

"BEING THERE"

Screenplay by

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FADE IN:

INT. CHANCE'S ROOM - DAWN

A large-screen color TV dominates a room sparsely decorated with expensive furniture of the twenties. There are no books, magazines, newspapers to be seen. A man, CHANCE, is in bed, sleeping. His eyes slowly open, and, with no change of expression, he sits up and turns on the TV with a remote control. He reaches for a pocketwatch on the bedside table, and, as he looks at it, the watch chimes. He gets out of bed, crosses to the closet, his eyes never straying from the TV. Chance puts on a bathrobe and leaves the room.

INT. POTTING ROOM - DAWN

The room is filled with the tools of a gardener. Chance enters and turns on a 1940's black and white TV that sits on a shelf.

A wheel with colored gels spins in front of the set, giving an early form of color television. He waters a few of the plants in the potting room as he watches TV.

INT. GARAGE - DAWN

Chance, with a dust rag and feather duster, cleans off a 1935 limousine, in perfect condition.

INT. CHANCE'S ROOM - DAWN

Chance takes off his robe, hangs it in the closet, changes channels on the TV, then goes into the bathroom.

EXT. GARDEN - MORNING

A light snow is falling in a garden between a three-story

brick townhouse and a one-story rear building, guarded on either side by a high brick wall. The door to the rear building opens, Chance peeks out, then goes back inside. A moment passes and Chance reappears, this time with an umbrella. Smartly attired in suit and tie, Chance, with an eye on the garden, crosses to the townhouse.

INT. TOWN HOUSE - REAR ENTRANCE/HALLWAY - MORNING

Chance enters, hangs his umbrella on a door knob, then crosses through the hall. As he goes, we reveal that the furniture in the house is covered with sheets.

INT. TOWN HOUSE - DINING ROOM - MORNING

A large table, covered with a sheet except for two place settings. A TV is on the table. Chance comes into the room, sits and turns on the television. He watches the screen for a moment, then turns, as if expecting someone.

No one appears, so he turns back to the TV. After a time. Footsteps are heard and Chance smiles. LOUISE, an elderly Black maid, hurries into the room, visibly distraught.

CHANCE

Good morning, Louise.

LOUISE

(out of breath)

He's dead, Chance! The Old Man's dead!

CHANCE

(flatly, turns back to TV)

...I see.

LOUISE

Must of happened durin' the night, I don't know... Lord, he wasn't breathin' and as cold as a fish. I touched him, just to see, and you believe me, Chance – that's doin' more than I get paid to do... Then I just cover him up, pulled the sheet over his head...

CHANCE

(nodding)

Yes. I've seen that done.

LOUISE

...Then I get the hell out of that room and call the doctor and I think I woke him probably, he wasn't any too alert. He just said, 'Yeah, he's been expectin' it and said he'd send somebody over...' Lord, what a mornin'!

CHANCE

(watches news, flashes of season's first snowfall)

...Yes, Louise, it's snowing in the garden today. Have you looked outside and seen the snow? It's very white.

A beat of silence from Louise, then anger.

LOUISE

Gobbledegook! Dammit, Boy! Is that all you got to say? More gobbledegook?

(Chance smiles, is silent)

That Old Man's layin' up there dead as hell and it just don't make any difference to you!

Louise takes a long look at Chance, then softens, sits next to him.

LOUISE

Oh, Lord, Chance – I don't know what I was expectin' from you... I'm sorry for yellin' like I did... No sir, I just don't know what I was expectin'...

(Chance doesn't react, watches TV)

...I 'spose I'd better gather up some breakfast for you...

CHANCE
(a turn to her)
Yes, I'm very hungry.

LOUISE
(rises, looks upstairs)
Well, no more stewin' those prunes
every mornin', that's somethin', I
guess...
(she starts out, stops
by the door)
...What are you goin' to do now,
Chance?

CHANCE
(gazing at TV)
I'm going to work in the garden.

Louise gives Chance another look, then turns to leave.

LOUISE
(as she goes)
...I'll get you some eggs.

Chance nods in approval, then changes the channel on the TV.

INT. TOWN HOUSE - SERVANT'S STAIRWAY - MORNING

An enclosed stairway. Chance enters, proceeds up the stairs.

INT. TOWN HOUSE - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - MORNING

Chance comes out of the doorway adjoining the main staircase.
He moves off down the hall.

INT. TOWN HOUSE - OLD MAN'S ROOM - MORNING

The furniture in this room is not covered with sheets – but the Old Man is. There is a knock at the door, then Chance enters the room. He stands by the bed for a moment, then reaches down and pulls the sheet back from the Old Man's face. He touches the man's forehead, briefly, then replaces the sheet. Chance moves to the TV and turns it on. He sits in an easy chair next to the Old Man's bed and watches a movie from the early forties. Chance puts an arm out, rests

it on the Old Man's covered body. He becomes absorbed in a scene in which a gentleman tips his hat to a lady. The scene seems to have 'sunk into' his mind.

EXT. GARDEN - MORNING

It has stopped snowing. Chance, wearing a hat, and a gardening apron over his suit, putters in the garden.

Louise, dressed warmly, comes out of the main house. Chance sees her, tips his hat exactly like the man he saw on television.

LOUISE

...Well, ain't you the gentleman
this morning...

(a pause)

...I'm gonna go now, Chance...

CHANCE

(resumes working)

Yes.

LOUISE

You're gonna need somebody, some
one's gotta be around for you...

(he keeps working)

...You oughta find yourself a lady,
Chance...

(she smiles slightly,
with caring)

...But I guess it oughta be an old
lady, 'cause you ain't gonna do a
young one any good, not with that
little thing of yours...

(she reaches out,
puts a hand on his
shoulder)

...You're always gonna be a little
boy ain't you?

(he smiles, keeps
working)

...Goodbye, Chance...

Louise hugs and kisses Chance, then turns to go.

CHANCE
(as she goes)
Goodbye, Louise.

Louise waves as she enters the townhouse. Chance tips his hat once again as she disappears.

INT. TOWN HOUSE - FRONT HALLWAY - MORNING

Louise enters the hallway, picks up a couple of suitcases waiting by the door. She stops as she sees TWO Men carrying a stretcher down the main staircase. A THIRD MAN, a mortician, follows behind.

LOUISE
...He used to be a big man... 'Spose
he wasted away to about nothin'...
(a beat – then she
talks to the body of
the Old Man)
I guess I'll be goin' off to find me
some folks, Old Man... I'm not batty
enough to stay around this
neighborhood any longer...

The stretcher bearers move to the front door. Louise steps in front of them.

LOUISE
Wait up! I'm goin' out that door
first.

Louise takes one more look at the covered body, then opens the front door, leaves.

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

Chance's pocketwatch chimes as he looks at it. He removes his gardener's apron as he walks toward the townhouse.

INT. TOWNHOUSE DINING ROOM.

Chance enters and sits at his place. He turns on the TV, and watches for a moment, then turns, looks for Louise.

She does not appear so he resumes watching TV. He changes

channels, views a wildly exciting game show. At a peak in the excitement, he again switches channels to news coverage of the President of the United States greeting foreign dignitaries at the White House. CLOSE SHOTS on television reveal that the President uses a two-handed handshake when meeting his guests. Chance grips one hand with the other, the scene on TV seeming to have 'sunk into' his mind.

INT. TOWNHOUSE - FRONT HALLWAY - DAY

A key is heard in the lock. The door opens and THOMAS FRANKLIN and SALLY HAYES enter. Franklin, an attorney, is in his late thirties, carries a large briefcase. Hayes is younger, attractive, also an attorney. She totes a briefcase, has the look of a modern woman.

FRANKLIN

(as they enter)

He and my father used to ride together
back in the thirties... Fox hunting...
Before I was born...

HAYES

(looking around)

Will you give me a tour?

FRANKLIN

Gladly...

(he smiles)

...The safe is in Mr. Jennings'
bedroom, that'll be stop number one.

Franklin puts a hand on Hayes' shoulder as they go toward the stairway. Suddenly, they stop, listen to the off-stage TV.

INT. TOWNHOUSE DINING ROOM - DAY

Chance still watches TV as Franklin and Hayes appear in the doorway. They are surprised to see Chance.

FRANKLIN

...Why... Hello, we thought we heard
something...

(moves to Chance,
hand outstretched)

...I'm Thomas Franklin.

Chance remains seated, takes Franklin's hand warmly in both of his like the President did on TV.

CHANCE

Hello, Thomas... I'm Chance, the gardener.

FRANKLIN

(a beat)

...The gardener?

(thinks it's a joke,
laughs)

...Yes, of course... Mr. Chance,
this is Ms. Hayes.

Hayes moves to shake Chance's hand.

HAYES

Mr. Chance, I'm very pleased to meet
you.

CHANCE

(doesn't rise, again
shakes with both
hands)

Yes.

Chance turns back to the TV. Hayes and Franklin exchange looks, there is an uneasy pause.

FRANKLIN

We're with Franklin, Jennings and
Roberts, the law firm handling the
estate.

CHANCE

(a smile, totally at
ease)

Yes, Thomas – I understand.

FRANKLIN

...Are you waiting for someone? An
appointment?

CHANCE
I'm waiting for my lunch.

FRANKLIN
Your lunch? You have a luncheon
appointment here?

CHANCE
Louise will bring my lunch.

FRANKLIN
Louise?... The maid? ...
(a look to Hayes)
But she should have left earlier
today...

CHANCE
(smiles at Hayes)
I see...

FRANKLIN
(a beat)
All kidding aside, Mr. Chance, may I
ask just what you are doing here?

CHANCE
I live here.

Franklin stares at Chance as Hayes unzips her briefcase.

EXT. GARDEN - AFTERNOON

Chance talks to Franklin as Hayes quickly checks through
some paperwork.

CHANCE
The Old Man himself used to visit my
garden. He would read and rest here.

FRANKLIN
Come now, the deceased...
(catches himself)
Mr. Jennings was bedridden for at
least the last thirty-five years,
since he fractured his spine.

CHANCE

Yes, Thomas. Then he stopped visiting my garden.

(points to a small area)

I planted a lot of tulips right there. I like to watch them grow.

HAYES

(looking up from papers)

There is no mention of a gardener. In fact, according to our inventories, there hasn't been a man employed here since 1933... except for a Mr. Joe Saracini, a brick mason, who did some repairs to a wall. He was here for two-and-a-half days in 1952.

CHANCE

Yes, I remember Joe. He was very fat and had short hair and showed me pictures from a funny little book.

HAYES

...Some pictures?

CHANCE

Yes. Of men and women.

HAYES

...Oh.

FRANKLIN

Just how long have you been living here, Mr. Chance?

CHANCE

Ever since I can remember, since I was a child. I have always worked in the garden.

HAYES

...Then you really are a gardener?

CHANCE

Yes.

(again points off)
...My roses...

FRANKLIN
...We will need some proof of your
having resided here, Mr. Chance.

CHANCE
You have me, I am here. What more
proof do you need?
(he starts toward
rear building, points
off)
That's where Joe fixed the wall.

FRANKLIN
(starts after Chance)
Are you related to the deceased, Mr.
Chance?

CHANCE
No. I don't think so.
(looks back to garden)
In the springtime, you will be able
to see my flowers.

Chance goes into the garage. A perplexed Franklin and Hayes
follow.

INT. GARAGE - AFTERNOON

Chance enters, Franklin and Hayes close behind.

FRANKLIN
(looking at limo)
That's a nice car. Do you drive it,
Mr. Chance?

CHANCE
I've never been in an automobile.

HAYES
You've never been in a car?

CHANCE
Oh, no. I've never been allowed

outside of the house.

INT. CHANCE'S ROOM - AFTERNOON

Chance turns on the TV as Hayes and Franklin inspect the room.

CHANCE

I used to listen to the radio, then the Old Man started giving me television sets, this one has a remote control... I like to watch...

(motions to bed)

You see? This is my bed...

(to closet)

...This is my closet...

(to bathroom)

...This is my bathroom...

HAYES

(goes to closet)

You have a very handsome wardrobe, Mr. Chance.

CHANCE

Yes. I am allowed to go to the attic and use the Old Man's clothes. They all fit me very well.

HAYES

It is amazing how these clothes have come back into style.

FRANKLIN

Could you show us something with your address? A driver's license, a checkbook? Anything to show that you were employed here?

CHANCE

I don't have any of those things.

HAYES

How about a birth certificate?

CHANCE

Oh, no.

FRANKLIN

What are your plans now, Mr. Chance?

CHANCE

My plans are to work in my garden.

HAYES

How much money did Mr. Jennings pay you for your work?

CHANCE

Pay me?... Why nothing. I've never needed money.

FRANKLIN

Mr. Chance, I would like to know what sort of claim you are planning to make against the deceased's estate.

CHANCE

I'm fine, Thomas. The garden is a healthy one. There is no need for a claim.

FRANKLIN

I see. Would you be willing to sign a paper to that effect?

CHANCE

No, Thomas. I don't know how to sign.

FRANKLIN

Come now, Mr. Chance.

CHANCE

(smiles)

I have no claim, Thomas.

FRANKLIN

But you won't sign, correct?

CHANCE

Yes, correct, thank you.

FRANKLIN

Very well, Mr. Chance. I have no alternative but to inform you that this house is now closed. If indeed, you have resided here, you have no legal right to remain. You will have to move out.

CHANCE

Move out? I don't understand, Thomas.

FRANKLIN

I think you do, Mr. Chance. However, I will reiterate. This house is closed and you must leave – by, let's say – noon tomorrow.

(he gives Chance his
business card)

Call me if you change your mind about signing.

(turns to Hayes)

C'mon, Sally – let's grab a bite...

HAYES

(stops by the door)

What about medical records? Could you give us the name of your doctor? Or your dentist?

CHANCE

I have no need for a doctor or dentist. I have never been ill.

HAYES

(a smile to Chance)

I see... Well, good day, Mr. Chance.

CHANCE

(returns smile)

Good day, Sally.

Chance watches as they leave, then puts Franklin's card on a desk without ever looking at it and turns to stare at television.

INT. TOWNHOUSE - ATTIC - AFTERNOON

A large attic filled with the Old Man's possessions of the past. Chance enters, turns on an old black-and white TV with a magnifying lens attached to the front. As it plays, he selects a fine leather suitcase from several, takes a hand-made suit from a long rack.

INT. CHANCE'S ROOM - AFTERNOON

The TV is on as Chance packs his belongings. He tries to fit in his umbrella, but it is too long for the suitcase.

EXT. GARDEN - AFTERNOON

Chance, very nicely dressed, with his suitcase and umbrella, stands in the middle of the garden looking around.

INT. TOWNHOUSE - FRONT HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

Chance is reluctant to open the front door. After some hesitation, he gathers up his courage, opens it and steps outside, closing the door behind him.

EXT. FRONT OF TOWNHOUSE - WASHINGTON, D.C. - AFTERNOON

Chance stops short on the steps; the front of the townhouse is run down and the yard filled with trash. He tries to return to the safety of inside, but the door is locked.

Chance stays on the steps for a moment, ponders which way to go. Making a decision, he steps to the sidewalk and walks down the street to reveal a decaying ghetto.

Windows are shattered or boarded up, walls are smeared with graffiti. Chance passes a group of black people huddled together in threadbare stuffed furniture on the sidewalk, a fire burning between them for warmth. Chance nods politely to the the people; they stare back, no sign of friendship in their faces.

EXT. GHETTO STREET - WASHINGTON, D.C. - AFTERNOON

Chance walks along a ghetto sidewalk. He notices something, moves across the street toward a gang of eight to ten hardcore ghetto youths.

EXT. GHETTO STREET - WASHINGTON, D.C. - AFTERNOON

Chance approaches the gang.

CHANCE

(friendly)

...Excuse me, would you please tell em where I could find a garden to work in?

They turn to him as one, silent. After a moment, LOLO, one of the gang, speaks.

LOLO

What you growin', man?

CHANCE

There is much to be done during the winter, I must start the seeds for the spring, I must work the soil...

The leader of the gang, ABBAZ, moves forward and interrupts.

ABBAZ

Bullshit. Who sent you here, boy? Did that chickenshit asshole Raphael send you here, boy?

CHANCE

No. Thomas Franklin told me that I had to leave the Old Man's house, he's dead now, you know...

ABBAZ

Dead, my ass! Now get this, honkie – you go tell Raphael that I ain't takin' no jive from no Western Union messenger! You tell that asshole, if he got somethin' to tell me to get his ass down here himself!

(edges closer to Chance)

You got that boy?

During this, as Abbaz becomes more hostile, Chance reaches into his pocket, takes out his remote control TV changer.

He points the changer at Abbaz and clicks it three times, tries to change the picture. ABBAZ immediately pulls out a switchblade knife, holds it at Chance.

ABBAZ

Now, move, honkie! Before I cut your white ass.

Chance, disappointed that the changer did not work, returns it to his pocket.

CHANCE

Yes. I understand. If I see Raphael, I will tell him.
(as he leaves)
Good day.

Abbaz, Lolo and the gang watch him go, then begin to buzz with excitement: "Who the fuck died?" "Why'd he pull that changer on us, man?" "The Old Man died, must be Papa Joe!" "He's some weird honkie, man!"

EXT. PORNO AREA - WASHINGTON, D.C. - AFTERNOON

A street lined with adult book stores, X-rated movies and strip joints. An elderly Black Woman approaches carrying a bag of groceries. Chance steps in front of the woman, stops her.

CHANCE

I'm very hungry now. Would you please bring my lunch?

The woman looks up to Chance, becomes very frightened.

She turns and half-runs into a sleazy bar for safety.

Chances watches after her for a moment, then continues along.

EXT. PARK - WASHINGTON, D.C. - AFTERNOON

Chance stands looking through a chain-link fence watching some teenage boys playing basketball. He bangs on the fence, calls to them.

CHANCE

I have seen your game! I have watched
Elvin Hayes play it many times! They
call him 'Big E!'

The boys ignore him, Chance walks away.

EXT. - WASHINGTON, D.C. - LATE AFTERNOON

Chance seems stumped on which way to walk. He looks one way,
then the other, turns and looks behind him and sees a large
statue of Benito Juarez pointing. Chance smiles and goes off
in the direction that Benito points.

EXT. WASHINGTON, D.C. - LATE AFTERNOON

Chance walks down the center meridian of a divided street.

He seems oblivious to the automobiles passing on either side.
In the background can be seen the Capitol Building.

EXT. REAR OF THE WHITE HOUSE - DUSK

Chance is across the street from the White House, inspecting
the branches of a potted tree. He moves to a POLICEMAN
standing nearby.

CHANCE

Excuse me...

(points to tree)

...That tree is very sick. It should
be cared for.

The Policeman looks at the tree, then at Chance, figures a
man dressed that well must be important.

POLICEMAN

Yes sir. I'll report it right away.

CHANCE

Yes. That would be a good thing to
do. Good day.

POLICEMAN

Good day.

The Policeman takes out his walkie-talkie as Chance leaves.

EXT. BUSINESS DISTRICT - EVENING

A fashionable area. Expensive shops, well-kept streets and sidewalks. Chance stands by the display window of a TV store, looks in at a dozen or so color TVs, all turned on, playing various channels. A video camera points outward and is focused on the sidewalk to allow passersby to see themselves live on TV. Chance is intrigued by his own image.

He poses, then steps back off the curb, frowns as his likeness disappears from the frame. Standing between two parked cars, Chance takes out his remote control, clicks it at the store.

Four or five other sets in the window change channels, but he does not reappear on the giant screen. As he does this, the car to his left, a large, American-made limousine, backs up. The limo bumps Chance, pins him against the car to his right. Chance cries out in pain, drops his suitcase, his umbrella, his changer, and bangs his hand on the trunk of the limo. The chauffeur, DAVID, and the liveryman, JEFFREY, immediately jump from the car, run back to Chance.

DAVID

I'm very sorry, sir... I...

David and Jeffrey reach out to help, but Chance is wedged solidly between the two cars.

CHANCE

(in pain)

...I can't move... My leg...

DAVID

(rushes back to limo)

...My Lord...

JEFFREY

This is terrible, sir – I hope you're not badly injured...

CHANCE

No. I'm not badly injured. But my leg is very sore.

David pulls the car forward, freeing Chance. A few bystanders

begin to gather as Jeffrey helps Chance to the sidewalk.

JEFFREY

Can you walk? It's not broken, is it?

CHANCE

(leans against limo,
holds leg)
I hope not.

DAVID

(returning)
Perhaps I should call an ambulance.

A BYSTANDER interrupts.

BYSTANDER

Somebody ought to call the police!

CHANCE

(looks over, smiles)
There's no need for police, it's just my leg.

During this, the rear door of the limo opens and EVE RAND steps out. Eve is in her mid-thirties, and is rich.

She is not pleased with this inconvenience

JEFFREY

Let's have a look, do you mind?

CHANCE

Of course. I would like to look.

Chance bends, raises his trouser leg. A red-bluish swollen bruise is forming on his calf. Eve moves closer, looks at the bruise.

EVE

(to Chance)
...Won't you let us do something for you? Your leg should be examined, we could take you to a hospital.

CHANCE
(smiles at Eve)
There's no need for a hospital.

EVE
Why, there certainly is. You must
see a doctor, I insist on it. Please,
let us take you.

Eve turns to get back in the limo. David goes with her to
hold the door.

DAVID
I'm terribly sorry, Mrs. Rand, I
never saw the man.

EVE
Oh, I don't think it was anyone's
fault, David.

DAVID
Thank you, ma'am.

Jeffrey holds the door open but Chance is hesitant about
getting in the car.

CHANCE
I've never ridden in an automobile.

JEFFREY
(a beat)
I assure you, sir, David is a very
careful driver.

CHANCE
(looks at the car,
then decides)
...Yes. You can take me.

JEFFREY
(as Chance gets in)
Very good.

Jeffrey closes the door, goes back to pick up Chance's
suitcase and umbrella but does not notice the remote control.
As Jeffrey puts Chance's bag into the trunk, we see the

personalized license plate "Rand 1."

INT. LIMOUSINE MOVING THROUGH TOWN - EVENING

Chance and Eve are settled in the back seat. As they talk, Chance is experiencing his first ride in a car.

EVE

I hope you're comfortable.

CHANCE

Yes, I am.

EVE

These situations can be so trying – everybody seems to make such a todo over a simple little accident...

(eyes Chance)

...the insurance, police, the news and all... Is your leg feeling any better?

CHANCE

No, it isn't.

EVE

I see.

Chance looks out the window at passing cars.

CHANCE

It looks very much like television but you can see further.

EVE

(not hearing him)

Say – if you came to our house, we could take care of you there.

CHANCE

Your house?

EVE

Yes. My husband has been very ill. His doctor and nurses are staying with us. Those hospitals can be so

impersonal – why, it might be hours before you are treated...

CHANCE

I agree.

EVE

Fine, it will save a lot of unnecessary fuss and it will be so much more pleasant for you...

(leans forward)

David, we'll just go on home. Jeffrey, would you call and let them know?

JEFFREY

Yes ma'am.

Jeffrey closes the glass between them, then dials the limo telephone.

There is a moment of silence. Eve, a bit uncomfortable, presses a button. The limo's bar moves out, revealing a row of decanters and glasses.

EVE

Would you care for a drink?

CHANCE

Yes. Thank you. I am very thirsty.

As Eve pours cognac into a monogrammed crystal glass, Chance notices the limo's TV set.

CHANCE

I would like to watch television.

EVE

(a bit surprised)

Oh? Certainly...

She hands Chance the cognac, turns on the TV.

EVE

May I ask your name?

Chance takes a sip of the cognac, is not accustomed to

alcohol, coughs.

CHANCE
(with a slight cough)
My name is Chance.

EVE
Pardon me, was that Mr. Chance?

CHANCE
No, I'm a gardener.

EVE
Oh... Mr. Gardiner... Mr. Chauncey
Gardiner... You're not related to
Basil and Perdita Gardiner are you?

CHANCE
No... I'm not related to Basil and
Perdita.

EVE
Oh. Well, they're just a wonderful
couple, we've been friends for years.
We visit their island quite often.

Chance suddenly starts going through his pockets, searching.

EVE
Did you lose something?

CHANCE
Yes. I lost my remote control.

EVE
Oh... Well, I'm very sorry...

Another pause, Chance reaches out, changes channels on TV.

EXT. HIGHWAY - WOODED AREA - NIGHT

The limo approaches, then turns into the entranceway of the
Rand Estate. Two guards stand on either side of the open
gate, salute as the car passes through.

INT. LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

As Eve speaks, Chance is glued to the TV, switches channels to the news.

EVE

Is there anything special you like to watch?

CHANCE

I like to watch. This is fine.

EVE

I know it's very important to stay informed of all the latest events, but I find there is so much to assimilate that it can become quite muddling at times...

Chance nods, changes the channel, watches a Mighty Mouse cartoon. Eve takes it for a small joke and smiles patronizingly.

EXT. RAND MANSION - NIGHT

At least three uniformed people, two valets, WILSON and PERKINS, and LEWIS, the Doorman, are waiting at the front of the Rand Mansion as the limousine arrives. There is a general hubbub as the three of them, along with Jeffrey, help Chance into a wheelchair.

INT. RAND MANSION - FRONT HALLWAY - NIGHT

As the group comes through the front doors, Wilson is wheeling Chance. A uniformed woman, GRETA, is waiting to take Eve's coat.

EVE

(to Wilson)

You take Mr. Gardiner to the third floor guest suite.

(to Chance)

I'll see you after Dr. Allenby has a look at your leg.

CHANCE

Yes, I think he should examine my

leg.

Eve heads off partially revealing a remarkable and large place to live in as Wilson wheels Chance into the elevator.

INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

As the door closes on them, Chance looks to Wilson.

CHANCE

...I've never been in one of these.

Wilson thinks that Chance is talking about the wheelchair.

WILSON

It's one of Mr. Rand's. Since he's been ill...

CHANCE

(looks around elevator)
Does it have a television?

WILSON

(laughs)
No – but Mr. Rand does have one with an electric motor, that way he can get around by himself.

CHANCE

I see.

Chance again checks out the elevator.

CHANCE

How long do we stay in here?

WILSON

How long? I don't know, see what the doctor says...

The elevator stops on the third floor.

INT. RAND MANSION - PALM COURT - NIGHT

Eve is talking to ROBERT ALLENBY. He is in his late fifties and has been Benjamin Rand's doctor for years.

EVE

I pray that I did the right thing, Robert. I didn't want to take the risk of any publicity, especially with Benjamin being so ill.

ALLENBY

I'm sure you did, Eve. But let's just hope he's not one of those opportunists that try and make a fortune out of every little bruise.

EVE

Well, I'm sure we could make a settlement if we had to, but I'd rather not – find out what you can, I'm going to change.

ALLENBY

(as she goes)

Ben's been asking about you...

EVE

(over her shoulder)

I'll see him soon.

Allenby watches after her for a beat, then turns, goes off in the other direction.

INT. GUEST SUITE - NIGHT

An enormous bedroom, filled with 18th Century antique furniture. Allenby dabs Chance's ass with a piece of cotton soaked in alcohol, prior to an injection. Chance stands with his pants to the floor, looks to the television which is not turned on.

ALLENBY

This will ease the pain and swelling, Mr. Gardiner.

CHANCE

I understand. I've seen it done before.

ALLENBY

Now, you'll barely feel this. It won't hurt at all.

Allenby administers the injection, Chance reacts from the pain.

CHANCE

You were wrong, it did hurt.

ALLENBY

(a chuckle)

But not for long...

As Allenby puts a band-aid on Chance's ass, Chance spots a remote control for the TV on the bedside table. He reaches out, picks it up.

ALLENBY

It's good that there was no apparent damage to the bone.

CHANCE

Yes. I think so, too.

ALLENBY

There could be minor hemorrhaging, which really isn't too serious at the time, but can cause secondary problems if not looked after.

CHANCE

(turns on TV)

I see.

ALLENBY

(a look to the TV,
then to Chance)

You can pull your trousers up, now.

CHANCE

Oh, fine.

ALLENBY

Just to take the proper precautions, Mr. Gardiner, I'd recommend we take

you downstairs and X-Ray your leg.

There is no reaction from Chance, Allenby takes a long look at him.

ALLENBY

...By the way, Mr. Gardiner, I would like to ask you something straight out.

CHANCE

(doesn't understand)
...Straight out?

ALLENBY

Yes. Are you planning on making any sort of claim against the Rand's?

CHANCE

(after a beat)
Claim...? ...Oh, claim, that's what Thomas asked me.

ALLENBY

Thomas? Who's Thomas?

CHANCE

Thomas Franklin, an attorney.

ALLENBY

An attorney?

CHANCE

(turns to TV)
Yes.

ALLENBY

(suddenly very cold)
Then you wish to handle this matter through your attorneys?

CHANCE

There's no need for a claim, the garden is a healthy one.

ALLENBY

(gives Chance a look)
Oh, I see...
(laughs)
...Well, then... You caught me off
guard, I must admit...

CHANCE
(changes channels,
sits on bed)
Thank you.

ALLENBY
Good, keep your weight off that leg,
Mr. Gardiner. In fact, it would be
best if you could stay here for a
day or two, if that would be possible.
I can promise you the finest in care.

CHANCE
Yes, I could stay here. Does this
house have a garden?

ALLENBY
...Why, yes – many.

Allenby picks up his bag, heads for the door.

ALLENBY
I'll send Wilson up to take you for
X-Rays, Mr. Gardiner. Feel free to
use the telephone, and please let me
know if you have any discomfort.

CHANCE
(clicking changer)
Yes, I will.

Allenby gives him a look, then leaves. Chance watches an old
movie of a man lighting a cigar. The man enjoys the cigar,
blows out smoke. The scene seems to 'sink into' Chance's
mind.

INT. EVE'S BEDROOM/SITTING ROOM - NIGHT

Allenby enters to reveal Eve standing in front of large double
windows that are wide open. She is wearing different clothes,

different hair.

ALLENBY

Good God, Eve – you'll freeze.

EVE

I wanted some fresh air. How is Mr. Gardiner?

ALLENBY

A rather large contusion, but there isn't any...

EVE

(interrupts)

That's not what I meant, Robert.

ALLENBY

(a beat)

Okay... Well – he seemed to be a most reasonable man, I don't think he'll cause any trouble.

EVE

Thank God for that.

ALLENBY

I'd like to keep an eye on him, though – I suggested that he stay here for a couple of days.

EVE

Stay here? Is that necessary?

ALLENBY

Not necessary, but preferable. Don't worry, Eve – he might be a breath of fresh air...

EVE

(a beat)

...Yes, he is different... He's very intense, and internal, don't you think?

ALLENBY

Perhaps... Actually, I found him to have quite a sense of humor.

EVE

Good. It might be pleasant for a couple of days....

Eve is silent for a moment, looks out to the darkness.

EVE

I guess I should go see Ben now.

(turns)

I'll see you at dinner.

Eve leaves the room.

INT. RAND'S CONVERTED BEDROOM - NIGHT

Eve enters through heavy glass doors. BENJAMIN RAND, wearing a silk bathrobe, lies on a king-sized bed to one side of the room. Rand perks up as sees Eve crossing to him. He is in his sixties, maintains an inner strength and dignity despite the sapping effects of his illness.

RAND

(with weakness)

...Eve...

Eve kisses him, holds his hand.

EVE

(with conviction)

Oh, Ben – I do miss you when I'm out... How are you feeling?

RAND

Tired... And I'm getting tired of being tired. Other than that, I'm doing very well.

EVE

I'm so glad... No headaches?

RAND

No, it's been a good day – better than yours, from what I've been told.

EVE
You heard?

RAND
I may be a shut-in, but I do not
lack for news. I'm sorry you had to
go through all that.

EVE
Oh, it wasn't all that bad darling.
We were fortunate that Mr. Gardiner
turned out to be so reasonable.

RAND
Reasonable? Good, I'd like to meet a
reasonable man. Why don't you ask
this Gardiner to join us for dinner?

EVE
For dinner? Are you well enough for
that?

RAND
(smiles)
Hah!... Tell me the truth, Eve – if
I wait until I feel better, will I
ever meet the man?
(Eve is silent)
Constance!

CONSTANCE, in a nurse's uniform, appears in a side doorway.

RAND
Constance! I want new blood tonight,
I'm getting up for dinner.

CONSTANCE
But, Mr. Rand...

RAND
Don't argue, tell Robert I want new
blood!
(turns to Eve)
...Ask him to dinner.

Rand pulls Eve's hand close, kisses it.

EVE

(after a beat)

...I ran into Senator Jansen at lunch today and he all but ignored me... And it's starting to happen a lot lately... since you've been sick.

RAND

Dammit, there's no excuse for that. I'll call him tomorrow.

EVE

Thank you, darling.

INT. RAND MANSION - FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

The elevator door opens to reveal Wilson with Chance in the wheelchair.

CHANCE

(as Wilson wheels him out)

...That's is a very small room.

WILSON

(laughs)

Yes sir, I guess that's true – smallest room in the house.

CHANCE

(glancing around)

Yes. It seems to be.

Wilson takes this as another joke, chuckles as he wheels Chance toward Rand's hospital room.

INT. RAND'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

A glass-enclosed room, next to Rand's bedroom, filled with the very latest in hospital emergency equipment. CONSTANCE and another nurse, TERESA, stand by as Rand is being given a transfusion. Rand lifts his head as Wilson wheels Chance into the room.

RAND

Welcome to Rand Memorial Hospital,
Mr. Gardiner.

CHANCE

(looks around room)

...I see.

Wilson pushes Chance to the X-Ray machine, where BILLINGS, a Black technician helps him onto the table.

CHANCE

(inhales deeply)

I feel very good in here.

RAND

That's the oxygen! When I first got sick I had it all glassed in so I could have a little extra oxygen pumped in, keeps my spirits up.

Chance is now flat on his back as Billings lines up the X-Ray camera.

CHANCE

You must be very sick.

RAND

Aplastic anemia, Mr. Gardiner –
aplastic anemia. Failure of the bone marrow to produce red blood cells... Not a damn thing they can do about it. Oh, they can make me comfortable, prolong my life with steroid therapy and transfusions... But what makes my blood boil, what little I have left, that is, Mr. Gardiner – is that it's generally a young person's disease... Here I am, getting on in years and about to die of a young person's disease...

CHANCE

(smiles at Rand)

I've never seen anything like this on television.

BILLINGS

Please, hold still, Mr. Gardiner.

CONSTANCE

You too, Mr. Rand, you must stay quiet.

RAND

(lays his head back)

..You will join us for dinner, won't you, Mr. Gardiner?

CHANCE

Yes. I am very hungry.

RAND

..So am I, my boy – so am I.

Chance stares at Billings, reacts to him being black.

CHANCE

Do you know Raphael?

BILLINGS

No sir, I don't believe I do.

CHANCE

Oh. I have a message for him.

BILLINGS

Yes, sir.

CHANCE

A black man gave me the message.

BILLINGS

Well, I still don't believe I know the man, Mr. Gardiner. Now, please hold still.

INT. RAND DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The dining room is immense, a 75-foot ceiling, huge fireplaces. Allenby, Eve, Rand and Chance (both in wheelchairs) sit around the table. THURMAND, a waiter, and

MARIANNE, a waitress, enter carrying trays of food. Eve turns to Chance.

EVE

I do hope your injury won't prevent you from attending to business, Mr. Gardiner?

CHANCE

No. It won't do that.

EVE

...Would you like us to notify anyone for you?

CHANCE

No. The Old Man died and Louise left.

EVE

Oh. I'm very sorry. Well, if you have a need for any of our facilities, please don't hesitate to ask.

RAND

Do you need a secretary?

CHANCE

No, thank you. My house has been closed.

RAND

Oh, you mean to say that your business was shut down.

CHANCE

Yes. Shut down and locked by the attorneys.

RAND

What'd I tell you?... I know exactly what you mean. Today the businessman is at the mercy of kid-lawyers from the SEC. All they want to do is regulate our natural growth!

ALLENBY

It's happening to everyone, I'm afraid. The way things are going they'll probably legislate the Medical Profession, as we know it, right out of existence.

CHANCE

Yes. Right out of existence.

RAND

And it's a damn shame – it's all happening too fast...

(sighs)

What are your plans now, Mr. Gardiner?
Or may I call you Chauncey?

CHANCE

Yes. Chauncey is fine.

RAND

And I'm Ben.

ALLENBY

(smiles to Chance)

Robert.

EVE

(also smiles)

...Eve.

RAND

So tell me, Chauncey, just what are your plans?

CHANCE

I would like to work in your garden.

EVE

(laughs)

Oh, I know exactly what you mean. I sometimes enjoy puttering around myself, such a pleasant way to forget one's troubles.

RAND

I never had a feel for it myself...

But, Eve – why don't you show
Chauncey our gardens tomorrow...
(to Chance)
They're quite lovely.

EVE

Well, it'll have to wait until I get
back from Boston... Unfortunately,
my morning will be taken up by another
one of those charity events.

CHANCE

I am a very good gardener.

RAND

Isn't that what a businessman is? A
gardener? A person that makes flinty
soil productive with the labor of
his own hands, who waters it with
sweat from his own brow, and who
creates a place of value for his
family and community? Yes, indeed,
Chauncey, a productive businessman
is a laborer in his own vineyard.

CHANCE

I know exactly what you mean, Ben.
The garden that I left was such a
place. But I don't have that any
more...

(points to ceiling)

...All that's left for me now is the
room upstairs.

RAND

Now, wait a minute, Chauncey – you
have your health... for God's sake
don't give up on yourself! You have
to fight! You can't let those bastards
keep you down! I don't want to hear
any more from you about the 'Room
Upstairs.' That's where I'm going
soon.

There is a long pause. Chance looks up, then smiles at Rand.

CHANCE

It's a very pleasant room, Ben.

RAND

(laughs)

Yes, I'm sure it is. That's what they say, anyway.

Another period of silence. The servants bustle around the room as Allenby studies Chance.

INT. RAND'S POOL ROOM - NIGHT

Allenby is shooting pool. Rand is offering Chance a cigar from a humidor.

RAND

Have one of these, Chauncey – they're Cuban.

CHANCE

Thank you, Ben.

Chance examines the cigar, does not see Rand clip the end off his own.

RAND

It's one thing Robert can't keep me from. I've enjoyed a cigar as long as I can remember.

Rand turns the cigar clipper to Chance. As Chance tries to figure out the clipper, the flame from an ornate lighter catches his eye and Chance watches intently as Rand lights his own cigar.

RAND

...You know, Chauncey, there are thousands of American businessmen, large and small, that share your plight. I've been concerned with the situation for some time now.

(hands lighter to Chance)

...I'd like to offer the decent 'gardeners' of the community a helping

hand. They've been harassed long enough by inflation, excessive taxation, unions, all sorts of indecencies...

Allenby watches Chance as he first tries to light the lighter, then tries to light the unclipped cigar.

RAND

After all, they are our strongest defense against the pollutants that threaten our basic freedoms and the well-being of our middle class. So I've been thinking about beginning a financial assistance fund... Tell me, Chauncey, would you have any thoughts on such a program?

CHANCE

(puffing, trying to light cigar)

No, Ben.

RAND

(a smile)

Reluctant to speak, eh, Chauncey? Well, I can understand that. When a man loses everything, anger has a tenancy to block out reason for a time. Just give it some thought, work with the idea, I'm sure you'll have plenty to say in a few days.

Chance puts the unlit cigar in the ashtray, smiles at a most curious Allenby.

INT. MANSION - ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Wilson stands behind Chance in the wheelchair. Chance glances slowly around the elevator. Suddenly, Wilson breaks out into laughter.

WILSON

...Sorry, sir... I thought you were going to come out with another one of your jests about the elevator...

Excuse me, sir...

The elevator stops, the door opens.

INT. MANSION - THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

Wilson wheels Chance out of the elevator.

CHANCE
...Hmmm... Elevator.

WILSON
(laughs again)
...Yes sir – elevator!

Wilson stops laughing as he notices Eve coming toward them.

EVE
Chauncey, I wanted to tell you how dreadful I feel about your leg, but how delighted I am that you are staying with us.

CHANCE
Thank you, Eve – I like this house very much.

EVE
...And Ben is just mad about you – you've lifted his spirits so – it's just... Well, it's just a real pleasure, your being here...

CHANCE
Ben is very ill, Eve – I've seen that before.

EVE
Yes... I know Chauncey.

CHANCE
I like Ben very much... He reminds me of the Old Man...

EVE
He does...?

CHANCE

Yes. Are you going to leave and close the house when he dies?

Eve is not prepared for such a question.

EVE

...Why... No, I don't think so...

CHANCE

That's good.

Chance smiles at Eve and there is a moment of silence before Eve moves away.

EVE

...Good night, Chauncey.

CHANCE

Good night, Eve.

Wilson wheels Chance toward the guest room.

EXT. FRONT OF RAND MANSION - MORNING

Chance comes out of the front door, walking with a limp for his first view of the Rand grounds. The attendant, Lewis, hurries to Chance.

LEWIS

Did you want a car, sir?

CHANCE

Yes. I would like a car.

LEWIS

Yes, sir.

Lewis goes to his post, picks up a phone. As Chance looks at the surroundings, Allenby and Wilson, with Chance's wheelchair, come out of the house.

ALLENBY

Chauncey, there you are. What are you doing on that leg?

CHANCE
It's fine today, Robert.

ALLENBY
Shame on you, Chauncey – you should
let me be the judge of that. Please,
sit in the chair.

Wilson pushes a wheelchair to Chance, he sits.

ALLENBY
(checks leg)
I swear, Chauncey, between you and
Benjamin, I've got my hands full...
(examines Chance's
calf)
...Say, that is coming along, the
swelling has gone down considerably...

A limousine pulls up to the front of the mansion, waits for
Chance.

ALLENBY
(continues examining)
...Benjamin has been hounding me to
allow him to address the annual
convention of his Financial Institute
today, but obviously, the strain
would be impossible... How about
here, Chauncey, any soreness?

CHANCE
Hardly any, Robert.

Lewis, the attendant, interrupts.

LEWIS
Your limousine, sir.

CHANCE
Oh, thank you.

ALLENBY
...Are you going somewhere?

CHANCE
No, Robert.

ALLENBY
(a beat)
...Oh... Anyway, the President offered to sit in for Ben at the convention, quite a nice gesture. He's due here soon, I believe.

CHANCE
Yes, Robert. I know about the President.

ALLENBY
(mildly surprised)
...Oh? You've heard?

CHANCE
Yes. Ben called me. He wants me to meet the President.

ALLENBY
He does, does he?

CHANCE
Yes, Ben asked me to be in his room at ten o'clock.

ALLENBY
Why, that's terrific, Chauncey.

CHANCE
How do I know when it's ten o'clock?

A long reaction from Allenby, then he looks at his watch.

ALLENBY
...It's five of, you'd best get on in there.

CHANCE
Thank you, Robert.

Wilson begins to push Chance.

CHANCE

I would like to walk today.

ALLENBY

Hell yes – walk. You're meeting the President, aren't you?

CHANCE

(gets out of chair)

Yes. I like to watch him on television.

Allenby, a bit puzzled, watches as Wilson opens the front door for Chance.

INT. RAND'S ROOM - MORNING

Rand is in an easy chair, dressed for his meeting with the President. The two nurses are nearby. Rand smiles as Chance is shown into the room by Wilson.

RAND

Chauncey, up and around this morning, are you?

CHANCE

Yes, Ben. I like to walk.

RAND

Well, that's good news, my boy.

CHANCE

You're looking much better today, Ben.

RAND

Hah! It's all makeup, Chauncey... I asked nurse Teresa to fix me up, I didn't want the President to think I was going to die during our talk.

CHANCE

I understand.

RAND

No one likes a dying man, my boy –

because few know what death is. All we know is the terror of it. But you're an exception, Chauncey – that's what I admire in you, your marvelous balance. You don't stagger back and forth between fear and hope – you're a truly peaceful man.

CHANCE

Thank you, Ben.

(looks at Rand closely)

...Nurse Teresa did a very good job, Ben.

The nurses turn, look at Chance.

INT. RAND MANSION - THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY - MORNING

Allenby gets off the elevator, stands and thinks for a moment, then heads off down the hallway in the direction of Chance's room.

EXT. FRONT RAND MANSION - MORNING

Perkins is at the head of eight servants lined up on the front steps. Two black PLYMOUTH SEDANS pull up and EIGHT MEN in grey business suits get out. One of them, WOLTZ, goes directly to Perkins.

WOLTZ

Good morning, Perkins.

PERKINS

Good morning, Mr. Woltz, nice to see you again.

WOLTZ

Thank you. How have you been?

PERKINS

Fine, thank you.

(hands Woltz paper)

We have an additional guest with us today, Mr. Chauncey Gardiner.

WOLTZ

(reads list)
I see...
(turns to other men)
Okay, let's go to work.

The eight servants pair up with the eight men in suits and go into the house.

INT. RAND'S ROOM - MORNING

Chance watches television as Rand speaks.

RAND

Yes, when I was younger I had thoughts about public office... But I found, Chauncey – that I was able to contribute more as a private citizen... Of course, my wealth provided me with considerable influence, but I've tried, believe me, not to misuse that power... It's extremely important, Chauncey, that you don't allow yourself to become blinded to the needs of the country even when the temptations are strong. I've been labeled a 'kingmaker' by many, but I have tried to stay open to the voices of the people... I have tried to remain honest to myself...

CHANCE

(changing channels)
...I see, Ben.

INT. RAND MANSION - A HALLWAY - MORNING

One of the servants accompanies Secret Service Agent RIFF as he knocks on each door, checks inside, then moves on.

EXT. FRONT RAND MANSION - MORNING

Lewis picks up his phone and dials as he sees the President's motorcade come through the far gate.

LEWIS

(into phone)
The President is arriving now, Mrs.
Aubrey.

INT. RAND MANSION - MRS. AUBREY'S OFFICE - MORNING

MRS. AUBREY is Rand's executive secretary, but her office is the Nerve Center of Rand Enterprises.

MRS. AUBREY
(on phone)
Very good, Lewis, thank you.

Mrs. Aubrey clicks off, pushes another button.

INT. RAND'S ROOM - MORNING

Rand smiles at Chance as the phone buzzes.

RAND
He's here.
(into phone)
Yes, Mrs. Aubrey?
(listens)
Fine. Show the President to the
library, we'll be along in a few
minutes.

Rand hangs up the phone, turns to Chance with a twinkle in his eyes.

RAND
It's an old habit that goes along
with power – keep them waiting...

Teresa brings Rand's wheelchair to him.

RAND
(stands, very weak)
Not now, Teresa. I'm seeing the
President on my own two feet.

TERESA
But, Mr. Rand...

RAND

(puts an arm around
Chance for support)
Shall we go, Chauncey?

CHANCE
Yes, Ben. That's a good idea.

Rand walks slowly, clings to the limping Chance tightly as they leave the room.

EXT. HALLWAY - MORNING

The President and his entourage are seen on their way to the library as Rand and Chance enter and stop in front of Mrs. Aubrey's office.

RAND
Mrs. Aubrey, have you received the papers on the Caracas agreement?

MRS. AUBREY
Yes, sir. They're ready for you to sign.

RAND
Excellent.
(as they move away)
A good woman, Mrs. Aubrey.

CHANCE
I agree, Ben.

They shuffle off down the hallway and are met immediately by Woltz and another agent, Barker. Both carry small metal detectors.

WOLTZ
Good morning, Mr. Rand.

RAND
Woltz...
(nods toward Chance)
This is Mr. Gardiner.

WOLTZ
(indicates detector)

Just a formality, Mr. Gardiner.

Barker passes the detector over Rand as Woltz checks Chance.

RAND

Good thing we're not in our wheelchairs, you boys would have a devil of a time.

CHANCE

(as Woltz finishes)

Thank you very much.

INT. RAND LIBRARY - MORNING

A somewhat nervous PRESIDENT waits for Rand and Chance.

When they enter, he goes to Rand with both hands outstretched.

PRESIDENT

Ben!

RAND

...Mr. President, how good to see you.

PRESIDENT

It's so good to see you too, Ben, you look terrific!

RAND

(with a look to Chance)

Thank you, Mr. President. Let me tell you, your visit has raised my spirits...

PRESIDENT

Well, I've missed you, my friend.
(guides Rand to chair)
Here, sit down, get off your feet.

As Rand sinks into the chair, Chance approaches the President with both hands outstretched.

CHANCE

Good morning, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT
(smiling)
...Hello.

RAND
Oh, Mr. President, I'd like you to
meet my dear friend, Mr. Chauncey
Gardiner.

Chance and the President exchange a two-handed handshake.

The President reacts.

CHANCE
You look much smaller on television,
Mr. President.

PRESIDENT
(a beat)
...Oh, really...

RAND
(smiling)
You will find that Chauncey does not
bandy words, Mr. President.

The President gives Chance a look, then laughs.

PRESIDENT
Well, Mr. Gardiner, that's just fine
with me – I'm a man that appreciates
a frank discussion... Be seated,
please, Mr. Gardiner...

CHANCE
(sitting)
Yes, I will.

PRESIDENT
(also sits)
Now, Ben, did you happen to get a
chance to go over...

Chance reacts to the mention of his name, interrupts.

CHANCE

Yes?

There is a beat as the President look at Chance quizzically, then he continues.

PRESIDENT

...I just wonder if you had gone over my speech, Ben.

RAND

Yes, I did.

PRESIDENT

...Well?

RAND

Overall – pretty good. But, Mr. President, I think it's very dangerous to resort to temporary measures at this stage of the game.

PRESIDENT

Well, Ben... I...

RAND

I sympathize with you and, I know how difficult it is to be straightforward, but I'm telling you right now, Bobby – your position on this is going to cause more dissension that you want or might even be able to stand.

INT. CHANCE'S ROOM - MORNING

Allenby is searching through Chance's clothes looking for something. There is a knock at the door, Allenby pulls back from the closet as Riff opens the door, looks inside.

ALLENBY

Oh... Hello.

RIFF

(entering)

Good morning. I'm Riff, Secret

Service.

ALLENBY

...Yes. Of course.

Allenby spreads his arms as Riff passes the metal detector over him.

INT. LIBRARY - MORNING

The President paces, is worried about what Rand is telling him. Chance smiles through it all.

RAND

...There is no longer any margin for inflation, it has gone as far as it can. You've reached your limits on taxation, dependence on foreign energy is at a point of crisis, and, from where I see it, Mr. President, the so-called Free Enterprise System could be at the breaking point.

PRESIDENT

You don't think I should take that chance, huh?

RAND

Absolutely not.

Chance has reacted to his name, but doesn't know what to say. The President sits, turns, to Chance.

PRESIDENT

Do you agree with Ben, Mr. Gardiner?
Or do you think we can stimulate growth through temporary incentives?

CHANCE

(a beat)

As long as the roots are not severed,
all is well and all will be well in
the garden.

PRESIDENT

(a pause)

...In the garden?

CHANCE

That is correct. In a garden, growth has its season. There is spring and summer, but there is also fall and winter. And then spring and summer again...

PRESIDENT

(staring at Chance)

...Spring and summer...

(confused)

Yes, I see...Fall and winter.

(smiles at Chance)

Yes, indeed.

RAND

(interrupts)

I think what my most insightful friend is building up to, Mr. President, is that we welcome the inevitable seasons of nature, yet we are upset by the seasons of our economy.

CHANCE

Yes. That is correct. There will be growth in the spring.

PRESIDENT

(pleased)

...Well, Mr. Gardiner, I must admit, that is one of the most refreshing and optimistic statements I've heard in a very, very long time.

(he rises)

...I envy your good, solid sense, Mr. Gardiner – that is precisely what we lack on Capitol Hill.

(glances at watch)

I must be going.

(holds out hand to
Chance)

...This visit has been most enlightening...

Chance rises and shakes the President's hand.

CHANCE

Yes. It has.

PRESIDENT

...You will honor me and my family with a visit, won't you?

CHANCE

Yes. I will.

PRESIDENT

Wonderful, we'll all look forward to seeing you.

(turns to Rand)

Is Eve around? I'd like to say hello.

RAND

No, she flew up to Boston for some charity event. She'll be sorry to have missed you.

PRESIDENT

I'm sorry, too. Well, Nancy wanted me to send along her best to the two of you – and, Ben, I want to thank you for your time and thoughts.

RAND

Nonsense, Mr. President – I thank you for coming to spend time with a dying man.

PRESIDENT

Now, Ben, I won't have any any of that. Why don't you listen to your good friend Chauncey – this is a time to think of life!

The President claps Rand's hand.

RAND

You're right, Mr. President – I don't like feeling sorry for myself.

PRESIDENT
Take care of yourself, Ben.

RAND
You too, Bobby.

PRESIDENT
(as he turns to go, a
smile to Chance)
...Chauncey...

CHANCE
..Bobby...

The President leaves the library and Chance turns to Rand.

RAND
(as the door closes)
He's a decent fellow, the President,
isn't he?

CHANCE
I'm glad he came, Ben. It was nice
talking to the President.

INT. RAND MANSION - HALLWAY - MORNING

The President and his entourage are moving along toward the front door. One aide, KAUFMAN, walks next to the President.

PRESIDENT
Kaufman, I'm going to need information
on Mr. Chauncey Gardiner's background.

KAUFMAN
(makes note of name)
Gardiner, yes, sir.

PRESIDENT
And I'd like it some time today.

KAUFMAN
No problem, Chief.

INT. RAND MANSION - TAPESTRY ROOM - MORNING

Rand has an arm around Chance as the two of them walk.

Behind them, Wilson and Perkins push empty wheelchairs.

RAND

(very weak)

...You know, Chauncey, there's something about you... You don't play games with words to protect yourself. You're direct...

(they walk a few more feet in silence)

You know what I was talking to you about last night?

CHANCE

(blankly)

No, Ben.

RAND

Oh, sure you do, the financial assistance program for the businessman.

(another beat)

Well, I think you might be just the man to take charge of such an undertaking. I'd like you to meet with the other members of the Board so you can discuss the matter at greater length with them.

CHANCE

I understand.

RAND

And, please, Chauncey – don't rush your decision. I know you're not a man to act on the spur of the moment.

CHANCE

Thank you, Ben.

RAND

And now, Chauncey, I'm afraid you must excuse me – I'm very tired...

Rand sits down in his wheelchair and Perkins starts off with him.

CHANCE

(as they go)

I'm sorry that you are so sick, Ben.

Chance watches after them for a moment, then his interest is taken by one of the large tapestries.

EXT. RAND MANSION - MAIN GARDEN - DAY

Chance and Eve walk through the garden. At one end, is a huge Victorian greenhouse, with smaller greenhouses next to it. Off to one side, stands an attractive stone house.

Five young men work in one area, shoveling mulch.

EVE

There are over sixty thousand tulip bulbs planted here. It's quite a sight when they're blooming. Of course, the roses are beautiful, too. We have, I think, around twenty thousand bushes.

(gestures to men working)

...We plant something different every year in that area... But I haven't decided what I would like this spring. What do you think, Chauncey?

CHANCE

I don't know.

EVE

Well, give it some thought.

(indicates stone house)

That's the gardener's house over there.

Chance looks off to the two story stone house.

INT. A GREENHOUSE - DAY

Chance and Eve are in the middle of a huge potting greenhouse where hundreds of young plants are tended by four workers.

CHANCE

I like to watch the young plants grow.

EVE

It is wonderful, isn't it?

CHANCE

Young plants do much better if a person helps them.

Eve looks at Chance as he inspects some of the flowers.

She has decided to make a move.

EVE

...Ben tells me the President was very taken with you this morning.

Chance doesn't know what to say, continues inspecting the flowers.

INT. VICTORIAN GREENHOUSE - DAY

Chance and Eve move through a large and an extra lush greenhouse until they reach a long room filled with cacti.

EVE

(as they move)

...Chauncey... Last night you mentioned an old man, that died. Was a relative? Or an intimate friend?

CHANCE

(looking at greenhouse)

He was a very wealthy man, he looked after me since I was young.

EVE

Oh, I see... Your mentor.

CHANCE

...Mentor...?

Eve takes his uncertainty as a reluctance to discuss the Old Man.

EVE

Forgive me, Chauncey – I don't mean to pry. You must have been very close to him.

CHANCE

Yes. I was.

EVE

I'm sorry...
(getting more to the point)
...And what about Louise? You mentioned that she had gone. Were you close to her also?

CHANCE

Yes. I liked Louise very much. She was his maid.

EVE

(relieved)
Oh, his maid!... Stupid me, I thought perhaps she was someone that you may have been romantically involved with, or maybe your sister.

CHANCE

Oh no. She brought me my meals.

EVE

(pleased)
Of course.

Eve edges slightly closer to Chance. Chance edges slightly closer to the cacti, is fascinated by it.

INT. RAND'S ROOM - DAY

Rand is in bed, looking bad. Eve, Chance and Allenby are seated around him, the two nurses stand to one side. They all watch the President's address to the Financial Institute

on TV.

PRESIDENT'S VOICE

...I know that many of you believe that we are on the brink of the worst financial crisis in this nation's history. And there are some of you who would like to see us put mandatory freezes on prices and wages, and then call it a temporary measure. Well, that's exactly what I was going to do until this moment. But I have decided there are no temporary stop gaps. So I am going to re-think my position and find another solution. And, you'll be very pleased to know that your founder and chairman-of-the-board, Mr. Benjamin Turnbull Rand, agrees with me on this...

(a beat)

...for once.

There is applause and laughter from the audience.

PRESIDENT'S VOICE

(after applause)

Chauncey Gardiner, Mr. Rand's close friend and advisor, was at our meeting this morning. I found Mr. Gardiner to have a feeling for this country that we need more of. He likened us to a garden... To quote Mr. Gardiner, a most intuitive man, 'As long as the roots of industry remain firmly planted in the national soil, the economic prospects are undoubtedly sunny.'

Rand starts coughing, breathing heavily. Allenby and the nurses rush to his bedside. Allenby shoots a quick look to Eve and Chance.

ALLENBY

(motioning toward door)

I think you should leave.

Eve and an interested Chance leave the room as Allenby administers aid to Rand.

PRESIDENT'S VOICE

Gentlemen, let us not fear the inevitable chill and storms of autumn and winter, instead, let us anticipate the rapid growth of springtime, let us await the rewards of summer. As in a garden of the earth, let us learn to accept and appreciate the times when the trees are bare as well as the times when we pick the fruit.

INT. RAND MANSION - HALLWAY - DAY

Eve and Chance stand in silence near the palm court. Eve's eyes are swollen, red, she has been crying. She turns to Chance, reaches out, touches his hand.

EVE

(hesitates)

...I'm...

(pause)

...I'm very grateful that you're here, Chauncey...

(pause)

...With us...

CHANCE

So am I, Eve.

Allenby comes out of Rand's room, his mood is serious.

ALLENBY

...This has been an exhausting day for Ben... He's resting comfortably now. There's no cause for alarm...

Mrs. Aubrey approaches.

MRS. AUBREY

Mr. Gardiner, I have a telephone call for you, Sidney Courtney.

CHANCE
...Telephone call?

MRS. AUBREY
Yes, Sidney Courtney, the Financial
Editor of the "Washington Post."

Chance does not react.

MRS. AUBREY
(after a moment)
Would you care to take it, sir?

CHANCE
Yes.

Chance still does not move. Eve mistakes this for concern
for herself.

EVE
I'll be all right, Chauncey – you
go ahead with Mrs. Aubrey...

CHANCE
Yes, Eve. You'll be all right.

Chance follows Mrs. Aubrey. Eve watches Chance go, then turns
to Allenby.

EVE
...He's such a sensitive man, so
considerate...

INT. MRS. AUBREY'S OFFICE - DAY

Three television sets are on. Mrs. Aubrey hands a phone to
Chance, he looks at it, uncertain.

CHANCE
(after a moment, into
phone)
...Hello.

INT. WASHINGTON POST - COURTNEY'S OFFICE - DAY

SID COURTNEY, a man in his fifties, wears a rumpled wool jacket, smokes a pipe.

COURTNEY

Hello, Mr. Gardiner. I'm sorry to disturb you, but I watched the President's speech at the Financial Institute today, and I wondered if you have any comments on the meeting that took place between Mr. Rand, the President and yourself.

INTERCUT - MRS. AUBREY'S OFFICE/COURTNEY'S OFFICE - DAY

CHANCE

The President is a nice person. I enjoyed it very much.

COURTNEY

Good, sir. And so, it seems, did the President – but we would like to have some facts; such as, uh... What exactly is the relationship between yourself and that of the First American Financial Corporation?

CHANCE

I think you should ask Mr. Rand that.

COURTNEY

Of course. But since he is ill I'm taking the liberty of asking you.

CHANCE

(watching three TV sets)

Yes, that is correct. I think you should ask Mr. Rand that.

Courtney doesn't understand but continues his questioning.

COURTNEY

I see. Then one more quick question, Mr. Gardiner.

Chance hangs up the phone, watches the TVs.

Courtney listens to the dial tone, then puts the receiver down.

COURTNEY

(to himself)

No wonder he's so close to Rand...

INT. MRS. AUBREY'S OFFICE - DAY

Mrs. Aubrey puts a call on hold, speaks to Chance who is still intrigued by the three televisions.

MRS. AUBREY

Mr. Gardiner, I have the producer of the 'Gary Burns Show' on the line.

CHANCE

Yes, I have watched that on television.

MRS. AUBREY

Of course. They would like you to appear on the show tonight. The Vice-President was scheduled, but he had to cancel, and they asked if you would be interested.

CHANCE

Yes. I would like to be on television.

MRS. AUBREY

Fine.

Chance turns back to the televisions. Mrs. Aubrey talks to the producer.

MRS. AUBREY

(into phone)

Hello, Mr. Hull... Mr. Gardiner has agreed to do the show... Yes, I'll tell him. The show will be taped and then shown at ten o'clock, but he's to be there at seven.

INT. EVE'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Eve is on the phone while being attended to by a MANICURIST and a HAIRDRESSER. Eve talks to Sophie as if they weren't there as one wig is taken off, another is put on.

EVE

(into phone)

...Are you kidding? Of course, I'll bring him, I promise – but I'll get Ben to suggest it... Hands off, Sophie – this one's mine... No, I haven't done that, but give me time... Yes, be sure and watch the 'Burns' Show tonight, you'll see what I mean... Ben? Oh, he's okay – he's got his ups and downs...

INT. CHANCE'S ROOM - EVENING

Chance wears a velvet bathrobe, watches TV. Wilson and Perkins lay out a suit, shirt, tie, etc. There is a KNOCK at the door.

PERKINS

Excuse me, sir.

Perkins answers the door, it is Eve.

EVE

(entering)

Chauncey, I wanted to wish you well. I know you'll be just smashing.

CHANCE

(rising)

Thank you, Eve.

EVE

And Benjamin sends along his best wishes.

CHANCE

How is Ben feeling?

EVE

He's tired, Chauncey – but he's

going to watch you tonight. We'll both be watching.

CHANCE

That's good. I like to watch, too.

EVE

I know you do – you and your television...

(a pause)

...Good luck, Chauncey.

Eve impulsively steps forward, kisses Chance on the cheek.

Chance smiles at her. Eve returns the smile, then leaves the room. Chance sits back down, watches TV as Wilson and Perkins attend to his clothes with a whisk broom.

INT. WASHINGTON POST - RESEARCH ROOM - NIGHT

A woman, KINNEY, sits behind a stack of paperwork. She has a downcast expression as Sidney Courtney, followed by three staffers, enters the room.

COURTNEY

(to Staffers)

Gardiner is laconic, matter-of-fact. The scuttlebutt is that he's a strong candidate for one of the seats on the Board of First American.

(to Kinney)

...Kinney, what did you come up with on his background?

KINNEY

(after pause)

...Nothing.

COURTNEY

Skip the levity, Kinney – what have you got?

KINNEY

(another pause)

I realize this sounds banal – but there is no information of any sort

on Gardiner. We have no material on
him – zilch...

The room is quiet.

INT. TV STATION - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Chance is intrigued by the the surroundings as MORTON HULL
guides him through the corridor.

HULL

Of course, Mr. Gardiner, your position
in the financial community carries a
lot of weight, but what caught Gary's
attention was your down-to-earth
philosophy.

CHANCE

I see.

They walk a while through the corridor.

HULL

(making conversation)

Do you realize that more people will
be watching you tonight that all
those who have seen theater plays in
the last forty years?

CHANCE

Yes. It's a very good show.

Hull takes Chance into the makeup room.

EXT. AIRPORT - NIGHT

AIR FORCE 1 taxies to the ground.

INT. AIR FORCE 1 - NIGHT

The President sits on a couch in one of the compartments on
the jet. With him are six of his STAFF, Kaufman included.

PRESIDENT

What do you mean, no background?
That's impossible, he's a very well

known man!

KAUFMAN

Yes, sir – we are aware of all that,
but still, we haven't been able to...

PRESIDENT

(interrupts)

He's an advisor and close personal
friend of Rand's! For Christ sakes,
they have volumes of data on Benjamin!

KAUFMAN

Yes, Mr. President, I plan on
contacting Mr. Rand as soon as...

PRESIDENT

(again interrupts)

I do not want Benjamin Rand disturbed!
You have other ways of gathering
information than to trouble a dying
man. Use whatever agencies are
necessary to put together a detailed
history of Chauncey Gardiner, if you
run into problems, alert Honeycutt.

(he stands)

Have it in my office at seven in the
morning.

(he starts for door)

I've got to take a leak.

KAUFMAN

Right, chief.

As the President goes to the Men's Room, two of the aides
reach for telephones.

INT. TV STATION - CORRIDOR/MAKEUP ROOM - NIGHT

A PAGE comes through the corridor carrying a glass of water.
He turns into the makeup room to reveal Hull sitting next to
Chance in front of the mirror. The makeup man, COLSON, works
on Chance as he watches the guest preceding him on a TV
monitor that is reflected in the mirror.

PAGE

(gives Chance water)
I thought you might need this about now, Mr. Gardiner. It gets real hot under these lights.

CHANCE
Thank you. I am very thirsty.

The Page leans against the door jamb, smiles if anyone looks at him.

HULL
(briefing Chance)
Now, if Gary wants to interrupt you, or ask you a question, he'll raise his left forefinger to his left eyebrow.

CHANCE
(to Colson)
Nurse Teresa did Ben's makeup.

COLSON
(laughs)
Oh? Did she do a good job?

CHANCE
Yes, very good.

On the TV, GARY BURNS finishes with his guest and the band goes into a hot instrumental number.

COLSON
(a last minute dab)
Okay, Mr. Gardiner, looks like you're up.

Hull leads Chance out of the makeup room. Colson sits and watches the TV monitor. The Page, his back to Colson, carefully picks up Chance's water glass so as not to smear the fingerprints, then leaves the room. On the TV monitor, the band plays, the audience applauds as Burns introduces Chance.

INT. RAND LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

BURNS

(on TV)

I always find it surprising, Mr. Gardiner, to find men like yourself, who work so intimately with the President, yet manage to remain relatively unknown.

CHANCE

(on TV)

Yes. That is surprising.

BURNS

...Well, your anonymity will be a thing of the past from now on.

CHANCE

(doesn't understand)

I hope so.

BURNS

(a beat)

Yes... of course. Well, I assume, since the President quoted you, that you agree with his view of the economy.

CHANCE

Which view?

Applause and laughter from the TV audience.

INT. ALLENBY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Allenby watches, concerned as to which way it will go.

BURNS

(a beat)

Well, the President compared the economy of this country to a garden, and stated that after a period of decline a time of growth would naturally follow.

CHANCE

Yes, I know the garden very well. I

have worked in it all my life. It is
a good garden and a healthy one;

INT. RAND'S ROOM - NIGHT

Rand is in bed. Eve sits in a chair next to the bed, squeezes Rand's hand in the excitement as they both watch Chance on television. Teresa and Constance watch in the Background.

CHANCE

(on TV)

Its trees are healthy and so are its shrubs and flowers, as long as they are trimmed and watered in the right seasons. The garden needs a lot of care. I do agree with the President; everything will grow strong, and there is plenty of room in it for new trees and new flowers of all kinds.

The TV audience applauds Chance and Constance quietly leaves the room.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - PRESIDENT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The President and First Lady are in bed together watching the show.

BURNS

So you're saying, Mr. Gardiner, if the Stock Market collapses, and unemployment keeps increasing, that this is just another season, so to speak, in the garden?

The First Lady cuddles up to the President.

INT. RAND LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

Chance continues to watch himself.

CHANCE

Yes. In a garden, things grow – but first some things must wither; some trees lose their leaves before they

grow new leaves...

INT. THOMAS FRANKLIN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Franklin, the attorney that evicted Chance, comes out of the bathroom brushing his teeth. His wife, JOHANNA, is in the bed absorbed in the show. Franklin sits on the end of the bed.

CHANCE

(on TV)

...And if you give your garden a lot of love, and if you work very hard and have a lot of patience, in the proper season you will see it grow to be very beautiful...

More applause from the TV. Franklin leans closer to the set.

FRANKLIN

(puzzled)

It's that gardener!

JOHANNA

Yes, Chauncey Gardiner.

FRANKLIN

No! He's a real gardener!

JOHANNA

(laughs)

He does talk like on, but I think he's brilliant.

BURNS

Well, that's very interesting, Mr. Gardiner, but, what about the bad seasons?

INT. CHANCE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Constance is in Chance's closet searching through his clothing. Finding nothing, she checks the labels on his suits, copies them in a notepad.

BURNS (O.S.)

(on TV)

Such as prolonged droughts that have wiped out crops, disastrous winters, hurricanes? Doesn't a country need to have someone in charge that can see it through such crises? Don't we need a leader capable of guiding us through the bad seasons as well as the good?

CHANCE

(on TV)

Yes. We need a very good gardener.

Constance continues her work in the closet.

INT. PRESIDENT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The President and First Lady are very attentive.

BURNS

(on TV)

I realize this might be a difficult question for you, Mr. Gardiner – but there are a lot of us around the country that would like to hear your thoughts on the matter.

CHANCE

(on TV)

I understand.

BURNS

(on TV)

Do you feel that we have a 'very good gardener' in office at this time, Mr. Gardiner?

PRESIDENT

...That bastard...

CHANCE

(on TV)

Oh, yes. It is possible for one side of the garden to be flooded, and the other side to be dry... Some plants

do well in the sun, and others grow
better in the cool of the shade.

The First Lady moves closer to the President.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

A group of ELDERLY BLACK PEOPLE sit in the lobby, watching
the show on an old black-and-white TV.

CHANCE

(on TV)

..It is the gardener's responsibility
to take water from the flooded area
and run it to the area that is dry.
It is also the gardener's
responsibility not to plant a sun-
loving flower in the shade of a high
wall...

During the preceding speech, Louise, the maid from the Old
Man's house, chatters.

LOUISE

Gobbledegook! All the time he talked
gobbledegook! An' it's for sure a
White man's world in America, hell,
I raised that boy since he was the
size of a piss ant an' I'll say right
now he never learned to read an'
write – no sir! Had no brains at
all, was stuffed with rice puddin'
between the ears! Short-changed by
the Lord and dumb as a jackass an'
look at him now! Yes, sir – all you
gotta be is white in America an' you
get whatever you want! Just listen
to that boy – gobbledegook!

There is a chorus of "Amens" as she finishes.

INT. RAND LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

Chance watches himself.

CHANCE

(on TV)
...It is the responsibility of the
gardener to adjust to the bad seasons
as well as enjoy the good ones.

Chance changes channels to a Game Show.

INT. PRESIDENT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The President and First Lady still watch Chance.

CHANCE
(on TV)
If the gardener does his job,
everything will be fine.

PRESIDENT
Oh, Jesus...

Audience applause is heard on TV.

BURNS
Before we take a break... What sort
of gardener would you be?

CHANCE
(with confidence)
I am a very serious gardener.

BURNS
I'm sure you are, Mr. Gardiner.
(looks at camera)
We'll be right back.

As a commercial comes on, the President rolls over in bed.

The First Lady reaches out, puts a comforting hand on his
shoulder.

INT. RAND'S ROOM - NIGHT

The commercial is on TV.

RAND
He's a remarkable man, remarkable...
(to Eve)

You're fond of him too, aren't you,
Eve?

EVE
(a beat)
...Yes, I am, Ben.

RAND
That's good... that's good.

Rand looks up as Constance comes back into the room.

RAND
Constance! Where have you been? You
missed the whole show – Chauncey
was wonderful.

INT. FRANKLIN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Franklin shuts off the commercial on TV, is talking on the
phone.

FRANKLIN
Okay, Sally, I'll see you in twenty
minutes.

Franklin hangs up the phone, scurries around getting dressed.
His wife, Johanna, sits grimly in bed.

FRANKLIN
(notices her look)
I won't be long, I've just got to
talk to her about this Gardiner...

JOHANNA
(turns over in bed)
Good night.

FRANKLIN
Look, Johanna...

JOHANNA
(cuts him off)
I said good night!

Franklin gives up, hurries from the room.

EXT. RAND MANSION - NIGHT

Some of the household staff are lined up applauding Chance as he steps from the limousine. Perkins and Wilson come forward.

WILSON

Bravo, sir! You were outstanding.
Outstanding!

PERKINS

May I take your coat, Mr. Gardiner?

CHANCE

Yes. Thank you, Perkins.

Perkins nods, takes Chance's overcoat, allows everyone to enter the house. Once alone, Perkins quickly searches through the coat pockets, finds nothing.

INT. PRESIDENT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The First Lady is snuggled up close to the President, caresses his body. After a moment, it becomes clear to her that he is not up to the occasion.

FIRST LADY

...Darling... What's wrong?

PRESIDENT

...I can't... I just can't right
now... I'm sorry, dearest... I just
can't...

The First Lady looks at him for a beat, then turns, lies on her back and stares at the ceiling.

INT. RAND'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Rand is in his wheelchair, stripped to the waist. Eve stands nearby. Chance breathes deeply, enjoys the oxygen.

Allenby and the nurses prepare four separate injections for Rand, which Allenby administers to him during the scene.

RAND

(with some effort)

Senator Rowley's widow is hosting a reception tomorrow night honoring the Soviet Ambassador and I think it's rather obvious that Robert won't allow me to attend. So, Chauncey, you would be doing me a great favor if you would escort Eve, and go in my place.

CHANCE

Yes. I would like to escort Eve.

RAND

Good. Together, the two of you should create quite a stir – I can already hear the gossip.

EVE

...Ben, really...

RAND

...You possess a great gift, Chauncey, of being natural. And that, my boy, is a rare talent – tonight on television, you were strong and brave and didn't moralize. I hope the entire country was watching – the entire country.

Allenby gives Rand the last injection.

INT. COCKTAIL LOUNGE - NIGHT

An 'in' meeting place for the upper-middle Washington, D.C. crowd. Thomas Franklin and Sally Hayes sit at a table, drinks in front of them.

FRANKLIN

...It didn't make any sense to me at all. I didn't know what the hell he was talking about...

SALLY

It wasn't meant for us, Tom – he

was talking to the masses. He was very clever, keeping it at a third grade level – that's what they understand...

FRANKLIN

Yeah? Well, I don't understand why he was in Jennings' house? What was up his sleeve when he pulled that stunt with us? What was he doing? And why?

SALLY

Who knows...? Maybe the government had something to do with it.

FRANKLIN

You know, Sally – he made a fool out of me, ...and you know what that means, don't you?... It means that any political future I had is right down the toilet!

The CAMERA begins to slowly move away from the table, the sound of Franklin's voice continues.

FRANKLIN

...Jesus, the thought of spending the rest of my life as an attorney, that is really a downer... And, Christ, Sally, I almost forgot – Johanna is starting to think something's going on between...

Franklin's voice fades into the background hubbub. The voice of Kinney, the research assistant from the WASHINGTON POST is heard as the camera settles on a table occupied by Sidney Courtney and his staff.

KINNEY

...Sid, be reasonable – I've been everywhere, there's no place left to check!

COURTNEY

Try again.

KINNEY

Sure, try again – where? There's nothing, it's like Gardiner never existed!

COURTNEY

Try again.

KINNEY

It's useless!

COURTNEY

(coldly)

I said – try again.

Kinney stands, shoves her paperwork across the table.

KINNEY

Up yours, Sid. You try again, I quit!

Kinney takes her drink with her as she leaves the lounge.

INT. RAND MANSION - THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

The elevator door opens revealing Eve and Chance inside.

EVE

(as they come out)

I'll bet you don't have a tuxedo with you, do you?

CHANCE

No, thank you.

EVE

...Well, we can fix up one of Ben's for you tomorrow. Sophie insists on Black Tie.

CHANCE

I see.

They walk in silence for a moment. Eve stops, then Chance.

EVE

(softly)
...I have very few friends,
Chauncey... And Benjamin's friends
are all quite a bit older...

Eve gives Chance a long look, then kisses him on the lips.
She steps back, smiles.

EVE
...Good night, Chauncey.

CHANCE
Good night, Eve.

Eve goes into her bedroom, closes the door. Chance heads for
his room as though nothing had happened.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - OVAL OFFICE ANTE ROOM - MORNING

Kaufman and the five other Aides nervously await the
President's arrival. The door opens, the President briskly
enters.

PRESIDENT
Good morning, gentlemen.

AIDES
(as one)
Good morning, sir.

The President leads the way into the Oval Office.

INT. OVAL OFFICE - MORNING

As the President goes to his desk, Kaufman hands him a folder.
The President sits, reads it quickly, it is very brief.

PRESIDENT
(to Kaufman)
This is not what I requested.

KAUFMAN
No, sir.

PRESIDENT
This information goes back a day and

a half! I want the standard file,
you know that.

KAUFMAN
Right, Chief.

PRESIDENT
So...? Where the hell is it?

KAUFMAN
We...uh, have been unable to come up
with any information before Mr.
Gardiner appeared at the Rand's...
and, uh...

PRESIDENT
What the hell are you talking about,
Kaufman?

KAUFMAN
Well, we do have some data from the
Bureau, but it isn't pertinent.

PRESIDENT
I'd like to hear that data Kaufman.

KAUFMAN
Yes, sir.

Kaufman takes a clipboard from the man at his right.

KAUFMAN
(reading)
...Suits hand-made by a tailor in
Chicago in 1928. The tailor went out
of business in 1933, then took his
own life. ...His shoes were hand-
made in 1936. The cobbler has long
since been dead. Underwear, all of
the finest cloth, factory destroyed
by fire in 1948. The man carries no
identification; no wallet, no driver's
license, no credit cards... He carries
one item along with him, a fine Swiss
Patek-Phillipe watch, made in 1887,
but there is no record of where or

when it was purchased... Computers have analyzed Gardiner's vocal characteristics; it is impossible to determine his ethnic background, they feel his accent may be northeastern, but they will not commit to that... Fingerprint check proved negative, no identification possible.

(a pause)

...That's it, Mr. President.

The President stares at Kaufman for a beat, then speaks into his intercom.

PRESIDENT

Miss Davis – I'd like my eggs poached this morning, please.

INT. CHANCE'S ROOM - MORNING

Chance is in bed, a tray on his lap, eating breakfast.

A pile of the morning's newspapers lie at the foot of the bed, untouched. The TV is playing, Chance watches as he eats. There is a knock at the door.

CHANCE

(without turning from TV)

Come in!

Eve enters, wearing a robe over her nightgown.

EVE

Chauncey! Have you seen the papers?

CHANCE

No, Eve. I don't read the papers.

EVE

(moving to bed)

Well, it seems you've been described as one of the architects of the President's speech. And your own comments from the television show are quoted side by side with the

President's.

CHANCE

I like the President. He is a very nice man.

EVE

(sits on bed)

I know...

(a moment)

...So are you, Chauncey...

(another moment, Chance watches TV)

...Do you mind my being here, like this?

CHANCE

(a bite of toast)

No, Eve. I like you to be here.

Eve smiles, moves a little closer to Chance.

EVE

...You know, Chauncey... I want us to be...

(with difficulty)

I want us... You and I to become... close... I want us to become very close, you know...?

CHANCE

Yes, Eve. I know that.

Eve suddenly begins to cry, sobbing quietly at first, then losing control, the tears flowing freely. To comfort her, Chance puts his arm around her shoulder, nearly tipping his breakfast tray. Eve responds to his touch, draws closer, holds Chance tightly. Chance does his best to avoid slipping his breakfast, keep an eye on the TV, and to comfort Eve. She begins to caress Chance, running her hand over his body. She kisses him, his eyes, his neck, his lips, his ears. Chance does not return the lovemaking, and Eve eventually catches hold of herself, stops. She lies quietly beside Chance for a time, regains her demeanor, then speaks.

EVE

...I'm grateful to you, Chauncey...
I would have opened to you with a
touch, and you know that...
 (Chance, confused,
 turns to her)
...But you're so strong – I can
trust myself with you...

 CHANCE
Yes, Eve. I'm very glad that you
didn't open.

 EVE
I know you are, Chauncey... And I
appreciate why you've decided to
wait... until... until...

There is a long moment, then Eve rises, straightens her robe
and moves toward the door.

 EVE
 (stopping by door)
...I do love you, Chauncey.

Eve leaves. Chance eats his once-warm scrambled eggs and
watches "Mr. Roger's Neighborhood" on TV.

INT. RAND MANSION - ALLENBY'S ROOM - DAY

Allenby is at his desk, searching through the Washington,
D.C. telephone book. He finds a number, dials.

 ALLENBY
 (into phone)
Mr. Thomas Franklin, please.
 (a wait)
Is Thomas Franklin in?
 (a beat)
Yes, this is Dr. Robert Allenby,
would you please tell Mr. Franklin
that I would like to talk to him? It
concerns Chauncey Gardiner.

INT. RAND'S ROOM - DUSK

Rand is in bed, very still, deep in thought. Teresa and

Constance work in the background.

EXT. SOPHIE'S - NIGHT

Chance wears Ben's tuxedo and Eve is done to the teeth as they emerge from the limousine and are met by the press: a couple of reporters, 5 photographers and a mini-cam crew from a local TV station.

REPORTER #1

Mr. Gardiner, what did you think of the Posts' editorial on the President's speech?

CHANCE

(smiling for photogs)
I didn't read it.

REPORTER #2

But sir – you must have at least glanced at it.

CHANCE

No. I did not glance at it.

REPORTER #3

Mr. Gardiner, the New York Times spoke of your 'Peculiar brand of optimism,' what was your reaction to that?

CHANCE

(continues to pose
for pictures)
I did not read that either.

REPORTER #3

Well, how do you feel about that phrase, 'Peculiar brand of optimism?'

CHANCE

I do not know what it means.

REPORTER #2

Sorry to persist, sir, but it would be of great interest to me to know

what newspapers you do read.

CHANCE

I do not read any newspapers. I watch TV.

There is a moment of silence as the reporters digest this.

The TV Reporter smiles, questions Chance.

TV REPORTER

...Do you mean, Mr. Gardiner, that you find television's coverage of the news superior to that of the newspapers?

CHANCE

(flatly)

I like to watch TV.

TV REPORTER

Thank you, Mr. Gardiner.

CHANCE

(thinks the interview is over)

You're welcome.

Chance turns and goes toward the house, Eve follows. The TV Reporter turns to the TV camera.

TV REPORTER

Well, that is probably the most honest admission to come from a public figure in years. Few men in public life have the courage not to read newspapers. None, that this reporter has met, have the guts to admit it.

INT. SOPHIE'S - EVENING

Chance and Eve move through the hallway toward the Living Room.

EVE

I've never seen anyone handle the

press the way you do, Chauncey –
you're so cool and detached.

CHANCE

Thank you, Eve.

They move on to reveal the Black Tie Reception in progress,
crowded with Ambassadors and other such dignitaries.

SOPHIE ROWLEY, the hostess, comes rushing toward to greet
them.

INT. WASHINGTON, D.C. COCKTAIL LOUNGE - NIGHT

The same lounge as before. Sidney Courtney sits at the same
table as earlier, only this time with the editor of the
Washington Post, LYMAN STUART. Courtney puffs on his pipe as
he speaks.

COURTNEY

...It's strictly rumor at this stage,
Lyman – just something in the wind...

STUART

Something rather big in the wind,
I'd say. So whose files were
destroyed? The CIA's or the FBI's?

COURTNEY

I don't know. But we should start
nosing around, see if we can talk to
some people...

The CAMERA begins to slowly MOVE AWAY from their table.

STUART

What is it about his past they are
trying to cover up?
(his volume fades)
...A criminal record? A membership
in a subversive organization?
Homosexual, perhaps?

The SOUND of Stuart's voice dissolves into Thomas Franklin's
as the CAMERA SETTLES on Dr. Allenby and Franklin sitting at
a table nearby.

FRANKLIN

...And he told us that he had been living there since he was a child, working as a gardener. He showed us a room in the garage, where he said he stayed, and I... Well, I didn't really believe him, of course – but why the act? He must have been involved on some major financial level with the deceased...

(catches himself)

Mr. Jennings, but our firm has no record of any such transactions.

ALLENBY

Hmmm. You say he showed you his garden?

FRANKLIN

Well, he said it was his, he walked us through it.

ALLENBY

I see.

(leans close to Franklin)

Mr. Franklin, I must ask you and Miss Hayes to keep this incident with Mr. Gardiner to yourselves. There's no telling what he was involved in, and the matter may be extremely confidential. So please, not a word.

FRANKLIN

Of course, Doctor, I understand.

ALLENBY

Fine. Thank you, Mr. Franklin.

FRANKLIN

Certainly, glad to be of help.

Allenby rises, leaves the bar.

INT. SOPHIE'S - NIGHT

Sophie pulls Eve and Chance to AMBASSADOR SKRAPINOV and his WIFE. As they arrive, Eve steps in front of Sophie and makes the introduction.

EVE

Mr. Chauncey Gardiner, let me introduce you to the guest of honor, His Excellency Vladimar Skrapinov, Ambassador of the Soviet Union.

Chance warmly shakes Skrapinov's hand with both of his own.

CHANCE

(stumbles over name)
Hello... His... His...

SKRAPINOV

Delighted, Mr. Gardiner...
(a nod to Eve)
Mrs. Rand, delighted.

SOPHIE

And this is Mrs. Skrapinov.

Chance smiles at Mrs. Skrapinov as The Ambassador puts an arm around him.

SKRAPINOV

(to Chance and Eve)
You must sit with us, my friends, we have much to discuss.

CHANCE

I agree.

SOPHIE

(tugs at Eve)
Come, Eve, let's let the men talk.
(to Chance and Skrapinov)
Would you two excuse us for a moment?

SKRAPINOV

Regretfully – we shall yield the

pleasure of your company to others.

CHANCE

Yes, Eve. I shall yield, too.

EVE

Fine. You two have a nice chat.

Skrapinov leads his wife and Chance to their table as Eve and Sophie move through the crowd.

EVE

(with self-importance)

You see? Didn't I tell you?

SOPHIE

Oh, I'm so glad you brought him, it makes everything perfect.

(looks back at Chance)

He's very, very sexy – don't let me alone with him for too long...

A smiling Senator Jensen comes out of the crowd.

SENATOR JENSEN

Mrs. Rand! How good to see you!

EVE

Well, Senator Jensen.

SENATOR JENSEN

I certainly would like to meet Mr. Gardiner.

EVE

I'm sure you would.

Eve turns away, Sophie follows.

As they are met by the Senator, we CUT.

INT. SOPHIE'S - NIGHT

Chance is seated between Ambassador Skrapinov and his wife at their table.

SKRAPINOV

(moves chair close to
Chance)

Considering the gravity of your economic situation, Mr. Gardiner, shouldn't we, the diplomats, and you, the businessmen – get together more often to exchange our thoughts? What does a Russian know about business? On the other hand, what does an American know about diplomacy? So why not a coming together? An interchange of opinion? We may find, my friend, that we are not so far from each other, not so far!

CHANCE

(an engaging smile)

We are not so far...

(motions at nearness
of their chairs)

...our chairs almost touch.

SKRAPINOV

(laughs)

Bravo! Bravo! Our chairs are indeed almost touching! And we want to remain seated on them, correct? We don't want them snatched from under us, am I right? Because if one goes, the other goes, and then – boom! Boom! And Boom, Boom! And we are both down before our time, you see? And neither of us wants that, do you agree?

CHANCE

I certainly do.

SKRAPINOV

Yes. Tell me, Mr. Gardiner – do you by any chance enjoy Krylov's fables? I ask this because there is something... there is something Krylovian about you.

CHANCE

Do you think so? Do you think so?

SKRAPINOV
So you know Krylov!

Skrapinov pauses, then leans close to Chance, speaks softly in Russian. Chance, having never heard this language, raises his eyebrows and laughs. Mrs. Skrapinov remains impassive.

SKRAPINOV
(amazed)
So you know your Krylov in Russian, do you? Mr. Gardiner, I must confess I had suspected as much all along.

CHANCE
(beat)
Would you tell me your name again, please?

SKRAPINOV
(slaps Chance on the back)
Ho! Ho! A dash of American humor! Vladimar Skrapinov!

CHANCE
Yes. I like that name very much.

SKRAPINOV
And yours, sir – Chauncey Gardiner! (in Russian)
How poetic! Chauncey, a name of uncertain meaning! And Gardiner, a bit of French, a suggestion of a stroll through the flowers! A beautiful name, my friend!

INT. WHITE HOUSE - PRESIDENT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A light from the adjoining bathroom filters into the darkened bedroom. The President and the First Lady are in bed. They each lie on their backs, a distance apart and are silent.

FIRST LADY
(after some time)

...Maybe you should talk to somebody,
darling.

PRESIDENT

No, that won't do any good.

FIRST LADY

(another pause)

...Is it me? Is there something I've
done?

PRESIDENT

Oh, no, sweetheart – it's not you...

FIRST LADY

(another pause)

It's your damn job. It never happened
when you were a senator...

PRESIDENT

It's not that, I just...

The inter-White House phone buzzes, the President reaches
for it.

PRESIDENT

(into phone)

Yeah, Kaufman – what is it?

KAUFMAN'S VOICE

(over phone)

Chief, we have a break in the case.
Our man at the Washington Post says
they are working on a story that
either the CIA or the FBI destroyed
Gardiner's files before anyone could
get to them.

PRESIDENT

What? Why?

KAUFMAN'S VOICE

(over phone)

I can't say at this time – neither
agency will admit to a thing.

PRESIDENT
(getting out of bed)
Okay, get Honeycutt and Baldwin over
here, I'll be right down.

The President hangs up the phone as the First Lady stares at
the ceiling.

INT. SOPHIE'S - NIGHT

Eve and Chance are talking. AMBASSADOR GAUFRIDI of France
edges toward them.

EVE
Chauncey, you had Ambassador Skrapinov
eating out of your hand, and you
never told me you spoke Russian.
That's incredible!

Gaufridi joins in.

GAUFRIDI
It's extremely useful to speak Russian
these days. Are you proficient in
other languages, Mr. Gardiner?

EVE
Mr. Gardiner is a modest man,
Ambassador Gaufridi. He doesn't
advertise his accomplishments, his
knowledge is for himself.

Chance smiles, then turns away to select an hors d'oeuvre,
where he is approached by RONALD STIEGLER, a publisher.

STIEGLER
Mr. Gardiner, I'm Ronald Stiegler,
of Harvard Books.

CHANCE
(a two-handed handshake)
Hello, Ronald.

STIEGLER
Mr. Gardiner, my editors and I have
been wondering if you'd consider

writing a book for us? Something on your political philosophy. What do you say?

CHANCE

I can't write.

STIEGLER

(smiles)

Of course, who can nowadays? I have trouble writing a post card to my children! Look, we could give you a six figure advance, provide you with the very best ghostwriters, research assistants, proof readers...

CHANCE

I can't read.

STIEGLER

Of course not! No one has the time to read! One glances at things, watches television...

CHANCE

Yes. I like to watch.

STIEGLER

Sure you do! No one reads! ...Listen, book publishing isn't exactly a bed of roses these days...

CHANCE

(mild interest)

What sort of bed is it?

INT. SOPHIE'S - NIGHT

KARPATOV, an aide, sits next to Skrapinov and his wife.

SKRAPINOV

I want to know everything about his relationship with Rand. And found out the real reason the President has singled him out.

(Karpatov takes notes)

And I want this quote included in the TASS coverage... "Chauncy Gardiner, in an intimate discussion with Ambassador Skrapinov, noted that 'unless the leaders of the opposing political systems move the chairs on which they sit closer to each other, all of their seats will be pulled from under them by rapid social and political changes.'"

Karpatov writes out the quote.

INT. SOPHIE'S - NIGHT

Eve is with SENATOR SLIPSHOD, MRS. SLIPSHOD, and DENNIS WATSON of the State Department.

SENATOR

I heard that he speaks eight languages, and on top of everything else, holds a degree in medicine as well as law. Isn't that true, Eve?

EVE

Well, I really don't know, Senator, but it wouldn't surprise me.

MRS. SLIPSHOD

He's very attractive.

EVE

Isn't he?

DENNIS

Yes... Very.

INT. RAND'S ROOM - NIGHT

Allenby enters the room quietly and stands in the shadows watching Rand sitting up in bed with a large loose-leaf type book on his lap. He has a dictaphone mike in one hand, with the other, he moves his finger down a page and stops.

RAND

(into mike)

Sell all 750,000 shares of C.C.T.

His finger continues down the page, does the same to two more pages before stopping again.

RAND

(into mike)

...Let's see – just sell a million shares of Inland Oil.

(takes a beat)

Oh, and Mrs. Aubrey, have 30,000 shares of Standard transferred into your name. That's for you.

ALLENBY

(steps out of shadows)

...Ben.

RAND

(looks up)

Robert... I was just cleaning up some loose ends – getting rid of some of the dead wood so Eve won't have to put up with it...

ALLENBY

(a beat)

...Ben, I want to talk to you about Chauncey.

RAND

(smiles)

Oh, yes – Chauncey – you know, Robert – there's something about him that I trust – he makes me feel good. Since he's been around, the thought of dying has been much easier for me.

Allenby is silent and thoughtful.

INT. SOPHIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Dennis Watson is a homosexual and is coming on strong to Chance.

DENNIS

You're fascinating, Mr. Gardiner –
I've never met anyone like you in
Washington before.

CHANCE

Yes, I've been here all my life.

DENNIS

Really? Well, where have you been
all my life?

(Chance smiles)

Tell me, Mr. Gardiner, have you ever
had sex with a man?

CHANCE

(a beat)

No. I don't think so.

DENNIS

We could go upstairs right now.

CHANCE

Do they have a TV upstairs?

DENNIS

A TV? I'm sure they do.

CHANCE

I like to watch.

DENNIS

You like to waaaaaatch? Well – you
wait right here, I'll go get Warren.

Dennis hurries off. Eve appears, moves to Chance.

EVE

Let's get out of here, Chauncey –
Let's go home...

Eve takes Chance by the arm and they move off.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - OVAL OFFICE - NIGHT

The President sits behind his desk in a bathrobe, his hair

mussed. Standing before him are GROVER HONEYCUTT, the Director of the FBI, and CLIFFORD BALDWIN, CIA Chief.

Kaufman stands to one side. All are red-eyed, tired, and frustrated.

HONEYCUTT

I never gave such a directive, Mr. President.

BALDWIN

Nor I, sir – it would be out of the question.

PRESIDENT

Gentlemen, I didn't call you here at such an hour to make accusations, I just want to explore the possibilities. Now, I have three questions: Is the man a foreign agent? Or, have we suddenly found that our methods of gathering data are grossly inefficient? Or, thirdly, have the man's files been destroyed? Now, I'd like some answers.

BALDWIN

Gardiner is not a foreign agent, there are now sixteen countries investigating the man. We can rule that out.

PRESIDENT

Very well... Can we rule out inefficiency?

There is silence in the room. A couple of looks, but silence.

PRESIDENT

I see. What about question three? Is it possible to erase all traces of a man?

HONEYCUTT

Highly unlikely, sir... In fact, the boys around the Bureau feel that the

only person capable of pulling it off would be an ex-F.B.I. man.

BALDWIN

(a look to Honeycutt)
I don't think that's entirely true, Grover.

PRESIDENT

(to Baldwin)
And what do the boys around Intelligence think?

BALDWIN

Well, Mr. President... They don't know quite what to think.

More silence, more looks.

INT. RAND LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

Chance watches TV. Eve sits beside him, her hand on his thigh.

EVE

I feel so close to you, so safe with you, Chauncey... and Benjamin understands that, dearest... He understands and accepts my feelings for you...

CHANCE

Yes. Ben is very wise.

Eve moves her hand up higher on Chance's thigh, there is no reaction.

INT. RAND MANSION - 3RD FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

Eve and Chance stand close together in the hallway.

EVE

...It's difficult to say good night to you, Chauncey – it's very hard for me to leave you.

CHANCE

It's very hard for me, too, Eve.

EVE

...Oh.

Flustered at the thought, Eve turns and leaves. Chance watches her go, then moves off to his room.

INT. CHANCE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Chance is propped up in bed, watches an old movie on television. The hero gives his lady a passionate kiss and embrace.

The scene seems to 'sink into' Chance's mind. Suddenly, Eve, robe over her nightgown, comes into the room.

EVE

Oh, Chauncey – I just couldn't stand it any longer.

She goes to the bed, takes Chance in her arms, starts to kiss him, when he abruptly takes Eve into his arms and kisses her full on the mouth. Once done, Chance's attention returns to the television while Eve is in a frenzy of passion. She holds him, kisses him, runs her hands over his body.

Chance neither resists nor responds, he just watches television. Suddenly Eve stops, lets her head fall on Chance's chest.

EVE

...You don't want me, Chauncey...
You don't feel anything for me...
Nothing at all...

Chance, feeling her sadness, gently strokes her hair as he looks at TV.

EVE

...I just don't excite you... I don't
know what you want... I don't know
what you like...

CHANCE

I like to watch.

EVE
(not understanding)
To watch...? To watch me...?

CHANCE
Yes. I like to watch.

EVE
(uncertain)
...Is that all you want...?
(a hesitation)
...To watch me...?

CHANCE
Yes. It's very good, Eve.

EVE
...But I've never done...
(another hesitation)
...You mean...? When... When...
When I do it? ... When I touch
myself...?

Eve slowly gets up from the bed, nervously paces the bedroom as Chance watches TV. She makes a decision, moves to Chance, kisses him.

EVE
(getting aroused)
Oh, Chauncey... I do love you so
much.

She steps back, slips off her robe. She does not undress any further, instead, leans close to Chance.

EVE
One of those little things you don't
know about me yet, darling – I'm a
little shy.

She smiles, drops to the floor. Chance divides his attention

between Eve and the TV, watching both with an equal detachment. Eve becomes more and more involved with herself, finding immense pleasure with her own body. Chance changes

the channel with the remote control. Eve reaches orgasm, her body shaking violently, then a delicate tremor. Then she is still. Chance turns off the TV with the remote, turns over in bed.

CHANCE
Good night, Eve.

A low purr is heard from Eve.

INT. RAND'S ROOM - MORNING

There is a feeling of urgency as Allenby and the nurses attend to Rand.

ALLENBY
(to nurses)
Get set up for a transfusion right away.

RAND
(very weakly)
...No more, Robert – no more needles...

ALLENBY
It's not good, Ben – I'm sure you can feel it.

RAND
I know, Robert... I know...

INT. RAND MANSION - PATIO - MORNING

A light snow is falling. Eve is in a fur coat, holds a steaming cup of coffee. Chance stands near her next to the railing. He reaches out, catches snowflakes as they fall.

EVE
...And I feel so free now, Chauncey. I never felt so acknowledged by a man... Until I met you, I always had the feeling that I was just a vessel for a man, something that he could take hold of, pierce, and pollute. I was merely an aspect of somebody's

lovmaking. Do you know what I mean?

Chance turns to her, says nothing, presses the cold snowflakes to his face.

EVE

You uncoil my wants; desire flows within me, and when you watch me my passion dissolves it. You set me free. I reveal myself to myself and I am drenched and purged.

Teresa appears in the doorway.

TERESA

Mr. Gardiner. Mr. Rand would like to see you.

CHANCE

Yes. I would like to see Ben.

Chance gives Eve a warm smile, then follows Teresa into the house.

INT. RAND'S ROOM - MORNING

Allenby, with nothing more he can do to prolong Rand's life, stands close to him, grips his hand tightly. Teresa shows Chance into the room and Allenby motions to the nurses to leave. Chance, with a smile, goes to Rand's bedside.

RAND

(slowly)

...Chauncey... Chauncey...

CHANCE

Yes, Ben – are you going to die now?

Allenby winces.

RAND

(a weak smile)

...I'm about to surrender the Horn of Plenty for the Horn of Gabriel, my boy...

CHANCE

I see.

RAND

(reaches out to him)

Let me feel the strength in your hand, Chauncey... Let me feel your strength...

(holds Chance's hand)

Yes, that's good... I hope, Chauncey – I hope that you'll stay with Eve...

Take care of her, watch over her, she's a delicate flower, Chauncey...

CHANCE

(smiling)

A flower...

RAND

She cares for you and she needs your help, Chauncey... there's much to be looked after...

CHANCE

Yes. I would like to do that.

RAND

...My associates, Chauncey – I've talked with them about you... They're eager to meet with you... very eager...

(trails off)

...Tell Eve..

Rand slumps down, dead. Allenby checks his pulse, turns to Chance.

ALLENBY

...He's gone, Chauncey.

CHANCE

Yes, Robert. I have seen it before. It happens to old people.

ALLENBY

(covers Rand's face)
Yes, I suppose that's true.

Chance reaches out, uncovers Rand's face, gently touches the man's forehead, feels the coldness. Allenby eyes him as Chance stays with Rand for a moment, then replaces the sheet.

CHANCE
(turns to Allenby)
Will you be leaving now, Robert?

ALLENBY
In a day or two, yes.

CHANCE
Eve is going to stay. The house will not be closed.

ALLENBY
(a moment, a look)
...You've become quite a close friend of Eve's – haven't you...
(a beat)
...Chance...?

CHANCE
Yes. I love Eve very much.

ALLENBY
I see...
(another beat)
...And you really are a gardener, aren't you?

CHANCE
(brightens)
Yes, Robert – I am.
(a smile at Allenby)
I'll got tell Eve about Ben now, Robert.

Chance leaves the bedroom. Allenby watches him go, then sits back in a chair, his head spinning.

EXT. RAND ESTATE - DAY

Rand's funeral services are being held on a hill overlooking the mansion. Six distinguished-looking men stand near Rand's casket, which is placed on a concrete block. They are the PALLBEARERS. The Rand mausoleum is fifty yards further up the hill, while the MOURNERS, all close friends and associates of Rand's, stand fifty yards down the hill from the pallbearers.

Chance stands with Eve and Allenby. The President of the United States is before the microphone, which feeds loudspeakers for the Rand servants lined up in front of the mansion.

PRESIDENT

...I know that Ben said keep it small and quiet... No eulogies, no fanfares... And I don't want to go against Ben's wishes. But I thought it would be good, while our close friends carry Ben to his last resting place, to read from his quotes, which I'm sure will have special meaning to all of us who are gathered here today.

With this, the Pallbearers pick up the casket and begin the chore of taking it to the mausoleum. It is hard work.

PRESIDENT

(reading quotes)

...'I have no use for those on welfare, no patience whatsoever... But if I am to be honest with myself, I must admit that they have no use for me, either.' ...'I do not regret having political differences with men that I respect; I do regret, however, that our philosophies kept us apart.'... 'I was born into a position of extreme wealth, but I have spent many sleepless nights thinking about extreme poverty.'

As the President speaks, Chance turns and walks away. Eve and Allenby watch as he goes toward the trees surrounding the area.

PRESIDENT

(continues reading)

...'When I was a boy, I was told that the Lord fashioned us from his own image. That's when I decided to manufacture mirrors.'... 'Life is a state of mind.'

The Pallbearers are enroute, they are all breathing heavily.
JAMES DUDLEY, a powerful industrialist, speaks.

DUDLEY

Yes, I agree, Maxwell would be an excellent man for the job – but he's boring, he would never take an election.

SEWELL NELSON, a corporation Chairman, speaks.

NELSON

Correct, the people of this country need to be awakened.

PETER CALDWELL, another executive:

CALDWELL

What about Lawson? He's charismatic, exciting...

DUDLEY

A bit too exciting, I'm afraid...

Once they start bringing things up about his background.

WEBB, railroad money:

WEBB

Well, gentlemen. Time is running out, we must come to a decision.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Chance, his umbrella under his arm, walks through the woods.

He stops by a tree, brushes some snow from a branch, moves

on.

EXT. RAND ESTATE - DAY

The President is still reading Rand's quotes.

PRESIDENT

(reading)

'The world parts with Rand, and Rand parts with the world: A fair trade, don't you agree? Security, tranquillity, a well-deserved rest: All the aims I have pursued will soon be realized.'

Eve is concerned about Chance, she turns to Allenby.

EVE

(quietly)

I've got to find Chauncey.

She leaves the funeral, heads toward the trees.

PRESIDENT

(reading)

...'I do not know the feelings of being poor, and that is not to know the feelings of the majority of people in this world. For a man in my position, that is inexcusable.

The Pallbearers near the mausoleum, they are struggling.

DUDLEY

But what do we know of the man?
Nothing! We have no inkling of his past!

NELSON

Correct, and that is an asset. A man's past can cripple him, his background turns into a swamp and invites scrutiny.

CALDWELL

...Up to this time, he hasn't said

anything that could be used against him.

NELSON

The response from his appearance on the 'Burns Show' was overwhelming; mail and telephone response was the highest they ever had, and it was ninety-five percent pro!

CHARLIE BOB BENNET, a Texas oil millionaire;

BENNET

Well, I'm certainly open to the thought – it would be sheer lunacy to support the President for another term.

LYMAN MURRAY, a banker;

MURRAY

Exactly. That is why I agree with Ben's final wishes, and I firmly believe, gentlemen, if we want to retain the Presidency, that our one and only chance is Chauncey Gardiner!

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Chance happens on a tree with a cracked limb, hanging to the ground. He stops, inspects the break, runs his fingers along the split of the bark. He looks to the ground, notices that an end of the limb has fallen on a seedling, bending it double. Chance pulls the limb away, then kneels beside the seedling. He removes an expensive pair of suede gloves, and, with gentle fingers, brushes the dirt and snow away from the seedling. Chance glances up to the remaining limbs of the larger tree which could fall and threaten the emerging tree.

He unfolds his umbrella, places it over the seedling in a way to give it protection, yet still allow it to receive light from the winter sun. Chance stands, and is putting his gloves on when Eve appears, running towards him.

EVE

(breathless)

Chauncey! Chauncey!

CHANCE

(looks)

Hello, Eve.

EVE

(holds him)

Oh, Chauncey, darling. Where were you? I've been looking for you. I was scared.

CHANCE

Yes. I've been looking for you too, Eve.

She hugs him one more time, then leads him back from whence she came. The President can still be heard reading quotes.

PRESIDENT'S VOICE

(in the distance)

I've lived a lot, trembled a lot, was surrounded by little men who forgot that we enter naked and exit naked and that no accountant can audit life in our favor.

THE END