

# CONFESSIONS OF A DANGEROUS MIND

a screenplay by

Charlie Kaufman

based on

CONFESSIONS OF A DANGEROUS MIND

*an unauthorized biography by*

Chuck Barris

third draft (revised)  
May 5, 1998

MUSIC IN: OMINOUS ORCHESTRAL

TEXT, WHITE ON BLACK:

This film is a reenactment of actual events. It is based on Mr. Barris's private journals, public records, and hundreds of hours of taped interviews.

FADE IN:

EXT. NYC STREET - NIGHT

SUBTITLE: NEW YORK CITY, FALL 1981

It's raining. A cab speeds down a dark, bumpy side-street.

INT. CAB - CONTINUOUS

Looking in his rearview mirror, the cab driver checks out his passenger: a sweaty young man in a gold blazer with a "P" insignia over his breast pocket. Several paper bags on the back seat hedge him in. The young man is immersed in the scrawled list he clutches in his hand. A passing street light momentarily illuminates the list and we glimpse a few of the entries: double-coated waterproof fuse (500 feet); .38 ammo (hollowpoint configuration); potato chips (Lays).

GONG SHOW

An excerpt from The Gong Show (reenacted). The video image fills the screen. We watch a fat man recite Hamlet, punctuating his soliloquy with loud belching noises. The audience is booing. Eventually the man gets gonged. Chuck Barris, age 50, hat pulled over his eyes, dances out from the wings to comfort the agitated performer.

PERFORMER

Why'd they do that? I wasn't done.

BARRIS (AGE 50)

I don't understand. Juice, why'd you gong this nice man?

JAYE P. MORGAN

Not to be. That is the answer.

The studio audience laughs.

INT. TAXI CAB - NIGHT

The cab slobes to a stop in front of a liquor store. The young man gets out, jogs through the rain toward the fluorescent storefront. The cab driver waits, listens to staticky reports in a foreign language on his radio. The meter is running. The back seat is piled high with bags.

GONG SHOW

Chuck Barris spastically dances on the screen along with Gene Gene the Dancing Machine. Barris turns to the camera, points at it.

BARRIS

We'll be right back with *more stuff*.

INT. TAXI CAB - NIGHT

The back of the cab is filled with even more bags and boxes. The cab stops. The young man gets out and confers with a shady looking guy on the corner. The young man pulls out a big wad of cash. Money and a small package change hands. The meter in the cab is at thirty-five dollars and change.

THE GONG SHOW

Chuck Barris is being sniffed in the crotch by a large dog. The audience howls with glee. Suddenly the video image explodes. Slow motion sparks and shards of glass shoot toward the camera. We pull back to reveal we're in a darkened, messy hotel room. We pan across the walls, past taped-up, yellowed newspaper clippings with headlines like "Gong Show a New Low in Television", "The Dumbing of America", and "Chuck Barris *is* the Decline of Western Civilization." We come to rest on a naked middle-aged man crouching in the shadows in the corner, holding a gun. This is Chuck Barris. The television continues to sputter, spark, and smoke. There is a knock at the door.

BARRIS

(mumbly)

Fuck. Shit. Piss.

Naked Barris, still holding the gun, seems panicked. He hesitates, trying to determine his options. Should he answer the door? Should he climb out onto the window ledge? Finally, he creeps to the door and peeks out the peephole for a long moment. He unlocks the door, opens it. The sweaty, young man, a bellhop, stands there with his many bags.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He tries to appear casual as takes in the sight: a naked Chuck Barris holding a gun, an exploded, smoking tv set in the background.

BARRIS (CONT'D)

(weakly)  
More stuff?

BELLHOP

Yes sir, Mr. Barris. Everything you requested. Except I couldn't find a...  
(consults list)  
... DH-10 directional fragmentation mine.

BARRIS

Well, it's late.  
(mumbling and bowing)  
But thank you. Thank you for trying.  
You are a scholar and a...

Barris trails off, gives a quick glance both ways down the hall, then motions for the bellhop to enter. The bellhop places the bags on a table, fishes in his pocket and pulls out some bills.

BARRIS (CONT'D)

Keep it. It's okay. Keep it. You are a scholar and a...

Barris trails off.

BELLHOP

(eyes averted)  
Thank you, sir.

Suddenly Barris becomes agitated.

BARRIS

Why are you not looking at me like that?  
Do I look ugly to you?  
(runs to the mirror)  
It's the not sleeping. I'm not sleeping,  
see. I have a lot on my...

Barris trails off. There is a pause. The bellhop attempts to make conversation.

BELLHOP

(re: exploded tv)  
Um, another Gong Show rerun, sir?

The naked Barris approaches the bellhop, drapes his arm over the young man's shoulder and walks with him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BARRIS

(conspiratorially)

You know what I'd do? -- And don't tell anybody -- I'd rub... I'd rub Alpo brand dog food on my dick so the dogs would stick their noses into my... dick. Guaranteed big laugh, right? That was my trick, my great contribution to the world. How wouldn't I degrade myself, I ask you.

There is a silence.

BARRIS (CONT'D)

(screaming)

*I ask you!*

BELLHOP

I... I... I don't know, sir.

Suddenly Barris punches himself in the head, flops down on the unmade bed. The bellhop glances at Barris's bare ass, looks away.

BELLHOP (CONT'D)

Mr. Barris, maybe if you just don't watch the show every night, you wouldn't have to --

BARRIS

I always pay for the damn tv's, don't I?  
(turning to face him)  
Don't I?!

BELLHOP

It's -- Yes, you do, sir, and we appreciate that -- It's just that there've been complaints from some of the other guests, and Mr. Andrews, the assistant manager, requested that I --

BARRIS

Still? Complaints? I specifically used the silencer this time! Specifically!

BELLHOP

Well, the people in 917 found a bullet lodged in their wall. And while we want to accommodate you -- we certainly value your patronage -- there *is* an issue of customer safety.

Barris lets this sink in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BARRIS

Yes, of course.

Barris finds his pants draped over a chair, pulls out his wallet, holds some more money out to the bellhop.

BARRIS (CONT'D)

My apologies. Buy -- 917, is it? -- buy them a magnum of your finest champagne. And... and your finest spackle. Oh, and get me a bag of plastic army men while you're out. I forgot to tell you before.

The bellhop sighs, takes the money.

BELLHOP

Thank you for your understanding, sir.

The bellhop exists.

BARRIS

(calling after)

And some black socks! Seven black socks, you rascule!

Barris locks the door, dumps the contents of the bags onto the floor, fishes through the mess for a cigar, puts the cigar in his mouth, studies himself in a full length mirror.

BARRIS (CONT'D)

Bellhop Johnson was clearly repulsed by the sight of me. And why not? I'm wrinkled...

(searches for simile, then proudly)

... like a prune. Covered in liver spots...

(searches for simile)

... like an old guy. My hair is falling out in clumps, leaving exposed patches of white, sickly scalp. A flabby inner-tube of fat hangs from my waist, practically obscuring my bedraggled prick -- dark and shriveled and dead. Still leaking urine even though I left the toilet ages ago. My asshole itches. Hemorrhoids abound. George Orwell said every man has the face he deserves by fifty. Does every man have the asshole he deserves by fifty, as well? Does every fifty year old asshole have the asshole he deserves?

EXT. TERRACE - DAY

This feels real, verite. The actual Chuck Barris, smoking a cigar, is being interviewed. He stands outside his villa in St. Tropez, older than the middle-aged Barris depicted in the hotel room, and talks to someone off-camera.

ACTUAL BARRIS

It was 1981. I had holed myself up in this New York hotel. Parker Hotel. Terrified of everything. Ashamed of my life.

INTERVIEWER (O.C.)

Ashamed? What do you mean?

Barris walks through a small vegetable garden as he talks, occasionally adjusting a stake or pulling out a weed.

ACTUAL BARRIS

When you're young, your potential is infinite. You might do anything, really. You might be great. You might be Einstein. You might be Goethe. Then you get to an age where what you might be gives way to what you have been. You weren't Einstein. You weren't anything. That's a bad moment. But I remembered something Carlyle wrote: "... there is no life of a man, faithfully recorded, but is a heroic poem of its sort, rhymed or unrhymed." I realized my salvation might be in recording my wasted life, unflinchingly. Maybe it would serve as a cautionary tale. Maybe it would help me understand why.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Barris, now in a hotel terrycloth bathrobe and a porkpie hat, sits at a desk and types manically.

BARRIS (V.O.)

My name is Charles Prescott Barris. I have written pop songs, I have been a television producer. I am responsible for polluting the airwaves with mind-numbing, puerile entertainment. In addition, I have murdered thirty-three human beings. I am damned to hell.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PHILADELPHIA STREET - DAY

It's sepia. Three year old Chuck, dressed somewhat girlishly and sporting a blonde pageboy haircut is being posed on a pony by a photographer. His mother stands by anxiously as the boy totters on the animal.

BARRIS (V.O.)

Born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1931, my early childhood remains accessible to me only as a series of elliptical, enigmatic memories.

INT. BUTCHER SHOP - DAY

A smiling butcher hands a slice of bologna to young Barris, who puts it in his mouth.

BARRIS (V.O.)

The taste of bologna fresh from the butcher.

EXT. CEMENT YARD - DAY

A baby doll is set afire. Young Barris dances around it.

BARRIS (V.O.)

The sickly sweet smell of a burning babydoll on a crisp autumn day.

INT. CHILDHOOD BEDROOM - DAY

Young Barris is being dressed by his mother. We're close on the velvet material being slipped over his head.

BARRIS (V.O.)

Velvet brushing against my tender young skin, as my mother dressed me.

EXT. SCHOOL YARD - DAY

Young Barris rolling on the ground in battle with another boy, as a crowd of children look on.

BARRIS (V.O.)

A constant, inarticulate rage leading to fist fight after fist fight.

INT. CHILDHOOD BEDROOM - MORNING

Young Barris watches dust motes lit by the early morning sunlight pouring through his bedroom window.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARRIS (V.O.)

The calm I felt watching dust suspended  
in the early morning sunlight.

INT. CHILDHOOD BEDROOM - NIGHT

Young Barris sits on the floor and watches the shadow of a man walking upstairs. The young boy is clearly terrified.

BARRIS (V.O.)

I remember fear.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - MORNING

Toddler Barris watches his mother change clothes. He studies her pendulous breasts. She looks down, smiles warmly.

BARRIS (V.O.)

Love.

MOTHER

You like the way mommy looks, Chuckie?

BARRIS (AGE 4)

Yes.

MOTHER

I bet you would like to be a mommy some day, wouldn't you?

BARRIS

Yes, mommy. Please.

MOTHER

C'mere, you.

His mother lifts the little boy to her breasts and presses his face against them. He is in heaven.

INT. CHILDHOOD HOME - DAY

Four year old Chuck sits at the dining room table with several other four year olds. They all wear party hats. Barris's father, a milquetoast middle-aged man enters in birthday hat, carrying a cake decorated with four lit candles. He leads the children in "Happy Birthday Dear Chuck" as young Chuck beams.

BARRIS (V.O.)

Rejection.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Chuck glances at the kitchen doorway. His mother stands there, staring at him. She dressed in black mourning clothes, complete with veil.

INT. NURSERY - DAY

Young Chuck peeks in as his mother sits in a rocking chair and holds Barris's infant sister. She fusses with the bows and frills on the baby's outfit. The light in the room is golden and warm.

BARRIS (V.O.)

Expulsion.

We move in on the little boy's devastated face, then follow him as he turns and walks down the hall into darkness.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

A sixteen year old Barris lies on his back on a couch lazily tossing a football in the air. Tuvia, a thirteen year old girl, sits on the floor playing with a puppy. In the background, throughout the scene, we hear the inept playing of scales on a bass violin.

BARRIS (V.O.)

When I was sixteen I had an experience with my little sister's friend Tuvia that left an indelible impression.

BARRIS (CONT'D)

Phoebe's no Walter Page, huh, Tuvia?

TUVIA

I don't know who that is.

BARRIS

Of course you don't.

(beat)

Why are you waiting around anyway, listening to this cacophonous *cacophony*, when you could be in your own abode disrupting the lives of your own siblings?

TUVIA

I don't know what anything you say means.

BARRIS

No. You wouldn't, would you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Barris watches Tuvia playing with the dog. She gets on all fours and yelps, imitating the dog. This excites the dog, who bounces around her. Barris studies Tuvia's exposed white underwear for a while. This excites Barris. Finally he pulls an afghan off the back of the couch and drapes it over his pants. We hear him unzip his fly.

BARRIS (CONT'D)

Hey.

TUVIA

(not looking)

What?

BARRIS

Hey, Tuvia.

TUVIA

(turning)

Wha-at?!

Tuvia sees Barris fiddling with something under the afghan. She gets quiet.

BARRIS

You wanna lick it?

Tuvia snorts, goes back to playing with the dog.

TUVIA

No. Why should I?

BARRIS

Well, for one thing it tastes like strawberry. My sister tells me you love strawberries.

TUVIA

Yeah, well... I hate strawberries.

BARRIS

Honestly, a man's penis tastes exactly like a strawberry lollipop.

TUVIA

Look, I know that's not true, so --

BARRIS

It is true. It's weird but it's true. I just read a research paper on it.

Tuvia looks at the afghan.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Middle-aged Chuck Barris turns from the typewriter and stares out the window at the dark night sky.

BARRIS  
(sadly wistful)  
My first love.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Tuvia's face jerks up into frame. She spits.

TUVIA  
Uhhh. Yech. It doesn't taste anything  
like strawberry, you creep.

The dog sticks his head under the afghan. Barris shoos him away.

BARRIS  
(curious)  
Well, what *does* it taste like?

Tuvia gets up.

TUVIA  
Y'know, I'm gonna tell your mother what  
you just did.

BARRIS  
If you do, I'll tell your mother you made  
our dog lick your crack.

TUVIA  
I did not!

BARRIS  
(shrugging)  
So what?

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Middle-aged Barris types as the camera glides over some of the acquired detritus in his room: skin magazines, a gun and silencer, liquor, a copy of *Beyond Good and Evil*, a disguise kit, a kid's sprouted lima bean science fair project.

BARRIS (V.O.)  
Perhaps my whole life turned at that  
point. The repulsiveness of my sex  
confirmed by the tastebuds of a ripening  
pubescent girl.

## MONTAGE

Sequence of young Barris unsuccessfully attempting to pick up girls at bars, unsuccessfully attempting to cop a feel on a date in a movie theater, standing on a front porch unsuccessfully attempting to kiss a girl good night, standing outside of a movie theater in the rain, holding an umbrella over his head and checking his watch.

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

And so I found myself in a downward spiral of debauchery. Endlessly chasing pussy. My only focus in life: to get laid, to get blown, trying to fool myself into believing that given the right combination of circumstances and deception, maybe the Tuvias of the world could desire me the way I desired them. I only wanted to be loved.

INT BAR - NIGHT

Barris is fighting another drunken guy. He's getting pummeled.

BARRIS (V.O.)

A constant, inarticulate rage led to bar fight after bar fight.

The two men get tossed from the bar.

EXT. BAR - CONTINUOUS

The other guy gets up, brushes himself off, orients himself, and after a moment starts beating Barris again.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

SUBTITLE: New Jersey Turnpike, 1955

A bus drives along. We see from the sign above the windshield that it is bound for New York.

INT. BUS - CONTINUOUS

Young Barris, age 24, in traveling clothes and red hunting cap, stares out the window.

BARRIS (V.O.)

As much as I tried, I couldn't understand my past and my present was miserable, so, at twenty-four, I decided what I needed was a future...

EXT. ROCKEFELLER CENTER (1955) - DAY

Young Barris, suitcase in hand, looks up at the impressive building. People hurry by.

BARRIS (V.O.)

... I had heard that television was an industry with a future.

Barris enters the building with resolve.

INT. NBC STUDIOS (1955) - DAY

Young Barris, age 24, dressed in an NBC blazer is leading a group of sheep-like tourists down a hall.

BARRIS

Next, we'll have a look at the studio where they produce the Today Show.

The tourists "ooooh." Another tour group comes around a corner. This one is led by Georgia, a perky, blonde southern girl. The two groups squeeze past each other. Chuck tries to make eye contact with Georgia. He smiles at her, but she ignores him.

INT. NBC COMMISSARY - DAY

Barris is at the cash register paying for his food. He looks around for a place to sit. He spots Georgia, sitting with a female friend, and he sits at a table behind, so as to listen unobserved to their conversation.

GIRLFRIEND

That fella Raymond in payroll is kinda cute, huh?

GEORGIA

Cute's all well and good, Mary Ann, but what you want is a man who's goin' places. A go-getter on the management fast-track.

Barris registers this information.

INT. NBC PERSONNEL OFFICE - DAY

Barris stands at the counter talking to a female clerk.

BARRIS

Management trainee application, please.

The clerk hands him an application without looking up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARRIS (CONT'D)

How many people applying for this so far?

CLERK

(calculating)

Let's see, including you... about two thousand.

BARRIS

For how many positions?

CLERK

(looking up and smiling)

Five.

INT. NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY - DAY

Barris sitting with a book and copying the names of three of the board of directors of RCA onto his application under the heading of "Personal References."

INT. BARRIS'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Young Barris is having sex with Georgia. They finish. Barris rolls off her and onto his back. Georgia sighs.

GEORGIA

Tell me again.

BARRIS

Head of network sales at thirty. Head of the entire network at forty.

GEORGIA

And?

BARRIS

(rote)

Dead of a heart attack by fifty with all my millions left to you.

GEORGIA

You're wonderful. I love you, Mr. Chuck Barris, management trainee.

She climbs on top of Barris and begins kissing him all over.

BARRIS (V.O.)

Life was sweet. For a minute.

INT. BARRIS'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Georgia is looking radiant as she reads a movie magazine. Barris enters. She runs over to kiss him.

GEORGIA  
Baby doll!

BARRIS  
I got fired.

She pulls away, studies him for a moment, lets it sink in.

GEORGIA  
Fired?

BARRIS  
Fired. F-I-R...

GEORGIA  
Fired? What the fuck did you get fired for?!

BARRIS  
I don't know, efficiency cutback. Some bullshit... Look, it's gonna be...

GEORGIA  
Well, I'm pregnant, you fuck!

BARRIS  
Pregnant?

GEORGIA  
Yeah, pregnant!

BARRIS  
What the fuck did you get pregnant for?!

GEORGIA  
What do you mean, what the fuck did I get pregnant for? You got me fucking pregnant, you fuck!

BARRIS  
Well, fuck you.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Barris sits drunkenly at the bar. He talks to a drunken guy next to him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARRIS

So I figured I'd skip town. I intend to be important, y'know, I can't be saddled with this.. But then I remembered something Carlyle said: "Do the duty which lies nearest thee."

BAR FLY

Who's Carlyle?

BARRIS

Dear God, why do I even bother?

BAR FLY

Hey, fuck you, you condescending prick.

BARRIS

Hey, fuck you.

BAR FLY

Hey, fuck you.

BARRIS

Hey, fuck you.

The guy punches Barris. A fight ensues.

INT. BARRIS'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Barris is drunk on the couch watching a tv game show, his face swollen from the fight. Georgia enters.

GEORGIA

(pissy)

Looks like I was just late.

Barris barely acknowledges this, continues to watch tv.

INT. BARRIS'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

Barris and Georgia are in bed. Georgia is asleep. Barris opens his eyes, quietly climbs out of bed.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Another verite-looking interview. A middle-aged blonde woman, the actual Georgia, is talking to someone off-camera. Sitting next to her is a Jewish-looking middle-aged man.

ACTUAL GEORGIA

I woke up and he was gone. No note. No nothing. I never saw him again. Until that stupid tv show he did.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JEWISH-LOOKING MAN  
The Gong Show.

ACTUAL GEORGIA  
I know what it's called, jerk.

INT. COMMUTER TRAIN - DAY

We're close on a copy of the NY Herald Tribune. The headline reads *Clark Testifies Before "Payola" Committee*. We pull back to see young Barris, in a suit, reading the paper in a passenger car of a moving train.

BARRIS (V.O.)  
In '61 I was thirty. I had become a minor suit at ABC. It was during the music payola scandal...

INT. TV STUDIO - DAY

American Bandstand is taping. The studio is filled with dancing teens. Barris sits off to one side behind an imposing desk in the semi-darkness, suspiciously watching Dick Clark's every move, and taking copious notes. Clark glances over nervously.

BARRIS (V.O.)  
...so my job was to commute to Philly every day to the American Bandstand tapings, and keep an eye on Dick Clark.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

The actual Dick Clark is being interviewed.

DICK CLARK  
Chuck Barris? He spooked me. I tried to keep on his good side because he was sort of... spooky.

INTERVIEWER (O.C.)  
How so?

DICK CLARK  
I dunno, there was something in his eyes. Something dark, like unbridled ambition, maybe. Or an inarticulate rage.

EXT. PALISADES PARK - NIGHT

Barris walks through the crowds. A dark look in his eyes as he follows some giggling teenage girls in poodle skirts.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARRIS (V.O.)

On weekends I used to hang around  
amusement parks. Because that's where  
the young girls were.

INT. BARRIS'S TENEMENT APARTMENT - NIGHT

Young Barris lies in bed masturbating.

BARRIS (V.O.)

I wrote a song about my experience.

The song "Palisades Park" begins.

FREDDIE CANNON

Last night I took a walk after dark/to  
see a place called Palisades Park/to have  
some fun and see what I could see/that's  
where the girls are

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TV STUDIO

A sign above the stage reads *The Dick Clark Saturday Night  
Beechnut Show*. Freddie Cannon is on stage singing "Palisades  
Park" as a crowd of 1962 teenagers dance on the studio floor.

BARRIS (V.O.)

I got it to Freddie "Boom Boom" Cannon  
through my friendship with Dick Clark.  
Dick really wanted to help me out.

FREDDIE CANNON

I took a ride on the shoop de shoop/that  
girl I sat beside was awful cute/and when  
we stopped she was holding hands with  
me/my heart was flying/up like a rocket  
ship/down like a roller coaster/fast like  
a loop de loop/round like a merry go  
'round...

Young Barris watches happily from behind the cameras. He  
spots, Debbie, a pretty, bland young woman with headphones  
and a clipboard. He sidles over to her.

BARRIS

Hi.

DEBBIE

What?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARRIS

Hi!

DEBBIE

Oh.

BARRIS

I wrote this song.

DEBBIE

Oh. Uh-huh.

BARRIS

It's number three on the pop charts.

Barris pulls out music magazine clipping as proof.

DEBBIE

Huh.

INT. FANCY RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Barris and Debbie are having dinner.

BARRIS

See, I believe there's a great future in television.

DEBBIE

Uh-huh.

BARRIS

So I'm going to take my royalties and create a pilot. A pilot is what they call a test tv show.

DEBBIE

I work in tv.

BARRIS

Yeah. It's gonna be a game show. I believe there's a great future in game shows.

DEBBIE

That's good.

BARRIS

Everyone loves game shows, right?

DEBBIE

I don't know.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARRIS  
Well, they do.

DEBBIE  
That's great then.

BARRIS  
I'm on my way!

There is a long, awkward silence. They both stare away at their steaks.

INT. DEBBIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Barris and Debbie are having sex, sort of mechanical. They're plowing through, kind of like sawing through their steaks. When it's over, they both just lie there.

INT. DEBBIE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Young Barris, in his underwear, sits alone in the semi-darkness and stares out the window. The front door unlocks and a woman enters, backlit from the hallway. She turns on the light. This is Penny Pacino, eighteen, a beatnik in a black leotard and skirt and black mascara. She has red hair. She sees Barris on the couch.

PENNY  
Hello.

BARRIS  
Hi. Don't be alarmed I'm with Debbie.

PENNY  
Yeah, I figured.

Penny walks past him, drops her keys and bag on the counter, and enters the kitchenette. Barris watches her ass.

PENNY (CONT'D)  
You hungry?

BARRIS  
Um, no thanks.

PENNY  
Thirsty?

BARRIS  
If you have a beer.

Penny returns with two beers, hands one to Barris. She sits in a chair across from him. They both drink.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PENNY

So how was sex with Debbie? I've always wondered.

BARRIS

(a little taken aback)

It was good. Fine. Thanks for asking.

PENNY

No problem. I just got fucked by this drummer cat. A really righteous Negro hipster.

BARRIS

Huh. Interesting.

PENNY

See, I believe in the brotherhood of man. Last week I got fucked by an Oriental.  
(beat, studies him)  
What are you?

BARRIS

Jew.

PENNY

That's what I thought. I had a Jew, but he was Sephardic. You look Ashkenazi (pronounced Ashkuh-Natzee), I'm guessing.

BARRIS

*Ashkenazi.*

PENNY

Right. Ashkenazi... I haven't balled one of them.

BARRIS

You're a romantic.

PENNY

Eh, I just don't get into all the bullshit between cats and chicks.

BARRIS

I know what you mean.

PENNY

(not hearing him)

You know what I mean?

BARRIS

I know what you mean.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PENNY

Besides, you fall in love with a cat, you only get hurt. Right?

BARRIS

Don't I know it.

PENNY

(beat)

We could ball if you want. I seem to like you pretty well.

BARRIS

Well, that would be good. But, you know, I'm kind of here with Debbie. It doesn't seem right.

PENNY

Yeah. That's true. I didn't think of that.

(getting up)

Well, I'm going to bed. Nice meeting you.

Penny shakes his hand and heads off.

BARRIS

What's your name?

PENNY

Penny.

BARRIS

I'm Chuck.

PENNY

Oh, you're the one who wrote that Palisades song. I love that song. It's such sentimental bullshit.

Penny exits into her bedroom. Barris drinks his beer.

INT. BARRIS'S TENEMENT APARTMENT - DAY

Barris and Penny are having sex on the kitchen floor. It's quite passionate.

INT. TENEMENT APARTMENT - LATER

Penny is taking a bath in the tub in the kitchen while Barris broodingly cooks dinner at the stove.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PENNY

(animatedly)

... so this ape and I were looking at each other. It was, like, across time and evolution. Then he began to talk, but it was a language I didn't understand, maybe Swiss. Then he turned into Perry Como, real square and... what's wrong with you?

BARRIS

Nothing.

PENNY

Just because we fucked, doesn't mean there are strings now. It's okay.

BARRIS

Okay.

PENNY

Okay? I only wanted to tell you my dream is all. Nothing more complicated than that. Don't panic.

BARRIS

I'm just used to all this dating bullshit, y'know. *Now* we're a couple. *Now* I'm obliged to give a shit what you say.

PENNY

Don't worry about it, I'm not into those games either. So, anyway, this monkey turns into Perry Como and I say --

BARRIS

Holy fuck!

PENNY

What?

BARRIS

Holy holy fuck!  
(runs over, kisses her)  
You just gave me an idea.  
(starts pacing  
For a show! Fuck!

PENNY

A show about monkeys?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BARRIS

In a way. About the craziest monkey of all: Monkius Humanus! Don't you see? About people! About sex. About romance. About the bullshit of dating!

INT. LEONARD GOLDBERG'S OFFICE - DAY

Leonard Goldberg, ABC executive, sits behind his desk as Barris, holding a cardboard model of a game show set, excitedly paces the room giving a pitch.

BARRIS

I call it The Dating Game, Mr. Goldberg. And that's what it's about. A pretty girl asks three handsome guys, who she can't see, silly questions. And based on their answers, she picks one to date. And we pay for the date. That's it! That's the show! It's got everything!

EXT. ABC BUILDING - DAY

Penny leans on a signpost smoking a cigarette. Barris emerges from the building with his cardboard set. He looks grave. He approaches Penny.

PENNY

No?

BARRIS

(lighting up)  
They bought it!

Penny screams, hugs Barris.

BARRIS (CONT'D)

They bought it they bought it they bought it...

The two dance around on the street.

BARRIS (CONT'D)

They're giving me seventy-five hundred fucking dollars to make a pilot!

PENNY

Oh my God! Oh my God! We gotta go celebrate! Let's go roller skating!

Penny kisses Barris.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARRIS

I can't, Pen. I got a date.

PENNY

Okay. That's cool. Call me after.

BARRIS

Yeha, okay. I will.

Barris walks off. We stay on Penny smoking her cigarette.

MUSIC IN: DATING GAME THEME

THE DATING GAME PILOT BEING MADE, QUICK SHOTS OF:

BARRIS TENSELY DIRECTING ACTIVITY ON THE SET.

GIGGLY BACHELORETTE ASKING QUESTION.

GAWKY BACHELORS MUGGING.

TOOTHY HOST GUFFAWING.

ACTUAL BARRIS (V.O.)

I figured I was in. All I had to do was get the pilot made and I'd be a millionaire. Everyone would love me.

MUSIC OUT SUDDENLY.

EXT. TERRACE - DAY

ACTUAL BARRIS

(staring off)

Was anyone ever so young?

INT. CHILDHOOD BEDROOM - DAY

Barris, 32, lies on his bed on his back and tosses the football in the air. A very very very old dog lies on the floor. Phoebe, Barris's 26 year old sister enters.

PHOEBE

Chuck...

BARRIS

Albert's dead.

PHOEBE

Well, he led an amazingly long life.

BARRIS

Still, it's hard to go on.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PHOEBE

Y'know, you've been staring out this window for six months now.

BARRIS

I'm trying to come up with new tv shows, if you must know. Okay? That's what I'm doing. I believe there's a real future in tv.

(holds up notebook, shakes it)

Look. Ideas. Okay?

PHOEBE

You're thirty-two years old, and you have no career and no prospects.

BARRIS

Thanks for the status report, Phoebe. Look, I just gotta come up with the right concept. Then, boom.

(holds up notebook again)

Which, by the way, I've almost got.

PHOEBE

You're breaking mom's heart. You know that, don't you?

Barris looks out the window at his emaciated mother sitting in the yard in an old wicker-backed wheelchair and staring off into space.

BARRIS

Somehow, and don't ask me why, Phoebe, my being born broke mom's heart.

Barris watches his mother for a long moment.

BARRIS (CONT'D)

Hey Phoebe, you ever see what's-her-name, Tuvia, anymore?

PHOEBE

Who?

BARRIS

Tuvia. Your friend. Tuvia. The girl.

PHOEBE

Oh. No. I heard something. I think she got divorced recently or something.

BARRIS

Oh, yeah?

EXT. FRONT PORCH - DAY

Barris knocks on the door. There is some movement inside and a woman answers the door. This is older Tuvia, 20's, attractive but a little hard-edged now. She balances a baby on her hip

OLDER TUVIA

Yes?

(registers)

Well, if it isn't Strawberry-dick Barris.

BARRIS

Hi, Tuvia.

Barris taken by the changes in Tuvia. The baby and the full, milk-producing breasts get him excited.

OLDER TUVIA

What do you want?

BARRIS

I came by to apologize.

OLDER TUVIA

Okay then.

She closes the door. He knocks again. She opens the door.

OLDER TUVIA (CONT'D)

Well, if it isn't Strawberry-dick Barris.  
Now what do you want?

BARRIS

So I'm back in town. For a while. I  
thought maybe you and I could --

OLDER TUVIA

Jesus, you've got to be kidding.

Tuvia closes the door. Barris stands there for a moment, considers knocking again, then turns and leaves.

EXT. WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK - NIGHT

We move along a park bench, past several homeless people, one holding an old doll, others holding other sad items. We come to Barris. He's wrapped in a horse blanket and holding the miniature cardboard Dating Game set. An open notebook sits on his lap. The pages are blank, except for one entry: The Something Else Game. Barris holds a pen poised to write, but doesn't.

INT. BAR - DAY

Barris is drunk and in a fight. He is losing, flailing, swinging wildly. Jim Byrd, a middle-aged, business man-looking guy, in tinted glasses and sideburns, watches from the bar. Eventually Barris and the other brawler get thrown out of the bar. Byrd takes a sip of his drink.

EXT. BAR - DAY

Barris sits on the curb, nursing his wounds. Byrd exits the bar and casually approaches.

BYRD

You're a pretty angry young fella, aren't you? Can't fight worth a damn though.

BARRIS

Screw off, fag. Don't think I haven't seen you watching me in that bar for a week now.

BYRD

Kind of a loner, I'd say. Fairly bright. A tad anti-social. Mad at the world. Can I buy you lunch?

BARRIS

Look, there's a schoolyard half a block down. Why don't you go trolling there?

Barris gets up and starts to walk away.

BYRD

I could teach you at least thirty different ways to kill a man with a single blow, Mr. Barris.

Barris stops.

BYRD (CONT'D)

Might help you in future bar fights. Just a thought.

Barris just stands there.

BYRD (CONT'D)

Oh, and there's money in it. Good money.

Barris turns.

INT. DINER - DAY

Barris and Jim Byrd sit in a booth. Barris is wolfing a hamburger. Byrd sips coffee.

BARRIS

(mouth full)

... and I figure if I can keep afloat until I come up with my next game show idea, then all will be copacetic.

BYRD

That sounds great, Chuck. Y'know, I've never known a television producer before. I'm impressed.

BARRIS

Yeah, yeah. So what's this money deal you were talking about?

BYRD

Well, I work for a government agency, and I can always use good, enthusiastic men to help me carry out my directives.

BARRIS

What kind of work? What government agency?

BYRD

(matter-of-fact)

Problem solving work. For the Office of Diplomatic Security.

BARRIS

Office of *what*? Never heard of it. Is that the fucking CIA or something?

BYRD

Please be discreet, Mr. Barris.

BARRIS

(whispering)

Jesus, it is the fucking CIA! Hell, I'll be a spy! Where do I sign up? Are you fucking with me? You're fucking with me, aren't you?

BYRD

Hardly. And you wouldn't be with the company. You'd be a contract agent. Independent. No official tie to any agency. Is that understood?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARRIS

(beat)  
Why me?

BYRD

As you know, I've been watching you. For years, actually. I've only let you know about it for the last week.

Chuck stops chewing.

BARRIS

Jesus.

BYRD

I'm happy to report you fit our profile, Mr. Barris. Are you interested in this work?

Long pause.

BARRIS

Well, what's the profile?

BYRD

Are you interested in this work, Mr. Barris?

BARRIS

Yeah, sure, I wanna be a secret agent. *Contract* agent. Whatever. Get to fuck beautiful Eastern European women. Wear a trenchcoat. Sounds like a kick.

BYRD

The work we do is very serious. It's essential in quelling the rise of communism and allowing democracy to gain its rightful foothold around the globe.

BARRIS

Sure. Yeah. Okay. That's good.

EXT. ABANDONED ARMY BASE - DAY

The place is ramshackle and overgrown. It looks deserted. A barbed-wire fence surrounds it.

INT. BASE REC ROOM - DAY

A severe-looking instructor is teaching a class to an assembled group of scary-looking men: losers, psychos, mercenaries, Latin American thugs, and Chuck Barris.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

INSTRUCTOR #1

There are several efficient methods of killing a man, were you to find yourself without a weapon. The edge of your hand against the adversary's Adam's apple.

(demonstrates on mannequin)

This will crush the windpipe causing strangulation and death.

The students take notes.

INSTRUCTOR #1 (CONT'D)

Boxing your adversary's ears with proper force will cause his ear drums to burst and possibly result in bleeding in the brain. And death.

EXT. BARRACKS - NIGHT

It's dark. Byrd sits on a step, smoking a cigarette. Barris approaches.

BARRIS

You're training me to be a killer.

BYRD

See, Chuck, I knew you were fairly bright.

BARRIS

I can't kill people. My future is in television.

BYRD

Listen, you're thirty-two years old and you've achieved nothing. Jesus Christ was dead and alive again by thirty-three. Better get cracking.

BARRIS

I have ideas for shows.

BYRD

Oh, good. Why don't you spend another six months developing 'em while staring out the window at mommy's house next to poor dead Albert the dog.

BARRIS

How do you know all that?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BYRD

I know everything about you, Chuck. For fuck's sake, I know which hand you jerk off with.

Barris lifts his hands, tries to remember.

BYRD (CONT'D)

Right. Leave in the morning, if you want. But I'm here to tell you this is honest work for good pay. You'd be helping to make the world safer. And your country would be grateful.

Byrd rises, stubs out his cigarette in his hand.

BYRD (CONT'D)

It'll toughen you up.

Barris sits there staring into the blackness.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Another big, frightening instructor stands before the class. Behind him is a full-sized diagram of a man which illustrates all major arteries and organs. He is demonstrating the proper way to grip a knife, then using the knife, he points to various sites on the body.

Angle on Chuck Barris. He has copied the diagram of the man in his notebook and is writing "Carotoid artery carries blood to brain. Death in seconds." He then writes: "Game show idea: Slice of Life. Interesting!!"

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Several canvas dummies are propped up in the field. Barris and other students slash at the dummies with big knives.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

Barris and other students are assembling rifles.

EXT. MUDDY FIELD - NIGHT

Barris and other students crawl on their bellies through mud.

INT. LABORATORY - DAY

The severe instructor, in a lab coat, is mixing chemicals.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

INSTRUCTOR #1

Glycerin is, of course, the best-known nitrating agent. Now keep in mind, nitroglycerin is extremely unstable. A slight tap, a one degree change in temperature and it'll blow up in your hands. Yee-haa, let's mix us up a batch!

Instructor #1 holds up a beaker.

INSTRUCTOR #1 (CONT'D)

Everybody take your 75 ml beaker and fill it to the 13 ml level with fuming red nitric acid, 98% concentration.

The students nervously pour nitric acid into beakers.

INT. BUNKER - DAY

The severe instructor is demonstrating how to use an army field telephone to torture a man. A canvas dummy is tied to a chair as the instructor attaches wires from the telephone to the dummy's genitals and to his mouth. The students watch closely, take notes.

EXT. BARRACKS - DAY

The students with suitcases and in traveling clothes are hugging and saying good-bye. The end of summer camp. A tearful Barris heads toward one of the waiting buses. Byrd pulls him aside, discusses something with him.

INT. PLANE - DAY

Byrd and Barris, now dressed in a suit similar to Byrd's, sit in first class. Byrd stirs his scotch and water with his finger as he stares at nothing out the window.

EXT. AIRSTRIP, MEXICO CITY - DAY

SUBTITLE: MEXICO CITY, 1965

A commercial airliner comes in for a landing.

INT. CAFE - DAY

Barris, Byrd, and two sleazy, sweaty men, Benitez and Brazioni, sit in a booth in the back of the dark cafe. Benitez opens up his brief case and pulls out a pile of grainy photos of a man leaving a residence and a street map. He lays them on the table.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BYRD  
Salvador Panagra Renda, gentlemen.

BENITEZ  
*Si.* In the flesh.

BYRD  
What have you got for me, Manny?

BENITEZ  
(re: map)  
Renda leaves his apartment every day at 8:30, alone, walks east two blocks to this news kiosk, buys a paper and heads south four blocks to the plaza of the Museum Nacional to read it.

BYRD  
Okay. Chuck, you're here at 8:25. Dress like a tourist. Start walking north. You should pass Renda here. Stop him and ask him in bad Spanish where the museum is. Make sure he doesn't understand what you're asking.

BARRIS  
Okay.

BYRD  
(to Brazioni and Benitez)  
You'll be parked here. Brazioni, you're behind the wheel. Benitez, you're on the street leaning into the car chatting with Benitez. When Chuck stops Renda, you turn to help with the directions, stick a gun into Renda's ribs, and direct him into the back seat. Chuck, you get in first. Renda's between you and Benitez. Brazioni, whaddaya got?

Brazioni opens a case to reveal three Walther P-38 pistols.

BYRD (CONT'D)  
Nice. You got suppressers with those, I'm assuming.

BRAZIONINI  
I am not an imbecile.

BYRD  
(smiling)  
Glad to hear it. Wasn't sure.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BARRIS

(to Byrd)

Where are you going to be, Jim?

BYRD

Poolside, Chuck.

INT. HOTEL BAR - NIGHT

Brazioni and Benitez are at a table, drunk, sweaty and loud, flirting with some women. Byrd sits at the bar, sipping a scotch. Barris enters, spots Byrd, sits down next to him.

BYRD

(not looking up)

*Hola, Chuckito. Que pasa?*

YOUNG BARRIS

So what'd this guy Renda do anyway?

BYRD

It's your job to follow directives, not question their validity.

BARRIS

It's just...

BYRD

He's a bad guy, Chuck. He's one of the bad guys. Okay?

BARRIS

Bad for the U.S., right, Jim? Not bad in an absolute sense, just bad for the U.S.

BYRD

Don't fuckin' dance with me, Barris. Renda's bad for the Tea and Biscuit Co. He's bad for me personally. You work for me, and Renda's bad for me. You're now officially a patriotic citizen of the United States of Jim Byrd.

YOUNG BARRIS

Look, this is --

Byrd grabs Barris and pulls him over to a dark corner of the room. No one looks up. He pushes Barris against the wall.

BYRD

There's no backing out now, Chuck. We've let you in on everything. So you don't play, you don't leave Mexico. *Comprende?*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

YOUNG BARRIS

I was just --

BYRD

(softening)

I like you. I really do. And you're gonna do fine tomorrow. And we're gonna become great friends. And you're gonna have a very nice little career. But you've got to grow up. There's a war on.

YOUNG BARRIS

What war?

BYRD

(walking away)

That's not your concern.

INT. MEXICAN HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

It's hot. There are two twin beds in the room. Byrd sleeps soundly in one. Barris lies in the other, eyes wide open.

EXT. MEXICO CITY STREET - DAY

Renda is buying a newspaper at the kiosk. He completes the transaction and takes a few steps with his paper. Barris blocks his way, holding a phrase book and shaking.

BARRIS

Excusa me, por favor, Senor.

Renda stops.

BARRIS (CONT'D)

Donde es-bla ra-ba-blala los bloteros?

RENDA

No comprende.

Renda tries to get away from this pesky tourist. Barris follows him, calling after him.

BARRIS

Ra-bla-bla-mamos las minjares?

Renda picks up his pace, as does Barris. Benitez approaches.

BENITEZ

May I be of some assistance here?

Renda appears relieved, until he feels the gun in his back.

INT. CAR - DAY

Renda's in the back between Barris and Benitez. Brazioni drives. Renda seems pale and nervous, as does Barris in his gaudy tourist wear and sunglasses. The car drives slowly through the crowded Mexico City streets. They arrive at a jammed intersection and are suddenly confronted with a big parade. It's Day of the Dead; the streets are filled with dancing skeletons. It's wild and frightening. Brazioni glances at Renda in the rearview mirror.

BRAZIONI

Day of the dead.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

The car stops in a deserted field. Barris gets out first. His shirt is soaked through with sweat. Suddenly there's a commotion inside the car. Renda has gotten hold of a gun. He shoots Brazioni and Benitez. Barris panics and dives behind the car. Renda steps cautiously outside of the car, looking for Barris. Barris grabs Renda's foot. Renda falls, the gun flies from his hand. Barris kicks the gun under the car, his own gun drawn. He points the gun at Renda, who is on his stomach. Barris doesn't shoot. He's scared, shaking wildly. Renda looks up at Barris, trying to figure him out. He slowly rises to his feet, turns to Barris with a pleading look in his eyes.

RENDA

*Por favor. No me mates, senor. Tengo tres bebes.*

Barris sucks in a deep gulp of air. His hand shakes. He pulls out Spanish-English dictionary.

BARRIS

Again.

RENDA

*Que?*

BARRIS

Again. *Repitolo.*

RENDA

*No me mates. Tengo tres bebes.*

Barris flips through the dictionary. A church bell chimes, startling Barris. His gun goes off accidentally and the bullet hits Renda in the face, tearing most of it away. Renda falls, but is still alive. He screams out of where his mouth was. A wedding party emerges from the distant church.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARRIS

Oh Christ. Oh crap.

Barris tries to stop Renda from screaming by covering the hole in Renda's face. Barris throws up, some of it landing on Renda's pants. He wipes his own mouth with his bloody hand and looks at the still screaming Renda. The churchgoers are starting to squint in Barris's direction. Barris shoots Renda again. And again and again and again and again. More blood spatters Barris's clothing and face. The church bell continues to chime.

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

Barris and Byrd sit side-by-side in first class. This time Barris has the window seat and stares out.

BYRD

Beautiful country, isn't it?

YOUNG BARRIS

Yeah.

BYRD

You did us proud, Chuck.

Barris doesn't say anything.

BYRD (CONT'D)

Renda was a bad guy. He really was.

BARRIS

Yeah.

INT. APARTMENT - EVENING

Barris enters carrying an overnight bag and some mail. He flips on the hall light and stares at himself in a mirror.

BARRIS (V.O.)

I had changed. I could see it in my eyes. Something dark.

Barris notices a fleck on the side of his nose. It's dried blood. He distractedly rubs at it.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Renda's contorted face in close-up as he is shot. Blood spurting. Echoey church bells chime.

RENDA

*No me mates. Yo tengo tres bebes.*

INT. APARTMENT - EVENING

Barris puts down his bag, pulls the Spanish-English dictionary from his pocket, and tries to translate what Renda said. It takes him a while but he does.

BARRIS

"Don't kill me. I am three babies." I am three babies? What the fuck does that mean?

(studies dictionary)

Oh. "I *have* three babies." Oh, God.

Barris drops to the floor and throws up into a trash can. Out of the corner of his eye, he catches a movement in the living room. He lurches backwards, knocks over the can. Vomit spills onto the carpet.

PENNY (O.C.)

(groggily)

Chuck, is that you throwing up?

In the dim light from the hallway, Barris spots Penny lying on the couch. She is dressed as a hippy. A backpack and a duffel lie on the floor next to her.

BARRIS

Jesus Christ, Penny. You scared the shit out of me. What are you doing here?

PENNY

Sorry. I just been crashing here for a few days. Waiting for you. Where you been, man, where you been?

BARRIS

Mexico. Just on a little vaca...

PENNY

You drank the water, didn't you?

BARRIS

Yeah.

PENNY

You're not supposed to. Montessori's Revenge. You're not even allowed to open your mouth or your eyes when you take a shower. It's crazy. How come our water is so good and their water is poison? It's the same ocean.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARRIS

I don't know.

PENNY

It's weird, huh?

(beat, then proudly)

So I'm a hippy now. Look.

Penny stands in the dimness to show off her outfit.

PENNY (CONT'D)

I've been in San Francisco, and it's amazing. Everybody loves everybody and there's lots of colors. We're gonna change the world, Chuck. Come back with me and be my old man, okay? Not that old! Ha ha ha.

BARRIS

Penny, I'm a little tired now, so...

PENNY

Oh! You gotta hear this song!

Penny shrieks excitedly as she runs to the record player. She turns it on, plugs in a strobe light. "Sunshine Superman" starts up. Penny sings and dances along, directing the lyrics at Barris. Barris looks around at his strobing apartment. He sees Penny's mess: pot paraphenalia, anti-war posters, a gold dove painted on the wall with a phone number underneath.

PENNY (CONT'D)

(singing)

"Cause I made my mind up, you're going to be mine..."

BARRIS

Penny, what did you do to my wall?

PENNY

(looking)

Oh, it's a guy who called a couple a days ago. Gold-Bird. Isn't it pretty?

BARRIS

Leonard Goldberg?! You're kidding?

(dials phone anxiously)

Hello, this is Chuck Barris returning for Leonard Goldberg.

Pause. Barris paces. Penny sings and dances in background.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GOLDBERG (PHONE VOICE)

Hi, Chuck!

BARRIS

Mr. Goldberg! I'm so sorry I didn't get back to you right away. I was out of town. Vacationing in Mexico.

GOLDBERG

Good for you. Listen, Chuck. We've ended up with a damn hole in our daytime schedule. I've been reviewing some options, and it occurred to me there might be a place here for you and your baby.

BARRIS

My baby, Mr. Goldberg?

GOLDBERG

The Dating Game.

(joshingly)

That is your baby, isn't it, Chuck?

BARRIS

Yes sir, it is.

GOLDBERG

Are you still interested?

BARRIS

Yes sir. Very interested. Sir.

GOLDBERG

Good man. We'll need to start airing in about six weeks. Is that do-able for you and your people?

BARRIS

My people? Six weeks? Sure. Yes sir.

GOLDBERG

Great. Keep me posted.

Dial tone. Barris sits there, phone in hand, then throws up again into the trash can. Penny stops dancing, watches.

PENNY

Damn Mexicans and their water.

INT. DATING GAME SET - DAY

An episode of the show is being taped. Barris paces nervously behind the camera.

BLONDE BACHELORETTE

Bachelor number two, what would I like most about you?

BEANPOLE BACHELOR

I am very romantic and I would send you flowers every day.

The studio audience "awwws."

BLONDE BACHELORETTE

Aww. That's sweet. Bachelor number three, what would I like most about you?

FRIZZY-HAIRED BACHELOR

My big cock.

The bachelorette makes a mock-horrified expression as the studio audience erupts in laughter. Barris buries his face in his hands.

INT. DATING GAME SET - DAY

A brunette bachelorette asks a question.

BRUNETTE BACHELORETTE

Bachelor number one, what nationality are you?

HANDSOME BACHELOR

Well, my father is Welsh and my mother is Hungarian, so I guess that makes me Well-Hung.

The audience goes wild. Barris pulls at his hair.

INT. DATING GAME SET - DAY

A black bachelorette asks a question.

BLACK BACHELORETTE

Bachelor number three, I play the trombone. If I blew you, what would you sound like?

The audience screams with delight.

INT. BOARD ROOM - DAY

Leonard Goldberg, a bunch of network executives, and Barris sit around a conference table and watch a tv. On it is The Dating Game. A black bachelor is responding to the trombone question. He simulates the receiving of a blow job, moaning and writhing in his seat as the studio audience howls. Barris has his head in his hands. Goldberg signals an assistant, who switches off the television. The executives look quite grim.

GOLDBERG

Chuck, quite frankly these episodes are unairable.

BARRIS

Look, Len, the show's spontaneous, it's unscripted. That's it's charm. I can't control what people say.

EXECUTIVE

Be that as it may, Mr. Barris, we can't have black men getting blow jobs on national television!

GOLDBERG

The point isn't that he's black, Hank.

EXECUTIVE

(beat)

Well, I know that. That's not what I meant.

BARRIS

Look, Len, nobody is indifferent to these shows. Right? And that's good. Show business must avoid indifference at all costs.

EXECUTIVE

Even when taste is involved?

BARRIS

Taste is just a word.

EXECUTIVE

You don't fuck with taste, my friend!

BARRIS

(uncomprehending)

What does that even mean? I don't even under --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GOLDBERG

Chuck, we cannot air this stuff. That's it. If you can't figure out how to retain your spontaneity without the contestants being lewd, we're going to have to pull the show.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Barris is drunk and brooding. He picks a fight with a big man who has unintentionally knocked into him at the bar. Barris is brutal and effective, utilizing the techniques he learned from one of the scary instructors at training camp. This gives him an idea.

INT. DATING GAME SET - DAY

The contestants are onstage. Barris appears, warm and charming.

BARRIS

Hi, folks. Before we begin taping today, I'd like to introduce you to Mr. Peter Jenks of the Federal Communications Commission.

The severe training camp instructor joins Barris onstage.

INSTRUCTOR #1

(increasingly psychotic)

Thank you, Mr. Barris. I don't know if any of you are aware of this, but it's a federal offense to make licentious remarks on a network television broadcast. The penalty for this disgusting, un-American behavior is one year in prison or a ten thousand dollar fine or both. Anyone making a sick, subversive remark tonight will be arrested immediately. I will then personally escort the offender to federal prison for booking under edict number 364 of the Broadcast Act of 1963. And it's a long drive to that prison. Just you and me. No other witnesses --

BARRIS

(jumping in)

Any questions?

There are none. The contestants are paralyzed with fear. Jenks is red-faced, trembling.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARRIS (CONT'D)

Okay. Have fun, everybody!'

EXT. TERRACE - DAY

The actual Barris being interviewed.

ACTUAL BARRIS

Sometimes as a younger man I stretched the truth to get what I wanted. "Through all the lying days of my youth/I swayed my leaves and flowers in the sun;/Now I may whither into the truth." Yeats. You heard of him?

INTERVIEWER (O.C.)

Yeah. Of course.

ACTUAL BARRIS

Sure you have.

(beat)

Anyway, my little lie worked. We aired and become a big hit. A phenomenon, really.

INT. BARRIS'S OFFICE, BARRIS PRODUCTIONS - DAY

SUBTITLE: BARRIS PRODUCTIONS, LOS ANGELES, 1967

This is the sixties and the office is crazily appointed. Street signs, funny posters, faux Tiffany lamps, mobiles, lava lamps, an inflatable sex doll, etc. Barris, 36, is behind his desk, feet up and on the phone. He wears a t-shirt and jeans and loafers. This is a new Barris, confident and successful and hip and relaxed and slovenly. Outside in the bullpen area we hear the hustle and bustle, laughing and screaming of a busy but casual office.

BARRIS

(into phone)

Terrific, Rod! Yeah, I'll get back to you on Monday. Great. Thanks. Bye.

Barris hangs up the phone. His jovial facade disappears. He opens up his ice bucket. It's empty.

BARRIS (CONT'D)

(yelling)

Ice! Ice! Ice! Ice! Ice!

Loretta, Barris's pretty young secretary, enters with a new bucket of ice. She is braless and shoeless.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LORETTA

Jesus, Barris, take a Darvon.

Loretta drops the bucket of ice on his desk. Barris grabs her arm, pulls her toward him, kisses her on the back of the neck.

BARRIS

Hey, baby.

Loretta acts annoyed, but it's playful.

LORETTA

Asshole.

BARRIS

I know. Sit. Talk to me.

Loretta sighs and drops into a bean bag chair. Barris puts some ice in a glass and pours himself a scotch.

LORETTA

I'm busy. We're in the middle of a bachelorette crisis out there.

BARRIS

I just got a call from the network. Drink?

LORETTA

You got any weed?

BARRIS

I wish.

LORETTA

Then I'll have a drink. Bad news?

Barris pours a drink for Loretta. She gets up, takes it off the desk and falls back down into the bean bag.

BARRIS

The Tammy Grimes Show is being pulled from Saturday night.

LORETTA

(mock concern)

Oh my God!

(drily)

So?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BARRIS

They want to put a prime-time version of the Dating Game on in its place.

LORETTA

Shit! You're kidding! That's fucking great!

BARRIS

But they say the day-time version's not hot enough. They want me to make it more exciting for night-time. I got forty-eight hours.

LORETTA

What do you have so far?

BARRIS

Nothing. Bupkis. I mean, the show is what it is. I don't have a clue. This could be my big break, Loretta.

LORETTA

Yeah, I know. Don't blow it.

Loretta smiles at him, downs her drink, gets up and pads out of the office. Barris watches her ass.

BARRIS

Thank you for your help.

LORETTA

(not looking back)  
Hey, I brought the ice.

She is out the door. Barris picks up his guitar and noodles on it.

INT. DATING GAME SET - LATER

Barris paces on the darkened set. He is trying to think. A shadowy figure appears at the top of the bleachers and creeps down the aisle. Barris is deep in thought and doesn't hear. The man appears behind Barris and locks his arm around Barris's neck. Barris is startled, choking and flailing trying to remove the arm. He can't. Finally the man releases Barris and tweaks his crotch. Barris turns wildly around. It is Jim Byrd.

BYRD

Boy, didn't I teach you anything?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARRIS  
You son of a bitch!

Barris swings at Byrd. Byrd easily blocks the punch.

BYRD  
You're so rusty, it's embarrassing.

BARRIS  
You're a stupid fucking turd, you know that?

BYRD  
Can I buy you lunch?

INT. MARTONI'S - DAY

Jim is downing his bourbon and signals the waitress for another. Barris, still pissed, sips a martini.

BYRD  
Ah, lighten up, hombre.

BARRIS  
My fucking neck hurts. Okay?

BYRD  
Poor baby. Look, I've been put in charge of a fairly large wet operation and I could use your help.

BARRIS  
Have you noticed, Jim, I've got a tv show on the air? I don't need to kill people for hire anymore.

BYRD  
I know you don't need to. But you'd like to.

BARRIS  
That's insane.

Byrd shrugs, unconvinced. He sips his drink.

BYRD  
Think of it as a hobby. An avocation. Something you do to relax. You can be an assassination enthusiast, a murder bug.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARRIS

I've got important things to think about here. I don't have time to fuck around with you.

BYRD

Okay, I'll help you out with your little show. Tit for tat. That's the kinda guy I am. I've seen this Dating Game of yours, Chuck. And I have a thought.

BARRIS

What, now you're a television producer?

BYRD

Hey, I'm CIA operative John Q. Public when it comes to tv and that should make my opinion of interest to you.

BARRIS

Let's hear it then.

BYRD

Well, what do you have now? The couple gets sent to some stupid second-rate Hollywood shitcan restaurant, right? Sets you back fifty bucks? That's not too exciting a prize to us vicarious-living boobs out in TV-land.

BARRIS

Yeah, what's your point?

BYRD

Up the stakes, Chuckles. Send 'em to some exotic locale. Europe, Southeast Asia, for example.

BARRIS

The network's not going to let me send two unmarried kids on vacation together.

BYRD

(shrugs)

Send 'em with a chaperone. Some respectable old lady with a sewn closed snatch.

BARRIS

(considering)

Y'know, that's not half bad.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BYRD

I'm telling ya. And... And sometimes you can be the chaperone, Chuckie. Let's say we have a job for you in Austria. You, a successful tv producer, above suspicion, chaperones the young couple, and while you're there, blam! you take care of some Company business. It's the perfect cover. TV producer by day, CIA operative by night.

BARRIS

I told you, I don't have to kill people for money anymore.

BYRD

Chuck, when I said you fit our profile, very little of that had to do with you needing the money. Some of it, but very little. You liked it with Renda, Chuck. I saw it in your eyes. You liked it but you botched it. Don't you want to get really good at something, Chuck?

Barris stares at Byrd.

INT. BOOTH (DATING GAME SHOW) - DAY

The director calls the shots. Barris stands in the back watching the show in progress. On the stage is a pretty blonde bachelorette in a short black dress and three bachelors. Bachelors two and three are attractive and stylishly dressed and groomed. Bachelor one is a fat, not-too-bright looking guy in a yellow-ochre leisure suit. His slow, unfocused delivery contrasts with the fast, sharp chatter in the booth.

DIRECTOR

(rapidly)

Ready one, take one. Ready three, take three. Ready one, take one.

BLONDE BACHELORETTE

Number one, can you please tell me what a girl is like who hasn't been on a date before and how you can tell she hasn't been on a date before?

DIRECTOR

Ready two, take two. This guy has never been on a date.

Everyone in the booth laughs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FAT BACHELOR

Well...

BARRIS

Jesus, she's gotta pick this guy. This is just too good.

FAT BACHELOR

... I'll ask her what she likes to do and --

DIRECTOR

Ready one, take one. Ready two, take two.

FAT BACHELOR

And if she doesn't know what she likes to do --

DIRECTOR

Ready three, take three. The only date he's ever had is with his right hand.

Guys in booth laugh, except Barris.

FAT BACHELOR

... then I'll know she hasn't done it yet.

EXT. PICCADILLY CIRCUS - DAY

SUBTITLE: LONDON, 1967

It's all mod and colorful. Chuck Barris shuffles along, taking in the sights with the Dating Game couple. The blonde bachelorette did indeed pick the fat guy. But it's clear she thinks she made a mistake and pays him no attention whatsoever, walking about twenty feet in front of him and Barris. Barris seems bored.

INT. PUB - DAY

Barris enters the pub alone. He's dressed in a blonde wig and moustache and glasses. It's crowded and he searches the room for someone. He spots a pretty young woman by herself at a table. She wears white go-go boots.

BARRIS

Excuse me, is this seat taken?

WOMAN

By you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Barris sits across from the woman.

BARRIS  
London is wonderful this time of year,  
isn't it.

WOMAN  
Yes it is.

BARRIS  
(beat)  
Oh. Sorry.

Barris gets up, glances around, spots another pretty young woman in white go-go boots, sitting by herself. He approaches her.

BARRIS (CONT'D)  
Excuse me, is this seat taken?

PATRICIA  
By you.

Barris sits.

BARRIS  
London is wonderful this time of year,  
isn't it?

PATRICIA  
Especially the fog. It affords one  
solitude, even in a city full of people.

BARRIS  
I'm Chuck.

PATRICIA  
Yes, I gathered.

BARRIS  
And you are?

PATRICIA  
(smiles)  
Here you go, Chuck.

She hands him a manila envelope, and stands to leave.

BARRIS  
At least give me a made-up name.  
Something for me to cry out during those  
dark nights of the soul.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PATRICIA  
Cry out, "Olivia!"

BARRIS  
That's Twelfth Night.

PATRICIA  
Very good, Chuck. I'm pleasantly surprised. You're not like the other murderers.

She smiles and leaves. Barris watches after her, then opens the envelope and pulls out a black and white photo of a man.

EXT. WESTMINISTER ABBEY - DAY

It's raining. A bored Barris, dressed normally, waits with the fat bachelor under an umbrella near the entrance. The fat bachelor checks his watch.

FAT BACHELOR  
I think he's really pretty and I want to be her boyfriend.

EXT. CHURCH COURTYARD - NIGHT

Barris, in wig and moustache, stands in the middle of the empty, dark courtyard.

ENGLISHMAN  
(loud whisper)  
Here.

Barris approaches.

BARRIS  
Do you have it?

ENGLISHMAN  
Do *you* have it?

BARRIS  
Sorry. Yeah.

Barris reaches into his jacket pocket and pulls out an envelope. The Englishman takes it, opens it, pulls out a wad of cash and counts.

BARRIS (CONT'D)  
Don't worry, we're not gonna cheat you.

ENGLISHMAN  
Just the same.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Englishman finishes counting the money, pockets it, and hands Barris a box of Polaroid film.

BARRIS

Thank you. Oh, one more thing.

Barris pulls out his automatic with attached silencer and jams it into the Englishman's mouth. The silencer breaks the man's front teeth. The man makes a muffled grunt.

BARRIS (CONT'D)

Sorry about your teeth.

The Englishman's eyes are wide with terror. Barris pulls the trigger three times. The back of the Englishman's head explodes. Blood and hair and brain are spattered against the church wall. The Englishman slumps to the ground. Barris reaches into the man's jacket, pulls out the envelope of money, pockets it, and makes his way toward the churchyard gate. There stands the fat bachelor, watching, confused. After the initial shock, Barris smiles warmly.

BARRIS (CONT'D)

It's Ronnie, isn't it?

The fat bachelor nods.

BARRIS (CONT'D)

C'mere, Ronnie. I want to show you something neat. It's okay.

The fat bachelor enters the courtyard.

EXT. TERRACE - DAY

ACTUAL BARRIS

I felt bad about Ronnie. But really I did that ugly, fat, stupid kid a favor. He was ugly and fat and stupid. More life wouldn't have changed that for him. No woman would ever have loved him. That's just the brutal truth, y'know?

INT. LONDON HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Barris enters the room, shaky and scared.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Barris rips open the Polaroid box, pulls out the foil paper that protects the film, rips that open and pulls out a small white plastic vial. Barris greases the vial with Vaseline and sticks it up his ass.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He looks at himself in the mirror, naked and pathetic. There is a knock at the door. He stiffens, grabs his gun and pads out of the bathroom.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Barris peeks out the peephole. We see a fish-eye view of Patricia Watson.

BARRIS

Olivia?

PATRICIA

It's Patricia, actually.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - LATER

Barris and Patricia sit sipping champagne. Both are drunk.

PATRICIA

... and so then I spent a year in Operation Chaos, inside the anti-war movement as an agent provocateur, nudging it toward violence in order to discredit it. That was fun. I got to wear granny glasses.

BARRIS

Sounds fun. So tell me, Patricia, why'd you come up here tonight?

PATRICIA

I don't know. You're sort of cute in a homely way. And it's always lonely when that civilian you're fucking calls out the name off your fake passport.

BARRIS

"All the information I have about myself is from forged documents."

PATRICIA

Nabokov.

Barris is thrilled and kisses her. It begins to turn hot and heavy. Suddenly Barris pulls away.

BARRIS

Actually, I just gotta go into the bathroom and take care of something.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PATRICIA

No, baby. Leave the microfilm in.

EXT. KENNEDY AIRPORT - DAY

A plane lands.

INT. KENNEDY AIRPORT TERMINAL, CUSTOMS - DAY

Barris waits sweatily in line with a small a carry-on suitcase. When the line moves, he walks as if perhaps he has something up his ass. A customs agent walks past the line with a dog. The dog sniffs Barris's ass in passing.

EXT. AIRPORT TERMINAL - DAY

Barris steps out of the terminal. A black limo pulls up. The back door opens and Barris gets in.

INT. LIMO - CONTINUOUS

Seated in the back are Jim Byrd and Simon Oliver, 50. Oliver is pure ivy league with a pipe. When he speaks it is with an affected British accent. Byrd is pissy.

BYRD

Hey, buddy. This is Simon Oliver.

BARRIS

Hey.

BYRD

Everything go okay? You don't look too good.

OLIVER

Mr. Barris, do not ever again jeopardize one of my missions by killing a game show contestant. Is that understood?

BARRIS

You're welcome, pal.

OLIVER

Do I make myself clear?

BARRIS

Fuck you! They're my contestants.

OLIVER

Amateur.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARRIS

Faggot.

BYRD

Chuck --

OLIVER

Lovely. Tell me, Mr. Barris, are you in possession of my microfilm?

BARRIS

Yeah, I got it.

OLIVER

Let's have it then.

BARRIS

It's up my ass, Oliver. Why don't you reach on up there and get it.

Oliver tamps his pipe. Byrd stares down at his thumbs.

BARRIS (CONT'D)

I just feel I deserve some appreciation for my efforts.

OLIVER

What do you think Patricia Watson was?

Barris looks at Byrd. Byrd almost imperceptibly shakes his head "no."

BARRIS

Prick.

INT. BARRIS PRODUCTIONS - DAY

Barris, now in t-shirt and jeans, shuffles through the busy bullpen area. Employees wave, say "hi", give Barris the peace sign. He returns the gestures, but halfheartedly. He seems depressed. Loretta sidles up beside him.

LORETTA

Well, if isn't the hitman.

BARRIS

(turning, wild-eyed)  
What?

OFFICE WORKERS

Hitman! Hitman! Hitman! Hitman!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LORETTA

I said, well, if it isn't the hitman. Just heard through the grapevine that ABC is going to pick up The Newlywed Game.

BARRIS

You're kidding me.

LORETTA

Not kidding you. Day-time and prime-time.

BARRIS

Oh, fuck, Loretta. That's sensational!

Barris kisses Loretta.

OFFICE WORKERS

Hitman! Hitman! Hitman!

Barris joins them chanting "Hitman" and dances around the office.

EXT. TERRACE - DAY

ACTUAL BARRIS

The Newlywed Game was based on my theory that almost any American would sell out their spouse for a washer-drier or a lawnmower you can ride on. Such was my respect for that most holy of unions. I must've been on to something, because the show aired for thirteen years.

EXT. MUSTANG CONVERTIBLE - DAY

Barris speeds through the curvy streets of the Hollywood Hills. Penny Pacino, dressed as a hippy, sits in the front passenger seat.

SUBTITLE: HOLLYWOOD HILLS, 1969

PENNY

Great wheels, man.

BARRIS

Yeah, I decided to start treating myself right. You spend so much time denying yourself things. Life's too short.

PENNY

Yeah, I really gork what you're saying, man.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARRIS

You really grok what I'm saying, man.  
Not gork.

PENNY

Oh.  
(beat)  
Really?

The car screeches to a halt in front of a fancy house with a "For Sale, Open House" sign out front.

INT. FANCY HOUSE - A FEW MINUTES LATER

The house is empty. Barris and Penny are greeted at the door by a real estate agent.

PENNY

(looking around)  
Outa sight! Buy this one.

REAL ESTATE AGENT

Hi. Welcome, folks. If you wouldn't mind signing-in on our sheet over th --

BARRIS

I'll take it.

REAL ESTATE AGENT

I'm sorry?

BARRIS

I'll take the house.

PENNY

Yay!

Penny happily kisses Barris.

REAL ESTATE AGENT

(beat)  
Very good, sir.

INT. EMPTY LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Barris and Penny are having sex on the floor.

PENNY

So, man, are you seeing anyone?

BARRIS

Nobody serious. You?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PENNY

No. I think we should get married.

BARRIS

Aw, Pen, don't start --

PENNY

No, listen, it makes sense. You and I feel exactly the same about marriage, right? How much bullshit it is, right? And the odds of us finding someone else with the exact same view on it are small. So, it makes sense.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Barris, 50, types away. He is sweaty and naked except for a towel draped over his head.

BARRIS (V.O.)

I liked Penny. I even loved her in my way. But the idea of tying myself down for the rest of my life... I remember my parents' marriage.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CHILDHOOD KITCHEN - NIGHT

Barris, five, sits at the dinner table with his parents. His father, dressed in a dental smock, stares down at his plate as he eats. His mother absently chews and stares vacantly into space.

MOTHER

We need a new ice box.

The father shrugs.

INT. DATING GAME SET - DAY

The set, which holds four couples, divides in the middle to reveal a new refrigerator.

ANNOUNCER

A brand new Amana refrigerator-freezer with automatic ice maker!

One of the couples is cheering and screaming hysterically, happy and in love and kissing. The other couples look disappointed and angry at their spouses.

We pull back to reveal we're watching this on a tv in:

INT. BARRIS'S OFFICE - MORNING

The office is filled to capacity with with hippy-like employees watching The Newlywed Game. Many sit on the floor, jammed up against each other. A few women are nursing infants. Someone passes a joint. Barris sits behind his desk, with a "Make Love Not War" helmet on his head, his feet up, and a guitar in his lap.

BARRIS

Beautiful. Did you see that? How much they loved each other just then? That's what it's all about, kiddies.

Everyone agrees. Someone switches off the tv.

BARRIS (CONT'D)

Okay, guys, new business. We're winning our slots every week.

Everyone cheers.

BARRIS (CONT'D)

But that means we need you Bandits to get on the contestant mill. Our supply of dumbfucks is lagging behind our demand for dumbfucks. And I'm gonna be introducing three new shows in the coming months: The Parent Game, The Game Game, and the Dollar Ninety-Eight Beauty Pageant, so we're gonna really need you guys to carry your weight. Nuff said. Any other business?

EMPLOYEE #1

Yeah. Rick took four slices of pizza at lunch yesterday. Everyone else only got two.

BARRIS

Ooh. Is that true, Rick? Where are you?

RICK

Here. No, it's not true.

BARRIS

Any other witnesses to this alleged infraction?

EMPLOYEE #2

I saw it. He took four. I only got one.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARRIS

Rick, you're dead meat, buddy.

(shoots Rick with finger)

I sentence you to... dance for us in today's post-meeting version of "Out of Limits" featuring the musical stylings of the CBP Stompers.

Everyone cheers.

RICK

Aw, Chuck.

BARRIS

Get up here, you rascule, you.

Rick heads up to Barris's desk. Everyone laughs. A few employees have joined Barris at his desk with instruments. They break into a raucous banjo version of "Out of Limits." Rick dances. Everyone's laughing and clapping.

MONTAGE

As "Out of Limits" continues, now the actual version, we see montage of Barris shooting, stabbing, and garroting various foreign-looking people in strange, murky locations intercut with Barris having sex with Patricia Watson in different bedrooms and motel rooms, Barris dancing with Patricia in various exotic locales, and Barris on the set for his many game shows, happily directing the bustling activity.

INT. RANCH-STYLE LIVING ROOM - DAY

The actual Jim Lange, host of The Dating Game.

JIM LANGE

Sometimes Chuck would just disappear for weeks. I remember once we had a conflict on the set over the right way to throw that kiss at the end of the show, y'know...

(demonstrates kiss)

... and Chuck was just not reachable to resolve it.

INTERVIEWER (O.C.)

What was the conflict?

JIM LANGE

Look, it's water under the bridge. I'm not gonna talk about it.

## INT. BARRIS'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The previously bare room is now filled with lovely and expensive furnishings. But Barris and Penny are again on the floor, now playing Scrabble by candlelight. Penny lays down some tiles: I-N-T-E-R-P-E-T

BARRIS

The word's *interpret*.

PENNY

*Interpet*.

BARRIS

*Interpret*.

PENNY

Well, do you have an extra "r" then I could borrow?

BARRIS

I'm not going to give you a letter. You're lucky I don't make you forfeit a turn.

PENNY

Oh. Okay.

Penny retrieves her letters and studies the board. Barris empties the wine into Penny's glass. There wasn't much left.

BARRIS

I'll run to the store and get some more.

PENNY

All right.

BARRIS

Don't cheat.

PENNY

You neither.

## EXT. LIQUOR STORE - NIGHT

Barris pulls up in a Jaguar XKE convertible. A pretty, innocent-looking young woman, Monica, is emerging with a big laundry bag from the laundromat next to the liquor store. She glances, momentarily, at the Jaguar and at Barris.

INT. BARRIS'S LIVING ROOM - A BIT LATER

Barris enters with a bottle of wine. Penny is in the same position on the floor.

PENNY  
Intrepet's a word, right?

BARRIS  
Intrepid.

PENNY  
Shit fuck piss.  
(concentrating)  
Okay okay okay...

BARRIS  
Pen, we should call it a night. I'm kinda tired.

PENNY  
You're tired.

BARRIS  
I got a date.

PENNY  
Since when?

BARRIS  
I just met this girl.

PENNY  
You mean just now? Like, *just now* ?

BARRIS  
Yeah. Kinda.

PENNY  
Well, that's rude.

BARRIS  
Sorry.

PENNY  
Yeah, well, see ya...

Penny picks up her bag and exits in a huff.

INT. MONICA'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

It's a young woman's apartment, small and girly. The doorbell rings.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Monica, clearly not out of her teens, enters the room and answers the door. Barris stands there with the bottle of wine.

BARRIS

Hi!

MONICA

Hi!

BARRIS

Wow, this is a beautiful place you got!

Barris enters, looks around. There's another teenage girl in pajamas in the kitchenette, mixing tuna salad.

ROOMMATE

Hi.

BARRIS

Hi.

MONICA

Chuck, this is Mindy, one of my roommates.

BARRIS

Hi.

MONICA

Have a seat.

Barris sits on the couch. Monica sits next to him. Mindy is in the background, futzing around in the kitchen area.

MONICA (CONT'D)

So... have you accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as your savior, Chuck?

BARRIS

(beat)

Yes, I have.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MONICA'S LIVING ROOM - A BIT LATER

Barris, Monica, and Mindy sit on the couch watching a religious show on television.

EXT. TERRACE - DAY

ACTUAL BARRIS

Yeah, I remember that religious girl, sure. Monica Something. Fleming. Oh God, she had the softest, fleeci-est clam I ever experienced. It took a little more work than usual, but I got in there, baby.

(smacks lips, then stares off into space)

It was some clam. Oh Lordy. You get old, y'know, but the taste for soft clam, it just doesn't go away. This is the great tragedy of getting old.

INT. BARRIS PRODUCTIONS - DAY

The room is abuzz with activity. Lots of people on the phone talking. A potential Newlywed Game couple being interviewed. Monica sits in the waiting area, eavesdrops on the interview with the Newlywed Couple.

WOMAN

Getting married to Alan is the best thing I've ever done. It's just so wonderful knowing that you've got someone by your side through everything for the rest of your life.

The couple kisses.

LORETTA

'kay, Mon. He's off.

Monica enters the office.

INT. BARRIS'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Monica enters. Barris wears a deerstalker cap.

BARRIS

My sweet little clamato.

Monica leans down and kisses Barris.

MONICA

I'm pregnant.

Barris's eye twitches.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MONICA (CONT'D)

(crying)

I can't be pregnant, Chuck.

BARRIS

Is it mine?

Monica looks at him incredulously, flings an ashtray at him, misses. She sits at the desk, looks glumly out the window.

MONICA

I can't believe you asked me that.

BARRIS

I know. I'm sorry.

(beat)

But you're sure, right?

MONICA

I hate you so much right now.

BARRIS

Look, we'll take care of it.

MONICA

How? Are you gonna marry me?

BARRIS

(carefully)

Well, no. Not at this point.

MONICA

I'm not murdering my baby!

(weeping)

I can't... do that. Please...

Barris sighs. He touches Monica's hand.

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

Barris and Monica sit in first class. Barris stares out the window. Monica stares straight ahead.

BARRIS

Beautiful country, isn't it?

EXT. MEXICAN ALLEY - DAY

Barris leads a crying Monica down the garbage-strewn alley. They find a doorway. Barris opens it.

BARRIS

Here we are.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MONICA  
(collapsing)  
I can't I can't I can't I can't...

Barris supports her and leads her into the office.

BARRIS  
It's okay. It'll be okay.

EXT. SCULPTURE GARDEN, UCLA - DAY

Barris and Penny walk sadly through the garden.

PENNY  
What a waste.

BARRIS  
Tell me about it. I figure over the years I must've spent close to twenty grand on these abortions: airfare, hotels, doctors, gifts.

PENNY  
That's not what I meant.

BARRIS  
And I don't even know how many of these fetuses were mine. That's what really kills me.

A SERIES OF SHOTS IN VARIOUS LOCALES OF MIDDLE-AGED WOMEN WITH PAIN-ETCHED FACES, ADDRESSING THE CAMERA.

WOMAN #1  
It was his.

WOMAN #2  
Yeah. It was his.

WOMAN #3  
It wasn't his. I lied.

WOMAN #4  
Yes, it was his baby.

WOMAN #5  
Yeah.

WOMAN #6  
The godamn son of a bitch. He asked you to ask me this?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WOMAN #7

I was screwing a lot of guys at the time.  
It coulda been his.

WOMAN #8

Uh-uh. I just needed someone to pay for  
it. He was a wallet with legs.

WOMAN #9

Yeah, I was just a kid. It ruined my  
life.

EXT. TERRACE - DAY

ACTUAL BARRIS

I don't really want to talk about this.

We hold on a silent Barris.

EXT. SCULPTURE GARDEN - DAY

Barris and Penny walk in silence.

PENNY

So I'm assuming this means Monica is out  
of the picture.

BARRIS

Yeah, I got baptized for nothing.

PENNY

Chuck, I was thinking... I have this  
plan now, now that you're free --

BARRIS

God, you look cute today.

PENNY

I always look cute. Don't distract me.  
What was I going to say?

BARRIS

I don't know.

PENNY

You do know.

(enthusiastically charged)

Chuck, why don't we get married? We've  
known each other forever. We've fucked  
each other forever. You think I'm cute,  
you just said. You always come to me  
when you're in trouble. And you're  
almost forty, Chuck.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Barris turns violently toward Penny.

BARRIS  
(shouting)  
I know how old I almost am! That's it.  
Don't ever ask me to marry you again!

PENNY  
(quietly)  
I won't.

INT. BARRIS'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Barris and Penny are having sex. It is gentle and quiet. Penny is crying, trying to conceal it. Barris notices.

BARRIS  
I'm sorry I yelled at you today, Pen.

PENNY  
I'm not crying because you yelled at me.  
This is it, isn't it? This is us.

Barris studies Penny's face in the dim light.

EXT. TERRACE - DAY

The actual Barris puffs on his cigar.

ACTUAL BARRIS  
I almost asked Penny to marry me right  
then. But I didn't.

INT. SEEDY HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Barris sits naked on the bed, swigging from a bottle of vodka, as a prostitute in a black dress and veil sings "Happy Birthday" to him. When she's done, she lifts the veil, looks confused.

PROSTITUTE  
Is that right?

INT. BARRIS'S OFFICE - DAY

Barris sits staring out the window. His mood is somber. On the table beside him are many birthday cards. The anarchic and youthful decor of the office seems to mock Barris now. Loretta enters.

LORETTA  
Chuck?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

No response.

LORETTA (CONT'D)

Chuck?

BARRIS

(not turning)

Uh.

LORETTA

Rod Flexner's here.

BARRIS

Shit piss fuck, send him in.

Flexner enters. He's a suit.

FLEXNER

Chuck! Great to see you.

BARRIS

What's up, Rod?

FLEXNER

Well, the thing is, Chuck, some of your shows aren't doing too well in the old ratings war. The Family Game, for one.

BARRIS

Okay.

We move into Barris's eyes.

INT. FAMILY GAME SET

The show is in progress. Suddenly shots are fired from offstage. The host and contestants are slaughtered. It's bloody and violent.

INT. BARRIS'S OFFICE - DAY

We're on Barris's eyes.

FLEXNER

And How's Your Mother-in-Law is, quite frankly, in the toilet, Chuck.

INT. HOW'S YOUR MOTHER-IN-LAW SET

A mother-in-law is being garotted with piano wire. Her neck is sliced. Blood spurts.

INT. BARRIS'S OFFICE - DAY

FLEXNER

Now, as you know, Dream Girl is flailing terribly.

INT. DREAM GIRL SET

Dream Girls lie bloody and flailing all over the set.

INT. BARRIS'S OFFICE - DAY

FLEXNER

And The Game Game has no life in it at all.

INT. GAME GAME SET

The contestants on the set are all bloody and dead. An applause light flashes on and off, but the audience members are also dead.

INT. BARRIS'S OFFICE - DAY

FLEXNER

So I've been put in the unfortunate position of having to inform you that the network is canceling all four of these shows. Now don't shoot me, Chuck, I'm just the messenger.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Barris drinks alone. He's sullen and sauced.

BARRIS

(to bartender)

They killed my babies. Just like that. I pushed them into the world through the birth canal of my imagination. Lovingly. Tenderly. Where's the humanity of these people?

BARTENDER

The fucking bastards.

BARRIS

What am I gonna do now?

(sees pretty woman)

Hey there, can I buy you a drink?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LARGE MAN

What are you blind, asshole? This lady's with me.

BARRIS

(screaming)

Fuck you!

The large man stands to face Barris. He is very large. Barris stands. The man swings at Barris. Barris easily deflects the punch, grabs the man's forearm and breaks it with a sickening crack. The man screams. Barris gets him in a chokehold from behind. The man whimpers and gags.

BARRIS (CONT'D)

Let's see, if I remember correctly, the next move breaks your neck, which kills you instantly or paralyzes you. Depending on your luck.

LARGE MAN

Please.

BARRIS

(lets go)

Get out of here, you pussy faggot piece of shit dog-shit shithead.

The large man hurries from the bar. Everyone in the bar, including the large man's date, watches Barris.

BARRIS (CONT'D)

(to the woman)

Hi. I'm Chuck Barris, tv producer. Have you ever done any acting?

INT. BARRIS'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Barris and the woman from the bar are having sex on the couch. Penny enters.

PENNY

Hey, I was just in the --

Penny sees Barris and the woman.

PENNY (CONT'D)

What is she doing here, man?

BARRIS

She's --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PENNY

This is our house, man. Our house! It's one thing to go elsewhere for your pussy needs. But this is our house!

BARRIS

This is not our house, it's my house.

PENNY

It's our house! I found it with you. I decorated it for you! I spent six months sitting on that fucking couch she's fucking you on, fucking waiting for the fucking plumbers to come! God, you are such an asshole!

Penny throws the house key at Barris. It hits him in the forehead. Then she turns and storms from the house. Barris looks over at the woman. She looks confused.

WOMAN

I should go. This doesn't feel right.

The woman stands, grabs her purse, pulls out an 8x10 glossy of herself and hands it to Barris, then exits. Barris stares at the photo for a moment, then opens a drawer and puts on top of a pile of similar photos.

EXT. PENNY'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Barris pulls up, gets out of his car, and heads toward the building.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

Barris walks down the hall, carrying a bouquet of flowers. He arrives at Penny's door. There is an envelope attached to it with Barris's name on it. He opens the envelope and reads the letter.

Dear Chuck,  
I'm dead now. I hope you're happy.  
The door's open.

Love always,  
Penny

Barris hurriedly opens the door, enters the apartment looks around, finds Penny face down on the floor, surrounded by empty champagne bottles and vials of pills. He stares at her body for a moment, feeling faint. He drops to his knees.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PENNY  
(face down)  
Wanna see a stupid girl vomit?

INT. DINER - NIGHT

Barris and Penny sit in a booth. Penny has black coffee in front of her. She is pale and drawn.

PENNY  
Why were you with that girl in our living room?

BARRIS  
It's not our living room, Pen.

PENNY  
That's your defense? You know what it feels like to see you with someone else? In any living room.

BARRIS  
You know who I am, Penny. I don't force you to hang around.

PENNY  
(incredulous)  
You don't force me? Fuck. So you're saying you have no interest in this, one way or the other?

BARRIS  
No, I'm not saying that.

PENNY  
Well, then, what are you saying, Chuck? Do you want me around or not? Do you even like me?

BARRIS  
Of course I like you.

PENNY  
How much?

BARRIS  
What?

PENNY  
I need to know how much you like me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARRIS

(beat)

I don't even know what that means, "how much?" How can I rate a person in that way? That's ridiculous.

PENNY

You could if you felt it. If you felt it, it would be easy to rate me. You could spread your arms as wide as they would go and say, "This much, Penny."

BARRIS

Everything's complicated, Pen. Nothing's black and white like that.

PENNY

Do you want me around or not? If you don't, just say so, so I know. Okay?

Barris and Penny look at each other. She starts to cry.

BARRIS

I love you, Pen, in my way. Maybe not in that crazy, head-over-heels thing, but what is that, anyway? Romantic love. Isn't that just an illusion?

PENNY

(beat)

But you just said you love me, right?

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - NIGHT

A non-descript American car is parked on the quiet wooded street. Barris pulls up in his Jaguar. He gets out of the car, looks in the window of the empty American car.

BYRD (O.S.)

Over here, Strawberry-dick.

Barris looks over and makes out Byrd sitting on a rock with a view of L.A. spread out in front of him. Barris joins him.

BARRIS

Jesus, how do you know these things?

BYRD

We even know what she actually thought it tasted like.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARRIS

Really? I could never find that out.  
What did she think?

BYRD

It's a "need to know", my friend. So  
tell me, what can I do you for?

BARRIS

I could really use an assignment, Jim.  
To straighten my head.

BYRD

I got something for your head.

INT. DATING GAME SET

A Dating Game couple waits anxiously for host Jim Lange to  
announce their destination.

JIM LANGE

... and we're the sending the two of you  
for three days and three nights to  
beautiful... West Berlin!

The couple screams excitedly by reflect, but as the  
destination sinks in, their perplexity becomes apparent.

EXT. WEST BERLIN STREET - DAY

Barris and the Dating Game couple walk along. It's cold and  
gray and they all wear heavy coats. The couple wear cameras  
around their necks. Nobody looks happy.

INT. BEER HALL - NIGHT

Barris sits in the corner of this noisy, smoky place. He has  
a stein of beer and reads a paper as a group of drunken  
Germans in the background sing a song. Patricia Watson  
approaches and sits. Barris looks up and smiles.

BARRIS

Treesh.

PATRICIA

Leibchen.

(kisses him, sits)

So, here's what we got. Name's Hans  
Colbert.

(pulls out photos)

Other side of the wall. We don't like  
him very much.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARRIS

(singing *Toot-toot-tootsie*)  
Bye-bye, Colbert, bye-bye.

PATRICIA

You'll work with a kraut named Keeler. He's been trailing Colbert for a month now. Knows the routine. Keeler's a drunk, so you stay sober and take charge.

BARRIS

(collecting photos)  
Done and done. See you after?

PATRICIA

Prove how much you love me, baby. Kill for me. Then I'm all yours.

INT. TUNNEL - DAY

Barris crawls through a long dirt tunnel. Telephone cables run along the floor. An occasional bare bulb lights the way.

INT. APARTMENT BATHROOM - DAY

A middle-aged man stands in his underwear at a mirror and shaves. The stall shower pushes away from the wall revealing a hole. Barris steps through it, covered in dust. He nods at the shaving man. He nods back, hands Barris a gun and a change of clothes, and continues shaving.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Barris exits the apartment building in the clean clothes. We see the East Berlin side of the wall in the background. A car pulls up and Barris gets in.

INT. CAR, RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY

Barris sits in the parked car with Keeler, a heavysset, silent German man with nicotine stained fingers and teeth. He is constantly smoking and writing in a tiny notebook. There is a long silence.

BARRIS

What you writing, Sig?

KEELER

I am keeping track of all the goings on on this street.

Barris looks out the window. There is nothing going on, yet Keeler keeps writing. More silence.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARRIS

Hey, Keeler, a bird just flew by.

KEELER

Yah. I know how to do my job.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PARKED CAR - NIGHT

Barris and Keeler are still in the car. Keeler continues to smoke and write. A well-rested, happy-looking Colbert walks by with a group of people.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PARKED CAR - AFTERNOON

Barris looks even more sickly. Colbert rides by happily on a tandem bike with a lovely woman on the back. Keeler continues to smoke and write.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PARKED CAR - EVENING

Barris and Keeler wait in the car. Colbert emerges from his house, alone, and walks toward the car. A drained Barris sighs a sigh of relief, then suddenly and with unexpected force, Keeler swings open the passenger door. The door hits a stunned Colbert and sends him flying. Keeler races around the car, grabs Colbert, throws him into the back seat, and jumps on top of him. Barris watches, surprised at the dramatic personality shift in Keeler. Keeler is strangling Colbert. A cigarette is dangling casually from his lips as he does this. Keeler turns Colbert over so he's facing him, so he can watch him die.

KEELER

(calmly to Barris)

Under the seat, please.

Barris reaches under the seat, pulls out a Polaroid camera.

KEELER (CONT'D)

Please, if you don't mind, a photograph.  
To remember.

Barris is stunned, scared. He takes the photo. The flash illuminates the bulging-eyed Colbert and the calm Keeler.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

Barris types. A knock at the door. He looks up, panicked.

BARRIS  
(falsetto)  
Who is it?

HOUSEKEEPER (O.S.)  
Housekeeping, Mr. Barris.

Barris looks around. The place is a disaster. Food wrappers, crumpled papers, liquor bottles, strewn clothing, plastic army men set up for battle. He gets up, puts on a hotel bathrobe and his hat, grabs his gun, checks the peephole for a long moment, and answers the door. The housekeeper is plump and kind-looking.

BARRIS  
Good morning, Mrs. Reynolds.

HOUSEKEEPER  
(looking around)  
Another rough night, huh?

BARRIS  
(tapping his head)  
The human psyche is a wondrous thing.

HOUSEKEEPER  
(smiling maternally)  
Yes, I know it is.  
(taking gun)  
We don't need this now, do we? Why don't we just put this away?

She puts the gun in a drawer, starts to pick up. Barris watches her, then:

BARRIS  
Mrs. Reynolds, may I rest my head on your bosom for a little while?

HOUSEKEEPER  
Oh, that doesn't really seem like a very good idea, Mr. Barris.

BARRIS  
I'm sorry. You're right. I just... I'm just without... *comfort* of any sort, and I... please forgive me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOUSEKEEPER  
(smiles at him)  
No harm done.

Barris smacks himself in the head.

BARRIS  
(bowing)  
Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. You  
are a scholar and...

HOUSEKEEPER  
It's fine, sir.

BARRIS  
Mrs. Reynolds, what do you suppose God  
thinks of someone like me?

HOUSEKEEPER  
God?

BARRIS  
Yes, God.

HOUSEKEEPER  
Well, Mr. Barris, your television shows  
have brought laughter and joy to millions  
of people. That's a very important  
thing, I think, in these difficult times.  
I would imagine God likes you very much.

Barris smiles a rubber-band smile.

BARRIS  
Thank you, that's very kind.  
(glances at her ample bosom)  
So... I should get back to...

HOUSEKEEPER  
Yes, of course, sir. Don't mind me.

Barris resumes typing. The housekeeper cleans.

EXT. EAST BERLIN STREET - EARLY MORNING

A hollow-eyed Barris approaches the building that conceals the tunnel entrance. Suddenly there's a commotion on the quiet street. The shaving man is being led handcuffed out of the building by two trench-coated men. They shove him into a car. Barris continues to walk by, betraying no interest. He glances casually into the entranceway of the apartment building. Another trenchcoated man waits inside the shadows.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The car drives away. Barris stops at the end of the block, stares at the imposing wall.

BARRIS  
I'm really, really fucked.

Another car pulls up next to him. Picard, a serious-looking Frenchman, sticks his head out the window.

PICARD  
Get in.

BARRIS  
What? Who the hell are you?

PICARD  
No time. Get in or die.

Barris hesitates, gets in. The car screeches off.

INT. PICARD'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Picard drives fast. Barris eyes him suspiciously, fingers his gun. Picard spots a Fiat in his rearview mirror.

PICARD  
*Merde.* KGB. They know who you are, Monsieur Barris. It is their intention to kill you very much in East Berlin.

Barris checks in the passenger side mirror.

BARRIS  
*Merde! MERDE!*

PICARD  
Not to worry, my friend.

Picard speeds up dramatically, but continues to drive calmly. Barris is agitated.

PICARD (CONT'D)  
I am Paul Picard, by the way. Nice to meet you. Do not worry, I am not KGB. I do not want to kill you, I want you to live a long happy life and have many dancing grandchildren to admire.

Picard screeches around a corner, then another one. He's lost the Fiat, for the moment.

EXT. QUIET EAST BERLIN STREET - EARLY MORNING

Picard's car stops at the curb. Picard and Barris emerge. Picard opens the trunk. He lifts out a big folded-up clump of rubber with an engine mounted on it.

BARRIS

What the hell is that?

PICARD

Your ride, Monsieur Barris.

Picard unfolds the rubber mass. He pulls a cord and it begins to inflate. It is an airplane, a one person inflatable plane.

BARRIS

No fucking way.

PICARD

It's quite reliable and easy to operate. It will get you over the wall. Or you can stay here. In the German Democratic Republic. I will arrange for you to get a good factory job. No, you must fly, like Daedalus before you, to the freedom of the west.

BARRIS

Christ. What about you?

PICARD

They do not catch me, monsieur. This is my talent, to get away always. In *guerre*. In *amour*. This is my talent, and perhaps this is my curse.

EXT. BERLIN WALL - DAY

The fully-inflated rubber plane flies down the street, dipping and rising erratically. The noise is deafening. Barris lies on his stomach and steers, looking petrified. He approaches the wall and manages to get the plane over it. The plane is shot by a soldier. Air hisses out.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY

Barris sits on a park bench. Jim Byrd approaches, sits.

BYRD

(chuckling)

So, did you have a nice flight?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARRIS

Fuck you, Jim. It was terrifying.

BYRD

Seems the KGB knew exactly what you were up to. You were there to kill Colbert, they were there to kill you. I'm thinking we got a mole. So much hate in the world, Chuck.

BARRIS

Am I in danger still?

BYRD

Jesus, yes. KGB didn't go out of business since yesterday, so far as I know. You're fucked, Chuck. But our main concern should be: if they know who you are, they know who I am.

BARRIS

Fuck off. What do we do?

BYRD

Bow out. Lay low. That's what I'm gonna do. You're lucky you have another career to immerse yourself in.

INT. REHEARSAL HALL - DAY

Barris sits with a several network executive and some other staff members watching a fat man tap dance badly and, because of his weight, extremely loudly. It's painful for everybody to watch. The fat man finishes.

BARRIS

Thank you. Thanks. That was great.

The fat smiles and exits. Barris puts his head in his hands.

EXECUTIVE WOMAN

I don't know, Chuck. It's looking bleak.

BARRIS

There's gotta be somebody in America with some talent. Ted Mack got bookings every week.

The executives look at each other.

BARRIS (CONT'D)

Bring in the next *thing*.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

An assistant opens the door and a middle-aged woman in pale blue polyester pants and Joan Crawford painted on eyebrows enters with a guitar. She begins to sing a folk song, very sincerely, in a very off-key monotone. It's unbearable and depressing. Barris glances over at the executive; she's checking her watch again. The song is endless. Barris's eyes grow cloudy.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FIELD - DAY

This is the same field where Renda was shot. Now, the folksinging woman is in the field singing. Barris pulls out a gun and aims it at the woman. Her eyes widen in terror, but she keeps singing. A church bell chimes and Barris shoots her. She flies back, spurting blood. Her guitar hits the ground with a twang.

INT. REHEARSAL HALL - DAY

Barris snaps out of his fantasy with renewed energy. The folksinger is still droning on.

BARRIS

(ushering out)

Thank you. Thank you. We'll be in touch. That was wonderful.

Barris closes the door behind the folksinger and turns to the executives.

BARRIS (CONT'D)

We've been going about this all wrong. Rather than killing ourselves trying to find good acts, we just book bad ones and kill *them*.

EXECUTIVE #2

Chuck, it's torture to sit through even one of these people --

BARRIS

We kill 'em before they're through. As soon as it gets unbearable, we kill 'em. Dead.

EXECUTIVE WOMAN

For God's sake, what are you talking about?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARRIS

Celebrity judges ring a bell to end the act... to kill 'em. And when you kill something, it stops. This I know to be true.

INT. GONG SHOW SET - DAY

Barris and some suits watch from the booth as an octogenarian woman on stage sings "Born Free" in an impossibly high voice. Jamie Farr gongs the woman. The woman is angry. A vacuous host with great hair appears next to the woman. He seems genuinely agitated.

HOST

Why'd you do that, Jamie? This is someone's grandmother. She was really trying.

JAMIE FARR

This is The Gong Show, not the Van Cliburn eliminations.

HOST

*This* is a human being with aspirations.

BARRIS

(muttering)

Oh, fuck me. This guy sucks. He's bringing everyone down.

The executives eye each other.

EXECUTIVE WOMAN

None of the hosts are getting it, Chuck. But we have a thought.

BARRIS

What?

EXECUTIVE WOMAN

You host.

All the executives smile at Barris.

EXECUTIVE WOMAN (CONT'D)

You *get* it. And we believe your awkward, non-professional, mumbling persona is exactly right for the show.

BARRIS

I don't want to be on tv.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EXECUTIVE WOMAN

Listen, we can't sit through anymore of these test shows. Do it, Chuck, or we advise the network to pull it.

INT. BARRIS PRODUCTIONS - NIGHT

Barris switches on the lights, walks through the empty bullpen area to his office, unlocks the door, enters.

INT. BARRIS'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Barris enters, stares out the window, looks at himself in a full-length mirror.

BARRIS

(stiff)

Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome to The Gong Show! I'm your host, Chuck Barris!

(turns away in disgust)

Ucchhh.

Barris sits behind his desk, draws a line down a piece of paper and writes "Pros" and "Cons" at the top of the page. He thinks. Under "Pros" he writes "Become National Celebrity", "Get More Attention from Stewardesses", "Even more women will want to have sex with me". Under "Cons" he writes: "Easier target for KGB." He gets up, paces. Suddenly, a shot rings out. It comes through the window and shatters the mirror. Barris dives to the floor. More shots, crazy relentless shooting. Barris crawls on his belly to the window, carefully reaches up and lowers the venetian blinds just as another shot whizzes through. The blinds explode. The shooting stops. He waits on the floor, shaking like a leaf. He pulls the list off his desk and writes under "Pro": "I need another hit before I die."

INT. GONG SHOW SET - DAY

Center-stage is empty. The band begins to play. The studio audience cheers.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

And now, here's the host and star of our show, Chuck Barris!

The curtain rises. Barris appears in a tuxedo coat, denim work shirt, cowboy boots and a hat pulled down over his eyes.

BARRIS

Welcome to The Gong Show. Here's an esoteric act if there ever was one. Ephemeral. It's an ephemeral act.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARRIS (CONT'D)

One that should get us our Emmy. Do we have an Emmy? We don't? Well this should get us one. Anyway, ladies and gentlemen... Big Nose!

Big Nose leaps onto stage. He is skinny, wearing a flowered shirt and a sarong, and playing a toy flute while dancing in ladies platform shoes. Suddenly he drops his flute, rips off his sarong, revealing polka-dotted boxer shorts and a yellow leotard. He rushes to a steamer trunk, opens it, and begins crazily pulling out endless amounts of old newspapers.

Barris watches from the wings, mesmerized. Big Nose is gonged. Barris dances out onto stage to join him.

BIG NOSE

Why? Why? Why?

BARRIS

I don't know. I don't understand.

Barris glances out into the audience. Something glints. Is it a gun. He starts to sweat. Jaye P. Morgan is saying something about Big Nose. But we can't understand it. The audience laughs. Barris continues to scan the audience. Someone in headphones signals Barris from behind a camera.

BARRIS (CONT'D)

(to Big Nose)

Well, win a few, lose a few.

(to audience)

We'll be back with more stuff... right after this message.

Barris waits on his mark for the taping to again begin. He watches the commotion around him with eagle eyes: technicians and stagehands running around, the audience chanting "Chuckie Baby", the celebrity panel joking with each other, the guys in the booth smoking, the guys in the band laughing. Barris turns around and around on his mark, trying to catch every movement, looking for a gun, a suspicious character. The chanting continues, louder and more distorted. The faces in the audience turn grotesque. Barris sweats profusely, his breathing becomes more and more shallow. Suddenly his eyes roll back in his head and he drops to the stage floor, unconscious.

DISSOLVE TO:

NEWSPAPER HEADLINES BEING SHOWN TO THE CAMERA:

VARIETY: GONG SHOW EM-BARRIS-MENT OF RICHES

HOLLYWOOD REPORTER: KING GONG!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

L.A. TIMES: BARRIS'S TALENT *SHOWS*

DAILY NEWS: GONG HO!

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

We see Barris in bed, hooked up to machines. The executive woman sits by his bed showing him the headlines.

EXECUTIVE WOMAN

You can't quit.

BARRIS

I can't quit? But I get panicky, Louise, in front of all those people.

EXECUTIVE WOMAN

You lack confidence, that's all.

BARRIS

I lack confidence?

EXECUTIVE WOMAN

But we'll take care of that. We'll get you some confidence powder. Leave that to us.

BARRIS

Confidence powder?

EXECUTIVE WOMAN

Nose candy, Chuck. Blow. Snow. Flake.

BARRIS

Blow, snow, flake?

EXECUTIVE

Coke.

BARRIS

Oh. Coke. Okay. Does that work?

INT. GONG SHOW SET - DAY

Barris on stage introducing an act. He is very confident.

BARRIS

Ladies and gentlemen, oh, this act is amazing, your gonna love this act. I'm telling ya. All the way from Pacoima... David Pincus!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The curtain rises. A young man with a square of Plexiglass in his hands, presses his lips against the Plexiglass and blows. It makes a farting noise and allows to the audience to see inside his mouth.

INT. WINGS - CONTINUOUS

Barris snorts some cocaine. We hear the act and audience "booing" and yelling "Gong him!" in the background.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

The actual Jaye P. Morgan is being interviewed.

ACTUAL JAYE P. MORGAN

Chuck was real different on stage and off. Very tense. He was always looking over his shoulder. Even when we were fucking. Sort of an enigma.

INT. GONG SHOW SET - DAY

Barris dances onstage with Gene Gene the Dancing Machine.

INT. SUBURBAN LIVING ROOM - DAY

The actual Gene Gene is being interviewed.

GENE GENE

Oh yeah, a real Jekyll and Hyde. Sometimes nice as you please. Give you the shirt off his back. Other times he'd rant like a crazy man. I remember once he screamed at me that I didn't know anything about dancing. "Nijinsky," he yelled, "now there was a dancer!"

INT. GONG SHOW SET - DAY

A black guy with weird teeth and a speech impediment attempts stand-up. He looks petrified.

BLACK COMEDIAN

Today I had a bad day today...

The audience yells "How bad was it?" This throws the performer. Finally he continues.

BLACK COMEDIAN (CONT'D)

It was so bad, my wife didn't even know how to cook.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BLACK COMEDIAN (CONT'D)

That barracuda took an egg, put it in a pot of water, and burned the water. We had to rush that to the hospital.

The audience boos.

BLACK COMEDIAN (CONT'D)

My mother-in-law...

The booing continues. The comedian can't take it. He looks disoriented. He turns away from the audience and puts his head in his hands. Jamie Farr gongs him.

EXT. SWIMMING POOL - DAY

The actual Jamie Farr sits next to the pool. In the background we see a couple of kids with enormous noses splashing around in the water.

JAMIE FARR

Chuck used to love to discuss philosophy. I think he was very saddened that the public saw him as this sort of spastic moron. I remember at the time I was reading Wittgenstein. And Chuck was just thrilled to have someone else in addition to Rex Reed to talk about that stuff with.

INT. BARRIS'S BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

Barris lies in bed next to Patricia. It's 12:30 AM. He's chatting on the phone, lazily twirling the cord. Patricia reads.

BARRIS

Look, Jamie, you know as well as I that language does not exist without an outward criteria.

JAMIE FARR (TELEPHONE VOICE)

Certainly. Wittgenstein said as much in *Investigations*. But if you read Ryle carefully --

PATRICIA

(looking at clock)  
Chuck...

BARRIS

Can we pick up tomorrow?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAMIE FARR

Yeah. But consider my thinking on elementary propositions. I'm serious.

BARRIS

Will do. Love ya.

JAMIE FARR

Right back at ya, amigo.

Barris hangs up. Patricia kisses him. She pulls away.

PATRICIA

I'm concerned about you. I think you need to get back into the life. Our sex was always amazing after you killed. Truth is you're not that great after your discussions with Jamie Farr.

The phone rings.

PATRICIA (CONT'D)

Oh, c'mon.

BARRIS

(picks up)

Jamie, I can't talk anymore tonight --

KEELER (O.S.)

(telephone voice)

This is Siegfried Keeler. I need to see you.

Barris jerks up, surprised, alarmed. Patricia watches him.

BARRIS (V.O.)

Assassins do not fraternize. That Keeler was calling me could mean it was my turn to get hit.

KEELER (O.S.)

(phone voice)

I am in town on business, Chuck. And I desire nothing more than your company for dinner. I consider you one of my closest friends.

BARRIS

Sure. Dinner sounds good. There's a place called La Scala. See you there at eight.

Barris hangs up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PATRICIA  
 (eyes closed)  
 Dinner sounds good with whom?

BARRIS  
 Keeler.

Patricia glances over at Barris. They stare at each other.

EXT. LA SCALA PARKING LOT - EVENING

Barris pulls into the parking lot. As he waits for the valet parking attendant to get to him, he adjusts the gun strapped to his ankle.

INT. LA SCALA - EVENING

Barris enters the crowded restaurant, looks around, spots Keeler sitting at a table in the rear. As he makes his way back, Barris shakes hands and says hello to several early seventies tv celebrities scattered throughout the restaurant: Carrol O'Connor, Joanne Worley, Flip Wilson, Ron Palillo. Barris arrives at Keeler's table. Keeler rises and embraces Chuck. He's already drunk. They sit.

KEELER  
 A very fancy place.

BARRIS  
 Only the best for my friend.

KEELER  
 The friendships one develops during wartime are remarkably strong.

BARRIS  
 Yes.

There is an awkward silence.

KEELER  
 So how is the business of television?

Barris, pleased to have something to talk about, rambles.

BARRIS  
 Well, it's hit and miss. I've got a new show called "Operation Entertainment" which I believe is going to kill. It's sort of a Bob Hope visiting the troops thing, but it's weekly and...

Keeler is staring right through Barris.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KEELER

Why do you do what you do, Chuck?

BARRIS

Well, I like to think that I bring joy and laughter to millions of people. I'm not saying that my shows are as good as they could be. Yet. But --

KEELER

Why do you kill?

Barris looks around, clears his throat.

BARRIS

Oh.

KEELER

During the second world war, I had the pleasure of killing. Yes, pleasure. I found it exhilarating. Afterwards, I could find nothing else to fill me so much with life. So I became what I am today. I wanted the exhilaration again... of death.

The waiter appears.

WAITER

Are you gentlemen ready to order?

KEELER

I'll have the shrimp scampi and a green salad.

WAITER

And for you, sir.

KEELER

Um, Just give me a steak. Rare.

WAITER

Thank you.

The waiter leaves. Keeler sips his drink, stares at Barris.

KEELER

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy whole might. Work while it is called, for the night cometh wherein no man can work."

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BARRIS  
That's Carlyle!

KEELER  
Yes.

BARRIS  
It's amazing you should quote him. He's my hero.

KEELER  
I read in a book recently that killing your first man is like making love to your first woman. Every smell, every nuance, you remember with a special allure, as if the acts had occurred outside civilization, outside time. And when the allure is gone, you are condemned.

BARRIS  
Condemned?

KEELER  
I am condemned to live the rest of my life outside civilization. You will be too, my good friend.

Barris looks into Keeler's hollow eyes.

EXT. TERRACE - DAY

The actual Barris puffs on his cigar.

ACTUAL BARRIS  
The next day I heard Keeler offed himself.

EXT. L.A. HOTEL - NIGHT

Keeler falls silently in slow motion from a very high window.

ACTUAL BARRIS (V.O.)  
You never really know in the world of espionage if something labeled a suicide actually is a suicide. But he was dead. That I knew.

INT. MARTONI'S - NIGHT

Barris eats dinner with Penny. Barris seems depressed. Penny is reserved.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PENNY

When you called, I wasn't gonna come.

BARRIS

I'm glad you did, Pen.

PENNY

I said to myself, enough. Enough of this jerk already. Enough.

BARRIS

I could see how you would feel that way.

PENNY

But I've come upon something interesting through my delvings into human psychology. It's called TA, Transactual Analysis.

BARRIS

*Transactional* Analysis.

PENNY

Now see, by correcting me you're responding as "Parent" to my "Child."

(authoritative voice)

"Here's the proper way to say this word, Penny." But that's okay. As long as we both understand that's what you're doing. Y'know, I'm okay, you're okay. So what's wrong, Chuck? Are you okay?

BARRIS

A guy I knew killed himself last night.

PENNY

My God. Everyone you know kills themselves. Or tries. Who is it this time?

BARRIS

You don't know him. A stagehand.

PENNY

Why'd he do it?

BARRIS

He didn't like his work anymore.

PENNY

Is being a stagehand really bad or something?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BARRIS

(beat)

Yeah, it's pretty bad.

Patricia storms up to the table.

PATRICIA

You were supposed to meet me at The Palm two hours ago.

BARRIS

Oh fuck, I forgot.

PENNY

Who is this?

PATRICIA

I do not get stood up. Do you understand?

BARRIS

Um, Penny, this is Patricia.

(to Patricia)

How did you find me?

PATRICIA

Are you serious? That's what I do for a living.

PENNY

Who's Patricia? What does she mean, that's what she does for a living?

PATRICIA

You're dead in my book, Strawberry-dick.

PENNY

Strawberry dick? What's that?

PATRICIA

There is no second chance. Get it?

(to Penny)

Nice meeting you, Penny. I've heard a lot about you.

(to Barris, walking away)

Oh, by the by, Byrd's dead.

Patricia exits. Penny just looks down at the table.

PENNY

And... and okay... I'm only gonna give you one more chance, man. That's it. Get it?

## INT. BARRIS'S ROLLS ROYCE - NIGHT

Barris snorts some coke, pulls out of the studio parking lot. The sound of his heart beating pounds in his ears. Another car pulls behind him. A wired Barris notices the car in his rearview mirror. He turns. The other car turns also. Barris speeds up. So does the other car. Barris panics; he tries to lose the other car. A chase ensues. Finally Barris screeches to a halt, pulls a gun from his glove compartment. The second car screeches to a halt behind him. Barris already out of his car and at the driver's side window of the second car. He looks in and sees there are two petrified teenagers, a boy and a girl, holding up their hands. Barris pulls open the door.

BARRIS

(screaming)

Who sent you?! Who the fuck sent you?!

TEENAGE BOY

Nobody, man. We just waited for you to leave after the show. We just think the show is cool. We just think you're cool.

The girl is crying.

TEENAGE GIRL

Please don't kill us.

Barris points the gun at them for a long while, his hands shaking wildly.

## INT. GONG SHOW WINGS - DAY

Barris stands backstage waiting for his cue. The Unknown Comic appears next to him, wearing a paper bag with two eyeholes cut out over his head. Barris glances over at him.

UNKNOWN COMIC

Hey, Chuck.

Barris doesn't say anything. He studies the bag. Barris pulls a pistol from an ankle holster, and jams it against the bag.

BARRIS

Take it off.

UNKNOWN COMIC

Huh?

BARRIS

The fucking bag. Take it off.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Unknown Comic takes the bag off. He looks terrified. Barris stares him down.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)  
Ladies and Gentlemen, Chuck Barris!

Barris dances onto the stage.

INT. GONG SHOW SET - CONTINUOUS

Barris is clapping his hands together. He looks happy and relaxed. The audience is cheering.

BARRIS  
Here he is, the Prince of Puns, the  
Wizard of Whoopee... The Unknown Comic!

The Unknown Comic appears upstage with bag on head.

UNKNOWN COMIC  
Chuckie Baby, Chuckie Baby, Chuckie  
Baby...

BARRIS  
What? What do you want?

UNKNOWN COMIC  
What's the difference between toilet  
paper and a shower curtain?

BARRIS  
I don't know.

UNKNOWN COMIC  
(calling off)  
Here's the guy!

The audience laughs. Barris feigns annoyance and pushes the unknown comic off the stage.

BARRIS  
Get out of here.

UNKNOWN COMIC  
(for Barris's ears only)  
You're fucking crazy, man.

INT. BARRIS'S OFFICE - DAY

Barris sits behind his desk, drinking and popping pills. Loretta pokes her head in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LORETTA

Phone call from someone named Tuvia.

BARRIS

Who?!

LORETTA

Tuvia?

BARRIS

I'll take it! Don't hang up!

Barris picks up the phone.

BARRIS (CONT'D)

Hello?

TUVIA (O.S.)

Hello, is this Chuck Barris?

BARRIS

Yes.

TUVIA (O.S.)

Oh, this is Tuvia Feldman. I don't know if you remember me --

BARRIS

Of course I do.

TUVIA (O.S.)

I'm in town and I've been following your career and I wondered if you might want to get a drink. For old times sake.

INT. CHILDHOOD BEDROOM - DAY

Tuvia plays with the dog. White panties are revealed.

BARRIS (V.O.)

Sweet Tuvia...

EXT. FRONT PORCH - DAY

Adult Tuvia answers the door with her baby.

BARRIS (V.O.)

Ripe Tuvia.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Barris waits in a booth, anxiously eyeing the door. A guy approaches.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GUY  
Hey, Chuck, I got a talent.

BARRIS  
Not now.

GUY  
Just take a second.

The guy gets down on all fours and starts barking and panting like a dog. It is a repulsive and frightening sight, but Barris becomes transfixed by it and cannot take his eyes off the guy.

TUVIA (O.C.)  
Chuck?

Barris tears his eyes away from the dog guy to look at Tuvia. She is an older middle-aged lady. Younger than Chuck, but clearly of no interest to him. The disappointment on his face is palpable.

TUVIA (CONT'D)  
It's Tuvia! Remember? Hi!

BARRIS (V.O.)  
Old Tuvia.

BARRIS (CONT'D)  
Hi.

TUVIA  
You look great.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BAR - LATER

Barris sits in a booth across from Tuvia. The relationship has shifted once again. Now middle-aged Tuvia is trying to flirt. As they talk, she touches his arm repeatedly. She laughs at everything he says. She reapplies lipstick as they talk. There's a quiet desperation in her eyes. Barris is pleasant but unengaged.

BARRIS (V.O.)  
Ah, Tuvia. The fantasy of Tuvia forever cast out by the reality of Tuvia. Finally, because of my fame and her desperate straits, her poverty and single parenthood, she was going to submit to me. Finally I could've had her.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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

I could've had what had so long eluded me. But now she was old and I wasn't interested.

INT. TRAIN - NIGHT

Middle-aged Tuvia staring out at the night-time landscape in the darkened train car, her suitcase on the seat next to her.

INT. BARRIS'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Barris is having sex with two twenty year old nymphettes. The drugs and alcohol flow freely. He seems to be enjoying himself but there is a hollowness in his eyes.

BARRIS (V.O.)

Tuvia was old, but not me. I was the Game Show King.

INT. GONG SHOW SET - DAY

The rabid audience members chant, "Chuckie Baby, Chuckie Baby, Chuckie Baby..."

INT. BARRIS'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Barris snorts Coke in the darkness. He scans an article headlined: "Chuck Barris *is* the Decline of Western Civilization." The phone rings, alarmingly breaking the stillness.

BARRIS

What?

TELEPHONE VOICE

Paul Picard is dead.

EXT. EAST BERLIN STREET - EARLY MORNING

Barris looks down from the plane as Picard, on the ground, runs after it.

PICARD

(yelling)

Fly, Daedalus, fly!

INT. BARRIS'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Barris hangs up the phone. He stares off into the distance. The phone rings again, again shattering the silence.

INT. GONG SHOW SET - DAY

Barris on stage with red stocking hat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARRIS

This is the moment we've been waiting for...

The contestants appear on stage.

BARRIS (CONT'D)

The winner is Miss Tiny Brooks!

A model appears with a trophy and a big check and hands it to an enormously fat woman. The other contestants applaud. Two midgets dance. The band plays. A massive amount of confetti and balloons fall on everyone.

INT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

It's the Emmy Awards. Barris is in the audience, next to his starlet date. He sweats through his tuxedo, fidgets. Ed Asner and Carroll O'Connor are on stage presenting.

ED ASNER

And the winner is Taxi!

The Taxi theme starts as the winners make their way to the stage.

ED ASNER (CONT'D)

James L. Brooks, Stan Daniels, and Ed. Weinberger, executive producers.

The starlet whispers into Barris's ear, outraged at the unfairness.

STARLET

I don't see why your shows are never nominated.

Barris looks sick. Jim Brooks is on stage accepting.

JAMES L. BROOKS

And I honor *you*, members of the academy, for recognizing and supporting high quality television.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Barris is locked in a stall, vomiting. The door to the bathroom opens. Someone enters. Barris peeks through the closed stall door. It's Jim Brooks, whistling and holding his Emmy. He places it next to the sink, unzips his fly and pisses. An agitated Barris pulls his gun from his ankle holster, opens the stall door a crack, and shakily aims the gun at Brooks' back.

EXT. TERRACE - DAY

ACTUAL BARRIS

But as I stood there, I realized, I couldn't kill Jim Brooks, the man who was responsible for such *good* stuff: Mary Tyler Moore, Rhoda, Cindy, Phyllis, episodes of My Friend Tony. I loved those shows as much as anybody in America.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Barris is crying. He turns the gun away from Brooks, almost against his will, and sticks it in his own mouth. After a moment, he realizes he can't do that either.

ACTUAL BARRIS (V.O.)

I couldn't kill either of us, so I let us both live. Jim Brooks and me. The rest is history.

Barris puts the gun away, flushes the toilet and exits the stall.

BARRIS

Hey, congratulations, Jim.

Brooks turns and looks at Barris. He smiles.

JAMES L. BROOKS

Oh, hey! Thanks...

BARRIS

Chuck Barris. The Gong Show.

JAMES L. BROOKS

Oh, right. Hey, thanks, Chuck.

BARRIS

Once again you deserve it. Your shows are the greatest. You bring so much... *quality* to the medium.

JAMES L. BROOKS

Thank you. I appreciate that. I really do

They smile and nod at each other awkwardly. Chuck waits for some sort of return of the compliment. It does not come. They continue to nod at each other.

INT. OFFICES OF GRACIE FILMS - DAY

The actual Jim Brooks is being interviewed.

ACTUAL JIM BROOKS

I don't really remember ever meeting  
Chuck Barris.

INTERVIEWER (O.C.)

In the men's room at the Emmys, he says.

Brooks thinks, looks at interviewer.

ACTUAL JIM BROOKS

I'm not saying it didn't happen. I'm  
just, y'know... If he remembers it, I'm  
sure it happened. Really doesn't seem  
like much of an anecdote though.

INT. CHATEAU MARMONT BUNGALOW - NIGHT

A big party is in progress. The place is packed. Late  
seventies celebrities abound. Alan Alda is there. Burt  
Reynolds, Jamie Farr, Jaye P. Morgan, Gene Gene the Dancing  
Machine, Pam Dawber, Farrah Fawcett Majors and Lee Majors,  
John Belushi. Chuck Barris steps out of the bathroom, drink  
in hand. He wipes his nose like someone who's just snorted  
coke. He wanders disconsolately and slightly wild-eyed  
through the crowd. He sits in a chair. A man sitting across  
from him looks at Barris. His eyes light up.

PARTY MAN #1

Hey, you're Chuck Barris!

BARRIS

Yeah.

PARTY MAN #1

I love your show!

BARRIS

(unenthused)

Great. I'm just heading --

PARTY MAN #1

I have a talent I think you'd really  
appreciate.

BARRIS

Uh-huh.

Party Man #1 begins farting "Jingle Bells." Barris gets up  
and moves away.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PARTY MAN #1  
(calling after)  
Hey, didn't you ever hear of Le Petomane?  
He was a star, buddy! These are totally  
smell-free!

Barris settles by the fireplace. A pretty woman approaches,  
smiling.

PRETTY WOMAN  
Hi.

BARRIS  
Hi.

PRETTY WOMAN  
I thought it was you.

BARRIS  
(bowing)  
It's me.

PRETTY WOMAN  
I'm glad to meet you because I wanted to  
tell you that I've seen The Gong Show and  
I think you are the most insidious and  
despicable force in entertainment today.

BARRIS  
Well --

PRETTY WOMAN  
How dare you subject the rest of the  
world to your loathsome view of humanity.

BARRIS  
I don't think it's that loathsome.

PRETTY WOMAN  
What is it then? To mock some poor,  
lonely people who just crave a little  
attention in their lives. To destroy  
them. So everybody's not brilliantly  
talented. They're still people. They  
deserve respect and compassion. I mean,  
who the hell are you? What the fuck have  
you ever done that elevates you above the  
pathetic masses? Oh, I forgot, *you*  
created The Dating Game. Wow, right up  
there with the Sistine Chapel. I guess  
that's what gives you the right to...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BARRIS

Excuse me, I've got to --

Barris loses himself in the crowd. He hurries past a guy who recognizes and starts chanting.

PARTY MAN #2

Chuckie Baby! Chuckie Baby! Chuckie  
Baby!

Barris turns and makes his way through the crowd to the door.

EXT. SUNSET BLVD - NIGHT

Barris makes his way down the crowded street. People stare, turn their heads to gawk. We hear over and over again: "Hey, isn't that Chuck Barris?" and "Hey, look, The Gong Show guy!", and "Chuckie baby, Chuckie baby!" Barris smiles wanly and nods. People shove paper and pen in his face and he scribbles autographs without stopping. Sweat forms on his brow. His polyester shirt is drenched.

BARRIS (V.O.)

She was right. What the hell had I done  
with my life?

Among the fans on the street, Barris spots the fat bachelor he killed in London. He sports a bullet hole in his head Barris does a double take.

BARRIS (CONT'D)

Wait, you're that guy. You're dead.  
This is screwy.

FAT BACHELOR

I only want to be loved.

BARRIS

That's all I fucking wanted!

Barris hurries away from the fat bachelor. He begins to spot others converging on him: the corpses of those he killed, bloody and disfigured. Crazy, angry-looking gonged Gong Show contestants appear in the crowd with weapons. KGB agents in trench coats and sunglasses wield guns, Day of the Dead skeletons dance after him. Barris breaks into a run. Suddenly confetti and balloons pour down on him out of the L.A. night sky. Barris dashes across the street, almost getting hit by a car. He ducks down an alley to catch his breath. As he leans against the wall and heaves, a middle-aged woman appears, somewhat backlit by the street light.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN

Mr. Barris?

BARRIS

No, I'm...

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN

My name is Louise Wechsler and I'm here from Tulsa with my family and...

BARRIS

Please, I'm not feeling well.

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN

Just a moment of your time. I love your show. And, well, I, sort of, have a talent myself.

BARRIS

You can stop by the office to audition tomorrow.

The woman continues to approach.

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN

Well, I'm leaving tomorrow and I was just wondering. See, I dance a little and I was just wondering --

There's no way out of this. Barris sighs.

BARRIS

Yeah, all right. Go ahead.

Barris turns to face the woman, who's very close now. She starts to dance around, sort of ballet-like, very badly. Barris watches. She pirouettes, arms above her head.

BARRIS (CONT'D)

Very nice.

Something in her hand glints in the light. Barris reflexively grabs her arm. It's an ice pick. The two wrestle for it. The woman is extremely strong. Barris jams the palm of his hand up into the woman's nose. She staggers back, but doesn't drop the ice pick. Barris leaps at her. The two roll on the ground. The woman pins Barris. She straddles him and is about to stab him through the air. Barris reaches under her skirt and grabs her crotch. The middle-aged woman is a man. He screams in a distinctly male voice. Barris takes the moment of distraction to grab the ice pick and jam it up through the assailant's chin and into his brain. The assailant slumps over.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Barris pushes the body off himself, kneels beside it, and pulls off the wig. He gets up, shaking and heaving. He looks at the body one more time, kicks it in the head with all his might.

EXT. TERRACE - DAY

ACTUAL BARRIS

That was it. I just disappeared. The network had to put The Gong Show into reruns. It was 1981. I holed myself up in this hotel in New York. Parker Hotel.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

SUBTITLE: NEW YORK CITY, SPRING 1982

We see Barris from above, shivering and naked in the corner. The manuscript pages are piled high next to the typewriter. Barris looks up at the camera with outstretched arms, appealing to the gods.

BARRIS

Who Am I?

There is a pounding on the wall from a neighbor.

NEIGHBOR (O.S.)

Who cares? Shut the fuck up!

There's a knock at the door. Barris crawls toward it, peeks through the peephole.

BARRIS

Fuck. Shit. Piss.

Barris unlocks the door. Simon Oliver stands there.

OLIVER

Barris.

BARRIS

How'd you know where I was?

OLIVER

Chuck, Chuck, Chuck, don't be an orangutan. We always know where you are. We always know what you're doing. By the by, I'd think twice before I'd attempt to get that tripe you're writing published. And there's a typo on page --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARRIS

Look, what do you want, Oliver? I don't work for you anymore. I have things to...

Barris trails off.

OLIVER

I'd like you to come back for one last assignment, Chuck.

BARRIS

No. Now get... Good-bye

OLIVER

I think you might be interested when I tell you it's the mole who fingered your friends Jim Byrd and Paul Picard... and Seigfried Keeler.

BARRIS

Keeler committed suicide.

OLIVER

Yes, of course he did. He threw himself from a twentieth floor window after he strangled himself to death with an electrical cord.

BARRIS

(beat)

I'm not interested, Oliver.

OLIVER

As long as the mole's alive, you don't have a chance in hell of remaining so. Besides, killing is in your blood, old man. You fit the profile.

Barris lunges at Oliver, pushes him against the wall.

BARRIS

That fucking profile again! What's the fuck is it?! What the fuck do you bastards know about me, that I don't?!

OLIVER

Indeed. Where to begin. First, let go of me.

Barris lets go. Oliver sits in a chair, straightens his shirt.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

OLIVER (CONT'D)

Let's see. Well, you had a twin sister, stillborn, strangled by *your* umbilical cord. Your first hit, Chuck. Your mother always wanted a daughter. She blamed you for your sister's death. And, so, until your sister Phoebe was born, she raised you as a girl.

BARRIS

That's not true.

OLIVER

Oh, and your father the dentist? Not really your father. Your biological father was a man named Edmund James Windsor. A serial killer. A fact your mother didn't know when she had an affair with him in 1930. If you want to look him up, he was also known as the Tarrytown Troll, because he had been described by witnesses as short and ugly. Windsor died in the electrical chair at Ossining in 1939. We believed your self-loathing tendencies coupled with that extra Y chromosome and whatever else you inherited from your father would serve us well.

BARRIS

You're lying.

OLIVER

I'm trying to think what more I can tell you. I'm sure there's more. But you have me at a disadvantage here, Barris. I don't have your files in front of me.

BARRIS

Just leave me the hell alone!

OLIVER

Your mother always loved the game shows, and you so wanted to please her. We never expected the game show business to work out for you. But that it did, turned out to be in our favor. I guess your need to be a good daughter drove you more than we anticipated.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Barris lunges at Oliver. The two wrestle on the floor.  
Barris punches him repeatedly in the face.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

Barris lies sleeping in a tangle of sheets. There's blood on his hands. A knock at the door. Barris jumps awake, grabs his gun. He looks around. The room is a mess, stuff knocked over. There's been a fight. He sees his bloody hands. Another knock.

BARRIS

Huh? What?

PENNY (O.S.)

Chuck? It's Pen.

Barris brings his gun with him to the door, looks through the peephole, then opens the door. Penny stands there, takes in the room, the mess, the haggard Barris.

PENNY (CONT'D)

Oh, Chuck.

BARRIS

Jesus, how'd *you* find me? Am I listed in some guidebook or something?

PENNY

You sent me your last letter on hotel stationary.

BARRIS

Oh. Well, it's great to see you, Pen.  
You look beautiful.

Barris hugs her.

PENNY

I don't really. But I appreciate the lie. I know how you hate lying.

(looking around)

Boy, this place is scary looking.

BARRIS

Yeah.

(taps his head)

The human psyche.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PENNY

I came to take you back to California with me. It's a lonely state without you.

BARRIS

I don't know, Redhead.

PENNY

I can't wait forever for you to ask me to marry you, you know. Well, apparently I can. But I really don't want to. Chuck.

BARRIS

Pen.

PENNY

(crying)

I love you so much. You don't understand. I don't even know why. You're such a schmuck.

BARRIS

You don't know the half of it.

PENNY

You're not gonna marry me, are you?

BARRIS

I don't know if I can.

Penny nods her head and leaves. Barris watches her go, then falls to the floor and weeps.

EXT. PLANE - DAY

EXT. UNION OYSTER HOUSE, BOSTON - NIGHT

INT. UNION OYSTER HOUSE, BOSTON

Barris, dressed in a suit, sits with Patricia Watson. He smiles across the table at her.

PATRICIA

I can't believe you finally left your two-hundred-dollar-a-night cave to see me. I'm honored.

BARRIS

Y'know, I got a visit this morning from Penny. She's wanted to marry me forever. But she doesn't know who I am, what I've, what I'm capable of.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARRIS (CONT'D)

And she can't ever know. So what does she really love? A lie. And I started thinking, Treesh, you are the only woman in the world who truly knows me. I know I've screwed you over in the past, and I'm really sorry. I just want you to know that you're the one I want to be with. I love you, Treesh.

Patricia looks at him. Her hard-as-nails demeanor softens. She smiles. Barris smiles and reaches across the table for her hand.

EXT. WHARF - NIGHT

Barris and Patricia stand looking out at the harbor.

BARRIS

I hate myself for how I've lived, Treesh.

PATRICIA

Neitzsche said, "Whoever despises oneself still respects oneself as one who despises."

BARRIS

I never thought of that. Jesus, I can't even despise myself with any insight.

PATRICIA

Insane asylums are filled with people who think they're Jesus or Satan. Very few have delusions of being the guy down the block who works at an insurance company. Wonder what that means.

BARRIS

Y'know, I wanted to be a writer once. I wanted to write something that someday some lesser person would quote. But I never did. I'm the lesser person, Treesh. I never said anything meaningful that wasn't said by somebody else first. I am disposable. I disposed of people and I am disposable.

(beat)

You look cold.

Barris drapes his jacket over Patricia's shoulders.

PATRICIA

Chuck, what's gotten into you? You're actually acting like a gentleman.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Barris kisses her. She lets him.

PATRICIA (CONT'D)

Well, it's late. I should get going.

BARRIS

I suppose you still won't tell me where you're staying.

PATRICIA

No. But I'll show you.

She takes his hand. They walk off.

INT. PATRICIA'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Patricia enters followed by Barris. She turns on the light.

PATRICIA

Drink?

BARRIS

Sure. Bourbon.

Patricia pours some drinks. There are a couple of chairs near the window. Barris sits in one.

PATRICIA

I've been thinking a lot about you lately, Chuck.

BARRIS

Yeah?

Patricia approaches Barris with the drinks, hands him one.

PATRICIA

I've missed you.

BARRIS

You could've fooled me.

PATRICIA

Well, I've mellowed.

Patricia takes Barris by the hand, leads him to the window.

PATRICIA (CONT'D)

Look. Boston's a beautiful city. We could start over here. A normal person's life. Together. Selling insurance.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARRIS  
That sounds right.

Patricia flops down in the chair that Barris had been sitting in. Barris sits in the chair across from her. Patricia raises her glass.

PATRICIA  
To life.

BARRIS  
To life.

Patricia casually slides her hand under the chair cushion. In one swift move, Barris pulls a gun from his ankle and shoots Patricia three times, twice in the head, once in the heart. The force of the bullets has tipped the chair over. Patricia lies sprawled on the floor.

BARRIS (CONT'D)  
(bitterly)  
L'Chaim.

Barris stands and looks at Patricia's body. She holds a gun.

INT. QUIET CAFE - MORNING

Simon Oliver sits sipping an espresso. He has a black eye and bruised face. Barris enters, looking haggard. He sits and stares at Oliver.

BARRIS  
It's done and I'm done. Agreed?

OLIVER  
Agreed. But if you get antsy... and you will.

Oliver smiles and walks off. Barris sits for a moment, then stands, walks over to a payphone and dials.

BARRIS  
Hey, Redhead?

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

Barris and Penny are getting married surrounded by friends in a small chapel.

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE  
We have come here today to join together  
Penny Pacino and Chuck Barris.  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE (CONT'D)

You all know Chuck Barris: the creator of The Dating Game, The Newlywed Game, The Family Game...

Barris looks at Penny. Should he slug this guy? She gives him a "be patient" look.

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE (CONT'D)

... The Game Game, Dream Girl of 1968, Operation Entertainment, How's Your Mother-in-Law? and many others. Chuck Barris who most recently brought us such hits as The Rah-Rah Show, Treasure Hunt, Leave it to the Women, The Dollar-Ninety-Eight Beauty Show, and The Gong Show. The Chuck Barris, who I'm sure will be back with even more shows to...

EXT. CHAPEL - DAY

Well-wishers, family, fans, photographers, reporters, and passers-by are lined up on either side of a red carpet that leads from the chapel to a limousine waiting at the curb. Barris and Penny emerge from the chapel. Everyone cheers, photos are snapped, rice and confetti are thrown, as the happy newlyweds make their way to the limo, Barris spots a pinky-ringed hand in the crowd holding a gun. Barris pushes Penny toward the white limo. The driver stands there holding the door open. Barris shoves Penny in, then screams at the driver.

BARRIS

Drive, Danny! Now!

Barris jumps in the car, the driver slams the door closed, hurries around the driver's door and gets in. The car peels away from the cab.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

An ashen Barris looks back at the crowd. Penny watches him.

PENNY

What's going on?

BARRIS

(still looking out window)

Pen, I have something to confess.

Penny's expression shifts, turns slightly stony. She's getting ready for something bad.

PENNY

Okay.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARRIS

(stalling)

You know me as the creator of The Dating Game, The Newlywed Game, The Family Game, The Game Game, How's Your Mother-in-law, Dream Girl of 1968...

PENNY

Operation Entertainment.

BARRIS

Yeah, Operation Entertainment. The Rah-Rah Show, Gong Show, The Dollar-Ninety-Eight Beauty Show, The Ra-Rah Show...

PENNY

You said that already.

BARRIS

Okay.

(beat)

Okay, but what you don't know is that I've brutally murdered thirty-three people for the CIA.

Penny just stares blankly at Barris, who can't look at her. Suddenly she starts to laugh. Danny joins in. Eventually so does Barris.

EXT. TERRACE - DAY

The actual Barris is being interviewed.

ACTUAL BARRIS

Y'know, I came up with a new game show idea recently. It's called The Old Game. You got three old guys with loaded guns on stage. They look back at their lives, see who they were, what they accomplished, how close they came to realizing their dreams. The winner is the one who doesn't blow his brains out. He gets a refrigerator.

The camera holds on Barris's face as he puffs a cigar.

BLACK.

THE END