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Called - OK
9/20/90

September 12, 1990

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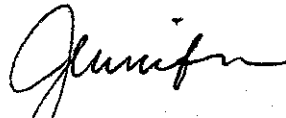
Dear Dr. Gerbner:

Enclosed is an updated draft of Media Mania. We abandoned the idea of the reality shift and instead made it a flashback story, embellished by Elliot's imagination.

We welcome your comments. If you like, you can wait until the full script is completed, hopefully by the end of this month. Also, in interest of time, please feel free to phone or fax your comments to us.

Again, thank you for your advice and input.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Norwood

Synopsis: Media Mania

We FADE IN on a typical grade school, on a typical bright, summer day. We dissolve to a series of shots gliding through the school corridors which are devoid of any signs of human activity. We finally begin hearing voices as we glide up to and stop at a door marked, "School Principal." Now, inside the office, we see two parents having a conference with the principal, who says that their son, ELLIOT PORTER has been having trouble concentrating in class. They feel he has an undue fascination with the media and entertainment and suggest that they hire a tutor to help him focus on his studies and learn to think more critically about his choices. The Porters agree to hire a tutor to help Elliot over the summer months while school is in recess. We fade out.

FADE IN on the same school exterior, but this time it is autumn: the start of 6th grade. Inside the school, as we move down the halls, we see the hustle and bustle of many kids finding their lockers. We settle on eleven year old ELLIOT PORTER and his little brother MICHAEL (age 6, who is just entering first grade). A very attentive and self-assured Elliot helps Michael first find his locker, and then his classroom. As Elliot says goodbye, he says, "Race you home after school, Michael?"

Elliot then goes off to find his locker and classroom. On the way, he encounters his friends JACK, MISSY, ROGER, COLIN, and PETER, some of whom are in his class. Once Elliot finds his classroom and seat assignment, the teacher enters, and the class

begins. They are given an assignment to write an essay on, "How I spent my summer vacation," to be done in class, which will help them all get to know each other better. Although there are some grumblings about the assignment, Elliot, who is obviously eager to begin, jumps right in and start writing. He writes, "My summer vacation began exactly the same time as everyone else's, on the last day of school...." and as we see the words on the paper form (and hear his voiceover), we dissolve again to the front of the school as it was at the beginning of the summer. But this time, suddenly, kids come pouring out of the main doors and stream off in all directions.

As the camera moves in, Elliot steps into view (a closeup), and smiles. He sees Michael, who is waiting on his bike, saying, "Race you home, dude!" Elliot unlocks his own bike from the rack, and they race for home. On the way, they pass the TV station and other key geographical locations that figure prominently in his story. Suddenly Michael takes a short cut in which he almost runs over Colin. Colin starts to bully Michael, but before any real harm can be done, Elliot appears and reminds Colin that he is a guest at their video party later that day (effectively defusing the situation). They continue on home.

We now found Elliot in the family living room. The room is full of the current generation of boys and girls of varying races, their clothing representative of their entertainment idols. They are bathed in the shifting pale-blue light that emanates from the television set.

The sounds of a rock video fill the room, the scene of this group of kids' frequent video parties. We see that some of the kids are wearing headsets, listening at an obviously increased volume, and are pretending to play guitars. The cables to the headsets create a spiderweb entanglement, in which the kids maneuver with ease.

We get to know Elliot's friends: COLIN, a twelve-year old bully who fancies himself as some kind of "Rambo Commando." He is insulting to many of his friends and is known to pick on ROGER, an overweight child who Colin refers to as, "that couch potato." Colin excludes MISSY, a "Madonna-wanna-be," from many of his games, telling her she isn't "smart" enough to play with the boys and should go play with her Barbie dolls instead. JACK, a boy they call "Metal Head," is a loner who seldom joins in with Colin's warlike games. He always wears the T-shirts advertising his favorite metal group, prompting the other kids to get into a screaming match about which groups are better than others. PETER is a soft-spoken, bespectacled black boy who often mediates the arguments Colin causes. He therefore often becomes a target of Colin's sarcastic humor.

Colin jumps up and grabs the remote control away and starts switching through the channels quickly. Jack, who had been watching the the rock video with interest, grabs his Walkman and goes to the corner to intently read the album jacket to his favorite metal group. He seems to be searching the lyrics for some hidden meaning. Colin's channel switcher stops on a cooking show. "Ugh, that stuff's for girls," Colin chortles

contemptuously, throwing a glance at Missy. He switches some more channels and pauses at a commercial for expensive athletic shoes, featuring Michael Jordan. "Peter, why don't you own a pair of these shoes?" says Colin. "Come to think of it, you don't even play basketball. Well, Michael's cool. I can't understand why you wouldn't want to be like him. Are you sure you're really black?" Peter turns calmly to Colin and replies, "Just because I'm black doesn't mean I have to play a certain sport. And Missy doesn't have to play with dolls just because she's a girl. You can be such a jerk, sometimes."

Colin jumps up menacingly just as Elliot's parents enter the room. Both parents encourage the children to play outside, instead of watching so much television on such a beautiful day. Elliot's mom watches as Elliot remains glued to the television, watching a scene where two people are locked in physical combat. "Really, Elliot, you shouldn't watch so much junk T.V. Some of these shows are way too violent," she says. "Aw mom," replies Elliot, "It doesn't scare me. I don't even think about it. I just watch it for the action scenes and the car chases, anyway."

The telephone rings and Elliot's mom answers it. She gets a call from Jack's parents that it's time for him to come home. We hear her calling for Jack to go home, but he is plugged into his earphones and cannot hear her. She then asks Elliot to relay the message to his friend but he appears too engrossed in his show to pay any attention. We hear the noise level from the TV, stereo and other sources growing to the point of audio noise, with Mrs.

Porter continuing to ask, amid the static and noise, for the children's attention.

We dissolve to the exterior of Elliot's house. The sounds of the kids and the rock video continue. We dissolve again to a high altitude view of Elliot's neighborhood. The sounds from Elliot's house are joined by various sounds from the other homes.

Through a series of dissolves, we continue to move up and away from earth, until we see the planet rotating fully. The sound has built to a crescendo of totally confusing noise. We pull away as the earth disappears into the blackness, the noise growing fainter as the stillness of deep space envelopes it.

Out of the depths of space appears a rotating planet, ZORK. Our Narrator explains the location of Zork in a humorous way, as we take in the wondrous vista of this alien planet, a world not unlike our own. We finally settle on two alien companions, RAY GAMMA, and his little friend ZAP [an animated creature]. The pair are tuning in the planet Earth which is slowly turning on their television screen. A noise is emanating from their screen: the sounds of Earth. The sound becomes a cacophony, totally unintelligible.

Gamma and Zap become extremely excited about their discovery. They leave their laboratory in search of their superior, THE BRAIN. As they pixilate down a long hallway, we become aware of massive doors at the far end, ala "The Wizard of Oz." Gamma and Zap enter the "Throne Room." The Brain materializes and hovers above them. He is a big, friendly, pulsating alien entity, who is always ready to assimilate their data.

Gamma and Zap are breathless with their discovery. "I think this is it!" says Gamma. "A planet so full of electronic sound and picture signals that we feel certain this is what we have been looking for!" In a dazzling display of pixilation and animation effects, Gamma and Zap demonstrate a rapid representation of Earth's music, sounds and images. We recognize our own popular TV shows, music videos, and entertainment stars, from the opening theme music of well-known sitcoms, to the "Heeere's Johnny" introduction of the "Tonight Show." The Brain suddenly calls the display to a halt and in order to settle down the overly excited duo, he creates a "calm zone" in the center of the room.

"You must be careful," warns Brain. "It's important to keep these signals separate from your own brain signals - otherwise they could affect your central nervous system and you'll end up with noise, just like you are receiving on your screens. It is something that we have long avoided in Zork."

A more serious, attentive and quieter atmosphere now exists. The Brain then produces an image in the center, a variety of stereotypical representations of people from Earth. A music video shows women as identical sexual objects. Movie action scenes depict glamorized violence. Commercials show stereotypical blacks and elderly. Brain observes that, "These earthlings describe themselves as 'humans.' However, their own transmission equipment presents a very narrow view of their humanity!" They are candid shots of them talking about their favorite music, and television programs. We hear children

describe their favorite scary shows, without commenting on the sadness of violence. We hear them discuss their favorite stars, without realizing that the images they portray are not real. These interviews are intercut with shots from TV shows and other appropriate images, as well as shots of trance-like kids and family members watching television. We finish with a view of a TV show reflected on a child's eye.

The Brain explains to the duo that it is their mission to try and teach the people of this civilization to think for themselves. He instructs our heroes to go to Earth and quietly observe the conditions there firsthand: he wants to understand the power of music and entertainment on the human psyche, and it's impact on their emotions, desires, actions and reactions.

"You are our Master's of media literacy. We must teach these earthlings the skills of critical thinking. You must teach them the formula. Start with one child who seems to be most affected." We see a picture of Elliot Porter form as a holograph.

We cut to Gamma and Zap in their space ship. They find Earth without mishap. Zap bumps into the controls and causes their navigation to become a thing of the past. Out of control, the ship barely avoids colliding with a variety of Earth's landmarks. We see the ship fly over the Statue of Liberty and dip down into the Grand Canyon. It finally makes an extremely low pass over Washington, D.C., flying zanily past the Capitol building and the Washington monument. They fly past a billboard captioned, "Satellite Parking" which causes Gamma to do a double

take with Zap. They fly down a city street right over a variety of people who are so wrapped up in their portable headphones and other entertainment distractions that they don't notice the spaceship at all.

The ship finally crashes through the side of a huge television station into a large room filled with paraphenalia marked "Prop Room." The ship comes to rest upon a pile of used props, television monitors, sets, even old, outdated toys, such as transformers, cabbage patch dolls and Batman and Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle paraphenalia.

In the TV station's office a large SECURITY GUARD is snoring in front of a television set with its picture rolling. The remains of a junk food feast litter the room and his rotund belly. The sound of the crash awakens him. He turns on his flashlight and heads out to investigate.

Gamma and Zap spill out of their open hatch onto a sea of objects. Zap curiously scans the sea of now useless objects and scratches his head. Gamma sees the huge crash-hole they made in the side of the building and gasps! He frantically instructs Zap to fetch the "Reconstruction Generator." Zap picks up a toy ray gun and hands it to his flustered friend. Gamma tries to use it to no avail. Once aware of the prank, he admonishes Zap, who darts into the ship and back with the alien device. With the security guard getting nearer, Gamma activates the device, putting the wall back to its original undamaged condition.

The guard is now fumbling with his keys to unlock our heroes' section of the Prop Room. Gamma uses the reconstruction

generator to put the toys back where they belong. Suddenly the door behind them starts to open. They look at their huge ship, clearly visible, then at each other, and gasp! The burly guard enters the room, his flashlight sweeping the shelves and aisles. All is as it should be! There is no sign of the ship or our alien friends. The confused yet still suspicious guard scratches his head as he scans with the light. Finally his beam falls on a trio of toys: a tiny spaceship, a stuffed Zap doll, and a Gamma action figure. The guard does a double-take and exits with a less than satisfied expression. Gamma returns to normal size.

We cut to Elliot's neighborhood. The morning sky serenely illuminates a neatly kept community of middle class houses. We approach one home where we see a mailbox that reads, "Porter." Inside the house, Elliot sits frozen in front of the TV. The frenzy of Saturday morning programming dances across the screen. There is the normal domestic hustle and bustle taking place. His mother is vacuuming, Michael yells (over the din) that there is someone at the door. She opens the door to find Gamma in a nice business suit.

He identifies himself as Mr. Raymond, Elliot's summer tutor. When she becomes confused about a lack of appointment, Gamma points out that it wasn't scheduled, but since Elliot is due to meet him at his office later that day, he thought he would drop in and remind him. He adds that he will leave if it's not a good time, but she assures him it's fine.

She asks Michael where Elliot is, and he doesn't know, so they leave Mr. Raymond with Michael while they go to find Elliot.

They find him still sitting, though asleep, in front of the TV. While she is waking him, Gamma is taking note of all of the entertainment-related effluvia in the living room. As Gamma is pointing out items to a now invisible Zap, Michael enters, asking "Who're you talking to?" Gamma squats down to his level, and explains that he is "eccentric" and sometimes talks to himself. After a few moments, Elliot appears, and he and "Mr. Raymond" are introduced to each other. On the front porch they have a talk. Mr. Raymond says to come to school later that day to his office. A still groggy Elliot asks what subject they will study and to his amazement, the teacher replies, "Whatever you want! It's up to you. What do you like?" Elliot thinks, then says, "TV and music?" The teacher says, "Then TV and music it is. Meet me at 1 pm at the school." As he leaves, we focus past Elliot to Michael and mom. Michael tells mom, "Mr. Ray-man said he was extra-centric! That means he talks to himself!"

Later, we find an empty school, except for Mr. Raymond and Elliot. Sitting in a big classroom, with a large screen TV and giant speakers up in front, they are starting their lesson. They very quickly center on Elliot's problem concerning thinking about entertainment. Elliot is afraid that thinking too much about his entertainment choices will destroy the magic in entertainment. Mr. Raymond, pulls out the chalkboard and tries to explain it to Elliot:

"Entertainment should be used by you -- you shouldn't be used by it. YOU are in control. If you think about the things you watch and hear, you can still be entertained without being

manipulated. There is a simple formula that I would like to teach you. It is called ZAP + THINK = _____. In this equation, Zap means to DETACH yourself from what you are viewing or hearing. Take a step back and pause a moment. Then you add THINK. When you put the two actions together, ZAP + THINK equals a process that gives you control over what you are viewing. It allows you to accept the ideas that come across or to reject them. It puts you in the driver's seat."

Elliot looks confused. We (and Elliot) notice that whatever Mr. Raymond is talking about appears on the large screen TV, to help illustrate his point. This begins to make Elliot think more about how Mr. Raymond is doing that than his formula. He asks Mr. Raymond how it is done, and Mr. Raymond uses that opportunity to explain where music and programs come from -- how they come to be. At this point, Mr. Raymond explains that the answers to this question will be found on today's field trip. They exit the room.

They arrive at the TV station. Once inside, the dress up as janitors in order to observe the situation inconspicuously. They enter Studio #1 just as a TV commercial is being shot. A "Rambo" like character with muscular arms is holding up a box of Ram-O's breakfast cereal. He says, "It would be your worst nightmare if you don't try my new breakfast cereal!" At this point, ADRIAN, a high-strung ad executive type charges in and starts complaining loudly about the lighting being wrong. Mr. Raymond, with a less than graceful move, accidentally knocks over the product setup, spilling the contents of the cereal box around Rambo's feet.

Adrian screams, "You idiot! Do you know how long it took to set that up? No, of course you don't! Hours and hours! Dollars and dollars! Do you know what this means?" Adrian, clenching his fists and moving toward Mr. Raymond says, "It means we lose dollars and dollars!"

Rambo grabs Adrian's arm, saying, "Take it easy, Adrian! You take this stuff too seriously!" Adrian, pursuing Mr. Raymond and Elliot says, "If I don't get this commercial done, the children won't see it! If the children don't see it, the parents won't buy it! If the parents don't buy it, the Ram-O's Breakfast food people will lose dollars and dollars and dollars!"

Rambo says, "Yo! Adrian! Calm down!" Adrian says to Mr. Raymond and Elliot, "If the Ram-O's Breakfast food people lose dollars and dollars then I'll lose my job and dollars and dollars and dollars!" Adrian drops to his knees, repeating "Dollars and dollars and dollars!" over and over again.

Mr. Raymond and Elliot beat a hasty retreat out the studio door. Rambo loudly yells, "ADRIAN!", which echoes through the building as Mr. Raymond and Elliot run down a hallway.

After they are sure of being a safe distance from the crazed madman, they slow to a fast walk. Talking to Mr. Raymond, Elliot says "Dollars and dollars and dollars!" mockingly.

Elliot and Mr. Raymond round a corner and find themselves at a set of double doors: Studio #2. Not noticing the red flashing "Shooting in process" light over the door, they peek into the studio and see a talk show in progress.

From behind the talk show host, we can see the guests, the cameras, and the control booth. The host says, "Welcome back to "Is Too, Is Not". Our guests tonight are opera superstar DONNA PRIMA and I.M. FRESH AND THE HOMEBOYS rap group, whose hit song, "Mop 'n Glow Baby" is based on the Cinderella fairytale.

I.M. Fresh, the rap musician, with his Homeboys adding rap symphonics in the background, raps, "Cinderella, met her fella, dissed the dude 'cause he was yella!" Donna Prima sings back, in a high operatic soprano, "Noooo, nooo....she fell in love...they lived happily ever aaafter!"

Meanwhile, in the control room, we see the switching control panel and monitors, with I.M. Fresh visible on them. He says, "It's a brother's tale. She done him wrong!" Donna Prima says, "It is not! It's a fairytale! They fell in love!" "Is too!," says I.M. Fresh. "Is not!," says Donna. The dialogue degenerates into the "Is too, Is not" of the show's title. The DIRECTOR says, "Take wide shot, Camera 2." On the monitor we see Mr. Raymond and Elliot in the shot, obviously ruining the show. The director says, "What's going on? Bobby, who are those guys? Get them out of there. Cut! This show's a bust!!"

The two intruders dart out the door. As they flee down the hall, the door to Studio #3 opens and a grey-suited man bustles out, running into Elliot without apology. Through the open door, Elliot and Mr. Raymond can see a bewildered group of black-clad, aging rockers in the midst of shooting a music video. The stage is set with symbols reminiscent of pentagrams and goats' heads. The obviously older rock group is bewildered because they're

clutching new costumes consisting of sneakers and baseball caps. Gamma overhears the record executive on his portable phone as he moves slowly down the hall: "Yeah, Irv!," he says excitedly, "I've got this great new concept for the group. Nobody wants to hear those old depressing songs anymore - that whole devil thing went out in the seventies. The kids today want clean, wholesome entertainment like that 'New Kids' group. They're selling like crazy. So, I figured, we just remake the image for Uzzy and the gang. You know, like 'New Kids Over The Hill.' We'll make a killing! The kids'll eat it up!" His voice fades as he rounds a corner. Elliot and Mr. Raymond look back into the studio to see the lead singer in long hair, T-shirt and baseball cap shaking his head, saying, "I don't think this is gonna work."

Mr. Raymond shuts the door to the studio and turns to Elliot. "We've got to find the computer core, which is a central corridor of many banks of electronic circuit panels. We can study how a TV station works from there." When they reach the central core, Mr. Raymond turns on a monitor to show something to Elliot, and the Brain is on the screen, calling to Gamma for a mission update. Elliot looks quizical and Mr. Raymond finally turns to him to explain.

He briefly explains to Elliot that he is Ray Gamma, a "Galactic Guardian" and "Master of Media Literacy" and that he has been sent to Earth to help him overcome his dependency on the electronic signals that make up his entertainment. Elliot doesn't believe a word of it. Then Gamma calls to Zap, who appears dramatically in front of Elliot. Gamma explains that the

planet Zork was once overcome by their entertainment media, thus requiring a restructuring of their society to learn how to think critically about their media so they were not controlled by it. He and Zap are two of the trainers who must now share that knowledge with fledgling societies. Brain is their mission leader. Now that his secret is revealed to Elliot, he can use his powers to show him even more. Elliot, Gamma and Zap will enter the computer core system, locate and interface with the transmission carrying programming to neighborhood homes and travel into the TV sets and radios of Elliot's friends to observe them. They will be able to observe the victims from the inside looking out.

Zap spins around playfully and transforms into a comet of electrical impulses. He flies into the circuit panel, causing a beautiful display of electrical sparks and "Disney-dust drippy-downs." Gamma takes Elliot's hand and they follow Zap. Outside the TV station, "Zap, Elliot and Gamma-the-comet" fly straight up out of the microwave dish, bounce off a satellite and heads back towards earth.

We now find ourselves at a microwave relay station. The three suddenly fly down and hit the relay station's microwave dish. They travel into the dish, and then into the above-ground cables. We see the cables light up as they quickly fly through dozens of them. We see them stop suddenly at a junction, materialize, and take out a map to consult.

The three then head off in a new direction and stop inside a TV screen where they can see the image of a violent show played

out on the screen in reverse. On the other side of the screen they seen Colin, who is playing war, imitating the violent acts of combat. He is decked out in khaki combat clothing and has a variety of toy weapons at his disposal. Elliot shakes his head in amazement and then journey back the way them came.

We now see our three heroes shoot down another above ground cable, and into a house. Once inside the TV set, (bouncing around), they again shrink down to tiny size, and enter the electron gun on their way to the picture tube. They dodge the electron-projectiles as they impact the back of the TV screen, creating an image of Madonna. Inside the house we see MISSY and two of her friends (DEBBIE and MOLLY) dressed up like a parade of Madonnas, dancing and singing along with their video idol, a take-off of "Papa Don't Preach" (early Madonna song); "Teacher don't preach/I'm in trouble deep/I'm makin' all 'F's'/I've been losin' sleep/But I made up my mind/Ain't goin' to summer school!" They throw their schoolbooks in the air and dance around. One of the girls, Debbie, who is black, turns to watch herself in a full length mirror. The reflection she sees in the mirror is not herself as she really is, but a fantasized view of herself as a blonde and bangled Madonna. Elliot looks worried!

Once again, the three fly down a cable into another house, ending up looking through the television's vibrating phosphor-dots into the living room of ROGER, the overweight child from the video party. They see Roger rapidly, like in a silent movie, stuffing his face with junk food. Elliot rubs his eyes, and looks, to see Roger looking larger. He rubs his eyes again,

in disbelief, and looks to see Roger even larger still. This continues until Roger becomes so incredibly huge, that he achieves "critical mass," and suddenly vibrates, changing himself into, literally, a giant potato! The giant "couch potato" eyes (visual pun) turn toward the television set to watch. Elliot looks horrified, gasps an "Oh, no!!" sound, and rockets out of the house and down the overhead cables to escape.

Elliot turns to the two space adventurers and says, "Well, maybe my friends do have a problem, but that doesn't affect me, does it?" In response, Gamma and Zap take him on a more serious trip: to the playground. They arrive in a Walkman (laying on a bench) that belongs to Elliot's brother, Michael.

We now see Elliot's little brother Michael playing on a playground see-saw with a friend. Other kids are playing on various slides, jungle gyms, etc. "Why, there's Michael," exclaims Elliot. "What are we doing watching him?" "Your friends are not the only ones who are affected by this," replies Gamma.

Then a group of older kids arrive: Commando Colin and his "Army Task Force." Colin puts his foot on the low end of the teeter-totter and pushes Michael's friend off, leaving Michael way up in the air. He tells Michael that he warned him to stay out of his territory. Michael protests, so Colin bounces the see-saw with his foot, making it hard for Michael to keep his balance. Elliot starts up with anger. Michael finally gives in, addressing his tormentor as "Commando Colin, SIR." Colin and his friends then start blasting Michael with their big,

battery-powered, automatic (1 quart backpack reservoir) squirt guns. Michael loses his grip on the wet teeter-totter handle and falls to the ground. Colin kicks the low end of the teeter-totter up in the air, causing it to come crashing down, barely missing Michael. The task force continues to blast him with water as they mouth the sounds of real gunfire. Michael finds his glasses on the ground. They are broken. He cannot hold back any longer, and begins to cry. We see Elliot, wide-eyed, breathing heavy and extremely concerned.

The three then travel back through the cables to the TV station and go to the prop room, where the space ship is stored, to talk. In the prop room, Gamma and Elliot discuss everything they have seen. Elliot is beginning to understand the problem but is still not sure about the solution. Gamma grabs his cap off his head and Zap magically writes on it, "ZAP + THINK." Gamma points out again that the formula tells him what to do, detach and think about it. Elliot says that his brother and friends have the problems, not him. Gamma points to Elliot's batman watch and it disappears. He then points to Elliot's "Bart Simpson" logo on his T-shirt and that, too, disappears. He then points to Elliot's dogtags, saying "What about you, G.I. Joe?" They appear magically in Zap's hand with the words, "ZAP + THINK" inscribed on them. Zap hands them back to Elliot.

Gamma says, "One more journey is necessary!" Tiny Elliot, Gamma and Zap appear in a stereo in Elliot's living room. They see a very small Michael plugged into headphones, sitting in front of a number of televisions, all playing different shows.

An address flashes on the screen that invites the viewer to send fan mail. Michael starts writing a letter, as the wires to the electronic equipment surround him snakelike, making it appear as if he is caged. He is oblivious to anything but his letter, as the TVs, radios, stereos, video equipment begin to dance around him, the sound growing louder and louder.

Over the din, we hear Elliot shout to Gamma and Zap: "We can teach Michael the formula. ZAP + THINK! ZAP + THINK! We've got to teach him! ZAP + THINK!"

The scene fades slowly to black, with the multitude of audio and video noise fading slowly. We fade in on a piece of notebook paper with the words ZAP + THINK written on them. Elliot is at his desk at school, surrounded by his classmates, still working on his essay about how he spent his summer. Colin leans over and punches him in the arm and says, "Whatsa matter? Ya got writer's block?" Elliot shakes his head and looks down in his shirt and grabs his dog tags. We see him look at them, but cannot see what is inscribed. He goes back to his writing.

We fade in on Elliot at home. He walks into the living room to find Michael plugged in as described before, but with fewer electronic monitors surrounding him. Michael is working on his fan letter. Elliot grabs Michael and says, "Michael, come with me. There is something I want to show you!" They get on their bikes and head for the TV station.

They arrive at the station and sneak in through a side door to the Prop Room. Elliot calls out, "Ray? Zap? Where are you?" Suddenly the large bay door starts to open with shafts of light

streaming in. A figure appears in the bright mist. It is the security guard, who says, "Hey? Kids! What are you doing in here?!" (He starts walking toward Elliot). "You're in big trouble, mister!"

The guard moves closer, very threatening, but suddenly in a flash of Disney dust, he freezes in mid stride. Elliot watches in amazement, and then, turns quickly as a miniature spaceship on the storage rack begins to move. The tiny ship takes off, and flies around the warehouse, leaving a trail of sparkling Disney dust. Then the ship lands in the open center of the warehouse and in a swirl of Disney dust flourish, it grows to its full size. The hatch on top opens, and Gamma rises up in a formal version of his spacesuit, making a grand entrance. Zap appears on his shoulder.

Elliot introduces Michael, who calls out, "Hey, it's the Ray-Man!" They all sit down together and explain to Michael the formula for critical thinking and media literacy. "You must not be controlled by your sensory stimulus equipment," says Gamma. "Huh?" says Michael. "Your television, your stereo, your music and your entertainment. You must learn to discern and use it wisely rather than consume mindlessly. Then, it can show you many wonderful things. The power of music and television on the human species is a strange thing to behold. It can make you laugh, it can make you cry. It can sometimes teach and sometimes distort the truth. You must use it rather than let it use you."

At this point, Gamma goes into a pixillated song and dance animation sequence. The song and animation will involve the

objects in the warehouse, assuring us of no shortage of props. It will involve a sequence with televisions and stereos moving about, the Cabbage Patch dolls and transformers will come to life and use the entertainment equipment, demonstrating the joy of entertainment when the viewer is in control. One toy dances up to a chalkboard and writes amazing equations with captions like "Patterns of thought = Patterns of action" and "ZAP + THINK." As one errant Batman doll breaks with the other toys to demonstrate poor choice, a buzzing sound will break into the song and dance, the toys scatter in fear and in a dark cloud, all the electronic equipment comes together to form a huge robotlike creature. Gamma steps up to face off with the creature and they begin to do battle. "Stop him" cries Elliot "I can't!" cries Gamma as the creature imprisons him in a force field. Zap flies around the creature's head to confuse him, but the monster just grabs him and squashes him between his hands, leaving only a little cloud of "disney dust drippy-downs." Gamma shouts to Elliot, "Elliot. YOU have the power to defeat him. THINK!" Elliot, distressed, says, "But won't my magic thinking cap work?" "No, Elliot, you must think for yourself. That is what it's all about." Michael mistakenly thinks it is all for fun. Elliot adjusts his cap and grabs his dog tags and thinks hard. The creature, noticing this, reaches down and plucks the cap and dogtags from Elliot, and swallows them with a thundering evil laugh. The monster then makes his move to get Michael. "Run Michael!", yells Elliot, "I can't stop it now!" As Michael runs behinds some props, and the monster is trying to grab him, Gamma yells, "Yes you can, Elliot!

You don't need the cap or dog tags, they're just props! ZAP + THINK!"

Elliot sits down and begins to concentrate. As a look of cognition appears on his face. At this moment, Elliot has a fantastic revelation: he understands that he can make his own choices, and that thinking critically about things won't take the fun away. He looks at the creature and says matter-of-factly, "I'm in charge here!" The robot looks back at him through the TV monitor that makes up its head and face and laughs. Elliot then holds out his hand and says "ZAP" and a remote control device appears in his hand. He then says "THINK" and changes the channel! "I've decided to watch a different program!", he says. The robot looks worried suddenly. Elliot presses the button and the robot collapses back into its component parts, defeated, never to bother Elliot again.

Gamma is now free, and Elliot and Michael are now safe. Elliot will teach Michael what he has learned. But poor Zap, he didn't make it. Elliot and Gamma are sad for a moment, but just then, Michael jumps out and says, "ZAP + THINK" and our little friend Zap appears in a burst of sparkly dust out of Michael's head.

After they say their goodbyes, and the flying saucer takes off, we find ourselves back in the classroom, on the first day of 6th grade, with Elliot just finishing reading his essay, saying, "And that's how I learned the formula and am in control of my entertainment. The end." Elliot waits for a reaction, but we hear only silence. Is he alone in the classroom again?

Just then we hear the teacher speak. "Class!", he says, as we see him clearly for the very first time: Surprise! It is Mr. Raymond (Gamma)! "Well, do we have any comments? What does Elliot's story mean to you?" The students then discuss his story and relate some concepts that allow us to tie up our learning armatures. They discuss their own experiences with entertainment and how they know when they are being manipulated by certain techniques. The dismissal bell rings and the children all file out, except for Elliot.

After the other kids are gone, Elliot steps up to Mr. Raymond and asks him what he thought of his story. Mr. Raymond laughs and tells Elliot how pleased he is to see that their summer tutoring sessions paid off. At the very end, with a twinkle in his eye, he looks at Elliot, winks and says, "But you know, with an imagination like that, you should be working in Hollywood!"

Just then, we hear the director yell, "Cut! Print! That's a wrap!" From the shadow of a camera, we pull back to see the schoolroom set, actors and technicians start shaking hands, congratulating each other. We roll our end credits over a behind-the-scenes montage of this production, which reveals many of the tricks and illusions that were used in this show's creation.

Following the credits, we flash on the words, "ZAP + THINK," with highlights and Disney dust. Fade out.

The End.