.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Larry and Althea drive home. She's animated and fidgety, but he
seems deep in thought.

ALTHEA
What a long night. Blah blah blah
blah blah -- I thought we'd never
leave!

(beat)
What do ya say we pull over and screw
on the hood of the car?

Larry quietly shakes his head.

LARRY
Nah. Let's just go home.

CUT TO:

INT. HUSTLER OFFICES - DAY

Larry shuffles glassy-eyed down a corridor. He sullenly looks up and notices a framed editorial on a wall: A photo of himself grinning, with the byline "Call Me Mr. Sleaze."

Larry frowns.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM

A rowdy editorial meeting. Everybody is laughing. Larry stares, unblinking.

STAFFER
Can we really do a "Scratch 'n Sniff"
centerfold?!

ARLO
Sure. It'll cost an extra 8 cents
an issue, but we should make it up
in volume.

A nerdy CHEMIST in a white coat steps forward. He holds up a pile of cards.

CHEMIST
My laboratory has developed a variety
of odor options for you.

JIMMY
Lemme try them!

Jimmy swipes them away, SCRATCHES one and sticks his nose in it. Suddenly, he YELPS in pain.

JIMMY
ECH! What is this?

CHEMIST
Trout.

JIMMY
Well it's AWFUL!

The group HOWLS crazily.

ANGLE - LARRY

gazes silently, glassy-eyed. He seems deeply troubled. Finally, he whispers, unnoticed.

LARRY
I have to go.

CUT TO:

INT. LARRY'S OFFICE - DAY

The shades are drawn. In the dark, Larry huddles over the phone, quivering.

LARRY

Ruth, it's Larry! I need to talk.
(desperately insistent)
I'm flying out west on business. Can
you join me...?

CUT TO:

EXT. SKY - NIGHT

All is quiet. The stars twinkle. Then Larry's pink jet soars into view.

INT. HUSTLER JET - NIGHT

Larry and Ruth are alone in the cabin. He is doubled over and crying.

LARRY

I'm lost!

RUTH

It's okay...

LARRY

I've done such terrible things -- and
I don't know why! I've published
pictures of naked pregnant women.
Naked bald women. Women being licked
by grizzly bears. I'm goin' into
another obscenity trial. I've cheated
business partners. I haven't been
faithful to my wife for one day. I've
mocked our great country. I've broken
at least seven of the Ten
Commandments!

RUTH

(comforting him)
Jesus can forgive anybody.

LARRY

Oh PLEASE! I need that forgiveness!!

Larry falls to his knees, his hands clasped in prayer.

Suddenly, his whole body starts shaking. His eyes roll back in his head.

The ROAR of the jet grows.

Suddenly -- SHABOOM!

A BOLT of lightning hits the plane!

Everything shakes. The lights flash off.

TIGHT - LARRY

is having a convulsion. His skin is clammy. He begins TALKING IN TONGUES.

WIDE

A blue mist rises. A HEAVENLY MURMUR builds, whispering, humming, swirling around the plane.

Tears pour down Larry's face.

Then FLASH! TWO BEARDED MEN IN ROBES APPEAR IN FRONT OF HIM. JESUS CHRIST and His Apostle PAUL. They smile warmly.

JESUS

Hi Larry.

LARRY

(overcome)

W-who're you...??

JESUS

I'm Jesus.

PAUL

I'm Paul!

LARRY

Master, forgive me!!!

Larry clutches at their robes. Jesus raises an eyebrow.

JESUS

But Larry, you've been very bad.

PAUL

So many sins, even we have trouble tabulating them.

LARRY

Please. I'll change my ways. I'll do anything to prove my love.

PAUL

Anything...??

They wait. Larry shudders painfully.

LARRY

I'll even give up... what I hold dearest...

A VISION appears: Althea... slowly floating from view.

Paul is impressed.

PAUL
That's quite a sacrifice.

JESUS
Hmm... what else?

LARRY
(thinking)
I will see myself castrated. I will
give up my organs!

A loud POP -- and Larry is nude.

He looks down, and there is nothing between his legs! His
genitals have vanished.

JESUS
Your gestures seem sincere.

MAN'S VOICE
Damn. Check it out!

Larry turns -- and LENNY BRUCE strolls up.

LARRY
(startled)
Lenny?! Lenny Bruce?!

LENNY BRUCE
(gaping at Larry's non-genitalia)
My friend, you are a Ken doll!

Jesus frowns.

JESUS
Oh, it's you.

LARRY
(sensing tension)
What, you two don't get along?

LENNY BRUCE
Well, I said a lot of bad shit, man.
Jesus wouldn't let me in.

LARRY
Oh c'mon, Lord, do me a favor. Cut
Lenny some slack.

JESUS
(thinking he's being conned)
I dunno. Heaven's mighty crowded...

LARRY
(imploring)
There's always room for one more!

Jesus considers this -- then reluctantly nods.

JESUS
 Alright. But you'll have to do
 penance for two.

Jesus holds out his arms. Lenny Bruce grins and jumps in them,
 and Jesus, Paul, and Lenny fly away.

JESUS' RINGING VOICE
 Larry, go forth and spread the true
 message...

Suddenly the lights FLASH again.

KABOOM!

And we are back in

INT. REALITY

Larry lies on the floor of the plane, sobbing. Ruth cradles
 him.

RUTH
 Are you okay?

LARRY
 (still shivering)
 Ruth, it was so beautiful...

RUTH
 (she smiles)
 His love is.

She holds Larry tighter.

CUT TO:

INT. LARRY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Althea is flabbergasted. Larry smiles beatifically.

ALTHEA
 WHAT??!

LARRY
 Honey, it was powerful and awesome.
 I'm not ashamed to say that I cried
 for God.

ALTHEA
 Is this a JOKE?!??

LARRY
 (enraptured)
 I know it sounds goofy, but I've been
 Born Again.

Althea gazes, quite skeptical.

ALTHEA

~~What's the angle?~~

LARRY

No angle! I've been all the way to the bottom, and now there's only one way to go -- up! I'm goin' to be hustling for the Lord.

ALTHEA

(sinister)

It was that Carter woman. I knew she was gonna fuck with your head.

LARRY

Nope, Ruth had nothin' to do with it. She was just the messenger.

(beaming)

But now I've seen the truth: I was handed Hustler magazine as a means to spread the Word.

ALTHEA

Yeah? Well I got news for you. The Lord might have walked into your life, but \$20 million a year just walked out.

CUT TO:

EXT. FLYNT MANSION - DAY

A massive PRESS CONFERENCE. A mob of REPORTERS crowd the steps, cameras rolling on Larry. Bodyguards watch, stone-faced. Larry stoically speaks, Ruth bravely at his side.

LARRY

This is not a publicity stunt. I have been called by God!

The crowd is flabbergasted. No one knows how to respond.

REPORTER #1

Ruth, what are you doing with this guy??!

RUTH

(calm and dignified)

I would ask you... have you met him personally and talked to him and looked into his eyes? Jesus says, "You shall be known by the fruit of the spirit." Well, I know what Larry's spirit is.

LARRY

My mission is to get people to talk and think. You can't accept Christ until you first accept yourself.

INT. HUSTLER OFFICES - SAME TIME

The staff is squeezed around a TINY TV. Their mouths are agape.

JIMMY

I can't believe this is fuckin' happening!

ARLO

It's the end of the world. Start building the ark.

ON THE TV

REPORTER (on TV)

So are you shutting down Hustler?

LARRY (on TV)

Nope! It's the beginning. Jesus had the New Testament -- well, Larry Flynt has the New Hustler!! There will still be a whole lotta sex, but no more explicit than what can be found in the Good Book.

ARLO

yanks a secretary.

ARLO

Quick! Find me every dirty passage in the Bible.

EXT. PRESS CONFERENCE

LARRY

Hustler will become a beacon of strength, fighting sexual repression. Before, I had the best journalistic talent in the country. Now, I've also got the Big Boy on my side.

Off alone, Althea shakes her head in bewilderment.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE -- NATIONAL TV COVERAGE

WALTER CRONKITE (on TV)

And in news that stunned the nation today, adult magazine publisher

BARBARA WALTERS (on TV)

Larry Flynt, in one of the most shocking conversions in modern history,

JOHN CHANCELLOR (on TV)
has become Born Again. Church
leaders' responses range from disgust
to disbelief.

CUT TO:

INT. HUSTLER OFFICES - DAYS LATER

A sign says "HUSTLER MAGAZINE. JESUS CHRIST, PUBLISHER"

Larry is enlightening his confused workers.

LARRY

...there will be no more photo spreads
of women alone. Sex will be presented
more natural, with a man in the
picture. Something like a Genesis
pictorial, with Adam and Eve gettin'
it on in the Garden of Eden.

(beat)

The following month, I want pretty
naked girls floating on big glass
crucifixes. See if we can get Marjoe
Gortner to shoot it.

Silence.

The group is astonished.

Finally, Jimmy pleads.

JIMMY

Larry, please don't do this! My share
of the company is gonna be worth
nothin'.

LARRY

Hogwash! I read a poll that 92% of
the American public believes in God.
A lot less than that believe in
pornography.

This sinks in. Slowly, Arlo's eyes widen.

ARLO

Wait a second. This is a big put-on!
You're just trying to juice our
circulation!

LARRY

(shocked)

Arlo, how DARE you question my
sincerity. I love my God.

In a corner, Dick Gregory stuffs beets, celery, and assorted
moss into a blender. He pours the green drink into a glass and
hands it to Larry.

DICK GREGORY
Here's your lunch.

JIMMY
What is that shit?!

DICK GREGORY
Vegetable potassium tonic. Larry
cleansed his soul. Now he has to
cleanse his body.

Larry chugs it down. It leaves a ring of green on his face.

LARRY
Delicious!

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Late. A full moon shines down on a black ocean.

Ruth, Robert, Larry, and a handful of CHRISTIANS stand
motionless at the edge of the water. Larry is being baptized.

RUTH
Do you accept the Lord Jesus Christ
as your Savior, and reject Satan and
all his works?

LARRY
(quiet)
I do.

Larry is dunked in the chilly water. He shivers blissfully.

INT. ASSEMBLY OF GOD CHURCH - DAY

A packed CONGREGATION sings a spiritual. At the pulpit is a
jubilant CHOIR, a REVEREND, Ruth, and Larry, singin' away.

LARRY
(belting the SONG)
"Jesus is in the garden!
Jesus is in the garden...!"

The hymn reaches a climax and ends.

Everyone sits. Ruth steps to the microphone.

RUTH
And now, I would like to introduce
a very special guest --
(some HISSES and BOOS)...
Now now, I don't want any of that.
You must be patient, because he's a
baby Christian. Jesus loved sinners,
and so can you. Our friend has a lot
to teach us.

(more)

RUTH (Cont'd)
 (a warm smile)
 So now... I bring you Mr. Hustler
 Magazine himself... Larry Flynt!

Larry smiles anxiously. Ruth gives him a hug, then he takes the
 mike. He softly speaks, quite tentative.

LARRY
 I want to thank you, heavenly Father,
 for coming into my life. Because I'm
 living proof that if it can happen
 to me, it can happen to anyone.

ANGRY VOICE
 Go back to HELL!

LARRY
 (he nods)
 Yes... I know there are angry people.
 But I've promised God that I'll ask
 forgiveness from everyone. And that's
 a lot of folks -- since I was in the
 business of being offensive.

WOMAN'S VOICE
 Jesus loves you, Larry!

Larry is touched. Overly emotional, he starts weeping.

LARRY
 I'm so sorry! I was blinded by the
 lure of the almighty dollar. But it
was wrong!
 (sobbing)
 I owe every woman in America an
 apology!

CUT TO:

EXT. NEWSSTAND - DAY

CLOSEUP on a HUSTLER COVER -- A boldface quote from Larry Flynt:
 "We will no longer hang women up like pieces of meat." The
 artwork shows a woman's legs going into a meat grinder.

A PUERTO RICAN NEWSDEALER pulls this magazine from a bundle. He
 is appalled.

PUERTO RICAN NEWSDEALER
 Dios Mio...!

Trembling, the man puts the Hustlers on a rack. Then he quickly
 blocks the covers with a board.

INT. HUSTLER OFFICES - DAY

Outside, ANGRY WOMEN jeer and throw things at the windows.

Inside, Jimmy and Althea yell at Larry. He calmly drinks juice.

JIMMY
It's making people SICK! People are
walkin' up to newsstands and VOMITING!

LARRY
(quiet, sincere)
I thought it was a means of atonement.
I wanted to show that I was no longer
willing to exploit the female body.

JIMMY
Well you failed miserably! Nobody
wants religion in their porno! Is
it a stroke book? A bible? Nobody
knows!

LARRY
But Ruth says the sex drive is the
power of God.

ALTHEA
Yeah?! Well then Ruth can buy the
two million fuckin' magazines, 'cause
no one else is!!
(struggling to show compassion)
Larry, listen. This has to stop.
You're out of your mind!

LARRY
(offended)
No I'm not. I can accomplish
anything! GOD WORKS THROUGH ME!
(he points across the room)
Do you see that wall? I CAN MAKE THAT
WALL COME TUMBLING DOWN THROUGH SHEER
WILL POWER!!!

The phone rings. Larry snatches it.

LARRY
Hello?

ISAACMAN (v.o.)
Larry, good news. I talked with the
Georgia prosecutor -- he's impressed
that you found God, and he's willing
to cut a plea bargain.

LARRY
Heck NO! I sold Hustler there to make
a point -- and the Lord's sweet smile
hasn't changed anything!
(triumphant)
LET'S GO TO TRIAL!

Althea and Jimmy's eyes pop.

CUT TO:

EST. GEORGIA COURTHOUSE - DAY

Lawrenceville, Georgia. A quiet courthouse sits in a parched town square. All is still around the ancient frame buildings.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

A JUDGE and a JURY of five women and one man listen attentively.

ISAACMAN

Ladies and Gentlemen, this is a blatant case of prior restraint. Georgia newsdealers are afraid of selling something that has yet to be proven unlawful. It is 1978, and we are still censoring free thought!

(beat)

Popular ideas don't need protection -- what needs to be protected is speech that makes people uncomfortable. Pornography, political criticism, radical thinking... this is what you find in Hustler.

(ominous)

If you start banning, where do you stop?

CUT TO:

LATER

Larry is on the stand, testifying to an amiable PROSECUTOR.

LARRY

If you don't like it, don't read it! But don't tell me and my millions of readers what to do.

PROSECUTOR

Mr. Flynt, how can you, as a good Christian, defend this filth?!

Larry thinks about this. Then he sighs sincerely.

LARRY

Look, I realize it's wrong to portray women the way I have -- and this is something I had to ask forgiveness for when I accepted Christ in my life. But... it's not illegal. America's the greatest country in the world because anybody can do whatever they want!

(he takes a breath)

I think it's wrong to drink liquor, but not illegal. I think it's wrong to commit abortion, but not illegal. Our right to think for ourselves cannot be restricted!

The jury is impressed.

CUT TO:

EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

A flag stirs in a light breeze. Larry and Isaacman stride out, buoyant.

LARRY
I actually saw some of the jurors smile! I think we're gonna win.

A few reporters scramble up.

REPORTERS (adlibbed)
Hey Larry, did you pray before going in the courtroom? Is your wife jealous of Ruth? Do you regret changing Hustler?

LARRY
No comment. I got nothin' to say.

Larry casually strolls off. Isaacman is stunned.

ISAACMAN
Larry, I am shocked! I've never seen you decline an interview.

LARRY
I tell ya, Herald, I guess I've changed. I just don't need the attention anymore.

HIGH POV

An odd wide view from above. A window shutter creeps open, and someone looks down on the scene.

Larry and Isaacman amble down the sunny street.

ISAACMAN
So are you flying home tonight?

LARRY
No, I'm goin' out to L.A. -- to look at new offices. I've decided that Columbus, Ohio is a little puny for a media empire.

ISAACMAN
You've done fine so far.

LARRY
Eh, Hustler's just the beginning. There's a whole lotta good I can do for this country.

Suddenly -- BAM! BAM! BAM!

Three loud pops explode in the quiet.

ANGLE - ISAACMAN

He looks up and around, confused. Something strange has happened. He glances down, then notices a growing bloodstain on his shirt. He has been shot.

Disoriented, Isaacman peers back at Larry.

ANGLE - LARRY

is lying on the sidewalk, writhing in pain. His belly is ripped open, and bright red guts pour out. Larry SCREAMS in agony.

In the distance, the sound of a car SCREECHES away.

WIDE

PASSERSBY shriek at the sight and run over.

Larry is jerking spasmodically. He's swimming in blood.

Isaacman collapses in the gutter.

Courthouse doors slam open. COPS tear down the steps.

A SIREN punctuates the commotion. Suddenly an ambulance races around the corner. It roars to a stop, and two YOUNG PARAMEDICS jump out.

CLOSEUP - PARAMEDICS

They see the bloodbath, and freeze, horrified.

CUT TO:

INT. AMBULANCE - DAY

It speeds through town. Larry lies in the back, skin pale, eyes glassy, tubes going in. Blood is everywhere. He moans.

LARRY

Oh God, give me something for the pain...

INT. BUTTON GWINNETT MEMORIAL HOSPITAL - DAY

A small, country medical center. Suddenly the doors fly open. The frantic paramedics burst in, pushing Larry on a gurney. He's in shock.

PARAMEDIC

Out of our way! We got a man dyin' of gunshots!

NURSE #1

My Lord...!

NURSE #2
Get his shirt off!

PARAMEDIC
Give us some blood!

PARAMEDIC #2
Do we got a surgeon here?!

CUT TO:

EST. ATLANTA AIRPORT - DAY

A plane touches down on the runway.

EXT. AIRPORT TERMINAL - DAY

Doors slide open, and Althea, Jimmy, and Arlo run out. Althea is crying hysterically, and Jimmy holds her.

ALTHEA
Oh shit!! Oh man...!!

Arlo flags a cab.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Post-surgery. Larry is pasty and unconscious, bandages engulfing his torso. His breathing is assisted. A thousand tubes and machines practically bury him.

IN THE HALL

A shaken Althea speaks with a weary DOCTOR.

DOCTOR
Two bullets, .44 magnum. One passed through his stomach. The other lodged near his spine. We had to remove his spleen and several feet of intestine.

ALTHEA
Jesus Christ. Is he gonna live?

DOCTOR
(somber)
A slim chance. It's already a miracle he made it through surgery. He needed 24 pints of blood.

(beat)
Actually, what saved his life was his intestine was empty. All he had consumed was juice. Otherwise, the infection would've killed him.

ALTHEA
Can I see him?

The doctor grimaces. He has more bad news.

DOCTOR
Yeah -- but -- there's one more thing
you have to know...

INT. LARRY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - LATER

Larry rhythmically sucks air through a respirator. Slowly, his eyes flutter open, and he gradually focuses on Althea, quietly sitting. In a druggy, groggy stupor, he hoarsely speaks.

LARRY
Did they catch the other driver?

ALTHEA
(unsure)
What other driver?

LARRY
The guy in that Buick that ran into
me.

ALTHEA
(hesitant)
Larry -- you weren't in a car
accident. You were shot.

Larry winces in pain. He's confused.

LARRY
I got shot?
(pause)
What about Isaacman?

ALTHEA
He's gonna be fine. He wasn't hit
as bad as you --

Larry's eyes widen.

Althea gulps. She dreads what she's about to say.

ALTHEA
Larry... you're paralyzed from the
waist down.

LARRY
(stunned)
"Paralyzed"...?

ALTHEA
(trying not to cry)
You're not gonna walk.

CLOSEUP - LARRY

His mind is reeling.

Overcome, he stammers.

LARRY
From the waist down...?
(slowly, scared)
Does that include my cock?

CLOSEUP - ALTHEA

She silently nods.

CLOSEUP - LARRY

He pales in anguish. It's all sinking in.

Althea leans forward, wraps her arms around him, and hugs Larry tightly. They both start crying.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - ANOTHER DAY

Arlo, Jimmy, and Dick Gregory WHISPER intently, furiously.

JIMMY
The FBI says they don't have any leads.

DICK GREGORY
This is fuckin' fishy! A high-powered rifle picks off two men in broad daylight in front of a courthouse, and nobody sees anything!

JIMMY
Who would wanna shoot Larry?

ARLO
You kidding? Who wouldn't wanna shoot Larry?!

Dick pulls out a spiral notebook. He reads some notes.

DICK GREGORY
Most obvious suspect -- the CIA. They're freaked about that million dollars Larry's offering for JFK's killers.

JIMMY
Does the government really give a shit about Larry?

DICK GREGORY
Are you naive?? I can tell you from personal experience that anyone who speaks out has a file this thick.

Dick makes a dramatic gesture.

ARLO

What about the Klan? I know we made
a lot of enemies after that
interracial photo spread.

DICK GREGORY

Intriguing. Never underestimate an
angry cracker.

JIMMY

Could be the Mob. They got their
fingers in most of the porn business.

ARLO

And don't forget our big ticket
suspect: the hard-core Religious
Right. There's thousands of
extremists who hate Larry's guts.

Dick smiles wryly. He shuts the notebook.

DICK GREGORY

So that's it: We've narrowed it down
to every dangerous fanatic in this
country.

BEHIND THEM

An elevator DINGS open. Ruth and Robert step out, holding
flowers. Quite pensive, they stride down a hall. We FOLLOW
them to Larry's room... discovering ARMED COPS standing guard.

INSIDE THE ROOM

The doctor and Althea watch typical Flyntesque commotion.
Larry's bandages have been stripped off, and Tony the
Photographer is snapping shots of the horrific exposed wounds.
Larry's belly looks like raw hamburger.

Larry mumbles orders in a slurred speech.

LARRY

Move in tighter. Good and gory. I
want those bastards to see what they
did to me.

DOCTOR

(irked)

Germs, Mr. Flynt! Can we wrap this
up??

LARRY

Shut up, Doc. We're racin' the
deadline for next month's issue.

(surly)

But if you wanna make yourself useful,
gimme another 4 milligrams of
Morphine.

ANGLE - RUTH

She silently enters. Ruth comes over and softly kisses Larry on the forehead.

RUTH
Larry, how are you?

LARRY
The pain is indescribable. I'm in hell...

Ruth lowers her head. She takes his hand.

RUTH
Remember, you belong to God. He has not forsaken you.

ALTHEA
(muttering)
Bullshit.

Ruth ignores this.

Larry peers at Ruth. Deeply troubled, he struggles to contain his rage and grief.

LARRY
Ruth... they should've hit me in the heart, because my life is over! I'm never gonna walk again. I'm never gonna have children with Althea. My body feels like it's on fire.

RUTH
I know, honey, I know...
(upset, trying to be strong)
But guard against bitterness. God will see you through this.

CLOSEUP - LARRY

He stares.

LARRY
There is no God.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEWSSTAND - DAY

The cover of Hustler screams "ALL GODLESS ISSUE."

The sleazy soft-core artwork is a return to the old days. The fine print says "Althea Flynt, Publisher."

CUT TO:

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

The Flynt entourage quietly exits the building. The bodyguards form a cluster around shivering Larry, being glumly pushed in a WHEELCHAIR by Althea.

Larry's limo waits by the curb. The DRIVER runs over and opens a door, and Herald Isaacman steps out, weak but healed. Isaacman goes to Larry, and they warmly shake.

Althea then rolls Larry up to the car. An awkward pause.

Then the driver and a bodyguard hurry over and unsurely lift Larry from the wheelchair. They place him into the car.

Althea gets in, and the door closes.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEVERLY HILLS - DAY

Palm trees sway against a blue sky. We're in BEVERLY HILLS, California. Luxurious mansions glisten on wide, beautiful streets. A parade of moving vans roll up to a HUGE ESTATE -- and a giant iron gate swings open.

EXT. FLYNT'S L.A. MANSION

It is an insane compound. The house is an unbelievable Spanish/Roman Xanadu extravaganza. Statuary decorates the broad lawns. Koi swim in a lake around the courtyard. Matching tennis courts, swimming pools, and waterfalls give a symmetry to both sides of the spread.

The Flynt's Ohio butler and maid, along with a NURSE, wait in front. A van pulls up, and the butler officiously opens the sliding passenger door. A grinding mechanical lift drops down, depositing wheelchair-bound Larry onto the ground.

Larry's chair is now motorized. Sleepy-eyed, he clicks a button, and it rolls him across the courtyard, everything going fine, until he suddenly encounters -- A WALL OF STEPS. Twenty, thirty, forty stairs oppressively lead up to the house.

Larry abruptly stops. His face drops, discouraged.

CUT TO:

INT. L.A. MANSION - EARLY MORNING

Lavish, stifling opulence. Green marble onyx floors, stained oak walls, Venetian lamps, oil paintings, a grand piano, a restaurant-sized kitchen, an exercise room with body-building equipment... And no people.

INT. BEDROOM

A large canopied bed sits in an airless, dim, spooky bedroom. Larry lies in the bed, moaning like the living dead. He's shaking, sweating terribly, dull eyes glazed over.

Althea sits forlornly in a chair, watching. Quietly, she gets up and tiptoes to the door, for a break. Suddenly --

LARRY

Don't go.

Althea turns. Larry weakly gestures, in a woozy whisper.

LARRY

Hon', it hurts so much... I need...
a higher dose... try 12 milligrams...

Althea winces. She glances at Larry's nightstand.

It is literally spilling over with DRUGS. Dozens of bottles, syringes, pills, vials...

Althea sighs. She fills a syringe, checks the needle, then injects Larry.

He rolls over, GROANING in agony.

LARRY

Ohhh, you can't imagine what it's
like...

ANGLE - ALTHEA

No reply. She listens to the miserable wailing. Althea stares at Larry, then at the needle in her hand.

She thinks, then refills the syringe and rolls up her own sleeve. Althea injects herself. As the drug consumes her body, she starts shivering uncontrollably. Althea climbs into bed and lies down next to Larry...

A pause, then she reaches over and hits a BUTTON.

OUTSIDE THE BEDROOM

A hulking 500-pound STEEL DOOR swings shut and locks with a thud.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

The vaultlike door is still closed.

A SUPER appears: "FIVE YEARS LATER. 1983"

INT. BEDROOM

The room has become a chamber of horrors: Dirty, dark, and clammy. Years of insane drug use have aged Althea and Larry beyond belief: Larry looks wasted and has put on a bloated 50 pounds. Althea is gaunt, haggard, and a punked-out junkie. She wears a nose ring, and track marks run up and down her arms.

They converse in an incoherent, narcotic fog.

ALTHEA

I've got a fuckin' headache that won't stop.

LARRY

Clean my bedsores.

ALTHEA

Just wait til after breakfast.

She stumbles over to a dressing area. The room is a warehouse of drug paraphernalia: Bottles, pills, booze, dirty needles, rubber tubes, scattered all over the counters and floor...

Althea goes to a mountain of coke and scoops up a startling amount with a bartender's jigger. She dumps it into a martini shaker.

LARRY

Hey, you're not usin' enough coke!

ALTHEA

Shut up! Yesterday you said there wasn't enough Dilaudid.

Althea grinds some pills, mixes them in, then pours in half a bottle of gin. She shakes the cocktail. Larry groggily licks his lips. Althea pours the concoction into two dirty glasses, then staggers back over.

LARRY

Here's to us.

They share zombied smiles, then CLINK glasses.

EXT. MANSION - DAY

The manicured estate has been turned into an armed fortress. Uniformed SOLDIERS with Uzis patrol the grounds.

A handsome JOGGING COUPLE runs by. They shake their heads in dismay: There goes the neighborhood.

A Mercedes-Benz drives up to the guardhouse. The car window glides down, revealing DOCTOR FLEISCHER, a groovy Beverly Hills internist. The tough GUARD suddenly smiles warmly.

GUARD

Hey Doc, c'mon in!

INT. MANSION - DAY

More guards with Uzis walk the house. Dr. Fleischer hops the stairs and approaches the airtight steel bedroom door. He BUZZES an intercom outside.

Larry's garbled, phlegm-filled VOICE squawks over a speaker.

LARRY (v.o.)

Mrmyeah?

DR. FLEISCHER
Larry, it's Dr. Fleischer.

Beat. Then the door's giant lock WHIRS and unclicks. The door starts opening.

INT. BEDROOM

Dr. Fleischer enters, fake-cheery. Larry lies on the bed like a blob. Althea is hanging onto a table for support.

DR. FLEISCHER
So how's my favorite patient?

LARRY
(slurry)
Lousy. It feels like I'm standin' in boiling water while a claw hammer rips the meat off my bones.

DR. FLEISCHER
Ah. So no change.

Althea sloppily unlocks a safe by the bed. She removes a HUGE WAD OF MONEY.

ALTHEA
Enough with the chit-chat. What do you got for us today?

DR. FLEISCHER
Well, y'know, Althea, it's getting difficult. The hospital pharmacist keeps asking questions --

ALTHEA
(rudely throwing money at him)
Here's twelve or fifteen grand.

The good Doc shrugs.

DR. FLEISCHER
But you're such a sweetheart, how can I let you down?

He gathers up the money, then snaps open a Gucci bag. The Doctor starts lifting out pill bottles and pharmaceutical jars.

Larry groans unhappily. He tries to focus enough to talk serious.

LARRY
Doctor... I've been thinkin'. I wanna have them cut my spinal cord.

ALTHEA
(surprised)
Larry...?!

LARRY

I don't care if I lose control of my
body -- I can't take the pain anymore!

Dr. Fleischer nods grimly. While Althea rummages through the drugs, he sits down with Larry.

DR. FLEISCHER

Larry, we might have a better option.
I just heard about a new experimental
laser surgery at Duke University.
They cauterize the sensory nerves on
the spinal cord, so you stop feeling
the pain.

LARRY

(intrigued, but dubious)

What are the side effects?

DR. FLEISCHER

There aren't supposed to be any.

Larry's eyes widen.

CUT TO:

INT. DUKE UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER - DAY

Surgery. Larry lies unconscious on his stomach, while a burning LASER cuts into his spine.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - DAYS LATER

Althea walks shakily down a corridor, carrying flowers. She looks hellish.

Althea enters Larry's room -- and he's propped up in bed, alert and ferociously energetic. He eats jello with a wild hunger.

ALTHEA

Hey, how are ya doin'?

LARRY

Real good!

ALTHEA

No... seriously...

LARRY

I mean it, I'm Jim Dandy!
(he frantically shovels the jello
into his mouth)
It's unbelievable! I feel like I can
fly!! For the first time since those
fuckin' bullets, I don't hurt!

She smiles weakly and hugs him.

ALTHEA
That's cool. We should celebrate and party.

Althea whips out a BAG OF COLORED PILLS.

Larry stops eating. He gives her a strange look.

LARRY
No, don't you understand? I don't need that stuff anymore.

ALTHEA
(she picks out some red ones)
Okay. Then just a couple uppers --

LARRY
(determined)
NO, I don't want any of that shit!
I want my mind back. I'm stoppin' cold turkey.

CLOSEUP - ALTHEA

She is hurt, angry, and confused.

ALTHEA
Oh, uh... terrific. Then what the fuck am I supposed to do??!

CUT TO:

EST. CENTURY CITY TOWERS - DAY

The beautiful buildings gleam.

INT. HUSTLER'S L.A. OFFICES - DAY

Hustler has relocated to pricy offices: Sterile, overdesigned corporate headquarters, indistinguishable from a Proctor & Gamble. Suited employees carry on a low hum of activity.

Suddenly the front lobby elevator DINGS -- and Larry comes barreling out, speeding in an ELECTRIC GOLD-PLATED WHEELCHAIR. He shouts out.

LARRY
THE PERVERT IS BACK!

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Larry sits at the head of a long table, addressing the troops. All the familiar staffers, plus NEW CORPORATE FACES, listen. Embossed on the wall are gold letters, "LFP."

CLOSEUP - LARRY

His face hardens.

LARRY

The plan... is to CREATE CHAOS. This magazine will be a tool to bring America to its knees -- and make 'em suck my dead dick!!

(bellowing)

Cause they're askin' for it! I was shot going into a courthouse, and nobody was arrested! Nobody was investigated! The government just looked the other fuckin' way!!!

Larry is shaking. He catches his breath.

LARRY

They stripped me of my manhood. I have only half a life left... the half with a brain. Well, I'm gonna use it to get back at the people who did this to me. SO WATCH OUT! I'm an anarchist with a hundred million dollars to shove up their collective ass.

CUT TO:

INT. FLYNT MANSION - NIGHT

Larry sits in his wheelchair, silently staring.

On the couch, Althea is fucking another WOMAN. Althea throws her head back, enjoying the domination. A pause, then she glances over at Larry.

ALTHEA

Is it good, baby? Can you see everything, baby?

Larry nods. Suddenly, the woman starts GROANING with pleasure. Her moans get louder, more intense.

Larry snaps from his reverie. Slowly realizing his isolation, he glumly zooms away in his wheelchair.

ACROSS THE ROOM

Larry stops at the big screen TV. He morosely clicks it on.

On the TV, JERRY FALWELL appears, booming in front of American flags and a giant choir.

LARRY

Circulation is down by a third. The articles suck. The color reproduction is terrible, and the women look like three-dollar whores.

(repulsed)

It's just like every other skin mag on the rack.

A good-looking BLOW-DRIED JERK stands up.

BLOW-DRIED JERK

Mr. Flynt, I don't want to step on your toes, but things have changed since you were actively running the company.

(patronizing)

I mean, I look back at that stuff you did in the '70s, and... it's sort of racy, and crazy... but the country is different now. Reagan has rebuilt America, and there's a sense of hope --

LARRY

You're fired.

BLOW-DRIED JERK

(taken aback)

Excuse me?

LARRY

Get the fuck out of my building. Hans, escort him out. Throw him down the garbage chute. Just get out of my face.

A KRAUT BODYGUARD picks up the jerk. Jimmy jumps up.

JIMMY

But Larry! He's V.P. of marketing.

LARRY

(enraged)

You questionin' my authority, Jimbo?!

(he points at "LFP" on the wall)

You see that?? It stands for "Larry Flynt Publications"! That makes me king! So who else has a problem??

The group is stupefied.

Nobody speaks. Jimmy scrunches down in his seat.

Finally, Arlo breaks the mood --

ARLO

So Larry, what's the plan?

JERRY FALWELL
 Get them saved, baptized, and
 registered!
 (he holds up a BIBLE)
 If a man stands by this Book, vote
 for him. If he doesn't, don't!

Larry frowns. He CHANGES the channel --

"DYNASTY" appears. JOAN COLLINS takes a bath.

Another channel CHANGE --

An urgent NEWS REPORTER delivers a live report.

REPORTER
 ...received word that U.S. troops have
 just invaded the Caribbean island of
 Grenada. Details are sketchy, due
 to a press blackout...

ANGLE - LARRY

What?! He is shocked, outraged, thinking, scheming...

LARRY
 That takes fuckin' nerve....!

CUT TO:

EXT. LINCOLN MEMORIAL - DAY

A crowded PRESS CONFERENCE. Larry reads gravely from a
 statement, with Isaacman standing deadpan at his side.

LARRY
 Today I filed suit in U.S. District
 Court against Secretary of State
 George Shultz and Secretary of Defense
 Caspar Weinberger. This press ban
 in Grenada is a national disgrace!
 There is no justification in locking
 reporters out -- it's a violation of
 constitutionally protected First
 Amendment rights.

All the REPORTERS shout out questions.

PATRONIZING TV REPORTER
 What on earth does this have to do
 with Hustler?

LARRY
 (eyes burning)
 It has NOTHING to do with Hustler,
 you jerkoff! I put out a monthly with
 a three-month leadtime!
 (more)

LARRY (Cont'd)
 I'm doin' this for you, because you
 pussies at CBS and ABC and NBC are
 too chickenshit to fight for the
 public's right to know!!

The crowd is shocked silent.

Larry rages.

LARRY
 Hundreds of Americans have been
 slaughtered, and the mad bomber Reagan
 hides behind presidential privilege
 and national security! What is going
on? You sure can't tell from reading
 a White House press release!

CUT TO:

EST. CAPITOL BUILDING - DAY

INT. CONGRESSIONAL MAILROOM - DAY

A MAILCLERK nonchalantly rolls a cart down a corridor, sticking Hustlers into every official Congressional mailbox. On the COVER, a naked girl pulls down Uncle Sam's pants.

We see a few names on the mailboxes: Jesse Helms, Jack Kemp, Barney Frank, Geraldine Ferraro, Strom Thurmond...

EST. SUPREME COURT BUILDING - DAY

INT. SUPREME COURT MAILROOM - DAY

Another MAILCLERK delivers Hustlers to the Justices' mailboxes: Honorable William H. Rehnquist, Honorable Sandra Day O'Connor...

We HEAR Larry dictating a letter.

LARRY (v.o.)
 "Dear Public Servant... because you
 need to stay informed on all social
 issues, I have taken the liberty of
 gifting you a complimentary
 subscription to Hustler, our country's
 greatest porn magazine."

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES - DAY

Completely unhinged HOUSE REPS bicker on the floor. A few wave their complimentary Hustlers.

HOUSE REP #1
 I am repulsed! We are the victims
 of a sick publicity stunt!

HOUSE REP #2
 It's outrageous! I call on all decent
 members of Congress to remove
 themselves from this smut mailing
 list.

CUT TO:

INT. HUSTLER OFFICES - DAY

Larry LAUGHS naughtily at Dick Gregory.

LARRY
 Now they're petitionin' the Postmaster
 General to stop the magazines! These
 guys are trippin' over themselves --
 nobody wants to be the last one on
 the Hill subscribing to Hustler!

DICK GREGORY
 Keep it coming. Don't let 'em off
 easy.

LARRY
 Hell NO! I'm gonna drag 'em into
 Federal court and make 'em read the
 thing. I've got a constitutional
 right to communicate with my elected
 representatives!

Dick shakes his head, impressed.

DICK GREGORY
 Where does a guy with an eighth grade
 education get ideas like this?

Larry giggles and coyly picks up a NEWSPAPER.

LARRY
 I just read the newspaper!
 (he scans the front page)
 Why, look at all these interesting
 stories: Korean jetliner 007 shot down
 over Russia. Moral Majority backs
 Reagan for reelection. Alfred
 Bloomingdale's mistress found
 murdered. John DeLorean busted in
 FBI cocaine sting.
 (beat; he grins)
 See, I just say to myself: How can
these things affect Larry Flynt?

CUT TO:

INT. WEALTHY MAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A distinguished 60-year-old MAN and his WIFE are asleep in bed.
 This is DON HEWITT, Emmy-winning producer of "60 Minutes."

Suddenly the phone RINGS. Don Hewitt is jolted awake. He looks at the clock -- 2:48 a.m. -- then groggily answers the phone.

DON HEWITT

H-hello...?

LARRY (o.s.)

(cheery, loud)

Is this DON?

DON HEWITT

Hrmm...?

LARRY (o.s.)

Don Hewitt, producer of "60 Minutes"?

It's your old pal Larry Flynt!

(beat)

Well anyway, I know you're busy, so I'll just cut to the chase. Are you interested in seeing videotape of the FBI selling John DeLorean 50 kilos of cocaine?

Don Hewitt's eyes bulge.

CUT TO:

INT. FLYNT MANSION - LATE THAT NIGHT

Don Hewitt sits in Larry's den, slobbering with excitement. He's still in his pajamas. Larry cockily fingers the VCR... then hits PLAY.

ANGLE - THE TV

Grainy black-and-white surveillance video comes on. JOHN DELOREAN and UNDERCOVER FEDERAL AGENTS sit around a tacky hotel room. An agent lifts a suitcase onto a table.

AGENT (on TV)

This would be 50 kilos, worth \$800,000...

ON LARRY AND DON

LARRY

See, that's the undercover agent, selling the coke to DeLorean. He needs the money to save his car company --

DON HEWITT

Shh!

ANGLE - THE TV

The agent opens the suitcase -- revealing it's full of BAGS OF COCAINE. DeLorean is astonished.. He fondles the snow-white packet, then laughs jovially.

JOHN DELOREAN (on TV)
 It's better than gold! Gold weighs
 more than this, for God's sake!
 (he pops open a bottle of
 CHAMPAGNE)
 This is to a lot of success for
 everyone!

Suddenly a rear door opens. Another MAN walks in.

MAN (on TV)
 Hi, John. We're the FBI. We're here
 to arrest you on narcotics law
 violations.

JOHN DELOREAN (on TV)
 I don't understand...

The agent whips out HANDCUFFS and shackles DeLorean.

BACK ON DON HEWITT

His jaw is wide open.

DON HEWITT
 Jesus Christ. How the hell did you
 get this??!

LARRY
 (enigmatic)
 Oh, friends in high places.

CUT TO:

INT. U.S. DISTRICT COURT - DAY

The courtroom of calm JUDGE ROBERT TAKASUGI. Over time, this
 poor man is going to be driven crazy by Larry.

Three GROUPS OF LAWYERS shout over each other.

FEDERAL ATTORNEY
 CBS cannot be allowed to air the tape!
 It's stolen government evidence!

CBS ATTORNEY
 The tape is genuine and newsworthy.
 We have a right to broadcast it!

DELOREAN ATTORNEY
 This leak will make a fair trial
 IMPOSSIBLE! My client Mr. DeLorean
 will never find an impartial jury!

Takasugi rubs his head.

CUT TO:

CLOSEUP - TELEVISION

The "60 MINUTES" stopwatch logo TICKS away.

The fuzzy DeLorean VIDEO comes on.

DELOREAN (on TV)
It's better than gold!

CUT TO:

INT. HUSTLER OFFICES - DAY

Larry and the staff flip CHANNELS on a TV.

NEWSCASTER (on TV)
Today the John DeLorean trial was
postponed indefinitely --

Another channel.

NEWSCASTER #2 (on TV)
DeLorean attorneys plan to ask for
a dismissal of all charges --

The group is flabbergasted.

ARLO
This is fuckin' unbelievable!

ALTHEA
(strung out, head bobbing)
I don't understand... what do you have
to do with DeLorean...?

LARRY
Nothing.

ARLO
Well, Mr. Flynt, this is certainly
Grade A Anarchy. I don't know how
you're gonna top this.

Larry wiggles his eyebrows...

CUT TO:

EXT. CINCINNATI HUSTLER BAR - DAY

Larry is in front of his old Hustler bar. He is dressed-up, and his gold-plated wheelchair is now decorated with a little string of American flags.

Larry booms out to a row of CAMERAMEN.

LARRY
I hearby announce my candidacy for
the Presidency of these United States
of America.

The crowd GASPS. Tons of FLASHBULBS go off.

LARRY

I am running as a Republican rather than as a Democrat because I am wealthy, white, pornographic and, like the nuclear-mad cowboy Ronnie Reagan, I have been shot for what I believe in. My platform is simple: Free thought, individual liberties, and civil rights for all mankind. Big Brother Government and the Moral Majority should stay out of our lives! When elected, my primary goal will be to eliminate sexual ignorance and venereal disease.

CUT TO:

EXT. WHITE HOUSE - DAY

Larry speaks in front of the White House. He's wearing a "Larry Flynt for President" T-shirt. Althea stands uncomfortably next to him, in black leather and green hair. HOMELESS PEOPLE watch.

LARRY

As President, I will immediately initiate massive social reforms: Fines will be levied against all Americans who fail to vote. Teachers will earn at least \$30,000 per year. And I will ensure that the ERA is ratified.

(beat)

Think about it: Who would you prefer as your President -- an addle-brained Hollywood ham, or a smut peddler who cares?

CUT TO:

INT. BOWLING ALLEY - NIGHT

Under a banner that says "PAINT THE WHITE HOUSE PINK," Larry sits in his wheelchair in the center lane of a bowling alley. The BOWLERS listen to him over a P.A. system.

LARRY

What qualifications are we looking for in our next President? First of all, he should be a good con man, so he can persuade blue-collar America that forty-hour weeks on an assembly line is all you can expect from life. He should've been raised in poverty eating grits and red-eye gravy, so he knows how important a steak is to us working people.

(more)

LARRY (Cont'd)
 And he should have paid for the
 services of at least one prostitute,
 so that he knows what it's like to
 be face-to-face with Yasir Arafat.

Hmm. The bowlers scratch their heads.

Larry rebounds.

LARRY
 You folk deserve more than a trickle-
 down. So vote for me next November!

The crowd CHEERS and WHISTLES enthusiastically.

EXT. BOWLING ALLEY - NIGHT

A SEXY LADY TV REPORTER does a stand-up in front of the bowling alley.

TV REPORTER
 ...tapping into the anger and
 frustration that working people have
 toward Washington and politicians.
 At this rate, Larry Flynt should have
 little trouble getting his supporters
 into the voting booth next fall. The
 only question is, what will they do
there?

(smirk)
 This is Bonnie Brown, Channel 3 News.

She lowers her mike. The CAMERAMAN turns off his light.

Suddenly, punked-out Althea shimmies out of the shadows. She
 seductively leans in to the woman.

ALTHEA
 Hey Cutie, do you like to party?

CUT TO:

EST. HOLIDAY INN - NIGHT

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Althea and the sexy reporter are naked. The woman blushes.

SEXY REPORTER
 I can't believe this... you are so
 kinky...

Althea gives her a long, deep kiss.

ALTHEA
 C'mon... Larry will love it.

The woman finally nods. So Althea hands her a rubber George
 Bush mask. Althea pulls on a Reagan mask.

INT. HOTEL BEDROOM - NIGHT

~~The naked "Reagan"~~ is humping the naked "Bush" on the bed.

Larry sits to the side, shouting out orders. He's wearing an admiral's hat.

LARRY

C'mon, screw it to Bush! Harder!
Show him what it's like to be on the
bottom of the ticket!

Suddenly "Bush" looks over.

REPORTER (MUFFLED IN MASK)

Hey Larry, that reminds me. Have you
picked your V.P.?

Hmm?! Larry gets a quizzical expression. He thinks...

CUT TO:

EST. PINE RIDGE RESERVATION - DAY

A poor Indian reservation. Small log homes sit on the land.
Suddenly the pink plane ROARS overhead.

INT. LOG HOME - DAY

Herald Isaacman rolls Larry into a meeting room of INDIANS.
RUSSELL MEANS, a large, serious Indian with black braided hair,
stands up.

ISAACMAN

(not quite sure why he's here)
Uh, Larry Flynt, I'd like you to meet
Russell Means, leader of the American
Indian Movement.

Larry and Russell shake.

RUSSELL MEANS

So you're looking for a running mate?

LARRY

Join with me. I'm the candidate for
the oppressed and exploited. I'll
give you political attention on a
national level -- you can tell
everyone about your 371 broken
treaties.

RUSSELL MEANS

(intrigued)
Hmm. An Indian has never had that
kind of forum before...

Isaacman pipes up.

ISAACMAN

Yeah, I can't wait to see you at the
Debates wiping the floor with Sam
Donaldson.

ANGLE - LARRY

Something suddenly catches his eye. He hits a button on his
wheelchair and zooms across the room. A YOUNG INDIAN is
watching a tiny TV -- with Delorean's picture on the screen.

LARRY

Hey, crank up that volume!

INSERT - TV

A NEWSCASTER talks.

NEWSCASTER

...federal prosecutors were pleased
to announce that the John DeLorean
trial will resume in one week.

CLOSEUP - LARRY

The veins bulge angrily on his forehead.

LARRY

I thought I shut that DOWN!

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

A cherry red Rolls Royce swerves down a street, jumping lanes.

INT. ROLLS

Althea drives, struggling to focus her eyes.

In the back seat, Larry holds a Sony mini TAPE RECORDER up to
unsure Arlo.

LARRY

Okay, when I hit "record," start
mumbling.

ARLO

Why are we fucking with this trial?

LARRY

Because we CAN.
(a sly grin)
Okay -- mumble incoherently.

Arlo makes a face, then begins MUTTERING. Larry MUTTERS back.
Arlo MUMBLES in response...

EXT. FLYNT MANSION - DAY

A crazed press conference. The lawn is filled with news vans. Swarming REPORTERS jostle to hear Larry, proudly centerstage. Security guards with automatic weapons patrol the courtyard.

LARRY

Ladies and Gentlemen of the press,
when I released the John DeLorean
videotape, it may have given the
impression that he was guilty.

(beat)

So, today I have an audiotape
absolutely proving that DeLorean was
threatened by the government and
coerced into this drug deal!

The crowd goes NUTS.

REPORTER #1

Where'd you get the tape?!

LARRY

None of your business. I can't reveal
my source. Now quiet please!

The group obediently HUSHES.

Larry holds up the tiny Sony recorder. Biting his lip, he
presses "Play."

INAUDIBLE VOICES come out of the horribly overamplified little
machine. Two men's distorted voices MUMBLING.

The crowd strains to understand. People scrunch up their faces,
trying to make out a word here or there.

ARLO

If anyone needs it, I've got the
official transcript right here.

Arlo waves a pile of PAPERS. Reporters mob him, snatching them
from his hands.

ANGLE - TWO REPORTERS

examine the TRANSCRIPT. It is a scrawled hand-written Xerox.
The completely UNINTELLIGIBLE TAPE keeps playing in the b.g.

REPORTER #2

I can't understand anything. What's
it say?

REPORTER #1

(reading the transcript)

DeLorean: "I've pulled out. I don't want any part of narcotics. All I wanted was an investment to save the company."

Fed: "John, you honor your part of the deal. That way you live longer."

DeLorean: "Please! I just want out."

Fed: "How is your little daughter? Wanna get her head smashed?"

REPORTER #2

Jesus Christ!

DOWN FRONT

The murky TAPED VOICES stop. The crowd is in a state of shock.

LARRY

Really something, ain't it?! It's amazing what our government gets away with.

People shake their heads, astonished.

REPORTER

Can we hear the tape again?

LARRY

Sure.

Larry reaches for the tiny recorder and presses the button.

But nothing happens.

Larry examines the machine, then suddenly gets bizarrely upset. He angrily waves the recorder in the air.

LARRY

Alright, who stole the tape?!

WIDE

Total confusion.

Nobody understands what's happening.

LARRY

SHUT THE GATES! Nobody's gettin' off this property!!

Big iron gates start closing.

Utter pandemonium.

Reporters are trampling each other.

TIGHT - ARLO AND LARRY

Larry is pleased. Then Arlo tiredly leans in.

ARLO
Enough already. Let 'em go.

CUT TO:

INT. JUDGE TAKASUGI'S CHAMBERS - DAY

Federal Judge Takasugi stares incredulously at the morning newspaper. The headline screams, "FLYNT TAPE REVEALS FBI ENTRAPPED DELOREAN."

Takasugi fumes.

TAKASUGI
I cannot believe this! Issue a subpoena to Mr. Flynt. I want this tape on my desk 9 a.m. tomorrow.

WIPE TO:

INT. MANSION - DAY

Larry shouts into a phone.

LARRY
You tell that judge I wiped my ass with his subpoena.
(beat)
And if anyone tries comin' after me, I'll shoot 'em between the eyes!

WIPE TO:

INT. TAKASUGI'S CHAMBERS - DAY

Takasugi holds another newspaper: "FLYNT DEFIES UNITED STATES." The judge is perplexed.

TAKASUGI
Why is this man doing this?!

BAILIFF
I don't know, your Honor.

Takasugi burns. He scribbles his signature on a form.

TAKASUGI
I'm issuing a bench warrant for his arrest. Send in the friggin' marshals.

WIPE TO:

EXT. FLYNT COMPOUND - DAY

HELICOPTERS buzz Larry's house. Rain pours.

A motorcade of Federal MARSHALS storm the premises. They bust in the gate, jump from vehicles and serpentine up to the house.

Startled Flynt security guards run out, defiantly pointing machine guns.

GUARD

Freeze!

MARSHAL

(unamused)

Drop that toy, or I'll kick your ass.
We're federal marshals.

On the muddy street, NEWS VANS with satellite dishes screech up.

INT. HOUSE

Marshals leap the stairs, three at a time. Chinese vases CRASH in their wake.

The butler runs scared.

But a marshal grabs him by the neck.

MARSHAL

Where is he?

BUTLER

(shaking)

In there.

WIDE

The butler points at the STEEL DOOR. The marshal is flabbergasted. He tugs at it.

MARSHAL

What the fuck?

A sudden SQUAWK from the intercom.

LARRY (over intercom)

You'll never get me! I'm behind 500
pounds of reinforced steel!

INSIDE THE BEDROOM

Larry is watching a bank of TVs. Althea is sprawled woozily on the bed, eating Captain Crunch. On TWO TVs is live news coverage outside the house: Helicopters zoom through frame. On the THIRD TV is Bert Convy on "TattleTales."

LARRY

I've got ABC and NBC, but CBS is still
runnin' some game show.

(disenchanted)

Man, what kind of fucked-up priorities
do they have...?

Suddenly "SPECIAL BULLETIN" appears. Larry is instantly happy.

LARRY

Alright! There we go. I've turned
the world into a tabloid!

He hits a black BUTTON.

ALTHEA

While you're out, pick up some
bananas.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE BEDROOM

The steel door clicks and starts GRINDING open.

CUT TO:

EXT. MANSION - DAY

In the raining drench, marshals force Larry in his wheelchair
into a police van. The soaked newspeople are going berserk.

LARRY

Don't let them silence me! I KNOW
TOO MUCH!

REPORTER

Are you really that scared?

LARRY

No. It's just a publicity gimmick.
And thank God you all fell for it!

He opens his coat, revealing "Larry Flynt for President" on his
shirt.

The wet reporters frown, burned.

WIPE TO:

INT. TAKASUGI'S COURTROOM - DAY

Judge Takasugi sits calmly, waiting. Suddenly the doors BURST
open, and the Larry Flynt circus barges in. Bailiffs, marshals,
lawyers, buddies, and shackled Larry HOLLARING over the din.

LARRY

Take your hands off me! These cuffs
are too tight. OW! I'm a CRIPPLE!

Larry is rolled to the front, then brakes.

CLOSEUP - TAKASUGI

He stares down this menace with a horrid dread.

CUT TO:

LATER

Larry is on the stand. The bailiff holds up a Bible.

BAILIFF

Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

LARRY

No.

TAKASUGI

(startled)

No?

Larry abruptly removes his hand from the Bible.

LARRY

I'm an Atheist. I won't swear on anything to God.

Takasugi sighs.

TAKASUGI

Mr. Flynt, you are a handful.

(overwhelmed)

You've wreaked havoc on this DeLorean case, you've produced an audiotape which mysteriously disappears, if your evidence is proven factual it will probably produce a mistrial... Where will it all end?

LARRY

I don't know, your Honor.

TAKASUGI

Well I'll tell you what, Mr. Flynt. I'm willing to believe that this tape was stolen. But please, I need you to tell me one thing: WHO WAS THE SOURCE OF YOUR AUDIOTAPE?

Hmm. Larry thinks long and hard about this, then speaks:

LARRY

Well, you see, Your Honor... there was a girl named Vicki Morgan, who was Alfred Bloomingdale's mistress...

ON ISAACMAN

His face pales.

ISAACMAN

Oh my God...

ON LARRY

He cheerily continues.

LARRY

Now Vicki was a party girl. And when Alfred introduced her to Reagan's cabinet buddies, they liked her -- if you know what I mean.

(he winks at Takasugi)

Unfortunately, Vicki was naive enough to start writin' a book about these sex orgies. Suddenly, BINGO -- she gets murdered!

TAKASUGI

(holding his temper)

Mr. Flynt, how are you connected to this?

LARRY

(emotional)

Your Honor, you can see I'm sittin' in a wheelchair! These are some of the same thugs who had me gunned down!

Takasugi is mystified.

The court STENOGRAPHER keeps typing.

LARRY

But, what these White House killers didn't realize is that Vicki videotaped their sexcapades. And these tapes are dirty, Your Honor -- pure carnality. If our country knew our leaders were involved in these filthy activities... believe me, heads would roll.

TAKASUGI

Mr. Flynt, what does this have to do with the DeLorean trial?

Larry thinks.

LARRY

Absolutely nothing, Your Honor. It just made me think of it, because I have that tape, and this tape.

Takasugi is astounded.

TAKASUGI

Mr. Flynt, I cannot tolerate this behavior in my courtroom --

LARRY

Yeah, well I'm fed up with your shit, too.

The gallery GASPS.

Takasugi glares. He SLAMS his gavel.

TAKASUGI

That's it! You're in contempt.
Beginning tomorrow, I'm fining you
\$10,000 a day until you reveal your
source.

LARRY

NEVER! You wouldn't ask that to Time
magazine. I ain't squealin'!

INT. COURTROOM CORRIDOR - LATER

Larry triumphantly rolls away. Arlo runs along, whispering.

ARLO

I can't believe you're gonna pay!
There's no source. You're protecting
nothing!

LARRY

No, I'm protectin' the principle. He
doesn't have the right to ask.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUNSET BOULEVARD - NEXT DAY

The Sunset Strip. Half a dozen HOOKERS in cut-offs shake their
wares on a corner.

Suddenly a long WHITE LIMO cruises up, honking an "OOGAH,
OOGAH!" horn.

The girls turn.

A tinted window rolls down, and grinning Larry sticks his head
out. He's wearing a COMBAT HELMET.

LARRY

Hey girls, wanna make some easy money?

EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

The limo screeches up, and Larry is helped out. He wears the
combat helmet, plus a Purple Heart on his bulletproof vest.
REPORTERS see him and scramble over like insects.

REPORTER

Larry! When can we see the Vicki
Morgan Sex Tapes?

LARRY
 When I'm good and ready! During the
 New Hampshire Primary, I'm mailing
 'em to every registered voter. These
 tapes will destroy the Reagan
 hypocrites!

Two GARBAGEMEN emptying trash cans watch admiringly.

GARBAGEMAN
 Y'know, if I had a hundred million
 bucks, I'd probably be doin' exactly
 what he is.

CUT TO:

INT. TAKASUGI'S COURTROOM - DAY

Judge Takasugi sternly peers at deadpan Larry.

TAKASUGI
 Mr. Flynt, are you prepared to pay
 today's \$10,000 fine?

LARRY
 Yes, Your Honor.

Larry SNAPS his fingers.

The back doors swing open. And the hookers strut in, carrying
 trash bags tied with pink ribbons.

The bailiff's eyes pop.

The hookers rip the bags open and dump \$10,000 IN CRUMPLED BILLS
 onto the floor. Larry booms.

LARRY
 I am a publisher! I have a right to
 keep the source of the tape
 confidential under the First Amendment
 right of freedom of the press.

Takasugi blinks, unimpressed.

TAKASUGI
 What denomination are we looking at?

LARRY
 One-dollar bills, Your Honor.

TAKASUGI
 (irked)
 Fine. Start counting.

Larry wiggles his eyebrows, then rolls forward to the money. A
 dramatic pause... then he removes a shawl from his legs.

Larry is WEARING A DIAPER MADE OF THE AMERICAN FLAG.

ANGLE - TAKASUGI

What the fuck?! He shudders.

TAKASUGI

Mr. Flynt! Is that an American FLAG?!

WIDE

LARRY

Yeah, I made it into a diaper.

TAKASUGI

WHY?!

LARRY

Since you treat me like a baby, I'm gonna act like one.

Takasugi throws up his hands, furious.

TAKASUGI

Mr. Flynt, I'm arresting you for desecrating the American flag!

(he turns)

Bailiff, take him into custody!

Isaacman leaps to attention.

ISAACMAN

Your Honor, can we post bail?

TAKASUGI

Fine. \$50,000, and I'd prefer a cashier's check.

(beat)

But I'm keeping our Mr. Flynt on a short leash. As a condition of his release, he absolutely cannot leave California.

CUT TO:

INT. MANSION - NIGHT

Campaign headquarters. Larry and his gang work at a GIANT U.S. MAP dotted with colored pins.

LARRY

Okay, first we'll fly to Dallas. Then to Cincinnati. Then to Vegas. Then to Alaska.

Althea GROANS, bleary-eyed. In a tight punk get-up, she looks scarily skinny.

ALTHEA

Uggghhhh! I'm so fuckin' sick of this! It's such a waste of time...

LARRY

But honey, don't you get it? I'm
mocking the hypocrisy of the system.
The ruling class represses free
thought --

ALTHEA

Wank off! Wank off!

LARRY

(insulted)

You're not acting like a First Lady.

ALTHEA

I don't wanna be a mother-fuckin'
First Lady.

(beat)

I'm goin' to Madame Wong's.

Althea stumbles out the door.

Larry shakes his head, then returns to his flight plans.

LARRY

Well anyway, like I was sayin'...
once we get to Alaska, we're gonna
recreate the flight of Korean Airliner
007 -- find out why it was shot down.

(he draws a dotted line on the map)

See, we'll move in a north-western
trajectory, go this way, and fly over
Soviet airspace...

ARLO

Jesus Christ! Larry, you can't do
that -- there's international laws.

LARRY

So what? If the Russkies blow me up,
I'll be an American hero!

JIMMY

(unimpressed)

Yeah, but we'll be in the plane with
you.

Suddenly -- CRASH!!!

A huge COLLISION outside.

Everybody drops their things and runs to the window. Larry
zooms over in his wheelchair.

OUTSIDE

They crowd in the window, peering down.

Below, the Rolls Royce has been plowed into a tree. The car is
upended and totalled. Althea hangs out the driver's door, her
head resting on the grass.

Larry shouts down.

LARRY
Babe, what happened?!

ALTHEA
(blase)
Ehh, it's hard to drive with a needle
in your arm.

CUT TO:

EST. WASHINGTON BUILDING - NIGHT

A looming building says "FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION"

INT. FCC OFFICES

In a shadowy room, two WASHINGTON GUYS gape at a TV in horror.
They watch Larry give a speech.

LARRY (on TV)
Since I am a candidate, I will begin
buying 30-minute blocks of primetime
television, where I will explain my
political platform... peppered with
hot, hard-core triple X footage.

The guys are freaked.

WASHINGTON GUY #1
My God! Porn is NOT allowed on the
airwaves!

WASHINGTON GUY #2
Yeah, but federal law prohibits
censoring political ads.

WASHINGTON GUY #1
What are we gonna do?! This s.o.b.
has found a loophole.

Larry continues ranting.

LARRY (on TV)
I'm the People's Candidate! Anyone
who's been screwed over will vote for
me! Every poor white cracker! Every
black! Every Jew! Every cripple!
Every Indian! Every Hustler reader!
I got them all! I AM the next
President of the United States!!!

The guys stare gravely at each other.

WASHINGTON GUY #2
We have to stop him.

CUT TO:

EXT. LAX AIRPORT - DAY

The Hustler plane sits on the tarmac. Larry and Isaacman argue angrily in front of it.

ISAACMAN

Do NOT get on that plane! Do NOT leave California! The guys in Washington are really pissed-off.

LARRY

(bizarrely irrational)

Good!

ISAACMAN

Why is that good? You and I hooked up because we wanted to fight for the First Amendment -- but now... I don't even know WHAT you're accomplishing.

LARRY

Herald, I'm just tryin' to show that in America, any boy can grow up to be President.

ISAACMAN

(irritated)

That's bull! You're not even trying to win!

LARRY

Lighten up. I'm a lawyer's dream client -- rich and always in trouble.

ISAACMAN

It's not funny! Law is not a game.

Larry gets enraged.

LARRY

You're RIGHT. It's A FUCKIN' JOKE!! Five-and-a-half years since I was shot, and the government still hasn't produced ONE SUSPECT!

ISAACMAN

I know. I was there too. But you don't see me trying to get revenge on an entire country.

LARRY

Herald, I can't WALK! I can't FUCK!
(terribly upset)
But I got MONEY! And that gives me the right to make the whole corrupt system eat my shit.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALASKA - NIGHT

Glacier ice caps glisten below an ink black sky. The pink plane glides silently into view.

INT. HUSTLER PLANE

Larry and Arlo look at magazine artwork.

ARLO

...and here's next month's inside front cover. A parody of a Campari Liquor Ad -- Jerry Falwell describes his "first time."

Larry examines the fake ad. Falwell's face beams out.

LARRY

Cool -- I hate that guy.

ARLO

Yeah. Callin' himself the "Moral Majority"... implies the rest of us are an immoral minority.

LARRY

It's fascism.

(beat)

Tell ya what: Instead of screwing a hooker, why don't we have Falwell makin' it with his own mama?

ARLO

(he LAUGHS)

El Jefe, you're the best.

A beat. Arlo puts the artwork down.

ARLO

Look, I gotta ask you a question. Do you really have the Vicki Morgan Sex Tapes?

LARRY

(he snorts)

Of course not. There's no such thing.

ARLO

I knew it!!

LARRY

All I ever had was the FBI tape. I paid some clerk at DeLorean's lawfirm five grand -- best investment I ever made. It gave me credibility. Now those idiots believe anything I say.

Suddenly the cockpit door opens, and a WORRIED PILOT enters.

WORRIED PILOT

Excuse me, sorry to interrupt -- but
I just received a transmission from
Anchorage Airport. We're being
grounded.

LARRY

WHY?

WORRIED PILOT

I guess the FAA got wind of our flight
plans, and they tipped off the State
Department and the Soviet Embassy...
There's a lot of angry people saying
we weren't authorized to fly over
Russia.

LARRY

(beat)

Curses, foiled again!

CUT TO:

EXT. ANCHORAGE AIRPORT - NIGHT

Freezing snow blows in the dark. ESKIMO FEDERAL MARSHALS stand
in the cold, as the pink Hustler plane taxis to a stop.

ESKIMO MARSHAL #1

Who is this guy?

ESKIMO MARSHAL #2

I dunno. Some fugitive who jumped
bail.

The plane door starts to open.

The marshals lift their guns, aimed and ready.

A beat -- and then Larry appears in the doorway, dressed like
Santa Claus.

CUT TO:

INT. TAKASUGI'S COURTROOM - DAY

Takasugi glares incredulously. Larry is sitting there, wild-
eyed in his Santa suit. Althea watches in back, forlorn.

TAKASUGI

Mr. Flynt, wasn't I clear? Didn't
I explicitly state that you couldn't
leave California?

ISAACMAN

I'm sorry about the misunderstanding,
Your Honor. Mr. Flynt always intended
to be back in court on Monday --

LARRY
Unless the Commies shot me down.

TAKASUGI
(unamused)
That is not humorous. These added
contempt charges are quite serious.

Larry bows his head, acting like a bad kid coming clean.

LARRY
Your Honor, you're right. I realize
that rules help us, not hurt us.
(coily remorseful)
I've learned my lesson, and now I want
to fess up and reveal my source.

TAKASUGI
Well -- I'm glad to hear this. I'm
pleased you've come around.
(taking notes)
Who was it?

Larry speaks, deadpan.

LARRY
The Samurai.

TAKASUGI
(startled)
Excuse me??

LARRY
The Samurai gave me the tape.

TAKASUGI
(confused)
Who is he? Where is this man?

LARRY
Well, unfortunately he was critically
injured while delivering me the tape.
So he's receiving medical treatment
in China.

Judge Takasugi wipes his brow.

TAKASUGI
Mr. Flynt, I fear you are mentally
ill.

LARRY
Well, opinions are like assholes.
Everybody's got one.

Takasugi CHOKES in shock.

ISAACMAN.
Cut it out, Larry --

LARRY
Shut up, Herald.

TAKASUGI
Mr. Flynt, listen to your lawyer.
Let him speak for you.

LARRY
I know the rules!
(he snaps at his attorneys)
You're fired. You're fired. You're
fired. There! Now I'm my own lawyer.
I can say whatever the fuck I want!

TAKASUGI
No you can't! I will NOT have cursing
in my courtroom.

LARRY
Oh. Well what about spitting?
Larry HOCKS a giant loogie and SPITS it across the room.
Takasugi SLAMS his gavel.

TAKASUGI
Bailiff! Gag that man!!
The BAILIFF nervously walks over, holding out a cloth.
Larry GROWLS at him, like a mad dog. He snaps his teeth
threateningly.

LARRY
Grrr!!!
The bailiff glances worriedly at the judge.

BAILIFF
Do I have to --?

TAKASUGI
(outraged)
I've had ENOUGH OF THIS! Mr. Flynt,
you leave me no choice but to sentence
you to nine months --

LARRY
I'm crazier than hell! GIVE ME MORE!

TAKASUGI
Fine. I'll add another six months!
Althea winces. Isaacman frantically tugs Larry.

ISAACMAN
Larry, ask to post bail --

LARRY
Shut UP, Herald! I'm a rich white
man -- they'll just send me to some
country club prison!

ISAACMAN
Larry, you're not competent to know
what you want...
(imploring)
Trust me.

Hmm. Larry thinks, then acquiesces.

LARRY
Oh, fine.
(to the judge)
Your Honor, can I post bail?

CLOSEUP - TAKASUGI

A pause. And then --

TAKASUGI
NO.

He glowers powerfully.

TAKASUGI
Larry Flynt, you are hereby sentenced
to fifteen months... in federal
psychiatric prison.
(beat)
Now get him out of my courtroom.

CLOSEUP - LARRY

Absolute shock. The color drains from his face.

WIDE

Then THREE BAILIFFS sneak up behind him, grab the wheelchair,
and roll it backwards out of the courtroom.

Althea stares, pained.

CUT TO:

EST. BUTNER FEDERAL PRISON - DAY

A dark, spooky fortress with high fence containing it.

INT. BUTNER - DAY

The prison psychiatric unit. Dim corridors buzz with flickering
fluorescents.

Terrifying muffled SCREAMS echo off the walls.

PRISONERS in strait jackets bang their heads in padded cells.

Larry gets rolled in, chained to a gurney. He is shivering, clammy, and seems completely disoriented.

Larry is in hell.

CUT TO:

EST. LIBERTY BAPTIST COLLEGE - DAY

A quaint, lovely school on thousands of green Virginia acres. A cross stands high above.

INT. COLLEGE CORRIDOR - DAY

A clean-cut DIVINITY STUDENT marches formally down a long subdued hallway. Paintings of Jesus pass by.

The young man gulps nervously.

Clutched tightly in his hand is a copy of HUSTLER.

INT. DEAN'S OFFICE - DAY

A proper, RESERVED DEAN is working. Jesus hangs on the cross behind him. The young man KNOCKS and tentatively enters.

DIVINITY STUDENT

Sir, I'm so sorry to disturb you --
but I have something quite...
(searching for the word)
odious you need to be aware of.

He gingerly places the Hustler down. On the cover, two women French kiss.

The Dean raises an eyebrow. The student opens the magazine, revealing the FULL-PAGE CAMPARI AD PARODY. Jerry Falwell's picture stares out. The Dean is befuddled.

DEAN

I don't understand. The Reverend
would never endorse a liquor
company...

DIVINITY STUDENT

Well... there's a larger problem.
Ahem. Substantially larger.
(nervous)
It says the Reverend fornicated with
his mother in an outhouse.

The Dean's eyes pop.

CUT TO:

A DOOR

Stenciled lettering says "Reverend Jerry Falwell, Chancellor"

INT. FALWELL'S OFFICE

A dignified office for an important man. Photos of Falwell with Reagan, Bush, and Bob Dole litter the walls. Sitting at a desk, intently reading his Bible, is the REVEREND JERRY FALWELL. Formidable, dedicated, strong-willed, he truly sees himself as an anointed leader of a Godly Moral Majority.

Falwell glances up.

REV. FALWELL

Give me a second.

Falwell finishes reading the Bible passage. Finally finished, he places a ribbon on the page and shuts the Book.

Falwell smiles warmly.

REV. FALWELL

So what do you boys got for me?

The Dean and the Student stand across from him. They look ill.

DEAN

Uh, Reverend... I think you should read this.

He hands Falwell the Hustler AD.

Falwell innocently examines it.

FALWELL'S POV

A blizzard of TERRIBLE WORDS leap out at us:

"Mom"

"Shit"

"Flies"

"Campari in the crapper"

"Kicked the goat out"

"Baptist whore"

"Passed out before I could come"

CLOSEUP - FALWELL

He turns frighteningly pale. All color, all emotion, all life just drains from his face.

He whispers faintly.

REV. FALWELL

Dear Lord...

CUT TO:

INT. BUTNER PRISON - DAY

Larry sits in a padded cell. He hasn't been shaved in days, and his eyes are glazed and lifeless. A glob of drool hangs from his open mouth.

Outside, keys clank, and the cell door gets unlocked and flung open. A muscular ORDERLY stares passively.

ORDERLY

Flynt. You've got a visitor.

Larry GRUNTS.

INT. PRISON VISITOR CHECK-IN - DAY

Gaunt, withered Althea struggles to stand as a GUARD frisks her. Absurdly, he pats down her skeletal frame.

VISITORS AREA

Larry sits glumly, overweight like a blob of dough. Behind a GLASS WALL, Althea staggers over and plunks down. She catches her breath.

ALTHEA

You look good...

He stares unresponsively, quite over-medicated.

LARRY

Mrmmm...

ALTHEA

(awkward)

Lar', I got some bad news...

LARRY

Mrhm...

She realizes this is all she's gonna get from him. Althea starts crying.

ALTHEA

Larry... I got AIDS...

Larry gazes. He's probably comprehending, but doesn't speak.

Althea leans up to the glass.

ALTHEA

Do you understand...?

TIGHT - LARRY

A pause. His eyes drop, overwhelmed.

Then, shuddering, he struggles and lifts his hand to the glass. Althea places her hand against it.

CUT TO:

INT. HUSTLER OFFICES - DAY

Somber staffers gossip.

STAFFER #1
It's weird. Nobody's heard from him
in weeks.

STAFFER #2
I hear they lobotomize people in that
place...

An uneasy pause.

A cute RECEPTIONIST answers the phone.

RECEPTIONIST
Larry Flynt Publications.
(suddenly surprised)
Oh! Yes!

She grabs a MICROPHONE. Her voice gets AMPLIFIED everywhere.

RECEPTIONIST
CODE PINK! CODE PINK!

People suddenly scurry crazily.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM

Everybody hastily gathers around the table. A SPEAKER PHONE is placed in the center. They all stare at it, waiting...

Finally -- Larry's drugged, confused-sounding VOICE barks out.

LARRY'S VOICE
Is everybody therrre...?

ARLO
Yeah, Larry. We're all here. So,
uh -- how are you?

LARRY'S VOICE
Never you mind about that... I have
some import'nt announcements to
maaaake.....
(a long pause)
First... I wanna withdrawww my
candidacy for Prezident...

The group is startled.

STAFFER .
Why?!

LARRY'S VOICE

(suddenly enraged)

~~Never you~~-mind why! It's none of yer fuckin' business!!

(beat)

But take all them t-shirts, and bumper stickers, and posterrrs, and BURN 'EM! Just toss 'em in the incinerator! The carnival is closed.

Everybody is astonished.

LARRY'S VOICE

Okay. Next point of biziness. Dwaine, Suze, Morgan, Timmy, Bruce, Paul, Arlo... y'all there?

STAFFERS

(in unison)

Yes, Larry.

LARRY'S VOICE

Good. You're all fired.

HUH? People are flabbergasted. Jimmy jumps up.

JIMMY

Larry, you can't do this! We need these people.

LARRY'S VOICE

Shut up, Jimbo. It's my business, and I'll run it into the ground if I want to!!

(pause)

Okay, that's all. I gotta go.

CLICK. He suddenly hangs up. A DIAL TONE comes on.

Everybody keeps staring at the speaker phone, totally weirded out. It's like they're expecting Larry to jump out of it.

ARLO

What the fuck was that?!

DWAIN

Maybe I can get a job at Mad Magazine --

JIMMY

CALM DOWN! Don't everybody panic. You're not fired.

STAFFER

But Larry just said --

JIMMY

Yeah, well Larry's in a nuthouse, ain't he?

Hmm. Not a bad point.

CUT TO:

INT. ISAACMAN'S OFFICE - DAY

A LEGAL SECRETARY carries a letter over to Isaacman.

LEGAL SECRETARY

You got a certified letter.

Isaacman glances down. The return address says "Moral Majority -- Lynchburg, Virginia"

Isaacman is certainly intrigued. He RIPS it open and pulls out a sheaf of papers.

Then he gasps.

ISAACMAN

Oh my God. Jerry Falwell is suing us for 45 million dollars!!

INT. LARRY'S PRISON CELL - DAY

Frazzled Isaacman sits across from Larry. Larry peers at him sideways, from his gurney.

ISAACMAN

This probably will not come as too much of a surprise, but the Reverend Falwell did not find your Campari parody amusing. So he's charging you with Appropriation of Likeness, Emotional Distress, and Libel.

(reading off his notes)

The complaint states that you intended to expose him to "public hatred, contempt, disgrace, and induce an evil and unsavory opinion of him in the minds of the community."

Larry's lips curl into an evil smile: Exactly.

ISAACMAN

Larry, Falwell is pissed. So he's sent a million letters to his Moral Majority flock, hitting them up for money to fight you in court and send you back to hell.

(beat)

He's even enclosed a copy of the ad, to really upset them!

(he leans in)

So, look, I know your medication makes it tough for you to talk... but... could you make it known to me what you want to do?

CLOSEUP - LARRY

A long pause. His chest fills with air, and then a single word crawls slowly up his throat and pops out of his mouth:

LARRY

Countersue.

CUT TO:

INT. TV STUDIOS - DAY

The studios for the "Old Time Gospel Hour." TECHNICIANS scurry around a glitzy set with a lectern. A makeup girl is touching up Reverend Falwell. Suddenly he yelps out in shock.

REV. FALWELL

WHAT??!!!!!!!!!!

His ponderous, puffed-up lawyer ROY GRUTMAN tries to appease him.

GRUTMAN

Uh, yeah... Jerry... he's suing you.

REV. FALWELL

He's suing ME???!!

(baffled)

For heaven's sake, why?!!!

GRUTMAN

(he winces)

Copyright infringement. You xeroxed his ad, and raised money with it.

Falwell is turning red with rage.

REV. FALWELL

He is Lucifer! His depth of depravity sickens me! Is decency something to be mocked??

GRUTMAN

Uh, no, Jerry...

REV. FALWELL

Then DON'T BACK OFF! I am going to fight this heathen with every breath in my body!

CUT TO:

INT. FLYNT MANSION - DAY

Althea lies alone on the couch in the giant living room. With a dull expression, she eats ice cream and stares at the big screen TV.

INSERT - BIG TV

A REPORTER ominously speaks from a courthouse.

REPORTER

God versus the Devil. America's
Minister versus America's Pimp.
Tomorrow, in a Virginia courthouse,
they meet.

(beat)

Ironically, Falwell and Flynt couldn't
have started out more similar: Rural
boys from mountain country who dreamed
of being successes. Both became
leaders of multimillion dollar
empires... but ultimately in wildly
different ways.

A CLIP of Falwell appears. Althea frowns. Using all her
effort, she hurls her ice cream at the screen. It splatters
messily across Falwell's face.

CUT TO:

INT. LAWYER'S OFFICES - LATE NIGHT

1 a.m. Isaacman and his weary LEGAL TEAM go over their final
preparations. They examine the Campari ad.

ISAACMAN

Remember, Larry's personality has
nothing to do with the issue. He
might be unsavory, but he has every
right to speak his mind.

(beat)

This ad is satire at its purest --
savage barbs thrown at a public
figure. Falwell has mixed-up religion
and politics, blatantly trying to
alter the direction of our country.
He's got to expect an occasional
raspberry!

YOUNG LAWYER

So our legal argument boils down to
"Can't you take a joke?"

ISAACMAN

Exactly. The ad is too ridiculous
to be libel. Nobody thinks it's real!
(he points at the ad)
Hell, it even says "Parody -- Not To
Be Taken Seriously"!

CUT TO:

INT. U.S. DISTRICT COURTHOUSE - ROANOKE, VIRGINIA - DAY

The big trial.

In a packed courtroom, Jerry Falwell is on the stand testifying. Grutman paces pompously. JUDGE JAMES TURK watches.

REV. FALWELL

...I have a number of honorary degrees. I have been named "Clergyman of the Year." I have been awarded "Humanitarian of the Year"...

GRUTMAN

Has the Good Housekeeping Poll of influential Americans ever included you?

REV. FALWELL

Yes. Last year, I was second most-admired, behind the President.

Falwell speaks confidently. The TWELVE JURORS are impressed.

Isaacman whispers to his team.

ISAACMAN

That's good for us. It just makes him a bigger target.

Grutman strides to a large blow-up of the CAMPARI AD, sitting on an easel. He gestures with a pointer.

GRUTMAN

Mr. Falwell, I'd like to draw your attention to Exhibit One. The caption reads: "Jerry Falwell talks about his first time" -- and there appears to be a photograph of you. Did you give consent for the use of your name or photograph in this ad?

REV. FALWELL

I did not.

GRUTMAN

(he nods)

All right. Underneath your photograph, it reads, quote -- "FALWELL: My first time was in an outhouse outside Lynchburg, Virginia. I never really expected to make it with Mom, but then after she showed all of the other guys in town such a good time, I figured, 'What the hell.'" Unquote.

(he looks up)

Now, referring to the use of the verb "make it," according to your interpretation, Mr. Falwell, did that have a sexual connotation?

REV. FALWELL
 (awkward)
 That... is street vernacular for
 sexual intercourse.

Falwell holds his dignified pose. Grutman nods.

GRUTMAN
 Next, quote -- "INTERVIEWER: But your
 mom? Isn't that a bit odd?" "FALWELL:
 I don't think so. Looks don't mean
 that much to me in a woman." Unquote.

Yikes. The jurors grimace uncomfortably.

Isaacman squirms in his seat, wanting Grutman to move on.

Grutman milks the stink in the air, then gently continues.

GRUTMAN
 Did you ever say that?

REV. FALWELL
 Never.

GRUTMAN
 Please tell us, Mr. Falwell, what was
 the nature of the relationship between
 you and your mother?

REV. FALWELL
 We were as close as a mother and son
 could be on this earth. She was a
 very godly woman... probably the
 closest to a saint that I have ever
 known.

Grutman lets this sink in.

GRUTMAN
 Forgive this question -- but I must
 ask it... was your mother anyone who
 ever committed incest?

Isaacman LEAPS from his chair, objecting.

ISAACMAN
 Your Honor! Excuse me, it seems to
 me that we could certainly stipulate
 this his mother was a person of the
finest moral character, and that she
is now deceased, and that this really
 is not necessary --

JUDGE
 (cutting him off)
 I'll let him answer the question.

ANGLE - GRUTMAN

~~He hides his pleasure.~~ Here comes the Big Out-Of-The-Ballpark,
Bases-Loaded Moment.

GRUTMAN

Mr. Falwell, specifically... did you
and your mother ever commit incest?

CLOSEUP - FALWELL

Such agony. He bites his lip, pained.

REV. FALWELL

Absolutely not.

ANGLE - THE JURY

They shake their heads. How ugly.

CUT TO:

EXT. VIRGINIA COURTHOUSE - DAY

A prison van pulls up. Two uniformed GUARDS lower a mechanical
lift and roll out Larry in an institutional wheelchair. His
hands are strapped down. His scraggly beard is quite scummy.
And his suspicious eyes dart about like a caged animal.

Isaacman runs over, smiling.

ISAACMAN

Larry! You all ready for your big
day?

LARRY

(speech a tad slurred)
No. I suck.

ISAACMAN

(taken aback)
Oh. Well I do wish you had shaved.

LARRY

Listen... I didn't get my breakfast,
they forgot my enema, nobody cleaned
my bed sore, and Jimmy thinks I'm crazy
-- he's tryin' to become my
conservator.

Larry is a seriously ornery son-of-a-bitch.

ISAACMAN

Well, we can't worry about these
things today. Let's concentrate on
your testimony.

(beat)

Larry, the case is an easy win.

(more)

ISAACMAN (Cont'd)
 Just go up there, give 'em a friendly smile, and say it was a joke. You were pokin' fun at the Reverend, and nobody could possibly take it seriously.

Larry thinks.

LARRY
 I'm just a clown.

ISAACMAN
 Exactly!

Larry scowls.

CUT TO:

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

The guards push Larry in. He rolls past the crowd of spectators, passes the plaintiff's table, then -- finally -- sees Falwell.

Time stops.

The two men lock eyes.

Larry and Jerry. Jerry and Larry. Nobody else exists. Falwell stares impassively, while Larry burns with hatred.

CUT TO:

MOMENTS LATER

Larry's on the stand, glaring at Falwell. Grutman smugly approaches.

GRUTMAN
 Mr. Flynt, will you please state your full name?

LARRY
 My name is Christopher Columbus Cornwallis I.P.Q. Harvey H. Apache Pugh.

Grutman is unamused.

GRUTMAN
 Are you known as Larry Flynt?

LARRY
 No. Jesus H. Flynt, Esquire.

GRUTMAN
 Are you the publisher and editor-in-chief for Hustler magazine?

LARRY

Better believe it.

Grutman lifts a piece of TYPED PAPER off the exhibit table.

GRUTMAN

Alright. I have here Exhibit B, a typewritten script of the Campari ad copy. There are approval initials from the legal department, the copy department, and then "Okay, L.F." What does that mean?

LARRY

It means they could take it to the bank.

GRUTMAN

Alright. And when you approved this ad, did you have any knowledge specifically that Reverend Falwell had ever had intercourse with his mother?

A pause. Larry gazes at Falwell.

LARRY

Yes.

GRUTMAN

(startled)

What??

LARRY

YES.

Isaacman's jaw drops.

Falwell's jaw drops further.

The crowd goes CRAZY.

LARRY

I have an affidavit signed by three people stating that they witnessed the incestuous act.

GRUTMAN

You DO??

(bewildered)

And... where is this affidavit?

LARRY

It's locked in an airtight vault where nobody can meddle with it.

GRUTMAN

Mr. Flynt, you're making this all up.

LARRY
 (insulted)
 No, I'm not. The affidavit states
 that the incident was observed by
 three boys peeking through the window
 of the outhouse.

Isaacman tries to intercept.

ISAACMAN
 Your Honor!
 (to the Judge)
 Just to make something clear, we are
 not aware of any such documentation --

LARRY
 BRAVO NOVEMBER. BRAVO WHISKEY.

GRUTMAN
 Mr. Flynt?

Larry is receiving radio signals.

LARRY
 ELEVEN BRAVO.

GRUTMAN
 Mr. Flynt --

LARRY
 (talking into a pretend mike)
 YOU'RE CLEARED FOR RUNWAY TWO. CAN
 YOU GIVE ME AN E.T.A. ON IT?

GRUTMAN
 Mr. Flynt, can we get back on the
 subject?!

Larry snaps back.

LARRY
 And ya know what?? There's somethin'
 else in that vault: A photo of Jerry
 having coitus with a sheep.
 (he gets indignant)
 And no one has the right of taking
 the individual liberty of sticking
 their sexual organ in some poor
 animal's mouth! Now, there's a big
 difference between civil rights and
 individual liberties. And you should
 learn the difference. I mean, an
 individual liberty is something I'd
 like to do right now -- take a shit
 right on top of your head. But civil
 rights is what's been violated by
 locking me in a hellhole psychiatric
 prison.

Grutman tries to regain control.

GRUTMAN

Mr. Flynt, do you realize by publishing this ad parody, you were conveying to the reader that Reverend Falwell was just as you characterized him -- a liar?

LARRY

He's a glutton.

GRUTMAN

How about a liar?

LARRY

Yeah. He's a liar, too.

GRUTMAN

You wanted to hold him up to ridicule?

LARRY

No, contempt.

GRUTMAN

Contempt. Scorn?

LARRY

Truculent.

GRUTMAN

Obloquy?

LARRY

Parlez-vous francais?

GRUTMAN

Je parle le francais mieux que toi.

LARRY

Oui, je veux vais coucher vous, avec vous -- I'm sorry, it's rusty, Jesus Christ, it is rusty.

GRUTMAN

Mr. Flynt, do you have an aversion to organized religion?

LARRY

You bet your sweet ass I do.

GRUTMAN

Do you believe that gives you license to mock leaders of religious movements?

LARRY

You're goddamn right.

ISAACMAN

OBJECTION. It's irrelevant --

JUDGE
Overruled.

LARRY
Free expression is absolute.

Grutman bears in.

GRUTMAN
You wanted to make Reverend Falwell
out to be a hypocrite?

LARRY
Yeah.

GRUTMAN
That's what you wanted to convey?

LARRY
Yeah.

GRUTMAN
And didn't it occur to you, at the
time you approved the publication,
that for Reverend Falwell to function
in his livelihood, he has to have an
integrity that people believe in?
Did you not appreciate that?

LARRY
Yeah.

GRUTMAN
And wasn't one of your objectives to
destroy that integrity, or harm it,
if you could?

CLOSEUP - LARRY

LARRY
To assassinate it.

CUT TO:

EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

Larry is squeezed wriggling into a straitjacket and thrown into
the police van. He looks insane.

Isaacman stands at the top of the courthouse stairs, staring
silently at this spectacle. He looks nauseous. Finally, too
weak to stand, he sits down and sticks his head between his legs.

CUT TO:

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

JUDGE
Have you reached a verdict?

JURY FOREWOMAN
Yes we have, your honor.

The BAILIFF takes a folded piece of paper from the forewoman and hands it to the judge.

The judge opens the paper -- then does a startled doubletake.

CUT TO:

INT. COURTHOUSE CORRIDOR - DAY

The courtroom doors BANG open. A MOB OF REPORTERS scrambles out and races for the phone booths. They're freaked out.

REPORTER #1
Nobody thought the ad was true! What the hell does this mean?

REPORTER #2
The end of free speech as we know it.

They all push their way to the pay phones and CALL IN their stories. We eavesdrop:

REPORTER #3
He's not guilty of invasion of privacy, he's not guilty of libel, but he is guilty of inflicting emotional distress!

REPORTER #4
It's FUCKED! He didn't hurt Falwell's reputation, but he hurt his feelings. So now Flynt has to pay him 200 grand!

REPORTER #5
Damages without libel. It's a disastrous precedent.

AT THE DOORS

Falwell calmly strides out. More reporters mob him.

REV. FALWELL
This ruling shows that nobody can prostitute the First Amendment.
(beat)
I just hope it'll set some form of limit in the press for people like Larry Flynt.

ANGRY REPORTER
But that's where censorship starts
-- with people like Larry Flynt!

CUT TO:

INT. TIME MAGAZINE - DAY

"TIME" EDITORS argue passionately.

TIME EDITOR #1

This decision is an end run around the Constitution! It's for people who have libel suits, but know they can't win.

TIME EDITOR #2

It's ludicrous. You can't sue because someone insulted you!

CUT TO:

INT. NATIONAL LAMPOON - DAY

More EDITORS argue.

LAMPOON EDITOR #1

Flynt is gross and sleazy. He's always been gross and sleazy. But goddammit, he's on the right side!

LAMPOON EDITOR #2

With this ruling, Tip O'Neill could sue Art Buchwald. George Bush could sue Garry Trudeau. Bush could say, "Whenever I read Doonesbury, I'm a basket case for the rest of the day!"

CUT TO:

INT. NEWSPAPER OFFICES - DAY

An ANGRY EDITOR throws down a political cartoon on the CARTOONIST'S desk.

ANGRY EDITOR

What are you doing? You put Reagan's head on an elephant!

CARTOONIST

(puzzled)

Uh, yeah... I did it because he's a Republican.

ANGRY EDITOR

Well, he might think it means we're saying he's FAT, and hurt his feelings. Lose it!

CUT TO:

EXT. BUTNER PRISON YARD - DAY

In front of massive prison gates, Larry sits decrepit in his wheelchair. Two GUARDS flank his sides.

GUARD #1

Big day for you, Larry. You're
gettin' out, and you made the front
page.

LARRY

(glum)
Who gives a fuck? I don't.

MAN'S SHOUTING VOICE

GOODBYE, LARRY! GOODBYE!

They all turn. A distant figure waves from a barred window.
Larry is puzzled.

LARRY

Who's that?

GUARD #1

(squinting)
Um -- John Hinckley.

The gates silently swing open.

A limo waits in front. A DRIVER runs over and rolls Larry to
the car. Then he awkwardly helps Larry into the back seat.

INT. LIMO

The door shuts. Larry turns, and he's sitting alone with
Althea. She looks pale, sunken-cheeked, gravely ill.

Larry tries to smile.

LARRY

Hey, cutie-pie.

He gently kisses her.

ALTHEA

(voice hoarse)
We make quite a team. A cripple
gettin' out of a nuthouse, and a
junkie with AIDS.

LARRY

Yeah... but a good-lookin' junkie.

She smiles weakly.

They cuddle tightly.

CUT TO:

INT. HUSTLER OFFICES - DAY

A banner says "Welcome Back, Larry." Staffers APPLAUD
enthusedly. Larry waits for the noise to die down.

LARRY

I thought I fired you all.

Nervous laughter. A secretary tentatively speaks.

SECRETARY

Uh, Larry, you got a ton of messages. Reporters want to know what you think of the verdict.

LARRY

Tell 'em I don't give a shit. I've got bigger things to worry about.

(he looks around)

Is Jimmy here?

Uh-oh.

People jerk, anxiously. Larry scans the room, finally spotting Jimmy. He points. Jimmy shudders nervously.

JIMMY

Uh, yeah, Larry...?

LARRY

Come here! Come closer...

Jimmy takes little baby steps. Larry gestures insistently from the wheelchair. Jimmy slowly leans down... unsure if an act of horrible violence is about to break out...

JIMMY

Uh, yeah... look... sorry if I tried to run things... but I just wanted to protect you from yourself...

Jimmy grimaces remorsefully. Larry pulls him to his body -- then hugs him.

LARRY

Don't sweat it, bro'. I forgive you.

CUT TO:

INT. FLYNT MANSION - DAY

Larry and Althea lie on the big couch, like a still life. Curtains are drawn. He cradles her head.

LARRY

Ya wanna do something?

ALTHEA

No. This is fine...

(softly)

But I could use a glass of water.

They both look over.

Across the room sits a WATER PITCHER.

Hmm. They slowly glance at each other.

ALTHEA
Oh, uh... I'll ring the maid.

LARRY
(chivalrously)
No, don't worry, 'hon. I'll get it
for you.

With much effort, Larry awkwardly lifts his legs and slides himself into his wheelchair. Then he rolls across the room, reaches the water, and pours a glass. Then he carefully balances the glass on his lap and rolls back over to Althea. Smiling lovingly, he gives her the water.

She drinks.

CUT TO:

INT. FLYNT MANSION - NIGHT

Larry huddles in a corner, talking on a phone. His tone is hushed and desperate.

LARRY (into phone)
What would it take to save her?
(upset)
Look, I'm worth a hundred million
dollars! I'll write as big a check
as you need.

We MOVE IN. The voice on the line says something... and Larry's face slowly drops.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FLYNT MANSION - NIGHT

Larry and Althea are back on the couch, unmoving.

LARRY
C'mon, it'll be a hoot.

ALTHEA
No, it's too much work.

LARRY
You can do it.

ALTHEA
Oh... alright.

She makes a pained face... then sits up. Larry smiles.

LARRY
Okay, here we go! Larry and Althea's
Greatest Hits.

He clicks the TV remote.

ANGLE - THE TV

goes on. Larry starts SCANNING through a VIDEOTAPE. ~~It's 15~~
YEARS OF FLYNT TV APPEARANCES...

An early crude TV commercial. GO-GO MUSIC plays over a shot of the original Hustler club. We hear Larry's amateurish voice-over.

LARRY (v.o.)

Dance and laugh with our hostesses,
or just have a good time. The Hustler
Club. Where singles become doubles.

(beat)

And ten-cent smorgasbord til 2 a.m.

The TAPE SCANS -- to young Larry and Althea. Happy, healthy, vigorous, standing, triumphantly waving the Jackie O issue.

The TAPE SCANS -- Larry is led into a police station in handcuffs.

The TAPE SCANS -- Althea on a talk show.

ALTHEA (on TV)

Of course I wish he was free. But
I'd rather have a man who stands up
for what he believes in.

The TAPE SCANS -- Larry has been shot. Frantic paramedics roll him into a hospital. Blood is everywhere.

The TAPE SCANS -- Larry lies in a hospital bed. He emotionally grips Althea.

LARRY (on TV)

She stood by me after I was paralyzed.
She made me feel I could still be
loved.

The TAPE SCANS -- beaming Larry shows off a Hustler ad parody: John DeLorean and the words "COKE IS IT!"

The TAPE SCANS FASTER -- Larry campaigns for President. Larry wears the flag diaper. Larry waves the fake audiotape. Larry is arrested in the Santa Claus suit.

Suddenly -- the TAPE FREEZES.

ANGLE - LARRY AND ALTHEA

They stare dully at the Santa Claus image.

It all seems so pointless.

LARRY

(disheartened)

Didn't add up to much, did it?

ALTHEA
Maybe not... but it sure was fuckin'
interesting.

Silence.

They hold hands.

ALTHEA
Larry, when I die... I want you to
freeze my body. Bring me back to life
when you can cure me.

LARRY
Sure.
(pause)
Hell, I'll do it too. Then they can
thaw us both out in the year 3000.
We'll fuck on the moon.

She smiles gently at him.

CUT TO:

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Larry awkwardly transfers himself from the wheelchair to the bed. He squirms around next to Althea, trying to make himself comfortable.

ALTHEA
Do you need another pillow?

LARRY
Yeah.

Althea nods sweetly. She takes a measured breath, then gets up and shuffles feebly across the room. Althea gets a pillow, fluffs it, then places it under Larry's head.

ALTHEA
I'm gonna take a bath.

LARRY
Okay. Goodnight, 'hon.

They kiss.

And then she clicks off the light.

Blackness.

DISSOLVE TO:

EARLY MORNING

Larry slowly wakes up. He groggily looks over, and Althea is not in the bed.

Althea...? LARRY

Larry hears RUNNING WATER. He turns -- and sees water streaming under the door.

Shit. Adrenalin suddenly shoots through his body. Larry whips off the covers, throws himself into the wheelchair, and rolls over to the bathroom. Heart pounding, he whips open the door.

CLOSEUP - LARRY

And he gasps.

ANGLE - THE BATHTUB

Althea lies lifeless under the water.

CLOSEUP - LARRY

Agony. Barely a sound can escape his lips.

Oh no... LARRY

Overcome, Larry starts sobbing.

CUT TO:

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Her funeral. Under a blue sky, Larry and the Hustler gang somberly watch Althea's casket get lowered into the ground.

Nobody speaks.

Larry sits in his wheelchair, dressed in black, staring in pained disbelief.

Finally, he takes a single white rose and tosses it onto the casket. A beat. Then dirt is thrown over it.

ARLO
(whispering to Dwaine)
I heard he tried to have her frozen.
But there wasn't enough of her left
to bring back...

CUT TO:

INT. FLYNT MANSION - DAY

The big house is empty. All the furniture and expensive antiques are perfectly arranged and dusted clean, but there's no sign of life.

Room after room, empty.

Finally, the large gleaming kitchen. In the center, Larry sits alone. A plate of biscuits are piled in front of him. Like a robot, Larry dips biscuit after biscuit into a jar of molasses, then silently chews them into oblivion.

CUT TO:

EXT. MANSION BACK YARD - DAY

The huge green estate is like a beautiful unused resort.

A speck in the middle, Larry sits in front of the shimmering swimming pool, staring into the water.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Moonlight shines in. Larry lies alone in the bed, awake.

Unable to sleep, he presses a button -- and the electric bed lifts his head up. Larry clicks on the TV.

INSERT - TV

A COMMERCIAL for the Popeil Pocket Fisherman.

The channel changes. An old Mexican horror film.

The channel changes. Jerry Falwell lectures on a Christian network.

REV. FALWELL (on TV)
You cannot mock God! You cannot fool
God! If you break his laws, God
Almighty will judge you.

(booming)

AIDS is a plague. These perverted
lifestyles have to stop! When you
violate moral laws, you reap the
whirlwind.

TIGHT - LARRY

He is infuriated. A rage builds inside him... an angry, incensed, exploding passion we haven't seen in a hell of a long time.

Suddenly motivated, Larry snatches the telephone and furiously punches in a number.

INTERCUT:

INT. ISAACMAN'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Isaacman and his wife are sound asleep. Suddenly the phone RINGS shrilly. Isaacman bolts up, startled. The clock says 3 a.m. Confused, he answers the phone.

ISAACMAN .

Hello...?

LARRY'S VOICE
Herald, it's Larry! I wanna appeal
the Falwell case!

ISAACMAN
(surprised)
W-why?

INTERCUT:

CLOSEUP - LARRY

He roars wrathfully.

LARRY
Because he's what's wrong with the
world -- and I wanna kick that
motherfucker's ass.

CUT TO:

INT. FEDERAL COURTHOUSE - RICHMOND, VIRGINIA - DAY

Gold lettering on a closed wooden door states "UNITED STATES
COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE FOURTH CIRCUIT"

THREE POWERFUL JUDGES frown obstinately.

POWERFUL JUDGE
Appeal denied.

CUT TO:

INT. ISAACMAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Larry and Isaacman stare at the decision. Larry is pissed-off.

LARRY
This is bullshit! Appeal it again!

ISAACMAN
(tired)
Larry, you can't appeal it again.
That was the Appellate Court.

LARRY
So go HIGHER!

ISAACMAN
You're acting silly. The only thing
higher is the Supreme Court.

LARRY
So give 'em a call! Let's go there!

Isaacman looks sternly at Larry, like an exhausted teacher.

ISAACMAN

Larry, it's not that easy. Thousands of people petition the Court every year. They only hear a hundred, hundred-and-fifty cases.

LARRY

But my case is as good as any!

ISAACMAN

Look -- they're not gonna pick you. Every month, Sandra Day O'Connor goes out to her mailbox, and there's a fresh copy of Hustler waiting for her. These people are frightened of you. They're worried that if they let you in, you'll wear a diaper, or spit at them, or bring a bunch of hookers.

(beat)

You don't understand courtroom behavior. You're a pig.

Larry ponders this.

LARRY

But, that shouldn't matter. The principle is what's important. In America, a pig should have the same rights as a president.

Isaacman is struck by this sincerity.

ISAACMAN

I don't disagree. Look, Larry... every lawyer's dream is to go to the Supreme Court. A win there can change our country.

(beat)

But you always have these grand ideals -- and then you fuck me over.

LARRY

Yeah, I know... I look back at my life, and I just see a shit-smeared path of destruction. I've wasted my talents, without doin' anything important.

(beat)

So maybe this Falwell suit is my chance. Maybe I was put on this earth to test the First Amendment.

ISAACMAN

After hundreds of trials, it's sure seemed that way.

TIGHT - LARRY

He slowly smiles.

LARRY

So you go and get us to the Supreme Court. I promise I'll be good. And then we'll settle this friggin' thing once and for all.

CUT TO:

INT. SUPREME COURT MAILROOM - DAY

The mailclerk deposits big packages in each Justice's mailbox: Rehnquist, Marshall, Blackmun, O'Connor...

INT. JUSTICE O'CONNOR'S CHAMBERS - DAY

The HONORABLE SANDRA DAY O'CONNOR examines her mail. Wearing reading glasses, she picks up a bound volume of hundreds of xeroxed pages. The cover says "HUSTLER MAGAZINE AND LARRY C. FLYNT V. JERRY FALWELL. PETITION FOR CERTIORARI."

Yikes. Justice O'Connor grimaces at Larry's name.

But then... she notices an attached pile of petitions. The cover letter states, "FRIEND OF THE COURT BRIEFS ON BEHALF OF LARRY FLYNT." And the list of petitioners is astonishing: The New York Times, The American Newspaper Publishers Association, the Magazine Publishers Association, the Times Mirror Company, HBO, the Harvard Lampoon, the Association of American Editorial Cartoonists, the Authors League of America, etc., etc., etc....

Justice O'Connor is impressed. She starts reading...

CUT TO:

EXT. UNITED STATES SUPREME COURT - MORNING

A chilly December day. The majesty of the nation's highest court looms above. A crowd of eager SPECTATORS waits outside.

Isaacman stands in a tailored suit, nervously looking at his watch. His associates huddle with him.

LAW ASSOCIATE

Do you wanna check your notes one last time?

ISAACMAN

No. If I don't know it by now...
(a strained smile)
it's too late.

A long black limo glides up. The doors open, and the DRIVER helps Larry out and lifts him into his wheelchair. Larry is dressed in a beautiful three-piece business suit.

Isaacman is wowed.

ISAACMAN

You look nice, Larry.

LARRY
(he beams)
~~It's a big day.~~

Jubilant, Larry waves his ancient Ma and Pa from the car.

LARRY
Herald, I want you to meet my momma
and daddy. They insisted on coming.

MA FLYNT
(chuckling)
Oh yeah, right! Larry flew us in all
the way from Kentucky for this.

Another limo pulls up, and Jerry Falwell and his WIFE step out.
Falwell is wearing a patriotic red, white, and blue tie.

Falwell turns -- and suddenly locks eyes on Larry.

An intense beat. Then Falwell shakes his head. He quickly
hurries up the stairs and disappears inside.

Larry peers after them, then pokes Isaacman.

LARRY
So where's the ramp?

INT. U.S. SUPREME COURT - DAY

The most important court in the land.

The majestic red velvet curtains part. Then, in inspiring
ceremony, the NINE JUSTICES grandly file out. A hush comes over
the crowded room. The COURT MARSHAL stands and proclaims.

COURT MARSHAL
All rise! Oyez, oyez, oyez. The
Honorable, the Chief Justice and the
Associate Justices of the Supreme
Court of the United States. All
persons having business before this
honorable Court are admonished to draw
nigh and give their attention, for
the Court is now sitting. God save
the United States and this honorable
Court.

The Justices step from behind their seats and sit. All the
spectators do likewise.

Chief Justice Rehnquist shuffles through his papers.

CHIEF JUSTICE REHNQUIST
We'll hear the argument first this
morning in number 86-1278, Hustler
Magazine and Larry C. Flynt versus
Jerry Falwell.
(more)

CHIEF JUSTICE REHNQUIST (Cont'd)

(he nods at Isaacman)

Mr. Isaacman, you may proceed whenever you're ready.

Isaacman glances over. Larry gives him a big grin -- then mimes zipping his lips closed.

Isaacman smiles. He stands, staring down the panel of Justices. They peer, waiting. In contrast to Grutman's obvious arrogance, Isaacman presents himself in a low-key, ingratiating manner.

ISAACMAN

Mr. Chief Justice, and may it please the Court. One of the most cherished interests that we have as a nation is uninhibited debate and freedom of speech. There is a public interest in allowing every citizen of this country to express his views.

JUSTICE STEVENS

Well what view was expressed by Exhibit A?

ISAACMAN

Uh... in the first place, it's a parody of a Campari ad.

JUSTICE STEVENS

(deadpan)

I understand.

ISAACMAN

And it is also a satire of Jerry Falwell, and he is in many respects the perfect candidate to put in this Campari ad, because he's such a ridiculous figure to be in it: Somebody who has campaigned against alcohol, campaigned against sex. Somebody we're used to seeing standing on a pulpit, with a beatific look on his face, holding a Bible.

JUSTICE STEVENS

(unrelenting)

But what is the public interest that you're describing, that you're building up here? That there's some interest in making him look ludicrous?

Isaacman pauses, cockily. He knows this is his moment.

ISAACMAN

There is a public interest in having Hustler express its view that what Jerry Falwell says, as the ad parody indicates... is "B.S."

(pleased at his nerve)

And Hustler has every right to say that somebody who's out there campaigning against it, saying don't read our magazine and we're poison on the minds of America and don't fornicate and don't drink liquor -- Hustler has every right to say that man is full of "B.S." Let's deflate this stuffed shirt and bring him down to our level.

Isaacman smiles impishly. A few Justices nod, getting his point.

JUSTICE SCALIA

But Mr. Isaacman, the First Amendment is not everything. It's a very important value, but it's not the only value in our society. What about another value -- which is that good people should be able to enter public life and public service. The rule you give us says that if you stand for public office, or become a public figure in any way, you cannot protect yourself or, indeed, your mother, against a parody of your committing incest with her in an outhouse. Now, do you think George Washington would have stood for public office if that was the consequence?

Isaacman is relaxed, warmed-up. He's prepped for this question.

ISAACMAN

Well, there's a 200-year-old cartoon -- I think it's in the brief of the Association of American Editorial Cartoonists -- that has George Washington being led on a donkey. And underneath there's a caption that the man leading the donkey is leading an ass...

JUSTICE SCALIA

I can handle that. I think George could handle that.

(a few CHUCKLES)

But that's a far cry from committing incest with your mother in an outhouse.

(a huge LAUGH from the room)

I mean, there's no line between the two?

ISAACMAN

No. There's no line, since what you're talking about is a matter of taste -- not law. That's the issue, because nobody literally believes that Jerry Falwell is being accused of committing incest --

JUSTICE MARSHALL

So why did Hustler have him and his mother together??

ISAACMAN

They had him and his mother together to show what's called in literary form "travesty." This is a man who is so self-righteous in the area of sex, telling everybody else what to do, telling them what to read, acting as though he has more knowledge than they do about how they live their lives. The ad might say that he is incestuous, but what it symbolically communicates is he's a hypocrite.

JUSTICE MARSHALL

(thinking)

And what public purpose does that serve?

ISAACMAN

It serves the same public purpose as having Garry Trudeau in "Doonesbury" call George Bush a wimp. It makes people look at Bush a little bit differently.

(building to his finale)

Because, this is not just a dispute between Hustler and Jerry Falwell. This case affects everything that goes on in our national life. We have a long tradition of satiric commentary, and you can't pick up a newspaper in this country without seeing cartoons or editorials that have critical comments about people. And if Jerry Falwell can sue, so can any other public figure. Because if you say something critical about a person, it's going to cause emotional distress. We all know that. It's an easy thing to show, and that's why it's a meaningless standard.

(beat)

All it does... is allow the punishment of unpopular speech.

Isaacman lets this idea hang, then sits down.

Larry is blown away. He smiles proudly at Isaacman.

The Justices nod.

CHIEF JUSTICE REHNQUIST
Thank you, Mr. Isaacman.

CUT TO:

INT. ISAACMAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Months later. Larry and Isaacman wait apprehensively. Larry stares at the palm trees outside.

LARRY
Goddamn, this has been a long wait!
If I had a stomach, it'd be a nervous wreck.

ISAACMAN
You can't rush the Court. Once they reach a verdict, it becomes law.

A door opens, and an EXCITED CLERK runs in.

EXCITED CLERK
They've released the decision!

Larry's eyes pop. He hits "GO" on his wheelchair, and it races out. Isaacman laughs and runs after him.

INT. XEROX ROOM

Larry and Isaacman hover over a whirring FAX MACHINE. They eagerly read the pages as they glide out.

ON THE FAX

The top page says "SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES DECISION IN CASE NO. 86-1278, HUSTLER MAGAZINE AND LARRY C. FLYNT, PETITIONERS V. JERRY FALWELL. FEBRUARY 24, 1988."

ON LARRY

He's excited as all hell. He skims the page, reading some of it out loud.

LARRY
"...At the heart of the First Amendment is the recognition of the fundamental importance of the free flow of ideas... The freedom to speak one's mind is not only an aspect of individual liberty, but essential to the quest for truth and the vitality of society as a whole."
(he turns to Isaacman)
This is soundin' good so far.

ISAACMAN
(pleased)
It's sounding very good.

INTERCUT:

JERRY FALWELL AND GRUTMAN

hovering over their own FAX MACHINE, reading along.

REV. FALWELL
"...but in the world of debate about
public affairs, many things done with
motives that are less than admirable
are protected by the First
Amendment...

Falwell is looking ill...

BACK ON:

LARRY AND ISAACMAN

reading the final page.

LARRY
"...so the judgment of the Court of
Appeals is accordingly... REVERSED"!!!

ISAACMAN
We won.

A moment of silence. They look at each other, overwhelmed.

LARRY
I can't believe it! The United States
took my side!

ISAACMAN
(awed)
And it was unanimous! Larry, this
is a free speech milestone! We'll
be in the history books.

LARRY
Hmm.
(suddenly worried)
Can't Falwell pull some sneaky trick
and appeal it again?

ISAACMAN
No -- it's over! This is the end.

ANGLE - LARRY

For once, he is speechless.

The magnitude of the moment sinks in.

CUT TO:

EXT. HUSTLER OFFICES - DAY

Larry holds a triumphant press conference. The proud Hustler staff stand at his side. As cameras flash all around, Larry emotionally speaks in front of a rippling American flag.

LARRY

It takes a lot of courage to be free.
You have to be a strong person. I've
been accused of hiding behind the
First Amendment. Well, you're damn
right I do!

(overcome)

America is a great country... and
thank God we have a First Amendment.
You can all sleep soundly, because
if the Constitution protects a crazy
man like me, then it protects good
people like you.

Larry is all choked up. A reporter shouts out.

REPORTER

So Larry, have you achieved everything
you wanted?

A long pause.

We slowly PUSH IN to Larry. A sad smile comes over him, and
then he speaks in a low, sincere whisper.

LARRY

Almost.

(beat)

I just wish Althea could've been here
to see this.

CUT TO:

EXT. HEAVEN - DAY

Up on a fluffy white cloud, Jesus, Paul, and Lenny Bruce look
down.

Then Althea floats over and joins them. She stares down at
Larry, then smiles.

FADE OUT.

THE END