

SHUT UP AND KISS ME

written by

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ACT ONE

SCENE A

FADE IN:

OVER STOCK SHOTS of Washington, D.C. landmarks, we hear a DRAMATIC NEWS THEME.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Live from Washington, this is  
Firing Squad, a no-holds-barred  
discussion of the issues that shape  
our lives.

CUT TO:

INT. TV STUDIO

A discussion group set -- at the center sits CARLTON McALLISTER, a pompous man with a clipped delivery (imagine Jon Lovitz).

McALLISTER

Good Sunday to you all. I'm...  
(SAVORING IT) Carlton McAllister.  
With me, as always, Boston Globe  
columnist Tim O'Shannon...

We see TIM O'SHANNON, a 30ish good-looking man.

McALLISTER (CONT'D)

... Conservative economist Andre  
Dewitt...

We see ANDRE DEWITT, an older African American professor in a bow tie.

McALLISTER (CONT'D)

... Legendary journalist Chester Blount, celebrating his 50th year in network news...

We see an aged mummy of a man, like David Brinkley.

CHESTER

And I'm still at the top of my game!

McALLISTER

(SMILES) You certainly are.

CHESTER

And I'm still at the top of my game!

McALLISTER

You already said that.

CHESTER

Uh oh.

McALLISTER

... And finally, right-wing radio show host Trent Harshberger.

A grossly overweight, red-faced Rush Limbaugh-type holds up a book.

TRENT

I'd like to mention my new book 'I'm Always Right, You Morons.'

McALLISTER

Available at fine gun shops  
everywhere. (CHANGING SUBJECT)  
Topic one: 'Faster Than a Speeding  
Buick.' After changing the  
national speed limit to 65 miles  
per hour, the government is  
thinking of raising it yet again.  
Is it time for Congress to hit the  
brakes? Chester Blount?

CHESTER

Well, I remember a simpler time,  
when the superhighway was a humble  
dirt road, and the corner multiplex  
was a glamorous movie palace. A  
common haberdasher named Harry S.  
Truman...

McALLISTER

Chet, what's your point?

CHESTER

I don't have one.

PULL BACK TO:

ACT ONE

SCENE B

INT. WASHINGTON D.C. APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

ALISON COX, 30ish, intelligent and attractive, from South Carolina, watches Firing Squad intently. Her more down-to-earth sister, PATTY, ENTERS, eating popcorn. A remarkably fat cat sits on the couch like a lump.

PATTY

What are you watching?

ALISON

Firing Squad. It's one of those political talk shows.

PATTY

Oh, is this the one with the two Republicans, the gay guy, and the O.J. lawyer?

ALISON

No, that's Friendly Fire. This is Firing Squad.

PATTY

Which one is Firestarter?

ALISON

That's a Stephen King book.

PATTY

Oh yeah.

They look at the TV. On it, TRENT HARSHBERGER is blustering.

TRENT (V.O.)

(ON TV) I'm an American! That gives me the right to drive fast, burn oil, run over Bambi's mother and eat her for dinner.

PATTY

Looks like he ate Dumbo.

ALISON

This isn't journalism! It's infotainment. And it's not very infotaining.

PATTY

You're just jealous.

ALISON

What do I have to be jealous of? I covered the Gulf War, I've interviewed the Pope... for God's sake, I wrote this week's cover story for Newsweek!

PATTY

(HOLDING UP MAGAZINE) 'Big Bird

Turns 30'?

ALISON

Hey, I don't pick the topics. The  
point is, I don't have a single  
reason to be jealous of these guys.

(LOOKS AT TV, DISGUSTED) Oh, look  
at that. His fly is open! On the  
air! For the money he makes!

PATTY

Maybe we should change the channel.

ALISON

Good idea. (LOOKS AROUND) Where's  
the remote?

PATTY

Under the cat.

They look at the sleeping cat.

ALISON

He eats, he sleeps, he controls the  
remote. Who needs a man?

PUSH IN TO TV:

ACT ONE

SCENE C

INT. TV STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

The show is still in progress. McALLISTER turns to ANDRE.

McALLISTER

Andre Dewitt, can you drive 55?

ANDRE

I myself drive a Lexus, and asking  
a machine like that to do 55 is  
like asking Sir John Gielgud to do  
a Pizza Hut commercial.

TRENT

You know he did one.

ANDRE

Horrors.

TIM, the younger, Boston liberal, speaks up.

TIM

Well, I don't drive a Lexus.

(MORE)

TIM (CONT'D)

I drive a 10-year-old Ford Escort  
and it wouldn't do 65 if you shot  
it out of a cannon. But if it  
means cleaner air and safer  
streets, I don't mind driving a  
little slower. Or here's an idea:  
I know this will sound un-American  
to you, Trent, but you could try  
walking once in a while.

TRENT

(OFFENDED) Hey, I get plenty of  
exercise.

TIM

Just 'cause you're sweating doesn't  
mean it's exercise.

TRENT

(IN A RAGE) Remember the rules --  
no cheap shots, you left-leaning,  
tree-hugging, sandal-wearing, glue-  
sniffing, Barbra Streisand-enjoying  
punk!

McALLISTER

You've been watching the Hippie  
versus The Hippo -- you make the  
call.

(MORE)

McALLISTER (CONT'D)

(CLEARS THROAT) Topic Two: 'All's  
Well That Ends Welfare.' Has the  
Congress gone too far in cutting  
the safety net for the poor?  
Opinion: Trent Harshberger.

HARSHBERGER doesn't move.

McALLISTER (CONT'D)

Trent?

After an uncomfortable beat:

McALLISTER (CONT'D)

Uh, opinion: Andre Dewitt.

ANDRE

In my opinion, he's dead.

ANDRE shakes TRENT -- he rolls off the chair onto the floor, dead. After a brief, stunned moment:

CHESTER

Admit it -- you all thought I'd be  
the first to go.

CUT TO:

ACT ONE

SCENE D

INT. RECEPTION HALL - TWO DAYS LATER

CLOSEUP ON PICTURE of Trent Harshberger swathed in black. Below is the quote "I Sit at the Right Wing of God." PULL BACK TO SEE an elaborate wake is in progress. Many journalists in black suits and dresses mill about.

ANGLE ON CHESTER, ANDRE AND A FEMALE JOURNALIST.

FEMALE JOURNALIST

It was a very moving ceremony.

ANDRE

Schwarzenegger was crying like a  
baby.

CHESTER

(SADLY) 37. So young.

ANDRE

Perhaps this wasn't a simple heart  
attack. Perhaps it was foul play.

FEMALE JOURNALIST

Did Trent have any enemies?

ANDRE

Let's see... the National  
Organization for Women, the  
National Endowment for the Arts,  
the spotted owl...

CHESTER

Mother Theresa...

ANDRE

Oh yes, she hated his ass.

PAN OVER TO TIM, drinking a scotch and talking to  
McALLISTER.

TIM

This is a freakin' nightmare. I  
can't help but feel responsible.

McALLISTER

(KINDLY) Well, these things  
happen. (THINKS) Although  
actually it's never happened  
before. (SEEING THE BAR) Oooh!  
Margaritas!

TIM

Hello? A man is dead here. How  
can you be so heartless?

McALLISTER

My friend, I was in 'Nam... well,  
I covered 'Nam... from Toronto.

(MORE)

McALLISTER (CONT'D)

(BITTER) And when I came home, no  
one threw a parade for me.

ANGLE ON PATTY AND ALISON. They are attending the wake.  
ALISON looks stunning in her black dress. PATTY has a  
full buffet plate.

PATTY

Sis, you take me to all the best  
funerals. (ELBOWING WOMAN) Can  
you believe the chow at this thing?

WOMAN

I'm the widow.

PATTY

I share your pain.

The WOMAN walks off. ALISON peers through the crowd.  
She spot TIM.

ALISON

Patty, look! It's the guy from the  
show.

PATTY

(LOOKING) Which one?

ALISON

The cute liberal guy who's always  
wrong.

ALISON peers around to get a better look at TIM. He sees  
her looking at him and brushes his hair back in a  
polished move. They exchange significant eye contact,  
then:

ALISON (CONT'D)

Damn!

PATTY

What's wrong?

ALISON

I lost a contact. It rolled up in  
my head.

PATTY starts whacking ALISON in the back of the head.

ALISON (CONT'D)

I'm not choking on it -- it's  
floating around in my eye.

ALISON cranes her neck and looks up at the ceiling,  
trying to work the contact lens out. TIM approaches. He  
sees her looking up and he, too, stares at the ceiling.

TIM

What are we looking at?

ALISON

Oh... I lost a contact.

TIM

And it fell on the ceiling?

ALISON

No, no. (SHE COVERS ONE EYE) Oh  
hi, I'm Alison Cox.

TIM

Tim O'Shannon.

They shake hands -- there is an immediate attraction.

TIM (CONT'D)

Wait, I know you.

(MORE)

TIM (CONT'D)

You wrote that op-ed piece saying  
gun control is for weenies. You're  
not what I pictured!

ALISON

What did you picture?

TIM

Newt Gingrich in a dress.

ALISON

That's ridiculous. All the cross-  
dressers are in your party.

They share a laugh, then:

TIM

Wait, don't move.

He moves in very close to her -- it's an intimate moment.

TIM (CONT'D)

(QUIETLY) Your contact lens is  
stuck to your eyelash.

ALISON

(QUIETLY) You have cream cheese on  
your nose.

Embarrassed, they both turn away. She puts in her  
contact lens, he wipes off his nose.

TIM

You know, it's a little crowded in  
here. You wanna go out for coffee?

ALISON

(SWEETLY CHIDING) Are you in the  
habit of hitting on women at wakes?

TIM

Hey, I'm from Boston. We do  
everything at wakes. I once bowled  
a 280 at a wake.

McALLISTER calls TIM from across the room.

McALLISTER

Tim, get over here! They want to  
see your Tipper Gore impression.

TIM

(TO ALISON) Excuse me. Duty calls.

He puffs out his cheeks and exits, waddling like Tipper  
Gore.

TIM (CONT'D)

(SOPRANO MONSTER VOICE) Feed me!

Feed me!

TIM walks off.

PATTY

(SOUR, TO ALISON) Thanks for  
introducing me.

ALISON

(CALLING AFTER TIM, FAST) By the  
way, this is my sister!

PATTY

(BITTER) Well, at least I met his  
back.

CUT TO:

ACT ONE

SCENE E

INT. STUDIO - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

McALLISTER, CHESTER and ANDRE are seated. TIM ENTERS. He points O.S., outside the door.

TIM

So those are the people auditioning  
to replace Trent?

McALLISTER

Yes, the cream of American  
journalism is out there.

(SUSPICIOUS) Anyone stealing  
office supplies?

TIM looks out the door.

TIM

All of them.

McALLISTER

We'd better get started.

ANDRE

I don't see why we're going through  
with this charade.

(MORE)

ANDRE (CONT'D)

We should just hire a "famous name"  
and be done with it.

CHESTER

How about Ted Koppel?

McALLISTER

Too much hair.

CHESTER

Sam Donaldson?

McALLISTER

Bad toupee.

TIM

What the hell kind of way is this  
to judge journalists? By their  
hair?

CHESTER

You haven't been in TV news very  
long, have you, son?

TIM

If you don't mind my saying, maybe  
we could use a little diversity  
here. You know, like a woman or a  
Hispanic... (RE: ANDRE) ... or a  
black guy who acts like a black guy.

ANDRE

Sir, you have cut me to the quick.

McALLISTER

Look, we have exactly three days to  
replace the most obnoxious man in  
America, may he rest in peace.  
We'd better get cracking.

TIM

I'll call in the first applicant.

McALLISTER

Wrong! The first order of business  
is to order lunch. Opinion:  
Chester Blount.

CHESTER

Pizza would be good.

McALLISTER

Wrong! Pizza is fattening and  
greasy. Andre Dewitt?

ANDRE

How about Chinese? Hunan Palace  
makes a wonderful shrimp with  
peanuts.

TIM

Nah, I'm allergic to peanuts.

McALLISTER

Typical liberal weakness. Chinese  
is out. Pizza is out. The correct  
response is omelets from Duke  
Ziebert's.

CHESTER

I hate omelets.

McALLISTER

Too bad -- they're on the way!

(INTO INTERCOM) Send in the first  
applicant.

WIPE TO:

A distinguished-looking REPORTER auditions. He makes an odd growl after every sentence.

REPORTER

I covered the '96 Republican  
convention for Time. (SHORT GROWL)  
But I'm proudest of my L.A. riot  
coverage (SHORT GROWL), for which  
I was nominated for a Pulitzer  
Prize. (SHORT GROWL) But I didn't  
win. (LONG GROWL)

ANDRE

(DELICATELY) Do you have to do  
that after every sentence?

REPORTER

Do what? (SHORT GROWL)

MATCH CUT TO:

The real MAURY POVICH is there.

MAURY

When I got the call that you wanted  
to see me, I thought, 'Wow!' I've  
always loved your program and...

McALLISTER

We were calling for your wife --  
Connie Chung.

MAURY

Oh. I see. (WEAK CHUCKLE) You'd  
be amazed how often this happens to  
me.

McALLISTER

No we wouldn't. Goodbye.

MATCH CUT TO:

A very tough-looking young GANGSTA is rapping with a BOOM BOX.

GANGSTA

(RAPPING) Why can't the White  
House get a black man / Like  
Michael Jordan? Or even Shaq-Man?

ANDRE cuts him off.

ANDRE

Son, I don't like your playing that  
music in the house, and I don't  
like it here.

GANGSTA

Sorry, Dad.

ANDRE

See you at home, boy.

GANGSTA

Don't call me homeboy!

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - A LITTLE LATER

The applicants have left. The room is filled with empty coffee cups, a cigar butt, etc. TIM leafs through a magazine.

McALLISTER

(UNENTHUSED) Well, what do you  
think?

ANDRE

Well, I don't think there's any  
question here. I say we go with  
Connie Chung's husband.

TIM

(SKEPTICAL) Based on what?

ANDRE

Based on the name recognition you  
get from a Connie Chung's husband.

TIM

Do you even know his name?

ANDRE

(CAUGHT) Mr. Chung?

McALLISTER

Face it. We've got nothing.

CHESTER nods. After a beat, TIM holds up Newsweek with Big Bird on the cover.

TIM

Okay, how about this?

CHESTER

Big Bird? I've worked with him.

A consummate pro.

TIM points to ALISON's picture in the magazine.

TIM

No, Alison Cox. Writes for  
Newsweek. She's fresh, she's  
witty, she's a natural.

ANDRE

Yes, I've seen her. She used to do  
commentary for C-SPAN2. Before it  
merged and became MSNBCBSEESPN.

TIM

(ENTHUSED) I met her the other  
day. She's conservative but hip,  
she looks great in black...

McALLISTER

Opinion: You want to sleep with  
her. Andre Dewitt?

ANDRE

He wants to know her in the  
Biblical sense.

McALLISTER

Chester Blount?

CHESTER

He wants to do the horizontal  
polka. (OFF THEIR LOOKS) That  
means have sex.

TRENT

What is this? You guys sound like  
a bunch of middle-aged schoolboys!

CHESTER

(FLATTERED) I haven't been called  
middle-aged in years.

TIM

Look, I do think she's sexy, and I  
would like to sleep with her, but  
more importantly -- uh, I forgot  
where I was going.

McALLISTER

Do you really think she'll be good  
on the show?

TIM

Yeah! And we don't have anybody  
else for this Sunday. Why don't we  
give her a shot?

McALLISTER

All right. Unless somebody more  
qualified shows up in the next two  
minutes, we'll put her on.

ANDRE

(LOOKING OUT THE DOOR) Geraldo  
Rivera just showed up.

McALLISTER

We'll put her on.

CUT TO:

ACT ONE

SCENE H

INT. STUDIO MAKEUP ROOM - THAT SUNDAY

TIM sits in a makeup chair, being worked on by MYRNA, an elderly chain-smoking makeup lady. ALISON ENTERS, wearing a stylish conservative suit and looking a little nervous.

ALISON

Hi.

TIM

Hi!

ALISON

(NERVOUS) Look, this is a big opportunity, so I want you to be brutally honest. How do I look?

(AFTER A BEAT) Your silence says it all. I look terrible. That's it. I'm going to stick with print journalism where the standard of beauty is Art Buchwald.

TIM

Relax. How much coffee have you  
had?

ALISON

Eleven cups. Eleven. I've had  
eleven cups.

TIM

Well, relax. You look terrific.  
Doesn't she, Myrna?

MYRNA

(DOESN'T CARE) Yeah, terrific. No  
scars.

ALISON introduces herself.

ALISON

(TO MYRNA) Hi. I'm Alison.

TIM

You know, Myrna here has done  
makeup for five Presidents.

ALISON

Did you do Kennedy?

McALLISTER

Yes. (THINKS) Oh, did I make him  
up? No.

She takes the chair next to his. She touches his arm.

ALISON

Tim, I can't thank you enough for giving me this chance. As my daddy would say, 'You're sweeter than sweet potater pie.'

TIM

Thanks. All my daddy would say was, 'Get the hell away from my beer.'

ALISON

(LAUGHS) I hope this works out. We could have a lot of fun together.

TIM

(SEEING AN OPPORTUNITY) Well... would you like to get a cup of coffee after the show?

ALISON

(SWEETLY) This is the second time you've asked me out for coffee.

TIM

(MOCK SERIOUS) You're right -- I'm getting dreadfully predictable.

(REGULAR GUY) Wanna go to Hooters?

ALISON

(SMILES) Coffee would be fine.

A STAGEHAND leans in.

STAGEHAND

Ms. Cox, we need you onstage. We  
have to make sure your blouse  
doesn't strobe.

ALISON

(EXITING) Southern women do not  
strobe. We shimmer!

TIM and MYRNA watch her as she leaves, then:

MYRNA

If you were Kennedy, you'd have  
nailed her by now.

CUT TO:

ACT ONE

SCENE J

INT. TV STUDIO - THE NEXT SUNDAY

The show is beginning. ALISON is now on the panel.

McALLISTER

Good Sunday to you all. I'm...

(LOVING IT) Carlton McAllister. As  
you know, we lost our colleague  
Trent Harshberger last week.

SUPER: PICTURE OF TRENT HARSHBERGER.

McALLISTER (CONT'D)

... So I'd like to begin today's  
program with a moment of silence  
for our fallen comrade.

After a beat:

CHESTER

He was loud, he was crude, and you  
people at home don't know this, but  
he smelled bad. (OFF THEIR LOOKS)  
I can say these things. I'm old.

McALLISTER

(BIG SIGH) Topic One: Slugfest in  
La-La-Land. Construction of  
Transcontinental Highway 201 has  
been halted because  
environmentalists fear it may  
damage the habitat of the  
California Desert Slug.

SUPER: THE SAME PICTURE OF TRENT HARSHBERGER.

McALLISTER (CONT'D)

Wrong picture!

SUPER: A PICTURE OF AN UGLY SLUG WHICH SOMEWHAT  
RESEMBLES TRENT.

McALLISTER (CONT'D)

Thank you. Is this sound  
environmental policy? I say no.  
But I'm not always right -- even  
though I do have the only chair  
here that reclines.

He reclines in his La-Z-Boy-style chair.

McALLISTER (CONT'D)

Opinion: Andre Dewitt.

ANDRE

Well, I drive a Mercedes, and  
frankly I'd prefer there be a few  
more superhighways and a few less  
slimy slugs.

CHESTER

I thought you drove a Lexus.

ANDRE

I gave the Lexus to my son when he  
promised not to get his belly  
pierced.

TIM

Hey, I know it's hard to care about  
the desert slug. They're wicked  
ugly, they smell, Jackson Browne's  
not about to do a concert for them.  
  
But you can't pick and choose what  
you like in nature. Squirrels eat  
those slugs, and coyotes eat the  
squirrels. And if you take away  
their food, those coyotes are gonna  
come after your garbage, your  
dog -- maybe even you, Andre.

ANDRE

Gadzooks.

McALLISTER

Let's ask our newest panelist,  
Alison Cox, what she thinks of Tim  
O'Shannon's stirring speech.

TIM gives ALISON a friendly thumbs-up. She begins.

ALISON

I think Tim is a representative of another endangered species -- the Spineless Liberal Jellyfish. These wimps would have progress grind to a halt for fear of stepping on a bug. Well, I say we should get on with our lives and stick Tim and his slug-hugging friends on a nature preserve where they can eat sunflower seeds and tax each other to death.

There is a stunned silence.

McALLISTER

Rebuttal, Tim O'Shannon?

TIM

(SHOCKED BABBLE) Bwah.

DISSOLVE TO:

A little later in the show. TIM is making a point.

TIM

... but we can't forget the fine work the ACLU has done.

ALISON

The ACLU is the Association of  
Criminals, Losers and You, Tim  
O'Shannon!

TIM slumps.

DISSOLVE TO:

Still later in the show, ALISON is concluding:

ALISON

We all agree the federal deficit is  
too high, Tim, but it's a drop in  
the bucket next to the amount you  
spend each month on hair spray and  
cheap cologne.

McALLISTER

(CHUCKLES) Very good. Although we  
don't keep score here, today's  
score is Alison 12, Tim zero. See  
you next week.

The show over, ALISON turns to TIM.

ALISON

(SWEETLY) So, how about that  
coffee?

TIM

Suck on a bean.

He storms off.

ALISON

Talk about rude.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

SCENE K

FADE IN:

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

TIM is sitting in an elegant restaurant with candles on the table.

TIM

(NICELY) That was a rough show today. But I'm glad we could put our differences aside and still enjoy a meal together.

WIDEN TO SEE he is eating with CHESTER, ANDRE, and McALLISTER.

CHESTER, ANDRE and McALLISTER AD-LIB ASSENTS.

CHESTER

I still don't know why you broke your date with the young lady.

TIM

Could you have coffee with a woman after she's emasculated you and ripped you to shreds?

ANDRE

I do, every morning at home.

McALLISTER

Tim, I've told you a million  
times -- never hit on a guest.

TIM

You hit on Margaret Thatcher.

McALLISTER

Yeah, but she was sending me vibes.  
(BEAT) You've been with more women  
than any of us...

CHESTER clears his throat.

McALLISTER (CONT'D)

(CORRECTED) Except Chester. Why  
are you letting this one bug you?

TIM

She doesn't bug me! (BEAT) Oh,  
she really bugs me. I help her get  
this job and she tears me apart on  
national TV.

McALLISTER

Sometimes a woman has to come on  
strong because men don't give them  
enough respect.

TIM

Says who?

McALLISTER

Says you, two weeks ago, defending  
Hillary Clinton.

TIM

(SIGHS) Well, that Alison is a killer. I'm sure whoever we get next week won't be as bad.

McALLISTER

Oh, I think they'll be exactly as bad.

CHESTER and ANDRE chuckle.

TIM

Wait a minute! You're not bringing her back, are you?

McALLISTER

Yes! From now on, she's a regular.

CHESTER

I loved watching you two go at it. It was like watching the great Joe Louis fight a marshmallow.

ANDRE

I believe you put it best, Tim:  
'She's a natural.'

TIM

Yeah, a natural bitch.

McALLISTER

I should call her with the good news... and here's her number right in your pocket!

He takes a slip of paper from TIM's pocket and walks off humming. TIM starts banging his head on the table.

TIM

Why? Why? Why?

CHESTER

I remember the day when my genitals  
did my thinking for me.

CUT TO:

ACT TWO

SCENE L

INT. ALISON'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

ALISON is on the phone.

ALISON

(NONCOMMITTAL) Yes. I understand.

Thank you.

She hangs up and throws a pillow with a frustrated grunt.

PATTY

Hey, easy, easy. You'll scare the  
cat.

The cat lays there... an impassive, fat lump.

ALISON

I'll tell you what'd scare the  
cat -- if it got on a scale.

PATTY

What's the matter, honey? Didn't  
you get the job?

ALISON

No, I got it.

PATTY

Oh that's great! We've gotta  
celebrate! Where's that champagne  
we were saving for a special  
occasion?

ALISON

You drank it that day we got our  
new phone books.

PATTY

Oh yeah. I still don't  
understand -- why aren't you happy?

ALISON

(NOT HAPPY) Oh I am. This is a  
great opportunity. It's just... I  
thought Tim and I were hitting it  
off, and then I was so mean to him  
on the air.

PATTY

That's your job! And I'm sure he's  
mature enough to understand that.

CUT TO:

TIM is in the men's room of the restaurant banging his  
head against the stall door.

TIM

Why, why, why...

CUT BACK TO:

ALISON

What am I going to do? I could be  
nicer to him on the air, but that's  
not what they pay me for. Maybe I  
should just forget him altogether.

PATTY

Then you could fix him up with me.

ALISON

(OBLIVIOUS) No, that's not the  
answer. Oh, why do these things  
happen to me?

PATTY

Because you're like the praying  
mantis. You lure men in with your  
sexual charms, then -- bang -- you  
crush his head with your mighty  
jaws.

ALISON

You've been spending way too much  
time at the Smithsonian.

PATTY

We're talking about your screwed-up  
life, not mine. You've dated six  
different guys this year and driven  
every one of them away, and what do  
you have to show for it?

ALISON

The last guy gave me the cat.

(LOOKS AT CAT) Although I'm  
starting to think it's a baby  
buffalo.

PATTY

Alison, do you want my help with  
Tim or don't you?

ALISON

I do.

PATTY

All right. Do you remember what  
Mom used to say when you were  
having trouble with men?

ALISON

What?

PATTY

Shut up and cook.

CUT TO:

ACT TWO

SCENE M

INT. TV STUDIO - THE NEXT SUNDAY

The panel is getting ready for the broadcast. MYRNA is touching up ANDRE's makeup as he eats a doughnut.

ANDRE

I was watching a tape of last  
week's show, and I thought my  
cheeks looked a bit chubby. Is  
there something you could do about  
that?

MYRNA

Uh huh.

She takes the doughnut from his hand, drops it on the floor, and grinds it under her heel.

ANDRE

Point made.

TIM ENTERS.

TIM

Anyone seen the Wicked Witch of the  
Right?

ANDRE

Still smarting from last week?

TIM

Hey, last week I was like the '86 Red Sox. They got all the way to the Series, and then they choked on the last pitch. Well, now it's a whole new season.

ANDRE

I believe the next year, the Red Sox came in fifth.

TIM

(BREAKING DOWN) I know, I know, they never win! They're a bunch of freaking choke artists!

ANDRE

(PUTS HAND ON TIM'S SHOULDER)

Timothy, let me tell you, as a friend, you're falling apart.

TIM

You're right. It's Alison -- she's making me crazy.

ANDRE

That's because Alison is special.

(MORE)

ANDRE (CONT'D)

You've finally met a woman who  
doesn't simply melt because of your  
sparkling Irish wit and tight  
behind.

TIM

I know. I can't stop thinking  
about her and I don't even know if  
she likes me. It's that Southern  
accent -- she can say 'screw you'  
and it sounds like 'have a cookie'.

ALISON approaches from behind carrying a box.

ALISON

Have a cookie?

TIM

A cookie?

ALISON

Look, I wanted to apologize -- no,  
not apologize, I didn't do anything  
wrong -- but explain to you -- not  
that you couldn't figure this out  
on your own, but -- oh here.

TIM takes a cookie.

TIM

(TOUCHED) This is really sweet of  
you.

ALISON

(CHUCKLES) Thanks. I just wanted  
to show you I'm not out to get you.

TIM is about to take a bite of one, then stops.

TIM

(RE: COOKIES) Are there peanuts in  
here?

ALISON

No. Those are walnuts.

TIM starts to eat heartily.

TIM

(MOUTH FULL) That's good, because  
I am really allergic to peanuts.

ALISON

(SHEEPISH) Well, there is peanut  
butter in the batter.

TIM does a cookie spit take.

STAGEHAND (O.S.)

You're on in five seconds.

ALISON

(TO TIM) Are you all right?

TIM shakes his head "no", garbled moans.

CUT TO:

ACT TWO

SCENE R

INT. STUDIO - DAY

The show is beginning.

McALLISTER

Good Sunday to you. I am...

(SAVORING IT) Carrrlton --

TIM

(LOUD) Gak!

McALLISTER

(ARCH) I'm sorry, Tim, you had  
something to add to my name?

TIM is sweating profusely. He loosens his tie.

TIM

(GASPING) No, no. Go on.

McALLISTER

Thank you. 'Topic One: Beneath  
the Planet of the Hype.' NASA  
tells us there's life on Mars. Is  
it true?

(MORE )

McALLISTER (CONT'D)

And if so, how long before we start  
seeing Starbucks up there?

Opinion: Andre Dewitt.

ANDRE

My opinion is I simply don't care.

Unseen by ANDRE, a delirious TIM staggers around behind him, clawing at his collar.

ANDRE (CONT'D)

This country has quite enough  
problems with unwanted aliens  
without importing more.

CHESTER

(RE: TIM) Is it just me, or does  
everyone see this?

McALLISTER

Yes, Tim, what the hell are you  
doing?

TIM's explanation is garbled.

ALISON

(BREAKING DOWN) This is all my  
fault. I fed him peanuts.

McALLISTER

Now, you know the rules. Don't  
feed the panelists.

ANDRE

Tim, are you all right?

TIM's head is now swollen huge. He makes the okay sign.

TIM

(GARBLED) O-tay.

ALISON rushes to comfort TIM, stroking his giant head.

ALISON

(TEARY) Oh Tim, I didn't mean for  
this to happen. I don't want to  
hurt you. Well, maybe deep down  
subconsciously I do want to hurt  
you, but even deeper below that, I  
think you're a really sweet guy and  
I just wanted you to like me.

TIM

(THROAT CLOSED) I oo! I oo ike  
oo! (MORE UNINTELLIGIBLE GIBBERISH)

McALLISTER

For a transcript of this program,  
send five dollars to Merkel Press.

CUT TO:

TAG

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - THAT NIGHT

TIM, back to normal, is in a hospital gown in bed. ALISON sits beside him. They are drinking coffee off a hospital tray with a candle on it.

ALISON

I'm glad we finally got to have  
coffee together.

TIM

Me too. (SEDUCTIVELY) I guess  
it's true what they say. Opposites  
attract.

ALISON

Actually, that's a myth. In  
nature, like attracts like.  
Opposites tend to destroy each  
other.

TIM

(SIGHS) This is gonna be tough,  
isn't it?

ALISON

Yeah. (SWEETLY) But you know what  
they say -- no pain, no gain.

TIM

Actually, doctors say the greatest  
benefits come from moderate  
exercise.

They are silent for a beat, then ALISON opens her purse.

ALISON

I baked you some more cookies.

TIM takes one, then hesitates.

TIM

Any peanuts in these?

ALISON

No.

TIM

Peanut oil? Peanut butter? Peanut  
brittle?

ALISON

Nope. (KIDDING) Just rat poison.

TIM

Yum.

They laugh and eat as we:

FADE OUT.

THE END