

WAG THE DOG

by

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FADE IN:

A CARD, WHITE ON THE BLACK SCREEN, READS:

Why does a dog wag its tail?

BENEATH IT, THE NEXT LINE FADES IN:

Because a dog is smarter than its tail.

CROSS-FADE TO THE NEXT CARD, WHICH READS:

If the tail were smarter, the tail would wag the dog.

DISSOLVE

FADE IN:

EXT THE WHITE HOUSE NIGHT

A VAN FULL OF PEOPLE STOPS AT A SIDE ENTRANCE.

ANGLE INT THE WHITE HOUSE

AT THE SIDE, UTILITY ENTRANCE, WE SEE THE DISGORING WORKING-CLASS MEN AND WOMEN, THEY PASS THROUGH SECURITY SCREENING IN THE B.G., THROUGH METAL DETECTORS, AND PAST SEVERAL GUARDS WHO CHECK THE PHOTO-I.D.'S AROUND THEIR NECKS.

ANGLE INT THE WHITE HOUSE

WILFRED AMES, AND AMY CAIN, A BRIGHT YOUNG WOMAN IN HER TWENTIES, WALKING DOWN A CORRIDOR, LOOKING WORRIED.

ANGLE AMES AND CAIN

AMES AND CAIN HAVE STOPPED AT THE END OF THE HALL. BEYOND THEM WE SEE THE CLEANING PEOPLE COMING IN FROM THE VAN, AND BEING CLEARED THROUGH A METAL DETECTOR INTO A HOLDING AREA, AND HANDED CLEANING MATERIALS, MOPS, VACUUMS, ET CETERA, BY A TYPE HOLDING A CLIPBOARD. PART OF THE GROUP, A MAN IN HIS FORTIES, IN A RATTY JACKET, OPEN COLLARED SHIRT, PASSES THROUGH THE GROUP, AND IS STOPPED BY A SECRET SERVICEMAN WHO APPEARS NEXT TO AMES. IN THE B.G. WE SEE A TV IN AN ADJACENT ROOM, SHOWING A POLITICAL COMMERCIAL.

AMES

(TO SECRET SERVICEMAN)

...That's him.

AMES MOVES OUT OF THE SHOT. LEAVING US ON THE POLITICAL COMMERCIAL.

WE SEE TWO BUSINESS PEOPLE ON THE PLANE, A MAN AND A WOMAN.

BUSINESSMAN

Well, all I know, you don't change horses in the middle of the stream.

BUSINESSWOMAN

"Don't change Horses," well, there's a lot of truth in that.

THE IMAGE SHIFTS TO A PRESIDENT, DOING PRESIDENTIAL THINGS. AND THE VOICE-OVER.

VOICE-OVER

For Peace, prosperity, for all of us: Don't change Horses in...

ANGLE

A CORRIDOR OF THE WHITE HOUSE, AS AMES AND THE MAN IN THE RATTY JACKET (BREAN) WALK HURRIEDLY. AMES FINISHES ONE CIGARETTE AND USES THE BUTT TO LIGHT A FRESH ONE. THEY PASS BY A LARGE PHOTOGRAPH OF THE BACK OF A MAN, BENDING TO SHAKE HANDS WITH ONE OF A LINE OF GIRLSCOUTS. AMES GLANCES UP AT THE PHOTOGRAPH AND SHAKES HIS HEAD DEJECTEDLY.

INT WHITE HOUSE "SITUATION" ROOM. NIGHT.

A WOMAN WITH A STENOPAD, ARRANGING PADS AND PENCILS AT A SMALL CONFERENCE TABLE. A SECRET SERVICE TYPE PUTS HIS HEAD IN THE ROOM, AND BOWS OUT, AND NODS, BREAN AND AMES ENTER HURRIEDLY.

AMES

We're going to...

HE STOPS TALKING AS A WHITE HOUSE WAITER ENTERS WITH A TRAY WITH COFFEE THINGS ON IT, FOLLOWED BY TWO YOUNG AIDES, SLEEPY AND DISHEVELLED, WHO ENTER QUICKLY, AND APOLOGIES UNUTTERED, SIT AND MAKE THEMSELVES SMALL.

BREAN MAKES A LITTLE GESTURE AT THE WAITER, WHO IS SETTING OUT THE COFFEE, AND AT THE STENOGRAPHER, MEANING "GET THEM OUT OF HERE."

AMES

Thank you, that'll be all.

THE STENOGRAPHER AND THE WAITER LEAVE

BREAN

(OF THE TWO STAFFERS)

Who we got here...?

AMES

John Levy, Staff, and Amy Cain, Press Off....

BREAN

Alright. Look here, any of you kids hear in this room: what you hear here, what you say here, what you do here, f'it got out, you leaked it.

(TO AMES)

Tell'em what they need to know.

AMES

When it broke, he said one word: get me Ronnie Brean.

BREAN

(NODS)

Well. Alright. What is it? What's, he, uh...? He had an Illegal Immigrant, was his Gardener, some years back...?

(SMILES)

What's the thing? You people get ahead, you sure get nervous.

AN AIDE ENTERS, WITH SEVERAL TYPED SHEETS, WHICH SHE HANDS TO CAIN. CAIN READS TO HERSELF, PASSES THEM TO AMES.

BREAN

(CON'T)

...he made a pass at some Secretary, back in...

AMES TAKES THE SHEETS, AND READS. GESTURES TO BREAN, "ONE MOMENT, PLEASE."

ANGLE INS. THE SHEET, WHICH AMES HOLDS.

IT READS:

AS PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES I REGRET THAT PERSONAL INCAPACITY HAS RENDERED ME MOMENTARILY UNABLE TO CONFRONT AND CORRECT....

ANGLE

BREAN LOOKING ON, AS AMES READS, AND SHAKES HIS HEAD SADLY. BREAN TAKES THE SHEETS.

ANGLE INS.

READING OVER BREAN'S SHOULDERS:

- 1.) Statutory Rape.
- 2.) The President's long-documented mental problems
- 3.) Brought about by reaction to Drugs to control

flu...?

ANGLE AMES READING OVER BREAN'S SHOULDER.

AMES
...did he have the flu...?

CAIN
It can be documented that he displayed the...

BREAN LAYS DOWN THE SHEET SOMBERLY, EVERYONE LOOKS AT HIM.

BREAN
This ain't the illegal immigrant Nanny.

CAIN
There was a group of Girlscouts here from Indiana last month. One of them expressed an interest in a Frederick Remington bust. The president took her into the oval Office, for a period...

AMES
Three minutes. It couldn't have been over three minutes, the Secret Service...

BREAN GESTURES HIM TO BE QUIET.

BREAN
Okay. And she's alleging...?

CAIN GESTURES BREAN TO KEEP READING THE SHEETS IN FRONT OF HIM. HE DOES SO.
PAUSE. TO HIMSELF.

BREAN
(CON'T)
Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

AMES
We are virtually certain it isn't...

BREAN
Who's got the story?
(PAUSE)

AMES
Don't you want to know if it's true?

BREAN
What difference does it make if it's true?
(PAUSE)

It's a story, and, it breaks they're gonna have to run with it -- How long've we got til it breaks?
(PAUSE)

AMES
Front page. Washington Post. Tomorrow.

BREAN
Well, yeah. Now. That's not good. Okay:

(PAUSE)

Okay. We'll set up the War Room Here...

AN AIDE BRINGS HIM A CUP OF COFFEE.

BREAN

Thank you. Now: where is he?

LEVY

China.

BREAN

When's he coming back...?

LEVY

Touchdown, Andrews, fourteen hundred, today.

BREAN TAKES A NOTEBOOK OUT OF HIS POCKET, AND LOOKS AT IT.

BREAN

(AS HE READS FROM HIS NOTEBOOK)

Alright, now, here: he stays on the ground in China
til Tomorrow.

CAIN

...why?

BREAN

...you the Press Office?

CAIN

...Yes.

BREAN

(SHRUGS)

Earn your money. ...He's ill, the Plane is sick...

CAIN

(MAKING NOTES)

...Good...

AMES

When do we bring'em back?

BREAN

You gotta give me a day. I need a day.

(PAUSE)

He's sick, get it out now. Get him on the phone'n tell
him how sick he is. We got to get it out before the
story breaks, so we aren't quote, responding to it.
Issue is as a bulletin. He's got some rare strain
of...

AMES

It won't hold.

BREAN

All I need is the one day.

AMES

It won't even hold the one day, Ronnie --

BREAN

Yes -- It will... Now: why is the President in China?

LEVY

Trade Relations.

BREAN

You're goddamn right. And it's got nothing to do with the B-2 Bomber.

(PAUSE)

LEVY

There is no B-2 Bomber,

BREAN

That's what I'm telling you.

(PAUSE. HE GLANCES AT HIS WATCH.)

The two things: the two things: Rare strain of flu, No Cause to Be Alarmed. And the B-2 Bomber...

(TO AIDES)

Clear me a space. Get me a copy, go rob one, get it off the computer, Wash Post, N.Y. TIMES,

AIDE

You want some research, flu? Side-effects of medi....

BREAN

Naw, we can't play this one catch-up. That's how long since you stopped beating the wife. We have to...

AMES

We're going to have to explain away the...

BREAN

They caught him in the closet with a Girlscout. Side-effects of a pill ain't gone trump that. You have to keep'em guessing for

(HE GLANCES AT THE CALENDAR)

Two weeks. You don't have to Cure Cancer, Pal, you just have to give them something more interesting than...

CAIN

What's more interesting than boffing the girlscout?

BREAN

Well, that's what we're doing here...

BREAN IS SUNK IN THOUGHT. AN AIDE STARTS TO SPEAK. AMES SILENCES HIM, BREAN BECKONS AMES OVER.

BREAN

(SOTTO)

Gemme twenty thousand dollars....

AMES NODS, AND WAVES AN AIDE OVER AND WHISPERS TO HER.

BREAN

(CONT.)

And gemme a car.

AMES

Car and a driver, Mr. Brean, the Westgate, Now, please...

BREAN

Okay, look, who's takin' the press conference today?

CAIN

Is there a press conference today?

BREAN

What do you think? What I need from you: I need a base of operations. Some place in the District. I need some clean money ...

LEVY

How much...?

AMES GESTURES HIM TO BE QUIET.

BREAN

And, to hold it together, I need two days. There is no B-2 Bomber: here's what you do about that: whoever is leaking stuff to that geek at the Post, lets it slip, "Geez, I hope this doesn't screw up the B-2 Program..." "What B-2 Program, and why should it screw it up?" "If the president moves to deploy the B-2 before it is fully tested." "Deploy the B-2, Why?" "In the Crisis."

AMES

What crisis?

BREAN

I'm working on it. Same time, you call Billy Scott at Joint Chiefs, and pour him onna plane right now to Seattle, y'got that...? All flustered and worried. To talk to the Boeing people.

AMES

(TO LEVY)

Do it...

LEVY MOVES TO A TELEPHONE.

BREAN

(TO CAIN)

And you?

CAIN

But there isn't a B-2 bomber.

BREAN

Where'd you go to school, Kid. Wellesly?

CAIN

Dartmouth

BREAN

Then show a little spunk. There is no B-2 Bomber, General Scott, the best of your knowledge, is not in Seattle to talk with Boeing...

AMES

It won't hold.

BREAN

One day, Two days? Course it's gonna hhhh....

CAMERA TAKES THEM DOWN THE HALL, WHERE WE SEE THE CLEANING PEOPLE, WITH FLOOR POLISHERS, LOOKING UP AT THE PICTURE OF THE PRESIDENT AND THE GIRLSCOUTS, AND SNICKERING.

ANGLE

ON BREAN AND AMES LOOKING ON.

THE CLEANING PEOPLE NOTICE THEY ARE BEING WATCHED AND DISPERSE.

AMES

It won't hold, Ronnie, it won't prove out.

BREAN

We don't need it to prove out. We need it to distract them for two weeks til the election.

AMES

What would do that...?

HOLD, ON BREAN THINKING.

AMES

(CONT.)

What in the world would do that?

BREAN

I'm working on it.

HE TURNS AROUND AND STARES AT THE WALL.

BREAN WALKS TO THE COUNTER WHERE THE COFFEE AND ROLLS ARE STEAMING. ON THE WALL ARE HUNG TWO WIPE-OFF SLATES. ONE READS "DAYS TO ELECTION 12," THE OTHER READS "% IN FAVOR 63" BREAN PICKS UP A ROLL, DOWNS A COFFEE, AND STARTS OUT OF THE DOOR.

ANGLE

CAMERA TAKES THEM OUT INTO THE HALL.

BREAN LEANS CLOSE TO AMES.

BREAN

Gimme twenty thousand dollars.

HE STARTS INTO THE HALL, FOLLOWED BY THE ENTOURAGE, AND THE CAMERA.

BREAN

I'll be back within the hour. Now,

AMES

(WALKS ALONG, SHAKING HIS HEAD)

It's going to be fine. It's going to be ... you remember in 88, when...

AN AIDE COMES UP TO THEM, HOLDING A VIDEOTAPE.

AMES

What is it...

AIDE WHISPERS TO AMES. WHO NODS, TAKES THE TAPE, AND BREAN, AND THE AIDE, INTO A SIDE OFFICE.

INT SIDE OFFICE NIGHT.

AS THE AIDE PUTS THE TAPE INTO A V.C.R.

BREAN

What is it?

AMES

It's the rough-cut, the other side's new commercial.

THE PICTURE COMES ON, IT SHOWS THE PRESIDENT DOING SEVERAL PRESIDENTIAL THINGS. THE COMMERCIAL WE SAW EARLIER.

BREAN

That's our commercial.

(PAUSE)

I've seen it. That's our commercial.

AMES

(TO AIDE)

Turn up the volume.

THE AIDE DOES SO, AND WE HEAR MAURICE CHAVALIER SINGING,
"Thank heaven, for Little Girls...."

ANOTHER AIDE ENTERS, SHEEPISHLY, HANDS A THICK PACKET TO AMES, WHO HOLDS IT OUT TO BREAN.

BREAN

What is this?

AMES

Twenty thousand dollars.

BREAN

(NODS, REMEMBERING IT)

Yeah, I'm gonna have to go to L.A.

INT BACKSEAT THE STATIONWAGON WE SAW AT THE WESTGATE. GEORGETOWN. NIGHT.
AMES IN THE BACKSEAT.

AMES

I'm coming with you.

BREAN

(SHRUGS)

Gemme a plane. Business Aviation, National, one hour.
Fly to Chicago. O'hare, LAX 6 A.M.

AMES

I'll see you at National.

BREAN NODS, AND EXITS.

HOLD ON AMES.

HE HEARS SOMETHING, AND TURNS.

ANGLE

HIS POV.

A YOUNG STAFFER, IN THE CORNER, SPEAKING SOFTLY ON THE PHONE.

STAFFER

(ON PHONE)

Tell him, well, tell him we, I know we just signed it,
but we're going to cancel it.

(PAUSE)

Because, because we're not going to be staying here the
next four years.

(PAUSE)

Well, I can't tell you on the phone...

EXT GEORGETOWN STREET NIGHT.

THE DOORSTEP OF A HOUSE. A MIDDLE AGED MAN IN A BATHROBE, HOLDS A VERY LARGE
MANILA ENVELOPE, HE TURNS, SOMEONE BEHIND HIM OBVIOUSLY HAVING CALLED HIM. HE
TURNS AND SECRETS THE ENVELOPE IN HIS BATHROBE POCKET.

ANGLE

IN THE FOREGROUND, BREAN, IN A TAXICAB, WHICH DRIVES AWAY, IN THE B.G., THE
MAN IN THE BATHROBE, REENTERING HIS HOUSE.

INT SMALL TWIN ENGINE PROP PLANE. NIGHT.

AMES AND BREAN IN THE BACK

HOLD ON AMES

WHO IS SHAKING HIS HEAD. HE REACHES OVER AND NUDGES BREAN AWAKE.

AMES

Tell, tell, tell me again.

BREAN

....we landing?

AMES

Tell me again.

BREAN

(SIGHS)

Lookit, don't worry about it. It's not a New Concept.
Wake me when we touch down, will...

HE TRIES TO NESTLE HIMSELF BACK TO SLEEP. AMES NUDGES HIM.

AMES

We can't afford a war.

BREAN

We aren't going to have a war. We're going to have the "appearance" of a war.

AMES

I'm not sure we can afford to have the "appearance" of a war.

BREAN

What's it gonna cost?

(HE SHRUGS AND STARTS TO ROLL OVER TO GO TO SLEEP.)

AMES

But, but, but, "they" would find out.

BREAN

Who would find out?

AMES

...the...

(HE GESTURES OUT OF THE WINDOW)

BREAN

The American "people"?

AMES

Yes

BREAN

Who's gonna tell'em.

AMES

...but...

BREAN

What did they find out about the Gulf War? One shot: one bomb, falling through the roof, building coulda been made of Legos.

HE ROLLS OVER AGAIN.

AMES

(AS IF REHEARSING IT TO HIMSELF)

...you want us to go to War...

BREAN ROUSES HIMSELF, SHRUGS, TAKES OUT A NOTEBOOK, AND BEGINS TO WRITE.

BREAN

...that's the general idea.

AMES

Why?

BREAN

Why not, what've they ever done for us...? Also: they sound... Ah, you see, this is why we have to mobilize

the B-2 Bomber...

AMES

...they sound what?

BREAN

Shifty. Who knows anything about em...

AMES

Hold on, hold on, hold on:

BREAN

Well, I'm gonna hold on, but you want to win this election, you better change the subject. You want to change this subject, you better have a War. What do you need? It's gotta be quick, it's gotta be dramatic, you got to have an enemy. Okay? What do you need in an enemy? Somebody you fear. Who do you fear? Som'b'y you don't know.

AMES

Who?

BREAN

Well, I'm working on it....

HE ROLLS OVER.

EXT, O'HARE AIRPORT. BUSINESS TERMINAL.

A BEAUTIFUL PRAIRIE DAWN.

THE SMALL PLANE FINISHES TAXIING, BREAN AND AMES EMERGE, A UNIFORMED OBSEQUIOUS AIRLINE ATTENDANT COMES UP, AND HANDS THEM TICKETS.

ANGLE, ON BREAN AND AMES, AS THEY WALK ACROSS THE TARMAC.

AMES

Albania...

BREAN

Yes.

AMES

Why?

BREAN

What do you know about them?

AMES

...nothing...

BREAN

Precisely.

AMES

What did Albania ever do to us?

BREAN

What did they ever do for us...?

(PAUSE)

You see, this is why we have to mobilize the B-2 Bomber.

AMES

(TO HIMSELF)

...you want us to go to War with Albania.

BREAN

Here's what you got to do:

(HE GESTURES, "GET ON THE PHONE")

Get your Press Office, Right now. To deny; There is no report of Albanian Activity. They have to deny it. Now, get the C.I.A.

INT AIRLINE WAITING AREA. DAY.

EARLY MORNING BUSINESSMEN AND WOMEN, HOLDING COFFEE CUPS.

ONE WEARS A CAMPAIGN BUTTON SHOWING THE PHOTO OF THE PRESIDENT AND THE GIRL SCOUT. HE BRUSHES PAST BREAN WHO IS SITTING BY A MINDLESS TELEVISION WEATHER PRESENTATION ON A HUGE TV. HE LOOKS DOWN AT HIS WATCH.

ANNOUNCER

(VO)

American Airlines Announces the departure of flight _____ for Los Angeles, will all Passengers holding...

THE BUSINESS TYPES BEGIN TO QUEUE UP IN A SLEEPY LINE. BREAN LEANS CLOSER TO THE TELEVISION, AS IT CHANGES TO A NEWS LOGO, AND A TALKING HEAD APPEARS.

TALKING HEAD

Good morning: With the election eleven days away the world slept, expecting news from the President on Trade and his visit to China, another sort of news, however, has emerged from the Presidential Quarter. Chris Andrews, station KCRT, Santa Fe Reports:

BREAN LEANS BACK FROM THE TELEVISION, AND PUTS HIS ATTENTION ON THE BUSINESS PEOPLE ABOUT TO FILE ONTO THE PLANE. AS HE WATCHES THEY MOVE FIRST ONE AT A TIME, AND THEN, IN A GROUP, DRAWN TO THE TELEVISIONS.

ANGLE:

BREAN, LOOKING AT THE BUSINESS PEOPLE, CLUSTERING UP. BEYOND HIM, WE SEE THE TALKING HEAD FROM SANTA FE, THE SHOT OF THE PRESIDENT WITH THE GIRLSGOUTS, WHICH WE SAW PREVIOUSLY ON THE WHITE HOUSE WALL, AND ON THE CAMPAIGN BUTTONS.

BREAN TAKES OUT A NOTEPAD AND STARTS MAKING NOTES. AMES WANDERS INTO THE SHOT, WITH A CUP OF DUNKIN' DONUTS COFFEE, AND THE CELLPHONE INTO WHICH HE IS TALKING.

AMES

Top people. Albanian Desk. Well, I don't know either, but we probably have one. Albanian Dusk, C.I.A., N.S.A. roust'em outta bed, sirens blaring....

BREAN NODS, MEANING, "GOOD STUDENT."

AMES

(CONT.)

I know they'll be in in an hour, get'em now...C.I.A.,
N.S.A., wake'em up.

BREAN GESTURES, TELL THEM THE OTHER THING.

AMES

(CONT.)

And you tell the staff, anyone leaks anything on this
situation, his or her job is going to be...

THE TWO ARE IN THE QUEUE THROUGH THE JETWAY. THEY COME TO THE DOOR OF THE
AIRLINER.

AMES

(CONT.)

...General Scott in Seattle...? No, I don't think his
trip has got anything to do with the B-2 Bomber.
Now...

THE STEWARDESS INTERVENES, AS THEY COME UP TO THE DOOR OF THE AIRLINER

STEWARDESS

I'm sorry, Sir, I'll have to ask you to...

SHE GESTURES AT THE CELLPHONE.

AMES LAGS BEHIND IN THE JETWAY, AS BREAN WALKS INTO THE PLANE, CAMERA TRACKS
WITH HIM.

BREAN AND THE CAMERA NOTICE A SMALL MINI TV IN THE GALLEY AREA, WHERE THE
STEWARDESS IS SNEAKING A PEEK AT THE SCREEN, SHOWING THE PRESIDENT, GREETING
THE GIRLSCOUT.

STEWARDESS

(CONT.)

(TO BREAN)

Did you hear?

BREAN

Well, I don't know, a lot of these early reports are
inflated.

STEWARDESS

... could, could, could he have done it?

BREAN

...who understands Human Nature?

ANGLE

BACK AT HIS SEAT, THE WOMAN IN THE SEAT ACROSS THE AISLE TO HIM IS TALKING IN
AN AIRPHONE.

WOMAN

(INTO PHONE)

What did she say that the President Actually did....
Well, who said it. Her mother, or Her?

(PAUSE)

He did...?

(PAUSE)
...and they said that on TV...?
(PAUSE)
They used that word...?

BREAN EASES INTO HIS SEAT, AND TAKES OUT HIS NOTEBOOK.

WOMAN
(INTO PHONE)
...what time? Two Eastern? Alright, I'll.... Alright.

(SHE HANGS UP THE AIRPHONE.)

BEAT. SHE TURNS TO BREAN. WE SEE SHE IS WEARING THE BUTTON WHICH SHOWS THE PRESIDENT AND THE GIRLSGOUTS. SHE LOOKS DOWN AND FINGERS THE BUTTON.

WOMAN
(OF THE BUTTON)
...what do you think...?

BREAN
...how can any of us know?

WOMAN
(OF THE BUTTON)
Makes you feel kind of foolish, doesn't it...?

BREAN
I'm sure that's the worst of it.
(BEAT)

WOMAN
(MEDITATIVELY, SHAKING HER HEAD, AS SHE LOOKS AT THE BUTTON)
...a twelve year-old girl.
(PAUSE)
...and I was going to vote, for him.

BREAN
Well, it ain't over til it's over...

AMES SITS IN THE SEAT NEXT TO BREAN.

BREAN
How's he doing?

AMES SHUSHES BREAN, TAKES OUT THE AIRPHONE, AND STARTS DIALING.

EXT POOLHOUSE BEVERLY HILLS HOTEL DAY.

TWO WHITE-TOGGED POOL ATTENDANTS, WATCHING A SMALL TELEVISION AT THE CHECK-IN AREA.

ON TELEVISION, SENATOR FREDERICK NOLE, A MIDWESTERNER, HOLDING FORTH.

NOLE
...if it is true, he should, he must step down. And if it is not true, then he must ... we are informed he has extended his visit to China, I say, on behalf of the

American...

ANNOUNCER

(VO)

Senator...Senator... we have to...

NOLE

I say, on behalf of the American People, Come home, face the music, whatever that may be. Th'election's in ten days, let the American...

ANNOUNCER

(VO)

Let the American People decide...

SCREEN GOES TO THE TALKING HEAD OF THE ANNOUNCER.

ANNOUNCER

Senator Frederick Nole. With, excuse me, Senator, that's eleven days, til the election, And the president ahead in the polls by, Bob...?

SECOND TALKING HEAD

Seventeen percent.

ANNOUNCER

Accusations have surfaced, which...

BOB

Bill, the White House has announced, that, in response to media pressure there will be a press conference in...

THE TWO POOL ATTENDANTS STRAIGHTEN, AND PUT ON THEIR BEST SMILES, AND LOOK AT AN ARRIVING MAN.

POOL ATTENDANT

Morning, Mr. Moss.

STANLEY MOSS, A SUCCESSFUL LOOKING FELLOW AROUND SIXTY, COMES THROUGH THE TURNSTILE, ONE OF THE ATTENDANTS BUSTLES AROUND, HANDING HIM TOWELS. WE HOLD ON THE SECOND ATTENDANT, WHO SCURRIES UP THE STEPS.

SECOND ATTENDANT

...I'll be right back with your juice...

MOSS CALLS AFTER HIM

MOSS

...with a carrot in it...

AS HE CLEARS THE FRAME, WE SEE, BELOW HIM, MOSS AND THE FIRST ATTENDANT, WHO IS GESTURING DOWN TOWARD THE POOL AREA, THEY TURN THEIR HEADS.

ANGLE

DOWN AT THE DESERTED POOL AREA. ONE NANNY TYPE, WITH A YOUNG KID IN WATERWINGS, FROLICKING IN THE WATER, AND BREAN, AND AMES, WHO ARE SITTING IN POOL CHAIRS. BREAN RISES, AND WALKS TO GREET MOSS, LEAVING AMES IN THE B.G. TALKING ON A CELL PHONE.

ANGLE

ON MOSS AND BREAN, AS MOSS APPROACHES A BIT TENTATIVELY.

MOSS

Do I know you?

BREAN

We have some mutual friends in Washington.

INT POOL CABANA, BEV. HILLS HOTEL, DAY. A CURTAIN IS SWEEPED ASIDE, AS MOSS AND BREAN AND AMES ENTER, IN THE B.G. WE SEE THE NANNY AND THE LITTLE KID IN THE POOL. MOSS AND BREAN ARE TALKING AS THEY ENTER.

MOSS

And is it true?

AMES

Waal, Mr. Moss, I wouldn't....

MOSS STARTS STRIPPING OFF HIS CLOTHES, AND CHANGING INTO A SWIMSUIT.

MOSS

You wouldn't be here if it wasn't true. It's true, right?

HE SWITCHES ON THE TELEVISION IN THE CABANA. WE SEE A FEMALE TALKING HEAD.

FEMALE TALKING HEAD

Sexual relations with a girl thirteen years old.

THE SCREEN GOES TO THE PHOTO OF THE PRESIDENT WITH THE GIRLSCOUTS.

MOSS TURNS DOWN THE VOLUME. AS HE AND BREAN TALK THE TV SHOWS IMAGES OF THE PRESIDENT WITH GIRLSCOUTS, AND WITH OTHER YOUTH GROUPS.

MOSS

And you're here why...?

BREAN

I'm here, Mr. Moss, because you've shown yourself a great supporter of the Party.

MOSS

Party's gonna need more than a couple bucks now.

THE POOL ATTENDANT ENTERS WITH A TRAY ON WHICH IS A GLASS WITH LIQUID AND A CARROT STICK IN IT, AND A GLASS FULL OF CELERY STICKS.

MOSS

Back where I come from they call this Romeo in Joliet.

(HE SHAKES HIS HEAD, REACHES ONTO A SMALL TABLE BEHIND HIM, AND PICKS UP A BOOK.)

I, I, and y'know, I like the guy... he signed his book to me....

HE HOLDS THE BOOK TO BREAN, THE CAMERA SEES THE PHOTO OF THE PRESIDENT ON THE BACK COVER, THE FRONT COVER READS.

".... FOR TWO GENERATIONS TO AGREE."

MOSS LOOKS DOWN AT THE BOOK, AND QUOTES

MOSS

"For Progress to occur, it is necessary for Two Generations to Agree...."

HE LOOKS AT THE TELEVISION SCREEN, WHICH SHOWS THE PRESIDENT WITH A YOUNG GIBL ON HIS LAP.

MOSS

Oh, jeez, this guy is fucked.

BREAN

What one has to do, Mr. Moss. Is to fight a holding action.

MOSS

...holding action. THEY'RE GOING TO TEAR THIS GUY TO Shreds.

BREAN

If we can hold the break-in-the-dam for ten days, til the election, we...

MOSS

Yeah, hut you can't hold the dam. How the hell, n'nu'n', I don't get what you want me to ...

THE SCREEN CHANGES, WE SEE THE SEAL OF THE PRESIDENT, AND WE ARE IN THE NEWSROOM OF THE WHITE HOUSE. A SHOT OF THE RESTIVE REPORTERS, IN THE B.G. OF THE CABANA WE SEE THE POOL ATTENDANT TAKING HIS LEAVE, HURRYING BACK TO THE OTHER TELEVISION AT THE POOL DESK.

ANNOUNCER

(VO)

Allegations that the president had sexual... Ah... here is the deputy ... assistant under secretary...

WE SEE LEVY TAKE THE PODIUM, ARRANGE HIS NOTES, AND CLEAR HIS THROAT.

BREAN LEANS FORWARD, ANXIOUS, IN HIS SEAT.

MOSS

I don't ... they're gonna tear this guy to shreds...

LEVY

(ON TV)

...the illness of the President, which we are assured, is not serious. I repeat, it is not serious, the doctors suspect it's a stomach flu, but have advised him not to fly. He will remain, on the ground, in China for, they estimate, one or two days, I stress that, during this time he will, of...

MOSS

...he's gotta come back sometime, what the hell is two

days gonna buy him.

LEVY

(VO)

Any questions....Mr. Sklansky, Yes...

MOSS

(AS HE LEANS CLOSER TO THE TV)

... twelve year old girl... Breir Rabbit couldh t gut outta this...

ANGLE, ON BREAN AS HE LOOKS AT MOSS, LEANING INTO THE TV. HE THEN SWITCHES HIS GLANCE TOWARD THE POOL DESK, ANGLE HIS POV. AT THE POOL DESK WE SEE THE TWO ATTENDANTS, THE NANNY, THE KID AND SEVERAL NEWLY ARRIVED BATHERS CLUSTERED, RAPT, AROUND THE TELEVISION.

LEVY

(C) (VO)

Yes...?

SKLANSKY

(VO)

Mr. Levy...

LEVY

(VO)

Yes

SKLANSKY

Would you comment on the rumors... on the rumors that the President's trip, that the President's delay... is due to the situation in Albania?

ANGLE

ON THE TELEVISION WE SEE SKLANSKY, AND SEE THAT HE IS THE CHAP IN THE BATHROBE WHOM BREAN GAVE THE ENVELOPE TO.

LEVY

There, uh, I'm not aware of the situation to which you refer.

SKLANSKY

Sir: the heads of the Albanian Desks at C.I.A., and at the National Security agency have been recalled on Special Alert, and there are rumors that the B-2 Bomber...

LEVY

Mr. Sklansky, Mr. Sklansky, I am I am unaware of any, um, "situation..." The B-2 Bomber?

(PAUSE)

The B-2 Bomber...? There is no B-2 Bomber. Mrs. Rose...

A WOMAN REPORTER STANDS.

MRS. ROSE

Mr. Levy, early this morning Major General William Scott flew to Seattle. Is his trip connected with the

B-2 Bomber?

LEVY

Uh...Mrs. Rose, there, to the best of my knowledge, there is no...

REPORTER

Mr. Levy: is the situation in Albania in any way connected with recent Muslim Fundamentalist, anti-American...

BEAT. MOSS LOOKS AT BREAN.

MOSS

How close are you to this thing?

BREAN PICKS UP A CELLPHONE FROM THE TABLE, AND DIALS

BREAN

(TO MOSS)

What do you want the kid to say?

MOSS LOOKS AT BREAN APPRAISINGLY.

MOSS

Have him say, 'I know we're all concerned for the President, there will be an update at 5:45.'

AS MOSS SPEAKS BREAN NODS TO AMES, SPEAKS INTO THE TELEPHONE.

AMES

(INTO PHONE)

Have the kid say I know we're all concerned for the President. There will be an update on his condition at 5:45.

THEY BOTH TURN TO WATCH THE SCREEN.

LEVY

(ON TV)

...no information whatever on Fundamentalist...

(HE HOLDS HIS HAND TO HIS EARPHONE)

I. I just want to say I know we're all concerned for the President, there will be an update on his condition at five forty-five...

MOSS LEANS OVER AND TURNS DOWN THE VOLUME ON THE TV.

BEAT.

MOSS

Well. You bought yourself one day. Maybe two.

BREAN

String a few together. All I need's eleven,

MOSS

How you going to stretch it?

(HE GESTURES AT THE TV)

This won't hold for eleven days. Guy fucked a twelve-

year-old...whadday're gonna do to hold that off?

BREAN

What do you think would hold it off?

MOSS

Uh, nothing, oh, nothing ... uh... a War, uh...

(HE PAUSES, THEN LOOKS AT BREAN WITH
COMPREHENSION.)

You're kidding.

BREAN SHAKES HIS HEAD NO.

MOSS

I'm a Jew in Show Business. Why come to me?

BREAN

I'm gonna tell you why...

BREAN LEANS CONSPIRATORIALLY, OVER TOWARD MOSS.

BREAN

Here's the Short Course: Fifty-Four, Forty or Fight.
What does that mean?

MOSS

Uh, it's a slogan. From, uh...

BREAN

Remember the Maine...

MOSS

That's from the ... it's got to be from the...

BREAN

Tippecanoe and Tyler, Too!

MOSS

...uh ... No, that's...

BREAN

We remember the slogans, we can't even remember the
fucking wars. Y'know why. Cause it's show business.
That's why I'm here. Naked girl, covered in Napalm.
Five marines Raising the Flag, Mount Suribachi.
Churchill, V for Victory, Y'remember the Picture, fifty
years from now, they'll have forgotten the war. Gulf
War? Smart Bomb, falling through the roof. 2500
missions a day, 100 days, One Shot of One Bomb. The
American people bought that war. M'I getting through
to you? War in the Balkans, don't mean nothing, till
some G.I. flyer, went down, Eating Snakes for Ten days.
N'then It's show business, Mister Moss. That's why
I'm here.

ANGLE

AT THE POOL DESK. THE ATTENDANTS AND THE GUESTS ARE WATCHING THE TELEVISION.
ON WHICH WE SEE COMIONTATOR TALKING ABOUT A MAP OF ALBANIA.

THE SCENE SHIFTS TO THE SHOTS OF THE PRESIDENT BEING PRESIDENTIAL, AND WE HEAR, "THANK HEAVEN, FOR LITTLE GIRLS..."
AMES WINCES, WE SEE THE POOL ATTENDANTS LAUGH.

BREAN

It's like being a producer, Mr. Moss. The Things in Trouble. Somebody's got to wade in, save the thing.

(PAUSE)

You get the Actors get up there, and strut and Posture. But somebody, knows what's what, got to jump in and Save the Thing.

(PAUSE)

THEY LISTEN TO THANK HEAVEN, FOR LITTLE GIRLS, AND THEY LOOK AT MOSS.

PAUSE

MOSS

Why Albania?

BREAN

Why not?

MOSS NODS DECISIVELY. AS IF TO SAY, "BY GOLLY, NOW YOU'RE TALKING..."

MOSS

Pat? Pat?

ONE OF THE ATTENDANTS RAISES HIS HEAD FROM THE TV AND SPRINTS OVER TO THE CABANA, WHERE WE SEE MOSS AND BREAN DEEP IN CONFAB. MOSS GESTURES TO THE TRAY WITH THE JUICE AND THE CELERY.

MOSS

...throw this shit out. Gemme a pot of coffee and a packet of Camels.

INT MOSS'S HOME, AFTERNOON.

A GREENE AND GREENE BUNGALOW IN THE HOLLYWOOD HILLS, AMERICAN ART POTTERY ALL AROUND. MOSS IN BLUEJEANS AND A HAWAIIAN HAT, PACING BACK AND FORTH, SMOKING LIKE A CHIMNEY.

MOSS

But at some point they gotta know.

BREAN

Who?

MOSS

The...

(HE GESTURES OUT OF HIS WINDOW,
MEANING, "THE PUBLIC")

BREAN

"They Got To Know?" Stan...? Get with it. Who Killed Kennedy...? I read the first draft of the Warren Report, said he was killed by a Drunk Driver. You watched the Gulf War. What did you see? Day after day, the one "Smart Bomb" falling into a building.

The truth, I was in the building when they shot that shot, they shot it in a studio, Falls Church Virginia, 1/10th scale model of a building.

MOSS

Is that true?

BREAN

How the fuck do we know. You take my point?

MOSS

(SHAKING HIS HEAD)

...going to War...

BREAN

It's not "war." It is a Pageant. It's a Pageant... Like the Oscars... why we came to you...

MOSS

I never won an Oscar.

BREAN

N'it's a crying shame. But you staged the Oscars...

MOSS

Yes. Indeed I did.

(PAUSE)

HE LOOKS OVER AT HIS WALL FULL OF PLAQUES AND TROPHIES.

MOSS

(CONT.)

You know, you're a writer, that's your script. You're a director...

(HE GESTURES, ET CETERA.)

But if you're the producer ... what did you do?

(PAUSE)

What did you do? All you've got is the credit...

(PAUSE)

Some plaque on the wall...

HE SHAKES HIS HEAD SADLY.

BREAN

And if you never won an Oscar, How'd you like an ambassadorship...

(PAUSE)

MOSS

Hell, I'd just do it for the hell of having done it, for a story to tell...

BREAN

Well, no, well, you couldn't tell any...

MOSS

Hey, I know that, hey, I'm kidding...

(PAUSE)

"It's a pageant"

BREAN

...that's what it is.

MOSS

(TO HIMSELF)

"The Country Is At War."

(PAUSE)

BREAN

It's Miss America, N'you're Bert Parks.

(PAUSE)

MOSS

...Yoha, Yoha... Yoha.

(PAUSE)

Why Albania?

BREAN

Because.

MOSS

They got to have something that we want.

BREAN

I'm sure they do.

MOSS

What do we have that they want?

BREAN

"Freedom."

MOSS

Why would they want that?

HAKAN

They're Oppressed.

MOSS

No, no, no. Fuck Freedom. No. Fuck Freedom.
They.... They Want... They Want To Destroy the Godless
Satan of the United ... They want to destroy our Way of
Life. Okay, okay, okay, could we ... okay: the
President is in China. He is dealing with a Dispatch
of the B-2 Bomber to Albania. Why?

(HE SHRUGS, HOLDS UP HIS HANDS, TO SAY,

"YOU TELL ME...")

AMES

Alright, well, alright: geopolitically...

MOSS GESTURES FOR SILENCE.

MOSS

We've just found out They Have the Bomb. We've Just
Found Out They Have The Bomb, aaaand... No, No wait a
second, no, no, wait a second, No. The Bomb's not...
it's not there -- because they'd have to have a

rocket and that shit n'they're a buncha wogs-- it's ... it's a suitcase Bomb. Oookay. It's a suitcase bomb, and it's in Canada! Eh? Albanian Terrorists have placed a suitcase Bomb in Canada, in an attempt to infiltrate the bomb into the USA.

AMES

You know what? This is good. This is terrific, and I'll tell you why: it's cost effective. This is....

MOSS

(SHRUGS)

It's producing.

AMES

No, this is great.

MOSS

I could tell you stories: Cecil B. Demille: Alright? The Greatest Show on Earth: He needs an elephant,

GRACE COMES IN WITH A PHONE, TO AMES.

GRACE

I have the White House on the Line.

MOSS

...one minute: Demille needs an elephant for a reshoot.

AMES

(TAKES THE PHONE)

Ames here. Yessir...

(HE LISTENS.)

MOSS

Okay. Okay. The Suitcase Bomb...

GRACE

...good title for a movie....

MOSS GESTURES "WRITE IT DOWN"

AMES WANDERS AWAY, RELATING THE PROCEEDINGS INTO THE PHONE.

AMES

..."Terrorism," and an attempt to infiltrate...

MOSS

...the Suitcase Bomb. ACT ONE Albania denies it. President comes on the air, "Be Calm." Okay, now: Good. Now, Alright. Act TWO...

(TO GRACE)

I need the following here. Right now: Johnnie Green, Liz Butsky, and get me the Fad King.

GRACE

Isn't Johnny Green in the...

(SHE GESTURES, LOONEY BIN)

MOSS

No, he's back in Nashville.

BREAN

...who is this guy...?

MOSS

(TO BREAN)

Act Two: and then, Act Two...

BREAN

We don't need an Act Two.

MOSS

(ON THE PHONE)

And get me the Fad King. No. Get him First...

(TO BREAN)

We don't need an Act Two?

BREAN

We've just got to hold their interest for ten more days, till the Election.

MOSS

...it's a Teaser!

BREAN

It's a teaser, absolutely right,

AMES IS SEEN IN THE B.G. ON THE CELLPHONE.

AMES

(ON THE PHONE, SOTTO)

The thinking is, as of this moment, Terrorism...

(HE COVERS THE PHONE)

...they're getting a Good Reaction on the "Albania" thing...

BREAN SHRUGS, TO SAY, "OF COURSE."

MOSS

(ON THE PHONE)

Hello, King. How the heck are you...?

(PAUSE)

Get out...

(PAUSE)

Get out... Well, man, you fall in love like a Hillbilly...

(HE COVERS THE PHONE, EXPLAINING TO THOSE NEAR HIM)

Ditch the wife, toss the kids in the Pick-up,

(HE GESTURES, MEANING, YOU KNOW...)

(To THE FAD KING)

Listen, King: Get your fat redneck ass out here, willya...

AMES

(TO BREAN, STILL HOLDING THE PHONE TO

HIS EAR)
...but the President wonders about the Possible
Albanian Backlash...

BREAN
(SHRUGS)
You can't have a war without an enemy.

MOSS
(ON PHONE)
No, King, I need you here yesterday...
(TO BREAN)
How long do I need him for?

BREAN
(CORRECTING HIMSELF)
Well, you could have one, but it'd be a very
ineffective war...
(TO MOSS)
We're done in 10 days...

MOSS
Ten Days.
(COVERS THE PHONE)
There going to be any Back End in this thing?

BREAN
W...what?

MOSS
...there gonna be any money in this thing?

BREAN
"Back End" ... count on it.

MOSS
(TO PHONE)
Lots n lotsa cash. Stay on for Gracie, she'll get you
a ticket
(HE HANGS UP)

AMES
(TO BREAN)
...where is the Back End coming from?

BREAN
It's like that thing with the Yellow Ribbon...

AMES
The thing with the Yellow Ribbon...

BREAN
The Hostages...?

AMES
The hostages, but that was a naturally-occurring...
(BREAN GIVES HIM A LOOK TO SAY, "OH,
GROW UP")
It was a put-up job?

(BREAN GIVES HIM THE LOOK AGAIN)
But where was the, where was the money in that?

BREAN
In the yellow ribbon.

AMES
...the Yellow Ribbon, but who, who'd profit from
that...

BREAN
(LONG SUFFERING)
The Ribbon Manufacturers.

MOSS
(INTO THE PHONE)
King, King, I got a thing here, a product placement,
gonna have a bigger back-end than Hattie McDaniel.
Now:

AMES, CELLPHONE TO HIS EAR, APPROACHES BREAN -- BREAN WAVES HIM OFF.

BREAN
I gotta protect the Canadian Horder,

BREAN PICKS UP ANOTHER PHONE, AND STARTS

BREAN
(INTO THE PHONE)
Here's what we want to do: The Park Police, the
Border Patrol, and the US Marshall's Service. The D.E.
the A.T.F, all of em, Stand by for instant
mobilization, 'long the Canadian Border.
(PAUSE)
And tell 'em there's nothing to be alarmed about.

INT MOSS'S DINING ROOM NIGHT.

MOSS, BREAN, AND THREE MORE PEOPLE, PADS AND NOTES TACKED ONTO THE WALL.

CAMERA PANS OVER THE TABLE. ONE NEWSPAPER, THE EDITORIAL CARTOON SHOWS
THE PRESIDENT. A GIRLSCOUT IS HANDING HIM A BOX OF COOKIES, AND HE IS SAYING,
"I KNOW I REALLY SHOULDN'T"... ON ANOTHER THE EDITORIAL CARTOON SHOWS THE
GREAT SEAL OF THE PRESIDENT, THE MOTTO, WRITTEN AROUND THE CIRCUMFERENCE
READS, "SIT ON MY LAP."

JAY LENO
(VO)
...went into a Convenience store...

ANGLE
THE GROUP, MOSS, BREAN AND THREE MORE, WATCHING THE TV

JAY LENO
...asked if they had any girlscout cookies. Five cops
jumped on me, took me off in chains...

MOSS SWITCHES THE STATION. WE SEE RICKY JAY, DOING A VANISH OF COINS.
APPLAUSE... CONAN O'BRIAN BECKONS RICKY OVER TO THE PANEL.

CONAN

Ricky Jay, Ladies and Gentleman, Ricky, I guess we'd have to say that you're the most famous manipulator of small objects in the World.

RICKY JAY

No, I'd have to say, that'd be the President.

LAUGHTER ON THE TV.

MOSS SWITCHES THE CHANAEL AGAIN. WE SEE SENATOR NOLE.

SENATOR NOLE

(ON TV)

...taking refuge behind the fact of distance, taking refuge behind the mention of Albania, of his stomach flu, taking refuge, with the election those scant days away, behind everything except avowal of his guilt. Mr. President, if you have any shame, I ask you, the public asks you, the electorate asks you to return, to face these terrible charges, to...

THE SCREEN GOES TO THE GREAT SEAL OF THE PRESIDENT

ANNOUNCER

...from Airforce One. In China. The President of the United States.

PRESIDENT

My fellow Americans. I apologize for the need for secrecy. I assure you that had it not been necessary to ensure the safety of our men and women in the Combat Arms. The Republic of Albania, long a staging ground for terrorists around the World, is in the procesa of mounting ... actions directed against the people of the United States. In consultation with my advisors, I have elected to take the following precautionary measures:

EXT POOLSIDE, MOSS'S HOME, L.A. NIGHT.

THE FAD KING, A SLOPPILY FAT FELLOW IN A DIRTY T-SHIRT, IS WALKING THE POOL, HOLDING FORTH TO MOSS, AND JOHNNY GREEN, A NASHVILLE TYPE, AND LIZ BUTSKY, A COSTUME DESIGNER, WHO IS SKETCHING ON A PAD.

FAD KING

It's a, it's a...

(LIZ STARTS TO TALK)

It can't be a ribbon...

LIZ

Why can't it be a ribbon?

FAD KING

It can't be a ribbon cause AIDS had a ribbon, cause the Yellow Ribbon thing had a ribbon, cause...

MOSS

Look, look, look, look, Canada, okay...? Our neighbor

to the North, alla sudden, transformed, into That Place, where, like the North Wind, Terror comes...

FAD KING

Keep Talking....

MOSS

What guards Us Against Canada...?

AMES

(PHONE TO HIS EAR)

...we've got a crash poll, says...

(HE LISTENS)

Sixty seven percent of the

(BEAMS)

American People, on hearing the President's Speech...

JOHNNIE GREEN WALKS AWAY, HUMMING TO HIMSELF, "I GUARD THE NORTHERN BORDERS..."

FAD KING AND LIZ WAVE AMES OFF, MEANING, "WE HAVE ADULT WORK TO DO HERE."

LIZ

Uh...uh... Mounties. The Mounties Guard The Border.
uh... those Mountie Hats.

FAD KING

They look stupid.

LIZ

We had Davy Crockett hats... They made a fortune.

FAD KING

We had Davy Crockett hats, but you could crush'em ...
you could crush'em, see, when you felt stupid.
Crush'em, put em in your Pocket. You can't put a
Mountie hat in your...

MOSS WALKS THROUGH THE SHOT, WITH BREAN.

MOSS

(EXPANSIVELY)

Y'see, this is what Producing is: you put me in a
Room...

AMES

(LISTENING TO THE PHONE)

...and he's got a negative rating of...

(HE SMILES)

MOSS

(TO FAD KING, PROMPTING)

King, we've got to be on the streets in...

FAD KING

...what am I doing? Do you see me working...?

(TO LIZ)

Here's what you want to do, you want to come out of the
box, an item, someone 'ready has, but then you sell

it to'em. Torn jeans, uh ... faded Levi Jackets, uh...
uh...

MOSS

Where are we on the Image? Grace? Grace...

ANGLE

OVER A SLEEPING BREAN, STRETCHED OUT ON A POOLCHAIR, GRACE, THE SECRETARY,
COMES OUT ON TO THE POOL AREA, HOLDING THE SHOT OF A SMALL, FOREIGN LOOKING
CHILD, IN FRONT OF A PILE OF RUBBLE.
SHE SHOWS IT TO MOSS.

MOSS

...we own it?

GRACE

Public Domain.

MOSS

And what? What? She was Driven From Her Home, by
Albanian Terrorists. It is her we are mobilizing to
defend... it is "she"?

GRACE

We-are-mobilizing-to-defend-her.

MOSS

Can we give'er a kitten?

GRACE

No problem. Here's the...

SHE GOES BACK INTO THE HOUSE.

FAD KING

I gotta get something, I gotta get ...shoes? Ties?
Hats...?

(TAKES A SHEAF OF HEADSHOTS FROM
GRACE)

Good. Good.

(HE PASSES THEM AROUND, WE SEE THEY
ARE ALL GIRLS AROUND FOURTEEN WITH LONG
BLONDE HAIR.)

BREAN

...what is this?

MOSS

Headshots. Girls to play the girl in our footage.

(OF A PHOTO)

I like the sorrowful one. Anybody Else....?

(HE PASSES THE PHOTOS AROUND.)

FAD KING

...what is this?

BREAN

Young-Albanian-girl-driven-from-her-home.

FAD KING

I go with this here...

(HE WALKS OFF SHAKING HIS HEAD.)

MOSS

Too Texan. Go with the stick. Thanks.

(TO THE FAD KING.)

What...? ...does it have to be Albania...We're locked into Albania...why?

JOHNNY GREEN

It's tough to rhyme.

MOSS

I believe in you....

JOHNNY GREEN

Albania, Albania, Albania, James bond Villains.

MOSS

John Belushi... Jim Belushi...

JOHNNY GREEN

Jim Belushi...?

MOSS

Surest thing you know.

FAD KING

Shoes, Hats....

LIZ

The special hats of the Special Anti-terrorist detachment of the Border Patrol.

MOSS

(MULLING IT OVER)

The Special Anti-Terrorist Detachment of the Border Patrol... what do they do...?

LIZ

(SHRUGS)

...they... you know...

JOHNNY GREEN

They guard our, you know ... "borders," night and day...

MOSS

Yeah, good good good good good. And They're So Secret...

LIZ

Oh huh...

MOSS

...they have the capacity to Meld into the Woods, and...

ALL NOD

MOSS

(CONT.)

And one of them is in love with the sister of...

LIZ

I'm just talking about the Hats.

MOSS

The hats.

LIZ

A beret.

MOSS

Why a beret?

LIZ

Cause you can crush it and put it in your pocket.

MOSS

"...the special detachment..."

Good! What is it?

BREAN WAKES FOR A MOMENT, AT THE SHOUTING, LOOKS AT HIS WATCH.

BREAN

Three-o-three...

MOSS

The men and women of Detachment Three-O-Three, with their...

FAD KING

Black...

LIZ

Leopard Skin...

MOSS

With their berets...

LIZ

...their Leopard Skin Berets....

FAD KING

Well, that ain't very butch, is it?

LIZ

It's a beret...

CAMERA TAKES MOSS TO THE TV WHERE BREAN IS WATCHING A "CHANGE HORSES IN MIDSTREAM" AD, SHOWING TWO RETIRED LADIES, SITTING OUT ON A PORCH IN THE SOUTH, ON A ROCKER.

LIZ

(CONT.)

...you said you wanted something they could stuff in their pocket...

FAD KING

...I meant the Leopard Skin...

LIZ

British Regiments drape their drums in Leopard Skins.

FAD KING

Thank God this is America.

MOSS

(DISTRACTED)

How about half-black, half leopard skin...

TV OLD LADY

...why change Horses in Mid Stresm, that's what I ...

MOSS

(SHAKING HEAD SADLY)

Why are they sticking with this age old horseshit?

BREAN

(SHRUGS)

"If One Twinkie is Funny, Two Twinkies are Funnier..."

AMES WALKS IN WITH HIS ARMS FULL OF FAXES. HE READS FROM THEM.

AS HE PERUSES THEM WE SEE THE FAD KING, HE GOES, DREAMILY, TO A PHONE, AND DIALS.

FAD KING

(INTO PHONE)

Bunny: I had an idea: a Slinky, that falls Up...

(PAUSE)

Naa, we can figure that out. What I'm wondering: what do we call it...

(PAUSE)

You got my number...

(HE HANGS UP.)

MOSS

(TO AMES)

Why are they ...

AMES

(OF FAXES)

NY Times, Washington Post, War, War, War. Times got the girlscout page twelve, Post in Section Two.... Horses in Mid-Stream...?

MOSS

I don't think you're gonna need it.

AMES

Well, we paid for it, we got the guys on a retainer.

MOSS

They got the guys on a retainer, it's cheaper, pay'em, but don't lettem touch it... Let'em leave us alone.

AMES

What can it hurt.

MOSS

What can it hurt is they offend me.

IN THE B.G. WE SEE BREAN, WALKING AROUND WITH A CELLPHONE.

LIZ

I need a ruling on the Hats. I say a Leopard-skin, and...

MOSS

Hey, you're getting the big bucks....

(TO BREAN)

I think we're up-and-running...

JOHNNY GREEN COMES OVER, "JUST LISTEN TO THIS."

JOHNNY GREEN

(SINGS)

Canada your Peaceful slumbers
Guard our Border To The North...
The Rightful Order
Of Our Border...

HE SHAKES HIS HEAD, AND RETIRES. GRACE COMES OUT WITH A TRAY OF COFFEE, FROM WHICH THEY TAKE A CUP.

FAD KING

Kid comes to School. Teacher: You're late for Geography Class. Kid: I din' get my breakfast. Teacher: siddown, where's the Canadian Border. Kid: In bed wit My Mom. That's why I missed my breakfast...

GRACE REACHES IN HER BACK POCKET, HANDS MOSS SEVERAL SHEETS

GRACE

We got the Albanian Girl, with a cat, with a kitten, with a dog...

MOSS

I didn't ask for a dog.

GRACE

(SHRUGS)

...the pet wrangler suggested it..he's also got a...

AMES

I think I should check with the President -- to see what kind of animal he...

GRACE

The Pet wrangler has also got a...

MOSS

Do it later...

(OF THE PHOTO)

Okay, now, "The Little Girl," who is she, what is she doing? She is....she's ...Okay, okay, it's an Albanian village... She is the victim of, she has been relocated, to, to, for the terrorists, the Government Labs...the, the... a staging area for their Atomic workshop.

(PAUSE)

They're torturing her family, because they have connections in Canada, which would permit the terrorists access to the American Border.

GRACE

Better.

MOSS

You like it?

GRACE

Yes.

MOSS

Fine. Good.

GRACE EXITS.

BREAN

(HANGS UP THE CELL PHONE)

Would somebody wake me in five minutes?

FAD KING

Does it have to be Albania? Because, lookit:

(HE HOLDS UP A SKETCH OF A BOOT)

I can get my hands on a lot of walking-around-cash, I think, if it's Italy...Look at the tie-in here: The Boot, "Givvem the Boot,"... If we were to go Wide with a shoe as the fad. A "Shoe-fad"... Here's what it offers us...

BREAN

We're locked into Albania.

FAD KING

Well, let's not be too sure, why is that?

BREAN

(CHECKS HIS WATCH.)

The President is going to declare War against Albania in a half an hour.

BREAN ROUSES HIMSELF, WALKS TO THE POOL, AND BEGINS TO WASH HIS FACE IN IT.

EXT STUDIO PARKING LOT L.A. DAWN.

MERCEDES CONVERTIBLE PULLS UP, MOSS DRIVING. HE AND BREAN GET OUT.

INT STUDIO, DAWN.

A TELEVISION, SHOWING THE PRESIDENT, SPEAKING.

PRESIDENT

That a state of war has existed, between the United States, and...

BREAN AND MOSS BREEZE PAST THE SET, INTO A MOVIE MAKING SCENE. TWENTY PEOPLE CLUSTERED AROUND A YOUNG GIRL IN TRADITIONAL ALBANIAN DRESS WHOSE HEADSHOT WE SAW EARLIER, BEING FUSSED-UP AND TWEAKED BY HAIR AND MAKE-UP.

MOSS

Good morning, My name's Stanley Moss, I'll be your director this morning, what I'd like you to do, Miss, what is your name...

ALBANIAN TYPE

Trudy Larouche.

MOSS

..."Trudy," is, to start at that wall...

(HE GESTURES AT THE SWEEP)

and, on my signal, "action" to run toward me, screaming ...they taking care of you...? Good. You wanna cuppa tea? Okay. Can we just try one, just for the...

TRUDY

I understand this is going to be National? Is that the case? Because my agent didn't get a chance to...

THEY ARE WALKED OVER TO AN AREA IN WHICH WE FIND THE PET WRANGLER, SURROUNDED BY SEVERAL ANIMAL CASES WITH DOGS IN THEM.

MOSS, AS HE SPEAKS, IS SURVEYING THE DOGS.

MOSS

Well, it's a little bit of a...

A.D.

...we're going for a direct buy-out.

MOSS

...you have your agent check with the...

TRUDY

No, I know it's going to be fine. I'm so excited, and I'm looking forward to putting it on my resume. When you called last...

BREAN TAKES TRUDY ASIDE.

BREAN

Eh, Trudy, could I talk to you for a moment...? You know, this project is a... "Funny" kind of...

HE WALKS HER ASIDE. MOSS SELECTS A DOG, AND AMES COMES OVER TO HIM, HOLDING A CELLPHONE.

AMES

(DESCRIBING THE SCENE, INTO THE PHONE)

A schnauzer. What appears to be a...

PET WRANGLER

Lhasa Apso.

AMES

(INTO PHONE)

Lhasa Apso, and a...

HE LOOKS AT THE THIRD DOG.

PET WRANGLER

What you have here is a cross-breed, between a dog which was substantially a...

AMES GESTURES HIM FOR SILENCE, AS HE LISTENS TO THE PHONE.

AMES

(INTO THE PHONE)

Abso... absolutely, sir... Absolutely.

(TO MOSS)

He wants a kitten.

(PAUSE)

MOSS

(TAKING CHARGE)

Okay. Here's what we're gonna do.

HE GESTURES TO HIS ASSISTANT, WHO COMES OVER FOR A CONFERENCE.

MOSS

(CONT.)

I need a little bit of help...?

ANGLE ON BREAN WALKING TRUDY. HE GESTURES TO AMES.

AMES

Miss, we are going to ask you to sign this little sheet of paper...

TRUDY

Well, my agent would be ril ril miffed with me, if I signed anything, uh, to...

AMES

This does not have to do with your Deal. This is for your Security Clearance.

(PAUSE)

HE TAKES OUT A SHEET OF PAPER FROM HIS POCKET.

THEIR WALK HAS BROUGHT THEM AND THE CAMERA BACK TO MOSS AND THE ASSISTANT, AND THE DIRECTOR.

DIRECTOR

(TO MOSS)

...fix it in the mix.

ASSISTANT

We're going to do it digitally...

MOSS
...can we shoot one?

DIRECTOR
Alright, now we're gonna...

THE PET WRANGLER HANDS A DOG TO TRUDY. THE ASSISTANT WAVES HIM OFF, AND LOOKS AROUND, AND HANDS HER A BAG OF POTATO CHIPS.

ASSISTANT
...run with this...

TRUDY
...these'r potato chips...

DIRECTOR
Just, uh, just hold the bag when you run.

MOSS
(TO BREAN)
We need it for the Arm Position, on the screen it'll be a kitten.

TRUDY
Someone's bringing in a kitten...?

MOSS
No, no, no.... we'll punch in a kitten. Um... Later.

TRUDY
...you're gonna Punch in a Kitten Later.

MOSS
Yes.

(PAUSE)

TRUDY
Why...?

A.D.
Okay, settle, people. Settle... we're gonna try one...

MOSS
It gives us a wider option.

TRUDY
A wider option of what?

MOSS
(DISTRACTED)
...of kittens...

TWO HAIR AND MAKE-UP WOMEN JUMP IN, AND START TWEAKING TRUDY, AS MOSS'S ATTENTION IS DIVERTED ELSEWHERE. TRUDY ADDRESSES HERSELF TO BREAN.

TRUDY

...but, you know, all kidding aside. When this goes National.... I get to put it on my resume.

BREAN

(WHO IS DIALING A PHONE)

Actually, no.

TRUDY

Because, like, what is it, a Guild thing? I mean, what, what, what could they do to me...

BREAN

...someone would come to your house and kill you.

(TO PHONE)

Hello... we're about to start shooting...

A.D.

(TO HAIR AND MAKE-UP)

Hey, hey, hey, she's ... will you? She's just been raped by Terrorists, jump out, will you...

THE A.D. SHOOS HAIR AND MAKE-UP AWAY.

CAMERA GOES WITH BREAN, PAST AMES, WHO IS ADDRESSING HIMSELF TO THE A.D.

AMES

And...she's not an Illegal Immigrant? Is she? Can I see her "chart?" Because...

MOSS

Gonna be fine. Gonna be fine, people? Are we getting there...?

BREAN WANDERS BACK TO THE CONTROL BOOTH WHERE WE SEE THE SCENE ON SEVERAL MONITORS AND THE YOUNG GIRL, STANDING AGAINST THE BARE SWEEP ON THE BACK WALL. WE HEAR "ACTION" AND THE YOUNG GIRL RUNS FORWARD. WE HEAR THE TECHNICIANS MUTTERING, AND THEY PUNCH UP A PLAYBACK, AND WE SEE THE SAME RUN-FORWARD, REPLAYED AGAINST AN "ALBANIAN VILLAGE" SCENE.

TECHNICIAN

...gimme some flames...

AS HE SPEAKS, FLAMES ARE ADDED TO THE SCENE...

TECHNICIAN

...some sound of Screaming...?

(SCREAMING IS ADDED)

...whoo-aahh sirens? Anne Frank?...

THE SIRENS ARE ADDED.

MOSS COMES INTO THE CONTROL BOOTH, AND TALKS TO THE ACTOR.

ANGLE

ON AMES AND BREAN, IN THE CONTROL ROOM.

AMES

...can we see the Kitten...?

THE PHONE RINGS, AMES PICKS UP HIS CELLPHONE.

AMES

(CONT.)

Hello... Yes. We'll be back...?

BREAN

We'll be back tonight.

AMES

(TO PHONE)

Tonight.

(HE HANGS UP)

Well, you've started a Tempest in a Teapot.

BREAN

Waal, that's where you want em...

AMES

...I just hope...

MOSS

(TO TRUDY)

Do it again, love, will you...? We'll tell you before we're going to shoot...

WE SEE ON THE MONITOR THE YOUNG GIRL RUNNING WITH THE BAG OF POTATO CHIPS, VARIOUS BURNING BUILDINGS IN THE B.G.

MOSS

...could she be running across a bridge? She's running across a Burning Bridge.

ONE OF THE TECHNICIANS' FACES LIGHTS UP.

TECHNICIAN

(TO HIMSELF)

....beautiful.

WE PLAYBACK THE LAST RUNTHROUGH, AND THE GIRL IS NOW RUNNING ACROSS A BRIDGE.

MOSS

(LEANS IN TO TALK WITH THE TECH PEOPLE)

Of course, we're gonna need some water, uh...

TECHNICIAN

Is it a stream, or is it a...

MOSS

No, I think..

TECHNICIAN

a "pond," or

MOSS

No, I think it's ... can we see the calico kitten...?

AS HE SPEAKS THE BAG OF CHIPS IS TRANSFORMED INTO A CALICO KITTEN.

AMES

(ON HIS PHONE)

A small, "calico" kitten, sir.

(PAUSE)

"Calico."

(PAUSE)

AMES

(TO MOSS)

...can we have a white one...?

MOSS

(TO DIRECTOR)

Can we have a white one, please...

AS THEY SPEAK THE BROWN KITTEN IS TRANSFORMED INTO A WHITE ONE.

MOSS

(CONT)

You know, if we're gonna run with the kitten, maybe it turns out, the Kitten has a Name, and...

DIRECTOR

We ready out there...?

BREAN LOOKS DOWN AT HIS WATCH, AND TAPS AMES ON THE SHOULDER, AS HE EASES HIS WAY PAST THE CONTROL CONSOLE.

AMES

(ENGROSSED)

...one moment...

INT L.A.X. DAY.

A POSTER FILLS THE SCREEN. IT IS A NORMAL ROCKWELL SORT OF THING SHOWING HAPPY AND PROUD AMERICANS OUTSIDE OF A VOTING BOOTH. AND IT READS: "DON'T FORGET TO VOTE. NOVEMBER 2ND. IT'S YOUR DUTY -- IT'S YOUR RIGHT."

PRESIDENT'S VOICE

(VO)

...a state of War.

(PAUSE)

That a State of War...

PAN OFF THE POSTER TO SHOW THE GATE AREA, MANY PEOPLE WAITING, WATCHING A TELEVISION SET, ON WHICH WE SEE THE PRESIDENT.

PRESIDENT

(CONT.)

...exists...

A TELEVISION SET, THE PRESIDENT ON THE TELEVISION.

PRESIDENT

...between the United States and Republic of Albania,

and that the Congress Authorize any and all measures consonant with a swift and painless, and victorious conclusion of that War.

ANGLE

BUSINESS PEOPLE QUEUING UP, AT THE TV, BEYOND THEM, THE DEPARTURE GATE, SHOWING A SIGN, AMERICAN AIRLINES FLIGHT _____ TO WASHINGTON D.C. IN THE FOREGROUND, BREAN, ON A CELLPHONE, PAYS NO ATTENTION TO THE SCREEN, AS HE STANDS IN LINE.

BREAN

(ON THE PHONE)

Go with a two-tone hat, I don't care, you work it out. You, well, I'm sure you've had similar problems in the past. Good. Good. Keep me ppp... Fine, I'll call you from the plane.

THE TICKET TAKER, TAKING HIS TICKET, IS SHAKING HIS HEAD AT THE TELEVISION, ON WHICH WE SEE AN ANNOUNCER/COMMENTATOR, DOING, "YOU HAVE JUST HEARD," ET. CETERA.

TICKET TAKER

Hell of a thing. Hell of a thing.

BREAN

Innit?

TICKET TAKER

Albanian Terrorists on the Canadian Border.

BREAN

(ABOUT TO GET ONTO THE PLANE)

...makes you think.

IN THE B.G, WE SEE THE TELEVISION HAS GONE TO A COMMERCIAL, TWO BUSINESSMEN TYPES, EACH PARKING HIS STATION WAGON IN HIS DRIVEWAY.

TYPE ONE

Ed, what do you think?

TYPE TWO

Bob, my mind wasn't one hundred percent made up, but now it is: I say: don't go changing Horses in Midstream...

BREAN, HEARING THIS, WALKS BACK TO THE NOW DESERTED TELEVISION.

ANGLE

FROM THE JETWAY THE DOOR ABOUT TO CLOSE, BREAN IN THE B.G. WATCHING THE INFOMERCIAL. THE TICKET TAKER CALLS TO HIM, "...SIR...?" BREAN TURNS AND RUSHES TO THE CLOSING DOOR. ON THE TV, IN THE BG, WE SEE THE LOGO: "RE-ELECT THE PRESIDENT. THIS MESSAGE PAID FOR BY..." ET CETERA.

BREAN

(INTO THE PHONE)

It's workmanlike, what can I tell you.... no, it ain't going to help, but it won't hurt, cool down, see you in Nashville.

HE FOLDS UP HIS PHONE AND WALKS ONTO THE PLANE, IN THE B.G. WE SEE SENATOR NOLE, SPEAKING ON THE TELEVISION, THE REMAINING VIEWERS ARE DRIFTING AWAY.

SENATOR NOLE

The issue of War, is, finally, an issue of Moral Fibre,
Moral Fibre. In my Platoon, in World War Two

BREAN

(ON THE PHONE)

You have the number in D.C.? Good. What time
tonight... What...?

(BREAN TURNS TO THE TELEVISION)

BREAN COMES OVER TO AMES WHO IS ON THE PHONE, AND TALKING WITH LIZ BUTSKY, WHO
IS SHOWING HIM SOME SKETCHES.

LIZ

...wanted to go with Roman Numerals... but there isn't
a Roman Numeral for Zero, so, you can't really do THREE
OH THREE, in Roman...

BREAN

(TURNING TO AMES, OF NOLE)

Why is this putz on the air...

AMES

... they're checking the ratings...uh...

LIZ

...and I wanted to ask you if you thought it made sense
that the uniforms of the Freedom fighters were
starched.

(PAUSE)

I know that, traditionally,

(SHE FLIPS A CARD AND WE SEE THE
STARCHED UNIFORMED FREEDOM FIGHTER
DRAWN BY HER)

...they're born, and so forth: days-in-the-mountains,
so on, but I thought...

BREAN

(INTO THE PHONE)

Why am I seeing this guy on the News...?

(PAUSE)

What am I missing...? What are we forgetting?

AMES

Well, at least we're not seeing the Girlscouts...

HE TURNS AROUND

ANGLE, HIS POV.

A YOUNG DISHEVELLED COLLEGE STUDENT TYPE. HE WEARS A BUTTON ON HIS JACKET.

ANGLE INS

THE BUTTON READS, "FUCK ALBANIA"

ANGLE

AMES AND BREAN.

AMES

(OF THE BUTTON)

...is that "us"...?

BREAN AND LIZ BUTSKY SHAKE THEIR HEADS.
AMES JUMPS UP IN THE AIR AND YELLS "YAY."

SENATOR NOLE
Especially in a time of war. Now:
We said that Moral fibre, not guns, not supplies, not
strategy, Moral...

COMMENTATOR
(INTERRUPTING)
...Senator...?

SENATOR NOLE
And this man, our President, in what I hope will be his
last days in that office, has proved himself empty and
devoid of...

A SMALL CHILD COMES OVER TO THE TELEVISION AND CHANGES THE CHANNEL.

INT DULLES AIRPORT ARRIVALS AREA, DUSK.

BREAN AND AMES COMING OFF OF THE PLANE, BREAN STOPS AT THE FREE PERIODICALS
DISPLAY. SAMPLE HEADLINES READ:

DEFENSE OF THE REALM: TERRORISM ALONG THE BORDER: THE PRESIDENT: ALL SPUNK:
CALL TO THE COLORS: DEFEND THE NORTH, ETC.

HE PICKS UP SEVERAL, AND CAMERA FOLLOWS HIM DOWN A HALL, PAST A HUGE POSTER
SHOWING OPPRESSED COMMUNIST HORDES, AND THE MOTTO "THEY DIDN'T HAVE THE
CHOICE, YOU DO. VOTE! IT'S YOUR RIGHT!"

ANGLE

TIGHT ON BREAN AND AMES, AND A FELLOW PASSENGER, AS ALL SCAN THEIR NEWSPAPERS.
THE PASSENGER IS WAITING IN LINE TO USE A PAY PHONE.

BREAN
(AS HE NUDGES AMES)
Can't find anything in here about the President and
that girlscout.

PASSENGER
...what are you talking about... What does that mean
now, are you nuts...?

THE PASSENGER MOVES UP IN TURN TO TAKE THE PHONE, HE DIALS.

PASSENGER
(INTO PHONE)
Hello, Honey.... NO. I'm safe. In about an hour.
Have you got Grandma and the kids in...? Well, where
am I talking to you? Well, who has the Shotgun? Go
Down in the Basement. Well, get the long cord, and...
isn't there a jack down there... Well, move, the
canned goods, and...

THE LINE BREAN AND AMES ARE IN MOVES FORWARD, PAST THE MAN ON THE TELEPHONE.

TIGHT ON AMES AND BREAN, AS THEY MOVE FORWARD, THEY SPEAK UNDER THEIR BREATH.

AMES
(SHAKING HIS HEAD)
...hell of a price for the country to pay.

BREAN
...take a long view.

AMES
...what's the Long View?

BREAN
Your guy gets four more years in Washington... ...it's
only Nine More Days.

AMES
Yes. That's true. But...

BREAN
(SMILES)
Wilfred. We've got work to do...

THE LINE THEY ARE IN STOPS. BREAN LOOKS UP.

ANGLE, HIS P.O.V.

A LINE OF SERVICEMEN, ARMED WITH SUBMACHINE GUNS, STANDS BARRING THE ARRIVING PASSENGERS AN EXIT. THE PASSENGERS ARE HERDED INTO LINES, TO GO THROUGH MAKESHIFT BARRICADES, AND METAL DETECTORS.

ANGLE
BREAN, AND ANOTHER PASSENGER.

BREAN
...what the hell's this all about, d'you think?

PASSENGER
...small price to pay, pal...

HE APES THE PRESIDENT, WHO'S SAID THAT EARLIER.

BREAN LOOKS UP, AS AMES, ACCOMPANIED BY AN ARMY MAJOR, PASSES THROUGH LINE AND APPROACHES BREAN, BECKONING.

INT SUBURBAN MALL NIGHT.

BREAN, AND AMES, AND TWO SECRET SERVICE TYPES, WALKING THROUGH THE MALL. BREAN GLANCES AT A FOODSTORE, WHERE WE SEE A LONG LINE OF PEOPLE WAITING TO BE ADMITTED, AND A VAST LINE INSIDE, AT THE CHECK OUT COUNTER, THEIR CARTS PILED HIGH, THE SHELVES BEHIND THEM DENUDED.

THEY PASS BY A SHOESTORE, CLOSED, A PLYWOOD SCREEN IN FRONT, COVERED BY A SIGN: SOON TO REOPEN UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT. BREAN FOLLOWS AMES, INTO THE STORE.

INT SHOESTORE NIGHT. MANY YOUNG STAFFERS. A VAST SIGN READS: DAYS TIL ELECTION 8. % IN FAVOR?

THE STAFFERS STAND IMMOBILE, AS BREAN, AMES, AND THE SECRET SERVICE TYPES ENTER. ON A TELEVISION, UNWATCHED BEHIND THEM. A FOREST SCENE, A SQUAD OF SERVICEMEN IN WOODLAND CAMO, LOOKING DOWN AT A RIVER, THEIR LEADER SPEAKING

SOFTLY INTO A MICROPHONE.

LEADER

...scared. Sure we're scared. But th'fella said the trick is not minding that it hurts. N'Ill tell you one thing: They might get into the U.S.A., but they'll have to get in over Mrs. Kelly's son...

(HE TAPS HIMSELF ON THE CHEST)

THE SCREEN GOES TO A SCENE OF SUPERMARKET LOOTING IN AN INNER CITY. A STAND-UP COMMENTATOR SPEAKS.

COMMENTATOR

...dead and fifteen wounded in these first hours of the War. They are not, they are not The Enemy, they are people, like You and Me, a different kind of Victim of Albanian Aggression, but Victims Nonetheless...

ANGLE

BREAN, GIVEN THE TOUR BY AMES.

AMES

Telexes to the major...

HE IS SHUSHED BY A YOUNG AIDE, STANDING, HIS EAR TO A PHONE. ON THE TV WE SEE THE DECK OF AN AIRCRAFT CARRIER, AND A REPORTER SPEAKING, AS PLANES TAKE OFF.

REPORTER

Missions into Albanian Airspace. Missions to Kill or Die. American Men, and, yes, and women, in the prime of their lives, but never closer to death, while...

ANGLE, ON BREAN, AS HE TURNS TO LOOK AT ANOTHER SCREEN. ON THAT TV SCREEN WE SEE A SOB-SISTER TYPE

SOB SISTER REPORTER TYPE

...fighting, yes, but fighting for what?

THE SCREEN IS FILLED WITH THE PHOTO OF THE YOUNG ALBANIAN WOMAN, WHO IS NOW HOLDING TWO CATS.

SOB SISTER REPORTER TYPE

For this. For this. For Freedom, for safety -- yes, theirs and ours.

BREAN HEARS A WHOOSH, AND TURNS TO LOOK BACK AT THE SCREEN OF THE JETS TAKING OFF.

TV SCREEN, WITH JETS.

ANNOUNCER

(VO)

The sound of Freedom? Yes, Perhaps the sound of Death... but....

BREAN LOOKING AT THE SCREEN, BEHIND HIM HE HEARS A VAST CHEER, HE TURNS. THE AIDE WITH THE PHONE TO HIS EAR HAS PICKED UP A PIECE OF CHALK, AND IS

WRITING, ON THE % IN FAVOR SLATE THE FIGURE 71%.
THE AIDES ARE CHEERING, AND SLAPPING EACH OTHER ON THE BACK.

INT, IMPROVISED OFFICE, IN THE SHOE STOCKROOM. NIGHT.

A STOCKROOM LINED WITH SHOEBOXES, IN IT A DESK, TWO CHAIRS, A TELEVISION.
AMES ENTERS, OPENS THE DESK AND TAKES OUT A BOTTLE. HE HANDS IT TO BREAN,
WHO ENTERS AFTER HIM. ON THE WALL IS ANOTHER SET OF SIGNS, READING DAYS TILL
ELECTION 8, AND % IN FAVOR WHICH AMES NOW FILLS IN 71. AMES PICKS UP A SHEAF
OF PAPERS FROM THE DESK.

AMES

New York Times, Wash Post, Detroit Register, San Diego
BEE, all in emission. No mention of the Girlscout.
None.

BREAN

Eight Days To Go
(HE GESTURES AT THE CALENDER)

AMES

I live for midnight, when I can tear another of those
suckers off. Watcha got for me?

BREAN

Big Bird touches down when?

AMES

We're bring'n im in tomorrow, five AM.

BREAN

Anything at the Airport?

AMES

Press thought "no," whaddaya think...?

BREAN

(NODS)

I think, here's what I think: S'it gonna rain...?
(HE CHECKS A NOTEBOOK)

AMES

(YELLING)

Gimme the weather for tomorrow morning, five A.M.
Andrews...

BREAN

(CHECKING HIS NOTEBOOK)

An Albanian, a young Albanian Girl.

AN AIDE APPEARS WITH A TEARSHEET. AMES READS IT.

AMES

No rain.

BREAN

(SHRUGS, NONETHELESS)

A young Albanian Girl, dressed in their...

HE GESTURES, MEANING, "WHATEVER THEY WEAR, YOU FIGURE IT OUT..." AMES NODS TO THE AIDE, WHO BEGINS SCRIBBLING IN A PAD.

BREAN

And carrying.

(HE GESTURES, MEANING, LOOK IT UP)

The National Flower of Albania, something..... Now Is it some Festival? Some Harvest Festival, something...

AMES

(TO THE AIDE)

Get on this, right now...

BREAN

...got to be something. She gives him the sacred...

(HE GESTURES, WHAT-HAVE-YOU)

And tells him: this is the Traditional Harvest Offering, given to the Man who Ties the First Sheaf, the last sheaf, whatever the fuck it is...

AMES

...this's good...

BREAN

Stanley Moss, Ladeesngennlmen... And she says...

AMES

Is she saying this in Albanian...?

BREAN

(OF NOTES)

Yes: she is saying this in Albanian, but she's doing it not to be uh...

(AMES GESTURES, MEANING, "I GET IT")

But because, she explains, that is the only way it can be understood by her Aged and Sainted Mother, who is standing there with her, dressed in her Traditional...

AMES GESTURES TO THE AIDE, MEANING, "GET TO IT," THE AIDE NODS HER UNDERSTANDING, AND DISAPPEARS.

BREAN

(TO DISAPPEARING AIDE)

C'n I get something to eat...? Now the Old Broad starts to speak: you are bringing peace. Not only to This Land...

AMES

Our adopted land...

BREAN

...but to the Old World; you are stilling the forces of hatred and of War which have, since I was a child...

AMES

...uh huh...

BREAN

Now, the Old Lady starts to Weep, Big Bird shrugs off

his secret Service, goes to her, and covers her with his own coat.

AMES

(CALLING OUT)

Find out is there any chance we can get some rain tomorrow, will you...?

BREAN

(OF PAD)

So forth...

AMES STOPS TO LOOK AT ANOTHER COMMERCIAL ON TV. THEY TURN TO SEE TWO "YOUNG MOTHER" TYPES, SHOPPING...

YOUNG MOTHER ONE

...to vote for.

YOUNG MOTHER TWO

Well, I think it's like when we thought of Changing Tommy's Pediatrician. Bill said, "Not While he's sick -- cause you Don't Change Horses in the mid..."

BREAN TURNS OFF THE VOLUME, AND CONTINUES.

BREAN

How is Big Bird holding up, by the way?

AMES

Catching up on his reading. Asked about you, sends his thanks.

BREAN

Knock on wood.

AMES

Speaking of thanks... we puttem back in, what does your fellow Moss want?

BREAN

I dunno.... Ambassador to Togo, somethin', I dunno... he...

AMES

Maybe he's just a patriot.

BREAN

Yeah...what was I talking about...?

AN AIDE APPEARS WITH A SANDWICH, AND BREAN STARTS TO EAT.

AMES

How long you been up, you need a nap.

BREAN

(SHAKING HIS HEAD)

Due in Nashville.

AMES

Nashville...?

BREAN

We're gonna do the Team Song.

AMES

You're tired, Ronnie.

BREAN

Y'wanna follow the Cattle Drive? Sleep in the Winter. What does Moss want...? Matchmaker comes to the Levinsky Family. Mr. Levinsky, Mrs. Levinsky, would you entertain an offer of marriage for your son Saul, from Princess Margaret of Great Britain. Well, they think, she isn't Jewish, but she's well to-do, a nice old family. Alright, yes, they say. We would consider such an offer. Wonderful, matchmaker says, My Job is Half Done.

(HE YAWNS)

Now, Look: I got the file, from the L.A. contingent, I got the day-by-day, of how...

HE LOOKS AT AMES, WHO IS LOOKING INTENTLY AT THE TV.

ANNOUNCER

(AS AMES TURNS UP THE SOUND)

...denial from the Albanian Government continues, but this tape, just in...

THE SCREEN SWITCHES TO SHOTS OF TRUDY LAROCHE, IN ALBANIAN GARB, RUNNING TOWARD THE CAMERA, OVER A BRIDGE ACROSS A SMALL STREAM, IN THE B.G. HER BURNING HOUSE, SIRENS, AND THE SOUNDS OF SHOTS, AT WHICH TRUDY COLLAPSES, CONVULSED WITH SOBS.

ANNOUNCER

...just having heard her family shot. For the crime of non-cooperation with Albanian Authorities. Apparently, they had a family connection in Canada, along the US border and refused to exploit it to aid the Terrorists to infiltrate this country.

(BEAT)

They paid with their lives.

AMES

...this is magnificent.

BREAN

...Stanley Moss...

AMES

8 days and we bring it back home....

BREAN RISES, STRETCHES.

SOMEBODY SWITCHES THE CHANNEL, AND WE SEE A NEWSMAN DOING A STANDUP IN FRONT OF A STREETVENDOR, WHO HAS A BOARD FULL OF BUTTONS. THE CAMERA PANS OVER THE BUTTONS, WE SEE THE "FUCK ALBANIA," AND WE SEE ONE READING "RUN FROM ALBANIA? TELL ME ANOTHER ONE..." AND T-SHIRTS SHOWING SIMILAR LOGOS.

ANGLE

ON BREAN AND AMES SITTING AROUND.
AMES LOOKS AT HIM INQUISITIVELY.

BREAN

None of these are ours. None of em are ours....
(HE SMILES AT AMES)
....that's real politik, Buddy.

AMES

Waal, I gotta tell you. I've been inside the Beltway
fourteen years, and I feel like I Just Got My Feet Wet.

THEY KICK BACK, AND WATCH THE TELEVISION, SHOWING IMAGES OF THE TANKS ALONG
THE CANADIAN BORDER.

AMES

And if you think about it: if you think about it, what
is war...? What is war? I mean, aside from the
killing, and, all... that isn't so pleasant, ... you in
the Service...?

(PAUSE)

BREAN, UNSEEN BY AMES, GETS UP AND GOES TO THE DOOR TO LISTEN.

AMES

(CONT.)

...and I'll tell you another thing. President said to
me: When this thing... "happened." "It looks like the
Building's falling. But, these are the times..." and I
wish what he said, we could have used it on TV, and, as
a matter of fact, we can, if we...

(HE LOOKS AROUND, SEES BREAN STANDING
BY THE DOOR.)

Look here, here's an idea... Here's an idea...

(HE WALKS OVER TO THE DOOR.)

Turn it on it's head. If we're ahead in the polls,
well, hell, this is the time to capitalize on it. What
do you think? Get ahead of them, use the percentage
points to push forward some of the long-term goals:
housing, health-care ref...

BREAN GESTURES FOR SILENCE. HE AND AMES LISTEN INTENTLY, THE HUBBUB IN THE
ADJOINING ROOM (THE SHOESTORE) HAS PASSED. IT IS SILENT. AMES AND BREAN PEEK
AROUND THE WALL OF SHOEBOXES.

ANGLE THEIR POV

THE AIDES, IMMOBILE. FIVE VERY FIT YOUNG MEN IN SUITS STAND NEAR THE
ENTRANCE. ONE YALIE-LOOKING FELLOW IN HIS THIRTIES WALKS THROUGH THEIR MIDST,
FROM THE ENTRANCE. HE STOPS FOR A MOMENT AT A TELEVISION, WHICH IS GLARING A
COMMERCIAL FOR LAUNDRY SOAP, AND FLICKS IT OFF, ONE OF HIS FIT YOUNG MEN
INCLINES HIS HEAD TOWARD THE REAR OF THE STORE, AND MR. YOUNG WALKS TOWARD THE
REAR.

THE YALIE COMES INTO A FITTING AREA. SEVERAL OF THE SMALL BENCHES USED FOR
TRYING ON SHOES... TO AMES AND BREAN.

YALIE

Who might be the Boss Hog in this operation?
(PAUSE)

BREAN
Feel free to talk to me.

YALIE NODS

YALIE
Cheezit-the-Cops.

AMES
(TO HIMSELF)
Ohmigod...

INT OFFICE SUITE, NIGHT.

BREAN AND AMES SITTING ON A COUCH. THE YALIE SITTING BEHIND A LARGE DESK, WATCHING A SMALL TELEVISION ON WHICH WE SEE A REPORTER, STANDING NEXT TO SEVERAL VERY GRIM LOOKING MEN IN PARK POLICE SMOKEY HATS. IN A FOREST, BELOW THEM, A LINE OF TANKS FADING ALONG A RIVER.

REPORTER
...awaiting the arrival of The President back on American Soil. To still the fears, to answer the questions of this troubled land. Here, along a border once considered more Imaginary than real, I'm Mike Stears, at latitude 45, along the Canadian Border.

ANGLE
BREAN LOOKS DOWN AT HIS WATCH.

BREAN
...I just missed my plane.

AMES
You missed your plane? My life is over.
(PAUSE)
My life is over. What have you done to me? What have I done?
(PAUSE)
Fourteen years of Public Service...

BREAN
Well, keep your wits about you, and let's see if we can't...

AMES
...fourteen years...

BREAN
...brazen-it-through...

AMES
Brazen it through? Brazen it through? They're going to hang us out to dry like the laundry --- do you know what we've ddd...

THE BODYGUARD IN THE B.G. RAISES HIS FINGER TO HIS LIPS AND SHAKES HIS HEAD.

AMES

Do you know what we've done, for Godsake? Do you know what you've....

A BODYGUARD IN THE B.G. SPEAKS UP.

BODYGUARD

No talking, please.

THROUGH IT ALL AMES SITS, WITH HIS HEAD IN HIS HANDS.

A NEW REPORTER TAKES OVER ON TV, BEHIND HER A CHART, A GRAPH OF AN UPWARDLY MOVING LINE.

REPORTER

With seven days to go before the election, the Fortunes of President...

THE DOOR OPENS, THE YALIE COMES TO ATTENTION, MR. YOUNG, A TWENTY-YEAR OLDER VERSION OF THE YALIE, ENTERS, CARRYING A CUP OF COFFEE, NO TIE, HAIR DISHEVELLED.

MR. YOUNG

(TO YALIE)

...took you long enough.

YALIE

Found'em as quick as we could, sir.

MR. YOUNG

When I'm done with'em, we want to dump'em in the District, or stick'em out in the country, have the F.B.I. trip over'em?

THE YALIE CONSULTS HIS NOTES.

YALIE

Legal department says You Pick Em. Depends on how big of a splash you want to make, how long you want them to Go Away for.

AMES

(SOTTO)

Oh, MiGod.

BEAT, MR. YOUNG SHAKES HIS HEAD SADLY.

MR. YOUNG

Guess who I am.

AMES

I'd like to mention a few names, who...

MR. YOUNG

(LOOKING AT NOTES HE IS HANDED BY YALIE)

I know who you are, Mr. Ames.

AMES

I was acting as a Private Citizen. Nothing that I've done should be construed as reflecting on the orders or intentions of anyone with whom you may have reason to believe I am connected with.

(PAUSE)

Or in whose employ...

MR. YOUNG

Quite touching.

AMES

And I take this opportunity to suggest that, equally, I admit to nothing, and that I would like my lawyer present.

MR. YOUNG NODS.

MR. YOUNG

Guess what? We show, and N.S.A. confirms, there are no nuclear devices on the Canadian border.

(PAUSE)

There are no nuclear devices in Albania. Z'at put us in something of a pickle?

(PAUSE)

Albania has no nuclear capacity. Our spy satellites show "no secret terrorist camps" in The Albanian Hinterland. The F.B.I. and the Border Patrol, And the R.C.M.P. report no repeat no untoward activity along our picturesque Canadian Border. The Albanian Government is screaming its innocence, the world is listening.

(PAUSE)

There is no War.

BREAN

(GESTURES AT THE TV, WHERE WE SEE TRUDY LAROUCHE RUNNING ACROSS THE BURNING BRIDGE)

Course there's a war. I'm watching it on Television.

MR. YOUNG

N'who might you be, when all's said and done?

BREAN

My name is Ronald Brean.

MR. YOUNG

Who're you working for?

BREAN

Nobody whose name you want me to say, Mr. Young, I promise you.

MR. YOUNG

S'all very well, but when the Fit hits the Shan, somebody's going to have to Stay After School, and who do you 'spose that might be.

BREAN

S'only got to hold for another few days.

MR. YOUNG

Well, I'm not interested in how long its "got to hold for."

BREAN

What are you interested in?

(PAUSE)

MR. YOUNG

I'm interested in the Security of My Country, Mr. Brean.

AMES

As are we all, and I'd like to take this opportunity to suggest that the Security of the country would be ill-served by any, any...any...

PAUSE. THEY LOOK AT HIM.

AMES

(CONT.)

Any untoward "revelation" regarding, uh...

MR. YOUNG

And I think that the Security of the Country would be best-served by its citizens obeying its laws.

(OVER HIS SHOULDER, TO AN AIDE)

Gemme a Federal Judge, gemme search-warrants, all premises controlled by our friends, and bench-warrants for the two of...

BREAN

(SIMULTANEOUSLY, WITH THE ABOVE SPEECH)

Well, I'm sure that speaks very well of you and for your parents. But if forced to choose between the security of the country and the security of your Job, which would you pick. And, while you hesitate, permit me to suggest that they are one and the same. Your country and your job.

MR. YOUNG

I'm doing my job, Mr. Brean. That's what you see me doing here. What is it you thought you were doing?

AMES

And I'd like to point out that I've been on prescription medication, the side-effects of which...

BREAN

I'm doing my job, Too.

(OF THE AIDE)

Would you give me a... do you think you could call off your Dogs for a minute.

PAUSE. MR. YOUNG LOOKS AT THE AIDE, WHO IS EXITING, AND NODS. THE AIDE STAYS BEHIND.

BREAN

(CONT.)

Thank you.

MR. YOUNG

What's on your mind?

BREAN

I have a question for you.

MR. YOUNG

Ask it.

BREAN

Why do people go to war?

MR. YOUNG

Why do people go to war?

MR. YOUNG

I'll play your silly game.

BREAN

Why do they go to War?

MR. YOUNG

To preserve their Way of Life.

BREAN

Would you go to War to do that?

(PAUSE)

MR. YOUNG

I have.

BREAN

Well, I have, too. Would you do it again...? In't that why you're here? I guess so. N'if you go to war again, who is it going to be against? Your "ability to fight a Two-ocean War" against who? Sweden and Togo? Who you sitting here to Go To War Against? That time has passed. It's passed. It's over. The War of the Future is Nuclear Terrorism. It is and it will be against a Small Group of Dissidents who, unbeknownst, perhaps, to their own governments, have blah blah blah. And to go to that war, you've got to be prepared. You have to be alert, and the public has to be alert. Cause that is the war of the future, and if you're not gearing up, to fight that war, eventually the axe will fall. N'you're gonna be out in the street.

(PAUSE)

And you can call this a "drill," or you can call it "job security," or you can call it anything you like. But I got one for you: you said, "Go to War to protect your Way of Life," well, Chuck, this

(HE GESTURES AROUND THE ROOM)

is your way of life. Innit? And if there ain't no war, you can punch out, go home, and take up Oil

Painting. And there ain't no war but ours.
(PAUSE)

HOLD ON THE GROUP.

BREAN
(CONT.)

It's just for eight more days.....

INT CORRIDORS C.I.A. COMPLEX

AMES, AND BREAN ACCOMPANIED BY SEVERAL BODYGUARD TYPES AND THE YALIE.

BREAN
(TO THE YALIE)
One more thing, what is that river she's running
across?

YALIE
What?

BREAN
...the young girl in the video, the Albanian Girl....

YOUNG NODS, AND MAKES A NOTE IN A BOOK. BREAN TURNS TO AMES.

BREAN
...she's running, it's some sacred... some ancestral
land, cloven by the Brook named.... give it to Moss,

YOUNG
No, we're on top of it.

BREAN
Thank you.

YOUNG
No, thank you...

BREAN
(HE CHECKS HIS WATCH)
I should be in Nashville, tell him I'm coming in.

BREAN
(TO AMES)
(GESTURING TO THE YALIE, AND
BODYGUARDS.)
Nice enough people... they just hadn't thought it
through...

AMES, AS HE WALKS, TAKES OUT HIS CELLPHONE, AND DIALS.

AMES
(INTO THE PHONE)
No. I was busy.
(PAUSE)
Yes, I need the new poll fig.... how long? I'll call
in from Nashville. And patch me through to the Big
Bird, will...?

(TO BREAN)

I've got to hand it to you. They sure let us out of there easy....

BREAN

(TO HIMSELF)

...they just hadn't thought it through...

THE YALIE SHAKES BREAN'S HAND, AND GESTURES FOR A DOOR TO BE OPENED. BEYOND THE DOOR WE SEE A HELIPAD, AND THE ROTORS OF A HELICOPTER JUST BEGINNING TO TURN, BREAN WAVES, AND TROTS OUT TO THE HELICOPTER.

INT HELICOPTER NIGHT.

AN AIRCREWMAN, LISTENING TO A SMALL RADIO.

RADIO

(VO)

Midst repeated denial from the Albanian Government. While, at the White House, a sense of Stillness pervades, awaiting the return of...

THE AIRCREWMAN SNAPS TO ATTENTION AS BREAN COMES INTO THE AIRCRAFT, BUCKLES HIMSELF INTO A WEBSEAT, AND FALLS ASLEEP. HE ROUSES HIMSELF, TAKES OUT HIS NOTEBOOK, AND STARTS TO WRITE IN IT.

EXT PARKING LOT, NASHVILLE DAWN.

A SUPERMARKET PARKING LOT, A HUGE COWBOY HAT ADORNS A STORE CALLED "KELLEY'S WESTERN WEAR." AT THE SUPERMARKET, SHOPPERS, PUSHING CARTS PILED HIGH -- THE WIFE PUSHING, THE HUSBAND GUARDING THE CART WITH A RIFLE. A FISTFIGHT BREAKS OUT. NO ONE NOTICES THE HELICOPTER.

BREAN IS GETTING INTO A JEEP, ITS TOP OFF, DRIVEN BY A FELLOW IN WESTERN GETUP, ON THE SIDE IS PAINTED A GUITAR. IN THE B.G. WE SEE THE HELICOPTER LIFTING OFF. IN THE JEEP ARE THE FAD KING AND MOSS.

ANGLE

THE JEEP, AS BREAN SETTLES HIMSELF IN HE TURNS TO LOOK AT THE CHAOS IN THE PARKING LOT.

COWBOY

It ain't hoarding. It's stockpiling.

BREAN

Uh huh.

COWBOY

Only common sense.

MOSS

(OF THE BOOK)

We got the guy, we got the guy, we got the Guy!

FAD KING

The Canada Thing was a shuck. A shuck -- wasted a day. What can you do with Canada? Bears, mapleleaves, "sugar -on-Snow." Lays there on the plate like a lox.

ANGLE

AMES ON THE PHONE IN THE JEEP.

AMES

Yes... Hello...?

(PAUSE)

What...? What...? We're breaking up, I'll call you from the studio.

INT RECORDING STUDIO NASHVILLE, DAY.

THE COWBOY, MOSS, FAD KING, AMES, AND BREAN WALKING THROUGH THE LOBBY AND CORRIDOR OF A NASHVILLE STUDIO, MANY GOLD AND PLATINUM RECORDS ON THE WALL. THEY PASS AN ELDERLY AFRICAN AMERICAN MAN SWEEPING THE HALL, AND NOD AT HIM.

BREAN

(REACHES INTO HIS JACKET POCKET)

Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, get this typed, get somebody to send it to the White House...

HE HANDS IT TO MOSS.

MOSS

What is it?

BREAN

President's speech.

MOSS

At the Airport? Cause we decided at the Airport he hugs the fat, wet Albanian Broad, we...

BREAN

No, no, no, no, no after the airport.

THEY TURN AROUND, LOOKING FOR AMES, WHO IS HANGING BACK, LOOKING AT A TV. THEY RETRACE THEIR STEPS. CAMERA TAKES THEM TO AMES, WHO IS WATCHING SENATOR NOLE ON TV.

AMES

(SOFTLY)

Oh, shit...

NOLE

...gotten word that the situation in Albania is resolved. That it is resolved. My military sources confirm that our troops, along the Canadian Border, And overseas are standing down, and I must take this opportunity to call upon our President to stand and face the charges, the heinous charges brought against him. You know, folks, there is nothing in life as precious as the Innocence of a Child.

(PAUSE)

Nothing. Now, I do not say these charges are true, I do not see how they could be. Accusations of, of sexual misconduct in anyone, must be investigated. In the case of a Sitting President, of one whose term, and I do not hesitate to mention it, ends, in, effectively, in a matter of days... I call upon the President...

AMES

What does he mean The Situation has Been Resolved?

BREAN

He just got Hip to us.

(PAUSE)

He just ended the War.

CAMERA TAKES THEM INTO THE RECORDING STUDIO.

AMES

What are we gonna do about it...?

WE SEE SEVERAL PEOPLE AT A CONSOLE, AND, IN THE STUDIO, A BRIGHT SASSY LOOKING GROUP, SINGING.

GROUP

We guard the Northern Borders.

We live the Northern Liiiiifffe...

We come to restore Order...

For our Children and our Wiiiiiiifffee...

BREAN

(TO ENGINEER)

Tell'em to knock it off.

THE ENGINEER TELLS THE GROUP TO STAND DOWN.

PAUSE

AMES

What are we going to do?

BREAN

(TO MOSS)

The War is Over.

MOSS

What?

BREAN

The War is Over. Senator Nole just ended the War.

AMES

Oh, God...

BREAN

Yep. Well, we started it, he Ended it...

ANGLE ON THE TV.

TELEVISION REPORTER

...and the C.I.A. Confirms the cessation of Hostilities, with...

BREAN

The C.I.A.

AMES

Oh, Lord....

BREAN

...those limp-dick ... turncoat... I thought they let us out of there too easy.....

HE REACHES OVER AND FLICKS OFF THE TV.

BREAN

(TO MOSS. CONT.)

War's over, Pal.

(PAUSE)

IN THE B.G. AMES PICKS UP THE PHONE AND DIALS.

AMES

(ON PHONE)

Gloria -- sell the House.

(HE HANGS UP)

(PAUSE)

MOSS

The War ain't over.

(PAUSE)

BREAN

I saw it on TV.

MOSS

The war ain't over til I say it's over. This is my picture. You think you're in a spot? You think this is a tight spot? Try making the Hunchback of Notre Dame when your three lead actors die, two weeks from the end of Principal Photography. This is... this is... this is just...

(PAUSE)

Act One: THE WAR.

Act Two ... the... uh...

FAD KING

It's like those Japanese in the Caves on Okinawa... didn't believe the War was Over.

MOSS

You got a guy, doesn't believe the War is... NO NO NO. An American Serviceman... A brave American Serviceman, is Left Behind ...

(HE LOOKS AT THE FAD KING, WHO IS MASSAGING HIS FOOT, HAVING TAKEN OFF HIS SHOE)

He is Left Behind. He is discarded like an Old Shoe...

(TO BREAN)

Gemme the Pentagon. List of people in all Military Special Programs.... Left behind. Like the Old Shoe... Johnny: "Good Old Shoe"...

(JOHNNY NODS)

BREAN PICKS UP THE PHONE AND DIALS.

BREAN

Hello...?

FAD KING PICKS UP THE PHONE.

FAD KING

Yeah, I need a list, people in Military Special Pro...

MOSS

...what do you got?

FAD KING

(INTO PHONE)

Military Special Programs... Programs... No, I am not Shouting at you, I'm... I'm sorry. Anyone named Shoe Schumann? Schuster... uh

JOHNNY GREEN, ANGLE ON HIM, HIS EYES LIGHT UP.

JOHNNY GREEN

I got it!

HE TAKES OUT HIS GUITAR, AND STARTS TO STRUM. HE PICKS UP A PENCIL. IN THE B.G. WE SEE THE OLD AFRICAN AMERICAN MAN COME INTO THE STUDIO, AND START CLEANING UP.

SINGER

"I guard the Northern Borders..."
Okay, y'want to roll on another one...?

JOHNNY GREEN

Naaa. Fuck that. Fuck that...

ENGINEER

...go get a Coke. Y'want something to eat...?

SINGER

We gonna be long, cause I told my wife...

DISSOLVE

INT STUDIO. NIGHT. VAST AMOUNTS OF TAKE-OUT FOOD WRAPPING. AMES, BREAN, JOHNNY GREEN, MOSS, THE ENGINEER, SITTING AT THE CONSOLE. IN THE STUDIO, AN OLD, BLACK SINGER, ARRANGING MUSIC ON THE STAND IN FRONT OF HIM. HE HOLDS A VERY BATTERED OLD GUITAR.

JOHNNY GREEN, STILL SCRIBBLING ON MUSIC PAPER, GOES INTO THE STUDIO, AND HANDS A SHEET TO THE SINGER, AND LEAVES.

THE SINGER IS THE OLD MAN WE SAW SWEEPING UP.

SINGER

(SINGS)

Good Old Shoe
Good Old Shoe...never left you hangin, Just a Good Old Shoe...

(HE STOPS, TALKS TO THE CONTROL ROOM)

I'm sorry, Barry, the action on this... where the hell did you get this old thing?

ENGINEER
(TALKING THROUGH THE P.A.)
...found it in a pawnshop. Three bucks.

THE SINGER SMILES, SHAKES HIS HEAD, STARTS TO TUNE A STRING.

MOSS
Don't tune it too good.

ENGINEER
Leave it flat, will you, Ben?

THE SINGER NODS.

ENGINEER
Do another?

SINGER
Let's do it.

ENGINEER
(CUING THE TAPE)
Good Old Shoe...

MOSS
(SHOWS THE PHOTO OF SCHUMANN TO BREAN)
William Schuman. Old Shoe. U.S. Army. Serial number,
21-31-2841-262.

ENGINEER
Take ten.

SINGER
He's the Runt of the Litter
Waal that's true
N'I found him jest hiding in an Old Work Shoe
N'he got into mischief, as a Pup will do.
But I never had a better than my Good Old Shoe.
Waal, we's out jest a-huntin, on a Cold Fall Day, and
it seems like that Possum 'bout to Get Away...

MOSS
It's too clean.

ENGINEER
Hold it a minute, Benny, willya?

MOSS
It's too clean.

ENGINEER
Let's take the bridge from nine, and the intro from
one, and...

MOSS
It's got to sound like an acetate recording, 1930.

ENGINEER

Hold it a minute, Benny, we're going to tweak it a bit.
(TO THE GROUP)
This may take a while.

BREAN
(TO JOHNNY, AND MOSS)
This is fantastic.

JOHNNY GREEN
Y'like it? Wait'll you get to the bridge...

BREAN
This's Fantastic...

JOHNNY GREEN
(TO ENGINEER)
Don't go with the bridge from nine, go with the bridge
from eight.

ENGINEER
Why eight?

JOHNNY GREEN
Just try it.

IN THE B.G. WE SEE AMES TALKING INTO THE CELLPHONE.

AMES
A new take on the... Well, sir, we're coming back,
we'd like you to try it out, this evening...

MOSS
Listen to what I've ... listen to... does anybody know
Morse Code?

BREAN
What're you gonna do with Morse Code?

MOSS
(NODS, POINTS TO THE GLOSSY PHOTO)
...we put your Guy in a sweater...

BREAN
Yeah...?

MOSS
"Good Old Shoe -- " We put him in a sweater.

WE HEAR A WHISTLE. HEADS TURN. THE COWBOY TYPE IS WHISTLING. HE IS OVER
AT A COFFEE AREA, LOOKING AT A SMALL TELEVISION, THE GROUP MOVES TO THE TV.
ON THE TELEVISION WE SEE A TALKING HEAD, ANNOUNCING THE ARRIVAL OF THE PRESS.
IN THE B.G. AIRFORCE ONE IS ROLLING TO A STOP. WE SEE THE RAMP COME DOWN AND
THE PRESIDENT COME OUT IN THE RAIN AND HURRY TOWARD A WAITING HELICOPTER.

HE SEES SOMETHING OFF TO THE SIDE AND STOPS, HIS AIDES TRY TO DISSUADE HIM,
BUT HE PULLS AWAY. THE NEWS CAMERA HUNTS AND FINDS A SMALL ALBANIAN GIRL,
CARRYING A SHEAF OF WHEAT IN HER HANDS, AN OLD WOMAN BEHIND HER, BOTH STANDING
IN THE RAIN. THE PRESIDENT ADVANCES, AND MOVES TO LET HIS AIDES LET THE CHILD
COME FORWARD. WE SEE THE PRESIDENT, MOVED AT THE SIGHT OF THE LITTLE GIRL,

OFFERING HIM THE SHEAF OF WHEAT, WE HEAR A REPORTER, V.O.

REPORTER

(VO)

...trying too... it seems that she is speaking in... is
is Albanian ... Is it Albanian? Can we get someone
on...

A WOMAN'S VOICE COMES ON, A TRANSLATOR.

TRANSLATOR

(VO)

...salvation of our Country. To...to "intercede" where
violent men would work to destroy ... to destroy
Harmony. Now is the Harvest Season in my Land, and I
bring you...

(SHE HANDS HIM THE WHEAT)

I bring you this traditional Albanian, forgive me not
to speak English, but my Grandmother...

THE CAMERA MOVES ONTO THE GRANDMOTHER, STANDING, NODDING, BEHIND THE LITTLE
GIRL, AND THE PRESIDENT, REALIZING FOR THE FIRST TIME THAT THE OLD WOMAN IS
STANDING IN THE RAIN, MOVES TO HER, REMOVES HIS SUITCOAT, AND PLACES IT OVER
HER HEAD. SHE CLASPS HIM TO HER BOSOM. SHE SPEAKS TO HIM IN ALBANIAN.

TRANSLATOR

God bless you, God bless you, you are my Son... you are
a Bringer of Peace...

WE HEAR A PHONE RING.

ANGLE

WIDER, ON THE GROUP AT THE TV, ALL SHAKING THEIR HEADS SADLY. AN AIDE HANDS
THE PHONE TO MOSS, WHO GIVES IT TO BREAN.

BREAN

Hello?

EXT ANDREWS AIRFORCE BASE DAY. CAIN, FROM THE PRESS CORPS, ON A CELL PHONE,
BEHIND HER THE SPECTACLE OF THE PRESIDENT AND THE GIRL AND THE OLD WOMAN, WE
SEE THE RAIN IS BEING SUPPLIED BY RAINBIRD MACHINES, THE DAY IS CLEAR.

CAIN

...getting the speech for the White House...?

(PAUSE)

Good. Good. Because he's....

ANGLE, INT THE STUDIO, ON BREAN, ON THE PHONE.

BREAN

He can't respond to the Allegations.

(PAUSE)

I don't care how many girlscouts are picketing the ...
look, look, look, we're coming home with Gold. Eh?
Tell him to hold firm for two hours... coming home with
Gold.

MOSS

(TO FAD KING)

Did we ever use those costumes for the Border Patrol?
Those guys in the Leopard-Skin Hats? Here's my
idea....

INT LIMO DAY.

THE BACKSEAT OF A LIMO
AMES AND BREAN WITH A PHONE TO HIS EAR. THE TELEVISION ON, SHOWING THE GIRL
RUNNING ACROSS THE FLAMING BRIDGE, MOSS, FIDDLING WITH THE VOLUME ON THE TAPE
PLAYER, WHICH IS PLAYING "GOOD OLD SHOE."

BREAN
(INTO PHONE)
I'll hold.

WE HEAR THE SCRATCHY RENDITION OF "GOOD OLD SHOE" ON THE TAPE PLAYER.

AMES
...this is a snappy song....

MOSS
What'd ya think?

BREAN
I think it's fine?

MOSS
It's not too clean...

BREAN
No, it's...
(ON PHONE)
I'll, yes, I'm holding, but...
(TO MOSS)
No, it's ...

HE STOPS AND GESTURES MOSS TO TURN OFF THE VOLUME ON THE TAPE. THEY BOTH TURN
TOWARD THE TV, WHERE WE SEE A FREEZE FRAME OF THE GIRL ON THE BRIDGE, AND AN
INSERT OF A MAP OF ALBANIA.

ANNOUNCER
Have identified the bridge, and the river from that
tape. It is a bridge over the river _____, ...
what is it, Mayra, a "rhyme...?"

ANOTHER WOMAN IS SHOWN ON THE SCREEN, AS THE ANGLE WIDENS.

MAYRA
Actually, Bess, it's an ode, an ancient Albanian ode,
praising the river, this particular river, the
_____, as a source of peace. It is ironic that....

BREAN
(ON PHONE)
Hello --

BREAN
(ON PHONE)
Look: I'm bringing in a tape, I need it copied AT ONCE

onto an old acetate, and stuck in the Library of Congress. Gotta Happen Today.

MOSS

In the Folk Music Section.

BREAN

In the Folk Music Section. We'll be in in...

ON THE TV SCREEN, NOW, IS SENATOR NOLE. BREAN HANGS UP THE PHONE.

MAYRA

Ironic Bess, that while Peace is At Hand, the spectre of disgrace, unrest haunts the President, who, scant days from the Election...

INT. MALL -- DAY

BREAN MOSS AND AMES.

WALKING -- AN AIDE GIVES BREAN A PHOTO.

BREAN

...this the Guy.

MOSS

Oh, he's gonna be Aces.

BREAN

Where is he now?

MOSS

(SHRUGS)

Some, military... Special Program, Oklahoma somewhere...

BREAN

...we get our hands on him?

MOSS

They got him standing by.

BREAN

What's the thing with Morse Code...

MOSS

Oh, you're gonna love this:

INT MALL H.Q., SHOESTORE DAY.

WE SEE THE ASSEMBLED THROG LISTENING TO THE END OF THE SONG, "GOOD OLD SHOE," RAPT. BREAN RISES, AND FLIPS OFF THE TAPE.

BREAN

Who said, "I care not who writes a country's laws, so long as I can write its songs..."? Stanley Moss, folks...

THE GROUP STARTS APPLAUDING.

MOSS

Hey, hey, I'm just the Producer, I'm just the Stationmaster, Johnny Green wrote that song, and...

AMES

All we have to do now is sell it to the President.

BREAN

No, I'm telling you, this guy, this guy is aces, this guy is the Kitty's Sleepwear, this guy, they should of given him every Oscar. Every Oscar. This is the...

AN AIDE ENTERS, HOLDING A BOX GINGERLY, SHE BRINGS IT TO BREAN, WHO OPENS IT, HOLDS IT TO THE CAMERA, IT CONTAINS A RATTY OLD 78 RECORD "FOLKLORE OF THE RURAL SOUTH, VOLUME THREE, 'GOOD OLD SHOE' WRITTEN AND SUNG BY NATHANIEL HORN, 1934, ATHENS, GA."

BREAN

(HOLDING IT UP)

Well, this is genius. Who did this?

MOSS

My prop guy, had a guy out here.

BREAN

(TO THE AIDE)

Get it in the stacks at the Library of Congress, Now.

(TO THE ASSEMBLE)

Who's seeing the guy at C.B.S.?

A YOUNG WOMAN RAISES HER HAND.

BREAN

Tonight, you remember some song, from your folksong days, something about a Good Old Shoe...

AIDE

...tonight...

BREAN

You're with him tonight, watching the President's Speech, when the President...

AIDE

What if he's busy tonight?

BREAN

Lure him.

(PAUSE)

AIDE

What are you saying...

BREAN

Well, darlin' I ain't your confessor. Tell him you've got some info on the President's sex scandal, it's on your conscience, believe me, he'll drop what he's doing. Okay; Now: Folks, folks, folks, this is a shitty business, and it needs no Ghost Come From the

Grave to tell us that. But in Six Days, Lord willing n'Jesus Tarries, I am going to take you beauties into the second term.wait til you hear the speech tonight. The 3-0-3 Speech... where's the Fad King, by the way...

AIDE

(ON THE TELEPHONE, LOOKING WORRIED)

...on the way in.

BREAN

When you...

(TO AIDE)

What? I'm busy.

AIDE

It's the White House.

HE HANDS THE PHONE TO BREAN.

BREAN

Hello.

(PAUSE)

What?

MOSS

What?

BREAN

What do you mean he won't do it?

(PAUSE)

He won't do what?

(TO MOSS)

He won't do the sp...

(TO PHONE)

It's what? It's corny? Corny? Is that the word? Of course it's corny. We wouldn't have him say the flippin' thing it wasn't corny. Put... listen, it's not a question, we're locked in to this speech. NO We're, Are You Listening? LOCKED IN. We're, we're playing way past it, we're past it -- it's the set-up for...he has got to say the speech.

(PAUSE)

Tell Ames to meet me at the West Gate in...

(HE CHECKS HIS WATCH AND HANGS UP THE PHONE)

ANGLE

AT THE TV, MOSS IS WATCHING THE TELEVISION WHICH IS SHOWING THE "CHANGE HORSES CAMPAIGN." WE SEE TWO KIDS WITH SOAPBOX RACERS.

KID ONE

(OF HIS MACHINE)

...change it, but I said to my dad, "You Don't Change Horses in the Mid..."

MOSS

(OF TV)

Can you believe this shit?

BREAN GRABS MOSS, AND THEY EXIT HURRIEDLY. THE TV GOES TO A CARD READING "COMMITTEE TO RE-ELECT THE PRESIDENT," AND THEN TO A TALK-SHOW FORMAT, THE WOMAN SPEAKING TO A HIGHLY DECORATED GENERAL.

GENERAL

Yes. Thank God, I say. Thank God for the B-2 Bomber. Thank God for it, for it is not an engine of War, but an engine of Deterrence, as we've seen, and were it not for that deterrence, who is to say, but that American blood, would, even now...

EXT WHITEHOUSE. PENNSYLVANIA AVE. DAY.

MANY PLACARDS, ON THE GROUND, SHOWING MAPS OF ALBANIA, IN A RED CIRCLE WITH THE RED LINE THROUGH IT, HELD ALOFT, PLACARDS READING, "DON'T CHANGE HORSES," PHOTOPLACARDS SHOWING THE PRESIDENT WITH THE GIRLSCOUT AND THE MOTTO: "THANK HEAVEN FOR LITTLE GIRLS."

A REPORTER IS INTERVIEWING A POLICEMAN.

POLICEMAN

(TALKING INTO A MICROPHONE)

I was in the Vietnam Conflict, and I want to tell you that a man who could do what the President did -- I respect him. But, on this issue....

EXT WHITEHOUSE WESTGATE. DAY.

A VAN MARKED "JIFFY LOCKSMITHS" IS WAVED THROUGH THE GATE.

ANGLE

AT THE DRIVETHROUGH PORTICO, AMES WAITING, WE SEE THE VAN, ON WHICH SOMEONE HAS SPRAYPAINTED "FUCK ALBANIA."

INT WHITEHOUSE.

AMES, CAIN AND LEVY STANDING THERE, WAITING, AS BREAN AND MOSS, DRESSED IN LOCKSMITHS COVERALLS, ENTER THE WHITEHOUSE/
CAMERA TRAVELS WITH THEM AS THEY STRIDE DOWN THE HALL.

MOSS

(TO AN AIDE)

Gimme all your secretaries, puttem in an office now, Would you? Would you do that?

(PAUSE)

Gimme thirty secretaries...

AMSE NODS AT LEVY, WHO TAKES OFF ON HIS MASTER'S BUSINESS.

MOSS

I need the President. Five minutes of his time. Eh? Five... "the speech is corny"...??

(TO BREAN)

You know, this is what they used to say when I went out to Hollywood. "It's too theatrical"... I came from the Theatre, and, anything, over their heads, "It's too Theatric..."

AMES

He thinks it's too...

BREAN

First of all, we're locked in to it, secondly:

MOSS

Don't tell me that the speech is too corny. Your guy got caught with his hand in the cookie Jar. I came to Save him. I don't need this gig, I don't need the money, I don't need the tsuris ... I don't need it. He needs the gig. Y'r gonna go to the goddamn Doctor an exam, What've I got? He tells you you've got Cancer, you tell him, "That's Old Hat, gimme something else"...?

HE IS STEERED INTO AN OFFICE, HE OPENS THE DOOR, AND WE SEE THE LAST OF TWENTY SECRETARIES, WANDERING, TAKING SEATS IN A SMALL WAITING ROOM. HE TURNS. AND WE SEE THE BACK OF THE PRESIDENT, ENTERING.

AMES

Mr. President, this is St...

MOSS

Hi, How are ya? Listen to this, willya...

MOSS TAKES A SHEAF OF PAPERS FROM HIS POCKET AND GOES THROUGH THE DOOR FROM THE SMALL OFFICE INTO THE WAITING ROOM. LEAVING THE DOOR HALF-OPEN, THE PRESIDENT WAITS BEHIND, LOOKING ON THROUGH THE HALF OPEN DOOR.

MOSS

(TO THE SECRETARIES)

...Ladies, thank you for coming. I have in my hand a . It is a photograph of a man. His name is William A. Schumann. He is the part of the team, of unit 303, who dropped behind Albanian Lines. We've just received this photograph, of Schumann in captivity. Held by a dissident, a renegade group of Albanian Terrorists.

(HE HOLDS THE PHOTOGRAPH UP)

I'm going to call your attention to something...I don't know how many of you know Morse Code...

ANGLE

BREAN, AND AMES, IN THE CORRIDOR. PACING. PAUSE.

AMES

You need this Schumann fellow?

BREAN

Ronnie says we don't need'em for another four days.

(PAUSE)

...s'there a problem?

AMES

No. No...Pentagon says, Army's got'em, they got'm in ..."Custody"...

(PAUSE)

BREAN

How's your wife?

AMES

Fine.

(PAUSE)

THE DOOR BEHIND THEM OPENS. BEAT. THEN A WEEPING SECRETARY COMES OUT. BREAN, MOVES INTO THE ROOM, FOLLOWED BY AMES, WE SEE A ROOM FULL OF SECRETARIES, QUIETLY WEEPING. BREAN LOOKS AROUND FOR MOSS. HE SPOTS HIM THROUGH THE OPEN DOOR.

ANGLE. HIS POV, IN THE OVAL OFFICE, MOSS, HANDING THE SPEECH BACK TO THE PRESIDENT.

MOSS

"The Speech Won't Work..."

MOSS STARTS OUT OF THE OFFICE, BACK TOWARD THE CAMERA, AND THEN TURNS BACK TO THE PRESIDENT.

MOSS

...and see if you can keep your dick in your pants two more weeks, willya...?

(HE CLOSES THE DOOR)

(TO HIMSELF, DEROGATORILY)

"...speech won't work..."

AS HE STARTS TO LEAVE THE ROOM, ONE OF THE WEEPING SECRETARIES TAKES HIS HAND AND KISSES IT...

HE PICKS UP HIS LOCKSMITH KIT, AND STARTS DOWN THE HALL, MOTIONING TO HIM TWO SECRET SERVICE ESCORTS, "LET'S GO..."

HOLD ON THE WAITING ROOM, ONE OR TWO RESIDUAL WEEPING SECRETARIES DABBING AT THEIR EYES. AND A SIGN ON THE BOARD, READING 6 DAYS TO ELECTION, AND %-IN-FAVOR -- 37%. AN AIDE GOES OVER TO THE BOARD, A PHONE TO HIS EAR, AND WIPES OUT 37% AND INSERTS 27%.

INT STUDIO APARTMENT NIGHT.

A YOUNG FELLOW, IN BLUEJEANS AND T-SHIRT, EATING POPCORN OUT OF A BOWL AND WATCHING TELEVISION.

ON THE TELEVISION, THE PRESIDENT, IN THE OVAL OFFICE.

TV (VOICE OVER)

Ladies and Gentlemen, the President of the United States.

WE SEE THE FORM OF THE PRESIDENT COME TO THE PODIUM, AND CAIN MOVES TO THE BACK OF THE READYROOM, WHERE SHE WATCHES, THROUGH A TWO-WAY MIRROR, THE BACK OF THE PRESIDENT, AS THE PRESIDENT PREPARES TO GIVE THE SPEECH. WE SEE, BEYOND THE PRESIDENT THE PODIUM, AND THE GLASS WITH THE TELEPROMPTER TEXT PRINTED ON IT, AS IT SCROLLS UP, AND WE SEE CAIN FOLLOW ALONG, ON THE TEXT AT HER HAND.

PRESIDENT

Thank you, would you be seated, please.

(PAUSE)

Ladies and Gentlemen... I thank. A merciful God. And I am sure each and every one of us will thank that

Supreme Power, whatever we conceive that power to be --
that peace is at hand.

MURMUR AMONG THE PRESSCORPS. THE PRESIDENT CLEARS HIS THROAT, AND TAKES A SIP OF WATER.

CAIN LOOKS UP, AND WE SEE ON A VIDEOMONITOR, WHICH SHOWS A REARVIEW OF THE PRESIDENT, THE SAME TELEPROMPTER IMAGE HE SEES, WHICH READS:

...That peace is at hand...

(CLEAR THROAT AND TAKE A DRINK)

ANGLE

THE PRESIDENT, CONTINUIN TO SPEAK.

PRESIDENT

The threat of Nuclear Terrorism has been quelled. We are in contaot with the Albanian Premier, who assures me, and this government credits his assurances, that his country does not wish us ill, and has not. That the threat which we perceived was not of his wish, or of his making.

ANGLE

CAIN, MOUTHING ALONG, WITH THE SPEECH, SHE LOOKS DOWN, AND WE SEE WRITTEN, ON HER COPY.

of his making

(BITE LIP)

ANGLE

AS WE LOOK UP, WE SEE THE PRESIDENT BITING HIS LIP, AND CONTINUING WITH THE SPEECH.

PRESIDENT

From whence did it come? Our information states it came from a small group of armed, dissidents. Of Armed and Violent Dissidents...

ANGLE

ON CAIN, AS SHE LOOKS AROUND.

ANGLE, HER POV.

THE GROUP, LISTENING SPELLBOUND.

ANGLE

CAIN, AS SHE SMILES TO HERSELF.

ANGLE

ON THE PRESIDENT. AS HE CONTINUES.

PRESIDENT (C)

But that group has been, in the main, subdued. Now:
How did we come by this information? And. Who subdued that group?

(THE PRESIDENT COUGHS)

ANGLE

CAIN LOOKS DOWN AT HER SCRIPT. SHRUGS, AND LOOKS UP.

ANGLE

ON THE PRESSCORP, THE REPORTERS, LISTENING WIDEMOUTHED, TO THE PRESIDENT'S

SPEECH.

PRESIDENT

It falls to me to reveal to you a secret.

(PAUSE)

To reveal the existence of a secret group of warriors.

Men, yes, and women, trained and pledged their strength, their skills, and, if called upon, their lives, in the service of their fellow Americans.

A group so secret, its very existence has been known to just a few, and known not by a Name, but by a Designation Number, Three-Oh-Three...

INT HEADQUARTERS IN THE SHOESTORE IN THE MALL, NIGHT.

LIZ, THE COSTUME DESIGNER, WORKING ON A DRAWING OF A SHOULDER PATCH, ON A BERET. ON ONE SKETCH WE SEE IT IS ON A BLACK BERET, ON THE ONE BELOW IT IS ON A LEOPARDSKIN BERET.

ONE VERSION HAS A COUGAR WITH AN OLILTE BRANCH, WE PAN ONTO VERSION TWO WHICH SHOWS A DOVE HOLDING A SWORD. THE NUMERALS 303 FIGURE PROMINENTLY ON EACH. THE BANNER FOR THE MOTTO IS BLANK.

LIZ

...anybcdy know Latin.

PRESIDENT

(VO)

...member of the group, was left behind what were, then, Enemy Lines.

(PAUSE)

ANGLE

ON LIZ, AS SHE WALKS THROUGH THE H.Q., ON A BOARD WE SEE "DAYS TILL ELECTION 6" AND % IN FAVOR 82%. A HUGE TV SHOWS THE PRESIDENT.

PRESIDENT

And I can only say, to those family members, of group 303, which members are, I know, as I speak, gathering to comfort you, the parents of the missing man, I can only say,

LIZ

I need a Latin Motto, anybody know n'y Latin...?

PRESIDENT

...and the Albanian Government joins with me, that no, I repeat, No effort will be apared, to find...

ANGLE INT LIMO, BREAN AND MOSS WATCHING THE TV

PRESIDENT

(ON TV)

...this brave man and to bring him home.

BEAT. BREAN REACHES OVER AND TURNS DOWN THE SOUND. THEY LOOK AT EACH OTHER AND SMILE.

MOSS

Trump that, Senator Nole, you Howdy Doody vontz.

BREAN

Not bad for government work.

(PAUSE)

Having a good time.

MOSS

Haven't had so much fun since Live TV.

BREAN SIGHS, TAKES A PHOTO OF SCHUMANN FROM HIS POCKET, CAMERA SEES IT CAPTIONED WITH THE NAME WILLIAM SCHUMANN, ETC.

PRESIDENT

(HOLDS UP A PHOTOGRAPH)

Here's a photograph. It is a photograph of a man. His name is William Schumann. He is a Master Sergeant in the United States Army. A member of the Squad 303....dropped behind Albanian Lines. We've just received this photograph, of Schumann in Captivity. Held by a dissident group of Albanian Terrorists...Now, I don't know how many of you are familiar with the Morse Code...but...could you bring the camera closer in here, please...?

THE CAMERA PUSHES IN, TO A SECTION OF SCHUMANN'S SWEATER.

PRESIDENT (VO)

You will see his sweater is worn...it has been unraveled in places, and those places form dashes and dots.

ANGLE

THE PRESIDENT, HOLDING THE PHOTOGRAPH

PRESIDENT

Dashes and Dots. And those dots spell out a message in the Morse Code.

And that message is, "Courage, Mom..."

(PAUSE. PRESIDENT PAUSES, AS IF ALL CHOKED UP)

And he got the message through. "Courage. Mom..."

(PAUSE. HE COMPOSES HIMSELF)

Well, to the Family of William A. Schumann, to the Men and Women of Unit 303, to my fellow citizens I say "courage." I have informed the Albanian government, and I inform you, that we will not rest until the safe return of Sergeant Schwn&nn.

(PAUSE)

I'm told his unit mates gave him the nickname, "Old Shoe." Ladies and Gentleman, we will not treat him like an Old Shoe, we...

ANGLE INT, SHOESTORE HQ. NIGHT.

AMES, MOSS AND BREAN, LOOKING AT THE TV.

MOSS

Trump that, Senator Nole, you Howdy-Doody-looking Vontz.

ANGLE

YOUNG PERSON'S APARTMENT, NIGHT.

PRESIDENT

(VO. ON TELEVISION)

...we will not be swayed, will, will not be swayed
from Every effort to find our Old Shoe, our...

WE HEAR A YOUNG WOMAN'S VOICE

YOUNG WOMAN

(VO)

Hey...?

ANGLE

ON THE YOUNG MAN, AS HE TURNS. WE SEE, BEHIND HIM, AN UNMADE BED, AND A YOUNG
WOMAN, THE AIDE FROM THE SHOESTORE H.Q., WRAPPED IN A SHEET.

AIDE

...wasn't there a folksong called "Old Shoe?" Wasn't
there an old, uh ..."folksong"...

WHITEHOUSE SITUATION ROOM, WE SEE THE BOARD, READING, DAYS TO ELECTION, ET
CETERA, AND THE AIDE, STANDING BY THE PERCENTAGE IN FAVOR SIGN WHICH NOW
READS 37%, THE AIDE CROSSES OUT 37 AND WRITES IN 41, THEN LISTENS, AND WIPES
OUT THE ONE AND MAKES IT 47.

EXT. POOR NEIGHBORHOOD. NIGHT.

A BLACK LIMO GLIDES SLOWLY THROUGH THE STREET.

ANGLE, INT THE LIMO.

BREAN AND MOSS IN THE BACKSEAT.

MOSS

It's all, you know ... thinking ahead. Thinking
Ahead. That's what producing is.

(PAUSE)

It's like being a plumber.

BREAN

Mmm...

MOSS

You do your job right, nobody should notice.

BREAN

Mmm.

MOSS

S'only when you fuck up, everything gets full of shit.

(PAUSE)

Do you think we could line him up for the Peace Prize?

BREAN

Hey, our job ends at the Finish Line.

MOSS

Yes, but I, well, you know...

BREAN

Just for the Symmetry of the thing...?

MOSS

...that's right.

BREAN

If they can give Kissenger the Peace Prize, I wouldn't be surprised to wake up and find I'd won the Preakness.

MOSS

Well, yes, but the guy did bring Peace.

BREAN

Yes, but there wasn't a War.

MOSS

All the greater accomplishment.

THEY LOOK AT THE TELEVISION, PLAYING SILENTLY.

ANGLE INS. THE TV SHOWING THE SHOULDER PATCH OF GROUP 303, THE NUMERALS AND A DOVE HOLDING A SWORD, AND A WOLF HOLDING AN OLIVE BRANCH. AND THE WORD "VOLO." BREAN INCREASES THE VOLUME A BIT.

ANNOUNCER

"Volo," meaning, "I will." As the President bends all his will, to find, and to restore to his country, to his family, and to what are his mounting legion of friends, William Schumann, the Commando Ranger of detachment 3.0.3. -- Sgt. William Schumann...the Old Shoe.

BREAN

(SIGHS)

Hell of a thing...

(HE LOOKS OUT OF WINDOW. TO THE DRIVER)

Stop there..

THE LIMO STOPS. BREAN AND MOSS EXIT THE LIMO, TAKING A LARGE CARDBOARD BOX WITH THEM.

ANGLE, EXT, THE LIMO

BREAN AND MOSS, BENT OVER A BOX OF WHAT ARE REVEALED TO BE OLD SHOES.

BREAN

Ya got to hand it to the Fad King.

MOSS

No, he's my Hero.

THEY PICK UP SEVERAL OLD SHOES, TIE THEM TOGETHER, AND BEGIN HEAVING THEM UP ONTO A LAMPPOST ON THE DESOLATE STREET. A SMALL AFRICAN-AMERICAN BOY COMS UP, AND LOOKS THROUGH THE BOX.

KID

...these Shoes are ratty...

BREAN

Yeah, well, that's why we're flinging them away...

THE KID SHRUGS, TAKES SEVERAL SHOES OUT OF THE BOX. BREAN AND MOSS GET INTO THE LIMO, WHICH BEGINS TO DRIVE AWAY. THE KID BEGINS TYING SHOES TOGETHER AND WALKS DOWN THE STREET AND HEAVES ANOTHER PAIR UP TO ANOTHER LAMPPOST.

ANGLE

RICH NEIGHBORHOOD. SUBURBS NIGHT.

WEALTHY LOOKING WHITE GUY OUT WAKING HIS DOG. LIMO COMES UP BEHIND HIM. BREAN GETS OUT OF HIS CAR AND TAKES A CARDBOARD BOX OUT, AFTER HIM. HE RUMMAGES THROUGH THE BOX. FINDS A PAIR OF RATTY "SPERRY TOPSIDER," AND FLINGS THEM UP INTO THE TREE.

INT RICH WHITE FELLOW'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

THE MAN ENTERS THE BACK-DOOR, WITH THE DOG.

INT LIVING-ROOM. HIS WIFE, KNITTING, LISTENING TO THE RADIO.

MAN

...there was a fellow in a limousine, outside,
throwing...

SHE SHUSHES HIM. WE HEAR, ON THE RADIO:

RADIO

(SINGING, AS PER THE RECORDING WE HEARD
PREVIOUSLY)

..."Dog Was Loyal, and the Dog was True...n'there's
never been a better than my Good Old Shoe...Good Old
Shoe...Good Old Shoe...Never have ta call'im when
there's Work to do...If I get to Heaven when the Day is
Through. I'll know I'll see him waitin', Jest a Good
Old Shoe..."

ANGLE, ON THE MAN, AS HE NODS ALONG IN TIME, TO THE WISDOM OF THE SONG.

F.M. ANNOUNCER (VO)

...was just discovered. A 1930's recording, part of
the folksong collection of the Library of Congress, and
a fitting...

THE MAN, MOVED, GOES INTO THE KITCHEN, WHERE HE POURS HIMSELF A DRINK,
SWITCHING ON THE TV, WHERE WE SEE JIM BELUSHI, DOING "PANE:" ON SOME TALK
SHOW.

JIM BELUSHI

...and there's just one thing I'd like to say, and I am
speaking to those in Albania who have the man in
custody, and from the bottom of my heart:

HE TURNS TOWARD THE CAMERA, AND BEGINS SPEAKING IN ALBANIAN.

DISSOLVE

INT FACTORY LUNCHROOM. DAY.

A BUNCH OF WORKERS EATING, SOUNDS OF HEAVY MACHINERY IN THE B.G., AS OTHER WORKERS ENTER. SEVERAL PEOPLE WATCHING A SOAP OPERA.

ANGLE

ONE WORKER, WITH A T-SHIRT READING, "COURAGE, MOM," AND A PHOTO OF SCHUMANN, CHECKS HER WATCH, AND SWITCHES THE CHANNEL TO A NEWSCAST.

NEWSCASTER (ON TV)

...the City Council, Denying the charges of...and this just in...the search for William Schumann continues. NATO, US, and Albanian Forces continue to scour the countryside, as...

ANGLE

ANOTHER SMALL GROUP OF WORKERS, SEVERAL WEARING, "FUCK ALBANIA" T-SHIRTS. ONE INT SHOESTORE H.Q.

THE BLANK "% IN FAVOR" CHART. IS FILLED IN BY THE HAND OF AN AIDE. IT READS "87." CAMERA PULLS BACK TO SHOW "3" DAYS TIL ELECTION.

BREAN AND MOSS AND THE FAD KING, LEAVING THE OFFICE, AN AIDE COMES AFTER THEM.

AIDE

...White House wants to know about the Congressional Medal of Honor.

BREAN

What about it?

AIDE

For Schumann.

BREAN

Well, well, well, well, wait a minute, we got 86 percent. We bring'em back tomorrow, the charts go up, they don't go down...

THEY WALK THROUGH THE MALL, PAST A NEWSSTAND SHOWING TIME AND NEWSWEEK BOTH OF WHICH BREAN PICKS UP, ONE SHOWS THE PHOTO OF SCHUMANN AND THE LEGEND, "COURAGE, MOM," THE OTHER A PHOTO OF SCHUMANN, AND THE LEGEND, "GIVE HIM BACK." THE VENDOR IS WEARING A "303" T-SHIRT.

BREAN

I don't wanna tell them their business, but why not wait to give it to him after the election. When he's gonna need some help....

THE AIDE NODS AND RETIRES.

BREAN GESTURES AT THE KID WITH THE 303 T-SHIRT.

BREAN

King...

FAD KING

All part of the Service we Render.

MOSS

(OF BREAN, TO FAD KING)
He ain't seen nothin' yet.

FAD KING
When do you bring'em back? Schumann.

BREAN
(LOOKS AROUND)
Schumann. We're gonna go pick him up tonight.

FAD KING
Where is he?

BREAN
Out in Oklahoma.

MOSS
Going to make a little stop back home, pick up my shirts, show him a little treat.

FAD KING
See y'at the Finish Line.

AS THEY WALK AWAY, MOSS CALLS BACK.

MOSS
Tell'em to fly the Inaugural Speech past me.

BREAN
Inaugural Speech, press corp's gonna be jealous of giving up that one...

MOSS
Hey, lemme close out the thing in style.

MOSS
I've come to feel It's my thing.
(PAUSE)
You know, you take a job... You take a job, and, many times, it's just a job. And then...

BREAN
Hell of a Ride, Stanley...

MOSS
...isn't it?
(PAUSE)
Hey, what-the-hey ... it's all part of the bittersweet...

HE GESTURES WITH HIS HANDS, LOOKING FOR THE WORD.

INT L.A. LAKERS, STADIUM, NIGHT.

BREAN AND MOSS. LOOKING ON, A SILENT AUDITORIUM, MOSS TALKING ON THE PHONE.
BREAN SHUSHES HIM. MOSS LOOKS UP.

ANGLE HIS P.O.V.

THE LAKERS, AND THE OPPOSING TEAM, SILENTLY, IN TWO RANKS, LOOKING ON AS A CHOIR OF YOUNGSTERS OF ALL RACES FILES ONTO THE COURT, AND, DIRECTED BY THEIR CHOIRMASTER, BEGINS TO SING, IN MANY PART HARMONY, "GOOD OLD SHOE."

AS THEY CONCLUDE, THE BASKETHALL PLAYERS TAKE OFF THEIR SHOES, AND FLING THEM INTO THE STANDS, WHICH CHEER.

ANGLE

BREAN, MOSS, AND AMES, IN A SKYHOX, WATCHING THE SPECTACLE.
BREAN SHAKES HIS HEAD IN SATISFACTION.

MOSS

No business like it.

THEY WALK OUT OF THE BOX.

INT LIMO, LEAVING THE STADIUM. POURING RAIN. THE GUARD MOTIONS FOR THE LIMO TO STOP, CHECKS THEIR I.D., AND SAYS, "COURAGE, MOM..." THE GUARDS WEAR A LAPEL PIN OF AN OLD SHOE.

ANGLE

MOSS AND BREAN LOOKING OUT OF THE WINDOW.

ANGLE, THEIR POV.

EVERY TREE AND LAMPPOST HAS A PAIR OF OLD SHOES HANGING IN IT.

ANGLE INT THE LIMO.

BREAN, MOSS, AND AMES, BREAN NODDING, DEEP IN THOUGHT.
THE RADIO IN THE LIMO IS PLAYING AN AUDIO VERSION OF THE "DON'T SWITCH HORSES," COMMERCIAL.

COWHOY

(VO)

Rode the fifteen miles from the Bottomland, n'I was a-gonna switch him for a fresher one to do the Ropin'...

COWBOY #2

(VO)

Waal, but, you know, my Paw always said, Ya Don't Switch Horses...

ANNOUNCER

Don't switch Horses. Vote. And vote for the man who brought peace to...

MOSS REACHES OVER AND TURNS OFF THE RADIO, SIGHS.

MOSS

Fucking amateurs. Pity of it is, two more days, we bring it all back home...

BRKAN

...knock wood...

MOSS

And who's gonna know?

(PAUSE)

Who's gonna know what we did.

(PAUSE)

Who's gonna know...?

BREAN

(SHRUGS)

Pride of a job-well-done...

AMES

It's the Pride of a Job Well Done, Stanley, yes, but it's more than that.

MOSS

(DISTRACTED)

...mmm?

AMES

It's the gratitude of your party, and of your President...

MOSS

Izzat the thing...

AMES

Indeed it is.

MOSS LOOKS OUT OF THE WINDOW.

ANGLE, OUT OF HIS WINDOW. AN L.A. VIADUCT, IN THE POURING RAIN, SPRAY PAINTED, WITH A HUGE MURAL OF SCHUMANN, AND THE WORDS, "COURAGE, MOM..."

BREAN

(ON HIS PHONE)

Dean City, Oklahoma...

(SHRUGS)

Army Special Programs -- tell'em to bring Schumann to the plane, n we'll bring him back, stash him the Hospital...Call the plane....tell me where to pick'm up.

MOSS LOOKS OUT OF THE WINDOW, AT THE MURAL. LOOKS OVER IN ADMIRATION AT BREAN.

MOSS

I'll bet you're good at Chess.

BREAN

I would be, I could remember how all the pieces move...

INT CORPORATE JET NIGHT.

THE AIRBORNE JET, NIGHT, BREAN AND MOSS RELAXING.

A CO-PILOT COMES BACK INTO THE CABIN, AND CAMERA HINGES HIM TO A BAR -- HE TAKES OUT A BOTTLE AND TOPS UP DRINKS FOR THE TWO MEN --

HE PROGRESSES DOWN THE AISLE, WHERE WE SEE AMES ON THE PHONE.

AMES

(ON PHONE)

...aspect of the inaugural which.... No. No, the thinking is, to Wait on the Congressional... hello?

(TO THE CO-PILOT)
We getting some.... hello? Some interference...?

CO-PILOT
Little rough weather.

AMES
(AS THE PHONE COMES BACK ON)
To wait on the Congressional Medal for Schumann. Moss and Brean think, and I agree, why spend it til you need it.

(PAUSE)
No. Go ahead and pre... go ahead and prepare it.
Sure.

(PAUSE)
Well, you... hello? You can find the info on him in the Army Special... Hello? The Army Special Programs.

CAMERA TRAVELS UP THE CABIN AGAIN, WITH THE CO-PILOT.

CO-PILOT
We're seeing some difficult weather out of Oklahoma -- but the captain thinks that we'll be fine.

BREAN
(TALKING ON THE TELEPHONE)
Against...who could be aggressor....Help me out here...Units of 303, the Defense Department confirms, early this morning, Albanian Time, stormed a mountain hideaway, near the city of -- help me out here -- and freed a tired, but happy William Schumann, Suffering no casualties. His condition is reported as Guarded, and his route to the US has not been disclosed, but a high White House source confirms he is expected in Washington tomorrow morning...no, that's for the wire service. Moss's working on Big Bird's Inaugural.

(PAUSE)
Nine A.M...?
(TO MOSS)
Nine? Miss the commuters, but...

MOSS
...we'll gettem in their cars.

BREAN
(INTO PHONE)
Yeah, we'll gettem in their cars.

(TO SELF)
I'm slowing down...
(TO PHONE)
No, no. Look, lookit: I think it's a mistake, well, I'll tell you why: you got'em by the balls, Squeeze.

(PAUSE)
Because Schumann's the Shark. He's ...Jaws. You have to tease'em... You don't puttem in the first reel of the movie...

(MOSS NODS)
Bring'em back slow, the President... No, no, put him on. Put him on.

(PAUSE. HE COVERS PHONE)

President wants to reveal Schumann before the election.

MOSS

Big mistake.

BREAN

(INTO PHONE)

Hell, yes, we're, we're on our way to get him now. No. Lookit: it's like a girl with her virginity, y'understand...

MOSS NODS ALONG.

BREAN

(CONT)

Guy says he'll respect her tomorrow, he might, but why take a chance? Hold out til after you're married. That's... that's.... looky, we're offering'em Schumann, make em vote for hhhh.... psychologically, they will understand that that's the bargain. Make them pay for him. Make... that's right, the price is their vote. Now, we bring him home, the President announces he is flying home, he's here, he's there... f'there the election, TA DA, here he is.

(PAUSE)

Have him say it like I wrote it, It'll be fine. Thanks.

(HE HANGS UP.)

Labor, five bucks an hour. If you watch, ten bucks an hour. If you help ... if you help, a hundred bucks an hour.

MOSS

Hey, lookit: any business...

BREAN

Ain't that the truth.

(PAUSE)

MOSS

Whattaya gonna do when this is all over?

BREAN

What am I gonna do? I'm gonna "Fade Away."

(SMILES)

What are you gonna do?

MOSS

(LAUGHS)

Well, I'll be damned if I know ... you know... doing this thing ...

(PAUSE)

You know what the worst word is, in the English Language? It's retirement." What the hell was I thinking of? Hell, I used to...

BREAN NUDGES HIM, TO LOOK AT THE TV.

THEY SETTLE BACK, LOOK AT THE TV.

ANGLE, ON A TV, A COUNTRY MUSIC SPECTACULAR. WILLIE NELSON IS CALLED TO THE STAGE, SITS ON HIS STOOL, PLAYS A FEW BARS FOR NOTHING, AND THEN A RENDITION OF "COURAGE, MOM."

ANGLE, IN THE AUDIENCE, PAN OVER THE FACES, ONE TEENAGE GIRL IN A 858 SWEATSHIRT, BEARING THE LOGO, AND THE WORD, "VOLO," IS SILENTLY, TEARFULLY, MOUTHING THE WORDS ALONG WITH WILLIE.

WILLIE NELSON

"What have you got at the end of the day? How do you keep those fears at bay? What do you say, when there's nothin' to say? Courage, Mom..."

(ET CETERA)

ANGLE

MOSS AND BREAN.

BREAN

We pick up Schumann. Sneak him back inside the Beltway. And we plan his homecoming. Zt's gone be Neil Armstrong, Dr. Livingston, and Lindy...They're gonna forget, they're gonna forget, they're gonna forget that there is an election...The Pres's gonna have to say, one of his speeches, "Don't forget to Vote..."

MOSS

I got it in the inaugural. "Thank you for voting for me, but, as importantly: Thank you for voting..."

(HE GESTURES AT A SHEAF OF PAPERS)

BREAN

(GRINS)

Getting off on the inaugural?

(MOSS NODS)

Gonna go...

MOSS

Might, if I was asked...

(HE SMILES)

ANGLE THE OKLAHOMA AIRPORT. NIGHT.

IN THE POURING RAIN, THE PLANE, BEING WAVED TO A PARKING SPACE. IN THE B.G. AN ARMY TRUCK, SURROUNDED BY CHASE CARS, PULLS UP, WE READ, "UNITED STATES ARMY. SPECIAL P..." AND THE REST OF THE WORD OBSCURED.

ANGLE

INT THE PLANE. AS THE TWO UNBUCKLE, AND STRETCH.

MOSS

But, you know, this is the meeting, Ron? You think about it. This is the meeting. This, here. Schumann and us. King Kong and the Trainers...this's it... What are you working on?

ANGLE

ON BREAN, WHO IS DOODLING.

BREAN
Medal. Medal and Ribbon.

MOSS
Of what?

BREAN
The Albanian Campaign.

MOSS
(TO HIMSELF)
...the Albanian Campaign. This... this is history...

AMES COMES UP FROM THE BACK OF THE PLANE.

AMES
...The Albanian Campaign...

MOSS
...like the sound of it, eh...

AMES
We've got to put that, into the Inaugural. "I have here, a ribbon. You haven't seen it before, and you will not see it too often now. For it is the Proud Possession of a few, a very few Men and Women... it is the Ribbon of the Albanian Campaign...."

THE OTHER TWO LOOK AT HIM ADMIRINGLY.

MOSS
Wilfred, that's not bad.

BREAN
That's not bad at all.

AMES
Well, you know, "The Whole Thing's Theatre..."

THE OTHER TWO MEN LAUGH WITH HIM.

BREAN
Napoleon said, fellow won't sell you his life, but he will trade it to you for a little piece of ribbon.

MOSS
...the Albanian Campaign.
(PAUSE)
And we won't even be a footnote...

BREAN
We were the Albanian campaign, John -- We Were There.

HE CLEARS HIS THROAT. HE LOOKS OUT THROUGH THE WINDOW. WE SEE A MILITARY CONVOY APPROACHING. THE DOOR TO THE COCKPIT OPENS, THE PILOT GOES OUT.

PILOT
Gentlemen, little problematical weather.

BREAN

Well, c'n we get him back home?

PILOT

Could if we had to. Rather not. Rough weather.

BREAN AND MOSS GET UP, MOVE TOWARD THE FRONT OF THE PLANE, MOSS LOOKING OUT OF THE WINDOW.

MOSS

Well, they're protecting him well enough.

BREAN

They should be. Most valuable animal since Sea Biscuit. Isn't he...

MOSS

Bigger than that. For want of a nail a Kingdom was lost...

BREAN

You've got something, there...

AMES

(WRITING)

Napoleon said -- A man will not sell you his life...

THEY LOOK OUT THE WINDOW, START STRAIGHTENING UP THEIR CLOTHING, ET CETERA, IN PREPARATION FOR MEETING SCHUMANN.

BREAN LOOKS HACK OVER HIS SHOULDER AT THE TELEVISION.

ANGLE HIS POV.

ON THE TV A PICTURE HEADED "ANDREWS AIRFORCE BASE," AND SIGNS OF SCAFFOLDING BEING CONSTRUCTED, AND BUNTING PUT UP. CUTS TO A TALKING HEAD, IN FRONT OF A PHOTO OF SCHUMANN.

ANGLE

MOSS AND BREAN.

BREAN

...a masterpiece...

MOSS

(SHRUGS)

...givem what they want...But...

THEY MOVE TOWARD THE FRONT OF THE PLANE.

THEY RUN INTO THE PILOT.

PILOT

Weather's worsening, sir...might be advisable, wait it out, on the ground, till..

BREAN

(NODS)

We're due at Andrews.

(LOOKS AT HIS WATCH)

PILOT

Well, I wouldn't go up in it, lest I had to...

MOSS

(TO AMES)

Here he comes...

THEY HEAR THE PLANE DOOR OPENING.

THEY ALL STRAIGHTEN UP AND SMILE, AS SCHUMANN, A RAINCOAT OVER HIS SHOULDERS, IS LED ONTO THE PLANE, FLANKED BY 4 M.P.'S, AND AN OFFICER, WITH A CLIPBOARD.

MOSS

Sergeant Schumann? If I may? Welcome to History...

AMES

Sergeant Schumann? My name is Ames. Welcome.

OFFICER

S'mby named Brean? Sign here...

BREAN

(TO THE PILOT)

Captain... You wanna Take'er up...?

PILOT

Heavy weather East of here.

BREAN

Whaddaya think?

PILOT

Six to five and pick'em...you wanna chance it...

THEY ARE QUIET, AS SOUNDS OF THE TV FILTER IN. AN EXCITED NEWSCASTER.

NEWSCASTER

(ON TV)

Word that William Schumann, the Old Shoe, is expected back, today, and that a glimpse of him...

MOSS

Let's fly, if it'll fly... People waiting for us...

THE PHONE RINGS. BREAN ANSWERS IT.

BREAN

(ON PHONE. HE HAS NOT YET REGISTERED SCHUMANN)

...child at the airport...

(TO MOSS)

breaks through the ranks, runs to "old shoe" -- should we have flower or a bear...?

AMES

Uh...Didn't we do this?

BREAN

Never quit a winner.

MOSS

I thought they weren't meeting him at the airport...

BREAN

They insist they wanna go with meeting him at the airport. I told'em they're wrong, I can't convince'em. They're concerned that the last kid had the Wheat. Variations include, the kid is a boy, the kid is twins, it's a little dog ... they rub meat on Schumann's cuff, the dog runs to him...

MOSS

(OF SCHUMANN)

Uh...

IN THE B.G. BREAN FINISHES SIGNING THE CLIPBOARD, THE OFFICER NODS TO THE M.P.'S, AND THEY SALUTE AND DEPART, THE OFFICER HANDS A KEY TO BREAN.

AMES

(OF KEY)

What's this...?

THE OFFICER TAKES THE RAINCOAT FROM SCHUMANN'S SHOULDERS, REVEALING HE IS IN A PRISON UNIFORM, AND HEAVILY MANACLED. THE MAN, IS SCHUMANN, AN UNMISTAKABLE DERANGED, DROOLING, PSYCHO-NUTTER. HOLD.

OFFICER

(TAKES A KEY ON A CHAIN FROM AROUND HIS
NECK -- HANDS IT TO BREAN)

Key to the manacles...

THE OFFICER SALUTES, STARTS OUT OF THE PLANE.

ANGLE. AMES LOOKS BACK, AT THE MANACLED SCHUMANN, AND BREAN GLARING, OPEN MOUTHED AT HIM.

ANGLE

EXT THE PLANE, THE OFFICER RETREATING, IN THE RAIN, TO THE TRUCK, AMES, RUNNING AFTER HIM.

AMES

Wait wait wait wait wait wait wait wait wait...

(HE CATCHES UP WITH THE OFFICER)

What did he...what...what's the trouble?

OFFICER

No trouble at all.

AMES

What did he do...?

THE OFFICER CONSULTS HIS CLIPBOARD.

CAMERA PANS TO SHOW THE VAN READS "MILITARY SPECIAL PRISONS."

ANGLE

INT, THE PLANE, BREAN, LOOKING AT SCHUMANN. HOLD. MOSS ENTERS THE PLANE.

ANGLE

ON MOSS, AS HE MOVES TO HIS BRIEFCASE, AND EXTRACTS THE TELEPHONE-LIKE BOOK, HE TURNS TO THE FRONT PAGE, AND WE SEE THE TITLE IS "MILITARY SPECIAL PRISONS."

ANGLE

MOSS AND BREAN. MOSS HANDS BREAN THE BOOK. BREAN LOOKS. TURNS TO MOSS. AND THEN TO SCHUMANN.

BREAN
...how ya doing?

MOSS TAKES THE CLIPBOARD, AND READS, WHILE AMES SITS STUNNED.

SCHUMANN
Fine.

MOSS HOLDS UP THE MILITARY DIRECTORY.

MOSS
I think we asked for "special programs" and they gave us "special prisons."

BREAN
Yeah, well -- it's only one word difference.

AMES DRAWS MOSS ASIDE.

AMES
(SOTTO)
He, uh, has he been in the "jail" long?

MOSS
...twelve years.

BREAN NODS.

AMES
Much more...uh, he have much more time to "serve?"

MOSS SHAKES HIS HEAD, SPREADS HIS HANDS APART TO ARM'S LENGTH.
PAUSE

AMES
(BRAVING IT)
What'd he do?

MOSS
He raped a nun.
(PAUSE)

AMES
Yeeaahhh... Ohmigod ... ohmigod... ohmigod...

MOSS
(READING FROM THE CLIPBOARD)
...and...

AMES
And? NO. I don't wanna know.
(PAUSE)

What do you mean "and...?"

MOSS

(READING)

Look, look, look....

(HE HOLDS UP A SMALL VIAL, READS.)

He's fine, as long as he has his medication.

AMES

What happens if he doesn't have his medication?

MOSS

He's not fine.

BREAN GOES TO THE FRONT OF THE PLANE.

BREAN

Yeah, Captain, uh, yeah, Captain, uh, y'better get us back to Washington.

BREAN POURS HIMSELF A DRINK. PAUSE. TO SCHUMANN.

BREAN

How are'ya...

DISSOLVE

INT THE PLANE NIGHT.

INSERT.

THE VIAL OF PILLS, LABELLED, "MILITARY SPECIAL PRISONS," SCHUMANN, WILLIAM. A. TWO PILLS EVERY FOUR HOURS. SHOULD THE PATIENT BECOME VIOLENT THE DOSAGE CAN BE INCREASED TO...

THE PILLS SPILL OUT OF THE FRAME.

ANGLE

THE PLANE, IN A VIOLENT RAINSTORM, BUCKING WILDLY. AMES, ON HIS KNEES, GATHERING UP THE PILLS, REPLACES THEM IN THE VIAL, SHAKES OUT TWO, AND GIVES THEM TO SCHUMANN. WHO TAKES THEM. MOSS THEN STRAPS HIMSELF BACK IN AND BREAN CONTINUES TALKING ON THE TELEPHONE.

THE THREE STRAPPED IN, THE PLANE TOSSING WILDLY. BREAN ON THE PHONE.

SCHUMANN

You gonna git me back tomorrow?

(PAUSE)

Cause they havin beans tomorrow...

BREAN

(ON THE PHONE)

(HE PICKS UP A BOTTLE OF SCOTCH AND STARTS DRINKING FROM IT.)

A slight, a slight, well, no, we're gonna deal with it, we just, I need a little readjustment...we need to rethink...

MOSS

Yes, William, Uh, we have this thing we're doing...

SCHUMANN

Long's you git me back for the beans...

MOSS

...for the beans, yes...

BREAN

(ON THE PHONE)

We're gonna, just, may have to call off the...

HE GESTURES AT THE SILENT TELEVISION, WHERE WE SEE THE SIGNS OF THE SCAFFOLDING, SIGNS READING, "WELCOME HOME OLD SHOE," ET CETERA...

Well, maybe, you know, ah, ah, he's sicker than we thought, and rush him under wraps to Walter Reed to do a complete...

SCHUMANN

(TO AMES)

R'if y'r gonna keep me out, I'd kinda like the chance, t'go to church...

(HE LEANS TOWARD AMES AND WINKS LASCIVIOUSLY, AND NUDGES HIM IN THE RIBS)

AMES

Oh Lord. What have you done to me? What have you done to me...?

BREAN

Wilfred.

AMES

...what have you done to me...

BREAN

All Combat takes place at night, in the Rain, and at the Junction of four Map Segments...

AMES

...what are we going to do...?

MOSS

He's fine, as long as he gets his medication.

BREAN

Speaking of that...

(HE LOOKS AT THE VIAL)

We're gonna need a whole lot more of this....

AMES

Well, get on the phone, and get it...

MOSS

You know, I think you people are looking at this All Wrong. If you look at the backstory -- the guy's coming back from Combat and Torture. Of course he is gonna be ... uh ... uh ... "fucked up". Of Course he's gonna "need a little help"...

(GESTURES PUTTING A HYPODERMIC IN HIS

ARM)

AMES

(TO HIMSELF)

Oh, Lord....

ANGLE, ON THE TV, WHERE WE SEE THE PRESIDENT, WEARING AN OLD SHOE BUTTON.

PRESIDENT

...a proclamation of a Day of National Rejoining...

THE TELEVISION GOES ALL FUZZY, THEN CONKS OUT.

...a day of Humility, a day of Pride...in the Return of...

SCHUMANN

N'ybody gotta Beer...?

THE LIGHTS IN THE PLANE FLICKER, AND THEN COME ON, WE SEE THE LIGHTENING FLASHING OUT OF THE WINDOW, THE CO-PILOT COMES BACK INTO THE CABIN...

BREAN

(ON THE PHONE)

Just....do what I ...look: get me a ...hello...?
Hel...? I'm going to need an ambulance, we take him,
the last moment, right from the Pl...no, we land, we
puttem in the ambulance. Air force jet lands, we take
somebody else off that jet...what the fuck do I care?
Somebody in a Hospital gown. And we need a
.....hello? Hello...?

THE LINE GOES DEAD.

BREAN

Cause I don't think this dog is gonna hunt....

MOSS

He's going to be fine, aren't you boy...?

BREAN

Yeah, well, perhaps...

(TO PHONE)

Speaking of which: I have a prescription here, I'm
going to give you the number, I need you standing by
with a crate of the stuff.... it's ... what is it?

MOSS

An anti-psychotic...

BREAN

(TO TELEPHONE)

It's an anti-psychotic, the num... the
number...hello...hello...

BEAT. THE BUFFETING STOPS. THE CO-PILOT ENTERS.

CO-PILOT

We have been experiencing some buffeting, but I think
from here on out, it's going to be fine.

HE RETURNS TO THE COCKPIT. BREAN TRIES TO REDIAL THE TELEPHONE.

SCHUMANN

Long's I git back for my Beans.

MOSS

This is nothing, Wait'll you've worked with a movie star, one time, this is nothing, we keep him shot-up and happy -- the Old Days, I used to think I was a pharmacist, the kind of stuff I had to do. One time...

SCHUMANN

Cause the beans, y'know, y'can tell if they're puttin stuff in it.

BREAN

Uh huh...

SCHUMANN

So you don't have to fear it.

BREAN

Uh huh...

MOSS

Mmm.

BREAN

What kind of stuff?

(TO PHONE)

Hello...?

SCHUMANN

(PAUSE. SCHUMANN LOOKS AT THEM WARILY)

What do you mean, "What kind of stuff?"

AMES

No, no, he didn't mean anything at all...

BREAN

(TO MOSS)

Give'em another pill...

AMES

No. No. He didn't mean anything by it at all...

BREAN

(TO PHONE)

Hello? No, operator...

MOSS ADMINISTERS A PILL TO SCHUMANN.

SCHUMANN

What the fuck did you mean, "What kind of stuff?"

MOSS

(TO BREAN)

...this is nothing. This is nothing. D'you ever shoot

in Italy? Try three Italian starlets on Benzedrine,
this is a walk in the park...

SCHUMANN

(AS IF COMING TO)

...who are you?

(PAUSE)

Who are you sonofabitches...

(HE LOOKS AROUND WILDLY)

AMES

We're just, actually, we're friends of... can we get
another pill into him...

SCHUMANN

Where are you taking me...?

BREAN

(TO PHONE)

Hello...?

A HUGE FLASH OF LIGHTENING, THE PLANE IS PLUNGED INTO DARKNESS, THE ENGINES
STOP:

INT THE DARK CABIN. THE WIND WHISTLING.

AMES

(SOFTLY)

Oh, Heck.

DISSOLVE

EXT A FIELD IN MONTANA. THE WRECKED CORPORATE JET.

ANGLE

A BEATEN-UP BREAN STRUGGLES FROM THE PLANE, FINISHING A BOTTLE OF SCOTCH, HE
FLINGS IT FROM HIM, REACHES IN HIS BACK POCKET, OPENS ANOTHER, AND, AS HE DOES
SO, HE SINGS DRUNKENLY.

BREAN

"Hush little baby, don't say a Word...Pappa's gonna buy
you a Mockingbird, if that Mocking bird don't sing,
Poppa's gonna buy you a diamond ring..."

AMES, SIMILARLY BRUISED, STUMBLES FROM THE PLANE BEHIND HIM.

BREAN

...kid complains, kid cries, gets more junk, junk don't
work, kid cries, gets more junk. End of the song,
house full of worthless junk, the kid's still crying.
Story of America...

(HE SITS ON THE GROUND AND OPENS THE
NEW BOTTLE OF SCOTCH.)

...Z'at ever bother you...?

(HE REACHES BACK INTO THE PLANE, AND
BRINGS OUT A SMALL TELEVISION SET)

ANGLE, AS HE LEANS INTO THE PLANE. WE SEE MOSS, LYING IN A HEAP, MOSS COMES
TO.

MOSS

...what happened...?

BREAN

I think we were experiencing a Little Technical Difficulty.

MOSS

How's our friend?

BREAN SETS UP THE TELEVISION. TURNS IT ON.
HE SITS, AND TAKES THE BOTTLE FROM BREAN, AND DRINKS.

MOSS

..."Courage. Mom"...

BREAN HAS KICKED THE TELEVISION INTO LIFE, WE SEE A MAN AND WOMAN ANCHOR,
SPEAKING LUGUBRIOUSLY, INTO THE CAMERA.

BREAN

News. Like a Wedding Cake. Tons and tons of sticky
sugar, Barbie and Ken on top...

(HE HITS THE TV)

Can't ya Talk, you sonofabitches...?

MOSS

What the hell do we care?

BREAN

Eh? I'm like the Rest of America. I don't care -- I'm
just addicted to it...

A PHOTO OF SCHUMANN COMES ON THE TELEVISION. BREAN STUMBLES BACK INTO THE
PLANE, AND HAULS THE DAZED SCHUMANN OUT, AND PROPS HIM AGAINST THE PLANE.

BREAN

(TO SCHUMANN)

N'just when everything was going so well...

HE SIGHS. HE LOOKS AT THE TELEVISION SCREEN.

ANGLE

THE CROWDS AT ANDREW'S AIRKORCE BASE, THE "OLD SHOE" BANNERS, THE "COURAGE,
MOM," BANNERS. THE STILL BAND. A SHOT OF THE BANDMASTER, SURREPTITIOUSLY,
GLANCING AT HIS WATCH.

MOSS

How's our friend? What is he, "dead?"

BREAN

Wake up.

MOSS

Is he dead?

AMES

Is he dead?

(PAUSE)

Is he dead? ARE YOU DEAD? WAKE UP. You stupid, nun-raping sonofabitch.... wake up... WAKE UP. Do you want to spend the rest of your life in JAIL? WAKE UP! Do You Know Who I AM??? I'm talking to you...

SCHUMANN BEGINS TO ROUSE HIMSELF.

SCHUMANN

Z'it time for Exercise?

(PAUSE)

Cause it's my Day on the Yard.

BREAN

Courage, Mom.

AMES

Oh. Hell. And what do we do now? What do we do now? Boy Producer?

(PAUSE)

Mister Win-an-E Emmy, Social Conscience, Whaleshit, save-the-rainforest, Liberal hire-a-convict shithead?

Mister Affirmative-Action Peacnik. Commie... shithead....?

MOSS

(PAUSE)

This is nothing. ...piece of cake. Y'know, producing is being a Samurai Warrior. They pay you, day in, day out, for Years, so that, ONE DAY, when called upon, you can respond, your training At Its Peak, and save the day.

ANGLE

BREAN, SHAKING HIS HEAD. IN THE B.G., MOSS, DRINKING. THE TV COMES TO LIFE.

COMMENTATOR

...long overdue, its absence unexplained.

THE NEXT SHOT IS SENATOR BUD NOLE, SPEAKING EARNESTLY AT THE CAMERA.

NOLE

...this...regrettable absence... this ...tardy absence of the flight. Must give us pause. And, in that pause we should take time to examine ourselves, our plans, and our future. There has been an ...interregnum -- if you will, of reason, while we've watched unfold this drama..... on the world scale...

AMES

(TO HIMSELF)

...I hate this cocksucker...

NOLE

And, now, end how it will, this drama is done...

ANGLE MOSS, AS HE WANDERS BACK TO STARE AT THE SCREEN. THE VAST FIELDS STRETCHING AWAY IN THE DISTANCE

NOLE (C)

The drama is done, and we must pause to consider.

(HE HOLDS UP A PHOTO OF THE PRESIDENT)

And we must consider this man. This man...who, you will remember, was discovered, scant days ago, in a situation which must debar him from Public Office...

(HE HOLDS UP A SHOT OF THE PRESIDENT
AND THE GIRLSCOUTS)

And I say, when we take time to reflect, there're going to be a lot of apartments for rent in Washington, Election Day. Two days from now, Folks...Don't forget to vote.

MOSS

No, I didn't think so.

AMES KICKS IN THE THLEVISION. HE MOVES TO SCHUMANN AND LIFTS HIM TO HIS FEET.

BREAN

(DRUNKENLY)

Leav't alone. Wha'd television ever do to you? Ate your life, ruin'd your Culture, but...

AMES FINISHES DESTROYING THE TV.

AMES

IT DESTROYED THE ELECTORAL PROCESS.

HE FINISHES RAGING AT THE TELEVISION SET. PAUSE.

MOSS

Come on.

AMES

...where?

MOSS

Come on.

MOSS MOVES SCHUMANN INTO A STANDING POSITION.

BREAN

Y'know what else bothers me? "Shh lil baby, don' saya word, papa's gon buy you a mocking bird..."

(PAUSE)

The baby don'say a word, WHAT THE FUCK IS THE MOTHERFUCKING MOCKING BIRD GONE SAY?

(PAUSE)

You follow me...?

MOSS

Get on your feet, boy.

BREAN

Uh huh...why?

MOSS

We're going home. We're going home together...

BREAN

We have no home. We're vagrants. N'each man's hand's against us. We killed Old Shoe...

(HE BEGINS TO WEEP)

We killed the Schuster...spend our life in a packingcrate...Where are you going...?

MOSS STARTS CODDLING SCHUMANN.

MOSS

Come on, Pal, come on Willie, come on, Old Shoe...

SCHUMANN

Just want to take a nap.

MOSS

He's not dead, Ronnie. He's just a little understandably, fatigued.

(PAUSE)

Let's get him to some help...

SCHUMANN

...gimme some help...

MOSS

That's right, we'll take a nap. We'll get you to Washington, we'll get you Back to your Buddies, and...

SCHUMANN

...just want to Get Back to the Beans...

MOSS WALKS TO BREAN, AND STARTS KICKING HIM.

MOSS

Come on, you fucking sissy, you think this is tough? Try show-business. 1970-1990, n'ybody I worked with, y'could of bottled their piss n'sold it in the ghettos...

(TO SCHUMANN)

Come on, Pal...

BREAN

I'm tired.

MOSS

Finish Strong! Are you nuts?

(HE STARTS SHEPHERDING THE TWO ACROSS
THE VAST WHEATFIELD)

Are you nuts? This's Pennies from Heaven... on his triumphal return home, Old Shoe, his Plane Forced Down...AND YET...

BREAN

He's supposed to be flying in from Europe.

MOSS

We'll deal with that when we come to it. This is producing. This is what they pay off on...come on, Pal, Boots and Saddles...

AMES

...his Triumphal Plane. Shot Down.

MOSS

Shot down, Forced down...

(HE GESTURES, MEANING, THIS IS A MINOR
POINT)

You guys are missing it... You're missing the
opportunity

THE GROUP TRUDGES OFF.

SCHUMANN

Isn't it time for my Pill...?

DISSOLVE

INT VAST COMBINE HARVESTER DAY. STOPPED IN A WHEATFIELD.

OUTSIDE, AN ENDLESS WHEATFIELD.

INSIDE, BREAN, MOSS, AMES AND SCHUMANN, CRAMMED INTO THE PASSENGER SPACE OF
THE HUGE MACHINE. THE DRIVER WATCHING A SMALL TELEVISION, AS HE DRIVES, THE
EARPIECE IN HIS EAR.

ANGLE, THE TELEVISION, SHOWS THE DESERTED RUNWAY AT THE AIRFORCE BASE. THE
CROWD BREAKING UP.

ANGLE. THE THREE IN THE PASSENGER SPACE OF THE COMBINE.

MOSS

This is producing. This is, this is, this is the
Beauty Part. You've got your fortune right here, and
you were ready to throw it away. Because he's got a
Problem? F'it was easy, anyone would do it.

(PAUSE)

Otto Preminger. Had to film a scene, in EXODUS. The
proclamation of the State of Israel. Needed twenty
thousand extras, n'Jerusalem Park. Not enough money to
pay'em. What did he do? What did he do? Printed up
signs: Be in a movie, fifteen skekels. He Charged'em
-- had to turn'em away. That's producing. That's
producing... n'you know, someday, people're gonna tell
this story...

BREAN

You can't tell this story.

MOSS

Why not?

BREAN

Some'b'y'll have you killed.

MOSS

Ha ha. No, no, not now, not now, of course, But
Someday... when they tell this story...

AMES

You can't tell this story. He's not kidding you.

(PAUSE)

You can't tell this story. You knew that.

(PAUSE)

The pay off was, you get to be Ambassador, or...

MOSS

No, no, no...

SCHUMANN

...isn't it time for my Pill...?

BREAN

And what the fuck story are you gonna tell? The guy is a nutcase.

MOSS

You would be, two, if you'd gone through what he went through.

BREAN

He raped a Nun...

MOSS

What he went through in Albania...

BREAN

He's doped to the Gills ...

SCHUMANN

...where's my l'il pill?

MOSS

(TO BREAN)

Show some compassion.

BREAN

... and he spent the last twelve years in a Military Prison...

(PAUSE)

AMES

How do we explain that?

MOSS

...how do we Explain That? Hey? Am I worried...?

AMES

...how do we explain that? With the World Watching.

MOSS

Fuck the world. Try a ten A.M. pitch meeting, no sleep, coked-to-the-gills, and you haven't even read the material.

AMES

But how do we explain the fact he was in prison?

MOSS

How do we explain that? Ah, well, you see, Wilfred, this is where you've never been at a pitch. You see? His records say he was in prison ... as they must, as all the records of Group 303 have the men and the women, carried on their roster, as belonging somewhere else, the secrecy required of....

ANGLE

MOSS STILL TALKING, THE HARVESTER CONTINUING DOWN THE ENDLESS ROWS OF WHEAT, MOVING AWAY FROM THE CAMERA.

DISSOLVE

EXT TINY OLD FASHIONED OKLAHOMA GAS STATION DAY.

THE OWNER, BOOTS PROPPED ON THE COUNTER, WATCHING AN OLD BLACK AND WHITE TELEVISION. IT IS SENATOR NOLE.

NOLE

Get out and vote, get out and vote, but remember the difference, between a Promise, and a deed -- a promise-and-a-deed...

HE HALF TURNS HIS HEAD, ACROSS THE HIGHWAY WE SEE THE HARVESTER, WITH MOSS AND BREAN AND SCHUMAN AND AMES. AMES STAYS BEHIND, TO TALK WITH THE DRIVER OF THE HUGE HARVESTER COMBINE.

ANGLE

ON BREAN AND MOSS, WHO WALK SCHUMANN ACROSS THE HIGHWAY. IN THE B.G. WE SEE AMES TALKING TO THE DRIVER OF THE HARVESTER, WHO IS A SMALL, HISPANIC MAN.

ANGLE ON THE THREE, AS THEY APPROACH A PAYPHONE OUT BY THE GAS STATION.

MOSS

(TO BREAN)

..."down safely," crew perished in the Crash....

BREAN

(SHAKING HIS HEAD TO CLEAR IT.)

No, I'm On Top of it...

MOSS

"...unsure whether or not Enemy Action..."

BREAN

No, I'm fine... I got it together....

MOSS

...but...

THEY STOP BY A TELEPHONE.

BREAN

You got a dime....?

MOSS HANDS HIM A DIME.

BREAN DIALS.

BREAN

(TO PHONE)

Hello.

(PAUSE)

Hello. I'm fine. We're fine. We're... stand by to copy this, will... just get a pencil.... He is Down Safely, though...

ANGLE

ON MOSS, AS HE WALKS THE GROGGY SCHUMANN TOWARD THE GAS STATION.

MOSS

...how ya feeling, boy?

SCHUMANN

...mmm.

MOSS

...'bout ready to Mix it Up...?

SCHUMANN

Is today Laundry Day...?

CAMERA TAKES THEM INTO THE SMALL GAS STATION OFFICE, WHERE WE SEE A WIZENED OLD WESTERNER, LOOKING AT THE TELEVISION WHERE WE SEE SENATOR NOLE.

MOSS

Hiya.

OWNER

Yup.

MOSS

How 'bout a Cold Drink...?

ANGLE ON THE TELEVISION, SENATOR NOLE.

NOLE

...produce this Schumann.

(PAUSE)

Produce him. I say; or, and I do not hesitate to say it, rank him as Just One More...

THE OWNER GESTURES AT A COLD DRINK COOLER.

NOLE

(CONT.)

Just One More of a series of Broken Promises. Of ... Fantasies, yes, Fantasies, which...

MOSS AND SCHUMANN WALK OVER TO THE COOLER. THEY LOOK OUT THE WINDOW AT BREAN, WHO IS WALKING IN FROM THE PHONE. HE HANGS UP AND COMES IN. MOSS LOOKS AT HIM, MEANING, "WHAT'S UP?" BREAN GESTURES AT THE TELEVISION.

ANGLE, HIS POV.

THE TELEVISION, NOW SWITCHED TO THE SCENE OF THE DESERTED TARMAC.

COMMENTATOR (VO)

Senator Nole, commentating on the unexplained

absence of...wait a moment...wait a....

THE SCREEN DISSOLVES, TO A SHOT OF THE GREAT SEAL OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

ANNOUNCER (VO)

Live, from the White House, we bring you...

ANGLE

ON BREAN AND MOSS, AS THEY CLUSTER UP TO THE TELEVISION. IN THE B.G., SCHUMANN, SITTING ON A STOOL AT THE COUNTER.

PRESS PERSON (VO)

Ladies and Gentlemen, the President of the United States...

ANGLE

ON THE THREE, AS THEY WATCH THE TELEVISION.

MOSS

Okay ... it's time for the Cavalry.

(PAUSE)

Nick of Time.... sonofabitches.... Fuck with me...?

PRESIDENT (VO)

My fellow Americans.

(PAUSE)

ANGLE

TIGHT ON SCHUMANN WHO SEES SOMETHING OUT OF THE CORNER OF HIS EYE.

ANGLE, HIS POV

UP A NARROW STAIRCASE, THE FIGURE OF A YOUNG GIRL IN A FLIMSY DRESS, CLIMBING.

ANGLE

SCHUMANN, AS HE LOOKS AWAY, AND MUTTERS TO HIMSELF.

SCHUMANN

"...where's my pill..."

ANGLE

THE GROUP WATCHING TELEVISION.

PRESIDENT

...he is down safely, though the flight crew perished in the crash. He will be transhipped, we are informed he has sustained minor injuries, which will require his being medicated for some time, but, I am assured...

AMES WANDERS IN.

MOSS

(OF THE T.V.)

You see, this is what I'm talking about. Stand It On Its Head. How does it Work for your benefit...

AMES

I'm concerned about the driver of the rig.

MOSS

What rig?

AMES

...the Harvester...

(HE GESTURES OUT AT THE VAST FARM MACHINE, WHICH CAN JUST BE SEEN STANDING BY THE HIGHWAY. ITS OWNER BESIDE IT. WAITING.)

BREAN

What about him?

AMES

Well, he doesn't have his Green Card.

(PAUSE)

He Doesn't have his Greencard.

ANGLE

ON SCHUMANN, WHO HAS COME TO THE BACK OF THE COUNTER, AND IS EMPTYING THE CANNISTERS.

SCHUMANN

(TO HIMSELF)

Where's my pill...?

HIS WANDERINGS BRING HIM TO THE END OF THE COUNTER. WHERE WE SEE, OVER HIS SHOULDER, A YOUNG GIRL, PUTTERING ABOUT IN THE KITCHEN OFF THE GAS STATION OFFICE.

ANGLE

CU. ON SCHUMANN, LEERING.

ANGLE ON AMES, ETC.

AMES

... you want Schumann saved by an Illegal Alien...?

BREAN

Well, what do you want to do about it?

(PAUSE)

What do you...

MOSS

Pals:

(TO BREAN)

Get on the phone... r'they flying it?

BREAN

They'll be here in ten minutes.

MOSS

Get on the phone, have'em fly in a ...whaddaya need to be a citizen? A Judge? Whaddaya need? A Judge...?

Call in a Judge, call in a Federal Judge, and...

(TO AMES, AS IF TO A CHILD)

If you're concerned about him, being an ..."immigrant."

Make him a citizen... Eh? Guys ... what's all this mopery, we...

SCHUMANN LOOKS TO THE SIDE.

THE YOUNG GIRL HAS DROPPED A SPOON OFF OF THE WORKTABLE AND BENDS OVER TO PICK IT UP, REVEALING HER LEGS AND LITTLE GIRL UNDIES.

ANGLE

ON SCHUMANN, LEERING.

SCHUMANN

(MUTTERING)

...where is my pill?

ANGLE

ON THE MEN, IN THE ROOM, ARGUING ABOUT THE ILLEGAL ALIEN, SCHUMANN IN THE B.G.

SCHUMANN

WHERE'S MY FUCKING PIIIILLLLLLLL...?

SCHUMANN RUNS INTO THE KITCHEN, AND WE HEAR THE SOUNDS OF LITTLE GIRL SCREAMS.

ALL THE MEN IN THE ROOM LOOK AROUND.

THE OWNER STANDS, AND LOOKS AROUND.

OWNER

Susie...?

(PAUSE)

Susie...

HE IS ANSWERED BY WHIMPERING.

MOSS

Oh, hell...

THE GAS STATION OWNER GOES TO THE DOOR TO THE KITCHEN, AND FINDS IT LOCKED.

OWNER

Susie? Susie. Are you alright...? Susie...

MOSS STRIDES UP TO THE DOOR.

MOSS

Lemme talk to him. Will? Shoe?

OWNER

SUSIE...? Are you alright...?

MOSS

(PUSHES HIM ASIDE)

Lemme talk to him. Shoe? Shoe...? You in there...?

WE ARE ANSWERED BY THE SOUNDS OF WHIMPERING.

ANGLE

ON THE GAS STATION OWNER, WHO HAS RETREATED TO HIS COUNTER AND PRODUCES A SHOTGUN, AND STARTS TO LOAD IT.

MOSS

(AT THE DOOR)

Shoe, boy...? You know, you were telling me you

wanted Beans? Remember, you were concerned about the Beans...?

THE MAN WITH THE SHOTGUN COMES UP TO THE DOOR.

MOSS

(TO THE STATION OWNER)

No, lemme talk to him... lemme talk to him, we have a relationship...

THE GAS STATION OWNER EXITS THE BUILDING, AND WE SEE HIM, OUTSIDE, KICK IN THE SIDE DOOR TO THE KITCHEN.

MOSS

(THROUGH THE DOOR, TO SCHUMANN)

'Member, we were talking about how much you liked the "beans" and all...?

WE HEAR THE SOUND OF WHIMPERING, AND THEN TWO SHOTGUN BLASTS.

WE HEAR MORE LITTLE GIRL SCREAMS, THEN A BLAST, AND THEN ANOTHER SHOTGUN BLAST.

BEAT.

BREAN AND MOSS ROUSE THEMSELVES, AND GO TO STAND IN THE DOORWAY, LOOKING INTO THE KITCHEN. AMES PEEKS OVER THEIR SHOULDERS.

BREAN

(AFFECTLESS)

...now look what's happened...

BREAN WALKS TO THE DRINK COOLER, OPENS A CAN OF DR. PEPPER, AND COMES BACK TO STAND IN THE DOORWAY.

BEAT. THE OWNER COMES OUT, HOLDING THE SHOTGUN AND COMFORTING THE DISTRAUGHT LITTLE GIRL.

IN THE B.G. WE HEAR A JET ROAR, AND WE SEE A CARRIER JET MAKING AN APPROACH ONTO THE HIGHWAY.

AMES

So-close-and-yet-so-far.

MOSS

Naa, fuck this, this is nothing. Oh, Lord -- this just got Big. I see it -- Big -- Big for you and big for me.

AMES

What are you talking about?

MOSS

You're not thinking right, Pal...

AMES

He's dead.

(PAUSE)

He's dead.

(PAUSE)

The Fella Killed Old Shoe.

(PAUSE)

MOSS

And what is bigger than a triumphal Homecoming...?

INT HANGAR, ANDREWS AIRFORCE BASE, DAY.

A VAST HANGAR, A SINGLE JET TRANSPORT.

ANGLE

BREAN AND MOSS, DISHEVELLED, UNSHAVEN, LOOKING ON.

ANGLE, THEIR POV

THE RAMP, AT THE BACK OF THE PLANE, A FLAG DRAPED CASKET APPEARS AND CRAWLS DOWN THE RAMP.

SIX MILITARY PEOPLE IN FATIGUES ADVANCE TO THE CASKET.

ANGLE

BREAN AND MOSS, THEY SWIVEL THEIR HEADS, AND WE SEE, BEYOND THE DOORS OF THE HANGAR, A VAST CROWD, FLASHBULBS BEGIN POPPING.

ANGLE ON MOSS, AS HE GLANCES AROUND, AND THEN AT AN AIDE, AS IF TO SAY, WELL...

THE AIDE LOOKS AROUND, AND THEN, WITH RELIEF, AT THE CROWD, AS A SMALL DOG BREAKS AWAY, AND RUNS TOWARD THE CASKET.

SEVERAL PHOTOGRAPHERS BREAK THROUGH THE CORDON, AND BEGIN SNAPPING PHOTOS OF THE SMALL DOG, AS IT SITS, ITS HEAD COCKED, NEAR THE CASKET.

BREAN AND MOSS WALK AWAY, CAMERA FOLLOWS THEM TOWARD A SMALL READYROOM OFF THE HANGAR.

INT, THE READYROOM. BREAN AND MOSS SINK DOWN INTO AN OLD RATTY LEATHER COUCH, BREAN GETS UP, WALKS TO THE TABLE, ON WHICH IS A PACK OF CIGARETTES. HE TAKES ONE, LIGHTS IT, PASSES ONE TO BREAN WHO LIGHTS IT. WALKS TO A MR. COFFEE MACHINE.

BREAN

...coffee...?

MOSS

Yes, please.

BEYOND THE COFFEE MACHINE WE SEE AMES, AND THE HISPANIC MAN WHO DROVE THE HARVESTER, STILL WEARING A STRAW COWBOY HAT, ET CETERA, THEY BOTH STAND, AS A MAN IN HIS SIXTIES ENTERS, AND BEGINS EXTRACTING A BLACK ROBE FROM HIS BRIEFCASE, HE PUTS ON THE ROBE.

BREAN SIGHS. NODS, AND WALKS HACK TO THE TABLE, WBERE MOSS IS SLUMPED.

BREAN SNAPS ON A SMALL TELEVISION, ON THE COUNTER, AND WE SEE, IN ITS SCREEN, THE PALLBEARERS PROCEEDING TO A MILITARY TRUCK, AND THE SMALL DOG FOLLOWING, WE SEE A PORTRAIT OF THE DOG, AS IT COCKS ITS HEAD, WE CUT TO A SHOT OF THE PRESIDENT, IN THE HANGAR, DABBING AT HIS EYES WITH A HANDKERCHIEF.

MOSS

(WATCHING THE SCREEN)

Good. Good. Good. Looking Good, bring-it-all-back-

home. Lassie Barks Twice n'it's time to take out the garbage.

BREAN

Hell of a show. Hell of a job, Stan.

MOSS

(KNOCKS ON WOOD)

...one more day.

BREAN

Naw, naw, we own the airways...

(HE FLIPS THE CHANNEL)

WE SEE A COUPLE OF MEDIA NERDS, BEING INTERVIEWED AROUND A CONFERENCE TABLE.

MODERATOR

...thrust of the Albanian Episode, to put him over the top...

FIRST MEDIA GUY

Yes, you could say that, Joyce, but it wouldn't be true.

JOYCE

What would be true, then.

SECOND MEDIA GUY

Well, you said it yourself, earlier, and if I may rephrase, that the success of the President, in the Polls...

JOYCE

...as of today, 89% favorable.

SECOND MEDIA GUY

Eighty-nine percent favorable, is based not on events...

BREAN

...events.

SECOND MEDIA GUY

Which, of course, we cannoy control....

FIRST MEDIA GUY

...no...

SECOND MEDIA GUY

But on the spin given to those events.

FIRST MEDIA GUY

...yes.

SECOND MEDIA GUY

On the meaning found in those events, and given to the public...

JOYCE

...by you?

SECOND MEDIA GUY

By the media, by, yes, by, in this case, our organization.

JOYCE

Well, there's a lot to be said for that. And I'm going to show a clip.

(TO THE AUDIENCE)

You've seen it before, you've seen it many times...

(ALL SMILE)

But I'm going to ask you to look at it once more. With the election one day off, and the President's standing in the polls...

FIRST MEDIA GUY

...89 percent

JOYCE

...a record, a record high for sitting president, I'd like you to watch the campaign that put him there when we come back.

THE SCREEN CHANGES TO A COMMERCIAL.

MOSS

You see? What's the lesson here? Never give up. Never give up.

BREAN

No. You're right.

MOSS

Show Must Go On.

BREAN

A proud tradition.

MOSS

Prouder of this, than anything I ever did in my life. I want to thank you, Ron.

(PAUSE)

Want to thank you.

THE SCREEN COMES BACK TO THE TALKING HEADS. WKERE WE SEE THE COMMENTATORS INTERVIEWING THE SUBJECTS.

JOYCE

And as we said. The President, a sure-fire winner, and the campaign, many said, that put him there...

THE SCREEN CHANGES TO TWO HORSES IN A PADDOCK. A COUPLE OF JOCKEYS WALK UP TO THEM.

JOCKEY ONE

Which horse you going to ride tomorrow, Jim?

JOCKEY TWO

Well, Chuck, my Daddy used to say, and I've lived by it: never change Horses in...

MOSS
(TO HIMSELF)
...oh no...

THE SCREEN REVERTS TO THE MODERATOR AND THE TWO TYPES.

JOYCE
And now, we're going to be taking your calls. The number is...

MOSS RISES.
MOSS BEGINS PACING AROUND THE READYROOM.

BREAN
What're you doing?

MOSS
I'm looking for a phone...

BREAN
No, I don't think you can do that.

MOSS
Watch me.

BREAN
No, I don't think you can do that, Stanley...

MOSS
Watch me.

BREAN
Stanley. Stanley... you knew the... Stanley.
(HE RESTRAINS HIM)
You knew the deal when you signed on.

MOSS
Deal's changed.

BREAN
No, the deal isn't changed. The Deal isn't changed. You can't ... what is it? Money? Money? You want Money?

MOSS
Money? You think I did this for money...? I did this for Credit. Credit, paalll...

BREAN
But you always knew you couldn't take the credit....

MOSS
That's one thing, but I'm not gonna let two dickheads from Filmschool take it... are you Nuts? Are you Nuts?

HE TRIES TO GET OUT OF THE READYROOM. BREAN RESTRAINS HIM.

ANGLE
TIGHT ON THE TWO.

BREAN
Stanley, no fooling... no fooling... you're playing
with your life here...

MOSS
Fuck my life... Fuck my life.... I WANT THE CREDIT...
The Credit. Do you know what the New York Times said
about my last picture? They pissed on me. They pissed
on me. Do you know what that picture Grossed? And now
some limp-dick film school pansy...

JOYCE
(ON TV)
That number to call....

MOSS TAKES OUT A PAD AND PENCIL, AND BEGINS TO WRITE IT DOWN.

BREAN
Stanley, you can't do this....

AMES CALLS FROM THE FAR ROOM.

AMES
Could we have you in here, please...7

BREAN, DISTRACTED FOR A MOMENT, LETS MOSS GO, MOSS PULLS AWAY, AND RUNS OUT OF
THE ROOM.

ANGLE
ON BREAN, AS HE PROCEEDS TO THE BACK ROOM, WHERE WE SEE AMES, STANDING WITH
THE MAN, WHO NOW HAS ON HIS BLACK ROBE, AND HOLDS A BIBLE OUT TO THE HISPANIC
FELLOW IN THE STRAW COWBOY HAT.

AMES
(SOTTO, TO BREAN)
...we need a witness.

MAN IN THE BLACK ROBE
(TO THE HISPANIC HARVESTER DRIVER)
Do you swear to Uphold the duties and responsibilities
of a citizen of the United States? To defend her, (ET
CETERA)

ANGLE
ON THIS ROOM, WITH THE HUGE HANGAR, AND THE CASKET IN THE FAR ROOM.
ANGLE, ON BREAN AS HE SHAKES HIS HEAD SADLY.

DISSOLVE

EXT PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE. NOVEMBER DAY.

VAST CROWDS, LINING THE STREET. THE SOUND OF SLOW FIFE AND DRUMS.

ANGLE
ON VARIOUS SPECTATORS, WEEPING, MANY OF THEM WITH OLD SHOES HUNG AROUND THEIR

NECKS. 303 SWEATSHIRTS. ET CETERA... THE SPECTATORS CRANE THEIR NECKS.

ANGLE, THEIR POV.

A CAISSON, A RIDERLESS HORSE, COMING DOWN THE STREET.
PAN ONTO A NEWSCASTER.

NEWSCASTER

...coming, yes, yes, I can just...yes, the caisson,
bearing his remains, the Riderless Horse, led by three
members of his unit, 303, identified by their
distinctive Caps...

ANGLE, ON THE 303 TROOPERS, TWO MEN AND A WOMAN IN BERETS WHICH ARE HALF
BLACK, HALF LEOPARD SKIN.

INT SHOESTORE, H.Q.

THE TELEVISION, SHOWING THE SAME SCENE. PAN ONTO AIDE, SWEEPING UP.

TV VOICE OVER

(WE HEAR A SERIES OF GUNSHOTS)

...and that's the, yes, you hear it, a salute, in Code,
Spelling out, "Courage, Mom" ...and there, yes, there
is the Staff Car, bearing the Pres...

INT MOSS'S KITCHEN, BEVERLY HILLS, DAY

A SMALL COUNTERTOP TELEVISION. A HISPANIC MAID WATCHING THE TV.

ANNOUNCER

(ON TV)

...sident Elect -- the President-Elect of the United
States...

SHE PICKS UP A TRAY OF CRUDITES, AND PROCEEDS, CAMERA FOLLOWS HER INTO THE
LIVING ROOM, GIVING ONTO THE POOL, WHERE WE SEE A FLOCK OF MOURNERS, THE MEN
IN YALMULKAS.

ANGLE EXT, MOSS'S HOUSE.

A LINE OF LIMOS, ONE OF THE CHAUFFEURS LISTENING TO THE RADIO.

RADIO

(VO)

...the end of the incredible saga of One Man, his
country, and a War He did Not Wish, but unto which
he...

A LIMO ARRIVES, BEARING BREAN, WHO IS GIVEN A YALMUKA, AS HE ENTERS MOSS'S
HOUSE.

INT. H.Q. SHOESTORE, DAY.

THE AIDE HAS JUST FINISHED CLEANING UP. THE SCENE ON THE TV IS ARLINGTON
NATIONAL CEMETERY. THE PALLBEARERS, MILITARY MEN AND WOMEN, ARE DOING A SLOW
MARCH TO THE TUNE OF "GOOD OLD SHOE." THERE IS A SHOT OF THE PRESIDENT, AS AN
AIDE APPROACHES HIM, AND HANDS HIM A BOX, WHICH HE OPENS, WE SEE AS THE CAMERA
RACKS FOCUS TO IT, THAT IT IS THE CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR. THE PRESIDENT
PROCEEDS TOWARD THE CASKET, BEARING THE BOX.

THE TV GOES BLANK, AS THE AIDE FLIPS IT OFF. HE TAKES THE LAST REMAINING TRASHBIN, AND STARTS TO PULL IT OUTSIDE.

WE SEE TWO MOVING MEN, TAKING DOWN THE TELEVISION, AND PUTTING IT ON A DOLLY.

ANGLE, INT, THE MALL

THE BOARDED UP STOREFRONT. THE OLD "SHOE WORLD" SIGN, THE AIDE PUTTING OUT THE LAST TRASHBIN. HE IS OVERTAKEN BY, AND CAMERA DOLLIES WITH, THE TWO MEN MOVING OUT THE TELEVISION. THEY PASS A NEW SIGN, WHICH HAS BEEN APPLIED OVER THE PLYWOOD, READS: "COMING SOON, GOOD OLD SHOE," FOLLOWED BY A STYLIZED RENDITION OF A PAIR OF OLD BASKETBALL SHOES, THE TRADEMARK REGISTRATION SIGN, AND THE NIKE SWOOSH, CAMERA CONTINUES TO DOLLY, PAST GRAFFITI, READING, COURAGE, MOM.

END

WAG THE DOG

A SCREENPLAY BY

DAVID MAMET

SECOND DRAFT. OCTOBER, 1996