WHAT'RE THE ODDS!?!
A documentary proposal by M. George Stevenson

Log line:

Joan Ginther has won the lottery four times, gaining almost $20M – really lucky lady or a PhD in mathematics who knows the odds all too well?

Synopsis:

The odds say that that a lottery winner like Joan Ginther, who won the Texas Lottery four times and gained more than $20M as a result, should come along once every 18 septillion years. The odds also say that what's much likelier is that Ginther had a plan. After all, she's a Ph.D. in math who taught statistics at Stanford and lives in Las Vegas – if anybody knew how to predict where winning scratch off tickets were likely to be found, it would be she.

So – how could this be done? Without Ginther to tell us – she has wisely refused all invitations to discuss her remarkable luck – we will talk to experts in statistics, casino security, state lotteries, and some of the people whose cooperation Ginther would have needed to pull off whatever games she played on what turns out to be a surprisingly scammable system in which millions place their hopes and dreams.

Treatment:

We open with a black screen that asks the question: How could anyone be as lucky as Joan Ginther who has won the lottery four times and won more than $20M, which we see via news reports. The fourth time she won, she even became a minor celeb for a day as the "luckiest woman on earth." According to some statisticians, the odds are greater than the number of all the stars in the universe *TIMES 18* to 1.

What they also say is that some kind of system-gaming is far more likely. Scholars of gambling, casino security experts and state lottery directors all agree: the fix was in.

But what fix? Since Ginther has taken her money home and, as far as anyone can tell, quit the business, we will look at two potential ways for her, with or without compatriots, to use her Ph.D. knowledge of statistics and probability to find a way to ensure that an investment of approximately the price of a

American midsize car could result in a return that would put you into the top 1% -- of millionaires.

The first possibility we'll investigate is:

THE INSIDE JOB

[Etc. Etc. etc. until the end of the story]

A/V Script:

Video	Audio
BLACK SCREEN	MUSIC UP NARRATOR: Joan Ginther is a lucky woman:
FADE IN: GRFX: NEWSPAPER ARTICLE (1993): Woman wins $5M in Pick 6	NARRATOR: She won the lottery. Not only that…
DISSOLVE TO: GRFX: NEWSPAPER ARTICLE (2006): Woman wins $2M in Texas Scratch-off	NARRATOR:…she did it again…
DISSOLVE TO: GRFX: NEWSPAPER ARTICLE (2008): Woman wins $3M in Texas Scratch-off	NARRATOR:… and again…
DISSOLVE TO: ARCHIVE FOOTAGE (2008): Four-time Lottery Queen wins $10M	NARRATOR: :… and again.
FADE TO BLACK FADE UP: [Numerals] 1 in 18 FADE UP one [0] every half second for 12 seconds until we see: 1 in 18,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000	NARRATOR: What're the odds? Actually, the AP interviewed mathematicians who figured they were one in Eighteen septillion. How big a number is that? There are… Wait for it, Wait for it, Twenty four zeroes. For reference, there are
DISSOLVE TO: EXT. JONES BEACH SEEN FROM ABOVE – DAY FAST ZOOM OUT TO IMAGE OF THE WHOLE EARTH FROM SPACE	NARRATOR: One septillion grains of sand… …on earth. Or one septillion…
FAST ZOOM OUT TO:	

HUBBLE TELESCOPE IMAGE OF THE MILKY WAY FAST ZOOM OUT TO: HUBBLE TELESCOPE IMAGE OF DEEP SPACE WITH RANDOM WIDELY SPACED GALAXIES	NARRATOR:..stars in the… …Universe. Other experts have a different idea of the odds:
INT. UNV/RENO OFFICE – DAY PROF. NAME sits at her desk. LOWER THIRD: Prof. Name Institute for the Study of Gambling and Commercial Gaming University of Nevada at Reno PROF. NAME: When something this unlikely happens in a casino, you arrest 'em first and ask questions later.	AMBIENCE PROF. NAME: When something this unlikely happens in a casino, you arrest 'em first and ask questions later.
INT. CAESAR'S SURVEILLANCE MODULE – DAY NAMEY NAME, wearing sunglasses, looks out the one-way glass onto the gaming table LOWER THIRD: Namey Name Casino Surveillance Expert NAMEY NAME: She must have had some kind of scam working. They need to lock her up.	AMBIENCE NAMEY NAME: She must have had some kind of scam working. They need to lock her up.
ETC	ETC
ETC UNTIL STORY IS DONE	ETC UNTIL STORY IS DONE