

HALSTON

"BECOMING HALSTON"

101

WRITTEN BY
IAN BRENNAN
RYAN MURPHY
SHARR WHITE

We're close on a MAN. So close that we can really examine him: matinee idol looks; hair slicked back; black turtleneck; perfectly TANNED. He exhales smoke. Then he says:

HALSTON

But my *name* is Halston.

NICK

You'll have to find a new name. If you want to keep designing.

Halston eyes NICK LEWIN: mid-thirties. Decent guy. A smart-as-hell lawyer. They're in Nick's corner office, lots of light. On Nick's desk is a CONTRACT the size of a PHONE BOOK.

NICK (CONT'D)

What you sold almost ten years ago along with your company was the Halston trademark. And the Halston trademark... is the name *Halston*.

Halston blinks. Blows smoke. Takes a sip from a glass of water.

HALSTON

So get me out of it.

NICK

(sympathetic)

There's no getting out. I mean... yes, you could walk away, but you'd be leaving your employment contract -- meaning your salary -- and it wouldn't matter because you *still* couldn't use your name.

A beat, then Halston smacks the glass of water. It goes shattering across the room.

HALSTON

I don't even own my fucking name.

Off Halston we PRELAP the sound of chickens:

An unremarkable farmhouse in an unremarkable town.

CHYRON: **Evansville, Indiana. 1938**

2 INT. CHICKEN COOP -- DAY 2

A pair of small hands picks up chicken feathers from the dirt floor -- discarding dirty ones, keeping clean ones.

3 INT. FARMHOUSE -- HALLWAY -- THAT MOMENT 3 *

From inside the house, we see the back of a housewife in her thirties, HALLIE MAE, gazing out at her seven-year-old son, ROY, in the chicken coop. She grips the edge of the door as she hears her husband JAMES descend a set of stairs and enter. 30's, ragged, not even hungover, still drunk. He has a whiskey in hand. *

HALLIE
Your breakfast is cold...

JAMES
What the hell's that supposed to mean?

HALLIE
Nothing -- I didn't know when you were planning on getting outta bed.

Out of NOWHERE, he's lunging at her, VIOLENT, his hand raised to slap her --

JAMES
Don't you start running that mouth, woman!

SMASH TO:

4 INT. CHICKEN COOP -- DAY 4

Roy looks up at the sickening smack of a hand striking flesh. A cry of pain, then a flurry of loud screaming and arguing. CLOSE ON his anxious face as he hears a front screen door slap open and shut and the sound of heavy feet receding.

5 INT. FARMHOUSE -- LIVING ROOM -- DAY (MINUTES LATER) 5 *

Roy walks in through the door, his hands behind his back. He walks into the living room where his mother sits facing away from him, dazed. She turns to look at him. *

ROY
I made something for you.

A twinkle of life rises to her teary eye.

HALLIE
What is it?

(CONTINUED)

"Becoming Halston" Full Blue Revisions 2/7/20 3.
5 CONTINUED: 5

ROY
Turn around.

She does. From behind his back, Roy gently reveals a CLOCHE MADE OF CHICKEN FEATHERS. Delicate and stunning. ANGLE ON the back of Hallie's head as his small hands lower it onto her head like a crown.

MATCH CUT TO:

6 INT. BERGDORF GOODMAN'S -- SALON -- DAY 6

A pair of adult male hands place a POWDER BLUE PILLBOX HAT onto a bouffant of jet black hair.

CHYRON: **New York City. January, 1961.**

7 INT. HALSTON'S APARTMENT -- DAY 7 *

John F. Kennedy's inauguration plays on a television set at a bustling, civilized bachelor's dinner in a stylish New York apartment. The men are all dressed in suit and tie, crisp and preppy. Among them is a HANDSOME MAN with a roiling intensity behind his eyes, natty as the rest of them, sitting on the sofa, his eyes glued to the TV. We PUSH IN ON HIS FACE.

NEWS COMMENTATOR

...and we see First Lady Jackie Kennedy in a dress by designer Oleg Cassini and a simple yet elegant pillbox by hatmaker Mr. Halston...

Some gasps amidst the chatter at the luncheon.

MAN (O.S.)
Did you hear that?

ANOTHER MAN (O.S.)
Hold on -- did they just say your name???

A smile blooms on his face, tears of emotion welling in his piercing blue eyes. This is HALSTON. We SMASH TO TITLES.

8 EXT. 5TH AVENUE -- NEW YORK CITY -- DAY 8

Halston walks down the street, in suit, tie and trench coat -- sharp and businesslike, CONFIDENT -- then turns into...

9 INT. BERGDORF GOODMAN'S -- CONTINUOUS 9

Camera follows him past department after department, when he starts to notice a long line of WOMEN. His ears perk up as he hears whispers. "THAT'S HIM!" "Look -- there he is -- Halston!"

(CONTINUED)

The line leads into the MILLINER'S SALON, where a SASSY OLD QUEEN OF 60 measures the head of a seated shopper.

HALSTON
(re: the line)
What the hell's going on?

OLD QUEEN
(duh)
What's going on? UHHHH, so, Jackie Kennedy dropped your name for one -- we've sold fifty already and it's not even ten am.

PAN DOWN to find the face on the head being measured -- a 50-something HOUSEWIFE who is STAR-STRUCK.

HOUSEWIFE
Y-you're him, aren't you? Oh my -- you're Mr. HALSTON -- !

A beat. An ecstatic smile washes over him.

HALSTON
(dawning)
God bless Jackie Kennedy.

SMASH TO:

10 INT. BERGDORF GOODMAN'S -- MILLINER'S SALON -- DAY 10

Still in a suit but his hair longer, Halston sits in an armchair, smoking and scowling.

CHYRON: **Seven years later.**

He takes a long drag, then:

HALSTON
Fuck Jackie Kennedy.

Reveal two SHOPGIRLS fiddling with hats in an empty salon.

SHOPGIRL
HALSTON. Why would you say that -- after all she's been through?

OTHER SHOPGIRL
She made you, Halston!

HALSTON
Then she killed me. Stopped wearing hats so she wouldn't ruin that awful gigantic hairdo of hers...

(CONTINUED)

10 "Becoming Halston" Full Blue Revisions 2/7/20 5.
CONTINUED: 10

He pops one of the display hats onto his own head. Rolls his eyes at the shopgirls. *

There's a knock at the doorframe. Reveal BERGDORF'S MANAGER, 50s. *

MANAGER
Do you have a moment?

HALSTON
(after a beat)
I'm sorry. As you can see, I'm
terribly busy.

SMASH TO:

11 INT. BERGDORF GOODMAN'S -- ESCALATER -- MOMENTS LATER 11

They ride in silence, Halston smoking.

MANAGER
Halston, the second quarter report
came in, and it's -- it's not good.

Halston takes a drag. Wry and playful:

HALSTON
Mmm-hmm.

MANAGER
Hat sales are down thirty percent
from last quarter, and the previous
quarter they were down *forty*
percent...

HALSTON
So we're trending up, is what
you're saying.

MANAGER
No, that's *not* --

HALSTON
Well, you know what they say.
(waving his hands)
Numbers.

MANAGER
Who says that?

HALSTON
Oh. Everyone. All the time.

(CONTINUED)

MANAGER

People just don't wear hats
anymore, is the problem...

HALSTON

(irritated)

Yes. As I'm a milliner, Henry, I'm
well aware of this fact.

They arrive at another floor, head towards an office.

MANAGER

Well, what I mean is -- what are
you going to do about it?

Halston turns to him, dry as a bone as they enter the office.

HALSTON

Well, I can tell you I'm hard at
work on making the *sun* brighter but
until I can get my rainmaking
machine to work, I don't know *what*
I'm going to do, Henry.

(with a shrug)

Except maybe drink after our
meeting.

Halston smokes at the end of the iconic gay bar, the sidewalk
outside busy with foot-traffic, no one in hats. Halston
stares intently at a striking young AFRICAN-AMERICAN MAN
across the bar as the BARTENDER places a cocktail in front of
him with a few words, gesturing towards Halston. The man
looks at Halston, then back to the bartender, waving the
drink away. The Bartender brings the drink over.

BARTENDER

He sent it back.

Halston has taken the drink and is already floating across
the bar to take a seat next to the young man. The bartender
and several other patrons clock this -- a white man
approaching a black man. Halston places the drink in front of
him with a flourish as he sits.

HALSTON

What is it you don't like about an
Amaretto Stone Sour? The Amaretto
or the stone? It's the stone, isn't
it. *Choking* hazard. I'll have it
removed...

ED

No, thank you.

HALSTON

Well, I'll get you something else.

ED

No. Thanks. I just don't accept drinks from strangers.

HALSTON

Tell me your name and we won't be strangers.

ED

You go first.

HALSTON

Eric.

ED

And what do you do, Eric?

HALSTON

I'm a falconer.

Ed snorts an amused chortle.

ED

Bullshit.

HALSTON

We're *heroes*, really, my falcon and I. We're keeping the rat population under control. It's quite fashionable, my line of work. The big, leather glove, the little cap I put over his head -- *kinky*.

Ed shakes his head, looking away, amused but not convinced.

HALSTON (CONT'D)

Can I buy you a drink now?

ED

And can I ask -- what is it about me that caught your eye?

HALSTON

How do you mean?

ED

I mean, why are you trying to pick me up and not anybody else?

(CONTINUED)

HALSTON
Because I'm not *like* anybody else.

ED
I just wouldn'ta thought I was your
type.

HALSTON
And what type is that?

ED
(with a shrug)
White guy in a Brooks Brothers'
suit.

HALSTON
(hands to his heart)
Ouch.

ED
Or maybe you're just a size queen.
Trolling for black guys because we
might have a little more to offer
you...

HALSTON
Ooo. *Maybe*.

He leans in, suddenly earnest and vulnerable. Piercingly
honest.

HALSTON (CONT'D)
Or *maybe* I've been an outsider,
too. My *whole life*. Getting
sideways glances from white men in
Brooks Brothers' suits, judging me
for who I was and what I liked and
what I was and *who* I liked and at
some point I just stopped giving a
flying fuck.

He shoots a glance to a pair of queens eyeing them. They look
away. Halston turns back to Ed, playful again.

HALSTON (CONT'D)
Or maybe I'm just a size queen.

Ed laughs, won over.

ED
It is a good conversation starter.
(then)
Ed. Ed is my name.

(CONTINUED)

12 "Becoming Halston" Full Blue Revisions 2/7/20 9.
CONTINUED: (3) 12

HALSTON
GET OUTTA HERE --

ED
What?

HALSTON
THAT'S THE NAME OF MY FALCON.

ED
Fuck off.
(with a smile)
You can buy me that drink now.

HALSTON
Goody....

13 INT. HALSTON'S APARTMENT -- BEDROOM -- AFTERNOON 13 *

The sound of heavy breaths as we pan across a classic upper east side pre-war apt. It's aspirational but cozy. Nothing out of place. *

In the BEDROOM, CLOSE on Halston's face, Ed behind him, they're fucking. Intensely. *

JUMP CUT -- CLOSE ON Halston and Ed face-to-face kissing. Eyes connected. *

JUMP CUT -- Halston watching Ed asleep on his chest. Studying his handsome face. Breathing softly. *

ED (V.O.)
It was nice meeting you, Eric...

CROSSFADE TO:

14 INT. HALSTON'S APARTMENT -- BEDROOM -- LATER 14 *

Halston sits up in bed, smoking, as Ed comes out of the bathroom, dressing.

ED
Though Eric's not your real name is it?

HALSTON
Roy. Though that's not really my name either. I like people to call me Halston.

ED
Get the fuck out. The *hat* designer?

(CONTINUED)

Halston gives a breezy salute with his hand.

ED (CONT'D)

I've always wondered this -- how
does somebody end up designing
hats?

HALSTON

Why, because it seems frivolous?
It's not. It's one of the great
arts. Shaping a single piece of
felt to fit a living form. It's
sculpture, really. And I've always
done it. Used to make hats for my
mother. To lift her spirits.

15 INT. FARMHOUSE -- BEDROOM -- DAY -- FLASHBACK 15

We see Hallie seated in front of a mirror, seven year-old Roy
behind her, smiling warmly as she admires the hat of chicken
feathers in the mirror. She turns to look at him, her smile
darkening into something serious. She touches his cheek.

HALLIE

You are far too special for this
place. You need to get out of here
as soon as you can.

16 INT. HALSTON'S APARTMENT -- BEDROOM -- RESUME 16 *

HALSTON

I left Indiana the second I could.
First to Chicago, then here. Made
myself out of nothing. Whole cloth,
as it were...

Ed sits down on the bed.

ED

I think we all do that. Men like
us. We come here from some faraway
place to invent ourselves. Make
something out of nothing. I didn't
come from as far, just crossed the
river from New Jersey, but that
version of me seems very far away.

(then)

So what are you going to do?

(off his look)

Women aren't wearing hats anymore.

HALSTON

Well, Ed, I have a plan.

(CONTINUED)

"Becoming Halston" Full Blue Revisions 2/7/20 11.
16 CONTINUED: 16

Halston sits up, a twinkle of excitement in his eye.

HALSTON (CONT'D)
Have you ever heard of Ralph
Lifshitz?

CUT TO:

17 INT. BLOOMINGDALE'S -- DAY -- FLASHBACK 17

We're on the back of RALPH LIFSHITZ whose face we never see as he rides up the escalator. JUMP CUT as he walks unannounced into the Manager's office and places a box of ties on the desk.

HALSTON (V.O.)
Just recently, Ralph Lifshitz
walked into Bloomingdale's with a
line of ties, one-inch wider than
every other tie that was being
sold, and the label said 'Polo'.

The manager explains, MOS.

HALSTON (V.O.)
They told him if he made them one
inch narrower and swapped his tags
for theirs, they'd sell them.

Ralph closes the box, puts it under his arm and goes.

HALSTON (V.O.)
He told them no, and walked out.

BACK TO:

18 INT. HALSTON'S APARTMENT -- BEDROOM -- RESUME 18 *

HALSTON
A few weeks later, Bloomingdale's
came back to the table.

CUT TO:

19 INT. BLOOMINGDALE'S -- DAY -- FLASHBACK 19

Ralph on the escalator again, but this time, when he walks into the office, it's packed with staff. The manager welcomes him in with MOS hosannahs.

HALSTON (V.O.)
They said they made a mistake. They
LOVED the ties. They were HAUNTED
by them.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

"Becoming Halston" Full Blue Revisions 2/7/20 12.
19 CONTINUED: 19

HALSTON (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Told him he could keep the label,
and keep the ties one inch wider,
AND they told him they wanted him
to make shirts to go with them.

CUT TO:

20 INT. BERGDORF GOODMAN'S -- PRESENT DAY 20

Like Ralph, we're now behind Halston up the escalator.

HALSTON (V.O.)
I'm going to do what Ralph did, but
bigger. I've designed hats for
Bergdorf's since 1961. I put that
fucking place on the map. I'm gonna
be bigger than Ralph Lifshitz.

21 INT. HALSTON'S APARTMENT -- BEDROOM -- RESUME 21 *

ED
Why don't I know this name? I love
ties, I collect them.

HALSTON
Because he changed his last name to
fucking Lauren.
(beat, eyes gleaming)
I have a vision...

22 INT. BERGDORF GOODMAN'S -- MANAGER'S OFFICE -- DAY 22

The Manager looks perplexed.

MANAGER
So...a store within a store?

HALSTON
See? Simple.

MANAGER
But. To sell what?

HALSTON
Halston. See, I want to be the
first person who is also a *complete*
line. You know how there's
Campbell's soup? Kodak? Well, now
there's Halston. Women will come to
me and I will provide a custom
couture experience for them. I'll
put her in Halston, head to toe.
Dress, bra, panties, hose, shoes,
all of it Halston.

(CONTINUED)

MANAGER

I don't know -- Halston -- this has never been *done* before.

HALSTON

Let me ask you something. What's your greatest fear?

MANAGER

Um. Sharks, probably?
(then)
Or, I guess getting *eaten* by one?

HALSTON

Okay. What's a woman's greatest fear? I'll tell you what it is. It's being *average*. And right now, a woman comes to a department store, and that's what she's told she is. Average. Not original. Not Modern. She doesn't want European knockoffs anymore. What if Bergdorf Goodman could be the home of the first *American* courtier...?

MANAGER

You.

HALSTON

Not me. *Halston*. Who is me.

The manager sits back in his chair, a big pill to swallow.

MANAGER

Well, it's -- it's interesting. Why don't you start by making us some dresses?

Push in on Halston's smile as he smokes. GOT 'EM.

A hundred people fill a smallish salon with beige walls and beige carpeting. MODELS in dresses, all BLACK AND WHITE, walk silently down the runway holding numbers with signs at the hip. This is not a runway as we know it now. There's no music, no flurry of flashbulbs -- like the dresses, it's staid and subdued, totally silent but for polite whispering.

FIND Halston, seated, STARING, a sphinx. PUSH IN on him as he smokes.

ED (V.O.) (PRE-LAPPED)
So *then* what happened? How many did
you sell?

HALSTON (V.O.) (PRE-LAPPED)
You're not going to believe it.

24 INT. HALSTON'S APARTMENT -- LIVING ROOM -- ANOTHER NIGHT 24 *

Halston sips a cocktail as he lounges on the sofa with Ed.

HALSTON
It was an unmitigated disaster. No
orders. Total flop.

ED
Oh, my god. I'm sorry. Are you
okay?

HALSTON
What do you mean? Of *course*. I was
brilliant. They're the dummies. Can
I freshen you up?

He whisks Ed's drink out of his hand and walks over to the
drinks cart.

ED
But -- what are you going to do?

HALSTON
Keep going. You have to understand
-- there are no *problems*. Only
opportunities. The show didn't
work, that's fine. I know now what
I have to do next.

Halston takes Ed's hand and pulls him into the bedroom.

ED
And what is that?

HALSTON
I'm too big for that room. All that
beige -- I was drowning in it. I
have to go out on my own. *

ED *

You are really fucking impressive, *

man. *

Ed may be falling for him. *

(CONTINUED)

HALSTON
(Shrugs)
I know. Let's go to bed.

*
*
*

Ed GUFFAWS. This relationship is different now. Real. They
kiss and we CUT TO:

25 EXT. STREET -- NIGHT 25

Halston walks down the street with JOE EULA -- 43, thin,
pencil mustache, fast talker.

JOE
Oh come on. No you don't.

HALSTON
Joe, I do, I need an illustrator.
My drawings are terrible. I need a
proper illustrator who can sketch
out my designs as I describe them,
so I'll be able to see the whole
collection at once...

JOE
What you need is an adult to hold
your hand while you figure out what
the fuck you're doing.

HALSTON
Fuck you. I know *exactly* what I'm
doing! Why are you dragging me to
this?

JOE
You gotta see this kid. She's Judy
Garland's daughter! What kind of a
gay are you? She's royalty!

HALSTON
I saw 'The Sterile Cuckoo.' I fell
asleep.

JOE
Yeah, but she's *singing* now.

HALSTON
How do you try singing when you're
Judy Garland's daughter? They'll
eat her alive.

JOE
That's why you gotta see her. This
girl's got *balls*.

26

INT. THE GOLD ROOM -- NIGHT

26

Joe leads Halston through a small cabaret towards an intimate table at the lip of a SMALL STAGE.

JOE

Here's the thing, though. You love yes people. And I've got a lot more syllables up my sleeve than just yes...

HALSTON

Try me. Tell me something you think I won't like.

JOE

Okay. Fine. That collection for Bergdorf's? Looked like cement. That's why they didn't sell. Nobody wanted 'em.

HALSTON

Nobody *understood* them.

JOE

(gently)

You don't want to understand a dress. You want to *love* it.

(as they sit)

You want to be Balenciaga. Well, there's *already* a Balenciaga. What we need is to figure out your signature. What's gonna make me see some gorgeous girl in an amazing ensemble and say: *that's a Halston*.

HALSTON

So that means you're in?

At that moment, the lights DIM. A YOUNG WOMAN steps out onto STAGE. JOE CLAPS. Whistles.

Halston STARES, struck, as TWENTY ONE YEAR-OLD LIZA MINNELLI steps out on stage. She begins the shtick that introduces the song LIZA WITH A "Z".

LIZA

Good evening. I need to tell you I have a problem sometimes. And... that's my *name*. For instance, someone will walk up to me on the street and say *Lisa, how are you?* And I'll say...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LIZA (CONT'D)
well I'm fine, but it's Liza. You see, it has a "Z" in it. You know: A "zed"?

Halston leans forward: she's a CHILD-WOMAN. Insecure. Dressed like a schoolgirl. And yet brash. MAGNETIC.

LIZA (CONT'D)
Or somebody will say Lisa, what a nice... hat. You have on. And I'll say thank you very much but my name's... Liza.

JOE
(shouting out)
Liza!

Halston LAUGHS, along with the rest of the audience. He watches as Joe blows her a KISS. She CATCHES it. Halston grins; it's adorable.

Liza starts into *LIZA WITH A "Z"*. Halston watches this diamond in the rough; RAPT. He turns to Joe who is just as transfixed. They meet eyes, Joe shrugs as if to say "Is this the beginning of our beautiful friendship?"

JOE (V.O.) (PRE-LAPPED) (CONT'D)
Liza, meet Halston.

27 INT. TINY DRESSING ROOM -- BACKSTAGE 27

Liza stands from her makeup mirror, flushed with adrenaline, taking Halston's hand.

LIZA
I saw you out there -- everybody else was going berserk and you were sitting there like you were in a Dutch Masters painting.

HALSTON
If I'm honest, I was a little distracted by the Buster Brown getup. I think you could use a new look.

Liza GUFFAWS, tickled. To Joe:

LIZA
I love him already!
(then)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LIZA (CONT'D)

Let's get outta here -- *I'd sell my SOUL for a drink!*

SMASH TO:

28 INT. THE GOLD ROOM -- NIGHT (LATER) 28

Chairs are being put up on tables, they have closed the place down. Camera pans past Joe, asleep in a banquette. FIND Liza and Halston, deep in conversation, many drinks in.

HALSTON

...the show was a disaster and I knew it, so I decided to throw it all away, leave Bergdorf's, destroy my life, basically --

LIZA

(vehement)

No. No. You can't think of it like that. You didn't throw anything away. You just gave yourself an *enormous* gift. You've left everything you knew behind which means you are *open to inspiration* and inspiration is going to *find you*.

(then, light bulb)

YOU KNOW WHAT? That pillbox hat that Jackie wore? That's your Judy Garland. You and me -- we're both living in the shadow of something, and we're both trying to do the same thing -- we're walking away, saying, "No. I want to be taken seriously on my own..." I don't wanna just be Judy Garland's daughter, just like you don't wanna just be Jackie-O's hat-maker.

Halston takes a deep drag, nodding, relishing this connection. With a wry smile.

HALSTON

Then why are you dressing like a little girl?

LIZA

(delighted)

SEE? Exactly! *Why am I doing that???*

(CONTINUED)

HALSTON

It's cute, sure, but it isn't you,
I don't think. You're a *woman*. You
should be dressed like one.

LIZA

And I suppose you're just the fella
to help.

HALSTON

(with a smile)

Yes, I think I am...

29 EXT. HALSTON'S APARTMENT -- MONTAGE -- MORNING 29 *

In wordless MONTAGE, Halston walks out onto the street. He is
alive, bristling with energy, on a mission for inspiration.
He wants to see what women are wearing, but more importantly,
what they NEED to be wearing.

He spots a couple of SOCIETY LADIES wearing heavy WOOL
Chanel. Stiff. Constrained. They look so predictable to him,
he pauses. Moves on.

Next, a gaggle of HIPPIE GIRLS in CAFTANS. Interesting. He
follows them, eyeing the garments -- free and flowing and
liberating. He can see their bodies moving sensuously beneath
the unstructured fabric.

He continues on. Just walking, looking. Chic trench coat
slung over his shoulders.

30 EXT. WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK -- MONTAGE -- DAY 30

Halston walks through the park and something PIERCES his
reverie. He sees a DEMONSTRATION at the fountain -- WOMEN
with bullhorns and signs -- NEW YORK RADICAL WOMEN protesting
the MISS AMERICA PAGEANT. Amidst the ND yelling and chanting,
women take off their bras and throw them into garbage cans
along with CORSETS and GIRDLES and yes, HATS. He stands
there, a little dumbstruck. His eye finds the bodies of these
women, their breasts liberated beneath peasant dresses and
caftans, sexy and stunning, as one of the women suddenly
douses the bras with lighter fluid and unexpectedly LIGHTS
THE GARBAGE CANS ON FIRE. The crowd of women ERUPT. Off
Halston, FASCINATED and inspired by this new courage we CUT
TO:

31 EXT. FIFTH AVENUE -- MONTAGE -- NIGHT 31

Wheels turning in his head, Halston looks up to a BUILDING
across the street as he walks.

(CONTINUED)

Its facade is framed with scaffolding, hidden behind an enormous crimson tarpaulin -- but there's slits in the fabric, caught by the wind, and the tarp gently undulates, revealing the bones of the scaffolding. Halston keeps walking, perhaps unaware of what moved him or why...

32 INT. HALSTON'S APARTMENT -- MONTAGE -- DAY 32 *

CLOSE ON a pair of scissors cutting through a bolt of CRIMSON SILK. He has a simmering enthusiasm now that is contagious.

CLOSE ON the fabric as Halston drapes it over Liza, standing on a box, naked but for bra and underwear.

HALSTON
Hold that there.

She does. He pins it. He takes a step back, in a deep fugue.

LIZA
Can I look?

HALSTON
No. And stop talking.

He moves behind her, pinching the left and right corners of the fabric into pleats.

HALSTON (CONT'D)
Lose the bra. And panties.

LIZA
(faux shock)
HALSTON -- are you getting fresh
with me?

He raises a tickled eyebrow to her that says, "Funny, but shut up." She pulls off her bra and underwear, the curves of her tight, young body now visible beneath. The look on her face changes -- she *feels* different now. Sexy. He takes a step back, his eyes in deep focus, trying to see the whole thing at once. He walks behind her. He pulls the fabric off of her. Liza YELPS, covering herself, bashful. A beat, then, bursting into song:

LIZA (CONT'D)
"Before the Para-a-ade -- !!!"

Halston chuckles, SWIRLING the fabric over her head, letting it fall around her shoulders. He pulls the pleated corners of the fabric behind her neck to make a HALTER.

HALSTON
Hold that right there.

(CONTINUED)

She does, pinching it behind her neck. He pins it. Halston moves around in front of her, staring. She tries to catch a glimpse in a mirror.

HALSTON (CONT'D)

Don't look.

He stares. The fabric drapes down to the floor. It's simple, classical. Its EDGE hangs HORIZONTALLY to the floor, like a SQUARE. Halston's eyes narrow. Something's off.

Liza watches him, silent. Seeing inspiration arrive at the artist. Then, he has it. To himself, a whisper:

HALSTON (CONT'D)

On the bias.

He walks up to her, rearranging the fabric so it hangs like a DIAMOND -- the grain of the thread now diagonal to the floor.

He stands back, giving a tiny, pursed smile. It's a dress now, the fabric clinging to her body.

He takes the scissors, kneeling before her, carefully cutting a horizontal hem in the diagonal hanging fabric. The hemline SCALLOPS, suddenly WAVY. He pulls the fabric behind her and pins it.

VOILA. As he walks back around her:

HALSTON (CONT'D)

There. *That's* a Halston.

Her face lights up, thrilled. Her eyes say, "Can I look?" and he gives the smallest nod of assent. She turns to the mirror and GASPS, her hands flying to her mouth. This is completely new. No one has ever seen this before.

LIZA

*OH MY GOD. HALSTON YOU'RE A
GENIUS!!!*

Ed sits at a table sipping white wine. Halston kisses him on the neck, then slides into the seat opposite, grinning.

ED

Someone's in a good mood.

HALSTON

It's always been my dream to have a showroom with a workshop on another floor. I found it and I'm renting it.

ED

Where?

HALSTON

68th and Madison. Wait til you see it.

(then)

I mean *literally* wait to see it. It's a mess. *AND* I've got my team. Merry misfits, each and every one of them plucked off the Island of Lost Toys. I got Joe Eula to be my illustrator --

*

CUT TO:

INT. 68TH STREET -- UNFINISHED WORKROOM -- DAY (FLASHBACK) 34

*

CLOSE on a hand drawing a pencil illustration. Strewn on the table are different colors and variations of the LIZA DRESS. Halston looms behind him, smoking, pacing.

HALSTON (V.O.)

-- he's *fantastic*. He's drawn collections for Vogue and The New York Times, he's sketched for Givenchy, Coco Chanel. Chic is hard to capture, elusive, but he can do it. Of course, he needs to be pushed.

*

Halston leans over, pointing to a curved line on the drawing.

HALSTON

No. That's a straight line...

JOE

(as he crumples it up)
Oh, fuck off...

ED (V.O.)

Wait a second.

BACK TO:

35 INT. UPTOWN RESTAURANT -- RESUME

35

ED

What do you need an illustrator
for?

*

HALSTON

I want to see a whole collection
laid out in front of me. Take this
out, let's lower that neckline,
it's a very intimate relationship
between designer and illustrator --
Joe's more like a -- *second brain* --
now don't break my train of thought
--

*

*

*

*

ED

Sorry --

HALSTON

ELSA PERETTI. My fitting model.
She's Italian. Comes from money but
she left it all behind --

CUT TO:

36 INT. 68TH STREET -- UNFINISHED WORKROOM -- FLASHBACK

36

JUMP CUTS -- CLOSE on the face of a RAW ITALIAN BEAUTY, 20s,
laughing and smoking MOS, as Halston drapes bolts of fabric
around her, a la Liza. Sexy. Flirty. Joe scribbles. She whips
off her bra and panties, CHATTING, SWEARING, HOWLING with
laughter, loving every minute of this.

HALSTON (V.O.)

-- she's stunning. You can't take
your eye off her. Some models just
wear clothes. Elsa makes them her
own...

Off Halston, laughing, falling into a kind of love we SMASH
TO:

37 INT. UPTOWN RESTAURANT -- RESUME

37

ED

I thought Liza was your muse.

HALSTON

You can never have too many muses.
(then, with a wink)
(MORE)

*

*

(CONTINUED)

"Becoming Halston" Full Blue Revisions 2/7/20 24.
37 CONTINUED: 37

HALSTON (CONT'D)
Don't be jealous, Ed. Then there's
this kid. His name's Schumacher --

*

CUT TO:

38 EXT. PARAPHERNALIA FASHION STORE -- WINDOWS -- DAY 38

Halston stands smoking, sunglasses on, ENRAPPED by what he sees. PUSH IN on his FUGUE.

HALSTON (V.O.)
He does the windows at
Paraphernalia. He'll bring me that
youthful attitude...

JOEL SCHUMACHER exits out onto the street, wide-eyed and jumpy. Halston walks up to him.

HALSTON
Excuse me.

SCHUMACHER
(suddenly nervous)
Yeah? What? What do you want?

HALSTON
(re: the window)
Did you do *that*?

Schumacher turns to the window and then back to Halston.

SCHUMACHER
Yeah. I also designed all the
clothes. Why?

BACK TO:

39 INT. UPTOWN RESTAURANT -- RESUME 39

Halston takes a drag, self-satisfied, opening up the menu.

HALSTON
So the team's all in place. Last
thing I have to do is get the
money.

ED
Wait -- I'da thought that was the
first thing you had to do.

HALSTON
(playful)
All I need is a *teensy-weensy*
million dollars.

(CONTINUED)

Ed spits a mouthful of wine back into his glass.

ED

I'm sorry -- a *million* dollars?

HALSTON

Yes. Well, the plan was to go to the rich husbands of all my old clients at Bergdorf's and ask them. Alfred Vanderbilt, Charles Engleharrd, Baron de Rothschild --

ED

And how'd that turn out?

HALSTON

Well, they didn't say, "*no*"...

40 INT. CORNER OFFICE -- DAY -- FLASHBACK 40

Halston sits across from a ALFRED VANDERBILT.

ALFRED VANDERBILT

No.

41 INT. HIGH RISE OFFICE -- DAY -- FLASHBACK 41

CHARLES ENGLEHARRD leans back in his chair.

CHARLES ENGLEHARRD

(thoughtful)

Nnno.

42 INT. LAVISH SITTING ROOM -- DAY -- FLASHBACK 42

BARON DE ROTHSCHILD stares, flummoxed.

ROTHSCHILD

(duh)

No.

43 INT. UPTOWN RESTAURANT -- RESUME 43

Halston takes a sip of water, worried.

HALSTON

But I'm not worried. I've got a meeting tomorrow with *Estelle Marsh*. Wife of a Texas Oil baron. When she sweats, hundred dollar bills come *dripping* out of her engorged pores.

(off his smirk)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

HALSTON (CONT'D)

Don't give me that look. I've got
this all sewn up.

*
*

CUT TO:

44 INT. 68TH STREET -- UNFINISHED WORKROOM -- MORNING 44

Stark morning sunlight pours into the VERY unfinished salon. Strewn on a work table are Joe's illustrations riffing on the design of the LIZA DRESS, that Elsa wears as she stands, hip cocked, in the middle of the room. A WELL-DRESSED WOMAN OF A CERTAIN AGE, MRS. MARSH sits, unimpressed, her son MICHAEL sitting next to her, feeling out of place. Joe and Schumacher sit to the side, nervous, watching Halston, mid-pitch, smooth as silk.

HALSTON

Mrs. Marsh? When was the last time
someone asked you -- *really* asked
you -- what you needed?

Mrs. Marsh stares at him.

HALSTON (CONT'D)

When I was at Bergdorf's the ladies
would sit down in my chair, and I
would say *Sweetiecakes, tell me
your troubles. What's bothering
you? What do you need?* Such a small
question that would almost without
fail be met with... well, at *first*
a little sorrow. Because so few
people in their lives -- especially
the men -- ever think to ask them
that.

MRS. MARSH

The way my ex-husband put it was...
what the fuck do you want?

She LAUGHS. Halston allows himself to chuckle.

HALSTON

Have you ever visited Balenciaga in
Paris for Made to Order?

Mrs. Marsh is society, but she's not **that** society.

HALSTON (CONT'D)

-- Come.

Halston rises. Mrs. Marsh follows as they travel through the
space down towards the UNFINISHED SALON.

(CONTINUED)

HALSTON (CONT'D)

Balenciaga loves making women feel afraid. When you come up the stairs to his *Atelier*, you're met by a very stern secretary who makes you feel unimportant, even ugly. That won't happen here.

Along the floor are taped OUTLINES of the future salon; hallways, a lounge.

HALSTON (CONT'D)

(walking the outlines)

The lounge, here, is where you can take a breath, let go, tell us what you need; be reminded what you're capable of. There will be tea, champagne...and I'm sure some of our younger staff could even find you marijuana.

Mrs. Marsh laughs as she glances to Schumacher, who is suddenly NERVOUS. He looks back to Halston. Fast:

SCHUMACHER

No I couldn't. I mean, I could, but I would never -- why would you say that -- ?

HALSTON

In the *salon*, here, I'll bring the girls out to model the latest collection. You choose from those designs and I'll build your choices to your measurements. You won't have to get on a plane or a boat and go to Europe. You'll simply cross Madison Avenue to my little oasis.

Halston takes her by the arm. The OTHERS follow, at a distance, watching their leader, inspired and rapt.

HALSTON (CONT'D)

Mrs. Marsh, I'm going to become America's first Haute Couturier. And because women like Catherine Deneuve, Jackie Onassis -- you -- will custom order your clothing here, within five years *Halston, Limited* will be picked up in every reputable department store in the United States.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

HALSTON (CONT'D)

I'm going to change the face of
American fashion, Mrs. Marsh. I'm
going to dress the American
Everywoman as powerfully as I dress
you.

(beat)

And it will all be...because of
you.

Mrs. Marsh stares at Halston. So do the OTHERS in the room.

MRS. MARSH

You could talk a leopard out of its
spots.

(looking around)

Nothing's going to happen without a
finished space.

HALSTON

That's where you come in.

MRS. MARSH

How much, exactly, are you looking
for?

Not batting an eye:

HALSTON

A million dollars.

MRS. MARSH

(after a beat)

I'll give a hundred thousand. Oh.
And you're gonna' hire Michael.
He's handy, he can do all sorts of
work. He can even model - he has
just *wonderful* eyes and ears...

HALSTON

Deal.

OFF Halston, betraying not one ounce of worry we CUT TO:

Halston jaywalks across the street to a red brick building in
full salesman mode alongside ANGELO DONGHIA, 40s, sharply
dressed and intelligent.

HALSTON

This place will be your blank
canvas. Third floor, there's the
sewing room -- all state of the art
-- just like Balenciaga in Paris...

(CONTINUED)

DONGHIA

Mmm-hmm...

45 INT. 68TH STREET -- UNFINISHED SALON -- MOMENTS LATER 45

He breezes into the second floor salon space. It looks like a raw, unfinished, vacant rental space, which it is.

HALSTON

...and *this* will be the salon, where it's *really* gonna happen -- I want to create a new *kind* of experience. A woman comes in, she feels like she's been transported to another *world*...

DONGHIA

(looking around)

And what *sort* of design are you picturing?

HALSTON

Well, you know -- *HALSTON. RICH. TEXTURAL*. Like -- I want it to feel like -- *Shangri-La*. Just -- on the Upper East Side.

DONGHIA

Mmm-kay. Halston. How long have we known one another?

HALSTON

(grandiose)

UH-OH...

DONGHIA

Four years? I *love* you. You're like *family* to me. But what you're describing costs *MONEY*, and I happen to know you don't got any...

HALSTON

NOT true...

HALSTON (CONT'D)

-- in *all of humanity*, you're the only one who can do this! What you did with the Opera Club at the Met -- ??

DONGHIA

-- that cost a zillion dollars --

(CONTINUED)

HALSTON

-- at & Vice Versa??? Putting
pattern on pattern -- that's what I
need here -- it *has* to be you. You
made fucking *KEY WEST* fashionable,
Angelo! Look at a map! Florida is
America's limp dick and Key West is
what's dribbling out of it -- !

DONGHIA

(amused, gentle)

HALSTON. You can't afford me.

A beat. Halston sighs, deflating.

HALSTON

What if you did it at cost?

DONGHIA

(exasperated)

It's like your ears don't work...

*

HALSTON

I am giving you the *OPPORTUNITY* to
have the cream of New York society
walking through those doors and
saying, 'this place is spectacular!
Who designed it?' Okay? God as my
witness, that's gonna be worth more
than whatever the Opera Club paid
you.

*

DONGHIA

Do you mean that?

HALSTON

Have I ever lied to you?

A beat, then, with a sigh, 'fuck off':

*

DONGHIA

Okay.

Halston clasps his fingers together at his chin, batting his
eyelashes:

HALSTON

My hero!

DONGHIA

Knock it off.

Donghia snaps into designer mode, walking the room --

(CONTINUED)

DONGHIA (CONT'D)

So I think you should go for a *bedouin tent* kinda feel -- high ceilings, you drape a beautiful pattern, a deep crimson, that'll keep your cost down and it'll look fantastic, like you've wandered into a desert OASIS. Bring in those antler chairs from your apartment...

PULL BACK as they trail off wandering into the space.

*

SMASH TO:

INT. 68TH STREET -- WORKROOM -- DAY

CLOSE ON HALSTON'S FACE, PISSED. Almost nauseous. Drained.

HALSTON

That's fucking terrible --

Reveal Joe, Schumacher and Elsa (in one of the designs) watching as a FIT MODEL stands in a muslin mock-up of one of Halton's dresses. He's right, it's not right, but it's not *bad* -- and it *ALMOST* looks like Halston. But just *ALMOST*.

Around the room, FIT MODELS in various states of undress try on dresses as part of a kind of preliminary show and tell. Michael sits nervously to the side as Halston continues a tear that may have been going a while now...

HALSTON (CONT'D)

I'm serious -- who made this?

*

SCHUMACHER

I did.

HALSTON

Okay, well, don't take this the wrong way, but that's is the worst fucking dress I've ever seen. This looks like a *PROM DRESS*, but for a *MARTIAN*.

ELSA

They're just mock-ups, Halston.

*

*

Halston stares daggers. Elsa rolls her eyes. Smokes.

*

JOE

(fed up)

Okay, Halston. EASY --

(CONTINUED)

HALSTON

(standing)

Don't *EASY* me, *JOE*, we have a
fucking *SHOW* in *TWO WEEKS*, and
these designs are shit --

*

ELSA

I think if she had a nice, big
piece of chunky jewelry --

HALSTON

*WE'RE NOT SELLING FUCKING JEWELRY,
ELSA, WE'RE SELLING DRESSES TO
HUMAN WOMEN.*

(to the fit model)

Take that off. Do you feel good in
that?

FIT MODEL

Not when you're yelling...

HALSTON

See? Take it off.

MICHAEL

(clearing his throat)

Maybe in uh the right *color*...?

*

HALSTON

(wheeling on him)

YOU DO NOT GET TO TALK.

(to Schumacher)

Joel? These are not working. You
see that, right?

*

SCHUMACHER

(wounded, jittery)

Sorry.

HALSTON

Don't say *sorry*, do better.

*

SCHUMACHER

I'm just trying to help --

HALSTON

(wheeling on him)

Well, you're *NOT helping*. Not at
the moment. I think this is the
obvious problem here.

*

*

*

JOE

Halston, please. You're mad at yourself. Why are you talking it out on the kid -- ?

HALSTON

(to the room)

I CANNOT FUCKING DO THIS ALL, EVERYBODY. I DID NOT HIRE YOU SO I COULD DO ALL THE WORK, BUT THAT IS WHAT'S HAPPENING --

JOE

Why don't we take a little break --

HALSTON

We don't have time.
(to Elsa re: her dress)
Let me see that.

Elsa walks over in one of Halston's designs. It's okay, but the front is wrong -- it falls square to the ground. Halston spots it immediately and starts fiddling --

*

HALSTON (CONT'D)

No, *SEE* -- *JOE*. This keeps happening --

JOE

(defensive)

This was *YOUR* design, remember --

Joe grabs the illustration of the dress, flashes it at Halston, who's futzing with the hem.

HALSTON

Look at how this falls here -- she's not a fucking *TABLE* --

(to Joe, eyes closed)

-- *AND I KNOW IT'S MY DESIGN BUT THIS WAS BUILT OFF OF YOUR SKETCHES*

*

*

--

JOE

WHICH YOU OKAYED!!!

MICHAEL

(declarative)

Who wants coffee?

HALSTON

-- SO THEN I'M SAYING STOP
ILLUSTRATING DESIGNS BY PUTTING A
SQUARE HEM IN FRONT WITH A WRAP IN
FRONT LIKE WE'RE TRYING TO HIDE HER
HIDEOUS MISSHAPEN LEGS!!!

ELSA

(offended)

Mi scusi?

*

HALSTON

Oh, fuck off, I'm not saying your
legs are misshapen, I'm saying
they're NOT hideous and misshapen
they're gorgeous and I want to
fucking see them!!

ELSA

(pulling the dress up)

Like this?

HALSTON

(not even looking)

No.

Halston's had enough. He crosses the room and sits alone.
Quietly lethal. It's terrifying.

*

HALSTON (CONT'D)

(to no one)

None of these work. I have not seen
a SINGLE design here that I would
put my name on.

(then)

Not one.

(silence)

This is a fucking embarrassment.

*

Silence, as everyone sits. Not daring to respond, as it won't
do any good. He turns to Joel.

HALSTON (CONT'D)

Where's the suede trench coat?

SCHUMACHER

Um.

(dreading)

Yeah, just a sec.

He gestures to one of the fit models to put on the suede
trench coat that's draped over a chair. She puts it on and
walks over. It's drenched and stained. Drips of water pool
around it.

(CONTINUED)

HALSTON

What happened?

SCHUMACHER

Well -- this is stupid -- but it
was *raining* today...

HALSTON

Well, who wore it out in the rain? *

ELSA

It's a *trench coat*, Halston.

As Halston stares at the trench coat, devastated:

SCHUMACHER

(sheepishly) *

Uh, I did? Suede's not waterproof, *

as it turns out. And it just -- you
can see, it's just not gonna
work...

JOE

The cut's fantastic. Look at it.
It's just the wrong material. But
it's the right idea...

Halston quietly slumps into a chair, head in his hands.

HALSTON

No. Suede is NOT waterproof. Suede *

is the idea. No one's doing it and
I wanted that -- that sensation --

Not looking up, he rubs his fingertips along the coat sleeve. *

POP TO:

INT. HALSTON'S APARTMENT -- LATE NIGHT -- FLASHBACK

CLOSE ON Halston's fingers running up the small of Ed's naked
back in the moonlight.

BACK TO:

INT. 68TH STREET -- WORKROOM -- RESUME

Devastated, Halston just sits, numb. Furious, but not
yelling, which is even worse. Icy.

HALSTON

(defeated) *

*Everyone knows suede's not **
*waterproof. **

(CONTINUED)

SCHUMACHER

I know, Halston. I'm sorry...

*

Halston turns his gaze to him, icy calm.

HALSTON

Schumacher, you're a junior partner, right? That's your title?

*

*

SCHUMACHER

Yeah...

HALSTON

Do you think that, as of right now, you're earning that title?

This slams the kid in the gut. His eyes well.

HALSTON (CONT'D)

It's a yes or no question. Do you think you're earning the title of junior partner right now?

*

SCHUMACHER

(quickly)

No.

He gets up and hurries out before he can burst into tears. The room goes cold. Silence but for the fit models climbing into their street clothes. A beat, then, deflating:

HALSTON

I'm sorry.

(to everyone)

I'm being a cunt. Everyone's working hard, I understand that.

JOE

Halston.

Halston looks up. Joe gestures with his head, saying, "go check on him." A beat, then Halston goes.

CUT TO:

INT. 68TH STREET -- SALON -- MOMENTS LATER

Halston steps out of the elevator. He looks around. No Joel. Exhausted, Halston rubs his face and heads to the bathroom.

*

There's commotion as he opens the door and sees Joel, scampering to his feet from the closed toilet.

(CONTINUED)

SCHUMACHER

Jesus -- !!

Halston watches as Joel pulls a NEEDLE from his arm, and quickly pulls off the rubber tubing around his upper arm.

SCHUMACHER (CONT'D)

*Sorry -- thought I locked it --
sorry --*

Halston stands there, stunned, staring. A beat. Coolly --

HALSTON

What are you doing?

SCHUMACHER

I was just taking a second to --
collect my thoughts...

HALSTON

No, I mean, what are you *doing*? Is
it heroin?

SCHUMACHER

*NO! No. It's...
(shrugs it off)
It's...it's just speed...*

*
*

HALSTON

How often do you do it?

SCHUMACHER

*(faux thinking)
Oh. Pffft -- I dunno. Every-y-y...*

HALSTON

Every day?

SCHUMACHER

No. Not *always*...

HALSTON

*(nailing it down)
You shoot speed every day.*

Caught, Joel sighs, then:

SCHUMACHER

Yeah. Yes, I do. With all the work
we're doing --

HALSTON

You're bleeding.
(as Joel wipes it)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

HALSTON (CONT'D)

So you started this when you came
to work with *me*.

SCHUMACHER

(after a beat)

No.

(then)

It's a just a thing I do. It -- it
keeps me focused. It's how I get
into the groove...

*

Halston sits against the sink. He lights a cigarette,
thinking. He exhales, concerned:

HALSTON

Do I need to do something here?
Take you somewhere?

Schumacher shakes his head.

HALSTON (CONT'D)

Do I need to be *worried*?

SCHUMACHER

No... I really don't know yet.

(then)

I don't belong here, do I?

*

*

*

Halston looks down at the kid so vulnerable.

*

HALSTON

I think all of us are a bit like
little ships, lost at sea. We've
all been through a lot. Left our
families. Been rejected one way or
the other. A bunch of queers and
freaks and girls who haven't grown
up yet. You belong here.

(the kid tries not to cry)

You're very talented, Joel. But
we've got too much at stake here.
You can see that, right? So if you
want to keep working for me, you're
gonna get clean.

*

*

*

*

*

*

*

*

*

*

*

SCHUMACHER

(through the tears)

I do. I mean, I will. It's just --
when you bite my head off about the
designs...

*

*

HALSTON

If you don't shoot up, I won't bite
your head off.

*

(CONTINUED)

Schumacher snuffles, dries his eyes with toilet paper and gives a relieved chuckle. *

SCHUMACHER

Okay.

HALSTON

(as he goes)

Okay.

SCHUMACHER

(stopping him)

Halston -- there's something I want to show you. I *didn't* show you, because I thought you'd get mad, but...it might be good? *

Off Halston, interest piqued:

50 INT. 68TH STREET -- WORKROOM -- MINUTES LATER 50

An EXQUISITE, TIE DYED LENGTH OF FABRIC is whooshed out onto a table. Reveal Halston, Joel, Elsa, Michael looking on, the fit models peering over. A beat as Halston stares. This TYE-DYE is not messy, hippie tie-dye. It's sophisticated and elevated -- expertly done.

HALSTON

How did you make it?

SCHUMACHER

Just in my kitchen. Boiling dyes on the stove...

HALSTON

(elsewhere)

I love it. Nobody's doing this. It's modern, it's *sensual* --

He feels it between his fingers, then, a POP OF MEMORY -- LIZA LAUGHING, SWIRLING AROUND IN THE CRIMSON DRESS, FEMININE AND FREE. Halston looks to the team, a lightbulb clicked on.

HALSTON (CONT'D)

Elsa.

Elsa, back in street clothes takes off her suede shirt, then her bra. Like a magician, Halston starts wrapping it around her. Joe pulls out his pad and starts sketching. Elsa twists the fabric, guiding Halston's hands.

HALSTON (CONT'D)

It's *stunning*...

(CONTINUED)

JUMP CUTS. Joe sketches. Halston gazes, in a fugue. Schumacher pins and adjusts as Halston wraps her, sculpting a dress out of nothing.

ELSA
Jesus. Beautiful.

JOE
Maybe bring up the hem?

HALSTON
(gazing)
No. Bring it down.

He moves the hem down, now a full dress.

HALSTON (CONT'D)
There...

He takes a step back. The whole room looks on, seeing this stunning, finished piece. The fit model beams -- this thing feels *amazing* to wear. Halston's eyes narrow.

HALSTON (CONT'D)
Something's not right.

Elsa turns and looks at herself in a mirror.

ELSA
(eyes narrowing)
It's the hair...

She grabs a spray bottle and a brush. She mists her hair, then brushes it back. The look is suddenly *profoundly* different...slick and modern. The forecast of a new decade dawning. PUSH IN on Halston's smile.

HALSTON
Yes.

A moment as they admire this living work of art. Without looking, Halston slaps Joel on the shoulder. Atta boy. A beat, to Elsa:

HALSTON (CONT'D)
Now walk.

SMASH TO:

MUSIC PLAYS as Elsa strides the catwalk, cameras flashing, the tie-dyed fabric lilting -- widen to reveal THE FINISHED SALON. THIS IS THE SHOW.

(CONTINUED)

The space is PACKED. CUTS of reporters and women dressed to the nines, eyes glued. Fit models of every skin color float down the runway like butterflies.

BACKSTAGE, Halston watches, smoking, through a slit in the fabric. He fixes the drape of each model as she gets ready:

HALSTON

Go...

He continues peering. CLOSE ON his face. *WHAT WILL THEY THINK?* A moment, then he walks onto the runway.

Halston strides down the catwalk to applause, drinking it in. Liza leaps to her feet in the front row, clapping and hollering in her new look and cropped hair. Halston stands and waves thank you at the end of the runway, then gives a BIG BOW as we CUT TO:

52 INT. 68TH STREET -- WORKROOM -- THE NEXT DAY 52

The last note of the music rings out to silence. Joel, Joe, Elsa and Michael. Halston reads *The Times*, then SLAMS it to the ground.

HALSTON

FUCK.

JOE

Halston, these are not bad.

HALSTON

They're not good.

ELSA

Yes they are! This one is!

(reading)

"Effortless and elegant, Halston is an exciting new voice in women's fashion..."

He picks back up *The Times*, defiant.

HALSTON

(reading)

..."the look they've assembled is more thrown together or contrived..." *WHICH IS IT, BERNADINE MORRIS? THROWN-TOGETHER or CONTRIVED? I CAN'T TELL WHETHER YOU HATED IT OR YOU HATED IT!*

(grumbling)

The bitch. *Fell all over myself being nice to her...*

(CONTINUED)

MICHAEL

This one says, "You're either young or old, says Halston."

A beat.

HALSTON

THAT'S NEITHER GOOD NOR BAD THAT'S JUST A QUOTE.

(to everyone else)

HE DOESN'T EVER GET TO TALK.

(then)

A collection doesn't count as a success unless we have *orders*. And how many orders do we have, Joel?

SCHUMACHER

Not many.

HALSTON

Correct. Zero, which is, yes, not many.

JOE

(with a sigh)

Well, onto the next collection...

HALSTON

What are you *talking* about? There won't *BE* a next collection. That was fucking *IT*. We're \$200,000 in debt. We haven't paid rent this month, in two weeks, they turn off the lights in here.

SCHUMACHER

Well, if we're talking about money you could maybe spend a little less on orchids...

Halston looks around. There really are a lot of orchids. He turns back to Schumacher, exploding.

HALSTON

That's *entirely* missing the thrust of what I'm saying and the orchids are part of my process. You can't put a *budget* on *inspiration*...

ELSA

(dry)

Evidently.

(CONTINUED)

SCHUMACHER

Excuse me, I gotta use the.
Bathroom.

Schumacher walks out. A phone rings in the background.

ELSA

I'll get it...

HALSTON

(to Joe)

Why does he walk out every time I
raise my voice? Am I really that
abrasive?

JOE

(after a beat)

Do you want me to answer that
question?

HALSTON

(calling out, to Elsa)

*Who is that?! And do they have
money?!*

Elsa turns to him, face ASHEN as we CUT TO:

INT. 68TH STREET -- SALON -- DAY

Schumacher walks out of the bathroom and stops. Halston is
standing RIGHT THERE.

SCHUMACHER

Oh. Hi.

HALSTON

You didn't flush the toilet.

SCHUMACHER

That's 'cuz I -- sorry.

He goes back in, flushes, comes back out. Halston doesn't
move.

HALSTON

Roll up your sleeve.

A beat, then Schumacher does. Shows it to him.

HALSTON (CONT'D)

How 'bout the other one.

Schumacher balks. His head drops.

SCHUMACHER

Is it over?

HALSTON

We had a deal. I am under way too much pressure to be having a junkie on my team. It's so much stress...

SCHUMACHER

I know! How -- how can you even handle it -- ?

HALSTON

(vehement)

Because it only takes ONE person, ONE socialite, and everything will change. If I get my designs on the ONE right person, I can get them on every woman in America. All it takes is ONE yes from the most sophisticated socialite in New York.

(then)

And I just got off the phone with her.

(off his look)

Babe Paley just called. The well heeled wife of the chairman of CBS wants to see the collection.

SCHUMACHER

BABE PALEY??? Are you serious???

HALSTON

Now get your fucking shit together.

He turns and goes.

SMASH TO:

Halston wraps a towel around himself, still wet from the shower. He pulls out a hair dryer as he looks in the mirror and stops. He SEES SOMETHING. He puts down the hair dryer and slicks his hair straight back with his fingers. Stares again. JUMP CUTS as he applies some light bronzer. Pulls on a black turtleneck. He lights a cigarette and stares at the man looking back at him. More stylish. More glacial. More lethal.

SMASH TO:

55

INT. HALSTON'S APARTMENT -- LATER

55

*

Halston on phone mid-conversation. Opens the door to Ed. Air kisses, gestures him to be quiet. He drags the cord along behind him heading into the living room.

*

*

*

HALSTON

*

No, no one -- my take-out just arrived.

*

*

(then)

*

Alright, I'll let you go darling.

*

Ciao!

*

Halston hangs up lights a cigarette and slides into a chair, almost posing. He tilts back his head and blows smoke at the ceiling. Ed watches this, clocking something.

*

ED

Can I ask you something? What's going on here?

HALSTON

I don't know what you mean.

ED

The past few weeks, I haven't seen you *smile*. You're dressing different, you *talk* different, for goddsakes...

HALSTON

I'm under a lot of pressure, you know that --

ED

(blurting it out)

I could be more to you.

A long pause.

HALSTON

Is this not working?

ED

No, it's just that I -- we see each other two, three nights a week? And I still don't really know you. That's all. I want to *know* you.

Halston leans back. Takes a drag on his cigarette. He *knows* what Ed is asking of him. *Why can't he just give in?* Then:

HALSTON

I think you know me very well, Ed.

(CONTINUED)

Ed laughs, derisive, imitating.

ED

I think you know me very well, Ed.
WHAT IS IT WITH THE VOICE?

HALSTON

What voice?

ED

THAT ONE! You're from *Indiana*. It's
like you're *imitating* somebody --

*

HALSTON

(flaring)

No, I'm not. I take offense to
that. I've *always* been this person.
If there's anyone in this room
who's changed, it's you.

ED

(exasperated)

ME?

HALSTON

Yes. I make you insecure. That's
what's changed. My success, my
ambition --

(talking over his
scoffing)

-- it didn't *bother* you before, but
it obviously does now because now
you're looking for things to pick
at. My *VOICE*. Good *LORD*...

He turns away and takes a drag. Ed heaves a lungful of air
and deflates, accepting defeat.

ED

All right. Well. I don't want to
argue. You have a big day tomorrow.

HALSTON

Good. I don't either.

(standing)

I think I'll turn in.

ED

Okay.

Ed heads toward the bedroom then stops, noticing Halston
still standing there, staring. Ed's stomach drops. Twisting
the knife:

(CONTINUED)

HALSTON

I'd like to sleep alone.

Halston goes over and pours himself a drink, not looking at Ed, who stands there a moment, then walks out without a word. A moment, then Halton puts the needle on the record player and sips his scotch. Sergio Mendes' cover of 'Fool on the Hill' plays.

Alone, and alone by choice, Halston walks back to the chair and sits, smoking. CAMERA PULLS BACK as we DISSOLVE TO:

56 INT. 68TH STREET -- SALON -- DAY 56

Elsa walks down the catwalk in the tie-dye collection, followed by the other fit models. BABE PALEY, oozing taste and money and class, sips champagne as she sits next to Halston, who leans back, smoking, now fully at home in his new persona. She leans over to him, eyes glued to the collection.

BABE PALEY

Well, they're beautiful -- they're *stunning*, actually. But I can't wear them everyday.

A worried Halston turns to her, smooth as silk.

HALSTON

Are you *interested* in everyday?
(then)
Let me show you something I've been developing...

He leaps to his feet, calling:

HALSTON (CONT'D)

Elsa -- !

CUT TO:

57 INT. 68TH STREET SALON -- FIVE MINUTES LATER 57

Camera pans up on Elsa as she walks down the runway in the iconic ULTRASUEDE DRESS. Reveal Babe Paley standing at the foot of the runway, TRANSFIXED.

(CONTINUED)

HALSTON

I call it "Ultrasuede". I was working with suede, which I *adore* -- but wear it out in the rain and it gets ruined, so I just about had a *fit*, I was devastated, then it *occurred* to me -- I have to make my own suede. It's a new synthetic. You can throw it in the wash, you can dress it up, you can wear it to lunch, pick the kids up from school -- it's *sexy*, it's comfort and *ease...*

(then)

It's *freedom*.

Babe Paley stares at the design that will become iconic, synonymous with the man standing next to her. She turns to him.

BABE PALEY

I'll take one in every color.

Jackpot. PUSH IN ON HALSTON'S SMILE as we --

END EPISODE