

SCRIPT TITLE

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SPORTS NIGHT
(pilot)
Aaron Sorkin

SPORTS NIGHT
(TEASER)

FROM THE DARKNESS WE HEAR:

WOMAN'S VOICE
STAND BY AUDIO, STAND BY TAPE.

MAN'S VOICE
Georgia Dome's hot.

ANOTHER WOMAN
You're hot, Atlanta.

MAN'S VOICE
Somebody: Arrowhead, then back to
Mile High, is that how it goes?

FIRST WOMAN
We're live in 60 seconds.

SECOND WOMAN
Arrowhead bounces to Mile High.

FADE UP ON:

INT. STUDIO/CONTROL ROOM

WE'RE IN THE BROADCAST STUDIO FOR SPORTS NIGHT, A NATIONAL NIGHTLY CABLE SPORTS SHOW, MADE POPULAR BY ITS TWO HOSTS, DAN ROSEN AND CASEY MCCALL. THE DUAL ANCHOR DESK IS FLANKED BY FOUR CAMERAS AND THE SET PROMINENTLY FEATURES BOTH THE SPORTS NIGHT AND SNN (SPORTS NEWS NETWORK) LOGOS. IN THE CONTROL ROOM, VARIOUS ENGINEERS AND PRODUCERS (MOST OF WHOM WE'LL GET TO KNOW) TAKE THEIR PLACES BEHIND TWO CONSOLES OF MONITORS, BUTTONS, DIALS, SWITCHES, ETC. A NEON DIGITAL DISPLAY TELLS US THERE ARE NOW 59 SECONDS TO AIR AND COUNTING, AND MONITORS ON THE WALL SHOW REPORTERS POISED TO GO ON THE AIR IN PLACES LIKE ATLANTA, KANSAS CITY, GREEN BAY AND DENVER.

RUNNING THE SHOW IS DANA WHITAKER, A WOMAN IN HER 30'S AND THE PRODUCER OF SPORTS NIGHT. HER ASSOCIATE PRODUCER IS NATALIE RYDELL, EARLY 20'S AND A LITTLE NEW TO HER JOB. ISAAC JAFFEE,

THE EXECUTIVE PRODUCER, STANDS IN BACK WITH HIS ARMS FOLDED.

A GLASS WALL SEPARATES THEM FROM THE STUDIO WHERE CASEY AND DAN, BOTH IN THEIR 30'S, ARE CLIPPING ON THEIR MICROPHONES AND EAR PIECES AND ARRANGING PAPERS ON THE DESK. ELLIOT, AN INTERN, FLIES IN AND OUT WITH SOME PAPERS AND THEN SITS OFF CAMERA AT A LAP-TOP.

THE ATMOSPHERE IS CALM, PROFESSIONAL CHAOS, AND WHILE WE MAY NOT ALWAYS KNOW WHAT THESE PEOPLE ARE TALKING ABOUT, WE KNOW THAT THEY DO.

DAN
(TO CASEY) I think you should
start getting out of your house, I
think it's time.

DANA
(INTO MIC) Casey, we're going to
Atlanta first, then Arrowhead.

CASEY
(TO DANA) Got it.

DAN
(TO CASEY) Just out of your house.

CASEY
(MARKING COPY) I am out of my
house. I've been out of my house
for six months. I don't live at my
house.

DANA
seconds to tape, we're live in
seconds.

CASEY
(RE: A SCRIPT PAGE) What's this?

NATALIE
(SHOUTING INTO A MICROPHONE) Dan,
did you get that change on Atlanta
and Arrowhead?

DAN
(NICELY) Natalie, if you shout into
a

MICROPHONE WHILE I'M WEARING AN EARPIECE, IT POSES THE
QUESTION: IS THERE A DECIBEL LEVEL AT WHICH THE HUMAN HEAD
WILL JUST, YOU KNOW, EXPLODE.

NATALIE
Sorry.

CASEY
Excuse me--

DANA
Roll tape in five--

ISAAC
Good show, everybody.

DANA
Roll tape.

NATALIE
We're live in 30 seconds.

SFX: THE TAPED SPORTS NIGHT INTRO BEGINS. ITS THEME MUSIC
AND STORY TEASERS CAN BE SEEN AND HEARD ON MONITORS
THROUGHOUT THE STUDIO AND CONTROL ROOM.

CASEY
Excuse me.

DANA
Casey's got his hand raised.

CASEY
Why are we quoting high-level
sources inside the Swiss Olympic
Committee on Helsinki's bid for the
2010 Olympics?

DANA
I know it's twelve years away,
Case, but--

CASEY
Helsinki's in Finland.

DANA
What?

CASEY
Isaac, Helsinki's in Finland. It's
okay, I'll just--

NATALIE
He says Helsinki's in Finland.

DANA
I heard him. (TO CASEY) Are you
sure?

CASEY
Yes I'm sure.

ENGINEER
I thought it was in Sweden.

NATALIE
It says "Swiss officials".

ENGINEER
It should say Swedish Officials.

INTERN
Graphics, which is it, Sweden or
Switzerland?

DAN
This is confidence inspiring, huh.
(TO THE CONTROL ROOM) It's in
Finland!

NATALIE
Elliot, get somebody on the phone.

ELLIOT
What do you need?

NATALIE
We think Helsinki might be in
Finland.

CASEY
We think there's a pretty good
chance.

DANA
We're live in ten. Isaac, is
Helsinki in--

ISAAC
(SHAKING HIS HEAD) Yes, you
unbelievable idiots.

DANA
Isaac needs a hug, everybody. (INTO
MICROPHONE) We'll change it on the
TelePromTer.

CASEY
You don't have to change it on the
TelePromTer.

DAN

We can go out after the show, you
can stay at my place.

CASEY

Danny, you know what? I'm getting
a divorce, I don't need a cruise
director.

DAN

Right.

DANA

In three, two--

A RED LIGHT GOES ON OVER A CAMERA--

DAN

Good evening, everybody. From New
York City I'm Dan Rosen alongside
Casey McCall. Those stories and
more plus highlights and interviews
center

ICE FROM THE GARDEN COMING UP AFTER THIS. YOU'RE WATCHING
SPORTS NIGHT ON SNN SO STICK AROUND.

DANA

We're out, up in 60.

ELLIOT

(LOOKING UP FROM HIS LAP-TOP) Yep.
Finland. Their national bird is
the Pheasant.

CASEY

Thank you.

SMASH CUT TO:

MAIN TITLES

ACT ONE

(A)

INT. NEWSROOM

A LARGE ROOM WITH 30 OR 40 CUBBY HOLES, EACH WITH A COMPUTER AND PHONE. OFFICE DOORS, MOST OF WHICH ARE OPEN, LINE THE PERIMETER OF THE NEWSROOM, AS DO TELEVISION MONITORS. A GLASS-ENCLOSED CONFERENCE ROOM IS THE CENTER-PIECE AND THE NEW YORK SKYLINE CAN BE SEEN THROUGH A WALL OF GLASS.

THE PLACE IS IN FULL HUSTLE AND BUSTLE AS STAFFERS WORK THE PHONES AND THE COMPUTERS WHILE ELLIOT AND KIM, AND ASIAN-AMERICAN INTERN SHOUT ACROSS THE ROOM TO EACH OTHER.

ELLIOT

(HOLDING A PHONE AND SHOUTING) I've got the lawyer on the phone, Kim, she's gonna give me a quote, and the receptionist's on hold.

KIM

The lawyer?

ELLIOT

A spokesperson for the lawyer.

KIM

A spokesperson, Elliot, or--

ELLIOT

(OVER) The lawyer's wife--

KIM

--cause that's what I thought.

ELLIOT

I'm trying.

DAN ROSEN ENTERS. IT'S MORNING AND HE'S WEARING STREET CLOTHES.

DAN

What's up, I heard something's on the wire.

ELLIOT

Jayson Grissom was arrested at a strip bar in Houston last night.

DAN

He hit somebody?

ELLIOT

He hit a guy over the head with a cognac bottle.

KIM

There'll be a closed circuit press conference at noon.

DAN

I don't want to wait 'till noon, let's get something now. Is Casey here yet?

KIM

I think he slept here.

DAN

Really?

KIM AND ELLIOT TRY TO MAKE SUBTLE GESTURES WITH THEIR HANDS AND THAT SAY "YEAH THIS IS PRETTY BAD BUT I GUESS IT'S NONE OF OUR BUSINESS".

DAN (CONT'D)

Are you guys miming something?

ELLIOT

(SOTTO) No, we just think that Casey might be going through some tough--

DAN

Forget about that. Let's go. Do we have a quote from the lawyer?

KIM

We've got a quote from the lawyer's wife and the lawyer's receptionist is on hold.

DAN

(PAUSE) No, seriously.

KIM

We're trying.

DAN

When you've got the lawyer's pool man on the phone, let me know.

CASEY COMES OUT OF HIS OFFICE--

CASEY

(SHOUTING) Elliot--

ELLIOT
Right here.

DAN
(TO CASEY) Did you sleep here?

CASEY
I came in early.

DAN
You came in yesterday.

CASEY
Don't worry about it. Elliot--

DAN
Let me say also that you don't look
that good.

CASEY
Then let me point to recent data
that suggests that a considerable
portion of viewers think that I'm
the cute one.

DAN
A considerable portion of our
viewers are men. And God knows I
agree with each and every one of
'em. My point was that this
particular morning--forget it. Have
I told you about my New York
renaissance?

CASEY
A lot. You've told me about it a
lot.

DAN
What do we know?

CASEY
He shot 12 for 15 from the field,
and went to the Silver Key in
Houston. Somebody called him a
dumb sonofabitch red-neck and he
hit the guy with a cognac bottle.

DAN
Elliot, call Stuart Fisher in
Houston, tell him it's for me.

ELLIOT
You want me to do it now, it's
still--

CASEY
Yeah, he wants you to do it now,
Elliot. When he says he wants you
to--

DAN
(CALMING HIM) Casey, Casey...

CASEY
Sorry. (BEAT) Sorry, Elliot.

CASEY STARTS TO HEAD INTO THE CONFERENCE ROOM. DAN MAKES A
GESTURE AT THE INTERNS, MIMING "IT'S OKAY, IT'S A PHASE THAT
WILL PASS". THE INTERNS MIME BACK: "HOW LONG ARE WE SUPPOSED
TO DEAL WITH THESE MOODS?" DAN GIVES THEM A GESTURE THAT SAYS
"JUST ROLL WITH IT". THEY DON'T REALIZE THAT CASEY HAS
STOPPED, TURNED AROUND, AND IS LOOKING AT THEM.

CASEY (CONT'D)
'Scuse me, I'm standing here.

AS THEY HEAD TOWARD THE CONFERENCE ROOM--

DAN
Yeah, it's a mime thing. They're
okay.

CASEY AND DAN STOP TO GET SOME DONUTS IN THE BACKGROUND--

ELLIOT
Casey hasn't told him yet?

KIM
No.

CUT TO:

ACT ONE

(B)

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

THE SENIOR STAFF IS GATHERING OUTSIDE - HELPING THEMSELVES TO DONUTS, ETC. DANA AND ISAAC ARE IN THE MIDDLE OF A PRIVATE CHAT.

ISAAC

Dana, if you had to guess, what would you say my opinion is of how the show's been going the last few weeks?

DANA

You think we're doing a heck of a job and you're really proud of me?

ISAAC

I think the show's going to hell in a handbasket and I'm ready to fire the whole bunch a you.

DANA

(BEAT) Yeah, but you won't 'cause we're all family here and I'm like a daughter to you.

ISAAC

No, this is a television show here and you're very much like an employee to me.

DANA

Isaac, Casey's been having some personal--

ISAAC

I know all about Casey's personal problems. You know why? Because they've become my problems. And I'm telling you, that at the very most, I want them to be your problems.

DANA

Got it.

ISAAC

Is he quitting, is he staying, is he in, is he out, is he sleeping in his office, has he told Danny that he's quitting... the show we're doing back here's better than the show we're doing out there! And the show we're doing back here's not that good!!

DANA

I understand.

I'LL TALK TO HIM LATER.

ISAAC

Let's get started.

DAN WALKS IN DRINKING HIS COFFEE--

DAN

It's a genuine renaissance, Casey. I've lived in New York all my life. This is the time when I should be sick of it. But I'm not.

CASEY

Really?

DAN

Yeah.

CASEY

Nobody cares.

DAN

The restaurants, the theatre--

NATALIE

Museums.

DAN

Oh we got museums up the whazoo.

ISAAC

And Dana, how do we avoid these little Helsinki mishaps in the future?

DANA

The interns are over-worked. Natalie screened some new people last week. I'm meeting her finalist today.

NATALIE
You guys, he is so cute and sweet
and funny...

NATALIE FEELS DANA AND ISAAC STARING AT HER...

NATALIE (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
...and smart. And a hard worker. I
like him.

ISAAC
Yeah?

NATALIE
(SOBER) Yeah.

ISAAC
Let's talk about Jayson Grissom.

DAN
The Metropolitan Opera under tha
baton of Mr. James Levine.

ISAAC
(RE: DAN) Is he okay?

CASEY
Yeah.

ISAAC
Good. So we got Jayson Grissom.

STAFFER (J.J.)
How 'bout we take the athlete's
side for once. This is a sports
program.

DANA
It's a news program, we don't take
anybody's side.

ISAAC
It's a news program staffed by
people who can't find Finland on a
map.

DANA
You know what, Isaac? Maybe give
that a rest.

ISAAC
I'm sayin' it's the kinda thing
that tends to eat away at our
credibility as a news organization.

DANA
And I hear 'ya.

CASEY
Are you suggesting we congratulate
Jayson Grissom for beating a man
over the head with a bottle?

J.J.
I'M SUGGESTING, CASEY, THAT A MAN'S
JUST PLAYED AND WON A PROFESSIONAL
BASKETBALL GAME ON THE ROAD--

CASEY
Yes...

J.J.
--HE GOES TO LOCAL BAR TO HAVE A
FEW BEERS--

CASEY
Yes...

J.J.
--IT'S A DRUNKEN, HOSTILE CROWD
WHO'S TEAM JUST LOST--

CASEY
Right...

J.J.
--there's some taunting, some words
are exchanged. Our guy grabs a
bottle and hits somebody.

CASEY
That's where I get tripped up.

DAN
When did he become our guy?

CASEY
He's not our guy.

J.J.
Is there a law against going to a
strip bar?

CASEY
Nope. No law against getting
drunk. No law against calling
somebody a red neck.
(MORE)

CASEY (CONT'D)

No law against breaking a bottle over their head. No, wait, it's that last one again.

J.J.

No one's saying he didn't break the law.

DAN

Well it's still pretty early.

CASEY

(TO DAN) You wanna help me out?

DAN

Plaza Hotel. Oak Bar. Dry Martini. New York at night, my friend, the city never sleeps.

CASEY

Come on back.

DAN

J.J., your idea is stupid.

CASEY

Thank you.

J.J.

The guy called him a red-neck and probably called him worse. What would you do, Dan, what would you do if a guy walked up to you on your date last night and called you an Ivy League Jew?

ISAAC

Alright, c'mon--

DAN

Well so far, he hasn't insulted me.

J.J.

Yeah, but he won't get offa you. He knows everything about you, or he thinks he does 'cause he reads the papers and listens to the call-in shows, and he's in your face and he's drunk and you're with this girl and he won't let up. What do you do, Dan?

DAN

I show some discretion. (BEAT)
This is a twirpy little man who's
showing off in a bar. He's
embarrassing himself and he's
embarrassing his friends. If his
girlfriend didn't break up with him
yesterday, she's going to tomorrow.
This is a loser. It doesn't take a
lot of wit to overcome that
obstacle. I show some discretion,
J.J. And I show some class. And
if I don't, I would expect, in some
measure, the wrath of a civilized
people.

CASEY

Isaac, please listen to Danny.
He's one of the few sane voices
left in sports.

DAN

You ever ride the subway all day
long, I mean just for the fun of
it?

CASEY

Danny--

ISAAC

Dana?

DANA

J.J.'s insane and I can't believe
this conversation's gone on as long
as it has. I want to do a feature
on Ntozake Nelson.

J.J.

Yeah, let's do more features on
Third World soccer players, 'cause
you know, that's what people are
talking about.

DANA

Ntozake Nelson's a South African
distance runner. 15,000 Meters.

NATALIE

As a 22 year old school teacher in
Jamestown, he led protests against
the white majority--

J.J.

Here we go.

DANA

He was beaten up, thrown in jail,
his legs were broken, doctors said
he'd never walk without a cane.
He's years old, you know what he's
doing tonight?

ISAAC

Going to a strip bar in Houston?

DANA

He's running in the Goodwill Games.
If that's not a feature segment--

J.J.

That's a happening story for our
audience. A 41 year old South
African with two broken legs.
Don't get me wrong, Dana, I admire
his spunk, but logic says Ntozake
Nelson can't go 15,000 meters in a
golf cart, I don't care how
courageous he is, can we please
talk about sports?

NATALIE

This is a genuine hero, no one
expects him to win.

J.J.

Forget winning, can he finish?

NATALIE

J.J.--

ISAAC

At eleven o'clock, I've gotta turn
heads away from Ted Koppel, I've
gotta turn heads away from 400 re-
runs of MASH, and I've gotta turn
heads away from ESPN. Ntozake
Nelson's not gonna do it.

J.J.

Who's gonna be watching the
Goodwill Games?

DANA

Anybody watching our networks.
We're carrying it live.

DAN
So that's 17 or 18 people right
there.

CASEY
Fewer if there's a good MASH re-
run.

ISAAC
So you see my problem. Moving on--

ELLIOT POPS HIS HEAD IN THE DOOR--

ELLIOT
Dan, I've got Stuart Fisher on the
phone.

DAN
(GETTING UP) I'm gonna take this
in my office.

DAN DISAPPEARS OUT THE DOOR--

NATALIE
(TO CASEY) When are you gonna tell
him?

DANA
(TO NATALIE) Leave it alone.

NATALIE
(TO CASEY) You gotta tell him. He's
your best friend, he's your
partner.

CASEY
I mentioned this to you in
confidence, Dana. Friend to
friend. It's what we call a
secret. Between you and me. Entre-
nous, you know what that means?

DANA
It means--wait, in the feminine
form of--

CASEY
It means "between you and me".

DANA
Yes.

CASEY
I said tell no one. Especially
Natalie. And what did you do?

DANA
I told Natalie.

CASEY
Yes.

DANA
But you had to know that was gonna
happen.

CASEY
Who told Isaac? (BEAT) Isaac, who
told you that--

NATALIE
It's a big office, anybody could've--
-

DANA
(RE: NATALIE) She did.

NATALIE
You turned on me.

DANA
Well that was bound to happen as
well.

CASEY
Alright. Everyone. Please. This is
obviously a difficult thing to tell
him and I'd like to do it in my own
way and in my own time.

DAN COMES BACK IN THE ROOM--

DAN
We're going to conference him at
two o'clock. He's gonna have a
quote, Grissom's gonna have a
quote, we think we're gonna hear
from the guy in the bar. I told
him J.J. was gonna do a puff piece,
he dropped the phone. Anyway, I
think tonight is gonna be a hot
show if only you people would stop
staring at me and tell me what the
hell is going on!

(THERE'S ANOTHER LONG SILENCE IN THE ROOM)

ISAAC

There's some news that Casey has.
It inadvertantly started making its
way through the office grapevine,
but out of respect for you, and out
of respect for Casey--

DAN

What?

CASEY

I'm leaving the show.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

(C)

INT. CASEY'S OFFICE

CASEY IS SITTING AT HIS COMPUTER MONITOR TYPING WHEN DANA TAPS ON THE OPEN DOOR.

CASEY

Hey.

DANA

Casey--

CASEY

I need you to take ten seconds off the NFL Injury Report and give it to me for the intro on ACC recruiting violations.

DANA

Fine.

CASEY

Thanks.

DANA

You're screwing up my show, Casey.

CASEY LOOKS UP...

CASEY

(BEAT) Keep the ten seconds.

DANA

That's not what I mean.

CASEY

I know. I was joking.

DANA

I know you were joking.

CASEY

I could tell by the way you didn't laugh at all when I said it.

DANA

That's 'cause I'm mad at you. Also it wasn't that funny.

CASEY

I know.

CASEY CAN SEE THAT DANA'S SERIOUS.

DANA

I love this show. I do it really well, and believe me, it's the only thing I do well. Now I know you think there are 200 people in this business who could produce this show as well as--

CASEY

I don't think there are 200 people who could--

DANA

Yes you do. And you're probably right. But I'm the one who has the job. And I do it well. And I love it, I love producing Sports Night. I live from eleven from eleven-thirty and the rush is so huge I don't come down until three in the morning. (BEAT) I told the others about your wanting to quit 'cause I hoped somebody could talk you out of it. I didn't tell Dan 'cause I thought that was stepping over the line, but now Dan's my last hope and you know how much I like relying on Dan. I came by to apologize. I came by to tell you that I'm gonna miss you. I like you a lot and I think you know how much respect I have for your talent. But mostly I came by to tell you that you're screwing up my show.

CASEY SIMPLY NODS THAT HE UNDERSTANDS...DANA SHOUTS INTO THE NEWSROOM--

DANA (CONT) (CONT'D)

(SHOUTING) Natalie! Let's meet with this guy.

NATALIE (O.S.)

Yay.

CUT TO:

(D)

INT. DANA'S OFFICE

JEREMY, A NERVOUS YOUNG MAN IN A JACKET AND TIE SITS AND
WAITS AS DANA AND NATALIE ENTER.

DANA
Hi, I'm Dana Whitaker, you've
already met Natalie.

JEREMY
(SHAKING HANDS) Yes.

DANA
You've got an impressive resume.
Let. me ask you some questions.

NATALIE
You look nervous.

JEREMY
I'm okay.

NATALIE
Would you like a glass of water?

JEREMY
No thank you.

NATALIE
A soft drink? We have Fresca.

DANA
If you're taking orders, I'll have
the angel hair pasta and a glass of
of cold Chardonnay.

NATALIE
I'm just--

DANA
Can we interview the man?

NATALIE
I'm just trying--

DANA
I know.

NATALIE
Just trying to make him
comfortable.

DANA

A little professionalism is all I'm saying.

JEREMY

I could come back another time if--

DANA

What's your favorite sport?

JEREMY

I beg your pardon?

DANA

Where are you strongest?

JEREMY

Football, I guess.

DANA

Great, let's talk about basketball.

JEREMY

I said football.

DANA

I heard you. Let's talk about basketball.

JEREMY

(HOPING) We could talk about baseball. Or hockey.

DANA

You're pretty strong in baseball and hockey are you?

JEREMY

Not as strong as football, but--

DANA

Great, let's talk about basketball.

JEREMY

I'm not gonna get the job, am I?

NATALIE

Relax. Would you like a cupcake?

DANA

Natalie?

NATALIE

Sorry.

DANA
(TO JEREMY) You grew up in
California, went to UCLA, you
must've followed the Lakers a
little.

JEREMY
A little, but--

DANA
Good, let's talk about the Knicks.

JEREMY
Oh come on--

NATALIE
A shot of bourbon?

JEREMY
Please.

DANA
(TO NATALIE) Sit. (TO JEREMY)
Name three things the Knicks have
to do this season to make it to the
finals.

JEREMY
(BEAT) Like I said--

DANA
You want the job?

JEREMY
Very badly, yes.

DANA
Name three things.

JEREMY
(SEARCHING) Improve their free-
throw percentage?

NATALIE
Yes.

JEREMY
(SEARCHING) Run the floor?

DANA
Okay. One more.

JEREMY

Get Spike Lee to sit down and shut up?

DANA

Right!

NATALIE

Excellent!

JEREMY

(GAINING CONFIDENCE) Okay.

DANA

(TO NATALIE) You're doing well, Jeremy. I've gotta tell you, though, the job is very tough. Endless games, endless highlights, your life is nothing but sports and television.

NATALIE

And your direct superiors would be Dana and me.

DANA

Can you handle working for two women?

JEREMY

You're offering me a job where I do nothing but watch sports on television and the down side is I'd be working for two women?

DANA

That's right.

JEREMY

Due respect, Miss Whitaker, but throw in a bag of Doritos and I'll pay you the 350 bucks a week.

CUT TO:

(E)

INT. STUDIO

DAN SITS IN SILENCE, ALONE AT THE ANCHOR DESK. AFTER A MOMENT, CASEY WALKS IN.

CASEY

Okay, good, you're here. (SILENCE)
I thought we could talk. (SILENCE)
I know you're feeling hurt and
betrayed, but if we can just
remember that we're friends and
talk calmly, I'm sure--

DAN

I'd like you to imagine a line
running down the middle of the
studio dividing it, and the anchor
desk, in two equal halves. There,
where you are, is Casey-Land--

CASEY

Danny--

DAN

Here, where I am, is Danny-World.
Once again--

CASEY

(STEPPING TOWARD HIM) Look, let's--

DAN

Whoa, whoa, whoa! Let's call this
area here The Sphere of Safety.
Cross it, and--

CASEY

Would you knock it off.

DAN

You decided to leave the show? And
you decided to tell everyone--and I
mean everyone-- you work with but
me?!

CASEY

Danny, that's not what happened.

NATALIE ENTERS WITH JEREMY IN TOW.

NATALIE

Guys, I want you to meet Jeremy
Goodwin, our new production intern.
Jeremy, this is Dan Rosen and Casey
McCall.

JEREMY

Wow.

DAN
Don't bother getting to know Casey,
he's leaving the show.

JEREMY
I heard.

CASEY
Natalie, Dan and I need to talk for
a minute.

NATALIE
(TO JEREMY) This is the time of
day when Dan and Casey usually
fight.

JEREMY
Cool.

CASEY
(WALKING OVER) Out, let's go!

DAN
(TO CASEY) You are in Danny-World
without a visa pal, so--

CASEY
Shut up. Jeremy, welcome aboard,
I'll see you in a few minutes.

NATALIE
(ON HER WAY OUT) 30 minutes to
air.

NATALIE AND JEREMY EXIT. AFTER THEY ARE OUT OF EARSHOT,
CASEY WAITS A MOMENT BEFORE SAYING...

CASEY
I'm tired of it, Danny.

DAN
What?

CASEY
I said I'm tired of it. Really.

DAN
I don't--tired of what?

CASEY GOES TO THE ANCHOR DESK AND PICKS UP ONE OF THE SCRIPT
PAGES DAN WAS WORKING WITH--

CASEY

(READING) "But first this:
Sacramento Kings back-up power
forward Jayson Grissom was released
by a judge in Houston this morning
after posting a \$5000 bond--"
(PUTTING DOWN THE COPY) -- which,
by the way, he paid in cash that he
happened to have in his pocket.

DAN

Casey--

CASEY

This isn't an abberation, this is
every God damn night, and I'm tired
of it. Assault, Sexual Assault,
Battery, Wife Beating,
Prostitution, Drugs, and I'm not
even talking about what goes on
during the damn games. A batter
shows you up with a home run? Next
time at the plate, whip a baseball
at his head. That's gamesmanship?
Isn't it also assault with a deadly
weapon, to say nothing of
unsportsmanlike? I'm tired of it.
When was the last time something
good happened in sports? When's
the last time we reported something
sportsworthy? I'm a P.R. man. I'm
a P.R. man for punks and thugs.
I'm a P.R. man for the Corleone
Family. Who's supposed to be his
male role model now?

DAN

Casey--

CASEY

Who am I telling him to cheer for?
Some idiot with a crow bar breaks a
skater's leg? A Goalie who gets
arrested at LAX with a .38 in his
gym bag? (LONG PAUSE) These are
his heros. I have an eight year
old son I get to see on Wednesdays
and alternate weekends, and these
are his heros. And I'm tired of
it.

DAN

(BEAT) Well... quitting your job
oughta do the trick.

CASEY

Hey look--

DAN

No, I mean it, you're showing a helluva a lot of wisdom. You should definitely quit your job, 'cause that way, sports'll be good again, your wife'll take you back, and you can be a role model for your son. Children often look up to the bitter and unemployed. Are you insane?

CASEY

(STARTING TO LEAVE) I'll see you at airtime.

DAN

Yeah, one thing you definitely don't want to do is talk to your friends, I wouldn't do that.

CASEY

(TURNING AROUND) You know, I know you're pissed, but canning the sarcasm wouldn't be outa line.

DAN

I've been here every day, Casey. Every day! And I've kept my mouth shut, 'cause that's what you asked me to do. But if you'd asked me, I'd have told you. I'd have told you that Lisa's an angry, unhappy, punishing woman who doesn't love you. She doesn't even like you. And someone who makes you unhappy, Casey, shoots right to the top of my "Don't-Mess-With- Me" list. The people here like you. Me, Isaac, Dana, Natalie, Elliot, Kim... I don't know who this new guy Jeremy is, but he seems to like you fine. These are people who love you and know what you've been--

KIM RUNS INTO THE STUDIO--

KIM

Guys--

DAN
--what you've been going through,
and for six months--

KIM
Guys--

DAN
--for six months you've shown us
the back of your hand. And now
you're gonna show us the door.
Wise move, Casey.

KIM
Excuse me, fellas?

DAN
Yeah, I'm pissed. And I'm tired of
it.

KIM
DAN! CASEY!

DAN/CASEY
WHAT!!!???

KIM
There's something going on you're
gonna wanna see.

KIM LEAVES THE STUDIO... DAN AND CASEY LOOK AT EACH OTHER,
THEN WALK/RUN AFTER HER.

CUT TO:

(E)

INT. NEWSROOM - CONTINUOUS

AS KIM TROTS IN, FOLLOWED BY DAN AND CASEY, THEY JOIN DANA,
NATALIE, ISAAC AND THE ENTIRE OFFICE STAFF, SOME 30 OR 40
PEOPLE, ALL STARING UP AT THE BANK OF TV MONITORS.

CASEY
What's going on?

DAN
(SHOUTING) Can we get some audio?!

CASEY
(RE: THE SCREEN) That time can't
be right, Danny--

DANA
He's been leading from the start.

CASEY
Danny, can that time be right?!

DAN
(SHOUTING) We need audio!

SFX: WE HEAR A STADIUM FULL OF SCREAMING PEOPLE AND THE VOICES OF TWO ANNOUNCERS WHO ARE SHOUTING THEIR LUNGS OUT TO BE HEARD OVER THE NOISE.

ANNOUNCER #1 (VO)
--never seen anything like it!
This stadium is going absolutely
crazy!

ANNOUNCER #2 (VO)
With 900 meters left, at 41 years
old, Ntozake Nelson is on a pace to
absolutely shatter the world
record!!

ISAAC
(TO THE SCREEN) Well you go ahead
boy.

AND ISAAC'S QUIET ADMONITION IS A CUE FOR EVERYONE TO UNLEASH THEIR PASSION AT THE SCREEN--

DAN/DANA/NATALIE, ET AL
RUN! DIG! GET IT! GO! ETC.!

CASEY
(TO DAN) Is he gonna do this?

DAN
Does it look to you like he's
planning on slowing down?
(TO THE SCREEN) RUN!!!

AS THE STADIUM CROWD, THE ANNOUNCERS AND THE STAFF CONTINUE THEIR FRENZY, CASEY PICKS UP A TELEPHONE AND DIALS...

CASEY
(INTO THE PHONE) Lisa, it's me. Can
I talk to him?...Charley, hey, it's
dad. You finish your homework?...
Turn on your TV, I want you to
watch this.

ISAAC, WHO'S STANDING NEXT TO CASEY, TURNS HIS HEAD SLIGHTLY...

ISAAC
(TO CASEY) Welcome back.

CASEY SMILES. AMIDST THE SHOUTING, DANA HANGS UP A PHONE--

DANA
(SHOUTING) They're gonna bounce to us for a 15 second promo at the end of the race, I need the first team in the studio. Now! Casey, we gotta move!

CASEY
(INTO PHONE) I gotta go, pal, if you wanna stay up and watch the show, you gotta ask your mom, okay?

NATALIE
(HURRYING HIM) Casey--

CASEY
I love you, Charley, I'll talk to you tomorrow.

MOST OF THE CROWD HAS ALREADY STREAMED INTO THE STUDIO AND CONTROL ROOM WHERE MONITORS ARE STILL SHOWING THE END OF THE RACE. CASEY HUSTLES TO JOIN THE OTHERS AS WE

CUT TO:

(F)

INT. STUDIO/CONTROL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

DAN IS ALREADY AT THE DESK AS CASEY HURRIES IN--

DANA
I need a 15 second promo, no time for copy, who wants it?

CASEY
I got it.

DANA
We're live in 30, on the light.

CASEY
(TO DAN) Excuse me, do you mind if I pass through Danny-World on my way to Casey-Land?

DAN
Oh you're feelin' pretty good now,
aren't you?

CASEY
Look. I was wrong. You were
right. I apologize. It won't
happen again.

DANA
seconds.

CASEY
You wanna do something tonight
after the show?

DAN
Hey, well I was gonna ride the
Staten Island Ferry for a while.
Eat a hot dog. You wanna come?

CASEY
Yeah, Dan, it's 17 degrees outside
with the wind chill, so what I
wanna do is stand on a boat in the
middle of New York Harbor at half-
past midnight.

DAN
You got a better idea?

CASEY
We could go to a bar, find some
people we don't like, beat the crap
out of 'em...

DAN
(RE: THE CAMERA) Heads up--

DANA
In three, two--

CASEY
(INTO CAMERA) I'm Casey McCall
alongside Dan Rosen. Lakers-
Sonics, Pistons-Heat and Ntozake
Nelson takes the Gold at the Games.
Stay tuned for Sports Night comin'
at the top of the hour. You'll be
glad you did.

DANA
We're out.

EVERYONE STARTS MOVING AROUND--

NATALIE
We're up in nine minutes.

CASEY
Dana, come here a second.

DANA
What do you need?

CASEY
Come here.

DANA WALKS OVER TO CASEY.

DANA
What?

CASEY TAKES HER ARM AND SAYS, DIRECTLY IN HER EAR--

CASEY
There's no one can produce this
show but you.

DANA'S QUITE TAKEN WITH THIS AS CASEY KISSES HER GENTLY ON
THE CHEEK.

DANA
You've got nine minutes. Change
your shirt. My mascara's on your
collar.

CASEY
Okay.

DANA
(SHOUTING) Elliot, let's not take
any chances with the satellite feed
from Buenos Aires. Get somebody on
the phone and make sure we're cool.

ELLIOT STARTS TO RUN OUT--

CASEY
Elliot!

ELLIOT
(STOPPING) Yeah.

CASEY
Argentina.

ELLIOT
Got it.

HE STARTS OUT--

CASEY
Elliot!

ELLIOT
(STOPPING) Yeah?

CASEY
Um...double check.

FADE TO BLACK