



## RE-RELEASES

# Network

### Network

*Directed by:* Sidney Lumet  
*Production Companies:* Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, United Artists Corporation  
*Produced by:* Howard Gottfried  
*Associate Producer:* Fred Caruso  
*Office Co-ordinator:* Connie Schoenberg  
*Production Auditor:* Selma Brown  
*Location Co-ordinator:* John Starke  
*Production Assistants:* Susan B. Landau, Mark Hurwitz, David Starke \*  
*Assistant to Ms Brown:* John McWade \*  
*1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Director:* Jay Allan Hopkins  
*2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Director:* Ralph Singleton  
*Script Supervisor:* Kay Chapan  
*Casting:* Juliet Taylor, MDA  
*Casting (Extras):* Todd-Champion Ltd  
*[Screenplay] By:* Paddy Chayefsky  
*Director of Photography:* Owen Roizman  
*Camera Operator:* Fred Schuler  
*Assistant Cameraman:* Tom Priestley Jr  
*2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Cameraman:* Gary Muller  
*Gaffer:* Norman Leigh  
*Key Grip:* Kenneth Goss  
*Still Photographer:* Michael Ginsburg  
*Editor:* Alan Heim  
*Assistant Editor:* Michael Jacobi  
*Production Designer:* Philip Rosenberg  
*Assistant to Art Director:* Phillip Jostrom \*  
*Set Decorator:* Edward Stewart  
*Scenic Artist:* Eugene Powell \*  
*Property Master:* Conrad Brink  
*Construction Grip:* Walter Way \*  
*Carpenter:* Jules Wollock \*  
*Costume Designer:* Theoni V. Aldredge  
*Costumers:* George Newman, Marilyn Putnam  
*Ms Dunaway's Make-up:* Lee Harman  
*Make-up Artist:* John Alese  
*Ms Dunaway's Hair:* Susan Germaine  
*Hair Stylist:* Phil Leto  
*Original Music Composed and Conducted by:* Elliot Lawrence  
*Sound Mixer:* James Sabat  
*Re-recordist:* Dick Vorisek  
*Sound Editors:* Jack Fitzstephens, Sanford Rackow, Marc M. Laub  
*Television Consultant:* Lynn M. Klugman \*  
*Transportation Chief:* James Giblin \*  
*Publicity Co-ordinator:* Howard Newman \*  
*Cast:*  
Faye Dunaway (*Diana Christensen*)  
William Holden (*Max Schumacher*)  
Peter Finch (*Howard Beale*)  
Robert Duvall (*Frank Hackett*)  
Wesley Addy (*Nelson Chaney*)  
Ned Beatty (*Arthur Jensen*)  
Jordan Charney (*Harry Hunter*)  
Conchata Ferrell (*Barbara Schlesinger*)  
Darryl Hickman (*Bill Herron*)  
Roy Poole (*Sam Haywood*)  
William Prince (*Edward George Ruddy*)  
Beatrice Straight (*Louise Schumacher*)  
Marlene Warfield (*Laureen Hobbs*)  
Arthur Burghardt (*Great Ahmed Kahn*)  
Bill Burrows (*TV director*)  
John Carpenter (*George Bosch*)  
Kathy Cronkite (*Mary Ann Gifford*)  
Ed Crowley (*Joe Donnelly*)  
Jerome Dempsey (*Walter C. Amundsen*)  
Gene Gross (*Milton K. Steinman*)  
Stanley Grover (*Jack Snowden*)  
Cindy Grover (*Caroline Schumacher*)  
Mitchell Jason (*Arthur Zangwill*)

Peter Finch is mesmerising as veteran news anchor Howard Beale, who's 'mad as hell' and 'not going to take it anymore', in this era-defining satire. Having been given two weeks' notice due to his evening news show's falling ratings, Beale announces that he will kill himself live on air. With the show's fortunes reversing due to his outburst, Beale's mental health, distress and anger are exploited by the network, who indulge his ranting, turning him into a populist entertainer. But as the network searches for viewers in increasingly outrageous ways, things begin to take a very dark turn. Writer Paddy Chayefsky's satirical masterpiece, directed with brio by Sidney Lumet, is a prescient portrait of the media and entertainment world's push for profit over quality, presaging the rise of reality television and a world in which anything is up for grabs.

Justin Johnson, Lead Programmer

### A contemporary review

*Network* is a furious and infuriating tangle. Is it a brilliant/shocking/corrosive satire on America's dwelling in screened imitations of reality, or is it a snake devouring its own tail? Is the satire cleansing or only huckster raillery, responsible anger turned into self-contempt by the cynicism that ravishes every ideal? It is a reckless but literate film, incoherent and pretentious, piercing yet evasive. It is itself very like TV, the monster it mocks. Sidney Lumet's direction is in shelter, but *Network* is thunderously written and as contentious as Paddy Chayefsky's last picture, *The Hospital*. Every time I saw the film in America, audiences identified with its haphazard spleen and applauded at the end. Was that simply a version of the inane rabble-rousing of Beale asking his audience to get up from the set, go to the window and cry out 'I'm as mad as hell, and I'm not going to take it anymore'? Or was it a true lament for a culture distraught at its own reliance on TV? Is horror nullified by the assent of 'Right on', and is there nothing to do but bear witness to our contorted integrity?

The film is best when least sequential – bursts of impact not pondered or related. There is a feeling all through that it is preparing for a leap into comic-book caricature. Perhaps it needed William Burroughs to write the script, if only to catch the devastating interruptedness of TV. The movie needs commercials, preferably for itself. Isolated scenes are very funny – the terrorists haggling with network lawyers over subsidiary rights – or beautifully lunatic, as when Jensen bulges with his corporation gospel. But restraining this frenzied crescendo is the dull realism of the UBS offices and studios and the use of the William Holden character as a sour observer of the dementia. In *The Hospital*, the George C. Scott doctor was the more engaging because he struggled to contain both Max and Beale, sceptic and believer, rueful spectator of chaos and damaged participant in it. But in *Network*, Max is from the early days of TV: he sentimentalises over Ed Murrow and might have known the Chayefsky who wrote *Marty* and those other pieces of sentimental 'realism'. He comes from that soft source and offers the sketchy outline of decency and humanity; his reality subsides under windy humanist speeches and the thorough implausibility of his falling for Diana. When he is fired by Hackett, he warns that he will expose UBS irresponsibility – nothing follows, except a slowly accumulating pile of manuscript for the book he plays with writing. When he

Paul Jenkins (TV stage manager)  
Ken Kercheval (Merrill Grant)  
Kenneth Kimmins (associate producer)  
Lynn Klugman (TV production assistant)  
Carolyn Krigbaum (Max's secretary)  
Zane Lasky (audio man)  
Michael Lipton (Tommy Pellegrino)  
Michael Lombard (Willie Stein)  
Pirie Macdonald (Herb Thackeray)  
Russ Petranto (TV associate director)  
Bernard Pollock (Lou)  
Sasha von Scherler (Helen Miggs)  
Lane Smith (Robert McDonough)  
Theodore Sorel (Giannini)  
Fred Stuthman (mosaic figure)  
Cameron Thomas (TV technical director)  
Lydia Wilen (Hunter's secretary)  
Lee Richardson (narrator)  
Howard K. Smith \*  
USA 1976  
121 mins  
Digital

\* Uncredited

A Park Circus release

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leaves his wife for Diana she predicts great grief for him. But he suffers only the stuffed unhappiness of soap opera – with a little more panache, their affair might have been as wild a parody of daytime TV as Mary Hartman. As it is, it looks like padding and a narrative framework for audiences who might have been disconcerted by more fragmentation.

Max becomes a grumbling old woman who allows himself to be the recipient of Diana's nearly instant orgasm, followed by a brief collapse – commercial break? – before she resumes the frantic love talk wheedling for advice on programme problems. Diana is the only intriguing person in the film, despite the heavy-handed attempt to present her as the spirit of TV. She is akin to the medium: shimmering and hectic, all instant appeal and fended off boredom, without substance, feelings or ideas. She fidgets and blurs like a TV picture and horizontal hold probably worries her more than grasp on reality. It is a cunning use of Faye Dunaway's frigid, nervy glamour and an accomplished performance.

The other characters are merely dumped on the film. Max's 'responsibility' is a lazy pose; Robert Duvall comes as close to plainness as he is capable with a stereotype who is only foulmouthed bluster and stupid ruthlessness. Emptiest of all is Beale. The film blithely consigns him to madness and never tells us anything about the man: perhaps he only exists when he is on the air. We laugh at his grotesque messianism and reflect wistfully on his complaints. He may be right, but his rhetoric ignores the chance of action. Thus he collapses after every jeremiad – fainting fits or feigned fits? We never know, but the dramatic fall signals applause, relief and escaped responsibility.

Chayefsky is surely caught in the same dilemma. The film bristles with articulate curses against TV. It is an onslaught on trite sensation corrupting consequences. But its methods and devices are those of TV: the moving image; abrupt transitions; cheap laughs; hollow characters; activity concealing no point of view; movement as a distraction from meaning. The film is as vicious and feeble as a wasp trapped in the jam it craves, and if *Network* is essential viewing it is because of this chronic confusion. It is a satire without detachment, roots or hope of remedy. The whole film bellows with the cry Beale sells to viewers, but there is no pain, only the bittersweet irony of the Orson Welles scorpion that killed its carrier frog. Chayefsky knows we are drowning without dying in TV, but he concedes that 'Help!' is only a gesture in a Lichtenstein painting of a comic-book crisis.

David Thomson, *Sight and Sound*, Spring 1977