

BEING THERE

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. TOWNHOUSE GARDEN - WASHINGTON, D.C. - AFTERNOON

An afternoon in late November, the leaves have left the trees, and the early darkness of a winter dusk approaches. The garden is long and narrow, guarded on either side by a high brick wall. At one end stands the rear of a three-story brick townhouse; at the other, a one story brick building. CLASSICAL MUSIC is heard in the distance. A MAN, handsomely dressed in a well-tailored suit of the 1920's, works in the garden. A gardener's apron protects his suit from the earth as he turns the loam along one of the walkways. He works slowly, -precisely, obviously engrossed in his surroundings. This man is called CHANCE.

Chance stops working for a moment, takes a pocket watch from inside his coat, checks the time. He looks to the darkening skies, returns the watch to his pocket. As Chance starts toward the one story brick building, he takes a spotless rag from his apron pocket and wipes the dirt from the tines of his pitchfork.

INT. GARAGE - AFTERNOON

The sound of the music increases as Chance enters the garage from the garden. A gleaming 1921 TOURING CAR is revealed as he walks through the garage and leans the pitchfork against a wall. Chance takes a neatly folded cover from a shelf, carefully puts it over the car. When he finishes covering the car for the night, Chance picks up the pitchfork, leaves the garage through a side entry.

INT. POTTING ROOM - AFTERNOON

The Potting Room is filled with the tools of the gardener, everything arranged in an orderly fashion. Rows of small pots are on tables, young plants sprouting from some of them. A small, 1940's table model black-and-white TV rests on a shelf. It is playing, tuned to the BOSTON POPS ORCHESTRA. Attached to the front of the screen is a wheel containing colored gels. The wheel spins, creates an early form of color TV. As Chance enters, his attention is on the television set. He watches it as he oils the tines of the pitchfork and puts it away. Chance turns off the TV and leaves the room, but the sound of the Boston Pops continues.

INT. CHANCE'S ROOM - AFTERNOON

A room adjacent to the Potting Room. A large screen remote control color television set dominates the room. It is on, tuned to the Boston Pops. In contrast to the new TV, the rest of the room is sparsely but tastefully decorated with expensive furniture of the twenties. There are no books, magazines, newspapers or reading matter of any kind to be seen. Chance comes in, watches the TV with a detached gaze as he removes his apron. He changes the channel with the remote control as he puts his apron and the pitchfork rag into a laundry bag. He takes off his suit jacket, hangs it in the closet where it is accompanied by several others, all of like quality. Chance changes the channel once again.

EXT. GARDEN - NIGHT

Chance, wearing a different suit and carrying the laundry bag, crosses from the rear building to the main house.

INT. MAIN HOUSE - REAR ENTRANCE/HALLWAY - NIGHT

The interior of the main house has the mustiness of age, the warmth of oak. White dropcloths and sheets cover all of the furniture. Chance enters, walks through the hallway.

INT. MAIN HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

A large dropcloth is over the dining room table and chairs. It is neatly folded back at one end, leaving one chair and place setting uncovered. A small portable color TV is next to the place setting.

Chance enters, puts his laundry bag on a covered table near the doorway. He sits at the dining room table, turns on the TV, and carefully unfolds his napkin, puts it on his lap as he watches the screen. LOUISE, an elderly black maid, enters with a tray of food and Chance's clean laundry.

LOUISE
 (sets dinner before
 Chance)
 ... Evening, Chance.

CHANCE
 (slowly, perfect diction,
 no accent of any kind)
 ... Good evening, Louise.

Louise sets Chance's clean clothes on the small table, picks up his laundry bag.

LOUISE
... The Old Man is getting weaker,
Chance.

CHANCE
(begins to eat)
I see.

LOUISE
I'm afraid he's slippin' a bit with
every hour that goes by...

Chance, his manners impeccable, concentrates on the TV as he eats. A buzzer SOUNDS, Louise looks upstairs.

LOUISE
... Back up those stairs - damn...
That Man's needin' me more and more
just before he never needs me
again...

CHANCE
(still watches TV)
Is his back feeling better?

Louise gives Chance a look.

LOUISE
... Gobbledegook... You and your
gobbledegook. You're gonna be the
death of me yet, Chance...
(she turns to leave)
... Unless those stairs are... The
Good Lord's liable to snatch up two
unwillin' souls at the same time if
I keep on trampin' up those
stairs... I don't want none of
that...

Louise disappears through the doorway. Chance continues to eat and watch TV.

INT. CHANCE'S ROOM - DAWN

Chance is asleep, lying on his back. His eyes slowly open, and, with no change of expression, he sits up and turns on the TV with the remote control. Chance gets out of bed, goes to the dresser and takes his pocket watch out of a drawer, checks the time. He crosses to the closet, his eyes never straying from an early morning show on television. He puts on a bathrobe and leaves the room.

INT. POTTING ROOM - DAWN

Chance enters, turns on the TV with the spinning color wheel, then waters a few of the pots with a sprinkling can. He turns off the TV and exits.

INT. GARAGE - DAWN

Chance comes into the garage, takes the cover off of the touring car, folds it and puts it on a shelf. He leaves the garage.

INT. CHANCE'S ROOM - DAWN

Chance returns to his room, changes channels on the television, takes off his robe and hangs it back up in the closet, then goes into the bathroom.

EXT. GARDEN - MORNING

A light snow is falling. The door to the small building opens, Chance peeks out, then goes back inside. A few seconds pass and Chance reappears, this time with an umbrella. Smartly dressed in suit and tie, he crosses to the main house.

INT. MAIN HOUSE - REAR ENTRANCE/HALLWAY - MORNING

Chance opens the door, shakes off and closes the umbrella before entering. He hangs the umbrella on a doorknob, then heads for the dining room.

INT. DINING ROOM - MORNING

Repeating his ritual, Chance enters the dining room, sits, turns on the TV, carefully spreads his napkin on his lap. He watches the screen for a moment, then turns, expecting Louise. She doesn't appear, so he turns back, watches TV. After a few beats, Chance hears Louise's footsteps hurrying down the stairs. She comes into the dining room, visibly distraught. Chance looks up, smiles.

CHANCE

Good morning, Louise.

LOUISE

(out of breath)

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

CHANCE

(flatly, turns back to TV)

... I see.

LOUISE

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

CHANCE

(nodding)

Yes. I've seen that done.

LOUISE

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

CHANCE

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

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

A beat of silence from Louise, then anger.

LOUISE

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

(Chance smiles, is silent)

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

CHANCE

(with a smile, accepting death)

Yes, Louise. I have seen it often. It happens to old people.

LOUISE

Well, ain't that the truth...

CHANCE

Yes. It is.

Louise throws back the cover from a chair next to Chance and sits, softening a bit toward him.

LOUISE

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

(Chance doesn't react, watches TV)

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

CHANCE

(a turn to her)

Yes, I'm very hungry.

LOUISE

(rises, looks upstairs)

Well, no more stewin' those prunes every mornin', that's somethin', I guess...

(she starts out, stops by the door)

... what are you goin' to do now, Chance?

CHANCE

(gazing at TV)

I'm going to work in the garden.

Louise gives Chance a long look, then turns to leave.

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

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

INT. MAIN HOUSE - SERVANT'S STAIRWAY - MORNING

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

INT. MAIN HOUSE - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - MORNING

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

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

The furniture in this room is not covered with sheets but the Old Man is. There is a polite knock at the door, then Chance enters the room. As Chance moves slowly to the Old Man's bed, we sense a feeling of respect from Chance, as well as a bit of curiosity. Chance stands by the side of the bed for a moment, then he reaches down and gently pulls the sheet back from the Old Man's face. He touches the man's forehead, lightly, briefly, then replaces the sheet. Chance moves to the TV (like the one in his own room) and turns it on. He sits in an easy chair next to the Old man's bed and watches a movie from the early forties. Chance puts an arm out, rests it on the Old Man's covered body. With the other, he changes the channels with the remote control. He returns to the channel with the forties movie and seems to become absorbed in a scene in which a gentleman tips his hat to a lady. The scene seems to have 'sunk into' his mind.

EXT. GARDEN - MORNING

It has stopped snowing. Chance, wearing a hat, the gardening apron over his suit and boots, putters in the garden. Louise comes out of the main house. She is dressed warmly, a scarf over her head, a heavy coat. Chance sees her, tips his hat to Louise exactly like the man he saw on television.

 LOUISE
 ... Well, ain't you the gentleman
 this mornin'...
 (a pause)
 ... gotta go now, Chance...

CHANCE

(resumes working)

Yes.

LOUISE

You're gonna need somebody,
someone's gotta be around for you,
boy...

(he keeps working)

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

(she smiles slightly, with
caring)

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

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

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

(he smiles, keeps working)

... Goodbye, Chance...

Louise gives his shoulder a squeeze, turns and moves toward
the house.

CHANCE

(as she goes)

Goodbye, Louise.

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

INT. MAIN HOUSE - FRONT HALLWAY - MORNING

Louise enters the hallway, picks up a couple of suit cases
waiting by the door. She stops as she sees TWO MEN in white
carrying a stretcher down the main staircase. She notices the
ease with which they bring the Old Man's body down the
stairs.

LOUISE

... He used to be a big man...
'Spose he wasted away to about
nothin'...

(a beat - then she talks
to the body of the old
Man)

... I guess I'll be goin' off to
find me some folks, Old Man... I'm
not batty enough to stay around
this neighborhood any longer...

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

LOUISE

(to stretcher bearers)

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

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

INT. CHANCE'S ROOM - DAY

The TV plays offstage as Chance washes up in the bathroom. He finishes, comes into the bedroom, takes a pair of house slippers from his closet, turns off the television and leaves the room.

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

Chance, carrying his slippers, crosses through the layer of fresh snow to the townhouse.

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

Chance, wearing the slippers, enters and sits at his place. He turns on the TV, puts the napkin on his lap. He watches TV for a moment, then turns, looks for Louise. She does not appear so he resumes watching TV. He changes channels, views a wildly exciting FOOTBALL game. At a peak in the excitement, he again switches channels. Chance watches TV News coverage of the PRESIDENT of the United States greeting foreign dignitaries at the White House.

CLOSE SHOTS on television reveal that the President uses a two-handed handshake when meeting his guests. Unconsciously, Chance grips one hand with the other, the scene on TV seeming to have 'sunk into' his mind.

INT. TOWNHOUSE - FRONT HALLWAY - DAY

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

HAYES

(looks around)

... This is another world, Tom - I never would have believed it...

FRANKLIN

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

HAYES

... Would you take me on a tour?

FRANKLIN

Gladly...

(he smiles)

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

Franklin puts a hand on Hayes' shoulder as they go off down the hall.

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

Chance still watches TV, waits for Louise to serve him. Franklin and Hayes appear in the doorway of the dining room. They are both surprised to see Chance.

FRANKLIN

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

(moves to Chance, hand outstretched)

I'm Thomas Franklin.

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

CHANCE

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

FRANKLIN

(a beat)

... The gardener?

(thinks it's a joke,
laughs)

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

Hayes moves to shake Chance's hand.

HAYES

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

CHANCE

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

Chance turns back to the TV and Hayes and Franklin exchange looks.

FRANKLIN

(after an uneasy pause)

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

CHANCE

(a smile, totally at ease)
Yes, Thomas - I understand.

Another period of silence. Franklin and Hayes seem perplexed.

FRANKLIN

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

CHANCE

Yes. I'm waiting for my lunch.

FRANKLIN

Your lunch? You have a luncheon appointment here?

CHANCE

Yes. Louise will bring me lunch.

FRANKLIN

Louise?... The maid?...

(a look to Hayes)

But she should have left earlier today...

CHANCE

(smiles at Hayes)

I see...

FRANKLIN

(a beat)

... You've quite a sense of humor, Mr. Chance - but all kidding aside, may I ask just what you are doing here?

CHANCE

I live here.

FRANKLIN

You live here?

(a look to Hayes)

... We don't have any record of that.

CHANCE

Yes. It's very cold outside today, isn't it, Thomas?

FRANKLIN

(a beat)

... How long have you been living here?

CHANCE

Ever since I can remember, since I was a child.

FRANKLIN

(doubting)

Since you were a child?

CHANCE

Yes, Thomas. I have always been here. I have always worked in the garden.

HAYES

... Then you really are a gardener?

CHANCE

Yes.

HAYES

Your appearance doesn't suggest that at all, Mr. Chance.

CHANCE

Oh. Thank you.

FRANKLIN

Do you have any proof of your employment, Mr. Chance - any checks from the deceased, any contracts or documents?

CHANCE

No.

FRANKLIN

How were you compensated for these duties you say you performed?

CHANCE

Compensated...?

FRANKLIN

How were you paid?

CHANCE

I was given meals, and a home...

HAYES

What about money?

CHANCE

I never needed money.

Franklin steps to the TV, turns it off.

FRANKLIN

Mr. Chance, perhaps you could show us some identification with your address -- a Driver's License, a credit card, checkbook?

CHANCE

No, I do not have any of those.

FRANKLIN

Then how about medical records? Could you give us the name of your doctor, or your dentist?

CHANCE

I have no need for a doctor or dentist. I have never been ill. I have never been allowed outside of this house, and, except for Joe, I have never had any visitors.

FRANKLIN

... Joe? Who's Joe?

CHANCE

(turns TV back on)

Joe Saracini. He was a mason that did some repairs on the brickwork at the rear of the house. That was in 1952.

FRANKLIN

1952...?

CHANCE

(changes channels)

Yes. I remember when he came. He was very fat and had short hair and showed me some pictures from a funny little book.

HAYES

Some pictures...?

CHANCE

Yes. Of men and women.

HAYES

... Oh.

FRANKLIN

Mr. Chance, that was twenty-seven years ago.

CHANCE

Yes and the Old Man used to come to my garden. He would read and rest there.

FRANKLIN

Come now, Mr. Jennings had been bedridden for thirty-five years, since he fractured his spine.

CHANCE

Yes, Thomas, that is correct. Then he stopped visiting my garden.

FRANKLIN

(a beat)

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

CHANCE

You have me, I am here. What more proof do you need?

Franklin and Hayes exchange looks.

INT. TOWNHOUSE - REAR ENTRANCE/HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

Chance puts on his snow-boots as Franklin and Hayes continue their questioning.

FRANKLIN

Have you served in the Army?

CHANCE

No, Thomas. But I have seen the Army on television.

HAYES

How about taxes, Mr. Chance, surely you must have paid taxes?

CHANCE

No.

Chance picks up his slippers and leads the attorneys outside.

EXT. GARDEN - AFTERNOON

Chance describes his garden with pride as they walk toward the rear building.

CHANCE

(points)

Those trees were very young when I first arrived.

FRANKLIN

Are you related to the deceased, Mr. Chance?

CHANCE

No, I don't think so. And I have planted and shaped all the hedges, and in the springtime you will be able to see my flowers.

HAYES

Might you have a birth certificate,
Mr. Chance?

CHANCE

No.

(points to wall)

That's where Joe fixed the bricks.

They arrive at the rear building and Chance opens the door to the garage. Franklin and Hayes follow him inside.

INT. GARAGE - AFTERNOON

Franklin and Hayes are taken aback by the touring car.

FRANKLIN

(admires car)

... Do you drive this, Mr. Chance?

CHANCE

No, Thomas. I have never been in an
automobile.

HAYES

(amazed)

You never been in a car?

Chance is silent for a moment, he blushes slightly.

CHANCE

... Well... From time to time I did
sit in it... Just in here... It
hasn't been outside since the Old
Man hurt himself.

(he turns)

I live in here.

Chance moves toward his room, Franklin and Hayes follow.

INT. CHANCE'S ROOM - AFTERNOON

Chance sits on the bed to remove his boots as Hayes and Franklin inspect the room.

CHANCE

The Old Man gave me nice television
sets, this one has remote control.

(he turns it on with the
remote)

He has one just like it.

FRANKLIN

Mr. Chance, the fact remains that we have no information of your having any connection with the deceased.

CHANCE

Yes, I understand.

Chance puts on his slippers, crosses to the closet, opens the door. It is filled with men's wear.

CHANCE

I am allowed to go to the attic and select any of the Old Man's suits. They all fit me very well. I can also take his shirts, shoes and coats.

HAYES

It is quite amazing how those clothes have come back into style.

CHANCE

Yes. I have seen styles on television.

FRANKLIN

(getting back to business)
What are your plans now, Mr. Chance?

CHANCE

I would like to stay and work in my garden.

Chance turns to watch TV. Franklin takes Hayes to a side of the room.

FRANKLIN

(quietly)
... What do you make of all this?

HAYES

I really don't know, Tom - he seems so honest and simple... In a way, he's quite charming...

FRANKLIN

(looks at Chance)
... Yeah...

HAYES

... It's very bizarre - I don't know what to think...

FRANKLIN

Well... He's either very, very bright or very, very dense - he's hard to figure...

(he unzips briefcase)

... Let's just keep everything legal.

Franklin takes out some papers, approaches Chance.

FRANKLIN

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

CHANCE

(does not understand)

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

FRANKLIN

Good. That's good. Then if you would please sign a paper to that effect.

Franklin hands the release to Chance but Chance does not take it.

CHANCE

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

FRANKLIN

Come now, Mr. Chance.

CHANCE

(smiles)

I have no claim, Thomas.

FRANKLIN

But you won't sign, correct?

CHANCE

Correct.

FRANKLIN

Very well, Mr. Chance - if you insist on dragging this matter on... But I must inform you this house will be closed tomorrow at noon. If indeed, you do reside here, you will have to move out.

CHANCE

Move out? I don't understand, Thomas.

FRANKLIN

I think you do, Mr. Chance. However, I will reiterate, this house is closed and you must leave...

(he gives Chance his business card)
Call me if you change your mind about signing.

(turns to Hayes)

C'mon, Sally - let's grab a bite...

HAYES

(a smile to Chance)

Good day, Mr. Chance.

CHANCE

(returns smile)

Good day, Sally.

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

INT. TOWNHOUSE - ATTIC - AFTERNOON

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

INT. CHANCE'S ROOM - AFTERNOON

The TV is on as Chance packs his belongings.

EXT. GARDEN - AFTERNOON

Chance, very nicely dressed, comes out of the rear building carrying his suitcase. He stops on occasion to inspect his garden as he walks toward the townhouse.

INT. TOWNHOUSE - FRONT HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

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

EXT. FRONT OF TOWNHOUSE - AFTERNOON

Chance stops short on the front steps; the townhouse is situated in a decaying ghetto. The snow is a dirty grey, houses adjoining have their windows shattered, are smeared with grafitti. Chance tries to return to the safety of the townhouse, but the door is locked. He stands on the steps for a moment, then moves to the trash laden sidewalk. He stops, ponders which way to go, finally makes up his mind and moves off to his left.

EXT. GHETTO STREET - AFTERNOON

The buildings are crumbling, rusted out cars line the street. A group of Black people huddle together in threadbare stuffed furniture on the sidewalk, a fire burning between them for warmth. Chance rounds the corner, walks up to them. He stands by them, smiles. They stare back, no sign of friendship in their faces. Chance nods politely to them, then walks away down the sidewalk.

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

A group of eight to ten hard-core ghetto youths hang out on a corner. Other passersby give them a wide berth, they are unapproachable. Chance nears the group, approaches.

CHANCE

(friendly)

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

They turn to him as one, silent, amazed that this White trespasser would intrude on their jiving.

CHANCE

(after a beat)

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

One of the Black youths, LOLO, interrupts Chance.

LOLO

What you growin', man?

The leader of the gang, ABBAZ, shuts up Lolo with an elbow
and moves menacingly forward.

ABBAZ

(nose to nose with Chance)

... What you doin' here, boy?

CHANCE

I had to leave my garden. I want to
find another.

ABBAZ

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

CHANCE

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

ABBAZ

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

(edges closer to Chance)

You got that, boy?

Chance smiles at Abbaz and reaches into his pocket.

CHANCE

Yes. I understand.

(he takes out his remote
control TV changer)

If I see Raphael I will tell him.

Chance points the changer at Abbaz and clicks it three times, tries to change the picture. Abbaz immediately pulls out a switchblade, whips the blade open.

ABBAZ
 (holds knife at Chance)
 Now, move, honkie! Before I cut
 your white ass!

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

CHANCE
 Yes. Of course.
 (as he leaves)
 Good day.

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

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

A Bulletin board affixed to a storefront in Chinatown. Chance gazes at the notes pinned to it, written in Chinese. Smiling, he turns from it, walks on through the area.

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

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

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

The woman looks up to Chance, becomes very frightened. She turns and half-runs into a sleazy bar for safety. Chance watches after her for a moment, then continues along.

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

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

CHANCE

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

The boys ignore him, Chance walks away.

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

Chance walks down the center meridian of a divided street. He seems oblivious to the automobiles passing on either side. In the background can be seen the Washington Monument.

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

Chance seems stumped on which way to go. He looks up one street, then the other, has no idea where they lead. He turns, looks behind him and sees a large statue of Benito Juarez pointing. Chance smiles and goes off in the direction that Benito points.

EXT. REAR OF THE WHITE HOUSE - DUSK

Tourists are gathered around gazing through the fence at the White House.
Chance is turned the other way, inspecting the branches of a dying tree. Chance moves to a POLICEMAN standing nearby.

CHANCE

Excuse me...
(points to tree)
... That tree is very sick. It
should be cared for.

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

POLICEMAN

Yes sir. I'll report it right away.

CHANCE

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

POLICEMAN

Good day.

The Policeman takes out his walkie-talkie as Chance walks away.

EXT. BUSINESS DISTRICT - EVENING

A fashionable area. Expensive shops, well-kept streets and sidewalks. A television store has caught Chance's eye. He stands by the display window, looks in at a dozen or so color TVs, all turned on, playing various channels. A video camera points outward from a corner of the window and is focused on the sidewalk to allow potential customers to see themselves live on an Advent TV. Chance is intrigued by his own image. He poses, lifts one arm, then the other to make sure that it is really him on television. He moves forward, smiles, then moves slowly backward, notices himself become smaller on the screen. He steps back off the curb, frowns as his likeness disappears from frame on the Advent. Standing between two parked cars, Chance takes out his remote control, clicks it at the Advent. Four or five other sets in the window change channels, but he does not reappear on the giant screen. As he does this, the car to his left, a large, American-made limousine, backs up. The car bumps Chance, pins him against the car to his right. Chance cries out in pain, drops his suitcase, his changer, and bangs his hand on the trunk of the limo. The chauffeur, DAVID, and the liveryman, JEFFREY, immediately jump from the car, run back to Chance.

DAVID

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

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

CHANCE

(in pain)

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

DAVID

(rushes back to limo)

... My Lord...

JEFFREY

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

CHANCE

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

David pulls the car forward, freeing Chance. A few bystanders begin to gather as Jeffrey helps Chance to the sidewalk.

JEFFREY

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

CHANCE
 (leans against limo, holds
 leg)
 It's very sore.

David gets out of the car, comes back.

DAVID
 Perhaps I should call an ambulance.

A BYSTANDER interrupts.

BYSTANDER
 Somebody ought to call the police!

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

During this, the rear door of the limo opens and EVE RAND steps out. Eve is in her late thirties, has the look of a traditional New England lady. She watches as Jeffrey tends to Chance.

JEFFREY
 I don't think we should call anyone
 just yet, it may not even be all
 that serious.

CHANCE
 (obviously hurting)
 I agree.

JEFFREY
 Let's have a look, do you mind?

CHANCE
 Of course. I would like to look.

Chance bends, raises his trouser leg. A red-bluish swollen bruise, three inches in diameter, is forming on his calf.

JEFFREY
 It's starting to swell, is it
 painful?

CHANCE
 Yes.

Eve moves closer to Chance, looks at the bruise.

EVE

(to Chance)

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

CHANCE

(smiles at Eve)

There's no need for a hospital.

EVE

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

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

DAVID

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

EVE

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

DAVID

Thank you, ma'am.

Chance is hesitant about getting in the car. Jeffrey offers a helping hand.

JEFFREY

Please, sir.

CHANCE

I've never ridden in an automobile.

JEFFREY

(a beat)

I assure you, sir, David is a very careful driver. Please, won't you let us take you?

CHANCE

(looks at the car, then decides)

... Yes. You can take me.

JEFFREY

Very good.

Jeffrey assists Chance into the rear seat of the limo.

CHANCE
 (as he gets in)
 ... My suitcase.

JEFFREY
 Yes sir. I'll take care of that.

Jeffrey closes the door, goes back to pick up Chance's suitcase, does not notice the remote control. As Jeffrey puts Chance's bag into the trunk, we see the personalized license plate "RAND 1."

INT. LIMOUSINE - EVENING

Chance and Eve settle in the back seat. As they talk, David starts up the limo, Jeffrey joins him in front and the limo pulls out into traffic.

EVE
 I hope you're comfortable.

CHANCE
 Yes. I am.

EVE
 These can be such trying situations everyone seems to make such a to-do over a simple little accident. Of course, they can be very frightening, and I must apologize for David, he's never had an accident before.

CHANCE
 Yes. He's a very careful driver.

EVE
 ... Why, yes, he is... Is your leg feeling any better?

CHANCE
 It's feeling better, but it's still very sore.

EVE
 I see.
 (a thought)
 ... Say, would you mind seeing our family doctor?

CHANCE
 (doesn't understand)
 Your family doctor?

EVE
 Yes. My husband has been very ill.
 His doctor and nurses are staying
 with us. Those hospitals can be so
 impersonal - why, it might be hours
 before you are treated...

CHANCE
 I agree.

EVE
 Fine, it will save a lot of
 unnecessary fuss and it will be so
 much more pleasant for you...
 (leans forward)
 David, we'll just go on home.
 Jeffrey, would you call and let
 them know?

JEFFREY
 Yes ma'am.

Eve presses a button, the glass partition closes. As the window rolls up behind him, Jeffrey dials the limo telephone.

There is a moment of silence. Eve, still a bit on edge from the accident and feeling a bit uncomfortable with a stranger in the car, presses another button. The limo's bar moves out, revealing a row of decanters and glasses.

EVE
 Would you care for a drink?

CHANCE
 Yes. Thank you.

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

CHANCE
 I would like to watch television.

EVE
 (a bit surprised)
 Oh? Certainly...

She hands Chance the cognac, turns on the TV.

EVE

Oh, by the way - I'm Eve Rand.

CHANCE

Hello, Eve.

Chance takes a sip of the cognac, is not accustomed to alcohol, coughs. There is another moment of silence.

EVE

May I ask your name?

CHANCE

(with a slight cough)
My name is Chance.

EVE

Pardon me, was that Mr. Chance?

CHANCE

(still indistinct)
No. I'm a gardener.

EVE

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

CHANCE

No, Eve. I'm not related to Basil and Perdita.

EVE

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

Chance reaches out to change the channel on the TV, suddenly realizes he doesn't have his remote control. He starts going through his pockets, searches for it.

EVE

Did you lose something?

CHANCE

Yes. I lost my remote control.

EVE

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

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

EVE

... I'll feel so relieved after Dr. Allenby examines your leg. After that, David can run you on home, or to your office or wherever you'd prefer...

(Chance still watches TV)

... Is there anything special you would like to watch?

CHANCE

I like to watch. This is fine.

Chance watches the news. Eve sips on her cognac as David eases the limo out of the city of Washington.

EXT. HIGHWAY - WOODED AREA - NIGHT

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

EXT. RAND DRIVE - NIGHT

The drive runs alongside a stream, then turns and crosses a large meadow. The limousine passes, still no sign of the house. It is a very, very long driveway.

INT. LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

Chance is glued to the TV, switches channels, again watches the news. Eve takes his fascination with television as a sign of intelligence.

EVE

I can see that it must be very important for you to stay informed of all the latest events.

CHANCE

Yes.

EVE

I admire that in a person. As for myself, I find there is so much to assimilate that it can become quite muddling at times...

Chance nods, changes the channel, watches a Mighty Mouse cartoon. Eve looks at him perplexed, then takes it for a joke and smiles.

EXT. RAND MANSION - NIGHT

Two uniformed valets, WILSON and PERKINS, await the limousines by the front door of the Rand mansion. Wilson stands behind a wheelchair. As the limo parks, Perkins and Jeffrey assist Chance into the chair. Wilson turns to Eve as she gets out of the limo.

WILSON

Good evening, Mrs. Rand.

EVE

Good evening, Wilson.

WILSON

I shall take the gentleman to the third floor guest suite, ma'am. Dr. Allenby is standing by.

EVE

Thank you, Wilson. That will be fine.

Perkins and Jeffrey carry Chance in the chair up the steps and into the house. Eve and Wilson follow.

INT. RAND MANSION - FRONT HALLWAY - NIGHT

Once inside the house, Wilson takes over wheeling Chance. A lady, GRETA, is waiting to take Eve's coat.

EVE

Thank you, Greta.

(to Wilson)

I'll be with Mr. Rand if I'm needed.

WILSON

Yes, ma'am.

EVE

(to Chance)

I'll see you after the doctor has a look at your leg, Mr. Gardiner.

CHANCE

(looking around mansion)

Yes, I think he should examine my leg.

Eve watches as Wilson wheels Chance around a corner.

INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

The doors open, Wilson pushes Chance into the elevator. As Wilson pushes a button and the doors close on them, a strange look comes over Chance's face.

CHANCE
 (looks to Wilson)
 ... I've never been in one of
 these.

Wilson thinks that Chance is talking about the wheelchair.

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

Chance looks around the elevator.

CHANCE
 Does it have a television?

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

CHANCE
 I see.

Chance again checks out the elevator.

CHANCE
 How long do we stay in here?

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

The elevator stops on the third floor.

INT. RAND MANSION - HALLWAY - NIGHT

A hallway adjoining a large, glass-enclosed room. Eve passes through the hall, enters the room.

INT. BENJAMIN RAND'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Eve enters into a hermetically sealed area, set up with all the latest hospital emergency gear; oxygen, EKG machine, X ray machine, transfusion equipment, sterilizers, etc. BENJAMIN RAND, wearing a silk bathrobe, lies in a king-sized bed in the center of the room. A nurse, CONSTANCE, is attending to her duties in the room, looks up as Eve comes in.

CONSTANCE
Good evening, Mrs. Rand.

EVE

Good evening, Constance.

Ben Rand perks up as he sees Eve crossing to him. He is in his sixties, maintains an inner strength and dignity despite the sapping effects of his illness.

RAND
(with weakness)
... Eve...

Eve kisses him, holds his hand.

EVE
Oh, Ben - I miss you so when I'm out... How are you feeling?

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

EVE
No headaches?

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

EVE
(holds his hand against her cheek)
You heard?

RAND

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

EVE

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

RAND

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

EVE

(sits on the side of the bed)
Do you feel well enough for that?

RAND

(smiles)
Hah!... Tell me the truth, Eve - if I wait until I feel better, will I ever meet the man?

There is silence from Eve. Rand squeezes her hand, turns to Constance.

RAND

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

CONSTANCE

But, Mr. Rand...

RAND

Don't argue, tell Robert I want new blood!

(turns to Eve)
... Ask him to dinner.

Rand pulls Eve's hand close, kisses it.

INT. EAST WING GUEST SUITE - NIGHT

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

ALLENBY

The injection will ease the pain and swelling, Mr. Gardiner.

CHANCE

I understand. I've seen it done before.

ALLENBY

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

Allenby administers the injection, Chance reacts from the pain.

CHANCE

You were wrong, it did hurt.

ALLENBY

(a chuckle)

But not for long...

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

ALLENBY

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

CHANCE

Yes. I think so, too.

ALLENBY

However, with injuries such as this, I have run into minor hemorrhaging, which really isn't too serious at the time, but can cause secondary problems if not looked after.

CHANCE

I see.

Chance turns on the TV.

ALLENBY

(a look to the TV, then to
Chance)
You can pull your trousers up, now.

CHANCE

Oh, fine.

ALLENBY

(as Chance pulls up pants)
Just to take the proper
precautions, Mr. Gardiner, I'd
recommend we take you downstairs
and X-ray your leg.

(no reaction from Chance,
Allenby takes a long look
at him)
... By the way, Mr. Gardiner, I
would like to ask you something
straight out.

CHANCE

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

ALLENBY

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

CHANCE

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

ALLENBY

Thomas? Who's Thomas?

CHANCE

Thomas Franklin, an attorney.

ALLENBY

An attorney?

CHANCE

(turns back to TV)
Yes.

ALLENBY

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

CHANCE

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

ALLENBY

(gives Chance a look)

Oh, I see...

(warms up)

... Well, then... You're a very funny man, Mr. Gardiner. You caught me off guard, I must admit...

CHANCE

(changes channels, sits on bed)

Thank you.

ALLENBY

Good, keep your weight off that leg, Mr. Gardiner. In fact, it would be best if you could stay here for a day or two, if that would be possible. Since Benjamin became ill we have our own hospital downstairs. I can promise you the finest in care, unless, of course, you would prefer to go elsewhere.

CHANCE

Yes, I could stay here. Thank you.

ALLENBY

Fine. Would you like me to speak to your personal physician?

CHANCE

No.

Allenby waits for Chance to say more, he does not. Finally, Allenby picks up his bag, heads for the door.

ALLENBY

(stops by door)

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

CHANCE

(clicking changer)

Yes, I will.

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

EXT. MANSION - PATIO - NIGHT

Eve sits next to a roaring patio fireplace with a steaming cup of tea. Allenby comes outside, joins her.

ALLENBY

Good God, Eve - you'll freeze out here.

EVE

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

ALLENBY

A rather large contusion, but I don't feel there is any serious damage. I'd like to keep an eye on him, though - I suggested that he stay here for a couple of days.

EVE

Stay here? Is that necessary?

ALLENBY

Not necessary, but preferable. I don't think he'll be a bother, he seems like a most refreshing sort of man.

EVE

Yes, he is different... Not the kind of person one usually meets in Washington.

ALLENBY

How true. Mr. Gardiner may be a welcome change of pace.

EVE

He's very intense, and internal, don't you think?

ALLENBY

At times, yes. But that's not an uncommon reaction to such an accident. Actually, I found him to have quite a sense of humor.

EVE

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

(Eve puts down her tea)

... Robert... Is there any improvement...?

ALLENBY

No, Eve... I'm sorry.

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

EVE

... Sometimes when I see Ben I could swear that he's getting stronger... Something that he might say, the way he moves, or a look in his eyes - makes me feel that this is all a nightmare and that he'll be better soon... It's just so hard to believe what's really happening...

Allenby reaches out, holds Eve's hand.

INT. RAND MANSION - FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

The elevator door opens, Wilson guides Chance in the wheelchair into the hallway.

CHANCE

(looks back to elevator)

... That is a very small room.

WILSON

(laughs)

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

CHANCE

(glancing around)

Yes. It seems to be.

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

INT. RAND'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

CONSTANCE and another nurse, TERESA, stand by as Rand is being given a transfusion. Rand lifts his head as Wilson wheels Chance into the room.

RAND
 Welcome to Rand Memorial Hospital,
 Mr. Gardiner.

CHANCE
 (looks around room)
 ... I see.

Wilson pushes Chance to the X-Ray machine, where the technician, BILLINGS, a Black man, waits. As Wilson and Billings help Chance onto the X-Ray table, Chance's face brightens up.

CHANCE
 I feel very good in here.

RAND
 Sure you do. This ward is air tight, I have a little extra oxygen pumped in, keeps my spirits up.

CHANCE
 Yes. I like that very much.

BILLINGS
 (lining up Chance's leg)
 This won't take long, Mr. Gardiner.
 Please hold still when I ask.

Chance stares at Billings, reacts to him being Black.

CHANCE
 (to Billings)
 Do you know Raphael?

BILLINGS
 No sir, I don't believe I do.

CHANCE
 Oh. I have a message for him.

BILLINGS
 Yes, sir.

CHANCE
 A Black man gave me the message.

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

Rand looks over as Billings takes the X-Ray.

RAND
 Aplastic anemia, Mr. Gardiner -
 aplastic anemia.

Chance smiles to Rand.

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

CHANCE
 (still smiles at Rand)
 Yes. You look very sick.

BILLINGS
 Hold still, please, Mr. Gardiner.

RAND
 (a laugh)
 I am very sick, and, as you can see
 by all this paraphernalia, I am
 very wealthy. I think I would
 rather be wealthy and sick than
 poor and sick.

CHANCE
 (looks around the room)
 I understand. I've never seen
 anything like this on television.

BILLINGS
 Please, hold still, Mr. Gardiner.

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

Rand lays his head back.

RAND
 ... We're prisoners, Mr. Gardiner -
 we're prisoners of tubes and
 technology.

CHANCE
 I agree.

RAND
 (flat on his back)
 ... You will join us for dinner,
 won't you, Mr. Gardiner?

CHANCE
 (also flat on his back)
 Yes. I am very hungry.

RAND
 ... So am I, my boy - so am I.

INT. RAND DINING ROOM - NIGHT

THURMAND, a waiter, and MARIANNE, a waitress, enter into the Rand dining room carrying trays of food. The dining room is immense, a 70-foot ceiling, huge fireplace. Allenby, Eve, Rand, and Chance (both in wheelchairs) sit around the table. Rand speaks slowly, with obvious weakness.

RAND
 I know exactly what you mean. Today
 the businessman is at the mercy of
 kid-lawyers from the SEC. All they
 want to do is regulate our natural
 growth! It's happening across the
 country!

ALLENBY
 To everyone, I'm afraid. The
 Government controls are so
 restricting that the Medical
 Profession, as we know it, is being
 legislated out of existence.

RAND
 Of course! By kid-lawyers!

Eve turns to Chance.

EVE
 Won't your injury prevent you from
 attending to business, Mr.
 Gardiner?

CHANCE

No. It won't do that.

EVE

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

CHANCE

No. The Old Man died and Louise left.

There is a moment of silence.

EVE

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

RAND

Do you need a secretary?

CHANCE

No, thank you. My house has been closed.

RAND

Oh. When you say 'Your house has been closed', you mean to say that your business was shut down?

CHANCE

Yes. Shut down and locked by the attorneys.

RAND

What'd I tell you? Kid-lawyers! The S.E.C.! Damn them!

EVE

I hope that staying here won't be an inconvenience for you.

CHANCE

No. I like it here.

RAND

That's good, Mr. Gardiner. Or may I call you Chauncey?

CHANCE
 (agreeable to being called
 Chauncey)
 Yes. Chauncey is fine.

RAND
 And I'm Ben.

ALLENBY
 (smiles to Chance)
 ... And please call me Robert.

CHANCE
 Yes, Robert. I will.

RAND
 So tell me, Chauncey, what are your
 plans now?

Chance looks around the room.

CHANCE
 Does this house have a garden?

Allenby gives Chance a look.

RAND
 Do we have a garden? Hah! Tomorrow,
 Chauncey, you will see our gardens.

CHANCE
 I see. I would like to work in your
 garden.

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

CHANCE
 I am a very good gardener.

RAND
 A gardener! excellent! businessman
 is? A gardener? family and
 community? vineyard.

(MORE)

RAND
vineyard.

CHANCE
Thank you, Ben. The garden that I
left was such a place. Everything
which grew there was with the labor
of my own hands. I planted seeds
and watered them and watched
everything grow.

RAND
(weakly)
Bravo!

CHANCE
But I don't have that any more...
(points to ceiling)
... All that's left for me now is
the room upstairs.

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

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

CHANCE
It's a very pleasant room, Ben.

RAND
(laughs)
Yes, I'm sure it is. That's what
they say, anyway.

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

INT. RAND'S POOL ROOM - NIGHT

Allenby opens the door. Rand enters in his electric
wheelchair followed by Chance being pushed by Wilson.

RAND

... I don't know what you've heard about me, Chauncey, but I'm sure you know everything there is to know. Cigar?

Rand holds out humidor to Chance.

CHANCE

Yes, thank you.

(takes cigar)

No Ben. I don't know everything about you.

Rand smiles as he takes a cigar for himself.

RAND

... No, of course you don't. Excuse me for being so presumptuous. No man knows everything about another man - however, very few are honest enough to admit it.

ALLENBY

That is so true. You're different, Chauncey... Quite different than most men.

CHANCE

Thank you, Robert.

Rand lights his own cigar, then hands an ornate lighter to Chance.

RAND

(picks up pool cue, weakly strokes the balls)

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

Chance, not knowing to bite off the tip, tries to light the cigar like the man on TV. It will not light.

RAND

So I've been thinking about beginning a financial assistance program, Chauncey, to help out American businessmen that have been harassed by inflation, excessive taxation, unions and other indecencies...

Allenby watches Chance trying to light the cigar as Rand speaks on, shooting pool as he talks.

RAND

... I'd like to offer the decent 'Gardeners' of the business community a helping hand. After all, they are our strongest defense against the pollutants who so threaten our basic freedoms and the well-being of our middle class. Tell me, would you have any thoughts on such a program?

Chance puts the unlit cigar in the ashtray, smiles at Allenby, then answers Rand.

CHANCE

No, Ben.

RAND

(a smile)

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

CHANCE

I could give it some thought, Ben, but my leg is very sore.

RAND

... Oh?

(looks to Allenby)

Robert, take a look, would you?

ALLENBY

Some pain is to be expected...
 (bends to Chance, looks at
 leg)

... And I think what would be best
 for the two of you is a good
 night's rest.

(checks watch)

... It's late, I'm afraid it's time
 for my patients to prepare for bed.

RAND

(puts down pool cue)

We have common foes, Chauncey - kid
 lawyers and our physician!

CHANCE

I agree.

Allenby laughs as he takes Rand's cigar from him, snuffs it
 in the ashtray.

INT. MANSION - ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Wilson stands behind Chance in the wheelchair. Chance glances
 slowly and inquisitively around the elevator. When his eyes
 meet Wilson's, the valet breaks out in laughter.

WILSON

(laughing, trying to
 apologize)

... Sorry, sir - I just couldn't
 contain myself... I knew you were
 going to come out with another one
 of your jests about the elevator...
 Excuse me, sir...

The elevator stops, the door opens.

INT. MANSION - THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

Wilson wheels Chance out of the elevator.

CHANCE

(looks back as the door
 closes)

... Hmmm... Elevator.

WILSON

(laughs again)

... Yes sir - elevator!

Wilson stops laughing, becomes the stone-faced servant once again as he notices Eve coming out of her bedroom. Wilson stops wheeling Chance, stands stiffly at attention as Eve and Chance talk.

EVE

Chauncey, I wanted to tell you how dreadful I feel about the accident today, but that I'm delighted that you are staying with us.

CHANCE

Thank you, Eve - I like this house very much.

EVE

... And Ben is just mad about you - you've lifted his spirits so - it's just... Well, it's just a real pleasure having you with us.

CHANCE

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

EVE

Yes... I know, Chauncey.

CHANCE

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

EVE

He does...?

CHANCE

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

Eve is not prepared for such a question.

EVE

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

CHANCE

That's good.

Chance smiles at Eve and there is a moment of silence before Eve steps back into her bedroom.

EVE

... Good night, Chauncey.

CHANCE
 Good night, Eve.

Eve closes the door. Wilson wheels Chance down the hallway toward the guest room.

EXT. FRONT OF RAND MANSION - MORNING

Eve comes out of the house, Jeffrey holds the door for her as she gets into "RAND 1." Jeffrey gets in and the limo pulls away. Chance comes out of the front door, walking with a limp. His first view of the Rand grounds in the daylight, he is taken by the extent of the greenery. An attendant, LEWIS, hurries to Chance.

LEWIS
 Did you want a car, sir?

CHANCE
 Yes. I would like a car.

LEWIS
 Yes, sir.

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

ALLENBY
 (frowns as he sees Chance walking)
 Chauncey, there you are. What are you doing on that leg?

CHANCE
 It's fine today, Robert.

ALLENBY
 Shame on you, Chauncey - you should let me be the judge of that.
 (motions to Wilson)
 Please, sit in the chair.

Wilson pushes the wheelchair to Chance, he sits.

ALLENBY

(checks leg)

I swear, Chauncey, between you and Benjamin, I've got my hands full...

(looks at calf)

... Say, that is coming along, the swelling has gone down considerably...

(pokes a spot)

... Any pain here?

CHANCE

Yes, Robert. But it's not bad.

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

ALLENBY

(continues examining)

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

CHANCE

Hardly any, Robert.

Lewis, the attendant, interrupts.

LEWIS

Your limousine, sir.

CHANCE

Oh, thank you.

ALLENBY

(reacting to limo)

... Were you going somewhere?

CHANCE

No, Robert.

ALLENBY

(a beat)

... Oh.

(checks leg)

... My God, I only wish that Benjamin had your recuperative powers... Anyway, the President offered to sit in for Ben at the meeting, quite a nice gesture, I felt. He's due here soon, I believe.

CHANCE

Yes, Robert. I know about the President.

ALLENBY

(mildly surprised)

... Oh? You've heard?

CHANCE

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

ALLENBY

(stands)

He does, does he?

CHANCE

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

ALLENBY

Why, that's terrific, Chauncey.

CHANCE

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

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

ALLENBY

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

CHANCE

Thank you, Robert.

Wilson begins to push Chance.

CHANCE

I would like to walk today.

ALLENBY

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

CHANCE

(gets out of chair)
Oh, really?

Allenby, a bit puzzled, watches as Chance goes into the house.

INT. RAND MANSION - HALLWAY - MORNING

Chance limps aimlessly through a hallway. He stops, admires a large tapestry on the wall. A servant, SMYTHE, notices Chance appears confused, approaches him.

SMYTHE

May I help you, Mr. Gardiner?

CHANCE

(with a smile)
Yes. I would like to go to Rand
Memorial Hospital.

SMYTHE

(a pause)
... Sir?

CHANCE

Yes.

There is another long pause.

SMYTHE

... Did you wish to see someone,
sir?

CHANCE

Yes, I would like to see Ben.

SMYTHE

Oh, Mr. Rand, of course. Right this
way, sir.

Chance follows Smythe down the hall.

INT. RAND'S HOSPITAL ROOM - MORNING

Rand is in an easy chair, dressed for his meeting with the President. The two nurses are working at the disinfecting table. Rand smiles as Chance is shown into the room by Smythe.

RAND

Chauncey, up and around this morning, are you?

CHANCE

Yes, Ben. My leg is not very sore.

RAND

Well, that's good news, my boy.

CHANCE

You're looking much better today, Ben.

RAND

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

CHANCE

I understand.

RAND

No one likes a dying man, my boy - because few know what death is. All we know is the terror of it. But you're an exception, Chauncey - that's what I admire in you, your marvelous balance. You don't stagger back and forth between fear and hope - you're a truly peaceful man.

CHANCE

Thank you, Ben.

(looks at Rand closely)

... The nurse did a very good job, Ben.

The nurses turn, look at Chance.

EXT. FRONT RAND MANSION - MORNING

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

WOLTZ

Good morning, Mr. Wilson.

WILSON

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

WOLTZ

Thank you. How have you been?

WILSON

Fine, thank you.

(hands Woltz paper)

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

WOLTZ

(reads list)

I see...

(turns to other men)

Okay, let's go to work.

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

INT. RAND MANSION - THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY - MORNING

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

INT. RAND'S HOSPITAL ROOM - MORNING

Chance watches television as Rand speaks.

RAND

thoughts about public office...
 citizen... me, not to misuse that
 power...
 needs of the country... voices of
 the people... tried to remain
 honest to myself...

(MORE)

RAND
 tried to remain honest to myself...

CHANCE
 (changing channels)
 I see, Ben.

RAND
 ... Maybe one day you shall find
 yourself in a similar position,
 Chauncey... Maybe one day...

EXT. FRONT RAND MANSION - MORNING

Two black limousines followed by a station wagon with small holes in the side pull up in front of the mansion. As men from the first limousine and the station wagon jump out and take positions around the driveway, Lewis hurries to his post, picks up his phone.

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

The nerve center of the Rand Enterprises since he has become ill. Four or five desks, all the latest electronic office equipment, three TV's with video taping facilities, countless telephones. MRS. AUBREY, Rand's senior secretary, is at her desk, answers her phone.

MRS. AUBREY
 (into phone)
 Yes... Oh, very good, Lewis, thank
 you.

Mrs. Aubrey hangs up, picks up another phone, pushes a button.

INT. RAND'S HOSPITAL ROOM - MORNING

Rand smiles at Chance as the phone rings.

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

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

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

Teresa brings Rand's wheelchair to him.

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

TERESA
But, Mr. Rand...

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

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

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

EXT. HALLWAY - MORNING

Secret Service Men are seen in the background as Rand stops outside Mrs. Aubrey's office, leans in.

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

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

RAND
Excellent.
(turns to Chance)
A good woman, Mrs. Aubrey.

CHANCE
(seeing her for first
time)
I agree, Ben.

They shuffle off down the hallway. Chance smiles at the Secret Service men that they pass.

INT. RAND MANSION - HALLWAY BY LIBRARY - MORNING

Woltz and Wilson wait by the library door. Woltz takes a small metal detector from his pocket as Rand and Chance approach.

WOLTZ
Good morning, Mr. Rand.

RAND
Woltz, how have you been?

WOLTZ
(passes detector over
Rand's body)
Just fine, thank you, sir.
(turns to Chance)
And you must be Mr. Gardiner.

CHANCE
Yes.

WOLTZ
(passes detector over
Chance)
Just a formality, Mr. Gardiner.

CHANCE
(as he finishes)
Thank you very much.

Wilson knocks lightly, then opens the library door, Rand and Chance enter.

INT. RAND LIBRARY - MORNING

Rand and Chance come into the Library and the President goes to Rand with both hands outstretched.

PRESIDENT
Ben!

RAND
(very weak)
... Mr. President, how good to see
you.

PRESIDENT

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

RAND

(barely able to stand)
I'm not convinced of that, Mr.
President, but your visit has
raised my spirits...

PRESIDENT

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

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

CHANCE

Good morning, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT

(smiling)
... Hello.

Chance and the President exchange a two-handed handshake.
Rand, still weak from standing, catches his breath and
introduces Chance.

RAND

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

PRESIDENT

Mr. Gardiner, my pleasure.

CHANCE

You look much taller on television,
Mr. President.

PRESIDENT

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

RAND

(smiling)
You will find that my house guest
does not bandy words, Mr.
President.

The President gives Chance a look, then laughs.

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

CHANCE
 (sitting)
 Yes, I will.

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

Chance perks up at the mention of his name, interrupts.

CHANCE
 Yes?

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

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

RAND
 Yes, I did.

PRESIDENT
 ... Well?

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

PRESIDENT
 Well, Ben... I...

RAND
 I sympathize with your position,
 Mr. President, I know how difficult
 it is to be straightforward, the
 reaction to such a speech could be
 chaos.

PRESIDENT
 That's too big a risk, I can't take
 the chance.

CHANCE
 (again perks up)
 Yes?

Once again, the President gives Chance a puzzled look.

INT. RAND MANSION - THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY - MORNING

Perkins accompanies Secret Service Agent RIFF as he checks out the third floor. Riff knocks on each door, looks inside, then moves in.

INT. CHANCE'S ROOM - MORNING

Allenby is searching through Chancel's clothes looking for some sort of identification. There is a knock at the door, Allenby pulls back from the closet as Riff opens the door, looks inside.

ALLENBY
 Oh... Hello.

RIFF
 (entering)
 Good morning. I'm Riff, Secret Service.

ALLENBY
 ... Yes. Of course.

Perkins watches curiously as Riff passes the metal detector over Allenby's clothing.

INT. LIBRARY - MORNING

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

RAND
 ... There is no longer any margin for inflation, it has gone as far as it can, you've reached your limits on taxation, dependence on foreign energy has reached a crisis, and, from where I see it, Mr. President, the Free Enterprise System has reached the breaking point. We are on the brink of another crash from which recovery might not be possible.

PRESIDENT
It's that serious, huh?

RAND
I'm afraid so.

The President now looks nearly as bad as Rand. He sits, turns to Chance.

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

CHANCE
(a beat)
As long as the roots are not severed, all is well and all will be well in the garden.

PRESIDENT
(a pause)
... In the garden?

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

PRESIDENT
(staring at Chance)
... Spring and summer...
(confused)
Yes, I see... Fall and winter.
(smiles at Chance)
Yes, indeed...
(a beat)
Could you go through that one more time, please, Mr. Gardiner?

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

CHANCE
Yes. That is correct.

PRESIDENT

(pleased)

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

The President puts out his cigarette, rises.

PRESIDENT

... Many of us forget that nature and society are one! Yes, though we have tried to cut ourselves off from nature, we are still a part of it! Like nature, our economic system remains, in the long run, stable and rational. And that is why we must not fear to be at its mercy!

(he smiles at Chance, who is absorbed in looking around the room at the books)

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

(glances at watch)

I must be going.

(holds out hand to Chance)

Mr. Gardiner, this visit has been enlightening...

Chance rises and shakes the President's hand.

CHANCE

Yes. It has.

PRESIDENT

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

CHANCE

Yes. I will.

PRESIDENT

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

(turns to Rand)

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

RAND

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

PRESIDENT

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

RAND

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

PRESIDENT

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

The President clasps Rand's hand.

RAND

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

PRESIDENT

Take care of yourself, Ben.

RAND

You take care too, Bobby.

PRESIDENT

(as he turns to go, a smile to Chance)
Mr. Gardiner...

The President leaves the library and Chance sits back down.

RAND

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

CHANCE

Yes, Ben - he is.

RAND

He was quite impressed with your comments, Chauncey - he hears my sort of analysis from everyone, but yours, unfortunately - seldom if ever at all.

CHANCE

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

EXT. RAND MANSION - MORNING

An aide, KAUFMAN, waits by the front door of the Rand mansion. As the President comes out, he speaks quietly to Kaufman.

PRESIDENT

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

KAUFMAN

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

PRESIDENT

And put it through on a Code Red - I want it as soon as possible.

KAUFMAN

No problem, Chief.

They head toward the waiting limousines.

INT. RAND MANSION - HALLWAY - MORNING

Rand has an arm around Chance, hangs on for dear life as the two of them walk through the hall. Behind them, Wilson and Perkins push empty wheelchairs.

RAND

(very weak)

... You know, Chauncey, there's something about you... You're direct, you grasp things quickly and you state them plainly. You don't play games with words to protect yourself. I feel I can speak to you frankly... You know what I was talking to you about last night?

CHANCE

(blankly)

No, Ben.

RAND

Oh, sure you do, the financial assistance program. I think you might be just the man to take charge of such an undertaking. I'd like you to meet with the members of the Board, we'll be able to discuss the matter at greater length at that time.

CHANCE

I understand.

RAND

(stops outside his door)

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

CHANCE

Thank you, Ben.

RAND

And now, Chauncey, I'm afraid you must excuse me - I'm very tired all of a sudden.

Wilson and Perkins leave the wheelchairs, assist Rand into his hospital room.

CHANCE

(as they go in)

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

The door closes, Chance limps off down the hall.

EXT. RAND MANSION - GARDEN - DAY

Chance, with a limp, walks down a pathway in the garden, admires the greenery. In the background, coming from the house, we see Eve.

EVE
(approaches Chance, calls)
Chauncey!

CHANCE
(stops, turns)
Hello, Eve.

EVE
Your leg must be getting better.

CHANCE
Yes. It's feeling much better now.

EVE
Good. I'm glad to hear that.
(they walk together)
... How did you like meeting the
President?

CHANCE
Fine. He's very nice.

EVE
Yes, he is. I'm sorry I didn't get
to see him.

They walk along in silence for a moment. Chance sees a huge greenhouse not far from them, heads toward it. Eve turns to him, hesitates, then questions.

EVE
... Chauncey... Last night you
mentioned an old man, that died.

CHANCE
Yes.

EVE
Was he a relative? Or an intimate
friend?

CHANCE
(looking at greenhouse)
He was a very wealthy man, he
looked after me since I was young.

EVE

Oh, I see... Your mentor, perhaps?

CHANCE

(quizzically)

... Mentor...?

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

EVE

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

CHANCE

Yes. I was.

EVE

I'm sorry...

(getting more to the point)

... And what about Louise? YOU mentioned that she had gone, were you close to her also?

CHANCE

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

EVE

(relieved)

Oh, his maid!... Stupid me, I thought perhaps she was someone that you may have been romantically involved with.

CHANCE

Oh, no. She brought me my meals.

EVE

(pleased)

Of course.

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

CHANCE

What is that?

EVE

Our greenhouse.

CHANCE

(pleased)

Oh, I like that very much.

EVE

Yes, so do we.

Chance peeks through one of the windows.

INT. RAND'S BEDROOM - DAY

Rand is in bed. Eve, Chance and Allenby are seated around him, the two nurses standing to one side. They all watch the President's address to the Financial Institute on TV. Chance inhales deeply, enjoys the oxygen in the room. Rand is looking weaker. Every so often, Allenby casts a concerned glance his way.

PRESIDENT'S VOICE

... And there are so many of you that have proclaimed that we are on the brink of the worst financial crisis in this nation's history. And there are so many of you demanding that we put into effect drastic measures to alter its course. Well, let me tell you, gentlemen, I have been conducting multiple-level consultations with members of the Cabinet, House and Senate. I have conducted meetings with prominent business leaders throughout the country. And this very morning I had an in-depth discussion with your founder and Chairman-Of-The-Board, Mr. Benjamin Turnbull Rand and his close friend and advisor Mr. Chauncey Gardiner...

Rand perks up a bit at this mention. Allenby manages a smile, once again looks at Rand, checking his condition. Eve looks proudly at Chance, who continues to enjoy the oxygen.

PRESIDENT'S VOICE

... Well, gentlemen, I found this to be a most rewarding conference... To quote Mr. Gardiner, a most intuitive man, 'As long as the roots of industry remain firmly planted in the national soil, the economic prospects are undoubtedly sunny.'

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

ALLENBY

(motioning toward door)
Excuse us, please.

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

PRESIDENT'S VOICE

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

EXT. RAND MANSION - PATIO - DAY

Eve and Chance sit in silence on the patio. Eve's eyes are swollen, red, she has been crying. She turns to Chance, reaches out, touches his hand.

EVE

(hesitates)
... I'm...
(pause)
... I'm very grateful that you're here, Chauncey...
(pause)
... With us ...

CHANCE

So am I, Eve.

Allenby comes out the door, his mood is serious, professional. Eve turns quickly, awaits his news.

ALLENBY

(sits alongside Eve)
... Eve - this has been an
exhausting day for Ben...

EVE

(anxious)
... But he's...?

ALLENBY

He's resting comfortably now.
There's no cause for alarm, yet...

Mrs. Aubrey comes out of the house.

MRS. AUBREY

Mr. Gardiner, I have a telephone
call for you. Sidney Courtney, the
financial editor of the Washington
Post.

CHANCE

(not moving)
Thank you.

MRS. AUBREY

Would you care to take it, sir?

CHANCE

Yes.

Chance still does not move. Eve mistakes Chance's not moving for concern for herself. She puts a hand on his shoulder.

EVE

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

CHANCE

(rising)
Yes, Eve. You'll be all right.

Chance follows Mrs. Aubrey into the house. Eve watches him go, then turns to Allenby.

EVE

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

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

Mrs. Aubrey leads Chance to a phone at one of the desks. The three television sets are on, attract Chance's attention.

CHANCE
 (picks up phone, looks at
 TVs)
 Hello.

INT. WASHINGTON POST - COURTNEY'S OFFICE - DAY

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

COURTNEY
 Hello, Mr. Gardiner. This is Sid
 Courtney, Washington Post.

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

CHANCE
 Hello, Sid.

COURTNEY
 I'm sorry to disturb you, Mr.
 Gardiner, I know you must be very
 busy.

CHANCE
 (looking from one TV to
 the other)
 No. I'm not busy.

COURTNEY
 Then, I'll be brief. I covered the
 President's speech at the Financial
 Institute today, and since the Post
 would like to be as exact as
 possible, we would appreciate your
 comments on the meeting that took
 place between Mr. Rand, the
 President and yourself.

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

COURTNEY

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

CHANCE

I think you should ask Mr. Rand that.

COURTNEY

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

CHANCE

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

Courtney doesn't understand but continues his questioning.

COURTNEY

I see. Then one more quick question, Mr. Gardiner; since we at the Post would like to, uh - update our profile on you - what exactly is your business?

CHANCE

I have nothing more to say.

Chance hangs up the phone, watches the TVs.

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

COURTNEY

(to himself)

Typical - no wonder he's so close to Rand...

INT. RAND MANSION - HALLWAY - DAY

Chance comes out of Mrs. Aubrey's office, notices the service elevator.

CHANCE

Hmmm. Elevator.

He gets in the elevator.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

Chance looks at the row of buttons, presses one. He smiles as he feels the elevator move.

INT. RAND MANSION - BASEMENT - DAY

One of Mrs. Aubrey's secretaries, JENNIFER, waits with an arm load of paperwork for the elevator. The door opens, Chance smiles at her as he steps out.

JENNIFER
 (surprised to see him)
 Why, hello, Mr. Gardiner - are you
 looking for someone?

CHANCE
 No.

Jennifer gets in the elevator, the doors close. Chance looks around the basement, puzzled. He had expected to be on the third floor.

INT. MRS. AUBREY'S OFFICE - DAY

Mrs. Aubrey is at her desk, buzzing her inter-house phone. As Jennifer enters, Mrs. Aubrey hangs up in frustration.

MRS. AUBREY
 I can't find Mr. Gardiner anywhere.

JENNIFER
 He's in the basement.

MRS. AUBREY
 What's he doing in the basement?

JENNIFER
 I don't know, Mrs. Aubrey.

Mrs. Aubrey grabs a notepad, leaves the office.

INT. RAND MANSION - BASEMENT - DAY

Mrs. Aubrey comes out of the service elevator, hurries through the basement. She checks:
 The boiler room.
 The electrical room.
 The photographer's studio (Eve is sitting for a portrait)
 The gym (Allenby is working out)

INT. RAND MANSION - BASEMENT BOWLING ALLEY - DAY

Chance stands in the middle of the two-lane bowling alley, totally confused. Mrs. Aubrey enters, he smiles at her.

MRS. AUBREY

Oh, Mr. Gardiner, I've been looking all over.

CHANCE

Oh, yes.

MRS. AUBREY

Morton Hull, the producer of 'This Evening' just called.

CHANCE

Yes, I have seen that show on television.

MRS. AUBREY

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

CHANCE

Yes. I would like to be on that show.

MRS. AUBREY

Fine. They felt that since you had such close ties with the President, you would be a splendid choice.

(Chance nods, there is a pause)

... Can I help you? Are you looking for something?

CHANCE

No. I like this attic very much.

Mrs. Aubrey gives him a look, leaves.

EXT. SKY - DUSK

AIR FORCE 1 passes through the clouds.

INT. AIR FORCE 1 - DUSK

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

PRESIDENT

... Gentlemen, I quoted this man on national television today he is obviously a financial sophisticate of some reknown.

KAUFMAN

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

PRESIDENT

(interrupts)

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

KAUFMAN

Yes, Mr. President, we attempted to contact Mr. Rand, but he was too ill to...

PRESIDENT

(again interrupts)

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

(he stands)

I'll be in the office at seven in the morning and I would like to have it at that time.

(he starts for door)

I've got to take a leak.

KAUFMAN
Right, Chief.

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

INT. CHANCE'S ROOM - EVENING

Chance wears a velvet bathrobe, watches TV. Perkins lays out a suit, shirt, tie, etc. on the bed.

PERKINS
I believe these garments will be quite appropriate, Mr. Gardiner.

CHANCE
(eyes on TV)
Yes. They are fine.

There is a knock at the door.

PERKINS
Excuse me, sir.

Perkins answers the door, it is Eve.

EVE
(entering)
Chauncey...

CHANCE
(rises)
Hello, Eve.

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

CHANCE
Thank you, Eve.

EVE
And Benjamin sends along his best wishes.

CHANCE
How is Ben feeling?

EVE
He's tired, Chauncey - but he's going to watch you tonight. We'll both be watching.

CHANCE

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

EVE

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

(a pause)

... Good luck, Chauncey.

Eve impulsively steps forward, kisses Chance on the cheek. Chance smiles at her, and Eve, slightly embarrassed, turns and leaves the room. Chance sits back down, watches TV as Perkins attends to his clothes with a whisk broom.

INT. WASHINGTON POST - STAFF ROOM - NIGHT

Courtney heads a meeting of his four staffers. One man, KINNEY, a research assistant, sits behind a stack of paperwork, has a downcast expression as he listens to Courtney.

COURTNEY

... Gardiner is laconic, matter-of-fact. The scuttlebutt is that he's a strong candidate for one of the vacant seats on the board of First American. But before we can do any sort of a piece on the man, we're going to need facts on his background...

(turns to Kinney)

... Kinney, what did you come up with?

KINNEY

(after a pause)

... Nothing.

COURTNEY

(sighs, taps pencil on table)

... Skip the levity, Kinney - what have you got?

KINNEY

(another pause)

... I realize this sounds banal but there is no information of any sort on Gardiner. We have no material on him - zilch...

The room is quiet except for the tapping of Courtney's pencil.

EXT. TELEVISION STATION - NIGHT

The RAND 1 limousine parks in front of the station. As Jeffrey opens the door for Chance, MORTON HULL steps to the limo.

HULL

Mr. Gardiner, I'm Morton Hull, the producer of 'This Evening.'

CHANCE

(as they shake hands)
Hello, Morton.

Hull takes Chance into the station.

INT. RAND MANSION - CHANCE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Constance, Rand's nurse, enters Chance's room, goes to the closet.

INT. TV STATION - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

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

HULL

Of course, Mr. Gardiner, the fact that you occupy such a position in the world of finance makes you ideally suited to provide our millions of viewers with an explanation of this nation's economic crisis.

CHANCE

I see.

HULL

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

CHANCE

Yes. It's a very good show.

HULL

I'm glad you like it, Mr. Gardiner.

Hull takes Chance into the MAKE-UP room.

INT. RAND MANSION - CHANCE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Constance is in the closet, searching through Chance's pockets, finding nothing. She takes out a small knife, cuts a label from one of the jackets. Quickly, she examines one of Chance's shoes, copies the name of the shoemaker in a notebook. Constance hurries to the dresser, continues her search.

INT. TV STATION - CORRIDOR/MAKEUP ROOM NIGHT

COLSON, the makeup man, comes through the corridor carrying a glass of water. He turns into the makeup room, goes to Chance who sits in front of the lights. Hull sits next to Chance, briefs him on the show. Chance has his eyes on a TV monitor, watches the guest preceding him on "This Evening."

COLSON

(gives Chance water)

Here you go, Mr. Gardiner.

CHANCE

Thank you. I'm very thirsty.

COLSON

Yes, sir - it's hot under those lights.

Colson applies finishing touches to Chance.

HULL

Now, if the host wants to ask you a question, he'll raise his left forefinger to his left eyebrow.

(Chance watches TV)

Then you'll stop, and he'll say something, and then you'll answer.

On the TV, WILLIAM DUPONT, the host, wraps up his talk with his guest.

COLSON

(a last-minute dab)

Okay, Mr. Gardiner, you're all set.

Hull leads Chance out of the makeup room. Colson closes the door, then carefully picks up Chance's water glass, wraps it in Kleenex, puts it in his overcoat pocket.

INT. TV STATION - "THIS EVENING" STUDIO - NIGHT

William Dupont introduces Chance.

DUPONT

Ladies and gentlemen, our very distinguished guest, Mr. Chauncey Gardiner!

The BAND plays as Chance comes onto the stage. An audience of about three hundred applauds Chance as he appears. Two TV cameras move with him as he walks, with a smile and a limp, to center stage. Dupont shakes Chance's hand, Chance holds Dupont's hand with both of his own.

DUPONT

Mr. Gardiner, how very nice to have you with us this evening.

CHANCE

Yes.

DUPONT

(showing Chance to chair)
I'd like to thank you for filling in on such short notice for the Vice President.

CHANCE

(sits)
You're welcome.

DUPONT

(also sitting)
I always find it surprising, Mr. Gardiner, to find men like yourself, who are working so intimately with the President, yet manage to remain relatively unknown.

CHANCE

Yes. That is surprising.

DUPONT

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

CHANCE

(doesn't understand)

I hope so.

DUPONT

Yes... Of course, you know, Mr. Gardiner, that I always prefer an open and frank conversation with my guests, I hope you don't object to that.

CHANCE

No. I don't object.

DUPONT

Fine, then let's get started. The current state of our country is of vital interest to us all, and I would like to know if you agree with the President's view of the economy?

CHANCE

Which view?

Applause and laughter from the audience. Dupont accustomed to parrying with his guests, asks again.

DUPONT

Come now, Mr. Gardiner, before his speech at the Financial Institute the President consulted with you and Benjamin Rand, did he not?

CHANCE

Yes. I was there with Ben.

DUPONT

I know that, Mr. Gardiner.

CHANCE

Yes.

DUPONT

(a beat)

Well, let me rephrase the question; the President compared the economy of this country to a garden, and stated that after a period of decline a time of growth would naturally follow. Do you go along with this belief?

CHANCE

Yes, I know the garden very well. I have worked in it all my life. It is a good garden and a healthy one; its trees are healthy and so are its shrubs and flowers, as long as they are trimmed and watered in the right seasons. The garden needs a lot of care. I do agree with the President; everything in it will grow strong, and there is plenty of room in it for new trees and new flowers of all kinds.

The audience applauds Chance's apparent metaphor. Dupont waits for it all to subside, then asks another question.

INT. RAND'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

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

DUPONT

(over TV)

...Well, Mr. Gardiner, that was very well put indeed, and I feel it was a booster for all of us who do not like to wallow in complaints or take delight in gloomy predictions.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - PRESIDENT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

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

PRESIDENT

Gloomy predictions? That insolent son of a bitch!

DUPONT

(over TV)

Let's make it clear, Mr. Gardiner, it's your view that the collapse of the Stock Market, the dramatic increase in unemployment, you feel that this is just another season, so to speak, in the garden?

The First Lady cuddles close the President, ruffles his hair, tries to cheer him up.

INT. TV STUDIO - "THIS EVENING SHOW" - NIGHT

Chance answers.

CHANCE

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

INT. CIA ROOM - NIGHT

A small, dark room. A videotape machine is running. Also, a
machine is turning that records the harmonics of Chance's
voice. TWO CIA MEN run the equipment, watch as a needle
charts Chance's voice onto paper.

CHANCE

(over TV)

... Then they grow thicker and
stronger and taller. Some trees
die, but fresh saplings replace
them. Gardens need a lot of care
and a lot of love.

INT. THOMAS FRANKLIN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

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

CHANCE

(over TV)

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

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

FRANKLIN

(puzzled)

It's that gardener!

JOHANNA

Yes, Chauncey Gardiner.

FRANKLIN

No! He's a real gardener!

JOHANNA

(laughs)

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

DUPONT

(over TV)

I think your metaphors are quite interesting, Mr. Gardiner, but, haven't we seen seasons that have been devastating to certain countries?

INT. PRESIDENT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The President and First Lady continue to watch.

DUPONT

(over TV)

Such as disasterous winters, prolonged droughts that have wiped out crops, hurricanes that have all but swept away island communities? Doesn't a country need to have someone in charge that can see it through such crises?

PRESIDENT

... That bastard...

The First Lady moves closer to him.

INT. CHANCE'S ROOM - NIGHT

The TV, its volume low, plays in the background as Constance, with a pair of tweezers, plucks a hair from Chance's pillow, puts it into a small vial.

DUPONT

(over TV)

Don't we need a leader capable of guiding us through the seasons? The bad as well as the good?

CHANCE

(over TV)

Yes. We need a very good gardener.

INT. TV STUDIO - NIGHT

Dupont continues his questions.

DUPONT

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

At the end of the question, Dupont glances over Chance's shoulder to look at the monitor.

CHANCE

(a beat)

I understand.

Chance turns to see what Dupont is looking at, sees the back of his own head on the TV screen.

DUPONT

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

Chance is still turned to the monitor.

CHANCE

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

INT. RAND MANSION - ALLENBY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Allenby watches Chance on television. The camera that covered Dupont in close-up has now pulled back, includes Dupont and Chance, both looking into camera. Allenby is concerned, he is unsure of Chance.

CHANCE

(over TV)

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

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

A group of ELDERLY BLACK PEOPLE sit in the lobby, watch "This Evening" on an old black-and-white TV.

CHANCE

(over TV)

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

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

LOUISE

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

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

INT. TV STUDIO - NIGHT

Chance continues.

CHANCE

... It is the responsibility of the gardener to adjust to the bad seasons as well as enjoy the good ones. If the gardener does his job, everything will be fine.

INT. RAND'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Audience applause is heard over TV. Rand claps weakly along with the TV sound. Eve and Teresa also clap.

RAND

(smiling)

Splendid. Just splendid...

Rand looks up as Constance comes into the room.

RAND
 Damn, Constance, get in here! You
 shouldn't miss any of this!

Constance hurries to Teresa's side. Rand turns to Eve.

RAND
 I'm becoming quite attached to
 Chauncey - quite attached...
 (Eve smiles)
 ... And so are you, aren't you,
 Eve.

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

RAND
 (reaches out, takes her
 hand)
 That's good... That's good.

DUPONT
 (over TV)
 Well, Mr. Gardiner, from the sound
 of our audience, I'd say that your
 words are a most welcome respite
 from what we've been hearing from
 others...

CHANCE
 (over TV)
 Thank you.

INT. TV STUDIO - NIGHT

Dupont asks another question.

DUPONT
 I'm sorry to say that our time is
 running short, but before we close,
 I'd like to ask one final question.
 What sort of gardener, sir, would
 you be?

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

INT. PRESIDENT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

More applause over the TV. The President pales.

PRESIDENT

Oh, Jesus...

He rolls over in bed. The First Lady reaches out, puts a comforting hand on his shoulder.

INT. FRANKLIN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Franklin holds a phone to his ear with one hand, shuts off the TV with the other.

FRANKLIN

Okay, I'll see you in twenty minutes.

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

JOHANNA

(coldly)

... Business, bullshit! Going out in the middle of the night to meet that bitch in a bar...

FRANKLIN

Sally Hayes is not a bitch - she's a damn fine attorney! I've got to talk to her about this Gardiner...

JOHANNA

(turns over in bed)

Good night.

FRANKLIN

Look, Johanna...

JOHANNA

(cuts him off)

I said good night!

Franklin gives up, hurries from the room.

INT. TV STATION - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Colson, carefully carrying his overcoat, walks with Chance through the corridor. A delighted Hull walks behind them.

COLSON

Marvelous! Just marvelous, Mr. Gardiner! What spirit you have, what confidence! Exactly what this country needs!

Chance smiles at well-wishers as they continue on through the corridor.

INT. PRESIDENT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

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

FIRST LADY

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

PRESIDENT,

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

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

INT. COCKTAIL LOUNGE - NIGHT

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

FRANKLIN

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

SALLY

He wasn't making a speech to us, Tom - he was talking to the masses. He was very clever, keeping it at a third grade level - that's what they understand...

FRANKLIN

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

SALLY

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

FRANKLIN

You know, Sally - I really feel like I've been had, and you know what that means, don't you?... It means that any political future I had is right down the toilet!

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

FRANKLIN

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

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

KINNEY

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

COURTNEY

Try again.

KINNEY

Sure, try again - where? There's nothing, it's like he never existed!

COURTNEY

Try again.

KINNEY

Sid, it's useless!

COURTNEY

I said - try again.

Kinney stands, shoves his paperwork across the table.

KINNEY

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

Kinney takes his drink with him as he leaves the lounge.

EXT. RAND MANSION - NIGHT

The household staff is lined up on the front steps, applauding Chance as he steps from the limousine. Chance accepts the plaudit, though does not understand the reason. As he nears the steps, Perkins and Wilson step forward.

WILSON

An outstanding speech, sir.

PERKINS

May I take your coat, Mr. Gardiner?

CHANCE

Yes. Thank you, Perkins.

Perkins nods, takes Chance's overcoat, allows everyone to enter the house ahead of him. Alone on the steps, Perkins quickly searches through the pockets of the coat, finds nothing.

INT. RAND'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Rand is in bed. Eve sits on the edge, looks warmly to Chance who stands nearby. Allenby prepares an injection for Rand, and occasionally glances curiously at Chance. Chance breathes deeply, enjoys the oxygen.

RAND

(with some effort)

... You possess a great gift, Chauncey, of being natural. And that, my boy, is a rare talent, the true mark of a leader. You were strong and brave, yet did not moralize. I hope the entire country was watching you tonight, the entire country...

Allenby crosses to Rand, needle in hand.

ALLENBY

And you, Benjamin, must be strong
and brave for me. Turn over,
please.

RAND

(holds up hand)

In a minute, Robert - in a
minute... Chauncey, I would like to
ask a favor of you...

CHANCE

Certainly, Ben.

RAND

Senator Rowley's widow, Sophie, is
hosting an evening reception
tomorrow evening honoring
Ambassador Skrapinov of the Soviet
Union... I think it's rather
obvious that Robert won't allow me
to attend, so - would you go in my
place, and escort Eve?

CHANCE

Yes. I would like to escort Eve.

RAND

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

EVE

(with a blush)

... Ben, really...

RAND

(reaches out a tired hand
to Chance - Chance holds
it)

... Thank you, Chauncey... Thank
you very much.

(takes back hand)

... All right, Robert, I'm all
yours.

Eve and Chance quietly leave the room. Allenby watches Chance
go, then readies Rand for the injection.

INT. RAND MANSION - THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

The elevator door opens, Eve and Chance come into the hallway. Chance looks back at the elevator for a beat, then the two walk quietly down the hall.

EVE

(stopping by bedroom door)
... You don't happen to have a
tuxedo in your suitcase, do you?

CHANCE

No, thank you.

EVE

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

CHANCE

I see.

EVE

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

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

EVE

... Good night, Chauncey.

CHANCE

Good night, Eve.

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

INT. WHITE HOUSE - OVAL OFFICE ANTE ROOM - MORNING

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

PRESIDENT

Good morning, gentlemen.

AIDES
(as one)
Good morning, sir.

The President leads the way into the Oval Office.

INT. OVAL OFFICE - MORNING

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

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

KAUFMAN
No, sir.

PRESIDENT
This information goes back three days. I want the standard file, you know that.

KAUFMAN
Right, Chief.

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

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

PRESIDENT
What the hell are you talking about, Kaufman?

KAUFMAN
Well, we do have data from Honeycutt's sources, Chief - but it isn't pertinent.

PRESIDENT
I'd like to hear that data, Kaufman.

KAUFMAN
Yes, sir.

Kaufman takes a clipboard from the man at his right.

KAUFMAN

(reading)

Suits hand-made by a tailor in Chicago in 1918. The tailor went out of business in 1929, then took his own life.

... His shoes were hand-made in 1928. The cobbler has long since been dead. Underwear, all of the finest cloth, factory destroyed by fire in 1938. The man carries no identification; no wallet, no driver's license, no credit cards.

... He carries one item along with him, a fine Swiss pocket-watch crafted at the turn of the century; so far they have been unable to ascertain where or when purchase was made.

... He has never dyed his hair.

... Computers have analyzed Gardiner's vocal characteristics; it is impossible to determine his ethnic background, they feel his accent may be northeastern, but they will not commit to that.

... Fingerprint check proved negative, no identification possible.

(a pause)

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

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

PRESIDENT

(into intercom)

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

A quick "Yes sir" from Miss Davis over the intercom. The President leans back in his swivel chair, looks at Kaufman.

PRESIDENT

... So what does all that add up to?

KAUFMAN

Well, sir - it occurred to us that he might be an agent of a foreign power. But, we ruled that out, as they invariably are provided with too much documentation, too much American identity... We, uh...don't quite know what to make of it yet, sir... But we'll keep on top of it, Mr. President - we'll come up with the answer.

PRESIDENT

(with sarcasm)

I would appreciate that.

The Aides quickly leave the office.

INT. CHANCE'S ROOM - MORNING

Chance is in bed, a bed tray on his lap, eating breakfast. A pile of the morning's newspapers lies at the foot of the bed, untouched. The TV is playing, Chance watches as he eats. There is a knock at the door.

CHANCE

(without turning from TV)

Come in!

Eve enters, wearing a robe over her nightgown.

EVE

Chauncey! Have you seen the papers?

CHANCE

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

EVE

(moving to bed)

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

CHANCE

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

EVE
 (sits on bed)
 I know...
 (a moment)
 ... So are you, Chauncey ...
 (another moment, Chance
 watches TV)
 ... Do you mind my being here, like
 this?

CHANCE
 (a bite of toast)
 No, Eve. I like you to be here.

Eve smiles, moves a little closer to Chance.

EVE
 ... You know, Chauncey... I want us
 to be...
 (with difficulty)
 I want us... You and I to become...
 close... I want us to become very
 close, you know...?

CHANCE
 Yes, Eve. I know that.

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

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

CHANCE

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

EVE

I know you are, Chauncey...

(a pause)

... You conquer a woman from within herself, you infuse in her the need and desire and the longing for your love.

CHANCE

(another bite of toast)

Yes. That could be true.

EVE

(sits up)

... I guess I may as well be honest about my feelings, Chauncey, as I know you are I am in love with you... I love you and I want you... And I know that you know it and I'm grateful that you've decided to wait until... Until...

Eve cannot bring herself to finish the sentence. She rises, straightens her robe and moves toward the door.

EVE

(stopping by door)

... I do love you, Chauncey.

A knock at the door startles Eve. She turns, opens it to MAGGIE, the seamstress. Maggie carries one of Rand's tuxedos.

EVE

Oh, come in, Maggie.

MAGGIE

(entering)

Yes, ma'am.

EVE

Chauncey, Maggie will alter Ben's tuxedo for you now.

CHANCE

Fine.

Eve leaves. Maggie stands by patiently as Chance eats his once-warm scrambled eggs and watches "Mr. Rogers Neighborhood" on TV.

INT. RAND MANSION - ALLENBY'S ROOM - DAY

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

ALLENBY

(into phone)

Mr. Thomas Franklin, please.

(a wait)

Is Thomas Franklin in?

(a beat)

Yes, this is Dr. Robert Allenby,
would you please tell Mr. Franklin
that I would like to talk to him?
It concerns Chauncey Gardiner.

INT. RAND'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DUSK

Teresa and Constance work in a corner of the room. Rand is in bed, very still, deep in thought.

EXT. SOPHIE'S - EVENING

The RAND 1 limousine pulls up to Sophie's house. Jeffrey opens the door for Eve and Chance. He wears Ben's tuxedo, Eve is in a formal gown. The press is waiting, a couple of reporters, 5 photographers and a mini-cam crew from local TV station gather around Eve and Chance.

REPORTER #1

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

CHANCE

(smiling for photogs)

I didn't read it.

REPORTER #2

(surprised)

But air - you must have at least
glanced at it.

CHANCE

No. I did not glance at it.

REPORTER #3

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

CHANCE

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

REPORTER #3

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

CHANCE

I do not know what it means.

REPORTER #2

Sorry to persist, air, but it would be of great interest to me to know what newspapers you do read.

CHANCE

I do not read any newspapers. I watch TV.

There is a moment of silence as the reporters digest this. The TV Reporter smiles, questions Chance.

TV REPORTER

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

CHANCE

(flatly)
I like to watch TV.

TV REPORTER

(pleased))
Thank you, Mr. Gardiner, for what is probably the most honest admission to come from a public figure in years. Few men in public life have the courage not to read newspapers none have the guts to admit it.

CHANCE

You're welcome.

Eve and Chance walk toward the front door, leaving the newsmen to talk among themselves.

EVE

I've never seen anyone handle the media as well as you, Chauncey. You're so cool and detached - almost as if you were born to it.

CHANCE

Thank you, Eve.

The front door is opened for them by an attendant.

INT. SOPHIE'S - EVENING

The Black Tie reception is in progress. The house is crowded, possibly a hundred guests, mostly foreign ambassadors and other such dignitaries. Eve and Chance enter, are greeted by DENNIS WATSON, a State Department official.

WATSON

Mrs. Rand, how good to see you.

EVE

Mr. Watson.

WATSON

(looks to Chance)

And you must be Mr. Gardiner, correct?

CHANCE

Yes.

EVE

Chauncey, this is Mr. Dennis Watson of the State Department.

CHANCE

(they shake)

Hello, Dennis.

WATSON

A pleasure to meet you, sir.

CHANCE

Yes. It is.

SOPHIE, an older woman bedecked with jewelry, approaches, embraces Eve.

SOPHIE

Eve, child! How nice of you to come.

EVE

Hello, Sophie.

Sophie steps back, looks at Chance.

SOPHIE

And look who you brought with!

EVE

Sophie, this is Chauncey Gardiner...

SOPHIE

(hugs Chance)

Oh, I've been just dying to meet you, Mr. Gardiner!

EVE

Chauncey, this is Mrs. Sophia Rowley.

CHANCE

(being hugged)

Hello, Sophia.

SOPHIE

(steps back, admires

Chance)

Sophie, please - call me Sophie!

Sophie pulls them both into the party, leaving Dennis looking after Chance as he walks away.

SOPHIE

(as they go, to Chance)

You just have to let me introduce you to some of the exciting people here... Why, Pat Boone and his daughter may drop by later!

They disappear into the crowd.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - OVAL OFFICE - NIGHT

The President is hunched over his desk, absorbed in constructing a model airplane, a World War II flying fortress bomber. The First Lady sits nearby, plays solitaire on a small table. The President glances to her, then back to his work.

PRESIDENT

(gluing the wing)

... How are the kids getting along?

FIRST LADY

Oh. Well, I just talked to Cindy this morning. She loves California, but to quote her, she says, 'The Secret Service is getting to be a drag.' I guess she wants her privacy...

PRESIDENT

Huh... I'm glad they're along with her, if you know what I mean... How about Jack?

FIRST LADY

Well, I think Jack needs some time alone with you, darling... He's getting to that age, you know... He really misses you...

PRESIDENT

Yeah... I'll have a talk with him as soon as...

A KNOCK at the door interrupts the President.

PRESIDENT

(calls out)

... Yes, come in!

Kaufman enters.

KAUFMAN

Sorry to disturb you, chief but we have new developments.

PRESIDENT

Oh? What?

KAUFMAN

We have word that the Soviets have put out a top priority alert for information on Gardiner's background. So far, they haven't come up with a thing - what's more, as a result of their eagerness, one of their ablest agents blew his cover, we have him in custody at this time.

PRESIDENT

Good. Anything else?

KAUFMAN

Yes, chief - eight other foreign powers have put Gardiner under surveillance. We're around-the-clock now, sir - I'll keep you posted.

The President nods, Kaufman leaves. The President puts some more glue on the wing.

INT. SOPHIE'S - NIGHT

Sophie pulls Eve and Chance to AMBASSADOR SKRAPINOV and his WIFE. Skrapinov smiles as he sees Eve.

SKRAPINOV

Mrs. Rand. How delightful.

Skrapinov kisses Eve's hand.

EVE

It seems like ages, Mr. Ambassador.
(a nod to his wife)
Mrs. Skrapinov.

Mrs. Skrapinov returns the nod as Sophie introduces Chance.

SOPHIE

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

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

CHANCE

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

SOPHIE
Ambassador Skrapinov, this is Mr.
Chauncey Gardiner.

SKRAPINOV
Delighted. Delighted.

SOPHIE
And this is Mrs. Skrapinov.

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

SKRAPINOV
You must sit with us, my friend, we
have much to discuss.

CHANCE
I agree.

SKRAPINOV
(to Eve)
How is my dear friend Benjamin
feeling?

EVE
He's doing as well as could be
expected, Mr. Ambassador. He still
speaks of the stimulating
discussions he's had with you.

SKRAPINOV
Ah, Yes. Please give him my
regards.

EVE
Of course.

SOPHIE
(tugs at Eve)
Come on, Eve. Let's let the men
talk, there are so many people that
have been asking about you.

EVE
(to Chance and Skrapinov)
Would you two excuse me for a
moment?

SKRAPINOV
Regretfully, Mrs. Rand - I shall
yield the pleasure of your company
to others.

CHANCE

Yes, Eve. I shall yield too.

EVE

(smiling)

I'll be back soon...

Eve and Sophie leave. Skrapinov leads his wife and Chance to their table.

SKRAPINOV

(as they walk)

I'm sorry we haven't met sooner, Mr. Gardiner. I had the pleasure of seeing you on television last night and I listened with great interest to your down-to-earth philosophy. I'm not surprised that it was so quickly endorsed by the President.

(quietly)

... Tell me, Mr. Gardiner, just how serious is Benjamin's illness? I did not want to upset Mrs. Rand by discussing it in detail.

CHANCE

Ben is very ill.

SKRAPINOV

Yes, so I've heard, a shame... As you know, we in the Soviet Union have the keenest interest in developments of the First American Financial Corporation... We are pleased to hear that you may fill Benjamin's place should he fail to recover.

(arrive at table)

Be seated, please, Mr. Gardiner.

Chance sits between Skrapinov and Mrs. Skrapinov.

SKRAPINOV

(moves chair close to

Chance)

... Mr. Gardiner, I wish to be quite candid - considering the gravity of your economic situation, shouldn't we, the diplomats, and you, the businessman - get together more often?

CHANCE

Yes, I agree, I think so too.

SKRAPINOV

To exchange our thoughts - what does a Russian know about business? On the other hand, what does an American know about diplomacy?

CHANCE

Yes, I understand.

SKRAPINOV

And I have noticed in you a certain reticence regarding political issues - so why not a coming together? An interchange of opinion? We may find, my friend, that we are not so far from each other, not so far!

CHANCE

(an engaging smile)

We are not far...

(motions at nearness of their chairs)

... our chairs almost touch.

SKRAPINOV

(laughs)

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

CHANCE

I certainly do.

SKRAPINOV

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

CHANCE

Do you think so? Do you think so?

SKRAPINOV
So you know Krylov!

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

SKRAPINOV
(amazed)
So you know your Krylov in Russian, do you? Mr. Gardiner, I must confess I had suspected as much all along - I know an educated man when I meet one!

CHANCE
Oh, good.

SKRAPINOV
Yes, it is very good!

CHANCE
Yes, it is.
(beat)
Would you tell me your name again, please?

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

CHANCE
Yes. I like that name very much.

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

As he speaks in Russian, Eve comes to the table, taps Skrapinov on the shoulder.

SKRAPINOV
(immediately rises)
Mrs. Rand! You have returned to us!

EVE

Only to steal Mr. Gardiner away, if I might.

(to Chance)

Everyone wants to meet you.

CHANCE

Yes, Eve. That would be good.

SKRAPINOV

(shakes Chance's hand)

We must speak again, Mr. Gardiner, many times!

CHANCE

Thank you.

As Eve and Chance leave, Skrapinov turns and nods to a MAN standing a short distance away. The man, KARPATOV, hurries to the table.

SKRAPINOV

Yes? What have you found?

KARPATOV

(in Russian)

We have nothing on him, Ambassador Skrapinov.

SKRAPINOV

(holds up hand, looks around)

Quietly, please. Mr. Gardiner, for one, understands our language.

KARPATOV

(in English, softly)

Sorry, Comrade Ambassador.

SKRAPINOV

What do you mean there is nothing? That's impossible.

KARPATOV

There is no information available on the man before he moved into Benjamin Rand's. It has proven to be such a difficult task that it has resulted in the loss of one of our agents to the United States Government.

Mrs. Skrapinov strains to overhear the conversation.

SKRAPINOV

But... Where was this man Gardiner before last week?

KARPATOV

Apparently the White House shares our curiosity - they have also launched an investigation, and, according to our sources, neither the F.B.I. nor the C.I.A. has met with success.

SKRAPINOV

I see. Clearly, such interest on their part is of great political significance.

KARPATOV

Clearly, yes comrade.

SKRAPINOV

Hmmm... Take this down.

(Karpatov takes out notepad)

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

KARPATOV

Very good, Your Excellency.

Karpatov leaves the table.

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

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

COURTNEY

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

STUART

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

COURTNEY

I don't know. Like I said, it's
just rumor so far, but we should
start nosing around, see if we can
talk to some people...

The CAMERA begins to slowly MOVE AWAY from their table.

STUART

... But why? The question is why?
Why would they destroy Gardiner's
files? What is it about his past
they are trying to cover up?

(his voice fades)

... A criminal record? A membership
in a subversive organization?
Homosexual, perhaps?

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

FRANKLIN

... And he told us that he had been
living there since he was a child,
working as a gardener. He showed us
a room in the garage, where he said
he stayed, and I... Well, I didn't
really believe him, of course - but
why the act?

ALLENBY

I have no idea...

FRANKLIN

Another thing that baffles me,
Doctor - what was his connection
with the deceased? Major financial
dealings, obviously - but our firm
has no record of any such
transactions.

ALLENBY

Hmmm. You say he showed you his
garden?

FRANKLIN

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

ALLENBY

I see.

(leans close to Franklin)

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

FRANKLIN

Of course, Doctor, I understand.

ALLENBY

Fine. Thank you, Mr. Franklin.

FRANKLIN

Certainly, glad to be of help.

Allenby rises, leaves the bar.

INT. SOPHIE'S HOUSE - DINNER PARTY - NIGHT

Eve and Sophie are talking to a small group. Chance moves away to get an hors d'oeuvre and is approached by RONALD STIEGLER, a publisher.

STIEGLER

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

CHANCE

(a two-handed handshake)

Hello, Ronald.

STIEGLER

Mr. Gardiner, my editors and I have been wondering if you'd consider writing a book for us? Something on your political philosophy. What do you say?

CHANCE

I can't write.

STIEGLER

(smiles)

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

CHANCE

I can't read.

STIEGLER

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

CHANCE

Yes. I like to watch.

STIEGLER

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

CHANCE

(mild interest)

What sort of bed is it?

INT. RAND'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Rand is in bed. Sitting nearby are two attorneys, MONROE and TOWNSEND. Mrs. Aubrey stands to one side and Constance and Teresa prepare an IV for Rand.

RAND

(speaks slowly, with effort)

Everything. I said everything and that's exactly what I mean.

MONROE

But, Mr. Rand, the holdings are so extensive, I would like to be more precise in...

RAND

(interrupts)

What could be more precise than everything...?

Allenby enters the room, stands by the door, unnoticed.

MONROE
 (turns to Townsend)
 Everything to Mrs. Rand.

TOWNSEND
 (drafting a will)
 Right - everything.

RAND
 You two don't have to lecture me on the complexities of the situation, no one knows that better than myself... But you must understand that I have an endless faith in Mrs. Rand's abilities - I know that she will select the right person for guidance when she has the need... She has shared my life, gentlemen, she has given me far more pleasure than any of my so called assets... Life has suddenly become very simple for me now - I may be older than my years, and you might think me to be somewhat feeble... But I am still in love, gentlemen, thank God for that...

Allenby silently leaves the room.

INT. SOPHIE'S HOUSE - DINNER PARTY - NIGHT

Dennis Watson, of the State Department, talks with Chance in a corner of the living room. Dennis whispers something into Chance's ear and Chance gives him an innocent smile. Dennis is encouraged by the smile.

DENNIS
 We could do it now, we can go upstairs.
 (no reaction from Chance)
 ... Please, it's time for us. Come upstairs.

CHANCE
 (blankly)
 I like to watch.

DENNIS
 Watch? You mean just watch me?
 Doing it alone?

CHANCE

Yes. I like to watch very much.

DENNIS

Well, if that's what you want, then
I want it too.

(takes Chance's arm)

We can go this way.

CHANCE

I want to tell Eve.

DENNIS

Tell Eve? You mean Mrs. Rand?

CHANCE

Yes.

DENNIS

(pulling Chance)

Oh, you can tell her later. She'll
never miss you in this crowd.

Dennis leads Chance out of the crowded room.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - PRESIDENT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

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

FIRST LADY

(after some time)

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

PRESIDENT

No, that won't do any good.

FIRST LADY

(another pause)

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

PRESIDENT

Oh, no, sweetheart - it's not
you...

FIRST LADY

(another pause)

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

PRESIDENT
It's not that, I just...

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

PRESIDENT
(into phone)
Yeah, Kaufman - what is it?

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

PRESIDENT
What? Why?

KAUFMAN'S VOICE
(over phone)
I can't say at this time - neither agency will admit to a thing.

PRESIDENT
(getting out of bed)
Okay, get both Directors over here, I'll be right down.

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

INT. SOPHIE'S HOUSE - UPSTAIRS ROOM - NIGHT

A small room exquisitely decorated in pale lilac tapestry. The lights are very dim, and Dennis, who we cannot see, is lying on the floor. Dennis' clothes are draped over a chair. Chance sees a very small pocket television on a desk. He turns the TV on.

DENNIS' VOICE
(softly)
Can you see well?

CHANCE
(squints at small screen)
Yes, very well, thank you.

DENNIS' VOICE
Do you like it?

CHANCE
Yes. It's very tiny, but it's good.

DENNIS' VOICE
(disappointed at it being
'tiny')
... Are you sure you like it?

CHANCE
Yes, I do, it's very good.

DENNIS' VOICE
(excited)
Really? Really!!!

Chance reacts to the change in tone of Dennis' voice, turns to look at him on the floor. Hearing the groans and heavy breathing, Chance thinks Dennis is ill.

CHANCE
Do you need a doctor? I could call
Robert...

DENNIS' VOICE
I don't want Robert.

CHANCE
I see.

DENNIS' VOICE
(through the groans)
Your foot! Give me your foot!!

Dennis reaches out with his free hand, grabs Chance's foot, pulls it to himself.

CHANCE
(some pain)
Thank you. But my leg is still a
little sore.

Chance watches as Dennis goes through some spasms, then his body relaxes. Chance is concerned for Dennis' health.

CHANCE
Are you sure you're not ill?

We hear a contented sigh from the man on the floor.

EXT. SOPHIE'S - NIGHT

A long, black limousine with a Red Star on the door pulls away from Sophie's house.

INT. RED STAR LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

ALEXIS NOVOGROD, a high-ranking KGB officer, and two of his underlings are in the limousine, along with Skrapinov, his wife and Karpatov. Novogrod and his men wear heavy clothing, fresh from Moscow. They all drink vodka.

(Dialogue in Russian, English subtitles)

NOVOGROD

The rank-and-file in the FBI feel he is FBI, but others feel he is a CIA man who knows how to destroy FBI files.

SKRAPINOV

That could be possible...

NOVOGROD

But we are quite certain, comrade, that this man Gardiner is a leading member of an American elitist faction planning a coup d'etat.

SKRAPINOV

A coup d'etat! Of course, that was foreseen by Lenin himself!

NOVOGROD

That is correct, Comrade Skrapinov. We have ascertained that Gardiner heads a big-business power group that will soon be taking over the American government.

SKRAPINOV

Big business. I could work with that faction quite nicely, Colonel Novogrod.

NOVOGROD

You have proven that already, Comrade Skrapinov, you are to be congratulated for recognizing the importance of this man and establishing an early friendship.

SKRAPINOV
Thank you, Colonel.

NOVOGROD
(raising his glass)
Let us toast to the success of the
coup.

They all raise their glasses.

GROUP TOAST
Na zdorov'e!

The men and Mrs. Skrapinov drink their vodkas.

INT. SOPHIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The reception is breaking up. Eve, wearing her coat, searches for Chance in the crowd. She sees him, taps him on the shoulder from behind.

EVE
Chauncey, where have you been? I
was afraid you got bored and left,
or that you were with some
mysterious woman.

CHANCE
No. I was with a man. We went
upstairs.

EVE
Upstairs? Chauncey, you're always
involved in some sort of
discussion...

CHANCE
He was very ill, I stayed with him
for a while.

EVE
It must be the punch, and it is
stuffy in here -- I feel it a
little myself. You're an angel, my
dear - thank God there are still
men like you around to give aid and
comfort.

Eve and Chance leave the reception.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - OVAL OFFICE - NIGHT

The President sits behind his desk in a bathrobe, his hair mussed. Standing before him are GROVER HONEYCUTT, the Director of the F.B.I., and CLIFFORD BALDWIN, C.I.A. Chief. Kaufman stands to one side. All are red-eyed, tired, and frustrated.

HONEYCUTT

I never gave such a directive, Mr. President.

BALDWIN

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

PRESIDENT

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

BALDWIN

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

PRESIDENT

Very well... Can we rule out inefficiency...?

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

PRESIDENT

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

HONEYCUTT

Highly unlikely, sir... In fact, the boys around the Bureau feel that the only person capable of pulling it off would be an ex F.B.I. man.

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

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

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

PRESIDENT
 (rising)
 Gentlemen, needless to say, there
 is going to be a full Congressional
 investigation of your respective
 operations.
 (goes to door)
 Good night.

The President leaves the Oval Office.

INT. RAND MANSION - THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

Eve and Chance walk down the hallway.

EVE
 (holding his hand)
 I feel so close to you, so safe
 with you, Chauncey...
 (stops at her bedroom
 door)
 ... And Benjamin understands that,
 dearest... He understands and
 accepts my feelings for you...

CHANCE
 Yes, Eve. Ben is very wise.

EVE
 (opens her door)
 ... Come in, Chauncey - please come
 in...

CHANCE
 Thank you.

Chance enters, Eve closes the door behind them.

INT. EVE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Eve turns on a soft lamp, Chance goes directly to her TV, turns it on.

EVE

I can sense that you've been through a lot, Chauncey. But one day, when you feel like it, you'll tell me all about your life...

(Chance watches an old movie)

... But, even if you tell me nothing, even if it's too painful for you to reveal your past...

As she talks, Chance watches a love scene on TV. The hero gives his lady a passionate kiss and embrace. The scene seems to 'sink into' Chance's mind. He abruptly turns, takes Eve into his arms and kisses her full on the mouth. Just as abruptly, he turns away and changes channels on TV.

EVE

(breathless)

Oh, Chauncey... I do love you so much!

She takes Chance in her arms, kisses him wildly. They fall to her bed in an embrace. As she holds him, kisses him, runs her hands over his body, Chance watches television, neither resists nor responds to Eve's caresses. Suddenly she stops, lets her head fall on Chance's chest.

EVE

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

Chance sits up on the bed, then, feeling her sadness, gently strokes her hair as he looks at TV.

EVE

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

CHANCE

I like to watch.

EVE

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

CHANCE

Yes. I like to watch.

EVE

(uncertain)

... Is that all you want...?

(a hesitation)

... To watch me...?

CHANCE

Yes. It's very good, Eve.

EVE

... But I've never done...

(another hesitation)

... You mean...? When... When...

When I do it? ... When I touch myself...?

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

EVE

(getting aroused)

Oh, Chauncey...

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

EVE

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

She smiles, gets in bed and pulls the covers over herself. Chance divides his attention between Eve and the TV, watching both with an equal detachment. Eve begins to respond to her own touch, finds a heretofore undiscovered pleasure with her own body. Chance changes the channel as she reaches orgasm. As Eve's body trembles, Chance yawns, gets up from the bed.

CHANCE

(going to door)

Good night, Eve.

A low purr is heard from Eve as Chance leaves.

INT. RAND'S HOSPITAL ROOM - MORNING

Allenby, Constance and Teresa are readying a transfusion for Rand. There is a feeling of urgency as they work.

Rand, very weak, strains to speak to Allenby.

RAND

No more, Robert... No more
needles...

ALLENBY

(sits on the side of the
bed)
It's not good, Ben - I'm sure you
can feel it.

RAND

I know, Robert... But, strangely
enough, I don't feel too bad about
now... I feel all right... I guess
it's easier... knowing Chauncey is
here... to take care of things...

Teresa is about to swab Rand's arm with alcohol but he pulls
away.

RAND

No, I don't want any of that...
Please... please, just get me Mr.
Gardiner, Teresa - please... he'll
head it up...

Teresa looks to Allenby, he nods to her. Teresa puts the
cotton down, leaves the room.

EXT. RAND MANSION - PATIO - MORNING

A light snow is falling. Eve is in a fur coat, holds a
steaming cup of coffee. Chance stands next to her, an
umbrella in one hand. He holds his other arm out, catching
the snowflakes as they fall.

EVE

... And I feel so free now,
Chauncey. Until I met you, I never
felt acknowledged by a man...
(Chance gazes out at the
falling snow)
... I always had the feeling that I
was just a vessel for a man,
someone that he could take hold of,
pierce, and pollute. I was merely
an aspect of somebody's lovemaking.
Do you know what I mean?

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

EVE

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

CHANCE

That's very interesting, Eve.

Teresa appears in the doorway.

TERESA

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

CHANCE

Yes. I would like to see Ben.

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

INT. RAND'S HOSPITAL ROOM - MORNING

Allenby, with nothing more he can do to prolong Rand's life, sits on the bed close to him, grips his hand tightly. Teresa shows Chance into the room and Allenby motions to the nurses to leave. As they do, Chance, once again breathing the oxygen with a smile, goes to Rand's bedside.

RAND

(slowly)
... Chauncey... Chauncey...

CHANCE

Yes, Ben - are you going to die
now?

Allenby winces.

RAND

(a weak smile)
... I'm about to surrender the Horn
of Plenty for the Horn of Gabriel,
my boy...

CHANCE

Oh, I see.

RAND

(reaches out to him)

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

(holds Chance's hand)

Yes, that's good... I hope, Chauncey - I hope that you'll stay with Eve... Take care of her, watch over her, she's a delicate flower, Chauncey...

CHANCE

(smiling)

A flower...

RAND

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

CHANCE

Yes. I would like to do that.

RAND

... I've worked very hard and enjoyed my life... I've known success... and I've felt love... My associates, Chauncey - I've talked with them about you... They're eager to meet you... very eager to meet you... I'm very fond of you, Chauncey... And I understand Eve... Tell her that... tell her I'm madly in love with her...

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

ALLENBY

... He's gone, Chauncey.

CHANCE

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

ALLENBY

(covers Rand's face)

Yes, I suppose that's true.

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

CHANCE

(turns to Allenby)

Will you be leaving now, Robert?

ALLENBY

In a day or two, yes.

CHANCE

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

ALLENBY

(a moment, a look)

... You've become quite a close friend of Eve's - haven't you Mr...

(a beat)

... Chance...?

CHANCE

Yes. I love Eve very much.

ALLENBY

I see...

(another beat)

... And you are really a gardener, aren't you?

CHANCE

(brightens)

Yes, Robert - I am.

(a smile at Allenby)

I'll go tell Eve about Ben now, Robert.

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

EXT. RAND MANSION - DAY

A cloudy, cold day patches of snow are on the ground. The Rand servants are lined up in front of the mansion, listen to funeral services for Rand on a pair of loudspeakers. PAN AROUND, reveal the services being held on a hill overlooking the mansion. Fifty mourners are gathered around the Rand family mausoleum. Chance stands with Eve and Allenby. The President of the United States stands before a microphone.

PRESIDENT

... Millions of people across the world have heard of the passing of Benjamin Rand; but, unfortunately, only relatively few will feel the pain and sadness at such a loss. To most, Benjamin Rand was a legend; to those of us gathered here today, Benjamin was a beloved friend. My personal association with Benjamin dates back many years, and my memories of our friendship will stay with me forever.

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

PRESIDENT

the Rand name in 1943. Europe. the Rand Aeronautics Corporation.

(MORE)

PRESIDENT

the Rand Aeronautics Corporation.

(a beat)

Benjamin Rand was an industrial giant, known to be powerful and uncompromising, and yet, on a personal level, we have all felt his warmth and humor...

(a beat)

... I would like to share with you a few quotes, and a few feelings from our dear friend.

(holds up paper, reads)

... 'I do not regret having political differences with men that I respect; I do regret, however, that our philosophies kept us apart.'

... 'I have no use for those on welfare, no patience whatsoever... But, if I am to be honest with myself, I must admit that they have no use for me, either.'

... 'I was born into a position of extreme wealth, I have spent many sleepless nights thinking about extreme poverty - I do not know the feelings of being poor, and that is not to know the feelings of the majority of people in this world. For a man in my position, that is inexcusable.'

'Life is a state of mind.'

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

INT. LARGE AUDITORIUM - DAY

Ah auditorium with row upon row of empty seats. Huddled together at one end of the hall are six important businessmen, speaking in hushed tones. JAMES DUDLEY, a powerful industrialist, speaks.

DUDLEY

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

SEWELL NELSON, a corporation chairman, joins in.

NELSON

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

Another executive, PETER CALDWELL, agrees.

CALDWELL

To this time, he hasn't said anything that could be used against him.

CHARLIE BOB BENNET, a Texas oil millionaire;

BENNET

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

NELSON

No one will go along with that... Look at the facts, gentlemen, the response from his appearance on 'This Evening' was overwhelming; he has excited and awakened the people of this country at a time of despair.

LYMAN MURRAY, a banker;

MURRAY

He's personable, elusive, yet seemingly honest. He's riding a crest of popularity that builds with every statement. As far as his thinking goes, he appears to be one of us. I firmly believe, gentlemen, that he is our only chance - Mr. Chauncey Gardiner!

EXT. WOODS - DAY

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

EXT. RAND'S FUNERAL - DAY

The services are over. Eve, Allenby talk with the President and the First Lady.

EVE

It was very moving, Bobby - thank you so much...

PRESIDENT

We're all going to miss him, Eve...
(glances around)
... Where's Mr. Gardiner?

ALLENBY

... He walked off...

EVE

Chauncey is so sensitive... He was overcome with grief...

PRESIDENT

I can certainly understand that...

FIRST LADY

Of course... I'm so sorry for you, Eve...

EVE

Thank you, Nancy.

FIRST LADY

I'll call you soon.

The President and First Lady head toward their limousine.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Chance walks deeper into the woods, absorbed in the greenery. He stops by a tree, brushes some snow from a branch, moves on.

EXT. RAND'S FUNERAL - DAY

The majority of mourners have left. Eve and Allenby walk slowly to the RAND 1 limousine, look around for Chance.

EVE

... Do you think we should look for him?

ALLENBY

I don't think so, he should be along soon...

EVE

I wish he were here...

Eve keeps looking as they walk to the limousine.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Chance happens on a tree with a cracked limb, hanging to the ground. He stops, inspects the break, runs his fingers along the split in the bark. He looks to the ground, notices that an end of the limb has fallen on a seedling, bending it double. Chance pulls the limb away, then kneels beside the seedling. He removes an expensive pair of suede gloves, and, with gentle fingers, brushes the dirt and snow away from the seedling. Chance glances up to the remaining limbs of the larger tree which could fall and threaten the emerging tree. He unfolds his umbrella, places it over the seedling in a way to give it protection, yet to still allow it to receive light from the winter sun. Chance stands, puts his gloves back on and continues his walk, disappearing into a remote section of the woods.

EXT. RAND'S FUNERAL - DAY

Jeffrey stands holding the door for Eve and Allenby, all the other cars have gone. Eve is worried, gets into the car.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Chance walks through the woods, his pace faster than before.

EXT. RAND'S FUNERAL - DAY

The limousine still waits for Chance.

INT. LIMOUSINE - DAY

Eve is deeply concerned for Chance.

EVE

We have to find him, Robert - he could be lost, something may have happened, we can't leave him!

ALLENBY

You really care for him, don't you, Eve?

EVE

I do - we do - both of us, Ben and
I feel so much for Chauncey...

ALLENBY

I think we'd better go look for
him.

(he taps on the glass
partition)
David!

David starts up the limousine.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Chance walks with determination through the woods.

INT. LIMOUSINE - DAY

Allenby and Eve search for Chance as David drives along a
narrow road through the woods. Jeffrey, sitting in front,
suddenly calls out.

JEFFREY

Look!

About 100 yards ahead of them, Chance crosses the road,
continues on down a hill.

EVE

There he is! Chauncey!

David stops the limousine at the point where Chance crossed.
Eve hurries out of the car.

EXT. SIDE OF ROAD - DAY

Chance is about twenty yards down the side of a hill. Eve
calls to him.

EVE

Chauncey! Chauncey!

CHANCE

(stops, looks up)
Hello, Eve.

Eve runs, half falls as she goes down the hill.

EVE

Oh, Chauncey...!

She gets to him, holds him tightly.

EVE

Oh, Chauncey, darling... Where have
you been? We thought we'd lost you
-
we've been looking all over!

CHANCE

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

She hugs him one more time, then she leads him back up the
hill to the waiting limousine. Allenby gets out of the car,
greeted Chance with a handshake and an arm around the
shoulder. Then the three get into the limousine.

FADE OUT.

THE END