

Public TV: Pilot-Day One

BY

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FLASH CUT IN:

EXT. DEEP IN THE WISCONSIN NORTH WOODS - AUTUMN 1992.

VIDEO CAMERA POV.

It is chaos. We hear screaming as the camera rushes to three people, a woman and two men, jammed against a tree fending off an attacking deer.

WOMAN PRODUCER

(To camera.)

For God's sake, do something!!!

The woman, a PRODUCER, screams and swings her clipboard at the deer.

The deer is rearing on it's hind legs and kicking at them. It bellows an unearthly howl as it does.

One of the men, a SOUND MAN, wears headphones and a remote audio mixer around his neck. He tries desperately to run, but is being frantically grabbed by the other man, an ON CAMERA HOST, who sports a thick beard and wears camouflage hunting gear. He is the one screaming like a kidnapped girl scout. The Host is trying in vain to scramble up the tree.

The camera jumps and shakes trying to capture the action. The Producer looks into the camera and screams.

The scene freezes and a graphic appears on screen:

"DAY 7."

CUT TO BLACK:

FADE UP:

EXT. MILWAUKEE CITY STREET - A WEEK EARLIER.

The camera points up at a tall, 70's industrial looking building; all glass and plain brick. A carved metal sign above the entrance reads: *WMGT Milwaukee Public Television.*

A graphic appears on screen.

"DAY 1."

The camera swings down to reveal CLAUDIA WYNN, the Producer from the opening scene. She is a bright, attractive woman in her late twenties. She carries a polka-dot tote bag. She looks up at the sign, smiles and enters through the front door.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE BUILDING.

Claudia steps off the elevator and into the outside lobby of the TV station. She confronts an enormous, ominous looking steel door full of bolts and rivets. It has grooves and scratches in it's surface. *Milwaukee Public TV* is stamped into the metal plate of the door. Next to the door is a glass security window, behind which sits a plump, middle-aged RECEPTIONIST. She is talking on the phone.

Claudia waves, but the receptionist is turned away from her.

Claudia sees a red button on the wall next to the steel door. A piece of paper is taped above the button. It reads: *Bell out of order. Please knock (VERY HARD)*.

Claudia knocks on the door. No response. She knocks again, harder. No response. She pounds on it with her fists. *Ouch!* Nothing. Finally, in desperation, she picks up a nearby metal waste basket and begins hammering it into the door. Very hard. The receptionist turns and sees her, smiles and buzzes her in. The buzzer sounds like something from a WWII Soviet factory. Claudia picks up her tote, smiles and pulls open the door. We realize from the door's scratches and grooves that she is not the first one to use the waste basket. As the door opens we see it is about eighteen inches of solid steel.

Claudia enters and approaches the Receptionist.

RECEPTIONIST
(smiling.)
Hello.

CLAUDIA
Hi, I'm Claudia Wynn. I have an appointment with Mr. Coomes.

RECEPTIONIST
Oh sure, just have a seat. He'll be right out.

CLAUDIA

Thanks.

Claudia sits on a padded bench in the reception area. She looks over and sees MICKEY ROONEY* sitting further down on the bench. He is very old. His suit is frayed at the elbow and collar. His tie is full of food stains. He looks a bit confused as he thumbs through a magazine. Claudia is surprised and moves down the bench toward him.

**Obviously Mr. Rooney has passed away, but since the show takes place in 1992, in our world he is still very much alive. Hence, he would be played by comedian/actor Dana Carvey wearing enhanced prosthetic makeup.*

CLAUDIA

Excuse me...

He looks up.

CLAUDIA

...but aren't you--

MICKEY ROONEY

Mickey Rooney, darlin'. But you can call me Mick. Or, you know, The Mick-ster.

She shakes his hand, joyfully.

CLAUDIA

Oh my gosh, what are you doing here?

MICKEY ROONEY

Well, I'm just making a special appearance for--

He pulls her closer.

MICKEY ROONEY

(whispering.)

You have to help me!

CLAUDIA

(confused.)

What?

MICKEY ROONEY

God, please help me! They won't let me leave!

CLAUDIA
Who--I don't understa--

MICKEY ROONEY
They make me stay out here! All
day! No food, no water! For months!
Please, you have to help me!
Please!!!

CLAUDIA
But I don't--

MICKEY ROONEY
Shhhhhhhh!!!

MAURICE COOMES enters from a nearby door. He is an enormous man; six foot five and pushing 400 pounds. He is very nattily dressed in a wool, 3-piece suit. He has a neatly groomed beard and slicked back hair. He floats over to Claudia and Mickey Rooney, smiling. He has a lilting, Southern accent.

MAURICE
Hello there, Ms. Wynn, how are you?

Claudia stands and shakes his hand, very confused.

CLAUDIA
Hello, Mr. Coomes.

MAURICE
Oh please, it's Maurice. We don't
stand on formalities here.
(seeing Mickey Rooney.)
Well, how are you doing, Mickey?

MICKEY ROONEY
(very frightened.)
Oh fine...fine, Mr. Coomes.

MAURICE
Everything all right out here? You
need anything? Water? Candy bar?

Mickey Rooney starts nervously leafing through his magazine.

MICKEY ROONEY
Oh no, I'm fine. Real good. Fine.

MAURICE
Well, that's good. Come on into my
office, Claire.

CLAUDIA
Claudia, actually...

MAURICE
See you later Mickey.

MICKEY ROONEY
(extremely frightened.)
Right...Good.

Mickey Rooney warily glances over to the receptionist. She gives him a stern look. He goes back to his magazine.

CUT TO:

INT. MAURICE'S OFFICE.

The office is plush and lined with rich, dark mahogany paneling. Maurice lowers himself behind an enormous oak desk. He motions Claudia to sit. She does in a chair opposite the desk.

MAURICE
Well, Ms. Wynn, I am pleased to congratulate you and welcome you as the newest producer for WMGT Public Television.

CLAUDIA
Oh gosh, that's...thank you, so much. Thank you.

MAURICE
Now I have to admit, we had some pretty highly qualified candidates for the position.

JUMP CUT:

In Claudia's chair we see a thin woman with owl-eyed glasses.

OWL EYE
Will I get workman's compensation for my hypoglycemia?

JUMP CUT:

In the chair is an older, stout man wearing Liederhosen and playing the accordion.

JUMP CUT:

In the chair is a nervous, twitchy man with crazed eyes and a T-shirt with the message "We are not alone."

TWITCHY MAN
Alien abduction...black ops
helicopters...repeated anal
probing.

JUMP CUT:

In the chair is a Hindu man wearing an ornate Sherwani jacket, a bright blue turban and a well groomed beard curling out at the ends.

HINDU MAN
I want to produce a twenty part
series on the Panchatantra!

JUMP CUT:

In the chair is Claudia.

CLAUDIA
Wow! That's terrific, really.

MAURICE
Now as per your job description,
I'd like for you to look at
yourself as a floater, Claire.

CLAUDIA
Claudia..."Floater?"

MAURICE
Yes, as you know we have some
popular, well respected shows on
our local schedule.

CLAUDIA
I know.

MAURICE
Wisconsin Outdoors.

CUT TO:

EXT. NORTHWOODS LAKE - MORNING.

DON LITTLE, the host of the show is standing in a rowboat aiming a shotgun. He fires. The recoil knocks him backwards and out of the boat.

CUT TO:

INT. MAURICE'S OFFICE.

MAURICE
Sewing With Shirley.

CUT TO:

INT. PRODUCTION STUDIO - DAY.

SHIRLEY, the host of the show, is running fabric through a sewing machine. She sews her hand.

SHIRLEY
(recoiling in pain.)
Ahhhh! Jesus God!

CUT TO:

INT. MAURICE'S OFFICE.

MAURICE
Afro Nouveau.

CUT TO:

INT. PRODUCTION STUDIO - DAY.

LYDIA COOPER, the host is a serious African American woman wearing a colorful traditional African Dashiki dress and Gele head piece. She sits in a chair on a set with a sign behind her reading: *Afro Nouveau*. A CREW MEMBER is trying to fasten a microphone on her.

LYDIA
Back the fuck off!!

CUT TO:

INT. MAURICE'S OFFICE.

MAURICE
Bob's Painting Corner.

CUT TO:

INT. PRODUCTION STUDIO - DAY.

BOB BEEMER, host of the show, stands at an easel supporting a landscape painting of a cabin in the snow. He holds a pallet and paint brush. He sports a huge, curly white man's afro and a goatee. He slaps the brush back and forth on the easel below the painting. He chuckles.

BOB BEEMER
Ha...I love doin' that.

CUT TO:

INT. MAURICE'S OFFICE.

MAURICE
And a host of others. To be frank,
Claire--

CLAUDIA
--Claudia.

MAURICE
--most of our shows are
understaffed. They're just spillin'
TV crumbs all over the floor. Right
and left. What we need you to do is
to catch those crumbs *before* they
hit the floor, plate them up and
put them all together into a nice
looking, rich slice of TV cake. Can
you do that for me?

CLAUDIA
Well, I don't really bake, but...

MAURICE
Fine, fine. And if there's is one
vital thing I want you to remember,
it's this.

He gesture her to lean forward. She does. He leans towards her.

MAURICE
(somberly.)
Beneath the shadow of my
sword...lies paradise.

There is a long pause as she processes her confusion, revulsion, fear and bewilderment. Finally...

CLAUDIA

Okay.

MAURICE

(leaning back.)

Great. Well I'll give a call down to Denny Vlasik, he's our Production Coordinator. He can give you the full tour, okey-dokey?

CLAUDIA

Great.

They both get up and Maurice shows her to the door.

MAURICE

And if you need anything, Claire, my door is always open.

CLAUDIA

It's Claudia...

The door shuts behind her.

CLAUDIA

...actually.

Claudia sees the empty bench by the reception desk. She turns to the receptionist.

CLAUDIA

Where's, uh...

RECEPTIONIST

Who?

CLAUDIA

Nothing.

RECEPTIONIST

Denny should be right down.

The receptionist takes a small can of air freshener from her desk drawer.

RECEPTIONIST

You might want this.

CLAUDIA

(taking it.)

Air freshener? What--

DENNY VLASIK enters. He is a stooped, dour man in his thirties with greasy black hair and thick glasses. His most prominent feature is that he is constantly drenched in sweat. His arm pits, his back, even the crotch of his pants; soaked through with perspiration. And with the sweat comes the odor.

DENNY

Hi, how are you?

Claudia is physically repulsed by the smell. She tries hard not to show her reaction, but retching is right around the corner.

CLAUDIA

(through tears.)

Hi! Denny, right?

She shakes his hand.

DENNY

Denny Vlasik, right. Ready for the grand tour?

CLAUDIA

Lead on.

She wipes the sweat from her hand on her skirt. He pulls something from his pocket.

DENNY

Oh, almost forgot. Had a name tag made for you.

CLAUDIA

(taking it, pleased.)

Oh...

She looks at it. It is a light blue name tag with the station logo. In it is carved the name *Claire Wynn*.

CLAUDIA

Huh.

DENNY

Well, onward and upward.

He leads her away, leaving the Receptionist who is gagging into a handkerchief at her desk. Through her security window we see a mailman pounding on the door with the waste basket.

CUT TO:

INT. TV STATION.

Denny leads Claudia down a cold, sterile white brick hallway. The ceiling tiles are in disarray and a wave of cords, cables, wires and ducts spills out from them, dangling precariously above the heads of anyone walking by. People pass them, most of them discreetly holding their noses or covering their faces as they pass Denny. In the hallway a man wearing welding goggles is bent over an open utility box built into the wall. Sparks and flames shoot out as he welds something within the bowels of the wall.

DENNY

Oh, there's Stan. Hey Stan!

The man stops welding and straightens up. He pulls his goggles on top of his head. It is STAN FRITZEL. He is a nebbish, slight fellow wearing a short sleeved shirt, wide clip-on tie, polyester slacks and a welding apron. He also sports horn-rimmed glasses and a bristly mustache.

STAN

(seeing them.)

Hello Denny.

DENNY

Stan Fritzel, this is Claire Wynn.
Our new producer.

CLAUDIA

It's Claudia, actually.

DENNY

Really?

She smiles weakly at Denny. He holds out his hand to her. She hands him the name tag. He sighs and puts it in his pocket.

DENNY

What's the rumpus, Stan?

STAN

Oh, we've had a few glitches in the network. Just trying to trace it down. Thought I'd shore up some of these relay harnesses while I had it open.

DENNY

(looking at the ceiling.)

You gonna get this back to normal any day soon?

STAN
Oh, sure...Probably.

DENNY
Stan's the head of the Tech Department. Anything that has to do with the hardware, cameras, editors, it's Stan's baby.

STAN
That's right. I'm the man.

DENNY
You are the man.

CLAUDIA
(playing along.)
Stan the Man.

STAN
(surprised and pleased.)
Oh...Stan the Man. Yeah. Stan the Man...Stan THE Man...I am Stan and I am the Man.

CLAUDIA
Uh-huh.

Stan starts mumbling, turrets-like.

STAN
Stan, Stan, Stan...Man, man, man...Stan man...Man Stan...Man man, Stan Stan..Manny, manny...Stanny Stanny--

DENNY
You want to tighten it up there, Stan?

STAN
(recovering.)
Okay, sure thing.

DENNY
We'll head over to Master Control.

Denny leads Claudia through another door marked Master Control.

CUT TO:

INT. MASTER CONTROL.

Denny and Claudia walk down a hallway past tall glass walls, behind which is a massive array of monitors, reel-to-reel video tape decks, and other broadcast hardware.

DENNY

So this is Master Control. It's the heart and soul of the station. This is where the magic happens.

CLAUDIA

Cool.

Denny opens a glass door and leads her in. The room is filled with four Technicians. All men. All middle aged. All with some sort of facial hair and beer bellies. They all lean back in office chairs. They all are, in one way or another, eating a doughnut. One reads a magazine. One of them is knitting a sweater, a doughnut clenched in his teeth.

DENNY

Hey guys.

They all mutter some sort of lazy "Hello."

DENNY

Everything running like clockwork?

They all mutter some sort of "Yes."

DENNY

Later, guys.

Denny leads Claudia out.

CLAUDIA

Nice to meet you.

CUT TO:

INT. TV STUDIO.

Denny leads Claudia through an empty studio. It is vast, with an array of lights hanging from the ceiling grid. Studio cameras on large pedestals rest in the corner.

DENNY

So this is Studio A. Studio B is over on the other side. Just like this one, except reverse.

A group of people are assembling a set in the center of the studio. Denny and Claudia approach them.

Leading the group is JIMMY HANKEY, set designer. He is artistically theatric and outgoing. He wears a paisley knit shirt with a bit of a pooch, tight jeans, cowboy boots and many wrist-lets.

JIMMY

No, no, no, people. The magenta cones stack on top of the spattered cubes. It's a-symmetric. Duh.

DENNY

What's the skinny, Jimmy?

JIMMY

Oh, just trying to get this set together for the Community Report Show. They want it by five. I can only spatter so much paint, right?

DENNY

Jimmy Hankey, this is Claudia, our new producer.

CLAUDIA

(shaking his hand.)

Hi.

JIMMY

(taking her hand.)

Enchanté. Oh my God, girl, I love what you are wearing.

CLAUDIA

Really?

JIMMY

I mean the tights with the multi-skirt and those little cloggy shoes. Killer! Spin around, Come on, spin.

She does, happily.

JIMMY

That is so hot, so cool, so totally lukewarm. And that polka-dot bag. Are you kidding me? You're like a hip little Jap-o Pokemon schoolgirl. It's fabulous!

CLAUDIA
Thank you!

DENNY
Well, we move on. Bye, Jimmy.

JIMMY
Ciao.

CLAUDIA
Nice meeting you.

Denny and Claudia head to a studio exit door.

CLAUDIA
(smiling.)
He seems like a fun handful.

DENNY
(nodding.)
You have no idea.

He heads out the door. She follows, confused.

CUT TO:

INT. STORAGE ROOM.

Denny opens the door and turns on a light switch. A large storage room filled with shelves lines with props and set pieces of every size and shape. The room seems to go on into infinity.

DENNY
This is the prop shop. You need any kind of prop or set piece, it's probably in here somewhere. Jimmy has it all cataloged.

Denny leaves. Claudia starts to go, but sees some movement on a lower shelf. She looks closer and sees Mickey Rooney wearing plush, onesie pajamas. He climbs into a sleeping bag in a makeshift bed on a bottom shelf. He holds a Teddy Bear. He sees her, smiles and waves. She waves back. He mouths, "*Get the light.*" She turns off the light and shuts the door.

CUT TO:

INT. PRODUCTION OFFICES.

Denny leads Claudia into the Production Office. It is a monument to cubicles and fluorescent light fixtures. People in the office subtly cover their noses and spray freshener into the air. Denny leads her to another door and opens it.

DENNY

This is your office through here.

He turns on the lights. It is a cramped room with stacks of boxes filled with papers and video tapes.

DENNY

(slightly embarrassed.)

Uh, we were using this for storage.
It was supposed to be cleared out.

He starts moving some boxes off of a desk in the corner.

CLAUDIA

(helping him.)

Oh don't worry about it.

DENNY

Really?

CLAUDIA

Sure. Really, no problem.

He moves a box to reveal a large tube monitor on the desk.

DENNY

We've got the computer set up for
you, it's right under there.

He takes a keyboard and mouse out of a box and sets them on the desk.

DENNY

You're gonna need these.

CLAUDIA

Okay. I'll just get this set up and
get things squared away and I'll be
good to go. Thanks.

DENNY

You sure?

CLAUDIA

Yep. No problem.

Denny leaves. She starts to hook up the keyboard. He steps back in. Looking at the floor, seriously.

DENNY

I sweat.

CLAUDIA

What?

DENNY

I sweat. I know I sweat. I sweat a lot.

CLAUDIA

No...no.

DENNY

Yes. I've sweated for a very long time. Since puberty. I sweat. I'm of Latvian heritage and I sweat...I just wanted to be up front about that.

CLAUDIA

Well...okay.

DENNY

Okay. And I make a good living, too. A fine living.

CLAUDIA

Really?

DENNY

I live with my mother because I want to.

CLAUDIA

(after a pause.)

Super.

He exits. She looks down at the old tower computer under her desk. She wipes the thick layer of dust from it's face. It reads: *Svetlenska 220*.

CLAUDIA

Oh, lovely.

She turns on the computer. It whirs and chugs. Finally the old monitor lights up. The splash screen shows illuminated green characters, all in Russian.

CLAUDIA
Oh, how very lovely.

FADE OUT:

FADE UP:

INT. TV STATION - NEXT DAY

The camera tracks down the hall of the station. It stops as a herd of pot bellied technicians gather like a hungry herd of wildebeests around a table full of doughnuts and coffee. It moves past a man sitting in the hallway playing a banjo. He wears coveralls and a straw hat. He looks up, smiles and winks at the camera.

The camera moves down the hall to a doorway. Inside is a bearded man with thinning hair and a protruding brow making copies at a copy machine. Stacks and stacks of copies are spewing from the machine. The man turns and looks menacingly at the camera.

The camera moves away toward the production offices. It moves around the cubicles till it gets to the doorway of Claudia's office.

Claudia sits glumly at her desk with stacks of boxes surrounding her in the room. A single flowering plant sits on her desk. The fluorescent light on the ceiling flickers.

A graphic appears on screen.

"DAY 2"

Claudia tries to tap out something on the computer. The screen crashes to blue.

CLAUDIA
Ahh!

Lydia Cooper, the host of *Afro Nouveau* enters Claudia's office. She is wearing regular street clothes and is sucking on a Tootsie Pop. She is still very serious and stern.

LYDIA
You the new girl?

Claudia stands and holds out her hand.

CLAUDIA
Yeah, my name's--

Lydia plops a huge, 3/4 inch video cassette on her desk, cutting her off.

LYDIA
--Shot a segemnt at the Curl Up & Dye Beauty Salon yesterday. Need you to log it.

Lydia stats heading out. Claudia stares blankly at the tape.

CLAUDIA
You want this...logged?

LYDIA
Did I stutter?

Lydia exits.

CUT TO:

INT. TV STATION STAIRWAY

Claudia makes her way up a long, steep stairway, tape in hand. Coming down the stairs, in one of those motorized stair chairs for handicapped people is one of the technicians. His belly hangs between his knees as he slowly rides the chair downwards. He is eating a chicken leg. Claudia meets him at the halfway point and squeezes by him.

CLAUDIA
Hello...hello.

The technician grunts a "hello" and glides past her. She finally gets to the top of the stairs.

CUT TO:

INT. EDIT SUITE.

Claudia steps up to a door that says *Offline Edit*. She knocks on it lightly as she slowly opens it.

CLAUDIA
Hello?

The room is dark but for the glow of random TV screens. Illuminated by one at an edit bay is TOM BIRCH, a young, tall slightly handsome fellow about Claudia's age. He turns and sees her.

TOM
Hi. Come on in.

CLAUDIA
(approaching him.)
Hi. I take it this is where I log
tape?

TOM
Yep.

CLAUDIA
(looking at the tape.)
Can you believe this? I mean, this
should be in a museum.

TOM
I hear you.

CLAUDIA
I mean, let's get with the times,
right?

TOM
Well, they say digital is right
around the corner. Then those will
be obsolete. I'm Tom, by the way.
Tom Birch.

CLAUDIA
Claudia Wynn.

He goes back to work.

CLAUDIA
So, what do you do around here,
Tom?

Tom types into his edit console.

TOM
I'm the normal, funny, handsome
character you're supposed to be
attracted to.

CLAUDIA
(confused.)
What?

He turns to her, innocently.

TOM
 Freelance production. I basically do all the things the inept staff producers can't or won't do to complete their programs. Only I do it for half the pay and no benefits.

CLAUDIA
 Ah, a win-win.

TOM
 (chuckling.)
 Well, not for long.

CLAUDIA
 What are you working on?

TOM
 You know Ted Olbauer?

CLAUDIA
The Wishin' Fisherman? My Dad loves that show.

TOM
 This is sort of a behind the scenes documentary.

He rewinds the tape a bit, then hits the play button. On screen we see a stocky, middle aged man in a fishing supply store. TED OLBAUER. The walls are filled with fishing poles and lures. Ted has a long porn mustache and wears waders and a t-shirt that says "*I Could Hold My Rod All Day.*" He wanders down the aisle of the store and speaks to the camera.

TED OLBAUER
 Now is the time, in the Spring of the year, to re-stock your tackle box. Now the first lure I like to pick up is a--

He stops and bends over slightly, holding his belly.

TED OLBAUER
 Oh geeze, I shouldn't have had that extra knockwurst.

Ted wrenches up his face and squeezes out a loud, trumpeting fart. The screen jump cuts to Ted by a boat dock farting long and loud again. Another jump cut, another continuation of the fart aria. This goes on for many seconds as each fart

blends in with the next, creating a single, lilting, ever changing symphony.

Claudia is laughing uncontrollably. She is clenching her face and holding her hand over her mouth, to no avail. Each fart cut just adds to her hysteria. Tears stream from her eyes as the infinity-fart goes ever onward.

CUT TO

INT. TV STATION.

We see folks going about their day. They look up when they hear the faraway fart opera.

People stocking tape shelves.

CUT TO:

Stan Fritzel soldering a circuit board in a monitor.

CUT TO:

The quartet of doughnut eating technicians in Master Control.

CUT TO:

Jimmy Hankey and crew assembling a set in the Studio.

CUT TO:

INT. EDIT SUIT.

The fart still continues and Claudia is gasping for air, holding her sides from the laughter cramps. After what seems an eternity the fart noise starts to taper off, ending in a high pitched question mark of expelled gas. There is a pause. Tom holds up his hand.

TOM

Wait for it.

The fart continues again at full strength. Claudia can't take it. She flops off the chair and on to the floor. Tom stops the video and smiles triumphantly.

TOM

And that's just part one.

Claudia climbs back into her chair, recovering.

CLAUDIA

It's nice to see your freelance hours put to good use.

TOM

Well, like I said, not for long. They're filling a Staff Producer position this week, and I am the prime candidate.

CLAUDIA

(after a pause.)

Uhm, not to burst your bubble, but...I think I'm the new Staff Producer.

TOM

(smiling, confused.)

What?

CLAUDIA

I was just hired yesterday.

TOM

No...no, you're the new *freelancer*.

CLAUDIA

Nope. Mr. Coomes made it official. Got my own office, desk...Slovenian computer.

There is a long moment where Tom just stares at her, digesting this. Then...

TOM

God...DAMN IT!!!

He screams in her face. She recoils. Tom picks up a small monitor and throws it to the floor, stamping on it and screaming.

TOM

AHHHHHHHHHH!!!

He charges out of the edit suite, leaving Claudia in a confused stupor.

FADE OUT:

FADE UP:

INT. TV STATION MEETING ROOM - TWO DAYS LATER

We are close up on the end of some kind of plastic horn. The sound of loud trumpeting emits from it.

A graphic on screen appears.

"DAY 4"

We pull back to reveal DON LITTLE, the host of *Wisconsin Outdoors* blowing into some kind of home made trumpeting device made from PVC pipe and various valves. Don sports a thick lumberjack beard, jeans, suspenders and a cammo sweater. He stops trumpeting. Sitting at a table in the room are Claudia, Denny and Maurice.

DON LITTLE

That is, of course, the Spring mating call of the Northern White Tailed Deer. People have tried to replicate it over the years, with very little success. But I met this fellow on a hunting trip last Fall who made one of these in his garage workshop. The sound is perfect.

CLAUDIA

So...what's it supposed to do, exactly?

DON LITTLE

It's like Viagra for the male deer. The bucks are in rut right now, and when they get an ear full of that trumpeting noise, it's like a sweet, voluptuous young doe saying "Come on, baby. I'm here, I'm ready and I want you."

CLAUDIA

That's...sweet.

MAURICE

(sincerely.)
Fascinating.

DON LITTLE

If we can get a crew up to Chewamegon this week, he can take us out to the woods and call in

(MORE)

DON LITTLE
 some rutting bucks. It'd be great
 to get on tape.

DENNY
 Sounds like a segment to me.

MAURICE
 I agree. Claire, I want you to be
 lead producer on this.

CLAUDIA
 Really?

MAURICE
 You have to start somewhere.

Denny slides a stack of papers in front of Claudia.

DENNY
 These are our basic segment rundown
 forms. You put in the show name,
 host, location...

As Denny explains, a steady drip, drip, drip of sweat fall
 from his nose and on to her papers. She swipes them away
 periodically as he continues.

DENNY
 ...number of crew needed and any
 contact names.

DON LITTLE
 The fellow's name is Gary Sakoziak.
 He has a place just outside of
 Winneconne near Chetek.

They all get up to leave the meeting room.

CLAUDIA
 Thanks for the opportunity,
 Maurice.

MAURICE
 Of course. And just remember, my
 dear... "The shadow of my sword."

CLAUDIA
 (smiling feebly.)
 Right-o.

They head out of the meeting room. We follow Claudia down the hallway. She passes an open door and sees Tom in an equipment room, cleaning video camera lenses on a workbench. She enters, shyly.

CLAUDIA

Hey.

TOM

(without looking up.)

Hey.

CLAUDIA

I just got my first segment to produce.

TOM

Oh, yeah?

CLAUDIA

Yeah. For the Outdoor show. Heading up to the north woods.

TOM

Great.

He keeps working.

CLAUDIA

Look, I'm really sorry about the other day. I didn't know--

TOM

Two years...two years I've been here. Every day. Doing every little, menial shit job I've been asked. I edit, I shoot, I make copies, I fetch lunch, I clean these fucking cameras... making next to nothing. And all for a chance. For an opportunity, however small, to *maybe* get a staff position.

CLAUDIA

Tom...

TOM

And then I see a crack. A small door opens. Finally, after two years. And who gets to walk through that door? You.

CLAUDIA
I'm sorry.

TOM
I shouldn't complain. I did get a raise out of the deal.

CLAUDIA
Oh, there, you see?

TOM
Seventy-five cents an hour. Now I can start planning that trip to Vienna. You know why I didn't get the job? I didn't fit the profile. Because I'm young and white and have all my arms and legs and I have a DICK...You get the job.

CLAUDIA
(angrily.)
Wait a minute--

TOM
--Fresh out of community college--

CLAUDIA
--Milwaukee Tech!

TOM
Pardon *me*!

CLAUDIA
Look, I'm a very qualified person! I finished in the top percentile of my class!

TOM
At Milwaukee Tech.

CLAUDIA
And many, *many* qualified people interviewed for this job!

CUT TO:

INT. MAURICE'S OFFICE.

The accordion player sits in Maurice's office, smiling and playing. The Owl-Eyed Woman, the Twitchy Man and the Hindu Guy dance the polka around him.

CUT TO:

INT. TV STATION EQUIPMENT ROOM.

CLAUDIA

So you're not the only one with skills around here, Mr. Whiz Kid!

TOM

(trying to stay calm.)

You know, you're probably a very nice person--No, you are. You are very nice. And you're attractive and you're funny and you seem really smart. And who knows? In another world we might have hit it off, dated, gotten serious, committed, started a production company together and lived out the rest of our lives as a happy, childless by choice couple with a condo in the city and a farm out in the country.

As Tom is saying this, Mickey Rooney comes out of a cabinet, sneaks over to the workbench and takes a camera battery.

TOM

(without looking at him.)

Mickey, put that back!

Mickey Rooney puts the battery back and slinks out of the room, embarrassed.

TOM

But that's not this world. And you need to know, as long as you sit in that chair behind that desk in that office in this building...you are my mortal enemy.

There is a pause as he gets back to cleaning the lenses.

CLAUDIA

Fine.

TOM

Good.

CLAUDIA

Good.

TOM

Fine.

She leaves. He stops working, feeling conflicted and upset.

FADE OUT:

FADE UP:

EXT. DEEP IN THE WISCONSIN NORTH WOODS - DAY.

Through a video camera we see a deer far away in the forest. Leaves and branches frame the shot. The deer stands majestic, his antlers gleaming in the dappled sunlight. We hear whispers off camera.

CLAUDIA
Is that him?

DON LITTLE
Yep.

CLAUDIA
Oh, he's beautiful!

DON LITTLE
Give him a blast, Gary.

We hear the PVC trumpet sound. The deer turns and trots toward the camera, snorting.

CLAUDIA
Here he comes. Wow, he's really moving...Should he be going that fast?

DON LITTLE
Stop, Gary.

Gary keeps trumpeting.

DON LITTLE
Gary, stop.

CLAUDIA
Uh, guys?...Guys?!

DON LITTLE
Gary...Gary for God's sake!

The deer is almost upon them, braying and snorting.

CLAUDIA
Oh my God, oh my God, oh my God!

The deer crashes into the camera. We hear screaming, shouting, braying and the sound of a PVC trumpet being trampled on.

CUT TO BLACK:

FADE UP:

INT. TV STATION.

Tom makes his way down the hallway. He has his jacket on and a knapsack bag over his shoulder. He passes a group of Polish folk dancers rehearsing outside of the studio.

He rounds a corner and passes Stan Fritzel pulling a huge wad of cable from behind the ceiling tiles.

He walks past a technician eating the crumbs off of a now empty doughnut and coffee table.

He makes his way to the reception area. He waves to the receptionist.

TOM
Goodnight.

RECEPTIONIST
'Night, Tom.

TOM
(calling off camera.)
See you tomorrow, Mick.

Mickey Rooney is sitting on the reception area bench eating a candy bar. His face full of chocolate.

MICKEY ROONEY
Bye Tommy!

Tom grabs the doorknob of the security door.

CUT TO:

On the opposite side of the door stand Claudia, Don Little, the Sound Man and the Camera Man. They all look worse for wear. Their faces are filthy, their clothes are torn and Claudia's hair is sticking out everywhere in a ratted, leaf-filled mess. The Sound Man is slamming the waste basket into the door. The door opens and Tom steps through. Tom heads for the elevator.

TOM
'Night, everyone.

They all mutter an exhausted response. The elevator door opens and Tom gets on. He turns and calls to Claudia.

TOM
So, how'd your first shoot go?

Claudia stands by the open security door. She turns to him.

CLAUDIA
Blow me.

TOM
(smiling.)
Will-do. See you tomorrow.

The elevator doors close. Claudia weakly shuffles through the doorway. The security door closes behind her.

We close on a shot of the *Milwaukee Public TV* logo on the door.

FADE OUT: