

30 ROCK SPEC
"NETWORK"

Written by

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An original spec script
parodying the 1976 Paddy
Chayefky film, "Network."

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FADE IN:

INT. JACK DONAGHY'S OFFICE - DAY

LIZ LEMON enters JACK DONAGHY'S office.

LIZ

Jack, if this is about me telling TMZ your daughters' middle name is Karma because she's going to be a bitch, I'm sorry. It was a joke.

JACK

No, Lemon. I have much better things to do with my time than be concerned with people who are concerned with celebrity gossip. Have a seat.

Liz sits down while Jack pours two drinks and hands one to her. Liz smells it and makes a face.

JACK (CONT'D)

Lemon, it's no secret that TGS's ratings are down. There's no easy way of saying this, so I'm just going to say it. This could be TGS's last season.

Liz takes a large gulp of the drink and gags a little.

JACK (CONT'D)

The show had a good run. Two mildly funny seasons. You should be proud.

LIZ

I always knew this day would come, but TGS is my life, Jack. What am I going to do?

JACK

Buck up, Lemon. You'll always have work here at NBC. I can get you on the staff for 'The Office' spin-off, 'Dwight: Beet Farmer.'

EXT. BEET FARM - DAY

DWIGHT

I miss Jim and Pam.

INT. JACK DONAGHY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

LIZ
But what about everyone else?

JACK
Ask yourself, do you really care?

INT. WRITER'S ROOM - DAY

FRANK is throwing nuts into LUTZ's mouth, missing every time. Toofer looks at the camera.

TOOFER
I went to Harvard.

INT. JACK DONAGHY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

LIZ
Well...

JACK
Tell no one about our little discussion, Lemon. When shows get canceled, the cast and crew act like the world is ending. The truth is, if you work hard, or you're Tracy Jordan, you'll do okay. You're a hard worker, Lemon. Start planning the next chapter of your life. But tell no one, or chaos will ensue.

LIZ
Believe me, Jack, I know the cast and crew of TGS. I'm not telling anyone.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Liz grabs PETE HORNBERGER and pulls him into the frame of a door.

LIZ
Pete. I gotta tell you some bad news.

PETE
Is it worse than not having sex in ten months? Ten months, Liz. That's almost a year.

LIZ

Focus, Pete. TGS is getting cancelled.

PETE

What? That is worse. Without a job, I'll never get laid. It could be years. Decades. I could live and die without ever having sex again.

LIZ

I thought when TGS was over I'd be relieved and ready to move on but I'm freaking out, Pete.

PETE

You've got nothing to worry about. You'll always have work. You can start an original series about how awful working in television really is. Or you can write for 'Dwight: Beet Farmer.'

EXT. BEET FARM - DAY

Dwight is standing in the field talking to a fellow worker who is turned away.

DWIGHT

This show isn't funny without Steve Carell.

The fellow worker turns, reacting to the statement. It is RICKY GERVAIS.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

LIZ

Listen, you can't tell anyone else about this.

PETE

The doctor says I have to cut down on bacon. If I can't have sex or bacon, I just don't want to live anymore.

LIZ

Are you listening to me, Pete? You can't tell anyone.

PETE
Tell them what?

Liz and Pete walk away in separate directions. TRACY JORDAN emerges from the door they were speaking in front of.

INT. TGS STUDIO

TGS is about to air and Tracy cannot be found. JENNA MORONEY is yelling at KENNETH PARCELL.

JENNA
Where is he, Kenneth? We go live in less than two minutes!

KENNETH
Grizz and Dot-com found him and they're on their way, Ms. Maroney. Be patient.

JENNA
Patience, Kenneth? I'm a beautiful blonde, and a celebrity. Patience is for the average.

GRIZZ and DOT-COM rush a tipsy Tracy through the studio and pass Liz and Pete whispering in the corner.

LIZ
See, normally, I would be livid about Tracy and right now I just don't care.

PETE
I may take a job with a reality show.

LIZ
Ugh. Pete, no. Reality TV is to TV what turkey bacon is to bacon. Only stupid people think it's better, and like the real thing. There's got to be a way we can spike TGS's ratings.

PETE
We can have Jenna accidentally slip a boob. She's been dying to do that ever since the Janet Jackson Super Bowl.

LIZ
Gross, no.

A STAGE HAND counts down to action. Costume and make-up are touching up Tracy, who is swatting at them. FRANK ROSSITANO is standing off stage, watching. Kenneth is frantic.

KENNETH

Mr. Rossitano, I think Tracy may be drunk!

FRANK

So?

Frank swigs a flask as Kenneth runs off. The stage hand mimes, 'three, two, one,' Tracy rips off his clothes.

FRANK (CONT'D)

That's not in the script.

TRACY

I don't wanna do this no more. This is stupid. What's da use? Does anyone care about me? I'm going to blow my head off on live TV. I'm done with this. Things are bad. Things are really, really bad, and instead of fixing it, you're watching me. I know I'm handsome and hilarious, but you gotta stop dis. You oughtta do somethin'. I would tell you to write to your senator, but like most of you, I don't know who that is.

Jenna dances in front of him, bursting into song. TGS cuts to commercial. Liz and Pete are oblivious to what has just happened.

LIZ

You're wrong, Pete. Star Wars the musical would be epic.

PETE

An epic disaster, like Spider-man. Besides, how would you get rights from George--

KENNETH

Ms. Lemon, excuse me, did you not see what just happened?

LIZ

What just happened?

KENNETH

Mr. Jordan lost his marbles.

Kenneth pulls out several marbles from his pocket.

KENNETH (CONT'D)

See? He never goes on stage without them.

Security is wrestling Tracy off the stage. Tracy is yelling all sorts of bleeped out obscenities. Pete runs to the control booth yelling.

PETE

Cut to commercial! Cut to commercial!

LIZ

Blerg.

INT. JACK DONAGHY'S OFFICE - DAY

Liz enters Jack's office, holding a stack of newspapers.

JACK

Lemon, why is Tracy in the building after last week's debacle?

LIZ

He wants to make a public apology.

JACK

Why wasn't I informed?

LIZ

Oh, I don't know. Maybe it's because you fired my star actor and I've been so busy trying to figure out what do this week, while having the next chapter of my life looming above me. Let him back on the show, Jack, it's not like Tracy's never had a psychotic episode before.

JACK

He said he was going to commit public suicide. That's out of character, even for Tracy. I did what I had to do because you let out the secret.

LIZ

I did not!

JACK

Why else was Tracy acting like that?

LIZ

Oh... I don't know, maybe because he's Tracy Jordan. Being crazy is his thing.

JACK

What do you think?

LIZ

I don't know, maybe he put a fork in a socket too many times while eating paint chips as a kid and-

JACK

...About letting him do a live apology?

LIZ

Look at this.

Liz throws the papers down on Jack's desk. Tracy is on the cover of every one.

LIZ (CONT'D)

The Post, the Times, even MARTHA STEWART LIVING put Tracy on the cover this week. We can't buy this publicity, Jack.

JACK

Yes, well, journalism isn't what it used to be, Lemon. The Times hasn't been good since the reporters stopped making up facts.

LIZ

But Jack, this is the most attention Tracy...or TGS have ever gotten.

JACK

He embarrassed himself, he embarrassed TGS, you, and NBC. I will allow him to apologize but only because I think it would take some strain off the show.

LIZ

How am I supposed to replace Tracy?

JACK
You'll think of something.

LIZ
Hey, I have an idea for a new TV show.

JACK
Already?

LIZ
Yeah. What if we made a fictional TV show based on us. A cranky but benign TV exec, and a brilliant and beautiful young female head writer.

JACK
I don't know, Lemon. I can see how my character would be fascinating, but let's face it. If we're the main characters, I would be the likable one, funny one. Even if you got a pompous actor to play me.

LIZ
Whatever. So, is it okay if Tracy apologizes?

JACK
I want you to write the copy.

Liz leaves.

JACK (CONT'D)
Lemon...be careful.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Jenna runs up to Liz, excited.

JENNA
Liz, I have good news.

LIZ
Has the world stopped letting Tyler Perry make TV shows?

JENNA
No. I joined a communist revolution party!

LIZ

You did what now? No. No, no, no. Jenna, I have enough to deal with, with Tracy. Please, please try to be normal for once. Besides, everyone knows communism has never worked, except in Smurf land.

JENNA

Liz, you're not seeing the big picture. Anti-establishment is very in right now. I need something to keep me in the news when TGS goes under.

LIZ

Who said TGS is going under?

JENNA

We haven't been signed for a new season yet, and ratings are down... Anyone with common sense knows that's bad.

LIZ

I never pinned you for one with common sense.

JENNA

What makes you say that?

INT. HALLWAY - FLASHBACK

JENNA

I joined a communist revolution party!

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

LIZ

Whatever, Jenna, but please take off that shirt.

The camera zooms out to reveal that Jenna is wearing a shirt the reads, 'Death to America.'

JENNA

I'm flattered, Liz, but your window for experimenting has passed.

Frank, out of nowhere, is standing behind Liz. He startles her.

LIZ

What are you doing, Frank?

FRANK

I'm sorry, I just got a feeling that something magical might be happening over here.

INT. TGS STUDIO - DAY

TGS is about to go live. Tracy is prepped for a live apology. Liz and Pete watch off stage. The stage hand counts down.

LIZ

Here goes nothing.

STAGE HAND

5, 4.

The stage hand mimes, 3, 2, 1.

TRACY

Hi. My name is Tracy Jordan. If you missed last week's TGS, I have to say I'm sorry and I have a very important message for you...TV is bull! Everything on TV is a sham. That's right, I used the word sham correctly. My whole career has been dedicated to distracting you from what really matters. And I've just ran outta bull.

Stand hand runs up to Liz.

STAGE HAND

Should we cut to commercial?

Liz holds up her hand and nods, dismissing his suggestion. Pete runs over to Liz.

TRACY

TV ain't the truth! It's an amusement park! But better in the sense that it has no lines.

PETE

What are you doing, Liz?

LIZ

...Saving TGS.

TRACY

Everything is crazy, so we sit in our homes, glued to the tube, and we just want to be left alone. Well, I'm not going to leave you alone!

PETE

Or ruin our careers forever. This is madness, Liz. What's happening may seem like a good idea now, but it's like the turtle sketch... It was funny on paper but doesn't work. Like communism, or the Mets.

Tracy gets close to the camera, holding it.

TRACY

You gotta get mad, America. You gotta let it out! Your life's got value. Throw away your televisions! Put 'em in the streets! Take off your clothes made by evil corporations and yell, 'I'm as mad as hell, and I'm not going to take this anymore!'

PETE

This is going live to millions of people right now.

LIZ

I don't care.

TRACY

I'm as mad as hell, and I'm not going to take this anymore!

Lutz runs through the studio tearing his shirt off, yelling.

LUTZ

I'm as mad as hell, and I'm not going—

Frank trips him.

TRACY

Smash your TV's. In the middle of this sentence! Smash...

Tracy faints. The live studio audience cheers as well as the crew.

Liz runs out of the studio.

PETE
Where are you going?

EXT. CITY STREET - CONTINUOUS

Liz runs out of 30 Rock into the street to find people yelling out their windows, and dancing half naked in the street.

WOMAN #1
I'm as mad as hell and I'm not going to take this anymore!

MAN #1
I'm as mad as hell and I'm not going to take this anymore!

MAN #2
Hey! Shut the hell up!

Liz opens her arms and spins around, smiling.

LIZ
We struck the motherload!

EXT. STREETS OF MANHATTAN - NEXT DAY

Jack is walking down the street in awe of all the broken TV sets on the curb. People are smashing TV sets, along with other electronics. Jack notices the GE logo on many of the appliances. A man throws a microwave off his stoop and then continues to stomp on it.

JACK
Excuse me, sir. Why are you doing this? That's a GE PEB1590SM with Microwave Sensor Cooking controls. Our design team worked hard on that...for you.

MAN #3
I don't know. I'm angry! The man on TV told me to do to!

JACK
This is ridiculous. Give me that.

Jack picks up the microwave. Man #3 tries to force it out of his arms. Jack wins and continues to walk away with the microwave.

INT. LIZ LEMON'S OFFICE - DAY

Pete enters. Liz is on the phone.

PETE

Liz!

Liz holds up a finger. Pete unplugs the phone.

LIZ

Hey! What are you doing? I was in the middle of a very important phone call with the New York City Deli.

PETE

Can you explain to me why you're the producer of the new reality show, 'Communism: United Looney Toons,' aka 'CULT.'

LIZ

I came up with the name myself.

PETE

But, why?

LIZ

I'm interested in doing a series based on this group. Each week we open with an act of political terrorism shot on location.

PETE

Putting criminals on TV? What are you crazy? That's like...that's like...pretty normal I guess, but it's still an awful idea.

LIZ

Awful television equals success. That's the new formula. That's what we've been doing wrong! Just look at THE JERSEY SHOW or SLUTTY AND ANNOYING HOUSE WIVES or anything done by Tyler Perry.

Liz gets up with a stack of folders.

LIZ (CONT'D)

I don't have time for this. Excuse me, Pete. But I have to prepare for the TGS special, 'A NIGHT WITH TRACY JORDAN.'

EXT. 30 ROCKEFELLER PLAZA - DAY

Jack sees a group of people dressed as Smurfs. The 'Smurfette' is Jenna, leading the group in chants. They are holding signs that read 'Have Some Common Sense, Try Communism,' 'If you're lazy, hate working, and never want to make a lot of money, you'll love communism.'

JACK

Where's McCarthy when you need him.

JENNA

The Smurf way is the communist way!
The Smurf way is the communist way!
The Smurf way is the communist way!

JACK

Walk with me, Jenna.

JENNA

No! You're part of corporate America, you're part of the problem! The Smurf way-

JACK

The problem? What problem? Business drives the American economy. Business creates jobs and enables the best and brightest to be successful... it allows creativity to flourish. Sure, I might be a powerful executive with a private jet, but I used to be poor. You just have to work hard.

JENNA

Blah, blah, blah! As a communist, I no longer subject myself to logic.

JACK

Fine. I'll get you in People's 100 sexiest people if you come with me now and drop ten pounds.

Jenna drops her picket sign and follows Jack.

Tracy is outside the building surrounded by press and adoring fans.

TRACY

All I'm saying is we're becoming mass produced like the products we make. It's like we're not human no more.

Jack grabs Tracy and pulls him inside.

The crowd goes crazy, chanting Tracy's name.

INT. TGS STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

The TGS studio crew is raising a large stained glass window. Liz is walking around, barking orders, gleeful, and Pete follows her.

PETE

What do you mean we're going live tonight? There's no script! You're just going to let Tracy rant?

LIZ

It's a special show. I can do what I want.

PETE

Jack approved this?

LIZ

Not exactly. Did you see TGS's ratings the other night? Tonight, we may have a 50 or 60 share. Tracy is an instant God!

PETE

You're madness, Liz Lemon.

LIZ

You're really starting to tick me off, Pete. Stay out of my way, or I will fire you.

INT. JACK DONAGHY'S OFFICE - DAY

Liz enters.

JACK

What exactly do you think you're doing?

LIZ

I'm saving TGS. Don't you see? I have the best ratings on NBC right now.

JACK

You're ruining TGS and you're ruining your career. You just can't see it.

LIZ

You can't stop me, Jack.

JACK

I can stop you. I'm your boss.

LIZ

We have to re-evaluate our relationship, Jack. I don't like the way this script is turning out. It's becoming a seedy drama.

JACK

Listen to yourself. Have you lost all concept of what is real? You're dealing in illusions.

LIZ

I don't need you, Jack.

JACK

You need me. You need me badly. I won't let you destroy yourself, Lemon. I just hope it's not too late, like with Mel Gibson.

LIZ

People love the new Tracy. He's a patriot, Jack. And everything will be better, not Apoctalypto, like you think. Because I'm a brave heart.

JACK

The show tonight isn't happening, and there's nothing you can do about that.

MR. HACKETT enters (played by Robert Duvall).

HACKETT

I don't think so, Jack.

JACK

Who are you?

HACKETT

I'm the new CEO of Kabletown and I'm taking over your division.

JACK
You can't do that.

HACKETT
I already did.

JACK
Lemon, you go along with this?

HACKETT
This matter of-

JACK
You cannot do-

HACKETT
Oh yes I can, Mr. Donaghy. You have to realize that there are people bigger than you and when you have a hit, you're not going to take it off the air!

JACK
If you want me out of here, you're going to have to drag me, kicking and screaming.

HACKETT
I got a hit, Donaghy. Nothing else matters anymore. I got a big fat hit. You think anyone is stupid enough to take our biggest hit off the air.

Jack looks to Liz.

LIZ
Sorry, Jack.

INT. WRITER'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The writers are goofing off, with nothing to do.

Frank enters.

LUTZ
Isn't this great, Frank? They don't want us to write anything. We're getting paid to do nothing... Like Snookie!

FRANK

No. This isn't great, because we're not getting paid.

TOOFER

What?!

FRANK

Yeah. The head of Kabletown, this Hackett guy, wants to strip the Network of writers and focus on reality television.

Enter Jack Donaghy.

JACK

Writers, I need your help.

FRANK

We need your help.

JACK

Our jobs rely on tonight's show. Does any one know what Tracy is most afraid of?

FRANK

Febreeze.

TOOFER

Midget cowboys.

JACK

No, something useful.

FRANK

Hecklers.

JACK

Hecklers?

FRANK

Well, he was a stand-up comedian. They all hate hecklers.

JACK

Yes, but is he afraid of them?

TOOFER

You've never seen the video?

Toofer opens his lap top, and the gang surrounds it.

INT. COMEDY CLUB - INTERNET VIDEO CLIP

HECKLER

Are you related to Michael Jordan?

TRACY

No, I'm not related to Michael
Jordan...I forgot my next joke...

Tracy begins to sweat and get cotton mouth.

HECKLER #2

Say something funny!

TRACY

Stop yelling out things.

Tracy begins to cry and someone throws a pickle at him.

INT. WRITER'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

JACK

Hmmmmmm... I have a plan.

INT. TRACY'S DRESSING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Kenneth enters.

KENNETH

Mr. Donaghy would like to see you
now.

TRACY

I'll go to his office. But he won't
change my mind.

KENNETH

He doesn't want you to meet him in
his office.

INT. MEETING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Tracy enters a dark room, lit by only personal green lamps at every seat on the long table. Tracy sits at one end. Jack stands at the far side of the table.

JACK

You have meddled with the primal
sources of nature, Mr. Joradan, and
I won't have it! Is that clear?

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Kenneth approaches Liz.

KENNETH

Ms. Lemon, I know it's not my place but I don't think you should put Tracy on television. He's not himself. He says please and thank you and doesn't make me do things for him, like act like a human foot stool.

LIZ

You're right, Kenneth, it's not your place.

KENNETH

What Tracy is saying-

LIZ

What Tracy is saying is that life is meaningless, and it is, so what are you complaining about?

Liz storms away, and Kenneth begins to sob.

INT. MEETING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

TRACY

But why me?

JACK

Because you're on TV, dummy.

Jack walks to the door and exits.

EXT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Kenneth is crying. Jack stops him.

JACK

Kenneth, what's wrong?

KENNETH

Ms. Lemon has gone crazy. She's just like one of those un-human people Mr. Jordan was talking about.

Jack continues to walk down the hallway, when an older woman (Faye Dunaway) catches his attention.

FAYE

This Network is falling apart.

INT. TGS STUDIO

A NIGHT WITH TRACY JORDAN is ready to go live. Tracy is dressed in a suit, prepping to go on stage.

The writers, Frank, Toofer, and Lutz, walk around, suspiciously, with large jackets.

Liz talks to Tracy.

LIZ

Are you ready to be a mad prophet denouncing the hypocrisies of our time?

TRACY

I am a mad prophet denouncing the hypocrisies of our time.

The music swells up, the audience applauds.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Welcome to A NIGHT WITH TRACY JORDAN, and now the mad prophet of the airways, Tracy Jordan!

The crowd goes wild. Tracy enters and throws his hands in the air.

TRACY

Jack Donaghy was fired today, and woe is us if a wealthy executive was fired...Woe is us. I'll tell you why, because most you don't read no more. Too many of you let Sponge-Bob baby-sit your kids. All that you have ever known has come through this tube. We're in a lot of trouble.

TRACY (CONT'D)

You even believe that reality TV is reality. That isn't real. Mr.Hackett wants to rid this network of quality content, content people work really hard on. Reality television isn't the truth. It's letting untalented, stupid, usually drunk people become famous for their lack of hard work.

(MORE)

TRACY (CONT'D)

That's not the American dream,
people. Stop encouraging bad
behavior, America...you're better
than this. Stop-

FRANK

Boo! Say something funny!

TOOFER

Yeah, this is boring! Do a funny
sketch.

TRACY

But no one wrote anything.

The crowd begins to boo.

FRANK

We want comedy.

Tracy begins to break down.

TRACY

But there is no script!

Lutz hurls a tomato at Tracy's head. Other audience members
also begin to throw tomatoes. In slow motion, Tracy falls to
the ground.

INT. JACK DONAGHY'S OFFICE - SAME AS FIRST SCENE

Jack is pouring a drink and it's over flowing as he is in
deep thought.

LIZ

Jack?

Jack snaps out of it.

LIZ (CONT'D)

You wanted to tell me something?

JACK

Yes...I wanted to tell you that
despite the fact that TGS's ratings
are down, I want you to know, I'm
going to do everything in my power
to keep it on the air. So don't
worry.

Liz smiles. She goes to hug him, but it's awkward, so they
just shake hands.

LIZ
Thanks, Jack.

FADE TO BLACK.