

DIAGNOSIS MURDER

"Trash TV"

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 INT. WAREHOUSE – NIGHT

1

The vast interior of this decrepit, industrial building is
AGLOW in MOVIE LIGHTS. Various MAGIC PROPS are
scattered
through the empty space. KENT McCORD (CAMEO STAR #1)
steps *
into frame, looking rugged and tough in a LEATHER JACKET
and
JEANS.

KENT McCORD

*

I'm Kent McCord. In this abandoned
warehouse deep in an American
city, one brave man will once
again solve mysteries that have
perplexed us for centuries...
risking his life to reveal the
secrets behind the world's
greatest illusions...live.

*

(then:)

He's the first magician to dare
show how the tricks are done...
and for that, there is a price. He
must forever hide his identity or
face certain death...he must
become The Masked Magician.

*

*

*

(then:)

So stay tuned...in two minutes the
mysteries of magic will finally be
revealed.

The THEME SONG swells up and a DIRECTOR'S VOICE yells:

DIRECTOR'S VOICE
And we're clear.

Kent McCord steps off his mark and we PULL BACK to reveal
the *
LIGHTS, CAMERA and CREW...among them producer KENT
BEAUDINE,
30s, who is standing with an irritated STEVE SLOAN. Publicist
MELANIE COOPER, 20s, is nearby.

STEVE
You told me it was an emergency.
You told me someone's life was in
jeopardy.

CONTINUED

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2.

1 CONTINUED:

1

KENT

Didn't you hear what Kent McCord
just said?

*

STEVE

That's hype.

KENT

You see that man?

Kent points across the warehouse to THE MASKED
MAGICIAN, who
is taking position in front of a BULLSEYE TARGET,
accompanied
by several SCANTILY CLAD FEMALE ASSISTANTS.

KENT

Most magicians would like to kill
him for this.

STEVE

When they show up, give me a call.

He starts to go, but Kent steps in front of him.

KENT

He's telling millions of people
how the tricks are done.

(then:)

The magicians want him dead.

STEVE

I'm not going to be used as a PR
stunt.

MELANIE
And you won't be.

Melanie steps forward and introduces herself.

MELANIE
Melanie Cooper, I'm a publicist
for the Pox Network. I would never
exploit this situation for
promotional purposes.

CONTINUED

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3.

1 CONTINUED: (2)

1

STEVE

Maybe you wouldn't, but he would.
I know him. He wants Kent McCord
to tell the audience that the
Masked Magician is in so much
danger, homicide detectives are
standing by.

*

She looks at Kent, who shrugs shamelessly.

KENT

You have to admit it's a grabber.

Steve turns to go.

STEVE

Bye.

Melanie is still looking at Kent.

KENT

Hey, if you were any good at your
job, you would have thought of it
first.

That's when the DIRECTOR ANNOUNCES:

DIRECTOR'S VOICE

Five seconds to air!

The magician takes his place. Kent McCord stands to one
side *
of the camera, preparing to introduce the trick. The director

counts off the seconds with his fingers, then POINTS to Kent

*

McCord to signify action.

*

KENT McCORD

*

You are about to witness an
astonishing illusion. An arrow
will pass harmlessly through the
Masked Magician and hit that bulls-
eye behind him...

(then:)

And then, if he survives, he will
reveal the secret of how it was
done.

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2 STEVE 2

Is almost at the door when his curiosity gets the better of him. He turns around to see how the trick is done.

3 BACK TO SCENE 3

Kent McCord steps out of FRAME and begins to NARRATE the

*

ACTION as the Masked Magician does his stuff with pure, theatrical relish.

KENT McCORD (V.O.) *

To protect his identity, you will not see his face nor hear him speak.

The TWO ASSISTANTS dance seductively in front of the Masked Magician. One of them hands him an ARROW. He stabs it into the BULLSEYE like a knife. It sticks out of the target.

KENT McCORD (V.O.) *

The trick begins with his assistants dancing in front of him. One of them hands him an arrow, which he stabs into the bulls-eye to show that the sharp point is real.

One of the assistant hands him a RIFLE. He waves his hands magically over it and gives it back to her. She cracks it open. The other assistant hands him AN EXPLOSIVE CHARGE.

He

waves his hand magically over that as well and places the charge in the rifle. The assistant snaps the rifle shut.

KENT McCORD (V.O.)

*

An assistant gives him a rifle. He endows it with magic powers, then loads a charge into it.

The magician pulls the arrow out of the bullseye. The other assistant gives him a LONG, COLORFUL RIBBON, which he ties to the end of the arrow. He then jams the arrow into the barrel of the rifle.

KENT McCORD (V.O.)

*

He ties a ribbon to the end of the arrow. Once the arrow hits the bulls-eye, he will use the ribbon to prove that it has actually gone through his body.

CONTINUED

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5.

3 CONTINUED:

3

The magician waves his hands magically over his body once more, then stands in front of the bulls-eye. The assistant takes aim...

KENT McCORD (V.O.)

*

Watch closely -- maybe you can see how the illusion is done. Here's a hint. Ask yourself why he's using a rifle instead of a bow to fire the arrow...

The music SWELLS dramatically...SHE FIRES. There's a BLAST
of
the
chest,
right above the heart. He staggers back and COLLAPSES,
writhing in PAIN...

KENT McCORD

*

Oh my God...

And on STEVE, KENT BEAUDINE, KENT McCORD and everyone
rushing *
forward, we

FADE OUT:

END OF TEASER

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6.

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

4 4 EXT. COMMUNITY GENERAL – ESTABLISHING – DAY (STOCK)

The old establishing shot.

5 INT. COMMUNITY GENERAL – HOSPITAL ROOM – DAY
(STOCK) 5

A WOMAN lies in bed, making a tearful confession.

WOMAN

He knew about my secret past as a
call girl, my affair with his
brother, and the forged checks. I
had to kill him, doctor.

We PULL BACK and see she's talking to a familiar-looking,
WHITE-HAIRED DOCTOR who has his back to us.

DR. SLOAN

And you would have gotten away
with it, too, if only you hadn't
polished your nails.

That's when Dr. Sloan turns around...it's PETER GRAVES. He
motions to a DETECTIVE.

DR. SLOAN
Read her her rights...

He hands the detective a pill bottle.

DR. SLOAN
And make sure she takes one pill,
three times daily.

And on Dr. Sloan's look, and the SWELLING OF THE THEME,
we
PULL BACK to see all of this is actually A TELEVISION
PROGRAM
(actually, it's a clip from our "Must Kill TV" episode) being
watched in:

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7.

6
6 INT. COMMUNITY GENERAL – DOCTOR'S LOUNGE – NIGHT

...by DR. MARK SLOAN, DR. JESSE TRAVIS and producer
JACKSON
BURLEY (Stephen J. Cannell), who ejects the cassette from
the
VCR.

BURLEY
That's the "Dr. Danger" pilot Phil
Zarkin made last season based on
your life.

MARK
That's not anything like my life.

BURLEY
It's garbage. That's why the
network brought me in to revamp
the whole thing. They have
tremendous faith in the concept
and enormous respect for you. They
want to do this right.

Mark breaths a sigh of relief.

MARK
I'm very relieved to hear that. I
would have been so embarrassed if
that got on the air.

BURLEY
Of course you would. They missed
the whole essence of what you do.

MARK
Completely.

BURLEY
Where's the humanity?

MARK
Exactly.

BURLEY
Where's the relevance?

MARK
Absolutely.

BURLEY
Where's the sex?

CONTINUED

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8.

6 CONTINUED:

6

MARK

Sex?

BURLEY

The show didn't begin to capture the blood, grit and raw sexuality you face every day.

MARK

I don't face that.

JESSE

I do.

Mark gives him a look.

BURLEY

You know what audiences are looking for today?

MARK

Their remotes?

BURLEY

Honesty. They don't want to be patronized. They can take it the way it really is. And that's what we're going to give'em.

MARK

We?

Burley puts another cassette into the VCR.

BURLEY
Take a look at the new "Dr.
Danger."

INTERCUT WITH:

7 EXT. COMMUNITY GENERAL - ESTABLISHING - NIGHT (ON
TV) 7

The new establishing shot, with the THREE-STEP PUSH-IN.

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9.

8 INT. COMMUNITY GENERAL – HOSPITAL ROOM – NIGHT (ON
TV) 8

isn't A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN lies in bed in a SHEER NIGHTIE. She
crying. She's cool and collected.

BEAUTIFUL WOMAN

He knew I was a hooker, that I
seduced his wife, and that I was
emptying his secret Cayman Islands
account. He had to die.

his We PULL BACK to see she's talking to a YOUNG DOCTOR in
20s. It's an actor we will come to know as DEREK SHAW.

DR. SLOAN

You would have gotten away with
it...if only you'd changed your
perfume. I smelled it on the
corpse at the crime scene...and on
you the first time we slept
together.

same She whips a SILENCED GUN out from under the sheets at the
instant Dr. Sloan whips a HUGE GUN out from under his lab
coat. It's a STAND OFF.

DR. SLOAN

Go ahead, baby, pull the trigger.

They stay there, guns drawn on each other.

DR. SLOAN

I promise you, before that bullet
hits my skull you'll already be
dead. I'm ready to die, are you?

She wilts under his STEELY GAZE. She drops the gun. Two
UNIFORMED OFFICERS come in now. Dr. Sloan jams his gun
back
into his SHOULDER HOLSTER and tells his men:

DR. SLOAN
Read her her rights.

He hands the officers a prescription bottle.

DR. SLOAN
And make sure she takes two of
these with water before every meal.

And on the his look, and the SWELLING OF THE NEW,
THROBBING,
PERCUSSIVE SCORE blasting out of the TV...we END
INTERCUT.

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10.

9

9 INT. COMMUNITY GENERAL – DOCTOR'S LOUNGE – NIGHT

Jackson Burley proudly switches off the TV. Mark is in a state of shock. Jesse is amused.

BURLEY

Fixing it was easy. First, I imbued the show with unflinching realism, then I combined the Mark and Steve characters into one dynamic hero: A doctor with a badge.

MARK

I don't have a badge.

BURLEY

You're a police consultant, same thing.

MARK

I don't have a gun and I don't sleep with my patients.

BURLEY

What's important is that we captured the essence of what you do. I didn't sugarcoat the bullet.

MARK

It's mindless, superficial entertainment that glorifies sex and violence.

BURLEY

That's exactly why MBC is putting "Dr. Danger" on Thursdays at nine, right up against the hit sitcoms on UBC and those freak show specials on the Pox Network.

MARK

Your show demeans the medical profession, law enforcement and everything I believe in. I won't have anything to do with it.

Mark walks out. Burley turns to Jesse and sighs.

CONTINUED

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11.

9 CONTINUED:

9

BURLEY

You don't goose the fat lady
when's she's eating your pie in
the sky.

Jesse has no idea what he just said.

JESSE

Good point.

BURLEY

So, what did you think of the show?

And on Jesse's enigmatic smile, we CUT TO:

10 INT. COMMUNITY GENERAL – ER – NIGHT

10

Mark is walking towards the nurse's station when Steve
drags
his
in THE MASKED MAGICIAN, the ARROW still sticking out of
his
shoulder.

MARK

What happened?

STEVE

He got shot with an arrow during
a magic trick. He wouldn't let me
call an ambulance so I drove him
in myself.

Mark motions to several NURSES to follow him and leads
them
into

11 INT. COMMUNITY GENERAL – EXAM ROOM – NIGHT
11

Steve lays the Masked Magician on the table, Mark puts on
his
RUBBER GLOVES and gives orders to the nurses.

MARK
Cleanse it with betadine, pack it,
and start him on Keflex.

Mark puts his stethoscope to the magician's chest.

MARK
Breathe.

CONTINUED

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12.

11 CONTINUED:

11

The magician does.

MARK

I don't hear signs of a pnemo or
hemothorax.

Mark straightens up and lifts the magician's arm.

MARK

(to magician:)

Can you spread your fingers for me?
(he does.)

Now make an "okay" sign.
(he does.)

Good.

swats Mark reaches for the magician's mask...and the magician
his hand away.

MASKED MAGICIAN

No. I can't reveal my identity.

STEVE

(to Mark:)

That's why he wouldn't wait for an
ambulance. He was afraid they'd
take off his mask.

MARK

I won't tell you how to do magic
if you don't tell me how to
practice medicine.

Mark pulls off his mask, then opens up the magician's jacket to reveal A PIPE that wraps around his waist...and a TANGLE OF FISHING LINE and COLORFUL RIBBON.

MARK
What is all this?

MASKED MAGICIAN
The secret behind the illusion.
The arrow is never supposed to
leave the rifle. A small charge
creates a loud bang and a harmless
puff of smoke.

Mark has figured out the rest.

CONTINUED

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13.

11 CONTINUED: (2)

11

MARK

At the same moment, someone off-stage yanks the fishing line, pulling the ribbon out of the rifle and into the pipe hidden under your clothes, creating the illusion that it passes through your body.

Mark takes the man's arm and feels his pulse.

MASKED MAGICIAN

...then an arrow pops out of the bulls-eye, finishing the trick.

STEVE

Only this time someone put an explosive charge in the rifle.

MASKED MAGICIAN

They want to kill me for revealing how the illusions are done.

MARK

Another quarter inch and they would have succeeded. I have to admit I can see why they're angry. Aren't you taking the wonder out of magic?

MASKED MAGICIAN

I love magic, but it's a dying art, thanks to unimaginative magicians who keep rehashing the

same old tricks. I'm forcing them to create new illusions, to keep magic alive.

MARK

I'm afraid there's no magic way to remove that arrow. It's going to hurt. Are you ready?

The magician nods. Mark is just about to start when HARSH MOVIE LIGHT fills the room from the OBSERVATION WINDOW.

They

turn to see a CAMERA CREW and SOUND MEN pressed up against the glass. Mark is furious.

CONTINUED

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11 CONTINUED: (3) 11

MARK
Steve, get them out of here.

door Mark SNAPS SHUT the BLINDS and Steve exits, closing the
behind him.

12 INT. COMMUNITY GENERAL – LOBBY – NIGHT
12

Steve pushes back the camera crew from the window,
holding his
BADGE up to the camera lens.

STEVE
Back off. Everybody out.

That's when Kent Beaudine rushes up.

KENT
(to Steve:)
It's okay, they're with me. It's
for the show.

STEVE
The show is over.

KENT
This is for my other one,
"Maimings, Massacres and Practical
Jokes." A few quick shots of the
gruesome wound and we're gone.

Kent pushes the BOOM MAN closer to the exam room door.

KENT

I don't want to miss the scream of
agony.

STEVE

Which will be yours if you don't
get these people out of here.

That's when Jackson Burley and Jesse walk down the hall.
Burley freezes when he spots Kent.

BURLEY

Beaudine!

Kent spots Burley and BOLTS for the doors. But Burley is
faster, taking Kent down in a FLYING TACKLE.

CONTINUED

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15.

12 CONTINUED:

12

Jesse The CAMERA CREW turns to capture the FIGHT. Steve and
break the two men apart. It's all Steve can do to hold the
furious Burley back.

JESSE
(to Burley:)
What did you do that for?

BURLEY
He was my agent...until he became
a producer using my ideas. I
created The Masked Magician.

KENT
As a cop show, not a reality
special. It's totally different.

Burley goes for Kent again, but Steve holds him firmly. Jesse
lets Beaudine free.

JESSE
Get out of here. Take the cameras
with you.

Kent motions his crew to the doors, then shoots Burley a
smirk.

KENT
"He's a magic cop who pulls
justice out of a hat." Gee, I
wonder why no one bought it.

Kent leaves. Steve releases Burley, who yells after Kent.

BURLEY
Nobody gutter-slides on my astro-
turf, pal -- and you can take that
to the bank and smoke it.

Burley marches out. Steve, baffled, turns to Jesse, who just shrugs. And we CUT TO:

13 AN AWFUL CAR CRASH (STOCK)

13

Injured PEOPLE are treated by emergency workers.

CONTINUED

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16.

13 CONTINUED:

13

NARRATOR'S VOICE

This spectacular accident on a
lonely interstate sent three
people to a fiery grave.

CUT TO:

14 ANOTHER AWFUL CAR CRASH (STOCK)
14

And more human suffering.

NARRATOR'S VOICE

But it was a minor fender-bender
compared to this bone-grinding
smash-up that killed two
cheerleaders.

(then:)

All this, and more, tonight on
"Red Asphalt -- America's
Bloodiest Car Accidents"

We PULL BACK to see

15 INT. POX NETWORK CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY
15

TV That this is all on a BIG SCREEN TV, being played for a
conference room full of SUITS. KENT BEAUDINE clicks off the

TV and finishes his presentation. The POX NETWORK LOGO is
prominent on the wall.

KENT

With "Red Asphalt," we think we've created another reality special franchise for Thursday nights.

Kent moves over to a CHART, which shows the Thursday night schedule. UBC has "Pals," "Valet Girls," "He's My Wife," "Smart Alec," and "Sexual Surrogates." GBS has "Hawaii 6-0," "Lifeguards from UNCLE," and "Supertrain." MBC has "Adoption Agency," "Dr. Danger," and "Mansect" and the POX Network has "Maimings, Massacres & Practical Jokes," "Various Specials" and "9 1/2 Weeks: The Series."

CONTINUED

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17.

15 CONTINUED:

15

KENT

Combined with the proven appeal of its lead-in, "Maimings, Massacres & Practical Jokes," we can deliver a decisive blow to UBC's sitcom block in the key demographic, especially with men 18-35.

Kent takes his seat. MORRIE LUSTIG, president of Pox, nods approvingly.

MORRIE

Cheap, male-skewing programs. Can't get enough of them. And considering how well "Mysteries of Magic Revealed" did last night, neither can our viewers.

Melanie hesitantly speaks up.

MELANIE

Not all of them, Mr. Lustig. The Viewers for Better Television is branding our specials "trash TV" and launching a national boycott against our advertisers.

Morrie bolts out of his seat, startling the poor girl.

MORRIE

Great -- more press!

MELANIE

And the hate mail continues to

pour in, twelve thousand letters
at last count.

MORRIE
Great -- they're watching!

Morrie starts to stride around the table.

MORRIE
(to Kent:)
I want four "Red Asphalt" specials
ready for sweeps. And two more
magic shows...even bigger and more
dangerous than the last.

CONTINUED

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15 CONTINUED: (2) 15

KENT
You got it.

MORRIE
It's going to be hard to top the
near-death of the Masked Magician.

Morrie stops behind Kent, putting his hands on his
shoulders
and leaning close to his ear.

MORRIE
It's a shame we can't capture that
same sense of jeopardy every time.

He gives Kent's shoulder a squeeze and walks on. And on
Kent,
message clearly received, we CUT TO:

16 INT. COMMUNITY GENERAL - CORRIDOR - DAY
16

Mark and Jesse are walking towards the lobby in mid-
conversation.

MARK
If I hadn't already signed over my
royalties to the pediatric AIDs
foundation, I'd shut "Dr. Danger"
down.

JESSE
So it plays a little loose with

reality, big deal.

MARK

That's my life up there, Jesse.

JESSE

No, it's "Dr. Danger's" life.
You're just the inspiration.

MARK

But I'm nothing like that. How
many doctors do you know who are
homicide detectives?

JESSE

TV isn't supposed to be real, it's
supposed to be fun.
(more)

CONTINUED

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19.

16 CONTINUED:

16

JESSE (cont'd)

(then:)

Do you really think people would
tune in every week to watch us?

MARK

Maybe with the right cast.

JESSE

Face it, Mark, we aren't that
interesting.

That's when they reach lobby, just as Jackson Burley and
DEREK
SHAW, the actor who plays Dr. Danger, enter. Derek is
wearing
a white LAB COAT and ID TAG. Jesse isn't pleased to see
them.

BURLEY

Derek, I'd like you to meet the
real Dr. Sloan.

Derek and Mark shake hands. Derek motions to Mark's name
tag.

DEREK

We're going to spell Sloan with an
"e" to make the character my own.

MARK

So I see. Why are you wearing a
lab coat?

BURLEY
Jesse's giving us a tour. Derek is
absorbing his role.

JESSE
(to Burley:)
You're an hour early.

DEREK
(to Mark:)
Let me see your piece.

MARK
I don't have a piece.

Derek opens his jacket.

DEREK
I got mine.

CONTINUED

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20.

16 CONTINUED: (2)

16

So he does.

MARK
That's not loaded is it?

Derek taps his head.

DEREK
It is in here.

MARK
I see.

Mark gives Jesse a look. Jesse just smiles and motions them towards the exam rooms.

JESSE
So, shall we get started?

BURLEY
Thanks for lending us your boy,
Mark. He brings truth to the table.

MARK
Really?

Jesse stands at the exam room door and motions them to follow.

JESSE
We better get moving. There's so
much to absorb.

BURLEY

His script will be raw, but I like
it that way.

Mark gives Jesse a stony look.

MARK
You're writing a script?

Jesse wilts, caught.

BURLEY
It will give the show the sharp
edge of reality and maintain the
integrity of the Mark Sloan
character.

CONTINUED

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21.

16 CONTINUED: (3)

16

DEREK
With an "e."

MARK
Perhaps Jesse should work on his
own integrity first.

Mark grabs a stack of charts and steps into the elevator,
looking pointedly at Jesse as the doors close.

JESSE
Mark, wait--

But the doors close before Jesse can reach the elevator. Jesse
sags. This is a mess. Derek steps up to him.

DEREK
Can I see your piece?

And on Jesse's look, we CUT TO:

17 INT. COMMUNITY GENERAL - HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

17

The Masked Magician is in bed...and still wearing his mask.
Mark is at his bedside, along with Kent Beaudine and Melanie
Cooper.

MARK
If you keep the wound clean and
take it easy, there's no reason
you can't go home right now.

MASKED MAGICIAN
I'm going straight to the studio
and start rehearsing for
tomorrow's live broadcast.

MARK
I don't think that's a good idea.

Kent leans close to Melanie and whispers:

KENT
"The Masked Magician is performing
despite fervent protests from his
team of top surgeons." Use it.

She scribbles it in her notepad.

CONTINUED

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22.

17 CONTINUED:

17

MASKED MAGICIAN
You just told me I was fine.

MARK
But there's a good chance whoever
sabotaged the trick will try
again. You may not be so lucky
this time.

KENT
(again, to Melanie)
"Daring death for you, the
viewer." Use it.

She jots it down.

MASKED MAGICIAN
If I was going to be scared off,
I wouldn't have done it in the
first place. Besides, I'm getting
a big raise.

KENT
Not from me.

MASKED MAGICIAN
Then I'll get it from GBS, where
I will be doing my next special.
(to Melanie)
Use that.

She starts to write it down...

KENT

Okay. Fine. You win.
(to Melanie)
But this stays quiet.

She scratches it out.

MASKED MAGICIAN
That's one secret I'll keep. It's
my identity I'm going to reveal --
on tomorrow night's show.

KENT
What?!

He scratches his mask.

CONTINUED

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23.

17 CONTINUED: (2)

17

MASKED MAGICIAN
It's hell on my skin anyway.

Mark and Melanie are surprised. Kent is furious.

MARK
You're going to get yourself
killed.

KENT
You're going to get the show
killed.

MASKED MAGICIAN
My show is all about revealing
secrets. If I don't do it, I'm a
hypocrite and a fraud.

KENT
Of course you are, you're on TV.
That's what people expect you to
be.
(then:)
You obviously don't understand the
business at all.

MASKED MAGICIAN
Besides, as long as I'm masked,
I'm replaceable.

MARK
(to Kent:)
He understands.

Mark slips out the door, Melanie follows him, just as the SHOUTING MATCH starts between Kent and the Masked Magician.

18 INT. COMMUNITY GENERAL - CORRIDOR - DAY
18

Mark walks down the hall with Melanie.

MARK
It's unfortunate what has happened
to the TV business. It's all about
ratings now.

CONTINUED

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24.

18 CONTINUED:

18

MELANIE

It wasn't supposed to be like this. TV was supposed to unify us, to help us understand ourselves and each other through intelligent programming.

Mark gives her a look. Melanie smiles, embarrassed.

MELANIE

My father was Pat Cooper.

MARK

The founder of MBC?

(off her nod:)

I guess "Maimings, Massacres & Practical Jokes" wasn't what he had in mind when he helped create network television.

MELANIE

He saw television as a kind of university, open to the world. But he didn't foresee how competitive the medium would become.

(then:)

Pay-per-view, cable, five networks, home video, first-run syndication, the Internet...all fighting for our limited attention spans.

MARK

So what are you doing at POX?

MELANIE

You have to start at the bottom to
get to the top.

MARK

You want to run a network?

MELANIE

Someday...if there are any
networks left.

TO: She walks on. And on Mark, looking after her, we DISSOLVE

"Trash TV" 1/22/99 (GREEN)

25.

19 EXT. WAREHOUSE – NIGHT

19

MAGICIANS are demonstrating outside the warehouse where "Mysteries of Magic Revealed" is broadcast, drawing a crowd of lookee-loos and THE PRESS. They are being held back by a police barricade. Mark, Steve and Melanie are on the other side, watching as THE AMAZING ARTURO, in his black CAPE, faces the NEWS CAMERAS.

ARTURO

For centuries, audiences have been mystified and entertained by amazing feats of magic. Each magician makes an implicit vow to never reveal the secrets behind those tricks. One man has broken that vow. The Masked Magician will pay for his traitorous betrayal of the magic arts. We will make sure he disappears forever.

*
*
*
*
*
*

Arturo thrusts his arms into the air and POOF!... he DISAPPEARS in a HUGE PUFF OF SMOKE. The CROWD CHEERS. Among the faces in the crowd is an OMINOUS LOOKING MAN we will come to know as GARTH ZAND. More about him later, but first:

STEVE

(to Melanie:)

I thought this was a secret location.

MELANIE
It was...until Kent Beaudine
tipped them off.

*

MARK
Why did he do that?

MELANIE
Nothing like a little conflict to
stoke ratings. Half those cameras
are ours.

Mark and Steve share a look. Melanie glances at her watch.

MELANIE
We're about to come back from
commercial.

They hurry inside and we CUT TO:

"Trash TV" 1/22/99 (GREEN)

25A*.

20 INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

20

As Kent McCord faces the camera. (We INTERCUT Mark,
Steve, and
Kent Beaudine watching the trick from behind the camera)

CONTINUED

"Trash TV" 1/22/99 (GREEN)

26.

20 CONTINUED:

20

KENT McCORD

*

You just saw it for yourselves.
Even as a mob screams for his
blood outside, the Masked Magician
continues to reveal the darkest
mysteries of magic...

Kent McCord steps OUT OF FRAME to reveal The Masked
Magician *

standing in front of "The Bed of Spikes," a PLATFORM of
METAL

SPIKES suspended over the "bed," which is raised so you can
see there's nothing underneath it.

KENT McCORD (V.O.)

*

Each trick is more dangerous than
the last. But nothing can match
the risk of what he's about to do.

The Masked Magician WHIPS OFF HIS MASK. It's VAL
VALENTINO.

MASKED MAGICIAN

This is who I am. Why have I
revealed these secrets? To
reinvigorate a declining art.
Revealing these old tricks will
inspire magicians everywhere to
create new illusions to dazzle and
amaze us....keeping magic alive.

(then:)

And now I will put to rest one of
the oldest tricks of them all.

The magician strides around the platform, grabbing an occasional spike to show it's solid and waving his hand under them to show there are no mirrors.

KENT McCORD (V.O.)

*

The magician tests the spikes to prove they are real and waves his hand underneath them to show there are no mirrors. Let me assure you, the spikes are as razor-sharp as they look.

The magician lays down in the center of the bed, underneath the spikes. SEVERAL SCANTILY CLAD FEMALE assistants come out to fit his arms and legs into straps. Then they step away and draw a CURTAIN around the bed...

CONTINUED

"Trash TV" 1/22/99 (GREEN)

27.

20 CONTINUED: (2)

20

KENT McCORD (V.O.)

*

The magician is strapped down, and then a curtain is drawn around the bed. Notice the curtain doesn't reach the floor...this is so you can see he can't hide under the bed.

and
their
out
The ASSISTANTS release the ROPES, the MAGICIAN SCREAMS,
the PLATFORM OF SPIKES falls, SPLINTERING THE WOOD,
POINTS showing underneath the bed. The assistants dance
and whip open the curtain. The magician isn't there. There's
a long silence.

MARK

(to Kent:)

Where is he?

KENT

I don't know. He's supposed to be sitting on top of the platform.

Uh-oh. Mark, Steve, Kent Beaudine and Kent McCord rush
over to *
the bed. Steve and Kent McCord grab the ROPES and raise
the *
platform of spikes.

21 TIGHT ON MARK AND KENT

21

As they react to what they see. Kent looks away...it's not pretty. Mark leans down, OUT OF FRAME, to check the body.

He

shoots a look to Steve.

MARK

He's dead.

And on Steve's reaction, we

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

"Trash TV" 1/22/99 (GREEN)

28.

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

22 INT. WAREHOUSE – NIGHT

22

It's now a crime scene. The body is WHEELED AWAY in a
BODY BAG. AMANDA joins Mark.

AMANDA

I don't think I need to tell you
the cause of the death.

MARK

No.

AMANDA

How did the trick go wrong?

MARK

Pretty simple, really. Although
the magician is actually tied
down, the straps are only attached
to the bed with velcro. When the
curtain is drawn, he sits up, and
rolls on to this narrow ledge just
before the spikes fall.

(then:)

Only this time, one of the straps
was real.

Mark leads Amanda to the bed...where there are THREE
VELCRO

STRIPS and just ONE STRAP still there. He yanks on the strap to show it's still securely attached. Kent walks up and looks at the strap.

KENT

Why would someone do such a thing?

Mark glares at him.

MARK

Maybe to avoid paying a hefty raise and to make sure the last special gets the biggest ratings possible.

CONTINUED

"Trash TV" 1/22/99 (GREEN)

29.

22 CONTINUED:

22

KENT

I meant why would someone else do
such a thing?

STEVE'S VOICE

You mean like the Amazing Arturo?

Steve walks up with Arturo, who HANDCUFFED and dressed
in an EXECUTIONER'S ROBES.

STEVE

I caught him hiding in a crate,
wearing that and holding this.

Steve holds up a DAGGER.

STEVE

(to Arturo:)

Want to explain why?

ARTURO

Not without a lawyer.

Steve leads him away, Mark shakes his head, upset with
himself.

MARK

When Arturo "disappeared" out
front, it was a distraction... so
he could sneak past the police
line and get in here. A basic,
garden-variety illusion...and I
fell for it.

KENT

Don't be too hard on yourself,
Mark. I'm sure you'll come off
very sympathetically in the TV
movie.

Kent claps Mark on the back and walks away. And on Mark
and
Amanda, both disgusted with him, we CUT TO:

23 23 INT. GBS NETWORK – TANYA SIMONE'S OFFICE – DAY

Network president TANYA SIMONE, 30s, sharp and professional,
is sitting in the homey conversation area of her office facing
NATHAN REECE, 50s, tough-minded CEO of Allied Bottling
and his
right-hand man, GARTH ZAND, who we will recognize from
the
crowd outside the warehouse.

REECE

Since Allied Bottling bought GBS
a year ago, we have allowed you to
remain autonomous, to run the
network your way.

TANYA

And I appreciate that, Mr. Reece.

Tanya glances at Zand, who sits in a chair, staring coolly at
her. It's unnerving.

REECE

We did that because we didn't
understand how the television
business worked. We still don't.

TANYA

It's not as easy as it looks. You
are at the mercy of a fickle
audience, an amorphous culture,
and a turbulent social landscape.
But it can be very rewarding.

REECE
There's nothing rewarding about
losing \$150 million annually.

Tanya shifts uncomfortably in her seat and chances another
glance at Zand, who's expression hasn't changed.

TANYA
All it takes is one hit to change
all that. And I'm pleased to say
that our development for next
season looks very promising.

REECE
We can't wait until next season to
see substantial improvements.

CONTINUED

"Trash TV" 1/22/99 (GREEN)

31.

23 CONTINUED:

23

TANYA

It takes a year to develop and produce new series...and virtually all of them will be canceled within 13 episodes. But you keep putting shows out there, hoping that just one of them will survive the season. That is the television business.

REECE

Now I know why we don't understand it...because it makes no economic sense.

(then:)

Perhaps it's time you learned how we do things on the bottling side.

TANYA

I don't see how the bottling business applies to what we do.

REECE

Mr. Zand will show you.

at
Reece rises, motioning to Garth Zand as he does. She looks
Zand.

REECE

He's your new vice president of ...
(to Garth:)
What was it, again, Garth?

ZAND
West Coast Operations.

REECE
Yes, right. West Coast Operations.
I think you'll find that Mr. Zand
will be instrumental in devising
new competitive strategies. You'll
work very well together.

Reece walks out, leaving the two of them sitting there.
There's a long moment of silence, then:

ZAND
I don't know anything about TV.

CONTINUED

"Trash TV" 1/22/99 (GREEN)

32.

23 CONTINUED: (2)

23

Tanya looks at him. Why isn't that a surprise? He offers her a thin smile.

ZAND

But then, I didn't know anything about hamburgers before we bought the Burger Town chain. Now I can tell you everything about a Double Cheese Super Deluxe, right down to the number of sesame seeds on the bun.

TANYA

Really.

She couldn't be less interested.

ZAND

So, at first, you'll have to forgive me if I ask a few dumb questions.

TANYA

Okay.

ZAND

For instance, why aren't we first on Thursday night?

*

She gets up wearily, goes to the schedule board and taps the card labeled "He's My Wife." Duh.

TANYA

"He's My Wife" on UBC at 9 pm.

It's been the number one sitcom on television for five years.

ZAND

Why aren't we second?

TANYA

Because the freak show specials on the Pox Network are difficult to counter-program. It's hard to top a live murder.

ZAND

Then why aren't we third?

CONTINUED

"Trash TV" 1/22/99 (GREEN)

33.

23 CONTINUED: (3)

23

Tanya takes a deep breath and tries not to snap at him.

TANYA

All we can do is put the programs
out there, Mr. Zand. The audience
decides what its going to watch.
That's the way it is.

ZAND

Then it seems to me that's the
first thing we ought to change.

He gets up slowly and walks out, Tanya staring after him.

And

we CUT TO:

24 INT. POLICE STATION – CONFERENCE ROOM – DAY

24

Mark and Steve sit across from Arturo.

ARTURO

My lawyer has advised me to
cooperate.

STEVE

You hired the right lawyer.

(then:)

You can start by telling us what
you were doing hiding in a crate,
dressed as an executioner.

MARK

And why we found one of the Masked Magician's assistants bound and gagged in a storage closet.

ARTURO

First, I have to show you this. My lawyer dropped it off for me.

Arturo gets up and puts a VIDEO CASSETTE in the VCR.
Arturo hits PLAY on the remote.

ARTURO

This was going to be the Masked Magician's next trick. He taped his rehearsal. It's called the executioner's box.

"Trash TV" 1/22/99 (GREEN)

34.

25 ON THE TV

25

The MASKED MAGICIAN stands in front of a tall crate. A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN in a LONG EXECUTIONERS ROBE comes out with a

LARGE SACK, which she sets on the floor. He steps into a BAG.

She pulls it up to his neck and TIES IT SHUT. She then leads him into the box and closes it. The executioner puts a HOOD over her head, picks up a DAGGER, and dances around the box a

few times...then opens it. The Masked Magician is still there, stuck in the bag. The executioner yanks off the magician's mask...and reveals THE BEAUTIFUL WOMAN. Now the executioner

whips off his hood...it's THE MASKED MAGICIAN. Somehow they

have changed places. Amazing.

26 BACK TO SCENE

26

Mark smiles, he's figured it out.

MARK

I think I've got it.

IT He rewinds the tape and explains how it's done AS HE PLAYS AGAIN. We INTERCUT as necessary.

MARK

There are actually three people involved in this trick, one of whom is hiding behind the box when the trick begins, dressed just

like the executioner.
(then:)
That would have been you.

ARTURO
You should have been a magician,
Dr. Sloan.

MARK
When the woman dances behind the
box, she stays and the third
person dances out. While the third
person dances, the woman switches
places with the magician in the
box through a secret opening in
the back.

CONTINUED

"Trash TV" 1/22/99 (GREEN)

35.

26 CONTINUED:

26

STEVE

(catching on:)

Then the third person dances behind the box and the magician comes out in his place, disguised in the executioner's robes.

MARK

That's how the trick is usually done. But you were going to incapacitate the magician when he came out of the box...and replace him as the executioner.

ARTURO

I was going to whip off my hood, reveal myself...and deliver a statement on behalf of the magic community against what he has done.

STEVE

Which means the woman in the trick had to be your accomplice.

ARTURO

Leave her out of this. I take full responsibility.

STEVE

Is that a confession?

ARTURO

Yes. It's also my alibi.

Mark gets it.

MARK

Why would you still be around,
preparing to sabotage this trick,
if you'd already rigged the bed of
spikes?

ARTURO

Exactly. I'd have to be an idiot.

MARK

Or extremely clever.

CONTINUED

"Trash TV" 1/22/99 (GREEN)

36.

26 CONTINUED: (2)

26

STEVE

You may have done all this just to rule yourself out as a suspect.

ARTURO

Unless you can prove that right now, I believe I am free to go.

Arturo looks at Steve, who reluctantly opens the door.

STEVE

Just don't disappear.

Arturo leaves. Steve turns to his Dad.

STEVE

So where does that leave us?

MARK

Back at the beginning.

And on Mark, his mind working, we CUT TO:

27
27 EXT. MONOLITH STUDIOS – ESTABLISHING – DAY (STOCK)

28
28 INT. MONOLITH STUDIOS – SOUNDSTAGE – DAY

"Dr. As Jackson Burley leads Jesse and Amanda on a tour of the

Danger" stage. EXTRAS in MEDICAL GARB lounge around,
reading
paperbacks and magazines, waiting for their call.

BURLEY

We're on an accelerated production
schedule. MBC wants "Dr. Danger"
on the air next Thursday.

JESSE

That's the worst timeslot on
television. You'll be up against
"He's My Wife."

BURLEY

But not the Masked Magician.
Against "Red Asphalt," we could
come in second... all we need are
promotable stories.

CONTINUED

"Trash TV" 1/22/99 (GREEN)

37.

28 CONTINUED:

28

Burley claps Jesse on the back.

BURLEY

Think big. Think bloody. Think
hooters.

AMANDA

Hooters?

BURLEY

That's one thing "Red Asphalt"
won't have.

They enter the THREE-WALLED ELEVATOR SET and find
themselves
in the lobby of the COMMUNITY GENERAL SET, where THE
CREW is
is preparing for another shot, adjusting lights, checking
marks, etc.

BURLEY

Welcome to Community General
hospital.

AMANDA

Wow. It looks so real.

Amanda runs her hands along the counter of the nurse's
station.

BURLEY

It is. Right down to the gum
underneath the waiting room seats.

AMANDA

But no one will see the gum, what
difference does it make?

BURLEY

Reality, baby. It permeates.
Actors absorb it and use it in
their performance.

JESSE

You could probably build a real
hospital for what this must have
cost.

CONTINUED

"Trash TV" 1/22/99 (GREEN)

38.

28 CONTINUED: (2)

28

BURLEY

Actually, it's a redress of a set from "Beyond the Beyond." This was the underwater sperm bank on Altair-2.

Amanda takes her hand off the counter, disgusted, and wipes it on her pants.

AMANDA

You don't build sets from scratch?

BURLEY

You save money where you can. Some of these flats date back to "Jake & The Fatman."

That's when Jesse notices a YOUNG ASIAN WOMAN, wearing a DOCTOR'S COAT over a LOW-CUT TOP, practicing KARATE MOVES in the exam room, which is missing one wall and is open to the stage.

JESSE

Who is that?

BURLEY

That's Dr. Jesse Travis.

Jesse looks at her again. Amanda is amused.

JESSE

You told me I was a vibrant
character with lots of levels.

BURLEY

The network felt a woman would be
sexier...particularly one with a
black belt.

(then:)

"A doctor with healing hands and
feet of fury."

AMANDA

It's a definite improvement.

(off Jesse's look:)

Think big. Think bloody. Think
hooters.

Jesse shoots her a nasty look then turns to Burley.

CONTINUED

"Trash TV" 1/22/99 (GREEN)

39.

28 CONTINUED: (3)

28

JESSE

What did the network make you do
to Amanda?

BURLEY

Nothing. She's perfect.

spots
Amanda flashes Jesse a smug smile. That's when Burley
Derek Shaw coming on the set.

BURLEY

Excuse me, gotta stroke the talent.

Burley goes over to confer with Shaw. Jesse turns to Amanda.

JESSE

You think Mark will forgive me for
writing a script? Burley begged me
to do it and it seemed like fun.

AMANDA

I'm sure Mark will get over it. As
long as you don't make him look
bad.

JESSE

That's why I'm here. Burley wants
me to ground the show in reality.

That's when they hear a BELL RING and the director yell:

DIRECTOR'S VOICE

Action!

Amanda and Jesse turn to see:

29 INT. THEIR POV – COMMUNITY GENERAL LOBBY
29

Derek Shaw aka "Dr. Sloane" leans over a SICK CHILD in a
wheel
chair.

DR. SLOANE
Don't worry, Timmy. You're going
to see tomorrow...and a lot of
tomorrows after that...you'll know
love, heart-break, happiness and
pain.
(more)

CONTINUED

"Trash TV" 1/22/99 (GREEN) 40.

29 CONTINUED: 29

DR. SLOANE (cont'd)
The crazy kaleidoscope of
experiences we call life.
(then:)
Because you're going to get that
kidney...or I'll give you one of
mine.

Dr. Sloane musses the brave kid's hair then turns away, and
that's when we see a TEAR roll down the doctor's cheek.

DIRECTOR'S VOICE
Cut!

30 BACK TO SCENE 30

Amanda looks at Jesse and tries to stifle a laugh.

AMANDA
You can't get much more realistic
than that. I don't think Mark has
any spare organs left to give.

She claps him on the back and walks off. And on Jesse's
discomfort, we CUT TO:

31 INT. POX NETWORK - DAY 31

Mark is wandering down the hall when he spots Melanie
Cooper.

MARK

Hello, Melanie. Do you know where
I can find Kent Beaudine?

MELANIE

He's in the editing room, putting
together the next episode of
"Maimings, Massacres & Practical
Jokes."

MARK

What kind of person would watch a
program like that?

CONTINUED

"Trash TV" 1/22/99 (GREEN)

41.

31 CONTINUED:

31

MELANIE

I don't know... but there are 15 million of them. All of them and probably a couple million more will watch to see the Masked Magician get killed again.

MARK

Kent's using that footage?
(off her nod:)
Has he no shame?

MELANIE

That's what makes him such a good producer. Third door on your left.

She walks away. Mark continues down the hall.

32 INT. POX NETWORK – EDITING ROOM – DAY

32

Kent sits with an editor in front of a COMPUTER. The Masked Magician's murder plays on the screen. Mark stands in the doorway, shocked.

MARK

You're using the Masked Magician's death on your show?

Kent looks up, surprised.

MARK

How can you?

KENT

I can't stop asking myself that same question. There are so many serious issues to consider.

Mark regards Kent in a new light. Maybe there's so hope for this man yet...

KENT

I mean...is it a maiming, a massacre or a practical joke? Technically, they all apply.

CONTINUED

"Trash TV" 1/22/99 (GREEN)

42.

32 CONTINUED:

32

MARK

Technically, you're looking at
life in prison no matter which it
is.

Mark walks away. Kent rushes out after him.

33 INT. POX NETWORK – KENT'S OFFICE – DAY
33

Kent hustles him into his expansive office, which includes a
small kitchenette.

KENT

Sssh. Are you trying to ruin my
reputation?

MARK

I don't think that's possible.

Kent slams the door.

KENT

I had nothing to do with what
happened last night.

MARK

Except you were the one who told
Arturo where you were shooting.

KENT

That's not a crime.

Kent picks a mug off his desk, goes to the kitchenette, and pours himself a cup of coffee from a STYLISH METAL KETTLE.

MARK

It is if you helped him get into the warehouse.

KENT

What if I did? That doesn't mean I killed the Masked Magician.

MARK

It suggests you were setting him up to take the fall for a murder you committed.

CONTINUED

"Trash TV" 1/22/99 (GREEN) 43.

33 CONTINUED: 33

Kent walks back towards his desk. A DROP of COFFEE falls from the bottom of the mug... and hits the floor.

KENT
If I was going to kill the Masked Magician, I would've waited until at least the second commercial break, I wouldn't sacrifice the second half-hour of the show.

34 MARK'S POV 34

The DROPLET is EATING A HOLE THROUGH THE FLOOR.

35 BACK TO SCENE 35

Kent is about to take a sip when Mark knocks the coffee cup from his hand. The mug HITS THE WALL and SHATTERS. Kent rears back, staring at Mark like he's insane.

KENT
What's got into you?

MARK
It's what's got into your coffee that matters.

Mark points to the wall. Kent looks and sees THE COFFEE EATING THROUGH THE WALL...the ACID HISSING.

MARK

You were about to have a fatal
case of acid indigestion.

And on Kent's shock, we

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

"Trash TV" 1/22/99 (GREEN)

44.

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

36 INT. BBQ BOB'S – NIGHT

36

The restaurant is closed. Our heroes are all gathered at the counter, party food in front of them. Jesse is excited, Mark is apprehensive. Steve and Amanda are simply curious.

JESSE

In five seconds, "Dr. Danger" premieres and you become a national icon.

MARK

Or a national joke.

Steve nudges Amanda and grins.

STEVE

My Daddy's an action hero.

Amanda glances admiringly at Mark.

AMANDA

Wow. Can I see your piece?

Mark glares at them both.

MARK

I don't know if I can bear to watch this.

Steve and Amanda laugh. Jesse shushes everyone.

JESSE
Quiet -- it's starting.

37 ON THE TV

37

The "Dr. Danger" main titles begin...a series of ACTION
SCENES
cut to a PULSATING, PERCUSSIVE SCORE: Dr. Sloane tackles
someone in the hospital corridor and sticks a gun in the
man's
face. There's a STOCK FOOTAGE CAR CHASE. Dr. Sloane
kisses a
beautiful woman, then spins her around, pinning her arm
behind
her...and forcing her to drop the KNIFE she was about to
plunge in his back. There's a STOCK FOOTAGE EXPLOSION.

CONTINUED

"Trash TV" 1/22/99 (GREEN) 45.

37 CONTINUED: 37

And on the title DR. DANGER...

MARK'S VOICE
Change the channel.

38 BACK TO SCENE 38

Mark has had enough. Jesse looks imploringly at him.

JESSE
But it's just the beginning.

MARK
That's what terrifies me.

Jesse reluctantly changes the channel to:

39 ON THE TV 39

A metal-crunching CAR CRASH and the NARRATION:

NARRATOR'S VOICE
...a flesh-shredding collision
that killed a family of three and
their adorable dog. All this and
more on tonight's premiere of "Red
Asphalt -- America's Worst Car
Crashes."

40 BACK TO SCENE 40

JESSE
Now, maybe, you can appreciate Dr.
Danger.

the Mark, disgusted, takes the remote from Jesse and changes
the channel again, landing on

41 ON THE TV

41

It's a VIDEO-TAPED SITCOM on a TWO WALLED BEDROOM
SET. Actor

GERRY LANE in a dress, shaving cream on his face, a razor in
his hand, is confronting another actor.

CONTINUED

"Trash TV" 1/22/99 (GREEN)

46.

41 CONTINUED:

41

GERRY

How am I supposed to get a date
with a supermodel if they all
think I'm your wife?

We hear a BURST OF CANNED LAUGHTER and Mark switches
off the
set.

42 BACK TO SCENE

42

Mark tosses the remote on the counter. Steve looks at Jesse.

STEVE

Who was that?

JESSE

Gerry Lane. You know...
(but he doesn't:)
Star of "He's My Wife." The most
popular show on television...
(off his blank look:)
There are other things on TV
besides "Baywatch."

STEVE

Why was he wearing a dress?

JESSE

Gerry's best friend had to marry
within a year or lose his \$300
million inheritance...but he's
such a jerk, no woman will marry

him. So Gerry does, for a percentage... and wacky hijinks ensue.

Amanda shakes her head.

AMANDA
What has television come to?

CONTINUED

"Trash TV" 1/22/99 (GREEN)

47.

42 CONTINUED:

42

MARK

It's getting to be murder.

(then:)

I don't think whoever killed the Masked Magician did it to prevent him from revealing how tricks are done. It was for ratings.

Jesse picks up a piece of paper and pen and starts making some notes.

STEVE

But the only one who benefitted from the ratings was Kent Beaudine, and someone tried to kill him, too.

AMANDA

He could have staged the attempt on his life to throw suspicion off himself.

MARK

I don't think so. He had no idea I was coming down there...and he would have done something flashier than putting acid in his own coffee.

(then:)

The sabotage and killings are all about stopping Kent Beaudine's hit specials.

AMANDA
You mean his Trash TV.

That's when Steve notices Jesse taking notes.

STEVE
What are you doing?

JESSE
Trying to capture your voices for
my "Dr. Danger" script. Keep
talking... but be authentic.

CONTINUED

"Trash TV" 1/22/99 (GREEN)

48.

42 CONTINUED: (2)

42

MARK

(to Jesse:)

You know as well as I do that "Dr. Danger" has nothing to do with reality. How can you write for it?

JESSE

It's just entertainment, Mark.
You're taking it way too seriously.
(then:)

I don't mind being an Asian woman who heals with her hands and fights injustice with her feet of fury... why should you mind being a doctor with a badge?

*

MARK

You're sounding more and more like Jackson Burley every day.

STEVE

Who has, by the way, a strong motive for seeing Beaudine and his shows fail. Beaudine stole the idea for The Masked Magician from him... and those specials would've been competing with "Dr. Danger."

*

MARK

(to Jesse:)

Maybe you could ask Burley a few questions... he won't have his guard up around you.

AMANDA
But if he does, just use your feet
of fury.

And on Jesse's look, we CUT TO:

43 INT. LE GUERRE RESTAURANT – NIGHT

43

It's a celebration for "Dr. Danger." Derek Shaw, Jackson Burley, and bunch of stars, starlets, and wanna-be stars and starlets, party it up at a table.

BURLEY
I want to make a toast.

CONTINUED

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49.

43 CONTINUED:

43

He raises his glass to Shaw.

BURLEY

To the guy who runs on the molten
concrete to destiny-ville and that
shining light that reflects off
the eyes of hope.

(then:)

And I mean that.

Whatever the hell that means. Everyone tinks their glasses
and
drinks up...all under the watchful eyes of GARTH ZAND,
sitting
alone at a table in a corner of the restaurant. Derek gets up
and hugs Burley.

DEREK

Thanks, Jack. That tore.

BURLEY

To the bone, pal.

Burley claps him on the back. Derek raises a fist to his
friends.

DEREK

I got places to go. Keep the flame
burning.

They all raise their fists back at him. He leaves. Garth Zand
waits a beat, then follows him out, out of sight of the
others. Zand flashes a big smile.

ZAND

Hate to trouble you, Mr. Shaw, but my little niece Katie would kill me if I told her I saw you and didn't get an autograph.

DEREK

Sure.

Zand holds out a napkin and a pen to Derek, who takes it, scrawls his autograph and hands it back to him.

ZAND

Thanks so much.

Zand glances at the autograph.

CONTINUED

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50.

43 CONTINUED: (2)

43

ZAND
Dr. Sloane?

DEREK
I always sign as the character I'm
playing. It's my thing.

ZAND
And what a dandy thing it is. And
you've numbered it, too.

DEREK
That will be especially valuable,
five or six years from now, since
it's the first one I've signed in
the role.

ZAND
You think you'll be lucky enough
to stay on the air that long?

DEREK
I make my own luck, friend.

Shaw leaves. Zand looks after him and tosses the napkin in
the trash.

ZAND
Makes two of us.

After a moment, Zand leaves. And we DISSOLVE TO:

44 44 INT. MONOLITH STUDIOS – ESTABLISHING – DAY (STOCK)

45 45 INT. MONOLITH STUDIOS – BURLEY'S OFFICE – DAY

his This is Burley's club house, crammed with memorabilia from
Gun shows ("Frankencop," "Young Barnaby Jones Chronicles," "My
motorcycle Has Bullets," etc) and masculine things like a basketball
way hoop, a punching bag...for instance, he's astride a
as he gives Jesse notes on his script. They are about half-
through the session.

BURLEY
This scene with the guy hit by the
bulldozer...it just sits there.
(more)

CONTINUED

"Trash TV" 1/22/99 (GREEN)

51.

45 CONTINUED:

45

BURLEY (cont'd)
It needs more of the ER stuff.
Stat this and stat that.

Jesse makes a quick note in the script.

JESSE
ER stuff, got it.

BURLEY
Don't you think the guy is kind of
passive?

JESSE
Well, he has been run over by a
bulldozer.

BURLEY
But he's just laying there with a
tube in his throat.

JESSE
That's what people do when they
have massive internal injuries.

BURLEY
What if the instant Dr. Sloane
turns his back, the guy, delirious
with pain, yanks his ET tube out
and tries to strangle the nurse
with it?

JESSE
But--

Burley is on a roll now, nothing can get in his way...

BURLEY

So Dr. Sloane spins on his heels,
punches him in the face, throws
him onto the table, straddles the
guy and jams the tube back down
his throat.

JESSE

I don't think that's possible.

BURLEY

If you write it, it's possible.

CONTINUED

"Trash TV" 1/22/99 (GREEN)

52.

45 CONTINUED: (2)

45

Jesse is about to argue some more when the FEMALE ASSISTANT brings in some papers.

BURLEY
Ah, the ratings!

Burley swings off the boss hawg and snatches the pages out of the ASSISTANT'S HANDS.

JESSE
How did we do?

Burley sorts quickly through the pages.

BURLEY
Kick-ass. We came in third.

JESSE
That doesn't sound so good to me.

BURLEY
UBC's "He's My Wife" and "Pals" are always number one -- the fight on Thursday is for second place.

He hands the pages to Jesse.

JESSE
And "Red Asphalt" on POX was second. We still lost.

BURLEY

By one sickly little share point.

(then:)

When MBC had "Con Artist" in this slot, they were ten share points behind.

JESSE

"Con Artist?"

BURLEY

Lee Majors as an ex-con whose jailhouse tattoos come to life and help people in need. Lasted six episodes.

Now Jesse remembers it.

CONTINUED

"Trash TV" 1/22/99 (GREEN)

53.

45 CONTINUED: (3)

45

JESSE

Oh yeah, it's on UPN now.

BURLEY

Once those freak shows on POX are gone, we'll be number two.

This is the opening Jesse has been looking for.

JESSE

What makes you think those specials are going to stop?

BURLEY

How many car crashes can you watch before you've seen them all? What do you think happened to the "A-Team?"

(then:)

Besides, the Masked Magician was Kent Beaudine's real star, and he's dead.

JESSE

How fortunate for us.

BURLEY

That's TV baby. You never know which way lady luck is going to spit, you just hope it's not in your breakfast.

That's when Burley's phone rings. He grabs it.

BURLEY
Burley.

His face falls as he listens.

BURLEY
You sure it was him?
(then:)
Thanks for the call.

He hangs up the phone.

JESSE
What is it?

CONTINUED

"Trash TV" 1/22/99 (GREEN)

54.

45 CONTINUED: (4)

45

BURLEY

Lady Luck coughed up a heffer-sized spit-wad and heaved it on my life.

Burley gets back on the Harley and stares off down some distant road.

BURLEY

Derek Shaw is dead.

And on Jesse's look, we CUT TO:

46 INT. COMMUNITY GENERAL – PATH LAB – DAY

46

Mark comes in to find Steve and Amanda standing over the MORGUE DRAWER which holds Derek Shaw's corpse.

MARK

I came up as soon as I heard. What happened?

STEVE

His sports car was found at the bottom of a canyon off Mulholland this morning. Looks like he took a curve too fast.

MARK

(dubious:)

That's what it looks like. I wouldn't be so sure that's what

actually happened.

Mark picks up her autopsy report.

AMANDA

There are no signs of foul play, at least not yet. From what I can tell from a preliminary external exam, he died from injuries sustained in the crash.

MARK

It says here you found 9 ounces of Scotch in his stomach.

CONTINUED

"Trash TV" 1/22/99 (GREEN)

55.

46 CONTINUED:

46

STEVE

Shaw was partying around town pretty hard last night, celebrating the premiere of the show. He's also got a history of reckless driving and alcohol abuse.

MARK

(to Amanda:)

Have you got his tox screen back yet?

AMANDA

Just came in -- I haven't had a chance to look at it yet.

She goes to her desk, takes a piece of paper out of the in-basket and hands it to Mark.

MARK

It says here his blood alcohol level is .05%.

Amanda and Mark share a look.

STEVE

What?

AMANDA

(to Steve:)

There's nine ounces of Scotch in his stomach, that's the equivalent of six 1.5 ounce shots. He should have a blood alcohol level well

above .05%.

MARK

But it's not. Which means he was
dead before the alcohol had a
chance to enter his blood stream.

(then:)

Someone poured the Scotch down his
throat. Dr. Danger was murdered.

Mark drops the report on the body and walks out. Amanda
closes the morgue drawer, and then follows Steve out after
Mark.

47 47 INT. COMMUNITY GENERAL – CORRIDOR – DAY

the As Mark, Amanda and Steve head out of the path lab towards
nurse's station.

MARK

In a sense, that's me lying on
that autopsy table. I've got a
personal interest in seeing this
case through.

STEVE

Dr. Sloan solves his own murder.
Sounds like a TV show.

AMANDA

Better be careful or Jackson
Burley will use it.

MARK

I can't help thinking Shaw's
killing is connected in some way
to the Masked Magician's murder.
I just wish I knew how.

They join Jesse at the nurse's station, where he's working on
some files, looking depressed.

MARK

I suppose you heard about Derek
Shaw.

Jesse nods sadly.

JESSE
I suppose you heard about "Dr.
Danger."

CONTINUED

"Trash TV" 1/22/99 (GREEN)

57.

47 CONTINUED:

47

AMANDA

Aren't they one in the same?

JESSE

They are now. MBC is putting Dr. Danger on hiatus, which is TV-speak for dead. Which means my script won't be shot.

MARK

I'm sorry, Jesse. As much as I disliked the show, I know how excited you were about writing for it.

JESSE

But I lost some of your respect doing it, didn't I?

MARK

I found the show such a personal insult that I couldn't step back and see the opportunity it represented for you. Now I can.

JESSE

Now that it's over.

Jesse looks past them to the PATH LAB.

STEVE

Maybe you can write for another show. "Baywatch" can't be too hard.

JESSE
Or maybe I can write for the show
that's shooting in the path lab.

They follow his gaze to see:

48 HIS POV

48

CREW Through the window of the path lab, he can see A CAMERA
* is standing in front of the morgue drawer. It's the same
when "Maimings, Massacres & Practical Jokes" crew that came in
The Masked Magician was here.

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49 BACK TO SCENE 49

As our heroes rush into

50 50 INT. COMMUNITY GENERAL – PATH LAB – DAY

To find Kent Beaudine and his crew trying to get a shot of Shaw's corpse...but he can't get the MORGUE DRAWER open.

KENT

Could you give me a hand with this thing? It's stuck.

Amanda gets between them and the bag.

AMANDA

I will not. This is a restricted area.

KENT

All I want is a peek.

MARK

So you can broadcast Derek Shaw's corpse on national television. Did you ever think how his family might feel?

KENT

I'll make sure they get a cassette if they miss it.

Steve ushers the camera men out.

STEVE

Out. Before I put you in one of those bags myself.

They get the subtle hint and leave. Steve then turns his attention to Kent, grabbing him by the arm. He starts to drag Kent away...

KENT

Wait, please. You got to help me.

MARK

I won't be an accomplice to the crimes you commit against common human decency.

CONTINUED

"Trash TV" 1/22/99 (GREEN)

59.

50 CONTINUED:

50

Jesse turns to Amanda.

JESSE

Shame "Dr. Danger" is over. I could have used that.

KENT

I'm the victim here.

STEVE

If I catch you sneaking into the morgue again, you will be. Now get out.

Steve pushes him into the hall and is about to slam to door
on him when Kent intrudes again.

KENT

My specials aren't drawing half as many people as the Masked Magician shows did. Without it as a lead-in, my other shows are dead.

STEVE

What a loss.

Anyone who knows Mark, and is paying any attention to him,
his would start to notice now that what Steve said has started
mind working...

AMANDA

Why not just hire another Masked

Magician?

JESSE

Maybe you'll get lucky, and
someone will try to kill him, too.

MARK

Maybe you will!

Now everyone looks at Mark.

AMANDA

You think that's a good idea?

CONTINUED

"Trash TV" 1/22/99 (GREEN)

60.

50 CONTINUED: (2)

50

STEVE

Whoever killed the Masked Magician
is still out there. It would be
suicide for another magician to
take his place.

KENT

But it would be a great special.

Mark nods.

MARK

Yes, it would. Which is why you
have to do it.

And on Mark and Kent's smiles, and everyone else's
confusion,
we

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

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61.

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

51 EXT. WAREHOUSE – NIGHT

51

with Once again, the Amazing Arturo is demonstrating outside other magicians for the benefit of the press cameras.

ARTURO

We will unmask this traitor to the magic arts and make his life a living hell. Whoever he is, his career is over. He will never perform on stage again.

We FIND Jesse and Amanda in the crowd.

JESSE

And if these specials continue, neither will they.

AMANDA

Sounds like something to kill for.

JESSE

It's up to us to make sure he doesn't.

Arturo continues his press conference.

ARTURO

He will be forgotten, like a whisp

of smoke.

Arturo whips his cape in front of his face and there's a POOF OF SMOKE...he lowers his cape...and he's GONE, a BEAUTIFUL WOMAN in his place.

AMANDA

Oh no, he's done it again.

JESSE

We have to find him.

And as Jesse and Amanda plunge into the crowd to find him,

we

CUT TO:

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62.

52 INT. WAREHOUSE – NIGHT

52

a The show is well under way, LIVE. The Masked Magician is at
table, holding a HAT. He shows the hat is empty, turns it
over, taps it with his finger, turns it over again... and
pulls out a RABBIT. Steve and Kent look on. KENT McCORD
* narrates. *

KENT McCORD (V.O.) *

It's one of the oldest tricks in
magic -- and one of the easiest.
But the secret has never been
revealed -- until now.

* As Kent McCord explains how the trick is done, the Masked
Magician demonstrates.

KENT McCORD (V.O.) *

The hat is, indeed empty, but when
he tips it over, he slips in a
specially-designed black bag
hidden on a hook under the table.
Inside the bag is the docile
Rabbit.

The Masked Magician then moves to the center of the
warehouse,
which is dominated by a TALL WOODEN CRATE, which is
open to
the audience.

KENT McCORD (V.O.) *

Now the Masked Magician will

perform one of the deadliest tricks ever devised...and, if he manages to live, will show you how it's done.

Three BEAUTIFUL WOMEN dance out, wearing OVER-SIZED OVERALLS, CAPS, and SUNGLASSES. It's virtually impossible to tell them apart.

KENT McCORD (V.O.)
Once again, the dancing girls.
Notice how they are all dressed alike. This is important.

*

The Masked Magician is WRAPPED IN A STRAIT-JACKET by the assistants, and then led into the box. He gets inside. The assistants close the lid, then DRILL IT SHUT with POWER DRILLS. Then they close a CHAIN AROUND IT, which they attach to a CRANE HOOK from above. Then they put on PROTECTIVE HOODS and GLOVES and affix STICKS OF DYNAMITE to the box.

CONTINUED

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63.

52 CONTINUED:

52

KENT McCORD (V.O.)

*

The Masked Magician is tied into a strait jacket and put in the box, which is then sealed tight with screws and chains. Now it gets deadly. I can assure you these are real sticks of dynamite...the suits they are wearing are standard bomb-squad issue, for their own protection.

Kent Beaudine whispers to the CAMERA MAN.

*

KENT

No matter what happens, keep rolling.

The assistants LIGHT THE FUSES and DASH OFF. The CRANE starts

to lift the box when A BLOOD-CURDLING SCREAM comes from the

BOX! One of the assistants RUSHES OUT with a FIRE EXTINGUISHER

and DOUSES THE FUSE at the last possible second. Steve rushes

over to the CRANE OPERATOR.

STEVE

Lower the box! Now!

The ASSISTANT drops the fire extinguisher and unlocks the chains. Steve takes a CROWBAR and forces open the crate...and

an ASSISTANT emerges from it, still wearing her PROTECTIVE SUIT. She yanks off her hood... it's MELANIE COOPER, the PUBLICIST! She's terrified...and furious. Steve is stunned.

STEVE
How did you get in there?

Melanie glares at the other assistant, the one who came out with the fire extinguisher.

MELANIE
Ask him.

The assistant pulls off his protective hood...it's THE MASKED MAGICIAN!

MELANIE
He almost got me killed.

MASKED MAGICIAN
You can blame yourself.

CONTINUED

"Trash TV" 1/22/99 (GREEN)

64.

52 CONTINUED: (2)

52

The Masked Magician pulls off his mask...it's MARK SLOAN!

MARK

If you hadn't tried to murder me,
the way you did the real Masked
Magician, you wouldn't be in that
box right now.

As Steve helps Melanie out of the box, Jesse and Amanda
join
Kent behind the camera. Kent is transfixed.

KENT

Now this is television.

AMANDA

And no one had to get maimed.

KENT

There's still hope. The show's not
over yet.

Melanie confronts Mark.

MELANIE

How did you know it was me?

MARK

I didn't. But I knew whoever the
murderer was would strike during
the only trick that truly
endangered the magician's life.

(then:)

And the only way to sabotage this

trick was if the assistant who was supposed to secretly free the magician from the box...didn't.

MELANIE

You didn't have to drag me into the box instead.

MARK

I didn't want to cheat the audience... after all, they tuned in to see a trick.

CONTINUED

"Trash TV" 1/22/99 (GREEN)

65.

52 CONTINUED: (3)

52

MELANIE

At least you care about the audience, that's more than I can say about Kent Beaudine.

MARK

Is that why you killed -- for the audience?

MELANIE

For television. It's part of me, part of my family. My father didn't help create this medium so it could become a freak show...so that it could literally take the magic out of magic.

(then:)

I had to stop them before they destroyed television.

MARK

And you killed Derek Shaw because "Dr. Danger" was twisting reality and giving a distorted view of medicine.

Melanie gives him a confused look.

MELANIE

"Dr. Danger" was pure entertainment...something my father would have embraced. I loved that show.

rights Steve handcuffs her and leads her away, reading her her
as he goes. Kent McCord steps out and joins Mark.

*

KENT McCORD
So how did you get out of the box?
And how did you get her into it?

*

Mark turns to the camera and smiles.

MARK
Magic.

KENT McCORD
But surely there's a secret...one
that's waiting to be revealed.

*

CONTINUED

"Trash TV" 1/22/99 (GREEN)

66.

52 CONTINUED: (4)

52

MARK
Not by me.

Mark turns to the camera and bows.

MARK
Good-night, everyone.

He walks off stage. Kent Beaudine immediately stops him.

*

KENT
Good thinking, Mark. Keep'em
hanging. We can save that reveal
for the next special.

MARK
My career as a magician is over.

He hands the mask to Kent and, leaving him disappointed,
joins Jesse and Amanda.

JESSE
If Melanie Cooper didn't kill
Derek Shaw...who did?

MARK
I have no idea...and I'm afraid
whoever did may just be getting
started.

*

And on Mark's concern, we DISSOLVE TO:

53 INT. MBC NETWORK – PRESIDENT'S OFFICE – DAY

Jackson Burley faces DON DEBONO, president of the MBC network, across his massive, and empty, desk. DeBono isn't happy.

DEBONO

Last night on the Pox Network, Dr. Mark Sloan caught the Masked Magician's murderer live on national television. They're going to repeat the show tonight, and our research department thinks it will get a 45 share.

CONTINUED

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67.

53 CONTINUED:

53

BURLEY

It's a one-shot deal. It's not like they can turn that into a series.

DEBONO

They can't... but we can.

DeBono comes around his desk to face Burley.

DEBONO

They don't know it yet, but they are running a promo for your new series.

DeBono breaks into a big smile.

BURLEY

"Dr. Danger."

DEBONO

We've got the Mark Sloan TV series... all we need is a story and someone to star in it.

BURLEY

I've got a searing drama on tap by one of his sidekicks, Dr. Jesse Travis.

DEBONO

She's Hong Kong tough...but sexy.

BURLEY

So's the script. And I've found a
new star who embodies the essence
of Mark Sloan... and exudes so
much raw sexuality, he pollinates
flowers.

DEBONO

I want it on the air in two weeks.
Can you do it?

BURLEY

You know what they say, if the
rabbit won't run, take it out of
the microwave.

CONTINUED

"Trash TV" 1/22/99 (GREEN)

68.

53 CONTINUED: (2)

53

CUT And on Burley's crafty smile, and DeBono's confusion, we
TO:

54 54 INT. COMMUNITY GENERAL – ER – DAY

ER...our As PARAMEDICS rush in a PATIENT ON A GURNEY into the
HAND-HELD PERSPECTIVE rushes up to join them. The EMT
practically looks into CAMERA.

DOCTOR'S VOICE
Give me the headlines.

EMT #1
Gang shooting. Two bullets in the
chest. He crashed twice on the way
here. I don't think even you can
save him, Dr. Sloan.

DOCTOR'S VOICE
Think again. Out of the way.

towards The doctor pushes the EMT aside and wheels the gurney
he the trauma room himself, snapping orders at the nurses as
goes. And that's when we see that the doctor is JACKSON
BURLEY.

BURLEY
(to nurse:)

CBC! Chem-7! Type and cross! Ten
units whole blood! STAT!

That's when A GANG MEMBER bursts into the ER behind him
wielding a shotgun. Someone SCREAMS. Burley doesn't
hesitate... he reaches for his gun, whirls around and gets a
shot off before the Gang Member can react. The gang
member
goes DOWN. Burley holsters his gun and tells the nurse:

BURLEY
Check his blood-type. There's a
boy upstairs waiting for a
kidney...and if there's a God in
this world, we just found it.

That's when we hear an OFF-SCREEN VOICE yell:

DIRECTOR'S VOICE
Cut!

CONTINUED

"Trash TV" 1/22/99 (GREEN)

69.

54 CONTINUED:

54

A BELL RINGS and we PULL BACK to see the CREW, Jesse among them. Burley joins him.

BURLEY

So what was it like seeing your words come to life?

JESSE

Those weren't exactly my words. Come to think of it, it wasn't exactly the scene I wrote, either.

BURLEY

You don't need to thank me for the tweaks. The truth was there, I just had to find it for you.

JESSE

I didn't know you were an actor.

BURLEY

I didn't know either until today. Truth is, I always wanted to act.

That's when Jesse looks past Burley to the gang member on the floor.

JESSE

Shouldn't he get up? The scene is over.

BURLEY

He's a method actor. He's into the part.

JESSE
His performance is almost too good.

BURLEY
What can I say, I have an eye for casting.

Something isn't right. Jesse moves past Burley to the guy... crouches beside him, checks his pulse ...and IMMEDIATELY STARTS CPR. Jesse starts yelling out orders:

JESSE
Call 911! Hurry!

CONTINUED

"Trash TV" 1/22/99 (GREEN)

70.

54 CONTINUED: (2)

54

No one moves, except Burley, who whispers.

BURLEY

You're upstaging me, kid. Cut it out.

Jesse snaps at him:

JESSE

The bullets were real.

Jesse stops the CPR, realizing it's futile. He stands up slowly and faces Burley.

JESSE

You killed him.

And on Burley's realization, and Jesse's frustration, we SUPER: TO BE CONTINUED. And we

FADE OUT:

THE END

