

MR. CONFIDENTIAL

BOOK & LYRICS
Samuel Garza Bernstein

MUSIC
David Snyder

BASED ON THE AWARD-WINNING NON-FICTION BOOK

MR. CONFIDENTIAL
*The Man, His Magazine & The Movieland
Massacre That Changed Hollywood Forever*

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This is a fable, but almost all of it really happened.

CHARACTERS

ROBERT (BOB) HARRISON: Mr. Confidential himself. At first, all he cares about is finding a way to the top. The magazine makes him a star. But when his empire is attacked, he has a choice to make. What kind of man does he really want to be?

JEANNIE DOUGLAS: Bob's cotton-candy girlfriend is a drop-dead stunner. She's a showgirl who gets lots of ink from the columnists, and a dumb blonde who proves to be anything but. She loves Bob with all her heart.

MARJORIE MEADE: Bob's niece is an intelligent young wife and mother who unexpectedly becomes his right-hand in business. As "Confidential" gains in popularity, tabloids start calling her a "Flame-Haired Femme Fatale" and she relishes it... for a while.

HOWARD RUSHMORE: He's the razor-sharp, red-baiting writer who sees everyone as a probable enemy. His acid-tongue is matched by his energetic belief in his own infallibility. When things go spectacularly wrong, it is never his fault.

EDITH TOBIAS: Bob's matronly older sister is a worrier and a mother. Maybe she seems a little meek, but she morphs into a pit-bull when she has to defend her beloved brother Bob or her daughter Marjorie.

MICHAEL TOBIAS: He's a fresh-faced, geeky high school student; Bob's nephew, Marjorie's brother, Edith's son. He idolizes his Uncle Bob and idly dreams of becoming just like him one day.

FRANCES RUSHMORE: Howard Rushmore's pretty, alcoholic wife can give as good as she gets, but there's a fragility and honesty to her.

WALTER WINCHELL: The most famous newspaper and radio personality of the day, with 50 million readers and listeners. His rapid-fire, machine gun delivery is one-of-a-kind.

FRED MEADE: Marjorie's neglected husband is a good guy, but not the smartest or most exciting of men.

FRANCESCA DE SCAFFA: A source for magazine stories. She is sexy, mysterious, and of an indeterminate foreign origin.

ENSEMBLE Two more women and three men of varying shapes, sizes, ages, and ethnicity. They play many characters.

SONGS

ACT ONE

1. BET IT ALL (Bob/Company)
2. ONE OF THE FAMILY (Bob/Jeannie/Family/Girls)
3. FOUR AND TWENTY KARAT (Bob)
4. NOTHING TO HIDE (Bob)
5. AMERICAN MAN (Rushmore/Ensemble)
6. BLUE CHIP BABY (Jeannie/Bob/Quartet)
7. NAMING THE NAMES (Bob/Rushmore/Family)
8. MR. CONFIDENTIAL (Company)
9. GIRL NEXT DOOR (Marjorie/Girls)
10. DEAD OR ALIVE (Company)

ACT TWO

11. DEAD OR ALIVE - REPRISE (Company)
12. PEGA PALO (Jeannie/Girls)
13. THE DUCHESS OF DIRT (Marjorie)
14. TRIAL OF 100 STARS (Company)
15. GIRL NEXT DOOR - REPRISE (Marjorie/Company)
16. CONFIDENTIALLY SPEAKING (Bob)
17. THE GIRL WITH YELLOW HAIR (Jeannie)
18. BRIDGE ON FIRE (Bob/Rushmore)
19. FINALE (Company)

TIME

1952-1957

SETTINGS

New York

Los Angeles

Sets and transitions are fluid and not all that naturalistic,
and they utilize various mixed-media and light effects (MFX).

SCENES

FANTASY NEW YORK

BOB'S APARTMENT

STREETS OF NEW YORK

SUBWAY

BOB'S OFFICE

WASHINGTON PRESS CONFERENCE

BOB'S BEDROOM

FANTASY HOLLYWOOD

MARJORIE AND FRED'S KITCHEN

IDLEWILD AIRPORT

ED SULLIVAN SHOW

LOS ANGELES COURTROOM

MR. CONFIDENTIAL

ACT I

ACT I, SCENE 1 - FANTASY NEW YORK - 1957

AFX PROJECTION: BOB HARRISON in a fedora and dark glasses, with scandal headlines running across his skin. Then a collage of tabloid ARTICLES:

"MAGAZINE PUBLISHER BOB HARRISON IS SULTAN OF SLEAZE"

"CONFIDENTIAL BOSS SHOT IN JUNGLE LOVE TRIANGLE"

"GOSSIP RAG HAG IS DUCHESS OF DIRT"

"PEGA PALO GIRL FUMBLES AND TAKES A TUMBLE"

"WINCHELL'S WONDER BOY IS OUT"

COMPANY enters and looks at the projections. Then ROBERT (BOB) HARRISON enters.

BOB

'Confidential' BOSS. Bob Harrison. Me.

(points to headlines)

Take a guess, how much of that stuff actually happened?

(to someone in the audience)

You. Smart guy. Bet ya fifty bucks you can't tell the difference. Truth is, sometimes I can't tell the difference either.

SONG #01: BET IT ALL (BOB/COMPANY)

BOB/COMPANY

TAKE A LOOK
ALL THIS HULLABALLOO
ON THE HOOK
BUT I'M TELLING IT TRUE
I'M LIVIN' LARGE
AND BABY, THAT AIN'T A CRIME
I'M STILL IN CHARGE
BUT MAYBE, ON BORROWED TIME
BOTTOM LINE
WHAT THE REGISTER TELLS

BOB/COMPANY (CONT'D)

*RAIN OR SHINE
IT'S THE SIZZLE THAT SELLS
AND WHEN YOUR FATE COMES RINGIN'
YOU TAKE THE CALL
YOU'RE IN LUCK, TAKE A CHANCE
DOUBLE DOWN, BET IT ALL*

BOB

They called me a magazine titan, a Broadway and Hollywood big shot.

ENSEMBLE #1

You're a huckster.

ENSEMBLE #2

A pornographer.

ENSEMBLE #3

A blackmailer.

ENSEMBLE #4

A communist.

ENSEMBLE #5

A pervert.

BOB

But what I really am, is an All-American Success Story.

BOB

*DIDN'T CARE ABOUT FAME
FIND A SCOUT
AND HE'LL TELL YOU THE SAME
BUT WHEN IT HIT, OH BABY
WHAT COULD I DO?
YOU THINK I'D QUIT?
NO, BABY*

COMPANY

*HE GOT AROUND
DIDN'T CARE ABOUT FAME
HONOR BOUND
AND HE'LL TELL YOU THE SAME
DIDN'T CARE FOR FAME!
BUT WHEN IT HIT, OH BABY
WHAT COULD HE DO?*

COMPANY

No!

BOB

*WHO WOULD? WOULD YOU?
WAS I WRONG?
WELL, I LEAVE IT TO YOU
I'LL GO ALONG
GIVE THE DEVIL HIS DUE*

COMPANY

*WOULDN'T DO!
RIGHT OR WRONG
YES, IT'S ALL UP TO YOU
RIGHT OR WRONG
IF YOU WANT HIM TO*

BOB/COMPANY

*BUT WHEN YOUR FATE COMES RINGIN'
YOU TAKE THE CALL
YOU'RE IN LUCK, TAKE A CHANCE
DOUBLE DOWN, BET IT ALL*

MFx: GIRLY MAGS: Projections of the covers of "Titter," "Wink," "Whisper," "Eyeful," "Flirt," and "Beauty Parade."

BOB

My first magazines were swank --
fantasies, glorifying the American Girl.
And fellas, they were a hit. We took
America by storm.

A trio of BEAUTIES emerges.

BOB

*YOUR TURN HONEY
THROW 'EM A CURVE
OH, THE NERVE
LOOK AT ALL THAT BRAZEN BEAUTY
WHERE DOES A GUY REPORT FOR DUTY?
THE BIRDS AND BEES ARE BOPPIN'
NO DROPPIN' THE BALL
GIVE IN TO NATURE'S ELEMENTAL CALL*

BOB

(to someone in the audience)

Great lookin', right? I know 'em all.
Personally. Oh, no, not like that. Get
your mind out of the gutter, buddy.
(winks at a girl)
Ain't she a peach. Each one special.

COMPANY

PICK A WINNER, PICK A WINNER, PICK A WINNER

BOB

*STRIKE IT RICH
MULTI-MILLIONAIRE DEALS
THEN A HITCH
AND YOU'RE SPINNING YOUR WHEELS*

BOB/COMPANY

*YOU'RE TAKING TEA AT THE RITZ
THEN SIPPIN' RIPPLE AT SIX
NEVER MIND
TAKE A CHANCE
DOUBLE DOWN
BET IT ALL*

Beautiful redhead MARJORIE enters
with her husband FRED, brother
MICHAEL, and mother EDITH.

BOB

Believe it or not, THIS was a family
business. We made it happen together: my
sister Edith, and her kids Michael and
Marjorie. And that's Marjorie's husband--

MARJORIE

Fred.

BOB

Yeah, Fred.

FAMILY

*TAKING PRIDE IN WHAT FAMILY ACHIEVES
THICK AS THIEVES
BUT A CREDIT TO OUR COUNTRY
WE IGNORE INDICTMENTS
EXCITEMENTS, AND PRANKS
WE'RE AMERICAN
AS MOM AND KOSHER FRANKS*

ENSEMBLE

KOSHER FRANKS

BOB

Jeannie. My Pega Palo Jungle Beauty.

JEANNIE

*TITTER TATTLE AND SECRET AFFAIRS
BUT HE CARES
MORE THAN ANYONE CONSIDERS
HE'S MY GREAT BIG BOBBY
BIG BOB, BE A LAMB
ADD A LETTER TO MY PERSONAL MONOGRAM*

BOB

*BACK TO BUSINESS
ALL KIDDING ASIDE
I CAN'T HIDE
FROM THE DESTINY BEFORE ME*

JEANNIE/MARJORIE

*HE'S GOT DECISIONS TO MAKE
ABOUT THE ROAD HE WILL TAKE*

BOB

I'LL MAKE IT SOMETHING TO REMEMBER...

JEANNIE/MARJORIE/FAMILY

SOMETHING TO REMEMBER

ENSEMBLE

SOMETHING TO REMEMBER

BOB

*WHAT A TIME
I'LL BE MAKING A TOAST*

BOB (CONT'D)

*DROP A DIME
CALL THE 'NEWS' AND THE 'POST'*

COMPANY
HE'S MAKING HEADLINES
BABY, IT'S GOING ON

BOB
NOT TALKING BREADLINES
BABY, THOSE DAYS ARE GONE

COMPANY
DONE AND GONE

BOB/COMPANY
GO ALL NIGHT
IF THE FAT LADY SINGS

BOB
SET HER RIGHT
WITH SOME MUSIC THAT SWINGS
'CAUSE WHEN YOUR FATE COMES RINGIN'
YOU TAKE THE CALL

COMPANY
BETTER ANSWER THE CALL
KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE BALL
YOU'RE IN LUCK
TAKE A CHANCE
DOUBLE DOWN

BOB
YES, I'M BETTING IT ALL

COMPANY
BETTER ANSWER THE CALL
KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE BALL
YOU'RE IN LUCK
TAKE A CHANCE
DOUBLE DOWN

BOB/COMPANY
BET IT ALL!

SCENE SHIFTS TO:

ACT I, SCENE 2 - BOB'S APT./HOTEL - 1952

Bob remains. An elevated area is set up for a photo shoot. Scantly clad BEAUTIES wait to pose for magazine pix. Edith, Michael, and Marjorie are busy with paperwork, the mail, and the phone.

BOB

(to audience)

I started with beautiful girls in beautiful layouts bringing beautiful dreams to men everywhere. Okay, so maybe most of those dreams were wet. Go figure.

EDITH

Marjorie, are you sure you told Jeannie the right time? It's not like her to be late.

MARJORIE

Of course I did. Ten.

BOB

It's only a quarter past.

MICHAEL

You don't think something's happened to her?

EDITH

It better had.

BOB

Edith.

EDITH

I just mean, I hope she's got a good reason. Clock's tick-tocking.

BOB

(to the models)

Girls, you okay? Mikey, go get some egg creams or something.

EDITH

Good idea. Keep up their strength.

MICHAEL

Sure, Uncle Bob.

Michael opens the door to exit, to find Jeannie outside, about to come in.

JEANNIE

I'm so sorry. We were going along, and then suddenly, they're saying the next stop is Jamaica! Can you believe it? I ask you, how's a train supposed to drive to the Caribbean?

EDITH

It's Queens.

BOB

Yeah, Sweetheart, Jamaica in Queens.

JEANNIE

There's a Jamaica in Queens?

BOB

Jeannie, you've lived here your whole life.

JEANNIE

Well, I never been to Queens.

BOB

Don't worry. What's fifteen minutes? Right, Edith? RIGHT?

EDITH

You're lucky I like you so much.

JEANNIE

I'll be quick, just let me get undressed.

BOB

Mikey, never mind the egg creams, bring over the columns. Girls, think Greek. You're getting ready for a big Greek goddess shindig or whatever.

The girls get ready. They start practicing poses in various stages of undress -- the see through lingerie is mixed with sheer material arranged like short togas.

Michael arranges gold papier mâché columns and a cheesy Greco-Roman backdrop.

JEANNIE

(off columns)

They're so tall. And gold.

BOB

For you? The best. So. Ladies. Focus. Now, Gods, men, everyone -- they're all waiting for you. But you don't care. MAKE 'em wait. You're getting ready in goddess time.

EDITH

It's too virginal. How about you rip down the front and add a blindfold?

BOB

Like she's being kidnapped?

MICHAEL

Kidnapped?

EDITH

Sure. Kidnapped.

MARJORIE

Gee, Mom, I never figured you for the pervy stuff.

BOB

Edith, I love you, but don't mix in on the creative. THIS is the picture I want in my magazine.

(to Jeannie as he starts shooting)

Gimme some three-quarter. More to the right.

JEANNIE

My right or their right or yours?

BOB

That way. Yes. Marvelous.

EDITH

It's just an idea... How about a spanking instead?

BOB

Jeannie doesn't do that kind of thing.

They shoot. Bob moves the girls around.

MICHAEL

I like how Uncle Bob has it. Like they stepped right off Mount Olympus, or Vesuvius or something.

EDITH

Keep your tongue in your head or I'll make you wash it out.

MICHAEL

That doesn't even make sense.

BOB

Let me switch lenses.

JEANNIE
(shivers, then to one of the girls)
Jeez, the landlord's pretty stingy with the heat.

BOB
You okay, Honey?

JEANNIE
Me? Sure. I'm swell. Promise.

BOB
Girls, let's take five.

EDITH
We started late as it is. Already a five?

Jeannie sneezes.

BOB
For Jeannie.

EDITH
Okay. That's a five.

Bob puts a sweater around her shoulders and sits with her.

SONG #02: ONE OF THE FAMILY
(Bob, Jeannie, Marjorie, Edith, Michael, Girls)

BOB
*ARE YOU WARM ENOUGH?
COMFORTABLE IN THAT POSITION?*

EDITH
*DON'T WANT THE CHILD TO CRAMP
IT'S NOT LIKE SHE'S A TRAMP*

BOB
SHE'S A NICE GIRL

EDITH
ONE OF THE FAMILY

JEANNIE
A NICE GIRL

ALL
*ONE OF THE FAMILY
ESSENTIAL TO THE FAMILY BUSINESS*

Jeannie sneezes again.

BOB
*ARE YOU CATCHING COLD?
CAN YOU WORK IN THIS CONDITION?*

JEANNIE
(spoken)
I'm fine, really, don't make such a fuss.

EDITH
WE'LL ORDER CHICKEN SOUP

MARJORIE
BEFORE SHE GETS THE CROUP

ALL
SHE'S A NICE GIRL

BOB/EDITH
ONE OF THE FAMILY

ALL
A NICE GIRL

MARJORIE/MICHAEL
ONE OF THE FAMILY

ALL
ESSENTIAL TO THE FAMILY BUSINESS

BOB
*MAYBE SOMEONE, SOMEWHERE
IN THE MIDDLE OF THE MIDDLE
OF THE MIDDLE MID-WEST
MIGHT LOOK AT OUR BUSINESS
AND SEE SOMETHING ELSE*

EDITH
BUT WE'RE NICE PEOPLE

MICHAEL
*AND THESE ARE NICE GIRLS
OUR FAMILY BUSINESS IS THE BEST...*

JEANNIE
Aren't you ever jealous, thinking about other
guys looking at my picture?

BOB
Let 'em look. I know you're my girl. Here, I
got you something.

Bob takes a small jewelry box from
his pocket, but drops it on the
floor. He crouches down to get it,
and then holds the box up to Jeannie.
She thinks he's proposing.

JEANNIE
Oh, Bobby.

She opens the box, then tries to hide her disappointment that it isn't a ring.

JEANNIE

Earrings...

Bob stands up and realizes what she assumed. It seems like it might become an uncomfortable moment, but they are tender with one another.

JEANNIE

Bob, they're just beautiful. Diamonds!

BOB

Not real ones. Not yet. But one day. I promise.

JEANNIE

I don't care. I love 'em.

BOB

Jeannie, I'm not in a position yet to, well, you know... But stick with me and one day I'll make diamonds rain down from the sky for you.

JEANNIE

Won't that hurt?

EDITH

Break's over, and I think somebody needs a spanking.

JEANNIE

What did I do?

BOB

Edith, what did I just tell you? No.

EDITH

I'm just thinking of the readers. They love stuff like that.

JEANNIE

I don't mind. I mean, if you need it for the magazine.

They arrange the spanking. It's very tame. Bob hands the camera to Michael and gets in the picture, spanking Jeannie.

SONG #02: ONE OF THE FAMILY

EDITH

*JUST A LITTLE TAP
WOULD IT BE AN IMPOSITION?*

JEANNIE

*WELL, IF IT HELPS THE CAUSE
NOT BREAKING ANY LAWS*

MICHAEL

SHE'S A NICE GIRL

EDITH/MARJORIE

ONE OF THE FAMILY

BOB/JEANNIE

A NICE GIRL

EDITH/MARJORIE/MICHAEL

ONE OF THE FAMILY

ALL

ESSENTIAL TO THE FAMILY BUSINESS

BOB/MARJORIE

*MAYBE SOMEONE, SOMEWHERE
IN THE MIDDLE OF THE MIDDLE OF
THE MIDDLE MID-WEST*

BOB/MARJORIE/EDITH/MICHAEL

*MIGHT LOOK AT OUR BUSINESS
AND SEE SOMETHING ELSE*

EDITH

*BUT WE'RE NICE PEOPLE
AND THESE ARE NICE GIRLS*

MARJORIE/MICHAEL

OUR FAMILY BUSINESS IS THE BEST

ALL

*WE'RE AN ORDINARY FAMILY
JUST WANNA MAKE A LIVING
AN ORDINARY FAMILY--*

EDITH

NO MUSS

ALL

*HUSTLE AND BUSTLE BUT NO FUSS
WE'RE JUST A FAMILY
WITH A FAMILY BUSINESS
THAT'S US*

The bell rings. Edith answers.

TELEGRAM DELIVERY MAN
Telegram for Mr. Robert Harrison, et. al.

EDITH
I'll take it.

TELEGRAM DELIVERY MAN
You're Robert Harrison?

EDITH
I'm the 'et. al.'

She tips him and he exits.

BOB
Who died?

EDITH
It's from our attorneys. Bob, they got a subpoena. From Washington. Saying we're 'distributing lewd and lascivious material across state lines.'

Marjorie takes the telegram and reads it.

BOB
I bet it's nothing. Someone's idea of a joke.

MARJORIE
No, Uncle Bob, it looks legit. If you want to keep publishing, you're gonna have to PROVE the magazines aren't obscene. In court.

BOB
So, I'll go to DC. I'm the greatest salesman there is. They'll see it my way, believe me.

EDITH
To the government, you're a pornographer.

BOB
Don't make such a big deal about this. Maybe we just change things up a little, make the girls more ladylike.

JEANNIE
I could be a nun!

EDITH
Don't you get it? What the readers WANT is the stuff Uncle Sam is saying is illegal. If it's MAILABLE it ain't SALABLE.

BOB
So we make a little less money.

EDITH
We're hardly breaking even as it is.

BOB
What?

EDITH
Every month, we're a little more in the red.

BOB
Then how are we paying for all this?

EDITH
Some months we aren't. Maybe it's time we quit while we're behind.

BOB
Great. So, you're giving me a choice between being a failure or being a criminal.

EDITH
Look, I've got some cash put aside.

BOB
I don't want my sister bailing me out. What kind of loser would that make me?

EDITH
A loser? I don't care what your bank book says, in MY book you're pure gold. Solid four and twenty karat.

BOB
Fool's gold, more like...

Family disperses.

JEANNIE
(offering him the earrings)
Maybe you could get your money back?

BOB
Oh, Honey, they're worthless... Like me.

She exits. The other characters
fade into the shadows, leaving Bob
alone.

SCENE SHIFTS TO:

ACT I, SCENE 3 - NEW YORK STREET SCENE

SONG #03: FOUR AND TWENTY KARAT (BOB)

BOB

SMALL TIMER, BIG DREAMS
 OUT OF THE GAME
 NOT A DIME TO YOUR NAME
 LOOKING FOR SOMETHING
 OR SOMEONE TO BLAME
 NOTHING NEW
 IT'S DOWN TO YOU
 YOU BETTER REMEMBER
 WHATEVER YOU DO--
 BE SOLID FOUR AND TWENTY KARAT
 BE SOLID GOLD
 BIG TALKER, SMALL MAN
 YESTERDAY'S NEWS
 NOTHING LEFT YOU CAN LOSE
 CRYING A RIVER
 AND SINGING THE BLUES
 SHOW SOME CLASS
 AND TAKE A PASS
 YOU BETTER REMEMBER
 IF OUT ON YOUR ASS--
 BE SOLID FOUR AND TWENTY KARAT
 BE SOLID GOLD
 TAKE IT BACK TO THE BEGINNING
 YOU SEE A KID
 STANDING TALL
 SAYING, 'LOOK AT WHO I'LL BE'
 'I'LL BE OUT THERE WINNING
 WINNING IT ALL'
 OFF KILTER, ON ICE
 OUT OF THE GATE
 BUT TOO LITTLE, TOO LATE
 WANNA SURRENDER
 AND LEAVE IT TO FATE
 WHY PRETEND
 BUT BUCK THE TREND
 YOU BETTER REMEMBER
 TO WIN IN THE END--
 BE SOLID FOUR AND TWENTY KARAT
 BE SOLID GOLD
 TAKE IT BACK TO THE BEGINNING
 YOU SEE A KID
 STANDING TALL
 SAYING, 'LOOK AT WHO I'LL BE'
 'I'LL BE OUT THERE WINNING
 WINNING IT ALL'
 BELIEVE IT AGAIN
 BELIEVE IT, AND THEN
 YOU'RE SOLID FOUR AND TWENTY KARAT
 YOU'RE SOLID GOLD

MFX: BROOKLYN -- under the bridge
on the Brooklyn side.

BOB
Where the hell am I?

PEDESTRIAN
Brooklyn.

BOB
I don't even remember crossing the bridge. How
am I supposed to get back to civilization?

PEDESTRIAN
Ain't you never heard of the subway?

SCENE SHIFTS TO:

ACT I, SCENE 4 - SUBWAY CAR

Groups of people are packed in clusters. There is no escaping their conversations.

GOSSIP #1

I know for a fact, Bobo Rockefeller's cleaning his clock in the divorce. She took the hush money but she won't shut up.

GOSSIP #2

You know Mrs. Rockefeller?

GOSSIP #1

I heard it from my friend Madeline who heard it at the salon where Bobo has a standing appointment Tuesdays and Fridays.

GOSSIP #2

Twice a week? Now, THAT'S money.

Annoyed, Bob moves away, encountering another cluster.

GOSSIP #3

The United Nations is a mess. My dad's a janitor there. He says they're all slobs. Especially the French.

Now interested, Bob moves to another cluster.

GOSSIP #4

I heard he was makin' craps with a dice girl, and that's why he got the axe.

BOB

Who? Who got the axe?

ALL GOSSIPS

Excuse me, this is a private conversation.

BOB

Private?

SCENE SHIFTS TO:

ACT I, SCENE 5 - BOB'S APT./HOTEL

Family reassembles as Bob enters,
all excited and cheerful.

BOB

What do you think about when I say... Bobo
Rockefeller?

EDITH

Huh?

JEANNIE

Well, she and Rocky are splitsville. And she's
trying to take Rocky for a bundle. Is that what
you mean?

BOB

And... how do you know that?

JEANNIE

I heard it in the ladies' room at the Copa.

BOB

Exactly!

JEANNIE

Really?

BOB

BUT. What if you didn't live in New York, where
Bobo gets her nails done, and buys stockings,
and goes to lunch, spreading stories about
herself?

JEANNIE

Well... then I guess I wouldn't know about it.

BOB

I think I've got an idea for a new magazine.

EDITH

Bob, we're closing down SIX of them right now.

BOB

Not a girly magazine, something different,
something new. Something BIG. Big enough to
make fake diamonds and delicatessens
yesterday's news.

JEANNIE

You LOVE corned beef.

BOB

Sure I do. But caviar is better. Right?

JEANNIE

Too fishy.

BOB

You'll learn to love it.

JEANNIE

Well, what kind of magazine do you want to invent?

BOB

INVENT. I love it. See? You're an inspiration.

JEANNIE

An inspiration...

BOB

It'll be about public people -- but their private lives. Not just gossip... MEAT! COLOR! LIFE! Grab a newspaper, any paper, and tell me a story.

MICHAEL

(off paper)

The Trumans are throwing a dinner on account of Eisenhower getting elected.

BOB

Okay. Politics. Diplomacy. Dinner. But what's underneath?

MICHAEL

I don't get it.

BOB

The official story of who said what to whom'll be boring, like eating your vegetables. No fun.

MARJORIE

Truman and Eisenhower don't exactly scream fun.

BOB

Maybe Ike and Bess were flirting and Harry got sore. Maybe J. Edgar Hoover thinks Mamie's a commie. Maybe the butler says all four of 'em are slobs.

EDITH

That's a whole lot of 'maybes.'

BOB

The stories are there, ripe for the picking. I FEEL it. Now, who do we know?

EDITH

For what?

BOB
Investors.

EDITH
Investors? We keep things in the family. If we need money, we scrape it up ourselves.

BOB
No scraping, or scrimping, or skimping. I'll find the money.

EDITH
Bob, you just... You do whatever it takes. We're with you.

Everyone but Bob exits. At a drawing board he tries different ideas. Each time he discards an idea and crumples it up, we see it projected.

IKE LAYOUT IDEA: "Who DOESN'T Like Ike? Harry!" Erases. "Mamie!" "The Butler!" Paper crumples.

BOB
(in sync, crumples up paper)
Who'm I kidding? Everybody likes Ike,

J. EDGAR HOOVER LAYOUT IDEA:
"Hoover Makes the Moves on Mamie"
"On BESS" "On McCarthy" Paper crumples.

BOB
Forget politics. Hollywood. Beautiful...

DIETRICH IDEA: "Marlene Dietrich is... Beautiful."

BOB
Sexy...

MFX: Crumples. "Sexy..."

BOB
A German...

MFX: Crumples. "German..." Paper crumples.

Jeannie enters.

JEANNIE
You've been working like a dog all day long.

BOB

The magazine. First, it's so real I can touch it. Then, I don't know. What's actually so special? What'll make it matter, make it great?

JEANNIE

I don't know.

BOB

Everyone is counting on me. I gotta make this one stick. Now or never.

JEANNIE

Well, it's all about getting the stories, right?

BOB

Yeah, but... okay, so let's say we do a story about Marlene Dietrich for instance. I mean, I know she had an affair with Chevalier, then with Gary Cooper.

JEANNIE

Everybody knows that.

BOB

That's the trouble.

JEANNIE

(excitedly speeding through it)

But you know what I heard from my girlfriend Pauline? She was friends with the actress Evelyn Keyes, remember, the one who was Vivien Leigh's sister in 'Gone with the Wind?' Well, Evelyn was married to the movie director John Huston, you know, who made 'The African Queen?' And John Huston was good friends with Gary Cooper, except that they fell out over a poker game. But anyway, so Cooper told John, who told Evelyn, who told Pauline, who told ME that Marlene Dietrich had a black LOVER in Africa who was a WOMAN!

BOB

Holy cow. I should write about THAT?

JEANNIE

Well, if it's true, I guess. I mean, it's interesting, right? People'll want to read it.

BOB

'Marlene Dietrich's Secret Life... THE BARITONE BABE AND HER NUBIAN NYMPH' Hah!

JEANNIE

What's a Nubian?

BOB

I don't know, a naked African. Not just naked.
Beautiful, perfect, gorgeous AND naked. Nubian.
Say it with me.

BOB/JEANNIE

Nubian.

BOB

I love it. And you know what? I'll bet you
dollars to donuts that for the right price, I
can find a lot of people to tell me stories
like that.

JEANNIE

I don't know. Pauline told me to keep it
confidential.

(giggles as she exits)

But I guess I didn't.

Fireworks go off in his head.

BOB

Confidential! Baby, you're the best.

He kisses her and she recedes.

SONG #04: NOTHING TO HIDE (BOB)

BOB

A WORLD
WAITING
NEW
WILD
JUST LOOKING FOR A CHANCE
TO BREAK FREE
I SEE IT ALL IN FRONT OF ME
LIVING, BREATHING
A WORLD WITH NOTHING TO HIDE
MORE THAN JUST
A HALF-REMEMBERED WHISPER
OR A SHADOWY EMBRACE
PAINT A RUMOR
DARK AND DANGEROUS
BUT IN THE EDGES
THERE IS ALSO GRACE
IN A WORLD WITH NOTHING TO HIDE
IT'S BEAUTIFUL
NOTHING TO HIDE
COME PLAY WITH ME
SUN, SHINING A LIGHT IN EVERY CORNER
MUSIC, SINGING OF WHO WE REALLY ARE
LOVE, TAKING THE BLINDERS FROM OUR EYES
LIFE, LIVING AT LAST WITHOUT DISGUISE
LETTING THE TRUTH INSPIRE

BOB (CONT'D)

*SETTING YOUR SECRETS FREE
GETTING YOUR HEART'S DESIRE
NOTHING TO HIDE
YES, IT'S BEAUTIFUL
NOTHING TO HIDE
EVERY ONE OF US WITH
NOTHING TO HIDE
NO NEED TO LOOK AWAY
TAKE MY HAND
COME AND PLAY
WHERE THERE'S NOTHING TO HIDE
I'LL SHOW THE WORLD
EXACTLY WHAT IT'S WANTING TO SEE
A BRILLIANT NEW REALITY
A WORLD WITH NOTHING TO HIDE
COME AND PLAY WITH ME*

BOB (CONT'D)

Confidential!

SCENE SHIFTS TO:

ACT I, SCENE 6 - BOB'S FIRE ESCAPE

Late that night. Bob is in his bedroom. We see him through the vantage point of a fire escape outside his window. He pours a drink and sits down, thinking.

Two women converge on another level of the fire escape below him. He gets drawn in to their conversation.

WOMAN

Sherman Billingsly's a slave driver.

WOMAN #2

Still, it's the Stork Club.

WOMAN

The boss was in such a mood. Josephine Baker came in, and he refused to serve her on account of her being a Negro. Well. Did she raise a ruckus. Then she sees that there, right across the room, is Winchell--

BOB

(butting in)

WALTER WINCHELL?

WOMAN

(shouts up at him)

Yeah. Winchell. Is there an echo out here?

BOB

Winchell. Huge. 'Fifty Million People Can't Be Wrong.'

WOMAN

(back to her friend)

So Baker tells Winchell to make a stink on the radio about it, but he give her the brush off. Suddenly she's screaming how Winchell's a Negro Hater. Was he steamed. He called her a commie and a tramp and told her to go back to France.

WOMAN #2

I bet it's in all the papers tomorrow...

BOB

Winchell...!

BOTH WOMEN

Yeah. Winchell.

WOMAN #2

But, excuse me--

BOTH WOMEN

This is a private conversation.

BOB

Private...

Bob is lost in thought. Jeannie enters.

JEANNIE

Bobby, I thought we were going out.

BOB

Ah. Sorry, Doll...

JEANNIE

What are you doing?

BOB

You know, thinking...

JEANNIE

Thinking, thinking, thinking... That brain of yours never stops.

BOB

No, I'm just-- So we got the idea, right? But how do we make sure people find out about it?

JEANNIE

I don't know, how?

BOB

I'm thinking... Winchell.

JEANNIE

'Fifty Million People Can't Be Wrong.'

BOB

Exactly. So. If I can figure a way to get him on our side, maybe he spreads the word about the magazine, and we're in business.

JEANNIE

Hmmm.

BOB

You know anybody who knows him?

JEANNIE

No, but you got a copy of this morning's 'Post?'

Bob grabs a paper and gives it to Jeannie. She thumbs through and shows Bob an article.

MFX Projection of the story:

WALTER WINCHELL'S D.C. WONDER BOY
OUT

JEANNIE

It's about this writer in D.C. who's into all that anti-commie stuff. But Senator McCarthy just fired him.

BOB

What's that got to do with Winchell?

JEANNIE

They say Winchell loves him like a son.

BOB

I get it. I give HIM a break, maybe Winchell gives ME a break.

JEANNIE

Ipsa facto.

BOB

I gotta go to D.C.

JEANNIE

I just love it when you get all excited like this.

BOB

Baby, you're... Incredible.

SCENE SHIFTS TO:

ACT I, SCENE 7 - WASHINGTON, D.C. CAPITOL STEPS

Rushmore takes center stage at a
press conference. Bob mixes in
like he's one of the REPORTERS.

REPORTER #1

Mr. Rushmore, are the reports of a rift between
you and Senator McCarthy true? Are you going
your separate ways?

RUSHMORE

No. That story is a phony.

REPORTER #2

Then you're NOT leaving?

RUSHMORE

What's all this talk of separate ways and leaving? Senator
Joe McCarthy and I are on the same team. There's nothing
separate about us working on that team in separate places.

REPORTER #1

(aside)

Well, that's a new spin on gettin' canned.

REPORTER #2

(aside)

A new spin? It's practically a whirling
dervish.

REPORTER #3

Did you or did you not get the axe? Just tell
the truth.

SONG #05: AMERICAN MAN (Rushmore/ENSEMBLE)

RUSHMORE

*THESE GUTTER ACCUSATIONS KILLING ME
IT'S SLANDER FROM THE COMMIE FAMILY TREE
THE SABOTEURS' SECRET STRATEGY
IT AIN'T AMERICAN
A SOLDIER FIGHTING IN A HOLY WAR
AND TAKEN HOSTAGE AT THE DEVIL'S DOOR
I'LL GIVE THOSE DIRTY PINKOS WHAT FOR
'CAUSE I'M A GREAT AMERICAN
LOOKING DOWN THE BARREL OF A GUN
NO ONE TO TURN TO, NO PLACE TO RUN
THE TALE IS TREASONOUS
AND THAT'S THE REASON, US--
PATRIOTS'LL GET 'EM
WE'RE GONNA GO AND GET 'EM
GOTTA GO AND GET 'EM, GET 'EM SON
I'M AMERICAN*

RUSHMORE/CROWD

SO AMERICAN

RUSHMORE
GREAT AMERICAN

RUSHMORE/CROWD
ALL AMERICAN.

RUSHMORE
*KEEPING GOD AND COUNTRY OUT IN FRONT
HOW COULD MY DEVOTION BE A STUNT?
I AM VOCIFEROUS
MY TOP LIP STIFFER, US--
PATRIOTS 'LL GET 'EM
WE'RE GONNA GO AND GET 'EM
US WARRIORS ARE GOING ON THE HUNT*

RUSHMORE/CROWD
I'M AMERICAN, SO AMERICAN, GREAT AMERICAN

RUSHMORE
ALL AMERICAN

BOB
(joining the reporters)
Tell us, Mr. Rushmore, how serious is the
threat we face together as Americans?

RUSHMORE
Glad you asked. Dead serious, sir.

BOB
Have you ever considered using a national
magazine as a platform?

RUSHMORE
I've been weighing such possibilities.

BOB
Wouldn't it be terrific if all of America could
hear what YOU have to say.

RUSHMORE
Why, yes, it would.

SONG #05: AMERICAN MAN (Rushmore) CONT'D

RUSHMORE
*KEEPING LOYAL AMERICAN CITIZENS
SAFE IN LOYAL AMERICAN BEDS
BY SNIFFING OUT THESE GODLESS, EVIL-DOING REDS
IT'S JUST MY DUTY
AND BROTHER IT'S YOUR DUTY TOO
IT'S EVERYBODY'S DUTY*

CROWD
EVERYBODY'S DUTY

RUSHMORE
AMERICAN MAN

MEN
AMERICA

RUSHMORE
AMERICAN WOMAN

WOMEN
AMERICA

RUSHMORE
AMERICAN KID

ALL
DO IT LIKE THE FOUNDING FATHERS DID

RUSHMORE
I'M WATCHING YOU

CROWD
HE IS WATCHING YOU

RUSHMORE/CROWD
'CAUSE--

RUSHMORE
YOU'RE AMERICAN

CROWD
Yes!

RUSHMORE
SO AMERICAN
GREAT AMERICAN

RUSHMORE/CROWD
ALL AMERICAN
I'M A GREAT AMERICAN MAN

Bob is left with Rushmore and
FRANCES, Rushmore's wife.

BOB
Howard Rushmore, Bob Harrison. Happy to meet
you. And this must be Mrs. Rushmore.

RUSHMORE
My wife, Frances.

BOB
How'd you like it if I make your boy here
famous?

RUSHMORE
Everyone who matters knows who I am already.

BOB
Here in Washington.

RUSHMORE

Not just Washington.

BOB

Of course not. I've heard of you. And Walter Winchell is certainly a fan.

RUSHMORE

Walter and I go way back.

BOB

I'm starting a new mag in New York. Come work for me.

FRANCES

A job?

RUSHMORE

Washington is our home.

BOB

But New York is the greatest.

RUSHMORE

AMERICA is the greatest.

FRANCES

Honey, think about it.

BOB

We'll get you moved, get you an apartment. Something real nice.

FRANCES

A new beginning...?

RUSHMORE

Can I ask you a question, on the square?

BOB

Anything you like.

RUSHMORE

Why me?

BOB

I'm an American too.

RUSHMORE

And that's the only reason?

BOB

Nothing wrong with putting your country first. But I'm also a businessman. And you're good business.

RUSHMORE

Because of what?

BOB

Your talent. Your associations. Your contacts.

RUSHMORE

You mean Winchell. That's who you're really after.

BOB

Not true. Sure, Winchell could be a great supporter for the magazine, but if I didn't believe in you and your work, I wouldn't be here, Winchell or no Winchell.

RUSHMORE

I don't work for just anybody, you know.

BOB

I'm not just anybody. Take a leap of faith. I bet you want to.

FRANCES

Howard, say yes. Please.

RUSHMORE

I guess that's it then. Yes.

BOB

Fantastic.

RUSHMORE

I want you to know something about me. I'm the guy you want to have with you in a foxhole. The guy who comes through. I just hope you are too.

BOB

I won't disappoint you.

They shake and Bob exits.

Rushmore and Frances are alone. She bursts into tears and hugs him.

We hear the sound of telegraph keys urgently tapped and a musical fanfare.

WALTER WINCHELL emerges, hand pressed to his ear as he broadcasts into a microphone in a high-pitched yet oddly stentorian, machine-gun-rapid voice.

WALTER WINCHELL

Good evening Mr. and Mrs. America, from border to border and coast to coast and all the ships at sea, this is Walter Winchell, let's go to press.

WALTER WINCHELL (CONT'D)

The same thing happened today that happened yesterday, only to different people. And I've got big news. Can't say what. Can't say when. But a couple of guys I know are cooking up something colossal.

Winchell recedes.

SCENE SHIFTS TO:

ACT I, SCENE 8 - BOB'S APT./OFFICE

Bob is with Edith and Jeannie.

BOB

We'll call it 'Confidential.' We tell the facts and name the names. Every last one of 'em.

EDITH

Then it's official? And it's... Gossip.

BOB

Not just gossip. Fun. Truth. Love. Freedom. Life!

JEANNIE

Isn't he adorable?

BOB

We're not just selling a magazine, we're selling a new world.

EDITH

Then you've got the money to do it? An investor?

BOB

I've got more than money. I've got ideas.

EDITH

It's still going to take a lot of little pieces of paper with pictures of presidents on them.

(she tosses a savings passbook to him)

That enough?

BOB

(off passbook)

That's a lot in savings, Edith. You sure?

EDITH

If you're sure, I'm sure. It's a family business.

She exits.

BOB

(looks again at the passbook)

Actually, I don't think this is going to be enough. And I still gotta pay for Rushmore's apartment.

JEANNIE

Why don't you get the dough on the stock market?

BOB

What do I know about investing?

JEANNIE

I mean the other way around. Get people to invest in YOU.

BOB

Money men only want what's been done a million times before. What we got is new. But there is an idea there...

JEANNIE

Really?

BOB

It might not raise any money, but it would be a hell of a publicity stunt.

SCENE SHIFTS TO:

ACT I. SCENE 9 - NEW YORK STOCK EXCHANGE

Bob addresses the press.

BOB

Ready to take the world by storm, meet Jeannie Douglas, Incorporated. Assets: blonde hair, hazel eyes, 37-inch bust, 22-inch waist, 36-inch hips, and the sexiest swivel in showbiz. She's a showgirl selling shares... in HERSELF.

A quartet emerges, surrounding Jeannie.

SONG #06: BLUE CHIP BABY (Jeannie/BOB/QUARTET)

BOB

WALL STREET'S GOTTA GET IN LINE

JEANNIE

WHAT'S MINE IS YOURS
WHAT'S YOURS IS MINE
AND THAT'S JUST THAT

BOB

EVERYBODY'S CAT GETS FAT

JEANNIE

SHOWGIRL SELLS SHARES IN SELF
IT'S SO INGENIOUS (IN-GEE-NEE-US)
GEE, I'M A GENIUS (GEE-NEE-US)
SHOWGIRL SELLS SHARES IN SELF
MY SYSTEMATICAL IS ALL MATHEMATICAL
SO I'M A SOLID BET
THE STOCK EXCHANGE NO LONGER STRANGE OR SCARY
NOW DIVIDENDS ARE EXTRA-ORDINARY

MEN

SHOWGIRL SELLS SHARES IN SELF
SHOWGIRL SELLS SHARES IN SELF
SOLID AS U.S.--
SHE'S SOLID AS STEEL!

JEANNIE

TAKE NEW TECHNOLOGY THEN ADD
BIOLOGY
IT'S SO SOPHISTICAL NOW I'M
STATISTICAL
I'M SOLID AS STEEL!

JEANNIE

GET BIG AMOUNTS
IN YOUR ACCOUNTS OF FINANCE
WHAT SAY WE GO
AND FORM A NEW ALLIANCE
SHOWGIRL SELLS SHARES IN SELF

Dance break as Walter Winchell and Bob have a phone call.

WALTER WINCHELL

This is Walter Winchell.

BOB

Well, hello, Mr. Winchell. It's an honor.

WALTER WINCHELL

I know. So tell me, you raising any money with your stock market gag?

BOB

YOU'VE heard about THIS?

WALTER WINCHELL

Howard Rushmore told me all about it. Listen, I want your magazine to be a hit. Howard needs it. Those bums in Washington threw him out like yesterday's trash.

BOB

Yes they did.

WALTER WINCHELL

What say I give you the money you need. Not an investment. A loan.

BOB

Really? Just like that?

WALTER WINCHELL

In my world, everything is 'just like that.'

BOB

I don't know what to say. And believe me, that doesn't happen very often.

WALTER WINCHELL

And I've got other reasons. Some stories, I don't want my fingerprints all over, but I want 'em told, you get me? Like Josephine Baker. Looks bad if I keep going after her.

BOB

But WE can tell the truth about how wrong she is about YOU.

WALTER WINCHELL

Exactly. And I'll want other stories.

BOB

Walter, anything you want, anything at all.

WALTER WINCHELL

And THAT's the way I like it.

They recede as the song continues.

SONG #06: BLUE CHIP BABY (JEANNIE/QUARTET)

JEANNIE

BLUE CHIP BABY, BLUE CHIP BABY
BALANCING YOUR BOTTOM LINE
BLUE CHIP BABY, BLUE CHIP BABY

JEANNIE

SPIKIN' YOUR PORTFOLIO
THINK OF HOW IT'S GONNA GROW

MEN

OH, THINK!
GONNA GROW

JEANNIE/MEN

YOUR FINANCIAL FUTURE'S FINE
SHOWGIRL SELLS SHARES IN SELF

JEANNIE

MY TAPE IS TICKERIN' SO LET'S GET DICKERIN'

MEN

SHOWGIRL SELLS SHARES IN SELF

JEANNIE

I'M RECOMMENDABLE
AND SO DEPENDABLE
ALL OF MY ASSETS SOLD
IT'S AN OFFERING

MEN

ALL OF HER ASSETS SOLD
ALL OF 'EM SOLD

JEANNIE/MEN

GOOD AS GOLD, SHOWGIRL SELLS SHARES IN SELF

JEANNIE

FOR THE PRICE OF A TINY STOCK CERTIFICATE
I CAN BE YOURS

MEN

YOU BET YOUR BOTTOM BUCK
OH, HONEY YOU'RE IN LUCK

JEANNIE

I'M VERIFIABLE
AND UNDENIABLE
I CAN BE YOURS
YA-DA, DA, DA... YEAH!

MEN

BLUE CHIP BABY, WOW!
BLUE CHIP BABY

In choreographed movement, the
company surrounds Bob, who is
flush with money and excitement.

CHASER LIGHTS LEAD US TO:

ACT I, SCENE 10 - BOB'S OFFICE

Bob reaches for Rushmore to join him.

HOWARD

Bob!

BOB

Howard! Stories?

HOWARD

I got 'em.

MFX: STORY AND COVER FRAGMENTS
swirl in.

SONG #07: NAMING THE NAMES (BOB/RUSHMORE/FRANCES/FAMILY)

RUSHMORE

*I'M GONNA TELL THE STORY OF A COMMUNIST PLOT
WHAT A GANG OF KILLERS TRIED TO DO*

MFX: Magazine spread: MARKED FOR
DEATH BY RED MURDER SQUADS

RUSHMORE

*ALL OF 'EM BACK IN WASHINGTON
THEY WOULDN'T KNOW SQUAT
A SURPRISE ATTACK
WOULD HAVE HIT FROM OUT OF THE BLUE*

BOB

*I'M GONNA TELL THE STORY OF A HOLLYWOOD QUEEN
AND A CAST OF CHARACTERS IN LINE*

It is as if they are pushing one another's stories off to make room for their own:

MFX: THE BARITONE BABES AND NUBIAN
NIGHTS OF MARLENE DIETRICH

BOB

*ALL OF 'EM IN HER BEDROOM
WAITING FOR THE NEXT SCENE
WHAT A SCANDAL--*

RUSHMORE

WHAT A STORY--

BOB/RUSHMORE

*--AND IT'S MINE
NAMING THE NAMES AND TELLING THE FACTS*

RUSHMORE

TRAITORS WHO WOULD TAKE OUR FREEDOM

MFX: back to REDS magazine spread.

BOB
BARITONES AND THOSE WHO BREED 'EM

MFX: Back to DIETRICH magazine
spread.

BOB/RUSHMORE
WAIT 'TIL IT HITS THE RACKS
STARTING WITH ME, STARTING TODAY

BOB
OH, IT'S CRYSTAL CLEAR

RUSHMORE
GOT A NEW CAREER

BOB/RUSHMORE
CONFIDENTIAL'S HERE TO STAY

RUSHMORE
I'M GONNA TELL A STORY 'BOUT SOCIETY SWELLS
AND THE WAY THEY CHEAT IF NO ONE LOOKS

MFX: VANDERBILT WELSHES ON
GAMBLING DEBTS.

RUSHMORE
ALL OF 'EM LIE TO YOU AND ME

BOB
THAT'S TRUE--AND IT SELLS

RUSHMORE
GONNA MAKE MY MARK
ON THE BACKS OF WELL-TO-DO CROOKS

BOB
I'M GONNA TELL THE STORY OF A BEAUTIFUL BLONDE
IT'LL BE A MILLION DOLLAR STUNT

MFX: SHOWGIRL SELLS SHARES IN
SELF.

BOB
ALL CAFE SOCIETY, NEW YORK AND BEYOND
GOTTA READ IT

RUSHMORE
BETTER LISTEN

BOB/RUSHMORE
WE'RE ON THE HUNT
NAMING THE NAMES AND TELLING THE FACTS

RUSHMORE
PUT SOME PINKOS IN DETENTION

BOB
ADD SOME INTERRACIAL TENSION

BOB/RUSHMORE
*WAIT 'TIL IT HITS THE RACKS
STARTING WITH ME, STARTING TODAY*

BOB
OH, IT'S CRYSTAL CLEAR

RUSHMORE
GOT A NEW CAREER

BOB
CONFIDENTIAL'S--

BOB/RUSHMORE
HERE TO STAY

Doorbell. It's Walter Winchell.

WALTER WINCHELL
Get yourself strapped, buckled, and all tucked
in, 'cause this thing's gonna land like an
atomic bomb.

BOB
From your mouth--

WALTER WINCHELL
Oh I got God's ear. His and everyone else's.

BOB
I'm counting on it. And Walter, what you asked
for? All taken care of.

RUSHMORE
In spades.

WALTER WINCHELL
Have fun, you two -- Have a blast.

He recedes and Frances and family
gathers.

FAMILY
*WE'RE GONNA TELL THE STORY
OF THE HARRISON CLAN
HOW A FAMILY BUSINESS DID US PROUD*

BOB
*NOW IS THE TIME WE FOLLOW
WITH THE REST OF THE PLAN
WALTER WINCHELL*

RUSHMORE
WALTER WINCHELL

ALL
SAY IT LOUD

MFX: WALTER WINCHELL WAS RIGHT
ABOUT JOSEPHINE BAKER.

ALL
NAMING THE NAMES AND TELLING THE FACTS

BOB
NEVER UNDERESTIMATE ME

RUSHMORE
I DON'T CARE IF PEOPLE HATE ME

ALL
WAIT 'TIL IT HITS THE RACKS

MFX: ANIMATE the five MAGAZINE
SPREADS as they form the first
issue of the magazine.

BOTH
STARTING WITH ME, STARTING TODAY

RUSHMORE
GONNA MAKE IT PAY

BOB
AND I HAVE TO SAY

BOB/RUSHMORE
CONFIDENTIAL'S DAY IS--

FAMILY
GET IT ALL IN PRINT
AND IT'S WORTH A MINT
CONFIDENTIAL'S HINT OF--

BOB
OH, IT'S CRYSTAL CLEAR

RUSHMORE
GOT A NEW CAREER

ALL
CONFIDENTIAL'S HERE TO STAY

MFX: First issue of CONFIDENTIAL
MAGAZINE.

SCENE SHIFTS TO:

ACT I, SCENE 11 - FANTASY NEW YORK

The company converges with copies
of Confidential. MFX: Stories and
graphics materialize as Bob's
office recedes: MAGAZINE SPREADS.

ENSEMBLE #1

Marilyn Monroe and Joe DiMaggio's big bust-up
is a fake!

ENSEMBLE #2

Elvis is one quarter Negro!

ENSEMBLE #3

Tab Hunter wants to be pretty in pink!

ENSEMBLE #4

Eisenhower's cook's a commie spy!

ENSEMBLE #5

Dietrich got herself an African Queen!

Telegraph keys urgently tap and a
musical fanfare as Winchell
enters.

WALTER WINCHELL

Broadway wags are barking about a friend of mine,
publisher Bob Harrison and his brand new oh-so-go-go
'Confidential Magazine.' Buy it. Try it. Wrap it up
in a big blue bow and tie it. Baby this is something
big. But not just the MAG, no siree Bob, it's the
MAN. Mr. Confidential him-SELF. He's BIG. He's BOB.
He's BIG BOB!

BOB

"Big Bob!?"

COMPANY

But, ssshh! Keep it Confidential.

SONG #08: MR. CONFIDENTIAL (BOB/COMPANY)

BOB

*THE WORLD WILL NEVER BE THE SAME
NOW I'VE GOT A DIFFERENT NAME
CATCH ME IF YOU CAN*

COMPANY

*BIG BOB IS THE MAN
BIG BOB IS THE MAN*

BOB

SEE HOW IT'S GONNA HIT THE FAN

COMPANY
FROM LACKAWANNA TO SPOKANE

BOB
AND LIKE A ROCKET IN THE SKY--

COMPANY
BIG BOB IS A GAS

BOB
I'M DONE WITH GOIN' SECOND CLASS

COMPANY
YA KNOW IT'S SHOWIN' BOLD AS BRASS

BOB
AND NOW I'M FINALLY RIDING HIGH

COMPANY
BIG BOB IS A WHIZ, THE BEST IN THE BIZ
BIG BOB IS A MENSCH, BUT PARDON MY FRENCH

BOB
NO HOLDING ME BACK

COMPANY
HE'S BIG AS WALTER WINCHELL

BOB/COMPANY
BETCHA THE HEAD OF THE PACK

BOB
REMEMBERING THE DREAM WE HAD
THE GREAT TEAM WE HAD
BUT WHAT A TEST WE HAD
WE GAVE THE BEST WE HAD
THINK OF HOW IT ALL BEGAN

ALL
BIG BOB IS THE MAN

MFx: NYC NEON BACKDROP #2

EDITH
(runs in with the news)
The Warner Brothers say Marlene Dietrich is
FURIOUS.

RUSHMORE
The White House called to complain. The WHITE HOUSE
called ME.

MARJORIE
Uncle Bob, we gotta go back to press. Two
hundred and fifty thousand copies -- every one
of 'em sold.

MICHAEL

Josephine Baker's seeing red.

RUSHMORE

You got that right.

EDITH

Bob, you need to keep up your strength. Have a lamb chop.

JEANNIE

Bobby, you're making me FAMOUS.

BOB

This could make us ALL famous.

ENSEMBLE

AVA AND LANA AND MARILYN TOO
WITH ELVIS, SINATRA, A HOLLYWOOD ZOO
A RUMOR, A WHISPER,
WE DON'T MEAN TO PRY-- SHH!

BOB

KEEP IT CONFIDENTIAL
MISTER CONFIDENTIAL AM I

ENSEMBLE

CONFIDENTIALLY SPEAKING
EVERYTHING ON THE SLY

BOB

UNCLE BOBBY IS PEEKING
NO USE TRYING TO LIE

ENSEMBLE

DRINKIN' AND DRUGGIN'
AND CRASHIN' A CAR
YOU'RE FIGHTIN' AND DEALIN'
AND TRASHIN' A BAR
SNEAKIN' AND CHEATIN'
AND PAYIN' A PRO-- SHH!

BOB

KEEP IT CONFIDENTIAL
MR. CONFIDENTIAL YA KNOW

ENSEMBLE

CONFIDENTIALLY SPEAKING
EVERYTHING ON THE SLY

FAMILY/JEANNIE

UNCLE BOBBY IS PEEKING

BOB/COMPANY

NO USE TRYING TO LIE

ENSEMBLE
BOOZIN' AND GAMBLIN'
AND LOSIN' YOUR STAKE

BOB
YOUR LADY IS REALLY--
A GUY ON THE MAKE

COMPANY
SQUEALIN' AND POPPIN'
AND COPPIN' A PLEA
SHH! KEEP IT CONFIDENTIAL

BOB
"MR. CONFIDENTIAL" IS ME
A PART THAT I WAS BORN TO PLAY

JEANNIE
HE REALLY TAKES MY BREATH AWAY

FAMILY
CATCH HIM IF YOU CAN
BIG BOB IS THE MAN

JEANNIE
BIG BOBBY IS HOT
HE'S GONNA GO OFF LIKE A SHOT
GET HIM TO SHOW OFF WHAT HE'S GOT
HE'S NOT A BIT LIKE OTHER GUYS

MARJORIE/EDITH
BIG BOB IS AN ACE
NO MATTER WHAT, RIGHT ON THE CASE
AND IF YOU CUT RIGHT TO THE CHASE
THEN IT'LL COME AS NO SURPRISE

COMPANY
BIG BOB IS A PIP AND SMART AS A WHIP
BIG BOB IS THE MOST FROM PILLAR TO POST

BOB
NO HOLDING ME BACK

COMPANY
HE'S BIG AS WALTER WINCHELL

BOB/COMPANY
BETCHA THE HEAD OF THE PACK

ENSEMBLE
CUT IT TO THE QUICK FOR ME
GIVE IT A KICK FOR ME
THE NITTY GRIT FOR ME
YES EVERY BIT FOR ME
AND KEEP IT CONFIDENTIAL
KEEP IT CONFIDENTIAL

BOB
MR. CONFIDENTIAL

COMPANY
BIG BOB IS THE MAN

BOB
READY TO MINGLE, GIVE ME A JINGLE

COMPANY
IF YOU CAN

BOB
RIGHT ON THE MONEY, COUNT ON IT HONEY

WOMEN
BIG BOBBY IS COOL AND NOBODY'S FOOL

MEN
BIG BOB IS A KING, THE WORLD ON A STRING

BOB
NO HOLDING ME BACK

COMPANY
HE'S BIG AS WALTER WINCHELL

BOB/COMPANY
BETCHA THE HEAD OF THE PACK

FAMILY
BELIEVE IT HE'S TOP
OF THE LEADER OF--
PICK OF THE WINNER OF--
CREAM OF THE--
MASTER OF
BROADWAY AND HOLLYWOOD

(spoken)
NO!
STOP!

BOB

BOB
CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

FAMILY/ENSEMBLE
YES, IF YOU CAN, OH, IF YOU CAN

BOB/COMPANY
BIG BOB IS THE MAN

BLACK OUT.

ACT I, SCENE 12 - MARJORIE AND FRED'S KITCHEN

Fred is doing dishes. Marjorie enters, and takes over.

FRED
You're finally home.

MARJORIE
Sorry, I'm late, Fred. It's just, you wouldn't believe how much is going on with the magazine.

FRED
Your uncle sure picked a winner.

MARJORIE
He didn't pick it, Fred. He CREATED it. And I just, I wish I could be more a part of it all.

FRED
Honey, you're down at that office practically every day. The twins hardly see you at all. I hardly see you.

MARJORIE
I'm here.

FRED
When?

MARJORIE
Oh, Fred. What do you want from me?

FRED
Just the girl I married. Even when you ARE home, your mind's a million miles away, thinking about that magazine.

MARJORIE
It's fabulous. Isn't it fabulous?

FRED
See?

MARJORIE
What if this is my chance and I miss it?

FRED
Your chance for what?

MARJORIE
To matter. The magazine is only going to keep getting bigger, I can feel it. And sure, I'm at the office a lot, but I don't MATTER. Not the way I could.

FRED
You matter to me.

MARJORIE
It's not the same thing.

FRED
Maybe it should be.

Fred recedes, Marjorie takes
center stage, and three other
housewives enter mid-song.

SONG #09: GIRL NEXT DOOR (MARJORIE/GIRLS)

MARJORIE
WHEN I LANDED MY GUY
'TOGETHER FOREVER'
A HANDSOME PRINCE
IN ALL HIS GLORY
FAIRY TALE WEDDING
AND HONEYMOON SUITE
BUT THAT WAS NOT
THE END OF THE STORY
FOR, I LOOKED AT MY GUY
'TOGETHER FOREVER'
WITH ENDLESS DAYS
AND NIGHTS BEFORE ME
EVERYTHING SUNNY
AND EVERYTHING SWEET
HOW COULD I KNOW
HOW MUCH IT WOULD BORE ME?
WHATEVER IS WAITING I WANT IT NOW
THE SOONER THE BETTER I DON'T CARE HOW
I NEVER SAID I'D BE
THE GIRL NEXT DOOR
I NEVER SAID I WAS
THE KIND OF WIFE
WHO'D EVER BE LIVING
THE QUIET LIFE
NO, I'LL NEVER BE
THE GIRL NEXT DOOR
SO IF YOU WANT THE GIRL NEXT DOOR--
GO NEXT DOOR, GO NEXT DOOR
YES I TREASURED MY GUY

MARJORIE/GIRLS
TOGETHER FOREVER

MARJORIE
OUR LOVE A SURE ASSOCIATION

GIRLS
ASSOCIATION

MARJORIE
TWIN BABY BOYS AND OUR FAMILY COMPLETE
BUT AFTER MUCH CONSIDERATION--

GIRLS
SHE'S BEEN THINKING...

MARJORIE
WHATEVER IS WAITING

MARJORIE/GIRLS
I WANT IT NOW

MARJORIE
THE SOONER THE BETTER

MARJORIE/GIRLS
I DON'T CARE HOW

MARJORIE
I NEVER SAID I'D BE THE GIRL NEXT DOOR

GIRLS
NO, NO, NO, NO

MARJORIE
I NEVER SAID I WAS THE KIND OF WIFE
WHO'D EVER BE LIVING THE QUIET LIFE
NO, I'LL NEVER BE THE GIRL NEXT DOOR

GIRLS
GIRL NEXT DOOR

MARJORIE
SO IF YOU WANT THE GIRL NEXT DOOR--

GIRLS
IF YOU WANT HER--

MARJORIE
GO NEXT DOOR

MARJORIE/GIRLS
GO NEXT DOOR

MARJORIE
YOU CHERISH YOUR GUY IN THE USUAL WAY
BUT IF HE'S ALL YOU HAVE EVERY DAY

GIRLS
EVERY DAY

MARJORIE
EVERY WEEK

GIRLS
EVERY WEEK

MARJORIE
EVERY YEAR TO LOOK FORWARD TO

MARJORIE/GIRLS
THEN YOUR LIFE'S AS EXCITING
AND AS UN-SURPRISING

MARJORIE
AS A BINGO GAME

MARJORIE/GIRLS
AT THE Y.M.C.A.

MARJORIE
WHATEVER IS WAITING

MARJORIE/GIRLS
I WANT IT NOW

MARJORIE
THE SOONER THE BETTER

MARJORIE/GIRLS
I DON'T CARE HOW

MARJORIE
I NEVER SAID I'D BE
THE GIRL NEXT DOOR
I NEVER SAID I WAS
THE KIND OF WIFE
WHO'D EVER BE LIVING
THE QUIET LIFE
NO, I'LL NEVER BE
THE GIRL NEXT DOOR
SO IF YOU WANT
THE GIRL NEXT DOOR--
IF YOU WANT
THE GIRL NEXT DOOR
GO NEXT DOOR!

GIRLS
SHE NEVER SAID IT
NEVER, NEVER,
NO NEVER, NEVER,
NOT EVER, EVER,
NOT EVER, NO NEVER,
OOOH, I'LL NEVER BE
THAT GIRL
SO IF YOU WANT
THE GIRL NEXT DOOR
GO NEXT DOOR
SHE NEVER SAID
SHE WOULD BE
THE GIRL NEXT DOOR
WHATEVER IS WAITING
I WANT IT NOW
I'M NOT
THE GIRL NEXT DOOR!

SCENE SHIFTS TO:

ACT I, SCENE 13 - BOB'S NY OFFICE/FANTASY HOLLYWOOD

Bob's new offices are swankier. The setting is fluid, to allow for Hollywood-based interludes into the office action.

Marjorie is alone, looking through some magazine layouts. The dark, mysterious, and beautiful FRANCESCA enters.

FRANCESCA

I come for the Mr. Bob Harrison.

MARJORIE

Just me I'm afraid. Can I help you?

FRANCESCA

I don't know. I need the Big Bob. I am the Francesca.

MARJORIE

I am the niece. I work for him.

FRANCESCA

You are a niece. That is very nice. I would be a niece, but my only aunt, she die of terrible infection. Very expensive.

MARJORIE

I'm so sorry.

FRANCESCA

It is not your fault. But I am digression. I have story to sell the Bob. Tell. Sell.

MARJORIE

Why don't you tell me. I'll make sure you're taken care of. I promise.

FRANCESCA

Anthony Quinn is a bull in the bedroom.

MARJORIE

And you got that from, the horse's mouth, as it were....?

FRANCESCA

I am, what you say, the horse's mouth. And he was a bull. A bull with a horse.

MARJORIE

Wow. Anthony Quinn.

FRANCESCA

And that is not all. I have doozy with Desi Arnaz.

MARJORIE

Francesca, you're really... something.

FRANCESCA

I like you. Soon I am moving back to California. Maybe you come there? I know many people there who know many things.

MARJORIE

Time will tell, Francesca. But I think you and I could become very good friends.

Focus shifts as company appears in front of projections of corresponding MAGAZINE SPREADS.

ENSEMBLE #2

Robert Mitchum is the Nude Who Came to Dinner!

ENSEMBLE #3

Orson Welles Takes a Bite Out of Eartha Kitt!'

ENSEMBLE #5

Wheaties turns Frank Sinatra into a sex maniac!

ENSEMBLE #6

Tab Hunter! Arrested at a Lavender Lad party!

ENSEMBLE #4

Most girls go for the Gold, but Ava Gardner goes for the Bronze... with Sammy Davis, Jr.!!'

AFRICAN AMERICAN ENSEMBLE FEMALE

And Sammy ain't the only bite of chocolate Ava's been taking.

Focus back on the office.

RUSHMORE

Where are my stories?

Rushmore being upset catches Bob off guard.

BOB

Howard. Your stories are right there. In the magazine.

RUSHMORE

I had seven articles in the first issue. Then six. Then five, three, and just two in this one. What's the big idea?

BOB

My mistake, Howard, you're absolutely right. I guess I got stars in my eyes.

RUSHMORE

But it's just... homosexuality, miscegenation, hermaphrodites and sex changes--

BOB

We got a hermaphrodite?

RUSHMORE

I'm just saying--

BOB

'Cause I think I'd remember that.

RUSHMORE

The point is, it's all so disgusting. Sordid. People are saying you're 'Queer for Queers.'

BOB

Half those stories are from you know who.

RUSHMORE

From Walter?

BOB

I'd hate to disappoint him.

RUSHMORE

No, of course not. I didn't realize...

BOB

So what can I do? I tell you what. Next month, we'll add more pages, and make sure more of your stories get in.

RUSHMORE

Really? That's true?

BOB

Scout's honor.

RUSHMORE

Well, Bob. I appreciate it.

Howard recedes.

BOB

Queer for queers... Queer for what sells.

On another area of the stage, a LAWYER is on the phone. Bob answers.

LAWYER

The 'Nude Who Came to Dinner?' Mr. Mitchum is apoplectic with rage.

BOB

Apoplectic? Wow. He must have had some very bad Mary Jane.

LAWYER

Print a retraction or we're gonna sue you for everything you've got.

BOB

What's wrong with the story?

LAWYER

What's WRONG? It's all lies. Mr. Mitchum strenuously denies showing up drunk at a costume party, taking off all his clothes, squirting ketchup all over his chest, and then calling out, 'Look at my costume, I'm a hamburger.'

BOB

No, you're right. That isn't what happened. What DID happen is WORSE.

LAWYER

I beg your pardon?

BOB

If Mr. Mitchum wants to declare under oath that the story isn't true, I will produce two witnesses who will testify in open court that the party was at Charles Laughton's house for a bunch of homosexuals, Bob Mitchum put the ketchup on his johnson, and his exact words were, 'Which one of you fairies wants to eat a hotdog?'

LAWYER

Oh. Well, that would be... unfortunate.

BOB

What's he worried about, anyway? You think the public doesn't know he likes a drink? That he's got a sense of humor?

LAWYER

Well...

BOB

Read that story again. Do we say he was wrong? That it was illegal? No. Who am I to judge? These stars are rich. Famous. Gorgeous. Of COURSE they get a little wild now and then. Wouldn't you?

LAWYER

I'll have to take this matter under advisement.

BOB

You do that. And from one Big Bob to another, tell Mr. Mitchum I'm a big fan.

Elsewhere on stage, a HOLLYWOOD STUDIO HEAD emerges.

STUDIO HEAD

You want to write about Hollywood? Well, include me OUT. Me and everyone else in Tinsel Town. The filth, the fegelehs, the white girls with schwartzes. Those fegelehs and schwartze lovers are big box office. CUT IT OUT, or the studio's attorneys will BURY you.

Focus back on the office. Bob is at his desk. Marjorie enters.

MARJORIE

You know, Uncle Bob...

BOB

What, Sweetheart?

MARJORIE

We're scaring the hell out of everyone in Hollywood.

BOB

I know. Isn't it terrific. Jayne Mansfield just threatened to sue us for five million bucks.

MARJORIE

Five MILLION? Dollars? For what? Her own publicist gave us the story we printed about her.

BOB

She gets headlines for the story, more headlines for denying the story, then even more for threatening to sue.

MARJORIE

So much is happening in Hollywood now. Wouldn't it be great if we had someone to manage things on the Coast...?

BOB

Who could we trust? There's nobody.

MARJORIE

There's me.

BOB

You? Marjorie, what about the boys, your life here? Your husband...

MARJORIE

Fred.

BOB

Fred.

MARJORIE

It doesn't have to be forever.

BOB

Decisions like this, there's usually no turning back.

MARJORIE

Oh, I'm ready. After all, I've been watching and learning from the very BEST.

BOB

Don't do that.

MARJORIE

What?

BOB

Don't play me to get what you want.

MARJORIE

I don't know what you mean.

BOB

Yes you do. You and me, we need to be straight with each other. Save the phony baloney for the yahoos.

Beat. Musical transition.

MFX: HOLLYWOOD HILLS/SIGN
BACKDROP.

Bob introduces Marjorie to the press.

BOB

Here she is folks. A red-headed, red-hot firecracker -- and she's the brand new head of Hollywood Research for 'Confidential.'

MARJORIE

I'm at the Polo Lounge if you need me. I've got forty-two lunches booked over twenty-nine days. I don't know why, but everyone seems to want to meet me.

MFX: HOLLYWOOD NIGHTLIFE BACKDROP.

Marjorie goes into a dance routine with a gaggle of guys. The Beautiful Star and Her Boys.

She's the real deal. Think Verdon.

Bob comes in and out of the dance, and the family appears behind them.

EDITH

Marjorie, I thought your trip to California was supposed to be temporary.

MARJORIE

(still dancing)

Call me next week. We'll talk.

FRED

When are you coming home? The boys miss you. And so do I.

MARJORIE

I miss you too...

FRANCESCA

I spend weekend with Dean Martin and case of scotch.

MARJORIE

Tell me all about it.

WALTER WINCHELL

(on phone)

Bob? Walter. I need to punish Van Johnson.

MALE SOURCE #1

Van Johnson tried to get me in the feathers. I don't swing that way. I mean, not for free.

WALTER WINCHELL

Bob? Walter. Joanie Crawford needs a boost.

SOURCE #2

I worked as a nanny for Joan Crawford. She's quite a nice woman, actually.

A new line of sources forms.
Marjorie gives each source a wad of cash.

MARJORIE

Stories from hookers and nannies are terrific, but get me Debbie Reynolds on tape.

(gives cash, then to next source)

I want Bob Hope's actual love letters.

(gives cash, then to next source)

Show me where James Dean keeps his dope.

(gives cash, then to Francesca)
Get the skinny. Get the scoop.

FRANCESCA

I have picture of me in bathtub with Fernando Lamas. We are in the naked with bubbles. Is that a skinny scoop?

MARJORIE

The skinniest.

WALTER WINCHELL

Fourth day. Fourth month. And it's what Hollywood star's Fourth marriage? Won't say the name, but she's suing 'Confidential' for a bundle.

Jeannie approaches.

JEANNIE

Bob? Why ya leaving me all on my lonesome?

MARJORIE

(on phone)

Uncle Bob, which is better for the cover? Rita Hayworth's kids are living like animals or Jerry Lewis is a germaphobic mama's boy?

BOB

Go with Rita. But change 'animals' to 'pigs.'

JEANNIE

Could you help me with this zipper? Bob?

BOB

You're the greatest, Baby. But business is business.

He leaves her in the lurch. Segue to Rushmore and Bob.

RUSHMORE

(speeding)

You cut my stories AGAIN. All for more Hollywood sleaze.

BOB

(gently)

How many pills you had today, Howard? How much booze?

RUSHMORE

My stories rip the lid off Commie evil.

BOB

Have you slept at all? I'm worried about you.

RUSHMORE

I'm trying to save my country...

BOB

I know. But I won't lie to you, Howard, readers want more Hollywood.

RUSHMORE

You won't lie to me? All you ever do is lie. Every word that comes out of your mouth, including 'and' and 'the.'

BOB

Winchell wants more Hollywood. I want more Hollywood too.

RUSHMORE

I don't care what you want. I don't care what WALTER wants. And I don't care about the bedroom habits of a bunch of Hollywood whores and deviants.

BOB

That's enough, Howard.

RUSHMORE

You gonna fire me?

BOB

Nobody's firing anybody. You helped put this magazine on the map. I would never forget that.

RUSHMORE

(under his breath)

Sure, it's on the map. Right next to Hell.

Howard stumbles away. Bob makes some careful notes.

MFX: DARK NYC BACKDROP.

Frances emerges.

RUSHMORE

I hate it here. And I hate that bastard Harrison.

He offers the flask to Frances. She hesitates, takes it, sips, makes a face.

FRANCES

Howard, where'd you buy this? A gas station?

RUSHMORE

Since when are you so choosy about your booze?

FRANCES

Let's go home.

RUSHMORE
(sneering)
Am I embarrassing you?

FRANCES
No.

RUSHMORE
Yes I am, admit it. A big, messy drunk...

He wrests the flask from Frances
and drinks.

FRANCES
Ever think about what Bob's got that you don't?
'Cause it's a lot, Howard. A ton.

RUSHMORE
I'm twice the man he is.

FRANCES
Sure, I'll remember that tonight, right before
you pass out and pee all over the sheets.

He slaps her hard across the face.
Rushmore clutches at Frances and
starts sobbing. She recedes.
Rushmore is left alone.

Music segues to HOWARD GETS AN
IDEA.

RUSHMORE
I'll show you just how useful I can be to your
dirty little magazine.

Guys enter with an enormous rope.
Rushmore gets them to help him
wrap himself up in a rope. He
falls over with a thud.

SCENE SHIFTS TO:

ACT I, SCENE 14 - PRESS CONFERENCE

AFX: "CONFIDENTIAL REPORTER
KIDNAPPED"

Winchell enters.

WALTER WINCHELL

Ace reporter Howard Rushmore, 'Confidential's' crusading champ, was kidnapped, yes, folks kidnapped. The perpetrators? Commies. Who held our hero captive for three whole days. America held its breath and said its prayers.

AFX: "RUSHMORE ESCAPES COMMIE KIDNAPPERS"

WALTER WINCHELL

And God Himself answered those prayers, Ladies and Gentlemen. God Himself.

AFX: NYC NATURAL BACKDROP.

Rushmore emerges from his ropes as the conquering hero. Bob joins him, with Frances, Jeannie, Edith, Marjorie, and Michael off to the side.

BOB

What do you think of our hero?

RUSHMORE

I'm no hero. A hero wouldn't have gotten captured. And though I did escape from ruthless Red kidnapppers, a real hero would've gotten the bad guys too. But they're still on the loose.

BOB

I don't care what you say, Howard, you're a hero. Folks, Mr. Rushmore will be our next cover story, with the blow-by-blow on his terrifying ordeal.

RUSHMORE

We're doing it for America.

The press conference recedes.

BOB

Great work. And you sold a lot of magazines.

RUSHMORE

I think you owe me. Don't you?

BOB

Howard, what do you want? What can I do to say thanks?

RUSHMORE

'Commie Couples in the U.N.'

BOB
I'll print the story.

RUSHMORE
'Red Spies on Madison Avenue.'

BOB
Ditto.

RUSHMORE
'J. Robert Oppenheimer's Bolshevik Beauty.'

BOB
Didn't she just die? Have a heart, Howard.

RUSHMORE
My heart is right where it belongs.

Rushmore exits and Jeannie
emerges.

JEANNIE
I'm sorry, Bobby.

BOB
Honey, what could you ever have to be sorry
about?

JEANNIE
It isn't fair, Howard getting all those
headlines.

BOB
'Commie Kidnapping' my ass. But you gotta hand
it to him, it was a brilliant stunt.

JEANNIE
You're the one doing all the work. They should
be writing stories about you.

Music for BOB GETS AN IDEA.

BOB
Jeannie. What say you and me blow this popsicle
stand and take a little vacation.

JEANNIE
That would be... WONDERFUL.

SCENE SHIFTS TO:

ACT I, SCENE 15 - IDLEWILD AIRPORT

Bob and Jeannie are flying off.
The family gathers to bid them
good-bye.

BOB
Glad you could see us off on our trip *to the Jungle*.

EDITH
You promise to be careful?

BOB
Relax. We'll be perfectly safe on our Dominican
Republic safari TO THE JUNGLE.

Airline stairs appear from the sky.
Bob and Jeannie board. Then
gunshots. MFX: "CONFIDENTIAL
PUBLISHER GUNNED DOWN IN JUNGLE
LOVE TRIANGLE!"

SONG #10: DEAD OR ALIVE
(Marjorie/EDITH/RUSHMORE/ENSEMBLE)

MARJORIE
HE'S BEEN SHOT

MARJORIE/EDITH
SHOT IN THE JUNGLE

EDITH
HE COULD BE SUFFERING FROM A FUNGAL INFECTION

MARJORIE/EDITH
OR WORSE

MARJORIE
DON'T EVEN KNOW IF OUR BELOVED BOB

EDITH
BROTHER BOB

MICHAEL
UNCLE BOB

ALL (INCLUDES ENSEMBLE)
IS DEAD OR ALIVE
HE COULD BE DEAD OR ALIVE
IS THIS SOME KIND OF CURSE?
ROBERT HARRISON COULD NEED A HEARSE

MICHAEL
HE'S BEEN SHOT

MICHAEL/FRED
SHOT IN THE JUNGLE

EDITH
A PRIMITIVE GOVERNMENT
SURE TO BUNGLE THE MISSION

EDITH/ENSEMBLE
THE SEARCH

MARJORIE
DON'T EVEN KNOW

ALL
IF OUR BELOVED BOB

EDITH
BROTHER BOB

MICHAEL
UNCLE BOB

FAMILY
IS DEAD OR ALIVE

ALL
SO TRUE, HE COULD BE DEAD OR ALIVE
WRITE A EULOGY FOR CHURCH

MARJORIE/EDITH
ROBERT HARRISON

ALL
LEFT IN THE LURCH

MARJORIE
THE U.S. ARMY'S GOTTA GET INVOLVED
SEND A PLATOON

ALL
OF FIGHTING BOYS

MICHAEL
GET HIM OUT OF THE JUNGLE

EDITH
HE HATES THE OUTDOORS

MARJORIE/EDITH
OUT OF THE JUNGLE

ENSEMBLE
OUT OF THE JUNGLE

FAMILY
A NATION IMPLORES
KILL THE CARIBBEAN HOOLIGANS

ENSEMBLE
KILL THOSE HOMBRES

FAMILY
AND BRING HIM HOME

ALL
BRING BELOVED BOBBY HOME

ENSEMBLE
HE'S BEEN SHOT, SHOT IN THE JUNGLE... (ETC.)

RUSHMORE
What the hell? Is this a cheap publicity stunt?

EDITH
Is it, Marjorie?

MARJORIE
I don't know.

RUSHMORE
(on phone)
Look, I need everything your boys know about
this Dominican Republic business.

EDITH
(on phone)
We need answers.

RUSHMORE
You got that from Hoover himself? Really?

EDITH
I will NOT hold. I don't care if the President is asleep.
Or if Mamie has him tied to the bedposts. Get him.

RUSHMORE
Even YOU don't know if he's dead or alive?

ALL
THE UNITED NATIONS MUST GET INVOLVED
SEND A PLATOON OF FIGHTING BOYS
GET HIM OUT OF THE JUNGLE,
HE HATES THE OUTDOORS
OUT OF THE JUNGLE
A NATION IMPLORES
KILL THE CARIBBEAN HOOLIGANS
AND GET HIM HOME
GET BELOVED BOBBY HOME
IT'S A CERTIFIED FACT
AND THE PRESIDENT MUST ACT

RUSHMORE
OH, BOBBY BOY I CALL YOUR BLUFF
YOU'RE NEVER DOWN OR DEAD ENOUGH

ALL
JUST GET ROBERT HARRISON HOME!

RUSHMORE
JUST GET ROBERT HARRISON!

ALL
*HE'S BEEN SHOT
SHOT IN THE JUNGLE!*

MFX: Same newspaper with different
headline: "TO BE CONTINUED"

BLACKOUT.

END ACT ONE

ACT II

ACT II, SCENE 1 - NEW YORK CITY HALL

Flashbulbs, pandemonium. Bob wears a sling and an eye patch, limping, with Jeannie on his arm. The crowd cheers, rushing to him, as his family embraces him.

Bringing up the rear is a very drunk Rushmore, pulling Frances along.

WALTER WINCHELL

A jungle shooting and a bloody triangle of love. The torrid story? Fiery Dominican playboy Juan de Santos took a fancy to Jeannie Douglas, but the lady said ix-nay. Then angry hombre de Santos went crazy loco and gunned Bobby down. But here he is, Mr. and Mrs. America, the man of the hour, uncensored and ALIVE:

MFx: HEADLINE "BIG BOB IS ALIVE!"

SONG #11: DEAD OR ALIVE - reprise (Bob/Company)

BOB

*I WAS SHOT, SHOT BY A RIVAL
A PLAYBOY LUNATIC
MY SURVIVAL BECAME HIS DEFEAT*

JEANNIE

*A MANIAC AND A LOTHARIO
THAT SO-AND-SO*

BOB

MIGHTY LOW

JEANNIE

A TERRIBLE MAN

BOB

A LOVE-SICK, ENVIOUS MAN

JEANNIE

*SINCE HE COULDN'T
MAKE ME CHEAT*

BOB

*SINCE HE COULDN'T
MAKE HER CHEAT*

BOB

CRAZY HOMBRE CAME PACKING HEAT

ALL

HE WAS SHOT

BOB

SHOT

ALL
SHOT BY A MAD MAN

FAMILY
A LAWLESS ANIMAL, SUCH A BAD MAN--

FAMILY/BOB/JEANIE
WHOSE LOVE TURNED TO HATE

FAMILY
WE DIDN'T KNOW IF HE WOULD EVEN LIVE

ENSEMBLE
COULD HE LIVE?

RUSHMORE
SHOULD HE LIVE?

BOB
IT'S TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE

FAMILY
OH BOB, IT'S JUST TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE
IN A LUCKY TWIST OF FATE--

ENSEMBLE
IT WAS FATE

BOB/JEANNIE
ROBERT HARRISON--

ALL
IS NOT 'THE LATE'

BOB
No, I'm not the late Bob Harrison, I'm alive.
And suffering through my jungle ordeal was not
in vain. No. For there in the wilds of the
Dominican jungle, I discovered the very secret
to life itself. Ladies and gentlemen, I give
you, the vine that makes you virile: Pega Palo.

MFX: Graphic of PEGA PALO.

BOB
THE SILVER LINING
MY DISCOVERY: A FLOWERING VINE

ALL
A MIRACLE

BOB
FROM THE HEART OF THE JUNGLE
FOR MEN IN THE KNOW
ON TO THE BEDROOM

MICHAEL/FRED/MEN
ON TO THE BEDROOM

BOB
LIBIDO TO GO

MICHAEL/FRED/MEN
YES! LIBIDO, LIBIDO, LIBIDO

BOB
TAKE THIS CARIBBEAN OFFERING
AND BE A KING

ALL
BE A CASANOVA KING

FAMILY
HE WAS SHOT, SHOT BY A RIVAL

RUSHMORE
NO BIG CALAMITY

FAMILY
HIS SURVIVAL A QUESTION OF PRIDE

RUSHMORE
OPEN YOUR EYES
(singing about Bob)
A MANIAC AND A LOTHARIO
THAT SO-AND-SO
MIGHTY LOW
A TERRIBLE MAN

BOB
(singing about Howard)
A TINY, ENVIOUS MAN

FAMILY
ALMOST GETTIN' EIGHTY-SIXED

BOB/JEANNIE
IN THE JUNGLE PRACTICALLY NIXED

RUSHMORE
EVEN THOUGH THE GAME IS FIXED

FAMILY
IT'S A MIRACLE

BOB
I COULD HAVE DIED

ALL
HE COULD HAVE DIED

RUSHMORE
HE SHOULD HAVE DIED

JEANNIE
But he DIDN'T.

WALTER WINCHELL
No he did not. And I for one, am a grateful
American.

MFX: Back to NY CITY HALL
BACKDROP.

Winchell goes to Bob, shakes his
hand

WALTER WINCHELL
Good work Bobby boy.

BOB
Thanks, Walter. Hey, I have something for you.
(hands him an envelope)
Here you go. With interest. And my deepest
thanks.

WINCHELL
Paying me back isn't going to change our little
arrangement, is it?

BOB
Not in the least. But, Walter, I need your help
with something else. It's Howard. He fights me
on your stories. Every single one.

WINCHELL
He WHAT?

BOB
We had a pretty heated exchange about it before
Jeannie and I flew out to the Caribbean. He
tried to get me to cut some stories. When I
said they were what you wanted, he said he
didn't care.

WINCHELL
That little son of a bitch...

BOB
Maybe it was just the booze talking. Or the
pills...? But he was quite adamant. 'I don't
care what Walter wants...'

Howard approaches.

WINCHELL
You're nothing without me. And nothing without him.

RUSHMORE
Walter? I don't understand. What's Bob been
saying?

BOB
That you've argued against Walter's stories.
Strenuously. Which you have.

RUSHMORE
I was just trying to protect MY stories.

WALTER WINCHELL
By sticking a shiv in my ribs.

RUSHMORE
It wasn't like that. I swear.

WALTER WINCHELL
Then what was it like?

RUSHMORE
Just... not like that...

WALTER WINCHELL
Howard, drop dead.

Winchell exits.

RUSHMORE
Walter? Walter, please.
(turns on Bob)
You bastard.

BOB
Howard, as of Monday morning, 'Confidential'
is no longer in the business of reporting on
communism. So, in terms of your association
with the magazine--

RUSHMORE
You're making a terrible mistake.

BOB
I'm hoping we can work this out like friends.

RUSHMORE
You're not my friend. You USED me.

BOB
You sound like a teenaged girl.

RUSHMORE
I don't deserve this.

BOB
I know you don't believe it Howard, but I'm a
fan. You're tenacious, fearless--

RUSHMORE
You were a nothing before I got you to
Winchell. A pornographer and a kike. You can't
hide it from me.

BOB
Why would I want to? I published girly
magazines. My parents came from the old country
and changed their name. So what? What am I
hiding?

RUSHMORE

Look at you. So smug. So stupid. Just remember, whatever happens now is on your head.

Rushmore exits. Family emerges.

EDITH

And good riddance.

MARJORIE

We're outselling 'TV Guide' and 'Time Magazine.'

BOB

I knew it would work. I knew it.

Bob takes off the sling and removes the patch. His limp disappears.

A long moment as the family realizes he didn't get shot. The family gets VERY upset. Jeannie is embarrassed.

BOB

What?

EDITH

I cannot believe you lied to us, that you USED us like that. And Jeannie, you're just as bad.

JEANNIE

I didn't even know until it was happening.

BOB

I didn't lie.

EDITH

You put us through hell.

BOB

For publicity.

EDITH

Once upon a time, I was the one dreaming up publicity stunts. I was the one who decided when we needed something fake. But you blind-sided me. Humiliated me. And I don't appreciate it, not one bit.

BOB

But with you NOT knowing, think how much more convincing you were. Every tear for the camera, every plea for help COMPLETELY believable.

Edith slaps Bob, and exits.

BOB

What about it, Mikey? Cut your Uncle Bob some slack?

MICHAEL

I really thought you were dead. And for what?
So you could be a hero in the papers?

Michael exits.

Bob turns to Marjorie.

BOB

You wanna take a shot too?

MARJORIE

I'm really glad you're not dead. And I'll up
the print run. What do you think? Five million?

BOB

SIX.

MARJORIE

I'm flying back tonight.
(gathers her things)
I'll call the printer from the Coast tomorrow.

BOB

What's the hurry? Stay in town for a few days.

MARJORIE

I have to get back. I'm closing on the new
house.

BOB

This new house of yours, is it nice?

MARJORIE

It's in Beverly Hills.

She exits.

Jeannie hugs Bob.

JEANNIE

Maybe you should've told them ahead of time...?

BOB

Nah, they'll be fine. So how high ya think the
sales figures can go? Ten million?

JEANNIE

Bobby, can you do something for me?

BOB

For you? Anything.

JEANNIE

Can we spend some time together? Just us?
Private.

BOB

No time, Doll. You've got rehearsal.

JEANNIE

I do? For what?

SCENE SHIFTS TO:

ACT II, SCENE 2 - TELEVISION STUDIO

Hollywood searchlight FX take us
to: BACKSTAGE TV SHOW BACKDROP.

ED SULLIVAN

Ladies and gentlemen, there's been a lot of
hullabaloo lately about our next act. And when
you see her, well, I think you'll know why.
Rrrright here on our very stage, 'Confidential
Magazine's' own jungle beauty, let's hear it for
Miss Jeannie Douglas.

MFX: BACKSTAGE TV SHOW BACKDROP.

Their studio set is an Jungle. A
beautiful FEMALE TRIO backs Jeannie
up.

SONG #12: PEGA PALO (Jeannie/GIRLS)

JEANNIE

(spoken)

Pega Palo. Pega Palo. The vine that makes you
VEER-ile. The opposite of STEER-ile!

JEANNIE/GIRLS

HAS YOUR BRIGHT LITTLE HUBBY
GOTTEN GRUBBY AS A DUMP
IS HIS PASSIONATE PERSISTENCE
IN A MONUMENTAL SLUMP
JUST A PINCH OF PEGA PALO
AND HE'S RIGHT BACK AT THE PUMP
PEGA PALO

GIRLS

AY! AY! AY! AY!

JEANNIE

GO GET A CLUMP

JEANNIE/GIRLS

PEGA PALO, PEGA PALO
CASANOVA WILL CRAVE HIS CONCUBINE
PEGA PALO, PEGA PALO
THE VINE THAT MAKES YOU VIRILE IS DIVINE

JEANNIE

HE'S A PRIG GOING PRICKLY
LOVE IS SICKLY, COMATOSE
AND HIS CHRONIC LACK OF INTEREST
LEAVES YOU MOUSY AND MOROSE
JUST A PINCH OF PEGA PALO
AND YOUR GUY IS GRANDIOSE
PEGA PALO

GIRLS

GRACIAS

JEANNIE

AND ADIOS

JEANNIE/GIRLS

PEGA PALO, PEGA PALO,
CASANOVA WILL CRAVE HIS CONCUBINE
PEGA PALO, PEGA PALO
THE VINE THAT MAKES YOU VIRILE IS DIVINE

JEANNIE

Muy mas magnifico, this vine is los terrifico!

GIRLS

AY! AY! AY! AY! AY!

MFX: "BIG BOB'S BEDROOM SECRETS!"

MFX: ON THE Q.T. MAG: HARRISON
HOAX

In a dark part of the stage, lights come up on Bob and a NEWSMAN, seated, facing one another "Person-to-Person" style.

NEWSMAN

What do you say to the man who calls your product 'obscene?'

BOB

I'd tell him a dose of Pega Palo would put him in a much better mood.

NEWSMAN

And to the man who calls your jungle shooting a phony? How do you answer him?

BOB

I would say to that man, there's a bullet wound in my back that says otherwise.

NEWSMAN

Can we see it?

BOB

The wound? Sure.

Camera pushes in on Bob's back as he lifts his shirt.

MFX: See as we would see it on television, in black and white. There are some weird looking marks... pen marks?

But the camera pans by those and
rests on something that looks an
awful lot like a bullet wound.

BOB

Nothing phony about that, now is there.

NEWSMAN

We can all see it with our own eyes: Bob
Harrison was shot in the back.

Back to the girls:

JEANNIE/FEMALE TRIO

*IS YOUR BIG MAJOR-LEAGUER
'BOUT AS EAGER AS A PRIEST
NEED A SYMPATHETIC HAND
TO GET HIS HANKERINGS INCREASED
JUST A PINCH OF PEGA PALO
AND YOUR HOMBRE WANTS A FEAST
PEGA PALO*

GIRLS

AY! AY! AY! AY!

JEANNIE

NOW HE'S A BEAST

JEANNIE/GIRLS

*PEGA PALO, PEGA PALO
CASANOVA WILL CRAVE HIS CONCUBINE
PEGA PALO, PEGA PALO
THE VINE THAT MAKES YOU VIRILE IS DIVINE
THE VINE THAT MAKES YOU VEER-ILE
THE OPPOSITE OF STEER-ILE*

JEANNIE

THE VINE THAT MAKES YOU VEER-ILE

GIRLS

THE VINE THAT MAKES YOU VEER-ILE

JEANNIE/GIRLS

IS DIVINE AY! AY! AY! AY!

BLACKOUT.

ACT II, SCENE 3 - DARK ALLEY

Marjorie enters, looking around,
and is startled when Francesca
sneaks up behind her.

MARJORIE

Jesus Christ... Francesca, what the hell is so
important, you drag me out in the middle of the
night, to El Segundo of all places?

FRANCESCA

I want not to be seen.

MARJORIE

You LIVE to be seen.

FRANCESCA

No. Not with what is this. It's too big.

MARJORIE

Enough with the cloak and dagger. Get to the
point.

FRANCESCA

Rock.

MARJORIE

Rock what? Hudson? We have an arrangement.
Universal feeds us the goods on their other
stars, and we let Rock get his rocks off in
peace.

FRANCESCA

That is not the rock I mean. This is another
rock. A rock to make you sorry. But for money,
I... I am desperation.

MARJORIE

Jeez. We've already paid you over twenty five
grand this year.

FRANCESCA

My mother could die. Is true. Operation. So much money.

MARJORIE

Francesca, I have to get to the airport.

FRANCESCA

I am seriously. There is plan. They call it
rock something. Perhaps is code word? It is
powerful government men with this plan, this
rock... No, not rock, stone. BRIM-stone.

MARJORIE

What?

FRANCESCA

They are having instructions for watching Robert Harrison, for being with Marjorie outside Polo Lounge. They watch. Everywhere. Looking for way to destroy you, with a spinning web.

MARJORIE

Francesca--

FRANCESCA

But it is MORE. They are putting together a plot. I don't have yet all of the information... But for you I can get this, I know it. But... It is just...

MARJORIE

(gives her some cash)

I hope she's okay.

FRANCESCA

Hmm?

MARJORIE

Your MOTHER.

FRANCESCA

So very sick. Beware the brimstones. They are watching.

Francesca disappears into the dark.

MFx: Magazine cover collage of copy-cat publications like 'On the Lowdown,' 'On the Q.T.,' 'Hush-Hush,' etc.

WINCHELL

Off the record and on the grapevine, folks, Bob Harrison's 'Confidential Magazine' seems to have given birth. Not to twins, but to quad or quints or possibly sextuplets -- I'm losing track, trying to count the magazine's many imitators. Sincerest form of flattery? Too much of a good thing? Time, Mr. and Mrs. America, will tell. That's unless I tell first. Tune in, and we'll see what happens...

SCENE SHIFTS TO:

ACT II, SCENE 4 - MARJORIE AND FRED'S KITCHEN

Marjorie appears in a coat carrying a small suitcase. She lets herself into her apartment and finds Edith, Michael, and Fred. Edith holds a large manila envelope. She pulls bundles of money from it.

EDITH
Michael found it.

MARJORIE
What were you doing going through my things?

MICHAEL
I wasn't.

EDITH
We knew you were flying in from the coast. I told your brother to come over and help Fred tidy up.

MARJORIE
You were snooping. I know it when I see it.

EDITH
People are calling us night and day talking about crime and money and brimstones and I don't know what.

MARJORIE
Brimstones?

MICHAEL
Marjorie? There's over fifty grand here.

FRED
Are you mixed up in something dangerous?

EDITH
Or illegal? Or wrong?

FRED
Whatever it is, you can tell us.

MARJORIE
The money is for sources.

EDITH
I'm not an idiot. I know we pay for information. But where did THIS money here come from? I can't account for it.

MARJORIE
Look, we don't always have time to stop and explain everything to you.

EDITH

Listen, Little Miss High and Mighty--

MARJORIE

This is none of your business.

EDITH

My money put this family in business.
EVERYTHING is my business.

MARJORIE

I schlep all the way across the country to
visit MY FAMILY, and what do I get for it?
Grief.

EDITH

Look at this.

(off papers)

'Bob Harrison, the Sultan of Sleaze, is like a
mob boss, running a 'criminal enterprise with
his corrupt family.'

MARJORIE

All they care about is tearing Uncle Bob down.

EDITH

It's not just about him, missy. 'Gossip Rag Hag
is Duchess of Dirt.'

MARJORIE

(off paper)

At least the picture is good.

EDITH

THIS is what you wanted to become? Well, let me
STOP and EXPLAIN something to YOU: It stinks.

MICHAEL

What she said.

They exit.

FRED

Something's gotta give.

MARJORIE

Shut up and leave me alone.

FRED

Who the hell do you think you are?

Fred exits.

SONG #13: THE DUCHESS OF DIRT (Marjorie)

MARJORIE

YOU KNOW MY NAME,
 OF COURSE YOU DO
 GOT THE GIST?
 I'M PRACTICALLY FAMOUS
 THE SAME AS ANY KILLER
 ON THE WANTED LIST
 IT'S TRUE,
 WHY WOULD I BOTHER TO RESIST
 SUCH A ROYAL TWIST?
 I'M THE DUCHESS OF DIRT
 YOU KNOW MY NAME
 OF COURSE YOU DO
 ON THE MAKE
 AND RUNNING A RACKET
 I'D SACRIFICE MY MOTHER
 FOR ANOTHER SCOOP
 IT'S TRUE
 HOW MUCH LOWER CAN A LADY STOOP?
 WAS I BORN A SNOOP?
 I'M THE DUCHESS OF DIRT
 BUT TELL ME STRAIGHT
 AND ON THE SQUARE
 WILL THIS BE
 A FOREVER KIND OF THING?
 WHAT HAVE I DONE?
 AM I WORSE FOR THE WEAR?
 WILL THERE BE A PRICE?
 JUST WONDERING...
 I'LL SETTLE MY DEBT
 WITHOUT REGRET
 I DON'T CARE
 YOU KNOW MY NAME
 OF COURSE YOU DO
 SAY IT NOW
 I'M TAKING THE CREDIT
 I READ IT IN A HEADLINE
 GONNA TAKE MY BOW
 IT'S TRUE
 LOOK AT YOU
 HOLIER THAN THOU
 YES I DO AVOW
 I'M THE DUCHESS OF DIRT
 IT'S IN MY BLOOD
 LOOK AT THE DUCHESS
 IN THE MUD

She exits.

SCENE SHIFTS TO:

ACT II, SCENE 5 - FANTASY NEW YORK/HOLLYWOOD

Walter Winchell appears.

WALTER WINCHELL

Dateline: Los Angeles. Studios are stewing, lawmakers look high and low, cops are casing the joint, and the courts are cutting to the chase. Something's brewing, and it ain't a barrel of beer.

Lights shift.

MFX HOLLYWOOD HILLS BACKDROP.

THREE MEN converge.

PROSECUTING ATTORNEY MALONE, JUDGE BLANDINGS, and the STUDIO HEAD.

MALONE

It's time to activate Brimstone.

STUDIO HEAD

Brimstone. What kind of cockamamie name is that? Nobody at the studio knows what the hell it means.

MALONE

FIRE and Brimstone. Don't you read the Bible?

STUDIO HEAD

For you, Mr. Prosecutor, I'll read the coverage.

JUDGE

This is about the law, Mr. Malone. Nothing to do with God. Though He certainly would approve of putting Bob Harrison out of business.

MALONE

Don't forget the niece, Judge Blandings.

JUDGE

The Flame Haired Femme Fatale.

STUDIO HEAD

Hey that's good. Did you make that up yourself?

JUDGE

I read it in the 'Herald Examiner.'

MALONE

Call her whatever you like. But issue an arrest warrant. I want to arrest them ALL.

JUDGE

But on what charges exactly?

Rushmore emerges.

RUSHMORE

You want charges? Bob Harrison is a liar, a
pornographer, an extortionist and a thief. And
I can prove every bit of it.

They happily surround
Rushmore, and they all exit.

SCENE SHIFTS TO:

ACT II, SCENE 6 - FANTASY NEW YORK

MFX NIGHTCLUB. Bob and Jeannie are
in a really fast dance.

BOB

Baby, I could go all night. Don't you feel it?
How ALIVE the music is?

JEANNIE

I know, it's wonderful, but aren't you hungry?
We never had dinner.

BOB

How alive EVERYTHING is...

JEANNIE

I need something... A shrimp cocktail even...

BOB

Don't the martinis have olives?

JEANNIE

Bob, can't we just sit this one out?

BOB

I'm not sitting anything out. But you go ahead,
Doll, order whatever you like.
(heads for another girl)
Hello, Beautiful.

JEANNIE

Bob. Bob!
(running after him)
It's not like I'm starving to DEATH or
anything.

They continue dancing. As Bob
twirls Jeannie on the dance floor,
Edith and Michael run on stage,
with COVENY, their attorney.

EDITH

Bob. Bob! STOP!

MFX Spin in old movie style:
"HARRISON FAMILY INDICTED"

Bob looks back and forth between the
newspaper projection and his family.

COVENY

Bill Coveny, sir. I'm a criminal attorney.

EDITH

Because apparently we're CRIMINALS.

BOB

What?

COVENY

The State of California has handed down ten separate indictments, charging you--

EDITH

Charging ALL of us.

COVENY

--with Criminal Conspiracy to Commit Libel, Production and Distribution of Obscene Materials, and Felonious Perpetration of a Public Fraud.

EDITH

The whole family. Even Michael.
(to Jeannie)
And YOU too.

JEANNIE

I'm a criminal?

EDITH

Perpetrating a fraud on the public. In the JUNGLE.

Phone rings. A cigarette girl brings it to Bob.

CIGARETTE GIRL

Coast-to-coast call for Mr. Robert Harrison.

BOB

Thanks. Hello?

Marjorie appears on the other side of the stage. She is in California.

MARJORIE

I'm not going to prison. Not for you. Not for anybody.

BOB

Honey, no one's going to prison. Get some rest. We'll talk tomorrow. I'll make this go away.

MARJORIE

I'm scared.

BOB

I know, Sweetheart. But I'm right here.

MARJORIE

No, I'M here. You're THERE.

Marjorie hangs up and recedes.

COVENY

So do you want the good news, or the bad?

BOB

There's good?

COVENY

Well, sir. It seems the California authorities filed these charges without bothering to look at the legal codes in New York. They can't extradite any of you to California on any of these charges.

BOB

What a bunch of schmucks.

JEANNIE

Well, that's good, right?

EDITH

Not for Marjorie, it isn't.

COVENY

And that's the bad news. As a California resident now, Marjorie must face trial.

BOB

She is NOT taking the fall for me. This is my magazine. My dream. And I'll fight to the death for it if I have to. Get me a flight to California as soon as possible.

COVENY

You'd be putting yourself in grave legal jeopardy.

BOB

I'm responsible. I'm the only one. Besides, whatever happened to due process? Everything in 'Confidential' is true.

JEANNIE

Not everything. We never actually sold shares in me...

BOB

Not those kinds of stories. The stuff that can get you a lawsuit. Every one of those stories is 100% true.

COVENY

And the jungle shooting?

BOB

Publicity.

COVENY

I strongly advise against traveling to California.

BOB

I know, kid, and thanks. But this is something I gotta do. Tell you what, make a deal with them. If I come, they drop the charges against the Peanut Gallery here.

COVENY

I'll see what I can do.

Family and Coveny recede.

JEANNIE

I don't want you to go. I don't want you in prison.

BOB

I can't imagine it will come to that. God, what a mess. I wish we could take a vacation now, for real...

JEANNIE

Come here.

She holds him. He leans into her.

JEANNIE

It's funny, but I kind of like you like this.

BOB

Cornered? Desperate?

JEANNIE

Standing still for a minute. Everything was going so fast, but now, you feel like you again.

BOB

I'm not myself.

JEANNIE

Yes. You are. I'm coming with you to California.

BOB

No you're not. Not unless they drop the charges against you.

JEANNIE

I don't care about that. I care about you.

SCENE SHIFTS TO:

ACT II, SCENE 7 - L.A. COURTROOM

Big musical fanfare. As the courtroom emerges around them, Bob, Jeannie, Marjorie, and Coveny gather in a prep area.

WALTER WINCHELL

The First Amendment is fighting for its life, on the first day of 'Confidential Magazine's' First Family's Trial of 100 Stars. Charges were dropped for some, but not for others. Still on the spot: THE MAN, THE NIECE, and THE GIRLFRIEND... Who will testify? What will they be wearing?

Quick spotlight as Winchell leans in for a private moment with Bob.

WALTER WINCHELL

You gonna keep me out of this thing?

BOB

Of course, Walter, of course.

WALTER WINCHELL

Good. Because if you don't, bad press and prison will be the least of your worries.
(points to Rushmore)
Same goes for him.

BOB

Does he know that?

WALTER WINCHELL

I've made myself clear to all the parties involved.

Winchell recedes.

Bob turns to Jeannie and Marjorie, who are both dressed more conservatively than usual. Marjorie's shirtwaist dress with buttoned-up Peter Pan collar is as squeaky clean as it gets.

BOB

Wow. You look like a couple of librarians.

MARJORIE

I'm so virginal, I'm wondering how the hell Fred and I had kids.

COVENY

It's perfect.

MARJORIE

Uncle Bob, thank you. You didn't have to come out here and put your neck on the line. Neither did you, Jeannie.

JEANNIE

Bobby wouldn't leave you hanging out to dry, and I wouldn't leave him, so, here I am.

BOB

I told you, Kid, for you and me there's no phony baloney. I've got your back, one hundred percent.

Malone is with Rushmore, who seems to be in charge, making notes and looking through court documents. The JURY is a floating pool of people. The Judge has his own portable bench and the witness box is also moveable.

BAILIFF

The Honorable Judge Nelson Blandings. All rise.

JUDGE

Be seated. You are each charged with five counts of Publishing Materials of an Obscene Nature, three counts of Criminal Conspiracy and Collusion to Commit Libel, and a single count of Felonious Perpetration of a Public Fraud. How do you plead?

BOB/MARJORIE/JEANNIE

Not guilty.

RUSHMORE

LIARS.

JUDGE

Mr. Rushmore, while I appreciate your zeal, this is my courtroom.

RUSHMORE

Your Honor. My... apologies.

JUDGE

Now. Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, in the Interest of Justice, we must put aside our own morals in order to pass fair and impartial judgment on these sleaze mongers and the filth and fakery they peddle. Mr. Malone, you may begin.

MALONE

The People submit the following 'Confidential' articles as examples forming the basis for the charges.

MFX: Each of six MAGAZINE SPREADS comes up when mentioned.

MALONE

'Pega Palo: The Vine That Makes You Virile.'

MFX: Above MAGAZINE SPREAD.

MALONE

Obscenity. 'Mae West's Open Door Policy for Negros.'

MFX: Above MAGAZINE SPREAD.

MALONE

Obscenity and Libel. 'Don't Take Those New Abortion Pills.'

MFX: Above MAGAZINE SPREAD.

MALONE

Obscenity. 'Errol Flynn's Secret Two-Way Sex Mirror.'

MFX: Above MAGAZINE SPREAD.

MALONE

Obscenity AND Libel. 'Liberace's Theme Song Should Be 'Mad About the Boy.''

MFX: Above MAGAZINE SPREAD.

MALONE

Obscenity, libel, and downright preposterous.

MARJORIE

Uncle Bob, tell me something to make me feel better. Anything. Even if it's a lie.

BOB

No worries, Kid, I promise. We're in a great position.

MARJORIE

How do you figure?

BOB

We got Truth, Justice, and the First Amendment on our side. It's a prime puh-zish.

JEANNIE

A puh-zish.

MARJORIE

Puh-zish? Did you make that up for a magazine headline?

BOB

Natch.

Malone addresses the courtroom.

SONG #14: TRIAL OF 100 STARS (COMPANY)

MALONE

THERE IS A PLAGUE
ALL AROUND IN THE LAND
AND A DIRTY DEVIL RUN AMOK
BUT KEEPING FAITH
DUTY BOUND
NOW AT HAND
IT'S TIME A PURE AND RIGHTEOUS
STRIKE IS STRUCK
TAKING TO BATTLE, TAKING A STAND
DO ONLY WHAT A CITIZEN MUST
FOR, YES IN GOD, UP ABOVE, DO WE TRUST
IF WE DO NOT ACT
WE PAY THE PRICE
DROWNING IN SIN AND VICE

JURORS

OBSCENE
DON'T HAVE TO READ IT OR SEE IT
OR HEAR ABOUT WHAT'S IN IT
OBSCENE
ABOUT IT I AM CLEAR
NO DOUBT WHATEVER HERE
THIS FILTHY RAG IS OBVIOUS OBSCENITY

MALONE

RELIABLE PREDICTION
MY HON'RABLE CONVICTION

JURORS

DON'T HAVE TO STUDY IT TO KNOW
THIS HORRIFIC INDECENCY IS OBSCENE

JUDGE

Does the Defense wish to make an opening
statement?

COVENY

Yes, Your Honor.

Coveny begins to rise, but Bob
interjects.

BOB

I've got this.

BOB

GREAT TO MEET YA
HOPE WE CAN BE PALS
GUYS N' GALS
YOU'RE A SPIFFY LOOKIN' JURY
MAY I SAY I'M GRATEFUL
I KNOW YOU'LL BE FAIR

YOU'LL BE LISTENING
IMPARTIALLY AND WITH CARE

BOB
WE SHOUT HALLELUJAH
THAT YOU'RE HERE TODAY
THIS IS CERTAINLY A BENEFICIAL TIME
TO STUDY EVERY CONCERN
WE CAN ENDEAVOR TO LEARN
IF THIS SINCERE MISUNDERSTANDING
IS A CRIME

BOB/MARJORIE
NOT A CRIME, NOT A CRIME
NO, NOT A CRIME, AND THUS, NO DOIN' TIME FOR US

BOB/MARJORIE/JEANNIE
NOT A CRIME, NOT A CRIME
IT'S NOT A CRIME TO DISH
WE'RE IN A PRIME PUH-ZISH

BOB
TO TELL YA, JUDGE AND JURY
YOU HEARD IT FROM ME
I'D NEVER FUDGE, DON'T WORRY
AND I GUARANTEE
IT'S NOT A CRIME, NOT A CRIME
NO, NOT A CRIME YOU WILL AGREE

BOB/MARJORIE/JEANNIE
NOT A CRIME, NOT A CRIME
NO, NOT A CRIME WE GUARANTEE

MALONE
THERE IS A PLAGUE
ALL AROUND IN THE LAND
AND A DIRTY DEVIL RUN AMOK
BUT KEEPING FAITH,
DUTY BOUND, NOW AT HAND
IT'S TIME A PURE AND
RIGHTEOUS STRIKE IS STRUCK
TAKING TO BATTLE,
TAKING A STAND
DO ONLY WHAT A CITIZEN MUST

JURY
LOOK AT HIM
LOOK AT THEM
THEY SEEM SO NICE
WHY RUSH TO CONDEMN?
NOT CLEAR
NOR OBVIOUS
WHO TO TRUST?

JUDGE
FOR THOUGH IN GOD, UP ABOVE DO WE TRUST

MALONE
IF WE DO NOT ACT WE PAY THE PRICE

GROUP 1
DROWNING IN SIN AND VICE

GROUP 2
NOT A CRIME, NOT A CRIME

DEFENSE

*NO, NOT A CRIME, AND THUS
NO DOIN' TIME FOR US
NOT A CRIME, NOT A CRIME
IT'S NOT A CRIME TO DISH
WE'RE IN A PRIME PUH-ZISH*

RUSHMORE

*IS HE A RED, OR KIDDIN'
OR PLAYIN' A TRICK?
THEY SHOULD BE DEAD, NO KIDDIN'
IT'S MAKIN' ME SICK*

DEFENSE/CHORUS

*IT'S NOT A CRIME, NO, NOT A CRIME
IT'S NOT A CRIME YOU WILL--*

Abrupt cut off.

JUDGE

Call your first witness.

MALONE

Your Honor, for the record, we prepared subpoenas for Frank Sinatra. Marilyn Monroe. Gary Cooper. Jayne Mansfield. Ava Gardner. Robert Mitchum. Lana Turner. And Mr. Van Johnson.

The jury applauds enthusiastically.

MALONE

Unfortunately they all seem to be out of the country on various emergencies and could not be served.

The jury sighs.

BOB

They won't answer questions under oath, because what we printed about 'em is true.

As various characters step in and out of the jury box in a montage of testimony. Each raise his or her right hand as they speak.

MALONE

State your occupation and employer for the record.

HOOKER

I'm a prostitute.
(points to Bob and Marjorie)
And I work for THEM.

PRIVATE DICK

Sure, I used wiretaps and hidden cameras. It's a free country, ain't it?

FRANCESCA

Of course I receive salary. The money, it is for because I am journalistic researcher. And Your Honor, my mother, she very sick. I am helplessly.

(to Bob and Marjorie)

Please forgive me. I do not want to testify. They make me tell them about the slush monies.

(to the jury)

But the Harrisons, they are good people, even if they are criminals.

COVENY

Objection.

JUDGE

Overruled.

MALONE

Now, I apologize Your Honor, we had hoped to swear in our next scheduled witness against Mr. Harrison and his accomplice, but word has just reach me that last night the witness died. Of an apparent suicide. Or was it MURDER?

Marjorie faints dead away.

BOB

Give her some room. Back away!

JUDGE

Order! Order!

As soft music rises, Marjorie makes her way to the stand.

MARJORIE

To tell you the truth, I really don't know what I'm doing here. I mean, I'm just an ordinary girl.

JEANNIE

She looks just like Jennifer Jones in 'Song of Bernadette.'

SONG #15: GIRL NEXT DOOR - REPRISE (Marjorie/COMPANY)

MARJORIE

*WHEN I MARRIED MY GUY
TOGETHER FOREVER
A WORLD OF PLAIN
DOMESTICATION*

WITH BETTY CROCKER
AND GOOD DOCTOR SPOCK

MARJORIE

I LIVE MY LIFE
WITH TRUE DEDICATION
COMPANION AND MOTHER
A SIMPLE THING
I HONOR THE VOWS
OF MY WEDDING RING
OH, I'LL ALWAYS BE
THE GIRL NEXT DOOR
WHATEVER YOU THINK
OF MY KIND OF LIFE
I SWEAR ON THE BIBLE
I'M JUST A WIFE
OH, I'LL ALWAYS BE
THE GIRL NEXT DOOR
SO WHEN YOU WANT THE GIRL NEXT DOOR
I'M NEXT DOOR
YES, WHEN YOU WANT THE GIRL NEXT DOOR
I'M NEXT DOOR

MALONE

The girl next door. I see. People's Exhibit 14B. Do you recognize the names and figures on this list?

MARJORIE

Yes...

MALONE

Can you describe them?

MARJORIE

Well, I don't--

MALONE

Would it be correct to say it is a list of two hundred and eighty five payments to forty-seven individuals in amounts totaling three hundred sixty one thousand dollars?

MARJORIE

That's probably correct.

MALONE

Payments you approved.

MARJORIE

Yes.

MALONE

To informants.

MARJORIE

Sources.

MALONE

Peddling stories about lewd and lascivious acts, homosexuality, miscegenation, pill popping, and other chicanery of a similar bent?

MARJORIE

I don't know how to answer that.

MALONE

Tell us, would you describe those as the actions of a 'Girl Next Door?'

MARJORIE

I'm sure I don't know.

RUSHMORE

The 'Girl Next Door.' Hah. If you live next to a brothel.

Bob wants to object but can't figure out what to say. Marjorie sinks back to the defense side. The scene segues to LIONEL PAULSEN testifying.

MALONE

Name and occupation.

PAULSEN

Lionel Paulsen. I was a film producer.

MALONE

But you are no longer in that profession?

PAULSEN

No. They saw to that. They told me I had to give them a thousand dollars or they'd run a story about me that would ruin my life.

MALONE

Blackmail?

PAULSEN

Yes, sir.

MALONE

Did you pay the money?

PAULSEN

Yes, I did. One thousand bucks.

MALONE

Did they run the story?

PAULSEN

No. But it ruined my nerves. I couldn't work.

MALONE

And what was the story about?

PAULSEN

Something private.

MALONE

Meaning... your privates, correct? That they were of a rather diminutive size and stature, correct? That you had a botched surgery to increase the size and stature, correct? Is the person who blackmailed you here today?

PAULSEN

Yes.

MALONE

Who is that person?

PAULSEN

(points to Marjorie)

Her.

MARJORIE

That's a lie.

JUDGE

Order!

MALONE

Let the record show the witness indicated Mr. Harrison's codefendant, the 'Girl Next Door.'

MARJORIE

But he's lying.

MALONE

Objection.

JUDGE

Sustained. And we're adjourned for the day.

WALTER WINCHELL

Tune in tomorrow, folks. Same time. Same station. This is Walter Winchell saying sweet dreams.

Courtroom recedes.

SCENE SHIFTS TO:

ACT II, SCENE 8 - NEW YORK APT./L.A. HOTEL ROOM

On the phone stage opposite:

EDITH

Who is this man? He's lying, right?

BOB

Maybe he's a plant. He could be anyone.

MARJORIE

I know who he is. We researched a story on him, but tossed it. The guy wasn't worth bothering with.

EDITH

I don't care what you've done, you're my little girl. And Bob, I don't care what you've done either.

BOB

We haven't done anything.

MARJORIE

Why would I blackmail someone for a grand?

BOB

Hardly even walking-around money.

EDITH

Am I crazy? There must be something to all this?

BOB

A lot of people peddle stories to the magazine. So maybe not all of them are upstanding citizens.

MARJORIE

Tell me about it.

BOB

Maybe one of them blackmailed that sweaty little man. Who the hell knows? It's nothing to do with US. Stay out of it.

EDITH

This isn't how things were supposed to be.

FRED

Marjorie? Marjorie?

Bob hands the phone to Marjorie.

MARJORIE

Fred?

FRED

You okay? We miss you.

MARJORIE

Oh, Fred, I miss you too. I do.

SCENE SHIFTS TO:

ACT II, SCENE 9 - L.A. COURTROOM

Back in court.

WINCHELL

Virile not 'steer-ile' folks, Miss Pega Palo herself, the beautiful Jeannie Douglas.

MALONE

Tell me, Miss Douglas, do you know what Fraud is?

JEANNIE

Yes, sir.

MALONE

Can you tell us? In your own words.

JEANNIE

It's like selling rhinestones and calling 'em diamonds, or muskrat and calling it mink.

MALONE

Very good. Now, let's travel back to your adventure in the Dominican Republic. Was it... scary?

JEANNIE

Yes, sir.

MALONE

So you were frightened?

JEANNIE

Yes, sir.

MALONE

Of what, may I ask?

JEANNIE

Well, of everything that happened.

MALONE

But specifically. Frightened. Of what? That... you might get sick?

JEANNIE

Well, no, sir.

MALONE

That you might be hurt?

JEANNIE

No, sir.

MALONE

Could it be... You were frightened you'd be caught and revealed as a two-timer?

JEANNIE

NO, I would never.

MALONE

With Juan de Santos, glamorous playboy industrialist?

JEANNIE

NEVER!

MALONE

You didn't give Mr. De Santos reason to believe you welcomed his advances?

JEANNIE

No, I'm with Bobby, I'd NEVER go behind his back.

MALONE

You didn't encourage Mr. De Santos?

JEANNIE

I'm telling you, I wouldn't do such a thing. The truth is, I never even MET Juan de Santos.

MALONE

You never met the man who shot your lover?

JEANNIE

It was just publicity. I would NEVER cheat on Bobby, NEVER, honest, you gotta believe me.

MALONE

Oh, I do believe you, Miss Douglas. And thank you. For confirming, under oath, that Robert Harrison did perpetrate a FRAUD on the American public.

JEANNIE

But-- But--

MALONE

The witness is excused.

JEANNIE

I'm sorry, Bobby, I didn't mean to, I didn't mean it--

WINCHELL

Good morning Mr. and Mrs. America, from border to border and coast to coast and all the ships at sea, let's go to press.

The Pega Palo girl fumbles and takes a tumble, and now, all eyes open and all ears turn as the prosecution calls former 'Confidential' anti-Commie crusader, some might say... turncoat. Howard Rushmore.

RUSHMORE

Can I be honest?

MALONE

Of course. You took an oath.

RUSHMORE

I'm guilty.

MALONE

You? Guilty?

RUSHMORE

Of trusting too much. Believing too much. I'm guilty of selling away my own good sense for pennies on the dollar.

MALONE

You sound almost bereaved.

RUSHMORE

Maybe I am. Bob Harrison made me believe we could change things. I'm not a man who... trusts easily.

MALONE

Some suggest this is merely sour grapes from a disgruntled former employee.

RUSHMORE

We paid disreputable people to lie, then hid behind those lies to pretend the stories were true.

MALONE

And you acknowledge you took part in this.

RUSHMORE

That is my shame. But I left Mr. Harrison's employ once I discovered his true intentions. The communists have nothing on him. He couldn't do more harm if he worked for them.

COVENY

Objection.

JUDGE

Overruled.

MALONE

Your witness.

COVENY

Mr. Rushmore, what about the veracity of some of YOUR stories?

MALONE

Objection. The witness is not the one on trial.

JUDGE

Sustained.

COVENY

What about the reliability of sources you, yourself paid?

MALONE

Objection.

JUDGE

Sustained.

COVENY

Isn't this a personal vendetta against Mr. Harrison?

RUSHMORE

He's a menace.

COVENY

(chuckles)

If Bob Harrison is such a menace, why is your former supporter Walter Winchell such a fan?

BOB/RUSHMORE

OBJECTION!

Bob, Howard, and the Judge seem equally alarmed.

JUDGE

Sidebar!

Tension mounts as Bob, Coveny, Rushmore, and Malone convene with the panicky Judge. It's like a mini silent movie of mayhem. Then, abruptly, calm. They all step back.

COVENY

Mr. Harrison would like to clarify that Walter Winchell has no connection with 'Confidential' magazine, and the question is withdrawn.

MALONE

Mr. Rushmore is also anxious to clarify that he claims no association with, or connection to, Walter Winchell.

JUDGE

The State of California solemnly agrees. We have no communications with Walter Winchell.
(pounds his gavel)
It is so ordered.

MARJORIE

(aside to Bob)

Geez, is everybody really THAT scared of Winchell?

BOB

You have no idea.

WINCHELL

The big man himself, Big Bob Harrison, testifying at last. Will he pull a rabbit out of the hat or flop like a fish out of water?

COVENY

Mr. Harrison, tell us: Have you bribed anyone?

BOB

No.

COVENY

Killed?

BOB

No.

COVENY

Lied?

BOB

No. We have affidavits. Hundreds. Attesting that what we publish is true. But this court doesn't wanna know from the truth.

JUDGE/MALONE

Objection.

COVENY

Mr. Harrison, would you characterize yourself as a liar?

BOB

Absolutely not. No.

MALONE

What about the Dominican Republic? Even you're own co-conspirator says you lied.

(holds up photo of Bob's TV bullet wound)

And with a fake bullet wound on national television no less. Your own counsel asked if you lied, and you just perjured yourself, since you now admit that you did in fact lie.

BOB

That's not a lie, it's a fib.

MALONE

That's a distinction with no legal relevance.

BOB

So tell me, who got hurt from the Jungle gag?

RUSHMORE

What about Juan de Santos? What about his reputation?

BOB

There is no Juan de Santos, you putz. He's as phony as your commie kidnapppers.

RUSHMORE

I object.

BOB

I object to making such a big deal out of a little publicity stunt.

RUSHMORE

If it's no big deal, then why are you on trial?

SONG #16: CONFIDENTIALLY SPEAKING (BOB)

BOB

*WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO SAY?
YOU DON'T LISTEN ANYWAY
NO MATTER WHAT THE TRUTH
AND NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH
DON'T WANNA HEAR THE TRUTH
WHY DO YOU FEAR THE TRUTH?
MISTER CONFIDENTIAL
MISTER CONFIDENTIAL
WHERE'S THE NEW YORK TIMES
AND FREEDOM OF SPEECH?
WHEN YOU'RE TREATING ME
LIKE SOME KIND OF LEECH
CONFIDENTIALLY SPEAKING
I'VE GOT NOTHING TO HIDE
ASK MY MILLIONS OF READERS
IF WHAT THEY WANTED
WAS WHAT I SUPPLIED
JUST A LITTLE FUN*

BOB (CONT'D)

*DEEP DOWN YOU AGREE
HOLD A MIRROR UP
AND WHADDAYA SEE?
CONFIDENTIALLY SPEAKING,
ONE CONCLUSION TO DRAW
DISRESPECT UNINTENDED*

*BUT YOU ARE THE ONES
WHO ARE BREAKING THE LAW*

MALONE

Objection.

RUSHMORE

That's slander.

JUDGE

Mr. Harrison. I will hold you in contempt.

BOB

Contempt? That's rich.

JUDGE

I'm warning you. Order.

BOB

*YOU WANTED PROOF
THERE'S THE PROOF
BUT THE PROOF DOESN'T MATTER
JUSTICE ISN'T BLIND
YOU CALL IT FILTH
BUT THE FILTH ISN'T FILTH
IF IT ISN'T IN A FILTHY MIND*

BOB (CONT'D)

This isn't just me and my family they're going after. Millions of people read 'Confidential.' And I bet a lot of you do too. That's Freedom of Speech in action.

BOB (CONT'D)

*WE THE PEOPLE
DIVIDED WE FALL
BUT WE CAN ALL
BE THE CENTER OF ATTENTION
YOU KNOW WE'VE ALL GOT THE ITCH
FOR BEING FAMOUS AND RICH
A LITTLE TASTE OF RECOGNITION
THE GREAT AMERICAN AMBITION
CONFIDENTIALLY SPEAKING
EVERYBODY CAN WIN
BUT WHATEVER THE VERDICT
'CONFIDENTIAL' WILL NEVER GIVE IN*

Bob leaves the stand.

Courtroom scene time-shifts
through Winchell's broadcast.

WALTER WINCHELL

Two months in and the jury's still out folks, O-U-T, OUT. Out to dinner, out for drinks, and out to the pool.

Sequestered at the lovely Ambassador Hotel, they don't seem in any hurry to pass judgment on the Headline-Heavy Harrisons. Who knows. Maybe the jury just doesn't want to seem judgmental. Even to the judge.

JUDGE

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, your inability to do your job has put us at a dead end. And you should be ASHAMED.

WALTER WINCHELL

Sixty two days. A record? I don't know. But the Trial of the Century ends with more fizzle than sizzle. Hung, folks. Like a monkey from a tree. No harm, no foul? Well, no joke, folks, there's NO VERDICT. It's a mistrial!

Pandemonium. Bob and Jeannie hug and kiss. Marjorie is more subdued. Rushmore starts throwing things around the prosecution table, and beats up on Malone.

RUSHMORE

This isn't over. I'll see you in prison or die trying.

BOB

I'll go with option number two.

RUSHMORE

You make me sick.

BOB

Then go be sick. Knock yourself out.

JEANNIE

Let's go home. I'll take care of you for a change.

BOB

They're bound to put us on trial again. We need to plan the next move.

MARJORIE

You said it would be over. Were in such a PRIME PUH-ZISH. Well, puh-zish this, BOB, I don't care what I have to do, I am NOT going through this again.

BOB

It's all going to be fine.

MARJORIE

All I wanted was to MATTER. But now I'm a criminal with my picture in every paper in the country.

BOB

You of all people know how the press plays this game.

MARJORIE

You did this. You created this monster. And now it's biting us all in the ass.

BOB

We did it together. As a family.

MARJORIE

We're not a family, we're a freak show.

BOB

You think you're going to be happy? With nothing but a couple of kids and Fred?

MARJORIE

Finally. You remember his name.

(as she exits)

Maybe it's time I remember it too.

JEANNIE

Bob...?

BOB

Great. Someone ELSE with an opinion.

JEANNIE

But--

BOB

Always a 'but' -- you think I want to go back to being a nobody?

JEANNIE

You were never that to me.

BOB

That schmuck with his dirty magazines who couldn't get a table anywhere or buy his girl anything nice?

JEANNIE

I didn't think it was so bad. I thought it was... wonderful.

BOB

I gave you everything you wanted. I made you a star.

JEANNIE

I didn't want to be a star. I wanted you.

Everyone on stage goes his or her
separate way.

SCENE SHIFTS TO:

ACT II, SCENE 10 - HOTEL ROOM

Jeannie is alone, packing.

SONG #17: THE GIRL WITH YELLOW HAIR (Jeannie)

JEANNIE

THE GIRL WITH YELLOW HAIR
 MAKES A MAN FEEL LIKE A MAN
 SHE GOES ALONG TO GET ALONG
 THE GIRL WITH YELLOW HAIR
 DOES A DOG AND PONY SHOW
 LIKE NOTHING IN THE WORLD IS WRONG
 IT'S NOT LIKE SHE'S A DOORMAT OR A DUMMY
 JUST A GIRL WHO LEARNED TO PLAY
 A CERTAIN PART
 GET A DIAMOND OR A SABLE
 WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE WHEN-
 NEITHER ONE WILL WARM
 THE COCKLES OF YOUR HEART
 THE GIRL WITH YELLOW HAIR
 IN THE PAPERS EVERY DAY
 THE CENTER OF A CROWD
 HER FELLA LOOKIN' PROUD
 HER MIND A MILLION MILES AWAY
 I SMILE TOO WIDE, I'M TOO CAREFREE
 HE CALLS ME THE LIFE OF EVERY PARTY
 IT'S THE GIRL HE SEES IN ME
 I LOVE HIM, JUST A LOOK FROM HIM, AND OH--
 I LOVE HIM, EVEN IF I GO
 I LOVE HIM
 BUT HE DOESN'T WANNA KNOW FROM LOVE

Jeannie puts on a trench coat,
 takes a note from her pocket,
 leaves it and leaves the earrings
 Bob gave her.

JEANNIE

THE GIRL WITH YELLOW HAIR,
 FOR A MAN ABOUT THE TOWN
 WILL NEVER BE A WIFE
 IT'S NOT HIS KIND OF LIFE
 WHY BOTHER WITH A WEDDING GOWN
 STAY FANCY FREE, IT'S RIGHT AS RAIN
 TOMORROW ANOTHER CELEBRATION
 AND A GLASS OF PINK CHAMPAGNE
 I LOVE HIM, JUST A LOOK FROM HIM, AND OH--
 I LOVE HIM, EVEN IF I GO
 I LOVE HIM
 BUT HE DOESN'T WANNA KNOW FROM LOVE

Jeannie exits carrying her
 suitcase.

SCENE SHIFTS TO:

ACT II, SCENE 11 - FANTASY NEW YORK/HOLLYWOOD

The prosecution team assembles.

JUDGE

Settle.

RUSHMORE

WHAT? We can't let them get away with this.

JUDGE

He'll pay a fine.

STUDIO HEAD

What's he care about a fine? Get rid of the magazine.

MALONE

He pays a fine AND shuts down the magazine.

RUSHMORE

This is CRIMINAL. If you'd done your job we could have WON.

STUDIO HEAD

There's no winning against these cockroaches. You kill 'em, but they keep coming back. Like Lana Turner.

(sighs)

But who knows, maybe you shut down Harrison and some of his ugly step-children disappear too.

MALONE

It could stop the new magazines in their tracks.

RUSHMORE

'Who knows?' 'Maybe?' 'COULD?' That's the best you can do? You're pathetic.

JUDGE

Mr. Rushmore, you are not in charge here.

RUSHMORE

I gave you everything any COMPETENT prosecutor would need.

MALONE

Who the hell are you calling incompetent?

RUSHMORE

YOU. I'm calling you ALL incompetent.

JUDGE

Mr. Rushmore, I hardly think you're in a position to idly burn bridges.

They exit. Switch focus. Edith enters.

EDITH

Take the deal. Settle.. You have no choice.

BOB

It's not up to you; and if you think I have no choice in what happens here, you're dumb as dirt.

EDITH

No more arguing. No more.

BOB

Just, get off my back. I can't even get Winchell on the phone. Where's Jeannie?

EDITH

(hands him Jeannie's note)

She's gone. And good for her.

BOB

What?

EDITH

People think she's a dumb blonde? Well, she's smart enough to walk away from this train wreck.

BOB

My magazine is not a train wreck.

EDITH

No. You are.

Everyone but Bob recedes. Lights darken.

SONG #18: BRIDGE ON FIRE (Bob/Rushmore)

BOB

*DEAD ON, DEAD TO RIGHTS,
ASK ME HOW I SLEEP NIGHTS
ASK ME IF I CARE
BRIDGE ON FIRE, BRIDGE ON FIRE*

Rushmore emerges.

RUSHMORE

*DEAD DUCK, D.O.A.,
DOESN'T MATTER ANYWAY
ASK ME IF I CARE
BRIDGE ON FIRE, BRIDGE ON FIRE*

BOTH

ME? MY PLACE IN THE SUN
IS COMIN' ROUND AGAIN
ME? I'M STILL NUMBER ONE
I'M GLORY-BOUND AGAIN
PEDAL TO THE METAL
ARE YOU GONNA WAIT AROUND
AND BE AFRAID
OF HOW A FOOL
WITHOUT A BRAIN
IS GONNA VOTE?
FAKING IT AND MAKING LIKE A SUCKER
NO, YOU BETTER HIT AND RUN
BEFORE THE SONS A' BITCHES
GET YOU BY THE THROAT
IN THE REAR VIEW MIRROR
WHAT I SEE
A CLEAR REFLECTION
SETTING ME FREE
OF WHAT WAS THEN
AND WHAT SHALL BE

BOB

THE BRIDGE I BURNED

RUSHMORE

THE BRIDGE I BURNED

BOB

DEAD MAN, DEAD AHEAD

RUSHMORE

DEAD MAN, DEAD IS DEAD

BOTH

JUST REMEMBER WHAT I SAID
I DON'T REALLY CARE
BRIDGE ON FIRE, BRIDGE ON FIRE

BOB

ME? MY PLACE IN THE SUN
IS COMIN' ROUND AGAIN

RUSHMORE

ME? I'M STILL NUMBER ONE
I'M GLORY-BOUND AGAIN

BOB/RUSHMORE

BRIDGE ON FIRE

BOB

JUST A PILE OF ASH-

RUSHMORE

A BURNING EMBER-

BOB
BUT YOU WILL REMEMBER--

RUSHMORE
YOU WILL REMEMBER--

BOTH
ME...

FADE TO BLACK.

ACT II, SCENE 12 - NEW YORK/PRESS CONFERENCE/FANTASY NEW YORK

Frances carries a suitcase.
Rushmore follows.

RUSHMORE

Frances? Where are you going?

FRANCES

I want a divorce.

RUSHMORE

No. No no no no.... Frances... I love you...

FRANCES

Do you have any idea how much I loved YOU? Back when we met, a thousand years ago? I've got to make some kind of life again. I'll go back on the wagon--

RUSHMORE

Back? Were either of us ever on it in the first place?

FRANCES

I mean it.

RUSHMORE

I'll stop drinking. No more pills. No more--

FRANCES

It's not the booze or the pills. It's the hate.

RUSHMORE

I don't hate you. I love you.

FRANCES

All you do is hate. Look, I have a taxi waiting. Just... Good bye, Howard.

RUSHMORE

Frances. Frances!

He follows her off. We hear a taxi pull away. A gun shot. A screech. Another shot. A crash.

MFX "'CONFIDENTIAL MAGAZINE' BOSS KILLS WIFE AND SELF!"

BOB

(to audience)

If you saw that, what would you think? That it's about me. The paper will say the confusion is unintentional.

BOB

After all, wasn't Howard Rushmore ONE OF the bosses at 'Confidential?' They'll retract it. Nobody'll care. They'll still think it's about me.

Music rises as Edith, Michael, Marjorie, and Fred gather around Bob. They takes their time, each deciding when and how to approach.

Marjorie is particularly shaky, leaning on Fred. They are a united family again.

A press conference assembles around Bob.

BOB

This is a terrible thing. I won't lie to you. I still can't make sense of it. But this tragedy is not the main thing driving my decision to walk away from the magazine. Back when I invented 'Confidential' -- that's how my girl, Jeannie always put it: 'Invented.' Truth is, she's the one who really inspired everything. I wanted to do so much for her, and for my family. Well, I almost lost my family because of 'Confidential.'

The family moves in closer around him.

BOB

And I did lose the one person who mattered. My heart's just not in it anymore. Not without her.

Reporters exit to reveal Jeannie, wearing her trench coat.

JEANNIE

Bob?

BOB

Jeannie? Is it really you?

JEANNIE

(nods)

Do you mean what you're saying? About walking away?

BOB

Come here.

JEANNIE

No. Answer the question. Are you telling the truth?

BOB

Oh, Jeannie, don't you get it, Honey? You ARE my truth.

SONG #19: FINALE (COMPANY)

BOB

*I'M NOT THE MAN I THOUGHT I WOULD BE
STILL AND ALL I KNOW I COULD BE
ANYTHING FOR YOU BY SAYING I DO...*

He kneels.

BOB

God as my witness. I do wanna know from love. What do you say?

Jeannie is trembling. She turns away, as if to refuse him, undoes her coat, and turns back around revealing that she's wearing a short wedding dress.

She nods, and bursts into tears as he holds her. Music rises as they kiss, and the family gathers around them.

SONG #19: FINALE (COMPANY) -- CONT'D

BOB

*OH, WHEN YOUR FATE COMES RINGIN'
YOU TAKE THE CALL*

COMPANY

*BETTER ANSWER THE CALL
KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE BALL
YOU'RE IN LUCK, TAKE A CHANCE, DOUBLE DOWN*

BOB

YES, I'M BETTING IT ALL

COMPANY

*BETTER ANSWER THE CALL
KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE BALL
YOU'RE IN LUCK, TAKE A CHANCE, DOUBLE DOWN
BET IT ALL*

BOB

(to audience)

I may be walking away, folks, but I'll tell you one thing for free: This world I created?

MFX: Projected logos take us from
"Confidential" to the "National
Enquirer," "People," "Access
Hollywood," TMZ and all the rest.

BOB

THIS will last forever.

BOB/COMPANY

*BETTER ANSWER THE CALL
KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE BALL
YOU'RE IN LUCK, TAKE A CHANCE, DOUBLE DOWN
BET IT ALL!*

BLACKOUT.

THE END