

Escalator!

by

Tricia Ariane Morgan

REGISTERED WGAw No. 1001884
Tricia Ariane Morgan
1830 N. Lincoln Street
Burbank, California 91506
818.563.2346
Tricia@TriciaMorgan.com

FADE IN:

INT. SANTA CALIFORNIA GALLERIA MALL - NIGHT

It's the Christmas season, and the mall is decorated with angels, reindeer and twinkling trees. SHOPPERS are everywhere, carrying bags touting the names of popular shops. CHILDREN are filled with wonder, begging to see Santa and his reindeer.

Seeing TWO BOYS running, a short, wiry, white-haired Security Guard, HENRY HARRIS, admonishes them.

HENRY HARRIS

No running, boys. I have a walkie-talkie and I'm not afraid to use it.

ELLEN WILSON is pushing her infant daughter, SARAH MICHELLE WILSON, in a stroller loaded with packages. Holding onto the stroller is her four-year-old son, TOMMY WILSON. Tommy discards a large, empty lemonade cup in a trash can, then hits the trash can repeatedly with a small, plastic toy hammer.

TOMMY WILSON

I wanna go see Santa.

ELLEN WILSON

Soon, Tommy. I have one more place to go on the upper level.

CHRISTY HUNTINGTON and JENNIFER WHITMER, two pretty 16-year-old girls in blue and gold cheerleading uniforms walk out of a jewelry store. They're carrying matching pom-poms.

CHRISTY HUNTINGTON

These earrings are so gorgeous.

JENNIFER WHITMER

If we hurry, we can buy those bracelets on the upper level before the game.

The girls walk briskly toward the escalator. RUTH BRANNIGAN and PHYLLIS GROSS, two women in their early 60s, are behind them.

RUTH BRANNIGAN

Ellen is on the network in the daytime and then there's a repeat on the Oxygen channel at night. I watch them both.

PHYLLIS GROSS

Ruth, dear, you've got to get a
life.

A priest, FATHER IRVING O'FLANAGAN, tips his hat to a group of NUNS as he makes his way toward the escalator. Behind him is JAMES VAN EDWARD, a psychic medium with a well-known television program. He sees a kiosk with a promotion for his show with a large picture of him and the words: "I talk to dead people. Psychic James Van Edward is 'On the Other Side.' Weekdays at noon on RGB-TV." He turns away from the kiosk and starts muttering to himself.

JAMES VAN EDWARD

I know you didn't want me to come
here, Mother, but I have a few more
gifts to buy. Everything will be
fine.

THREE WOMEN clutch their handbags to their chests as a handsome young man in his 20s, WALDEN ROHRER, walks by on his way to the escalator.

ERMINE SACHET PETTIFORBES GETTY, a wealthy, well-dressed woman in her 50s wearing a long scarf, floats regally out of Bed, Bath, Infinity and Beyond, followed by her chauffeur, PETER SUFFERFLESH, also in his 50s, who carries her purchases. For no reason, she turns around and slaps Peter, who smiles gratefully at her.

JACKIE TOYOTA, a very pregnant Japanese-American woman in her late 20s, waddles out of a Baby Cravasse store. As she walks slowly toward the escalator, MAURICE MOLINA, an Hispanic man dressed as Santa Claus and WILLIE ESCARGOT, a little person in an elf costume, emerge from the men's room and walk behind her. Maurice is wiping a wet spot on the front of his pants with paper towels.

MAURICE MOLINA

I hate it when the little buggers
pee on my lap.

WILLIE ESCARGOT

That wasn't in the job description,
was it?

TEN CENTS, a 30ish black man in a sweatsuit and copious gold jewelry, walks out of an Edges Bookstore. BRADLEY SALISBERRY, a fireman in his 20s, falls in behind Ten Cents as they wind through the crowd toward the escalator.

At the bottom of the escalator, DONATELLO ESPERANTO, a rotund Italian tenor, is signing autographs on CDs for TWO OLDER WOMEN.

DONATELLO ESPERANTO
(in an Italian accent)
My voice, she is so beautiful on my
new CD, I almost cried tears.

Donatello gets on the escalator behind Ten Cents and is followed by IVANA BELOVED BAYOU, a beautiful, six-foot-tall drag queen with a hint of a five o'clock shadow. Ivana touches her chin, grimaces and looks at her watch.

Behind Ivana, VICTOR COUSINEAU, a man in his late 50s wearing a cowboy hat, and his long-suffering wife, GENEVIEVE COUSINEAU, get on the escalator. She opens a bottle of aspirin and takes two with a sip of Naive bottled water.

As Victor and Genevieve step onto the crowded escalator to the upper level, it suddenly comes to an abrupt stop. Everyone is surprised and shocked.

ELLEN WILSON
Oh my! Help!

With an impressive, ominous swell of MUSIC, the TITLE fills the screen: ESCALATOR!

Henry Harris rushes to the bottom of the escalator and yells up to the victims.

HENRY HARRIS
Is everyone all right?

There is a cacophony of voices from the escalator. The shoppers on the "down" escalator glide down to the lower level, seemingly unaware of the stalled "up" escalator.

PHYLLIS GROSS
We aren't moving!

WALDEN ROHRER
We're trapped! Trapped like rats!

For a moment, everyone stands still, then Walden Rohrer attempts to move up a step. But the escalator lurches forward, then stops. Everyone grabs for the handrail to steady themselves.

PHYLLIS GROSS
Don't move or we'll fall!

RUTH BRANNIGAN
I saw a show once where the
escalator stairs just went flat and
everyone slid to their deaths.

ELLEN WILSON
Oh, my!

Henry grabs his radio.

HENRY HARRIS
Code three! We've got a stalled
escalator at the west end of the
mall.

DRUCILLA WHEAT (ON RADIO)
Is anyone trapped?

HENRY HARRIS
Yes, there's eighteen, nineteen,
no, twenty-one people trapped!

DRUCILLA WHEAT
We'll try to locate maintenance,
Henry. Stand by.

EXT. SANTA CALIFORNIA GALLERIA MALL PARKING LOT

Two RGB-TV news vans collide in the parking lot in front of the mall. Reporters CAMERON JAMES, a handsome, self-important man with minimal intelligence, and SAMANTHA SCARBOROUGH, a beautiful woman with a tenuous grasp of English vocabulary, emerge from the vans, microphones in hand, and begin interviewing each other. TWO CAMERA OPERATORS and TWO AUDIO MEN with boom mikes also leap out to cover this breaking news.

CAMERON JAMES
(to his camera)
I'm Cameron James in the parking
lot of Santa California Galleria
Mall where Samantha Scarborough's
news van has collided with my news
van.
(to Samantha)
How are you feeling?

SAMANTHA SCARBOROUGH

(to her camera)

I'm Samantha Scarborough at the Santa California Galleria Mall, where a news van occupied by RGB-TV reporter Cameron James has collided with the news van in which I was riding.

(to Cameron)

I was a little jostled, but I retain an assembly of good health. Tell me, Cameron, how do you feel after this near-fatal collision?

CAMERON JAMES

I have a tiny scrape on my hand, but otherwise I'm fine.

(to camera)

An investigation is sure to follow. This is Cameron James, RGB-TV Newschannel 8.

SAMANTHA SCARBOROUGH

(to camera)

Though it appears everyone suffered little or no damage, there is always the spectacle of internal injuries. This is Samantha Scarborough, RGB-TV Newschannel 8. Back to you in the studio.

The reporters race to the mall entrance, followed by their crew.

INT. BLANK FAMILY LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Parents ADELE and EDDIE BLANK are gathered around their television set with their two children, DENNIS and JESSICA, engrossed in an intense scene in a movie.

EXT. DARK ALLEY

On the television, SAM COLUMBUS, a detective in a trenchcoat, is holding a gun directed at a sleazy man, JOE CRIMINALI. Fog shrouds the scene.

SAM COLUMBUS

Joe Criminali? It's me, Sam Columbus. I know you killed Louie and the Greenblatt sisters. What I don't know is why.

Joe suddenly lunges for Sam and a violent struggle ensues. The gun is wrenched from Sam's hand and lands several feet away.

JOE CRIMINALI

You want to know why? I'll tell you why! But you'll die before you hear it!

Joe is within reach of the gun and grabs for it, but Sam dives for it, desperate to defend himself.

INT. BLANK FAMILY LIVING ROOM

The Blank family is completely caught up in the television program, holding on to every word, every movement.

Suddenly, a GRAPHIC reading "BREAKING NEWS" interrupts the program. An urgent NEWS THEME fills the room.

The family is aghast. Adele slugs a throw pillow. Dennis pounds on the floor. Eddie throws the remote on the floor and jumps on it. How could there be breaking news at this critical juncture in their movie?

INT. RGB-TV NEWS STUDIO

News Anchor AMY DAIWOO, a perky young Asian woman, is seated at the anchor desk. Behind her, a GRAPHIC reads: "Unfolded Disaster."

There is a continuous CRAWL at the bottom of the screen: "Sun rises in East. Westerners still in dark," "Supreme Court rules punishment violates criminals' rights; tells victims to 'stop whining,'" etc.

SUPER: Amy Daiwoo, Anchor Woman

AMY DAIWOO

I'm Amy Daiwoo with an RGB-TV Newschannel 8 Update. A disaster is unfolding at Santa California Galleria Mall. Our Cameron James is on the scene. Cameron, what's the story?

INT. SANTA CALIFORNIA GALLERIA MALL

At the bottom of the escalator, Henry Harris stands by Cameron James, who speaks in an urgent, authoritative voice.

CAMERON JAMES
Amy, I'm here with Henry Harris,
the commanding officer in charge at
this disaster scene.

HENRY HARRIS
I'm not an officer. I'm Security
Guard Level One.

CAMERON JAMES
Sergeant Harris, can you tell us
what happened?

HENRY HARRIS
Well, the escalator stalled.

CAMERON JAMES
How many people are trapped?

HENRY HARRIS
I counted twenty-one, including
women and two children.

CAMERON JAMES
(to the camera)
Women and children!
(to Henry)
Tell me, Major Harris, how many
days do you think it will take to
organize a rescue attempt?

HENRY HARRIS
Well, I called Drucilla Wheat at
Security Central and she's trying
to contact maintenance.

The RADIO CRACKLES to life.

DRUCILLA WHEAT (ON RADIO)
Henry, you there?

HENRY HARRIS
Yes, Drucilla.

DRUCILLA WHEAT (ON RADIO)
I have bad news. Maintenance has
gone home for the day. We'll leave
a message on his answering machine,
but it may take a while. I think
it's Al's bowling night.

HENRY HARRIS
Ten-four.

Henry clips his walkie-talkie back on his belt.

CAMERON JAMES
You've heard from a higher ranking
officer. What can you tell us?

HENRY HARRIS
Well, maintenance has gone home.
It's his bowling night, so it may
take a while.

CAMERON JAMES
How long have the victims been
trapped, Admiral?

HENRY HARRIS
Oh, it was during the opening
credits.

CAMERON JAMES
(to camera)
It could be days, even weeks,
before the twenty-one innocent
victims trapped on this escalator
are rescued. This is Cameron James,
reporting live for RGB-TV
Newschannel 8. Back to you in the
studio.

Henry gets an intense look on his face and races off. As he
runs, he speaks into his radio.

HENRY HARRIS
Drucilla, I'm going to the utility
room to devise a plan to help those
people. I'll need an assistant and
a replacement on the floor.

DRUCILLA WHEAT (ON RADIO)
Ten-four. I'll send Michelangelo to
assist you. Good luck.

INT. RGB-TV NEWS STUDIO

Amy Daiwoo has been joined at the anchor desk by STEVE SCOTT,
an impossibly handsome anchorman. The GRAPHIC behind them
reads: "Escalator to Nowhere."

The CRAWL continues, "Rare photo of Jesus with crew cut
found, say archaeologists," "Dutch numerologist Eddie Van Der
Hoeven loses count; has to start over," etc.

SUPER: Steve Scott, Overpaid Anchorman

STEVE SCOTT

We continue our team coverage of the escalator breakdown at Santa California Galleria Mall with Samantha Scarborough on the upper level. Samantha?

INT. SANTA CALIFORNIA GALLERIA MALL

Samantha Scarborough is checking her hair and make-up in a mirror. On the top step of the escalator, Ellen Wilson looks worried. Tommy is whacking the stroller with his plastic hammer. Suddenly, Samantha turns dramatically toward the camera.

On the "down" escalator in the b.g., interspersed with regular shoppers, are several SURGEONS in scrubs, and a group of HASIDIC JEWS.

SAMANTHA SCARBOROUGH

(to camera)

Steve, I'm on the upper level of Santa California Galleria Mall where we find a mother and her two preliminary children among the victims.

(to Ellen Wilson)

Tell me, ma'am, who are you?

ELLEN WILSON

I'm Ellen Wilson and this is my son, Tommy, and our baby, Sarah Michelle. We were Buffy fans...

SAMANTHA SCARBOROUGH

How did this occur to you?

ELLEN WILSON

Well, we got on the escalator and it stopped.

SAMANTHA SCARBOROUGH

How will you and your children survive this ordeal?

ELLEN WILSON

Survive? Is it that bad?

SAMANTHA SCARBOROUGH
I wouldn't be here if this wasn't
life threatening. I see all types
of horrible things, Mrs. Wilson.
Decapitations, bugs crawling on
dead bodies --

Ellen covers Tommy's ears to shield him.

ELLEN WILSON
Oh, my! Oh, my!
(to camera)
Honey, if you're home, come to the
mall! We may not survive!

SAMANTHA SCARBOROUGH
A mother and her children come to
grips with the prospector of
hideous deaths at Santa California
Galleria Mall. This is Samantha
Scarborough. Back to you.

INT. SANTA CALIFORNIA GALLERIA MALL UTILITY ROOM

Henry Harris and his assistant, MICHELANGELO JONES, a young,
goofy-looking black man in a security guard's uniform, are
rummaging through the boxes, cleaning supplies and other
items in the utility room. Henry pauses and clasps the young
man on the shoulders.

HENRY HARRIS
Michelangelo, we have to save those
unfortunate people.

Michelangelo nods in agreement.

HENRY HARRIS
I need to make a mock-up of the
escalator stairs. Let's see what we
have to work with.

Henry continues rummaging, then holds up a ball of string, an
ice cube tray and a roll of bathroom tissue.

HENRY HARRIS
Okay. We'll have to be creative.
And we'll have to be quick about
it. So, let's put on our thinking
caps and get to work.

INT. RGB-TV NEWS STUDIO

The GRAPHIC "Disaster Traffic" is behind Steve Scott.

The CRAWL continues with "Al Gore limbers up, sells excess lumber," "NPR to air reruns: All Things Reconsidered," etc.

STEVE SCOTT

It's time to check in with our News
8 Telecopter and Warren Wingfield.
Warren?

INT. TELECOPTER - NIGHT

WARREN WINGFIELD, wearing an old aviator's jacket and goggles, is at the controls. He speaks over the HELICOPTER NOISE.

SUPER: Warren Wingfield, Traffic

WARREN WINGFIELD

I'm over Santa California Galleria Mall and I'll tell you, Steve, it looks like a parking lot down there. Nothing is moving. If an ambulance needed to get to these victims, well, it wouldn't be pretty.

STEVE SCOTT (O.C.)

Uh, Warren, did you say you were over the parking lot?

WARREN WINGFIELD

That's correct.

STEVE SCOTT (O.C.)

That's why nothing's moving, Warren.

Warren looks down at the parking lot, then at the camera.

WARREN WINGFIELD

Back to you.

INT. SANTA CALIFORNIA GALLERIA MALL

Cameron James approaches Victor Cousineau and Genevieve Cousineau on the bottom steps of the escalator. The Cousineaus have French-Texan accents.

On the "down" escalator in the b.g., interspersed with regular shoppers, are several CLOWNS, EAST INDIAN WOMEN in saris and HOUSE PAINTERS.

CAMERON JAMES

(to camera)

Steve, I'm here with two more victims.

(to Victor and Genevieve)

And you are?

VICTOR COUSINEAU

Trapped on an escalator.

CAMERON JAMES

Yes, of course. Your names?

VICTOR COUSINEAU

I am Victor Cousineau and this is my wife, Genevieve. Who in turn are you?

CAMERON JAMES

Why, I'm Cameron James, RGB-TV News reporter. We're live with coverage of this disaster.

GENEVIEVE COUSINEAU

Disaster? We're in a disaster?

CAMERON JAMES

If it's not a disaster, it's not news, is it? I detect an accent. Tell me, are you of the foreign persuasion?

VICTOR COUSINEAU

No. We are French Canadian Americans, refugees from Quebec, but we're American citizens now.

CAMERON JAMES

Refugees from Canada?

VICTOR COUSINEAU

But of course. We weren't separatists, so we escaped Quebec, lived for a while in Texas and moved here six months ago.

GENEVIEVE COUSINEAU

Can you get us off this escalator? I have Christmas cookies to bake.

CAMERON JAMES
I don't help. I just report.

VICTOR COUSINEAU
Sacred Blue! You're useless!
(a beat)
Come on, Pardner, can't you notify
someone to help us?

CAMERON JAMES
No.
(to camera)
Back to you, Steve.

INT. SANTA CALIFORNIA GALLERIA MALL UTILITY ROOM

Henry Harris and Michelangelo Jones stand back to survey their creation, a realistic four-step mock-up of the escalator. On each step is a remarkably accurate life-like wax figure of one of the victims, detailed down to the clothing. They smile at one another and shake hands.

INT. RGB-TV NEWS STUDIO

Amy Daiwoo and Steve Scott are at the anchor desk with DR. JACK WISNIEWSKI, a distinguished grey-haired man.

The CRAWL continues: "Disney plots to take over failing US government after successful Anaheim 'test run,'" "Anna Nicole Smith trips, falls into 10th dimension; no one notices," etc.

AMY DAIWOO
Here in the studio, we have as our guest, Dr. Jack Wisniewski, an expert in the psychology of people trapped on escalators. Welcome, Doctor.

SUPER: "Jack Wisniewski, MD, PRN, RSVP. Escalator Psychology Expert"

DR. JACK WISNIEWSKI
Thank you, Amy.

AMY DAIWOO
Doctor, what are these victims feeling?

DR. JACK WISNIEWSKI
The initial reaction is usually surprise.

(MORE)

DR. JACK WISNIEWSKI(cont'd)

They're moving along normally, and then they're not. The next reaction can be annoyance, shock or resigned acceptance.

AMY DAIWOO

How do annoyed people usually react?

DR. JACK WISNIEWSKI

Well, they get ticked off. They're in a hurry and this fouls up their schedule.

STEVE SCOTT

What about shock? Isn't that dangerous?

DR. JACK WISNIEWSKI

In a medical sense, yes. Shock can be life-threatening. But in this case, I am referring to more of a surprised variety of shock, what I call "shockrise." Shockrise is characterized by utterance of phrases such as, "Uh, oh" or "Oh, feces!"

AMY DAIWOO

And the resigned acceptants? What's that all about?

DR. JACK WISNIEWSKI

These people accept whatever comes their way. They're patient and don't get overly excited, no matter what happens.

AMY DAIWOO

That's sick.

DR. JACK WISNIEWSKI

Most acceptants tend to be religious, drunks or mummies.

AMY DAIWOO

Mummies? That's a shockrise.

DR. JACK WISNIEWSKI

Mummies deal with emergencies, frustration and disappointments every day. They don't overreact, they nurture.

STEVE SCOTT
That was fascinating. Thank you,
Dr. Wisniewski.

INT. SANTA CALIFORNIA GALLERIA MALL

At the bottom of the escalator, the SELLYOUAIR ONE SPOKESMAN
walks by and pauses, talking into his cell phone.

SELYYOUAIR ONE SPOKESMAN
Can you hear me now? Really?

He walks off. Ruth Brannigan and Phyllis Gross are standing
on the escalator below Christy Huntington and Jennifer
Whitmer, and a step up from Father Irving O'Flanagan.

On the "down" escalator in the b.g., interspersed with
regular shoppers, are RAILROAD CONDUCTORS, a GRUNGE ROCK BAND
and BALLERINAS.

PHYLLIS GROSS
Oh, Father, we're so fortunate
you're here.

FATHER IRVING O'FLANAGAN
(with a Jewish accent)
Fortunate? You call this fortunate?
I should be at the rectory having
Spaghetti-Os.

RUTH BRANNIGAN
Well, Phyllis just meant that it's
comforting to have a man of the
cloth with us at this difficult
time.

PHYLLIS GROSS
Would you say a prayer for our
safety, Father?

FATHER IRVING O'FLANAGAN
Dear God, don't let us die. Amen.

Phyllis and Ruth are surprised at the brevity of the prayer.

PHYLLIS GROSS AND RUTH BRANNIGAN
Amen.

PHYLLIS GROSS
(quietly, to Ruth)
That wasn't a very good prayer,
now, was it?

RUTH BRANNIGAN
(quietly, to Phyllis)
Maybe he's sexually frustrated. I
saw a show about this very thing on
Montel.

FATHER IRVING O'FLANAGAN
I heard that and it's not true.
(softer)
I'm sorry, ladies. I'm going
through a difficult time.

PHYLLIS GROSS
Are you doubting your faith?

FATHER IRVING O'FLANAGAN
Certainly not. Well, not really.
Kind of. A bit. I don't think so.

PHYLLIS GROSS
What's the problem then, Father?

FATHER IRVING O'FLANAGAN
I can't keep it in anymore! I have
to tell someone!

RUTH BRANNIGAN
Tell us!

There is a collective gasp and DRAMATIC ORGAN MUSIC as Father
O'Flanagan reveals --

FATHER IRVING O'FLANAGAN
I'm a Jew in a priest's body!

RUTH BRANNIGAN
My God!

PHYLLIS GROSS
And he's right next to us.

FATHER IRVING O'FLANAGAN
You can't imagine the torment. My
name is Irving O'Flanagan. My
mother was Jewish and my father was
Catholic.

RUTH BRANNIGAN
(to Phyllis)
I've heard about those mixed
marriages having the worst effect
on the children. I think it was on
Oprah.

PHYLLIS GROSS
Go on, Father.

FATHER IRVING O'FLANAGAN
They have pork chops at the rectory
every Saturday but I just can't
bring myself to eat them.
(a beat)
And I crave Hebrew International
hot dogs.

There is the "AH!" of a HEAVENLY CHOIR at the mention of
Hebrew International and everyone looks around for the
source.

FATHER IRVING O'FLANAGAN
I have a yarmulke in my vestment
pocket ---

RUTH BRANNIGAN
Well, put it on!

PHYLLIS GROSS
People will love you anyway. You're
still a man of God.

FATHER IRVING O'FLANAGAN
(putting on his yarmulke)
I want to be a rabbi!

Farther down the escalator, Maurice Molina and Willie
Escargot hear Father O'Flanagan's declaration.

MAURICE MOLINA
What was all that? Something about
a rabbit?

WILLIE ESCARGOT
You can see more than I can from
down here. Excuse me, Maurice, your
fur is in my face.

MAURICE MOLINA
Sorry. I'd take off this coat, but
there's some kids up there and I
don't want to scar them for life.

WILLIE ESCARGOT
If Santa doesn't scar them, someone
else will. We're all walking
wounded.

MAURICE MOLINA

You're awfully bitter, Willie. Why is that?

WILLIE ESCARGOT

Can you say "lousy career choice?" I'm thirty-eight years old and a friggin' elf.

MAURICE MOLINA

Come on, you make children happy.

WILLIE ESCARGOT

I wanted to be a gynecologist. I figure I look at it every day anyway. I went through college and medical school and finally was an intern. Then one day, I heard a colleague tell a nurse I was "crotch high." I thought I was respected, like the other interns, but I wasn't. It destroyed my confidence and I quit.

MAURICE MOLINA

That's rough.

(a beat)

So you became an elf?

WILLIE ESCARGOT

Eventually.

MAURICE MOLINA

Wasn't there another choice?

INT. RGB-TV NEWS STUDIO

Steve Scott is joined by JIMMY CLOUD, an American Indian, who stands at the end of the desk near a weather map. There is an anchor on the anchor desk.

The CRAWL continues: "Mars probe discovers Starbucks on red planet," "Trix found to be excellent contraceptive, says company spokesrabbit," etc.

SUPER: Steve Scott, Anchoredman

STEVE SCOTT

Now, to see if weather will play a role in this disaster, we have Jimmy Cloud, our meteorologist. Jimmy?

SUPER: Jimmy Cloud, ~~Meeteyor~~, ~~Meatierol~~, Weather Dude

JIMMY CLOUD

Thanks, Steve. While temperatures have been in the mid to high 80s in Southern California this holiday season --

He moves in front of the weather map which shows a single, large, ominous cloud hovering off the coast of Southern California.

JIMMY CLOUD

-- there is a storm system off the coast which may move in and cause heavy sprinkles of treacherous moisture. Ambulances attempting to assist the victims may skid on the moist streets, causing delays. We can only watch and wait.

STEVE SCOTT

Thank you, Jimmy. We now continue our live team coverage of the Mall 21 DeathWatch with Samantha Scarborough. Samantha?

INT. SANTA CALIFORNIA GALLERIA MALL

On the "down" escalator in the b.g., interspersed with regular shoppers, are several HIPPIES, TENNIS PLAYERS with rackets and ARTISTS with palettes.

SAMANTHA SCARBOROUGH

(to camera)

One of the things I've learned as a reporter is that victims are color blind and age blind. They're young, old, rich, poor, black, white and some --

(dramatic pause)

-- are even tanned. I'm with two beautifully tanned pom-pom girls. You are?

CHRISTY HUNTINGTON

I'm Christy Huntington and I'm not a pom-pom girl. I'm a semi-professional cheerleader at Santana High School.

JENNIFER WHITMER

My name is Jennifer Whitmer and I'm head cheerleader at Santana High. We're the most popular girls in school.

CHRISTY HUNTINGTON

And both of our daddies are rich.

SAMANTHA SCARBOROUGH

I see. How are you coping with this disaster?

JENNIFER WHITMER

It's horrible! They're going to start the football game without us if we don't get out of here soon. And the cheer squad won't be able to make a pyramid without us.

SAMANTHA SCARBOROUGH

That's transcendental.

CHRISTY HUNTINGTON

They're counting on us.

(to the camera)

Daddy! We're trapped at the mall and might not make the game. I won't be popular anymore!

SAMANTHA SCARBOROUGH

(to camera)

The worst part of any tragedy like this is the effect it has on semi-professional cheerleaders. And the misery continues. From Santa California Galleria Mall, I'm Samantha Scarborough.

INT. RGB-TV NEWS STUDIO

The GRAPHIC behind Amy Daiwoo and BOB SCORE, the thick-necked sports reporter, reads: "Sports Update."

The CRAWL continues: "God says world to end at 8 pm. Details at 11," "Suicide bomber changes mind; wants to see who The Bachelor selects," etc.

AMY DAIWOO

Thank you, Samantha. Now, with a sports update, here's Bob Score.

BOB SCORE

In synchronized swimming, the boys of West Hollywood High scored an upset victory today over the top-ranked San Francisco Poofs with their effort titled, "Water Works of Broadway."

(a beat)

In curling, Canada's Courtenay Courtmasters swept to victory over the Nanaimo Broommasters today. And in local sports, the kick-off has just taken place for the big Civil War game between the Santana High School Sentinels and the Mahatma Gandhi High Rebels.

AMY DAIWOO

Tell me, Bob, how will the mall disaster impact local sports?

BOB SCORE

Well, Amy, the pending gruesome deaths of Santana cheerleaders Christy Huntington and Jennifer Whitmer may affect the big game tonight. These young women are critical to the formation of the pyramid.

A COMPUTER GRAPHIC shows stick figures in a pyramid that collapse into a pile of random, bent lines.

BOB SCORE

In this computer graphic, you'll see that without them, everyone falls down into a pile on the grass, thus ruining the cheer. I spoke earlier with head coach Uvula S. Grant about the ramifications for the team.

INSERT:

Bob Score on a football field with Santana High School Coach UVULA S. GRANT, who is dressed like a Union Army General.

UVULA S. GRANT

We're just a bit concerned, Bob. Our ath-a-letes really need this win and, without a pyramid, the cards are stacked against us.

FOOTBALL PLAYERS wearing Union Army uniforms and football helmets push around door-sized playing cards on the football field behind Uvula and Bob.

BOB SCORE

What about the long term outlook,
Coach?

UVULA S. GRANT

Well, if the girls croak, we'll
have to select and train two new
cheerleaders. We wouldn't be able
to do a pyramid for a month or two.
That would be devastating.

BOB SCORE

A bleak outlook for the Santana
team. Back to you, Amy.

AMY DAIWOO

Thanks for that lighthearted look
at sports, Bob. Now to Cameron
James on the lower level.

INT. SANTA CALIFORNIA GALLERIA MALL

A memorial to the escalator victims appears, with flowers, teddy bears, photos of the victims and a signs reading, "In Memory of the Mall 21" and "We Love You, Mall 21." Some mothers are clutching their children and softly crying.

On the "down" escalator in the b.g., interspersed with regular shoppers, are a MARIACHI BAND, BOXERS and the THREE STOOGES.

James Van Edward looks over the handrail at the memorial, where an old woman, EVILYN CRINKLE, is placing a bouquet of flowers.

JAMES VAN EDWARD

Hey! What is this? We're not dead!

EVILYN CRINKLE

(looking up and smiling)

Yet.

Cameron James walks up to the memorial and then turns dramatically to the camera.

CAMERON JAMES

Hearts are heavy with the emotional
toll this catastrophe is taking.

WANDA SUE JONES, a middle-aged woman with a head full of curlers wearing horribly mismatched clothes, places a ragged teddy bear on the memorial.

CAMERON JAMES

And who are you supposed to be?

WANDA SUE JONES

I'm Wanda Sue Jones.

CAMERON JAMES

How is this tragedy affecting you?

WANDA SUE JONES

I just can't believe this is happening. They're all so young. Well, most of them are young or sort of young. A few are middle-aged and there's two old ladies at the top, but there are a couple of young ones and it just tears you up.

CAMERON JAMES

(to camera)

Trapped victims and torn up women. You have to wonder where it will all end.

LEONARDO DI CRAPPIO, a handsome young man in a security guard's uniform, walks up to the bottom of the escalator carrying an old megaphone. On the side is stencilled, "Property of R. Vallee."

CAMERON JAMES

Excuse me. Who are you?

LEONARDO DI CRAPPIO

I'm Leonardo di Crappio, Security Guard Level Two. I'm filling in for Henry. He's devising a plan to help rescue these wretched souls.

Leonardo raises the megaphone just inches from Victor and Genevieve Cousineau.

LEONARDO DI CRAPPIO

(through the megaphone)

Do not panic. I repeat, do not panic.

Everyone in the mall panics, screaming and flailing their arms.

INT. RGB-TV NEWS STUDIO

The GRAPHIC behind Amy Daiwoo reads: "The World Responds."

The CRAWL continues: "Gardeners declare greenhouse effect good for petunias," "Government funded fifty year study concludes exercise, diet essential to weight loss," etc.

AMY DAIWOO

All around the world, people are wondering how an escalator could stall in this day and age. Alastair Kookooroo in Sydney, Australia brings us the Austrian response.

INT. AUSTRALIAN CROCODILE WRESTLING SCHOOL

ALASTAIR KOOKOOROO is wrestling a crocodile. Behind him is a sign on the wall reading: "Croc Wrestling 101."

ALASTAIR KOOKOOROO

(in an Australian accent)

G'day, mates. All of us here Down Under hope you'll find a way out of that dangerous mall. We know the meaning of danger here in Australia. It's my first day of crocodile wrestling class.

He suddenly is pulled down to the floor, out of frame, and there are sounds of him THRASHING about. A foot flies into frame, then a crocodile's tail. Then, Alastair pops back into view with one arm missing.

ALASTAIR KOOKOOROO

Guess I should have read the homework assignment. Anyway, good luck to you all.

INT. SANTA CALIFORNIA GALLERIA MALL

Willie Escargot pulls himself up and looks over the handrail at the memorial, then turns to Maurice Molina.

On the "down" escalator in the b.g. are a MOTORCYCLE GANG holding handlebars, CHEFS in white hats, SWISS MEN with their Alpenhorn, BREAK DANCERS and POSTAL CARRIERS. There are no longer regular shoppers on the escalator.

WILLIE ESCARGOT

Well, if we end up taking a dirt nap because of this, at least we'll be remembered. You got a family, Maurice?

MAURICE MOLINA

I was married once. I didn't want children but my wife did, so she left me and married my brother. They have six kids now.

WILLIE ESCARGOT

Wait a minute. Didn't I see you on Jerry Springer?

MAURICE MOLINA

No. America's Funniest Home Videos.

WILLIE ESCARGOT

Ouch. That must have hurt.

INT. RGB-TV NEWS STUDIO

WALLY NIELSEN, an old man with long, grey braided hair and a bandana around his forehead joins Steve Scott.

The CRAWL continues: "Survivor: LA Freeways to air next season," "Forty-year-old man discovered with no baggage," etc.

STEVE SCOTT

As the world learns of this intense situation, there is a yearning to help the victims, even by those who have no reason to want to help. I'm here with famous singer, songwriter and do-gooder, Wally Nielsen. Welcome, Wally.

SUPER: Wally Nielsen, Legend

WALLY NIELSEN

Hi, Steve. This country loves a disaster. And the only thing we love more than a disaster is the opportunity to help disaster victims by putting on a concert. Tomorrow night at the Hollywood Bowl, we present Escalator Aid.

A GRAPHIC appears to Wally's side, with over 50 names scrolling by almost too fast to read, including: "Madonna, Metallica, Simian and Garfunkel, M&M, Justin Timberlike, Clay Aching, Reuben Stutters, Fantasia Barrio, Christina Arguelera and Cher's fourth annual farewell appearance."

WALLY NIELSEN

A lot of music greats will perform including a bunch of kids I've never heard of who are doin' their fifteen minutes of fame. It's all at the Hollywood Bowl tomorrow night, so plan to be there. Tickets are \$19.95 at the door or \$322 through TicketMaster.

STEVE SCOTT

Country music legend Wally Nielsen. Thank you. I'm sure everyone will want to be at this charitable event. Now, back to Samantha Scarborough at the mall.

INT. SANTA CALIFORNIA GALLERIA MALL

On the "down" escalator in the b.g. are a BOWLING TEAM with bowling balls, SURFERS with their boards and BEACH BABES playing volleyball, AIRLINE PILOTS, FLIGHT ATTENDANTS and COWBOYS and INDIANS.

SAMANTHA SCARBOROUGH

What are your monicas?

RUTH BRANNIGAN

Do you mean 'monikers'? I'm Ruth Brannigan and this is my dear friend, Phyllis Gross.

SAMANTHA SCARBOROUGH

You're old, decrepit women. How does it feel to know your boring lives will come to a grisly end at a mall?

RUTH BRANNIGAN

We're not that old. We're in our early sixties.

SAMANTHA SCARBOROUGH

Do you have husbands and family waiting for you?

RUTH BRANNIGAN
We're both widows, but we have
children.

SAMANTHA SCARBOROUGH
(to camera)
Widows with dead husbands and
children waiting for them in houses
where the lights are on and
nobody's coming home. Back to you.

Cameron James interviews Ivana Beloved Bayou.

CAMERON JAMES
I'm here with Mrs. Blue Bayou.

IVANA BELOVED BAYOU
(slowly, in a husky voice)
Ivana Beloved Bayou.

CAMERON JAMES
You do? Here? Now?

IVANA BELOVED BAYOU
That's my name, ditz.

CAMERON JAMES
Oh, right. Miss Ditz, I understand
you're a performer.

IVANA BELOVED BAYOU
Yes. I perform nightly at 8 and 10
at Goldberg's Chinese Cajun Room on
Fourth Street.

CAMERON JAMES
And how has this horrifying
entrapment affected you?

IVANA BELOVED BAYOU
Well, I have to get to work early
or I won't have time to shave
before I take the stage.

CAMERON JAMES
You shave? Are you a bearded lady?

IVANA BELOVED BAYOU
I'm a drag queen, ditz.

CAMERON JAMES
Well, I don't meet many gay race
car drivers.

IVANA BELOVED BAYOU
Hel-lo! I'm a drag queen.

CAMERON JAMES
Oh, you own a tow truck company.
What do you drag behind your tow
truck?

IVANA BELOVED BAYOU
Someone please help this man! Does
anyone have a clue to spare?

CAMERON JAMES
(to camera)
A beautiful bearded woman in need
of a clue and to be rescued so she
can continue to thrill audiences in
her funny car.

INT. SANTA CALIFORNIA GALLERIA MALL UTILITY ROOM

Henry Harris and Michelangelo Jones are viewed from behind.
They turn to each other and shake hands, then look at the
escalator mock-up. Around the mock-up is a miniature Rube
Goldbergesque maze of ropes and pulleys.

HENRY HARRIS
I think we're ready to try it, son.
Let's hope it saves some lives.

INT. RGB-TV NEWS STUDIO

Behind Steve Scott is the GRAPHIC, "Worldwide Response."

The CRAWL continues: "Mighty Ducks protest down pillows," "El
Niño adopted by Greenland, can use some warming," etc.

SUPER: Yack, yack, yack.

STEVE SCOTT
Throughout the world, people are
rooting for the doomed Mall 21. For
their response to this predicament,
we go to RGB-TV correspondent Nigel
Pennylane in London.

INT. HARE AND HOUND PUB - DAY

NIGEL PENNYLANE is in a London pub. A BARTENDER is in the b.g., a DRUNK MAN is at a table and GLUED MAN is standing by a television set mounted at the end of the bar.

SUPER: Nigel Pennylane, London Correspondent

NIGEL PENNYLANE
(with British accent)
Thank you, Steve. I'm here at the
Hare and Hound Pub in London's West
End where we've been glued to the
telly.

We see the Glued Man with his arm stuck to a television set. He struggles to pull his arm free.

GLUED MAN
Leggo, ya bugger!

NIGEL PENNYLANE
We're all in support of our
American friends.

The Drunk Man is sitting at a table, surrounded by half-empty beer mugs. He looks up at the camera.

DRUNK MAN
(mumbling)
Incoherent. Incoherent.

NIGEL PENNYLANE
As you can see, we're all behind
the Mall 21 here in jolly old
England. Now to Cahier Plume de
Matante in Paris.

EXT. EIFFEL TOWER - DAY

CAHIER PLUME DE MATANTE, in a plaid beret, makes a rude gesture at a passing Parisian taxi driver.

SUPER: Cahier Plume de Matante, Correspondent de Frenches

CAHIER PLUME DE MATANTE
(in a French accent)
This is Cahier Plume de Matante in
Paris.

(MORE)

CAHIER PLUME DE MATANTE(cont'd)

The French have been enthralled by the American disaster and have taken up a collection of fine wines and cheeses to donate to the survivors and their families, even though they are Americans.

INT. RGB-TV NEWS STUDIO

The GRAPHIC behind Steve reads: "Mall 21 DeathWatch continues."

STEVE SCOTT

We return now to the disaster with Samantha Scarborough on the upper level of the mall.

INT. SANTA CALIFORNIA GALLERIA MALL

Samantha Scarborough looks at herself in a pocket mirror, then watches as her Audio Man directs the boom mike over Father O'Flanagan.

On the "down" escalator in the b.g. are a BASEBALL TEAM with bats, EXPLORERS in pith helmets, COAL MINERS, FRED ASTAIRE dancing with GINGER ROGERS, and SCIENTISTS in lab coats with test tubes and white rats.

SAMANTHA SCARBOROUGH

You're a religious parsonage, is that right?

FATHER IRVING O'FLANAGAN

I'm Father Irving O'Flanagan of Our Lady of the Perpetually Overtaxed in Santana.

SAMANTHA SCARBOROUGH

Father, how does someone of the religious predicament endure this hellish confinement?

FATHER IRVING O'FLANAGAN

Like everyone else, I guess.

SAMANTHA SCARBOROUGH

Do you think this is part of God's master plan?

FATHER IRVING O'FLANAGAN

Stalling an escalator? I think He has bigger fish to fry.

SAMANTHA SCARBOROUGH

(to camera)

One man, under God, invisible,
hoping for liberty and fish for
everyone trapped here.

On the lower level, Henry Harris and Michelangelo Jones have rigged up an elaborate rope and pulley system above the escalator. Michelangelo attaches a huge hook to the back of Henry's belt.

Michelangelo walks to a rope and pulls on it and Henry's feet are lifted off the ground. He swings out and over the escalator, back and forth. Walden Rohrer reaches out and catches one of Henry's feet, directing him to the escalator stairs.

HENRY HARRIS

(to Walden)

Get a good grip on me and I'll
carry you to the lower level.

Walden looks unsure of this, but throws his arms around Henry's neck and wraps his legs around Henry's waist. Walden is much bigger than Henry and Henry is unsteady on his feet.

HENRY HARRIS

Now, Michelangelo!

Michelangelo strains at the rope, but is unable to budge them. For several moments, Henry and Walden just stand there.

WALDEN ROHRER

Shouldn't we be moving?

HENRY HARRIS

That was the plan. But we're too
heavy. You'll have to let go.

Walden unclasps his legs and stands on his step. Henry is pulled up, but he just dangles above Walden's head. Walden reaches up and swings Henry enough that he comes down on the outside of the escalator and is lowered to the ground. Michelangelo takes the hook off Henry's belt as Henry shakes his head, disappointed.

HENRY HARRIS

Okay. Looks like we go to Plan B.

LEONARDO DI CRAPPIO

(through the megaphone)

Do not panic. I repeat. Do not
panic.

Everyone panics.

INT. RGB-TV NEWS STUDIO

The GRAPHIC behind Amy Daiwoo reads: "What Goes Up, Doesn't Always." Across the studio, BILL HILL sits facing guest OLIVER ROCK.

The CRAWL continues: "Bart Simpson marries Liza Minnelli," "Queen Elizabeth finally retires; Prince Charles no longer cares, moves to trailer park," etc.

SUPER: Amy Daiwoo, Token Woman Anchorman

AMY DAIWOO

For those of you just joining us, I'm Amy Daiwoo at the RGB-TV news desk. We're providing comprehensive team coverage of 21 people trapped and helpless on a stalled escalator at Santa California Galleria Mall. For approximately thirty minutes, their lives have been hanging by a thread, their fates dependent on a maintenance man who's out bowling.

(a beat)

We now go to our very own Bill Hill. Bill?

SUPER: Bill Hill, Token Male Anchorwoman

BILL HILL

Thank you, Amy. We're speaking with escalator terrorist expert Oliver Rock. Tell me, Oliver, what are the odds this escalator breakdown is part of a fiendish plan to ruin Christmas?

SUPER: Oliver Rock, Escalator Terror Expert

OLIVER ROCK

Well, Bill, if it's not terrorists, it's a conspiracy. Take your pick. These things always happen for a reason.

BILL HILL

Could it be poor escalator maintenance?

OLIVER ROCK

Sure. But that would be boring. I say America's enemies want to scare us away from Christmas shopping.

BILL HILL

Why?

OLIVER ROCK

America is the land of plenty. To undermine Christmas shopping is to deprive Americans of their constitutional rights to presents and happiness.

BILL HILL

Who would do such a thing?

OLIVER ROCK

It could be almost anyone. Iraqis, Iranis, North Koreans, Canadians. They're all jealous of us and capable of terrorizing our innocent citizens with heinous acts like this.

BILL HILL

Canadians?

OLIVER ROCK

Of course, Canadians. They're hanging around our northern borders just waiting to take over. Oh, they look innocent, but they're treacherous.

BILL HILL

Canadians?

OLIVER ROCK

They've been waiting a long time to swoop down into the States and take jobs from our illegal Mexicans.

BILL HILL

Thank you, Oliver Rock.
(to camera)
Back to you, Steve.

The GRAPHIC behind Steve Scott reads: "Set Your VCR."

STEVE SCOTT

Thank you, Bill. Here's a programming note. We'll be continuing our live team coverage of this breaking story, preempting regularly scheduled programming. For those of you tuning in to see RGB's hit reality show, Eat Bugs for Money, it will be airing tonight at 2 a.m., so set your VCRs.

(a beat)

Now back to our field reporter, Cameron James, at the scene of the disaster.

INT. SANTA CALIFORNIA GALLERIA MALL

PICKETERS are now in the crowd, holding signs. TWO PICKETERS, one holding a sign reading "Down with Escalators!" and the other's reading, "Up with Escalators," are having an angry exchange. Other signs include: "Down with pants!," "PETA" and "It's not fur. I'm Robin Williams' cousin!"

On the "down" escalator in the b.g. are FIGURE SKATERS, AMELIA EARHARDT, PHAROAHS and EGYPTIANS and 40s MOVIE DIRECTORS in jodhpurs.

On the lower level, a well-dressed man, OLIVER BISHOP HUNTINGTON IV, rushes into the mall, followed by his chauffeur, RON BROWN. Christy Huntington sees her father on the lower level and calls out to him.

CHRISTY HUNTINGTON

Daddy! We're up here! Save us!

OLIVER BISHOP HUNTINGTON IV

Babycakes! Are you all right?

CHRISTY HUNTINGTON

Yes, but the game has probably started by now and they can't make a pyramid without us!

OLIVER BISHOP HUNTINGTON IV

That's ghastly!

CHRISTY HUNTINGTON

Daddy, if you don't get us out of here, I won't be popular anymore!

Oliver turns to Ron with his hand out. Ron hands him a business card reading: "Oliver Bishop Huntington IV - Filthy Rich" which Oliver hands to Cameron James.

OLIVER BISHOP HUNTINGTON IV
(to Christy)
Hang on, Princess!
(to Cameron)
Who do I pay?

CAMERON JAMES
(to camera)
We have here --
(reading card)
Oliver Bishop Huntington the
fourth.

OLIVER BISHOP HUNTINGTON IV
You idiot. I'm Oliver Bishop
Huntington "eye-vee." Can't you
read? Now, who do I pay to get my
daughter released?

CAMERON JAMES
Sir, this isn't a hostage
situation. Your money won't help.

OLIVER BISHOP HUNTINGTON IV
Money always helps! What's the
matter with you?

LEONARDO DI CRAPPIO
Sir, you'll have to wait until our
maintenance expert arrives to
repair the escalator.

CAMERON JAMES
He's out bowling.

OLIVER BISHOP HUNTINGTON IV
How pedestrian! That's not
acceptable. I have money and I want
my daughter freed now.

Oliver holds out his hand and Ron hands him a checkbook, which Oliver waves in the air.

OLIVER BISHOP HUNTINGTON IV
(to camera)
I'm offering a reward. One hundred
thousand dollars to the person who
rescues my beautiful daughter.

LEONARDO DI CRAPPIO
It's not a matter of money.

OLIVER BISHOP HUNTINGTON IV
Nothing is a problem if you can buy
your way out of it.

CAMERON JAMES
A distraught father makes a feeble
attempt to buy his daughter's
freedom. Typical of rich, upset
fathers everywhere, Emperor
Huntington wants his daughter
safely home, no matter how
ridiculous the cost. Back to you in
the studio.

INT. RGB-TV NEWS STUDIO

WENDY MCDONALD is seated beside Steve Scott. The GRAPHIC
reads: "Escalator Nutrition Needs."

The CRAWL continues: "Social security isn't," "Surgeon
General declares mothers were right: your face can stick like
that," etc.

SUPER: Steve Scott, Still Handsome.

STEVE SCOTT
Thank you, Cameron. Now, we go to
our own Wendy McDonald for
information on how to meet your
nutritional needs if you become
trapped on an escalator. Wendy?

WENDY MCDONALD
Thank you, Steve. My, you're just
impossibly handsome today.

STEVE SCOTT
Thank you.

Super: Wendy McDonald, Nutritionist

WENDY MCDONALD
You're welcome.
(to camera)
Most shoppers forget to eat before
attempting to ride an escalator.
This is a mistake, because if you
become trapped, your nutritional
needs may not be met.

(MORE)

WENDY MCDONALD(cont'd)

I always recommend carrying a pound of prepared hamburger, a spatula and condiment packages with you whenever you embark on a journey between mall levels.

SFX: SIZZLING HAMBURGERS

are flipped over on an escalator step.

WENDY MCDONALD

Mixing in some fresh minced garlic, onion flakes and MSG can add wonderful flavor to your emergency meal. You know, most Americans just aren't eating enough red meat. And don't forget to carry some Damp Ones moist wipes so clean-up will be quick and easy. This is Wendy McDonald with today's helpful tip for disaster dining. Bon appetit.

(to Steve)

Back to you.

STEVE SCOTT

Thank you, Wendy. We now return to our continuing coverage of the Mall 21 DeathWatch.

INT. SANTA CALIFORNIA GALLERIA MALL

On the "down" escalator in the b.g. are a group of SCUBA DIVERS, LAUREL AND HARDY, SOUTHERN BELLES, SAILORS and PIRATES, 50s-era GREASERS and GIRLS IN POODLE SKIRTS.

CAMERON JAMES

I'm here with a brave member of our armed forces.

BRADLEY SALISBERRY

I'm a fireman.

CAMERON JAMES

I understand your name is Bradley Steak.

BRADLEY SALISBERRY

No, Salisbury.

CAMERON JAMES

Excuse me, Salisbury Steak.

BRADLEY SALISBERRY
No, Bradley Salisbury.

CAMERON JAMES
Lieutenant, you do everything you
can to keep us safe, don't you?

BRADLEY SALISBERRY
I try.

CAMERON JAMES
So it must be particularly
frustrating for you to save people
all day on the battlefield, then
find yourself in a situation where
you need to be rescued.

Bradley whips off his yellow coat and hands it to Donatello
Esperanto, then casts a determined glance up the escalator.

BRADLEY SALISBERRY
(to Donatello)
Here, hold this. I think it's time
I took some action.

DRAMATIC MUSIC fills the mall.

BRADLEY SALISBERRY
I'm going up there. I don't know
how long it will take, but I'll get
to the top of this escalator. And
when I get there, I'll get a rope
and tie myself to something solid,
then carry each of these good
people to safety, one by one.

Slowly, Bradley begins his arduous climb past the other
victims. He slips and the crowd gasps, then he recovers and
continues his ascent. He steps over SIZZLING hamburgers
cooking on one of the steps. As he nears the top step, the
crowd breaks into applause, but it is too soon.

Bradley's foot comes down on one of Tommy Wilson's small toys
and he does a SLOW MOTION fall back to his place lower on the
escalator as the crowd gasps and looks horrified.

CAMERON JAMES
I detect a murmur from the crowd.

CROWD
Murmur, murmur, murmur.

Then the crowd grows silent, waiting anxiously to see if Bradley was injured or killed in the fall. But Bradley jumps to his feet and indicates he is all right. The crowd breaks into wild applause and cheer.

CAMERON JAMES

That, ladies and gentlemen, was the most stupid heroic thing this reporter has ever seen. Bradley Salisbury Steak, the brave U.S. Marine, placed his life on the line to save the lives of his fellow victims. He didn't succeed, but you have to give him credit for trying, or at least a lower home mortgage rate. Back to you in the studio.

INT. RGB-TV NEWS STUDIO

Steve Scott is at the anchor desk.

STEVE SCOTT

And now a brief station break.

NEWS PROMO

Steve Scott is sitting in a chair against a black background.

STEVE SCOTT

News doesn't stop and neither do we. We just go on and on and on and on.

DISSOLVE TO:

Amy Daiwoo is now in the chair.

AMY DAIWOO

We'll interrupt your favorite program at a critical moment so that you'll know where there's a police pursuit.

DISSOLVE TO:

Samantha Scarborough in the chair.

SAMANTHA SCARBOROUGH
Beautiful people will tell you
about ugly things happening in your
neighborhood.

DISSOLVE TO:

Cameron James in the chair.

CAMERON JAMES
We'll talk to important people who
have nothing important to say.

DISSOLVE TO:

BILL HILL in the chair.

BILL HILL
We think you should know this
stuff. Why?

DISSOLVE TO:

Amy, Steve, Cameron, Samantha and Bill are now piled into the
chair, one atop the other.

AMY DAIWOO, STEVE SCOTT, CAMERON
JAMES, SAMANTHA SCARBOROUGH AND BILL
HILL
We're RGB-TV News. That's why.

ANNOUNCER
RGB-TV News. Every morning at 5, 6
and 7. Every evening at 5, 6 and
10. And if something's happening,
we might be on at other times.
Maybe.

INT. SANTA CALIFORNIA GALLERIA MALL

James Van Edward is slapping himself in the forehead and
talking to himself as Phyllis Gross and Ruth Brannigan look
down at him.

On the "down" escalator in the b.g. are GYMNASTS, the DEVIL,
the WOLFMAN, FRANKENSTEIN'S MONSTER, THE CREATURE FROM THE
BLACK LAGOON, the MUMMY and COUNT DRACULA.

JAMES VAN EDWARD
Stupid! Stupid! Stupid! I know I
should have listened to you, but
you weren't very specific.

PHYLLIS GROSS

Excuse me down there! Who are you talking to?

JAMES VAN EDWARD

My dead mother.

PHYLLIS GROSS

Aren't you psychic medium James Van Edward?

JAMES VAN EDWARD

Shhhh! I don't want anyone to know I'm here.

RUTH BRANNIGAN

We just love your show. Would you channel my dead husband?

JAMES VAN EDWARD

This isn't a good time.

PHYLLIS GROSS

Why not?

WALDEN ROHRER

Hey, famous TV guy, if you're so psychic, why didn't you foresee this escalator stopping?

JAMES VAN EDWARD

I'm not that kind of psychic. I appreciate, communicate and validate parking for dead people.

WALDEN ROHRER

Bummer. If you were the other kind of psychic, you could have picked some good stock or the Super Bowl winner and made some real green.

JAMES VAN EDWARD

Tell me about it.

WALDEN ROHRER

Well, what I mean is you'd be rich -
-

JAMES VAN EDWARD

(interrupting)

It was a rhetorical question.

WALDEN ROHRER
And I was answering you, man.

JAMES VAN EDWARD
Never mind.

A boom mike edges over the handrail and James Van Edward looks down to see Cameron James looking up at him.

CAMERON JAMES
We have here the man with a popular syndicated show on RGB-TV who talks to crossing guards.

JAMES VAN EDWARD
I talk to those who have crossed over to the other side.

CAMERON JAMES
You talk to chickens?

JAMES VAN EDWARD
Chickens?

CAMERON JAMES
They cross to the other side, don't they?

PHYLLIS GROSS
He talks to dead people.

CAMERON JAMES
How do you do that? Dead people can't move their lips.

PHYLLIS GROSS
He's a psychic.

CAMERON JAMES
Like Tonto or Kevin Eubanks?

RUTH BRANNIGAN
Not a sidekick. A psychic.

CAMERON JAMES
Gotcha. Colonel Van Edward, do you see your fellow victims on the other side?

JAMES VAN EDWARD
No. They're not dead.

EVILYN CRINKLE

Yet.

The memorial has grown to engulf the entire area to the side of the stricken escalator. More picket signs appear: "Straight pride!", "Hi Matt, Katie and Al!", "Death to Spammers" and "Where am I going and why am I in a handbasket?"

TWO MEN and TWO WOMEN in evening clothes are in front of a karaoke monitor singing the Ode to Joy from Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, as the words appear on the television monitor.

MEN AND WOMEN

(singing)

Freude, schöner Götterfunken,
Tochter aus Elysium,
Wir betreten feuer-trunken,
Himmlische, dein Heiligtum!
Deine Zauber binden wieder,
Was die Mode streng geteilt;
Alle Menschen werden Brüder,
Wo dein sanfter Flügel weilt.

On the escalator, Bradley Salisbury turns to Willie Escargot and Maurice Molina.

BRADLEY SALISBERRY

I fell down the stairs and didn't
rescue us. I'm such a loser.

WILLIE ESCARGOT

Hey, man, you tried.

BRADLEY SALISBERRY

But I didn't succeed. People think
all firemen are heroes. But I
haven't saved one life, rescued
even one kitty cat.

MAURICE MOLINA

Really? I thought you guys got
medals almost every day.

BRADLEY SALISBERRY

I don't. I go home at night, watch
reruns of Happy Days and wish I
were Fonzie.

MAURICE MOLINA

But inside, you feel like Ralph
Malph.

BRADLEY SALISBERRY

Well, maybe Potsie. I have good hair.

WILLIE ESCARGOT

The only TV stars I could identify with were Billy Barty, Herve Villachaize and Michael Dunne. But they're all dead now, so I have to wait for the seasonal repeat of the Wizard of Oz.

MAURICE MOLINA

I liked the coroner dude.

(sings)

"She's really most sincerely dead."

WILLIE ESCARGOT

He was good, but his beard creeped me out.

BRADLEY SALISBERRY

Maybe, someday, I'll get the chance to do something heroic and not mess it up.

INT. RGB-TV NEWS STUDIO

The GRAPHIC behind Steve Scott reads: "Worldwide Response."

The CRAWL continues: "Cincinnati Elephant has bad memory, forgets a lot," "Employee at Jack-in-the-Box drive-through window understandable; customer faints," etc.

SUPER: He's starting to annoy me.

STEVE SCOTT

Here's Mazda Kawasaki, our correspondent in Japan with their response to Mall 21 DeathWatch.

SUPER: Mazda Kawasaki, Japan

MAZDA KAWASAKI

(with a Japanese accent)

You don't know how to use technorogy! Just rook at our cars. They're much better than yours. And you also make clappy escarators.

(a beat)

And now to Flee-jeed Spivey in Antarctica.

EXT. ANTARCTIC PENGUIN ROOKERY - DAY

FRIGID SPIVEY is in a parka, his face barely visible. Behind him, there is a white wasteland.

SUPER: Frigid Spivey, Shivering Correspondent

FRIGID SPIVEY

This is Free-jeed Spivey in Antarctica. The hearts of everyone here goes out to those unfortunate mall people.

PULL BACK

to reveal Spivey is surrounded by penguins. There's a small table in front of him, with a bowl of fish on it.

FRIGID SPIVEY

As you can see, this may be one of the few places on earth where there are no malls. But hardship is a way of life in Antarctica. Male penguins hold the precious eggs on their feet for up to two months in 200 mile per hour winds and sub-freezing temperatures while the females feed at sea.

(a beat)

Despite their own hardships, these penguins have donated what little they have to assist the victims. It's cold in Antarctica, but our hearts are warm. Back to you.

INT. SANTA CALIFORNIA GALLERIA MALL

On the "down" escalator in the b.g. are KNIGHTS in shining armor, INVISIBLE MEN, MIMES pretending to be in boxes, HULA DANCERS and CONSTRUCTION WORKERS.

CAMERON JAMES

We have another famous guy trapped here tonight: Italian tenor Donatello Esperanto. Doctor Esperanto, what brought you to the mall tonight?

DONATELLO ESPERANTO

A long, black limousine. Very expensive.

(MORE)

DONATELLO ESPERANTO(cont'd)

There's an Olympic-sized swimming pool in the back seat on the upper level.

CAMERON JAMES

But why are you here?

DONATELLO ESPERANTO

That should be obvious. I was planning to purchase overpriced American trinkets made in Taiwan.

CAMERON JAMES

And now you may die here.

DONATELLO ESPERANTO

I will never die. My voice will live forever. My legacy is secure.

CAMERON JAMES

But if your body is dead ---

DONATELLO ESPERANTO

My body is merely here to carry my voice around. Of course, it also eats fine Italian cuisine and has sex.

(a beat)

I *will* miss those things if I die, but my body is just a vessel.

CAMERON JAMES

There you have it. The Grand Duke Donatello Esperanto, a great singer unafraid of death because he works on cruise ships.

INT. SANTA CALIFORNIA GALLERIA MALL

TREVOR WILSON enters the mall and rushes to the bottom of the escalator. He looks up at his wife, Ellen.

TREVOR WILSON

Ellen! I'm here! I'm late! I ran out of gas. Do you know how high gas prices are?

ELLEN WILSON

It's okay, Trevor. They said we're in danger and may not survive.

TREVOR WILSON

You'll get out of this, honey!

ELLEN WILSON
Well, in case we don't, I'm
throwing down the last of the
Christmas presents I bought.

Trevor positions himself beside the escalator under Ellen and catches the bags she drops down. But then she tosses a bowling ball, barbells, a microwave oven and a kitchen sink. Trevor is buried beneath these items.

TREVOR WILSON
(from under the rubble)
I...I got them!

ELLEN WILSON
Good. Remember, your mother gets
the blue hand towels and your Uncle
Don gets the singing fish.

TREVOR WILSON
(weakly)
He'll really love the fish.

OSCAR LEWIS, a well-dressed man, walks into the mall and to the bottom of the escalator.

OSCAR LEWIS
Hey, everybody! I'm Oscar Lewis and
I've got great news!

All eyes turn to this man in hope.

IVANA BELOVED BAYOU
Are we being rescued?

OSCAR LEWIS
No. I just saved a ton of money on
my car insurance by switching to
Gecko!

TWO MEN IN WHITE COATS rush in and surround Oscar. Then the men move back and Oscar is laced up in a straitjacket. The men escort Oscar out of the mall as the crowd cheers.

On the upper level, Michelangelo Jones straps Henry Harris into a harness attached to rappelling equipment.

HENRY HARRIS
I have a feeling this will work.

Gingerly, Henry steps over the railing and successfully rappels a few feet, but then he's hanging alongside the escalator, not close enough to do anything. He dangles there for several moments as he surveys his situation.

HENRY HARRIS

Okay. Plan C.

He rappels to the lower level. Henry and Michelangelo walk dejectedly back to the utility room as Leonardo Di Crappio walks to the bottom of the escalator.

LEONARDO DI CRAPPIO

(through megaphone)

Continue to not panic. I repeat,
continue to not panic.

Everyone panics.

INT. RGB-TV NEWS STUDIO

Behind Steve Scott and a middle-aged man, PAUL UPPITY, is the GRAPHIC: "Escalator Safety."

The CRAWL continues: "Michael Jackson returns to original face," "OJ concludes tour of US golf courses for killer; next stop: Canada," etc.

STEVE SCOTT

Our guest is Paul Uppity from the
Escalator Safety Foundation.
Welcome.

SUPER: Paul Uppity, Historical Figure 8

PAUL UPPITY

Glad to be here, Steve.

STEVE SCOTT

What can you tell us about the
history of escalators?

PAUL UPPITY

Jesse Reno invented the escalator
in 1897. That same year, Charles
Seeberger installed the first one
at Coney Island as an amusement
ride. Seeberger later joined the
Otis Elevator Company to produce
the first commercial escalator,
which won a first prize at the 1900
Exposition Universelle in Paris.

STEVE SCOTT

Yeah, yeah, yeah. But how many lives have been lost on these killer conveyances?

PAUL UPPITY

Well, there was the King's Cross fire in London in 1897. Originally, the stairs on escalators were made of wood, but now they're metal, which doesn't burn.

INSERT

The functioning "down" escalator with various TEAM MASCOTS, BEDOUINS in desert garb and a SYNCHRONIZED SWIM TEAM traveling to the lower level.

PAUL UPPITY

Escalators have an incredible safety record. There are over 30,000 escalators in the United States with over 90 billion riders a year. That means escalators move the equivalent of the US population every two days.

STEVE SCOTT

Where do they move to?

PAUL UPPITY

Well, up or down.

STEVE SCOTT

Seems rather pointless moving that many people without them going somewhere like New Jersey. Tell me, why did this particular escalator break down?

PAUL UPPITY

I don't know.

STEVE SCOTT

(to camera)

Escalators. They burn people, move them around pointlessly and break down without warning or reason. We return now to the disaster scene.

INT. SANTA CALIFORNIA GALLERIA MALL

New picket signs appear in the crowd: "More chlorine in the gene pool," and "Unfair to short, ugly, stupid people!"

On the "down" escalator in the b.g. are a CHURCH CHOIR in robes, CROSSING GUARDS with stop signs, NUNS, PRIESTS, VIKINGS in horned helmets and NURSES.

James Van Edward touches his back pocket, then gets a horrified look on his face.

JAMES VAN EDWARD

My wallet's gone! Somebody's picked my pocket!

(turning to Walden)

It was you! Empty your pockets!

WALDEN ROHRER

What makes you think it was me?

JAMES VAN EDWARD

(gesturing at Father O'Flanagan)

He's a Jewish priest. You do the math!

WALDEN ROHRER

What math?

JAMES VAN EDWARD

Him minus my wallet equals you took it!

WALDEN ROHRER

There's nineteen other people on this escalator.

JAMES VAN EDWARD

But they aren't standing next to me.

Cameron James sees a hand waving at him beside the top of a green elf's hat.

WILLIE ESCARGOT

Hey, you haven't interviewed me, yet.

CAMERON JAMES

(to camera)

We've just discovered a third child
on the escalator.

WILLIE ESCARGOT

No, I'm a little person.

CAMERON JAMES

All children are little people.

WILLIE ESCARGOT

But I'm thirty-eight years old!

The crowd begins to hum "Battle Hymn of the Republic" softly
in the b.g. as an American flag drops down behind Cameron and
the lights dim.

CAMERON JAMES

Children want to grow up quickly
but parents want their children to
remain forever young. Then those
same lovable kids grow into
rebellious teenagers and parents
can't wait for them to move out. If
they graduate, the kids get entry-
level jobs and crummy apartments in
a bad part of town where they party
all the time, until they lose their
jobs and are forced to move back in
with their parents. The parents
wonder how they managed to raise
kids without a work ethic who won't
take responsibility for their own
actions. Eventually, the parents
get old and the ungrateful kids
stick them in a nursing home and go
to court to battle over who gets
their folks' 401K and the house.

(a beat)

This, my friends, is America.

Ruth Brannigan hears this monologue and is appalled.

RUTH BRANNIGAN

(to Willie)

You should be ashamed of yourself,
young man.

WILLIE ESCARGOT

But, I ---

CAMERON JAMES

This is Cameron James, live at the
Mall 21 DeathWatch.

At the bottom of the escalator, Victor Cousineau is ranting
to Ivana Beloved Bayou.

VICTOR COUSINEAU

It's the crooked politicians, I
tell you. Socialist fascist
philanderers, every one of them.
I'm sure they're responsible for
this breakdown. Probably took money
from the maintenance fund to pay
for a two-thousand dollar toilet
seat for Congress. And the aliens!
Oh, don't get me started on the
aliens. The government says there
aren't any, so why is Area 51 such
a big secret?

IVANA BELOVED BAYOU

It's not. Everybody knows about
Area 51.

Suddenly, Genevieve clutches her chest and sits down on her
step.

VICTOR COUSINEAU

What's the matter with you?

GENEVIEVE COUSINEAU

I don't feel very good. I have some
pain in my chestal area.

Cameron James rushes to the bottom of the escalator.

CAMERON JAMES

It appears we have our first
fatality. Baroness Genevieve
Cousineau is having a fatal heart
attack.

GENEVIEVE COUSINEAU

I don't know if it's my heart. I
just don't feel so good. And I'm an
American now.

CAMERON JAMES

But everyone in America is from
someplace else.

PATRIOTIC MUSIC begins to play and people in the crowd place their hands over their hearts and wave flags.

CAMERON JAMES

(to camera)

We're part of a melted pot here in America. Unlike other countries in other worlds, in the U. S. of A., we all are melted together, like chocolate. Regular chocolate and white chocolate... and Reese's Pieces.

(a beat as MUSIC ENDS)

A pending fatal heart attack? Only time will tell. And this lady. She'll have to tell us. Just this lady and time will tell. Then I'll tell you because that's my job.

INT. BLANK FAMILY HOME

The Blank Family is gathered around the television set watching the drama at the mall unfold. They're munching popcorn and chips and wearing "Free the Mall 21" t-shirts.

INT. RGB-TV NEWS STUDIO

The GRAPHIC behind Amy Daiwoo reads: "News For the Less Abled."

The CRAWL continues: "LA suffers 1.0 earthquake. Old man falls down," "Biologists declare Donald Trump's hair a new life form," etc.

SUPER: Amy Daiwoo. Again.

AMY DAIWOO

Now, Barbara Lindstrom will translate this story into American Sign Language for our blind viewers.

SUPER: Barbara Lindstrom, Talking Hands Expert

BARBARA LINDSTROM signs the following. There are no subtitles.

BARBARA LINDSTROM

(in sign language)

Twenty-one really stupid people are stuck on an escalator.

(MORE)

BARBARA LINDSTROM(cont'd)

Yes, an escalator. Talk about "less abled!" Back to you, Amy.

AMY DAIWOO

(mouthing the words)

Thank you, Barbara.

(in her regular voice)

And now, we go to Brother Theophylline, a monk from Chip, South Dakota.

BROTHER THEOPHYLLINE, in monk's robes, has taken a vow of silence and communicates through facial expressions. He shakes his head, looks very sad, then confused, smiles and then shrugs and gives a "so what?" look.

AMY DAIWOO

Thank you, Brother Theophylline.

That was eloquent.

(a beat)

Our Cameron James has another interview with one of the unfortunate victims.

INT. SANTA CALIFORNIA GALLERIA MALL

On the "down" escalator in the b.g. are MARILYN MONROE, OLD ENGLISH MINSTRELS, FLAMENCO DANCERS, ASTRONAUTS, ESKIMOS in parkas and an AMISH FAMILY.

CAMERON JAMES

And who are you?

TEN CENTS

Ten Cents.

CAMERON JAMES

I'm not paying you anything. You have to do TV interviews for free.

TEN CENTS

It's my name, man.

CAMERON JAMES

Are you one of those gangsta Christmas wrappers? How come you charge so much to wrap presents?

TEN CENTS

Are you serious?

CAMERON JAMES

I'm always serious. I'm Cameron James, RGB-TV news reporter.

TEN CENTS

No. I'm a street guy from the 'hood.

BRADLEY SALISBERRY

Excuse me, but I heard you on your cell phone talking about negotiations with your employees.

TEN CENTS

Okay, I'm not a street guy, but I pretend to be one on the weekends. I've got to have some street cred, man. Got to hang with the brothers.

BRADLEY SALISBERRY

That's fine, but you shouldn't lie to the American public.

TEN CENTS

(to camera)

Sorry, public.

CAMERON JAMES

A gangsta Christmas wrapper with amnesia. Strange but true.

Donatello looks Ivana up and down, seemingly confused.

DONATELLO ESPERANTO

(to Ivana)

For some reason, I do not think you are aware of who I am. You have not complimented me once.

IVANA BELOVED BAYOU

Oh, I get it. You're stuck here without your entourage. Nobody's worshipped you in minutes and you're just dying for a compliment. Right?

DONATELLO ESPERANTO

I am handsome and talented, no? You do not wish to adore me?

IVANA BELOVED BAYOU

You need to learn to love yourself.

DONATELLO ESPERANTO
But I have people for that!

IVANA BELOVED BAYOU
Why should you care what others
think? You shouldn't need people
around to feed your ego.

DONATELLO ESPERANTO
No one to adore me? You must be
mad!

Victor Cousineau continues to rant to Genevieve, still
sitting on her step, clutching her chest.

VICTOR COUSINEAU
We had to come to the mall.
Couldn't stay home like normal
people.

GENEVIEVE COUSINEAU
There was a sale. How could I know
what would happen?

VICTOR COUSINEAU
These things are death traps. What
happened to good old-fashioned
stairs? Probably some illegal
aliens work here and can't read
English, so the maintenance doesn't
get done right.

INT. RGB-TV NEWS STUDIO

Steve Scott is at the anchor desk. He tosses the anchor onto
the floor as a FLOOD OF WATER rushes in. The GRAPHIC behind
him reads, "Mall 21 DeathWatch Continues."

The CRAWL continues: "Crocodile Hunter eaten by alligator,"
"Europa signs Sea World franchise deal," etc.

STEVE SCOTT
And now a station break.

SFX: GLASS SHATTERING

NEWS PROMO

MONTAGE of news footage
1) a fire,
2) tornado,

- 3) a car accident,
- 4) earthquake damage,
- 5) someone barbecuing.

The heads of Amy Daiwoo and Steve Scott float across these images.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
North, East, West and South. News
equals "things that happen." At RGB-
TV, we tell you about the news.

AMY DAIWOO
News can affect your life, like
rain or if gas prices go up.

STEVE SCOTT
News is knowing about things, so we
read the news to you.

ANNOUNCER
There's a lot of news so we have
more than one reporter.

Warren Wingfield's head floats in.

WARREN WINGFIELD
I fly the telecopter.

Jimmy Cloud's head floats in.

JIMMY CLOUD
I stand in front of the weather
map.

Bob Score's head floats in.

BOB SCORE
I show you pictures of ath-a-letes
in action.

Though the screen is crowded with heads, the heads of Bill Hill, Samantha Scarborough and Cameron James float in. The heads bump into each other, grimacing and scowling.

BILL HILL, SAMANTHA SCARBOROUGH AND
CAMERON JAMES
We are team coverage.

ANNOUNCER
RGB-TV, News 8. We tell you more
than you want to know.

INT. SANTA CALIFORNIA GALLERIA MALL

Cameron James send the boom mic up to Ermine Sachet Pettiforbes Getty and Peter Sufferflesh.

On the "down" escalator in the b.g. are ABRAHAM LINCOLN and GEORGE WASHINGTON, LAS VEGAS SHOWGIRLS in headdresses, LITTLE GIRLS IN TUTUS and a CIRCUS RINGMASTER.

CAMERON JAMES
(to Ermine)
And you are?

PETER SUFFERFLESH
Young man, you're addressing the
richest woman on the planet.

Ermine slaps Peter.

ERMINE SACHET PETTIFORBES GETTY
I can speak for myself.
(to Cameron)
I am Ermine Sachet Pettiforbes
Getty. Young man, I resent being
detained here. I implore you to get
this contraption moving.

CAMERON JAMES
I'm not a maintenance man. I'm the
star reporter for RGB-TV.

ERMINE SACHET PETTIFORBES GETTY
Have you reported this fiasco to
someone who can make repairs?

CAMERON JAMES
No. He's bowling.

ERMINE SACHET PETTIFORBES GETTY
Then you haven't been a very good
reporter, have you? You should be
fired. I don't suffer malfeasance
gladly.

PETER SUFFERFLESH
She certainly doesn't.

Ermine slaps Peter again.

ERMINE SACHET PETTIFORBES GETTY
Speak when you're spoken to.

PETER SUFFERFLESH

Yes, ma'am.

CAMERON JAMES

(to Peter)

And you are?

PETER SUFFERFLESH

Peter Sufferflesh.

CAMERON JAMES

You have an accent, I hear.

PETER SUFFERFLESH

I was a flagellant monk in Great Britain before I retired and came into Madame's service ten years ago.

CAMERON JAMES

You know, you can take EX-Gas for that flagellence.

PETER SUFFERFLESH

I'm not flatulent, young man. I was a flagellant. I used to whip myself.

CAMERON JAMES

You should report yourself for abuse.

Suddenly, a BABY CRIES. Ellen Wilson picks up her daughter.

ELLEN WILSON

Oh, my! She's hungry and I need to breast-feed her.

There is a loud collective gasp.

CHRISTY HUNTINGTON

Daddy, she's going to expose herself!

At the bottom of the escalator, Bradley Salisbury whips off his yellow coat and hands it to Ten Cents, who passes it up the escalator.

BRADLEY SALISBERRY

(to Ellen)

Use this to cover yourself, ma'am.

The coat finally reaches Ellen and she puts it over herself. The BABY STOPS CRYING, replaced by LOUD "GLUG, GLUG" SOUNDS. Everyone applauds.

CAMERON JAMES

Another brave, selfless act by our war hero. A coat he could have used as shelter on the battlefield has been donated to cover a meal site.

INT. RGB-TV NEWS STUDIO

MARY MARCIA STEWART is with Amy Daiwoo. The GRAPHIC behind them reads: "Disaster Fashion."

The CRAWL continues: "Archaeologists discover bones of Neanderthal attorney clutching coins," "Scientists conclude mental health will be the end of civilization as we know it," etc.

AMY DAIWOO

Mary Marcia Stewart is here to tell us about disaster fashion. Mary Marcia?

SUPER: Mary Marcia Stewart, Disaster Fashion Expert

MARY MARCIA STEWART

Thank you, Amy. It's difficult to look your best when you're trapped on an escalator. After only a few minutes of panic, your clothes tend to wrinkle from perspiration. I recommend a light fabric, such as cotton, which wicks moisture away from the body and cools you off. Stay away from dark colors as they tend to look somber and may depress you. So, when you're involved in an escalator disaster, wear light-colored cotton to look and feel your best.

AMY DAIWOO

Thank you, Mary Marcia. And now, we'll pause for a word from our network.

PROGRAM PROMO: LAW AND ORDER SUV

An SUV pulls to a stop on a dark street. Police cars, their lights flashing, are in the b.g. DETECTIVE JOHN SMITH and DETECTIVE PATRICE THOMAS get out of the car and move out of frame. The camera remains on the vehicle.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

On the next Law and Order: SUV ---

DETECTIVE JOHN SMITH (O.C.)

My, God. Look at that. It's horrible.

DETECTIVE PATRICE THOMAS (O.C.)

In all my years on the force, I've never seen anything like it.

DETECTIVE JOHN SMITH (O.C.)

How did they get the body to do that?

Moments later, they return to the car.

DETECTIVE PATRICE THOMAS

Now we know just how cruel one human being can be.

They get into the SUV and drive off.

The SUV pulls into the driveway of a residential home. The detectives get out of the car, their guns drawn, and move out of frame. There are SCREAMS and a GUNSHOT, but the camera remains on the SUV.

ANNOUNCER

Law and Order: SUV. The crime, the detectives and the vehicle they drive. Watch new reruns every Sunday night at nine on RGB-TV.

INT. SANTA CALIFORNIA GALLERIA MALL

YOUNG GIRLS continue to place flowers and other mementos on the massive memorial. Many girls are wearing T-shirts with "We Love Brad" and "Bradley Salisbury Mall Tour." BUDDHIST MONKS are chanting and a PRIEST is conducting communion.

On the "down" escalator in the b.g. are UNCLE SAM, KEYSTONE COPS, ENGLISH BEEFEATERS and an EAST INDIAN SNAKE CHARMER.

Cameron James interviews one of the girls, LATOYA UNDERWOOD, who is wearing a "Brad is Hot" T-shirt.

CAMERON JAMES

I see you're wearing a T-shirt.

LATOYA UNDERWOOD

And you're wearing a cheap suit.
Who are you? The fashion police?

CAMERON JAMES

You appear to be a fan of our
soldier, Bradley Salisbury Steak.

LATOYA UNDERWOOD

He's a fireman. He's a real hero,
even if he didn't make it to the
top of the escalator. He's a
gentleman, too. He passed his coat
up to that lady who was going to
get naked.

CAMERON JAMES

(to camera)

Young girls wearing T-shirts to
support an almost-hero. This is
America at its best.

Back on the escalator, Bradley Salisbury speaks to TEN
CENTS.

BRADLEY SALISBERRY

Excuse me, but are you ashamed that
you're a successful black
businessman?

TEN CENTS

Of course not. Well, maybe a
little. But I worked hard to get
where I am.

BRADLEY SALISBERRY

On a stalled escalator?

(a beat)

Well, Mr. Cents, you should be
proud of what you've accomplished.
You should be a role model for
black children, like actor Will
Smith. What kind of business are
you in?

TEN CENTS

I manufacture feminine hygiene products.

BRADLEY SALISBERRY

Well, there you go! You could be the Will Smith of tampons.

Farther up the escalator, James Van Edward and Walden Rohrer are still discussing James' missing wallet when a boom mike appears over Walden's head. The two men look up to see Samantha Scarborough.

SAMANTHA SCARBOROUGH

Our next victim is ---

JAMES VAN EDWARD

A criminal! A pick-pocket! A thief!

SAMANTHA SCARBOROUGH

Not you. The guy next to you.

JAMES VAN EDWARD

That's who I'm talking about.

Walden glances down, bends over and picks up a wallet from where it has fallen on the step. He hands it to James.

WALDEN ROHRER

You dropped your wallet. It was on the step.

JAMES VAN EDWARD

Oh, uh. Thank you.

WALDEN ROHRER

You owe me an apology.

JAMES VAN EDWARD

I'm very sorry.

WALDEN ROHRER

Ah, never mind. It's the story of my life.

(in a higher voice)

"Walden, you stole my car."

(in his own voice)

It's in the driveway.

(in a higher voice)

"Walden, you took my diamond necklace."

(in his own voice)

You're wearing it.

(MORE)

WALDEN ROHRER(cont'd)

(a beat)

I'm just a glutton for destiny.

JAMES VAN EDWARD

Sorry, but you look guilty of something.

WALDEN ROHRER

It's been like this since I had that Extreme Makeover. They don't tell you that when they fix your protruding chin, repair your nose, give you porcelain veneers and liposuction that you're going to look so innocent, people will assume you're hiding something.

JAMES VAN EDWARD

You had an Extreme Makeover? What did you look like before?

Walden pulls a photo out of his wallet and hands it to James, who cringes.

JAMES VAN EDWARD

Wow. You were butt ugly, man. They did an awesome job on you.

WALDEN ROHRER

Right. Now I'm a good looking suspect.

JAMES VAN EDWARD

Maybe you look guilty because you don't feel you deserve to look so good. I mean, you didn't pay for any of it, right?

WALDEN ROHRER

Right.

JAMES VAN EDWARD

Well, that could be the problem. You look guilty because, inside, you feel guilty.

WALDEN ROHRER

You know, that makes sense. It's hard getting used to people looking at you because you're handsome rather than because you're hideous.

(a beat)

Thanks, man. I feel better already.

JAMES VAN EDWARD
You're looking more innocent, too.

SAMANTHA SCARBOROUGH
Facing a gory, painful death, a man
comes to grips with how handsome he
is. Sometimes, beauty is only on
top of your skin, on the
upperdermis. Now back to Amy
Daiwoo.

Henry Harris and Michelangelo Jones drag a large wooden
ladder to the side of the escalator below James Van Edward.
Henry slowly ascends the ladder, but when he reaches the top
rung, it breaks. James grabs Henry's hand and holds onto him
as the ladder collapses to the floor. The crowd gasps.

Walden Rohrer extends his hand to Henry, then Peter
Sufferflesh reaches out his hand and Henry takes it. Each
victim extends a hand and Henry grasps each in turn, making
his way slowly down the escalator. The crowd applauds as he
reaches the ground.

HENRY HARRIS
Okay. Plan D.

LEONARDO DI CRAPPIO
(through megaphone)
Do not panic. Continue to not
panic.

Everyone panics.

INT. RGB-TV NEWS STUDIO

Amy Daiwoo is at the anchor desk. The GRAPHIC behind Amy
reads: "Sports Disaster."

AMY DAIWOO
We have breaking news from the
Santana High School Coliseum where
the Civil War game is being played
tonight. With the latest is Bob
Score.

EXT. SANTANA HIGH SCHOOL COLISEUM

The Santana Sentinels football team are wearing football
helmets, but are dressed in Union Army uniforms.

Their opponents, the Mahatma Gandhi Rebels, wear Confederate uniforms. The teams make a play as a CANNON on the sidelines goes off.

BOB SCORE (O.C.)

In a night of tragedies, here's a few more. I'm at Santana High School Coliseum where the Santana Sentinels were ahead fourteen to zipo when the cheerleading squad attempted a pyramid with the expected results.

CHEERLEADERS are lying in a mangled heap on the sidelines. An ambulance roars across the football field, lights flashing and SIRENS WAILING, hitting several FOOTBALL PLAYERS who soar through the air.

BOB SCORE (O.C.)

Without Christy Huntington and Jennifer Whitmer, the pyramid collapsed into this unsightly pile of pom-poms and human debris.

The ambulance stops and AMBULANCE ATTENDANTS hop out, rushing to aid the cheerleaders.

BOB SCORE

(to camera)

I'm here with head coach Uvula S. Grant.

(to Uvula)

Coach, how will this affect the game?

UVULA S. GRANT

Oh, the game continues on. Even though this cheerleader thing is distracting, we have to keep playing. There's a clock involved here, Bob.

Bob Score and Uvula S. Grant suddenly freeze, with smiles on their faces, as MATTHEW BRADY takes their picture with an 1860s vintage camera.

BOB SCORE

We're joined now by assistant coach, Kennedy Lincoln.

KENNEDY LINCOLN

Four scores and seven downs ago ---

Uvula S. Grant shoves Kennedy Lincoln out of the way. In the b.g., the Ambulance Attendants extract cheerleaders from the pile. Each cheerleader retains a mangled pose.

UVULA S. GRANT

We'll have to do without cheers for the balance of the game and that's going to be unpleasant.

BOB SCORE

We don't know how many injuries or deaths there are yet, but the game continues, so there's still time. We'll have more as this mess of human flesh and pom-poms is untangled. Live from Santana High School Coliseum, I'm Bob Score, RGB-TV News.

INT. SANTA CALIFORNIA GALLERIA MALL

GORDON BAEZ MITCHELL steps to the front of the crowd, playing a guitar and singing.

On the "down" escalator in the b.g. are QUEEN VICTORIA, SIGMUND FREUD, 1920s FLAPPERS and GANGSTERS, STAND-UP COMEDIANS speaking into microphones, BELLY DANCERS and BULLFIGHTERS waving their capes.

GORDON BAEZ MITCHELL

(singing)

Back in the beginning of the Millennium,
Went to the mall to get a pack of gum,
Got on the escalator and it stalled,
Thought it was the end and the angels called.

The crowd sways back and forth in time to the music.

GORDON BAEZ MITCHELL

Escalator, a one-way trip to hell,
Escalator, Man, you never can tell.

(a beat)

Trapped on a stairway that wouldn't go
With a lot of losers I didn't know
Goin' nowhere and getting there fast,

(MORE)

GORDON BAEZ MITCHELL(cont'd)

Hoped each breath wouldn't be my
last.

(a beat)

Escalator, Going up or goin' down.
Escalator, the worst ride in town.

(a beat)

Twenty people had the ride of their
life,
A Jewish priest, Santa and a
pregnant ex-wife,
A drag queen, a psychic and two old
dames,
A lot of other people, can't recall
their names.

(a beat)

Escalator, you've got nowhere to
go.

Escalator. Where it stops, you'll
never know.

The crowd applauds.

CAMERON JAMES

That was nearly adequate, young
man. Who are you and why?

GORDON BAEZ MITCHELL

I'm Gordon Baez Mitchell and I
wrote this song because I didn't
make the cut on American Idol and I
wanted Simon to see what he missed.
I also wanted to perform for the
fans who are going buy my CDs.

CAMERON JAMES

What's the title of your CD?

GORDON BAEZ MITCHELL

Well, I don't have one yet.

CAMERON JAMES

A heartfelt tribute to the Mall 21
by a young, unsuccessful folk
singer with no CDs.

(a beat)

Now back to the studio and Ernie
Schultzenegger, our fitness expert.

INT. RGB-TV NEWS STUDIO

ERNIE SCHULTZENEGGER, an imposing muscle man, is seated at
the anchor desk beside Steve Scott. Behind them is the
GRAPHIC: "Disaster Fitness."

The CRAWL continues, "Illegal U.S. aliens flooding into Canada," "Scientists rename Uranus 'Wally'; tired of kids laughing and making jokes," etc.

SUPER: Ernie Schultzenegger, Fitness Expert

ERNIE SCHULTZENEGGER

(in an Austrian accent)

Thank you, Cameron James. I owe you.

(a beat)

Keeping fit is something we should all do in case we have to save people trapped on escalators, in burning buildings or from under heavy household appliances. And if you are fit, people may put you in movies or elect you to a public office.

(a beat)

But you have to start somewhere, so let's start with clenching our buttocks to build a firm hiney. Okay, clench. Unclench. See how easy? Do it again. Clench. Unclench. Looking good. Watch out behind you!

(laughs)

Just a little joke. This is Ernie Shultzenegger, looking good and feeling fit.

INT. RGB-TV NEWS STUDIO

The GRAPHIC behind Amy Daiwoo reads: "They're all out to get me." At the end of the desk is BARRY DINGLE, a disheveled mess.

The CRAWL continues: "Mars not really red, say scientists; more orangey," "Middle East halts fighting; says it's tired," etc.

AMY DAIWOO

And now our own Barry Dingle will provide a translation of this breaking story in Polaroid Schizophrenic.

BARRY DINGLE

(rapidly)

That man is looking at me. Where's my money?

(MORE)

BARRY DINGLE(cont'd)

The telephone company is sending signals into my head. Yellow and green make twenty-five. They tell me it's medicine, but I know they're trying to poison me.

AMY DAIWOO

Thank you, Barry.

BARRY DINGLE

You're welcome, Amy.

INT. SANTA CALIFORNIA GALLERIA MALL

Tommy Wilson slams his plastic hammer against the legs of Christy Huntington and Jennifer Whitmer.

On the "down" escalator in the b.g. are GOLFERS in plaid pants, NAZIS saluting each other, MEDIEVAL PEASANTS, JAPANESE GEISHAS and KKK MEMBERS in white robes.

CHRISTY HUNTINGTON

Ouch! You little menace, you're going to make marks on my legs!

JENNIFER WHITMER

Stop hitting me! You're a munchkin from hell!

WILLIE ESCARGOT

Watch your language up there!

Cameron James thrusts a microphone at Maurice Molina.

CAMERON JAMES

Santa, what will happen if you don't survive this ordeal? Who will deliver my Christmas presents?

MAURICE MOLINA

I'm not really ---

WILLIE ESCARGOT

(in a loud whisper)

Remember the children!

MAURICE MOLINA

--- sure who will deliver them. Maybe Fed-Ex.

CAMERON JAMES

Can't the reindeer fly in here and rescue you?

MAURICE MOLINA
(confused)
They aren't allowed indoors?

CAMERON JAMES
Wait a minute. Aren't you from the
Italian incontinent?

MAURICE MOLINA
No. I'm Hispanic.

CAMERON JAMES
Oh, okay.
(to camera)
A tanned Santa Claus from Hispania
prepares to end his career on the
escalator of death.

A VENDOR is walking through the crowd selling his wares.

VENDOR
Get your popcorn, peanuts, Pepsi
and programs right here! You can't
know who's a victim without your
program!

CAMERON JAMES
There seems to be a hubbub from the
crowd.

CROWD
Hubbub, hubbub, hubbub.

CAMERON JAMES
Yes, we have three famous religion
persons entering the mall.

Evangelist BILLY CRACKER, THE POPE and JESSE JEFFERSON gather
around Cameron.

REV. BILLY CRACKER
God said, "What goeth up, cometh
down --- eventually," Revelations
24:7" and I think He's probably
right about that.

JESSE JEFFERSON
I am reminded of Jacob's Ladder,
ascending to heaven, only this one
isn't moving.

THE POPE

I bring blessings from Roma and the
world that you are soon rescued,
except for that turncoat Father
O'Flanagan. Rot in hell, traitor!

INT. RGB-TV NEWS STUDIO

The GRAPHIC behind Steve Scott reads: "Has-Beens Get
Involved."

The CRAWL continues with "Antarctic study concludes eating
fish good for penguins," "Buddhists admit Buddha was
overweight," etc.

STEVE SCOTT

Response to the Mall 21 DeathWatch
has been swift and gratifying.
We've just received a check for
\$42.57 from the Cancelled Talk Show
Hosts Benefit Fund. On behalf of
the Mall 21, we thank Sharon
Osbourne, Arsenio Hall, Wayne
Brady, Joan Rivers, Chevy Chase and
others whose talk shows were
cancelled. Their shows are gone,
but they're still here. Now back to
Cameron.

INT. SANTA CALIFORNIA GALLERIA MALL

Cameron James sends the boom mic up to Jackie Toyota.

On the "down" escalator in the b.g. are NAPOLEON, ELVIS in a
dirty white jumpsuit, trying not to be noticed, a LION TAMER
with a chair and whip, and DUTCH GIRLS in wooden shoes.

CAMERON JAMES

We'll now be talking to a thin
woman of Hindu descent who is
suspiciously fat.

JACKIE TOYOTA

I'm Japanese-American and I'm not
fat. I'm going to have a baby.

CAMERON JAMES

Right now?

JACKIE TOYOTA

Not this minute. I'm due next week.

CAMERON JAMES
And where is the father?

JACKIE TOYOTA
He's, well, let's just say he's
otherwise occupied.

CAMERON JAMES
He's occupied.
(a beat, then to camera)
A fat, thin woman whose husband is
in an occupied restroom. Yet
another victim and a half at the
Mall 21 DeathWatch.

James Van Edward looks up at Ruth Brannigan.

JAMES VAN EDWARD
I'm sorry I was abrupt with you
earlier.

RUTH BRANNIGAN
I shouldn't have intruded. I guess
you don't have much privacy, do
you? Dead people wanting to get
through day and night---

JAMES VAN EDWARD
Well, I think I have your husband
coming through. Who's John?

RUTH BRANNIGAN
That's him. That's my dead husband.

JAMES VAN EDWARD
I don't know quite how to put this,
but he's showing me a potato on a
living room sofa. He wants you to
stop watching so much TV.

RUTH BRANNIGAN
Except for your show.

JAMES VAN EDWARD
Of course.

RUTH BRANNIGAN
He's just upset because I finally
have control of the remote.

JAMES VAN EDWARD
And who is Frank?

PHYLLIS GROSS
That's *my* dead husband.

JAMES VAN EDWARD
He wonders what you did with the
moose head in the den. He wants it
put back.

PHYLLIS GROSS
He doesn't have to look at it all
day, so tell him it's history.

JAMES VAN EDWARD
(to Father O'Flanagan)
This might be for you. It's a
father figure and he's making me
feel like you're changing hats. He
says to go with the small hat. But
you might want to change your name.

FATHER IRVING O'FLANAGAN
I guess Rabbi O'Flanagan doesn't
work for him.

JAMES VAN EDWARD
I'm getting a mother figure. Ellie,
Elaine---

MAURICE MOLINA
Elise. My mom.

JAMES VAN EDWARD
She's making me feel like she's
proud of you.
(a beat)
They're coming in fast! Victor,
your mother says to shut your trap.
Ivana, your grandmother says, "go
to Italy and lose the blue eye
shadow." Genevieve, Uncle Guillaume
says "grow a spine." Willie, your
father says, "take the job."

WILLIE ESCARGOT
What job?

IVANA BELOVED BAYOU
Italy?

JAMES VAN EDWARD
They're pulling back their energy.
Thank you.

Everyone applauds.

WILLIE ESCARGOT

What job?

TEN CENTS

I was planning to offer you a job in my feminine hygiene products factory. It's amazing how he knew that.

WILLIE ESCARGOT

I'm not a factory worker.

TEN CENTS

You were a doctor at one time, right? Well, I need a medical consultant for my products. Nice office, good pay ---

WILLIE ESCARGOT

Thanks. I accept. Say, do you have something for my good friend, Maurice?

TEN CENTS

Sure. We'll find Santa a good gig.

MAURICE MOLINA

That would be wonderful. You're a nice guy, Willie.

WILLIE ESCARGOT

Maybe we should do coffee some time.

MAURICE MOLINA

I think I see the beginning of a beautiful friendship.

INT. RGB-TV NEWS STUDIO

The GRAPHIC behind Amy Daiwoo reads, "The World Talks Back."

The CRAWL continues: "Scientists say ducks walk funny due to large flat feet," "HMOs to put patient needs before profits," "Hell experiences unseasonably cool weather," etc.

SUPER: I wonder what else is on television?

AMY DAIWOO

For more response from the concerned people of the world, we go to Dr. Albert Chandra, one of the brave astronauts on the Space Station orbiting high above the earth.

INT. SPACE STATION - NIGHT

DR. ALBERT CHANDRA is in a confined area on the space station, next to a window looking out into space.

DR. ALBERT CHANDRA

The astronauts and cosmonauts here on the space station wish you a rapid rescue. As we travel above this glorious world ---

He glances out the window to see a large asteroid is hurtling toward the space station. He turns back to the camera with a look of terror on his face.

DR. ALBERT CHANDRA

Oh, oh.

The screen goes dark.

INT. RGB-TV NEWS STUDIO

Amy Daiwoo is joined by the distinguished DR. ROGER SOANDSO. The GRAPHIC reads: "No Place is Safe."

AMY DAIWOO

We seem to have a problem with our feed from Dr. Chandra. We'll try again later.

(a beat)

Here in the studio, we have a safety expert, Dr. Roger Soandso, to tell us about safe places to shop.

(to Dr. Soandso)

Doctor, is anyplace really safe?

SUPER: Dr. Roger Soandso, Safety Expert

DR. ROGER SOANDSO

Well, strip malls don't have escalators.

AMY DAIWOO

Thank you, Doctor. We now return to
the disaster at the mall.

INT. SANTA CALIFORNIA GALLERIA MALL

On the "down" escalator in the b.g. are a BASKETBALL TEAM
tormenting JOCKEYS, CIRQUE DU SOLEIL CONTORTIONISTS and
SCANDINAVIANS in traditional costume.

PETER SUFFERFLESH

Madam, you haven't struck me in
minutes. Are you unwell?

ERMINE SACHET PETTIFORBES GETTY

I've just discovered I'm a bit
claustrophobic.

(she gasps)

The walls are closing in!

PETER SUFFERFLESH

There are no walls, madam. Just
take deep breaths and the feeling
will pass. I'm confident we'll be
rescued soon.

ERMINE SACHET PETTIFORBES GETTY

You are?

PETER SUFFERFLESH

Of course. Besides, what's the
worst that can happen? I'll be
trapped forever next to an
intelligent, beautiful, cultured
woman.

(a beat)

Sure, I'd be forced to speak at
intervals with that cretin
reporter, but ---

ERMINE SACHET PETTIFORBES GETTY

You really care about me, don't
you, Peter?

PETER SUFFERFLESH

Yes. I do.

ERMINE SACHET PETTIFORBES GETTY

Would it be wrong? A wealthy widow
and her lower-class, impoverished
chauffeur? Together?

PETER SUFFERFLESH

No, madam. So long as you thrash me
on occasion.

Ermine slugs Peter hard, almost knocking him over. He smiles gratefully.

At the top of the escalator, Ellen Wilson notices her son, Tommy, fidgeting.

TOMMY WILSON

Mommy, I gotta pee!

ELLEN WILSON

Honey, you can hold it a little longer.

TOMMY WILSON

I gotta pee now!

Ellen Wilson puts a plastic diaper under Tommy's feet.

ELLEN WILSON

Here, stand on this so it doesn't drip down the escalator.

CHRISTY HUNTINGTON

Ewwwww!

SAMANTHA SCARBOROUGH

(to camera)

Amy, it appears Tommy Wilson has wet his pants. His mother has been calming the distended child.

(to Ellen)

Mrs. Wilson, what caused this?

ELLEN WILSON

Tommy had a glass of lemonade at that corn dog place where they have those big vats with lemons floating in them.

SAMANTHA SCARBOROUGH

I see.

ELLEN WILSON

Well, when you're a little guy, like my Tommy, one big glass of lemonade is about all he can hold.

SAMANTHA SCARBOROUGH
So he evaluated his bladder in his
pants.

ELLEN WILSON
He wouldn't normally do that, but
there's no restroom here. I put one
of Sarah's diapers on the floor for
him to stand on so it doesn't leak
down the escalator.

CHRISTY HUNTINGTON
Ewww!

SAMANTHA SCARBOROUGH
(to Jennifer)
What's your reaction to this
dampness, Miss Whitmer?

JENNIFER WHITMER
It's disgusting! I can smell the
pee!

CHRISTY HUNTINGTON
Dad-dy! There's pee up here!

Oliver Bishop Huntington IV has been talking on his cell
phone. He slams the phone shut when he hears his daughter and
turns to Cameron James.

OLIVER BISHOP HUNTINGTON IV
Pee? Good heavens! What else does
my poor, sweet girl have to endure?
(to camera)
I repeat my offer. One hundred
thousand dollars to get my daughter
away from pee. Pee, I tell you!
Someone has to be able to help her!

Henry Harris and Michelangelo Jones are at the bottom of the
escalator, looking up at the victims. Henry sits down, opens
a box and, with Michelangelo's assistance, straps on a pair
of huge, unwieldy metal boots.

The boots are magnetic and with a resounding CLUNK,
Michelangelo's watch becomes "welded" to one boot. With great
difficulty, he pulls his arm free, but the watch remains
firmly attached.

Henry stands up and walks laboriously toward the escalator.
As he approaches, everyone's arms rise, their jewelry
attracted to the powerful magnet. One man's knee also rises.

Leonardo di Crappio salutes Henry, who has reached the escalator, then marches away. OMINOUS MUSIC fills the mall as the rescue attempt begins.

HENRY HARRIS
This has got to work.

With great difficulty, Henry lifts his right foot and holds it up next to the outside of the escalator. The magnetic boot instantly adheres to the metal. Carefully, Henry lifts his left foot and attaches it to the escalator. He's now standing upright in the boots, but horizontal to the floor.

LEONARDO DI CRAPPIO
Go rescue them, sir!

MICHELANGELO JONES
You can do it, Mr. Harris!

But, try as he may, Henry isn't moving. The magnets are so strong, he is unable to budge an inch.

HENRY HARRIS
Okay. On to Plan E.

LEONARDO DI CRAPPIO
(into megaphone)
Continue to not panic. I repeat,
continue to not panic.

Everyone panics.

INT. RGB-TV NEWS STUDIO

The CRAWL continues: "Donald Trump buys Iraq; plans to open DesertLand theme park," "Steven Wright cured, career in shambles," etc.

STEVE SCOTT
We'll return with continuing
coverage of this disaster.

AMY DAIWOO
What?

STEVE SCOTT
Someone has to pay our exorbitant
salaries.

AMY DAIWOO
Oh, right. We'll be back after a
few words from our sponsor.

SPONSOR PROMO

The SPONSOR is in front of a black backdrop.

SPONSOR
Kumquat. Existentialism. Weasel.

CELEBRITIES AND JUSTICE PROGRAM PROMO

A parade of CELEBRITIES, surrounded by POLICE OFFICERS and PAPARAZZI, leave a courthouse and walk by the camera, shielding their faces. Suddenly, the celebrities pull out cameras and start snapping photos of the Paparazzi, who cover their faces and hurry into waiting limousines.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
The next Celebrities and Justice brings you face-to-covered face with famous people who make a lot of money and then screw up their lives doing stupid stuff even your bozo brother wouldn't do.

(a beat)
See celebrities busted with twenty-dollar hookers, arrested for drug use, shoplifting and even for perjury. See them hiding their faces, ducking into limos and pretending to be innocent. All on the next Celebrities and Justice --- where you can gloat that you're better than they are.

INT. SANTA CALIFORNIA GALLERIA MALL

Genevieve Cousineau struggles and stands up. Cameron James rushes up.

On the "down" escalator in the b.g. are MOUNTAIN CLIMBERS and SHERPAS, COPS CHASING ROBBERS and a CYCLING TEAM.

CAMERON JAMES
And how are you feeling?

GENEVIEVE COUSINEAU
A little better, I think.

VICTOR COUSINEAU

Thank Dieu. I don't want to think about the medical bills we could have racked up. Damned HMOs have us by the family jewels.

CAMERON JAMES

The stoicism of this brave Bohemian queen is something to behold. Despite life-threatening heart pain, she's on her feet in a valiant effort to save her husband's hard-earned money.

GENEVIEVE COUSINEAU

I think I need to sit down again.

CAMERON JAMES

But bravery can only take us so far.

INT. RGB-TV NEWS STUDIO

ROBERTA WADDLE joins Amy Daiwoo at the anchor desk. The GRAPHIC behind them reads: "Disaster Make-Up."

The CRAWL continues: "Life discovered on 1,243,642,112 planets," "White, educated, English-speaking employees hired at convenience store; public stunned, confused," etc.

AMY DAIWOO

No matter what terrible situation you're in, your face shouldn't show it. Here with disaster make-up tips is Roberta Waddle.

SUPER: Roberta Waddle, Author "Wake Up Your Make-up."

ROBERTA WADDLE

Amy, without make-up, we'd look as bad as we do in the morning all day long.

GRAPHIC: a WOMAN with a dripping wet face.

ROBERTA WADDLE

Escalator air can be drying, so start with a good moisturizer. I recommend Elizabeth Revlon's Soggy Face. Next you need a good foundation.

GRAPHIC: a building under construction.

ROBERTA WADDLE

I've found Le Brick by L'Oreo to be quite good.

GRAPHIC: a woman's face with hideous bright green eye shadow. She's also wearing large, tacky Christmas tree earrings.

ROBERTA WADDLE

Eye shadow should be fun and geared to the season, so I suggest green for Christmas. And, top it all off with waterproof mascara ---

GRAPHIC: a weeping woman with black streaks covering her cheeks.

ROBERTA WADDLE

--- by Covered Girl to avoid those unsightly black streaks under your eyes that crying can cause.

(a beat)

That's all I'm going to tell you for free. For more great tips, buy my book, Wake Up Your Make-Up for \$24.95 at all your better book stores, and some lousy ones, too.

AMY DAIWOO

Thank you, Roberta. Just a reminder, tomorrow on Good Morning America Today, any survivors of this disaster will be the guests. They'll also appear on Jay and Letterman with the Survivor and American Idol rejects. So don't miss these exciting losers you've come to love.

(a beat)

Now back to the mall.

INT. SANTA CALIFORNIA GALLERIA MALL

Samantha Scarborough is with MARTIN LEMASTER, who is about to board the "down" escalator.

RACE CAR DRIVERS, GENGHIS KHAN and assorted BARBARIANS and CAN-CAN DANCERS are getting on the escalator.

SAMANTHA SCARBOROUGH

(to camera)

People are getting on the down escalator, seemingly unaware of the danger.

(to Martin)

Sir, what is your name?

MARTIN LEMASTER

Martin LeMaster. I'm a personal trainer at Bully's Quasi-Total Fitness.

SAMANTHA SCARBOROUGH

Were you aware twenty-one people were entrapped on the up escalator?

MARTIN LEMASTER

Uh, no.

SAMANTHA SCARBOROUGH

How do you feel about getting on the down escalator now that you know this?

MARTIN LEMASTER

Well, I still need to go down. Anyway, I'm kind of a "what happens, happens" sort of guy.

SAMANTHA SCARBOROUGH

A daredevil?

MARTIN LEMASTER

Not at all. I just don't worry about things I can't control. If it stops, it stops. If it doesn't, I continue on my way.

SAMANTHA SCARBOROUGH

(to camera)

There you have it. One man's total lack of concern for his own safetiocitude.

Martin steps onto the "down" escalator and immediately trips.

In SLOW MOTION, he falls down the escalator. Other people on the escalator move to the side to let him fall past them. Finally, he reaches the bottom of the escalator and sprawls onto the floor. People getting off the escalator walk around him.

MARTIN LEMASTER
I should have taken the elevator.

Ambulance Attendants rush in and put the mangled Martin on a stretcher. They rush him outside. As Martin is carried out, the gathered crowd is soft singing.

CROWD
(singing)
Kumbaya, my Lord. Kumbaya. Kumbaya,
my Lord. Kumbaya.

SAMANTHA SCARBOROUGH
And the number of victims escalates
here at Santa California Galleria
Mall. Our hearts go out to the
latest victim, Martin LeMaster.
Back to you, Steve.

INT. RGB-TV NEWS STUDIO

The GRAPHIC behind Steve Scott reads: "Victim Count Rising Up."

The CRAWL continues: "Jim Carrey secures rubber face patent," "Politicians to halt foreign aid; will spend taxpayer money to end homelessness, hunger. Yeah. Right," etc.

STEVE SCOTT
Here's an update for those of you
just joining us. The number of
victims has risen to twenty-two
with the fall of Martin LeMaster
down the down escalator. For those
of you who missed this dramatic,
death-defying fall, here it is on
our RGB-TV Look Again Replay.

REPLAY:

MARTIN LEMASTER's fall down the escalator. The tape is
REWOUND and Martin falls up the escalator, then down again.

STEVE SCOTT
It's certainly worth watching again
and again and maybe once more.
(grabbing his earpiece)
But there's breaking news at the
Santa California Galleria Mall.
Cameron, what's happening?

INT. SANTA CALIFORNIA GALLERIA MALL

Cameron James is at the bottom of the escalator, pointing up at Jackie Toyota.

CAMERON JAMES
Steve, it's bedlam here. The
anorexic fat woman has informed us
she has a leak.

Jackie Toyota is leaning against the handrail, her legs
crossed.

JACKIE TOYOTA
My water broke!

RUTH BRANNIGAN
What was that?

PHYLLIS GROSS
I think she got her water bill. It
must be higher than usual.

MAURICE MOLINA
Hey, someone could slip on that and
then where would we be?

WILLIE ESCARGOT
At the bottom of the escalator,
dead, pushing up daisies, singing
with the heavenly choir ---

JACKIE TOYOTA
Oh, my! Not here!

WILLIE ESCARGOT
--- kicking the bucket, appearing
on James Van Edward's show ---

MAURICE MOLINA
(to Willie)
We get the idea.

WILLIE ESCARGOT
(to Jackie)
You're not going to give birth now,
are you?

JACKIE TOYOTA
I don't think I have a choice
unless we get rescued in the next
five minutes.

MAURICE MOLINA

Cross your legs. Breathe! Visualize
Albuquerque!

(to Willie)

Is it bloody? I have a weak
stomach.

WILLIE ESCARGOT

It's a little messy. She's going to
be squirting out a six or seven
pound human being.

MAURICE MOLINA

Oh, no.

A tall, gaunt undertaker, FELLINI SCARBUNKLE, enters the mall
and walks directly to Genevieve Cousineau, still sitting on
her step.

FELLINI SCARBUNKLE

Excuse me, madam. Could you stand
up for just a moment?

Genevieve struggles to her feet. Fellini takes out a tape
measure and begins measuring her from head to foot.

GENEVIEVE COUSINEAU

Excuse me. What in the world are
you doing?

Fellini takes out a tablet and writes down a number.

FELLINI SCARBUNKLE

Fellini Scarbunkle, owner and
operator of Scarbunkle Funeral
Home. I'm measuring you for your
coffin. Wouldn't want it to be too
short, would we?

GENEVIEVE COUSINEAU

My coffin?

FELLINI SCARBUNKLE

Of course. You should see some of
the new ones. We have the latest
models, including the new CofFUN.
Get it? It's fun. There's a DVD
player, wet bar, mirror ball and so
much more.

GENEVIEVE COUSINEAU

You've got to be kidding.

FELLINI SCARBUNKLE

Do I look like I kid?

(a beat)

You know, it's not often I get to meet one of you while you're still breathing. Remember, pre-planning for your final needs takes the burden off your survivors.

(chuckling)

It's so hard for them to think straight when they're grieving.

GENEVIEVE COUSINEAU

Grieving? Final needs? My Dieu!

Ruth Brannigan is turning red and sweating.

RUTH BRANNIGAN

Uh, oh.

PHYLLIS GROSS

What's wrong, Ruth?

RUTH BRANNIGAN

I'm having a hot flash.

PHYLLIS GROSS

Hold on. I have some Damp Ones in my purse.

She ruffles through her purse and hands Ruth some towelettes. Ruth wipes her face and water pours down as if she had a garden hose on her forehead.

RUTH BRANNIGAN

Thanks, I just hate hot flashes.

PHYLLIS GROSS

You know, I've been using EstroVent since doctors say we shouldn't take estrogen any more.

RUTH BRANNIGAN

EstroVent?

PHYLLIS GROSS

Yes. It's like having a tiny fan or vent on your forehead. Cools you right down. Amazing stuff.

RUTH BRANNIGAN

Well, I'll have to ask my doctor or
pharmacist to see if EstroVent will
be right for me. By the way,
Phyllis, do you ever feel --- not
so fresh?

Phyllis slaps her.

RUTH BRANNIGAN

Thanks, I needed that.

PHYLLIS GROSS

The television has to go, Ruth.

Father O'Flanagan speaks to the others on the escalator.

FATHER IRVING O'FLANAGAN

I think we should all sing to raise
our spirits.

PHYLLIS GROSS

What a lovely idea. What song,
Father?

FATHER IRVING O'FLANAGAN

Havah Nagilah!

The VICTIMS and crowd all sing and dance.

FATHER IRVING O'FLANAGAN

(singing)

Havah nagilah, Havah nagilah
Havah nagilah v'nismchah
Havah nagilah, Havah nagilah
Havah nagilah v'nismchah
Havah n ran' nah Havah nran' nah
Havah n'ran' nah v'nismcha
Havah n ran' nah Havah nran' nah
Havah n'ran' nah v'nismcha

INT. RGB-TV NEWS STUDIO

Behind Steve Scott the GRAPHIC reads: "Mall 21 Death Watch."

The CRAWL continues, "Microsoft releases new bug-free
Windows; Hell freezes over," "FedEx, UPS to charge less for
shipping items than the items cost," etc.

STEVE SCOTT
I understand we have breaking news
from the Santana Coliseum. What's
the latest. Bob?

EXT. SANTANA HIGH SCHOOL COLISEUM

The stadium is empty.

BOB SCORE
(to camera)
Steve, the most tragical event of
the night has occurred. After the
fallen cheerleaders were removed by
ambulances, the Sentinels had no
one to cheer them on. Disheartened,
they left the field at halftime and
never returned.

Bob is joined by INDIRA WHOSARINOW, a tiny East Indian woman
in a sari in the colors of the Confederate army.

BOB SCORE
I'm here with the coach of the
Mahatma Gandhi High Rebels, Indira
Whosarinow.
(to Indira)
Coach, what's your take on this
forfeiture?

SUPER: Indira Whosarinow, Gandhi High Coach

INDIRA WHOSARINOW
(in an East Indian accent)
The Sentinels do not have their
cheers, so they give up. We win. It
is better to have won peacefully
than by violence.

BOB SCORE
(to camera)
Though none of the cheerleaders
were killed in the pyramid scheme,
there were countless gory bruises
and even some unsightly scrapes.
The Civil War game is over and the
pacifists won. Back to you.

INT. RGB-TV NEWS STUDIO

ANDY GLOOMY, a cantankerous old man with grey hair and mega-bushy eyebrows that cover his forehead, joins Amy Daiwoo.

The CRAWL continues: "Protestors decry tests on rats and flies, suggest testing on trailer trash," "Elvis found alive, says death was 'just a silly stunt,'" etc.

AMY DAIWOO

The Mall 21 will end their lives during the most joyous of seasons, Christmas. Here with his take on the joys of the holiday is Andy Gloomy.

There is a TICKING CLOCK behind Andy.

SUPER: Andy Gloomy, Crabby Guy

ANDY GLOOMY

Don't you hate it when you go to the mall at Christmas time? It's really crowded and you never have enough money to buy expensive presents for everyone. Or if you don't have much money, you can't find enough cheap garbage that doesn't look too cheap. And if you buy stuff, you have to carry lots of bags with string handles that cut into your hands. And never take children with you. They only want things you can't afford like hundred dollar tennis shoes and violent video games and rap CDs. And don't you hate it when the escalator stalls and you're trapped with a bunch of losers while idiot news crews stick microphones in your face and ask how you feel?

He's handed a note, which he opens and reads. The clock STOPS TICKING and an ALARM GOES OFF.

ANDY GLOOMY

Don't you just hate it when you've been fired? This is Andy Gloomy.

STEVE SCOTT

Back to our team coverage of the Mall 21 Death Watch.

INT. SANTA CALIFORNIA GALLERIA MALL

On the "down" escalator in the b.g. are ALFRED HITCHCOCK, waving at the camera, GOD and a HOST OF ANGELS and SONNY AND CHER in 60s costumes.

JENNIFER WHITMER

I'll bet the game is over. Everyone will treat me like a persona au gratin.

CHRISTY HUNTINGTON

My Daddy will get us out of here. I just know it.

RUTH BRANNIGAN

Why don't you girls try to be optimistic and stop your whining? It's getting annoying.

CHRISTY HUNTINGTON

When we whine, we get what we want.

PHYLLIS GROSS

Cheerleading is supposed to bring hope, joy and courage to everyone. Now here we are, trapped on this escalator and are you cheering everyone on? No, you're all wrapped up in yourselves.

RUTH BRANNIGAN

You're a disgrace to cheerleaders.

CHRISTY HUNTINGTON

Well, you're old.

RUTH BRANNIGAN

Duh. But we used to be cheerleaders.

JENNIFER WHITMER

Were not! Look at you!

PHYLLIS GROSS

We were once voluptuous young girls like you.

JENNIFER WHITMER

Ewww. You couldn't have been cheerleaders! Mascots, maybe.

Christy and Jennifer laugh, but Ruth and Phyllis grab the girls' pom-poms and start to cheer.

PHYLLIS GROSS AND RUTH BRANNIGAN
Give me an E, give me an S, give me
a C-A-L, give me an A, give me a T,
give me an O and R. What's that
spell?

JENNIFER WHITMER
I don't know. E, C ---

PHYLLIS GROSS AND RUTH BRANNIGAN
Escalator! Say it again! Escalator!
Yeah!

CHRISTY HUNTINGTON
Wow. You were cheerleaders.

JENNIFER WHITMER
Ohmigod! Does this mean we're going
to get all wrinkly and flabby?

PHYLLIS GROSS
You bet your ass, kiddo.

CHRISTY HUNTINGTON
Dad-dy!

INT. RGB-TV NEWS STUDIO

The CRAWL continues: "Rush Limbaugh takes an aspirin. Charges filed," "Canada sick of US, moves to Europe," etc.

STEVE SCOTT
Minutes ago, our meteorologist,
Jimmy Cloud, predicted treacherous
drizzle may fall around the mall
this evening. For an update on his
prediction, here's Jimmy.

JIMMY CLOUD
Thanks, Steve. Well, as I guessed,
it's drizzling and this will make
life a lot more difficult for
Southern California drivers. As you
know, we can't drive on anything
moist. We'd have team storm
coverage, but our team is tied up
at the mall, so you're on your own
tonight. Take it easy out there.

STEVE SCOTT
Thank you, Jimmy. And now a word
from Tom Brokejaw.

NETWORK NATIONAL NEWS PROMO

TOM BROKEJAW sits in front of a map of the world.

TOM BROKEJAW
Tomorrow on the RGB-TV National
Nightly Worldwide News, a scathing
indictment of broadcast news. See
how the media sensationalizes
insignificant events, ignores
really important stories and slants
its coverage because it thinks
you'll buy anything they say.

(looking off-set)

Hey, who wrote this?

(handed new copy)

Ha. This is better.

(a beat)

Tomorrow on RGB-TV National Nightly
Worldwide News, why you're not
getting enough carbohydrates and
fats in your diet. Join us, won't
you?

PROGRAM PROMO: BARNABY HIND, FORENSIC PROCTOLOGIST

A white-haired doctor in a white coat, BARNABY HIND, has his
back to the camera. He holds up his right hand and puts on a
rubber glove, which he snaps decisively. Then he turns
around. "B. Hind" is embroidered on his pocket.

ANNOUNCER

On the next Barnaby Hind, Forensic
Proctologist ---

CLOSE ON:

Barnaby's head and shoulders. He has a quizzical look on his
face.

BARNABY HIND

No polyps. No hemorrhoids.
Definitely a homicide.

PULL BACK

To reveal DETECTIVE BLACK standing by an autopsy table on which a DEAD WOMAN is lying.

DETECTIVE BLACK
How did you reach that conclusion,
Doctor?

BARNABY HIND
The bullet hole in her forehead.

The dead woman has a circular hole in her forehead. Her eyes are open and crossed.

DETECTIVE BLACK
Oh, that.

ANNOUNCER
Barnaby Hind, Forensic
Proctologist. He gets the killer in
the end. Tuesday nights at ten on
RGB-TV.

INT. RGB-TV NEWS STUDIO

The GRAPHIC behind Amy Daiwoo reads: "Celebrity Response."

The CRAWL continues, "Beethoven continues decomposing,"
"Carrot Top dramatic role nominated for Oscar," etc.

AMY DAIWOO
Celebrities around the country are
sending their good wishes to the
Mall 21 and to Jackie Toyota, the
obese skinny lady with broken
water.

CHARLESTON HUSTON, JESSICA SIMPLETON and NICK LATCHKEY, RYAN
SEEBREAST, JEFF PROBES and OZZIE and SHARON OZBURNED appear
in a series of clips.

SUPER: Charleston Huston, Moses and NRA Supporter

CHARLESTON HUSTON
This is why we need guns. We could
have come in there and shot the
people responsible. But noooo. Ban
assault rifles and we're helpless.
Amen.

SUPER: Jessica Simpleton and Nick Latchkey, Celebrities

JESSICA SIMPLETON

I don't know if this will help, but on TV once, I saw them push open that little roof in the top and climb out and then pry open the doors.

NICK LATCHKEY

That's an elevator. They're on an escalator. There's no ceiling.

JESSICA SIMPLETON

Oh, then they could get rained on. I hope you brought your umbrellas!

SUPER: Sharon and Ozzie Ozburned

SHARON OZBURNED

Our hearts go out to all of you unfortunate people.

OZZIE OZBURNED

(slurred)

You're bleeping right!

SUPER: Ryan Seebreast, American Idle Announcer

RYAN SEEBREAST

Good luck to you all. Keep your eyes open and go for that escape route once it's open. Seabreast out.

SUPER: Jeff Probes, Survivor Tiki Torch Snuffer

JEFF PROBES

Mall 21, the world has spoken.

He snuffs out a flaming tiki torch with a conch shell on a stick.

INT. SANTA CALIFORNIA GALLERIA MALL

On the "down" escalator in the b.g. are a COLLEGE ROWING TEAM with oars, an ARCHAEOLOGIST with a large bone, MAGICIANS with attractive ASSISTANTS, the BEATLES and FISHERMEN with poles.

TEN CENTS

I thought about what you said. I've decided to open a youth computer center in my old neighborhood to give the kids something they can use to succeed.

BRADLEY SALISBERRY

That's a great idea.

TEN CENTS

I'm going to call it the Dollar Center, because I feel ninety-cents better.

BRADLEY SALISBERRY

Why don't you name it after yourself? What's your real name?

TEN CENTS

Michael Jackson.

BRADLEY SALISBERRY

The Dollar Center. Good name.

A middle-aged woman in a designer suit, GLORIOUS ALLGREEN, strides into the mall.

CAMERON JAMES

You look like someone important.

GLORIOUS ALLGREEN

I certainly am. I'm self-promoting attorney Glorious Allgreen, of course.

CAMERON JAMES

I thought I recognized you.

GLORIOUS ALLGREEN

Everyone does. I'm everywhere there's a possible high profile case.

(a beat)

I'm here to represent all 21 victims in a multi-billion dollar lawsuit against Santa California Galleria Mall. Their survivors will need money to cover burial costs and continue their pitiful lives once this disaster comes to its inevitable conclusion. Ipso facto.

CAMERON JAMES

We have twenty-two victims now.
Martin LeMaster plunged to the
bottom of the down escalator.

GLORIOUS ALLGREEN

Well, *that's* a lawsuit. Those
stairs were moving and tripped him
on purpose. It's a deathtrap.

(a beat)

Excuse me.

She pulls out a cell phone.

GLORIOUS ALLGREEN

Higgins, bring the car around.
We'll be going to Santana General
Hospital next.

She walks over to Victor Cousineau and hands him a stack of
her business cards, which he dutifully passes up the
escalator. On the cards is written: "Gloria Allgreen, No
Defendant Too Guilty if the Money's Right."

CAMERON JAMES

(to camera)

Laws are made to protect us from
ourselves and Ms. Allgreen will
help these victims fight for their
right to be paid billions of
dollars for their stupidity in
getting stuck on this escalator.

(a beat)

Of course, Ms. Allgreen earns a
high percentage of their
settlement. Ah, America!

VICTOR COUSINEAU

I love America!

A man in the crowd, ERVIN SPINDLE, yells at Glorious
Allgreen.

ERVIN SPINDLE

Hey, it's the ambulance chaser!

GLORIOUS ALLGREEN

There aren't any ambuli here.

EVILYN CRINKLE

Yet.

BRIDGET RYAN, wearing a t-shirt reading "Death-Wish Foundation - Dying Dreams Do Come True" enters the mall.

CAMERON JAMES

(to camera)

It's a touching moment here at the mall as a representative of the Death-Wish Foundation arrives to grant final wishes to the dying children and teenagers on the escalator.

(to Bridget)

Excuse me. I couldn't help noticing you're with the Death-Wish Foundation.

BRIDGET RYAN

Why, yes. I am.

(extending her hand)

I'm Bridget Ryan, executive director of the Santana chapter.

CAMERON JAMES

(ignoring her hand)

You're here to grant wishes to the dying children and teenagers on the escalator, aren't you?

BRIDGET RYAN

What?

CAMERON JAMES

There are 21 people trapped on this stalled escalator including two children and two teenage girls. Isn't that why you're here?

BRIDGET RYAN

No. I'm picking up a video game for my nephew, Ralph.

CAMERON JAMES

Now that you're here, of course, you'll be granting wishes. Can they wish for anything? What if one of them wants a pony? Can you make one appear right here in the mall?

BRIDGET RYAN

I have a wish.

CAMERON JAMES

What's that?

BRIDGET RYAN
That you'd go away and leave me
alone.

Bridget walks off, casting glances back over her shoulder at
Cameron.

CAMERON JAMES
Obviously, Ms. Ryan needs to get
her magic wand ready to make the
wishes of these youngsters a
reality. Back to you.

Ivana Beloved Bayou's beard is now quite obvious.

DONATELLO ESPERANTO
I have considered what you said,
that I should love myself and not
concern myself with how others
think.

IVANA BELOVED BAYOU
Good.

DONATELLO ESPERANTO
I will attempt this. Would you help
me, beautiful woman?

IVANA BELOVED BAYOU
I don't know if I can. Sometimes,
it's hard keeping my own spirits
high.

DONATELLO ESPERANTO
But you are such an exciting woman.

IVANA BELOVED BAYOU
Look, Donnie, I perform at a dive,
working my tail off for bupkis.
I've always thought I was talented
but, let's face it, there's not a
lot of opportunities for women like
me out there.

DONATELLO ESPERANTO
Bella, you will help me and I will
help you. Come with me to Italy. I
will show you all the good things
life has to offer, introduce you to
the best people.

IVANA BELOVED BAYOU
(considers the offer)
Italy? That's what the psychic
said. Well, I've always wanted to
live in the lap of luxury. All
right. I'll help you.

DONATELLO ESPERANTO
But if we die, the offer's off.

IVANA BELOVED BAYOU
Of course.

Donatello kisses her on both cheeks. Ivana feigns
embarrassment.

IVANA BELOVED BAYOU
Honestly, Donatello, you must learn
to control yourself!

Jackie Toyota begins labor.

JACKIE TOYOTA
This is it and my birthing partner
isn't here!

JAMES VAN EDWARD
Maybe I could help.

RUTH BRANNIGAN
Someone get some hot water and some
white sheets to tear into strips!

IVANA BELOVED BAYOU
Why?

RUTH BRANNIGAN
They always do that on television.

ELLEN WILSON
I've had two children and we didn't
boil or tear up anything.

WALDEN ROHRER
I think that's an old wives' tale.

RUTH BRANNIGAN
I'm not that old and I'm a widow,
not a wife!

WALDEN ROHRER
Sorry.

PHYLLIS GROSS

You know, Ruthie, I remember seeing that sheet thing, too. I always thought it was a waste of perfectly good linens.

IVANA BELOVED BAYOU

White? I couldn't sleep in white sheets. The glare would keep me awake all night.

DONATELLO ESPERANTO

Precisely. And I prefer Egyptian cotton. The high thread count makes them luxurious.

IVANA BELOVED BAYOU

Definitely not satin sheets. You hug your pillow and it squirts away and flies off the bed as if it had wings.

JACKIE TOYOTA

Excuse me. I hate to interrupt this fascinating conversation, but I'm going to have a baby here.

James moves slowly, cautiously past Walden, Ermine and Peter to get to Jackie. He sits on the step above her and gestures her to sit down. She awkwardly complies.

JAMES VAN EDWARD

We need to breathe.

JACKIE TOYOTA

Duh. I haven't *stopped* breathing.

IVANA BELOVED BAYOU

He means going "hee, hee, hoo."
Amazed Breathing.

BRADLEY SALISBERRY

It's Lamaze Breathing.
(he demonstrates)
Hee, hee, hoo. Hee, hee, hoo.

Jackie begins the Lamaze breathing. Everyone "hee, hee, hoos" with her.

INT. RGB-TV NEWS STUDIO

The GRAPHIC behind Steve Scott and Amy Daiwoo reads:
"Breathing: The Breath of Life."

The CRAWL continues: "Hee, hee, hoo! Hee, hee, hoo!"

STEVE SCOTT

And now, more response from the
world. Hee, hee, hoo. Hee, hee,
hoo.

AMY DAIWOO

Hee, hee, hoo.

EXT. TIERRA DEL FUEGO

ESCONDIDO DEL TACO stands by a signpost on a dirt road:
"Tierra Del Fuego 5, End of the Earth 6."

SUPER: Escondido del Taco, Tierra Del Fuego

ESCONDIDO DEL TACO

Hee, hee, hoo! Hee, hee, hoo!

EXT. GERMANY'S BLACK FOREST

HERRMAN MUENSTER, wearing lederhosen and holding a mug of
beer, faces the camera.

SUPER: Herrman Muenster, Germany

HERRMAN MUENSTER

Hee, hee, hoo! Hee, hee, hoo!

EXT. ANTARCTIC PENGUIN ROOKERY

SUPER: Frigid Spivey, Antarctica

FRIGID SPIVEY

Hee, hee, hoo! Hee, hee, hoo!

EXT. AUSTRALIAN CROCODILE WRESTLING SCHOOL

The stump of ALASTAIR KOOKOOROO's missing arm is covered by
massive band-aid.

SUPER: Alastair Kookooroo, Australia

ALASTAIR KOOKOOROO
Hee, hee, hoo! Hee, hee, hoo!

EXT. EIFFEL TOWER

SUPER: Cahier Plume de Matante, Still French

CAHIER PLUME DE MATANTE
Hee, hee, hoo! Hee, hee, hoo!

INT. HARE AND HOUND PUB

NIGEL PENNYLANE
Hee, hee, hoo! Hee, hee, hoo!

DRUNK MAN
Incoherent. Incoherent.

INT. BLANK FAMILY HOME

Eddie is having sympathy pains. Adele is tearing up white sheets into long strips.

BLANK FAMILY
Hee, hee, hoo! Hee, hee, hoo!

INT. SANTA CALIFORNIA GALLERIA MALL

The T-shirts and picket signs read, "Hee, hee, hoo!"

On the "down" escalator in the b.g. are MARATHON RUNNERS, a BIG BAND with their instruments, JESUS and his DISCIPLES and BRITISH JUDGES in powdered wigs.

CROWD
Hee, hee, hoo! Hee, hee, hoo!

EVILYN CRINKLE
Hee, hee, hoo! Hee, hee, hoo!

The SELLYOUAIR ONE SPOKESMAN walks by.

SELLYOUAIR ONE SPOKESMAN
Hee, hee, hoo! Hee, hee, hoo!

The screen on the karaoke monitor reads: "Hee, hee, hoo!"

INT. RGB-TV NEWS STUDIO

Barbara Lindstrom rejoins Amy Daiwoo. The GRAPHIC behind them reads: "For our Anemic viewers."

The CRAWL continues: "Hee, hee, hoo! Hee, hee, hoo!"

AMY DAIWOO
Barbara Lindstrom, our Ameslan
expert, is back with us.

SUPER: Barbara Lindstrom, Yackety Hands Expert

Barbara signs the following. There are no subtitles.

BARBARA LINDSTROM
Hee, hee, hoo! Hee, hee, hoo!

INT. SANTA CALIFORNIA GALLERIA MALL

On the "down" escalator in the b.g. are FOX HUNTERS, NEANDERTHALS, ADAM and EVE, AFRICAN NATIVES with spears, a GAY MEN'S CHORUS and a BOBSLED TEAM.

Bradley Salisbury moves up to the step below Jackie Toyota and James Van Edward.

BRADLEY SALISBERRY
(to Ellen Wilson)
Send down my coat!

The yellow coat is passed down the escalator. Bradley places it over Jackie.

BRADLEY SALISBERRY
James, you keep her breathing and
I'll deliver the baby.

Everyone continues "Hee, hee, hooing." Jackie strains and groans, then a BABY CRIES.

Everyone in the mall cheers.

BRADLEY SALISBERRY
It's a girl! Mother and daughter
doing fine.

Farther down the escalator, Victor Cousineau is still griping to his wife, Genevieve Cousineau.

VICTOR COUSINEAU
Another hungry mouth to feed. As if
we don't have too many children in
the world already. And her mother
isn't even married ---

GENEVIEVE COUSINEAU
Victor, shut up.

VICTOR COUSINEAU
(stunned)
What?

GENEVIEVE COUSINEAU
I said shut up.
(she stands up)
I've had just about enough of your
complaining. We never have a
conversation. You just rant and
rave, day in, day out. I'm sick of
it.

VICTOR COUSINEAU
I had no idea you felt that way.
I'm sorry. I'll try to be more
positive.

GENEVIEVE COUSINEAU
Like *that's* ever going to happen.

Ermine Sachet Pettiforbes Getty passes her long scarf down to
Bradley, who wraps the baby in it. He hands the newborn to
her mother.

JACKIE TOYOTA
Fireman Salisbury, Mr. Van Edward,
you're my heroes. And you know, I
don't feel so alone any more. I can
do this. I can raise my daughter on
my own.

BRADLEY SALISBERRY
(to Willie)
What do you know? I delivered a
baby. I'm a hero for real!

WILLIE ESCARGOT
We knew you had it in you, Bradley.

BRADLEY SALISBERRY
What? She had it in *her*.

Near the memorial, several YOUNG GIRLS are seen wearing T-shirts reading: "Brad, Will You Have My Baby?" and "Brad is My Hero."

INT. RGB-TV NEWS STUDIO

ROLAND CANTINA joins Steve Scott and Amy Daiwoo. The GRAPHIC READS: "Birth at DeathWatch"

The CRAWL continues, "It's a girl for Mall 21 mother, Jackie Toyota," "Child completes grades 7, 8 and 9 in L.A. traffic jam," etc.

AMY DAIWOO

A new life has begun, but life goes on anyway. Roland Cantina has business news.

SUPER: Roland Cantina, Business Stuff

ROLAND CANTINA

In commodities today, feathers were down and balloon prices were inflated. Paper was stationery. Otis Elevators was up 3, down 4, up 6, down 2. The market closed up one point, possibly due to the birth of the Mall Baby.

STEVE SCOTT

Thanks, Roland.

(picks up a slip of paper)

This just in, the Nielsen ratings are in for this evening and RGB-TV's coverage of the Mall 21 DeathWatch put us in solid third place after the 7300th repeat of the I Love Lucy grape-stomping episode and the Pasadena Hopscotch League Semi-finals. Way to go, RGB!

AMY DAIWOO

I think it's time we paused a moment to reflect on everything that's happened here tonight. Now back to the Mall as 22 people, including a newborn child, cling precariously to life on the escalator of death.

73

73

INT. SANTA CALIFORNIA GALLERIA MALL

On the "down" escalator in the b.g. are HENRY VIII with his SIX WIVES, SLAVES with bags of cotton, CAROL CHANNING, LIZA MINNELLI in a bridal gown, MOSES with tablets and a SOCCER TEAM.

Ermine gently touches Peter's cheek.

ERMINE SACHET PETTIFORBES GETTY
I should have left you more in my will, Peter. Or at least something.

PETER SUFFERFLESH
Money isn't important to me, Madam. You pay me an adequate salary and beat me regularly. What more could a man want?

ERMINE SACHET PETTIFORBES GETTY
Things will be different now. And you may call me Ermine.

PETER SUFFERFLESH
Yes, Madame.

INT. SANTA CALIFORNIA GALLERIA MALL

As Michelangelo Jones races below him in horror, Henry Harris, in a harness attached to a huge helium-filled balloon, floats up, over and beyond the escalator. The victims watch and sigh.

CAMERON JAMES
Plan E has failed and brave Senator Henry Harris floats away with the last hopes of rescue.

Leonardo Di Crappio walks to the bottom of the escalator, holding his megaphone.

LEONARDO DI CRAPPIO
(through megaphone)
Panic. You may now all panic.

Everyone remains calm.

ELLIOT SPENCER, a boy about ten years old, enters the mall and marches up to Oliver Bishop Huntington IV. Elliot tugs at Oliver's coat jacket.

ELLIOT SPENCER
Mister! Hey, mister!

OLIVER BISHOP HUNTINGTON IV
What do you want? I'm busy here. Go
find your mother.

ELLIOT SPENCER
You offered a one hundred thousand
dollar reward, right?

OLIVER BISHOP HUNTINGTON IV
Yes.

ELLIOT SPENCER
I'd like a cashier's check please.

OLIVER BISHOP HUNTINGTON IV
This isn't a gift, young man. It's
a reward for rescuing my daughter.

ELLIOT SPENCER
I know how to save her. They just
walk off the escalator.

The mall goes silent.

OLIVER BISHOP HUNTINGTON IV
What?

ELLIOT SPENCER
An escalator is moving stairs. When
it doesn't move, it's just stairs.
They can just walk off.

OLIVER BISHOP HUNTINGTON IV
(to Christy)
Just walk off, Princess.

CHRISTY HUNTINGTON
But, Daddy ---

OLIVER BISHOP HUNTINGTON IV
Pretend you're on stairs. Just walk
off.

RUTH BRANNIGAN
Everyone hold on!

DRAMATIC MUSIC plays as Christy gingerly moves to the next
step. She breathes a sigh of relief, then continues past
Ellen and the children. As Christy steps off the escalator,
everyone cheers.

CHRISTY HUNTINGTON
(extending her hand)
Come on, Mrs. Wilson. You can do
it, too!

Ellen hands Sarah to Christy, then takes Tommy's hand and walks off. Ellen pulls the stroller off and Christy places the baby in it. Ellen hugs Christy, then sees her husband, Trevor rushing to greet them. Trevor is heavily bandaged.

Christy gestures for Jennifer to walk off. They take the "down" escalator to the lower level where Christy runs to her father's open arms.

ELLIOT SPENCER
My cashier's check, please?

OLIVER BISHOP HUNTINGTON IV
Of course, my boy. What is your
name?

ELLIOT SPENCER
Elliot Spencer. Two "L"s and one
"T".

The cheerleaders, Oliver and Elliot walk toward the exit.

OLIVER BISHOP HUNTINGTON IV
I'll write you a personal check now
and we'll get the cashier's check
first thing in the morning when the
bank opens.

ELLIOT SPENCER
You got any ID on you?

INT. RGB-TV NEWS STUDIO

Amy Daiwoo and Steve Scott have a look of shockrise on their faces.

The CRAWL CONTINUES, "What happened?," "Anchors suffer shockrise," etc.

INT. SANTA CALIFORNIA GALLERIA MALL

Ruth and Phyllis walk off the escalator arm in arm. Father Irving O'Flanagan taps his yarmulke as he debarks.

SAMANTHA SCARBOROUGH

A precarious child has rescued 22 victims at the Santa California Galleria Mall. He'll be able to pay his way through college now, or buy a whole lot of video games.

James and Walden are smiling and chatting as they escape the death-trap. Ermine takes Peter's arm and they walk off, smiling. Jackie and her newborn are flanked by Maurice, Willie, Ten Cents and Bradley.

On the lower level, the massive memorial, crowd and karaoke equipment have disappeared.

EXT. BLANK FAMILY HOME

Eddie is looking at the TV Guide.

EDDIE BLANK

I wonder what else is on?

INT. RGB-TV NEWS STUDIO

The GRAPHIC behind Amy and Steve reads: "Car chases."

The CRAWL continues, "Elliot Spencer, 10, rescues Mall 22," "Senate votes to ban escalators; safety concerns, silly movies sited as reasons," etc.

AMY DAIWOO

This just in. There are police pursuits on the 5, 405, 134, 2, 110, 210 and 10. CalTrans has closed the 710 and 101 for construction until 5 am, so take alternate routes. We go now to Warren Wingfield, our Eye in the Sky, for more on the pursuits. Warren?

INT. SANTA CALIFORNIA GALLERIA MALL

Donatello and Ivana walk off the escalator arm in arm. Henry Harris, Michelangelo Jones and Leonardo Di Crappio are on the lower level watching the exodus.

Victor and Genevieve are the last to get off the escalator. Suddenly, there is a GRINDING NOISE, then the escalator jerks and starts moving again.

Shoppers get on and are transported without problem to the upper level. Henry Harris takes out his radio.

HENRY HARRIS
Drucilla, I'm going on break.

MICHELANGELO JONES
Well, at least no one died.

Behind a Christmas display a few feet away, old Evilyn Crinkle pulls a gun out of her handbag and grins.

EVILYN CRINKLE
Yet.

FADE OUT.