

NICK OF TIME

Ebbe Roe Smith  
and  
Patrick Duncan

White Draft - March 9, 1995  
Blue Draft - March 23, 1995  
Pink Draft - March 24, 1995

Producer/Director  
John Badham

FADE IN:

INT. UNION STATION - DAY - 12:06PM

Union Station, that gorgeous fifty-year-old monument to Art Deco/California Mission architecture. Still beautiful. Still grand.

A sign at one of the departure/arrival gates in the main concourse-says the "San Diegan", number 2 64, is due at 12:00.

Set above the gates, a big clock - six feet in diameter.

THE TIME -

12:06.

We see the big hand slam into "7".

A loudspeaker - you can just about understand this guy.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)  
Amtrack 2 64, the San Diegan, from  
San Diego, Del Mar...

EXT. UNION STATION PLATFORM - DAY - 12:06PM

The "San Diegan" pulls into the terminal and comes to a slow, grinding stop.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)  
...San Clemente, San Juan Capistrano,  
and Irvine is now arriving at Gate  
Nine.

Doors are opened. Steps set down. Passengers pour out.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)  
Amtrack 264 will be departing in  
fifteen minutes from Gate Nine for  
Oxnard, Ventura...

INT. UNION STATION - DAY - 12:07PM

A MAN and A WOMAN stand with a view of the arrival doors. He's a blue-collar tough guy, dressed for church. She's his beefy counterpart.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)  
...Santa Barbara, Lompoc...

THE GUY (MR. SMITH) checks his watch.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)  
...Santa Maria, San Luis Obispo...

Then he looks up to the big clock.

12:07.

The minute hand slams into the "8".

ANNOUNCER  
...and points north.

He resets his watch as DISEMBARKING PASSENGERS pour out of the gate. PEOPLE run forward with kisses and hugs.

MR. SMITH  
Look sharp.

They stand like a couple of rocks, their eyes scanning the crowd.

MS. JONES  
That one.

MR. SMITH  
Nah. Hates his wife.

They're talking about a couple in their forties. She motormouths her way across the terminal and the husband follows with the suitcases.

WHOOSH! A couple of TEENAGE BOYS on rollerblades zip by.

MS. JONES  
I hate rollerblades.

EXT. UNION STATION - PLATFORM - DAY - 12:08PM

The train.. A PRETTY SIX-YEAR-OLD GIRL (LYNN) , who is holding a stuffed animal almost as large as she is, climbs down the steps. She reaches the platform, looks around. From within the train:

GENE  
Lynn! Lynn!!

GENE WATSON, thirtyish, a regular Joe in appearance and inclination, appears above, carrying a couple small suitcases. He takes a relieved breath when he sees her.

GENE  
Lynn, don't walk ahead of me, OK?

As he comes down the steps:

GENE  
I'm serious, honey. Don't get out of my sight, all right? I want you to stay right by me. Will you do that for me?

LYNN  
Nods solemnly. GENE reaches the platform and gives out an exaggerated

sigh.

GENE

We made it.

LYNN nods back.

LYNN

We made it.

INT. UNION STATION - DAY - 12:08PM

WHOOSH! A SECURITY GUARD approaches the two ROLLERBLADING TEENS. They circle him, toss off a few taunts and roll away, laughing.

MR. SMITH and MS. JONES continue trolling the PASSENGERS as they come through the gate.

MS. JONES

Skate-boarders I don't mind, even though they dress like fuckin' idiots, but when I see some pin-head on rollerblades, I get the definite urge to grease the grill of my car with 'em.

MR. SMITH

Keep your eyes peeled.

MS. JONES

What about them?

MR. SMITH

Too old.

They're talking about a COUPLE IN THEIR SIXTIES, warmly greeting each other.

MR. JONES

Him!

MR. SMITH

If you ever had an idea it would die of malnutrition. First those blue hairs then some Spic. Leave this to me. I know people. It's my job. I'm a people person.

MR. SMITH laughs at his joke.

MS. JONES

What the fuck are you looking for?

MR. SMITH has spotted someone.

MR. SMITH

I'm looking for them.

MS. JONES

Where?

MR. SMITH

Right there.

He starts walking towards the exit gate.

INT. UNION STATION -ARRIVAL CONCOURSE - DAY - 12:09PM

GENE has emerged with LYNN. They pause there, getting their bearings. Next to them, a YOUNG COUPLE is kissing. They can't keep their hands off each other.

GENE

I gotta make a phone call, Lynn. Do you see a phone?

LYNN has seen the YOUNG COUPLE. She secretly points to them, covers her mouth, and does a "tee, hee, hee" number. GENE laughs.

GENE

Come on, you.

They start walking across the concourse, towards MR. SMITH and MS. JONES.

GENE

(to LYNN)

Haven't you ever seen anybody kiss like that?

LYNN

On TV.

GENE

You never saw your Mom and me kiss like that?

LYNN suddenly gets very sad. She looks at the ground, slows down. GENE notices. He stops, crouches down to her level. MR. SMITH and MS. JONES, nearing them, split apart, move around them, and keep going.

GENE

(to LYNN)

Hey, it's OK to talk about her. You can talk about her all you want. You know that, don't you?

LYNN nods.

GENE

So, come on. You never saw us kiss like that?

LYNN

No way.

GENE

How did you see us kiss?

LYNN gives her own hand a little peck of a kiss.

GENE

That's it? That little peck of a kiss? Oh, brother, you missed some kisses.

LYNN laughs and throws herself on her dad. He holds her to him, looks to the sky for help.. He finds himself staring at the big clock.

12:10.

GENE

Ooh, I'm gonna be late. I gotta call.

INT. UNION STATION - DAY - 12:10PM

MR. SMITH and MS. JONES are making a beeline for their target: the YOUNG KISSING COUPLE.

WHOOSH! The-ROLLERBLADING TEENS almost collide with them. MS. JONES wants to do something about it, but MR. SMITH pulls her along. They have a mission to complete. They close in on the couple.

MR. SMITH

Look at 'em. He'd do anything for her.-

MS. JONES

Young love.

The couple are murmuring sweet talk between kisses. The words themselves are unclear until MR. SMITH and MS. JONES are only a few feet away. French. They are speaking French. MR. SMITH makes an instant one-eighty turn. MS. JONES follows.

MR. SMITH

(sotto voce)  
Foreigners! Fuck!

MS. JONES

Frogs. They copy our blue jeans and when we need their help in Kuwait, where the fuck are they?

MR. SMITH looks at the partner he's been saddled with.

INT. UNION STATION - PAY PHONE AREA - DAY - 12:10PM

GENE has found a pay phone. He keeps an eye on LYNN who has

wandered a few yards away.

GENE

Hello, is Mr. Connors there? I have an interview with him at twelve-thirty. Hi, Mr. Connors, this is Gene Watson. Sorry to call you at the last minute like this but... Hey, hey!

He reacts to the ROLLERBLADING TEENS who swoop past LYNN, one on each side, too close for a father's comfort.

GENE

Watch that! Lynn, come here!

She does. He keeps an eye on the TEENS, who, having found a victim, are circling around, passing MR. SMITH and MS. JONES. MR. SMITH has noticed GENE.

GENE at the phone.

GENE

Sorry. There's some crazy kids on skates. Listen, the train just got in, I'm afraid I'm going to be a few minutes late.

The TEENS make their pass, flip him the bird, engage in other objectionable behavior, begin to circle again. MR. SMITH watches GENE watch the TEENS, then notice a sturdy, sand-filled ashtray next to him.

GENE

Great. OK, I'll get there as soon as I can. Bye, now.

He hangs up. Keeping one eye on the circling TEENS.

GENE

(to LYNN)

Ready?

LYNN

Nods.

GENE

Let's do it.

He picks up a suit-case and accidentally-on-purpose uses it to knock over the ashtray, just as the TEENS approach. The ashtray spills its load of sand into their path. When they hit it, their skates stop, they don't. They sprawl, doing nasty things to knees and wrists.

GENE

Whoops.

He stands over them with LYNN.

GENE

Now, see, this is why you should  
always wear a helmet and knee pads.  
You never know when you're going to  
fall down and go boom. Right?

LYNN

Right.

ANGLE ON MR. SMITH AND MS. JONES. - 12:11PM

MR. SMITH

Perfect.

He starts forward.

MS. JONES

(not so sure)

Perfect.

She follows. They intercept GENE. MR. SMITH flashes a badge.

MR. SMITH

Could I see some identification,  
sir?

GENE

What?

MS. JONES

(ditto with the badge)

I.D. Could we see some?

GENE

Uh, sure. What's, what's the problem?  
Will a driver's license do?

MR. SMITH

That'll do just fine.

GENE pulls out his wallet, surprised and confused. MR. SMITH  
looks at it.

GENE

Is this about those kids? Look, I'm  
sorry about that. But they darn  
near...

MR. SMITH

You're from Santa Maria, Mr. Watson?

GENE

Yes.

MS. JONES

Where's that?

GENE

Near Lompoc, north. What's...

MR. SMITH

Come with us, sir.

GENE

I'd like to know what...

MR. SMITH

Don't cause a ruckus, sir.

He pulls open his coat, putting his hands on his hips, not-so coincidentally revealing the butt of a holstered gun.

MR. SMITH

You don't want to cause a ruckus,  
with the little girl and all.

MS. JONES

Come with me, honey.

MS. JONES swoops LYNN up and heads for the station entrance.

GENE

Hey! I'll take the girl. I'll take  
the girl!

MR. SMITH

Don't worry. She's good with kids.

GENE hurries after MS. JONES. MR. SMITH grabs up the suitcases.

INT. UNION STATION - SOUVENIR SHOP - DAY - 12:11PM

MS. JONES nears a souvenir stand. The OWNER is looking the other way. Without breaking stride, MS. JONES reaches out, snatches a child's coloring book and crayons.

LYNN

You stole that.

MS. JONES

No, I didn't. I confiscated it.  
There's a difference.

And they're out the door, GENE hurrying after. The big hand on the big clock moves.

12:12.

EXT. UNION STATION PARKING LOT - DAY - 12:12PM

MS. JONES heads for-a van with smoked windows. She gets inside with LYNN. GENE stops a few feet away.

GENE

What is going on?

MR. SMITH prods him in the ribs.

MR. SMITH

Into the van, Mr. Watson. Front seat.

GENE looks desperately around for help. There is none. He lets MR. SMITH push him toward the van.

INT. VAN -.DAY - 12:13PM

LYNN and MS. JONES are in the back.

MS. JONES

Let's get your seatbelt on. Always gotta wear your seatbelt, isn't that right?

LYNN resists.

LYNN

I want my daddy.

GENE climbs into the front passenger seat.

MS. JONES

There's your daddy. See? We're your daddy's friends.

MR. SMITH climbs into the driver's seat.

MR. SMITH

That's right. The policeman is your friend. Isn't that right, Daddy?

GENE looks down. MR.. SMITH has pulled his gun. He points it casually so it's aiming through the seat in the general direction of the little girl.

MR. SMITH

Daddy?

GENE

Yes. It's OK, Lynn. These are our friends.

MS. JONES

Hey, would you look at this crazy car? Everybody has their own radio. What do you think of that?

LYNN

Everybody does?

MS. JONES

Yep. And you can listen to it without anybody else listening. Let's try it out.

She puts some ear phones on her. She holds up the plug-in end.

MS. JONES

This is what they call the jack. Hi, Jack!

LYNN

Laughs.

MS. JONES

It goes in that little hole.

LYNN

Let me do it.

She plugs the jack in. MS. JONES turns on the radio. LYNN gets a big smile on her face.

LYNN

(loudly)

It's loud!

She goes to work, playing with the radio, changing stations, etc., oblivious to all else.

MS JONES

Removes a Pro Label Machine from under the seat. She begins to type in several characters.

MR. SMITH

Let's get down to business.

GENE

Who are you? You're not the police.

MS. JONES

Brilliant.

MS JONES presses PRINT on the Labeller. A strip of plastic emerges that she begins to apply to a Name Tag. He looks back to her. MR. SMITH whacks him on the knee with the gun. It hurts.

MR. SMITH

Pay attention, Mr. Watson. Pay attention and your daughter won't be hurt.

GENE

You wouldn't...

MS. JONES

Try us.

He looks back. She is caressing LYNN's hair.

GENE

Get your hands off her.

He makes a move. MR. SMITH whacks his knee again, harder.

MR. SMITH

Mr. Watson, you're not paying attention. Your daughter's life depends on you. Do you understand that?

GENE looks from MR. SMITH to MS. JONES and back. He's having a hard time focussing.

She slips the NameTag into a manila envelope beside her MR. SMITH Do you understand?

GENE

Yes, yes, I understand.

MR. SMITH

Good.

He takes the manila envelope from MS JONES, tosses it in GENE'S lap.

MR. SMITH

This is for you. In it there is a picture of a woman and an itinerary. It is her itinerary. She is presently - are you listening, Mr. Watson?

GENE

Yes, I'm listening.

MR. SMITH

She is presently at the Bonaventure Hotel. That's right near here.

He gestures. GENE looks. The glassy Bonaventure Hotel is glimpsed surrounded by taller, newer high-rises.

MR. SMITH

When you leave this van you will get yourself a cab and take it to the Bonaventure Hotel. Then you will take this.

MR. SMITH holds up his hand, snaps his fingers. From the back, MS. JONES hands him a cloth-wrapped bundle. He puts it in GENE's hand, shows him what it is: a gun.

MR. SMITH

...and you will kill the woman whose picture is in there. Not just shoot her, mind,! kill her. I'd recommend you empty the gun into her. Close up. Got all that?

It takes a moment for it all to sink into GENE'S brain.

GENE  
You're out of your mind.

MR. SMITH  
What's your point?

GENE  
I will do no such thing.

MR. SMITH  
Yes, you will, Mr. Watson.

A "snap!" from the back seat. GENE looks. MS. JONES has broken a carrot stick. She breaks another.

MS. JONES  
Don't worry. We'll take good care of the kid.

She gives half the carrot stick to LYNN, pops the other half in her mouth and grinds it to pulp. MR. SMITH is checking his watch.

MR. SMITH  
It is now 12:16. If the woman in the picture is alive at 1:30...  
(holds up a walkie-talkie)  
...I call my partner, your daughter is dead.

He looks in the rear-view mirror to MS. JONES.

MR. SMITH  
And what happens if I don't call you?

MS. JONES  
I kill her anyway.

MR. SMITH  
Did you hear that, Mr. Watson? Do you understand?

He taps the manila envelope.

MR. SMITH  
The woman in the picture...

He indicates the back seat with his head.

MR. SMITH  
...or your daughter.

GENE looks at his daughter.

GENE  
Oh, my God...

MR. SMITH reaches over, puts the gun and manila envelope into GENE'S pockets.

MR. SMITH  
God can't help her, Mr. Watson. Only you can help her.

MS. JONES  
Only you.

MR. SMITH  
You're wasting time.

He reaches across GENE, opens the door and pushes him out, then follows him. LYNN takes off the ear-phones, tries to undo her seatbelt.

LYNN  
Where is my daddy going?

MS. JONES wraps a big arm around her.

MS. JONES  
He's going to help the police. Your daddy is going to be a hero.

LYNN  
My daddy is going to be a hero? Like Power Rangers?

MS. JONES  
Just like Power Rangers.

EXT. UNION STATION PARKING LOT - DAY - 12:18PM

MR. SMITH activates the walkie-talkie, speaks into it.

MR. SMITH  
Let's test this thing. You on?

He holds it up for GENE to hear.

MS. JONES (O.S.)  
(filtered)  
Reading you.

MR. SMITH still has GENE'S wallet. He opens it, pulls out some cash, puts it in GENE's breast pocket.

MR. SMITH  
You'll need some cash.  
(re: the wallet)  
I'll hang onto this for the time  
being. Oh, and...

He grabs one of GENE's hands.

MR. SMITH  
You'll need these.

He dumps six bullet's into GENE's palm from a cloth Chivas  
Regal bag.

MR. SMITH  
Get moving, Mr. Watson. Time's a  
wastin'.

GENE just stands there, transfixed by the bullets in his  
hand. MR. SMITH reaches out, turns him around and gives him  
a shove away from the van and into the midst of...

EXT. UNION STATION - PARKING LOT - BUS STOP - DAY - 12:19PM

...a LARGE CROWD OF TOURISTS, that have just exited an  
arriving mini-bus. GENE is caught up in the crowd and carried  
along like a leaf in a stream.

Amid the chattering CROWD, GENE is pushed along as if in a  
trance. He touches the pocket with the gun. He looks at the

Bullets in his hand, then at the people around him. It's  
like a splash of cold water. He quickly pockets the bullets,  
turns and pushes against the tide of tourists. They resist  
him, pushing him along until he breaks free and can see...

The van is gone!

ANGLE ON GENE -- 12:19PM

He stands there, a lost man. Fear sweeps over him. He looks  
desperately around. He is within himself, oblivious to his  
surroundings, his mind racing, his face a tangle of emotions.  
He is a man alone in a crowd. He takes a step.

A LITTLE LATINO GIRL, chased by HER BROTHER, runs into GENE'S  
legs. He instinctively grabs her before she can fall, finds  
himself, crouched down, holding her by the arms. His heart  
plunges - she isn't Lynn. His intensity scares her.

LITTLE GIRL  
Mama!

She pulls away, flees to HER MOTHER, who hoists her up,  
reprimanding her in Spanish. GENE stays crouched, watching  
the LITTLE GIRL staring at him over HER MOTHER'S shoulder.

Until a COP crosses his line of sight. A LOS ANGELES TRANSIT

POLICEMAN, foot-patrolling the station.

It's like a gift from above. Relief floods GENE's face. He is saved. He stands, hurries toward the COP, each step more confident.

Then, just beyond the COP, MR. SMITH casually slides into view, pointedly holding the walkie-talkie. GENE walks right past the COP heading towards a cab stand. MR. SMITH falls in behind him speaking in his ear.

MR. SMITH

You talk to a cop, you even look at a cop too long and your daughter is dead.

(into walkie-talkie)

Do it.

MS. JONES (O.S.)

(filtered)

Go ahead, sugar Die.

LYNN (V.O.)

(filtered)

Lynn calling Daddy. Lynn calling Daddy. Come in, Daddy.

GENE grabs at the walkie-talkie like a drowning man.

GENE

Lynn!

LYNN (V.O.)

(filtered)

I can hear you good. Can you hear me?

GENE

Yes. Yes, I can hear you.

MR. SMITH

That's enough.

MS. JONES (V.O.)

(filtered)

'Daddy has to go now.

LYNN

(filtered)

He has to say "over and out". Daddy, you have to say "over and out".

GENE

Over and out.

MR. SMITH clicks off the walkie-talkie.

MR. SMITH

Look at your watch. Look at it! At one-thirty your little girl is dead. Say it with me. At one-thirty my little girl is dead. Say it. Say it!

GENE

(softly)

At one thirty my little girl is dead.

MR. SMITH

Unless you do what you're told. Go do it!

He pushes GENE on, toward a cab.

MR. SMITH

And don't forget I'll be watching you.

GENE looks back at him, full of impotent rage. MR. SMITH raises the walkie-talkie. GENE reaches the first cab at the stand.

EXT. UNION STATION - CAB STAND - DAY - 12:21PM

The CABBIE, talking to ANOTHER DRIVER, throws away his cigarette, ambles over to the Driverside-of the cab.

CABBIE

Where to, sir?

GENE

The Bonaventure. The Bonaventure Hotel. Do you know where that is?

The CABBIE is disappointed, but he nods and GENE gets into the cab.

INT. CAB - DAY - 12:21PM

The CABBIE gets in and they take off. GENE stares at the manila envelope in his hand. He starts to open it, is stopped by:

CABBIE

Amtrack?

GENE

What?

CABBIE

You just come in on Amtrack?

GENE

Uh, yes..

CABBIE

Business or pleasure?

GENE

Business.

CABBIE

Where'd you come from?

GENE

San Diego.

CABBIE

Oh, San Diego? I've thought about moving to San Diego. It's hard to make a living in this town. These short hops. Can't make a dime on 'em. To LAX, Pasadena, then I can make a buck. These little hops cost me money.

GENE

Sorry.

CABBIE

'S okay. What do you think?

GENE

Huh?

CABBIE

Better in San Diego? More opportunity there? What?

GENE

I really don't know. I don't live there. I was just visiting...a grave.

CABBIE

Aw, too bad.

They lapse into silence. GENE starts to open the envelope again.

CABBIE

Somebody close?

GENE

What?

CABBIE

The grave. Somebody close?

GENE

Wife. Ex-wife. Almost ex. We were separated. She was thinking about a divorce.

GENE notices the dashboard clock -

12:22

GENE leans forward.

GENE

Look...I've... I've got a problem. A big problem...

CABBIE

Oh, yeah?

He hits the horn and swerves to the left.

CABBIE

Jesus! Watch it, buddy!

EXT. LOS ANGELES STREET - DAY - 12:22PM

GENE looks out his window and finds himself staring at MR. SMITH, staring back at him, driving the van, next to him. He throws himself back in the seat.

INT. CAB - DAY - 12:22PM

The cab pulls into the drive front of the Bonaventure Hotel and stops.

CABBIE

I'd love to hear about your problem, but the ride's over. Three-fifty.

GENE looks out the back window, watches the van pulls up to the curb on the other side of the street.

CABBIE

Three-fifty. I hope your problem doesn't have anything to do with my three-fifty.

GENE looks back at the CABBIE, waiting for his fare.

GENE

Right. Right.

GENE digs through his pockets and comes up with one of his business cards. He hurriedly writes on it: "HELP. VAN KIDNAP CHILD." He wraps a five around it, pushes it into the CABBIE'S hand, gives him a meaningful look and gets out of the cab.

EXT. BONAVENTURE HOTEL - DAY - 12:23PM

GENE stops a few yards from the cab, watching the CABBIE.

INT. CAB - DAY - 12:23PM

The CABBIE finds the secreted card, but looks at the wrong side.

CABBIE

What do I want with an accountant?

A DOORMAN leans down at the window.

DOORMAN

I got one for the airport. You free?

CABBIE

You bet.

The DOORMAN plants a PASSENGER in the cab. As he pulls away, the CABBIE again glances at the business card, crumples it up.

EXT. BONAVENTURE HOTEL - DAY - 12:23PM

GENE watches the cab leave. As it exits, the CABBIE's arm snakes out and tosses the card in the trash. GENE knows what it is. He looks around.

VALETS, BELLMEN, ARRIVALS and DEPARTEES, cars coming and going. No one pays particular attention to him.

GENE looks at the van across the street. MR. SMITH gets out and walks across the street towards him. The van drives away.

GENE watches the van disappear around the corner, desperately hanging onto the last glimpse of it.

MR. SMITH takes the walkie-talkie out of his pocket. GENE goes into the hotel.

INT. BONAVENTURE HOTEL - LOBBY - DAY - 12:24PM

GENE enters. It's like another world. A busy, humming, air-conditioned planet. PEOPLE hustle around the restaurants, waterfalls - a definite ant farm ambiance.

HIGH DOWN ANGLE ON GENE - LOBBY - DAY - 12:24PM

Suddenly we have cut to a VIDEO IMAGE of Gene looking around this Hotel, complete with scrolling TIME AND DATE. Shot by someone high above.

CLOSE ON GENE - LOBBY - DAY - 12:24PM

GENE is bumped and buffeted about by the bustling crowd. He breaks free to a clear spot, looks up and freezes. Then he starts tracking all around him, seeing...something.

GENE

Oh, my God. Oh, no.

He desperately fumbles in his pocket.

Facing and above him, some WORKMEN ON LADDERS are securing a

huge, rolled up banner.

GENE finds what he's looking for - the manila envelope. He rips it open. As he pulls out the photograph that is inside, the WORKMEN let their banner unfurl. We do a simultaneous reveal. The woman in the photograph in the envelope is the same as depicted on the banner. Written across the bottom of it in your best red, white, and blue:

"RE-ELECT ELEANOR SAMARA GRANT GOVERNOR"

And an addendum:

"HERE TODAY!"

GENE

Oh, shit.

It dawns on him. He looks around him again. This time we see what he sees. Campaign posters and banners everywhere.

On some of them she is posed with a handsome man, several years her junior. These have the caption, "Governor Grant and husband Brendan".

GENE

Oh, sweet Jesus...

His eyes fall on MR. SMITH, standing inside the entrance, walkie-talkie in hand, watching him.

GENE looks at a poster, at MR. SMITH, who smiles, nods and gives GENE a move of the head - "Get to it."

GENE shoves the photograph away as if it could incriminate him, then slides out the itinerary.

The itinerary says "California Educators' Association - 12:00 noon - Emerald Bay Room - Opening Address - Governor Eleanor Samara Grant".

GENE checks his watch.

12:26.

He looks around him at the confusion and spots a Bellboy, GUSTINO, who's cleaning out ashtrays.

GENE

Could you tell me where the Emerald Bay Room is?

GUSTINO points up.

GUSTINO

Third floor. Yellow stairwell. Follow the signs.

GENE turns away without a word, starts to walk, then turns back.

GENE  
Oh, thanks. Thanks a lot.

GUSTINO smiles.

GUSTINO  
No problem.

INT. BONAVENTURE HOTEL - "YELLOW STAIRWELL" - DAY - 12:26PM

GENE mounts a set of stairs that will take him to the third floor. MR. SMITH follows him as he climbs.

INT. "YELLOW STAIRWELL" - DAY - 12:26PM

The whole lobby and entrance of the hotel are seen as Gene ascends.

GENE forces himself not to look at MR. SMITH behind him. His nerves are rising in anticipation of his destination.

INT. THIRD FLOOR - DAY - 12:26PM

GENE sees the arrow and sign for the Emerald Bay Room. He walks that way. MR. SMITH follows.

INT. THIRD FLOOR - SHOP ARCADE AREA - DAY - 12:27PM

GENE and MR. SMITH pass gift shops, snack bars. The walkway is crowded and GENE is going against the tide of REPORTERS, POLITICIANS, SUPPORTERS, and just a lot of PEOPLE WITH NAME TAGS.

GENE plows on through...

...and runs smack into BRENDAN GRANT.

BRENDAN GRANT  
(laughs)  
Whoops!

The two men reel back from each other. A SECURITY MAN, earphones and gray suit, steps immediately between them. BRENDAN GRANT is a charmingly smooth man.

BRENDAN GRANT  
Nice body check.

He continues on, talking to an ATTRACTIVE WCMAN COMPANION.

BRENDAN GRANT What the Governor really admires, Mrs. Wentzel, and Eleanor has said this to me on more than one occasion, are people like you who take a personal tragedy and turn it into a positive force.

He slides a familiar hand around her waist.

BRENDAN GRANT

You know my wife has a deeply personal reason for going after repeat drunk drivers. They are felons and they should be treated as such. A drivers license is a privilege, not a right.

And he is hustled away. Right past an election poster featuring him and Governor Grant.

Still stunned by the encounter, GENE turns back and watches the Governor's husband, but keeps walking.

INT. EMERALD BAY ROOM - DAY - 12:28PM

It is emptying, that's where the crowd came from. GENE comes in.

A WOMAN is heading for the door with a centerpiece she's just copped.

GENE

Excuse me, is the...thing over?

WOMAN

Yes. You didn't miss much. The food...chicken again.

GENE

Eleanor Grant is gone?

WOMAN

Yes. Nice speech. But it's the same at all these...

But GENE has turned away. The WOMAN gives him a face, grabs another centerpiece and exits. A CLEAN-UP CREW is starting to go through the room. GENE leans against a wall, breathing through a combination of relief and agony.

MR. SMITH is suddenly next to him.

MR. SMITH

Check your itinerary. Move along.

GENE gets out the itinerary. "12:30 - 12:45 - Hors d'oeuvres/ Buffet w/Friends of Eleanor Samara Grant - INVITATION ONLY - Bona Vista Lounge".

GENE

This says "invitation only".

MR. SMITH

Of course you're invited. You're a big donor to the campaign. They love

you.

MR SMITH digs into the manila envelope, comes out with a handful of security badges, name tags, invites. He plucks the name tag that MS JONES printed earlier. It has a red ribbon signifying a Major Donor to the Campaign. He fastens it to Gene's lapel.

MR. SMITH

This'll get you in anywhere. Red Elevator. Thirty-fifth floor.

GENE

Where did you get these? Who are you?

MR. SMITH

I'm the guy who's going to kill your daughter if you don't get moving.

INT. LOBBY ENTRANCE TO THE "RED" ELEVATOR - DAY - 12:28PM

GENE approaches. He notices a flurry of movement, a small GROUP OF PEOPLE moving determinedly through the lobby. It is GOVERNOR ELEANOR GRANT with a small entourage! She is a handsome woman in her fifties. The entourage consists of KRISTA BROOKS, Eleanor's, late-twenties assistant, a few assorted POLITICAL AIDES and a couple of PEOPLE WITH NAME TAGS. GENE is not sure what to do. The group reaches the elevator. KRISTA pushes the button.

ELEANOR GRANT

They-didn't hear a word I said. The mike was too low on the podium.

KRISTA

How much did we pay for that room?

CHIEF AIDE

We didn't.

ELEANOR GRANT

Somebody did.

KRISTA turns to an Aide.

KRIST

A Have Nolin pre-check the PA systems.

The elevator doors open. They crowd in. The doors start to close.

Gene looks around, where did Mr. Smith go?

GENE springs forward, thrusts his hand between them. The doors stop, then bounce open. GENE is startled, finding himself face to face with a cold eyed bodyguard.

BODYGUARD

Excuse me, sir, this car is for the Governor. You can take the next one.

ELEANOR GRANT

Don't you dare, Franco. This is one of our biggest supporters.

She smiles charmingly, offers her hand to GENE.

ELEANOR GRANT

Eleanor Grant, gubernatorial incumbent. That's a mouthful isn't-it? I love saying that.

GENE steps aboard, shakes her hand.

INT. "RED ELEVATOR" - DAY - 12:29PM

The elevator begins to rise.

ELEANOR GRANT

Whose idea was it to have a lunch right after the brunch? I'm about to bust as it is.

KRISTA

We'll just walk through, do a little grip-and-grin, then get ready for the press con.

INSERT FLOOR INDICATOR

We are on the third floor.

The doors have closed and the elevator begins to rise.

GENE

Governor...

It comes out a little louder than he intended. He has turned, his back to the door. Everyone looks at him. He's committed.

GENE

I need your help.

ELEANOR GRANT

What can I do for you Mr....Watson?

GENE

Its'...ah...about my daughter....

The elevator slows and stops on the next floor above.

INSERT FLOOR INDICATOR

We are on the fourth floor.

Behind GENE, the doors open.

MR. SMITH (O.S.)  
Room for one more?

GENE freezes.

ELEANOR GRANT  
I think we can accommodate you.

She offers her hand to MR. SMITH as he steps on board.

ELEANOR GRANT  
Eleanor Grant, gubernatorial  
incumbent.

MR. SMITH  
A pleasure to meet you, Governor.

The car begins to rise again. ELEANOR GRANT turns back to GENE.

ELEANOR GRANT  
You were saying? Your daughter....?

GENE  
I...

ELEANOR GRANT  
Yes?

ANGLE ON MR SMITH

Yes???

ANGLE ON GENE

What to do now?

GENE  
She ..ahh...wanted me to... be sure  
to get your autograph.

ELEANOR GRANT  
Of course. I wish everything were  
that easy.

KRISTA  
I've got the pen if you've got the  
paper.

GENE looks at her. She smiles back.

KRISTA  
How about that?

He looks at what she refers to: the manila envelope he holds,  
the one MR. SMITH gave him.

KRISTA

Is that something precious?

GENE

No, that's,..that's fine

He gives it to ELEANOR GRANT. KRISTA hands over the pen. GENE's eyes flick over to MR. SMITH who is staring at the envelope.

ELEANOR GRANT

What's her name?

GENE looks at the Governor, only inches away, back to MR. SMITH, who raises his eyes, nods, his silent message curt - do it! GENE pulls his eyes away.

GENE

Her name? Her name is Lynn.

ELEANOR GRANT writes the autograph. MR. SMITH'S eyes drill into him. GENE looks over. MR. SMITH raises a hand to his face, pretends to scratch an itch. His other hand taps his wristwatch. GENE's hand slides toward his jacket pocket. Sweat beads on his forehead. He's barely aware of KRISTA talking to him.

KRISTA

It's funny. I don't even keep a pad of paper with me anymore, everything's gone so electronic.

He gives her a quick, weak smile. His free hand wipes the sweat from his face.

KRISTA

If it wasn't for double A batteries I'd be in big trouble.

He is slowly reaching into the pocket with the gun, but stops when he notices MR. SMITH'S hand slide into his jacket, where his gun is.

He looks at the other MR. SMITH, earphone, crewcut-Security. There is the hint of a gun on his hip.

GENE's eyes widen, dart to MR. SMITH'S face, his hand sliding into his coat. His hand hovers over his gun, trembling. Is the SECURITY MAN staring at him?

ELEANOR GRANT hands over the autograph.

ELEANOR GRANT

Are you all right? Elevators make me queasy, too.

GENE gives her a sick smile, abruptly turns away. He takes his hand out of his pocket. It's shaking. He clenches it to stop the shakes.

The doors open, startling him.

INT. THIRTY-FIFTH FLOOR - DAY - 12:2 9PM

ELEANOR GRANT and her entourage exit to greetings and applause.

GENE stays in the elevator, frozen, alone with MR. SMITH.

The doors close and the elevator descends.

INT. "RED ELEVATOR" - DAY - 12:29PM

MR. SMITH is fuming, his face red. He explodes.

MR. SMITH

She was right in front of you! What's wrong with you!?

His fists clench. He seems about to lose control. He backs GENE into a corner, physically terrified.

MR. SMITH

Are you 'fucking with me!?

GENE

The gun...

MR. SMITH

What about the gun?

GENE

It wasn't loaded. I didn't put the bullets in it.

MR. SMITH

You...

He raises a fist. Struggles with the impulse to smash GENE, controls it. Angrily, he takes the gun from GENE's pocket, expertly loads it with bullets from his own pocket.

MR. SMITH

You won't get many chances like that, Mr. Watson. That's the way life works. Don't blow the next one.

He indicates the glass wall of the elevator with his eyes. GENE looks out and down.

GENE'S POV

The van. It's moving into a parking spot across from the Bonaventure, on Flower Street.

INT. THE VAN - DAY - 12:29PM

LYNN is coloring a picture in her stolen book. MS. JONES takes a look.

MS. JONES  
That's pretty good.

LYNN  
I've done much better ones than this.

MS. JONES  
You have, huh?

LYNN  
Oh, yes. I'll show you. I have much more colors at home.

MS. JONES  
That's good.  
(checks her watch)  
That's good, sweetie pie.

INT. RED ELEVATOR - DAY - 12:29PM

The elevator continues its descent and the van disappears from view. GENE strains to see it again, but it's impossible.

MR. SMITH jams the loaded gun into GENE's pocket.

MR. SMITH  
There, all loaded. Ready for the hunt.

The elevator, doors open into the lobby.

INT. BONAVENTURE HOTEL - THIRD FLOOR - YELLOW ELEVATOR LOBBY - DAY - 12:29PM

MR. SMITH walks out. GENE follows. MR. SMITH, suddenly becomes self-conscious, walks away from GENE. The object of his shyness: A JAPANESE TOURIST COUPLE nearby. The man is taping his wife with a video camera.

VIEW THROUGH VIDEO CAMERA - 12:31PM

We see what the camera is seeing, the WIFE, smiling. Behind her, we see GENE, looking confusedly after Mr. Smith. He turns, walks out of frame. In the corner of the picture, a read-out of the TIME:

12:31:00.

INT. BONAVENTURE HOTEL - SHOESHINE STAND - DAY - 12:31PM

Back in real life, GENE walks toward a shoeshine stand outside the Men's Room. "Huey's Polished Act" and below that, hand-

lettered, "Disabled Veteran" where HUEY himself, a fiftyish black man, reads a "Smithsonian" magazine.

He sees GENE and perks up - a customer.

HUEY

Having a rough day? Down at the heels  
as they...?

But GENE goes right past HUEY and into the Men's Room.

HUEY

(calling after him)  
You don't see your face, you don't  
pay!

HUEY gives up, goes back to his magazine.

INT. MEN'S ROOM. - DAY - 12:31PM

Gene goes- over to one of the sinks, runs the cold water, splashes his face, looks in the mirror, into his own eyes. He tries to find an answer, a way out. A pay phone, on the wall behind him, comes into focus. Then a hand reaches in, grabs the receiver...and yanks it, snapping the wire. Gene spins around. It is MR. SMITH, of course.

MR. SMITH smiles. GENE doesn't. MR. SMITH leaves.

INT. BONAVENTURE HOTEL - THIRD FLOOR - DAY

GENE exits the Men's Room and walks back the route he came.

INT. BONAVENTURE HOTEL - SHOESHINE STAND - DAY - 12:32PM

HUEY sets down his magazine again.

HUEY

Having a rough day? Down at the heels  
as they say? What you need is a shoe  
shine, shoe shine, shoe shine today.

It's HUEY's usual patter, he's said it a thousand times.  
GENE looks around.

MR. SMITH is in the lounge area, facing the Flower Street entrance, able to keep the Men's Room and GENE in view.

HUEY

Take ten, take a break, take a seat,  
take a load off. Put the world in  
perspective.

GENE lets HUEY usher him into a chair.

The gun in his jacket pocket clunks against the arm of the chair. A grim reminder. He pulls out the itinerary.

ECU - ITINERARY

12:45 - Governor Eleanor Samara Grant - Pacific Rim  
Multi-Cultural Conference - Pool Deck - Fourth Floor

GENE looks at his watch.

ECU WATCH

12:32.

The minute hand clicks to 12:33 as he watches.

ANGLE ON HUEY - 12:33PM

He works away at GENE's shoes.

HUEY

So, are you a visitor or lucky enough  
to live in The City of Angels?

It's more of HUEY's patter, no real substance to the inquiry.

GENE

I'm...I'm visiting.

GENE watches MR. SMITH frown and amble toward the shoeshine  
stand.

HUEY

What do you do, if I may be so bold?

GENE

(looking at MR. SMITH)  
I'm just an accountant.

HUEY

Don't denigrate yourself, my friend.  
Where would the government be without  
accountants? They wouldn't know how  
hard they can squeeze us before we  
pop, isn't that right?

ANGLE ON MR. SMITH - 12:33PM

He takes note of the conversation and wanders back to his  
chair.

ANGLE ON HUEY - 12:33PM

HUEY

Now you take tips. Time was a tip  
was between a man and his customer.  
Not any more. They've figured out  
what they call a formulae, don't  
laugh, it ain't for babies. They  
take your sales, see, and slap a  
percentile on there, figuring that

somewhere between your lies and your bad luck they'll hit on the mean amount, mean meaning "in the middle", but if you ask me it means "just plain mean". Why you can have Uncle Scrooge wring a nickel over your poor out-stretched palm, or Daddy Warbucks dropping pearl stick-pins like manna from heaven, don't make no difference, they'll tax your behind according to that same figure. Doesn't seem quite right., does it?

GENE

No. No, it doesn't.

The Bellboy GUSTINO walks by, calls out to HUEY.

GUSTINO

Hey, Huey, how's it hangin'?

HUEY

It's a load, my friend, but somebody's got to carry it.

GUSTINO laughs, waves.

GENE

I have to do something.

HUEY

What's that? You have to speak up.

(taps his ear)

I'm a little deaf in this ear. Between that and my wooden leg I'm a mess. Compliments of the United States Army Artillery Corps.

GENE

I said I have to do something.

HUEY

I'll have you out of here in two shakes o'f a lamb's tail.

GENE

Is within himself.

GENE I keep wondering what she would do if she was here. She'd figure it out. She'd run it down like a column of numbers. Pro's and cons. That's the way she was: Lists all over the house.

HUEY's manic shoe-shining slows down: who has he got in his chair?

GENE

Drove me crazy. There must have been one on me. I didn't add up so she left. That's what attracted me to her In the first place. She made up her mind and she did it. She wouldn't sit around waiting for...whatever. She'd do something. She'd do something.

HUEY keeps his eyes on his work. He's afraid he's got a live one.

HUEY

Yes, well, you know, for a quality shoe you can't beat a good wingtip. Wears like iron. You're a wise man. There ya' go. Two bucks.

HUEY gestures for GENE to get down. GENE steps to the floor. He pays HUEY with a twenty.

HUEY

You got anything smaller?

GENE

Keep it.

HUEY

It's a twenty.

GENE

Keep it.

GENE is thinking about something.

HUEY

Well...thanks muchly...

GENE looks around the lobby, at MR. SMITH, the Flower Street entrance, the rest of the area, feeling the gun in his pocket.

GENE

Can I get out to Flower Street from here?

HUEY

Sure. Go down past the bar. Take you right out there.

HUEY nods toward the bar.

GENE

Thanks.

GENE walks toward the bar. HUEY shakes his head: time for the boys in white.

INT. BONAVENTURE HOTEL - LOBBY - DAY - 12:35PM

GENE looks towards the Flower Street entrance. The van is still there. A bus pulls up.

GENE walks past MR. SMITH.

MR. SMITH

You get another chance in ten minutes.

GENE

Then I have time for a drink.

He heads up to the bar.

MR. SMITH

All right, Mr. Watson, but make it just one. I don't want you...

But GENE is long gone.

INT. HOTEL BAR AREA - DAY - 12:30 PM

GENE walks into the area of the bar. The BARTENDER is just returning to chat with a customer, a REPORTER who is getting sloshed. GENE moves slowly along the bar, into an area where MR. SMITH'S view of him is blocked.

REPORTER

So where was I?

BARTENDER

I don't know. Something about the Governor's new regime.

GENE hears this and glances towards them.

REPORTER

Oh yeah. She's dumping the Good Old Boys like yesterday's newspapers.

GENE sees that MR. SMITH can no longer see him. He scans the lobby, sees a smaller door that leads onto Flower Street.

REPORTER

The white boys are in for it. When they got her elected they never thought she was gonna make the Governor's office look like the United Nations.

The BARTENDER laughs. GENE quickly cuts across the lobby and out the smaller door onto Flower Street.

REPORTER

We're talking Custer's Last Stand here. The only minorities not on her staff are the ones still lost in the Rain Forest.

EXT. FLOWER STREET - DAY - 12:3 6PM

GENE comes out the door, dashes across the street, weaving through the traffic.

Once across, he heads up the sidewalk toward the van, keeping low, sneaking up behind it. He crouches by the front door, one hand sliding into his pocket for the ' gun, the other -on the door handle. He raises his head cautiously and looks inside the cab.

No MS. JONES up front at least. He takes a breath, braces himself. With one motion he jerks the back door open, yanks out the gun.

INT. VAN - DAY - 12:37PM

The first thing he sees, fixates on, is LYNN. She is stretched out on the seat, eyes closed, mouth open. She appears dead.

GENE

(a gasp)

Lynn!

MS. JONES (O.S.)

Shhh. You'll wake the baby up.

MS. JONES is sitting on the seat behind the one LYNN is on. GENE points the gun at her face. She smiles.

MS. JONES

(softly)

What we have here is what they call a Mexican standoff. The thing you gotta ask yourself is, "What's behind the seat?" Now, a twenty-two'd go right through it, but even a button will throw a twenty-two off so there's a good chance it'd get screwed up somewhere along the way, miss the target. Maybe a thirty-eight? A thirty-eight'll drill pretty straight, unless it hits metal, then it'll bust up in little bitty pieces. They'll keep going but they'll be slowed down quite a bit. How's about a three-fifty-seven? It'll go through the seat, her, you, the dashboard, shit, it'll go through the engine block before it knows it's hit anything, end up in some pedestrian three blocks away. What do you think? What's my poison?

GENE look at Lynn's sleeping face - the gun in his own hand. He lowers the gun, defeated.

MS. JONES

Well it's a comfort to know you've got the co-Jones to pull that thing out. Whether you've got the balls to pull the trigger we've still got to see.

EXT. FLOWER STREET - DAY

GENE climbs out of the van, shuts the door, leans there. The gall of his defeat is hard to swallow. He realizes he's holding the gun, hurriedly tucks it away.

INT. THE VAN - DAY - 12:38PM

MS. JONES puts her gun down, raises a walkie-talkie.

MS. JONES

(into the walkie-talkie)  
He's coming back in.

MR. SMITH

(filtered)  
I've got him in the crosshairs.

INT. BUFFET AREA - DAY - 12:38PM

MR. SMITH near the entrance, eating some food. He watches

GENE walk past him. Their eyes meet.

INT. BONAVENTURE HOTEL - LOBBY - DAY - 12:39PM

GENE looks at his watch, then checks the itinerary once more.

ECU - ITINERARY

12:45 - Governor Eleanor Samara Grant - Pacific Kim Multi-Cultural Conference - Pool Deck - Fourth Floor

ANGLE ON GENE-NEAR BUFFET AREA - 12:39PM

GENE addresses another Bellboy, HECTOR who is moving luggage out to the street.

GENE

Pool Deck?

HECTOR

Fourth Floor. Take that escalator.

GENE thanks him and moves across the lobby MR. SMITH follows GENE

INT. BONAVENTURE HOTEL - BAR AREA - DAY - 12:39PM

GENE heads toward the escalators. Ahead of him, he sees ELEANOR GRANT and BRENDAN GRANT surrounded by AIDES and

SECURITY MEN facing a crowd of PRESS PEOPLE. The Governor and her husband have an arm around each other. They are smiling, relaxed, quite the " happy couple. They give each other a warm kiss. Camera flashes, recording the moment.

GENE, heading toward them, has to thread his way through a large WEDDING PARTY - tuxedos and bridesmaid gowns. When he clears them he has neared the impromptu press conference.

ANGLE ON BRENDAN GRANT - 12:3 9PM

He is now alone in front of a campaign poster, fielding questions from a few remaining REPORTERS.

Farther on, ELEANOR GRANT and her entourage can be seen taking the escalator up. GENE heads that way, passing BRENDAN GRANT.

BRENDAN GRANT

My wife is not interested in negative campaigning. She wants to accentuate the positive. I don't know about you but I find that refreshing.

A REPORTER

Have you ever thought of running for office yourself?

BRENDAN GRANT

(smiles, charmingly)

Me?

A PRETTY YOUNG WOMAN walks by. The Governor's husband's eyes follow her appreciatively as he says:

BRENDAN GRANT

I'm just a business man.

ANGLE ON GENE - 12:40PM

He nears the escalator. It's crowded and GENE is pulled into the midst of NEWS PEOPLE, TV, RADIO, PRESS. He joins the flow and lets it pull him along.

GENE rides the escalator to the Second Floor and follows the crowd up two flights of the circular stairs.

Down a short tunnel and out onto the Pool Deck.

EXT. BONAVENTURE HOTEL - POOL, DECK - HIGH ANGLE - 12:41PM

About an acre of grass on the Fourth Floor. Skyways connect the Pool Deck to the office buildings across Flower and Figueroa. A platform has been set up with chairs and microphones in front of a podium.

EXT. POOL DECK - CLOSE ANGLE ON GENE - 12:41PM

GENE blinks in the sudden, bright sunshine. When his eyes adjust, he finds himself in a line that is approaching A SECURITY MAN with a hand-held metal detector. He panics, turns, trying to escape, but finds himself bumped along, trapped. The line shuffles forward. He turns, determined to make a supreme effort to escape and finds himself facing a 2ND SECURITY MAN, who waves him to one side.

2ND SECURITY MAN Excuse me, sir, You don't have to wait. I can take you over here.

GENE is dragged forward. He looks around; no way out. He stands, expectant, as the detector slides down one side of his body, is lifted over to the other. Down it slides, toward the pocket concealing the gun. GENE waits for the alarm - which doesn't come. The SECURITY MAN operating the gizmo deftly switches it off as it passes the weapon. GENE is pushed on, looking back, confused, alarmed, finds himself among:

PRESS by the dozens. Eleanor Samara Grant SUPPORTERS by the hundreds. SECURITY MEN and COPS IN UNIFORM. GENE moves through them, trying to figure out what just happened. He glances back to the 2ND SECURITY MAN, and bumps into one particular POLICE OFFICER, plain clothes, badge in pocket, who reacts with a quick laugh.

POLICE OFFICER Easy, sir. Got to watch where you're going in a crowd like this.

He is a handsome, solid-looking guy. You'd trust him. Call him OFFICER TRUST. OFFICER TRUST seems to be in charge. He moves off through the crowd, giving LOCAL POLICE orders in an easy way.

GENE looks around. He can't see MR. SMITH. He edges his way after OFFICER TRUST, who reaches the wall beyond which is the drop to the street. He leans there comfortably, scanning the crowd, GENE reaches the wall a few yards away from him. He looks out at the city, getting his courage up. Just as he turns to approach OFFICER TRUST:

MR. SMITH (O.S.)

I know what you're thinking.

GENE freezes! MR. SMITH appears from the crowd, joins him. He smugly flips his walkie-talkie into the air, catches it.

GENE

What would you do in my place?

MR. SMITH

Me?

He flips the walkie-talkie, catches it.

MR. SMITH

The bitch would be dead. Course I ain't sayin' which bitch.

He flips the walkie-talkie. GENE lashes out, smacks the walkie-talkie. It sails over the edge, falls and smashes onto the sidewalk four stories below.

MR. SMITH goes ballistic.

GENE walks away from him - right up to OFFICER TRUST.

GENE  
There's a plot to kill the Governor.  
If you don't believe me, check that  
guy right there. He has a gun.

OFFICER TRUST looks at MR. SMITH and then at GENE.

OFFICER TRUST  
So do you, Mr. Watson.

And OFFICER TRUST reaches in his hip pocket for a spare Walkie-Talkie that he tosses to MR. SMITH.

OFFICER TRUST  
You got this under control?

MR. SMITH  
Yeah.

OFFICER TRUST  
It doesn't look like it.

MR. SMITH  
It's under control.

OFFICER TRUST  
It better be.

OFFICER TRUST walks away.

MR. SMITH stares at a devastated GENE. He sticks the walkie-talkie into his pocket, grabs GENE under the arm, drags him to an isolated corner.

MR. SMITH  
I oughta throw you after that walkie-talkie but I'm going to give you a break because you're an amateur.

WAITER M (O.S.)  
Gentlemen...

The WAITER offers a tray of hors d'houvres.

MR. SMITH  
Yeah, thanks. Have a cracker.

GENE shakes his head.

MR. SMITH  
Have a cracker, Mr. Watson.

GENE woodenly takes one. The WAITER moves on.

MR. SMITH  
There was this guy. Big guy. Irish-  
Italian. Red-faced, black-haired,  
jolly son-of-a-bitch.

We see them from a distance - just a couple guys chatting.

MR. SMITH  
Nobody could make me laugh like him.  
We closed more bars together than I  
can count. He was my pal. I loved  
that crazy mick, I'm not ashamed to  
say it. But he was fuck-up. He had  
this image of himself. Thought he  
was con man. Always trying to shave  
the edge. Nickel and dime. I'll always  
miss him. Tell me why.

GENE  
What...?

MR. SMITH  
Tell me why I miss him.

GENE  
He's dead?

MR. SMITH  
That's right. He's dead. Tell me  
why.

GENE  
How should I...?

MR. SMITH  
Tell me why he's dead.

GENE stares at him for a beat.

GENE  
You killed him.

MR. SMITH  
That's right, I killed him. He fucked  
up one too many times so I put a  
bullet in his eye. Then I put two  
more into him just to make sure. Now  
that was somebody I loved.

He moves in on GENE, crowding him. He breathes hard, looks  
like one insane piece of work.

MR. SMITH

I loved that motherfucker but I got the call and I put him down like a sick animal. So if you've got any doubts about what's going to happen if you don't deliver let me tell you something. I'd make gravy out of your little girl just to season that black Irish cocksucker's meat.

A wave of applause catches their attention.

ANGLE ON ELEANOR GRANT

She and her entourage enter the Pool Deck and walk toward the platform. ELEANOR GRANT gladhands people on the way.

ANGLE ON MR. SMITH - 12:45PM

He turns' back to GENE.

MR. SMITH

Do what you're supposed to do. Do it now.

He grabs GENE and gives him a push. There is a general movement in the crowd toward the platform. GENE is buffeted along. MR. SMITH follows him, keeping him in sight, but then a PACK OF PHOTOGRAPHERS move in, start snapping, lifting their cameras high to shoot over the crowd. MR. SMITH instinctively turns away, hiding his face. He moves around the PHOTOGS and finds himself separated from GENE by the mob. He searches, trying to spot him.

MR. SMITH

Shit!

ANGLE ON GENE - 12:4 6PM

In the crowd, GENE is bumped this way and that. His face displays an inner devastation. His eyes focus desperately on something ahead:

It is the back of ELEANOR GRANT'S head. She is turning this way and that, greeting supporters.

GENE's hand slides into his pocket, grips the gun. He is at the end of his rope. He is going to do it.

ANGLE ON ROSTRUM

A local POLITICO mounts the platform, taps the microphone.

LOCAL POLITICO Can I have your attention Please! Please welcome a man who was for 19 years the distinguished Mayor of Los Angeles. The honorable Tom Bradley.

The CROWD reacts loudly, yells and whistles. GENE-pushes his way forward.

TOM BRADLEY

It is my extreme pleasure this  
afternoon to introduce to you...

ANGLE ON GENE - 12:4 6PM

He is now a few yards from ELEANOR GRANT. He comes up against the SECURITY MAN who gave him the once-over with the metal detector. The man's eyes slide over him, then he looks away. He nonchalantly steps aside, moves off through the CROWD.

TOM BRADLEY

...a woman who can only be  
characterized as a one-of-a-kind.

GENE is close to ELEANOR GRANT. She is just a few bodies away, visible between them. His hand moves in his pocket. He swallows. The impulse sweeps over him and...

KRISTA (O.S.)

Feeling better?

KRISTA BROOKS, the young woman from the elevator is next to him, smiling. He looks at her in confusion.

TOM BRADLEY

An iconoclast with class...

KRISTA

The elevator. You weren't feeling  
well.

GENE looks at ELEANOR GRANT.

TOM BRADLEY

A genuine lady who's not afraid to  
get into the trenches...

KRISTA

Are you better now?

GENE turns, scans the crowd - no sign of MR. SMITH.

TOM BRADLEY

...and go to the mat with greedy  
special interests...

GENE looks at KRISTA, studies her intensely. She's a bit unnerved.

TOM BRADLEY

The finest Governor our state has  
ever had...

Again GENE looks at ELEANOR GRANT. She's turning around, facing the crowd, facing him.

TOM BRADLEY  
My friend and yours, Governor Eleanor  
Grant!

ELEANOR GRANT raises her arms. A perfect target. The CROWD  
roars as GENE turns back to KRISTA. He leans into her, speaks.

GENE  
My wife always said I had a problem  
trusting people.

KRISTA  
Well, you can trust Eleanor Samara  
Grant.

GENE  
You don't understand. I'm going to  
trust you. And you have to trust me.

Krista looks at Gene.

KRISTA  
Yes, you're right, I don't understand.

GENE  
Look...my daughter ... she's going  
to die...unless you can help me.

Krista assesses Gene, his desperate tone of voice. Obviously  
a nut case. A well-dressed nut case, but a nut case  
nevertheless. Krista, nervous, looks around for help.

KRISTA  
Sure, sure, I'll help you. Let me  
get Mr. White. I'm sure he can assist  
you, he's our...

Gene pulls the gun, holding it in Krista's sight only,  
unnoticed by anyone else.

GENE  
(sotto voce)  
No! You have to listen to me.

Krista stares wide-eyed at the gun, at Gene.

KRISTA  
I'm listening, I'm listening.

ANGLE ON THE ROSTRUM

ELEANOR GRANT takes over the microphone from the beaming  
LOCAL POLITICO.

ELEANOR GRANT  
My friends, my good friends...

ANGLE ON THE CROWD

Gene and Krista are gone.

EXT. BEHIND THE PLATFORM - DAY - 12:47PM

Hidden by potted plants and campaign posters at the fringe of the CROWD, GENE confronts KRISTA, covering her with the pocketed gun. In the background, ELEANOR GRANT delivers a ringing speech, accented with applause.

GENE

Please...please...you have to believe me... They have my daughter. They want me to kill Eleanor Grant , or they'll kill my daughter.

KRISTA tries to edge away.

KRISTA

All right, let's just...let's get security in on this.

GENE

No! You can't! They're in on it.

KRISTA

I don't see how they could be in on it. They're the best. They're hand-picked.

GENE

I don't know. One of them is following me. If he knew what I'd just told you they'd...

GENE pulls the gun from his pocket. She recoils, thinking he's going to shoot her.

GENE

Look, how did I get in here with this!?

KRISTA stares at the gun. She can't deny the fact.

KRISTA

I don't know.

GENE

You've got to trust me. I'm putting my daughter's life in your hands. She's only six. She's just a little girl. Please, please, trust me.

KRISTA

It's a little hard to trust you under the circumstances.

GENE looks at her intently.

GENE  
You're right, it is.  
(beat)  
Here.

GENE offers KRISTA the gun. She is surprised, to say the least. She takes it gingerly, with only the tips of her fingers.

GENE  
Will you trust me now?

She stares at the gun, at the strange man.

KRISTA  
I guess I'll have to. Come on, there's one person we can go to.

GENE  
The man following me has a walkie-talkie. If he sees I'm not here he'll call his partner. I do anything out of line and he'll send the word to kill my daughter.

KRISTA  
He'll think you're in the crowd until the end of the speech. Wait a minute.

She steps closer to the platform/ listens. ELEANOR GRANT'S voice is heard.

ELEANOR GRANT (O.S.)  
...I remember that horrible night as if it were yesterday. A phone call pulling me out of sleep, the terrible news...

KRISTA checks her watch.

12:48.

ELEANOR GRANT (O.S.)  
My husband and child senselessly killed by a drunk driver.

KRISTA  
We've got about ten minutes.

GENE  
Are you sure?

KRISTA  
I've heard this speech a lot. Come on. We'll take care of him. We will.

GENE

But...

KRISTA

Trust me. You asked me for help. Let me help. Trust me.

GENE

Okay...

She starts to lead him away.

GENE

Hey.

He stops her, points to the gun she still holds.

GENE

I think you better put that away.

KRISTA

I think you're right.

She pulls out a handkerchief, covers the gun and tucks it out of sight as she leads him behind the platform and away.

EXT. POOL DECK - DAY - 12:4 9PM

MR. SMITH still roams the crowd, looking for Gene.

ELEANOR GRANT

But tragedy, if it doesn't destroy us, has a curious way of giving us strength.

He sees OFFICER TRUST who gives him a questioning look. He ignores it.

ELEANOR GRANT

I doubt if I would be before you now, if I hadn't been put through that crucible of loss.

MR SMITH notices the JAPANESE TOURIST COUPLE we met before. The man has the video camera pointed at a sharp up angle. MR. SMITH glances up toward what the man is shooting. Consternation and anger fill his face.

ANGLE ON RED BONAVENTURE TOWER - 12:4 9PM

What he sees is one of the exterior elevators rising. KRISTA stands at the glass looking down. Behind her, just glimpsed, is GENE.

ANGLE ON MR. SMITH

ELEANOR GRANT

And though I can never forget William

and Bill Junior or the love I felt  
for them...

MR. SMITH cuts a wake through the CROWD.

ELEANOR GRANT

I have found joy again in serving  
this great state. I have found love  
again in my second husband Brendan...

INT. TWENTY-FIFTH FLOOR - DAY - 12:.50PM

The elevator doors open. GENE and KRISTA bolt out and hurry  
down the hall.

GENE

Where are we going?

INT. TWENTY-FIFTH FLOOR - SECURITY TABLE - DAY - 12:50PM

KRISTA leads GENE past the SECURITY GUARD stationed in the  
hallway at a small table. GENE tries to keep his face turned  
away. The GUARD glances up.

HALL GUARD

Ms. Brooks ...

KRISTA

Is he in?

HALL GUARD

Yes, ma'am.

They walk past him. He's a bit curious about GENE, but shrugs  
it off.

GENE and KRISTA reach a door and knock.

GENE

Who is this? Are you sure we can  
trust him?

KRISTA

I'm sure. It's her husband. He's her  
Campaign Manager.

The door opens. BRENDAN GRANT is framed there.

BRENDAN GRANT

What is it? Is there a problem?

KRISTA

We need to see you, Brendan.

She grabs GENE and pushes inside.

INT. ROOM 2503 - DAY - 12:51PM

Upscale suite. BRENDAN GRANT'S coat is draped on a chair.  
KRISTA moves past him, pulling GENE.

GENE  
(to KRISTA)  
We have to hurry.

KRISTA  
I know. Brendan, listen to me. Someone  
is trying to kill Eleanor.

BRENDAN GRANT  
What? What are you talking about?

KRISTA  
We need people we can "trust. We  
only have a few moments...

BRENDAN GRANT  
This is...this is insane. How do you  
know this?

GENE  
I know it because I'm the one who's  
supposed to kill her.

BRENDAN GRANT  
You are!?  
(to KRISTA)  
You brought this man here!? You  
brought this man to my room!?

KRISTA  
I had to. Her Security people may be  
involved...

There is the sound of a toilet flushing in an adjacent  
bathroom. The door opens and A MAN emerges drying his hands  
on a hotel towel. He is late-middle-aged, white, mild-looking,  
perhaps wearing glasses.

MYSTERY MAN  
Is there a problem, Brendan?

BRENDAN GRANT  
There certainly is. This man says  
he's been hired to kill Eleanor.

GENE  
Not hired. They're blackmailing me.

MYSTERY MAN  
Who is this "they"?

GENE  
I don't...I don't know. Please, Mr.  
Grant! They have my daughter. I'm

not some lunatic. Your wife is in trouble. Someone is trying to kill her. Someone is trying to make me kill her. Please, listen...

MYSTERY MAN

And on the strength of this story, you bring this man to Brendan's suite? Does that show good judgment, Ms. Brooks? I'm just a friend of Brendan's, but it seems to me...

KRISTA

He brought a gun onto the pool deck.

MYSTERY MAN

(beat)

What?

KRISTA

He got onto the pool deck with a gun. How did he get past her Security carrying a

MYSTERY MAN

I see. Where is this gun?

KRISTA I

Have it.

MYSTERY MAN

Well, is it real? Do we know anything about it?

KRISTA

It looks real. I don't know anything about guns.

MYSTERY MAN

Could I see it?

KRISTA gets out the gun, wrapped in the handkerchief, hands it to him. It lays in the palm of his hand. He unwraps it awkwardly, examines it.

MYSTERY MAN

My goodness. It certainly looks real.

He looks beyond them, towards the entrance to the suite.

MYSTERY MAN

What's your opinion? You're the expert in these matters, supposedly.

GENE turns, to see who he is talking to.

ANGLE ON DOORWAY - 12:.53PM

MR. SMITH stands by the open door. Before GENE can speak, MR. SMITH moves. It is fluid and controlled and fast. He marches across the room, detouring to grab a pillow from the couch. He takes the gun, shoves it into the pillow and goes face to face with KRISTA. She just has time to wonder what is going on. There is a double muffled gunshot. Shock fills her eyes, she slides to the floor. GENE can only stand there, unbelieving, freaked to the gills.

BRENDAN GRANT

Jesus Christ!

MR. SMITH

(calmly, staring at  
GENE)

Yeah, I'd say it's real.

MYSTERY MAN

Are you out of your fucking mind!?

The door opens. OFFICER TRUST slides in quickly.

OFFICER TRUST

Somebody mind telling me...

(sees KRISTA's body)

What the hell happened!?

MR. SMITH

Help me get her off the rug.

OFFICER TRUST checks the hall, shuts the door. They begin to drag her body to the bathroom. The MYSTERY MAN watches.

BRENDAN GRANT

What have you done to me!? Christ  
almighty!

GENE's eyes follow them. As if rousing from a sleep he comes to life.

GENE

No!

He tries to rush to the bathroom but MR. SMITH is right there, gripping him. GENE struggles frantically, uselessly, watching the bathroom door close. MR. SMITH is beyond anger. He grabs GENE'S throat, muscles down. GENE grips the iron hand that's cutting off his air.

MR. SMITH

You fucked up.

MYSTERY MAN (O.S.)

That's enough.

The MYSTERY MAN grabs MR. SMITH'S arm, tries to pry him loose. MR. SMITH is beyond reason.

MR. SMITH  
You want me to kill your kid!? You  
want me to kill you!?

GENE's eyes begin to roll back in his head. Everything begins fading to black.

The blackness retreats in a rush and GENE finds himself staring at the butt of MR. SMITH'S gun, visible under his coat. He reaches for it, yanks it out, fires point-blank into

MR. SMITH, again, again. MR. SMITH'S shocked face falls away. GENE heads for the door.

MYSTERY MAN  
Don't let him go!

OFFICER TRUST steps between GENE and the door. GENE shoots him down and is out the door.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

GENE stumbles out in the hall, gun in hand. He hurries down the hall, looking back to see the MYSTERY MAN and a wounded OFFICER TRUST spill out of Room 2503. The HALL OFFICER pulls his weapon MYSTERY MAN Get him!

GENE fires at the HALL OFFICER who goes down. GENE rushes down the hall. One of the guest room door's opens and a MAN staggers out. It is a bloody, wounded MR. SMITH! GENE stops in shock.

GENE  
I killed you.

MR. SMITH  
You fucked up.

And MR. SMITH grabs him by the collar and throws him over a railing.

INT. THE LOBBY - MID-AIR - DAY

GENE is falling, falling. He passes the ascending elevator and gets a glimpse of MS. JONES and LYNN, pressed against the glass, her face a mask of terror. The floor rushes up to meet GENE and...

INT. ROOM 2503 - DAY - 12:56 PM

...he hits the floor, thrown there by MR. SMITH. His escape has been a dream. A wrist-watch fills the frame.

12:56.

It is GENE's. We are seeing his P.O.V. He's laying on the

floor, his watch-hand in front of his face.

MYSTERY MAN (O.S.)

You nearly killed him, too, you idiot!

MR. SMITH (O.S.)

Nearly doesn't count.

Lose the P.O.V.

BRENDAN GRANT

I'm on record. I never wanted this. I wanted simplicity; a telescopic sight, a powerful rifle, but no. What was good enough for Oswald wasn't good enough for you two. You had to get fancy. Drag some shmuck in off the street, stick a gun in his hand.

MYSTERY MAN

It's academic now. She had to be killed.

MR. SMITH

What were you going to do, Brendan? Lock her in a closet? You're in the fucking kitchen now. Get used to the heat. He's been seen all over the hotel, looking like some Loony Tunes. We even got him on video. It'll work. Don't worry about it.

GENE stirs on the floor.

MYSTERY MAN

(about GENE) Is he awake?

MR. SMITH

Yeah.

He yanks GENE to his feet.

BRENDAN GRANT

Oh Great. Why don't we just give him our home phone numbers while we're at it?

MR. SMITH

It doesn't matter what he hears.

He pulls GENE over to the bathroom door. Throws it open. GENE reacts to what he sees within.

MR. SMITH

That's what it looks like. She was alive a minute ago. Now she's dead. Because you wouldn't do what I told you to do.

MYSTERY MAN

Get going. You've only got a few minutes to pull it together.

MR. SMITH takes GENE out of the suite into the hall. The door closes. Brendan, the Mystery Man and Officer Trust are alone  
BRENDAN GRANT I don't know if we should go through with this.

MYSTERY MAN

It's too late for that.

BRENDAN GRANT

There is a dead woman on my bathroom floor!

MYSTERY MAN

What about it? She's Eleanor's assistant and they will have been shot with the same gun, by the same lunatic. Some, anonymous loser who went over the edge.

BRENDAN GRANT

(breathing easier)

Only thing better would be if he were a postal worker.

OFFICER TRUST

He won't be doing any work once I get through with him.

MYSTERY MAN

And in a few months you're in the Governor's mansion. The people'd make you king of California if they could.

BRENDAN GRANT laughs.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY - 12:57PM

OFFICER TRUST exits from the room and engages the HALL OFFICER in conversation down the hall. GENE and MR. SMITH turns the other way, walk. In an undertone:

GENE

I'm not stupid.. I know how this is supposed, to work.

MR. SMITH

Do you now, Mr. Watson?

GENE

I kill her - and you kill me.

MR. SMITH

Keep your voice down.

GENE

Even if you don't, Her Security men  
will.

INT. TWENTY-FIFTH FLOOR - ELEVATOR FOYER - DAY - 12:58PM

They reach the elevator. MR. SMITH punches the button. GENE  
turns on him.

GENE

How am I supposed to get away?

MR. SMITH

That's not my problem, Mr. Watson

He gets out the walkie-talkie, keys it.

MR. SMITH

(into the walkie-talkie)  
Come back.

GENE

How do I know you won't kill my  
daughter once I'm gone?

MR. SMITH

(into the walkie-talkie)  
Come Back....Fucking Radio.

MR. SMITH is getting nothing but static. He angrily keys  
off, hisses at GENE:

MR. SMITH

I told you she'd be alright, if you  
do your job.

GENE

And I'm supposed to trust you?

MR. SMITH

What choice do you have?

The elevator doors open. MR. SMITH gestures graciously.

MR. SMITH

After you.

INT. "BLUE" ELEVATOR - DAY - 12:58PM

They step into the elevator. Stare at each other. The doors  
close. MR. SMITH erupts. He grabs GENE slams him into the  
outside window. GENE's face is smashed into the glass by MR.  
SMITH'S shoulder. His body presses GENE against the glass  
wall and he speaks, his mouth an inch from GENE's ear.

MR. SMITH

Look out there! You see the van?

The van can be seen below on Flower Street.

MR. SMITH

You see it?!

WHAM! He slams GENE's head against the window. He lifts up the walkie-talkie.

MR. SMITH

Come back.

MS. JONES (V.O.)

(filtered)

Yeah.

MR. SMITH

Do it!

He jabs the walkie-talkie next to GENE's ear.

LYNN (V.O.)

(filtered)

Daddy...?

And then a scream. The horrible sound of a little girl in terrible pain. It cuts through GENE like a stab in the heart.

GENE

Lynn!

He struggles to turn around. MR. SMITH kidney punches him, hard! GENE goes down on one knee.

The car stops. SOMEONE starts to board it, stops in surprise. MR. SMITH sticks a badge in their face.

MR. SMITH

Security. Take the next car.

They back off. The doors close, the car continues its descent.

MR. SMITH lifts the walkie-talkie.

MR. SMITH

Again.

GENE

(a gasp)

No, please...

Another bone-chilling scream from the walkie-talkie. GENE is ripped to his soul. MR. SMITH hauls him to his feet, shoves him against the glass.

MR. SMITH

You got one last chance. Half an

hour and that kid is dead. I'll kill  
her myself. I'll rip her fucking  
head off right in front of you!

MR. SMITH releases GENE, who goes limp. The elevator doors  
open onto the lobby.

MR. SMITH gets out, straightening his tie, wiping the sweat  
from his face.

INT. THIRD FLOOR "GREEN" ELEVATOR LOBBY - DAY - 12:59PM

GENE gets out of the elevator, almost getting caught in the  
closing doors. He can't even fight back at the doors. They  
pound him a couple of times before he is able to step clear  
of the elevator. GENE stifles a retch, hurries away.

MR. SMITH is standing there. Childish giggles erupt from the  
walkie-talkie.

LYNN (O.S.)  
(filtered, giggling)  
Daddy, did you hear me scream?

INT. THE VAN - DAY - 1:00PM

MS. JONES holds the walkie-talkie for LYNN.

LYNN (O.S.)  
She told me to scream as loud as I  
could. Did you hear me?

OMIT

INT. MEN'S ROOM - DAY - 1:01PM

GENE staggers over to the row of sinks. Leaning on one sink  
with both hands, his body shudders violently. And he throws  
up.

A man exits a toilet stall and walks toward the sinks. He  
sees GENE retching, turns away in disgust, and leaves quickly.

GENE turns on the faucets to wash the mess away.

He tries to clean up, but catches his reflection in the  
mirror. He has trouble looking himself in the eye.

INT. THIRD FLOOR LOBBY - DAY - 1:01PM

MR. SMITH is fuming. Into the walkie-talkie:

MR. SMITH  
The next time I tell you to do  
something, you goddamn well do it!

INT. THE VAN - DAY - 1:01PM

MS. JONES tries to be private on the walkie-talkie.

MS. JONES

Hey, fuck you! You want to baby-sit a screaming kid in traffic, come out here and do it yourself. He got the message, didn't he?

LYNN watches her, knowing something's not quite right.

INT. BONAVENTURE HOTEL - EXT MEN'S ROOM - DAY - 1:02PM

GENE comes out of the Men's Room, stands there at a loss.

HUEY (O.S.)

Having a rough day? Down at the heels as they say? What you need is a shoe shine, shoe shine, shoe shine today.

GENE looks around. HUEY has his nose in his magazine, calling out his patter for whoever drifts by.

INT. BONAVENTURE HOTEL - SHOESHINE STAND - DAY - 1:02PM

GENE walks over, climbs into a chair.

HUEY

(still not looking up)  
Take ten, take a break, take a seat, take a load off. Put the world in perspective.

GENE has settled into the chair. HUEY tosses the magazine aside, swings into action...

HUEY

So, are you a visitor or are you lucky enough to...

...and freezes, staring at the familiar pair of shoes.

HUEY

(as he looks up)  
You got a complaint?

GENE looks down at him.

GENE

You remember me?

HUEY

I remember. The big tipper.

GENE

Something is going to happen. When it's over you'll know what I was talking about.

HUEY

Oh, man...

GENE

Please. Something is going to happen...

HUEY

What? The end of the world? Man, don't give me your mad rap. I'm not a bartender. I don't want to hear it. I raise a family doing this bullshit. Do me a favor. Get your crazy white ass out of my chair.

GENE

Please...

HUEY

Hey, a big tip doesn't give you the right to crap in my ear. You want change? You got it, brother. What was that you gave me, a twenty?

HUEY kneels down, gets his cashbox, starts to open it up. From behind him:

MR. SMITH

Come on, let's get some privacy.

GENE

He's deaf.

It spills out of GENE almost without volition. There's a note of pleading hidden in it. GENE slowly points a thumb at HUEY's "Disabled Veteran" sign.

GENE

He can't hear a word we're saying.

MR. SMITH looks at the sign. HUEY stops what he's doing - "What the fuck?" He almost says it aloud, then:

MR. SMITH

You wouldn't be kidding me now, would you, Mr. Watson?

(to HUEY's back)

Hey, nigger! Is that right? You can't hear me? Nigger?

HUEY's face settles into something cold. What's he going to do? He stands, looks at GENE, who stares back at him, then slowly turns around, looks at MR. SMITH - and breaks into a jive-ass grin.

HUEY

Why, looky-here. My customer-quotient

just got multiplied by two. What do you think of that? You'll have to forgive me, sir. Didn't hear your approach. Fact of the matter is, I'm deaf as a post. Compliments of the United States Army...

(does a snappy salute)

...Artillery Corps. Can I give you a shine, sir? You don't see your face, you don't pay.

MR. SMITH is suspicious but he climbs into the second chair.

MR. SMITH

(loudly)

Yeah, sure, give me a shine...

(looks at GENE)

...shine.

HUEY goes to work on his shoes.

MR. SMITH

I'm putting your toy back in your pocket, Mr. Watson.

Unseen by MR. SMITH, HUEY takes a peek and sees the gun being transferred to GENE's pocket.

MR. SMITH

It's all wound up. Now let's get out your itinerary.

GENE does.

"1:'30 - California Leads the Nation into the 21st Century - California Ballroom - Governor Eleanor Samara Grant and Brendan Grant" It is the last entry.

GENE

One thirty. California Ballroom.

MR. SMITH

(glances at HUEY)

That's right. That gives you...

He looks at his watch.

1:04.

MR. SMITH

...twenty-six minutes to get your shit together.

GENE

Let me talk to her again.

MR. SMITH

No.

GENE

I want'to talk to her.

MR. SMITH

Forget about it.

GENE

I talk to her or you can forget about it.

MR. SMITH

Don't you threaten me.

GENE

What are you going to do about it, shoot me?

MR. SMITH

(glances again at HUEY) You know what I'm gonna do.

GENE

What? Walk out there and twist her arm off?

MR. SMITH doesn't reply.

GENE

It would be a lot less trouble just to let me talk to her.

They stare at each other for a few beats. Then MR. SMITH checks HUEY out and gets out the walkie-talkie.

MR. SMITH

(into it)  
Come Back.

MS. JONES (O.S.)

(filtered)  
Yeah.

MR. SMITH

Put her on.

MS. JONES (O.S.)

What gives?

MR. SMITH

Just put her on.

LYNN (O.S.)

(filtered)  
Daddy?

GENE grabs the walkie-talkie.

GENE  
Yes, sweetie, it's me.

LYNN (O.S.)  
(filtered)  
I'm tired. I want to go now.

GENE  
I know you do, honey.

INT. THE VAN - DAY -1:05PM

MS. JONES holds the walkie-talkie for LYNN.

LYNN  
Can we go now?

GENE (O.S.)  
(filtered)  
Not just yet, baby. There's...there's  
something Daddy has to do.

LYNN  
To be a hero?

INT. BONAVENTURE LOBBY - DAY - 1:05PM

MR. SMITH, GENE and HUEY in situ.

GENE  
No, honey, not to be a hero. But I  
want you to remember something for  
me, all right?

LYNN (O.S.)  
(filtered)  
All right.

GENE  
He's doing it for you. No matter  
what anybody tells you, no matter  
who they are, he's doing it for you,  
because he loves you.

MR. SMITH  
That's enough.

He reaches for the walkie-talkie, but GENE stares him down.  
Back to the walkie-talkie:

GENE  
Will you promise me that?

LYNN (O.S.)  
(filtered)  
I promise.

GENE  
All right. Kisses to you.

LYNN (O.S.)  
(filtered)  
No...kisses to you.

GENE  
No. Kisses to you.

LYNN (O.S.)  
(filtered)  
No, kisses to...

MR. SMITH grabs the walkie-talkie.

MR. SMITH  
I don't care who the fuck you do it  
for just so you do it. Hey.

He reaches down, snaps his fingers in HUEY's face. HUEY looks up.

MR. SMITH  
You done yet?

HUEY  
Just about.

He gives the shoes a final wipe, stands away.

HUEY  
Two dollars, if it pleases you.

MR. SMITH  
It doesn't. I remember when it was a  
fuckin' quarter.

He throws a couple dollars to HUEY. To GENE as he stalks away:

MR. SMITH  
Twenty-five minutes.

TO HIS BACK:

HUEY  
Thanks for the tip.

HUEY turns back to GENE. They stare at each other.

HUEY  
Mister, what are you dragging me  
into?

GENE  
I'm not dragging you into anything.  
I don't expect...

HUEY  
Cover your mouth.

GENE  
What?

HUEY  
This gorilla's watching you, is that right?

GENE  
That's right.

HUEY  
Then don't let him be seeing you talking to me. I don't want him twisting my arm off.

GENE lowers his head, covers his mouth with a hand. HUEY pretends to work on his shoes.

HUEY  
That was your kid on the walkie-talkie?

GENE  
My daughter. They have her in a van across the street. They say they'll kill her if I don't do something for them.

HUEY  
In twenty-five minutes in the California Ballroom.

GENE  
There was a woman. She was trying to help me. I watched him murder her.

HUEY  
What are you supposed to do?

GENE  
Kill the Governor.

HUEY checks his perimeters, then:

HUEY  
I knew I should have packed up and gone home as soon as I got that twenty. What am I supposed to do about this situation?

GENE  
One of them is in on it. He might even be in charge. Her Security is in on it. There's only one person I

know for sure isn't in on it.

HUEY

Who?

GENE

The Governor. If I could just talk to her...

HUEY

Oh, Jesus ...

GENE

No way, there's nothing you can do to help me.

HUEY

Then why'd you drag me into it?

GENE

(getting emotional)

It's my kid. I've got to...to somehow...do right by my little girl.

He gets out her picture, stares at it.

GENE

It's about time I did. I was one of those guys, workaholics. I worked my ass off for them - my wife, my daughter. That's just what I thought I was supposed to do.

HUEY

Yeah, all right, listen...

GENE

(running on)

So when she wanted a divorce...I was...I didn't know what I'd done wrong. I didn't see it. I didn't see it....

HUEY takes his wooden brush and whacks GENE on the foot, snapping him from his downward spiral.

HUEY

Why don't you tell me about the early years some other time?

GENE

I'm sorry. You understand I don't mind dying if I could save my daughter. I mean that.

HUEY

Yeah, now listen. I can't mess with these shoes any more or it's gonna

look funny. You go down get yourself something to drink. Make sure Godzilla there, follows you.

GENE

What are you going to do?

HUEY

I haven't the faintest idea. Go on now. I'll get word to you.

GENE gets down.

GENE

If nothing else, someone heard my story.

He gives HUEY a twenty.

GENE

Keep the change.

HUEY

Don't think I won't.

GENE just stands there. HUEY has to give him a little push.

INT. BONAVENTURE HOTEL - THIRD FLOOR - DAY - 1:09PM

GENE turns and walks across the lobby toward the bar. His mind is racing. As he passes MR. SMITH...

GENE

I need a drink.

MR. SMITH rises immediately, looks back at HUEY. HUEY gives him a symbolic tip of the hat. MR. SMITH follows GENE.

INT. HOTEL BAR - DAY - 1:11PM

GENE finds a stool at the empty part of the bar. The place is half-full, noisy. The television is showing a game show.

The BARTENDER comes over.

GAME SHOW HOST (O.S.)

(over television)

...and time is running out...

GENE

Give me a ...a gingerale?

MR. SMITH sits -at the other end of the bar. The BARTENDER gets him a beer. GENE and MR. SMITH lock eyes in the mirror. Between them, a couple of T.V. NEWS TECHNICIANS are grabbing a quick beer. A video camera resides on the bar by them.

GENE notices OFFICER TRUST, walking by on a level above, watching him.

T.V. NEWS TECHNICIAN 1  
Man, I thought she was going to get out the violins.

TV REPORTER  
No shit. If I hear that stop the violence routine one more time I'm going to shoot somebody.

A WAITRESS appears suddenly at GENE's elbow, surprising him. She puts a basket of pretzels next to him and a coaster next to his drink.

WAITRESS  
Here's your Ginger Ale, sir.

DOWN THE BAR:  
T.V. NEWS TECHNICIAN 1 Politicians.

TV REPORTER  
They're all the same.

The WAITRESS is tapping a long fingernail against the bar.

GENE looks down and sees it. A note on the coaster. "Men's Room - Huey."

The WAITRESS turns the coaster over, and leaves. GENE looks down the bar at MR. SMITH, drinking, unaware.

TV REPORTER  
You know what bothers me?

GENE looks at his watch.

1:12.

TV REPORTER  
When they get all weepy eyed about the "ordinary citizen", the "regular Joe", the "normal American". Gimme a break. There ain't no such animal. We're a nation of two hundred forty million special interest groups.

GENE stands.

GENE  
Well, I'm just a regular guy.

The T.V. NEWS TECHNICIANS stare at him.

TV REPORTER  
Is that right?

GENE

Yeah, that's right. But I've built a good solid business out of nothing. Don't underestimate the regular guy.

He heads for the open lobby.

BARTENDER

Sir, you haven't paid.

GENE

It's on the Special Interest at the end of the bar.

GENE jerks a thumb at MR. SMITH and is gone. MR. SMITH starts to follow him. The BARTENDER is right with him.

BARTENDER

Hey, Sir, don't make me call a cop.

MR. SMITH slaps some money on the bar and leaves.

T.V. NEWS TECHNICIAN 1

Left field bleachers heard from.

T.V. REPORTER

Laughs.

INT. BONAVENTURE HOTEL - LOBBY - DAY - 1:13PM

MR. SMITH scans the lobby trying to spot Gene. OFFICER TRUST comes up behind him.

OFFICER TRUST

Where is he? Did you lose him?

MR. SMITH

Shut up.

INT. BONAVENTURE HOTEL - SHOP ARCADE - DAY - 1:13PM

Elsewhere, GENE circles around the lobby. There seem to be clocks everywhere.

A. set of four clocks over the registration desk with the time for Tokyo, Los Angeles, New York, and Paris.

The souvenir shop has a dozen clocks on display, with the logos of various LA sports teams.

INT. BONAVENTURE HOTEL - RESTAURANT AREA - DAY - 1:14PM

The restaurant, the travel agency, the newsstand, all have clocks.

1:14 .

Everywhere he turns. GENE has to look at his watch.

1:15! GENE's watch and all the clocks tick over at once. GENE winces as if he could hear all those minute hands tick over one number in a thunderous chorus.

INT. BONAVENTURE HOTEL - SHOESHINE STAND - DAY - 1:16PM

He's near the Men's Room. HUEY's stand has a sign on the chair - "Gone to Lunch" and there is a clock face with moveable hands. "We'll be back at 1:30."

GENE  
(sotto voice)  
Let's all hope so.

And he enters the Men's Room.

Across the lobby MR. SMITH spots him, heads that way.

INT. MEN'S ROOM - DAY - 1:16PM

GENE enters to find HUEY and GUSTINO the Bellboy. HUEY runs to the door, keeping a lookout.

HUEY  
Quick, off with the shoes and pants.  
Trade with Gustino. The big guy's  
coming.

INT. BONAVENTURE HOTEL - THIRD FLOOR - DAY - 1:16PM

MR. SMITH marching towards the Men's Room.

INT. MEN'S ROOM - DAY - 1:16PM

HUEY turns to see GENE and GUSTINO just looking at each other, uncomfortable, to say the least.

HUEY  
C'mon, ladies. No time to be shy.

GENE kicks off his shoes, shucks his pants. He trades his pants and jacket with GUSTINO, who has done the same. GUSTINO's pants are too big for GENE. His pants are too small for GUSTINO.

GUSTINO goes into a stall and closes the door.

HUEY comes back from the door.

HUEY  
Gustino! Drop 'em!

GUSTINO has taken a seat inside the stall, but with GENE's pants still up. He drops them.

HUEY  
And cover up them socks. Man, who

dresses you?

HUEY leads GENE to another door. "Service Personnel Only". He taps on it. It is opened by a Latino JANITOR. HUEY and GENE slip through the door, shut it. The JANITOR begins mopping the floor as MR. SMITH comes in.

His eyes come to rest on the stall. All he sees are GENE's shoes and GENE's pants crumpled around the ankles.

MR. SMITH smirks and leaves.

The Janitor raps on GUSTINO's stall with the mop.

JANITOR

Fue. (Gone.)

INT. SERVICE HALL - DAY - 1:17PM

HUEY and GENE move down a drab service corridor. Boxes stacked on both sides, floor buffers at rest, shelves with cleaning supplies. GENE notices for the first time that HUEY has a pronounced limp.

They come upon IRENE the Cleaning Woman. She joins them moving down the corridor.

HUEY

Meet Irene.

GENE

Hi.

HUEY

Irene is going to help.

GENE

Thank you.

IRENE takes GENE's hand and leads him along at a half-trot.

GENE

Where am I going?

INT. BONAVENTURE - SERVICE ELEVATOR FOYER - DAY - 1:17PM

They come through a short corridor and onto the service elevator.

HUEY

You said there was only one person you knew wasn't in on this thing.

GENE

Yeah.

HUEY

You're going to go see her.

GENE

What!?

The elevator doors close.

INT. SERVICE ELEVATOR - DAY - 1:17PM

IRENE punches the button for the twenty-fifth floor.

HUEY

You sure she's asleep?

IRENE

I took up extra pillows. She take a nap before her big speech.

GENE

What am I supposed to say to her?

HUEY

It'll come to you. See if you can stop this thing 'fore it gets started. Save us all considerable embarrassment.

HUEY takes a pillow and a blanket from IRENE'S cart and puts it into GENE's arms IRENE You don't have to save me. I got nothin' to do with it. You ain't gettin' no key from me.

HUEY

(shocked)

Irene...?

The service elevator stops. IRENE pushes her cart out into the hall signalling them to stay put for a second. She starts moving out into the hall, the card key falls on the floor.

INT. TWENTY-FIFTH FLOOR - HALLWAY - SECURITY TABLE - 1:17PM

At the other end of the hall the HALL OFFICER turns when he hears her approach.

INT. SERVICE ELEVATOR - DAY -

GENE and HUEY hover in the door of the service elevator. Gene reaches down and snags the card key at his feet.

INT. TWENTY-FIFTH FLOOR - HALLWAY - SECURITY TABLE - 1:17PM

The HALL OFFICER has to move his table aside so Irene can pass with the cart. As he turns,

INT. TWENTY-FIFTH FLOOR - HALLWAY - DAY

HUEY pushes GENE across the hall to the door of the Governors bedroom.

The Service Elevator door closes.

INT. TWENTY-FIFTH FLOOR - HALLWAY - SECURITY TABLE - 1:18PM

HALL OFFICER turns quickly at the noise.

INT. TWENTY-FIFTH FLOOR - HALLWAY - DAY

GENE holds totally still in the alcove outside her room.

INT. TWENTY-FIFTH FLOOR - HALLWAY - SECURITY TABLE - 1:18PM

HALL OFFICER looks suspiciously, and finally sits back down.

INT. TWENTY-FIFTH FLOOR - HALLWAY - DAY

GENE uses the key to let himself into

INT. ROOM 2510 - 1:18PM

Lit only by a bedside lamp. ELEANOR GRANT is laying on the bed, dressed, towel across her eyes, bare feet elevated on a pair of pillows. GENE edges over slowly to her. He stands over her, not knowing how to begin.

GENE

(softly)

Excuse me...

ELEANOR GRANT lifts a hand, moves the towel from her eyes.

ELEANOR GRANT

Who the hell are you?

She sits upright, reaches for the phone! GENE moves, putting his hand on top of hers on top of the phone.

GENE

No, please.

They stare at each other for a beat.

She bolts for the door! Gene beats her to it! She backs up to the bed.

Eleanor Grant is a strong, tough woman, but she's not fearless.

GENE

Mrs. Grant, Governor...I won't hurt you.

ELEANOR GRANT

My security people are right next door.

GENE

I appreciate that.

ELEANOR GRANT

One loud scream will bring them in here instantly. You won't get very far. Think it over.

GENE

If I were here to hurt you I would have done it already.

ELEANOR GRANT

That's...a comfort to hear.

GENE

I have a problem.

ELEANOR GRANT

Ah.

GENE

Only you can help me. I'm also sorry to say, my problem is your problem, Mrs. Grant.

She studies him.

ELEANOR GRANT

I remember you...in the elevator.

GENE

That's right.

ELEANOR GRANT

You were very nervous.

GENE

It was because I had this...in my pocket

He slowly pulls out the gun. She takes it in.

GENE

I need you to listen to me. Carefully. Three lives depend on you listening very carefully to what I have to say.

She smiles.

ELEANOR GRANT

(friendly as can be)

Of course. But suppose we set up an appointment. I have an important speech to deliver and you're cutting into my nap time.

Very slowly, she moves to the table, lifts the phone ELEANOR

GRANT My assistant, Krista Brooks, takes care of  
constituent...

GENE  
Krista Brooks is dead.

She freezes, slowly replaces the phone.

ELEANOR GRANT  
How do you know that?

GENE  
I saw her die. She was shot. With  
this gun.

She turns to him.

ELEANOR GRANT  
You shot her?

GENE  
No.

ELEANOR GRANT  
Who did?

GENE  
I don't know. The only thing I know  
about him is that he works for your  
husband.

ELEANOR GRANT  
What?

GENE  
And your husband works for somebody  
else.

ELEANOR GRANT  
What the hell are you saying?

GENE glances at the bedside clock.

1:19.

He looks back to the Governor.

INT. BONAVENTURE HOTEL - THIRD FLOOR - DAY - 1:19PM

An increasingly edgy MR. SMITH is looking at the Men's Room  
door. He glances over to OFFICER TRUST who's keeping an eye  
on him. He looks at his watch again, then gets up and heads  
for the Men's Room.

INT. MEN'S ROOM - DAY - 1:19PM

MR. SMITH enters. HECTOR is at the urinal.

MR. SMITH checks out the feet under the stall. He has to bend over to check properly. GENE's shoes, GENE's pants legs.

HECTOR notices MR. SMITH'S actions.

MR. SMITH is aware that he's been noticed, but he is very suspicious.

HECTOR flushes the urinal.

MR. SMITH stays by the stall. He is going to look over the top of the stall. He rises on his tiptoes.

But HECTOR is staring at him like he's a pervert.

MR. SMITH is suddenly embarrassed. He backs away from the stall.

HECTOR washes his hands, watching MR. SMITH in the mirror.

MR. SMITH leaves.

HECTOR dries his hands. He walks over to the stall and knocks on the door.

HECTOR

He's gone.

And GUSTINO tosses a Bellboy jacket over the top of the stall. HECTOR puts it on.

HECTOR

Hey, Gustino, what takes you so long?  
You need to eat more fiber.

GUSTINO (O.S.)

You got anything to read?

INT. ROOM 2510 - DAY - 1:21PM

The clock on the nightstand.

1:21.

ELEANOR GRANT sits against the headboard. GENE sits on the edge of the bed, the gun all but forgotten, held loosely in his hand.

GENE

I knew you wouldn't believe me.

ELEANOR GRANT

I said I'd listen to you, not necessarily believe you. You're telling me my people are in a plot against me. You're telling me my husband wants me killed. What do you

expect?

GENE

I don't blame you. I don't have any proof. But nothing like this occurs in a vacuum. You can't be totally oblivious. You must suspect something. You're doing things which are making people angry. People who have been in power a long time are losing their jobs. You know them better than me. How much does it mean to them? How far would they go to hang onto it?

Her eyes go inward, reflecting a vague doubt. GENE sees it, hurries to follow up on this possible chink in her armor. Excited by it, he gets up, forgets to cover her so closely.

GENE

There's only one way to find out for sure. Try to cancel the last speech.

ELEANOR GRANT

(smiling, covering  
her inner thought)

I'd prefer we didn't refer to it as my last speech.

GENE

It's the last chance they have for me to kill you. Try to get out of it. They won't let you. They can't. Try to change the schedule and you'll know I'm right. What have you got to lose? It comes down to who you trust, them or me? Test them.

ELEANOR GRANT

I love it when pistolero's talk of trust.

GENE, across the room looks at the gun in his hand. He takes the plunge.

GENE

This? I've never even fired one.

ELEANOR GRANT

Indeed.

ELEANOR GRANT'S hand sweeps the lamp off the table, plunging the room into blackness.

ELEANOR GRANT

(in the blackness)

Franco! Franco.'

GENE slips out into the hall as the connecting room door flies open. Light from the other room spills in. FRANCO rushes in, pulling a gun.

INT. TWENTY-FIFTH FLOOR - SECURITY TABLE - DAY - 1:22PM

The HALL OFFICER jumps from his chair and runs into the suite

INT. TWENTY-FIFTH FLOOR - HALLWAY - DAY

GENE quickly moves to the Service Elevator and pushes the button.

INT. ROOM 2510 - DAY - 1:23PM

ELEANOR GRANT stares up at FRANCO, back-lit by the light coming from the next room. It gleams off the gun he holds in his hand. She stares from the gun up to his hulking frame.

FRANCO

What is it, Governor!? What's wrong!?

She hesitates.

ELEANOR GRANT

I...I'm afraid I've had a bad dream,  
Franco.

INT. SERVICE CORRIDOR - DAY - 1:23PM

The service elevator opens and GENE rushes out. He hurries down the dim service corridor. Suddenly an arm snakes out of the blackness and grabs him! HUEY steps into the light.

HUEY

Well?

GENE

I don't know.

HUEY

What are you going to do now?

GENE

I don't know. I have to get back.

GENE keeps moving fast. HUEY limps to keep up

HUEY

What are you going to do!?

GENE

This is about power and you haven't  
got any. There's nothing more you  
can do. I'm sorry. Thanks for trying.

HUEY watches him disappear.

INT. BONAVENTURE HOTEL - LOBBY - DAY - 1:23PM

MR. SMITH sees the T.V. TECHNICIAN and REPORTER leaving the bar with their equipment.

OFFICER TRUST (O.S.)

(alarmed)

Where is he?

MR. SMITH looks at the man who has appeared behind him.

MR. SMITH

In the john.

He looks at his watch.

1:23.

OFFICER TRUST

Get moving.

MR. SMITH

You' oughta learn to relax. I told you I've got it under control.

OFFICER TRUST

It's time. It's time now.

MR. SMITH scowls and heads for the Men's Room.

INT. THE VAN - DAY - 1:24PM

A different watch. The minute hand moves to:

1:24.

It is MS. JONES'. She is in the driver's seat. She looks back at LYNN who is trying to amuse herself one way or another. She checks her gun. She pulls out her walkie-talkie, puts it on the seat beside her. She starts the car.

LYNN

Where are we going?

MS. JONES

Not very far, honey-pie. Not far at all.

She pulls the van out into traffic.

INT. MEN'S ROOM - DAY - 1:24PM

MR. SMITH bursts into the Men's Room. He goes to the stall and lifts his fist to pound on the door.

MR. SMITH

Out of there, Mr. Watson! Your time's up!

The stall door opens and GENE comes out, zipping up his pants. He brushes right past MR. SMITH, heads for the door. MR. SMITH reaches out, grabs him.

MR. SMITH

You forgot to wash your hands.

He throws him against the sinks. GENE washes his hands. MR. SMITH leans against the sink next to him. In the mirror above the sink, GENE sees the stall door swings open. GUSTINO is huddled in the corner, feet up on the toilet. MR. SMITH doesn't notice.

MR. SMITH

I've got faith in you, Mr. Watson. I know you're not just a regular guy, see, I know that. Even if you don't know it yourself. Maybe that's why I picked you.

GENE steps between MR. SMITH and the open stall door.

GENE

I know what I have to do. I'll do it. Let's go.

And they exit the Men's Room. GUSTINO slumps with relief.

INT. ROOM 2510 - DAY - 1:25PM

Other lights have been turned on. ELEANOR GRANT is fixing her hair in the mirror. FRANCO is cleaning up the broken lamp. There is a perfunctory knock on the hall door and it opens, revealing BRENDAN GRANT. The MYSTERY MAN hovers in the background.

BRENDAN GRANT

Hey, El, how's the head?

She turns, locksees with the MYSTERY MAN.

MYSTERY MAN

Eleanor.

She nods, turns back to the mirror.

ELEANOR GRANT

Lousy. And I have siesta hair. I'm thinking of canceling the speech.

BRENDAN GRANT

It's an important speech.

MYSTERY MAN

I'd say critical, not that it's any of my business.

ELEANOR GRANT

It's just another speech in a Tower of Babel so high that Nimrod himself would be put to shame. Cancel. Make my apologies.

In the mirror she takes note of BRENDAN GRANT and the MYSTERY MAN exchange a look.

BRENDAN GRANT

Excuse me.

MYSTERY MAN

I'll trot along. Nice to see you, Eleanor.

BRENDAN steps into the room, shuts the door.

BRENDAN GRANT

During a campaign every speech is important. This is free media exposure. Primetime news coverage that we couldn't buy.

ELEANOR GRANT

What's he doing here?

BRENDAN GRANT

Who, him? Just visiting.

ELEANOR GRANT

Things have changed, Brendan. I thought you understood that.

BRENDAN GRANT

He's my friend. And he did help you to get elected, after all.

ELEANOR GRANT

Don't remind me.

BRENDAN GRANT

(re the broken lamp)  
What happened here?

ELEANOR GRANT

Nothing. I broke a lamp.

Brendan steps behind Eleanor and puts his arms around her affectionately.

BRENDAN GRANT

Eleanor, please. I'll put it this way. This speech or a half-dozen rubber chicken-fund raisers. What do you say?

ELEANOR GRANT

Truth is, besides the headache I've  
come down with a little lower  
intestinal havoc. Make my apologies.

BRENDAN GRANT

Come on, El, you're a trooper. I'll  
get you some Pepto, you'll make one  
of your patented tributes to the  
common person, then back to  
Sacramento. This is no time to lay  
down on the job. I don't care what  
the polls say, you can't afford to  
relax. Look what happened to Bush.  
Tell you what, if you want to blow  
off the Sacramento speech, fine. But  
do this one and we'll get out of the  
smog.

ELEANOR GRANT looks at him, almost sadly. She steps toward  
the dressing table to fix her hair

ELEANOR GRANT

All right, I'll do it.

BRENDAN GRANT

That's my girl.

ELEANOR GRANT

But I want to make some changes. Get  
Krista in here right away won't you?

BRENDAN looks at her for a beat, then snaps his fingers like  
he just remembered something.

BRENDAN GRANT

Aw, gee. I sent her on an errand.

ELEANOR GRANT

You sent my assistant on an errand.

BRENDAN GRANT

(trying to look  
sheepish)  
I've been a bad boy.

ANGLE ON ELEANOR

It was not what she wanted to hear.

INT. BONAVENTURE HOTEL - LOBBY - DAY - 1:26PM

Mr. Smith pushes Gene toward the escalators.

INT. CALIFORNIA BALLROOM - DAY - 1:27PM

All sorts of MEDIA PEOPLE hover around, CAMPAIGN WORKERS  
wearing political buttons and REGULAR FOLKS round out the

crowd. People are eating, drinking, and talking.

There are a couple of bars, one at each end of the room. Dessert tables are strategically placed around the room. On the speaker's platform at one end is a podium with some chairs arranged behind it.

One of the POLITICO'S takes the podium microphone.

POLITICO

Ladies, gentlemen, it is my great pleasure to introduce to you the esteemed spouse of our Governor. Let's give a big L.A. welcome to Mr. Brendan Grant.

The crowd applauds warmly.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY - 1:27PM

GENE and MR. SMITH move down the hall, following the signs to the California Ballroom. The entrance to it looms ahead.

INT. CALIFORNIA BALLROOM - DAY - 1:27PM

BRENDAN GRANT at the podium.

BRENDAN GRANT

Ladies and gentlemen of the press, campaign volunteers, and those of you who were looking for any excuse to take off work for the afternoon...

Polite laughter.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY - 1:27PM

GENE is pushed up to the doorway where he is met by our friend, the SECURITY MAN with the metal detector. He gives MR. SMITH a nod over GENE'S shoulder and sends GENE to join the crowd beyond.

INT. CALIFORNIA BALLROOM - DAY - 1:28PM

VIEW THROUGH CAMERA

The Video Camera clumsily tracks past the CROWD, and comes to settle on GENE who is walking into the room, not quite sure where he is going.

UP ON THE PODIUM:

BRENDAN GRANT

We have with us today the first woman Governor of our great state...

GENE is pushing forward into the crowd. He looks back, seems surprised, begins turning, searching for someone as:

BRENDAN GRANT

Governor Eleanor Samara Grant. What can I say about her....that won't get me in trouble when I get home tonight.

Laughter.

Lose the video camera effect.

ANGLE ON GENE - 1:28PM

GENE, in the midst of the crowd, can't locate MR. SMITH. Confusion clouds his face.

He finds himself near the T.V. TECHNICIAN from the bar. The TECHNICIAN is talking into a walkie-talkie.

T.V. NEWS TECHNICIAN

Charlie. Charlie. Charlie, are you reading me?

He gets nothing but static. GENE's eyes move to the back of the room.

BRENDAN GRANT

She's a woman who loves our great state.

T.V. NEWS TECHNICIAN

Charlie...

(gives it up)

I can't get shit on this stupid radio.

GENE looks up to a spotlight booth set up in the back.

BRENDAN GRANT

A brilliant legislator.

GENE sees the GLINT of something. A gun? His eyes widen. Is that MR SMITH there? He looks from the spotlight booth to the stage.

BRENDAN GRANT

...who will soon win her second term as the greatest Governor California has ever seen!

T.V. NEWS TECHNICIAN

Somebody's going to have to run down to the truck. Tell them this radio's fucked.

GENE looks away from the stage and locks eyes with OFFICER TRUST. He's at the front of the ballroom to one side of the speaker's platform.

OFFICER TRUST stares at GENE like a hungry wolf, clutching his gun in his pocket. They both hear:

T.V. NEWS TECHNICIAN  
I can't get through. Walkie-Talkies  
don't work from here. There's too  
much concrete and stuff.

Realization floods GENE'S eyes. He looks back at Mr. Smith in he booth.

ANGLE ON MR. SMITH - EXTREME CLOSEUP

The camera pans along the barrel of the weapon until it comes to Mr. Smith who is settling into firing position.

ANGLE ON CROWD

BRENDAN GRANT  
Ladies and gentlemen...

T.V. NEWS TECHNICIAN  
Nothin's getting out.

OFFICER TRUST, presses forward, hand in pocket. Gene is his target.

ANGLE ON PODIUM - 1:29PM

BRENDAN GRANT  
I am honored to present to you our  
esteemed Governor and my beloved  
wife, Eleanor Samara Grant!

ANGLE ON ELEANOR GRANT

The crowd erupts in .applause and cheering as ELEANOR GRANT comes from the rear of the auditorium and begins to work her way down the center aisle. She waves and nods to all the lyal supporters who surround her.

ELEANOR GRANT  
Thank you! Thank you all!

Ballons are released above her onto the center of the floor.

ANGLE ON WAITER-GUSTINO

He is pushing a large high cart filled with hundreds of finished plates back towards the kitchen area.

ANGLE ON GENE - 1:30PM

GENE looks at Mr. Smith and Officer Trust and the impending disaster. He has to do something...anything...NOW!

GENE begins frantically clawing his way toward the podium.

GENE

Look out! Look out!

But it is lost in the uproar.

Fighting to be heard above the noise:

GENE clawing forward, screaming hopelessly. He pulls the gun out.

ANGLE ON ELEANOR GRANT

She spots Gene in the crowd, pushing toward her, gun drawn. Her eyes widen in fear.

BRENDAN GRANT follows her gaze. His eyes widen in something other than fear.

GENE aims his gun at the ceiling and fires.

BAM! BAM!

GENE

Look out!

Pandemonium. Total chaos. People scattering.

The Gun in the booth swings from Gene to ELEANOR GRANT.

Mr. Smith fires, but his target is blocked by a panicked guest who is hit.

From behind her, FRANCO runs to protect ELEANOR GRANT as more gunfire erupts.

Mr. Smith's aim is clear and he pulls...BAM! BAM!

FRANCO is hit in the center of the back and in the shoulder. He falls onto ELEANOR GRANT and they both fall down hard on the steps. Blood is everywhere.

ANGLE ON GENE

He looks over and sees ELEANOR GRANT, beneath FRANCO, looking very dead.

He careens toward a door.

ANGLE ON PODIUM

On the dais, BRENDAN GRANT crawls over to where FRANCO lays, half on top of ELEANOR GRANT. They are both still, eyes closed. BRENDAN looks down at his wife's face, splattered with blood.

BRENDAN GRANT

My God, he did it!

The Governor suddenly and violently gasps for breath. Her eyes snap open and burn into BRENDAN. She has heard her worst suspicions confirmed.

BRENDAN'S a great liar, but even he can't hide the shock and fear on his face.

INT. BACK HALLWAY - DAY

GENE bursts through a door. He is followed speedily by OFFICER TRUST.

OFFICER TRUST  
You little son of a bitch.

His attack is interrupted by a noise from the darkness. The HUGE DISH PLATE CART, fully loaded, comes flying toward them pushed by GUSTINO. The cart smashes into OFFICER TRUST, throwing him against a wall, dishes clatter and smash.

GENE raises a hand to the darkness and takes off.

INT. CALIFORNIA BALLROOM - DAY

The dais. FRANCO takes a shuddering breath. ELEANOR GRANT pulls herself free, leans over him. She rips opens his shirt revealing a slightly-used bullet-proof vest with a bullet hole that missed the vest and hit his upper arm. His eyes flutter open.

ELEANOR GRANT  
Are you all right, Franco?

FRANCO  
(painfully)  
I'd be better if they'd put sleeves  
on these damn vests.

She touches his face, looks over to where her husband stands. Their eyes lock. It's curtains for BRENDAN.

EXT. HOTEL TAXI STAND - DAY

The van pulls into a waiting area.

INT. LOBBY - NEAR SHOESHINE STAND - DAY

Huey turns and spots a van arriving outside the hotel. He realizes who it could be.

INT. THE LOBBY - DAY - 1:30PM

GENE 'bangs out of a door, comes to a falling and sees:

MR. SMITH has reached the spiral stairway. He starts down it, two and three steps at a time.

GENE moves along the railing.

MR. SMITH is a whole floor below him. He looks up, sees GENE and lifts the walkie-talkie to his mouth.

GENE pockets the gun climbs the parapet. And jumps!

INT. BONAVENTURE HOTEL - LOBBY - DAY - 1:30PM

GENE lands right on top of MR. SMITH. The walkie-talkie flies over the railing and into the water of the central fountain.

INT. THE VAN - DAY - 1:30PM

MS. JONES  
(on the walkie talkie)  
It's time....You read me? I don't  
hear from you I'm going ahead now.

CHECKS HER WATCH:

1:30

INT. THE LOBBY - DAY - 1:31PM

MR. SMITH and GENE roll down the steps, fighting. MR. SMITH basically beats the crap out of him and gets up to continue on. GENE somehow pulls himself up and tackles MR. SMITH. He gets in a few lucky shots before MR. SMITH overpowers him, beats him again finally .sending him flying into the fountain pool.

INT. THE VAN - DAY - 1:31PM

MS JONES looks to the back seat at LYNN.

LYNN  
Why do you keep looking at me?

MS. JONES  
That's my job. I'm your babysitter.

As they talk MS. JONES screws a silencer on her gun.

LYNN  
I'm not a baby.

MS. JONES  
You're a big girl, huh?

LYNN  
I'm not a big girl but I'm not a  
baby.

MS JONES turns to face LYNN.

MS. JONES  
Close your eyes.

LYNN

Why?

MS. JONES

I've got something for you.

LYNN

A surprise?

MS. JONES

You ask too many questions. You want the surprise or not?

LYNN closes her eyes. MS. JONES makes to do the deed.

Suddenly, HUEY appears behind her at the windshield.

HUEY

Good afternoon, madam. Hello there, little girl.

With a crumpled up newspaper he begins vigorously rubbing the window. LYNN's eyes pop open.

MS. JONES

Hey, hey, what are you doing!?

HUEY

Just giving you the gift of a clean windshield. Only cost you a dollar.

MS. JONES

I don't want my windshield cleaned.

HUEY

You just think you don't want your windshield cleaned.

MS. JONES

No, I know I don't want it cleaned. Get out of here.

HUEY

Don't be like that. Think of me as the Moses of dirty windshields leading you through the desert of dead bugs.

LYNN laughs.

MS. JONES

For the last time, I don't want it cleaned. Now get the hell out of here!

HUEY

It's already done. I've already done it. You have to pay me now.

MS. JONES

I don't have to pay you nothin'.

HUEY

You're going to deny me a lousy dollar  
after I've sweated like a pig giving  
you the gift of a clean windsheild?

MS. JONES

Fuckin' A.

HUEY

I don't think so.

He reaches in the passenger's window.

MS. JONES

Hey!

HUEY

I think this is worth a dollar.

He snatches the walkie-talkie off the seat.

MS. JONES

Goddamnit! Gimme that!

She lunges across. HUEY dangles the walkie-talkie before  
her.

HUEY

Oh, we'll have to do better than  
that.

MS. JONES

You worthless piece of shit! Gimme  
that!

She throws open the passenger door, climbs out.

EXT. TAXI STAND - DAY

HUEY backs away, taunting her with the walkie-talkie. She is  
caught between the van and HUEY, trying to keep her gun under  
wraps.

MS. JONES

Goddamnit, you fuckin' bum, come  
here!

HUEY

Gimme a dollar.

MS. JONES

Fuck you!

She loses it, hauls out her cannon.

BAM!

HUEY's leg is shot out from under him. He ends up on his back. MS. JONES swoops down on him, trying to grab the walkie-talkie..

MS. JONES  
Gimme that thing!

HUEY's wounded leg is twisted under him.

INT. THE VAN - DAY

Lynn is terrified by the gunfire and looks for someplace to go.

EXT. THE VAN - DAY

MS. Jones jumps on the wounded HUEY who is stunned but bravely clutches the Walkie Talkie under him.

MS. JONES  
Goddammit, give it to me, you  
Sunnabitch!

She sticks the gun in HUEY's face. He tries to take it away from her, but she's really tough...and mad. The gun fires wildly, hitting a passing vehicle which careens left causing a chain reaction of COLLISIONS on the street.

INT. THE VAN - DAY

LYNN tries to open the van door to escape. The van's door flies open. MR. SMITH stands there, gun in hand.-

MR. SMITH  
Daddy blew it.

He points the gun. Lynn jumps back in terror and clammers back in the van. She goes over the seat as he FIRES...

The back window SHATTERS.

MR SMITH steps inside the van a step and aims over the seat. This time he won't miss.

LYNN has nowhere to hide.

BAM! BAM!

But it isn't his gun firing. He stands, staring surprised, wide-eyed. He pivots...

EXT. TAXI STAND - DAY

...and stares at GENE, soaking wet, holding the gun. MR.

SMITH'S gun slides from his hand.

MR. SMITH

Very good...Mr. Watson. I told them...I could make a killer out of you.

He drops to his knees, pauses, then tree-falls onto his face.

ANGLE ON GENE

He rushes forward into the van and reaches over the seat to pick Lynn up.

ANGLE ON MS JONES AND HUEY

She has heard the gunfire and turns her attention from HUEY to GENE. She raises her gun and aims at GENE and LYNN inside the van.

HUEY reaches down, grabs his ankle and pulls his shattered artificial leg out of the pants-leg and applies it to the side of her head. She is knocked aside and out.

HUEY

There's nothing like a good wing-tip.

INT. BONAVENTURE HOTEL - SHOESHINE STAND - LATER - 2:26PM

At HUEY's shoe-shine stand, GENE and HUEY sit in the shoe-shining chairs. They are variously bandaged. LYNN is on GENE'S lap. She clings to him, her face buried against him.

They are guarded by COPS.

HUEY

What time is it?

GENE looks at his wrist, gives an ironic smile.

GENE

Lost my watch.

A hub bub catches their attention.

ANGLE ON LOBBY AREA-BELOW - 2:26PM

A handcuffed BRENDAN GRANT is lead out by STATE POLICE. PRESS flock around them - shouting questions.

ELEANOR GRANT watches her husband taken out.

The PRESS descends on her like ducks on bread crumbs. Questions litter the air like confetti.

ELEANOR GRANT

Any comment at this time would be

most premature. Please, we'll have something for you in a couple of hours. Please...

ELEANOR GRANT finally makes her way toward GENE. COPS keep the PRESS back.

INT. BONAVENTURE - SHOESHINE STAND - 2:27PM

ELEANOR GRANT looks at GENE for a long moment.

ELEANOR GRANT  
I...I would like to...thank you,  
Mister Wat... Gene.

GENE NODS, SMILES.

ELEANOR GRANT  
I would also like to apologize.

GENE  
For what?

ELEANOR GRANT  
For not believing you.

GENE  
Believe me, I don't blame you.  
(to LYNN)  
This is the Governor, Lynn. Say hello.

LYNN lets go of her father with one of her hands, gives a shy little wave.

The Governor reaches out, strokes the little girl's hair.

ELEANOR GRANT  
You have a very brave father, Lynn.

LYNN looks up.

LYNN  
He's a hero.

ELEANOR GRANT  
Yes, yes he is.

LYNN  
Dads are like that.

She goes back to clinging to her father. Gene looks like he might cry he, loves her so much.

GENE  
Can we go now?

ELEANOR GRANT  
Of course. I'll get a car to drive

you.

GENE

No, that's... That's OK. We don't need any help. We'll be just fine. Won't we, Lynn?

LYNN nods. ELEANOR GRANT offers her hand to GENE.

ELEANOR GRANT

Good luck.

GENE

Same to you.

ELEANOR GRANT walks away. The PRESS renews their assault.

HUEY and GENE look at each other. Then:

GENE

Thanks for the shine.

HUEY

Thanks for the tip.

GENE

(to LYNN)

Come on, kid. I gotta make a phone call.

He gets up wearily, carrying his daughter, grabs his briefcase, and heads away. LYNN peeks back over his shoulder at HUEY, shyly waves. HUEY points at her.

HUEY

Kisses to you.

LYNN laughs, comes to life.

LYNN

No, kisses to you!

HUEY

No, kisses to you.

INT. BONAVENTURE - LOBBY - DAY - 2:30PM

Across the lobby, GENE's watch lays on the ground. The crystal is smashed, the hands stopped.

1:31.

A shoe steps on the watch, crushing it further. It belongs to the MYSTERY MAN. He stops, checks his perimeters and walks slowly toward the exit.

FADE OUT:

THE END